

## Important Monthly Current Affairs Capsule – March

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## Important Days

Date	Important days	Theme
March 1	Zero Discrimination Day	Act to change laws that Discriminate
March 1	World Civil Defence Day	Children's safety, our responsibility
March 3	World Wildlife Day	Life below water: for people and planet
March 3	World Hearing Day	Check your hearing!
March 4	National Safety Day	Cultivate and sustain a safety culture for building nation
March 8	International Women's Day	"Think equal, build smart, innovate for change"
March 10	CISF Raising Day	-
March 12	Corporation Bank's 114th Foundation Day	-
March 13 (2 <sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of March)	No Smoking Day	-
March 14	World Kidney Day	'Kidney health for everyone, everywhere'
March 14	International Pi Day	-
March 14	The 22nd annual International Day of Action for Rivers	'Celebration of the role of women in protecting and managing our rivers'
March 12 to 16	India Smart Utility Week	-
March 15	World Consumer Rights Day	'Trusted Smart Products'
March 15	World Sleep Day	Healthy Sleep, Healthy Aging
March 18	National Ordnance Factories Day	-
March 18	Global Recycling Day	Recycling Into The Future
March 20	International Day of Happiness	Happier Together
March 20	World Sparrow Day	-
March 21	World Forestry Day	Forests and Education: Learn to Love Forests
March 21	World Down Syndrome Day	Leave No One Behind
March 21	World Poetry Day	-
March 21	International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination	'Mitigating and countering rising nationalist populism and extreme supremacist ideologies'
March 22	World Water Day	Leaving No One Behind
March 23	World Meteorological Day	The Sun, the Earth and the Weather'
March 23	Marty's Day (Shaheed Diwas)	-
March 25	International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade	'Remember Slavery: The Power of the Arts for Justice'
March 25	International Day of Solidarity with Detained and Missing Staff Members	-
March 26	Epilepsy Awareness Day or Purple Day	-
March 27	World Theatre Day	-

## Important Banking News

### RBI

#### **RBI, Bank of Japan sign Bilateral Swap Arrangement**

- Reserve Bank of India and Bank of Japan have signed a Bilateral Swap Arrangement (BSA).
- The BSA provides for India to access 75 billion US dollars whereas the earlier BSA had provided for 50 billion dollars.
- The financial cooperation would further enhance the strong economic ties between India and Japan

#### **RBI forms task force to see overseas Rupee**

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) task force would likely also suggest policy measures to strengthen the local markets, helping avoid wild swings in exchange rates for the rupee. The eight-member committee headed by Usha Thorat – former deputy governor, Ajit Ranade – chief economist of Aditya Birla group, and Sajjid Chinoy – chief economist India, JPMorgan. The committee will assess the causes behind the development of the offshore rupee market while studying the effects of the overseas market on the rupee exchange rate per dollar and liquidity in the domestic market.

#### **RBI imposed 8 crore fine on 3 banks for non compliance in SWIFT operation**

- The Reserve Bank of India has imposed a total monetary fine of Rs. 8 crore on three banks - Karnataka Bank, United Bank of India and Karur Vysya Bank - for non-compliance of directions on Swift messaging software.
- While the RBI imposed Rs. 4 crore fine on Karnataka Bank, United Bank is facing a penalty of Rs. 3 crore. The regulator has levied Rs. 1 crore fine on Karur Vysya Bank.
- The RBI has levied an aggregate penalty of Rs 40 million on the Karnataka bank for delayed implementation of four of the Swift related operational controls
- Earlier, four banks -- SBI, Union Bank of India, Dena Bank and IDBI -- had informed exchanges about monetary penalty slapped on them by the regulator for non-compliance with various directions.
- Fine of Rs. 3 crore was imposed on Union Bank, Rs. 2 crore on Dena Bank, and Rs 1 crore each on IDBI and the SBI.

#### **RBI to infuse Rs. 12,500 crore via OMOs**

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has stated that it will infuse 12,500 crore rupees into the system through open market operations (OMOs). It based on an assessment of prevailing liquidity conditions and also of the durable liquidity needs going forward, it will conduct the purchase of the government securities under open market operations. OMOs are money market tools to infuse or suck out liquidity from the system

#### **RBI identifies SBI, ICICI and HDFC Bank as Domestic Systemically Important Banks (D-SIBs)**

- The Reserve Bank of India has released the list of Domestic Systemically Important Banks (D-SIBs). The Reserve Bank had issued the Framework for dealing with D-SIBs in July 22, 2014.
- Domestic Systemically Important Banks are those banks which if fails would have a significant impact on the economy. RBI has a various set of criteria to add a bank to this list. The basic condition is that a bank size should be more than 2% of Indian GDP. The D-SIBs banks are classified into 5 buckets. Bucket 1, Bucket 2, Bucket 3, Bucket 4 and Bucket 5. With Bucket 5 being the most important followed by rest in decreasing order.
- State Bank of India is in Bucket 3, while HDFC and ICICI Bank both are in Bucket 1. Rest all buckets are empty. These three banks are in the D-SIBs list since Sep 04, 2017. No new bank has been added after the revised list is released on March 14, 2019

#### **RBI to infuse fresh liquidity worth \$5 billion into the system**

- The Reserve Bank of India announced to infuse long term liquidity worth \$5 billion into the system through Foreign Exchange swap arrangement with banks for 3 years. The swap is in the nature of a simple Buy/Sell foreign exchange swap with the RBI. A bank can sell U.S. dollars to the RBI and simultaneously agree to buy the same amount of U.S. dollars at the end of the three year.
- Under the swap auction, minimum bid size would be USD 25 million and in multiples of USD 1 million thereafter, the eligible participants are allowed to submit multiple bids. However, the aggregate amount of bids submitted by single eligible entity should not exceed the notified amount of auction. Authorised Dealers (ADs) – category-1 banks will be the eligible entities to participate in the auction.

## **RBI to reform Ways And Means Advance system for states**

- Reserve Bank of India has proposed a rule-based approach in fixing new Ways and Means limits for the state governments, replacing the previous expenditure-based system. It will set up a panel to recommend parameters of the new system which is aimed at preventing automatic monetisation of deficits.
- The central bank which acts as debt manager for state governments provides short-term loan to them to bridge temporary liquidity mismatches. The temporary loan facility is called Ways and Means Advances. The states have also agreed to link their receipts and payment systems with RBI's integrated accounting system (e-Kuber) for greater system efficiency.

## **RBI slaps Rs. 2 crore penalty on PNB**

- The Reserve Bank of India has slapped a penalty of Rs. 2 crore on Punjab National Bank for non-compliance of regulatory directions with regard to SWIFT operations.
- SWIFT is a global messaging software used for sharing information on inter-bank transactions by financial entities. Earlier this year, the Reserve Bank had imposed penalties worth 71 crore rupees on 36 public, private and foreign banks for non-compliance with various directions on time-bound implementation and strengthening of SWIFT operations

## **RBI raises FPI investment limit in G-Secs**

- The Reserve Bank of India upped the investment limit for FY2019-20 for foreign portfolio investors (FPI) in Central government securities (G-Secs) to 6 per cent of outstanding stock of securities from 5.5 per cent in FY2018-19.
- The limit for FPI investment in State development loans (SDLs) and corporate bonds has been left unchanged at 2 per cent and 9 per cent of outstanding stocks.
- The current limit of Rs. 6,49,900 crore, the revised limit for FPI investment in debt for FY2020 has been set at Rs. 6,98,300 crore for the first half, and Rs. 7,46,500 crore for the second half of the financial year.

## **SBI**

## **SBI reports frauds worth Rs.7951 crore in Apr – Dec FY19**

- SBI had reported frauds amounting Rs. 7,951 crore during the first nine months of fiscal 2019, mainly due to frauds declared in some large-value accounts. All those accounts became non-performing assets "much earlier" and that most of the portfolio was already provided for with full provision. The resolution process for recovery is on via various debt recovery regulatory bodies.

## **Hitachi arm & SBI to roll out digital payments platform**

- State Bank of India and Hitachi Payment Services Pvt Ltd, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Hitachi Ltd launched their merchant-acquiring joint venture, SBI Payment Services Pvt Ltd (SBIPSPL), in Mumbai, for establishing a digital payments platform for India and other countries in the region. The joint venture (SBI) has a 74 percent stake, and the balance is with Hitachi Payment Services) will facilitate expansion of the digital payments landscape in India via its digital payments platform.

## **State Bank of India to join SWIFT's global payment interface**

- State Bank of India will soon sign up with the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Transactions' (SWIFT) Global Payment Interface (GPI) which is set to make cross-border transactions much more secure and transparent
- India's largest lender will join 11 of its counterpart banks that will have subscribed to this payments platform
- SWIFT gpi is being used by 3500 banks across the globe carrying transactions worth over \$300 billion daily.
- The gpi-enabled banks can also opt for an additional feature called Payment Control Service (PCS) where in case of any irregularities during the payments' transaction such as higher-than-usual fund size or uncommon transaction timeframe, the channel can block the transaction and notify the bank

## **SBI links pricing of loans, deposits to the repo rate**

- The State Bank of India (SBI) will use the repo rate of RBI as a benchmark to set the savings deposit interest rates and interest rates for short-term loans from May 01, 2019.
- With this the State Bank of India will become the first bank in the country to use an external benchmark like repo for interest rates of saving deposits and loans. This has been done for quick transmission of changes in the RBI's policy rates.

- However, those saving deposit accounts with balance less than Rs. 1 lakh and borrowers with CC/OD limits up to Rs. 1 lakh will be exempted from this. These will continue to be linked to MCLR. This has been done to insulate them from the movement of external benchmarks like repo rate. In savings account with deposits balances above Rs. 1 lakh, the effective interest rate will be 2.75% below repo rate. All cash credit accounts and overdrafts above Rs. 1 lakh would be priced at 2.25% over the repo rate.

### **SBI launched doorstep banking service for senior citizens**

- State Bank of India launched 'Doorstep Banking' for senior citizen customers over 70 years of age, differently-abled customers and infirm customers including visually impaired customers.
- Doorstep banking services are available to KYC-compliant account holders, with a valid mobile number registered with the bank and residing within 5 kilometres radius from their home branch. This service will not be available for accounts operated jointly, minor accounts, and accounts of non-personal nature.
- Eligible customers can avail these services with a nominal fee of Rs. 100 per transaction for financial transactions and Rs. 60 per transaction for non-financial transactions.

### **SBI customers can withdraw cash without ATM cards**

- The State Bank of India has launched the YONO Cash service for its customers which will allow them to withdraw cash from ATMs without their debit cards. A part of SBI's digital banking platform, You Only Need One (YONO), the cardless cash withdrawal service will be available across 16,500 ATMs of the bank in the country. Such SBI ATMs will be called YONO Cash Point.
- SBI customers can use the YONO app on their smartphones to withdraw cash from SBI ATMs, or YONO Cash Points, without using their debit and credit cards. After installing the YONO app on their phones, SBI account holders will have to set a 6-digit YONO PIN for withdrawing cash. Once a request for withdrawing cash is placed, a 6-digit code will be sent to the user's phone via SMS, which will then have to be entered into a YONO Cash Point.

### **SBI raises Rs. 1,251.30 crore by issuing Basel III-compliant tier-I bonds**

- The country's largest lender State Bank of India (SBI) has raised Rs. 1,251.30 crore by issuing Basel III-compliant additional tier-I bonds. The proceeds from these bonds will help SBI to boost its additional tier 1 capital ratio to meet systematically important bank (D-SIB) criteria to which SBI is mandated to meet.
- The bonds with a face value of Rs 10 lakh each bears a coupon rate of 9.45 per cent per annum payable annually with call option after 5 years or any anniversary date thereafter.

## **Asian Development Bank**

### **Centre and ADB sign 926 million loan agreement to operationalize two lines of Mumbai Metro**

- The Centre and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) have signed a 926 million dollar loan agreement to operationalize two lines of the Mumbai Metro Rail System. It is the single largest infrastructure project loan in ADB history approved by the ADB Board. It will help fund lines 2A (Dahisar to D.N. Nagar), 2B (D.N. Nagar-Bandra-Mandale), and 7 (Dahisar-East to Andheri-East), totaling about 58 kilometres,
- Once operational by the end of 2022, an estimated two million passengers a day will use the two new lines and will travel in improved safety and comfort. It will also reduce emissions from vehicles, with carbon dioxide emissions expected to fall by about 166,000 tons a year.

### **India and ADB sign 26 million dollar loan pact for improving drainage infrastructure in Dibrugarh**

- The Centre and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) have signed a 26 million dollar loan agreement to provide additional financing for improving drainage infrastructure in Dibrugarh town of Assam under the ongoing Assam Urban Infrastructure Investment Program.
- The ongoing loan of 51 million dollars under the Assam Urban Infrastructure Investment Program is helping to improve water supply infrastructure in Guwahati and solid waste management and drainage infrastructure in Guwahati and Dibrugarh.
- Additional Secretary in Department of Economic Affairs (Fund Bank and ADB), Sameer Kumar Khare and India Resident Mission of ADB, Hoe Yun Jeong signed the agreement in New Delhi

### **ADB to invest USD 50 mn in solar project developer Avaada**

- Asian Development Bank (ADB) has inked an agreement to invest USD 50 million in solar energy project developer Avaada Energy Pvt Ltd to help the company scale up rapidly. The investment will come equally from ADB's Ordinary Capital Resources and Leading Asia's Private Infrastructure Fund (LEAP).
- LEAP is a funding arrangement provided by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) which is administered by ADB. The project will contribute to the strategy of the government to increase the share of renewable energy generation capacity from about 20 per cent in 2018 to 40 per cent by 2030.
- It will also help to reduce India's emission intensity of its gross domestic product by 33-35 per cent by 2030. The investment contributes to ADB's goal to provide cumulative climate finance of USD 80 billion from 2019 to 2030.

## **World Bank**

### **India signed USD 25.2 million loan agreement with the World Bank**

- The Government of India, the State Government of Chhattisgarh and the World Bank signed \$25.2 Million Loan Agreement to support the State's Reforms in Expenditure Management. This support will cover Expenditure Planning, Investment Management, Budget Execution, Public Procurement and Accountability.
- The Chhattisgarh Public Financial Management and Accountability Program, which is the First Bank-Financed State-Level Project in Chhattisgarh in nearly a decade, will also help the State strengthen its Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) and Tax Administration Systems.

### **India signed loan agreement with World Bank Uttarakhand Disaster Recovery Project**

- India signed a loan agreement with the World Bank for 96 Million US dollars for additional financing of Uttarakhand Disaster Recovery Project.
- The 96 million dollars loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) has a 5-year grace period and a final maturity of 15 years.
- The World Bank has been supporting the State Government since 2014 to restore housing and rural connectivity and to build the resilience of communities. The additional financing of 96 million dollars will further help in the reconstruction of bridges, road and river bank protection works, and in the construction of a training facility for the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF)

### **India and World Bank Signs \$137 Million Loan Agreement for the Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (DRIP)**

- India, The World Bank and representatives of 5 state governments of India and implementing agencies signed the loan agreement for additional financing of \$137 million for the Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (DRIP)
- That will help rehabilitate and modernize over 220 selected large dams in the states of Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Tamil Nadu and Uttarakhand.
- In 2010, the Bank's Board approved \$350 million to finance the Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project to improve the safety and sustainable performance of over 220 selected dams in India.

## **Other Banking News**

### **Corporation Bank celebrates 114th Foundation Day**

- Corporation Bank observed its 114th Foundation Day. The bank started operating on March 12, 1906, in Udupi under the leadership of Khan Bahadur Haji Abdullah Haji Kasim Saheb Bahadur with a first day business of Rs. 38, 13 Annas and two Paisa. To commemorate the 114th Foundation Day, 114 CSR activities were undertaken by the bank across the country.
- Bank Managing Director and CEO P.V. Bharathi, Executive Directors Gopal Murli Bhagat and Birupaksha Mishra and other senior officials were present at the occasion

### **DBS to operate as wholly-owned subsidiary in India from March 1**

- The RBI approved merger of Singapore-based DBS Bank's Indian unit with its wholly owned local subsidiary, DBS Bank India. The merger will be effective from March 1.
- The wholly-owned subsidiary model allows foreign lenders to be treated as a local bank, removing certain restrictions they face such as those on opening new branches.

### **To mark Gandhi's 150<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary Commemorative notes is to be released**



- To celebrate the 150th birth anniversary year of Mahatma Gandhi, a Dubai-based numismatics company has launched a unique series of commemorative notes. The notes are designed by Dubai-based Indian artist, Akbar Saheb who is also the sole illustrator of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's book, Mann Ki Baat. The illustrations on the note are based on interesting and famous incidents from Gandhi's personal and political life.
- The limited-edition Zero Euro 12-notes commemorative series is being unveiled by UAE-based specialized numismatics company, Numisbing, with just 5000 notes of each design

### **Banks need to lend RS. 1 lakh crore to meet MUDRA target for FY19**

- Banks will have to lend about Rs. 1 lakh crore more to meet the Micro Units Development and Refinance Agency (MUDRA) scheme's target of Rs. 3 lakh crore for 2018-19, as per government data. Over 3.89 crore MUDRA loans have been sanctioned so far this fiscal. The scheme aims to provide loans up to Rs. 10 lakh to non-corporate, non-farm small and micro-enterprises

### **HDFC Bank plans to acquire 9% stake in CSC E-Governance for 14.6 crore**

- Private sector lender HDFC Bank will buy a 9.11 per cent stake in CSC E-Governance Services. The acquisition, for Rs. 14.62 crore, which HDFC Bank termed as a "strategic investment", will be on cash basis.
- HDFC Bank has executed an agreement for subscribing to 37,993 equity shares of face value of Rs. 1,000 each to be issued by CSC E-Governance Services India Limited at Rs. 3,848 per equity share

### **HDFC Bank crosses Rs. 6 trillion market capital**

- India's most valued lender HDFC Bank Ltd crossed the Rs. 6 trillion market capitalisation for the first time, making it only the country's third firm to achieve the milestone.
- Tata Consultancy Services Ltd (TCS) and Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) are the other two companies that crossed the market capitalisation of Rs. 6 trillion. RIL remained the most-valued company with a market value of Rs. 8.54 trillion, followed by TCS with a market value of Rs. 7.51 trillion.
- HDFC Bank's steady 20% profit growth quarter-after-quarter as well as its immunity to the bad loans crisis have helped the stock.

### **IDBI Bank receives nod to handle import, exports transactions with Iran**

- The IDBI has received government nod to handle import and export transactions with Iran, a move which would help in promoting two-way trade amid US sanctions on the Persian Gulf nation
- IDBI Bank has been identified to route the payments. UCO Bank had in the previous round of sanctions handled rupee payments. Iran is India's third-largest oil supplier after Iraq and Saudi Arabia. It was India's second biggest supplier of crude oil after Saudi Arabia. Bilateral trade between India and Iran increased to USD 13.8 billion in 2017-18 from USD 12.9 billion in the previous fiscal. However, India's exports were only worth USD 2.5 billion to that country.

### **United Bank, HDFC Life signed Bancassurance deal**

- United Bank of India has signed a bancassurance deal with private life insurer HDFC Life Insurance Company
- United Bank has a strong presence in rural and semi-urban areas, with over 2,000 branches and offices, while HDFC Life is India's largest non-bank-promoted private life insurer.
- This partnership, United Bank's customers will be able to take advantage of HDFC Life's expertise in life insurance products, distribution and customer service.

### **NHA, IRDAI to set up working group for Ayushman Bharat implementation**

- Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) and National Health Agency (NHA) will set up a joint working group for better implementation of Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY). The joint working group, to be chaired by Dinesh Arora, Deputy CEO of NHA, will have 10 members from both the organisations.
- They will work together to standardise hospital rates and also reduce fraud. NHA is the apex agency that looks after the implementation of PMJAY.

### **White label ATM allowed to get Source cash directly from RBI**

- The Reserve Bank relaxed norms for white label ATM (WLA) operators and allowed them to buy wholesale cash directly from the central bank to enhance the viability of white-label ATMs (WLAs)
- It has been decided to allow them to buy wholesale cash, above a threshold of 1 lakh pieces (and in multiples thereof) of any denomination, directly from the Reserve Bank and currency chests against full payment

- The RBI also permitted WLA operators to source cash from any bank, including cooperatives and regional rural banks. WLAs are owned and operated by non-bank entities on behalf of the banks.
- RBI has also allowed WLA operators to display advertisements pertaining to non-financial products or services anywhere within the WLA premises, including the ATM screen, except the main signboard.
- Banks can issue co-branded ATM cards in partnership with the authorised WLAOs, and may extend the benefit of 'on-us' transactions (where the customer or cardholder and ATM are of the same bank) to their WLAs as well.
- White label ATM (WLA) comes under The Payment & Settlement Systems Act, 2007

### **PNB sanctions loans worth Rs. 689 crore to 1,600 MSMEs via 59-minute loan portal**

- State-owned Punjab National Bank (PNB) has sanctioned loans worth Rs 689 crore to over 1,600 Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) through the [psbloansin59minutes.com](http://psbloansin59minutes.com). Under the Mudra Yojana, the bank has offered loan to over 2.69 lakh small entrepreneurs this fiscal (till February 14, 2019).
- In November 2018, Hon'ble Prime Minister announced the launch of the 59-minute loan portal to enable easy access to credit for MSMEs.
- MSMEs through this portal can avail loans of up to Rs. 1 crore in 59 minutes or less than an hour. MSMEs apply for loans using their GST registration as the portal is integrated with GST server at the back-end as well as IT, credit bureaus and banks. It is able to quickly score the applicant on individual models of lenders (currently only public sector banks).
- PNB has bagged many awards last month under the Enhanced Access and Service Excellence (EASE) reforms agenda. The bank won the Reforms Excellency Award. It was also declared the winner in the customer responsiveness, responsible banking and credit Off-take category. The bank has also figured in the Forbes world's best bank 2019 report in terms of customer satisfaction ratings.

### **Bank of Baroda launches creche/daycare facility for children of employees**

- Bank of Baroda has become one of the first public sector banks to launch a crèche/child daycare facility for children of its employees. After launching such a facility at its Mumbai corporate office in Bandra Kurla Complex which houses some 1500-plus employees, the bank intends to roll out more of them at its head office in Vadodara.
- This initiative is designed to help employees save time and reduce stress of finding the right care for children in the age group of 6 months to 6 years. Bank of Baroda will bear 60% of the cost every month for each employee, while 40% will be taken care by the parents

### **RBI categorises IDBI as private bank**

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has re-categorised IDBI Bank as a private sector lender.
- This comes after LIC acquired a 51% stake in the bank on January 21, becoming its majority shareholder. IDBI Bank has been under the RBI's Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) framework which bans it from activities including corporate lending and branch expansion. The bank's gross non-performing assets (NPAs) shot up to 29.67 per cent of gross advances as at December 31, 2018 against 24.72 per cent in the year-ago period.

### **Paytm Payments Bank launches mobile banking app**

- Paytm Payments Bank launches mobile banking app
- The new app has been introduced exclusively for its bank's customers to provide wide range of banking services in a phased manner. The purpose of new app is to segregate its operations from the existing app which caters to customers of several group entities. However, PPB customers will continue to serve its customers on its older app should its customers desire so. Both apps will co-exist. The mobile app will enable customers to check their balances, raise request for physical debits cards, access digital debit cards, etc., with 24x7 help and support.

### **Bank of India raises Rs. 660 crore by selling shares to employees**

- State-owned Bank of India (BoI) has raised Rs. 660.80 crore by issuing shares to employees under Employee Share Purchase Scheme (ESPS). The bank issued 6,25,52,188 shares of Rs 10 each to eligible employees.
- It offered a discount of 24.28 percent on the applicable price to the employees and about 94.70 percent of total employees participated in the scheme. These shares are issued with a lock-in period of one year

### **Karur Vysya Bank raises Rs. 487 crore through private placement of Tier II bonds**

- Karur Vysya Bank stated that it has raised Rs. 487 crore through Basel-III compliant bonds to fund its growth plans.



- The Capital Raising Committee of the board allotted 48,700 BASEL-III compliant unsecured, redeemable, non-convertible tier-II bonds in the nature of debenture of Rs. 1,00,000 each aggregating to Rs. 487 crore. The capital was raised on private placement basis

### **Bandhan Bank gets RBI approval for acquisition of Gruh Finance**

- Bandhan Bank has received no objection from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for the proposed acquisition of Gruh Finance. Gruh Finance, the affordable housing finance arm of HDFC Ltd, was taken over in January by Kolkata-based Bandhan Bank in a share-swap deal. As part of the deal, Bandhan Bank has to transfer 14.9 per cent stake to HDFC for merging Gruh with itself. The deal will allow Bandhan Bank's promoter Bandhan Financial Holdings to come down to about 61 per cent from about 82 per cent, and HDFC to hold around 15 per cent in the merged entity from about 57 per cent in Gruh. The swap ratio for the amalgamation will be 568 shares of Bandhan Bank for every 1,000 shares of Gruh Finance.

### **MCCIL recognised as a Third-Country Central Counterparty (TC – CCP) by Bank of England**

- Metropolitan Clearing Corporation of India Ltd (MCCIL) has become the first SEBI recognised clearing corporation in India to get recognition as a Third-Country Central Counterparty (TC-CCP) by Bank of England.
- MCCIL is an arm of Metropolitan Stock Exchange of India. The recognition granted by the Bank of England will enable MCCIL to offer clearing services to UK-based entities after Britain's exit from the European Union. That is when BREXIT comes into effect.
- There are currently seven clearing houses recognized by SEBI including BSE's Indian Clearing Corporation Ltd and NSE's NSE Clearing Ltd.

### **ICICI Lombard partners with Mobikwik for Cyber Insurance Cover**

- ICICI Lombard General Insurance, a leading non-life insurance company, has entered into a strategic partnership with MobiKwik, a digital financial services platform, to provide cyber insurance cover for the latter's mobile wallet users.
- The relationship aims to provide protection against unauthorised and fraudulent transactions online, across bank accounts, debit/credit cards and mobile wallets. The cyber-insurance can be availed digitally through the app at only Rs. 99 per month and with a sum insured of Rs. 50,000.
- The policy's validity is only for one month. MobiKwik users can enroll under this insurance product at the time of loading money into their wallet or in a standalone format.

### **Indian Bank – carrying 'Your Own Bank' tag with utmost pride!**

- Indian Bank, with over 9400 touch points across the country, has crossed the milestone business level of Rs. 4.00 lakh crore. The Bank has featured in the most trusted brands in the Public Sector Bank category and has been acknowledged as India's Best Bank.
- It has many 'Firsts' to its credit when it comes to merging banking and technology for better, safer and more convenient solutions. The Bank was the first to migrate from Total Bank Computerization (TBC) to 100% Core Banking Solutions (CBS). Installing the first ATM by any public sector bank in 1989, installing the first drive-in ATM of the country during 1990, introducing the first ever voice-guided biometric ATM in 2007 to name a few.
- The Bank launched an industry-first mobile app to block and manage limits of debit card and credit card, the 'IB Smart Remote'. Because of these factors, carrying the tag 'Your Own Bank', the Bank is looked upon with pride in India.
- On 9th March 2019, the Bank celebrated 'International Women's Day' and felicitated twelve women achievers. On that day, the Bank also launched 'IB- Surabhi', a Savings bank Account exclusively for women.

### **Deutsche Bank is to set up bad-loan buying unit in India**

- Deutsche Bank AG is setting up a unit in India to buy and reorganize soured debt as it seeks to profit from an unprecedented bad-loan clean up in the nation with one of the world's worst non-performing loan ratios.
- The German bank felt the need to have its own asset reconstruction company to buy and reorganize non-performing credit as current Indian rules restrict overseas investors from buying soured loans directly from lenders in the country. Bank of America Corp is also considering setting up a similar unit.
- More than 29 ARCs have been set up in India after parliament passed a law in 2002 to help banks clear their balance sheets by selling bad loans.

### **Forex reserve swells by over \$3.6 billion to \$405.6 billion**

- According to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), India's foreign exchange (forex) reserves surged by \$3.602 billion to \$405.638 billion in week to March 15, 2019. The surge was driven by rise in foreign currency assets, a major component of the overall reserves. Forex reserves had increased by \$258.8 million to \$402.035 billion in the previous week. The reserves had touched a life-time high of \$426.028 billion in the week to April 13, 2018. Since then, it has been on a slide and is now down by over \$20 billion.
- Gold reserves rose by \$38.9 million to \$23.408 billion. The special drawing rights with the International Monetary Fund rose by \$5.9 million to \$1.461 billion. The country's reserve position with the Fund, too, increased by \$12.1 million to \$2.995 billion.

### **BoB inks MoUs with 6 firms to develop agri-digital platform 'Baroda Kisan'**

- Public sector lender Bank of Baroda will develop an agri-digital platform called 'Baroda Kisan' in order to provide solutions for all major agricultural requirements.
- Six companies - Skymet Weather Services, Weather Risk Management Services, BigHaat, Agrostar India, EM3 Agri Services and Poorti Agri Services -- have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the bank for this project.
- The agri-digital platform will be executed by IT Centre of Excellence (ITCoE) of Bank of Baroda in partnership with IBM India. The platform aims to solve agricultural plights by providing reliable and customized information, inputs for use, the convenience of renting farm equipment, and market linkage for sale of agriculture produce.

### **ICICI Prudential Mutual Fund launches Bharat Consumption Scheme**

- ICICI Prudential Mutual Fund launched ICICI Prudential Bharat Consumption Scheme, which will remain open for subscription until April 9. The scheme aims to benefit from the Indian consumption story, considered as one of the fastest growing consumption markets globally. Minimum investment: Rs 5,000 and in multiples of one rupee thereafter
- 1 percent if investments are redeemed within 12 months from the date of allotment. The benchmark for the Scheme is Nifty India Consumption Index and will be managed by Rajat Chandak and Dharmesh Kakkad. The overseas investments of the scheme will be managed by Priyanka Khandelwal.

### **Government to infuse Rs. 5,042 cr into Bank of Baroda**

- The government has decided to infuse Rs. 5,042 crore into state-owned Bank of Baroda (BoB) ahead of merger of two other public sector lenders Dena Bank and Vijaya Bank with BoB.
- The merger of Dena Bank and Vijaya Bank with BoB would be effective from April 1
- According to the Scheme of Amalgamation, shareholders of Vijaya Bank will get 402 equity shares of BoB for every 1,000 shares held. In the case of Dena Bank, its shareholders will get 110 shares for every 1,000 shares of BoB

### **Axis Bank opens its 4,000th branch in Pune**

- The country's 3rd largest private bank, Axis Bank, has opened its 4,000th branch in the country in Pune at Eon, Kharadi. The new branch was inaugurated by Amitabh Chaudhry, Managing Director and CEO, Axis Bank, and Ravi Narayanan, President and Head Branch Banking, Axis Bank.
- The bank has added 297 branches in the current fiscal across India

### **Small savings schemes' interest rates to remain unchanged for Apr-Jun quarter**

- Interest rates on small saving schemes such as National Savings Certificate and Public Provident Fund will remain unchanged for the April-June quarter.

Schemes	Interest Rates
Savings Deposit	4%
Senior Citizen Savings Scheme (SCSS)	8.7%
Public Provident Fund Account (PPF)	8.0%
National Savings Certificates (NSC)	8.0%
Kisan Vikas Patra (KVP)	7.7% (maturity- 112 months)
Sukanya Samriddhi Accounts	8.5%

### **PNB sells stake in PNB Housing Fin for Rs. 1,851.60 crore**

- Punjab National Bank (PNB) will sell its stake in PNB Housing Finance to General Atlantic and Varde Partners for Rs. 1,851.60 crore,
- Varde Partners and General Atlantic will buy 1.09 crore shares each. The shares will be acquired at Rs. 850 per share, valuing the purchase at Rs. 925.80 crore each for the buyers.

- After the transaction, PNB will continue to hold a 19.78 per cent stake in the housing finance arm, and will remain the promoter and strategic shareholder of the company

## **Important Financial & Economy Affairs**

### **Goods and Services Tax collection drops to Rs. 97,247 crore in February**

- GST collections dropped to Rs. 97,247 crore in February from Rs. 1.02 lakh crore in the previous month
- The total gross GST revenue collected in February 2019 is Rs 97,247 crore of which Central GST is Rs. 17,626 crore, State GST (SGST) is Rs. 24,192 crore, Integrated GST (IGST) is Rs. 46,953 crore and Cess is Rs. 8,476 crore
- Goods and Services Tax collections in the current fiscal till February totalled Rs. 10.70 lakh crore. The government has lowered the GST collection target for current fiscal to Rs. 11.47 lakh crore in the Revised Estimates, from Rs 13.71 lakh crore budgeted initially. For the next fiscal 2019-20, the GST collection target has been budgeted at Rs 13.71 lakh crore.

### **OECD cuts global growth forecast over trade, Brexit uncertainty**

- The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, OECD, has again cut its 2019 forecast for global economic growth due to ongoing trade tensions and Brexit uncertainty. In an interim version of its Economic Outlook, the OECD lowered its forecast to 3.3 per cent for this year, down from the 3.5 per cent it predicted in November, which was itself a downgrade from a previous 3.7 per cent.
- The 19-nation eurozone was particularly hard hit, with predicted growth dropping from 1.8 per cent to one per cent. The growth forecast for European powerhouse Germany sank to 0.7 per cent from 1.4, while Italy's fell from 0.9 per cent growth into a recession at minus 0.2 per cent.
- Britain's growth forecast was chopped from 1.4 to 0.8 per cent, which would mark the first time it had fallen below one percent since 2009 following the global economic crisis.

### **SEBI lifts foreign investment cap on corporate bonds**

- Markets regulator SEBI withdrew the 20 percent limit on investments by Foreign Portfolio Investors in corporate bonds of an entity. In June last year, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) had mandated that no Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) shall have an exposure of more than 20 percent of its corporate bond portfolio to a single corporate. The central bank in February lifted the restriction in view of market feedback.

### **India's April-February fiscal deficit at 134% of FY target**

- The country's fiscal deficit touched 134.2 per cent of the full-year revised budgeted estimate at the end of February 2019. The fiscal deficit target for FY19 was revised upwards to 3.4% of GDP in the interim budget for FY20 presented on February 1 from 3.3% estimated initially.
- The fiscal deficit for April-February 2018-19 was Rs. 8.51 lakh crore as against the revised estimate (RE) of Rs. 6.34 trillion for the entire year, according to Controller General of Accounts (CGA) data. The government's tax revenue stood at Rs. 10.94 trillion and non-tax revenue was Rs 1.7 trillion.
- Total expenditure incurred by the government during April-February 2018-19 was Rs. 21.88 trillion (89.08 per cent of RE), of which Rs. 19.15 trillion was on revenue account and Rs. 2.73 trillion on capital account.

ORGANISATION	GDP RATE	
	2018 - 2019	2019 - 2020
Department of Economic Affairs (DEA)	7%	-
Moody	-	7.3%

### **Fitch cuts India GDP growth forecast for FY20 to 6.8%**

- Fitch Ratings cut India's economic growth forecast for the next financial year starting April 1, to 6.8 per cent from its previous estimate of 7 per cent, on weaker than expected momentum in the economy.
- The rating agency has also cut growth forecasts for FY20 and FY21 to 7 per cent from 7.3 per cent and 7.1 per cent from 7.3 per cent, respectively
- Fitch Ratings cut India's FY19 GDP growth forecast to 7.2% from 7.8% on December 6

## Important Business News

### Hyundai and Kia to invest \$300 million in Ola

- Hyundai Motor Group and Kia Motors Corporation announced a strategic partnership to invest 300 million dollars (about Rs 2,000 crore) in ride-hailing platform Ola for providing smart mobility solutions.
- The agreement will see the three companies extensively collaborate on developing unique fleet and mobility solutions, build India-specific electric vehicles and infrastructure, as well as nurture opportunities for driver partners with customised vehicles on the Ola platform.

### Tata Communications partners with China Telecom for IoT devices

- Tata Communications announced that it is working with China Telecom Global to launch Internet of Things (IoT) service in the Chinese market
- The partnership will allow companies to deploy and manage IoT devices easily and cost-effectively within China and internationally across multiple industries, including consumer and industrial electronics manufacturing, automotive, transport and logistics
- China Telecom Global and Tata Communications will cooperate to support global IoT opportunities. The Tata Communications MOVE service leverages the company's relationships with more than 600 mobile network operators worldwide. Through this partnership, China Telecom Global also provides Tata Communications with connectivity for Mainland China, Hong Kong and Macau.

### NSEIT acquires global cybersecurity company Aujas

- NSEIT, the IT-services focused subsidiary of the National Stock Exchange has acquired Aujas Networks Ltd. a company which provides information security consulting and IT risk management services. The combination with Aujas helps us offer next generation cybersecurity services and platforms to address emerging security threats.
- NSEIT and Aujas will focus on offering market leading solutions to customers globally. Aujas is a perfect fit due to its expertise in cybersecurity transformation services, strong team, and global customers. NSEIT currently provides technology solutions across industries such as capital markets, financial markets, banking and insurance.

### Government extends IGST, compensation cess exemption till March 2020

- The directorate general of foreign trade (DGFT) has extended integrated GST (IGST) and compensation cess exemptions for goods procurement under advance authorisation scheme, export oriented unit (EOU) scheme and export promotion capital goods (EPCG) scheme of foreign trade policy 2015-20 to 31 March 2020. This decision is aimed at giving relief to exporters as they do not have to pay IGST at initial point itself. In the GST regime, exporters have to pay the indirect tax and then seek refund, which is cumbersome process.

## Important Cabinet Approval

- The Cabinet committee approved Pradhan Mantri JI-VAN (Jaiv Indhan –Vatavaran Anukool fasal awashesh Nivaran) Yojana. It will provide financial support integrated Bioethanol projects using lignocellulosic biomass and other renewable feedstock. The total financial outlay is of Rs.1969.50cr for the period from 2018-19 to 2023-24.
- Cabinet approved Rs.1450 crore for the share capital of RBI in National Housing Bank (NHB), which operate as the principal agency to promote housing finance institutions in India. The decision is the resultant of the amendments made to the NHB Act, 1987 in 2018.
- Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) approved construction of four lane bridge which connects Dhubri in Assam and Phulbari in Meghalaya over Brahmaputra. It will be constructed with loan assistance from Japan International Cooperative Agency at the Civil Construction cost of Rs.3548cr and total capital cost of Rs.4997.04cr.
- Cabinet approved the proposal for setting up a Centre for Disability Sports at Gwalior in Madhya Pradesh which will be registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860. The estimated cost of setting up the centre shall be of Rs.170.99 crore for a period of 5 years.
- Cabinet approved National Policy on Software Products 2019 with an outlay of Rs.1500cr for a period of 7 years.
- Cabinet approved draft Homeopathy Central Council (Amendment) Ordinance, 2019 which looks for the extension of the period for reconstruction of the council from the existing one year to 2 years.

- Union Cabinet approved metro rail projects of Kanpur and Agra cities in Uttar Pradesh. The estimated cost of the project is Rs.8379.62cr and will be completed in 5 years.
- Union Cabinet decided to value Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas as 25<sup>th</sup> member of International Energy Agency's Technology Collaboration Programme on Bioenergy (IEA Bioenergy TCP).
- Cabinet approved the FDI proposal for Foreign Direct Investment of more than Rs.5000cr and upto Rs.25,000cr in Vodafone Idea Limited. It will be part of a proposed equity fund raise by way of Rights issue.
- Union Cabinet approved Jammu and Kashmir Reservation (Amendment) Ordinance, 2019 which will bring the people living in remote and inaccessible areas under reservation. It will pave the way for 10% quota for the economically weaker section to be applicable in the state.
- Union Cabinet approves promulgation of an Ordinance to make amendments to the Aadhaar Act 2016, Prevention of Money Laundering Act 2005 and Indian Telegraph Act 1885.
- Cabinet approved the proposal for creation of 2 posts of commissioners in the office of the Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD), in terms of provisions of the Rights of Persons with Disability (RPF) Act, 2016.
- Cabinet approved the creation of Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) and associated activities for the disinvestment of Air India and its Subsidiaries/JV. It will transfer Air India's Rs.29,464cr loans, Subsidiaries to SPV.
- The proposal for implementation of scheme titled 'Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Electric Vehicles in India Phase II (FAME India Phase II) approved by the Union Cabinet for the promotion of Electric mobility in the country. The total outlay is of Rs.10,000cr for a period of 3 years with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019.
- Cabinet approved inclusion of Common Service Centre (CSC e-Governance Services India) as Enrolment Agency for Pradhan MantriShram Yogi Maan(PM-SYM) which will enable workers in unorganized sector to get monthly pension of Rs.3000 on attaining the age of 60 years.
- Cabinet committee has approved laying down procedure and mechanism for asset monetization of CPSEs/PSUs/other government organizations and immovable enemy properties as per section IV of section 8A of the Enemy Property Act, 1968.
- Union Cabinet approved setting up of new AIIMS at Manethi, Haryana at a cost of Rs.1299cr. Cost of construction and running would be met by the Central Government under Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY).
- CCEA approved investment for transmission component of Arun-3 Hydro Electric Project (Nepal portion) by Sutlej Jal Vikas Nigam (SJVN) Limited. The project is on Arun River in Sankhuwasabha district of Eastern Nepal.
- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has approved the investment sanction for construction of 624 Mega watts Kiru Hydro Electric Project in Jammu and Kashmir.
- Approved the investment for 1320 Mega Watt Khurja Super Thermal Power Plant at Bulandshahar in Uttar Pradesh.
- Investment for 1320 Mega Watt Buxar thermal Power Project in Bihar was also approved.
- Approved proposal for promulgation of Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Teachers' Cadre) Ordinance, 2019
- The construction of a 3rd railway line between Narayangarh in West Bengal and Bhadrak in Odisha of 155 kilometres length. The total estimated cost of this project is 1866 crore rupees and will be completed by 2023-24.
- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has also approved additional funds to Sugar Mills amounting to 2790 crore rupees.
- The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister, Narendra Modi has signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) in February with various countries in the field of Housing, Youth Affairs and earth sciences.
- Union Cabinet headed by Prime Minister, Narendra Modi approved MoU between India and Indonesia on combating illicit trafficking on narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and its precursors. The MoU will help both the countries in mutual cooperation in regulation of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and also in combating drug trafficking.
- Union Cabinet was Cabinet apprised about the MoU signed between India and Morocco for cooperation on youth matters. The MoU will strengthen and encourage cooperation between the two countries on youth matters.
- MoU signed between India and Morocco to promote exchange of information and technical cooperation in the field of Housing and Human Settlement.



- The Memorandum of Understanding signed between India and Argentina in February 2019 on Antarctic Cooperation to help Scientific Cooperation on projects in the field of Earth Sciences. It will also help in the protection and conservation of Antarctica and Southern Oceans.
- MOU signed between India and Saudi Arabia for cooperation in the field of Housing. It will promote technical cooperation between both the countries including affordable / low income housing and will also enhance participation of authorities and companies in the housing and infrastructure projects.
- Union Cabinet has given ex-post facto approval for the MoU signed in February between India and Republic of Korea on Startup Cooperation. It will facilitate and promote bilateral cooperation between the startups of both countries.
- The Union cabinet also approved acquiring land of Central Water Commission at Nallagandla, Hyderabad by Telangana State Government for road widening.
- Creation of additional posts of three Judicial Members and three Technical Members in the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT).

## **Important State Wise National News**

### **Assam**

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

#### **Assam government launched ‘Rice Knowledge Park’ under APART**

- Rice Knowledge Bank-Assam is an agriculture webportal. It is dedicated to magnifying knowledge on rice production technologies and techniques, best production practices and state agriculture facts. It was launched under the World Bank funded project – Agri-business and Rural Transformation (APART).
- This portal is the efforts of Assam Rural Infrastructure and Agricultural Services Society (ARIAS), Assam Agricultural University (AAU) with technical assistance from the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI).

#### **Home Minister inaugurated BOLD-QIT project in Assam**

- Home Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated the project BOLD-QIT (Border Electronically Dominated QRT Interception Technique) on India-Bangladesh border in Dhubri District of Assam.
- It deals with the problem of border safeguarding in the areas where border fences can't be constructed due to Brahmaputra River. This project, under the Comprehensive Integrated Border Management System (CIBMS), will equip the unfenced areas along the riverine border with sensors, enabling the troops to take prompt action against intrusion.

#### **Country's first oil museum to come up in Guwahati**

- Assam, the state where oil was discovered and produced for the first time in the country more than a century ago, will have the first Oil Museum in the country.
- All major oil and gas PSUs of the country – ONGC, IOCL, HPCL, BPCL and EIL are coming together for this project, which was launched by Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan. The oil museum will be named after KD Malaviya, called the father of India's hydrocarbon industry
- The museum to come up at a cost of Rs 104 crore.

#### **Initiative to promote digital electoral literacy, ‘i-help’ launched in Assam**

- The Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) and Common Service Centres (CSC) in Assam has launched an initiative named ‘i-help’ to promote digital electoral literacy in the state of Assam. Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) of Assam, Chandra Sahu launched the ‘i-help’ initiative. This particular initiative will fill the digital divide and fulfill the objective of turning the General Election more inclusive and participatory.
- The CSCs are internet-enabled access points spread throughout the country delivering various government and non-government digital services to the citizens and is uniquely positioned in rural areas to significantly extend the awareness and outreach activities of CEO, Assam. The entire initiative is being launched under the Systematic Voters Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) in the state to ensure that no voter is left behind.

#### **Assam CEO Mukesh Sahu launches ‘Enajori’ initiative in Guwahati**

- Assam Chief Electoral Officer Mukesh Sahu launched the Enajori initiative in Guwahati. It is a special initiative for persons with disabilities with an aim that 'No Voter to be Left behind'.



- It is a joint initiative of CEO Assam and Social Welfare Department with an objective to make Lok Sabha Elections accessible to Persons with Disability, PwD voters.
- Section 11 of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 states that Election Commission of India and State Election Departments shall ensure that all polling stations are accessible to persons with disabilities and all materials related to the electoral process are easily understandable by and accessible to them.

#### **Assam's Bongaigaon district admin develops 'Sankalp' app to reach out to 1st-time voter**

- In Assam, the Bongaigaon district administration has developed a mobile app Sankalp to particularly reach out to the first-time voters. It is a special initiative has been taken to encourage the first-time voters. NIC team has developed the app. The first-time voters on their mobile phones, requesting them to download the 'Sankalp' app. The new voters will also be able to sign a digital 'sankalp patra' to cast their votes on the day of polling.

### **Andhra Pradesh**

**Capital – Hyderabad (Amravati); CM – Chandrababu Naidu; Governor - ESL Narasimhan**

#### **NTPC to set up 25 MW floating solar power plant at Simhadri, Andhra Pradesh**

- National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) -Simhadri is setting up a 25 MW floating solar power plant in its water storage reservoir as part of the company's efforts to diversify into the solar segment
- NTPC-Simhadri was also setting up a flue-gas desulphurisation plant (FGD) like the other thermal stations of the company. It had four units 500 MW each.

### **Himachal Pradesh**

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

#### **Tashigang in Himachal Pradesh is world's highest polling station**

- Tashigang, a small Himachal Pradesh village at an altitude of 15,256 feet, is now the highest polling station in the world. Located around 29 km from the India-China border, this polling station covers two villages of Tashigang and Gete. As per the revised electoral rolls, the two villages have 48 voters, of which 30 are men and 18 women.

### **Jammu & Kashmir**

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

#### **Jammu and Kashmir government to give monthly stipend and jobs for those who Shun militancy**

- Draft on Reintegration proposes a monthly stipend of Rs. 6000 and jobs for those who Shun militancy by the Jammu and Kashmir government. The reintegration policy draft proposes a monthly stipend of Rs 6,000 for a militant who surrenders 'to encourage him to join the mainstream'.
- The new Reintegration policy draft is under the consideration of Jammu and Kashmir administration headed by Governor Satya Pal Malik. Militants found to have been involved 'in heinous crimes' won't get the proposed benefits

### **Karnataka**

**Capital – Bengaluru; CM – Kumarasamy; Governor - Vajubhai Rudabhai Vala**

#### **Arecanut gets its first GI tag for 'Sirsi Supari'**

- Arecanut, also known as supari or betel nut, is the latest entrant in the list of agricultural produce with a Geographical Indication (GI) tag. The 'Sirsi Supari' is grown in Sirsi, Siddpaur and Yellapur taluks of Uttara Kannada district in Karnataka. Production of arecanut in these three taluks is around 7 per cent of the production of Karnataka State
- Grown on an area of around 40,000 acres, the annual production of 'Sirsi Supari' is estimated to be around 40,000 tonnes. The Totagars' Cooperative Sale Society (TSS) Ltd, a Sirsi-based agri cooperative, is the registered proprietor of the GI 'Sirsi Supari'

#### **Paralympic high jumper Girish Gowda appointed as Karnataka Lok Sabha Elections Ambassador**

- Silver Medalist in Paralympic high jump, Girish Gowda has been appointed as the ambassador of Karnataka Lok Sabha Elections 2019.

- He represented India in men's high jump F-42 category during 2012 Summer Paralympics games held in London, where he clinched silver medal. With this, he became the first Indian to win medal in this category.

#### **Yarn bank set up to help weavers in Karnataka**

- A yarn bank has been set up at the Mysore Powerloom Silk Manufacturers Cooperative Society to benefit the state's weavers.
- The bank, with aid from the Centre, will supply pure silk yarn and zari to weavers who subscribe. Currently, the weavers have to source yarn locally through agents and wholesalers.

### **Kerala**

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

#### **Kerala's jaggery gets GI tag**

- The Marayoor Jaggery, a traditional and homemade product manufactured at Marayoor, a place in Idukki district of Kerala, has bagged Geographical Indication tag.
- Marayur jaggery is known especially for its organic and traditional production using the sugar cane cultivated in the region. Jaggery is a dark brown sugar balls made from sugarcane and no chemicals are added during the manufacturing process.

### **Madhya Pradesh**

**Capital – Bhopal; CM – Kamal Nath; Governor – Anandiben patel**

#### **Ancient tribal language Gondi to be taught in tribal districts of Madhya Pradesh**

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

#### **National Institute of Mental Health Rehabilitation to be set up at Sehore in Madhya Pradesh**

- Secretary of Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities at Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment Shakuntala D Gamlin laid the foundation stone of the 'National Institute of Mental Health Rehabilitation' at Sherpur village along Bhopal-Sehore highway, Sehore district of Madhya Pradesh
- This Institute will be first of its kind in the country. The Centre has approved an outlay of Rs 180 crore for this project for an initial period of three years. The land for this institute measuring about 25 acre was allocated free of cost by the Madhya Pradesh government in October 2018
- It will promote mental health rehabilitation using an integrated multidisciplinary approach, to undertake capacity building and to involve in developing trained professionals in the area of mental health rehabilitation and help the Government in formulating policy and programs/models for rehabilitation of persons with mental illness.

#### **Madhya Pradesh government issues ordinance to give 27% quota to OBCs**

- Madhya Pradesh state government has issued an ordinance raising reservation for Other Backward Classes (OBC) to 27 per cent from the present 14 per cent. At present, the state provides 20 per cent reservation to Scheduled Tribes (ST), 16 per cent to Scheduled Castes (SC) and 14 per cent to OBCs. The announcement was made by the state's Law and Legal Affairs Minister PC Sharma

### **Maharashtra**

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

#### **India's first LGBTQ clinic and HIV treatment centre inaugurated in Mumbai**

- The country's first HIV treatment centre and holistic clinic for the for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) community has been inaugurated in Mumbai. A patient gets tested at India's first holistic LGBTQ clinic and community-based HIV clinic at Humsafar Trust, Santacruz, Mumbai.
- The centre will give free counselling and provide Anti-Retroviral Therapy (ART). ART is the use of HIV medicines to treat the infection, and is recommended for everyone who is infected with virus and delays the progression of the disease.

#### **EC comes up with PWD app for over two lakhs Divyang voters in Maharashtra**

- In Maharashtra, Election Commission has come up with a mobile application called 'PWD' for making voting easier and implement the poll body's slogan of Accessible Elections for over two lakhs Divyang voters across the state.

- The app would facilitate Divyang voters special facilities including wheelchairs, ramps and transport from home at polling booths during the Lok Sabha elections.

## **Manipur**

**Capital – Imphal; CM - Nongthombam Biren Singh; Governor – Najma Heptulla**

### **Manipur Assembly Passed Anti-mob Violence Bill**

- The Manipur Assembly has passed a bill which recommends life imprisonment for those involved in mob violence,
- It recommends a rigorous life imprisonment term if the crime results in the death of a victim. The Assembly also passed the Manipur Goods and Services Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2018

## **Meghalaya**

**Capital – Shillong; CM - Conrad K Sangma; Governor – Tathagata Roy**

### **India's deepest shaft cave discovered in Meghalaya**

- India's deepest shaft cave Krem Um Ladaw was recently discovered in East Khasi Hills district of Meghalaya.
- The cave has 105 m deep shaft entrance passage. It was discovered during 28th edition of annual 'Caving in the Abode of the Clouds Expedition' that took place in February 2019. Its discovery comes one year after discovery of world's longest sandstone cave Krem Puri in Mawsynram region of Meghalaya's East Khasi Hills district. Overall 2019 expedition explored and mapped 12.3 kms of new cave passage.
- 8 new caves were also explored and mapped including revisit to Krem Shrieh (Tangnub). Krem Shrieh which was earlier explored in 2000 was now extended from 8,713m to 9,844m. Other major caves explored and mapped were Retdung Khur (3724m), Tui Khur Lut (2185m) and Kellung Puk (788m.)

## **New Delhi**

**Capital – New Delhi; CM -Arvind Kejriwal; Governor – Anil Baijal**

### **Delhi Government to introduce AC Electric Buses**

- The Delhi Cabinet has approved a proposal to add 1,000 low-floor AC electric buses to the capital's public transport fleet.
- The first lot of electric buses will reportedly hit the streets before the end of 2019.

### **Delhi Government established high-level committee to reform higher education**

- The Delhi government's Dialogue and Development Commission (DDC), a think-tank that advises the government on key issues, has set up a 17-member high-level committee to "reform higher education" in the capital.
- The panel, to be chaired by DDC vice-chairperson Jasmine Shah, will recommend goals, metrics, policies, and actionable plans for reforming Delhi's higher education system within a year
- Nalanda 2.0, a non-profit policy think tank with a mission to make India's higher education system world class, is the knowledge partner of DDC on this initiative

## **Rajasthan**

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

### **Textiles Minister Smriti Irani inaugurated the 'Titanwala Museum' in Rajasthan**

- Union Textiles Minister Smriti Irani inaugurated the 'Titanwala Museum' in Bagru that showcases the Chhipa community's hand-block printing. The museum is an effort towards preserving the art of traditional Bagru block printing. Bagru printing is one of the traditional techniques of printing with natural color followed by the chippas of Rajasthan

### **Rajasthan Diwas**

- Rajasthan Day is celebrated on 30th March every year on which the state Rajasthan came into existence as it was previously known as Rajputana. On 30th March 1949, Rajasthan was formed

## **Tamil Nadu**

**Capital – Chennai; CM – Edapadi Palanisamy; Governor – Banwarilal Purohit.**

## **Chennai Central station to be named after MGR – PM Modi**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that the Chennai Central railway station will be renamed after former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MG Ramachandran. Prime Minister Narendra Modi was in Tamil Nadu to officially launch the National Democratic Alliance's poll campaign for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections.
- The 146-year-old iconic railway station is one of the major landmarks in the city. He launched several schemes, and unveiled projects in roadways, railways, and energy sector worth Rs. 5010 crore

## **Tamil Nadu's Erode Turmeric Gets GI Tag**

- The tag is a name or sign used on products that correspond to a specific location and prevents misuse of the popularity of the products by others. After an eight-year-long process, Erode turmeric finally got a Geographical Indication (GI) tag from the Geographical Indication Registry.
- Erode turmeric is a rhizome, both finger and bulb obtained from the Erode local cultivar. Erode turmeric cultivar is called 'Chinna nadan'. that turmeric is one of the oldest spices used in India

## **Telangana**

**Capital – Hyderabad; CM – Chandrasekhar Rao; Governor – ESL Narashiman.**

## **Telangana government launches digital portal for MSMEs**

- The State government launched a digital business networking portal for MSMEs - Telangana State GlobalLinker (ts-msme.globallinker.com) - to digitise over 2.3 million MSMEs of the State. The solution aims to address key challenges faced by MSMEs with the core objective of making their business growth - simpler, more profitable and enjoyable.
- Telangana State GlobalLinker will provide MSMEs - a digital profile (including an online product catalogue and eCommerce store), access to global networking opportunities to find buyers & suppliers, economies of scale on a wide range of business services, access to industry news, articles and discussions.

## **Tripura**

**Capital – Agartala; CM – Biplab Kumar Deb; Governor – Kaptan Singh Solanki.**

## **Tripura government launched Notun Disha initiative**

- The government of Tripura announced 'Notun Disha' (New Direction) for assessing the academic level of students in classes III-VIII and then improving their current level. It was launched by state Education Minister Ratan Lal Nath.
- The Notun Disha is a one-month project to provide training to teachers. Training will be provided by NGOs and educational institutions to 800 teachers. In that initiative the state government has decided to distribute laptops to 800 school teachers to assess the level of students' development in different disciplines.

## **Tripura has second highest number of child marriages**

- Tripura ranks second position with respect to the highest prevalence of child marriage among girls aged 15 years to 19 years at 21.6 per cent which is significantly higher than the national average of 11.9 per cent. Also found that more than 80 per cent of child marriages were registered in three districts of the state.
- The four districts include Dhalai, South Tripura, North Tripura, and West Tripura have the highest number of child marriage. A report released by the National Family Health Survey (NFHS), Young Lives – an international study on childhood poverty.

## **West Bengal**

**Capital – Kolkata; CM – Mamta Benerjee; Governor - Keshari Nath Tripath**

## **West Bengal government launched 'Banglar Shiksha' portal**

- West Bengal Education Minister Partha Chatterjee inaugurated a web portal, 'Banglar Shiksha', which is set to provide real-time data on state-run and aided schools. This is first-of-its-kind online initiative in the state as well as in the country. It will be operated on a trial basis for two months to remove glitches. The portal should be fully functional by May 1. The portal will store real-time data of 1.5 crore students, five lakh teachers and one lakh schools.

## **Other National News**

## **Former SC Judge Justice PC Ghose to be India's first Lokpal**

- Former Supreme Court judge Justice Pinaki Chandra Ghose was recommended to be the first Lokpal or anti-corruption ombudsman of India. His name was finalised and recommended by the Selection Committee comprising Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi, Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan and eminent jurist Mukul Rohatgi. Justice Ghose is a member of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) since June 2017
- He is a former judge of the Calcutta High Court and former Chief Justice of the Andhra Pradesh High Court.

### **Cabinet approves 10% reservation for general category poor in J&K**

- The Union Cabinet has approved the Constitution (Application to Jammu and Kashmir) Amendment Order, 2019. Finance Minister Arun Jaitley stated that it will serve the purpose of application of relevant provision of the constitution as amended through the constitution (77th Amendment) act, 2019 for Jammu and Kashmir by issuing the constitution Amendment order. This will pave the way for giving the benefit of promotion in service to the SCs, STs and also extend the reservation of up to 10 per cent for the economically weaker section in educational institution and public employment in addition to the existing reservation in the state. The Cabinet approved Agra and Kanpur Metro Rail Projects. The Cabinet also approved the promulgation of an Ordinance to make amendments to the Aadhaar Act 2016, Prevention of Money Laundering Act 2005 and the Indian Telegraph Act 1885.

### **Government may offer 2.5 lakh subsidy on electric cars**

- The government has proposed a subsidy of up to Rs. 2.5 lakh on around 60,000 electric cars in India, whereas hybrids may get Rs. 20,000 over the next three years.
- The subsidy calculation will be done on the basis of the battery capacity of the respective vehicles, including electric two-wheelers and buses. The scheme will reportedly come into effect by April.

### **IRCTC launched digital payment gateway, IRCTC iPay**

- Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC), has launched its own payment aggregator system called "IRCTC iPay". With the launch of IRCTC iPay, passengers will not need any third-party platforms as all payment options like credit card, debit card, UPI – Unified Payment Interface, International Card are integrated into the platform. The back-end support will be provided by Delhi based MMAD communications, which is IRCTC's technology partner.

### **PM flags off Tejas Express, fastest train between Chennai & Madurai**

- PM Narendra Modi flagged off the Madurai-Chennai Egmore Tejas Express, the fastest train running between the two cities, via video conferencing from Kanyakumari. The fully air-conditioned train comprises one executive chair car coach with 56 seats and 12 chair car coaches with 78 seats each. The train's features include infotainment system, attendant call button and smart windows.

### **PM launched 'ONE NATION ONE CARD' for all modes of travel**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the indigenously-developed National Common Mobility Card (NCMC) to enable people to pay multiple kinds of transport charges, including metro services and toll tax, across the country. Dubbed as 'One Nation One Card', the inter-operable transport card would allow the holders to pay for their bus travel, toll taxes, parking charges, retail shopping and even withdraw money
- The 'One Nation One Card' card runs on RuPay card can be used for travelling in metros in any part of the country.

### **Government brings TMA scheme to boost agriculture exports of farm commodities**

- The government introduced a Transport and Marketing Assistance (TMA) scheme for providing financial assistance for transport and marketing of agriculture products with a view to boosting export of farm commodities to certain countries in Europe and North America. Under the TMA scheme, the government would reimburse a certain portion of freight charges and provide assistance for marketing of agricultural produce
- The scheme covers freight and marketing assistance for export by air as well as by sea (both normal and refrigerated cargo). The scheme would be applicable for a period as specified from time to time. Presently, it would be available for exports effected from March 1 this year to March 2020.

### **Mahesh Sharma Inaugurated 'Azaadi Ke Diwane' Museum at Red Fort in Delhi**

- The Minister of State for Culture (Independent charge) and Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Dr. Mahesh Sharma inaugurated 'Azaadi Ke Diwane' museum at Red Fort, New Delhi which is created by Archaeological Survey of India (ASI). The museum is the fifth in a series of recently inaugurated ones - the others being the Subhash Chandra Bose and INA museum, the Yaad-e-Jallian museum, the Museum on 1857 (on the country's first war of Independence) the Drishyakala (a museum on Indian Art)



- The 'AzaadikeDiwane' museum talks about on the sacrifices of India's freedom fighters.

### **Bharat Electronics launched SWAGAT- Automatic Fare Collection Gating System**

- Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL), a defence public sector undertaking, presented SWAGAT – the Automatic Fare Collection Gating System. PM Narendra Modi launched the system as part of the inaugural of Phase-I of the Ahmedabad Metro. SWAGAT is an initiative steered by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) in collaboration with BEL and Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC) with the support of Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC), National Payment Corporation of India (NPCI) and State Bank of India (SBI).
- SWAGAT is compliant with the National Common Mobility Card (NCMC) ecosystem for hassle-free commute across India. The Automatic Fare Collection System has been designed and developed by CDAC, a R&D organization of the Ministry of Electronics & IT.

### **Government has transferred first instalment of Rs. 2000 each to over two crore farmers so far under PM-Kisan scheme**

- The Centre has transferred the first instalment of two thousand rupees each to over two crore farmers so far under the ambitious Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-Kisan) scheme. In the Interim Budget 2019-20, the central government had announced the PM-Kisan scheme under which 6,000 rupees per year will be given in three instalments to 12 crore small and marginal farmers.
- Last month, Prime Minister Narendra Modi officially launched the scheme in Uttar Pradesh by transferring the first tranche amount to over one crore farmers.

### **NGT imposed Rs. 500 crore fine on Volkswagen for cheating emission tests**

- The National Green Tribunal slapped a fine of 500 Crore rupees on German auto major Volkswagen for damaging the environment using cheat device in its diesel cars in India. A bench headed by NGT chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel directed the carmaker to deposit the amount within two months.
- The tribunal enhanced the compensation amount of Rs. 171.34 crore, which was recommended by a NGT- appointed committee, as a means of "creating deterrence"

### **Government to issue Rs. 20 coin for the first time**

- The Finance Ministry has announced the rollout of a new Rs. 20 coin shaped like a "dodecagon", a 12-edged polygon.
- The new coin will be heavier than all the existing coins at 8.54 grams. The coin will be two-toned with a 27-mm diameter, similar to Rs 10 coin. The outer ring will be 65% copper, 15% zinc and 20% nickel and the inner disc will be 75% copper, 20% zinc and 5% nickel
- The obverse side of the coin will bear Lion Capital of Ashoka Pillar, on the reverse of the coin, the rupee symbol will be shown above the denominational value and there will be grains designed on the left periphery of the coin to depict the country's agricultural dominance. The government is also releasing the new series of prototypes of coins of Re 1, Rs 2, Rs 5 and Rs 10. A new series of circulation coins, which are visually challenged friendly.

### **MOHUA Hardeep Puri launched Indian Urban Observatory and Video wall at New Delhi**

- Hardeep S Puri, Minister of State (I/C) for Housing and Urban Affairs has launched a state-of-the-art India Urban Observatory at Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation in New Delhi. He also inaugurated the Video Wall in New Delhi.
- India Urban Observatory – It is a system to collect and analyze data from cities, both from real-time and archival sources. The Observatory will help in getting reliable, up-to-date information on a meaningful set of indicators over various domains such as transport, health, environment, water, finance, etc and will assist in developing best practices, future strategies and policy interventions as and when required.
- The Video Wall will display the Insights Gained from India Urban Observatory and Various Missions/ Offices Aiming To Proactively Engage with Citizens with an aim of Spreading Awareness

### **United States to set up six nuclear power plants in India**

- India and the United States have committed to strengthen bilateral security and civil nuclear cooperation, including the establishment of six US nuclear power plants in India. This commitment was made at the 9th round of the India-US Strategic Security Dialogue held in Washington DC.
- The two delegations reaffirmed their commitment to work together to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems and to deny access to such weapons by terrorists and non-state actors
- The Indian delegation was led by Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale, while the US delegation was led by Andrea Thompson, Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security



## **New Delhi, Islamabad agree to work on operationalizing Kartapur corridor**

- India and Pakistan have agreed to work expeditiously on operationalizing the Kartapur corridor.
- The corridor will facilitate Indian pilgrims to visit the holy shrine of Gurdwara Darbar Sahib at Kartarpur in Pakistan. The agreement was reached during the first meeting between the representatives of the two countries held at Attari in Punjab. The Indian delegation was led by Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Home Affairs, S C L Das while Pakistan delegation was led by Director General for South Asia and SAARC Dr. Mohammad Faisal.

## **12 States in India have banned Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS)**

- The Central Drug Regulator has directed all drug controllers in states and Union territories to not allow the manufacture, sale, import and advertisement of Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems, including e-cigarettes and flavoured hookah. Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS), including e-cigarettes, heat-not-burn devices, vape, e-sheesha, e-nicotine flavoured hookah, and the like products have not yet been approved under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act 1940. The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology proposed an amendment to the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines) Rules 2018 to ban the advertisement of e-cigarettes.
- This commitment is to protect the health of children, adolescents and women of reproductive age, 36 countries around the world and 12 states in India have banned the sale of e-cigarettes due to its health harms.
- In India, Punjab, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Kerala, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Jharkhand have taken steps to ban the use of ENDS.

## **President Kovind Inaugurates Festival of Innovation and Entrepreneurship**

- The President of India Shri Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated FINE 2019, the Festival of Innovation and Entrepreneurship, in Gandhinagar, Gujarat. On the occasion, President Kovind also presented the 10th Biennial National Grassroots Innovation Awards.
- The four day event is being hosted outside Rashtrapati Bhavan for the first time since its establishment in 2000, with the assistance of Department of Science and Technology, Government of India.
- The Festival is unique initiative of the Office of the President of India to recognize, respect and reward grassroots creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship and provides a platform for the innovators to build linkages with potential stakeholders and get support in improving their prospects in coming years for the larger social good.

## **GI tag for Coorg Arabica Coffee, four other variety of coffee**

- The Geographical Indications Registry has granted the Geographical Indication (GI) tag to Coorg Arabica Coffee, Wayanad Robusta Coffee, Chikmagalur Arabica Coffee, Araku Valley Arabica Coffee and Bababudangiris Arabica Coffee. Coorg Arabica Coffee is grown specifically in Kodagu district in Karnataka.
- The Kodagu district has unique biotic and abiotic conditions which provide uniqueness to the Coffee grown in it. The terrain provided for coffee by the broader landscape provides it a unique aroma and flavour notes to the coffee when roasted. Wayanad Robusta Coffee, the flora of Wayanad is characteristic of the Western Ghats and the plantation crops grown in the cool climate.
- Chikmagalur Arabica Coffee and Bababudangiris Arabica Coffee are both grown in Chikmagalur district, Karnataka which is also known as the birthplace of coffee in the country. Araku Valley Arabica Coffee, grown around Visakhapatnam district in Andhra Pradesh and Koraput district in Odisha, is light to medium in strength, has a pleasant acidity with a citrus note of grape fruit and a mild jaggery-like sweetness.

## **India Post releases 'Special Stamp Cover on Ice Stupas'**

- Department of Post (DoP) under Ministry of Communication & Technology has released Special Stamp on Ice Stupa (Artificial Glacier) in Leh, Jammu and Kashmir.
- This special stamp is aimed at creating awareness about depleting glaciers and its effect on the ecology around the Himalayas.

## **RSDC launches 'Project Saamrath'**

- The Rubber Skill Development Council (RSDC) has launched Project Saamrath, which is aimed at skilling, upskilling and reskilling 10 lakh personnel involved in the rubber sector, by 2020. The training is being provided under the Recognition of Prior Learning Scheme of Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana across natural rubber plantations, tyre services and rubber manufacturing.

- The training is provided for jobs such as Latex Harvest Technician (tapper), Rubber Nursery General Worker, Rubber Processing Technician—Rubber Sheeting and General Worker Rubber Plantation, among others .

### **India achieves 84 % reduction in TB deaths among HIV patients: UN**

- India has achieved an 84 per cent reduction in tuberculosis deaths among people living with HIV by 2017.
- According to the Joint United Nations Programme on the UNAIDS, it is the highest recorded decline among over 20 nations and it is also three years ahead of the 2020 deadline.UNAIDS is urging countries to step up action to meet the 2020 target of reducing TB deaths among people living with HIV by 75 per cent, as outlined in the 2016 United Nations Political Declaration on Ending AIDS.
- India achieved the highest reduction at 84 per cent, followed by Eritrea (83 per cent, Djibouti (78 per cent) and Malawi (78 per cent)

### **India's Poverty Declines from 55% to 28% as per UNDP report**

- According to the global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) 2018, India drastically reduced its poverty rate from 55 percent to 28 percent between 2005-06 and 2015-16.The report was developed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI).
- India still had 364 million poor in 2015-16, the largest for any country, although it is down from 635 million in 2005-06. Globally, the poverty rate was found to be 23%.Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia regions accounted together for 83% (more than 1.1 billion) of all multidimensionally poor people in the world.

### **Government declares next census of India in 2021**

- The Home Ministry announced that the next census of India will be carried out in 2021 with March 1 of that year.
- The decision has been taken by the central government under the powers conferred by section 3 of the Census Act, 1948 (37 of 1948).For Jammu and Kashmir and snowbound non-synchronous areas of Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, the reference date shall be the first day of October, 2020.
- India's last census was carried out in 2011 when the country's population stood at 121 crore.The Census of India 2011 represents the 15th such operation (since 1872) and the seventh after Independence.

### **Government launched Blockchain Powered E-Marketplace for Coffee sellers**

- The Commerce Ministry launched a blockchain-based coffee e-marketplace in New Delhi.
- India has become the first country in the world to have a blockchain-based marketplace app for coffee trading launched by the Coffee Board of India and developed by Eka Software.
- The platform aims to "premium-ise" coffee, add "bean-to-cup traceability" and cut the role of middlemen.
- Around 20 coffee farmers, exporters, roasters, importers and retailers are already registered on the platform.

## **Important International News**

### **Malaysia joins International Criminal Court**

- Malaysia has become a member of the International Criminal Court. The ICC is the world's only permanent war crimes court and aims to prosecute the worst abuses when national courts are unable or unwilling. Malaysia becomes the 124th member of the court since its establishment in 2002.Burundi became the first country to quit the court in 2017

### **WHO unveils sweeping reforms in drive towards triple billion targets**

- The World Health Organization (WHO) has announced the most wide-ranging reforms in the Organization's history to modernize and strengthen the institution to play its role more effectively and efficiently as the world's leading authority on public health.
- These include one billion more people benefiting from universal health coverage (UHC), one billion more people better protected from health emergencies and one billion more people enjoying better health and well-being.

### **Marshall Islands to launch digital currency**

- The Marshall Islands is gearing to release a digital currency called 'SOV' this year, however, the launch date of the currency has not been decided.Neema, an Israel-based company, is partnering with the Marshall Islands government to develop the digital currency.
- The Marshall Islands, a tiny Pacific atoll nation with a population of just 55,000, passed legislation a year ago to develop digital currency as legal tender.

## **New visa agreement between Maldives & India comes into force**

- The new visa agreement between Maldives and India has come into force. The agreement will provide a liberal visa policy for Maldivians seeking medical treatment as well as education and business opportunities in India. The visa deal will allow Maldivian businessmen and tourists to stay in India for 90 days without a visa. The agreement was reached during the visit of Maldives President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih to India last December.
- India has also extended 1.4 billion US dollars in the form of budgetary support to fulfill the socio-economic development programmes

## **Tropical Cyclone Idai hits Mozambique**

- A category 3 Cyclone Idai, which is carrying heavy rains and winds of up to 177 km/h (106 mph), made landfall at the port city of Beira. The cyclone has now moved west towards Zimbabwe.
- Beira is the fourth-largest city in Mozambique and its port sits on the mouth of the Pungwe river, that runs to Zimbabwe. Mozambique has been struck by severe cyclones in the past, including Eline in 2000, when 350 people died and 650,000 were displaced across the wider region.

## **High-Level Dialogue on Indo-Pacific cooperation held at Indonesia**

- The Government of Indonesia has hosted the first ever High-Level Dialogue on Indo-Pacific Cooperation (HLD-IPC) in its capital city Jakarta. The Dialogue themed "Towards a Peaceful, Prosperous, and Inclusive Region," was opened by Indonesia's Vice President Jusuf Kalla.
- The dialogue was divided into two sessions of general debate and thematic debate. The general debate was chaired by Marsudi, with all delegation heads conveying the position of their respective countries. The delegates participated in the thematic debate under three themes: sustainable development goals, maritime cooperation, and infrastructure and connectivity.

## **India-funded educational campus inaugurated in Nepal**

- Educational campus constructed with Government of India's financial grant of 35.5 million Nepalese rupees was inaugurated in Nepal.
- The newly built Siddheshwar Education Public Campus will not only boost the learning environment of students but also enhance access to education to needy, poor and marginalized students of Ramechhap District and adjoining area. As part of the Development Partnership Programme, the Government of India is providing assistance to institutions at all levels from primary schools to universities in Nepal.

## **Italy becomes first G7 nation to join China's 'Belt and Road' Initiative**

- Italy become the first member of the Group of Seven (G7) major industrialised nations to join China's 'Belt and Road' infrastructure project (BRI), which is inspired by historic, centuries-old trade routes. G7 nations consist of: Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States.
- BRI is a development strategy adopted by the Chinese government involving infrastructure development and investments in 152 countries and international organizations in Europe, Asia, Middle East, Latin America and Africa.

## **World's largest e-waste recycling hub opens in Dubai**

- The world's largest e-waste recycling facility has opened at the Dubai Industrial Park, the 280,000 square feet plant will process Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE), IT asset disposition (ITAD), refrigerant gas and specialised waste. The 120 million dirhams (\$5 million) project is backed by the Swiss Government Export Finance Agency.

## **Norway Introduced the World's First Wireless Electric Car Charging Stations**

- Oslo will be the world's first city to install wireless charging stations for electric taxis, in a bid to make a zero-emission cab system by as early as 2023. Oslo Municipality is working with Finnish utilities firm Fortum to install charging plates in the road that connect to energy receivers in the vehicles themselves, making Norway the first country in this area.
- The goal is to make it as easy as possible to charge electric taxis, as doing so now is cumbersome, time-consuming, and expensive. Norway wants all new cars to be zero emission by 2025 whereas other nations, like Britain and France have similar goals for 2040.

## **Pakistan approves proposal to establish Sharada Peeth corridor**

- The Pakistan government has approved a proposal to establish Sharada Peeth corridor that will allow pilgrims from India to visit the ancient Hindu temple in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (Pok).

- Sharda Peeth corridor, when opened, will be second religious tract after Kartarpur corridor (for Sikh pilgrims) in Pakistan-controlled territory that will connect the two neighbouring nations.

### **EU parliament approves ban on single use plastics**

- An EU-wide ban on single-use plastic products such as the straws, cutlery and cotton buds that are clogging the world's oceans. It had already been approved in negotiations with member states and EU officials and it will now be rapidly approved into law. The ban comes into effect from 2021.
- The law sets a target that 90 per cent of plastic bottles will be gathered for recycling by 2029 and that they should be produced with 25 percent recycled material by 2025, 30 per cent by 2030. According to the EU Commission, the products prohibited under the law represent 70 percent of the waste that pours into the world's oceans, posing a threat to wildlife and fisheries.

### **Israel unveils world's longest salt cave**

- Israeli researchers have discovered the world's longest salt cave near the desert site. The total length of the cave is around 10 km (6.2 miles). Malham Cave is located under Mount Sodom (Israel's largest mountain located southwest of the salty Dead Sea).
- The new discovery has taken away a 13-year record held by the Cave of the Three Nudes (3N Cave) since 2006. It is a 6.85 km (four miles) salt cave in Iran's Qeshm Island.

### **Shanghai becomes world's first district with 5G coverage**

- Shanghai's Hongkou has become the world's first district with 5G coverage and broadband gigabit network as China seeks to establish lead over the US and other countries in the race to develop next generation cellular mobile communications. It conducted trial runs of the 5G network, backed by telecom services provider China Mobile. 5G is the next generation of cellular technology with download speeds that are 10 to 100 times faster than 4G LTE networks.

### **According to IUCN the hump-backed mahseer is now 'critically endangered'**

- The hump-backed mahseer—a large freshwater fish also called the tiger of the water and found only in the Cauvery river basin (including Kerala's Pambar, Kabini and Bhavani rivers)—is now "Critically Endangered", as per the International Union for Conservation of Nature's Red List of Threatened Species. The fish is one of the 229 species added to the Red List last November.
- Five other species have also made it to threatened categories: two wild orchids, the Arabian scud (a marine fish) and two wild coffee species found only in a few localities in the Western Ghats. While 31 species that were already in the Red List have been down-listed, the threat status of 12 species has increased.

## **Important Appointments National Appointments**

<b>Si.No</b>	<b>Person</b>	<b>Designation</b>
1.	Pranay Kumar Verma	Next Ambassador of India to Vietnam
2.	Ravneet Gill	MD & CEO of YES Bank
3.	Air Marshal Raghunath Nambiar	New chief of Western Air Command (WAC)
4.	Hasmukh Adhia	Non-executive chairman of Bank of Baroda
5.	Muktesh Kumar Pardeshi	Next High Commissioner of India to New Zealand
6.	Hemant Bhargava	Non-executive, Non-whole time chairman of IDBI Bank
7.	Ajay Narayan Jha	Member of the 15th Finance Commission
8.	Bhagwan Lal Sahni	Chairman - National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC)
9.	Kaushalendra Singh Patel, Sudha Yadav and Achary Talloju	Members of NCBC

10.	Sanjeev Ranjan	Secretary, Ministry of Road Transport and Highways
11.	Anil Kumble	Chairman of the ICC Cricket Committee
12.	Ajit Kumar Mohanty	Director of Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC)
13.	Dr. Ausaf Sayeed	Next ambassador of India to Saudi Arabia
14.	Padma Lakshmi	UNDP's newest Goodwill Ambassador
15.	Jagdish Mukhi (Assam Governor)	Interim Governor of Mizoram
16.	Subhash Chandra Garg	Finance Secretary
17.	Ashu Khullar	CEO of CITI India ( from April 1)
18.	Anup Kumar Dubey and Sushil Kumar	Special directors in the Enforcement Directorate (ED)
19.	C. Lalsawta	Chairman of Lokayukta in Mizoram
20.	Rakesh Makhija	Non-executive chairman of Axis Bank
21.	Aditya Kumar Misra	Chairman - Agricultural Scientific Recruitment Board (ASRB)
22.	M Ravi Kanth	CMD- Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO) Ltd, (6 Month extension)
23.	M R Kumar	Chairman of LIC
24.	T C Suseel Kumar	Zonal Manager (in-charge), LIC South Central Zone
25.	Vipin Anand	Zonal Manager (in-charge), LIC Western Zone
26.	P S Narasimha	Mediator to BCCI
27.	Anurag Bhushan	High Commissioner of India to the Republic of Malawi
28.	Padmaja	High Commissioner of India to the Republic of Fiji
29.	Santosh Jha	Ambassador of India to republic of Uzbekistan
30.	KVS Manian and Gaurang Shah	Kotak Mahindra Bank board directors
31.	Former SC Judge Justice PC Ghose	India's first Lokpal
32.	BJP leader Pramod Sawant	Chief Minister of Goa
33.	Gauri Sawant	First transgender election ambassador
34.	Shailendra Handa	ECI - Special Expenditure Observers for Maharashtra
35.	Madhu Mahajan	ECI - Special Expenditure Observers for Tamil Nadu
36.	Chacko Purackal Thomas	Tata Coffee MD and CEO

37.	Benedict Cumberbatch	Brand ambassador of MG Motor India
38.	Tim Stone	CFO of Ford
39.	Vice Admiral Karambir Singh	Next Chief of Naval Staff
40.	Aamir Khan	PhonePe's Brand Ambassador
41.	Sudarshan Ballal	The healthcare industry's apex body NATHEALTH president
42.	K. Govindaraj	Re-elected as president of the Basketball Federation of India (BFI)
43.	Chander Mukhi Sharma	Re-elected secretary-general as the BFI
44.	N S Srinath	Non-executive chairman of Karur Vysya Bank
45.	Veselin Matic	Head coach of the Indian men's basketball team
46.	Justice DK Jain	BCCI's Ethics Officer
47.	Goa Tourism Minister Manohar Ajgaonkar	Deputy CM of Goa
48.	Shri Abhay Thakur	Ambassador of India to Republic of Benin
49.	Cricketer Virender Sehwag	Brand Ambassador of PolicyX.com
50.	Vice Admiral MA Hampiholi	Director General Naval Operations (DGNO)
51.	Vijay Chandok	MD and CEO of ICICI Securities

### International Appointments

Sl.No	Person	Designation
1.	Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad Al-Sabah	Re-elected as president of the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA)
2.	Kaja Kallas	First female Prime Minister of Estonia
3.	Soumya Swaminathan	Chief Scientist of the World Health Organisation (WHO)
4.	Mohammad Shtayyeh	Palestinian Prime Minister
5.	Zinedine Zidane	Re-appointed as the coach football club Real Madrid
6.	Mohamed Moustahsane (head of African Boxing Confederation)	Interim President of AIBA
7.	Former India hockey captain Sardar Singh	Athletes Standing Committee of the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA)
8.	Azali Assoumani	Comoros President
9.	Zuzana Caputova	Slovakia's first female president

### Resignation

Sl.No	Person	Designation
1.	Naresh Goyal	Jet Airways Chairman.
2.	Kummanam Rajasekharan	Governor of Mizoram
3.	Juha Sipila	Finland Prime Minister
4.	Rahul Bajaj	Bajaj Finserv chairman
5.	Nursultan Nazarbayev	Kazakhstan President



6.	Gafur Rahimov	AIBA President
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### Important Awards and Honors

Sl.No	Winners	Awards
7.	Tripura's Tribal Musician Thanga Darlong	AB Vajpayee Life Time Award
8.	The Central Zone Power Distribution Company (CZPDC), Bhopal West Zone Power Distribution Company (WZPDC) Indore	"Saubhagya Award" under Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana
9.	Veteran Marathi writer and poet Vasant Abaji Dahake	'Janasthan' Award
10.	TVS Motor Company	'Green Era Award for Sustainability'
11.	Indian Bank	Best Bank Award from the Tamil Nadu government
12.	Abhinandhan	Bhagwan Mahavir Ahimsa Puraskar
13.	Alastair Cook (England cricket)	Knighthood Award
14.	Bharti AXA General Insurance	Non-Life Insurer of The Year Award 2019 by the Assocham
15.	Arata Isozaki (Japanese architect)	Pritzker Architecture Prize 2019
16.	Acko General Insurance (Mumbai)	Golden Peacock Innovative Product Award 2019 - under the Insurance Category
17.	Priyanka Dubey (BBC)	Chameli Devi Jain Award ( Outstanding Woman Journalist for 2018)
18.	Ministry of Tourism	International Golden City Gate Tourism Awards 2019 (TV cinema spot' category)
19.	Vice President Venkaiah Naidu	Doctor Honoris Causa from University of Peace
20.	Sona Yukti	Social Enterprise Network (SEN) sustainability award for education
21.	Ved Rahi (Film director and novelist)	Kusumagraj national award for literature
22.	Former RBI Governor Raghuram Rajan	'Yashwantrao Chavan National Award 2018'
23.	Kane Tanaka(116-year ) (Japan)	Guinness World Records as the oldest living person in the world
24.	Padmanaban Gopalan	Commonwealth Youth Award
25.	Kent RO Systems Pvt. Ltd	Best Domestic Water Purifier Award 2018-19
26.	Swati Shingade	DD Mahila Kisan Award
27.	Sociologist and political psychoanalyst Ashis Nandy	Hans Kilian Award 2019
28.	Brazilian physicist Marcelo Gleiser	Templeton Prize 2019
29.	Hindi writer Leeladhar Jagudi	Vyas Samman 2018
30.	Kenyan science teacher Peter Tabichi	\$1m global teacher award
31.	President Ram Nath Kovind	Croatia's highest civilian award - the Grand Order of the King of Tomislav
32.	Yoshua Bengio, Geoffrey Hinton, and Yann LeCun	Turing Award 2018 (Nobel prize for computing)
33.	Amartya Sen And Novelist Kazuo Ishiguro	Oxford University's Bodley Medal

34.	Dr Rajendra Joshi	Pravasi Bhartiya Samman Award
35.	Alemba Yimchunger (forest guard of Nagaland)	Earth Day Network Star Award

### **PM confers Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prizes**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi conferred Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prizes for the years 2016, 2017 and 2018 in New Delhi. Several IITs combined won eight awards at the ceremony for the coveted Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prize for Science and Technology, in New Delhi. Close behind the IITs was the Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru (IISc), which won seven prizes at the ceremony. Eleven scientists were given the Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prize for 2016. The awardees include Dr Rishikesh Narayan of Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru and Dr Amalendu Krishna of Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Mumbai. Among the ten scientists who got the prize for 2017 are Dr Deepak Gaur of Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi and Dr S Suresh Babu of Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre. There were thirteen prize winners for 2018. They include Dr Amit Kumar of IIT, Delhi and Dr Nitin Saxena, IIT, Kanpur.

### **President Kovind presents ‘Swachh Survekshan 2019’ Awards**

- Swachh Survekshan-2019 Awards were presented by President Ram Nath Kovind in New Delhi. Indore bagged award for cleanest city for third straight year in Swachh Survekshan. The second and third positions were grabbed by Ambikapur in Chhattisgarh and Mysuru in Karnataka, respectively.
- New Delhi Municipal Council area gets cleanest small city award while Uttarakhand's Gauchar was adjudged Best Ganga Town in the survey. Top ranked cities received a statue of Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi as award for their work towards cleanliness.
- Swachh Survekshan 2019 covered all Urban Local Bodies in the country, making it the largest such cleanliness survey in the world.

### **Guinness World Record in yoga in Hong Kong made by over 1,000 people**

- A Guinness World Record in Yoga was set by more than a thousand people who performed the Virabathrasan or the Warrior II Pose for 3 minutes, in Sun Yat Sen Memorial Park, Hong Kong. This initiative to promote yoga was taken by Overseas President of BJP for Hong Kong and China Sohan Goenka. The previous record was of 387 people

### **Biju Patnaik International Airport wins the prestigious ASQ award**

- The Biju Patnaik International Airport (BPIA) in Bhubaneswar has won the 2018 Airport Service Quality (ASQ) award as the leading airport in size and region. The Airports Council International selected BPIA for the prestigious award.
- The BPIA won the ASQ award for being the best airport in terms of size and region (2-5 million passengers in Asia-Pacific)
- Chandigarh Airport, Devi Ahilyabai Holkar Airport in Indore, SM Badaruddin II Airport in Indonesia, SS Kasim II Airport in Indonesia and Yichang Sanxia Airport in China were also chosen for the award.
- The award is accorded on the basis of independent survey amongst passengers on various parameters of security, safety, experience, ambience, ease of availability and cleanliness.
- Kempegowda International Airport in Bengaluru has become the first airport in the world to clinch the Airports Council International's Airport Service Quality Awards for both Arrivals and Departures
- Cochin International Airport came second in the 5-15 million passenger category for ASQ Departure awards.
- Kempegowda International Airport is currently the busiest airport in south India and the third largest in the country.
- The Airport Service Quality (ASQ) programme is an airport passenger service and benchmarking programme for airports across the globe. The ASQ Departures programme measures passengers' satisfaction across 34 key performance indicators.

### **President confers gallantry and distinguished service awards**

- The President and Supreme Commander of the Indian Armed Forces Shri Ram Nath Kovind conferred three Kirti Chakras and fifteen Shaurya Chakras to Armed Forces Personnel for displaying conspicuous gallantry, indomitable courage and extreme devotion to duty at a solemn ceremony at the Rashtrapati Bhawan. Two Kirti Chakras and one Shaurya Chakra were given posthumously.

- The President also conferred fourteen Param Vishisht Seva Medals, one Uttam Yudh Seva Medals and twenty two Ati Vishisht Seva Medals to senior officers of the Armed Forces for distinguished service of an exceptional order.

### **6 Indians in WEF's Young Global Leaders 2019 List**

The World Economic Forum has recognized six Indians in its 2019 list of the Forum of Young Global Leaders.

- Nara Lokesh – Andhra Pradesh IT minister
- Poonam Mahajan – BJP MP
- Manu Kumar Jain – Xiaomi India head
- Phanindra Sama – Telangana government's Chief Innovation Officer
- Piyush Tewari – Founder of SaveLife Foundation
- Sucharita Mukherjee – Kaleidofin's co-Founder

The 2019 list features 127 of the world's 'most promising social activists, business leaders, public servants, artists and technologists' under the age of 40.

### **Arun Jaitley gets Changemaker of the Year Award from ManMohan Singh for implementing GST**

- Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh presented the BusinessLine Changemaker Of The Year award to Union Minister Arun Jaitley for successfully introducing the Goods and Services Tax (GST).
- The awards were given in five categories: Social Transformation, Digital transformation, Young changemaker, Iconic changemaker, Changemaker of the year

### **Tata, Reliance and Airtel emerge best Indian brands of 2019**

- Tata, Reliance and Airtel emerged as the top three Indian brands of 2019 published by Interbrand, part of the Omnicom Media Group, an advertising and public relations conglomerate.
- Tata continued to hold the top position in the best Indian Brands ranking as its brand value grew by 6%, mainly due to Tata Consultancy Services (TCS).
- Knocking its competitor Airtel off from the second spot, Reliance's brand value grew by 12%, bolstered by the success of Jio. This also explains the 13% degrowth in Airtel's brand value.
- Following Airtel at number three, HDFC Bank, LIC, State Bank of India, Infosys, Mahindra, ICICI Bank and Godrej rounded off the top 10 list.

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### **Raghu Karnad's 'Indian story' wins US Windham-Campbell Prize**

- Journalist and writer Raghu Karnad won the prestigious award for his debut book 'The Farthest Field: An Indian Story of the Second World War' in the non-fiction category on a ceremony which was held in London.
- Karnad became the second Indian to win the Windham-Campbell Prize; after Jerry Pinto who won the prize in 2016 for his novel 'Em And the Big Hoom'.
- The Indian author is one of the eight winners who have been chosen across four categories this year. Each of the eight winners won \$165,000 as prize money to support their writing. In terms of the award money, Windham-Campbell Prize is one of the richest literary awards worldwide.
- Apart from Karnad, the other winner in non-fiction category was American writer Rebecca Solnit.
- The Windham-Campbell Prize was established in 2013 by writer Donald Windham to honour his late partner Sandy Campbell. It is now co-presented by the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University.

### **Karen Uhlenbeck becomes first woman to win Abel Prize for Maths**

- An American professor Karen Uhlenbeck has become the first woman to win the Abel Prize for mathematics since it was first established in 2002.
- She has been awarded the 6 million Norwegian kroner (\$700,000) prize for her work in the fields of gauge theory and geometric analysis, which have been credited with far-reaching impact in both mathematics and physics.
- She is also a role model and a strong advocate for gender equality in science and mathematics.

- The award was awarded by the Norwegian Academy of Science since 2003 to honour the 19th-century Norwegian mathematician Niels Henrik Abel. It is often referred to as the Nobel Prize for mathematics

### Hinduja family tops Asian Rich List with £25.2 bn

- Leading London-based NRI industrial tycoons, the Hinduja family top the Asian Rich List 2019 for the sixth successive year with an estimated net worth of 25.2 billion pounds, an increase of over 3 billion pounds over the previous year.
- According to the Asian Rich List 2019 released at the Asian Business Awards, Steel magnates Lakshmi Mittal and his son Aditya Mittal remained in second place, with 11.2 billion pounds- down 2.8 billion pounds. S P Lohia (Petrochemicals) took the third place with 5.8 billion pounds.

### 64th Vimal Elaichi Filmfare Awards 2019: Complete winners' list

- Members from all quarters of Bollywood got together to honour the best of Hindi cinema in 2018 at Jio Garden, Mumbai for the 64th Vimal Elaichi Filmfare Awards 2019.

Category	Winner
Best Actor In A Leading Role (Male)	Ranbir Kapoor for 'Sanju'
Best Actor In A Leading Role (Female)	Alia Bhatt for 'Raazi'
Critics Best Actor in Leading Role (Male)	Ranveer Singh for 'Padmaavat' tied with Ayushmann Khurrana for 'Andhadhun'
Critics Best Actor in Leading Role (Female)	Neena Gupta for 'Badhaai Ho'
Best Director	Meghna Gulzar for 'Raazi'
Best Film (Popular)	'Raazi'
Critics Best Film	'Andhadhun'
Best Actor In A Supporting Role (Male)	Gajraj Rao for 'Badhaai Ho' tied with Vicky Kaushal for 'Sanju'
Best Actor In A Supporting Role (Female)	Surekha Sikhri for 'Badhaai Ho'
Best Screenplay	Sriram Raghavan, Arijit Biswas, Pooja Ladha Surti, Yogesh Chandekar, Hemanth Rao for 'Andhadhun'
Best Dialogue	Akshat Ghildial for 'Badhaai Ho'
Best Original Story	Anubhav Sinha for 'Mulk'
Best Debut Actor (Male)	Ishaan Khatter
Best Debut Actor (Female)	Sara Ali Khan
Best Debut Director	Amar Kaushik for 'Stree'
Best Short Film (Popular Choice)	'Plus Minus'
Best Actor (Male) for Short Film	Hussain Dalal for 'Shameless'
Best Actor (Female) for Short Film	Kirti Kulhari for 'Maya'
Best Short Film (Fiction)	'Rogan Josh'
Best Short Film (Non-Fiction)	'The Soccer City'
Gulshan Kumar Award for Best Music Album	Sanjay Leela Bhansali for 'Padmaavat'
Best Lyrics	Gulzar for 'Ae Watan' from 'Raazi'
Best Playback Singer (Male)	Arijit Singh for 'Ae Watan' from 'Raazi'
Best Playback Singer (Female)	Shreya Ghoshal for 'Ghoomar' from 'Padmaavat'
RD Burman Award for New Music Talent	Niladri Kumar
Best Cinematography	Pankaj Kumar for 'Tumbbad'
Best VFX	Red Chillies VFX for 'Zero'
Best Background Score	Daniel B. George for 'Andhadhun'
Best Action	Vikram Dahiya and Sunil Rodriguez for 'Mukkabaaz'

## Important Committees

Committee	Heads
Comprehensive Insurance Scheme for Advocates	Dr Alok Srivastava

### RBI appoints five-member committee to deepen digital payments

- The central bank of the country has appointed 5-member committee under the chairmanship of Nandan Nilekani to further deepen digital payments and enhance financial inclusion through Fintech.
- This announcement made by Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das at the first event of Financial Technology (Fintech) Conclave, which was organized by NITI Aayog in New Delhi.
- The purpose of the event is to shape India's predominance in FinTech, build the future strategy and policy to uplift the financial inclusion.

## Important MOU's

### India, Paraguay agree to promote bilateral investment, explore new areas of collaboration

- India and Paraguay have agreed to identify sectors of mutual interest to promote bilateral investment and decided to explore new areas of collaboration, including Information and Communication Technology, space and biotechnology
- The decisions were taken as Vice President Venkaiah Naidu ongoing visit to the Latin American country. During the visit Naidu had meetings with Paraguay's President Mario Abdo Benítez, Vice President Hugo Velazquez and President of the National Congress (Senate) Silvio Ovelar
- Both sides agreed to jointly celebrate the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. India welcomed the issuance of a commemorative postal stamp in Paraguay.

### National Centre for Good Governance inks pact with Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs

- The National Centre for Good Governance (NCGG) and Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA) have signed an MoU. To ensure better utilisation of infrastructure facilities during training programme.
- NCGG aims to promote good governance through capacity building on public policy and governance both at national and international level and carrying out studies research on issues relating to governance.
- National Centre for Good Governance (NCGG) has been set up by the Government of India (GoI) under the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions. The IICA, registered as a society, is under the Ministry of Corporate Affairs with the primary objective of establishing, managing, maintaining and running a world class institute

### Korea Exim Bank to give Rs. 4,100 crore loan for Vizag Metro

- The Export-Import Bank of Korea (KEXIM) has come forward to extend a loan of Rs. 4,100 crore for the Visakhapatnam metro rail project.
- A team of officials from Korea EXIM Bank called on Andhra Pradesh Chief Secretary A.C. Punetha and discussed the loan proposal and related issues. The state government had earlier sent a proposal in this regard to the Central government, which in turn forwarded it to Korea Exim Bank.
- The three-corridor Vizag Metro would be built over a stretch of 42.55 km at a cost of Rs. 8,300 crore

### Ministries of WCD & Skill Development sign MoU to improve women livelihood

- Women and Child Development Ministry and Skill Development Ministry signed an MoU for improving women livelihood and empowering them through skill development. The MoU was signed in the presence of Women and Child Development Minister Maneka Sanjay Gandhi and Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Minister Dharmendra Pradhan.
- Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK) and the National Skill Development Council (NSDC) will be the implementing partners on behalf of the Ministry of Women and Child Development and Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship respectively
- Skill Development ministry of Women and Child Development through Rashtriya Mahila Kosh will identify the types of skill which are suitable for enhancing livelihood of women through self-employment.



## **India Signs USD 3 Billion Deal with Russia to Lease Nuclear Submarine**

- The Government of India has signed a USD 3 billion deal with Russian Government for the lease of a nuclear-powered attack submarine for the Indian Navy for a period of 10 years. Russia will deliver its Akula class 1 submarine to the Indian Navy by 2025. This submarine will be known as Chakra III. It will be the third Russian submarine to be leased to the Indian Navy. The first Russian nuclear powered submarine - christened INS Chakra was taken in 1988 under a three year lease. A second INS Chakra was taken on lease in 2012 for a period of 10 years

## **India and Costa Rica signed two documents**

- India and Costa Rica signed two documents during Vice President Venkaiah Naidu's first visit to the Central American nation.
- The two documents based on waiving visa requirements for Diplomatic and Official passport holders and the signing of the Letter of Intent to collaborate in the field of Biotechnology.

## **HP signs MoU with AP government to set up additive manufacturing centre**

- HP India has signed an MoU with Andhra Pradesh Innovation Society (APIS) and Andhra Pradesh Economic Development Board (APEDB) to build a Center of Excellence (CoE) for additive manufacturing powered by HP's 3D printing technology.
- The CoE is part of the state government's vision to accelerate adoption of 3D printing in various industry sectors such as automotive, aerospace, defence, consumer goods, healthcare, apparel and construction
- The CoE will give Small and Medium Businesses (SMBs) and Start-ups in Andhra Pradesh the opportunity to learn more about the benefits of additive manufacturing, and how they can make use of 3D printing to digitally transform their own operations or to grow their business.

## **Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board inks cooperation agreement with IFC**

- The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) has signed a Cooperation Agreement with the International Finance Corporation (IFC), a member of the World Bank Group (WBG). The agreement was signed by K. R. Saji Kumar, Executive Director, IBBI and Jun Zhang, Country Manager, IFC India, in the presence of Injeti Srinivas, Secretary, Ministry of Corporate Affairs, and M. S. Sahoo, Chairperson, IBBI.
- The agreement will enable IFC to assist IBBI to further build the capacity of insolvency professionals, and insolvency professional agencies for the purposes of the Code

## **ISRO, French space agency seal agreement on maritime security**

- The French space agency, National Centre for Space Studies (CNES), has signed an agreement with the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) to set up a maritime surveillance centre in India. K. Sivan, Chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation, and Jean-Yves Le Gall, President of CNES of France, signed the agreement in Bengaluru
- The two nations will explore putting up a constellation of low-Earth orbiting satellites that will identify and track movement of ships globally – and in particular those moving in the Indian Ocean region where France has its Reunion Islands

## **Microsoft's Project accelerates India's Swachh Bharat e-learning portal**

- Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) has partnered with Microsoft India to use the platform Project Sangam of Microsoft on its Swachh Bharat e-Learning Portal. With this partnership, the MoHUA has increased the features on the Swachh Bharat e-Learning Portal. With this now MoHUA has now trained more than 110,000 municipal functionaries on best sanitation practices across 4,000 plus cities in India.
- The Sangam platform was designed to train municipal functionaries of state sanitation missions, city managers - engineers, administrators, field supervisors and sanitation workers with an aim to equip, assess, measure and accredit training of these officers. It also provided video-based learning for users who have low-bandwidth supporting offline learning for the Swachh Bharat e-Learning Portal.

## **Japan announces Rs. 22 lakh for Kolkata museum**

- The Japanese government announced a donation of some Rs. 22 lakh (\$31,800) to the Rabindra Bharati Museum, in a bid to strengthen historical and cultural ties with India. To refurbish the Japan Gallery of the museum, a MoU will be signed between the Consul General of Japan in Kolkata, Masayuki Taga, and the Vice Chancellor of Rabindra Bharati University, Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury. Tagore, Asia's first Nobel Prize recipient, visited Japan in 1916, 1924 and 1929, renewing relations between the countries as India's leading cultural ambassador.

## **India extends USD 250 mn to Nepal for reconstruction of infrastructures post earthquake**



- India has extended a grant assistance of up to USD 250 million to Nepal for the reconstruction of infrastructures in the areas of housing, education, health and cultural heritage that was destroyed during the devastating April 2015 earthquake.
- During the India-Nepal Joint Project Monitoring Committee meeting held on March 12<sup>th</sup> in Kathmandu officials from the two countries reviewed the progress of post-earthquake reconstruction projects. Earlier India stated that it will reconstruct 72 education facilities in Nepal that were damaged during the earthquake

### **GoDaddy partners with ICC as official sponsor for Cricket World Cup 2019**

- Website hosting company GoDaddy announced its partnership with International Cricket Council (ICC) as official sponsor for the upcoming men's cricket World Cup. The 2019 World Cup will be held in the UK from May 30 to July 14. This time they are engaging with ICC for men's World Cup 2019 which is expected to reach out to around 700 million people in India and 1.5 billion people globally," GoDaddy India MD and Vice President Nikhil Arora.
- Under the partnership, GoDaddy will get visibility on ground, perimeter of the boundary, side screen, placards during the matches. MS Dhoni was brand ambassador of GoDaddy

### **PFC to lend Rs. 30,000 crore to Telangana irrigation schemes**

- State-owned public sector undertaking Power Finance Corporation has agreed to extend another credit line of Rs. 30,000 crore to Telangana to help complete some of the major ongoing irrigation projects, including Kaleshwaram, Sita Rama and Palamuru-Rangareddy schemes. PFC has extended loans of over Rs. 40,000 crore to ongoing power and irrigation projects in Telangana. The break-up shows Rs. 23,000 crore has been extended for various power projects, including Yadadri and Rs. 17,000 crore for electro-mechanical works of irrigation projects.

### **IIT Roorkee collaborates with ISRO to set up Space Technology Cell**

- The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Roorkee in Uttarakhand tied up with the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) to set up a Space Technology Cell at its campus. The need to strengthen their institutional interactions and thereby enhance the scope of the activities pursued under STC commensurate with the programmatic goals of ISRO.
- The activities of STC shall be directed to maximise the use of the research potential, infrastructure, expertise and experience that already exist in ISRO and IIT Roorkee. IIT Roorkee will be responsible for overall management of Space Technology Cell by providing required infrastructure, administrative and other support.

### **FeFA Girls Initiative - A New Collaborative Project with ICRISAT partnered with Telangana Govt**

- FeFA (Iron for Adolescent Girls), a new initiative to address malnutrition among adolescents was launched.
- Through this project, ICMR-National Institute of Nutrition (NIN) and the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) will work in partnership with the Government of Telangana to address these important issues. FeFA Girls includes two components: i) to establish diet-based approaches for improvement in haemoglobin and iron status in adolescent girls, and ii) to generate scientific evidence on nutritional benefits of groundnut and pearl millet (ICRISAT mandate crops) on human health. The initiative will target girls in the age group of 16 to 19 years from social welfare hostels in Telangana.

### **IIT KGP is getting India's first-of-its-kind supercomputer**

- The IIT Kharagpur has signed a MoU with Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) to set up a Petaflop high performance computing facility and data center funded under the National Supercomputing Mission.
- The department of science and technology (DST), along with experts from Niti Ayog, DRDO and IISc, will help IIT Kharagpur develop this supercomputer. A Petaflops is a unit of computing speed equal to 1,000 million million (10<sup>15</sup>) floating-point operations per second. PetaFlop is the measurement of computing power based on the frequency of mathematical calculations that can be done per second.
- The development of Centre for 1.3 PetaFlop High-Performance Computing facility will aid research in niche areas like healthcare, smart cities, geoscience, new material etc among others

### **India & Afghanistan signed a MoU on digital education initiatives**

- The Ministry of Human Resource Development has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Afghanistan government to work on digital education initiatives, which include many prominent programs developed by Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs). The MoU was signed at IIT-Madras. This collaboration hopes to contribute to bilateral relations and beget mutual benefits for the two countries.

- One of the main objectives of the MoU is to facilitate students and faculty from Afghanistan to enrol and learn from the courses offered on Study Webs of Active Learning for Young Aspiring Minds (SWAYAM), which is an online education platform developed by Government of India.

### **Maldives sign agreement with Exim Bank to finance new government's infrastructure projects**

- Maldives finance ministry has signed an agreement with India's Export-Import bank (EXIM) for line of credit (LOC) of 800 million US dollars to finance the new government's infrastructure projects. The LOC is part of 1.4 billion US dollars finance assistance announced by Indian government during President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih's state visit in December. The EXIM Bank loans come with a 1.75 percent interest rate and a 15-year repayment period after five years of moratorium. The agreement was signed in presence of External Affairs Sushma Swaraj who was on a 2-day visit to Male.

### **Ola signs MoU with Telangana government to implement smart traffic solutions in Hyderabad**

- Ola, one of the world's largest ride-hailing platforms, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Government of Telangana, to support their efforts towards strengthening the traffic infrastructure in Hyderabad city
- Under the partnership, Ola share intelligent insights that enable the Government to implement smart solutions to enhance the mobility experience in the city. The first pilot project proposed to be implemented is the dynamic mapping of the ride quality of major roads in Hyderabad through Ola vehicles

### **WhatsApp partners with NASSCOM to Impart Digital Literacy**

- WhatsApp and NASSCOM Foundation came together to impart digital literacy training to curb fake news during the general elections. As part of the partnership, WhatsApp and NASSCOM Foundation will train nearly 1,00,000 Indians to spot false information and provide tips and tricks to stay safe on WhatsApp.

### **SBI inks pact with Bank of China for business opportunities**

- The country's largest lender SBI stated that it has signed a pact with the Bank of China to boost business opportunities. Both SBI and BoC will gain direct access to their respective markets of operation.
- SBI has a branch in Shanghai and BOC is opening its branch in Mumbai. This MoU will facilitate the clients of both the banks to access banking products and services of each other, which will lead to a mutually beneficial relationship.

### **Exim Bank gives \$83 mn line of credit to Congo**

- Export-Import Bank of India (Exim Bank) has, on behalf of the government, extended three lines of credit (LOC) aggregating \$83.11 million to the government of Congo to finance three solar power projects in the central African country. The loan will be utilised for financing three solar photovoltaic power projects with a total capacity of 35 megawatt in the three provinces -- Karawa, Mbandaka and Lusambo.
- The LOC agreements were exchanged between Ambassador of Congo to India Mossi Nyamale Rosette and Exim Bank Managing Director David Rasquinha during the 14th CII-Exim Conclave 2019 which was held at New Delhi
- Exim Bank, till date, has extended 10 LOC to the government of Congo on behalf of government of India, taking the total value of LOCs extended to \$578.05 million. With this line of credit, Exim Bank has now put in place 244 LOCs covering 63 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the CIS with credit commitments of around \$23.43 billion available for financing exports from India.

### **IBBI signs MoU with SEBI for better implementation of IBC**

- The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) for effective implementation of the new bankruptcy law.
- The IBBI and the SEBI seek effective implementation of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 (Code) and its allied rules and regulations, which have redefined the debt-equity relationship and aims to promote entrepreneurship and debt market.
- They have agreed under the MoU to assist and co-operate with each other for the effective implementation of the Code, subject to limitations imposed by the applicable laws.

### **Pakistan to receive \$ 2.1 billion loan from China**

- Pakistan will receive a loan worth 15 billion yuan (\$ 2.1 billion) from China by next week.
- The loan facility will further strengthen foreign exchange reserves and ensure balance of payment stability. Pakistan has already secured a bailout package worth \$6 billion from Saudi Arabia.

### **Japan gives \$69m to UN World Food Programme**

- Japan has donated 69 million dollars to the United Nations World Food Programme to provide vital aid to 28 countries in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia, with the biggest shares of the money earmarked for Yemen and Iraq.
- Japan is one of WFP's top donors and has so far contributed \$958 million to UN-WFP since 2014.

### **PFC signs pact to acquire majority stake in REC for Rs 14,500 crore**

- State-owned Power Finance Corporation (PFC) has signed a share purchase agreement to acquire all 52.63 per cent shares of the government in Rural Electrification Corporation (REC) for about Rs 14,500 crore.
- Under this agreement, PFC will acquire 103.94 crore equity shares of Rs 10 of REC from President constituting 52.63% of paid-up share capital. With this PFC is now slated to become a promoter and the holding company of REC.
- The acquisition will enable increased efficiencies in lending processes and policies across both institutions, and create public value by offering better loan products to the power sector.

### **ESPNcricinfo in partnership with IIT Madras launches data science based 'Superstats'**

- Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Madras has launched data science-based 'Superstats,' to analyse Cricket games.
- Launched in association with ESPNcricinfo, Superstats is a combination of stats metrics - Luck Index, Forecaster and Smart Stats that uses data science for the first time to give a context to every event in a game and also venture into new territories such as luck and forecasting. Researchers from IIT Madras along with its incubated company Gyan Data acquired ball-by-ball database that has more than ten years of detailed data, and scientific methods, processes and complex algorithms based on machine learning (ML). The work was led by Raghunathan Rengaswamy and Mahesh Panchagnula.

### **Oman signs agreement allowing United States military to use its ports**

- Oman has signed an agreement with the United States that allow American ships and warplanes to take advantage of his ports and airports. The agreement will allow the US forces to take advantage from the facilities offered at some of the Sultanate's ports and airports during visits of the US military vessels and aircraft, particularly in the port of Duqm. Duqm port is located in southern Oman on the Arabian Sea and around 500 kilometres from the Strait of Hormuz

### **eBay adds Google Pay to its managed payments program**

- eBay announced adding Google Pay to its suite of payment options as part of its move to intermediate end-to-end payments on its marketplace. With the integration, Google Pay users will be able to complete purchases on eBay via the app, mobile web and on desktop from sellers participating in eBay's managed payments program, while shoppers using the Google Pay digital wallet will be able to complete purchases on desktop.
- eBay's new managed payments approach to payments after it decided to cut ties with long-standing partner and former subsidiary PayPal. Dutch fintech company Adyen is set to become eBay's primary payments processor after the current PayPal deal expires in mid-2020. Earlier, eBay added Apple Pay as a payment method under its managed payments programme.

### **Apple partners with Goldman Sachs and Mastercard for Apple Card**

- Apple card is a virtual credit card that can be integrated into the Wallet app of the iPhone. The company has partnered with Goldman Sachs and Mastercard for payment handling and processing.
- The idea behind the launch of this new service is to replace the traditional credit card with a new, smarter and secure payment method across online and offline stores.
- There is also a physical titanium credit card which does not have any other information apart from the Apple Logo and the card holder's name below it. This also means that there is no CVV, credit card number, expiration date, and signature that are usually found on traditional cards. All this information is stored in a special security chip used by Apple Pay called Secure Element.

### **India-African Union sign MoU on strengthening cooperation in healthcare sector**

- An agreement has been signed between India and the African Union to establish an India-Africa health sciences collaborative platform.
- The MoU will pave the way for cooperation in research and development, capacity building, health services, pharmaceutical trade and manufacturing capabilities for drugs and diagnostics.

### **India, US ink pact to check tax evasion by MNCs**

- India and the US signed an agreement for exchange of country-by-country (CbC) report

- The move that is expected to give a huge relief to subsidiaries of US headquartered companies in taxation-related matter. The agreement was signed by PC Mody, Chairman, Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), and Kenneth I Juster, US Ambassador to India.
- This agreement for exchange of CbC reports, along with the Bilateral Competent Authority Arrangement, will enable both the countries to automatically exchange CbC reports filed by the ultimate parent entities of multinational enterprises (MNEs) in the respective jurisdictions, pertaining to the years commencing on or after January 1, 2016

### **Infosys, Roland-Garros team up for digital innovation**

- Infosys and Roland-Garros Grand Slam tennis tournament, also called the French Open, announced a three-year strategic technology partnership. The partnership aims to re-imagine the tennis experience for the fans and the players globally

### **PFC completes REC acquisition pays Rs 14,500 crore to government**

- State-owned Power Finance Corporation (PFC) completed the acquisition of majority stake in (REC) Rural Electrification Corporation Ltd by transferring Rs. 14,500 crore to the government.
- The transaction has helped the government meet its disinvestment target of Rs 80,000 crore for the current financial year. The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs had approved the strategic sale of the government's 52.63 percent shareholding in REC to PFC, along with the transfer of management control in December 2018.
- PFC has raised money from Bank of Baroda, Life Insurance Corporation and State Bank of India, among others, to make the payment.

### **IIT-Kharagpur partnered with Wipro for advanced research in 5G and AI**

- IT services major Wipro has partnered with IIT Kharagpur to collaborate on industry-focused applied research in the areas of 5G and artificial intelligence (AI). The two organisations will focus on AI research applicable in the healthcare, education and retail sectors as well as in domains such as climate change and cybersecurity.
- In addition, subject matter experts from Wipro and IIT-Kharagpur will promote knowledge sharing through guest lectures, workshops and seminars on 5G and AI.
- Wipro and IIT Kharagpur will jointly take up applied research projects on industry challenges related to the design, planning and operations of 5G networks and cognitive information processing for the automation of these processes and 5G use cases.

### **India, US renew triangular development cooperation in Asia and Africa**

- India and the United States signed the First Amendment to the Statement of Guiding Principles (SGP) on Triangular Cooperation for Global Development, mainly focused on Asia and Africa. It renews SGP agreement, which was signed by both countries in November 2014.
- It extends its validity up to 2021. It also expands scope of capacity building activities undertaken jointly by India and US under this framework. India and US will continue to offer capacity building assistance to partner countries in multiple sectors, focusing primarily on agriculture, trade and investments, nutrition, health, water, sanitation, education, women empowerment, regional connectivity, clean and renewable energy, disaster preparedness and institution building.
- It will help to fulfil India-US joint commitment to work together and leverage their combined capacities to provide demand-driven development partnership.

## **Important Summit & Conference**

### **Rising India Summit 2019 held in New Delhi**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed News-18 Network Rising India Summit, held in New Delhi and laid out his vision for a 'New India'. The theme of the summit was, 'Beyond Politics: Defining National Priorities'.

### **Airports Authority of India organised the Startup Conclave "Innovate for Airports"**

- Airports Authority of India organised the Startup Conclave under the Startup initiative "Innovate for Airports" at the Airports Authority of India Officer's Institute. The Airports Authority of India (AAI) launched its Start-up policy to lay down the guidelines to help AAI as well as startups in relevant domains interact with one another. During the event 8 Startups were awarded the "Letter of Consent" under this initiative



## **International Digital Health Symposium' Inaugurated In New Delhi**

- Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare Smt. Anupriya Patel inaugurated the 'International Digital Health Symposium in New Delhi. She also inaugurated the exhibition on Digital Health as part of the Symposium
- Participant countries along with various Government Ministries, states and other stakeholders showcased key innovations, implementation experiences and innovative Digital Health Interventions. The Digital Health Symposium follows the two-day Global Digital Health Partnership (GDHP) summit and allows wide engagement with innovators, clinical leaders, academia, researchers, healthcare establishments, government representatives, international and national technical experts, entrepreneurs and the research community

## **NITI Aayog partners with Adobe to boost digital literacy, creativity skills**

- Software firm Adobe has partnered with Niti Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) to collaborate on enhancing digital literacy and creativity skills. The two parties have signed a statement of intent (SOI) to collectively drive the charter of developing creative skills and spreading digital literacy across all Atal Tinkering Labs in India
- 100 schools under Atal Tinkering Labs (ATL) initiative will be adopted by Adobe and it will be implementing its Digital Disha Program in ATLs. The Atal Tinkering Lab is based on the philosophy to identify and nurture innovation in young students across the country

## **India, Brunei signed pact to exchange information on tax and banking matters**

- India and Brunei signed an agreement for exchange of information in tax matters to curb tax evasion and tax avoidance. The Tax Information and Exchange Agreement (TIEA) was signed by Pramod Chandra Mody, Chairman of the Central Board of Direct Taxes, and Dato Paduka Haji Sidek Ali, Brunei's High Commissioner to India
- The agreement also provides for mutual assistance in collection of tax revenue claims between both countries,

## **7th RCEP Intersessional Ministerial Meeting held in Cambodia**

- The 7th Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Intersessional Ministerial Meeting was organized in Siem Reap, Cambodia. It was headed by Chutima Bunyapraphasara, Acting Minister of Commerce of Thailand and saw participation of ministers from the 16 RCEP Participating Countries (RPCs).
- It was also attended by Union Minister of Commerce & Industry and Civil Aviation- Suresh Prabhu.

## **PM Modi to inaugurate Construction Technology India-2019 Expo-cum-Conference**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the Construction Technology India-2019 Expo-cum-Conference in New Delhi. The conference will identify proven, innovative and globally established technologies for use in the Indian context.
- Technology providers, researchers, start-ups, developers, academia, public sector agencies and other domain experts are participating in the two day event. Proven technologies which are identified during CTI - 2019 will be further invited to design and build lighthouse projects of nearly one thousand housing units each at six States in the country.
- These States are Gujarat, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Tripura and Uttar Pradesh.

## **Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Summit on Innovation and Governance held in New Delhi**

- Vice President Shri M Venkaiah Naidu presented Kalam Innovation in Governance Award 2019, at the third edition of Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Summit on Innovation and Governance held in New Delhi.
- He also started 75 new Kalam Digital Libraries spread across the country, which will be serving as centers for no-cost digital based learning in schools.

## **34<sup>th</sup> edition of AAHAR - International Food and Hospitality fair-begins in New Delhi**

- The 34th edition of AAHAR - the International Food and Hospitality fair - begins at Pragati Maidan in New Delhi. Minister for Commerce and Industry Suresh Prabhu inaugurated the fair.
- The fair will feature a wide range of food products, machinery, hospitality and Decoration and Confectionery items from over 560 participants from India and abroad. Around 20 countries, including US, Russia, China, UK, Germany, Italy and Singapore will participate in the five-day fair.
- The fair which will showcase new trends in food and beverage, hospitality, culinary technology, retail and new innovations.

## **CII-EXIM Bank conclave on India-Africa Project Partnerships to be held in New Delhi**

- Commerce and Industry Ministry will be organising the 14th CII-EXIM Bank Conclave on India-Africa Project Partnerships, in association with Confederation of Indian Industry and EXIM Bank of India from March 17-19 in New

Delhi. The event will mark the deepening of India-Africa economic and business ties and pave the way for a whole range of cross-border project partnerships. Since its inception in 2005, the annual conclave brings senior ministers, policy makers, officials, business leaders, bankers, technologists, start-up entrepreneurs and other professionals on a common platform.

### **Internet of Things India Congress 2019 to be held in Bengaluru**

- The 4th Internet of Things (IoT) India Congress, an event which will see digital technology leaders converge to discuss and explore business opportunities in mainstreaming IoT, will be held in Bengaluru on August 22-23, 2019.
- The IoT India Congress 2019 will include tracks on segments such as healthcare, manufacturing, telecom, smart cities, energy, retail, cyber security, skills and development, IoT Standards, legal and regulatory, and agriculture. A new addition at the event 'Future Tech Spotlight', will provide a glimpse of technology trends in the next 5 to 10 years

### **First BRICS Sherpa meeting under Presidency of Brazil held in Curitiba**

- The first BRICS Sherpa meeting under the Presidency of Brazil concluded at Curitiba in Brazil. Secretary, Economic Relations in the Ministry of External Affairs, T S Tirumurti led the Indian delegation
- India conveyed its support for the priority areas set out by Brazil, particularly to take forward BRICS cooperation on counter terrorism in a meaningful and concrete manner with BRICS member countries. BRICS countries - Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa

### **3rd edition of Namaste Thailand festival held in New Delhi**

- 3rd edition of Namaste Thailand festival, aimed at strengthening bilateral ties and increasing cultural exchange between India and Thailand, held in New Delhi. The three-day festival was organised by the Royal Thai Embassy
- The festival will feature stage performances by Thai artistes including the much popular Thai folk-jazz band Asia-7.

### **NITI Aayog's FinTech Conclave held in New Delhi**

- NITI Aayog has organised one day FinTech Conclave at Dr. Ambedkar International Center, New Delhi
- The Conclave was inaugurated by RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das.
- The objective of the conference is to shape India's continued ascendancy in FinTech, build the narrative for future strategy and policy efforts, and to deliberate steps for comprehensive financial inclusion.

### **International seminar on 'Sanskrit: a common treasure for India & Nepal' held in Kathmandu**

- An international seminar on 'Sanskrit: a common treasure for India and Nepal' held at Kathmandu, Nepal.
- The three day seminar is culmination of a month-long Festival of India in Nepal which is being organized by the Embassy of India and Ministry of Culture. A panel of 10 world renowned Sanskrit scholars from India and 35 senior Sanskrit professors from various parts of Nepal will present their research papers on different topics including Sanskrit language, literature, Ayurveda and Yoga during the seminar.

### **Nepal Investment Summit to be organised on March 29-30 in Kathmandu**

- The Government of Nepal is organizing 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of 'Nepal Investment Summit 2019' on March 29 -30 in Kathmandu. The main objective of the event is to project Nepal as a favourable investment destination.
- Summit will unveil potential opportunities for investment in various sectors in Nepal including Hydropower, Tourism, Infrastructure, Industry, Transport, Agriculture and Information and Communication Technology. About 600 foreign delegates and investors from 40 countries are participating in the Summit with maximum participation from China and India.

## **Important Mobile App and Web Portal**

### **PM Modi launched Khelo India APP**

- Prime Minister Narendra launched Sports Authority of India's (SAI) first-of-its-kind mobile application, 'Khelo India App' in order to create awareness about sports and fitness in the country.
- The application has three unique features that will make it convenient for youngsters to take up sport and also help to identify potential champions among children, across the country
- The application is available both in hindi and english and once downloaded can be used even when the parent or teacher does not have connectivity to the internet

### **Delhi government launched app to track bus, metro services**

- Delhi Transport Minister Kailash Gahlot has launched a common mobility app named 'One Delhi' that provides information on public transport systems including buses and the metro.



- It shows bus or metro routes, nearest bus stops, fares and gives arrival information in real time.

### **Google unveils Bolo app to teach kids to read English and Hindi**

- Google unveiled speech-based 'Bolo' app aimed at rural children, to teach them how to read in English and Hindi.
- The app is aimed at bridging learning gap in education and is available on Google play store in India. The app, which uses Google's speech recognition and text-to-speech technology and features an animated character 'Diya'. It is a free-to-use app first available in India. It is designed to be work even in offline.

### **Minister Hardeep Singh Puri launched e-Dharti App**

- Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Puri launched e-Dharti app where all the three modules- Conversion, Substitution and Mutation related to properties have been made online.
- The public can now submit their applications online by visiting the L&DO website and are not required to visit this office for submission of them and for follow up of their applications
- He also launched e-Dharti GeoPortal, through which the lessee of the property will be able to see the basic details of property along with map showing its location.

### **Google shuts down its messaging app 'Allo'**

- Google has stopped all the services of its messaging app 'Allo' from March 12, 2019 and shut down the app.
- The 'Allo' messaging app from Google could not achieve popularity like its other product and hence Google has stopped the operation of Allo. It was launched in 2016.

### **Election Commission introduces mobile app for observers**

- The Election Commission has for the first time started using a mobile application that will help poll observers to submit reports. This is for the first time, election commission has launched a special mobile application for more than 1,800 special election observers appointed by it. They will get all the important notifications, alerts, and urgent messages through the 'Observer App'. It will help them get their deployment status, download the ID card and update their profile. As the observers will be closely involved in real-time disposal of Model Code of Conduct and expenditure violation cases received through another mobile application 'eVIGIL', those details will also be available on the 'Observer App'. The observers can make a written observation after the flying squads have investigated the matter.

### **Mobile Application 'Conquer Exam, Be a Warrior.' developed by IIPHG**

- Indian Institute of Public Health Gandhinagar, Gujarat, (IIPHG) joined hands with National Mental Health Program, Department of Health and Family Welfare, Government of Gujarat for developed a mobile application called as 'Conquer Exam, Be a Warrior' to reduce the exam pressure for the student.
- This Application to create awareness and help students and parents to analyse and overcome exam pressure.

### **Xiaomi launches Mi Pay wallet in India with ICICI Bank**

- Xiaomi has rolled out its own UPI payment solution app, Mi Pay, for its users in India, enabling them to send money to any UPI address and bank account in the country. The company will use the National Payment Corporation of India's UPI and Bharat Bill payment network for its core functionality. The company has tied up with ICICI Bank for the back-end solution.
- This is a closed payments app, and only Xiaomi users can download it from the Mi Apps store. Being a closed app, only Xiaomi users can transfer money between each other, using Mi Pay app

### **CBSE launched new 'Shiksha Vani' app**

- The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) launched a new podcast app 'Shiksha Vani' to upload podcast on Class 10, 12 exam evaluation process. This app will disseminate crucial information to students and parents in a timely manner. Its first episode, on the evaluation process of Class 10 and 12 board examinations, has been released on the platform.
- This episode is helpful for all the students, as when the examinations proceed, the episode helps students understand how their completed papers will be evaluated.

### **Hyper local connectivity app 'Bhonga' launched by Linkus Infratech**

- The launch of hyper-local connectivity app titled 'Bhonga'. The app is an initiative by Linkus Infratech Private Limited. The app is designed keeping in mind the connect beyond family and friends. It is designed to connect people within the same locality without worrying about whether they know each other or not.
- Bhonga is a simple app which once downloaded allows the user send a message to all those who have this app in the 1 km radius. The user can use the app to reach out to everyone around for posting messages which may be an

emergency, an offer, a query or even an opinion or information which he believes may be of help to people around him. Bhonga is a Marathi word which means megaphone or loudspeaker.

## **Important Defence News**

### **US, South Korea Call off Foal Eagle and Key Resolve Exercises, Announces New Exercise**

- The United States and South Korea announced the inauguration of a new exercise known as Dong Maeng (or “alliance”).
- The exercise was announced as a modification of the springtime exercises the allies have held in recent years known as Key Resolve and Foal Eagle.
- The Dong Maeng exercise will run from March 4 to March 12 and focus primarily on “strategic, operational, and tactical aspects of general military operations on the Korean Peninsula

### **Pinaka guided weapons system successfully test fired**

- Defence Research and Development organisation, (DRDO) successfully test fired the PINAKA guided weapon rocket system from Pokhran range in Rajasthan. The weapon system is equipped with state-of-the-art guidance kit comprising of an advanced navigation and control system. The weapon systems impacted the intended targets with high precision and achieved desired accuracies. The indigenously developed Guided PINAKA by DRDO will significantly boost the capability of the artillery to make precision hits.

### **U.S. special forces hold exercise with NSG in Hyderabad**

- As a part of US-India security partnership, a special force of the US military forces and the Indian National Security Guard (NSG) involved in a joint exercise in Hyderabad. The US forces are from the 1st Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) stationed out of Okinawa in Japan. The Hyderabad-exercise would help build interoperability and comradeship between the two forces and was designed to enhance the capabilities of both Indian and U.S

### **DRDO Successfully tested MP-ATGM**

- The indigenously developed, low weight, fire and forget ‘Man Portable Anti-Tank Guided Missile’ (MPATGM) was successfully test fired by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) in the ranges of Rajasthan desert. The missile is incorporated with advanced features including state-of-the-art Imaging Infrared Radar (IIR) Seeker with integrated avionics,
- This was the second successful testing of the missile. The first test was conducted on March 13, 2019. It was developed by Defence Research and Development Laboratory (DRDL), Hyderabad with support from other DRDO laboratories.

### **'Vijit' becomes the first Indian Coast Guard ship to visit Indonesia**

- Indian Coast Guard Ship 'Vijit' became the first-ever Coast Guard ship to visit Sabang, Indonesia to highlight the proximity between the two countries and the strengthening cooperation in maritime security and safety,
- Crew of Vijit will hold interaction with officials of Bakamla (Indonesian Coast Guard), Indonesian Armed Forces and the civil administration at Sabang. Fastest in its category with a designed speed of 26 knots at a displacement of 2393 tons, this new generation ship is equipped with the advanced Navigational and Communicational equipment
- This visit of the coast guard ship follows from the first-ever-visit of Naval Ship INS Sumitra to Sabang in July 2018.

### **Indian Navy to provide humanitarian aid to cyclone-hit Mozambique**

- Three Indian Naval Ships namely INS Sujatha, INS Shardul & INS Sarathi have reached the port city of Beira in Mozambique to provide immediate Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) to Central and Northern part of Mozambique affected by tropical cyclone ‘IDAI’
- Cyclone 'IDAI' made landfall at Beira, causing widespread damage and loss of human life in the Central and Northern provinces. The IN ships are likely to set up medical camps and provide food, water, blankets and other necessary relief items, as required by the local authorities

### **Government clears procurement of 10 lakh hand grenades for Indian Army**

- Ministry of Defence (MoD) has cleared the proposal to procure 10 lakh hand grenades for the Indian Army under its Make in India programme. The new hand grenades will replace the existing inventory, HE-36 grenades manufactured by the Ordnance Factory Board. The multi-mode grenades have been developed by the DRDO

- The project worth more than Rs. 500 crore. Recently, the government also signed a contract worth Rs 700 crore for procurement of 70,000 Sig Sauer assault rifles with a US manufacturer. A JV has also been formed with Russia to manufacture AK-203 assault rifles

### **IAF inducts first four heavy-lift Chinook helicopters**

- Indian Air Force (IAF) formally inducted the four heavy-lift Chinook helicopters. Air Chief Marshal BS Dhanoa announced the induction at a ceremony held at Air Force base in Chandigarh. Chinook helicopters will be deployed at Chandigarh's Air Force Station 12 Wing.
- The second batch of Chinooks will be stationed in Assam's Dinjan. India bought 15 CH-47F (I) Chinook helicopters in September 2015 from Boeing (United States) at a cost of \$1.5 billion.
- The entire fleet of 15 Chinooks is expected to be inducted in the air force by March 2020. These choppers will be used for various military purposes such as deploying of troops and machinery at high-altitude locations along the India-Pakistan border to support country's current and future security goals.

### **Indian Navy nuclear, biological, chemical training facility launched**

- The Indian Navy's Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Training Facility (NBCTF) was inaugurated at INS Shivaji in Lonavala by Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Sunil Lanba
- The NBCTF, christened "Abhedya", impenetrable in Sanskrit, will help train personnel of naval ships fitted with nuclear, biological and chemical detection and protection systems. INS Shivaji is celebrating its platinum jubilee year in 2019-20 and Admiral Lanba released the platinum jubilee logo, with the theme "Propelling the Indian Navy since 1945". The Goa Shipyard Limited had signed the contract with the Indian Navy for the construction of the facility in March 2016.

### **First Indian Army mountaineering expedition to Mt Makalu flagged off**

- First Indian Army Mountaineering Expedition to Mt Makalu (8485m) comprising five Officers, two JCOs and eleven OR was flagged off by Director General Military Training. In furtherance of the objective of summiting all challenging peaks above 8000M, Indian Army is launching its maiden expedition to Mt Makalu in Mar-May 2019.
- Mt Makalu is considered amongst the most dangerous peaks and summiting the peak is considered extremely challenging due to inclement weather conditions and freezing temperatures.
- Makalu is the fifth highest mountain in the world at 8,485 metres (27,838 ft). It is located in the Mahalangur Himalayas 19 km southeast of Mount Everest.

### **Tata Power SED bags Rs 1,200 crore contract from defence ministry**

- Tata Power Strategic Engineering Division (SED) has bagged a Rs. 1,200 crore contract from the defence ministry
- Tata Power SED has signed a deal with the Ministry of Defence to supply 23 ship-borne 3D Air Surveillance Radars to the Indian Navy over the next 10 years. The contract was signed under the Buy & Make (India) category of the Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP) 2013
- The contract will be executed by Tata Power SED as the prime contractor with foreign OEM (Original Equipment Manufacturer) partner Indra Sistemas, Spain.

### **Second joint logistics node become operational in Mumbai**

- The second joint logistics node of tri-services has become operational at Naval base in Mumbai, Maharashtra.
- It will provide logistical support to all three defence services and improve utilisation of resources, manpower and remove duplication. The first JLN consisting of the three services was set up at Andaman and Nicobar Islands in 2018. The third logistic node is in process and is likely to come up in Guwahati, Assam and it will only be among Indian Army and Air Force.

### **Indian Navy gets combat management system for INS Vikrant**

- It is the first CMS to be developed by private industry for Indian Navy and for indigenous aircraft carrier. Indian Navy has received Combat Management System (CMS) for first indigenous aircraft carrier, INS Vikrant.
- It has been privately co-developed by Tata Power Strategic Engineering Division and Electronics System Engineering Establishment and MARS of Russia. It is India's first indigenously-built largest aircraft carrier. It is also called IAC-1. It is in its third and final phase of construction at Kochi shipyard and the sea trials are expected to begin by mid-2020.

### **GRSE becomes first in India to build 100 warships**

- Garden Reach Ship Builders and Engineers Ltd (GRSE) became the 'first Indian shipyard' to build and deliver 100 warships. GRSE Chairman and Managing Director, V K Saxena, formally handed over the 100th warship 'IN LCU L-56'

to the Indian Navy. It had handed over its 99th warship, 'TCGS Priyadarshini', an advanced 'Fast Patrol Vessel' to the Indian Coast Guard.

- The 100th warship, a Landing Craft Utility (LCU), is the sixth of an order of eight such vessels from the Navy.

## Exercise

S.No	Name of the countries		Name of exercises
1.	Border Guards Bangladesh (BGB)	Border Security Force (BSF) India	'Mainamati Maitree Exercise 2019'
2.	Oman	India	Al Nagah 2019
3.	US	-	Red Flag 2019 (Aerial combat training exercise)
4.	Bangladesh	India	Exercise Sampriti-VIII
5.	Srilanka	India	Mitra shakti-VI
6.	India	Africa	AFINDEX-19
7.	India	Indonesia	IND-INDO CORPAT
8.	India	Australia	AUSINDEX 2019

## 'Mainamati Maitree Exercise 2019' held in Tripura

- Border Security Force (BSF) and Border Guards Bangladesh (BGB) concluded a three-day joint exercise organised as part of the confidence building measures in Tripura.
- The main objective of this exercise was to plan and conduct anti-smuggling and anti-criminal activity related operations with an aim to achieve better joint operational efficiency and border management in the area
- The exercise was named 'Mainamati Maitree Exercise 2019' after the Mainamati hill range, dotted with ancient Buddhist settlements, near Comilla town in Bangladesh.

## Indo-Bangladesh joint military exercise Sampriti – 2019 concluded

- Exercise Sampriti-VIII, a joint Indo-Bangladesh military exercise which witnessed participation of a company group of 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion the Rajputana Rifles from the Indian Army and the Company of 36 East Bengal Battalion, Bangladesh Army concluded at Tangail, Bangladesh
- The exercise was the 8th edition in the Sampriti series, which started in 2009. Exercise Sampriti strengthens and broadens interoperability and cooperation between the Indian and Bangladesh Armies.

Indian High Commissioner to

Riva Ganguly Das was the chief guest of closing ceremony

## India – Africa Joint Field Training Exercise AFINDEX-19 to be held in Pune

- The India-Africa Joint Field Training Exercise (AFINDEX-19) will be held between the Indian Army and 16 African nations in Pune from March 18 to 27.
- The 10-day long joint exercise will be held in two locations in Pune. They are Foreign Training Node at Aundh Military Station and College of Military Engineering in Kirkee.
- Indian Army will be represented by the personnel of Maratha Light Infantry.
- Besides, the personnel from the participating nations of African continent, officers from Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo and Madagascar would also attend the exercise as Observers.
- The aim of the exercise is to train the participating contingents in Humanitarian Mine Assistance (HMA) and Peace Keeping Operations (PKO) under the United Nations Charter.

## SCO members to hold joint anti-terrorism exercise 'Sary-Arka-Antiterror 2019'

- India, Pakistan and the other members states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) will take part in a joint anti-terrorism exercise to be held this year. The decision to hold the joint exercise 'Sary-Arka-Antiterror 2019' was announced during the 34th meeting of the SCO's Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) council held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

- RATS is a permanent organ of the SCO which serves to promote cooperation of member states against the three evils of terrorism, separatism and extremism. It is headquartered in Tashkent. The next meeting of the Council of the RATS SCO is scheduled to be held in Russia in September 2019.
- SCO Member States: China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India and Pakistan.

### **33<sup>rd</sup> Edition of IND-INDO CORPAT begins at Port Blair**

- 33<sup>rd</sup> edition of the India-Indonesia Coordinated Patrol (IND-INDO CORPAT) will be held from 19th March to 4th April 2019. During the opening ceremony in Port Blair, various activities such as sporting fixtures, ship visits and professional interactions have been planned.
- The ship and aircraft from both the countries would undertake patrolling on the respective sides of 236 nautical miles long International Maritime Boundary line and also participate in the 2nd Bilateral Maritime Exercise in the Andaman Sea. The opening ceremony was held at Port Blair. The closing ceremony will be held at Belawan, Indonesia on 04 April 2019. Indonesian Naval Ship KRI Sultan Thaha Syaifuddin and Maritime Patrol Aircraft CN-235, led by Cmde Dafit Santoso, will participate in this exercise.

### **Indo-Sri Lanka joint Exercise Mitra shakti-VI to be held in Sri Lanka**

- Exercise MITRA SHAKTI is conducted annually as part of military diplomacy and interaction between armies of India & Sri Lanka. The joint exercise for the year 2018-19 will be conducted from 26 March to 08 April 2019 in Sri Lanka. Troops from 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion the BIHAR Regiment of the Indian Army and Gemunu Watch Battalion of Sri Lankan Army would be jointly undertaking the exercise.
- The aim of the exercise is to build and promote close relations between armies of both the countries and to enhance the ability of joint exercise commander to take military contingents of both nations under command. The exercise will involve tactical level operations in an international counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism environment under United Nations mandate

### **Bilateral joint exercise between India, Oman to begin from Mar 12**

- The third edition of the bilateral joint exercise between India and Oman, Al Nagah 2019 will begin from 12th of this month at Jabel Al Akhdar Mountains in Oman.
- The aim of this exercise is to enhance interoperability in counter terrorist operations in semi urban mountainous terrain.
- The exercise will enchain understanding of capabilities and strengthening camaraderie between both the Armies

### **Terror camps on India-Myanmar border destroyed – Operation Sun Rise**

- Indian and Myanmar armies carried out a military operation named 'Operation Sunrise' to wipe out insurgent camps who were planning to hit the Indian workers at the Kaladan Transit project. The Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project aims to connect seaports from India to Myanmar. The Joint operation was conducted from mid-February till mid- March.
- The target of these operations carried out by the armies of both countries was the Arakan Army, an insurgent group trained by the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), and reportedly trained by China.

### **Indian Air Force to participate in LIMA 2019**

- Indian Air Force will participate in Langkawi International Maritime Aero Expo (LIMA 2019) scheduled to be held in Langkawi, Malaysia from March 26 to 30th 2019. This will be for first time, IAF is participating in LIMA expo and will showcase its indigenously developed LCA Tejas fighter aircraft.
- IAF contingent will be represented by two LCA, one C-130J and one IL-76 aircrafts along with 27 officers, 42 air-warriors and 11 HAL personnel. Participation of IAF in LIMA-2019 will provide an opportunity to air-warriors to interact with their Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) counterparts and foster close relationship between the two services.

### **India-Australia Naval Exercise AUSINDEX 2019 to be held in April 2019**

- India and Australia will conduct AUSINDEX 2019 bilateral naval exercise off the coast of Vishakhapatnam in Bay of Bengal from April 2 to 16, 2019. Overall it will be third installment (edition) of bilateral naval exercise between Indian Navy and Royal Australian Navy.
- It will see participation of over 1,000 Australian defence personnel, four Royal Australian Navy ships. It includes HMAS (Her Majesty's Australian Ship) Canberra, HMAS Success, HMAS Newcastle, and HMAS Parramatta. Both countries will also deploy P-8I aircraft and P-8A aircraft, which are long-range anti-surface warfare, anti-submarine



warfare, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance aircrafts capable of broad-area, maritime and littoral operations.

## **Important Science and Technology**

### **Signalchip launched India's first indigenous semiconductor chips for 4G LTE, 5G NR modems**

- Bengaluru-based Signalchip launched India's first semiconductor chips for 4G LTE and 5G NR modems.
- The company launched four chips as part of its SCBM34XX and SCRF34XX/45XX series, code-named 'Agumbe'.
- These chips also support positioning using India's own satellite navigation system, NAVIC. Founder and CEO of SIGNALCHIP Himanshu Khasnis

### **BHEL installed first solar electric vehicle charging station**

- Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) has set up its first solar electric vehicle charger on the Delhi-Chandigarh Highway. The first in a series of charging station on the entire 250 kilometer stretch was inaugurated by A R Sihag, secretary, Department of Heavy Industry (DHI) in the presence of BHEL Chairman Atul Sobti in Sonapat, Haryana.
- The project is covered under the Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of (Hybrid) & Electric Vehicles in India (FAME) scheme of Department of Heavy Industry (DHI).
- Recently the Cabinet government approved FAME II scheme with an outlay of Rs. 10,000 crore over a period of three years. To be implemented from April 1, 2019, the scheme envisages setting up of about 2700 charging stations across the country so that at least one charging station is available in a grid of 3×3 km<sup>2</sup>.

### **ISRO launched Yuva Vigyani Karyakram for school children**

- Indian Space Research Organisation has launched "Yuva Vigyani Karyakram", a "Young Scientist Programme" for the School Children to be studying in the ninth standard. The programme aims at imparting basic knowledge on space technology, space science and space applications to the younger ones with the intent of arousing their interest in the emerging areas of space activities.
- "Catch them young" residential training programme will be of around two weeks duration during summer holidays with a proposal to select 3 students from each State and Union Territory, covering CBSE, ICSE and State syllabus.

### **People in Japan temple unveiled a robot 'Goddess'**

- A 400-year-old Kyoto-based temple has unveiled a robotic avatar of the Buddhist Goddess of Mercy, Kannon, in an attempt to keep the younger generation connected with Buddhism.
- The robot named 'Mindar', can join its hands and move its eyes and torso while delivering 25-minute-long sermons to worshippers

### **NASA announced world's first all-female spacewalk**

- NASA announced Two NASA astronauts Anne McClain and Christina Koch are scheduled to carry out the first ever all female spacewalk in history on March 29.
- Both will walk outside the International Space Station (ISS) as members of Expedition 59, on a mission to replace batteries installed last summer. 35 years after the first woman performed a spacewalk. They will receive ground support from flight director Mary Lawrence and Kristen Facciolo of the Canadian Space Agency in NASA's Johnson Space Center in Texas.

### **China launches new communications satellite 'ChinaSat 6C', marks 300th mission**

- China sent a new communications satellite into orbit from the Xichang Satellite Launch Centre in southwest China's Sichuan Province. The "ChinaSat 6C" satellite was launched by a Long March-3B carrier rocket. It will provide high-quality radio and TV transmission services.
- The satellite was developed by the China Academy of Space Technology, and will be operated by the China Satellite Communications Co, Ltd. The launch marks the 300th mission of the Long March carrier rocket series developed by the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation.

### **IIT Madras developed 'NERO' for generating potable water from air**

- The Indian Institute of Technology-Madras (IIT-M) will develop a device called 'NERO' to generate potable water from atmospheric air. For this project, IIT Madras has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Teerthaa, a private sustainable technology company. The solar thermal energy powered device will produce about 4 to 5 litres of potable water per day.

### **IIT Kharagpur students created an mobile app to detect fake currency notes**

- Students from the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kharagpur have developed an image processing application which can detect counterfeit currency. The application, which can be installed on smartphones, can be used by people at various touch points thus reducing chances of fraud. The app would then perform verification of its authenticity with the help of 25 features that have been extracted from both the sides of the note.

### **IBM creates Blockchain-based global payment network**

- Information Technology (IT) major IBM has created a Blockchain-based global payment network that transmits monetary value in the form of digital assets, commonly known as cryptocurrencies or 'stable coins'.
- The payment network called World Wire uses the Stellar protocol that reduces intermediaries and allows users to accelerate settlement time. World Wire has already enabled payment locations in 72 countries, with 47 currencies and 44 banking endpoints.

### **SAIL launched Smart Garbage bins made of steel**

- Steel Authority of India Ltd (SAIL) has launched smart garbage bins made of stainless steel. These smart garbage bins will be able to send a signal to the garbage collection vehicle about the 'fill-up' position of the bin, aiding better cleaning and lower human intervention.
- The environment-friendly garbage bins will be made of SAIL SALEM stainless steel. These will be installed in underground Reinforced Cement Concrete (RCC) pits at the Smart Garbage Station. This will help prevent the spread of stink and diseases.

### **Flipkart introduces robot-based sortation technology**

- Flipkart has introduced a robot-based sortation technology — Automated Guided Vehicles (AGVs) at its Soukya sortation center in Bengaluru. The Soukya set-up involves over 100 self-guided bots that automatically sort packages to the right customer pincodes by identifying encoded information on each package.
- It can process up to 4,500 shipments in an hour and can be scaled over five times with minimal changes. The AGVs will help Flipkart meet ever-growing customer and scale demands, ensuring faster delivery and an enhanced experience for online shoppers.

### **Vega Rocket Launches Earth-Watching PRISMA Satellite for Italy**

- Italy's new Earth-observation satellite named PRISMA (Precursore Iperspettrale della Missione Applicativa) launched from the Guiana Space Centre by 98 foot (30 meters) tall Vega rocket which was developed by the joint venture of Italian Space Agency and the European Space Agency.
- PRISMA (an Italian acronym for Hyperspectral Precursor of the Application Mission) is designed to provide information about environmental monitoring, resources management, pollution and crop health.
- The satellite includes a medium resolution camera that can view across all visual wavelengths, as well as a hyperspectral imager that can capture a wider range of wavelengths between 400 and 2500 nanometers

### **ISRO to launch 29 satellites including EMISAT on first of April**

- Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will launch 29 satellites including the primary payload EMISAT, on the first of April. Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle, PSLV-C45 will take off from Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota.
- EMISAT has been developed for monitoring radar network by India. EMISAT, weighing 436 kg, is intended for electromagnetic spectrum measurement. It will be placed in an orbit of about 753 km altitude. Indian Institute of Space Science (IISc) and the Radio Amateur Satellite Corporation are the other two institutions that will have their devices on the experimental platform.

### **India successfully conducts A-SAT missile test under 'Mission Shakti'**

- Defence Research and Development Organisation, DRDO successfully conducted an Anti-Satellite (A-SAT) missile test, under Mission Shakti from Dr A P J Abdul Kalam Island in Odisha. A DRDO-developed Ballistic Missile, Defence Interceptor Missile successfully engaged an Indian orbiting target satellite in Low Earth Orbit (LEO) in a Hit to Kill mode.
- The missile travelled a distance of almost 300 km from earth and hit the target within three minutes of its launch. With this achievement, India has now become the only fourth nation after US, Russia and China to have such capability.

### **Facebook launches tools to boost election engagement**

- Social-networking site Facebook launched two new India-specific tools 'Candidate Connect' and 'Share You Voted' to boost civic engagement on its platform during the general elections that commence in April.

- While 'Candidate Connect' will help people learn more about candidates, the 'Share You Voted' will provide people with polling information and enable them to announce and celebrate their vote.

### **IIT-Delhi researchers develop AI-based detector for malaria, TB, cervical cancer**

- Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) here have developed an artificial intelligence (AI)-based low-power electronic hardware system that can help in detecting malaria, tuberculosis, intestinal parasite and cervical cancer in a few milliseconds.
- The research focuses on building a neuromorphic system which can be used for healthcare access in resource-constrained areas with limited access to human specialists. The portable device is trained to detect microorganisms in the biological samples. It was built on Raspberry Pi, a tiny computer attached to an infrared-sensitive camera

### **IIT Madras converts petroleum waste toluene into useful product**

- Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras has successfully converted petroleum waste-product toluene into benzoic acid. Benzoic acid is used as a food preservative (E210) and medicine for fungal/bacterial infection.
- Toluene is converted into benzoic acid through selective and controlled oxidation in the presence of a catalyst — binaphthyl-stabilised platinum nanoparticles (Pt-BNP).

### **Tesla builds its 'largest energy storage system in Asia'**

- Tesla has developed its 'largest power storage system in Asia' at Osaka train station in Japan to reduce energy demand and provide emergency backup power to trains in Japan.
- It has installed a bank of 42 Powerpacks at a train station in Japan's Osaka that can provide sufficient backup power to safely move a train and its passengers to the nearest station in the event of a power outage.

## **Important Schemes and Programs**

### **Assam government launched scheme for ex-militants**

- Government launched a scheme to for making former militants explore self employment avenues.
- Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal ceremonially distributed sanction letters for disbursal of loan by nationalized banks along with government subsidy to surrendered cadres of different insurgent groups of the state under 'Swabalamban' scheme. The financial assistance is provided to promote self-employment and will benefit 508 surrendered cadres.

### **Odisha government announced financial assistance for craftsmen**

- Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik launched the scheme 'Mukhyamantri Karigar Sahayata' for financial assistance to craftsmen
- Craftsmen with over 10 years of experience and annual income below Rs. 1 lakh would become eligible to get an assistance of Rs. 800 a month. Those above 80 years of age, would get Rs 1,000 monthly allowance

### **HRD ministry launched STARS scheme**

- The Union Human Resource Minister Prakash Javadekar launched the STARS scheme on National Science Day.
- STARS is an acronym for Scheme for Translational and Advanced Research in Science to fund Science projects.
- The scheme will be implemented at a cost of 250 crores will be used for around 500 science projects. IISc will be the coordinator of the scheme

### **Mamata Banerjee launched Yuvashree Arpan scheme**

- West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee launched a new scheme called Yuvashree Plan II or Yuvashree Arpan under which 50,000 youths will receive financial assistance of Rs. 1 lakh for setting up their own business initiatives.
- Youths who have passed out of ITI or other polytechnic institutes will be eligible to get financial support from the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) department
- The Yuvashree I scheme is implemented by the state labour department launched in 2013, the state provides unemployment allowance of Rs. 1,500 per month to 1,00,000 unemployed youth
- The state government had already provided cars to 24,000 unemployed youths under the 'Gatidhara' scheme, where the state enables youths to be car-owners and earn through driving it.
- The Chief Minister also laid foundation stone of various developmental projects including the first Hindi university in West Bengal in Arupara, Howrah district and Rs. 1,488 crore drinking water project at Purba Medinipur.

- Foundation stone of projects worth Rs 1,071 crore including drinking water project that would benefit more than 8 lakh people inaugurated Bankura.

### **Uttarakhand Government launched “Mukhyamantri Anchal Amrit Yojana” a free milk scheme**

- Chief Minister of Uttarakhand Trivendra Singh Rawat has launched a scheme named “Mukhyamantri Anchal Amrit Yojana” for providing free milk to childrens of Anganwadi Centers.
- Under the “Mukhyamantri Anchal Amrit Yojana” 2.5 lakh children at 20,000 Anganwadi kendras in the state will be given 100 ml milk twice a week for free. As many as 18,000 children suffer from malnutrition in the state of Uttarakhand, So this is a step to fight against malnutrition.

### **Maharashtra government launched 'Atal Aahar Yojana' to provide cheap hygienic food for construction workers**

- The Maharashtra government has launched the “Atal Aahar Yojana” for construction workers in the state that will provide good quality and hygienic food to construction workers at a highly subsidised rate.
- In the 1<sup>st</sup> phase, the target is to cover 20,000 workers and provide them with good quality food at a nominal cost of Rs. 5
- Under the Shramev Jayate Yojana, a pension of Rs. 3,000 is given to construction workers above the age of 60 years.

### **Aviva Life Insurance launched Wings to empower women at the workplace**

- Aviva Life Insurance has announced the launch of ‘Wings’, a specially designed mentorship program to empower the female workforce. The WINGS program is an initiative of the SHE division of Aviva Life Insurance for mentoring all the women employees. SHE was conceptualised in 2016 by Aviva India’s Women Network
- Aviva Life Insurance is a joint venture between Dabur Invest and Aviva International Holdings, a UK-based insurance group. Dabur is the majority stakeholder with 74 percent stake in Aviva Life Insurance Company India Limited, while Aviva PLC holds 26 percent share

### **Amitabh Kant to head transformative mobility panel**

- Niti Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant will head the National Mission on Transformative Mobility and Battery Storage, which is being set up to promote clean and sustainable mobility initiatives in the country. The Union Cabinet on March 7 had approved setting up of the National Mission on Transformative Mobility and Battery Storage.
- The terms of reference of mission includes ensuring implementation and compliance of the decisions and recommendations of the steering committee. The panel will also propose and recommend policy guidelines and government interventions and possible strategies for holistic, sustainable and transformative mobility and energy storage in India.

### **ISRO launched the ‘Young Scientist Programme’ YUVIKA for school children**

- Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) had announced a new initiative aiming at school children called ‘Young Scientist Programme’ or ‘YUva Vigyani Karyakram’ (YUVIKA)
- The Program aims at imparting basic knowledge on space technology, space science and space applications to young school goers with the intent of arousing their interest in the emerging areas of space activities.
- The Young Scientist Programme will be conducted for a duration of two weeks across four centres of ISRO during the second half of May 2019. 3 students from each State or Union Territory will be selected to participate in this programme covering CBSE, ICSE and State syllabus. The selection of the students would be based

## **Important Ranking and Indexes**

<b>Index</b>	<b>Rank</b>
‘Inclusive Internet Index 2019’ by the ‘Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) for Facebook	India 47th

### **Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport 12th busiest in the world**

- The nation capital's Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) has now become the world's 12th busiest airport, moving up four places from the 16th spot in 2017. According to the preliminary world airport traffic rankings for 2018 released by the Airports Council International (ACI), it overtook mega-hubs like Frankfurt, Dallas Fort Worth, Guangzhou and Istanbul Ataturk airports.

- The four airports above the IGI Airport are Amsterdam Schiphol, Paris-Charles de Gaulle, Shanghai Pudong and Hong Kong, managing over 46 lakh passengers more than IGIA. India became the world's third-largest aviation market in terms of passenger throughput, behind the US and China, in 2018.

#### **India ranks 76th on WEF's global Energy Transition index**

- India has moved up two places to rank 76th on a global energy transition index
- The index has ranked 115 economies on how well they are able to balance energy security and access with environmental sustainability and affordability. Sweden remains on the top on this annual list compiled by Geneva-based World Economic Forum (WEF) and is followed by Switzerland and Norway in the top three,
- The WEF stated that energy systems have globally become less affordable and less environmentally sustainable than they were five years ago, though access to energy has improved with less than 1 billion now living without access to electricity. Among major economies, the UK is ranked 7th, Singapore 13th, Germany 17th, Japan 18th and the US 27th

#### **Samsung tops consumer-focused brands in India list**

- Samsung, Tata Motors, Apple, Hero MotoCorp and Nike are the top-five consumer-focused brands in the country, according to TRA.
- 'India's Most Consumer-Focused Brands 2019', measures brands on their increase in buying propensity index over the previous year. HDFC is the top amongst Banks in the list and is at the 8th spot. While for Top PSU Bank, SBI is the leader at 12th position overall.

#### **Delhi topped the list of most polluted cities in Greenpeace report**

- According to a Greenpeace report, Delhi has been ranked the most polluted capital in the world, while Gurugram is the most polluted city. According to the latest data compiled in the IQ Air Visual 2018 World Air Quality Report and interactive world's most polluted cities ranking, which is prepared in collaboration with Greenpeace Southeast Asia in order to reveal the state of particulate matter (PM2.5) pollution in 2018
- Delhi had an average yearly PM2.5 concentration at 113.5 micrograms per cubic metre. The city-based rankings differ, with Delhi taking the 11th spot as the most polluted city and Gurugram at top, with an annual average PM2.5 reading of 135.8 micrograms per cubic metre. According to the National Ambient Air Quality Standards, the annual permissible limit for PM2.5 is 40ug/m3. The annual permissible limits prescribed by the World Health Organization is 10ug/m3

#### **India offers world's cheapest mobile data packs: UK report**

- According to a new report Price comparison site Cable.co.uk, India is home to the cheapest mobile data plans in the world, with one gigabyte (1GB) of data costing an average of \$0.26, compared to USD 6.66 in the UK.
- The cheapest mobile data in Western Europe was found in Finland with an average price of \$1.16 for 1GB of data. Denmark, Monaco and Italy all offer packages below \$2. There were 15 countries in Western Europe which had cheaper prices than the UK, Cable found in its study. In Eastern Europe, Poland is the cheapest at \$1.32 per GB, followed by Romania (\$1.89) and Slovenia (\$2.21).
- The most expensive place in the world to buy mobile data is Zimbabwe, where the average cost of 1GB is \$75.20 - 289 times as much as in India.
- The US had one of the most expensive rates, with an average cost of \$12.37 for the same amount of data. The global average came in at \$8.53 for 1GB in the study, which compared mobile data pricing in 230 countries around the world

#### **Mumbai is 16th most expensive prime residential property market in the world**

- According to Knight Frank report- Mumbai, the financial capital of the country, is the 16th most expensive prime residential market in the world. Globally Monaco topped the list
- Mumbai ranked 12th in terms of wealth on the index tracking global ranking of cities bettering its previous position of 18th in 2017. Mumbai is the only Indian city to feature in the global top 20 list of expensive prime residential markets recorded in The Wealth Report 2019.
- Knight Frank Prime International Residential Index (PIRI 100) report - Mumbai (67 PIRI rank), which has the most expensive real estate in India

#### **Women in India earn 19% less than men: Monster Salary Index**

- Women in India earn 19 per cent less than men according to a report prepared by monster.com.



- The disparity was found in the survey conducted for the year 2018 and it stood just 1 per cent lower than the 20 per cent pay gap in 2017. The survey titled 'Women of India Inc', mentioned that the median gross hourly salary for men was Rs. 242.49 earned Rs. 46.19 more in comparison to women who earned Rs.196.3 in 2018
- MSI is an initiative by Monster India in collaboration with Paycheck.in (managed by WageIndicator Foundation) and IIM-Ahmedabad as a research partner.

### **India is world's second largest arms importer: SIPRI Report**

- India is the second largest importer of weapons in the world, as per the annual report 'Trends in International Arms Transfers-2018' released by the think tank Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).
- Saudi Arabia has now become the largest importer of arms in the world
- For more than the last eight years, India was the largest arms importer in the international market.
- According to the report, Saudi Arabia, India, Egypt, Australia and Algeria as the five top arms importing countries and the United States, Russia, France, Germany and China as the five top arms exporting nations. India accounted for 9.5 percent of the global total imports during 2014-18, while Saudi Arabia accounted for 12 percent of the total imports during the period. The US and Russia remain the largest exporters by far, accounting for 36 percent and 21 percent of the total global trade, respectively.

### **India ranks 11th in gold holding**

- India, which is the world's largest consumer of gold, has the 11th largest gold reserve, with the current holding pegged at 607 tonnes, as per the latest report by the World Gold Council (WGC). The US (8133.5 tonnes) is on top, followed by Germany on Second. Whereas, International Monetary Fund (IMF) is included and is third on the list with total gold reserves of 2,814 tonnes. Pakistan, with its gold reserves of 64.6 tonnes, occupies the 45th position.

### **India ranks 16th in terms of highest number of impacted species in hotspots**

- India was ranked 16th in the world in terms of highest number of impacted species in biodiversity-rich zones (hotspots) due to human actions. In India, 35 species affected on an average in biodiversity-rich zones.
- On average number of species impacted in South Western Ghats montane rainforests is 60 and in Himalayan subtropical broadleaf forests it is 53. Malaysia ranks first among the countries with the highest number of impacted species (125). A recent study published in PLOS Biology an international journal dedicated to biological science.
- Southeast Asian tropical forests — including India's biodiversity-rich Western Ghats, Himalaya and north-east — also fall in this category.

### **Vienna to Top Spot in List of Most Liveable Cities for 10th Consecutive Year**

- The 2019 Quality of Living Rankings was released by the global consulting firm Mercer.
- The Survey ranks 231 cities based on 39 factors and are based on the analysis done between September and November 2018. The Austria capital Vienna topped the ranking for the 10th year in a row for having the highest quality of living. It was followed by Zurich at second while Auckland, Munich and Vancouver shared jointly third. The Indian city in the list includes Chennai (105), Bengaluru (149), Mumbai (154) and New Delhi (162).

### **Climate Vulnerability Index highest for Assam and Mizoram**

- The Department of Science and Technology (DST) commissioned a study to assess the climate risks faced by States in India. This follows an assessment of the global warming risks faced by 12 Himalayan States. On a scale ranging 0-1, 1 indicating the highest possible level of vulnerability, at the top of the scale were Assam with a score of 0.72 and Mizoram at 0.71,
- Whereas Sikkim, with an index score of 0.42 was relatively less vulnerable. Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT) at Mandi and Guwahati, and the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru, coordinated with State authorities in Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, the hill districts of West Bengal, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Jammu and Kashmir, to evolve a common methodology, and determine how districts there are equipped to deal with the vagaries of climate change.

### **Mukesh Ambani tops Forbes's The World's Richest Sports Team Owners 2019 ranking**

- The Reliance Industries Chairman, Mukesh Ambani has topped Forbes' The World's Richest Sports Team Owners 2019 list. The total net worth of Ambani is \$ 50 billion. He bought the IPL team Mumbai Indians for over \$100 million in 2008 through a RIL subsidiary. The former CEO of Microsoft, Steve Ballmer (Net worth: \$41.2 billion) is placed second. He bought the NBA team Los Angeles Clippers for \$2 billion in 2014.

- The third place is secured by the co-founder of Red Bull energy drink company, Dietrich Mateschitz (Net worth: \$18.9 billion), who is the owner of Auto racing team Red Bull Toro Rosso Honda, Formula One team Red Bull Racing and MLS club New York Red Bulls.

### **Bengaluru, Chennai, Delhi among world's cheapest cities to live in: Economist survey report**

- According to the latest Economist survey report, Bengaluru (129<sup>th</sup> rank) has the lowest cost of living among the 133 cities surveyed across the world, more affordable than Karachi, Delhi and Chennai.
- Only Caracas (Venezuela), Damascus (Syria), Tashkent (Uzbekistan) and Almaty (Kazakhstan) had lower costs of living than Bengaluru. Chennai and New Delhi were the ninth and tenth most affordable cities in the world respectively.
- Also for the first time in the survey's history, three cities - Singapore, Hong Kong and Paris - share the title of the world's most expensive city.
- Zurich and Geneva rounded out the top five and New York and Los Angeles reclaimed spots in the top 10 — ranking in seventh and 10th respectively - for this year.

### **Indian Railways ICF becomes largest rail coaches maker in the world**

- The Integral Coach Factory (ICF) in Chennai has manufactured as many as 301 coaches in the month of February, taking the total for this fiscal to 2,919. This puts the factory among the largest railcar builders in the world, beating top Chinese manufacturers who produce around 2,600 coaches a year. The ICF is now eyeing ending the financial year with over 3200 coaches. The ICF has also churned out the newly launched country's fastest train Vande Bharat Express between the April-February period. Indian Railways-owned Modern Coach Factory (MCF) in Rae Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh

### **Finland ranked happiest country for second Year**

- Finland has topped a global happiness ranking for the second year in a row.
- It beat Nordic peers Denmark, Norway and Iceland in a ranking of 156 countries by the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network. The ranking saw the US drop one place, to 19th, while people in South Sudan were the least happy. India dropped seven ranks to the 140th place.
- The Global Happiness Report published by the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network, the report ranked 156 countries by happiness levels, assessing factors such as life expectancy, social support and corruption. The report is released annually, on 20 March, on International Day of Happiness.

### **Piyush Goyal, Harsh Vardhan in 'World's 100 Most Influential People in Climate Policy for 2019'**

- Union Ministers Piyush Goyal and Dr Harsh Vardhan are among the seven Indians who have been named in the 'World's 100 Most Influential People in Climate Policy for 2019' for taking steps in order to combat climate change.
- Union Minister for Railways and Coal Piyush Goyal has led the fast track electrification of nearly 18,000 unelectrified villages, and been critical in the rollout of a drastic power sector reform and the world's largest LED bulb distribution programme, according to his profile on the website. Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Dr Harsh Vardhan has focused on motivating scientists to develop new technologies that address social and environmental problems.
- Other five persons are Mukta Tilak (Pune Mayor), Jyoti Kirit Parikh (executive director of Integrated Research and Action for Development), Sunita Narain, (environmentalist and political activist), Vandana Shiva (environmental activist) and Upendra Tripathy (director general of the International Solar Alliance)

### **Adani becomes first Indian port operator to record 200 MMT cargo movement**

- Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone (APSEZ) has recorded cargo movement of more than 200 million metric tonnes (MMT) at nine ports along the east and west coasts, becoming the first Indian port operator to achieve the milestone.
- Their projections were to reach this milestone by 2020 but they could achieve it ahead of schedule. APSEZ plans to double the growth up to 400 MMT by 2025

### **Skytrax World Airport Awards announced Singapore's Changi Airport named best, New Delhi's IGI at 59<sup>th</sup>**

- Singapore's Changi Airport has been crowned the world's best aviation hub for the seventh time in a row, while New Delhi's Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport featured at number 59, according to the Skytrax World Airport Awards.
- At number two on the list is Tokyo International Airport (Haneda), up one place from 2018. This hub also won World's Best Domestic Airport and World's Cleanest Airport.

- Breaching the top three is Incheon International Airport, down one place from its second-place spot in 2018. Incheon remains a stalwart of the airport rankings, also nabbing an award for World's Best Transit Airport.
- New Delhi's IGI Airport was eight points up this year after featuring at the 66th spot in 2018.
- The other Indian airports in the list were Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport at 64, down one point from the previous year, the Rajiv Gandhi Hyderabad International Airport at 66, up 10 points and Bengaluru's Kempegowda International Airport at 69, down five points.

### **Vijaywada Railway Station Gets 'Gold Rating' For Green Measures**

- Vijayawada railway station, one of the busiest railway junctions in the country, has received Gold Rating by the Indian Green Building Council. The IGBC-CII, with the support of the Environment Directorate of Indian Railways, developed the Green Railway Stations Rating System to facilitate adoption of green concepts, thereby reduce the adverse environmental impact due to station operation and maintenance and also enhance the overall commuter experience.
- Vijayawada Railway Station was ranked fourth in the Indian Railways for cleanliness among A-1 category stations.
- The station boasts of 100 per cent LED lighting, five star rated fans, pumps and motors and solar water heating systems.

## **Important Books and Authors**

<b>Authors</b>	<b>Books</b>
Nayantara Sahgal	The Fate Of Butterflies
Kamlesh Patel	"Designing Destiny: The Heartfulness Way"
Rhythm Waghlikar	Gauri- The Urge to Fly
Collection of selected speeches of Prime Minister	Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas
Dr. Y.V. Reddy and G.R. Reddy	Indian Fiscal Federalism
Salman Anees Soz	The Great Disappointment: How Narendra Modi Squandered A Unique Opportunity to Transform the Indian Economy'
Navin Chawla (Former Chief Election Commissioner of India)	'Every Vote Counts -The Story of India's Elections'
Chetan Bhagat	India Positive

### **Arun Jaitley released a book titled 'Mann Ki Baat - A Social Revolution on Radio'**

- Finance Minister Arun Jaitley was released a book titled, 'Mann Ki Baat - A Social Revolution on Radio' in New Delhi
- The book is a compendium encompassing 50 editions of the 'Mann Ki Baat' programme by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on All India Radio. The book contains a comprehensive, qualitative and academic analysis of 'Mann Ki Baat' – the themes, the choice of topics, the salient features

## **Important Sports News**

### **Cricket**

### **Imran Tahir to quit ODIs cricket after World Cup**

- South African spinner Imran Tahir has announced that he will quit ODI cricket after the ICC World Cup 2019.
- However he would like to continue playing for South Africa in Twenty20 internationals.
- 2019 Cricket World Cup is the 12th edition of the Cricket World Cup, scheduled to be hosted by England and Wales from 30 May to 14 July 2019

### **Goswami reclaims No.1 position in ICC women's ODI bowler rankings**

- Indian bowler Jhulan Goswami reclaimed the world number one position in the ICC Women's ODI bowler rankings after her performances in India's 2-1 home series win over England in the ICC Women's Championship.
- Goswami, who last held the top spot in February 2017, finished with eight wickets in the series, helping India reach the second position in the eight-team championship

- India's Shikha Pandey leapt 12 places to claim the fifth spot and a career-best points tally of 688, courtesy her eight scalps against England. Katherine Brunt and Ellyse Perry rose by one spot each to settle at No.6 and No.9 respectively.

### **Duminy to retire from ODIs after ICC World Cup 2019**

- South African all-rounder JP Duminy announced that he would retire from ODIs after the ICC World Cup in England
- Duminy will continue to be available for South Africa in T20 internationals. This would be his third World Cup after 2011 and 2015.

### **Sri Lanka's Lasith Malinga to retire from international cricket after Twenty20 World Cup**

- Sri Lankan limited overs captain Lasith Malinga will retire from international cricket after next year's Twenty20 World Cup to be held in Australia. He would also quit one-day internationals after the 2019 World Cup in England and Wales.
- He made his ODI debut in 2004, becoming the first to clinch two World Cup hat-tricks and the first to take three ODI hat-tricks.

## **Football**

### **India to host U-17 Women's Football World Cup in 2020**

- India will host the Under-17 Women's Football World Cup in 2020. This was announced by the President of International Football Federation (FIFA), Gianni Infantino. 2020 FIFA Under-17 Women's World Cup will be the seventh edition of the biennial tournament. This will be the second FIFA tournament India will be hosting, after the U-17 Men's World Cup in 2017.

### **India defeats Nepal to win SAFF Women's Championship for fifth time**

- In football, India has clinched the SAFF (South Asian Football Federation) Women's Championship for the fifth time in a row, defeating hosts Nepal 3-1 in the final at Biratnagar. This was India's 23rd straight victory in the championship since its inception in 2010.
- In this match, for India goals were scored by Dalmia Chhibber (26th minute), Grace Dengmei (63rd minute) and Anju Tamang (76th minute). For Nepal single goal was scored by Sabitra Bhandari at 33rd minute.
- So far India has won every edition of this tournament (2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2019), beating Nepal four times ((2010, 2012, 2014, 2019) and Bangladesh once (2016) in the final.

### **Ex-Ecuador football chief Luis Chiriboga receives life ban**

- FIFA slapped a lifetime ban on the disgraced former head of Ecuador's football federation, Luis Chiriboga, after finding him guilty of taking bribes. Chiriboga was one of the executives arrested in 2015 amid a massive US-led crackdown on corruption in world football.
- After finding him guilty, FIFA's ethics judges banned Chiriboga from all football-related activities for life and fined him 1 million Swiss francs. Chiriboga led Ecuador's football federation for 18 years before his arrest.

## **Others**

### **At Makran Cup One gold, five silver medals for India:**

- National champion Deepak Singh was the lone Indian boxer to notch up gold while five others claimed silver medals in the Makran Cup in Chabahar, Iran. P Lalitha Prasad (52kg), Commonwealth Games silver-medallist Manish Kaushik (60kg), Duryodhan Singh Negi (69kg), Sanjeet (91kg) and Commonwealth Games silver-medallist Satish Kumar (91kg) they were finishing second on the podium.
- Rohit Tokas (64kg) and Manjeet Singh Panghal (75kg) settled down with bronze medal.

### **ISSF World Cup: Manu, Saurabh clinch 10m Air Pistol Mixed Team gold**

- In shooting, the duo of Saurabh Chaudhary and Manu Bhaker claimed a gold medal for India in 10-metre air pistol mixed team event at the ISSF World Cup in New Delhi
- The Chinese duo of Ranxin Jiang and Bowen Zhang won silver.
- Bronze went to the Korean pair of Minjung Kim and Daehun Park.

### **Kyrgios beat Zverev to win Mexico open title**

- Australian tennis player Nick Kyrgios beat world number three Alexander Zverev in the final to win the Mexico Open title.
- Kyrgios will regain his place in the world's top 50 rankings, had earlier beaten Rafael Nadal in the tournament

### **Wrestler Bajrang Punia wins gold in Bulgaria**

- India's star wrestler Bajrang Punia has won a gold medal in 65 kilogram freestyle in Bulgaria. The tournament, Dan Kolov-Nikola Petrov was held in Ruse. This was Punia's 10th medal in as many international tournaments since the 2017 World Championships in Paris.
- Pooja Dhanda won gold in 59 kg women's freestyle category.
- Sakshi Malik settled for a silver medal in the 65 kg category.
- Sandeep Tomar claimed silver medal in the Men's 61kg category. Vinesh Phogat claimed silver medal in the Women's 53kg

### **Manpreet Singh named captain of Indian hockey team for Sultan Azlan Shah Cup**

- Manpreet Singh was named captain of the 18-member Indian hockey team to play in the upcoming 28th Sultan Azlan Shah Cup. The prestigious tournament will be held in Ipoh, Malaysia from the 23rd of this month. Surender Kumar will be the Vice-Captain of the team.
- Apart from India and hosts Malaysia, the other participating nations in the tournament are Canada, Korea, South Africa, Asian Games gold medallist Japan. India, will start its campaign against Japan on the opening day itself.

### **Roger Federer claims 100th ATP title of his career**

- Roger Federer has claimed the 100th ATP title of his career with after beating 20-year-old Greek Stefanos Tsitsipas 6-4, 6-4 in the final of the Dubai Tennis Championships.
- The 20-time grand slam champion is the second man, after American Jimmy Connors to claim 100 titles.
- Federer will have to win 10 more titles to beat Connors' men's record of 109, while Martina Navratilova holds the all-time record having won 167 women's singles crowns during her career.

### **Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports recognises Kudo International Federation India as National Sport Federation**

- Kudo International Federation India (KIFI) has been provisionally recognised as National Sport Federation by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.
- The recognition shall be granted if it complies with the provisions of National Sports Development Code of India, 2011 and displays information on the website according to the ministerial guidelines.
- Kudo is an official Japanese Cultural Budō sport under the same category as Judo, Aikido and Kendo. Kudo is recognized by over 10 national Olympic committees and has over 50 member countries.

### **Iniyan becomes India's 61st Grandmaster**

- P. Iniyan, the 16-year-old boy from the Erode district of Tamil Nadu has become the 61st Grandmaster of India after crossing 2,500 points in the Elo Ratings at the ongoing Noisiel Open in France.
- Iniyan needed 2.7 points to achieve the Grandmaster Title and achieved the feat by winning a game against Ukrainian GM Sergey Fedorchuk. Viswanathan Anand is India's first Chess Grandmaster and he achieved the norm way back in 1987.

### **Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports recognises All India Carrom Federation as National Sports Federation**

- Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports has granted provisional recognition to All India Carrom Federation (AICF) as National Sport Federation with immediate effect till up to 31st March, 2019. The recognition means granting a major role to AICF for development of the Carrom sport in India.
- The recognition can be reviewed by the government in case Memorandum of Association (MoA) of the All India Carrom Federation or its practices come into conflict with the government guidelines as amended from time to time.
- The Carrom sport is placed in the 'Others' category.

### **Kavinder fetches gold, 4 silver medals for India at Finland boxing tourney**

- Kavinder Singh Bisht (56kg) struck gold while Shiva Thapa (60kg) and three others claimed silver medals to end a fine Indian campaign at the 38th GeeBee Boxing Tournament in Helsinki, Finland.
- Signing off with silver medals were three-time Asian medallist Shiva Thapa (60kg), rookie Govind Sahani (49kg), Commonwealth Games bronze-medallist Mohammed Hussamuddin (56kg) and Dinesh Dagar (69kg).



## **WWE Kurt Angle announced his retirement from wrestling**

- WWE Hall of Fame inductee Kurt Angle announced his retirement from wrestling, saying that his match at the WrestleMania 35 will be his last. Angle made his comeback to the WWE after almost 11 years when he was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 2017. Following his return Angle was subsequently named the General Manager of WWE Raw.

## **Olympic champion Liu Hong breaks 50km race walk world record**

- Rio Olympics race walk champion Liu Hong broke the 50km world record and became the first woman to dip under the four-hour mark at an event in Haungshan.
- Liu, who won the Olympic distance 20km gold in Rio, clocked three hours, 59 minutes and 15 seconds for the longer race, clipping more than five minutes off the previous record (4:04:36) set by compatriot Liang Rui in Taicang last year. She also won the 20km gold at the 2011 and 2015 World Championships.

## **Upamanyu Dutta clinches bronze medal in Asian Open Laser Sailing Championship**

- Young sailor Upamanyu Dutta bagged the bronze medal in the Laser Standard race for men in the Asian Open Laser Sailing Championship which concluded in Singapore.
- Nethra Kumanan of Chennai achieved a creditable 4th position in the Laser Radial event for women.
- Dutta aggregated a total of 56 points to finish behind Thailand's Keerati Bualong (28 points) and Nicholas Bezy (47 points) of Hong Kong.

## **Gymnast Dipa Karmakar was selected as Barbie role model**

- Dipa Karmakar was selected as Barbie role model & was presented with a one-of-a-kind doll by Barbie as the company celebrates its 60th anniversary. Barbie decided to honour 20 different role models across 18 different countries, and celebrate their unique achievements and capabilities.
- Women like the first Indian gymnast to compete at the Olympics, Dipa Karmakar. The first Japanese tennis player to win a Grand Slam, Naomi Osaka. Italian chef Rosanna Marziale who pioneered techniques that earned her the nickname, 'queen of mozzarella'. From fire fighters to pilots, Barbie has represented various professions and thus inspired young girls to believe that they can be whoever they want to be

## **Special Olympics World Games 2019 begin at Abu Dhabi in UAE**

- Special Olympics World Games 2019, begin at Abu Dhabi in UAE, made history by welcoming a record-breaking 200 nations at the Games. Of the 200 nations, 195 will compete in the Games and five will observe.
- The event held in the West Asia for the first time, 7,500 athletes will take part in 24 Olympic-style sports over seven days. With the highest number of women taking part and the largest number of Unified teammates on board, the World Games will capture the attention of the globe.
- More than 2,500 women will fly the flag for their nation, with almost half of them performing in athletics competitions. Saudi Arabia will send female athletes for the first time, with 14 women participating.

## **India bags 368 medals in Special Olympics Games**

- India returned with 368 medals, including 85 gold, at the Special Olympics World Summer Games, held at Abu Dhabi, UAE. The Indian team of 284 athletes also clinched 154 silver and 129 bronze medals in its highly successful campaign at the prestigious event.
- Medals are won in Judo, Athletics, Cycling, Aquatics, Powerlifting, Basketball Traditional, Table Tennis, Roller skating, Badminton, Handball Traditional and Football 7 Side Female competitions in the game.
- From the roller skating event, the country won 49 medals - 13 gold, 20 silver, and 16 bronze medals.
- Indian powerlifters bagged the maximum number of medals 20 gold, 33 silver and 43 bronze.
- India participated in Judo and Futsal for the first time. The next Special Olympic Games are set to take place in Sweden in 2021

## **Kamalpreet Kaur wins gold in women's discus throw event**

- In Athletics, Kamalpreet Kaur grabbed the gold medal in the women's discus throw event.
- Kaur also qualified for the Asian Championships in the process on the opening day of Federation Cup in Patiala. Shivpal Singh also booked a berth in the next month's Asian Championships in Doha in men's javelin throw by crossing the qualifying standard set by Athletics Federation of India.

## **India bags five medals, including two gold in Asian Youth Athletics C'ships**

- India bagged five medals, including two gold in the Asian Youth Athletics Championships in Hong Kong on the first day. Philip Maheswaran Thabitha grabbed the first gold for India by winning the boys' 110 metres hurdles in 12.86 seconds. Vipin Kumar added the second gold metal for India in the boys' hammer throw with an effort of 69.63 metres. India's Harshita Sherawat clinched a silver in the girls' hammer throw with an effort of 61.93 metres. Deepak Yadav added a bronze in pole vault by clearing 4.70 metres while Ajay bagged a medal of the same colour in the boys' 1500 metres race with a timing of three minutes and 57.25 seconds.

## **Diksha Dagar becomes second Indian to win Ladies European Tour title**

- Eighteen-year-old Diksha Dagar became the second Indian women golfer to win an event on Ladies European Tour after clinching South African Women's Open in Cape Town.
- Aditi Ashok was the first Indian to win on the Ladies European Tour after clinching Hero Women's Indian Open in Gurugram in 2016. Dagar won silver at the 2017 Summer Deaflympics. She also had a stellar Amateur career during which she represented India at the 2018 Asian Games and won the 2018 Singapore Amateur title. She also won a Pro event on the Indian domestic Hero Women's Pro Golf Tour, before turning pro at the start of this year.

## **Finland's Valtteri Bottas wins Australian GP**

- Mercedes' Valtteri Bottas beat his world champion teammate Lewis Hamilton to clinch the season-opening Australian Formula One Grand Prix. Bottas, who claimed his first race win since Abu Dhabi in 2017, also claimed the extra point for the fastest lap in the race. Hamilton finished the race in the second spot, while Red Bull's Max Verstappen finished third.

## **Sai Praneeth Finishes With Silver at Swiss Open**

- India's B Sai Praneeth lost to Shi Yuqi of China in the men's single final clash of Swiss Open Badminton tournament in Basel.
- Top seeded and world number two Shi Yuqi has lifted the title defeating Praneeth. Earlier, Praneeth won the first game and gave tough fight in the second one, but lost in the third game

## **K T Irfan becomes first Indian athlete to qualify for Tokyo Olympics**

- KT Irfan became the first Indian from athletics to qualify for the next year's Olympics while finishing fourth in the 20 km event of the Asian Race Walking Championships in Nomi, Japan.
- Irfan also holds a national record of 1:20:21 when he finished 10th in the 2012 Olympics. He also qualified for this year's World Championships (September 27-October 6) in Doha, Qatar

## **Prajnesh Gunneswaran rises to career-best 84th position**

- In Tennis, the breakthrough run at the Indian Wells has propelled India's Prajnesh Gunneswaran to career-high rank of 84 in the latest men's rankings of the Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP).
- In the Women's Tennis Association rankings, Ankita Raina continues to be India's top-ranked player at 168. She was followed by Karman Kaur Thandi, who jumped seven places to 203.

## **Bengaluru FC crowned ISL champions for first time**

- Bengaluru FC clinched their maiden Indian Super League title as Rahul Bheke found a championship-winning header in the dying minutes of the final against FC Goa in Mumbai
- The two teams were locked 0-0 after 90 minutes. Even the first extra time saw no goals but Bengaluru got better of a 10-men Goan team 1-0, four minutes from the end of the second extra half.

## **Lakshya and Riya into top-100 in BWF badminton rankings**

- Young Indian shuttlers Lakshya Sen and Riya Mookerjee broke into the top-100 among Men's and Women's singles players in the latest World Badminton Rankings.
- Making a massive jump of 28 places, Lakshya Sen is placed 76<sup>th</sup>. Riya Mookerjee climbed up 19 spots to be placed 94<sup>th</sup>.
- In the women's singles rankings, P V Sindhu and Saina Nehwal are static with Sindhu at sixth and Saina at ninth position.
- Among men, B Sai Praneeth also moved up three places to 19<sup>th</sup>. Kidambi Srikanth remains static and is the best placed Indian in the men's rankings at seventh.

- He is followed by Sameer Verma (14th), H S Prannoy (24th), Subhankar Dey (43rd), Parupalli Kashyap (48th), Ajay Jayaram (52nd) and Sourav Verma (53rd).
- Japan's Kento Momota is leading the men's chart while Chinese Taipei's Tai Tzu Ying is topping the women's singles list.

### **India Loses Hosting Rights for the Junior Asian Championship 2019**

- United World Wrestling (UWW) has taken away the hosting rights from India to host junior Asian Championship which was to be held in July 2019. India had agreed to host the re-scheduled junior Championship in July after original hosts Lebanon withdrew. UWW has shifted the new venue for the junior Asian championship from India to Thailand.
- In the wake of the Pulwama terror attack, India had not issued visas to a three-member shooting contingent from Pakistan for the shooting World Cup in Delhi. UWW has also asked all its affiliated federations to suspend all communication with Wrestling Federation of India (WFI).

### **Abu Dhabi to host T10 League for next five years**

- The magnificent Zayed Cricket Stadium in Abu Dhabi will host the T10 League for the next five years, starting with the 2019 season. Abu Dhabi Cricket, in partnership with Abu Dhabi Sports Council (ADSC) and the Department of Culture and Tourism - Abu Dhabi (DCT Abu Dhabi), has signed a five-year agreement with the organisers of the T10 League. The first match of the T10 League 2019 will be held on October 23. The T10 format was first introduced to the UAE in 2017

### **Saina bags Sportsperson of the Year award**

- London Olympics bronze medallist Saina Nehwal was named 'Sportsperson of The Year' at the annual Telangana Sports Journalists Association awards function.
- Rio Olympics silver medallist PV Sindhu was named 'Outstanding Performer' in women's section while, Pullela Gopichand was presented the 'Coach of The Year' award and the Indian badminton team was the 'Team of The Year' and the Badminton Association of Telangana was awarded the 'Association of the Year'.

### **China crowned Badminton Asia Mixed Team Championships winners**

- China defeated Japan 3-2 to win the 2019 Badminton Asia Mixed Team Championships. This was the second edition of the tournament. 11 teams including India was part of this tournament that was held in Queen Elizabeth Stadium in Hong Kong. The event was also known as the Tong Yun Kai Cup 2019 named after the president of the Hong Kong badminton association.
- In the mixed doubles, Chinese pair He Jiting and Du Yue has defeated Japanese pair Yuta Watanabe and Arisa Higashino. In the men's doubles, Yugo Kobayashi and Takuro Hoki of China beat Han Chengkai and Zhou Haodong of Japan. In the women's doubles, Li Yinhui and Du Yue won for China by beating Ayako Sakuramoto and Yukiko Takahata.

### **Manu Bhaker-Saurabh Chaudhary wins senior gold in Asian Airgun C'ship**

- India had a successful start to the 12th Asian Airgun Championship in Taoyuan, Taipei with two gold medals.
- India won both 10m air pistol mixed team gold in both juniors and seniors. After winning an International Shooting Sport Federation World Cup stage gold, the pair of stars Bhaker and Chaudhary won senior gold together
- National champion Esha Singh and Vijayveer Sidhu won the gold in juniors.

### **31-year-old Hopman Cup replaced by new ATP Cup**

- The city of Perth in Western Australia (WA) will no longer play host to the Hopman Cup, Tennis Australia confirmed.
- The 31st edition of the tournament was the last edition of the game and ended in January 2019.
- Instead, the mixed tournament format will be replaced with an all men's event called the ATP (Association of Tennis Professionals) Cup. Played across three cities, Perth will join Sydney and Brisbane as the hosts of the new competition which is set to feature 100 of the world's top male players

### **Breakdancing and three other makes next move to Olympic status at Paris 2024**

- The Executive Board of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) has recommended adding breakdancing, skateboarding, sport climbing and surfing to the 2024 Paris Olympic Games.
- This decision was taken by the IOC's executive board in the meeting held in Lausanne, Switzerland. Final Decision will be taken after the end of 2020.

### **Aeronutrix's Fast&Up Ropes in Cricketer Mayank Agarwal as Brand Ambassador**

- Indian Test Cricketer, Mayank Agarwal, appointed as Brand Ambassador of Aeronutrix's Fast&Up Rope for the growth of the fast-moving healthcare goods business in India.
- Fast&Up is the flagship sports nutrition brand of Aeronutrix Sports Products Private Limited. Backed by innovative Swiss technology.

### Australia's Graham Reid to be appointed as India men's hockey coach

- Australian Graham Reid is set to be named as the Indian men's hockey team chief coach till the 2022 World Cup after the national federation. The Indian men's team is without a chief coach after the unceremonious sacking of Harendra Singh in January following a less-than-impressive quarterfinal exit at the World Cup in Bhubaneswar last year.
- A veteran of 130 international matches, Reid was a member of the Australian team that won the silver medal in the 1992 Barcelona Olympics. He was Australia's coach at the 2016 Rio Olympics but quit after the Kookaburras failed to finish on the podium.

### Australia legend Tim Cahill retires from all forms of football

- Australia's all-time top goalscorer Tim Cahill announced his retirement, bringing an end to one of the country's greatest football careers.
- The 39-year-old who scored 50 goals in 108 appearances for the Socceroos and played in four World Cups.

### India Open 2019 Winners List

- The 2019 India Open was held at K. D. Jadhav Indoor Hall in India.

Events	Winner	Runner Up
Men's Single	Viktor Axelsen	Srikanth Kidambi
Women's Single	Ratchanok Intanon	He Bingjiao
Men's Doubles	Lee Yang and Wang Chi-lin	Ricky Karanda Suwardi and Angga Pratama
Women's Doubles	Greysia Polii and Apriyani Rahayu	Chow Mei Kuan and Lee Meng Yean
Mixed Doubles	Wang Yiliu and Huang Dongping	Praveen Jordan and Melati Daeva Oktavianti

### India secures second position in the medal tally in Asian Youth Athletics Championships

- The third edition of the Asian Youth Athletics Championships 2019 was held at the Tseung Kwan O Sports Ground in Hong Kong from 15 to 17 March.
- It is a biennial, continental athletics competition for Asian athletes aged from 15 to 17 years.
- China topped the medal tally with 31 medals
- India secured second position in the medal table by winning 26 medals including 8 gold, 9 silver and 9 bronze.

#### List of Gold winners from India

Events	Winners
Men's 400 metres	Abdul Razak Cheramkulangara Rasheed
Men's Medley relay	Indian Team
Men's 10,000 m walk	Vishvendra Singh
Men's Hammer throw	Vipin Kumar
Men's Decathlon	Usaid Khan
Women's 100 metres	Avantika Santosh Narale
Women's 100 metres hurdles	Thabitha Philip Maheswaran
Women's Long jump	Thabitha Philip Maheswaran

### Momota 1st Japanese man to win title in All England Badminton Championships

- Japan's reigning world champion Kento Momota won a maiden All England Open Badminton Championships title as Chinese Taipei's Tai Tzu-ying failed with her bid to win three in a row.
- Momota is the first male Japanese winner ever, with the men's singles stretching back to 1900.

Events	Winners	Runners
Men's Singles	Kento Momota	Viktor Axelsen
Women's Singles	Chen Yufei	Tai Tzu Ying
Men's Doubles	Mohammad Ahsan and Hendra Setiawan	Aaron Chia and Soh Woo Yik
Women's Doubles	Chen Qing Chen and Jia Yifan	Mayu Matsumoto and Wakana Nagahara

### Dubai Tennis Championship 2019

- Dubai Tennis Championship 2019 commonly known as Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championship concluded in Dubai, UAE. It was the 27th edition of men and 19th of women.
- Prize money of ATP (Association of Tennis Professionals) is \$2887895 and for WTA (Women Tennis Association) is \$2828000.

Category	Winner	Runner
Men's Singles	Roger Federer (Switzerland)	Stefanos Tsitsipas (Greece)
Women's Singles	Belinda Bencic (Switzerland)	Petra Kvitova (Czech Republic)
Men's Doubles	Rajeev Ram (USA) and Joe Salisbury (UK)	Ben McLachlan (New Zealand) and Jan-Lennard Struff (Germany)
Women's Doubles	Hsieh Su-wei (Chinese Taipei) and Barbora Strycova (Czech Republic)	Lucie Hradecka (Czech Republic) and Ekaterina Makarova (Russia)

### YONEX Swiss Open 2019 badminton tournament

- The YONEX Swiss Open 2019 badminton tournament was held at St. Jakobshalle in Basel, Switzerland from 12 to 17 March 2019.

Event Category	Winner	Runner Up
Men's Single	Shi Yuqi (China)	Sai Praneeth (India)
Women's Single	Chen Yufei (China)	Saena Kawakami (Japan)
Men's Double	Lee Yang and Wang Chi-lin (Taiwan)	Fajar Alfian and Muhammad Rian Ardianto (Indonesia)
Women's Double	Nami Matsuyama and Chiharu Shida (Japan)	Chang Ye-na and Jung Kyung-eun (South Korea)
Mixed Double	Mathias Bay-Smith and Rikke Soby Hansen (Denmark)	Rinov Rivaldy and Pitha Haningtyas Mentari (Indonesia)

### Indian Wells Masters Tennis tournament winners complete list

- The Indian Wells Masters Tennis tournament held in California United States has come to an end. The list of winners is given below. Indian Wells Masters Tennis tournament is also known by the name BNP Paribas Open.
- Austrian tennis player Dominic Thiem registered a comeback victory over 20-time Grand Slam champion Roger Federer to win the Indian Wells Masters. It was Thiem's maiden ATP Masters 1000 title in three attempts.

Event Category	Winner	Runner Up
Men's Singles	Dominic Thiem (Austria)	Roger Federer (Switzerland)



Women's singles	Bianca Andreescu (Canada)	Angelique Kerber (Germany)
Men's Doubles	Nikola Mektic Horacio Zeballos	Lukasz Kubot Marcelo Melo
Women's Doubles	Elise Mertens Aryna Sabalenka	Barbora Krejčíková Katerina Siniakova

### Lingshui China Masters Badminton Tournament 2019 – Complete winner list

- The 2019 Lingshui China Masters was a badminton tournament held at Agile Stadium in China from 12 to 17 March 2019
- The tournament was the first Super 100 tournament of the 2019 BWF World Tour.

Events	Winners	Runner Up
Men's Singles	Weng Hongyang (China)	Liu Haichao (China)
Women Singles	Kim Ga-eun (South Korea)	Zhang Yiman (China)
Men's Doubles	Lee Jhe-huei and Yang Po-hsuan (Chinese Taipei)	Ou Xuanyi and Ren Xiangyu (China)
Women's Doubles	Baek Ha-na and Kim Hye-rin (South Korea)	Liu Xuanxuan and Xiayuting (China)
Mixed Doubles	Tang Chun Man and Ng Tsz Yau (Hong Kong)	Guo Xinwaa and Liu Xuanxuan (China)

## Important Obituaries

Person	Field
Andre Previn	Legendary composer and pianist
Bharat Mohan Adhikari	Former Deputy Prime Minister of Nepal
Bill Playle	Former New Zealand batsman
Luke Perry	American actor
Virendra Kataria	Former lieutenant governor of Puducherry
Daniel Rudisha(Kenya)	Olympian and Athletics coach
Kelly Catlin	American cyclist
Vinod Kashyap	Veteran Hindi Newsreader
Sir John Richardson	Eminent British art historian and critic
Maate Mahadevi	First woman Lingayat 'jagadguru'
Y.S. Vivekananda Reddy	Andhra Pradesh state Minister
WS Merwin	Pulitzer Prize winner and former US poet
Darryl D'Monte	Senior journalist and environmental activist
Manohar Parrikar	Goa Chief Minister
Chinmoy Roy	Veteran Bengali Actor
Alan Krueger	Former White House economist
S B Sinha	Former SC Judge Justice
L V Sharada Rao	Veteran Kannada actress
Larry Cohen	Cult-horror writer

Vinjamuri Anasuya	Noted folk artist
Ghulam Nabi Rather	Social activist
Shahnaz Rahmatullah	Bangladeshi singer
Scott Walker	Songwriter and producer
Ashita	Malayalam writer and poet
Bruce Yardley	Former Australian cricketer, coach and commentator
Valery Bykovsky	Russian cosmonaut
Prafulla Rajguru	Veteran Journalist