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Cabinet Approvals

Cabinet Approvals On 2nd January, 2019
On 2nd January 2019, the Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi took a stock of decisions on various proposals. The details of the cabinet approvals are as follows:

Cabinet allows inclusion of merchant exporters under Interest Equalisation Scheme (IES) for Pre and Post Shipment Rupee Export Credit
On 2nd January 2019, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi chaired the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, which gave its approval to the proposal of the Department of Commerce to allow merchant exporters under the Interest Equalisation Scheme (IES) for Pre and Post Shipment Rupee Export Credit by allowing them interest equalisation rate of 3% on all such credit for export of products which are covered under 416 tariff lines.

Key Points:
- The Department of Commerce had proposed to include merchant exporters under the Interest Equalisation Scheme (IES) for Pre and Post Shipment Rupee Export Credit by allowing them interest equalisation rate of 3% on all such credit for export of products which are covered under 416 tariff lines.
- The products that are included in the scheme include those from MSME/labour intensive sectors such as Agriculture, Textiles, Leather, Handicraft, machinery, etc.
- The proposal will entail benefits of around Rs 600 crore to merchant exporters on interest equalisation.
- The scheme is expected to make exporters more competitive and encourage them to exports more products manufactured by MSMEs adding to country's exports besides boosting employment generation in MSME sector.
- The government had launched the interest subsidy scheme in April 2015 for five years for all manufacturing exporters. But merchant exporters were not covered under the scheme and they had been persistently demanding inclusion of the merchant exporters also in the ongoing scheme.

"Cabinet approves Continuation of Umbrella scheme for “Family Welfare and Other Health Interventions” during 2017-18 to 2019-20"
The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, gave its approval for continuation of five schemes under the “Umbrella Scheme for Family Welfare and Other Health Interventions” during the Fourteenth Finance Commission period 2017-18 to 2019-20.

Key Points:
i. The scheme which would be funded 100% by Central Government Budgetary support will have an outlay of Rs. 2381.84 crore.
ii. The 5 schemes covered under the project are as follows:
- **Swastha Nagrik Abhiyan (SNA):** For dissemination of information on health issues to create awareness among citizens of India of all age/sex/locations and appropriately influence their health seeking behaviour to encourage healthy lifestyles and empower the citizens. SNA has been approved, with an estimated outlay of Rs.1030.15 crore for three years.
- **Free Supply of Contraceptives:** For providing free supply of contraceptives including condoms, Oral Contraceptive Pills, Pregnancy Test Kits, other contraceptives, etc. to States with a view to improve Maternal and Child Health and achieving population stabilization.
- **MIS Scheme now proposed as Health Surveys and Health Research (HSHR):** For sourcing of data on population, health and nutrition for India and its States through periodically conducted
National Family Health Survey (NFHS), which is one of the largest surveys of its kind worldwide and will provide valuable data for policy and programmes right up to the district level.

- **Social Marketing of Contraceptives**: For branding, attractively packaging, marketing and selling of products and services related to Family Planning for low-income groups at affordable prices.

- **Population Research Centres (PRCs)**: For third party evaluation of the scheme on PRCs and especially of those centres which are being considered for continuation will be carried out.

iii. The schemes are crucial to attaining the goals and objectives laid out in **National Health Policy (NHP) 2017**, and international commitments in the form of **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.

iv. It is also aimed at improving health seeking behaviour of the population through increased awareness and enhanced uptake of health services.

**Cabinet approves 'The Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order (Amendment) Bill, 2018' for revision in list of Scheduled Tribes of Arunachal Pradesh**

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi chaired the Union Cabinet which has approved the introduction of a Bill namely **‘The Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order (Amendment) Bill, 2018’** in the Parliament for certain amendments in the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950 so as to modify the list of Scheduled Tribes (STs) of Arunachal Pradesh.

**Key Points:**

- The Home Ministry's had proposed to replace the generic term ‘any Naga tribes’ with the specific names of the tribes that would qualify for recognition as Scheduled Tribes in Arunachal Pradesh.
- The decision taken is likely to have a bearing on the peace talks with the National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Isak Muivah (NSCN-IM).
- According to the bill ‘Khampti’ would be replaced with ‘Tai Khamti’ ‘Abor’ would be deleted and ‘Mishmi-Kaman, Idu and Taron’ would be included in the list.‘Monpa, Memba, Sartang, Sajolong’ would also be included in lieu of ‘Momba’ in the ST list of Arunachal Pradesh.
- The members of the communities newly listed in the revised list of Scheduled Tribes of Arunachal Pradesh will also be able to derive benefits meant for STs under the existing schemes of the Government after the Bill becomes an Act.

**Cabinet approves continuation of Rastriya Yuva Sashaktikaran Karyakram Scheme for the Period 2017-18 to 2019-2020**

On 2nd January 2019, the Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the continuation of **Rastriya Yuva Sashaktikaran Karyakram Scheme** for the Period 2017-18 to 2019-2020 with budget outlay of **Rs.1160 crore**.

**Key Points:**

- In consultation with Ministry of Finance and NITI Aayog, eight youth schemes of 12th Five Year Plan period were brought under the umbrella scheme of Rashtriya Yuva Sashaktikaran Karyakram as sub-schemes as part of a rationalization exercise.
- This helped in achieving better synergies between the Schemes and thereby, improving their effectiveness and helping in achieving better outcomes with the available resources.
- The Scheme beneficiaries include the youth in the age-group of **15-29 years**, in line with the definition of ‘youth’ in the **National Youth Policy, 2014**. In case of programme components specifically meant for the adolescents, the age-group is 10-19 years.
- The eight sub-schemes included Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan, National Youth Corps, National Programme for Youth and Adolescent Development, International Cooperation, Youth Hostels, Assistance to Scouting and Guiding Organizations, National Discipline Scheme and National Young Leaders Programme.
“Cabinet approves restructuring of National Health Agency as “National Health Authority” for better implementation of Pradhan Mantri – Jan Arogya Yojana”

On 2nd January 2019, the Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the restructuring of existing National Health Agency as “National Health Authority” for better implementation of Pradhan Mantri – Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY).

Key Points:

With this approval, the existing society “National Health Agency” has been dissolved and will be replaced by National Health Authority as an attached office to Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.

1. National Health Authority will be chaired by Union Health Minister to enable the decision making at a faster pace, required for smooth implementation of the scheme.

2. The National Health Authority will have full accountability, authority and mandate to implement the Pradhan Mantri – Jan Arogya Yojana.

3. The proposed National Health Authority will be funded by existing budget that was approved earlier by the Cabinet for the National Health Agency, including costs related to IT, human resources, infrastructure, operational costs etc and no new funds have been approved.

Cabinet gives ex post facto approval to India’s Approach for COP 24, Katowice, Poland (2-15 December 2018)

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi headed, Union Cabinet gave its ex-post facto approval to the negotiating stand of India at the 24th Conference of Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) held in Katowice, Poland from 2-15 December 2018.

Key Points:

1. The Indian delegation to the conference was led by Union Environment, Forest and Climate Change Minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan.

2. The key focus of the meeting was to finalize guidelines for implementation of Paris Agreement in post 2020 period and the outcome of the talks is to limit the rise of global temperature to well below 2 degrees Celsius.

3. India’s approach was guided by principles and provisions of the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement, particularly the principles of Equity and Common But Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capability (CBPR-RC).

4. India had also expressed reservations on the Global Stocktake (GST) decision regarding the need for considerations of equity in output of GST process as per the mandate of the Paris Agreement to ensure that vulnerabilities, problems and challenges of the poor and marginalised are addressed.

Cabinet apprised of Progress under NHM and Decisions of Empowered Programme Committee and Mission Steering Group of NHM

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has been apprised of the Progress and new initiatives under National Health Mission (NHM) and the Decisions of the Empowered Programme Committee and Mission Steering Group of NHM.

Outcomes achieved under the NHM during the last five years and during the year 2017-18:

1. Decline by 2.7% in the Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) to 130 during 2014-16 from 178 during 2010-12.

2. Decline in the Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) to 34 in 2016 as compared to 44 in 2011. The annual rate of decline of IMR between 2015 and 2018 was 8.1%.

3. Decline in the Under 5 Mortality Rate (U5MR) to 39 in 2016 from 55 in 2011. The U5MR annual rate of decline during 2015-16 was 9.3%.

4. Decline in the Total Fertility Rate (TFR) to 2.3% in 2016. The percentage annual compound rate of decline in TFR during 2011-16 has been observed as 1.7%.
• The Annual Parasite Incidence (API) with respect of Malaria, declined to 0.84 in 2016 from 1.10 in 2011. In 2017 malaria incidence went down by 30% and deaths due to malaria decreased by 70%.

• The incidence of Tuberculosis (TB) per 1 lakh population has been reduced to 204 in 2017, from 234 in 2013. Mortality due to TB per lakh population for India reduced to 21 in 2017 from 32 in 2016.

• The target of prevalence of leprosy <1/one lakh population has been achieved nationally. The number of districts that achieved elimination of leprosy has increased from 554 in 2017 to 571 by March 2018.

• Incidence of Kala Azar was to reduce it to less than 1 case per 10000 population in all blocks. The number of endemic blocks with prevalence of more than 1 case per 10000 population has been reduced to 72 in 2017, from 94 in 2016.

• Prevalence of 4 major Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) namely Cancers, diabetes, Stroke and Cardiovascular diseases, and chronic lung diseases attributable to Tobacco use has been reduced through bringing down prevalence of tobacco use by 6% average points, to 28.6% in 2016-17 from 34.6% in 2009-10.

Cabinet approves high level committee to implement Clause 6 of Assam Accord Several Longstanding demands of Bodos also approved

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi approved the setting up of a High Level Committee for implementation of Clause 6 of the Assam Accord and measures envisaged in the Memorandum of Settlement, 2003 and other issues related to Bodo community.

Background:
The Assam Accord was signed on 15th August, 1985 after the Assam agitation of 1979-1985. Clause 6 of the accord envisaged that appropriate constitutional, legislative and administrative safeguards, shall be provided to protect, preserve and promote the cultural, social, linguistic identity and heritage of the Assamese people. But, Clause 6 of the Assam Accord has not been fully implemented even almost 35 years after the Accord was signed.

Key Points:
• The Committee shall examine the effectiveness of actions since 1985 to implement Clause 6 of the Assam Accord by holding discussions with all stakeholders and assess the required quantum of reservation of seats in Assam Legislative Assembly and local bodies for Assamese people.

• The Committee will also assess the requirement of measures to be taken to protect Assamese and other indigenous languages of Assam, quantum of reservation in employment under Government of Assam and other measures to protect, preserve and promote cultural, social, linguistic identity and heritage of Assamese people.

• The Ministry of Home Affairs will decide the composition and terms of reference of the committee.

• Besides this the Cabinet also approved a number of measures to fulfil the outstanding issues related to the Bodo community and the Bodo Accord which was signed in 2003 and resulted in the establishment of a Bodoland Territorial Council under Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India.

• The union cabinet approved the establishment of a Bodo Museum-cum-language and cultural study center, modernization of existing All India Radio Station and Doordarshan Kendra at Kokrajhar and naming a Superfast Train passing through Bodoland Territorial Area Districts (BTAD) as ARONAI Express.
• The Assam Government will also take necessary measures related to appropriate land policy and land laws, besides setting up of Institutions for Research and Documentation of Customs, Traditions and Languages of indigenous communities.

**Cabinet approves proposal to allot land to Chandigarh Housing Board for construction of apartments for 3930 allottees under Self-Financing Housing Scheme for UT Employees**

The Union Cabinet approved a proposal to allot land to Chandigarh Housing Board for construction of apartments for 3,930 allottees under Self-Financing Housing Scheme (SFHS)-2008, for UT Employees.

**Key Points:**
- The scheme “Self-financing Housing Scheme -2008” was approved by the Chandigarh administration in which a total land area of 73.3 acre was earmarked for construction of 3,930 dwelling units on lease hold basis for 99 years for its employees.
- 11.8 acre of land out of 73.3 acre was already in possession of Chandigarh Housing Board and the remaining 61.5 acre of Government land is to be allotted to Chandigarh Housing Board.
- The proposal came before the cabinet when the Chandigarh MP Kirron Kher had raised the issue which was pending since 2008, before the Centre.

**Cabinet approves first-ever three way merger in Indian Banking with amalgamation of Vijaya, Dena and Bank of Baroda**

On 2nd January 2019, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi approved the scheme for the merger of state-run Vijaya Bank, Bank of Baroda(BoB) and Dena Bank, marking the first-ever three-way merger in the country’s banking sector.

**Key Points:**
- The merger which will come into force on April 1, 2019 will form the third largest bank in the country, after government-owned State Bank of India and private sector lender ICICI.
- In the merger process, Vijaya Bank and Dena Bank are transferor banks and BoB is the transferee bank. This means that all businesses, assets, rights, titles, claims, licences, approvals and other privileges and all property, all borrowings, liabilities and obligations of Vijaya Bank and Dena Bank will be transferred to Bank of Baroda.
- The fair equity share exchange (share swap) ratio for the amalgamation is: 402 equity shares of ₹2 each of BoB for every 1,000 equity shares of ₹10 each of Vijaya Bank; and 110 equity shares of ₹2 each of BoB for every 1,000 equity shares of ₹10 each of Dena Bank.
- The merged bank will have a combined business of Rs 14.82 lakh crore. There will be no impact on the service conditions of the employees and there will be no retrenchment following the merger.
- Strengths of individual banks – such as Dena Bank’s relatively higher access to low-cost CASA deposits, Vijaya Bank’s profitability and availability of capital for growth, and the extensive global network and offerings of BoB will translate into advantages in terms of market reach, operational efficiencies and the ability to support a wider offering of product and services.

**Cabinet approves Amendment to the Trade Unions Act, 1926 to make provisions regarding Recognition of Trade Unions**

The Union Cabinet approved amendment to the Trade Unions Act, 1926 to make provisions regarding recognition and giving statutory backing to central and state-level trade unions.

**Key Points:**
- The approval of the bill will facilitate recognition of Trade Unions at Central and State level and will ensure that the nomination of workers’ representatives in tripartite bodies by the government will become more transparent.
- Besides this the bill will check on the arbitrary nomination of workers’ representatives by the Government and reduce litigations and industrial unrest.
The bill will empower the Centre to frame rules for recognising unions and resolving disputes involving them.

Currently there is no statutory provision for either the recognition of a trade union in industry, or the establishment or recognition of a union at the central and state level.

**Govt launches Green-Ag, GEF-assisted project, in partnership with FAO**
The Minister of State for Agriculture & Farmers Welfare Shri Parshottam Rupala informed that the Government had launched a Global Environment Facility (GEF) assisted project namely, “Green – Ag: Transforming Indian Agriculture for global environment benefits and the conservation of critical biodiversity and forest landscapes” in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) during September, 2018.

**Key Points:**

i. The project was launched in high-conservation-value landscapes of five States namely (i) Madhya Pradesh: Chambal Landscape, (ii) Mizoram: Dampa Landscape, (iii) Odisha: Similipal Landscape, (iv) Rajasthan: Desert National Park Landscape and v) Uttarakhand: Corbett-Rajaji Landscape.

ii. The project aim is to mainstream biodiversity, climate change and sustainable land management objectives and practices into Indian agriculture.

iii. Besides this it is also supposed to catalyse transformative change of India’s agricultural sector to support achievement of national and global environmental benefits and conservation of critical biodiversity and forest landscapes.

iv. The project will be funded through **33.5 million dollar** grant from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) implemented by the government of India and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations.

**About Global Environment Facility (GEF):**

♦ Established on the eve of the **1992 Rio Earth Summit** to help tackle our planet's most pressing environmental problems, the GEF unites 183 countries in partnership with international institutions, civil society organizations (CSOs), and the private sector to address global environmental issues while supporting national sustainable development initiatives.

♦ CEO and Chairperson GEF: Naoko Ishii

♦ Head office: Washington, United States of America

**Cabinet Approval On January 10, 2019**
On 10th January 2019, the Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi took a stock of decisions on various proposals. The details of the cabinet approvals are as follows:

Cabinet approves creation of the post of Vice Chancellor for National Rail & Transport Institute (Deemed to be University) set up in Vadodara, Gujarat

On 10th January 2019, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi chaired the Union Cabinet meeting, which gave its approval to the proposal of creation of the post of Vice Chancellor for India’s first rail and Transportation University, National Rail & Transport Institute (NRTI), Vadodara in Gujarat.

**Key Points:**

- The Vice-Chancellor, who will be the Principal Executive Officer of the institution, shall exercise general supervision and control over the affairs of the institution.

- He shall be mainly responsible for implementation of the decisions of all the authorities of the Institution deemed to be University.

- Besides the institute seeks to forge collaboration with leading international institutions in the areas of faculty and student exchange as well as joint research.

- From 5th September 2018, the institute had started two fully residential undergraduate courses namely, Bachelor of Science in Transportation Technology and DBA in Transportation Management in which as many as 103 students from 20 states of the country took admission.
The NRTI is the country's first railway university and only third such university in the world after Russia and China.

**Cabinet approves setting up of 3 new AIIMS**

On 10th January 2019, the Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, gave its approval for establishment of three more All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) under Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY) to boost healthcare infrastructure in the country.

**Key Points:**
- The place of construction along with the cost of setting up of three new AIIMS are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Cost (in Rs.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vijaynagar, Samba, Jammu</td>
<td>1661 crore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awantipura, Pulwama, Kashmir</td>
<td>1828 crore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajkot, Gujarat</td>
<td>1195 crore</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Besides the cabinet has also approved the creation of one post of Director for each of the above three AIIMS in the basic pay of Rs 2,25,000/- (fixed) plus Non-Practising Allowance (NPA).
- The establishment of the new institutes involve the creation of hospital, teaching block for medical and nursing courses, residential complex and allied facilities and services.
- Each of the newly established AIIMS will add 100 undergraduate (MBBS) seats and 60 B.Sc. (Nursing) seats and each will have 15-20 Super Specialty Departments besides having 750 hospital beds which will include emergency, trauma Beds, AYUSH Beds, private beds and ICU Speciality and Super Speciality beds.
- Thus the new AIIMS would cater around 1500 OPD patients per day and around 1000 IPD patients per month.
- The objective of the project is to establish the new AIIMS as Institutions of National Importance for providing quality tertiary healthcare, medical education, nursing education and research in the Region.

**About Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY):**
- It is a Central Sector Scheme which aims at correcting the imbalances in the availability of affordable tertiary healthcare facilities in different parts of the country in general, and augmenting facilities for quality medical education in the under-served States in particular. The scheme was announced in 2003 and was launched in March 2006.
- PMSSY has two components:
  i. Setting up of AIIMS like Institutions
  ii. Upgradation of Government Medical College Institutions.

**Parliament passes NCTE amendment Bill**

On 3rd January 2019, the Parliament following the approval from the Rajya-Sabha passed a National Council for Teacher Education (Amendment) Bill (NCTE), 2018 to provide retrospective recognition to central and state government funded institutions offering B.Ed and related courses that are not recognized under the NCTE Act.

**Key Points:**
- The NCTE (Amendment) Bill which will be a one-time measure would help over 17,000 students who have obtained B.Ed degrees from those institutions which do not have NCTE approval for the course under the 1993 law.
- 23 state and central universities and colleges offering B.Ed courses were found not recognised by the Council.
- The government would ensure that the quality of institutes offering B.Ed courses is maintained and proposes to start integrated course in B.ED as in Law and other courses from 2020.
- Lok Sabha has already passed this bill on July 23, 2018.
About National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) Act, 1993:
The NCTE Act, 1993 came into force on 1 July 1995 and is applicable throughout the country, except the State of Jammu and Kashmir. The NCTE plans and co-ordinates the development of the teacher education system throughout the country and ensure maintenance of norms and standards in the teacher education system.

Parliament passed the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (Amendment) Bill
On 3rd January 2019, the Parliament passed the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (Amendment) Bill, 2018 that seeks to do away with the no-detention policy in schools.

Key Points:
i. The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (Amendment) Bill, was moved in the Rajya Sabha by Union minister for Human Resources Development Prakash Javadekar and was passed by a voice vote. It is already passed by the Lower House (Lok Sabha) on July 18 2018.

ii. Under current provisions of the Section 16 of the Act, no student can be detained up to class 8th but as per the amendment, it would be left to the States to decide whether to continue the no-detention policy. 25 states have favoured abolishing the no-detention policy.

iii. The bill provides for regular examination in classes V and VIII.

iv. The MHRD Minister assured that no child will be excluded from school in case he or she fails and such children will be provided two-month remedial teaching to perform better in another examination to be conducted by their schools. If the students still do not pass the exam, the state government may decide to detain them.

About Right to Education (RTE) Act:
The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 (RTE Act) provides for free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years.

11 projects to revive mythical Saraswati river approved by Haryana government
On January 2, 2019, 11 projects were approved to revive the mythical Saraswati River at the meeting of Haryana Saraswati Heritage Development Board (HSHDB) headed by Haryana Chief minister Manohar Lal Khattar.

i. The approved projects include:
- The construction of Somb Saraswati barrage,
- Developing storage capacity of Saraswati reservoir to 1475-hectare meters at village Rampur Herian, Rampur Kambian and Chillaur in Haryana,
- Adi Badri dam on Somb river, a tributary of the Yamuna that originates in the Shivalik Hills, in district Yamunanagar,
- Grant-in-aid of Rs 50 lakh annually for carrying out research activities at the Centre of Excellence at Kurukshetra University.
- Construction of waste water treatment plants for recycling of all waste water falling into Saraswati river,
- Construction of RCC divide wall at Saraswati Tirath at Saraswati Nagar.
- Construction of Saraswati Ghat at village Bhaini and Mangna in district Kurukshetra,
- Construction of bridges on river Saraswati at village Ishargarh and Beer Pipli near Pratapgarh in district Kurukshetra,
- Linking of Saraswati river heritage research institute with centre of excellence for research on Saraswati river established at Kurukshetra University.

ii. The construction of Somb Saraswati barrage and Saraswati reservoir would enable the storage of 1,000 hectare metres of water.

iii. The board also approved construction of bridges at different locations and a Saraswati ghat and interlinking of the Markanda River with that of Saraswati, through the Kainthla supply channel.

iv. He also launched a mobile App developed by the Haryana Saraswati Heritage Development Board.

v. He also approved the logo of the Saraswati Heritage Development Board.
Cabinet approved 10 pc quota for economically weaker sections in general category

On January 7, 2019, the Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved 10 pc quota in jobs and educational institutions for economically weaker sections in general category.

i. For the implementation of the quota, Articles 15 and 16 of the Constitution will have to be amended.

About the features:
- This would be availed by those whose annual income is below Rs 8 lakh and have up to five acres of land.
- The quota will be over and above the existing 50 per cent reservation.

About Articles 15 & 16:
- Articles 15, 16 falls under the category of Fundamental Rights in the Part III of the Indian Constitution.
- Article 15 states that the State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them. Also nothing in this article shall prevent the state from making any special provisions for women, children or any socially and educationally backward classes.
- Article 16 guarantees the Equality of opportunity in matters of public employment with no discrimination being done on basis of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth.

Union Cabinet cleared the redrafted Citizenship Amendment Bill

On January 7, 2019, the Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi cleared the redrafted Citizenship Amendment Bill thus providing Indian citizenship to non-Muslims from Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Features of the Bill:
- First introduced in Parliament in 2016, the bill seeks to amend the Citizenship Act 1955.
- It enables grant of Indian nationality to people from minority communities — Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians — from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan after six years of residence in India instead of 12 even if they don't possess any proper document.
- This would, however, nullify the 1985 Assam Accord under which any foreign national, irrespective of religion, who had entered the state after 1971 should be deported.

Central government approved formation of Centre for Classical Language in Tirur, Kerala

On January 5, 2019, the Union Government issued its nod for setting up the Centre for Classical Language at the Thunchath Ezhuthachan Malayalam University in Tirur, Kerala.

i. As per the notification, the state government will enter into an MOU with the Union Ministry of Human Resources Development.

ii. Furthermore, in this regard, the HRD ministry had issued a communication in this regard to the Central Institute of Indian Languages, Mysuru.

iii. The centre is aimed at study and research and other aspects of Malayalam language and its development.

Background:
In August 2013 Malayalam was declared a classical language. In 2016, the state approached the Union Government for setting up the centre

Gehlot approves amendment in Rajasthan judicial service rules

On 29th December, 2018, Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot approved the proposal for amendments in Rule-12 and Rule-17 of the Rajasthan Judicial Service Rules, 2010 after State Cabinet’s meeting held under the chairmanship of Ashok Gehlot.

Key Points:
- As per the Rajasthan Judicial Service(Amendment) Rule 2018, the minimum age limit for general category in Rajasthan Judicial Service has been reduced from 23 to 21 years and maximum age
limit is increased from 35 to 40 years.

ii. The benefit of age exemption has been given to differently-able persons of various classes, including general category, OBC and Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes by 10, 13 and 15 years, respectively.

iii. It has been decided to give 1 per cent reservation to the Backward Classes in the Rajasthan Judicial Service.

**Home Ministry approved UP’s proposal of renaming Allahabad as Prayagraj**

On January 1, 2019, ahead of the ‘Kumbh Mela 2019’, the Union Home Ministry (MHA) approved the Uttar Pradesh government's proposal to rename Allahabad as Prayagraj.

i. MHA had earlier approved the renaming of the British-era railway station Robertsgang as Sonbhadra, Farah Town railway station near Mathura and iconic Mughalsarai junction after Deen Dayal Upadhyay — both in Uttar Pradesh.

ii. The Centre had also approved the renaming of Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport in Mumbai as Chhatrapati Shivaji ‘Maharaj’ International Airport, earlier.

iii. The Tri pura government also got Centre’s approval to change the name of Agartala Airport as Maharaja Bir Bikram Manikya Kishore, the erstwhile ruler of the state.

iv. The Home ministry approves any such proposals of name change after consulting various concerned agencies like Indian Railways, Survey of India, Department of Posts etc.

**Cabinet approves ST status to 6 Assam communities**

On 9th January 2019, Union Cabinet has approved Scheduled Tribe (ST) status to six communities of Assam. The communities that are proposed to be extended ST status include, Koch Rajbongshi, Tai Ahom, Chutiya, Matak, Moran and the tea tribes.

The move came before the centre introduced the Citizenship Amendment Bill, 2019 in Lok Sabha. This amendment bill will give a status to the various tribal people.

**Lok Sabha passes “The DNA Technology (Use and Application) Regulation Bill – 2019”**

On 08th January 2019, the Lok Sabha passed “The DNA Technology (Use and Application) Regulation Bill, 2019” by voice vote after a brief discussion.

The Bill has been formulated recognizing the need for regulation of the use and application of Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA) technology, for establishing identity of missing persons, victims, offenders, under trials and unknown deceased persons.

**Key points**

i. The bill was introduced by Science and Technology Minister Harsh Vardhan. The Atal Bihari Vajpayee government had set up a DNA profiling advisory committee.

ii. The key components of this Bill include establishment of a DNA Regulatory Board and accreditation of DNA laboratories undertaking DNA testing, analysing.

iii. Establishment of the National and Regional DNA Data Banks, as envisaged in the Bill, will assist in forensic investigations.

iv. The Bill will add value in empowering the criminal justice delivery system by enabling the application of DNA evidence, which is considered the gold standard in crime investigations.

**Lok Sabha has passed the Personal Laws (Amendment Bill), 2018**

On 07th January 2019, the Lok Sabha has passed the Personal Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2018. The bill was moved by Minister of State for Law PP Chaudhary. The bill was introduced as various recommendations were made to remove leprosy as a ground for divorce.

**Key points**

i. The bill seeks to remove leprosy as a ground for divorce in five personal laws Hindu Marriage Act(1955), Dissolution of Muslim Marriages Act(1939), Divorce Act(1869), Special Marriage Act(1954) and the Hindu Adoptions and Maintenance Act(1956).
In 2010 the United Nations General Assembly adopted a Resolution on the ‘Elimination of discrimination against persons affected by leprosy and their family members’, which was signed and ratified by India.

The Law Commission of India in its 256th Report recommended the elimination of discrimination against people affected by the disease.

Leprosy is a chronic infectious bacterial disease caused by Mycobacterium leprae. Leprosy mainly affects the skin, the peripheral nerves, mucosal surfaces of the upper respiratory tract and the eyes.

Lok Sabha has passed Citizenship (Amendment) Bill 2019
On 8th January 2019, Citizenship (Amendment) Bill 2019 seeking to provide Indian citizenship to non-Muslims communities from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan was passed in the Lok Sabha.

Key Points:

i. As per the proposed amendment, the persecuted migrants will be eligible to apply for citizenship after due scrutiny and recommendation of district authority and state Government.

ii. Union Home Minister clarified that the Act is not confined to the state of Assam. The present government has taken several measures to implement the Assam Accord.

iii. Government has waived the requirement of Cabinet approval for the Bill, which was introduced in the current session of Parliament.

President of India gives assent to The Constitution (One Hundred and third Amendment) ACT, 2019
On 12th January 2019, The President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind has given his assent to the Constitution (One Hundred and third Amendment) Act, 2019 which grants 10 per cent reservation in jobs and educational institutions to the economically weaker sections in the general category.

Key Points

i. The Act amends Articles 15 and 16 of the Constitution to provide reservation to the economically weaker sections in the general category.

ii. The 10 per cent reservation will be in addition to the existing 50 per cent reservation for the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes (OBC) making the total reservation quota 60%.

iii. Following group of general category people are eligible for the reservation as per the law

- Families with Income below Rs 8 lakh per annum.
- People possessing agricultural land below five acres and residential house below 1000 square feet.
- For Urban areas, people living in residential plot below 100 yards in notified municipality and residential plot below 200 yards in the non-notified municipal areas.

President Kovind approves re-formation of Triple Talaq ordinance
On January 12, 2019, Ministry of Law and Justice announced that President Kovind has promulgated the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Ordinance, 2019. The ordinance is to protect the rights of married Muslim women and criminalise the practice of triple talaq or Talaq-e-Biddat”.

On this occasion, The President also re-promulgated Companies Amendment Ordinance 2019 and Indian Medical Council Amendment Ordinance 2019.

Facts to be Noted:

i. Instant “Triple Talaq” or “Talaq-e-Biddat” is an Islamic practice that allows men to divorce their wives immediately by uttering the word “talaq” (divorce) thrice. The pronouncement can be oral or written, or, in recent times, delivered by electronic means – telephone, SMS, email or social media. The Modi Government formulated a bill named The Muslim Women (Protection Of Rights on Marriage) bill 2017 and was passed in Lok Sabha on December 28th 2017 to protect the rights of married muslim women.

ii. On implementation of this ordinance giving instant triple talaq (talaq-e-biddat) will be illegal and
void and will attract a jail term of three years for the husband. The offence will be cognizable only if the complaint is lodged by the victim wife or her close blood relatives. Also, the offence will be compoundable at the instance of the wife on such terms and conditions as deemed fit by the Magistrate. The offence is also bailable, and Magistrate can grant bail, but only after hearing the wife. On other case, the offence will be cognizable only if the complaint is lodged by the victim wife or her close blood relatives. Also, the offence will be taken on count at the instance of the wife on such terms and conditions as deemed fit by the Magistrate. The offence is also bailable, and Magistrate can grant bail, but only after hearing the wife.

Govt re-promulgates ordinance to amend companies law

On 12th January 2019, the Union Government has re-promulgated the Companies (Amendment) Ordinance, 2019 which aims to amend the companies law to further improve the ease of doing business as well as ensure better compliance levels.

Key Points:

i. The government had first issued the ordinance in November but it would have ceased to be operational from January 21. The Lok Sabha has already passed the bill on 4th January 2019, but it is still pending in the Rajya Sabha so the government has to re-promulgate ordinance to make amendments to the Companies Act, 2013.

ii. The ordinance that has amended 16 sections of the Act, are aimed at reducing the burden of case load on special courts by over 60 per cent, bringing down applicable penalties for small companies and enhancing the jurisdiction of Regional Director for compounding offences.

iii. Now the jurisdiction of 16 types of corporate offences would be shifted from the special courts to in-house adjudication thus enhancing the scope of in-house adjudication from 18 sections at present to 34 Sections of the Act.

iv. The amended provisions also empower the central government to allow certain companies to have a different financial year instead of being determined by the National Company Law Tribunal.

v. The amendments through the ordinance were effected on the basis of recommendations made by a 10 Member Committee set up by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) in July 2018 and headed by the Secretary of Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Injeti Srinivas

Cabinet Approval on January 16, 2019

On 16th January 2019, the Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi cleared proposals from various ministries. The details of cabinet decisions are as follows:

Cabinet approves regularisation of Pay Scales of below Board Level Executives in NHPC Ltd., North East Electric Power Corporation, THDC India Ltd. and SJVN Ltd. w.e.f. 1.1.97

On 16th January 2019, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi chaired the Union Cabinet meeting which has given its approval for regularization of Pay scales of 5,254 executives in four state-run hydro power companies: National Hydroelectric Power Corporation Ltd. (NHPC), North East Electric Power Corporation (NEEPCO), THDC India Ltd. (formerly Tehri Hydro Development Corporation Ltd.) and Satluj Jal Vidhyut Nigam Ltd. (SJVN).

Key Points:

• The decision to regularize the pay scale came in order to remove the anomalies that existed in the pay scales of executives of the four PSUs since 1st January 1997 due to revision of pay scales of unionized category of workmen/non-executives in line with the NTPC/oil sector within the organizations.

• Due to this the pay scales of workmen and supervisors were higher than the pay scales of executives in the E-1 grade.

• With this approval, the order of the power ministry regarding pay scales to be adopted by the hydro unit and dated April 4, 2006 and September 1, 2006, would be regularised.

• Executives of the power units enrolled before January 1, 2007 will benefit by this approval.
• The total expenditure to the tune of **Rs. 323 crore** will be incurred for the regularization of pay scales.

**Cabinet approves Revised Cost of Estimates (RCE) for 13 new Central Universities in the States of Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir (Two), Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu, set up under Central Universities Act, 2009**

Prime Minister **Shri Narendra Modi** chaired Union Cabinet has given its approval for an expenditure of **Rs.3639.32 core** for setting up of the **13** new Central Universities the work of which will be completed within a period of **36 months**.

**Key Points:**

- Besides the Cabinet has also given ex-post facto approval for an amount of **Rs.1474.65 crore**, being the amount spent over and above the earlier Cabinet approval of Rs.3000 crore for these Central Universities.
- The total estimated cost of the construction of these universities would be **Rs 8,113 crore**.
- The decision will increase access to higher education besides minimizing the regional imbalances in educational facilities. It will also encourage other Universities to improve their standards.
- The new Central Universities which were established under Central Universities Act, 2009 are located in in the States of Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir (Two), Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu.

**Cabinet approves expenditure sanction for Integrated E-filing and Centralized Processing Centre 2.0 Project**

On 16th January 2019, Prime Minister **Shri Narendra Modi** chaired Union Cabinet has given its approval for development of the next generation income tax filing and processing centre i.e., **Integrated E-filing &Centralized Processing Center 2.0 Project** of the **Income Tax Department**.

**Key Points:**

- The total cost of the project will be **Rs 4,241.97 crore** and will be implemented by IT major **Infosys** which has been selected after the bidding process.
- The project is expected to be completed in **18 months** and will be launched after 3 months of testing.
- The new system will help in improving tax payers’ awareness and education through continuous engagement besides accelerating the process of returns and issue of refunds to the tax payers’ bank account directly. This will ensures the continuation of the Department’s goal towards business transformation through technology.
- The processing time for **Income Tax Return (ITR)** which at present is **63 days** will come down to **1 day** after implementation of the project.
- Furthermore the Cabinet also sanctioned a consolidated cost of **Rs 1,482.44 crore** for the existing **CPC-ITR 1.0** project up to **2018-19**.

**Cabinet approves recapitalisation of Export-Import Bank of India**

On 16th January 2019, the Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister **Shri Narendra Modi** approved recapitalization of **Export-Import Bank of India (EXIM Bank)** to the tune of **6,000 crore** rupees to expand its business.

**Key Points:**

- The bank will be infused with **Rs 4,500 crore** before March 2019 and **Rs 1,500 crore** in the next fiscal by Issuance of **Recapitalization Bonds** by Government of India which will be in line with those issued to Public Sector Banks.
- The cabinet has also approved to increase in the authorized capital of Exim Bank from **10,000 crore** to **20,000 crore** rupees.
The infusion of capital into Exim Bank which is the principal export credit agency for India will enable it to augment capital adequacy and support Indian exports with enhanced ability.

Besides it will also support Indian textile industries and give thrust to initiatives like changes in Concessional Finance Scheme (CFS) and likelihood of new letters of credit (LoCs) to be issued in future in view of India’s active foreign policy and strategic intent.

**Cabinet approves setting up of crude oil pipeline from Paradip to Numaligarh and Product pipeline from Numaligarh to Siliguri**

On 16th January 2019, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, approved a capacity expansion plan for Numaligarh Refinery (NRL) in Assam from the existing 3 million metric tonne per annum (MMTPA) to 9 MMTPA.

**Key Points:**

- Besides the Cabinet has also approved setting up of a crude oil pipeline from Paradip to Numaligarh and a product pipeline from Numaligarh to Siliguri.
- The total project cost is estimated at Rs. 22,594 crore and it will be financed by a mix of debt, equity and a Viability Gap Fund (VGF).
- A debt of Rs. 15,102 crore will be raised by NRL which will also deploy Rs. 2,307 crore via internal accruals. The promoters, Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd, Oil India Ltd and Government of Assam will contribute to equity.
- Besides the central government will provide Rs 1,020 crore viability gap funding for the project.
- The project is to be completed within 48 months, after approval and receipt of statutory clearances.
- The expansion of the refinery will meet the deficit of petroleum products in the North-East.

**Union Home Minister approves Task Force report on Space Technology in Border Management**

On 17th January 2019, Rajnath Singh, the Union Home Minister has approved the report of Task Force created by Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) to identify areas for use of Space Technology in improving Border Management.

**Key Points:**

i. The task force was headed by the Joint Secretary Border Management (BM) and included members from BSF, Department of Space and BM Division, MHA.

ii. The task force consulted all stakeholders including Border Guarding Forces (BGFs), ISRO, National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS) and Ministry of Defence (MoD) to finalise the report.

iii. The space technology will now be used in the following areas of Border Management:

- Island development
- Border Security
- Communication and Navigation
- GIS and Operations Planning System
- Border Infrastructure Development

iv. A short, medium and long term plan has also been proposed for implementation of the project in a time bound manner, in five years in close coordination with ISRO and MoD.

v. The Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS) based GPS will provide navigation facilities for operational parties in high altitude, remote and difficult borders and Naxal areas.

vi. Furthermore deployment of Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) in remote areas will be also coordinated by satellite communications.

vii. For implementation of ground segment and network infrastructure including establishment of Archival Facility, the MHA has designated the Border Security Force.

viii. The project which will strengthen island and border security and facilitate development of infrastructure in border/island areas will be implemented by MHA with the assistance of Department of Space.
Cabinet Approvals on 23rd January, 2019

On 23rd January 2019, the Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi took a stock of decisions on various proposals. The details of the cabinet approvals are as follows:

Cabinet approves extension of Delhi Metro corridor from Dilshad Garden to New Bus Adda Ghaziabad

On 23rd January 2019, the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi led Union Cabinet approved the extension of 9.41-km-long Delhi Metro corridor from Dilshad Garden to New Bus Adda in Ghaziabad. The extension will form the second metro line in Ghaziabad and the first metro link connecting the interiors of the city.

Key Points:

i. The extended metro corridor will in the form of elevated lines and will comprise eight stations: Shahid Nagar, Raj Bagh, Rajendra Nagar, Shyam Park, Mohan Nagar, Arthala, Hindon River Station and New Bus Adda.

ii. The newly approved line is the extension of the presently operational Dilshad Garden-Rithala corridor (Line 1) also called the Red Line and after the opening of the new section, the total span of Red Line will become 34.50 km.

iii. The total completion cost of the project is Rs 1781.21 crore and the centre had approved contribution of Rs 324.87 crore as central financial assistance for extension.

iv. The project will be implemented by the existing Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) of the Government of India and Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (GNCTD) i.e., Delhi Metro Rail Corporation Ltd. (DMRC).

Cabinet approves creation of the National Bench of the Goods and Services Tax Appellate Tribunal (GSTAT)

On 23rd January 2019, the Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi approved the creation of the National Bench of the Goods and Services Tax Appellate Tribunal (GSTAT) to ensure better resolution of GST-related disputes. The National Bench would be set up in New Delhi.

Key Points:

i. The National Bench of the Appellate Tribunal will be presided over by the President and shall consist of one technical member (Centre) and one technical member (State).

ii. The main objective to create the bench is to fast-track the process of GST-related dispute resolution and hear appeals related to disputes between states, as well as disputes between the Centre and states.

iii. The creation of the National Bench of GSTAT is based on the recommended by the GST Council and would incur an amount of Rs 92.50 lakh as one-time expenditure, besides the recurring expenditure of Rs 6.86 crore per annum.

iv. The newly created Goods and Services Tax Appellate Tribunal will act as the forum of second appeal in GST laws and will address the appeals against the orders in first appeals issued by the Appellate Authorities under the Central and State GST Acts.

v. The GSTAT has been created by utilising the Section 109 of Chapter XVIII of the CGST Act which empowers the Central Government to constitute, on the recommendation of Council, an Appellate Tribunal for hearing appeals against the orders passed by the Appellate Authority or the Revisional Authority.

About Goods and Services Tax Network (GSTN):

It is a non-Government, private limited company and was incorporated on March 28, 2013. The Government of India holds 24.5% equity in GSTN and all States and UTs together hold another 24.5%. Balance 51% equity is with non-Government financial institutions. The Company has been set up primarily to provide IT infrastructure and services to the Central and State Governments, tax payers and other stakeholders for implementation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST). The Authorised Capital of the company is Rupees ten crore only.

♦ Chairman: Dr Ajay Bhushan Pandey
♦ CEO: Prakash Kumar
**UttarPradesh Government approves construction of World’s longest expressway-Ganga expressway to connect Prayagraj with Western UP**

On 29th January 2019, UP government approved construction of world’s longest expressway between Prayagraj and Meerut with the aim of connecting Prayagraj with Western UP. It will have a length of 600 km.

**Key Points**

i. Ganga expressway will start from Meerut and will touch Amroha-Bulandshahr-Budaun-Shahjahanpur-Kannauj-Unnao-Rae Bareli-Pratapgarh and end at Prayagraj.

ii. The estimated cost of the project will be around Rs. 36,000 Crore on a stretch of 6,556 hectares of land.

iii. Another expressway project is upcoming for UP namely the Budelkhand expressway. It is a four lane access controlled highway.

iv. Budelkhand expressway will start from Jhansi and passes through Chitrakoot, Banda, Hamirpur, Auraiya, Jalaun, Etawah, Naseempur and joins the Agra-Lucknow Expressway. The expressway will pass through 182 villages and will have a total length of 296.26 km.

v. It amounts to Rs. 640 crores to make payment to the land owners. The Industrial Development Department issued order for the land acquirement.

vi. This was decided in the Cabinet Meeting led by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath in Kumbh, which is the second Cabinet Meeting held outside the Capital of UP. The First meeting which held outside the cabinet took place in the year 1962 in Nainital led by then Chief Minister Govind Vallabh Pant.

**Schemes**

**Government Extends CLSS for MIG scheme till 31st march, 2020**

On 31st December 2018, the Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs headed by Minister of State Hardeep S. Puri, extended the Credit-Linked Subsidy Scheme (CLSS) for Middle Income Group (MIG) Scheme by another 12 months till March 31, 2020.

**Key Points:**

i. Around 93,007 beneficiaries have been covered till date and have already received Rs 1,960.45 crore of subsidy in the scheme.

ii. The scheme covers two income segments in the MIG viz. Rs 6,00,001 to Rs 12,00,000 per annum for MIG-I and Rs 12,00,001 to Rs 18,00,000 per annum for MIG-II.

iii. The dwelling unit carpet area to avail the benefit of the scheme include ‘upto 160 sq.m’ and ‘upto 200 sq.m’ for MIG-I and MIG-II respectively.

iv. In the MIG-I, an interest subsidy of 4 per cent has been provided for loan amounts up to Rs 9 lakh, while in MIG-II, an interest subsidy of 3 per cent has been provided for loan amount of Rs 12 lakh.

v. To become eligible for the scheme, a beneficiary family should not own a pucca house (an all weather dwelling unit) either in his/her name or in the name of any member of his/her family in any part of India.

**Background of the Scheme:**

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on 31.12.2016 announced the commencement of a new Credit Linked Subsidy Scheme for the Middle Income Group (CLSS for MIG). The purpose of the scheme was to meet the aspirations of young professionals and entrepreneurs of Middle Class Segment seeking housing loans for acquisition/construction of houses (including re-purchase) from Banks, Housing Finance Companies and other such notified institutions.

**Govt Releases 6-Crore LPG Connections under PMUY**

On 2nd January 2019, the government gave out the 6-crore free cooking gas (LPG) connection as the scheme to make available cleaner fuel in every household kitchens under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY).

**Key points**

i. Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu handed over papers for an LPG connection to Jasmina...
Khatoon from Shivpark, Khanpur in New Delhi to mark the 6 crore LPG connections under PMUY.
ii. Under the scheme, the government provides a subsidy of Rs 1,600 to state-owned fuel retailers for every free LPG gas connection that they give to poor households.
iii. The 5-croreth free LPG connection under the scheme was given to Takrdiran, a resident of Sangam Vihar of the national capital, in August 2018 by Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan.
iv. It had covered almost 90% of the Population which is far higher than the 55% of the Population in May, 2014.

About Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY)
i. PMUY was launched in May 2016 with tagline of Swachh Indhan, Behtar Jeevan and a target to give 5 crore connections by March 2019. The target was later raised to 8 crore connections by 2021.
ii. PMUY is implemented by Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas headed by the Cabinet Minister Dharmendra Pradhan.
iii. PMUY was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Ballia, Uttar Pradesh with total expenditure of Rs.8000 crore. The launch is followed by launch of the scheme in Dahod in Gujarat.
iv. Beneficiaries will receive direct LPG subsidy through PAHAL (Pratyaksha Hastaantarit Laabh) digital payment scheme.

Hundred percent household electrification achieved in 25 states under SAUBHAGYA scheme:
 Ministry of Power
On December 31, 2018, the Minister of State (IC) for Power and New & Renewable Energy Shri RK Singh announced that 25 states have achieved 100 percent household electrification under Centre’s ‘Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana’ (Saubhagyay).

i. The Government with the support of State Power Departments and DISCOMs have already connected about 2.39 Crore households since launch of scheme
ii. Only about 10.48 Lakh households are left to be electrified in 4 States viz., Assam, Rajasthan, Meghalaya and Chhattisgarh.
iii. The highest volume of electrification was done in the State of Uttar Pradesh with 74.4 Lakh willing households being electrified in all of its 75 districts.

Other News:
i. Government of Uttar Pradesh launched a special campaign in all parts of the State to identify any left out un-electrified households and to provide electricity connections to such households.
ii. Under the campaign, a special vehicle ‘Saubhagya Rath’, is moving around in villages/towns to enable electrification of the left-out villages.
iii. Furthermore, a helpline number of 1912 has been activated for the left-out households to avail the facility.

About Saubhagyay Scheme:
♦ Under Ministry of Power.
♦ Purpose: to achieve the goal of universal household electrification in the country by 31st March 2019.
♦ The total outlay of the project: Rs. 16, 320 crore.
♦ The Rural Electrification Corporation Limited (REC) was the nodal agency for the operationalisation of the scheme throughout the country.
♦ Website: http://saubhagyay.gov.in/

Encouraging farmers to enrol farmers for the Atal Solar Krishi Pump Yojana: Maharashtra govt
On January 5, 2019, Maharashtra Government announced distribution of free sops to encourage farmers to enrol in the Atal Solar Krishi Pump Yojana.
i. The things included: two LED bulbs, a DC fan and a mobile charging socket.

About Atal Solar Krishi Pump Yojana (ASKP):
- Launched in October 2018, it aims to reduce losses due to non-payment of electricity bills and also promote solar energy.
Farmers with less than five acres will have to pay 5 per cent of the cost of a 3 HP solar pump while farmers with more than five acres will get a 5 HP solar pump and the sops.

It would provide subsidy of up to 95% on solar agriculture pumpsets.

Also around 1 lakh solar pumps were distributed to farmers to irrigate 14,000 Ha land.

The Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Co Ltd (Msedcl) is the implementing agency.

**Andhra CM Chandrababu Naidu unveils schemes for marginalized Brahmins**

On 4th January 2019, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu unveiled various welfare scheme for the marginalized and economically backward Brahmins through AP Brahmin Welfare Corporation such as distribution of Cars to the Unemployed Brahmin youths, loans and subsidies.

**Key Points**

i. Brahmin youths who had undergone training as drivers were given Maruti Suzuki Swift Dzire for the first time.

ii. 30 cars were distributed on 4th January to the Brahmin youths. Youth bore 10% of the total on-road cost the diesel run cars.

iii. Government has started at least half dozen schemes for Brahmins and around 10000 poor Brahmins have been given loans and subsidies.

iv. Andhra Pradesh is the first state of the country which has established a Brahmin Corporation which aims to help poor people of Brahmin families by providing financial assistance for education, coaching, entrepreneurship, skill development and welfare and culture.

**Zero percent interest for loans upto Rs. 3 lakhs for Self Help Groups (SHGs) under the Mission Shakti scheme: Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik**

On January 5, 2019, Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik announced interest-free loans of up to Rs.3 lakh for six lakh women self-help groups (WSHGs) benefitting about 70 lakh women in Odisha.

i. This was announced at the ‘Mission Shakti’ convention attended by about 50,000 women.

ii. In the convention, the chief minister did the following:

- He distributed financial assistance of Rs. 3,000 each to six lakh WSHGs to digitally empower women.
- Launched a scheme to distribute Rs. 15,000 seed money per group to three lakh new self-help groups.
- He also handed over revolving fund of Rs. 25 lakh to 338 block federations.
- Also announced incentives of Rs. 500 per month for anganwadi workers and Rs.200 for helpers.

iii. Also the Odisha government decided to build ‘Mission Shakti Home’ in each gram panchayat across the state, as a part of ‘Mission Shakti’ initiative.

**Background:**
The ‘Mission Shakti’ programme was launched in 2001.

**West Bengal quit Ayushman Bharat scheme due to misrepresentation on official communication**

On January 10, 2019, Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee announced exit of West Bengal from the Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojna due to the use of PM’s picture in the official poster of the centre-state joint scheme.

i. According to the announcement, the **states** are supposed to bear **40%** of the project cost, while the **Centre** will foot **60%** of the bill.

ii. Furthermore, the centre had unilaterally changed the scheme to Ayushman Bharat- Pradhan Mantri Jan Aarogya Yojana in spite of agreed efforts to retain the state sponsored health scheme name: SwasthyaSathi which was launched in 2016.

iii. Thus, West Bengal joined the league of states of Telangana, Kerala, Odisha, and Delhi which have...
opted out of the scheme for varied reasons.

**About Ayushman Bharat:**
- Launched: April 2018.
- Other names: PM Jan-Arogya Yojana, National Health Protection Scheme.
- Target: 10.74 crore poor families to get benefit of Rs. 5 lakh per family per year.
- 1st Health centre launched at Bijapur, Chhattisgarh in April 14, 2018.
- CEO: Dr. Indu Bhushan.
- Implementing authority: National Health Authority (NHA).

**Cabinet approves re-declaration of triple talaq ordinance**

On January 10, 2019, The Union Cabinet approved the re-issuance of an ordinance making the practice of instant **triple talaq** a criminal offence. The earlier ordinance is to expire on **January 22, 2019**.

**Points to be noted:**

i. **Instant Talaq** or **“Talaq-e-Biddat”** is an Islamic practice that allows men to divorce their wives immediately by uttering the word **“talaq” (divorce) thrice**. The pronouncement could be oral or written, or, in recent times, delivered by electronic means – telephone, SMS, email or social media. The Modi Government formulated a bill named **The Muslim Women (Protection Of Rights on Marriage) bill 2017** and was passed in Lok Sabha on December 28th, 2017.

ii. An ordinance has a validity of **six months**. But from the day a session begins, it has to be replaced by a bill which should be passed by Parliament within **42 days (six weeks)**, or it gets worthless.

iii. A fresh bill to make the practice of triple talaq among Muslims a offence was introduced in the Lok Sabha on December 17, 2018 to replace the ordinance issued in September. The lower house later gave its approval to the bill. But due to lack of majority, the bill got a strong opposition, when it was tabled for consideration in the upper house. It is now pending its approval.

iv. According to this law, giving instant triple talaq **(talaq-e-biddat)** will be illegal and void and will attract a jail term of **three years for the husband**.

v. The Government is very keen to pass this bill and is ready enough to make an another move during the **short budget session** which to begin on **January 31, 2019**.

**Four more projects of Rs. 190.46 crore sanctioned under Swadesh Darshan and PRASHAD schemes of M/o Tourism**

On 11th January 2019, Four new projects for **Rs. 190.46 Crores** under the tourism infrastructure development schemes, **Swadesh Darshan** and **PRASHAD** (Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual, Heritage Augmentation Drive) was launched by Ministry of Tourism in the states of **Meghalaya, Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh**.

**Details of Sanctioned projects**

i. The Ministry of Tourism has sanctioned the project ‘**Development of West Khasi Hills (Nongkhlaw-Krem Tirot – Khudoi & Kohmang Falls – Khri River- Mawthadraishan, Shillong), Jaintia Hills (Krang Suri Falls- Shyrmand- Iooksi), Garo Hills (Nokrek Reserve, Katta Beel, Siju Caves)**’ in **Meghalaya** for Rs. 84.95 crore under **North East Circuit** of Swadesh Darshan Scheme.

ii. Under the **Spiritual Circuit** of Swadesh Darshan Scheme, the ministry has sanctioned project of **Rs. 21.16 Crore** for the development of Gorakhnath Temple (Gorakhpur), Devipattan Temple (Balrampur) and Vatvashni Temple (Domariyaganj).

iii. Under the **PRASHAD scheme**, the Ministry has sanctioned the project ‘**Development of Govardhan**’ which includes Govardhan Parikrama Marg, Kusum Sarовар, Chandra Sarовар and Manasi Ganga in **Mathura** in **Uttar Pradesh** for **Rs. 39.74 Crores**.

iv. Under the **PRASHAD Scheme**, The Ministry of Tourism also sanctioned the project ‘**Development of Pilgrimage Amenities at Somnath – Phase II**’ for **Rs. 44.59 Crores**.

**About Swadesh Darshan Scheme**

i. It was launched in 2014-15 by Union Tourism Ministry with objective to develop theme-based tourist circuits in the country.

ii. Under this scheme, 13 thematic circuits have been identified for development.
iii. Tourism Ministry has sanctioned 74 projects worth Rs. **5997.47 crore** to 31 states and Union Territories under this scheme.

iv. Shri. Alphons Kannanthanam, the Minister of State for Tourism.

About PRASHAD Scheme

i. Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual, Heritage Augmentation Drive (PRASAD) was launched in 2014-15 by Union Ministry of Tourism.

ii. The number of sites under PRASAD is **41 in 25 states**.

**Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik launched a new scheme ’Ama Ghare LED’ to distribute free led bulbs**

On 11th January 2019, Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik launched the ‘Ama Ghare LED’ scheme, under which about 95 lakh families in the State will each get four LED bulbs free of cost.

**Key Points:**

i. The scheme in which the LED bulbs (9-watt each) will be distributed to the beneficiaries registered under the National Food Security Act (NFSA) and the State Food Security Scheme (SFSS) was launched during the ‘Ama Gaon, Ama Bikash’ programme.

ii. Distribution of the bulbs will be started through the PEETHA (Peoples Empowerment – Enabling Transparency and Accountability of Odisha Initiatives) schemes on January 15.

iii. The scheme will be implemented by Odisha Power Transmission Corporation Limited (OPTCL) and the bulbs will be distributed through camps to be held during 15th to 20th of every month and through the PDS outlets across the State.

iv. The beneficiaries will have to produce their bio-metric authentication to avail benefits under the scheme.

v. The ‘Ama Ghare LED’ project, which requires about 3.8 crore LED bulbs for distribution, will help curb high-watt consumption.

**Sikkim CM launched ‘One Family, One Job’ scheme in Rojgar Mela 2019 to give one state government job to one family**

On January 12, 2019, Sikkim Chief Minister Pawan Kumar Chamling launched the ‘One Family One Job’ scheme, under which for every family one government job has been allotted, in Gangtok.

New recruits were taken for Group C and Group D posts in 12 departments.

i. As part of the scheme, a “Rojgar Mela” (employment fair) was organised at the Paljor stadium in Gangtok, where over 12,000 unemployed youths, from 32 constituencies, were handed out appointment letters.

ii. Letters were given to families, by the Department of Personnel, which do not have a government job.

iii. He also announced that over 25,000 already employed but unregularised government employees would also be subsequently regularised within 2019.

iv. Thus, Sikkim became the first state in the country to carry out such a programme for the people entitling them to state government employee benefits.

**Background:**

CM Chamling is the longest serving CM of the Independent India.

**MP CM launches Rs 50,000 cr farm loan waiver scheme ’Jai Kisan Rin Mukti Yojana**

On 15th January 2019, “Jai Kisan Rin Mukti Yojana” scheme was launched by Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shri. Kamal Nath. It is **Rs 50,000 crore** farm loan waiver scheme for farmers. The loan waiver forms could be submitted till February 5 and farmers would start getting the benefits from February 22.

**Key points**

i. On 5th January 2019, the state cabinet decided to waive crop loans of 55 lakh small and marginal farmers in the state. The eligibility cut-off date has been extended to December 12, 2018 from March 31, 2018.

ii. Only those farmers who have not registered themselves to pay GST and income tax can avail benefits
under this schemes.

iii. Earlier former Chief Minister Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan also launched similar scheme named 'Bhavantar Yojana'.

**Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik announced extension of free health services under Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana**

On 17th January 2019, Odisha Chief Minister, Shri Naveen Patnaik announced the extension of free health services under Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana (BSKY) to all medical colleges and hospitals of Odisha from 1st February 2019.

**Key Points**

i. Earlier the free health services under Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana also known cashless care were available to all at sub-centres in villages and district headquarters hospitals.

ii. Under the scheme, all the patients irrespective of APL or BPL category will be eligible to avail the free health services at government medical colleges and hospitals.

iii. An Additional provision of over Rs 100 crore was made for this scheme by state government from its budget.

**About Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana (BSKY)**

BSKY was launched on 15th August 2018 by Odisha Government. This scheme provide free medical services to all at government colleges and hospital irrespective of the category of the patients without any requirement of income, residence or any other document. The scheme received an overwhelming response and till now over 2.25 crore people have availed free treatment under this scheme.

**Odisha CM hiked Rs.200 per month under Madhu Babu Pension Yojana scheme**

On January 19, 2019, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik announced in a video conference on “Ama Gaon, Ama Bikash” a hike of Rs 200 per month in the social security pension under Madhu Babu Pension Yojana (MBPY)

**Key points to be noted**

i. The state government launched Madhu Babu Pension Yojana on January 1, 2008, by merging two pension schemes – Old Age Pension and Odisha Disability Pension schemes.

ii. The Madhu Babu Pension Yojana is a pension scheme introduced in the Indian State of Odisha with the objective of providing financial assistance to the destitute elderly and destitute differently abled persons in the state.

iii. According to the new change, the elderly persons aged over 60 years would get a revised old age pension of Rs 500 per month as against Rs 300 and those who are more than 80 years old, the pension would be Rs 700 per month instead of Rs 500 per month and the enhanced pension will come into effect from February 15, 2019.

iv. Unmarried women above 30 years and belonging to a below poverty level family or with individual income below Rs 24,000 per year are also going to benefit from the hike.

**Prime Minister launches Pravasi Teerth Darshan Yojana**

On 22nd January 2019, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched Pravasi Teerth Darshan Yojana in New Delhi. Under this scheme a group of Indian origin currently in different nations will be taken to all religious places in India twice a year.

**Key Points:**

i. Eligibility criteria for the scheme is the person should be Indian origin and aged between 45 to 65. The group will be selected out of them with first preference given to people from 'Girmitiya Countries’ such as Mauritius, Fiji, Suriname, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica.

ii. First batch with 40 members are at Pravasi Bharatiya Divas and will begin their tour from there.

iii. Religious places of all major religious in India are included in the scheme and Government will bear all the expenses including the airfare from their country of residence.

iv. Prime Minister Modi also inaugurated Centers of Excellence at Deen Dayal Hastkala Sanku. He also

**Madhya Pradesh launched employment scheme “Yuva Swabhiman Yojana” for urban youth**
On January 26, 2019, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath launched ‘Yuva Swabhiman Yojana’ for youths of the weak section in urban areas of Madhya Pradesh.

**About the scheme:**
1. The scheme was launched in Chhindwara, Madhya Pradesh.
2. It aims to provide employment to the youth belonging to the weaker section of the society mainly in urban areas of the state.
3. Under this scheme, **100 days of employment** will be provided.
4. Registration of interested urban poor youth under this scheme will start on **February 10, 2019**.
5. Apart from this 100 days employment, they will also be given skill training by the government.

**66.6 lakh homes have been completed under PMAY-G**
The Ministry of Rural Development in partnership with states has completed **1.37 crore** rural homes under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Gramin (PMAY –G) and Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY) since April 2014. The Table Below shows the number of houses completed till now.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Rural Homes Completed (IAY + PMAY-G)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014-15</td>
<td>11.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-16</td>
<td>18.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-17</td>
<td>32.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017-18</td>
<td>44.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018-19</td>
<td>30.45 (may reach 65 lakh by March 31, 2019)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key Points**
1. There is a quantum jump in provision for rural housing. In 2014-15 only 12 lakh houses were made but in 2018-19 65 lakh houses are expected to be made.
2. PMAY-G was launched by Prime Minister, Narendra Modi on November 20, 2016 and till now around 66.6 lakh homes are made under this scheme.

**Maharashtra Government launched Special Scheme to Curb infant deaths**
On 30th January 2019, A special scheme is launched by Maharashtra government with an aim to curb infant deaths. Child development Minister Pankaja Munde distributed baby care kits to the children born in Primary health centre and Government Hospitals.

**Key Points**
1. The baby care kit contains a blanket, a small mattress, a towel, a thermometer, baby oil, shampoo, toys, nail cutter, gloves, socks, among other items. The kit costs around Rs.2000
2. The scheme is applicable only for first child of the parents. It will be beneficial for around 4 lakh women across Maharashtra.
3. The government allocated Rs.20cr for the scheme. Similar scheme launched by Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Tamil Nadu were successful in bringing down the infant mortality.
4. Infant mortality is the death of young children under one year. India is among the countries having highest number of deaths among newborns.

**Launches & Inaugurations**

**Veer Savarkar International Airport in Port Blair declared as an authorized Immigration Check post**
On January 3, 2019, Information, Public Relations and Tourism Division of Andaman and Nicobar Administration announced that the Veer Savarkar International Airport in Port Blair will be an authorized Immigration Check post.
i. Superintendent of Police (CID), Andaman and Nicobar Police has been appointed as the ‘Civil Authority’ for the purpose of the immigration check post.

ii. This would work as an entry into/exit point from India with valid travel documents for all classes of passengers.

iii. This opened up the Port Blair Airport for direct international flight and immigration facilities.

**PM inaugurated 12 projects worth over Rs. 1500 crore on his a day visit to Imphal, Manipur**

On January 4, 2019, On the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi's one day visit to Imphal, Manipur, he inaugurated 12 projects worth over Rs. 1500 crore.

i. Addressing a public gathering, he inaugurated 12 projects consisting of eight key development projects related to water supply and tourism and four schemes in Manipur. These include:
   
   - An Integrated Check Post at Moreh, Imphal, at a cost of over Rs. 125 crore, that will facilitate custom clearance, foreign currency exchange, immigration clearance etc,
   - The Dolaithabi Barrage Project which completed at a total cost of Rs. 500 crore,
   - the FCI Food Storage Godown at Sawombung that had begun in December 2016,
   - He dedicated to the nation the 400 kV Double Circuit Silchar-Imphal Line that was made at a cost of Rs. 700 crore.
   - A buffer water reservoir at Ukhrul was mentioned which would be helping the citizens till 2035,
   - He inaugurated improved and upgraded water supply for Churachandpur zone which will help the citizens till 2031,
   - Eco-tourism complex at Thangapat in Kangpokpi district,
   - Integrated tourist destination in Noney district and
   - The water supply scheme at JNV, Lambui and its surrounding villages
   - Infrastructure development of Dhanamanjuri University in Imphal West district,
   - Flood lighting of hockey stadium and the main stadium at the Khuman Lampak Sports Complex in Imphal East district and
   - AstroTurf laying in Langjing Achouba of Imphal West district.

ii. He acknowledged the better road rail and air connectivity that is being provided to the North East, with the overall vision of “Transformation through Transportation.”

iii. He also acknowledged Manipur's contribution in Swachh Bharat, sanitation, and development of the aspirational district of Chandel.

iv. Prime Minister Narendra Modi also addressed Vijay Samkalp Samavesh at Silchar in Southern Assam. This was his first visit to Barak Valley as Prime Minister.

**Other News:**

The Prime Minister has travelled to the North-East 30 times in the last 4.5 years.

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

On 4th January 2019, The Minister of state (I/C), Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Hardeep S Puri launched the fourth edition of annual cleanliness of Urban India known as “Swachh survekshan 2019”,

**Key Points**

i. The Survey will be conducted across 4237 towns and cities between 4th January to 28th January 2019 by independent third party.

ii. The survey is completely paperless and digital and will be completed in a record time of 28 days. For the first time the survey will be conducted without giving any prior information.

iii. Data will be collected from 4 broad sources which are Service Level Progress, Direct Observation,Citizens feedback and Certification.
iv. MoHUA has introduced an important component of Certification (Star Rating of the Garbage Free cities and open defecation free Protocols) on two different aspects:
   - The cities would be evaluated on the basis of the star rating achieved by them as per the protocol of MoHUA will has 12 parameters.
   - 5% weightage has been allotted in the swachh Survekshan to Open Defecation Free (ODF) Certification.

v. The Survey will contain 5000 marks in Swachh Survekshan 2019 as compared to 4000 marks of Swachh Survekshan 2018.

vi. 7 cities which are Indore, Ujjain, Khargone, Shahganj, Rajnandgaon, Ambikapur and Bhilai have been already given ODF++ certification and 35 cities have been given ODF+.

vii. Mysuru and Indore had been ranked as the No. 1 city in Swachh Survekshan 2016, 2017 and 2018 respectively.

Union Minister for HRD Shri Prakash Javadekar inaugurates 27th Edition of New Delhi World Book Fair in Pragati Maidan with Sharjah as Guest of Honour

On 5th January 2019, the 27th edition of the New Delhi World Book Fair (NDWBF), which has the UAE’s third largest emirate Sharjah as its 2019 guest of honour, inaugurated in Pragati Maidan, New Delhi. The event will conclude on 13th January.

Key Points:

i. To promote the idea of inclusive learning through a series of exhibitions of audio, silent, tactile and Braille books, the Book Fair’s theme is “Books for Readers with Special Needs”.

ii. It is co-organised by the National Book Trust (NBT) and the India Trade Promotion Organisation (ITPO).

iii. The nine-day-long fair, was inaugurated by Human Resource Development Minister Prakash Javadekar and H.E. Sheikh Fahim Bin Sultan Al Qasimi, Executive Chairman of the Department of Government Relations, United Arab Emirates. Besides a NBT calendar was also launched during the first day of the event based on the theme ‘Readers with Special Needs’.

iv. During the fair, International Disability Film Festival was organized for the first time where over 45 documentaries from 27 countries.

v. Secretary, Ministry of I&B Shri Amit Khare released seven books of Publications Division, Ministry of I&B during the World Book Fair. The list of 7 books are

1. Bapu ke ashirwaad – The book contains original handwritten thoughts and messages of Mahatma Gandhi and it is dedicated to the importance of thoughts and their possible impact in dealing with every-day life’s tribulations.

2. 2500 years of Buddhism – The book gives an inclusive account of Buddhism in last 2500 years and its foreword is written by India’s 2nd President Dr. S. Radhakrishnan. The book is also included in the limited list of India Publication under “Bharat ek Parichay” Programme.

3. Portraits of Strenght – This books is about the hitherto unheard, unsung women from far flung parts of India whose contribution has been hailed by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi in “Mann ki Baat”.

4. Hindi Swadesh mein aur Videsh Mein – The book is about the coming age of Hindi language and its literature not just within the country but even beyond.

5. Rang Birangi Kahaniya – It is a quintessential children’s book.

6. Badal ki Sair – The book is a collection of short stories written for children in a manner to highlight the lucid story telling style which was made popular by Munshi Premchand.

7. Aao Paryavaran Bachayen aur Dhra ko Swarg Bnayen – This book is a product of co-publishing arrangement with the Sasta Sahitya Mandal and it is about saving the environment amidst the cross fire of development.
PM Modi launches road, sewerage projects in Maharashtra
On January 9, 2019, PM Modi, launched the four-laning of Solapur-Osmanabad section of NH-211, underground sewerage system and three sewage treatment plants. It was launched in road and underground sewerage system projects developed at an investment of Rs.1,100 crore.

**Key Points:**

i. Mr. Modi also laid the foundation stone for a Rs. 1,811 crore housing project of 30,000 units under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana. Mr. Modi commissioned the four-laned 98.717 km Solapur- Tuljapur-Osmanabad section on NH-211 (New NH-52). The Rs.972.50-crore toll road project will improve connectivity between Solapur and the Marathwada region.

ii. The housing project will benefit the homeless poor like rag pickers, rickshaw pullers, textile and beedi workers.

iii. Mr. Modi laid the foundation stone for the Rs.244 crore water supply and sewerage system as part of area-based development in the Solapur smart city area. This project, developed under the smart city mission, is expected to bring about significant improvements in service delivery.

“Web- Wonder Women” Campaign launched to recognize Indian origin female drivers-of-change: Women and Child Development Ministry
On January 9, 2019, the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, has launched an online campaign, ‘#www: Web- WonderWomen’.

**Objective:** To recognize the exceptional women who have been driving positive agenda of social change via social media.

**Key Points:**

i. The partners of the campaign are: Breakthrough and Twitter India.

ii. Entries via Nominations from across the world are now invited open till 31st January, 2019.

iii. Nominations have been invited in a large number of categories including Health, Media, Literature, Art, Sports, Environmental protection, fashion among others.

iv. The shortlisted entries will be open for public voting on Twitter and the finalists will be selected by a specialized panel of judges.

For more details: [Click Here](#)

“Development of North East Circuit: Umiam (Lake View) – U Lum Sohpetbneng- Mawdiangdiang – Orchid Lake Resort” project under Swadesh Darshan inaugurated by Meghalaya CM
On January 9, 2019, the Chief Minister of Meghalaya, Shri. Conrad K Sangma, inaugurated the project “Development of North East Circuit: Umiam (Lake View) – U Lum Sohpetbneng- Mawdiangdiang – Orchid Lake Resort” under Tourism Ministry’s Swadesh Darshan Scheme.

**About the Project:**

i. The project was sanctioned by the Ministry of Tourism in July 2016 for Rs. 99.13 Crores.

ii. It has facilities like:


**Other News:**

The Ministry has sanctioned 16 projects for Rs. 1349.04 crores covering all North Eastern States under its schemes of Swadesh Darshan and PRASHAD.

**About Swadesh Darshan:**

♦ The scheme was launched in 2014-15 and as on date the Ministry has sanctioned 74 projects worth projects for Rs. 5932.05 Crore to 30 States and UTs.

♦ 9 projects have been inaugurated as on date under the scheme.
India’s longest single lane steel cable suspension bridge opens in Arunachal Pradesh

On 10th January 2019, Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu inaugurated India’s longest 300-meter single-lane steel cable suspension bridge over Siang River in Upper Siang district of state bordering China.

Key points:
- The suspension bridge, also known as Byorung Bridge was built at a cost of Rs 4,843 crore and funded by the ministry of development of North Eastern Region under Non Lapsable Central Pool of Resources scheme.
- It will reduce the distance from Yingkiong to Tuting town by almost 40 km. The earlier road length was 192 km.
- Chief Minister Pema Khandu said the newly inaugurated bridge will benefit about 20,000 people residing on both sides of the bank of Siang River and will boost military preparedness.

GST Council’s 32nd Meeting Held In New Delhi Under The Chairmanship Of The Union Minister Of Finance & Corporate Affairs, Shri Arun Jaitley

On 10th January 2019, the GST Council’s 32nd Meeting held under the Chairmanship of the Union Minister of Finance & Corporate Affairs, Shri Arun Jaitley in New Delhi, took the following major decisions to give relief to Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises MSME (including Small Traders)

Major Decisions:
- Increase in Turnover Limit for the existing Composition Scheme: The limit of Annual Turnover in the preceding Financial Year for availing Composition Scheme for Goods shall be increased to Rs 1.5 crore.
- Compliance Simplification: The compliance under Composition Scheme shall be simplified as now they would need to file one Annual Return but Payment of Taxes would remain Quarterly.
- Higher Exemption Threshold Limit for Supplier of Goods: There would be two Threshold Limits for exemption from Registration and Payment of GST for the suppliers of Goods i.e. Rs 40 lakhs and Rs 20 lakhs. The Threshold for Registration for Service Providers would continue to be Rs 20 lakhs and in case of Special Category States at Rs 10 lakhs.
- Composition Scheme for Services: A Composition Scheme shall be made available for Suppliers of Services (or Mixed Suppliers) with a Tax Rate of 6% (3% CGST +3% SGST) having an Annual Turnover in the preceding Financial Year up to Rs 50 lakhs.
- Free Accounting and Billing Software shall be provided to Small Taxpayers by Goods and Services tax network (GSTN).
- A seven Member Group of Ministers shall be constituted to examine the proposal of giving a Composition Scheme to Boost the Residential Segment of the Real Estate Sector
- Revenue Mobilization for Natural Calamities: GST Council approved Levy of Cess on Intra-State Supply of Goods and Services within the State of Kerala at a rate not exceeding 1% for a period not exceeding 2 years.

About GST:
- Goods and Services tax is an indirect tax levied in India on the supply of goods and services.
- Implemented On: 1st july, 2017
- Finance Minister: Arun Jaitley.

National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) launched by Environment minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan in New Delhi

On January 10, 2019, the Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Dr. Harsh Vardhan launched a nationwide strategy, to tackle implementation of air pollution, under the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) in New Delhi.
About the NCAP:

i. It will be a mid-term, five-year action plan with 2019 as the first year.

ii. It will be launched in the 43 smart cities falling in the list of the 102 non-attainment cities, under the Smart Cities program.

iii. Institutional Framework at Centre and State Level comprising of Apex Committee at the Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change in the Centre and at Chief Secretary Level in the States are to be constituted for implementation of the action plans of cities.

iv. Additionally, sectoral working groups, national level Project Monitoring Unit, Project Implementation Unit, state level project monitoring unit, city level review committee under the Municipal Commissioner and DM level Committee in the Districts are to be constituted under NCAP.

v. The respective ministries/institutions responsible for the institutionalization of NCAP are:
   - Ministry of Road Transport and Highway, Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, Ministry of Heavy Industry, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Health, NITI Aayog, Central Pollution Control Board, experts from the industry, academia, and civil society.

About the targets and salient features of the NCAP:
Following states the national targets and the features of the NCAP as per suggestions available from the international experiences and national studies. They are:

- national level target of 20%–30% reduction of PM2.5 and PM10 concentration by 2024 taking 2017 as the base year for the comparison of concentration,
- monitoring stations in the country including rural monitoring stations would be increased,
- technology support, emphasis on awareness and capacity building initiatives would be provided,
- setting up of certification agencies for monitoring equipment, source apportionment studies, emphasis on enforcement, specific sectoral interventions etc. would be promoted.

102 cities chosen for the implementation of NCAP:

i. The states concerned with the implementation are 23 in number and following shows the details of respective districts in an ascending order of number of districts allotted under the programme per state:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of districts allotted (in ascending order)</th>
<th>State/s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (Lowest)</td>
<td>Chandigarh, Delhi, Jharkhand, Meghalaya, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Uttarakhand, Jammu &amp; Kashmir, Nagaland, Gujarat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Bihar, Telangana, Chhattisgarh,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Karnataka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Rajasthan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Madhya Pradesh, Orissa,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Himachal Pradesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Punjab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 (Highest)</td>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Background:
3% of the land, but contribute to 82% of GDP and responsible for 78% of Carbon dioxide emissions.
Minister Ravi Shankar Inaugurates NIC Command & Control Centre at National Informatics Centre (NIC), New Delhi

On January 10th, 2019, Ravi Shankar Prasad, Minister for Electronics & IT and Law and Justice inaugurated NIC's National Informatics Centre Command & Control Centre (CCC) and Centre of Excellence in Artificial Intelligence by NIC, it has stamina to transform societies in the regime of transparency and efficient governance.

POINTS TO BE KNOWN:

i. As of now, NIC has 4 National Data Centres and 30 Mini Data Centres across the country hosting over 10,000 e-Governance applications.

ii. NIC’s main motive is to bring updation in nationwide information and communication technology.

iii. NIC is also in the process of having a centralised monitoring of critical websites hosted on cloud. NIC is proposing to provide users with a customized dashboard where they can monitor resources and availability of their applications.

Sino-Indian Digital Collaboration Plaza Launched by NASSCOM with Municipal Governments of Guiyang and Dalian as it Partner

On 10th January 2019, an initiative was launched to bring Indian IT companies and Chinese enterprises closer on a single artificial intelligence enabled platform, Sino-Indian Digital Collaboration Plaza (SIDCOP). The Sino-Indian Digital Collaboration Plaza (SIDCOP) is a partnership between the National Association of Software & Services Companies (Nasscom) and municipal governments ofGuiyang and Dalian in China.

Key points:

i. Domestic IT enterprises are renowned for their expertise in business transformation and operational optimization by using IT tools in complex business environments.

ii. The development assumes significance as Indian IT sector is seeking greater market access in China.

iii. This platform could be useful to connect with top providers from India and help Chinese enterprises source the right solution providers for their projects.

Union Minister Harshvardhan launches special weather services for Kumbh Mela

On 14th January 2019, Union Minister of Science and Technology, Earth Sciences and Environment and Forests and Climate Change, Dr Harshvardhan launched the special weather services for the benefit of people visiting Prayagraj during Kumbh Mela at a function in New Delhi.

Key Points:

i. The service will provide information of the prevailing weather and forecasts for next 3 days through four Automatic Weather stations (AWS) and a mobile van AWS that have been installed and operationalized at different locations at Prayagraj.

ii. The observational sites are distributed in all four directions within 5-10 km radius.

iii. It will be helpful for the local and state authorities by providing the real-time location specific weather information for efficient management of the entire event and also benefit the pilgrims by keeping them abreast of the latest weather information.

iv. Besides a mobile application named “Kumbh Mela Weather Service” was also launched to inform about the live weather information (temperature, humidity, rainfall and winds) and warnings if any for Prayagraj for next 3 days as observed in all the AWS sites.

“Womaniya on GeM” launched by Government e Marketplace [GeM] under Commerce Ministry to empower women entrepreneurs

On January 14, 2019, the Commerce Ministry announced that the Government e Marketplace [GeM] launched “Womaniya on GeM” initiative to enable women entrepreneurs and women self-help groups [WSHGs] to sell handicrafts and handloom, accessories, etc. directly to various Government ministries, departments and institutions.

About the initiative:

i. A 3-minute video highlighting benefits of the Womaniya initiative was launched by CEO GeM, S Radha Chauhan, whereby she explained the following:
• nearly 80 percent women-owned establishments are self-financed,
• more than 60 percent of 8 million units are owned and/or led by women entrepreneurs from socially-challenged sections of the society,
• empowering the women entrepreneurs is a step in the direction of poverty alleviation.

ii. Artist Anukta M Ghosh’s artwork “Magan”, an illustration of women empowerment and grace, is the face of Womaniya on GeM.

iii. The initiative aligns with Government’s initiatives for MSMEs, especially to reserve 3 percent in government procurement from women entrepreneurs.

iv. This initiative will also address goals and objectives under United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

About GeM:
♦ It is a 100 percent government owned company setup under the aegis of Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
♦ Constituted: 2016.

Finance Minister Shri Arun Jaitley and Union Minority Affairs Minister Shri Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi inaugurated Hunar Haat exhibitions in New Delhi
On 13th January 2019, The Union Minister for Finance and Corporate affairs, Shri Arun Jaitley and Union Minister of Minority Affairs Shri Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi inaugurated the Hunar Haat Exhibition at State Emporia Complex in New Delhi.

Key Points
i. The Hunar Haat exhibition will be organized from 12th January 2019 to 20th January 2019.
ii. Hunar Haat aim at “Development with Dignity” of the artisans and craftsman from the minority community.
iii. Hunar Haat is important for the national and international branding of the heritage of master artisans.

India’s largest startup ecosystem, measuring 1.8 lakh sq ft, inaugurated in Kerala by CM Pinarayi Vijayan
On January 13, 2019, Kerala chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan launched country’s largest startup ecosystem, integrated startup complex under the Kerala Startup Mission (KSUM), at the Technology Innovation Zone (TIZ), in Kochi, Kerala.

About the ecosystem:
i. It is a 1.8 lakh sq ft facility housing incubation infrastructure across a series of sectors in technology.
ii. It will have the following under it:
   • facilities of Maker Village that promotes hardware startups,
   • the Bionest that promotes medical technologies,
   • BRINC, the country’s first international accelerator for hardware startups;
   • BRIC which aids developing solutions for cancer diagnosis and care, and
   • a centre of excellence set up by industry majors such as UNITY.
iii. The facility also has firms working in fields such as biotechnology, computer-aided design, augmented/virtual reality and advanced communication.

Other News:
i. Also, the Kerala Government is working to have a total area of 2.3 crore sq ft of IT space (up from 1.3 crore sq ft last year).
ii. Furthermore, after the completion of three more projects, Kerala will have startup and incubation space of 5 lakh sq ft, which will be largest of these type in the world.
iii. The government is also planning to give direct jobs to 2.5 lakh in IT.
National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development (NIPCCD) inaugurated at Mohali, Punjab

On January 14, 2019, Minister of Women and Child Development, Smt Maneka Sanjay Gandhi inaugurated Regional Centre of National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development (NIPCCD) at Mohali, Punjab.

i. Addressing at the function, she stressed on the need for training and development of elected women representatives of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) to ensure that fruitful development would reach the top level through their active participation and actual empowerment.

ii. It is a premier organisation devoted to promotion of voluntary action research, training and documentation in the overall domain of women and child development. This organisation have already four such Regional Centres one each at Bangalore, Guwahati, Indore and Lucknow besides the Headquarters at New Delhi.

First Annual Disarmament and International Security Affairs Fellowship Programme inaugurated in Delhi

On 14th January 2019, the First Annual Disarmament and International Security Affairs Fellowship Programme was organised by Ministry of External Affairs in New Delhi. The event will be concluded on 1st February 2019.

Key Points:

i. The event was inaugurated by the United Nations Under Secretary General and High Representative for Disarmament, Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, and Foreign Secretary, Shri Vijay Keshav Gokhale.

ii. The Fellowship Programme, which is being held at the Foreign Services Institute, New Delhi will be attended by Young Diplomats from 27 countries.

iii. Multiple issues related to disarmament and international security such as global security environment, weapons of mass destruction, certain conventional weapons, space security, maritime cooperation, security of cyberspace, export controls, emerging technologies etc. will be covered in the programme.

iv. The aim of the programme is to equip participants with knowledge and perspectives on various issues related to disarmament, non-proliferation, arms control and international security.

DD Science and India Science: 2 National Level initiatives launched by DST and Prasar Bharti in field of Science Communication

On January 15, 2019, Union Science & Technology Minister, Dr. Harsh Vardhan inaugurated 2 national level initiatives in the field of Science and Communications. These initiatives are the first step in creating a national science channel for the country.

Key Points:

i. The initiatives were: DD Science and India Science.

ii. These were launched by:

The Department of Science and Technology (DST) and Doordarshan (DD), Prasar Bharati.

iii. These were made official by singing of MOUs between:

Vigyan Prasar and Doordarshan.

iv. These are aimed to integrate and elevate science in everyday life and to make India reach in top 3 of countries propagating science and technology by 2030.

v. The channels have been conceived and supported by the DST and are being implemented and managed by Vigyan Prasar, an autonomous organisation of DST.

vi. India Science (www.indiascience.in) is already a 24×7 presence and DD Science may also be scaled up to a full-fledged channel in the future.

vii. As per content, people will have free access to science-based documentaries, studio-based discussions, and virtual walkthroughs of scientific institutions, interviews and short films.

About DD Science:

It will be a one-hour slot on Doordarshan National channel which will telecast Monday to Saturday from 5 pm to 6 pm.

About India Science:
i. It is an internet-based channel, which will be available on any internet-enabled device, and will offer live, scheduled play and video-on-demand services.

**PM inaugurated spiritual circuit development project in Kerala**
On 15th January 2019, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the project “Development of Spiritual Circuit: Sree Padmanabha Swamy Temple - Aranmula-Sabarimala” at the cost of Rs. 92.22 crores under Swadesh Darshan Scheme of Tourism Ministry in Kerala. He also dedicated the 13-km Kollam bypass on NH 66 in Kerala to the nation

**Key Points**
1. The Sree Padmanaaswamy Temple is one of the 108 Divyadesams of Lord Vishnu and majority of the work under this project has been carried out at this temple.
2. Under the Project, the ministry of tourism has developed and rejuvenated the temple along with its surroundings keeping in mind the factors of heritage and socio-cultural aspects.
3. Ministry of tourism has sanctioned 7 projects in Kerala under the Swadesh Darshan and PRASHAD schemes for an approximate amount of Rs 550 crores.

**Swadesh Darshan Scheme**
- Swadesh Darshan Scheme was launched in 2014-15 and it is one of the flagship schemes of Ministry of tourism for development of thematic circuits in the country. Till now, 77 projects worth Rs. 6131.88 Crores has been sanctioned under this scheme in 30 States and UTs.

**Global Housing Technology Challenge India launched in New Delhi to build houses under PMAY in shorter time: MoH&UA**
On January 14, 2019, Shri Hardeep S. Puri, Minister of State (I/C) for Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) launched the “Global Housing Technology Challenge-India” (GHTC- India) in New Delhi.

**About Global Housing Technology Challenge-India:**
1. Under this, the best globally available innovative construction technologies would be adopted by India to deliver ready to live-in houses in a shorter time, with lower cost and quality construction. This will be implemented under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban (PMAY-U) Mission.
2. The challenge has three components. They are:
   1. Conduct of Grand Expo-cum-Conference,
   2. Identifying Proven Demonstrable Technologies from across the world and
   3. Promoting Potential Technologies through setting up incubation centers at selected IITs and organizing accelerator workshops under the Affordable Sustainable Housing Accelerators-India (ASHA-India) Program.
3. This transition will contribute towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as laid out by the United Nations (UN), the New Urban Agenda and the Paris Climate Accord.
4. A Grand Expo and Conference will be organized and conducted biennially to provide a platform to exchange knowledge and business among stakeholders.
5. Thus this challenge would enable:
   - conservation of natural resources;
   - bringing speed in construction;
   - utilization of industrial and construction demolition waste;
   - reduction in air and noise pollution;
   - optimum use of water;
   - increased labour productivity;
   - cost reduction;
   - safe and disaster resilient houses; and
   - all weather site execution etc.
ISRO’s UNNATI programme inaugurated by MoS DoS Dr. Jitendra Singh in Bengaluru
On January 17, 2019, Minister of State in Department of Space Dr. Jitendra Singh inaugurated the 1st batch of UNNATI programme of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) in Bengaluru, Karnataka.
i. The full form of UNNATI is: Unispace Nanosatellite Assembly and Training programme.
ii. It has been launched by ISRO as part of initiative by United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the first United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE-50).

About UNNATI:
i. Under the 1st batch of the program, India will provide 2 months training to 32 participants from 18 countries from Algeria, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bhutan, Brazil, Chile, Egypt, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Myanmar, Oman, Panama and Portugal.
ii. The participants were selected from 87 applications from 34 countries.
iii. Overall, the programme would be conducted for 3 years by U.R. Rao Satellite Centre of ISRO in 3 batches and will target to benefit officials of 45 countries.
For more information: Click Here

2nd phase of the Web Campaign ‘SANJHI –MUJH MEIN KALAKAR’ launched by Sangeet Natak Akademi
On January 16, 2019, the National Academy of Music, Dance and Drama, Sangeet Natak Akademi (SNA) launched the second phase of the Web Campaign ‘SĀNJHI –MUJH MEIN KALĀKĀR’.

Objective:
To document and promote direct public-participation in the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) and diverse cultural traditions of the country

Key Points:
i. The literal meaning of the term SĀNJHI is “to share” and “to partner”.
ii. The second phase of this campaign, SĀNJHI –MUJH MEIN KALĀKĀR, will focus mainly in areas like-the folk, traditional, customary, socially events and ritualistic art forms.
iii. This second phase would focus around the time of harvest festival season of January which is dubbed in many nomenclatures like Makar Sankranti, Pongal, Lohri, Bhogali Bihu, Torgya, Uttarayan, Attukkal Pongal etc.
iv. This would integrate domains of intangible cultural heritage as per the Convention of Safeguarding the ICH under UNESCO. They are:
   - Oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage;
   - Performing arts;
   - Social practices, rituals and festive events;
   - Knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe;
   - Traditional craftsmanship.
v. The first phase of this campaign was initiated in the month of November 2018 during the festival season of Diwali.

About Sangeet Natak Akademi (SNA):
The Sangeet Natak Akademi (SNA) is the nodal agency of the Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India related to Intangible Cultural Heritage and various UNESCO Conventions addressing Cultural Diversity and promotion of cultural traditions of the country.

FinMin launched the ‘Know Your Budget’ series to educate people on Twitter about terms and references of Union Budget
On January 18, 2019, Finance Ministry started ‘Know Your Budget’ series to educate people on Twitter about the importance of Union Budget and its making.
i. The series contains definitions of various terms used in the budget.
ii. The series began with explaining the terms: **Union Budget** and **Vote on Account**.

iii. The government on **February 1, 2019** would unveil the interim Budget for **2019-20**.

**Saksham 2019, annual event of PCRA, launched by Petroleum ministry in New Delhi**

On January 16, 2019, the 2019 edition of ‘Saksham’, an annual high intensity one-month long people-centric mega campaign of **Petroleum Conservation Research Association (PCRA)** under the aegis of **Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas** was launched **in New Delhi**.

It was launched by **Shri. Rajiv Bansal**, Addl Secretary & Financial Adviser Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.

i. The following lists the various activities that took place in the launch of Saksham 2019:
   - release of a comic book developed by **PCRA jointly with NCERT** for the children on various tips and day to day aspects of fuel conservation
   - a short animation film for children covering domestic and transport sector was released,
   - prizes for the ‘Saksham’ National Competition-2018 to the winners of Essay and Painting competitions were distributed,
   - oil companies and state govs. Were also awarded due to their contributions in the fields of fuel conservation,
   - publicity vans of PCRA, the fuel conservation messengers on wheels, equipped with audio, video and print displays were also flagged off to spread the conservation awareness

ii. PCRA utilized the social media platforms for various customized campaigns through Facebook, twitter, MyGov platform.

**Sustainable Catchment Forest Management launched in Tripura**

On 16th January 2019, Tripura Chief Minister, **Biplab Kumar Deb** launched the **Project for Sustainable Catchment Forest Management (SCATFORM)** at State Forest Academy Ground in Hatipara in West Tripura.

**Key Points**

i. The project is jointly funded by the Government of India and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) which is providing Rs. 1000 crores for a span of 10 years to improve forestlands in targeted catchment areas of Tripura.

ii. The 80 per cent of the cost is contributed by JICA and the rest would be funded by the state and central governments.

iii. A total of 1,447 check dams will be set up in hilly areas in seven districts of Tripura.

**PM Narendra Modi Inaugurates Country’s First National Museum of Indian Cinema in Mumbai**

On 19th January 2019, **Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi** launched the **Country’s First National Museum of Indian Cinema** in Mumbai, **Maharashtra**, that seeks to portray over a century-old journey of movies in India.

**Salient Features of the Museum:**

i. The state-of-the-art museum has been built at a cost of Rs 140.61 crore and is housed in two buildings – the New Museum Building and the 19th century historic palace Gulshan Mahal – in the Films Division campus in Mumbai.

ii. The National Museum of Indian Cinema was build under the guidance by the Museum **Advisory Committee headed by noted film maker Shyam Benegal**. An innovation Committee headed by **lyricist Prasoon Joshi was also constituted to provide an upgrade to NMIC**.

iii. The building has four exhibition Halls.
   - Mahatma Gandhi and his impact on Indian cinema
   - Children’s Film Studio
   - Technology creativity
   - Vibrant cinematographic culture across India
iv. The objective of the Museum is to take its visitors through an absorbing journey of over a century of Indian cinema in a story telling mode with the help of visuals, graphics, artifacts, interactive exhibits and multimedia expositions.

**Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman inaugurated the Diffu Bridge over Chipu River in Arunachal Pradesh**

On 18th January 2019, Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman inaugurated the **426 metres** long Diffu Bridge over Chipu River in Lower Dibang Valley District of Arunachal Pradesh.

**Key Points**

i. Border Roads Organization (BRO) has constructed the bridge along Indo-China border. The construction of the bridge began in 2011.

ii. The total cost to build the bridge was **Rs 4,847.83 lakh** and was funded by the Union ministry of road transport and highways.

iii. The Bridge will make travelling from east part to west part of Arunachal Pradesh very convenient and time saving.

**Nitin Gadkari inaugurated first inter-state bridge over Ravi River in J&K**


**Things to Be Noted:**

i. It was built at a cost of Rs 158.84 crore in a span of three and a half years linking areas of Katthua district with Punjab.

ii. The bridge also called as Keediyan-Gandiyal bridge will benefit over 2,20,000 people living on the two sides – Kathua in Jammu, and Pathankot in Punjab. It will reduce the distance between the two cities from 45 kms to 8.6 kms.

**Rajyavardhan Rathore inauguates National Declamations Contest on Patriotism and nation building**


**Key Points**

i. It was organized by Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKC) along with Department of Youth affairs. The contest has been conducting since 2015-16.

ii. Minister said that India is a country of diversities and therefore symbols like National Flag and National Anthem are necessary to inculcate feeling of belongings and Patriotism.

iii. It aims to further strengthen the spirit of nationalism in youth and whole hearted participation in nation building.

iv. It will enable the government to take lead in understanding the functions and policies of the government towards nation building.

v. The contest helps to identify youth with leadership qualities and good communication skills for their development.

vi. The contest will be block level, District level and state level declamation contest for the years 2018-19 which is organized from September 2018 to 15th January 2019.

**Third Bridge inaugurated by Union Minister Nitin Gadkari Named ‘Atal Setu’ in Goa**

On January 27, 2019, The Third bridge was inaugurated by Union Minister Nitin Gadkari in the presence of Chief Minister Manohar Parrikar. The bridge has been named as ‘Atal Setu’ after former prime minister of India late Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

**Key Points:**

i. It is **four-lane, 5.1-kilometer long** and the **third Cable bridge** across river Mandovi in Panaji, Goa.

ii. The bridge weighs **2.5 lakh tonnes** which is equivalent to the weight of **570 Boeing aircraft**.
iii. The bridge is constructed by the GIDC (Goa Infrastructure Development Corporation) and engineering and construction major Larsen and Toubro.

iv. The bridge is built at a cost of Rs 850 crore.

v. The two bridges already present in Goa are Mandovi Bridge and Zurai Bridge.

vi. The bridge will be open for four wheeler vehicles from Jan 29 but two and three wheelers will not be allowed on the bridge.

Ministry of Textiles launched “Artisan Speak” held at Elephanta Caves, near Mumbai to showcase GI Textiles

On January 26, 2019, Ministry of Textiles and Government of India launched Artisan Speak at Elephanta Caves (UNESCO heritage site) near Mumbai, to strengthen the handlooms and textiles sector of India. Important Fact:

i. This is first of its kind of meeting held in Elephanta Caves in Mumbai.

ii. It is organized by the Ministry of Textiles, in partnership with Reliance.

iii. Several agreements signed will establish long-term market linkage between industry players and handloom weavers.

Civil aviation ministry launched Country’s first GI store in Goa

On January 29, 2019, Civil Aviation minister Suresh Prabhu launched the country’s first Geographical Indication (GI) store at Dabolim International Airport in Goa.

i. The GI stores will promote local products made by the artisans and handicrafts at the airport.

ii. The store is set up by Airports Authority of India in partnership with The Cashew Export Promotional Council of India. The Plan of implementing 101 more stores are in cards, which may extend to 201 stores in near future.

Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) launches National Agricultural Higher Education Project (NAHEP) in New Delhi

On January 28, 2019, Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) launches National Agricultural Higher Education Project (NAHEP) to attract talent and strengthen higher agricultural education in the country. It is inaugurated at the fourth Convention of 2-day “Agrivision-2019” organized by Vidyarthi Kalyan Nyas in Pusa, New Delhi.

Key points:

i. During this inauguration, Recommendation of 5th Dean Committee have been implemented in all the Agricultural Universities.

ii. The ICAR has recently launched Rs 1100 crore ambitious National Agricultural Higher Education Project (NAHEP) to attract talent and strengthen higher agricultural education in the country. This project is to be funded by the World Bank and the Indian Government on a 50:50 basis.

iii. Rajendra Agriculture University has been upgraded as Dr. Rajendra Prasad Central Agricultural University to strengthen to bring green revolution in Eastern India including North East.

iv. At the same time, the Second Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) is to be set up in Barhi, Jharkhand after New Delhi, and another would be in Assam.

v. To enhance the participation of students in agricultural business, READY (Rural Entrepreneurship Awareness Development Yojana) is provided to the UG students.

K J Alphons Inaugurated first Swadesh Darshan Project in Sikkim

On 28th January 2019, Union Tourism Minister K J Alphons Inaugurated first Swadesh Darshan Project in Sikkim. It was inaugurated in the presence of Minister of Tourism and Civil Aviation for Sikkim Ugen T Gyatso in Zero Point, Gangtok, Sikkim.

Key Points

ii. This project was sanctioned by the Ministry of Tourism in June 2015 for Rs. 98.05 Crores.

iii. Under the scheme, the government will develop quality infrastructure in the country with an objective of providing better experience and facilities to the visitors. It will also promote a economic growth.

iv. The Ministry will develop tourism infrastructure facilities like tourism information centre, meditation centre, walkways, cafeteria, public toilets, etc. under the scheme.

Projects and Funds allocated for Swadesh Darshan Project:
The scheme was launched in 2014 -15 and the Ministry has sanctioned 77 projects worth Rs. 6121.69 Crore to 30 States and UTs and the ministry has also sanctioned 16 projects for Rs. 1349.04 crores covering all North Eastern States.

Festivals

30th Edition of 9-day long International Kite Festival kicks off in Ahmedabad, Gujarat
On 6th January 2019, 30th Edition of the nine-day long international kite festival inaugurated ahead of Uttarayan or Makar Sankranti, the day when winter season starts changing to summer and farmers welcome the approaching harvest season, at Sabarmati River Front in Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

Key Points:
i. This year’s Kite festival is inaugurated by Gujarat Governor O P Kohli, in which Chief Minister Vijay Rupani, Ahmedabad Mayor Bijal Patel and State Revenue Minister Kaushik Patel also addressed.

ii. This year’s kite festival is participated by about 500 kite fliers from 19 cities of Gujarat and 13 different states of the country are participating. Besides more than 150 kite fliers from 45 different countries are also taking part in the festival.

iii. This year, the Gujarat government has also decided to organise a kite festival at Kevadia, the site of the Statue of Unity, a memorial to Sardar Patel and also the world’s tallest statue. Other Venue’s are Vadodara, Kevadiya, Dwaraka, Surat, Rajkot, Jetpur, Songadh, Saputara and Dhordo in which the Kite festivals are planned to take place in the coming days.

Sanskriti Kumbh, a 29 days Cultural extravaganza inaugurated in Kumbh Mela, Prayagraj Uttar Pradesh
On 10th January 2019, Sanskriti Kumbh, a 29 days cultural extravaganza inaugurated by the Governor of Uttar Pradesh, Shri Ram Naik in the presence of the Union Minister of state for Culture Dr. Mahesh Sharma in Kumbh Mela area, Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh.

Key points:
i. Sanskriti Kumbh is celebrating the conglomeration of Spiritual Consciousness and Cultural Heritage of India in the main premises of Kumbh Mela area in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh.

ii. It is one of the oldest tradition in the world which showcases the unity in diversity of our country.

iii. The significance of Kumbh Mela has been enhanced at the Global level as the UNESCO has inscribed Kumbh Mela on the list of Intangible Cultural heritage for humanity in 2017.

iv. This time Kumbh is being organized in the city of Prayagraj which is located at the confluence of the Ganges, the Yamuna and Mystic river of Saraswati in Uttar Pradesh.

Three-day 6th ‘Women of India Organic Festival’ by WCD Ministry held in Chandigarh for the first time to Promote Women Farmers
On January 12, 2019, the three-day 6th annual ‘Women of India Organic Festival’ commenced at Leisure Valley, Sector-10, Chandigarh.

This is the first time the event is being held in Chandigarh.

i. It aims to celebrate and promote women farmers and entrepreneurs in the organic sector from the remotest parts of India.

ii. It has been organized by the Ministry of Women and Child Development.

iii. Shri B.L. Sharma, Secretary, Women and Child Development, UT Chandigarh was the Chief Guest.

iv. Smt. Anuradha Chagti, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Women and Child Development, Govt. of India
was be the Guest of Honour in the event.

v. On January 14th, as part of the event, the National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development (NIPCCD) Mohali Regional Centre would be inaugurated by Smt. Maneka Sanjay Gandhi, Union Minister for Women and Child Development.

vi. The Festival will showcase over 1,000 varied organic products, including fabric, wellness, grains, seeds, jewellery, bakery items and a lot more.

**Background:**

♦ The Women of India Organic Festival has been held annually in New Delhi since 2015.

**Minister Rajyavardhan Rathore launched National Youth Parliament Festival 2019 in New Delhi**

On January 12, 2019, Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports, Col Rajyavardhan Rathore launched the National Youth Parliament Festival 2019 at a function in New Delhi. The festival will continue till 24th of February 2019. The theme of the festival is- “Be the Voice of New India” and “Find solutions and contribute to policy”.

**Reason for the Launch:**

Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports propose to take the Youth Festival to every nook and corner of the country and celebrate it as the “National Youth Parliament Festival”. Organising District Youth Parliaments and taking the festival to the doorsteps of the youth would provide chance to youth of the country to participate and share their about how to make a New India.

**Process involved in National Youth Festival:**

Youth in the age of 18-25 years are invited to participate in the District Youth Parliaments. The National Youth Parliament Festival 2019 will be conducted at three levels:

- **District Youth Parliament (DYP) at the district level.** The participants for DYP would be selected through two screening processes i.e. Digital and Walk-in screenings in Nodal Institution in each district.
- **State Youth Parliament (SYP) at the State Level.**
- **National Youth Parliament (NYP) at the National Level.**

This programme is launched in accordance with National Youth Day.

**4th International Kite Festival and 2nd International Sweet Festival inaugurated by Vice President Venkaiah Naidu in Hyderabad, Telangana**

On January 13, 2019, Vice President Venkaiah Naidu inaugurated the 4th International Kite Festival and 2nd International Sweet Festival in Hyderabad, Telangana.

i. It was organised by the Department of Tourism, Government of Telangana and the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, as a part of Sankranthi celebrations, at the Parade Grounds in Secunderabad.

ii. This year’s theme for Telangana International Kite Festival was for empowerment of the girl child: ‘Educate girl child and she will save the world’.

iii. As many as 42 professional kite flyers from abroad and 60 from India are participating in the Kite Festival and it witnessed participation of nearly 100 enthusiasts of kite flying from 19 different countries including India.

iv. Moreover, sweets from 20 countries and from 25 Indian states were displayed at the Sweet Festival.

**About Makar Sankranthi:**

♦ It is a harvest festival, a celebration of life and vitality. It is the festival of Sun God who is often regarded as the symbol divinity and wisdom.

♦ In south India, it is popularly called ‘Pongal’, in Punjab and Haryana it is called ‘Lohri’, in Assam it is called ‘Bihu’ and ‘Khichdi festival’ in Bihar.

**6th Women of India Organic Festival of WCD Ministry held in Chandigarh:**

On January 12, 2019, The Ministry of Women and Child Development organised the three-day 6th ‘Women of India Organic Festival’ in Chandigarh, to encourage the women farmers and
entrepreneurs in the organic sector from the remotest parts of India. It concludes on 14th January, 2019.

i. This programme is conducted **twice in a year** with a motive to connect the Indian women entrepreneurs with other buyers and create awareness about the importance of adopting organic products for a healthy and a environmentally friendly lifestyle.

ii. The Festival visualised over 1,000 varied organic products, including fabric, wellness, grains, seeds, jewellery, bakery items and a lot more.

**Pongal: Harvest festival celebrated largely in Tamil Nadu**

On 15th January 2019, **Pongal** a harvest festival started in **Tamil Nadu**. It is a four-day festival according to the Tamil calendar and it is usually celebrated from January 15 to January 18. Pongal means **to boil**. Rice is boiled in milk and offered firstly to the sun and then cows and then to the family and friends.

**Legends behind Pongal**

i. Pongal marks the beginning of the sun’s northward journey towards the equinox, known as **Uttarayan**.

ii. The **first** day of Pongal is celebrated in honour of **Lord Indra** and is called **Bogi or Bhogi Pongal**.

iii. The **second** day is dedicated to the Sun God and known as **Surya Pongal**.

iv. On the **third** day **Jallikattu festival** starts and is dedicated to cattle and called **Mattu Pongal**.

v. Fourth day marks the end of the festival for the year and is called **Kaumum Pongal or Thiruvalluvar day**.

**First one-day Turtle Festival celebrated in Puri, Odisha to promote conservation of olive ridley turtles**

On January 12, 2019, Odisha celebrated its **1st one day Turtle Festival in Puri, Odisha**. 

i. The festival was organized by **Cox & Kings Foundation** in association with Humane Society International/India and Action for Protection of Wild Animals (APOWA).

ii. It was done to create awareness and promote ideas on conservation of olive ridley turtles.

iii. It was done in the interest of integrating conservation efforts with tourism and involving locals, tourists and others to be a part of the movement.

**Background:**

Odisha is the largest recipient of Olive Ridley Turtles that recorded about a million of them visiting the coastal State in October 2018. The Olive ridley turtles are the **smallest** and most abundant of all sea turtles found in the world, inhabiting warm waters of the Pacific, Atlantic and Indian oceans.

**55-day long Kumbh Mela 2019 commenced in Uttar Pradesh; it will continue till March 4, 2019**

On January 15, 2019, the **55-day long Kumbh Mela 2019** commenced with the Shahi Snan of Akharas at Sangam - the confluence of Ganga, Yamuna and the mystical Saraswati - at **Prayagraj in Uttar Pradesh**.

i. "Chalo Kumbh Chale" was the slogan used by the devotees commencing the mela.

ii. An area of 20 lakh sq.ft area, was designated for the street art projects under an initiative by Kumbh Mela Authority called "**Paint my city."**

iii. The whole kumbh area is divided into **20 sectors and 9 zones** for keen vigil by sector and zonal magistrates.

iv. For the **first time** at the Kumbh Mela, a **transgender ashram**, known as the **Kinnar Akhara**, led by rights activist **Lakshmi Narayan Tripathi from Mumbai**, joined the first bathing day.

v. The Kumbh Mela is the largest human congregation in the world, with the participation of over 130 million pilgrims.

**Contribution of the Ministries/state government:**

i. 15 state government departments, 28 central government departments and six union ministries are managing the **Kumbh Mela 2019**.

ii. The UP government has allocated **Rs.4,200 crore** for the Ardh Kumbh (twice in 12 years).

iii. Union minister **Harsh Vardhan**, launched a special weather service for the Kumbh Mela, which includes four automatic weather stations. It will provide information of the prevailing weather and
forecasts for the next **three days**.

iv. Forty police stations, 58 police outposts including **three women police station** are erected where more than 20 thousand security personnel have been deployed.

v. A mobile app named **‘Kumbh Mela Weather Service’** has also been developed to disseminate the live weather information on temperature, humidity, rainfall and winds.

vi. Alongside **21 Snan Ghats** set up for bathing, over **120000 toilets** have been erected for making **Clean Kumbh**.

**Background:**
The Kumbh Mela, which runs until March 4, was recognised as an intangible cultural heritage by UNESCO in 2017.

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**10-day Indian Panorama Film Festival held in New Delhi**

On January 13, 2019, the **10-day Indian Panorama Film Festival**, that was inaugurated by Secretary, Ministry of I&B, Shri Amit Khare, concluded at Siri Fort Auditorium II, in **New Delhi**. It commenced on January 4, 2019.

i. It was organized by: **Directorate of Film Festivals, Ministry of I&B**.

ii. The opening feature film of the festival was ‘**Olu’**, directed by Shri Shaji N Karun.

iii. The opening non-feature film of the festival was ‘**Kharvas’**, directed by Shri Aditya Suhas Jambhale.

iv. In this festival, 26 Feature Films and 21 Non-Feature Films were screened.

v. Additionally, all the films selected under the Indian Panorama section in the 49th International Film Festival of India were screened during the Festival.

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**Nagpur, the city of Oranges host the 4-day 2nd World Orange Festival for the first time**

On January 18, 2019, the **4-day 2nd World Orange Festival** commenced in **Nagpur**, the city of oranges, for the **first** time. It will conclude on 21st January, 2019.

i. The festival will also showcase and brand the exquisite fruit in order to boost its export.

ii. The festival is being presented by **UPL** and hosted by **Maharashtra Tourism**.

For more information: Click Here

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**Housing, Urban Affairs Ministry to organize ‘Shehri Samridhi Utsav’ from Feb 1 to 15**

On 18th January 2019, Housing and Urban Affairs Minister, Hardeep Singh Puri announced that Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs will organize a fortnight of events named Shehri Samridhi Utsav from 1st February to 15th February 2019.

i. The Shehr Samridhi Utsav focusing on urban livelihoods will be celebrated all over the country with active participation from states and cities.

ii. The event is aimed at extending the outreach of **Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY – NULM)**

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**Arunachal govt declares Pakke Paga Hornbill Festival as ‘state festival’**

On 20th January 2019, Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister, **Pema Khandu** declared **Pakke Paga Hornbill Festival (PPHF)** as the “State Festival” during a valedictory ceremony of the fourth edition of the festival at Seijosa in East Kameng district, Arunachal Pradesh.

**Key Points**

i. Pakke Paga Hornbill Festival (PPHF) is only conservation festival of Arunachal Pradesh.

ii. Pema Khandu announced that Arunachal Pradesh Forest Department will fund the festival from next year and permanent infrastructure will be constructed for the festival ground.

iii. In the PPHF festival is celebrated for the first time in 2015 to recognize the role played by the resident **Nyishi tribe** in conserving hornbills in the **Pakke Tiger Reserve (PTR)**.

iv. The festival also provides an alternate source of income to the native people of the region who mainly relies on hunting and logging.
Three day Flamingo festival was celebrated in Pulicat Lake, Andhra Pradesh

Three day Flamingo Festival, held in Pulicat Lake and Nellapattu in Sullurpet mandal, Andhra Pradesh.

i. Flamingo Festival is a 12-year-long tradition of the region. The highlight of this fest is the sight of colourful migratory birds from Siberia that visit the region for nesting and breeding.

ii. The three-day-long event was inaugurated by Agriculture Minister Somireddy Chandramohan Reddy and Municipal Administration Minister P Narayana.

9th Hyderabad literary festival held in Hyderabad

On 25th January 2019, 9th Hyderabad literary festival (HLF) conducted in Hyderabad, Telangana, India. It is a 3 day annual event organized by ‘Hyderabad Literary Trust’ in association with the Government of Telangana.

Key Points

i. China is the focus country in the 9th edition of Hyderabad literary festival (HLF). Gujarati was the language in focus for HLF 2019.

ii. The literary festival began in January 25. It gave special tribute to Mahatma Gandhi in his 150th birth anniversary year.

iii. The event will pay special attention to Gujarati keeping an eye on its tradition on each edition of the festival.

iv. The logo of HLF 2019 released on the inaugural day. The event will also pay tribute to Mrinalini Sarabhai and Kaifi Azmy to mark their birth centenaries.

China was the focus country at the 9th Hyderabad Literary festival

China’s Culture, Art and Literature was the focus of 9th edition of the prestigious Hyderabad Literary Festival.

Other News Related to Indian Affairs

Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan launched Ujjwala sanitary napkin initiative in Odisha

On December 30, 2018, Union Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan launched the Ujjwala Sanitary Napkin initiative in Bhubaneswar, Odisha.

Objective:

To provide access to hygiene products and employment opportunities in every district of the state.

Key Points:

i. Around 100 local manufacturing units will be set up by oil marketing companies at Common Service Centres (CSCs) across 93 blocks in all 30 districts of Odisha in the first phase.

ii. The units are expected to be ready by March 2019.

iii. The cost of setting up each manufacturing unit is expected to be Rs 2.94 crores.

iv. The sanitary napkins will be priced at Rs 42 per pack of eight pads.

v. Each manufacturing unit will employ five or six Ujjwala beneficiaries and will thus employ nearly 600 women across all districts.

vi. The scheme is a central move to counter Odisha government’s Khushi scheme that provides free of cost sanitary napkins to female students of government and government-aided schools in the state.

vii. Under the initiative, the National Aluminium Company Limited (NALCO) would sponsor 100 of the 500 units.

Background:

As per the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) report, the overall use of sanitary napkins in Odisha is 33.5 per cent.

Madhya Pradesh government to create an Adhyatmik Vibhag (spiritual department)

On 29th December 2018, The Congress-led Madhya Pradesh Government announced that it is going to create an Adhyatmik Vibhag (spiritual department) by merging several existing department.
Key Points:
i. The Congress had promised to form such a department before the last month’s Assembly elections.

ii. The proposed Adhyatmik Vibhag (Spiritual Department) going to be formed by merging Dharmik Nyas Evam Dharmasv Department (Religious Trust and Endowment Department), Anand Vibhag (Happiness Department) in addition to the Directorate of Religious Trust and Endowment, Madhya Pradesh Teerth Evam Mela Pradhikaran and Rajya Anand Sansthan. Madhya Pradesh had become the first state in the country to create Happiness Department.

UP university, Deen Dayal Veterinary University, to set up first goat fertility lab in the state of Uttar Pradesh

On December 30, the Deen Dayal Veterinary University in Uttar Pradesh proposed to set up the first goat fertility lab in the state under Rastriya Krashi Vikas Yojna at the cost of Rs 22 crore.

i. The University has entered into a contract with Pradeshik cooperative Dairy Federation for marketing.

About Rastriya Krishi Vikas Yojna:

- Rastriya Krishi Vikas Yojna or National Agriculture Development Programme is a State Plan Scheme of Additional Central Assistance launched in August 2007 as a part of the 11th Five Year Plan by the Government of India.
- It aims to achieve 4% annual growth in agriculture through development of Agriculture and its allied sectors.
- The funds are released to the State Governments/UTs on the basis of projects approved in the State Level Sanctioning Committee Meeting (SLSC) headed by the Chief Secretary of the concerned State.
- The Cabinet has approved (as on 1st November 2017) for continuation of the ongoing Centrally Sponsored Scheme (State Plans) – Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) as Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana- Remunerative Approaches for Agriculture and Allied Sector Rejuvenation (RKVY-RAFTAAR) for three years i.e. 2017-18 to 2019-20 with a financial allocation of Rs. 15,722 crores

- Under Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.
- Union Minister of MoA&FW: Shri Radha Mohan Singh.

Govt can check online food, grocery delivery items any time: FSSAI

On December 29, 2018, the national food regulator, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) issued guidelines to enable government to monitor the online food and grocery operators such as Grofers and BigBasket as well as food delivery platforms like Swiggy and Zomato any time.

i. The guidelines are part of directives issued by the regulator to re-operationalise licensing and registration of e-commerce food companies.

ii. According to the guidelines, the following has to be done:
- Food products offered for sale are liable to sampling at any point in the supply chain.
- An image of the said food should be out up in the platforms of the Companies so that consumers can recognise the product.
- All mandatory information mentioned in the Food Safety and Standards (FSS) Act will also have to be provided to consumers before purchase
- only fresh food should be delivered to consumers.
- A remaining shelf life of 30% or 45 days of the food should be maintained before expiry at the time of delivery.

Government sets up export promotion cell for MSMEs

On 31st December 2018, Giriraj Singh, Minister of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) informed the parliament that the MSME ministry has established an Export Promotion Cell with an aim to create a sustainable ecosystem for entire MSME development.

Benefits of Export Promotion Cell to the MSMEs:

i. Evaluation of readiness of MSMEs to export their products and services.
ii. Recognition of areas where improvements are required in order to be able to export effectively and efficiently.
iii. Integration of MSME into global value chain.

Key Points:

i. Citing the data available from the Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics (DGCIS), the minister stated that the current value of export from MSME related products is USD 147,390.08 million and share of MSME related products in the country’s exports was 48.56% during 2017-18.
ii. The Ministry also proposed to formulate a governing council chaired by Secretary MSME and comprising of senior officials and members from MSME, Export Development Authorities, Commodity Boards, and other bodies to ensure efficient and effective delivery of all MSME export related interventions.
iii. Besides this an action plan is also proposed to be put in place to achieve target of USD 100 billion of exports from India by 2020.

Phase II of Capacity Building Programme for Elected Women Representatives (EWRs) of Panchayati Raj Institutions initiated across 18 states: MOSW&CD

On December 28, 2018, Minister of State for Women and Child Development Ministry, Dr Virendra Kumar announced that Capacity Building Programme for Elected Women Representatives (EWRs) of Panchayati Raj Institutions was initiated by the government of India.

Objective:
To work as a forum to empower EWRs by developing leadership capacities through training.

Key Points:

i. Under this, State Institute of Rural Developments (SIRDs) and State Resource Centres (SRCs) will collaborate with Ministry of Women and Child Development in conducting training programmes across the States.
ii. Also, Departments of Panchayati Raj, Agriculture, Women & Child Development, Rural Development, etc. will be a part of the collaboration in the district level.
iii. In Phase-I of the programme (2017-18), a total 18,578 EWRs in 14 States were trained. In Phase-II, 18 States have been included for capacity building programmes for 15,030 EWRs.

AP gets separate HC from January 1

On 1st January 2019, Andhra Pradesh got a separate high court which will temporarily function from the Chief Minister's camp office in Amravati, the new capital of the state till a permanent building for the High Court is being set up at the 'Justice City'in Amaravati.

Key Points:

i. Since the bifurcation of the state on June 2, 2014, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana have had a common high court at Hyderabad. With the creation of the new high court, the country now has 25 high courts.
ii. The present high court building in Hyderabad would be housing the High Court of Telangana and the ten judges, who were part of the common high court, will now be the judges of the Telangana High Court.
iii. The bifurcation of the courts into the High Court of Telangana and High Court of Andhra Pradesh came after the Supreme Court on 29th October passed an order for the bifurcation and said that it expects a notification by January 01, 2019.
iv. Justice C Praveen Kumar, the senior-most judge among the judges allotted to Andhra Pradesh, was appointed as acting Chief Justice of AP High Court, that will have 15 other judges with effect from January 1, 2019.

v. Justice Thottathil B Radhakrishnan took over as the first Chief Justice of the Telangana High Court with effect from January 1, 2019.
Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation (KALIA): Rs.10,180 crore scheme launched for overall development of farmers of Odisha

On December 31, 2018, Chief Minister of Odisha, Naveen Patnaik, launched a Rs 10,180-crore scheme, for overall development of small, marginal and landless farmers, dubbed as ‘The Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation (KALIA)’ scheme.

i. This scheme consists of a life insurance of Rs.2 lakh for 57 lakh farmers and would grant them crop loans at zero percent interest.

ii. Also, financial assistance of Rs 10,000 per farmer family per annum to around 30 lakh small and marginal farmers’ families.

iii. Furthermore, Rs. 5000 would be given to farmers for Rabi cultivation and equal amount will be given for Kharif Cultivation.

iv. For landless farmers, a unit cost of Rs 12,500 would be provided for goat rearing, poultry farming, duck rearing, bee keeping and mushroom cultivation.

v. The scheme will be implemented in three phases. In the first phase of the initiative, Rs. 5000 would be disbursed to farmers between January 22 and January 25, 2019. The second phase will be completed by February 15, 2019.

Purchase of new vehicles, ACs banned for government departments: Madhya Pradesh CM Kamal Nath

On December 31, 2018, Chief Minister of the Congress led government of Madhya Pradesh, Kamal Nath, banned the purchase of new vehicles and air conditioners (ACs) by the government departments due to huge debt of the state.

i. Also, the expenditure incurred on office items has been limited on the basis of the difference between the allocated budget for these expenses in the financial year 2018-19 and the expenditure incurred in the financial year 2017-18.

ii. Although, hospitals, hostels, Anganwadis, shelter homes have been kept out of the purview of the limitations.

Background:
According to a report of Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) tabled in the Vidhan Sabha in March 2018, Madhya Pradesh is struggling with a huge debt of nearly Rs 1.83 crore.

Kerala women form 620-km long ‘wall’ to uphold gender equality against Sabarimala protests

On January 1, 2019, lakhs of women across Kerala formed a 620-km long Women’s Wall, that stretched from Kasargod in northern Kerala to the southernmost district of Thiruvananthapuram, to uphold gender equality and renaissance values.

i. This was a state sponsored move done in the backdrop of protests in Sabarimala due to Supreme Court’s decision to allow women to pray at the Ayyappa shrine.

ii. Health minister K K Shylaja was the lead of the human chain at Kasargod whereas leader Brinda Karat was the last person at the end of the chain in Thiruvananthapuram.

iii. The event was organised by the ruling CPI(M), along with over 176 other socio-political organisations, including the CPI, Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam (SNDP) and Kerala Pulayar Maha Sabha (KPMS).

WB govt announces two initiatives for farmers

On 31st December 2018, the Mamata Banerjee led West Bengal government announced two welfare initiatives for farmers as a part of the ’Krishi Krishak Bondhu’ scheme which will come into effect from New Year’s Day i.e. January 1, 2019.

Key Points:

i. Under the first of the two schemes, If a farmer aged between 18 to 60 years dies naturally or unnaturally, the state government will pay his family Rs 2 lakh. The farmers will be able to start applying for the scheme from February 1, 2019.

ii. Under the second initiative, farmers would get Rs 2,500 twice a year for growing a single crop on one acre of land. The farmers will be able to apply for this scheme from February 1, while the amount
will be calculated from January 1, 2019.

iii. The West Bengal government has already waived tax and cess on agricultural land to help farmers in distress.

iv. Recently, Odisha government also approved Rs.\textbf{10,180 crore} financial aid to farmers through ‘Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation’ (KALIA) scheme.

v. Recently Jharkhand had also announced a cash assistance of Rs \textbf{5,000} per acre to over 22.76 lakh small and marginal farmers across the state.

**ISRO launches ‘Samwad’ with students to engage them on space science**

On 1st January 2019, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) launched a new platform named “Samwad with Students” (SwS) as part of the enhanced outreach programme and to engage youngsters across India to capture their scientific temperament in Bengaluru.

**Key Points:**

i. The first SwS event saw interaction of 40 students and 10 teachers from select schools with ISRO Chairman Dr K Sivan during which the students were briefed about Indian space programme and their benefits to the common man at the Anthariksh Bhavan, Bengaluru.

ii. The Q&A session that followed saw Dr Sivan engaging students on a series of topics ranging from rockets, satellites, Chandrayaan, Gaganyaan and various space applications.

iii. The Chairman asked students to study science and mathematics with absolute seriousness which would enable them to take up challenging careers.

iv. Under the SwS platform, ISRO will also be organising guided tours thrice in a year, for students of class 11 and class 12 in which they would be taken to ISRO facilities in Thiruvananthapuram and Bengaluru and the launch centre at Sriharikota. Students would also be taken to space laboratories and would be allowed to make small satellites.

**Rs 185 cr released since FY 2015-16 to enhance female literacy rate among Scheduled Tribes: Govt**

On 02nd January 2019, the Centre has released around Rs \textbf{185 crore} since financial year 2015-2016 to bridge the gap between literacy levels of tribal girls and the general female population. The scheme, being implemented through voluntary and non-governmental organisations, aims at reducing the dropout rate at the elementary level by creating the required ambience for the education of tribal girls.

**Key points**

i. Minister of State Tribal Affairs Jaswantsinh Bhabhor told the Lok Sabha that the government released Rs \textbf{53.29 crore} in the 2015-16 fiscal under a scheme for education of tribal girls in 54 districts where the ST female literacy rate is less than 35 per cent

ii. Rs \textbf{65.44 crore} was released in financial year 2016-17 under the scheme titled ‘Strengthening Education among ST Girls in Low Literacy Districts’.

iii. The government released Rs \textbf{46.28 crore} in the 2017-18 fiscal and has so far released Rs \textbf{20.36 crore} in 2018-19.

**6 monuments declared of national importance in 2018 by ASI: Ministry of Culture**

On December 31, 2018, the Ministry of Culture announced that Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) declared 6 monuments as ‘protected and of national importance’ under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958, in 2018.

i. These sites are:
   - 125-year-old Old High Court Building in Nagpur, Maharashtra,
   - 2 Mughal era monuments in Agra - Haveli of Agha Khan and Hathi Khana,
   - The Neemrana Baori in Alwar district of Rajasthan,
   - The Group of Temples in Ranipur Jharail in Bolangir district of Odisha,
   - The Vishnu Temple in Kotali, Pithoragarh district in Uttarakhand.
ii. After this the total number of centrally protected sites or monuments under ASI are 3693.

iii. Among that, Uttar Pradesh has 745 sites, Karnataka has 506 and Tamil Nadu has 413 sites, marking them as the states having the highest number of ASI-maintained sites.

iv. In 2016, 2017, no new monuments were included in the list, the last of the included monument/site was done in 2015 which was- Vishnu Temple in Kerala's Wayanad district.

Background:
Under the Act, any monument or site that was erected and has been in existence for 100 years is dubbed as Ancient.

4677 PMBJP Kendras functional in 35 States/UTs of the country by end of year 2018: MoS Road Ministry
On January 4, 2019, Minister of State for Road Transport and Highways, Shipping and Chemicals and Fertilizers, Shri Mansukh L. Mandaviya stated that 4677 Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Jan Aushadhi Parivarjana’ (PMBJP) Kendras became functional in 35 States/UTs of the country.

i. Also unbranded generic medicines worth Rs. 417 crores (MRP) have been sold through PMBJP Kendras till December 2018.

ii. The medicines are procured only from WHO-GMP certified manufacturers,

iii. Thus, PMBJP has saved approximately Rs. 1668 crores to the citizens of country.

India & Pakistan’s 28th exchanged lists of nuclear installations under Prohibition of Attack against Nuclear installations Act, 1988 undertook on first day of new year
On January 1, 2019, India, Pakistan exchanged lists of nuclear installations and list of prisoners for the 28th time through diplomatic channels in New Delhi and Islamabad.

i. This was done under the Agreement on the Prohibition of Attack against Nuclear installations that was signed in December 1988 which came into force in January 1991.

ii. The pact states that two countries must inform each other of nuclear facilities to be covered under the agreement on January 1 every year.

iii. India handed over a list of 249 Pakistani civilian prisoners and 98 fishermen in its custody.

iv. The Pakistani side handed over a list of 537 prisoners — 54 civilians and 483 fishermen — in its jails.

v. The first such exchange was done in January 1, 1992.

Secunderabad Railway Station: the first Railway station to hoist Tricolour National flag on a 100 feet tall pole under Railway’s order
On January 2, 2019, Secunderabad Railway Station, in Hyderabad, became the first railway station of South Central Railway (SCR) zone to hoist a huge tricolour on a 100-foot tall pole.

i. This was done according to the Railway Board’s order to hoist the national flag at 75 A1 category railway stations. Kacheguda, Hyderabad became the 2nd and 3rd railway Stations to hoist the 100-foot tall pole.

ii. The flag would be guarded by the Railway Protection Force (RPF).

iii. Furthermore according to the order, SCR has taken the initiative to hoist the National Flag at 2 other ‘A1’ category Railway Stations they are Vijaywada and Tirupati.

Ministry of Human Resource Development introduced a 70-point grading index to assess the quality of school education
The Union Minister of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Shri Prakash Javadekar stated that the HRD ministry has introduced a 70-point grading index to assess the quality of school education offered by states.

Key Points:

i. A state performance grading will be done wherein the states will be marked out of 1,000 scores on 70 parameters.

ii. By doing so the ministry expects that it will give the correct picture of where every state stands and will create an atmosphere of a fair competition to improve each other's performances.
iii. In another move the ministry has also decided to print more books of the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) as against only 2 crore books two years ago.
iv. The ministry has set the target of printing 6 crore books this year so that the parents who want to send their wards to private schools, should get cheaper and quality books.
v. Furthermore the school curriculum will also be reviewed to ensure holistic education in which there will be time for physical education, value education, life skill education and experiential learning.

**Govt allocates Rs 10,900 cr for development of 40 satellite launch vehicles in next 4-years: ISRO Chairman**

Dr K Sivan, Chairman, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) announced at a ceremony organized by St Joseph's College, Trichy, Tamilnadu which is celebrating its 175 anniversary that the Union Government has allocated **10,900 crore rupees** for the development of **40** satellite launch vehicles in the next four years

**Key Points:**

i. He also informed that the Chandrayan-2 Mission will be launched within three months and It will land in one of those part of the Moon which is still unexplored.
ii. He also said that the human space flight Gaganyaan is planned to be launched by **2022**, on the occasion of **75th** anniversary of Independence.
iii. He also stated that the next year ISRO will be organising the Centenary year celebrations of ISRO founder Dr Vikram Sarabhai in which ISRO will rededicate itself to become a world class organization, capable of addressing the varied socio economic challenges of the nation.
iv. He said that Space Technology Incubation Centres will be set up in different parts of the country, including Trichy as a part of the celebrations.

**Kallakurichi announced as 33rd district, after bifurcating Villupuram: Tamil Nadu govt**

On January 8, 2019, Tamil Nadu chief minister Edappadi K Palaniswam announced the formation of a new district Kallakurichi by bifurcating Villupuram district which is one of the large districts in the State.

i. With this, the state will now have 33 districts.
ii. The decision was taken because the previous coverage of the district Villupuram was huge and it was becoming difficult for the administrators to govern the district.
iii. The newly formed region is renowned for its rice production.

**Consortium for Academic and Research Ethics (CARE) approved by UGC for better research publications**

On January 7, 2019, the Minister of State (HRD), Dr. Satya Pal Singh announced that the University Grants Commission (UGC) approved list of journals and the proposal to establish a Consortium for Academic and Research Ethics (CARE).

**Objective:**

Aim to refine and strengthen the Credibility of Research Publications.

**Key Points:**

i. The good quality Research Journals in disciplines will be maintained by CARE and referred to as ‘CARE Reference List of Quality Journals’. The disciplines are:

   - Social Sciences, Humanities, Languages, Arts, Culture, Indian Knowledge Systems etc.

ii. The ‘CARE Reference List of Quality Journals’ will be regularly updated and published by the UGC and the Members of the Consortium at their respective websites and will be used for all academic purposes.

iii. Additionally, to review its quality mandate relating to promotion of Research and to review the existing M.Phil/ Ph.D Regulations, the UGC constituted a Committee under the Chairmanship of Prof. P. Balram.

**Background:**

♦ A research paper led by Professor Bhushan Patwardhan had found that 88% of 1,009 journals
recommended by universities and included in the white list were dubious and only 112 journals met the criteria set by UGC to be included in the list.

**Indian Forest Service to be renamed as Indian Forest and Tribal Service: DoPT**

On January 8, 2019, the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) proposed renaming of the Indian Forest Service as Indian Forest and Tribal Service.

i. The move was made for the IFS to be more receptive towards tribals and forest dwellers.

ii. This was made after a directive from the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) suggested to do so.

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

The Ministry of Civil Aviation has approved operations of seaplanes in the Andaman Islands under UDAN-3 (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik) making Andaman the first island of India to operate seaplanes.

**Key Points**

i. The Union Minister for Civil Aviation, Suresh Prabhu has approved operations on 13 water aerodrome routes out of five are from Andaman islands which others are from dams in Gujarat and coastal areas in Kerala.

ii. The Islands of Andaman that would be connected through seaplanes are Campbell Bay, Car Nicobar, Havelock, Hutbay, Neil, Long island and Diglipur.

iii. Operation of Seaplanes which are commonly used in Maldives and Mauritius is a part government’s ambitious regional connectivity scheme and it will give a huge push to tourism in the strategically important region.

**Sikkim will become first state to roll out Universal Basic Income**

On January 11, 2019, Sikkim, though being a smallest state have set a initiative to introduce UBI in the entire nation. Sikkim’s long lasting chief minister and head of sikkim’s ruling party (sikkim democratic front) Pawan kumar chamling, quoted that if everything goes right then sikkim would be the first state to implement UNIVERSAL BASIC INCOME SYSTEM and execute it by 2022. This scheme is also regarded as an alternative to social welfare programmes with benefits towards reducing poverty.

**ABOUT UNIVERSAL BASIC INCOME:**

i. The UBI basically is an income given to families irrespective what do they do. It means everyone and every household will get an income irrespective of their profession.

ii. In other words , it is a step taken by the government to alleviate poverty by providing a basic income to all citizens

iii. This same scheme has been tested even in India. The UBI has been tried in Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and the results are fairly good.

**Chhattisgarh withdraws general consent accorded to the CBI to probe cases in the state**

On 10 January 2019, Government in Chhattisgarh withdrew the general consent accorded to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to probe cases in the state. The state government has conveyed the decision to the Union Ministry of Home Affairs and the Department of Personnel and Training.

**Key points:**

i. CBI cannot initiate any investigation without the consent of the state government after this decision.

ii. Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal have already withdrawn the general consent given to the CBI.

**Rs 637.98 crore released to 17 states under BADP for development of areas along international borders: MHA**

On January 11, 2019, the Ministry of Home Affairs announced release of Rs 637.98 crore during 2018-19 to 17 states to develop the living standards of people living within 50 kilometres of the International Border.

i. This will be given under the Border Area Development Programme (BADP).
ii. Earlier in 2017-18, the ministry had released Rs 1,100 crore for the all-round development of villages along the international borders.

**About BADP:**

i. With the release of total amount of Rs 13,400 crore, since its inception in 1986-87, BADP aims covers 111 border districts in 17 states to meet special development needs of border population with a focus on the people living within 50 kilometres of the international border.

ii. Schemes under the BADP include construction of primary health centres, schools, supply of drinking water, community centres, connectivity, drainage to enable sustainable living.

iii. 61 model villages are also being developed under the BADP.

**Background:**

India shares border with Pakistan (3,323 km), China (3,488 km), Nepal (1,751 km), Bhutan (699 km), Myanmar (1,643 km) and Bangladesh (4,096 km).

**Govt drafts five-year action plan to address drug abuse in the country**

The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has drafted a five-year action plan called the National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction (2018 -2023) NAPDDR which aims to employ a multi-pronged strategy to address the problem of drug and substance abuse in the country.

**Key Points:**

i. The action plan involves preventive education, awareness generation, counselling, treatment and rehabilitation of drug-dependent people, besides training and capacity-building of service providers through collaborative efforts of the Centre, state and NGOs.

ii. For monitoring the effective implementation of the NAPDDR, a steering committee would be constituted under the chairmanship of the secretary, Social Justice Ministry, and with representatives from the Ministries of Health, Human Resource Development, Women and Child Development, Home Affairs, Skill development and Entrepreneurship.

iii. Furthermore a national survey to find the extent and pattern of substance abuse is also being conducted by the ministry, in collaboration with the National Drug Dependence Treatment Centre (NDDTC), AIIMS.

iv. As a part of the plan, a database for re-treatment, ongoing treatment and post-treatment of addicts of different categories and age groups and on substance used will be maintained.

**Gujarat becomes 1st state to implement 10% quota to EWS(Economically Weaker sections)**

Gujarat Government announced to implement 10 per cent quota for Economically Weaker sections of general category in educational institutions and government jobs for general category poor candidates. This quota will be implemented for every job offers or admission process that is to start from January 14, 2019.

i. The Centre had taken the decision under Article 46 of Guiding Principles of Constitution of India. This move by the Government is considered to be the historic move.

**Puducherry announced ban of Single-Use Plastic from March 1, 2019**

On January 13, 2019, Chief Minister V Narayanasamy announced that production, sale and use of single-use plastic products will be banned in the Union Territory of Puducherry from March 1, 2019.

i. He also announced the following decisions of the cabinet:

- to introduce ‘voluntary retirement scheme’ for the workers and staff of the century-old Anglo-French Textiles (AFT) mill and two other textile mills, named Bharathi and Swadeshi (run by Puducherry Textile corporation) in a phased manner in the next six months.

- one per cent quota of reservation would also be provided to the members of the ‘Irular, Villi and Vettaikaran’ communities under the Scheduled Tribes Category in education and employment opportunities.
government-owned Pondicherry Industrial Promotion Development and Investment Corporation Limited (PIPDIC) and Distillery and Power Corporations would get benefits of Seventh Pay Commission,

**Maharashtra government committed to double farmers’ income by 2022: Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis**
On January 14, 2019, **Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis** reaffirmed the state government’s commitment towards doubling farmers income by **2022**.

i. According to his announcement, The government has approved Rs 24,000 crore worth loan waiver for the state’s 51 lakh farmers holding bank accounts,

ii. It had also made available more than Rs 10,000 crore fund through budget in the current fiscal for implementation of various schemes,

iii. Rs 15,240 crore worth compensation were distributed to farmers whose crops were damaged by natural calamity. He also mentioned about the government’s Jalyukta Shivar water conservation scheme.

iv. Rs 34,000 crore was given for upgrading the dams in the state.

**PM Narendra Modi unveils slew of projects worth over Rs 1,550 cr in Odisha**
On 15th January 2019, Prime Minister **Shri Narendra Modi** launched a slew of Central government projects worth over Rs 1,550 crore in **Balangir** district of Odisha for accelerating the state’s development.

**Details of the Projects launched:**

i. The prime minister dedicated to the nation the electrification of **Jharsuguda-Vizianagaram** and **Sambalpur-Angul** railway lines spanning 813 km and completed at a cost of Rs 1,085 crore.

ii. He also inaugurated the doubling of 14.2 km **Barpali-Dungaripali** and 17.3 km **Balangir-Deogao** rail lines, completed at a cost of Rs 189.3 crore.

iii. Besides a **Multi-Modal Logistics Park (MMLP)**, spread over 28.3 acres and built at a cost of Rs 100 crore at **Jharsuguda** was also dedicated to the nation.

iv. He also inaugurated the 15 km-long **Balangir-Bichhupali rail line** laid at a cost of Rs 115 crore. It is part of the new 289-km Balangir-Khurda road line which connects to Howrah-Chennai main line on Khurda Road and Titlagarh-Sambalpur line at Balangir.

v. A new train on **Balangir-Bichhupali** route was also flagged off by PM Modi.

vi. Modi also inaugurated renovation and restoration works at Nilamadhav & Siddheswar Temple at Gandhaharadi in Boudh, Paschim Somnath group of temples, also in Boudh, and Ranipur Jharial group of monuments in Balangir.

vii. Furthermore six **Passport Seva Kendras (PSKs)** one each at Jagatsinghpur, Kendrapara, Puri, Phulbani, Bargarh and Balangir were also inaugurated by PM.

viii. Finally he laid the foundation stone for a permanent building of **Kendriya Vidyalaya, Sonepur**, to be constructed at a cost of Rs 15.81 crore and also inaugurated a **Kendriya Vidyalaya** at **Rayagada**.

**SC issues notice to Centre against order allowing agencies to monitor computers**
On 14th January 2019, the **Supreme Court** issued a notice to the Centre on a plea challenging the government’s notification authorising 10 central agencies to intercept, monitor and decrypt any computer system.

**Key Points:**

i. Chief Justice **Ranjan Gogoi** issued the notice after the central government on 20th December 2018 had issued a notification allowing 10 government agencies to intercept communication on all social platforms and electronic devices.

ii. The ‘**cyber and information security**’ division of the Union **Home ministry** under the authority of Home Secretary **Rajiv Gauba** had passed the government order under the section 69 of the IT Act.

iii. The 10 agencies include: Intelligence Bureau, Narcotics Control Bureau, Enforcement Directorate,
the Central Board of Direct Taxes, Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, Central Bureau of Investigation,
National Investigation Agency, the Research and Analysis Wing, Directorate of Signal Intelligence (in
service areas of J-K, North East and Assam) and Delhi Police.
iv. The notification by the government bounds the subscriber or service provider or any person in
charge of the computer resource to extend all facilities and technical assistance to the agencies and
failing to do so will invite seven-year imprisonment and fine.

**Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (Amendment) Act, 2019 officially came into
force: HRD Ministry**
On January 10, 2019, the President of India, Shri. Ram Nath Kovind gave his assent to the Right of
Children to Free and Compulsory Education (Amendment) Act, 2019.
i. It was passed by the Parliament on 3rd January, 2019.
ii. It has also been notified in the Gazette of India on January 16, 2019, which is when it came into
force.

**About the Act:**
i. Earlier it was called the ‘Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009’.
ii. The following changes have been made:
   • There shall be a regular examination in the fifth class and in the eighth class at the end of every academic year,
   • If a child fails in the examination, he shall be given additional instruction and granted opportunity for re-examination within a period of two months from the date of declaration of the result.
   • Government may allow schools to hold back a child in the fifth class or in the eighth class or in both classes, if he fails in the re-examination.
   • No child shall be expelled from a school till the completion of elementary education.

**UP third state to approve quota for poor among upper castes**
On 18th January 2019, Uttar Pradesh became the third state after Jharkhand and Gujarat to approve the
10 per cent reservation for economically backward among upper castes in jobs and educational institutions.
i. The Approval was given in a meeting headed by Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister, Yogi Adityanath.
ii. The Reservation for the poor among upper castes came into effect on 12th January 2019, after President of India gives assent to The Constitution (One Hundred and Third Amendment) ACT, 2019.

**Tamil Nadu Released startup and innovative policy 2018-2023**
On January 18, 2019,Tamil Nadu government released ‘Startup & Innovation policy 2018-2023’ with a
mission to provide an innovative ecosystem for startups registered in the State and to make Tamil Nadu
a ‘Global Innovation hub for startups’ by 2023

**Key Points to be Noted**
i. The government formed a 5-point plan to implement the policies which include creating ecosystems, ensure resources availability for Startup ecosystem, enable skill development and job creation, support social entrepreneurship and establish global accessibility and partnerships.
ii. The State is to set up Tamil Nadu Startup Fund of Funds for Rs.250 crore which is to be registered as an Alternative Investment Fund (AIF) managed by Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI), for investment in startups and MSMEs. The government will invest Rs.75 crore in the fund with the first tranche of Rs. 25 crore be allotted in FY 2019-2020.
iii. The government also created Tamil Nadu Startup Seed Grant Fund (TNSSGF) of Rs.50 crore with a estimate amount of Rs.5 crore in the first year in partnership with financial institutions for supporting early stage financing requirements of the startups.
Nirmala Sitharaman launched Tamil Nadu defence industrial Corridor in Tiruchirappalli
On Jan 20, 2019, Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman launched a series of projects as a part of the Tamil Nadu Defence Industrial Corridor in Tiruchirappalli. This is considered to be the second corridor succeeding the one launched in Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh.

Points to be Noted:

i. This is considered to be the mega corridor that would link the remaining military manufacturing units present in South India, it is tuned at the cost of 3038cr. (apprx)

ii. Total investments of Rs 3,038 crore (Apprx.) in this defence corridor would come from Ordnance Factory Board, Bharat Electronics Limited and Bharat Dynamics Limited, TVS, Data Patterns and Alpha Designs committed to invest Rs 2,305 crore, Rs 140.5 crore and Rs 150 crore, Rs 50 crore, Rs 75 crore and Rs 100 crore, respectively.

iii. The Tamil Nadu corridor has nodes at Trichy, Salem, Hosur, Kovai and Chennai. It is expected to be a specialised facility hub in aero component manufacturing.

iv. Sitharaman also launched the “CODISSIA Defence Innovation and Incubation Centre” to support the MSMEs, start-ups and existing industries in their endeavour to expand and contribute significantly for defence indigenisation.

v. Tamil Nadu ranks 4th in the country with 9.8% of India’s total exports.

Indians over 65 and under 15 years of age can use Aadhaar Card to visit Nepal, Bhutan

Aadhaar Card has been added in the valid travel documents and now Indians under 15 and over 65 age can travel to Nepal and Bhutan if they have a valid Aadhaar Card.

Key Points:

i. Earlier Indians under the age brackets of under 15 and over 65 could travel to Nepal and Bhutan by showing their PAN Card, Driving Licence, CGHS card or Ratio card but not Aadhaar Card.

ii. Other India citizens except these two age bracket are not allowed to travel with Aadhaar Card to these two neighbouring countries.

iii. Indians do not require VISA to travel to Nepal or Bhutan if they have a valid Passport, Photo identity proof issued by Indian Government or Election ID issued by Election Commission of India.

iv. Certificate of registration issued by Indian embassy in Nepal is not considered as a valid travel documents to travel between India & Nepal.

v. The emergency certificate and identity certificate which is issued by Indian Embassy in Nepal can be used as a valid travel documents to travel back to India from Nepal.

vi. Teenagers of age 15 to 18 can use Identity certificate issued by Principal of the School to travel between India and Nepal.

UP govt to give pension of Rs 500 to destitute persons

On January 21, 2019, UP government announced to give a monthly pension of Rs.500, which is Rs.100 more than earlier monthly Pension to the destitute person.

Key points to be Noted:

i. This measure came immediately after the implementation of 10 per cent reservation for economically weak in the general category in the upcoming educational year

ii. The Parliament passed the Constitution (124th Amendment) Bill, 2019 in Parliament to grant 10% reservation in education and government jobs to economically weaker individuals belonging to the general category, across religions. The reservation is meant for individuals whose annual earning is below Rs 8 lakh and who possess less than 5 acres of agriculture land.

iii. Yogi Adityanath also announced pension scheme to Hindu seers who are above the age of 60. The scheme is also likely to benefit the seers in Uttar Pradesh. The pension will be provided to Hindu sadhus who are above the age of 60. This announcement was made when Prayagraj in Uttar Pradesh is hosted Kumbh Mela 2019.

Commerce Ministry invites suggestions on Baba Kalyani Group report on SEZ Policy

On 18th January 2019, Shri Baba Kalyani, Chairman & MD, M/s. Bharat Forge Ltd led a committee which constituted by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry to study the
existing Special Economical Zone(SEZ) policy of India submitted its report to Union Minister for Commerce & Industry and Civil Aviation Suresh Prabhu in New Delhi.

**Key Points:**

i. The reports of the committee were made public on 22\(^{nd}\) January and government is seeking suggestions or comments on the recommendations of the committee till 30\(^{th}\) January 2019.

ii. Objectives of the Baba Kalyani led committee was constituted in June 2018 to evaluate the SEZ policy and make it World Trade Organization (WTO) compatible, suggest measures to maximize utilization of vacant land in SEZs.

iii. The report says that if India is going to become a USD 5 trillion economy by 2025 then the current environment of manufacturing competitiveness and services has to undergo a basic paradigm shift.

iv. It says that Government has to set a target of creating 100 million jobs and achieving 25% of GDP from the manufacturing sector by 2022 as part of its flagship ‘Make in India’ programme.

**Assam Govt to give 10% quota to economically weaker sections in general category**

On 21\(^{st}\) January 2019, Assam Cabinet headed by Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal has approved 10 per cent quota for the economically weaker sections of the general category in government employment and government education institutes.

**Key Points:**

i. The cabinet also approved the guidelines for disbursement of Rs.5,000 each to five lakh farmers of the state under the Mukhya Mantri Krishi Sa Sajuli Yozana for purchase of farm tools and implements.

ii. In another decision the Cabinet approved a loan amount of Rs.95 crore under Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF) from NABARD, in-order to construct and strengthen embankments, dykes and other infrastructure across the state.

iii. Furthermore the cabinet also approved incentives for government doctors, nurses and other healthcare workers under Ayushman Bharat & Atal Amrit Abhiyan.

iv. The Assam Cabinet decided that, 20 per cent of the total amount for government hospitals implementing these schemes has been earmarked for the purpose of incentivizing Government Health workforce.

**Delhi HC approved to release Movie ’72 Hours – Martyr Who Never Died’**

On 20th January 2019, The Delhi High Court gave it nod to release the movie ’72 Hours – Martyr Who Never died’, which is based on the life of the 1962 Sino-Indian war hero Rifleman Jaswant Sing Rawat who was posthumously awarded the Maha Vir Chakra for gallantry during 1962 war.

**Key Points**

i. Rifleman Jaswant Singh Rawat was a Sino-Indian war hero who was serving as an Indian army soldier in Garhwal Rifles.

ii. He was serving the 4th battalion during the battle of Nuranang of the Nort- East Frontier Agency in the war of 1962, and now it’s in Arunachal Pradesh.

iii. He was honored by building a memorial by the Chinese people’s Liberation army and it was named as Jaswant Garh.

**Andra pradesh government decided to give quota to the kapus community**

On January 22, 2019, Andhra Pradesh government decided to give only five per cent reservation to the economically weaker sections (EWS) under the Centre’s 10 per cent quota, setting aside the rest to the upper caste Kapus in its capital city Amaravati.

**Important fact:**

i. The cabinet also approved the decision of doubling welfare pensions given under the NTR Bharosa Scheme. Pensions of Rs 1,000 and Rs 1,500 will now be doubled to Rs 2,000 and Rs 3,000 respectively.

ii. The cabinet also decided to provide exemption of life tax for autos and quarterly tax for tractors and motor vehicle tax arrears.

iii. To provide reservation to this community, Naidu formed a committee under Justice Manjunath in
iv. The cabinet has decided to provide aid for 1,26,097 houses built without approval since June 2014. Beneficiaries will be given Rs 60,000 each, including Rs 15,000 for building a toilet at their home. This will cost Rs 756 crores to the exchequer.

ev. The cabinet further approved the proposal of providing Rs 10,000 to houses constructed during 1996-2004 in urban areas. Andhra Pradesh Housing Board (APHB) will be given Rs 20 crores for 20,000 units as one time grant.

vi. Medical insurance scheme for handloom labour will be reintroduced with Rs 10 crores budget. Each family will be provided insurance worth Rs 20,000. Insurance companies will be called through e-tenders.

vii. The cabinet decided to allot Rs 50 crores for construction of Samata Sphoorti Vanam.

Union Minister Gadkari laid foundation for Namami Ganga project in Agra and Mathura

On January 22, 2019, Nitin Gadkari, Minister for Road Transport & Highways, Shipping and Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation laid foundation stone for six Namami Ganga project in Agra and Mathura.

About the Project:

i. There were four projects in Mathura that cost of Rs 511.74 crore. Out of the four, two were sewage projects. The first one was a integrated sewerage infrastructure in the city on Hybrid Annuity Mode with the motive of ‘One-City-One-Operator’

ii. There is also a project for cleaning of 27 Ghats at a cost of Rs 3.60 Crore and to eradicate of Industrial Pollution, there is also a project for upgradation of infrastructure of Textile Printing units at the Mathura Industrial Area at a cost of Rs 13.87 Crore

iii. The projects in Agra included Sewage Scheme at 857.26cr and laying sewer house connections under the AMURT scheme at a cost of 353.57cr.

RPF woman squad “JOYTI BAHINI” launched in Guwahati

On January 19, 2019, The Northeast Railway sector has launched a dedicated woman squad ‘JOYTI BAHINI’ to enhance security of women in railway station and trains. This has been launched in Kamakhya station of Guwahati.

Key points:

i. The squad is named after the brave queen Ahom of 17th century.

ii. The ‘Joymati Bahini’ was launched recently by NF Railway’s Inspector General and Principal Chief Security Commissioner B B Mishra

iii. In case of emergency the number allotted to seek help of this squad is 182

Cabinet decides to strengthen NE autonomous councils

On 23rd January 2019, the Union Cabinet approved the landmark amendment to Article 280 of the Constitution to increase the financial and executive powers of the 10 Autonomous Councils in Sixth Schedule areas of North East.

Key Points:

i. About 1 crore tribal people living in Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram will benefit by the amendment.

ii. According to the approval, Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Tripura, Karbi Anglong Autonomous Territorial Council and Dima Hasao Autonomous Territorial Council are the places where State Finance Commissions will be set up.

iii. The autonomous councils which till now had to depend on grants from Central Ministries and the State governments for specific projects would get financial resources upon the recommendation of newly constituted Finance Commission.

iv. The elections of Autonomous Councils, village and municipal councils in the scheduled areas of Assam, Mizoram and Tripura would be conducted by State Election Commissions. This will facilitate elected village municipal councils ensuring democracy at the grass-roots level.

v. The village and municipal councils will have to reserve at least one third of the seats for women.
Two nominated members in all the autonomous councils will be women.

vi. Furthermore additional 30 subjects including departments of Public Works, Forests, Public Health Engineering, Health and Family Welfare, Urban Development and Food and Civil Supply would be transferred to Karbi Anglong Autonomous Territorial Council and Dima Hasao Autonomous Territorial Council in Assam.

vi. The proposed amendments would enhance the funds available to the local government institutions for undertaking development works in the tribal areas.

vii. As far as now, Meghalaya has chosen to opt out of the election provision.

Article 35A: Supreme court to take in chamber decision on plea challenging the legislation

On January 22, 2019, 45th Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi announced to take consideration on early hearing about the allegation raised on Article 35A.

i. Article 35A, was incorporated in the Constitution 1954, which issues special rights and privileges to the citizens of Jammu and Kashmir and restricts the people from outside the state from acquiring any immovable property in the state

ii. In previous hearing, it is noted that, if a woman marries outside the state she is denied of her rights and everything whereas if it is a man, he and his spouse gets every single right that is applicable to them, over all it is undeniable that gender discrimination prevails in the implementation of the Article 35A

Neermahal: Logo for Tripura tea unveiled

On January 20, 2019, Tripura’s chief minister Biplab Kumar Deb launched the logo for Tripura’s tea in Agartala, which features Neermahal which would enhances its popularity all over the world.

i. ‘Neer Mahal’ is the Tripura’s logo which is a iconic place in Tripura and it is one of the largest water palace in India among the two water palace. The other water palace of India is located at Jal Mahal in Rajasthan.

ii. Tripura is the second largest tea producer with 10 million kg tea produced annually.

iii. The logo was designed by artist and designer Aparesh Paul.

Telangana to set up ‘Save Tiger Protection Force’

On January 22, 2019, The Telangana government decided to form a ‘State Tiger Protection Force (STPF) committee’ to save the Big cat population in the State. State Forest Protection Committee headed by chief Secretary S.K Joshi has decided to form STPF.

i. The State and Central government will share the cost of the ‘State Tiger Protection Force (STPF) with 112 members headed by the assistant conservator of the forest on 40:60 basis.

ii. They are organised to protect the tiger population in the areas of Amarabad and Kawal tiger reserves.

iii. Fund amount of 2.25cr was also sanctioned to protect the tigers and to prevent forest fire accidents.

Dharmendra pradhan launches new reforms to strengthen Jan Shikshan Santhans

On January 24, 2019, Dharmendra Pradhan, Minister of skill development implemented new reforms for Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS) to enhance skill ecosystem and entrepreneurship in most of the remotest areas of India under centre’s flagship programme Skill India at the National Conference for Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSSs) in New Delhi.

Guidelines made:

i. Aligning of JSS program and curriculum to Nationwide Talent Qualification Framework (NSQF) to enhance teaching.

ii. Decentralisation of powers for JSSs by supplying additional accountability and independence to district administration

iii. To identify and endorse common skills in the district

iv. Evidence based evaluation procedure

v. Straightforward online certification

vi. Linking JSS to Community Finance Administration program (PFMS) to manage transparency and
accountability of the ecosystem

vii. School for trainers to enhance their capacity through Countrywide Capabilities Coaching Institutes (NSTIs).

**New portal:**
The Ministry also released the new JSS site [www.jss.gov.in](http://www.jss.gov.in) which will furnish information and facts on action ideas, databases of beneficiaries and stakeholders, details of finance and expenditure and other ongoing development projects that are on process.

**About Jan Shikshan Santhans:**
Previously known as Shramik Vidyapeeth was renamed as Jan Shikshan Santhans in April, 2000. It is successful in providing skill development programmes to every remote areas of the country for past 50 years.

**Centre decided to renovate 400 abandoned airstrips Jharkhand is the first state to develop one such strip**
On January 25, 2019, The Centre decided to renovate and develop around 400 abandoned airstrips across the country to strengthen air-connectivity, and **Jharkhand is the first state to develop airstrip in Dhalbhumgarh**.

i. Airports Authority of India prepared a Memorandum of Understanding with a motive to renovate air strips and asked for support from all the 29 states and seven Union Territories.

ii. Modern airport at **Dhalbhumgarh** is to be renovated with the initial amount of **100cr** and would be completed in **18 months**

**NIC Hosts conclave on New Technologies**
On January 22, 2019, Technical Advisory Group (TAG) of National Informatics Centre (NIC) inaugurated a **two-day Technology Conclave** in New Delhi. The conclave was inaugurated by Shri Ajay Sawhney, Secretary, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology. The theme of the conclave was “Technologies for NextGen Governance”. It concluded on 23rd January, 2019.

**Key points:**

i. This Technology Conclave is considered to be the first move through a decade of digital technology and setting our path wide toward the New Digital India.

ii. The technologies covered during this conclave were Big Data and Advanced Analytics, Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Deep Learning Methodologies, Cloud Native Scalable Applications, Micro-services, Software Defined Infrastructure and Cyber Security.

**Amul Launches Camel Milk With ’Numerous Benefits’ In Select Markets**
On January 24th, 2019 Gujarat Co-operative Milk Marketing Federation Ltd, venture of diary brand **Anand Milk Union Limited or Amul** has launched the Camel milk first time in the brand name of **‘Amul Camel Milk’** in selective areas of Gujarat.

i. Initially ‘Amul Camel Milk’ will be launched in areas like **Gandhinagar, Ahmedabad and the Kutch of Gujarat**. Price of 500ml will be Rs.50 and it should be refrigerated with shelf life of three days. Amul has already introduced the Camel Milk Chocolate.

**DoJ to deliver e-courts services to litigant public through its CSCs**
On 25th January 2019, Department of Justice (DoJ) has decided to deliver e-courts services to the litigant public through around two lakh Common Service Centres (CSCs) so as to provide efficient and time bound access to the Courts services.

**Key Points**

i. No Fee will be charged from Customers for e-Court services to be delivered through Common Service Centres (CSCs). However CSCs can charge five rupees for any of the 23 services available on Courts portal towards cost of service.

ii. 17 thousands districts and subordinate courts have already become IT-enabled benefiting litigants and advocates.
iii. e-courts services are rolled through digital mediums like Email, SMS, Mobile App and some other platforms.

‘Nari-Shakti’ is the Oxford Dictionaries Hindi Word of the year for 2018
On 26th January 2019, the Oxford Dictionaries announced that the word ‘Nari Shakti’ which is derived from Sanskrit has been chosen as the Hindi Word of the year for 2018.
i. The Announcement was made during a session at Jaipur Literature Festival which is being held at Diggi Palace in Jaipur, Rajasthan.
ii. ‘Nari Shakti’ is made of two words ‘Nari’ and ‘Shakti’, ‘Nari’ means Women and ‘Shakti’ means Power. In 2017, Oxford Dictionaries had chosen ‘Aadhar’ as the word of the year.


Key Points
i. The amendment creates a separate category for the persons belongings to Pahari community, clan or tribe having distinct, cultural ethnic and linguistic identify among the Socially and Educationally Backward classes (other than SC and ST).
ii. Pahari community also called Pahadi or Parbati belongs to Indo – Aryan ethnic group inhabiting Himalayan region of Nepal and India.
iii. Pahari community is from old times itself faced economic distress as they wire Socio – economic backward. The main reason for Socio – economic backwardness is their remoteness and inaccessibility of the areas that they have been living in.
iv. Pahari communities were unable to compete with the other sections of the society as they have less access to education and health care.

Expert Panel Recommends Increasing Number Of Institutions Of Eminence To 30
On January 27, 2019, Empowered Expert Committee (EEC) set by the HRD Ministry for selecting Institutions of Eminence (IOEs) has recommended to increase the number of such institutes to 30 from the current 20 institutions.

Last year, 19 institution got the title of eminent institution and the selected government institutions were granted upto Rs. 1,000 crore provided and the private institutions were given the freedom to decide their fee structure and courses.

Train 18 named Vande Bharat Express: Piyush Goyal
On 27th January 2019, Union Minister of Railways, Piyush Goyal announced that Train 18 which is India’s first indigenously developed engineless semi high speed train has been named as Vande Bharat Express.

Key Points
i. The Train will run between Delhi and Varanasi at the maximum speed of 160 kmph and it will be flagged off by Prime Minister Narendra Modi soon.
ii. The Train has 16 coach and it is built in 18 months with a cost of Rs 97 Crore at Integral Coach Factory (ICF), Chennai.
iii. Train 18, the fully air-conditioned train is expected to replace 30 years old Shatabdi Express. It got a regular clearance of Electrical Inspector to the Government (EIG) on 25th January 2019.
iv. Vande Bharat Express which will run between Delhi and Varanasi, will stop at Kanpur and Allahabad in the route.

Patnaik launched Rs 1,100 crore Infra projects in Ganjam district
On 27 January 2019, Chief Minister of Odisha, Shri Naveen Patnaik launched various development and welfare projects worth Rs 1100 crore during his one day visit to Ganjam district.
Key Points
i. Naveen Patnaik laid foundation stone for 231 projects worth Rs 715 crore and inaugurated 48 projects in the Ganjam District of Odisha.
ii. Some of the Major Projects inaugurated by Naveen Patnaik are 10-bedded geriatric ward (Rs 40 crore), bleaching store (Rs 29.64 crore), district vaccine store (Rs 79 crore) and Construction of OPD for eye department at the district headquarter hospital and city hospital.
iii. Foundation stone for various projects were laid during the visit of Naveen Patnaik including Railway over bridge at Jagannathpur and Ambapua with estimated cost of Rs 30 and Rs 35 crore respectively and 9 Major Rail project (Rs 113.51 crore).
iv. Foundation stone were also laid for the development of infrastructure of 11 tourism projects costing Rs. 4.78 crore in the district.
v. The Foundation for an additional project costing Rs 49 crore for double laning of a 15-km road from Karapalli to Loudigaon were also laid by Naveen Patnaik.

Odisha launched Jiban Sampark project for the welfare of the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups
On 26th January 2019, Chief Minister of Odisha, Shri Naveen Patnaik announced “Jiban Sampark” Project in partnership with UNICEF India (United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund) while inaugurating Tribal Fair also known as “Adivasi Mela” on Republic day.

Key Points
i. The Project was announced to spread awareness about the development and welfare initiatives of state government among the Particularly vulnerable Tribal Groups of the state.
ii. ‘The Adivasi Mela’ is an annual event to showcase the lifestyle, artefacts, culture, tradition and music of the tribal people community of Odisha.
iii. Adivasi Mela was inaugurated on 26th January 2019. It concluded on 09th February 2019.
iv. The Focus Area of Jiban Sampark includes skill development, empowering communities, cooperation and innovation among the groups 13 particularly vulnerable tribal groups residing in the remote areas.
v. Besides this, CM of Odisha also dedicated a 500-seat hostel in the city to tribal students of the state. It boosts existing educational infrastructure.

Pariksha Pe Charcha 2.0 held in NewDelhi
On 29th January 2019, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi discussed ways to handle the exam pressure in the second edition of “Pariksha Pe Charcha 2.0” at Talkatora Stadium in New Delhi. The Programme was organized by Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD).

Key Points
i. 2200 students, parents, teachers and college students from 24 states and Union Territories took part in the event.
ii. Prime Minister, Narendra Modi answered the queries of Students, teachers and parents and motivated the students with his personal experiences.
iii. A 10 minute cultural programme was also performed by the winners of the Kala Utsav Contest Winners, their parents and teachers.
iv. Rini Bhattacharjee (differently abled student of class XI) from West Bengal enthralled the audience with her performance on the keyboard with the help of her feet only.
v. For the first time, Indian students residing abroad from countries like Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Russia, Japan, Libya, Kenya, Malaysia, Oman, Tanzania, Thailand, UAE, Ghana, Liberia Nigeria, Iran, Nepal, Doha, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Singapore were connected to the programme live.
First of its Kind: Western Railway provides ‘segway’ to RPF personnel

On 29th January 2019, the two-wheeled, self-balancing and battery powered electric vehicles - Segway provided by Western Railway to Railway Protection Force (RPF) personnel posted in all major railway stations in Mumbai.

**Key Points**

1. The vehicle will help RPF in keeping an eye on every nook and corner of the railway station. It will be helpful in railway stations having long platforms.
2. At present, Segways are used by Marine Drive Police in South Mumbai. The officials need sufficient training to operate these vehicles.
3. Segways will help the security personnel to carry out their duties more efficiently. They will be able to move faster in the premises of the railway station.
4. It was launched on the 70th Republic Day function where Western Railway General Manager A K Gupta inaugurated 6 segways at Churchgate Railway Station.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

U.S., Israel quit UNESCO citing bias

On 31st December 2018, The United states of America (USA) and Israel officially quit the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) amid concerns that the organization fosters anti-Israel bias.

**Key Points**

1. UNESCO was established in 1945 after the end of world war II to foster peace and it is best known for its World Heritage programs which designates cultural sites and aims to preserve traditions.
2. Both the countries filed the notice to withdraw from the organization in 2017.
3. The United states, one of the founding member of UNESCO has demanded “Fundamental Reform” in the organization.
4. USA and Israel stopped paying dues to UNESCO after Palestine which is disputes part of Israel was voted in as a member state of UNESCO in 2011. The total due that is not paid by USA and Israel is over $600 mn. So this move will not affect UNESCO because it has been already dealing with funding slash ever since 2011.

President Trump signs ‘Asia Reassurance Initiative Act’ into law

On 31st December 2018, President of United States of America (USA), Donald J. Trump signed the “Asia Reassurance Initiative Act (ARIA)” into law. The act establishes a multifaceted U.S. strategy to increase U.S. security, economic interests, and values in the Indo-Pacific region.

**Key points**

1. The ARIA will authorize $1.5 billion over a five year period to enhance economic, diplomatic and security cooperation with strategic regional allies.
2. The ARIA Act was introduced into the Senate in April by Senator Cory Gardner, and was co-sponsored by Senators Edward Markey, Marco Rubio, and Ben Cardin.
3. ARIA was passed by the Senate on December 04 2018, and approved by the House on December 12 2018.
4. ARIA draws attention to U.S. relations with China, India, the ten member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and Northeast Asian allies Japan and South Korea.

Pakistan’s Provincial Government declares Panj Tirath Hindu religious site as national heritage

On 2nd January 2019, the provincial Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government in northwest Pakistan has declared the ancient Hindu religious site of Panj Tirath in the provincial capital Peshawar as national heritage.
Key Points:
i. The announcement which stated that a fine of 2 million Pakistani rupees and five years imprisonment to be awarded to anyone found guilty of damaging the historic site was made under the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Antiquities Act of 2016.
ii. ‘Panj Tirath’ is named for the five pools of water present at the site and houses a Hindu temple “Shawal Thakardawara” and a lawn with date palm trees.
iii. Devotees believe that mythical king Pandu from the epic Mahabharata bathed in the pools during the month of Kartik and worshipped under the date palm trees in the area for two days.
iv. The site was damaged during the reign of the Afghan Durrani dynasty in 1747, however it was restored by local Hindus during the period of Sikh rule in 1834 and worship started again.

Iran approved anti-money laundering bill for ease of business
On January 5, 2019, Iranian council known as the Expediency Council approved an anti-money laundering bill to ease trade
i. This bill will be in line with the standards set by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF).

Background:
Iran is alone with North Korea on the FATF’s blacklist — although the Paris-based organisation has suspended counter- measures since June 2017 while Iran works on reforms.

Egypt opened West Asia’s largest cathedral in its New Administrative Capital
On January 7, 2019, Egypt opened West Asia’s largest cathedral in its New Administrative Capital, 45 kms away from its capital, Cairo.
i. President Abdul Fattah al-Sisi inaugurated the newly-built Cathedral of Nativity on the eve of Coptic Christmas.
ii. Unlike December 25, Coptic Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ on January 7, following the Coptic calendar.

China passed law to sinicize and make Islam compatible with socialism
On January 6, 2019, China passed law to make Islam compatible with socialism and ‘sinicize’ it within next five years.
i. The law was passed after Chinese government officials met representatives from eight Islamic groups.

Background:
In 2018, China held over a million people of the ethnic Uighur and Muslim minorities in prison in the Xingjian region.

Guatemala unilaterally terminate the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG) agreement
On 7th January 2019, the Foreign Minister of Guatemala Sandra Jovel notified the United Nations secretary-general about the Government’s decision to terminate the agreement which established in the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG).

Key points:
i. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has “strongly rejected” the Guatemalan Government’s decision to unilaterally terminate the International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG).
ii. Mr. Guterres recalled the important contribution to the fight against impunity made by the International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG), which was set up in 2006 at the invitation of the government.
iii. The mandate of the Commission is scheduled to end on 3 September, 2019 and the United Nation expects the Government of Guatemala to “entirely fulfill its legal obligations”.

Macedonia renamed as the Republic of Northern Macedonia
On January 11, 2019, Macedonia’s parliament passed an amendment to the constitution to rename the country as Republic of North Macedonia, on a mutual agreement with Greece to put an end to a 27-year rivalry. The agreement was reached between Greek prime minister Alexis Tsipras and
his Macedonian counterpart Zoran Zaev. The language of the country would be referred to as Macedonian and its people known as Macedonians.

Facts to be known:

i. The use of the name "Macedonia" is disputed between the southeastern European countries of Greece and the Republic of Macedonia, formerly a state within Yugoslavia.

ii. In the parliament of 120 seats only 80 voted in favour of renaming the country that is renaming amendment is passed with 2/3 of majority supporting it.

iii. This major step opened their door toward European Union and Nato organisation.

Facebook to Set Up Institute for AI Ethics with Initial Investment of $7.5 Million

On 20th January 2019, Social media giant Facebook announced that it will create an independent Institute for Ethics in Artificial Intelligence (AI) with an initial investment of $7.5 million over a period of five years.

Key Points

i. Technical University of Munich (TUM) in Germany will collaborate with this project which aims to explore fundamental issues affecting the use and impact of AI.

ii. Initial funding will be provided by Facebook but the institute will look for other funding opportunities for additional partners and agencies in the coming years.

iii. The Institute will address issues that affecting the use and impact of AI such as Safety, Privacy, Fairness and transparency.

The Global Commission on the Future of Work calls for fundamental changes in health at work

On 22nd January 2019, According to report ‘Work for a Brighter Future’ WHO in collaboration with International Labour Organisation(ILO) to form a global committee to implement the fundamental changes in current work to face the unprecedented change and exceptional challenges like globalization, rapid technological development, demographic transition and climate change.

i. WHO with the support of ILO and OECD implemented the five-year ‘Working for Health’, global action plan that would ensure the necessary workforce for universal health coverage and stimulating economic growth.

World’s longest 3D printed concrete bridge opened in china

On January 22, 2019, world’s longest 3D printed concrete bridge was opened in China. It is located on the Wenzaobang River in Shanghai.

i. The Bridge is designed by Professor Xy Weiguo from Tsinghua University in China.

ii. The bridge is of 26.3 metre-long and 3.6-metre-wide and is made out of 44 hollowed-out 3D printed concrete blocks.

iii. The newly-opened bridge is made with a technology that supplies data and also vibrating wire stress sensors.

Nepal and India partnered to set up a Energy banking mechanism

On January 25, 2019 In Pokhara, India and Nepal agreed to set up energy banking mechanism to make use of the surplus electricity in a essential and a useful way.

i. Nepal’s demand for electricity increased during the summer months, whereas in India demand increases during the monsoon season and slumps during winter.

ii. This partnership will help the Nepal export its surplus electricity to neighbour India during the monsoon season and import power during winter season.

Sugarcane juice national drink of Pakistan

On January 24, 2019, The Pakistan government declared sugarcane juice as the “national drink” of the country. They came at this decision after asking People’s opinion in twitter to choose one among orange, carrot and sugarcane. In which 81% voted in favour of Sugarcane Juice while 15% voted in favour of Orange and 4% for Carrot.
**Capacity Augmentation to Successfully Deliver the G20 Presidency**

India is to host the **G20 annual summit is 2022** when it celebrates its **75th year** of independence and in order to exploit it to the full extent, capacity augmentation of available resources and efficient addressal of organizational challenges must be done on time to fill the infrastructure, management and intellectual gap.

i. India needs to augment its intellectual capacity to be able to deliver inter-disciplinary research on the international monetary system, global financial architecture, global trading system, global climate, energy and sustainability issues.

ii. Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi requested **Italy** to host the 2021 G20 summit instead of 2022 summit which was accepted by Italy.

**Important Facts:**
- 2018 G20 Summit(Buenos Aires summit) held in Argentina
- 2019 G20 Summit(Osaka Summit) to be held in Japan.
- 2020 G20 Summit(Riyadh summit) to be held in Saudi Arabia.

**Italy, United Nations launch Africa Centre for Climate and Sustainable Development**

On 29th January 2019, Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte along with United Nation(UN) representative launched Africa Centre for Climate and Sustainable development near Food and Agriculture Organization headquarters in Rome.

**Key Points**

i. The major objective is to boost the agricultural sectors and promote rural development in Africa. It will ensure a better future for the youth in the Continent who can be the drivers of development.

ii. It will help in implementing the goals of the UN’s 2030 Agenda and the landmark 2015 Paris Climate Agreement to stop depending fossil fuel and cap global warming.

iii. A discussion on how G7 countries can fight environmental degradation and promote Africa’s sustainable economic growth was held by ministers.

iv. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is a specialized agency of UN that leads international efforts to defeat hunger.

**VISITS**

### Indian Visits

**Overview Of P.M Narendra Modi’s Day Long Visit To Andaman & Nicobar Island**

On December 30, 2018, Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi embarked on a day long visit to the **Andaman and Nicobar Islands**.

**Highlights:**

On his one-day visit, he at first visited Car Nicobar and then visited Port Blair in Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

**Visit in Car Nicobar:**

On December 30, 2018, Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, visited Car Nicobar on the first leg of the tour.

i. On his visit, the following happened:

   - The PM laid a wreath at the **Tsunami Memorial**, and lit a candle at the **Wall of Lost Souls** remembering those who lost their lives in 2004 Tsunami.
   - He interacted with Tribal Chiefs and Members of Tribal Council and eminent sportspersons from the islands.
   - He laid the Foundation Stone for Shore Protection Work near **Mus Jetty**, and **Extension of Campbell Bay Jetty**.
He unveiled projects focusing in developing sectors such as education, health, employment, skill development, transportation, power, sports and tourism.

He announced that a sum of Rs. **7000 crore** has recently been approved for making the fisheries sector in the country more profitable.

PM Modi also inaugurated the Industrial Training Institute at Arong and a Modern Sports Complex in Car Nicobar.

**Visit to Port Blair:**
On December 30, 2018, Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, visited Port Blair in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

i. On his visit to Port Blair, the following happened:
   - He unveiled a series of development projects related to the energy, connectivity and health sectors.
   - He laid a wreath at the Martyrs Column, and visited the Cellular Jail. At Cellular Jail, he visited the cells of Veer Savarkar, and other freedom fighters.
   - He addressed a public event to mark the **75th** anniversary of the hoisting of Tricolour on Indian soil by Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and formation of the **Azad Hind government in 1943**.
   - Here he released a commemorative postal stamp, **75 rupees** coin, and First Day Cover.
   - Mr Modi also dedicated the **150 feet** high Flag Mast at South Point in Port Blair to commemorate the first unfurling of the Tricolor on Indian soil by Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose in Port Blair on **Dec 30, 1943**.
   - He also announced setting up of a deemed university after Netaji Bose

ii. On this occasion, he announced renaming of three islands of Andaman and Nicobar.

   The 3 islands are:
   - The **Ross Island** was renamed as Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Dweep,
   - The **Neil Island** would now be known as **Shaheed Dweep** and
   - The **Havelock Island** as **Swaraj Dweep**.

iii. He announced setting up of a new **Integrated Terminal Building** is coming up at Veer Savarkar International Airport which will provide connectivity once the undersea optical fibre cable from Chennai is completed.

iv. Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of **50 MW LNG-based** power project at **Hope Town in South Andaman**.

v. The power plant will be established by wholly owned subsidiary of **NTPC Ltd**, **NTPC Vidyut Vyapar Nigam (NVVN)** at cost of **Rs 387.80 crore** in 18 months.

vi. Additionally, the PM distributed **Solar PV-based induction cook stoves** to 99 Tsunami Shelter Homes, at Chouldari village, to provide clean, comfortable and hassle-free cooking option.

vii. He also flagged off 20 electric vehicles that will be handed over to the Andaman & Nicobar Administration.

**Overview of PM Narendra Modi’s one-day visit to Palamu, Jharkhand**
On January 5, 2019, Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Palamu, Jharkhand, where he inaugurated projects worth a total of **Rs. 3500 crores**.

i. The following states the foundations stones laid or the inaugurations done:
   - Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi witnessed the e-Grih Pravesh of **25,000** beneficiaries under **Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana**.
   - He laid the Foundation Stone for the revival of **North Koel (Mandal Dam) project**, Kanhar Sone pipeline irrigation scheme.
   - He explained that a new system has been developed for monitoring the quality of houses constructed under Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana via photography and geo-tagging.
ii. He also said 99 big irrigation projects, are now being fast tracked, at a cost of almost 90,000 crore rupees.

iii. Regarding the success of Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana, he stated that 1.25 crore houses have been built in less than five years and the average construction time has fallen from 18 months to 12 months.

iv. Furthermore, 1.25 lakh rupees is reaching the beneficiary’s account in four instalments, greater than the earlier amount of 70,000 rupees.

**Overview of PM Narendra Modi’s one-day visit to Baripada, Odisha**
On January 5, 2019, Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Baripada, in Odisha, where he inaugurated projects worth Rs. 4500 crore.

i. The following lists the inaugurations done by the PM:
   - He dedicated the Balasore-Haldia-Durgapur section of the IOCL’s Paradip-Haldia-Durgapur LPG pipeline to the nation, which will ensure easy supply of LPG in parts of Odisha and West Bengal,
   - Inaugurated the Multi Modal Logistic Park at Balasore and six Passport Sewa Kendras.
   - He laid the foundation stone for the four-laning three National Highway projects.
   - He also flagged off the second passenger train from Tatanagar to Badampahar.

ii. He also unveiled a digital plaque to mark the commencement of work for conservation and development of Rasika Ray Temple, and Excavated Structure at Ancient Fort Haripurgarh.

**Overview of Prime Minister’s day long Visit to Agra**
On January 9, 2019, Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Agra in Uttar Pradesh for one day. This is Modi’s second visit to the city after his initial visit in 2016.

**Visit to Agra:**
On his one-day visit to Agra, the PM launched a series of development projects worth Rs. 2980 Crores for the Agra city and the adjoining areas.

i. They are as follows:
   - He dedicated the Gangajal project, worth Rs.2880 crores, to the nation. It would provide Agra with better and more assured water supply and bring 140 cusecs of Ganga water to Agra.
   - He laid the foundation Stone of Integrated Command and Control Centre for Agra Smart City at a cost of Rs.285 crores. This will enable installations of CCTVs throughout Agra City for monitoring and surveillance purposes.
   - Under Ayushman Bharat Yojana, the Prime Minister laid the foundation stone of the upgradation of SN Medical College in Agra at an estimated cost of Rs.200 Crore. It will add 100 bed maternity wing in the Women’s hospital,
   - He also laid the foundation stone of sewerage network project for the western part of Agra, under AMRUT scheme, to improved sanitation facility in over 50000 houses.

**Norwegian PM H.E.Ms. Erna Solberg three day Visit to India**
On 7th January 2019, Norway Prime Minister Erna Solberg arrived in New Delhi for a three-day state visit to India at the invitation of the Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi. This made her the first foreign leader and head of the government to visit New Delhi in 2019.

**Key Points:**
- Ms Solberg was accompanied by senior officials from her government and a large business delegation in her first visit to India.
- Ms Solberg held talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and also called on President Ram Nath Kovind and Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu.
- During the visit, she delivered the Inaugural address at the Raisina Dialogue and also participated in the Indo-Norwegian Business Conference.
The two countries held wide-ranging discussions on bilateral, regional and multilateral issues, and on the ways and means to further strengthen the growing bilateral partnership.

Norwegian P.M. Erna Solberg inaugurated the Indo-Norwegian Business Summit 2019 in New Delhi

On 7th January 2019, the Prime Minister of Norway Erna Solberg along with Minister of Commerce and Industry Suresh Prabhu inaugurated India-Norwegian Business Summit 2019 in New Delhi.

Key Points:
- At the summit she assured that the Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement between European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries (Switzerland, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein) and India will be finalised soon and it will contribute to increased trade and better environment for businesses from the two nations.
- She emphasised on the vitality of a stable global framework for trade and investment for both the countries, especially in times like today where there is increased protectionism in certain market.
- Union Commerce Minister Suresh Prabhu announced that the two country will be signing an agreement to facilitate a dialogue between India and Norway, to take business to a new level.
- During the summit, business entities from the two nations signed 15 MoUs across various sectors including finance, ICT, health-care, energy and aquaculture, among others.

Norway PM Erna Solberg inaugurates green compound at Royal Norwegian Embassy

On 7th January 2019, Prime Minister of Norway Erna Solberg, in a unique move inaugurated a new green compound at the Royal Norwegian Embassy in New Delhi. She is on a 3 day official visit to India.

Key Points:
- The Government of India has granted a Green Rating for Integrated Habitat to the Norwegian embassy.
- The building which is designed keeping in view sustainability, is adapted to the local climate and takes into account the environmental concerns of India. Besides 95% of the building materials that were used in the construction process came from local markets in New Delhi.
- The architect of the building, Terje Grønmo from Terje Grønmo Arkitekter AS informed that the building features rain water harvesting well, geothermal walls to circulate cool air in it and solar panels that produce 200 kWh energy a day.

India, Norway agree for new Joint Task Force on blue economy

On 8th January 2019, India and Norway signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the establishment of the Joint Task Force on Blue Economy, in order to promote multi-sectoral cooperation in various aspects of Blue Economy.

Key Points:
- The two sides recognised the importance of sustainable use of the oceans, including for food security, energy sources, mineral exploration and climate friendly maritime transport.
- The decision assumes significance in view of the fact that at least 15 per cent of Indian population resides in the coastal areas while 70 per cent of the Norwegian economy is dependent on the maritime industry of the country.
- The blue economy is an emerging concept which encourages better management of ocean or ‘blue’ resources.

About Blue Economy:
The blue economy is the “sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods, and jobs while preserving the health of ocean ecosystem.” It supports all of the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG14 ‘life below water’, and recognises
that this will require ambitious, co-ordinated actions to sustainably manage, protect and preserve our ocean now, for the sake of present and future generations.

**India, Norway agree to collaborate on ocean economy, SDGs**

On 8th January 2019, India and Norway agreed to collaborate closely on the ocean economy and achieve the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), while also vowing to step up cooperation in combating terrorism.

**Key Points:**
- The two countries signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to conduct an India-Norway Ocean Dialogue which aims to give “new energy and direction” to bilateral relations.
- Leaders of both the country expressed desire to work together for realizing Sustainable Development Goals including poverty, health, education, women’s empowerment, clean energy and sustainable use of ocean resources.
- The Norway PM pointed that the world will not be able to reach the sustainable goals unless “India is on board” and stressed for the reforms at the United Nations Security Council.
- It was also announced that the Norway Government Pension Fund Global has made a portfolio investment of $12 billion in India.
- Besides India and Norway are also cooperating in the field of mother and child health under the Norway-India partnership Initiative and desired to expand its scope.

**About Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):**
The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), otherwise known as the Global Goals, are a set of 17 global goals in the form of a universal call to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity. They are set by the United Nations in areas such as climate change, economic inequality, innovation, sustainable consumption and peace and justice. The SDGs came into effect in January 2016, and they will continue to guide United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) policy and funding until 2030.

**Norwegian Prime Minister will deliver the Inaugural address at the Raisina Dialogue**

From 8th to 10th January 2019, the 4th edition of the Raisina Dialogue, India’s flagship annual geopolitical and geostrategic conference kicked off in New Delhi. The event was organised by Ministry of External Affairs in partnership with Observer Research Foundation.

**Key Points:**
- The theme of the 2019 dialogue is “A World Reorder: New Geometries; Fluid Partnerships; Uncertain Outcomes”.
- The inaugural address of the conference was delivered by the Prime Minister of Norway, Ms Erna Solberg, who was accompanied by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi.
- Foreign ministers of Spain, Iran, Australia, Mongolia and Nepal, besides India’s Foreign Minister Smt Sushma Swaraj attended the event.
- The Dialogue will bring together over 600 delegates from 93 countries, including influential political leaders, strategic thinkers, policy practitioners, technology innovators, business representatives and academics on a common platform.

**Sushma Swaraj Meets Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg**

On 8th January 2019, External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj met visiting Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg to discuss ways of expanding bilateral ties in New Delhi.

**President Ram Nath Kovind Meets Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg**

On 8th January 2019, the Prime Minister of Norway, Ms Erna Solberg called on the President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, at Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi. The President recognised Norway as a natural partner as the two countries are vibrant democracies, with deep respect for the rule of law, cultural diversity and human rights.
Overview of Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s 3 day Visit to Gujarat

On 17th January 2019, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi embarked on a three day visit to Gujarat. He participated in various events and also inaugurated the ninth edition of the flagship bi-annual global investors summit Vibrant Gujarat. The Theme of the 9th edition of Vibrant Gujarat Global Investors Summit 2019 was “Shaping a new India”. The Visit concluded on 19th January 2019.

PM inaugurated Ninth Edition of Vibrant Gujarat Summit in Gandhinagar

On 18th January 2019, the 9th edition of Vibrant Gujarat Summit was inaugurated by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi at Mahatma Mandir Exhibition cum Convention Centre in Gandhinagar, Gujarat. The three-day investors’ meet will last till 20th January 2019.

Key Points:

- The main theme of the Vibrant Gujarat Global Investors Summit 2019 is “Shaping a new India”.
- The summit provided a platform for brainstorming on agenda of global socio-economic development, knowledge-sharing and forging effective partnerships.
- The summit witnessed the participation of the heads of five countries – witness the participation of the heads of five countries: Uzbekistan, Rwanda, Denmark, Czech Republic and Malta and over 30,000 national and international delegates.
- The government, for the first time organised buyer-seller and reserve buyer-seller meet as part of the trade show, where manufacturers, mainly from the MSME sector, are displaying their products.
- Exhibition on Futuristic Technologies and Space Exploration, Seminar on Port Led Development & Strategies to establish India as the Trans-shipment Hub of Asia was also organised during the summit.
- Besides there was a separate pavilion showcasing products from the African countries.
- During the three-day meet the major events included a Round-table interaction with the heads of global funds, ‘Africa Day’, an MSME convention, Roundtable for Opportunities in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Education & Research.
- The first edition of Vibrant Gujarat Summit was held in 2003 under the guidance of the then Chief Minister of Gujarat, Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Global Trade Show- the flagship event in the run up to Vibrant Gujarat Summit inaugurated by PM in Gandhinagar

On 17th January 2019, the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated the Global Trade Show at the Mahatma Mandir Exhibition cum Convention Centre in Gandhinagar, Gujarat in the run up to the start of the Vibrant Gujarat Summit.

Key Points:

- The Global trade show was spread over an area of 200,000 sq. mts, with more than 25 industrial and business sectors showcasing their ideas, products and designs under one umbrella.
- Prime Minister also inaugurated the Ahmedabad Shopping Festival 2019 during the event.
- The Summit witnessed the launch of a completely new set of forums aimed at diversifying the nature of knowledge sharing at the Summit, and intensifying the level of networking between participants.
- During the Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit 2019, 28,360 Memorandums of Understanding were signed and it was expected to generate over 21 lakh jobs.

PM inaugurated the Ahmedabad Shopping Festival-2019

On 17th January 2019, the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated the 10 days long Ahmedabad Shopping Festival-2019 at the Sabarmati Riverfront in Ahmedabad. The festival is being held simultaneously with the Vibrant Gujarat Summit. The Shopping Festival 2019 will conclude on 28th January, 2019.
Key Points:
- The festival is being managed by the Vibrant Shopping Festival Organizing Federation and is guided by iNDEXTb and Amdavad Municipal Corporation (AMC).
- The festival brings together over 5000 brands to offer a unique shopping experience along with lucky draw of prizes worth up to Crores and assured Gift Vouchers with great offers.
- Besides a mobile application named ASF 2019 App was also lunched by the organisers to experience and participate in the first biggest ever shopping festival of India.

PM Modi inaugurated Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Institute of Medical Sciences & Research
On 17th January 2019, the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Institute of Medical Sciences and Research a super-speciality public hospital in Ahmedabad, Gujarat which will strengthen the efforts to provide quality healthcare to the poor.

Key Points:
- The institute which is built by Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation at the cost of Rs 750 crore, is equipped with all modern amenities including an air ambulance and is linked with Ayushman Bharat to provide services at an affordable price.
- The institute will run by the Ahmedabad municipal corporation and consists of a 17-floor, 1,500-bed hospital.
- Out Of 1500 beds, 1300 beds are in General Ward and 200 beds are in the executive class. Besides there are 32 high class Operation Theatres with 139 ICU bed. The OPDs will have 90 consultation rooms with 20 specialists to serve.

PM unveiled a statue of Dr. Vikram Sarabhai
On 17th January 2019, the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi unveiled a statue of Dr Vikram Sarabhai, the father of Indian space programme at Sabarmati Riverfront in Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

Key Points:
- The statue was commissioned by Amdavad Municipal Corporation (AMC) and was closely supervised by Kartikeya Sarabhai and Mallika Sarabhai, the son and daughter of Dr. Sarabhai.
- The statue was installed to mark the innovator's birth centenary year, and to instill a scientific temperament among Gujarat’s children.
- The statue which has been sculpted by Ahmedabad-based artist Dhruv Shilpi is 6-ft-tall, made up of bronze statue and weighs 1,050 kg. It shows Dr Sarabhai seated on a chair and work on his table.
- A public gallery was also set up adjacent to the statue featuring Vikram Sarabhai’s life and work.

PM Modi inaugurated L&T's K9 Vajra gun-making facility complex in Hazira, Gujarat
On 19th January 2019, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Larsen & Toubro (L&T) facility called Armoured Systems Complex (ASC), the first private facility in the country where the K9 Vajra self-propelled Howitzer guns will be manufactured at Hazira near Surat in Gujarat.

Key Points:
- Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman was also present on the occasion.
- The ASC is a state-of-the-art facility to manufacture and integrate advanced armoured platforms such as self-propelled artillery Howitzers, future infantry combat vehicles (FICV), future ready combat vehicles (FRCV) or future main battle tanks.
- The ASC is spread over 40 acres, within L&T’s 755-acre Hazira manufacturing complex.
- The facility at Hazira came after Larsen & Toubro had won the Rs. 4,500-crore contract to supply 100 units of the K9 Vajra-T 155 mm/52 calibre Tracked Self-Propelled gun systems to the Indian Army in 2017 under the Centre’s "Make in India"initiative.
- It is the largest contract awarded to a private company by the Ministry of Defence which involves delivery of 100 K9 Vajra systems in 42 months with an associated engineering support package (ESP) covering spares, documentation and training and maintenance transfer of
technology (MToT) to the Army Base Workshop to support Howitzer regiments throughout their life cycle.

- To manufacture it in India, L&T had signed a transfer of technology contract for guns with South Korean company Hanwha Corporation.
- It is the first manufacturing facility in the private sector to produce advanced armoured platforms for the defence sector besides being the 10th manufacturing unit of the technology, engineering, construction, defence and services conglomerate.

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

On 17th January 2019, Gujarat government signed around 130 MoUs with investment commitments worth over 56,000 crore rupees in various sectors during the three-day Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit.

**Key Points:**

i. A majority of the MoUs, also called Investment Intentions (IIs), were signed in the port and transport sector.

ii. Tsingshan group of China committed to invest Rs 21,000 crore to set up a steel plant and a facility to manufacture car batteries in Dholera Special Investment Region (SIR).

iii. MoUs worth over 35,000 crore rupees were signed during the opening day of the three-day business conclave besides this mega agreement. Some of them are explained below.

- A MoU was signed with Petronet LNG Ltd with an intended investment of Rs 2,100 crore for expansion of their existing LNG Port Terminal at Dahej.
- HPCL Rajasthan Refinery Ltd signed a MoU with an intended investment of Rs 1,400 crore for development of Single Point Mooring System and Crude Oil Terminal at Mandvi.
- Furthermore HPCL signed another MoU of Rs 1,350 crore for LPG import facilities along with a jetty at Dahej Port and LPG cavern and pumping facilities at Ankleshwar.
- Adani Group signed another MoU of Rs 3,500 crore across three projects – development of a captive jetty at Kori Creek, cargo handling terminal at Mundra and Ro-Ro ferry facility at Mundra.
- Essar Group intended to cumulatively invest Rs 7,485 crore across two projects – development of port-based Smart City and an LNG terminal at Hazira.

Netherlands takes long-term view on prospects for investment in Gujarat

During the on-going Vibrant Gujarat Summit, Netherlands expressed optimism about investment in Gujarat by intending to sign 10 MoUs with core focus areas being Food Agri & Horticulture, Smart Cities, Renewable Energy, and Logistics & Maritime.

**Key Points:**

- Menno Snel, Minister of Finance for Taxation & Customs of the Netherlands, along with Ambassador of the Netherlands to India H.E. Marten van den Berg led a delegation of more than 100 Dutch business officials from 54 organisations at the three-day business conclave being held at Gandhinagar.
- Of the 10 MoUs, 2 are Government to Government (G2G) MoUs and 7 are B2G (between Dutch Businesses and Gujarat Government) and 1 is Business to Business (B2B).

Prime Minister also laid foundation stone of Nirali Cancer Hospital at Navsari

On 19th January 2019, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi laid foundation stone of Nirali Cancer Hospital at Navsari District of Gujarat which will benefit cancer patients of South Gujarat and
neighbouring states.

Key Points:

- The ultra-modern Nirali Cancer Hospital will be the first comprehensive cancer hospital of Navsari.
- Besides Prime Minister also laid the foundation stone of a Medical College in Sayli in Silvassa, capital of Union Territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli. It is UT’s first medical college since independence.
- Furthermore Prime Minister released M-Aarogya mobile app and door to door waste collection, segregation and processing of Solid Waste in Dadra & Nagar Haveli besides introducing IT policy for Dadra and Nagar Haveli.

Other Dignitaries present in Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit

Various national and international dignitaries and delegates were present at the ninth edition of Vibrant Gujarat Summit and Chief Minister of Gujarat, Shri Vijay Rupani hosted the global business leaders. Some important events were mentioned below.

Prime Minister meets President of Uzbekistan on sidelines of the Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit-2019 in Ahmadabad

On 18th January 2019, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and President of Uzbekistan Mr. Shavkat Mirziyoev held a meeting while attending “Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit-2019” in Ahmadabad.

Key points

- President Shavkat Mirziyoev mentioned that he is looking to attract investment from India in sector like IT, education, pharmaceuticals, healthcare, agri-business and tourism for Uzbekistan.
- The exchange of contracts between the Department of Atomic Energy of India and the Novoi Minerals and Metallurgical Company of the Republic of Uzbekistan for long-term supply of Uranium Ore Concentrate for India’s energy requirements took place in presence of both the leaders.
- Agreement were signed between the Export-Import Bank of India and the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan on a Line of Credit of USD 200 million supported by the Government of India for financing housing and social infrastructure projects in Uzbekistan.

Visit of Prime Minister of Malta to India to attend Vibrant Gujarat Summit 2019 (January 17 – 19, 2019)

On 17th January 2019, Prime Minister of Malta, Dr. Joseph Muscat visited India for the first time to attend the Vibrant Gujarat Summit 2019 along with a large business delegations.

- Possibilities of enhancing trade and commercial ties were discussed between the Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi and Malta’s Prime Minister Dr. Joseph Muscat.
- India and Malta decided to cooperate in an initiative to upscale solar technologies and harness the full potential of solar energy.

Visit of the Prime Minister of Denmark to India for Vibrant Gujarat Summit 2019

On 18th January 2019, Prime Minister of Denmark, Mr. Lars Lokke Rasmussen visited India along with business delegates including CEOs of major Danish companies to participate in the Vibrant Gujarat Summit. Denmark is a partner country in this year’s summit.

- MoU on Maritime tissues between the ministry of Shipping of India and the Ministry of Industry, Business and Financial Affairs of Denmark were signed.
- Another MoU between imagine Panaji Smart City Development Limited and the Danish Embassy in New Delhi to establish an Urban Living Lab in Panaji Goa.

Visit of Prime Minister of Czech Republic to India to attend Vibrant Gujarat Summit 2019

On 17th January 2019, Prime Minister of Czech Republic, Mr. Andrej Babis along with Minister of Trade and Industry Ms. Marta Novakova visited India to attend the Vibrant Gujarat Summit 2019.
• On 18th January 2019, the entire gamut of bilateral relations including important global and regional issues of mutual interest was discussed between Narendra Modi and Andrej Babis.

• Andrej Babis invited the nominations of an Indian scientist for the prestigious Research and Development Council which hosts many international researchers of high repute.

Mr. John Chambers, Chairman of US-India Strategic Partnership Forum calls on the PM
On 17th January 2019, Prime Minister Narendra and Mr John Chambers, Chairman of US-India Strategic Partnership Forum discussed about bilateral trade and economic relations between India and US in Gandhinagar.

Mr. Matt Bevin, Governor of Kentucky calls on the PM
On 17th January 2019, Governor of Kentucky, Mr. Matt Bevin and India's Prime Minister, Narendra Modi held discussions on growing convergence between India and US including in the areas of business and investment.

Overview of Prime Minister’s a day long visit to Silvassa in Dadra & Nagar Haveli
On 19th January 2019, Prime Minister Modi visited and laid foundation stone for several development projects worth Rs 1400 crores at Silvassa in Dadra & Nagar Haveli. These projects are linked to various aspects of connectivity, infrastructure health, education etc.

ZAKey Points
• An 11.4 kilometer long Ring road at Silvassa, a three phase Daman Ganga river front, and a sewage treatment plant were announced by Prime Minister, Narendra Modi.

• The projects inaugurated for Diu include an “Education Hub” built at a cost of Rs 250 cr and a bridge on the river Daman Ganga River at a cost of 48 cr.

• He Inaugurated door to door waste collection, segregation and processing of Solid Waste in Dadra & Nagar Haveli.

• He also distributed Gold cards to beneficiaries of Ayushman Bharat and distributed Van Adhikar Patra to the beneficiaries.

PM Modi lays foundation stone of first ever Medical College in Silvassa
On 19th January 2019, Prime Minister Modi visted and laid foundation stone for the first ever medical college at a cost of 189 crore and spread over 18 acres land in Sayli village, Silvassa in Dadra & Nagar Haveli.

Prime Minister released IT policy for Dadra and Nagar Haveli. M-Aarogya mobile app
On 19th January 2019, Prime Minister Narendra Modi released IT policy for Dadra and Nagar Haveli to give a boost to industries and launched M-Aarogya App for better health care facilities.

Key Points
• Daman & Diu and Dadra & Nagar Haveli have been declared open defecation free and Kerosene free.

• Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that under Blue Revolution government is trying to increase the income of fishermen and a budget of 7500 crores is allocated to it, PM also mention that his Government has built 1 crore 25 lakh houses Under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana in last 5 years.

• During the visit, Prime Minister Narendra Modi highlighted that 13000 women have been provided with Gas connection in Dadra & Nagar Haveli.

Overview of P.M’s Visit to TamilNadu & Kerala
PM Modi lays foundation stone of AIIMS in Madurai,Tamil Nadu
On 27th January 2019, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, laid the foundation stone for the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) at Thoppur near Madurai, Tamil Nadu.

Key Points:
• It will be the first such facility in Tamilnadu and will be built at a cost of Rs 1,264 crore within 45 months.
• The 750-bed AIIMS will offer 100 MBBS seats in the state and its location will benefit people residing in the Southern backward districts of Tamil Nadu.
• Besides this the super speciality blocks of Madurai’s Rajaji Medical College, Thanjavur Medical College and Tirunelveli Medical College was also inaugurated by the PM.
• Prime Minister Modi also dedicated a dozen Post Office Pass Port Seva Kendras to the nation on the occasion.
• The inauguration ceremony which was organised in the Nelson Mandela Nagar was attended by Tamil Nadu Governor Banwarilal Purohit, Chief Minister Edappadi Palanisamy, Deputy CM O Paneerselvam.

PM dedicates Integrated Refinery Expansion Complex and Mounded Storage Vessel to the nation at LPG Bottling Plant in Kochi
On 27th January 2019, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, dedicated to the nation an Integrated Refinery Expansion Project Complex (IREP) of Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) and laid the foundation stone for a petrochemical complex in Kochi, Kerala.

Key Points:
• With the inauguration, the Kochi refinery will now be transformed into the largest PSU Refinery in India with world class standards and equipped for production of cleaner Fuels for India.
• The plant will now be used for double roles for producing the LPG & diesel and commencement of production of feedstock for petrochemical projects in this plant.
• After execution of IREP the Kochi refinery will now be able to produce propylene and other niche petrochemicals that are used in different products such as paints, inks, coating, detergent and many other articles.
• Besides, Mr. Modi also laid the foundation stone of second campus of the Skill development institute set up by BPCL and backed by the Ministry of Petrochemical and Natural Gas at Ettumanoor.
• The Prime Minister also dedicated mounded storage facility by Indian Oil at its Kochi LPG based bottling Plant which is built at a cost of Rs 50 crores. The new facility will enhance LPG storage capacity and reduce road movement of LPG tankers.
• The total storage capacity of Mounded Storage Vessel, IOCL LPG Bottling Plant is 4350 MT.

Foreign Visits

Swaraj on 2-day visit to Samarkand,Uzbekistan to attend first India Central Asia dialogue
On 12th January 2018, Foreign Minister, Sushma Swaraj left for a two-day visit to Uzbekistan to attend the first ever India-Central Asia Dialogue which was held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan.

Key Points
• The Dialogue was focused on a plethora of regional issues including enhancing connectivity to war-ravaged Afghanistan.
• The Foreign Minister of Afghanistan participated in the dialogue as a special invitee dedicated to connectivity issues in the region.
• Foreign Ministers of Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan and Deputy Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan also participated in the event.

EAM Sushma Swaraj Co-Chair first ever India-Central Asia Dialogue held in samarkand,Uzbekistan
On 12th January 2019, External Affairs Minister, Sushma Swaraj co-chaired the first ever India-Central Asia Dialogue which was held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan. The dialogue concluded on 13th January 2019.

**Key Points**

- The Dialogue is expected to strengthen India’s engagement with all the Central Asian nations.
- The Dialogue between India and the Central Asian Countries including Afghanistan will enhance cooperation in wide-ranging spheres including exploring ways to substantially enhance India’s economic involvement in business and development sector of central Asia.

**India, 5 Central Asian nations back inclusive peace process in Afghanistan**

On 13rd January 2019, India and the five other Central Asian countries backed an inclusive peace process in Afghanistan that would be Afghan-owned and Afghan-led in the first ever India-Central Asia Dialogue.

**Key Points**

- A Joint statement issued by the India and the Central Asian countries condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations at the end of the dialogue
- Indian Foreign Minister reiterated India’s commitment to the economic reconstruction of the war-torn Afghanistan.

**Sushma Swaraj and Uzbek Foreign Minister Kamilov hold talks on the Sidelines of the Dialogue**

Sushma Swaraj and her Uzbekistan counterpart Abdulaziz Komilov held talks on the sidelines of the dialogue to discuss the measures for stepping up bilateral cooperation in a number of areas including trade, economy, defence and IT.

**EAM Sushma Swaraj met the Foreign Minister of Turkmenistan Rasit Meredow on the sidelines of the Dialogue**

On 13th January 2019, Sushma Swaraj held discussion with Turkmenistan’s Foreign Minister, Rasit Meredow on the sidelines of the dialogue to enhance bilateral cooperation across sectors.

**BANKING & FINANCE**

**RBI in News**

18th edition of India’s Fiscal Stability Report was released by RBI

On December 31, 2018, the central bank of India, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) released 18th Fiscal Stability Report of India.

i. This report has been prepared by the Sub-Committee of the Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC) on the risks to financial stability, the strength of the financial system and the development and regulation of the financial sector.

ii. This is the first such report that has been published after Mr. Shaktikanta Das became governor in December following Urjit Patel’s departure.

iii. The following states the findings of the report:

- India’s financial system remains stable,
- banking sector shows signs of improvement, with the gross non-performing assets (GNPA) ratio of Scheduled Commercial Banks declining from 11.5 per cent in March 2018 to 10.8 per cent in September 2018.
- GNPA ratio may decline from 10.8 per cent in September 2018 to 10.3 per cent in March 2019.
- Credit growth of scheduled commercial banks (SCBs) has improved between March 2018 and September 2018, driven largely by private sector banks (PVBs).
- Thus, the asset quality of the banks, as shown by the banking stability indicator (BSI), has improved.
• Analysis for the period September 2017 – September 2018 revealed a shrinking inter-bank market and increasing bank linkages with asset management companies-mutual funds (AMC-MFs).
• The rising linkage with asset management companies-mutual funds (AMC-MFs) are for raising funds and with NBFCs/Housing Finance Companies (HFCs) are for lending purposes.
• On the Macro level, the global growth outlook for 2018 and 2019 remains steady although emerging economies engendered by tightening of financial conditions in Advanced Economies.
• These are also being affected by the protectionist trade policies and global geopolitical tension which are on the rise.
• On the domestic front, growth of gross domestic product (GDP) showed slight moderation in Q2:2018-19 while inflation remains contained.

For a detailed read, refer the link given: Click Here

Paytm Payments Bank to add new customers after 6 months: RBI
On January 1, 2019, Reserve Bank of India granted permission to Paytm Payments Bank to add new customers after it initially barred Paytm from opening bank accounts in June 2018.
i. This was due to non-compliance of the KYC norms and because Paytm Payments Bank had failed to maintain Rs 100 crore net worth limit.
ii. Post the audit, Paytm Payments Bank had removed Renu Satti from the chief executive's role and replaced her with veteran banker and ex-NPCI senior executive Satish Gupta.

Complaints with bank ombudsman surge 25% in FY18: RBI Report
On December 31, 2018, according to the RBI Report on Trend and Progress of Banking in India, number of complaints registered at banking ombudsman offices has increased to 25% owing to increased awareness and poor internal redressal mechanisms of banks.
i. More than 57% of the total complaints came from the banking ombudsman offices in tier-1 cities like New Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Bengaluru and Hyderabad.
ii. Of all the complaints received at the ombudsman’s offices, 97% of them were resolved in 2017-18, up from 92% in a year earlier.
iii. The topic of complaints were related to non-observance of the fair practices code followed by those related to ATM, credit and debit cards, and for failure to meet commitments and mobile banking.
iv. Bank-wise distribution shows that most complaints received against public sector banks were pension-related while most complaints received against private banks were for credit cards discrepancies.

Other News:
In light of the growing digital banking infrastructure the country, the RBI plans to set up a compliance and tracking system portal to tackle the problem of cyber-fraud under the ombudsman scheme.

About Ombudsman:
♦ Currently, there are 21 functional banking ombudsman offices in the country.
♦ These offices were established under Banking Ombudsman Scheme, 2006.
♦ For a detailed read, refer: Click Here

One-time relief to MSMEs allowed by restructuring debt up to Rs 25 crore by 31st March 2020: RBI
On January 2, 2019, Reserve Bank allowed a one-time restructuring of existing debt of up to 25 crore rupees to micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) which are facing cash crunch in the wake of demonetisation and GST implementation.

i. The restructuring has to be implemented by 31st of March 2020.
ii. The eligibility for the scheme entails that the aggregate exposure including non-fund based facilities of banks and NBFCs, to a borrower should not exceed 25 crore rupees as on January 1, 2019.
iii. The restructuring of existing loans was permitted to MSMEs that are in default but ‘standard’ as on
1st of January, 2019, without any downgrade in asset classification.

iv. This means the MSMEs which have defaulted on payment but the loans given to them have continued to be classified as standard assets are eligible for the scheme.

v. Furthermore, a provision of 5% of outstanding loan amount, in addition to the provisions already held, shall be made in respect of accounts restructured under this scheme.

vi. Banks will, however, have the option of reversing such provisions at the end of the specified period, i.e. one year, subject to the account demonstrating satisfactory performance.

**Background:**

On November 19 2018, in its board meeting, RBI decided to examine a scheme for restructuring of stressed standard assets of MSME borrowers with aggregate credit facilities of up to 25 crore rupees.

**RBI Forms Expert Panel On MSMEs under Ex-SEBI Chief UK Sinha**

On 02nd January 2019, the Reserve Bank set up an expert committee under former SEBI chairman U K Sinha to suggest long-term solutions for the economic and financial sustainability of the MSME sector. The eight-member committee will also examine the factors affecting the timely and adequate availability of finance to the sector.

**Key points**

i. The RBI has announced the expert panel on MSMEs after it allowed a one-time restructuring of existing debt of up to 25 crore rupees for the companies which have defaulted on payment but the loans given to them have continued to be classified as standard assets.

ii. The restructuring has to be implemented by 31st of March 2020.

iii. The expert committee will submit its report by the end of June 2019.

iv. The panel will also review the current institutional framework in place to support the MSME sector and study the impact of the recent economic reforms on the sector and “identify the structural problems affecting its growth”.

v. While constituting the panel, the RBI said that considering the importance of the MSMEs in the Indian economy, it is essential to understand the structural bottlenecks and factors affecting the performance of the MSMEs. Such enterprises contribute about 40 per cent to the country’s export and 45 per cent in the manufacturing sector.

**Cyber frauds in Indian banking sector hiked over 50% in FY18; it is one-third of the overall amount of frauds in India: RBI**

On December 28, 2018, according to the Reserve Bank of India’s Report on Trend and Progress of Banking in India 2017-18, India witnessed a jump of 159 per cent to almost Rs. 110 crore, from Rs.42.3 crore in 2017-18.

i. The volume of cyber fraud at banks has doubled in a year.

ii. A total of 2,059 cases of cyber fraud were reported in 2017-18 amounting to Rs 109.6 crore.

iii. A total of 5,917 bank frauds were reported in 2017-18 and nearly one-third of these were cyber frauds.

iv. As a measure, the RBI plans to set up a compliance and tracking system portal to tackle the proliferation of cyber fraud and seeks to establish a better redressal mechanism for consumers.

v. This would address cybersecurity complaints from all regulated entities including Prepaid Payment Instruments (PPIs) and mobile banking interfaces.

vi. The process of redressal mechanism will be directed under the Internal Ombudsman Scheme of 2018.

**Other News:**

i. Deposit frauds declined 49 per cent to ₹457 crore (₹903 crore).

ii. Foreign exchange transaction frauds were down 35 per cent to ₹1,426 crore (₹2,201 crore).

iii. In 2017-18, frauds related to off-balance sheet operations, foreign exchange transactions, deposit accounts, and cyber activity took centre stage.

iv. Overall a whopping 72 per cent year-on-year jump was witnessed in frauds in FY18, Internal Ombudsman Scheme of 2018:

♦ In May 2015, RBI advised all public-sector and select private and foreign banks to appoint Internal
Ombudsman (IO) as an independent authority to review complaints that were partially or wholly rejected by the respective banks.

♦ RBI made it mandatory for lenders with more than 10 branches to have an independent authority.
♦ The IO got its statutory powers under Section 35 A of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 in the form of 'Internal Ombudsman Scheme, 2018’.
♦ The Scheme covers, inter-alia, appointment / tenure, roles and responsibilities, procedural guidelines and oversight mechanism for the IO.

**RBI limits customer liability in fraudulent PPI transactions**

On 4th January 2019, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) issued a notification for all authorised non-bank Prepaid Payment Instrument (PPI) Issuers in order to limit the liability of Customers in unauthorised electronic payment transactions in Prepaid Payment Instruments (PPIs) comprising mobile wallets, prepaid payments cards, and paper vouchers such as Sodexo.

**Key Points:**

i. The RBI said frauds due to third-party breach where neither the customer nor the PPI issuer is at fault, there cannot be any liability for the customer, in case the incident in reported within **three** days.

ii. If the fraud is reported between **three** and **seven days**, customer liability will amount to the transaction value or **Rs.10,000**, whichever is lower whereas for fraud reported over seven days, the liability of the customer will be according to the board-approved policy of the PPI issuer.

iii. The PPI issuer has to credit the amount involved in the unauthorised transaction to the customer’s PPI within **10 days**, after the customer reports the fraud.

iv. Also the burden of proving customer liability in case of unauthorised electronic payment transactions shall lie on the PPI issuer.

v. Furthermore there will be no liability to the customer if fraud is due to negligence or deficiency of the PPI issuer, irrespective of whether or not the transaction is reported by the customer.

vi. However in cases where the loss is due to negligence by a customer, such as where he/she has shared the payment credentials, the customer will bear the entire loss until he/she reports the unauthorised transaction to the PPI issuer.

vii. Besides if the PPI issuer is not able to resolve the complaint of fraud within the stipulated period of **90 days**, the customer will have to be compensated “irrespective of whether the negligence is on the part of the customer or otherwise”.

**Nepal's central bank asked RBI to declare new Indian currency notes legal in a written plea**

On January 6, 2019, the Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB), Nepal’s central monetary authority, wrote to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to legalize Indian currency notes of denominations higher than **Rs 100** in Nepal.

i. The Indian bank bills **Rs 200, Rs 500 and Rs 2,000** which are greater than the said amount has been asked to be made legal tender in Nepal, under the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA).

ii. The NRB said the country’s banking system, including banks, financial institutions and NRB, hold Indian currency denominations of Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 worth **Rs 48 million**.

**Background:**

i. Before the demonetisation of Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 bank notes in November 2016, the RBI had issued a FEMA notification allowing Nepali citizens to carry Rs 25,000 worth of such bank notes.

ii. After the demonetisation of Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 Indian currency notes, circulation of new bank notes of denominations Rs 200, Rs 500 and Rs 2,000 was started by the Indian government but they were not legalized in Nepal which led to the government of Nepal to ban usage of notes of higher denominations.
RBI set up 5-member panel under Nandan Nilekani to boost digital payments

On January 8, 2019, the Reserve Bank of India constituted a 5-member high-level committee under Aadhaar architect Nandan Nilekani to suggest measures to strengthen the safety and security of digital payments in the country.

i. The panel members include:
   - Infosys co-founder Nilekani,
   - former RBI deputy governor H R Khan,
   - former MD and CEO of Vijaya Bank Kishore Sansi and
   - former secretary in ministries of IT and steel Aruna Sharma and
   - chief innovation officer, Centre for Innovation, Incubation & Entrepreneurship (CIIE), IIM Ahmedabad, Sanjay Jain.

ii. The functions of the panel are as follows:
   - to undertake cross country analyses to identify best practices to accelerate digitisation of the economy,
   - financial inclusion through greater use of digital payments
   - to suggest a medium-term strategy for deepening of digital payments.

iii. With the suggested measures, the committee shall submit its report within a period of 90 days from the date of its first meeting.

iv. The decision aims to encourage digitisation of payments and enhance financial inclusion through digitisation.

IndiaMoneyMart Receives NBFC-P2P Certification from RBI

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has granted NBFC – P2P (Non-Banking Financial Company – Peer to Peer) Certificate to IndiaMoneyMart and this certification will enable IndiaMoneyMart to expand operations and target loan disbursals worth INR 100 Crore by the end of financial year 2018-19.

Key Points

i. The step will validates IndiaMoneyMart’s strong framework to make lending and borrowing transparent, digital and convenient in confrontation to the regulatory requirement.

ii. IndiaMoneyMart is offering loans starting from Rs. 10 thousands to Rs 10 Lakhs for a tenure ranging between 3 months to 36 months.

iii. The Milestone will enable IndiaMoneyMart to gain traction among investors seeking for alternative asset class and boost their sentiments.

iv. The Recognition of Peer to Peer or P2P lending sector by RBI has revolutionized the way borrowers seek loans and lenders invest idle cash.

RBI allows ‘tokenisation’ for more secure card transactions

On 08th January 2019, the Reserve Bank of India has allowed tokenization of debit, credit and prepaid card transactions to enhance the safety of the digital payments ecosystem in the country.

Key points

i. The central bank has allowed card schemes like Visa, Mastercard and others to start issuing tokens for third party payment applications as well.

ii. “Tokenisation and de-tokenisation” shall be performed only by the authorized card network and recovery of original Permanent Account Number (PAN) should be feasible for the authorized card network only.

iii. Tokenisation acts as an additional layer of security as it masks sensitive card data such as the 16-digit Account Number, expiration date and security code.

Sri Lanka’s Central Bank Gets USD 400 Million Swap From RBI

On January 9, 2019, the Reserve bank of India has agreed to disburse Sri lanka’s loan amount of USD 400 million to boost the nation’s reserve. RBI has agreed to issue the fund
under the SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) SWAP facility system. It is also said that another request of currency SWAP USD 1 billion is under process.

**Key Points:**

i. RBI’s assistance is appreciated by the Sri Lanka government and it will help the nation to recover and build itself from the political and constitutional crisis that is prevailing in the nation.

ii. The RBI's very rapid and timely assistance will serve to boost investor confidence by supporting Sri Lanka to maintain adequate level of external reserves while accommodating outflow related to imports, debt servicing and if necessary support for the currency to avoid disorderly adjustment.

iii. Due to the political crisis, the nation's economic rating is downgraded by the leading credit rating agencies- Moody’s, S&P rating, Fitch Rating.

iv. Sri Lanka is to move forward to IMF for further financial assistance. IMF has hold back its discussion about next loan for Sri Lanka because of the political crisis.

v. After IMF’s review, Sri Lanka is to receive sixth tranche of USD 250 million as a loan amount, total amount would be disbursed as the seventh tranche in the mid of 2019.

**Iran’s Pasargad Bank received RBI’s nod to open its branch in Mumbai**

On January 8, 2019, the Union Road Minister Nitin Gadkari, on successful meeting with Iran’s Minister of Foreign Affairs Mohammad Javad Zarif, announced that Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has approved Iran’s Pasargad Bank to open branches in Mumbai for easing trade related transactions. The bank branch would be made operational within 3 months.

i. This move will help India to operationalise the strategic Chabahar port in the Sistan-Balochistan province of Iran.

ii. From the Indian side, UCO Bank and Pasargad Bank of Iran will facilitate transactions relating to operation of berths at Chabahar port.

iii. India has placed USD 85 million machinery order for Chabahar.

**About Chabahar Port:**

- The Port is seen as a counter to Pakistan’s Gwadar port located at distance of around 80 km from Chabahar.
- In May 2015, India and Iran signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for the development of Chabahar Port.
- This MoU translated into a formal ten-year contract to develop two terminals with five berths at the Shahid Beheshti area in Chabahar, which was executed on May 23, 2016, during Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s visit to Tehran.
- Under the agreement, India would build a 600-metre (1,969 feet) cargo terminal and a 640-metre container terminal.
- On December 24, 2018, the government of India took over the operations of a part of Shahid Beheshti Port, Chabahar, in Iran during the Chabahar Trilateral Agreement meeting held there.
- The heads of Indian, Iranian and Afghanistan delegations had jointly inaugurated the office of the Indian SPV – India Ports Global Chabahar Free Zone (IPGCFZ) at Chabahar.
- This is the first time India will be operating a port outside its territory.

**Gold Monetisation Scheme 2015 met with a few changes: RBI**

On January 9, 2019, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) made a few changes in the Gold Monetisation Scheme (GMS) 2015.

i. According to the changes, it included charitable institutions and the central government under the ambit of the scheme.

ii. Due to this, besides individual and joint depositors, the scheme could be availed by charitable institutions, the central government, the state government or any other entity owned by the central government or the state government.

iii. It also allowed joint deposits of two or more eligible depositors in which deposit in such cases shall be credited to the joint deposit account.
About GMS:
♦ Launched in 2015, by the government, GMS aims to mobilise the gold held by households and institutions in the country.
♦ According to the scheme, banks’ customers are allowed to deposit their idle gold holdings for a fixed period in return for interest in the range of 2.25-2.50 per cent.

Rs 3 crore penalty slapped on Citibank India for non-compliance of criteria for directors: RBI
On January 11, 2019, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), under the relevant provisions of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949, imposed a penalty of Rs 3 crore on Citibank India for non-compliance in criteria for directors of the bank.
i. Citibank has been accused of deficiencies in regulatory compliance and of directions regarding the ‘fit-and-proper criteria’ for directors of the bank.
ii. The US-based Citibank has been operating in India for over 115 years.

RBI-Govt to jointly relax PCA norms for some better-off lenders
On January 14, 2019, the finance ministry and the Reserve Bank of India will work towards the prompt corrective action (PCA) framework for stressed banks.
 i. This would only be availed by those lenders that have shown considerable improvement in addressing bad loans.
 ii. On December 2018, the government gave an additional Rs 41,000 crore to state-run lenders, enhancing the total recapitalisation in the current financial year to Rs 1.06 lakh crore from Rs 65,000 crore.

About PCA:
♦ Prompt corrective action (PCA) is based on breach any of the three key regulatory trigger points — capital to risk-weighted assets ratio, net non-performing assets and return on assets.

Background:
♦ 11 state-run banks and one private lender are under the PCA framework.
♦ Gross bad loans of public sector banks have declined by Rs 23,860 crore in the first half of the financial year 2018-19. There has been a record recovery of Rs 60,000 crore.

RBI injected 10,000 crore rupees into the system through the purchase of government securities
On January 16, 2019, the Reserve Bank of India announced that it will inject 10,000 crore rupees into the system to increase liquidity through open market operations (OMOs).
i. The offers have been instructed to be submitted in electronic format on the RBI Core Banking Solution (E-Kuber) system.
ii. It also plans to inject liquidity under OMOs for 50,000 crore rupees in January 2019.
iii. The central bank has so far injected Rs 20,000 through OMOs in January 2019.

RBI eased norms for external commercial borrowings by launching new Framework
On January 16, 2019, RBI announced the New External Commercial Borrowings (ECB) Framework.
Objective:
To promote ease of doing business
i. According to the announcement, a few changes has been made. They are:
   • RBI rationalised the overseas borrowing norms allowing a uniform borrowing limit of Rs 750 million a year across tenors.
   • The list of eligible borrowers has been expanded to enable all entities eligible to receive foreign direct investment under the ECB framework.
   • Any entity who is a resident of a country which is FATF or IOSCO compliant will be treated as a recognised lender. This in term increases the lending options for lenders.
The **minimum average maturity period (MAMP)** has been kept at 3 years for all ECBs, irrespective of the amount of borrowing, except the borrowers specifically permitted in the circular to borrow for a shorter period.

A late submission fee for delay in prescribed reporting under the ECB framework have been introduced.

Tracks I (medium term ECB of three to five years) and Track II (long term ECB of up to ten years) under the existing framework have been merged as "**Foreign Currency denominated ECB**" and Track III and Rupee Denominated Bonds framework are combined as "**Rupee Denominated ECB**" to replace the current four-tiered structure, making the framework instrument-neutral.

For more information: [Click Here](#)

**Background:**
- The government has been opening up this sector to attract capital flows ever since the rupee started depreciating steeply vis-a-vis the dollar since April 2018.

**RBI fined Bank of Maharashtra with 1 Crore**

On January 16, 2019, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) imposed a **Rs 1-crore** penalty on state-owned **Bank of Maharashtra (BoM)** for non-compliance of **Know Your Customer** (KYC) guidelines and fraud-classification norms.

i. The penalty has been imposed on failure of the bank to follow the rules and regulation issued by the RBI.

ii. In the year 2018, the RBI had imposed a penalty of Rs 1 crore on BoM on account of **delay on the part of the bank to detect and report fraud in accounts**.

**RBI Initiates Industrial Outlook Survey (IOS) and Services and infrastructure Outlook Survey (SIOS)**

On 21st January 2019, The Reserve Bank of India has initiated two quarterly surveys named as Industrial Outlook Survey (IOS) and Services and Infrastructure Outlook Survey (SIOS) to examine the Indian Manufacturing, services and infrastructure sector and business situation for the quarter January-March 2019.

**Key Points**

i. The 85th round of quarterly Industrial Outlook survey would be conducted by Hansa Research Group Pvt. Ltd and it will assesses business sentiments of the current quarter and expectations for the ensuing quarter (April-June 2019).

ii. The 20th round of Quarterly Services and Infrastructure Outlook Survey (SIOS) will be conducted by Spectrum Planning India Ltd. And it will assesses the business situation from selected companies in the services and Infrastructure sector in the current quarter and their outlook in the ensuing quarter (April-June 2019).

**Technology in Banking**

**Bharti AXA Life uses WhatsApp to deliver policy, renewal premium**

On 02nd January 2019, private sector insurer **Bharti AXA Life Insurance** started delivering policies and renewal premium receipt to customers via instant messaging platform **WhatsApp** as a part of its alternative service option to the policy holders.

**Key points**

i. Bharti AXA Life Insurance, a joint venture between **Bharti Enterprises and French Insurance major AXA** is one of the first few insurers to provide the option of policy contract, renewal premium receipts and claim intimation through whatsapp.

ii. The Policy contract will be available for download shortly after its issuance.
SBI Card & Etihad Guest tie-up to launch premium card for international travel
On 24th January 2019, SBI Card, the country’s second largest credit card issuer and Etihad Guest, the loyalty programme of Etihad Airways have welded their hand together for a specific visa credit card to come into play for members and Indian travellers.

Key Points:

i. The card will prove handy in two forms:
   - Etihad Guest SBI Card
   - Etihad Guest SBI Premier Card

ii. It has been launched in order to confront the constraints of international travel. It is a promise to backtrack the lifestyles of affluent and urban Indians to complement their travel experience. Besides that, it is anticipated that the Indians will boost their travelling frequency which in turn leads to global exposure substantially.

iii. It is an appealing programme through which its clients can start collecting reward points instantly.

UAE, Saudi Central banks launch common digital currency called ‘Aber’
On 26th January 2019, Central banks of UAE and Saudi Arabia launched common digital currency called ‘Aber’. UAE central bank will establish an additional means for the central financial transfer systems of the two countries and enable bankers to directly deal with each other. It was announced during their Executive Committee’s First Meeting, which held in Abu Dhabi.

Key Points

i. Aber will be used in financial settlement between the two countries through Block chains and distributed Ledger technologies.

ii. Both Saudi Arabian Monetary Authority (SAMA) and the United Arab Emirates Central Bank (UAEIB) are studying the impact on the improvement and reduction of remittance costs and the assessment of risks through Aber.

iii. The use of digital currency will be restricted to a limited number of banks in each Country. If the first phase is successful then economic and legal requirements for future uses will be considered.

Other News Related to Banking & Finance

Allahabad Bank, SBI Life join hand for bancassurance partnership
On 31st December 2018, a ‘bancassurance’ pact was signed between State-owned Allahabad Bank and SBI Life Insurance to sell the policies of the insurer from over 3,238 branches of the Allahabad Bank.

Key Points:

i. The agreement is considered as one of the largest Bancassurance partnerships in the country.

ii. The agreement was signed in the presence of Allahabad Bank Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Mallikarjuna Rao and SBI Life MD & CEO Sanjeev Nautiyal.

Govt infuses nearly Rs 11,000 cr capital in public sector banks
On 31st December 2018, The government has infused 10,882 crore rupees in four public sector banks, including UCO Bank and Syndicate Bank. State-run lender UCO bank, formerly United Commercial Bank, announced that Government of India has infused Rs 3074 crore of capital into it by the way of preferential allotment.

Key Points

i. The UCO Bank has posted a net loss of Rs. 1136.44 Crore in the second quarter of FY19 against a net loss of Rs. 622.56 crore for the same period of previous fiscal.

ii. Gross NPA (Non-performing assets) of UCO bank fell marginally from Rs. 29786.41 crore to Rs. 29581.49 crore during the September Quarter of FY19.

iii. Government of India holds 90.8 per cent stake in UCO bank as on 30th September 2018.

iv. Bank of Maharashtra got 4,498 crore rupees, Syndicate Bank 1,632 crore and the Central Bank of India 1,678 crore.
The government has already announced infusion of 10,086 crore rupees in Bank of India, 5,500 crore in Oriental Bank of Commerce and 2,159 in United Bank of India.

**Bancassurance pact was signed between Syndicate Bank and SBI Life Insurance**

On January 2, 2019, Syndicate Bank and SBI Life Insurance signed a bancassurance pact aiming to offer a comprehensive financial planning solution to its customers.

i. This was signed between:
- Syndicate Bank MD & CEO, Mrutyunjay Mahapatra and MD and CEO of SBI Life, Sanjeev Nautiyal.

ii. Through the pact, Syndicate Bank will provide penetration in the market with its 3,000 branches and SBI Life’s diverse range of protection, wealth creation and savings insurance products will be brought to the table to the customers.

**HDFC MF surpassed ICICI Prudential MF to become largest AMC in India: AMFI**

On January 3, 2019, as per the latest data of Association of Mutual funds in India (AMFI), HDFC Mutual Fund has surpassed ICICI Prudential MF to become the country’s largest asset management company (AMC) after a gap of over two years.

i. As per the data, as of December 2018, HDFC MF managed assets worth Rs 3.35 lakh crore, while those of ICICI Prudential MF stood at Rs 3.08 lakh crore.

ii. And consequently, the assets under management (AUM) of HDFC MF have grown over 9 per cent in October-December quarter from the last quarter.

iii. Whereas, ICICI Prudential MF’s AUM reduced by 0.6 per cent.

iv. Among other firms, SBI MF stood at the third slot with AUM of Rs 2.64 lakh crore, followed by Aditya Birla Sun Life MF (Rs 2.42 lakh crore) and Reliance MF (Rs 2.36 lakh crore).

v. Overall, asset base of the country’s mutual fund industry was at Rs 23.61 lakh crore at the end of December quarter.

**Background:**

Earlier in February 2016, ICICI Prudential MF had surpassed HDFC MF in terms of AUM and reached the top position.

**What are Mutual Funds (MFs)?**

MFs are investment vehicles made up of a pool of funds collected from a large number of investors and this pool of money is invested in stocks, bonds and money market instruments, among others.

**ICICI Bank, Small Business FinCredit joined hands to provide loans worth Rs. 1 crore to MSMEs for 15-year tenure**

On January 4, 2019, ICICI Bank, in a first-of-its-kind programme, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Small Business FinCredit India Pvt. Ltd. (SBFC), a systemically important Non-Banking Finance Company for entrepreneurs, to jointly provide credit worth up to Rs 1 crore to MSMEs for a tenure of 15 years.

i. This MOU was signed under RBI's circular dated September 21, 2018, that permits banks to engage with a non-banking financial company (NBFC) to co-originate loans for the creation of priority sector assets.

ii. Under this arrangement, ICICI Bank will co-originate loan against property with SBFC at a mutually agreed ratio.

**Government amalgamated three Regional Rural Banks-Punjab Gramin Bank, Malwa Gramin Bank and Sutlej Gramin Bank into a single Bank**

With the effect from 1st January 2019, the three Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) – Punjab Gramin Bank, Malwa Gramin Bank and Sutlej Gramin Bank has been amalgamated into a single RRB by the Government.

**Key Points:**

i. After consulting the sponsor banks of the three RRBs, the central government felt that in the interest
of the banks and the areas served by them, they should be amalgamated into a single RRB.

ii. National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), the Government of Punjab, Punjab National Bank, State Bank of India and Punjab and Sind Bank are the sponsor banks of the said RRBs.

**Government Revises Interest Rate on Time Deposit Small Savings Scheme**
The Ministry of Finance, Government of India has revised the interest rates on select Time Deposit Small Saving Scheme for the quarter ending on 31st March 2019. The Interest rates on one-year time deposit is hiked from 6.9% to 7% whereas the interest rate on three-year time deposit has been changed from 7.2% to 7%.

**Key Points**
i. Interest on Small Saving Schemes is revised every quarter by Ministry of Finance, Government of India. Rates of Savings Deposit Scheme is 4.0%, 5-Year Time Deposit is 7.8%, 5-Year Recurring Deposit is 7.3%, 5-Year Senior Citizen Savings Scheme is 8.7%, 5-Year Monthly Income Account is 7.7%, 5-Year National Savings Certificate is 8.0%.

ii. Interest rates applicable to Public Provident Fund (PPF), Kisan Vikas Patra and Sukanya Samriddhi were remains unchanged at 8%, 7.7% and 8.5% respectively.

iii. Now, Investment in time deposits of one-year, two year and three year maturity periods will fetch interest at same rate 7%.

**IRDAI slapped a penalty of Rs 5 lakh on United India Insurance Co for violating motor settlement norms**
On January 4, 2019, the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) slapped a penalty of Rs 5 lakh on United India Insurance Co for violating norms regarding settlement of motor claims.

i. The insurer also violated file and use guidelines issued by the Authority.

**UBI, Srei Equipment Finance enter pact for MSME sector finance**
The United Bank of India (UBI) and Srei Equipment Finance have entered into an agreement for financing the Micro, Small and Medium enterprises (MSME) and agriculture sector.

**Key Points**
i. Under the agreement UBI plans to leverage the co-lending model to offer credit at blended interest rate of 11-12 per cent.

ii. The Bank will leverage low its low cost loans with Srei Equipment finance to enable purchase of equipment and vehicle in the seamless manner.

iii. The Bank is eyeing around 200 crore business over the period of three months by this agreement.

**Jana Small Finance Bank Launches Current Account with Unique Auto-Sweep Facility**
On 8th January 2019, the private sector Jana Small Finance Bank has launched a new Current Account with Auto-Sweep facility that will enable bank’s existing and potential new customers to auto sweep-in and sweep-out the idle funds in the current account to Sweep Fixed Deposit and earn high interest.

**Key Points**

i. In the said facility the customers will be able to earn interest of 8.5 percent for a tenor of 365 days on sweep deposit.

ii. The new facility will enable current account holders to earn higher interest on the idle funds while providing the flexibility of using the funds when the need in business arises.

iii. The Jana Small Finance Bank is offering an interest rate of 9% on Regular Fixed Deposit and 9.6% on senior citizen Fixed Deposit. Besides, the bank is also offering 9.25% interest rate on Fixed Deposit with no premature withdrawal.

**CAG report on the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management**
On 8th January 2019, The Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) released a report on the “Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM)” reveals that the government should frame a
policy on off-budget financing and sources of such funding in view of its fiscal implication. CAG further said that the government should also consider disclosing the details of off-budget borrowings through disclosure statements in Budget as well as in accounts.

**Key points:**

i. The objective of the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act, 2003 was to provide for the responsibility of the central Government to ensure inter-generational equity in fiscal management and long-term macro-economic stability.

ii. CAG said that the off-budget financing was being used to deter fertilizer arrears, food subsidy bills and outstanding dues of Food Corporation of India (FCI) through borrowings.

iii. The report said “Such off-Budget arrangement, deters committed liability (subsidy arrears/bills) or create future liability and increases cost of subsidy due to interest payment.

**NABARD through its venture capital entity NABVENTURES Ltd will provide early stage capital to agriculture and rural enterprises**

On January 8, 2019, **NABVENTURES Ltd**, the venture capital entity incorporated by **NABARD** under the **Companies Act**, will launch its maiden early stage capital fund offer to agriculture and rural enterprises.

i. This would support the agriculture and rural enterprises and fill the gap of adequate institutional support to them.

ii. It would also promote various enterprises to create more sustainable employment.

**NABVENTURES Ltd:**

♦ It is incorporated to operate and manage SEBI registered Alternative Investment Funds (AIF) with a primary investment objective to contribute to the development of agriculture, allied sector, Food Processing and sectors contributing to rural development.

♦ Headquarters: Mumbai.

♦ Chairman: Dr. Harsh Kumar Bhanwala.

**Fresh CLSS Subsidy of Rs 175.56 cr from NHB given to Aadhar Housing Finance**

On January 8, 2019, **National Housing Bank (NHB)** gave fresh subsidy worth **Rs 175.56 crore** under **Credit Linked Subsidy Scheme (CLSS)** to housing finance company, **Aadhar Housing finance**.

i. The credit would be passed on to the loan accounts of 7,592 customers in the **Economically Weaker Section (EWS) and Low Income Group (LIG)** who were eligible under **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY)**.

ii. This will reduce their monthly payable instalments.

**Other News:**

As on 31st Dec 2018, Aadhar has received and passed on government CLSS subsidy to close to 10,000 families.

**Indian Army and Punjab National Bank (PNB) singed MOU for updated salary packages**

On January 8, 2019, **Indian Army** and **Punjab National Bank (PNB)** signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the **Defence Salary Package**.

i. The signing ceremony was chaired by:

- From Indian Army: Adjutant General, Lt Gen Ashwani Kumar and
- PNB’s side: Mr Naveen Kumar (General Manager).

ii. **Salient features of the MOU are:**

- free ‘RAKSHAK PLUS’ Scheme for serving pers and veterans,
- overdraft facility range from Rs 0.75 to 3.0 lakhs,
- multiplicity ‘At Par’ cheques,
- instant credit of outstation cheques,
- preferential allotment of lockers at concessional AMC and
- free SMS alerts.
IRCTC tied up with Bharti AXA General insurance company to offer free travel insurance for air travellers

On 9th January 2019, IRCTC tied up with Bharti AXA General insurance company to provide **free travel insurance to the air travellers**. This insurance is applicable to only those who book ticket in the official website of air ticketing irctc, IRCTC Air – [air.irctc.co.in](http://air.irctc.co.in). Through this tie up, every passenger would be availed of insurance upto 50 lakhs in case of accidental death or life time disability. This facility is made available to everyone irrespective of class of travel. The premium of the insurance will be borne by Irctc itself and it is applicable to both one way and round way travels.

IDFC Bank re-named IDFC First Bank: Registrar of Companies, Chennai

On January 13, 2019, private sector lender IDFC Bank changed its name to IDFC First Bank Ltd owing to the merge of the bank with Non-Banking Finance Company (NBFC) Capital First on December 2018.

i. The change was effective from January 12, 2019 by virtue of **Certificate of Incorporation pursuant to change of name** issued by the Registrar of Companies, Chennai.

ii. The board of IDFC Bank also approved the appointment of V Vaidyanathan, founder and chairman of Capital First Ltd, as managing director and chief executive officer of the merged entity.

Sovereign gold bonds on sale at Rs 3,214 a gram during Jan 14-18,2019

On 12th January 2019, ministry of finance announced that a new series of **sovereign gold bonds** will be available at **Rs 3,214** per gram from **14th January to 18th January 2019**.

**Key Points**

i. A discount of **Rs 50 per gram** will be given to the investors who apply online for the Sovereign Gold Bond Scheme **2018-19 – Series V**.

ii. Interest rate of **2.50 percent** per annum will be offered to the investors which is payable semi-annually. The interest earned is taxable.

iii. The issue price of gold bond will be **Rs 3,164** per gram of gold with the settlement date of January 22, 2019.

**About Sovereign gold bond scheme**

i. Launched in **2015** by the government to reduce the demand for physical gold by shifting a part of the physical bars and coins purchased every year for investment into gold bonds.

ii. Sovereign gold bonds are issued by the **RBI** on behalf of the government.

iii. The tenor of the Bond is of **8 years** with an exit option in 5th, 6th and 7th year.

iv. Sovereign gold bonds are denominated in grams of gold and investments can be done in multiples of one gram with a maximum limit of **4 kg** per person.

PSU banks to bring down govt equity to 52%: FinMin

On January 16, 2019, Finance Ministry asked the **public sector banks** to bring down the government’s equity to at least **52 per cent** in the **first phase**.

**Objective:** To align with the best corporate practices

**Key Points:**

i. Dilution of government stake will help banks to meet 25 per cent public float norms of market regulator SEBI.

ii. This would also encourage the banks to follow the prudential lending norms.

**Steps taken regarding this move:**

i. The country’s largest lender State Bank of India (SBI) has already initiated step for **Rs 20,000 crore share sale** through qualified institutional placement (QIP).

ii. This would dilute the existing government stake of 58.53 per cent in the bank.

iii. Accordingly, other banks like Syndicate Bank, Union Bank of India, Punjab National Bank, and Oriental Bank of Commerce among others have already issued or in process of issuing Employee Share
Purchase Scheme (ESPS).

iv. The government had also merged 3 RRBs—Punjab Gramin Bank, Malwa Gramin Bank and Sutlej Gramin Bank—into a single RRB with effect from January 1, 2019.

v. Also, Punjab Gramin Bank (PNB), and Uttar Bihar Gramin Bank (UCO Bank) has been amalgamated with Madhya Bihar Gramin Bank (PNB).

**Background:**
1. Some of the public sector banks have government’s holding beyond 75 per cent.
2. Currently, the Centre holds 50 per cent in RRBs, while 35 per cent and 15 per cent are with the concerned sponsor banks and state governments.

**Banks led by SBI agreed to finance Nagpur-Mumbai Samruddhi Corridor**
On January 17, 2019, the Maharashtra Chief Minister’s Office in Mumbai announced that SBI along with others banks agreed to provide finance for ‘Nagpur-Mumbai Samruddhi Corridor’ expressway project.

i. Among the consortium of banks, SBI will be providing the highest amount which is Rs. **8,500 crore**.

ii. Other parties include: Punjab National Bank, Bank of Baroda, Bank of Maharashtra as well as the Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) of India.

**About the Project:**

i. The estimated cost of the project, being constructed by the Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation, is around **50,000 crores**.

ii. Out of this, around **26,000 crores** are required for the construction of the expressway.

iii. The corridor will have 25 toll plazas, and the toll will be collected for 40 years.

**Background:**
♦ The state government was falling short of 3,000 to 4,000 crores to reach the target of 26,000 crore rupees.

**HDFC Standard Life Insurance renamed to HDFC Life Insurance**
On January 16, 2019, HDFC Standard Life Insurance renamed itself to HDFC Life Insurance.

i. The change in name has been made effective immediately.

**Two commemorative coins in the denomination of Rs 100 and Rs 5 were released to mark the 102nd birth anniversary of late Tamil Nadu chief minister**
On 17th January 2019, Two Commemorative coins in the denomination of Rs 100 and Rs 5 were released to mark the **102nd Birth Anniversary** of late Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.G. Ramachandran.

i. Commemorative coins were released by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister K Palaniswami and Deputy Chief Minister O Panneerselvam.

**Centre to states: step up spending, auditing of District Mineral Fund**
On 18th January 2019, Centre has advised States to increase the spending under District Mining Fund (DMF) because only **24 percent** of the **Rs. 23,606 crore** allocated for Pradhan Mantri Khanij Kshetra Kalyan Yojana (PMKKKY) is spent until now.

**Key Points**

i. PMKKKY is announced to provide welfare to those affected by mining operations.

ii. Under PMKKKY’s scheme, Government has to spend a portion of revenue for the development activities in the mining regions.

iii. Ministry of Mines directed to states to ensure that the rate of expenditure for development works improves while ensuring timely audit of the spending.

**Government of India and JICA sign Loan Agreements on Japan’s Official Development Assistance Loan to India**
On 18th January 2019, Dr. C.S. Mohapatra, Additional Secretary, Department of Economic affairs, Government of India and Mr. Katsuo Matsumoto, Chief Representative, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) signed the Loan Agreement under Japan’s Official Development Assistance Loan to India.
Assistance Loan Program in New Delhi.

**Key Points**

i. Loan Agreement was signed for following projects:
   - Development of **Chennai Peripheral Ring Road (Phase 1)** for **JPY 40.074 billion** (Rs. 2470 Crore)
   - Program for **Japan India Cooperative Actions towards Sustainable Development Goal** in India for **JPY 15 billion** (Rs. 950 Crore)

ii. Chennai Peripheral Ring Road (Phase 1) project aims to meet the continuously increasing traffic demand in **Chennai metropolitan area**.

iii. The second project which is 'Japan India Cooperative Actions towards sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)' aims to contribute the promotion of SDGs especially in social development by supporting the efforts of Indian Government in strengthening the Policy Framework and Implementation mechanism.

**Group insolvency: UK Sinha-headed working group to suggest suitable framework**

Former Chairman of Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), U.K. Sinha will head an 11-member working group constituted by the **Insolvency and Bankruptcy board of India (IBBI)** to study the concept of 'Group Insolvency' and suggest a suitable framework.

**Key Points**

i. The Working Group have to submit the report within two months recommending a regulatory framework to facilitate insolvency resolutions and liquidation of corporate debtors in a Group.

ii. It was noted that Corporate groups falls apart in insolvency and thereby thwart the chances of their restructuring. **Group Insolvency** will prevent this situation.

iii. **Group Insolvency** will be very beneficial in a situation where two or more applications are pending in the same court against debtors in the same group.

iv. Managing Director of State Bank of India, Anshula Kant and Executive Director and CFO of Tata Steel, Koushik Chatterjee are members this working group.

**Nepal ‘s Central bank announces to ban the use of Indian rupee notes above 100**

is widely used. notes of Rs 2,000, Rs 500 and Rs 200 denominations, a move that could affect Indian tourists visiting the Himalayan nation where Indian currency has banned the use of Indian currency

On January 20, 2019, Nepal’s central bank

**Key points to be Noted:**

i. The decision to ban notes has come up with Reserve Bank of India (RBI)’s decision that Indian denominations of Rs.200, 500 and 2,000 cannot be carried and used for trading. The notes with a denomination of Rs.100 and below are freely exchangeable in Nepal and there is no ban lifted on it.

ii. With the implementation of this new rule, Nepali citizens cannot carry these denominations to other countries except India and Nepali people are also not allowed to bring in such notes from other countries.

iii. This ban would affect the ‘Visit Nepal’ Campaign which is aimed to attract at least 2 million tourists in 2020.

**IBBI organised Insolvency and Bankruptcy Awareness Programme at Vadodara, Gujarat**

On January 19, 2019, The **Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) organised an Insolvency and Bankruptcy Awareness Programme at Vadodara, Gujarat**. It is organised in collaboration with three Insolvency Professional Agencies, namely, the Indian Institute of Insolvency Professionals of ICAI (lead partner), the ICSI Institute of Insolvency Professionals, and the Insolvency Professional Agency of Institute of Cost Accountants of India.
Anushree Jindal launches maiden biz venture Svamaan Financial Services

Anushree Jindal, daughter-in-law of JSW Group Chairman Sajjan Jindal has launched her maiden business venture – Svamaan Financial Services, a microfinance company with Rs. 10 Crore “Personal Family Money” as seed capital.

**Key Points**

i. Reserve Bank of India approved the application of Svamaan Financial Services as an RBI Registered Non-Banking Financial Company – Micro Finance Institution (NBFC – MFI).

ii. Svamaan Financial Services aims to promote financial inclusion for rural woman and micro-enterprises. It will operate initially in Karnataka and Maharashtra and plans to enter eastern markets of Odisha and Chhatisgarh by 2020.

iii. The Microfinance company will offer financial services to un-banked and under-banked sections of population and aims to impact the life of over one lakh customer positively by 2021.

SBI Ecowrap Report recommends Unconditional Cash Transfer to Farmers

On 22nd January 2019, State Bank of India recommended Unconditional Cash Transfer to farmers to alleviate the agrarian distress instead of Universal Basic Income (UBI) scheme in its Ecowrap report.

**Key Points**

i. Initiating Rythu Bandhu Scheme on national level may not be feasible presently because land data in several states including Bihar, Jharkhand, Gujarat and Tamil Nadu is not yet digitized.

ii. The Report suggested that Government should consider Unconditional Cash Transfer scheme until the problems are ironed out in terms of proper tenancy laws because it will be more equitable (on per farmer basis) with meaning full impact.

iii. As per the report, The Government had estimated Agriculture Subsidy (Plus Support) at Rs 98,100 crore in the 2019-20 budget which includes 13,000 crore for Crop Insurance, 15,000 crore for Interest Subsidy and Rs. 70,100 crore for Fertilizer subsidy.

iv. As per the SBI Ecowrap Report, Government needs to provide cash support in the range of Rs. 10000 to Rs 12000 per annum to make it completely cash neutral and such as scheme would cost government about 1.2 lakh crore per annum.

Health research money increased by Rs 147 crore in India

On January 23, 2019, G-Finder a project tracked on global investments into research and development (R&D) for neglected diseases by Indian Council of Medical Research was (ICMR) increased by Rs 147 crore.

i. India attained 4th position, US become the largest funder, on research and development, which is followed by UK.

ii. Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) increased its funding for research and development for dengue and leptospirosis by Rs 6.5 crore and Rs 9.1 crore respectively.

iii. Over all the amount invested on research and development reached the height of USD 3.5 billion this year.

IRDAI sets panel headed by Praveen Kutumbe to identify systematically important insurers

A panel is all set by Insurance Regulatory Development Authority of India (IRDAI) headed by Praveen Kutumbe, to identify domestically systematically important insurers (SIIs) and an augmented regulatory framework is logically established in this regard.

**Key Points**

i. The rationale behind the idea for SIIs as explained by IRDAI states that any fiasco in the system will defy the essential services they provide to policy holders overall economic activity can start dampening.

ii. In this regard, a committee headed by Praveen Kutumbe, Member- Finance and Investment, IRDAI, has been asked to submit report in six months.

iii. It is also perceived that SIIs is pivotal for the smooth and incessant functioning of insurance services to the real economy.
IndiaFirst Life Insurance buys stake in CSC e-Governance services
On 28th January 2019 Life insurance firm IndiaFirst buys 9% stake in CSC e-Governance services India Limited. This stake purchase demonstrates bringing personal risk protection to all sections of the society in the four year association with Common Services Centre (CSC).

Key Points
i. IndiaFirst life insurance is a joint venture between Bank of Baroda, Andra Bank and Legal and General (UK).
ii. CSC is an integral part of Digital India initiative of the government under ministry of Electronics and information Technology.
iii. CSC e-Governance services India Limited is a special purpose vehicle (CSCSPV) incorporated under the companies Act, 1956 to monitor the implementation of common services centers scheme (CSCs).
iv. The financial inclusion journey will bring the 2 entities to work towards enabling village level entrepreneurs for reaching out to the last rule customers with tailored solutions.
♦ Minister of Electronics and Information Technology : Ravi Sankar Prasad
♦ Constituency: Bihar – Rajya Sabha

MoUs & AGREEMENTS IN NEWS

AAI signed MoU with SAMEER for boosting R&D in the field of communication
On January 4, 2019, Airport Authority of India (AAI) signed MoU with Society for Applied Microwave Electronics Engineering and Research (SAMEER) for joint research programs in the field of Communication Navigation and Surveillance (CNS).
i. The MOU is under government of India’s ‘Make in India’ concept to indigenously design and develop CNS systems.
ii. SAMEER is an autonomous research and development (R and D) institute under Ministry of Electronic and Information Technology (MeitY).

Bureau of Energy Efficiency and CPWD signed MoU for 5 years on promoting energy efficiency in buildings
On January 10, 2019, the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) and the Central Public Works Department (CPWD) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on cooperation in building energy efficiency for five years.
i. The MOU was signed by:
   • Shri Abhay Bakre, Director General, BEE and
   • Shri Prabhakar Singh, Director General, CPWD.
ii. According to the MOU, BEE and CPWD will cooperate on:
   • promoting designs and construction of Energy Conservation Building Code (ECBC) compliant new buildings,
   • star rating of CPWD managed buildings across the country with no registration or renewal fee,
   • awareness on energy efficiency in building sector and support for capacity building of CPWD officials in ECBC.
iii. This MOU was in line with Government of India’s vision for achieving energy security, economic growth and environmental sustainability.

Background:
♦ The project aims for promoting design and construction of homes including apartments and townships to give benefits of energy efficiency to the occupants.
Agreement for Renukaji Multipurpose Dam Project signed by 6 states: Ministry of Water Resources
On January 11, 2019, 6 states, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi, Rajasthan and Uttarakhand, in the presence of Union Minister for Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, Road Transport & Highways and Shipping Shri Nitin Gadkari, signed an agreement for Renukaji Multipurpose Dam Project in New Delhi.

i. Also a concession agreement was signed between U.P. Jal Nigam, NMCG and Prayagraj Water Pvt. Ltd., for Namami Gange projects for the city of Prayagraj, under Hybrid Annuity Mode and One City One Operator Concept.

Under Renukaji Dam Multipurpose Project:

i. 3 storage projects are proposed to be constructed on the river Yamuna and two of its tributaries – Tons and Giri in the hilly regions of Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh of Upper Yamuna Basin. These include:
   - Lakhwar project on river Yamuna in Uttarakhand,
   - Kishau on river Tons in Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh and
   - Renukaji on river Giri in Himachal Pradesh.

ii. Seen as National Projects since 2008, 90% funding of the cost of irrigation & drinking water component will be provided by the Govt. of India as central assistance and the rest 10% would be borne by the beneficiary states.

iii. The project will be executed by Himachal Pradesh Power Corporation Ltd. (HPPCL) and will generate 40 MW of power during peak flow.

iv. This project will meet the drinking water needs of Delhi and the stored water of Renukaji Dam will be used by
   - UP, Haryana & NCT of Delhi from Hathnikund Barrage,
   - by NCT of Delhi from Wazirabad Barrage and
   - by UP, Haryana and Rajasthan from Okhla Barrage.

v. The total cost of the project was estimated on Price Level 2015 is Rs. 4596.76 Crores out of which central assistance consists of Rs. 3892.83 crore and remaining Rs. 432.54 crore will be provided by the basin States of Haryana, UP/UK, HP, Rajasthan & NCT of Delhi.

India and Mongolia Sign a Powerful MoU at ICMEI
The Embassy of Mongolia and International Chamber of Media and Entertainment Industry (ICMEI), India have further strengthened the relationship between India and Mongolia by signing a MoU in the field of art and culture.

Key Points:

i. The MoU was signed in the presence of H.E. Gonchig Ganbold Ambassador of Mongolia to India and Dr. Sandeep Marwah, President ICMEI.

ii. The MoU will enable the two countries to work together on different segments including print, radio, television, cinema, animation, Performing and Fine Arts, tourism, hospitality, education, environment, solar energy, skill development, PR events and advertising, Fashion and Design and Journalism.

iii. During the event, the deserving students from Mongolia were handed over the first scholarship of short-term course of Asian Academy of Film and Television which also includes boarding and lodging for three months.

iv. Besides, decisions regarding the visit of media team to Mongolia, festival of Films from Mongolia, joint venture in feature film and short film with Mongolian film makers, promotion of Mongolia as a film location, Tourism in Mongolia, etc. were also taken at a joint meeting.

Cabinet approves MoC between India and Japan in the field of Food Processing Industry
On 23rd January 2019, the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi led Union Cabinet approved the Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) between India and Japan in the field of food processing sector which would help in getting better market access.
Key Points:

- The MoC is expected to be mutually beneficial in the field of food processing between India and Japan by introducing innovative techniques and processes.
- The aim of the agreement is to achieve equity and inclusiveness by promoting understanding of best practices in food processing in the two countries and help in improving the food processing sector as well as improving market access.

Cabinet approves Memorandum of Understanding between India and Kuwait for cooperation on the Recruitment of Domestic Workers

On 23rd January 2019, the Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi approved the signing Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Kuwait for cooperation on the Recruitment of Domestic Workers.

Key Points:

- The MOU will help the Indian domestic workers including female workers deployed in Kuwait by providing a structured framework for cooperation on domestic workers related matters besides providing strengthened safeguards to them.
- The validity of MOU is five years and it incorporates provision for automatic renewal.
- The MoU which will be implemented through a Joint Committee will benefit around 3,00,000 Indian domestic workers including around 90,000 female deployed in Kuwait.

Cabinet approves Amendment to the ‘Framework on Currency Swap Arrangement for SAARC Member Countries’ to incorporate ‘Standby Swap’ amounting to USD 400 million operated within the overall size of the facility

On 23rd January 2019, the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi led Union Cabinet approved amendments to the framework on currency swap arrangement for SAARC member countries by incorporating a stand-by facility of USD 400 million.

Key Points:

- The ‘Framework on Currency Swap Arrangement for SAARC Member Countries’ is operated within the overall size of the Facility of USD 2 billion and is built in flexibility with respect to modalities of its operation, such as period of swap, roll over, etc.
- The new amendments would help India to fulfil current request from SAARC member countries for availing the swap amount exceeding the present limit prescribed under the SAARC Swap Framework.
- The facility will help the short term swap requirements of SAARC countries which could be higher than the agreed lines and aroused due to heightened financial risk and volatility in global economy.
- The operational details of the facility will be negotiated by the Reserve Bank of India with the central banks of the SAARC countries availing the Standby Swap.
- The Framework on Currency Swap Arrangement for SAARC Member Countries on was approved by the central government on March 1, 2012 with the intention to provide a line of funding for short term foreign exchange requirements or to meet balance of payments crises.

India signs agreement with OECD for participation in PISA 2021

On 28th January 2019, the Ministry of Human Resources Development (MHRD), Government of India signed an agreement with Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) for India’s participation in Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2021.

Key Points:

i. The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) tests the learning levels of 15-year-old students in reading, mathematics, science and collaborative problem solving and is conducted by
OECD every three years.

ii. For Indian students, the question in the test will be related to India’s perspective only and the test will be in offline format.

iii. The objective of joining the PISA is to help introduce competency based examination reforms in the school system and to enhance the quality of education in the country.

iv. The students for the test will be selected through random sampling by PISA and the CBSE and NCERT will be part of the process and activities leading to the actual test.

v. The performance of India was very dismal in 2009 and it was placed 72nd among the 74 participating countries. Since then India stayed away from PISA.

vi. Union HRD Minister, Shri Prakash Javadekar graced the event for signing the agreement and it was signed by Shri Maneesh Garg, Joint Secretary, MHRD and Mr Andreas Schleicher, Director (PISA) in OECD.

Omega Healthcare inks MoU with IIIT-Bangalore

For advanced use of latest technology in providing healthcare solutions. Services signed a pact with IIIT-Bangalore. On January 21, 2019, Omega Healthcare Management

i. This MoU was signed to build industry-grade AI engines that can be embedded as part of Omega’s business solutions to solve healthcare business challenges

ii. The pact also enhanced research programmes in artificial intelligence (AI) and Data Science, aimed to focus on specific business-related processes.

Saab, AAI sign MoU over air traffic management solutions

On January 23, 2019, Swedish aerospace and defence company signed a memorandum of understanding with the Airways Authority of India (AAI) to improve air traffic management (ATM) solutions in airports

About the MoU

i. The MoU was signed by Vineet Gulati, Member (ANS) from AAI and Peter Engberg, Head of Traffic Management, Saab Business Area Industrial Products and Services.

ii. Saab and the AAI will jointly explore potential avenues for co-operation for automation system solutions in India

iii. Saab has ability to create Advanced-Surface Movement Guidance & Control System (A-SMGCS) and Surface Movement Radar (SR-3), to Remote Towers which can be fitted at all types of airports.

iv. Saab’s ATM solutions are now deployed in Ahmedabad, Amritsar, Guwahati, Jaipur, Lucknow, Chennai, Kolkata, Mumbai, New Delhi, Cochin and Bhubaneshwar.

India signed 11 MoUs worth $9.5 million with Afghanistan

India has signed 11 Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) with Afghanistan for 26 projects worth 9.5 million dollars in the field of infrastructure, public services such as health clinics and governance-related projects.

Key Points:

i. The MoUs signed will involve the construction of classrooms, orphanages, health clinics, canal protection walls and enhancing economic opportunities for women.

ii. The projects will be developed in seven provinces of Afghanistan- Balkh, Ghor, Herat, Kabul, Bamyan, Badghis and Kapisa.

iii. It will help local communities in education, employment and livelihood generation and capacity building.

iv. These projects which are part of 577 community-based Small Development Projects (SDP) are being funded by India from 2005-2021 and worth $120 million.

v. Since 2001, India has undertaken projects worth over $2 billion in Afghanistan.
India signs MoU with Sri Lanka to modernize facilities at Vipulananda Institute of Aesthetic Studies in Batticaloa, Sri Lanka

On January 21, 2019, India and Sri Lanka signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that would provide modern infrastructural facilities to Swami Vipulananda Institute of Aesthetic Studies of Eastern University in Batticaloa district of Sri Lanka.

**Key Points:**

i. The MoU was signed by High Commissioner of India to Sri Lanka Taranjit Singh Sandhu, and Secretary, Minister of City Planning, Water Supply and Higher Education M.M.P.K. Mayadunne.

ii. Our government have sanctioned a total amount of 275 million Sri Lankan rupee as a support to modernise facilities in the institute.

iii. The project involved renovation of the auditorium and construction of a new building with recording cum editing facilities for the institute.

India, China sign protocol for export of Indian tobacco to Chinese market

On January 21, 2019 a protocol was signed between India's Commerce Secretary Anup Wadhawan and Zhang Jiwen, Vice Minister of General Administration of China Customs (GACC) accountable for examining market access and quarantine issues for India's agriculture and allied products. Mr. Wadhawan was on a two-day visit to Beijing, China where his efforts with Chinese officials facilitated for the tobacco export to China.

The revival of the pyto-sanitary protocol with China will turn economically better for the farmers and also ameliorate Indian tobacco exports as China is the largest consumer and producer of tobacco with over 350 million smokers (world's highest).

Cabinet apprised of MoU between India and Morocco on Cooperation in the area of Cyber Security

On 2nd January 2019, The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has been apprised of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Morocco on cooperation in the area of Cyber Security.

**Key points**

i. The MoU was signed on 25th September 2018.

ii. The MoU will promote cooperation for Exchange of knowledge and experience in detection, resolution and prevention of security-related incidents between India and Morocco.

iii. Implementation of the MoU will result in significant mutual benefits in the Cyber Security sector, through institutional and capacity building with Morocco in the field of Cyber Security.

Cabinet approves MoU on Maritime issues between India and Denmark

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Maritime issues between India and Denmark and it is proposed to be signed during the upcoming visit of the VVIP from Denmark to India in January, 2019.

**Key Points:** The MoU will pave way for both countries to explore the areas for bilateral collaboration and facilitating cross-border cooperation and investments between the maritime sectors of India and Denmark.

- It will allow for cooperation in the field of green maritime technology and shipbuilding, granting the Indian Register of Shipping (IRS) the status of Recognized Organization (RO), cooperation in the fields of maritime training and education.

- Besides it will also help in research and development for sustained cooperation in the field of merchant shipping and maritime transport related matters.

Cabinet approves MoU between India and Japan on Development of Advanced Model Single Window

On 10th January 2019, the Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi approved the
Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Japan on development of Advanced Model Single Window, aimed at facilitating investments and promote ease of doing business.

Key Points:
- Besides development of ‘Advanced Model Single Window’, the agreement would also help in its operationalization in Central and State Governments in India.
- The development will help in formulating administrative procedures necessary for business operations and developing a structure in which those procedures are completed in an expeditious manner.
- The ‘Advanced Model Single Window’ is based on the best practices in and outside India, with measurable parameters and identify possible obstacles for establishment of the Single Window in India.
- The development will accelerate India’s effort to promote Ease of Doing Business in India.

Cabinet approves MoU between India and France on technical bilateral cooperation in the field of new and renewable energy

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and France on technical bilateral cooperation in the field of new and renewable energy. The MoU in this regard had already been signed on 3rd October, 2018.

Key Points:
- The MoU is aimed to establish the basis for a cooperative institutional relationship to encourage and promote technical bilateral cooperation on new and renewable issues on the basis of mutual benefit, equality and reciprocity.
- The agreement will include joint research working groups, pilot projects, capacity building programs, study tour, case studies and the sharing of experience/expertise.

Cabinet approves Signing of the TOR provide tax assistance to Swaziland

The Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi chaired Union Cabinet has approved the signing of Terms of Reference (TOR) that would govern the engagement of the designated Indian Expert to provide tax assistance to Swaziland (Eswatini) under the Tax Inspectors Without Borders Programme (TIWB) between India and Eswatini.

Key Points:
- Under the TIWB programme, an Indian Expert has been mutually selected by the Government of India and the Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini.
- The conditions of the engagement of the designated Indian Expert to provide tax assistance to Eswatini under the TIWB Programme will be decided by the Terms of Reference (TOR).
- The agreement will give impetus to India’s support in capacity building in tax matters in developing countries.

About Tax Inspectors without Borders Programme (TIWB):

It is jointly launched by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to support developing countries to strengthen national tax administrations through building audit capacity and to share this knowledge with other countries.

Cabinet approves Bilateral Swap Arrangement between India and Japan

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi gave its nod to the proposal for entering into an agreement for $75-billion Bilateral Swap Arrangement (BSA) between India and Japan.

Key Points:
- The agreement authorizes the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to sign the Bilateral Swap Arrangement between the RBI and the Bank of Japan for a maximum amount of USD 75 billion.
• It was concluded in October last year during summit level meeting at Yamanashi, Japan between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Japan’s Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.
• The arrangement is expected to greatly enhance the RBI’s ability to manage exchange rate volatility and capital markets in India besides maintaining an appropriate level of balance of payments for meeting short-term deficiency in foreign exchange.
• The facility will enable the agreed amount of Capital being available to India on tap for use thus improving prospects of Indian companies in tapping foreign capital as there would be greater confidence in stability of country’s exchange rate.

Cabinet approves MoU between India and Australia on the safety in Mines, Testing and Research Station

Key Points:
• The signing of the MoU will help the DGMS to collaborate with SIMTARS for implementation of risk based safety management system, providing training and modernising R&D laboratory of DGMS.
• The partnership will also help in organising, conference, seminar and other technical meetings, setting up occupations safety and health academy and national mine disaster centre.
• The MoU will remain in effect for three years from the date of signing

Cabinet approves ex-post facto approval for Agreement on the facilitation of visa arrangements signed between India and Maldives
The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi gave its ex-post facto approval to the agreement on the facilitation of visa arrangements signed between India and the Maldives last month to further deepen people to people exchanges between the two countries.

Key Points:
• The Visa Facilitation Agreement which was signed during the visit of Maldivian President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih to India will make it easier for Maldivian and India nationals to travel to each other’s countries for tourism, medical treatment, education as well as business and employment.
• The Agreement provides for 90-day visa free travel for tourism, medical and limited business purpose.
• Furthermore it also allows easy conversion of such visa free entry to medical visa as well as visas for dependents of students and those pursuing employment in each other's territories.

NCDEX, IRMA sign MoU to handhold farmer producer organisations
On January 24 2019, A MoU has been signed between The National Commodity & Derivatives Exchange Ltd (NCDEX) and Institute of Rural Management Anand (IRMA) to guide farmer producer organizations (FPOs) and allied institutions.

i. They provide their support through training sessions, handholding, and leadership development.
ii. IRMA’s students able to learn about commodity markets and also could provide training to agro sourcing professionals, skill upgrades of government officials, supportive awareness programmes and research.
Panel suggests not to allow new Engineering colleges from 2020
A government appointed panel headed by IIT- Hyderabad chairman B V R Mohan Reddy has suggested to the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) to stop setting up new engineering colleges from 2020 and review the creation of new capacity every two years after that.

Key Points:

i. In a 41-page report, the panel has also suggested that no additional seats should be approved in traditional engineering areas such as mechanical, electrical, civil and electronics.
ii. It has also recommended that institutes should be encouraged to convert current capacity in traditional disciplines to emerging new technologies as the current capacity utilisation in traditional disciplines is just 40% as opposed to 60% seat occupancy in branches such as computer science and engineering, aerospace engineering and mechatronics.
iii. Recommendations by the panel also include introduction of undergraduate engineering programmes exclusively for artificial intelligence, blockchain, robotics, quantum computing, data sciences, cybersecurity and 3D printing and design.
iv. The committee however is in the favour of allowing concessions for applications of setting up new engineering colleges that are already in the pipeline.
v. The committee has suggested that the AICTE should only give approvals based on the capacity utilisation of concerned institute.

Ministry of HRD constitutes a task force to look into the issue of JNV suicides
On 3rd January 2019, the Ministry of Human Resource Development constituted a task force to look into the circumstances of reported suicides of 49 students, including Dalits and Adivasi students, of residential Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas (JNVs) between 2013 and 2017.

Key Points:

i. The task force, to be headed by psychiatrist Dr. Jitendra Nagpal, has been constituted to look into the circumstances leading to the suicidal deaths of students residing in the hostels of JNVs.
ii. The task force will also suggest ways and means to arrest the trend of suicides by students of JNVs.
iii. Furthermore, a proposal to engage two full time counselors (one male and one female) in each of the 630 functional JNVs has also been sent to the Department of Expenditure for approval from the HRD Ministry.

SEBI Constitutes Research Advisory Committee Headed By Sankar De
On January 8th 2019, Market regulator SEBI has set up a Research advisory committee (RAC) that will help and analyse the new methods of policy making for the development of capital market. The committee formed will be headed by Sankar De

Key Points:

i. This committee is formed with an objective to define the objective of creating the policy for the development of the capital market and for as bridge between the analytical research to formation of the policy.
ii. For promotion and developing the researches that are relevant to the capital market
iii. Exploring the research collaboration with external researchers from both domestic and international agencies
iv. Another important factor for the formation of this committee is to maintain the database related to the capital market.
v. Promotion/development of research proposals in-house as well as by interested external researchers.

Government notifies High-Level Committee for implementation of Clause VI of Assam Accord
Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India has notified a High-level committee of nine members under the chairmanship of Shri M.P. Bezbarauah for implementation of Clause VI of the Assam Accord.

What is Clause VI?
The Clause VI of Assam Accord envisaged that appropriate constitutional, legislative and administrative safeguards should be provided to protect, preserve and promote the cultural, social, linguistic identity and heritage of the people of Assam.

**Key Points**

i. The Committee will submit its report within 6 months from the date of notification.

ii. The 9 member Committee headed by retired IAS M.P. Bezbarauah includes eminent Assamese persons from different fields.

iii. The State Government of Assam will provide necessary administrative and logistics support to the committee.

iv. The effectiveness of actions since 1985 will be examined to implement clause 6 of the Assam Accord.

v. The Committee will assess the required quantum of reservation of seats in the state Assembly and local bodies for the people of the state.

vi. The Committee is also tasked to assess the requirement of measures that needs to be taken to protect Assamese and other indigenous languages of Assam.

**J-K Law Department** set up a 3-year state law commission under the chairmanship of Justice M K Hanjura

On January 7, 2019, the Jammu and Kashmir Law Department set up a State law commission, for three years, under the chairmanship of Justice (Retd) M K Hanjura.

**Key Points:**

i. It will have a chairperson, two full-time members and two part-time members.

ii. The Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Secretary Shri. Achal Sethi will be the ex-officio member of the commission.

iii. The functions of the Commission are:

- To identity redundant and obsolete laws that can be repealed and suggest measures for quick redress of public grievances
- To examine the laws that affect the poor and carry out post-audit of socio-economic legislations,
- To ensure speedy clearance of arrears and reduction in costs and quick and economical disposal of cases.

**5-Judge Constitution Bench** to hear Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid Case

i. Supreme court of India was supposed to hear the oldest case in the Indian history Ram Janmabhoomi -Babri Masjid case. The case came in front of the 5 judge committee set by Our chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi. The five members are as follows Justice Ranjan gogoi, SA Bobde, NV Raman, Uday U Lalit and DY Chandrachud.

ii. As many as 14 appeals have been filed in the apex court against the 2010 Allahabad High Court judgement. The High Court had ordered that the 2.77 acre land be partitioned equally among the three parties – the Sunni Waqf Board, the Nirmohi Akhara and Ram Lalla.

**Committee under the chairmanship of Sh. Umesh Sinha** to look into Section 126 of the Representation of the People Act 1951 submitted the report

On 10th January 2019, the Committee constituted under the chairmanship of Sr. Deputy Election Commissioner Sh. Umesh Sinha to review and suggest modifications and changes in the provisions of the Section 126 and other sections of the Representation of the People Act 1951, provisions of Model Code of Conduct and any other Election Commission of India (ECI) instruction in this regard has submitted its report to the Commission.

**Key points:**

i. The Committee set up by the Commission included the representatives of Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology, Ministry of Law & Justice, Press Council of India, News Broadcasters Association apart from senior officers of the Commission.

ii. The said committee had studied the Impact of new media platforms and social media during the prohibitory period of 48 hours before the close of poll and its implication in view of the provisions of
section 126.

iii. Committee had studied and examined the present provisions of the Section 126 and other related Sections of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 and identify difficulties/critical gaps to regulate the violation of the said provisions of the act.

iv. Committee had Examined the type, category or growth of communication technology or media platform in the country and difficulties in regulating these media platforms during multi-phase election when prohibitory period of **48 hours** are in force.

v. Committee had examined the present provisions of **Model Code of Conduct (MCC)** related to the above issues and suggest modification in this regard.

vi. The recommendations made by the Committee, when implemented will help in minimizing the possible interference of activities which aim at indirectly influencing voters during the valuable silence period of **48 hours** provided to them.

**SC sets up panel for to suggest reforms for holding competitive exams**

On January 10, 2019, supreme court has set up a committee to suggest reforms to hold the competitive exams after the conflicts that arised in ssc examination. The committee includes **Nandan Nilekani**, a co-founder of tech giant Infosys, and renowned computer scientist **Vijay P Bhatkar**.

**Points to be noted:**

i. The committee would suggest reforms to the government bodies, which conduct competitive examinations like the SSC, as there are several cases of questions paper leaks.

ii. This committee was set up after conflict arised in ssc 2017 result publication, though it was ordered to cancellation because of difficulty in identifying the cause of the paper leak. Cancellation had a huge protest from the aspirants side. So the court in 2017 hearing has implemented to conduct it afresh by the National Testing Agency or the CBSE “in the interest of students”.

iii. Petitioner Shantanu Kumar, who had sought cancellation of examination, had said that contract of private company **Sify Technologies Pvt Ltd**, which had conducted the SSC examination, is now called off.

iv. The SSC is a government body which conducts examinations to recruit staff at multiple levels in various ministries and departments.

**Sushil Modi to head committee on GST revenue shortfall faced by states**

On January 13, 2019, **Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Modi** is to head the seven-member committee to look into revenue shortfall being faced by the states after the GST roll-out, and suggest steps for augmenting collections, a GST Council notification said. The **GST Council**, headed by Finance Minister Arun Jaitley and comprising state ministers, had on December 22, 2018, decided to set up a group of ministers (GoM) to analyse reasons for the shortfall in revenue collections by the states since July 2017.

**Facts to be known:**

i. GST was rolled out on **July 1, 2017**. As per the GST law, the centre compensates states to ensure that their revenue is protected at the level of 14 per cent over the base year tax collection in 2015-16.

ii. The committee will undertake data analysis using econometric and statistical tools and suggest “suitable measures/policy intervention” for course correction for revenue augmentation, particularly for the states suffering high revenue shortfall.

iii. It would also look into structural patterns of major sectors of the economy impacting revenue collection, including the services sector.

iv. The other members of the GoM include **Punjab Finance Minister Manpreet Singh Badal**, **Kerala Finance Minister Thomas Isaac**, **Karnataka Rural Development Minister Krishna Byre Gowda**, **Odisha Finance Minister Shashi Bhushan Behera**, **Haryana Taxation Minister Capt Abhimanyu and Goa Panchayat Minister Mauvin Godinho**.

v. The central government has released **Rs 48,202 crore** as GST compensation to states during April-November 2018, higher than the Rs 48,178 crore paid in the previous financial year.
HC forms committee to weed out invasive plant species from Western Ghats

On 12th January 2019, The Madras High Court formed an expert committee to suggest ways and means to remove the invasive species of the plants from the Western Ghats and rehabilitate the forests.

**Key Points**

i. The invasive species of plants are the second largest cause of loss of biodiversity in the world.

ii. The Expert committee has to find a solution and file the report within two months.

iii. The Division bench of Justice M M Sundaresh and N Sathish has already constituted a committee to restrain the state government from cultivating eucalyptus species in Tamil Nadu for commercial purpose.

**What are Invasive Alien species?**

The International Union for Conservation of Nature defines the invasive alien species as those species which establish themselves in ecosystems and threaten native biological diversity.

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7-Member GoM constituted under Nitin Patel for boosting the Real Estate Sector under the GST regime: FinMin

On January 15, 2019, the Finance Ministry announced constitution of a 7-member Group of Ministers (GoM) under the title ‘GoM for boosting Real Estate Sector under the GST regime’.

i. This decision was taken under the suggestion of the 32nd Meeting of GST Council held on 10 January 2019 at New Delhi.

ii. Nitin Patel, Deputy Chief Minister of Gujarat is convener of the GoM.

iii. 6 other members of the group include:

1. Sudhir Mungantiwar, Finance Minister, Government of Maharashtra,
2. Krishna Byre Gowda, Finance Minister, Government of Karnataka,
3. Dr. T.M. Thomas Isaac, Finance Minister, Government of Kerala,
4. Manpreet Singh Badal, Finance Minister, Government of Punjab,
5. Rajesh Agarwal, Finance Minister, Government of Uttar Pradesh and

iii. Manish Sinha, Joint Secretary (TRU-II), CBIC, was made the Secretary for the GoM for boosting the Real Estate Sector under GST regime.

iv. The functions of the GoM are:

1. Analysing tax rate of GST by providing a Composition Scheme for Residential Construction Units referred to GoM for boosting the sector,
2. Examining and suggesting the composition scheme,
3. Examining various aspects of levy of GST on Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) and Development Rights in a joint Development Agreement and suitable model,
4. Examining legality of inclusion/exclusion of land or any other ingredient, in Composition and suggest Valuation Mechanism.

v. The Conveners of Law Committee and Fitment Committee will assist the GoM.

vi. Any approval regarding the issues will be done by the Union Minister of Finance and Chairperson of GST Council.

vii. Currently, GST on the under-construction flats and houses is 12% whereas ready-to-move-in flats with a completion certificate attract no GST.

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Eight-member Group of Ministers under Maharashtra Finance Minister Sudhir Mungantiwar panel is formed to study uniform tax rate on lottery

On 16th January 2019, the GST council has constituted an eight member Group of Ministers (GoM) headed by Maharashtra State Finance Minister, Sudhir Mungantiwar to suggest whether a uniform tax rate should be imposed on lotteries or the current differential tax rate system be continued.

The Complete list of Group of Ministers (GoM)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Designation with State</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sudhir Mungantiwar</td>
<td>Maharashtra State Finance Minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Isaac</td>
<td>Kerala Finance Minister</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amit Mitra</td>
<td>West Bengal Finance Minister</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assam Finance Minister</td>
<td>Himanta Biswa Sarma</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manpreet Singh Badal</td>
<td>Punjab Finance Minister</td>
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<td>Mauvin Godinho</td>
<td>Goa Panchayat Minister</td>
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<td>Krishna Byre Gowda</td>
<td>Karnataka Finance Minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jarkar Gamlin</td>
<td>Arunachal Tax and Excise Minister</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Key Points**

i. Joint Secretary of CBIC, Shri Manish Sinha will be the Secretary of the Group of Ministers (GoM).

ii. GoM will be assisted by a Committee of Officers from the Centre and State on the issues relating to lottery.

iii. Currently a state authorized lottery attracts 28% tax while state organized lottery attracts 12% tax.

iv. The committee will also look whether private persons authorized by the states are misusing the lower rate and getting enriched themselves at the cost of the state or not and suggest measures to curb it.

v. The GoM will submit its report on the issues relating to the lottery to GST Council in the next meeting of GST Council.

**About GST Council**

i. GST Council is the governing body of GST having 33 members

ii. The council is headed by the union finance minister Arun Jaitley assisted with the finance minister of all the states of India.

iii. At midnight of 1st July 2017 GST was launched by then President of India Shri.Pranab Mukherjee and Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi.

**Centre reconstitutes tribunal to adjudicate ban imposed on 8 Manipur insurgent groups**

On 24th January 2019, The Central government reconstituted a tribunal headed by Delhi High Court Judge Justice G.S. Sistani for another 5 years to adjudicate the extension of ban imposed on the eight insurgent groups in Manipur which were involved in 756 violent and unlawful incidents in the last five years.

i. The Tribunal had been set up under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act 1967 and the tribunal will adjudicate whether there is sufficient cause for declaring these insurgent groups of Manipur as “Unlawful Associations”.

ii. Earlier, a tribunal headed by Delhi High Court Judge Justice Sangita Dhingra Sehgal was set up on 12th December 2018 but Justice Sangita Dhingra Sehgal left the tribunal.

**Government constitutes NITI Aayog-led Committee to monitor pricing of drugs**

On 21st January 2019, the government has formed a standing committee under NITI Aayog to monitoring the prices of specific drugs and health products which could put an end card to the price fixing power of National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA), a drug pricing regulator.

**Key Points:**

i. Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers has issued a notification states that Standing Committee on Affordable Medicines and Health Products (SCAMHP) will be headed by a NITI Aayog member (Health) and it will act as recommending body to National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) about price control of drugs.

ii. The previous mechanism was the health ministry prepares the list of drugs eligible for price regulation. The Department of Pharmaceuticals (DoP) then incorporates NLEM into Schedule 1 of the Drugs Prices Control Order (DPCO). Following this, NPPA fixes the prices of drugs in this schedule.

iii. The committee will also include the chief economic adviser, besides secretary, department of health research, director-general of health services, vice-chairperson, National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM) and joint secretary, department of industrial policy and promotion.
SC reconstitute 5 member committee to hear Ayodhya land dispute
On January 25, 2019, Supreme Court constituted a new five-judge committee to hear upon the politically sensitive Ram Janambhoomi-Babri Masjid land title dispute in Ayodhya.

i. The bench was reformed because Justice U.U. Lalit, who was a member of the original bench had recused himself on January 10 from this case”.

ii. The new committee members are Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi and Justices S.A. Bobde, D.Y. Chandrachud, Ashok Bhushan and S.A. Nazeer. Justices Bhushan and Nazeer are the new members in the bench.

EPFO’s central board of trustees formed 3 new committees
On January 28, 2019, Employees’ Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO), reconstituted three new committees on finance, investment and audit committee (FIAC), the pension and EDLI implementation committee (PEIC) and the exempted establishments’ committee (EEC).

i. Three committees will have central government representatives as well as two representatives each from the domain experts section.

ii. EPFO till to date covers 190 industries, mentioned under the EPFO ACT, with over 20 crore accounts.

iii. FIAC will look into investments made by portfolio managers and ensure timely investment of PF kitty for optimum returns.

iv. PEIC will review the function of the Employees Pension Scheme, 1995 and the Employees Deposit Linked Insurance Scheme, 1976 as well as consider amendments to the existing schemes.

v. EEC will look into the working of exempted establishments and move suggestions for CBT for improvement in the working of these exempted establishments

SUMMITS & CONFERENCES
Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated 5-day 106th Indian Science Congress in Lovely Professional University Jalandhar, Punjab
On January 3, 2019, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the 5-day long ‘Indian Science Congress (ISC)-2019’ in Lovely Professional University Jalandhar, Punjab. It will conclude on January 7, 2019.


ii. The 5 day congress will include:

• participation of 30,000 delegates including many Nobel Laureates, Union Cabinet Ministers of India, science policymakers, administrators, etc.

• 100 plus conferences and events of scientific and technology with participation of eminent personalities from DRDO, ISRO, DST, AIIMS, UGC, AICTE.

• Children’s Science Congress on 4th January 2019,

• two-day Science Communicators’ Meet- 2019 on January 5th, 2019,

• ‘Women’s Science Congress’ on 5th January,

• ‘Pride of India’ Expo with major exhibitors including CSIR, ISRO, DAE, ICMR, DST, DRDO, ICAR and more.

iii. The Nobel Laureates who will be participating include

German-American biochemist Prof. Thomas Sudoph, who has been awarded the 2013 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for work on vesicle trafficking;

a Hungarian-born Israeli biochemist and Nobel laureate in Chemistry Prof. Avram Hershko; and,

a British born physicist Frederick Duncan Michael Haldane who has been awarded 2016 Nobel Prize in Physics.

iv. PM called for the invention of new low-cost technologies for the help of farmers. P.M Modi add ‘Jai anusandhan’, therefore the slogan now becomes Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan, Jai Vigyan, Jai Anusandhan,”
Indus Food Meet 2019 to be held in Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha to participate as partner state
From 14th January 2019, the Trade Promotion Council of India (TPCI) and union commerce ministry is going to organize a two-day mega food international event, the Indus Food Meet 2019, at the India Exposition Mar of Greater Noida in Uttar Pradesh. The event will conclude on 15th January 2019

Key Points:

i. Odisha which will participate as ‘Partner State’ will be setting up its own Pavilion with 30 exhibitors to promote exports of food processing sector.

ii. Furthermore the Directorate of Horticulture and Agricultural Promotion & Investment Corporation of Odisha Limited (APICOL) along with local industry will showcase various processed food items of Odisha like spices, cashew, confectionary items, processed agro food, etc.

iii. The event which is an initiative to promote the country as a strong exporter of food and beverage products, would be hosting over 600 prominent global buyers from food and beverage industry from over 60 countries.

iv. This 2nd edition of Indus Food is likely to create a global food and beverage market place in line with global food expos like SIAL, ANUGA and GulfFood.

v. A seminar on “Potential and prospects of Food Processing Industry in Odisha” is also being organized during the inaugural ceremony.

4th Edition of Raisina Dialogue held in New Delhi
From 8th January to 10th January 2019, 4th Edition of Raisina Dialogue was organized by Ministry of External Affairs in partnership with Observer Research Foundation in New Delhi. The Theme of the Dialogue was “A World Reorder: New Geometries; Fluid Partnerships; Uncertain Outcomes”.

Key Points

i. The Raisina Dialogue whose first edition was held in 2015 is India’s flagship annual geopolitical and geostrategic conference.

ii. The Aim of the Discussion was to address the issues arising from ongoing global transitions and changes to the world order triggered by unique leadership, innovative partnerships and new technologies.

iii. The Inaugural address was delivered by the Prime Minister of Norway H E Ms Erna Solberg in the presence of India’s Prime Minister, Narendra Modi and External Affairs Minister, Sushma Swaraj.

iv. More than 600 delegates from 93 countries of the world including influential political leaders, strategic thinkers, policy practitioners, technology innovators and business representatives shared their vision in the Raisina Dialogue.

1st 2019 'National Consultation on Child Protection' held in New Delhi under Secretary, MoW&CD
On January 8, 2019, First 2019 edition of the ‘National Consultation on Child Protection’ was held at India Habitat Centre, New Delhi, under the Chairmanship of the Secretary, Ministry of Women and Child Development.

i. Following were the objectives of the meeting:
   - To follow up on the exercise of monitoring of the CCIs by States/UTs,
   - To deliberate upon various aspects of child protection and
   - to take stock of the efforts made by States/UTs regarding improvements in the Child Care Institutions.

ii. Following were discussed:
   - States have started background check of organizations running CCIs and police verification of staff of CCIs,
   - Andhra Pradesh government has started grading the Institutions,
iii. The next quarterly meeting would be held in May, 2019.

### 4th meeting of the Council for Trade Development and Promotion (CTDP) held in New Delhi

On January 10, 2019, the 4th meeting of the Council for Trade Development and Promotion (CTDP), chaired by Union Minister for Commerce & Industry and Civil Aviation, Suresh Prabhu, was held in New Delhi.

Representatives of 10 states including Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Karnataka, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Nagaland, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh attended this meeting.

**Objective:**

To tap the global value and supply chain by promoting the export of services, organic agricultural produce

**Key Points:**

i. The following were discussed/ announced in the meeting:

- States/ UTs to formulate a state and product specific export strategy to improve logistics and infrastructure in their region,
- Government of India formulated an Agricultural Export Policy, for the first time, to boost India’s agricultural exports to USD 60 billion by 2022
- This includes integrating Indian farmers and their agricultural products with the global value chain to double the India's share in world agriculture exports,
- Ministry of Commerce and Industry in collaboration with the World Bank will extend conduct of annual state level reform exercise to the district level, under the Business Reform Action Plan (BRAP) to improve efficiency of government services delivered,
- Central Government in preparing a development plan for each and every district to fulfil the vision of India’s GDP to USD 5 trillion in 2025,
- States/ UTs to make use of the Rs. 5000 crore allotted for 12 champion services sector,
- States/UTs to take full advantage of the Trade Infrastructure for Exports Scheme (TIES) to improve export competitiveness.

**About Council for Trade Development and Promotion:**

♦ Chairperson: The Union Commerce & Industry Minister.
♦ Members: Ministers’ in-charge of Trade and Commerce in State Governments/ UTs.

### One-day Global Skill Summit 2019 held in Ranchi, Jharkhand; jobs given to more than 1 lakh youth

On January 10, 2019, the one-day Global Skill Summit 2019 was held in Ranchi, Jharkhand. It is the only state where overall three global summits were organized in a row merely in four years by the state government.

i. The theme of the Summit was: ‘Skilling Youth, Enabling Youth’.

ii. It was under the #MOMEMTUM JHARKHAND campaign.

iii. It was attended by Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas, &Skill Development and Entrepreneurship.

iv. Governor of Jharkhand Smt. Droupadi Murmu was the chief guest.

v. Unique feature of the Summit was that on this occasion, in total 1,06,619 youths of Jharkhand were given symbolic offer letter for jobs in the private sector, surpassing the target of giving jobs to 1,00,000 youths.

vi. Thus, Jharkhand became the first state to achieve the feat of giving jobs to over one lakh youths in the private sector.

vii. Additionally, 17 countries took part in this summit.

### 64th National Symposium of poets, organized by All India Radio held in Chennai

On 10th January 2019, Tamil Nadu Governor, Bunwarilal Purohit inaugurated the 64th National
Symposium (Sarva Bhasha Kavi Sammelan) organized by All India Radio for the first time in Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

**Key Points**

i. 23 poets representing all the 22 languages present in the Ninth Schedule of the Indian Constitution will participate in the symposium.

ii. A Special Programme based on the event will be aired on the eve of Republic Day, 25th January 2019 by the Public Service Broadcaster All India Radio.

iii. Director General of All India Radio, Mr. Fayyaz Sheryar was present at the event.

2+2 Inter-Sessional meeting between India and US held in New Delhi

On 11th January 2019, the inaugural round of a 2+2 Inter-Sessional meeting between the United States and India which focused on the progress of defence and foreign policy issues between the two countries took place in New Delhi.

**Key Points**:

i. Shri Gourangalal Das, Joint Secretary (AMS), Ministry of External Affairs and Shri Shambhu S. Kumaran, Joint Secretary (PIC), Ministry of Defence led the Indian delegation.

ii. The U.S. delegation was led jointly by Ambassador Ms. Alice Wells, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State and Mr. Randall Schriver, Assistant Secretary of Defense.

iii. The meeting was a follow up on the decisions taken during the India-U.S. Ministerial 2+2 Dialogue, which was held in New Delhi in September 2018.

iv. Views on regional developments as partners and stakeholders for a free, open, inclusive, peaceful and prosperous Indo-Pacific were also exchanged by the two sides.

3-day 29th Indian Paint Conference–2019 held in Agra, UP by IPA


i. It was organised by the Indian Paint Association (IPA) – the apex body of the Indian Paint Industry.

ii. The theme of the Conference is ‘Paints Pe Charcha – Naye Aayaam’.

iii. It was the largest trade show of the estimated INR 500 billion (50,000 Crore) Indian Paints & Coatings industry.

For more information: [Click Here](#)

25th edition of Partnership Summit held in Mumbai

On 12th January 2019, the 25th edition of the CII Partnership Summit 2019, a global platform for dialogue, debate, deliberation and engagement among Indian and global leaders on economic policy and growth trends in India, kicked off in Mumbai, Maharashtra. The event will be concluded on 13th January 2019.

**Key Points**:

i. The summit which was inaugurated by the Vice President of India, M Venkaiah Naidu also saw the presence of Chief Minister, Maharashtra, Devendra Fadnavis, Governor of Maharashtra C. Vidyasagar Rao and Union Commerce Minister Suresh Prabhu besides other dignitaries.

ii. The summit will offer new partnerships and investment opportunities in sectors like Artificial Intelligence, big data, agri and food processing, defence and aeronautics, renewable energy and tourism.

iii. The summit is being organised by Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Maharashtra Government and Confederation of Indian Industry.

iv. The inaugural session of the summit themed at ‘New India: Rising to Global Occasions’ will be attended by over 1000 delegates from 40 countries.

v. This edition of the summit will showcase India in the present landscape of an emerging “New India”, the “New Global Economic Address”.

vi. On the side-lines of the Summit, Union Commerce Minister, Suresh Prabhu will also hold bilateral meetings with various foreign dignitaries.
Suresh Prabhu inaugurates Global Aviation Summit 2019 in Mumbai

On 15th January 2019, the Union Minister for Commerce & Industry and Civil Aviation, Shri Suresh Prabhu inaugurated the 2 day Global Aviation Summit (GAS) 2019 with a theme: ‘Flying for all-especially the next 6 Billion’. It is being organised by Ministry of Civil Aviation in association with Airport Authority of India (AAI) and Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) in Mumbai. The Summit Concluded on 16th January 2019.

Key Points:

- Devendra Fadnavis, Chief Minister of Maharashtra, Dr Olumuyiwa Benard Aliu, President of the Council ICAO, Jayant Sinha, MoS, Ministry of Civil Aviation, were present in the inaugural session of the summit.
- The Vision 2040 for aviation sector and the Air Cargo Policy was launched during the summit.
- Civil Aviation secretary R N Choubey informed that India would be adding 1,000 aircraft over the next 7-8 years and one billion trips in the next 15 years.
- The domestic aviation market in India has been growing at 20 percent annually for the last four years and this growth has been the highest in the world.
- Maharashtra chief minister Devendra Fadnavis announced that the Navi Mumbai international airport (NMIA) will be ready by the middle of 2020 and is expected to contribute 1% to the country’s GDP.
- The event will also examine the future of drones, sustainable growth of aviation, cargo and logistics in the aviation industry and all the factors behind building great aviation business.
- Around 13 transport and civil aviation ministers, 36 civil aviation authorities, 800 delegates, more than 35 exhibitors from over 80 countries across the world are participating in the summit.

Suresh Prabhu released the Vision 2040 document in the Global Aviation Summit 2019

On 15th January 2019, Union Minister for Commerce & Industry and Civil Aviation, Shri Suresh Prabhu unveiled the Vision 2040 document for aviation sector in the Global Aviation Summit (GAS) 2019, in Mumbai. The document is prepared by consultancy firm KPMG and industry body Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) in consultation with the government.

Key Points:

i. The Vision 2040 document aims to have 1.12 billion air passengers in 2040 from 187 million air passengers in 2018. This comprises around 821 million domestic passengers and around 303 million international passengers (to and from India).
ii. It further states that India will need 200 airports and an investment of $40-50 billion to handle at least 1.1 billion passengers flying to, from and within the country.
iii. India, which is currently the seventh-largest aviation market in 2017-18, is expected to become the third-largest by 2022, inching closer to the U.S., which is projected number two. Besides the Indian commercial air fleet is expected to be 2,359 by March 2040.
iv. India will establish its own aircraft leasing industry which may handle almost 90% of aircraft being ordered in India by 2040. Besides India’s tax structure and repossession processes will be equally or more attractive than those in leading global jurisdictions.
v. The incremental land requirement for airport expansion is expected to be around 150,000 acres.
vi. It further said that the government may consider establishing a Nabh Nirman Fund (NNF) with a starting corpus of around $2 billion to support low traffic airports in their initial phases.
vii. The vision document says that aviation sector which employs around five million people in India currently will create a total of 25 million jobs in the country.
viii. Air cargo will reach 17 million MT per annum by 2040, up from 3.35 million MT per annum in 2018.

Recommendations for Growth:

- The document suggested amendments to Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Restructuring Act, 2013 and adopting “land-pooling” techniques to develop newer airports.
• Lower Goods and Services Tax (GST) and inclusion of **aviation turbine fuel (ATF)** under GST at the earliest.
• Airlines must try to reduce dependence on ATF by adopting biofuels and explore issuing masala bonds to raise funds for themselves.
• Some other recommendations include automatic de-registration and repossession system, making registrar repository public, incorporation of ratified CTC 2001 conventions, making taxation of aircraft leasing more attractive and simplification of brown/green field airport agreements.

3-day 9th International Micro irrigation conference was inaugurated by Water Resource minister Nitin Gadkari in Aurangabad, Maharashtra
On January 16, 2019, Union Water Resources Minister Nitin Gadkari inaugurated the three-day long 9th International Micro irrigation conference at Aurangabad, Maharashtra. The conference would conclude on January 18, 2019.

i. Aim of the conference was to share experiences the use of new technologies and best management practices in drip, micro-sprinkler, and other localized irrigation systems.
ii. The Theme of the conference was: “**Micro Irrigation and Modern Agriculture**”.
iii. The conference was organized by Ministry of Water Resources and River Development.
iv. 740 delegates including 100 foreign delegates from 56 countries are participating in the conference.

President of India inaugurated Gandhian Resurgence Summit in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh
On 17th January 2019, honorable President of India Shri. Ramnath Nath Kovind inaugurated the three-day Gandhian Resurgence Summit on the occasion of Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi’s 150 birth anniversary at Prayagraj in Uttar Pradesh. It concludes on 19th January, 2019.

Key points
i. The summit was organised by the Parmarth Niketan, the Harijan Sevak Sangh and the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance.
ii. The President also unveiled the statue of **Maharishi Bhardwaj** in the town.
iii. Mr Kovind participated in Vishwa Shanti Yagya at Parmarth Niketan in Arail.

About Kumbh Mela 2019
i. On 15th January 2019, Kumbh Mela commenced at Sangam at Prayagraj in Uttar Pradesh.
ii. Slogan used by the devotees is “**Chalo Kumbh Chale**”.
iii. The UP government has allocated Rs.4,200 crore for the Kumbh Mela 2019.
iv. A mobile app named ‘**Kumbh Mela Weather Service**’ has also been developed to give information about weather during Kumbh Mela.
v. For the first time at the Kumbh Mela, a transgender ashram, Kinnar Akhara, led by rights activist **Lakshmi Narayan Tripathi** from Mumbai was formed and **three women police station** was also formed for the first time.

Commerce Minister Suresh Prabhu inaugurated the 10th edition of the India Rubber Expo – 2019 in Mumbai
On January 17, 2019, Union Minister for Commerce and Industry, Suresh Prabhu inaugurated the three-day 10th India Rubber Expo – 2019 at the Bombay Exhibition Centre in Mumbai. It concludes on 19th January, 2019.

i. He announced that a National Rubber Policy would soon be put to place to improve productivity of the sector enabling India’s efforts to become a 5 trillion-dollar economy.
ii. The India Rubber Expo is Asia’s largest rubber expo. The event offers a unique opportunity for Indian companies to meet and collaborate with overseas companies.

2nd Regional Conference on “Deendayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme (DDRS)” held at Mumbai
On January 17, 2019, Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Department of Empowerment of
Persons with Disabilities organized the 2nd regional conference at Nehru Centre, Mumbai, on a scheme titled ‘Deendayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme (DDRS)’.

i. The conference consisted of Programme Implementing Agencies (PIAs) from the Western Region of the country which further would culminate in a National Conference in New Delhi.

ii. The Regional Conference was organized in order to disseminate the provisions of the revised scheme (2018) and to create better linkages between the department, agencies and stakeholders associated with the scheme.

iii. The western states concerned were, namely, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Goa and two Union Territories i.e., Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu.

About the scheme DDRS:

i. DDRS is a Central Sector Scheme of Government of India which is being implemented since 1999 for providing financial assistance to NGOs working for education and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities.

ii. The objective of the scheme is ensuring welfare of Divyangjan and the dignity they deserve.

iii. Under DDRS, Grant-in-Aid is released to about 600 NGOs every year.

iv. About 10% of total NGOs under DDRS, 10% of total grant and 10% of Special School for Children with Intellectual Disabilities are from Western Indian States.

v. Currently in 2018, it was revised and the revised scheme is being implemented since 1st April 2018.

vi. In the revised scheme, the following changes were made:
   - increase in the cost norms by 2.5 times,
   - streamlining the procedure of application,
   - increasing the funding of projects from 75% to 90% of their total cost,
   - extending special benefits to special areas such as Left Wing Affected Districts,
   - removal of limit in increase of number of beneficiaries.

25th International conference and exhibition on terrestrial and satellite broadcasting, BES EXPO 2019 held in New Delhi

On 17th January 2019 inaugurated the 25th International conference and exhibition on terrestrial and satellite broadcasting, BES EXPO 2019 was inaugurated by the Information and Broadcasting Secretary Amit Khare and TRAI Chairman RS Sharma in New Delhi. The theme of the exhibition is “Next Gen Broadcasting in the IT World”. The Exhibition was concluded on 19th January 2019.

Key points

i. More than 300 companies from 25 countries from around the world have displayed their product at the BES EXPO 2019.

ii. The conference was organized for the 25th consecutive year and will be attended by more than 1000 delegates.

iii. BES EXPO 2019 was organized by Broadcast Engineering Society (India), endorsed by DRM U.K. and supported by Prasar Bharati, ABU Malaysia, AES India, Ministry of Communications & IT and Society of Broadcast Engineers, U.S.A.

Agri-Vision 2019, a two-day conference on ‘Envisioning Agro Solutions for Smart and Sustainable Agriculture’ at Hyderabad

On 17th January 2019, Vice-President of India Shri Venkaiah Naidu inaugurated the 2-days Agri-Vision 2019 conference on ‘envisioning Agro-solutions for smart and Sustainable Agriculture” in Hyderabad, Telangana. The conference was concluded on 18th January 2019.

Key Points

i. The Agro-vision 2019 conference was jointly organized by the Professor Jayashankar Telangana State Agricultural University (PJTSAU), Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and Cornell University, USA.

ii. Vice-Chancellor of PJTSAU, Dr V Praveen Rao chaired a Panel discussion on “Technology in Agri Entrepreneurship: Success stories and experiences from the progressive farmers”.

iii. Dr. Trilochan Mohapatra, Director General of Indian Council for Agricultural Research
(ICAR) chaired a session on “Post-harvest management and value addition of foods: Role of Farmer Producer’s organization (FPOs) in improving Market Access” on 18th January 2019.

Tourism Minister co-chairs the 7th ASEAN-India Tourism Ministers meeting at Ha Long City, Viet Nam
On 18th January 2019, Union Tourism Minister K. J. Alphons, co-chaired the 7th Meeting of Tourism Ministers of ASEAN-India with Minister of Culture, Sports and Tourism of Viet Nam, Mr. Nguyen Ngoc Thien. The Meeting was held in Ha Long City in Viet Nam.

Key Points
i. The Meeting was also attended by the Tourism Ministers of Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.
ii. Tourism Ministers welcomed the decision of ASEAN-India Informal summit which was held on 15 November 2018 and launched ASEAN-India Tourism Cooperation Year 2019. Earlier Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi also proposed to designate 2019 as the ASEAN-India Tourism Year.
iii. During the meeting, ministers noted the improved tourism performance of ASEAN and India in 2018 with the increase of 7.4 percent in arrival of tourists in ASEAN and India. The Preliminary number of tourist arrival stands at 139.5 million.

India to host the 14th session of the Conference of Parties to United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)
As per Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, India will host the 14th session of the Conference of Parties to United Nations Convention to combat Desertification (UNCCD) in 2019 to address the issues of land degradation and desertification.

i. The event will be participated by more than 100 countries and it is likely to be held in the month of October, 2019.
ii. UNCCD COP-14 aims to showcase the India’s commitment to achieve land degradation neutrality by 2030.

Palestine took over the Chair of the Group of 77 (G-77) for 2019 from Egypt
On January 15, 2019, Palestine took over the chairmanship of the Group of 77 from Arab Republic of Egypt.

i. Prior to this, Egypt was the previous Chair of the bloc which is a coalition of 134 developing countries, along with China.

ii. The decision to elect Palestine as 2019 Chair of the G77 was taken in September 2018 by the foreign ministers of the Groups’ member States.

iii. In October 2018, the UN General Assembly approved a resolution enabling Palestine, a non-member Observer State at the world body, to have additional privileges and rights, such as participating in international conferences held under its auspices, for the duration of its role as G77 Chair.

About G77:
♦ It was established in 1964 by 77 developing countries in Geneva.
♦ The Chairmanship, which is the highest political body within the organizational structure of the Group of 77, rotates on a regional basis (between Africa, Asia-Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean) and is held for one year.

Its main functions are:
• To promote collective economic interests and enhance joint negotiating capacity with UN Agencies,
• To promote South-South cooperation for development.
• G77 represents 80 per cent of the world’s population.
Three day 4th India Steel 2019 Exhibition and Conference inaugurated in Mumbai

On 22nd January 2019, Three day 4th International Exhibition & Conference on Steel Industry, India Steel 2019 Exhibition and Conference was organised by Ministry of Steel in association with Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) at NSE Complex Goregaon, Mumbai. It will conclude on 24th January 2019.

Key Points:
(i) The theme of the event is “Balancing Steel Demand & Supply Dynamics: Building a New India”.
(ii) The three-day event provided an opportunity for all the stakeholders to deliberate and identify ways to contribute towards building a robust roadmap for the further growth of the steel sector.
(iii) The biennial event will see over 250 exhibiting companies from 15 countries, over 200 International buyers and more than 10 thousand business visitors both from India and abroad.
(iv) A Reverse Buyer Seller Meet (RBSM) is also planned during India Steel Expo 2019 where more than 300 Foreign Buyers from Africa, CIS, Middle East, Developing Asia including SAARC and other important regions will be invited and hosted by the FICCI.
(v) The India Steel-2019 is part of series of initiatives to develop a globally competitive steel industry in line with National Steel Policy (NSP)-2107 which envisages production of 300 million tonnes of steels by 2030-31.
(vi) India has become the second largest producer of crude steel during 2018. Besides the country is also the largest producer of sponge iron in the world and the 3rd largest steel consumer in the world after China and USA.

2nd World Integrated Medicine Forum 2019 Inaugurated in Goa

On 23rd January 2019, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for AYUSH, Shripad Naik inaugurated 2nd World Integrated Medicine Forum 2019 on the ‘Regulation of Homeopathic Medical Products; Advancing global collaboration’ held in Goa.

Key Points:
(i) It is organized by the Central Council for Research in Homeopathy under the Ministry of AYUSH along with World Integrated Medicine Forum.
(ii) The forum is expected to witness participation from 20 countries.
(iii) The theme for the forum is “Regulatory collaborations, Converging on minimum regulatory & legal standards, Advancing safety and quality standards, Regulatory trend towards standardization and minimizing complexity, Recognizing homeopathy as distinct holistic medical system and Veterinary homeopathy”.
(iv) The 3 day forum will identify and illustrate the benefits and faults of multilateral or bilateral collaboration and promote global cooperation.
(v) Further development of evidence based traditional and integrated systems of Medicine by promoting public-private cooperation is the mission of the forum.

Union Minister of AYUSH: Shripad Yesso Naik

15th Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas Convention held in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh

On 21st January 2019, the celebration of 15th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas was commenced in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh. Prime Minister of Mauritius, Mr. Pravind Jugnauth was the chief Guest of Convention. The theme of this year’s Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas (PBD) convention was “Role of Indian Diaspora in building New India”. The Celebration of 15th PBD was concluded on 23rd January 2019.

Prime Minister inaugurated 15th Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas Convention in Varanasi

On 22nd January 2019, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated the 15th Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas convention in the presence of Prime Minister of Mauritius, Mr. Pravind Jagnauth at Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh.

Key Points
- Mr. Himanshu Gulati who is a Member of Parliament of Norway was the Special Guest whereas Mr. Kanwaljit Singh Bakshi, Member of Parliament of New Zealand was the Guest of Honor in the 15th edition of Pravasi Bharatiya Divas.
For the first time that the PBD celebration was held on 21-23 January instead of 9th January keeping in view the sentiments of larger diaspora to participate in Kumbh Mela and Republic Day Celebrations.

On 21st January 2019, inauguration of Youth Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas was held in partnership with Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.


About Pravasi Bharatiya Divas
Pravasi Bharatiya Divas is celebrated once in every two years in order to provide a platform to the overseas Indian Community from all over the world to engage with the government. The Decision to celebrate Pravasi Bharatiya Divas was taken by former Prime Minister of India, Atal Bihari Vajpayee and the 1st edition of PBD was held on 9th January 2003 in New Delhi. Mahatma Gandhi returned to India from South Africa on 9th January 1915, therefore 9th January was chosen as the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas.

PM inaugurates Centers of Excellence at Deen Dayal Hastkala Sankul in Varanasi
On 22nd January 2019, Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated the Centers of Excellence at Deen Dayal Hastkala Sankul, which is a complex dedicated to the handicrafts of the region at Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh.

Key Points

- Prime Minister released two books which are “Kashi: The Universe of Crafts and Textiles” and “Indian Textiles: History, splendor, Grandeur”.
- Further, a plaque was unveiled was Prime Minister, Narendra Modi to mark the inauguration of an Integrated Textile Office Complex at Chowkaghat in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh.

President of India addressed the convention and presented the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards
On 23rd January 2019, President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind delivered the Valedictory address in the closing session of 15th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention and presented the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards at Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh.

Key Points

- In the Valedictory address, Shri Ram Nath Kovind said that the Indian Diaspora is one of the largest in the world and motivated the Diaspora to contribute towards the growth of India.
- President of India presented the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards to 30 Non Resident Indians (NRIs), Persons of Indian Origin (PIO) and organizations run by NRIs or PIOs.
- IMF chief Gita Gopinath, Norwegian MP Himanshu Gulati and South African Diplomat Anil Sooklal are some of the eminent persons to receive the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards.

Mauritius to organise First International Bhojpuri Festival
On 22nd January 2019, Mauritius Prime Minister, Mr. Pravind Jugnauth announced in his address as the Chief Guest at inauguration of the 15th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas at Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh that Mauritius will organize the first Bhojpuri Festival in 2020. It was also announced by Mr. Pravind Jaugnauth that Mauritius will hold a Bhagwad Gita Mahotsav in partnership with the Haryana Government in February 2019.

Second edition of Tamil Nadu Global Investor Meet 2019 held in Chennai
On 23rd January 2019, the second edition of Tamil Nadu government’s ambitious two-day Global Investors Meet (GIM) 2019 which aimed at showcasing the state’s potential business opportunities and wooing investment was inaugurated at Chennai Trade Centre, Chennai, Tamil Nadu. The event was attended by over 250 companies from 10 countries. The Investors Meet Concluded on 24th January 2019.

Key Points:

i. The event was inaugurated by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edapadi Palaniswami in the presence of...
Union Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Deputy Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu O. Panneerselvam and Industries Minister of Tamil Nadu M.C. Sampath.

ii. This year focus will be given on key 12 sectors including automobile, textiles, aerospace, agro and food processing, pharmaceutical and chemicals, tourism, housing and construction, Electronics and hardware, Skill Development, Heavy Engineering, MSMEs and Information and Technology.

iii. The objective of the event is to position Tamil Nadu as the investor's choice besides showcasing its potential business opportunities. Rs.75 crore had been allocated by the state government to conduct the two-day event.

iv. Vice President Venkaiah Naidu attended the valedictory session on 24th January, 2019.

v. The event had managed to exceed the target investment of Rs 2 lakh crore and has witnessed the signing of 304 Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) worth Rs 3.4 lakh crore with promise of job opportunities for about 10.5 lakh people in the state.

vi. There was special focus on MSMEs this year for which over 32,206 crore rupees of investment has been committed.

vii. Besides an Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) arm has committed an investment of Rs 27,450 crore for a project and power PSU NLC is investing Rs 23,800 crore.

viii. Some of the other investment commitments are explained below:

   o CPCL will invest Rs 7,400 crore in Nagapattinam district for a petroleum refinery.
   o Automobile giant Hyundai to invest Rs 7,000 crore for the expansion and to commence the manufacture of electric cars in Tamil Nadu.
   o MRF will invest Rs 2,100 crore to expand the existing establishments in Perambalur and Vellore districts.
   o Foxconn agreed to invest Rs 2,500 crore to manufacture the premium brand smart phones in the state.
   o GSE Avigna has signed MoU for setting up a mega food park with an investment of 2,000 crore rupees.
   o Adani group has committed to invest Rs 10,000 crore for the expansion of Kattupalli Port, north of Chennai.
   o PSA France will invest Rs 1,250 crore for manufacturing of Peugeot cars in Tiruvallur district
   o Eicher Motor is planning an expansion plan worth Rs 1,500 crore.

Background Information:
The first edition of GIM held in 2015 had attracted 98 MoUs worth Rs 2.42 lakh crore.

Election Commission of India hosts International Conference on ‘Making our Elections Inclusive and Accessible”
on 24 Jan 2019, The Chief Election Commissioner of India, Sunil Arora and Election Commissioner Shri Ashok Lavasa inaugurated an International Conference on ‘Making our Elections Inclusive and Accessible “on the occasion of 9th National Voters Day held in New Delhi.

i. This conference held with a motive to enhance transparency in the upcoming election.

ii. National Voters Day is observed on 25th January every year.

iii. Theme of 2019 voters day is ‘No Voter to be Left Behind’ and a magazine My Vote Matters, was launched on the occasion.

Two day 3rd International stock taking conference on tiger conservation inaugurated in New Delhi
On 28th January 2019, 3rd stock taking conference on tiger conservation inaugurated in New Delhi. It will discuss on the status of the Global tiger Recovery Programme (GTRD) by the thirteen tiger range countries besides deliberation in combating wildlife trafficking.

Key Points
i. Union Minister for environment, Forest and climate change Dr. Harsh Vardhan is the chairman of the National Tiger conservation Authority.

ii. The conference is hosted by the National Tiger conservation Authority, Ministry of Environment, Forest and climate change in collaboration with Global Tiger Forum which is an international, intergovernmental organization for conserving tiger.

iii. During St. Petersburg declaration in 2010, tiger range countries had resolved to double tiger numbers across their range by 2022.

iv. The number of Tigers in India was **1411 in the year 2010**, the number increased to **2226 in the year 2014**.

**Important Facts:**
First stock taking conference on tiger conservation held in St. Petersburg, Russia(2010),
Second Stock taking Conference on tiger conservation held in India(2012).

**Important days**
♦ World Tiger Day: July 29.

**South India MSME summit 2019 held in Bengaluru, India**
On January 17, 2019, Karnataka Small Scale Industries Association (KASSIA) organized the South India MSME Summit-2019 at Bengaluru, India.

i. Basavaraj S Javali (President, KASSIA) chaired the event.

ii. The summit is held with a motive to find solution for their major problems like absence of good infrastructure, technology issues, marketing, procurement issues, regulatory issues, red tape, harassment and victimization.

iii. Union Cabinet has already approved the proposal for Amendment to the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Act, 2006 to change the criteria of classification and to withdraw the MSMED (Amendment) Bill, 2015. [Click here to read more.]

**Tourism Minister co-chairs the 7th ASEAN-India Tourism Ministers meeting at Ha Long City, Viet Nam**
On 18th January 2019, Union Tourism Minister K. J. Alphons, co-chaired the 7th Meeting of Tourism Ministers of ASEAN-India with Minister of Culture, Sports and Tourism of Viet Nam, Mr. Nguyen Ngoc Thien. The Meeting was held in Ha Long City in Viet Nam.

**Key Points**

i. The Meeting was also attended by the Tourism Ministers of Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.

ii. Tourism Ministers welcomed the decision of ASEAN-India Informal summit which was held on 15 November 2018 and launched ASEAN-India Tourism Cooperation Year 2019. Earlier Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi also proposed to designate 2019 as the ASEAN-India Tourism Year.

iii. During the meeting, ministers noted the improved tourism performance of ASEAN and India in 2018 with the increase of **7.4 percent** in arrival of tourists in ASEAN and India. The Preliminary number of tourist arrival stands at 139.5 million.

**India to host the 14th session of the Conference of Parties to United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)**
As per Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, India will host the **14th session** of the Conference of Parties to United Nations Convention to combat Desertification (UNCCD) in 2019 to address the issues of land degradation and desertification.

i. The event will be participated by more than 100 countries and it is likely to be held in the month of October, 2019.

ii. **UNCCD COP-14** aims to showcase the India’s commitment to achieve land degradation neutrality by 2030.

**Palestine took over the Chair of the Group of 77 (G-77) for 2019 from Egypt**
On January 15, 2019, Palestine took over the chairmanship of the Group of 77 from Arab Republic of...
Egypt.
i. Prior to this, Egypt was the previous Chair of the bloc which is a coalition of **134 developing countries, along with China**.

ii. The decision to elect Palestine as **2019 Chair of the G77** was taken in September 2018 by the foreign ministers of the Groups’ member States.

iii. In October 2018, the **UN General Assembly** approved a resolution enabling Palestine, a non-member **Observer State** at the world body, to have additional privileges and rights, such as participating in international conferences held under its auspices, for the duration of its role as G77 Chair.

**About G77:**
♦ It was established in 1964 by 77 developing countries in Geneva.
♦ The Chairmanship, which is the highest political body within the organizational structure of the Group of 77, rotates on a regional basis (between Africa, Asia-Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean) and is held for one year.

**Its main functions are:**
- To promote collective economic interests and enhance joint negotiating capacity with UN Agencies,
- To promote South-South cooperation for development.
- G77 represents 80 per cent of the world’s population.

### 4th Arab Economic and Social Development Summit Held In Beirut, Lebanon

On 20th January 2019, the 4th **Arab Economic and Social Development Summit** took place in Lebanon’s capital **Beirut** in which the Arab leaders have agreed a 29-item economic agenda in addition to encouraging the safe return of Syrian refugees to their homeland.

**Key Points:**

i. About 20 countries took part in the summit and issued a joint statement called the **Beirut Declaration** which called for the establishment of an Arab free trade zone and the international community to support countries hosting refugees and displaced people.

ii. The summit also focussed on redevelopment plans in **Somalia** and **Yemen**.

iii. The summit also saw the launch of a $200m technology investment fund across the region by Kuwait’s foreign minister.

iv. The next Arab economic summit(5th Summit) would be held in **Mauritania’s** capital **Nouakchott** in 2023.

### World Economic Forum Annual Meeting held in Davos

From 22nd January 2019, the flagship event of World Economic Forum, The **World Economic Forum Annual Meeting-2019** was held in **Davos-Klosters, Switzerland**. The theme of the event was “**Globalization 4.0: Shaping a Global Architecture in the Age of the Fourth Industrial Revolution**”. The event concluded on 25th January 2019.

**Key Points:**

i. The annual meeting brings together the heads and members of more than 100 governments, top executives of the 1,000 best global companies, leaders of international organizations and relevant non-governmental organizations.

ii. The working principles of the 2019 meeting are as follows:
- Dialogue is critical and must be multi stakeholder based
- Globalization must be responsible and responsive to regional and national concerns
- International coordination must be improved in the absence of multilateral cooperation
- Addressing the biggest global challenges requires the collaborative efforts of business, government and civil society
- Global growth must be inclusive and sustainable
The meeting witnessed a series of “Global Dialogues” in the fields including: geopolitics and a multiconceptual world, future of the economy, industry systems, cyber security, human capital and institutional reform.

**IMF forecasts India GDP at 7.5% in FY20 and 7.7% in FY21**

On 21st January 2019, **Gita Gopinath** the chief economist of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) released its **World Economic Outlook Update** in Davos, Switzerland. The report stated that India’s gross domestic product (GDP) is poised to grow by **7.5%** in the 2019-20 fiscal and **7.7%** in 2020-2021.

**Key Points:**
- The report reaffirmed that India will continue to be the world’s fastest growing major economy.
- The report stated that India’s economic growth will benefit from lower oil prices which will ease the inflation pressures and result in slower pace of monetary tightening than previously expected.
- The global growth according to the report is projected at **3.5 per cent** in 2019, a downgrade of 0.2 per cent from the October report, and **3.6 per cent** in 2020, a reduction of 0.1 per cent due to weakness in Europe and some emerging markets.
- **China’s** growth is expected to slip from 6.6 per cent last year to 6.2 per cent this year.

**Oxfam Annual Wealth Check report 2019**

On 21st January 2019, the british charity group, **Oxfam** released its **Annual Wealth Check report 2019** at the gathering of the **World Economic Forum** in Davos, Switzerland. The report stated that **Twenty six** richest billionaires own as many assets as the 3.8 billion people who make up for the poorest half of the planets population.

**Key Points:**
- The report also claimed that 2,200 billionaires worldwide saw their wealth grow by **12 percent**, whereas the poorest half saw its wealth fall by **11 percent**.
- A new billionaire was created every two days between 2017 and 2018 and the number of billionaires has doubled since the 2008 financial crisis.
- Oxfam proposed a **1% wealth tax** which it believes would raise an estimated **US$418 billion** a year which is enough to educate every child not in school and provide healthcare that would prevent three million deaths.
- In some countries, such as Brazil, the poorest 10 percent of society are now paying a higher proportion of their incomes in tax than the richest 10 percent.
- **Jeff Bezos**, the owner of Amazon and the world’s richest man, saw his fortune increase to $112 billion.

**Key Points related to India:**
- In India the billionaires saw their wealth increase by **Rs. 2,200 crore** a day last year, with the top 1 per cent of the country’s richest getting richer by 39 per cent while the bottom-half of the population saw just 3 per cent increase in wealth.
- The poorest **10 per cent** of the country or about 13.6 crore Indians continued to remain in debt since 2004.
- India’s top **10 per cent** of the population holds **77.4 per cent** of the total national wealth and the top **1 per cent** holds **51.53 per cent** of the national wealth.
- India added **18** new billionaires last year, raising the total number of billionaires to 119, while their wealth crossed the $394 billion (Rs. 28 lakh crore) mark for the first time.
- Furthermore the report stated that the combined revenue and capital expenditure of the centre and states for medical, public health, sanitation and water supply is Rs. 2,08,166 crore, which is less than the country’ richest man **Mukesh Ambani’s** wealth of Rs. 2.8 lakh crore.
For India Oxfam proposed that if India’s richest 1 per cent pay just **0.5 per cent** extra tax on their wealth then it could raise enough money to increase the government spending on health by 50 per cent.

**India 4th most attractive investment market for global CEOs: PwC survey**

On 21st January 2019, Price waterhouse Coopers (PwC) released a survey report on the first day of the World Economic Forum (WEF) annual meeting and stated that **India** has become fourth most attractive investment destination by surpassing the **United Kingdom**.

**Key Points:**
- The report stated that the **United States** remained top investment destination with 27 per cent votes **China** stood second with 24 per cent votes and **Germany** remained third at 13 per cent votes.
- The survey was conducted among more than 1,300 CEOs and in 91 countries.
- **India’s** popularity fell marginally from 9 per cent to 8 per cent.
- The survey reported that 85% of CEOs believe Artificial Intelligence would dramatically change their business over next five years.
- Among the global CEOs, 30% believe that global economic growth would decline in next 12 months.

**TCS named fastest growing brand of the decade in IT services**

On 23rd January 2019, the leading global IT services, consulting and business solutions organization, **Tata Consultancy Services (TCS)** was accredited as the fastest growing brand in the IT Services sector over the past decade by **Brand Finance**, the world's leading brand valuation firm.

**Key Points:**
- The report by Brand Finance was released at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting in Davos, Switzerland.
- TCS which continues to be among the top 3 global IT Services brands saw its brand value increase by **23 percent** over the previous year. Its brand rating was upgraded from AA+ to AAA-.
- The brand value of TCS increased by **447 per cent**, from USD 2.34 Billion in 2010 to USD 12.8 Billion in 2019.
- Besides **Rajesh Gopinathan**, TCS’ Chief Executive Officer was named as one of the top 100 global CEOs in a new **Brand Guardianship Index** by Brand Finance.

**Women comprise just 22% of World Economic Forum participants**

The women in this year's **World Economic Forum Annual Meeting-2019** comprised only 22 percent of the attendees. Last year the women attendees included 21 percent of the total participants.

**WEF lists 33 ways Davos 2019 made an impact on the world**

On 25th January 2019, the organizers of **World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2019** listed 33 ways in which this year's Annual meeting made impact on the world.

**Key Points**
- Prime Minister of Japan, Shinzo Abe launched an agenda for global data governance.
- A group of 70 plus countries discussed to commence WTO negotiations on trade related aspects of e-commerce.
- Members of the Forum's Business and civil society trade community also made discussions for a new ambitious and inclusive digital trade deal.
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Rankings

Andhra tops ACI’s Ease of Doing Business index
In the latest ranking of Singapore’s Asia Competitiveness Institute’s (ACI), Ease of Doing Business (EDB) index 2018, Andhra Pradesh emerged on top of the 21 states of India that were considered for the ranking. While Maharashtra and Delhi came in second and third place, respectively.

Key Points:
- Andhra Pradesh rose from the 5th rank in 2016 to the top spot in 2018.
- The ACI’s EDB index is based upon three parameters called ABC - Attractiveness to Investors, Business Friendliness and Competitiveness Policies. The index captured the business environment at the sub-national level on the basis of 72 hard and soft indicators.
- The Ease of Doing Business (EDB) list is compiled by a team of researchers led by Tan Khee Giap, who is the co-director of Asia competitiveness institute (ACI), and associate professor at Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore.
- Suggestions regarding areas where improvement was needed in the state of Andhra Pradesh include bridging numerous institutional and infrastructural gaps in order to sustain its position in the future and improvement in sub environments such as facilitating business operations, infrastructure resilience and market potential.

India Ranks 79th, Japan Tops List Of Most Powerful Passports: Henley Passport Index
On January 10, 2019, According to Henley Passport Index, which keeps in record and analyses of every country’s travel afford revealed a report of powerful passport holding country, in which Japan has retained its position to the top for the consecutive year due to access the document’s access to 190 countries and India has leaped two steps forward to 79th rank from 81st rank. A total of 190 countries are analyzed here.

Key Points:
- The Henley index ranks world’s passports based on how many countries they can get the holder access without a prior visa. An Indian passport holder can visit 61 countries without a Prior-travel visa.
- According to the ranking by Henley and Partners Passport Index, Afghanistan and Iraq – 104 Pakistan came close to them at 102.
- The US passport gives its citizens access to 185 countries without the need for a prior visa and shares the sixth spot with UK, Austria, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Switzerland. Click here to read the rank of all the countries.

India ranked at 41st at the 11th edition of EIU Democracy Index 2018, Norway topped the Index: Economist Intelligent Unit report
On January 10, 2019, Norway topped in the 11th edition of EIU Democracy Index 2018 was released by the Economist Intelligent Unit compiling the state of democracies in 167 countries in the world. India Ranked 41st in the Index. The Index was started in 2006.

Highlights:
- The countries were categorized and colour coded in 4 sections. They were:
  - Full Democracy (Dark Green) scoring 8-10 & consisting of 20 countries,
  - Flawed Democracy (Light Green) scoring 6-7.99 consisting of 55 countries,
  - Hybrid Regime (Mint green to Light Yellow) scoring 4-5.99 consisting of 39 countries and
  - Authoritarian Regime (Dark Red) scoring 1-3.99 consisting of 53 countries.
- The scores were divided based on 60 indicators on five categories of:
  - Electoral process and pluralism;
  - Civil liberties;
• the functioning of government;
• political participation; and
• political culture.

iii. For the first time in three years, the global score for democracy remained stable.
iv. One country, Costa Rica, moved from a flawed democracy to a full democracy; at the other end of the spectrum, one country, Nicaragua, moved from flawed regime to authoritarian regime.
v. A total of 42 countries experienced a decline in their total score compared with 2017; 48 registered an increase in total score.

**Ranking of Nations:**
i. Among the 167 nations, **Norway** topped the charts.
ii. It was followed by: Iceland (2), Sweden (3), New Zealand (4) and Denmark (5) closing off the top 5 rankings.
iii. The bottom 5 of the list are:
   Chad (163), Central African Republic (164), Democratic Republic of Congo (165), Syria (166) and North Korea (167).
v. India ranked 41st Position, falling in the 'Flawed Democracy' category. Following are the list of the ranks of her neighbours:
   • China (130),
   • Pakistan (112)
   • Bangladesh (88)
   • Afghanistan (143)
   • Nepal (97)
   • Bhutan (94)
   • Sri Lanka (71)
   • Myanmar (118)

v. Region wise, **North America** retains the highest average score of any region in the Democracy Index, lowest being in **Middle East and North Africa**.

For more information: Click Here, Click Here to read the ranking

**Bengaluru pipped Hyderabad to top list of world’s most dynamic cities: 6th City Momentum Index by JLL**

On January 15, 2019, according to the 6th City Momentum Index, released by property consultant JLL, **Bengaluru** has emerged as the world’s most dynamic city with a robust technology and innovation ecosystem in place.

**About the Report:**
i. The report is titled: ‘JLL City Momentum: The World’s Top 20 Most Dynamic Cities’.
ii. The 2019 edition of the survey was conducted on 131 cities over a period of 3 years.
iii. The key theme in this year’s index was cities having a robust technology and innovation ecosystem.

**Highlights:**
i. Among other Indian cities, **Hyderabad** ranked second with **Delhi** at fourth, **Pune** at fifth, **Chennai at seventh** and **Kolkata at fifteenth** position featuring in top 20 cities.
ii. 19 of the top 20 cities ranked were from Asia Pacific region.
iii. The other cities include Hanoi at the third position, Nairobi at 6th, Ho Chi Minh City at 8th Xi’an at 9th Guangzhou at 10th.
iv. The reasons behind India’s success in the rank goes to the implementation of reforms such as RERA and GST with a focus on improving infrastructure and improving ease of doing business that have brought in more transparency in the real estate sector.

For more information: Click Here

**Indian universities move up in global ranking with 49 institutions**

On 15th January 2019, the London-based, Times Higher Education (THE) released the Emerging
Economies University Rankings 2019 report which shows that India has improved its ranking and secured a higher position with 49 institutions making it to the list.

**Key Points:**

i. According to this year's report 25 Indian institutions figure in the top 200 institutes, a rise from 17 last year.

ii. The report stated that the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangaluru retains the highest spot for India (14th), followed by the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (27th). Last year India had 42 institutions in the overall list.

iii. China remains the most represented nation with 72 institutions in total and claiming four of the table’s top five positions with Tsinghua University topping the chart.

iv. Nearly 450 universities from 43 countries, across four continents were compared this year.

**14th Global Risks Report, the 2019 edition, was released by World Economic Forum Released**


**About the Report:**

i. The report’s findings are based on the annual Global Risks Perception Survey, which asks the Forum’s network of business, government, civil society and thought leaders to gauge the risks facing our world.

ii. The risks in the report has been divided into 2 parts: Top 10 Risks by Likelihood and Top 10 Risks by Impact.

iii. Further the risks were divided into 5 categories of: (1) economic vulnerabilities, (2) geopolitical tensions, (3) societal and political strains, (4) environmental fragilities, and (5) technological instabilities.

iv. It was done in partnership with: Marsh McLennan Companies and Zurich Insurance Group.

**Highlights of the report:**

i. Risks of major -power political confrontations are imminent.

ii. With risks intensifying, the collective will to tackle them is lacking.

iii. Environmental threats dominate the list for the third year in row – both in terms of impact and likelihood.

iv. 'Failure of climate-change mitigation and adaptation’ – is in second place on both lists of likelihood and impact.

v. Cyber-attacks feature in both top 10s, at number five for likelihood and seven for impact, while data fraud is at number four for likelihood, reflecting an overall trend as technology shapes the risk landscape.

vi. In terms of Societal Risk, water crises, defined as “a significant decline in the available quality and quantity of fresh water, resulting in harmful effects on human health and/or economic activity has also featured.

vii. The report also warns of the macroeconomic risks that could be faced ahead in 2019.

For more information: [Click Here](#)

**India ranks at 54th position among most innovative countries: Bloomberg 2019 Innovative Index**

For the first time, India has been ranked in the Bloomberg Innovation Index. India is ranked at the 54th Position with a score of 47.93 out of 100 among the world’s most innovative countries according to the Bloomberg 2019 Innovative Index.

**Key Points**

i. South Korea has retained its top spot with a score of 87.38, Germany ranked second with a score of 87.30 whereas Finland has been ranked at the third spot with a score of 85.70.

ii. The Annual Bloomberg Innovation Index ranks countries by analyzing their performances using seven metrics including Research and Development spending, Manufacturing Categories and Concentration of high-tech public computers.
iii. India, Mexico, Vietnam and Saudi Arabia are the new entrants in the Annual Bloomberg Innovation Index.

**Dubai Airport retains top position as world’s Busiest Airport**

On 28th January 2019, Dubai International (DXB) airport became the world’s busiest airport for international passengers for the fifth consecutive year in 2018.

**Key Points**

i. Dubai International (DXB) shows an increase of 1% in passenger traffic when compared to previous year. It is the slowest growth for Dubai Airport in the past decade.

ii. DXB overtook the crown from London’s Heathrow airport in 2014. At present Heathrow Airport is the second busiest airport.

iii. India renamed the biggest source of traffic for the airport, accounting for more than 12.2 million travellers with most of them from Mumbai, Delhi and Cochin.

iv. Saudi’s came second over 6.4 million passengers overtaking travellers from the United Kingdom. About 6.3 million British naturals used the airport.

v. Dubai International is the base for Dubai owned carrier Emirates and its budget airline FlyDubai.

vi. The non-oil based economy of Dubai has faced a slow down in key real estate tourism sectors.

**About Dubai International Airport (DXB)**

♦ CEO: Paul Griffiths

**India Ranked at 78th Position in Global Corruption Index, Denmark Topped**

On January 30, 2019, According to the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) released by the Transparency International, India has moved up to 78th position in 2018, with a Score of 41 out of 100. India was ranked 81st in 2017.

i. **Denmark topped** the chart with a score of 88, which is followed by **New Zealand** with a score of 87. **Somalia, Syria and South Sudan** are ranked bottom in the index.

ii. United States has dropped out of top 20 countries for the first time since 2011.

iii. While **China** ranked 87, while the Rank of China is 77 in the year 2017 and **Pakistan Retained** its rank 117 in the index.

**About Transparency International**

♦ Transparency International headquarters: Berlin, Germany

♦ Director: Patricia Moreira

**India up one place on global talent competitiveness ranking at 80th: INSEAD**

On 21st January 2019, INSEAD business school in partnership with Tata Communications and Adecco Group released the 6th edition of Global Talent Competitive Index (GTCI) 2019 which stated that India has moved up one position to rank **80th** on the Global Talent Competitive Index 2019 ranking.

**Key Points:**

i. The report, suggested that India’s biggest challenge is to improve its ability to attract and retain talent and there is a need to address its poor level of Internal Openness in particular with respect to weak gender equality and low tolerances towards minorities and immigrants and its disappointing showing in lifestyle indicators.

ii. The top 5 countries in the index included **Switzerland** followed by Singapore, the US, Norway and Denmark.

iii. At 45th position in overall ranking, **China** emerged as the best performer among the BRICS countries.

iv. The survey measures how countries and cities grow, attract and retain talent, ranking 125 countries and 114 cities across all groups of income and levels of development.

v. The top-ranked city this year is **Washington, DC**, followed by Copenhagen, Oslo, Vienna and Zurich.

vi. The ranking was released on the first day of the World Economic Forum (WEF) Annual Meeting in **Davos, Switzerland**.
**India 4th Most Attractive Investment Market for Global CEO’s: PwC Survey**

On 21st January 2019, **India** became 4th most attractive investment market for global CEO’s as per **PwC Survey** conducted over more than 1300 CEOs in 91 countries. The report was released on the first day of the World Economic Forum (WEF) annual meeting held in Davos, Switzerland.

**Key Points:**

i. India surpassed UK to become 4th most attractive destination where US remained on the top position with 27 per cent votes. India surpassed Japan last year.

ii. As per the survey, China’s popularity is falling but managed to be the 2nd most attractive followed by Germany in 3rd position.

iii. 85% of CEO’s believe that Artificial Intelligence would dramatically change their business over the next 5 years. 30 per cent of the global business leader believes that the global economic growth will decline in the next one year.

iv. India’s popularity falls marginally from 9% to 8% but In terms of CEO’s revenue confidence, India remains the most buoyant territory.

**China to become world’s biggest retail market in 2019: Research firms eMarket**

On 24th January 2019, Research firm eMarket predicted that **China** will become world’s **biggest retail market in 2019**. According to the report, the sale boom is a result of China’s rising incomes and thriving e-commerce.

**Key Points**

i. The report says China will overtake US in 2019 and total retail sales will grow 7.5% to reach 5.636 trillion USD in 2019, while US will grow 3.3% to 5.529 trillion.

ii. One- fifth of the country’s total sales in 2018 was from e-commerce which is a major driver of China’s retail economy.

iii. As per predictions US share of the global e-commerce market is expected to drop to 15 percent by 2022. By the end of 2019, China will have 55.8 percent of all online retail sales globally which is also expected to exceed 63% by 2022.

**India replaces Japan as 2nd top Steel Producing: World Steel Report**

On 28th January 2019, India became second largest steel producing country according to **world steel association report**. India has replaced Japan to attain the 2nd largest country.

**Key Points:**

i. China is the largest producer of crude steel. More than 51% of crude steel production is made by China.

ii. China produced 928.3 million tonnes in 2018 from 870.9 million tonnes in 2017 which is increased by 6.6% from the previous year. China’s overall share increased to 51.3% in 2018 from 50.3% in 2017.

iii. India’s crude steel production was 106.5 million tonnes in 2018 from 101.5 million tonnes in 2017. India shows 4.9% growth in production. Japan produced 104.3 MT and hold the third Position in Crude Steel Production.

iv. United States, at the 4th position, which produces 86.7 MT of crude steel in 2018, South Korea (72.5 MT, 5th place), Russia (71.7 MT, 6th), Germany (42.4 MT, 7th), Turkey (37.3 MT, 8th), Brazil (34.7 MT, 9th) and Iran (25 MT, 10th).

**World Economic Forum: India is set to become world’s third largest consumer market after US and China in 2030**

On 9th January 2019, a report by World Economic Forum today said that India is set to become the world’s third largest consumer market behind only USA and China by 2030. The report titled “Future of Consumption in Fast- Growth Consumer Market- India” also noted growth of the middle class will lift nearly 25 million household out of poverty.

**Key points:**

i. The report said consumer spending in India is expected to grow from 1.5 trillion US dollar at present to 6 trillion US dollar by 2030.
ii. The report said that with the annual GDP growth rate of 7.5%, India is currently the world’s 6th largest economy.

Reports

Parliamentary Panel Report on Western Ghats
On 31st December, 2018 the Parliamentary panel, which keeps track of assurances given by ministers, presented its latest report on Western Ghats on the floor of the Rajya Sabha.

Area of interest of the Panel:
The panel examined issues regarding the categorisation of the Western Ghats as Ecologically Sensitive Areas (ESA) as per the recommendations of two committees led by Madhav Gadgil and K. Kasturirangan.

Key Findings of the Panel:
i. The ecologically sensitive areas (ESA) which is stretched in about 56,000 square kilometres of the Western Ghats could not be earmarked as ‘no-go’ zones due to State governments’ ‘insensitivity’ though three draft notifications had been issued over four years for earmarking ESA.
ii. The recent monsoon floods in Kerala and parts of Karnataka should serve as alarm bells for the administrations in the States of Goa, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, which have failed to mark ESA in the Western Ghats.
iii. The polluting activities and large-scale deforestation, mining, and construction are continuing unabated in the ESA, hurting the ecology of the Western Ghats.
iv. Insensitivity towards ecology of Western Ghats was making the six States of Western Ghats vulnerable to floods and landslides
v. The implementation of the recommendations of the Kasturirangan report is only possible with active support of local population and also requires consultation with the State government at micro level to achieve the objectives of saving the Western Ghats.
v. The committee recommended that the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change should constitute a Committee to address the issues and grievances of local people.

Central Statistics Office (CSO) released the First Advance Estimates of National Income at Constant (2011-12) and Current Prices, for the financial year 2018-19
On 7th January 2019, the Central Statistics Office (CSO) under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation has released the first advance estimates of National Income at Constant (2011-12) and Current Prices, for the financial year 2018-2019.

Approach for obtaining advanced estimate:
Compilation of the sector-wise Advance Estimates is based on the extrapolation of Benchmark-Indicator method. The Benchmark-Indicators used in the estimation include:

- Index of Industrial Production (IIP) of first 7 months of the financial year.
- Financial performance of Listed Companies in the Private Corporate sector available up to quarter ending September, 2018.
- 1st Advance Estimates of Crop production.
- Accounts of Central & State Governments, information on indicators like Deposits & Credits, Passenger and Freight earnings of Railways, Passengers and Cargo handled by Civil Aviation, Cargo handled at major Sea Ports, Sales of Commercial Vehicles, etc., available for first 8 months of the financial year 2018-2019.

Key Points of the Estimates based at constant prices (2011-12):

- India’s GDP would grow at 7.2% in 2018-19, showing acceleration from 6.7% growth in 2017-18 because of push from agriculture and manufacturing sectors. It is likely to attain a level of Rs. 139.52 lakh crore.
• **Real GVA (Gross Value Added)** is anticipated to grow at 7% in the current fiscal as against 6.5% in 2017-18. It is is anticipated to reach Rs.128.09 lakh crore in 2018-19.

• The growth rate in Per Capita Income is estimated at **6.1 percent** during 2018-19, as against **5.4 per cent** in the previous year. It is likely to attain a level of **Rs.91,921** as compared to Rs.86,668 for the year 2017-18.

• The Ministry will release second advance estimates of national income for the year 2018-19 and quarterly GDP estimate for October-December quarter on **February 28, 2019**.

**Sector wise Growth Estimates based at constant prices (2011-12):**

• The sectors which registered growth rate of over 7.0% are: Electricity, Gas, Water Supply and Other Utility Services, Construction, Manufacturing, Public Administration, Defence and Other Services.

• The expansion in activities in ‘agriculture, forestry and fishing’ is likely to increase to 3.8% in the current fiscal from 3.4% in the preceding year.

• The growth of the **manufacturing** sector is expected to accelerate to 8.3% this fiscal, up from 5.7% in 2017-18.

• ’Mining and Quarrying’ sector is estimated to grow by 0.8 percent as compared to growth of 2.9 percent in 2017-18.

• ’Electricity, Gas, Water Supply and Other Utility Services’ sector is expected to grow by 9.4 percent as compared to growth of 7.2 percent in 2017-18.

• ‘Construction’ sector is expected to grow by 8.9 percent as compared to growth of 5.7 percent in 2017-18.

• The growth estimates for the **Trade, Hotels, Transport and Communication and Services** related to Broadcasting services during 2018-19 is placed at 6.9 per cent as against growth of 8 per cent in the previous year.

• The estimated growth in **Financial, Real Estate and Professional Services** sector during 2018-19 is placed at 6.8 percent as compared to growth of 6.6 percent in 2017-18.

• The **Public Administration and Defence and Other Services** sector is expected to grow by 8.9 percent as compared to growth of 10 percent in 2017-18.

**Key Points of the Estimates based at current prices:** The **Wholesale Price Index (WPI)**, in respect of the groups – Food Articles, Manufactured Products, Electricity and all Commodities, has risen by (-)0.9 per cent, 4.1 per cent, 6.8 percent and 4.9 percent, respectively during April-November 2018-19.

• The **Consumer Price Index (CPI)** has shown a rise of 3.9 percent during April-November, 2018-19.

• The **GDP at Current Prices** in the year 2018-19 is likely to attain a level of **Rs.188.41 lakh crore**, as against Rs. 167.73 lakh crore in 2017-18 showing a growth rate of 12.3 percent.

• The nominal **Net National Income (NNI)**, also known as **National Income** (at Current Prices) is likely to be Rs.167.03 lakh crore during 2018-19, as against Rs.148.49 lakh crore for the year 2017-18. It registered a growth rate of 12.5 percent in 2018-19 as against the previous year’s growth rate of 10.1 per cent.

• Besides the **Per Capita Net National Income** during 2018-19 is estimated to be Rs.1,25,397 showing a rise of 11.1 per cent as compared to Rs.1,12,835 during 2017-18 with the growth rate of 8.6 percent.

**Key Points for Annual Estimates of Final Expenditures of GDP, 2018-19:**

• The barometer of investment, **Gross Fixed Capital Formation (GFCF)**, at current prices is estimated at **Rs.55.58 lakh crore** in 2018-19 as against Rs.47.79 lakh crore in 2017-18.
• The **GFCF at constant (2011-12) Prices** is estimated at Rs.45.86 lakh crore in 2018-19 as against ₹40.88 lakh crore in 2017-18.

• The discrepancies in the GDP estimates for current fiscal has been pegged at Rs.1,49,331 crore as against Rs.2,23,504 crore in 2017-18.

• The **Government Final Consumption Expenditure (GFCE)** at Current Prices is estimated at Rs.21.70 lakh crore in 2018-19 as against ₹19.08 lakh crore in 2017-18. whereas at Constant (2011-12) Prices, the GFCE is estimated at Rs.15.28 lakh crore in 2018-19 as against ₹14.0 lakh crore in 2017-18.

• The **Gross Fixed Capital Formation (GFCF)** at Current Prices is estimated at Rs.55.58 lakh crore in 2018-19 as against Rs.47.79 lakh crore in 2017-18. At Constant (2011-12) Prices, the GFCF is estimated at Rs.45.86 lakh crore in 2018-19 as against Rs.40.88 lakh crore in 2017-18.

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**ASER 2018 by NGO Pratham: One out of every 8 students in rural India can’t read simple texts**

On January 16, 2019, as per the **Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2018**, one out of every four Class 8 students in rural India is unable to read.

**About the report:***

1. The report was made after the survey conducted by an autonomous unit of education-NGO Pratham.
2. The survey covered around 3.5 lakh households and 546,527 children between the ages of three and 16 across 596 rural districts.

**Highlights:**

i. Moreover, over one in two Class 8 students cannot solve a problem that involves basic division.

ii. Only a little more than half of all children enrolled in Class 5 can read a Class 2 level text.

iii. This improvement can be seen due to an improved performance by Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, Kerala, Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram.

iv. The proportion of children not enrolled in school has fallen below 3% to 2.8% for the first time ever in India.

v. Also the percentage of girls in the 15-16 age group who were not enrolled in school dropped from 20% in 2008 to 13.5 in 2018%.

vi. The number of schools with a serviceable girls’ toilet doubled between 2010 and 2018 with two-thirds of all girls’ schools in rural India having toilets.

vii. Additionally, the number of students seeking admission in private schools in rural India has dropped which gives impetus to the government schools to flourish.

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**UN office on drugs and crime (UNODC) released “Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2018”**

On 7th January 2019, UN office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) released a latest Global Report on “Trafficking in Persons”, which reveals that the number of human trafficking victims around the world is on the rise while armed groups and terrorists are trafficking women and children to generate funds and recruit.

**Key points:**

i. This report shows that human trafficking is on the rise with sexual exploitation of victims the main driver. Children now account for 30 per cent of those being trafficked, and far more girls are detected than boys.

ii. This report shows that more victims of human trafficking were reported to the United Nation’s agency in 2016 than at any time over the past 13 years.

iii. Trafficking for sexual exploitation is the most prevalent form in European countries, whilst in sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East, forced labour is the main factor driving the illicit trade.

iv. While the average numbers of reported victims had fluctuated during the earlier years for which UNODC had collected data, the global trend has shown a steady increase since 2010.

v. Yuri Viktorovich Fedotov, a high level diplomat of Russian Federation said that “We need to step up technical assistance and strengthen cooperation, to support all countries to protect victims and being
Indians could live up to 3 years more if there’s a 25% reduction in air pollution

On 30th January 2019, According to a study titled “The Potential Benefits of India’s ‘War Against Pollution’ — Longer Lives”, by Air Quality Life Index (AQLI) says the life expectancy of people in Delhi can go up by nearly three years if the air pollution is reduced by 25%.

Key Points
i. To reduce particulate pollution by 20-30 per cent by 2024, Environment Minister Harsh Vardhan declared a “war against pollution” and launched the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP).
ii. The programme takes 2017 as the base year to improve air quality. The study by Energy Policy Institute at University of Chicago (EPIC) uses the same base year as its parameters.
iii. They says the programme could pay off extensively in bringing the life expectancy up by an average of 1.4 years.
iv. Delhiites could gain around 2.8 years to their life, people in Kanpur would live 2.4 years longer and people in Kolkata could live 1.1 years longer.

Indians biggest supporters of international aid: WEF global survey

The World Economic Forum (WEF) released a survey ahead of its annual meeting which states that Indians are biggest supporters of international aid. 95 per cent of Indians supported the international aid and expect India to help other nations.

Key Points
i. World Economic Forum worked with Qualtrics to poll over 10000 from different parts of the world.
ii. South Asian Countries like India, Pakistan and Bangladesh exhibit widespread support for international aid leaving behind European countries.
iii. Pakistan and Indonesia are on the second position with 94 per cent of the people’s affirmative replies.
iv. The Global Average was 72 per cent and developed countries like France, Argentina, Germany and England scored 60 per cent or below 60 Percent.

India among the most trusted nations globally: 2019 Edelman Trust Barometer report

On 21st January 2019, the Edelman which is an independent global communications firm released its 2019 Edelman Trust Barometer report which placed India at the second place in the informed public category and third place in the general population category in the Trust Index.

Key Points:

i. The report ahead of the World Economic Forum (WEF) meet noted that the Global Trust Index witnessed a marginal increase of 3 points to 52.
ii. China topped the Trust Index among both the informed public and the general population segments with scores of 79 and 88 respectively.
iii. The Index calculated the average per cent of trust in NGOs, business, government and media on the basis of an online survey in 27 markets covering over 33,000 respondents from October to November last year.
iv. The companies headquartered in Switzerland (70 per cent), Germany (70 per cent), Canada (70 per cent) and Japan (69 percent) were found to be the most trusted.

United Nations released World Economic Situation and Prospects 2019 report

On 21st January 2019, the United Nations released the World Economic Situation and Prospects 2019 (WESP) report which projected the Global growth to remain at 3.0 per cent in 2019 and 2020. The report was produced by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN/DESA), the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the UN’s five regional economic commissions (ECA), (ECE), (ECLAC), (ESCAP) and (ESCWA).

Key Points:

i. In 2018 the Global Economy grew with a flat rate of 3.1 % .The report stated that more than half the world’s
economies growth rate accelerated in 2017 and 2018.

ii. The report cautioned that the constant growth rate in the global economy hides an increase in downside risks that could potentially exacerbate development challenges in many parts of the world.

iii. The trade tensions which are accelerating are causing an impact on global trade and employment.

iv. The report suggested that the countries which are facing the problem of rising national debt and thus are unable to provide basic services and those which are affected from climate change and waning support for international cooperation could avoid or minimize such situation if they work together.

v. For Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), including Russia the overall growth is forecast as slow to two per cent, and 2.5 per cent in 2020.

vi. The report further noted that the US-China trade tension had led to a fall in global trade levels in 2018, from 5.3 per cent in 2017, to 3.8 per cent.

vii. The result of trade war is that China which grew at 6.6 % in 2018 is expected to grow at 6.3% in 2019. Unless the dispute is settled, the developing countries may suffer the fallout too, due to this.

viii. The strengthening of the dollar and rise in interest rates in the US could make matters worse for fragile emerging economies. This could lead a substantial rise in interest repayments on debt in many low-income countries.

ix. The report warned that the effect of 'Brexit' fallout might affect the countries outside the EU, with a possible "10-15 per cent decline in funding available to EU accession countries".The full report is available in UN/DESA official website : https://www.un.org/development/desa/publications/publication/world-economic-situation-and-prospects-2019

India Manufacturing Barometer 2019 Report: Released by Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) in association with PwC

The global consulting firm PwC and industry body Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) held a new survey of manufacturers and released a report titled “The India Manufacturing Barometer 2019”.

Key Points:

i. The report projected that India's economy is expected to grow anywhere between 7.3 – 7.7 per cent.

ii. The report concluded that about 74 per cent of manufacturers are hopeful of a faster growth rate in their respective sectors over the next 12 months while about 58% expect their sector to grow faster by at least 5% in the next 12 months.

iii. The sample for the survey includes companies of the sectors like automobiles, chemicals, electrical machinery, food processing, leather, pharmaceuticals and textiles that contribute approximately 12 per cent to the manufacturing Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the country.

iv. The report pointed that the severe lack of working capital continues to be a pain point for micro, small and medium enterprises.

Consumer retail inflation fell 18-month-low to 2.19% in December 2018: CSO report

On January 14, 2019, according to an official release by Central Statistics Office (CSO), citing cooling food and fuel prices as the reasons, it stated that wholesale and retail inflation reduced to a multi month low with CPI falling to an 18-month low in December,2018.

Highlights:

i. India’s headline inflation rate based on the consumer price index (combined) reduced to an 18-month low of 2.19% in December, down from 2.33% in November, 2018. It was 5.21% in December 2017.

ii. Wholesale inflation (measured by WPI) softened to an eight-month low of 3.8% in December from 4.64% in November, 2018.

iii. Retail inflation remained below RBI’s target of 4%.
iv. **Core inflation** (excluding food, fuel and light, and transport and communications) was 5.7% in December, 2018. Core inflation numbers imply **demand side pressure**. High core inflation, for examples due to health and education where inflation is constantly on the rise, is due to limited supply.

**Effects of this slippage:**

i. Due to the reduction in CPI and since it is within RBI’s target of 4%, the following is predicted from the MPC meeting of RBI that will take place in February 7, 2019.

1. RBI is expected to change its policy stance to resume the accommodative policy stance.
2. This would provoke cuts in rates thus promoting growth by lowering the borrowing costs of industry.
3. Investments will rise and industries will be able to take loans at a lower cost and this would support growth in industries.

ii. As of November 2018, the industry growth has reduced to 17-month low.

**Background:**

1. The Reserve Bank in its last MPC (Monetary Policy Committee) meeting had kept policy rates unchanged in the December review of the monetary policy but had changed its stance to “calibrated tightening”.
2. The next monetary policy review is due on February 7, 2019.

**About measurement of Inflation:**

- To measure inflation in an economy, usually, **Wholesale Price Index (WPI)** and **Consumer Price Index (CPI)** are used.
- **Wholesale Price Index** helps in measuring the average change in prices received on bulk sale of goods.
- **Consumer Price Index** is one that computes the changes in the general price level of a class of consumer goods.

**Outbreak Readiness and Business impact released by WEF**

The World Economic Forum released **“The Outbreak Readiness and Business impact white paper”** in collaboration with the Harvard Global Health Institute.

**Key Points**

i. The report says that the business risk posed by a new era of epidemic cannot be considered exclusively and all the companies operating globally should take proper actions to mitigate threats posed by epidemics.

ii. Since 2011, World has witnessed **200 epidemic** events per year and the number and kind of infectious disease outbreaks have increased significantly in last 30 years.

iii. The Report also warns that the threat due to epidemic is similar to that estimated for climate change in the coming decades. As per report, the Pandemics will cause annual economic losses of 0.7 per cent of global GDP.

**India to knock Down UK In Largest Economy Rankings:PwC**

On January 20, 2019, According to British consultancy multinational PwC, India surpassed the UK in the 2019 rankings of world’s largest economies to become the World’s **Fifth Largest Economy**. GDP growth of India in 2019 is 7.6 per cent whereas 1.6 per cent for the UK, and 1.7 per cent for France.

**Key points:**

i. France also surpassed the UK in the world’s largest economy rankings in 2019, knocking it from fifth to seventh place with increased rate of **1.7% GDP**.

ii. Due to lower growth rate we may have a trade war in 2019, main focus of tension would be between US-China trade.

iii. The US was the world’s largest economy with a size of 19.39 trillion dollars, followed by China at 12.23 trillion dollars at the second place in 2017.
India to grow by 7.5% in 2019; Settled GST, credit flows had a positive effect: CII

On December 31, 2018, in its report titled ‘Growth Outlook for 2019’, Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) stated that India will remain the fastest growing major economy with GDP growth estimated to be 7.5% in FY19.

i. The reasons cited for the growth are:
- Better demand conditions, settled GST implementation, capacity expansion resulting from growing investments in infrastructure and better credit inflow especially in the service sector (that is of 24%).

ii. Additionally, CII had suggested the following:
- only three slabs for GST – a standard rate, a higher rate for demerit goods and a lower rate for some mass consumption items – and inclusion of fuels, real estate, electricity and alcohol in the ambit of the levy.
- RBI to have lending restrictions on banks under the PCA (prompt and corrective action) and create a limited special liquidity window to meet emergencies of financial institutions.
- digitisation of land records,
- online single window systems in states and
- enforcing contracts among measures to enhance ease of doing business.
- all states implement the Agriculture Produce and Livestock Marketing Model Act to strengthen agriculture produce marketing and
- To set up additional benches of the National Company Law Tribunal to address the issue of non-performing assets.
- Also to increase domestic oil production to have positive impact on crude oil prices.

Background:
The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) predicted India’s economy to grow 7.4% in 2018-19.

France introduced GAFA tax on global internet, technology firms

From 1st January 2019, France introduced a new “GAFA tax” named after the large internet and technology companies Google, Apple, Facebook and Amazon to ensure the global giants pay a fair share of taxes on their massive businesses in Europe.

Key Points:
- According to France’s finance Minister Bruno Le Maire, the new tax would raise 500 million euros (570 million dollars) in 2019.
- The unilateral move from France came after the deal for EU wide tax which required the support of all 28 EU states, crumbled earlier this month, with opposition from countries including Ireland, home to the European headquarters of Google and Apple.
- While other EU member states such as Britain, Spain and Italy are working on national versions of a digital tax, Asian countries such as Singapore and India are also planning their own schemes.

Minimum Support Price for 17 new items of Minor Forest Produce introduced on recommendations of Pricing Cell, TRIFED: Ministry of Tribal Affairs

On December 27, 2018, the Government introduced the Minimum Support Price (MSP) for 17 items of Minor Forest Produce (MFP) items after revising 23 items.
- These changes have been done under the recommendations of the MFP Pricing Cell constituted by the Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India Ltd. (TRIFED).
- Among the items revised, 10 MFP items have been under the scheme from 2013-14 and 13 new items were included w.e.f. 31.10.2016.
iii. Further, the **Ministry of Tribal Affairs** decided to announce the inclusion of seventeen (17) more MFP items in the scheme along with their MSP.

**Govt may impose anti-dumping duty on Chinese synthetic rubber**

The **Ministry of Commerce and Industry**, Government of India, is mulling to impose **anti-dumping duty** for 18 months on a Chinese synthetic rubber ‘**fluoroelastomers**’ used in automobile and other industries in order to minimize the impact of dumped imports.

**Key Points:**

i. The proposal in this regard was considered after the investigative arm of Commerce ministry, **Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR)** initiated the probe in January 2018 following a complaint from Gujarat Fluorochemicals which alleged dumping of the product.

ii. The **DGTR** said that the product has been exported to India from China at below its normal value, which has resulted in dumping and recommended a duty which ranges between **$0.078-$7.31** per kilogram.

iii. The final decision to impose the duty would be taken by **Ministry of Finance**.

iv. The duty which is imposed under the under the multilateral regime of **World Trade Organization (WTO)** is aimed at ensuring fair trading practises and creating a level-playing field for domestic producers with regard to foreign producers and exporters.

v. India imposes anti-dumping duty on several products to check cheap imports from countries including China, with which India had a wide trade deficit of **$63.12 billion** in 2017-18.

**India cuts duty on refined, crude palm oil from ASEAN to 40 and 45 percent respectively:**

**Finance Ministry**

On December 31, 2018, the **ministry of finance** announced that the government has cut import duties on **crude and refined palm oil** from **Southeast Asian countries or ASEAN** countries.

This move was taken under the **India-ASEAN Free Trade Agreement** and Malaysia under the **India-Malaysia Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (IMCECA)**.

i. The duty on **crude palm oil from Malaysia, Indonesia** and other members of the Association of South East Asian Nations was cut to **40 per cent** from **44 per cent**.

ii. The tax on **refined palm oil** was cut to **45 per cent** from **54 per cent** if imported from **Malaysia** and to **50 per cent**, if purchased from **Indonesia** or other member-nations of **ASEAN**.

iii. The duty cuts were made effective from **January 1, 2019**.

iv. India expects to import 15.5 million tonnes, with 60 per cent from Malaysia and Indonesia, followed by soyabean oil from Argentina and Brazil, sunflower oil from Ukraine and Russia and canola oil from Canada.

v. The effective duty difference between crude and refined palm oil has narrowed to 5.5 percent from 11 percent.

vi. This move could hurt the domestic refining industry.

**Background:**

India is world’s biggest edible oil buyer.

**India will not impose anti-dumping duty on coated paper imported from China, EU, US: DGTR**

On January 3, 2019, after the conclusion of its anti-dumping probe, the **Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR)**, under **Commerce Ministry** suggested that India will not impose anti-dumping duty on **coated paper** from **China, European Union and the US**.

i. The probe conducted by the DGTR has not found any impact on the domestic industry due to the alleged dumped imports.

ii. The probe was conducted as per the request of the **Indian Paper Manufacturers Association** on behalf of **BILT Graphics Paper Products**, subsidiary of Ballarpur Industries.

**What is coated paper?**
The paper, primarily used for printing of magazines, catalogues, books and manuals, calendars, brochures, labels and flexible packaging, is called coated paper.

**Background:**
Under the multilateral regime of the **World Trade Organization**, a country starts to impose anti-dumping duties on products of other countries when upon investigation it is found that domestic industries have been hurt because of increased cheap imports.

**Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR):**
- Under Commerce Ministry.
- DGTR: Shri Sunil Kumar (Additional Secretary).

**Defence industries received Rs 1.21 cr FDI during 2014-18: Commerce Min**
On January 2, 2019, **Minister of State for Commerce and Industry C R Chaudhary** announced that India’s defence sector received **Rs 1.21 crore** (Rs 12,146,180) foreign direct investment during **2014-18**.

i. The break-down of the FDI flows are as follows:
   - In 2013-14: defence industries had received USD 0.82 million
   - In 2014-15: USD 0.08 million, and
   - In 2015-16: USD 0.10 million.
   - In 2016-17, the industries had failed to attract any foreign direct investments.
   - In 2017-18: USD 10,000 (about Rs 7 lakh) FDI was attracted by the sector.

**Rs. 5,151 crore worth first LNG import terminal of IOC commissioned in Ennore, Tamil Nadu**
On January 2, 2019, **Indian Oil Corp (IOC)**, the nation’s biggest oil firm, announced commission of its first **Rs 5,151-crore** worth Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) import terminal in **Ennore, Tamil Nadu**.

i. This is the first LNG import terminal IOC has built on its own and will become operational by the end of January 2019.

ii. IOC holds 95 per cent stake in the Ennore LNG import terminal. Tamil Nadu Industrial Development Corporation (TIDCO) has 5 per cent.

iii. The firm is also working on laying a **1,385 km** natural gas pipeline originating from the **Ennore** terminal to **Nagapattinam** in **Tamil Nadu** via **Puducherry**.

iv. Also, branch pipelines will be laid in Madurai, Tuticorin, and Bengaluru to meet the LNG demand.

**7 Oil PSUs signed pact with IIT Bombay to set up centre of excellence**
On January 2, 2019, **IIT Bombay** and 7 public sector oil companies inked a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for setting up Centre of Excellence in **Oil, Gas and Energy**.

i. The MoU was signed by heads of:
   - Indian Oil Corp (IOC),
   - Oil and Natural Gas Corp (ONGC),
   - GAIL India Ltd,
   - Bharat Petroleum Corp Ltd (BPCL),
   - Hindustan Petroleum Corp Ltd (HPCL),
   - Oil India Ltd and
   - Engineers India Ltd.

ii. This would link up energy industry and academics to help jointly address energy requirements with new and innovative, indigenous technology.

**SEBI allows custodial services in commodity market, paves way for MF entry**
On 1st January 2019, **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)**, the market regulator has allowed custodial services in the **commodity derivatives market** enabling participation of institutional investors, including mutual funds, in the segment.
Key Points:
i. The new framework will allow the existing custodians to add commodities as an asset class and provide physical delivery of both the securities and commodities.

ii. Currently, the regulation on custodian of securities allows safekeeping of securities, gold or gold related instruments, title deeds of real estate and services incidental but doesn’t allows protection of goods, which are underlying assets of commodity derivatives.

iii. Under the new rules, the responsibility of custodians will not be limited to holding of securities but would also include holding of goods.

iv. The new regulations will enable participation of institutional investors such as mutual funds and portfolio managers in commodity derivatives market.

Govt exempts rupee payments for Iran oil from taxes: FinMin
On January 2, 2019, the finance ministry in its notification exempted rupee payments to the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) that it gets from Indian refiners, from a withholding tax.

i. The exemption, put in place December 28 but backdated to November 5, will allow Indian refiners to settle about $1.5 billion of outstanding payments to NIOC.

ii. India and Iran on Nov. 2, 2018, signed a bilateral agreement to settle oil trades through an Indian government-owned bank, UCO Bank, in the Indian currency.

Vijay Mallya first person to be named ‘fugitive economic offender’, under ED’s plea: PMLA Mumbai
On January 4, 2019, Vijay Mallya became the first person to be declared a ‘fugitive economic offender’ under Section 12 of the Fugitive Economic Offenders’ Act, 2018 by a special Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) Court in Mumbai.

i. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) had filed an application before the court in November, 2018 and this declaration was made by Special judge MS Azmi.

ii. The ED had also sought immediate confiscation of about Rs 12,500 crore worth of assets.

iii. He is wanted in India for defaulting on Rs. 9,000 crore in loans to his failed Kingfisher Airlines from a consortium of 12 banks led by the State Bank of India.

SoftBank renames early venture arm with focus on Asia
On 2nd January 2019, SoftBank Ventures Korea, the early-stage investment vehicle of Japanese internet conglomerate SoftBank Group, has renamed itself SoftBank Ventures Asia and will focus on finding artificial intelligence-related startups globally, with an emphasis on Asia.

Key Points:

i. The firm is looking to expand its presence beyond Seoul, Beijing, San Francisco, and Tel Aviv by targeting to open offices and hire investment professionals in Singapore and Shanghai.

ii. The new name is effective immediately and SoftBank Ventures Asia is already actively investing in the US, China, EU, Israel, Southeast Asia, and Korea.

iii. With a war chest of US$1.1 billion assets under management, SoftBank Ventures Asia has invested in over 250 companies across 10 countries, with a focus on AI, Internet of Things (IoT), and robotics startups.

iv. Softbank Ventures Asia is a wholly-owned subsidiary of SoftBank Group Corp. and was established as SoftBank Ventures Korea in 2000.

GST panel headed by Dy. CM of Bihar approved Kerala levying 1% calamity cess for 2 yrs
On January 7, 2019, the Group of States’ Finance Ministers (GoFM) led by Deputy Chief Minister of Bihar, Sushil Kumar Modi approved levy of 1% ‘calamity cess’ by Kerala for a period of two years to fund rehabilitation work in the state of Kerala. It will recommend the same to the GST council meeting which will be held in January 10, 2019.

i. The goods and services, which will attract the 1% cess, would be decided by Kerala and any other state considering to do the same would have to approach the council.

ii. It also suggested the GST council to allow additional borrowing over the permitted limit by states hit...
by natural calamity.

**Background:**
The GST law provides for levy of special taxes for a specified period to raise additional resources during any natural calamity or disaster.

**AAI banned single-use plastic items at 16 out of 34 airports in the first phase of the implementation**

On January 7, 2019, Airport Authority of India (AAI) banned single-use plastic items at 16 airports.

i. This entails air travellers not getting any single-use plastic items like straws, plastic cutlery and plastic plates etc at passenger terminals and city side.

ii. The 16 airports declared as single-use plastic free are: Indore, Bhopal, Ahmedabad, Bhubaneswar, Tirupati, Trichy, Vijayawada, Dehradun, Chandigarh, Vadodara, Madurai, Raipur, Vizag, Pune, Kolkata and Varanasi.

iii. The first batch of 16 airports was selected on the basis of third-party assessment carried out by Quality Council of India.

iv. Furthermore, Quality Council of India will assess/check the implementation of the ban of single-use plastic items at 34 airports handling 10 lakh passengers per annum. The assessment will be completed by January 31, 2019.

v. Also, the authority has formulated an environment policy to reduce green house gases (GHG) and sustainable development by implementing cost effective carbon mitigation action.

**NHAI collaborate with Oil Marketing Companies for issuance of FASTags through petroleum retail outlets**

On 7th January 2019, Indian Highways Management Company Ltd. (IHMCL), a company promoted by NHAI, has signed MOUs with state-run Oil Marketing Companies (IOCL, BPC, and HPC). It will ensure availability of FASTags at petroleum outlets across India.

**Key points:**

i. Indian highways management company ltd. (IHMCL) had launched the national electronic toll collection program (NETC) under the brand name “FASTag” in April 2016. This program has gain success and running at 450 toll plaza along with national highway and selected state toll plazas.

ii. The enhanced adoption of FASTag program will increase user convenience by offering seamless toll-fee payments at Plazas and thus help save time, money and fuel.

iii. IHMCL is also planning to launch two mobile applications named MYFASTag and IHMCLPOS, will enable customers to link the FASTags with their preferred bank account.

iv. FASTag can be recharged by using UPI (unified payment interface) platform. In the first phase, the tags will be available across 50 Fuel Station in Delhi NCR, which will subsequently be expanded to outlets across India.

**New national policy for domestic workers being drafted, about 40 lakh to benefit: Labour Ministry**

On January 7, 2019, labour minister Santosh Gangwar announced that the ministry of labour & employment will formulate a National Policy on Domestic Workers to give recognition to them and to make them eligible for minimum wages, social security and safe working conditions. This has been worked on by the ministry for over past three years.

i. As per the National Sample Survey, there are an estimated 39 lakhs people employed as domestic workers by private households, of which 26 lakhs are female domestic workers.

ii. Salient Features of the Policy are as follows:

- giving them the right to register as unorganized workers,
- right to form their own associations/unions,
- right to minimum wages and access to social security,
- right to enhance their skills, protection of domestic workers from abuse and exploitation,
- giving them access to courts, tribunals for grievance redressal,
• establishment of a mechanism for regulation of private placement agencies and
• establishment of a grievance redressal system for domestic workers.

Background:
Under the **Unorganised Workers’ Social Security Act, 2008**, the Central Government is already providing social security relating to life and disability cover, health and maternity benefits, old age protection to the unorganised workers including domestic workers.

**India’s GDP expected to grow at 7.3% in 2018-19: World Bank**
On 9th January 2019, World Bank projected India’ GDP, expected to grow at 7.3% in the fiscal year 2018-19, and 7.5% in the following two years. The Bank said India will continue to be the fastest growing major economy in the world. In India, the growth has accelerated, driven by an upswing in consumption, and investment growth has firmed as the effects of temporary factors wane, the World Bank said in its latest report.

**Key points:**
i. Domestic demand has strengthened as the benefits of structural reforms such as Goods and services Tax (GST) harmonization and bank recapitalization take effect.

ii. In 2018, China’s Projection is 6.5 and 6.2% each in 2019 and 2020 and 6% in 2021, according to the January 2019 Global Economic Prospects report released by the World Bank.

iii. Strong domestic demand is envisioned to widen the current account deficit to 2.6 per cent of GDP next year.

iv. The World Bank’s estimate suggest that India’s potential growth rate is around 7%, and is expected to remain around 7%.

**What is GDP?**
Gross domestic product is a monetary measure of the market value of all final goods and services produced in a period of time, often annually or quarterly.

**India’s GDP set to eclipse US’ by 2030: Standard Chartered**
On 08th January 2019, **Standard Chartered** released its long term forecast which states that **India** will surpass the **U.S** to become the world’s **second** largest economy by **2030** while **China** will be at **First** Position.

**Key points**
i. China will become the largest economy by **2020**, using purchasing power parity exchange rates and nominal GDP

ii. India to accelerate to 7.8 percent by the 2020s while China will moderate to 5 percent by 2030 reflecting a natural slowdown given the economy’s size.

iii. According to Standard Chartered Asia’s share of global GDP which rose to 28 percent in 2018 from 20 percent in 2010 will likely reach 35 percent by 2030.

**I&B Ministry Hikes Advertisment Rates For Print Media By 25%**
On 8th January 2019, **Ministry of Information and Broadcasting’s** decided to increase the advertisement rates by **25%** to the small and medium sized newspaper agencies. This new price is valid upto three years.

i. This step is taken under the recommendation of the 8th rate structure committee meeting. According to the recent report, this decision would help the religious and vernacular newspapers which rely highly on advertisement for their revenue and it is considered to be the good step for the small and medium newspaper agencies. The last hike was done in the year 2013.

**GST exemption limit doubled to give relief to small businesses**
On 10th January, Finance Minister **Arun Jaitley** raised the annual turnover for availing composition scheme to **Rs 1.5 crore from Rs 1 crore** effective from **April 1, 2019** to provide relief to small businesses under Goods and Services (GST) regime.

**Key points:**
i. It is said that "those who come under the composition scheme will pay tax quarterly, but the return will be filed once a year".

ii. The Goods and Services (GST) exemption limit has been doubled to **Rs. 40 lakh annual turnover and Rs 20 lakh** for northeastern states.

iii. It is also said that small companies would have the option to opt out of the GST tax net, adding that services and goods providers will get the benefit of composition tax.

**About GST:**

♦ GST: Goods and Services tax (GST) is an indirect tax levied in India on the supply of goods and services. It is divided into five slabs i.e. 0%, 5%, 12%, 18% and 28%.

♦ Implemented on: **1st July, 2017**

**US launches new innovation initiative at Raisina Dialogue, 2019**

On 11th January 2019, the Global Innovation Policy Center (GIPC) of United States Chamber of Commerce launched a new innovation strategy at Raisina Dialogue, 2019 in New Delhi. The Initiative is titled as "Fair Value for Innovation".

**Key Points**

i. The Initiative will examine economic underpinnings in order to enable breakthrough innovation and explore the opportunities to harness innovation capital in India and around the globe through research, advocacy, partnerships and programs.

ii. India is the first market where GIPC is launching this new innovation initiative.

iii. The Raisina Dialogue is most influential conference on geopolitics and geo-economics of India which is convened by the Observer Research Foundation and the Indian Ministry of External Affairs in New Delhi.

iv. The theme of this year’s Raisina Dialogue is “A World Reorder: New Geometries; Fluid Partnerships; Uncertain Outcomes”.

v. The inaugural address was delivered by Prime Minister of Norway H E Ms Erna Solberg.

**Trishna Gas Project of ONGC in Trishna Wildlife Sanctuary approved by National Wildlife Board**

On January 12, 2019, the National Wildlife Board, after receiving recommendations from the state Wildlife Board, approved extraction of natural gas from Trishna Wildlife Sanctuary by state-owned ONGC Tripura Asset.

i. Under the project, **10-12 gas bearing wells** had been discovered by ONGC Tripura Asset for extraction of **natural gas** from Trishna Wildlife Sanctuary in Belonia subdivision of Gomati district, **Tripura**.

ii. The gas extracted from Trishna Wildlife Sanctuary would be transported to the North Eastern Electric Power Corporation Ltd (NEEPCO) owned **100 MW** gas-based thermal power project at Monarchak in Sonamura subdivision of Sipahijala district.

iii. Also, Tripura unit of ONGC would provide **Rs 25 crore** to the state government for carrying out Swach Bharat Abhiyan.

**Background:**

♦ Earlier in September 2017, the state Wildlife Board sanctioned the project.

**National Wildlife Board:**

♦ National Board for Wildlife (NBWL) is a statutory Board constituted on 22nd September 2003 under Section 5 of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.

♦ It is chaired by Hon’ble Prime Minister.

**India to buy $5 billion oil, gas from US & spend $18 billion in defence**

On 16th January 2019, India has decided to purchase **$5 billion** worth of oil and gas from the US per annum and **$18 billion** worth for defence equipment. India-US bilateral trade has increased from **$119 billion** to **$140 billion** in past two years.
Key points
i. The US export to India has gone up by at least 30 per cent.
ii. Orders of 300 airplanes of $40 billion have been placed by commercial Indian airlines.
iii. The United States is India’s largest trading partner.

SEBI issues draft norms for commodity indices
On 16th January 2019, Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) issued drafts norm for commodity indices allowing trading in commodity-index-based futures. Earlier only individual commodity futures and options on it were allowed.

Only contracts that are compliant with certain conditions would be allowed to be part of the indices.

Key points
i. SEBI proposed a maximum weightage of 20% and minimum 1% for a constituent.
ii. As per the drafts norms, the contracts should have traded for at least 90% of trading days in last 12 months and they should have a minimum average daily turnover. The turnover should be at least Rs 75 crore for agricultural and agri-processed commodities, and Rs 500 crore for all other commodities.
iii. Future contracts concerned should have been trading in the particular exchange for at least 12 months before re-balancing an index.
iv. Initially tenor of the contracts can be of six months with a contract size of at least Rs 5 lakh.
v. The draft norms are the recommendations made by the Commodity Derivatives Advisory Committee (CDAC) set by SEBI 3 years ago.

About Commodity Index
A commodity index is an investment vehicle that tracks a basket of commodities to measure their price and investment return performance. These indexes are allowing investors to gain easier investment access to commodities without having to enter the futures market and are often traded on exchanges.

SEBI issued norms for mutual fund investments in derivatives
On January 16, 2019, Markets regulator SEBI allowed mutual fund schemes (except Index Funds and ETFs) to write call options only under a covered call strategy for constituent stocks of Nifty 50 and Sensex indices.

i. The announcement includes the following:
   • The total notional value of call options written by a scheme shall not exceed 15 per cent of the total market value of equity shares held in that scheme.
   • The total number of shares underlying the call options written should not exceed 30 per cent of the shares of a particular company held in the scheme.
   • No scheme shall write a call option without holding the underlying equity shares.
   • The call option written should be marked to market daily and the respective gains or losses should be factored into the daily net asset value of the respective scheme until the position closes or expires.
   • The risks and benefit of the same, must be disclosed in the Scheme Information Document.

For more information: Click Here

What is call options: Generally, call options refer to an agreement that gives a buyer the right to purchase an asset at a specified price within a particular time period.
• Currently, mutual fund schemes are permitted to undertake transactions in equity derivatives but cannot write options or purchase instruments with embedded written options.

GDP growth likely to be tad higher at 7.5% in FY20: India Ratings and Research
On 17th January 2019, a Fitch group company India ratings and research estimated that India’s GDP
growth to be a “tad higher” at 7.5% in financial year **2019-20**. Earlier it was **7.2%** during fiscal year **2018-19**.

**Key points**

i. The economy seen a growth rate of **7.2%** in the current financial year against **6.7%** in the previous year estimated by Central Statistics Office (CSO).

ii. According to India Ratings investments are slow but steady gaining traction with gross fixed capital formation growing 12.2% in FY19 and projected to grow at 10.3% in FY20.

iii. According to Fitch rating current fiscal has seen sharp recovery after demonetization and GST (Goods and Services Tax).

**BHEL and Libcoin to Build India’s First Lithium Ion Giga Factory**

On 18th January 2019, Government announced that **Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL)** and **Libcoin** are in dialogue to form a world class consortium to initially build the first lithium ion battery plant in India.

**Key Points**

i. The Initial capacity of the plant will be 1GWh and it will be scaled up to 30 GWh in due course.

ii. This project will bring energy independence by replacing oil imports with abundant renewable energy sources. The aim of the project is to create integrated manufacturing ecosystem resulting in self-reliance and lower cost.

iii. This project will includes “Made by India, for India” with focus on core cost component manufactured domestically.

iv. The cutting edge **digital technologies** to replace high **CAPEX** and high **OPEX** processes will be the highlight of this project in India.

**Centre to make Euro 6 mandatory for initial launch from April 1, 2020: Nitin Gadkari**

On 18th January 2019 Government has taken decision to make **Euro 6** Emission standards necessary for the initial launch of vehicles from **1 April 2020**. Union Minister for Transport **Nitin Gadkari** made the announcement while addressing **Symposium of International Automotive Technology 2019** in Pune.

**Key points**

i. The aim of Euro 6 is to reduce the level of exhaust emissions in petrol and diesel cars including Carbon Monoxide (CO), Nitrogen Oxide (NOx), Hydrocarbons (THC and NMHC) and Particulate matter (PM).

ii. Transport Ministry will provide a center of excellence for Methanol at ARAI (Automotive Research Association of India).

iii. Euro 6 is the sixth series of the European Union directive to reduce harmful pollutants from vehicle exhausts.

**Dell Launches India’s First PolicyHack for Teachers**

On January 18, 2019, Dell, as a part of its three-city **PolicyHack series**, hosted an interactive hackathon, where teachers focused on their learning journey in **New Delhi**.

**Key points:**

i. Dell has partnered with the **UNESCO, Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development (MGIIEP) and Ignus**, to create a platform where teachers, school representatives and a cross-sectional group experts related to education can interact with each other.

ii. PolicyHack in India was conducted at two levels: over 80 schools pan-India took part in it.on the evaluation parameters, top 20 shortlisted schools represented themselves infront of the jury which includes Mr. Sanjay Awasthi (Member Secretary – NCTE), Mr. Rajive Gulati (Head – Start-Up Incubator, HARTRON), Prof. Dr. Anantha Duraiappah (Director, UNESCO MGIIEP), Mr. Subir Shukla (Founder – Group Ignus), Mr. Ajay Kaul (Director – Dell EMC) and Ms. Ritu Gupta (Director – Dell).

iii. The initiative allows the teaching fraternity to come up with solutions for problems faced by teachers inside and outside the classroom.
**States’ fiscal deficit to breach target, may go up to 3.2% in FY20: India Ratings**

According to a report released by India Rating, India’s fiscal deficit may go up to **3.2 per cent** in Financial Year 2020 due to populist schemes like farm loan waivers and other financial support schemes which may be announced before the forthcoming general elections.

**Key Points**
- i. Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Kerala are most susceptible to see an increase in debt in Financial Year 2020.
- ii. States’ revenue account may clock an aggregate deficit of 0.5 per cent of GDP (Gross Domestic Product) in FY20 due to higher growth in revenue spending than revenue receipt.
- iii. Earlier a fiscal deficit of 2.8 per cent was forecasted by India Ratings in FY19 mid-year forecast.
- iv. The Announcement of Farm loan waivers by Madhya Pradesh, Chhatisgarh, Assam & Rajasthan and Financial assistance schemes for marginal farmer by Odisha, Jharkhand and Telangana contributed significantly to the increased fiscal deficit forecast.

**Bihar State GDP Growth outshines nation’s growth: CRISIL**

As per a report published by CRISIL (Credit Rating Information Services of India Limited), **Bihar** has been ranked the Top State in terms of Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) by clocking a growth rate of **11.3 per cent** in financial year 2017-2018.

**Key Points**
- i. Andhra Pradesh has been ranked at second spot with GSDP growth rate **11.2** per cent whereas **Gujarat** has been ranked at third spot with GSDP growth rate of **11.1 per cent**.
- ii. Bihar was ranked at 8th spot with GSDP growth rate of 9.9 per cent in 2017.
- iii. Madhya Pradesh which was the top state in 2017 with GSDP growth rate of 14 per cent has lost its top spot with a growth rate of 7.3 per cent in 2018.
- iv. 12 out of 17 non special states performed better in 2018 as compared to previous five years. Jharkhand, Kerala and Punjab performed poorly and ranked at the bottom.

**Indian economy may grow 7.4% in FY19, 7.6% in FY20: UN report**

On 23rd January 2019, the United Nations released the World Economic Situation and Prospects (WESP) report which projected India’s gross domestic product (GDP) to grow at **7.4 per cent** during 2018-19 and improve to **7.6 per cent** in the next fiscal.

**Key Points:**
- i. Besides the report projected that the gross domestic product (GDP) of India in **2020-21** will grow at **7.4 per cent**.
- ii. The robust private consumption, a more expansionary fiscal stance and benefits from previous reforms are the major pulling forces for India’s Economic growth.
- iii. But according to the report a crucial challenge which needs to be addressed to uplift medium-term growth is a more robust and sustained recovery of private investment.
- iv. The report also pointed out feeble job creation rates in the formal sector which has left many workers underemployed or in low-salary jobs, with the situation for youth particularly worrisome.
- v. Besides the UN report said the size and composition of public budgets have been important in promoting growth in India and any reduction of the fiscal deficit in the near term will be difficult because of prioritization of subsidies and welfare payments.
- vi. The **global economy** is expected to grow at a steady pace of around **3 per cent** in **2019** and **2020** but global trade tensions pose a threat to the economic outlook according to the report.
- vii. The rising financial, social and environmental challenges are the major concerns over the sustainability of global economic growth according to the World Economic Situation and Prospects 2019.

**BIS in Collaboration with IAF Releases New Standard for Bio-Jet Fuel**

On 24th January 2019, the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) in collaboration with Indian Air Force...
(IAF) released a new standard for Aviation Turbine Fuels (ATF) which can be used as bio-jet fuel on all military and civilian aircraft.

**Key Points:**

i. The new specifications will allow Indian standards of bio-jet fuel to align with current international standards.

ii. A committee comprising of domain experts was tasked to originate the required standards. It formulated **Indian Standard IS 17081:2019 Aviation Turbine Fuel (Kerosene Type, Jet A-1)** containing **Synthesised Hydrocarbons**, after a series of deliberations over the past nine months.

iii. The new standards were released by Air Marshal **RKS Shera AVSM VSM**, Air Officer-in-Charge Maintenance, Indian Air Force and **Mrs Surina Rajan**, Director General Bureau of Indian Standards, at Air HQs.

iv. With the new standard, the oil companies would be enabled to manufacture bio-jet fuel for the Indian aviation industry.

v. This standard could reduce the carbon emissions and help India become a green fuel production hub in line with the **Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA)** which is released by the **International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO)** and is to be adopted by 2027.

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**BSNL, French firm join hands to offer data services through SMS**

On January 24 2019, Indian state-owned telecommunications BSNL and French company **Be-Bound** had signed an agreement to become partners to provide data connectivity through SMS in areas where there is no Internet connectivity or signal breaks.

i. **BSNL Chairman and Managing Director Anupam Shrivastava** informed that Be-Bound has been given patent and already developed this technology which will be embedded in mobile apps. This app used to send command to Be-Bound server if it does not get data connectivity for SMS-based connectivity.

ii. Be-Bound server will facilitate SMS connectivity after getting command from the app. The app will also send SMS from user's account because for connectivity. The limit of 100 SMS per day per subscriber which is sufficient for this service.

**About Be-Bound, Inc.**

♦ **Be-Bound optimizes** existing networks to bring constant connectivity to all Android smartphones and IoT devices, enabling coverage for 95% of the world’s population without the need for any additional infrastructure investment. This technology is made for corporations, governments, mobile network operators, and developers to connect the unconnected, immediately.

♦ **Founder : Yazid Chir**

♦ **Founded : 2011**

♦ **Parent organization : Altheia Group**

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**India to grow at 7-7.5% over next few years: PM’s Economic Advisory Council**

On 25th January 2019, **Economic Advisory Council of Prime Minister (EAC-PM)** headed by **NITI Aayog Member Bibek Debroy** said in a report that India will continue to grow in the **7 to 7.5 percent range** in the next few years despite global and structural challenges.

i. The Growth rate of India may further improve by at least 1 per cent by the reforms designed to address the structural problems of the economy.

ii. As per the Economic Advisory Council, the macro-economic fundamentals of the economy are sound due to which India will remain one of the fastest growing economy despite global slowdown.

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**India 6th GDPR readiness index : CISCO**

On 25th January 2019, the report released by **CISCO** on **2019 Data Privacy Benchmark Study** ranked India in 6th position in **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) readiness index.**

**Key Points**

i. As per the report 65% of Indian organization are better prepared for GDPR making India the 6th best prepared nation to deal with the nee data privacy regulation which all organizations operating within
the European Union and European Economic Area are mandated to comply with.

ii. As per the report 59% of organizations across the world reported meeting all requirements or most of the requirements, 29% expect to do so within a year while 9% will take more than a year.

iii. It also stated that organizations that invested to meet GDPR norms experienced shorter delays in selling to existing customers.

**GST on Haj Reduced from 18% to 5%**

On January 29, 2019, Union Minister for Minority Affairs Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi announced that GST on Haj has been reduced from **18% to 5%** and this will reduce the airfare spend on Haj pilgrims’ by **Rs.113 crore in 2019**.

This is also first time since the independence 2,340 women from India will go on 2019 Haj without Mehram.

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

On 28th January 2019, Reserve Bank of India released a data on “Census on Foreign Liabilities and Assets of Indian Direct Investment Companies, 2017-18” which shows that the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) has been increased by 18 per cent to Rs. 28.25 lakh crore.

**Key Points**

i. There is an increment of Rs 4,33,300 crore during 2017-18 which includes revaluation of past investments making the total FDI to Rs.28.25 lakh crore.

ii. **Overseas Direct Investment (ODI)** by Indian companies has also increased by 5% and reached **Rs. 5.28 crore**.

iii. **Mauritius** is the largest source of FDI in India (19.7%) followed by United States of America, United Kingdom, Singapore and Japan.

iv. **Singapore** was the top destination followed by Netherlands, Mauritius and United states of America in case of Overseas investment by Indian companies.

**Anti-dumping duty imposed on Chinese chemical import**

On January 27, 2019, The Government imposed an **anti-dumping duty** on a chemical imports from China, which is used in photography and manufacturing of dyes, for five years to protect domestic producers of the chemical intermediate from cheap shipments.

i. The anti-dumping duty on **Meta Phenylenediamine (MPDA)** imported from China will be in the range USD 573.92-USD 1,015.44 a tonne.

ii. The duty is entrusted to ensure fair trading practices and to create field for domestic producers to interact with foreign producers and exporters.

iii. This is **second time** anti-dumping duty has been imposed on the import of the chemical from China as the first one is to expire in **March 2019**.

**AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS**

**Three Indian-origin women scientists awarded by Australian government under Superstar of STEM initiative**

On December 31, 2018, three Indian-origin women scientists were among the **60 Superstars of STEM** (Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics) list awarded by Australian government.

i. The 3 scientists are **Onisha Patel, Devika Kamath and Asha Rao**.

ii. Under the initiative, due to gender gap in STEM courses, the government there is planning to train these scientists for one year to become influencers for female students.

iii. 32-year-old, Devika Kamath is an astrophysicist, Onisha Patel is doing her research on generate a cure for many cancers including breasts.

iv. Whereas, Asha Rao is a cyber mathematics expert and specialises in detection of money laundering.
An Overview of ICC Awards 2018

On 31st December 2018, India Women Cricket team Vice-captain and Left-handed opener, Smriti Mandhana was adjudged ‘Rachael Heyhoe Flint Award for the Women’s Cricketer of the Year’ as well as the ‘Women’s ODI Player of the Year’ by the International Cricket Council (ICC).

**Key Points:**

i. The 22 year old Mandhana, scored 669 runs in 12 ODIs along with 622 runs in 25 T20 Internationals in 2018 and became the second Indian woman to win an ICC award after fast bowler Jhulan Goswami, who was named the ICC Women’s Player of the Year in 2007.

ii. Besides this Harmanpreet Kaur of India who spearheaded her side to the semi-finals of the ICC Women’s World T20 2018 held in the Caribbean in November 2018, has been named the captain of ICC Women’s T20I Team of the Year.

iii. The other awardees in different categories of the ICC Women Cricket 2018 include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Player (team)</th>
<th>Category of award</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alyssa Healy (Australia)</td>
<td>ICC Women’s T20I Player of the Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophie Ecclestone (England)</td>
<td>ICC Women’s Emerging Player of the Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suzie Bates (New Zealand)</td>
<td>Captain ICC Women’s ODI Team of the Year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

iv. The squad for ICC Women’s ODI Team of the Year: Smriti Mandhana (India), Tammy Beaumont (England), Suzie Bates (New Zealand) (captain), Dane van Niekerk (South Africa), Sophie Devine (New Zealand), Alyssa Healy (Australia) (wicketkeeper), Marizanne Kapp (South Africa), Deandra Dottin (Windies), Sana Mir (Pakistan), Sophie Ecclestone (England), Poonam Yadav (India).

v. The squad for ICC Women’s T20I Team of the Year: Smriti Mandhana (India), Alyssa Healy (Australia) (wicketkeeper), Suzie Bates (New Zealand), Harmanpreet Kaur (India) (captain), Natalie Sciver (England), Ellyse Perry (Australia), Ashleigh Gardner (Australia), Leigh Kasparek (New Zealand), Megan Schutt (Australia), Rumana Ahmed (Bangladesh), Poonam Yadav (India).

vi. Rumana Ahmed is the first Bangladesh player to have been selected in the ICC T20I Team.

vii. Anjum Chopra, Snehal Pradhan were the Indians in the voting academy comprising of former players, members of the media and broadcasters that selected the ICC women team 2018 and awardees for the ICC Women Cricket 2018.

National Nritya Shiromani Award 2019 for Anindita

US-based Kathak dancer Anindita Neogy Anaam will be honoured with the National Nritya Shiromani award for promoting the dance form across the world. This award of national repute has been given in the past to the outstanding Indian classical dance performers and musicians of India and abroad.

**Key Points:**

i. The award would be conferred on her in Cuttack on the opening day of the 10th Cuttack Mahotsav: International Dance and Music festival in Cuttack on 2nd January, 2019.

ii. Anindita Anaam is a recipient of prestigious national awards like Jayadev Rashtriya Puraskar and Bidagdha Nartaki Samman for her outstanding achievement in the preservation and promotion of Indian art in India and abroad.

**About National Nritya Shiromani Award**

♦ Organized By: Utkal Yuva Sanskrutik Sangathan  
♦ Venue: Cuttack, Odisha

Santosh Gangwar, MoSL&E, rewarded Rs. One Lakh to Mr. Siddrameshwar Siddharam Humanabade, Food Delivery Boy

On January 1, 2019, Minister of State for Labour and Employment, Shri Santosh Kumar Gangwar, awarded Mr. Siddrameshwar Siddharam Humanabade, Food Delivery Boy, with Rs. Rs. 1,00,000/- (Rupees One Lakh).
i. He was awarded for his heroic effort to save 10 people from the fire at the ESIC hospital at Andheri, Mumbai on 17.12.2018.

**Dr. Rajan Deshpande received the 12th Shankar Vaidya Shree Award instituted by Dr. P.S. Shankar Pratishtan**

On January 1, 2019, a Dharwad-based paediatrician, Dr. Rajan Deshpande, received the Shankar Vaidya Shree Award at the 19th anniversary of the Dr. P.S. Shankar Pratishtan in Kalaburagi, Karnataka.

i. He was honoured for his exemplary work in children’s healthcare for 40 years.

ii. He is the 12th recipient of this award after its inception in 2000.

iii. In this award, he got a cash prize of Rs. 10,000, a medal and a citation.

**French World Cup champions awarded Legion of Honour**

On 1st January 2019, the players in France’s football team which last year defeated Croatia to win the World Cup were awarded the Legion of Honour, France’s highest award for “exceptional service” to the nation, in the New Year’s honours list.

**Key Points:**

i. The football World Cup 2018 at Russia was France’s second World Cup title, after the 1998 World Cup.

ii. Each of the 23 players of French football team, including star strikers Kylian Mbappe and Antoine Griezmann, received France’s top medal for their part in beating Croatia in the World Cup final in Moscow.

iii. A total of 402 people, half men and half women were on this year's winners list.

**IIT professor awarded for contribution towards development of geo-spatial science**

On 1st January 2019, IIT Roorkee professor Jayanta Kumar Ghosh was felicitated with the National Geospatial Award for Excellence -2017 (Life Time Achievement Award) by the Indian Society for Remote Sensing for his contribution towards the development of geospatial science and applications.

**Key Points:**

i. The award which carries a citation, a medal and Rs.1,00,000 was conferred to J. K. Ghosh, a professor at the civil engineering department of the IIT Roorkee on 5th December 2018 at SAC (Space Application Centre) Ahmedabad.

ii. The Indian Society for Remote Sensing is an organisation known in the area of space science, remote sensing and geo-spatial technology.

**Indian-origin Singapore student wins gold medals at World Memory Championships**

On 2nd January 2019, a 12-year-old Indian-origin student Dhruv Manoj from Singapore has bagged two gold medals at the World Memory Championships held in Hong Kong from 20th December to 22nd December 2018.

i. Dhruv Manoj won in the “names and faces” and “random words” disciplines, beating 56 other contestants in the “kids category”.

ii. Dhruv has mastered in the Roman memory technique of creating “memory palaces”, which works by associating the ideas or objects to be memorized with scenes imagined at familiar locations, such as one’s house.

**India’s Arunima Sinha becomes first female amputee to climb the highest peak of Antarctica – Mt Vinson**

30 years old former National level Volleyball player turned mountaineer, Arunima Sinha became the world’s first female amputee to climb Mount Vinson, the highest peak of Antarctica.

**Key Points**

i. The Padma Shree Awardee, Arunima Sinha became the first woman amputee to climb Mount Everest in 2013.

ii. She is from Uttar Pradesh and had lost one of her legs in a horrific incident in which she was thrown
off the Padmawati Express train in 2011.

iii. Arunima Sinha’s aim is to summit seven peaks across seven continents. She had already scaled five peaks which are Mt Everest, Mt Kilimanjaro, Mt Ebrus, Mt Kosciuszko and Mt Aconcagua.

**Prof. Manoj Das, an eminent English and Odia Litterateur, received the Kabi Samrat Upendra Bhanja National Award for Lifetime Achievement in Literature**

On 3rd January 2019, Manoj Das, an eminent English and Odia Litterateur received the “Kabi Samrat Upendra Bhanja National Award for Lifetime Achievement” in literature during 53rd Foundation day ceremony organized by the Berhampur University, Odisha.

**Key Points**

i. Noted Folk dance Guru Nabaghana Parida was awarded with Dakshin Odisha Loksanakruti Samman during the ceremony.

ii. Manoj Sinha has been already honoured with Sahitya Akademi Award, Orissa Sahitya Akademi award, Sarala Award, Sahitya Bharati Award and Padma Shri.

**15-year old Wahengbam Lamnganba Singh from Manipur, selected by Indian Council for Child Welfare (ICCW) for receiving National Bravery Award**

On January 3, 2019, 15-year-old class IXth student, Wahengbam Lamnganba Singh, of Kumbi area in Manipur, has been selected by the Indian Council for Child Welfare (ICCW) for receiving National Bravery Award.

He will be honoured because he had saved his two and half year's old cousin from drowning in a pond, on May 16, 2018.

i. He would receive the award from Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Delhi.

ii. The National Bravery Awards are given under the aegis of the Indian Council for Child Welfare (ICCW) on every Republic Day.

iii. These awards are broadly classified into five categories, including the Bharat Award, Sanjay Chopra Award, Geeta Chopra Award, Bapu Gaidhani Award and the General National Bravery Awards.

**Andhra Pradesh Minister Devineni Umamaheswar Rao receives award for Polavaram Project**

On 4th January 2019, the Water Resources Minister of Andhra Pradesh (AP), Devineni Umamaheswar Rao received the 'Central Board of Irrigation and Power Award-2019' for better planning and construction of Polavaram Irrigation Project on the Godavari River.

**Key Points:**

i. AP Water Resources Minister, Rao received the award in the category of “Best Implementation of Water Resources Project”.

ii. The Minister of State (IC) Power and New and Renewable Energy Raj Kumar Singh honoured Devineni Umamaheswar Rao at Scope convention Centre Lodhi Road, New Delhi.

iii. The multi-purpose Polavaram irrigation project which has been accorded the status of a national project is under the final phase of construction in West Godavari district and East Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh and its reservoir spreads to parts of Chhattisgarh and Odisha.

iv. So far, 64 per cent of the project work is completed and the target is to complete the project by December 2019.

v. About Rs 15,380.97 crore has been spent on the project. Out of which, an amount of Rs 6,727.26 crore has been reimbursed by the central government and the remaining Rs Rs 3,517.84 crore is still awaited.

**Home Minister Rajnath Singh presented Ramnath Goenka Excellence in Journalism Awards**

On 4th January 2019, Home Minister Shri Rajnath Singh presented the prestigious 13th Ramnath Goenka Excellence in Journalism awards to 29 winners in 18 categories across Print, Broad cast and purely digital to recognize the outstanding contributions of journalists in 2017 in New Delhi.

**Key Points**

i. The Award aims to celebrate the excellence in journalism and recognize the courage and commitment of the journalists.
ii. The award was instituted by The Indian Express Group in 2005 as part of centenary year celebration of its founder, Ramnath Goenka.


**Ministry Of Skill Development And Entrepreneurship Felicitates Entrepreneurs And Individuals At National Entrepreneurship Awards 2018 in Delhi**

On January 4, 2019, the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) hosted the 3rd edition of the National Entrepreneurship Awards (NEA) at the Dr. Ambedkar International Centre, Janpath, New Delhi.

A total of 33 winners – 30 Young Entrepreneurs and 3 Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Builders were awarded.

**Objective:**
To recognize and honor outstanding young first-generation entrepreneurs and contributors of entrepreneurship ecosystem.

**Key Points:**

i. The ceremony was chaired by:

**Shri Dharmendra Pradhan,** Minister of Petroleum & Natural Gas and Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, and

**Shri Anant Kumar Hegde,** Minister of State for Skill Development & Entrepreneurship.

ii. **Shri Suresh Prabhu,** Minister of Commerce & Industry and Civil Aviation was the Chief Guest at the award ceremony.

iii. MSDE partnered with premier institutes and organizations such as XLRI, Jamshedpur; IIT Bombay, Mumbai; IIT Delhi; IIT Guwahati, Assam; IIT Kanpur; and IIT Madras, Chennai for this ceremony.

**About the Award:**

i. It was established by **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE)** in 2016.

ii. A total of 43 awards were presented out of which:

- 39 awards were for Young Entrepreneurs in different sectors and
- 4 awards were for Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Builders.

iii. The awards are classified into three investment categories –

- below Rs 1 Lakh,
- between Rs 1 Lakh to 10 Lakhs and
- between 10 Lakhs to Rs 1 Crore;

iv. The winners will receive a trophy, certificate and cash prizes ranging from Rs. 5 to 10 lakhs.

v. The nominees were small to big first-generation entrepreneurs below the age of 40 years.

**Veteran journalist Dinu Randive conferred with lifetime achievement award: Mantralaya and Vidhimandal Vartahar Sangh**

On January 6, 2019, Veteran journalist **Dinu Randive** was conferred with the lifetime achievement award for his lifelong contributions in journalism, who started his journalistic career in 1956.

i. He also participated in the freedom struggle, the Sanyukta Maharashtra movement and the Goa liberation movement.

ii. The award was given by the **Mantralaya and Vidhimandal Vartahar Sangh** which is an association of journalists covering Maharashtra legislature and secretariat.

iii. Award winners in other categories included Vishwas Waghmode, Mahesh Tiwari and Prajakta Pol.

**National Awards conferred to 97 Anganwadi Workers under ICDS Scheme by Smt. Maneka Sanjay Gandhi in New Delhi**

On January 7, 2019, Ministry of Women & Child Development, Union Minister Smt. **Maneka Sanjay Gandhi** conferred National Awards to 97 Anganwadi Workers (AWWs) for Exceptional Achievements for the year 2017-18, under **Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS)** in New
About the selection:

i. National Level awards to AWWs are given to the awardees nominated by States/UTs out of the State/UT Level awardees.

ii. The nominations received from the States/UTs are screened and recommended by a Screening Committee headed by Rakesh Srivastava, Secretary, MWCD.

iii. The selection of awardees is made by the Selection Committee headed by Hon’ble Minister for Women & Child Development.

About the Award:

i. The awards of National Level will comprise of cash prize Rs. 50,000, which has been increased from Rs. 25,000, and a citation.

ii. The number of awards has also been doubled.

iii. State Level award comprises of a cash prize of Rs. 10,000 and a citation.

Background:
The scheme of awarding AWWs was formulated by the government in the year 2000-2001.

Overview Of 76th Golden Globe Awards Held In California, United States

- On 6th January 2019, 76th Golden Globe Awards to honour the best in films and television of calendar year 2018 was held at Beverly Hills, California in USA.

- Sandra Oh won the Golden Globe award for the Best Actress in a TV Drama for her role in Killing Eve and became the first Asian to win multiple Golden Globe Awards………..Click here to Read more

The Complete list of Winners – Films

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Winner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Best Motion Picture – Drama</td>
<td>Bohemian Rhapsody</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Motion Picture – Musical or Comedy</td>
<td>Green Book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Actor – Drama</td>
<td>Rami Malek for “Bohemian Rhapsody”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Actress – Drama</td>
<td>Glenn Close for “The Wife”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Actor – Musical or Comedy</td>
<td>Christian Bale for “Vice”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Actress – Musical or Comedy</td>
<td>Olivia Colman for “The Favourite”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Supporting Actor</td>
<td>Mahershala Ali for “Green Book”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Supporting Actress</td>
<td>Regina King for “If Beale Street Could Talk”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Director</td>
<td>Alfonso Cuaran for “Roma”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Screenplay</td>
<td>Brian Hayes Currie, Peter Farrelly and Nick Vallelonga for “Green Book”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Original Score</td>
<td>Justin Hurwitz for “First Man”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Original Song</td>
<td>Shallow (A star is Born)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Animated Feature Film</td>
<td>Spider-Man: Into the Spider –Verse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Foreign Language Film</td>
<td>Roma (Mexico)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Six professors awarded Infosys Prize 2018 for science and research

On 5th January 2019, the global software major’s Infosys Science Foundation awarded its 10th Infosys Prize 2018 to six eminent professors for winning across different categories of science and research at an awards ceremony in Bengaluru.

Key Points:

i. The category in which the prize were awarded along with the winners’ are-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Winner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engineering and Computer Science</td>
<td>Navakanta Bhat, Professor, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore and Chairperson, Centre for Nano Science and Engineering, IISc,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td>Kavita Singh, Professor and Dean, School of Arts &amp; Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Life Sciences | Roop Mallik, Professor, Department of Biological Sciences, Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Mumbai.
---|---
Mathematical Sciences | Nalini Anantharaman, Professor and Chair of Mathematics, Institute for Advanced Study, University of Strasbourg, France.
---|---
Physical Sciences | S.K. Satheesh, Professor, Centre for Atmospheric & Oceanic Sciences, Indian Institute of Science, and Director, Divecha Centre for Climate Change.
---|---
Social Sciences | Sendhil Mullainathan, University Professor, Professor of Computation and Behavioral Science, and George C. Tiao Faculty Fellow, The University of Chicago Booth School of Business.

ii. The winners were felicitated by the Chief Guest, Prof. Manjul Bhargava, Fields Medalist and R. Brandon Fradd, Professor of Mathematics at Princeton University.

iii. The Infosys annual award includes a pure gold medal, a citation and a tax-free prize purse worth $100,000 (or its equivalent in Indian rupees).

iv. The winners were selected by a six-member jury of renowned scientists and professors, namely Kaushik Basu, Pradeep Khosla, Shrinivas Kulkarni, Amartya Sen, Mriganka Sur, and Srinivasa Varadhan from 244 nominations received in six categories.

M Venkaiah Naidu conferred textiles awards in New Delhi and presented commemorative stamps on GI registered handicrafts.

On 6th January 2019, the Vice President of India, Shri M Venkaiah Naidu conferred awards on 17 persons for their outstanding contribution in different fields of textiles sector during the day long 'National Conclave on Accomplishments and Way Forward for Textiles Sector' in New Delhi.

Key Points:

i. The national conclave which was organised to address the issues faced by textile sector was inaugurated by the Union Textiles Minister, Smriti Irani and was also addressed by the Minister of State, Ajay Tamta and Textiles Secretary, Raghvendra Singh.

ii. During the ceremony Vice President, Shri Naidu was presented commemorative stamps on GI registered handicrafts.

iii. The inaugural session was followed by panel discussions on technical textiles, ease of doing textiles business, handicrafts, access to global markets and supply chains and fashionizing weaves.

iv. The conclave was a part of a two-day event, on 5th – 6th January 2019 in New Delhi, to highlight the achievements of the textiles sector. The event was inaugurated with a textiles fashion show "Artisan Speak" at Red Fort.

v. On 5th January 2019, after the textile show at Red Fort, the event witnessed the presentation of eight special recognition awards for the excellent work in textiles sector and felicitation of 16 artisans who have enriched the handloom sector with their creative work in weaving and printing.

Bimal Roy Memorial and Film Society to honour Farooq Sheikh, Asha Parekh

On January 6, 2019, the Bimal Roy Memorial and Film Society announced that it would honour veteran actors Asha Parekh and Farooque Shaikh at the event on January 8, 2019, commemorating 52nd death anniversary of the renowned filmmaker.

i. Other awards will also be presented to directors Ananth Mahadevan and Amit Rai along with their actors Paresh Rawal and Jackie Shroff for their contribution.

ii. The organisation was instituted 22 years ago in memory of the late filmmaker. Its aim is to reward unsung heroes of the film industry.

iii. The memorial society is preserving and restoring Roy's film library along with other personal memorabilia such as songbooks, posters, stills, costumes, screenplays with the help of experts.

Andhra Pradesh’s Polavaram project enters Guinness Book of World Record for concrete pouring

On 7th Januray 2019, the Polavaram project of Andra pradesh got its place in the Guinness book of...
This project entered the Guinness by pouring 32,315.5 cubic meters of concrete non-stop in 24 hours. This project surpassed the leading record of 21,580 cubic metres which was achieved by Abdul Wahed Bin Shabib project.

**Key Points:**
- The state government invested Rs 15,380.97 crore on the project; the central government is to release Rs 3,517.84 crore.
- Polavaram irrigation project, is a multipurpose terminal reservoir will irrigate 38.78 Lac acres of land.
- It will also set up of 960 mw hydro power plant which will provide drinking water to 540 villages with a population of 28.5 Lac.

**2018 Confederration of African Football Player of the Year award given to Liverpool’s Mohamed Salah**

On January 8, 2019, Liverpool’s Mohamed Salah was conferred with the 2018 Confederation of African Football Player of the Year award, for the second time, in Senegal.
- He also won the BBC African Footballer of the Year award for the second time in December 2018.
- He beat Liverpool team-mate Sadio Mane of Senegal and Arsenal and Gabon striker Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang to the title.
- Among other awardees, Houston Dash and South Africa forward Thembi Kgatlana was named Women’s Player of the Year.

**Other News:**

Confederation of African Football (CAF) also announced that Egypt will host the 2019 Africa Cup of Nations.

**Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) pavilion received ‘Exhibitor of the Year Award’ at 106th Indian Science Congress in Punjab**

On January 7, 2019, the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) pavilion received ‘Exhibitor of the Year Award’ at 106th Indian Science Congress held at Lovely Professional University (LPU), Phagwara, Punjab.
- DRDO’s outdoor exhibits included surface-to-air missile system – Akash, model of BrahMos missile, remotely operated vehicle – Daksh, heavy weight torpedo – Varunastra, Laser Ordnance Disposal System (LORDS) and Vehicle Mounted Dazzler etc.
- DRDO pavilion also had a dedicated stall on Technology Development Fund (TDF) Scheme for promoting public/private industries especially MSMEs.
- It also provided information on ‘Kalam’s vision: Dare to Dream’ the pan India online contest for engaging young minds in emerging technologies namely Artificial intelligence, Cyber security, Robotics, Autonomous Systems, etc.

**WEF recognises Tata Steel’s Netherlands plant as ‘Manufacturing Lighthouse’ of the 4th Industrial Revolution**

On January 10, 2019, the World Economic Forum announced that the Tata Steel plant at Ijmuiden in the Netherlands has been recognized as ‘Manufacturing Lighthouses’ – a distinction awarded to manufacturing facilities which are seen as leaders in technologies of the ‘Fourth Industrial Revolution’.
- This was announced after assessing more than 1,000 factories in 2018.
- Other than the TATA Steel Plant, 6 more units have been awarded with the honour.
- This made Tata Steel part of a network of just 16 key factories to create the world’s leading learning platforms for production.
- Reason for the honour is because Tata Steel’s site at Ijmuiden has been pioneering use of advanced analytics to
  - optimise the way raw materials are used,
  - increase the yield at every step of the steelmaking process and
Current Affairs Study PDF 2019

- further improve logistics between the different processes and the quality of the product for customers.

v. Additionally, the newly established Advanced Analytics Academy enables its employees to find solutions for waste reduction, quality improvement and overall reliability of production processes.

**About the ‘Lighthouses’:**

♦ In 2017 the World Economic Forum set up a network of leading intelligent production companies ('Lighthouses') under its ‘Shaping the Future of Production’ initiative to allow the exchange of knowledge and promote collaborations in the area of the ‘Fourth Industrial Revolution’ in production.

♦ ‘Lighthouse’ factories showcase how best to develop a strategy for the ‘Fourth Industrial Revolution’.

**Adi Godrej conferred ICSI lifetime award at the golden jubilee celebrations of ICSI in Mumbai**

On January 10, 2019, Industrialist and Godrej Group Chairman Adi Godrej was conferred the ICSI’s Lifetime Achievement Award for ‘Translating Excellence in Corporate Governance into Reality’ in Mumbai.

i. The award instituted by The Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI), was given at its golden jubilee celebrations.

ii. Other awards given by the institute are as follows:

**18th ICSI National Awards for Excellence in Corporate Governance** were bagged jointly by
- Cipla Ltd
- Dabur India Ltd
- ACC Ltd,
- Hindustan Unilever Ltd,
- Indian Oil Corp,
- Tata Metaliks Ltd and
- Indian Hotels Co Ltd.

The **3rd CSR Excellence Awards** went to
- GMR Hyderabad International Airport Ltd in Emerging category,
- Tata Power Co Ltd in Medium category and
- Ambuja Cements Ltd in Large category.

**Virat Kohli and Ravi Shastri received honorary membership of Sydney Cricket Ground**

On January 11, 2019, Virat Kohli and coach Ravi Shastri received honorary membership of the Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG) for their contribution to the sport of cricket.

i. Apart from them, the only other international cricketers to be granted the honorary membership of the SCG are iconic Sachin Tendulkar and Brain Lara of the West Indies.

**President of India Confers The Honorary Rank of General of The Indian Army on General Purna Chandra Thapa**

On January 12, 2019, The President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, awarded the Honorary Rank of General of the Indian Army on Sukirtimaya Rashtradeep General Purna Chandra Thapa, Chief of the Army Staff, Nepal Army, for his immense military skills and immeasurable contribution to bring up Nepal’s long and friendly relationship with India, at a special Ceremony held at Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi.

i. Thapa assumed the command of the Nepal Army in September 2018. Nepal army chief is to arrive India on a four day visit. It will be his first official bilateral visit after taking over the command of the Nepal Army.

**Congo: Opposition leader Felix Tshisekedi wins presidential election**

ii. On 10th January 2019, Democratic Republic of Congo’s opposition leader Felix Tshisekedi won the long delayed Presidential Election by receiving more than 7 million or 38% votes.
Key points
i. Following the election results, Current President Joseph Kabila is stepping down after 18 years in office.
ii. Mr Tshisekedi will be the first opposition challenger to win since the DR Congo gained independence in 1960
iii. Martin Fayulu stands second and Emmanuel Shadary stands third in the Presidential elections.

Namita Gokhale wins Sushila Devi Literature Award
Gokhale won the Sushila Devi Literature Award for her novel “Things to Leave Behind”. She was awarded in the ‘Best Book of Fiction Written by a Woman Author’ category at the inaugural edition of Literature and Art Festival Bhopal (BLF).

Points to be Noted:
i. The literature festival was addressed by the Union Minister of State for Culture, and Tourism, KJ Alphons and Madhya Pradesh Culture Minister Vijaylaxmi Sadho on January 12, at Bharat Bhawan the multi-cultural hub in Bhopal.

The shortlist books:
- Brothers (Manju Kapur)
- The Glass Bead Curtain (Lakshmi Kannan)
- The Untitled (Gayathri Prabhu)
- Son of the Thundercloud (Easterine Kire)
- Things to Leave Behind (Namita Gokhale-Winner)

Lifetime Achievement Award given to Filmmaker Buddhadeb Dasgupta by WBFJA in the 3rd Cinemar Samabartan ceremony held in Kolkata
On January 13, 2019, national award-winning filmmaker Buddhadeb Dasgupta was conferred with the Lifetime Achievement Award, in the name of late Satyajit Ray, by the West Bengal Film Journalists Association (WBFJA) in Kolkata.

i. It was given in the third edition of the ‘Cinemar Samabartan’ ceremony.
ii. As a director, he has won the National Film Award for Best Direction twice, for Uttara (2000) and Swapner Din (2005).
iii. He is also a poet and an economics professor.

About the 3rd Cinemar Samabartan:
♦ The ceremony consisted of seventeen award categories in the popular segment, eight award categories in the Technical Award segment, and a Lifetime Achievement Award.

First-ever Philip Kotler Presidential award entitled to PM Narendra Modi
On January 14, 2019, The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, received the first-ever Philip Kotler Presidential award, in New Delhi.

About Philip Kotler Presidential award:
The Award focuses on the triple P’s of the Nation: People, Profit and Planet. It will be offered annually to the leader of a Nation. This award is given in remembrance of works and contribution done by Prof. Philip Kotler, who is a well-known in the field of Marketing.

Reasons that for Narendra Modi is selected for this award:
i. During his regime, India is identified as the Centre for Innovation and Value Added Manufacturing (Make in India), and a global hub for professional services such as Information Technology, Accounting and Finance.
ii. "Adding to it initiatives such as Make in India, Startup India, Digital India, and Swachh Bharat, “which positioned India as a iconic country.”His visionary leadership resulted in the Digital Revolution (Digital India), Unique Identification Number, Aadhaar, for social benefits and financial inclusion. These initiative made India to be noticed as one of the best infrastructural and technically developed country.
Detained Chinese lawyer Yu Wensheng wins Franco-German human rights award
On 14th January 2019, detained Chinese lawyer, Mr Yu Wensheng who is best known for suing the Beijing government over the city's once chronic pollution, granted a human rights award by the French and German ambassadors to China at an event organised by the German embassy in Beijing.

**Key Points:**
i. Yu Wensheng’s wife, Madam Xu Yan, received the Franco-German Prize for Human Rights and the Rule of Law for 2018, on his behalf.
ii. The awards which consisted of 15 winners were announced in November last year.
iii. Mr Yu was detained in January last year and charged with “inciting subversion of state power” after he had circulated an open letter calling for five reforms to China’s Constitution, including the institution of multi-candidate presidential elections.
iv. Since President Xi Jinping took power in 2012, Beijing has stepped up its crackdown on civil society by tightening restrictions on freedom of speech and detaining hundreds of activists and lawyers.

Mukesh Ambani in Top Global Thinkers List of Foreign Policy
Chairman and Managing Director of Reliance Industries, Mukesh Ambani who is also the Richest Indian, has been featured in the Top “Global Thinkers 2019” ranking released by the prestigious Foreign Policy publishing.

**Key Points**
i. Alibaba’s founder Jack Ma, Amazon’s CEO Jeff Bezos and IMF Head Christine Lagarde also featured in the list of few names released by Foreign Policy Publishing.
ii. The Full list of ‘Global Thinkers 2019’ will be published on 22nd January 2019 at the 10th Anniversary of Global Thinkers listing.
iii. Mukesh Ambani has replaced Alibaba’s founder Jack Ma to become the Asia’s Richest person with a fortune of 44.3 billion dollar.

Hindu Literary Prize 2018 Winner list announced at The Hindu Lit for Life 2019
On January 15th 2019, during the Hindu Lit for Life event 2019 the Hindu Literary Prize 2018 was announced to honour writers who have spent their lifetime mining the human spirit through their words and ideas.

**Winners under different categories are**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Winner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fiction Category</td>
<td>Neelum Saran Gour author of Requiem in Raga Janki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-fiction category</td>
<td>Manoranjan Byapari author of Interrogating my Chandal Life: An Autobiography of a Dalit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Hindu Young World-Good Books Award for best book Fiction</td>
<td>Venita Coelho for Boy No: 32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Hindu Young World-class Good Books Award for best book non-fiction</td>
<td>A Brush with Indian Art of Mamta Nainy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Hindu Young World-Good Books Award for Best picture book Story:Vinayak Varma’s Angry Akku, Best picture book illustration:Rajiv Eipe’s Ammachi’s Amazing Machines</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
India’s Satyarup Siddhanta became World’s Youngest Mountaineer to climb 7 Peaks, 7 Volcano Summits
On January 16, 2019, software engineer and mountaineer Satyarup Siddhanta, hailing from Haridevpur in South Kolkata, became the first Indian and youngest man to climb the seven highest peaks and volcanic summits across all continents.

i. This feat was attained after he conquered Antarctica’s highest point, Mount Sidley.
ii. He achieved the feat at the age of 35 years and 262 days.
iii. In 2018, Satyarup had scaled the highest volcanic peak in North America, Pico de Orizaba.
iv. He beat the record of Australia’s Daniel Bull who had done it at the age of 36 years 157 days

WHO Goodwill ambassador Yohei Sasakawa received Gandhi Peace Prize for 2018
On January 17, 2019, Yohei Sasakawa was named to receive Gandhi Peace Prize for 2018, who is the Goodwill Ambassador of the World Health Organization for Leprosy Elimination. The award will be given to Yohei Sasakawa in recognition of his work towards the eradication of the disease in India and across the world.

Key points to be Noted:

i. The award was instituted by the Government of India in 1995 during the commemoration of 125th Birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. The title winners would receive a cash prize of Rs.1 crore. The Indian government had instituted the award in 1995 to honour individuals and institutions for their contribution towards social, economic and political transformation through non-violence and other Gandhian methods.
ii. The committee under the Chair of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi comprising the Chief Justice of India, Justice Ranjan Gogoi (45th chief justice), Speaker of Lok Sabha Smt. Sumitra Mahajan, Leader of the single largest Opposition Party in Lok Sabha Shri. Mallikarjun Kharge and Member of Parliament, Shri L.K. Advani decided to select this organisation and persons in recognition to their outstanding contributions in the specific fields.
iii. The first recipient of the award was Julius K. Nyerere, former President of Tanzania in 1995.
iv. The list of winners have been announced after a gap of four years. Following are the chosen as the winners for the following years:

- **Vivekananda Kendra, Kanyakumari** bagged the award for the 2015. It is entitled as the winner for its contribution in rural development, education, and development of natural resource.
- For 2016, the **Akshaya Patra Foundation** was honoured for its work towards providing midday meals to children across India, and **Sulabh International** for its contribution towards the improvement of sanitation facilities in India and the emancipation of manual scavengers.
- **Ekta Abhiyan** Trust received the award for year 2017 for its work in the field of education for rural and tribal children, rural empowerment and gender and social equality.

India born, Dr. Rattan Lal honoured with 2019 Japan Prize for his contributions in “Biological Production, Ecology”
On January 16, 2019, the Japan Prize Foundation announced India born professor Dr. Rattan Lal as the recipient of the 2019 Japan Prize in the field of “Biological Production, Ecology”.

i. Dr. Yoshio Okamoto was announced to be the recipient of the 2019 Japan Prize on of “Materials and Production” field.
ii. Each laureate will receive a certificate of recognition and a commemorative gold medal.
iii. A cash award of 50 million Japanese yen (approximately $450,000 USD) will also be given to each prize field.

About the Award:

♦ The Japan Prize is highly competitive: the nomination process ends in February, and, every year from March to November, the Foundation considers the nominations of 15,000 prominent scientists and researchers from around the world.
The 2020 Japan Prize will focus on fields of the fields of “Electronics, Information and Communication” and “Life Science”.

Vinesh Phogat became first Indian athlete to be nominated in Laureus World Comeback of Year Award
On January 18, 2019, Indian female wrestler Vinesh Phogat, who hails from Haryana, became the first Indian athlete to receive a nomination in the prestigious Laureus World Comeback of the Year Award.

i. She was nominated due to her comeback after battling a long injury lay-off to win a gold medal at the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games and Jakarta Asian Games.

ii. Besides her, US Tour Championship winner Tiger Woods, Canadian snowboarder Mark McMorris, American alpine ski racer Lindsey Vonn, Japanese figure skater Yuzuru Manyu, and Dutch para-snowboarding star Bibian Mentel-Spee have also been nominated for the same.

iii. The deserving winner would be presented the award in Monaco, France on the 18th of February 2019.

Mary Kom named event ambassador of 16th Tata Mumbai Marathon
On January 3, 2019, Six-time women’s world boxing champion and Olympic medallist M C Mary Kom was named as the event ambassador for the 16th Tata Mumbai Marathon which will be held in January 20, 2019.

i. It would be organized by Procam International.

ii. The marathon will have a prize money of USD 405,000 and will see the participation of over 46,000 runners.

Haryana announces Shaurya Award for Students
On 16th January 2019, Chief Minister of Haryana, Shri Manohar Lal Khattar announced “Shaurya Award” to students in the name of 71 state police force martyrs who laid down their lives while maintaining law and order and protecting society since the formation of state in 1966.

Key Points

i. A prize money of Rs. 11,000 will be given to students for courageous deeds every year in a village block where school is located under this award.

ii. The announcement was made by Manohar Lal Khattar at the first state level function at National Police Memorial in New Delhi.

iii. Chief Minister, Mahohar Lal Khattar also released a book titled “Martyrs of Haryana Police” which highlights the heroic deeds of the police personnel.

Indian-American Gurinder Singh Khalsa, presented with the prestigious Rosa Park Trailblazer award
On 19th January 2019, An Indian-American philanthropist and entrepreneur, Gurinder Singh Khalsa(45), has been presented with the prestigious Rosa Park Trailblazer award for his campaign that forced US authorities change their policy towards headgear of the Sikh community.

Background:
In 2007, Khalsa was refused access to board an airplane because of his turban.

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snowboarding star Bibian Mentel-Spee have also been nominated for the same.

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**UNESCO names Rio de Janeiro as World Capital of Architecture for 2020**

On 18th January 2019, The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) named **Rio de Janeiro**, a city in Brazil as the **World Capital of Architecture** for **2020**.

**Key Points**

i. Rio de Janeiro becomes the first city to receive the title under a program launched by UNESCO and International Union of Architects (UIA) after defeating Paris and Melbourne.

ii. World Capital of Architecture is intended to become the global forum for debates on challenges of Culture, Cultural Heritage, Urban Planning and architecture.

iii. Rio de Janeiro will hold a series of events under the theme “**All the worlds. Just one world,**” and promote the internationally agreed 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development’s 11th Goal: “**Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.**”

**Aparna kumar First female IPS to reach the south pole**

On January 20, 2019, Aparna kumar, 2002 batch IPS officer of Uttar Pradesh is the first serving officer to finish this daunting challenge. Aparna already became the first officer of the All India Services to have successfully climb Antarctica’s highest peak Mount Vinson Massif in 2016 and then climbed Mount Manaslu in the west-central part of Nepal in 2017.

**Bharat Ratna CNR Rao chosen for Sheikh Saud International Prize for Materials Research**

On 19th January 2019, Centre for Advanced Materials of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) chose Eminent Scientist and **Bharat Ratna** recipient **CNR Rao** for the first **Sheikh Saud International Prize** for **Materials Research**.

**Key Points**

i. Professor CNR Rao will be awarded with the first Sheikh Saud International Prize on **25th February 2019** during the international Workshop on Advanced Materials at Ras Al Khairmain, UAE.

ii. The Award containing a plaque, a medal and a Cash Prize of USD 100000 will be presented by Sheikh Saud to Professor CNR Rao.

iii. CNR Rao was awarded with the highest Civilian award, **Bharat Ratna in 2014** and presently he is working as the Honorary President of Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research.

**BJP MP Anurag Thakur honoured with Sansad Ratna Award**

On 19th January 2019, BJP MP Anurag Thakur honoured with Jury Committee Special award at the **10th Edition of Sansad Ratna Awards** ceremony organised by city-based Prime Point Foundation in Chennai. The total of 11 Parliamentarians was awarded and it is presented by TamilNadu Governor Banwarilal Purohit.

**Other Winners of Sansad Ratna Awards:**

i. Bhratruthari Mahatub of Biju Janata Dal MP from Cuttack (Odisha) and N K Premachandran of RSP (Revolutionary Socialist Party) MP from Kollam, Kerala were honoured for their performance in initiating debates.

ii. Outstanding performance among the Parliamentary Standing Committees was given to Former union minister and chairman of standing committee on finance, M Veerappa Moily and his team.

iii. Supriya Sule of National Congress Party MP from Baramati (Maharashtra), who is also the daughter of former Union Minister Sharad Pawar, was honoured in overall tally, questions and women MPs categories.

iv. BJP MP from Godda, Jharkhand, Nishikant Dubey was awarded for his outstanding performance and first time MP, Rajeev Shankarrrao Satav was chosen for his outstanding performance among the first-time parliamentarians.
v. Shiv Sena MP from Maval, Maharashtra, Shrirang Appa Barne was selected for his outstanding performance while NCP MP from Kolhapur, Dhananjay Bhimrao Mahadik was selected for his performance under questions and overall tally category.

vi. The youngest Parliamentarian, 31-year old Heena Vijaykumar Gavit of BJP, who raised 1,059 questions in the Lok Sabha and holds an attendance of 82 per cent was selected for her outstanding performance.

vii. Indian National Congress, MP from Maharashtra, Rajani Patil was selected as the topper in overall tally among the retirees of Rajya Sabha while Ananda Bhaskar Rapolu, Congress MP from Telangana was selected for debates among the retirees of the upper House.

Ranjan Murali wins “Woman’s Voice Award at AKLF 2019”
On 20th January 2019, US Based Indian poet Ranjan Murali was awarded with the “Woman’s Voice Award” with Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival (AKLF), Kolkata, West Bengal.

i. The Objective of the ‘Prabha Khaitan Womans Voice Award’ to recognize and encourage creative writing by women in India. The Award carried a cash prize of Rs 1 Lakh along with a citation.


Vice President of India M. Venkaiah Naidu Presents Chhatra Viswakarma and Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY) Awards
On 21st January 2019, the Vice president of India Shri M Venkaiah Naidu presented the 2nd Chhatra Viswakarma Award to Students and their mentors and Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana Yojana (SAGY) awards to institution at an event organized by All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) at New Delhi.

The theme of 2nd Chhatra Viswakarma Award was ‘Empowerment of villages through technologies’ whereas the theme of Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana was “Developed Village – Developed Nations”.

Key Points
i. The Chhatra Viswakarma Award were given to encourage the young students to come up with novel ideas in order to improve the life of people in villages.

ii. The list of first prize winners under 2nd Chhatra Viswakarma Award is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Winner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educational skill initiative and startups</td>
<td>Gokaraju Rangaraju Institute of Engineering and Technology, Telangana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any other rural appropriate technologies</td>
<td>Army Institute of Technology, Maharashtra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Craft and Livelihood, Rural infrastructure, tourism</td>
<td>Shri Venkateshwara College of Engineering, Andhra Pradesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture and food</td>
<td>Sri Krishna College of Technology, Tamil Nadu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water and irrigation</td>
<td>Aditya Engineering College, Andhra Pradesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanitation &amp; Solid Liquid Waste Management</td>
<td>Kalasalingam Academy of Research and Education, Tamil Nadu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

iii. Under Sansad Adarsh GramYojana, College of Technology and Engineering Udaipur, Rajasthan got the first prize.

iv. Sethi Sahib Memorial Polytechnic College, Tirur, Kerala got the 2nd prize and Indian Institute of Food Processing Technology, Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu got the third prize.

Kohli first player to win all three top ICC awards in single year-ICC Awards 2018
On 22nd January 2019, 30-year-old Indian Cricket Team Captain, Virat Kohli became the first player to bag all top three ICC Awards in a single year. He won the Sir Garfield Sobers Trophy for ICC Cricketer.
of the Year, the ICC Men’s Test Player of the Year and the ICC Men’s ODI Player of the year for his performance in 2018.
i. He scored 1322 runs in Tests, 1202 runs in 14 ODIs and 211 runs in T20Is in calendar year 2018. He scored a total of 2735 runs with 11 centuries in 2018.
ii. South African Fast bowler Kagiso Rabada was runner up for ICC Cricketer of the Year in 2018.
iii. Virat Kohli finished 2018 as the Number one batsman in Tests and ODIs.
iv. Virat Kohli became second cricket after Australian Fast bowler Mitchel Johnson to bag ICC Cricketer of the year award for the second time. Virat Kohli was honoured with ICC Cricketer of the year in 2017 also.

**Rishabh Pant named ICC Emerging Player of the Year**

On 22nd January 2019, 21-year Old Wicketkeeper batsman, Rishabh Pant was named the “International Cricket Council’s (ICC) Emerging Player of the year” for his brilliant performance in Test Cricket in 2018.

**Key Points**
i. Rishabh Pant scored 537 runs including a century and two fifties in Tests in 2018. He also claimed 40 catches and two stumpings in 2018.
ii. Rishabh Pant became the first Indian Wicket-keeper to score a century in Australia after his unbeaten 159 runs knock in fourth Test Match against Australia.

**Winners of ICC Award 2018:**

♦ Kane Williamson(New Zealand) was awarded with Spirit of Cricket Award.
♦ Aaron Finch(Australia) was awarded with Men’s T20I Performance of the Year.
♦ Calum Macleod(Scotland) awarded with Associate Cricketer of the Year.

**TN bull taming event enters world record**

On January 20, 2019,Jallikattu’ as a symbol of the valour and courage of the Tamil people. A grand “jallikattu” (bull-taming) event held in Pudukottai and this event entered the world record for the maximum number of bulls released into the sport arena.

This event had the participation of **1,354 bulls and 424 tamers.**

**President of India Presents Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar**

On 22nd January 2019, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, the President of India, presented the Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar 2019 at Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi.

**Key Points:**
i. The awards were presented in the presence of Smt Maneka Sanjay Gandhi, Union Minister for Women and Child Development and other dignitaries.
ii. The Awards were given in two categories- Bal Shakti Puraskar (erstwhile known as National Child Award) for which 26 children were shortlisted and Bal Kalyan Puraskar (erstwhile known as National Child Welfare Award) for which 2 individuals and 3 institutions were awarded.
iii. The Bal Shakti Puraskar award which is given in the field of Innovation, Social Service, Scholastic, Sports, Art & Culture and Bravery carries a cash prize of **Rs. one lakh**, book vouchers worth Rs. ten thousand, a certificate and a citation.
iv. The Bal Kalyan Puraskar which is given in the category of individual and institution consists of cash prize of **Rs. one lakh**, a medal, a citation and a certificate for individual and consists of a cash prize of **Rs. five lakh** for institution.
v. A committee comprising experts from varied disciplines such as sociology, psychology, mathematics, science, art, music and sport selects the winners of the award through a rigorous process of critical analysis.

**JNPT becomes the only Indian port to be listed amongst the world’s top 30 container ports**

On January 22, 2019,The Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT), India’s container port got listed in the top 30 container ports.

i. It managed to place itself **28th** in the list, 5 place up from the previous position.
ii. JNPT also launched their App service to facilitate better tracking of consignment and ease the trade process for their EXIM partners.

**Gujarati poet Sitanshu Yashaschandra awarded Saraswati Samman for the year 2017**

On January 22, 2019, The 27th edition of Saraswati Samman award ceremony was held in New Delhi. Eminent Gujarati poet **Sitanshu Yashaschandra** was awarded for his poetry collection, ‘Vakhar,’ published in 2009. The 27th edition was organised by **KK Birla Foundation**.

i. His poetry collection ‘Jatayu’ received Sahitya Akademi Award for Gujarati in the year 1987.

ii. The 26th Saraswati Samman, 2016 was given to Konkani language author **Mahabaleshwar Sail** for his novel ‘Hawthan’.

**Kerala’s oldest student made commonwealth Learning Ambassador**

On 23rd January 2019, Karthiyani Amma from Kerala became Commonwealth Learning Goodwill Ambassador. She was the oldest ever candidate to appear for Kerala Literacy Mission’s Akshara Laksham (Million Letters) literacy exam.

**Key Points**

i. Karthiyani Amma is from Alappuzha district in Kerala. She secured top position with 98% marks in Kerala Literacy Mission’s Akshara Laksham (million letters) literacy exam for Grade 4. She was 96-year-old.

ii. Her story will now inspire other commonwealth countries and it also aims at promoting distant education in the member countries.

iii. Literacy exam includes reading, writing and Mathematics skills. Her next aim is to clear Class 10 equivalent. She started learning computer in a laptop which was gifted by Kerala Education.

iv. Commonwealth of learning is works for furthering education in the commonwealth nations and Akshara Laksham programme was launched by the government of Kerala on 26th January 2018 to achieve 100 percent literacy in the state about Kerala.

**Government institutes Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar**

On January 23, 2019, The government formed an annual award titled **Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar**. This award is to be awarded every year on **23rd January, the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose**. The Award carries a certificate and a cash prize of 51 lakh rupees.

i. For the year 2019, **8th Battalion of National Disaster Response Force** located at Ghaziabad is selected for its work in disaster management.

ii. The award is a honour to acknowledge the contribution and selfless service of organisations and individuals to humanity in any kind disaster.

**NRL receives Best Miniratna PSU award**

On 25th January 2019 **Numaligarh Refinery Limited (NRL)** received best Miniratna PSU in strategic performance financial category award at an award function held In **New Delhi**.

**Key Points**

i. Numaligarh Refinery Limited is a mini ratna company in Assam owned by **Bharat Petroleum**. It is a joint venture between **Bharat Petroleum, Oil India and Government of Assam**.

ii. The award was declared at the Sixth PSU awards held at New Delhi. The awards are given out in recognition to the effect of Public Sector Undertakings (PSU) who have played a key role in Country’s growth.

iii. NRL received award in strategic performance under financial category. It is evaluated by a two phase rigorous process by data science agency MT6 Analytics. The performance are measured using Moody’s methodology.

iv. The award presented to Managing Director of NRI by members of parliament (MP) Manoj Tiwari and veteran actress and social activist Poonam Dhillon.
Overview Of Padma Awards-2019
On January 25, 2019, President of India Ram Nath Kovind announced Padma Awards, which is the highest civilian Awards in the country. The Padma Awards are conferred under 3 categorized viz- Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri.

About Padma Award:
- For the Year 2019, President Ram Nath Kovind has approved conferment of 112 Padma Awards including one duo which is considered to be one award. The Padma Awards consist of 4 Padma Vibhushan award, 14 Padma Bhushan Award and 94 Padma Shri awards.
- 21 of the awardees are women, 11 are from the category of Foreigners/NRI/PIO/OCI, 3 Posthumous awardees and 1 transgender person.

Padma Vibhushan (Second Highest Civilian Award):
The Padma Vibhushan, instituted on 2 January 1954, is given for “exceptional and distinguished service”, without distinction of race, occupation, position, or sex. This year President approved the conferment of Padma Vibhushan to 4 Person.

Winners of Padma Vibhushan 2019:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Field</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Teejan Bai</td>
<td>Art-Vocals-Folk</td>
<td>Chhattisgarh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shri Ismail Omar Guelleh (Foreigner)</td>
<td>Public Affairs</td>
<td>Djibouti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shri Anilkumar Manibhai Naik</td>
<td>Trade &amp; Industry-Infrastructure</td>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shri Balwant Moreshwar Purandare</td>
<td>Art-Acting-Theatre</td>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Padma Bhushan (Third Highest Civilian Award):
The Padma Bhushan, instituted on 2 January 1954, is given for “distinguished service of a high order without distinction of race, occupation, position or sex.” This year President approved the conferment of Padma Bhushan to 14 Persons.

Winners of Padma Bhushan 2019:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Field</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shri John Chambers (Foreigner)</td>
<td>Trade &amp; Industry-Technology</td>
<td>USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shri Sukhdev Singh Dhindsa</td>
<td>Public Affairs</td>
<td>Punjab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shri Pravin Gordhan (Foreigner)</td>
<td>Public Affairs</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shri Mahashay Dharam Pal Gulati</td>
<td>Trade &amp; Industry-Food Processing</td>
<td>Delhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shri Darshan Lal Jain</td>
<td>Social Work</td>
<td>Haryana</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shri Ashok Laxmanrao Kukade</td>
<td>Medicine-Affordable Healthcare</td>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shri Kariya Munda</td>
<td>Public Affairs</td>
<td>Jharkhand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shri Budhaditya Mukherjee</td>
<td>Art-Music-Sitar</td>
<td>West Bengal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shri Mohanlal Viswanathan Nair</td>
<td>Art-Acting-Film</td>
<td>Kerala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shri S Nambi Narayan</td>
<td>Science &amp; Engineering-Space</td>
<td>Kerala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shri Kuldip Nayar (Posthumous)</td>
<td>Literature &amp; Education (Journalism)</td>
<td>Delhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Bachendri Pal</td>
<td>Sports-Mountaineering</td>
<td>Uttarakhand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shri V K Shuglu</td>
<td>Civil Service</td>
<td>Delhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shri Hukumdev Narayan Yadav</td>
<td>Public Affairs</td>
<td>Bihar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Padma Shri
Padma Shri, instituted on 2 January 1954, is given for “distinguished service of a high order without distinction of race, occupation, position or sex.” This year President approved the conferment of Padma Shri to 94 Persons.

Winners of Padma Shri 2019:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Field</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Profession</td>
<td>State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shri Rajeshwar Acharya</td>
<td>Art-Vocal-Hindustani</td>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shri Bangaru Adigalar</td>
<td>Others-Spiritualism</td>
<td>Tamil Nadu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shri Illias Ali</td>
<td>Medicine-Surgery</td>
<td>Assam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shri Manoj Bajpayee</td>
<td>Art-Acting-Films</td>
<td>Maharashatra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shri Uddhab Kumar Bharali</td>
<td>Science &amp; Engineering-Grassroots Innovation</td>
<td>Assam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shri Omesh Kumar Bharti</td>
<td>Medicine-Rabies</td>
<td>Himachal Pradesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shri Pritam Bhartwan</td>
<td>Art-Vocals-Folk</td>
<td>Uttarakhand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shri Jyoti Bhatt</td>
<td>Art-Painting</td>
<td>Gujarat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shri Dilip Chakravarty</td>
<td>Others-Archeology</td>
<td>Delhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shri Mammen Chandy</td>
<td>Medicine-Hematology</td>
<td>West Bengal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shri Swapan Chaudhuri</td>
<td>Art-Music-Tabla</td>
<td>West Bengal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shri Kanwal Singh Chauhan</td>
<td>Others-Agriculture</td>
<td>Haryana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shri Sunil Chhetri</td>
<td>Sports-Football</td>
<td>Telangana</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shri Dinyar Contractor</td>
<td>Art-Acting-Theatre</td>
<td>Maharashatra</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms. Muktaben Pankajkumar Dagli</td>
<td>Social Work-Divyang Welfare</td>
<td>Gujarat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shri Babulal Dahiya</td>
<td>Others-Agriculture</td>
<td>Madhya Pradesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shri Thanga Darlong</td>
<td>Art-Music-Flute</td>
<td>Tripura</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shri Prabhu Deva</td>
<td>Art-Dance</td>
<td>Karnataka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Rajkumari Devi</td>
<td>Others-Agriculture</td>
<td>Bihar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Bhagirathi Devi</td>
<td>Public Affairs</td>
<td>Bihar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shri Baldev Singh Dhillon</td>
<td>Science &amp; Engineering-Agriculture</td>
<td>Punjab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Harika Dronavalli</td>
<td>Sports-Chess</td>
<td>Andhra Pradesh</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms. Godawari Dutta</td>
<td>Art-Painting</td>
<td>Bihar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shri Gautam Gambhir</td>
<td>Sports-Cricket</td>
<td>Delhi</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms. Draupadi Ghimirey</td>
<td>Social Work-Divyang Welfare</td>
<td>Sikkim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Rohini Godbole</td>
<td>Science &amp; Engineering-Nuclear</td>
<td>Karnataka</td>
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<td>Ms. Friederike Irina (Foreigner)</td>
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**Bharat Ratna Award 2019**

On January 26, 2019, President Ram Nath Kovind announced the recipients of Bharat Ratna, the country’s highest civilian award, they are former president Pranab Mukherjee, social activist Nanaji Deshmukh (posthumously) and musician Dr Bhupen Hazarika (posthumously) in New Delhi.

**Details about the three recipients:**

i. Pranab Mukherjee also known as Pranab Da, was the 13th President of India and served from 2012 until 2017.

ii. Nanaji Deshmukh, who died at the age of 94 in 2012, was a member of the Lok Sabha and represented the Balrampur in Uttar Pradesh. He also served as a nominated member of the Rajya Sabha from 1999 to 2005.

iii. Bhupen Hazarika, legendary singer-composer from Assam, was awarded (posthumously) with this award. He was a recipient of Sangeet Natak Akademi Award, Padmashri and Padmabhushan. He was also awarded the Padma Vibhushan, the country’s second-highest civilian honour, in 2012. He died in November 2011 at the age of 85.

**Tetra Pak wins ICC ‘Social Impact Award’ for Environment Sustainability**

On 25th January 2019, ‘Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC) awarded social impact award to Tetra Pak India, the world’s leading packaging and processing solutions provider under the category ‘Sustainable Environment category’.

**Key Points:**

i. The award recognizes Tetra Pak’s leading efforts in setting up a sustainable ecosystem.

ii. Tetra Pak, in partnership with RUR conducted Go Green with Tetra Pak, Greenlife and Sahakari Bhandar ‘Alag Karo’ in 2010 to create awareness to the consumers about their role in waste management.

**Kerala Sahitya Akademi Award 2017: Novel Nireeshwaran by Malayalam Novelist VJ James won the best Novel award**

On 23rd January 2019, Kerala Sahitya Akademi Award 2017 was announced, Malayalam Novelist VJ James’s, Novel Nireeshwaran won the best novel award.

**Key Points:**

i. V J James was born in Vazhapally, Changanassery in Kottayam district of Kerala.

ii. His debut novel was Purappadinte Pusthakam.

iii. Other Accolades he received: DC Silver Jubilee Award, Malayattor Prize in 1999, Rotary Literary Award for Purappadinte Pusthakam, Thoppil Ravi Award, Kerala Bhasha Institute Basheer Award (2015) for Nireeshwaran.

**Other Winners:**

i. Mindaprani, written by Veerankutty won Best poetry award.

ii. Ethara Chararcharangalude Charitra Pusthakam written by Aymanam John won the best short story.
award.


Tamil translation of French book wins Romain Rolland Book Prize for literary translation

On 25th January 2019, Romain Rolland Book Prize for literary translation won by Tamil translation of Andrei Makine’s “La vie d’un homme inconnu” (The Life of an Unknown Man) at the Jaipur Literature Festival.

Key Points

i. The book was translated by S R Kichenamourty. He was the former head of the French department of Pondicherry University. Book is published by Kalachuvadu, a publisher of Tamil modern classics and contemporary fiction writing.

ii. “The Life of an Unknown Man” is the story of Shutov, a disenchanted writer, who revisits Saint Petersburg after twenty years of exile in Paris, hoping to recapture his youth.

iii. The books shortlisted include a Malayalam translation of ‘Révolution dans la Révolution’ (Revolution in the Revolution) and ‘La Leste’ (The Plague) by Rgis Debray and Albert Camus respectively.

iv. Award includes an invitation to the Paris Book Fair 2019 for the publisher of the work and an invitation for the translator to attend a one-month residency in France.

v. India will attend Paris Book Fair as the Guest of Honor. It will be held at March 2019 which brings together publishers and provides them with the opportunity to communicate about their profession.

D.N. Chakraborthy gets Assam Republic Journalism Award

On January 26, 2019, Assam government entitled the Republic Day Journalism Award 2019 to veteran journalist and former editor Dhirendra Nath Chakraborthy.

i. The award comprises Rupees one lakh in cash, a citation, the Assamese ‘xoraai’ (the bell metal memento presented as an honour), ‘jaapi’ (headgear) and an angavastra.

ii. Chakraborthy, former Editor of Dainik Asom, Dainik Janambhumi and Ajir Batori group of newspaper, was honoured for his lifetime contribution to journalism.

iii. Late Radhika Mohan Bhagawati and Sri Kanaksen Deka earlier received this award.

Southern Railway entitled number one for cleanliness: IRCTC

On January 28, 2019, According to IRCTC’s Trains Cleanliness Survey, The Southern Railway bagged number one position for cleanliness in the country.

i. Duronto trains are the least clean among premium trains, while Tejas and Shatabdi trains are the cleanest.

ii. To fulfill the demands of passengers, Southern Railway also introduced 54 trains in the past four years.

Jeevan Raksha Padak awards to 48 people for saving a person’s life

On January 26, 2019, The president of India approved the conferment of Jeevan Raksha Padak series of awards, 2018 to 48 persons, out of which eight of them were awarded posthumously.

About the Jeevan Raksha Padak award:

i. Jeevan Raksha Padak award was given for the meritorious act of human nature in saving the life of a person in various cases of accidents.

ii. This award was instituted in the year 1961.

iii. The award is presented in the form of a medal and a certificate signed by the Union home minister.

iv. The award is given in three categories.
Jayant Kaikini was named the winner of the DSC Prize for South Asian Literature for his translated work "No Presents Please."

On January 29, 2019, Kannada poet and short story writer Jayant Kaikini was entitled as the winner of the DSC Prize for South Asian Literature for his translated work "No Presents Please." Jayant and translator Tejaswini Niranjana received the award from eminent writer Ruskin Bond.

i. Jayant surpassed the internationally acclaimed writers Kamila Shamsie and Mohsin Hamid and won this title.

ii. The award was enlisted in the Tata Steel Kolkata Literary Meet at the iconic Victoria Memorial Hall in Kolkata. This marks the first time a translated work has won the prestigious prize.

ICAR and Tripura received the award for the best Tableau in Republic Day Parade from Defence Minister

On January 28, 2019, Defence minister, Nirmala Sitharaman presented the First Prize to the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) for its representation of Tableau on ‘Kisan Gandhi’ with the theme: “Mishrit Kheti, Khushiyan Ki Kheti” under the central ministries and departments category.

Key Points:

i. The ICAR presentation depicted the importance of dairy farming, use of indigenous breeds and livestock based organic agriculture for rural prosperity.

ii. Tripura bagged the best state tableau with the theme: ‘Empowering Rural Economy the Gandhian Way’ whereas The second position was bagged by Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab was placed in the third spot.

India bags Award of Excellence for ‘Best in Show’ at New York Times Travel Show 2019

On January 27, 2019, India received the Award of Excellence for ‘Best in Show’ in New York Times Travel Show 2019. It is the largest travel show in North America which held New York, USA from 25th of January, 2019.

i. The Ministry of Tourism led by Tourism Ministry Secretary Yogendra Tripathi participated as the Presenting Partner in the New York Times Travel Show (NYTTS 2019)

ii. This programme is conducted with a motive to enhance India’s visibility and share in US tourism market.

TN bags FSSAI awards for Swasth Bharat Yatra

On 29th January 2019, Tamil Nadu was awarded the “Best State Overall” for its active participation in the national campaign “Swasth Bharat Yatra”, which was organized from 16th October 2018 by Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI). The Swasth Bharat Yatra was culminated on 29th January 2019 at Connaught Place in New Delhi.

Key Points

i. The Swasth Bharat Yatra was World’s biggest Cyclothon and it saw the involvement of 10 lakh participants.

ii. The Cyclothon began from six different locations – Leh, Panaji, Thiruvananthapuram, Puducherry, Kolkata and Agartala in which more than 10,000 volunteer cyclists covered more than 20,000 km across 36 states and Union Territories.

iii. The Key element of the Cyclothon was “Eat Right India” and the goal of the campaign was to aware the sensitive people about eating food and being healthy.

Madurai, Sivakasi adjudged best cities in the Swasth Bharat Yatra

On 29th January 2019, Madurai and Sivakasi was awarded as the best cities in the Swasth Bharat Yatra which was concluded on 29th January 2019.
i. Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra have been recognized as the best states with a population above 3 crores.

ii. Delhi, Goa and Punjab have been adjudged as the best states with population less than 3 crore.

iii. Meghalaya, Jammu & Kashmir and Uttarakhand have been adjudged with special awards for their participation despite difficult and hilly terrain.

iv. Several associations like NCC, NSS and Nehru Yuva Kendra were honoured for their commendable efforts throughout the yatra.

**Kleinman Center for Energy Policy at the University of Pennsylvania awards 4th annual Carnot Prize to Union Minister Shri Piyush Goyal**

On January 30, 2019, Union Finance Minister Piyush Goyal received the Carnot prize for his work towards sustainable energy solutions from Kleinman Center for Energy Policy University of Pennsylvania in New Delhi.

i. This award rewards the works done by Piyush Goyal to reform the electricity sector and extended access to electricity to 19,000 villages.

ii. Last year this award was skipped before being entitled to the former power minister, because of the Amritsar tragedy in which over 60 people died after being moved down by a train.

iii. He has decided that the award money, which he will receive as part of the 2018 Carnot Prize, will be donated to the International Solar Alliance to institute the Diwakar Award.

**Civil Aviation Secretary Rajiv Nayan Choubey Named UPSC Member**

On January 29, 2019, Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) appointed Rajiv Nayan Choubey as the member of UPSC.

i. Chairman of UPSC, Aravind Saxena administered the Rajiv Nayan Choubey oath of office.

ii. UPSC can have a maximum of 10 members excluding the chairman, with Rajiv Nayan Choubey’s appointment filled up UPSC’s complete strength.

iii. Choubey was named as the Civil Aviation Secretary in June 2015.

iv. A member of the UPSC can have a maximum of six-year tenure or till an incumbent attains the age of 65.

**Sunjay Sudhir appointed as Ambassador of India to the Maldives**

On January 28, 2019, Senior diplomat Sunjay Sudhir, a 1993 batch Indian Foreign Service officer was appointed as India’s Ambassador to the Maldives. He presently works as a Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, which he will be resigning shortly.

Also, government appointed Vinay Singh Chauhan as the Ambassador of India to Burkina Faso who is presently Consulate General of India.

**Pakistan Appoints Suman Kumari, as Its First Ever Female Hindu Civil Judge**

On January 29, 2019, Suman Kumari became the first Hindu woman to be appointed as a civil judge in Pakistan after passing an examination for induction of judicial officers.

i. The first judge from the Hindu community was Justice Rana Bhagwandas, who served in Pakistan from 2005-2007.

ii. In the 2018, Krishna Kumari Kohli, was also a non-Muslim female to win a place in Pakistan Senate.

**Vice Admiral G Ashok Kumar took charge as Vice Chief of Naval Staff**

On January 30, 2019, Vice Admiral G Ashok Kumar assumed charge as Vice Chief of the Naval Staff.

i. He served as the Navigating Officer of Indian Naval Ships Beas, Nilgiri, Ranvir and Vikrantand as a Commanding Officer of INS Kulish and Ranvir, and Executive Officer onboard INS Brahmaputra.

ii. He held as a Deputy Chief of Naval Staff from June 6, 2016.
Sheikh Hasina Wins Third Term as PM of Bangladesh
On 31st December, 2018, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina’s alliance won Bangladesh’s election with a thumping majority giving her a third straight term.

Key Points:
i. The alliance dominated by her Awami League, won 287 of the 298 seats for which results have been declared, the commission said. There are 300 constituencies in the country.
ii. The main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), which boycotted the last poll in 2014, won just 6 seats.

Sudhir Bhargava Appointed New Information Chief Commissioner; Government Appoints 4 New Information Commissioners
The Government of India has appointed Sudhir Bhargava, an information commissioner in the Central Information Commission as the new chief information commissioner. The government has also appointed four new information commissioners.

Key Points:
i. President Ram Nath Kovind has approved the appointment of former bureaucrats Yashwardhan Kumar Sinha, Vanaja N Sarna, Neeraj Kumar Gupta and Suresh Chandra as the new information commissioners.
ii. The appointments came weeks after the Supreme Court had asked the Centre to disclose the process of appointment of the members of the Central Information Commission, including details on applicants and search committees. The court had asked the government to maintain transparency in the process.

SC judge Justice M B Lokur retired from his duties
On December 30, 2018, the second senior-most Supreme Court judge Justice Madan B Lokur retired. i. He was among the four judges who held the controversial January-12 press conference against the then Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra over the issue of allocation of sensitive cases.
ii. He also played an active role in the pursuit of judicial reforms — computerisation of courts, judicial education, legal aid and legal services.
iii. His tenure in the Supreme Court began in June 2012.

Justice T B N Radhakrishnan sworn in as Chief Justice of Telangana HC; Justice Praveen Kumar as the acting Chief Justice of Andhra Pradesh High Court
On January 1, 2019, Justice Thottathil Bhaskaran Nair Radhakrishnan was sworn in as the Chief Justice of the Telangana High Court.

i. His oath was administered by Telangana and Andhra Pradesh Governor E.S.L. Narasimhan.

ii. After that the CJ of Telengana HC administered the oath of office to 12 justices of Telangana High Court.

iii. He had been serving as the Chief Justice of the High Court of Judicature at Hyderabad for both the states of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.

Other News:
Governor Narasimhan also administered oath to Justice Praveen Kumar as the acting Chief Justice of Andhra Pradesh High Court in Vajaywada.

Background:
♦ As per the Supreme Court’s directions, the existing high court in Hyderabad was bifurcated as per demands of the advocates and legal fraternity for a separate high court for Telangana.
♦ The High Court of Judicature at Hyderabad had been serving as common high court of the two states since June 2014 when Andhra Pradesh was bifurcated to carve out Telangana.
♦ High Court of Andhra Pradesh was established by December 31, 2018, in state capital of Amaravati.
Brazil elected Jair Bolsonaro as its 42nd president

On January 2, 2019, Jair Bolsonaro was sworn in as Brazil's 42nd president.

i. Mr Bolsonaro, 63, won the presidential election by a wide margin against Fernando Haddad of the left-wing Workers’ Party.

Hemant Bhargava appointed as LIC’s Acting Chairman: Department of Financial Services

On January 1, 2019, the Department of Financial Services announced appointment of Hemant Bhargava, Managing Director, Life Insurance Corporation of India, as the Acting Chairman.

i. This was done after VK Sharma retired from the position at LIC on December 31.

ii. While, he is a contender for the post of Full-Time Chairman at the state-owned life insurer, his retirement is due in July 2019.

iii. Therefore, the Banks Board Bureau has called eight candidates for interviews for the posts of Chairman and MD on January 4.

LIC:
♦ Headquarters: Mumbai.
♦ Founded: September 1, 1956 under the the Life Insurance of India Act that nationalised the private insurance industry in India.
♦ It is the largest insurance company in India.

P K Singh appointed Competition Commission of India secretary: CCI

On January 1, 2019, P K Singh was appointed secretary of the Competition Commission of India (CCI).

i. Prior to this, he was adviser (law) to the competition watchdog.

ii. After completing 5 years of experience as the adviser to the CCI, according to the norms of the institution, he was chosen as the candidate.

iii. His scope of responsibilities include:
   • acting as the nodal officer for the Commission,
   • making or receiving all statutory information and
   • entering into any formal relationships including signing of memorandums with any foreign agency or other agency with prior approval from Commission and government.

RBL Bank appointed Pankaj Sharma as its chief operations officer

On January 2, 2019, Private sector lender RBL Bank appointed Pankaj Sharma as its chief operations officer (COO).

i. Prior to this, Sharma was heading retail operations of Axis Bank.

ii. Under his leadership, the ATM channel, phone banking and branch automation and digital initiatives at Axis Bank took shape.

iii. He had previously worked with GE Countrywide, ICICI Bank and ICICI Prudential Life Insurance.

Justice AK Sikri nominated as Executive Chairman of NALSA by President Kovind

On January 1, 2019, President Ram Nath Kovind nominated Justice Arjan Kumar Sikri as Executive Chairman of National Legal Services Authority (NALSA).

i. His appointment is effective from December 31, 2018.

ii. The post got vacant after the retirement of Justice Madan B. Lokur.

About NALSA:
♦ The NALSA was constituted under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 to provide free legal services to the weaker sections of the society and to organise Lok Adalats for settlement of disputes.
♦ The Chief Justice of India is the Patron-in-Chief and the Senior most Judge of the Supreme Court of India is the Executive Chairman of the Authority.
♦ 46th Chief Justice of India: Justice Ranjan Gogoi (as on October 3, 2018)
Saurabh Kumar takes over as chairman of Ordnance Factory Board
On 31st December 2018, Saurabh Kumar, a 1982-batch Indian Ordnance Factory Service officer, took over as the Director General of Ordnance Factories (DGOF) and chairman of the Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) following the superannuation of P.K. Shrivastava in Kolkata.

Key Points
i. An expert in the manufacturing of ordnance, Kumar is an M-Tech in mechanical engineering from the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Kanpur.
ii. He has worked with Ministry of Defence at Delhi as the Director of Planning and Coordination from 2002 to 2009 during which, he was involved in drafting the Indian offset policy for defence purchases and 'Make' procedure in the Defence Procurement Procedure of 2003-04, which incorporated recommendations of Arun Singh Committee.
iii. Furthermore he has proved his excellence during his tenure as General Manager of the Engine Factory at Avadi (2012-13) and as General Manager of Ordnance Factory Ambajhari, Nagpur where he spearheaded the modernisation programme and led the production of 'Pinaka' rockets.
iv. Saurabh Kumar is currently a member of the Ordnance Factory Board and is looking after Ammunition and Explosive group of factories.

VK Yadav appointed new chairman of Railway Board after Ashwani Lohani
On January 1, 2019, VK Yadav took charge of the chairmanship of Railway Board.

i. He succeeded Ashwani Lohani.
ii. Prior to this appointment, he was the General Manager of South-Central Railway (SCR).
iii. He is an electrical engineer and belongs to the 1980 batch of the Indian Railway Service of Electrical Engineers.
iv. He has also served as additional divisional railway manager of Delhi division, divisional railway manager of Lucknow and chief electrical engineer of planning/ traction distribution in Northern Railway.

Axis Bank MD & CEO Shikha Sharma retires, Amitabh Chaudhry takes charge
On 31st December 2018, private sector lender Axis Bank Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Shikha Sharma retired from the services of the bank and Amitabh Chaudhry will be the new MD and CEO of the Axis bank from 1st January 2019.

Key Points
i. In April 2018, Shikha Sharma requested the bank board to reduce her new term which was started from June 2018 to 7 months from a three-year tenure without citing any reasons.
ii. 54 years old, an Indian Institute of Management -Ahmedabad alumnus, Amitabh Chaudhry who is the former MD and CEO of HDFC Standard Life Insurance Company was appointed the MD & CEO of Axis Bank for the period of 3 years.

Pentagon comptroller David Norquist named acting deputy defence secretary of United States
On January 3, 2019, Pentagon comptroller David Norquist was named acting deputy defence secretary of United States.

i. He has been the department’s chief financial officer and comptroller since May 2017.
ii. In addition to that, Deputy Secretary of Defence Patrick Shanahan was appointed to serve as the acting secretary of defence.

Justice Asif Khosa appointed new Chief Justice of Pakistan succeeding the outgoing Justice Saqib Nisar
On January 2, 2019, Justice Asif Saeed Khosa, the senior most judge of the Supreme Court, was appointed as the new Chief Justice of Pakistan.

i. He will succeed incumbent Chief Justice Saqib Nisar who will be retiring from service on January 17, 2019.
ii. Justice Khosa, 64, has been a senior Justice of the Supreme Court since December 2016.
iii. He has also served as an advocate in the Lahore High Court and Supreme Court.
PayU India CEO Amrish Rau joined parent company Naspers as head of financial technology
On January 4, 2019, PayU India’s CEO Amrish Rau joined as the head of financial technology partnerships and investments for Naspers’ fintech business. Nasper is South African parent of PayU.
 i. Rau will continue to report to Laurent le Moal the chief executive of PayU, which is headquartered in the Netherlands.
 ii. He joined PayU after Citrus Pay was acquired by PayU in 2016 for $130 million in cash.

Shri Chhabilendra Roul took charge as Secretary, Department of Fertilizers
On January 3, 2019, Shri Chhabilendra Roul was appointed as the new Secretary, Department of Fertilizers, Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilizers, Government of India.
 ii. He succeeded Smt. Bharathi S. Sihag, IAS (HP:83) who completed her tenure.

Subramanian resigned from Bandhan Bank following appointment as Chief Economic Advisor
On January 5, 2019, Bandhan Bank announced the resignation of independent director Krishnamurthy V Subramanian following his appointment as the chief economic advisor (CEA) to the government.
 i. On December 7, 2018, the government appointed Subramanian as the CEA for a period of three years.
 ii. He replaced Arvind Subramanian, who resigned from the post in June 2018.

Rakesh Aggarwal took over as new JIPMER director
On January 1, 2019, Dr Rakesh Aggarwal assumed charge as the new director of Jawaharlal Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education & Research (JIPMER), Puducherry.
 i. He succeeded Dr S Vivekanandan.
 ii. He is also an elected fellow of Indian Academy of Sciences, Indian National Science Academy, National Academy of Sciences (India) and National Academy of Medical Sciences (India).

Pentagon chief of staff Kevin Sweeney resigned
On January 6, 2019, Kevin Sweeney, the chief of staff of the US Department of Defence, resigned from his position. He held his post for two years from January 2017.
 i. Kevin Sweeney retired as a Rear Admiral from the US Navy in 2014.

For first time in History, Malaysia’s monarch, Sultan Muhammad V, stepped down before completion of tenure
On January 6, 2019, Malaysia’s monarch Sultan Muhammad V resigned, as the 15th Yang di-Pertuan Agong, from the throne before completing their five-year tenure for the first time in Malaysia’s history.
 i. The selection of the next king can be decided by a vote in the Council of Rulers, made up of all nine royal households, who takes turns to sit on the throne.

Former Indian envoy to Myanmar, Vikram Misri, took charge as India’s new envoy to China
On January 8, 2019, India’s new ambassador to China, Vikram Misri, took charge of the post.
 i. He reported to Hong Lei, Deputy Director General of Protocol at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Beijing.
 ii. He is a 1989-batch India Foreign Service (IFS) officer, and replaced Gautam Bambawale who retired in November 2018.
 iii. Prior to this appointment, Misri served as Indian envoy in Myanmar.
 iv. Earlier, he has served in various capacities at the headquarters of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) as well as in the Prime Minister’s Office.
 v. He also served in various Indian Missions in Europe, Africa, Asia and North America.

Solar Man of India, Pranav R Mehta, became the first Indian to Head Global Solar Council, USA
On January 8, 2019, the chairman of National Solar Energy Federation of India (NSEFI), Shri Pranav R Mehta, has taken over as the president of Global Solar Council (GSC) from January 1, 2019.
 i. He is dubbed as the Solar Man of India.
ii. He has been conferred with the 'Visionary Disruptor Award' by Solar Future Today, which he will be receiving on 15th January, 2019 at the sidelines of World Future Energy Summit in Abu Dhabi.

**Background:**
♦ India is placed amongst the Top 5 solar players in the world and is third largest solar market.

**India-born Gita Gopinath joined IMF as 1st woman and it’s 11th Chief Economist**
On January 8, 2019, Mysore-born Gita Gopinath joined International Monetary Fund (IMF) as its 11th chief economist, thus becoming the first woman to occupy the top IMF post.
i. She succeeded Maurice (Maury) Obstfeld who retired on December 31, 2018.
ii. She is the John Zwaanstra professor of International Studies and Economics at Harvard University.

**Civil Aviation Security chief appointed as Sashastra Seema Bal DG**
Civil aviation security head and senior IPS officer Kumar Rajesh Chandra was appointed as the Director General of the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) up to 31st DEC 2021 for a tenure of around 2 years.

**Key Points:**
i. Kumar Rajesh Chandra, a 1985 IPS officer of Bihar cadre, is at present the director general of the bureau of civil aviation security (BCAS)
ii. He will succeed SS Deswal, chief of indo-tibetan border.
iii. The SSB has about 80,000 personnel, guards India’s borders with Nepal and Bhutan.

**SC reinstated Alok Verma as CBI Chief; to look in to corruption charges by High-Committee panel and CVC**
On January 8, 2019, the Supreme Court, as per orders penned by Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi, reinstated CBI Director Alok Kumar Verma without giving him any major policy decision making powers.
i. This was done against the October 23 2018 decision which had earlier divested him of his powers completely as per the corruption charges brought against him.
ii. After the successful conduct of the Central Vigilance Commission inquiry against those charges will further steps be taken against him by the high-powered committee which selects and appoints the CBI Director.
iii. The high-powered committee will comprise of the Prime Minister, Chief Justice of India and Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha.
iv. The top court also set aside the Centre’s decision to appoint senior IPS officer M Nageswara Rao, who was the joint director, as the interim chief of the agency.
v. Verma’s two-year tenure as CBI Director ends on January 31, 2019.

**Ex-Hotstar CEO Ajit Mohan officially joined Facebook India as VP and MD**
On January 8, 2019, Ajit Mohan officially took over as Facebook India’s new Vice President and MD.
i. He succeeded Umang Bedi who left the post on October 2017.
ii. Mohan, a former CEO of Hotstar, was earlier appointed to lead as India’s head for the company in September 2018.

**Narasimhan Ram of the Hindu Group is new AFMF President**
On 9th January 2019, Narasimhan Ram, Chairman, THG Publishing Private Limited, has been appointed President of the Alliance for Media Freedom (AFMF), a cross-media advocacy and action group of media organization, promoters and journalists.
i. While appointing him as the president of the Alliance, his role in thwarting the efforts of governments and authoritarian elements to impede the independent functioning of the media was commended.
ii. The Alliance for Media Freedom (AFMF) is dedicated to work for the cause of media freedom, media independence and the safety of the journalists.
Nicolas Maduro Sworn in as new Venezuela President for 2nd Term
On January 11, 2019, Nicolas Maduro was sworn in as Venezuela's President for the 2nd term for a new 6-year term.
i. Venezuela is one of the world’s largest oil producers and holds the presidency of oil cartel Opec until 2025.

Selection Committee chaired by PM removed Alok Verma as CBI Chief, M. Nageshwar Rao re-elected as New CBI Chief
On January 11, 2019, Additional Director of CBI, M. Nageshwar Rao took charge as the Director of Central Bureau of Investigation.
i. Rao, a 1986-batch Odisha cadre Indian Police Service officer, was given charge as interim Director after the government on October 23 divested the previous Director, Alok Verma's power.
ii. Alok Verma was removed from the post within 48 hours after rejoining as CBI Director.
iii. The decision was taken by a 2-1 decision by a selection committee headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi with its other two members being Leader of Congress Mallikarjun Kharge and Supreme Court judge A.K. Sikri.

Su Tseng-chang appointed as Taiwan PM
On 10th January 2019, Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen appointed 71 years old Su Tseng-chang as the new Prime Minister of Taiwan during a cabinet reshuffle following the loss of Ruling Democratic Progressive Party in the local elections.

Key Points
i. Tseng-chang will replace Lai Ching-te who resigned from the post following the defeat in the elections.
ii. Taiwan’s ruling Democratic Progressive party (DPP) lost to the opposition Kuomintang (KMT). He held the office earlier as Prime Minister in the year 2006.

Yes Bank appoints Brahmin Dutt as non-executive part-time chairman
Yes Bank, India’s fourth largest private sector bank, on January 11th 2019, said it has appointed Brahmin Dutt as non-executive part-time chairman to the board. The Yes Bank board had on December 13, 2018 finalised the recommendation for the Chairman and submitted it to the RBI for approval after its earlier Chairman Ashok Chawla resigned. Yes bank in its report, told that RBI following the law of Banking regulation Act 1949 has approved Dutt’s appointment as part-time chairman of Yes Bank's board up till July 4, 2020.

Points to be known:
i. Dutt has been on the board of the bank since July 2013 as an independent director, and has contributed to almost all the sub-committees of the board over the past 5.5 years. He also shares the additional post of Chair of the Nomination and Remuneration committee.
ii. Yes Bank’s board also includes Mukesh Sabharwal, Subhash Kalia, Ajai Kumar, Pratima Sheorey, Uttam Prakash Agarwal, TS Vijayan, and Rana Kapoor (Managing Director and CEO).
iii. Yes Bank executive Rajat Monga and a CEO of a foreign bank have been shortlisted as to succeed long-serving managing director and chief executive officer Rana Kapoor in the bank.

Senior bureaucrat Jaideep Govind appointed as Secretary General, National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)
On January 11, 2019, according to an announcement by the Personnel Ministry, The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) approved the appointment of senior bureaucrat Jaideep Govind as the Secretary General, National Human Rights Commission (NHRC).
i. He is a 1984 batch IAS officer of Madhya Pradesh cadre, is at present Special Secretary and Financial Adviser in Ministry of Rural Development.

Other News:
i. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) also approved the appointment of P N Sukul will
be Secretary, National Commission for Minorities (NCM).

ii. The 1982-batch officer of Indian Defence Accounts Service would take over the reins on superannuation of J Rama Krishna Rao on February 28, 2019.

Lt Gen J S Nain took over as 14th Commander of Army’s Rising Star Corps

On January 12, 2019, Lt Gen J S Nain took over as the 14th Corps Commander of the Rising Star Corps from Lt Gen Y V K Mohan in Jammu.

i. He is a soldier and an alumnus of the National Defence Academy.

ii. Based in Yol cantonment town in Kangra Valley, southeast of Dharamsala in Himachal Pradesh, the Rising Star Corps was raised in 2005 and is the Indian Army’s youngest corps.

Senior Indian Information Service officer Nitin Wakankar appointed as new Chief Information Officer and spokesperson of the CBI, replacing Abhishek Dayal

On 11th January 2019, senior Indian Information Service officer Nitin Wakankar appointed the new Chief Information Officer and spokesperson of the CBI replacing Abhishek Dayal who has been transferred to the Publication Division.

Key points

i. The decision was taken after the removal of Alok Verma from the post of the director of the Central Bureau of Investigation by a high powered selection committee.

ii. Nitin Wakankar has previously served in Rashtrapati Bhawan and Defense Ministry.

iii. 1986 Batch IPS Officer of Odisha Cadre, Nageshwar Rao is serving as the interim Director of CBI.

iv. Six Joint Director level officials – Gajendra Kumar Goswami, Sharad Agarwal, A. Sai Manohar, Vineet Vinayak, Praveen Sinha and Amrit Mohan Prasad were transferred on 11th January 2019.

Ashok Chawla resigns as chairman of National Stock Exchange (NSE)

A former finance secretary, Chawla took over as the chairman of the exchange on March 28, 2016. He had also served as civil aviation secretary and chairperson of the Competition Commission of India, and also chairman of yes bank. On January 11, 2019, Chawla resigned as the chairman of the country's largest bourse, the National Stock Exchange after CBI’s order to conduct legal action against him in the Aircel-Maxis case.

Points to be Noted:

i. In Aircel Maxis controversy Mr Ashok Chawla was named, along with secretary (economic affairs) Ashok Jha, additional secretary Ashok Chawla, joint secretary in finance ministry Kumar Sanjay Krishna and director in the ministry Dipak Kumar Singh, and the then undersecretary in the ministry Ram Sharan and former Finance Minister P Chidambaram, in the Aircel-Maxis bribery case being probed by the Central Bureau of Investigation or CBI. The CBI had filed its charge-sheet in last July 2018 but waited for government’s permission for further proceedings.

ii. Ashok Chawla resignation happened after Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) told a special court in Delhi that it has obtained Government’s approval to take action against the accused officials.

Former Citi group executive Daniel Houghes Callahan, 62, was appointed as additional and independent director for 5 years: TCS

On January 12, 2019, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) hired former Citi executive Daniel Houghes Callahan, 62, as an additional and independent director for 5 years.

i. With this, TCS has 11 directors, including seven independents in the expanded board.

ii. Prior to this, Callahan was a member of Citi’s operating committee until November 2018 and handled Citigroup’s technology as chief administrative officer.

iii. Callahan held senior positions in AIBM Japan, Morgan Stanley, and Credit Suisse.

Dr. T.C.A Anant takes Oath as Member, UPSC

On January 14, 2019, Dr. T.C.A Anant, former Chief Statistician of India & Secretary, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, took the Oath of Office and Secrecy as Member, Union Public Service Commission (UPSC). Oath was administered by Shri Arvind Saxena, Chairman, UPSC.
Facts to be known About UPSC
i. The commission has a strength of **10 members**, besides a chairperson. Despite Anant’s appointment, the commission had one more vacancy. Former Delhi Police Commissioner Bhim Sain Bassi, Prof. Pradeep Kumar Joshi, Air Marshal A S Bhonsle (retired), Sujata Mehta, Manoj Soni, Smita Nagaraj, M Sathiyavathy and Bharat Bhushan Vyas are members of the UPSC.
ii. A member of the UPSC have a maximum of six-year tenure or till an incumbent attains the age of 65.

**Retired HDFC Bank executive and former Federal Bank board member Deepak Maheshwari has taken charge as chief credit officer (CCO) at Axis Bank**
On 11th January 2019, **Deepak Maheshwari**, the retired HDFC Bank executive and former Federal Bank board member took charge as **chief credit officer (CCO)** at **Axis Bank** as part of an ongoing reshuffle undertaken by new CEO **Amitabh Chaudhry**.

**Key Points:**
- The 64 years old Maheshwari will be given responsibility of corporate credit appraisal and disbursement at the Axis Bank.
- Maheshwari was also granted an exemption to take over as CCO by the board of Axis Bank as he is now 64 which is above the bank’s retirement age of 60.
- The appointment of Maheshwari is an attempt by the CEO Amitabh Chaudhry to tighten the Axis Bank’s credit appraisal process and follow HDFC Bank’s model in the Axis Bank.

**Ananth Narayanan steps down as Myntra-Jabong CEO**
On 14th January 2019, **Ananth Narayanan**, the chief executive officer of **Myntra** and **Jabong**, a unit of Walmart-owned Flipkart, quit the company to pursue external opportunities.

**Key Points:**
- Ananth Narayanan is expected to join as the chief executive officer of video streaming service **Hotstar**.
- Flipkart executive **Amar Nagaram** who previously headed consumer shopping experience has been appointed as the new head of Myntra and Jabong and will report to Flipkart Group **CEO Kalyan Krishnamurthy**.
- Earlier in November Flipkart’s co-founder & group CEO, **Binny Bansal**, had also stepped down from the company following a probe into serious personal misconduct.

**ICICI Bank appointed B Sriram, Rama Bijapurkar as independent directors**
On January 14, 2019, private sector **ICICI Bank** appointed former SBI Managing Director **B Sriram** on its board as **independent director** for **5 years**.
- Prior to this, Sriram was the managing director of IDBI Bank and before which he was the same in SBI.
- Besides him, ICICI also appointed management consultant Rama Bijapurkar as **independent director**.

**Accenture CEO Pierre Nanterme steps down from the post:**
On January 11, 2019, Accenture, a Dublin based consultant firm’s CEO Pierre Nanterme steps down from his post due to his health issues.
- Financial Officer of the company **David Rowland** was named **interim CEO**.
- Though resigned as CEO of the company, Pierre Nanterme will continue at Accenture as advisor to the CEO.
- THE lead independent director **Marge Magner** was named **non-executive chair**.

**Former ESPN-Star Sports CEO Manu Sawhney appointed ICC’s chief executive:**
On January 15, 2019, The International Cricket Council (ICC) appointed former ESPN star sports CEO and former chairman of Singapore based sport hub **Manu Sawhney** as its new chief executive officer, replacing David Richardson.
- David Richardson, will step down after the World Cup that is to be held in England.
ii. Manu Sawhney will officially join the organisation in the month of July. Until then Sawhney will work along with outgoing CEO Richardson to ensure a smooth transition of leadership before assuming control.

iii. The appointment process was led by the apex body’s chairman Shashank Manohar and the Nominations Committee.

India's 1st CWG Boxing Gold-Medallist Mohammed Ali Qamar appointed as Women Team's youngest Coach: BFI
On January 15, 2019, the Boxing Federation of India (BFI) appointed India's first Commonwealth Games gold medalist in boxing, Mohammed Ali Qamar, as chief coach for the country's women pugilists.

i. The 38-year-old became the youngest ever to be appointed in the position.

ii. He replaced veteran Shiv Singh.

iii. Prior to this, he has been an assistant coach in the national camp for more than a year.

iv. Additionally, the Arjuna awardee has coached the Railways Sports Promotion Board's women’s team for more than three years.

v. In addition to this, the BFI also appointed 39-year-old C A Kuttappan as the chief coach for the men's camp.

President Kovind approved elevation of Justice Sanjiv Khanna, Justice Dinesh Maheshwari to Supreme Court
On January 16, 2019, President Ram Nath Kovind approved the elevation of Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justice Dinesh Maheshwari to the Supreme Court.

i. Justice Khanna is presently a judge of the Delhi High Court.

ii. Justice Maheshwari is the Chief Justice of the Karnataka High Court.

iii. The elevation was done under the recommendations of the Supreme Court collegium headed by Chief Justice of India Justice Ranjan Gogoi.

iv. The appointments of the two judges took the total strength of the Supreme Court to 28 as against a sanctioned strength of 31.

Background:
♦ The Chief Justice of India and the Judges of the Supreme Court are appointed by the President under clause (2) of Article 124 of the Constitution.

President appoints senior advocate Sanjay Jain as Additional Solicitor General in Supreme court
On January 16, 2019, President Ram Nath Kovind appointed senior advocate Sanjay Jain as Additional Solicitor General of India for the Supreme Court. He will be on the post till June 30, 2020.

Key points to be noted:

i. Additional Solicitor General, appointed under Law Officers Act 1987, is the third largest law officer of the Central Government. It is a duty of the Additional Solicitor General to assist the Solicitor General.

ii. The President of India Ram Nath Kovind also appointed Senior Advocate KM Nataraj as the Additional Solicitor General (ASG) in the Supreme Court of India. His term will also end on June 30, 2020. He also held the post as the Additional Advocate-General of Karnataka for four years from 2009 and also as the Additional Solicitor General of India for Southern Zone for a period of 03 years.

Additional news to be Noted:
Advocate Madhavi Divan was appointed ASG (Additional Solicitor General) in the Supreme Court and became the third woman to become an ASG (Additional Solicitor General) in the Supreme Court.

Prabhat Singh appointed DG in NHRC
On 17th January 2019, the Department of Personnel & Training, Government of India has appointed Senior IPS Officer Prabhat Singh as Director General (Investigation) in the National Human Rights Commission.

Key Points:
i. Singh, a 1985 batch IPS Officer of AGMUT cadre is at present Special Director, Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF).

ii. He has been appointed to the post for a period up to April 30, 2020, the date of his superannuation.

iii. The appointment of Mr. Singh came after the post of the Director General (Investigation) National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) fell vacant with the retirement of Gurbachan Singh (IPS 1984 batch) on 31 December 2018.

“Poetic Justice” Asif Khosa takes oath as 26th Chief Justice of Pakistan

On 18th January 2019, Justice Asif Saeed Khosa who is known for his habit of citing works of literature in his judgements took oath as the 26th Chief Justice of Pakistan in a ceremony held at the President’s House, Islamabad.

Key Points:

i. Justice Khosa, 64, was administered oath by President Arif Alvi, in the ceremony which was also attended by Prime Minister Imran Khan, judges of higher courts, ministers, diplomats, civil and military officials, lawyers and foreign guests, including from India.

ii. He will serve as the top judge of Pakistan for nearly 337 days and is scheduled to retire on December 21, 2019.

iii. Because of his habit of citing works of literature in his judgements, he is known as the “poetic justice” and is regarded as Pakistan’s top expert in criminal law.

iv. Some famous judgements of Justice Khosa include overturning of the death penalty of Asia Bibi, a Christian woman jailed for blasphemy and disqualification from politics for life to the former prime minister Nawaz Sharif after corruption allegations in 2017 in the landmark Panama papers verdict.

Swamy appointed Karnataka HC acting CJ

On 17th January 2019, the President of India Shri Ram Nath Kovind using the power conferred to him under Article 223 of the Constitution appointed Justice Lingappa Narayana Swamy as the Acting Chief Justice of the Karnataka High Court.

Key Points:

i. He was appointed Acting Chief Justice of the Karnataka High Court following the elevation of the incumbent Chief Justice Dinesh Maheshwari to the Supreme Court.

ii. Justice Swamy who began his career as an Advocate in 1987 and practiced in the Karnataka High Court is presently the senior most Judge of the Karnataka High Court.

iii. He was appointed as an Additional Judge of the Karnataka High Court in 2007 and was made a permanent judge in 2009.

RBI approves appointment of V Vaidyanathan as MD, CEO of IDFC First Bank

On 17th January 2019, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) approved the appointment of V Vaidyanathan as MD and CEO of IDFC First Bank for a period of three years. The Tenure of V Vaidyanathan started from 19th December 2019.

Key Points

i. V Vaidyanathan is the founder and chairman of Capital First.

ii. IDFC Bank and non-banking financial company Capital First completed their merger in December 2018 and created a loan asset book of 1.03 Lakh crore for the merged entity IDFC First bank.

Sweden, Prime Minister Stefan Lofven has been elected for a second term

On 18th January 2019, Sweden ended a four-month political vacuum when lawmakers elected 61 years old Swedish Social Democratic Party’s leader Stefan Lofven as the Prime Minister of Sweden for a second term.

Key Points

i. Stefan Lofven was succeeded in his second attempt to form government with 153 votes while 115 votes against him.

ii. Government is formed in coalition with the Green Party and in budget cooperation with Center Party and the Liberals.
iii. Legislative Elections in Sweden were held in September 2018 and no main parliamentary bloc win majority in these elections.

**Prabhat Singh appointed DG in NHRC**
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**Key Points:**
1. Singh, a 1985 batch IPS Officer of AGMUT cadre is at present Special Director, Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF).
2. He has been appointed to the post for a period up to April 30, 2020, the date of his superannuation.
3. The appointment of Mr. Singh came after the post of the Director General (Investigation) National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) fell vacant with the retirement of Gurbachan Singh (IPS 1984 batch) on 31 December 2018.

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**Key Points:**
1. Justice Khosa, 64, was administered oath by President Arif Alvi, in the ceremony which was also attended by Prime Minister Imran Khan, judges of high courts, ministers, diplomats, civil and military officials, lawyers and foreign guests, including from India.
2. He will serve as the top judge of Pakistan for nearly 337 days and is scheduled to retire on December 20, 2019.
3. Because of his habit of citing works of literature in his judgements, he is known as the “poetic justice” and is regarded as Pakistan’s top expert in criminal law.
4. Some famous judgements of Justice Khosa include overturning of the death penalty of Asia Bibi, a Christian woman jailed for blasphemy and disqualification from politics for life to the former prime minister Nawaz Sharif after corruption allegations in 2017 in the landmark Panama papers verdict.

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**Key Points:**
1. He was appointed Acting Chief Justice of the Karnataka High Court following the elevation of the incumbent Chief Justice Dinesh Maheshwari to the Supreme Court.
2. Justice Swamy who began his career as an Advocate in 1987 and practiced in the Karnataka High Court is presently the senior most Judge of the Karnataka High Court.
3. He was appointed as an Additional Judge of the Karnataka High Court in 2007 and was made a permanent judge in 2009.

**Aqeel Ahmed: new chairman of council of Leather Exports**
On January 18, 2019, the Council for Leather Exports (CLE) has appointed Aqeel Ahmed as its new chairperson.

1. The council also announced Sanjay Leekha as its new vice chairman.
2. In global leather export, India is to have a growth of 5-6% by March 2019. India’s share in global leather exports and imports is about 3 per cent.
3. The council is a trade promotion organisation of leather and leather products industry. It works under the aegis of Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
Andry Rajoelina New President of Madagascar
On January 19, 2019, Madagascar president, Andry Rajoelina, has sworn into office after taking the oath in Antananarivo before nine judges of the High Constitutional Court. He succeeds Hery Rajaonarimampianina.

**Key points to note:**
i. Few moments after taking oath as the president, he had a bilateral meeting with President Akufo-Addo of Ghana and that meeting indicated his intentions to deepen the relations between the two countries.

ii. He mentioned that his main motive is to double the electricity production and sell it at low price to his people and to create industries in all the six provinces to equalize the development in all corners of Madagascar.

Shri Jha was appointed Member of Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC)
On 21st January 2019, Shri Indu Shekhar Jha was appointed the member of Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC) and Shri Lalchharlian Pachuau was appointed as a member of Joint Electricity Regulation Commission for Manipur and Mizoram by Power Ministry.

**Key Points**
i. Union Minister of State (I/C) for Power and the New & Renewable Energy, Shri R K Singh administered the oath of Office and Secrecy to Indu Shekhar Jha.

ii. Indu Shekhar Jha was working as the Chief Managing Director of Powergird Corporation of India Limited since 2015 before joining CERC.

iii. Shri Lachharliana Pachuau has been appointed for the period of five years or age of 65 years whichever is earlier.

**About CERC:**
The Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC) had been established by the Government of India under the provisions of the Electricity Regulatory Commissions (ERC) Act, 1998. CERC is the Central Commission for the purposes of the Electricity Act, 2003 which has repealed the ERC Act, 1998.

Flipkart promotes Rishi Vasudev to head Myntra-Jabong’s fashion & lifestyle categories
Walmart backed E-Commerce giant Flipkart promoted its Fashion department head Rishi Vasudev to head Myntra – Jabong’s Fashion and lifestyle categories as an additional responsibility.

i. Rishi Vasudev will report to Flipkart CEO Kalyan Krishnamurthy after the formal announcement which is expected in next 10 days.

ii. Earlier Flipkart has appointed Amar Nagaram as the head of Myntra-Jabong after resignation of its CEO Ananth Narayanan.

Congo’s court upholds election victory of Felix Tshisekedi
On 20th January 2019, the Constitutional court of Democratic Republic of Congo confirmed the President’s election victory of Felix Tshisekedi of UDPS party making path for the first peaceful, democratic transfer of Power since Congo’s Independence in 1960. He succeeds the Outgoing President Joseph Kabila.

**Key Points**
i. The New National Assembly will be installed in Congo on 26th January 2019.

ii. Felix Tshisekedi won more than 7 million votes or 38 per cent and his opponent Fayulu received 34 per cent votes in the election conducted on 30th December 2018.

Kristin Scott Thomas appointed as the President of France’s Cesar Awards
of the French Academy’s most prestigious ceremony, Cesar Awards. This actress assumed the chair of president after it had been headless for past two years. Scott Thomas was appointed as the president on January 21, 2019, Kristin

**Key points:**
i. As a President, she will be opening the ceremony, that is set to take place in Paris on February 22. Nomination for this year’s award would be unveiled on Jan 23, 2019.
ii. The President herself is a three-time Cesar nominee for her roles in “I’ve Loved You So Long,” “Leaving,” and “Sarah’s Key.”

Policybazaar.com’s new two executives on post
On January 21, 2019, India’s largest insurance website and comparison portal and also owner of India’s leading marketplace, PaisaBazaar.com and health-tech venture, docprime.com had made two new appointments. They are as follows:

i. Rahul Agarwal, as its new Chief Technology Officer (CTO)
ii. Jayant Chauhan as its new Chief Product Officer (CPO).

Burkina Faso President appoints Christophe Joseph Marie Dabire as new Prime Minister
On 23rd January 2019, West African country Burkina Faso President appointed Christophe Joseph Marie Dabire new Prime Minister as Paul Kaba Theiba and his cabinet resigned last week.

Key Points:

i. Christophe Joseph Marie Dabire is a politician and economist. He takes the reins of government at the time when Burkina Faso is economic and security challenges.
ii. He worked as commissions for 10 years at the West African economical and Monetary Union. He served as ministers under former President Blaise Compaore between 1994 and 1996
iii. Dabire was head of the department of health between 1992 to 1997 and Higher Education and Scientific Research between 1997 to 2000
iv. He was a member of the National assembly from 1997 to 2007 under the former ruling partner.
v. Thieba did not give reasons for his resignation. It is evident that growing concerns over terrorists threats and social uneasiness are said to be the reasons.

Piyush Goyal named interim Finance & Corporate Affairs minister
On January 24, 2019, The President of India appointed Piyush Goyal as the interim finance and corporate affairs minister because of Arun Jately’s health issues. Piyush Goyal’s tenure as a interim finance Minister will be till August 2019.

Key points:

i. Jaitley will be designated as a minister without a portfolio during his period of indisposition.
ii. Being the interim finance and corporate affair minister, he will present the budget on February 1
iii. This is second time, Goyal has been given charge of the Finance Ministry.

Ranveet Gill to replace Rana Kapoor as the Yes bank’s MD and CEO
On January 24, 2019, Yes bank got its approval to appoint Deutsche Bank India head Ravneet Singh Gill as the successor to Rana Kapoor. His tenure will begin from March 1, 2019.

Important Facts:

i. Yes Bank’s hunt for new CEO ended up in Ranveet Gill as RBI rejected Rana Kapoor’s query extend to next three years.
ii. Though Kapoor’s CEO position ends up on January 31, 2019, He will still hold 10 percent in the bank share and will be entitled as the ‘Indian Partner’
iii. Kapoor’s term at the bank ends on Jan. 31, after which there will be a month-long gap before Gill takes over, so the board of directors have decided to appoint a interim head to hold the post for that period.

Sultan Abdullah elected new Malaysian King
On 24th January 2019, The Leaders of Malaysia’s royal houses, known as the “Conference of Rulers” elected 59 years old Sultan Abdullah who is the ruler of the Malaysian state of Pahang as new King for the period of 5 years under a system of rotational monarchy which is unique to Malaysia following the abdication of previous monarch Sultan Muhammad V after 2 years on the throne.

Key Points:

i. Malaysia has an Unique Constitutional Monarchy where Rulers are elected from nine hereditary state rulers every 5 years.
ii. Sultan Nazrin Shah of Perak state was named as the deputy king as per the statement issued by the keeper of the Rulers' Seal Syed Danial Syed Ahmad.

iii. For the first time in Malaysian history Sultan Muhammad V of Kelantan abdicated after just 2 years on the throne in January 2019.

iv. The sworn in ceremony is expected to be held on 31st January 2019. Sultan Abdullah sworn as Sultan of Pahang earlier this month.

**IndiGo appoints Ronojoy Dutta as CEO**

On January 24, 2019, Aviation veteran and former president of United airlines Ronojoy Dutta was appointed CEO of Indigo airlines. He succeeds Aditya Ghosh.

i. IndiGo also appointed former Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) chairman M Damodaran as chairman of the board and non-executive independent director.

ii. Ronojoy Dutta will remain as the company CEO for the next five years.

**Parthasarathi Mukherjee reappointed as the MD of Lakshmi Vilas Bank for another two years**


i. Previously, he served in Axis Bank and SBI in several position.

**Ascent Meditech appoints Hrithik Roshan As it Brand Ambassador for Flamingo**

On January 25, 2019, Medical products maker Ascent Meditech appointed Bollywood actor Hrithik Roshan as the brand ambassador for its brand 'Flamingo'. Ascent Meditech's product ranges from orthopaedic, healthcare, wound and injury, till to date it have over 300 products available to 47 countries in the world.

**Dr Poonam Khetrapal Singh reappointed as Regional Director WHO SOUTH EAST Asia**

On January 28, 2019, Dr Poonam Khetrapal Singh has been Reappointed as Regional Director for World Health Organization South-East Asia, for a second five-year term. Her second term of office will begin on 1 February 2019.

**Important Facts:**

i. She is the first woman to become Regional Director of WHO South-East Asia Region

ii. Thailand became the first in Asia-Pacific to eliminate mother-to-child transmission of HIV and syphilis. Maldives and Srilanka were malaria free.

iii. India was declared yaws-free and Nepal declared as trachoma-free.

**Dilip Sadarangani appointed as Chairman of Federal Bank**

On 28th January 2019, South India based private sector lender Federal Bank appointed Dilip Sadarangani as the part-time Chairman. He has been on bank's board since 2013.

**Key Points**

i. The appointment of Mr. Dilip Sadarangani who has been guiding person in technology in multiple banks, as Chairman of the board of Federal Bank comes at a time when the bank makes confident strides in gaining market share in India.

ii. Mr. Sadarangani played key roles in setting up of IT infrastructure in different banks in India, Australia and Kuwait. He was a core member of the team which automated the first 50 branches of State Bank of India.

iii. Federal Bank is a scheduled commercial bank in India with a history of 70 years. It also has its Representative offices abroad at Abu Dhabi and Dubai.
**ACQUISITIONS & MERGERS**

**Softbank to acquire 40% stake in FirstCry for $400 mn: Report**
The Tokyo Headquartered investment giant, **SoftBank** has decided to invest **$400 million** for over **40 per cent** stake in BrainBees Solutions, which owns and operates omni-channel baby and mother care product retailer **FirstCry**.

**Key Points**

i. SoftBank is valuing 8 years old Pune based venture, FirstCry at $600-700 million and planning to pick over 40 per cent stake whereas FirstCry Founder, Supam Maheshwari and Amitava Saha will retain 12-14 per cent stake.

ii. As per SoftBank officials the money will come in tranches linked to financial and business performance milestones.

iii. **Morgan Stanley** acted as the Financial advisor for this big deal.

**Amazon-Witzig bid to acquire Aditya Birla’s retail store**
On January 18, 2019, Competition commission of India approved **Amazon and Witzig Advisory services** deal to acquire **Aditya Birla**.

**Key points to be Noted**

i. According to CCI’s approval, **Amazon acquired 49%** of the shares and **Witzig got 51%** of shares in Aditya Birla.

ii. This is also seen as the US-based e-commerce major Amazon’s second investment in the Indian market after it had picked up stake in the K Raheja group’s retail arm **Shopper Stop**.

iii. Witzig, a wholly owned subsidiary of Samara Alternative Investment Fund is registered with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) as category II Alternative fund. CCI gave approval to the acquisition of 99.99 per cent of the equity share capital of Aditya Birla Retail limited (ABRL) to Witzig Advisory Services Private Limited.

**Reliance Industries gets CCI nod to acquire Hathway, DEN**
On January 22, 2019, The Competition Commission of India gave approval to Reliance Industries for the acquisition of Den Networks and Hathway Cable and Datacom.

Reliance acquired **66% in DEN** and **51.3% in Hathway** for total cost of **Rs 5,230 crore**. Out of which, In DEN, RIL is making a primary investment of Rs 2,045 crore through a preferential issue and secondary purchase of Rs 245 crore from existing promoters. In Hathway, RIL is investing Rs 2,940 crore.

**India enters $100 billion M&A club in 2018:Grant Thornton’s (GT) annual Dealtracker**
As per the **Grant Thornton’s (GT) annual report titled ‘Dealtracker’**, India has entered the **$ 100 billion** club in the merger and acquisition (M&A) space in **2018**.

**Key Points:**

i. In the year 2018, for the first time 1,200 deals worth around **$ 110 billion** or **Rs 71,000 crore** were concluded in India in a year.

ii. As per the report, the deals in 2018 showed an **80%** jump in value over 2017. In 2017 deals worth **$ 60 billion** were concluded while in 2016 it touched **$ 57 billion**.

iii. The rise in the value of M&A is expected to be the result of on-going capital market and regulatory reforms, constant amendments to reforms like Goods and Services Tax (GST), Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA), Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), and efforts to improve ease of doing business in the country.

iv. The consolidation activity driven by expanding the market share, buying technology and diversifying market presence also helped in the surge in the M&A deal activities.

v. The growth in the deal space is expected to come down for the first two quarters in the current year.
GSKCH India gets CCI approval for merger deal with HUL
On January 25, 2019, the Competition Commission of India (CCI), the fair trade regulator has approved the merger deal between GlaxoSmithKline Consumer Healthcare (GSKCH India) and Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL) via an all-equity deal.

i. CCI also approved the merging of schemes between the two companies and the total business has been valued at Rs 31,700 crore.

ii. The scheme remains subject to the receipt of other necessary statutory and regulatory approvals under applicable laws, including by the NSE, SSE, SEBI, NCLT and the respective shareholders and creditors of HUL and the company.

iii. GSKCH India is familiar in the health food drinks with popular brands such as Horlicks and Boost. Anglo-Dutch FMCG giant Unilever had announced already in Dec 2018 about the acquirement brands Horlicks and Boost from GlaxoSmithKline in India.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

AI tool found to hide data in image to ‘cheat’ on next task
As per the Research of Stanford and Google, A Machine learning Agent, CycleGAN which works on Artificial Intelligence tasked with transforming Aerial images into map was hiding information in order to cheat later.

i. CycleGAN, a neutral network that learns to transform images was working well till it was found that the agent didn’t really learn to make the map out of image but it learned to subtly encode the features from one into the noise patterns of the other.

ii. This is not a case of machine getting smarter but it is a case in which when a machine is not smart enough to do the difficult job then it learns a way to cheat the humans.

NASA’s New Horizons spacecraft Historic Flyby of Ultima Thule
On 1st January 2019, the American space agency NASA’s New Horizons spacecraft performed the farthest flyby in history as it approached the Kuiper Belt object Ultima Thule.

Key Points:

i. At 6.5 billion km(appr) from Earth, the encounter is the most distant ever exploration of a Solar System body. The cosmic rendezvous occurred so far from Earth that it took more than 6 hours for a signal from New Horizons to reach Earth.

ii. Ultima is an object in the Kuiper belt which is a band of frozen material that orbits the Sun more than 2 billion km (1.25bn miles) further out than the Neptune; and 1.5 billion km beyond even the dwarf planet Pluto, which New Horizons visited in 2015.

iii. NASA launched the $700 million nuclear-powered New Horizons spacecraft in January 2006 on a mission originally aimed at Pluto which was very successful as the spacecraft sent the first-ever detailed photos of the dwarf planet.

Scientists develop ‘brain pacemaker’ to treat epilepsy Parkinson’s
Scientists have developed a device named WAND which stands for “Wireless artifact-free neuromodulation device” that works like a “Pacemaker for the brain” to monitor the brain’s electrical activity and potentially deliver fine-tuned treatments to patients suffering from diseases like epilepsy and Parkinson’s.

i. The most important feature of the device is that it is both wireless and autonomous, which means when it learns to recognize the signs of tremor or seizures then it can adjust the stimulation parameters on its own to prevent the unwanted movements.

ii. The device has custom integrated circuits to record the full signal from both the subtle brain wave and the strong electrical pulses.
Paper Sensor to detect freshness of Milk developed by Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati
On 01st January 2019, scientists at Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati have developed a simple paper kit that can test freshness of milk and tell how well it has been pasteurized.
   i. The kit is sided with smart phone app to ensure that milk is consumed before it turns too sour.
   ii. The team has prepared a kit by attaching probe discs onto a 2 cm square transparent cellulose acetate film. The probe is then covered with another cellulose acetate film.
   iii. Colour reaction takes place when milk is injected through a tiny hole in the cover and a smart phone can be used to get the results. It takes just about 15 minutes to detect raw milk from pasteurized one.

US scientists successfully launched a telescope from Antarctica that analyses X-rays arriving from distant neutron stars, black holes
Scientists from Washington University of United states of America (USA) successfully launched a telescope (X-Calibur instrument) from the McMurdo Station in Antarctica that will analyze X-rays arriving from distant neutron stars, black holes and other exotic celestial bodies.
   i. The X-calibur instrument is carried aloft on a helium balloon intended to reach an altitude of 130,000 feet which is four times the cruising altitude of commercial airliners.
   ii. Neutron stars are object of very small radius around 30 km and a very high density composed of closely packed neutrons.

China: Lunar rover named ‘Yutu-2’, lands on the far side of the moon
On January 4, 2019, Lunar rover Yutu-2 or Jade Rabbit-2 of the Chang’e-4 spacecraft made the first-ever soft landing on the far side of the moon.
   i. Images were sent back to the Earth via the relay satellite ‘Queqiao’.
   ii. In Chinese folklore, Yutu is the white pet rabbit of Chang’e, the moon goddess who lent her name to the Chinese lunar mission.
   iii. China’s lunar probe is a part of its ‘Made in China 2025’ project.

‘Rail Kumbh Seva Mobile App’: mobile app to help people navigate through Prayagraj city during Kumbh Mela launched by NCR
On January 6, 2019, the North Central Railway, (NCR) launched a mobile application the ‘Rail Kumbh Seva Mobile App’ to help navigate the attendees of the Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj city from January 15- March 4, 2019.
   i. It will also provide information regarding all the ‘Mela special’ trains that will be run during the period.
   ii. The app will provide a link to the user to buy both unreserved and reserved train tickets.
   iii. Also, the users will not only get to know their current location, but will also be able to reach to all railway stations, the mela zone, major hotels, bus stations and other facilities within Prayagraj.
   iv. A photo gallery, containing pictures of previous Kumbh Melas can also be accessed through the app.

HD 21749b: NASA probe discovers new planet
On 7th January 2019, NASA’s transiting exoplanet survey satellite (TESS) has discovered a planet named HD21749b orbiting around the star HD 21749, which lies about 53 light years from earth in the faint constellation reticulum. TESS does this work by carving the sky up into overlapping sectors, studying each one for 27 days at a time. This is the Third Planet discovered by TESS after begins its Operation last year.

Key points:
   i. Discovery team leader Diana Drogomir, institute of astrophysics and space research said that the planet has a density of water, a thick atmosphere and has an average surface temperature around 300 degrees Fahrenheit.
   ii. HD 21749b completes one orbit of its host star, which is nearly as bright as our sun, every 36 earth
days.

iii. It is a “sub Neptune”, around three times bigger than earth and 23 times more massive then earth, which means it’s likely gaseous rather than rocky.

Reliance Jio introduces 'Kumbh JioPhone' app for pilgrims
On 7th January 2019, Reliance Jio Infocomm launched the Kumbh JioPhone application, especially designed for millions of pilgrims who will congregate during this year’s Ardh Kumbh Mela at Prayagraj.

Key Points:

i. The new app which will be available to both existing and new JioPhone users will contain information on Kumbh, real-time travel information (special trains, buses etc.), booking tickets and receiving updates, ‘Yatri Ashray’ at stations, emergency helpline numbers, area routes and maps, pre-published bath and religious day schedules and railway camp mela.

ii. The new app has a feature called ‘Khoya Paya’ that will help users stay close to near and dear ones by finding their exact location.

iii. The Kumbh Mela which is set to take place from 15th January to 4th March, 2019 in Prayagraj is the world’s largest human congregation, with over 130 million pilgrims taking a dip in the holy waters in a span of just 55 days.

‘Police-E-Eye’ app launched by Coimbatore city traffic police to enable report of traffic violations
On January 7, 2019, Coimbatore city traffic police launched a mobile application ‘Police-E-Eye’ for the public to report on traffic violations to police and to keep a check on the same.

i. The app was developed by Aveon Infotech Pvt. Ltd under its Corporate Social Responsibility.

ii. The violations so filed can be photographed which will be sent to the police along with the location, time and date with the help of GPS.

‘Space fuel’, made by crystallizing CO2, to curb greenhouse gases created by IIT Madras scientists
On January 9, 2019, IIT-Madras team created ‘space fuel’ by trapping carbon dioxide in crystalline form with the help of water molecules. This would in future help to curb greenhouse gases.

i. This was made in vacuum, one thousand billion times below the atmospheric pressure called ultra-high vacuum (UHV) and temperature close to minus 263 degree Celsius.

ii. These conditions are present in deep space which they mimicked in the lab.

iii. The Study was published in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS).

K2-288Bb new planet discovered using NASA telescope
On 7th January, 2019, Scientists have discovered new planet K2-288Bb, which is twice the size of Earth. Its discovery was announced at the meeting of the American Astronomical Society held in Seattle, Washington DC 233rd. It is estimated that liquid water may exist on the planet’s surface. The new world, known as K2-288Bb, is similar to Neptune. It is found 226 light-years away in the Taurus constellation.

The planet contains a pair of dim, cool M-type stars that are 5.1 billion miles apart, about six times the distance between Saturn and the sun. The brightest of the two stars is half as massive as our sun, and the other star is one-third of the sun’s mass. K2-288Bb orbits the smaller, dimmer star, completing a full orbit every 31.3 days.

First manned mission to space by December 2021: ISRO
On January 11, 2019, Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) chairman K Sivan announced that the 1st Gaganyaan manned mission to outer space would be launched by December 2021.

i. Under Gaganyaan project, India is planning to send three astronauts to outer space for seven days and bring them back.

ii. As of 2019, 332 launches are planned this year. Detail of some of these missions are as follows:
Launch of Chandrayaan -2 mission to the moon in mid-April 2019. Indian land up and rover will study south-pole of the moon for the first time under Chandrayaan-2 mission.

GSAT-20 Satellite for high bandwidth connectivity to be launched in September-October 2019.

ISRO is conceiving a mission to Venus by 2023.

ISRO TV Channel will be launched by another 3-4 months (March to April 2019).

6 incubation centres around the country would be set up by ISRO to help start-ups to begin new ventures.

ISRO will invite meritorious students to ISRO for developing Nanosatellites.

**SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket launches Ten Iridium communications satellites**

On January 11, 2019, The SpaceX Falcon 9 launched Iridium Communications satellite comprises of 10 voice and data satellites, which is an alternative for entire fleet with a new generation of orbiters from the Vandenberg Air Force station in California.

**Facts to be noted:**

i. The Iridium constellation was originally developed by Iridium SSC, with first-generation satellites deployed between 1997 to 2002. The constellation’s name comes from the chemical element Iridium, which has atomic number 77.

ii. This launch was one of the eight launches that are scheduled for the Virginia-based Iridium Communications to put a total of seventy-five Iridium-NEXT satellites into Earth’s lower orbit.

iii. The Iridium NEXT satellites also carry a system by Aireon LLC for space-based air traffic surveillance over 100 percent of the globe. The Aireon system collects data automatically and in real time, even from remote areas over the world’s oceans.

**ROADEO: robot inducted by Chennai Traffic Police for traffic management**

On January 14, 2019, the Chennai Traffic Police introduced a road safety robot named ROADEO, to help in traffic management and assist citizens.

i. With this, Chennai became the second city after Mumbai to induct robots in traffic management.

ii. The robots would be integrated with traffic signals and could be managed manually via Bluetooth devices.

iii. The robot has been developed by schoolchildren of a private robotics lab.

**Albumin better indicator of diabetes: study by scientists of NCL, Pune**

On January 14, 2019, scientists at the National Chemical Laboratory, Pune suggested that albumin can be a better indicator of diabetes.

i. This can be achieved based on measurements of levels of free albumin and albumin attached to glucose molecules in the blood.

ii. Glycation is binding of glucose to protein or lipid molecules and glycated hemoglobin is the percentage of glucose bound to hemoglobin.

iii. These albumin levels in blood influence glycation of haemoglobin which further helps in diagnosis of diabetes.

**SpaceX-CRS-16 Dragon craft departed from the International Space Station**

On January 13, 2019, The SpaceX-CRS-16 Dragon cargo craft departed from the International Space Station and making a remark as the first night splashdown and recovered the Dragon vehicle. SpaceX-CRS-16 Dragon transported more than 2,500 kilograms (5,600 pounds) of cargo to the space station and orbited Earth for five weeks.

i. SpaceX-CRS-16 Dragon is a Commercial Resupply Service mission to the International Space Station launched by NASA.

ii. The SpaceX-owned commercial cargo craft splashed down in the Pacific Ocean west of Baja California on January 13, 2019, closing out a 39-day mission.

iii. The cargo delivery included 40 mice sent to the space station to study the effects of microgravity on the animals’ immune systems, muscles and bones.
iv. It was the second nighttime splashdown of a Dragon spacecraft, following a return before dawn in July 2017. The returned SpaceX refurbished the spacecraft for another launch, a practice the company followed for five of its resupply missions to the space station.

**The International Observatory of Human Rights (IOHR) launched world’s first television channel dedicated to human rights has been launched in London**

On January 16, 2019, world’s first television channel dedicated to human rights was launched in London by the International Observatory of Human Rights (IOHR).

i. It would be a web-based channel would bring human rights issues to audiences in over 20 countries across Europe, Latin America and the Middle East.

ii. Initially the programmes would be broadcasted in English but other languages including Farsi, Turkish, Arabic and Russian would be inducted in the future.

iii. Also a mobile app for the channel would be launched.

**First in India: HAL-built light combat helicopter completes air-to-air weapon trials**

On 17th January 2019, Light combat helicopter (LCH), has successfully carried out air-to-air missile firing on a moving aerial target at the integrated test range in Chandipur on Odisha coast. This LCH is first in the country, which is designed and developed by Rotary Wing Research & Design Centre (RWRDC), Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL).

**Key Points:**

i. The helicopter is equipped with helmet mounted sight and a forward looking infrared sighting system, allowing its pilots to detect and destroy any target on ground or in the air.

ii. Other weapons on the LCH include a 20mm Turret gun and 70 mm Rockets, that had completed the test last year.

**ISRO to launch two unmanned space missions in 2020 and 2021**

On 18th January 2019, ISRO announced that two unmanned space missions to be launched in the year 2020 and 2021.

**Key points:**

i. Country’s first manned space flight Gaganyaan will send three humans into space for seven days by December 2021, which will carry humanoids not animals.

ii. In order to boost the Space Mission in India, the Union Cabinet had approved Rs 10,000 crore budget for the proposed human spaceflight mission.

iii. ISRO would launch a one month ‘Young Scientists programme to provide them with practical experience in building satellites.

iv. ISRO will develop an incubation center at Tripura and four more will be created at Trichy, Nagpur, Rourkela, and Indore.

**Japan launches Epsilon-4 rocket with 7 satellites**

On 18th January 2019, Japan launched the Epsilon – 4 rocket carrying 7 satellites including world’s first artificial meteor shower blasted into space from the Uchinoura space centre by the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA).

**Key Points**

i. The cost of launch which is roughly USD 50 million was borne by Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) to promote and encourage space exploration by private sector in Japan.

ii. The Epsilon series was developed in a bid to put small satellites into orbit at a low cost.

**Indian Navy inducted two Fast Interceptor Craft (FIC) into its fleet at Nagapattinam, Tamil Nadu**

On January 18, 2019, the Indian Navy inducted two Fast Interceptor Craft (FIC) at Nagapattinam, Tamil Nadu, to boost coastal security.

i. The vessels were acquired for Sagar Prahari Bal, a unit of the Navy.

ii. The boats can carry a variety of armament from heavy machine guns to grenade launchers with the upper deck canopies bullet-proof.
US spy satellite launched into orbit from California
On January 19, 2019, a powerful Delta 4 Heavy rocket carrying a U.S. spy satellite lifted off from California.

Important points to note
i. The central core booster's Aerojet Rocketdyne RS-68A engine continued fired until the upper stage's single RL10B-2 engine ignited to continue the climb to space. Details of the mission, dubbed NROL-71, were not released.
ii. This was the second attempt after the launch was postponed because of a communication problem between the control center and the launch site.
iii. National Reconnaissance Office satellites gathers intelligence information for U.S. national security and an array of other purposes including assessing impacts of natural disasters. The alliance already have carried 27 launches for the National Reconnaissance Office over the past 12 years.

TRAI releases Tele-density data of India
On 18th January 2019, the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has released the Tele-density data of India which stated that the total number of mobile phone subscribers in India was 1,031.28 million during the month November, 2018.

Key Points:
i. The number of telephone subscribers in India stood at 1,193.72 million at the end of Nov-18.
ii. The overall Tele-density in India climbed to 91.21% at the end of Nov-18.
iii. Total wireless subscribers (GSM, CDMA & LTE) went upto 1,171.76 million at the end of Nov-18. This has made the Wireless Tele-density in India to reach 89.54% at the end of Nov-18.
iv. The private access service providers held 89.99% market share of the wireless subscribers whereas BSNL and MTNL, the two PSU access service providers, had a market share of only 10.01%.
v. The cumulative Mobile Number Portability (MNP) requests reached to 407.22 million at the end of Nov-18, since the implementation of MNP.
vi. Wireline subscribers declined to 21.96 million at the end of Nov-18 and the Overall Wireline Tele-density (%) remained at 1.68 at the end of Nov-18
vii. BSNL and MTNL, the two PSU access service providers, held 67.27% of the wireline market share.
viii. The number of broadband subscribers remained at 511.90 million at the end of Nov-18. The top five broadband service providers constituted 98.56% market share of the total broadband subscribers.
ix. The Wireless Broadband Service was topped by Reliance Jio Infocomm Ltd (271.55 million subscribers) and Wired Broadband Service by BSNL (9.17 million subscribers).

Microsoft launches e-platform under Project ReWeave to help Handloom weavers
On January 20, 2019, Microsoft India has launched a new e-commerce platform re-weave.in for handloom weavers under its Project ReWeave.

i. This e-commerce platform will help connect artisans to buyers directly, enabling them to expand to newer customers and markets.
ii. Microsoft in association with the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) also curated a special curriculum in ‘CAD and Color for Handloom Weaving’ to provide digital training in handloom design.

Maharashtra armed with triple-drug therapy to fight elephantiasis
On January 21, 2019, Maharashtra in collaboration with World Health Organization (WHO)-recommended triple-drug therapy for lymphatic filariasis to speed up elimination of the disease in Nagpur.

Key points:
i. Actor Swapnil Joshi is assigned as brand ambassador for this project.
ii. This disease is transmitted through mosquitoes. The infection is usually acquired in childhood, causing hidden damage to the lymphatic system.
Israel Successfully Tests Arrow 3 Anti-ballistic Missile System

On January 22, 2019, Israel successfully tested the Arrow 3 missile system from Central Israel, it is done in collaboration with American Missile Defense Agency.

**Important Points:**

i. Arrow 3 is considered to be the next step in the defence system, which would help the Israel Military Force to attack their enemies from a greater distance and greater height

ii. It is a long range anti-ballistic missile

Navy Chief Admiral Sunil Lanba Commissioned new Naval Air Base 'INS KOHASSA' at Diglipur, Andaman

On 24th January 2019, Navy Chief Admiral Sunil Lanba commissioned new Naval Air Base 'INS KOHASSA' at Diglipur, Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

**Key Points**

i. The air base is situated at the northernmost part of Andaman and Nicobar Islands. It will be used for both defence and civil aircraft.

ii. The air base will function as an independent unit and will be used to handle operations of helicopters and small aircrafts like the Dornier.

iii. INS Kohassa being the third air base in Andaman and Nicobar Islands will be used for surveillance of Chinese ships and submarines entering the Indian Ocean through Malacca Strait.

iv. The probable reason behind INS Kohassa is a Chinese submarine docked on Colombo port in Sri Lanka in 2014 which drew an alarm and India government raised the issue to Sri Lankan authorities.

Online inter-state trade through the e-NAM portal started

On 19\(^{th}\) January 2019, the inter-state trade through e-NAM was initiated with the first trade of 8.46 quintal of groundnut between a farmer from Gadwal Mandi in Telangana and a trader from Kurnool in Andhra Pradesh.

**Key Points**

i. The e-NAM, a pan India electronic trading portal aims to network the existing physical regulated wholesale market also known as APMC market thorough a virtual platform in order to create a unified national market for agricultural commodities.

ii. the e-NAM portal has integrated the 585 Regulated markets in 16 states and 2 Union Territories with trading in 124 commodities on the common e-market platform.

iii. Prime Minister, Narendra Modi launched the e-NAM portal on 14\(^{th}\) April 2016 in 21 Mandis across 8 states with for trading in 24 commodities.

iv. The Government plans expand the e-NAM project and integrate 415 more mandis by March 2020.

v. As of now, 2.29 crores market trades with value more than Rs 60000 crore has been initiated on the e-NAM portal.

DRDO launches Long Range Surface to Air Missile off Odisha coast

On 24 January 2019, Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) successfully launched Long Range Surface to Air Missile (LR-SAM) jointly developed by DRDO and Israel Aerospace Industries from INS Chennai off the coast of Odisha.

**Key Points:**

i. The missile was test launched from a mobile launcher at the Integrated Test Range (ITR) in Chandipur, Odisha. It was the result of a joint venture between India and Israel.

ii. LR-SAM will improve air defence capabilities. It also had a system which includes a Multi-Functional Surveillance and Threat Alert Radar (MF-STAR) for detection, tracking and guidance of the missile.

iii. MF-STAR will provide the users the capability to neutralise any aerial threats. The missile directly hit a low flying aerial target.

ISRO's PSLV C44 launched Kalamsat and imaging satellite Microsat R

On 25th January 2019, Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) successfully launched PSLV
(Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle) C44 carrying Kalamsat V2 and imaging satellite Microsat R from Sathish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh.

**Key Points:**

i. Imaging satellite Microsat R will be used for military purposes. It is a small Indian earth observation satellite.

ii. Kalamsat is a communication satellite with one kilogram weight and a life span of 2 months. It is the **lightest ever satellite launched by India**.

iii. Space Kidz India- a group of college students and the members of a Chennai based organization built Kalamsat. Kalamsat is the first to use PS4 (the fourth stage of the vehicle) as a platform to orbit around the earth. India thus became the first country, which uses fourth and final stage of a rocket as an orbital platform for experiments.

iv. PSLV C44 which was assembled in 30 days was the first mission of a new variant of PSLV called the PSLV-DL.

v. PSLV C44 is the first launch for the India’s space agency in 2019. ISRO for the first time used only two boosters for the mission which was usually launched without any boosters.

**UK to support nitrogen research in India**

United Kingdom (UK) government has made an announced of a research project to study Nitrogen pollution in India and South Asia. South Asian Nitrogen Hub will be led by United Kingdom’s “Centre for Ecology and Hydrology” under the new partnership programme.

**Key Points**

i. The Project will include 50 organizations from across the United Kingdom (UK) and South Asia.

ii. The Research Project which is a five year programme with estimated worth of 19.6 million pounds (182 crore) is established by the funding from United Kingdom Research and Innovation ((UKRI).

iii. India is the only South Asian country which has completed its Nitrogen Assessment and now India is Co-leading the South Asian Assessment for the United Nations (UN) Environment.

iv. The Indian Institutes are that included in the project are as follows:

- National Institute of Oceanography
- Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University
- Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology
- Jawaharlal Nehru University
- Aligarh Muslim University
- National Physical Laboratory
- TERI University

**About Nitrogen Pollution**

Nitrogen pollution is one of the emerging environmental problem and it is caused by emissions from chemical fertilizers, livestock manure and burning of fossil fuels. The Nitrogen Pollution is linked with biodiversity loss, Ozone Depletion, Air pollution, pollution of rivers and seas. Nitrogen Pollution may leads to problems related to respiratory system and heart

**Roshni, an Android app developed by IIT Ropar helps the visually impaired to recognise Indian currency notes**

On January 24, 2019, The **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Ropar,** has developed an app Roshni that would help the Visually Impaired to recognise currency notes. The app can recognise both old and new notes and gives audio information as to which note you are holding in your hands. This app was launched in Chandigarh. **Roshni** is the first Android app, which recognise **INR currency notes.**

**About Roshni App:**

i. The user have to bring the currency note in front of phone camera and the App would give a audio intimation about the currency note denomination

ii. This app is now formed enough to recognise Indian money of any denominations, whereas we can...
expect its upgrade version in further even to identify the Indian coins as well as foreign currency notes.

iii. This app is bug free and is available in beta version of the play store

**Neonatal sepsis on rise in India: AIIMS paper**

On 24th January 2019, issue of neonatal sepsis gained importance as bugs of this infection haunted South-Asia, doctors from AIIMS (All India Institute of Medical Sciences) stated. The estimates exposed that 16 per thousand live births in India are infected with confirmed neo natal sepsis which is discovered through blood culture test. What’s more disheartening is that one-third of them die in lack of drugs that worked.

Neonatal sepsis is a kind of infection which is acquired by babies through mothers who are kept in unhygienic practices in the labour rooms and neonatal intensive units of the hospitals.

Name of Bugs in South Asia – klebsiella, e.coli, acinetobactor

**BFW, Universal Robots to co-create robots for MSMEs**

On 25th January 2019, Bharat Fritz Werner Ltd (BFW), Bengaluru-based machining solution provider has entered into Partnership with Universal Robots, a Danish robot maker and a leader in collaborative robots, to co-create Robots for Micro Small and Medium Enterprises(MSMEs).

**KeyPoints:**

i. By using a modular, flexible and user-friendly integration solution ‘Arjun’, BFW and Universal Robots had planned to redefine production processes for MSMEs.

ii. The Partnership between the two companies will dramatically improve productivity, quality and working conditions in the MSME segment as they will automate and streamline repetitive industrial processes.

**Government to launch Technology Mission Centre on Solar Energy & Water Treatment in Chennai**


**Implementation during the launch:**

i. The first centre was DST –IITM Solar Energy Harnessing Centre which would focus on a wide range of research activities such as silicon solar cells that would provide high efficiency in India.

ii. Next on count was the DST-IITM Water –IC for SUTRAM of EASY WATER (DST- IITM Water Innovation Centre for Sustainable Treatment, Reuse and Management for Efficient, Affordable and Synergistic Solutions) established with an aim to undertake training programs on wastewater management, water treatment, sensor development, storm water management and distribution and collection systems.

iii. The third on count was the Test bed on Solar thermal desalination solutions which was established by IIT Madras and Empereal KGDS as a preventive measure in Naripaiyur, Ramanathapuram District, Tamil Nadu with the aim to deliver customized technological solutions to prevalent water challenges in the arid coastal village located on the shores of the Bay of Bengal.

**Important facts:**

♦ Union Minister for Science & Technology, Earth Sciences and Environment, Forests & Climate Change- Dr. Harsh Vardhan

♦ Constituency: Chandni Chowk in Delhi

**India Tested The New Anti-Radiation Missile NGRAM at Balsore**

On January 24,2019, India tested the new generation anti-radiation missile(NGRAM) which would destroy all the surveillance and radar systems. The missile is launched from Balasore.

**About the Missile:**

i. The Defence-Research and Development Organization (DRDO) has created this missile as a surface to air missile and is screened by Sukhoi-30 MKI fighter jet.
ii. The new-generation anti-radiation missile (NGRAM) has the Strike range of 100 kilometers, this is the first indigenous air-to-ground missile developed by the DRDO, after the supersonic BrahMos cruise missile developed jointly with Russia.

**India accounts more than half leprosy cases globally: WHO**

On 25th January 2019, World Health Organization (WHO) stated more than half of the leprosy cases globally was reported by India although there is a steady decline worldwide in the number of leprosy cases which is estimated to be around 2 Lakh.

**Key Points**
i. Significant leprosy cases has been detected in South-east Asia region, Brazil, Sub-Saharan Africa and Pacific apart from India.

ii. WHO said leprosy related ‘discrimination, stigma and prejudice’ were the most powerful barriers in ending the disease. It also stated that disease is 100% curable if detected early.

iii. Leprosy is a chronic infectious disease which mainly affects the skin, the peripheral nerves, mucosal surfaces of the upper respiratory tract and the eyes.

iv. WHO’s Global Leprosy Strategy 2016-2020 aims at ending leprosy related discrimination, stigma and prejudice first as it plays a powerful role to achieve a leprosy free world.

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**ENVIRONMENT**

**Tropical Storm Usman hits Philippines**

On December 29, 2018, tropical Storm Usman hit Philippines’ Bicol region in Manila.

i. The tropical depression brought heavy rains and triggered deadly landslides all over the country.

ii. The Philippines is affected by 15 to 20 typhoons every year during the rainy season, which usually begins in May or June and concludes in November or December.

**Cyclonic Storm ’PABUK’ over Andaman Sea & neighbourhood**

On 5th January 2019, a warning was issued by The India Meteorological Department (IMD) that a Cyclonic storm “PABUK” over Andaman Sea and neighbourhood is moving towards west-northwestwards with a speed of 21 kmph. Cyclone warning for Andaman Islands is “ORANGE MESSAGE”.

**Key Points**
i. IMD issued guidelines to people living on the Andaman islands to remain at safe place and suspended all fishing operations in the Andaman sea and southeast and east central Bay of Bengal on 5th & 6th January 2019.

ii. The Cyclone PABUK will cross Andaman by the evening of 6th January and move towards Myanmar coast and weaken gradually during 7th and 8th January.

iii. PABUK was originated in the Gulf of Thailand and created landfall in Nakhon Si Thammarat province of Thailand on 4th January 2019.

iv. The Met department said, Pabuk is very likely to move northwestwards and cross Andaman Islands around tomorrow evening as a cyclonic storm with a wind speed of 70-80 kmph gusting to 90kmph.

**Garbage dumps leading to shift in food habits of wild animals: study**

On January 14, 2019, a research team including scientists from School of Life Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), Asian Adventures and Nature Science Initiative stated that dumps are resulting in a shift in food habits of birds and wild animals.

i. This shift is mainly due to plastic waste which causes health complications and disruptive reproductive patterns in animals.

ii. An experiment on the study was conducted to monitor animal visits and food intake behaviour at two selected sites in the Nainital district in Uttarakhand.

iii. The study found that few animal species at some places are becoming more dependent on
anthropological food waste.
iv. The study has been published in journal Current Science.

**Background:**
♦ Garbage dumping sites have both physical and toxicological implications on animal life.

**Antarctica ice melts 6 times faster than 40 years ago:**
On January 14, 2019, American and Dutch scientists found that yearly ice mass loss in Antarctica increased **six times** more in the past 40 years.

i. The increase in Antarctic snow accumulation that began 10,000 years ago is adding enough ice to the continent through the increased losses from its thinning glaciers.

ii. It is the longest-ever assessment of Antarctic ice mass, covering **176 basins** and surrounding islands.

iii. The Antarctic ice sheet revealed a net gain of 112 billion tons of ice a year from 1992 to 2001. And net slowed to 82 billion tons of ice per year between 2003 and 2008. Their report also revealed the accelerated melting elevated global sea levels more than **1.2 centimeters** during 1979 to 2017. As Antarctica is shedding ice at a rapid rate, we can expect a multi-meter rise in the sea level in the upcoming decades.

**SpaceX-CRS-16 Dragon craft departed from the International Space Station**
On January 13, 2019, The SpaceX-CRS-16 Dragon cargo craft departed from the International Space Station and making a remark as the first night splashdown and recovered the Dragon vehicle. SpaceX-CRS-16 Dragon transported more than **2,500 kilograms (5,600 pounds)** of cargo to the space station and orbited Earth for five weeks.

i. SpaceX-CRS-16 Dragon is a **Commercial Resupply Service mission** to the International Space Station launched by NASA.

ii. The SpaceX-owned commercial cargo craft splashed down in the Pacific Ocean west of Baja California on January 13, 2019, closing out a **39-day mission**.

iii. The cargo delivery included 40 mice sent to the space station to study the effects of microgravity on the animals' immune systems, muscles and bones.

iv. It was the **second** nighttime splashdown of a Dragon spacecraft, following a return before dawn in July 2017. The returned SpaceX refurbished the spacecraft for another launch, a practice the company followed for five of its resupply missions to the space station.

**2018, the sixth warmest year in India and fourth warmest globally since 1901: IMD**
On January 16, 2019, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) in its report titled ‘Climate of India during 2018’ announced that 2018 was the **sixth warmest** year in India since **1901** and total of 1,428 people died due to extreme weather events in 2018 alone. It was the **fourth warmest** year globally on record.

i. According to the government agency’s data, the average temperature over India during 2018 was "significantly above normal".

ii. The annual mean surface air temperature (averaged over the country) during the year was 0.41°C above (1981-2010) average and it showed an increase of **0.6°C** per 100 years in during **1901-2018**. 

iii. The country’s average season mean temperatures were also “above the average” with the winter season (January- February, +0.59 degree Celsius) being the **fifth warmest** since 1901 and the pre-monsoon season (March-May) the **seventh warmest**.

iv. Also, all the six warmest years on record in India were in the **last 10 years** and **11 out of 15** warmest years were during the recent **past 15 years (2004-2018)**.

v. The five warmest years on record are: **2016** (+0.72 degree Celsius), **2009** (+0.56 degree Celsius), **2017** (+0.55 degree Celsius), **2010** (+0.54 degree Celsius) and **2015** (+0.42 degree Celsius).

**Volcano erupts on Kuchinoerabu island of Japan**
On 17th January 2019, A Volcano was erupted on **Mount Shindake** on Kuchinoerabu island of Japan which spewed ash and smoke up to 6000 metres into the air.
**Key Points**

i. All the 140 people living on the Kuchinoerabu island were evacuated after the violent eruption. Japan has **110 active volcanoes**.

ii. Kuchinoerabu Island is **1,000km** southwest of the capital, Tokyo and has an area of 38 square kilometers. The entire island lies within the borders of the **Kirishima-Yaku National Park**.

iii. Mount Shindake had experienced explosive eruption in 2015. Meteorological Agency of Japan had alerted people for volcanic rocks and pyroclastic flows.

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**Small Woodbrown butterfly rediscovered in Sikkim after 120 years**

On January 16, 2019, butterfly researchers of Sikkim rediscovered the **Small Woodbrown butterfly** species from Bakhim in **Khanchendzonga National Park** after a span of **120 long years**. The Small Woodbrown butterfly was first discovered in Sikkim in 1887 by a scientist named de Nicéville.

i. The Small Woodbrown butterfly, scientifically known as **Lethe nicetella** is named after its brown-coloured wings patched with white round spots.

ii. It is amongst the smallest members of the genus **Lethe**, with wings that are up to 50 millimeters long.

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**Two new species of moss rose discovered in south India**

On January 16, 2019, The southern peninsular region of India is a biodiversity hotspot, The two new species were discovered from **Badami hills in Bagalkot district of Karnataka** by botanists from the Shivaji University in Kolhapur, Maharashtra. The species have been named **Portulaca badamica** and **Portulaca lakshminarasimhaniana**.

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**Scientists Warn of Climate “time bomb” for World’s Groundwater**

On 21st January 2019, scientists warn that if climate change is to have a significant effect on the world’s groundwater reserves, the future generations could be faced with an environmental **“time bomb”**.

**Key Points:**

i. Scientists from Cardiff University and a team of international collaborators have conducted research on groundwater and said that it could take over 100 years for groundwater systems to completely respond to current environment.

ii. Groundwater is the largest source of usable freshwater which is found in the underground cracks in soil, sand and rocks and More than 2 billion people in the world rely on groundwater as a source of drinking and irrigation water.

iii. Researchers found that groundwater in wetter, more humid locations will respond to climate change in short period of time while regions where water was naturally scarce had much more ability to deal with the situation.

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**Ten threats to Global Health in 2019: WHO**

On January 22, 2019, The World Health Organization released a list of top ten threats to global health in 2019 and considered vaccination to be the effective weapon to prevent the same.

**The top ten listed disease are**

1. **Air pollution and climate change**: it is considered as a major risk factor to human as thr micro pollutants from various things affect every single part of the human cell. **Burning Fossils** is the major contributor

2. **Noncommunicable diseases**: Noncommunicable diseases, such as diabetes, cancer and heart disease, are collectively responsible for over 70% of all deaths worldwide. This disease are caused due to the inactivity of the body so WHO decided in collaboration with government help them achieved the global target of reducing physical inactivity by **15% by 2030**

3. **Global influenza pandemic**: WHO has set up a unique partnership which will ensure effective and equitable access to vaccines in developing countries.

4. **vulnerable environment**: WHO will continue to work in developing countries to strengthen health systems so that they are able to respond to outbreak of certain viruses

5. **Antimicrobial resistance**: WHO is working with in this sectors to implement a global action plan to tackle antimicrobial resistance by increasing awareness and knowledge, reducing infection, and
encouraging prudent use of antimicrobials.

6. **Ebola and other high-threat pathogens**: WHO designated 2019 as a “Year of action on preparedness for health emergencies”

7. **Weak primary health care**: WHO will work with partners to revitalize and strengthen primary health care in countries, and follow up on specific commitments made by in the Astana Declaration.

8. **Vaccine hesitancy**: refusal to apply vaccine is a direct threat to our lives, WHO along with its supports will create awareness about vaccination and reduce the increase of diseases.

9. **Dengue**: 40% of the world is at risk of dengue fever, and there is around 390 million infections a year. WHO’s Dengue control strategy aims to reduce deaths by 50% by 2020.

10. **HIV**: This year, WHO will work to introduce the self-testing device so that people may know their status and can receive treatment in the case of a negative result

**Earth’s oldest rock found in Moon Sample brought 48 years ago**

On January 24, 2019, scientists discovered the **oldest Earth rock** on the Moon, it is found from the lunar sample bought by the **Apollo 14 astronauts**.

i. Studying the sample, researchers found that, The rock was crystallised about **20 kilometers** beneath Earth’s surface

ii. It estimated that the rock is **4.0 to 4.1 billion years old**.

**First Captive Elephant Survey: Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF)**

On January 30, 2019, according to the first survey of elephants in captivity by Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF), there were **2,454 elephants in captivity**.

About 58 per cent of all captive elephants is concentrated in two states: 905 in Assam and 518 in Kerala.

**Superbug gene’ – first detected in Arctic**

On January 29, 2019, scientists found a ‘**Superbug**’, first detected in New Delhi over a decade back — in one of the last “pristine” places on Earth that is some 12,870 km away and coded as **blaNDM-1** (called New Delhi Metallo-beta-lactamase-1).

i. **Superbug** was discovered in a Norwegian archipelago between mainland Norway and the North Pole — have now confirmed the spread of blaNDM-1.

ii. A total of **131 genes** associated with resistance to antibiotics were discovered by the scientists, of which one of the genes first found in **New Delhi in 2008**.

**DEFENCE**

**India-Myanmar bilateral army exercise, IMBEX 2018-19 held in Chandimandir**

On January 14, 2019, India-Myanmar bilateral army exercise, **IMBEX** begun at Chandimandir, headquarters of the Western Command in Chandigarh.

i. It is the **second edition** of the IMBEX EXERCISE.

ii. The motive of IMBEX 2018-19 are:

1. To train the Myanmar delegation for participation in United Nations peace keeping operations under the UN flag.

2. It provided opportunities to the army personnel of both the nations to serve effectively in UN missions as also understand each other’s training, tactics, procedures and best practices.

**Nashik in Maharashtra to be the site of the country’s second defence innovation hub after Coimatore, TN: MoS Defence**

On January 18, 2019, Union Minister of State for Defence Subhash Bhamre announced that **Nashik in Maharashtra** will be the site of the **country’s second defence innovation hub** after **Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu**.

i. It was announced at a defence industry stakeholders meeting in Ojhar, Nashik.
ii. This is in line with the Defence Ministry’s target of making the country among the top five arms exporters by 2025.

iii. By that timeline, India aims to achieve annual arms exports of Rs 35,000 crore.

**Government approves setting up of three new naval air squadrons**

On 18th January 2019, Government approved Setting up of Three Naval air Squadrons in Gujarat and TamilNadu. This Decision is taken to enrich the Indian Navy’s Overall Strength.

**Key Points:**

i. In addition to this approval Government of India also approved recruitment of ManPower for Dornier Surveillance Squadrons located in Kerala and Andaman Islands.

ii. In 2016, contract for procurement of Dornier 228 maritime surveillance aircraft was signed with Hindustan Aeronautics Limited.

iii. The Aircraft would enhance Maritime Domain Awareness of Indian Navy through round the clock sensor based surveillance and provide targeting data in areas of operation to ward off terror and other threats from sea.

**IAF AN-32 lands in Pakyong Airport of Sikkim**

On 16th January 2019, Indian Air Force AN-32 transport aircraft landed on the Sikkim’s first airport and one of the highest airfields of the country, Pakyong Airport.

**Key Points**

i. The Pakyong Airport which is just 60 km away from India-china border is situated at 4500 feet above sea level and it was inaugurated by Indian Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi in September 2018.

ii. It was the first landing by an AN-32 class aircraft on the Pokyong Airport and the crew was led by Wing Commander SK Singh.

iii. A Dronier aircraft of Indian Air Force had already landed on Pokyong Airport.

iv. Pokyong Airport was developed to boost connectivity land-locked state, Sikkim with rest of the country.

**Governments to induct 20% women in military police**

On January 19, 2019, government decided to induct 20% women in military police.

i. This decision is taken with motive to represent women in the armed force, they will be appointed for the first time in Personnel Below Officer Rank, PBOR.

ii. Their job criteria would be investigating offences like rape cases, policing cantonment and extending support to the civil police whenever needed.

**Nigrani, Nireekshan and Nakabandi-Exervise Sea Vigil**

From 22nd January 2019, India’s largest-ever Coastal Defence Exercise, Exercise Sea Vigil was conducted over an intense 36-hour period across all nine Coastal States and four Union Territories. The Exercise was concluded on 23rd January 2019.

**Key Points:**

i. The exercise which witnessed the utilisation of India’s entire Coastal Security apparatus was co-planned and led by the Indian Navy and Coast Guard.

ii. All the Central and State agencies including the MHA, MoD, Customs, CISF, Dept of Fisheries, DGLL, DG Shipping, Port authorities and the Coastal police of all participating states participated and supported the exercise.

iii. The exercise was planned in two Phases. In Phase – I, Nigrani (a near-unbroken surveillance net along the entire coast of India and outlying islands) and Nireekshan (multi-agency teams deployment to check and audit important landing points including Fish Landing Centres and Vulnerable areas and important installations along the coast as well as in the hinterland) was conducted.

iv. The Phase II of the exercise saw attempts to penetrate and land dummy explosives by designated ‘RED’ forces comprising teams drawn from the Navy Coast Guard, Police and CISF.

v. In Phase II of the exercise Nakabandi was undertaken in which many attacks were allowed to go-through to test robustness of Police.
vi. The exercise Sea Vigil 2019 which saw the largest mobilisation of maritime and coastal security machinery in India would now be conducted every two years besides the **Sagar Kavach** series of exercises.

**India Africa Field Training Exercise (IAFTX) 2019 to be held in Pune**

On 23rd January 2019, the final planning conference to work out the modalities for India Africa Field Training Exercise (IAFTX) which is to be held from 18th to 27th **March 2019** commenced in Pune, Maharashtra.

**Key Points**

i. India Africa Field Training Exercise (IAFTX) 2019 will boost strategic Cooperation, political and military ties between the countries.

ii. Representatives from Egypt, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, Sudan, South Africa, Tanzania, Namibia, Mozambique, Uganda, Niger, and Zambia are attending the conference.

iii. Field Training Exercise will be carried out at Aundh Military station and College of Military Engineering in Pune.

iv. At present, the Chinese Military has spread its tentacles in Africa through military hardware cooperation. The exercise will unify humanitarian action and joint peace operation.

v. As part of the exercise initial planning conference was held in December 2018. IAFTX will be the first ever exercise with several armies from Africa although Indian armed forces had given training to some military personnel from few African Nations.

**Coast Guards of India, Japan undertake disaster control exercise in Yokohama**

On 23rd January 2018, Indian and Japanese Coast Guards started disaster, search and rescue exercises off the coast of Yokohama in Japan. **ICGS Shaunak** is the main Indian Coast Guard Ship taking part in the drills.

**Key Points**

i. Rajendra Singh, Chief of Indian Coast Guard and his Japanese counterpart Shuichi Iwanami reviewed the drills.

ii. The Coast guards of India and Japan was working together after the establishment of deeper ties between the two countries. Japan Coast guard visited India last year whereas in this year Indian coast guard has visited Japan.

iii. One of Indian Coast Guard’s largest ships, **ICGS Shaunak** which is a 105 metre class Offshore Patrol Vessel is carrying 100 officers and sailors of Indian Coast Guard.

**SPORTS**

**Olympics 2020: Rs 100 crore earmarked for funding of athletes under TOPS, says SAI**

The **Sports Authority of India** Director General **Neelam Kapur** announced that The Sports Ministry has earmarked Rs 100 crore for the funding of athletes under the **Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS)** for their preparations for 2020 Olympics.

**Key Points:**

i. Launched in September 2014, TOPS, is a flagship programme of the sports ministry to provide financial assistance to potential Olympic medal winners besides giving the financial assistance to prepare for Commonwealth Games and Asian Games.

ii. On September 2018, a **TOPS Secretariat** which consists of a team of professionals with management and sporting expertise was established in a bid to fine tune India’s preparations for the 2020 Olympics and build a sustainable sports ecosystem in the country.

iii. The TOPS team reviews every sport broadly along several parameters, including global performance trends from previous Olympics, World Championships and other major competitions specific to that sport to select a player.

iv. The athletes selected are provided support which covers essential items specific to their sports
discipline including customised domestic and international training and competitions, purchase of equipment and out of pocket allowance.

**Jasprit Bumrah becomes top wicket-taker in international cricket in 2018**
On 30th December 2018, 25 years old Indian fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah became the highest international wicket-taker of 2018 with 78 wickets after taking 9 wickets in the 3rd Test Match against Australia held in Melbourne Cricket Ground, Australia.

i. South African fast bowler Kagiso Rabada ranked 2nd in the list of Highest International wicket taker of 2018 with 77 wickets.

ii. Indian spin bowler Kuldeep Yadav along with Adeel Rashid and Rashid Khan ranked 3rd with 76 wickets in 2018.

**Virat Kohli equals Ganguly’s record with 11th away test win as captain**
On 30th December 2018, Indian Cricket team captain Virat Kohli equaled Former Indian Captain Sourav Ganguly's record with 11th away test win as a captain after defeating Australia in the 3rd Test Match held in Melbourne, Australia.

i. Virat Kohli became the first Indian captain to retain the Border-Gavaskar trophy on Australian soil. India is leading the series with 2-1.

ii. Indian team also achieved the record of highest number of away Test wins after defeating Australia in the 3rd Test Match.

**Rishabh Pant became 1st ever Indian wicket-keeper to take 20 catches in a Test series**
On 30th December 2018, 21 years old Indian wicket-keeper Rishabh Pant became the 1st ever player to take 20 catches in a Test series by surpassing former cricketers Naren Tamhane and Syed Kirmani who had recorded 19 catches in 1954-55 and 1979-80 respectively.

i. Pant achieved the feat to take 20 catches in just 3 matches whereas Naren Tamhane and Syed Kimani took 19 catches in 6 and 7 matches respectively.

ii. Rishab Pant took 11 catches 6 in first innings and 5 in second innings against Australia in the 3rd Test Match to break the record of fellow wicket-keeper Wriddhiman Saha who took 10 catches in a match.

**Ishant, Shami, Bumrah breaks 34 year old record with 131 wickets in 2018**
On 30th December 2018, Indian pace trio of Ishant Sharma, Mohammed Shami and Jasprit Bumrah broke the 34 year record of highest test wickets in a calendar year to become the most successful pace trio with 131 wickets in 2018.

i. The record was previously held by West Indies seamers Joel Garner, Michael Holding and Malcolm Marshall who had taken 130 wickets in 1984.


iii. Current Indian bowling line-up had also created the record of having most wickets in Test in calendar year for India with a total of 257 wickets in 14 matches.

**10th R R Lakshya Cup: Divyansh Panwar, Nupur Patil win**
On 31st December 2018, shooter Divyansh Singh Panwar from Rajasthan and shooter Nupur Patil from Maharashtra have won 10th R R Lakshya Cup 2018 in senior and junior category respectively. Dronacharya Awardee and former National Coach Prof. Sunny Thomas was the chief guest of the event.

**Key points**

i. The tournament was organised in Lakshya Shooting Club, Karnala Sports Academy, Panvel, Navi Mumbai. The Club was founded by ace shooter Suma Shirur.

ii. R R Lakshya Cup being only a premier invitational tournament, it's record wouldn’t be count for International records.

iii. The event has prize money of Rs. 1,00,000 in senior category and Rs. 50,000 in junior category.
Virat Kohli fastest to 19000 international runs, breaks Sachin’s record
On 3rd January 2019, 30 years old Indian cricket team captain, Virat Kohli beats Cricketing legend Sachin Tendulkar’s to become the fastest batsman to score 19000 international runs on the 1st day of 4th Test Match in Sydney against Australia.

i. Virat Kohli crossed 19000 runs mark in 399 innings whereas Sachin Tendulkar took 432 innings to score 19000 runs.

ii. West Indies’ Brain Lara and Australia’s Ricky Pointing took 433 and 444 innings respectively to score 19000 international runs.

Rishabh Pant 1st ever Indian wicketkeeper to slam Test ton in Australia
On 4th January 2019, India’s wicketkeeper Rishabh Pant became the first Indian wicketkeeper batsman to score a century in Test against Australia on Australian soil after hitting 159 runs on the 2nd day of 4th Test Match at Sydney, Australia.

i. Rishabh pant broke Farokh Engineer’s record of highest Test runs against Australia on Australian soil. Farokh Engineer scored 89 runs in 1967.

ii. Rishabh Pant also became the only Indian wicket keeper who has two test centuries outside Asia.

Pujara faces 1258 balls in Australia series, breaks Dravid’s record
30 years old Indian Batsman, Cheteshwar Pujara has faced 1258 balls in the ongoing test series so far against Australia to become the batsman who had faced highest deliveries in a test series in Australia beating India’s Former Captain, Rahul Dravid’s record of 1203 balls. He achieved the feat by scoring 193 runs of 373 deliveries on the 2nd day of 4th Test Match against Australia in Sydney.

Sri Lanka’s Thisara Perera slams 13 sixes, scores 140(74), breaks 22-yr-old record
On 5th January 2019, 29 years old Sri Lanka’s Thisara Perera smashed 13 sixes against New Zealand in the 2nd ODI to break the 22 years old record of maximum sixes in an ODI innings by a Sri Lankan player. The previous record was held by Sanath Jayasuriya who smashed 11 sixes in an innings. Thisara Perera’s maiden century in which he scored 140 runs in just 74 balls, since it pulled off a thrilling victory of 21-runs for New Zealand.

16-year-old Indian Footballer Rohit Danu became I-League’s youngest ever goal-scorer
On January 5, 2019, 16-year-old Indian Footballer Rohit Danu became I-League’s youngest ever goal-scorer while scoring a goal on the ongoing match against Aizawl FC at the Rajiv Gandhi Stadium, Aizawl, Mizoram.

i. He defeated his team mate Jitendra Singh in this title.

ii. Earlier, Arrows’ Jitendra, was the youngest goal-scorer at the age 16 years, six months and 13 days when he scored against Shillong Lajong on December 26, 2017.

Hopman Cup: Roger Federer & Belinda Bencic retain title for Switzerland
From 29 December 2018, the Hopman Cup which is an annual international eight-team indoor hard court tennis tournament was held in Perth, Western Australia. It is a mixed competition in which male and female players are on combined teams and represent their countries. The Event was concluded on 5th January 2019.

Key Points:

i. This year Switzerland’s Roger Federer and Belinda Bencic secured a 2-1 victory over Germany’s Angelique Kerber and Alexander Zverev to win the Hopman Cup for the second year in a row. It was Switzerland’s fourth title overall, behind only the United States with six.

ii. This year’s tournament is the 31st edition of the Hopman Cup and potentially be the final edition of the tournament as it will be replaced by an ATP tournament from next year.

iii. In this year’s tournament for the first time in history, Roger Federer and Serena Williams faced each other in a competitive event in which Federer came out victorious alongside Bencic by defeating
the pair of Serena Williams and Frances Tiafoe in a mixed doubles round robin match.

**Roger Federer first person to win Hopman Cup thrice**
Twenty-time Grand Slam champion Roger Federer is the first player to win three Hopman Cups, twice with Bencic and once with Martina Hingis.

**ATP World Tour tennis tournament (Maharashtra Open 2019)**
From 31st December 2018, 24th Edition of ATP World Tour Tennis tournament, Maharashtra Open – 2019 also known as Tata Open Maharashtra organized by Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) was held in Pune, Maharashtra. The event concludes on 5th January 2019.

**Key Points:**
i. The total Prize money was US $527,880.

**World number six Kevin Anderson of South Africa defeated Ivo Karlovic in Men’s Singles at the Maharashtra Open**
On 5th January 2019, world number six Kevin Anderson of South Africa won the three-set finals against Ivo Karlovic of Croatia to clinch the Tata Open Maharashtra singles title in Pune.

**Key Points:**
i. It was Anderson’s fourth victory in five meetings against Karlovic and sixth career title overall.
ii. Karlovic became the oldest player at 39 to play a tour-level final since 1977.
iii. In another record, Anderson at 6-foot-8 (2.03 meters), and Karlovic at 6-foot-11 (2.11 meters), combined to make it the tallest final in the Open era.
iv. The Maharashtra Open is viewed as a key warm-up event for the first Grand Slam of the year, the Australian Open, which starts in Melbourne on 14 January.

**Indian tennis pair of Rohan Bopanna and Divij Sharan defeated the United Kingdom’s Luke Bambridge and Jonny O’Mara and clinched the ATP tour title in men’s doubles event at the Maharashtra Open**
On 5th January 2019, Rohan Bopanna and Divij Sharan, the Asian Games 2018 gold medallists, started the 2019 season by winning India’s only ATP 250 tournament, Tata Open Maharashtra in Pune after beating a British pairing of Luke Bambridge and Jonny O’Mara in straight sets by 6-4, 6-3.

**Key Points:**
i. This was two-time champion Bopanna’s 18th tour-level trophy, while for Sharan it was his fourth trophy from five tour-level doubles finals.
ii. The winning pair will next participate in the Davis Cup, scheduled for February 1-2 at the South Club in Kolkata.

**Jasprit Bumrah finishes 2018 as the highest wicket-taker across all formats**
25 years old Indian fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah finishes 2018 as the highest international wicket-taker of 2018 with 78 wickets after taking 9 wickets in the 3rd Test Match against Australia held in Melbourne Cricket Ground, Australia.

i. South African fast bowler Kagiso Rabada ranked 2nd in the list of Highest International wicket taker of 2018 with 77 wickets.

ii. Indian spin bowler Kuldeep Yadav along with Adeel Rashid and Rashid Khan ranked 3rd with 76 wickets in 2018.

**Virat Kohli Leads India to First-Ever Test Series Win In Australia**
On 7th January 2019, Indian Cricket Team skipper, Virat Kohli led the country to a maiden series victory on Australian soil, ending a 71-year wait to script a golden chapter in the game’s history.

**Key Points:**
i. India won their first-ever Test series in Australia by a margin of 2-1 after play in the fourth and final Test in Sydney was abandoned due to rain and the match was called off as a draw.
ii. India Became the First Asian team to win a Test series in Australia
India managed the feat for the first time since they began touring Australia in 1947-48. Besides, Virat Kohli became the first Indian as well as the first Asian captain to win a Test series in Australia.

iii. With the win, India reinforced their status as the world’s number one team in Test Cricket and retained the Border-Gavaskar Trophy.

iv. India which enforced the follow-on during the 4th test, was the first time since 1988 that Australia was asked to follow on at their home.

v. The winning of the 3rd test of the series was India’s 150th in Test cricket making them the 5th team after Australia (384), England (364), Windies (171) and South Africa (162) to reach the milestone.

vi. Virat Kohli became the first captain of India to win two Tests in Australia and equals Sourav Ganguly’s record of most overseas Test wins as India captain.

vii. Cheteshwar Pujara was adjudged as the man of the match (for 4th test) and player of the series.

viii. Besides, Rishabh Pant became the only Indian wicketkeeper to score a hundred in Australia and only the fourth Indian wicketkeeper to score over 150 in Tests.

Nishikori, Pliskova win Brisbane International titles
From 30 December 2018, the Brisbane International 2019 was played on outdoor hard courts in Brisbane, Queensland, Australia. It was the eleventh edition of the tournament and took place as part of the Australian Open Series in preparation for the first Grand Slam of the year. The Event Concluded on 6th January 2019.

Venue: The event took place at the Queensland Tennis Centre in Tennyson.

Results: The results of the Brisbane International 2019 are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Winners</th>
<th>Runners-up</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men’s Singles</td>
<td>K. Nishikori (Japan)</td>
<td>D. Medvedev (Russia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Singles</td>
<td>K. Pliskova (Czech Republic)</td>
<td>L. Tsurenko (Ukrain)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men’s Doubles</td>
<td>M. Daniell (New Zealand)</td>
<td>W. Koolhof (Netherland)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Doubles</td>
<td>N. Melichar (USA)</td>
<td>H. Chan (Taiwan)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key Points:
i. Japan’s Kei Nishikori won his first ATP title in nearly three years after 52 tournaments and nine finals defeats and the overall 12th of his career.

ii. K. Pliskova joined Victoria Azarenka (2009, 2016) and Serena Williams (2013-14) as the third woman to win the Premier event twice.

iii. The win marked a fourth career doubles title for both Marcus Daniell and Wesley Koolhof.

iv. The 2019 Brisbane International prize money include $589,000 financial commitment on the men’s side whereas total women’s prize money is $1,000,000.

Maharashtra to host Khelo India Youth Games 2019
From 9th January 2019, Maharashtra is going to host the second edition of the Khelo India Youth Games which includes completions in 18 different disciplines at Balewadi Sports Complex in Pune. The event will conclude on 20th January 2019.

Key Points:
i. Khelo India Youth Games (KIYG) is a part Khelo India which is the revamped national programme for development of sports in India.

ii. Students from colleges and universities are participating in the event for the first time.

iii. Maharashtra Chief Minister, Devendra Fadnavis and Union Minister of State for Youth affairs and sports Col Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore will attend a virtual touch ceremony at Shree Shiv Chatrapati Sports Complex.
iv. More than 6000 Under-17 and Under-21 athletes from all over India are participating in the games.
v. There are 6 team sports in KIYG and agenda includes Kabaddi and Kho-Kho.
vi. Khelo India Youth Games 2018 was held at Delhi.

**Sydney and Brisbane chosen to host $15 million 24 team ATP Cup in 2020**

On 7th January 2019, Australian cities Sydney and Brisbane have been announced as the first two host locations for the newest team event in men’s tennis for the multi-million dollar ATP Cup from 2020.

**Key points:**

i. The two cities have beaten competition from other parts of Australia to host the re-launched team event, the ATP Cup, slated to start from 3-12 January next year with a 24-team competition. The third Australian city for the tournament is yet to be determined.

ii. The tournament will comprise more than 100 players from 24 nations with $15 million in prize money and 750 ATP Ranking points.

iii. Sydney will host the knockout rounds and the final at the Ken Rosewall Arena at the Olympic Tennis Center venue while Brisbane will hold tie matches at the Queensland Tennis Centre.

iv. The ATP Cup is seen as a threat to the International Tennis Federation’s (ITF) 18-nation Davis Cup competition starting in Madrid in November this year.

**Egypt to host 2019 Africa Cup of Nations**

On 08th January 2019, Confederation of African Football’s (CAF) Executive Committee announced that Egypt will host African Cup for the fifth time in 2019. South Africa was the other country who made a bid to host the event.

**Key points**

i. The Cup of Nations will take place from June 15 to July 13, 2019.


iii. The tournament will be enlarged to 24 teams from its standard 16 teams.

iv. Guinea’s football federation announced that it has agreed to move its staging of the Nations Cup from 2023 to 2025.

v. Egypt’s Mohamed Salah retained his CAF Player of the Year Award at the CAF Awards on 08th January 2019 at Dakar, Senegal.

**USA Cricket announced as ICC’s 105th member**

On 08th January 2019, the International Cricket Council (ICC) announced USA Cricket as its 105th member. USA Cricket came into existence after USACA was expelled in June 2017 for lack of cooperation in terms of unifying the cricket community in the country.

**Key points**

i. The application of USA Cricket to become the 93rd Associate member in compliance with the ICC constitution, was accepted as per the recommendation of the seven-member Membership Committee to the ICC Board last year.

ii. In October 2018 USA Cricket had appointed Paraag Marathe president of 49ers Enterprises and Executive Vice President of Football Operations for the 49ers as the Chair of the Board.

iii. The International Cricket Council (ICC) was founded at Lord’s on 15 June 1909 as the Imperial Cricket Conference with Australia, England, and South Africa as its founding members.

iv. The Imperial Cricket Conference was renamed the International Cricket Conference in 1965.

**Mary Kom attained number one position in AIBA rankings**

On 10th January 2019, 36 years old boxer, M C Mary Kom attained the first position in the latest women ranking released by the International Boxing Association (AIBA) in the Light Fly 45-48 kilograms category with 1700 points.

**Key Points**

i. Ukraine’s Hanna Okhoto ranked number 2 in the ranking released by AIBA with 1100 points.
ii. Mary Kom will have to jump to 51 kg category in order to participate in 2020 Olympics because 48 kg Category is not included in the Olympics yet.

iii. Mary Kom has already achieved the feat to become the first woman boxer to win six world championship.

iii. Pinki Jangra has been placed 8th in the 51 kg Category whereas Asian Silver Medalist Manisha Maun is place 8th in 54 kg Category.

iv. Former World Silver-Medalist Sonia Lather was placed 2nd in 57 Kg Category and India Open gold-Medalist and world bronze winner Lovlina Borgohain has been place at 5th Position.

80th National Table Tennis Championship begins in Cuttack

On 4th January 2019, 80th National Table Tennis Championship organized by Odisha State Table Tennis Association (OSTTA) began at Jawaharlal Nehru Indoor Stadium in Cuttack, Odisha. The event concluded on 9th January 2019.

Key Points

i. 35 teams including 550 players from different part of the country participated in the mega Championship at Cuttack.

ii. Achanta Sharath Kamal created the history by winning the 80th National Table Tennis Championship for the ninth time in men’s category.

iii. Archana Kamath won the Women’s Title at the 80th National Table tennis Championship.

Check the Detailed Result of Men’s Team at http://ttfi.org/app/webroot/eventquaImage/Zw8_mt_det.pdf

Women’s Team Detailed Result is available at http://ttfi.org/app/webroot/eventquaImage/uEG_wt_det.pdf

Ranji Trophy : Bihar spinner Ashutosh Aman breaks Bishan Bedi's 44-year old record

On 9th January 2019, Bihar left- arm spinner Ashutosh Aman etched his name in record books, surpassing 44 year old record of the great Bishan Singh Bedi as the highest wicket-taker in a Ranji Trophy season after claiming his 65th scalp in Moun-ul-Haq stadium Patna, Bihar.

i. Ashutosh Aman hails from Gaya, Bihar and he is also an employee in Indian Air Force.

ii. He made his first class debut for Bihar in 2018-19 Ranji trophy on 1st November 2018.

Harendra Singh removed as head coach of senior hockey team

On 9th January 2019, meeting of Hockey India Performance and Development Committee held and decided to remove Harendra Singh as the coach of India’s senior men’s team.

i. Harinder Singh was reprimanded by International Hockey Federation, founded guilty of breaching level 1, 2.2 k of code of conduct.

ii. He was appointed as the senior side’s coach in May 2018.

South Africa’s All Rounder Albie Morkel retired from all forms of cricket

On January 10, 2019, South African allrounder Albie Morkel retired from all forms of cricket.

i. His career spanned for nearly 20 years.

ii. He represented South Africa in 58 ODIs, 50 T20Is and one Test.

IWF president Birendra Prasad Baishya will be India’s Chef de Mission for Tokyo Olympics

On January 11, 2019, Indian Weightlifting Federation President Birendra Prasad Baishya is named as Chef de Mission for the Tokyo 2020 Olympics. Baishya is also one of the Indian Olympic Association Vice Presidents. Tokyo 2020 organizing committee president is Yoshiro Mori

POINTS TO BE NOTED:

i. Tokyo Olympics is to be held from 24 July to 9 August, 2020 in which 207 nations will participate. There will be 339 event in 33 sports (50 disciplines) in the Games.

ii. Tokyo will be hosting the Game for the second time in 2020 after having organised it 56 years back in 1964.

iii. The mascot for the Olympics is named Miraitowa. Miraitowa is a combination of the Japanese words for future and eternity;
Kartik becomes youngest Indian to win junior world title
On 12th January 2019, Gurgaon’s 8-year-old Kartik Singh won the under-8 category Junior world title at the Kids’ Golf World Championship organised by US kids Golf in Malaysia to become the youngest Indian to win the title.
   i. Kartik is a member of the junior programme at the DLF Golf Academy.
   ii. The DLF Golf Academy which was opened in 1999, is the first professional golf school in the country and Karan Bindra is the Director of Instruction.

Dhoni becomes fifth Indian to reach 10000 run mark in ODIs
On January 12, 2019, Dhoni makes his place in the list 10000 runs club like Sachin Tendulkar, Sourav Ganguly, Rahul Dravid and Virat Kohli had scored 10,000 ODI runs for India. Former skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni became the fifth Indian to reach the milestone of 10,000-run mark in One-Day Internationals (ODIs) for the country.
   i. On to date, Mahendra Singh Dhoni, who was missing the feat by just a run, entered the 10,000th club with a single off Jhye Richardson in the ongoing first ODI between India and Australia and is the 12th player in history of ODI cricket to reach the 10,000-runs.

Rohit Sharma 1st Indian to slam 5 ODI hundreds in Australia
On January 11, 2019, 31-year-old Rohit Sharma slammed his 22nd ODI century in the first match of three-ODI series against Australia at the Sydney Cricket Ground.
   i. Sharma surpassed wicketkeeper Adam Gilchrist to become the third highest-run scorer in ODIs between the two countries.
   ii. He is the 1st Indian to bat 5 hundreds in ODI cricket in Australia.
   iii. This is Sharma’s 7th ODI ton against Australia, but it is the fifth time he has scored a ton in Australia.

Shakil Ahmed set world record in achieving 1 lakh meters in 10 hours in Indoor rowing
On January 13, 2019, Asian Cup gold medallist Shakil Ahmed set a world record in indoor rowing by completing 1,00,000 (one lakh) metres in 10 hours, in above-40 years category, at Salt Lake Stadium in Kolkata.
   i. He also has the record of completing 50,000 metres of simulated rowing in four hours and 13 minutes which is already in the Limca Record Book.

Pakistan skipper Sarfaraz Ahmed’s record goes past MS Dhoni, Adam Gilchrist, to become the wicket-keeper with most catches
On January 14, 2019, Pakistan skipper Sarfaraz Ahmed set a world record to become the wicket-keeper captain with the most number of catches in a match.
   i. This was achieved by him while playing a match against South Africa in the Third Test at the Wanderers Stadium in Johannesburg.
   ii. In the match, he took five catches in the first innings and repeated the feat in the second innings to go past Australia’s Adam Gilchrist and India’s MS Dhoni.

Bengaluru Raptors win Premier Badminton League title
On 13th January 2019, the Bengaluru Raptors beat Mumbai Rockets by 4-3 in the final of the Premier Badminton League (PBL) 2019 at the Kanteerava Indoor Stadium in Bengaluru to win their maiden title.

Key Points:
   i. Kidambi Srikanth, Vu Ji Trang and the Men’s Doubles pair of Mohammad Ahsan and Hendra Satiawan won their matches for Bengaluru guiding them to victory.
   ii. Bengaluru Raptors have become the fifth team after Chennai Smashers, Delhi Dashers, Hyderabad Hotshots and Hyderabad Hunters to win the title.
   iii. This was the fourth season of the Premier Badminton League (PBL) in which a total of 9 franchises played for the title. The winner team, Bengaluru Raptors got INR 3 crores and the Mumbai team got INR 1.5 crores as the runners-up.
iv. Besides the total prize money for this season was INR 6 crores. The teams which finished in the third and fourth places, i.e., Hyderabad Hunters and Awadhe Warriors were awarded INR 75 lakhs each.

v. Various other award winners of the League include-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Award Category</th>
<th>Winner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Best Comeback of the Tie</td>
<td>Sameer Verma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attacking Player of the Tie</td>
<td>Kidambi Srikanth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian Oil Indian Player of the Tie</td>
<td>Kidambi Srikanth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smartest Player of the Tie</td>
<td>Sameer Verma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attacking Player of the League</td>
<td>Mathias Christiansen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerging Player of the League</td>
<td>Anders Antonsen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian Oil Indian Player of the League</td>
<td>Sameer Verma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vodafone Smartest Player of the League</td>
<td>Kidambi Srikanth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Stephen Constantine resign as coach of Indian football team**

On 14\(^{th}\) January 2019, **Indian Football team**'s Head Coach, **Stephen Constantine** resigned from his post following the exit of Indian team from the **AFC Asian Cup 2019**. AFC Asian Football Cup, organized by Asian Football Confederation is being held in the **United Arab Emirates** from **5\(^{th}\) January 2019 to 1\(^{st}\) January 2019**.

**Key Points**

i. Indian suffered an exit from the group stage of AFC Asian Cup after their 1-0 loss against Bahrain at Sharjah Stadium on 14\(^{th}\) January 2019.

ii. Bahrain’s Jamal Rashed scored goal in the 91\(^{st}\) minute of game which was proved to be the winning goal.

iii. Stephen Constantine was on four contract with Indian Football team since 2015. It was his second stint as India Manager after having been at the helm from 2002 to 2005.

**Indian Football Team**

- Association: All India Football Federation (AIFF)
- Captain: Sunil Chhetri
- FIFA Ranking: 97

**Andy Murray announces tennis retirement**

On 11\(^{th}\) January 2019, **British** tennis player and former World No. 1, **Andy Murray**, because of his right hip injury, announced to retire from the game after this year's Wimbledon if he can keep playing beyond this month’s Australian Open.

**Key Points**

i. The 31-year-old Murray who had hip surgery a year ago said the pain has become unbearable and that he had made the decision last month during his training camp to make this summer’s Wimbledon his final tournament.

ii. Murray had won three Grand Slam titles: Wimbledon in 2013 and 2016 and the US Open in 2012 besides two Olympic gold medals in singles in 2012 and 2016, 45 ATP crowns, and led Britain to their first Davis Cup triumph.

iii. Murray became the first singles player from the **United Kingdom** officially to be world No. 1 when he topped the rankings Nov. 7, 2016.

**1st National EMRS National Sports Meet, 2019 held at Hyderabad**

On 14th January 2019, **Shri jaswantsinh Sumanbhai Bhabhor** Minister of State for Tribal Affairs launched the 1st National Level Sports Meet for the students of Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) at G.M.C Balayogi Stadium, Gachibowli, Hyderabad.

**Key points**

i. The Minister also launched an app 'EMRS Sports Meet' dedicated on the occasion.
ii. Total 1777 students comprising of 975 boys and 802 girls representing 20 States of the country are participating in the event which is three day event till Jan.16, 2019.

iii. Shri. Jual Oram, Union Minister for Tribal Affairs, Shri. Sudarshan Bhagat, Minister of State for Tribal Affairs, and Shri. Deepak Khandekar, Secretary, Tribal Affairs will also be present for presentation ceremony to be held on Jan 16th 2019.

About Eklavya Model Residential Schools
i. Eklavya Model Residential School (EMRS) is a Government of India scheme for model residential school for Indian tribals (Scheduled Tribes, ST) across India.

ii. It was established by the Tribal Ministry, Government of India in the year 1997-98 to ensure tribal students get access to quality education in the remote tribal areas.

iii. Provisions of funding is through Grants under Article 275(1) of the Constitution.

iv. According to the budget 2018-19 block with more than 50% ST population and at least 20,000 tribal persons will have an Eklavya Model Residential School by the year 2022.

Chennai’s Gukesh Crowned India’s Youngest Grandmaster
On January 15th 2019, a 12 year old Tamil Nadu boy D Gukesh became the youngest Grand master in India and second in the world. He achieved this feat by beating D K Sharma at 17th Delhi International Open Chess tournament in Delhi.

Key points
i. D Gukesh became India’s 59th Grand Master.

ii. Sergey Karjakin of Ukraine is the world’s youngest Grand master.

iii. This was D Gukesh’s third Grand master norm. His first GM norm was during the Bangkok Open in 2018.

Arsenal goalkeeper Petr Cech announced retirement
On January 16, 2019, Arsenal goalkeeper Petr Cech announced his retirement after having a career spanning 20 years in football.

i. He has a record 202 clean sheets in his 15 seasons in the Premier League since joining Chelsea in 2004 from French club Rennes.

ii. He is also the Czech Republic’s most capped player, making 124 appearances after which he also retired from international soccer in 2016.

Karlovic becomes oldest man in 40 yrs to win an Aus Open match
On 15th January 2019, Croatian tennis player, Ivo Karlovic became the oldest man to win a match at the Australian Open at the age of 40 years as he defeated Poland’s Hubert Hurkacz, a man 18 years his junior, to reach the second round.

Key Points:

i. The victory over Hubert Hurkacz made Karlovic the oldest victor at the tournament since Australian icon Ken Rosewall reached the third round of the 1978 tournament at the age of 44.

ii. Karlovic who is currently world number 73, also became the oldest winner at any Grand Slam since a 40-year-old Jimmy Connors beat Jaime Oncins to reach the second round of the 1992 US Open.

About Australian Open:
It is the first of the four Grand Slam tennis events held each year in January in Melbourne, Australia. It precedes the French Open, Wimbledon and the US Open. The tournament features men’s and women’s singles; men’s, women’s and mixed doubles and junior’s championships; as well as wheelchair, legends and exhibition events. It is held on hardcourt surfaces at Melbourne Park, Australia.

Stephen Constantine steps down as coach of Indian football tea
On January 15, 2019,Stephen Constantine steps down as the head coach of the Indian Football team following the team’s exit from 2019 AFC (Asian Football Confederation) Asian Cup. India faced failure against Bahrain at the Sharjah Stadium.

i. This was Constantine’s second regime as India’s Head Coach after 2005. He returned to the hot seat in 2015, succeeding Dutch Wim Koevermans.
India 1st away team to win bilateral series in all formats in Australia

On 18th January 2019, India defeated Australia in the third ODI at Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) to win the ODI series by 2-1 and became the first Visiting team to win bilateral series across the three formats against Australia in Australian soil.

**Key Points**

i. Indian team lead by Virat Kohli also became the first ever Indian side to win bilateral ODI series in Australia.

ii. Yuzvendra Chahal was given the player of the match award whereas Veteran Player M. S. Dhoni was honoured with Player of the series award.

iii. Earlier, India defeated Australia by 2-1 in the test series for the first time.

iv. Cheteshwar Pujara was awarded the Player of the series in Test Series against Australia.

Rani to lead Indian women's hockey team for Spain tour

On 18th January 2019, the Hockey India announced that striker Rani Rampal will lead the 18-member Indian women's team for the season opener tournament in Spain starting 26 January 2019.

**Key Points:**

i. Besides, goalkeeper Savita was appointed as the vice-captain of the Indian Women Hockey team for the tour.

ii. Throughout the tour the Indian Hockey team which is coached by Sjoerd Marijne is set to play four matches with Spain and two matches against the Women’s World Cup runners-up, Ireland.

Wasim Jaffer became the 1st Asian to slam 2 first-class double tons after turning 40

On January 17, 2019, the highest run-getter in the Ranji Trophy history, Wasim Jaffer, became the first Indian and the first Asian batsman to score two double centuries after turning 40 in first-class cricket.

i. This was achieved in the Ranji Trophy quarter-final for Vidarbha against Uttar Pradesh in Nagpur.

ii. He has scored more than 10,000 runs in the Ranji Trophy and has a tally of 1000 runs in the ongoing season of Ranji Trophy.

Saurashtra record highest successful chase in Ranji Trophy history

Saurashtra has created history by successfully chasing a target of 372 runs in the second quarter final against Uttar Pradesh in the ongoing Ranji Trophy 2018-19 at Bharat Ratna Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee International Cricket Stadium in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh.

i. Saurashtra broke the record of Assam which had chased 371 runs against services in 2008-09 in Delhi.

ii. Saurashtra qualified for the semi-final with this win with a great knock from Rinku Singh who scored 150 runs.

Khelo India Youth Games: Hosts Maharashtra finish top with 228 medals

On 20th January 2019, the Khelo India Youth Games concluded at the Shiv Chhatrapati Sports Complex, Balewadi in Pune with the host Maharashtra leading the medals table by winning a mammoth 85 gold, 62 silver and 81 bronze for a total of 228 medals in the Games.

**Key Points:**

i. With a total of 228 medals, hosts Maharashtra also walked away with the Overall Trophy at the Khelo India Youth Games.

ii. Union Minister for Human Resource Development Prakash Javadekar and Maharashtra Sports Minister Vinod Tawde presented the winning trophy at the closing ceremony in Pune.

iii. Haryana, stood at second place with 62 gold, 56 silver and 60 bronze for a total of 178 medals.

iv. Delhi stood third with 48 gold, 37 silver and 51 bronze, a tally of 136 medals.

v. Individually, Karnataka swimmer Srihari Nataraj became the most medals winner by competing in seven events in the U-21 category and winning all of them. The 16-year-old’s timing of 26.16 secs in 50m backstroke was a senior national record.
vi. In the closing ceremony Maharashtra Government announced that there would be one hour of sports every day for students in all schools in the State of Maharashtra.

vii. The theme of the Games revolved around ‘kheloge toh khiloge’ (if you play, you will prosper).

viii. About 10,000 participants, including about 6,000 athletes, from across the country participated in this year’s Khelo India Youth Games.

**Women’s National Boxing Championships: Lovlina wins gold medal, Manisha settles for silver**

On 6th January 2019, World Championship bronze medallist Assam’s Lovlina Borgohain claimed the gold medal while Haryana boxer Manisha Moun had to settle with silver at the Women’s National Boxing Championships held at the JSW Sports’ Inspire Institute of Sports, Vijayanagara, Karnataka.

**Key Points:**

i. Lovlina Borgohain of Assam won the gold in 69 kg category bout.

ii. Manisha Moun lost to Meenakumari of All India Police (AIP) in the finals of 54 kg class.

iii. Haryana won three gold medals through the reliable Pinki Rani Jangra (51kg), Neeraj (60kg) and Pooja Rani (81kg).

iv. Railways also won 3 gold medals with the win of Sonia Lather (57kg), Neetu (75kg) and Seema Poonia (+81kg).

v. Punjab earned two gold through Manju Rani (48kg) and Simranjit Kaur.

vi. In the Flyweight category, Pinki Rani won the gold by defeating Telangana opponent Nikhat Zareen.

vii. Haryana was adjudged the best team while Simranjit of Punjab was the best boxer and Tamil Nadu’s S.Kalaivani and Telengana’s Nikhat were the most promising and challenging boxer respectively.

**Ankita Raina wins ITF’s tournament in Singapore**

On 20th January 2019, India’s Ankita Raina won the International Tennis Federation’s (ITF) 25,000-dollar Women’s tournament in Singapore by defeating top seed and world number 122 Arantxa Rus of the Netherlands, by 6-3, 6-2.

**Key Points:**

i. Besides being the first title of the season, it is Ankita’s fourth title at the USD 25k level, and eighth overall.

ii. Ankita has earned 50 points from this win and has achieved a jump of 35 places to a career-high 168 in the latest WTA singles rankings issued on 21st January 2019.

iii. She will next play the Fed Cup, starting in the first week of next month at Astana, Kazakhstan.

**ICC announces men’s Test and ODI Teams of the Year**

On 22nd January 2019, the International Cricket Council (ICC) announced the Men’s Test and ODI teams of the year with Virat Kohli as the Captain of both teams following his brilliant performance in 2018 as a Batsman as well as a Captain.

**Key Points**

i. The Test team of the year is as follows: Virat Kohli (India), Rishabh Pant (India), Jasprit Bumrah (India), Kane Williamson (New Zealand), Henry Nicholls (New Zealand), Tom Latham (New Zealand), Dimuth Karunaratne (Sri Lanka), Jason Holder (West Indies), Kagiso Rabada (South Africa), Nathan Lyon (Australia) and Mohammad Abbas (Pakistan).

ii. The ODI Team of the year is as follows: Virat Kohli (India), Rohit Sharma (India), Kuldeep Yadav (India), Jasprit Bumrah (India), Joe Root (England), Jonny Bairstow (England), Jos Buttler (England), Ben Stokes (England), Mustafizur Rahman (Bangladesh), Ross Taylor (New Zealand) and Rashid Khan (Afghanistan).

iii. Virat Kohli and Jasprit Bumrah are included in both ODI and well as Test team of the year.
Mohammed Shami is the fastest Indian bowler to reach 100 ODI wickets
On January 23, 2019, Mohammed Shami succeeded the Indian record held by Irfan Pathan to become the fastest Indian bowler to claim 100 ODI wickets. Shami got this milestone at his 56th match where as Irfan got in his 59th match. The world record is currently held by Afghanistan leg-spinner Rashid Khan

Johan Botha cricket forms of retired from all forms of cricket
On January 24, 2019, Former South African all-rounder Johan Botha announced his immediate retirement from all forms of cricket because of his physical illness.
i. He played for South African national team from 2005 - 2012.
ii. After 2012, he moved on to Australia and played in domestic country league, he took part under the team Hobart Hurricanes

Daniel Hazelle retired from International Cricket
She made her debut match in 2009 and represented her country 146 times in international level in which she captained the team twice.

Virat Kohli overtakes Brian Lara to become 10th highest ODI run-getter
On January 22, 2019, Virat Kohli, was named ICC ODI Cricketer of the Year, Test Cricketer of the Year and Cricketer of the Year and he became the first man to grab all three big ICC awards. Virat Kohli surpassed West India’s Brian Lara. The 30-year-old, who has scored 10,430 runs in 212 innings, overtook ex-Windies captain Brian Lara, who scored 10,405 runs in 289 ODI innings. Kohli’s the only active player among the top-ten ODI run-getters. Similarly, on January 23, 2019, Shikhar Dhawan reached the 5000-run mark in his 118th innings in ODI cricket. Next to Sourav Ganguly, Shikhar Dhawan joined as the fourth fastest left-handed batsman to reach 5,000 runs in ODI cricket

Brisbane Heat win their maiden women’s Big Bash title
On 26th January 2019, Australian T20 cricket team “Brisbane Heat” won their maiden Women’s Big Bash League (WBBL) title by defeating Sydney Sixers in the final by three wickets at Drummoyne Oval in Sydney, Australia.
Key Points
i. Sydney Sixers opted to bat first but couldn’t get off to a flying start that they unusually followed throughout the season and could score only 131 runs which was chased by Brisbane Heat with four ball remaining.
ii. Beth Mooney from ‘Brisbane Heat’ was awarded as the Player of the match for her knock of 65 runs from just 46 balls.
iii. Ellyse Perry from “Sydney Sixers” was awarded the “Player of the tournament” for scoring highest number of runs in the tournament.
iv. Teen leg Spinner Georgia Wareham from “Melbourne Renegades” was awarded with the Rebel Young Gun award in the WBBL.

Wasim Jaffer first to score 1000 runs in Ranji season twice
On January 25, 2019, Wasim Jaffer, the veteran cricketer became the only batsman to score 1,000 runs in two separate seasons. Jaffer made his first-class debut in 1996-97
i. Wasim Jaffer already scored over 1260 runs while playing for Mumbai in the 2008-09 season.
ii. Wasim Jaffer, now has 1,003 runs in the ongoing Ranji Trophy season.
iii. He is also highest capped player in Ranji Trophy cricket, surpassing Amol Muzumdar (presently batting coach for Rajasthan Royals).
New Zealand cricketer Ewen Chatfield retired at the age of 68
On 27 January, Former New Zealand pacer Ewen Chatfield retired from all forms of cricket, he made his debut in 1975.
i. Ewen Chatfield retired from international cricket in 1989, then he played for the club for 51 years which gave him his identity.
ii. He played for the club named “Wellington club Naenae Old Boys”.

Operation Olympics Commences in Kerala
On 25th January 2019, An expert programme ‘Operation Olympics’ managed by Kerala’s Sports Department and State Sports Council was commenced to train 123 athletes in 11 disciplines for 2020 Tokyo Olympics.
Key Points
i. The programme has the objective to provide international standard training to the athletes with the help of eminent trainers from both India and abroad.
ii. Under the Programme, Expert training will be provided in athletics, boxing, cycling, swimming, shooting, wrestling, badminton, fencing, rowing and archery.
iii. Training in wrestling, cycling, swimming and boxing has been started at various stadium in Thiruvananthapuram district whereas training for other streams will be at Kollam, Ernakulam, Alappuzha and Kannur districts.
iv. Miraitowa is the mascot of 2020 Tokyo Olympics while Someity is the mascot of Tokyo 2020 Paralympics.

Nepal batsman Rohit Paudel became the youngest cricketer to score a half-century in International cricket surpasses Tendulkar’s record
On January 23, 2019, Nepal’s Rohit Paudel became the youngest man to hit an International fifty, he scored 55 for Nepal in the 2nd ODI against UAE to become the youngest man to score a half-century at the age of 16 years and 146 days by surpassing Sachin’s record which is set at the age of 16 years and 213 days.
ii. He surpassed the score held by Pakistan’s Shahid Afridi of being the youngest batsman to score a half-century in the one-day format.
iii. Rohit Paudel is 16 years and 146 days old, and became the youngest half-centurion in ODIs whereas the previous record was held by Shahid Afridi, who had scored 102 at the age of 16 years and 217 days.

Rohit Sharma-Virat Kohli pair reached Joint 3rd in list of most century stands in ODIs
On January 28 2019, Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli joint 3rd in list of most century stands in ODIs, they registered their 16th century stand, 10 century stands behind Sachin Tendulkar and Sourav Ganguly’s tally.
ii. They reached this milestone, during a match against New Zealand.
ii. Virat Kohli is also entitled as the 5th Indian player to acquire the fame of hitting 100 50 plus score in List A Cricket.

India’s Saina Nehwal Won Indonesia Masters Title 2019 against Spain’s Carolina Marin
2019 Indonesia Masters, officially known as DAIHATSU Indonesia Masters 2019, held in Istora Gelora Bung Karno, Indonesia
From 22nd January 2019, the Indonesia Masters 2019 Title, a badminton tournament which is officially known as DAIHATSU Indonesia Masters 2019, took place at the Istora Senayan in Jakarta, Indonesia. The event concluded on 27th January 2019.
Key Points:
ii. The Total prize money for the tournament was $350,000.
ii. The tournament was organized by the Badminton Association of Indonesia in recognition with Badminton World Federation (BWF).
iii. The Indonesia Masters 2019 Title is one of the World Tour Super 500 event conducted by BWF.
(Women’s single) India’s Saina Nehwal Wins Title After Spain’s Carolina Marin Retires
On 27th January 2019, Indian ace Badminton player, Saina Nehwal won the Indonesia Masters women’s singles title after Carolina Marin of Spain pulled out in the final when she injured her right foot.

Key Points:
- Carolina Marin was leading the game by 10-4 when she got injured and decided to retire hurt.
- Saina clinched her first-ever Indonesia masters title after Marin's pullout from the game. She also became the first Indian women’s player to win the Indonesia Masters title.
- With the win, Nehwal earned $26,250 of rewards as the champion of the title.
- Recently Saina lost to Carolina in the semi-final of Malaysia Masters Tournament.
- Besides this tournament, Saina had won a gold medal at the 2018 Commonwealth Games, a bronze at the Asian Games, and reached the finals at Denmark, Indonesia Masters and Syed Modi International tournament last year.

(Men’s Single) Danish player Anders Antonsen wins his first ever Indonesia Masters after defeating world number one Kento Momota of Japan

Key Points:
- Antonsen reached the finals of the championship for the first time. It is also the first time that Antonsen played in BWF World Tour Super 500 tournament.
- By winning the Indonesian championship, he earned prize money of $26,250.

(Women’s double) Ayaka Takahashi (L) and Misaki Matsutomo of Japan defeated Kim So Yeong and Kong Hee Yong of South Korea
On 27th January 2019, Ayaka Takahashi and Misaki Matsutomo of Japan won the women’s double’s final match of Indonesia Masters 2019 Title against Kim So Yeong and Kong Hee Yong of South Korea by 21-19, 21-15 in Jakarta, Indonesia.

(Mixed doubles) Highlight: This was Natsir’s last competition before she retires
Lilyana Natsir, the Indonesia Shuttler has decided to officially retire from the badminton. She lost her last mixed doubles match in the Indonesia Masters 2019.

Australian Open 2019

Key Points:
- The tournament consists of various events for professional tennis players in the single, double and
Mixed Double Category.

**ii.** For the First time, a 10-minute break was allowed due to heat in Men's Singles competition after the third set when the Australian Open Heat Stress Scale reaches 4.0 or higher.

**iii.** Final Set tie-breaker was featured for the first time in Australian Open across all formats which means if the match reaches 6-6 in the final set, the first player who scores 10 points and leads by at least 2 points will win the match.

**Novak Djokovik Beats Rafael Nadal to win record seventh title**

Spain's Rafael Nadal was defeated by Serbia’s Novak Djokovik to win his magnificent seventh Australian Open title.

**Key Points**

- Djokovik defeated Nadal by 6-3, 6-2, 6-3 with a display of flawless tennis.
- Djokovik won a record seventh Australian Open title and a third successive grand slam.

**Naomi Osaka beats Petra Kvitova to win Australian Opens womens singles.**

Japan's Naomi Osaka won the Australian Open women's singles title by defeating Czech Republic’s Petra Kvitova for 7-6, 7-6, 6-4 in the final.

**Key Points**

- Japan’s Naomi Osaka became WTA no.1 in singles ranking replacing Romania’s Simona Halep and first ever Asian to become world No.1.
- She became first player since Jennifer Capriatite win the 2 consecutive Grand Slam titles.

**Pierre-Hugues Herbert and Nicolas Mahut defeated Henri Kontinen and John Peers are in Men’s doubles**

France's Pierre-Hugues Herbert and Nicolas Mahut defeated Finland's Henri Kontinen and Australia's John Peers by 6-4, 7-6 in Australian Open Men's double Category.

**Samatha Stosur and Shuai Zhang defeated Timea Babos and Kristina Mladenovic in women’s doubles**

Timea Babos of Hungary and Kristina Mladenovic of France were defeated by Samantha Stosur of Australia and Shuai Zhang of China for 6-3, 6-4.

**Key Points**

- This is Stosur's third grand slam doubles title after winning 2005 US Open and 2006 French Open.
- Shuai Zhang celebrated the first grand slam which made her best no 14 in ranking.

**Barbora Krejcikova and Rajeev Ram defeated Astra Sharma and John – Patrick Smith in Mixed Doubles**

Australian Open 2019 Mixed Doubles category was won by Barbora Krejcikova of Czech Republic and Rajeev Ram of United States by defeating Australia’s Astra Sharma and Compatriot John Patrick Smith.

**Key Points**

- In the finals Krejcikova and Rajeev Ram made 7-6, 6-1 win against Astra and John Patrick.
- Rajeev Ram and Barbora Krejcikova took a 3-1 lead in the Australian Open 2019 Mixed Doubles final.

**Kartik Sharma wins New South Wales men’s Amateur Golf Championship**

Indian Golfer, Kartik Sharma won the New South Wales Men's Amateur Golf Championship held in Australia by defeating Australia’s Nathan Barberie in the scheduled 36-hole final. He hails from Gurgaon, India.

**Key Points**

- Kartik Sharma is playing for India as a part of National Squad since the age of 10.
- Kartik Sharma who is selected to represent Indian Golf Union for the three events in Australia had also won the Indian Golf Union western India amateur golf championship 2018.

**Malaysia stripped off world para swim event over Israel stance**

On 28th January 2019 Malaysia removed from the right to host world Para swimming championship 2019, as Malaysia refused to allow Israeli athletes to take part in the game. The Malaysia authorities failed to provide necessary guarantees that Israeli Para swimming could participate free from discrimination and safety in the championships.
Key Points
i. International Para swimming championship 2019 were due to be held in Kuching, Malaysia between 29 July and 4 August 2019.
ii. This issue started when Malaysia imposed a cross-sport ban in Israeli athletes attending events.
iii. This championship is a qualifier for the 2020 Paralympics in Tokyo. International Paralympics committee (IPC) encourages all potential hosts to express an interest in staging the event by 11 February 2019.

ICC Rankings: Holder becomes first West Indies player since Garry Sobers to top all-rounder charts
On January 27, 2019, Jason Holder became the first West Indian cricketer since Garfield Sobers to be named as the world’s leading all-rounder in ICC Ranking.

ii. Holder succeeded Bangladesh’s Shakib Al Hasan and India’s Ravindra Jadeja to grab the number one spot for the first time in his career.

Tata steel masters: Magnus Carlsen won the title, Viswanathan Anand finishes joint third
On 28th January 2019, Magnus Carlsen won the title and it is 7th Tata Steel Chess title after setting for a draw against Anish Giri in the final round. India’s Viswanathan Anand settled for joint third place in Tata Steel Masters Chess tournament held in Wijk aan Zee, The Netherlands.

Key Points
i. Anish Giri secured 2nd position with 8.5 points while Magnus Carlsen ended with 9 points. Anish who is ranking No.5 is a Russian born Dutch Grandmaster.
ii. Viswanathan Anand ended with 7.5 points with 3 victories, a lone loss and nine draws. Anand Share his third place with Ian Nepomniachtchi, Ding Liren in this tournament. Anand now ranked sixth in the world rankings.
iii. Vladislav Kovalev of Latvia won game in Challengers section to assure himself a place in the next year masters. The young Indian Grandmaster R Praggnanandhad ranked 11th when he settled for a draw with Dinara Saduakassova of Kazakhstan.

Nagaland CM inaugurated State’s first Astro Turf Football Pitch
On 29th January 2019, Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio inaugurated first Astro Turf Football Pitch of the State at Indira Gandhi Stadium in Kohima, Nagaland.

Key Points
i. The pitch was inaugurated on the occasion of 100th birth anniversary of the legendary footballer Dr. T. Ao.
ii. The state government also planned to partner with Bhaichung Bhutia Football schools for a game development plan. It will begin with young-footballers in which under-16 footballers all over the state will receive an opportunity to be part of this program.
iii. The Astro Turf has size of 105×66 metres for playground which is FIFA approved size. An exhibition match was also played between Chief Minister XI and Chief Secretary XI.
iv. The government will work on strategic sports infrastructure development plan to provide quality sports facilities in every district.

OBITUARY

ARPAnet lead, early internet pioneer Larry Roberts passed away at 81
On December 26, 2018, ARPAnet head and early internet pioneer Larry Roberts died at 81.

i. He was the program manager for ARPAnet (precursor to the internet), and conceptualised the computer-to-computer networks in the 1960s.
ii. Later he formed his company Telenet and to commercialise packet switching technology.
`City on Fire` director Ringo Lam died at 63
On December 31, 2018, **Hong Kong**-born filmmaker and “City on Fire” **director Ringo Lam** died at 63.
i. He worked on many other films like “Prison on Fire” and “School on Fire”, “Maximum Risk”, “In Hell” and “Replicant”.
ii. His final film was “Sky on Fire”.

Veteran actor-writer Kader Khan passed away at 81
On January 1, 2019, Veteran actor-writer **Kader Khan** passed away at 81 in Canada.
i. Making his acting debut in 1973 with Rajesh Khanna’s “Daag”, he has featured in over 300 films. He wrote dialogues for over 250 movies and was also a screenwriter.
ii. In 2013, he won Sahitya Shiromani Award for his work and contributions to Hindi Film industry and Cinema. Khan was recognized twice by the AFMI (American Federation of Muslims from India) for his achievements and service to the Muslim community in India.

Veteran Kannada actor CH Loknath passed away at 91
On January 1, 2019, Veteran Kannada actor **C H Loknath** died at 91.
i. His acting career spanned almost six decades and he had acted in about 650 movies and performed in over 1,000 plays.
ii. He made his debut in the National award winning movie ‘Samskara’ in 1970.

Bengali writer and Sahitya Akademi awardee Dibyendu Palit Passed away in Kolkata
On January 3, 2019, renowned **Bengali writer** and Sahitya Akademi awardee **Dibyendu Palit** passed away at 79 in Kolkata.
i. Palit was conferred the Sahitya Akademi for his novel ‘Anubhab’ in 1998.
ii. His first short story ‘Chhandopatan’ was published in 1955 and his first novel ‘Sindhu Baroan’ published in 1959.
iii. He was awarded the ‘Bankim Purashkar’ for ‘Dheu’ in 1990 and ‘Ananda Purashkar’ in 1984 for ‘Sahojoddha’.

Dronacharya awardee and cricketer Sachin Tendulkar’s coach Ramakant Achrekar Passed away in Mumbai
i. Besides Tendulkar, he also coached other prominent players like Vinod Kambli, Pravin Amre, Sameer Dighe and Balwinder Singh Sandhu.
ii. Because of his contribution to the sport, he was honoured with Padma Shri in 2010.
iii. The Kamath Memorial Cricket Club in Dadar was founded by him.

Former banker and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader Meera Sanyal passed away
On January 12, 2019, banker-turned-politician **Meera Sanyal** passed away at 57.
i. She was the country chief executive of Royal Bank of Scotland when she quit and joined the Aam Aadmi Party.
ii. She also unsuccessfully contested the Lok Sabha election from Mumbai twice, in 2009 and 2014.
iii. In 2018, she also wrote a book named: ‘The Big Reverse: How Demonetization Knocked India Out’.

Former Ranji cricketer Rajesh Ghodge passed away at 47
On January 13, 2019, Former **Goa Ranji player Rajesh Ghodge** passed away at 47 while playing at the Margao Cricket Club tournament.
i. Ghodge was part of the Goa Ranji squad in 1999-2000.
1956 Olympian footballer Zulfiqar passed away at 83
On January 13, 2019, Former India and 1956 Olympian footballer, Mohammed Zulfiqaruddin, passed away at 83 in Hyderabad.

i. He also represented India in the 1958 Tokyo Asian Games and the Merdeka Cup in Malaysia.
ii. He was the captain of Andhra Pradesh in the Santosh Trophy from 1955 to 1967.
iii. He also captained AP Police team from 1954 to 1967 and won IFA Shield, Durand Cup and Rovers Cup tournaments.

**Background:**
In 1956 Olympics, India lost to Bulgaria 0-3 in the bronze-medal match in Melbourne to finish fourth, a result considered one of the finest moments in the country’s football history.

Armed Forces Veterans Day – Jan 14
On January 14, 2019, The Armed Force is celebrated the **Veterans Day** to honour the legends of the Army, Navy and Air Force. The main celebration in **Delhi** will take place at the New Delhi. Minister of State(Defence) Dr Subhash Bhambre inaugurated the main event. This Day is commemorated in the memory of first Indian Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces Field Marshal K M Cariappa becoming a veteran in 1953. To mark the occasion, veteran rallies will be held country wide at Armed Forces stations.

**Facts to be known:**

i. Defence Minster Nirmala Sitharaman along with former Army chief General Shankar Roy Chowdhury, Air Chief Marshal (retd) Arup Raha, Lieutenant General Abhay Krishna, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief (GOC-in-C), Eastern Command paid homage to those who made supreme sacrifice in the line of duty.

ii. The main motive behind this celebration is to honour the ex-servicemen and resolve the problems faced by them after their retirement.

iii. 69th **Army day** is to be celebrated on January 15, 2019.

Malayalam Director Lenin Rajendran passed away at 67
On January 14, 2019, Malayalam director and screenwriter Lenin Rajendran passed away at 67.

i. He was a five-time recipient of the **Kerala State Film Awards** and also received the International Federation of Film Critics Award for the best Malayalam film for his ‘Makaramanju’ screened at the 2010 IFFK.

ii. In the 23rd International Film Festival of Kerala (IFFK) six of his films were screened under the category ‘Chronicler of Our Times’.

iii. He was also chairman of the Kerala State Film Development Corporation.

iv. Overall, he had directed 16 films in his 35-year career.

Fields Medal-Winning Mathematician Sir Michael Atiyah passed away

i. He was best known for his contribution to a branch of mathematics called **topological K-theory** and the Atiyah-Singer index theorem.

ii. He received many awards, notably the Fields Medal, Abel Prize and the Royal Society’s highest accolade, the Copley Medal.

iii. He was also the chancellor of the University of Leicester and was the President of Royal Society in 1990-1995.

**Background:**
♦ Fields Medal is also known as the ‘Nobel for Mathematics’.

Former Maharashtra Minister Shivajirao Deshmukh dies
On 14th January 2019, 83 year old Shivajirao Deshmukh, former chairman of the state legislative council and senior Congress leader died following long illnesses while under treatment at Mumbai, Maharashtra. His last rites to be performed at Shirala on 15th January.

**Key points**
i. He belongs to Shirala tehsil in Sangli district of western Maharashtra.
iii. He was also the former speaker of Maharashtra legislative assembly.
iv. He won the assembly polls four times from Shirala seat in 1978, 1980, 1985 and in 1990. In 2008 he was elected as Chairman of the upper house and continued till 2015.

Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) Vishnu Hari Dalmia passed away
On January 16, 2019, Vishnu Hari Dalmia, one of the major leaders of the Ram Janmabhoomi protest along with Ashok Singhal and Acharya Giriraj Kishore passed away in New Delhi. i. He also served as ‘Prabandh Nyasi’ (managing trustee) of Sri Krishna Janmasthan Mathura

Vanguard Group Founder John C. Bogle passed away
On January 16, 2019, John C. Bogle, who founded the Vanguard Group of Investment Companies in 1974 and built it into a giant kingdom, with $4.9 trillion in assets under management, died at the age of 89. Bogle was also a best-selling author, Stay the Course: The Story of Vanguard and the Index Revolution is the recent and the last master piece written by him.

Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Mary Oliver dies at 83
On 17th January 2019, Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Mary Oliver died at her residence in Hobe Sound, Florida due to a disease caused lymphoma at the age of 83.

i. She was critically acclaimed for her rapturous odes to nature and the animal life.
ii. Mary Oliver wrote more than 15 poetry and essay collections.

INLD MLA Jaswinder Sandhu passes away in Haryana
On 19th January 2019, Indian National Lok Dal (INLD)’s senior leader and MLA Jasvinder Singh Sandhu passed away after Suffering from Cancer at the age of 63 in Haryana.

ii. He had also served as the agriculture minister of the state.

Eminent neurologist Jagjit Singh Chopra died
On January 19, 2019, Padma Bhushan neurologist Jagjit Singh Chopra has died at the age of 84.

i. He was the founder of the department of neurology at PGI, Chandigarh.
ii. He was the first Indian neurologist to hold chair as the secretary general of XIV World Congress of Neurology, held at New Delhi in 1989.
iii. He received lifetime achievement award by the World Federation of Neurology in 2017.

World’s oldest man Masazo Nonaka dies in Japan aged 113
On 20th January 2019, World’s oldest man Masazo Nonaka died due to natural causes in the Japan’s northern most island of Hokkaido at the age of 113.

i. Masazo Nonaka was born on 25 July 1905 and have lived with his four generation family.
ii. Japan has one of the world’s highest life expectancies. The Longest living man on record Jiroemon Kimura who died after his 116th birthday in June 2013 was also from Japan.

Siddaganga mutt seer Sri Shivakumara Swamiji passed away
On 21st January 2019, Siddaganga mutt seer Sri Shivakumara Swamiji, popularly known as “Nadedaduva Devaru” (Walking God) passed away in Tumakuru, Karnataka at the age of 111.
Siddaganga Swamiji was conferred honorary doctorate by Karnataka University, Dharwad in 1965. He received the Padma Bhushan, in 2015 and the Karnataka Ratna in 2007.

**CIA officer who inspired Oscar-winning film Argo died at the age of 78**

On January 20, 2019, Former CIA agent Tony Mendez, who inspired the Oscar-winning film *Argo*, has died at the age of 78 due to Parkinson's Disease in Frederick, Maryland.

i. Mendez wrote three non-fiction memoirs, one with his wife
  - **Master of Disguise: My Secret Life in the CIA (1999)**, with Malcolm McConnell, a memoir of his CIA experiences.
  - **Spy Dust: Two Masters of Disguise** Reveal the Tools and Operations that Helped Win the Cold War (2003), with Jonna Mendez and Bruce Henderson.
  - **Argo**: How the CIA and Hollywood Pulled Off the Most Audacious Rescue in History (2012), with Matt Baglio, a more lengthy account of the Canadian Caper.

ii. Mendez's movie “Argo”, won best picture at the **2013 oscar academy awards**.

**Former India hockey player Raghbir Bhola passes away in NewDelhi**

On January 22, 2019, Former India hockey player Raghbir Singh Bhola, has passed away at the age of 92 in Newdelhi.

He represented India in the 1956 Melbourne and 1960 Rome Olympics, winning a gold and silver medal. In 2000, he was honoured with the **Arjuna Award** for his achievements in hockey.

**Bengali writer Atin Bandyopadhyay passes away**

On January 19, 2019, Veteran Bengali writer Atin Bandyopadhyay passed away in Kolkata due to brain stroke.

i. He received **Sahitya Akademi** award for his compilation of short story “*Panchashati Galpo*

ii. Some of other fiction written by him are ‘*Aloukik Jaljaan’, ‘Nil Timi’, ‘Ekti Jaler Rekha’

iii. His masterpiece was a four part tetra-logy on the partion : *Nilkantha Pakhir Khonje,*"Manusher Gharbari” *Aloukik Jalajan* and *Ishwarer Bagan*.

iv. He was also entitled with the **Bankim Puraskar (1998)** for his work *Dui Bharatbarsho*.

**Pulitzer Prize-Winning Columnist Russell Baker Died At 93**


**Jnanpith awardee, acclaimed author Krishna Sobti passes away at 93**

On 25th January 2019, Demise of Hindi fiction writer and essayist, Jnanpith awardee as well, Krishna Sobti passed away in New Delhi at the age of 93. She was born on 18th February, 1925 in Gujarat Punjab, British India.

i. Her writings insinuate Punjabi, Urdu, and afterwards Rajasthani languages. Her works mainly underscores the issues of female identity.

ii. Notable writings- Mitro Marajani, Daar se Bichuchuri, Surajmukhi Andhere Ke


**Ex-Goa governor Bhanu Prakash Singh died**

On January 24, 2019, Former ex Goa Governor and head of the Narsinghgarh royal family Bhanu Prakash Singh passed away due to physical illness in Indore.

i. Singh was elected as an MP from the Raigarh Lok Sabha seat in 1962 as an independent candidate. He later became close to former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, and joined the Congress in 1964.

ii. In 1991, he became the Governor of Goa.
French Oscar-winning composer Michel Legrand passed away aged 86 in Paris
On 26th January 2019, French music composer Michel Legrand died at the age of 86 in Paris.
ii. He also won five Grammys awards.

Former defence minister George Fernandes passed away
On January 29, 2019, former defence minister George Fernandes breathed his last due to prolonged illness of Alzheimer’s disease. He passed away at the age of 88.
i. He served as the Defence Minister in the year 1998
ii. During his regime as the Defence Minister, Fernandes oversaw the Pokhran nuclear tests of 1998 and the Kargil war in 1999.

Former Ranji player and Cricket coach Amrik Singh Nagra, died at 49
On January 25, 2019, Former Punjab Ranji cricketer and coach Amrik Singh Nagra died due to cardiac arrest in Ludhiana
In 1987, Amrik Singh Nagra was one of six players selected for under 19 championship from Ludhiana

BOOKS & AUTHORS

‘A Crusade Against Corruption’: book by Manohar Manoj launched by Vice-Chairman of Rajya Sabha, Harivansh Narayan Singh in New Delhi
i. The book written over a period of 15 years is claimed as the ‘Encyclopaedic snapshot on Corruption in India’.

Malala Pens New Book “We Are Displaced” On Refugee Girls
On 8th January 2019, Malala yousafzai, the youth icon of the world and the Noble Prize winner has come up with the new book, “We Are Displaced” about my Journey and Stories from Refugee Girls Around the World.

KeyPoints:
Through this story, she tells about her experience of travelling through the world and visiting the refugees, it also be considered as the depiction of her inner self, who was devastated from her homeland.

Other works of Malala Yousafzai are:
♦ I am Malala: The Story of the Girl Who Stood Up for Education and was Shot by the Taliban (co-written with Christina Lamb) in 2013

Vice President of India launched the book ‘Universal Brotherhood Through Yoga”
On January 21, 2019, Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu launched the book ‘Universal Brotherhood Through Yoga’ in New Delhi.
The book is compiled by Bharatiya Sanskrit Pitham

Indian Diplomat launches bilingual anthology in Brazil
On January 24, 2019, A new anthology titled ‘New Brazilian Poems’, translated and edited by Indian poet-diplomat Abhay Kumar was launched at the National Association of Writers of Brazil
i. He was also honoured with the SAARC Literary Award 2013 for his contribution to contemporary South Asian Poetry.
ii. Some other works of Abhay K. are *The Seduction Of Delhi*, *The Eight-Eyed Lord of Kathmandu*, *The Prophecy of Brasilia*, *CAPITALS*, *100 Great Indian Poems*

iii. He also penned the **SAARC anthem** which was also accepted by 8 members and was also translated into different languages

**IMPORTANT DAYS**

**Defence Research and Development Organisation, DRDO day**
On 1st January 2018, the **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** celebrated its establishment day, the **DRDO day**, throughout its laboratories and facilities in the country.

**Key Points:**

i. The DRDO has made the country self-reliant in areas of missiles, radars, sonars and torpedoes and many other systems.

ii. The Organisation has been working over the years to develop state of the art weapon system for the country’s armed forces.

iii. On the occasion the DRDO Chairman **Dr G Satheesh Reddy** announced that the indigenously developed fighter aircraft **Light Combat Aircraft Tejas** and **Airborne Early Warning and Control System** are now on final induction after going through all the test.

**World Braille Day celebrated on January 4**
On 4th January 2019, United Nations observed the **first official World Braille Day** remembering the birth anniversary of **Louis Braille** who was the inventor of **Braille** for the people with visual disabilities.

**Key Points**

i. World Braille day is observed annually on 4th January to raise awareness on the importance of Braille for approximately 1.3 billion people living with some form of distance or near vision impairment.

ii. Louis Braille was born on 4th January 1809 in France and he lost his vision at the age of 3.

iii. On the occasion of World Braille Day, half part of evening bulletin of All India Radio – Ahmedabad was read by a Visually challenged primary school teacher, Mr. Krishnabhai Thakar.

**Bharatiya Pravasi Day or Non Resident Day: 9th January**
On 9th January 2019, Non Resident Day or Bharatiya Pravasi Day is celebrated, marks the contribution of **overseas Indian community in the development of India**.

i. This day is celebrated to strengthen the engagement of the overseas Indian community with the Government of India and reconnect them with their roots.

ii. On 9th January 2019, Mahatma Gandhi came to India from South Africa and became the greatest Pravasi who led India’s freedom Struggle.

iii. Earlier till 2015, it was celebrated every year and now in every two year.

**World Hindi Day: 10th January**
On 10th January 2019, **World Hindi day** celebrated, marking the anniversary of first **World Hindi Conference** which was held in **1975** and inaugurated by the then prime minister Indira Gandhi.

**Key points:**

i. World Hindi Conference was first observed on **10th January, 2006**. Since then, it is celebrated on 10th January every year.

ii. The main focus of World Hindi Day is “to promote the language at the global stage”.

iii. Whereas **National Hindi Diwas** is celebrated every year on **14th September**, marks the adaption of Hindi, written in Devanagari script as the official language.

**January 10, 2019 celebrated as 26th Army Air Defence Day**
January 10, 2019 was observed as 26th Army Air Defence Day by Army Air Defence Corps.
i. A wreath Laying Ceremony was held at the Amar Jawan Jyoti at India Gate, New Delhi.
ii. The Corps of Army Air Defence is the youngest arm of Indian Army.

**National Youth Day-January 12**
On 12th January 2019, the nation celebrated the National Youth Day (also known as Yuva Diwas) to honour the birthday of Swami Vivekananda, one of India's greatest spiritual and social leaders who had strong faith in the power of youth.

**Key Points:**
i. On this occasion, President Ram Nath Kovind and Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid tributes to Swami Vivekananda on his 156th birth anniversary.

ii. To celebrate the day, Minister of State (I/C) for Youth Affairs and Sports Col Rajyavardhan Rathore (Retd) launched the National Youth Parliament Festival 2019 that will be celebrated from 12th of January up to 24th February in New Delhi.

iii. National Youth Parliament Festival 2019 is organised on the theme of “Be The Voice of New India” and “Find solutions and contribute to policy”.

iv. The National Youth Parliament Festival 2019 will be conducted at three levels: District Youth Parliament (DYP), State Youth Parliament (SYP) and National Youth Parliament (NYP). The best three speakers at the National Youth Parliament will be awarded Rs. 2 Lakhs, Rs. 1.50 Lakhs and Rs. 1 Lakh respectively by the Prime Minister.

v. On National Youth Day 2019, the tallest bronze statue (33 ft.) of Swami Vivekanand built at the cost of Rs 17 crore will be unveiled in Ranchi, Jharkhand by Chief Minister Raghubar Das.

**NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission releases the Atal Tinkering Lab Handbook on eve of National Youth Day**
On 12th January 2019, To celebrate the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda, NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) released the Atal Tinkering Lab Handbook titled "Nayee Dishayen, Naye Nirman, Naya Bharat".

**Key Points:**
i. The Handbook was released by Mr. Amitabh Kant, CEO, NITI Aayog, Mr. Ramanathan Ramanan, Mission Director, Atal Innovation Mission, Mr. Alok Ohrie, MD, Dell EMC and Dr. Anjlee Prakash, Chairperson, Learning Links Foundation (LLF).

ii. The book is a collection of guidelines, resources, methodologies, key learning, case studies of the ATL ecosystem and the outcome and impact that is being created by the Atal Tinkering Labs.

iii. A 10 Month Student Entrepreneurship Programme was also announced for the top six innovations of the Atal Tinkering Marathon 2017 to transform their innovative prototypes into functioning, scaled and Go-to-Market products by the Niti Aayog and American technology giant Dell EMC.

iv. Prototypes across six crucial themes having broader social impact, namely, Clean Energy, Waste Management, Agritech, Healthcare, Smart Mobility and Water Resources are included in these innovations.

**About Atal Innovation Mission (AIM)**
It is the Government of India's flagship initiative to promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in the country. AIM was given government approvals in February 2016. The Atal Innovation Mission has two core functions:

i. **Entrepreneurship promotion** through Self-Employment and Talent Utilization, wherein innovators would be supported and mentored to become successful entrepreneurs

ii. **Innovation promotion:** to provide a platform where innovative ideas are generated

**352nd Prakash Utsav of Guru Gobind Singh celebrated on January 13**
On January 13, 2019, the 352nd birth anniversary of the 10th Sikh Guru, Guru Govind Singh ji, was celebrated as Prakash utsav at Patna Sahib, in Bihar, the birth place of Guruji.

i. The main function was organised at Takhat Sri Harmandir Sahib Gurdwara, Patna Sahib.

ii. Guru Govind Singh ji was the creator of Khalsa Panth.
iii. The 10th Sikh Guru was a spiritual leader, philosopher, poet and master warrior. He is considered as the eternal guru by his followers because of his contribution to Sikhism.

**PM released commemorative coin on Sikh Guru Gobind Singh in New Delhi**

On January 13, 2019, Prime Minister Narendra Modi released a commemorative coin of 350 rupees on Guru Govind Singh ji in New Delhi on the eve of 352nd birth anniversary of the 10th Sikh Guru.

i. He also announced that the Kartarpur corridor located in Punjab, Pakistan, is being built for devotees to go visit and pray.

ii. Including celebrations of the 352nd Prakash Utsav of Guru Gobind Singh all over the country, the centre would also celebrate Guru Nanak Dev’s 550th birth anniversary.

iii. Earlier in November 23, 2018, the centre started its year-long celebrations to commemorate 550th Birth Anniversary of Shri Guru Nanak Dev Ji.

**About Kartarpur corridor:**

♦ On November 22, the cabinet chaired by PM Narendra Modi approved the corridor from Dera Baba Nanak to the Pakistan border.

♦ It involves a road link for Sikh pilgrims to visit the famous Kartarpur Sahib Gurdwara in Pakistan.

♦ The 16th century Gurdwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur on the banks of the river Ravi is important for Sikhs as Guru Nanak Dev, their main guru, spent 18 years here. The gurudwara was established by the first Sikh Guru in 1522.

**January 15, 2019 celebrated as 71st Army Day**

On January 15, 2019, an annual parade was held at the Carriappa Parade Ground in New Delhi to celebrate the 71st anniversary of the Indian Army Day.

i. January 15 is celebrated as the Indian Army Day to commemorate our soldiers for their bravery and sacrifice.

ii. This day was constituted by Field Marshall KM Cariappa who took over as the first Indian Army chief in 1949.

♦ Chief of Army Staff: General Bipin Rawat.

**Manipur, Meghalaya, Tripura celebrating statehood day**

On January 21, 2019, Manipur, Meghalaya and Tripura are celebrating their statehood day. It is their 47th statehood day.

**Keys points to be noted**

i. In the year 1972, all the three states became full-fledged states under the North Eastern Region (Reorganisation) Act, 1971.

ii. The erstwhile princely states of Tripura and Manipur were merged with Indian Union in October 1949 and became full-fledged states in 1972

iii. Meghalaya was a part of Assam before it was carved out as a full-fledged state under the North Eastern Region (Re-Organisation) Act, 1971. In Meghalaya, a week-long programme on the theme, ‘Celebrating Meghalaya-India’, on the occasion of the 47th Statehood Day and the 70th Republic Day began on Monday in different districts.

**Important Things about the states**

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<thead>
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<th>States</th>
<th>Capital</th>
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<th>Governor</th>
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<tr>
<td>Meghalaya</td>
<td>Shillong</td>
<td>Conrad Sangma</td>
<td>Tathagata Roy</td>
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<td>Manipur</td>
<td>Impal</td>
<td>N. Biren Singh</td>
<td>Najma Heptulla</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tripura</td>
<td>Agartala</td>
<td>Biplab Kumar Deb</td>
<td>Kaptan Singh Solanki</td>
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Tripura is the second largest rubber producer after Kerala.

**Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose’s Birth Anniversary**

On 23rd January 2019, 122nd Birth Anniversary of the great Freedom Fighter Subhas Chandra Bose was celebrated all over the India.

**Key Points**
i. Subash Chandra Bose was a member of the Indian National Congress and later he formed Indian National Army also known as **Azad Hind Fauz**.

ii. Subhas Chandra Bose popularly known as Netaji was born on 23rd January 1897 and died on 18th August 1945.

iii. Recently 3 islands of Andaman and Nicobar – Ross Island, Neil Island and Havelock Island has been named as Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Dweep, Shaheed Dweep and Swaraj Dweep by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to mark the 75th anniversary of raising of the Indian National Flag by Subhas Chandra Bose.

**PM inaugurates Subhas Chandra Bose Museum at Red Fort**

On 23rd January 2019, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated the **Subhas Chandra Bose Museum** to mark the 122nd Birth anniversary of freedom fighter Subhas Chandra Bose at **Red Fort** in Delhi.

**Key Points**

i. The museum features different artefacts related to the Subhas Chandra Bose and Indian National Army (INA) including a wooden chair and sword used by Subhas Chandra Bose, medals, badges and uniforms.

ii. Prime Minister, Narendra Modi also inaugurated two more museums – “**The Yaad-e-Jallian Museum**” and “**1857 War of Independence Museum**”.

iii. **The Yaad-e-Jallian Museum** is made in the memory of people died in the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre in Amritsar, Punjab in 1919.

iv. **The 1857 War of Independence Museum** showcases the heroism, sacrifices and valour shown by Indian Soldiers in the 1857 War of Independence which is also regarded as the first war of independence.

v. General Public can visit these Museums after **31st January 2019** because Red fort will be closed for general public visit till 31st January due to the Republic day and Bharat Parv celebrations.

**Ministry of women and Child Development to celebrate National Girl Child Day-24th January**

On 24th January 2019, the nation celebrated **National Girl Child Day 2019** through various programmes including awareness campaign on save girl child, child sex ratios and creating a healthy and safe environment for a girl child throughout the country.

**Key Points:**

i. The theme for National Girl Child Day 2019 is “**Empowering Girls for a Brighter Tomorrow**”.

ii. On the occasion the **Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD)** organised an event at Pravasi Bharti Kendra, Chankyaapuri, **New Delhi**.

iii. The event which was graced by Union Minister, MWCD, **Maneka Sanjay Gandhi** as Chief Guest and Minister of State MWCD, **Dr. Virendra Kumar** as the Guest of Honour also observed the anniversary of **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) Scheme**.

iv. During the event a compilation of 38 Innovative Activities titled “**Innovations under BBBP**” from districts across the country was also released.

v. The WCD Minister Maneka Gandhi also felicitated the Principal Secretaries and Commissioners of the **5 States** for their overall support, guidance and monitoring of the Scheme.

**Uttar Pradesh celebrates it’s 69th foundation day**

on January 24, 2019, Uttar Pradesh celebrated it’s 69th foundation day in Lucknow as “UP DIVAS”. Uttar Pradesh earlier known as United Province, got its name as Uttar Pradesh on January 24, 1950.

**International Day of Education: 24 January**

24th January is observed as International Day of Education

i. On 3 December 2018, the **United Nations General Assembly** decided to celebrate **24 January as International Day of Education**, in a way to appraise the role of education for peace and development.

ii. The right to education is represented in **article 26** of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

**Important news about January 24**
24th of January is also celebrated as **National girl child day** with the theme for 2019 as “**Empowering Girls for a Brighter Tomorrow**”

**Himachal Pradesh celebrates its 49th full Statehood day-25th January**
On 25th January, 2019 Himachal Pradesh celebrates its 49th full Statehood Day at Kunhiyar in Solan, in lieu of 18th state of India with the sterling presence of Prime Minister, Narendra Modi. At this occasion, Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jairam Thakur encores for the speedy development along with an emphasis on backward classes and mass areas.

**Discussed Issues:**
i. 1 lakh 20 thousand people will get gas connections under the Ujjawala Yojana in the next 5 months.
ii. 5 lakh rupees health cover under the HIMCARE project having premium of Rs 1000.
iii. 10% reservation to general economically weaker sections.

**India celebrates 9th National Voters Day on 25th January 2019**
On 25th January 2019, India celebrated its 9th **National Voters Day (NVD)** across the country for enhanced participation of citizens in the electoral process by encouraging the newly eligible voters. The theme of this year’s National Voters Day (NVD) is ‘No voter to be left behind’. It is focused on the upcoming Lok Sabha Elections.

**Key points:**
i. To mark the Foundation day of Election Commission of India, which was established on 25th January 1950, the National Voters’ Day is celebrated all over the country on January 25 every year since 2011.
ii. The main function is being organised by the **Election Commission of India** at Manekshaw Centre, Delhi Cantt. and President, Shri **Ram Nath Kovind** was the chief guest at the main function. The main function was also attended by Union Law Minister Shri **Ravi Shankar Prasad**.
iii. During the event a quarterly magazine named ‘**My Vote Matters**’ was launched and the first copy was offered to the President.
iv. Table tennis player and Commonwealth medallist **Manika Batra** who has been chosen as an **ambassador** by the office of the **Delhi Chief Electoral Officer** (CEO) also participated in the programme.
v. Besides the NVD is also being celebrated in over six lakh locations covering about ten lakh polling stations all over the country. In the polling station functions new Voters shall be felicitated and handed over their **Elector Photo Identity Card (EPIC)**.
vi. In the main event, the Officers who performed outstandingly for the conduction of polls were conferred **The National Awards for the Best Electoral Practices**.

**Mizoram launches helpline, mobile app**
On 25th January 2019, The Governor of **Mizoram** Shri **Kummanam Rajasekharan** launched the **Voters Helpline Number – 1950** and **mobile app** for people with disabilities on the occasion of National Voters Day.

**Key Points**
i. The Mobile will help the Persons with Disability (PwD) to cast their votes and this move is aimed to enhance participation of People with Disability in the in the upcoming elections.
ii. Mizoram governor appealed to all the voters to cast their votes in the Lok Sabha elections expected to be held in May-June 2019 and ensure peaceful conduct of the polls.

**Election Commission of India hosts International Conference on ‘Making our Elections Inclusive and Accessible’**
On 24th January 2019, the **Election Commission of India (ECI)** hosted an International Conference on ‘Making Our Elections Inclusive and Accessible’ on the occasion of 9th National Voters Day which is
observed on 25\textsuperscript{th} January every year. The conference was inaugurated by the Chief Election Commissioner of India, \textbf{Shri Sunil Arora} and Election Commissioner \textbf{Shri Ashok Lavasa}.

**Key Points:**

i. The conference was focused on sharing experiences, best practices and initiatives aimed at electoral engagement, enrolment and active participation in inclusive and accessible voting exercise in various countries.

ii. Several dignitaries from six Election Management Bodies (EMBs) of Bangladesh, Bhutan, Kazakhstan, Maldives, Russia and Sri Lanka and Heads/Senior Representatives of International Organisations like Malaysian Commonwealth Studies Centre, U.K.; International Centre for Parliamentary Studies, U.K. and International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) also attend the National Voters Day celebrations.

iii. The quarterly magazine of Election Commission titled \textit{VOICE International} was also released during the conference.

iv. The ECI also renewed the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for cooperation in the field of \textit{election management} with the \textbf{Election Commission of Bhutan} on the side-lines of the Conference.

**Millennials will be eligible to vote for the first time in 2019 General elections**

On 25\textsuperscript{th} January 2019, India’s President, Shri Ram Nath Kovind said that Millennials will be eligible to vote for the first time in the Upcoming General elections and they will decide the fate and future of 21\textsuperscript{st} Century.

**India Celebrates 70th Republic Day On 26th January**

On 26\textsuperscript{th} January 2019, India Celebrated its 70\textsuperscript{th} Republic Day. This Day honour the date on which the Constitution of India came into effect on 26th January 1950 replacing the Government of India Act (1935) as the governing document of India. On this Occasion, President Ram Nath Kovind Unfurled the Flag with 21 gun Shots in the Background.

**South Africa’s President Cyril Ramaphosa, Chief Guest:**

South Africa’s President Cyril Ramaphosa, was the Chief Guest of the 70\textsuperscript{th} Republic Day. This is the second time, South African President is Chief Guest for Republic Day, the first such occasion was held in 1995 when the late Nelson Mandela visited India as the Chief Guest for the Republic Day. Last year, 10 ASEAN leaders was the Chief Guest of India’s Republic Day. They addressed the Republic day celebration, after attending India-ASEAN Commemorative Summit.

**President Ram Nath Kovind confers Ashoka Chakra on Nazir Wani**

On 70\textsuperscript{th} Republic Day, President Ram Nath Kovind Conferred Ashok Chakra, India’s highest peacetime gallantry honour to militant-turned-soldier, Lance Naik Nazir Ahmad Wani.

- Wani, hails from Cheki Ashmuji in Kulgam district of Jammu and Kashmir, who lost his life in a counter-terror operation against six terrorists in Hirapur village near Batgund in Shopian.

- Wani was a recipient of the Sena Medal for gallantry twice in 2007 and 2018.

**Event Happened for the First time in Republic Day:**

- Four Indian National Army (INA) veterans (Parmanand, Lalti Ram, Hira Singh and Bhagmal), all aged above 90 took part in the Republic Day parade for the First time, under the theme ‘Veterans: Accelerators in Nation’s Growth’.

- First time in history, ‘Nari Shakti’ was displayed as the Assam Rifles tableau had all women contingent, led by Maj. Khushboo Kanwar, marched to the tune Assam Rifles \textit{kay Sipahi, Desh ki Humnay Shaan badhai}.

- Lt Kasturi becomes 1st woman, who led a contingent of the India Army Service Corps.

- Capt Shikha Surabhi from the Corps of Signals became the first woman to perform bike stunts, alongside her male teammates as part of daredevils.

- For First Time, IAF Flies Plane Using Blend Of Jet Fuel And Biofuel During Republic Day Parade.

**Other Events Took Part in Republic Day:**
2019 celebration will be special as this year will mark the 150th birth anniversary of ‘Father of the Nation’. Around 17 tableaux from states/Union Territories and 6 from various ministries will be displayed in the parade based on the theme ‘Gandhi’.

American howitzers M777, the Main Battle Tank (MBT) T-90 and indigenously developed Akash weapons system was displayed.

Indian Railways presents Republic Day Tableau depicting the theme of “Mohan se Mahatma”.

IAF will march on the tune of astronaut in the parade at Rajpath and the theme for the IAF tableau this year will be ‘Indian Air Force: Safeguarding Indian Skies’.

The CISF, which is also celebrating 50 years of service to the nation, is in the Republic Day parade after a gap of 11 years.

CPWD has been participating in Republic Day and displayed flower tableaux under the theme “Dandi March” Movement with title “VANDE MATARAM”.

Twenty-six children – six girls and 20 boys awardees of Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puruskar for their exceptional achievement also graced the occasion.

‘RDP INDIA 2019’-a mobile application was launched by Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman which can help,People to watch the highlights of this year’s Republic Day parade.

From 1946,January 26 is celebrated as Australia Day in Australia

Five day long ‘Bharat Parv’ begins at Red Fort, New Delhi
On 26th January 2019, 4th edition of ‘Bharat Parv’ event showcasing the spirit of Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat was inaugurated in Red Fort,NewDelhi.It will concluded on 31st January,2019.

- Statue of Unity was replicatd in Bharat Parv and Paintings on the theme of ‘Ideology of Mahatma Gandhi’ are created.
- Republic Day parade tableaux, performances by the Armed Forces bands and photo exhibition are displayed.

Awards Presented on Republic Day:
- Bikas Das (20) and Surya Das (22) honoured for averting train accident by Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) in Guwahati.They will receive a citation and award money of Rs 2,500 each.
- Distinguished Service and Gallantry Awards to IAF Personnel were conferred.Click here to read the winners
- 411 Gallantry and other Defence decorations to Armed Forces personnel were conferred.Click here to read the winners
- President of India has awarded President’sTatrakshak Medal (PTM) and Tatrakshak Medal (TM) to Indian Coast Guard personnel.Click here to read the winners
- President Confereed Vayu Sena Medal (gallantry) to Sergeant Amit Kumar Jha for his act of exceptional courage and bravery in the face the life threatening situation and saving the lives of 10 fishermen.Click here to read more
- President Confers vayu Sena Medal (Gallantry) to Wing commander Bhavanendran Nair Prasanth,Click here to read more.

International holocaust remembrance day
On 27th January 2019, International Holocaust Remembrance Day was observed all over the world commemorating the tragedy of the Holocaust that occurred during the Second World War.

Key Points
i. 27th January was designated as the International holocaust remembrance day by the United Nations General Assembly resolution 60/7 on 1st November 2005 in the 42nd Plenary session.
ii. The largest Nazi concentration and death camp, Auschwitz-Birkenau was liberated by the Red Army on 27th January 1945.
iii. Far-right activist along with other nationals gathered outside the former death camp of Auschwitz in Poland which was under Nazi German Occupation during the second world war, remembering the 1.1 million people who were murdered there

**Data Protection Day-Jan 28**

On 28th January 2019, Data Protection Day also known as Data Privacy Day was observed in some parts of the world to raise awareness and promote privacy and data protection.

**Key Points**

i. It is an annual event which was observed for the first time on 28th January 2007 by Council of Europe as European Data Protection Day.

ii. The Day is currently observed in the 47 European Countries, United States, Israel and Canada.

**International Customs Day- January 26**

International Customs Day (ICD) is celebrated on 26th January of every year by the Custom Organization, to commemorate the first Conference of World Customs Organizations. This year international Customs day is celebrated with a slogan “SMART borders for seamless Trade, Travel and Transport.”

**Russia marks 75 years since World War II siege of Leningrad**

On 27th January 2019, Russia marked the 75th Anniversary of the end of World War II siege of Leningrad in which more than 800,000 people lost their lives.

i. The President of Russia praised the unbroken spirit of the Saint Petersburg on the anniversary.

ii. The parade was organized including defence missile systems in the heart of Petersburg which was formerly known as Leningrad.

**World Leprosy Eradication Day 2019**

30th January 2019, is celebrated as World Leprosy Eradication Day which stresses the need of eradicating the disease.

i. It also brings to light the discrimination and stigma that people suffer from society every day.

ii. Leprosy, also known as Hansen's disease is a highly contagious infection caused by the bacterium Mycobacterium leprae.

iii. This year's theme for World Leprosy Day is ‘ending discrimination, stigma, and prejudice’.

**National Martyr’s Day or Sarvodaya Day 2019**

On 30th January 2019, National Martyr’s Day or Sarvodaya Day was observed to mark the death anniversary of our greatest Hero and father of the nation, Mahatma Gandhi who was assassinated by Nathuram Dodse on 30th January 1948.

**Key Points**

i. Prime Minister, Narendra Modi paid tribute to Mahatma Gandhi in his first “Mann Ki Baat” address of 2019 on 30th January.

ii. A cultural programme named “Remembering the Mahatma” was organized by Indian Cultural Centre in Columbo, Sri Lanka.

iii. In India, Martyr’s day is celebrated on five days every year to pay homage to the freedom fighters of India.

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<td>30th January</td>
<td>Death anniversary Mahatma Gandhi</td>
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<tr>
<td>23rd March</td>
<td>Death Anniversary of Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev Thapar, Shivaram Rajguru</td>
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<td>21st October</td>
<td>Observed by Police Department nationwide</td>
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<td>17th November</td>
<td>Observed in Odisha on the death Anniversary of Lala Lajpat Rai</td>
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<td>19th November</td>
<td>Birthday of Rani Lakshmibai, observed as Martyrs Day in Jhansi</td>
</tr>
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Indian States

Andhra Pradesh
♦ Capital: Amaravati (de facto), Hyderabad (de jure)
♦ Governor: E.S.L. Narasimhan
♦ Chief Minister: N Chandrababu Naidu

Andaman & Nicobar Islands:
♦ Lieutenant Governor: Admiral D K Joshi.

Arunachal Pradesh:
♦ Capital: Itanagar
♦ Chief Minister: Pema Khandu
♦ Governor: Brigadier B.D. Mishra

Assam
♦ Capital: Dispur
♦ Chief minister: Sarbananda Sonowal
♦ Governor: Jagdish Mukhi

Bihar
♦ Capital: Patna
♦ Chief Minister: Nitish Kumar
♦ Governor: Lal Ji Tandon

Dadra and Nagar Haveli:
♦ Administrator: Praful Khoda Patel
♦ Capital: Silvassa

Daman and Diu
♦ Administrator-Praful Khoda Patel
♦ Capital- Daman.

Goa:
♦ Capital: Panaji
♦ Districts: 2
♦ Governor: Mridula Sinha
♦ Chief Minister: Manohar Parrikar

Gujarat:
♦ Chief Minister: Vijay Rupani
♦ Governor: Om Prakash Kohli
♦ Capital: Gandhinagar

Haryana:
♦ Chief Minister: Shri. Manohar Lal.
♦ Governor: Shri. Satyadeo Narain Arya.

Jammu and Kashmir:
♦ Capital: Srinagar (Summer), Jammu (Winter)
♦ Districts 22
♦ Chief Minister: Vacant (presidential rule)
♦ Governor: Satya Pal Malik

Jharkhand:
♦ Capital: Ranchi
♦ Chief minister: Raghubar Das

Karnataka:
♦ Chief Minister: H. D. Kumarswamy
♦ Governor: Vajubhai Vala
♦ Capital: Bengaluru
Kerala:
♦ Capital: Thiruvananthapuram.
♦ Chief Minister: Pinarayi Vijayan.
♦ Governor: Palanisamy Sathasivam.

Madhya Pradesh
♦ CM: Shri.Kamal Nath
♦ Governor: Smt.Anandiben Patel

Maharashtra
♦ Capital: Mumbai
♦ Chief Minister: Devendra Fadnavis
♦ Governor: C Vidyasagar Rao

Manipur:
♦ Chief Minister: Shri. N Biren Singh.
♦ Governor: Dr. Najma A. Heptulla.

Mizoram
♦ Capital: Aizawl
♦ Governor: Kummanam Rajasekharan
♦ Chief Minister: Zoramthanga

Nagaland
♦ Capital – Kohima
♦ CM- Neiphiu Rio
♦ Governor – Padmanabha Acharya

New Delhi:
♦ Chief Minister: Arvind Kejriwal
♦ Deputy Chief Minister: Manish Sisodia
♦ Lieutenant Governor: Anil Baijal

Odisha:
♦ Chief Minister: Naveen Patnaik.
♦ Governor: Prof. Ganeshi Lal.
♦ Lakes : Chilika Lake, Kanjia Lake, Anshupa Lake, Balimela Reservoir.

Rajasthan:
♦ Governor: Shri Kalyan Singh
♦ Capital: Jaipur

Sikkim:
♦ Capital: Gangtok.
♦ Chief Minister: Pawan Kumar Chamling.
♦ Governor: Shri. Ganga Prasad.

Tamil Nadu
♦ Chief Minister: Shri Edapaddi Palaniswami
♦ Governor: Shri Banwaril Lal Purohit

Tripura:
♦ Governor- Kaptan Singh Solanki
♦ Chief Minister- Biplab Kumar Deb
♦ Capital- Agartala

Uttar Pradesh
♦ Chief Minister: Yogi Adityanath
♦ Governor: Ram Naik
♦ Capital : Lucknow

Lakes
Odisha:
♦ Lakes : Chilika Lake, Kanjia Lake, Anshupa Lake, Balimela Reservoir.
Dams

**Arunachal Pradesh**
♦ Dams- Ranganadi Dam on Ranganadi River

**Tripura**:
Dams- Gomti Dam

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**National Parks**

**Andhra Pradesh**
♦ National Parks (NP): Papikonda NP, Sri Venkateswara NP

**Andaman & Nicobar Islands**:

**Arunachal Pradesh**
♦ National Park- Namdapha National Park, Mouling National Park.

**Gujarat**:
♦ National Parks (NP) in Gujarat: Gir Forest NP, Blackbuck NP, Marine NP and Vansda NP

**Karnataka**:
♦ National Parks (NP): Anshi NP, Bandipur NP, Bannerghatta NP, Kudremukh NP, Rajiv Gandhi (Nagarhole) NP

**Kerala**:

**Madhya Pradesh**

**Maharashtra**:

**Manipur**:
♦ National Parks: Keibul Lamjao National Park, Sirohi National Park.

**Rajasthan**:
♦ National Parks: Ranthambore National Park, Sariska National Park, Keoladeo Ghana Bird Sanctuary.

**Sikkim**:
♦ National Parks: Khangchendzonga National Park.

**Telengana**:

**Tripura**:
♦ National parks- Bison National Park, Clouded Leopard National Park.

**Tamil Nadu**

**Uttar Pradesh**:
♦ National Parks: Dudhwa National Park,
♦ Tiger Reserve: Philibit Tiger Reserve,
♦ Bird Sanctuary: Sandi Bird Sanctuary.

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**Wildlife Sanctuaries**

**Arunachal Pradesh**
♦ Wild Life Sanctuary- Kane Wildlife Sanctuary, Mehao Wildlife Sanctuary, Daying Erring Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary.

**Karnataka:**
♦ Wild Life Sanctuaries (WLS): Dandeli WLS, Pushpagiri WLS, Bhadra WLS, Brahmagiri WLS, Cauvery WLS, Malai Mahadeshwara WLS, Mookambika WLS, Ranganathittu WLS, Sharavathi WLS, Dandeli WLS, Biligiri Rangaswamy Temple WLS, Bhimgad WLS, Ghataprabha Bird WLS, Ranebennur Black Buck WLS, Someshwara WLS, Daroji Bear WLS, etc.

**Madhya Pradesh**
♦ Wildlife Sanctuary:Bori WLS, Gandhi Sagar WLS, Ghatigaon WLS, Ken Gharial WLS, Narsighgarh WLS, National Chambal WLS, Orcha WLS, Kuno WLS, Sardarpur WLS, Son Gharial WLS.

**Manipur:**

**Sikkim:**

**Tamil Nadu**
♦ Wildlife sanctuary: Indira Gandhi (Annamalai) WLS, Kalakad WLS, Karaivetti WLS, Karikili WLS, Mudumalai WLS, Pulicat Lake WLS, Vaduvoor WLS, Vedanthangal WLS, Vettangudi WLS

**Tripura:**
♦ Wild life sanctuaries: Gomati Wildlife Sanctuary, Rowa WildLife Sanctuary, Trishna wildlife sanctuary.

**Uttar Pradesh:**
♦ Wildlife Sanctuary: Bakhira WLS, Chandraprabha WLS, Hastinapur WLS, National Chambal WLS, Nawabganj WLS.

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**Indian Entities**

**Lok Sabha**
♦ Speaker: Sumitra Mahajan (16th Lok Sabha)
♦ No. of Seats: 545

**Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI):**
♦ Chairman: Ram Sewak Sharma
♦ Headquarters: New Delhi

**Central Board of Direct Taxes:**
♦ Chairman: Sushil Chandra
♦ Headquarters: New Delhi

**Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO):**
♦ Director: Kailasavadivoo Sivan
♦ Headquarters: Bengaluru
♦ Founded: 15 August 1969

**Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB):**
Headquarters: New Delhi.

**NASSCOM (National Association of Software & Services Companies)**
♦ Chairperson: Rishad Premji
♦ Headquarters: Noida, Uttar Pradesh
♦ Founded: 1988

**Petroleum Conservation Research Association (PCRA):**
♦ Chairman and Secretary MoPNG: Shri. M M Kutty.
♦ Headquarters: Delhi.

**Railway Protection Force**
♦ Under Ministry of Railways
♦ Headquarters- New Delhi
♦ Union Minister of Railways- Piyush Goyal
CAG (comptroller and Auditor General of India)
♦ CAG, established by Article 148 of the Constitution of India audits all receipts and expenditure of the Government of India and state governments.
♦ Incumbent and 13th CAG of India: Rajiv Mehrishi

Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI):
♦ Headquarters: New Delhi
♦ President: Sandip Somany
♦ Secretary General: Dilip Chenoy

CII:
♦ Headquarters: New Delhi.
♦ President: Mr. Rakesh Bharti Mittal.

Airport Authority of India (AAI):
♦ Headquarters: New Delhi.

ARAI
♦ Automotive Research Association of India
♦ Headquarters: Pune
♦ Director: Mrs. Rashmi Urdhwareshe
♦ Founded in 1966

Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL)
♦ Headquarters: New Delhi.
♦ Chairman and Managing Director: Atul Sobti.

India Air Force:
♦ Chief of the Air Staff: Birender Singh Dhanoa
♦ Headquarters: New Delhi

National Commodity & Derivatives Exchange Limited (NCDEX)
♦ It is an online commodity exchange based in India.
♦ Headquarters – Mumbai, Maharashtra, India
♦ MD & CEO – Vijay Kumar

Infosys:
♦ CEO & MD: Salil Parekh
♦ Headquarters: Bengaluru

Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI):
♦ Headquarters: New Delhi.
♦ President: CS Makarand Lele.

Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR):
♦ Motto: “Agrisearch with a human touch”
♦ President: Radha Mohan Singh
♦ Director: Dr Trilochan Mohapatra
♦ Location: New Delhi, India

Central Information Commission:
♦ Headquarters: New Delhi
♦ Established: 12th October, 2005

Ordnance Factory Board (OFB):
♦ Headquarters: Kolkata, West Bengal
♦ Director General Ordnance Factories & Chairman: Saurabh Kumar

SSB: Sashastra Seema Bal
♦ Director General: Kumar Rajesh Chandra
♦ Founded on: 1963
♦ Headquarters: New Delhi

CBI:
♦ Headquarters: New Delhi
♦ Full form: Central Bureau of Investigation.

National Human Rights Commission:
♦ Headquarters: New Delhi.
National Stock Exchange (NSE):
♦ Headquarters: Mumbai
♦ CEO: Vikram Limaye

TCS:
♦ Headquarters: Mumbai.
♦ Chairman: N Chandrasekaran.

UPSC:
♦ Chairman: Arvind Saxena (Acting)
♦ Headquarters: New Delhi
♦ Founded: 1 October 1926

Flipkart:
♦ CEO: Kalyan Krishnamurthy
♦ Founders: Binny Bansal, Sachin Bansal
♦ Parent organization: Walmart

BFI:
♦ Headquarters: Haryana.
♦ President: Ajay Singh.

Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO):
♦ Headquarters: New Delhi
♦ Secretary: G. Satheesh Reddy

Indian Navy:
♦ Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS): Admiral Sunil Lanba
♦ Headquarters: New Delhi

Indian Coast Guard:
♦ Director General: Rajendra Singh
♦ Headquarters: New Delhi

Indian Coast Guard
♦ Headquarters: New Delhi
♦ Director General: Rajendra Singh
♦ Motto: We Protect

Sports Authority of India:
♦ Headquarters: Delhi
♦ Director General: Neelam Kapoor
♦ Ex-officio Chairman: Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore (Minister of State I/C Youth Affairs and Sports)

Boxing Federation of India (BFI):
♦ President: Ajay Singh
♦ Headquarters: Gurugram, Haryana

Army Air Defence Corps:
♦ Headquarters: New Delhi.
♦ Motto: “Akashe Shatrun Jahi” (Kill the Enemy in the Sky).

National Institution for Transforming India (NITI) Ayog:
♦ CEO: Amitabh Kant
♦ Vice Chairman: Dr. Rajiv Kumar
♦ Chairman: Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi
♦ Headquarters: New Delhi

Election Commission of India (ECI):
♦ Headquarters: New Delhi
♦ Chief Election Commissioner of India: Shri Sunil Arora

National Solar Energy Federation of India (NSEFI):
♦ Headquarters: New Delhi.

Banks

Reserve Bank of India (RBI):
♦ Governor: Shaktikanta Das
♦ Headquarters: Mumbai
Export-Import Bank of India (EXIM Bank):
♦ Headquarters: Mumbai, Maharashtra
♦ Managing Director: Shri David Rasquinha

Citicbank:
♦ Headquarters: New York City.

SBI Card:
♦ SBI Card Director & CEO - Hardayal Prasad.

HDFC Life Insurance:
♦ Headquarters: Mumbai.
♦ Tagline: Sar Utha ke Jiyo.
♦ MD & CEO: Ms. Vibha Padalkar.

HDFC Bank:
♦ Headquarters: Mumbai.
♦ MD: Aditya Puri.
♦ Tagline: We Understand your world.
♦ Personal Digital Assistant name: EVA.

Insolvency and Bankruptcy board of India (IBBI)
♦ Chairman: M.S. Sahoo
♦ Headquarters: New Delhi

Svamaan Financial Services
♦ Founder: Anushree Jindal
♦ CEO: Kiran Kumar
♦ Corporate Office: Mumbai

State Bank of India
♦ Headquarters: Mumbai, Maharashtra
♦ Chairman: Rajnish Kumar

IRDAI:
♦ Chairperson- Subhash Chandra Khuntia
♦ Headquarters- Hyderabad.

Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI):
♦ Chairman: Ajay Tyagi
♦ Headquarters: Mumbai
♦ Founded: 12 April 1992 through the SEBI Act, 1992

SoftBank Group:
♦ Chairman & CEO: Masayoshi Son
♦ Headquarters: Minato, Tokyo, Japan

World Bank
♦ Founded on: 1946
♦ President: Jim Yong Kim
♦ Headquarters: Washington, D.C., United States
♦ CEO: Kristalina Georgieva

RBL Bank:
♦ Headquarters: Mumbai.
♦ Tagline: Apno ka bank.
♦ MD & CEO: Mr. Vishwavir Ahuja.
♦ Non-Executive Part time Chairman: Mr. Prakash Chandra.

Axis Bank
♦ Headquarters: Mumbai, Maharashtra
♦ MD & CEO: Amitabh Chaudhry
♦ Tagline: Badhti Ka naam Zindagi

Yes Bank:
♦ CEO: Rana Kapoor
♦ Headquarters: Mumbai

HDFC (Housing Development Finance Corporation) Bank:
♦ CEO: Aditya Puri
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♦ Headquarters: Mumbai
♦ Tagline: We understand your world.

**ICICI Bank:**
♦ Headquarters: Mumbai.
♦ MD & CEO: Mr. Sandeep Bakshi.
♦ Chairman: Mr. Girish Chandra Chaturvedi.
♦ Tagline: Hum Hain Na!

**IDFC First Bank**
♦ Headquarters - Mumbai
♦ Non-Executive Chairman - Rajiv Lall

**Lakshmi Vilas Bank:**
♦ MD & CEO - Parthasarathi Mukherjee
♦ Headquarters – Chennai, Tamil Nadu
♦ Tagline - The Changing Face of prosperity

**Federal Bank:**
♦ Headquarters: Aluva, Kerala
♦ Tagline: Your perfect banking partner
♦ MD & CEO : Shyam Srinivasan

**PayU:**
♦ Headquarters: Netherlands.

**PayU India:**
♦ Headquarters: Gurgaon, Haryana.

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**Foreign Entities**

**National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA):**
♦ Headquarters: Washington, D.C., United States
♦ Administrator: Jim Bridenstine

**United Nations Development Programme (UNDP):**
♦ Administrator: Achim Steiner
♦ Headquarters: New York, USA

**Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD):**
♦ Secretary-General: Angel Gurría
♦ Headquarters: Paris, France
♦ Membership: 36 countries

**About Global Solar Council (GSC):**
♦ Headquarters: Washington D.C., USA.
♦ The Global Solar Council (GSC) was launched on December 6, 2015, following the historic United Nations Climate Change Conference (UN COP 21).

**United Nations:**
♦ Secretary General: António Guterres
♦ UN General Assembly President: María Fernanda Espinosa
♦ Headquarters: New York, United States
♦ Founded: 24 October 1945

**Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)**
♦ Headquarters - Chiyoda, Tokyo, Japan
♦ President - Shinichi Kitaoka

**Facebook**
♦ Headquarters: California, US
♦ Co-founder, Chairman and CEO: Mark Zuckerberg
♦ Facebook India Head: Ajith Mohan

**Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)**
♦ Headquarters - Rome, Italy
♦ Director General – Jose Graziano da Silva

**South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC):**
♦ Headquarters: Kathmandu, Nepal
Member States: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.
Secretary General: Amjad Hussain B Sial (Pakistani diplomat)
Founded: 8 December 1985, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD):
Secretary-General: José Ángel Gurría
Headquarters: Paris, France
Membership: 36 countries

World Economic Forum (WEF):
Secretary-General: José Ángel Gurría
Headquarters: Cologny, Switzerland
Chairman: Klaus Schwab

International Monetary Fund (IMF):
Secretary-General: Christine Lagarde
Headquarters: Washington, D.C., United States
CEO: Christine Lagarde

World Trade Organization:
Secretary-General: Roberto Azevêdo
Headquarters: Geneva, Switzerland

ASEAN:
Full form: Association of South-East Asian Nations.
Members: 10.
Headquarters: Jakarta, Indonesia.

Standard Chartered
Headquarter: London
Chairman: Jose Vinals

Price waterhouse Coopers (PwC):
Chairman: Bob Moritz
Headquarters: London, United Kingdom

Fitch Rating company
Headquarter: New York
Founder: John Knowles Fitch

International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO):
Headquarters: Montreal, Canada
Secretary General: Dr. Fang Liu
President: Dr. Olumuyiwa Benard Aliu

World Steel Association
Headquarter: Brussels, Belgium

International Cricket Council (ICC):
Chairperson: Shashank Manohar
CEO: David Richardson
Headquarters: Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Confederation of African Football (CAF):
Headquarters: Cairo, Egypt.
President: Ahmad Ahmad.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
Headquarters: Paris, France
Director-General: Audrey Azoulay

WHO:
Headquarters: Geneva, Switzerland
Head: Tedros Adhanom
Founded: 7 April 1948

SpaceX:
Headquarters: Hawthorne, California, U.S.
Head: Elon Musk
International Observatory of Human Rights (IOHR):
♦ Headquarters: London.
♦ Director: Valerie Peay.

International Tennis Federation (ITF):
♦ Headquarters: London, United Kingdom
♦ President: David Haggerty

Badminton World Federation (BWF):
♦ Headquarters: Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
♦ President: Poul-Erik Høyer Larsen

International Paralympic committee (IPC):
♦ Headquarter: Bonn, Germany
♦ President: Andrew Parsons.

Other Countries
Afghanistan:
♦ Capital: Kabul
♦ Currency: Afghan Afghani
♦ President: Ashraf Ghani

Australia:
♦ Capital: Canberra
♦ Currency: Australian Dollar
♦ Prime Minister: Scott Morrison

Bangladesh:
♦ Capital: Dhaka
♦ Currency: Taka
♦ President: Mohammad Abdul Hamid

Bhutan:
♦ Capital: Thimpu
♦ Currency: Ngultrum
♦ Prime Minister: Lotay Tshering

Brazil:
♦ Capital: Brasilia.
♦ Currency: Brazilian real.

Burkina Faso:
♦ Capital: Ouagadougou
♦ Currency: Franc
♦ President: Roch Marc Christian Kabore

China:
♦ President: Xi Jinping
♦ Capital: Beijing
♦ Currency: Renminbi

Congo:
♦ Capital: Kinshasa
♦ Currency: Congolese franc
♦ Prime Minister: Bruno Tshibala

Croatia:
♦ Capital: Zagreb
♦ Currency: Croatian Kuna

Denmark:
♦ Capital: Copenhagen
♦ Currency: Danish Krone
♦ Prime Minister: Lars Løkke Rasmussen

Finland:
♦ Capital: Helsinki
♦ Currency: Euro
♦ Prime Minister: Juha Sipila

**France:**
♦ Capital: Paris
♦ Currency: Euro, CFP franc
♦ President: Emmanuel Macron

**Indonesia:**
♦ Capital: Jakarta
♦ Currency: Indonesian Rupiah

**Israel:**
♦ President: Reuven Rivlin
♦ Prime Minister: Benjamin Netanyahu

**Kuwait:**
♦ Capital: Kuwait City
♦ Currency: Kuwaiti Dinar

**Japan:**
♦ Capital: Tokyo
♦ Currency: Japanese Yen
♦ Prime Minister: Shinzo Abe

**Lebanon:**
♦ Capital: Beirut
♦ Currency: Lebanese pound

**Madagascar**
♦ Capital: Antananarivo
♦ President: Andry Rajoelina
♦ Prime Minister: Christian Ntsay

**Maldives:**
♦ President: Ibrahim Mohamed Solih
♦ Capital: Male
♦ Currency: Maldivian Rufiyaa

**Mauritius**
♦ Capital: Port Louis
♦ President: Barlen Vyapoory
♦ Prime Minister: Pravind Jagnauth
♦ Currency: Mauritain rupee

**Malaysia:**
♦ Capital: Kuala Lumpur.
♦ Currency: Malaysian ringgit.

**Morocco**
♦ Capital: Rabat
♦ Prime Minister: Saadeddine Othmani
♦ Currency: Moroccan dirham

**Nepal**
♦ Capital: Kathmandu
♦ Currency: Nepalese rupee
♦ Prime Minister: Khadga Prasad Oli.

**Netherlands:**
♦ Capital: Amsterdam
♦ Currencies: Euro, United States Dollar
♦ Prime Minister: Mark Rutte

**Norway**
♦ Capital: Oslo
♦ Currency: Norwegian krone
♦ Prime Minister: Erna Solberg.
Pakistan:
♦ Capital: Islamabad.
♦ Currency: Pakistani rupee.

Democratic Republic of Congo
♦ Capital: Kinshasa
♦ Currency: Congolese franc

Saudi Arabia
♦ Capital: Riyadh
♦ Currency: Saudi Riyal
♦ King: Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud.

Sri Lanka:
♦ Capital: Colombo, Sri Jayawardanepura Kotte
♦ Prime minister: Ranil Wickremesinghe
♦ Currency: Sri Lankan rupee
♦ President: Maithripala Sirisena

Spain:
♦ Capital: Madrid
♦ Currency: Euro
♦ Prime minister: Pedro Sánchez

South Korea:
♦ Capital: Seoul
♦ Currency: South Korean Won

Sweden
♦ Capital: Stockholm
♦ Currency: Swedish Krona

Swaziland (Eswatini):
♦ Capital: Mbabane (administrative capital), Lobamba (legislative and royal capital)
♦ Continent: Africa
♦ Currencies: South African Rand, Swazi lilangeni

Switzerland:
♦ Capital: Bern
♦ Currency: Swiss Franc
♦ President: Ueli Maurer

Taiwan
♦ Capital: Taipei
♦ Currency: New Taiwan Dollar (TWD)

United Arab Emirates (UAE):
♦ Capital: Abu Dhabi
♦ Currency: United Arab Emirates Dirham

United Kingdom:
♦ Prime minister: Theresa May
♦ Capital: London
♦ Currency: Pound Sterling

US
♦ Capital: Washington DC
♦ President: Donald Trump
♦ Currency: US Dollar.

Uzbekistan
♦ President: Mr. Shavkat Mirziyoyev
♦ Capital: Tashkent
♦ Currency: Uzbekistani som.

Vietnam
♦ Capital: Hanoi
♦ Currency: dong
President: Nguyen Phu Trong
Prime Minister: Nguyen Xuan Phuc

Venezuela:
- Capital: Caracas.
- Currency: Venezuelan bolivar.

Ministries of India

Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA):
- Minister: Arun Jaitley
- Minister of State: P P Choudhary
- Secretary: Injeti Srinivas

Ministry of Human Resource Development:
- Minister: Prakash Javadekar
- Minister of State: Dr. Satya Pal Singh, Shri Upendra Kushwaha
- Headquarters: New Delhi

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare:
- Minister: Jagat Prakash Nadda
- Minister of State: Anupriya Patel, Ashwini Kumar Choubey

Ministry of Labour and Employment:
- Minister: Santosh Gangwar (MOS independent charge)
- Headquarters: New Delhi

Ministry of Law and Justice:
- Department of Justice (DoJ) is a child agency of Ministry of Law and Justice.
- Union Minister: Ravi Shankar Prasad
- Headquarters: New Delhi

Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers’ Welfare:
- Union Minister: Shri Radha Mohan Singh
- Minister of State: Shri Parshottam Rupala, Smt. Krishna Raj, Shri. Gajendra S.S

Ministry of Railways:
- Minister: Piyush Goyal
- Minister of State: Manoj Sinha, Rajen Gohain
- Chairman Railway Board: Vinod Kumar Yadav
- Headquarters: Rail Bhawan, New Delhi

Ministry of Power:
- Minister: R.K. Singh, (MOS independent charge)
- Headquarters: New Delhi

Ministry of Finance:
- Union Minister: Arun Jaitley
- Minister of State: P. Radhakrishnan, Shiv Pratap Shukla

Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas:
- Minister: Dharmendra Pradhan
- Headquarters: New Delhi

Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs:
- Minister: Hardeep Singh Puri (MOS independent charge)
- Headquarters: Nirman Bhawan, New Delhi

Ministry of Home Affairs:
- Minister: Rajnath Singh
- Minister of State: Kiren Rijiju, Hansraj Gangaram Ahir

Ministry of Rural Development:
- Headquarters: New Delhi
- Union Ministers: Narendra Singh Tomar
- Minister of State: Ram Kripal Yadav

Ministry of Women and Child Development:
- Union Minister: Smt Maneka Gandhi.
Minister of State: Dr. Virendra Kumar.
Secretary: Shri Rakesh Srivastava.

Ministry of Tourism:
Minister of State: Shri. K. J. Alphons.

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change:
Union Minister: Dr. Harsh Vardhan.
Minister of State: Dr. Mahesh Sharma.

Ministry of Science and Technology:
Minister: Dr Harshvardhan
Headquarters: New Delhi

Ministry of Earth Sciences:
Minister: Dr Harshvardhan
Headquarters: New Delhi

Ministry of Information and Broadcasting:
Minister of State: Shri. Rajyavardhan Rathore.

Ministry for Development of North Eastern Region (MDoNER):
Minister of State: Jitendra Singh (Independent Charge)
Headquarters: New Delhi

Ministry of Defence:
Minister: Nirmala Sitharaman
Minister of State: Dr. Subhash Ramrao Bhamre

Ministry of Mines
Minister of Mines: Narendra Singh Tomar
Headquarters: New Delhi

Ministry of Water Resources:
Union Minister: Shri. Nitin Gadkari.

Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilisers:
Minister: D.V. Sadananda Gowda
Minister of State: Rao Inderjit Singh
Headquarters: New Delhi

Ministry of Steel:
Minister: Chaudhary Birender Singh
Minister of State: Vishnu Deo Sai
Headquarters: New Delhi

Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation:
Union Minister: Shri. D. V. Sadananda Gowda.
Minister of State: Shri. Vijay Goel.

Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE):
Union Minister: Shri. Dharmendra Pradhan.
Minister of State: Shri Anant kumar Hegde.

Ministry of Personnel:
Minister of State: Dr. Jitendra Singh.

Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports:
Minister: Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore (MOS independent charge)
Headquarters: New Delhi

Banking Terminologies
Letters Of Credit (LoCs)
Viability Gap Fund (VGF)
Alternative Investment Fund (AIF)
Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC)
Prepaid Payment Instruments (PPIs)
Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA)
Gold Monetisation Scheme (GMS)
Prompt Corrective Action (PCA)
Open Market Operations (OMOs)
External Commercial Borrowings (ECB)
Minimum Average Maturity Period (MAMP)
Know Your Customer (KYC)
Non-performing assets (NPA)
Association of Mutual funds in India (AMFI)
Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM)
Credit Linked Subsidy Scheme (CLSS)
Economically Weaker Section (EWS)
Low Income Group (LIG)
Employee Share Purchase Scheme (ESPS)
District Mining Fund (DMF)
Universal Basic Income (UBI)
Finance, Investment And Audit Committee (FIAC)
Pension And EDLI Implementation Committee (PEIC)
Exempted Establishments’ Committee (EEC)
Business Reform Action Plan (BRAP)
Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA)
Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)

Other Terminologies
Pradhan Mantri Khanij Kshetra Kalyan Yojana (PMKKKY)
Atal Solar Krishi Pump Yojana (ASKP)
Biju Swasthaya Kalyan Yojana (BSKY)
Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY)
Madhu Babu Pension Yojana (MBPY)
Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana – Gramin (PMAY –G)
Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY)
Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY)
Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation (KALIA)
Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Jan Aushadhi Pariyojana’ (PMBJP)
Consortium for Academic and Research Ethics (CARE)
Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik (UDAN)
Automatic Weather stations (AWS)
Government to Government (G2G)
Business to Business (B2B)
Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF)
in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)
National Clean Air Programme (NCAP)
Elected Women Representatives (EWRs)
Command & Control Centre (CCC)
Goods and Services Tax Appellate Tribunal (GSTAT)
Goods and Services Tax Network (GSTN)
Credit-Linked Subsidy Scheme (CLSS)
Peoples Empowerment – Enabling Transparency and Accountability (PEETHA)
National Food Security Act (NFSA)
Concessional Finance Scheme (CFS)
Bilateral Swap Arrangement (BSA)
Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA)
National Hydroelectric Power Corporation Ltd. (NHPC)
Income Tax Return (ITR)
Right to Education (RTE) Act
Interest Equalisation Scheme (IES)
Swastha Nagrik Abhiyan (SNA)
Health Surveys and Health Research (HSHR)
Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual, Heritage Augmentation Drive (PRASHAD)
Population Research Centres (PRCs)
Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
Common But Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capability (CBPR-RC)
Global Stocktake (GST)
Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR)
Infant Mortality Rate (IMR)
Under 5 Mortality Rate (U5MR)
Total Fertility Rate (TFR)
Annual Parasite Incidence (API)
Tuberculosis (TB)
Bodoland Territorial Area Districts (BTAD)
Self-Financing Housing Scheme (SFHS)
Global Environment Facility (GEF)
National Rail & Transport Institute (NRTI)
Recognized Organization (RO)
Tax Inspectors without Borders Programme (TIWB)
Technology Innovation Zone (TIZ)
Global Housing Technology Challenge-India" (GHTC- India)
United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE)
Sustainable Catchment Forest Management (SCATFORM)
Geographical Indication (GI)
State Youth Parliament (SYP)
National Youth Parliament (NYP)
Action for Protection of Wild Animals (APOWA)
Communication Navigation and Surveillance (CNS)
Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)
Group of Ministers (GoM)
Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)
Standing Committee on Affordable Medicines and Health Products (SCAMHP)
Ecologically Sensitive Areas (ESA)
Nominal Net National Income (NNI)
Consumer Price Index (CPI)
Wholesale Price Index (WPI)
Gross Fixed Capital Formation (GFCF)
Government Final Consumption Expenditure (GFCE)
Gross Fixed Capital Formation (GFCF)
Minimum Support Price (MSP)
Minor Forest Produce (MFP)
General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
Fast Interceptor Craft (FIC)
Mobile Number Portability (MNP)
Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV)
New Generation Anti-Radiation Missile (NGRAM)
India Africa Field Training Exercise (IAFTX)
AffairsCloud Recommends Oliveboard Mock Test

SBI PO 2019: Take 30 Tests, 1 Free

IBPS SO (IT, Agriculture & Marketing Officer). Take Free Tests

Railways RRB JE 2019: Take 15 Tests, 1 Free

SSC CGL 2018: 50 Tests (30 Tier I + 20 Tier II)

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