



# RESOURCE WORLD

## Current Affairs



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## JANUARY 2019

### NATIONAL

#### India 47th in 'Inclusive' Internet list: Facebook

India ranked 47th in the overall "Inclusive Internet Index 2019" score while Sweden topped the chart, followed by Singapore and the US, a Facebook-led study has revealed. According to the Inclusive Internet Index (3i) prepared by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) for Facebook, there are demonstrable benefits from comprehensive female inclusion policies, digital skills programmes and targets for women and girls to study science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

#### Swine flu deaths reached 377 across India

Swine flu deaths reached 377 across India. The number of those infected by the flu has crossed 12,000. Rajasthan reported the highest number of cases (3,508) and fatalities (127). The governments of the states most affected by the virus have now issued advisory to control the pandemic.

#### Govt panel proposes national minimum wage of Rs 375 per day

A government panel has recommended a national minimum wage of ₹375 per day or ₹9,750 per month plus an additional housing allowance of ₹1,430 per month for workers in cities. The minimum wage would be 'irrespective of sectors, skills, occupations and rural-urban locations'. Currently, minimum wages are decided by respective state governments.

#### India Signs Legal Agreements with The World Bank

The Government of India, Government of Himachal Pradesh (GoHP) and the World Bank signed a \$40 Million Loan Agreement to help bring clean and reliable drinking water to the citizens of the Greater Shimla area, who have been facing severe water shortages and water-borne epidemics over the last few years.

### **Indian Foreign Exchange Reserves increased by \$2.063 billion**

The data from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) shows that the Foreign Exchange Reserves of India increased by \$2.063 billion to \$400.24 billion in the week to February 1. The foreign exchange reserves had increased by USD 1.497 billion to reach USD 398.178 billion in the previous week corresponding to January 25. The increase in the value of the Foreign Exchange Reserves is attributed to the increase in foreign currency assets.

### **India to Host 13th Conference of Parties of Convention on Conservation of Migratory Species**

The 13th Conference of Parties (COP) of the Convention on the conservation of migratory species of wild animals (CMS), an environmental treaty under the aegis of United Nations Environment Programme, is going to be hosted by India during 15th to 22nd February 2020 at Gandhinagar in Gujarat.

### **India Jumps 8 Place to 36th on International IP Index 2019**

US Chambers of Commerce released the annual International IP Index of top 50 economies in the world, in the index, India climbed 8 positions up to the 36th rank and USA, as the lead. In 2018, India's rank was 44th of 50 countries, the increase in the rank is dedicated to the various reforms made to the better alignment of India's IP environment and one of the reforms, was the agreement with Japan to initiate a Patent Prosecution Highway (PPH).

### **India becomes World's Second Largest Consumer and importer of LPG**

As per Oil Minister, Dharmendra Pradhan, India has become the second largest importer of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) after China, due to rising demands of cleaner alternatives to the traditional cooking fuels like firewood and cow dung. India surpassed Japan as the imports of LPG grew 12.5% over the last 5 years to 12 million metric tons.

### **India's Tourism Sector Registers 19% Growth in 2018**

Union Minister KJ Alphons has announced that the country's tourism sector fetched revenue of 234 billion US Dollar in 2018, registering a growth of over 19%. This revenue was contributed by 87% domestic and 13% foreign tourists. He made the announcement at the 2nd ASEAN-India Youth Summit in Guwahati.

### **India's Unemployment Rate Hit 4 Decade High of 6.1% in 2017-18: NSSO**

As per the National Sample Survey Office's (NSSO's) periodic labor force survey (PLFS) India's unemployment rate hit a 45 year high of 6.1% in 2017-18. It is the first comprehensive survey on employment conducted by a government agency after demonetization.

**STATES****MP Govt launched 100-day employment scheme for youths**

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath launched the State Government's flagship scheme 'Mukhyamantri Yuva Swabhiman Yojana' that guarantees 100 days of employment every year to urban youth from economically weaker sections. Under the scheme, Rs 4,000 stipend per month during 100 days of period, would be given to the youth and they will also be given skill development training in order to become independent.

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

A boat ambulance service has been launched by the Odisha government. It would be used to transport patients to hospitals in remote areas. The cost of the project is Rs 5.40 crore. The ambulance service can be availed by dialling '108'. The first boat ambulance was introduced at Batighar in Kendrapara district.

**TN becomes First State in mainland to get 2 Coast Guard Districts**

Tamil Nadu Governor Banwarilal Purohit inaugurated the second Coast Guard district headquarters at Thoothukudi, Tamil Nadu. Tamil Nadu is the first state in India to get a second Coast Guard district headquarters. The first district headquarters is Chennai.

**Bihar becomes the 1st State to Deploy Dog Squad to Check Liquor Smuggling**

Bihar has become the first state to deploy specially-trained dogs to check smuggling of liquor which continues to take place inspite of the total ban imposed in the state for the last 3 years. 20 liquor-tracker dogs were trained rigorously for nine months in Hyderabad, Telangana.

**Telangana gets two new districts**

The State government announced the creation of two more districts, Narayanpet and Mulugu. Now the the number of districts in the State is 33. Narayanpet has been carved out of Mahbubnagar district and Mulugu from Jayashankar Bhupalpally.

**India's First District Cooling System to be Built in Amravati**

United Arab Emirates (UAE) based international cooling provider, National Central Cooling Company PJSC (Tabreed) entered into a 30-year concession with Andhra Pradesh Capital Region Development Authority (APCRDA) to build India's first district cooling system in Amravati.

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

Godavari Mega Aqua Food Park, first aqua mega food park was commissioned by Secretary of Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI), Pushpa Subrahmanyam on behalf of Food Processing Industries Minister Harsimrat Kaur Badal via video conferencing in Andhra Pradesh.

### **'Exercise Rahat' Concluded in Jaipur**

Joint Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Exercise 'Exercise Rahat' concluded in Jaipur, Rajasthan. It was demonstrated in Jaipur, Kota, and Alwar in Rajasthan. With a view to co-operating efforts for humanitarian assistance and Disaster Relief operations, NDMA coordinated the exercise. Indian Army was represented by Jaipur based Sapta Shakti Command.

### **Jharkhand banned Popular Front of India**

The Jharkhand government banned the Popular Front of India (PFI) in the State to curb its anti-national activities and for links with terror outfits like the IS. The PFI has been banned with immediate effect under the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 1908.

### **Senior National Badminton Championships begins in Guwahati**

The 83rd edition of Senior National Badminton Championships has begun in Guwahati. Defending champion Saina Nehwal and last edition's runner-up PV Sindhu will be the biggest attractions in Women's Singles. The Men's Singles will be without defending champion HS Prannoy and runners-up Kidambi Srikanth who are suffering from injuries.

### **Prajnesh Gunneswaran breaks into men's singles top 100**

Prajnesh Gunneswaran has made it to the top-100 of Men's Singles Tennis rankings. He ranked 97 with a jump of six places. Prajnesh is the third Indian player to break into the top-100 barrier after Somdev Devvarman and Yuki Bhambri. He reached the semifinals of the ATP Chennai Challenger last week to ensure his entry into the coveted bracket.

### **Ladakh declared Jammu & Kashmirs third administrative division**

The Jammu & Kashmir Government on Friday declared Ladakh as the third administrative division of the state. An order issued by Governor Satya Pal Malik's administration said, "The Government has approved the creation of a separated administrative/revenue division of Ladakh".

### **Himachal pegs growth at 7.3% this fiscal**

Himachal Pradesh's economic growth is expected to be 7.3 per cent this fiscal and its per capita income is estimated at Rs 1,76,968. The economic growth was 6.5 per cent in the previous fiscal, the highest in three years. The per capita income at current prices

witnessed an increase of 7.8 percent as it rose to Rs 1,60,711 in 2017-18 from Rs 1,49,028 in 2016-17.

### **Maharashtra Sets Up Panel To Review Welfare Schemes For Tribals**

The Maharashtra government has set up a committee to review various schemes being implemented for the welfare of tribals in the state. The 17-member committee, headed by former MLA and Shramjeevi Sanghatna president Vivek Pandit, will undertake study of various works done for providing employment opportunities, minimum wages and proper livelihood to tribals, as per a recent government order.

### **Centre is not willing to recommend President's rule in Bengal**

After the City Police Commissioner Rajeev Kumar in the Saradha chit fund scam, the BJP leaders demanded President's rule in the State. Saradha scam is about Rs.2500 crore. Centre declared that the incident bordered on the failure of constitutional machinery, but the situation was not grave enough to invoke Article 356 of the Constitution enabling the President's rule.

### **Kerala becomes 1st State to Set Up Price Monitoring And Research Unit**

Kerala has become the first State to set up a Price Monitoring and Research Unit (PMRU) to track violation of prices of essential drugs and medical devices under the Drugs Price Control Order (DPCO).

### **Punjab Government approves 'Smart Village Campaign' Worth of Rs 385 Crores**

The Punjab government approved a rural development scheme worth Rs 384.40 crore to supplement the ongoing works to build village infrastructure and provide essential amenities. Named 'Smart Village Campaign', the scheme would be financed with funds from the 14th Financial Commission and MGNREGA works.

## **INTERNATIONAL**

### **Muhammadu Buhari Re-Elected Nigerian President**

Muhammadu Buhari was re-elected Nigeria's President, results showed, after a delayed poll that angered voters and led to claims of rigging and collusion. Buhari, 76, took an unassailable lead of more than four million votes as the last states were yet to be declared, making it impossible for his nearest rival, Atiku Abubakar, to win.

### **Cuba votes on new constitution**

Voters in Cuba took part in a referendum on a new constitution that expands recognition of private property. The referendum contained only two options: yes or no to the new constitution. More than eight million were registered to voters. The new constitution, replacing the 1976 version, recognises a limited role for the free market and private investment, but only under the control of the Communist Party.

Zimbabwe Starts Trading New Currency RTGS dollar  
Zimbabwe started to trade its new currency, the RTGS dollar, two days after the central bank announced measures to try and resolve a chronic monetary crisis. The bank unveiled a foreign exchange trading system that effectively devalued its quasi-currency, the bond note, which was officially pegged at parity with the US dollar.

### **Donald Trump Signs SPD-4 to Create US Space Force**

US President Donald Trump signed Space Policy Directive-4 (SPD-4), ordering the Pentagon to establish the Space Force as the 6th branch of the United States military, to go along with the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, and Coast Guard, in order to secure and extend American dominance of the space domain.

### **Cobra Gold Military Exercises held in Thailand**

Thailand and the United States hosted the annual Cobra Gold military exercise, the biggest activity of its type in the Asia-Pacific region with 29 nations taking part as participants or observers. Apart from the 2 countries, 7 countries who participated in the exercise were India, Singapore, Japan, China, Indonesia, Malaysia and South Korea.

### **President Bashir Declares Year-Long State of Emergency in Sudan**

Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir has declared a year-long state of emergency, dissolving his cabinet and local governments throughout the country. Omar al-Bashir in a televised address called on Sudan's parliament to postpone constitutional amendments that would allow him to run for another term in a presidential election in 2020.

### **Squash Great Nicol David Announces Retirement**

Malaysia's 8-time World Champion Nicol David has announced that she will call time on her record-breaking career at the end of the 2018/19 season. The 35-year-old from Penang is one of the most successful squash players of all time and spent an unprecedented 9 years at World No.1 between 2006-2015.

### **Saudi becomes 73rd Nation to Sign International Solar Alliance**

Saudi Arabia became the 73rd nation to sign the International Solar Alliance. ISA was unveiled by PM Narendra Modi and former French President Francois Hollande in 2015. The move came at Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman visit to India.

### **Chris Gayle announces retirement from One-day Internationals**

West Indian batsman Chris Gayle has announced that he will retire from One-day Internationals after the forthcoming World Cup. The 39-year old left-hander has scored 9,727 ODI runs, second only to the legendary Brian Lara among West Indians in 284 matches. He needs 677 more runs to surpass Lara, he will be hoping to achieve at his fifth World Cup.

**Argentina becomes 72nd country to sign solar agreement**

Argentina became the 72nd country to sign the Framework Agreement of the International Solar Alliance (ISA). The agreement was inked on the sidelines of the official three-day visit of Argentinian President Mauricio Macri to India by Argentina's Foreign Minister Jorge Faurie in the presence of ISA's Director-General Upendra Tripathy.

**India hiked the custom duty of Pakistan goods to 200 percent**

After the Pulwama terror strike, the Union government has hiked the basic customs duty on all goods imported from the neighbouring country to 200% with immediate effect. This comes after India revoked the 'Most Favoured Nation' (MFN) status to Pakistan on February 15 following the Pulwama terror strike, that killed 40 CRPF personnel. The two main items imported from Pakistan are fruits and cement, on which the current customs duty is 30-50% and 7.5%, respectively.

**Macedonia Officially Changed Its Name to North Macedonia**

The country, formerly known as the Republic of Macedonia officially changed its name to the Republic of North Macedonia, on paper ending a decades-long dispute that should pave the way for NATO membership. The freshly named country celebrated the event with a flag-raising ceremony marking its prospective – and long-awaited – accession to NATO.

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

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban has said that women in the country with four children or more will be exempted for life from paying income tax. The move aims at boosting the country's population. The PM said that this is a way of defending Hungary's future without depending on immigration.

**Egypt's President el-Sissi Elected as the new chairman of African Union**

Egypt's President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi took over as chair of the African Union (AU). The post rotates annually between the five regions of the continent. He is expected to focus on the fight against armed groups on the continent and rebuilding efforts of countries recovering from conflict. Sisi takes the helm from Rwandan President Paul Kagame, who focused on creating an Africa wide free-trade zone during his tenure.

**Macedonia signs accord to join NATO**

Macedonia signed an accord to join NATO to become the 30th member of the US-led alliance. At a formal signing of the NATO accession protocol, Macedonia's Foreign Minister Nikola Dimitrov hailed the moment as showing that the country will never walk alone once in the alliance.



**Former mayor Nayib Bukele wins El Salvador's presidential election**

Nayib Bukele, a former mayor of San Salvador was declared the winner in El Salvador's presidential race, saying the country had left behind the postwar period by electing a young alternative to the two-party system.

**Cory Booker to run for the 2020 presidential election**

U.S. Senator Cory Booker, who gained national prominence in the fight over Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh, announced that he would seek the Democratic Party's nomination for the 2020 presidential election, injecting more youthful energy to the expanding Democratic field.

**Interim Budget 2019**

Finance minister Piyush Goyal will present the Interim Budget for 2019-20 amid heightened expectations that he will announce an income support scheme for distressed farmers who have seen their incomes stagnate because of plunging prices, barely enough to pay for loans and input costs.

**INDIA & WORLD****India destroys Jaish-e-Mohammeds biggest camp in Pakistan**

Indian government confirmed that Indian Air Force (IAF) jets destroyed the biggest training camp of Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) in Pakistan's Balakot in the strike carried out by 12 Mirage 2000 fighter jets. IAF dropped around 1,000 kg bombs on JeM terror camps across the Line of Control (LoC) in Muzafarabad sector.

**India to Attend OIC Meet for 1st Time in Abu Dhabi**

External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj has been invited to deliver an address at the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in Abu Dhabi. This is the first time that a leader of the non-Muslim country has been invited to the OIC conference. Ms Swaraj will be the Guest of Honour and address the inaugural plenary of the 46th Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of OIC.

**India to stop its share of water flowing into Pakistan**

The Minister of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation, Nitin Gadkari has said that India would fully utilise its share of unused water from rivers Ravi, Beas and Sutlej that has been flowing into Pakistan. The comment was made by the Minister in the backdrop of the Pulwama Terror attack which took the life of 40 CRPF soldiers.

### **India withdraws Most Favoured Nation status granted to Pakistan**

India has withdrawn the Most Favoured Nation status granted to Pakistan following the Pulwama terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir. A decision in this regard was taken during the meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security, CCS in New Delhi. Union Minister Arun Jaitley said that Ministry of External Affairs will initiate all possible diplomatic steps which are to be taken to ensure the complete isolation Pakistan from the international community.

### **India & Bangladesh sign MOU for training 1800 Bangladesh civil servants**

India and Bangladesh have signed an MOU for training 1800 Bangladesh Civil Servants under Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DAR&PG). The Mou was signed between the NCGG and the Ministry of Public Administration, and Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh for the tenure of 6 years.

## **CONFERENCES**

### **Global Business Summit held in New Delhi**

The Global Business Summit can be the Davos of the East, said Vineet Jain, Managing Director of the Times group in the welcome address for the Economic Times Global Business Summit 2019 in New Delhi. Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the Global Business summit in New Delhi.

### **International Conference ENCO-2019 held in New Delhi**

The International Conference and Exhibition on Energy and Environment – Challenges and Opportunities (ENCO-2019) held in New Delhi. The conference was inaugurated by the President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind.

### **55th MSC held at Munich, Germany**

55th Munich Security Conference (MSC), an annual meeting that brings together leaders and security experts from across the world. Deputy National Security Adviser Pankaj Saran attended the conference and participated in various events besides holding bilateral meetings with several countries.

### **4th Agri Leadership Summit 2019 held at Sonipat, Haryana**

Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmer's Welfare, Radha Mohan Singh, inaugurated the 4th Agri Leadership Summit 2019 at the India International Horticulture Market (IIHM) in Ganaur, Sonipat district, Haryana. It was a 3-day summit. The theme of the summit was 'Entrepreneurship & Agri-Business; Agri Allied – A Promising Sector and Agri Service- Direct Marketing'.

### **16th Lok Sabha Session Concludes**

The last session of 16th Lok Sabha came to an end on 13th of February 2019. Giving the details for the tenure of 16th Lok Sabha, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Narendra Singh Tomar informed that there were a total number of 331 sittings for Lok Sabha. 205 bills were passed and the productivity was 85%. For Rajya Sabha, 154 bills were passed and the productivity was 68%.

### **2nd ASEAN-India Youth Summit held in Guwahati**

Union Minister of State for Tourism KJ Alphons and Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal inaugurated the 2nd ASEAN-India Youth Summit at Hotel Taj Vivanta in Guwahati.

### **ISC 2019 held in Hyderabad**

The fourth edition of international spice conference (ISC 2019) held in Hyderabad. The conference is hosted by the All India Spices Exporters Forum (AISEF) which represents around 80% of spices export from India. ISC will bring under one roof more than 800 delegates from over 50 nationalities, 45 speakers and 72 exhibitors. The theme for the conference is challenges of change-redefining the value chain.

### **AWARDS & HONOURS**

#### **President Conferred Gandhi Peace Prize**

President Ram Nath Kovind presented the Gandhi Peace Prize for the years 2015, 2016, 2017 & 2018 at Rashtrapati Bhawan, New Delhi. The recipients of the award are Vivekananda Kendra for the year 2015, Akshaya Patra foundation and Sulabh International for 2016, Ekal Abhiyan Trust for 2017 & Yohei Sasakawa for 2018.

#### **Lifetime Achievement award for G.R. Karthikeyan**

G.R. Karthikeyan, father of India's first Formula One driver Narain Karthikeyan, was honored with the Lifetime Achievement award at the FMSCI annual awards function. FIA president Jean Todt was the chief guest and handed over the awards.

#### **Digital India Awards conferred for Excellence in Web Space**

The Digital India Awards have been instituted under the ambit of the National Portal of India by National Informatics Centre, MeitY, to promote exemplary initiatives in e-governance using the medium of World Wide Web. Hon'ble Minister of Electronics & IT, Law & Justice Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad conferred 'Digital India Awards 2018' in an exclusive ceremony.

#### **Divya Karnad becomes First Indian Woman to receive Future For Nature Award**

33-year-old Ashoka University teacher and Wipro Sustainable Fellow, Divya Karnad became the First Indian Woman to be honoured with the 'Future for Nature Award' for

her work on marine conservation. She is the second Indian to receive this award after Dr. Charudutt Mishra.

### **Dr Soumitro Chakraborty wins 'CEO of the year' award**

Dr Soumitro Chakraborty, Chief Executive Officer of Innovative Financial Advisors Pvt. Ltd. (Fiinnovation), was conferred with 'CEO of the year' award at the 8th World CSR Congress held in Mumbai. The World CSR Congress this year focussed on the integration of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in corporate strategies, innovation, and strategic alliances.

### **Narendra Modi Conferred with Seoul Peace Prize**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been conferred with the Seoul Peace Prize for 2018 for his contribution to international cooperation and fostering global economic growth.

### **Abdul Aziz Muhamat wins International Human Rights Prize**

Sudanese refugee, Abdul Aziz Muhamat, who spent 5 years in the Australian detention centre on Manus Island in Papua New Guinea, was given the Martin Ennals Award 2019 in Geneva, Switzerland, for exposing 'the very cruel asylum seeker policy of the Australian Government'.

### **Sunil Chhetri Given First Ever Football Ratna Award**

Football Delhi conferred Sunil Chhetri with first ever "Football Ratna" Award. Delhi Dynamos player Shubham Sarangi was also honoured. About Sunil Chhetri: Sunil Chhetri is popularly known as Captain Fantastic. He has scored 2nd highest number of goals in international football matches among active players after Cristiano Ronaldo. Chhetri has also been named AIFF (All India Football Federation) Player of the Year five times in 2007, 2011, 2013, 2014 and 2017.

### **De Goede, Van Doren win 2018 FIH Player of the year Awards**

Eva de Goede from Netherlands and Arthur van Doren of Belgium were titled the International Hockey Federation's Players of the Year for 2018. Eva de Goede, 29, was named the Female Player of the Year and Arthur van Doren, 24, won the Male Player of the Year award for the second year in a row.

### **Bradley Cooper wins Best Director From PETA for 'A Star is Born'**

Bradley Cooper has been awarded the 'Oscat' by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA). The animal rights organisation awarded Cooper 'for his enlightened decision to cast his own canine companion in 'A Star Is Born' rather than using one supplied by a notorious animal exhibitor'.

**Indian Historian Sanjay Subrahmanyam wins the Dan David Prize**

Indian historian Sanjay Subrahmanyam has won prestigious Dan David Prize of Israel for the year 2019 for his work on inter-cultural encounters between Asians, Europeans and people of North and South America during the early modern era. Sanjay Subrahmanyam shares the award in the category of 'past time dimension' with Prof Kenneth Pomeranz of the University of Chicago.

**Deepa Mehta to be Feted with Lifetime Achievement Award**

Acclaimed Indo-Canadian filmmaker, Deepa Mehta will be conferred with Lifetime Achievement Award by the Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television. This award will be presented in privilege of Deepa's enormous impact and impression she has had on the essence of Canada's entertainment industry. Deepa Mehta is best known for her trilogy- "Fire", "Earth" and "Water".

**YES Bank wins Data Science Innovation Award**

YES BANK has been announced as the winner of the 9th edition of Aegis Graham Bell Award 2018 for its 'Yes Engage Enrich Excel (EEE)' project in data science. YES EEE program is an industry-first analytics tool that aids the Bank's relationship managers with top three talking points to engage with their customers. Aegis Graham Bell Award has been promoting innovations and entrepreneurship in the ICT domain.

**Francois Laborde Conferred France's Highest Civilian Honour**

Father Francois Laborde, a 92-year-old priest, was conferred the Légion d'Honneur (Legion of Honour), the highest civilian award of France, in recognition of his work for specially-abled children. He is the third person from the state to have been awarded the Legion of Honor after film maestro Satyajit Ray and actor Soumitra Chatterjee.

**SBI UK Chief Honoured 'Freedom of the City of London'**

The State Bank of India's Uk chief Mr. Sanjiv Chadha has been honored with the 'Freedom of the City Of London' by the city of London Corporation in recognition of his contribution to promoting the bilateral relations. Sanjiv Chadha was nominated for the honor by Lord Mayor of London Peter Estlin and Sheriff Vincent Keaveny.

**P.S.Krishnan received K.Veeramani Award for Social Justice in 2018**

K.Veeramani Award for Social Justice 2018 will be conferred on P.S. Krishnan, former Secretary, Government of India. Dravidar Kazhagam leader Veeramani will felicitate the awardee at a function in New Delhi.

**Azim Premji awarded EY Lifetime Achievement Award**

Azim Premji Chairman of Wipro Ltd will be felicitated with the Ernst & Young Lifetime Achievement Award. Ernst & Young, famously known as EY is a multinational professional services firm and is one of the "Big Four" accounting firms.

**P.S.Krishnan is to receive K.Veeramani Award**

K.Veeramani Award for Social Justice 2018 will be conferred on P.S. Krishnan, former Secretary, Government of India. Dravidar Kazhagam leader Veeramani will felicitate the awardee at a function in New Delhi. About the award: Periyar International Inc., (USA) gives an annual award for outstanding contributions to Social Justice, which is named his honor.

**Manus Island refugee Behrouz Boochani won Australian literary prize**

Manus Island 's refugee Behrouz Boochani 's debut book 'No Friends But the Mountains' won both the 25,000 dollars non-fiction prize at the Victorian premier's literary awards and the 100,000 dollars Victorian prize for literature , in Australia.

**Health Minister confers 'Award of Appreciation'**

Rajiv Nath was conferred with the prestigious 'Award of Appreciation' by Ashwini Kumar Choubey, Minister of State for Health & Family Welfare for his contribution to the Global Public Healthcare sector at The Award of Appreciation Ceremony held at Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Nirman Bhawan, New Delhi, organized by Diaspora Foundation.

**SPORTS & GAMES****Grandmaster Abhijeet Gupta wins Cannes International Open Trophy**

Indian Grandmaster Abhijeet Gupta lifted the Cannes International Open trophy. He took an easy draw with Pier Luigi Basso of Italy in the ninth and final round. Abhijeet won the tournament with 7.5 points. It is his first solo International tournament victory.

**Saurabh Chaudhary clinches gold in 10m air rifle at Shooting World Cup**

Saurabh Chaudhary has clinched the country's second gold medal at the ongoing ISSF World Cup at the Dr. Karni Singh Shooting Range in New Delhi. Saurabh, who had already won gold medals at Youth Olympics and Asian Games gold, attained the top spot in the 10m air pistol event of the World Cup. Saurabh shot a total of 245 (World Record) to claim the top spot. He has also booked a spot in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

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

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

### **Apurvi wins gold at shooting World Cup**

Apurvi Chandela won the first gold for India at the ISSF World Cup by finishing on top of the women's 10 metre Air Rifle category in New Delhi. She also set a new world record with 252.9 points on the way to the title. Apurvi, who had booked a quota place for the 2020 Olympics last year, thus bagged her third individual medal at a World Cup.

### **Jitendra Singh wins National Race Walking Championship**

Jitendra Singh Rathore claimed the top honours in the men's 50km race walk competition at the 6th National Open Race Walking Championships that concluded in Chennai. The Rajasthan athlete clocked a time of 4:23.23 and beat out Gujarat's Joshi Sagar who registered 4:24.21 to take the silver medal. The National Open Race Walking Championships were meant to serve as an opportunity to qualify for the Athletics World Championships to be held in Doha in September this year.

### **Elise Mertens beats Simona Halep to win Qatar Open**

Elise Mertens, world number 21 from Belgium beat world number 3, Simona Halep to win the Qatar Open held in Doha, Qatar. This is her first WTA Premier-level crown and fifth title of her overall career. Mertens' triumph over the Romanian was her third win over a top 10 player in Doha.

### **Saina Nehwal won her women's title at the Yonex-Sunrise Senior Nationals**

Saina Nehwal won her fourth title at the Yonex-Sunrise 83rd Senior Nationals. She defeated P.V.Sindhu. Sourabh Verma completed a hat-trick of titles, claiming the men's singles crown after defeating young Lakshya Sen. The pair of Pranaav Jerry Chopra and Chirag Shetty outclassed top seed duo Arjun M.R and Shlok Ramachandran to clinch the Men's Doubles title.

### **Derrick Pereira becomes the India U-23 Football team coach**

Derrick Pereira was named head coach of the India U-23 team for the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Qualifiers slated to be held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan from March 22, ON Wednesday. Besides India, the other teams in the group are Tajikistan and Pakistan.

### **PV Sindhu, Vaishnavi Bhale, Ashmita Chaliha enter semi finals of women's singles in NBC**

PV Sindhu sailed into the semi-finals, while Nagpur's Vaishnavi Bhale and Ashmita Chaliha of Assam booked their maiden last-4 spots. Sindhu had an easy outing as she defeated Riya Mookerjee 21-16, 21-7 to progress to the semis on Thursday.

### **'Clouded Leopard' to be Mascot for National Games 2022**

The Sports and Youth Ministry in the meeting of Executive Committee of the National Games 2022 has chosen the Smiling Clouded Leopard to be the Mascot for the National Games 2022. Meghalaya will host the 2022 National Games, which is coinciding with its

50 years of statehood. Clouded Leopard is among the wild cats that live throughout the forests of Garo, Khasi, and Jaintia Hills.

### **Corentin Moutet Clinched Chennai Open ATP Challenger Title**

In Tennis, France's Corentin Moutet has clinched the Chennai Open ATP Challenger tournament title after beating Andrew Harris of Australia in the singles final. It was the second Challenger title for Moutet, who received 80 ATP points, while Andrew got 48 ATP points.

### **India's young paddlers clinch four medals**

In Table Tennis, India's young paddlers clinching four medals include a gold, at the Bahrain Junior and Cadet Open tournament in Manama. Besides the gold, India won two silver and a bronze. In the final, the India-A team of Suhana Saini and Anargya Manjunath proved too strong for India-B and clinched the Gold. In the Junior girls' competition, the Indian team of Manushree Patil and Swastika Ghosh beat three teams before losing to eventual champions Russia to settle for a Silver.

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

Vidarbha lifted their second successive Ranji Trophy title with a comfortable 78-run win over Saurashtra. Left arm spinner, Sarwate was adjudged man of the match. Vidarbha is only the sixth team in the tournament's long history to have defended the title.

### **Mirabai Chanu Notched up Gold at EGAT Cup in Thailand**

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

### **Ramit Tandon wins Seattle Open**

Indian squash player Ramit Tandon defeated Egyptian Mohamed El Sherbini in the finals to win the Seattle Open, a PSA challenger squash Tour event. The top-seeded Indian, who rose to his career high ranking of 58 in the latest February list, won his first PSA title in the new year and fourth title overall in his career.

### **Smriti Mandhana becomes World No.1 Women's ODI Batter**

Indian women's cricket team opener Smriti Mandhana has become the top-ranked batter in women's ODI cricket, as per the latest rankings released by the ICC. The 22-year-old moved up three spots in the batters' rankings to reach the top spot. In the 15 ODIs Smriti has played since the beginning of 2018, she has scored two centuries and eight half-centuries.



**Australia Cricketer Greg Chappell decided to retire as after Ashes 2019**

Former Cricketer, Greg Chappell confirmed to retire after the Ashes 2019. Greg Chappell have played 87 Tests for Australia. After his retirement in 1984, he worked as Team selector in three separate regimes, from 1984 to 1988, 2010 to 2011, and 2016 to the present. He was also appointed as national talent manager in 2010.

**Sana Mir becomes 1st Asian Woman to Play 100 T20Is**

Former captain of the Pakistan women team Sana Mir has become the first Asian woman to play hundred T20Is. Mir, 33, is one of Pakistan's most senior women cricketers and has been representing the country since 2005.

**Qatar won their First-ever Asian Cup Title In Football by defeating Japan**

Qatar won its first major soccer title by beating four-time champion Japan 3-1 in the 17th edition of the AFC Asian Cup held in United Arab Emirates(UAE). Sudan born Almoez Ali, became the first player to score nine goals at a single Asian Cup.

**INS Dronacharya wins Kochi Area Boat Pulling Regatta 2019**

The INS Dronacharya team won the Regatta trophy in the Kochi Area Pulling Regatta 2019 of the Southern Naval Command (SNC) held in the Ernakulam Channel. Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) School & Diving School secured the runners up position.

**Vani Kapoor becomes First Indian to Grab Australian LPGA Card**

Golfer Vani Kapoor has become the first Indian to grab Australian Ladies PGA Tour (LPGA) after securing 12th Rank tied with three others in the first-ever qualifying tournament at the Ballarat Golf Club in Australia. Total 81 players participated in the Qualifying tournament out of which top-20 earned the card for LPGA.

**Indian Captain Mithali Raj becomes 1st female cricketer to play 200 ODIs**

Indian captain Mithali Raj became the first female cricketer to play 200 ODI. The 36-year-old is also the highest run-getter in ODIs with 6622 runs at an average of 51.33. Mithali made her ODI debut way back in 1999 and has featured in 200 games out of the 263 ODIs India have played.

**ECONOMY****EPFO Hikes Interest Rates on EPF by 0.1%**

Employees' Provident Fund Organisation has hiked interest rate on employees' provident fund to 8.65% from 8.55% for the 2018-19 fiscal year. The announcement was made by Labour Minister Santosh Gangwar. The proposal would now go to the Finance Ministry for approval, Gangwar said after the CBT meeting.

### **WPI Inflation Hits 10-Month Low**

The Union Ministry of Commerce and Industries has released the data on WPI Inflation. The data makes the observations of The WPI Inflation fell to a 10-month low of 2.76 per cent in January owing to softening prices of fuel and some food items. The WPI inflation has stood at 3.8 per cent in December 2018, and 3.02 per cent in January 2018.

### **Government to borrow additional Rs 36,000 cr in FY19**

In order to meet additional expenses, the government has decided to raise additional Rs 36,000 crore through dated securities taking the total borrowing through the instrument to Rs 96,000 crore in the remaining period of the current fiscal.

### **6th Bi-Monthly Monetary Policy Statement Released**

RBI has released 6th Bi-Monthly Monetary Policy Statement. On the basis of an assessment of the current and evolving macroeconomic situation at its meeting, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) decided Reduce the policy repo rate under the liquidity adjustment facility (LAF) by 25 basis points from 6.5% to 6.25% with immediate effect. Consequently, the reverse repo rate under the LAF stands adjusted to 6.0%, and the marginal standing facility (MSF) rate and the Bank Rate to 6.5%. On the supply side, the FAE has placed the growth of real gross value added (GVA) at 7.0% in 2018-19 as compared with 6.9% in 2017-18.

### **FDI during April-September 2018-19 fell 11 per cent to \$22.66 billion**

According to commerce and industry ministry data Foreign direct investment (FDI) into India has declined 11% to \$22.66 billion during April-September period of the current fiscal. Sectors that received maximum foreign investment are services (\$4.91 billion), computer software and hardware (\$2.54 billion), telecommunications (\$2.17 billion), trading (\$2.14 billion), chemicals (\$1.6 billion) and automobile industry (\$ 1.59 billion).

### **GST collection increases to one lakh crore in January**

The data from the Ministry of Finance shows that goods and services tax collections stood at Rs. 1,02,503 crore in the month of January. Of the Rs. 1,02,503 crore GST revenue, Central GST is Rs 17,763 crore, State GST (SGST) is Rs 24,826 crore, Integrated GST (IGST) is Rs 51,225 crore (including Rs 24,065 crore collected on imports) and Cess is Rs 8,690 crore.

### **Fiscal deficit pegged at 3.4% of GDP for 2019-20**

The Interim Budget 2019-20 has pegged the fiscal deficit for the year 2019-20 at 3.4% of GDP. The fiscal deficit for the current fiscal has been revised upward to 3.4 per cent from the Budgeted target of 3.3 per cent in previous year. Fiscal deficit for FY21 has been pegged at 3 percent.

### **GST collections for January expected at Rs 103,000 cr**

The Goods and Services Tax (GST) collections for January have crossed the Rs 1 lakh crore mark and is expected to be Rs 103,000 crore, acting Finance Minister Piyush Goyal said. The Rs 1 lakh crore barrier in average monthly collections seen over the past two years had finally been broken this January with the collection for last month expected to be at around Rs 103,000 crore.

### **SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**

#### **Scientists discovered new Universe map which unveiled 3,00,000 more galaxies**

A new map of the night sky published in charts hundreds of thousands of previously unknown galaxies discovered using a LOFAR telescope that can detect light sources optical instruments cannot see. More than 200 astronomers from 18 countries were involved in the study, which used radio astronomy to look at a segment of the sky over the northern hemisphere, and found 3,00,000 previously unseen light sources thought to be distant galaxies.

#### **NASA to Launch SPHEREx Mission to Investigate Universe**

NASA has announced a new space telescope mission dedicated to understanding the origins of life and the universe. It's called the Spectro-Photometer for the History of the Universe, Epoch of Reionization and Ices Explorer or SPHEREx, for short. The space agency is aiming for a 2023 launch.

#### **NASA Announces the end of Opportunity**

NASA announced that its Opportunity Rover mission is complete after the rover failed to respond despite repeated trials since August 2018. The space agency inferred that a planet-encircling dust storm cut off communications with Opportunity, disabling its solar panels from storing power. Since then NASA has beamed over 830 unanswered rescue commands.

#### **NASA lost contact first mini-spacecraft MarCO CubeSats**

NASA has lost touch with the first mini-spacecraft that ventured into deep space, according to the US space agency which said that it is unlikely the twin CubeSats will be heard from again. The MarCO CubeSats were launched last year to test if such low-cost technology can operate in deep space. WALL-E sent back stunning images of Mars as well, while EVE performed some simple radio science.

#### **DRDO Successfully Flight Tests Indigenously Developed Missile System SFDR**

The second indigenously developed 'Solid Fuel Ducted Ramjet (SFDR)' propulsion-based missile system was successfully flight tested in Odisha by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO). The success of SFDR propulsion technology is a significant milestone and will pave the way for the development of long-range air-to-air missiles in the country.

**India successfully tests Solid Fuel Ducted Ramjet Propelled Missile**

India has successfully undertaken the demonstration of the indigenously developed propulsion technology. The successful demonstration of indigenous technology is a step forward in the development of long-range air-to-air missiles.

**ISRO to launch its 40th communication satellite GSAT-31**

The Indian Space Research Organisation, ISRO, is all set to launch its 40th communication satellite GSAT-31 on February 6 from the spaceport in French Guiana. The satellite with a mission life of 15 years will provide continuity to operational services on some of the in-orbit satellites and augment the Ku-band transponder capacity in Geostationary Orbit.

**India to launch communication satellite GSAT-31 aboard Ariane-5**

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) would be launching its latest communication satellite GSAT-31, aboard Ariane-5 (VA 247) from French Guiana. Ariane-5 is the launch vehicle of the European launch services provider Arianespace. According to Arianespace, the launch of Ariane-5 (VA 247) is scheduled for 2:31 am India time. In its first mission on 2019, Arianespace would be launching two telecommunications satellites with Ariane 5.

**ISRO to get its new communication satellite**

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is to get its new communication satellite GSAT-31 aloft in space on February 6 from French Guiana on a hired European rocket. GSAT-31 will replace the INSAT-4CR. GSAT-31 weighs roughly 2,500 kg. The latter with 12 Ku-band transponders was put to orbit in September 2007 to drive what was then a new DTH industry. The launch of Ariane-5 V247 mission is fixed for 2.31 a.m. IST.

**APPOINTMENTS****NBT appoints Govind Prasad Sharma as Chairman**

The National Book Trust (NBT) has appointed educationist and author Govind Prasad Sharma as its new Chairman. NBT, an autonomous organisation under the Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development, was previously chaired by Baldeo Sharma since 2015.

**Indra Nooyi joins Amazon Board of Directors**

PepsiCo's India-born former CEO Indra Nooyi has joined Amazon's board of directors. Nooyi, who stepped down as CEO of PepsiCo in October last year, is the second woman to be added on the Amazon's board of Directors. Early this month, Starbucks executive Rosalind Brewer joined the Amazon Board.

**State Governor of Ayala appointed Sudan's Prime Minister**

Mohamed Tahir Ayala, governor of Gezira state, was appointed Sudan's prime minister. Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir said in November 2017 that he would support Ayala in the 2020 presidential election if he decided to run.

**Brij Bhushan Sharan elected as WFI President**

Brijbhushan Sharan Singh has been elected unopposed as President of Wrestling Federation of India. This marked the third time that Singh had assumed the post of WFI's president. He is also a Member of Parliament from the Kaiserganj constituency of Uttar Pradesh. He was the chef-de-mission of the Indian contingent for the Asian Games 2018 held in Jakarta and Palembang.

**Kelly Knight Craft is the new US ambassador to the UN**

US President Donald Trump has announced the nomination of Kelly Knight Craft as the new US ambassador to the UN. The post of the US ambassador to the UN was vacant due to the resignation of Nikki Haley. Kelly Knight Craft is currently serving as the US ambassador to Canada. The appointment would be formalised after the approval by the US Senate.

**Saudi Arabia appoints first female ambassador to United States**

Saudi Arabia has appointed Princess Reema bint Bandar, a former business executive and philanthropist, as its first female ambassador to the United States. She replaced Prince Khalid bin Salman, amid fallout over journalist Khashoggi's murder. She has been a leading advocate of female empowerment in the kingdom.

**Kareena Kapoor Khan appointed ambassador of Swasth Immunised India campaign**

Actress Kareena Kapoor Khan has been appointed as an ambassador of Swasth Immunised India campaign. The Swasth Immunised India campaign has been launched by Serum Institute of India (SII) and Network 18. The Swasth Immunised India campaign aims to build a robust campaign aimed at spreading awareness on the importance and benefits of immunisation among the masses.

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

The first Lok Ayukta of Nagaland, Justice Uma Nath Singh, took the oath of office. Nagaland Governor PB Acharya administered the oath to him at a function held at Raj Bhavan. Justice Uma Nath Singh was a former Chief Justice of Meghalaya High Court. He will hold the office for a term of five years or till he attains the age of 70 years whichever is earlier.

**Additional charge as Secretary of Department of Fisheries given to Tarun hridhar**

The PM administration gave the Secretary of Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Tarun Shridhar the additional charge of Secretary of Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare. Department of Fisheries is a newly created department under Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare. Tarun Shridhar is an IAS officer from 1984 batch.

**PayU India appoints Anirban Mukherjee as CEO**

Naspers-owned PayU, a leading online payments service provider, has a new Chief Executive for its Indian operations in Anirban Mukherjee. Besides leading PayU's Indian business, Anirban will join PayU's global leadership team to support its ambitious plans to unlock innovative credit and financial services for under-served populations in high-growth markets. Mukherjee will now report to Laurent Le Moal, CEO, PayU Global.

**Ajay Singh Appointed as the Head of AIBA Elite Foundation**

Ajay Singh, president of the Boxing Federation of India has been selected as the president of the Foundation Board for Better Boxing of AIBA (International Boxing Association). He has been elected to the post for a tenure of 4 years. AIBA formed the Foundation Board for Better Boxing in the last meeting of its Executive Committee to formulate an action plan for global development of the sport in future.

**SC Appoints Former Judge Justice D.K. Jain as BCCI Ombudsman**

The Supreme Court appointed a retired judge of the court Justice D.K. Jain as the first ombudsman under the new BCCI (Board of Control for Cricket in India) Constitution approved by the court in a judgment. Bringing a quietus to the quibbling between the Committee of Administrators (CoA) which runs the BCCI and the State bodies that form the Board, a Bench of Justices S.A.

**Mary Kom designated as women's training Ambassador of PUMA**

German sports and lifestyle brand PUMA has appointed the 6 time world champion woman M C Mary Kom as its new brand ambassador. Mary Kom is now PUMA India's new ambassador for their women's training category and will be representing the brand in marketing campaigns.

**CBIC appoints Sandeep Mohan Bhatnagar and Ashok Kumar Pandey as its members**

Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) appointed 2 senior Indian Revenue Service (IRS) officers, Sandeep Mohan Bhatnagar and Ashok Kumar Pandey as its members. Ashok Kumar Pandey is a 1983-batch Indian Revenue Service (Customs and Central Excise) officer and Sandeep Mohan Bhatnagar is a 1984-batch IRS officer.

**Dr G C Anupama elected as President of ASI**

Dr G C Anupama has been elected president of the Astronomical Society of India (ASI). Dr G C Anupama was elected to the post in the ASI Executive Council elections for triennium 2019-22. She has become the first woman to head the prime association of professional astronomers in the country.

**UN Appoints C Ramanathan as Controller & ASG for Programme Planning, Budget and Finance**

Chandramouli Ramanathan has been appointed as Controller, Assistant Secretary-General for Programme Planning, Budget and Finance in the management strategy, policy and compliance department. He succeeds Bettina Tucci Bartsiotas of Uruguay. Ramanathan brings to the position nearly 40 years of executive international experience in diverse organisational settings in finance and budget, management and information technology.

**Dr. B. P. Sharma re-appointed as the CMD of Pawan Hans**

The Ministry of Civil Aviation with the approval of Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) re-appointed Dr. B. P. Sharma as the new Chairman & Managing Director (CMD) of the state-run helicopter manufacturer Power Hans. He had taken charge as the CMD of Raj Hans in March 2015 and superannuated in January 2019.

**William Barr sworn in as US Attorney General**

William Barr was sworn in for second time as the new Attorney General of United States. Barr, who also served as the Attorney General from 1991 to 1993 during President George HW Bush's administration, succeeds Jeff Sessions.

**Hina Jaiswal became the first Indian Woman Flight Engineer**

Flight Lieutenant Hina Jaiswal from Chandigarh, became the First Indian Woman Flight Engineer of the Indian Air Force (IAF). She was commissioned in the IAF's engineering branch in 2015 and completed the 6-month Flight Engineer course from the 112 Helicopter Unit attached to the Air Force Station in Yelahanka, Bengaluru. The Flight Engineer branch was opened to women officers in 2018.

**P C Mody appointed as Chairman of CBDT**

Appointments Committee of Cabinet (ACC) has appointed senior IRS officer Pramod Chandra Mody as chairman of Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT). He will succeed Sushil Chandra, who was recently appointed Election Commissioner.

**Jaitley resumes charge as Finance Minister**

Union Minister Arun Jaitley resumed charge as finance minister after his return from the US. He attended the Cabinet Committee of Security chaired by Prime Minister

Narendra Modi on the Pulwama terror attack. Arun Jaitley had stopped attending office last month and had gone to New York for medical treatment.

### **Sushil Chandra is appointed as an Election Commissioner**

President Ram Nath Kovind appointed Sushil Chandra as an Election Commissioner of India. Mr.Chandra is the second Indian Revenue Service (IRS) official to hold the post after T.S.Krishnamurthy.

### **Ashwani Lohani reappointed Air India CMD**

Ashwani Lohani, a retired bureaucrat, has been appointed the Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of national carrier Air India in New Delhi. Lohani held the position for around two years from 2015. In August 2017, he was named the Chairman to the Railway Board. The government appointed Air India CMD Pradeep Singh Kharola as the new Civil Aviation Secretary.

### **Ruchira Kamboj to be India's Ambassador to Bhutan**

Ruchira Kamboj, currently serving as the High Commissioner of India to South Africa, was appointed as the Ambassador of India to Bhutan. Kamboj is a 1987 cadre Indian Foreign Service (IFS) Officer who has previously served as the Ambassador/PR to Permanent Delegation of India to UNESCO, Paris.

**Ricky Ponting appointed as Assistant Coach of Australia for 2019 World Cup**  
Cricket Australia appointed Ricky Ponting as the assistant coach for Australia's cricket team for 2019 World Cup. Ponting was appointed after David Saker's resignation from the post. Ricky Ponting worked as the assistant for Australia's T20 in 2017 and 2018.

### **Shane Warne named as brand ambassador of Rajasthan Royals**

Australian spinner, Shane Warne has been named the brand ambassador of Rajasthan Royals for the upcoming edition of IPL. He led Rajasthan Royals to its first and only IPL title in 2008. Also, Rajasthan Royals has decided to change its jersey colour from blue to pink this year.

### **Dinkar Gupta takes over charge of DGP Punjab**

Dinkar Gupta has taken over the charge of Director General of the Punjab Police. He took over the charge as DGP from Suresh Arora at a simple ceremony at the Punjab Police headquarters at Chandigarh. Previously, Gupta was posted as Director General of Police, Intelligence, Punjab.

### **Shri Sailesh assumed Charge as Secretary, Ministry of Minority Affairs**

Shri Sailesh, IAS, Assam-Meghalaya Cadre, took charge as the Secretary, Ministry of Minority Affairs. He will also hold the post of Secretary, Department of Official Language as an additional charge.



**Air India Chairperson Pradeep Singh Kharola appointed Civil Aviation Secretary**

The government appointed Air India chief managing director and Chairperson Pradeep Singh Kharola the secretary of the Ministry of Civil Aviation. Kharola will take over from Rajiv Nayan Choubey. Kharola, an Indian Administrative Services officer of Karnataka cadre from the 1985 batch, was named chairperson of Air India.

**Nilambar Acharya appointed Nepal's envoy to India**

Nilambar Acharya, Nepal's former law minister, was appointed as Nepal's ambassador to India in Kathmandu. Nilambar Acharya's oath of office position was administered by President Bidya Devi Bhandari in Kathmandu. The position of Nepalese ambassador to India was vacant after Deep Kumar Upadhyay resigned.

**Dinesh Bhatia appointed as the Ambassador of India to the Republic of Argentina**

The government has appointed Dinesh Bhatia, the present Consul General, Consulate General of India at Toronto as the next Ambassador of India to Argentina. The MEA stated that present India's envoy to Argentina Sanjiv Ranjan has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Colombia.

**P.V.Bharathi appointed as the MD & CEO of Corporation Bank**

The government has appointed P.V.Bharathi as the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Corporation Bank. Earlier she has served as the Executive Director of Canara Bank. Corporation Bank is public-sector banking The company headquartered in Mangaluru, India. The bank has a pan-Indian presence.

**Rishi Kumar Shukla appointed CBI Director**

IPS officer Rishi Kumar Shukla has been appointed as the chief of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) for a fixed tenure of two years. Rishi Kumar Shukla is currently serving as the chairman of Madhya Pradesh Police Housing Corporation in Bhopal.

**K.P.Singh appointed as DGP of Haryana**

K.P.Singh, Senior Indian Police Service officer, took charge as officiating Director-General of Police, Haryana. This is in addition to his present duty as D-G Human Rights Commission. Mr.Singh has been assigned the charge of DGP of the Haryana police till the finalization of the ongoing process of regular appointment to the post as per guidelines of the Supreme Court.

**Nilambar Acharya Appointed Country's Ambassador to India**

Former Law Minister of Nepal Nilambar Acharya has been appointed as country's ambassador to India. President Bidya Devi Bhandari administered the oath of office and secrecy to Mr Acharya in Kathmandu. He has been appointed on the recommendation of the cabinet.

**Ramesh Abhishek given additional charge as Civil Aviation Secretary**

The government gave senior bureaucrat Ramesh Abhishek additional charge as Secretary of Civil Aviation Ministry. Abhishek holds the position of Secretary, Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion (DIPP) under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. Abhishek takes over from R.N. Choubey who retired recently. He will join the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) as a member.

**Sanjiv Ranjan appointed as the Ambassador of India to the Republic of Colombia**

Ministry of External Affairs announced that Sanjiv Ranjan has been appointed as new Ambassador to the Republic of Colombia. Ranjan, who is the current Ambassador to Argentina, is expected to take up the assignment shortly.

**Punit Goenka re-elected as new BARC India chairman**

Punit Goenka, managing director and CEO, Zee Entertainment Enterprises Ltd has been re-elected the new chairman of TV viewership measurement company, BARC India. Punit Goenka was the founder of BARC India. Punit Goenka succeeded Nakul Chopra who completed his year-long tenure as chairman.

**LT Gen Rajeev Chopra takes over as DG NCC**

Lt Gen Rajeev Chopra assumed the appointment of Director General of NCC (DGNCC). Commissioned in the Madras Regiment in December 1980, Lt Gen Chopra is an alumnus of the National Defence Academy, Khadakwasla and Indian Military Academy, Dehradun. He has been awarded Ati Vishisht Seva Medal for his distinguished service.

**Ajai Kumar is appointed as the interim CEO of Yes Bank**

Ajai Kumar is appointed as the interim CEO of Yes Bank. He will hold the charge of MD & CEO till the new CEO Ravneet Gill joins the lender. Yes Bank said that the Reserve Bank of India had approved the interim appointment.

**RESIGNS****Iranian foreign minister Javad Zarif resigns**

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif announced his resignation. However his resignation can only take effect once President Hassan Rouhani accepts it. Zarif played a prominent role in negotiating the landmark 2015 nuclear agreement between Iran and major international powers.

**CEO of DHFL, Harshil Mehta resigned from his post**

Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Limited (DHFL) has notified that its CEO Harshil Mehta has resigned from his position. Mr. Mehta will further hold the position of DHFL's Executive President in Retail business from 14th February, 2019. DHFL's board has

further appointed Sunjoy Joshi as an Independent Director and Srinath Sridharan as a Non-Executive director.

### **Yes Bank senior group president Pralay Mondal resigns**

Yes Bank Senior group President and head of retail and business banking, Pralay Mondal resigned from his post. Pralay Mondal joined Yes Bank in 2012 and he was elevated along with Rajat Monga who handled financial management as Executive Directors of the Yes Bank.

## **DEATHS**

### **Veteran Kannada writer Ko Channabasappa passes away**

Veteran freedom fighter and noted Kannada writer Ko Channabasappa passed away in M S Ramaiah hospital in Bengaluru. He was 96. He was former Judge and had written more than 80 books. He was winner of Nadoja and Kannada Rajyotsava Awards.

### **Veteran Telugu filmmaker Kodi Ramakrishna passes away**

Well-known Telugu filmmaker Kodi Ramakrishna, best known for directing memorable films such as 'Ankusam', 'Ammoru' and 'Arundhati' among others passed away in Hyderabad. Ramakrishna made his directorial debut with 1982 Telugu romantic comedy 'Intlo Ramayya Veedhilo Krishnayya' with megastar Chiranjeevi.

### **Veteran Film Producer Raj Kumar Barjatya Passes Away**

Veteran Bollywood producer and father of filmmaker Sooraj Barjatya, Raj Kumar Barjatya passed away in Mumbai. He was popularly and affectionately known as Raj Babu and helmed several Bollywood hit films including 'Hum Saath Saath Hain', 'Hum Aapke Hain Koun', 'Vivah', 'Prem Ratan Dhan Payo', 'Main Prem Ki Deewani Hoon' among others.

### **Bengali singer Pratik Choudhury passes away at 55**

Bengali singer Pratik Choudhury passed away at a City hospital after suffering a cardiac arrest. The popular singer, known for his albums on contemporary Bengali songs including 'Mukhosh', 'Bhusandir Mathe', and 'Ebar Pratiker Pallay'. Choudhury, a graduate from Calcutta University, began his music career in 1994 by singing jingles. He also sung in numerous TV serials, Bengali movies.

### **Noted Hindi Writer Namvar Singh Passes Away**

Noted Hindi writer Namvar Singh passed away in New Delhi. He was 92. Prof. Namvar Singh was ill for some time and was being treated at All India Institute of Medical Sciences. Singh was the first chairman of JNU's Centre of Indian Languages. He has authored over dozen books including 'Kavita Ke Naye Pratiman', 'Chhayavad' and 'Dusri Parampara Ki Khoj' among others.

**'Badge of Honor' Military Novelist, W.E.B. Griffin Passes Away**

American military veteran and novelist, William E. Butterworth III, better known as W.E.B. Griffin (his pen name), passed away at the age of 89. He joined the army at the age of 17 and has served in the Korean War.

**Climate Scientist Wallace Smith Broecker Passes Away**

Climate scientist Wallace Smith Broecker, who popularised the term "global warming" has passed away in New York. Eighty-seven-year-old Columbia University professor breathed his last at a New York City hospital.

**Best-selling British Author 'Andrea Levy' Passed Away**

The best-selling British author Andrea Levy, who explored the experience of Jamaican British people in a series of novel over 20 years, has died from cancer at the age of 62. She was known for penning books 'The Long Song' and 'Small Island'. She was conferred with Orange prize for fiction, Whitbread book of the year, Commonwealth writers prize and many more.

**Swiss Actor Bruno Ganz Passed Away**

77 years old Swiss actor, Bruno Ganz who is famous for his role of German dictator, Adolf Hitler in the Oscar-nominated film Downfall, passed away in Zurich, Switzerland due to Colon Cancer. Bruno Ganz was born in 1941 and he was active in German theatre, film, and television for more than 50 years.

**Ex-Goa Dy CM Francis D'Souza passes away at 64**

Former deputy chief minister of Goa and BJP MLA Francis D'Souza passed away. He was 64. He was elected to Goa Legislative Assembly in the year 1999 as Goa Rajiv Congress party candidate and was later shifted to BJP to get elected to the state legislative assembly in 2002, 2007, 2012 and 2017 from Mapusa constituency.

**'Clouded Leopard' to be Mascot for National Games 2022**

The Sports and Youth Ministry in the meeting of Executive Committee of the National Games 2022 has chosen the Smiling Clouded Leopard to be the Mascot for the National Games 2022. Meghalaya will host the 2022 National Games, which is coinciding with its 50 years of statehood. Clouded Leopard is among the wild cats that live throughout the forests of Garo, Khasi, and Jaintia Hills.

**England football great Gordon Banks passes away**

England football great, goalkeeper Gordon Banks, whose safe pair of hands helped the Three Lions to their only World Cup final victory in 1966, has passed away at the age of 81. Banks won 73 caps for England between 1963 and 1972 and made nearly 200 appearances for Stoke before his playing career was brought to an end due to a car crash that cost him the sight in one eye.

**Bollywood actor Mahesh Anand passed away at age of 57**

Hindi film actor Mahesh Anand passed away at age of 57 in Mumbai. Mahesh Anand, was best known for negative roles in the movies of 80s and 90s. The villainous actor was last found in the Govinda's film 'Rangeela Raja'.

**Oscar-Nominated British Actor Albert Finney Passes Away**

Oscar-nominated British actor Albert Finney passed away peacefully after a short illness. He aged 82. He was a five-time Oscar nominee who began his career at the Royal Shakespeare Company before making his mark in film. His big film break came as "angry young man" Arthur Seaton in Saturday Night and Sunday Morning.

**Longest-Serving US Congressman John Dingell Passes Away**

John Dingell, the longest-serving congressman in US history, has passed away aged 92. He was first elected in 1955, serving in the House of Representatives for the next 59 years. He retired in 2015. Mr. Dingell served through the terms of 11 US presidents.

**Noted freedom fighter Priyanath Dey passes away**

Noted freedom fighter and former Odisha MLA Priyanath Dey passed away in Bhubaneswar. He was 97. Dey had joined freedom movement in 1942 and was jailed several times. He was elected to Odisha Legislative Assembly from Jagatsinghpur seat in 1961.

**Veteran Marathi Actor Ramesh Bhatkar Passes Away**

Veteran Marathi actor Ramesh Bhatkar passed away aged 70 after battling cancer for over one and a half years. During his career, spanning over 30 years, the actor starred in several Marathi films and television series including 'Aai Pahije' and 'Commander'. The actor also featured in Hindi films like 'The Accidental Prime Minister' and 'Bhavesh Joshi Superhero'.

**Padma Shri R.B.Patil passed away**

Padma Shri R.B. Patil, 93-year-old, passed away in Hubballi. He established North Karnataka's first comprehensive centre for cancer in 1977 from voluntary donations. Dr.Patil completed his education in England and continued to see patients until recently before his health deteriorated.

**Former IIMC Director Hiten Bhaya Passes Away**

Former Planning Commission member and ex-director of IIMC Hiten Bhaya passed away in Delhi. Bhaya was 98. Bhaya was a member of the Planning Commission in the Rajiv Gandhi government and had also served as director of the Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC) and chairman of Hindustan Steel.

## **VISITORS**

### **PM Modi on a two-day visit to Seoul**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi went to Seoul on a two-day visit to South Korea. Mr Modi will hold bilateral talks with South Korean President Moon Jae-in and receive the Seoul Peace Prize. He will receive the prize in recognition of his dedication to international cooperation, global growth and human development. He addressed the India-Korea Business Symposium and also launched India-Korea Startup Hub in Seoul.

### **Overview of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Visit to Varanasi**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi flagged off the first ever diesel to electric converted locomotive twin engine of 10000 Horse Power(HP) at DLW Varanasi. Prime Minister, Narendra Modi inaugurated Virtual Experiential Museum (VEM) under Archeological Survey of India, Man – Mahal, in the bank of the River Ganges.

### **Overview of PM Narendra Modi's Visit to Bihar & Jharkhand**

Foundation stone for the Patna Metro Rail Project was laid down by PM Narendra Modi, which is worth more than Rs 13,000 crore (estimated cost Rs 13,365.77crore) and will be completed in the next 5 years. The project will benefit about 27 lakh people of the state. PM Narendra Modi inaugurated the first phase of the River Front Development at Patna and the Patna City Gas Distribution Project(CGD).

### **BJP President Amit Shah to visit Kumbh in Prayagraj**

BJP President Amit Shah visited Kumbh in Prayagraj along with Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. Mr Shah met various saints and seers during his visit. Meanwhile, the departure of Akharas from Kumbh has already begun.

### **Overview of Prime Minister's visit to Tripura**

Prime Minister, Narendra Modi visited Agartala in the final leg of his a day long tour to Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Tripura. PM Modi during his visit to Agartala, Tripura inaugurated various development projects. It was the final destination of a day long tour to 3 North Eastern States.

### **Overview of Official Visit Of Monaco's Prince Albert II to India**

Prince Albert II of Monaco made his first Official 2 days Visit to India along with a high level delegation on 4-5 February 2019 to review the bilateral relations between India and Monaco. Union Minister of Commerce & Industry and Civil Aviation, Suresh Prabhu addressed India-Monaco Business Forum which was hosted by New Delhi.

**MISCELLANEOUS****China's Xinhua Unveils World's First Female AI News Anchor**

Chinese news agency Xinhua unveiled the world's first female AI news anchor Xin Xiaomeng. She has been developed in collaboration with Sogou Inc, a search engine company. She is expected to make a debut in March, during the upcoming meetings of China's national legislature.

**Mukesh Ambani tops Hurun India Philanthropy list 2018**

Reliance Industries chairman Mukesh Ambani and also richest person in Asia topped the Hurun India Philanthropy list with a donation amount of 437 crores. Mukesh Ambani is followed by the chairman of the Piramal Group, Ajay Piramal who donated 200 crores. Top 10 list of Hurun India Philanthropy list.

**BOOKS IN NEWS****'Simplicity & Wisdom' Authored by Mr. Dinesh Shahra Launched**

A book 'Simplicity & Wisdom' written by Dinesh Shahra was launched at Parmarth Ashram in Kumbh Mela. Launched by the Governor of West Bengal- Keshari Nath Tripathi and Swami Chidanand Saraswati, Head of Parmarth Ashram, this book is dedicated to Late Vedanti Swami Pragananandji.

**Book containing Venkaiah Naidu's selected speeches released by Pranab Mukherjee**

Former President Shri Pranab Mukherjee released the book, which is a compilation of 92 selected speeches of Vice President Shri Venkaiah Naidu, in New Delhi. It contains the wide experience of the Vice President in Public Affairs. Mr. Mukherjee and Mr. Naidu also paid homage to the martyrs of Pulwama terror attack and said that the country must stand together to fight against terrorism.

**Keshari Nath Tripathi launches book dedicated to Swami Pragananandji at the Kumbh Mela**

Famous industrialist and philanthropist Dinesh Shahra's book, 'Simplicity & Wisdom' was launched at Parmarth Ashram in the ongoing Kumbh Mela. The book is dedicated to Late eminent Vedanti Swami Pragananandji. The book was formally launched by Keshari Nath Tripathi, Governor of West Bengal, and Swami Chidanand Saraswati, Head of Parmarth Ashram.

**'Let's Talk on Air: Conversations with Radio Presenters'**

The book titled 'Let's Talk On Air: Conversations with Radio Presenters' has been authored by Rakesh Anand Bakshi, was launched on World Radio Day (WRD-2019) on February 13 in Mumbai. This book is depicted as the comprehensive guide on radio-presenting in India.

**Book 'Undaunted: Saving The Idea of India' by former finance minister P Chidambaram launched**

Former finance minister and senior Congress leader P Chidambaram expressed disapproval of the Madhya Pradesh government's decision to slap NSA for alleged cow slaughter, saying the party leadership has conveyed its reservations to the state leadership.

**Manish Tewari launches book on economic justice**

Former Union Minister and author Manish Tewari launched "What Marx Left Unsaid", authored by Malay Chaudhuri, Arindam Chaudhuri and Che Kabir Chaudhuri at the India International Centre in New Delhi. It was launched to commemorate the 200th birth anniversary of Karl Marx. The book is jointly written by three generations of authors from the same family, and has been published by Times Group Books.

**Law, Justice and Judicial Power Justice P N Bhagwatis Approach Book Launched**

The book "Law, Justice and Judicial Power – Justice P N Bhagwati's Approach" written by Mool Chand Sharma was launched by the Chief Justice of India, Shri Justice Ranjan Gogoi. The first edition of the book was received by President Ramnath Govind.

**COMMITTEES****CBDT Set Up Panel to help bring down Tax Litigation**

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) formed a 4-member committee, headed by income tax commissioner Sanjeev Sharma, to look into the matter of taxation related pain points and submit its final report and recommendations by mid-March. It will tackle the issue by addressing some current pain points and recommending some steps borrowed from international best practices.

**5th India-Bangladesh Joint Consultative Committee Meeting held in New Delhi**

The 5th India-Bangladesh Joint Consultative Committee Meeting, co-chaired by External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and Foreign Affairs Minister of Bangladesh Dr. Abdul Momen was held in New Delhi.

**5-Member Committee to Promote Dairy Farming was set up by Punjab**

Punjab government headed by Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh decided to constitute a high-powered committee to prepare a comprehensive action plan for boosting the dairy sector with the aim of supplementing the income of farmers in a result-oriented manner.

**Government Sets up Committee to Explore Prepaid Payments**

On the recommendation of Cabinet Secretary P K Sinha, the government constituted a committee under the Central Electricity Authority (CEA) to explore prepaid payments



by state electricity distribution companies to power plants. The CEA led committee has been asked to submit its recommendations to the power ministry in one month.

### **DAYS & DATES**

#### **21 February: International Mother Language Day**

International Mother Language Day has been observed every year on 21st February since February 2000 to promote linguistic and cultural diversity and multilingualism. This year, International Mother Language day 2019 will be framed by the International Year of indigenous languages 2019 (IYIL19) around the theme 'Indigenous languages matter for development, peace building and reconciliation'.

#### **20 February: World Day of Social Justice**

The World Day of Social Justice is celebrated annually all over the world on 20 February. The theme for WDSJ 2019 is 'If You Want Peace & Development, Work for Social Justice'. The International Labour Organization unanimously adopted the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization on 10 June 2008.

#### **13 February: World Radio Day**

13 February is celebrated as World Radio Day by UNESCO all over the world. The theme of WRD 2019 is 'Dialogue, Tolerance and Peace'. This day marks a time where people around the world celebrate the radio and how it shapes our lives. Radio informs, transforms and unites us.

#### **10 February: World Pulses Day**

February 10, 2019, was the first-ever World Pulses Day, a United Nations global event to celebrate pulses worldwide and continue the important gains made with the 2016 International Year of Pulses. The aim is to celebrate, raise awareness and promote the consumption of pulses at events around the globe.

#### **04 February: World Cancer Day**

World Cancer Day is being observed globally on 4th February. This year, Union for International Cancer Control (UICC), which organizes World Cancer Day, is launching a new 3-year (2019-2021) campaign with the theme: 'I Am and I Will'. The Day aims to save millions of preventable deaths each year through education, raising awareness and by pressing governments and individuals across the world to take action against the deadly disease.

#### **February 02: World Wetlands Day**

World Wetlands Day is celebrated every year on the 2nd of February to raise global awareness on the value of wetlands for humanity and the planet. The theme of World Wetlands Day 2019 is 'Wetlands and Climate Change'.

## BANKING AWARENESS

### **BoB Ties Up With German KfW for USD 130m to Refinance Solar Units**

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

### **World Bank, UN, SIDBI launch Rs 300 crore Women's Livelihood Bond**

World Bank, UN Women, and Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) have joined hands to launch a new social impact bonds exclusively for women, called Women's Livelihood Bonds (WLBs), with an initial corpus of Rs 300 crore. The proposed bond will enable individual women entrepreneurs in sectors like food processing, agriculture, services and small units to borrow around Rs 50,000 to Rs 3 lakh at an annual interest rate of around 13-14 per cent or less.

### **RBI formalised USD 75-billion swap pact with Bank of Japan**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the Bank of Japan formalised the USD 75- billion swap agreement, which would act as a cushion against any sharp swings in the local currency whenever the international financial markets turn volatile. The proposal for entering into an agreement for the bilateral swap arrangement was approved by the Union Cabinet.

### **Government to Infuse Rs 48,239 crore in 12 PSB**

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

### **RBI to pay Rs 28,000 crore interim dividend to government**

The Reserve Bank has announced that it will transfer an interim surplus of 28,000 crore rupees to the central government for the half-year ended 31st December 2018. The central bank follows a July-June financial year and usually distributes the dividend in August after annual accounts are finalised.

### **J P Morgan became First US Bank With Cryptocurrency**

JP Morgan rolled out as the first US bank with cryptocurrency. The change in opinion of JP Morgan is the first step in the program of making it more competitive. The currency is designed to be decentralized so that no one has control over transactions being sent over the network. JP Morgan will be using the cryptocurrency to see its potential in using digital coins to reduce risk and enable instant transfers.

**Yes Bank cleared of Divergence charges imposed by RBI**

Reserve Bank of India cleared Yes Bank of Divergence charges i.e. disparity in reporting bad loans and provisioning numbers for the year ended March 2018. The final report has observed nil divergence in the bank's asset classification and provisioning from the norms of the RBI. In FY16, after its first assessment, Yes Bank was found a divergence of Bad loans by RBI at Rs. 4,176 crores higher than the reported gross NPA of Rs. 748.9 crore.

**RBI MSME package to help recast Rs 1-trn loans for 700k accounts: Govt**

The Reserve Bank's restructuring package for small businesses announced last month will help recast Rs 1 trillion of loans for 700,000 eligible micro, small and medium enterprises. The estimate from the Department of Financial Services (DFS) secretary Rajiv Kumar is much higher than domestic rating agency Ica's assessment of Rs 10,000 crore.

**RBI doubles the limit of Bulk Deposits from Rs. 1 Crore to Rs 2 Crore**

Reserve Bank of India decided to treat deposits to over Rs.2 crore as 'bulk' as they doubled the limit for the same from the earlier Rs.1crore. This move will enhance the operational freedom of Banks. According to current RBI rules, last reviewed in January 2013, banks have the option of not permitting premature withdrawals of 'large rupee term deposits' of INR 1 crore and above.

**RBI announces bi-monthly monetary policy**

The Monetary Policy Committee headed by Reserve Bank of India Governor Shaktikanta Das, announced a reduction in policy repo rate. The repo rate will reduced from 6.5 per cent to 6.25 per cent with immediate effect. Consequently, the reverse repo rate stands adjusted to 6.0 per cent, and the marginal standing facility rate and the Bank Rate to 6.5 per cent.

**Two RRBs to be merged to form Tamil Nadu Grama Bank**

Public sector Indian Bank said two regional rural banks (RRBs), Pallavan Grama Bank and Pandyan Grama Bank will be merged to form Tamil Nadu Grama Bank as per the Finance Ministry. The integration. The new Tamil Nadu Grama Bank will be under the sponsorship of Indian Bank with head office in Salem,Tamil Nadu. Originally the Pallavan Grama Bank was sponsored by Indian Bank and Pandyan Grama Bank by Indian Overseas Bank.

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