

Important Monthly Current Affairs – January 2019

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Important Days

Date	Important days	Theme
January 1	Global Family Day	-
January 4	World Braille Day	-
January 9	Pravasi Bharatiya Divas	-
January 10	World Hindi Day	-
January 11	National Youth Day	Channelizing Youth Power for Nation Building
January 15	Army Day	-
January 21	Manipur, Meghalaya and Tripura's statehood day	-
January 24	National Girl Child Day	-
January 24	Uttar Pradesh foundation day	-
January 25	National Voters Day	No Voter to be left behind
January 26	Republic Day	-
January 26	International Customs Day	SMART borders for seamless Trade
January 29	Data privacy day	

Important Banking News

RBI

RBI Allowed one-time restructuring of loans to MSME sector

- Reserve Bank of India allowed a one-time restructuring of existing debt up to Rs. 25 crore for the companies which have defaulted on payment but the loans given to them have continued to be classified as standard assets, The decision will help the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) which are facing cash crunch in the wake of demonetisation and GST implementation.

RBI issued fresh guidelines on limiting the customer liability in fraudulent PPI transactions

- Reserve Bank of India has issued fresh guidelines on limiting the customer liability for unauthorised electronic payments involving Prepaid Payment Instruments (PPIs). RBI stated that, the rules are applicable to all authorised non-bank PPI issuers such as Paytm, Mobikwik, PhonePe and Oxigen, among others. In case of third-party breach, the customer will not lose any money if reported within three days. Fraud is reported within 4-7 days, then the customer liability is same as the transaction value, or Rs. 10,000 per transaction, whichever is lower. PPI issuer shall credit the amount within 10 days.

Nepal's central bank asked RBI to Make Rs. 200, Rs. 500, Rs. 2000 currency notes legal in country

- The Nepal Rastra Bank asked the RBI to declare newly circulated Indian currency notes of denominations higher than Rs 100 legal tender in the country. As of now, the RBI has only allowed the circulation of Indian currency notes of Rs 100 and less in Nepal and provides exchange facilities for bills of these denominations. The NRB stated that country's banking system, including banks, financial institutions and NRB, hold Indian currency denominations of Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 worth Rs 48 million.

Sri Lanka's Central Bank gets \$400 million swap from RBI

- Sri Lanka's Central Bank stated that the Reserve Bank of India has agreed to provide USD 400 million under a swap arrangement to boost the island nation's reserves.
- The RBI has agreed to provide the funds under its SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) Swap Facility.

RBI makes changes in Gold Monetisation Scheme

- The Reserve Bank of India has changed its Gold Monetisation Scheme (GMS), 2015 to make charitable institutions, Central Government, State Government or any other entity owned by Central Government or State Government eligible to deposit under the scheme.

- The government had launched the GMS in 2015 to mobilise the gold held by households and institutions in the country. The scheme allows bank's customers to deposit their idle gold holdings for a fixed period in return for interest in the range of 2.25-2.50%.

RBI fined Rs. 1 crore fine on Bank of Maharashtra

- The Reserve Bank of India imposed a Rs. 1 crore penalty on state owned Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) for non-compliance of Know Your Customer guidelines and fraud classification norms.
- This penalty has been imposed taking into account the failure of the bank to adhere to directions issued by the RBI.

Reserve Bank of India to inject Rs 37,500 crore through OMO in February

- Reserve Bank of India will inject Rs 37,500 crore into the system through purchase of government securities in February to increase liquidity. RBI has been decided to conduct purchase of government securities under Open Market Operations (OMOs) for an aggregate amount of Rs 375 billion in the month of February 2019 through three auctions of Rs 125 billion each during the 2nd, 3rd and 4th week. There will be no auction during the first week due to the scheduled Monetary Policy Committee meeting

RBI released December 2018 Financial Stability Report

Overall assessment of systemic risks

- India's financial system remains stable, and the banking sector shows signs of improvement, even though the global economic environment and the emerging trends in financial sector pose challenges.

Financial Institutions: Performance and risks

- Credit growth of scheduled commercial banks (SCBs) has improved between March 2018 and September 2018, driven largely by private sector banks (PVBs).
- The asset quality of banks showed an improvement with the gross non-performing assets (GNPA) ratio of SCBs declining from 11.5 per cent in March 2018 to 10.8 per cent in September 2018.
- Under the baseline scenario, GNPA ratio may decline from 10.8 per cent in September 2018 to 10.3 per cent in March 2019.
- Analysis of the financial network structure for the period September 2017 – September 2018 reveals a shrinking inter-bank market and increasing bank linkages with asset management companies-mutual funds (AMC-MFs) for raising funds and with NBFCs/Housing Finance Companies (HFCs) for lending.

Global and domestic macro-financial risks

- The global growth outlook for 2018 and 2019 remains steady although the underlying downside risks have risen.
- Spill-over risk to emerging economies engendered by tightening of financial conditions in Advanced Economies, protectionist trade policies and global geopolitical tension has significantly increased.
- The gradual monetary policy normalisation in advanced economies (AEs) as also the uncertainty in global trade regime may adversely affect capital flows to emerging markets (EMs) and exert upward pressure on EM interest rates and corporate spreads.
- On the domestic front, growth of gross domestic product (GDP) showed slight moderation in Q2:2018-19 while inflation remains contained.
- In domestic financial markets, structural shifts in credit intermediation and the evolving interconnectivity between banks and the non-banks call for greater vigilance.

SBI

SBI Card and Etihad Guest tie-up to launch premium card for international travel

- SBI Card and Etihad Guest, the loyalty programme of Etihad Airways, have joined hands to launch a travel specific Visa credit card for members and Indian travellers. This is the first international co-brand partnership of SBI Card, the country's second largest credit card issuer. The card will be available in two variants, Etihad Guest SBI Card and Etihad Guest SBI Premier Card, will bring an unmatched value proposition to Etihad Guest members and international travellers from India. It has been launched against the backdrop of increasing international travel in the country. Travel is now a key spend category for Indian consumers, with 33 per cent of overall card spends in the SBI Card portfolio made within the travel industry.

State Bank of India set to own 15% in Jet Airways

- India's largest lender State Bank of India (SBI) is set to swap part of its loans into a stake of at least 15 per cent in Jet Airways. The airline's founder and chairman Naresh Goyal stake cut to below 20 per cent from 51 per cent
- Etihad Airways PJSC, the foreign partner with a 24 per cent stake, is expected to infuse additional funds to take its holding to more than 40 per cent

OTHER BANKING NEWS

Allahabad Bank, SBI Life Join hand for Bancassurance Partnership

- State-owned Allahabad Bank has tied up with SBI Life Insurance to sell the policies of the insurer from over 3,200 branches, the tie-up, one of the largest Bancassurance partnerships in the country, 3,238 branches of Allahabad Bank across the country offer SBI Life's range of protection, wealth creation and savings products to its customers.

RBI allows Paytm Bank to restart account opening

- Paytm Payments Bank has received the green light from the Reserve Bank of India to restart opening accounts for its customers, Paytm Payments Bank had stopped enrolling new customers from 20 June following an audit by RBI, which made certain observations about the process the company follows in acquiring new customers and its adherence to know your customer (KYC) norms.

Complaints registered at Banking Ombudsman surge 25% in FY18

- The number of complaints registered at banking ombudsman offices have seen a 25% increase in the fiscal year 2018. The banking ombudsman offices in tier-1 cities like New Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Bengaluru and Hyderabad accounted for more than 57% of the total complaints received. 97% of the Complaints were resolved in 2017-18, up from 92% a year earlier. Most complaints received against public sector banks were pension-related while most complaints received against private banks were for credit cards discrepancies.

HDFC Mutual Fund piped ICICI Prudential Mutual Fund to become largest AMC in India

- HDFC Mutual Fund has piped ICICI Prudential Mutual Fund to become the country's largest asset management company (AMC) after a gap of over two years. As of December-end, HDFC MF manages assets to the tune of Rs 3.35 lakh crore, while those of ICICI Prudential MF stood at Rs 3.08 lakh crore.
- SBI MF is at the third slot with AUM of Rs 2.64 lakh crore, followed by Aditya Birla Sun Life MF Rs 2.42 lakh crore, and Reliance MF Rs 2.36 lakh crore.

Bharti AXA Life delivers policy, renewal premium receipts via WhatsApp

- Private sector insurer Bharti AXA Life Insurance has started delivering policies and renewal premium receipt to customers via instant messaging platform WhatsApp. Bharti AXA Life Insurance, a joint venture between Bharti Enterprises and French Insurance major AXA.

Public Sector lender Syndicate Bank and SBI Life Insurance signed Bancassurance pact

- Syndicate Bank and SBI Life Insurance have signed a pact to offer a comprehensive financial planning solution to its customers. This partnership will see over 3000 branches of Syndicate Bank offer SBI Life's diverse range of insurance products to its customers.

ICICI Bank, Small Business FinCredit join hands to provide loans to MSMEs

- Private lender ICICI Bank has joined hands with Small Business FinCredit (SBFC) to jointly offer loans worth Rs 1 crore to the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), for tenure of 15 years per customer.
- Under the pact, the bank will co-originate loan against property with SBFC at a mutually settled ratio.

AGS Transact Tech set to launch QR-based cardless withdrawals at white-label ATMs

- Payment solutions provider AGS Transact Technologies has initiated cardless cash withdrawals, based on quick response (QR) code on its white-label ATMs (WLAs).
- AGS Transact operates white-label ATMs under the 'OnGo' brand name.

UBI, Srei Equipment Finance enter pact for MSME sector finance

- United Bank of India and Srei Equipment Finance has entered into an agreement for financing the MSME and agriculture sectors. Under the pact, UBI would leverage its low-cost loans with Srei to enable purchase of equipment and vehicles in a seamless manner.

Centre amalgamates three regional rural banks into a single Bank

- The Centre has amalgamated three Regional Rural Banks (RRB) Punjab Gramin Bank, Malwa Gramin Bank and Sutlej Gramin Bank into a single RRB with effect from January 1. The sponsor banks of the RRBs are National Bank

for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), the Government of Punjab and Punjab National Bank, State Bank of India and Punjab and Sind Bank.

IRDAI fines United India Insurance Company Rs 5 lakh for violating claims settlement

- IRDAI slapped a penalty of Rs 5 lakh on United India Insurance Company for violating norms regarding the settlement of motor claims.
- The insurer also violated file and use guidelines issued by the Authority,

Government allowed Iranian bank to open branch in Mumbai

- The government has allowed an Iranian bank to open a branch in Mumbai.
- Iran's Bank Pasargad will open its branch within the next three months.

Cabinet approved recapitalisation of Export-Import Bank of India

- The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has approved the recapitalization of EXIM Bank.
 1. Issuance of Recapitalization Bonds by Government of India to the tune of Rs.6,000 crore for capital infusion in Export Import Bank of India (Exim Bank).
 2. The equity will be infused in two tranches of Rs. 4,500 crore in FY 2018-19 and Rs.1,500 crore in FY 2019-20 respectively.
 3. The Cabinet also approved an increase in the authorized capital of Exim Bank from Rs. 10,000 crore to Rs. 20,000 crore. The recapitalisation bonds will be on the lines issued to Public Sector Banks.

SoftBank to acquire 40% stake in FirstCry for \$400mn

- Japanese conglomerate SoftBank is reportedly set to invest \$400 million to acquire a 40% stake in Pune-based baby products startup FirstCry at a valuation of around \$600-700 million.
- This comes after previous reports claimed that FirstCry may raise at least \$150 million at an \$800-900 million valuation from SoftBank.
- FirstCry was founded in 2010 by SupamMaheshwari and AmitavaSaha.

LIC completes 51% controlling acquisition in IDBI Bank

- The country's largest life insurer LIC has completed acquisition of 51% stake in the IDBI bank, making it the lender's majority shareholder. The deal had received approval from the Union Cabinet in August last year.
- It was completed through a combination of preferential allotment and open offer of equity. IDBI Bank has about 1.5 crore retail customers and about 18,000 employees.

ICICI Bank launches premium savings account for men

- ICICI Bank has launched a new premium savings account for upwardly-mobile male customers, named 'The ONE'. It is available in two variants - Magnum and Titanium. It offers the account holder with a range of benefits including the option of opting for health and term life insurance. It also waives the processing fees for home loans for account holders. When the customer opens the account, the bank provides an Amazon Gift Card on specified debit card spends, using which they can join Amazon Prime.
- The account holders of the Titanium variant will also receive a complimentary one-year subscription of Zomato Gold.

National Company Law Tribunal approves merger of Tata Teleservices with Bharti Airtel

- The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) has approved Bharti Airtel's acquisition of Tata Teleservices' (TTSL) mobility business. The merger, which is subject to the approval of Department of Telecommunications (DoT) now, will help Airtel to strengthen its 4G network and compete with Reliance Jio and come closer to number one player, Vodafone-Idea, in terms of market share. Airtel will get additional spectrum pool of 178.5 MHz in the 1800, 2100 and 850 MHz bands all widely used for 4G out of this merger.

YES Bank ties up with Maharashtra to onboard fair price shops as BCs

- The Maharashtra government has partnered with private sector lender YES Bank, under its e-PDS State programme, to onboard fair price shops (FPS) as Business Correspondent Agents. As part of the initiative, the lender will engage fair price shops to provide banking services such as small-value cash deposits into any bank account, including domestic remittances and withdrawal from any bank account via Aadhaar-enabled payment system. Such shops will also be able to collect digital payments through Aadhaar-enabled payments for ration, and will also offer value-added services such as bill payments and mobile recharges.

ICICI Bank, top arranger of bond issues this fiscal

- ICICI Bank has become the top arranger of bond issues for the period between April and December 2018. According to data from Prime Database, the private sector bank helped Indian firms raisers. Rs. 95,856.10 crore through bonds

and non-convertible debentures through 107 issues. This was followed by Axis Bank, which helped India Inc raise Rs. 93,296.27 crore from such instruments through a total of 101 issues. According to the data, Indian companies raised a total of Rs. 3.65 lakh crore from bonds and NCDs through 1,547 issues between April 1 and December 31 last year.

DHFL raises Rs. 1,375 crore via securitisation financing

- Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Ltd has raised Rs. 1,375 crore from funds managed by Oaktree Capital Management. L.P. Oaktree is a leading global alternative investment management firm with assets under management of about \$124 billion
- DHFL intends to further reduce its real estate project finance exposure through more such transactions in the future

IndiaFirst Life Insurance buys 9 percent stake in CSC e-Governance Services

- IndiaFirst Life Insurance has bought nine per cent stake in CSC e-Governance Services India Ltd. IndiaFirst Life Insurance is a joint venture between Bank of Baroda, Andhra Bank and Legal and General (UK)
- CSC is an integral part of Digital India initiative of the government under Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology. The financial inclusion journey, the two entities have worked towards enabling village-level entrepreneurs for reaching out to the last mile customers with tailored solutions

FDI grew 18% in FY18 to Rs 28.25 lakh crore: RBI data

- According to RBI data on 'Census on Foreign Liabilities and Assets of Indian Direct Investment Companies, 2017-18', foreign direct investment (FDI) during the previous fiscal grew 18 per cent to Rs 28.25 lakh crore. FDI increased by Rs 4,33,300 crore, including revaluation of past investments, during 2017-18 to reach Rs 28,24,600 crore in March 2018 at market value
- Overseas direct investment (ODI) by Indian companies increased by 5 per cent to Rs 5.28 lakh crore
- The census showed that Mauritius continued to be the largest source of FDI in India (19.7 per cent) followed by the US, the UK, Singapore and Japan.
- In case of overseas investment by Indian companies, Singapore (17.5 per cent) was the major destination, followed by the Netherlands, Mauritius and the US

NABARD fix 2019-20 priority sector lending target at Rs. 1,01,378 crore for Telangana

- The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has fixed the total priority sector credit potential for Telangana at Rs. 1,01,378.60 crore for 2019-20
- This represents a 9 per cent increase over the target for 2018-19 which was at Rs. 83,389 crore
- NABARD has released its State Focus Paper at the State Credit Seminar, this serves as a guiding document for banks and state government

Important Financial & Economy Affairs

Government sets up export promotion cell for MSMEs

- The MSME ministry has established an export promotion cell to create a sustainable ecosystem for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs). The ministry has also proposed to formulate a governing council that will be chaired by secretary of the MSME ministry. The Cell would evaluate readiness of MSMEs to export their products and services, recognise areas where improvements are required in order to be able to export effectively and efficiently and integration of MSME into global value chain.

SEBI allowed custodial services in commodity market

- Markets regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has allowed custodial services in the commodity derivatives market, which would enable participation of institutional investors, including mutual funds, in the segment. SEBI stated that under the new framework, existing custodians will be permitted to add commodities as an asset class and provide physical delivery of both the securities and commodities. Currently, the regulation on custodian of securities provides safekeeping of securities, gold or gold related instruments, title deeds of real estate and services incidental.

Growth to remain in 7-7.5% range in next few years: PM advisory panel

- The Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister, headed by NITI Aayog Member Bibek Debroy stated that India's economic growth is expected to remain in the range 7-7.5 per cent in the next few years. The growth rate can be easily increased by 1 per cent by addressing structural problems through reforms. The Central Statistics Office (CSO) in its latest forecast pegged the growth at 7.2 per cent for 2018-19. The EAC-PM is an independent body constituted to give advice on economic and related issues to the Government of India, specifically to the Prime Minister.

India to surpass UK in world's largest economy rankings in 2019: PwC

- India is likely to surpass the United Kingdom in the world's largest economy rankings in 2019, to become world's fifth largest economy, according to a report by global consultancy firm PwC.
- As per the report, while the UK and France have regularly switched places owing to similar levels of development and roughly equal populations, India's climb up the rankings is likely to be permanent.
- PwC's Global Economy Watch report projects real GDP growth of 1.6 per cent for the UK, 1.7 per cent for France and 7.6 per cent for India in 2019. According to World Bank data, India became the world's sixth largest economy in 2017 surpassing France and was likely to go past the UK which stood at the fifth position. The US was the world's largest economy with a size of 19.39 trillion dollars, followed by China at 12.23 trillion dollars at the second place in 2017.

Maharashtra FM-led GoM to look at issues related to lottery under GST

- A ministerial panel headed by Maharashtra Finance Minister Sudhir Mungantiwar will examine uniformity of taxation on lottery under GST or other issues arising out of it. Under GST, state-organised lottery falls under the 12 percent tax slab while state-authorised lottery attracts 28 percent tax. The panel will also examine any other issue related to enforcement, including the legal frame work, in order to curb evasion of tax on lottery and suggest appropriate tax rate to address the problem. The GoM for lottery will submit its report to GST Council in next its meeting for approval.

GST on Haj reduced from 18% to 5%

- GST on Haj has been reduced from 18 per cent to 5 per cent and this will significantly lower the air fare thus saving Haj pilgrims' 113 crore rupees this year
- For the first time since the independence that 2,340 women from India will go on 2019 Haj without Mehram

SEBI proposed relaxed norms for REITs, InvITs to increase access to investors

- The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has proposed a new framework for REITs (Real Estate Investment Trusts) and InvITs (Infrastructure Investment Trusts) in order to provide flexibility to the issuers in terms of fund raising and increasing the access of these investment vehicles to investors
- Under the proposal, minimum allotment and trading lot for publicly issued REITs and InvITs will be reduced
- It has been proposed that the leverage limit for InvITs will be increased from the existing 49 per cent to 70 per cent
- SEBI had notified REITs Regulations in 2014, allowing setting up and listing of such trusts which are very popular in some advanced markets
- At the time of initial/follow-on issue, the minimum application and allotment lot shall be of 100 units and the value of one such lot shall be within the range of Rs 15,000-20,000
- The minimum subscription from any investor in an initial offer and follow-on public offer is not less than Rs 2 lakh for REIT, and Rs 10 lakh in case of InvIT
- The prescribed trading lot for the purpose of trading of units of the REIT on the stock exchange is Rs 1 lakh, while the same is Rs 5 lakh for InvIT
- SEBI has proposed a separate framework to enable unlisted privately placed InvITs, the minimum investment by an investor should not be less than Rs 1 crore

ORGANISATION	GDP RATE	
	2018-2019	2019-2020
India Ratings	7.2%	7.5%
World Bank	7.3%	7.5%
Central Statistics Office (CSO)	7.2%	

Important Business News

Kia Motors India set to begin trial production

- Kia Motors is eighth largest automotive company in the world
- Kia Motors, the South Korean global automotive major, is all set to commence trial run of its \$1 billion greenfield plant in Anantapur district of Andhra Pradesh. The company's first car from the plant, SP2i, a sports utility vehicle showcased at the Auto Show as a SP concept, is poised to be rolled out by July this year for sale in India
- Kia motors along with the auto ancillaries from South Korea is one of the largest Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in India in automobile sector. The Greenfield facility will have installed capacity of 300,000 vehicles annually from day one

Important State Wise National News

Andaman and Nicobar

Capital - Port Blair; Governor - Admiral D K Joshi

Veer Savarkar International Airport in Port Blair declared as an authorized Immigration Check post

- Veer Savarkar International Airport in Port Blair has been declared as an authorized Immigration Check post for entry into/exit from India with valid travel documents for all classes of passengers. This decision of the Union Government will open up the Port Blair Airport for direct international flight and immigration facilities. The announcement was made by Information, Public Relations and Tourism Division of Andaman and Nicobar Administration.

Assam

Capital – Dispur; CM – Sarbananda Sonowal; Governor – Jagdish Mukhi

Assam approves 10% quota for economically weaker sections of general class

- The Assam Cabinet has approved 10% quota for the economically weaker sections of the general category in government jobs and education. The meeting chaired by Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal also approved the guidelines for disbursement of Rs. 5,000 each to five lakh farmers of the state under the Mukhya Mantri Krishi Sajuli Yozana for purchase of farm tools and implements. The Cabinet approved a loan amount of ₹95 crore from NABARD. The loan amount will be utilised to construct and strengthen embankments, dykes and other infrastructure across the state. The Cabinet also approved incentives for government doctors, nurses and other healthcare workers under Ayushman Bharat and Atal Amrit Abhiyan.

Andhra Pradesh

Capital – Amravati; CM – Chandrababu Naidu; Governor - ESL Narasimhan

Polavaram project enters Guinness Book of World Record

- The Polavaram multipurpose irrigation project entered the Guinness Book of World Records by pouring 32,000 cubic metres of concrete in 24 hours during the work of dam construction. Work on the project, being undertaken by the private sector Navayuga Engineering Co Ltd, is being conducted with extraordinary speed to make the dam ready for irrigation purposes by June. The project beat the existing record of 21,580 cubic metres which was achieved by Abdul Wahed Bin Shabib, RALS Contracting LLC and Alfa Eng. Consultant (all UAE), in Dubai between May 18 and 20 in 2017. Polavaram Project is an under construction multi-purpose irrigation project on the Godavari River in Andhra Pradesh.

Andhra Pradesh government to provide 100 units free power to MBCs

- Andhra Pradesh government will provide 100 units free power to the Most Backward Classes (MBCs)
- The government give aid of up to Rs 15 lakhs for foreign education of BCs, also setting up a Jyotiba Phule memorial centre with Rs 100 Crores, and set up 69 new gurukul schools in addition to the existing 106 gurukul schools

Arunachal Pradesh

Capital – Itanagar; CM – Pema Khandu; Governor - BD Mishra

Country's longest single lane steel cable bridge opened in Arunachal Pradesh

- India's longest 300 metre single lane steel cable suspension bridge was inaugurated by Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu. The bridge across the Siang River at Yingkiong in Upper Siang district has been named Byorong Bridge. It will reduce the distance from Yingkiong to Tuting town by almost 40 km. The earlier road length was 192 km.

Goa

Capital: Panaji; CM: Manohar Parrikar; Governor: Mridula Sinha

Goa Cabinet approves Rs. 2,000 fine for drinking in public

- The Goa Cabinet has approved a proposal to impose a fine of Rs. 2,000 on people who drink alcohol or cook in public and a fine of Rs. 10,000 if a group of people is doing so. Offenders who do not pay the fine will face up to three months' imprisonment. The amendment is expected to be tabled during the Assembly session.

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari inaugurated Atal Setu in Goa

- Union Minister Nitin Gadkari inaugurated four-lane, 5.1 kilometre long “Atal Setu”, the third Cable Bridge across river Mandovi in Panaji, Goa. The bridge is a joint venture between the GSIDC (Goa State Infrastructure Development Corporation) and Larsen and Toubro. AtalSetu Bridge is the third longest cable stayed bridge in the country. The construction lasted over four and a half years, having started on June 14, 2014, total worth of the project is over 600 crore Rupees

Gujarat

Capital: Gandhinagar; CM: Vijay Rupani; Governor: Om Prakash Kohli

Gujarat becomes 1st state to implement 10% quota to EWS

- Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani has announced that his government will implement the 10 per cent reservation for economically weaker sections of the general category with immediate effect, His announcement comes less than a week after Parliament passed a constitutional amendment bill to facilitate 10 per cent reservation for upper castes in higher education and employment, The 10% quota will be applicable for higher education and govt job, Not applicable for recruitment/admission that have already started.

PM Narendra Modi inaugurated 9th Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit in Gandhinagar

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated the 9th edition of Vibrant Gujarat global investors' summit-2019 at Mahatma Mandir Gandhinagar, Gujarat, Uzbekistan President Shavkat Mirziyoyev addressed the Vibrant Gujarat Summit. More than 30 thousand international and Indian delegates including the Heads of State from 5 countries are participating in the summit. Apart from this, 11 international organizations are participating as partner organizations for the Summit.

Theme	Shaping a new India
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Gujarat government signs around 130 MoUs with investment commitments worth over Rs 56,000 crore in various sectors

- Gujarat government has signed around 130 MoUs with investment commitments worth over 56,000 crore rupees in various sectors on the first day of the three-day Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit.
- China-based Tsingshan group has committed to invest 21,000 crore rupees to set up a steel plant and a facility to manufacture car batteries.
- Besides this mega agreement, MoUs worth over 35,000 crore rupees were also signed during the opening day of the three-day business conclave.

Himachal Pradesh

Capital –Shimla; CM -Jai Ram Thakur; Governor - Acharya Devvrat

Himachal Pradesh approves 10% general category quota

- Himachal Pradesh has approved 10% reservation in jobs and educational institutions for economically weaker sections in the general category, becoming the fourth state to do so.
- Gujarat, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh are the three other states to implement the reservation.
- The amendment was approved by the Parliament on January 9 and by President Ram Nath Kovind on January 12.

Jammu & Kashmir

Capital –Jammu (winter) Srinagar (summer); CM - Vacant; Governor - Satya Pal Malik

Jammu and Kashmir government to provide cattle to BPL families

- The Jammu and Kashmir government has decided to give away cattle received from the military farms to the families living below the poverty line. The decision was taken here at a meeting of defence representatives and officers of animal husbandry department, chaired by advisor to the Governor Khurshid Ahmed Ganai, regarding the handing over of cattle to state government after the closure of military farms. The military dairy farms at Nowshera, Udampur and Jammu have a total of 1917 cattle heads of different types.
- The advisor directed officers of animal husbandry department to prepare a plan for the distribution process with special preference to SC/ST families.

Jammu and Kashmir government sets up panel for school infrastructure

- The Jammu and Kashmir's administration has set up a panel for implementation of saturation of toilets, drinking water and electricity in government schools in the state. The General Administrative Department (GAD) has ordered

constitution of district-level committee on this issue. A five-member committee will be headed by the district development commissioner as chairman.

- The committee will prepare a detailed project report after undertaking actual assessment of deficient schools on the minimum requirement basis. The panel will monitor the works executed by different agencies, including public health engineering, power development department and engineering wing of the School Education Department and to ensure completion of works by February 28.

Jammu and Kashmir Governor gives nod to bill for reservation to Paharis

- Jammu and Kashmir Governor Satya Pal Malik gave his assent to the Jammu and Kashmir Reservation (Amendment) Bill, 2014, granting reservation to people belonging to the Pahari community in government jobs.
- The amendment provides for addition of a separate category for the persons belonging to the Pahari community, clan or tribe having distinct, cultural, ethnic and linguistic identity among the Socially and Educationally Backward classes (other than Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes).

Jharkhand

Capital – Ranchi; CM - Raghubar Das; Governor - Draupadi Murmu

PM Modi inaugurated 6 irrigation projects in Jharkhand

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated six irrigation projects, including the Rs 2,391.36 crore Mandal dam that will provide irrigation to 19,604 hectare in Palamau and Garhwa districts. The Mandal dam, work on which began in 1972, but has been stalled since 1993, will be built on North Koel river under Barwadih block in Latehar district.

MIB to extend support for organizing 2nd Jharkhand International Film Festival at Ranchi

- Ministry of Information and Broadcasting will extend support for organizing second Jharkhand International Film Festival at Ranchi in Jharkhand to promote and showcase the Best of Indian cinema. The three-day Film Festival will be held from 1st of next month. The objective of promoting the Festival is to encourage states that have showcased potential of promoting cinema. The aim of the scheme is to promote good films reflecting the changes and challenges and opportunities of society and to provide an opportunity of exposure to regional films to new trends in cinema.

Kerala

Capital – Thiruvananthapuram; CM – Pinarayi Vijayan; Governor – P.Sadasivam

India's largest startup ecosystem inaugurated in Kerala

- Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan inaugurated a 1.8 lakh square feet facility housing incubation set ups across a string of segments in modern technology. The Integrated Startup Complex under the Kerala Startup Mission (KSUM) includes the ultra modern facilities of Maker Village that promote hardware startups, the BioNest that promotes medical technologies, BRINC which is the country's first international accelerator for hardware startups.
- The Kerala state government intends to expand its incubation space further and after the completion of three more projects, Kerala will have a total startup and incubation space of 5 lakh Sq ft. This will be one of the largest incubation facilities in the world.

PM Narendra Modi dedicated Kollam bypass in Kerala to the Nation

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated the 13-km Kollam bypass of National Highway 66 to the nation
- Kollam Bypass will reduce travel time between Alappuzha and Thiruvananthapuram. This is the first National Highway project in the country taken up on a 50:50 Centre-State partnership. The 13 kilometre long two lane bypass is constructed at a cost of 352 crore rupees. It has three major bridges over the Ashtamudi lake, having a total length of 1540 metres and an underpass

PM Modi dedicated Kochi Refinery project to Nation

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated the Integrated Refinery Expansion Complex of BPCL in Kochi to the nation,
- The integrated refinery is a modern expansion complex and would transform the Kochi Refinery as the largest PSU refinery in the country with world class standards. Modi also inaugurated Mounded Storage Vessel at IOCL LPG bottling plant in Kochi, Kerala. Mounded Storage Vessel, IOCL LPG Bottling Plant has a total storage capacity of 4350 MT. He also laid the foundation stone for a petrochemical complex at the refinery and a skill development institute at Ettumanoor.

Kerala to launch 'Pravasi Dividend Pension Scheme'

- The Kerala government will soon launch a 'Pravasi Dividend Pension Scheme' to provide regular pension to Non Resident Keralites on a onetime payment of Rs 5 lakh. There are 2.1 million migrants from Kerala across the world

whose estimated total annual remittances to the state has been found to be Rs 85,092 crore. Investments ranging from Rs. 5 lakh to Rs. 50 lakh being deposited as a whole or as six instalments paid within three years

- Each beneficiary will be entitled to receive pensions ranging from Rs. 5,000 to Rs. 50,000 every month, three years after the final deposit has been made at a dividend rate of 12%.

'Operation Olympics' commenced in Kerala

- Operation Olympics', an expert programme to train athletes in 11 disciplines has commenced in Kerala
- The Kerala sports department and the state sports council are preparing the 123 athletes, who are participating in the programme, for the Olympics. The objective of 'Operation Olympics' is to provide international standard training with the help of eminent trainers from both India and abroad. The programme includes expert training in athletics, boxing, cycling, swimming, shooting, wrestling, badminton, fencing, rowing and archery

Madhya Pradesh

Capital – Bhopal; CM – Kamal Nath; Governor – Anandiben Patel

Madhya Pradesh Government to Create an Adhyatmik Vibhag (spiritual department)

- Madhya Pradesh Government announced that it is going to create an Adhyatmik Vibhag (spiritual department) by merging several existing department, The 'Anand Vibhag' (Department of Happiness) set up by the previous government in the state, a first in the country, would be incorporated into the new department.
- The proposed Adhyatmik Vibhag (Spiritual Department) going to be formed by merging Dharmik Nyas Evam Dharmasv Department (Religious Trust and Endowment Department), Anand Vibhag (Happiness Department) in addition to the Directorate of Religious Trust and Endowment, Madhya Pradesh Teerth Evam Mela Pradhikaran and Rajya Anand Sansthan.

Madhya Pradesh Government bans purchase of new vehicles, ACs

- Chief Minister Kamal has put a ban on the purchase new vehicles and air conditioners (ACs) by the government departments along with a slew of other items. Also, the expenditure incurred on office furniture, books, magazines, stationery, guest expenses, press and publication, consultancy, sanitation, security, and other such heads has been limited. Hospitals, hostels, Anganwadis, shelter homes have been kept out of the purview of the latest directive of the Finance Department.

The Bhopal Literature and Art Festival inaugurated at Bharat Bhavan

- Bhopal's first literature festival organised by the Society for Culture and Environment inaugurated at Bharat Bhavan, The literary event will see participation by over 70 writers and artists attending the festival.

Madhya Pradesh launched Rs.50,000 crore farm loan waiver scheme

- Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath launched his government's Rs 50,000 crore farm debt waiver scheme named 'Jai Kisan Rin Mukti Yojana'. in Bhopal. It would benefit 55 lakh small and marginal farmers in the state.
- Farmers, who have registered themselves to pay GST and are paying income tax, cannot avail benefits under this scheme.

Bhopal to become India's first city to have crematorium for cows

- India's first crematorium for cows will soon be built in Bhopal.
- Bhopal Municipal Corporation is now looking for a piece of land for the construction of the crematorium.
- Moreover, for the safety of the animal, temporary cowsheds (gaushalas) will also be set up in villages, highways, panchayats and municipalities across the region

Madhya Pradesh government launched Employment scheme for urban youth

- Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath announced the launch of the 'Yuva Swabhiman Yojana' for youths from the economically weaker sections in urban areas
- Under this scheme, 100 days of employment will be provided to youths from economically weaker sections in urban areas. They will also be given skill training

Maharashtra

Capital – Mumbai; CM – Devendra Fadnavis; Governor – Vidyasagar Rao

PM Modi inaugurated infrastructure projects in Solapur, Maharashtra

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched road and underground sewerage system projects developed at an investment of Rs 1,100 crore in Solapur. Modi inaugurated the four laned section of Solapur - Tuljapur - Osmanabad of NH-211 (New NH-52).

- Modi also laid the foundation stone for 30,000 houses under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, the total cost of the project is Rs 1811.33 crore.

World Orange Festival inaugurated in Nagpur

- The second World Orange Festival will be organised in Nagpur
- The festival, while offering its famed oranges to the world, will also showcase and brand the exquisite fruit in order to boost its export, Agricultural experts and scientists from various countries will participate in the workshops and guide farmers.

10th edition of India Rubber Expo 2019 inaugurated in Mumbai

- Union Minister for Commerce and Industry, Suresh Prabhu inaugurated the 10th edition of the India Rubber Expo 2019 in Mumbai
- The three day event being held at the Bombay Exhibition Centre is one of the most anticipated events in the rubber industry's calendar.

All-woman political party launched in Maharashtra

- An all-woman political party was launched in Mumbai under the banner of National Women's Party (NWP). The party aims to field candidates in half of the state's 48 Lok Sabha constituencies. The party has also been launched in Delhi and Karnataka. The first ever women's political party unveiled its agenda and stated they would demand 50 per cent reservation for women in elected bodies, including in Lok Sabha.

Maharashtra cabinet approves Rs. 25 crore for Divyangs

- In a move that will benefit around 650 Divyang (differently-abled) people in the state, the Maharashtra cabinet gave its approval to provide Rs. 25 crore aid to them as part of a scheme. Each Divyang person will get a financial help of Rs 3.75 lakh to purchase eco-friendly vehicles and start mobile vehicle shops. The decision is aimed at making the differently-abled persons financially independent.

Maharashtra government launched special scheme to curb infant deaths

- The Maharashtra government launched a special scheme to curb infant deaths. State child development Minister Pankaja Munde distributed baby care kits to the children born in primary health centres and government hospitals. The scheme is applicable only for the first child and will benefit around four lakh women across the state Women.
- Each kit contains a blanket, a small mattress, a towel, a thermometer, baby oil, shampoo, toys, nail-cutter, gloves, socks, among other things. The cost of the kit is around Rs. 2,000. The state government has allocated Rs 20 crore for the scheme.

Odisha

Capital – Bhubaneswar; CM – Naveen Patnaik; Governor – Prof Ganeshi Lal

Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik announced interest free loans for women Self Help Groups

- Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik announced interest free loans of up to Rs.3 lakh for women self help groups (WSHGs) in the state. There are around six lakh women self help groups in Odisha. The initiative will benefit about 70 lakh women in the state. The chief minister also distributed financial assistance of Rs. 3,000 each to six lakh WSHGs as part of the state government's efforts to digitally empower women. Launched a scheme to distribute Rs. 15,000 seed money per group to three lakh new self-help groups. He announced incentives of Rs. 500 per month for anganwadi workers and Rs. 200 for helpers.

Odisha launched free LED bulb distribution scheme

- Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik launched the 'Ama Ghare LED' (LED bulbs in our houses) scheme which will benefit about 95 lakh families in the State. Each beneficiary family will get four LED bulbs free of cost under the scheme, LED bulbs (9-watt each) will be distributed to the beneficiaries registered under the National Food Security Act (NFSA) and the State Food Security Scheme (SFSS).
- Distribution of the bulbs will be started at the PEETHA (Peoples Empowerment – Enabling Transparency and Accountability of Odisha Initiatives) schemes on January 15, Odisha Power Transmission Corporation Limited (OPTCL) will be implementing the scheme and the bulbs will be distributed through camps and PDS outlets across the State.

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik announced "Jiban Sampark" project

- Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik announced "Jiban Sampark" project in partnership with UNICEF India to generate awareness about the development and welfare initiatives of state government among the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups of the state. The announcement was made after Patnaik inaugurated the annual tribal fair

popularly known as "Adivasi Mela" the annual event which has 180 stalls to showcase tribal market, food, agriculture produces and forest products

- The Jiban Sampark's focus areas will include skill development, empowering communities, cooperation and innovation among the groups of 75 tribal communities in the country, 13 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups residing in remote and far off areas of 12 district in Odisha

Punjab

Capital–Chandigarh; CM–Amarinder Singh; Governor–V.P.Singh Badnore

Punjab government to set up development authority for Anandpur Sahib

- The development authority for Anandpur Sahib will be set up to execute the development plans in the wake of the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev in November this year. Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh made this announcement at Anandpur Sahib. The authority would be established on the pattern of Dera Baba Nanak Development Authority

Rajasthan

Capital – Jaipur; CM – Ashok Gehlot; Governor - Kalyan Singh

Rajasthan government to issue 1 Lakh power connections to farmers by June

- Rajasthan CM Ashok Gehlot has directed officials to issue one lakh electricity connections by June to farmers who have deposited the demand money. He also asked them to expedite the work on solar energy to provide households in remote areas with electricity. He further asked them to ensure no power cuts in domestic connections between 7am-11am, and 6pm-10pm.

12th Jaipur literature festival begins

- 12th Jaipur literature festival, considered to be the Kumbh of Literature, held in Jaipur. Around 500 authors, literateurs and thinkers are participating in the five-day event. Writers from 17 languages are participating this time and the youngest author is just 10 years old. The festival is to host many well-known personalities including Prasoon Joshi, Javed Akhtar, and many others.

Sikkim

Capital – Gangtok; CM – Pawan Kumar Chamling; Governor – Ganga Prasath.

Sikkim will become first state to roll out Universal Basic Income

- Sikkim becomes the first state in the country to introduce the scheme called the Universal Basic Income (UBI).
- Universal basic income (UBI) is a model for providing all citizens of a country with a given sum of money, regardless of their income, resources or employment status, this scheme is alternative to social welfare programmes with benefits towards reducing poverty.

Sikkim launches 'One Family, One Job' scheme

- Sikkim Chief Minister Pawan Kumar Chamling launched the 'One Family One Job' scheme which entitles one government job for every family in the state, Sikkim has become the first state in the country to carry out such an exclusive programme for the people who would now be entitled to state government employee benefits.

First Swadesh Darshan project inaugurated in Sikkim

- Shri. K.J. Alphons, Union Minister for Tourism inaugurated the project "Development of North East Circuit in Gangtok, Sikkim. The project implemented under Swadesh Darshan Scheme of Ministry of Tourism, Government of India was sanctioned by the Ministry in June 2015 for Rs. 98.05 Crores
- Under this scheme, the Government is focussing on development of quality infrastructure in the country with objective of providing better experience and facilities to the visitors on one hand and on other hand fostering the economic growth. Ministry has sanctioned 16 projects for Rs. 1349.04 crores covering all North Eastern States under its schemes of Swadesh Darshan and PRASHAD

Tamil Nadu

Capital – Chennai; CM – Edappadi Palanisamy; Governor – Banwarilal Purohit.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister launches nursery classes in government schools

- A scheme introducing nursery classes in State run schools was launched by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami. The classes would be conducted jointly by the School Education Department and the Social Welfare Department in all 32 districts. The scheme, with Montessori education as the basis, is expected to benefit about 52,900 children in 2,381 anganwadi centres located in State-run middle schools. The schools would be managed by

headmasters of middle schools and would be under the administrative control of officials of the Integrated Child Development Scheme.

2-Day Global Investors Summit begins in Chennai

- The two-day Global Investors Summit, being organised by Tamil Nadu government, held in Chennai. It is being participated by about five thousand delegates from industries in India and abroad. In the inaugural event, the Adani Group Chief Executive Officer Karan Adani committed an investment of 12 thousand crore rupees in its Kattupalli port expansion project. The Ford Motors inaugurated its Global Technology and Business Facility at its sprawling Sholinganallur campus in Chennai. More investment commitments are expected to be made during the ongoing two-day interactions.

Deals worth Rs. 3 lakh crore signed at Tamil Nadu Global Investors Meet

- Tamil Nadu CM Edappadi K Palaniswami announced the state has signed agreements amounting to over Rs. 3 lakh crore during the second edition of the Global Investors Meet (GIM). Some of the biggest investors included Chennai Petroleum, Hyundai Motor India and MRF. MoUs worth Rs. 30,000 crore were signed between the government and nearly 12,000 small businesses.

PM Modi laid foundation stone for AIIMS Madurai in Tamil Nadu

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone for All India Institutes of Medical Sciences, AIIMS at Madurai in Tamil Nadu. Narendra Modi also inaugurated the Super Speciality blocks of government medical college hospitals in Madurai, Tirunelveli and Thanjuvar built at a total cost of Rs.450 crores contributed by the Centre and Rs. 85 crores contributed by the State. Modi also inaugurated 12 Passport Seva Kendra across Tamil Nadu. The Institute is to be built within 45 months at an allocated budget of Rs. 1,264 crores
- AIIMS, Madurai will be a 750 bedded hospital with 30 Emergency/Trauma beds, 75 beds in the ICU & Critical Care unit, 215 beds in Super Speciality unit, will also offer 100 MBBS seats.

Uttarakhand

Capital – Dehradun; CM –Trivendra Singh Rawat; Governor –Baby Rani Maurya

Uttarakhand's first tulip garden in Pithoragarh

- Uttarakhand's first tulip garden will come up over 50 hectares of forest land in Pithoragarh district at a cost of Rs 50 crore. The garden to be developed by the ONGC, under its corporate social responsibility programme (CSR) in over 50 hectares of forest land near Chandak hill top. The proposed tulip garden will be the country's second after the one located in Srinagar (J&K)

Uttar Pradesh

Capital – Lucknow; CM – Yogi Adityanath; Governor – Ram Naik

Uttar Pradesh becomes 3rd state to approve 10% general category quota

- Uttar Pradesh government approved 10% reservation in jobs and educational institutions for the economically weaker sections in general category.
- Gujarat and Jharkhand are the two other states to incorporate the additional quota.
- The Constitution (124th Amendment) Bill, 2019 was passed by the Parliament on January 9 and was approved by President Ram Nath Kovind on January 12.

Uttar Pradesh cabinet renames Mughalsarai tehsil as Deendayal Upadhyay

The Uttar Pradesh cabinet approved the proposal of renaming the Mughalsarai tehsil as Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay, the co-founder and president of Bharatiya Jana Sangh.

- Many places in the state have witnessed change in names in the recent past under Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath-led Uttar Pradesh government.
- In August last year, the iconic Mughalsarai Railway station got officially renamed as Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Junction. On October 16 last year, Allahabad was formally rechristened to Prayagraj.

Youth Pravasi Bharatiya Divas held in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh

- Pravasi Bharatiya Divas is a celebratory day observed (starting in 2015) on 9 January by the Republic of India to mark the contribution of the overseas Indian community towards the development of India. The day commemorates the return of Mahatma Gandhi from South Africa to Mumbai on 9 January 1915.
- Youth Pravasi Bharatiya Divas began at Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh. Prime Minister of Mauritius, Pravind Jugnauth will be the chief guest.

Uttar Pradesh government approved construction of Ganga expressway to connect Prayagraj with western UP

- Uttar Pradesh state cabinet approved construction of a four lane Ganga Expressway connecting Prayagraj to Western Uttar Pradesh which would cost about 36,000 crore rupees. Ganga Expressway will be 600 kilometres long and can be expanded to six-lane in future. New Ganga Expressway will be the longest expressway in the world
- The state cabinet also gave approval to 291 kilometres long Bundelkhand Expressway will be constructed at a cost of 8864 crore rupees

West Bengal

Capital – Kolkata; CM – Mamta Benerjee; Governor - Keshari Nath Tripathi

West Bengal Government Announced two Initiatives for Farmers

- The West Bengal government announced two welfare initiatives for farmers, Both initiatives, which are part of the 'Krishi Krishak Bondhu' scheme. The first of the two initiatives will provide Rs 2 lakh to the family of a deceased farmer,
- Under the second initiative, farmers would get Rs 2,500 twice a year for growing a single crop on one acre of land,

Other National News

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

- The Credit Linked Subsidy Scheme (CLSS) for Middle Income Group (MIG) Scheme has been extended by another 12 months till 31.03.2020, Till December 30 this year, around 3,39,713 beneficiaries have availed the CLSS under the PMAY (Urban), Under the CLSS, the MIG beneficiaries with an annual income of above Rs 6 lakh and up to Rs 12 lakh would get an interest subsidy of four per cent on a 20-year loan component of Rs 9 lakh.
- Those with an annual income exceeding Rs 12 lakh and up to Rs 18 lakh would get interest subsidy of three per cent.

ISRO Launched Samwad with Students Programme

- As part of the enhanced outreach programme of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), a new platform named Samwad with Students (SwS) was launched in Bengaluru, The Indian Space agency will engage youngsters across the country in activities concerning space science under this programme, During the inauguration in Bengaluru yesterday, 40 students and 10 teachers from select schools interacted with ISRO Chairman Dr. K Sivan about the Indian Space Programme and their benefits to the common man.

All houses in 25 States Electrified under Saubhagya Yojana

- The country achieved yet another milestone in the power sector with completion of electrification in 100% households in 25 states at year end. Only about 10.48 lakh households are left to be electrified in 4 states - Assam, Rajasthan, Meghalaya and Chhattisgarh. The central government launched 'Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana' (Saubhagya) in September 2017 to achieve the goal of universal household electrification in the country by 31 March, 2019

Parliament passed National Council for Teacher Education (Amendment) Bill, 2018

- The Indian Parliament passed the National Council for Teacher Education (Amendment) Bill, 2018, following the approval of the Rajya Sabha. The Lok Sabha had already passed the Bill on July 23, 2018. The Bill seeks to amend the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) Act, 1993. That bill seeks to retrospectively grant recognition to certain institutions running teacher education courses as well as grant retrospective permission to start new courses.
- The Bill was introduced by the Union Minister of Human Resource Development, Prakash Javadekar in Lok Sabha on December 18, 2017.

Indian Oil Corporation will commission its first liquefied natural gas (LNG) import terminal at Ennore in Tamil Nadu

- Indian Oil Corp (IOC), the nation's biggest oil firm stated that, it will commission its first Rs. 5,151 crore worth liquefied natural gas (LNG) import terminal at Ennore in Tamil Nadu. This is the first LNG import terminal IOC has built on its own, it holds 95 per cent stake in the Ennore LNG import terminal. Tamil Nadu Industrial Development Corporation (TIDCO) has 5 per cent. The firm is also working on laying a 1,385 km natural gas pipeline originating from the Ennore terminal to Nagapattinam in Tamil Nadu via Pudukkottai.

Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education amendment Bill passed in Parliament

- Parliament has passed the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (Amendment) Bill, 2018, The Lok Sabha had already passed the bill seeking to further amend the Right to Education Act, 2009. The existing policy under the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, prohibits schools from detaining students till they complete elementary education. The Bill seeks to amend the Right to Education (RTE) Act to abolish the "no-detention" policy in schools.

National Green Tribunal imposes Rs 100-crore fine on Meghalaya government

- The National Green Tribunal has imposed a fine of 100 crore rupees on Meghalaya government for its failure to curb illegal coal mining in the state. The amount of the fine has to be deposited with the Central Pollution Control Board within two months. The action comes after a high-level committee submitted an adverse report to a bench headed by NGT chairperson AK Goel.

Indian Panorama Film Festival inaugurated in New Delhi

- A 10-day long Indian Panorama Film Festival began at Siri Fort Auditorium in New Delhi. Indian Panorama Film Festival, being organized by Directorate of Film Festivals, Ministry of I&B, was inaugurated by Secretary, Ministry of I&B, Shri Amit Khare. The opening feature film 'Olu' directed by Shri Shaji N Karun.

World Book Fair inaugurated in Delhi

- The 27th New Delhi World Book Fair inaugurated at Pragati Maidan in New Delhi. Human Resources Development Minister Prakash Javadekar inaugurated the 9-day annual event. All India Radio is the radio partner for the fair.
- To mark Mahatma Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary, there will be special book exhibition of books on and by Mahatma Gandhi. More than 600 publishers will display books at more than 1350 stalls at the fair.
- The theme of this year is 'Readers with Special Needs'.

Government launched nationwide cleanliness survey 'Swachh Survekshan 2019'

- Union Housing and Urban Affairs Minister, Hardeep Singh Puri, launched the 'Swachh Survekshan 2019', the fourth edition of the annual nationwide cleanliness survey of urban India in New Delhi. The Swachh Survekshan 2019 aims to evaluate the achievements in the cleanliness level in urban areas of the country.
- The survey will cover 40 crore people across over four thousand towns and cities. Swachh Survekshan 2019, completely digital and paperless survey, will be completed in a record time of 28 days.

Central Government launched Green-Ag project

- The Government of India launched a Global Environment Facility (GEF) assisted project, namely Green-Ag, in partnership with FAO. The overall objective of the project is to catalyse the transformative change of India's agricultural sector to support achievement of national and global environmental benefits and conservation of critical biodiversity and forest landscapes of five states, namely Madhya Pradesh (Chambal landscape), Mizoram (Dampa landscape), Odisha (Similipal landscape), Rajasthan (Desert National Park landscape) and Uttarakhand (Corbett-Rajaji landscape)

Archaeological Survey of India declared 6 monuments as 'protected and of national importance'

- The Ministry of Culture announced that Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) declared 6 monuments as 'protected and of national importance' under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958, in 2018. No new monument was included in the list of sites of national importance in 2016 and 2017. The last monument to be included in the list, in 2015, was the Vishnu Temple in Nadavayal in Kerala's Wayanad district.
 1. 125-year-old Old High Court Building in Nagpur, Maharashtra,
 2. The Group of Temples in Ranipur Jharail in Bolangir district of Odisha,
 3. 2 Mughal era monuments in Agra- Haveli of Agha Khan and Hathi Khana,
 4. The Neemrana Baori in Alwar district of Rajasthan,
 5. The Vishnu Temple in Kotali, Pithoragarh district in Uttarakhand.

Government allocated Rs. 10,900 cr for development of 40 satellite launch vehicles in next 4 years

- The Union Government has allocated 10,900 crore rupees for the development of 40 satellite launch vehicles in the next four years. Dr Sivan stated that Chandrayan Mission will be launched within three months. It will land in one part of the Moon which is still unexplored. The human space flight Gaganyaan is planned to be launched by 2022, the 75th anniversary of Independence.

Cabinet approved restructuring of National Health Agency as "National Health Authority"

- The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the restructuring of existing National Health Agency as "National Health Authority" for better implementation of Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY). The National Health Authority would be empowered with full autonomy, accountability and the mandate to implement PM-JAY through an efficient, effective and transparent decision-making process by aligning the accountability with responsibility.

High-level committee set up to implement Clause 6 of Assam Accord

- Government had notified the High Level Committee (HLC) for implementation of Clause 6 of Assam Accord. The clause envisaged that appropriate constitutional, legislative and administrative safeguards, should be provided to

protect, preserve and promote the cultural, social, linguistic identity and heritage of the people of Assam. Retired IAS officer M.P. Bezbaruah is chairman of the 9 member Committee. The committee will examine the effectiveness of actions since 1985 to implement Clause 6 of the Assam Accord.

NAFED to set up 100 bio-CNG plants via PPP with Rs 5,000-cr

- Farm cooperative major NAFED announced setting up 100 bio-CNG manufacturing facilities using agri waste such as stubble through public private partnership (PPP) with an estimated investment of Rs 5,000 crore. The first three centres will come up in Muzaffarnagar in Uttar Pradesh, which is the largest sugarcane producing state where waste from sugar mills is available in abundance. An agreement has already been signed with 4-5 private investors like Reliance, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and technology provider. Another agreement has been signed with Indian Oil for purchase of bio-CNG from the plants at a rate of Rs 48 per kg.

Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg in India on 3-Day Visit

- Prime Minister of Norway Erna Solberg has arrived in New Delhi on a three-day state visit to India. She was accompanied by senior officials from her government and a large business delegation. She will participate in the Indo-Norwegian Business Conference. Solberg will also deliver the Inaugural address at the Raisina Dialogue.

Cabinet approved 10% quota for economically backward in general category

- The Union Cabinet approved a 10 per cent reservation for 'economically backward' upper castes in government jobs. The government has announced reservation in jobs for those belonging to the upper castes and earning less than Rs 8 lakh per year. A bill to amend Article 15 and 16 of the Constitution will be moved in the Parliament to this effect.

International Kite Festival 2019 inaugurated in Ahmedabad, Gujarat

- Nine day long international kite festival was inaugurated at Sabarmati Riverfront in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, by the Governor OP Kohli. Ahmedabad has been hosting this international kite festival since 1989, this grand event is a part of the celebrations for Makar Sankranti (also called Uttarayan). About 500 kite fliers 13 different states of the country and 19 cities of Gujarat are also taking part.

Lok Sabha passed Citizenship Amendment bill

- The Lok Sabha has passed the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill. The Bill seeks to amend the Citizenship Act, 1955 to make illegal migrants who are Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan, eligible for citizenship. The bill relaxes this 11 year requirement to 6 years for persons belonging to the all the six religions from the three countries. Under the 1955 Act, requirements for citizenship by naturalisation is that the applicant must have resided in India during the last 12 months,

Private FM channels allowed to carry All India Radio news

- Minister of State (IC) for Information & Broadcasting and Youth Affairs & Sports, Col. Rajyavardhan Rathore (Retd.) launched the sharing of All India Radio News with private FM broadcasters. Private FM channels can now carry All India Radio News free of cost on trial basis up to 31st May this year. News Services Division of All India Radio has permitted its news bulletins in English and Hindi to be carried in unaltered form by Private FM Channels as per certain terms and conditions.

GST ministerial panel approved Kerala levying 1% cess for 2 years

- The ministerial panel under Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Modi approved levy of 1% 'calamity cess' by Kerala for a period of two years to fund rehabilitation work in the state hit by floods. The goods and services, which will attract the 1% cess, would be decided by Kerala and any other state considering to do the same would have to approach the council. The council also suggested to the GST Council to allow additional borrowing over the permitted limit by states hit by natural calamity.
- The GST law provides for levy of special taxes for a specified period to raise additional resources during any natural calamity or disaster.

HRD Ministry Introduced a 70 Point Grading Index to Assess the Quality of School Education

- The Ministry of Human Resource Development has introduced a 70 point grading index to assess the quality of school education offered by states. State performance grading will be done wherein the states will be marked out of 1,000 scores on 70 parameters. This will give the correct picture of where every state stands. There will be a fair competition to improve each other's performances.

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

- According to the Ministry of Civil Aviation, islands in Andaman will soon be connected by seaplanes. The ministry has approved operations on 13 water aerodrome routes, under the regional connectivity scheme Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik (UDAN). Five are from Andaman, while the others are from dams in Gujarat and coastal areas in Kerala.
- UDAN-RCS, UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Naagrik) is a regional airport development and "Regional Connectivity Scheme" (RCS) of Government of India.

University Grants Commission to set up CARE to refine and strengthen research publication

- UGC decided to set up Consortium for Academic and Research Ethics (CARE) to refine and strengthen research publication. With an aim to refine and strengthen the University Grants Commission (UGC) approved list of journals
- The good quality Research Journals in disciplines under Social Sciences, Humanities, Languages, Arts, Culture, Indian Knowledge Systems etc., will be maintained by CARE and referred to as 'CARE Reference List of Quality Journals'. UGC has constituted a Committee under the Chairmanship of Prof. P. Balram, to review its quality mandate relating to promotion of Research and to review the existing M.Phil/ Ph.D Regulations.

PM Modi will inaugurate the 15th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas on 21st January

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the 15th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas on 21st January, at Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh, the three days long event will attract many eminent persons of Indian origin from the world over, Minister of state in External Affairs General V K Singh stated that, the first day of the Divas will be dedicated to the youth, There will be seven sessions in the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas programme.
- Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) is celebrated once in every two years to strengthen the engagement of the overseas Indian community with the Government of India and reconnect them with their root
- During the Convention, selected overseas Indians are also honored with the prestigious Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award to recognize their contributions to various fields both in India and abroad

Cabinet Approves 3 New AIIMSs in Gujarat, Jammu And Kashmir

- The Union cabinet has given its approval for establishment of three new AIIMS at Samba in Jammu, Pulwama in Kashmir and Rajkot in Gujarat, These All India Institutes of Medical Sciences will be set up under Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana, The objective is to establish the new AIIMS as Institutions of National Importance for providing quality tertiary healthcare, medical education, nursing education and research in the region,
- Establishment of new AIIMS involves creation of Hospital, Teaching Block for medical and nursing courses, residential complex and allied facilities/services,
- AIIMS New Delhi is governed by the All India Institute of Medical Sciences Act, 1956

National Informatics Centre Command & Control Centre inaugurated

- Minister for Electronics and IT (MeitY) Ravi Shankar Prasad inaugurated the National Informatics Centre (NIC)'s Command and Control Centre (CCC), Prasad also inaugurated the Centre of Excellence in Artificial Intelligence (AI) developed by the NIC to help government departments improve efficiency in their service technically like photo verification of beneficiaries for grant of services in large-scale projects, distribution of subsidies etc.
- NIC has been offering Data Centre and Cloud services to the Government. Currently, it has 4 National Data Centres and 30 Mini Data Centres across the country hosting over 10,000 e-Governance applications.

6 states signed agreement for Renukaji dam multipurpose project

- Six states Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Delhi, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh signed an agreement for construction of Renukaji Dam Multi Purpose Project, Agreement on water sharing was signed on 28 August 2008.
- Renukaji Dam project has been conceived as a storage project on the Giri river (tributary of the Yamuna) in Sirmour district of Himachal. It envisages construction of 148 m high rock-filled dam for supply of 23 cumec water to Delhi and other basin states, Three projects are proposed to be constructed on the Yamuna and two of its tributaries, Tons and Giri, in the hilly regions of Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh of the Upper Yamuna Basin.
- These include Lakhwar project on the Yamuna in Uttarakhand, Kisau on the Tons in Uttarakhand and Himachal, and Renukaji on the Giri in Himachal.

VP Naidu inaugurated 25th edition of Partnership Summit 2019

- Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu inaugurated the 25th edition of Partnership Summit 2019 in Mumbai.
- Theme of Summit is New India Rising to Global Occasions
- The summit is expected to build new partnerships and explore investment opportunities in sectors like Artificial Intelligence, big data, food processing, defence, aeronautics, renewable energy and tourism.

- The Partnership Summit 2019 is being organised by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the Maharashtra Government and the Confederation of Indian Industry.

Government launched Web Wonder Women Campaign

- The Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, has launched an online campaign, '#www : Web WonderWomen'.
- The Campaign aims to discover and celebrate the exceptional achievements of women, who have been driving positive agenda of social change via social media, the Campaign has been launched by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India in association with the NGO Breakthrough and Twitter.

Government launched National Clean Air Programme

- Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change Dr Harsh Vardhan launched the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) aiming to reduce toxic particulate matter by 2024,
- With 2019 as its first year, Centre has set a mid-term (five-year) target to reduce air pollution by 20-30% by 2024, taking 2017 as the base year, the Environment Ministry has announced a budget of Rs 300 crore for two years to tackle air pollution across 102 cities, which have been identified by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) for not meeting the pollution standards set by the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change.

Rajyavardhan Rathore launched National Youth Parliament Festival 2019

- Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports, Col Rajyavardhan Rathore launched the National Youth Parliament Festival 2019 at New Delhi, The theme of the festival is Be the Voice of New India and Find solutions and contribute to policy
- The Ministry has decided to organise the youth festival at every district of the country so that the youth between the age group of 18 to 25 years can participate and discuss and debate about how to make a New India, the festival will be held at District, State and National level to select the best speakers, maximum of 50 best speakers from the digital screening and 50 best speakers from walk in process will be shortlisted by the screening committee to participate in the District Youth Parliament.

Government launched 'Womaniya on Government e Marketplace' initiative

- The Union Government launched the 'Womaniya on Government e Marketplace (GeM)', an initiative to enable women entrepreneurs and Women Self-Help Groups (WSHGs) to sell handicrafts, handloom, accessories, and other products directly to Government departments and institutions, GeM is an online platform of the ministry for procurement of goods and services by government departments, public sector units, and other agencies.
- GeM was setup in 2016 and has 731,431 product categories, with 180,862 registered sellers and 32,114 government buyers.

Government Launched two National level Initiatives in the field of science communication

- The Department of Science and Technology (DST) along with Doordarshan (DD), Prasar Bharati launched two science communication initiatives, DD Science and India Science
- Union Science & Technology Minister, Dr. Harsh Vardhan inaugurated the initiative.
- DD Science is an one hour slot on Doordarshan National channel, which will be telecast Monday to Saturday from 5 pm to 6pm, India Science is an internet based channel, which is available on any internet-enabled device, and will offer live, scheduled play and video-on-demand services.

Government approves inducting women as jawans in Army's Military Police

- Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has approved induction of women as jawans in the Army's Corps of Military Police. "
- The women will be inducted in graded manner to eventually comprise 20% of total Corps of Military Police.
- Their roles would include probing rape and molestation cases, assisting the Army wherever required, searching or frisking women, among other duties.

PM Narendra Modi to inaugurate National Museum of Indian Cinema in Mumbai

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurates the National Museum of Indian Cinema in Mumbai.
- The museum spread across two adjacent buildings will not only cater to the needs of film critics and enthusiasts but also enthrall visitors through visuals, graphics, interactive

Aparna Kumar becomes 1st woman IPS officer to reach South Pole

- Aparna Kumar has successfully reached the South Pole after covering 111 kilometres of walking on the snow.
- She also carried equipment weighing 35 Kilograms along with her.
- She has already scaled the top six mountain peaks of the six continents of the globe. She became the first woman IPS officer to reach the South Pole.

2nd World Integrated Medicine Forum 2019 to be held in Goa from Jan 23

- The 2nd World Integrated Medicine Forum 2019 on the Regulation of Homeopathic Medical Products will be held in Goa from 23rd January. AYUSH Minister Shripad Naik will inaugurate the three day forum.
- 20 countries will participate in the event. This forum will strengthen regulatory framework worldwide, to assure that the users of Homoeopathy could have wider access to quality-assured homeopathic medicines

Indians over 65 and under 15 can now visit Nepal and Bhutan with Aadhaar

- Aadhaar cards are now valid travel documents for Indians under 15 and over 65 years travelling to Nepal and Bhutan, according to a Home Ministry communiqué. Indians other than those in the two age brackets will not be able to use Aadhaar to travel to the two neighbouring countries, for which no visas are needed, said the communiqué issued recently. Indian citizens going to Nepal and Bhutan don't need a visa if they have a valid passport, a photo identity card issued by the government of India or an election ID card issued by the Election Commission, it added.
- Earlier, persons over 65 and under 15 could show their PAN card, driving licence, Central Government Health Service (CGHS) card or ration card, but not the Aadhaar, to prove their identity and visit the two countries

Central government considering paying farmers cash instead of subsidies: Report

- India is considering a plan to transfer cash to farmers to ease their financial burden instead of offering subsidies.
- Central government is planning to combine all farm subsidies, including fertilizer costs, and instead pay farmers cash. The additional cost will be limited to 700 billion rupees (\$9.8 billion) annually after a full roll-out of the program. Finance Minister Arun Jaitley had budgeted 701 billion rupees for farm subsidies in the year ending March 31.

PM Modi inaugurates Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose museum at Red Fort

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Subhash Chandra Bose museum at the iconic Red Fort in New Delhi to mark the leader's 122nd birth anniversary. He also inaugurated the Yaad-e-Jallian Museum on the Jallianwala Bagh and World War I, the Museum on 1857- India's first war of Independence and Drishyakala-Museum on Indian Art within the Red Fort complex. The Museum on Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose and Indian National Army provides a detailed account of Subhash Chandra Bose and the history of Indian National Army.
- It also showcases various artefacts related to Subhash Chandra Bose and INA. The artefacts include wooden chair and sword used by Netaji, medals, badges, uniforms and other artefacts related to INA.

Ayush Minister Shripad Naik inaugurates 2nd World Integrated Medicine Forum 2019

- Minister of State for Ayush Shripad Naik inaugurated the 2nd World Integrated Medicine Forum 2019 in Panaji, Goa. The central government is committed to promoting all disciplines under Ayush including homoeopathy. Around 150 delegates from 21 countries are participating in the event.

10% quota in government jobs applicable from February

- Central government jobs and services which come up from February onwards will have to implement the 10% quota for economically weaker sections (EWS), the Union ministry of personnel, grievances and pensions has notified.
- An order passed by the ministry refers to an office memorandum of the social justice ministry, which mentions the Constitution (One Hundred and Third Amendment) Act 2019, that provides 10% reservation to the EWS category in jobs as well as educational institutions. Persons who are not covered under the existing scheme of reservations and whose family income is below Rs 8 lakh are identified as EWS for the benefit of reservation.

Lt Kasturi becomes 1st woman to lead all-men contingent on Republic-Day

- Lieutenant Bhavana Kasturi has become the first woman to lead an all-men Army contingent in Republic Day parade by leading the Indian Army Service Corps contingent.
- An all-women Assam Rifles contingent was also part of the parade for the first time.

I&B Ministry to increase advertisement rates by 11% to private TV channels

- Information and Broadcasting Ministry has decided to revise the advertisement rates offered by the Bureau of Outreach and Communication (BOC) to private TV channels.
- The revision would lead to an increase in rates of around 11 per cent over the rates of 2017 in respect of most of the private TV channels. It could be of higher percentage for some others, as per their reach and TV ratings. Differential rate structures for news and non-news channels will be offered, depending upon their overall reach in the country.

India's 1st Geographical Indication Store opened in Goa

- Union Civil Aviation Minister Suresh Prabhu inaugurated India's 1st Geographical Indication (GI) Store at Goa International Airport in Dabolim. The store is located on the first floor on Departure Terminal, and jointly set up by Airports Authority of India and The Cashew Export Promotional Council of India
- Currently there are 270 GI registered products in the country. Products from the self-help groups, artisans and farmers' produce will be also displayed on the airport at a concessional rate

Western Railway provides segways to RPF personnel to enable stricter patrolling

- The Western Railway has provided segways, the two-wheeled, self-balancing and battery powered electric vehicles, to the Railway Protection Force (RPF) personnel deployed at major railway stations in Mumbai
- The vehicle will help the RPF in keeping an eye on every nook and corner of the railway stations, specially on long platforms, this is the first of its kind initiative by the Indian Railways

Train 18 named Vande Bharat Express

- India's first indigenously built engineless semi high speed train, Train 18, has been named Vande Bharat Express
- The train is set to run between Delhi and Varanasi at a maximum speed of 160 kmph. The 16 coach train, built in 18 months at a cost of Rs 97 crore by the Integral Coach Factory, Chennai, is regarded as a successor to the 30 year old Shatabdi Express.

India and China signed protocol for exports of Indian tobacco leaves to China

- India and China have signed the protocol for exports of Indian tobacco leaves to China. The protocol was signed during the recent visit of Commerce Secretary, Dr. Anup Wadhawan to Beijing
- Dr.Wadhawan also had bilateral meeting with Vice Minister of General Administration of China Customs, Zhang Jiwen for examining market access and quarantine issues for India's agriculture and allied products

National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA) to organize the first edition of Night at the Museum

- National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA), New Delhi organized the first edition of Night at the Museum. The event organised in collaboration with the India Art Fair from 8:00 PM to 11:00 PM. Highlight objects include works of art of Rabindranath Tagore, Amrita Sher-Gil, Raja Ravi Verma, Nandalal Bose and Jamini Roy. NGMA aims to conduct Night at the Museum as a regular activity and will organise it on the last working day of every month

ICAR launched National Agricultural Higher Education Project (NAHEP)

- Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) launched National Agricultural Higher Education Project (NAHEP) to attract talent and strengthen higher agricultural education in the country. It is inaugurated at the fourth Convention of 2-day "Agrivision-2019" organized by Vidyarthi Kalyan Nyas in Pusa, New Delhi
- ICAR has launched Rs 1100 crore ambitious National Agricultural Higher Education Project (NAHEP), this project will be funded by the World Bank and the Indian Government on a 50:50 basis. In addition, a four year degree in Agriculture, Horticulture, Fisheries and Forestry has been declared a professional degree
- Rajendra Agriculture University has been upgraded as Dr. Rajendra Prasad Central Agricultural University to strengthen the government's effort to bring green revolution in Eastern India including North East
- Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) has been set up in Barhi, Jharkhand on the lines of IARI, Pusa New Delhi, and another IARI is being set up in Assam
- To promote the participation of students in agricultural business, Student READY (Rural Entrepreneurship Awareness Development Yojana) scheme is being run, under which practical experience of agriculture and entrepreneurship is provided to undergraduate students

Government renamed DIPP as Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade

- The Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) has been renamed as the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade with a mandate to deal with matters related to start-ups, facilitating ease of doing business among others. The newly named department under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry will look into matters related to promotion of internal trade, including retail trade, welfare of traders and their employees. The President gave his nod to bring internal trade matters under the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade

PM Modi dedicated National Salt Satyagraha Memorial to the nation

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated the National Salt Satyagraha memorial monument to recall the historic Dandi Yatra on Mahatma Gandhi's death anniversary. Mahatma Gandhi began the march from Ahmedabad to Dandi near Surat on March 12th 1930 against the ban on Indians producing or selling salt. The

memorial has statues of Mahatma Gandhi and 80 Satyagrahis who had marched with him during the historic Dandi Salt March. The cost of Memorial is Rs. 110 Crores.

Important Cabinet Approvals

- MoU between India and Japan on Development of Advanced Model Single Window.
- MoU on Maritime issues between India and Denmark
- Signing of the TOR provide tax assistance to Swaziland
- Creation of the post of Vice Chancellor for National Rail & Transport Institute set up in Vadodara, Gujarat
- Bilateral Swap Arrangement between India and Japan.
- MoU between India and France on technical bilateral cooperation in the field of new and renewable energy

Cabinet approves the creation of National Bench of GSTAT

- The Union Cabinet approved the creation of the National Bench of the Goods and Services Tax Appellate Tribunal.
- It will be presided over by the President and shall consist of one technical member (Centre) and one technical member (State). The National bench would be set up in New Delhi. It also approved a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between India and Kuwait for the cooperation on recruitment of domestic workers.
- Over 3 lakh Indian domestic workers, of which 90,000 are women, in Kuwait would be benefited by the move.
- The Cabinet also gave its nod for the extension of Delhi metro corridor from Dilshad Garden to New Bus Adda, Ghaziabad. The total distance of the extended line would be 9.41 km.

Cabinet approves signing of MoU between India and Kuwait on recruitment of domestic workers

- Union Cabinet has approved the signing of Memorandum of Understanding between India and Kuwait for cooperation on the recruitment of domestic workers.
- It provides a framework for cooperation on matters related to domestic workers deployed in Kuwait and provides safeguards for them. The MoU is initially valid for a period of five years and incorporates provision for automatic renewal. Around three lakh Indian domestic workers deployed in Kuwait will benefit from the decision.

Important International News

The U.S. and Israel Quit the U.N.'s Cultural Agency UNESCO

- The United States and Israel officially quit the U.N.'s educational, scientific and cultural agency,
- UNESCO is best known for its work to preserve heritage, including maintaining a list of World Heritage sites, and programmes to promote education in developing countries. Before The US has pulled out of UNESCO in 1984 because it viewed the agency as mismanaged, corrupt, and used to advance Soviet interests. The US rejoined in 2003.

China Building "Most Advanced" Naval Warships for Pakistan

- China is building the first of four 'most advanced' naval frigates for Pakistan as part of a major bilateral arms deal to ensure 'balance of power' in the Indian Ocean. The warship will be capable of anti-submarine and air-defence operations. The ships are of the Type 054AP class, meaning that it is based on the Type 054A of the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN).

Tropical Storm Usman hits Philippines

- Storm Usman hit the Bicol region in Manila
- The tropical depression, locally named Usman, brought heavy rains, causing catastrophic flooding and triggering deadly landslides.

Trump Signed Asia Reassurance Initiative Act into Law

- U.S. President Donald J. Trump signed into law the Asia Reassurance Initiative Act (ARIA), which passed the U.S. Senate earlier in December. The act establishes a multifaceted U.S. strategy to increase U.S. security, economic interests, and values in the Indo-Pacific region. Specifically, the ARIA will authorize \$1.5 billion in spending for a range of U.S. programs in East and Southeast Asia and develop a long-term strategic vision and a comprehensive, multifaceted, and principled United States policy for the Indo-Pacific region, and for other purposes.

Guatemala to withdraw from UN backed anti corruption commission

- Guatemala was withdrawing from a United Nations backed anti corruption commission and giving its prosecutors a day to leave the country. President Jimmy Morales accused the International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala, commonly known as CICIG, of polarising the country and putting its security at risk. The International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala, or CICIG, was established over a decade ago with the authority to conduct independent investigations and work with the country's prosecutors.

First ever India-Central Asia Dialogue to be held in Uzbekistan

- The first India-Central Asia Dialogue will be held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan on January 12 and 13, The Dialogue will be co-chaired by External Affairs Minister (EAM) Sushma Swaraj and the Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan, Abdulaziz Kamilov.
- India-Central Asia Dialogue, with the participation of Afghanistan, is expected to strengthen India's engagement, including political, economic, development partnership and cultural, with all the Central Asian countries and take it to a new level.

US launched new innovation initiative at Raisina Dialogue 2019

- The United States Chamber of Commerce's Global Innovation Policy Center (GIPC) launched a new innovation initiative at the Raisina Dialogue in New Delhi. The initiative, titled "Fair Value for Innovation".
- That will examine economic underpinnings that would enable breakthrough innovation, and explore how policymakers can harness innovation capital in India and around the globe through research, advocacy, partnerships, and programs, The Raisina Dialogue is India's most influential conference on geopolitics and geo economics, convened by the Observer Research Foundation and the Indian Ministry of External Affairs in New Delhi.

Japan launches satellite for world's 1st artificial meteor shower

- Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency has launched Tokyo-based startup Star-ALE's mini-satellite aimed to deliver the world's first artificial meteor shower.
- The satellite carries 400 tiny balls, which the startup says will be enough for 20-30 events, that will glow as they rush down the atmosphere on being released. ALE plans to deliver its first show in Hiroshima in early 2020.

Government signs agreements for Development Assistance Loans of Rs 3420 crore with JICA

- Japan will give a loan of Rs. 3,420 crore to India for the construction of the Chennai Peripheral Ring Road (Phase 1) and for Japan-India cooperative actions towards Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in India.
- The programme to promote SDGs in India focusses especially on social development.
- The loan agreements were signed between the Government of India and Japan International Cooperation Agency.

Nepal's central bank bans use of Indian currency notes

- Nepal's central bank has banned the use of Indian currency notes of Rs 2,000, Rs 500 and Rs 200 denominations.
- Under the new regulation issued, Nepali citizens cannot carry these denominations to countries other than India.
- Similarly, Nepalis are also not allowed to bring such notes from other countries. Indian notes of 100 or below, however, are allowed for trading and conversion.
- On December 13, the Nepal Cabinet had decided to publish the notification in the Nepal Gazette not to allow people to carry Indian currency notes above 100 denominations in Nepal.

Rio de Janeiro will be World Capital of Architecture for 2020: UNESCO

- The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has announced that the Brazilian city of Rio de Janeiro will be the World Capital of Architecture for 2020.
- Having defeated Paris and Melbourne, Rio will be the first city to receive the title under a program launched together by UNESCO and the International Union of Architects (UIA) in November last year.
- The city will host the World Congress of UIA, in July 2020, an event that occurs every three years.
- According to UNESCO, the World Capital of Architecture is intended to become an international forum for debates about pressing global challenges from the perspectives of culture, cultural heritage, urban planning and architecture.

Israel, US successfully test ballistic missile interceptors

The Israel and US countries have successfully tested ballistic missile interceptors deployed at Israeli airbases. The tests came a day after the latest deadly exchange of fire between Israel and Iranian forces operating in Syria. The Arrow 3 interceptor system, designed to shoot down missiles above the atmosphere, was deployed at air force bases across Israel two years ago.

Saudi Arabia builds its 1st ballistic missile factory

- Saudi Arabia, which does not currently possess nuclear weapons, has built its first-known ballistic missile factory.
- Satellite images reviewed by the experts appeared to show a rocket-engine production and test facility. The factory is reportedly in the same location as the al-Watah missile base which first became public in 2013.

Pakistan government declared sugarcane juice as the "national drink" of the country

- Government of Pakistan has declared sugarcane juice as the nation juice of Pakistan
- The announcement came after the government conducted a Twitter poll where people were asked to decide on the country's national drink with two other options orange and carrot besides sugarcane.

Dubai airport retains its position as world's busiest airport in 2018

- Dubai International Airport has retained its position as the world's busiest airport for the fifth consecutive year in a row in 2018. Indian travellers emerging as the largest source of traffic for the airport, accounting for more than 12.2 million travellers. Most of them coming from the Indian cities of Mumbai, Delhi and Cochin. The annual customer tally at Dubai's main transit hub increased by 1 per cent to 89.1 million last year from 88.2 million in 2017
- The number of flights fell 0.3 per cent to 408,251 during 2018 while the average number of passengers grew slightly by 1.3 per cent to 226 people per plane

US imposed sanctions on Venezuela's state owned oil group

- The Trump administration imposed sweeping sanctions on Venezuelan state owned oil firm PDVSA
- Aimed at severely curbing the OPEC member's crude exports to the United States and at pressuring socialist President Nicolas Maduro to step down

Syria signed long-term economic cooperation deal with Iran

- Syria has signed a long-term economic cooperation deal with Iran. The new agreement covers the industrial, agricultural, service, infrastructure and energy sectors among others
- Syria government also reached an agreement with Iran on the banking sector as well as establishing an electricity generating station in the coastal city of Latakia

Suman Kumari becomes first Hindu woman judge of Pakistan

- Suman Kumari has become the first Hindu woman in Pakistan to be appointed as a civil judge. She passed her LLB examination from Hyderabad and did her masters in law from Karachi's Szabist University
- Suman, who hails from Qambar-Shahdadkot, will serve in her native district
- Ratna Bhagwandass Chawla became the first Hindu woman elected to Pakistan's Senate in 2006
- Last year, Krishna Kumari Kohli, a Hindu woman became the first non Muslim female to win a women reserved seat in Senate of Pakistan

UAE and Saudi central banks launch common digital currency called 'Aber'

- The central banks of the UAE and Saudi Arabia have launched a common digital currency called "Aber" which will be used in financial settlements between the two countries through Blockchains and Distributed Ledgers technologies. The UAE central bank will establish an additional means for the central financial transfer systems of the two countries and enable banks to directly deal with each other in conducting financial remittances. The use of the currency will be restricted to a limited number of banks in each state

National Appointments

Sl.No	Person	Designation
1.	Pramod Kumar Singh	Competition Commission of India secretary
2.	V K Yadav	Chairman, Railway Board
3.	Justice AK Sikri	The Executive Chairman of National Legal Services Authority (NALSA).
4.	Saurabh Kumar took	Chairman of the Ordnance Factory Board
5.	Hemant Bhargava	Interim Chairman of LIC
6.	Pankaj Sharma	RBL Bank Chief Operations Officer
7.	Justice T B N Radhakrishnan	First Chief justice of Telangana High Court.
8.	Vikram Misri	India's new envoy to China
9.	Kumar Rajesh Chandra	Director General of the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB)
10.	Birendra Prasad Baishya	Chef de Mission for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics
11.	Ajit Mohan	Managing Director and Vice President, Facebook India

12.	Brahm Dutt	Yes Bank non executive part time chairman
13.	Daniel Hughes Callahan	Additional and Independent Director of TCS
14.	Mohammed Ali Qamar	Women's Boxing Team Coach
15.	B Sriram and Rama Bijapurkar	ICICI Bank independent director
16.	Agyey Kumar Azad	Executive Director of Punjab National Bank
17.	Piyush Goyal	Interim Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister
18.	Ravneet Gill	MD and CEO of Yes Bank
19.	Ronojoy Dutta	IndiGo CEO
20.	Parthasarathi Mukherjee	Lakshmi Vilas Bank MD and CEO (Reappoint)
21.	Vice Admiral G Ashok Kumar	Vice Chief of Navy Staff (VCNS)
22.	Dilip Sadarangani	part time Chairman of Federal Bank
23.	Civil Aviation Secretary Rajiv Nayan Choubey	Member of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC)

International Appointments

Sl.No	Person	Designation
1.	Jair Bolsonaro	Brazil President
2.	David Norquist	US deputy defence secretary
3.	Justice Asif Saeed Khan Khosa	Chief Justice of Pakistan
4.	Shri Pranav R Mehta	Global Solar Council
5.	Nicolas Maduro	Venezuelan President
6.	Su Tseng-chang	Prime Minister of Taiwan
7.	Manu Sawhney	ICC CEO
8.	Andry Rajoelina	President of Madagascar
9.	Sultan Abdullah Sultan Ahmad Shah	Malaysia's new king
10.	Poonam Khetrapal Singh	Director of World Health Organization South-East Asia
11.	Sunjay Sudhir	India's Ambassador to Maldives

Resignation

Sl.No	Person	Designation
1.	Madan B Lokur	Supreme Court judge (retired)
2.	Kevin Sweeney	US Department of Defence chief of staff
3.	Jim Yong Kim	World Bank President (from 1 February,2019)
4.	Harendra Singh	Indian men's hockey coach
5.	Ashok Chawla	Chairman of the National Stock Exchange of India
6.	Stephen Constantine	Indian football team's head coach
7.	BK Divakara	Executive Director (ED) of Central Bank of India

Malaysia's King Muhammad V becoming first monarch to resign before completing tenure

- Malaysia's King Muhammad V resigned, the first time a monarch has stepped down from the throne before completing their five year tenure.
- The resignation comes barely a week after the king resumed his duties after spending two months away on medical leave.

Awards and Honors

French World Cup champions awarded Legion of Honour

- The players in France's football team which last year won the World Cup have been awarded the Legion of Honour in the New Year's honours list. The 23 players, including star strikers Kylian Mbappe and Antoine Griezmann, each received France's top medal for their part in beating Croatia in the World Cup final in Moscow.
- The French team that won the 1998 World Cup also received the Legion of Honour.

IIT Professor Awarded For Contribution towards Development of Geo-Spatial Science

- The Indian Society for Remote Sensing conferred the National Geospatial Award for Excellence to IIT professor Jayanta Kumar Ghosh for his contribution towards the development of geospatial science and applications. Mr Ghosh, a professor at the civil engineering department of the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) in Roorkee, He was conferred the National Geospatial Award for Excellence-2017 (Life Time Achievement Award) at the Space Application Centre in Ahmedabad. The award comprised a citation, a medal and Rs. 1 lakh.

India's Arunima Sinha becomes world's first woman amputee to climb highest peak of Antarctica

- Arunima Sinha, the first female amputee to have conquered Mt Everest, created another record as she became world's first woman amputee to climb highest peak of Antarctica. Her aim was to climb all the continents' highest peaks and hoist the national flag of India. She has already done six peaks: Everest in Asia, Kilimanjaro in Africa, Elbrus in Europe, Kosciuszko in Australia, Aconcagua in Argentina and Carstensz Pyramid (Puncak Jaya) in Indonesia.

Low budget debut 'The Rider' as best picture of 2018

- The National Society of Film Critics chose Chloe Zhao's low-budget debut feature, The Rider, as best picture of 2018. Director Alfonso Cuarón's "Roma" won the most awards as best picture runner up, best foreign language film and for best cinematography. Cuarón also got the award for best director. The film critics society was founded in 1966, electing its voting critics from newspapers and other major U.S. media outlet

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) pavilion received 'Exhibitor of the Year Award'

- DRDO pavilion received 'Exhibitor of the Year Award' at 106th Indian Science Congress held at Lovely Professional University (LPU), Phagwara, Punjab
- The DRDO Pavillion at the mega science expo was inaugurated by Governor of Punjab Shri VP Singh Badnore and Union Science and Technology Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan

India bags Award of Excellence for 'Best in Show' at New York Times Travel Show 2019

- India received the Award of Excellence for 'Best in Show' at the recently concluded New York Times Travel Show 2019, It is the largest travel show in North America which held in New York. The Ministry of Tourism participated as the 'Presenting Partner' in the New York Times Travel Show (NYTTS 2019)
- A high level delegation led by Tourism Ministry Secretary Yogendra Tripathi and a number of stakeholders from India's tourism industry participated in the Show

Tamil Nadu bags FSSAI award for Swasth Bharat Yatra

- Tamil Nadu was declared as the 'Best State Overall' for exemplary participation in the Swasth Bharat Yatra, Madurai and Sivakasi won the awards for the best performing districts, while the State also bagged 17 awards in various other categories. Swasth Bharat Yatra is 100 day consumer outreach programme organised by Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), which was launched to amplify its Eat Right India initiative
- The Yatra, a cyclothon saw the involvement of 10 lakh participants and reached to around 2.5 crore people across various States and UTs
- Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra were adjudged the Best States with population above 3 crore
- Punjab, Goa and Delhi were recognised as the Best States having population less than 3 crore.
- Meghalaya, Jammu and Kashmir and Uttarakhand were given special awards for their participation despite their hilly and difficult terrain

Awards	Winners
Minister Devineni Umamaheswar Rao	Central Board of Irrigation and Power Award
Wahengbam Lamnganba (Manipur)	National Bravery Award

Polavaram project	Guinness Book of World Records
Mohamed Salah	African Football Player of the Year
Adi Godrej	ICSI's Lifetime Achievement Award
Namita Gokhale	Sushila Devi Literature Award
Chinese lawyer Yu Wensheng	European human rights award
Prime Minister Narendra Modi	Philip Kotler Presidential award
Wrestler Vinesh Phogat	Laureus World Comeback of the Year Award
India born Dr. Rattan Lal	Japan Prize
Pranab Mukherjee, Nanaji Deshmukh, Bhupen Hazarika	Bharat Ratna
Nari Shakti (women empowerment)	Hindi word of the year 2018 by Oxford Dictionaries
Dhirendra Nath Chakraborty	Assam Republic Day journalism award
Tamil translation of The Life of an Unknown Man Book	Romain Rolland Book Prize for literary translation

76th Golden Globe Awards 2019 complete list

Motion Picture Category

Best Motion Picture Drama	Bohemian Rhapsody
Best Motion Picture – Musical or Comedy	Green Book
Best Actor – Drama	Rami Malek for “Bohemian Rhapsody”
Best Actress – Drama	Glenn Close for “The Wife”
Best Actor – Musical or Comedy	Christian Bale for “Vice”
Best Actress – Musical or Comedy	Olivia Colman for “The Favourite”
Best Director	Alfonso Cuaron for “Roma”
Best Screenplay	Brian Hayes Currie, Peter Farrelly and Nick Vallelonga for “Green Book”
Best Original Score	Justin Hurwitz for “First Man”
Best Original Song	Shallow (A star is Born)
Best Animated Feature Film	Spider-Man: Into the Spider –Verse
Best Foreign Language Film	Roma (Mexico)

Television Category

Best Television Series, Drama	The Americans
Best Television Series – Musical/ Comedy	The Kominsky Method
Best Actress in Television Series – Drama	Sandra Oh (Killing Eve)
Best Actor in Television Series – Drama	Richard Madden (Bodyguard)
Best Actress in Television Series – Musical/Comedy	Rachel Brosnahan (The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel)
Best Actor in Television Series – Musical/Comedy	Michael Douglas (The Kominsky Method)

Government conferred Gandhi Peace Prize for 2015-2018

The government announced the names of the winners of the Gandhi Peace Prize for 2015-2018, which were last conferred to the Indian Space Research Organisation in 2014.

- It is given to individuals and institutions for their contribution towards social, economic and political transformation through non-violence and other Gandhian methods.
- 2015 - Vivekananda Kendra, Kanyakumari won the award for rural development and education
- 2016 - The award has been jointly given to Akshaya Patra Foundation for providing mid-day meals to children across the country and Sulabh International for its work towards emancipation of manual scavengers
- 2017 - The award will be given to Ekai Abhiyan Trust for its contribution to education for rural and tribal children
- 2018 - The award will be given to Nippon Foundation chairman Yohei Sasakawa for his role in leprosy eradication.

SAG - Screen Actors Guild Awards 2019

- “Black Panther” took home the top award for best performance by a cast in a motion picture at the 2019 Screen Actors Guild Awards
- On the TV front, “This Is Us” nabbed the ensemble award for drama,
- While “The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel” won the comedy prize.

S. No	Category	Winner
1.	Outstanding Performance by a Male Actor in a Leading Role	Rami Malek, “Bohemian Rhapsody”
2.	Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor in a Leading Role	Glenn Close, “The Wife”
3.	Outstanding Performance by a Male Actor in a Supporting Role	Mahershala Ali, “Green Book”
4.	Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor in a Supporting Role	Emily Blunt, “A Quiet Place”
5.	Outstanding Performance by a Cast in a Motion Picture	“Black Panther”
6.	Outstanding Performance by a Male Actor in a Television Movie or Miniseries	Darren Criss, “Assassination of Gianni Versace”
7.	Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor in a Television Movie or Miniseries	Patricia Arquette, “Escape at Dannemora”
8.	Outstanding Performance by a Male Actor in a Drama Series	Jason Bateman, “Ozark”
9.	Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor in a Drama Series	Sandra Oh, “Killing Eve”
10.	Outstanding Performance by a Male Actor in a Comedy Series	Tony Shalhoub, “The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel”
11.	Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor in a Comedy Series	Rachel Brosnahan, “The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel”
12.	Outstanding Performance by an Ensemble in a Drama Series	“This Is Us”
13.	Outstanding Performance by an Ensemble in a Comedy Series	“The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel”
14.	Outstanding Action Performance by a Stunt Ensemble in a Comedy or Drama Series:	“Glow”
15.	Outstanding Action Performance by a Stunt Ensemble in a Motion Picture	“Black Panther”

Important Committees

Person	Committee
Former Sebi chairman U.K. Sinha	Expert Committee on Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)
UIDAI's former Chairman Nandan Nilekani.	To boost digital payments
Dr. Sankar De	Research Advisory committee
Nitin Patel (convener of the GoM)	To boost the real estate sector under the GST regime
Pravin Kutumbe	To identify systemically important insurers

EPFO's central board of trustees notifies new committees

- Employees' Provident Fund Organisation has notified new finance, investment and audit committee (FIAC), the pension and EDLI implementation committee (PEIC) and the exempted establishments' committee (EEC)
- All the three committees will continue to have central government representatives as well as two representatives each of the employers and the employees and domain experts
- FIAC will oversee investments made by portfolio managers and ensure timely investment of PF kitty for optimum returns
- PEIC will review the function of the Employees' Pension Scheme, 1995 and the Employees Deposit Linked Insurance Scheme, 1976 as well as consider amendments to the existing schemes
- The EEC will oversee the working of exempted establishments and move suggestions for CBT for improvement in the working of these exempted establishment

Madras HC Forms Committee to Weed out Invasive Plant Species

- The Madras High Court has set up an expert committee to find a solution to root out invasive species of plants from the Western Ghats, Committee will be headed by Cherukuri Raghavendra Babu, chairman of Expert Committee on Invasive Species, National Biodiversity Authority, Chennai
- It has also directed the panel to file a report on the ways to weed out such species within two months.

Important MOU's

IIT Bombay and public sector oil companies inked a MOU

- IIT Bombay and public sector oil companies inked a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for setting up Centre of Excellence in Oil, Gas and Energy. The MoU was signed by heads of Indian Oil Corp (IOC), Oil and Natural Gas Corp (ONGC), GAIL India Ltd, Bharat Petroleum Corp Ltd (BPCL), Hindustan Petroleum Corp Ltd (HPCL), Oil India Ltd and Engineers India Ltd.

AAI signs MoU with SAMEER for boosting communication

- Airports Authority of India (AAI) signed MoU with Society for Applied Microwave Electronics Engineering and Research (SAMEER) for joint research programs in the field of Communication Navigation and Surveillance (CNS).
- AAI and SAMEER, an autonomous research and development (R and D) institute under MeitY have entered into an overarching MOU that will provide a platform for Collaborative Research for both the Organizations to work together.
- The MOU, on the one hand, will provide for the transfer of skill by SAMEER experts in the areas of Radio Frequency, Millimetre Wave and Antenna-related solutions to AAI domain experts, while on the other hand, it will pave way for exposure for the SAMEER researchers to the challenging Aviation field.

Indian Army signed MOU with Punjab National Bank

- A MoU was signed between the Indian Army and PNB on the Defence Salary Package. The signing ceremony was chaired by the Adjutant General, Lt Gen Ashwani Kumar and was attended by top dignitaries of PNB headed by Mr Naveen Kumar. Salient features of the improved and updated MoU are free 'RAKSHAK PLUS' Scheme for serving pers and veterans, overdraft facility range from Rs 0.75 to 3.0 lakhs, multicity 'At Par' cheques, instant credit of outstation cheques, preferential allotment of lockers at concessional AMC and free SMS alerts.

NHAI to collaborate with Oil Marketing Companies for issuance of FASTags

- Indian Highways Management Company Ltd. (IHMCL), a company promoted by NHAI, is signing MoUs with state-run Oil Marketing Companies (IOCL, BPC, and HPC). It will ensure availability of FASTags at petroleum outlets across India. In the first phase, the tags will be available across 50 Fuel Station in Delhi NCR, which will subsequently be expanded to outlets across India.
- IHMCL has been mandated to implement the National Electronic Toll Collection Program (NETC) in the country. The company launched the program under the brand name "FASTag" in April 2016. IMHCL is also planning the launch of two mobile applications MyFASTag and IHMCLPOS. These apps will enable customers to link the FASTags with their preferred bank account, recharge the FASTag via UPI platform, and also ensure that the tags are bank neutral.

IRCTC offers free travel insurance for air travellers

- The Indian Railways Catering and Tourism Corporation has announced that passenger booking air ticket using its website irctc.co.in can avail free of cost travel insurance of Rs 50 lakh. IRCTC tied up with Bharti AXA General

insurance company to provide free travel insurance. This facility will be available for passengers irrespective of the class of tickets and for both domestic and international flights. The insurance will provide them financial protection against accidental death and total or permanent disability. The premium for insurance will be borne by the IRCTC to secure its passengers from any untoward incident during the journey.

BEE and CPWD signed MOU on promoting energy efficiency in buildings

- The Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) and the Central Public Works Department (CPWD) have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for co operation in building energy efficiency, BEE and CPWD will cooperate on promoting designs and construction of Energy Conservation Building Code (ECBC) compliant new buildings, star rating of CPWD managed buildings across the country with no registration or renewal fee, awareness on energy efficiency in building sector and support for capacity building of CPWD officials in ECBC.
- In the first stage, approximately 150 buildings will be taken under a star rating scheme to promote energy efficiency in CPWD managed buildings, the Central Public Works Department under Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), the Bureau of Energy Efficiency is an agency of the Government of India, under the Ministry of Power created in March 2002 under the provisions of the nation's 2001 Energy Conservation Act.

Important Summit & Conference

PM Modi to inaugurate 106th Indian Science Congress in Jalandhar

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the 106th Indian Science Congress at Lovely Professional University in Phagwara near Jalandhar, Punjab. The theme of this five-day mega event is 'Future India: Science and Technology'. Three Nobel laureates will participate in this conference.

Kochi to host Advertising Association global summit in February

- The International Advertising Association (IAA) will host the IAA World Congress at will be held at the Lulu International Convention Centre in Kochi from February 20 to 22, 2019. The world congress is held every alternate year, This is the first time an Indian city is hosting the summit,

Theme of the summit	BrandDharma'
IAA world president	Srinivasan Swamy.

First Global Aviation Summit to be held in Mumbai on Jan 15

- The first ever two day Global Aviation Summit 2019 with the theme of 'Flying For All' will open on January 15, 2019 in Mumbai, Maharashtra. The summit organised by the Ministry of Civil Aviation along with FICCI, the first GAS-2019 will discuss how to ride this strong tailwind of growth and pave the way forward for the aviation sector.
- The summit is supported by International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), Federal Aviation Administration of US (FAA), International Air Transport Association (IATA), Civil Air Navigation Services Organisation (CANSO), Airports Council International (ACI) and Association of Asia Pacific Airlines (AAPA).

4th Raisina Dialogue inaugurated in Delhi

- The fourth edition of the Raisina Dialogue inaugurated in New Delhi. Norway Prime Minister Erna Solberg delivered inaugural address in presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj. Ministry of External Affairs in partnership with Observer Research Foundation is organizing the flagship annual geopolitical and geostrategic conference.
- The theme of the Dialogue this year is "A World Reorder: New Geometries; Fluid Partnerships; Uncertain Outcomes".
- The Dialogue will bring together over 600 delegates from 93 countries, including influential political leaders, strategic thinkers, policy practitioners, technology innovators, business representatives and academics.

National Consultation on Child Protection' held in New Delhi

- The First 'National Consultation on Child Protection' for 2019 was held at India Habitat Centre, New Delhi under the Chairmanship of the Secretary, Ministry of Women and Child Development.
- The meeting was organized to follow up on the exercise of monitoring of the CCIs by States/UTs, to deliberate upon various aspects of child protection and to take stock of the efforts made by States/UTs regarding improvements in the Child Care Institutions.

6th 'Women of India Organic Festival' Inaugurated in Chandigarh

- The Union Ministry of Women and Child Development is organising the sixth edition of the festival.
- Three-day 'Women of India Organic Festival' will begin at Leisure Valley in Sector-10 here on Saturday to celebrate and promote women farmers and entrepreneurs in the organic sector from the remotest parts of India, the Women of India Organic Festival has been held annually in New Delhi since 2015, and makes its debut in Chandigarh this year,

through this festival, the Ministry aims to educate people about its various initiatives and schemes relating to women and children.

Global Skill Summit 2019 held in Ranchi, Jharkhand

- To mark employment generation for 1.06 lakh youths in a year, Government of Jharkhand organized Global Skill Summit - 2019 in Ranchi during which appointment letters were given to all the candidates, Jharkhand is the only state in the country where three global summits were organized in a row merely in four years
- Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas, & Skill Development and Entrepreneurship today attended the summit

29th Indian Paint Conference - 2019 inaugurated in Agra

- 29th Indian Paint Conference - 2019 inaugurated in Agra, Uttar Pradesh, this would be the largest trade show of the estimated INR 500 billion (50,000 Crore) Indian Paints & Coatings industry.
- The theme of the Conference is 'Paints Pe Charcha – Naye Aayaam'.
- Apex body of the country's paint industry - Indian Paint Association (IPA)

4th meeting of the Council for Trade Development and Promotion (CTDP) in New Delhi

- Union Minister for Commerce & Industry and Civil Aviation, Suresh Prabhu, chaired the 4th meeting of the Council for Trade Development and Promotion (CTDP) in New Delhi
- Suresh Prabhu informed that the Government of India has formulated an Agricultural Export Policy for the first time with a focused plan to boost India's agricultural exports to USD 60 billion by 2022.
- CTDP was constituted in July 2015, to ensure a continues dialogue with State Governments/UTs on measures for providing International Trade enabling environments. It also seeks to create a framework for making States/ UTs active partners in boosting India's export.

9th International Micro irrigation conference inaugurated in Aurangabad

- Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, is organised the 9th International Micro Irrigation Conference at Aurangabad in Maharashtra, The conference is held in association with International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage (ICID), Indian National Committee on Surface Water (INCSW) and WAPCOS Limited, a CPSE under the Union Ministry of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation.
- The theme of the conference is "Micro Irrigation and Modern Agriculture".

Global Aviation Summit 2019 inaugurated in Mumbai

- The Union Minister of Civil Aviation, Suresh Prabhu on January 15, 2019 inaugurated the Global Aviation Summit 2019 in Mumbai, Maharashtra, The theme of the Global Aviation Summit 2019 is 'Flying for all' especially the next 6 Billion', The two-day summit is being organised by the Union Ministry of Civil Aviation, Airport Authority of India (AAI) in association with the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI)

BES EXPO 2019 inaugurated in New Delhi

- Information and Broadcasting Secretary Amit Khare and TRAI Chairman RS Sharma inaugurated the 25th International conference and exhibition on terrestrial and satellite broadcasting, BES EXPO 2019 in New Delhi. Nearly 300 companies from 25 countries are displaying their products at the Expo

World Economic Forum held in Davos

- The annual meet of World Economic Forum (WEF) begin in Davos. World leaders from across the globe will flock to the ski resort town on the Swiss Alps for five days to discuss what's ailing the world amid fears of the global economy sleepwalking into a crisis. Those expected to attend include German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Swiss President Ueli Maurer, Japan's Shinzo Abe, Italy's Giuseppe Conte and Israel's Benjamin Netanyahu among more than 30 heads of states/government, as also CEOs of global corporations, central bankers, economists, civil society leaders, media heads, celebrities and heads of international organisations like IMF, WTO, OECD and World Bank, among more than 3,000 participants. More than 100 CEOs from India are expected to participate in the meet. Nobel Laureate Kailash Satyarthi and filmmaker Karan Johar are also going to be a part of session which would be open for public.

Important Mobile App and Web Portal

Rail Kumbh Seva Mobile App launched by North Central Railway

- The North Central Railway (NCR) has launched a mobile application to help people navigate through Prayagraj city during Kumbh Mela starting from January 15, 2019. 'Rail Kumbh Seva Mobile App' will provide information regarding all the 'Mela special' trains that will be run during the period. The app will provide a link to the

user to buy both unreserved and reserved train tickets. A photo gallery, containing pictures of previous Kumbh Melas can also be accessed through the app.

‘Police-E-Eye’ app Launched

- The Coimbatore city traffic police launched a mobile application ‘Police-E-Eye’ for the public to report traffic violation. The application will enable public to take pictures of traffic rule violators and upload them for the police to view and take actions. The app was developed by a seven-member team of Aveon Infotech

Roshni an Android Mobile app developed by IIT Ropar helps the visually impaired recognise Indian currency notes

- The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Ropar, has developed an app to help the Visually Impaired recognise currency notes. “Roshni” was the first Android app that worked successfully with new INR currency notes
- The app can recognise both old and new notes and gives audio information as to which note you are holding in your hands. The user has to bring the currency note in front of phone camera and the app would provide audio notification intimating the currency notes denomination to the user. The app, developed by Dr Puneet Goyal, assistant professor and his students Mandhatya Singh, Joohi Chauhan and R Ram

Important Defence News

Defence industries received Rs 1.21 cr FDI during 2014-18

- India’s defence sector received Rs 1.21 crore foreign direct investments during 2014-18. Minister of State for Commerce and Industry C R Chaudhary stated that, FDI equity inflow of Rs 12,146,180 has been reported in the sector namely 'Defence Industries' during the period 2014-2018.
- As per the current policy, in defence sector, foreign investment beyond 49 percent has been permitted through approval route.

Indian Navy set new navy base in Port Blair

- Indian Navy's new airbase INS Kohasa, set to boost Andaman archipelago defence, 100 miles north of Port Blair in the strategically located Andaman and Nicobar islands. The facility was earlier known as INS Shivpur and has been renamed as INS Kohasa after the extension of facilities at the base. This will be India’s fourth air base and the third naval air facility in the archipelago. The base will initially operate choppers and Dornier short-range surveillance aircraft.

Army Tech Seminar (ARTECH 2019) held in New Delhi

- Indian Army organised the Army Technology Seminar-2019 in New Delhi.
- Theme of the seminar is “Disruptive Impact of Emerging Technologies on Land Warfare”
- The seminar was aimed to bring together stakeholders in the military, academia and industry to provide perspective on the available and emerging technologies, the event was attended by Dr Subhash Bhamre, Raksha Rajya Mantri, Gen Bipin Rawat, Chief of the Army Staff, Shri Ajay Kumar, Secretary Department of Defence Production and other dignitaries from Ministry of Defence.

India - Myanmar joint training exercise inaugurated in Chandimandir

- The second edition of the India-Myanmar bilateral army exercise, IMBEX 2018-19, commenced at Chandimandir Military Station, headquarters of the Western Command. The aim of this joint training programme, spread over six days, is to train the Myanmar delegation for participation in United Nations peace keeping operations under the UN flag. The exercise includes participation of 15 officers from Myanmar Army and 15 officers from the Indian Army.

Army plans to buy over 3,000 anti-tank guided missiles from France

- The Indian Army is planning to purchase over 3,000 Milan 2T anti-tank guided missiles (ATGM) from France in a deal worth over Rs. 1,000 crore. The decision to procure Milan 2T ATGMs is a stopgap arrangement while the Army gets its own homegrown third-generation ATGM in its arsenal. Milan 2T has a range of over two kilometres.
- Indian Army has a requirement of around 70,000 anti-tank guided missiles (ATGM) of various types and around 850 launchers of different types even as it is looking for third-generation ATGMs with a longer range than that of its existing Milan-2T and Konkurs ATGMs. India had last year scrapped a programme to buy the Spike ATGM from Israel in view of the indigenous developments in this direction.

Navy Chief Admiral Sunil Lanba commissions new Naval Air Base INS Kohassa

- Navy Chief Admiral Sunil Lanba commissioned the new Naval Air Base ‘INS Kohassa’ at Diglipur in Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The new Naval Air Base will enhance our maritime capability along with keeping the northern part of Andaman sea and the area under surveillance. Commander-in-Chief, Andaman & Nicobar Command (CINCAN) Vice

Admiral Bimal Verma was also present on the occasion. The new airbase, named 'INS Kohassa' at Diglipur, will be used to handle operations of helicopters and small aircraft like the Dornier. The airport at Diglipur will be utilised for both Defence and civil aircraft.

DRDO successfully test-fires Barak 8 LRSAM missile

- Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has successfully test-fired Barak 8 LRSAM (Long Range Surface-to-Air Missile) from naval warship INS Chennai off the coast of Odisha. The missile (directly) hit a low flying aerial target. The Barak 8 LRSAM missile defence system has been jointly developed by DRDO and Israel Aerospace Industries.

Ministry of Defence Launched 'RDP INDIA 2019' Mobile App

- As a new initiative in sync with the Digital India campaign of the Government, Ministry of Defence had launched a mobile app 'RDP India 2019' on the Republic Day. With the intent of making available the highlights of the Republic Day event, not only to the spectators at Rajpath, but also to the general public all over the world. This app contains information about the Parade on Rajpath, New Delhi, including Order of the March, details of the tableaux presented by different States and Ministries, children cultural performances, fly past and names of recipients of Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar 2019.

Important Science and Technology

ISRO becomes first agency to use fourth stage of rocket as orbital platform

- The fourth and final stage of the rocket normally turns into debris after ejecting a satellite. This time, the workhorse PSLV DL's fourth stage, with a satellite built by school students strapped to its back, will continue orbiting the earth at a distance of 450km above it for six months. The latest Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) take off from Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh on a mission to help India notch up one more first in space technology. It will make use of the final stage of rocket as orbital platform for a satellite.

ISRO launches student-made satellite Kalamsat-V2 into space

- ISRO's rocket was mainly to put into orbit a 740 kg satellite named Microsat-R that will be used to take high-resolution photographs of the earth. This satellite will be used by the Indian Defence research team.
- The satellite was launched using the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) and was successfully placed into orbit. Onboard the PSLV was the world's lightest satellite that was built by Indian students. This satellite weighs just 1.2Kgs and is named Kalamsat v2. The satellite cost the student team around Rs. 12 Lakhs, but ISRO launched it into orbit for free. The 1.2Kg Kalamsat v2 was prepared in 6 days, and was under development since the last 6 years. The 20+ team of students at Space Kidz India were headed by Srimathy Kesan.

Important Schemes and Programs

Global Report on Trafficking in Persons Launched

- UN office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) released a latest Global Report on "Trafficking in Persons".
- According to the latest Global Report on Trafficking in Persons, The number of human trafficking victims is on the rise, while armed groups and terrorists are trafficking women and children to generate funds and recruit,
- The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime is a United Nations office that was established in 1997, as the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention by combining the United Nations International Drug Control Program (UNDCP) and the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Division in the United Nations Office.

Dr. Jitendra Singh inaugurates UNNATI of ISRO in Bengaluru

- Minister of State in Department of Space Dr. Jitendra Singh inaugurated UNNATI programme of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) in Bengaluru. UNNATI, a capacity building programme on Nanosatellite development, is an initiative by ISRO to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the first United Nations conference on the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space (UNISPACE-50)
- UNNATI - Unispace Nanosatellite Assembly and Training programme

Important Ranking and Indexes

India to grow by 7.5% in 2019; Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)

- A settled goods and services tax (GST), improving credit availability and capacity expansion from increasing investment in infrastructure are among seven key drivers that will help Indian economy grow 7.5% next year.

- Growth Outlook for 2019', CII stated that amid growing global vulnerabilities of trade wars and US monetary tightening, India shines as the fastest growing major economy with robust gross domestic product (GDP) in 2018 that is expected to continue to expand in 2019.

Andhra Pradesh tops ACI's Ease of Doing Business index

- Andhra Pradesh has topped the survey of Asia Competitiveness Institute (ACI), Singapore's 2018 Ease of Doing Business (EDB) Index ABC Rankings for economies of 21 states of India, while Maharashtra and Delhi came in second and third place respectively. Andhra Pradesh rose from the 5th rank in 2016 to the top spot in 2018.
- Ease of Doing Business (EDB) index is based upon three parameters called ABC, Attractiveness to Investors, Business Friendliness and Competitiveness Policies.

Indian economy is expected to grow at 7.2% in 2018-19: CSO

- First advance estimates of national income released by the Central Statistics Office (CSO). Indian economy is expected to grow at 7.2% in 2018-19, higher from 6.7% in the previous fiscal, mainly due to improvement in the performance of agriculture and manufacturing sectors. The income earned by an average Indian doubled in seven years, from Rs 63,642 per year in 2011-12 to Rs 1.25 lakh in 2018-19.

India is set to become world's third largest consumer market: World Economic Forum

- India is set to become the world's third largest consumer market behind only USA and China by 2030. The report titled 'Future of Consumption in Fast-Growth Consumer Market - India' also noted that growth of the middle class will lift nearly 25 million households out of poverty. Consumer spending in India is expected to grow from 1.5 trillion US dollar at present to six trillion US dollar by 2030. The report stated that, with the annual GDP growth rate of 7.5 percent, India is currently the world's sixth largest economy.

India Ranks 79th, Japan Tops List of Most Powerful Passports

- Henley Passport Index periodically measures the access each country's travel document affords, India jumped two positions from 81st in 2018 to 79th this year, Japan retained its top spot as the world's most travel-friendly passport due to the document's access to 190 countries,
- The ranking is based on the extensive and exclusive data collected from the International Air Transportation Association (IATA) which maintains the world's largest and most accurate database of travel information, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Nepal ranked further low at 104, 102 and 94 respectively

Economist Intelligence Unit 2018 Democracy Index

- Norway topped and India has ranked at 41st place on the Economist Intelligence Unit's annual Global Democracy Index, The EIU Democracy Index provides a snapshot of the state of world democracy for 165 independent states and two territories.
- The Democracy Index is based on five categories: electoral process and pluralism; civil liberties; the functioning of government; political participation; and political culture, Based on their scores on 60 indicators within these categories, each country is then itself classified as one of four types of regime: full democracy; flawed democracy; hybrid regime; and authoritarian regime.

India among the most trusted nations globally: Report

- India is among the most trusted nations globally when it comes to government, business, NGOs and media. The 2019 Edelman Trust Barometer report, which was released, ahead of the World Economic Forum meet in Davos, noted that the Global Trust Index witnessed a marginal increase of 3 points to 52. China topped the Trust Index among both the informed public and the general population segments. India was at the second place in the informed public category and third place in the general population category.

JNPT becomes India's only port to be ranked among world's top 30

- The Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT) has become India's only port to get listed among the top 30 global container ports. The JNPT, India's premiere container port got listed amongst the top 30 container ports globally, as per the latest Lloyds Report. JNPT notched up five spots, to be 28th on the list, compared to its previous ranking.
- This is a validation of all the efforts and strategic initiatives being implemented at JNPT in order to enhance overall port efficiency

India ranks sixth in GDPR readiness index: Cisco

- Around 65 per cent of Indian businesses and organisations are better prepared for the European Union's (EU) General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), making India the sixth best prepared nation to deal with the new data privacy regulation which all organizations operating within the European Union and European Economic Area are

mandated to comply with. The rankings were part of the 'Data Privacy Benchmark Study' for 2019 put out by technology giant Cisco. As per the report 59% of organizations across the world reported meeting all requirements or most of the requirements, 29% expect to do so within a year while 9% will take more than a year.

India replaces Japan as second largest steel producer

- According to World Steel Association (worldsteel) India has replaced Japan as world's second largest steel producing country. **China is the largest producer** of crude steel accounting for more than 51 per cent of production
- "India's crude steel production in 2018 was at 106.5 MT, up by 4.9 per cent from 101.5 MT in 2017. Japan produced 104.3 MT in 2018, down 0.3 per cent compared to 2017

Global Corruption Index: India 78th Rank

- According to the annual index by global watchdog Transparency International, India has improved its ranking on a global corruption index in 2018 by three points and moved to 78th position with a score of 41
- In the list of 180 countries, China and Pakistan lagged far behind at 87th and 117th position, respectively
- Denmark is the least corrupt country followed by New Zealand. Somalia, Syria and South Sudan are the most corrupt countries in the world
- Transparency International Headquarters - Berlin, Germany
- Managing Director -- Patricia Moreira

India's unemployment rate hit four decade high of 6.1% in 2017-18

- As per the National Sample Survey Office's (NSSO's) periodic labour force survey (PLFS) of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, India's unemployment rate hit a 45 year high of 6.1 per cent in 2017-18. It is highest level since 1972-73
- The report further stated that unemployment was higher in urban areas 7.8% as compared to 5.3% in rural areas of the country
- For educated rural females, the unemployment rate ranged between 9.7% to 15.2% between 2004-05 to 2011-12, which rose to 17.3 per cent in 2017-18,
- In case of rural educated males, the joblessness rate surged to 10.5 per cent in 2017-18 from 3.5 - 4.4% between 2004-05 to 2011-12

Important Books and Authors

Rajya Sabha Vice Chairman launched 'A Crusade Against Corruption' book

- Vice-Chairman of Rajya Sabha, Harivansh Narayan Singh launched Manohar Manoj's book 'A Crusade Against Corruption' in New Delhi.

Malala Yousafzai pens new book on refugee girls

- Nobel Peace Prize winner and Pakistani activist Malala Yousafzai pens a new book, titled 'We Are Displaced: My Journey and Stories from Refugee Girls Around the World.'

Important Sports News Cricket

Jasprit Bumrah Becomes Highest International Wicket-Taker in 2018

- India pacer Jasprit Bumrah finished 2018 as the highest wicket-taker across all formats in the calendar year, He has picked up 78 wickets across all formats in 2018, The South African Bowler Kagiso Rabada, has taken 77 wickets in 2018.

USA Cricket becomes ICC's 105th member

- The International Cricket Council (ICC) Tuesday announced USA Cricket as its 105th member.
- As a Member of the ICC, USA Cricket is now eligible to receive funding in accordance with the ICC Development Funding Policy and can sanction domestic and international cricket in the United States, The International Cricket Council (ICC) is the global governing body of cricket. It was founded as the Imperial Cricket Conference in 1909 by representatives from Australia, England and South Africa, It was renamed as the International Cricket Conference in 1965, and again renamed as International Cricket Council (ICC) in 1989.

Albie Morkel announced retirement from all formats of cricket

- South African allrounder Albie Morkel announced his retirement from all forms of cricket, putting an end to nearly 20-year of professional cricketing career.

- Morkel played one Test, 58 ODIs and 50 T20Is for his country, scoring 1412 runs and picking up 77 wickets across formats.

Bengal's Satyarup Siddhanta Becomes World's Youngest Mountaineer to Climb 7 Peaks, 7 Volcano Summits

- Mountaineer Satyarup Siddhanta climbed Antarctica's highest point, Mount Sidley, to become the youngest man in the world to have climbed the seven highest volcanic peaks, Mr Siddhanta hails from Haridevpur in South Kolkata and is a software engineer by profession. He holds the record of conquering several summits such as Mt Kilimanjaro in Africa, Mt Elbrus in Europe, Mt Denali in Alaska and Mt Mont Blanc in France.

Kohli became first player to win all three top ICC awards in single year

- Virat Kohli has become the first player to win all three major annual ICC awards in a single year for his performances in 2018. Kohli was named Men's Test Player of the Year for the first time, while he also won Cricketer and ODI Player of Year awards. He was also named captain of Test and ODI teams of 2018

21-yr-old Rishabh Pant named ICC Men's Emerging Cricketer of 2018

- India's 21-year-old wicketkeeper-batsman Rishabh Pant has been named the ICC Men's Emerging Cricketer of the Year 2018. Last year, Pant became the first Indian wicketkeeper to score a Test hundred in England and equalled the record for most catches taken in a Test, with 11 in Adelaide in December. Pant is the third Indian to be honoured with this award.

Mohammed Shami is the fastest Indian bowler to reach 100 ODI wickets

- Mohammed Shami became the fastest Indian bowler to claim 100 ODI wickets, during the first one-dayer against New Zealand at Napier. Shami reached the milestone in his 56th match, with the wicket of opener Martin Guptill.
- The Indian record was previously held by Irfan Pathan, who got there in his 59th match, against Pakistan in Abu Dhabi in 2006. The world record is currently held by Afghanistan leg-spinner Rashid Khan, who needed only 44 games to reach the mark. Some of the other Indians in the list include Zaheer Khan (65 matches), Ajit Agarkar (67 matches) and Javagal Srinath (68 matches).

Shikhar Dhawan becomes second quickest Indian to 5000 ODI runs

- India's opening batsman Shikhar Dhawan became the second fastest Indian to 5000 ODI runs in the first ODI between India and New Zealand at McLean Park in Napier. He also became the fifth fastest overall while joining legendary left-hander Brian Lara in the list. Dhawan surpassed the likes of Sourav Ganguly and Graeme Smith while matching Lara to become the joint-fastest left-handed batsman. Earlier, Dhawan had become the second fastest Indian, behind Kohli, and sixth quickest overall to reach 4000 ODI runs during an ODI series at home against Sri Lanka in 2017. Dhawan had brought up 4000 runs in the 94th innings of his ODI career

Botha announces immediate retirement from all forms of Cricket

- Former South Africa all-rounder Johan Botha has announced his immediate retirement from all forms of Cricket. Botha played for South Africa in five test matches, 78 one-day internationals and 40 T20 Internationals from 2005 to 2012. Botha captained the Proteas in 10 ODIs and took the team to the No. 1 ranking after they defeated Australia 4-1 in Australia in 2009.

Wasim Jaffer becomes 1st player to score 1,000 runs in a Ranji season twice

- Wasim Jaffer went past 1000 runs this season for Vidarbha a decade after scoring 1260 runs for Mumbai. He is the first batsman in Ranji Trophy history to score over 1000 runs in a season twice. In 2008-09, Wasim Jaffer had scored 1260 runs for Mumbai in the Ranji Trophy. This season, Jaffer has scored over 1000 runs for Vidarbha. Jaffer is the only Asian batsman to score 2 first-class double hundreds after turning 40

West Indies captain Holder 3rd player to hit Test double ton batting at no. 8

- Windies captain Jason Holder slammed 202* (229) in the second innings of the first Test against England, becoming only the third batsman in Test cricket history to score a double ton batting at number eight.
- Pakistan's Wasim Akram (257* against Zimbabwe, 1996) and Imtiaz Ahmed (209 against New Zealand, 1955) are the other two batsmen to have achieved the feat.

Football

Egypt to host 2019 Africa Cup of Nations

- Egypt will host the 2019 Africa Cup of Nations, the Confederation of African Football (CAF) has announced. It will be the fifth time Egypt to host the African Cup of Nations. Egypt beat South Africa, the only other nation to bid, by 16 votes. Original host nation Cameroon was stripped of staging duties because of slow preparations.

- Egypt will use eight stadiums during the tournament, hosting in five different cities: Alexandria, Ismailia, Port Said, Suez and the capital Cairo.

Other Sports news

80th National Table Tennis Championship begins in Cuttack

- The 80th National Table Tennis Championship began at Jawaharlal Nehru Indoor Stadium in Cuttack, Odisha. As many as 35 teams, including 550 players from different parts of the country are participating in the mega championship. Odisha State Table Tennis Association (OSTTA) is hosting the championships after a gap of 18 years.

Roger Federer and Belinda Bencic won the Hopman Cup for the second time

- Switzerland's Roger Federer and Belinda Bencic secured a 2-1 victory over Germany's Angelique Kerber and Alexander Zverev to win the Hopman Cup for the second year in a row. In a rerun of 2018 final, Federer beat Zverev to give the Swiss an early 1-0 lead. Wimbledon champion Kerber then overcame Bencic to level the tie. However, the Swiss claimed a tight win in the mixed doubles to claim their fourth Hopman Cup title.
- Twenty time Grand Slam champion Federer is the first player to win three Hopman Cups - twice with Bencic and once with Martina Hingis, in 2001.

Second edition of Khelo India Youth Games inaugurated in Pune

- The second edition of Khelo India Youth Games officially inaugurated in Pune, Maharashtra. More than 9000 players from different states will participate in 18 different games at Khelo India Youth Games. Khelo India Youth Games is a part Khelo India which is the revamped national programme for development of sports in India.
- Khelo India Youth Games (KIYG), formerly Khelo India School Games (KISG), held annually in January or February.

Sydney and Brisbane Chosen to Host ATP Cup In 2020

- The debut of the ATP Cup will take place in January 2020.
- Australian cities Sydney and Brisbane have been announced as the first two host locations for the newest team event in men's tennis.
- With more than 100 players from 24 nations vying for \$15 million in prize money and 750 ATP Ranking points.

Mary Kom attained number one position in AIBA rankings

- M C Mary Kom has attained number one position in the International Boxing Association's (AIBA) latest world rankings. Mary Kom is placed top of the charts in the 48kg weight division with 1700 points.
- The 36-year-old will have to jump to 51kg in pursuit of her 2020 Olympic dream as 48kg is not yet included in the Games roster

Maharashtra tops the medal tally with 37 golds at the Khelo India Youth Games in Pune

- Maharashtra had 111 medals in its kitty with 37 gold, 31 silver and 43 bronze. Delhi continues to follow second with 35 gold and Haryana too maintains its third position with 29 gold.
- Ten year old Abhinav Shaw became the youngest gold medallist in shooting, He teamed up with Mehuli Ghosh to help West Bengal win the 10m air rifle mixed team event.

Bengaluru Raptors clinch PBL title

- Bengaluru Raptors beat Mumbai Rockets 4-3 in the final of the Premier Badminton League (PBL) at the Kanteerava Indoor Stadium in Bengaluru to win their maiden title.
- Kidambi Srikanth, Vu Ji Trang (Trump match) and men's doubles pair of Mohammad Ahsan and Hendra Satiawan won their matches for Bengaluru Raptors.

8 year old Kartik Singh becomes youngest to win Junior World title in golf

- Gurgaon's 8-year-old Kartik Singh has won the under 8 category at the Kids' Golf World Championship organised by US kids Golf in Malaysia, which makes him the youngest Indian to win the title.
- He finished 8th at the US kids junior world championship 2017, Pinehurst, the USA in 7 year category.

Shakil Ahmed sets world record in Indoor rowing

- Asian Cup Gold medallist Shakil Amed set up a world record in indoor rowing by completing 1,00,000 (one lakh) metres in above 40 years category.
- Shakil began his record setting indoor rowing feat in Salt Lake stadium complex and achieved the milestone of covering 1,00,000 metres of simulated distance in 10 hours.

1st National EMRS National Sports Meet, 2019 Began at Hyderabad

- The 1st National Level Sports Meet for the students of Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) was inaugurated by Shri Jaswantsinh Sumanbhai Bhabhor, Minister of State for Tribal Affairs at G.M.C Balayogi Stadium, Hyderabad
- The Minister also launched an app 'EMRS Sports Meet' dedicated on the occasion. The event has a participation of 1777 students comprising of 975 boys and 802 girls representing 20 States of the country.
- Government has decided to establish EMRS in every block with more than 50% or more tribal population and 20,000 or more tribal persons by the year 2022 thereby around 462 schools will be set up in addition to the 288 EMRSs already sanctioned.

Ex-captain Sardar Singh named in Hockey India selection committee

- Former captain Sardar Singh has been included in a 13-member Hockey India selection committee.
- The team will be headed by BP Govinda, a member of the 1975 World Cup-winning team.

Ankita Raina wins ITF's tournament in Singapore

- India's Ankita Raina has won the International Tennis Federation's 25,000-dollar Women's tournament in Singapore, Ankita defeated top seed and world number 122 Arantxa Rus of the Netherlands, 6-3, 6-2.
- She toppled four seeded players in the tournament to win her first title of the season and eighth overall.
- Ankita came into the tournament after competing at the Qualifiers of the ongoing Australian Open. She will play two more tournaments before gearing up for the Fed Cup, starting in the first week of next month at Astana, Kazakhstan.

Sam Stosur and Zhang Shuai win Australian Open women's doubles title

- Former US Open women's singles winner Sam Stosur teamed up with Zhang Shuai to overcome defending champions Timea Babos and Kristina Mladenovic to claim the Australian Open women's doubles title.
- This was the 34-year-old Australian's first Grand Slam title on home soil since 2005. Notably, this was Zhang's first Grand Slam title of any kind.

Novak Djokovic beats Rafael Nadal to win his 7th Australian Open title

- Novak Djokovic defeated Rafael Nadal to win his 7th Australian Open Men's Singles title at Melbourne. World No.1 outplayed the second-ranked Nadal 6-3, 6-2, 6-3 in a largely one sided match
- In Women's Singles, Japan's Naomi Osaka clinched her maiden Australian Open Grand Slam Singles title in Melbourne. Osaka defeated Petra Kvitova of Czech Republic 7-6, 5-7, 6-4 in the summit clash

Saina wins Indonesia Masters after injured Marin limps out of final

- Ace shuttler Saina Nehwal won her first Indonesia Masters title after three-time world champion Carolina Marin limped out of the final due to a leg injury.
- The Spaniard was leading 10-4 in the first game, after she retired with injury.

Kartik Sharma wins New South Wales Men's Amateur Golf Champion

- India's Kartik Sharma won the New South Wales men's Amateur Golf Championship in Australia. Kartik notched up a magnificent win over Australia's Nathan Barberie in the scheduled 36 hole final to emerge as champion
- The Gurgaon golfer has been playing for India since the age of 10 as part of the National Squad. Kartik had also won the Indian golf union western India amateur golf championship 2018

73 year old Frenchman wins solo round the world sailing race

- Frenchman Jean-Luc van den Heede won the round-the-world Golden Globe race without the help of modern technology after 211 days at sea
- Jean-Luc Van Den Heede arrived Les Sables d'Olonne in western France in his 35 foot yacht Matmut, the first boat to finish the 30,000 mile Golden Globe race.

Important Obituaries

Sl.No	Person	Field
1.	Kader Khan	An Afghan-born Indian-Canadian film actor
2.	Larry Roberts	ARPAnet lead, early internet pioneer
3.	C H Loknath	Kannada actor
4.	Ramakant Achrekar	Cricket coach
5.	Dibyendu Palit	Bengali writer and Sahitya Akademi awardee
6.	Harold Brown	Former U.S. Defence Secretary
7.	Lenin Rajendran	Veteran Malayalam filmmaker

8.	Sir Michael Atiyah	British mathematician
9.	Raghubir Singh Bhola	Former India hockey player
10.	Bhanu Prakash Singh	Former Union minister, ex-Goa Governor
11.	Krishna Sobti	Hindi writer
12.	Michel Legrand	French composer
13.	George Fernandes	Former Defence Minister