

CURRENT AFFAIRS



FEBRUARY 2019

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Current Affairs – February 2019

This is a guide to provide you a precise summary and a huge collection of Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs) covering national and international current affairs for the month of **February 2019**.

This guide will help you in preparing for Indian competitive examinations like Bank PO, Banking, Railway, IAS, PCS, UPSC, CAT, GATE, CDS, NDA, MCA, MBA, Engineering, IBPS, Clerical Grade and Officer Grade, etc.

Audience

Aspirants who are preparing for different competitive exams like Bank PO, Banking, Railway, IAS, PCS, UPSC, CAT, GATE, CDS, NDA, MCA, MBA, Engineering, IBPS, Clerical Grade, Officer Grade, etc.

Even though you are not preparing for any exams but are willing to have news encapsulated in a roll, which you can walk through within 30 minutes, then we have put all the major points for the whole month in a precise and interesting way.

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Foreign Affairs

1. Prince Albert II of Monaco Visited India

On February 5, 2019, Prince Albert II of Monaco has arrived India as part of his official visit. Prince Albert II came to India with senior officials of the Monaco government and a group of business delegation. He was respectfully invited by the Hon'ble President of India.

India and Monaco have had very close and multi-faceted relation. On the other hand, the visit of Prince Albert II will definitely provide an opportunity for the two nations to review progress in bilateral cooperation. It will also create niche to discuss ways to further expand the multi-faceted partnership in areas of mutual interest. However, among significant discussion, economic and technical cooperation are the major facets of existing bilateral relations.



2. For Capacity Building, Bangladesh Signed MoU with India

To strengthen the two neighborhood nations' bilateral relations, India and Bangladesh have signed four Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs). The major areas include capacity building, anti-corruption issues, and medicinal plants.

From India side, the agreement was signed between the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and from Bangladesh side, the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC). They were aimed to share their expertise and develop anti-corruption mechanism. Besides, India and Bangladesh have signed the agreement also for the providing training to Bangladesh Civil Servants at the National Centre for Good Governance.



3. India Signed MoU with US Firm for Assault Rifles

On February 12, 2019, the Indian Army has signed a contract with the United States' Sig Sauer for 72,400 SIG 716 assault rifles. The rifle would be given to the frontline soldier deployed in operational areas.

The most interesting parameters for the assault rifle are its effective range of 500 metres and less than 3 kg weight.

Out of the 72,400 rifles, 66,400 will be given to Army, 4,000 will be given to the Indian Air Force, and remaining 2,000 will be given to the Indian Navy. The deal will be accomplishing within 12 months from the date of signing the agreement.



4. India Withdrew MFN Status to Pakistan

Immediately after the incident of Pulwama (attack) in which 40 Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel lost their lives in a suicide bombing attack, the Indian government, has withdrawn the "Most Favoured Nation" (or MFN) Status to Pakistan.

Arun Jaitley, the Finance Minister, has confirmed that the Ministry of External Affairs soon will imitate all possible and necessary steps to ensure complete isolation from the international community of Pakistan.

Besides, India also increased the Customs Duty 200% on goods imported from Pakistan.



What is Meaning of MFN Status?

Most Favoured Nation or simply MFN is a special commercial relationship, which is shared among the World Trade Organization (WTO) members (countries). Such relationship ensures no discrimination in export-import of goods and services (trading relation) among the partners of WTO.

The country that provides MFN status to another country essentially needs to provide concessions, privileges, and immunity in conducting the trade and trade agreements.

5. IOC Signed Deal Worth \$1.5 Bn to Buy US Crude Oil

On February 18, Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) has signed an annual deal worth \$1.5 Billion to import 3 million tonnes of crude oil. First time, Indian refiner has signed an annual contract.

The contract term follows IOC signing up to buy crude oil from the US through a term-tender deal committed in the month of August 2018. At that time, about 6 million barrels crude oil was bought from the US under the single tender. The oil was delivered between November 2018 and January 2019.



IOC and other state firms including Bharat Petroleum Corp Ltd (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corp Ltd (HPCL) enter into annual term import deals with national oil companies of mostly Middle East countries.

6. India and Sri Lanka Signed MoU to Set up Business Centre for ICT Incubators in Jaffna

On February 21, India and Sri Lanka have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to set up a business centre for ICT incubators in Jaffna. For this project, an amount of 25 crore Sri Lankan rupees was granted from India.

The agreement was signed by Taranjit Singh Sandhu, the High Commissioner of India to Sri Lanka and S. T. Kodikara, Secretary, Ministry of Development Strategies and International Trade in Colombo. However, Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ranil



Wickramasinghe was also present there. As per the report, the centre would provide opportunities and promote the environment for Information Communication Technology (ICT) and other professional services in the Northern regions.

International

1. The United States to Withdraw Nuclear Arms Control Treaty with Russia

The Trump administration has announced that United States will pull out of a nuclear arms control treaty with Russia. It will end a cornerstone Cold War agreement and raise fears of a new nuclear arms race in Europe and Asia.

As per the United States' President, Trump's statement, Russia is violating the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty. However, Moscow denies this charge. The treaty has been a central element of Europe's security strategy for more than three decades. The signing of treaty was considered as a crucial moment in Cold War arms control, which eliminated more than 2,600 missiles and ended a years-long standoff with nuclear missiles in Europe.



However, the Trump administration has argued that since 2014, Russia has not been complying with the agreement. Because of the breach of the agreement, the United States is at military disadvantage against China, which is not bound by the treaty.

2. Siamese Fighting Fish Became National Aquatic Animal of Thailand

Because of having historic and cultural significance, the government of Thailand, has declared the fighting fish 'Siamese' to be the national fish (National Aquatic Animal).

Popularly known as betta fish (in the West), the underwater brawler is tiny, testy, and eye-catching. It has a colorful fin plumage and its body is iridescent and it has also many hued tail. Because of having beautiful look, it is also common in home aquariums. However, Thailand's official national animal is the elephant.



3. Five-day Multinational Maritime Exercise Held in Pakistan

The five-day multinational maritime exercise held nearby coastal city Karachi in Pakistan from February 8 to 12, 2019. The name of maritime exercise was "AMAN-19" in which 46 nations from different parts of the world participated.

In this maritime exercise, Pakistan's navy ships, boats, submarines, and marines and special forces participated. Besides, Pakistani air force, army, and rangers also participated.



Such maritime exercise was initiated in 2007, and since then, it is being exercised after every two years. This integrated exercise provides a forum for understanding of each other's maritime concepts and operational culture.

The participants also share the ways and means to combat common threats at sea.

4. Hindi Became Third High Court Language in Abu Dhabi

In a landmark decision, the government of UAE, has announced to include Hindi language as the third official language, which will be used in the court. In the country, other two languages are Arabic and English. The objective of such decision is to improve the access to justice system.

As per the official report, UAE has around 9 million population; of which two-third are immigrants from different countries of the world. Amidst, the Indians in the country counted as 2.6 million (about 30% of total population). Indians are the largest expatriate community here. Therefore, with the objective to help Hindi speakers



to learn about the litigation procedures, their rights, and duties, Hindi is included as the third language.

5. Red Cross Started Movement to Ban Nuclear Weapon

The Red Cross in an announcement asked for a total ban on nuclear weapons. It warned about the growing risk which is potentially caused by such arms and its devastating effect. As per the report, in recent years, it has been observed that some of the nuclear-armed States are straying from their "long-standing nuclear disarmament obligations". In addition to this, some nuclear armed States are upgrading their arsenals, developing more advance nuclear weapons, which might be easier to use.



Therefore, to raise awareness about the rising nuclear threat posed at the whole world, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies have launched a global campaign. The objective of the campaign is to encourage people to lobby their governments to sign and ratify the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. However, it has so far been signed by 70 nations and ratified by merely 21.

Nevertheless, such campaign is the result of abolishing the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty by United States and Russia.

6. "North Macedonia" is the New Name of Macedonia

Macedonia has announced its new official name as North Macedonia. There were almost three decades' diplomatic dispute (with Greece) regarding a new state namely North Macedonia that finally received its own geographical place on the World Map.



As a result of the new name, now North Macedonia could join NATO. Most likely, the newly named Balkan State will become 30th member of NATO. However, it needs to get ratified by other signatories.

7. Measles Cases Doubled in 2018: WHO

As per the World Health Organization (WHO) report, in the year 2018, a total of 229,068 cases of measles were registered. The number is almost double as compared to 2017.

The virus of measles that can survive for hours in a droplet of water, easily gets transmitted through coughing and sneezing. The symptoms of measles include rashes, blindness, and inflammation of the brain. Analyzing the data, WHO has appealed to the Member States to decrease the infection through maximum vaccine coverage.



Katherine O'Brien, Director of Immunization, Vaccines and Biologicals at the WHO said – "Measles is not going anywhere it is everyone's responsibility. For one person infected, up to nine or 10 people could catch the virus. Further, Measles knows no geographical or political borders."

8. JP Morgan Became First US Bank to Have Crypto-Currency

JP Morgan has become the first US bank who has created cryptocurrency. The currency is designed to be decentralized so that no one has control over transactions being sent over the network.

Recently, the crypto-currency, which runs on block-chain technology, has been used successfully to move money between the bank and a client account. Therefore, JP Morgan said that the technology appears potential in using digital coins, as it also reduces risk and enables instant transfers.



Virtual currencies can be used for any purchase in the real world. One can pay for things, such as a hotel room, food or even a house. Digital tokens are held in online wallets, and can be sent anonymously between users.

9. US President Signed Directive to Create Military Space Force

The President of the United States has signed 'Space Policy Directive-4' (SPD-4). As per the directives, Pentagon is ordered to set up the Space Force as the Sixth Branch of the United States military. Other five are Army, Air Force, Navy, Marines, and Coast Guard. However, such creation also need to be approved by the US Congress.



The main objective of the Space Force is to extend and secure the American dominance of the space domain. President Trump interprets space to be a new warfighting domain.

National

1. India's Unemployment Rate Rose Four-Decade High of 6.1%

Based on the National Sample Survey Office's (NSSO's) periodic labour force survey (PLFS) of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, the unemployment rate of India has risen a 45-year high. The unemployment rate is 6.1 percent for the year 2017-2018.



The report stated that the unemployment was higher in urban areas (i.e. 7.8%) in comparison to rural areas, which is 5.3%. Further, the unemployment rate among youth rose a high level during the period 2017-2018 in comparison to previous year.

2. Government Lowers Import Duty On Parts and Components of Electric Vehicles to 10-15%

The Government of India has announced to lower the custom duty on the imports of parts and components of electric vehicles to 10 to 15%. Until now, such vehicle parts and components imported in India for the assembly had 15 to 30% import duty.



With the objective to promote domestic assembling of electric vehicles, the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) has segregated and made a separate category for parts and components of electric vehicle and custom duty has been lowered down to 10 to 15%.

3. Banks Liable for Loss Through Fraud – Kerala High Court

In a judgment, the Kerala High Court has given decision that the banks cannot be forgiven from the liability for the loss caused to a customer on account of unauthorized withdrawals from customer's account.

Hon'ble Court said that merely on the ground that the customer has not responded promptly to the SMS alerts given by bank, it cannot escape from its accountability. In fact,

once the customer opens his/her account in a bank, from the same time, bank owes duty to take necessary steps to prevent unauthorized withdrawals or any such fraud in respect of his/her account.

The landmark ruling was made by Justice P. B. Suresh Kumar of Kerala High Court. He dismissed an appeal by the State Bank of India (SBI) who has challenged an order of a Pala sub-court allowing the plea of P.V. George, an NRI, for the realization of ₹2.40 lakh loss. The amount was lost through unauthorized withdrawals by fraudsters in Brazil.



4. UNICEF in Maharashtra Joined Hands with Goa WCD

The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) in Maharashtra has joined hands with Goa Women and Child Development (WCD). Their objective is to provide support in the area of child protection in the state.

Chief Field Officer of UNICEF Maharashtra, Ms. Rajeshwari Chandrasekar and Ms. Alpa Vora, the Consultant, Child Protection, UNICEF have discussed on "key challenges around the child protection" in Goa.



Further, Ms. Vora says

"Goa needs for systemic training of the workforce in urgency...Goa has an ICPS set up in place. But for effective implementation of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) (JJ) Act, 2015, the State needs to have a better convergence of different stakeholders."

5. President Ram Nath Kovind Unveiled Portrait of AP Vajpayee at Parliament

On February 12, Mr. Ram Nath Kovind, the President of India, has unveiled the life-size portrait of former Prime Minister Late Atal Bihari Vajpayee. The portrait is placed at the Central Hall of the Parliament.

Besides, on the eve of Vajpayee's 94th Birthday (December 24, 2018), Mr. Narendra Modi, the Prime Minister, has released a commemorative coin in memory of the great leader late AP Vajpayee. One side of the coin has the Emblem of India and the other side Vajpayee's picture with his name inscribed in Devanagari and Roman languages.



The veteran leader of BJP, Vajpayee served as the Prime Minister of India three times – first time, for 13 days (in 1996); second time, for 13 months (1998-99); and third time, he completed his tenure of five years (1999 to 2004).

6. The Civilian Awards Including Bharat Ratna Cannot Be Used as Titles

In a reply, Government has cleared that the civilian awards including the highest one - Bharat Ratna and Padma awards are titles and cannot be used as either prefix or suffix to respective names. In case of misuse, it can be withdrawn.

Hansraj Gangaram Ahir, the Minister of State for Home, said that in case of any misuse, the defaulter shall forfeit the national award conferred on him or her under the procedure laid down in regulation 10 related to creation of these awards.



As per regulation 10, the President may cancel and annul the awards of the decoration to any person and thereupon his or her name shall be erased from the register. Further, the awardee shall be asked to surrender the award.

7. Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Mandhan Pension Scheme Launched for Informal Workers

Piyush Goyal, the Finance Minister, has announced the launch of "Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Mandhan" (PMSYM) scheme for the informal workers. Under the scheme, the unorganized workers (informal workers) will get an assured monthly pension of Rs. 3,000 after the age of 60.



However, under the scheme, initially, such workers have to pay Rs. 100 per month; at the same time, government will also contribute Rs. 100. In addition to this, Mr. Goyal also announced hiking of tax-free gratuity to Rs. 30 Lakh from existing Rs. 20 Lakh. However, this facility would be available for the employees whose have completed their service for more than five years.

8. India's First District Cooling System in Amaravati

India's first district cooling system will be set up in Amaravati, the developing capital of Andhra Pradesh. A UAE-based international cooling provider company has made a 30-year concession with Andhra Pradesh government. Based on the agreement, it will build, own, operate, and transfer India's first district cooling system in Amaravati.

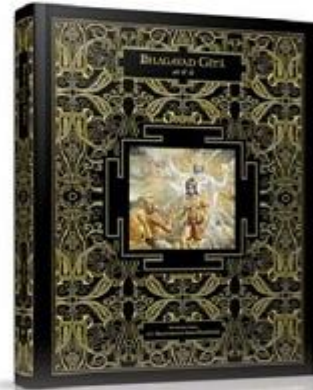


Based on the agreement, the National Central Cooling Company (Tabreed) will set up a district cooling system with 20,000 refrigeration tonnes cooling capacity. Interestingly, this agreement will not only set up the cooling district in Amaravati, but also create jobs and homes along with world-class infrastructure, efficient resource management, and green city.

9. PM Modi Unveiled 800 kg Bhagavad Gita in Delhi

On February 25, Mr. Narendra Modi, the Prime Minister, has unveiled a giant "Astounding Bhagavad Gita" at the ISKCON temple in Delhi. The sacred book has a total of 270 pages with weight about 800 kg. Further, it is measuring 2.8 m by 2 m.

As per the ISKCON's statement, this copy of Bhagavad Gita is the largest principle sacred text ever to be printed. The book, which carries 18 exquisite paintings and an innovative elegant layout, is printed in Milan, Italy. To make it untearable and waterproof, it is published on YUPO synthetic paper.



10. Andhra Pradesh About to Get New Railway Zone

The Railway Minister, Piyush Goyal, has announced the set-up of a new Railway Zone in Andhra Pradesh. Till now, there are 17 Railway Zones in India, and after this announcement, the number will be increased to 18.

The new railway zone, which is named as "Southern Coast Railway," would have the headquarter at Vishakhapatnam. Mr. Goyal said that as per item 8 of Schedule 13 of the Andhra Pradesh Reorganization Act, 2014, the Indian Railways was required to examine establishing a new railway zone in the successor state of Andhra Pradesh. Therefore, the creation of a new zone is the result item 8 of Schedule 13.



11. 40 CRPF Men Killed in Worst Terror Attack in J&K

In a suicidal terrorist attack, about 40 Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel were killed and many others injured. The incident took place on February 14 at Pulwama district in Jammu and Kashmir.

The incident occurred when a convoy of CRPF were going, on the way, Mahindra Scorpio carrying more than 300 kg of explosive. The explosive laden Scorpio targeted the convoy and exploded the vehicle. The injured were rushed to the nearest army base hospital in Srinagar, which is 20 km from the attack site.

As per the report given by Home Ministry, the terrorists triggered the car bomb while 78 vehicles carrying more than 2,500 CRPF men were on the Srinagar-Jammu highway. After the attack, Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted that the sacrifices of CRPF personnel would not go in vain.



Jaish-e-Mohammed, Pakistani-based terrorist group, has taken the responsibility of this attack.

Regional

1. Punjab Govt. Approved 'Smart Village Campaign' Worth Rs. 385 Crores

The Punjab Government has given its approval to a rural development scheme namely 'Smart Village Campaign' scheme worth Rs. 384.40 crores. It would be supplement to the ongoing works to build village infrastructure.

The scheme 'Smart Village Campaign' would be financed by the funds from 14th Finance Commission and MGNREGA works. The project worth INR 2,500,000 would be approved by a committee of deputy commissioner and additional deputy commissioner (Development); however, if the project is worth more than 2,500,000, then approval will be given by a state-level committee headed by the joint development commissioner.



2. Dolphin of Indus River Declared as Punjab's State Aquatic Animal

On February 1, 2019, the Punjab Government has declared the dolphin of Indus River as Punjab's state aquatic animal. Dolphin of Indus River is second most endangered freshwater river species and one of the world's rarest mammals.

Presently, there are about 1,800 dolphins in the Indus River (in Pakistan); however, in the Beas River, its population is between (merely) 8 to 10. Last year (in the month of May), contaminated water leaked into the Beas River, posed a big threat to all aquatic species in the region. Therefore, a strict measure has been taken to conserve the ecosystem of Beas River.



3. For Enhancing Digital Literacy, Microsoft India Signed MoU with Sikkim Govt.

Microsoft India has signed an agreement with Sikkim Government to improve the education system in Sikkim. As per the MoU, the digital literacy will be introduced to build new age tech capacity among students and faculty especially in government-run schools.

As per the MoU, Microsoft will support the state in the integration of IT content in the state board curriculum for:

- building student capacity,
- ushering in school reforms,
- building teacher capacity,
- enhancing digital literacy, and
- promoting digital citizenship.



4. Odisha Government Announced New 'KALIA Chhatravritti Yojana' For Farmer's Children

Naveen Patnaik, the Chief Minister of Odisha, has announced a new scholarship scheme especially for the children of farmers. The name of scholarship is 'KALIA Chhatravritti Yojana'.

It is for all those children (of farmers) who are the beneficiaries of Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation (KALIA) scheme. Further, the scheme will provide scholarships for pursuing higher education in professional courses free of cost. Mr. Patnaik has announced that under this scheme, State Government will bear the education expenses of those children who are beneficiaries of KALIA scheme.



5. Under Operation Smile - V, Hyderabad Police Rescued 325 Children

Under Operation Smile – V, Hyderabad Police has rescued 325 children. Among 325 children, 11 were girls. 272 rescued children have been handed over to their parents; however, remaining 53 children were sent to rescue homes.

Among the rescued children, 100 children were native other states including Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Nepal. As per the report of the Police Commissioner, the rescued children were found working in different types of factories and other such establishments.



What is "Operation Smile – V?"

Launched on January 1, Operation Smile – V, is mission to trace missing children. Under this program, police trace the missing children and rescue the child labour, and the children

engaged in begging. To accomplish the mission, 17 teams were constituted each headed by a Sub-Inspector in Hyderabad City.

6. To Uplift Tribal Group in the State, Maharashtra Govt. Constituted a Committee

Maharashtra Government has constituted a committee to review the work being done for the welfare of the lakhs of tribal population. The underneath objective behind this is to reduce the malnutrition deaths and also help tribes in the State to have healthy life.

Vivek Pandit, the former MLA, will head the committee. Mr. Pandit is the President of the Shramajivi Sanghatana, an organization working for the betterment of tribal groups. The committee will thoroughly study and review the situations (covering every aspect of tribal groups) and attempt to resolve the issue (of tribes in the region). The committee will also ensure the health and education of children in the region.



7. Mizoram Govt. Banned Import of Pigs & Piglets

By taking precautionary steps in advance, the Deputy Commissioners of all the eight districts of Mizoram have issued orders under which import of pigs and piglets from other countries, is banned.

Officials reported that there is possibility of outbreak of the Porcine Reproductive and Respiratory Syndrome (PRRS); therefore, import of pigs and piglets may affect the health of people. As per the official records of the Veterinary department, in 2013, the PRRS had killed 3,806 swine; in 2016, it killed 4,699 pigs; and in 2018, it killed 2,574 pigs.



8. Boori Boot Yollo Festival Celebrated in Arunachal Pradesh

Boori Boot Yollo festival was celebrated in Arunachal Pradesh. The festival is celebrated by Nyishi tribe of Arunachal Pradesh usually in the month of February every year.

It is about 15 days long festival celebrated to welcome spring and a successful harvest. Mr. Pema Khandu, the Chief Minister and Dr. BD Mishra, Governor of the Arunachal Pradesh greeted the people through personal message.



9. Ladakh Declared as Third Administrative Revenue Division of J&K

The Government of Jammu and Kashmir, in an announcement, has declared that the cold desert region namely Ladakh as the third administrative division of J&K. The decision may have political touch, for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections and assembly polls in J&K.

Until now, the region was the part of the administrative division of Kashmir. Surprisingly, the cold desert region (Ladakh) of J&K remains cut off from the main life of the world for almost six months because of extreme cold conditions. Further, Ladakh is one of the most sparsely populated regions located in the northern side of the State. It is the highest plateau situated at an altitude of about 9,800 feet above sea level.



10. First Ever Aqua Mega Food Park Commissioned in Andhra Pradesh

Country's first Mega Aqua Food Park has been commissioned in Godavari region of Andhra Pradesh. It was inaugurated by Pushpa Subrahmanyam the Secretary of Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI).

At this food park, the modern infrastructure is set up especially to benefit farmers, processors, and also consumers of Andhra Pradesh as well as neighborhood areas.

The park covers an area of 57.81 acres and at its Central Processing Centre, it offers the facilities such as:



- Pre-processing line
- Freezing and cold storage of fish and shrimp
- An ice plant
- Food testing laboratory

11. Bihar Govt. Announced Universal Old Age Pension Scheme for All

Nitish Kumar, the Chief Minister of Bihar, has announced a universal old age pension scheme namely "*Mukhyamantri Vridhajan Pension Yojana*" (MVPY). The scheme will benefit all old aged people who are above 60 years. 400 INR will be given as monthly pension. However, one who retired from the government job will be excluded from the scheme.



Mr. Kumar further told in the state assembly that the pension scheme will come into force from the April 1, 2019. The scheme would not bar any person based on religion, caste, or community rather everyone will be included. However, the pension scheme is applicable only for the people who fall under the category of BPL (Below Poverty Line).

Besides, Mr. Kumar also announced that the journalists above the age of 60 years who are not getting pension will get 6000 INR as monthly pension under the scheme of Bihar *Patrakar Samman Yojana* (BPSY). However, the scheme will include those journalists who have been in regular service in the field of mass media and no source of income.

12. Rajasthan Assembly Passed the Bills to Scrap Criterion of Minimum Education Qualification for Civic Polls

On February 11, Legislative Assembly of Rajasthan, has passed two Bills in order to abolish the minimum education criterion for panchayat and civic polls candidates. These two Bills namely Rajasthan Panchayati Raj (Amendment) Bill, 2019 and the Rajasthan Municipality (Amendment) Bill, 2019 passed through voice vote.

In 2015, the Vasundhara Raje government had introduced the education criterion; based on this, a candidate must have class 10 pass certificate for contesting Zilla Parishad, Panchayat Samiti, and Municipal elections.



And, for contesting elections of Sarpanch of a panchayat in scheduled and other than scheduled areas, candidate must

have passed class 5 and 8 respectively. While discussing on the Bills, Panchayati Raj Minister Sachin Pilot said that the present government would not discriminate based on education criterion, as it is committed for the development of every section of the society.

13. Telangana Government Announced to Form Two New Districts

Telangana Government in a meeting announced to form two new districts namely Mulug and Narayanpet. At present, the total number of districts in Telanaga is 31; it would be 33 after forming these two new districts.

The Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao has given direction to the Principal Secretary (Revenue) Rajeshwar Tiwari to initiate the process of carving out two more districts namely Mulugu and Narayanpet.

Besides, Mr. Rao also announced that (as he promised during the election campaign), every person on completion of 57 years would be provided old-age pension, which will be effective from April 1, 2019.



14. Himachal Pradesh Made Sanskrit as Second Official Language

On February 16, Himachal Pradesh Assembly has passed a Bill to Make Sanskrit as the Second Official Language of the state. Mahender Singh Thakur, the Irrigation and Public Health Minister, has introduced the Bill namely the Himachal Pradesh Official Language Bill, 2019.

The Bill is passed without any discussion.



15. Kerala to Host Attukal Pongala, World's Largest Religious Congregation of Women

Thiruvananthapuram, the capital of Kerala, is all set to host the Attukal Ponkala festival. The Attaukal Ponkala festival is one of the world's largest religious gathering of women on a single day.

On this occasion, women prepare 'Pongala' - i.e. the offering in makeshift brick stoves to worship the presiding deity of Attukal Bhagavathy temple. Pongala is mix of rice, jaggery and scraped coconut. The women cook it about two hours in fresh earthen or metal pots by lining up on either side of the roads around the shrine.



16. Dog Deployed to Check Liquor Smuggling in Bihar

Bihar government deployed 20 liquor-tracker dogs in the state to stop smuggling of liquor. Three years back, Bihar Government has (total) banned liquor in the state; however, smuggling is still going on.

All these dogs have been given rigorous training for nine months in Hyderabad. Until now, sniffer dogs were being used in detecting substances such as explosives and other illegal drugs, but this is the first time that special dog squad is deployed to detect alcohol hidden or smuggled in Bihar.



17. Boat Ambulance Service Launched in Odisha

In order to give swift medical service to the people living in remote areas, Odisha Government has launched a boat ambulance service. This service especially benefits people living in remote areas during emergency.

At the cost of Rs 5.40 crore, government has added six boat ambulance to the road fleet. It will be a part of '108' ambulance service. As per the report, such new facility will be a sort of a "vessel of hope" for the people living in numerous far-flung, river locked pockets of the state.



Defence

1. To Build Six Submarines, Defence Ministry Approved Rs. 40,000 Crore

Ms. Nirmala Sitharaman, the Defence Minister, has approved a project worth INR 40,000 crore for building six advance submarines. The project will be done under the government's strategic partnership model to reinforce the Indian Navy's underwater force levels.

The first project on 'strategic partnership' model is already cleared by the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) in the month of August last year. The first project worth INR 21,738 crores, was for the building of 111 naval utility helicopters (NUH) and replace the outdated navy's fleet Chetak choppers (of French-design).



2. For Maritime Search & Rescue Indian Coast Guard Signed MoU with AAI

Indian Coast Guard and the Airport Authority of India (AAI) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) at Coast Guard Regional Headquarters in Port Blair. The agreement is signed in the presence of Inspector General Maneesh Vishal Pathak, Commander Coast Guard Region (Andaman and Nicobar Islands).

The objective of the agreement is to have the coordination in the aeronautical and maritime search and rescue operations in the region.

Besides, it is also intended to strengthen the mutual interactions, interoperability and validating the procedures during the conduct of search and rescue operations.



3. Aerospace Industries of Israel Announced to Sign Agreement Worth \$93 Million with Indian Navy

Israeli Aerospace Industries has announced to sign agreements worth USD 93 million with the Indian Navy and Cochin Shipyard. As per the agreement, the Israeli Aerospace Industries will provide Naval Medium Range Surface-to-Air Missile systems to India.

Further, following the contracts, Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) will provide complementary systems for the air defense system. In addition to this, it also will involve follow up orders for a range of maintenance and other services for various sub-systems of IAI's advanced Medium Range Surface-to-Air Missile (MSRAM) ADS.



4. India Received 4 Chinook Heavy Lift Helicopters from US

India has received its four Chinook Heavy Lift Helicopters at the Mundra Port in Gujarat from US. The Chinooks have the capability to airlift the M777 lightweight howitzers that the Indian Army is installing.

The delivery of four Chinook CH-47F (I) heavy lift helicopters are a part of the deal that India ordered in 2015. India had signed nearly a \$3 billion deal with American aviation giant Boeing and the US government in September 2015 to buy 22 Apache and 15 Chinook choppers.



As per the report, the Chinook helicopters will be assembled first and then flown to the Chandigarh base of the Air Force. Here, it will become part of 126 Helicopter Flight, which is a unit that operates the last of the Mi-26 choppers.

5. INS Trikand Participated in Cutlass Express 2019 Exercise

A front-line warship of the Indian Navy namely INS Trikand, has participated in a multinational training exercise 'CUTLASS EXPRESS - 19'. It was held from January 27 to February 06, 2019.

During the exercise, Naval, Coast Guard and Marine Police personnel from different countries of East Africa, were jointly trained by mentors and seniors came from USA, India, and Netherlands. The Express exercise is also supported by international organizations including the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), Combined Maritime Force (CMF) and European Naval Forces (EUNAVFOR). Amidst, the Indian Navy has played a significant role in 'CUTLASS EXPRESS - 19'. Indian Navy assisted in planning, coordination and execution.



The objectives of the exercise were to:

- improve law enforcement capacity
- promote regional security
- progress inter-operability between the armed forces of the participating nations for the purpose of interdicting illegal maritime activity in the Western Indian Ocean.

6. IAF carried out 'Vayu Shakti' exercise at Pokhran

On 16th of February, the Indian Air Force carried out a mega exercise at Pokhran near the border with Pakistan. In this exercise, all sorts of fighter jets and attack helicopters were used. It was in fact the power demonstration in response of Pulwama attack.

In this Vayu Shakti exercise, the IAF showcased fire power capability of indigenously-developed platforms such as Light Combat Aircraft Tejas, Advanced Light Helicopter, and efficacy of the Akash. Akash is a surface-to-air missile. Astra, which is an air-to-air missile was also tested. The IAF also deployed the upgraded MiG-29 fighter jet in an air-to-ground role in this exercise.



7. India Test Fired Surface-to-Air Missile "QRSAM" from Odisha

On February 26, India successfully test fired the short range Quick Reaction Surface-to-Air Missile (QRSAM). It is tested from the Integrated Test Range (ITR) at Chandipur, coast of Odisha.

QRSAM is developed by the Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO). It has strike range of 25 km to 30 km and it has the capability of multiple targets. It is said that with advanced technology, QRSAM will soon replace the 'Akash' missile defence system which is on its way out due to technological obsolescence.

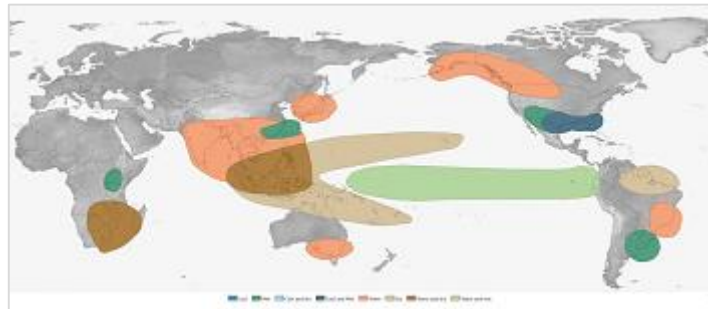


Environment

1. El Niño Likely to Increase Temperature in 2019

As per the UN's World Meteorological Organization report, 2019 may evidence the advent of El Niño resulting in a raise in temperature. El Niño, which is a natural phenomenon occurs once in every few years in the region of Eastern Pacific Ocean, but affects the whole world.

Last time, El Niño occurred in 2016 and made the year hottest ever recorded. El Niño has a great influence on weather around the globe, as it causes draught in some regions (such as parts of Australia) and floods in drier regions (such as in South America). In addition to



this, the high temperature also affects the coral reef, as it causes bleaching on coral reefs.

2. Centre Approved INR 59 Crore to Gujarat's Gir Forest for Asiatic Lion Conservation

For the conservation of Asiatic Lion at Gir Forest in Gujarat, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), has allocated 59 Cr. INR. Asiatic lion is one of the endangered species for which, the Ministry of Environment has launched a three-year Asiatic Lion Conservation Project. Ministry of Environment has collaborated with the state of Gujarat.



Asiatic lion is the last habitat of the big cat. To execute the program properly for the conservation and protection efforts of the Great Gir Region, the modern information and communication technology will be used. It will include:

- GPS-based animal and vehicle tracking,
- automated sensor grid with movement sensors,
- night vision capability,
- real-time monitoring, and
- report generation.

3. To Monitor Cloud Activities, Observatory Set Up in Tehri

To Monitor cloud burst incidents in the Himalayan region and also to receive forecast, a Himalayan Cloud Observatory has been set up. The Observatory is set up in Tehri District of Uttarakhand state.

The cloudburst incidents are common and frequent in the Himalayan region of Uttarakhand, which cause huge loss of life and wealth more often. This observatory will help minimize the damage in the region. This is the second observatory in India to monitor cloudburst activities. It is set up and regulated by the Indian Science and Technology Department and Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kanpur.



4. A Crying Snake Discovered in Arunachal Pradesh

A team of zoologists has discovered a new species of 'crying' snake in Lepa-Rada district of Arunachal Pradesh. It is non-venomous crying keelback snake. Its zoological name is *Hebius lacrima*. 'Lacrima' is a Latin term, which means tear.

So, the name of this keelback was given because of a dark spot under its eyes, which looks like a black tear. The dark spot interrupts a white stripe running along the upper jaw to the back of its head and beyond. The snake forms its habitat along the water areas of paddy fields, as it gets food. Its major food includes tadpole, small fish, small frogs, and geckos.



5. An Australian Rat Became First Mammal to Extinct Due to Climate Change

The Australian Government has officially announced that the '*Bramble Cay Melomys*' is extinct because of the climate change. This species is a native of sand island near the coast of Papua New Guinea.

The small rat-like animal was missing since 2009; however, scientists first time guess that the animal might have become extinct in 2014. As per the report given by the University of Queensland and the Queensland government, there is no trace of this animal. They said that their team have made great effort to search this animal through 900 small mammal

trap-nights, 60 camera trap-nights and two hours of active daytime searches produced no records of the species.

The reason of extinction is given – climate change (especially human made climate change). Since, the animal had coastal habitat, extreme high water levels and strong storm surges could have destroyed their habitat.



6. World Largest Bee Discovered in Indonesia

A group of researchers have discovered the world's largest bee in Indonesia. The size of this bee is as large as the thumb of a human being. Since 1981, it was believed that it was extinct.

As per the CNN report, the entomologist Eli Wyman, behavioural ecologist Simon Robson and ornithologist Glenn Chilton, natural history photographer Clay Bolt, in a field research work, have made the spectacular "rediscovery" of the elusive critter and took the first photos and video of a living Wallace's giant bee.



Science & Technology

1. Artificial Pancreas Smartphone App Developed for Diabetic Patients

As per the recent report, a group of scientists, have developed an artificial pancreas smartphone app and the app is effective and efficient enough to regulate blood sugar levels in diabetes patients. The smartphone app is designed to interface wirelessly with glucose monitors, insulin pump devices, and decision-making algorithms.

The clinical trial of the artificial pancreas system has shown that the app is effective and safe, as it efficiently regulates glucose levels under challenging situations. In addition to this, it is suitable for use in unconstrained environments. It also improves time in the target glucose range.



2. Iran Unveils Long-Range Surface-to-Surface Cruise Missile

On the eve of celebrating 1979 Islamic Revolution Anniversary, Iran unveiled a new cruise (surface-to-surface) missile. The range of the cruise missile is 1300 km (or 800 miles). The advanced missile needs very short period of time to hit the target and it flies at a low altitude.

The name of missile is given as 'Hoveizeh'. However, western countries have doubt over such missile advancement. Besides, Washington (the United States) also warned Tehran (the capital of Iran) last month against undertaking three planned rocket launches, as it violates a UN Security Council resolution.



3. GSAT-31, India's Latest Communication Satellite Launched

The latest communication satellite GSAT-31 has been launched successfully from the Spaceport in French Guiana (South America) on February 6, 2019. The launch vehicle Ariane 5 VA-247 lift off from *Kourou* Launch Base, French Guiana at 2:31 am (IST). It was having India's GSAT-31 and Saudi Geostationary Satellite 1/Hellas Sat 4 satellites.

With a lift-off mass of 2536 kg, GSAT-31 is designed to augment the Ku-band transponder capacity in Geostationary Orbit. Further, it will provide continuity to operational services on some of the in-orbit satellites.



4. ISRO Set Up Human Space Flight Centre in Bengaluru

ISRO has set up its first manned space mission namely 'Gaganyaan' in Bengaluru, Karnataka. It is a Human Space Flight Centre, which will gear up the human spaceflight program.

As per the space agency, the launch of human spaceflight programme is scheduled to be functional by the end of 2021. The program will also include a woman astronaut. In the year 2019, 'Gaganyaan' is the highest priority. As per the latest report, the first unmanned mission is scheduled in December 2020, and second in July 2021. Once these two mission will be completed, then the manned mission will begin i.e. December 2021.



5. Anti-tank Missile 'Helina' Test Fired in Balasore

One of the most-advanced ant-tank weapons 'Helina' has been launched from Balasore located at the Odisha coast. It is helicopter-launched version of the anti-tank weapons.

Helena is the helicopter-launched version of the Nag anti-tank guided missile. Its range covers 7 to 8 km. Helena is developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO). It is technologically advanced and is guided by an infrared imaging seeker (IIR) having the system of lock-on-before-launch mode, which further strengthens the defence capabilities.

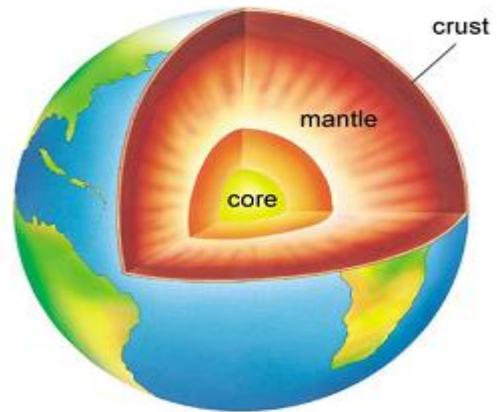


6. Massive Mountains Discovered Under Earth's Mantle

A group of scientists have discovered massive mountains in the interior of the Earth. Mountains are found in the Earth's mantle part i.e. the middle layer of the earth (first -

crust, second - mantle, and third - core). After this finding, it is believed that the understanding of how the planet was formed will be changed.

For such study, scientists have used waves and powerful computers to simulate the complicated behavior of scattering waves in the deep Earth. The technology is dependent upon a fundamental property of waves specifically their ability to bend and bounce.



Banking, Finance, and Business

1. IBA Issued advisory to Waive Off Various Charges for Kisan Credit Card

Indian Banking Association (IBA) has issued an advisory under which requested banks to waive off the processing, documentation, inspection and all other service charges especially for the Kisan Credit Card and crop loans up to Rs. 3 lakhs.

The Kisan Credit Card Scheme is destined to provide adequate and timely credit support from the banking system to the farmers. Such credit facility helps farmer to meet the short term credit requirements for cultivation of crops, investment credit requirements for agriculture and allied activities and other needs.



Agriculture Ministry said that there are more than 21 crore small and marginal farmers in the country and providing them timely and affordable credit is the key to attaining comprehensive growth.

2. Export Growth of India May Slow to 7% in 2019

As per the report released by Government of India, country's export may slow down to 7.3% in the financial year 2018-19. Last financial year, i.e. for 2017-2018, the growth rate was 9.8%. The growth rate likely to decrease because of poor growth of traditional exports including gems and jewelry, marine, farm and engineering.

However, amidst slow growth rate, the favorable growth projections come with the assumption that investments will grow at 6.7% in 2019-20. Besides, the investment rate, as represented by the gross fixed capital formation, stood at 7.6% in 2017-18, which has grown from a low of 1.6% in 2013-14.



3. RBI Increased Limit on Collateral Free Agriculture Loans from 1 Lakh to 1.6 Lakhs

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has announced a good news for the farmers by increasing the limit on collateral free agriculture loans to 1.6 lakhs. Until the such limit was 1 lakh. The

objective is to boost the liquidity in the farming sector giving special attention to small and marginal farmers.

As per the report, RBI's move will increase the coverage of small and marginal farmers in the formal credit system. Besides, RBI also planned to set up an internal working group to review agricultural credit to address issues like regional disparity, etc. Besides, to cover maximum number of farmers under the scheme of KCC (with banks' support), government has also decided to launch a campaign.



4. RBI Fined Rs. 1 Crore on SBI

Reserve Bank of India has slapped Rs. 1 Crore penalty on State Bank of India (SBI), for violating the norms. As per the Section 47 A of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949, RBI has imposed the penalty of Rupees one crore on the bank for not monitoring the end use of funds in respect of one of its borrowers.



State Bank of India is the largest public sector bank of the country.

5. RBI Fined Rs. 3.5 Crore on Allahabad Bank & Corp Bank for Violating Norms

Reserve Bank of India (RBI), on the course of taking strict action against the rules violators, a cumulative penalty worth of Rs. 3.5 Crore imposed on Corporation Bank and Allahabad Bank. In its report, Corporation Bank told that they violated various norms such as not monitoring the end use of funds and exchange of information with other banks in case of a borrower.



On the other hand, Allahabad Bank also reported that RBI has imposed a penalty of Rs. 1.5 Crore for not monitoring end use of funds.

6. Allahabad Bank, Corp Bank Out of PCA Framework: RBI

The Board for Financial Supervision (BFS) of the Reserve Bank of India has taken action against two public sector banks namely Allahabad Bank and Corporation Bank and one private sector bank namely Dhanlaxmi Bank and removed them from Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) framework.

Such exclusion decision has been taken based on the principles adopted by the BFS in its earlier meeting taken place on 31 January. However, three banks namely Bank of India, Bank of Maharashtra, and Oriental Bank of Commerce are allowed in existing PCA framework.



Reports

1. Mukesh Ambani Ranked at Top in Hurun India Philanthropy List 2018

The Chairman of Reliance Industries and the richest person of India as well as Asia, Mukesh Ambani is ranked at the top in Hurun India Philanthropy List 2018. In the list, the second rank is given to Ajay Piramal, the Piramal Group.

As per the report prepared by Hurun Research Institute, India, Mr. Mukesh Ambani and family donated Rs. 437 crore from the month of October 2017 to September 2018. Whereas, in the same period, Ajay Piramal donated Rs 200 crore.



The following table illustrates the top ten philanthropists:

Rank	Name	Donations (INR Cr.)	Company
1	Mukesh Ambani & Family	437	Reliance Industries
2	Ajay Piramal & Family	200	Piramal Group
3	Azim Premji & Family	113	Wipro
4	Adi Godrej & Family	96	Godrej
5	Yusuff Ali MA	70	Lulu
6	Shiv Nadar	56	HCL
7	Savji Dholakia	40	Hari Krishna Exports
8	Shapoor Pallonji Mistry	36	Shapoorji Pallonji (Monaco)
8	Cyrus Pallonji Mistry	36	Shapoorji Pallonji (Mumbai)
10	Gautam Adani	30	Ahmedabad

2. India Placed at 47th Rank in the Facebook Inclusive Internet Index 2019

As per the Inclusive Internet Index (3i) 2019, prepared by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) for Facebook, India has been placed at 47th rank out of 100 participants. Sweden is

placed at the top in the list. Based on the scores of availability, affordability, relevance, and readiness categories, the “Inclusive Internet” score has been prepared.

As per this report, men have more access than women globally; however, lower middle income countries narrowed the gender gap in 2018. Inclusion for women along with the disabilities has improved with low income and lower middle income countries driving progress.



Though the percentage of households having the internet facility globally increased, on average from 53.1 percent to 54.8 percent, but the rate of growth related to internet connections slowed to 2.9% in 2019 from 7.7% in 2018.

The following table illustrates top ten countries:

Rank	Country	Score (100)
1	Sweden	89.5
2	Singapore	87.3
3	United States	86.3
4	Denmark	85.9
5	United Kingdom	85.4
6	Canada	85.3
6	Finland	85.3
8	Spain	85.2
9	South Korea	85.1
10	France	84.9

Appointments

1. Lt Gen Rajeev Chopra Appointed as NCC Director General

Lt Gen Rajeev Chopra is appointed as the Director General of NCC (DGNCC) in New Delhi. He is an alumnus of the National Defense Academy, *Khadakwasla* and Indian Military Academy, *Dehradun*. In addition to this, Lt Gen Chopra has been awarded with *Ati Vishisht Seva* Medal for his notable service in January 2018.

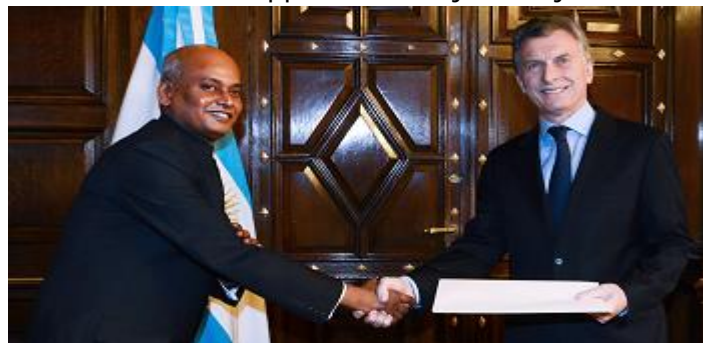
Lt Gen Chopra has also commanded various major operations like Operation Rhino in Assam and has also been the Commandant officer of the prestigious Infantry School.



2. Sanjiv Ranjan Appointed as Ambassador of India to the Republic of Colombia

On 2nd February 2019, Ministry of External Affairs appointed Sanjiv Ranjan as the Ambassador of India to the Republic of Colombia. Mr. Ranjan is Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer of 1993 batch. Currently, he is serving as the Ambassador of India to Argentina.

Mr. Ranjan also served as Deputy High Commissioner of India to Mauritius from 2006 to 2009.



3. Rishi Kumar Shukla Appointed as New Director of CBI

The Center has appointed 1983 batch IPS officer, Rishi Kumar Shukla as the new director of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). Mr. Shukla is appointment for a period of two years from the date of joining of the office. It has been approved by appointment committee of the Cabinet.

Currently, Mr. Shukla is the Chairman of the Madhya Pradesh Police Housing Corporation.



4. EU Parliament Recognized Juan Guaido as Venezuelan Interim President

Parliament of European Union (EU) recognized Juan Guaido as Interim President of Venezuela. Mr. Juan Guaido is self-declared interim president and de facto Head of the State.



At a special session in Brussels, held to recognize Venezuelan Congress Head Guaido as interim leader, among all EU lawmakers, 439 have been voted in favor; 104 voted against; and, 88 were absent.

However, by the time, EU did not set any time limit for the Presidential election in Venezuela.

5. B.S. Mubarak Appointed as Ambassador of India to the Republic of Honduras

Indian Foreign Service Officer of 2001 batch, Mr. B. S. Mubarak has been appointed as the next ambassador of India to the Republic of Honduras.



Currently, Mr. Mubarak is ambassador of India to the Republic of Guatemala with residence in Guatemala City.

6. Dinesh Bhatia appointed as the Ambassador of India to the Republic of Argentina

Indian foreign Service Officer of 1992 batch, Mr. Dinesh Bhatia has been appointed as the next ambassador of India to the Republic of Argentina.

Currently, Mr. Bhatia is Consulate General of India, Toronto and he is expected to take up the assignment shortly.



7. Former Mayor Nayib Bukele Became New President of El Salvador

Former Mayor of El Salvador, Nayib Bukele has won the presidential election of El Salvador with 53.7 percent of vote and 89 percent of the ballots counted.

The 37 years old, Mr. Bukele will take the charge of President of El Salvador on June 1, 2019.



8. Sanjay Kumar Verma Appointed as the Next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Marshall Islands

Indian Foreign Service (IFS) Officer of 1998 batch, Mr. Sanjay Kumar Verma is appointed as the next ambassador of India to the Republic of Marshall Islands.

Presently, Mr. Verma is ambassador of India to Japan with residence in Tokyo.

Mr. Verma will take up the assignment shortly.

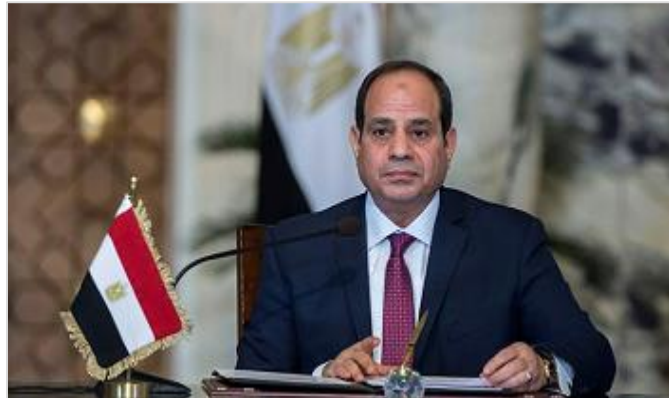


9. African Union Elected Egypt's President Abdel Fattah El Sisi as its New Chairman

President of Egypt, Abdel Fattah El Sisi has been elected as a new chairman of African Union. He has been elected in the 32nd African Union summit held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Rwanda's President Paul Kagame was previous Chairman of African Union, who completed his one-year of tenure.

However, this appointment is warned by the rights group Amnesty international, as they are worried that chairmanship of El Sisi might undermine the human rights mechanisms.



10. Centre has named Ruchira Kamboj as India's new Ambassador to Bhutan

Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer of 1987 batch, Ms. Ruchira Kamboj has been appointed as the next ambassador of India to Royal Kingdom of Bhutan.

Presently, Ms. Kamboj is High Commissioner of India to the Republic of South Africa. Ms. Kamboj will take up the assignment shortly.



11. Australia Spin Legend Shane Warne Appointed as Brand Ambassador of Rajasthan Royals

Australian spin legend, Mr. Shane Warne has been appointed as the brand ambassador of Rajasthan Royals for Indian Premier League (IPL) 2019. Mr. Warne was the captain of Rajasthan Royals for four sessions of IPL. However, in 2011, he retired completely from all forms of cricket.

Under the captainship of Mr. Warne, Rajasthan Royals had won their first and only IPL title in 2008.

Apart from this, Rajasthan Royals has also decided to change the color of their jersey from blue to pink. Pink is pretty popular color in Rajasthan because the capital Jaipur is popular as 'Pink city;' Jodhpur is famous for 'pink sandstones;' and, Udaipur is known for its 'pink marble.'



12. President Appointed Sushil Chandra as New Election Commissioner

Chairman of Central Board of Direct Taxation (CBDT), Mr. Sushil Chandra has been appointed as new Election Commissioner by the President of India.

The other two members of the election commission are Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sunil Arora and Election Commissioner (EC) Ashok Lavasa.

Appointment of Mr. Chandra will fill the vacancy, which is occurred because of the retirement of existing EC Mr. O.P. Rawat.



13. Union Minister Arun Jaitley Resumed Charge as Finance Minister

Union Minister Arun Jaitley resumed the charge as the Minister of Finance and Minister of Corporate Affairs.

He was on leave for three weeks from January 23, 2019 to February 14, 2019 because of some health related concerns.

In the absence of Minister Arun Jaitley, Railway Minister Piyush Goyal looked after both Finance and Corporate Affairs ministries.



14. PC Mody Designated as New CBDT chairman

Indian Revenue Service (IRS) Officer of 1982 batch, Mr. Pramond Chandra Mody has been appointed as new Chairman of Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT). CBDT is a policy making body of Income Tax Department.

Mr. PC Mody has been appointed in the place of previous Chairman of CBDT, Mr. Sushil Chandra.



15. Mary Kom Designated as Women's Training Ambassador of PUMA

Six-time World boxing champion, Mangte Chungneijang Mary Kom has been appointed as women's training Ambassador of PUMA. It is a Germany based Sports and Lifestyle company.

According to Mary Kom, PUMA is brand which always supports and encourages women. The Managing Director of PUMA India, Mr. Abhishek Ganguly is expecting that this partnership will encourage women all over the country and also said,



"We are very thrilled to welcome Mary to the Puma family. Having consistently defied all odds to achieve a wide range of records and medals, she is an idol for women all over India."

16. The Charge as Secretary of Department of Fisheries Given to Tarun Shridhar

Secretary of Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairy, Mr. Tarun Shridhar has been given additional charge as secretary of newly created Department of Fisheries. The appointment is with immediate effect and it will remain till the appointment of a regular obligatory or until further orders.



The appointment had been done just day after the approval of the forming Department of Fisheries by the Cabinet. Mr. Shridhar is an Indian Administrative Service (IAS) Officer of 1984 batch.

17. BFI President Ajay Singh Appointed as the Head of AIBA Elite Foundation

President of Boxing Federation of India (BFI), Mr. Ajay Singh has been selected for the post of President of the Foundation Board for Better Boxing. It is an elite International Boxing Association (AIBA) Elite Foundation. He has been elected for the tenure of four years.

Mr. Ajay Singh expressed his happiness through the following words:

"The appointment is a huge pride not only for me personally but an honour for Indian boxing and the boxers too as our hard work has been not only appreciated globally, our potential as an upcoming boxing powerhouse has been recognised as well. I would like to thank AIBA and all members for considering me for this position and I will do everything possible in my capacity to render the responsibilities bestowed".



18. Former Judge, Justice D.K. Jain, Appointed as First BCCI Ombudsman by SC

The Supreme Court of India has appointed former Judge, Justice D.K. Jain as the first ombudsman for the Board of Control of Cricket in India (BCCI).

Ombudsman is an administrative body who deals with any issue that comes with regards to the players and other financial issues.



Headquartered in Mumbai, the Ombudsman will have to hold the hearing at the Board of Control of Cricket in India (BCCI).

19. Justice Uma Nath Appointed as First Lokayukta of Nagaland

On February 22, 2019, former Chief of Meghalaya High Court, Justice Uma Nath Singh took the oath as a first Lokayukta of Nagaland.

The Governor of Nagaland, Mr. PB Acharya administered the Oath to Justice Uma Nath Singh in an oath ceremony held at Raj Bhawan.



Tenure of the post is 4 years or until the age of 70. Whichever is earlier.

20. Brij Bhushan Sharan Elected as WFI President

The Wrestling Federation of India has been elected MP Brij Bhushan Sharan as the President of WFI. Mr. Sharan assumed the post of President of WFI third time.

Mr. Sharan is also the member of Parliament from the Aiserganj constituency of Uttar Pradesh,

In addition to this, Mr. Sharan was also the chef-de-mission of the Indian Contingent for the Asian Games 2018 held in Jakarta and Palembang.



21. Muhammadu Buhari Re-Elected as Nigerian President

President Muhammadu Buhari has been re-elected as the President of Nigeria. He will serve for the second four-year term.

President Buhari defeated his biggest rival, Atiku Abubakar by the margin of about four million votes but the opposition party of Atiku Abubakar, rejected the election result. Mr. Buhari was first elected in 2015. Earlier during the year of 1980s, he led a military regime for 20 months.



Awards

1. France's Highest Civilian Honour is Conferred to Old Bengal Priest Father Francois Laborde

The 92 years old, Father Francois Laborde has been awarded with highest civilian award of France, Legion d'Honneur. This award is presented to Father Laborde for his unforgettable work for the specially-abled children in Howrah.

Father Laborde set up an organization, namely Howrah South Point to uplift the most deprived section of the society, specially-abled children.

According to the ambassador of France to India, Alexandre Ziegler, France was happy to present the highest civilian honour award, Legion d'Honneur to Father Laborde.



2. Manus Island Refugee Behrouz Boochani Won Australian Literary Prize

Refugee of Manus Island, Bahrouz Boochani has been awarded the country's most valuable literacy award, namely Victorian Premier's Literary Award for his novel, "No friends But the Mountains". This award includes \$1,00,000 prize as well as \$25,000 for acquiring first place in the category of non-fiction.

Mr. Boochani had written entire novel from the prison by typing in mobile phone and sent his writings to the translator Omid Tofighian via WhatsApp, in pieces and bits.

The Human Rights Law Centre of Australia has tweeted their congratulations to Boochani. They called this novel "an Australian story that as a nation we cannot be proud of, but it's a story that cannot be ignored".



3. Uniphore Software Systems conferred with Aegis Graham Bell Award 2019

Samith Ramachandran, Vice President & Head of Products, Uniphore Software Systems received the Aegis Graham Bell Award 2019 for "Innovation in Data Science". The award is given by Ameya Abhyankar, Secretary, Department of Information Technology, Government of Goa.

In addition to this, Senior Marketing Manager of Uniphore Software Systems, Mohammed Nawaz was also present at the award ceremony.



4. President of India Presented Sangeet Natak Akademi Awards 2017

Honorable President of India, Mr. Ram Nath Kovind has presented the highest recognition award of India for an artist, "Sangeet Natak Akademi" award for 2017 to 42 artists in the ceremony held at Rashtrapati Bhawan, New Delhi.

Awardees in the field of music are Tabla player Yogesh Samsi, Carnatic vocalist M S Sheela, Carnatic veena player Suma Sudhindra, flautist and shehnai player Rajendra Prasanna, Carnatic mridangam player Tiruvarur Vaidyanathan, Madhurani, Carnatic flautist Shashank Subramanyam and Haimanti Sukla for Sugam Sangeet, and Gurnam Singh for Gurbani, Hindustani vocalist Lalith J Rao.



In addition to this, 9 were awarded in the field of dance namely Rama Vaidyanathan for Bharatnatyam, Shobha Koser for Kathak, Madambi Subramanian Namboodiri for Kathakali, IN Oinam Ongbi Dhoni Devi for Manipuri dance, Deepika Reddy for Kuchipudi, Ramkrishna Talukdar for Sattriya, Janmajoy Saibabu for Chhau, and Ashit Desai (composer).

5. SBI UK Chief conferred with "Freedom of the City of London"

City of London Corporation has presented "Freedom of the City of London" award to UK Chief of State Bank of India (SBI), Mr. Sanjiv Chandra for his contribution in the bilateral relation between UK and India.

Lord Mayor of London, Peter Estlin and Sheriff Vincent Keaveny nominated Mr. Chandra for this award.



6. Canadian Academy Conferred Deepa Mehta with Lifetime Achievement Award

Veterian Indo-Canadian filmmaker, Deepa Mehta has been awarded with Lifetime Achievement award by the Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television. Ms. Mehta is most famous for her elemental trilogy, "Fire", "Earth" and "Water".

Besides, Ms. Mehta previously received Governor General's Performing Arts Award for Lifetime Artistic Achievement in 2012. At present, Ms. Mehta is working with Netflix on the web seri "Leila".



Ms. Mehta was born in India but after her marriage with documentary filmmaker, Paul Saltzman, she moved to Canada.

7. BAFTA Awards 2019 – "Roma" Film Won Best Picture

Netflix Film "Roma" has won award in 72nd British Academy of Film and Television Arts Awards ceremony, 2019 (BAFTA Awards 2019) which was held on February 10, 2019 in Royal Albert Hall, London, United Kingdom.

Film "Roma" is all about the life of a middle class domestic worker in 1970s residing in Mexico.

This film is semi-autobiographical film of Alfonso Cuaron. It is also selected for Oscar Award and became the first film of Netflix to get selected for such a prestigious award.



8. Sanjay Subrahmanyam Won Israel's Million Dollar Dan David Prize

Historian of India, Mr. Sanjay Subrahmanyam has won one of the prestigious awards of Israel. The name of award is Dan David Prize, given in the category of 'Past time Dimension' for his eminent work in the field of macro history.

Mr. Subrahmanyam has shared the award in the past category with Professor Kenneth Pomeranz of University of Chicago

According to Mr. Subrahmanyam, when he gets prize money then he donates 10% for the scholarship of graduate and post-graduate researchers.



Note: It is the culture of the Dan David Prize laureates that awardee needs to donate 10 percent of their prize money towards scholarships for graduate or post-graduate researchers in their respective fields to encourage and foster new generations of scholars.

9. Bradley Cooper Won PETA's 'Oscat' award for A Star is Born

Actor and Director, Bradley Cooper has been awarded with 'Oscat' award, presented by the People for Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA).

The award is presented to Mr. Cooper for casting his own dog, Charlie in the film 'A Star is Born' rather than casting any trained dog or any animal from other suppliers.



11. Top Swachhata Excellence Awards 2019 Announced

During the Shehri Samridhi Utsav in New Delhi, Swachhata Excellence Awards 2019 has been presented to the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) cities and municipal corporations of Raigarh, Ambikapur, and Kumbakonam.

Raigarh's AMRUT and municipal corporation won first prize, Ambikapur won second prize and Kumbakonam won third prize.

Further, as per the statement of Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry, Nagar Palika Parishad of Jashpur Nagar, Malappuram Municipality, and Nagar Palika Parishad Surajpur had won the prizes in category of "Statutory Towns".



11. De Goede, Van Doren Won 2018 FIH Player of the Year Awards

International Hockey Federation Player of the Year Award 2018, presented to the Eva de Goede. She is from Netherlands. She is titled as the female player of the year.

Arthur van Doren of Belgium was titled with the male player of the year for the year of 2018.

The FIH Player of the Year Award have been awarded to the male and female hockey players by the International Hockey Federation. It is established in 1998 and present award to the players every year since then.



13. Shiv Chhatrapati Awards Given to Uday Deshpande and Smriti Mandhana

Maharashtra Government has presented the Life time achievement Award to Mallakhamb coach, Mr. Uday Deshpande for the year of 2017-18. In addition to this, Ms. Smriti Mandhana has been awarded with "Shiv Chhatrapati award for the players among several others". The awards are presented by the Maharashtra's Governor, Mr. C. Vidyasagar Rao.

On 17 February, the award event is held at the Gate way of India, Mumbai.



Mr. Deshpande is known for promoting the traditional sport of India, namely *Mallakahamb* which is a traditional and native sport. In this game, practitioner performs different gymnastic and yoga postures with wrestling grips on an erect pole or a suspended rope.

14. Rabindranath Tagore Award for Cultural Harmony Awarded by the President

Honorable President of India, Mr. Ram Nath Kovind has presented the Rabindranath Tagore Award for Cultural Harmony to Shri Rajkumar Singhajit Singh. It is given for the year 2014.

However, for the year 2015, it is given to cultural organization of Bangladesh Chhayanaut; and for the year 2016, it is given to Shri Ram Sutar Vanji.

In the year 2012, the Rabindranath Tagore Award was inaugurated by the government, during the commemoration of the 150th Birth Anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore.



15. Sunil Chhetri awarded the India's First-ever "Football Ratna"

The professional Indian striker, Sunil Chhetri has been awarded with first ever Football Ratna award by Delhi Football, the State Association (governing the sport in Delhi).

The award has been presented to Mr. Chhetri by the President of Delhi Football, Dr. Shaji Prabhakaran in the award ceremony. The ceremony was held at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in New Delhi.



16. Rajyavardhan Rathore Presented the 7th National Photography Awards in New Delhi

On February 19, 2019, the 7th National Photography Awards were presented by Rajyavardhan Rathore in New Delhi. A total of 13 awards were presented for different categories.

Ashok Dilwali won 'Life Time Achievement Award,' SL Shanth Kumar won 'Professional Photographer of the Year Award,' 'Amateur Photographer of the year award was given to Gurdeep Dhiman,' Arun Sreedhar, PV SUnderrao, Kailash Mittal, Mihir Singh, Ranita Roy won 'Special Mention Awards (Professional),' and V Ravi Kumar, S Neelima, Manish Jaisi, Mahesh Balasaheb Lonkar, Avijit Datta were awarded with 'Special Mention Awards (Amateur).'



17. Manpreet Singh Honored with AHF's Player of the Year

Indian hockey skipper, Mr. Manpreet Singh has been honored with the Player of the Year Award for 2018 by the Asian Hockey Federation.

In addition to this, women team's striker, Lalremisiami has been awarded with Rising Player of the Year Award.

Manpreet contributed a lot by leading India's team to an unbeatable streak at the Asian Champions Trophy at Muscat. He has also won Asian Championship Trophy along with Pakistan.



18. Apurvi Chandela Won Gold in Women's 10m Air Rifle

Apurvi Chandela has won India's first medal of International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup 2019.

Apurvi won gold medal for women's 10-meter air rifle event held at Dr. Karni Singh Shooting Range in New Delhi. In addition to this, Apurvi also created the new world record by scoring 251.9 points in the finals.



19. Oscars Award 2019: Full List of Winners

The 91st Academy awards (more popular as Oscar award) have been announced at Dolby Theatre in Hollywood.

The following table illustrates the name of significant winners along with their categories:

Sl. No.	Category	Awardees
1	Best Picture	Green Book
2	Best Director	Alfonso Cuaron for "Roma"
3	Best Actress	Olivia Colman for "The Favourite"
5	Best Actor	Rami Malek for "Bohemian Rhapsody"
6	Best Supporting Actress	Regina King for "If Beale Street Could Talk"
7	Best Supporting Actor	Mahershala Ali for "Green Book"

8	Best Foreign Language Film	"Roma" (Mexico)
9	Best Animated Feature Film	Spider-Man: Into The Spider-Verse
10	Best Original Screenplay	Green Book
11	Best Adapted Screenplay	BlackKkKlansman
12	Best Original Score	Black Panther
13	Best Original Song	Shallow" from "A Star Is Born
14	Best Documentary Feature	Free Solo
15	Best Documentary Short Film	Period. End of Sentence

19. India Shines at Oscars, 'Period. End of Sentence' Won Documentary Short Subject

An Indian short film, 'Period. End of Sentence' has won the Oscar award for the category of Documentary Short Subject at the 91st Academy Awards.

This film is based on menstruation and its conditions in the rural areas. This film is directed by the Award winning filmmaker, Rayka Zehtabchi.



20. Sourabh Chaudhary Won Gold in 10m air Rifle at Shooting World Cup

Sourabh Choudhary has become the second to clinch the gold medal in 10-meter air rifle at International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup 2019.

Sourabh already won gold medals at Youth Olympics and Asian Games. He has attended the top shot in the 10-meter air pistol event of the World Cup.

Sourabh created world record by scoring 245 points to claim the top shot. With this record, he booked his place for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.



21. First Indian-origin Woman to Get Blue Plaque in UK

Indian-origin woman, Late Noor Inayat Khan has become the first Indian woman to get Blue Plaque award at London, United Kingdom.

Noor Inayat Khan was the daughter of Indian Sufi Saint Hazrat Inayat Khan and an agent of Britain's Special Operations Executive (SOE) during World War II.

Spy of Britain, Noor Inayat Khan had been killed in 1944 by the NAZIS at the very young age of 30.



22. President Presented Gandhi Peace Prize

Honorable President of India, Mr. Ram Nath Kovind presented the Gandhi peace prize for the years 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018 at Rashtrapati Bhawan, New Delhi.

The recipient of Gandhi peace prize for the above mentioned years are listed below:

- Mr. Vivekananda Kendra for the year 2015,
- Akshaya Patra foundation and Sulabh International for 2016,
- Ekal Abhiyan Trust for 2017 and
- Yohei Sasakawa for 2018.



Instituted in 1995, Gandhi peace prize was inaugurated for Social, Economic and Political transformation through Non-violence. The prize carries one crore rupees and a citation.

23. Abhijeet Gupta Won Cannes International Open Trophy

Indian Chess master, Mr. Abhijeet Gupta has been awarded with Cannes International Open trophy.

Abhijeet won the tournament with 7.5 points and also this is his first solo International tournament victory.



24. PM Modi Presented the National Youth Parliament Awards

Honorable Prime Minister of India, Mr. Narendra Modi presented the National Youth Parliament Awards to the winners at the Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi.

The theme of this year award is "Be the Voice of New India". Youth of the age of 18-25 years were invited to participate in the district, state and national level youth parliament.

In this, Shweta Umre of Maharashtra won first prize, Anjankshi MS of Karnataka won second prize and Mamta Kumari of Bihar won third prize.



In addition to this, the best three speakers were awarded with Rs. 2 lakhs for first position, Rs. 1.50 lakhs for second and Rs. 1 lakh for third.

24. Manu, Saurabh Won 10 m Air Pistol Mixed Team gold

Saurabh Chaudhary and Manu Bhaker have won the gold medal for the 10-meter Air Pistol Mixed Team event in the ISSF World Cup at Dr. Karni Singh Shooting Range in New Delhi.

They scored 483.5 points to finish on the top position. In addition to this, both of them already won gold in ISSF World Cup for Solo Shooting.



Persons in News

1. Dhanya Became First Woman to Climb Agasthyarkoodam Peak

Kerala woman namely Dhanya placed her name into the history book, as first woman to climb on the Agasthyarkoodam peak. Located in Kerala, Agasthyarkoodam peak is 1868-meter high mountain peak.

On this peak, every year, the state forest department conducts treks, but officially, now women are allowed to climb as security and safety issues are taken care of. Currently, Dhanya is serving as the spokesperson of the Defence Ministry in Thiruvananthapuram. She is a civil servant of 2012 batch. After Dhanya, many other women climbed this mountain peak.



2. Kareena Kapoor Became Brand Ambassador of Swasth Immunized India

As per the latest report, the Bollywood queen Kareena Kapoor Khan, has been made the new brand ambassador of Swasth Immunized India. Kareena was happy to be part of the campaign, which is helmed by her close friend Natasha Poonawalla's husband, Adar Poonawalla.

Swasth Immunized India is an initiative to immunize children under the age of 2 years. She has been chosen as the right person for such campaign, as she more frequently remains involved in such social activities and also supports social causes.



3. Hina Jaiswal Became the first Indian Woman Flight Engineer

Flight Lieutenant Hina Jaiswal has become the first Indian woman flight engineer. According to Defense Ministry, Hina has been appointed after completing the course at the Yelahanka Air Force Station.

As a Flight Engineer, Hina would be posted to operational helicopter units of the Indian Air Force (IAF). In the Unit, Hina is always admired for her ability to operate in the demanding and stressful conditions.

Hina also shared her feelings through the following words:

"I am enthusiastic about my stint in aviation and look forward to embracing the challenges in the service".



4. Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif Resigned

Iranian Foreign minister Javad Zarif has announced his resignation from his post of minister. However, this resignation come into effect when President of Iran, Hassan Rouhani accept the resignation of Mr. Zarif.

Mr. Zarif played most important role for negotiating the landmark 2015 nuclear agreement between Iran and major international powers.



Mr. Zarif is foreign minister since 2013 but in 2018, he faced criticism for withdrawal of United States from the nuclear deal.

Books & Authors

1. Chidambaram's Book "Undaunted: Saving the Idea of India" Launched

A book namely "Undaunted: Saving the Idea of India" authored by former Finance Minister P Chidambaram, has released on February 8, 2019, at Nehru Memorial Museum and Library Auditorium at Teen Murti Marg, in New Delhi, India.

During the launch of the book, former vice-president Hamid Ansari and Congress leader Salman Khurshid were also present there. The book "Undaunted: Saving the Idea of India" basically is a collection of essays narrating the country's atmosphere of fear and how the constitutional values are being threatened.



2. The Book "Law, Justice and Judicial Power: Justice P.N. Bhagwati's Approach" Launched

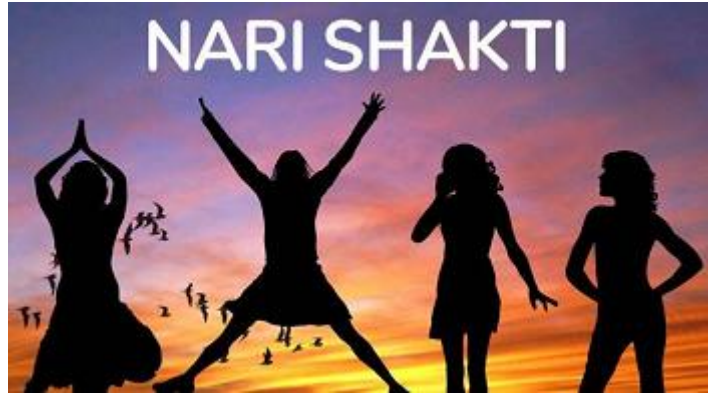
On February 11, 2019, the Chief Justice of India, Justice Ranjan Gogoi, has launched the book namely "Law, Justice and Judicial Power: Justice P.N. Bhagwati's Approach." The book, written by Professor Mool Chand Sharma, has 24 essays written in the honor of the late Justice P.N. Bhagwati, former Chief Justice of India.

Dr. Mool Chand Sharma is a distinguished Professor of Law in University of Delhi and the Founder Vice Chancellor of Central University of Haryana. He worked extensively in the area of Constitutional jurisprudence; Law, Political Economics and development; Law, Politics and Democracy; Poverty and Human Rights jurisprudence.



3. Nari-Shakti Announced as Hindi Word of the Year for 2018 – Oxford Dictionary

The Oxford Dictionary has announced that the word 'Nari Shakti' (or Women Power) as the Hindi Word of the year for 2018. The Announcement was made during a session at Jaipur Literature Festival held at Diggi Palace in Jaipur, Rajasthan.



The word 'Nari Shakti' is actually derived from Sanskrit language. In recent years, the term is widely used to symbolize women taking charge of their own lives. Furthermore, the term in itself enshrines women's rights and ensure that women across the Hindi-speaking world and beyond are empowered.

4. The Book "What Marx Left Unsaid" Released

Manish Tewari, Indian Politician-cum author, has launched the book "What Marx Left Unsaid"- Production of Skills by Means of Skills. The book is authored by Dr. Malay Chaudhuri, Dr. Arindam Chaudhuri, and Che Kabir Chaudhuri.

The book discusses the theory of economic justice that creates a forceful case for an exploitation-free world. Further, it explains concept of a maximum wage ratio of the highest paid to lowest paid worker at 3:1. The book also elaborates that why human beings must earn as per their skills. The skill, in fact, determines the ability to contribute in society. However, the skill has to be measured fairly.



Death

1. Former Umpire Dara Dotiwalla Passed Away

Former umpire Dara Dotiwalla, who officiated in the famous tied Test match between India and Australia held in 1986 at Chennai, passed away on January 30, 2019. He was 85-year-old.

Mr. Dotiwalla born on October 30, 1933 and officiated in six Test matches, including India and Australia tied match at the MA Chidambaram Stadium at Chennai.

Mr. Dotiwalla's first Test match in which he officiated was India versus England Test match at Kanpur in 1982 and he officiated India versus West Indies in 1987 as his last Test match.



2. Former Planning Commission Member & Ex- IIMC Director Hiten Bhaya Passed Away

Former Planning Commission member and Ex-Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC) Director Hiten Bhaya has passed away. He was 98 years-old. Mr. Bhaya was a member of Planning Commission during the governance of Rajiv Gandhi and also served as a director of IIMC and Chairman of Hindustan Steel.



3. Senior Congress Leader Harihar Karan died

Senior Congress leader and former minister, Harihar Karan died at the age of 72. Mr. Karan was six time MLA from Daspalla Constituency, in Nayagarh district, Odisha.

Mr. Karan was the health and family welfare minister in the J B Patnaik ministry in 1980 and also served as the chairperson of the disciplinary committee of the Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee (OPCC) in 2013.



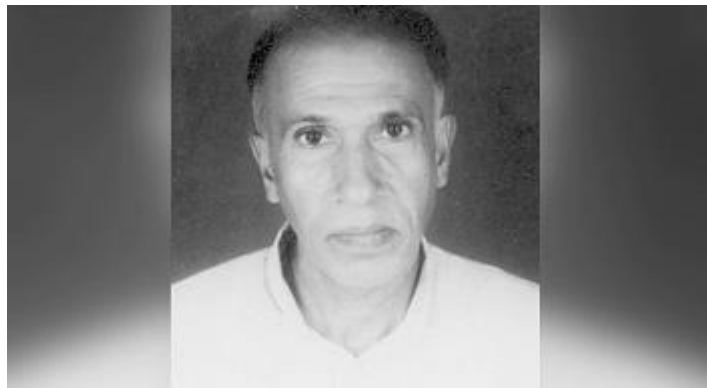
4. Noted Freedom Fighter Priyanath Dey Died

Prominent Freedom fighter and former MLA of Odisha, Priyanath Dey has died on February 4, 2019. He was 97 years old.

Mr. Dey joined freedom movements in 1942 and was jailed for several times.

Mr. Dey was elected to Legislative Assembly of Odisha in 1961 from Jagatsinghpur.

Odisha Governor Prof. Ganeshi Lal and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik condoled the death of Dey. They expressed deep sympathy for the bereaved family.



5. British Actor Albert Finney, Five Time Oscar Nominee Died

Five time Oscar nominee, actor Albert Finney has died on February 7, 2019. He was 82 years old. According to Finney's family, he died because of some sort of illness and old age complications.

Finney's most famous film includes "Angry Young Man" and "Arthur Seaton in Saturday Night and Sunday morning".

Finney also won many awards such as BAFTA and Golden Globe awards for his film "The Gathering Storm".

Finney was also the recipient of two BAFTA Awards from the 13 nominations and in 2001, he received Academy Fellowship.



6. Legendary Goalkeeper of England, Gardon Banks Passed Away

The Legendary Goalkeeper of England, Gardon Banks passed away on February 12, 2019. He was 81 years old. Mr. Banks won 73 caps for England between the year of 1963 and 1972. He had also appeared about 200 times for Stoke until his playing career came to the end because of loss of eye sight in a car accident.

Mr. Banks was also famous for his specialty of blocking shot from Pele that many consider as the greatest save in the history of football.

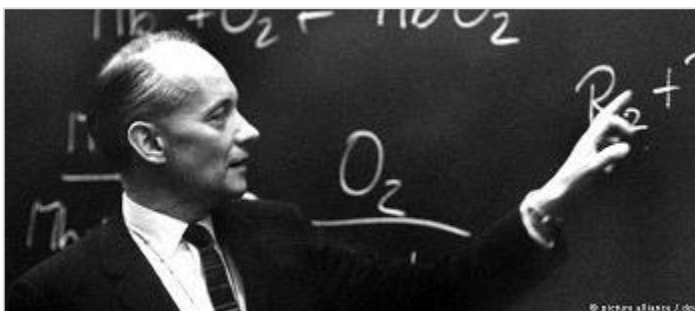


In addition to this, Banks was the goalkeeper of World Cup winning England team of football.

6. Manfred Eigen, German Nobel Prize Winning Chemist, Died

Nobel Prize winner chemist of Germany, Manfred Eigen passed away on February 13, 2019. He was 91 years old. Mr. Eigen was born in Bochum, Germany.

Mr. Eigen was especially famous for his skill to measure fast chemical reaction for which he won Nobel Prize along with R.G.W. Norrish and George Porter.



One of his wonderful works is the introduction of high frequency sound wave that could determine chemical reaction rates in micro and nanosecond range.

Mr. Eigen also won the Ludwig Darmstadter and Paul Ehrlich Prize in 1992. He had also received a Lifetime Achievement Award at the Institute of Human Virology in the US in 2005.

7. Former Goa Deputy Chief Minister Francis D'Souza Passed Away

Former Goa Deputy Chief Minister and Mapusa Legislator of BJP, Mr. Francis D'Souza passed away on February 21, 2019. He died due to prolonged illness of cancer. He was admitted to city hospital two weeks before, but his conditions turned critical.

Chief Minister of Goa, Mr. Manohar Parrikar tweeted to condole the demise of Mr. D'Souza.



8. WWE Legend Pedro Morales Died

First ever World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE) Crown Champion and Hall of Famer, Mr. Pedro Morales passed away on February 12, 2019. He was 76 years old. He died due to Parkinson's disease.

He was reportedly being fighting Parkinson's disease for several years.

Mr. Morales was the native of Culebra Island, Puerto Rico but later he moved to New York and Mr. Morales debuted himself in the ring in 1959 at the age of 17.

WWE shared condolence to the demise of Mr. Morales through their website, WWE.com.



9. "Badge of Honor" Military Novelist, W.E.B. Griffin Died

Military Veteran and novelist, Mr. William E. Butterworth III died on February 12, 2019 at the age 89. Mr. Butterworth III was popularly known as W.E.B. Griffin.

Mr. Griffin joined the army when he was just 17 and later served in Korean war. Mr. Griffin wrote more than 200 books and under the name, W.E.B. Griffin.

Some of the most popular series of Mr. Griffin are "Badge of Honor," "Clandestine Operations" and "Presidential Agent."

Mr. Griffin was native of Newark, New Jersey. He started using different pen names for his books because he was worried that libraries wouldn't accept multiple works by the same author in a given year. Some of his other pen names includes, Alex Baldwin, Webb Beech and Walter E. Blake.



10. Scientist Wallace Smith Broecker Who Popularized the Term “Global Warming” Passed Away

The innovative scientist, Mr. Wallace Smith Broecker passed away on February 18, 2019. He was 87 years old. He died due to some sort of illness.



Mr. Broecker was the man who popularized the term “Global Warming” through his article posted in 1975. In this article, his prediction that is rising carbon dioxide level in the atmosphere causes increase in global warming proved true.

Mr. Broecker was also the pioneer of radiocarbon and isotope dating. He became the first person to recognize what he called the ocean conveyor belt, a global network of currents affecting everything from air temperature to rain patterns.

Mr. Broecker also won many awards such as National Medal of Science in 1996, Vetlesen Prize in 1987 and Tyler Prize for Environmental Achievement in 2002.

11. Hindi Author and Literary Critic Namwar Singh Passed Away

Hindi author and literary critic, Mr. Namwar Singh died on February 19, 2019. He was 92 years old.



Mr. Singh received Sahitya Akademi award for literary criticism in the year of 1971 for his book `Kavita Ke Naye Pratiman`.

Mr. Singh was the former president of All India Progressive Writers' Association (AIPWA) and also worked as an editor in the magazines namely `Janyug` and `Alochana`.

11. Hum Aapke Hain Koun Producer Rajkumar Barjatya Passes Away

Bollywood Producer, Mr. Rajkumar Barjatya has died on February 21, 2019. He was 75 years old. He died due to some sort of illness at the hospital of Mumbai.

Mr. Barjatya's demise is truly a shock for Indian Film Industry. He produced many hit movies such as '*Maine Pyar Kiya*' in 1989, '*Hum Aapke Hain Koun*' in 1994, '*Hum Saath Saath Hain*' in 1999 and '*Prem Ratan Dhan Paayo*' in 2015.



Places in News

1. The Singapore Named as Best City to Live for Asian expats – ECA International

Surprisingly for the 14th year in a row, Singapore is named as the most livable city especially for the Asian Expats. To prepare the report, survey was conducted by human resources consultancy (ECA) International. Outside of Asia, cities namely Brisbane and Sydney (located in Australia) jointly secured second rank for the best quality of living for Asian workers.

Lee Quane, the Asian Regional Director for ECA International say –

"Several factors make Singapore the ideal location, such as access to great facilities, low crime rates, good quality healthcare and education, as well as a large expat population already living in Singapore."



What is ECA International?

Founded in 1971, ECA International is an International Human Resource Consulting, Expatriate Management. It provides data on cost of living, salary, accommodation, labour law, tax, benefits and quality of life for international assignees in about 400 locations worldwide.

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

Pune has hosted the First State Level Awareness Programme on Agriculture Export Policy. The objective was to create awareness among farmers and stakeholders. Suresh Prabhu, the Minister of Commerce & Industry and Civil Aviation, has addressed this programme.

The first State level awareness programme on Agriculture Export Policy was organized on 2nd February, 2019 at Vaikunth Mehta National Institute of Cooperative Management (VAMNICOM) in Pune, Maharashtra. Recently, Government of India has released an Agriculture Export Policy with the objective to strengthen the entire value chain from export oriented farm production and processing to transportation, infrastructure and market access.



The Agriculture Export Policy is framed with a focus on:

- agriculture export oriented production,
- export promotion,
- better farm realization, and
- synchronization with policies and programmes of Government of India.

3. World Heritage Centre Set Up at Mayapur, West Bengal

A World Heritage Centre, which is housing 'spiritual Camps' of 45 countries, is all set to set up at Mayapur, West Bengal. It is the global headquarters of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) located in Nadia district of West Bengal.

Interestingly, the camp of each country would reflect its dress, lifestyle, culture, food, and ambiance at Mayapur. The estimated cost of 3,000 crores, the Temple of Vedic Planetarium will come up at the first part of the



World Heritage Centre, which would have one of the biggest domes in the world.

Sports

1. Vani Kapoor Is First Indian to Have Australian LPGA Card

Vani Kapoor became the first Indian golfer to earn a card for the Australian Ladies PGA Tour (LPGA). To earn this card, she qualified the tournament at Ballarat Golf Club. Vani shot rounds of 71, 78, and 69 to finish at two-over 218. She secured the rank 12 tying with three others.

From the field of 81, the top 20 got the opportunity to play the Australian LPGA. Other Indian girls in the Australian LPGA Qualifying were Diksha Dagar, Astha Madan, and Ridhima Dilawari.



2. Mithali Raj Became First Woman To Play 200 ODIs

The captain Indian cricket team, Mithali Raj has played her 200th One Day International (ODI) Cricket Match and last month and became the first woman cricketer to play 200 ODIs. Ms. Raj has played her 200th ODI against New Zealand.

The 36-year old Mithali has also the record of the highest run-scorer in ODIs. She has scored 6622 runs with an average of 51.33 in ODIs. Ms Raj had played her first ODI in 1999 against England.



3. Qatar Defeated Japan to Win Asian Cup (Football)

First time, Qatar has won Asian Cup by defeating four times champion Japan. Qatar won the final match by 3-1 to win first Asian Cup Title. Almoez Ali performed outstandingly with his spectacular overhead kick to set fix victory of his team.

Sudan born Mr. Ali has scored total nine goals in the tournament; likewise, he became the first player to score nine goals at a single Asian Cup. Mr. Ali has broken the record of Iranian Ali Daei, who had scored eight goals in 1996 Asian Cup Tournament.



4. Ramit Tandon Won His First PSA Title – 2019

Top seed Ramit Tandon won his first Professional Squash Association (PSA) title (2019) by defeating Egypt's Mohamed El Sherbini in the final of the Seattle Open. Mr. Tandon has won by 11-4, 11-7, 2-11, 11-2 against El Sherbini.

It was his first PSA title in 2019 and overall fourth title in his career. 26-year old Ramit Tandon is a professional squash player from Kolkata, West Bengal. As a junior, he won 6 Junior National Titles and many international titles. He ended his junior career as India's number 1, Asia's number 2, and world's number 5.



5. Jamie Chadwick Became First Female Winner of MRF Challenge Series

Jamie Chadwick has excelled the title of first female driver to clinch the MRF Challenge. She has scored a triple win in the final round of the season in Chennai, Tamil Nadu to win the title.

Likewise, 20-year-old Jamie Chadwick (from Bath, England) has set a new record in the MRF Challenge, as she became the first female driver to annex the championship in seven seasons. Chadwick won three of the five races in the previous round in Bahrain; however, she ended the championship with 280 points, which also includes two bonus points for the fastest lap in the last race.



Inaugurated in 2013, MRF Challenge is an open-wheel motorsport formula based in India. It is organized by Madras Motor Sports Club.

6. Saina Nehwal Defeated PV Sindhu to Win National Championship

Saina Nehwal has maintained her crown by winning her fourth national championship title. She has defeated PV Sindhu by 21-18, 21-15 and retains the women's singles title (badminton).

28-year old, from Hisar, Haryana, Saina Nehwal is a professional badminton singles player. She has won more than 20 international titles and also was former world no. 1 player.

On the other hand, in the men's singles final, Sourabh Verma defeated Lakshya Sen to win the championship title.



7. Chris Gayle Made Record for Most Sixes in International Cricket

Chris Gayle, the opener batsman of West Indies, set a new record by hitting his 477th six in the international cricket match. Previously, it was Sahid Afridi, Pakistan's all-rounder who was holding the record of maximum number of sixes (476) in the international cricket match.

Chris Gayle hit his 477th six at the first ODI playing against England at the Kensington Oval in Bridgetown, Barbados and broke the record of Sahid Afridi. Gayle hit 477th six on the bowl of Moeen Ali of England. Gayle excelled this record in his 444th match, whereas Sahid Afridi had scored total 476 sixes in 524 international cricket matches.



8. Saurabh Chaudhary Won Gold with World Record in Shooting Sport

Appearing in his maiden senior World Cup, the 16-year-old, Saurabh Chaudhary claimed the top honors in the men's 10m air pistol event at the season-opening International Shooting Sport Federation event.

Teenager Saurabh Chaudhary set the world record by winning the gold in the ISSF World Cup; he has secured India's third Olympic quota. The Asian Games and Youth Olympics gold medalist ended the event with a total score of 245.

Last year, Saurabh has already won gold at the Junior World Cup in Suhl, Germany and acquired the crown of junior world champion and Youth Olympic champion.



9. Rashid Khan Became 1st Bowler in T20I History to Pick 4 wickets in 4 Balls

Rashid Khan, the Afghanistani Leg-spinner has set a history by taking four wickets on successive four deliveries in Twenty20 Internationals while playing against Ireland. In addition to this, Rashid became the 7th bowler in the T20I history to excel hat-trick and also completed his 2nd 5-wicket haul.

With outstanding performance by Rashid Khan, Afghanistan has swept the T20I series against Ireland in Dehradun.



10. Abhijeet Gupta Won Cannes International Open (Chess)

Grandmaster Abhijeet Gupta has won the Cannes International Open, played in Cannes. In the ninth and final round, he drew with Pier Luigi Basso of Italy to win the championship.

Abhijeet has won six matches and three were drawn; likewise, he finished with 7.5 points and won the Cannes International Open. 29-year old from Bhilwara, Rajasthan, Abhijeet Gupta is an Indian chess



player. He is adorned with the title of Grandmaster. Gupta is the first player to win the title of Commonwealth Chess Champion four times.

11. Jitendra Singh Won National Race Walking Championship at Chennai

Jitendra Singh Rathore has won the arduous 50 km event in the 6th Open National Race Walking Championship held at Chennai, Tamil Nadu. Rathore, native of Rajasthan won the race in a time of 4:23:23.00, whereas the second ranker Joshi Sagar, native of Gujarat finished the race in 4:24:21.00. Pawan Kumar, native of Haryana placed at third rank.



The National Open Race Walking Championships were meant to serve as an opportunity to qualify for the Athletics World Championships, which will be held in Doha in September month of this year.

12. Corentin Moutet Won Chennai Open ATP Challenger

France's Corentin Moutet, the second-seed, has won the Chennai Open ATP Challenger Tennis Tournament held at Chennai, Tamil Nadu. Moutet has defeated Andrew Harris of Australia by 6-3, 6-3 in the singles final to win the title.



It is the second Challenger title for the French man Moutet. With the Championship, Moutet received prize money of USD 7,200 and 80 ATP points. On the other hand, the runner up, Andrew Harris received USD 4,240 and 48 ATP points.

Important Days

1. 1 February 2019 - Indian Coast Guard (ICG)

Indian Coast Guard Day is celebrated on every 1st of February (every year) to memorize its foundation day. The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) is an armed force of India which is founded exclusively to protect the maritime interests and enforce maritime law.

The interim Indian Coast Guard was set up on February 1, 1977 with the objective to restrain the sea-borne smuggling of goods.

To execute its responsibility properly, the ICG works in close cooperation with the Indian Navy, the Department of Revenue (i.e. Customs), Department of Fisheries, and the Central and State police forces.



2. 2 February 2019 - World Wetlands Day

World Wetlands Day is celebrated on February 2 of every year internationally. February 2 is marked as the date of the adoption of the Convention on Wetlands i.e. on February 2, 1971.

Since then, every year, government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and groups of citizens at all levels of the community, celebrate World Wetlands Day to increase the public awareness about the benefits of the wetlands.



3. 4 February 2019 – World Cancer Day

World Cancer Day is celebrated on February 4 of every year internationally. The objective of such celebration is to raise awareness of cancer and to encourage its prevention, detection, and treatment.

The Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) has set up World Cancer Day to support the goals of the World Cancer Declaration, which was written in 2008. The primary goal of World Cancer Day is to considerably reduce



illness and death caused by cancer. Besides, it also offers an opportunity to rally the international community to end the injustice of preventable suffering from cancer.

4. 11 February 2019 – International Day of Women and Girls in Science

The International Day of Women and Girls in Science is celebrated on February 11 of every year. It was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly with the objective to promote full and equal access to and participation in science for women and girls.

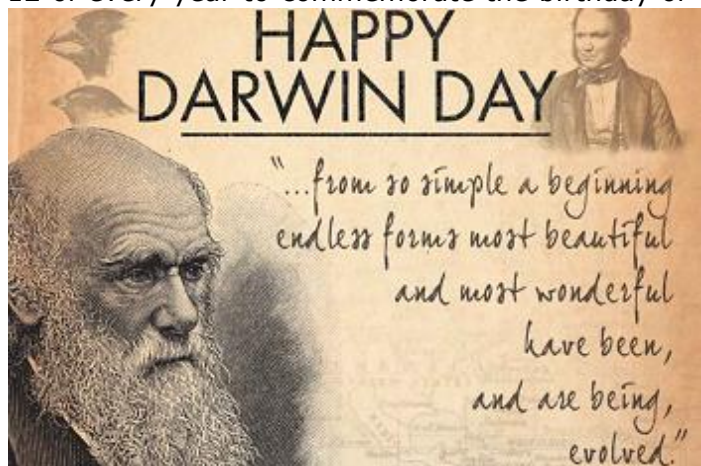
The Day reminds that women and girls play a critical role in science and technology communities. Further, women and girls' participation strengthens science and technology. The celebration is managed by UNESCO and UN-Women, in collaboration with institutions and civil society partners that promote women and girls' access to and participation in science.



5. 12 February 2019 – Darwin Day

Darwin Day is celebrated on February 12 of every year to commemorate the birthday of Charles Darwin (he was born on 12 February 1809). Darwin Day is celebrated around the world.

The date February 12 is used to highlight Darwin's contributions to science and it also promotes science in general. The celebration of Darwin's work and tributes to his life have been organized occasionally since his death on April 19, 1882 (i.e. at age 73).



6. 20 February 2019 – World Day of Social Justice

World Day of Social Justice is celebrated on February 20 of every year to recognize the need of promoting efforts to tackle issues such as poverty, exclusion, and unemployment.

Ideal topics of social justice for teaching students include (but are not limited to) childhood poverty, global citizenship, human rights, and sustainable development. Moreover, the Declaration of world day of social justice focuses on guaranteeing fair outcomes for all through employment, social protection, social dialogue, and fundamental principles and rights.



7. 21 February 2019 – International Mother Language Day

International Mother Language Day is celebrated on February 21 of every year to promote awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity and promote multilingualism. It was first announced by UNESCO on November 17, 1999; however, General Assembly of United Nations recognized it as the International Year of Languages in 2008.



The idea of celebrating the International Mother Language Day was originated in Bangladesh. In fact, February 21 is the anniversary of the day on which Bangladeshis fought for the recognition for the Bangla Language.

8. 28 February 2019 – National Science Day

National Science Day is celebrated in India on February 28 of every year. It is celebrated to mark the discovery of the Raman effect by the Indian Physicist Sir C V Raman on February 28, 1928.

In 1930, Sir C.V. Raman was awarded the Nobel Prize for his discovery in Physics. The theme of the year 2019 was - "Science for the People, and People for the Science."

Following are the **objectives** of celebrating National Science Day every year:

- to spread a message about the importance of science used in the daily life of the people;
- to display all the activities, efforts and achievements in the field of science for human welfare;
- to discuss all the issues and implement new technologies for the development in the field of science;
- to give an opportunity to the scientific minded citizens in the country; and
- to encourage the people as well as popularize the Science and Technology.

Important Days in Nutshell

Date	Name of important Days
01-Feb	Indian Coast Guard Day
02-Feb	World Wetlands Day
04- Feb	World Cancer Day
06- Feb	International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation
10- Feb	World's Pulse Day
11- Feb	International Day of Women and Girls in Science
12- Feb	Darwin Day
13- Feb	World Radio Day (by UNESCO)
14- Feb	Saint Valentine's Day
20- Feb	World Day of Social Justice
21- Feb	International Mother Language Day
28- Feb	National Science Day

Miscellaneous

The Projects/Plans/Policies/MoUs Approved by Cabinet Ministry in February 2019

Following are the important projects/plans/policies/MoUs those were approved by Government of India in the month of December:

Approved On February 06, 2019

1. Cabinet Approved Establishment of *Rashtriya Kamdhenu Aayog*

The Union Cabinet has approved the proposal for establishment of *Rashtriya Kamdhenu Aayog* for Conservation, protection, and development of cows and their progeny.

The objective of setting up *Rashtriya Kamdhenu Aayog* is to conserve, protect, and develop cattle population in the country. It also includes the development and conservation of indigenous breeds. The scheme will likely to increase the growth of livestock sector and benefit women and small and marginal farmers.

2. Cabinet Approved Proposal for Official Amendments to the Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Bill, 2018

The Union Cabinet has given its approval to move official amendments to the Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Bill, 2018. The action has been taken on the report of the Standing Committee on Finance (SCF).

The Bill namely "Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Bill, 2018," was introduced in Parliament on 18th July, 2018. It delivers a comprehensive legislation to deal with the menace of illicit deposit schemes in the country.

The **salient features** of the 'Bill' are:

- The Bill contains a substantive banning clause which bans Deposit Takers from promoting, operating, issuing advertisements or accepting deposits in any Unregulated Deposit Scheme. The principle is that the Bill would ban unregulated deposit taking activities altogether, by making them an offence ex-ante rather than the existing legislative-cum-regulatory framework which only comes into effect ex-post with considerable time lags.
- The Bill creates three different types of offences, namely, running of Unregulated Deposit Schemes, fraudulent default in Regulated Deposit Schemes, and wrongful inducement in relation to Unregulated Deposit Schemes.
- The Bill provides for severe punishment and heavy pecuniary fines to act as deterrent.

- The Bill has adequate provisions for disgorgement or repayment of deposits in cases where such schemes nonetheless manage to raise deposits illegally.
- The Bill provides for attachment of properties/assets by the Competent Authority, and subsequent realization of assets for repayment to depositors.
- Clear-cut time lines have been provided for attachment of property and restitution to depositors.
- The Bill enables creation of an online central database, for collection and sharing of information on deposit-taking activities in the country.
- The Bill defines "Deposit Taker" and "Deposit" comprehensively.
- "Deposit Takers" include all possible entities (including individuals) receiving or soliciting deposits, except specific entities such as those incorporated by legislation.
- "Deposit" is defined in such a manner that deposit-takers are restricted from camouflaging public deposits as receipts, and at the same time, not to curb or hinder acceptance of money by an establishment in the ordinary course of its business.
- Being a comprehensive Union Law, the Bill adopts best practices from State laws, while entrusting the primary responsibility of implementing the provisions of the legislation to the State Governments.

3. Cabinet Approved Establishment of Circuit Bench of Calcutta High Court at Jalpaiguri

The Union Cabinet has approved the setup of Circuit Bench of Calcutta High Court at Jalpaiguri. The Circuit Bench of Calcutta High Court at Jalpaiguri would have jurisdiction over four districts namely:

- Darjeeling
- Kalimpong
- Jalpaiguri
- Cooch Behar

4. Cabinet Approved Establishment of a Unified Authority for Regulating All Financial Services in IFSCs in India

The Union Cabinet has approved the establishment of a unified authority for regulating all financial services in International Financial Services Centres (IFSCs) in India. It is the result done through International Financial Services Centres Authority Bill, 2019.

Presently, the banking, capital markets and insurance sectors in IFSC are regulated by multiple regulators, such as RBI, SEBI and IRDAI. The objective behind such set up is that - the unified authority would provide the much needed impetus to further development of IFSC in India in-sync with the global best practices.

Salient Features of the IFSCs

- The first IFSC in India has been set up at GIFT City, Gandhinagar, Gujarat.
- It would provide Indian corporates easier access to global financial markets.
- It would also compliment and promote further development of financial markets in India.

5. Cabinet Approved Introduction of National Institutes of Food Technology

The Union Cabinet has approved the introduction of National Institutes of Food Technology, Entrepreneurship and Management Bill, 2019. The objective of the bill is to confer the status of Institutions of National Importance to National Institute of Food Technology, Entrepreneurship and Management (NIFTEM) located at Kundli, Haryana.

In addition to this, the bill is also intended to regulate status of the Indian Institute of Food Processing Technology (IIFPT) located at Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu.

Benefits

Following are the major benefits of the scheme:

- The legislation would provide for functional autonomy to the institutes to:
 - design and develop courses
 - undertake research activities
 - leverage enhanced status in their academic pursuits (so that they become world class institutes)
- The institutes would implement the reservation policy of the Government and would also undertake special outreach activities for the benefits of concerned stakeholders.
- It would enable the institutes to provide world class teaching and research experience by adopting innovative practices.

6. Cabinet Approved Framework Agreement Between India and Indonesia

The Union Cabinet has given ex-post facto approval to the Framework Agreement between India and Indonesia. The agreement focuses on cooperation in the exploration and uses of outer space for peaceful purposes.

Furthermore, the Framework Agreement, which was signed and exchanged at Jakarta on May 30, 2018 will strengthen the cooperation between India and Indonesia. This agreement will help in setting up ISRO's TTC station and IRIMS station in Indonesia.

Highlights

The Framework Agreement shall enable the following potential interest areas of cooperation such as:

- space science

- exploration of outer space
- use of space technology
- remote sensing of the earth
- operation and maintenance of the integrated BIAK TTC station
- hosting of Indian ground station
- hosting of IRIMS station
- kind support for launching LAPAN made satellites
- cross utilization of ground stations

7. Cabinet Approved Proposal for Higher Allocation of Power to Home State

The Union Cabinet has approved the Proposal of Ministry of Power to allocate 85% power to the Government of Telangana generated from Telangana Super Thermal Power Project (4000MW) of NTPC Ltd. In addition to this, approved 85% power to the State Government of Jharkhand, which is generated from the expansion project of *Patratu* Thermal Power Station (4000MW) of *Patratu Vidyut Utpadan* Nigam Limited (PVUNL), a subsidiary company of NTPC Ltd.

At present, Phase-I of both the projects are under construction. Telangana Super Thermal Power Project expected to commission in third quarter of 2020-2021. And, Phase-I of *Patratu* Super Thermal Power Station expected to commission in fourth quarter of 2022-2023.

8. Cabinet Approved MoU between India and Uzbekistan

The Union Cabinet has approved the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for promoting bilateral cooperation in the field of e-Governance with Uzbekistan.

The Agreement between India and Uzbekistan intended to promote close cooperation in the areas of:

- e-Governance
- IT education
- Implementation and roll out of generic configurable e-Governance products/devices in various sectors
- development of Data Centers

9. Cabinet Approved Abolition of Institution of Income-Tax Ombudsman and Indirect Tax Ombudsman

The Union Cabinet has approved the proposal for Abolition of Institution of Income-Tax Ombudsman and Indirect Tax Ombudsman.

In 2003, the Institution of Income-Tax Ombudsman was created to deal with grievances of public related to settlement of complaints relating to Income Tax. But the Institution could not fulfil the objective adequately and failed to achieve its goals. As result of this, it has been observed that the tax payers started preferring alternate methods of grievance redressal such as CPGRAMS (Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System), *Aaykar Seva Kendras* etc.

10. Cabinet Approved MoU Between India and Finland in the Field of Biotechnology

The Union Cabinet has approved the MoU between India and Finland. The agreement will be collaborating the mutual interest in the field of Biotechnology. Further, it will be funding and implementing ambitious industry-led innovative and transnational projects within the broad scope of research development and innovation.

The MoU will support creation of long-term Research, Development & Innovation collaboration mechanism. It will set up and strengthen cooperative network between Indian and Finnish organizations. It will also facilitate knowledge sharing and knowledge generation among scientists, researchers, and industry in the two countries.

11. Cabinet Approved MoU between India and the UAE on Development Cooperation in Africa

The Union Cabinet has approved the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and the United Arab Emirates. The MoU specifically will focus on the Development Cooperation in Africa.

The MoU necessitates the setting up of a framework of cooperation between the two countries for implementing development partnership projects and programmes in Africa. Hopefully, the proposal will help to strengthen political and economic linkages between India and the countries of Africa. It will also serve India's broader strategic interests.

12. Cabinet Approved Signing of Agreement Between India and Ukraine

The Union Cabinet has approved Signing of Agreement between the India and Ukraine. The agreement will cooperate in the field of Agriculture and Food Industry.

To materialize the agreement, a Joint Working Group comprising of representatives from both countries would be constituted. They will discuss the task and prepare plans of cooperation in identified sectors. They will also monitor the implementation of tasks determined by the Parties.

13. Cabinet Approved MoU between India and Maldives

The Union Cabinet has approved ex-post facto approval to the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Maldives. The agreement is signed between the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare (of India) and the Ministry of Fisheries, Marine Resource and Agriculture (of Maldives).

The objective of the agreement is to set up mutual cooperation to improve the ecosystem for agribusiness provides for cooperation in the fields:

- Agriculture census
- Agribusiness
- Integrated farming system
- Improved seeds
- Soil health management
- Research
- Capacity building of local agribusiness
- Enhancing knowledge of entrepreneurs in the areas of food security and nutrition, developing climate resilient agriculture system
- Establishing facilities to test pesticide residues and so on.

14. Cabinet Approved MoU Between India and Brazil

The Union Cabinet has approved Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Brazil. The agreement has objective to cooperate in the field of Traditional Systems of Medicine and Homoeopathy.

Both India and Brazil are rich in biodiversity with a large range of health practices. All these are based on medicinal plants and history of use of traditional medicine. Ayurveda, Yoga and other traditional systems are popular in India as well as in Brazil.

The agreement will enhance bilateral cooperation between India and Brazil in the areas of Traditional System of Medicine.

15. Cabinet Approved MoU Between India and Norway

The Union Cabinet has approved the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Norway. The agreement will focus on Ocean Dialogue (between India & Norway).

Norway is a global leader in the area of Blue Economy and has cutting-edge technologies. Besides, it has also expertise in the fields of fisheries, hydrocarbons, renewable energy, sustainable harnessing of ocean resources and maritime transport.

Therefore, it is expected that this MoU will create opportunities for collaboration in areas such as:

- Exploitation of hydrocarbons and other marine resources
- Management of ports and tourism development for the mutual benefit of all stakeholders within the framework of the Joint Task Force (JTF)
- It will contribute to the objective of Food Security through infusion of new technologies in fisheries and aquaculture
- It will further offer a platform for businesses in both countries to execute profitable ventures, and

- Scientists and researchers may collaborate on studying ocean ecosystem also in the context of the Arctic region

16. Cabinet Approved MoU Between India and Election Management Bodies of Namibia and Panama

The Union Cabinet chair has approved the proposal for an MoU between India and the Electoral Commission of Namibia (ECN) as well as with Electoral Tribunal of Panama (ETP). The objective of the agreement is to cooperate in the field of electoral management and administration.

The agreement is designed to promote bilateral cooperation, aimed at building technical assistance/capacity support for the Electoral Commission of Namibia (ECN) and with Electoral Tribunal of Panama (ETP). In addition to this, it will also cooperate in the field of electoral management and administration.

Major Features of the agreement are:

- Promotion of cooperation in the field of electoral management and administration such as:
 - promotion of exchange of knowledge and experience in the field of organizational and
 - technical development of electoral process;
- Support in exchanging information
- Institutional strengthening and capacity building
- Training of personnel
- Holding regular consultations, and so on

17. Cabinet Approved “Amendment of Constitution to provide for reservation for Economically Weaker Sections”

The Union Cabinet has given ex-post facto approval to the revised Office Memorandum (OM) relating to the Cabinet Note on “Amendment of Constitution to provide for reservation for Economically Weaker Sections”.

The objective of such amendment is to promote social equity by providing opportunities in higher education and employment to those who have been deprived by virtue of their economic status.

Approved On February 13, 2019

18. Cabinet Approved MoU between India and Saudi Arabia

The Union Cabinet has approved the signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Saudi Arabia in the field of tourism. The agreement is signed between

the Ministry of Tourism, Government of the Republic of India and the Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The objective of agreement is to strengthen cooperation in the field of Tourism. It is believed that Saudi Arabia is one of the potential tourist generating market for India from the Middle East.

The **objectives** of the agreement are:

- Exchanging information and expertise in Legislations in the fields of:
 - tourism development
 - Hotels development
 - resorts and tourist accommodation facilities
 - Tourism data and statistics
 - Exhibition events and other tourism activities in States of the Parties
 - Tourism development, planning and investment
 - Licensing, operating and marketing tourism facilities
 - Agricultural Tourism
 - Desert tourism
- Exchanging media publications, tourism related films, and encourage exchanging of visits between experts and tourism media representatives in the States of the Parties.
- Introducing tourism investment opportunities available in the States of the Parties; encourage mutual tourism investment in tourism projects.
- Encouraging organizing joint tourism events; participate in exhibitions, conferences and seminars held in the States of the Parties thus contributing to tourism development and crystalizing a joint tourism vision.
- Encouraging public and private education facilities working the tourism education and training field in the States of the Parties.
- Exchanging innovative experience and technologies in the tourism field, and consultation services.
- Cooperation and coordinating in international forums and organizations concerned with tourism affairs.

19. Cabinet Approved Revision in the list of Scheduled Tribes of Chhattisgarh

The Union Cabinet has given its approval to the Cabinet note on the proposal for official Amendments in The Constitution (Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes) Order

(Amendment) Bill, 2016. Now, it will modify the list of Scheduled Tribes (STs) of Chhattisgarh.

This Act may be called the Constitution (Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes) Order (Amendment) Bill, 2019. Once the Bill becomes an Act, member of the communities newly listed in the revised list of Scheduled Tribes of Chhattisgarh can avail the benefits meant for Scheduled Tribes under the existing schemes of the Government.

Following are the major changes that will be made in list of Scheduled Tribes of Chhattisgarh: -

- In entry 5, after "Bharia Bhumia,", the following shall be inserted, namely:
 - "Bhuinya, Bhuiyan, Bhuyan,"
- For entry 14, the following entry shall be substituted, namely:
 - "14. Dhanwar, Dhanuhar, Dhanuwar"
- For entries 32 and 33, the following entries shall be substituted, namely:
 - "32. Nagesia, Nagasia, Kisan 33. Oraon, Dhanka, Dhangad"
- For entry 41, the following entry shall be substituted, namely:
 - "41. Sawar, Sawara, Saunra, Saonra"
- After entry 42, the following entry shall be inserted, namely:
 - "43. Binjhia"

20. Cabinet Approved Introduction of Registration of Marriage of NRI Bill 2019

The Union Cabinet has approved the introduction of Registration of Marriage of Non-Resident Indian (NRI) Bill, 2019. This Bill will create more accountability and offer more protection against exploitation of Indian citizens, mostly women by their NRI spouses.

Further, the Bill will serve as a deterrent to NRIs against harassment of their spouses and benefit Indian women married to NRIs worldwide.

Once the Bill is passed, marriages performed with NRIs would be registered in India or Indian Missions & Posts abroad. Besides, necessary changes would be carried out in the:

- Passports Act, 1967
- Code of Criminal Procedure 1973 by insertion of Section 86A

21. Cabinet Approved MoU between India and Finland for Peaceful Use of Outer Space

The Union Cabinet has given its approval for Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Finland on cooperation in the field of peaceful uses of outer space. The MoU has already been signed on January 10, 2019 at New Delhi.

The MoU is designed to facilitate to explore newer research activities and application possibilities in the field of remote sensing of the earth; satellite communication; satellite navigation; space science and exploration of outer space. Therefore, cooperation with the Government of Finland would lead to develop a joint activity in the field of application of space technologies for the benefit of humanity.

Salient Features

Following are the important features of MoU:

- Remote sensing of the earth
- Satellite communication and satellite based navigation
- Space science and planetary exploration
- Development, testing and operation of space objects and ground system
- Launching of Finnish Space objects by Indian launch vehicles
- Processing and use of space data
- Developing innovative applications and solutions based on space technologies and use of artificial intelligence
- Cooperation around emerging New Space opportunities and data ecosystems and sustainable used of outer space

Approved On February 19, 2019

22. Cabinet Approved Proposal for Promulgation of the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage)

The Union Cabinet has approved Proposal for Promulgation of the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage), Second Ordinance, 2019. The objective of such proposed Ordinance is to protect the rights of married Muslim women.

Following are the **two proposals**:

- I. Promulgation of an Ordinance, namely the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Second Ordinance, 2019, as per Appendix-III (pages (9 to 12) under clause (1) of article 123 of the Constitution; and
- II. Move necessary official amendments in the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill, 2018 pending in Rajya Sabha to replace the aforesaid Ordinance with such modifications of drafting and consequential nature as may be considered necessary.

Benefits

Following are the major benefits of the Ordinance:

- It will protect the rights of married Muslim women.
- It will prevent divorce by the practice of instantaneous and irrevocable '*talaq-e-biddat*' by the husbands.
- It will discourage the practice of triple *talaq* i.e. *talaq-e-biddat*.
- It will provide the rights of subsistence allowance, custody of minor children to victims of triple *talaq* i.e. *talaq-e-biddat*.

23. Cabinet Approved MoU between India and Morocco

The Union Cabinet has given ex-post facto approval to the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Morocco. The MoU will facilitate Mutual Recognition of Academic Qualifications.

The MoU, which was signed on January 22, 2019, has the following **benefits**:

- The MoU is designed to enhance and strengthen the cooperation between India and Morocco in the field of Education and Human Resource Development.
- The collaboration in the field of education will enable experience sharing and thereby improving the platform to cater to the needs of various target groups.
- Further, the collaboration is expected to increase the inflow of Moroccan students to India under the Study in India Programme.

24. Cabinet Approved MoU Between Korea and India

The Central Cabinet has approved the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Korean National Police Agency, Republic of Korea and the Ministry of Home Affairs, India. The objective of the MoU on combating transnational crime and developing police cooperation is proposed to be signed.

The MOU will improve the effectiveness of both countries in the prevention and suppression of crimes such as crime relating to terrorism and transnational organized crime. Further, it will establish a framework for enhancing cooperation between the officials of intelligence and law-enforcement agencies of the two countries.

25. Cabinet Approved Swadesh Darshan Scheme

The Union Cabinet has approved the Continuation of the *Swadesh Darshan* Scheme during 14th Finance Commission period and beyond. Under Swadesh Darshan Scheme, Ministry of Tourism is developing critical tourism infrastructure in the country in a sustainable and inclusive manner. The objective of such move is to make India into a world class tourist destination.

Further, the focus under the scheme is to develop following public facilities:

- Last mile connectivity
- Tourist reception centers

- Way side amenities
- Solid waste management
- Illumination
- Landscaping
- Parking (where private sector is not willing to invest)

Major Objectives

Following are the major objectives of the scheme:

- Develop circuits having tourist potential in a planned and prioritized manner
- Promote cultural and heritage value of the country to generate livelihoods in the identified regions
- Enhance the tourist attractiveness in a sustainable manner by developing world class infrastructure in the circuit/destinations
- Follow community based development and pro-poor tourism approach
- Create awareness among the local communities about the importance of tourism for them in terms of increased sources of income, improved living standards and overall development of the area
- Create employment through active involvement of local communities
- Harness tourism potential for its effects in employment generation and economic development
- Make full use of the potential and advantages in terms of available infrastructure, national culture and characteristic strong points of each and every region throughout the country by development of theme based circuits

26. Cabinet Approved Continuation of *Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana*

The Union Cabinet has approved the implementation of *Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana* i.e. *Gramin* (PMAY-G) beyond March, 2019 (PMAY-G) Phase-II.

The objective is to cover the left out rural households who are houseless and/or living in dilapidated houses. 1.95 crore would be provided for *pucca* houses by 2022.

Highlights:

- Total target for construction of 1.95 crore houses under PMAY-G Phase-II upto 2022
- Continuation of rural housing scheme *Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana*
- Gramin (PMAY-G) in Phase-II till 2019-20 as per the existing norms of PMAY-G Phase-I, with a target of 60 lakh houses involving financial implication of Rs. 76,500 crores (Central' Share of Rs. 48,195 crore and State share of Rs. 28,305 crores)

- Continuation of the scheme beyond 2019-20 upto 2021-22 in the next finance commission cycle, after due appraisal and approval based on third party evaluation of scheme/programme as per the extant procedure
- Inclusion of additional eligible households from the final Awaas+ list into the Permanent Wait List (PWL) of PMAY-G, with a ceiling of 1.95 Cr, on priority for those States/UTs where PWL is exhausted and allocate target to these States/UTs with the approval of the Minister of Rural Development in consultation with the Ministry of Finance
- Continuation of Program Management Unit (PMU) and National Technical Support Agency (NTSA) till 2019-20
- Borrowing for additional financial requirement through existing mechanism of EBR till the validity of the scheme
- Reduction in administrative expenses from 4% to 2% of programme funds
- 2% of the programme funds allocated for administrative component, shall be bifurcated
- 0.30% of the programme funds shall be retained at the central level
- The remaining 1.70% of the programme fund shall be released to the States/UTs as Administrative Fund