

# CURRENT AFFAIRS



**MARCH 2019**

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## **Current Affairs — March 2019**

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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 **March 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**

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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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## Table of Contents

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CURRENT AFFAIRS – MARCH 2019 .....	2
AUDIENCE .....	2
COPYRIGHT & DISCLAIMER .....	2
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	3
<b>APPOINTMENTS .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>AWARDS.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>BILLS &amp; ACTS .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>BOOKS &amp; AUTHORS .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>COMMITTEES.....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>DEATH .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>DEFENCE .....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>BANKING AND FINANCE.....</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>ENVIRONMENT .....</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>BUSINESS AND ECONOMY .....</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>IMPORTANT DAYS .....</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>INTERNATIONAL .....</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>MISCELLANEOUS .....</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>NATIONAL .....</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY .....</b>	<b>88</b>
<b>SPORTS .....</b>	<b>95</b>
<b>REPORTS .....</b>	<b>103</b>
<b>RESIGNATIONS .....</b>	<b>108</b>
<b>PERSONS IN NEWS.....</b>	<b>110</b>
<b>REGIONAL .....</b>	<b>114</b>
<b>PLACES IN NEWS.....</b>	<b>122</b>

# Appointments

## 1. Shambhu S Kumaran appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the Kingdom of Morocco

**Shambhu S Kumaran** an Indian Foreign Service officer of the 1995 batch appointed as India's next Ambassador to the Kingdom of Morocco.

Presently, he is the Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Defence.

He will succeed Dr. Kheya Bhattacharya.



## 2. Vice Admiral Karambir Singh is the next Chief of Indian Navy

The government of India appointed Vice-Admiral Karambir Singh as next Chief of the Naval Staff with effect from May 31, 2019.

Presently, he is the Flag Officer Commander-in-Chief (FOC-in-C) of the Eastern Naval Command.

The present Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Sunil Lanba retires on the same day when Karambir Singh take charge.

Born on November 03, 1959, Vice Admiral Karambir Singh was commissioned on July 01, 1980 into the Executive Branch of the Indian Navy.

Vice Admiral Karambir Singh is a graduate of the Defence Services Staff College, Wellington.



### 3. Tata Coffee Appoints Chacko Purackal Thomas as MD and CEO

Tata Coffee announced the appointment of **Chacko Purackal Thomas** as the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer.

Presently, he works as the executive director and deputy CEO of the Tata Group firm

Chacko Purackal Thomas will assume the charge from April 1, 2019 by replacing Sanjiv Sarin.



### 4. Goa Speaker Pramod Sawant sworn-in as new Chief Minister of Goa

**Pramod Sawant** (45), former Speaker of Goa legislative Assembly and MLA from **Sankhelim** in North Goa was sworn-in as **13th Chief Minister of Goa**.

He succeeds **Manohar Parrikar**, who died on March 17 after a prolonged battle with advanced pancreatic cancer.

**Sudin alias Ramkrishna Dhavlikar** of Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party (MGP) and **Vijai Sardesai** of Goa Forward Party were sworn in as **Deputy Chief Ministers**.

Nine other leaders also took oaths as cabinet ministers.



### 5. Santosh Jha appointed as the next ambassador of India to the Republic of Uzbekistan

**Santosh Jha** presently Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of India, Washington appointed as the **next Ambassador of India** to the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Presently, Mr Jha is working as Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of India, Washington DC USA.

He is expected to take up the assignment shortly.



## 6. Pinaki Chandra Ghose named as India's first Lokpal

**Pinaki Chandra Ghose** is likely to be **India's first anti-corruption ombudsman or Lokpal**. He is the **former Supreme Court judge** and current member of the **National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)**. The PM-led high-level selection committee made the decision to appoint Pinaki Chandra as India's first Lokpal.



Mr. Ghose was appointed as judge of the Calcutta High Court in 1997 and went on to become Chief Justice of Andhra Pradesh before his elevation to the Supreme Court in 2013.

The **Lokpal Act** was passed in **2013** after a **nationwide anti-corruption movement**. The act provides for setting up of **Lokpal at the centre** and **Lokayuktas in the States** to probe **corruption complaints against top functionaries** and public servants.

A Lokpal is an **anti-corruption authority or ombudsman**, who represents the **public interest**. The Lokpal has jurisdiction over all Members of Parliament, central government employees, including the Prime Minister and the Chief Ministers in cases of corruption.

## 7. S. Narasimha appointed as mediator to resolve disputes of cricket administration by SC

Supreme Court appointed senior advocate P. S. Narasimha as the mediator for resolving various disputes related to cricket administration in the country.

A bench of Justices S. A. Bobde and A. M. Sapre was informed by P. S. Narasimha that former apex court judge Justice (retired) D. K. Jain has assumed charge as the ombudsman of Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI).



The bench also asked P. S. Narasimha to look into the dispute relating to release of funds by the court-appointed committee of administrators to various cricket associations.

### About BCCI

- President – C. K. Khanna
- Headquarters – Mumbai

## 8. M.R.Kumar takes charge as Chairman of LIC

**M.R.Kumar**, the newly appointed **chairman of Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC)**, took charge of his duties on **14th March**.

Mr.Kumar took over from Hemant Bhargava who had been the acting chairman since January 2019. Mr.Kumar had joined LIC as a direct recruit officer in 1983.

The government had also named two MDs for LIC, **Vipin Anand and T.C. Suseel Kumar**.



### About LIC

- Founded: 1 September 1956
- Headquarters: Mumbai, India
- Chairman: M.R.Kumar
- Estimated asset value: ₹2,529,390 crore
- It is an Indian state-owned insurance group and investment company
- It is the largest insurance company in India

## 9. Axis Bank names Rakesh Makhija as new Chairman

**Axis Bank** appointed **Rakesh Makhija** as Non-Executive Chairman for a period of **3 years**.

He will take over from **Sanjiv Misra** when his term ends on July 17.

Makhija is also the Chairman of the bank's Nomination and Remuneration Committee.



### About Axis Bank

- It is the **third largest** of the **private**-sector banks in India
- Headquarters: Mumbai
- Founded: 1993, Ahmedabad
- Tagline: Badhti Ka naam Zindagi

### 10. Mohammad Shtayyeh appointed as the Prime Minister of Palestine by its President Mahmoud Abbas

President of Palestinian Authority **Mahmoud Abbas** appointed Mohammad Shtayyeh as the Prime Minister of Palestine.

He succeeds Rami al-Hamdallah who resigned from this post 6 weeks ago.

He is 61 years old and is a member of the central committee of the president's Fatah party.



### 11. B.S. Mubarak appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the Republic of El Salvador

Shri B. S. Mubarak, the Indian Foreign Service officer of 2001 batch, is presently the Ambassador of India to the Republic of Guatemala.

#### About Guatemala

- Capital – Guatemala City
- Currency – Quetzal
- President – Jimmy Morales

#### About El Salvador

- Capital – San Salvador
- Currency – United States dollar
- President – Salvador Sanchez Ceren





## 12. Kaja Kallas elected as the first female Prime Minister of Estonia

Kaja Kallas is the leader of Estonia's **Reform Party**.

The Reform party beat the current Prime Minister **Jüri Ratas'** lead Centre party, gaining four new seats in the parliament.

Estonia also elected their first female **president Kersti Kaljulaid** in 2016.

Estonia is a small country in the Baltic States that has been **very active** in the **blockchain field**.



## 13. Scientist Ajit Kumar Mohanty appointed as BARC Director

The **Bhabha Atomic Research Centre** (BARC) appointed scientist **Ajit Kumar Mohanty** as its Director.

He has been appointed for a period of three years.

Presently, he is the Director, Physics Group in BARC and Director, Saha Institute of Nuclear Physics.

The BARC is India's premier nuclear research facility based in Mumbai.



## 14. Vedanta has appointed Ajay Kapur as the CEO of its aluminium and power business

**Vedanta** has appointed **Ajay Kapur** as the **Chief Executive Officer** of its **aluminium and power business**. He joins Vedanta from Ambuja Cements where he was the MD and CEO for its India business.

Mr. Kapur brings with him an experience of 31 years across business verticals. His role would be crucial in driving key priorities for the aluminium business, which include a strong focus on volume and cost and improving efficiencies, among others.



## 15. Sheikh Ahmad re-elected as President of Olympic Council of Asia

**Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad Al-Sabah** was officially re-elected for an **eighth term** as President of the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA).

He won a new five-year term until **2024**.

**Tsunekazu Takeda**, President of the Japanese Olympic Committee, also retained his position as a **vice-president**.



### About Olympic Council of Asia (OCA)

- Governing body of sports in Asia
- Headquarters: Kuwait City, Kuwait
- Founded: 16 November 1982
- Membership: 45 National Olympic Committees
- Motto: Ever Onward

## 16. Anil Kumble re-appointed as chairman of the ICC Cricket Committee

Former Indian cricketer **Anil Kumble** has been reappointed as the **Chairman** of the ICC Cricket Committee for the **third** consecutive time.

This three-year stint will end in **2021** and be his **final term** as the Chairman of the ICC Cricket Committee.

Kumble has been the chairman of the committee since **2012**.

He had replaced former Windies' captain **Clive Lloyd** in 2012.

Kumble was reappointed for his second term in the year 2016 which would keep him in office till 2018.

### 17. P K Bezbaruah appointed as the Chairman of Tea Board for a second tenure

The **Ministry of Commerce and Industries** has approved the re-appointment of **P K Bezbaruah** as the **Chairman of Tea Board for a second tenure**. He was the first non-IAS chairman of the Tea Board.

In his tenure, he urged the Indian Tea Industry to explore export opportunities in the vast Chinese market. Additionally, he initiated a revamp of the old electronic auctioning system.



The **Tea Board** originated when the Indian Tea Cess Bill was passed to provide for levying a **cess on tea exports in 1903**. The Current Tea Board was constituted on **1st April 1954 under section 4 of the Tea Act 1953**. Tea Board functions under the Ministry of Commerce and Industries. It provides financial and technical assistance for cultivation, manufacture, and marketing of tea. It promotes Export. It Undertakes Research and Development activities. It provides financial assistance in a limited way to the plantation workers and their wards through labour welfare schemes.

### 18. Ravneet Gill appointed as MD and CEO of Yes Bank

Ravneet Gill, Former India chief of Deutsche Bank, took charge as the Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer of private sector lender Yes Bank. He will serve a three-year term.



Mr. Gill succeeds **Rana Kapoor**, the co-founder of the bank, whose term ended on January 31, 2019. Mr. Ajai Kumar, one of the board members, was appointed as the interim CEO after Mr. Kapoor's term ended. Yes Bank decided to search for a new chief executive after the RBI declined to extend Mr. Kapoor's tenure beyond January 31, 2019, though the board had endorsed a three-year extension.

### **19. Soumya Swaminathan Named Chief Scientist at WHO**

Soumya Swaminathan, a Deputy Director-General of the World Health Organisation has been named Chief Scientist of the WHO.

She will head the division created to strengthen the organisation's core scientific work. Soumya Swaminathan will also look into the quality and consistency of the norms and standards set by the organisation.



As Deputy Director-General Programmes (DDP), she was one of the three DDGs assisting WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

# Awards

## 1. PM Modi Confers Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prizes For Science & Tech

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** conferred the **Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prizes for Science and Technology** for the years 2016, 2017 and 2018 in **New Delhi**. There were 34 prize winners.
- The Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prize is the most coveted national recognition bestowed upon **young scientists and engineers** to honour their research and developmental work in India. It was first instituted in **1957** to honour the eminent scientist Dr. Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar.



## 2. Peter Tabichi won Global Teacher Prize 2019

**Peter Tabichi**, a science teacher from rural **Kenya**, who gives away most of his salary to support the education of poor children, has won a \$1m prize (£760,000) for the **world's best teacher**.

The award, in a competition run by the Varkey Foundation, has seen him beating 10,000 other nominations from 179 countries.

Andria Zafirakou, an art teacher from North London was the winner last year.



### 3. Leeladhar Jagudi will be honoured with the Vyas Samman 2018

Hindi writer **Leeladhar Jagudi** honoured with Vyas Samman 2018 for his collection of poems '**Jitne Log Utne Prem**'.

He was awarded Padma Shri in 2004 apart from other awards, including Sahitya Akademi Award, Akashvani National Award and Uttarakhand Gaurav Samman.



#### Vyas Samman

The award is given annually to outstanding literary work in **Hindi** authored by Indian citizen which has been published in the last decade.

- It was started in **1991** by the **KK Birla** Foundation.
- It carries monetary amount of Rs. 4 lakh.

### 4. Irfan Ramzan Sheikh who fought against 3 terrorists as 14-yr-old awarded Shaurya Chakra

Jammu and Kashmir's **Irfan Ramzan Sheikh**, who fought against three armed terrorists in **2017**, when he was **14 years old**, was awarded **Shaurya Chakra** by President Ram Nath Kovind.

Sheikh fought the terrorists who wanted to **kill his father** and didn't let them enter his house.

The terrified terrorists left one of the terrorists' body and ran away.



#### About Shaurya Chakra

- Shaurya Chakra is an **Indian military decoration** awarded for valour, courageous action or self-sacrifice while not engaged in direct action with the enemy.
- It comes after the Ashoka Chakra and the Kirti Chakra.
- Category: Peacetime gallantry award
- Established: 1952

## 5. Indian writer Raghu Karnad won Windham Campbell Prize

Indian Writer Raghu Karnad won the Windham-Campbell Prize \$165,000 under the non-fiction category for his debut book, *The Farthest Field: An Indian Story Of The Second World War*. Raghu Karnad is the second Indian to receive the award. Earlier in 2016, Jerry Pinto had won the award for his novel, *Em and the Big Hoom*.



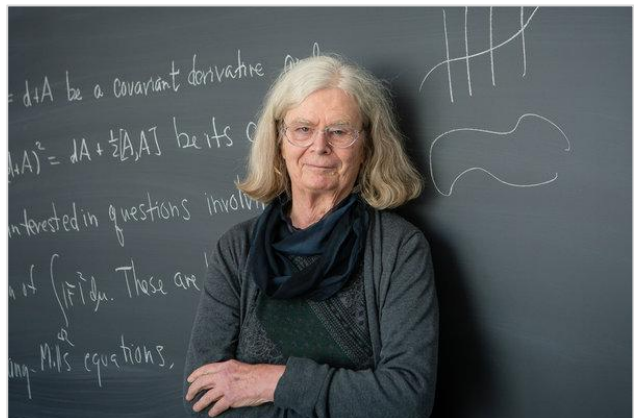
Karnad is one of the eight winners chosen across four categories: fiction, non-fiction, drama, and poetry. The other awardee in the non-fiction category was American writer Rebecca Solnit for the diverse body of work she has produced over her career.

The Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University in the US administer the Windham-Campbell Prize. It was established in 2013. The award was constituted with the generous gift from writer Donald Windham in memory of his partner Sandy Campbell. The jury selects two winners each for each of the category.

## 6. Mathematician Karen Uhlenbeck becomes 1st woman to win prestigious Abel Prize

Mathematician **Karen Uhlenbeck** (76-year-old) has become the **first** woman to win the Abel prize, sometimes called the Nobel prize for Mathematics. She won the prize for the impact she created with her work on "analysis, geometry and mathematical physics".

She is also an advocate for gender equality in Science and Mathematics.



### About Abel Prize

It is named after Norwegian mathematician **Niels Henrik Abel** and directly modeled after the **Nobel Prizes**.

It comes with a monetary award of **6 million** Norwegian Kroner.

Established: 23 August 2001

First awarded: 2003

Country: Norway

Awarded for: Outstanding scientific work in the field of Mathematics

Presented by: Government of Norway

## 7. Business line Changemaker Awards 2019 were announced

BusinessLine Changemaker Awards were constituted in the year 2018 to mark the completion of 25 years by the Hindu Business Line.

The winners of the BusinessLine Changemaker Award for 2019 are listed below:

- Changemaker of the Year: Petitioners against Section 377
- Changemaker of the Year: GST Council
- Iconic Changemaker: Bezwada Wilson (Safai Karmachari Andolan)
- Social Transformation: The Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences
- Digital Transformation: eNAM (Electronic National Agriculture Market)
- Young Changemaker: Anju Verma (promoting the education of underprivileged children)
- Young Changemaker: Kush and Arjun Pandey (developers of ScoutMe app for tapping football talent)



The awards seek to celebrate the Changemaker individuals, entities and organizations, who through their work, have contributed to materially improve the condition of society, economy and the planet.

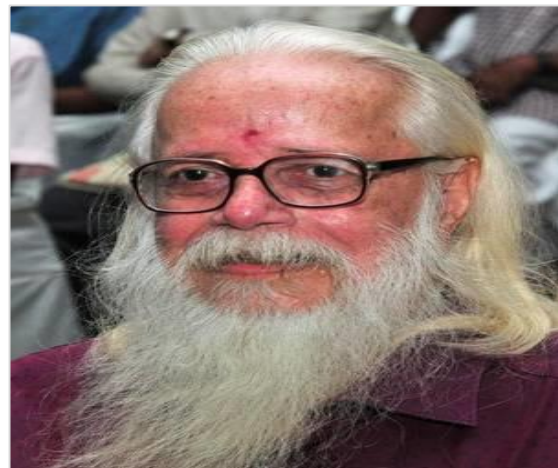
## 8. Former ISRO scientist Nambi Narayanan received Padma Bhushan from President

President Ram Nath Kovind presented Padma Bhushan to Shri **Sankaralingam Nambi Narayanan** for Science & Engineering.

Shri Narayanan is an accomplished scientist with more than three decades of experience in Indian Space Research Organisation.

The scientist was instrumental in developing the **Vikas engine** that would be used for the first PSLV that India launched.

But, Nambi Narayanan, who was falsely implicated in the **ISRO spy case**, was accused of selling state secrets comprising confidential test data from rocket and satellite launches.



In **1994**, Narayanan was arrested by Kerala police over espionage charges, which were dismissed by CBI in 1996.

The Supreme Court declared him not guilty in 1998 and ordered Kerala to pay ₹50-lakh compensation over "mental torture" in **2018**.

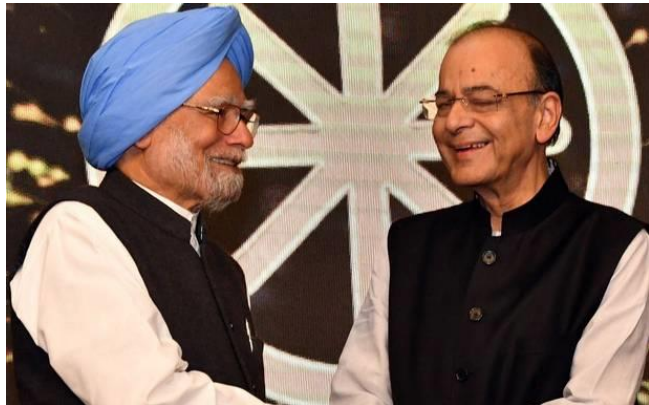


### 9. Manmohan Singh presented the BusinessLine Changemaker Of The Year award to Arun Jaitley

Union Finance Minister **Arun Jaitley** received the award over successful implementation of the Goods and Services Tax (**GST**).

The award was also presented to the petitioners against **Section 377** of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), which criminalised **homosexuality**.

Mr Jaitley accepted the award from Manmohan Singh on behalf of the GST council.



### 10. Three Kirti Chakras and 15 Shaurya Chakras awarded by the President to Army Personnel

President **Ram Nath Kovind** conferred 3 Kirti Chakras and 15 Shaurya Chakras to Armed Forces Personnel for displaying conspicuous gallantry, indomitable courage and extreme devotion to duty at the Defence Investiture Ceremony at Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi.

2 Kirti Chakras and 1 Shaurya Chakra were given posthumously.

15 Param Vishisht Seva Medals, 1 Uttam Yudh Seva Medal and 25 Ati Vishisht Seva Medals were also conferred on senior officers of the Armed Forces for their distinguished service by the President.



### 11. Padmanaban Gopalan bagged the Commonwealth Youth Award for the Asian region

Social entrepreneur from Tamil Nadu, Padmanaban Gopalan, founder of No Food Waste won the Commonwealth Youth Award for the Asian region worth 3,000 Pounds at a ceremony held at the Commonwealth Secretariat in London.

He was given the honour for his work towards achieving the UN's Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) of Zero Hunger with his innovative system of recovering excess food to distribute to those in need.



### 12. Vastradan Campaign has set the Guinness World Record

Vastradan Campaign initiated by the erstwhile royal family of Udaipur has set the Guinness World Record for the largest collection of clothes for donation.

Through the Vastradan Campaign, over 3,29,250 pieces of clothing from over 76,000 donors were collected and distributed to the needy.

The campaign reached out to over 120 schools, 15 colleges and around 30 NGOs. The certificate for the Guinness World Record was handed over to Lakshyaraj Singh Mewar, a descendant of Rajput ruler Maharana Pratap. The campaign highlighted the empathy of the citizen's especially young boys and girls.



### 13. Venkaiah Naidu conferred Honorary Doctorate from the University of Peace

Vice President Venkaiah Naidu was conferred Honorary Doctorate from the UN established the University of Peace. He is the first Indian to receive an honorary doctorate from the University of Peace. The university has stated that the degree of "Doctor Honoris Causa" (Doctor of Philosophy) was conferred on the Indian Vice President recognising his contribution to the Rule of Law, democracy and sustainable development in India.



The University of Peace was established in accordance with the Resolution 35/55 passed by the United Nations General Assembly in 1980. The main campus of the University of Peace is located in Costa Rica. It aims to be a forward-thinking, transformational and inspirational educational institution dedicated to the goals of quality teaching, research, and service for serving humanity in building a peaceful world.

### 14. BIAC India won the Women on a Mission award

**Brandix India Apparel City (BIAC)** India's partner **P. Doraswamy** was conferred with 'The Women on A Mission Award'. It was presented to him by philanthropist Sudha Narayana Murthy at the women's summit organized under 'he for she' category in Bengaluru.

The award was given to him for his contribution to the welfare of women workforce in Visakhapatnam by organizing free medical camps, cancer screening initiatives, distribution of free amenities.



### 15. Abhinandan Varthaman is to be awarded the first Bhagwan Mahavir Ahimsa Puraskar

Indian Air Force Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman has been chosen for the first Bhagwan Mahavir Ahimsa Puraskar constituted by the Akhil Bharatiya Digambar Jain Mahasamiti. The award carries a cash prize of Rs.2.51 lakh, a memento, and a citation. It will be presented to Abhinandan Varthaman on April 17 the Mahavir Jayanti.

Abhinandan Varthaman, a wing-commander in the Indian Air Force shot into limelight in the ongoing bilateral tensions between Indian and Pakistan aftermath of the Pulwama terror attack.



In the dogfight that followed, he crossed into Pakistan territory. He was captured by the Pakistan Military and was later handed over to India as a peace gesture.

## 16. Tata Steel has been recognised as one of World's Most Ethical Companies

The Ethisphere Institute has recognised Tata Steel as one of World's Most Ethical Companies for 2019. Ethisphere Institute is a global leader in defining and advancing the standards of ethical business practices. For the eighth time, Tata Steel won the recognition in the 'Metals, Minerals and Mining' category. Tata Steel is one of the only two honorees in the 'Metals, Minerals and Mining' industry.



128 companies are recognized for exemplifying and advancing corporate citizenship, transparency and the standards of integrity in the year 2019. The honorees are from 21 countries and 50 industries.

The companies are listed **World's Most Ethical Companies** based on 5 factors:

- Leadership and Reputation
- Ethics Compliance Programme
- Culture of Ethics
- Corporate Citizenship
- Responsibility Governance

## 17. CZPDC Bhopal and WZPDC Indore Honoured with Saubhagya Award

The **Central Zone Power Distribution Company (CZPDC), Bhopal and West Zone Power Distribution Company (WZPDC), Indore** was conferred with the "**Saubhagya Award**" under Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana at the National Conference of Energy Ministers by the Union Minister of State for Energy, R.K. Singh.

The award includes a cash prize of **Rs 100 crore each**.



## 18. TVS Motor Company won the Green Era Award for Sustainability

**TVS Motor Company** won the **International Sustainability award Green Era Award for Sustainability** in Lisbon, Portugal. **Tata Motors** also won the **Quality and Business Excellence Award** in acknowledgment of its endeavor to create new benchmarks in product quality.



### Green Era Award for Sustainability

The Green Era Award for Sustainability was awarded at the Green Economy Forum held on 10th of February 2019 at Lisbon.

The nominees for the **Green Era Award for Sustainability** are based on the **following criteria:**

- Energy Efficiency
- Creativity & Innovation
- Increase of Renewable Energy share in the energy source portfolio
- Economic, Social & Environmental Impact

The Green Era Award for Sustainability recognizes the true global exemplars who have been innovative and creative in pursuing sustainable imperative.

## 19. Sweden's 16-year-old Greta Thunberg nominated for Nobel Peace Prize

The 16-year-old **Swedish** student and activist has been nominated for a **Nobel Peace Prize** for her efforts in **climate activism** and fighting **global warming**.



She began her weekly protest in **August 2018** by riding her bicycle to the Swedish Parliament with "School strike for climate" sign.

The **#FridaysForFuture** movement went viral and spread over 80 countries.

If she were to win, she would be the youngest recipient since Pakistan's **Malala Yousafzai**, who was **17** when she received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014.

### About Nobel Peace Prize

- Established by: Alfred Nobel
- Established on: 1895
- First awarded: 1901
- Awarded for: Outstanding contributions in peace

- Reward: 90 lakhs SEK (2017)

## 20. Ved Rahi will be awarded with Kusumagraj Rashtriya Sahitya Puruskar

Famous Novelist and Film Director, **Ved Rahi** will be awarded prestigious **Kusumagraj Rashtriya Sahitya Puruskar** which carries a cash prize of **Rs. 1 Lakh**, a memento and a citation.

Ved Rahi was born in Jammu in 1933 and he had written seven novels in **Dogri Language**. He also wrote in Hindi and Urdu.

He was given Sahitya Akademi Award in 1983 for his Novel "**Aale**" which was written in Dogri Language.



# Bills & Acts

## 1. Lok Sabha passed the Indian Forest Amendment Bill, 2017

The Lok Sabha passed the **Indian Forest (Amendment) Bill, 2017**. The bill replaces **Indian Forest (Amendment) Ordinance, 2017** promulgated by President Ram Nath Kovind in November 2017 and amends **Indian Forest Act, 1927**.



Though bamboo was taxonomically a grass, it was earlier defined as a tree under the **Indian Forest Act, 1927** and its **felling and transit required permission**. It was a major impediment for bamboo cultivation by farmers on non-forest land.

The **bill omits bamboo** grown in non-forest areas **from the definition of trees**. The **omission thereby exempts it from requiring permits** for felling or transportation of bamboo grown in non-forest areas. With this, bamboo grown in non-forest areas ceases to be a tree. It will encourage bamboo plantation by farmers, which will contribute to **doubling farmers income by 2022**.

**The Indian Forest Act, 1927** consolidates **laws relating to forests**, the **transit of forest-produce** and **duty to be levied** on them. Under it, the definition of the tree includes palms, stumps, bamboos, brush-wood, and canes.

## 2. MoEFCC amended rules to ban the import of solid plastic waste

The Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has amended the Hazardous and other Wastes (Management and Transboundary Movement) Rules, 2016 to completely ban the import of solid plastic waste.



The amendment notified by the MoEFCC fixes a loophole, which previously allowed the import of plastic waste into India for processing. The ban on the import of plastics is in lines with the principles of sustainable development. To ensure the ban does not adversely impact the ease of doing business, the amendment **allows the reverse import of defective electrical and electronic**

**assemblies** and components **manufactured in and exported from India**, within a year of export.

India is exploring various options to discourage the **use of single-use plastics** and also is emphasizing recycling of the plastic waste to reduce the burden on the environment thereby providing benefits.

### 3. Cabinet approved the National Mineral Policy 2019 on 28th February

The **Union Cabinet** approved the **National Mineral Policy 2019** on **28th February 2019**. The policy is aimed at bringing about more effective regulation to the sector as well as a more sustainable approach while addressing the issues of those affected by mining.



The policy will also provide a more **effective, meaningful and implementable policy** that brings in further **transparency, better regulation,** and enforcement, balanced social and economic growth as well as sustainable mining practices.

It also aims to increase the **share of Indian software products** in global market by tenfold, pitches for nurturing of 10,000 technology start-ups in software product industry, including 1,000 such startups in tier-II and tier-III towns.



# Books & Authors

## 1. Former Governor's Book Titled 'Indian Fiscal Federalism' Launched

The Chairman of 15th Finance Commission of India, **N.K. Singh** launched the book "**Indian Fiscal Federalism**".

N.K.Singh believes fiscal federalism is a dynamic process.

The book has been written by Dr. Y. V. Reddy, former Governor of RBI and Chairman of the 14th Finance Commission of India along with Dr. G. R. Reddy, Advisor (Finance) to the Government of Telangana.



## 2. Book Titled 'Every Vote Counts' of Navin Chawla Launched

**Former Vice-President Hamid Ansari** launched the book titled '**Every Vote Counts-The Story of India's Elections**'.

The author of this book is **Navin Chawla**.

Navin Chawla served as the 16th Election Commissioner of India. In the past, he wrote the acclaimed biography of Mother Teresa in 1992.



### 3. Arun Jaitley releases book titled 'Mann Ki Baat – A Social Revolution on Radio'

A book titled, '**Mann Ki Baat - A Social Revolution on Radio**' was released by Finance Minister **Arun Jaitley** in **New Delhi**.

The book is a compendium encompassing 50 editions of the 'Mann Ki Baat' programme by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on All India Radio.



# Committees

## 1. RBI Appoints 5 Member Committee To Deepen Digital Payments

**Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has appointed **5-member committee** under the chairmanship of **Nandan Nilekani** to strengthen digital payments as well as to boost financial inclusion through Financial Technology. The committee would submit its recommendations within **3 months**.

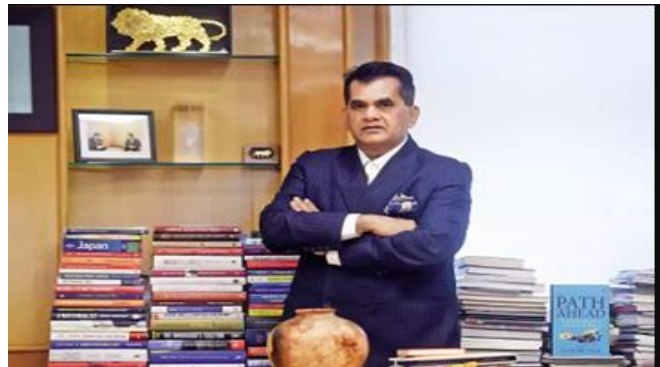
RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das made this announcement at the first event of Financial Technology (Fintech) Conclave, which was organized by NITI Aayog in **New Delhi**.



## 2. Amitabh Kant to Head Transformative Mobility Panel

Niti Aayog CEO **Amitabh Kant** will head the **National Mission on Transformative Mobility and Battery Storage**, which is being set up to promote clean and sustainable mobility initiatives in the country.

The terms of reference of the mission include ensuring implementation and compliance of the decisions and recommendations of the steering committee.



### 3. Delhi Government Sets-Up High-level Committee To Reform Higher Education

The Delhi government's Dialogue and Development Commission (DDC), a think-tank that advises the government on key issues, has set up a 17-member high-level committee to "reform higher education" in the capital.

DDC vice-chairperson Jasmine Shah will chair the committee. Nalanda 2.0, a non-profit policy think tank is collaborating with the DDC as the knowledge partner in the initiative.



### 4. 'Notun Disha' Initiated By Tripura Government

The government of Tripura announced '**Notun Disha**' (New Direction) for assessing the academic level of students in classes III-VIII and then improving their current level. It was launched by state Education Minister Ratan Lal Nath.

NGOs and educational institutions will provide training to 800 teachers. The duration of the project is 1 month. Rs. 28 crores have been allocated to the project.



# Death

## 1. India-Pakistan war hero, Captain M.N. Samant died aged 89 years

Captain Mohan Narayan Rao **Samant** of the Indian Navy, a **1971 India-Pakistan war** hero, who was honoured by Bangladesh as a 'Friend of Liberation War', passed away at the age of 89.

The **Maha Vir Chakra** awardee was instrumental in India waging a covert maritime war against shipping in the then East Pakistan. He had trained over 400 Bengali college students as maritime commandos for carrying out mass raids and inflicting damages to Pakistani shipping vessels in the run up to the 1971 war.



## 2. Goa Chief Minister Manohar Parrikar passed away aged 63

Parrikar had first become the Chief Minister of Goa in 2000 and had also served as Defence Minister of India from 2014 to 2017.

Mr. Parrikar was the first Indian Institute of Technology alumnus (of IIT, Bombay) to serve as Chief Minister of Goa in 2000. He became Chief Minister for four terms, but, ironically, could not complete a single full term in office.

He was born into a middle-class family on December 13. Parrikar began his political career as a Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) pracharak (worker).

He breathed his last on March 17.



### About Goa

Capital: Panaji

Governor: Mridula Sinha

### 3. Lingayat Pontiff Maate Mahadevi died aged 74 years

**Prominent Lingayat pontiff** and Basava Dharma Peetha President Maate Mahadevi passed away aged 74 years at the Manipal hospital in Bengaluru.

She was born on 13th March 1946 in Sasalahatti, Chitradurga in Karnataka.

She was an influential leader from the Lingayat community, took part in the protests held for separate religion and grant of minority status for Lingayats in Karnataka.



In 1966, she received her Jangama initiation as an ascetic in the Lingayat order of wandering mendicants.

Maate Mahadevi breathed her last on March 14.

### 4. Sitting Judge of Delhi HC Justice Valmiki J Mehta passed away

Valmiki J Mehta, who was 59 years old, had assumed office as an Additional Judge of Delhi high court on April 15, 2009.

Mehta got enrolled with the Bar Council of Delhi in 1982 and began his career in law by practising in the Delhi High Court, district courts and various tribunals in civil matters.

He was appointed a Senior Advocate at the age of 42, on September 22, 2001.



# Defence

## 1. Vice Admiral MA Hampiholi, AVSM, NM to be designated as Director General Naval Operations (DGNO)

Vice Admiral MA Hampiholi, AVSM NM has been appointed as **Director General Naval Operations (DGNO)**. He will succeed Satish Namdeo Ghormade.

He was commissioned in the Executive Branch of the Indian Navy on 1st July 1985.

The Flag Officer has experience as Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) specialist officer onboard INShips Himgiri, Agray, and Ganga.



He has experience as a Commanding officer in INS Nashak (missile vessel), INS Magar {Landing Ship Tank (Large)} and INS Talwar (stealth Frigate), Second-in-Command of INS Khukri (Missile Corvette).

He commanded the National Coast Guard, Mauritius for two years (2003 – 05) and served as Commanding Officer of INS Mandovi.

## 2. AUSINDEX to be held off the coast of Vishakhapatnam from April 2 to 16th

Third Installment of the Joint Naval Exercise of India and Australia **AUSINDEX** is to be held off the coast of **Vishakhapatnam** from **April 2 to 16**. The joint exercise will focus on anti-submarine warfare, as part of efforts to ramp up bilateral naval cooperation in the strategic Indian Ocean region.



### **AUSINDEX 2019**

From the Australian side, HMAS Canberra (landing helicopter dock), Auxiliary Oiler Replenishment vessel, two frigates, **HMAS Newcastle and HMAS Parramatta and P81 and P8 maritime patrol aircraft**, will be involved in the exercise. A Kilo-class submarine, land-based Hawk aircraft that will provide the air attack element for the exercise, **a Kamorta class anti-submarine vessel**, besides a stealth destroyer will lead the Indian deployment for the exercise.

The exercise will feature the deployment of Australian personnel on Indian ships and vice versa. The area of the exercise will be within **200 miles of Vishakhapatnam**.

Over 1000 Australian defence personnel will take part. Australia has also proposed logistics sharing pact with India.

### 3. LIMA 2019 Aero Expo held in Langkawi, Malaysia

Langkawi in Malaysia hosted the **Langkawi International Maritime Aero Expo (LIMA-2019)**.

The event, that takes place once every two years, is one of the **largest maritime and aerospace exhibitions** in the Asia-Pacific.

It was established in 1991.

Indian Air Force (IAF) is participating in the Maritime Aero Expo for the **first time**, during which it will display its indigenously developed LCA fighter aircraft, **Tejas**.



The anti-submarine warfare corvette **INS Kadmat** also participate in LIMA 2019.

### About Malaysia

Capital: Kuala Lumpur

Currency: Ringgit

Prime Minister: Mahathir Bin Mohammed

### 4. IAF formally inducted four heavy-lift Chinook helicopters

On the lines of Indo-US deal inked in September 2015 for the purchase of 15 Chinooks by India, the first four heavy lift CH-47F (I) Chinook helicopters were inducted in the Indian Air Force, at Air Force Station, Chandigarh, in Squadron No 126 Helicopter Flight. These multi-role helicopters will act as life-saver during HADR (humanitarian assistance and disaster relief) missions.



Regarded as one of the most modern heavy lift chopper, the payload capacity of Chinook is about 10 tonne, as it is able to lift artillery, vehicles, road construction and engineer equipment as well as troops and supplies to mountainous sectors. It can also lift M-777 ultra-light howitzers of the Indian armed forces.

India has purchased 15 Chinooks for \$1.5 billion.

The delivery of remaining helicopters is expected to be completed by 2023.

### 5. Joint exercises to be conducted by US army and NSG in Hyderabad



The US military forces and the Indian National Security Guard (NSG) is conducting joint exercises in Hyderabad.

This would be a part of the US-India security partnership.

The aim of these exercises is to enhance preparedness and tackle any crisis that affects the public health and safety.

The exercise is witnessing participation by the 1st Battalion and the 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) stationed out of Okinawa, Japan.



The exercise will be overseen from the US Embassy, New Delhi and US Special Operations Pacific Command at Camp HM Smith in Hawaii.

## 6. DRDO developed a range of Casualty Combat drugs

The **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** has developed a range of combat drugs that can extend the golden hour till the soldier or an armoured unit is shifted to hospital after an attack. This range of drugs can bring down the death toll.



The spectrum includes **bleeding wound sealants, super absorptive dressings, and glycerinated salines**. It can save lives in the event of warfare in the jungle and high altitude areas as well as in terror attacks.

These medicines ensure that soldiers do not suffer from unwanted blood loss while being taken to better healthcare from war zones. This range of casualty drugs is aimed at **enhancing the chances of survival** and minimum disability by providing **effective first aid care** within the golden hour.

## Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)

- Formed on: **1958**
- Headquarters: **New Delhi**
- Minister responsible: **Nirmala Sitharaman**
- Parent: **Ministry of Defence**
- It is charged with the military's research and development

## 7. Operation Sunrise: India and Myanmar jointly destroy insurgent camps

The **Indian** and **Myanmar's** armies, in a coordinated operation, destroyed at least 10 camps belonging to an insurgent group in Myanmar, which had become a threat to India's mega **Kaladan Project** in the neighbouring country.

The military action carried out was codenamed **Operation Sunrise**.



### About Kaladan project

- The Kaladan project connects **Sittwe Port** in Myanmar to the India-Myanmar border.
- The project was jointly initiated by India and Myanmar to create a multi-modal platform for **cargo shipments** from the eastern ports to Myanmar and to the North-eastern parts of the country through Myanmar.

## 8. Defence Ministry clears proposal to buy 10 lakh 'Made in India' hand grenades for Army

The **Rs 500 crore** proposal comes shortly after the Defence Ministry cleared the acquisition of assault rifles and signed a joint venture with **Russia** to manufacture **AK-203 rifles** for the infantry units of the Indian Army.

The new hand grenades will replace the existing inventory, **HE-36** grenades manufactured by the Ordnance Factory Board.

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) have developed the multi-mode grenades.



Recently, the government also signed a contract worth Rs 700 crore for procurement of 70,000 Sig Sauer assault rifles with a US manufacturer.

## 9. India and Sri Lanka to conduct joint military exercise Mitra Shakti VI

**India and Sri Lanka** is to conduct **joint military exercise Mitra Shakti VI** from 26 March to 8 April at Sri Lanka.

At the Military Exercise Mitra Shakti VI India would be represented by the **Bihar Regiment. Gemunu Watch Battalion of Sri Lankan Army** will be representing the Sri Lankan side.



The exercise aims to **build and promote close relations** between armies of both the countries and to enhance the ability of joint exercise commander to take military contingents of both nations under command. The exercise also involves tactical level operations in an international Counter **Insurgency and Counter Terrorist environment** under the United Nations mandate.

### Sri Lanka

- **President:** Maithripala Sirisena
- **Prime Minister:** Ranil Wickremesinghe
- **Capital:** Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte
- **Official languages:** Sinhala, Tamil
- **Currency:** Sri Lankan rupee (LKR)

## 10. IND INDO CORPAT 2019 was inaugurated at Port Blair

The 33rd edition of India-Indonesia coordinated patrol (IND-INDO CORPAT) was inaugurated at Port Blair, Andaman & Nicobar Islands. The IND-INDO CORPAT 2019 is held from 19 Mar to 04Apr 2019.

Navies of both countries have been carrying out coordinated patrolling twice a year since 2002 in an effort to keep the Indian Ocean region (IOR) safe and secure for commercial shipping and international trade. It also enhances mutual understanding and interoperability between the two navies.



### IND-INDO CORPAT 2019

From the Indonesian Side Naval Ship, **KRI Sultan Thaha Syaifuddin and Maritime Patrol Aircraft CN-235** are taking part. **Commodore Ashutosh Ridhorkar**, Naval Component Commander, Andaman and Nicobar Command is leading the Indian side. During the exercise ships and aircraft from both the countries would undertake the

patrolling on the respective sides of **236 nautical miles** long International Maritime Boundary line.

### 11. Vijit becomes the first Indian Coast Guard ship to visit Indonesia

This visit of the coast guard ship follows the first-ever-visit of Naval Ship **INS Sumitra** to Sabang in July 2018.

Vijit's visit to **Sabang**, Indonesia, also highlights strengthening cooperation in the area of maritime security and safety between New Delhi and Jakarta.

ICGS Vijit is the **2nd** in the series of 90 meter Offshore Patrol Vessels and was **commissioned** at Goa on 11 Dec **2010**.



'Vijit' meaning "**Winner or Victorious**" is the testimony of India's shipbuilding capabilities and the resolve of Govt of India to safeguard country's maritime interests.

### 12. Joint military exercise, Sary Arka Antiterror 2019, to be held in Uzbekistan

The decision to hold **Sary-Arka-Antiterror 2019**, the first joint military exercise of **Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)** was announced at the during the **34th meeting of the RATS council** held in **Tashkent, Uzbekistan**. The exercise will be held at **Sary Arka** in **Kazakhstan**.



#### RATS Council

- The Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) is a permanent organ which serves to promote cooperation of member states against three evils of terrorism, separatism, and extremism.
- RATS was established in June 2004.

### 13. Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)

- SCO is a permanent intergovernmental international organisation aimed at strengthening mutual trust and neighbourliness among the member states.
- SCO was created in 1996 of which the China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Tajikistan were members.
- Later Uzbekistan was admitted to the grouping.
- In 2001 the declaration of SCO was signed.

- In 2015 India and Pakistan were admitted to the grouping and they joined the grouping officially in 2017.

#### 14. Indian Navy stand behind the cyclone hit Mozambique

**India** decides to divert three Indian naval ships to the port city of **Beira** in Mozambique to provide humanitarian assistance to the people affected by tropical cyclone '**#IDAI**'.

The coastal city of Beira on Friday, 15 March.

The city's power grid has currently crashed, the airport has been shut and most roads are inaccessible.

The Indian Navy diverted ships to the African country for humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) work.

The Navy Spokesperson tweeted about the mission and on being the first-respondents for disaster relief.



#### 15. Second Scorpene submarine Khanderi ready for induction

The **Navy** is set to induct the **second Scorpene submarine Khanderi** by early May. The remaining submarines in the series are in advanced stages of manufacturing and trials. **Khanderi** was launched into the water in **January 2017** and has since been undergoing a series of trials.

Also, the **fourth submarine Vela** is ready to be launched into the water for trials around the same time depending on the ocean tide.



**Mazagon Dock Limited (MDL), Mumbai**, is manufacturing **six Scorpene submarines** under technology transfer from Naval Group of France under a 2005 contract worth **\$3.75 bn**. After a series of delays in the project, the first submarine of the class Kalvari joined service in December 2017. The entire project is expected to be completed by 2020.

## 16. AFINDEX 2019 held at Pune

**Africa-India Joint Field Training Exercise (AFINDEX-19)** between the Indian Army and 16 African nations will be conducted in **Pune from March 18 to 27**. The joint exercise will be held at Pune's Foreign Training Node at Aundh Military Station and College of Military Engineering in Kirkee.



### Features of AFINDEX-19

10 personnel, each from the participating nations from the African continent and personnel of Maratha Light Infantry of the Indian Army will participate in the joint exercise

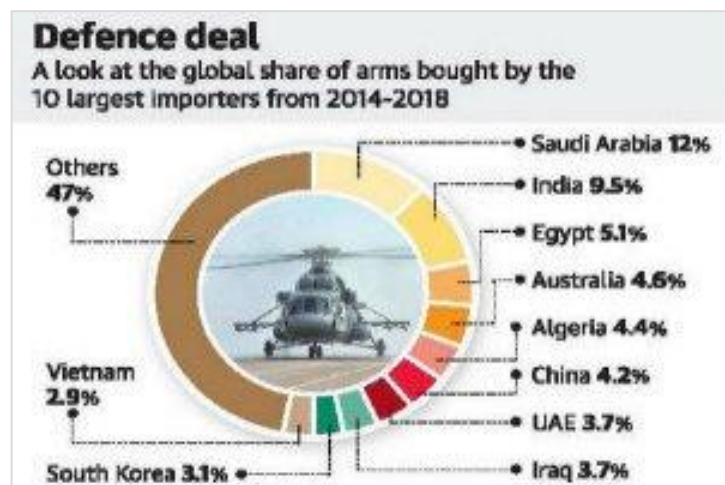
The exercise aims to train the participating contingents in **Humanitarian Mine Assistance (HMA) and Peace Keeping Operations (PKO)** under the United Nations Charter.

Contingents from Egypt, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, Sudan, South Africa, Tanzania, Namibia, Mozambique, Uganda, Niger & Zambia are part of the joint exercise together with officers from Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo and Madagascar as Observers.

## 17. India stands world's 2nd largest arms importer says SIPRI

According to the latest report published by the **Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)**, **India** was the world's second largest importer of major arms in 2014-18 and accounted for **9.5%** of the global total. **Saudi Arabia**, which holds the long-held tag as largest importer, accounted for **12% of the total imports during the period**.

**Russia** accounted for **58%** of Indian arms imports in 2014-18, compared with 76% in 2009-13. **Israel, the U.S., and France** all increased their arms exports to India in 2014-18.



The Russian share in Indian imports is likely to sharply go up for the next five-year period as India signed several deals including S-400 air defence systems, four stealth frigates, AK-203 assault rifles, a second nuclear attack submarine on the lease, and deals for Kamov-226T utility helicopters, Mi-17 helicopters, and short-range air defence systems.

### 18. Red Flag 2019 Aerial Exercise began in United States

Red Flag is US Air Force's premier **air-to-air** combat training exercise. It was launched in 1975.

**12-day long** Red Flag 2019 started at Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada, United States.

It is scheduled from 3rd to 16th March 2019.

Air forces from US, United Arab Emirates, Belgium, Netherlands, Singapore and Saudi Arabia, participate in this exercise.

India has participated in it for two times in 2008 and 2016.



### 19. Defence Ministry announced that permanent commission for women in Indian Army

The Defence Ministry announced that permanent commission will be granted for Women in all the 10 branches of Indian Army. The extension of Permanent Commission to Women will provide women with a career in the Army until their retirement. The Short Service Commission entails an opportunity to serve as a Commissioned Officer for 10/14 years. At the end of 10 yrs, 3 options will be provided, either elect for a Permanent Commission or opt out or have the option of 4 years extension.



The Women Officers will now get a permanent commission in branches such as signals, engineers, army aviation, army air defence, electronics, and mechanical engineers, army service corps, army ordnance corps, and intelligence. The Defence Ministry had earlier approved permanent commission for women in all branches of Air Force including fighter pilots.

## 20. March 1 2019 observed as World civil defence day

World Civil Defence Day is observed on 1st March every year, all over the world.

The theme of this year's World Civil Defence Day was "**Children's safety, our responsibility**".

The International Civil Defence Organisation (ICDO) incorporated this day in 1990.

The day marks the entry into force of the ICDO Constitution as an intergovernmental organisation in 1972 and has two main purposes:

- The attention of the world public the vital importance of Civil Protection and of raising awareness of the preparedness for, and
- Prevention and self-protection measures in the event of accidents or disasters.





# Banking and Finance

## 1. Bank of Baroda Set To Develop Digital Agri Platform 'Baroda Kisan'

**Bank of Baroda has signed an MoU with agriculture services companies** to develop an agriculture digital platform, Baroda Kisan, which will provide solutions for agricultural requirements.

BoB has signed the agreement with Skymet Weather Services, Weather Risk Management Services, BigHaat, Agrostar India, EM3 Agri Services, and Poorti Agri Services.



Mr. P. S. Jayakumar is the MD and CEO of Bank of Baroda. Its headquarters is in Vadodara, Gujarat.

## 2. Ministry of Finance Decides To Infuse Rs 5,042 crore Into Bank of Baroda

**The Finance Ministry** decided to **infuse Rs 5,042 crore into state-owned Bank of Baroda (BoB)** ahead of the merger of two other public sector lenders Dena Bank and Vijaya Bank with BoB.

The merger of Dena Bank and Vijaya Bank with BoB would be effective from April 1, 2019.



## 3. RBI Slaps Rs 2 Crore Penalty On PNB

**The Reserve Bank of India has slapped a penalty of Rs 2 crore on Punjab National Bank** for non-compliance of regulatory directions with regard to SWIFT operations.

SWIFT is a global messaging software used for sharing information on inter-bank transactions by financial entities.

SWIFT is an acronym for Society For Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunications.



## 4. Government Leaves Interest Rate On Small-Saving Schemes Unchanged

The Finance Ministry decided to keep **the interest rate unchanged on small savings schemes** for the three-month period beginning April 1.

The announcement covers small-saving schemes such as the Post Office Saving Accounts, Post Office Time Deposits, the National Saving Certificates (NSC), the Public Provident Fund (PPF), the Kisan Vikas Patra (KVP) and Sukanya Samridhi.



The unchanged interest rate means the NSC (5 years) and the PPF (15 years) will fetch 8% interest, while money deposited in KVP will double in little over nine years. At the same time, if one is parking money in a fixed deposit with a maturity of five years with the State Bank of India, he/she will get 6.85%. Senior citizens will get half a percent more, i.e., 7.35%.

Based on the recommendations of the **Shyamala Gopinath panel**, interest rates on these schemes are reviewed before the end of every quarter, and accordingly, new rates are announced for the next quarter.

## 5. SBI inks pact with Bank of China

The country's largest lender SBI has signed a pact with the Bank of China to boost business opportunities. **SBI has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Bank of China (BoC)**, the third-largest bank in the world by capital size and one of the major players in the Chinese banking sector, to enhance business synergies between both the banks, State Bank of India (SBI) said in a release.



Through this pact, both SBI and BoC will gain direct access to their respective markets of operation. Both banks' clients will be able to use the vast combined network to expand their businesses abroad. SBI said it has a branch in Shanghai and BOC is opening its branch in Mumbai.

SBI was founded on July 1 1955. It has headquarters in Mumbai. The current Chairperson of SBI is Rajnish Kumar.

**Bank of China (BoC) is the third-largest bank in the world** by capital size.

## 6. RBI Names SBI, ICICI and HDFC As Systemically Important Banks

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) named State Bank of India (SBI), ICICI Bank and HDFC Bank as Domestic Systemically Important Banks (D-SIBs), which in other words mean banks that are too big to fail.



As per the norms, these banks will have to **set aside more capital for their continued operation**. RBI comes with the list every year since 2015.

Inclusion in D-SIB indicates that failure of any of these banks would have a cascading effect on Indian financial system.

Inclusion in the list gives additional comfort to investors that these banks won't be allowed to fail and therefore, borrowing costs of these banks from the markets are cheaper than their peers.

## 7. SBI launches card less ATM withdrawals

State Bank of India launched '**YONO Cash**' for card less withdrawal of cash at over 16,500 SBI ATMs across the country.

With this facility, customers can initiate the cash withdrawal process on the YONO app and set a six-digit YONO Cash pin for the transaction. They will also get a six-digit reference number for the transaction on their registered mobile number via SMS. The cash withdrawal has to be completed within the next 30 minutes at the nearest ATMs using both PIN and the reference number received.



## 8. Bandhan Bank gets RBI nod for acquiring Gruh Finance

Bandhan Bank has received no objection from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for the proposed acquisition of Gruh Finance.

Gruh Finance, the affordable housing finance arm of HDFC Ltd, was taken over in January by Kolkata-based Bandhan Bank in a share-swap deal.

As part of the deal, Bandhan Bank has to transfer 14.9 per cent stake to HDFC for merging Gruh with itself.



The deal will allow Bandhan Bank's promoter Bandhan Financial Holdings to come down to about 61 per cent from about 82 per cent, and HDFC to hold around 15 per cent in the merged entity from about 57 per cent in Gruh.

Bandhan bank has its headquarters in Kolkata.

## 9. ICICI Lombard, MobiKwik to offer online fraud protection policy

ICICI Lombard and MobiKwik announced a strategic partnership to provide **cyber-insurance cover**.

The relationship aims to provide protection against unauthorized and fraudulent transactions online, across bank accounts, debit and credit cards, and mobile wallets.

MobiKwik users can avail the commercial cyber-insurance policy underwritten by ICICI Lombard and enjoy the benefit of stress-free and secured transactions. It can be availed at Rs 99 per month and with a sum insured of Rs 50,000.

MobiKwik users can avail the commercial cyber-insurance policy underwritten by ICICI Lombard and enjoy the benefit of stress-free and secured transactions.



## 10. RBI Categorises IDBI Bank as Private Sector Lender

**As per RBI notification**, IDBI Bank has been categorised as a private sector lender following acquisition of majority stake by Life Insurance Corporation. After 1 Apr 2019 merger of 2 more Government Banks Dena and Vijaya Bank in Government-owned bank of Baroda, the number of Government Sector Banks will be reduced to 18, while currently, the number is 20.



## 11. In a 1st, SBI Links Interest On Most Savings Account Deposits To RBI Repo Rate

**State Bank of India has become the first domestic bank** to link the interest rate it offers on **savings account deposits to** an external benchmark — the Reserve Bank of India's **repo rate**.

Savings accounts with deposits above Rs 1 lakh would be priced at 2.75% below the prevailing repo rate of 6.25%. The effective rate works out to be 3.5%.

Cash credit accounts and overdraft facilities over Rs 1 lakh would be priced at 2.25% over the repo rate.

For all other floating rate products, including retail and corporate loans, the impact of SBI's decision to link savings account deposit rates to the repo rate will be felt indirectly. These loans will continue to be linked to the 1-year MCLR (marginal cost lending rate).

For savings account holders with balances up to Rs 1 lakh and borrowers with cash credit and overdraft limits up to Rs 1 lakh, interest rates will remain fixed.



## 12. National Housing Bank proposes stricter regulations for Housing Finance Companies

National Housing Bank (NHB), a mortgage sector regulator and a fully owned subsidiary of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has decided to impose stricter regulations on the Housing Finance Companies (HFCs) to prevent them from falling prey to liquidity and credit risks. One of the regulations is increasing the capital adequacy ratio (CAR) of these companies from 12% to 15%, in a phased manner by 31st March 2022.



**NATIONAL  
HOUSING BANK**

Wholly Owned by Reserve Bank of India

# Environment

## 1. Environment Minister launches the anthem on 'plastic-free India' in seven languages

The Union Minister for Science & Technology, Earth Sciences and Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Harsh Vardhan launched an anthem "Plastic Waste-Free India" which has been composed and produced by Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya Smriti Manch (PDUSM)- a non-profit organisation which works in the field of social and environmental issues.



## 2. India collaborates with four nations to protect Asian rhinos

India decided to collaborate with Bhutan, Nepal, Indonesia and Malaysia with an objective to increase the population of three Asian rhino species – Greater one-horned rhinoceros, Javan rhino and Sumatran rhino, by signing the New Delhi Declaration on Asian Rhinos 2019 at the recently held Second Asian Rhino Range Countries, at Indira Paryavaran Bhawan, New Delhi.



## 3. Air pollution from stubble burning costs India USD 30 billion annually

According to a study of US-based International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), Air pollution due to crop residue burning in northern India causes an estimated economic loss of USD 30 billion (Rs 2 lakh crore) annually, and is a leading risk factor of acute respiratory infections, especially among children.



#### 4. IITs, IISc and SDC collaborate for climate change vulnerability assessment for Indian Himalayan region

Indian Institute of Technology-Guwahati, Mandi, and Indian Institute of Science Bengaluru, Department of Science (DST) have joined hands with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) to develop a climate change vulnerability assessment for the Indian Himalayan region comprising 12 states using a common framework called as the National Mission for Sustaining the Himalayan Ecosystem (NMSHE).



#### 5. India's deepest shaft cave discovered in Meghalaya

In Meghalaya India's deepest shaft cave discovered. During the 28th edition of the annual 'Caving in the Abode of the Clouds Expedition', a five-member team of cavers of Meghalaya Adventurers' Association (MAA) has discovered India's deepest shaft at Krem Um Ladaw. It has 105 m deep shaft entrance passage.



#### 6. Israelis cave explorers unveiled 'world's longest salt cave'

The Israeli cave explorers discovered the world's longest cave named Malham near the Dead sea, beating the record-holder in Iran.

The cave is spread in an area of 10 kilometers (6.25 miles) and it runs through the Israel's largest mountain, Mount Sodom and spills out to the southwest corner of the adjacent Dead Sea.



#### 7. World Meteorological Organization (WMO) releases 'State of the Global Climate Report'

A new report on 'the state of the Global Climate in 2018', of World Meteorological Organization (WMO) has warned that the physical and socio-economic impacts of climate change are accelerating day by day. It is the 25th annual record of the Global climate.



WORLD  
METEOROLOGICAL  
ORGANIZATION

Notification of Island protection zone (IPZ) 2019 for Andaman and Nicobar Island Protection Zone (IPZ) 2019 notification for Andaman and Nicobar has been notified by the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. The purpose of these changes in the Island Protection Zone (IPZ) is aligned with the Niti Aayog's proposal for holistic development in the Islands.



# Business and Economy

## 1. PFC becomes the Second Largest Govt-Owned Financial Firm after SBI

State owned Power Finance Corporation (PFC) became the promoter of REC Ltd as it acquired the management control of the power sector lender.

The ₹14,500 crore payment to the government for its 52.63% equity stake and subsequent transfer of REC shares to PFC cleared the decks for the creation of a \$80-billion lending institution for the Indian power sector. The REC' shares were

acquired at a per equity share price of ₹139.50. While 70% of the deal was financed through cash inflows, the balance was met through debt.



Currently, **Rajeev Sharma is the Chairman & Managing Director of Power Finance Corporation.** PFC has its headquarters in New Delhi. PFC was incorporated on July 16th, 1986 and is a leading Non-Banking Financial Corporation in the Country.

## 2. GAIL, BHEL Sign Pact For Development Of Solar Power Projects

State-owned gas utility GAIL India Ltd has signed an agreement with Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd (BHEL) for cooperation in the development of solar power projects. GAIL shall be the project developer and BHEL shall act as an engineering, procurement, construction and project management contractor.

**GAIL is India's biggest natural gas company.**

BHEL is one of the few companies in the world, and only company in India, having the capability to manufacture the entire range of power plant equipment.



## 3. GST Council approves transition plan for new tax rates for real estate

The all-powerful GST Council Tuesday approved a transition plan for the implementation of new tax structure for housing units.

A reasonable time for transition will be given to developers in consultation with states.

**GST rates for new projects will be mandatory from April 1.**



#### 4. SpiceJet Joins International Air Transport Association

Low cost carrier SpiceJet became a member of global airlines' grouping IATA.

**SpiceJet is the first Indian budget carrier to join the International Air Transport Association (IATA)**, which has over 290 airlines as members.

The membership also allows SpiceJet to explore and grow its collaborations with international member airlines of IATA through interlining and code shares.



#### 5. ADB To Invest \$50 million In Solar Power Project Developer Avaada

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has announced that it will invest \$50 million in Indian renewable energy independent power producer Avaada Energy Private Limited.

**Avaada aims to use the capital to expand its solar energy generation capacity in India.**

The ADB and Avaada entered into an agreement which was signed by the chairman of the company Vineet Mittal and ADB's principal investment specialist Mayank Choudhary.



**Asian Development Bank Headquarters is in Manila, Philippines.** Its president is Takehiko Nakao.

LEAP is a funding arrangement provided by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) which is administered by ADB.

#### 6. Fitch Cuts India GDP Growth Forecast For FY20 To 6.8%

Fitch Ratings cut India's economic growth forecast for the next financial year starting April 1, to 6.8 per cent from its previous estimate of 7 per cent, on weaker than expected momentum in the economy.

Fitch Ratings cut India's FY19 GDP growth forecast to 7.2 per cent from 7.8 per cent on December 6.

The rating agency has also cut growth forecasts for FY20 and FY21 to 7 per cent from 7.3 per cent and 7.1 per cent from 7.3 per cent, respectively.



## 7. Microsoft's Project Sangam accelerates India's Swachh Bharat Mission

Microsoft India partnered with The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) to deploy Microsoft's Project Sangam (cloud-hosted, mobile-first community learning platform) to train functionaries and officers across India on Swachh Bharat e-Learning Portal. Through this partnership, MoHUA has successfully trained 110,000+ municipal functionaries on best sanitation practices across 4000 plus cities in India.



Swachh Bharat Mission **e-learning Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM)** is a nation-wide campaign in India that aims to clean up the streets, roads and infrastructure of India's cities, towns, and rural areas. To successfully execute this campaign, MoHUA wanted to standardize, centralize, modernize, and establish systems for knowledge exchange and capacity development to train thousands municipal functionaries spread across cities in India.

Partnership with Microsoft to use the cloud powered Project Sangam, enabled delivery of large-scale, far-spread training programs with high quality and efficiency. The Sangam platform was designed to train municipal functionaries of state sanitation missions, city managers – engineers, administrators, field supervisors and sanitation workers with an aim to equip, assess, measure and accredit training of these officers.

## 8. Hyundai and Kia to invest \$300 million in Ola, focus on smart mobility solutions

Hyundai Motor Group and Kia Motors Corporation announced a strategic partnership to invest 300 million dollars (about Rs. 2,000 crore) in ride-hailing platform Ola for providing smart mobility solutions.



It will be Hyundai's and Kia's biggest combined investment to date.

The agreement will see the three companies extensively collaborate on developing unique fleet and mobility solutions, build India-specific electric vehicles and infrastructure, as well as nurture opportunities for driver partners with customized vehicles on the Ola platform.

## 9. Apple Partners With Goldman Sachs And Mastercard For Apple Card

Apple Inc. and Goldman Sachs Group Inc. jointly launched the **Apple Card credit card for iPhones**.

The card is tied to Apple Pay, a service that allows people to load banking information and pay in store or use it for purchases online.



Apple card is a virtual credit card that can be integrated into the Wallet app of the iPhone. The CEO of Apple Inc. is Tim Cook. The headquarters of Apple Inc. is in California, USA.

### 10. RBI to take steps to infuse liquidity

In first leg of the transaction, RBI will buy dollars in the spot market from dealers in exchange for the rupee.

During the current fiscal year, the central bank has injected over ₹2.36 trillion worth of liquidity for the rupee through an auction process. RBI will buy \$5 billion on 26 March for a period of three years and reverse it through sales at pre-determined rates fixed via auction.

Authorized dealers are allowed to participate in the auction.



### 11. HDFC Bank Becomes 3rd Indian Firm To Cross Rs6 trillion Market Cap

The market capitalization of HDFC Bank crossed Rs 6 trillion mark for the first time ever, after shares of the private sector lender spiked to an all-time high. Driven by heavy volume, shares of HDFC Bank rose as much as 2.87 percent in intra-day trade to hit 52-week high of Rs 2,233, surpassing its previous high of Rs 2,220 recorded on July 18, 2018.



As a result, the market cap of HDFC Bank stood at Rs 6,05,932.79 crore on the BSE, making it only the third Indian firm to achieve the milestone after Tata Consultancy Services and Reliance Industries.

### 12. SEBI Lifts Foreign Investment Cap On Corporate Bonds

Markets regulator SEBI withdrew the 20% limit on investments by Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) in corporate bonds of an entity.

In June last year, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) had mandated that no Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) shall have an exposure of more than 20% of its corporate bond portfolio to a single corporate.



However, the central bank in February lifted the restriction in view of market feedback.

### 13. PNB Sanctions Loans Worth Rs 689 cr to 1,600 MSMEs Via Online Portal

Punjab National Bank (PNB) has sanctioned loans worth Rs 689 crore to 1600 MSMEs under Prime Minister Narendra Modi '59-minute' initiative. The loans have been sanctioned through psbloanin59minutes.com portal as part of its effort to promote micro, small, and medium enterprises.



Under the Mudra Yojana Scheme, the bank has offered loans to over 2.69 lakh small entrepreneurs till February 2019.

#### 14. NCLT clears ArcelorMittal's Rs 42,000-crore Bid To Take Over Essar Steel

The Ahmedabad bench of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) cleared ArcelorMittal's Rs 42,000 crore resolution plan for insolvent Essar Steel, putting an end to the long-drawn battle for the steel asset.



The decision, which paves the way for ArcelorMittal's entry into India, came after 583 days of the stressed asset being referred for insolvency proceedings, instead of the mandatory resolution period of 270 days as per the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC).

The NCLT bench approved ArcelorMittal's resolution plan, which was voted as the winning bid in October 2018 by the Committee of Creditors (CoC) and which included an upfront payment of Rs 42,000 crore and a post-deal infusion of Rs 8,000 crore in Essar Steel.

#### 15. World Bank to provide 250 Million dollars for NRETP to boost Rural incomes in India

World Bank to provide 250 Million dollars for NRETP to boost Rural incomes in India.

PIB World Bank to provide 250 Million dollars for the National Rural Economic Transformation Project (NRETP) to boost Rural Incomes across 13 States in India.



The Agreement was signed by Mr. Sameer Kumar Khare, Additional Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, on behalf of the Government of India and Mr. Hisham Abdo, Acting Country Director, World Bank India, in New Delhi.

As per this, World Bank will help women in rural households develop viable enterprises for farm and non-farm products.10. Korea Exim Bank Extends Rs 4,100 crore Loan for Vizag Metro.

#### 16. SBI, Hitachi arm to roll out digital payments platform

State Bank of India (SBI) and Hitachi Payment Services Pvt Ltd, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Hitachi Ltd launched their merchant-acquiring joint venture, SBI Payment Services Pvt Ltd (SBIPSPL), in Mumbai, **for establishing a digital payments platform for India and other countries in the region.**



The joint venture (SBI has a 74 per cent stake, and the balance is with Hitachi Payment Services) will facilitate expansion of the digital payments landscape in India via its digital payments platform.

This will offer innovative products to suit the requirements of all segments of merchants by leveraging the brand value and vast distribution network of SBI, and bring Artificial Intelligence and other technological capabilities of Hitachi to SBI Payment Services.

**17. Bharat Electronics launches SWAGAT- Automatic Fare Collection Gating System**

BEL is taking up the large-scale manufacturing and deployment of the System at its manufacturing facilities.



Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL), a defence public sector undertaking, presented SWAGAT - **the Automatic Fare Collection Gating System.**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the system as part of the inaugural of Phase I of the Ahmedabad Metro.

SWAGAT is an initiative steered by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) in collaboration with BEL and Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC) with the support of Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC), National Payment Corporation of India (NPCI) and State Bank of India (SBI).

**18. India Signs Loan Agreement with the World Bank for USD 25.2 Million**

The Government of India, the State Government of Chhattisgarh and the World Bank signed a \$25.2 Million Loan Agreement to support the State’s Reforms in Expenditure Management. This support will cover Expenditure Planning, Investment Management, Budget Execution, Public Procurement, and Accountability.



The Chhattisgarh Public Financial Management and Accountability Program, which is the First Bank-Financed State-Level Project in Chhattisgarh in nearly a decade, will also help the State strengthen its Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) and Tax Administration Systems.

## 19. Government announces new Rs 20 coin

The Government will come out with the first ever Rs 20 coin which will be shaped like a **12-edged polygon** with design of grains to denote farm dominance in the country.

Besides, new series of one, two, five and ten rupees' coins too would be minted, which will be circular in design and have denominations written in Hindi script.

The exact date of issuance of these new series coins is yet to be announced.



The Rs 20 coin will weigh 8.54 gm and its outside diameter will be 27mm with the outer ring made of nickel silver and the centre piece of Nickel brass.

The face of the new Rs 20 coin shall bear the '**Lion Capitol of Ashoka Pillar**' with 'Satyameva Jayate' inscribed below. The left periphery will have the word 'Bharat' in Hindi and the right periphery will have the word 'India' in English.

## 20. NGT slaps Rs 500 crore fine on Volkswagen

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) slapped a fine of Rs 500 crore on German auto major Volkswagen for damaging the environment through the use of "cheat device" in its diesel cars in India. A bench headed by NGT chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel directed the carmaker to deposit the amount within two months.



The tribunal enhanced the compensation amount of Rs. 171.34 crore, which was recommended by a NGT- appointed committee, as a means of "creating deterrence." The auto maker, however, said that it did not violate the BS-IV norms and that the test results were based on "on road testings" for which there were no prescribed standards.

## 21. IRDAI, NHA form working group to curb fraud in Ayushman Bharat scheme

The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) and the National Health Authority (NHA) have formed a working group on the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY).

The joint working group, to be chaired by Dinesh Arora, Deputy CEO of NHA, will have 10 members from both the organizations.

In six months, it will submit a report on how to detect and deter fraud through a common repository and capacity-building.



It will develop standards for field verifications and investigations besides guidelines to "name and shame" fraudsters.

As part of Network Hospitals Management, the working group will define hospital infrastructure and facility audits, and develop a roadmap to get a common list of accredited hospitals for the industry.

## 22. OECD cuts global economic growth forecasts again

The OECD cut forecasts again for the global economy in 2019 and 2020, following on from previous downgrades in November, as it warned that trade disputes and uncertainty over Brexit would hit world commerce and businesses.



The Organisation for Economic Co-Operation & Development forecast in its interim outlook report that the world economy would grow 3.3 per cent in 2019 and 3.4 per cent in 2020.

## 23. Global Consumer Confidence Survey topped by India

India ranked first in the Confidence Board Global Consumer Confidence Survey which was conducted in collaboration with a global performance management company Nielsen Holdings.

India maintained its 1st position from 3rd quarter and in the 4th quarter of 2018 India's Consumer Confidence Index (CCI) score is 133.



## 24. India offers world's cheapest mobile data: UK report

**India has the cheapest mobile data** in the world as per the research by price comparison site cable.co.uk.

The global average was USD 8.53 for 1GB. Compared to global average of about Rs.600, 1GB is costing just Rs. 18.5(USD 0.26) in India. In the same case countries like UK has USD 12.37 for the same amount of data.





# Important Days

## 1. World Zero Discrimination observed on 1st March

World Zero Discrimination day is celebrated annually on **March 1** to emphasize living life with dignity irrespective of ethnicity, age, gender, skin color, height, weight, etc.



# UNAIDS

The day aims to promote equality and stresses that all humans are equal before the law irrespective of their ethnicity and race.

**The symbol of Zero Discrimination Day is butterfly.** The event has been in practice since its inception in March 2014 by Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS).

## 2. World Wildlife Day celebrated on 3<sup>rd</sup> March

The World Wildlife day is observed on March 3<sup>rd</sup> every year. The day aligns with **Sustainable Development Goal 12** which talks about Life without water, and focuses on marine species and to highlight the problems, critical issues of marine wildlife to our everyday life.



## WORLD WILDLIFE DAY 3 MARCH

The day came into practice from 20 December 2013

when the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) decided to dedicate a day specially for the adoption of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), as World Wildlife Day. Since then it is tradition to observe this on March 3 every year.

## 3. International Women's Day celebrated globally on March 8<sup>th</sup>

International Women's Day is a celebration that always stood as the cornerstone of women's fight for rights. Since its inception on February 28, 1909 in New York, Women's day always stood as an inspiration for many women across the globe to do more.



Every year the celebration of International Women' Day on March 8<sup>th</sup>. This year, the theme of Women's day is "Balance for Better - Think equal, build smart, innovate for change". The theme mainly focuses on ways in which gender equality can be achieved, empowerment of women can be strengthened and better protection for women can be enabled. The theme also encompasses discussion on social protection systems for women, safe and enhanced access to public services and sustainable infrastructure.

#### 4. World Sparrow Day

The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) is organization set up under an act of Parliament of India. It came into existence in 1960 and works for sea ways, air ways and other critical installations of India.

The organization also works with reserved state police departments in cases of need and certain battalions are specifically reserved for this purpose.



Every year the **Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) Raising Day is observed on 10 March.**

#### 5. No Smoking Day observed on Second Wednesday of March

No Smoking Day is observed every year on the Second Wednesday of March. This year the day coincided with 13<sup>th</sup> of March.

The day is aimed at creating awareness among the people globally about the health hazards that are associated with the use of tobacco in any form.

Several campaigns and programs are held across the globe on this day to encourage the people to quit smoking and the usage of tobacco.



#### 6. Pi Day observed on March 14<sup>th</sup>

Pi is a unique number in Mathematics that has an approximate value of 3.14 or 22/7. It stands for the ratio of the circumference of the circle to its diameter.

Pi also has a place in Mathematics as to be the number whose digits after the decimal place extend infinitely.

Every year Pi Day is observed on 14<sup>th</sup> March. The day also celebrates the birthday of Albert Einstein, a world renowned mathematician and scientist.



## 7. International Day of Action for Rivers observed on March 14<sup>th</sup>

The International Day of Action for Rivers is an occasion marked to maintain solidarity in protection of rivers across the globe.

Citizens of various nations talk about the problems the rivers in their country are facing and work on solutions to keep their rivers flowing.

This year, **the theme of this day was the role of women in protecting and managing rivers.**



## 8. World Consumer Rights Day observed on March 15<sup>th</sup>

Every year March 15 is marked and celebrated as World Consumer Rights Day. The event came into existence since President John F Kennedy, on March 15 1962, addressed some issues of consumer in the US Congress formally.

Since 1983, the date has been officially being celebrated as the day of World Consumer Rights. The day is dedicated for creating awareness among the consumers about their rights and needs.



## 9. National Vaccination Day observed in India on March 16<sup>th</sup>

National Immunization day or National Vaccination day is observed in India every March 16<sup>th</sup>. The day marks the anniversary of the administration of first dose of Oral Polio Vaccine in 1995.

The World Health Organization (WHO) emphasizes vaccines as the best way to prevent and eradicate dreadful and infectious diseases such as polio, small pox and measles.



## 10. World Happiness Day celebrated globally on March 20<sup>th</sup>

International day of happiness was celebrated globally on March 20<sup>th</sup>. The day took its shape from the idea of Jayme Illien, a renowned philanthropist, activist, statesman and Special advisor to United Nations.

The event is coordinated by a non-profit movement, Action for Happiness. The movement is supported by 160 nations of the world, besides from various international organizations.



## 11. World Sparrow Day celebrated on March 20<sup>th</sup>

Every year, World Sparrow Day is celebrated on March 20<sup>th</sup>. With a theme, I LOVE Sparrows, each annual celebration of sparrow day focuses on the conservation of this little birds who have been living with us on this Earth since the past 10,000 years.



I ♥  
SPARROWS

[www.worldsparrowday.org](http://www.worldsparrowday.org)

Events and campaigns are organized across the globe to create awareness among people to create awareness about how they can contribute in saving sparrows, what efforts they can put in from their side to increase the species and how they can provide food and shelter to these little birds.

## 12. World Forestry Day observed on March 21<sup>th</sup>

Since its inception in 2012 through the proclamation of the United Nations General Assembly, March 21<sup>st</sup> every year is being globally celebrated as World Forestry Day or International Day of Forests.

Every year the event is associated with a theme that would focus on addressing the sustainability of forests. The theme of 2019 International Day of Forests was 'Forests and Education.'

Events such as tree planting campaigns and gatherings that discuss how to conserve and protect trees are organized every year as a celebration of this event.



## 13. World Down Syndrome Day observed globally on March 21<sup>th</sup>

The UN General Assembly declared on 2011, that every year 21 March is to be celebrated as World Down Syndrome Day. Since then annually, March 21 is being celebrated accordingly.

On this day, organizations of the United Nations, governmental and voluntary organizations organize campaigns to increase awareness among the common public about Down Syndrome.

Down syndrome is an inherent chromosomal arrangement in humans that effect learning capabilities, styles and physical characteristics of affected humans.



## 14. World Water Day observed globally on March 22<sup>nd</sup>

March 22 is celebrated as World Water Day globally. The event is on the guidelines of UN to meet its **Sustainable Development Goal 6 – water for all by 2030.**



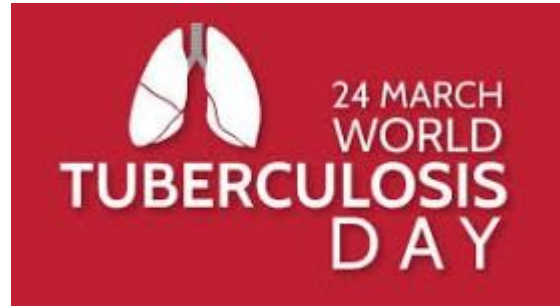
The day is dedicated to address the reasons for water crisis that is leaving many billions on this earth still not having the privilege of having access to safe drinking water.

### 15. World Tuberculosis Day observed on March 24th

With a theme **"It's Time!"**, the World Tuberculosis Day is observed on March 24.

The date marks the day in 1882 when Dr. Robert Koch announced that he had discovered the bacterium that causes TB, which opened the way towards diagnosing and curing this disease.

The day aims to raise public awareness of tuberculosis and the efforts made to prevent and treat this disease. It is one of the eight official global public health campaigns marked by the World Health Organization (WHO).



### 16. World Theatre Day celebrated on 27<sup>th</sup> March

The World Theatre Day is celebrated annually on 27th March.

This day is a celebration for those who can see the value and importance of the art form "theatre", and acts as a wake-up-call for governments, politicians, institutions and individuals which have not yet recognized its potential for economic growth.



# International

## 1. India & Bolivia Sign 8 MoUs In Various Fields Including Culture, Mining, Space

President Ram Nath Kovind has been conferred with the highest State honor of Bolivia, "Condor de Los Andes en el Grado de Gran Collar" during his visit to Bolivia. President of Bolivia Evo Morales awarded him the Honour at a function held in Santa Cruz.



On the second day of President's three-day visit to Bolivia, India and Bolivia signed eight MoUs in the fields of culture, Visa waiver arrangement for diplomats, exchange between diplomatic academies, mining, space, traditional medicine, establishment of Centre of Excellence in IT and Bi-Oceanic Railway project.

**Bolivia's capital city is Sucre.** Its currency is Bolivian boliviano.

## 2. World's Largest E-waste Recycling Hub Opened at The Dubai Industrial Park

The world's largest e-waste recycling plant has been opened in Dubai Industrial Park, Dubai by 'Enviroserve' company with a total cost of \$5 million. It will recycle Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE), IT asset disposition (ITAD), refrigerant gas and specialized waste.



The processing capacity of this recycling hub is 100,000 tonnes of total integrated waste (per year), of which **39,000 tonnes** is e-waste. The project is supported by the **Swiss Government Export Finance Agency.**

## 3. New Zealand Bans Assault Weapons

New Zealand has imposed an immediate ban on assault weapons following the Christchurch massacre that claimed the lives of 50 mosque-goers.

Prime Minister of New Zealand Jacinda Ardern announced assault rifles and military-style semi-automatic weapons would be banned with immediate effect, making a pledge to ensure that nothing like **Christchurch massacre** ever occurs in the Pacific nation again.



The capital city of New Zealand is Wellington and its Currency is New Zealand dollar.

#### 4. First Ever High-Level Dialogue On Indo-Pacific Cooperation (HLD-IPC) Held In Jakarta

The Government of Indonesia has hosted the first ever High-Level Dialogue on Indo-Pacific Cooperation (HLD-IPC) in its capital city Jakarta.

The theme of the HLD was 'Towards a Peaceful, Prosperous, and Inclusive Region'.

The objective behind this meet was to urge all participating governments to talk openly about their plans for increasing cooperation and for building trust in the Pacific Ocean and the Indian Ocean region.



#### 6. Kazakhstan Renames Its Capital Astana To Nursultan

Kazakhstan has renamed its capital Astana to Nursultan to honor outgoing leader Nursultan Nazarbayev.

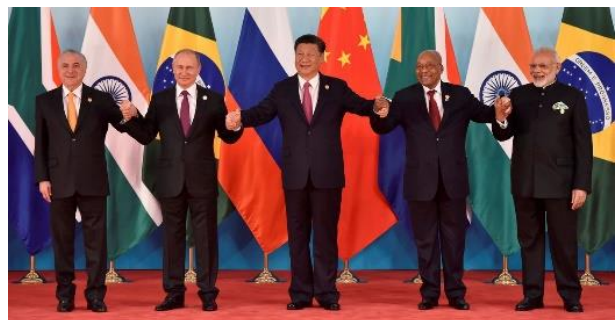
Mr. Nazarbayev, 78, served nearly 30 years as president of the nation. The change was announced after Kassym-Jomart Tokayev was sworn in as president, promising to seek his predecessor's opinion on key decisions.



#### 7. First BRICS Sherpa Meeting Under Presidency Of Brazil Held In Curitiba

The first BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) Sherpa meeting held in Curitiba, Brazil under the Presidency of Brazil.

The Indian delegation was led by Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs T S Tirumurti.



## 8. External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj Begins 2-Day Visit to the Maldives

External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj left for the Maldives on a two-day visit. She is accompanied by Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale and other officials.

During her visit, Mrs Swaraj will call on the President of Maldives Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, Parliament Speaker Qasim Ibrahim and meet with her Maldivian counterpart Abdullah Shahid.



## 9. Cyclone Idai Hits Mozambique, Malawi, Zimbabwe

Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi have been hit by a vicious cyclone 'IDAI' that has killed nearly 150 people, left hundreds more missing and stranded tens of thousands who are cut off from roads and telephones in mainly poor, rural areas.



**Cyclone Idai** has affected more than 1.5 million people in the three southern African countries, according to the UN and government

officials.

Hardest hit is **Mozambique's central port city of Beira** where the airport is closed, electricity is out and many homes have been destroyed.

## 10. Vice President's Visit To Paraguay And Costa Rica: Complete Highlights

The Vice President of India, M. Venkaiah Naidu visited the Republic of Paraguay and the Republic of Costa Rica.

In Paraguay, the Vice President met with the President of the Republic of Paraguay, Mr. Mario Abdo Benítez, the Vice President, Mr. Hugo Velázquez, and the President of the National Congress (Senate), Mr. Silvio Ovelar. He also addressed the India-Paraguay business forum and interacted with the Indian Diaspora in Paraguay.



In Costa Rica, the visit of Vice President to the Republic of Costa Rica was the first ever high-level visit from India to the nation. The Vice President met the President of Costa Rica, Mr. Carlos Alvarado Quesada and held Delegation level talks with him which was followed by a joint press statement.

## 11. US Officially Closes Jerusalem Consulate



The United States has officially shuttered its consulate in **Jerusalem**, downgrading the status of its main diplomatic mission to the **Palestinians** by folding it into the U.S. Embassy to **Israel**.

The U.S. State Department stated that the decision was driven to increase the efficiency and effectiveness in diplomatic engagements.



## 12. 116-Year-Old Japanese Woman Honoured as World's Oldest Person Alive by Guinness World Records

A 116-year-old Japanese woman who loves playing the board game Othello is being honored as the world's oldest living person by Guinness World Records.

Tanaka was born January 2, 1903, the seventh among eight children. The previous oldest living person was another **Japanese woman, Chiyo Miyako, who died in July at age 117.**



## 13. U.S. And South Korea End Military Exercises 'Foil Eagle 2019' And 'Key Resolve'

The United States and South Korea decided to call off their joint exercise "Foil Eagle" and "Key Resolve" and instead bifurcate them into smaller exercises.

This is being done to ease tensions with North Korea. "Key Resolve" will be replaced by "Dongmaeng" which is also known as alliance in English, Foil Eagle drills will be replaced by a smaller battalion-sized exercise.



This decision has been made after there was a failure to reach an agreement on denuclearisation during the summit in Hanoi, Vietnam between President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

#### 14. China slashes its GDP target to 6-6.5% amid slowdown

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang has expressed concern that the country will face a graver and more complicated environment to development, amid an ongoing trade war with the US and continued economic slowdown.

The world's second-largest economy has slashed its GDP target to 6.00 to 6.50 percent this year.



#### 15. Bilateral joint exercise between India, Oman to begin from 12th March

The third edition of the bilateral joint exercise between India and Oman, Al Nagah 2019 will begin from 12th of this month (March) at Jabel Al Akhdar Mountains in Oman.

It will continue till 25th of March. In the exercise, both the armies will exchange expertise and experience in tactics, weapon handling and firing.



#### 16. Kylie Jenner becomes world's youngest self-made billionaire

Kylie Jenner was named the youngest self-made billionaire of all time by Forbes magazine, thanks to the booming cosmetics company she founded three years ago.

Jenner, 21, the half-sister of reality television stars Kim, Khloe and Kourtney Kardashian, made it onto the annual Forbes list of billionaires after debuting her Kylie Cosmetics online in 2015 with \$29 lip kits containing matching lipstick and lip liner.



#### 17. Venezuela orders German ambassador to leave

The Venezuelan government has announced to expel German ambassador Daniel Kriener from the country. President Nicolas Maduro's embattled government has declared the German ambassador persona non grata and ordered him to leave the country within 48 hours.



## 18. NASA astronauts to carry out first all-female spacewalk

Just in time for International Women's Day, NASA announced that it will be conducting the first-ever, all-female spacewalk.

Astronauts Christina Koch and Anne McClain will exit the International Space Station on March 29, 35 years after the first woman performed a spacewalk. They'll be guided from the ground by flight director Mary Lawrence, and flight controllers Jackie Kagey and Kristen Facciol.



## 19. Malaysia joins International Criminal Court

Malaysia has become a member of the International Criminal Court. The ICC is the world's only permanent war crimes court and aims to prosecute the worst abuses when national courts are unable or unwilling. **Malaysia becomes the 124th member** of the court since its establishment in 2002.

But the tribunal in The Hague has come under fire over high-profile acquittals, while Burundi became the first country to quit the court in 2017 and the Philippines has announced its intention to withdraw.



## 20. President Kovind Embarks On State Visit To Croatia, Bolivia And Chile

President Ram Nath Kovind embarked on a state visit to Croatia, Bolivia and Chile to hold talks with the leaders of these countries and strengthen ties in trade, investment and renewable energy.

India will be conducting separate bilateral forums with Croatia, Bolivia and Chile during President Kovind's visit to these countries. President Kovind will first visit Croatia in what would be the first visit by an Indian president to the European country.



## 21. Oman Signs Agreement Allowing United States Military To Use Its Ports

Oman has signed an agreement with the United States of America that allow American ships and warplanes to take advantage of his ports and airports.

The agreement will allow the US forces to take advantage of the facilities offered at some of the Sultanate's ports and airports during visits of the US military vessels and aircraft.



# Miscellaneous

- Zero Discrimination Day, Mar 1 is also observed as Civil Accounts Day in India and civil defence day globally.
- Former Indian cricketer Anil Kumble has been reappointed as Chairman of the ICC Cricket Committee for 3rd consecutive term.
- Paralympic torch unveiled by Tokyo Organizing Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games (Tokyo 2020). Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games mascot is Someity. Miraitowa is Official Mascot of Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games.
- Suresh Raina became the First batsman to score 5000 runs in Indian Premier League Cricket Tournament.
- Bhagwan Lal Sahni appointed as Chairman of National Commission for Backward Classes.
- Former PM Manmohan Singh presented 2nd edition of BusinessLine Changemaker Of The Year award to Finance Minister Arun Jaitley, for successfully introducing the Goods and Services Tax (GST).
- Book Mann Ki Baat – A Social Revolution on Radio, based on 50 episodes of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's heart to heart talk with citizens of India, broadcasted on All India Radio, has been released. It has been compiled by BlueKraft Digital Foundation.
- PM Narendra Modi dedicated to the nation, the Joint Venture of Indo-Russian Rifles Pvt Ltd, for Kalashnikov Assault Rifle Production, in Kauhar, Amethi (Uttar Pradesh).
- For the first time, India attended Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Foreign Ministers Meet, held in Abu Dhabi (UAE). Indian Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj attended 46th Session of OIC's Council of Foreign Ministers.
- Indian fashion designer Ritu Beri has been appointed as Cultural and Tourism Ambassador of Uzbekistan in India.
- Ms. Padmaja appointed as next High Commissioner of India to the Republic of Fiji.
- Transgender social activist Gauri Sawant appointed as one of 12 election ambassadors from Maharashtra. She is the first transgender election ambassador.
- Shambhu S Kumaran is appointed as next Indian Ambassador to Kingdom of Morocco.
- Citibank named Ashu Khullar as Chief of Its India Operations.
- RBI constituted a panel under former deputy governor Usha Thorat to examine issues related to offshore rupee markets and recommend policy measures to ensure the stability of external value of the domestic currency.
- Shri Vishwakarma Skill University Haryana (SVSU) signed MoU with National Institute of Technical Teacher's Training and Research Bhopal to ensure purposeful

engagement of Faculty, Experts and Industry Partners for various academic activities.

- Indian Air Force Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman named for first Bhagwan Mahavir Ahimsa Puraskar constituted by Akhil Bharatiya Digambar Jain Mahasamiti, with a cash prize of 2.51 lakh.
- Malaysia became 124th member nation to International Criminal Court (ICC), ratifying Rome Statute after 20 years.
- Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) presented SWAGAT Automatic Fare Collection Gating System, an initiative OF Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) in collaboration with BEL and Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC).
- USA and South Korea will call off their joint exercise "Foal Eagle" and "Key Resolve" and instead bifurcate them into smaller exercises, to ease tensions with North Korea. "Key Resolve" will be replaced by "Dongmaeng" which is also known as alliance in English, Foal Eagle drills will be replaced by a smaller battalion-sized exercise.
- IDBI Bank received government nod to handle import and export transactions with Iran, to help promoting trade amid US sanctions on Iran. Iran is India's third-largest oil supplier after Iraq and Saudi Arabia.
- The book "Designing Destiny: The Heartfulness Way", written by Kamlesh Patel has been released.
- Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change amended Hazardous and other Wastes (Management and Transboundary Movement) Rules, 2016 to completely ban the import of solid plastic waste.
- Maharashtra Govt unveiled State's new 5-year industrial policy to be effective from 1st April, 2019. It will create nearly 40 lakh Jobs by 2023-24 and goal is to turn Maharashtra into a trillion dollar (one lakh crore) economy.
- National Housing Bank (NHB) imposed stricter regulations on Housing Finance Companies (HFCs) to prevent them from falling prey to liquidity and credit risks.
- Indian-American Padma Lakshmi appointed by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as its Goodwill Ambassador, supporting agency's fight against inequality and discrimination around the world.
- The book as Compilation of selected speeches of PM Narendra Modi, titled "Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas" has been released. Coffee Table Book Cruising New Heights- Flying For All was also released, depicting achievements of Ministry of Civil Aviation.

# National

## 1. YUVIKA programme launched by ISRO

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) launched a programme YUVIKA, specially for school children. The programme is on the lines of Central government's vision "Jai Vigyan, Jai Anusandhan".

This programme, YUVIKA or Yuva Vigyani Karyakram, in full, is designed to educate school going children about the latest areas of space research and activities. It also intends to create interest in young minds about space technology, space science and space applications.



ISRO has its headquarters in Bengaluru and was established in 1969. Currently, **K. Sivan is serving as the Director of ISRO.**

## 2. Facebook launches tools to raise voter awareness

In view of the upcoming General Elections in India that are set to commence in April 2019, the social media giant Facebook launched two new tools to promote voter awareness and to support electoral process.

The two tools are "**Candidate Connect**" and "**Share You Voted**". These tools are specific to only India. The tools are available in 12 Indian languages.



## 3. PM Modi addresses the Nation on the success of Anti-Satellite Weapon (A-SAT)

India successfully launched its first Anti-Satellite Weapon (A-SAT) under the mission named '**Mission Shakti**'.

On the event of this, Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the nation. He said this is a milestone in Indian space technology and development, and expressed happiness that India has entered the elite space power team.

India is the fourth country to have successfully tested Anti-Satellite Weapon (A-SAT), after US, Russia, and China.

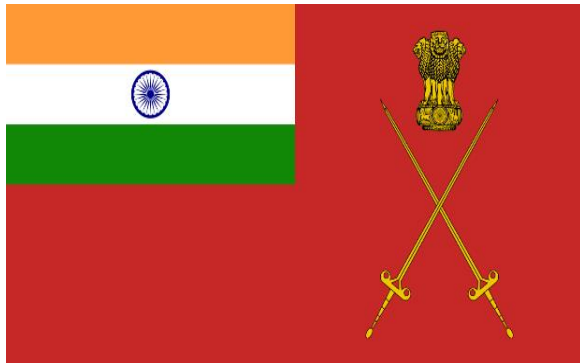


#### 4. Indian Army's First Mountaineering Expedition to Mt. Makalu Started

A team of five officers, two JCOs and eleven OR started their expedition to Mt. Makalu, the fifth highest mountain in the world.

This is the first ever expedition by the Indian army to the mountain. This was flagged off by Director General Military Training.

**Mt. Makalu, has an altitude of 8485 meters** and lies at Mahalangur Himalayas 19 km southeast of Mount Everest, on the border between Nepal and Tibet, China.



#### 5. Cabinet approvals in March 2019

The Union Cabinet gave nod to the following important approvals in March 2019:

- MoU between **India and Republic of Korea** on Startup Cooperation.
- MoU between **India and Indonesia** on combating illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and its precursors.
- Acquisition of land of Central Water Commission at Nallagandla, Hyderabad by Telangana State Government for road widening.
- Creation of **additional posts of three Judicial Members and three Technical Members** in the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal.



#### 6. Chennai's coach factory becomes the World's largest rail coach manufacturer

The Indian Railways Integral Coach Factory (ICF) created a record 40% increase in its production. With this it has surpassed the Chinese counterparts and became the World's largest rail coach manufacturer.

Established in 1952, owned and operated by Indian railways, the Integral Coach Factory manufactures railway coaches.

It is located in **Perambur, Chennai** in the state of Tamil Nadu, India.





## 7. Shiksha Vani app launched by CBSE

With a purpose to act as an intermediary platform between students, parents and the Board, an app named Shiksha Vani was launched by the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE). The app will notify the users in time about all important announcements the Board releases.



The headquarters of CBSE is New Delhi, India. The current chairperson of CBSE is Anita Karwal.

## 8. IIPHG launches app 'Conquer Exam, Be a Warrior'

To help students tackle the exam stress, Indian Institute of Public Health Gandhinagar, (IIPHG) in collaboration with National Mental Health Program, Department of Health and Family Welfare, Government of Gujarat launched a mobile app named 'Conquer Exam, Be a Warrior'.



INDIAN  
INSTITUTE OF  
PUBLIC HEALTH  
GANDHINAGAR

This APP features separate component for parents and students to identify their mental status during exam season. This app also provides access to directly linked to trained Mental Health Professionals i.e. Jeevan Aastha 24/7 telephonic counselling helpline by Government of Gujarat.

## 9. Assam launches 'i-help' Initiative

To create awareness among voters about the digital electoral literacy, an initiative named '**i-help**' was launched in the state of Assam, India.

This is a joint idea of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer(CEO) and Common Service Centres (CSC) in Assam.

The initiative is mainly focused on easing voter experience in the upcoming General elections in India.



## 10. Guinea PM pays India a 10-day trip

To strengthen Indo-African relations, Guinean Prime Minister Ibrahima Kassory Fofana paid a 10-day visit to India. He participated at a key India-Africa business conclave and hold talks with the top leadership to deepen ties.

He had talks with President Ram Nath Kovind and Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu too on various issues related to both the countries.

Guinea is a country in West Africa and its capital city is Conakry.



## 11. Indian Coast Guard Ship 'Vijit' visits Indonesia

Indian Coast Guard ship 'Vijit' becomes the first ever Coast Guard ship to visit Indonesia. This was done to showcase the importance of maritime proximity between India and Indonesia.

On this occasion, the crew of this ship, held talks with interaction with officials of Bakamla (Indonesian Coast Guard), Indonesian Armed Forces and the civil administration at Sabang.



## 12. IIT Roorkee signs MoU with ISRO for Space Technology Cells

IIT Roorkee signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with ISRO for setting up of Space Technology Cells in its campus.

As a result of the Space Technology Cells developed under this MoU, the students and faculty members of the institute can pursue advanced research in different areas related to futuristic space technology.



### 13. MoU on Digital Education signed between India and Afghanistan

With an intent to work on digital education initiatives, the Ministry of **Human Resource Development**, India and the Afghanistan government signed a MoU at IIT Madras. The MoU comprises many programs developed by **Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs)**.



The capital city of Afghanistan is Kabul and its currency is Afghan Afghani.

### 14. Namaste Thailand Festival Held In New Delhi

In a bid to strengthen the ties between India and Thailand, Namaste Thailand festival was held in New Delhi. Stage performances by Thai artists were given on this event.

This is the third season of the festival and is organized by the Royal Thai Embassy.

The capital city of Thailand is Bangkok and its currency is Thai Baht.



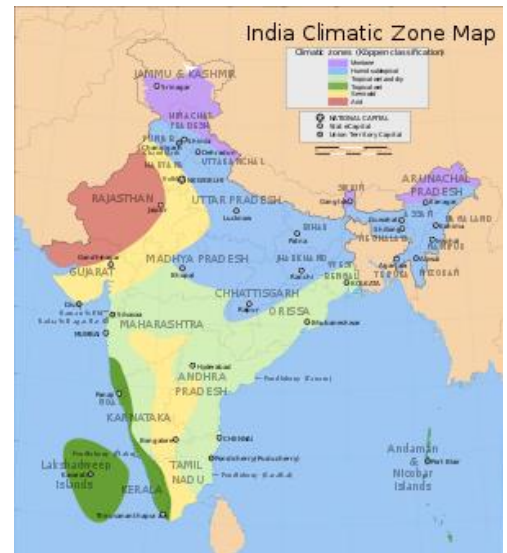
### 15. Assam and Mizoram top in Climate Vulnerability Index

As per a new common framework developed by Indian scientists, Assam and Mizoram are most vulnerable in terms of climate vulnerability. They score 0.72 and 0.71 respectively.

This framework is developed to assess the climate changes vulnerability in all Himalayan region states of India.

Researchers say that this report can be customized and applied for other parts of India too.

As per this report, Sikkim is the least vulnerable state with a score of 0.42.



## 16. Sampriti 2019 – The Indo-Bangladesh joint military exercise concludes

Sampriti 2019, the joint military exercise of India and Bangladesh concluded at Tangail, Bangladesh.

A group of 9th Battalion the Rajputana Rifles from the Indian Army and the Company of 36 East Bengal Battalion participated in this event.

This is the 8<sup>th</sup> edition of the Sampriti series. The event has been organized as a mark of special bonds between India and Bangladesh, since 2009.

**The current prime minister of Bangladesh is Sheikh Hasina.**



## 17. Kartarpur corridor operationalization talks successful between India-Pak

The famous Kartarpur Corridor will be soon operating for Indian pilgrims too very soon.

Talks on this operationalization are successfully completed recently between both the nations concerned – India and Pakistan.

The concerned agreement was made during a meeting held at Attari in Punjab.



## 18. USA to set up six nuclear power plants in India

India-USA talks on civil nuclear cooperation and bilateral security successfully took place at The 9th round of the India-US Strategic Security Dialogue held in Washington DC.

Both nations agreed to deny weapons of mass destruction and have agreed towards setting up of six new nuclear reactors in India.

In India, currently there are twenty-two nuclear power reactors with a total installed capacity of 6,780 MW.



### 19. Sirsi Supari becomes the first from Arecanut family to win GI tag

For the first time in the arecanut sector, 'Sirsi Supari' grown in Karnataka has received the Geographic Indication (GI) tag.

The total carbohydrates in 'Sirsi Supari' are 23% to 26%, total arecoline is 0.11% to 0.13%, total tannin content is 14.5% to 17.5%.

The Totagars' Cooperative Sale Society (TSS) Ltd, a Sirsi-based agri cooperative, is the registered proprietor of the GI 'Sirsi Supari'.



### 20. India Extends USD 250 million To Nepal for Reconstruction of Infrastructures

During the India-Nepal Joint Project Monitoring Committee meeting held, officials from the two countries reviewed the progress of post-earthquake reconstruction projects.

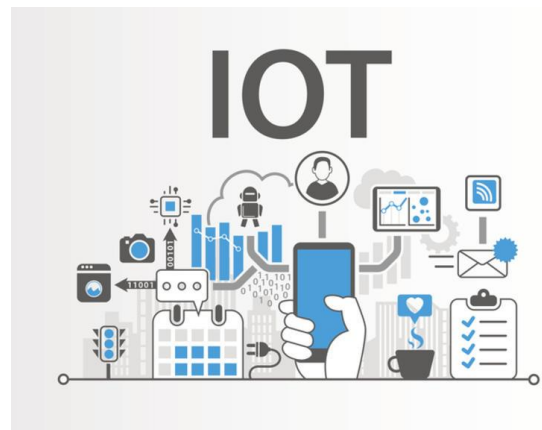
On this meet, India announced a grant assistance of USD 250 million to Nepal for the reconstruction of infrastructures in the areas of housing, education, health and cultural heritage, that was severely damaged during 2015 earthquake in the mountain nation.



### 21. Bangalore hosts 4th Internet of Things India Congress

With a focus on healthcare, manufacturing, telecom, smart cities, energy, retail, cyber security, skills and development, IoT Standards, legal and regulatory, and agriculture, the 4th Internet of Things India Congress would be held in Bangalore, from August 22<sup>nd</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2019.

In addition to the hackathons and speeches on latest developments in the IoT, a new event 'Future TechSpotlight' is included this time which will provide a glimpse of technology trends in the next 5 to 10 years.



## 22. Erode turmeric wins GI tag

Erode turmeric is a rhizome, both finger and bulb obtained from the Erode local cultivar. Quality parameters of the turmeric included 2.5 to 4.5% of curcumin content, a golden yellow colour and resistance to pests after boiling.

A **Geographical Indication** is a name or sign used on certain products that correspond to a specific geographical location or origin.

Erode is a city in the state of Tamilnadu, India.



## 23. Delhi Government Sets-Up Committee To Reform Higher Education

The Delhi government's Dialogue and Development Commission (DDC) set up a committee to "reform higher education" in the capital. The committee will recommend goals, metrics, policies, and actionable plans for reforming Delhi's higher education system within a year



Deputy Chief Minister and Education Minister Manish Sisodia said the "initiative furthers the commitment to transform the education system in the national capital".

## 24. Much 'liberal' visa agreement comes into effect in between India and Maldives

The Maldives and India exchanged diplomatic notes for implementing the visa facilitation agreement, which was signed during President Ibu Solih's visit in December 2018. The new agreement will be in place from March 11.

This has been a long term request from the side of Maldives. A liberalized visa regime was top priority for the Maldivian government, as thousands of nationals from the island nation travel to India for education and health reasons. Over the last few years, there were several complaints that India had asked many Maldivian nationals to leave the country because they had overstayed their visa.



## 25. Four Joint development projects inaugurated by India and Bangladesh

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Bangladesh counterpart Sheikh Hasina jointly inaugurated four projects, via video conferencing, in the areas of **transport, health and education**.

Speaking on this occasion, Modi said these projects showed that India-Bangladesh relations are playing a key role in improving the quality of life of the people. He also expressed confidence that bilateral relations between India and Bangladesh would continue to grow even further.



## 26. PINAKA Guided Weapons System Successfully Tested

Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) successfully test fired the PINAKA guided WEAPON rocket system from Pokhran range in Rajasthan.

The short range, guided Pinaka weapon system is equipped with a state-of-the-art guidance kit comprising an advanced navigation and control system.

According to the Defence Ministry, the weapon system impacted the intended targets with high precision and achieved desired accuracies in all the missions. Telemetry Systems tracked and monitored the vehicle through the flight path.



## 27. Dipa Karmakar Gets a Barbie Modelled After Her

Mattel, the toy manufacturing company behind Barbie, releases a Barbie that sports the iconic look the world remembers Dipa Karmakar for - becoming India's first female gymnast to qualify for the final of the vault event at the Olympics.

This is a part of the company's effort to increase the diversity of its Barbie and to respect women achievers across the globe.

Karmakar has won over 77 medals, including 67 gold ones at state, national and international levels. She also became India's first gymnast to win a gold medal at an international event - the FIG Artistic Gymnastics World Challenge Cup at Mersin, Turkey.



## 28. Rice Knowledge Bank launched under World-bank project

'Rice Knowledge Bank - Assam', an agriculture web portal dedicated to enhancing knowledge on rice production techniques and technologies, best production practices and state agriculture facts, was launched as part of the World Bank funded project- Assam Agri-business and Rural Transformation (APART).

According to an official communique the portal is the result of efforts of Assam Rural Infrastructure and Agricultural Services Society (ARIAS, Autonomous body of Govt of Assam); Assam Agricultural University (AAU); with technical assistance from International Rice Research Institute (IRRI).



## 29. Railways Minister announces new railway zone for Andhra Pradesh

Railways Minister Piyush Goyal announced a new railway zone for Andhra Pradesh. The new railway zone - - Southern Coast Railway -- will be headquartered in Visakhapatnam.

The new zone will comprise the existing Guntakal, Guntur and Vijayawada divisions that currently fall under the South Central Railway. The cost of creating infrastructure for a new zone is around Rs. 205 crore.



Currently, India has 18 zones and the 68 divisions. South Coast Railway zone is the newest zone in India.

The Northern Railways is the largest railway zone in India. It is the northernmost zone of the Indian Railways. Its headquarter is New Delhi Railway Station.

## 30. PM Modi launches 'One Nation, One Card' for transport mobility

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday launched the indigenously-developed National Common Mobility Card (NCMC) to enable people to pay multiple kinds of transport charges, including metro services and toll tax, across the country.

Dubbed as 'One Nation One Card', the inter-operable transport card would allow the holders to pay for their bus travel, toll taxes, parking charges, retail shopping and even withdraw money.

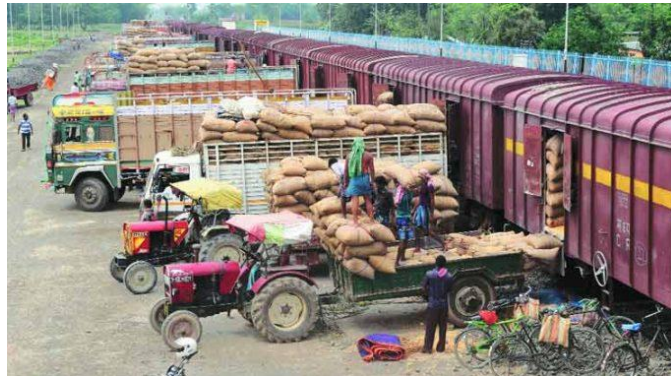


The Prime Minister launched the NCMC while inaugurating the first phase of the Ahmedabad metro train in Gujarat.



### 31. Government brings transport scheme to boost agriculture exports

The government on Tuesday introduced a scheme for providing financial assistance for transport and marketing of agriculture products with a view to boosting export of farm commodities to certain countries in Europe and North America. Under the Transport and Marketing Assistance (TMA) scheme, the government would reimburse a certain portion of freight charges and provide assistance for marketing of agricultural produce.



The scheme covers freight and marketing assistance for export by air as well as by sea (both normal and refrigerated cargo).

### 32. President presents Swachh Survekshan-2019 Awards

President Ram Nath Kovind on 06th of March presented Swachh Survekshan-2019 Awards in New Delhi. Indore bagged award for cleanest city for third straight year in Swachh Survekshan.



Top ranked cities received a statue of Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi as award for their work towards cleanliness. Swachh Survekshan 2019 covered all Urban Local Bodies in the country, making it the largest such cleanliness survey in the world.

### 33. Women officers in Indian army to get permanent career option in 10 branches

Women will be eligible for permanent careers in all 10 branches of the army where they have been inducted as short-service commissioned (SSC) officers.

Until now, women officers were allowed permanent commission (PC) only in two branches: Judge Advocate General (JAG) and Army Education Corps.

The government has taken various measures to open more avenues for women in the armed forces, beginning with inducting them in the Indian Air Force's fighter stream. That combat ban was lifted in October 2015.



### 34. 'Azaadi Ke Diwane: Museum on freedom struggle's unsung heroes opens in Red Fort

"Azaadi Ke Diwane", a museum paying homage to the unsung heroes of Indian freedom struggle, was inaugurated by Union Culture Minister Mahesh Sharma in the Red Fort complex.



The museum talks about the sacrifices of great freedom fighters. It pays tribute to the selfless sacrifices of revolutionaries, brave female freedom fighters and valiant children, the Ministry of Culture said.

This is fifth in the series of museums inaugurated since January in the Red Fort, after Subhash Chandra Bose and INA museum, Yaad-e-Jallian museum, museum on 1857 (India's first war of Independence) and Drishyakala, a museum on Indian art.

### 35. UK CM Rawat lays foundation stone for Doon-Mussoorie ropeway project

Uttarakhand Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat has laid the foundation stone for the Dehradun-Mussoorie ropeway project which is considered to be a tourist novelty.

The 300-crore rupees' ropeway project is expected to be completed in three years.



It will be one of the world's longest ropeways, and will shorten the one-hour zigzag drive to just 15 minutes from Purkul village the base camp at Dehradun to Mussoorie.

Poma, a French company which manufactures cable-driven projects, will provide the technical support to the ropeway which will be built on the PPP mode.

### 36. Ancient tribal language Gondi to be taught in tribal districts of MP

**In Madhya Pradesh, ancient tribal language Gondi will be taught in tribal districts.**

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath has decided to include Gondi in the primary education curriculum of the state's tribal-dominated districts.



The decision was taken keeping in the mind the rapid decline in the number of people who speak that tongue is a matter of concern.

**37. CCEA approves Rs 2,790 cr interest subvention on loans to sugar mills**

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) on Thursday approved Rs 2,790-crore interest subvention for extending loans by banks to sugar mills

The interest subvention is for extending loans of Rs 12,900 crore by banks to sugar mills under the scheme for extending financial assistance to sugar mills for enhancement and augmentation of ethanol production capacity.



**38. WCD signs MoU with Skill Development Ministry to provide skills training to women**

The Women and Child Development (WCD) Ministry and the Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Ministry entered into an agreement to provide skills training and employment to women.

The officials of the two ministries signed the agreement in the presence of WCD Minister Maneka Gandhi and Skill Development Minister Dharmendra Pradhan.



**39. Hardeep S Puri launches e-Dharti App**

Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Housing and Urban Affairs Hardeep S Puri has launched e-Dharti app, a new online system to provide the facility of online application submission in connection with conversion, substitution and mutation of properties under the jurisdiction of Land and Development Office (L&DO) for the citizens.



**e-Dharti** Geo Portal, another important application on which L&DO has started working, is GIS-based mapping of all its 65,000 properties. Through this application each and every government property under L&DO, whether it is allotted or still lying vacant, is proposed to be mapped on the portal.

#### 40. Lok Sabha Elections 2019: Polls to be held in 7 phases, starting April 11

iPolling for the upcoming Lok Sabha 2019 elections will begin from 11 April and end on 19 May. The polling will happen in seven phases and the counting will take place on 23 May, the Election Commission (EC) announced today. The model code of conduct (MCC) kicks in right away across the country and will be in effect till results are announced in May. The code is in place to ensure a level playing field for all the contesting candidates and political parties.



#### Schedule of Lok Sabha polls-

- Phase one - 11th April 2019,
- Phase two - 18th April 2019,
- Phase three - 23rd April 2019,
- Phase four - 29th April 2019,
- Phase five - 06th May 2019,
- Phase six - 12th May 2019,
- Phase seven - 19th May 2019.

#### 41. Supreme Court forms 3-member team to resolve Ayodhya dispute

The Supreme Court referred the politically sensitive Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid land dispute case for mediation by a panel headed by former apex court judge F M I Kallifulla and gave it eight weeks to complete the process.



The other members of the panel will be spiritual guru Sri Sri Ravishankar and senior advocate Sriram Panchu.

The bench, also comprising Justices S A Bobde, D Y Chandrachud, Ashok Bhushan and S A Nazeer, said the panel should file a progress report of the proceedings within four weeks and complete the process within eight weeks.

## 42. Insolvency And Bankruptcy Board Inks Cooperation Agreement With IFC

The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) has signed a Cooperation Agreement with the International Finance Corporation (IFC), a member of the World Bank Group (WBG).



The agreement will enable IFC to assist IBBI to further build the capacity of insolvency professionals, and insolvency professional agencies for the purposes of the Code.

The Cooperation Agreement envisages technical assistance up to June 30, 2021 by the IFC to IBBI and covers assistance in:

- Workshops and Training for Insolvency Professionals and Officers of the IBBI
- Train the Trainers for Workshops for Insolvency Professionals
- Development of National Insolvency Programme
- Insolvency and valuation examination.

## 43. 14th CII-EXIM Bank Conclave On India-Africa Project Partnerships Held In New Delhi

The 14<sup>th</sup> CII-EXIM Bank Conclave on India-Africa Project Partnerships concluded in New Delhi. The three-day conclave was organised by the Ministry of Commerce in association with Confederation of Indian Industry and EXIM Bank of India.



This conclave marked the pre-eminence of India-Africa partnership in the realm of South - South Cooperation at a time when the global economy is faced with intractable challenges that stem from rising protectionism and trade conflicts.

The India-Africa bilateral partnership is further augmented by India's ascendancy as the growing major economy, as well as Africa's new economic dynamism illustrated by some of the sub-Saharan economies featuring among the top 10 fastest growing economies in the world.

#### 44. Madhya Pradesh Government Increases Reservation Quota of OBCs to 27%

With General Election likely to be announced soon, the Congress government in Madhya Pradesh has taken the ordinance route to increase reservation for Other Backward Classes (OBCs) from 14 per cent to 27 per cent.



Chief Minister Kamal Nath had made an announcement to this effect on March 6 while handing over loan waiver certificates to farmers in Sagar.

Governor Anandiben Patel signed the ordinance to amend the Madhya Pradesh Lok Seva (Anusuchit Jatiyon, Anusuchit Jan Jatioyon aur Anya Pichhade Vargon ke Liye Arakshan) Adhiniyam, 1994.

#### 45. Kerala's Marayoor Jaggery wins Geographical Indication Tag

The Marayur jaggery has finally got the geographical indication (GI) tag, making it safe for consumption while rejuvenating the traditional way of production and ensuring a safe market in future.



It has been a long-term demand of farmers in Marayur and Kanthallur grama panchayats, where jaggery is produced without adding any chemicals. Though the Marayur jaggery has always been known for its high quality, fake jaggery with a salty taste was being marketed as Marayur jaggery.

#### 46. Textiles Minister Smriti Irani inaugurated Refurbished Handloom Haat in New Delhi

The refurbished Handloom Haat was inaugurated by Textiles Minister Smriti Irani at Janpath, New Delhi. The Haat aims to provide infrastructural support to handloom agencies so that they can enhance their sales of handloom products and provide a platform to display a wide variety of handloom products that are produced all over the country.



#### 47. Odisha government initiated "Mukhya Mantri Karigar Sahayata" for craftsmen

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik launched the scheme 'Mukhya Mantri Karigar Sahayata' for financial assistance to craftsmen. The nodal department of the scheme is the Directorate of handicrafts. Craftsmen with 10 years of experience and having annual income below Rs.1 lakh are eligible to get an assistance of Rs.800 per month.



Odisha Government

#### 48. Govt. working on a new scheme for unorganized food processing sector: Gram Samridhi Yojana

Gram Samridhi Yojana, a Rs 3,000 crore scheme funded by the World Bank and the Government of India, is being worked upon by the Ministry of Food Processing Industries in order to strengthen the unorganised food processing sector concentrated in rural areas. World Bank will be giving Rs 1,500 crore and Rs 1,000 crore will be borne by the Centre while state governments will put in Rs 500 crore.



# Science and Technology

## 1. Lancet Study on Tuberculosis

Lancet, a Medical Journal had conducted a study on Tuberculosis (TB) in three high-burden countries, including India. The following are the findings of the study:

India has too “ambitious” and “unrealistic” goals to end the epidemic by 2025 which are unattainable. By 2035, there will be 57% reduction in incidence and 72% reduction in mortality. TB incidence can be reduced by 38% by strengthening the care cascade.

Proper measures have to be adopted by India in proportion with the population levels to effectively eliminate the disease in the coming years.

India needs to diagnose and treat the drug-sensitive and drug-resistant TB.

Lives of eight million (28%) people with TB can be saved over the next 30 years if tests are subsidised and patients are supported to complete the treatment.

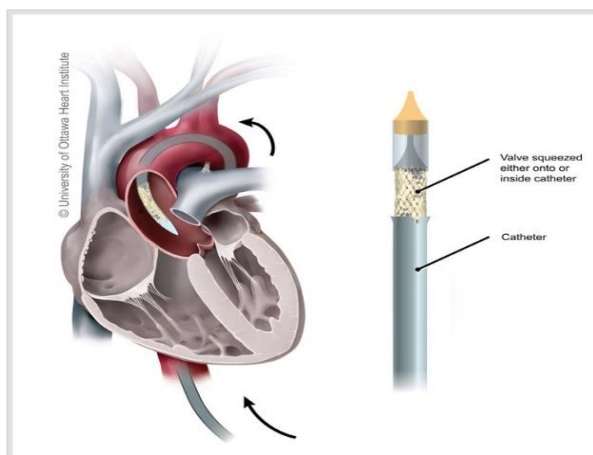
For this subsidised and complete care, India requires an extra \$290 million each year. This is significantly less than \$32 billion losses which India incurs associated with TB mortality each year.

India needs to scale up access to TB services for all those seeking them, optimize engagement of private sector providers and guarantee universal access to drug susceptibility testing and second-line TB drugs. Integration of TB services with the primary health system to reduce diagnostic delays is not happening.



## 2. Tamil Nadu Is The First State In The Country To Introduce Tavi

The country's first Transcatheter Aortic Valve Implantation (TAVI) has been introduced in Government sector by **Tamil Nadu** state. In November 18, it was launched at the **Tamil Nadu Government Multi Super Specialty Hospital (TNGMSSH)**, Omandurar Estate. A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between the Tamil Nadu State government and the HeartTeam India to perform the procedure for patients at the TNGMSSH. The procedure is performed for free in government sector whereas it costs **Rs.20 lakh to Rs.25 lakh** in the private sector.



Open heart surgery is replacing the **aortic valve** to treat aortic stenosis. Some patients like the elderly persons' health conditions do not permit to perform open heart surgery.



TAVI helps in this case where the valve is replaced **through a keyhole procedure** from the groin.

### 3. IRCTC Launched Its Own Digital Payment Gateway 'IRCTC iPay'

The Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC), with a view to promote Government's Digital India initiative, has launched its own payment aggregator system called "IRCTC iPay".

The new system will provide payment options like Credit Card, Debit card, Unified Payment Interface (UPI) and International card.



### 4. Signalchip Unveils India's First Indigenous 4G, LTE Semiconductor Chips

Semiconductor chips for 4G, LTE and 5G modems. Have been unveiled by Bengaluru-based Signalchip. These are first such chips developed in India.

SIGNALCHIP launched these four chips as part of its series code-named '**Agumbe**'. These chips also support positioning using India's own satellite navigation system, **NAVIC**.



### 5. ISRO Launches 'Yuva Vigyani Karyakram' For School Children

A young scientist programme, 'Yuva Vigyani Karyakram' has been started by Indian Space Research Organisation. This program has targeted the school children studying in the 9<sup>th</sup> standard.

'Catch Them Young' residential training programme will be of around two weeks' duration during summer holidays with a proposal to select 3 students from each State and Union Territory, covering CBSE, ICSE and State syllabus.



## 6. ISRO, French Space Agency Seal Agreement On Maritime Security

As an agreement, a joint maritime surveillance system has been signed between National space agency ISRO and its French counterpart CNES in May.

K. Sivan, Chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation, and Jean-Yves Le Gall, President of CNES of France, signed the agreement in Bengaluru.

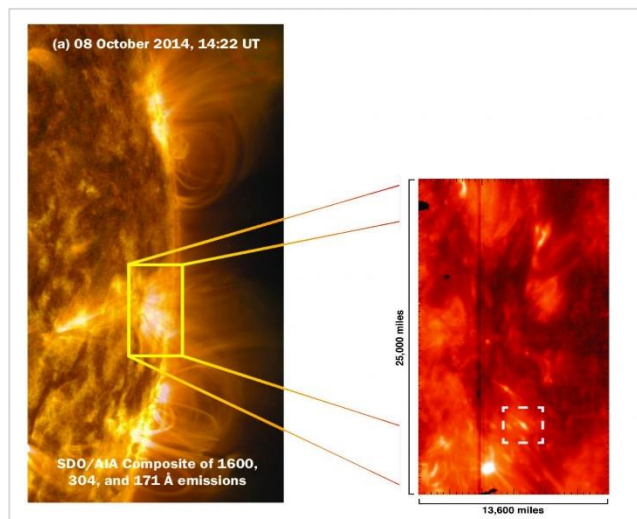


## 7. IIT (BHU) Scientist Discovered Tadpole-Like Jets On Sun

A tadpole-shaped jets emitting out from the regions with intense magnetic fields of the sun have been discovered by scientists led by IIT (BHU) researcher **Abhishek Srivastava**.

Formally called **pseudo-shocks**, the "tadpoles" are made entirely of plasma, which accounts for an estimated **99%** of the observable universe.

It explains why the Sun's upper atmosphere, **Corona** is over **200 times** hotter than its surface.

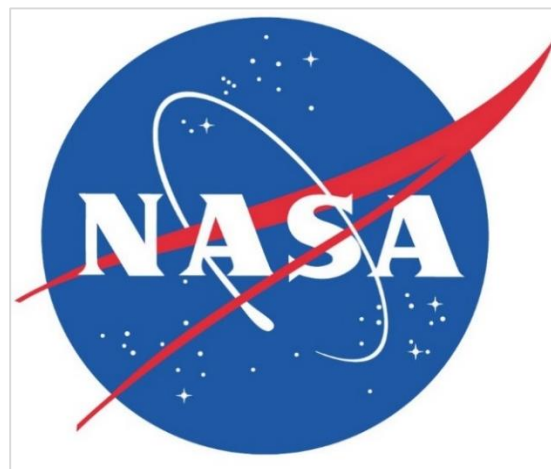


## 8. NASA Created Deep Ocean Conditions In Lab To Study Origins Of Life

NASA scientists have developed deep ocean conditions in the lab to re-create a life that could have formed on the sea floor four billion years ago.

The study focuses on how the building blocks of life form in **hydrothermal vents on the ocean floor**. It could offer clues to how life started on Earth. Hydrothermal vents are places on the seafloor where warm water from under the Earth's crust mixes with near-freezing seawater. These vents form natural chimneys, which play host to all kinds of ocean life.

The team at **NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL)** in California made their own miniature sea floors by filling beakers with mixtures that mimic Earth's primordial ocean.



## 9. SpaceX Successfully Launched A New Astronaut Capsule To ISS

To resume manned space flights from U.S. Soil, a key step has been taken by SpaceX after an eight-year break. On a ISS week-long round trip to the **International Space Station (ISS)**, **SpaceX** successfully launched a new astronaut capsule. The new capsule blasted off aboard the Falcon 9 rocket built by SpaceX from the **Kennedy Space Center, Florida**, lighting up the coastline.



In this trip, the only occupant on board **SpaceX's Crew Dragon capsule** was a dummy named **Ripley**. But NASA plans to put two astronauts aboard in July, although that date could be delayed.

## 10. Toyota and JAXA Partners On A Planned Mission To The Moon

**Toyota** to join hands with **Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA)**, **Japan's space agency**, on a **planned mission to the moon**, with the Japanese auto giant expected to develop a lunar rover. It will be the car manufacturer's first full-fledged entry into space exploration after the company jointly developed a **robot sent to the International Space Station**.

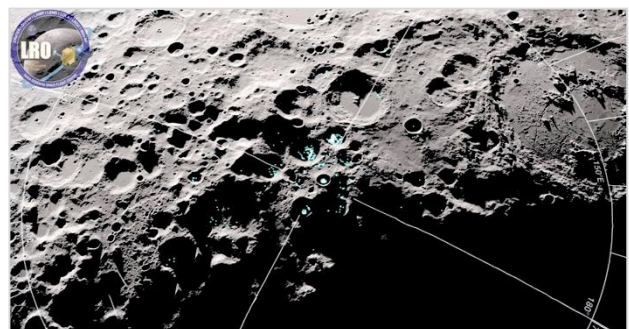


Toyota is expected to jointly develop a **mobility method** to be used on the lunar surface for the mission. So far, only **Russia, the United States, and China** have made the 3,84,000 km journey and landed spacecraft on the moon.

Last month, **Israel launched** a spacecraft that aims to join them. In 2017, Japan revealed plans to put an astronaut on the Moon around 2030. Before humans set foot on the lunar surface again, NASA aims to land an **unmanned vehicle on the moon by 2024**.

## 11. NASAs LRO spotted water molecules moving around the dayside of moon

**NASA** scientists have spotted **water molecules moving around the dayside** of the moon using NASA's **Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter (LRO)**. It helps to learn about the accessibility of water to humans in future missions.



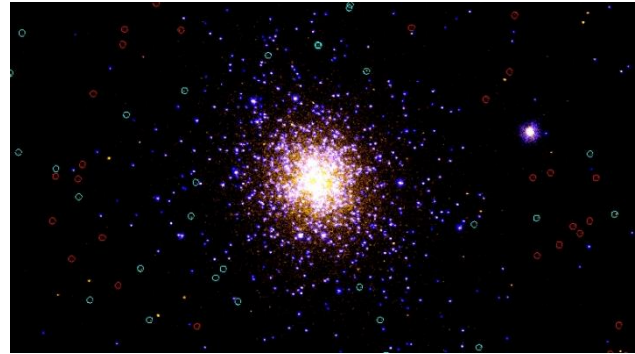
**Lyman Alpha Mapping Project (LAMP)** — the instrument aboard LRO — measured sparse layer of molecules temporarily stuck to the Moon's surface, which helped characterise lunar hydration changes over the course of a day.

Lunar water can potentially be used by humans to make fuel or to use for radiation shielding or thermal management. Water molecules remain tightly bound to the **regolith until surface temperatures** peak near lunar noon.

## 12. New Population Of Ultraviolet Stars Identified In The NGC 2808 Globular Cluster

Astronomers from Thiruvananthapuram and Mumbai have identified a new population of ultraviolet stars in the globular cluster NGC 2808 using the Indian multi-wavelength space observatory, AstroSat, launched in September 2015.

AstroSat is India's dedicated multi-wavelength space observatory which endeavours for a more detailed understanding of our universe. ASTROSAT observes the universe in the optical, Ultraviolet, low and high energy X-ray regions of the electromagnetic spectrum.



Globular clusters are collections of thousands to millions of stars, moving as one unit. NGC 2808 is one of the massive globular clusters and is located at a distance of 47,000 light years.

## 13. NASA to send women to Mars

NASA, the US Space agency, said that the first person to set foot on Mars is likely to be a woman. It is said that women are at the forefront of the U.S. space agency's upcoming plans.

NASA recently announced that it will have its first all-female spacewalk at the end of the month when astronauts Anne McClain and Christina Koch will get to float around in space.



NASA has the first all-female spacewalk at the end of March, which is, of course, National Women's Month. So NASA is committed to making sure that it has a diverse set of talent. It is also looking forward to the first woman on the Moon.

## 14. Increasing levels of Carbon dioxide and Wheat productivity

Scientists are worried over sustaining food production and productivity of major crops like wheat, paddy, and maize due to the increasing levels of carbon dioxide. Studies have shown that even though increased carbon dioxide levels stimulate wheat productivity, the consequent rise in temperatures would have a negative impact.



There has been optimism in tropical countries like Greenland, Canada, Northern China and Europe where annual temperatures are currently well below the optimum range for the growth of wheat and an increase in temperature would be beneficial to them with a possibility of a hike in wheat productivity. Whereas in tropical countries like India there is heightened concern as it is already hot enough and further rises in temperature could prove disastrous

### 15. Mission Shakti

Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that India has successfully test-fired an anti-satellite (A-SAT) missile by shooting down a live satellite. The project named as Mission Shakti was led by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) was aimed at strengthening India's overall security.



#### Key Facts about Mission Shakti

- DRDO-developed A-SAT system successfully destroyed a live satellite in the Low Earth Orbit.
- India is only the fourth country after the U.S., Russia and China to have the A-SAT technology.
- The PM Narendra Modi in his address has made clear that the intent of DRDO's "Mission Shakti" is to defend India's space assets and not to start an arms race in space.
- The indigenous development of the A-SAT technology will have many spin-offs that India can exploit for civilian commercial use.
- The test was carried out from the Dr A.P.J Abdul Kalam Island launch complex off the coast of Odisha by the DRDO
- Since the test was done in the lower atmosphere, whatever debris that is generated will decay and fall back onto the earth within weeks.

## 16. Facebook launches tools to boost Electoral Process

Social Media giant, Facebook has launched two new India-specific tools viz. "Candidate Connect" and "Share You Voted" to boost civic engagement on its platform during the Lok Sabha elections 2019 that commence in April. Both these tools will be made available in 12 local languages.

### Candidate Connect

Candidate Connect feature will provide contesting candidates to upload 20-second videos in which they can introduce themselves and highlight how they will address outstanding challenges in their constituencies if elected to office. It will also let them highlight their past achievements.



## 17. Google has launched global advisory council for AI and Tech Ethics

Google has constituted an eight-member Advanced Technology External Advisory Council that will examine the ethical challenges related to artificial intelligence (AI) and other emerging technologies.

The aim of the council is to provide recommendations for Google and other companies and researchers regarding the AI.



## 1. Deepak Singh Wins Gold At Makran Cup In Boxing

**Deepak Singh (49 kg)**, National Boxing champion, was the only Indian boxer who grabbed a **gold medal** at the Makran Cup in Boxing. **Five** others claimed **silver medals** in **Chabahar, Iran**. Deepak defeated Jaafar Naseri in the finals.

P. Lalitha Prasad (52 kg), Commonwealth Games silver-medallist Manish Kaushik (60 kg), Duryodhan Singh Negi (69 kg), Sanjeet (91 kg) and Commonwealth Games silver-medallist Satish Kumar (+91 kg) claimed silver medals.



## 2. Chris Gayle Becomes First Player To Smash 500 Sixes In International Cricket

**Chris Gayle, West Indies** opener became the **first ever batsman** to smash **500 or more sixes** in international cricket. In the 4<sup>th</sup> ODI against **England** in **Grenada**, Gayle scored 162 runs.

His innings contained a staggering **14 sixes** and powered the Windies to their highest-ever ODI score of **389**. Gayle also reached the **10,000-run milestone** in **ODIs** and became only the **second West Indian** after **Brian Lara (10,405 runs)** to achieve the milestone.



### 3. Roger Federer Claims 100<sup>th</sup> ATP Title Of His Career

**Roger Federer** has claimed the **100<sup>th</sup> ATP title** of his career after beating 20-year-old Greek Stefanos Tsitsipas in the final of the **Dubai Tennis Championships**. The **20-time grand slam champion** is the second man, after American **Jimmy Connors** to claim 100 titles.

Federer will have to win 10 more titles to beat Connors' men's record of **109**, while **Martina Navratilova** holds the all-time record having won **167** women's singles crowns during her career.



### 4. Finland Boxing Tournament: India Wins 1 Gold, 4 Silver

**Kavinder Singh Bisht** grabbed a Silver in **56 kg-category** struck gold while **Shiva Thapa** claimed a Silver in **60 kg category**. Three others claimed silver medals to end a fine Indian campaign at the **38<sup>th</sup> GeeBee Boxing Tournament in Helsinki, Finland**.



Bisht defeated Commonwealth Games bronze-medallist Hussamuddin in the 56 kg summit clash. Signing off with silver medals were three-time Asian medallists: Shiva Thapa, Govind Sahani, Commonwealth Games bronze-medallist: Mohammed Hussamuddin and Dinesh Dagar.

### 5. All England Open Badminton Championships 2019: Complete List of Winners

2019 All England Open, officially **YONEX All England Open Badminton Championships 2019** was a BWF World Tour 1000 event which took place at Arena Birmingham in England from 6 to 10 March 2019. It had a total purse of \$1,000,000.

**Here is the complete list of Winners of All England Open Badminton Championships 2019:**





Sl. No.	Event	Winner	Runner Up
1.	<b>Men's Singles</b>	Kento MOMOTA (Japan)	Viktor AXELSEN (Denmark)
2.	<b>Women's Singles</b>	CHEN Yufei (China)	Tai Tzu-ying (Taiwan)
3.	<b>Men's Doubles</b>	Mohammad Ahsan and Hendra Setiawan (Indonesia)	Aaron Chia and Soh Wooi Yik (Malaysia)
4.	<b>Women's Doubles</b>	Chen Qingchen and Jia Yifan (China)	Mayu Matsumoto and Wakana Nagahara (Japan)
5.	<b>Mixed Doubles</b>	Zheng Siwei and Huang Yaqiong (China )	Yuta Watanabe and Arisa Higashino (Japan)

## 6. Sailor Upamanyu Dutta Clinches Bronze In Asian Regatta

**In the Laser Asian Sailing Championship, Mumbai sailor Upamanyu Dutta** bagged the **bronze medal in the Laser Standard Race for Men** which concluded in **Singapore**.

The young sailor gained **India's first ever medal in the competitive single-handed Laser Standard category**. **Nethra Kumanan of Chennai** achieved a creditable 4<sup>th</sup> position in the Laser Radial event for women.



## 7. Special Olympics World Games 2019 in The UAE Makes History

**Special Olympics World Games 2019 held from March 14 to March 21 in the UAE** has made history by welcoming a **record-breaking 200 nations ahead of the Games**. Of the 200 nations, 195 will compete in the Games and five will observe.

It is **being held in West Asia for the first time**. 7,500 athletes will take part in 24 Olympic-style sports over seven days.



## 8. Supreme Court Appoints PS Narasimha As Mediator To Resolve Disputes Within BCCI

The Supreme Court appointed senior advocate PS Narasimha as a mediator for resolving various disputes related to cricket administration within the cricket body, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI).

Narasimha will hear the BCCI's position, and then make recommendations to the Committee of Administrators (CoA).



## 9. India To Host U-17 Women's Football World Cup In 2020

India will host the Under-17 Women's Football World Cup in 2020. This was announced by the President of International Football Federation (FIFA) Gianni Infantino after the council meeting in Miami, USA.

This will be the second FIFA tournament India will be hosting, after the U-17 Men's World Cup in **2017**.



## 10. JP Duminy To Retire From ODIs After World Cup 2019

**South African** all-rounder **JP Duminy** announced that he would retire from ODIs after the **ICC World Cup** in **England**. Duminy will, however, continue to be available for South Africa in T20 Internationals.

Duminy, who announced his retirement from Test and first-class cricket in **2017**, stated that 'the time is right' to close this chapter of his international career.



## 11. 18-yr-old Diksha 2<sup>nd</sup> Indian Golfer To Win Ladies European Tour

**18-year-old Diksha Dagar** has become the second Indian to win an event on **Ladies European Tour** after clinching **South African Women's Open** in Cape Town.

**Aditi Ashok** was the first Indian to win on the Ladies European Tour after clinching Hero Women's Indian Open in Gurugram in **2016**.



## 12. 2019 Swiss Open Championship Concludes: Complete List of Winners

The **2019 Swiss Open**, officially the **YONEX Swiss Open 2019**, was a badminton tournament which took place at St. Jakobshalle in Basel, Switzerland and had a total purse of \$150,000.



**Here is the complete list of Winners of 2019 Swiss Open Badminton Championships:**

Sl. No.	Event	Winner	Runner Up
1.	Men's Singles	Shi Yuki (China)	B Sai Praneet (India)
2.	Women's Singles	Chen Yufei (China)	Saena Kawakami (Japan)
3.	Men's Doubles	Fajar ALFIAN and Muhammad Rian ARDIANTO (Indonesia)	LEE Yang and WANG Chi-Lin (Taiwan)
4.	Women's Doubles	CHANG Ye Na and JUNG Kyung Eun (South Korea)	Nami MATSUYAMA and Chiharu SHIDA (Japan)
5.	Mixed Doubles	Mathias BAY-SMIDT and Rikke SOBY (Denmark)	Rinov RIVALDY and Pitha Haningtya MENTARI (Indonesia)

### 13. Bottas Wins Australian F1 Grand Prix 2019

**Mercedes' Valtteri Bottas** beat his **world champion teammate Lewis Hamilton** to clinch the **season-opening Australian Formula One Grand Prix**.

Hamilton finished the race in the second spot, while Red Bull's Max Verstappen finished third.



### 14. Asian Youth Championship 2019 Concludes: India Finishes 2<sup>nd</sup>, China Tops

In Asian Youth Athletics Championships in Hong Kong, boys medley relay team won a gold medal for India on the final day to help Indian youth team finish second in the overall medals tally with a total of 26 medals including 8 gold, 9 silver and 9 bronze medals.

China topped the overall medals tally with 31 medals that included 12 gold, 11 silver and eight bronze medals and Japan finished third with 20 medals that included 6 Gold, 8 Silver and 6 bronze.



HONG KONG 2019  
ASIAN U18  
ATHLETICS  
CHAMPIONSHIPS



### 15. Bengaluru FC Crowned ISL Champions For the 1<sup>st</sup> Time

**Bengaluru FC** clinched their maiden **Indian Super League title** as **Rahul Bheke** found a championship-winning header in the dying minutes of the **final against FC Goa**, in Mumbai.

The two teams were locked 0-0 after 90 minutes. Even the first extra time saw no goals but Bengaluru got better of a 10-men Goan team 1-0, four minutes from the end of the second extra half.



## 16. Special Olympics Games 2019 Concludes: India Bags 368 Medals

India returned with 368 medals (85 gold, 154 Silver, and 129 Bronze) at the Special Olympics World Summer Games, held at Abu Dhabi, UAE. Indian powerlifters bagged the maximum number of medals: 20 gold, 33 silver and 43 bronze. Roller Skating earned India 49 medals: 13 gold, 20 silver and 16 bronze. In cycling, the Indians won 45 medals: 11 gold, 14 silver and 20 bronze.



## 17. India Clinches SAFF Women's Championship For 5<sup>th</sup> Time

India has lifted South Asian Football Federation (SAFF) Women's Championship 5<sup>th</sup> time in a row. Keeping its winning streak, India defeated the host Nepal in the final by 3-1 in Biratnagar, Nepal.

India's Dalmia Chhibber scored 1<sup>st</sup> goal of the match in 26<sup>th</sup> minute. India's Indumathi Kathiresan and Sabitra Tamang of Nepal remained top scorers of the tournament.



## 18. Neeraj Chopra to lead Indian athletics team in Asian Championships

Star javelin thrower, Neeraj Chopra was named to lead a 39-member Indian athletics team for next month's Asian Championships in Doha, with sprint sensation Hima Das also making the cut in 400m despite her recent below-par show.

National record holders, Mohd Anas (400m), Jinson Johnson (800m and 1500m), Dharun Ayyasamy (400m hurdles), Avinash Sable (3000m steeplechase), Tajinder Pal Singh Toor (shot put) and Annu Rani (javelin throw) and Dutte Chand (200m) were also among those named in the team.



### 19. Paralympics high jumper Girish Gowda named as Ambassador of Karnataka LS Elections

Silver Medalist in Paralympic high jump, Girish Gowda has been appointed as the Ambassador of Karnataka Lok Sabha Elections 2019.

He represented India in men's high jump F-42 category during 2012 Summer Paralympics games held in London, where he clinched the silver medal.

With this, he became the first Indian to win medal in this category.



### 20. Suresh Raina becomes first cricketer to score 5,000 runs in IPL history

Chennai Super Kings' Suresh Raina has become the first ever cricketer to reach 5,000 runs in Indian Premier League (IPL).

He reached the landmark in the opening match of the 12<sup>th</sup> edition of the IPL against RCB (Royal Challengers Bangalore).

RCB captain Virat Kohli is the second highest run-scorer in IPL, with 4,954 runs in 156 IPL innings.



### 21. Veselin Matic Set To Be India's Basketball Coach

**Veselin Matic**, who took **Iran** to an **Asian Games bronze medal** in **2010**, is set to be appointed as the new head coach of the Indian men's **basketball** team.

The Serbian's name had been cleared by the sports ministry. A veteran international coach, Matic helped Iran qualify for its first ever World Championship (2010) with victory in the **2009 FIBA Asia Championship**.



# Reports

## 1. PNB Ranks 1<sup>st</sup> In Implementation Of 'Reforms Agenda'

According to **BCG-IBA Report - EASE Reforms for Public Sector Banks**, released by Union Minister of Finance & Corporate Affairs, **Punjab National Bank (PNB)** secured the **top spot** among all public sector banks in the implementation of '**Reforms agenda**'.

PNB which topped the list with a score of **78.4** out of 100 in the EASE-index was followed by **BoB (77.8)**, **SBI (74.6)**, and **Oriental Bank of Commerce (69)**.



## 2. Assam's Hailakandi Became The Top Aspirational District

According to the **Delta ranking report** released by **NITI Aayog**, Assam's **Hailakandi** has become the top aspirational district among the **112 aspirational districts** of the country.

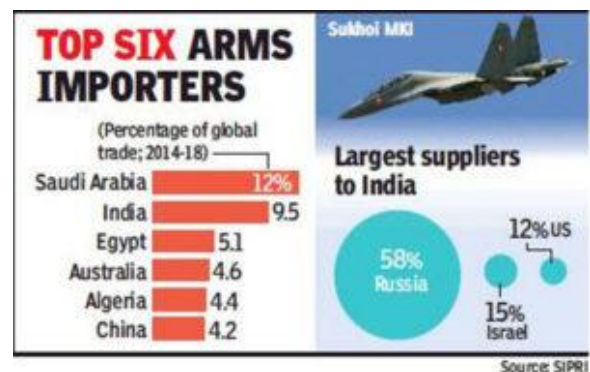
Hailakandi in Assam has made a giant leap from **52<sup>nd</sup> position** to **1<sup>st</sup>** position on the basis of its performance during November-December 2018 and January 2019. For securing the first rank as an aspirational district, Hailakandi will be given an allocation of **Rs. 10 crore**.



## 3. India Now 2<sup>nd</sup> Largest Arms Importer In The World; Saudi On Top: SIPRI Report

India is the second largest importer of weapons in the world, as per the annual report 'Trends in International Arms Transfers-2018' released by the think tank Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). *Saudi Arabia is now the world's largest weapons importer.*

After maintaining its position of world's largest arms importer for about 8 years, India dropped down to be the second largest importer of weapons during 2014-18. India accounted for 9.5% of the global total imports during 2014-18, while Saudi Arabia accounted for 12% of the total imports during that period.



#### 4. India Ranks 11<sup>th</sup> In Gold Holding: WGC Report

**India**, which is the **world's largest consumer** of gold, has the **11<sup>th</sup> largest gold reserve**, with the current holding pegged at **607 tonnes**, as per the latest report by the **World Gold Council (WGC)**.

India's overall position in terms of total gold holding would have been **tenth** had the list included only countries. The top spot is occupied by the **US** with gold reserves of **8,133.5 tonnes**, followed by **Germany** with **3,369.7 tonnes**.

Gold cache		
Rank	Possessor	Tonnes
1	U.S.	8,133.5
2	Germany	3,369.7
3	IMF	2,814.0
4	Italy	2,451.8
5	France	2,436.0
6	Russia	2,119.2
7	Mainland China	1,864.3
8	Switzerland	1,040.0
9	Japan	765.2
10	Netherlands	612.5
11	India	607.0

#### 5. India Ranks 16<sup>th</sup> In Terms Of Highest Number Of Impacted Species In Hotspots

A recent study published in **PLOS Biology** found that human impacts on species occur across **84%** of the earth's surface and India ranks **16<sup>th</sup>** in such impacts, with **35 species** impacted on an average. **Malaysia** ranks **1<sup>st</sup>** among the countries with the highest number of impacted species (**125**).

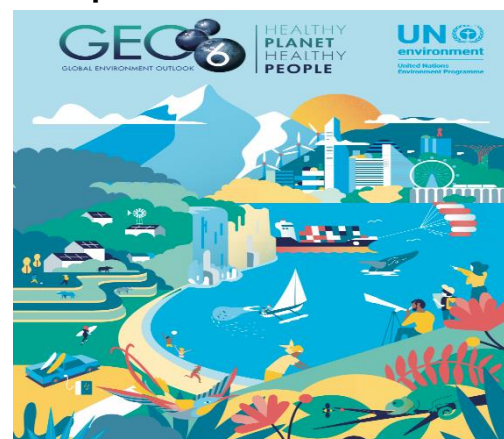


Southeast Asian tropical forests, including those in India's Western Ghats, Himalaya, and north-east, are among the '**hotspots**' of threatened species.

#### 6. UN Releases Global Environment Outlook 2019 Report

The United Nation Environment Program (UNEP) has released the sixth edition of the Global Environment Outlook (2019) titled, 'Healthy Planet, Healthy People'.

The report calls on the decision makers to take immediate action to address pressing environmental issues to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals as well as other internationally agreed environment goals, such as the Paris Agreement.





## 7. Vienna Topped The Mercer's Quality Of Living Survey 2019

The human resource consulting firm, **Mercer's Annual Quality of Living Survey 2019** has placed Austria's capital city **Vienna** at the number 1 spot, making it the **10<sup>th</sup> year** in a row. The cities outside Europe which topped the list are: Vancouver, Canada, and Auckland, New Zealand.

The Economist Intelligence Unit had also given Vienna the top spot in its ranking of the world's **most liveable cities in 2018**. Hyderabad and Pune, at a rank of **143**, continue to be the most liveable cities in **India** for expatriates.



## 8. Mukesh Ambani Tops Forbes' List of World's Richest Sports Team Owners

Reliance Industries CMD, Mukesh Ambani leads Forbes' list of richest sports team owners with a net worth of around \$50 billion. Ambani purchased the IPL team Mumbai Indians through a RIL subsidiary in 2008 for just over \$100 million.

Steve Ballmer (Net worth: \$41.2 billion), the American Businessman and Dietrich Mateschitz (Net worth: \$18.9 billion) were at 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> positions, respectively.



## 9. Tata, Reliance And Airtel Emerge Best Indian Brands Of 2019

**Tata, Reliance, and Airtel** emerged as the top three Indian brands of 2019, according to a report published by Interbrand, part of the Omnicom Media Group.

**Tata** continued to hold the **top** position in the best Indian Brands ranking as its brand value grew by 6%, mainly due to Tata Consultancy Services (TCS). Knocking Airtel off from the 2<sup>nd</sup> spot, **Reliance's** brand value grew by 12%, bolstered by the success of Jio. **Airtel** stood at number 3.



## 10. World Happiness Report Released, India Ranks 140<sup>th</sup>

The World Happiness Report was released by the Sustainable Development Solutions Network for the United Nations on March 20, the International Day of Happiness. India is ranked 140 out of 156 nations. India shows a 7 spot decline this year.



For the second consecutive year, **Finland** topped the list. **Denmark** ranked second followed by **Norway**. **Pakistan** ranked **67<sup>th</sup>**, Bhutan 95<sup>th</sup>, China 93<sup>rd</sup>, Bangladesh 125<sup>th</sup>, and Sri Lanka 130<sup>th</sup> while **South Sudan** ranked last in the World Happiness Report.

### 11. 7 Indians Marked In “World’s 100 Most Influential People in Climate Policy for 2019”

The “100 Most Influential People in Climate Policy” list is comprised of seven Indian names including Union Ministers Piyush Goyal and Dr. Harsh Vardhan, who took important measures to combat climate change.



The list is prepared by Apolitical, a peer to peer learning platform for governments. The list has been topped by Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (Congresswoman, US Congress).

The other 5 names from India are:

1. Mukta Tilak: Mayor of Pune.
2. Jyoti Kirit Parikh: Executive Director of Integrated Research and Action for Development.
3. Sunita Narain: Director of the Centre for Science and the Environment.
4. Vandana Shiva: Founder of the Research Foundation for Science, Technology, and Natural Resource Policy.
5. Upendra Tripathy: Director General of the International Solar Alliance.

## 12. Skytrax World Airport Awards: Singapore's Changi Tops, India's IGI Ranks 59<sup>th</sup>

Singapore's Changi Airport has been crowned the world's best aviation hub for the seventh time in a row, while **New Delhi's Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport featured at number 59**, according to the Skytrax World Airport Awards.

The list has been compiled by the UK-based Skytrax, a consultancy firm which runs an airline and airport review and ranking site, featuring 100 airports. New Delhi's Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport is India's Best Airport.



# Resignations

## 1. Naresh Goyal Steps Down As Jet Airways Chairman

Naresh Goyal, the Founder Chairman of Jet Airways, India's oldest private sector airline has stepped down from the airline's board along with his wife, Anite Goyal.

Lenders to Jet have taken over the company's management and board. The lenders will shortly initiate an auction process to find a new strategic investor for the company.

A person close to the development said lenders will now own slightly more than half of Jet, while Goyal's shareholding will reduce to half of his earlier holding of 50.1%. The airline's lenders led by the State Bank of India will further infuse Rs. 1,500 crore into the company via debt instruments "against security of its assets", Jet said in a statement to the Bombay Stock Exchange.



## 2. Kummanam Rajasekharan Resigns As Mizoram Governor

Kummanam Rajasekharan stepped down from his post. Governor of Assam, Prof. Jagdish Mukhi, has been given temporary charge of the Aizawl Raj Bhavan.

Mr. Rajasekharan, who was former State president of the BJP in Kerala, sworn in as Governor of Mizoram in May 2018.



## 3. Rahul Bajaj Resigns As Chairman Of Bajaj Finserv

Rahul Bajaj will step down as Chairman and Non-Executive Director of Financial services company 'Bajaj Finserv' on May 16.

However, he will continue to serve the company as Chairman Emeritus.

The 80-year-old has been at the helm of Bajaj Finserv since its inception in 2007 and the Bajaj Group for around five decades.



#### **4. Kazakhstan's First And Only President, Nursultan Nazarbayev Resigns After 29 Years In Power**

Nursultan Nazarbayev, Kazakhstan's first and only President, announced his resignation on March 19 after 29 years in power.

He has been Kazakhstan's President since 1990 and was formally elected in 1991 after the fall of the Soviet Union. He received 98% of the votes.

Nazarbayev would continue to chair the Security Council and remain the leader of the Nur Otan party.

Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, speaker of the Upper House of Parliament, will take over as the country's acting president for the remainder of his term in line with the constitution.



#### **5. AIBA President Gafur Rahimov Resigns**

The Amateur International Boxing Federation (AIBA) President Gafur Rahimov announced his resignation. He cited that political based discussions were harming the organizations progress. Rahimov will be replaced by an interim president.

Rahimov was elected in November 2018 despite being on the U.S. Treasury Department's sanctions list "for providing material support" to a criminal organization.



# Persons in News

## 1. Kylie Jenner Named Youngest Self-Made Billionaire Of All Time By Forbes Magazine

Jenner, 21, made it onto the annual Forbes list of billionaires after debuting her Kylie Cosmetics online in 2015 with \$29 lip kits containing matching lipsticks and lip liners.

According to Forbes list, she was both the world's youngest billionaire and also the youngest self-made billionaire ever.

The richest person in the world remained Amazon.com Inc Chief Executive Officer Jeff Bezos, whose net worth increased to \$131 billion from \$112 billion in 2018, according to Forbes.



## 2. IAF pilot Abhinandan Varthaman Returned To India 2 Days After Being Captured By Pakistan

Indian Air Force (IAF) pilot Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman was captured by Pakistani military on 27 February after his MiG-21 jet was shot down in PoK (Pakistan occupied Kashmir).

After the pilot's release, the Pakistan Foreign Office described him as a Prisoner of War.

Tensions between India and Pakistan flared up when 40 CRPF personnel were killed and many injured on February 14 in one of the deadliest terror attacks in Pulwama district.

Indian Air Force carried out a counter-terror operation in Balakot, deep inside Pakistan on February 26 and destroyed major camp of Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), which itself claimed responsibility for the Pulwama massacre.

Varthaman was in one of the eight MiG-21s that took on the invader and shot down Pakistan's F-16.

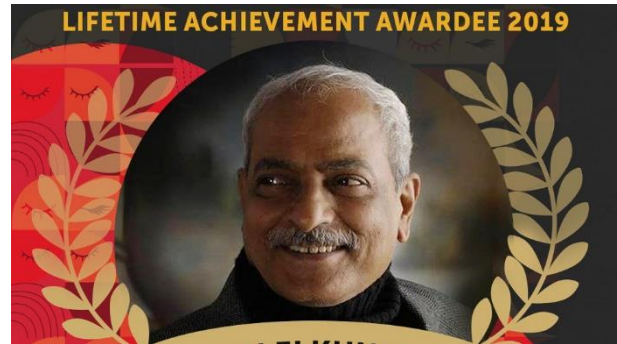


## 3. Mahesh Elkunchwar Is To Receive META Lifetime Achievement Award

Mahesh Elkunchwar, an eminent Indian playwright, has been chosen for Mahindra Excellence in Theatre Awards (META) Lifetime Achievement Award 2019. The award would be conferred on March 12 during the Mahindra Theater Festival.

Mahesh Elkunchwar is regarded as one of the progressive playwrights of the country and is critically-acclaimed and widely-known for having experimented with a wide range of

drama and is considered a powerful force in both Indian and Marathi theatre scene. He has over 30 plays and essays to his credit including works like 'Sultan', 'Holi', 'Garbo', 'Yatanaghar', and 'Atmakatha'.



#### 4. Ajay Narayan Jha became Member of the 15<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission

Shri Ajay Narayan Jha joined the 15<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission as its Member in place of Shri Shaktikanta Das resigned as a Member of the Commission after being appointed as Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

A 1982 batch IAS officer of Manipur cadre, he was the Finance Secretary to the Government of India and served as Secretary to the 14<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission, headed by former RBI Governor, Shri Y. V. Reddy.



The 15<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission was constituted by a Presidential Order in November 2017 under the Chairmanship of Shri N. K. Singh to decide the formula for devolution of revenue between Centre and States.

#### 5. Sanath Jayasuriya Banned For 2 Years After ICC Anti-Corruption Probe

The former **Sri Lanka** captain **Sanath Jayasuriya** has been banned for **two years** from all cricket-related activity by the ICC's anti-corruption unit.

He was punished for refusing to co-operate with investigations concerning corruption in the country.

Jayasuriya played 110 Tests, 445 one-day internationals and 31 Twenty20s for Sri Lanka and was also a former captain during his illustrious career between 1989-2011.

He is also a former member of Sri Lanka's **parliament** and a former **deputy minister**.



#### 6. Shashank Shekhar claimed 10 km Nepals (COAS) Marathon and Run for Fun

Shashank Shekhar won the 10-kilometre race of Nepal's Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Open Marathon and Run for Fun which was held in Nepal's Capital- Kathmandu.

This event is an annual event organized by the Nepal Army.



## 7. AIAA awarded Dr. G. Satheesh Reddy the Missile Systems Award

The American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) awarded Dr. G. Satheesh Reddy, the Secretary of India's Department of Defence, R&D and Chairman of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Rondell J. Wilson, a former Principal Engineering Fellow of Raytheon Missile Systems, the 2019 Missile Systems Award.

Dr. G. Satheesh Reddy is the first person outside the U.S. to be awarded this prestigious award in nearly four decades. He won the award for his role in the design and development of diversified strategic and tactical missile systems.



## 8. Bernard Arnault Overtakes Warren Buffett As World's Third-Richest Person

On the Bloomberg Billionaires Index, French luxury goods tycoon Bernard Arnault has overtaken Berkshire Hathaway Chairman Warren Buffett as the world's third-richest person.

Arnault is now worth \$83.1 billion, while Warren Buffett has a net worth of \$83 billion.

The following is the list of top 5 Billionaires by the Bloomberg Billionaire Index 2019:

1. Jeff Bezos \$140 billion
2. Bill Gates \$98.3 billion
3. Bernard Arnault \$83.1 billion
4. Warren Buffett \$83 billion
5. Amancio Ortega \$67.9 billion





## 9. Japanese Woman Honoured By Guinness World Records

A 116-year-old Japanese woman who loves playing the board game Othello is being honored as the world's oldest living person by Guinness World Records.

Kane Tanaka was born on January 2, 1903, the seventh among eight children. The previous oldest living person was another Japanese woman, Chiyo Miyako, who died in July at age 117.



## 10. Yomif Kejelcha Sets World Indoor Mile Record With A Time Of 3 min 47.01 sec

Ethiopia's Yomif Kejelcha smashed the world indoor mile record with a time of 3 min 47.01 sec at the Bruce Lehane Invitational in Boston. The 21-year-old broke a record of a mark of 3:48.45 set by Morocco's Hicham El Gerrouj on February 12, 1997.

It was third time for Kejelcha, who narrowly missed out on breaking world indoor records in his two previous races. He finished just 0.01 sec outside the world indoor mile record at the Millrose Games with a time of 3:48.46, and was then beaten to the world indoor 1,500m record in Birmingham one week later when compatriot Samuel Tefera won in 3:31.04.



# Regional

## 1. Mizoram passes Bill to Detect Illegal Foreigners

The Mizoram Assembly has unanimously passed The Mizoram Maintenance of Household Registers Bill, 2019 that seeks to detect foreigners illegally residing in the north-eastern state of Mizoram.

**The Features of the Bill are given below:**



- The bill aims to provide credible individual identification system and to prevent “usurpation” of benefits of developmental schemes by those who are not entitled and also provides for a comprehensive database of residents to be maintained.
- The bill defines citizens as a person registered as such or having requisite qualification as prescribed under the Citizenship Act, 1955.
- The bill aims to address the challenge wherein the benefits of development are found to have been eaten away to a large extent by foreigners who “clandestinely” stay back and get assimilated with the people of the State by taking advantage of the mistaken identity and of the difficulties in detecting them.
- The bill empowers President of the village council, town committee as the registering authority. They are required to maintain two registers, one will list the residents in the area and another non-residents. The register will be updated every three months.
- An offence committed under this act, a citizen may be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to one year or with fine of Rs. 3000 for willfully making a false statement or destroy the whole or any part of the form.
- The Bill seeks to detect foreigners illegally residing in the State of Mizoram which shares over 700-km-long border with Bangladesh and Myanmar.

## 2. Cloud Seeding in Karnataka for Two Monsoon Seasons

Reeling under drought, the government of Karnataka is planning for cloud seeding project to influence the upcoming monsoon and capture as much water as possible from the rain clouds. The government of Karnataka has called the tenders for cloud seeding operations to enhance rainfall during the monsoons of 2019 and 2020. The cost is expected to be Rs 50 cr per year.



### 3. Geographical Indication Tag: Arecanut gets its first GI tag for 'Sirsi Supari'

Arecanut, known as supari or betel nut, made its entry in the list of agricultural produce for the first time with the Geographical Indication (GI) tag for 'Sirsi Supari'.

The GI tag was accorded by the Registrar of Geographical Indications in the first week of March 2019.

Sirsi-based agri cooperative, Totagars' Cooperative Sale Society (TSS) Ltd is the registered proprietor of the Sirsi Supari. The cooperative began the process of obtaining a GI tag for Sirsi Supari in 2013.



### 4. States' Budget 2019: Meghalaya CM Conrad Sangma presents Tax-Free Deficit Budget for 2019-20

Finance Minister Piyush Goyal on February 1, 2019 presented the Union Interim Budget 2019-20, an estimate of revenues and expenditure of the Government during a financial year 2018-19. On the similar lines, various state governments have begun presenting the budget of their respective states.



#### The highlights of the budget are:

- Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma, who also holds the finance portfolio of the state, presented the budget 2019-20 on March 12, 2019.
- The Meghalaya budget 2019-20 has a fiscal deficit of Rs. 1323 crore, which is around 3.65 percent of the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP).

- The total expenditure, excluding repayment of loans, was estimated at Rs. 15786 crore, leaving a deficit of 1323 crore rupees.
- It is estimated that tax revenue collection of Rs. 2090 crore and non-tax revenue collection Rs. 601 crore would be generated.
- The revenue collected by the taxation department is expected to touch Rs 1478 crore by the end of year, thus registering a growth rate of 15 percent.
- The overall tax revenue including Goods and Services Tax (GST), Excise and Motor Vehicle Taxes is estimated at Rs. 1716 crore for 2018-19.
- The advance estimates indicate that the GSDP for 2018-19 is expected to be Rs 32972 crore, an increase of 10.41 percent over 2017-18.
- It included setting up of 11 Ekalavya Model Residential Schools in the state.
- An allocation of Rs. 1077 crore was made for the education sector for 2019-20, marking a 17 percent increase from 2018-19.
- To improve the health scenario in the state, the Budget proposed a development outlay of Rs. 740 crore for 2019-20, an increase of 21 percent over the previous year.
- It proposed an allocation of Rs. 590 crore for the roads and bridges sector.
- It proposed an outlay of Rs. 1045 crore for MGNREGS in 2019-20.

### 5. C Lalsawta Sworn In As Mizoram's First Lokayukta Chairman

Retired IAS officer C Lalsawta was on March 11, 2019 sworn-in as the first Chairman of the newly-constituted Lokayukta in Mizoram. He was administered the oath of office and secrecy by the newly appointed Mizoram governor Jagdish Mukhi in a swearing-in ceremony held at Raj Bhavan in Aizawl.



Chief Minister Zoramthanga and other ministers including Mizoram Assembly Speaker Lalrinliana Sailo, legislators and senior officials were present for the occasion. The function was presided over by state Chief Secretary Lalnunmawia Chuaungo, who is the younger brother of the new Lokayukta chairman.

## 6. Assam NRC: SC tells Election Commission To Address Discrepancies In Voters' List By March 28

The Supreme Court on March 12, 2019 asked the Election Commission of India (ECI) to form a plan of action to address the discrepancies in voters' list by March 28, 2019 in case a person's name is there in the voters' list of Assam but missing from the National Register of Citizens (NRC).



The Bench comprising Chief Justice of India (CJI) Ranjan Gogoi, Justice SA Nazeer and Justice Sanjeev Khanna asked the Election Commission to provide the court with complete information on the latest additions and deletions in the voters' list by March 28.

The Assam NRC is scheduled to be published on July 31, 2019.

## 7. MP Government Increases Reservation Quota Of OBCs To 27%

The Madhya Pradesh government on March 9, 2019 issued an ordinance increasing reservation quota for the Other Backward Classes (OBC) to 27% from the current 14%. The announcement was made by the state's Law and Legal Affairs Minister PC Sharma.



The ordinance was issued and notified after it received the assent from the state's Governor Anandiben Patel on the same day. The move was made to ensure that the ordinance could be issued before the Election Commission's model code of conduct for the 2019 Lok Sabha polls came into effect.

With the issuance of the ordinance, Madhya Pradesh has become the only state in the country to have 27 per cent quota for OBCs.

## 8. Geographical Indication Tag: Idukki's Marayoor Jaggery gets GI tag

The Marayoor Jaggery, the traditional and handmade product from Idukki district of Kerala, on March 8, 2019 received the Geographical Indication (GI) tag from the Central Government. The Marayoor jaggery finally managed to get the GI Tag after two years of continuous efforts by the Agricultural Department of the state.



The GI tag will provide more windows of opportunity to the traditional sugarcane farmers in Marayoor.

## 9. Uttarakhand Disaster Recovery Project: India, World Bank sign USD 96 Million Loan For Financing Project

A tripartite loan agreement was signed between the Central Government, Uttarakhand Government and the World Bank for additional financial assistance of USD 96 million for the Uttarakhand Disaster Recovery Project.



The loan agreement would provide additional funds to Uttarakhand in its post-disaster recovery plans, ongoing since the floods of 2013. The agreement would also strengthen the capacity of the state for Disaster Risk Management.

The Loan Agreement was signed by Sameer Kumar Khare, Additional Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, Union Ministry of Finance; Amit Negi, Program Director of Uttarakhand Disaster Recovery Project; and Hisham Abdo, Acting Country Director of World Bank India.

## 10. PM-SYM: PM Modi Launches Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-Dhan Yojana from Gujarat

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on March 5, 2019 launched the Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-dhan Yojana (PM-SYM), a mega pension scheme for unorganized sector, from Gandhinagar, Gujarat. The scheme was announced in the Interim Budget 2019.

The PM-SYM is a voluntary and contributory pension scheme that will benefit as many as 10 crore workers in the unorganized sector.



It will provide monthly pension of Rs. 3000 to the employees of unorganized sector after 60 years of age.

## 11. Kumbh Mela 2019: Prayagraj Kumbh 2019 Concludes; Makes It To Guinness World Records

Prayagraj Kumbh Mela 2019 concluded on March 4, 2019 with the sixth and final "Shahi Snan" (royal bath) held on the occasion of Mahashivratri.

The single bathing festival of Mahashivratri is among the six main bathing festivals of the Kumbh. The other 5 bathing festivals of the Kumbh concluded successfully with more than 22 crore pilgrims taking a holy dip.



The world's largest religious and cultural human congregation, 'Kumbh 2019' began at Prayagraj (erstwhile Allahabad), Uttar Pradesh on January 15, 2019.

This 7-week event began with the holy dip at Sangam, the confluence of three rivers - Ganga, Yamuna and mythical Saraswati. The first bathing was taken by saints and seers of different Akharas.

## 12. Centre, ADB sign 926 Million Dollar Loan Agreement To Operationalize Two Lines Of Mumbai Metro

The Union Government on March 1, 2019 signed a 926 million dollar loan agreement to operationalize two of the Mumbai Metro Rail System.

The move will ease the distress of millions of commuters each day and help provide a cleaner and less congested city. The loan agreement was signed by Sameer Kumar Khare, Additional Secretary (Fund Bank and ADB), Department of Economic Affairs, on the behalf of the Indian Government and Kenichi Yokoyama, Country Director of ADB's India Resident Mission on behalf of ADB.



### Key Highlights of this Agreement are:

- The project loan is the single largest infrastructure loan in ADB history approved by the ADB Board on February 26, 2019.
- It will help fund lines 2A (Dahisar to D.N. Nagar), 2B (D.N. Nagar-Bandra-Mandale), and 7 (Dahisar [East] to Andheri [East]), totaling about 58 kilometers (km).
- The project will fund 63 six-car trains, signaling and safety systems, and help establish a new dedicated metro operations organization to manage the entire metro network in Mumbai.
- The project will be implemented by the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA). It is expected to be completed by the end of 2022.

## 13. AIIMS Rewari: Cabinet Approves Setting Up Of 22<sup>nd</sup> AIIMS at Manethi, Haryana

The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the establishment of new All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Rewari at Manethi, Haryana at a cost of Rs. 1299 crore.

The Cabinet also approved the creation of a post of Director in the basic pay of Rs 2,25,000 (fixed) plus Non-Practicing Allowance (NPA) for the above AIIMS.

The site for this AIIMS has already been finalized at Manethi in Rewari, Haryana. Like other AIIMS in the country, the AIIMS Rewari will also be set up under the **Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY)**.



The cost of construction and running of the new AIIMS would be met by the Central Government under PMSSY.

#### 14. Azaadi ke Diwane Museum inaugurated at Red Fort

'Azaadi Ke Diwane' museum is dedicated to the unsung heroes of the country's freedom struggle.

Built by the **Archaeological Survey of India** (ASI), the museum is the **fifth** in a series of recently inaugurated ones - the others being:

- the Subhash Chandra Bose and Indian National Army (INA) museum,
- the Yaad-e-Jallian museum,
- the Museum on 1857 (on the country's first war of Independence),
- the Drishyakala (a museum on Indian Art) — on the sacrifices of India's freedom fighters.



#### 15. Terror Monitoring Group for Jammu and Kashmir

The Union Home Ministry has announced setting up of a Terror Monitoring Group (TMG) to ensure synergised and concerted action against terror financing and terror-related activities in Jammu and Kashmir.

##### Mandate of the Terror Monitoring Group

- Taking action against hardcore sympathisers among government employees including teachers, etc., providing overt or covert support to such activities.
- TMG will act against all registered cases related to terror, terror financing and terror-related activities and bring them to a logical conclusion.
- TMG shall identify all key persons including leaders of the organizations who are involved in supporting terrorism in any form and take concerted action against them. Investigate the networks of various channels being used to fund terror and terror-related activities and take action to stop the flow of such funds.



The seven-member TMG shall be headed by the Jammu and Kashmir Additional Director General of Police (ADGP) and have representatives from the Intelligence Bureau (IB), CBI, NIA, Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), and Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC). The Jammu and Kashmir police inspector-general shall be the seventh member of the TMG. Strangely the Enforcement Directorate (ED), which has attached several properties in terror funding cases, did not find mention in the order.



## 16. Punjab and Haryana High Court bars stating of caste in Proceedings

The Punjab and Haryana High Court has instructed states of Punjab, Haryana and Union Territory Chandigarh to not mention the caste of the accused, victims or witnesses in proceedings before the court.

### What did the High Court say?

The High Court while passing a ruling in a murder case where the Haryana police had mentioned the caste of the accused witnesses and the victim during the proceedings stated this is not permissible and the caste system was profoundly illogical and was also against the basic tenets of the Constitution.

The High Court stated that mentioning the caste separately in the criminal proceedings is a colonial legacy and requires to be stopped henceforth. The Constitution guarantees a casteless and classless society.

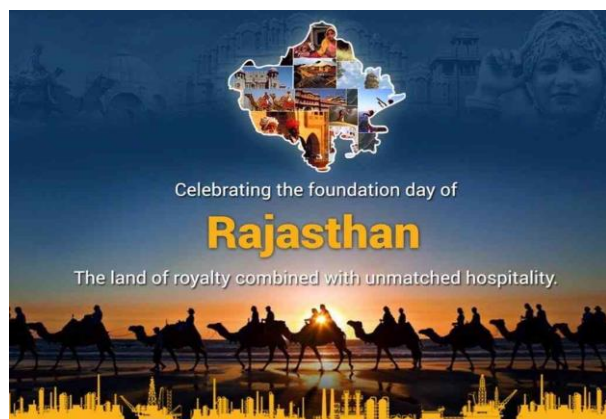
The High court directed the governments to issue instructions to all investigating officers not to mention the caste of the accused, victims or witnesses in recovery memos, FIRs, seizure memos, inquest papers and other forms prescribed under CrPC and Punjab Police Rules.



## 17. Rajasthan Day 2019

Rajasthan Day is celebrated every year on March 30 to commemorate the day on which the state of Rajasthan came into existence. Rajasthan Day commemorates the valour, strong willpower and sacrifice of the people of Rajasthan. Rajasthan earlier known as Rajputana came into existence on March 30, 1949.

Rajasthan which is the largest state of India in terms of the area, before Independence comprised of around 21 small and big princely states. The princely states were annexed to the union of India on 15<sup>th</sup> August 1947 but their unification could be accomplished only later. A brief outline of Rajasthan unification is detailed below:



# Places in News

## 1. Why Ballot Papers Will Be Used In Nizamabad Instead Of EVM?

While the entire Country will vote in EVMs in the Lok Sabha Polls 2019, the people of the Nizamabad in Telangana will vote through Ballot Papers.

### Why Ballot Papers in Nizamabad?

For the Lok Sabha Polls 2019 in the Nizamabad Lok Sabha seat, there are 185 candidates in contention. As one EVM can accommodate only 16 candidates and a maximum of 4 EVMs can be used in one polling booth, the Election Commission is forced to switch back to the age-old practice of ballot papers.



Of the 185 candidates in contention, 178 are farmers who cultivate Turmeric and Jowar. They are contesting polls to highlight their demand for the remuneration for their crops.

The Nizamabad Lok Sabha Constituency had received around 200 nominations of these some were rejected and 189 candidates remained in contention after the scrutiny of nomination papers. Of these 4 candidates withdrew their nomination papers.

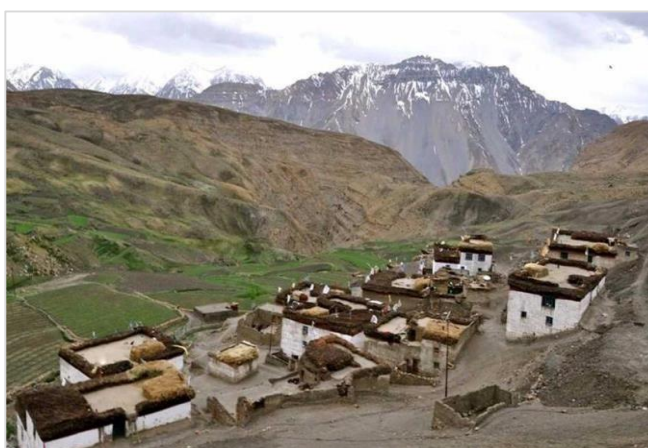
K Kavitha who is also the daughter of Telangana Chief Minister, Chandrashekhar Rao is the sitting MP from the Nizamabad seat.

## 2. World's Highest Polling Station

Tashigang, a small Himachal Pradesh village has got the distinction of the highest polling station in the world. Tashigang is located at an altitude of 15,256 feet.

### Tashigang Polling Station

Tashigang polling station falls in Buddhist-dominated Lahaul-Spiti and forms part of the Mandi Lok Sabha seat, the second largest constituency in India.



Tashigang is situated at about 29 km from the India-China border and the polling station covers two villages — Tashigang and Gete

The polling station has 48 voters, of which 30 are men and 18 women

Even though Tashigang has all necessary facilities like power and water supply, it lacks mobile connectivity and election officials will use a satellite phone during polls on May 19.

Initially, election officials had intended to set up the polling booth at Gete village but shifted it to Tashigang as the government school building there was not found safe. Earlier

the tiny settlement of Hikkim in Himachal Pradesh positioned at an altitude of about 14,400 ft, was the highest polling station in the country.