

FreshersLive's Current Affairs

Monthly Edition - February 2019



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BANKING & FINANCE

RBI lifted its curb on 3 banks under PCA framework

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has decided to allow three public sector banks, **Bank of India, Bank of Maharashtra and Oriental Bank of Commerce**, to exit the PCA framework following capital infusion by the government and a decline in net non-performing asset (NPA) ratio.
- **RBI**, which conducted a review following a demand made by the government to **lift the restrictions** in order to **boost credit growth**. RBI said that few banks are not in breach of the **PCA (Prompt Corrective Action) parameters** as per their published results for the quarter ending December 2018, except for **return on assets (RoA)**.
- However, though the RoA continues to be negative, the same is reflected in the capital adequacy indicator. The PCA framework is triggered when a bank breaches one of the three risk thresholds, and **crossing 6% net NPAs** is one of them.

Government sets up committee to explore prepaid payments by discoms to generator companies

- 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.
- **About the Committee**
- The formed committee, consist of the chairman of distribution companies of Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra, and representatives from Union power ministry and power associations to look into problems of delayed payments from distribution companies to power generators.

Paytm acquired Hotel Booking Platform and Night Stay

- **Paytm** launched hotel bookings on its platform and acquired **Night Stay**, which offers deals on last-minute bookings at luxury hotels as the Alibaba-backed payments and e-commerce company expands its travel business.

SBI UK chief honoured Freedom of the City of London



- State Bank of India's UK chief Shri Sanjiv Chadha honoured with the Freedom of the City Of London by city of London Corporation.
- Sanjiv Chadha was nominated for the honour by Lord Mayor of London Peter Estlin and Sheriff Vincent Keaveny.
- Sanjiv Chadha took up the position in 2014 and he will be succeeded by Sharad Chandak.
- The genesis of the Freedom of the City of London is traced to the medieval time of around 123.
- **About State Bank of India**
- Headquarter: Mumbai
- Chairman: Shri Rajnish Kumar

RBI imposed Rs.1 crore penalty on Syndicate Bank

- The **Reserve Bank of India** imposed a penalty of **Rs.1 crore on Syndicate Bank** due to non-compliance with the directions regarding frauds and risk management systems. RBI also imposed fine of **Rs.20 lakh on Axis Bank** for violating norms.
- **Syndicate Bank:**
- **Founded in:** 1925
- **Headquarters:** Udupi, Karnataka
- **Non-Exe Chairman:** Ajay Vipin Nanavati
- **MD & CEO:** Mrutyunjay Mahapatra
- Syndicate bank is owned by the Government of India

Cabinet to set up unified regulator for IFSCs

- The **Cabinet** has approved the setting up of a unified authority that would regulate all the financial services in **International Financial Services Centres (IFSC)**. This is to be done through the **International Financial Services Centres Authority Bill, 2019**.
- Aim is to encourage the Indian companies that are conducting business in foreign financial centres, to bring that business to India by providing them with a global-standard regulatory. Currently, the banking, capital markets and insurance sectors in IFSCs are regulated by multiple regulators like **RBI, SEBI and IRDAI**.

Fino Payments Bank Partners With Suryoday SFB To Offer Sweep Account Facility

- Fino Payments Bank (FPB) announced the launch of a sweep account facility in association with Suryoday Small Finance Bank (SSFB).
- This partnership will help FPB address the issue of deposit limits that all the payment banks face at the moment.
- As per the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)**, payment banks can only take deposits upto Rs 1 lakh per account.

RBI central board deferred to 18th February

- The meeting of the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** central board, which was scheduled to take a call on an interim dividend, has been deferred to **February 18 from February 9**.
- The board meeting, the first after the Interim Budget 2019-20, will also be addressed by the Finance Minister. The board will take a view based on the central banks first six months of audited earnings and finalize the interim dividend transfer.

RBI imposed Rs.1 crore penalty on SBI

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** imposed a fine of **Rs.1 crore penalty State Bank of India (SBI)**. This penalty was levied as the lender violated the RBI norms. RBI levied the penalty in the exercise of powers conferred under **Section 47 A** of the **Banking Regulation Act, 1949** as SBI was not monitoring the end use of funds in respect of one of its borrowers.

RBI reduced the policy repo rate by 6.25 percent

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** reduced the policy repo rate by **25 basis points to 6.25%** in a bid to revive economic growth as it projected retail inflation to remain below its **target of 4%** for the next 12 months.
- The rate reduction was the first since August 2017. The RBI also simultaneously changed the stance of the policy to neutral from calibrated tightening, which indicates that the central bank remains ready to move in either direction based on incoming data.

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

- With this interim transfer, the government will get a total **Rs 68,000 crore** from RBI in the current fiscal. The RBI had transferred **Rs 40,000 crore** to the government in August 2018.
- This will be the **highest receipt** from RBI in a single financial year for the government.
- This is the second consecutive year that the RBI will be transferring an interim surplus.
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had transferred a total of **50,000 crore** to the government for **2017-18** of which **10,000 crore** was transferred as **interim dividend**.
- **About RBI:**
 - Reserve Bank of India is India's central banking institution.
 - Main Role: controls the issuance and supply of the Indian rupee
 - RBI Governor: Shaktikanta Das
 - Headquarters: Mumbai
 - Subsidiary: National Housing Bank
 - Established: 1 April 1935
 - Ownership: Government of India

SIDBI plans bond issue to raise Rs.300 crore

- Government-owned **Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI)** is to raise **Rs.300 crore** through bonds over the next few months from a clutch of investors, including Tata group companies such as Tata Chemicals, Voltas, Titan, and Trent.
- Wealth managers such as Centrum group, ASK Wealth Advisors, Ambit Capital and Aditya Birla Finance have reached out to high net-worth individuals and impact investors to raise funds. Private equity fund KKR has also evinced interest to subscribe to the bonds.
- The World Bank group, which is **facilitating the fund-raising**, said the money would be extended to microfinance institutions, which, in turn, would be disbursed to women entrepreneurs. The bonds will be unsecured and unlisted with a fixed **coupon rate of 3%** and with a tenure of five years.

Centre approved a recapitalization package of Rs.48,239 crore for 12 PSBs

- The **Centre** has approved a recapitalization package of **Rs.48,239 crore for 12 public sector banks**. Till now 12 banks are under the purview of the PCA framework.
- It aims to bring the better-performing banks now in the **Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) category** out of the restrictive framework, help those that had come out of the PCA to stay out of it, equip non-PCA banks to meet regulatory requirements, and help the PCA banks to meet their requirements.
- **The 12 banks** under the purview of PCA framework are Corporation Bank, Bank of India, Allahabad Bank, Oriental Bank of Commerce, Bank of Maharashtra, Dhanlaxmi Bank, UCO Bank, Dena Bank, Central Bank of India, Indian Overseas Bank, United Bank of India, IDBI Bank.

RBI warns of mobile data theft by AnyDesk app

- Once installed, AnyDesk app reportedly generates a **nine-digit code** and seeks users' permission to access phone controls on inserting it.
- It then allegedly **steals confidential data** to process **fraudulent transactions** via payments apps.
- **About AnyDesk:**
- 'Anydesk' is a remote control application.
- It works to connect one device to another device.

Merger of Vijaya Bank and Dena Bank with BoB (Bank of Baroda) to be effective from April 1

- According to a statement by **Bank of Baroda**, its merger with Vijaya Bank and Dena Bank shall come into force from 1st April 2019.
- This scheme has been named as **Amalgamation of Vijaya Bank and Dena Bank with Bank of Baroda Scheme, 2019**.
- According to the Scheme of Amalgamation-
- Shareholders of **Vijaya Bank** will get 402 equity shares of Bank of Baroda for every 1,000 shares held.

SEBI declared 2 commodity broker unfit to function

- The **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** has declared **Motilal Oswal Commodities Broker and India Infoline Commodities (IICL) unfit to function as commodity brokers** on account of their alleged role in the Rs.5,600 crore settlement scam at the **National Spot Exchange Ltd (NSE)** that came out in the open in July 2013.
- SEBI rejected the application for registration of the two entities and further directed that all existing clients should be allowed to move to other brokerages within 45 days. This is the first set of actions against large brokerages alleged to have colluded with the spot exchange for marketing of the so-called pair contracts wherein clients were assured fixed returns of between **13% and 16% per annum**.

RBI extends KYC deadline for digital wallets by six months

- The RBI has extended its **February 28** deadline for completion of **KYC (Know Your Customer)** norms for digital wallets [prepaid payment instrument (PPI) issuers] by six months.
- PPIs are instruments that facilitate purchase of goods and services, including financial services and remittance facilities, against the value stored on such instruments.

RBI removed 3 more Banks from Corrective Action List

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has decided to remove **Allahabad Bank, Corporation Bank and Dhanlaxmi Bank Ltd.** from the list of banks placed under its **Prompt Corrective Action (PCA)** framework.
- **About RBIs Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) Framework:**
- RBI introduces Prompt Corrective Action when the Banks financial conditions worsen below certain limits (trigger points).
- Under PCA, weaker banks are restricted from lending until they improve their capital ratios, reduce bad debt and become profitable.
- The 11 banks under the PCA were: Allahabad Bank, United Bank of India, Corporation Bank, IDBI Bank, UCO Bank, Bank of India, Central Bank of India, Indian Overseas Bank, Oriental Bank of Commerce, Dena Bank and Bank of Maharashtra.

BUSINESS & ECONOMY

Piyush Goyal presented the Interim Budget

- Finance minister Piyush Goyal presented the **Interim Budget for 2019-20**.
- **Some highlight on the budget 2019 are:**
- The **defence budget** has been increased to over **Rs.3 lakh crore**. Additional funds for defence will be provided if needed
- **Income tax exemption** limit raised up to **Rs.5,00,000** annual income to get full tax rebate
- Current Fiscal Accounts to be contained to 2.5%
- The fiscal deficit has been brought down to 3.4% in FY19
- Rs.60,000 crore allocated for **MGNREGA** under **PM Gram Sadak yojana** for a year
- Rs.19,000 crore allocated for rural roads under Gram Sadak Yojana
- PM Kisaan Samman Nidhi announced at Rs.75,000 crore
- No tax on bank interest up to Rs.40,000
- Govt has announced that it is to allocate Rs.75,000 crore per year to support farmers incomes
- It is after the impact of Rs.20,000 crore in the current fiscal year
- The Vulnerable farmers will receive Rs.6,000 per year in three equal installments
- The government will also allocate Rs.60,000 crore for UPAs flagship MNREGA in 2019/20

Swiggy acquires Bengaluru-Based AI Startup Kint

- Food delivery startup **Swiggy** a Bengaluru-based AI startup Kint.io for an undisclosed amount.
- As part of the deal, Kint.io's founding members Pavithra Solai Jawahar and Jagannathan Veeraraghavan will join the Swiggy team.
- Founded in 2014, Kint.io specializes in applying deep learning and computer vision for object recognition in videos.
- Acqui-hiring refers to buying out a company or an entity primarily for the skills and expertise of its staff rather than for its products or services.

RBI is not likely to transfer the withheld contingency reserves to Centre

- The **government** has requested the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** for providing an interim surplus for the **financial year 2018-19** on the analogy of previous financial year and transfer of the amount withheld from the **surplus of 2016-17 and 2017-18**.
- The RBI is unlikely to give in to the governments demand for transferring funds that were set aside for contingency reserves in 2016-17 and 2017-18. A total of **Rs.27,330 crore** was set aside by the RBI for the contingency fund. **Rs.13,140 crore in FY17** and **Rs.14,190 crore in FY18**.
- Contingency fund:
- The contingency fund is a fund for **emergencies** or unexpected outflows, mainly economic crises.

Essar Oil Uk acquired assets worth Rs.800 crore from BP

- **Essar Oil UK**, part of the Essar Group has acquired a number of U.K. assets from oil giant BP, as part of efforts **to strengthen its distribution and logistics network**, even as the company seeks to increase its presence across a number of markets.
- The assets include an equity stake in the **UKOP north-to-south pipeline**, a 200-km-long multi-product pipeline that connects the companys Stanlow refinery to the Kingsbury oil terminal. It has also acquired an equity stake in the joint venture that runs the terminal as well as a 100% stake in the Northampton fuel storage terminal. The value of these deals comes to about **Rs. 800 crore**.

Tangedcos loss rose to Rs.7,582.56 crore in last year

- India Ratings and Research reported that the **Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation Limited (Tangedco)** has a widened loss in the **financial year 2018** to **Rs.7,582.56 crore** from **Rs.6,141.54 crore** in the financial year 2017. Lower sale of power, drop in collection efficiency and higher cost of power led to the higher losses.
- The financials sourced from Tangedco by India Ratings showed that the discoms revenue from the sale of power declined 0.63% to Rs.43686.77 crore in FY18 from the previous year. Sale of power accounts for 78% of Tangedcos total income.

- Tangedcos operating earnings before interest, tax, depreciation, and amortization (EBITDA) were negative Rs.607 crore in FY18, compared a positive level of **Rs.2,325 crore** in FY17.

Voltas to set up a new manufacturing facility in Andhra Pradesh

- **Voltas Limited**, a market leader in residential air-conditioners in India, plans to set up a new manufacturing facility at **Tirupati in Andhra Pradesh**. The cost of the facility is **Rs.500 crore**. This facility would initially manufacture and assemble air-conditioners and related cooling products with a total capacity of more than one million units and is expected to start rolling out products from the second half of 2020.
- The new facility would be one of the first cooling appliances units in the **State of Andhra Pradesh**. The choice of Andhra Pradesh as the destination for the new manufacturing unit was due to the States **ease of doing business** and growing focus on Make in India.

Vodafone Idea plans to invest about Rs.20,000 crore in networks

- Vodafone Idea announced that the company is planning to invest about **Rs.20,000 crore in networks** over the next 15 months. It has given **capital expenditure (capex) of Rs.270 billion** for financial years 2019 and 2020, combined together. Out of that, about Rs.70 billion has been spent in the first nine months.
- In the next 15 months, it expects a capex deployment of Rs.200 billion. The capex guidance of **Rs.27,000 crore** did not include capacity that would be created by reusing equipment from the synergy of operations between Vodafone and Idea.

Government has notified eight medical equipments as Drugs

- The government has notified **eight medical equipments** as Drugs under **Section 3 of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940** with effect from April 1, 2020. The decision was made after consultation with the **Drugs Technical Advisory Board**.
- The notification brings all the implantable and diagnostic devices will come under the **regulatory framework**.
- The equipments are:
- All implantable devices, CT scan, PET equipment, MRI equipment, Defibrillators,

Dialysis machines, Bone marrow separators, X-ray machine.

- **About Drugs Technical Advisory Board (DTAB):**

- DTAB is the highest statutory decision-making body on technical matters related to drugs in India
- It was constituted under the provisions of the **Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940**
- DTAB is part of the **Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO)** under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

JSW Steel gets LoI for BPSL

- **JSW Steel** has received the **Letter of Intent (LoI)** from the resolution professional of **Bhushan Power & Steel Limited (BPSL)**, taking the country's largest steelmaker a step closer towards the acquisition of the insolvent company.
- The development comes more than a week after the **National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT)** on February 4, turned down Tata Steels request to consider its bid as the most legitimate one for BPSL. It confirms the resolution plan will be submitted to the National Company Law Tribunal after the company's approval. JSW Steel topped Tata Steels offer of **Rs.17,000 crore with Rs.19,650 crore bid.**

Siddhartha Lal won the EY Entrepreneur of the Year 2018

- **Siddhartha Lal**, MD & CEO of Eicher Motors won the EY Entrepreneur of the year 2018 after transforming Eicher Motors and helping the company resurrect the Royal Enfield motorcycle brand in India and making it a global brand icon.
- Azim Premji, chairman of Wipro won the Lifetime Achievement Award for putting the Indian Information Technology industry in the global market and his notable contribution to society as a philanthropist.
- Other EY Entrepreneur of the Year 2018 winners in other categories
- Start-up -Byju Raveendran(BYJUS)
- Business Transformation Kishore Biyani (Future Group)
- Manufacturing Nirmal K Minda(Minda Industries)
- Services -Ritesh Agarwal(OYO Hotels and Homes)
- Financial Services Sanjay Agarwal (AU Small Finance Bank)
- Consumer Products & Retail Rajesh Mehra(Jaguar Group)

- Life Sciences & Healthcare -BinishChudgar (Intas Pharmaceuticals)
- Entrepreneurial CEO Bhaskar Bhat (Titan Company)
- Energy, Real Estate & Infrastructure Atul Ruia(The Phoenix Mills)

India to hold talks with U.S. to discuss trades and e com rules

- **India is to hold talks with U.S.** to discuss **trades and e-com rules**. Due to the unavailability of the **US Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross**, **U.S. Ambassador Kenneth I. Juster** will lead a delegation of officials to hold talks with **Union Commerce Minister Suresh Prabhu**.
- The objective is **to resolve several sore trade points**, including the concerns of American CEOs regarding doing business in India and bilateral trade imbalance.
- With the recent developments in India, the **Generalised System of Preferences (GSP)** is also likely to come up in the light where the U.S. has again threatened to withdraw the export exemptions for India.
- **USA:**
 - **Capital:** Washington, D.C.
 - **National Language:** English
 - **President:** Donald Trump
 - **Vice President:** Mike Pence
 - **Currency:** United States dollar (\$) (USD)

India's annual Wholesale inflation drops to 2.76% in January

- According to government data, India's annual wholesale price inflation eased to a **10-month low** of **2.76%** in January, helped by a smaller increase in prices of manufactured goods and fuel products.
- It was **3.8%** in December last year.
- India's **retail** inflation also declined to an 18-month **low** of **2.05%** in January.

IOC signed deal worth USD 1.5 billion with USA

- **Indian Oil Corporation (IOC)** signed an annual deal worth **\$1.5 billion** to import **3 million tonnes of crude oil** in the fiscal year beginning April 1. This is the first time any Indian refiner has signed an annual contract since the country in 2017 began importing crude oil from the U.S.



- The term contract follows IOC signing up to buy crude oil from the U.S. through a term-tender deal in August 2018. It had, at that time, bought about 6 million barrels of U.S. crude oil under a single tender for delivery between November 2018 and January 2019.

Safran aerospace major to set up plant in Hyderabad

- **French aerospace major Safran**, is to set up a plant in Hyderabad. It aims to make parts for **CFM Internationals LEAP turbofan engine** with an investment of **36 million**.
- Construction will begin in June. The new facility will be of the 13,000-square metre. The plant is to be built at the Special Economic Zone (SEZ) of GMR near the airport in Hyderabad, Telangana. It will include 8,000 square metres of workshops.

Alstom bags Rs.580 crore contract from BMRCL

- **Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL)** awarded Alstom a **Rs.580 crore contract**. The contract is to provide power supply and traction electrification for the 33-kilometre extension to **Bangalore Metro under Phase II**.
- This contract from BMRCL is Alstoms largest third-rail electrification contract in India. Phase II encompasses extension of Bangalore Metros existing north-south and east-west corridors.

RCom to raise Rs.260 crore from lenders fro Ericsson payment

- **Reliance Communications** has sought an urgent approval from its lenders to **release approximately Rs.260 crore** received from I-T refunds, lying in its bank account, directly to **Swedish telecom equipment maker Ericsson**.
- A sum of Rs.118 crore had already been deposited with the Supreme Court registry, which would be given to Ericsson within a week.
- RCom is set to raise the balance, **approximately Rs.200 crore for payment to Ericsson**, in order to ensure that the entire Rs. 550 crore, plus interest thereon, stands paid to Ericsson, well within the time of four weeks allowed by the SC. Reliance Communications shares closed at Rs.6.33, or 9.14% higher, on the BSE.

AstraZeneca joins with Nasscom to set up an accelerator programme in healthcare

- **AstraZeneca**, a Global biopharmaceutical major, has joined hands with **Nasscom**, the IT industry body, to set up an accelerator programme to support Indian start-ups in healthcare.
- AstraZeneca and Nasscom will incubate start-ups in bringing solutions that can help in the management of non-communicable diseases. AstraZeneca PLC Chairman of the Board Leif Johansson said the firm was committed to strengthening innovation in healthcare.

NIIT collaborated with Microsoft to accelerate cloudification

- **NIIT Technologies** has announced a global collaboration with **Microsoft**, to **accelerate the cloudification** of its enterprise clients. The collaboration would focus on the comprehensive cloud needs of enterprises, from infrastructure to business applications.
- Both the companies have concluded a strategic **Cloud Solution Provider (CSP)** agreement that enables NIIT Technologies to directly manage the entire life cycle for its enterprise customers including, commercials and support and deliver integrated end-to-end solutions as a managed service on **Azure platform**.

ReNew Power gets USD 350 million debt funding

- **ReNew Power**, a Clean energy producer, had secured a fresh debt financing of up to **\$350 million from the U.S. governments** development finance institution **Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC)**.
- This follows an earlier round of financing when OPIC granted a loan of **\$250 million to ReNew Power** in March 2016. The funds will be utilized by ReNew Power to support the **construction of new wind and solar power plants** in India.

FDI during Apr-Dec 2018-19 falls 7 percent to USD 33.49 billion

- **Foreign direct investment (FDI)** into India contracted by 7 per cent to **USD 33.49 billion** during April-December in the current fiscal.
- Foreign fund inflows during April-December 2017-18 stood at USD 35.94 billion.



- **Singapore** was the **largest source of FDI** during April-December 2018-19 with USD 12.97 billion inflow, followed by Mauritius (USD 6 billion), the Netherlands (USD 2.95 billion), Japan (USD 2.21 billion), US (USD 2.34 billion), and the UK (USD 1.05 billion).

Govt detects Rs 20,000 crore GST evasion in April-Feb FY19

- The government detected Goods and Services Tax (GST) evasion of around **Rs 20,000 crore** between **April 2018 and February 2019**.
- Out of this, 10,000 crore has been recovered.
- Currently, GST has 4-tier slab of 5, 12, 18 and 28 per cent, while essential items are zero rated.
- **About GST in India:**
 - GST - Goods and Services Tax
 - Came into effect on 1st July 2017
 - GST is a consumption based tax levied on sale, manufacture and consumption on goods & services at a national level.
 - Over 1,300 goods and 500 services fitted under four tax slabs of 5%, 12%, 18% and 28% under GST.

INTERNATIONAL

Italy, UN, Launch Africa Centre For Climate And Sustainable Development

- Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte along with UN representative launched **Africa Centre for Climate and Sustainable development**.
- The new center is located near the **Food and Agriculture Organization** headquarters in Rome.
- The major objective is boosting the **agricultural sectors and promoting rural development** in Africa.

International conference on 8th century sage held to mark 50 years of India-Bhutan ties

- The 50-years of formalization of diplomatic ties between **India** and **Bhutan**, a two-day international conference on 8th-century Himalayan sage Guru Padmasambhava was held in New Delhi.
- This conference was organized by the Centre for **Escalation of Peace (CEP)** and was titled Life and Legacy of Guru Padmasambhava, was held on January 29-30.
- Scholars from both countries participated in the conference and discussed the Guru who was born in India and moved towards Bhutan in the 8th century to spread Buddhism and Buddhist teachings all across the Himalayan region.
- **About Bhutan**
 - Capital: Thimphu
 - Currency: Ngultrum
 - Prime minister: Lotay Tshering
 - King: Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck

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 Partys nomination for the 2020 presidential election**, injecting more youthful energy to the expanding Democratic field.
- Mr.Booker, 49, became the latest Democrat and the fourth U.S. Senator to announce a presidential bid in what is expected to be a crowded and diverse race to

be the candidate to try to unseat President Donald Trump. The second-term Senator from New Jersey has appeared at political events in Iowa and New Hampshire as speculation mounted that he would parlay the Kavanaugh fracas into a presidential run.

India and Algeria relations on new heights as investment expected in the energy sector

- **India** and **Algeria** are cooperating in space, defence and civil nuclear energy.
- The President invited Algeria to consider investments in oil reserves, refineries and LNG terminals.
- Extending cooperation to strategic areas Sushma Swaraj & Algerian Foreign Minister Messahel held productive talks on cooperation in sectors such as trade & investment, space, defense, hydrocarbon resources, mining, fertilizers, as well as regional & global challenges.

US to back out from INF Treaty

- The U.S is suspending its obligations under the **Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty** effective February 2 and will withdraw from the treaty in six months. The announcement was made by the Secretary of State Mike Pompeo
- **Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty:**
 - **Type of agreement:** Nuclear disarmament
 - **Signed on:** December 1987
 - **Location:** Washington D.C
 - **Condition of the treaty:** Ratification by the Soviet Union and United States
 - It is a 1987 arms control agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union with an Unlimited duration

US envoy held talk with his Korean counterpart

- The U.S. special representative on North Korea, **Stephen Biegun** arrived in Seoul and held talks with his counterpart **Lee Do-hoon**. They discussed the pending issues including **working-level talks** with North Korea.
- The talk with North and South Koreans is ahead of the **second summit between President Donald Trump and the Norths Kim Jong-un**. The agenda of the

summit is expected to be settled during the talks between Washington and Pyongyang.

USA and 11 EU nations back Guaido as Interim President

- **Eleven European nations** joined the U.S. in recognizing opposition leader **Juan Guaido** as **Venezuelas interim President**. This is to heighten a global showdown over Nicolas Maduros socialist rule.
- The 11 EU nations followed suit are Spain, Austria, Britain, the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Poland, Portugal, and Sweden.
- An interim president is a person who temporarily fills the role of a country's president when the incumbent president is unavailable (such as by illness or vacation) or when the post is vacant (such as for death, injury, resignation, dismissal).
- **Venezuela:**
- **Capital:** Caracas
- **Official language:** Spanish
- **President:** Nicolas Maduro (partially recognized)
- Juan Guaido (partially recognized)
- **Currency:** Petro Bolivar Soberano (VES)

World heritage centre to be set up at Mayapur in West Bengal

- A World Heritage Centre housing '**spiritual camps**' of **45 countries** would be set up at Mayapur, the global headquarters of the **International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON)**, in Nadia district.
- The process for setting up the center got momentum after West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee inquired about the project at a recent administrative meeting in Nadia district.
- The estimated cost of the proposed center will be around **3000 crores**.
- The **Temple of Vedic Planetarium** will come up at the first part of the World heritage center.
- It will have one of the biggest domes in the world.

UNESCO organised Second Edition of the India Heritage Walk in partnership



with Sahapedia

- Sahapedia in partnership with UNESCO organized the second edition of **India Heritage Walk Festival (IHWF) 2019**.
- It is also supported by the National Mineral Development Corporation.
- The first edition of the festival, went on to receive the PATA Gold Awards 2018 in Heritage and Culture.
- This festival offers the opportunity to discover the hidden gems linked to history.
- Heritage Walks of 2019 edition.
- In the list of heritage walks, Delhi has a new attraction.
- The heritage walk plans to introduce Sanjhi- a paper-cutting art by a stencil of Vrindavan and the lanes of Bandra in Mumbai.

Indian Coast Guard and AAI signed MoU for maritime search and rescue Operations in Port Blair

- **Indian Coast Guard (ICG)** and **Airport Authority of India (AAI)** signed a MoU with an objective to coordinate the aeronautical and maritime Search And Rescue (SAR) operations in congruence with the International Aeronautical Maritime Search And Rescue (IAMSAR) standards.
- The MoU enhances **Rescue Coordination Centre (RCC)**, Kolkata and Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC), Port Blair and AAIs mutual interactions, interoperability and validating procedures on the occasion of SAR operations.

Ivanka Trump unveiled Womens Global Development and Prosperity Initiative

- **Ivanka Trump** unveiled an effort aimed at helping **50 million women** in the developing world get ahead economically over the next six years. The White House officially launched the **Womens Global Development and Prosperity Initiative**, a government-wide project led by the senior adviser and daughter to President Donald Trump.
- The initiative will involve the State Department, the National Security Council, and other agencies. Ivanka Trump, who will attend the Munich Security Conference next week to promote the project, stressed that she sees this as a national security priority.

Frances highest civilian honour is conferred to 92 years Old Bengal Priest Father Francois Laborde

- Father Francois Laborde, a 92-year-old priest, conferred with the **Legion dHonneur**, the highest civilian award of France, in recognition of his work for specially-abled children in Howrah.
- He was entitled by the French Ambassador to India, Alexandre Ziegler.
- Father Francois Laborde, French-origin with Indian citizenship, is considered to be the third person from the state to be entitled with the Legion of Honor after film maestro Satyajit Ray and actor Soumitra Chatterjee.

Fifth India-Bangladesh Joint Consultative Committee Meet to be held in New Delhi

- The **5th India-Bangladesh Joint Consultative Committee Meeting** will be held in New Delhi.
- External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and Foreign Affairs Minister of Bangladesh Dr A. K. Abdul Momen will co-chair the meeting.
- The two sides will also sign agreements after the meeting.
- The last Joint Consultative Committee Meeting between the two countries was held in October 2017 at Dhaka.

Siamese fighting fish was named Thailand's national aquatic animal

- Tiny, testy and eye-catching with a colorful fin plumage, **the Siamese fighting fish** was named **Thailand's national aquatic animal**. Known in the West as a betta fish, the underwater brawler is popular in home aquariums for its iridescent body and many-hued tail.
- The government said in a statement that the cabinet approved a proposal for the "**fighting fish to be the national fish**", citing its historical and cultural significance. Thailand's official national animal is the elephant.

Macedonia signed an accord to join as a new member of NATO military alliance

- **Macedonia** signed an accord to join NATO to become the **30th member of the NATO military alliance**.

- The historic agreement was signed between Macedonia's Foreign Minister Nikola Dimitrov and NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg.
- **About Macedonia**
- Macedonia Capital-Skopje
- Currency-Macedonian denar.

FCO demands more control for Facebook users

- **Federal Competition Office (FCO)**, the German competition watchdog, said that **Facebook users should be asked for consent** before data collected by the groups subsidiaries WhatsApp and Instagram and on third-party websites is combined with their social network account.
- FCO ruled neither should users who refuse permission for their data to be merged be shut out of Facebook services as a result. The FCO's requirement for specific consent to merge data with Facebook accounts stopped short of media rumors that the authority could ban familiar products, such as the "Like" or "Share" buttons strewn around many third-party websites which aid data collection.

ADJA added Hindi as 3rd official language of the city's courts

- The **Abu Dhabi Judicial Department** has added **Hindi as the third official language** of the city's courts. Arabic and English are the first and second languages. The move is aimed at **helping foreigners to learn about litigation procedures**, their rights, and duties without a language barrier. It also aims to facilitate registration procedures via unified forms.
- Abu Dhabi is the capital and the second most populous city of the United Arab Emirates.

Nepal hosted 2nd Joint Secretary Level Meeting to assess India-Nepal Trade Treaty

- The two days 2nd Joint Secretary Level meeting to assess the India-Nepal Trade Treaty was organized in **Pokhara, Nepal** on 7th Feb 2019 to deliberate upon various bilateral issues and non-tariff barriers in bilateral trade.
- India deputation was led by Bhupinder Singh Bhalla (Joint Secretary of South Asia), Department of Commerce whereas Nepal Deputation was led by Ravi



Shankar Sainju (Joint Secretary of Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies).

- This meet was based on a comprehensive review of the existing bilateral trade treaty to enhance both ways commerce and investments between India and Nepal.
- **About Nepal**
- **Capital**- Kathmandu
- **Currency**- Nepalese Rupee
- **Prime Minister**- Khadga Prasad Oli

Thailand hosted Multinational Cobra Gold Military Exercise

- The **United States and Thailand** are hosting the **multi-nation Cobra military exercise 2019**. The exercise is taking place in the northern Thai province of Phitsanulok. 10000 personnel, 29 nations are taking part as participants or observers. About Cobra Gold Exercise.
- It is one of the Asia-Pacific region's largest multinational military exercises that is held in Thailand every year. It was **first held in 1982** and its headquarters is in **Bangkok, Thailand**. This is a Thai-American initiative with an aim to improve coordination between the armed forces.

LAWASIA Human Rights Conference was held in New Delhi

- **LAWASIA Human Rights Conference** was held in New Delhi. LAWASIA, in association with the **Bar Association of India**, hosted the conference. Its motive is to explore a broad range of human rights issues of relevance in the **Asia Pacific region**.
- The theme of the conference was **State Power, Business and Human Rights: Contemporary Challenges**. It provides the opportunity for lawyers and associated professional members to exchange insights and expertise on topics of significance.
- LAWASIA is a regional association of lawyers, judges, jurists, and legal organizations, which advocates for the interests and concerns of the Asia Pacific legal profession.

European Union adds Saudi Arabia to dirty-money blacklist

- The European Commission has added **seven countries** including **Saudi Arabia, Panama, and Nigeria** to a blacklist of nations that fail to tackle **money laundering**



and the **financing of terrorism**.

- The list now includes **23** jurisdictions, up from 16.
- Newcomers to the list are Libya, Botswana, Ghana, Samoa, the Bahamas and the four United States territories of American Samoa, US Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico and Guam.
- The other listed states are Afghanistan, North Korea, Ethiopia, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Syria, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia and Yemen.
- Bosnia Herzegovina, Guyana, Laos, Uganda and Vanuatu were removed.

US announces 25 Countries to give USD 100 million aid to crisis-hit Venezuela

- US National Security Adviser **John Bolton** announced that, a total of 25 countries have pledged **\$100 million** in humanitarian assistance to crisis-hit **Venezuela**.
- Venezuela is facing the biggest economic crisis in its modern history, with hyperinflation predicted to hit 10 million percent this year according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF).
- **About Venezuela:-**
- Capital: Caracas Trending
- Currencies: Venezuelan bolvar, Sovereign Bolivar
- Official language: Spanish
- President: Nicols Maduro

Pulwama terror attack: India withdraws Most Favoured Nation status to Pakistan

- A day after the terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir's **Pulwama** district on February 14, India has withdrawn the **Most Favoured Nation** (MFN) status accorded to **Pakistan**.
- The MFN status to Pakistan was given by India in **1996**.
- The MFN status was accorded under WTO's General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).
- Removal of this status means India can now enhance customs duties to any level on goods coming from Pakistan.
- **About Pakistan:**
- Prime minister: Imran Khan



- President: Arif Alvi
- Capital: Islamabad
- Currency: Pakistani rupee

Macedonia officially changes name to North Macedonia

- The country changed its name to **North Macedonia** from **Macedonia** after an agreement with **Greece** to settle a long-standing dispute.
- After declaring independence from **Yugoslavia** in **1991**, the country chose the name Macedonia. But that title severely strained relations with neighbor Greece, which also has a region called Macedonia.
- The agreement and normalization of relations with Greece will help clear the way for North Macedonia to **join NATO**, most likely later this year or early 2020, and eventually the **European Union**.

Germany rejects US call to quit Iran nuclear deal

- German Foreign Minister **Heiko Maas** has rejected an appeal by US Vice President **Mike Pence** for Europeans to withdraw from the **2015 Iran nuclear deal**, saying it's fundamental for security.
- Pence criticised the initiative of France, Germany and Britain to allow European companies to continue operating in Iran despite US sanctions.
- **About 2015 Iran nuclear deal:**
- Iran nuclear deal - formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)
- In **2015**, **Iran** agreed a long-term deal on its nuclear programme with the **P5+1 group** of world powers - the **US, UK, France, China, Russia and Germany**.
- Under the deal, Tehran acceded to a **10-year restriction on nuclear production**.
- As of May 2018, there was broad consensus that Iran has abided by the agreement.
- On May 8, 2018, United States President Donald Trump announced the United States was withdrawing from the deal.

Iran launched first locally made 'Fateh' Submarine

- Iran President **Hassan Rouhani** has unveiled the **first** Iranian made semi-heavy submarine - **Fateh**, meaning "**Conqueror**" in Persian.



- The Fateh has **subsurface-to-surface** missiles with a range of about **2,000 kilometers** (1,250 miles), capable of reaching Israel and U.S. military bases in the region.
- The near **600-tonne** underwater vessel is equipped with torpedoes and naval mines in addition to cruise missiles, and can operate more than **200 metres** below sea level for up to 35 days.

Sixteen U.S. states sued Trumps decision over border wall emergency

- **Sixteen U.S. states sued President Donald Trumps** administration over his decision to **declare a national emergency to fund a wall** on the southern border with Mexico, saying the move violated the Constitution.
- Mr.Trump announced the emergency on **15th February 2019**, in order to bypass Congress, which approved only a quarter of the **\$5.6 billion**, he wanted for the wall in a spending Bill.
- The lawsuit, filed in a federal court in California, said the **Presidents order was contrary to the Constitutions presentment** and appropriations clauses, which outline legislative procedures and define Congress as the final arbiter of public funds, respectively.

Eighth World CSR Congress 2019 in Mumbai

- **World Corporate Social Responsibility Congress** (World CSR Congress 2019) is one of the admired meetings which promote Entrepreneurship, Social Responsibility, Sustainability and Social Development.
- 8th World CSR Congress held between Feb 17 and Feb 18, 2019, in Mumbai, Maharashtra.
- It was attended by participants from 33 countries to encourage the efforts of individuals and organizations.
- The theme of the year 2019 is **Sustainable Development Goals(SDGs)** to focus on corporate strategies, innovation, and strategic alliances.
- Dr.Soumitro Chakraborty won CEO of the year award
- CEO of Innovative Financial Advisors Pvt Ltd, (Fiinnovation), Social Entrepreneur Dr.Soumitro Chakraborty was awarded CEO of the year at the 8th World CSR Congress.

Bernie Sanders announced to run for US presidential election again in 2020

- Bernie Sanders (77-year-old), a self-described democratic socialist, is an independent Senator from Vermont.
- He had lost the Democratic Party's presidential nomination in 2016 to former US State Secretary **Hillary Clinton**.
- The 2020 United States presidential election is scheduled to be held on **November 3, 2020** and will be the 59th quadrennial U.S. presidential election.

Maldives ex-president Abdulla Yameen arrested for money laundering

- He had taken bribes amounting to **\$1.5 million**, ahead of his re-election bid.
- He is accused of receiving **US\$1 million** (\$1.4 million) of **government money** through a private company, SOF Private Limited, which has been implicated in a corrupt deal to lease tropical islands for hotel development.

Vietnam to host high-profile meet to be held on 27 and 28th February

- **Kim Hyok-chol**, Pyongyang's special representative to the U.S., arrived in **Hanoi** with a **North Korean delegation** ahead of a **summit between Donald Trump and Kim Jong-un on February 27-28**.
- Mr. Kim Hyok-chol is to meet with his U.S. counterpart Stephen Biegun, who is heading to Hanoi, later in the week to lay the groundwork for talks between Mr. Trump and Mr. Kim in the Hanoi, the Vietnamese capital.

Putin threatened Western capitals with new missiles

- **Russian President Vladimir Putin** threatened to **deploy new missiles** against **Western capitals** while addressing the nation. It aimed at boosting falling approval ratings. This threat against Washington comes after the collapse of a key Cold War-era treaty, that accused Moscow of developing new weapons that violated the treaty.
- The U.S. and Russia raised fears of a new arms race when **U.S.** announced that they were **pulling out of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty**, a 1987 deal that limited medium-range missiles. Washington was the first to announce its withdrawal. On 20th February 2019, Mr. Putin dismissed the U.S. claims as far-fetched.

China bars travellers from Tibet till 1st April

- **China is barring foreign travellers from Tibet** over a period of several weeks that includes a pair of sensitive political anniversaries questioning the legitimacy of **Beijings rule over the Himalayan region.**
- It is reported that the foreign tourists would not be allowed back into Tibet until April 1. Its not clear when the ban started, although some monitoring groups said it began from the month of February.
- The ban was confirmed by the online customer service portal of the Tibet Youth International Travel Service, as well as staff at the Tibet Vista and Go to Tibet travel agencies. March 10 is the 60th anniversary of an abortive 1959 uprising against Chinese rule in Tibet, while anti-government riots occurred on March 14, 2008, in the regional capital Lhasa.

PM Modi unveiled bust of Mahatma Gandhi in South Korea

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who is on a two-day visit to South Korea, unveiled the bust of Mahatma Gandhi at the **Yonsei University** in the South Korean capital **Seoul.**
- This year marks Gandhis 150th birth anniversary.
- Modi will also accept the Seoul Peace Prize he had won in October.
- He will also address the India-Korea business symposium.
- **About South Korea:**
- Capital: Seoul
- Currency: South Korean won
- President: Moon Jae-in
- Prime Minister: Lee Nak-yeon
- Official language: Korean

Virgin Atlantic Flight reaches 1,289 kmph; sets new world record

- **Virgin Atlantic** flight from Los Angeles to London reached the ground speed of 1289 km per hour, which is **faster than the speed of sound** (1234.37 km per hour).
- In 2018, a Norwegian Air flight broke records by peaking at 1248 kmph.



Chinas Xinhua unveils worlds first female AI news anchor

- Chinese news agency **Xinhua** unveiled the worlds 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 Chinas national legislature.

US President Trump signed order to create US space force

- Donald Trump signed **Space Policy Directive-4** (SPD-4), to establish the Space Force as the **sixth branch** of the United States **military**, to go along with the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines and Coast Guard.
- The Space Force would initially reside within the Department of the Air Force.
- The directive will have to be approved by Congress.

Afghanistan launched new export route to India through Iran

- **Afghanistan** formally launched shipping goods to **India** through the **Chabahar port** in Iran.
- The first shipment of 570 tonnes comprising of dried fruits, textiles, carpets, and other goods in 23 trucks was inaugurated by Afghan President **Ashraf Ghani**.
- With the opening of the Chabahar route, Afghanistans exports will double to **\$2 billion** from the current \$1 billion over the next one year.
- **About Chabahar Port:**
- Chabahar Port development is the India-Iran joint venture project.
- Inaugurated in 2017 and been built largely by India.
- This port provides a critical transport link from New Delhi to Afghanistan, bypassing Pakistan, to trade with Central Asia.

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 on February 26, 2019.

- The IAF carried out the successful operation 12 days after **Pulwama attack**, in which 40 soldiers were martyred.



INDIAN AFFAIRS

Punjab govt gave approval for Smart Village Campaign worth of Rs 385 crores

- Punjab govt gave approval for **Smart Village Campaign** worth of Rs 385 crores
- Punjab government approved a rural development scheme Smart Village Campaign worth Rs 384.40 crore to build village infrastructure and provide essential amenities.
- Getting approved by Chief Minister Amarinder Singh, Reformation and implementation of the scheme would be financed with funds from the 14th Financial Commission and MGNREGA.

Punit Goenka re-elected as new BARC India chairman

- **Punit Goenka**, Managing director and CEO, Zee Entertainment Enterprises Ltd re-elected the new chairman of TV viewership measurement company, BARC India.
- He was the founder of BARC India.

Scientists Develop Artificial Pancreas Smartphone App For Diabetics

- Scientists developed an **artificial pancreas smartphone app** that will help to analyze blood sugar levels in diabetes patients.
- This application is formed with the capacity to connect with glucose monitors, insulin pump devices, and decision-making algorithms.

GST collections crossed the Rs.1 lakh crore mark in January

- The **Ministry of Finance** said that **Goods and Services Tax (GST)** collections crossed the **Rs.1 lakh crore** mark in January.
- **Goods and Services Tax (GST):**
- GST is an indirect tax (or consumption tax) levied in India on the supply of goods and services
- It came into effect from July 1, 2017
- GST is divided into five tax slabs for collection of tax - 0%, 5%, 12%, 18% and 28%

KMRL launched Data Innovation Challenge

- With a view to improving the first and the last-mile **connectivity to Kochi metro in the city**, a competition titled **Data Innovation Challenge** was launched in Kochi, Kerala. The challenge seeks innovative solutions and visualizations on the connectivity network.
- The contest was launched by **Kochi Metro Rail Ltd (KMRL)** in collaboration with WRI India Ross Center for Sustainable Cities and Toyota Mobility Foundation, the challenge seeks solutions in two tracks. It is expected that the initiative would fuel the constant innovation that is being pursued by KMRL.

DIPP renamed as Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade

- The **Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP)** has been renamed as the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade with a mandate to deal with matters related to start-ups, facilitating ease of doing business among others. The order has been **approved by President Ram Nath Kovind**.
- It functions under the **Ministry of Commerce and Industry** will look into matters related to promotion of internal trade, including retail trade, the welfare of traders and their employees, facilitating ease of doing business and start-ups.

TRAI's New broadcasting tariffs came into effect

- The **Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI)** said that more than **170 million** digital TV customers in India would not face any service disruption on account of the introduction of the new tariff regime in broadcasting from **February 1, 2019**.
- About **62% of the over 100 million cable TV** consumers and 30% of the over 70 million DTH subscribers had registered their channel choices under the new tariff guideline.

National Pulse Polio Immunisation Campaign to be held on 10th March

- **Department of Public Health and Preventive Medicine** said that the **National Pulse Polio Immunisation Campaign** will be held in **Tamil Nadu on March 10**. Nearly 72 lakh children under the age of five will be covered in Tamil Nadu. K.



Kolandaswamy, Director of Public Health and Preventive Medicine, over 40,000 booths will be set up across the State, including railway stations and bus terminals.

International conference on 8th century sage held to mark 50 years of India-Bhutan ties

- The 50-years of formalization of diplomatic ties between **India** and **Bhutan**, a two-day international conference on 8th-century Himalayan sage Guru Padmasambhava was held in New Delhi.
- This conference was organized by the Centre for **Escalation of Peace (CEP)** and was titled Life and Legacy of Guru Padmasambhava, was held on January 29-30.
- Scholars from both countries participated in the conference and discussed the Guru who was born in India and moved towards Bhutan in the 8th century to spread Buddhism and Buddhist teachings all across the Himalayan region.
- **About Bhutan**
 - Capital: Thimphu
 - Currency: Ngultrum
 - Prime minister: Lotay Tshering
 - King: Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck

Ministry of Home Affairs extended the ban on SIMI

- The **Ministry of Home Affairs** extended the ban on the **Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI)** by five more years. The Ministry said SIMI was declared an unlawful association under the **Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967**. The law aimed at effective prevention of unlawful activities associations in India. Its main objective is to make powers available for dealing with activities directed against the integrity and sovereignty of India.
- **Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI):**
 - Formed on: 1977
 - Location: Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh
- **Mission of SIMI**
 - (i)The "**liberation of India**" from Western materialistic cultural influence
 - (ii)To convert its **Muslim society** to live according to the Muslim code of conduct.
- Indian government describes it as a **terrorist organization**

- The Indian government banned it in 2001
- The ban was lifted in August 2008 by a special tribunal
- The ban was reinstated on 6 August 2008 on national security grounds
- **Ministry of Home Affairs:**
- **Formed:** August 1947
- **Headquarters:** Ministry of Home Affairs
- **Minister:** Rajnath Singh
- It is responsible for the maintenance of internal security and domestic policy

Mizoram govt bans import of pigs and piglets

- The Mizoram Government issued an order to ban the import of pigs and piglets because there is a possibility of an outbreak of Porcine Reproductive and Respiratory Syndrome (PRRS).
- The PRRS disease is also called as Swine Flu, the virus of this disease generally transmitted from pigs and affects both pigs and humankind
- Basically, the pigs imported from Myanmar are in suspect point, pigs imported from other countries too have been banned as a move to prevent the outbreak of the PRRS in the state.
- **About Mizoram**
- Capital: Aizawl
- Chief minister: Zoramthanga
- Governor: Kummanam Rajasekharan

Health Minister Confers Award of Appreciation to Rajiv Nath of AIMED for his Contribution to Global Public Healthcare

- **Rajiv Nath** conferred with prestigious Award of Appreciation by Ashwini Kumar Choubey, Honourable Minister of State for Health & Family Welfare for his contribution to the Global Public Healthcare sector in New Delhi.
- Rajiv Nath honored for his valuable, remarkable and outstanding achievements in the field of healthcare & community services for affordable MedTech access & patients safety initiatives.
- Rajiv Nath has also been appointed as the Member on Board of National Medical Devices Promotion Council by **Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion**

(DIPP) to boost the Indian Medical Devices Sector and lead India to an export-driven market in the Medical Devices sector.

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

- Ministry of External Affairs appointed 1993 batch **Indian Foreign Service (IFS)** Officer Sanjiv Ranjan who is current Ambassador to Argentina as the new Ambassador to the Republic of Colombia.
- Sanjiv Ranjan was born in 1966 and he holds bachelors in Economics from the University of Delhi and an M.A. in International Relations from Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU).
- He served as Deputy High Commissioner of India to Mauritius from 2006 to 2009.
- **About Colombia**
- Capital: Bogota
- President: Ivan Duque
- Currency: Peso

Centre allocated Rs.500 crore for pension for unorganised labour

- The **Centre** has allocated **Rs.500 crore** for a new pension scheme for workers in the unorganized sector, even while reducing its allocation for an existing pension scheme by **Rs.775 crore**.
- The new scheme, to be called the Pradhan Mantri Shram-Yogi Maandhan, will benefit unorganized sector workers who have a monthly income up to Rs.15,000. It will provide them a monthly pension of Rs.3,000 **from the age of 60**. The Centre expects 10 crore workers to get the benefit within the next five years.

Home Ministry has been allocated with 4.9 percent hike in funds

- The **Home Ministry** has been allocated over **Rs.1 lakh crore** for the next fiscal, with special emphasis on improving border infrastructure of police forces, in the **interim Budget 2018-19**.
- The Budget papers said that the Ministry has got **Rs.1,03,927 crore** for 2019-20 which is **4.9%** more than **Rs.99,034 crore** given in 2018-19. This figure includes **Rs.78.09 crore** for the promotion of Hindi language.

- The Delhi Police, which maintains law and order in the national capital, has been allocated **Rs.7,496.91 crore** while Rs.2,000 crore has been allocated for the development of border infrastructure.

Center gives up on triple talaq Bill

- The government has effectively given up on at least two of its more controversial legislations, **the Citizenship Amendment Bill and the triple talaq Bill**, that was awaiting consideration by the **Rajya Sabha**, after opposition parties made it clear that they could not guarantee smooth functioning of the House if any contentious bills were tabled.
- With the numbers stacked against the government on both the contentious issues in the Upper House, the two bills, which were cleared by the **Lok Sabha** in the last session, will now **lapse once the 16th Lok Sabhas term ends**. The decision on the bills to be tabled in the Upper House was taken at a meeting chaired by **Rajya Sabha Chairman M.Venkaiah Naidu** that included government representatives and opposition parties.

India and Algeria relations on new heights as investment expected in the energy sector

- **India and Algeria** are cooperating in space, defence and civil nuclear energy.
- The President invited Algeria to consider investments in oil reserves, refineries and LNG terminals.
- Extending cooperation to strategic areas Sushma Swaraj & Algerian Foreign Minister Messahel held productive talks on cooperation in sectors such as trade & investment, space, defense, hydrocarbon resources, mining, fertilizers, as well as regional & global challenges.

Tamil Nadu State approved Rs.158 crore for drinking water supply scheme

- Tamil Nadu, Chief Minister **Edappadi K. Palaniswami** sanctioned **Rs.158 crore** for taking up drinking water supply schemes across the State. This approval is in view of the below normal rainfall during the **north-east monsoon**.
- While **Rs.122 crore** has been earmarked to **Chennai Metro Water** to take up suitable drinking water supply works, another sum of **Rs.36 crore** was sanctioned

to the **Tamil Nadu Water Supply and Drainage Board (TWAD Board)** to take up drinking water supply works in the urban and rural areas of Tamil Nadu.

- The CM also insisted that Metro Water, TWAD Board, Rural Development and MAWS Departments should complete the ongoing water supply works quickly and put them to use.

Karnataka State Panel to submit drought report on 4 February

- The **Karnataka State Cabinet sub-committees**, formed to tour drought-hit areas, is to submit their report to **Chief Minister H.D.Kumaraswamy** on February 4. The committee, comprising Mr. Kashempur, Social Welfare Minister Priyank Kharge, Mines and Geology Minister Rajshekar Patil, and MLA Ajay Singh, visited the Kodchi village of Yalwar GP in Jewargi taluk and interacted with **MGNREGA workers**.
- Due to the shortage of rainfall, the farmers had sown in less than **75% of the targeted area** in the six districts of Hyderabad Karnataka. District authorities and CEOs had been instructed to provide additional days of employment under the MGNREGA even if the labourers had completed 150 working days. Replying to a question on the delay of payment under MGNREGA, Mr.Kashempur said it was so owing to shortage of allocation of funds by the Centre. The State government has released **Rs.1 crore** to task forces to tackle drought and authorities have been asked to address the drinking water problem on priority.

Chennai Corporation has seized 88 tonnes of banned plastics in the January

- **Tamil Nadus Chennai Corporation** has seized **88 tonnes** of banned plastics from various parts of the city in January. According to the data compiled by the civic body, the **largest quantity** of banned plastics has been seized from outlets in **Kodambakkam zone**.
- The civic officials have seized **16.23 tonnes of banned plastics** from Kodambakkam in the past **31 days of the ban**. Madhavaram zone reported the lowest amount of banned plastics seized in the month in the city. Chennai Corporation collected 1.02 tonnes of banned plastics from all the 15 zones in the city. The civic body has planned to permit cement factories to use a portion of the plastics seized from traders. The seized plastics would also be used for relaying

roads.

Cancer awareness walk on Feb 3 by Mahatma Gandhi Cancer Hospital

- The **Mahatma Gandhi Cancer Hospital and Research Institute, Andhra Pradesh** is organizing a **Cancer Awareness Walk** at RK Beach on the eve of World Cancer Day 3rd February 2019. The objective of the walk is **to inform, raise awareness and inspire action** with the theme: **I am and I will**.

Karnataka State launched MyCityMyBudget initiative

- **MyCityMyBudget** initiative was launched in **Banguluru, Karnataka**.The **city Mayor Gangambike Mallikarjun** launched the initiative.
- The initiative provides citizens an opportunity to tell the BBMP exactly on what civic infrastructure issue, the money has to be spent on.**Citizens may submit their budget inputs** online by visiting www.ichangemycity.com
- Now the people can send their inputs about the citys road infrastructure, water, power, safety, transport to **ichangemycitys MyCityMyBudget initiative**.

Kerala State sets up Price Monitoring and Research Unit

- **Kerala** has become the first State to set up a **Price Monitoring and Research Unit (PMRU)**. This unit will track violation of prices of essential drugs and medical devices under the **Drugs Price Control Order (DPCO)**.
- The move comes more than five years after the **National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA)** proposed such a system for the States and the Union Territories.
- **National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA):**
 - **Formed on:** 1997
 - **Headquarters:** New Delhi, India
 - **Chairman:** Bhupendra Singh
 - **Parent:** Department of Pharmaceuticals, Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers
 - **NPPA controls the prices** of pharmaceutical drugs in India

Bihar approved a draft Bill on providing 10% quota to the EWS



- The **Bihar Cabinet** has approved a **draft Bill on providing 10% quota** in government jobs and educational institutions to the **Economically Weaker Sections (EWS)** among the general category. The Bill is set to be tabled before the **bicameral State legislature** during the budget session beginning February 11.
- The state government has already been giving education scheme benefits to the poor among upper castes having an annual income of less than **Rs.1.5 lakh** in wake of state upper caste commission recommendations.
- **Bihar:**
- **Formed on:** March 1912
- **Governor:** Lal Ji Tandon
- **Chief Minister:** Nitish Kumar
- **Capital:** Patna
- **Official Language:** Hindi

Odisha launched Kalia scholarship scheme to boost education for farmers children

- Odisha Chief Minister **Naveen Patnaik** launched a scholarship scheme named **KALIA Chhatravritti Yojana**, for the children of farmers under Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation (KALIA) scheme in Keonjhar district.
- Under this scheme, the beneficiaries will be provided with scholarships to pursue higher education in professional courses at free of cost.
- Children of farmers who have taken admission at Government Professional colleges on merit basis are eligible for this scheme.
- Odisha Government launched drinking water projects worth Rs 1,050 crore to supply safe drinking water in the district.
- **About Odisha**
- Capital: Bhubaneswar
- Governor: Ganeshi Lal
- Chief minister: Naveen Patnaik

Uniphore Software Systems Secured Prestigious Aegis Graham Bell Award 2019



- Under this scheme, the beneficiaries will be provided with scholarships to pursue higher education in professional courses at free of cost.
- Children of farmers who have taken admission at Government Professional colleges on merit basis are eligible for this scheme.
- Odisha Government has also launched drinking water projects worth Rs 1,050 crore to supply safe drinking water in the district.
- **About Odisha**
- Capital: Bhubaneswar
- Governor: Ganeshi Lal
- Chief minister: Naveen Patnaik

India-Monaco Business Forum Held in New Delhi

- Union Minister of Commerce & Industry and Civil Aviation, Suresh Prabhu inaugurated the **Indo-Monaco Business Forum** in New Delhi.
- The Bilateral trade between India and Monaco in 2017-18 was USD 3.01 million, and there is immense potential to scale up the bilateral trade between the two nations.

Around 1.38 lakh MSME Projects set up by women entrepreneurs

- **Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME)** is empowering women entrepreneurs through its different schemes.
- 1.38 lakh projects have been set up by the women entrepreneurs under Prime Ministers Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) Scheme since inception and upto 23.01.2019.
- The projects set up by women entrepreneurs are about 30% of total projects set up under PMEGP. Minister of State (Independent Charge) for MSME, Giriraj Singh, informed this in reply to a question in Lok Sabha today.
- PMEGP, a major credit-linked subsidy scheme since 2008-09, helps set up micro-enterprises and to generate employment in rural and urban areas of the country. The maximum cost of the project under PMEGP scheme is Rs.25.00 lakhs for manufacturing sector units and Rs.10.00 lakhs for units under the service sector.
- Under the scheme, women entrepreneurs are covered under Special Category and are entitled to 25% and 35% subsidies for the project set up in urban and rural areas

respectively.

- For women beneficiaries, own contribution is only 5% of the project cost while for general category it is 10%.

ICT Academy Bridge 2019 Conference Inaugurated in Tamil Nadu

- **Dr M. Manikandan**, Minister for Information Technology of Tamil Nadu inaugurated **ICT Academy Bridge 2019** conference in the city that witnessed more than 1,000 participants from government, industry and academia.
- Organized by ICT Academy, the 37th edition of the conference is the largest Industry-Institute Interaction Event of Asia.
- The conference was organized under the theme **Fostering India for Industry 4.0**.
- ICT Academy TN Icon Awards 2019
- ICT Academy conferred 3 industry icons of Tamil Nadu from 3 different sectors with TN ICON 2019 award for their outstanding contribution to the growth of their sectors through the extensive use of new age technology in their business/field. Awardees are:
 - Shankar S, Film Director, Producer, Writer.
 - Arun Alagappan, Executive Director, Cholamandalam.
 - R. Dinesh, Managing Director, TVS Logistics Services Limited.

Telangana State approves the creation of Mulugu district

- The **Telangana State government** has approved for the creation of **Mulugu as a new district**. It is carved out from Bhupalpalli district. This would be the sixth district to be created from the erstwhile Warangal district.
- The State government has issued a notification calling for objections and suggestions from the public on December 31. The one-month period duration expired on January 30. There were no objections to the proposals from the public. The district headquarters is **Mahabubabad**.
- **About the State:**
 - **Formation:** June 2014
 - **Capital:** Hyderabad
 - **Governor:** E.S.L.Narasimhan
 - **Chief minister:** K.Chandrashekar Rao



- **Official Language:** Telugu
- **District headquarters:** Mahabubabad

ICS launched Swasth Naari, Shakti Hamaari campaign

- The **Indian Cancer Society (ICS)** launched **Swasth Naari, Shakti Hamaari campaign** in Mumbai, Maharashtra to spread awareness of cancer among underprivileged women and enable early detection of the disease.
- The campaign was launched on the occasion of **World Cancer Day**. ICS in collaboration with pharmaceutical company **AstraZeneca** organized the campaign. It aims to conduct free and specialized cancer-screening camps for women in high-priority districts of **Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Karnataka**.

BMC to link over Rs.52,000 crore in reserves to city infrastructure

- The **Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC)** has linked all its reserves (in fixed deposits), totalling **Rs.52,635 crore**, to infrastructure projects of Mumbai, Maharashtra.
- The BMC had borrowed around **Rs.3,000 crore** from fixed deposits (FDs) towards its projects but ended up needing just Rs.574 crore. It plans to borrow **Rs.5,708 crore** from FDs for its immediate needs and has set aside **Rs.22,902 crore** for committed liabilities.

Aadhaar made mandate for second instalment PM KISAN

- **Farmers** who wish to avail themselves of **benefits under PM-KISAN** must have Aadhaar identification to get the money from the second installment, which would be paid by July 2019. PM-KISAN is a **new income support scheme** announced in the Union Budget. However, this would not be compulsory for the first installment expected to be disbursed by March 31, before the Lok Sabha polls.
- States have been told to prepare a database of beneficiaries, small and marginal landholder farmer families in all villages, including whether they belong to **SC/ST, bank account, mobile, and Aadhaar details**.

NCLAT directed RCom not to sell any asset sans prior approval

- The **National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT)** directed the **Reliance Communications (RCom)** or any third party cannot sell, transfer or alienate any of its assets (movable and immovable) without the appellate tribunals or the Supreme Courts permission.
- The directive came after RCom moved the NCLAT for withdrawal of its appeal against an NCLT order, directing the firm to **pay Rs.550 crore to Ericsson**, to pursue the resolution plan through the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) process.
- Accepting RComs application for withdrawal of the said appeal, the NCLAT directed Ericsson to file its reply in the matter by February 8 and listed the matter for hearing for **February 12**. NCLAT also prohibited RComs guarantors and any third party from invoking any guarantee, mortgage or any other instrument without the NCLATs or Supreme Courts prior permission.

Haryana government approved new Pharmaceutical Policy

- The **Haryana government** approved the **Haryana Pharmaceutical Policy 2019**, which envisages to establish a state-of-the-art pharma park at Karnal. The decision was taken at a Cabinet meeting held under the chairmanship of **Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar** at Chandigarh, Punjab.
- The new policy aims to develop Haryana into a hub for pharmaceutical manufacturing by facilitating and creating a holistic industry and academia. The Cabinet also gave its nod for the **Haryana Micro Small and Medium Enterprises Policy 2019** with an aim to **create globally competitive MSMEs** in Haryana.

Centre is not willing to recommend Presidents 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 Presidents rule.
- **President's rule:**
- President's rule is the **suspension of state government and imposition of direct**

Central Government rule in a state. It is Under **Article 356** of the Constitution of India.

Sushma Swaraj and Nitin Gadkari inaugurated 30th National Road Safety Week in New Delhi

- External Affairs Minister Smt Sushma Swaraj and Union Minister for Road Transport & Highways, Shipping and Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation Shri Nitin Gadkari inaugurated the 30th National Road Safety Week, 2019 at Gandhi Smriti and Darshan, Rajghat, New Delhi.
- The theme of the 30th National Road Safety Week is **Sadak Suraksha-Jeevan Raksha**.
- The motor rally will cover around 7250 km and will travel through those places in India, Bangladesh and Myanmar which are historically associated with Gandhiji. Conclusion of the rally will take place at Yangon in Myanmar on the 24th February 2019.
- The event was attended by Minister of State for Road Transport and Highways, Shipping, Chemicals and Fertilizers Shri Mansukh L Mandavia and Shri V. Kalyanam, Personal Secretary to Mahatma Gandhi.
- The main aim of the event is to generate awareness and sensitizing people about safe road usage.

NGT imposed fine of Rs.25 lakh on UP government

- The **National Green Tribunal (NGT)** imposed a cost of **Rs.25 lakh** on the **Uttar Pradesh government** for failing to stop dumping of sewage and untreated water in the Upper Ganga Canal.
- Earlier, the State government submitted that a sewage treatment plant in Niwari will be installed within six months. But it failed to do so. A Bench headed by NGT Chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel also directed the Urban Development Ministry to deposit a performance guarantee of Rs.35 lakh.
- **National Green Tribunal (NGT):**
- **Chairperson:** Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel
- NGT is to handle the expeditious disposal of the cases pertaining to environmental issues.

Google to shut down its Google Plus platform

- **Google is to shut down its Google Plus platform**, which had been originally conceived as a social networking option different from Facebook and Twitter. This announcement was made in **December 2018**. The reason for the shutdown was prompted by a major security breach, besides the lack of a growth trajectory that Google had anticipated.
- The **shutdown process has started**. The option for users to create new Google+ profiles, pages, communities or events is no longer available, since February 4. The option for using Google+ for comments was removed from Blogger on February 4, and from other sites, it will be removed by March 7. All the Google+ comments will be deleted starting April 2.

Cielo Di Houston, new vessel reached city on maiden voyage

- The **New Mangaluru Port** received a long-range vessel which was on its maiden voyage after being commissioned in Mangaluru. **MT (Motor Tanker) Cielo Di Houston**, constructed by Hyundai-Mipo, South Korea, at its Vinashin facility in Vietnam, with Liberian flag, called on the Port. The vessel, with a **deadweight tonnage (DWT) of 74,999 tonnes**, came with 65,000 tonnes of ballast from Port of Singapore.
- They welcomed Vessel Captain Shawkat Ali on behalf of Port Chairman M.T.Krishna Babu and presented him with a plaque and memento. It is customary to greet the crew of a vessel on her maiden voyage to any Port. MT Cielo Di Houston, 228 mt with 38 mt beams, sailed out of NMPT with 65,000 tonnes of high-speed diesel being exported by **Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd (MRPL)**.

AYUSH Minister inaugurated Conference of State AYUSH Ministers in New Delhi

- The **Ministry of AYUSH** organized Second Conference of State AYUSH and Health Ministers conference in New Delhi.
- It was inaugurated by the Minister of State for AYUSH (Independent Charge) and Health & Family Welfare Shripad Yesso Naik.

- **About the Conference**

- The programme is inaugurated to discuss about National AYUSH Mission (MAM), Integration of AYUSH services in Ayushman Bharat, Medicinal Plants, Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani and Homeopathy educational Institutes, Quality Control of Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani and Homeopathy drugs, Drugs Central Sector Schemes and special programmes and projects.

Union Minister Smriti Irani launches India Size project in Mumbai

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

Boeing 747-200 Air Indias first ever Flight Simulator was exhibited in Nehru Science Centre, Mumbai

- **Air Indias** First ever Flight Simulator knew as **Boeing 747-200** was exhibited in Nehru Science Centre, Mumbai.
- The Simulator was acquired by Air India in 1980, which is designed and manufactured by the CAE(Canadian Aviation Electronics), Canada.
- The 21 years serviced Simulator is donated with a purpose to create awareness about the significance in the field of aviation among the public in general and students in particular.

NCLT orders Reid and Taylor liquidation

- The Mumbai bench of the **National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT)** ordered the liquidation of the bankrupt **Reid & Taylor** following the bidders failure to meet eligibility criteria.
- However, it asked the **Resolution Professional (RP)** to ensure that the brand is sold as a going concern and protect the interest of the workers. However, **Reid & Taylor Employees Association** has decided to challenge the liquidation order at



the appellate tribunal NCLAT.

- The move came after the representatives of India Gas failed to satisfy the mandatory net worth of **Rs.50 crore** and other bonafide, even though it was ready to make the Rs.2 crore non-refundable earnest money deposit.

Parmanu Tech 2019-Nuclear Energy Conference in New Delhi

- **Ministry of External Affairs and Department of Atomic Energy (DAE)** organized Parmanu Tech 2019 in New Delhi to discuss the issues related to Nuclear Energy and Radiation Technologies.
- The main motive of this conference is to showcase Indias capabilities in Nuclear Energy with environmental responsibility.
- Food Preservation, Agricultural & Industrial Applications: From farms to factories Serving the National Cause.

Zero Fatality Corridor is launched by Delhi Government to reduce Road Accidents

- Delhi Government launched Zero Fatality Corridor project under its annual road safety action plan to reduce the number of road accidents on the outer ring road stretch between Burari and Bhalaswa Chowk.
- As per Kailash Gahlot, Delhis Transport Minister, Delhi witnessed 1691 road accidents in Delhi and this project is aimed at reducing deaths to near zero level on the Outer ring road stretch.
- As per a report, The 3 km proposed stretch witnessed 67 deaths due to road accidents in 2016 and 2017.
- **About Delhi**
- Lt. Governor: Anil Bajjal
- Chief Minister: Arvind Kejriwal

Indian Coast Guard and AAI signed MoU for maritime search and rescue Operations in Port Blair

- **Indian Coast Guard(ICG)** and **Airport Authority of India (AAI)** signed a MoU with an objective to coordinate the aeronautical and maritime Search And Rescue(SAR) operations in congruence with the International Aeronautical



Maritime Search And Rescue(IAMSAR) standards.

- The MoU enhances **Rescue Coordination Centre (RCC)**, Kolkata and Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC), Port Blair and AAI's mutual interactions, interoperability and validating procedures on the occasion of SAR operations.

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 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.
- The demand of LPG is expected to rise 34% from 2014 to 2025.

Narendra Modi to launch DD Arunaprabha

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** is scheduled to launch **DD Arunaprabha in Arunachal Pradesh** at Itanagar on **9th February**. DD Arunaprabha is India's public service broadcaster Doordarshan's exclusive channel based in Arunachal Pradesh. This will be **Doordarshan's 24th channel**.
- Arunachal Pradesh:
- **Established:** February 1987
- **Capital:** Itanagar
- **Governor:** Brig. (Dr.)B.D.Mishra
- **Chief Minister:** Pema Khandu
- **Official Language:** English

Nitin Gadkari is to inaugurate five national highway projects

- **Nitin Gadkari**, Minister for Road Transport and Highways, is to inaugurate **five national highway projects worth Rs.7,195 crore** in Ayodhya. These projects include a 262-km stretch connecting Ayodhya to Chitrakoot, which will be developed at a cost of **Rs.2,020 crore**.
- Another project, called **Kosi Parikrama Marg**, will be launched to facilitate the movement of pilgrims around Ayodhya.

Centre on data science, AI has been established at IIT M

- **Robert Bosch Center for Data Science and Artificial Intelligence (RBC-DSAI)**, a Centre for research on data science and artificial intelligence, has been established at the Indian Institute of Technology- Madras.
- RBC-DSAI will receive an estimated investment of **Rs. 20 crore over a period of five years**. India is one of the four locations of the Bosch Center for AI. The Centres mission was to create **societal impact through multidisciplinary interactions** with government, academic, research, and industrial collaborators by working on core challenges in data science and artificial intelligence.

Fifth India-Bangladesh Joint Consultative Committee Meet to be held in New Delhi

- The **5th India-Bangladesh Joint Consultative Committee Meeting** will be held in New Delhi.
- External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and Foreign Affairs Minister of Bangladesh Dr A. K. Abdul Momen will co-chair the meeting.
- The two sides will also sign agreements after the meeting.
- The last Joint Consultative Committee Meeting between the two countries was held in October 2017 at Dhaka.

India's first smart city site visited by the Chinese solemn monitoring the development amidst

- **SIR Project** in Gujarat, the Chinese investors visited the site reviewing the



progress and development of the first smart city in making.

- Mr Guangda Xiang, Founder and Chairman, Tsingshan industries from China visited the Dholera SIR site earlier this month to see the bloom of key infrastructure.
- Chinese steelmaker Tsingshan Holding Group have decided to invest \$3 billion in the project as announced by the founder Guangda Xiang at the Vibrant Gujarat 2019 summit in Gandhinagar last month.
- The company is also an emerging electrical vehicle battery producer and is considering setting up an electrical battery plant in Dholera to cater to the fast developing auto industry in India.

Solar powered cold storage system developed by NITT and IIFPT

- A **prototype solar-powered cold storage system** developed jointly by the faculty members of the **National Institute of Technology, Tiruchi (NIT-T)**, and **Indian Institute of Food Processing Technology, Thanjavur (IIFPT)**, was commissioned at the Industrial Automation Laboratory at the NITT.
- The aim of the cold storage system was to replicate a mobile multi-commodity cold storage system to store different fruits and vegetables towards reducing post-harvest losses. The shelf life of fruits and vegetables can be increased by maintaining the temperature and humidity of the fruits and vegetables in the recommended range.
- A unique aspect of the project is the use of the **Low Melting Temperature Phase Change Material (PCM)** to store and circulate in the cold storage rooms instead of direct evaporation of refrigerant. The excess cold energy can be stored in the PCM and utilized in the absence of solar energy. This is an energy saving and cost-effective system.

KIA for 100 percent reliance on renewable energy

- A solar plant generating **3.5 MW of power** was inaugurated in **Kempegowda International Airport (KIA)**, Bengaluru Karnataka. KIA currently meets **67% of its energy requirements** through solar power. It is now aiming for **100% reliance** on renewable energy by 2020.



HC quashes one year ban imposed on ads

- The **Karnataka High Court** quashed the **August 6, 2018** resolution of the **Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike Regional (BBMP)** banning all forms of advertisements in open spaces in the city for a period of one year.
- Justice Sunil Dutt Yadav declared that it cannot be said **the fundamental rights of the petitioners** and existing advertisement bylaws of 2006 could be kept in abeyance till the new advertisement bylaws are brought into force. Such action would amount to an arbitrary exercise of power.

Jharkhand okays to set up Tribal Commission Bill

- Jharkhand Legislative Assembly passed Jharkhand State Scheduled Tribes Commission 2019 Bill with an amendment proposal brought by MLAs Radha Krishna Kishore, Shivshankar Oraon, Ram Kumar Pahan, and Laxman Tuddu.
- It has been stated that any person having knowledge about history, tradition, custom and culture can be appointed as chairman, vice-chairman and three members of the commission.
- Kishore sought an amendment in the appointment process.
- The post of chairman, vice-chairman and three members of the commission should be reserved for scheduled tribes (ST), as any non-tribal person can have knowledge about history, culture, custom and traditions of the tribals.
- Kishore also stated that posts should be reserved for such tribal persons from birth follow the traditions, culture and customs of scheduled tribes. Chief Minister Raghubar Das, who was present in the house, gave his approval for the amendment.
- The decision to constitute Jharkhand State Scheduled Tribes Commission was taken in the tribal advisory committee meeting.

India Pavilion Inaugurated At 69th Berlin International Film Festival

- **India Pavilion** at the **Berlin International Film Festival (Berlinale) 2019** was inaugurated by Mr Matthijis Wouter Knol, **Director European Film Market (EFM)**.
- The poster of IFFI 2019 was also inaugurated by the dignitaries during the inaugural ceremony.
- Ministry of I&B, in collaboration with Confederation of Indian Industry, is

participating in the Berlin International Film Festival being held from 7th 17th February 2019 at Berlin, Germany.

Dinkar Gupta takes over charge of DGP Punjab

- **Dinkar Gupta** taken over the charge of Director General of the Punjab Police.
- He took over the charge as DGP from Suresh Arora yesterday at a simple ceremony at the Punjab Police headquarters at Chandigarh,.
- They decided to provide a safe and secure environment to the citizens of the state while listing counter-terrorism as the top priority for the force.
- Declaring zero tolerance against drug abuse during his first meeting with officers, Dinkar Gupta said he would implement DAPO and Buddy programmes in letter and in spirit.

Central Board of Direct Taxes says only 50 percent of PAN linked to Aadhaar

- **Central Board of Direct Taxes Chairman Sushil Chandra** said that with less than two months to go for the deadline to link **Permanent Account Number (PAN) and Aadhaar**, only a little more than half of PAN holders have linked them.
- Mr. Chandra was speaking at an ASSOCHAM event, in New Delhi. Only 23 crore of the total 42 crore PAN holders has linked them.

Lok Sabha takes up Interim Budget 2019-20 for discussion

- Lok Sabha took up the **Interim Budget 2019-20** for discussion.
- Initiating the discussion, Tathagata Satpathy of BJD accused the government of doing nothing for the farmer.
- The budget announcement of providing six thousand rupees annually to small farmers will not even help them to fill up diesel in their tractors.
- Earlier in the post-lunch session when the discussion started Congress, TMC and other parties members staged a walkout over Rafale aircraft issue.
- When BJD member Mr Satpathy was speaking Congress member Gaurav Gogoi tried to show a placard which was objected by the Speaker.

Ladakh declared Jammu & Kashmir's 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.
- The division will comprise Leh and Kargil districts, with Leh as the division's headquarters
- **About Ladakh**
- Ladakh is one of the most sparsely populated regions in Jammu & Kashmir and the highest plateau in the state, most of it being over 9,800 ft above sea level. The region is geographically isolated and remains landlocked for nearly 6 months in a year.
- **About Jammu & Kashmir**
- Capital Srinagar
- Governor Satya Pal Malik

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:
-

Rank 2018	Name	Donation (INR Cr)	Primary Cause	Company	City
1	Mukesh Ambani	437	Education	Reliance Industries	Mumbai
2	Ajay Piramal & family	200	Education	Piramal Group	Mumbai
3	Azim Premji & Family	113	Education	Wipro	Bengaluru
4	Adi Godrej & family	96	Livelihood enhancement	Godrej	Mumbai
5	Yusuff Ali MA	70	Disaster relief	Lulu	Abu Dhabi
6	Shiv Nadar	56	Education	HCL	New Delhi
7	Savji Dholakia	40	Livelihood enhancement	Hari Krishna Exports	Surat
8	Shapoor Pallonji Mistry	36	Education	Shapoorji Pallonji	Monaco
8	Cyrus Pallonji Mistry	36	Education	Shapoorji Pallonji	Mumbai
10	Gautam Adani	30	Education	Adani Enterprises	Ahmedabad

Source: Hurun Research Institute & Hurun India Rich List 2018

Narendra Modi inaugurated the Hollong Modular Gas Processing Plant

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** formally inaugurated the **Hollong Modular Gas Processing Plant (HMGPP)** of **Hindustan Oil Exploration Co. Ltd. (HOEC)** at **Dirok Field** in **Assam**.
- The HMGPP will initially have a capacity to process 35 million standard cubic feet per day of gas equivalent to 15% of Assam gas production and 800 barrels of condensate. Dirok Field is being developed in phases by HOEC along with its JV partners - Oil India Ltd. and Indian Oil Corporation.

Nepal hosted 2nd Joint Secretary Level Meeting to assess India-Nepal Trade Treaty

- The two days 2nd Joint Secretary Level meeting to assess the India-Nepal Trade Treaty was organized in **Pokhara, Nepal** on 7th Feb 2019 to deliberate upon various bilateral issues and non-tariff barriers in bilateral trade.
- India deputation was led by Bhupinder Singh Bhalla (Joint Secretary of South Asia), Department of Commerce whereas Nepal Deputation was led by Ravi Shankar Sainju (Joint Secretary of Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Supplies).
- This meet was based on a comprehensive review of the existing bilateral trade treaty to enhance both ways commerce and investments between India and Nepal.

- **About Nepal**
- **Capital-** Kathmandu
- **Currency-** Nepalese Rupee
- **Prime Minister-** Khadga Prasad Oli

TAC approved Rs.55,548 crore for the Polavaram project

- The **Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)** of the **Central Water Commission (CWC)** approved the **Polavaram Project revised cost estimates (RCE)** of **Rs.55,548 crore** in New Delhi. The TAC under the chairmanship of U.P. Singh approved the second detailed project report (DPR-2) at the 2017-18 price level.
- The cost of the project was estimated to be **Rs.16,010.45 crore at the 2010-11** level and the State government had submitted a revised estimate of **Rs.57,940.86 crore at 2013-14 level**. The TAC, however, approved the 2017-18 level. The estimate will now have to be approved by the Union Finance Ministry and sent to the Union Cabinet for final approval. The delay in approval of the RCE has cost Andhra Pradesh dearly with the State spending **Rs.3,866.79 crore in advance**.

NTPC Signs Pact With SBI For Rs 5000 crore Term Loan

- State-owned power giant **NTPC** announced that it has signed a term loan agreement for Rs 5,000 crore with State Bank of India.
- The loan facility is extended at an interest rate linked to 3-Month MCLR of the Bank.

Sanjay Subrahmanyam won Israels Million Dollar Dan David Prize

- Indian Historian Sanjay Subrahmanyam won Israels prestigious Dan David Prize in the category Past time dimension for his work in macro-history.
- He shared the USD 1 million award in the Past time dimension category with Prof Kenneth Pomeranz of the University of Chicago.**About Sanjay Subrahmanyam**Mr Subrahmanyam is a recipient of the Infosys Prize for humanities and holds the Irving and Jean Stone Endowed Chair in Social Sciences at the University of California. He is the son on strategic analyst K Subrahmanyam and brother of former foreign secretary S Jaishankar.**About the Dan David Prize**It is an international prize which annually awards three prizes of US\$ 1 million each

for achievements having an outstanding scientific, technological, cultural or social impact on our world. **About Israel** Capital Jerusalem Currency New Shekel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu

LPG coverage in T.N. to touch 100 percent

- With more connections being provided to beneficiaries under the Ujjwala scheme, **Liquified Petroleum Gas (LPG)** coverage in the **Tamil Nadu State** is now **97.9%**. That translates to 2.02 crore consumers. Substantial increases have happened in the last three years or so, bringing up the April 2016 figure of 80.08% with 1.61 crore consumers.
- Tamil Nadu is one of the States that has quite a high penetration of LPG in households with the three Government-run oil majors adding an average of 6 lakh regular connections each year. Under the **Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana**, the companies have added around 9 lakh connections each year, explained oil industry sources.

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**.
- The PFI has been involved in spreading social division, anti-India and pro-Pakistan slogans, links with Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and Jama'at Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB).
- **Popular Front of India (PFI):**
 - **Motto:** Naya Karavan:Naya Hindustan
 - **Formation:** 22 November 2006
 - **Headquarters:** New Delhi, India
 - **Chairman** of the Front: Janab E Abubacker
 - PFI is an extremist and militant Islamic fundamentalist organization in India

`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. Representatives from Armed Forces, National Disaster Management Response Mechanism (NDMRM), SDMA Rajasthan and DLMA's participated in the exercise.

Centre to strengthen runways of the Vijayawada and the Rajahmundry airports

- **Minister of Civil Aviation Suresh Prabhu** inaugurated the extended and strengthened runways of the **Vijayawada and the Rajahmundry airports** and **laid foundation stone** for the expansion of the Visakhapatnam airport via video link from the office of the Airports Authority of India (AAI) in New Delhi.
- AAI chairman Guruprasad Mohapatra said the runway of 2,486 metres in the Vijayawada airport had been strengthened and extended to 3,360 metres at a cost of Rs.145 crore to handle Code E aircraft like the **Boeing 747 and 777**. Similarly, the 1,750-metre runway in the Rajahmundry airport had been extended to 3,165 meters at Rs.182 crore.
- The 19,800 square feet area passenger terminal of the Visakhapatnam airport would be expanded into a 29,050 square feet to handle four million passenger movements per annum and 1,050 passengers in the peak hours against the present capacity of 700.

Rajasthan Assembly approved 5% quota for Gujjars

- The **Rajasthan Assembly** unanimously passed a Bill giving 5% reservation in government jobs and education to Gujjars and four other nomadic communities.
- Gujjars are a pastoral agricultural ethnic group with populations in **India, Pakistan, and a small number in northeastern Afghanistan**. The languages of gujjars is **Gujari**.
- **Rajasthan:**
 - Governor: Kalyan Singh
 - Chief Minister: Ashok Gehlot

- Official: Hindi
- Capital: Jaipur

Centre to set up a national law university in Uttarakhand

- The Centre has decided to set up a **national law university in Uttarakhand**. The Chief Minister of Uttarakhand **Trivendra Singh Rawat** has announced that the national law university will be opened in Uttarakhand. This is a big step toward making Uttarakhand a **quality education hub**.
- India has **21 national law universities**, admissions to which are held through a **Common Law Admission Test (CLAT)**.

Ghumot is to be notified as a heritage instrument of Goa

- **Ghumot** is to be notified as a **heritage instrument of Goa**. The announcement was made by the **Art and Culture Minister of Goa, Govind Gaude**. Ghumot is an indigenous earthen drum fashioned as a designed clay pot, with the skin of the monitor lizard stretched taut across the pot's mouth, forming a drumhead.
- The monitor lizard was classified as an endangered wildlife species and was listed in Schedule I of the **Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972**, Ghumot was banned by the **Forest Department of Goa**. Taking forward the efforts to conserve the heritage musical instrument the government of Goa is taking steps to declare Ghumot as the heritage musical instrument of Goa.

PM Narendra Modi inaugurated the PETROTECH 2019 conference

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** inaugurated the **PETROTECH-2019 conference**. PETROTECH-2019 conference is a three-day mega event held from 10 to 12 February. The conference was held at India **Expo Centre, Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh**. PETROTECH conference is a biennial International Oil & Gas Conference. The conference provides a platform for national and international experts in the oil & gas industry to exchange views and share knowledge, expertise, and experiences.

The **13th edition of International Oil & Gas Conference and Exhibition**,



PETROTECH-2019 is being organized by Oil & Natural Gas Corporation Limited, under the aegis of Ministry of Petroleum and Natural gas.

India's fastest Vande Bharat Express flagged off by PM Narendra Modi

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi on February 15 flagged-off India's **first semi-high speed Train 18** which was recently rechristened as **Vande-Bharat** Express.
- It is launched from the New Delhi railway station.
- The train will travel from **Delhi to Varanasi** in nine hours and forty-five minutes.
- The train can run up to a maximum speed of **160 kmph**.
- Train 18 is India's first engine-less train.

India's 1st Aqua Mega Food Park commissioned in Andhra Pradesh

- Union Minister of Food Processing Industries **Harsimrat Kaur Badal** commissioned **Godavari Mega Aqua Food Park** at **Tundurru** Village in **Bhimavaram** Mandal, West Godavari District, Andhra Pradesh.
- It will be the first Mega Aqua Food Park operationalised exclusively for fish and marine products processing in the state of Andhra Pradesh.
- The mega park has been set up in **57.81 acres** at a cost of **Rs 122.60 crore**.
- Besides this aqua food park, the Ministry had sanctioned another mega food park in **Chittoor** District of Andhra Pradesh. It was inaugurated on July 9, 2012.
- Currently, the third Mega Food Park sanctioned by the Ministry is under implementation at **Krishna** District of Andhra Pradesh.
- **About Andhra Pradesh:**
- Governor: E. S. L. Narasimhan
- Chief minister: N. Chandrababu Naidu
- Districts: 13
- Capitals: Hyderabad (Interim), Amaravati
- The northwestern portion of Andhra Pradesh was detached to form the state of Telangana in 2014.

Bihar Government announced Universal Old Age Pension Scheme

- Bihar Chief Minister, **Nitish Kumar** announced a Universal Old Age Pension



scheme, named Mukhya Mantri Vriddha Pension Yojana (MMVPY), irrespective for all caste, community, religion, except for those who are retired from government organizations.

- The scheme facilitates the amount of Rs. 400 monthly pension for all in the state above the age of 60 who are not getting a pension from the government.
- The Chief Minister announced a pension of 6,000 rupees for journalists above 60 years of age.
- Those who have been in regular service in the field of media and not getting any other pension will be eligible for **Bihar Patrakar Samman Yojana (BPSY)**.

Early Ed Asia 2019, Asias largest early childhood conference, held in Jaipur

- It was the first time such a conference was held in India with over 6000 eminent early childhood educators, policy-makers, researchers and other stakeholders from India and foreign countries.
- The latest trends in teaching and research were discussed to provide a stronger foundation to the children.
- The motto of the event was Our Children. Our Future.
- **About Rajasthan**
- Capital Jaipur
- Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot
- Governor Kalyan Singh

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's first district cooling system to be built in Amaravati

- UAE-based cooling solutions utility National Central Cooling Company PJSC (**Tabreed**) has entered into a **30-year concession** with Andhra Pradesh Capital



Region Development Authority (APCRDA) to build, own, operate and transfer India's first district cooling system in **Amaravati**.

- The agreement is for a contracted cooling capacity of **20,000 refrigeration tons (RTs)**.

Indias First Agromet Forecast Centre Inaugurated In Karnataka

- Union Minister for Science & Technology, Earth Sciences, Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Dr Harsh Vardhan, inaugurated the **North Karnataka Agromet Forecasting and Research Centre (NKAFC)**, Indias first agreement forecast centre, at University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS) in Dharwad, Karnataka.
- The main objective of the centre is to give accurate reports on the weather which would enable the farmers to protect the crops and get a good yield.

World Employment and Social Outlook Trends 2019 Report Released By ILO

- The International Labour Organization released World Employment and Social Outlook Trends 2019 report.
- As per the report, unemployment rates will fall to 4.9% in 2019 and remains steady in 2020.
- Among the age group 15-24 the global unemployment stood at 11.8% which is much higher than it is among other age groups.

Govt hikes minimum selling price of sugar by Rs 2 per kg

- Central Government hiked the minimum selling price of sugar by **Rs 2 per kg** to **Rs 31** to help millers clear farmers' dues.
- The minimum selling price (MSP) is the rate below which the mills cannot sell sugar in the open market to wholesalers and bulk consumers like beverage and biscuit makers.

PM Modi lays foundation of Bihar's first metro rail in Patna

- The Patna Metro Rail Project will be built at an estimate of over 13,300 crore and will be completed in five years.



- PM Modi inaugurated the Patna City Gas Distribution project.
- He laid the foundation stone of the **Barauni Refinery Expansion Project** and the ATF Hydrotreating Unit (INDJET) at Barauni Refinery.
- He also laid the foundation stone of medical colleges at Chhapra and Purnia.
- **About Bihar:**
- Governor: Lalji Tandon
- Chief minister: Nitish Kumar
- Capital: Patna
- Districts: 38

Telangana govt announced creation of two new districts

- The new districts - **Narayanpet and Mulugu** started functioning from February 17, 2019.
- Now, the number of districts in the Telangana rose to **33**.
- Narayanpet has been carved out of Mahbubnagar district and Mulugu from Jayashankar Bhupalpally.
- Telangana had 10 districts when it came into being as India's **29th** state on June 2, 2014, after it was carved out of Andhra Pradesh.
- **About Telangana:**
- Capital: Hyderabad
- Chief minister: K. Chandrashekar Rao
- Governor: E. S. L. Narasimhan
- Districts: 33
- Founded: 2 June 2014

Himachal passed bill to make Sanskrit 2nd official language

- The **Himachal Pradesh** Assembly passed the **Official Language (Amendment) Bill 2019** to make **Sanskrit** the **second official** language in the state.
- The bill was introduced in the Assembly by Irrigation and Public Health Minister **Mahender Singh**.
- Once given assent by the Governor, it will amend the Himachal Pradesh Official language Act, **1975**.
- Now, **Hindi** is the official language of Himachal Pradesh.

- The Assembly also renamed Himachal Pradesh University of Health Sciences after former PM **Atal Bihari Vajpayee**.
- **About Himachal Pradesh:**
- Capital: Shimla
- Chief minister: Jai Ram Thakur
- Governor : Acharya Dev Vrat
- Districts: 12
- Official Language: Hindi

About 16 crore Indians consume alcohol: Govt survey

- According to a survey conducted by the Social Justice and Empowerment Ministry, about 16 crore (14.6 per cent) Indians in the **10-75 age** group consume alcohol.
- Chhattisgarh, Tripura, Punjab, Arunachal Pradesh and Goa have the highest prevalence of liquor use.
- After alcohol, cannabis and opioids are the next commonly-used substances in India.

Rajnath Singh Launches Pan-India Number 112 For Women Safety

- This Emergency Response Support System (ERSS), launched in 16 states/union territories and Mumbai city, aims to help those in **distress**, especially **women** send out distress signals and their **location details** to the nearest police control room by pressing a button on their phones.
- The ERSS project, being launched by the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of Women & Child Development (WCD), is financed using **Rs 321.69 crore** from the Nirbhaya Fund Scheme.

The 79th IHC to be held in Bhopal Madhya Pradesh from 26th February

- The **79th Indian History Congress (IHC)** is to be held at Barkatullah University in **Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh from February 26**. The 79th Indian History Congress was supposed to be held at Pune but was cancelled citing financial constraints to host the congress. IHC will be held at Madhya Pradesh for the second time. The **first time it was held in 2011**. Over 1,000 delegates including prominent historians are expected to participate in the IHC in Bhopal.



- **Indian History Congress:**

- Indian History Congress was established in 1935
- It is the largest professional and academic body of Indian historians with over 10,000 members
- Its aim is the promotion and encouragement of the scientific study of Indian history
- The Indian History Congress holds annual sessions on five sections namely:
 - 1) Ancient India
 - 2) Medieval India
 - 3) Modern India
 - 4) History of Countries other than India
 - 5) Archaeology
- IHC stands for collaboration with historians throughout the world and promotes the study in India of the history of other countries

TN CM Palaniswami flagged off 4 vessels made under deep sea fishing project

- **Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami** flagged off the first set of **four vessels made at Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL)** under the **deep sea fishing project**. The project was initiated by **Prime Minister Narendra Modi**.
- The project is **to protect the fishermen from the troubled waters of Palk Bay** and prevent their arrest by the Sri Lankan navy on charges of trespass, through video conferencing from Chennai.
- The CSL has built the vessels at a cost of Rs.81.5 lakh each and has four more orders. Under the project, the beneficiaries are helped to construct the longliners at the cost of **Rs.80 lakh per boat**. The Centre provides **50%** subsidy and the **State government 20%** as the **beneficiaries contributed 10%** and helped to **raise 20% institutional finance**.

Indias First Fulldome 3D Digital Theatre Inaugurated In Kolkata

- Union Culture Minister Mahesh Sharma inaugurated Indias very first **Fulldome 3D Digital Theatre** at the Science City in Kolkata, West Bengal.
- It is fully funded by the Ministry of Culture at a cost of Rs 20 crore.
- **About Culture Minister**

- **Headquarters:** Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi
- **Annual budget :** 2,843.32 crore (US\$400 million) (2018-19 est.)[1]
- **Minister responsible:** Mahesh Sharma, Minister of State

PM Modi flags off the world's first diesel to electric locomotive in Varanasi

- The world's first **electric train engine** converted from a diesel engine flagged off in Uttar Pradesh's Varanasi and is a part of Indian Railways Mission **100 percent electrification and de-carbonization** efforts.
- Work on the project began in December 2017 and it took 69 days to convert two diesel train engines into a twin electric engine of **10,000 HP [Horse Power]**.

Dwarka to house Indias first hi-tech forensic lab

- Union home minister **Rajnath Singh** and **LG Anil Bajjal** inaugurated a state-of-the-art **National Cyber Forensic Lab (NCFL)** and the **Delhi Police's cyber crime unit 'CyPAD'** at Dwarka, Sector 16C.
- Called the **Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C)**, the lab will have equipments to deal with memory forensics, image enhancement, network forensics, malware forensics, crypto-currency forensics, recovery of damaged hard drives and advanced mobile forensics.
- It is the **first cybercrime** awareness and detection center in India.
- Rajnath Singh also felicitated 15 school teachers who have done commendable work as 'Cyber Awareness Mitras'.

Cabinet approved the new National Electronics Policy

- The **Union Cabinet** approved the **new National Electronics Policy 2019** that aims to achieve a turnover of **\$400 billion (about Rs.26 lakh crore)** for the **Electronics System Design and Manufacturing (ESDM)** sector by 2025, while generating employment opportunities for one crore people.
- To promote the creation of an ecosystem, the NEP 2019 has pitched for **2.0 version of the Electronics Manufacturing Cluster scheme**, under which infrastructure support will be provided for a group of industries that are part of the product supply chain rather than individual industries.

Punjab FM Manpreet Singh Badal presented the Rs 1,58,493 crore state budget for FY 2019-20

- State budget of **Rs. 48,663.90 crore** was presented by Finance Minister Prakash Pant who described it as a balanced budget by prioritising education, health, agriculture, employment generation in rural areas, infrastructure, housing and urban development.
- It is said to be a surplus budget with the total expenditure for the Financial Year 2019-20 standing around 48,663.90 crore and total earnings for the period around Rs 48,679.43 crore.
- Interest-free loans of up to Rs 1 lakh shall be provided to poor and small farmers.
- Interest-free loans amounting to Rs 5 lakh shall be given to self-help groups involved in agro-related activities.
- Rs 1,341 crore have been allocated to agriculture and horticulture in the budget while Rs 3,141.34 crore have been allocated to rural development and Panchayati Raj department.
- Rs 2,545.40 crore have been allocated for medical health, family welfare and medical education while Rs 1,073 crore for the education sector.
- **About Uttarakhand**
 - Capital- Dehradun
 - Chief Minister- T.S Rawat
 - Governor- Baby Rani Maurya

PM Modi inaugurated Madan Mohan Malviya Cancer Centre of BHU

- The new Cancer Centre at Banaras Hindu University (BHU) is built at a cost of **Rs 500 crore** and aims to provide **affordable cancer care** to patients in Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Bihar, Uttarakhand and even neighbouring countries like Nepal.
- He also inaugurated **Homi Bhabha Cancer Hospital** in Lehartara.

Cabinet approves 3 percent hike in Dearness Allowance for central govt employees

- **Dearness Allowance (DA)** to central government employees and **Dearness Relief** to pensioners has been increased from **9% to 12%** with effect from January 1, 2019.

- This move will benefit 48.41 lakh central government employees and 62.03 lakh pensioners.
- The combined impact on the exchequer on account of both DA and DR would be **Rs 9,168.12 crore** per annum and **Rs 10,696.14 crore** in 2019-20 (for a period of 14 months from January 2019 to February 2020).
- Previously, the Cabinet had increased dearness allowance in March **2018**, from **5% to 7%** in accordance with the recommendations of the 7th Central Pay Commission (CPC).

Eco Circuit Project in Kerala inaugurated by K.J. Alphons

- K.J. Alphons, Union Minister for Tourism inaugurated the project Development of Eco Circuit: Pathanamthitta Gavi Vagamon Thekkady under the Swadesh Darshan scheme of Ministry of Tourism at Vagamon, Kerala.
- **About Ministry of Tourism:**
- **Formed:** 1967
- **Headquarters:** New Delhi
- **Minister responsible:** Alphons Kannanthanam
- It is responsible for the formulation and administration of the rules, regulations and laws relating to the development and promotion of tourism in India.

Kerala Police inducts India's first humanoid robot officer

- Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan inducted India's first humanoid robot '**KP-BOT**', gendered female, into the Kerala Police force at the rank of Sub-Inspector (SI).
- It'll receive the visitors & direct them to different places according to their needs.
- **About Kerala:**
- Capital: Thiruvananthapuram
- Chief minister: Pinarayi Vijayan
- It is the Land of Coconut Trees And Backwaters.
- Kerala has the highest literacy rate in India.

International Vision Zero Conference to promote Occupational Safety and Health inaugurated in Mumbai, Maharashtra



- International Vision Zero Conference was inaugurated in Mumbai, Maharashtra to promote occupational safety and health.
- The Conference was organized by Directorate General Factory Advice and Labour Institutes (DGFASLI), Ministry of Labour and Employment, German Social Accident Insurance (DGUV), Germany along with Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay and International Social Security Association Manufacturing, Construction and Mining. It was inaugurated by Shri Heeralal Samariya, Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Employment.
- Vision Zero is based on four principles:
 - Life is non-negotiable.
 - Humans are fallible.
 - Limits of tolerance defined by physical resistance of humans.
 - People are entitled to safe transport and safe workplaces.
- **About Maharashtra**
 - Capital- Mumbai
 - Chief Minister- Devendra Fadnavis
 - Governor- C. Vidyasagar Rao

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.
- The swine flu virus is harbored in pigs but transmitted through the inhalation of contaminated droplets of moisture or through contact with a contaminated surface and a persons eyes, nose or mouth. The Drug Controller General of India instructed 10,000 licensed pharmacies across India to increase their stocks of the two main drugs used to treat swine flu, **Oseltamivir and Tamiflu**. The Indian government has initiated to educate citizens on Swine flu symptoms/precautions.

Sri Lankan students awarded the Mahatma Gandhi scholarships for study in India

- **150 Sri Lankan students** all 25 districts were awarded the prestigious Mahatma



Gandhi scholarships for study in India. The Scholarships were awarded by Sri Lankan Education Minister **Akila Viraj Kariyawasam** and **Indian High Commissioner Taranjit Singh Sandhu** at a special ceremony in Colombo.

- **Mahatma Gandhi Scholarships:**

- The Mahatma Gandhi Scholarships are instituted in 2006-07 for Sri Lankan students. It is awarded annually by the High Commission of India in cooperation with the Ministry of Education of Sri Lanka.

- The High Commission of India has increased the scholarship amount from Rs. 2,000 to 2,500 per month from 2015-16 onwards and accordingly; this year's awardees will receive Rs.30,000 annually during their two years of 'Advanced Level studies.

- **Sri Lanka:**

- **President:** Maithripala Sirisena

- **Prime Minister:** Ranil Wickremesinghe

- **Capital:** Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte

- **Official languages:** Sinhala, Tamil

- **Currency:** Sri Lankan rupee (LKR)

PF interest rate hiked for first time since FY16 to 8.65 percent

- The **Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO)** has hiked interest rate on employees' provident fund (PF) deposits by **0.10 per cent** from **8.55%** to **8.65%** for the 2018-19 financial year.

- This move will benefit six crore EPFO subscribers.

- The fund, which consists **retirement savings** of over **Rs 11 lakh crore**, is managed by the EPFO.

- **About Provident Fund (PF):**

- Another name - Pension fund

- A stipulated amount (currently 12%) is deducted from the employee's salary and contributed towards the fund, so that he can use the same at retirement or in need.

- Provident Fund can be withdrawn in below three cases:

- 1) At the time of retirement (On or after 58 years of age)

- 2) If unemployed for two months of time

- 3) Death before the specified retirement age

MHA granted power to arrest anyone to Assam Rifles in the Northeast

- **Assam Rifles**, deployed along the Myanmar border, has been empowered by the **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)** to arrest anyone and search a place without a warrant in the border districts of **Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Nagaland, and Mizoram**.
- The Assam Rifles has been given these powers under the Code of Criminal Procedure.
- Earlier, Assam Rifles was making arrests only in areas where the **Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act was in effect**. Since, they were finding it difficult to make seizures and arrest in Mizoram, which doesn't have AFSPA. The MHA had lifted AFSPA from some areas of Arunachal Pradesh in 2018.
- **Ministry of Home Affairs:**
 - **Formed:** 1947
 - **Headquarters:** Raisina Hill, New Delhi
 - **Minister responsible:** Rajnath Singh
 - It is responsible for the maintenance of internal security and domestic policy

Rare frog species discovered in Arunachal Pradesh

- A rare **frog** species was found by Scientists at Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) in Lower Subansiri district of Arunachal Pradesh.
- It is native to Xizang in China.
- **About Arunachal Pradesh**
 - Capital Itanagar
 - Chief Minister Pema Khandu
 - Governor Dr. B. D. Mishra
- **Important Wildlife Sanctuary/National Parks**
 - Dibang Wildlife Sanctuary
 - Mehao Wildlife Sanctuary
 - Kamlang Wildlife Sanctuary
 - Pakke Tiger Reserve

Tortoise feared extinct for 100 years spotted on Galapagos island

- A species of tortoise- Fernandina Giant Tortoise, labelled by International Union

for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) as critically endangered and possibly extinct for the last 100 years, was rediscovered in Galapagos Island of Fernandina.

- An adult female *Chelonoidis phantasticus*, also called Fernandina Giant Tortoise, was spotted in a joint expedition of the Galapagos National Park and the U.S.-based Galapagos Conservancy, Ecuador.

Jharkhand cuts ribbon for its Sweet Revolution Scheme

- A new scheme launched in the state named as **Mithi Kranti Yojna** in which the government has given approval for the scheme of 100 crores for the launch of the sweet revolution.
- In the first phase, after giving training to the state government 1207 farmers, they are now giving a unit of rupees one lakh rupees for beekeeping.
- It is giving a grant of 80 thousand rupees, while you will get a payment of 20 thousand rupees. In this way, a farmer can earn Rs. 1 lakh 30 thousand annually by investing 20 thousand rupees.

Centre asked ONGC and OIL to see 66 of its firms to private firms

- The Centre advised Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) and Oil India Ltd. (OIL) to sell **66 of their small oil and gas fields** to private firms as it brought in a new policy to boost domestic production and cut imports. The announcement was made by the **Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan**. ONGC and OIL have a total of 184 fields.
- They have been asked to provide enhanced production profile for **66 of these fields**, which contribute **95% of the 36 million tonnes** of annual oil production in the country and given freedom to induct private and foreign partners.

Supreme Court exempted Saridon from list of Banned Drugs

- Piramal Enterprises Ltds (PEL) pain relief tablet brand **Saridon** has been exempted from the list of banned **fixed dose combinations** (FDCs) by the Supreme Court.
- In September 2018, the government had banned **328 FDCs**, which were termed 'irrational' on the basis of safety issues and lack of therapeutic justification.

Saudi-backed USD 44bn refinery may now come up in Maharashtra's Raigad

- Saudi Arabia-backed **\$44-billion Ratnagiri refinery project** may be shifted to neighbouring **Raigad** district in Maharashtra.
- Following **farmer protests**, Maharashtra stopped land acquisition for the refinery at the proposed site at **Nanar** village in Ratnagiri.
- Thousands of farmers refused to surrender land for the project, as it could affect Alphonso mango and cashew plantations.

Kareena Kapoor Khan named brand ambassador of Swasth Immunised India

- **Kareena Kapoor** Khan named as the brand ambassador of Swasth Immunised India, a year-long campaign initiated by Network18 and Serum Institute of India which promotes immunisation of babies under two years of age.
- The campaign was launched at **Mumbai and Adar Poonawalla**, President, Vaccine Manufacturers Association of India and CEO, Serum Institute of India (SII).

Odisha govt launched boat ambulance service for remote areas

- The project, which costs around **5.40 crore**, reportedly includes six boat ambulances and 60 jetties with walkway.
- This new facility is hope for residents who live in far-flung areas, river-locked pockets of the state, making it easier for them to reach the hospitals.
- **About Odisha:**
 - Capital: Bhubaneswar
 - Governor: Ganeshi Lal
 - Chief minister: Naveen Patnaik
 - Principal Language: Oriya
 - Famous dances - Odissi (Orissi), Ghumura, Chhau

UP launched the Phase I of route rationalization under Connect Delhi

- The **Uttar Pradesh government** has launched the first phase of **route rationalization** under an initiative **Connect Delhi**. This initiative seeks to effectively link residents of the rural belt with State-run transport infrastructure.

- Connect Delhi will rationalize the **bus and feeder services in the city** with a vision that **all residential areas and villages of Delhi** are connected with a reliable public transport facility within 500 metres of walking distance at a frequency of 15 minutes.
- The initiative would improve connectivity of Najafgarh to Mori Gate Terminal (ISBT Kashmere Gate) via Uttam Nagar and Inderlok, Nehru Place Terminal via Palam, Ambedkar Nagar Terminal via Kapashera, and Saket and Azadpur Terminal via Peeragarhi.

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

- Bihar becomes the first state to deploy specially-trained dogs to check to smuggle of liquor.
- Around 20 liquor-tracker dogs were trained for nine months in Hyderabad, Telangana.
- They were trained at Hyderabad-based Integrated Intelligence Training Academy.
- Patna will witness deployment of 4 such dogs.
- This action was taken after the seizure of more than three million litres of illegal alcohol since April 2016.

44th Global Summit of International Advertising Association held in Kochi

- The **44th IAA World Congress** was organised in Kochi International Advertising Association (IAA), Kerala
- The conference lasted for 3 days.
- The highlight of the event was a robot trying to answer the theme-based question-**Brand Dharma, Whats coming next?**

Jio Saavn only Indian company to make it to 50 Most Innovative Companies list

- Jio Saavn India-based global audio and music that it scored the 1st rank among Indian companies and 28th rank globally in the 2019 list of **50 Most Innovative Companies**.
- Jio Saavn is the only Indian company to have made into the list.
- The other domestic companies that ranked top on the India list of Most Innovative



Companies are OYO rooms, biodegradable sanitary pad manufacturers Sathi and app based can service Ola.

Punjab ranks first in highest alcohol consumption among kids

- According to a survey conducted by AIIMS New Delhi, **Punjab** ranks **first** in the list of **highest alcohol consumption** among **children** in India.
- As many as **1.2 lakh** children in the age group of 10-17 years from the state consume alcohol.
- West Bengal ranked second in the list and Maharashtra third.
- **About Punjab:**
- Capital: Chandigarh
- Governor: V.P. Singh Badnore
- Chief minister: Amarinder Singh
- Official language: Punjabi
- Largest city: Ludhiana

ONGC Rajahmundry wins environmental excellence award

- **Oil and Natural Gas Corporation(ONGC)**s Rajahmundry unit won the Energy and Environment Foundation Global Clean Awards-2019 for sustained efforts in pursuit of Swachh Bharat Mission as envisioned by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, at a function in New Delhi.
- **About ONGC**
- Headquarters New Delhi
- Chairman & Managing Director (CMD) Shashi Shankar

India Hosts 4th Global Digital Health Partnership Summit

- **International Olympic Committee (IOC)** suspended all Indian applications to host future events and urged international sports federations not to stage competitions in the country after two Pakistanis were denied visas to compete in New Delhi.
- It was after India denied visa requests of two shooters from Pakistan who were due to take part in the 25m Rapid Fire Pistol Competition during International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup event held in New Delhi following the attack



by a Pakistan-based militant group in Pulwama, which killed at least 40 CRPF paramilitary police.

- The IOC Executive Board decided to suspend all discussions with the Indian National Olympic Committee (NOC) and Government regarding the potential applications for hosting future sports and Olympic-related events in India, until clear written guarantees are obtained from the Indian government to ensure the entry of all participants in such events in full compliance with the rules of the Olympic Charter.

PM Modi inaugurated National War Memorial

- National War Memorial is spread over **40 acres** in the India Gate complex in Delhi.
- The memorial is built at a cost of nearly **176 crore** in a record time of one year.
- The names of **25,942 martyrs** have been inscribed across 16 walls at the memorial.
- First conceptualised in 1961, the memorial got approved by Cabinet in **2015**.
- The memorial has been built in the memory of the martyred jawans who lost their lives protecting India during Indo-China War in 1962, Indo-Pak Wars in 1947, 1965 and 1971, Indian Peace Keeping Force Operations in Sri Lanka and the Kargil Conflict in 1999.
- The memorial layout consists of four concentric circles - namely, the '**Amar Chakra**' or Circle of Immortality, '**Veerta Chakra**' or Circle of Bravery, '**Tyag Chakra**' or Circle of Sacrifice and '**Rakshak Chakra**' or Circle of Protection.

PM Modi unveils world's largest Bhagavad Gita weighing 800 kg

- The world's largest **Bhagavad Gita** at ISKCON temple in south Delhi's East of Kailash, has 670 pages, weighs **800 kg** and is 2.8 metre tall and 2 metre wide (when closed).
- The book is dubbed as the 'Astounding Bhagavad Gita'.
- Bhagavad Gita, often referred to as the **Gita**, is a sacred text, revered by the **Hindus**, and is part of the epic **Mahabharata**, containing the teachings of Lord Krishna to Arjuna on the battlefield.
- ISKCON - International Society for Krishna Consciousness

Union Textile Minister inaugurated Titanwala Museum in Rajasthan



- Union Textiles Minister **Smriti Irani** inaugurated the **Titanwala Museum** that showcases the hand block printing of the Chhipa community in Bagru.
- **Bagru printing** is one of the traditional techniques of printing with natural color followed by the chippas of Rajasthan.
- Suraj Narayan Titanwala took the initiative of setting up the museum.

Centre brought 42 non scheduled cancer drugs under price control

- Centre announced that it had brought **42 non-scheduled anti-cancer drugs** under price control, capping trade **margin at 30%**, which would reduce **their retail prices by up to 85%**.
- The **National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA)** has invoked extraordinary powers in public interest, under Para 19 of the **Drugs (Prices Control) Order, (DPCO) 2013** to bring 42 non-scheduled anti-cancer drugs under price control through trade margin rationalization. **Department of Pharmaceuticals (DOP)** directed manufacturers to fix their retail price based on the price at first point of sale of a product of the non-scheduled formulations containing any of the 42 drugs.
- The NPPA currently fixes prices of drugs placed in the **National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM)** under Schedule-I of the DPCO. So far, around **1,000 drugs** have been brought under price control under the initiative. **Non-scheduled drugs** are allowed an increase of up to **10% in prices** every year, which is monitored by the NPPA.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

ISRO launched GSAT-31 from French Guiana

- **Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISRO) 40th** communication satellite **GSAT-31** has been launched successfully by European launch services provider- **Ariane-5 rocket** from French Guiana. It placed GSAT-31 in the intended **Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit**.
- Weighing about **2,535 kg**, the GSAT-31 will provide continuity to operational services on some of the in-orbit satellites.
- GSAT-31 is to provide **transponder capacity for supporting VSAT networks**, Television uplinks, Digital Satellite News Gathering, DTH television services, cellular backhaul connectivity, and many such applications.

PM JAY App has been launched on Google play store

- **Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY) App** has been launched on Google play store. Ayushman Bharat Yojana or Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY) is a centrally sponsored scheme. The scheme was launched in the **year 2018** under the **Ayushman Bharat Mission of MoHFW** in the country.
- This scheme aims at making interventions in primary, secondary and tertiary care systems, covering both preventive and promotive health, to address healthcare holistically. Moving ahead to digitalization this app is now available on Google Play store.

Saudi plans to launch its first satellite for communications

- **Saudi Arabia** announced the launch of its first **satellite for communications from the French Guiana Space Centre**. Khaled bin Abdulaziz Al-Falih, minister of Energy, Industry and Mineral Resources, said the launch aims at localizing strategic technologies and enabling Saudi young people to work with state-of-the-art technologies in the field of satellite development and manufacturing.
- The satellite will offer multiple applications including **broadband telecommunications** and **secure communications** for remote and disaster-stricken areas.
- The satellite **SGS-1** aims to employ advanced Ka-band capabilities to enable space

communications at ultra-fast speeds, and will offer multiple applications including broadband telecommunications and secure communications for remote and disaster-stricken areas.

Chennai Police Commissioner launches mobile app DigiCop

- Chennai Police Commissioner A.K. Viswanathan launched mobile App **DigiCop** of the city police department at the commissioners office in Chennai.
- This app as of now have details of 18,000 stolen mobile phones are stored.
- Using this app, the user can lodge mobile theft complaints and also check if the users mobile is in the police list of retrieved mobiles.
- Moreover, if someone is buying a phone from a second-hand shop they can verify if the phone is stolen or genuine.
- Using this app, Users can also follow, if their stolen two-wheeler had been traced by the police.

USFDA approved Laurus Labs HIV drug

- **Laurus Labs**, a Pharma firm, has received tentative approval from the **United States Food and Drug Administration (USFDA)** for **Tenofovir/Lamivudine/Dolutegravir (TLD)** 300/300/ 50mg fixed dose combination drug. The product is the preferred first-line regimen for the treatment of people living with HIV.
- It will be available in the generic form in low and middle-income countries. The U.S. health regulator had given tentative approval under the Presidential Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. Meanwhile, the company has received an **Establishment Inspection Report (EIR)** from USFDA for its Unit 6.

India ropes in space technology to track border management

- **India** areas are island development, border security, communication and navigation, GIS and operations planning system, and border infrastructure development.
- The recommendation was given a green signal as Union Minister Rajnath Singh approved use of space technology at the borders.
- The task force headed by Joint Secretary (Border Management) and having



members from Border Security Force (BSF), Department of Space and Border Management division of the Home Ministry consulted all stakeholders including BGFs, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS) and the Ministry of Defence (MoD).

Inkjet solar panels set to produce solar panels under lower temperatures

- Polish physicist and businesswoman **Olga Malinkiewicz** has developed a novel **inkjet processing method for perovskites**, a new generation of cheaper solar cells, that makes it possible **to produce solar panels under lower temperatures**, thus sharply reducing costs.
- Solar panels coated with the mineral are light, flexible, efficient, inexpensive and come in varying hues and degrees of transparency. They can easily be fixed to almost any surface, be it **laptop, car, drone, spacecraft or building**, to produce electricity, including in the shade or indoors.
- Perovskite has been known to science since at least the **1830s**. It was first identified by German mineralogist Gustav Rose while prospecting in the Ural mountains and named after **Russian mineralogist Lev Perovski**.

Hubble discovers NGC 6752, dwarf galaxy in cosmic neighbourhood

- The **Hubble Space Telescope** has made an unexpected discovery of a **new dwarf galaxy in the cosmic backyard**. The dwarf galaxy is located just 30 million light-years away.
- An international team of astronomers used the NASA/ESA Hubble Space Telescope to study white dwarf stars within the globular cluster NGC 6752.

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

- **Facebook** acquired US-based virtual search start-up, GrokStyle, at an undisclosed amount.
- GrokStyle was founded in 2015 and is based in San Francisco, USA.
- The basic idea is to allow users to match a piece of furniture or a light fixture in an image to visually find similar ones in stock at stores.
- **About Facebook**
- Chairman & CEO Mark Zuckerberg



- Headquarters California, USA

Solid Fuel Ducted Ramjet (SFDR),indigenously developed missile system successfully flight tested in Odisha

- The second indigenously developed **Solid Fuel Ducted Ramjet (SFDR)**, propulsion-based missile system was successfully flight tested from ITR, Chandipur, Odisha, by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- Unlike conventional rockets that carry propellant and oxidizer, Ramjet uses the air as an oxidizer just like a jet engine, and hence, the weight of the fuel required is eliminated.
- SFDR propulsion is designed in such a way that it allows for an up and down throttling which further lets the missile to amplify its speed until it reached the terminal phase of flight. The first flight of SFDR, developed under a joint Indo-Russian R&D project, was tested in 2018. The Indian SFDR will be used as variants of missiles such as the advanced version of ASTRA.

Himalayan Cloud Observatory set up in Tehri

- A **Himalayan Cloud Observatory** is set up in **Tehri district** with a motive to forecast and monitor cloudburst incidents in the Himalayan region and help to minimise the damage.
- The Observatory is established in the SRT campus,in Tehri and is in the testing period.
- This is the second observatory in the country.

e-AUSHADHI portal launched for licensing of AYUSH medicine

- Minister of State for AYUSH, **Shripad Yesso Naik** launched the e-AUSHADHI portal, for online licensing of Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani and Homoeopathy drugs and related matters.
- AUSHADHI is an acronym for Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy Automated Drug Help Initiative.

NASAs Opportunity rover declared dead by NASA



- **During 14 years** of intrepid exploration across **Mars**, **NASAs Opportunity rover** advanced human knowledge by confirming that water once flowed on the **red planet** but it has **analyzed its last soil sample**.
- In June 2018, NASA lost contact with the rover during a dust storm. It was declared officially dead on **13th February 2019**. It ended one of the most fruitful missions in the history of space exploration. Unable to recharge its batteries, **Opportunity** left hundreds of messages sent from the earth unanswered over the months. NASA said it made its last attempt at contact on **12th February 2019**.

NASA to launch SPHEREx mission in 2023 to explore universe's origins

- 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 - shortly **SPHEREx**.
- NASA is aiming for a 2023 launch and has already earmarked **\$242 million** for the project.
- Once SPHEREx is already in orbit, it will observe and collect data on over **300 million galaxies**, some as far as **10 billion light-years** away from Earth, and 100 million stars in our own Milky Way every six months.
- **Main goals of SPHEREx mission:**
- To search for water and organic molecules within the Milky Way.
- To find more clues on how our universe formed and evolved.

NASA plans to send astronauts on Moon in 2028

- **NASA**, The U.S. space agency, plans to send **American astronauts back on the Moon by 2028**, with unmanned demonstration missions in **2024 and 2026**. Bridenstine laid out the space agency's plan to support the development of commercial hardware capable of landing astronauts on the Moon. The mission architecture represents a dramatic shift from the way NASA had put humans on the Moon when **Apollo 11 in July 1969** put Neil Armstrong as the first man to walk on the lunar surface.
- The procurement plan, as laid out in a document known as a **Broad Agency Announcement**, calls for commercial ventures to propose concepts for a descent

module, a space refueling system and a transfer vehicle by March 25. In May, NASA would select several companies for an initial six-month phase to study and develop in this line and will allocate up to **\$9 million** to each company. Astronauts would make their first trip to the **lunar surface in 2028**. NASA's plan calls for four astronauts to spend as long as seven days on the Moon.

Symantec has launched Email Fraud Protection

- **Global cybersecurity company Symantec** has launched **Email Fraud Protection**, an automated solution, to help organizations **block fraudulent emails** from reaching enterprises.
- It aims to reduce workload for IT departments and eliminate the need to manually manage email security configurations while combating Business Email Compromise attacks. The solution is now available as part of **Symantec's Email Security Solution and Integrated Cyber Defence Platform**. With this solution, email authentication standards are met by automatic monitoring of approved third-party senders.

First Israeli private lunar mission set to be launched

- **SpaceIL**, an Israeli Private company, is to launch what it hopes will be the **first private spacecraft to land on the moon** in the 4th week of February 2019. SpaceIL and State-owned **Israel Aerospace Industries** said that the spacecraft, dubbed Beresheet, or Genesis, will ship from Florida, where, propelled by a SpaceX rocket, it will commence its voyage to the moon.

Indias First Fulldome 3D Digital Theatre Inaugurated In Kolkata

- Union Culture Minister Mahesh Sharma inaugurated India's very first **Fulldome 3D Digital Theatre** at the Science City in Kolkata, West Bengal.
- It is fully funded by the Ministry of Culture at a cost of Rs 20 crore.
- **About Culture Minister**
- **Headquarters:** Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi
- **Annual budget :** 2,843.32 crore (US\$400 million) (2018-19 est.)[1]
- **Minister responsible:** Mahesh Sharma, Minister of State

Scientist developed the first walking robot to navigate without GPS

- **AntBot** is the first walking robot to **have navigational capabilities without GPS or mapping**. It has been designed by **Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS)** and Aix-Marseille University researchers at ISM, on lines similar to desert ants who use polarised lights and UV radiation to navigate in space.
- It consists of an **optical compass** which determines its movements by **the help of polarised light**. Weighing only 2.3 kg, this robot has six feet for increased mobility, allowing it to move in complex environments, precisely where deploying wheeled robots and drones can be complicated.

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. The team plans to create images of the northern sky, which they say will reveal as many as 15 million as-yet undetected radio sources.
- Radio astronomy allows scientists to **detect radiation produced when massive celestial objects interact**. The LOFAR telescope is made up of a network of **radio antenna across seven countries**, forming the equivalent of a 1,300-km diameter satellite dish.

PM Modi inaugurated supercomputer 'PARAM Shivay' at IIT-BHU

- Supercomputer named '**PARAM Shivay**' of 833 teraflop capacity is built for **32.5 crore**, at IIT-Banaras Hindu University (BHU).
- It will include 1 peta byte secondary storage.
- It was built under the **4,500-crore National Supercomputing Mission (NSM)**, under which 73 supercomputers would be installed.
- Indias **first** supercomputer called **PARAM 8000** was launched in **1991**.

NARI decided to drop focus on AIDS and undergo change name

- The **National Aids Research Institute (NARI)** decided to drop its focus on research into the Acquired Immuno-deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and to undergo a name change in the coming months.
- It will no longer serve as a single disease centre, after observing a major drop in a number of
- It will address other areas of public health too and apply the same knowledge and expertise to other fields of public health as well.
- **About NARI**
- Director Dr. Samiran Panda
- Headquarters Pune, Maharashtra

Law ministry launched Nyaya Bandhu, a tele law mobile application

- The **Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad** launched **Nyaya Bandhu**, a tele-law mobile application. The application will benefit **73,000 paralegal volunteers (PLVs) of National Legal Service Authority and State Legal Services Authorities (SLSA)** in the country who will be associated under Tele-Law service.
- **Ministry of Law and Justice:**
- **Formed:** 1833
- **Headquarters:** Raisina Hill, New Delhi
- **Minister responsible:** Ravi Shankar Prasad
- It deals with the management of the legal affairs, legislative activities and administration of justice in India
- **3 departments** under the Law ministry are:
 - 1) Legislative Department
 - 2) Department of Legal Affairs
 - 3) Department of Justice

Scientist says that tiny Neptune moon may be result of cosmic collision

- Scientist says that **Neptunes tiny, mysterious moon**, maybe a chipped-off piece from a larger moon as a result of a collision with a comet that took place billions of years ago. **NASA's Hubble Space Telescope** had discovered **Hippocamp in 2013**.
- Astronomers call it the moon that shouldn't be there. Researchers discovered that

the tiny moon, named Hippocamp, is unusually close to a much larger **Neptunian moon called Proteus**. Normally, a moon like Proteus should have gravitationally swept aside or swallowed the smaller moon while clearing out its orbital path.

ECI developed cVIGIL for Lok Sabha election

- **Election Commission of India** has developed **cVIGIL**, a mobile app, for the upcoming **Lok Sabha election**. cVIGIL stands for '**Vigilant Citizen**'. It was launched in **Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala**. Complaints regarding the model code of conduct and expenditure violations can be lodged in during election time.
- **To lodge a complaint**, a voter should download the app from **Google Play Store**. Photos and two-minute video clippings regarding the violation can be uploaded via the app. Complainants also have the option to remain anonymous. Within 100 minutes of filing the complaint, the complainant will receive feedback on the action taken.

World's fastest 1TB microSD card revealed at MWC

- Two **1 terabyte microSD** cards were revealed by companies Western Digital-owned **SanDisk** and **Micron** during Mobile World Congress (MWC) in Barcelona.
- The 1TB SanDisk Extreme UHS-I microSD card, which the company claims to be the **world's fastest**, reaches speeds of up to **160 Mbps**.
- While Micron's card, claimed to be the **world's first**, reaches speeds of up to **100 Mbps**.

ISRO to launch defence satellite 'Emisat' in March for DRDO

- In the special mission, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will also launch **28 third-party satellites** and will demonstrate its new technologies like three different orbits with a new variant of 'Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle' (PSLV) rocket in **March, 2019**.
- **Electronic intelligence** satellite '**Emisat**' of Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) weighs about **420 kg**.
- After launching Emisat at an altitude of **763 km**, the PSLV rocket will be brought down to put the remaining 28 satellites into orbit at an altitude of 504 km.
- **About ISRO:**



- Space agency of the Government of India
- Headquarters: Bengaluru
- Founder: Vikram Sarabhai
- Founded: 15 August 1969
- Director: Kailasavadivoo Sivan

First Indian made Centaur rocket was successfully launched at Thumba, Kerala

- The **first Indian-made Centaur rocket** was successfully launched from the **Thumba equatorial rocket station, Kerala** on 26th February 2019 to the great jubilation of a large number of scientists.
- **Dr. Vikram Sarabhai, Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission** and Indian National Committee for Space Research, described that the flight of the two-stage sounding rocket as very satisfactory. It was hailed as a momentous event. India is now on the path to long-range development of superior rockets, which will take us to the goal of satellite launching in **five years**.



ENVIRONMENT

MoEF approved bullet train via flamingo and Sanjay Gandhi national park

- A committee, chaired by **Union Environment Minister Harsh Vardhan**, approved wildlife clearance to the Mumbai-Ahmedabad fast bullet train corridor that encroaches upon a **Thane Creek Flamingo Sanctuary** and the **Sanjay Gandhi National Park**, the home to leopards, in Mumbai.
- The proposal involves diversion of 3.2756 ha of forestland from the Thane Creek Flamingo Wildlife Sanctuary and 97.5189 ha of land close to the boundary of the forests protected area. The project for one of India's first bullet trains was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Japanese counterpart **Shinzo Abe in Ahmedabad** in September 2017. It is expected to be ready by 2022.
- **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change:**
- The Ministry is responsible for planning, promoting, coordinating, and overseeing the implementation of environmental and forestry programmes in the country
- **Formed:** 1985
- **Headquarters:** New Delhi, India
- **Minister:** Dr. Harsh Vardhan

EDMC signed MoU with NTPC for waste management

- The **East Delhi Municipal Corporation (EDMC)** signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** with the **National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC)** for the disposal and management of solid waste in its jurisdiction.
- The NTPC will be setting up an integrated waste management plant which will have a capacity to process **2,000 MT of garbage**. The plant will have a waste to energy component to generate electricity as well as composting of waste to generate CNG.

Study says that Climate change threatens underwater forests

- A study says **Climate change** could lead to a **decline of underwater kelp forests** by impacting their microbiome. Ocean warming can change microbes on the kelp surface, leading to disease and potentially putting fisheries at risk. Blistering and bleaching of the kelps surface impact their ability to photosynthesize.

JSW Steel gets LoI for BPSL

- **JSW Steel** has received the **Letter of Intent (LoI)** from the resolution professional of **Bhushan Power & Steel Limited (BPSL)**, taking the country's largest steelmaker a step closer towards the acquisition of the insolvent company.
- The development comes more than a week after the **National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT)** on February 4, turned down Tata Steels request to consider its bid as the most legitimate one for BPSL. It confirms the resolution plan will be submitted to the National Company Law Tribunal after the company's approval. JSW Steel topped Tata Steels offer of **Rs.17,000 crore with Rs.19,650 crore bid.**

NBWL approved the 99.82 percent projects in forests

- Indias apex **National Board for Wildlife (NBWL)**, charged with allowing forest land in Protected Areas to be diverted for industry, **cleared 682 of the 687 projects (99.82%)** that came up for scrutiny. Only five projects were rejected since August 2014.
- 2017 analysis by the **Centre for Science and Environment analysis** said that from 2009-2013, the **United Progressive Alliance (UPA)** recommended 260 of the 328 that came into its purview or about 80% of the projects. It had deferred nearly 243 projects after 2013. The environment ministry has delegated all powers of the NBWL to a compliant Standing Committee which regularly meets and clears projects in Protected Areas with little due diligence.

SC set aside NGTs decision to reopen Sterlite copper plant at Thoothukudi

- The **Supreme Court on 18th February set aside** the National Green Tribunal (NGT) decision to **reopen the Sterlite copper plant at Thoothukudi.** The plant had been ordered to be closed down by the Tamil Nadu government due to **environmental pollution.**
- The tribunal, in its **December 15** order, directed the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB) to pass fresh orders of renewal of consent and issue an authorization to Vedanta Limited to handle hazardous substances.
- A Bench led by Justice Rohinton Nariman concluded that the **tribunal lacked**

jurisdiction to entertain the appeal by the plant's owner, Vedanta, against the shutdown. The Tamil Nadu State contended that Vedanta had not been complying with pollution norms, and the situation had severely deteriorated since 1996.

Aussie rodent becomes world's 1st mammal to go extinct due to climate change

- **Australia** officially declared a **Great Barrier Reef rodent** extinct, making it the first mammal believed to have been killed off by human-induced climate change.
- The small brown rat has not been seen since **2009**.
- It was found only on a small sand island near the coast of **Papua New Guinea**.
- According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature, **Australia** has the **third highest extinction rate** of all nations, surpassed by only French Polynesia and the Republic of Mauritius.

BILLS & ACTS

AP Assembly cleared Kapu sub castes, EWS Bills

- The **Andhra Pradesh Assembly** passed the **Bills for 5% reservation** each for the **Kapus** (Kapus, Telaga, Ontari and Baliya sub-castes) and other **Economically Weaker Sections (EWS)** in the general category consequent to the **103rd amendment to the Constitution**.
- The Bills are the A.P. EWSs of Citizens (Reservation of Seats in Educational Institutions and of Appointments or Posts in the Public Services under the State for Kapus) Bill, 2019 and the A.P. EWS other than Kapus (Reservation of Seats in Educational Institutions and of Appointments or Posts in Public Services under the State) Bill, 2019.
- The Assembly also passed the A.P. Backward Classes Sub-Plan (Planning, Allocation, and Utilisation of Financial Resources) Bill, 2019 (BC Sub-Plan) after brief debate on its modalities.

Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2019 and triple talaq Bill lapsed

- The **Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2019 lapsed** as the government failed to push it through Rajya Sabha despite a last- ditch effort as the term of the present Lok Sabha ends.
- The Citizenship (Amendment) Bill was seen as violating the terms of the **1985 Assam Accord** that had set March 24, 1971 as the cut-off for granting citizenship.
- Along with the Citizenship Bill, the **triple talaq Bill** that **criminalises instant divorce** in a Muslim marriage has also lapsed.

Centre introduced the Registration of Marriage of Non-Resident Indian Bill

- The government has introduced the **Registration of Marriage of Non-Resident Indian Bill, 2019** in the Parliament. The Bill aims to **arrest the cases of Indian women being trapped** in fraudulent marriages with **non-resident Indians (NRI)**.
- The bill was introduced by the **Minister of External Affairs Sushma Swaraj** in the Rajya Sabha. The Bill proposes to offer greater protection to Indian women married to NRIs and serve as a deterrent to NRIs against harassment of their spouses.

Rajya Sabha cleared law removing leprosy as ground for divorce

- Parliament passed a Bill removing **leprosy as a ground for divorce** under five personal laws, including the **Hindu Marriage Act**. The Rajya Sabha on the last day of the Budget session passed the Bill without debate after consensus on the issue.
- The **Personal Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2018** sought to remove leprosy as a ground for divorce in five personal laws, Hindu Marriage Act, Dissolution of Muslim Marriages Act, Divorce Act (for Christians), Special Marriage Act and the Hindu Adoptions and Maintenance Act.

LS passed the Jallianwala Bagh National Memorial (Amendment) Bill, 2018

- The **Jallianwala Bagh National Memorial (Amendment) Bill, 2018** was passed in Lok Sabha. It amends the **Jallianwala Bagh National Memorial Act, 1951**. The act was provided for the erection of a National Memorial in memory of those killed or wounded on April 13, 1919 in Jallianwala Bagh, Amritsar.
- The Bill provided a **Trust to manage the National Memorial**.
- The Trust as per the 1951 Act includes:
 - (i) the Prime Minister, as Chairperson,
 - (ii) the President of the Indian National Congress,
 - (iii) Minister-in-charge of Culture,
 - (iv) the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha,
 - (v) the Governor of Punjab,
 - (vi) the Chief Minister of Punjab, and
 - (vii) three eminent persons nominated by the central government.
- The 2018 amendment bill removes the President of and the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha. It also says that the leader of the single largest opposition party in the Lok Sabha will be the Trustee.

Cabinet approved the ordinance to curb Ponzi schemes

- The **Cabinet approved** the promulgation of an ordinance with regard to the **Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Bill**, to protect investors from **Ponzi schemes**.
- The **Lok Sabha had passed** the Bill on the last day of the Budget session, but

could not get the approval of the Rajya Sabha.

- The proposed ordinance will tackle the menace of illicit deposit-taking activities launched by rapacious operators who exploiting regulatory gaps and lack of strict administrative measures **to dupe poor and gullible people** of their hard-earned savings. It has provisions for **punishment and repayment of deposits**.
- **Ponzi scheme:**
- Ponzi scheme is a **form of fraud which lures investors** and pays profits to earlier investors by using funds obtained from more recent investors.



DEFENCE

Lt Gen Rajeev Chopra takes over as NCC Director General

- Lt Gen **Rajeev Chopra** took charge as the **Director General of NCC (DGNCC)** in New Delhi.
- He has been awarded **Ati Vishisht Seva Medal** for his distinguished service in January 2018.

INS Dronacharya wins Kochi Area Boat Pulling Regatta 2019

- INS Dronacharya team won the **Regatta trophy** in the area **Pulling Regatta Kochi 2019** of the **(SNC Southern Naval Command)** held in Kochi.
- It is one of the most prestigious and traditional naval sporting activities conducted by the Southern Naval Command.

Defence Ministry approves procurement of 73,000 assault rifles from US

- Defence Minister **Nirmala Sitharaman** approved the procurement of around 73000 Sig Sauer rifles from United States of America under fast track procurement mode in a major move towards infantry modernization.
- USA will have to deliver the Sig Sauer rifles which is used by US forces as well as several other European forces within one year of finalization of the deal.
- The Procured rifles will replace INSAS rifles and the new rifles will be used by the troops deployed along the 3600 km border with China.
- **Ministry of Defence**
 - Union Minister: Nirmala Sitharaman
 - Minister of State: Dr. Subhash Ramrao Bhamre
 - Headquarters: New Delhi

Russia to make 2 types of new missiles

- US announced that it is to **withdraw from the INF treaty**. After the announcement, the **Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu** announced that the country is to make two types of missile in the year 2019-20.
- The two types of missile Russia plans to develop are:

- 1) A **land-based** version of the seaborne Kalibr system equipped with a **long-range cruise missile**
- 2) **Land-based long-range hypersonic missile**
- The United States has repeatedly accused Russia of violating the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) agreement. The INF agreement forbids **ground-launched, short- and intermediate-range missiles**, but not those launched from the air or sea.

India Army chooses the Go Green option; inaugurates 2MW solar power plant in military station

- The **Go Green initiative**, Lieutenant General Surinder Singh, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Western Command inaugurated a **2 MW solar power plant** at Chandimandir.
- This is the largest Solar power project within Western Command of the Indian Army, set up at Chandimandir.
- Considered as one of the largest, the solar power plant in Panchkula (Haryana) was established with an investment of Rs 10 crore.

AMAN 19, the multinational maritime exercise held at Karachi

- The 5-day **multinational maritime exercise AMAN-19** was held at Pakistan Navy Dockyard, Karachi. In this multinational maritime exercise. 46 nations participated from all over the world.
- The aim to conduct this exercise is to facilitate a forum of understanding of each others maritime concepts and operation cultures and to produce ways and means to confront common threat at sea.
- **Pakistan:**
 - Capital: Islamabad
 - PM: Imran Khan
 - President: Arif Alvi

India has signed the U.S. for 72,400 SIG716 assault rifles

- **Ministry of Defence** has signed the U.S. for **72,400 SIG716 assault rifles** for front-line soldiers deployed in operational areas. Of the 72,400 rifles, **66,400 are meant**



for the Army, 2,000 for the Navy and 4,000 for the Air Force.

- The broad parameters for the weapon are an effective **range of 500 m** and a weight of less than 3 kg. The new rifles will replace the **Indian National Small Arms System (INSAS)** rifles.

Exercise Topchi was held at Nashik, Maharashtra

- The **Exercise Topchi** was held at Deolali Camp near **Nashik, Maharashtra**. In this exercise, the Indian Army showcased its artillery firepower by using **ultralight Howitzers and indigenous Swathi weapon-locating radar**. Aviation and surveillance capabilities were also showcased.
- There were a showcase of display of rockets, missiles, surveillance, and target acquisition radars, remotely piloted aircraft and hi-tech equipment in addition to gunfire. The precision displayed while delivering the explosives in the target area stunned all those present.

Three Rafale jets fly to India for Aero India 2019 show

- **French** aerospace major **Dassault Aviation** flew to India three **Rafale fighters** to participate in the 12th edition of **Aero India 2019** air show from February 20-24.
- The biennial international expo is being held at the **Yelahanka** base of the Indian Air Force (IAF) near the Bengaluru international airport.
- India is buying **36** of the twin-engine, delta wing multi-role **Rafale** to replace the ageing Russian-made **MiG-21** fleet of the Indian Air Force over the next four years.

LCA Mark I Tejas got its FOC certification

- **Hindustan Aeronautics Limited's (HAL)'s Mark I (MkI) Tejas**, the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) designed and developed in India has got its FOC certification. The **FOC or Final Operational Clearance** certifies that the world's lightest fighter plane is ready for use. LCA-MkI would soon be inducted into the IAF.
- **Indian Air Force (IAF):**
 - Founded on: October 1932
 - Headquarters: New Delhi
 - Chief of the Air Staff (CAS): Air Chief Marshal Birender Singh



- Vice Chief of the Air Staff (VCAS): Air Marshal Anil Khosla
- Part of: Indian Armed Forces

Lockheed Martin unveiled new F-21 fighter jet to be made in India

- US defence firm, Lockheed Martin, unveiled the F-21 multi-role fighter jet at Asia's biggest air show Aero India-2019, which will be manufactured in India, under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's flagship programme **Make in India**.
- It is specifically configured for the Indian Air Force (IAF) and provides a host of Make in India opportunities and strengthens India's path to an advanced airpower future.
- It will be produced by Lockheed Martin and Tata Advanced Systems.
- **About Lockheed Martin**
- It is a global security and aerospace company that employs approximately 1,05,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture, integration and sustainment of advanced technology systems, products and services.
- **About IAF**
- Chief Air Chief Marshal Birender Singh Dhanoa
- Headquarters New Delhi

Cobra Gold military exercise was held in Thailand

- The annual **Cobra Gold military exercise** was hosted by **Thailand and the United States**. It is 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. In total **9 countries participated**.
- The Indian Army participated in the military training exercise with a **14-member contingent**. India participated in this exercise for the first time in the **Observer Plus** category in 2016 alongside China.

DAC approved purchase of defence equipment worth Rs 2,700 crore

- Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) granted approval for procurement of **three**



cadet training ships for the Indian Navy, which would be utilised to provide basic sea training for officer cadets including women officer under trainees.

- DAC meeting was chaired by Defence Minister **Nirmala Sitharaman**.
- DAC is the highest decision-making body for defence purchases.

India has successfully test fired 2 indigenously developed QRSAM

- India has successfully **test-fired two indigenously developed Quick Reaction Surface-to-Air missiles (QRSAM)** from a test range at Chandipur in **Odisha's Balasore district**. The missile is an all-weather, all-terrain missile with electronic countermeasures against jamming by aircraft radars. QRSAM uses solid-fuel propellant.
- **Quick Reaction Surface-to-Air Missiles**
- The missile is an **all-weather, all-terrain missile with electronic countermeasures** against jamming by aircraft radars
- QRSAM uses **solid-fuel propellant** and has a range of **25-30 km**
- QRSAM has been developed by the **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** in association with **Bharat Electronics Limited and Bharat Dynamics Limited** as a replacement to Osa-AK and Kvadrat missile systems
- This was the **third test firing of QRSAM**
- The first test firing was done on June 4, 2017, and the second on July 14, 2018

AWARDS AND HONOURS

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. Mr. V.P. Singh, former Prime Minister of India, was the first recipient of the award. K. Veeramani is an **Honorary Associate of Rationalist International.**

Karnataka Sahitya Academy awards announced

- The **Karnataka Sahitya Academy** announced **special awards for 2018** to **five writers**, B.A. Vivek Rai, H.S. Venkateshmurthy, Deshamsha Hudagi, Saisuthe, and A.K. Hamppanna, for their contribution to Kannada literature.
- It has also chosen **10 writers for Sahityasri Award 2018**. The winners are K.C. Shivappa, Purushotham Bilimale, C.P. Siddashrama, Parvathi G. Ithal, G. Krishnappa, Satish Kulkarni, Rangaraja Vanadurga, Abdul G. Basheer, Gangaram Chandala, and H.L. Pushpa.
- The writers will be presented a **cash prize of Rs.50,000** each, a citation and a certificate, the Sahityasri award winners would be given **Rs.5,000 each**, a citation and a certificate.

Francois Laborde conferred Frances highest civilian award

- Father **Francois Laborde**, a 92-year-old priest, was conferred the **Lgion dHonneur (Legion of Honour) of France**. This is the highest civilian award. The award is to recognize 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. He was entitled by the **French Ambassador to India, Alexandre Ziegler.**
- Father Laborde had set up Howrah South Point. It is an organization working for the development of specially-abled children, the destitute and the most deprived

sections of the society.

Deepa Mehta To Be Feted With Lifetime Achievement Award

- Acclaimed Indo-Canadian filmmaker Deepa Mehta will be given the Lifetime Achievement Award by the Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television.
- The Canadian Screen Awards are awards given annually by the Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television recognising excellence in Canadian film, English-language television, and digital media productions.

Bradley Cooper wins PETAs Oscar award for A Star is Born

- Bradley Cooper awarded the Oscar 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.

President to present Tagore Award for Cultural Harmony

- Indian President **Ram Nath Kovind** would be presenting the Tagore Award for Cultural Harmony to Rajkumar Singhajit Singh (for the year 2014), Bangladesh cultural organisation Chhayanaut (for 2015) and Ram Sutar Vanji (for 2016), on February 18, 2019.
- The award was instituted by the Union Government in **2012** to recognise the contributions made by Rabindranath Tagore to humanity.
- The award is open to all persons regardless of nationality, race, language, caste, creed or gender.

Raigarh Municipal Corporation of Chhattisgarh won the Swachhata Excellence awards

- The **Raigarh Municipal Corporation of Chhattisgarh** has won the **Swachhata Excellence awards 2019**.
- The Municipal Corporations of Ambikapur of Chhattisgarh won second and the Municipal Corporations of Kumbakonam of Tamil Nadu bagged the third prizes

respectively. The Awards were given by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) as part of the Shehri Samridhi Utsav.

- All of these are **Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) cities**.
- **The Shehri Samridhi Utsav:**
- It was organized by the **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs** from **1st to 15th February 2019**.
- A number of activities and events were organised at the City, State and National level as part of the initiative which aimed at extending the outreach of National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM) to the poorest of the poor and the most vulnerable by showcasing its initiatives and facilitating access of SHG members to the other government schemes.

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.

Union Minister Rathore presented Seventh National Photography Awards

- The **7th National Photography Awards** were presented by **Union Minister of State (IC) for Information & Broadcasting Col. Rajyavardhan Rathore**. The seventh edition of National Photography Awards was organized at **National Media Centre in New Delhi**. The theme for the Professional category was "**Women-led Development**" and Amateur category was "**Fairs and Festivals of India**".
- Lifetime Achievement Award - Shri Ashok Dilwali
- Professional Photographer of the Year - Shri SL Shanth Kumar
- Amateur Photographer of the Year - Shri Gurdeep Dhiman
- **National Photography Awards:**

- National Photography Awards are presented by the **Photo Division under Ministry of I&B**
- National Photography Awards aims to promote art and technique of photography and to encourage professional and amateur photographers from all corners of the country

Spain conferred with 'Grand Cross of the Order of Civil Merit' to Sushma Swaraj

- Spanish Government presented this award to Indias External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj in recognition of India's support in evacuating 71 Spanish nationals during **April 2015 Nepal earthquakes**.
- The Operation **Maitri** (Hindi word for Amity and Friendship) was a rescue and relief operation in Nepal launched by the Modi government and Indian armed forces in the aftermath of the April 2015 Nepal earthquake.
- **About Spain:**
- Capital: Madrid
- Currency: Euro
- Prime Minister: Pedro Snchez

Nori is awarded the Lifetime achievement award by Rotary Club

- The **Rotary Club of Vijayawada** is going to present a **Lifetime achievement award Nori Dattatreyyudu** as part of its 114th Rotary Day celebration. He is a world-renowned radiation oncologist and Padma award winner.
- Dr. Dattatreyyudu is currently professor and executive vice-chairman of the The New York Presbyterian Weill Cornell Medicine Radiation Oncology Department in New York.
- Born in Krishna district the oncologist did his schooling in Machilipatnam, under-graduation in Kurnool Medical College and postgraduation in Osmania Medical College. The award will be presented to him at a function held in Vijayawada.

Oscars winners 2019, India-based film on menstruation wins Best Short Documentary Oscar

- India-based '**Period. End of Sentence.**' has won the Oscar 2019 for Best



Documentary Short Subject at the **91st** Academy Awards.

- **The Oscars 2019 went to:**
- **Best Actress:** Olivia Colman, The Favourite
- **Best Actor:** Rami Malek, Bohemian Rhapsody
- **Best Supporting Actress:** Regina King, If Beale Street Could Talk
- **Best Supporting Actor:** Mahershala Ali, Green Book
- **Best Picture:** Green Book
- **Best Director:** Alfonso Cuaron (Roma)
- **Best Foreign Film:** Roma (Mexico)
- **Best Animated Feature Film:** Spider-Man: Into The Spider-Verse
- **Best Documentary Short:** Period. End Of Sentence

Manpreet Singh won 2018 Asian Player Of The Year Award

- Indian skipper **Manpreet Singh** has been honoured with the 2018 Player of the Year award by the **Asian Hockey Federation**.
- Women's team striker **Lalremsiami** bagged the **Rising Player of The Year** prize.
- The Indian men's Hockey team was awarded the **Best Performance** of The Year for being the only Asian side to have reached the top eight at the World Cup in Bhubaneswar.
- **About Asian Hockey Federation:**
- Governing body of Hockey in Asia
- President: Tengku Abdullah Sultan Ahmad Shah
- Founded: 1958
- Headquarters: Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- Motto: Ever onwards
- Member associations: 31

IRCTC Rail Connect mobile app win National e-Governance Award 2019

- Railway's ticket booking mobile application - IRCTC Rail Connect mobile app and the **Chhattisgarh** government's '**Khanij online**' and **14** other such IT projects have been chosen for **National e-Governance Awards 2019**.
- **Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC)** Rail Connect mobile app, launched in **January 2017**, has been chosen for the **special jury** award

for excellence in government process re-engineering for digital transformation.

- Railways collected revenue of over **Rs 5,800 crore** in 2018-19 (till December) through the App.
- National e-Governance Awards will be presented by Minister of State for Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions **Jitendra Singh**.

Telanganas 4 ULBs bagged Swachh Survekshan 2019 awards

- **Telanganas four Urban Local Bodies (ULBs)** bagged **Swachh Survekshan-2019 awards**. Siddipet, Sircilla, Boduppal, and Peerzadiguda are the four Urban Local Bodies. The awards would be presented by **President Ram Nath Kovind** and others at a ceremony to be held in **Delhi on March 6**.
- Every year, cities and towns across India are awarded the title of '**Swachh Cities**' on the basis of their cleanliness and sanitation drive as a part of the **Swachh Bharat Abhiyan** that was launched in 2014.
- The objective of the survey is to **encourage large scale citizen participation**, ensure sustainability of initiatives taken towards garbage free and open defecation free cities, provide credible outcomes which would be validated by third-party certification, institutionalize existing systems through online processes and create awareness amongst all sections of society about the importance of working together towards making towns and cities a better place to live in.

Mahesh Elkunchwar is to receive META Lifetime Achievement Award

- **Mahesh Elkunchwar**, an eminent Indian playwright, has been chosen for **Mahindra Excellence in Theatre Awards (META) Lifetime Achievement Award 2019**. The award would be conferred on **March 12** during the Mahindra Theater Festival.
- Mahesh Elkunchwar is regarded as one of the progressive playwrights of the country and is critically-acclaimed and widely-known for having experimented with a wide range of drama and is considered a powerful force in both Indian and Marathi theatre scene. He has over 30 plays and essays to his credit including works like 'Sultan', 'Holi', 'Garbo', 'Yatanagar', and 'Atmakatha'.
- **META Awards:**
- The META awards were instituted by the **Mahindra Group** with the objective of



becoming a significant platform for celebrating this art. META recognizes theatre's varied elements like playwriting, set, costume and light designing, direction and performance.



SPORTS

India to take on Italy in Davis Cup World Group qualifiers

- **India** will take on **Italy** in the Davis Cup World Group qualifiers beginning in Kolkata.
- The country rely heavily on in-form Prajnesh Gunneswaran and favorable home conditions to upset former champions Italy in their bid to qualify for the inaugural Davis Cup Group Finals.
- Prajnesh will clash with Italian Matteo Berrettini while Andreas Seppi, who will be leading the Italian challenge, will face Ramkumar Ramanathan today in the singles.
- In the doubles match to be played tomorrow at the Centre court, Rohan Bopanna and Divij Sharan will lead India against Italy's duo Marco Cecchinato and Simone Bolleli.
- In the reverse singles, Prajnesh will take on Andre Seppi of Italy and Ramkumar will vie against Matteo Berrettini in the last match.

Vani Kapoor Becomes First Indian To Grab Australian LPGA Card

- Golfer **Vani Kapoor** becomes 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.

Sana Mir becomes first Asian woman to play hundred T20Is

- Former Pakistan women's cricket team skipper **Sana Mir** became the first Asian woman cricketer to play hundred T20 international matches.
- The 33-year-old reached the milestone when she walked into the field for the ongoing third and final T20I against West Indies in Karachi.
- Sana is the sixth woman cricketer to complete a century of T20 Internationals.
- **Daendra Dottin** of West Indies tops the list with a total of 109 T20Is to her name.

Indian squash player Ramit Tandon win Seattle Open title

- Indian squash player **Ramit Tandon** defeated **Egyptian Mohamed El Sherbini** in the finals to win the Seattle Open, a PSA challenger squash Tour event here.



- The top-seeded Indian, who rose to his career high ranking of 58 in the latest February list, won 11-4, 11-7, 2-11, 11-2 for his first PSA title in the new year and fourth title overall in his career.
- Tandon was fluent right through till the final and his only moment of hesitation came in the third game.
- A superior choice of strokes held the Indian in good stead besides the flourish in the finishes up front.

Sports Ministry demands Rs.500 crore for its promotion

- The **Karnataka Ministry for Youth Empowerment and Sports** said that he has sought **Rs.500 crore** for the sports promotion and to build infrastructure facilities in the **State Budget for 2019-20**. Four divisions, the coastal region, Bengaluru, North Karnataka, and Hyderabad Karnataka, have been identified for **sports promotion**.
- The State government is yet to release Rs.5 crore for providing incentives to talented sportspersons and achievers.

FIFA Rankings: India dropped out of 100 and Belgium remains at the top

- AFC Asian Cup in **UAE**, the world ranking list had some changes, in which India is dropped out of the top 100 ranks, but Belgium's pole position remained the same.
- Changes in the Rank List
 - India -103
 - Qatar 55
 - Japan -27
 - Korea Republic -38
 - UAE 67
 - Jordan 97
 - Iraq -80th
 - Iran -22
 - Uzbekistan 89

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.
- Making a strong comeback from the lower back injury that kept her out of action for nearly nine months.

World Government Summit is being held in Dubai, UAE

- The **seventh annual World Government Summit** is being held in **Dubai, UAE**. The World Government Summit is a forum dedicated to **shaping the future of governments**. The Summit is being attended by **4,000 decision-makers from 140 countries** including heads of state, ministers and business leaders.
- The World Government Summit is a global platform dedicated to **shaping the future of governments worldwide**. The Summit sets the agenda each year for the next generation of governments, focusing on how they can harness innovation and technology to solve universal challenges facing humanity. It provides a unique platform to showcase and exchange best practices and smart solutions to the challenges that nations face.

Jamie Chadwick became the 1st female driver to win the MRF challenge title

- **Jamie Chadwick**, female driver from England won the **MRF challenge title**. She made history by becoming the **first female driver** to win the title after scoring a **triple win** in the final round in Chennai, Tamil Nadu.
- **MRF challenge:**
- It is an open-wheel motorsport formula based in India organized by Madras Motor Sports Club. It was inaugurated in 2013.

Domestic hockey extravaganza will witness enthralling matches

- **Hockey India** named **34 players** for the senior men's national camp, beginning February 18 at the Sports Authority of India, Bengaluru, to prepare for the season's first tournament -- Sultan Azlan Shah Cup in Ipoh, Malaysia.
- The team for the 28th Sultan Azlan Shah Cup will be selected from this core group of 34 players after a selection trial is held in Bengaluru in the last week of February.

Argentina, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay announce joint FIFA World Cup 2030 bid

- Chile president **Sebastian Pinera** has announced that Chile, along with **Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay**, will bid to host the **2030 FIFA World Cup**.
- Morocco could also bid for hosting the tournament.
- The **2022** World Cup is controversially set to be held in **Qatar**, with the United States, Mexico and Canada teaming up to host four years later.

Saina Nehwal beats Sindhu to become national champion for 4th time

- World number nine **Saina Nehwal** became the national champion for the fourth time, defeating world number six PV Sindhu in the women's singles final of Senior National Badminton Championship.
- Saina Nehwal had previously won senior nationals in 2006, 2007 and 2017.
- In the men's singles final, **Sourabh Verma** defeated Lakshya Sen in straight games.

Elise Mertens has claimed the Qatar Open 2019 title

- Belgium's **Elise Mertens** has claimed the **Qatar Open 2019 title** held at Doha, Qatar. She defeated the top seed **Simona Halep of Romania** and secured 3-6, 6-4, 6-3 .
- In the 2019 edition, the Men's Singles was won by **R.Bautista Agut of Spain** by beating T. Berdych of Czechoslovakia.
- **About Elise Mertens:**
- Currently, Mertens **ranks 21** in the world rankings
- Mertens has won five singles and six doubles WTA titles as well as 24 ITF titles so far

Chris Gayle announced retirement from ODI cricket after ICC World Cup 2019

- West Indies batsman Chris Gayle has scored the most centuries (23) by a West Indian in the ODI format.
- Gayle has played 284 ODIs, in which he has scored 9,727 runs at an average of 37.12.

- Chris Gayle made his debut against India in 1999 in Toronto in the ODI format.
- He is the only Windies player to get a double ton and the first ever to score at a World Cup.
- **About 2019 Cricket World Cup:**
- 12th edition
- Dates: 30 May, 2019 - 14 Jul, 2019
- Hosts: England, Wales

Indonesia submits formal bid to host 2032 Olympics

- **Muliaman Hadad**, Indonesias ambassador to Switzerland, submitted a formal bid letter from President **Joko Widodo** to the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in Lausanne.
- If Indonesia wins the opportunity to host the summer Olympics 2032, it would become the fourth Asian country to do so, after Japan, South Korea and China
- **India** has also expressed an interest in hosting the 2032 games while **North and South Korea** announced that they might enter a **joint** bid.
- The IOC will announce the 2032 host by 2025.
- The next Olympics will be in **2020** in **Tokyo**, while Paris will host it in 2024 and Los Angeles in 2028.
- **About International Olympic Committee (IOC):**
- Headquarters: Lausanne, **Switzerland**
- Founded: 23 June 1894, Paris, France
- Founders: Pierre de Coubertin, Demetrius Vikelas
- Organises Summer and Winter Olympic Games
- Honorary President - Jacques Rogge
- President - Thomas Bach
- Motto - Citius, Altius, Fortius (Latin: Faster, higher, stronger)
- **About Olympic Games:**
- Held every four years
- World's foremost sports competition
- With more than 200 participating nations

Seventh Strandja Memorial Tournament held in Sofia, Bulgaria

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- **Russia** topped the medals tally with 9 medals (5 Gold and 4 Bronze), followed by India at 2nd rank with 7 medals (3 Gold, 1 Silver, 3 Bronze) and USA at 3rd with 8 medals (2 Gold, 1 Silver, 5 Bronze).
- Asian Games Gold medallist, Amit Phangal, claimed a second successive Gold by defeating Kazakhstans Temirtas Zhussupov by pulling off a dominating 5-0 triumph in the Mens 49 KG category.
- Former junior world champion, Nikhat Zareen (Womens 51 KG) and Meena Kumari Devi (Womens 54 KG), became the first set of Indian Women Boxers to clinch Gold medals in Sofia.
- Manju Rani (Womens 48kg) settled for a Silver after being defeated by Josie Gabuco of Philippines.

Chris Gayle broke Shahid Afridis record for Most Sixes in International Cricket

- West Indies batsman, Chris Gayle, broke the record for **Most Sixes in International Cricket** by achieving a feat of 477 international sixes at the 1st ODI between West Indies and England at the Kensington Oval in Bridgetown, Barbados. It was his 444th match.
- With this he broke the record held by Shahid Afridi who had a total of 476 sixes in international cricket in 524 matches.
- He hit the 477th six in the 15th over bowled by Moeen Ali of England.

Saurabh Chaudhary smashed World Record in ISSF World Cup, secured India's Olympic quota

- The 16-year-old Indian **Shooter Saurabh Chaudhary** claimed gold medal in the men's **10m air pistol** event with a world record score of **245.0** in the final at the season-opening International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) event.
- In addition, he sealed a berth for the **2020 Tokyo Olympics**.

Mayank Markande becomes India's 79th T20I cricketer

- Mayank Markande made his senior Team India **debut** in the first **Twenty20** International against **Australia** in Visakhapatnam.
- The 21-year-old spinner Markande hence became the 79th player to represent India

in the shortest format of the game.

- Markande played for Punjab in domestic circuit and Mumbai Indians in IPL, has taken 99 wickets in 47 professional matches across formats.



ARTS & CULTURE

Naveen inaugurated statue of Guru Padmasambhava

- **Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik** unveiled a 19-foot-high statue of **Guru Padmasambhava**, the founder of Tibetan Buddhism, at Jirang in Gajapati district, Berhampur, **Odisha**.
- This 29 tonne stone statue is placed in the middle of **Padma Sarovar**, a large tank near Padmasambhava Mahavihara, the largest Buddhist monastery in eastern India. The Dalai Lama had inaugurated this monastery in 2010. Tibetan refugees settled in this region over **six decades ago**. Historians claim that Guru Padmasambhava, also known as second Buddha, was born and brought up in Odisha before he left for Tibet.

OBITUARY

Padma Shri R.B.Patil passed away

- **Padma Shri R.B. Patil**, 93-year-old, **passed away** in Hubballi. He established North Karnatakas 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. The mortal remains of the surgeon were kept at his nursing home in Vidyanagar, Hubballi, for people to pay tributes.

Former Afghan interim President Sibghatullah Mojaddedi passed away

- **Former Afghan mujahideen commander Sibghatullah Mojaddedi**, who fought the Soviets and rose to become the countrys interim President after the collapse of the **Afghan communist regime in 1992**, has died at the age of 93. He **passed away** dueto a long illness. His death comes three days before the **30th anniversary of the Soviet** withdrawal from Afghanistan.
- Mr. Mojaddedi served just two months as **interim President under a power-sharing deal** struck by mujahideen leaders. These factions later turned on each other. But he continued to play a prominent role in Afghan politics, particularly after the fall of the Taliban in 2001.In 2003, he served as chairman of the Loya Jirga, or Grand Assembly, that approved the Constitution for a post-Taliban era.

SUMMITS & CONFERENCE

Asia LPG 2019 Summit Held In New Delhi

- Mr. Dharmendra Pradhan, Union Minister for petroleum and natural gas, inaugurated the 2019 Asia LPG summit in New Delhi.
- The summit organized jointly by the major **Indian oil marketing companies (OMCs)** Indian Oil, Hindustan Petroleum and Bharat Petroleum together with the **World LPG Association (WLPGA)** at the Taj Palace Hotel in New Delhi.
- This is the second edition of the Asia LPG Summit, with the first one having been held in 2017.
- This two-day event will focus on **LPG Energy for Life**.

World Sustainable Development Summit 2019 Held At New Delhi

- World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS) 2019, the flagship event of **The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI)**, was inaugurated by Vice President Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi.
- The **theme** of WSDS 2019 was **Attaining the 2030 Agenda: delivering on our promise**.
- Frank Bainimarama, Prime Minister of Fiji was honoured with the Sustainable Development Leadership Award 2019 for his outstanding contributions towards sustainable development in Fiji

Donald Trump and Kim Jong-un held second summit in Vietnam

- US President **Donald Trump** and North Korea's leader **Kim Jong-un** have begun their high-profile second summit in Vietnam's capital, **Hanoi**.
- The main focus of the summit is to discuss **denuclearisation** amid claims from Michael Cohen ahead of public hearing.
- US may announce a formal end to the **Korean War** during the summit.

SCHEMES

Hirkani Maharashtra scheme was launched in Maharashtra

- Union Commerce Minister Suresh Prabhu launched the **Hirkani Maharashtra scheme** to provide a platform for **womens Self Help Groups (SHGs)** and the **District Business Plan Competition** to boost entrepreneurship in Maharashtra.
- The **Maharashtra State Innovation Society (MSInS)**, which comes under the State departments of **Skill Development and Entrepreneurship**, will execute the project with support from officials in the districts.
- Under the Hirkani Maharashtra scheme, womens SHGs will pitch their business plan at the taluka level. Ten groups will be selected from each taluka and **Rs.50,000** will be given to each SHG to implement their idea. Five SHGs at the district level will be selected and **Rs.2 lakh** will be given to each SHG to take their ideas forward.

PM Modi to launch scheme to give Rs 6,000 to farmers on Feb 24

- PM Narendra Modi will launch the **75,000-crore** cash transfer scheme for farmers on February 24 in Uttar Pradesh's Gorakhpur.
- Under the **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi** scheme, announced in the interim budget, **6,000** will be given in three instalments to **12 crore** small farmers holding cultivable land up to **two hectares**.

Andhra Pradesh government to give Rs. 9,000 to farmers

- **Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N.Chandrababu Naidu** announced income support of **Rs.9,000** for small and marginal farmers owning up to five acres in addition to **Rs.6,000** which the Union government sought to directly credit into their bank accounts under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi scheme.
- The **Central scheme** and the one offered by the State will put total **Rs.15,000** in the hands of the small and marginal farmers who constitute a huge chunk of the farming community. For farmers owning more than five acres, the State government has reportedly committed to provide **Rs.10,000**.

CCEA launch of the Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan

- The **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA)**, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the launch of the **Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan (KUSUM)**. The Centre also approved the aid of **Rs.34,422 crore** to provide financial and water security to farmers through harnessing solar energy capacities of 25.75 gigawatts (GW) by 2022.
- The objective of KUSUM is to provide **financial and water security to farmers**.
- **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs:**
- CCEA is chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi
- CCEA has the mandate to review economic trends on a continuous basis, as also the problems and prospects, with a view to evolving a consistent and integrated economic policy framework for the country.
- It also directs and coordinates all policies and activities in the economic field including foreign investment that require policy decisions at the highest level

Odisha government launched KALIA Chhatra Bruti scholarship

- The **government of Odisha** has launched the **Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation (KALIA) Chhatra Bruti scholarship** for the children of farmers. The Scholarship is under the KALIA, a scheme for financing farmers in Odisha.
- **Eligibility for the Scholarship**
- Students should be the children of KALIA beneficiaries
- They should be studying in government professional colleges on merit. The government has launched the 'KALIA Chhatra Bruti' programme so that the children of the farmers excel in the future.
- The State government would spend Rs.10,180 crore over three years until 2020-21 in providing financial assistance to cultivators and landless agricultural labourers benefitting 92% of the cultivators in the state
- The Scheme also proposes interest-free crop loans up to Rs.50,000.

M.P. launched Mukhyamantri Yuva Swabhiman Yojana

- The **Madhya Pradesh government** launched its flagship scheme **Mukhyamantri Yuva Swabhiman Yojana**. It was launched by the **Chief Minister Kamal Nath**.



- This scheme guarantees **100 days of employment every year** to urban youth from Economically Weaker Sections(EWS).The youth under the scheme would be imparted skill development training.Each youth enrolled under the scheme will get total Rs.13,500 for the 100 days period.
- **Maharashtra:**
- **Capital:** Bhopal
- **Governor:** Anandiben Patel
- **Chief Minister:** Kamal Nath
- **Official language:** Hindi

Narendra Modi launched Rs 75,000 Crore PM KISAN scheme from Gorakhpur

- Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) scheme was announced in Piyush Goyal's interim budget 2019-20 and is completely funded by the central government.
- Under the PM-KISAN scheme, **Rs 6,000** will be given to **12 crore farmers** with less than **2 hectares** of land, **per year in three instalments**.

Karnataka launched a major water conservation scheme Jalamrutha

- **Karnataka State government** launched a major water conservation scheme titled **Jalamrutha**, which focuses on drought-proofing measures, including **protection and rejuvenation of water bodies**. The scheme was initiated by the **Rural Development and Panchayat Raj** Department and was cleared by the State Cabinet. Chief Minister **H.D. Kumaraswamy** launched the scheme in Bengaluru.
- Jalamrutha will deploy scientific approaches to **water budgeting, water harvesting, and water conservation** through the use of geospatial data, satellite imagery, topographical and geological data.
- The scheme will be implemented by key line departments of the government, **Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and private sector** institutions. It will operate on a four-tier institutional structure with planning and execution committees being set up at village, taluk, district and State levels.

APPOINTMENTS / RESIGN

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. **YesBank** said that the **Reserve Bank of India** had approved the **interim appointment**.
- **About Yes Bank:**
- **Founded:** 2004
- **Type:** Banking, Financial Services
- **Founder:** Rana Kapoor, Ashok Kapur
- **Headquarters:** Mumbai, Maharashtra
- **Non-Exe Chairman:** Brahm Dutt
- **MD & CEO:** Rana Kapoor
- Yes Bank is **India's 4th largest private sector Bank**

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. He will serve his notice till 31st March 2019.
- 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 in September 2018.
- **About Yes Bank**
- **Headquarters:** Mumbai, Maharashtra
- **Founder:** Rana Kapoor, Ashok Kapur
- **Tagline:** Experience our Expertise

Gupteshwar Pandey took over as the new DGP of Bihar

- **Gupteshwar Pandey**, the Senior IPS officer, took over as the **new Director General of Police of Bihar**. He succeeds K.S.Dwivedi. Mr.Dwivedi has been holding the position since **March 1, 2018**.
- Mr.Pandey has been known for his hands-on style of policing and attempts at making the civil society an active participant in law enforcement.

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. The tenure of incumbent DGP B.S.Sandhu, who was scheduled to retire in September 2018 ended on January 31 after he was granted a three-month extension in service earlier.

Rishi Kumar Shukla is appointed as Director of CBI

- The **Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC)** has approved the appointment of **Rishi Kumar Shukla as Director, CBI**, for a period of **two years**. Shukla is at present Chairman of Madhya Pradesh Police Housing Corporation in Bhopal.
- The CBI chiefs post has been lying vacant since January 10 after the unceremonious exit of **Alok Verma**, who had been engaged in a bitter fight with Gujarat-cadre IPS officer Rakesh Asthana over corruption charges.
- **Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI):**
- **Formed:** 1941 as the Special Police Establishment
- **Headquarters:** New Delhi, India
- **Director:** Rishi Kumar Shukla
- **Parent:** Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions

P.V.Bharathi appointed as the MD and 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 is headquartered in **Mangaluru, India**. She took charge on **February 1, 2019**. The bank has a pan-Indian presence.
- The bank has a network of 2,600 fully automated CBS branches, 3,040 ATMs, and 4,724 branchless banking units across the country.

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

- **Ministry of External Affairs** appointed **Sanjiv Ranjan** as the **Ambassador of India to the Republic of Colombia**.
- Presently he is the Ambassador of India to Argentina. Ranjan who is a 1993 batch Indian Foreign Service officer
- **Ministry of External Affairs:**
- **Formed:** September 1946
- **Headquarters:** Raisina Hill, New Delhi
- **Minister:** Sushma Swaraj
- The Ministry is responsible for the **conduct of foreign relations of India**
- **Colombia:**
- Capital: Bogota
- **Official languages:** Spanish
- **President:** Ivan Duque
- **Currency:** Peso (COP)

Sanjay Kumar Verma concurrently accredited as the next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Marshall Islands

- Shri **Sanjay Kumar Verma** (IFS: 1998), presently Ambassador of India to Japan, concurrently accredited as the next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Marshall Islands, with residence in Tokyo.
- **About Republic of Marshall Islands**
- President Hilda Heine
- Capital Majuro
- Currency US Dollar
- **About Japan**
- Prime Minister Shinzo Abe
- Capital Tokyo
- Currency Japanese Yen

Ruchira Kamboj was appointed as the Ambassador of India to Bhutan

- **Ruchira Kamboj** was appointed as the **Ambassador of India to Bhutan**. She is

currently serving as the High Commissioner of India to South Africa since 2017. She is expected to take up the assignment shortly.

- She is a 1987-cadre **Indian Foreign Service (officer)**. Kamboj has previously served as the Ambassador/PR to Permanent Delegation of India to UNESCO, Paris.

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.
- **Election Commission of India:**
- **Formed:** January 1950
- **Headquarters:** New Delhi
- **Chief Election Commissioner:** Sunil Arora
- **Election Commissioner:** Ashok Lavasa, Sushil Chandra
- It is responsible for administering election processes in India

Ashwani Lohani appointed Air India CMD for second time

- Former Railway Board chairman, **Ashwani Lohani** has been appointed chairman and managing director (CMD) of **Air India** for **second time**.
- Lohani succeeds **Pradeep Singh Kharola**.
- Mr. Lohani's first tenure in Air India was from **August 2015 to August 2017**, during which he helped pilot the organisation to a financial operating profit.
- Lohani has also served as the Chairman of India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC).

Chandigarh's Hina Jaiswal becomes IAF's first woman flight engineer

- She has completed the Flight Engineers course at 112 Helicopter Unit and placed at the Air Force Station, **Yelahanka, Bangalore**.
- She has served as the Chief of firing team and battery commander in a front line Surface to Air Missile squadron, before being selected for the prestigious Flight Engineers Course.
- The flight engineer branch was opened to woman officers in **2018**.

Chandramouli Ramanathan is appointed as the Controller and ASG

- The **United Nations** has appointed Indian official **Chandramouli Ramanathan as the Controller, Assistant Secretary-General (ASG)** in the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance (DMSPC). Chandramouli Ramanathan will take over the position from **Bettina Tucci Bartsiotas of Uruguay**.
- Chandramouli Ramanathan has served as Deputy Controller, Director of Accounts Division, and Chief of Service, IT Services Division. He has nearly 40 years of executive international experience in diverse organizational settings in finance and budget, management and information technology.
- **DMSPC:**
 - It is launched on 1 January 2019
 - It is aimed to provide strategic policy leadership in all areas of management through a clear, integrated global management strategy and policy framework.

Supreme Court appoints D.K. Jain as the first ombudsman of BCCI

- Supreme Courts former judge Justice **DK Jain** appointed as the **first Ombudsman** of the BCCI (Board of Control for Cricket in India) to resolve disputes under the cricket board's **new constitution**.
- He will decide quantum of punishments for players **KL Rahul** and **Hardik Pandya** over their comments on women in 'Koffee with Karan'.
- Supreme court in its August 9, 2018 judgement had recommended the appointment of ombudsman.
- **About BCCI:**
 - Board of Control for Cricket in India
 - National governing body for cricket in India
 - Founded: December 1928
 - President: C.K. Khanna
 - Headquarters: Mumbai
 - Chief Executive: Rahul Johri
 - Women's coach: W.V.Raman
 - Men's coach: Ravi Shastri

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.

Trump appointed Kelly Knight Craft as US ambassador to United Nations

- Craft will replace former US Ambassador to the UN **Nikki Haley**, who resigned her post in October 2018.
- Kelly Craft is currently serving as the US ambassador to **Canada**, since September 2017.
- She has also been a strong backer of the **US-Mexico-Canada Agreement** - pioneered by President Trump as a replacement for the North American Free Trade Agreement (**NAFTA**).
- Jonathan Cohen is currently serving as the acting UN ambassador.

Muhammadu Buhari re-elected as Nigerian President

- Buhari, of the ruling All Progressives Congress party, secured 56 percent, or **15.2 million votes**, in the February 23 polls.
- His main opponent, former vice president **Atiku Abubakar** of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), received 41 percent or 11.3 million votes.
- Muhammadu Buhari, 76-year-old, has been re-elected for a **second four-year term**.
- He was first elected president in **2015**, becoming the first opposition candidate to defeat an incumbent and win the presidency.

Govind Prasad Sharma is appointed as the Chairman of NBT

- Educationist and Author **Govind Prasad Sharma** has been appointed as the **Chairman of National Book Trust (NBT)**. Govind Prasad Sharma has served as the **Principal of Government P.G. College in Madhya Pradesh** and in other Educational sectors previously.

- National Book Trust National Book Trust (NBT) is an apex body established by the Government of India in the Year 1957 under the Department Of Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development.
- **Objectives of NBT**
- To produce and encourage the production of good literature in English, Hindi And Other Indian Languages.
- The major activities of NBT include publishing non- textbooks, organizing book fairs, book exhibitions, conducting literary events, activities for children, training in publishing throughout the country, participating in international book fairs to promote Indian literature.



IMPORTANT DAYS

International World Cancer Day celebrated on 4th February

- The world celebrates the **World Cancer Day on 4th February**. World Cancer Day was founded by the **Union for International Cancer Control (UICC)** to support the goals of the **World Cancer Declaration, written in 2008**.
- The aim is to **raise awareness of cancer** and to encourage its prevention, detection, and treatment. The main goal is to significantly reduce illness and death caused by cancer and is an opportunity to rally the international community to end the injustice of preventable suffering from cancer.

India celebrated National Deworming day on 10th February

- India celebrated the **National Deworming day on 10th February**. The National Deworming Day (NDD) is an initiative of the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare**, Government of India.
- The objective of National Deworming Day is to **deworm all preschool and school-age children** between the ages of 1-19 years through the platform of schools and Anganwadi Centers in order to improve their **overall health, nutritional status**, access to education and quality of life.
- According to the World Health Organization (WHO), **241 million children between the ages of 1 and 14 years** are at risk of parasitic intestinal worms in India, also known as **Soil-Transmitted Helminths (STH)**.
- STH infections can lead to anemia, malnutrition, impaired mental and physical & cognitive development, and reduced school participation.

World Pulses Day celebrated on 10th February

- 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.

World Radio Day celebrated on 13th February



- **13th February** is celebrated as **World Radio Day** by **UNESCO** all over the world. The theme of WRD 2019 is **Dialogue, Tolerance, and Peace**.
- It is to mark the time where people around the world celebrate the radio and how it shapes their lives. The date of 13 February, the day United Nations Radio was established in 1946, was proposed by UNESCO. It was approved in the **67th session of UN General Assembly**.



AGREEMENTS, MOU

China is to loan 1 billion USD to Beijing

- **China** is to sign a **\$1 billion concessional loan** agreement with **Beijing**.The agreement is to fund a major highway project linking Colombo to Kandy.The construction of the first phase of the road has been delayed for more than two years due to a lack of funding.Last year Sri Lanka has handed over a strategic port to a Chinese firm for a 99-year lease.
- **China:**
- **Capital:** Beijing
- **President:** Xi Jinping
- **Currency:** Renminbi (yuan;)
- **Official Language:** Chinese
- **Sri Lanka:**
- **Capital:** Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte
- **Official languages:** Sinhala, Tamil
- **President:** Maithripala Sirisena
- **Prime Minister:** Ranil Wickremesinghe
- **Currency:** Sri Lankan rupee (LKR)

India signed MoU with Republic of Poland for coal mining

- The **Union Ministry of Coal** on **February 4, 2019**, signed a Memorandum of Understanding with **Ministry of Energy, the Republic of Poland** in New Delhi on cooperation in the field of coal mining.The MoU was signed between Haribhai Parathibhai Chaudhary, Minister of State for Coal and Mines and **Grzegorz Tobiszowski**, Secretary of State for Polands Ministry of Energy.
- The objective of the MoU is to **strengthen the relations in the field of coal mining** and clean coal technologies through the already established joint coal working group as well as research institutes and academia between the two countries.
- India and Poland recently celebrated **60 years of vibrant diplomatic relations** and also formalised cooperation agreements in different areas.

CLTA signed deal with CAM

- The **Chandigarh Lawn Tennis Association (CLTA)** signed a deal with **Club Atletico Montemar (CAM)**, Spain, for a **five-year period**, to ensure a high standard of training for its trainees.
- The protocol, signed by CLTA president Jai Singh Gill and the Founder-Director of CAM, Joaquin Perez Roman, at the CLTA Complex, would help the **trainees get two weeks of training every season** from the visiting experts.
- The coach and trainer who visit the CLTA from Spain will try to upgrade training facilities and provide the latest skills. Four trainees of CLTAs rural scheme CHART will also visit Spain for two to three weeks to learn international techniques.

GeM And CCI Sign MoU For Fair Environment In e-Marketplace

- **Government e Marketplace (GeM)** and **Competition Commission of India (CCI)** entered into a MoU to enable a fair and competitive environment in the e-Marketplace.
- Chairman CCI, A.K. Gupta, CEO GeM, S. Radha Chauhan were present on the occasion.
- GeM is a state-of-the-art national public procurement platform of Ministry of Commerce and Industries, that has used technology to remove entry barriers for bonafide sellers and has created a vibrant e-marketplace with a wide range of goods and services.

India and Norway signed a letter of Intent for Marine Pollution Initiative

- **India and Norway** signed a letter of Intent for establishing the India-Norway **Marine Pollution Initiative**. The letter of intent was signed by the **Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change**, Government of India together with the **Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs**. The Joint initiative aims to combat marine pollution, which is one of the fastest growing environmental concerns.
- **Norway:**
- Capital: **Oslo**
- Official languages: **Norwegian**



- Monarch: **Harald V**
- Prime Minister: **Erna Solberg**
- Currency: **Norwegian krone (NOK)**

NTPC Signs Pact With SBI For Rs 5000 crore Term Loan

- State-owned power giant **NTPC** announced that it has signed a term loan agreement for Rs 5,000 crore with State Bank of India.
- The loan facility is extended at an interest rate linked to 3-Month MCLR of the Bank.

Sanjay Subrahmanyam won Israels Million Dollar Dan David Prize

- Indian Historian Sanjay Subrahmanyam won Israels prestigious Dan David Prize in the category Past time dimension for his work in macro-history.
- He shared the USD 1 million award in the Past time dimension category with Prof Kenneth Pomeranz of the University of Chicago.**About Sanjay Subrahmanyam**Mr Subrahmanyam is a recipient of the Infosys Prize for humanities and holds the Irving and Jean Stone Endowed Chair in Social Sciences at the University of California. He is the son on strategic analyst K Subrahmanyam and brother of former foreign secretary S Jaishankar.**About the Dan David Prize**It is an international prize which annually awards three prizes of US\$ 1 million each for achievements having an outstanding scientific, technological, cultural or social impact on our world.**About Israel** Capital Jerusalem Currency New Shekel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu

India signed defence cooperation with Germany and Sweden

- **India concluded defence cooperation and security protection agreements with Germany and Sweden** during the ongoing visit of Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.
- The agreement for security protection agreement between the two countries was signed by Indias Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and **Peter Hultqvist, Swedish Minister for Defence.**
- The agreement will enable both countries to share classified information with each other. India and Sweden have had a memorandum of understanding on cooperation

in the area of defence since 2009.

Argentina signed the Framework Agreement of the ISA with India

- **Argentina** signed the **Framework Agreement of the International Solar Alliance** with **India**. The agreement was signed by **Argentinas Foreign Minister Jorge Faurie** in the presence of **ISAs Director-General Upendra Tripathy**.
- The agreement of the International Solar Alliance was opened for signature during the **22nd Conference Of Parties** at Marrakech on November 15, 2016. Argentina is the **72nd country** to sign the Framework Agreement of the ISA.
- **International Solar Alliance:**
 - It aims to provide a common platform to address the specific solar technology deployment needs of the solar resource-rich countries located between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn
 - ISA targets to achieve the production 1 TW of solar energy by 2030. It also targets to produce 100 GW of solar energy by 2022

Five MoUs, agreements signed between India and Saudi Arabia

- Saudi Arabias Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and Indias PM Narendra Modi signed 5 Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs)/Agreements:
- 1. Investing in the **National Investment and Infrastructure Fund** between the Government of India and the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
- 2. Cooperation on broadcasting between **Prasar Bharati** and **Saudi Broadcasting Corporation** (SBC) for exchange of audio visual programme.
- 3. MoU in the field of tourism and National Heritage.
- 4. **Framework Cooperation Program** between Invest India of the Republic of India and Saudi Arabian General Investment Authority of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on enhancing bilateral investment relations.
- 5. Cooperation in the field of housing.

BUDGET / TAXES

South Central Railway gets Rs.5,924 crore

- **South Central Railway (SCR) got Rs.5,924 crore** for 2019-20 from the year **2019 budget** as against last years outlay of Rs.5,752 crore with the highest allotment made for doubling works of Rs. 1,905 crore.
- Additional General Manager John Thomas said that the New lines got **Rs.834 crore**, passenger amenities **Rs.229 crore** and traffic facilities got **Rs.138 crore**.

Income tax rebate of Rs.12,500 for those who earn up to Rs.5 lakh

- The **interim Budget2019** contains several proposals aimed at reducing the tax burden on the salaried class and homeowners, increasing the tax rebate limit and amount for small taxpayers and exempting certain forms of rental income from tax.
- Finance Minister Piyush Goyal proposed **amending Section 87A of the Income Tax Act** to increase the rebate for taxpayers at the lower end of the spectrum.
- Currently, the Section provides for a rebate of Rs.2,500 for all taxpayers with an income of less than Rs.3.5 lakh a year. So, a taxpayer earning **Rs.5 lakh** a year effectively paid tax (at 5%) on only **Rs.2 lakh of that amount**.

UP CM Yogi Adityanath presented Rs.4.79 lakh crore budget

- The **Uttar Pradesh** government allocated **Rs.1,200 crore** for a scheme for girls and **Rs.612 crore** for stray cattle and construction of cow shelters in its budget for **2019-20 financial year** ahead of the Lok Sabha polls.
- The Yogi Adityanath government presented an **Rs.4.79 lakh crore budget**, which is 12% higher than **Rs.4,28,384.52 crore** earmarked for the current financial year ending March 2019. After the presentation of his **governments third budget**, Mr.Adityanath said it is the biggest one in the history of Uttar Pradesh.

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. The hike on import duty of 200 percent effectively means almost banning the imports from Pakistan.
- **Pakistan:**
- **Capital:** Islamabad
- **National languages:** Urdu
- **President:** Arif Alvi
- **Prime Minister:** Imran Khan

Telangana State Budget to cross Rs.2 lakh crore mark

- The **Telangana State Cabinet** chaired by **Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao** approved the **Vote-on-Account budget** for **2019-20** ahead of the budget session commencing from 22nd February 2019.
- This budget important to the Chief Minister because it will reflect the major electoral promises made by the ruling party such as doubling the Aasara pensions and bringing more beneficiaries under the scheme as the eligibility age has been reduced to 57 years, enhancing the Rythu Bandhu investment assistance from **Rs.4,000 to Rs.5,000 an acre for each of kharif and rabi seasons**.

GST on under construction flats cut from 12 percent to 5 percent

- Under construction properties priced over **45 lakh** will attract **5% GST** (Goods and Services Tax), instead of 12%.
- A **residential property** priced at 45 lakh or below will now be defined as "affordable" and taxed at **1%**, from 8% earlier.
- The new rates will be effective from April 1, 2019.

MCCs budget includes Mysuru Yugalakshmi scheme

- The **Mysuru City Corporation (MCC)** presented the budget with an outlay of **Rs.775 crore for the year 2019-20**. MCC introduced new schemes that included **Rs.25,000 for each girl child born in government hospitals** in the City, pink toilets for the benefit of women, besides placing dust bins in buses and

autorickshaws.

- Chairperson of the **Standing Committee on Taxation, Finance and Appeals, Shobha** presented the MCC Budget 2019-20. She announced the **Mysuru Yogalakshmi scheme** for the benefit of girl children born to residents of the city in government hospitals. The scheme will come into force from April 1, 2019.
- Under the scheme, Rs.25,000 will be deposited in the form of a bond in a nationalized bank in the name of each girl child born in a government facility. **Rs.2.5 crore** has been set aside in the Budget for the scheme. The scheme aimed at helping the girls pursue higher education and become financially independent.



VISITS BY PM / PRESIDENT

Prime Minister Narendra Modi take on the financial estimates for New India

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** take on the financial estimates for New India is considering three options for a relief package to help farmers suffering because of low crop prices at a cost of as much as Rs. 3 lakh crore, according to three government sources.
- The possibilities are a direct payment to all landowning farmers, compensation for those who sold produce below government prices, and a loan-waiver programme.
- The government is keen to find a way to get money to farmers as quickly and simply as possible so that they can feel the benefits before the election.

Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu launches second phase of Pasupu-Kumkuma scheme, welfare pension

- The second phase of **Pasupu-Kumkuma (Turmeric-Kumkum) scheme** and welfare pensions was launched by Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, Shri Chandrababu Naidu.
- Around 94 Lakh DWCRA (Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas) women will be given Rs 10000 in three installments under the Pasupu-Kumkuma scheme.
- Under the scheme, Rs 2500 will be given on 1st February 2019, Rs 3500 will be given 8th March and Rs 4000 will be given on 5th April.
- 54 Lakh pensions will be given to different categories of people each month and it will cost a monthly expenditure of Rs 1100 crore. The Annual Expenditure will be around Rs 13200 crore.
- Pensions of senior citizens, widows, handloom workers, fisherman, toddy tappers, single women, dappu artists, cobblers and AIDS patients will increase from Rs 1500 to Rs 3000.

PM Modi on two day visit to South Korea from Feb 21

- PM Modi will hold delegation-level talks with the South Korean **President Moon Jae-in** and also be conferred with the **Seoul Peace Prize**.
- He will unveil a bust of **Mahatma Gandhi** at the **Seoul** campus of a South Korean



university.

- Meanwhile, **Argentinian President Mauricio Macri** will begin his visit to India on February 17 when he will visit Agra.
- **About South Korea:**
- Capital: Seoul
- Currency: South Korean won
- President: Moon Jae-in

Saudi Crown Prince signs USD 20 billion in agreements with Pakistan

- Saudi Arabias Crown Prince **Mohammed bin Salman** has signed investment agreements worth **\$20 billion** during his visit to Pakistan.
- The crown prince arrived in Pakistan earlier on February 17, 2019 on the first stop of a trip to South Asia and China.
- **About Saudi Arabia:**
- Capital: Riyadh
- Currency: Saudi riyal
- Crown Prince: Mohammed bin Salman
- Official language: Arabic



QUIZ CORNER

1) According to National Sample Survey Office (NSSOs) survey result, which country unemployment rate hit 4 decade high of 6.1% in the year 2017-18?

- A.Pakistan
- B.India
- C.Saudi Arabia
- D.Indonesia

Answer B

2) Which state govt gave approval for Smart Village Campaign worth of Rs 385 crores?

- A.Punjab
- B.Kerala
- C.TamilNadu
- D.Odisha

Answer A

3) Scientists Develop Artificial Pancreas Smartphone App For -----

- A.Heart Attack
- B.Diabetics
- C.Blood pressure
- D.Bronchitis

Answer B

4) Which country to take on Italy in Davis Cup World Group qualifiers?

- A.India
- B.Pakistan
- C.Saudi Arabia



D.Indonesia

Answer A

5) Who is appointed as the Director General of National Cadet Corps (NCC)?

- A.General Rajeev Chopra
- B.General Suresh Yadav
- C.General Nitish gupta
- D.General Sathish Kumar

Answer A

6) How much did the government announce for the PM Kisan scheme in the Interim budget 2019?

- A.Rs.56,000 crore
- B.Rs.75,000 crore
- C.Rs.88,000 crore
- D.Rs.95,000 crore

Answer B

7) How much did the government announce for the Defence Ministry in the Interim budget 2019?

- A.Rs.2 lakh crore
- B.Rs.2.5 lakh crore
- C.Rs.3 lakh crore
- D.Rs.3.5 lakh crore

Answer C

8) What are the 3 banks did the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) lift its curb from Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) framework?

- A.Bank of India, Bank of Maharashtra, Oriental Bank of Commerce
- B.Allahabad Bank, Bank of India, Central Bank of India



C. Corporation Bank, Dena Bank, IDBI Bank Ltd
D. UCO Bank, United of India, Corporation Bank

Answer A

9) RBI introduced a new framework called, Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) to regulate bank's _____.

- A. Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR)
- B. Statutory liquidity Ratio (SLR)
- C. Monetary Policy
- D. Non-Performing Asset (NPA)

Answer D

10) As per the Ministry of Finance, how much GST was collected in the month of January?

- A. Rs. 94,725 crore
- B. Rs. 89,825 crore
- C. Rs. 1 lakh crore
- D. Rs. 1,12,000 crore

Answer C

11) The Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) has been renamed as _____.

- A. Department Industrial Policy and Internal Trade
- B. Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade
- C. Department for Promotion of Industry
- D. Department for Industrial Trade and Policy

Answer B

12) Under which Ministry does the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) function?



- A.Ministry of Home Affairs
- B.Ministry of Trade and Policy
- C.Ministry of Corporate Affairs
- D.Ministry of Commerce and Industry

Answer D

13) Who is appointed as the interim CEO of Yes Bank?

- A.Ajai Kumar
- B.Rana Kapoor
- C.Ravneet Gill
- D.Pratima Sheorey

Answer A

14) International conference on 8th century sage held to mark ----- of India-Bhutan ties

- A.50 years
- B.150 years
- C.100 years
- D.125 years

Answer A

15) Who is appointed as the Ambassador of India to the Republic of Colombia?

- A.Sanjiv Ranjan
- B.Suresh kumar
- C.Naresh Raj
- D.Vikram Singh

Answer A

16) For how many years did the government extend the ban on SIMI?



- A.5
- B.8
- C.10
- D.12

Answer A

17) Which bank senior group president Pralay Mondal resigns?

- A.Yes bank
- B.Canara Bank
- C.State Bank of India
- D.Dena bank

Answer A

18) Which country footballer Ki Sung-yueng belongs to?

- A.South Africa
- B.Pakistan
- C.Australia
- D.North America

Answer A

19) Which Country is to lend a loan of \$1 billion to Beijing's major highway project linking Colombo to Kandy?

- A.India
- B.China
- C.Myanmar
- D.Bangladesh

Answer B

20) Who won Kochi Area Boat Pulling Regatta 2019?

- A.INS Dronacharya



- B.INS Vikramaditya
- C.INS Vikram
- D.INS Dina

Answer A

21) Which cricketer becomes first female to play 200 ODIs?

- A.Shantha Rangaswamy
- B.Diana Edulji.
- C.Shubhangi Kulkarni
- D.Mithali Raj

Answer A

22) Which app acquired Hotel Booking Platform and Night Stay?

- A.Paytm
- B.Zomato
- C.Swiggy
- D.Faasos

Answer A

23) Who take on the financial estimates for New India?

- A.Shri Narendra Modi
- B.Shri Suresh Prabhu
- C.Shri Prakash Javedakar
- D.Shri Vikram Kumar

Answer A

24) Which country relations with India on new heights as investment expected in the energy sector?

- A.Algeria
- B.Albania



- C.Australia
- D.Pakistan

Answer A

25) Who Becomes First Indian To Grab Australian LPGA Card?

- A.Vani Kapoor
- B.Suresh kapoor
- C.Anil Kapoor
- D.Kamal Kapoor

Answer A

26) Who is appointed as the Director-General of Police, Haryana?

- A.B.S.Sandhu
- B.Suresh Arora
- C.K.P.Singh
- D.Sulkhan Singh

Answer C

27) How much did the Centre allot for the Home Ministry in the interim Budget 2019?

- A.Rs.50 crore
- B.Rs.75 crore
- C.Rs.1 lakh crore
- D.Rs.1.2 lakh crore

Answer C

28) Who is the Chairman of Rajya Sabha?

- A.M.Venkaiah Naidu
- B.Arun Jaitley
- C.Narendra Modi



D.Ram Nath Kovind

Answer A

29) Who is appointed as the new Director General of Police of Bihar?

- A.Gupteshwar Pandey
- B.Virendra
- C.Neelamani.N.Raju
- D.K.S.Dwivedi

Answer A

30) Which is the capital of China?

- A.Shanghai
- B.Beijing
- C.Xi An
- D.Wuhan

Answer B



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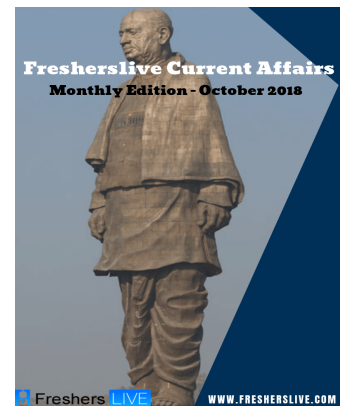
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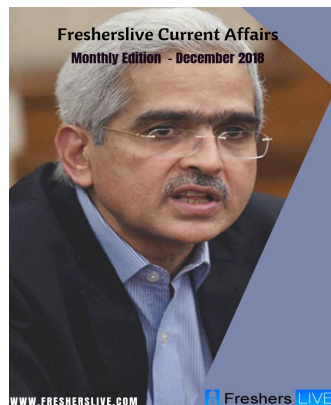
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