

# TNPSC THERVUPETTAGAM CURRENT AFFAIRS – JANUARY 2019

[www.tnpscthervupettagam.com](http://www.tnpscthervupettagam.com)



**SHANKAR**  
**IAS ACADEMY™**  
The Best IAS Academy In South India SINCE 2004

Plot No. 1742, I Floor, 18th Main Road,  
Anna Nagar, Chennai - 600 040.

Phone: 04-26216435, 4353 3445, Mobile: 9444166435  
[www.shankariasacademy.com](http://www.shankariasacademy.com)

# CONTENT

<b>TNPSC BITS .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>TAMILNADU.....</b>	<b>26</b>
Ban on single-use plastic .....	26
Tamilnadu Assembly session .....	27
Top 10 Districts of India .....	27
Minister P Balakrishna Reddy Convicted.....	28
Tamilnadu's 33rd district.....	28
'Police-E-Eye' app.....	28
Namma Chennai mobile app .....	28
Committee to weed out invasive alien species.....	29
Chennai Unified Metropolitan Transport Authority (CUMTA) .....	29
Robo cop 'Rodeo'.....	29
Tamil Nadu defence industrial corridor.....	29
MGR birth anniversary Commemorative coins .....	30
TN launches portal for pensioners .....	30
Golden jubilee of Tamil Nadu to be celebrated.....	31
Startup and Innovation policy of Tamil Nadu .....	31
World record in bull taming event.....	31
New paddy variety.....	32
Kindergarten in Government Schools .....	32
TN bagged awards for BBBP scheme.....	33
Global Investors Meet (GIM) 2019 .....	33
Apollo Proton Cancer Centre .....	34
Anna medal for gallantry .....	34
Republic Day parade awards .....	35
Awards under Swasth Bharat Yatra .....	35
PM's TN Visit.....	35
Thiruvalluvar Day Awards .....	36
<b>NATIONAL.....</b>	<b>36</b>
Bhima Koregaon.....	36
Indian Bridge Management System .....	37
Ujjwala Sanitary Napkin initiative .....	37

New immigration check post .....	37
Monuments of national importance.....	37
Mahila Police Volunteers -MPVs .....	38
MSP for minor forest produce .....	39
Doubling Farmers' Income (DFI) committee.....	39
Panel to protect Assam's heritage.....	39
Transgenders can file sexual harassment case under IPC.....	40
Amendment to the Trade Unions Act -1926 .....	40
Amendment in the POCSO Act.....	40
Non-Nuclear Aggression Agreement .....	41
RTE amendment Bill.....	41
NCTE (National Council for Teacher Education) amendment Act .....	42
National Health Agency restructured as National Health Authority.....	42
New Delhi International Arbitration Centre Bill .....	42
National Entrepreneurship Awards 2018 .....	43
10% quota for economically weaker sections in general category .....	43
Public Enterprises Survey 2017-18 .....	43
NABCB Accreditation Secures Recognition in Asia-Pacific Region .....	44
Alok Verma as CBI Chief again .....	44
Defence India Startup Challenge.....	44
Issuance of FASTags through petroleum retail outlets .....	45
Personal Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2018 .....	45
Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2019 .....	45
“Web- Wonder Women” Campaign .....	45
MSMEs initiatives to promote Ease of Doing Business.....	46
First Island to operate seaplanes under UDAN-3 .....	46
IFoS to be renamed as IFTS - DoPT.....	47
Rashtriya Gokul Mission .....	47
Raisina Dialogue .....	48
National Consultation on Child Protection 2019.....	48
Henley Passport Index .....	48
The DNA Technology (Use and Application) Regulation Bill, 2019 .....	49
Committee for Campaign Silence Period.....	49
Agreement for Renukaji Multipurpose Dam Project .....	50
World's largest Single-location Solar Photo-voltaic (PV) Plant.....	51



UNNATI - Unispace Nanosatellite Assembly & Training programme .....	51
Prayagraj Kumbh .....	52
Guru Gobind Singh Coin .....	52
Womaniya on GeM .....	52
NH-66 .....	53
DD Science.....	53
Voter Awareness Forums .....	54
SĀNJHI –MUJH MEIN KALĀKĀR.....	54
Dynamic City .....	54
ASER .....	55
Sita Rama Irrigation Project.....	55
Trishna gas project.....	56
Global Housing Technology Challenge.....	57
Judges of Supreme Court .....	57
103rd Constitutional Amendment Act.....	57
Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar 2019.....	57
National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction (2018-2023).....	58
Pradhan Mantri Rozgar Protsahan Yojana .....	58
National Air Cargo Policy .....	58
9th International Micro irrigation conference .....	58
7th ASEAN-India Tourism Ministers meeting .....	59
India’s 2nd defence innovation hub.....	59
IAF AN-32 lands in Pakyong Airport.....	59
India’s First National Museum of Indian Cinema .....	60
HAL-built LCH completes air-to-air weapon trials .....	60
Exclusive satellite for Border Management.....	60
District Mining Fund (DMF) programme.....	61
Women to get 20% jobs in Military Police .....	61
Aadhaar – A Valid Travel document .....	62
Armoured Systems Complex (ASC).....	62
National Conference on Self Reliance in Defence Manufacturing.....	62
PwC Global Economy Watch .....	62
NITI Aayog-led Committee to monitor pricing of drugs .....	63
India Steel 2019 Exhibition and Conference.....	63
New Naval Air Base ‘INS KOHASSA’ at Andaman.....	64

Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar award .....	64
Pravasi Teerth Darshan Yojana.....	65
IMBEX 2018-19.....	65
‘in-chamber’ decision on listing of plea challenging Article 35-A .....	65
Exercise SEA VIGIL .....	66
Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards 2019.....	66
Indian Africa Field Training Exercise (IAFTX) .....	67
Bio-Jet fuel for Military Aircraft .....	67
LRSAM Test from coast of Odisha .....	67
New norms for Jan Shikshan Sansthan.....	67
Powers of the Autonomous Councils .....	68
Abandoned airstrips across country to be renovated .....	68
World’s longest expressway.....	68
Amendments to Representation of People’s Act 1951 .....	69
Conclave on New Technologies.....	69
<b>INTERNATIONAL .....</b>	<b>69</b>
“Panda Bonds” in Chinese Currency - Pakistan .....	69
France introduced GAFA tax.....	70
Germany - Denmark rail and road tunnel link .....	70
Non-Permanent Members of UNSC .....	71
Asia Reassurance Initiative Act (ARIA).....	71
Panj Tirath site declared as National Heritage .....	72
New peace agreement .....	72
Iran approves anti-money laundering bill.....	72
Malaysia’s first king to abdicate the throne .....	73
World Bank President announces resignation .....	73
Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2018.....	74
International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala .....	74
Democracy Index 2019 .....	75
Tata Steel's Netherlands plant 'factory of the future'.....	75
Human Rights Television .....	75
Palestine takes over chairmanship of G77 .....	75
India and Australia mining safety agreement .....	76
Swedish PM elected for second term .....	76

Outbreak Readiness and Business Impact – White Paper .....	77
1st World Capital of Architecture for 2020 .....	77
The Global Risks Report 2019.....	78
Iran satellite failure .....	79
Edelman Trust Barometer report 2019.....	79
Global Talent Competitiveness Index 2019.....	79
Oxfam Annual Wealth Check report 2019 .....	80
Bloomberg Innovation Index 2019.....	81
UK to support nitrogen research in India .....	82
Sultan Abdullah elected as New Malaysian King.....	82
<b>ECONOMY .....</b>	<b>82</b>
Survey on Retail Payment Habits of Individuals (SRPHi).....	82
India’s Fiscal Stability Report - RBI.....	83
RBI panel on MSME revival .....	83
GST on inter-state office services .....	83
Vijay Mallya declared as Fugitive Economic Offender .....	84
GST panel approves ‘calamity cess’ by Kerala.....	84
5-member panel to boost digital payments .....	84
RBI allows ‘tokenisation’.....	84
GST exemption limit doubled.....	84
Global Economic Prospects report 2019 .....	85
Gold Monetisation Scheme (GMS) .....	85
‘Know Your Budget’ series in Twitter - MoF .....	86
UK Sinha-headed working group to study Group insolvency.....	87
Committee on GST Revenue Shortfall.....	87
India Ratings Report.....	87
Goods and Services Tax Appellate Tribunal.....	88
<b>SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY .....</b>	<b>88</b>
Body Scanners From 2019.....	88
TaiGenomics .....	89
Chang'e-4 Spacecraft.....	89
Algorithm to detect rare cells .....	90
Bagbazar-O-Rosogolla Utsob.....	90
NASA’s New Horizons spacecraft.....	90

Paper Sensor to detect freshness of Milk .....	91
'Brain Pacemaker' - WAND.....	91
Juno probe captured volcanic plumes on Io .....	92
Apollo 8 - 50th anniversary.....	92
Korolev Crater .....	93
New planet - HD 21749b .....	93
IIT scientists developed Space fuel .....	94
NIC Command and Control Centre.....	94
Human Space Flight Centre - ISRO .....	95
Chang'e-4 probe – Cotton sprout .....	95
Magnetic North Pole movement.....	95
Evidence of methane rainfall on Titan .....	96
Japan launches Epsilon-4 rocket with 7 satellites .....	97
SpaceX 's communications satellites .....	97
BES EXPO 2019.....	98
Young Scientist Programme .....	98
Website to Aid Handloom Weavers .....	98
US spy satellite.....	99
Earth's oldest rock found in Moon Sample .....	99
BSNL to Offer Data Connectivity Services via SMS in India.....	100
'Lightest satellite' Kalamsat V2 launched into orbit .....	100
World's longest 3D printed concrete bridge opened in china .....	100
Roshni app.....	101
New Anti-Radiation Missile (NGRAM) .....	101
<b>ENVIRONMENT .....</b>	<b>102</b>
Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI) .....	102
Parivesh .....	102
Green – Ag Project .....	103
Mandal Dam Project .....	103
Cyclone Pabuk .....	104
AAI banned single-use plastic items.....	104
Impact of increase in salinity on Gangetic Dolphins .....	105
National Clean Air Programme .....	105
Northeast is home to six new lizards .....	106

Climate of India during 2018 – IMD Report .....	106
14th session of the CoP to UNCCD.....	107
Sustainable Catchment Forest Management .....	107
Methanol Blending to cut Carbon-di-oxide Emissions .....	107
Two new species of moss rose .....	107
Small Woodbrown butterfly.....	108
Triple-drug therapy to fight elephantiasis.....	108
WHO list of 10 global health threats .....	108
State Tiger Protection Force - Telangana .....	109
India accounts more than half leprosy cases globally - WHO .....	109
<b>STATE .....</b>	<b>110</b>
Minimum educational qualification abolished .....	110
2 initiatives under Krishi Krishak Bandhu .....	110
Maharashtra - 100% electrification .....	110
Telangana hospital enters Guinness Book of World Records .....	110
ACI's Ease of Doing Business index .....	111
World Book Fair .....	111
Prana Raksha app of police.....	111
Buddhist site museum at Lalitgiri.....	111
CBIP award for Polavaram project.....	112
Atal Solar Krushi Pump Yojana.....	113
Polavaram project enters Guinness Book of World Record .....	113
State law commission – J&K.....	113
General Consent withdrawn .....	114
India's longest single lane steel cable suspension bridge .....	114
West Bengal Ayushman Bharat scheme .....	114
Ama Ghare LED .....	115
Ban on formalin fishes.....	115
Turtle Festival – Odisha .....	115
10 % Reservation for economically weaker sections.....	116
Jai Kisan Rin Mukti Yojana .....	117
Shaurya Award - Haryana .....	117
Kerala HC disqualifies MLA Karat Razack .....	117
B.Tech. in Artificial Intelligence – First in India .....	117



Logo for Tripura tea unveiled .....	118
Madhu Babu Pension Yojana .....	118
Bengal's tableau for the Republic day parade 2019 .....	118
First inter-state bridge - J&K .....	119
Pakke Paga Hornbill Festival declared State Festival .....	119
Yuva Swabhimani Yojana .....	119
Jammu and Kashmir Reservation (Amendment) Bill, 2014 .....	119
Operation Olympics .....	120
Kerala Sahitya Akademi Awards .....	120
Jiban Sampark Project .....	120
<b>PERSONALITIES, AWARDS AND EVENTS .....</b>	<b>121</b>
Superstar of STEM initiative .....	121
National Nritya Shiromani award .....	121
National Legal Services Authority Executive Chairman .....	121
National Bravery Award .....	122
World's first female amputee to climb Mount Vinson .....	122
Ramnath Goenka Excellence in Journalism Awards .....	122
First female chief economist of IMF .....	123
First Indian to Head Global Solar Council, USA .....	124
Confederation of African Football Player of the Year award 2018 .....	124
Jeevan Gaurav Puraskar lifetime award .....	125
Philip Kotler Presidential award .....	125
Gandhi Peace Prize .....	125
The Hindu Prize 2018 .....	126
Sushila Devi Literature Award .....	127
Japan Prize .....	128
Rosa Park Trailblazer award .....	128
Franco-German human rights award .....	129
ICSI lifetime Achievement award .....	129
Woman's Voice Award - AKLF 2019 .....	130
Sansad Ratna Award .....	130
Sheikh Saud International Prize for Materials Research .....	131
ICC Awards 2018 .....	131
Chhatra Viswakarma & Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY) awards .....	132
Bharat Ratna Award 2019 .....	132

Ashoka Chakra.....	133
Best Miniratna PSU.....	133
DSC Prize for South Asian Literature 2018 .....	133
New CEO of Indigo Air .....	134
<b>SPORTS .....</b>	<b>134</b>
34-year-old record broken .....	134
Rishabh Pant - Equaling World Record.....	134
Hopman Cup.....	135
Brisbane International 2019 .....	135
AFC Asian Cup 2019 .....	136
India's First-Ever Test Series Win in Australia.....	136
Khelo India Youth Games .....	137
1st away team to win bilateral series in all formats - India .....	138
Laureus World Comeback of Year Award.....	138
National Table Tennis champion 2018 .....	138
Federer - Australian Open 2019.....	139
Chennai Open International Grand Master chess tournament.....	139
Australian Open 2019 .....	139
Indonesia Masters Title 2019 .....	140
<b>IMPORTANT DAYS .....</b>	<b>140</b>
DRDO day – 01 January .....	140
World Braille Day - 04 January.....	141
Bharatiya Pravasi Day/Non-Resident Indian Day – 09 January .....	141
World Hindi Day – 10 January.....	141
National Youth Day – January 12 .....	142
Indian Army Day – January 15 .....	142
47th Statehood Day – 21 January.....	142
National Girl Child Day - 24 January.....	143
International Day of Education - 24 January .....	144
National Voters Day 2019 – 25 January .....	144
International holocaust Remembrance Day – 27 January.....	144
World Leprosy Day - last Sunday of January.....	145
Republic Day - 26 January .....	145
International Customs Day – 26 January.....	146

Data Protection Day – 28 January .....	147
<b>MISCELLANEOUS.....</b>	<b>147</b>
Lifetime achievement award to Dinu Randive .....	147
Khelo India Youth Games - 2nd edition.....	147
Kumbh JioPhone application .....	147
Must-see global destinations.....	148
World Tamil Conference (WTC).....	148
Vision 2040 – Civil Aviation .....	150
World's Youngest to Climb 7 Volcanic Peaks .....	150
World Orange Festival .....	150
Operation Kabaddi .....	151
75th anniversary of WWII siege of Leningrad.....	151
Australia Day - 26 January .....	151

## **TNPSC BITS**

- ❖ The ISRO chairman K.Sivan was presented the National Systems Gold Medal by the Systems Society of India (SSI) during the 42nd National Systems Conference held in Thiruvananthapuram.
  - The medal acknowledges his outstanding contributions to system science and engineering.
- ❖ The ISRO has launched Samwad with Students as part of its outreach programme. This will engage youngsters across the country in activities concerning space science under this programme.
- ❖ A panel headed by IIT-Hyderabad chairman B V R Mohan Reddy has suggested the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) not to allow setting up of new Engineering colleges from 2020.
- ❖ The Minister for Housing and Urban Affairs (Independent Charge) Hardeep Singh Puri announced that the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, PMAY loan subsidy for middle-income group has been extended till 31st March 2020.
- ❖ The Rising football star Kylian Mbappe won the 2018 French Player of the Year title, beating out Raphael Varane and Antoine Griezmann.
- ❖ Uzbekistan has announced 2019 as the 'Year of Active Investment and Social Development' in the backdrop of the proposed investments from India to boost economy of the Central Asian country.
- ❖ The Tamilnadu governor Banwarilal Purohit has appointed Krishnan as vice chancellor of the Madurai Kamaraj University for a period of three years with effect from the date (January 1, 2019) of his assumption of office.
- ❖ India and Pakistan have exchanged lists of their nuclear facilities in accordance with a 1988 agreement.
  - This is the twenty-eighth consecutive exchange of such list between the two countries, the first one having taken place on 1 January 1992.
- ❖ The Erode district forest department along with the Tamil Nadu Butterflies Society (TNBS) carried out a census on butterflies for the first time in Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve (STR) on December 29 and 30.
  - Besides 150 varieties of butterflies, the census team also spotted 241 varieties of birds in the forest.
- ❖ The government has declared the entire state of Nagaland as "disturbed area" for six more months, till June end, under the AFSPA (Armed Forces Special Powers Act).
  - It empowers the security forces to conduct operations anywhere and arrest anyone without any prior notice.
- ❖ The Indian Government ties up with JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency), Japanese funding agency to manufacture 75% of Metro rail coaches in India either by setting up its own plant or by collaborating with Indian firms.



- ❖ The Union Government has appointed Sudhir Bhargava as new Chief Information Commissioner along with four new Information Commissioners in the Central Information Commission (CIC).
- ❖ The Union Government appointed V K Yadav as the new chairman of railway board on the retirement of Ashwani Lohani.
- ❖ The Indian woman cricket opener Smriti Mandhana was named the ICC Women's Cricketer of the Year as well as the ICC Women's ODI Player of the Year by the International Cricket Council (ICC).
- ❖ Magnus Carlsen retained his world blitz chess title in St Petersburg with a score of 17/21, defeating Polish Grand Master Jan-Krzysztof Duda. Japanese-American Hikaru Nakamura finished third.
  - This was the Norwegian ace's 10<sup>th</sup> world title of his career.
- ❖ The Bangladesh team Cricket captain Mashrafe Mortaza has registered a landslide victory in the 11<sup>th</sup> general elections of Bangladesh and becoming the first active cricketer in the country to be elected as a lawmaker.
- ❖ A 1982 IOFS (Indian Ordnance Factories Service) officer **Saurabh Kumar** took over as the **Director General of Ordnance Factories (DGOF) and chairman** of the Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) following the superannuation of P.K. Shrivastava in Kolkata.
- ❖ P K Singh was appointed secretary of the Competition Commission of India (CCI).
- ❖ The Department of Financial Services announced the appointment of Hemant Bhargava, Managing Director, Life Insurance Corporation of India, as the Acting Chairman.
- ❖ A 12-year-old Indian-origin student **Dhruv Manoj** from Singapore has bagged two gold medals at the **World Memory Championships** held in Hong Kong.
- ❖ IIT Roorkee professor **Jayanta Kumar Ghosh** was facilitated with the **National Geospatial Award for Excellence -2017** (Life Time Achievement Award) by the Indian Society for Remote Sensing.
  - It has been awarded for his contribution towards the development of geospatial science and applications.
- ❖ The players in **France's football team** which last year defeated Croatia to win the World Cup were **awarded the Legion of Honour**, France's highest award for "exceptional service" to the nation, in the New Year's honours list.
  - The football World Cup 2018 at Russia was France's **2nd** World Cup title, after the 1998 World Cup.
- ❖ Lakhs of women from across Kerala formed **a 620-km long Women's Wall or Vanitha Mathil**, that stretched from Kasargod in northern Kerala to the southernmost district of Thiruvananthapuram, to uphold gender equality and renaissance values on January 1, 2019.
- ❖ Indian fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah became the highest international wicket-taker of 2018 with 78 wickets.

- ❖ The Eminent English and Odia writer Manoj Das received the Kabi Samrat Upendra Bhanja National Award for Lifetime Achievement in Literature, instituted by the Berhampur University.
- ❖ India defeated Australia at Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) of Australia by the margin of 137 runs and it turned out to be India's 150th Test victory.
  - It is their first ever Boxing Day Test win in Australia.
- ❖ The Delhi Police has become the first police force in the country to digitize all malkhanas. Malkhana is a storage facility in police stations where case properties & evidences are kept for safe custody.
- ❖ The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) launched a toll-free number 14433 and a facility to file complaints through Common Service Centre (CSC). The toll-free number would be available only during the office hours of the NHRC.
- ❖ The Indian Cricket team captain Virat Kohli equalled Former Indian Captain Sourav Ganguly's record with 11th away test win as a captain. He also became the first Indian captain to retain the Border-Gavaskar trophy on Australian soil.
- ❖ The State-owned Allahabad Bank and SBI Life Insurance to sell the policies of the insurer from over 3,238 branches of the Allahabad Bank. The agreement is considered as one of the largest Bancassurance partnerships in the country.
- ❖ 1990 Dronacharya awardee cricket coach Ramakant Achrekar, who coached Cricketer Sachin Tendulkar passed away at 86.
  - Because of his contributions to the sport, he was honoured with Padma Shri in 2010.
- ❖ Virat Kohli beats Cricketing legend Sachin Tendulkar's to become the fastest batsman to score 19000 international runs.
- ❖ Tropical Storm Usman hit Philippines' Bicol region in Manila, which brought heavy rains and triggered deadly landslides all over the country.
- ❖ Pentagon comptroller David Norquist was named acting deputy defence secretary of the USA.
- ❖ The Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), the nation's biggest oil firm, has announced commissioning of its first Rs 5,151- crore worth Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) import terminal in Ennore, Tamil Nadu.
  - This is the first LNG import terminal IOC has built on its own.
- ❖ The Gujarat education board has recently mandated that students in Gujarat government schools have to respond to their attendance call by saying 'Jai Hind' or 'Jai Bharat' instead of 'Yes Sir' to foster "a feeling of patriotism".
- ❖ The Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister has laid the foundation stone for the Kuppam airstrip project being taken up at an estimated cost of 100 crore, at Vijalapuram village.

- ❖ India's wicketkeeper Rishabh Pant became the first Indian wicketkeeper batsman to score a century in Test against Australia on Australian soil.
- ❖ Justice Asif Saeed Khosa was appointed as the new Chief Justice of Pakistan. He will succeed incumbent Chief Justice Saqib Nisar.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu government appointed Mylswamy Annadurai as Vice president of Tamil Nadu state council of Science and Technology.
- ❖ Delhi's Indira Gandhi International (IGI) airport will be the first in the country to get a fleet of six bullet-resistant vehicles (BRVs) equipped with the latest weapons.
- ❖ The 11th edition of Coimbatore Vizha took off on January 03 at VOC Park in Coimbatore. The week-long annual celebrations, facilitated by Young Indians (Yi) – CII, will go on till January 12.
- ❖ The Eminent Bharatanatyam exponent Shanta Dhananjayan was conferred the title of Nritya Kalanidhi at the 13th dance festival inaugurated held at Chennai.
- ❖ The Group of researchers at Nagpur-based Visvesvaraya National Institute of Technology have developed a new technique which promises to help produce high value graphene from discarded dry cells batteries.
- ❖ The Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Communications and Minister of State for Railways Manoj Sinha released a Commemorative Postage Stamp on Rajkumar Shukla at New Delhi.
  - He made a seminal contribution culminating in the launch of the Champaran Satyagraha in 1917 by Mahatma Gandhi.
- ❖ The HDFC Mutual Fund has surpassed ICICI Prudential MF to regain top position after two years as the largest asset management company (AMC).
- ❖ Pakistan has decided to withdraw the facility of on-arrival visas for Afghan nationals citing security risks and the spike in terror attacks.
- ❖ The Ministry of Rural Development Signs MoU with Maruti Suzuki India Ltd for Training Rural Youth for Skill Development Under Deendayal upadhyaya grameen kaushalya yojana (Ddu-Gky).
- ❖ The New NASA research confirms that Saturn is losing its iconic rings at the maximum rate estimated from Voyager 1 & 2 observations made decades ago.
  - The rings are being pulled into Saturn by gravity as a dusty rain of ice particles under the influence of Saturn's magnetic field.
- ❖ The Andhra Pradesh government has launched works for erection of the first radial gate - the 41<sup>st</sup> one - at the Polavaram project site.
  - The state hopes that the project works would be completed by May 2019 and water would be released to canals under gravity by December 2019.
- ❖ The Polavaram multi-purpose irrigation project is all set to break the Guinness Book record in terms of using the highest volume of concrete in a given day.

- ❖ The famous dal lake in Srinagar is frozen. The city recently witnessed the lowest temperature ever in 11 years at minus 7.6 degree.
- ❖ The Government of India has notified a High-level committee of nine members under the chairmanship of M.P. Bezbarauah for implementation of Clause VI of the Assam Accord.
- ❖ The Indian Railways has decided to replace the conventional coaches with modern LHB (Linke Hofmann Busch) design coaches in all long-distance trains to provide crashworthiness features in these coaches.
- ❖ The Union Ministry of Human Resource Development constituted a task force, headed by psychiatrist Dr. Jitendra Nagpal, to look into the circumstances leading to the suicidal deaths of students residing in the hostels of JNV (Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas).
- ❖ Kevin Sweeney, the chief of staff of the US Department of Defence, resigned from his position recently.
- ❖ The Secunderabad Railway Station, in Hyderabad, became the first railway station of South-Central Railway (SCR) zone to hoist a huge tricolour on a 100-foot tall pole. This was done according to the Railway Board's order.
- ❖ The 42nd edition of the Chennai Book Fair, organised by the Booksellers and Publishers Association of South India (BAPASI), started on January 4 up to 20 on the YMCA grounds in Nandanam in Chennai.
- ❖ Egypt has recently opened the West Asia's largest cathedral in its New Administrative Capital, 45 kms away from its capital, Cairo.
- ❖ In a bid to make Islam more compatible with Socialism, Beijing has passed a law to "implement measures to Sinicize" Islam within the next five years.
- ❖ The Civil Aviation Security Head and senior IPS officer Kumar Rajesh Chandra was appointed as the Director General of the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) up to 31st December 2021 for a tenure of around 2 years.
  - He will succeed SS Deswal, chief of Indo-Tibetan Border Police.
- ❖ The International Cricket Council (ICC) has recently announced the USA Cricket as its 105th member.
- ❖ A report by the World Economic Forum said that India is set to become the world's third largest consumer market behind only USA and China by 2030.
- ❖ The Standard Chartered Bank released its long term forecast which states that India will surpass the U.S to become the world's second largest economy by 2030 while China will be at 1st position.
- ❖ The Union Cabinet has recently approved the Scheduled Tribe (ST) status to 6 communities of Assam. The communities that are proposed to be extended ST status include, Koch Rajbongshi, Tai Ahom, Chutiya, Matak, Moran and the tea tribes.
- ❖ The Deen Dayal Veterinary University in Uttar Pradesh proposed to set up the first goat fertility lab in the state under Rastriya Krishi Vikas Yojna.



- The University has entered into a contract with the Pradeshik cooperative Dairy Federation for marketing.
- ❖ The England cricketer Sophie Ecclestone has been named as ICC Women's Emerging Player of the Year, whereas the New Zealand cricketer Suzie Bates has been named as the Captain ICC Women's ODI Team of the Year.
- ❖ The Nobel Peace Prize winner and Pakistani activist Malala Yousafzai pens a new book, titled 'We Are Displaced: My Journey and Stories from Refugee Girls Around the World,' charting her experiences traveling the world and visiting refugee camps.
- ❖ The Bihar left-arm spinner Ashutosh Aman etched his name in record books, surpassing the great Bishan Singh Bedi as the highest wicket-taker in a Ranji Trophy season after claiming his 65th scalp.
- ❖ M C Mary Kom attained the first position in the latest ranking released by the International Boxing Association (AIBA) in the Light Fly 45-48 kilograms category.
- ❖ Narasimhan Ram or N.RAM (Hindu Group), Chairman of the THG Publishing Private Limited, has been appointed the President of the Alliance for Media Freedom (AFMF), a cross-media advocacy and action group of media organization, promoters and journalists.
- ❖ The Ex-Hotstar CEO Ajit Mohan officially took over as Facebook India's new Vice President and MD.
- ❖ The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) pavilion has received 'Exhibitor of the Year Award' at 106th Indian Science Congress held at Punjab.
- ❖ The Market regulator SEBI has set up an advisory committee that will help and analyse the new methods of policy making for the development of capital market. The committee formed will be headed by Sankar De.
- ❖ The Supreme Court has suggested setting up of a 3-member panel comprising of
  - Nandan Nilekani (co-founder of Infosys), and
  - Vijay P Bhatkar (renowned computer scientist)to suggest reforms for conducting the competitive examinations fairly by the government bodies.
- ❖ As per the Airports Authority of India (AAI) data, in terms of passenger growth, Amritsar, Bagdogra and Patna were the fastest growing big Indian airports in 2018 as compared to the previous year.
- ❖ The Madurai bench of Madras High Court constitutes a 24-member committee to oversee the conduct of Avaniapuram jallikattu on January 15.
  - The panel will be headed by the retired District and Sessions Judge C. Raghavan.

- ❖ Mahendra Singh Dhoni became the fifth Indian batsman, 2nd full-time wicket-keeper and 12th overall batsman to score 10,000 runs in the 50-over format in the first one-day international in Sydney.
  - Dhoni joined with Sachin Tendulkar, Sourav Ganguly, Rahul Dravid and Virat Kohli on the elite list.
- ❖ Pradhan Mantri Rozgar Protsahan Yojana (PMRPY), the flagship scheme of the Central Government for employment generation has crossed the milestone of one crore beneficiaries as on January 14, 2019.
- ❖ The President of India conferred the Honorary Rank of General of the Indian Army on Sukirtimaya Rashtradeep General Purna Chandra Thapa.
  - The Chief of the Army Staff, Nepalese Army is awarded for fostering Nepal's long and friendly association with India.
- ❖ The Union Cabinet has given its approval to setup Integrated E-filing & Centralized Processing Center 2.0 Project of the Income Tax Department.
- ❖ 38-year-old K Dhanya Sanal, spokesperson for the Union Ministry of Defence, became the first woman to reach Agasthyarkudam peak, a biodiversity hotspot and the second highest peak of Kerala.
- ❖ Indo-American Raja Krishnamoorthi has been appointed as a member of a Congressional committee on intelligence, becoming the first South Asian to serve in the powerful body tasked to strengthen U.S.'s national security.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu's D Gukesh, became the second youngest Grandmaster in the world and the youngest Indian to achieve the feat at 12 years, seven months and 17 days. Gukesh beat the mark set by his state-mate R Praggnanandhaa.
  - Gukesh is now the second youngest Grandmaster in the World after Sergey Karjakin.
- ❖ Mohammed Ali Qamar, the man who won India's first Commonwealth Games gold medal in boxing, has taken over as the chief coach for the country's female boxers.
  - He has replaced veteran Shiv Singh.
- ❖ The Indian cricket team's captain Virat Kohli and coach Ravi Shastri on January 11, 2019 received the honorary membership of the Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG) for their contribution to the sport of cricket.
- ❖ The Parliamentarians of the Republic of Macedonia voted to change their country's name to the "Republic of North Macedonia". The move now awaits approval from Greece's Parliament.
- ❖ The Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu inaugurated the 45th Tourist and Industrial Trade fair at Island Grounds in Chennai. It is being organised by the Tamil Nadu Tourism Department.
- ❖ The 12th edition of the Chennai Bird Race will be held on January 26 in Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

- ❖ Tamil Nadu International Balloon festival 2019, the 5th edition of Global hot air balloon festivals was organized by the Global Media Box and ThisisPollachi.com with the support of Department of Tourism Tamil Nadu.
  - It was held in January 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> at the Mahindra World City, Chengalpattu near Chennai in the first phase and it was held from January 10<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> at Pollachi in the subsequent phase. Chennai witnessed it's first ever hot air balloon festival.
- ❖ The Chief Minister V.Narayanasamy of Puducherry announced that production, sale, and use of single-use plastic products will be banned in the Union Territory of Puducherry from March 1, 2019.
- ❖ In a first time, an AN-32 transport aircraft of the Indian Air Force has carried out a successful landing at Sikkim's Pakyong, one of the highest airfields (4,500 feet above sea level) in the country.
- ❖ The Senior Advocates KM Nataraj and Sanjay Jain has been appointed as the Additional Solicitor General (ASG) in the Supreme Court. Both will hold the office up to June 30, 2020.
- ❖ The Andhra Pradesh State government has taken up infrastructure (road connectivity and utility) projects costing nearly Rs.1960 crore in the Visakhapatnam-Chennai Industrial Corridor (VCIC) under phase-I in view of its importance for the growth of the State.
- ❖ The Election Commission of India (ECI) appointed Gopal Krishna Dwivedi as a Chief Electoral Officer of Andhra Pradesh.
  - Mr.Dwivedi will replace R. P. Sisodia.
- ❖ The Union Minister for Commerce and Industry Suresh Prabhu, inaugurated the three-day 10<sup>th</sup> India Rubber Expo – 2019 at the Bombay Exhibition Centre in Mumbai.
  - This India Rubber Expo is the Asia's largest rubber expo.
- ❖ The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) ordered a penalty of Rs.1 crore each on three civic bodies, East Delhi Municipal Corporation (EDMC), South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) and North Delhi Municipal Corporation (NDMC), of the city over open burning, dumping of waste, the illegal running of plastic industries in non-conforming residential areas.
- ❖ 3 days long 1<sup>st</sup> National level Sports Meet for students of Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) held in the GMC Balayogi Sports Arena located in Hyderabad, Telangana.
- ❖ The Union Cabinet approved an infusion of Rs.6,000 crore of capital in the Exim Bank of India. The capital infusion would enable the bank to augment its capital adequacy and support Indian exports.
- ❖ The International Cricket Council (ICC) announced that Manu Sawhney was appointed as the organization's new CEO.
- ❖ The Pakistan skipper **Sarfaraz Ahmed** set a world record to become the wicket-keeper captain with the most number of catches in a match.

- This was achieved by him while playing a match against South Africa in the Third Test at the Wanderers Stadium in Johannesburg.
- ❖ The highest run-getter in the Ranji Trophy history, Wasim Jaffer, became the first Indian and the first Asian batsman to score two double centuries after turning 40 in first-class cricket.
- ❖ The President of India has recently appointed Justice Lingappa Narayana Swamy as the Acting Chief Justice of the Karnataka High Court.
- ❖ The Pakistan President Arif Alvi administered oath to Justice Asif Saeed Khosa, who took office as the 26th Chief Justice of Pakistan.
  - He is known as the “poetic justice” for his habit of citing works of literature in his judgements.
- ❖ The Department of Personnel & Training (DoPT) has appointed Senior IPS Officer Prabhat Singh as Director General (Investigation) in the National Human Rights Commission.
- ❖ The Chhattisgarh Election Commission has developed an app to keep track of its polling officials at the conference of Chief Electoral Officers of various States held in New Delhi. This app will streamline the personnel management during the polls.
  - Meanwhile, the Madhya Pradesh Election Commission showcased an app developed by its poll machinery to ensure the queue-less voting experience for people with disabilities and pregnant women.
- ❖ 6-time women’s world boxing champion and Olympic medallist M C Mary Kom was named as the event ambassador for the 16th Tata Mumbai Marathon which will be held in January 20, 2019.
  - It would be organized by Procam International.
- ❖ The Centre has ordered moving a strategic Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) command from its current base in Chandigarh to the border of Leh in Jammu and Kashmir, despite the growing concerns over the Chinese military build-up along the eastern edge of the country.
- ❖ Uttar Pradesh became the 3rd state after Jharkhand and Gujarat to approve the 10% reservation for economically backward among upper castes in jobs and educational institutions.
- ❖ The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities under the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, organized the 2nd regional conference at Nehru Centre, Mumbai, on a scheme titled ‘Deendayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme (DDRS)’.
- ❖ The 2019 edition of ‘Saksham’, an annual high intensity one-month long people-centric mega campaign of Petroleum Conservation Research Association (PCRA) under the aegis of Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas was launched in New Delhi.



- ❖ Stephen Constantine steps down as the head coach of the Indian Football team following the team's exit from 2019 AFC (Asian Football Confederation) Asian Cup. India faced failure against Bahrain at the Sharjah Stadium.
  - This was Constantine's second regime as India's Head Coach after 2005.
- ❖ RBI has recently imposed a Rs 1-crore penalty on state-owned Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) for non-compliance of Know Your Customer (KYC) guidelines and fraud-classification norms.
- ❖ A volcano has erupted on Kuchinoerabu Island of Japan. The eruption occurred on Mount Shindake. Mount Shindake had experienced explosive eruption in 2015.
- ❖ Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen has appointed Su Tseng-chang as Prime Minister, during a Cabinet reshuffle following the ruling Democratic Progressive Party's heavy losses in local elections.
- ❖ The Vice-President of India has recently inaugurated the 2-days Agri-Vision 2019 conference on 'envisioning Agro-solutions for smart and Sustainable Agriculture" in Hyderabad, Telangana.
- ❖ The Odisha state government has announced extension of free health services under Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana (BSKY) to all government medical colleges and hospitals in the state.
  - Earlier, the free treatment facility for all were available at sub-centres in villages and district headquarters hospitals.
- ❖ The Defence Minister of India has recently inaugurated the 426 m long Diffo Bridge over Chipu River in Lower Dibang Valley District of Arunachal Pradesh. The Border Roads Organization (BRO) has constructed the bridge along Indo-China border.
  - It was funded by the Union ministry of road transport and highways.
- ❖ The Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs is organising a fortnight of events named Shehri Samridhi Utsav all over the country with an aim to extend the outreach of DAY-NULM to the poorest of poor and the most vulnerable.
  - Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM)
- ❖ The Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) is to use a humanoid robot resembling a human for conducting experiments in space twice before actually sending humans by 2022.
  - It is not planning to use any animals to test systems for the Gaganyaan project.
- ❖ The Arab Economic and Social Development Summit held in Lebanon's capital Beirut. The economic meeting is a prelude to the actual Arab League summit taking place in Tunisia in March.

- ❖ The world's oldest man, Masazo Nonaka of Japan, has died at the age of 113. Nonaka was officially recognized as the oldest male in the world by the Guinness World Records in April 2018.
- ❖ India's Ankita Raina defeated top seed Arantxa Rus of the Netherlands in the final and won 25,000 \$ at the International Tennis Federation's Women's tournament in Singapore.
- ❖ The Union Minister of State for Defence Subhash Bhamre announced that Nashik in Maharashtra will be the site of the country's second defence innovation hub after Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu.
  - This is in line with the Defence Ministry's target of making the country among the top 5 arms exporters by 2025.
- ❖ Ashok Chawla resigned as chairman of the National Stock Exchange of India Ltd (NSE) with immediate effect on 12 January 2019.
- ❖ Gurgaon's 8-year-old Kartik Singh has won the under-8 category at the Kids' Golf World Championship organized by the US kids Golf in Malaysia, which makes him the youngest Indian to win the world title.
- ❖ Bengaluru Raptors won their first ever Premier Badminton League (PBL) title after they beat Mumbai Rockets in the final of the tournament at the Kanteerava Indoor Stadium in Bengaluru.
- ❖ The President of the Indian Weightlifting Federation (IWF), Birendra Prasad Baishya, has been named Chef de Mission for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.
  - It is for the first time that the Weightlifting has been accorded with the honour of Chef de Mission for the Olympics.
- ❖ The Constitutional court of Democratic Republic of Congo confirmed the President's election victory of Felix Tshisekedi of UDPS party making path for the first peaceful, democratic transfer of Power since Congo's Independence in 1960.
- ❖ The Madras high court has become the first high court to entertain a PIL against the Centre's 10% reservation for economically weaker sections of forward communities.
  - The petition was filed by Rajya Sabha MP and the DMK's Organising Secretary RS Bharathi.
- ❖ The Delhi High Court has allowed the release of the movie '72 Hours – Martyr who never died'. The film was based on the life of the 1962 war hero Rifleman Jaswant Singh Rawat.
  - Rawat was posthumously awarded the Maha Vir Chakra for gallantry during the 1962 war.'
- ❖ Facebook grants \$7.5 million to set up an Institute for Ethics in Artificial Intelligence (AI) in collaboration with the Technical University of Munich (TUM) in Germany.

- ❖ A renowned Lingayat seer, Shivakumara Swami, popularly known as 'Nadedaaduva Devaru' (Walking God), the 111-year-old head of the Siddaganga Mutt, passed away on 21 January at the mutt in Tumakuru, Karnataka.
- ❖ Uttar Pradesh celebrated its 69th foundation day in Lucknow as "UP DIVAS" on January 24, 2019. Uttar Pradesh earlier known as United Province, got its name as Uttar Pradesh on January 24, 1950.
- ❖ The inter-state trade through e-NAM was initiated on January 19 with the first trade of 8.46 quintal of groundnut between a farmer from Gadwal Mandi in Telangana and a trader from Kurnool in Andhra Pradesh.
- ❖ The Competition Commission of India gave approval to Reliance Industries for the acquisition of Den Networks and Hathway Cable and Datacom.
  - Reliance acquired 66% in DEN and 51.3% in Hathway.
- ❖ The President of India has appointed Piyush Goyal as the interim finance and corporate affairs minister because of Arun Jaitley's health issues. Piyush Goyal's tenure as an interim finance Minister will be till August 2019.
  - This is the second time, Goyal has been given charge of the Finance Ministry.
- ❖ The West African country Burkina Faso's President appointed Christophe Joseph Marie Dabire a new Prime Minister as Paul Kaba Theiba and his cabinet resigned recently.
- ❖ 96-year-old Karthyayani Amma from Kerala, who topped the Kerala Literacy Mission's Akshara Laksham (Million Letters) literacy exam has been selected as the Commonwealth of Learning Goodwill Ambassador.
  - The Commonwealth of Learning is aimed at promoting distance education in the member countries.
- ❖ Aparna Kumar (Karnataka) has become the first woman Indian Police Service (IPS) and ITBP (Indo Tibetan Border Police) officer to successfully conquer the South Pole, the southernmost point on the globe situated in Antarctica.
  - The South Pole is the coldest and driest place on Earth.
- ❖ Wasim Jaffer, the veteran cricketer became the only batsman to score 1,000 runs in 2 separate seasons of Ranji Trophy cricket. Jaffer made his first-class debut in 1996-97.
  - He is also highest capped player in Ranji Trophy cricket.
- ❖ The SBI Ecowrap report recommends the government to opt for the unconditional cash transfer to farmers to alleviate agrarian distress rather than Universal Basic Income (UBI) scheme.
- ❖ India's premier container port Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT) has become India's only port to get listed among the top 30 global container ports in Top 100 Container Ports report.

- JNPT has notched up five spots, to be 28th on the list, compared to its previous ranking.
- ❖ Ministry of Defence has launched ‘RDP INDIA 2019’ mobile app on the 70th Republic Day. Using the mobile application, people can watch the highlights of this year’s Republic Day parade at the Rajpath.
  - The new initiative is in sync with the Digital India campaign of the government.
- ❖ The coast guards of India and Japan undertook disaster control, search and rescue exercises off the coast of Yokohama in Japan. India had hosted the Japanese ships for the exercise last year and this time Japan is hosting the exercise.
  - ICGS Shaunak is the main Indian ship taking part in the drills.
- ❖ The Union Minister Rajyavardhan Rathore has inaugurated a National declamation contest on Patriotism and nation-building. It was organized by Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKC) along with Department of Youth affairs.
- ❖ The Oxford Dictionaries announced that the word ‘Nari Shakti’ (women empowerment) which is derived from Sanskrit has been chosen as the Hindi Word of the year for 2018.
- ❖ The historic Diggi Palace is hosting the 12<sup>th</sup> (5-day) Jaipur Literature Festival. The Jaipur Literature Festival is an annual literary festival which takes place in the Indian city of Jaipur each January.
  - It was founded in 2006, and from 2008 it has been produced by Teamwork Arts.
- ❖ The Pakistan government has declared sugarcane juice as the “national drink” of the country. They came at this decision after asking People’s opinion in twitter to choose one among orange, carrot and sugarcane.
- ❖ The Assam government entitled the Republic Day Journalism Award 2019 to veteran journalist and former editor Dharendra Nath Chakraborty.
- ❖ The Union Minister Nitin Gadkari has recently inaugurated four-lane, 5.1-kilometer long “Atal Setu”, the third Cable bridge across the river Mandovi in Panaji, Goa.
- ❖ India has successfully launched Microsat-R, a military satellite and Kalamsat onboard its Polar rocket PSLV C44, in the first mission for the ISRO in 2019.
- ❖ The Indian milk cooperative Amul for the first time has launched camel milk, branded as ‘Amul Camel Milk’ in select Gujarat markets — Gandhinagar, Ahmedabad and the Kutch.
- ❖ India’s fastest indigenous train, Train 18 has been named as Vande Bharat Express and it will ply between Delhi and Varanasi. Train 18 is an indigenously developed world-class train by ICF Chennai under Make in India.



- ❖ Nepal's Rohit Paudel became the youngest man to score a half-century at the age of 16 years and 146 days by surpassing Sachin's record (16 years & 213 days).
- ❖ Dr Poonam Khetrapal Singh has been reappointed as the Regional Director for World Health Organization South-East Asia, for a second five-year term.
  - she is the first woman to become the Regional Director of WHO South-East Asia Region.
- ❖ According to IRCTC's Trains Cleanliness Survey, The Southern Railway bagged number one position for cleanliness in the country.
  - Durgam Chattrpalli trains are the least clean among premium trains, while Tejas and Shatabdi trains are the cleanest.
- ❖ Tamil translation of Andrei Makine's "La vie d'un homme inconnu" (The Life of an Unknown Man) has won the Romain Rolland Book Prize for literary translation.
  - The book was translated by S R Kichenamourty.
- ❖ The second edition, Pariksha Pe Charcha 2.0, was held at Talkatora Stadium in Delhi on January 29. In this, the Prime Minister discussed ways to handle the exam stress in an interactive session with parents and students.
- ❖ The Prime Minister of India has recently inaugurated
  - Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Museum,
  - Yaad-e-Jallianwala Bagh Museum (museum on the Jallianwala Bagh & World War I)
  - The Museum on 1857- India's first war of Independence, and
  - Drishyakala-Museum on Indian Artwithin the Red Fort complex.
- ❖ Fast Bowler Mohammed Shami has become the fastest Indian to claim 100 wickets in One-day Internationals. Mohammed Shami achieved this feat in his 56th ODI game.
  - The record was held by Irfan Pathan who had reached the 100-wicket mark in 59 ODIs.
- ❖ The South African President Cyril Ramaphosa delivered his speech at the First IBSA Gandhi-Mandela Memorial Freedom Lecture in New Delhi.
- ❖ The government of Uttarakhand has obtained the permission to develop the tulip garden in Pithoragarh district at a cost of Rs 50 crore. It will be the 2nd Tulip garden in the country after the one located in Srinagar of Jammu & Kashmir.
  - The Tulip Garden will be developed by ONGC, under its Corporate Social Responsibility programme.

- ❖ The Insurance regulator IRDAI has set up a panel to identify domestically Systemically Important Insurers (SII) and put in place an enhanced regulatory framework for them.
- ❖ The Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC) awarded social impact award to Tetra Pak India, the world's leading packaging and processing solutions provider under the category 'Sustainable Environment category'.
  - The award recognizes Tetra Pak's leading efforts in setting up a sustainable ecosystem.
- ❖ The Delhi government has decided to introduce the Minimum Support Price (MSP) for farmers based on the recommendations of the National Commission on Farmers (NCF) headed by MS Swaminathan.
  - The National Commission on Farmers (NCF) was constituted on November 18, 2004 under his chairmanship.
- ❖ The National Tourism Day is celebrated every year in India on January 25 to raise the awareness about the importance of tourism for the country's economy.
- ❖ The Beating Retreat ceremony, held on January 29 at Vijay Chowk of Delhi, marks the culmination of the four-day-long Republic Day celebrations.
- ❖ The National Martyr's Day or Sarvodaya Day was observed on 30 January to mark the death anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.
- ❖ The Former defence minister Geroge Fernandes (88) passed away due to prolonged illness. He served as the Defence Minister in the year 1998. During his regime as the Defence Minister, Fernandes oversaw the Pokhran nuclear tests of 1998 and the Kargil war in 1999.

## **TAMILNADU**

### **Ban on single-use plastic**

- ❖ The Tamil Nadu Government's order banning Manufacturing, trade and use of 14 kinds of plastic products – kicks off on 2019 January 1 in the state.
- ❖ The state will decide on the penalty for the users who violate the ban after studying the models of other states, including Karnataka.
- ❖ 14 banned items only constitute five per cent of the total plastic manufactured in the state.
- ❖ The Union Environment Ministry has already notified the Plastic Waste Management (Amendment) Rules, 2018, which mandates phasing out of manufacture and use of non-recyclable multi-layered plastic in two years.



### Tamilnadu Assembly session

- ❖ The Tamil Nadu Assembly session commenced on 2nd January 2019 with the customary New Year address by the Governor.
- ❖ The Assembly session would continue till January 8.
- ❖ A decision to this effect was taken at the Business Advisory Committee (BAC) meeting chaired by Speaker P Dhanpal.

### Top 10 Districts of India

- ❖ The Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation had organised a 10 day long (November 9 – November 19) contest to mark World Toilet Day.

Bankura, West Bengal  
Ganderbal, Jammu and Kashmir  
Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh  
Hazaribagh, Jharkhand  
Jehanabad, Bihar  
Kandhamal, Odisha  
Kodagu, Karnataka  
Lohardaga, Jharkhand  
Murshidabad, West Bengal  
Salem, Tamil Nadu  
Sangli, Maharashtra  
South West Khasi Hills, Meghalaya

- ❖ The ministry released the list of top 10 placeholders that is the top 12 districts (including joint winners).

- ❖ Salem district of Tamil Nadu has been placed among top 12 districts in World Toilet Day contest.

### **Minister P Balakrishna Reddy Convicted**

- ❖ A special court sentenced P Balakrishna Reddy to 3 years' imprisonment & imposed a fine of Rs 10000 for damaging buses with stones in 1998.
- ❖ Following the conviction, Reddy, the Minister for Youth Welfare and Sports Development, submitted his resignation from the ministry and it was accepted..

Under Section 8(3) of the RPA, a person convicted of any offence and sentenced to imprisonment for not less than 2 years shall be disqualified for that period and a further 6 years after release.

- ❖ Reddy, who represents Hosur constituency in the state assembly, is the first minister to have been convicted by the special court.
- ❖ The portfolio held by him has been allocated to School education minister Thiru KA Sengottaiyan.

### **Tamilnadu's 33rd district**

- ❖ Tamil Nadu CM announced the formation of a new district Kallakurichi by bifurcating Villupuram district on 08<sup>th</sup> January.
- ❖ It is one of the large districts in the State.
- ❖ Kallakurichi will be the headquarters of the new district and its creation has increased the number of districts in Tamil Nadu to 33.
- ❖ The district will have four Assembly constituencies and one parliamentary constituency.
- ❖ Tiruppur was the last district to be formed in Tamil Nadu before this announcement in 2009.

### **'Police-E-Eye' app**

- ❖ The Coimbatore city traffic police has launched a mobile application 'Police-E-Eye' for the public to report on traffic violations to police and to keep a check on the same.
- ❖ The app was developed by Aveon Infotech Pvt. Ltd under its Corporate Social Responsibility.
- ❖ The violations so filed can be photographed which will be sent to the police along with the location, time and date with the help of GPS.

### **Namma Chennai mobile app**

- ❖ The Greater Chennai Corporation has added additional services to the Namma Chennai mobile app for the use of the general public.
- ❖ Birth certificate, death certificate, property tax collection status and receipt download, professional tax collection status and receipt download, trade licence status and receipt download can all be done using the application now.
- ❖ Changes to birth and death certificates can be made online using the app.
- ❖ It also allows the submission of complaints.

### **Committee to weed out invasive alien species**

- ❖ The Madras High Court has set up an expert committee to find a solution to root out invasive species of plants from the Western Ghats.
- ❖ The invasive species are considered as the second major cause for biodiversity loss besides causing agriculture, forestry and aquatic ecosystem degradation.
- ❖ This committee shall be headed by Cherukuri Raghavendra Babu, Chairman, Expert Committee on Invasive Species, National Biodiversity Authority, Chennai.

### **Chennai Unified Metropolitan Transport Authority (CUMTA)**

- ❖ The Chennai Unified Metropolitan Transport Authority (CUMTA) Act and its relevant rules were finally notified in the Gazette after Eight years it has received the Governor's assent (November 27, 2010).
- ❖ The Chief Urban Planner (Transport) of Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority (CMDA) will be the Chief Executive officer of CUMTA under whose control the authority will function.
- ❖ The Eminent person in traffic and transportation expert having knowledge of and experience in the field of transport planning, management, operations, engineering economics and disciplines related to urban transport will be nominated by government.

### **Robo cop 'Rodeo'**

- ❖ Rodeo, a Robo cop was inaugurated by the Chennai city police commissioner in the road safety gallery at the Chennai traffic police office at vepery.
- ❖ A team consisting of 23 kids from SP Robotic Works have designed the robot.
- ❖ It can do multiple tasks like rotating to face the visitors and deliver road safety related messages.

### **Tamil Nadu defence industrial corridor**

- ❖ The Union Government will launch a defence industrial corridor in Tamil Nadu on 20<sup>th</sup> January.



- ❖ The Tamil Nadu industrial corridor will connect Chennai, Hosur, Coimbatore, Salem and Tiruchirappalli.



- ❖ Uttar Pradesh corridor was launched at Aligarh in August 2018 and saw investment announcements to the tune of Rs 3,732 crore being made.

### **MGR birth anniversary Commemorative coins**

- ❖ Two commemorative coins in the denomination of Rs 100 and Rs 5 were released to mark the 102nd birth anniversary of late Tamil Nadu chief minister M G Ramachandran.
- ❖ As part of birth anniversary celebrations, 66 feet wide and 52 feet tall "Dr MGR Centenary Arch", constructed across the Kamarajar road, off the famous Marina beach, was also unveiled.



### **TN launches portal for pensioners**

- ❖ The Deputy CM of Tamil Nadu has recently launched a new portal for pensioners' - (<https://tnpensioner.tn.gov.in>).
- ❖ The portal was jointly developed by the Department of Treasuries and Accounts and National Informatics Centre.
- ❖ From the portal,
  - Details of monthly pension credited into the bank accounts,

- Restoration of commuted value of pension,
- Enhanced family pension, etc.,

can be accessed without approaching the Treasury/Pension Pay Office.

### **Golden jubilee of Tamil Nadu to be celebrated**

- ❖ The Tamil Nadu government has announced that Golden jubilee of renaming the erstwhile state of Madras, as Tamil Nadu will be commemorated this year (2019).
- ❖ The Madras state was renamed as Tamil Nadu by the then DMK government led by C. N. Annadurai on January 14, 1969, on the occasion of Pongal.
- ❖ It was the Congressman Thyagi Sankaralinganar in July 27, 1956 who first struggled for the renaming of Madras State to “Thamizhagam”.

### **Startup and Innovation policy of Tamil Nadu**

- ❖ The government of Tamil Nadu has released Start up and Innovation policy 2018-2023.
- ❖ Its mission is to provide an enabling and innovative ecosystem for start-ups registered in the State and to make Tamil Nadu a ‘Global Innovation hub for start ups’ by 2023.
- ❖ The Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India (EDII) will act as a nodal agency to promote and facilitate start-ups.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu Startup and InnovaTION Mission (TANSIM) headed by a full-time officer will advocate and oversee policies and programmes for promoting start-ups.

Creation of at least 5000 technology startups of which at least 10 global high growth startups in social impact sectors

Infrastructure support to strengthen existing mechanism in areas like the IoT, AI, Machine Learning (ML) and Software as a Service (SAAS)

### **World record in bull taming event**

- ❖ A grand "jallikattu" event held at Viralimalai, Pudukkottai on 20<sup>th</sup> January has entered the world record for the maximum number of bulls released into the sporting arena.
- ❖ A whopping 1,353 bulls and 700 tamers participated in the mega jallikattu event, which is almost double than the previous record.

- ❖ For the first time in the country, a temporary trauma care unit was established near the Jallikattu venue with all the facilities to perform surgeries.

### **New paddy variety**

- ❖ The Tamil Nadu Rice Research Institute (TRRI), Aduthurai, has released a new short duration rice variety christened as ADT 53.
- ❖ This short-term variety has a maturity period of 105 to 110 days.
- ❖ The new ADT 53 variety is a boon to the farmers as it is superior to the ADT 43 variety in terms of yield and quality.
- ❖ The new variety will suit the requirements of farmers for
  - Kuruvai or Kodai (summer) seasons in the delta districts and
  - Sornavari or Navarai seasons in other districts.
- ❖ It has a milling capacity of 62% and full rice capacity of 65 %.
- ❖ It also has rich content of Zinc and Iron.
- ❖ ADT 53 variety is a cross derivative of ADT 43 / JGL 384.

### **Kindergarten in Government Schools**

- ❖ The Tamil Nadu CM kicked off a pilot project on 21<sup>st</sup> January enabling children to attend kindergarten classes based on Montessori education in English medium at government middle schools with anganwadi centres in the State.
- ❖ In this regard kindergarten sections were inaugurated at the Presidency Girls Higher Secondary School in Egmore, Chennai.
- ❖ It is expected to benefit over 52,000 students in 2,381 anganwadis.
- ❖ The classes would be conducted jointly by the School Education Department and the Social Welfare Department in all 32 districts.
- ❖ The schools would be managed by headmasters of middle schools and would be under the administrative control of officials of the Integrated Child Development Scheme.
- ❖ The surplus secondary grade teachers will be utilised for the same.
- ❖ Teachers who are to teach the children would be trained under Samagra Shiksha Abhiyaan.
- ❖ Four set of school uniforms, one set of footwear, stationery and a course completion certificate would be provided by the State government.
- ❖ The scheme is aimed at improving students' learning skills, spoken and writing ability in English.
- ❖ The government is optimistic that it will encourage parents to opt for government schools.
- ❖ As much as 7 crores has been released towards this project.

- ❖ It is a pilot project for three years.

### **TN bagged awards for BBBP scheme**

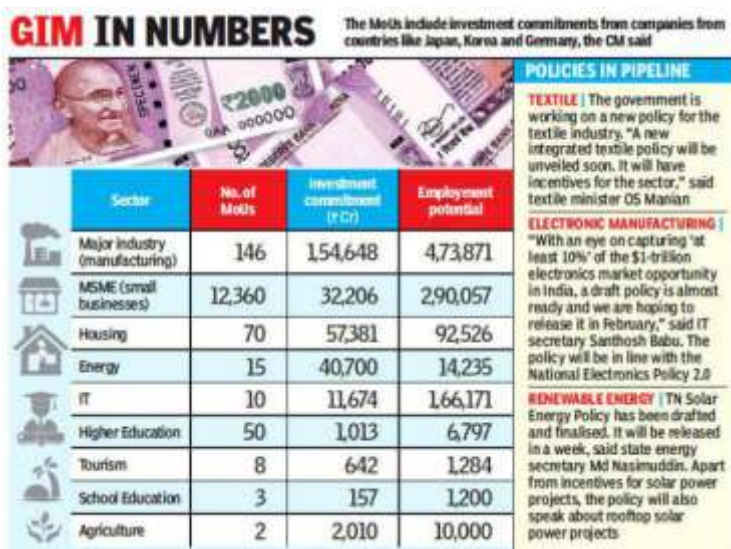
- ❖ The Tamil Nadu State government bagged 2 awards for its performance pertaining to the Union government's Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) scheme at the National Girl Child Day celebrations in New Delhi.



- ❖ Tamil Nadu was selected for its good performance on BBBP in the category “overall support, guidance, monitoring and achieving the targets of BBBP”.
- ❖ The State won praise for bringing out a guide book on BBBP in Tamil.
- ❖ Tiruvannamalai district was selected for district-level BBBP award under the category of “Effective community management”.

### **Global Investors Meet (GIM) 2019**

- ❖ The second edition of Global Investors Meet (GIM) 2019 was held (Jan 23,24) at Chennai, Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ The T.N. government signed 304 Memoranda of Understanding and agreements entailing investments to the tune of over Rs.3,00,431 crore at GIM-2.



- ❖ MSME 's alone account for 11% of the total investments, a significant increase from 7% in the inaugural GIM.
- ❖ The first edition of the Global Investors Meet was held on 2015 at Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

### **Apollo Proton Cancer Centre**

- ❖ India has launched Apollo Proton Cancer Centre (APCC) in Chennai, Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ With this launch, India has become the 16th country in the World to offer proton therapy for cancer.
- ❖ The Centre offers proton therapy with pencil-beam technology that provides a high degree of precision.
- ❖ Through proton beam therapy, which is a form of radiation, zero dose beyond the tumour is achievable.

### **Anna medal for gallantry**

- ❖ Tamil Nadu CM has presented the Anna Award for Gallantry to 3 meritorious persons during the Republic day celebrations held in Chennai.
  - G Ranjithkumar (Bodinaikanur) – Rescued 8 trekkers trapped in the Kurangani forest fire in March 2018.
  - N Surya Kumar (Thirumanagalam, Chennai) - caught a robber
  - R Sridhar (Thanjavur) – Rescued 6 women and children from drowning in a lake
- ❖ The CM also gave a special award to farmer S Xavier (Pudukottai district) for getting the highest yield in paddy cultivation using the Rice intensification method.



## Republic Day parade awards

- ❖ Overall 15 state Government departments have projected their achievements through their parade vehicles at the Republic day event held at Chennai.
- ❖ Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has won the first prize in the Republic day parade held in Chennai.



- ❖ Agriculture and Horticulture Department secured the second prize while Health and Sanitation department secured the third prize.

## Awards under Swasth Bharat Yatra

- ❖ Tamil Nadu has won the 'Best State – Overall' award under 'Swasth Bharat Yatra' (SBY) programme of the FSSAI (Food Safety and Standards Authority of India).
- ❖ Madurai and Sivakasi have been adjudged the best cities in Tamil Nadu under the programme.
- ❖ The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) had launched Swasth Bharat Yatra to amplify its Eat Right India initiative.
- ❖ Swasth Bharat Yatra was a 100-day consumer outreach programme.

### Other awards

- ❖ Best States with a population above 3 crore - Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh & Maharashtra.
- ❖ Best States having a population less than 3 crore - Punjab, Goa & Delhi.
- ❖ Special awards - Meghalaya, Jammu and Kashmir & Uttarakhand (participation despite their hilly & difficult terrain).

## PM's TN Visit

- ❖ The Prime Minister laid the foundation stone for the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) at Thoppur near Madurai, Tamil Nadu on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2019.
- ❖ It will be the first such facility in Tamilnadu.

- ❖ Besides this, the super speciality blocks of Madurai's Rajaji Medical College, Thanjavur Medical College and Tirunelveli Medical College was also inaugurated by the PM.

### **Thiruvalluvar Day Awards**

- ❖ A total of 9 Tamil scholars were felicitated by Tamil Nadu CM at the Thiruvalluvar Day celebrations held at Chennai.
- ❖ The Government of Tamil Nadu celebrates Thiruvalluvar Day (16 January) in the honour of the poet Thiruvalluvar, as part of the Pongal celebrations.

<b>Recipients</b>	<b>Awards</b>
<b>Pazha Nedumaran</b>	Kamarajar award
<b>C Ponnaiyan</b>	Periyar award
<b>Soolur Kalaipithan</b>	KAP Viswanatham award
<b>Poet Thiyaroo</b>	Bharathidasan award
<b>Dr K Ganesan</b>	Thiru.Vi.Ka award
<b>M Bharathi Sugumaran</b>	Bharathiyar award
<b>M Aikkan</b>	Perarignar Anna award
<b>C Ramaguru</b>	Ambedkar award
<b>MG Anwar Batcha</b>	Thiruvalluvar award

- ❖ These Tamil scholars were awarded for their service to the language.

## **NATIONAL**

### **Bhima Koregaon**

- ❖ On January 01, 2019 people visited the Vijay Stambh (war memorial) in Koregaon Bhima village in Pune district of Maharashtra.
- ❖ The battle was fought in Bhima Koregaon, a district in Pune with a strong historical Dalit connection, between the Peshwa forces and the British on January 1, 1818.
- ❖ It is the 201<sup>st</sup> year of this battle of Bhima Koregaon.

- ❖ The British army, which comprised mainly of Dalit soldiers, fought the upper caste-dominated Peshwa army.
- ❖ The British troops defeated the Peshwa army.

### **Indian Bridge Management System**

- ❖ The Minister of Road Transport & Highways and Shipping Nitin Gadkari formally launched the Indian Bridge Management System (IBMS).
- ❖ The IBMS is being developed to create an inventory of all bridges in the country and rate their structural condition.
- ❖ The IBMS is the largest platform in the world owned by a single owner, with database that could exceed 1,50,000 bridge structures.
- ❖ During the inventory creation each bridge is assigned a unique identification number or National Identity Number based on the state, RTO (Road Transport Office) zone and whether it is situated on a National Highway, State Highway or is a district road.
- ❖ Precise location of the bridge in terms of latitude-longitude is also collected through GPS and based on this, the bridge is assigned a **Bridge Location Number**.

### **Ujjwala Sanitary Napkin initiative**

- ❖ The Union Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan launched the Ujjwala Sanitary Napkin initiative in Bhubaneswar.
- ❖ The Central scheme will be a counter to the Odisha government's Khushi scheme, in which sanitary napkins are provided free of cost to female students of government and government-aided schools in the state.
- ❖ The New scheme will expand women's access to hygiene products and provide them with employment opportunities in every district of the state.

### **New immigration check post**

- ❖ The Ministry of Home Affairs has designated Port Blair airport as an authorised immigration check post for entry and exit from India.
- ❖ Hereafter foreign tourists can directly fly to the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
- ❖ Also, the ministry appointed the superintendent of police, CID, the Andaman and Nicobar Police, as the "civil authority" for the immigration check post at Port Blair airport with effect from December 31, 2018.

### **Monuments of national importance**

- ❖ The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has recently declared 6 monuments as protected and national importance.

- ❖ There were 3,686 centrally protected monuments/sites under the ASI in the country, the number has now been increased to 3,693.
- ❖ Uttar Pradesh (745 monuments/sites), Karnataka (506) and Tamil Nadu (413) have the highest number of ASI-maintained sites.
- ❖ The New Monuments which are added newly includes
  - 125-year-old Old High Court Building in Nagpur, Maharashtra
  - Mughal-era monuments in Agra — Haveli of Agha Khan and Hathi Khana
  - Ancient Neemrana Baori in Rajasthan's Alwar district
  - The Group of Temples at Ranipur Jharail in Odisha's Bolangir district and
  - The Vishnu Temple in Kotali, Pithoragarh district, Uttarkhand.
- ❖ According to the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958, an "Ancient Monument means
  - any structure, erection or monument, or
  - any tumulus or place of interment, or
  - any cave, rock-sculpture, inscription or
  - Monolith which is of historical, archaeological or artistic interest and which has been in existence for not less than 100 years."
- ❖ In 2016 and 2017, no new monument was included in the list of sites of national importance.
- ❖ The last monument to be included in the list, in 2015, was the Vishnu Temple in Nadavayal in Kerala's Wayanad district.

### **Mahila Police Volunteers -MPVs**

- ❖ The Ministry of Women and Child Development in collaboration with the Ministry of Home Affairs has envisaged engagement of Mahila Police Volunteers (MPVs) in the States and Union Territories.
- ❖ This Volunteers scheme envisages creation of a link between the police authorities and the local communities in villages through police volunteers who will be women specially trained for this purpose.
- ❖ One Mahila Police Volunteer (MPV) is envisaged per Gram Panchayat across the country.
- ❖ Haryana was the first state to adopt the initiative at Karnal and Mahendergarh District on a pilot basis under Nirbhaya Fund during the financial year 2016-2017.

### **MSP for minor forest produce**

- ❖ The Union government has declared inclusion of 17 new minor forest produce (MFP) under the government's Minimum Support Price (MSP) scheme.
- ❖ New MFP under the scheme includes Mahua flowers (dried), Tejpatta (dried) and Kokum (dry).
- ❖ It also is increasing the MSP of 23 MFPs already included in the scheme since 2013.

#### MSP for MFP

- ❖ In 2013-14, the government had for the first time declared MSP for MFP, after years of demands by the forest dwelling communities.
- ❖ The Pricing Cell, constituted by the Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India Ltd (TRIFED), recommended the inclusion of new MFPs under the scheme.
- ❖ MFPs contribute up to 80 per cent of tribal communities' cash income.

### **Doubling Farmers' Income (DFI) committee**

- ❖ The government will soon be appointing a committee to oversee the implementation of the recommendations of the DFI committee.

#### DFI committee

- ❖ A committee has been constituted in 2016 to look into the entire agriculture ecosystem in the country to suggest ways and means to reform it.
- ❖ For this purpose, an expert committee headed by Ashok Dalwai was constituted to suggest recommendations.
- ❖ It is expected that farmers' income can be doubled by 2022 by these recommendations.

### **Panel to protect Assam's heritage**

- ❖ The Union Cabinet has approved the setting up of a high-level committee for implementation of Clause 6 of the Assam Accord.
- ❖ The committee shall examine the effectiveness of actions since 1985 to implement Clause 6.
- ❖ It provides for constitutional, legislative and administrative safeguards to protect, preserve and promote the cultural, social, linguistic identity and heritage of Assam.
- ❖ After the Assam agitation of 1979-1985, the accord was signed on 15 August, 1985.

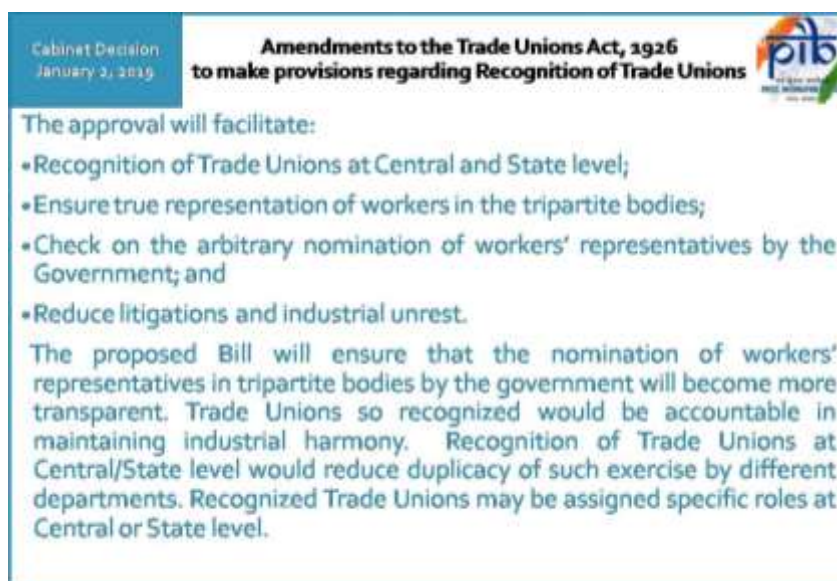


## Transgenders can file sexual harassment case under IPC

- ❖ Recently, the Delhi High Court has ruled that Section 354A of IPC can be used by transgender persons to register complaints of sexual harassment.
- ❖ The Section 354A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) deals with sexual harassment and punishment for sexual harassment.
- ❖ The development came after a transgender student's complaint of sexual harassment was not entertained by the police as there was lack of an appropriate penal section to register such complaint.

## Amendment to the Trade Unions Act -1926

- ❖ The Union Cabinet has recently approved amendment to the Trade Unions Act of 1926 to make provisions regarding Recognition of Trade Unions.
- ❖ The approval will facilitate
  - Recognition of Trade Unions at Central and State level;
  - Ensure true representation of workers in the tripartite bodies;



- ❖ The present Act provides for only registration of trade unions. Currently, there is no provision for recognition of unions in the Act.

## Amendment in the POCSO Act

- ❖ The Union Cabinet has recently approved amendments to the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act of 2012.
- ❖ These amendments aim to make punishment more stringent for committing sexual crimes against children.

- ❖ The amendments provide for the options of stringent punishment, including the death penalty, for committing aggravated penetrative sexual assault crime on a child.



**#POCSO**  
Salient Features:

- ◆ The POCSO Act, 2012 was enacted to Protect the Children from Offences of Sexual Assault, Sexual harassment and pornography with due regard for safeguarding the interest and well-being of children. The Act defines a child as any person below eighteen years of age, and regards the best interests and welfare of the child as matter of paramount importance at every stage, to ensure the healthy physical, emotional, intellectual and social development of the child. The act is gender neutral.
- ◆ The amendment in Section-4, Section-5, Section-6, Section-9, Section-14, Section-15 and Section-42 of Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012, is made to address the aspects of child sexual abuse in appropriate manner. The modification is made to address the need for stringent measures required to deter the rising trend of child sex abuse in the country.
- ◆ To discourage the trend of child sexual abuse by acting as a deterrent Section-4, Section-5 and Section-6 are proposed to be amended to provide option of stringent punishment, including death penalty, for committing aggravated penetrative sexual assault crime on a child to protect the children from sexual abuse.
- ◆ The amendments are also proposed in section-9 to protect children from sexual offences in times of natural calamities and disasters and in cases where children are administered, in any way, any hormone or any chemical substance, to attains early sexual maturity for the purpose of penetrative sexual assault.
- ◆ Section-14 and Section-15 of the POCSO Act, 2012 are also proposed to be amended to address the menace of the child pornography. It is proposed to levy fine for not destroying/or deleting/ or reporting the pornographic material involving a child. The person can be further penalized with jail term or fine or both for transmitting/propagating/administering such material in any manner except for the purpose of reporting as may be prescribed and for use as evidence in court. Penal provisions have been made more stringent for storing/possessing any pornographic material in any form involving a child for commercial purpose.

- ❖ The amendments (section-9) provide for the protection of children from sexual offences in times of natural calamities and disasters.

### **Non-Nuclear Aggression Agreement**

- ❖ Both India and Pakistan have exchanged their list of nuclear installations.
- ❖ The exchange was in accordance with the Agreement on Prohibition of Attacks against Nuclear Installations and Facilities between Pakistan and India.
- ❖ The agreement is also referred to as the Non-Nuclear Aggression Agreement.
- ❖ The exchange is done each year on January 1 under the Agreement, which was signed on December 31, 1988, and entered into force on January 27, 1991.

### **RTE amendment Bill**

- ❖ The Parliament has given its approval for the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (Amendment) Bill, 2018.
- ❖ The Bill seeks to amend the RTE Act to abolish the “no-detention” policy in schools.

- ❖ Under the current provisions of the Act, no student can be detained up to class VIII.
- ❖ The amendment bill now leaves it to the states to decide whether they want to continue the no detention policy or not.
- ❖ The key aim behind the move is to rebuild the education system of the country.

### **NCTE (National Council for Teacher Education) amendment Act**

- ❖ The Parliament has given its approval to the National Council for Teacher Education (Amendment) Bill, 2018.
- ❖ The Bill grants retrospective recognition to institutions offering teacher education courses after the establishment of the NCTE until the academic year 2017-18.
- ❖ The Bill grants retrospective permission to start a new course or teacher education courses after the establishment of the NCTE until the academic year 2017-2018.

### **National Health Agency restructured as National Health Authority.**

- ❖ The Union Cabinet has approved the restructuring of existing National Health Agency as National Health Authority.
- ❖ The move is to effectively the implement Pradhan Mantri – Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY).
- ❖ The National Health Authority would be empowered with full autonomy, accountability.

### **New Delhi International Arbitration Centre Bill**

- ❖ The Lok Sabha has recently passed the New Delhi International Arbitration Centre Bill.
- ❖ It aims to set up a revamped International Arbitration Centre at New Delhi with an aim to make India the hub of arbitration.
- ❖ The bill seeks to
  - establish an independent and autonomous regime for institutionalised arbitration and
  - for acquisition and transfer of undertakings of the International Centre of Alternative Disputes Resolution (ICADR).
- ❖ The New Delhi International Arbitration Centre is being set up as per the recommendation of the Justice B.N. Sri krishna committee.
- ❖ The chief justice of India is the ex-officio chairperson of the ICADR.

## National Entrepreneurship Awards 2018

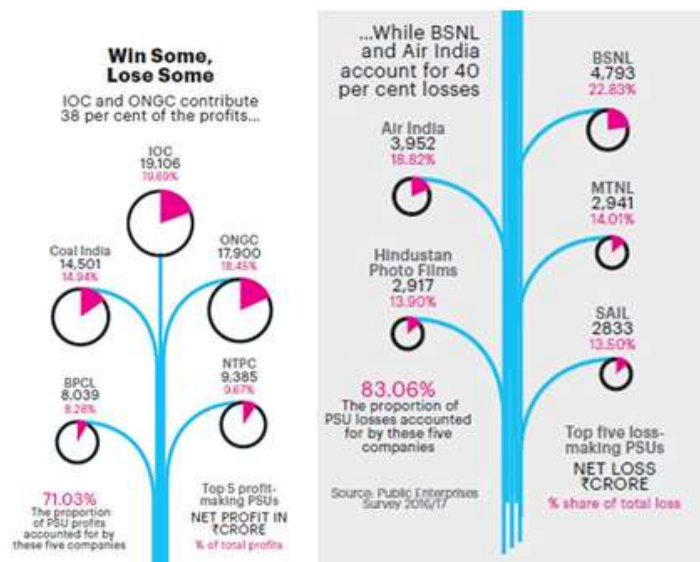
- ❖ The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) presented the National Entrepreneurship Awards 2018 at a ceremony held in New Delhi.
- ❖ A total of 33 winners – 30 Young Entrepreneurs and 3 Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Builders were awarded.
- ❖ Its objective is to recognize and honour outstanding young first-generation entrepreneurs and contributors of entrepreneurship ecosystem.
- ❖ The award was instituted by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship in 2016.

## 10% quota for economically weaker sections in general category

- ❖ The Union Cabinet has approved 10% quota in jobs and educational institutions for economically weaker sections in the general category.
- ❖ For the implementation of the quota, Articles 15 and 16 of the Constitution will have to be amended.
- ❖ This would be availed by those whose annual income is below Rs 8 lakh and have up to five acres of land.
- ❖ This 10% reservation would be over and above the existing 50% reservation.

## Public Enterprises Survey 2017-18

- ❖ The Public Enterprises Survey 2017-18, which mapped the performance of the various central public sector units, was tabled in the Parliament.



- ❖ The survey was undertaken by the Department of Public Enterprises, Ministry of Heavy Industries & Public Enterprises.
- ❖ The Indian Oil Corporation, ONGC and NTPC were the top three most profitable PSUs in 2017-18.

- ❖ BSNL, Air India and MTNL incurred the highest losses for the 2nd consecutive year.
- ❖ The survey notes that there were 339 Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSE) in 2017-18, out of which 257 was in operation.

### **NABCB Accreditation Secures Recognition in Asia-Pacific Region**

- ❖ The NABCB, India's national accreditation body, has secured equivalence for its accreditation programme for OHSMS Certification Bodies in Asia - Pacific region.
  - National Accreditation Board for Certification Bodies – NABCB
  - Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems - OHSMS
- ❖ It has signed the Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA) of the Pacific Accreditation Cooperation (PAC).
- ❖ It is a constituent Board of the Quality Council of India, responsible for accreditation of certification/inspection bodies as per applicable international standards under an international system of equivalence.
- ❖ NABCB can facilitate export of Indian goods in the global market by attesting that these are certified as per international standards by competent certifying bodies.
- ❖ It is the third accreditation body in the Asia-Pacific region (other two being the accreditation bodies of Hong Kong and Mexico).

### **Alok Verma as CBI Chief again**

- ❖ The Supreme Court, as per orders penned by CJI Ranjan Gogoi, reinstated the CBI Director Alok Kumar Verma without giving him any major policy decision making powers.
- ❖ This was done against the October 23, 2018 orders which had earlier divested him of his powers completely as per the corruption charges brought against him.
- ❖ After the successful conduct of the CVC inquiry against those charges, further steps have to be taken against him by the high-powered committee which selects and appoints the CBI Director.
- ❖ The high-powered committee will comprise of the Prime Minister, Chief Justice of India and Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha.

### **Defence India Startup Challenge**

- ❖ The Defence India Startup Challenge has been launched by the Defence Innovation Organization.
- ❖ It aims to boost innovations under the Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX) scheme.



- ❖ The initiative has been launched with support from the Department of Defence Production, Ministry of Defense, Atal Innovation Mission and NITI Aayog.

### **Issuance of FASTags through petroleum retail outlets**

- ❖ The Indian Highways Management Company Ltd. (IHMCL), a company promoted by NHAI (National Highways Authority India), has signed MOUs with state-run Oil Marketing Companies (IOCL, BPCL, and HPCL).
- ❖ It will ensure availability of FASTags at petroleum outlets across India.
- ❖ IHMCL had launched the national electronic toll collection program (NETC) under the brand name “FASTag” in April 2016.

### **Personal Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2018**

- ❖ The Lok Sabha has passed the Personal Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2018.
- ❖ The bill seeks to remove leprosy as a ground for divorce in five personal laws –
  - Hindu Marriage Act
  - Dissolution of Muslim Marriages Act
  - Divorce Act (for Christians)
  - Special Marriage Act
  - Hindu Adoptions and Maintenance Act.

### **Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2019**

- ❖ ‘Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2019’ has been passed in the Lok Sabha on January 8, 2019.
- ❖ The bill seeks to provide Indian citizenship to non-Muslims from Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Pakistan.
- ❖ The bill was first introduced in Parliament in 2016 and was examined later by the Joint Parliamentary Committee.
- ❖ It enables grant of Indian nationality to people from minority communities from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan after 6 years of residence in India instead of 12 even if they don’t possess any proper document.
- ❖ It also nullifies the 1985 Assam Accord, under which any foreign national, irrespective of religion, who had entered the state after March 25, 1971, should be deported.

### **“Web- Wonder Women” Campaign**

- ❖ The Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, has launched an online campaign, ‘#www: Web – Wonder Women’.



- ❖ Its objective is to recognize the exceptional women who have been driving positive agenda of social change via social media.
- ❖ The partners of the campaign are Breakthrough and Twitter India.

### **MSMEs initiatives to promote Ease of Doing Business**

- ❖ In the World Bank's Doing Business (DB) rankings for 2019, India has climbed 23 spots to rank 77th globally.
- ❖ The various digital interventions have been a great contributing factor for India in making this significant improvement.
- ❖ To increase the ease of doing business rankings, it is a pre-requisite for India to give a special focus towards MSMEs (Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises).
- ❖ The MSME has introduced various digital initiatives in this regard and they are,
  - Udyog Aadhaar Memorandum – A self-declaration format for MSME's to register itself.
  - MSME Samadhaan Portal – To register cases relating to delayed payments by government.
  - MSME Sambandh Portal - To monitor the implementation of the Public Procurement from MSMEs by CPSEs.
  - MSME Sampark Portal - Digital platform for job seekers to register.

### **First Island to operate seaplanes under UDAN-3**

- ❖ The Ministry of Civil Aviation has approved operations of seaplanes in the Andaman Islands under UDAN-3 (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik).
- ❖ It thus made Andaman, the first island of India to operate seaplanes.



- ❖ The Islands of Andaman that would be connected through seaplanes are Campbell Bay, Car Nicobar, Havelock, Hutbay, Neil, Long island and Diglipur.
- ❖ The Operation of Seaplanes which are commonly used in Maldives and Mauritius is a part government's ambitious regional connectivity scheme.

### **IFoS to be renamed as IFTS - DoPT**

- ❖ The Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) proposed renaming of the Indian Forest Service as Indian Forest and Tribal Service.
- ❖ The move was made for the IFoS to be more receptive towards tribal and forest dwellers.
- ❖ This was made after a directive from the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) suggested to do so.

### **Rashtriya Gokul Mission**

- ❖ The Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare is implementing the scheme of Rashtriya Gokul Mission to conserve and develop indigenous breeds in a focused and scientific manner.

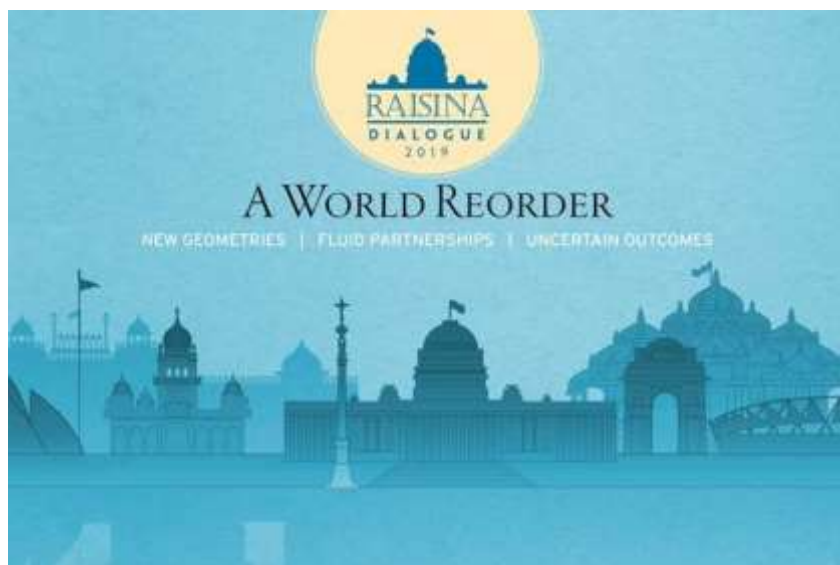


- ❖ The scheme comprises of two components namely
  - National Programme for Bovine Breeding (NPBB) and

- National Mission on Bovine Productivity (NMBP).

### **Raisina Dialogue**

- ❖ The 4th Edition of Raisina Dialogue was organized by Ministry of External Affairs in partnership with Observer Research Foundation in New Delhi.
- ❖ The Theme of the Dialogue was “A World Reorder: New Geometries; Fluid Partnerships; Uncertain Outcomes”.
- ❖ The Raisina Dialogue, whose first edition was held in 2015, is India’s flagship annual geopolitical and geostrategic conference.



### **National Consultation on Child Protection 2019**

- ❖ The First 2019 edition of the ‘National Consultation on Child Protection’ was held at India Habitat Centre, New Delhi.
- ❖ It was held under the Chairmanship of the Secretary, Ministry of Women and Child Development.
- ❖ The meeting aims to follow up on the exercise of monitoring of the Child Care Institutions (CCIs) by States/UTs.

### **Henley Passport Index**

- ❖ According to Henley Passport Index, Japan has retained its position to the top for the consecutive year.
- ❖ South Korea and Singapore are at joint second position.
- ❖ India jumped two positions from 81st in 2018 to 79th this year.
- ❖ European Union member states along with Norway and the US occupy the places behind the top three nations in the rankings.
- ❖ The rankings of the USA and UK have continued to drop.



- ❖ The bottom 5 positions are held by Eritrea, Yemen, Pakistan, Somalia-Syria and Afghanistan-Iraq.

THE 10 MOST POWERFUL PASSPORTS IN THE WORLD					
Rank	Country	Visa free	Rank	Country	Visa free
1	■ Japan	190	7	■ Belgium, Canada, Greece, Ireland	184
2	■ Singapore, South Korea	189	8	■ Czech Republic	183
3	■ France, Germany	188	9	■ Malta	182
4	Denmark, Finland, Italy, Sweden	187	10	■ Australia, Iceland, New Zealand	181
5	■ Luxembourg, Spain	186			
6	■ Austria, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Switzerland, UK, US	185			

### **The DNA Technology (Use and Application) Regulation Bill, 2019**

- ❖ The Lok Sabha passed “The DNA Technology (Use and Application) Regulation Bill, 2019” by voice vote after a brief discussion.
- ❖ The Bill regulates the use and application of DNA technology, for establishing identity of missing persons, victims, offenders, under trials and unknown deceased persons.
- ❖ The key components of this Bill include establishment of a DNA Regulatory Board and accreditation of DNA laboratories undertaking DNA testing, analysing.
- ❖ Establishment of the National and Regional DNA Data Banks, as envisaged in the Bill, will assist in forensic investigations.



### **Committee for Campaign Silence Period**

- ❖ The Committee appointed by the Election Commission of India has submitted its report on digital media and campaigning during last 48 hours before polls to the Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora.



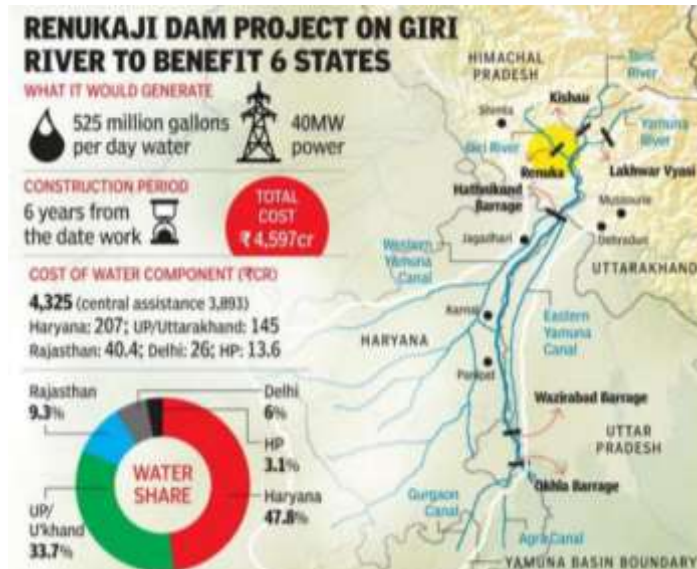
- ❖ The Committee was constituted under the chairmanship of Deputy Election Commissioner Umesh Sinha.
- ❖ The panel was mandated to review and suggest modifications in the provisions of Section 126 of the Representation of the People Act dealing with campaigning in the last 48 hours and related provisions of the Model Code of Conduct.
- ❖ No campaigning is allowed in the last 48 hours so that voters can think independently. This period is also called silence period.
- ❖ The Recommendations of the Committee will be considered by the Commission in detail for follow up action.

### **Agreement for Renukaji Multipurpose Dam Project**

- ❖ Six states Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Delhi, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh are signed an agreement for construction of Renukaji Dam Multi-Purpose Project in the presence of Union Water Resources Minister Nitin Gadkari.
- ❖ Renukaji Dam project has been conceived as a storage project on the Giri river in Sirmour district of Himachal Pradesh.
- ❖ It envisages construction of 148 m-high rock-filled dam for supply of 23 m<sup>3</sup>/s water to Delhi and other basin states.

### **Renukaji Multi-Purpose Project**

- ❖ Three projects are proposed to be constructed on the Yamuna and two of its tributaries.



- ❖ These includes
  - Lakhwar project on river Yamuna in Uttarakhand,
  - Kishau on river Tons in Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh,
  - Renukaji on river Giri in Himachal Pradesh.

- ❖ These three projects were identified as National Projects in 2008 under which 90% funding of the cost of irrigation & drinking water component will be provided by the Government of India and the rest 10% cost will be borne by the beneficiary states.

### World's largest Single-location Solar Photo-voltaic (PV) Plant

- ❖ The World's largest Single-location Solar Photo-voltaic (PV) Plant will be set up in Ladakh, Jammu & Kashmir.
- ❖ The 5000 MW Ladakh project will be located at Hanle-Khaldo in Nyoma block, about 250 km from Leh and 200 km from Kargil.
- ❖ It will be supplemented by another 2.5GW solar project in the Kargil district.
- ❖ The Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI) expects the 5 GW Ladakh solar farm to be the world's largest, surpassing China's 3 GW Datong Solar Power Project.
- ❖ This project will be completed in 2023 and is expected to save around 12,750 tonnes of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions annually.

TOP 5 SOLAR PV PROJECTS (Single Location)	Present Capacity (MW)	Projected Capacity (MW)	Location
Tengger Desert Solar Park	1,547		Ningxia, China
Bhadla Solar Park	1,365	2,255	Rajasthan, India
Datong Solar Power Top Runner Base	1,000	3,000	China
Kurnool	1,000	2,000	Andhra Pradesh, India
Longyanxia Dam Solar Park	850		Eastern Zhejiang, China
<b>Ladakh project</b>		<b>5,000</b>	<b>Ladakh, India</b>

Source: SolarInsure, as of June 2017: The Ladakh project will still be the world's largest even after others complete their planned capacities

### UNNATI - Unispace Nanosatellite Assembly & Training programme

- ❖ The Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISRO) has launched UNNATI - capacity-building programme on nanosatellite development.
- ❖ It is launched to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the first United Nations conference on the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space (UNISPACE 50).
- ❖ The UNNATI programme will be conducted for three years by the U.R. Rao Satellite Centre of ISRO in Bengaluru.
- ❖ Responsibility: Department of Space

## Prayagraj Kumbh

- ❖ Ram Nath Kovind offered prayers along with his wife at the Sangam of Prayagraj, becoming the first president after Rajendra Prasad to visit a Kumbh Mela.
- ❖ The President also inaugurated the three-day 'Gandhian Resurgence Summit' at the Parmarth Niketan camp.
- ❖ Prayagraj Kumbh 2019 will be remembered for opening of doors to Akshaya Vat (sacred tree) and Saraswati Koop (sacred well) for common men after 450 years. It was a long pending demand of the devotees.

## Guru Gobind Singh Coin

- ❖ The Prime Minister released a commemorative coin on Guru Gobind Singh, on January 13, 2019.



- ❖ The event marks the birth anniversary of Guru Gobind Singh.
- ❖ The Tenth Guru of Sikhs- Guru Gobind Singh has been a source of inspiration for many through his teachings and ideals.

### List of commemorative coins issued by PM Modi

- ❖ Rs 100 and Rs 5 coins were issued to honour iconic Indian actor and politician Late MG Ramachandran.
- ❖ Rs 100 and Rs 10 coins were issued in the honour of Carnatic singer MS Subbalakshmi.

## Womaniya on GeM

- ❖ The Government e Marketplace [GeM] has launched “Womaniya on GeM”, an initiative to enable women entrepreneurs and women self-help groups [WSHG] to sell handicrafts and handloom, accessories, jute and coir

products, home décor and office furnishings, directly to various Government ministries.



- ❖ The GeM is an online platform of the ministry for procurement of goods and services by government departments, public sector units, and other agencies.

### **NH-66**

- ❖ The Prime Minister dedicated the 13 km 2-lane Kollam bypass on NH-66 to the nation.
- ❖ The bypass has three major bridges over the Ashtamudi Lake, with a total length of 1,540 metres.



- ❖ Kollam Bypass will reduce travel time between Alappuzha and Thiruvananthapuram and decongest the traffic in Kollam town.

### **DD Science**

- ❖ The Department of Science and Technology (DST) along with Doordarshan (DD), Prasar Bharati today launched two science communication initiatives



- DD Science
- India Science
- ❖ DD Science is a joint initiative of Vigyan Prasar, an autonomous organisation under the Department of Science and Technology (DST) and public broadcaster, Doordarshan. It is a one-hour slot on Doordarshan National channel.
- ❖ India Science is an online channel available on all internet-enabled devices.

### **Voter Awareness Forums**

- ❖ Voter Awareness Forum (VAF) was launched by Election Commission of India (ECI) in New Delhi.
- ❖ Voter Awareness Forums are informal Forums for generating awareness around electoral process through activities like discussions, quizzes, competitions and other engaging activities.

### **Electoral Literacy Club**

- ❖ VAF is part of the Electoral Literacy Club programme of ECI.
- ❖ Launched on the 8th National Voters Day, 25th January 2018, the ELC programme envisages setting up of Electoral Literacy Club in every educational institution and Chunav Pathshala at every booth to cover those outside the formal education system.

### **SĀNJHI –MUJH MEIN KALĀKĀR**

- ❖ Sangeet Natak Akademi (SNA) the National Academy of Music, Dance and Drama has launched the second phase of the Web Campaign ‘SĀNJHI –MUJH MEIN KALĀKĀR.
- ❖ It is an initiative to document and promote the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) and diverse cultural traditions of the country by direct public-participation.

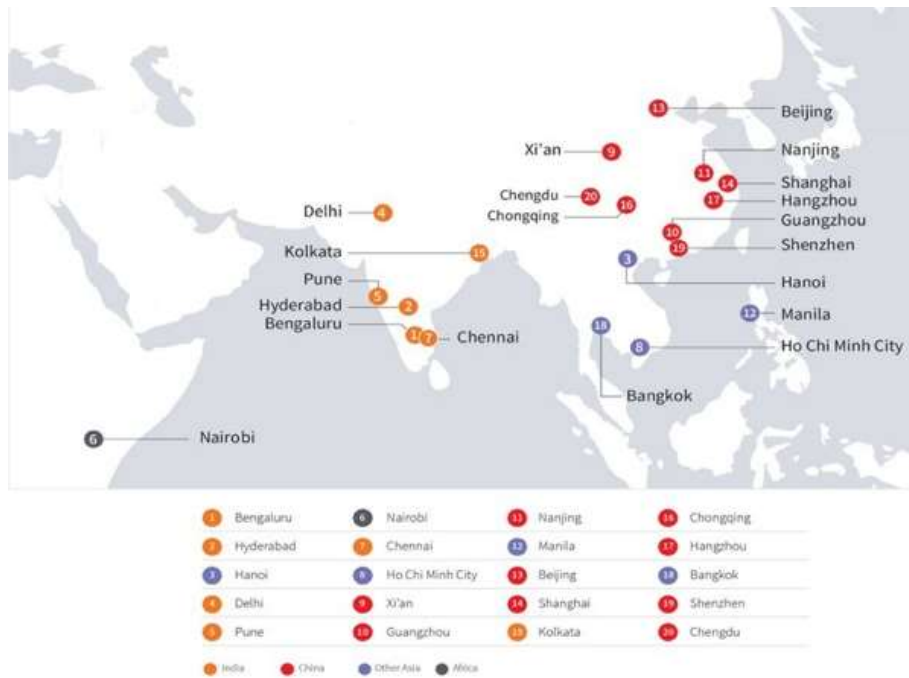
### **Sangeet Natak Akademi**

- ❖ The Sangeet Natak Akademi (SNA) is the nodal agency of the Ministry of Culture, under the Government of India to coordinate the matters related to Intangible Cultural Heritage and various UNESCO Conventions addressing Cultural Diversity and promotion and dissemination of multifarious cultural traditions and expressions of the country.

### **Dynamic City**

- ❖ According to the sixth City Momentum Index published by JLL, Bengaluru is the world’s most dynamic city among 131 major established and emerging business hubs globally.

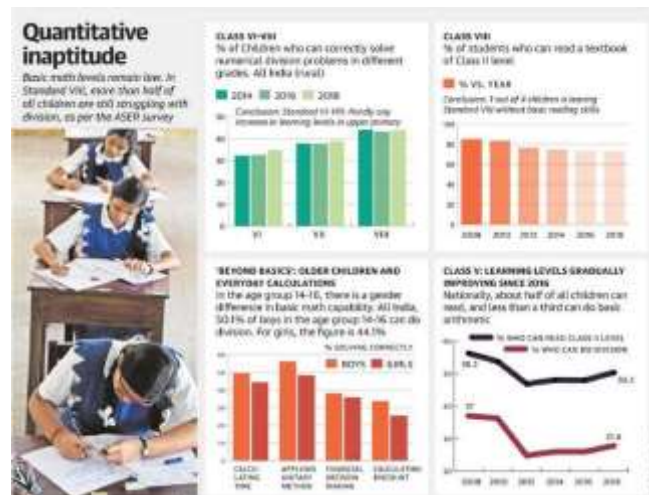




- ❖ It is followed by Hyderabad

### ASER

- ❖ The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2018 is a yearly survey by NGO Pratham carried out since 2006.



- ❖ The report shows that more than half of Class VIII students cannot correctly solve a numerical division problem and more than a quarter of them cannot read a primary-level text.
- ❖ There has been some improvement in the reading and arithmetic skills of lower primary students in rural India over the last decade, the skills of Class VIII students have actually seen a decline.

### Sita Rama Irrigation Project

	Sita Rama LI Project	Kannepalli LI Scheme
Proposed water utilisation 	<b>70.4</b> TMC ft	<b>4.5</b> TMC ft
Proposed ayacut 	<b>9,36,000</b> acres	<b>45,527</b> acres
Land required	<b>₹ 11,932</b> crore	<b>₹ 499</b> crore
Forest land	<b>12,212</b> acres	<b>3,642</b> acres
Submergence area	<b>4825</b> acres	

- ❖ Telangana government has been given the green nod for its Sita Rama Lift Irrigation Project.
- ❖ The lift irrigation project will divert Godavari river water from upstream of existing Dummugudem Anicut to irrigate 2,72,921 hectares of Bhadradi Kothagudem, Khammam and Mahabubabad districts of Telangana.
- ❖ The objective of the project is to provide water for irrigation as well as to enroute tanks, villages, towns and supplement some of the existing/ proposed irrigation schemes.

### **Trishna gas project**

- ❖ The National Wildlife Board has given its approval for the Trishna Gas project of ONGC.
- ❖ The state-owned ONGC Tripura Asset would soon start extracting the natural gas from Trishna Wildlife Sanctuary in Belonia subdivision of Gomati district.
- ❖ The National Wildlife Board, following recommendations from the state Wildlife Board, has cleared the project.

### **National Wildlife Board**

- ❖ National Board for Wild Life (NBWL) is a “Statutory Organization” constituted under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.
- ❖ The NBWL is chaired by the Prime Minister.
- ❖ It serves as apex body to review all wildlife-related matters and approve projects in and around national parks and sanctuaries.

### **Global Housing Technology Challenge**

- ❖ The Centre will offer about Rs150 crore as a technology innovation grant to build 6,000 homes – cheaper, faster and better using alternative technologies and materials.
- ❖ In charge Ministry: Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation.

### **Judges of Supreme Court**

- ❖ The Justices Dinesh Maheshwari and Sanjiv Khanna were sworn-in as Supreme Court judge.
- ❖ The Chief Justice of India (CJI) Ranjan Gogoi administered the oath of office to justices Maheshwari and Khanna during the swearing-in ceremony.



- ❖ The sanctioned strength of judges in the Supreme Court is 31. With the swearing-in of justices Maheshwari and Khanna, the strength has now gone up to 28.

### **103<sup>rd</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act**

- ❖ The President has given his assent to the 124th constitutional Amendment Bill (which is now 103rd Constitution Amendment Act) providing 10 per cent reservation for economically weaker sections on 12 January 2019.
- ❖ The Union Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment Thaawarchand Gehlot introduced the Reservation Bill in Lok Sabha on 08 January 2019 and the bill was passed with 323 'yes' and only 3 'nos'.
- ❖ Rajya Sabha also passed the Bill with 165 votes in its favour and 7 against on 09 January 2019.

### **Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar 2019**

- ❖ The National awards for children have been revamped as Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar 2019 and will include the bravery awards category too.

- ❖ Till last year, national Bravery category were organised by the NGO 'Indian Council for Child Welfare'.
- ❖ For the Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar 2019 the Ministry of Women and Child Development ministry has shortlisted 26 awardees.
- ❖ The awards will be given by the President of India on January 22 in the run-up to Republic Day.
- ❖ Except for bravery, children in the other categories were earlier given the national awards on Children's Day.

### **National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction (2018-2023)**

- ❖ The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has drafted a five-year action plan for addressing the problem of drug and substance abuse in the country.
- ❖ Its aims to employ a multi-pronged strategy to address the issue.
- ❖ It involves education, de-addiction and rehabilitation of affected individuals and their families.

### **Pradhan Mantri Rozgar Protsahan Yojana**

- ❖ The Pradhan Mantri Rozgar Protsahan Yojana (PMRPY), the flagship scheme of the Union Government for employment generation, crossed the milestone of one crore beneficiaries on January 14, 2019.
- ❖ This scheme was announced on August 07, 2016 and is being implemented by the Union Ministry of Labour and Employment through the Employees' Provident Fund Organization (EPFO).
- ❖ A direct benefit of the scheme is that these workers have access to social security benefit through Provident Fund, Pension and Death Linked Insurance.

### **National Air Cargo Policy**

- ❖ The government has announced its National Air Cargo Policy with which it aims to make India one of the top five air freight markets by 2025.
- ❖ The policy document was released during the two-day Global Aviation Summit 2019 at Mumbai.
- ❖ The policy will fuel the growth of the aviation sector and boost the country's economy.

### **9<sup>th</sup> International Micro irrigation conference**

- ❖ The Ministry of Water resources and River development has organized 9th International Micro irrigation conference in Aurangabad, Maharashtra.

- ❖ This conference aims to share experiences in the use of new technologies and best management practices in drip, micro-sprinkler, and other localized irrigation systems.



- ❖ The conference focused on the theme of “Micro Irrigation and Modern Agriculture”.

### **7th ASEAN-India Tourism Ministers meeting**

- ❖ The Union Tourism Minister K. J. Alphons, co-chaired the 7th Meeting of Tourism Ministers of ASEAN-India with Minister of Culture, Sports and Tourism of Viet Nam, Mr. Nguyen Ngoc Thien.
- ❖ The Meeting was held in Ha Long City in Viet Nam.
- ❖ As a follow up to the Summit, the Ministers launched the ASEAN-India Tourism Cooperation Year 2019.

### **India's 2nd defence innovation hub**

- ❖ The Union Minister of State for Defence Subhash Bhamre announced that Nashik in Maharashtra will be the site of the country's second defence innovation hub after Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ This is in line with the Defence Ministry's target of making the country among the top five arms exporters by 2025.

### **IAF AN-32 lands in Pakyong Airport**

- ❖ For the first time, an AN-32 (Antonov-32) class of aircraft of the IAF has carried out a successful landing at Sikkim's Pakyong, one of the highest airfields in the country.
- ❖ The successful landing has assumed great importance due to its strategic location of 60 km from the India-China border and it is located 4,500 ft. above sea level.
- ❖ A Dronier aircraft of the IAF had landed at this airport last year.



### **India's First National Museum of Indian Cinema**

- ❖ The Prime Minister of India has recently launched the Country's First National Museum of Indian Cinema (NMIC) in Mumbai, Maharashtra.
- ❖ The Museum seeks to portray over a century-old journey of movies in India.
- ❖ The NMIC was built under the guidance by the Museum Advisory Committee headed by noted film maker Shyam Benegal.
- ❖ An innovation Committee headed by the lyricist Prasoon Joshi was also constituted to provide an upgrade to NMIC.

### **HAL-built LCH completes air-to-air weapon trials**

- ❖ The Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) designed and developed light combat helicopter (LCH) has successfully carried out air-to-air missile firing on a moving aerial target.



- ❖ This is the first time in the country that a helicopter has carried out air-to-air missile engagement.
- ❖ It is equipped with Helmet mounted sight and a forward-looking infrared sighting system, LCH pilots can now detect and destroy any target on the ground or in the air.

### **Exclusive satellite for Border Management**

- ❖ A satellite will be launched by the ISRO exclusively for the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) to help it further strengthen its frontiers with Pakistan and Bangladesh among others.
- ❖ The move is part of recommendations made by a task force on the use of space technology in improving border management.
- ❖ The MHA has approved the report of Task Force created by it to identify areas for use of Space Technology in improving Border Management.
- ❖ The task force was headed by the Joint Secretary of Border Management (BM) and included members from BSF, Department of Space and BM Division of MHA.

## District Mining Fund (DMF) programme

- ❖ The Central government has asked the states to step-up the spending under the District Mining Fund (DMF) programme.

Funds utilised for projects in high priority sectors	
Sector	(₹ cr)
Drinking water supply	1,039.37
Environment preservation & pollution control measures	113.63
Health	467.09
Education	1,020.87
Welfare of women and children	135.54
Welfare of aged and disabled people	36.26
Skill development	136.39
Sanitation	460.67

- ❖ The move comes as just 24 % of the Rs 23,606-crore mopped up under the Pradhan Mantri Khanij Kshetra Kalyan Yojana (PMKKKY) was actually spent.
- ❖ The PMKKKY is aimed at providing welfare to those affected by mining operations.
- ❖ Under the programme, a portion of revenues (10-30 % of the royalty proceeds from the minerals) is earmarked for development activities in mining regions.

## Women to get 20% jobs in Military Police

- ❖ The Union Defence Minister has announced the decision to induct women in Personnel Below Officer Rank (PBOR) role in Corps of Military Police.
- ❖ The women will be inducted in graded manner to eventually comprise 20% of total Corps of Military Police.

For the following roles:
• Investigation of offences such as rape, molestation, thefts etc.
• Military operations of nature where Army needs assistance from police organisations
• Assisting civil police/administration for evacuation in forward villages during hostilities.
• Crowd control of refugees comprising women and children.
• Searching/Frisking of women during cordon & search operations/check posts.
• Ceremonial and Policing Duties: Maintaining military discipline.
• Manning the Prisoner of War Camps.

- ❖ Accordingly, the Army chalked out induction of approximately 800 women in military police with a yearly intake of 52 personnel per year.
- ❖ Military Police are the corps responsible for the enforcing discipline and the maintenance of law and order in the military environment and for military purposes.

### **Aadhaar – A Valid Travel document**

- ❖ The Union Ministry of Home Affairs has announced that Aadhaar Cards are now valid travel documents for Indians under 15 and over 65 years travelling to Nepal and Bhutan.
- ❖ However, Indians belonging to the age bracket of 15 to 65 years will not be able to use Aadhaar to travel to the two neighbouring countries.
- ❖ Earlier, people over 65 and under 15 years could show PAN card, driving licence, ration card, but not the Aadhaar, to prove their identity to visit the two countries.

### **Armoured Systems Complex (ASC)**

- ❖ The Prime Minister inaugurated the Armoured Systems Complex (ASC), developed by Larsen & Toubro (L&T) at Hazira near Surat in Gujarat.
- ❖ This Armoured Systems Complex (ASC) is the country's first private facility where the K9 Vajra self-propelled Howitzer guns will be manufactured.
- ❖ The Armoured Systems Complex (ASC) at Hazira is a striking example of Make in India Defence.

### **National Conference on Self Reliance in Defence Manufacturing**

- ❖ The 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the National Conference on Self Reliance in Defence Manufacturing is organised at Hyderabad.
- ❖ The National Conference is being held by Forum for Integrated National Security in association with Indigenous Defence Entrepreneurs Association.
- ❖ The first National Conference on Self Reliance in Defence Manufacturing was held in 2015 at Hyderabad.

### **PwC Global Economy Watch**

- ❖ The Global Economy Watch report has been released by the London based multinational professional services network- PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC).
- ❖ The report monitors trends and issues affecting the global economy and details its latest projections for the leading nations.
- ❖ India and France are likely to surpass the UK in the world's largest economy rankings in 2019, pushing it down to 7th place from 5th in the global table.

- ❖ The report projects real GDP growth of 1.6% for the UK, 1.7% for France and 7.6% for India in 2019.
- ❖ The US was the world's largest economy followed by China, Japan and Germany.

### **NITI Aayog-led Committee to monitor pricing of drugs**

- ❖ The Government has constituted a Standing Committee headed by NITI Aayog to oversee the drug pricing regime.
- ❖ It is seen as a move that would curb the powers of the National Pharmaceuticals Pricing Authority (NPPA) when it comes to regulating the prices of medicines in the country.
- ❖ The Standing Committee on Affordable Medicines and Health Products will be headed by NITI Aayog Member (Health).
- ❖ The committee will be a recommending body to the NPPA regarding prices of drugs and health products.
- ❖ It will examine issues Suo-moto or on recommendation of Department of Pharma, NPPA and Department of Health.
- ❖ The NPPA was established as an autonomous regulator in 1997.
- ❖ Its objective is to oversee and set the prices of drugs and products on the National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM), prepared by the Health Ministry, and set price caps.

### **India Steel 2019 Exhibition and Conference**

- ❖ The 4th International Exhibition & Conference on Steel Industry, India Steel 2019 Exhibition and Conference at NSE Complex Goregaon, Mumbai.
- ❖ It was organised by Ministry of Steel in association with Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI).



- ❖ The theme of the event is “Balancing Steel Demand & Supply Dynamics: Building a New India”.



- ❖ The India Steel-2019 is part of series of initiatives to develop a globally competitive steel industry in line with National Steel Policy (NSP)-2107.
  - NSP-2017 envisages production of 300 million tonnes of steels by 2030-31.

### **New Naval Air Base 'INS KOHASSA' at Andaman**

- ❖ The Navy Chief Admiral Sunil Lanba commissioned the new Naval Air Base 'INS KOHASSA' at Diglipur, Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
- ❖ The air base will be used for both defence and civil aircraft and it will function as an independent unit.



- ❖ Being the 3rd air base in Andaman and Nicobar Islands, INS Kohassa will be used for surveillance of Chinese ships and submarines entering the Indian Ocean through Malacca Strait.

### **Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar award**

- ❖ The government formed an annual award titled Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar.
- ❖ This award is to be awarded every year on 23rd January, the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose.





- ❖ The Award carries a certificate and a cash prize of 51 lakh rupees.
- ❖ For the year 2019, 8th Battalion of National Disaster Response Force located at Ghaziabad is selected for its work in disaster management.

### **Pravasi Teerth Darshan Yojana**

- ❖ The Prime Minister has recently launched Pravasi Teerth Darshan Yojana in New Delhi.
- ❖ Under this scheme, a group of Indian diasporas will be taken on a government-sponsored tour of religious places in India twice a year.
- ❖ Under the eligibility criteria, all people of Indian-origin, aged between 45 and 65 can apply and a group will be selected out of them.
- ❖ The first preference will be given to people from 'Girmitiya countries' such as Mauritius, Fiji, Suriname, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica.

### **IMBEX 2018-19**

- ❖ The 2nd edition of India-Myanmar bilateral Army exercise 'IMBEX 2018-19' was held at Chandi Mandir military station in Haryana.
- ❖ The aim of this joint training programme is to train the Myanmar delegation for participation in UN peace keeping operations under the UN flag.
- ❖ The Indian Army has a rich experience of serving in UN peace keeping operations, being the foremost troop contributing country in the world body.

### **'in-chamber' decision on listing of plea challenging Article 35-A**

- ❖ The Supreme Court has announced that it would take 'in-chamber' decision on listing of plea challenging Article 35-A.
- ❖ A petition has been filed by NGO 'We The Citizens' challenging the constitutional validity of both Article 35A and Article 370.



- ❖ 'In-chamber' decision refers to a process of decision making where the orders are issued from the Justice's chambers without a formal court proceeding.

## Article 35-A

Article 35A of the Indian Constitution is an article that empowers the Jammu and Kashmir state's legislature to define "permanent residents" of the state and provide special rights and privileges to those permanent residents. It was added to the Constitution through a Presidential Order.

### Exercise SEA VIGIL

- ❖ The Indian Navy has commenced its largest-ever coastal defence exercise - 'Sea Vigil'-off the Indian coast, ten years after the "26/11" attack.

<b>'SEA VIGIL' FOR COASTAL SECURITY</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Exercise being undertaken along the entire <b>7516.6km coastline</b> and Exclusive Economic Zone of India.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Aims to comprehensively and holistically validate the efficacy of the measures taken for coastal defence since 26/11</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ It will provide a realistic assessment of our strengths and weaknesses</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Mock drills and simulation of terror attacks will be conducted on Wednesday</li> </ul>	

- ❖ Navy had undertaken biannual coastal security exercises at the level of states previously.
- ❖ But it is for the first time an exercise involving all coastal states, island territories and all central and state agencies has been undertaken.
- ❖ The exercise is a build up towards the major theatre level tri-service exercise TROPEX which Indian Navy conducts every 2 years.
- ❖ It aims to comprehensively and holistically validate the efficacy of the measures taken since the '26/11' attack in Mumbai.

### Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards 2019

- ❖ President conferred Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards 2019 to 30 awardees.
- ❖ The awards were conferred during the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas being held at Varanasi.
- ❖ Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards is the highest honour conferred on overseas Indians.
- ❖ The winner of this prestigious award includes
  - Gita Gopinath - Chief economist of IMF
  - Chandra Shekhar Mishra - senior scientist (Instrumental in 2015 India-US S&T relationship)
  - Girish Pant – (social worker - instrumental in rescuing several Indian sailors stranded in UAE waters)

- ❖ Every year since 2003 till 2015, 15 PBSAs were awarded during the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) Convention.
- ❖ Since 2015, PBD Convention is being held Biennially and the number of PBSAs have been increased to 30.

### **Indian Africa Field Training Exercise (IAFTX)**

- ❖ Indian Africa Field Training Exercise (IAFTX) will be held at Pune from 18 March to 27 March 2019.
- ❖ IAFTX joint exercise is being conducted between India and a dozen African Countries.
- ❖ The joint exercise aims at synergising humanitarian mine action and joint peace operations.
- ❖ The exercise is being conducted with an aim to synergise United Nations peacekeeping operations.

### **Bio-Jet fuel for Military Aircraft**

- ❖ The Centre for Military Airworthiness and Certification (CEMILAC), a premier military certification agency, has cleared the use of indigenously produced bio-fuel for use in the military aircraft.
- ❖ The Indian Air Force is expected to use bio fuel for its transport fleet and helicopters following this clearance.
- ❖ In a first for the Republic Day parade, the IAF flew an An-32 aircraft in 'vic' & 'satluj' formation, whose lead plane used a mix of traditional and biofuel during the grand event.
- ❖ The bio-jet fuel has been produced from seeds of Jatropha plant sourced from Chhattisgarh and processed at CSIR-IIP's lab at Dehradun.

### **LRSAM Test from coast of Odisha**

- ❖ India has successfully flight-tested Long Range Surface-to-Air Missile (LRSAM) from a warship off Odisha coast.
- ❖ The LRSAM successfully destroyed a low flying aerial target.
- ❖ LRSAM has been jointly developed by DRDO, India and Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) for the Indian Navy.
- ❖ The LRSAM was test fired in operational configuration on board INS Chennai positioned in the Arabian Sea.

### **New norms for Jan Shikshan Sanstans**

- ❖ The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) has issued new guidelines for Jan Shikshan Sanstans (JSS).

- ❖ The new guidelines are issued as part of an attempt by the MSDE to re-energize and reinvigorate the Jan Shikshan Sansthan.
- ❖ Some of the highlights of these guidelines are,
  - Aligning of JSS program and curriculum to Nationwide Talent Qualification Framework (NSQF) to enhance teaching.
  - Decentralisation of powers for JSSs by supplying additional accountability and independence to district administration.
- ❖ JSS were established to provide vocational training to non-literate, neo-literate, as well as school dropouts by identifying skills as would have a market in the region of their establishment.

### **Powers of the Autonomous Councils**

- ❖ The Union Cabinet has approved a constitutional amendment to increase the financial and executive powers of the 10 autonomous councils in the 6th Schedule areas of the northeast.
- ❖ The Finance Commission would be mandated to recommend the devolution of financial resources to the councils.
- ❖ Till now, the autonomous councils have depended on grants from Central Ministries and the State governments for specific projects.
- ❖ At least 1/3rd of the seats would be reserved for women in the village and municipal councils in the 6th Schedule areas of Assam, Mizoram and Tripura.
- ❖ The amendment also provides for transfer of additional 30 subjects, to
  - Karbi Anglong Autonomous Territorial Council and
  - Dima Hasao Autonomous Territorial Council in Assam.
- ❖ The proposed amendments provide for elected village municipal councils, ensuring democracy at the grass-roots level.
- ❖ The State Election Commissions would hold elections to the autonomous councils, village and municipal councils in the areas of Assam, Mizoram and Tripura.

### **Abandoned airstrips across country to be renovated**

- ❖ The Centre has decided to renovate and develop around 400 abandoned airstrips across the country to strengthen air-connectivity.
- ❖ Jharkhand is the first state in the country where an MOU was signed to develop one such abandoned air strip at Dhalbhumgarh.

### **World's longest expressway**

- ❖ The government of Uttar Pradesh has approved the construction of the Ganga Expressway.

- ❖ The government has said that it would be the longest expressway in the world.
- ❖ The expressway will provide for better connectivity of the Prayagraj (Allahabad) to Western Pradesh.
- ❖ Expressways are the highest class of roads in the road network in India.
- ❖ National Expressways Authority of India under the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways is responsible for the construction and maintenance of expressways.

### **Amendments to Representation of People's Act 1951**

- ❖ The Election Commission of India (ECI) has sought an amendment to the Representation of People Act 1951.
- ❖ It will prevent print media, social media and other digital platforms from carrying political advertisements in the last 48 hours before the polling begins.

*The Commission has sought inclusion of 'print media' and 'other entities' within the ambit of Section 126 (1) (b). The other entities would refer to all social media formats*

- ❖ Section 126 of the Representation of People Act 1951 prevents electronic media from airing any political advertisements in the silent period (48 hours before polling begins).
- ❖ ECI has also made it mandatory to seek pre-certification of the campaign material to be published in newspapers during the 48 hours.

### **Conclave on New Technologies**

- ❖ The Technical Advisory Group (TAG) of National Informatics Centre (NIC) inaugurated a two-day Technology Conclave in New Delhi.
- ❖ The theme of the conclave was "Technologies for NextGen Governance".
- ❖ This Technology Conclave is considered to be the first move through a decade of digital technology and setting our path wide toward the New Digital India.

## **INTERNATIONAL**

### **"Panda Bonds" in Chinese Currency - Pakistan**

- ❖ The Pakistan's cabinet has approved the issuance of first-ever renminbi-denominated bonds (**Panda Bonds**) to raise loans from the China's capital markets.



- ❖ With this, Pakistan has moved a step forward to give the Chinese currency a status at par with the US dollar.
- ❖ The bonds will help the government to diversify the investor base of capital market issuance and provide a source of raising Renminbi, the Chinese Currency.
- ❖ This is being done so that Pakistan can finance its yawning trade deficit with Beijing.

**BOND ISSUE IN FOREIGN CURRENCY**

- **Formosa bond**  
A non-New Taiwan Dollar-denominated bond issued by a non-Taiwan entity in the Taiwan market
- **Panda bond**  
A Chinese renminbi-denominated bond issued by a non-China entity in the People's Republic of China market

### France introduced GAFA tax

- ❖ France has introduced a new “GAFA tax” to ensure the global giants pay a fair share of taxes on their massive businesses in Europe.
- ❖ It has been named after the large internet and technology companies Google, Apple, Facebook and Amazon.

### Germany - Denmark rail and road tunnel link

- ❖ The German authorities gave their approval to an US \$8 billion rail and road tunnel linking Denmark and Germany, despite the environmental objections.
- ❖ It is partly funded by the European Union.
- ❖ The 19 km Fehmarn belt link, connecting the Danish island of Lolland to the German island of Fehmarn, was due to be completed in 2024.



- ❖ Once completed, it will become the world’s longest road and rail tunnel.

## Non-Permanent Members of UNSC

- ❖ Five nations, namely,
  - Belgium,
  - Dominican Republic,
  - Germany,
  - Indonesia and
  - South Africa

have assumed the charge as the Non-Permanent Members of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

Permanent Members	China
	France
	Russian Federation
	the United Kingdom
	The United States
Non-permanent Members 2018 - 2019	Côte d'Ivoire
	Equatorial Guinea
	Kuwait
	Peru
	Poland
Non-permanent Members 2019 - 2020	Belgium
	Dominican Republic
	Germany
	Indonesia
	South Africa

- ❖ These five countries will hold a two-year term in the Council with effect from January 1, 2019.
- ❖ The Dominican Republic has been elected in the Security Council for the very first time.
- ❖ They retained the seats vacated by Bolivia, Ethiopia, Kazakhstan, the Netherlands and Sweden on December 31, 2018, after serving their 2-year term.

## Asia Reassurance Initiative Act (ARIA)

- ❖ US President Donald J. Trump has recently signed the “Asia Reassurance Initiative Act (ARIA)” into law.
- ❖ The act establishes a multifaceted U.S. strategy to increase U.S. security, economic interests, and values in the Indo-Pacific region.

### Key highlights of the Act

- ❖ The act will authorize \$1.5 billion in spending for a range of U.S. programs in East and Southeast Asia.
- ❖ It establishes a policy goal to peacefully denuclearize North Korea through the campaign of maximum pressure and engagement.
- ❖ It expresses support for regular arms sales to Taiwan and to enhance the relationship between Taiwan and the US.

### **Panj Tirath site declared as National Heritage**

- ❖ The provincial Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) government in the northwest Pakistan has declared the ancient Hindu religious site of Panj Tirath in Peshawar as national heritage.



- ❖ The KP Directorate of Archaeology and Museums issued a notification under the KP Antiquities Act 2016.
- ❖ Panj Tirath derives its name from the five pools of water in the site which also has a temple.

### **New peace agreement**

- ❖ The ceasefire between Yemen's Houthi rebels and forces loyal to President Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi in the port city of Hodeida came into existence on December 18.
- ❖ The agreement was reached in the UN-mediated talks held in Stockholm.
- ❖ According to the agreement, all combatants should withdraw from Hodeida in 21 days.
- ❖ The UN observers will set up a monitoring team of government and rebel representatives to oversee the peace.

### **Iran approves anti-money laundering bill**

- ❖ The Iranian council known as the Expediency Council approved an anti-money laundering bill to ease trade.
- ❖ This bill will be in line with the standards set by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF).
- ❖ It is considered a major step towards reforms that would bring Iran into line with global norms and could facilitate foreign trade in the face of U.S sanctions.
- ❖ The FATF is an inter-governmental organisation that underpins the fight against money laundering and terrorist financing.
- ❖ Iran is alone with North Korea on the FATF's blacklist.

### **Malaysia's first king to abdicate the throne**

- ❖ Malaysia's monarch Sultan Muhammad V resigned, as the 15th Yang di-Pertuan Agong, from the throne before completing their five-year tenure for the 1st time in Malaysia's history.
- ❖ Under the Malaysia's rotational monarchy system, a king is typically elected for five years from each of the nine Malay royal houses.
- ❖ The selection of the next king can be decided by a vote in the Council of Rulers, made up of all 9 royal households.



### **World Bank President announces resignation**

- ❖ The World Bank President Jim Yong Kim announced that he would step down by 1 February, three and a half years before the expiry of his term in 2022.
- ❖ The Former President Barack Obama appointed Kim as the bank's president in 2012.

- ❖ He was reappointed by the bank's board for a second five-year term in 2017.
- ❖ Under Kim's leadership, the bank set the goal of eliminating extreme poverty by 2030.
- ❖ The World Bank CEO Kristalina Georgieva will serve as interim president upon Kim's February 1 departure.

### **Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2018**

- ❖ The UN office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has recently released a latest Global Report on "Trafficking in Persons".
- ❖ As per the report, Children now account for 30% of those being trafficked, and far more girls are detected than boys.
- ❖ This report shows that more victims of human trafficking were reported to the United Nation's agency in 2016 than at any time over the past 13 years.
- ❖ Trafficking for sexual exploitation is the most prevalent form in European countries.
- ❖ In sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East, forced labour is the main factor driving the illicit trade.

### **International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala**

- ❖ The Guatemala President Jimmy Morales has recently announced the termination of the mandate of International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala.
- ❖ The International Commission Against Impunity is known by its Spanish acronym Cicig.



- ❖ But the Guatemala constitutional court had suspended the president's decision to unilaterally terminate the government's pact with the United Nations.
- ❖ The International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG) was set up as an international body to examine and investigate the serious crime in Guatemala.



## **Democracy Index 2019**

- ❖ The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) has released the Democracy Index which ranks 167 countries by 60 indicators across five broad categories.
- ❖ The index classifies each country either as a full democracy, flawed democracy, hybrid regime or authoritarian.
- ❖ India was at the 41st place with a score of 7.23/10 and was placed in the flawed democracies category.
- ❖ Australia and New Zealand are the only “full democracies” in the entire Asia-Pacific region.
- ❖ Some key findings of the democracy index are,
  - Only 4.5% of the world’s people live in a full democracy.
  - The overall global score remained stable in 2018 for the first time in three years.
  - 42 countries experienced a decline in their index score compared with 89 in 2017 and 48 countries have improved their score.
  - Political participation is the most improved category in the index.

## **Tata Steel's Netherlands plant 'factory of the future'**

- ❖ The World Economic Forum (WEF) has recognised Tata Steel's IJmuiden plant in Netherlands and six others as 'Manufacturing Lighthouses' state-of-the-art production facilities.
- ❖ Tata Steel has successfully adopted and integrated the cutting-edge technologies of the future and drove financial and operational impact.
- ❖ Assessing more than 1,000 factories in 2018, it has been inducted into WEF’s prestigious community.
- ❖ The WEF set up a network of leading intelligent production companies ('Lighthouses') under its 'Shaping the Future of Production' initiative in 2017.
- ❖ It allows the exchange of knowledge and promote collaborations in the area of the 'Fourth Industrial Revolution' in production.

## **Human Rights Television**

- ❖ The world’s first television channel dedicated to human rights was launched in London.
- ❖ It was launched by the International Observatory of Human Rights (IOHR).

## **Palestine takes over chairmanship of G77**

- ❖ Palestine took over the chairmanship of the Group of 77 from Arab Republic of Egypt.

- ❖ The decision to elect Palestine as 2019 Chair of the G77 was taken in September 2018 by the foreign ministers of the Groups' member States.
- ❖ In October 2018, the UN General Assembly approved a resolution enabling Palestine, to have additional privileges and rights.

**Privileges and Rights such as participating in international conferences held under its auspices, for the duration of its role as G77 Chair.**

- ❖ Palestine is not the member-state of UN, but it has the status of non-member observer state similar to Holy city of Vatican.
- ❖ The Chairmanship is based on the system of geographical rotation (between Africa, Asia-Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean) and is held for one year.
- ❖ G77 is a coalition of 134 developing nations (including China) at the United Nations.
- ❖ G77 was formed on 15 June 1964 by the “Joint Declaration of the Seventy-Seven Countries” issued at the UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development).

### **India and Australia mining safety agreement**

- ❖ The Union Cabinet has given its approval for signing a memorandum of understanding with the Australian state of Queensland to improve mining safety in both countries.
- ❖ This agreement will establish a partnership between
  - Directorate General of Mines Safety (DGMS), the department of the Indian Government responsible for granting mining permits and enforcing safety legislation, and
  - Safety in Mines, Testing and Research Station (SIMTARS), Australian research group that works to improve the conditions of mines and provide safety training to workers.
- ❖ This two groups will work together to establish a safety management system, train employees in best safety practices, and organise a number of meetings, including conferences and seminars.

### **Swedish PM elected for second term**

- ❖ The Swedish Parliament ended a four-month-long political uncertainty, electing the Prime Minister Stefan Lofven for a 2nd four-year term.
- ❖ This political uncertainty was due to the September 2018 general elections in which no political party won a majority.



- ❖ Now, Lofven has formed a minority government with support from the Green Party, Center Party and the Liberals.
- ❖ About 115 lawmakers in the 349-member Swedish Parliament voted in favour of Lofven, while 153 MPs voted 'no' and 77 abstained in the no-confidence vote.
- ❖ Under Sweden's political system, a nominee becomes a prime minister as long as a majority of the Parliament (175 members) does not vote against that individual.

### **Outbreak Readiness and Business Impact – White Paper**

- ❖ The World Economic Forum (WEF) has recently released the report on 'The Outbreak Readiness and Business Impact'.
- ❖ The white paper on the report was released by the WEF in collaboration with the Harvard Global Health Institute.
- ❖ The white paper details why and how the business community should contribute more to manage the threat and impact of infectious disease on societies.
- ❖ The important findings of the white paper report are,
  - The number and kind of infectious disease outbreaks have increased significantly over the past 30 years.
  - The world has witnessed 200 epidemic events per year since 2011.
  - Pandemics will be the cause of average annual economic losses of 0.7% of global GDP i.e. \$ 570 billion.
  - This is a threat similar in scale to that estimated for climate change in the coming decades.

### **1<sup>st</sup> World Capital of Architecture for 2020**

- ❖ The UNESCO has named the Brazilian city of Rio de Janeiro as the World Capital of Architecture for 2020.

- ❖ Rio will be the first city to receive the title under a programme launched together by UNESCO and the International Union of Architects (UIA) in November 2018.
- ❖ The city beat Paris and Melbourne to get the position.
- ❖ As the first World Capital of Architecture, Rio de Janeiro will hold a series of events under the theme “All the worlds. Just one world,”.
- ❖ It will also promote the internationally agreed 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development’s 11th Goal: “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.”

### The Global Risks Report 2019

- ❖ The Global Risks Report 2019 has been recently released by the World Economic Forum (WEF).
- ❖ The report describes changes occurring in the global risks landscape from year to year and identifies global catastrophic risks.
- ❖ The Top 5 risks by likelihood as per the latest report are,
  - Extreme weather events.
  - Failure of climate change mitigation and adaption.
  - Major natural disasters.
  - Massive incident of data fraud/theft.
  - Large scale cyberattacks.
- ❖ The Environmental risks dominate the global risks landscape in terms of impact and likelihood for the third year in a row.



- ❖ The Global risks are intensifying, but our capacity to respond to them is declining.
- ❖ The Geopolitics and geo-economic factors, such as uncertainty and nationalism are fuelling risks.

- ❖ The Shorter-term fears are around geopolitical and cyber threats.
- ❖ There is a significant financing gap (US\$18 trillion) in infrastructure capital.

### **Iran satellite failure**

- ❖ Iran launched a satellite named 'Payam' with the Safir satellite carrier on 15 January, but it failed to be placed in orbit in the final stage.
- ❖ The United States has criticised the launch as a breach of a UN Security Council Resolution 2231.
- ❖ US & Israel claims that the space programme is a cover for the development of longer-range ballistic missiles capable of delivering nuclear warheads.
- ❖ Iran also plans to launch another low Earth orbit satellite Doosti (Friendship in Persian).
- ❖ The Payam (Message in Persian) and Doosti were both designed to gather information on environmental changes in Iran.

### **Edelman Trust Barometer report 2019**

- ❖ The 2019 Edelman Trust Barometer report by the Edelman Intelligence has been released.
- ❖ It is an international study based on the opinions of elites that focuses on the principles of trust in business, government, media and NGOs.
- ❖ Based on the findings the report calculates the Global Trust Index.
- ❖ The important findings are
  - India is among the most trusted nations globally when it comes to government, business, NGOs and media but the country's brands are among the least-trusted.
  - India stood at the 2nd place in the informed public category and 3rd place in the general population category where China topped both.
  - Companies headquartered in Switzerland, Germany and Canada were the most trusted ones.
  - Companies headquartered in India, Mexico and Brazil are the least trusted, followed by China and South Korea.

### **Global Talent Competitiveness Index 2019**

- ❖ The Global Talent Competitive Index was released on the first day of the 49th World Economic Forum (WEF) Annual Meeting 2019 in Davos, Switzerland.
- ❖ The annual index is prepared by the INSEAD business school in partnership with Tata Communications and Adecco Group.
- ❖ The index measures how countries grow, attract and retain talent.



### Top 10 cities



- ❖ Even though India has moved up one position to rank 80th on the index, India remains a laggard among the BRICS nations.
- ❖ Switzerland is followed by Singapore, the US, Norway and Denmark in the top five on the list.
- ❖ The talent gap between higher and lower-income countries has widened over the last 5 years.
- ❖ China's ranking fell by two places to 45 but also it managed to be the best performer among BRICS countries.

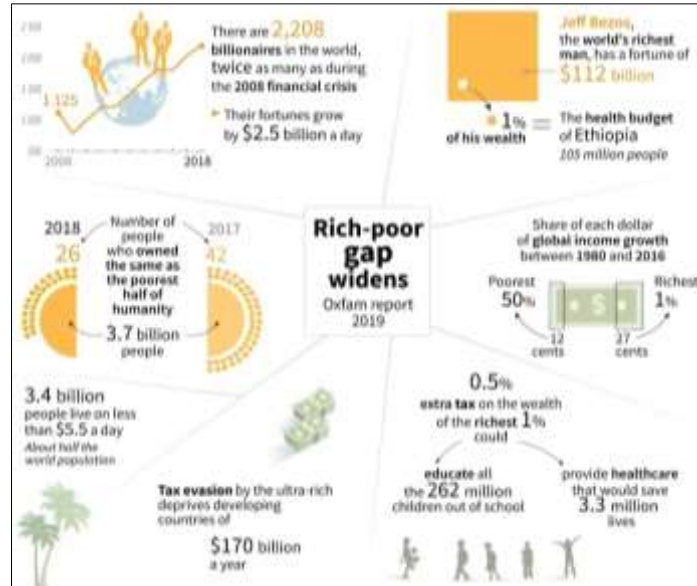
### Top 10 countries



### Oxfam Annual Wealth Check report 2019

- ❖ The Annual Wealth Check report 2019 of Oxfam has been released marking the start of the World Economic Forum in Davos.
- ❖ 26 richest billionaires own as many assets as the 3.8 billion people who make up the poorest half of the world.
- ❖ The rich had grown richer and the poor poorer in 2018 and the widening gap is hindering the fight against poverty.
- ❖ The number of billionaires has doubled during the last 10 years. A new billionaire was being created every two days in 2017-2018.
- ❖ The top 1% of India's richest lot got richer by 39% as against just 3% increase in the wealth for the bottom half of the population.

- ❖ The wealth of the Indian billionaires witnessed an increase by Rs 2,200 crore a day last year.
- ❖ Top 10% of the richest population in India holds 77.4% of the total national wealth.



### Bloomberg Innovation Index 2019

- ❖ The 2019 Bloomberg Innovation Index' of 60 economies, which lists most innovative countries in the world, has been released recently.
- ❖ India has been placed in the Index for the first time ever and has grabbed 54th spot in the Bloomberg Innovation Index.

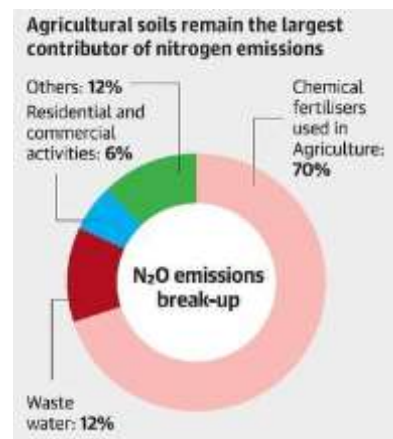


- ❖ UAE, Saudi Arabia, Mexico, Vietnam, Brazil, Kuwait, Qatar, Chile, Argentina, Slovenia are the countries which have been ranked for the first time.
- ❖ South Korea has topped the Bloomberg Innovation Index for the sixth time in a row with a total score of 87.38.
- ❖ It is followed by Germany, Finland, Switzerland, Israel, Singapore, Sweden, U.S., Japan and France in the top 10.

- ❖ The United States has regained its position under the top 10 this year after the nation had been dropped from the top 10 from 2018 Bloomberg Innovation Index.

### **UK to support nitrogen research in India**

- ❖ The UK government has announced a research project to study Nitrogen pollution in India and South Asia.
- ❖ The South Asian Nitrogen Hub will be led by United Kingdom's "Centre for Ecology and Hydrology" under the new partnership programme.
- ❖ India is the only South Asian country which has completed its Nitrogen Assessment and now it is Co-leading the South Asian Assessment for the UN Environment.
- ❖ The five-year programme is being established with funds from the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI).
- ❖ Nitrogen pollution is one of the emerging environmental problem and it is caused by emissions from chemical fertilizers, livestock manure & burning of fossil fuels.



### **Sultan Abdullah elected as New Malaysian King**

- ❖ Malaysia has named Sultan Abdullah Ibni Sultan Ahmad Shah as the country's 16th King.
- ❖ He will officially take over as King or Yang di-Pertuan Agong on January 31, replacing his predecessor Sultan Muhammad V of Kelantan state who resigned on January 6.
- ❖ The 59-year-old Abdullah became Sultan of the Malaysian state of Pahang, succeeding his father Sultan Ahmad Shah.

## **ECONOMY**

### **Survey on Retail Payment Habits of Individuals (SRPHi)**

- ❖ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has launched Survey on Retail Payment Habits of Individuals (SRPHi).
- ❖ The Survey will capture payment habits of individuals in cities of Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Bengaluru and Guwahati.

- ❖ The survey seeks qualitative responses around 6000 individuals from various socio-economic backgrounds on their payment habits.
- ❖ The Sigma Research & Consulting Private Ltd has been engaged to conduct the fieldwork of the survey on behalf of the RBI.

### **India's Fiscal Stability Report - RBI**

- ❖ The Bi-annual Reserve Bank of India has recently released the 18th issue of the Financial Stability Report (FSR) for the year 2018.
- ❖ The FSR reflects the collective assessment of the Sub-Committee of the Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC) on risks to financial stability, as also the resilience of the financial system.
- ❖ This is the first such report that has been published after Mr. Shaktikanta Das became the Governor of RBI in December following Urjit Patel's departure.

#### **Key Findings**

- ❖ The GNPA ratio of both public and private sector banks showed a half-yearly decline, for the first time since March 2015.
- ❖ The Gross Non-Performing Assets (GNPA) of Scheduled Commercial Banks (SCB) ratio declined from 11.5% in March 2018 to 10.8% in September 2018.
- ❖ The ratio of Restructured Standard Advances (RSAs) steadily declined to 0.5% in September 2018.

### **RBI panel on MSME revival**

- ❖ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has appointed an 8-member expert committee headed by the former SEBI chairman U.K. Sinha.
- ❖ The committee will comprehensively review and propose long-term solutions for the economic and financial sustainability of the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector.
- ❖ The MSME sector has been facing stress due to the demonetisation exercise and implementation of GST.

### **GST on inter-state office services**

- ❖ The Karnataka AAAR (Appellate Authority for Advance Rulings) has upheld the levy of GST on services rendered by one office branch to other branches of the same company located in different states.
- ❖ In-house service functions such as human resources and payrolls, if carried out from a centre in one state for offices in other states, then it will attract GST for which it will have to issue an invoice.

### **Vijay Mallya declared as Fugitive Economic Offender**

- ❖ The Prevention of Money Laundering (PMLA) court in Mumbai has declared Vijay Mallya as a Fugitive Economic Offender.
- ❖ Vijay Mallya is the first businessman to be charged under the new fugitive economic offender's act 2018.
- ❖ The person so declared can challenge the proclamation in the High Court within 30 days of such declaration according to the Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, 2018.

### **GST panel approves 'calamity cess' by Kerala**

- ❖ The Group of States' Finance Ministers (GoFM) led by the Deputy Chief Minister of Bihar, Sushil Kumar Modi approved levy of 1% 'calamity cess' by Kerala.
- ❖ The calamity cess will be for a period of 2 years to fund rehabilitation work in the state of Kerala.
- ❖ The GST law provides for levy of special taxes for a specified period to raise additional resources during any natural calamity or disaster.

### **5-member panel to boost digital payments**

- ❖ The RBI constituted a 5-member high-level committee to suggest measures to strengthen the safety and security of digital payments in the country.
- ❖ The high-level committee will be headed under the Aadhaar architect Nandan Nilekani.
- ❖ The decision aims to encourage digitisation of payments and enhance financial inclusion through digitisation.

### **RBI allows 'tokenisation'**

- ❖ The RBI has allowed tokenization of debit, credit and prepaid card transactions to enhance the safety of the digital payments' ecosystem in the country.
- ❖ Tokenisation acts as an additional layer of security as it masks sensitive card data such as the 16-digit Account Number, expiration date and security code.
- ❖ The central bank has allowed card schemes like Visa, Mastercard and others to start issuing tokens for third party payment applications as well.

### **GST exemption limit doubled**

- ❖ The GST council has raised the annual turnover for availing composition scheme to Rs 1.5 crore from Rs 1 crore effective from April 1, 2019.



- ❖ The move comes to provide relief to small businesses under Goods and Services (GST) regime.
- ❖ The Council has doubled the GST exemption limit to Rs 20 lakh for north eastern states and Rs 40 lakh for the rest of the country.
- ❖ The council also allowed Kerala to levy 1 per cent calamity cess on intra-state sales for a period of up to 2 years.

**GST Exemption Limit Increased to Rs 40 lakh, Composition limit increased to 1.5 Cr, Relief to real Estate etc...Outcome of 32nd GST Council Meeting**

### Global Economic Prospects report 2019

- ❖ The World Bank has released the Global Economic Prospects report 2019 titled “Darkening Skies”.
- ❖ The Growth among advanced economies is expected to drop to 2% this year.
- ❖ Slowing external demand, rising borrowing costs and persistent policy uncertainties may impact the outlook for Emerging Market and Developing Economies (EMDE).
- ❖ South Asia is expected to grow at 7.1% in 2019 with much of the contribution would come from India.



### Gold Monetisation Scheme (GMS)

- ❖ The RBI has made changes with the Gold Monetisation Scheme (GMS) to allow
  - Charitable institutions,

- Central government entities and
  - State government entities
- to deposit gold under the GMS.
- ❖ The ambit of the scheme was expanded to,
    - Bring out the unaccounted gold with the charitable institutions.
    - Enable the government agencies to deposit gold which they had confiscated.

### Background

- ❖ The GMS was launched with the tagline “Earn, while you secure”.
- ❖ The scheme provides the dual benefit of interest (denominated in gold) on the gold deposited and an option of encashing the gold at maturity.
- ❖ All the scheduled commercial banks except the RRBs are authorised to implement the scheme.

**Gold Monetisation Scheme**

- 👉 A person or entity can earn **interest in either cash or gold units**, by depositing the precious metal with the banks
- 👉 Interest payable **after 30/60 days** of opening of the account
- 👉 Threshold limit for deposit-**30 gms**
- 👉 Interest earned on it exempted from income tax and capital gains tax
- 👉 A person or institution holding surplus gold can get it valued from BIS-approved hallmarking centres
- 👉 Minimum period for Gold Savings Account -**One year**

India imports as much as 800-1000 tonnes of gold each year  
Though stocks of gold in India are estimated to be over 20,000 tonnes, mostly this gold is neither traded, nor monetised

**Gold Monetisation Scheme**

- 👉 Minimum deposit- 30 grams
- 👉 Short term(1-3 years) , medium term(5-7 years) and long term(12-15 years)
- 👉 Interest: 2.25-2.5%
- 👉 To run till maturity unless depositors withdraw them
- 👉 Resident Indians, MFs and ETFs can make the deposits

### **‘Know Your Budget’ series in Twitter - MoF**

- ❖ The Union Finance Ministry has started the Know Your Budget series on Twitter to educate the general public about the budgetary process.
- ❖ The series contains definitions of various terms used in the budget.
- ❖ The series began with explaining the terms: Union Budget and Vote on Account.
- ❖ The government on February 1, 2019 would unveil the interim Budget for 2019-20.

## UK Sinha-headed working group to study Group insolvency

- ❖ The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) has set up a 11-member working group under the Chairmanship of former SEBI chief UK Sinha.
- ❖ The working group (7 members + 4 invitees) will study the concept of 'Group Insolvency' and suggest a suitable framework.
- ❖ At present, the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) provides for the resolution or liquidation of only individual stressed companies.
- ❖ So, a framework within the IBC is sought to be created for the resolution/liquidation of an entire stressed corporate group having several entities in multiple NCLT jurisdictions.

## Committee on GST Revenue Shortfall

- ❖ Bihar Deputy CM Sushil Modi will head the seven-member committee to analyse the revenue shortfall faced by states after the GST rollout.
- ❖ The shortfall in collection stood between 14-37% in the April-November period for states including Punjab, Gujarat, Goa, Bihar and Himachal Pradesh.
- ❖ Among the union territories, Puducherry is facing maximum shortfall of 43%.
- ❖ Only Andhra Pradesh and 5 north-eastern states Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Sikkim and Nagaland have recorded revenue increase post the GST roll out.

## India Ratings Report

- ❖ According to a report released by India Ratings, India's fiscal deficit may go up to 3.2% in Financial Year 2020.
- ❖ It is due to populist schemes like farm loan waivers and other financial support schemes which may be announced before the forthcoming general elections.
- ❖ Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Kerala are most susceptible to see an increase in debt in Financial Year 2020.
- ❖ States' revenue account may clock an aggregate deficit of 0.5% of GDP (Gross Domestic Product) in FY20 due to higher growth in revenue spending than revenue receipt.
- ❖ Earlier a fiscal deficit of 2.8% was forecasted by India Ratings in FY19 mid-year forecast.

**In Focus**

**THERE ARE SOME FISCAL SLIPPAGE** concerns: Apr-Sep deficit at **91.3%** of budget estimates

**UNCERTAINTY OVER SPECTRUM** realisation, GST and lower RBI dividend have put pressure on revenue

Rising fiscal deficit at this stage could exacerbate inflation and current account deficit

Govt looking for revenues to meet deficit target of **3.2%**

## Goods and Services Tax Appellate Tribunal

- ❖ Cabinet has approved creation of National Bench of the Goods and Services Tax Appellate Tribunal (GSTAT).

### The features of the GSTAT

- ❖ The National Bench of the Goods and Services Tax Appellate Tribunal will be situated in New Delhi.
- ❖ It will be Presided over by its President and shall consist of one Technical Member (Centre) and one Technical Member (State).
- ❖ It is the forum of second appeal in GST laws and the first common forum of dispute resolution between Centre and States.
- ❖ The appeals against the orders in first appeals issued by the Appellate Authorities under the Central and State GST Acts lie before the GSTAT.
- ❖ GSTAT will ensure that there is uniformity in redressal of disputes arising under GST, and therefore, in implementation of GST across the country.



## SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

### Body Scanners From 2019

- ❖ Airports across India are set to install body scanners from next year.
- ❖ The full-body scanners to be used in all airports are called "millimetre wave" machines.
- ❖ It bounces electromagnetic waves off the traveller to provide an animated image where a suspicious item might be located.
- ❖ The Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) will come out with technical specifications following which airports can install these machines.



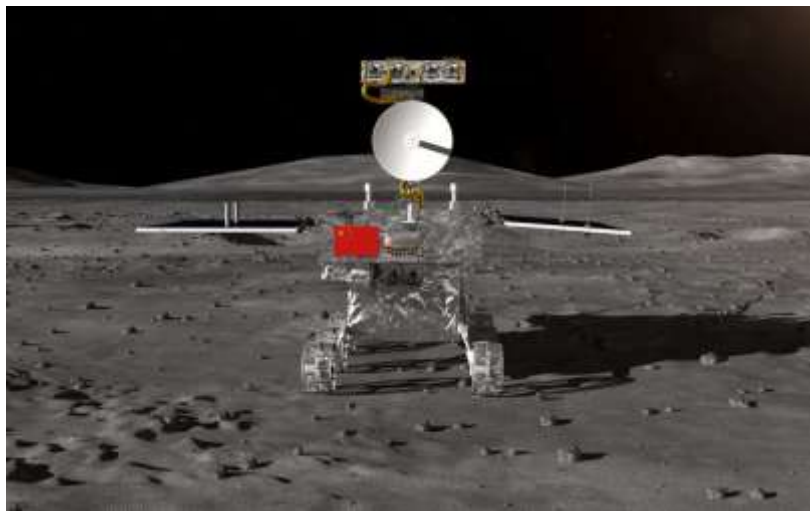


### TaiGenomics

- ❖ Microsoft and Taiwan’s AI Labs have collaborated and unveiled TaiGenomics, using Microsoft Azure Cloud computing and storage capabilities.
- ❖ It is an Artificial Intelligence (AI) based genetic analysis platform.
- ❖ The platform uses AI to process, analyse and draw inferences from vast amounts of medical and genetic data provided by patients and hospitals.
- ❖ TaiGenomics could decrease human error by helping the doctors to predict diseases efficiently.

### Chang'e-4 Spacecraft

- ❖ The probe, the Chang'e-4, entered a planned orbit "to prepare for the first ever soft landing on the far side of the moon".



- ❖ The space probe is moving into position to land on the dark side of the moon for the first time.
- ❖ China launched the Chang'e-4 probe on December 08, carried by a Long March-3B rocket.



- ❖ Soft-landing on the far side is challenging because any direct communication between the rover and Earth will be blocked by the other hemisphere.
- ❖ To solve this, China launched a relay satellite, Queqiao, or Magpie Bridge, between Earth and the moon.

### **Algorithm to detect rare cells**

- ❖ Researchers from IIT Delhi have developed an algorithm that can find rare cells from a very large pool of cells in a matter of seconds.
- ❖ The algorithm, Finder of Rare Entities (FiRE), assigns a rareness score to each cell that is computed based on the gene expression profile of about 20,000 genes.
- ❖ Cells having scores above a certain threshold are reported as rare cells.
- ❖ The new algorithm has superior sensitivity and specificity compared with existing methods.

### **Bagbazar-O-Rosogolla Utsob**

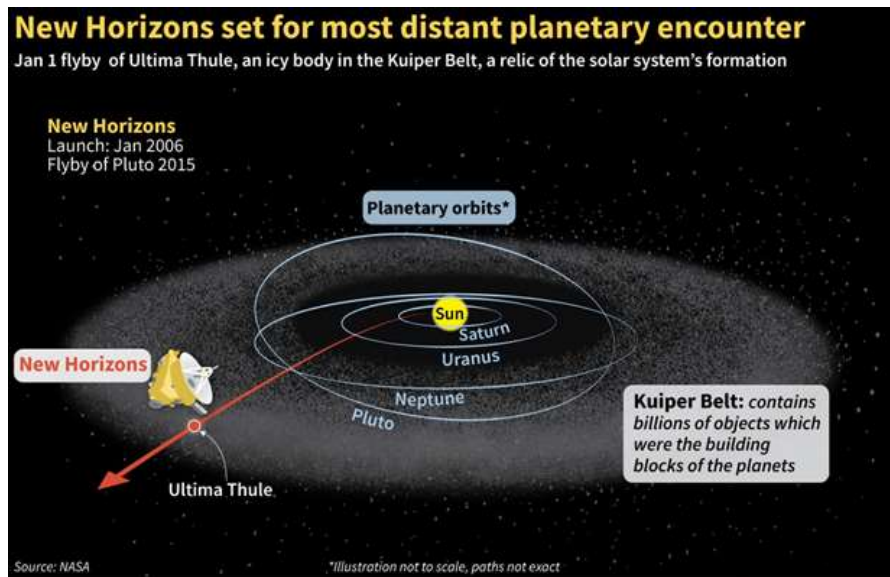
- ❖ Bagbazar-O-Rosogolla Utsob, a 3-day festival has been inaugurated at Bagbazar, Kolkata to mark the 150th year of invention of Rosogolla.
- ❖ During the occasion, a postal stamp and a statue of Nabin Chandra Das, the inventor of Rosogolla, was unveiled.

### **NASA's New Horizons spacecraft**

- ❖ NASA's New Horizons spacecraft became the first explorer to fly past the mysterious object - Ultima Thule, located some 4 billion miles from Earth.
- ❖ This is a historic flyby of the farthest, and quite possibly the oldest, cosmic body ever explored by humankind.

#### **Ultima Thule**

- ❖ Ultima Thule is located in the Kuiper belt in the outermost regions of the Solar System, beyond the orbit of Neptune.
- ❖ It measures approximately 30 km in diameter, and is irregularly shaped.
- ❖ Ultima Thule has a reddish color, probably caused by exposure of hydrocarbons to sunlight over billions of years.
- ❖ Ultima Thule belongs to a class of Kuiper belt objects called the "cold classicals", which have nearly circular orbits with low inclinations to the solar plane.



### **Paper Sensor to detect freshness of Milk**

- ❖ The Scientists at IIT - Guwahati, have developed a simple paper kit that can test freshness of milk and tell how well it has been pasteurized.
- ❖ Aided with a smart phone app, the kit can help to ensure that the milk is consumed before it turns too sour.
- ❖ Using the kit, it takes just 15 minutes to detect 'raw' milk from pasteurized milk.
- ❖ A milk enzyme, Alkaline Phosphatase (ALP), is considered to be an indicator of milk quality.
- ❖ The scientists have used an ordinary filter paper to prepare the detector, which was impregnated with chemical probes that preferentially react with ALP resulting in colour change.

### **'Brain Pacemaker' - WAND**

- ❖ The Scientists have developed a device named WAND, which stands for "Wireless Artefact-free Neuromodulation Device", to treat disorders like epilepsy and Parkinson's disease.



- ❖ It works like a “Pacemaker for the brain” to monitor the brain’s electrical activity and stimulate the brain with electric current.
- ❖ The device is both wireless and autonomous and can simultaneously stimulate and record the electrical signals in the brain.

### **Juno probe captured volcanic plumes on Io**

- ❖ Juno spacecraft, has beamed back new images of volcanic plumes on Jupiter’s moon Io, captured during the mission’s 17th flyby of the gas giant.
- ❖ Juno spacecraft is NASA’s solar-powered probe on Jupiter.
- ❖ Io is the most volcanic body in our solar system.
- ❖ Io's volcanoes were discovered by NASA's Voyager spacecraft in 1979.
- ❖ Images could lead to new insights into Jupiter's interactions with its five moons.

### **Apollo 8 - 50th anniversary**

- ❖ NASA’s 1st flight to moon, Apollo 8, marks 50th anniversary on December 21, 2018.
- ❖ It was the second manned spaceflight mission in the United States Apollo space program, was launched on December 21, 1968.
- ❖ It became the first manned spacecraft to leave low Earth orbit, reach the Moon, orbit it, and safely return.
- ❖ The 3-astronaut crew Frank Borman, James Lovell, and William Anders became the first humans to travel beyond low Earth orbit, see Earth as a whole planet, and enter the gravity well of another celestial body.



### **Korolev Crater**

- ❖ Korolev Crater is an icy- crater on Mars found recently.
- ❖ It was captured by European Space Agency’s (ESA) Mars Express mission.



- ❖ The crater floor can reach depths of two kilometres (1.2 miles) below its rim, deeper than Earth’s Grand Canyon.
- ❖ The Mars Express Mission was launched back in June 2003 and entered orbit around the red planet in December of the same year.
- ❖ Since then, the probe has been surveying the surface of Mars using a high-resolution camera as well as other tools like radars and spectrometers.

### **New planet - HD 21749b**

- ❖ NASA's Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite (TESS) has discovered a planet named HD21749b orbiting around the star HD 21749.
- ❖ The planet lies about 53 light years from earth in the faint constellation reticulum.



- ❖ HD 21749b completes one orbit of its host star, which is nearly as bright as our sun, every 36 earth days.
- ❖ It is a “sub Neptune”, around three times bigger than earth and 23 times more massive than earth, which means it's likely gaseous rather than rocky.

### **IIT scientists developed Space fuel**

- ❖ The IIT-Madras team created ‘space fuel’ by trapping carbon dioxide in crystalline form with the help of water molecules.
- ❖ This would in future help to curb greenhouse gases.
- ❖ This was made in vacuum, 1 thousand billion times below the atmospheric pressure called ultra-high vacuum (UHV) and temperature close to minus 263 degree Celsius.
- ❖ These conditions are present in deep space which they mimicked in the lab.
- ❖ The Study was published in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS).

### **NIC Command and Control Centre**

- ❖ The Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY) inaugurated the National Informatics Centre (NIC)'s Command and Control Centre (CCC) and its Centre for Excellence in Artificial Intelligence.
- ❖ It aims to provide a platform to provide innovative new solutions and to test and develop solutions for projects undertaken by NIC at central and state level.



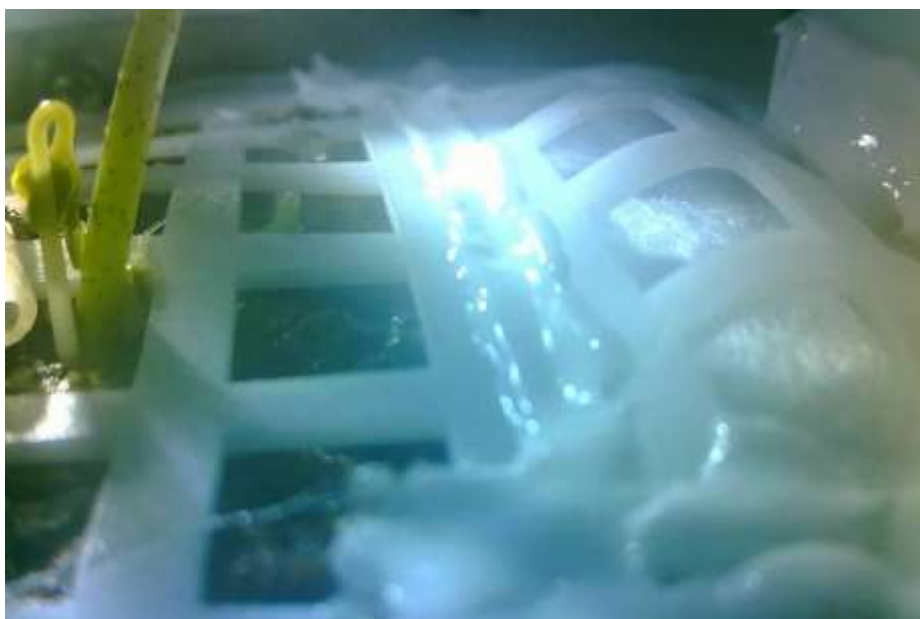
- ❖ It has been established with a motto 'Inclusive AI' for responsive governance to work towards improving Government service delivery to citizens.

### **Human Space Flight Centre - ISRO**

- ❖ The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is setting up a Human Space Flight Centre to carry out the country's maiden manned mission into space by 2021.
- ❖ The new organisation will be based out of Bengaluru.
- ❖ It will be in charge of all human-related space activities at the ISRO and operate on a new management structure with senior scientist Unnikrishnan Nair as its director.
- ❖ ISRO chairman K. Sivan further named R. Hutton as the project director for Gaganyaan. Hutton currently helms the PSLV light vehicle programme.

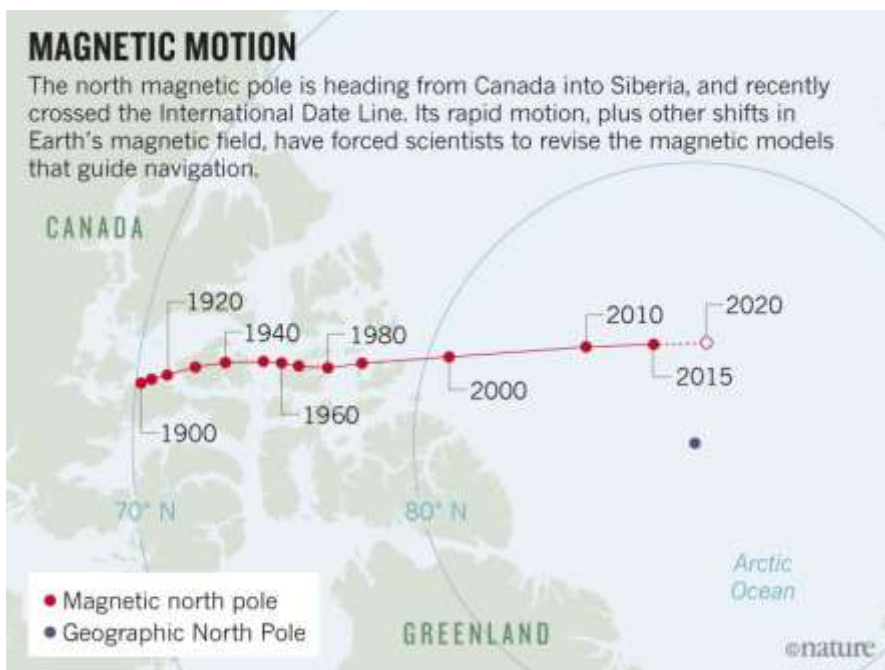
### **Chang'e-4 probe – Cotton sprout**

- ❖ A cotton seed carried to the Moon by China's recent Chang'e-4 probe has sprouted, the first for any biological matter to grow on the Moon.
- ❖ On January 3, China's robotic spacecraft Chang'e-4 landed on the far side of the moon, a first in the human history of space exploration.
- ❖ The 1.3-tonne lander, which made a soft landing on the Moon, carried the seeds of cotton, oilseed rape, potato and arabidopsis, as well as eggs of the fruit fly and some yeast, to form a simple mini biosphere.
- ❖ The lunar mini biosphere experiment on the lander is designed to test photosynthesis and respiration.



### **Magnetic North Pole movement**

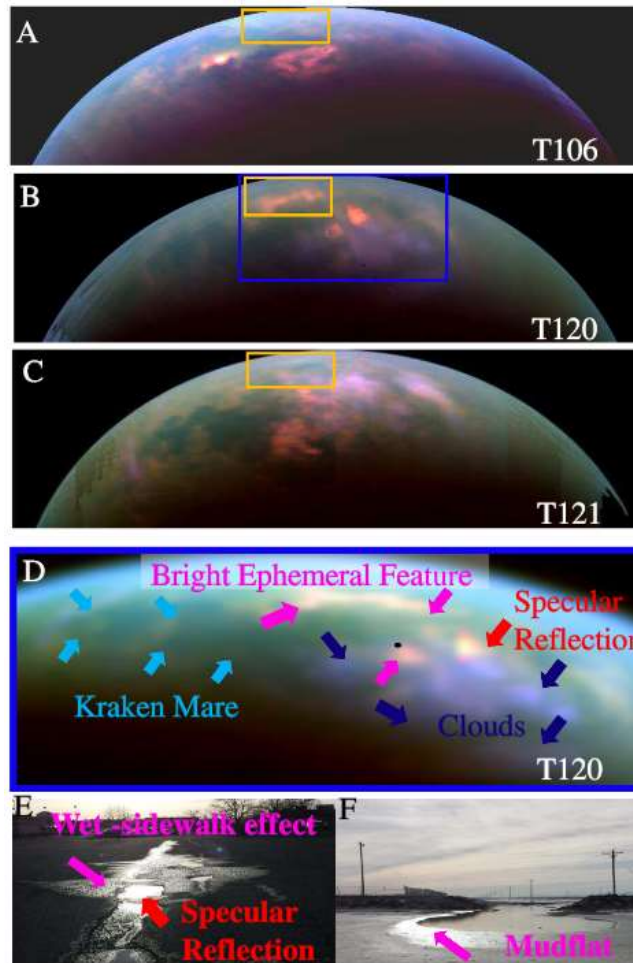
- ❖ Researchers say the magnetic North Pole is skittering away from Canada, towards Siberia.
- ❖ It is driven by liquid iron sloshing within the planet's core.



- ❖ On 15<sup>th</sup> January, Scientists are set to update the World Magnetic Model, which describes the planet's magnetic field and underlies all modern navigation, from the systems that steer ships at sea to Google Maps on smartphones.

### **Evidence of methane rainfall on Titan**

- ❖ The Scientists have found evidence of methane rainfall on the north pole of Titan, the largest moon of Saturn, using data from the Cassini spacecraft.
- ❖ The rainfall would be the first indication of the start of a summer season in Titan's northern hemisphere.
- ❖ Reflective surface represents the first observations of summer rainfall on the moon's northern hemisphere.
- ❖ If compared to Earth's yearly cycle of four seasons, a season on Titan lasts seven Earth years.
- ❖ The Cassini mission was a collaboration between **NASA, Europe Space agency and Italian space agency**. It was launched in **October 1997**.
- ❖ The purpose of the spacecraft is to study the planet Saturn and its system, including its rings and natural satellites.



### Japan launches Epsilon-4 rocket with 7 satellites

- ❖ Japan has recently launched the Epsilon – 4 rocket carrying 7 satellites from the Uchinoura Space Center in Kagoshima.
- ❖ The Epsilon is a solid fuel rocket equipped with artificial intelligence technology that cuts labour and launch costs.
- ❖ It can be controlled from the ground by just two personal computers.

#### Note

- ❖ One of the 7 satellites is supposed to generate fake meteor shower.
- ❖ It aims to create the world's first artificial meteor shower next year, above the coastal region of Hiroshima Prefecture.

### SpaceX 's communications satellites

- ❖ The SpaceX rocket delivered 10 satellites to low-Earth orbit, completing a two-year campaign by Iridium Communications.
- ❖ This will replace its original fleet with a new generation of mobile communication technology and added global aircraft tracking capability.

- ❖ Previously used first stage was recovered again with a bullseye landing on a "droneship" in the ocean while the upper stage continued on to orbit.
- ❖ The 8<sup>th</sup> and final launch of the Iridium NEXT project completed the delivery of 75 new satellites to orbit for the McLean Virginia company.
- ❖ Sixty-six will be operational and nine will serve as in-orbit spares. Six other satellites remain on the ground as spares.

### **BES EXPO 2019**

- ❖ The 25th International conference and exhibition on terrestrial and satellite broadcasting, BES EXPO 2019 was held recently at New Delhi.
- ❖ The theme of the exhibition is "Next Gen Broadcasting in the IT World".
- ❖ The BES EXPO 2019 was organized by the Broadcast Engineering Society India (BES).



### **Young Scientist Programme**

- ❖ The ISRO has announced Young Scientist Programme to inculcate and nurture space research fervour in young minds.
- ❖ The modalities of the Young Scientist Programme are,
  - It would be a one-month programme.
  - Mostly 8th standard passed out students will be given lecturers and access to research laboratories.
  - 3 students from each of the 29 States and 7 Union Territories will be selected for the Young Scientist program.
  - The students will be exposed to the practical experience of building small satellites.

### **Website to Aid Handloom Weavers**

- ❖ Microsoft India launched a new e-commerce platform 're-weave.in' under its project ReWeave to aid handloom weavers.

- ❖ This e-commerce platform will help to connect the artisans to buyers directly, enabling them to expand to newer customers and markets.
- ❖ Microsoft in association with the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) has also curated a special curriculum in 'CAD and Colour for Handloom Weaving' to provide digital training in handloom design.
- ❖ Project ReWeave was initiated by Microsoft India (R&D) Private Limited in 2016 as part of its Philanthropies efforts.

### **US spy satellite**

- ❖ A US spy satellite has been launched into orbit from California.
- ❖ A powerful Delta 4 Heavy rocket carrying the National Reconnaissance Office satellite blasted off from Vandenberg Air Force Base.
- ❖ The mission, dubbed as NROL-7, is the company's 132nd successful launch since it was formed in December 2006.
- ❖ This was the second attempt after the launch was postponed because of a communication problem between the control centre and the launch site.
- ❖ The National Reconnaissance Office is responsible for U.S. intelligence satellites.
- ❖ United Launch Alliance is a joint venture of Lockheed Martin and Boeing.

### **Earth's oldest rock found in Moon Sample**

- ❖ Scientists discovered the oldest Earth rock on the Moon, which is found from the lunar sample bought by the Apollo 14 astronauts in February 1971.
- ❖ This rock was formed between 4 and 4.1 billion years ago, about 12.4 miles beneath the Earth's crust.
- ❖ The 2-gram fragment of rock was composed of quartz, feldspar, and zircon -- all commonly found on Earth and highly unusual on the Moon.





## BSNL to Offer Data Connectivity Services via SMS in India

- ❖ BSNL has signed a partnership agreement with the French company Be-Bound to offer data connectivity through SMS in areas where there is no Internet connectivity or signal breaks.
- ❖ This technology was first introduced in France and it is also being tested in some of the African countries.
- ❖ The SMS based data connectivity will work with the help of a technology embedded in a mobile App.
- ❖ The app will detect if the user's area has poor network connectivity. If yes, then the app will send commands to the Be-Bound server.
- ❖ Be-Bound server will facilitate SMS based data connectivity after getting a command from the app.
- ❖ The connectivity is based on SMS sent to-and-fro between the app and the Be-Bound server.

## 'Lightest satellite' Kalamsat V2 launched into orbit

- ❖ ISRO has launched the Kalamsat-V2 from Sriharikota space centre using Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) – a four-stage rocket.
- ❖ The satellite is named after former president and Indian scientist Dr Abdul Kalam.
- ❖ It is the lightest satellite to be ever built and launched into orbit and it is also ISRO's first launch of a satellite built by a private firm.
- ❖ It is a communications satellite for ham radio transmission, a form of wireless communication used by amateurs for non-commercial activities.
- ❖ The satellite is being built by students belonging to Space Kidz India, a Chennai-based space education firm.
- ❖ The satellite cost 1.2m Indian rupees and was built during the span of six days.
- ❖ ISRO has made an attempt to recover the dead rocket stage in this launch by converting 4th stage into an experimental orbital platform to conduct small experiments in space.



## World's longest 3D printed concrete bridge opened in china

- ❖ The World's longest 3D printed concrete bridge was opened in China.
- ❖ It is located on the Wenzaobang River in Shanghai.



- ❖ The Bridge is designed by Professor Xy Weiguo from Tsinghua University in China.
- ❖ The bridge is of 26.3 metre-long and 3.6-metre-wide and is made out of 44 hollowed-out 3D printed concrete blocks.

### **Roshni app**

- ❖ The IIT-Ropar, has developed an app Roshni that would help the Visually Impaired to recognise currency notes.
- ❖ The app can recognise both old and new notes and gives audio information as to which note you are holding in your hands.
- ❖ Roshni is the first Android app, which recognise INR currency notes.

### **New Anti-Radiation Missile (NGRAM)**

- ❖ India's first indigenously developed Next Generation Anti-Radiation Missile (NGRAM) was successfully tested at the missile testing range in Balasore, Odisha.
- ❖ DRDO has created this missile as a surface to air missile and is screened by Sukhoi-30 MKI fighter jet.
- ❖ The new-generation anti-radiation missile (NGRAM) has the Strike range of 100 kilometres.
- ❖ This is the first indigenous air-to-ground missile developed by the DRDO, after the supersonic BrahMos cruise missile developed jointly with Russia.

## ENVIRONMENT

### Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI)

- ❖ Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI) reported that Sweden has been named the first best performing country in the CCPI 2019 list.
- ❖ CCPI evaluates the climate protection performance of 60 countries, responsible for over 90% of global energy-related CO2 emissions.

Rank	Country	Score**	
1	–	–	
2	–	–	
3	–	–	
4	– Sweden	76.28	
5	▲ Morocco	70.48	
6	▼ Lithuania	70.47	
7	▲ Latvia	68.31	
8	– United Kingdom	65.92	
9	▲ Switzerland	65.42	
10	▲ Malta	65.06	
11	▲ India	62.93	
12	▼ Norway	62.80	
13	▼ Finland	62.61	
14	▼ Croatia	62.39	
15	▲ Denmark	61.96	

- ❖ Morocco has been named second in the CCPI 2019 followed by Lithuania is in the 3rd position.
- ❖ The bottom 5 in the list are Saudi Arabia, U.S., Iran, South Korea, and Taiwan.
- ❖ With the connection of the world’s largest solar plant to the grid, Morocco is on track for achieving its target of 42% installed renewable energy capacities by 2020.
- ❖ The Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI) is an instrument designed to enhance transparency in international climate politics.
- ❖ It is an annual publication by German watch, New Climate Institute and Climate Action Network Europe.
- ❖ It evaluates the climate protection performance of 60 countries, responsible for over 90% of global energy-related CO2 emissions.

### Parivesh

- ❖ An ambitious web-based single-window system ‘Parivesh’ is set to be rolled out in all the states by January 15 to provide ‘quick and fast’ environmental clearances for industries.
- ❖ Parivesh expands as “Pro-Active and Responsive facilitation by Interactive, Virtuous and Environmental Single-window Hub”.
- ❖ The system has been designed, developed and hosted by the

- Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change,  
with the technical support from the National Informatics Centre, (NIC).
- ❖ It is an automated system for submission, clearance and monitoring of the proposals for seeking Environment, Forest, Wildlife and CRZ (Coastal Regulation Zone) Clearances from various authorities.



### **Green – Ag Project**

- ❖ The Government has launched the
  - “Green – Ag: Transforming Indian Agriculture for global environmental benefits and the conservation of critical biodiversity and forest landscapes”
 in association with Global Environment Facility (GEF).
- ❖ The project would be implemented in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) in high-conservation-value landscapes of 5 States,
  - Madhya Pradesh - Chambal Landscape
  - Mizoram - Dampa Landscape
  - Odisha - Similipal Landscape
  - Rajasthan - Desert National Park Landscape
  - Uttarakhand - Corbett-Rajaji Landscape.
- ❖ The Green-Ag project seeks to integrate biodiversity, climate change and sustainable land management objectives and practices into Indian agriculture.

### **Mandal Dam Project**

- ❖ The Prime Minister has laid the foundation stone for the Mandal Dam Project on the North Koel River.

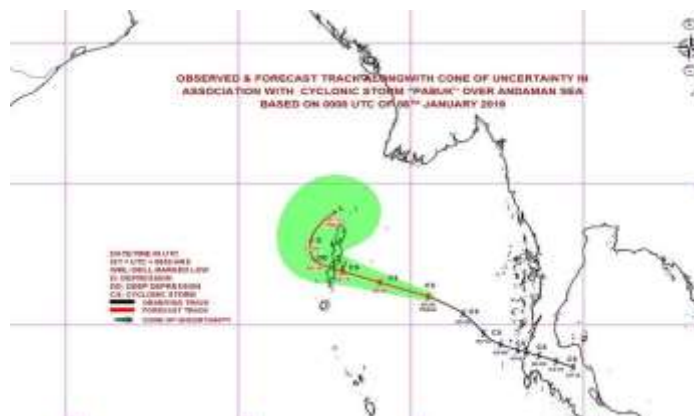
- ❖ The construction of the Mandal Dam began in 1972 and continued till 1993.



- ❖ Later it was stalled over the concerns raised by the Bihar Forest Department.
- ❖ The project threatens to submerge the portions of the Palamau Tiger Reserve and Betla National Park.
- ❖ The North Koel River rises on the Ranchi Plateau in Jharkhand.
- ❖ It is a tributary of River Sone that joins the river Ganga in Bihar.

### **Cyclone Pabuk**

- ❖ The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has stated that cyclone Pabuk weakened into deep-depression and made landfall over the Bay Islands such as Port Blair.



- ❖ Pabuk, a once in the three-decades weather system, originated over the Gulf of Thailand and its neighbourhood.

### **AAI banned single-use plastic items**

- ❖ The Airport Authority of India (AAI) has recently banned single-use plastic items at 16 airports.



- ❖ The 16 airports declared as single-use plastic free are Indore, Bhopal, Ahmedabad, Bhubaneswar, Tirupati, Trichy, Vijayawada, Dehradun, Chandigarh, Vadodara, Madurai, Raipur, Vizag, Pune, Kolkata and Varanasi.

### **Impact of increase in salinity on Gangetic Dolphins**

- ❖ A five-year study by researchers
  - Sangita Mitra (National Biodiversity Authority, Chennai) and
  - Mahua Roy Chowdhury, (a marine biologist Calcutta)has been published in the Journal of Threatened Taxa.
- ❖ The research has found that raising water salinity level is threatening the habitat of Gangetic river dolphins.
- ❖ Gangetic Dolphins are the only surviving freshwater dolphin in India.
- ❖ Gangetic Dolphins are found in the river systems of Ganga, Brahmaputra, Meghna and Karnaphuli- Sangu in Nepal, India and Bangladesh.
- ❖ The IUCN status of the Gangetic Dolphin is Endangered. Gangetic Dolphin is the National Aquatic Animal of India.

### **National Clean Air Programme**

- ❖ The Union Environment Ministry has recently launched the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP).
- ❖ It aims to tackle the challenge of increasing pollution in the cities and towns.
- ❖ The important features of the programme are
  - It is a 5-year action plan with a tentative target of 20-30% reduction in concentrations of PM10 and PM2.5 by 2024, with 2017 as the base year.
  - The plan covers 102 non-attainment cities, across 23 states and Union territories,
  - These cities were identified by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) on the basis of their ambient air quality data between 2011 and 2015.
  - The plan document is not binding on the states since the document is not a legal document.

- ❖ **Cities are considered as Non-attainment cities, if they were consistently showing poorer air quality than the National Ambient Air Quality Standards.**
- ❖ **Cities included under the list of Non-attainment cities Delhi, Varanasi, Bhopal, Kolkata, Noida, Muzaffarpur, and Mumbai.**

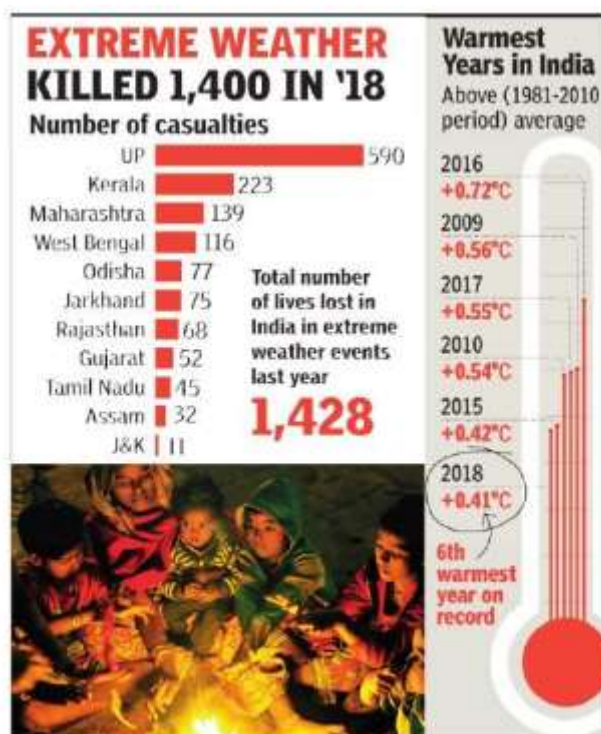
## Northeast is home to six new lizards

- ❖ The Researchers have discovered six new species of bent-toed geckos from the North Eastern India.
- ❖ Geckos are a type of small lizard.

Species	Found in
Guwahati bent- toed gecko	Guwahati city
Kaziranga bent- toed gecko	Assam's Kaziranga National Park
Jaintia bent- toed gecko	Jaintia hills of Meghalaya
Nagaland bent- toed gecko	Khonoma village in Nagaland
Abhayapuri bent- toed gecko	Found only in the vicinity of Abhayapuri town in Assam's Bongaigaon district
Jampui bent- toed gecko	Tripura's Jampui Hills.

## Climate of India during 2018 – IMD Report

- ❖ The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) has recently released a report titled 'Climate of India during 2018'.
- ❖ As per the report, 2018 was the 6th warmest year in India since 1901 and 4th warmest year globally on record.
- ❖ The report showed that the average temperature over India during 2018 was "significantly above normal".
- ❖ The annual mean surface air temperature (averaged over the country) during the year was 0.41°C above (1981-2010) average.
- ❖ The annual mean temperature during 1901-2018 showed an increasing trend of 0.6 °C per 100 years.
- ❖ All the six warmest years on record in India were in the last 10 years.
- ❖ As far as 2018 is concerned, the winter season was the fifth warmest since 1901.



### **14th session of the CoP to UNCCD**

- ❖ As per the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, India will host the 14th session of the Conference of Parties (CoP) to United Nations Convention to combat Desertification (UNCCD) in 2019.
- ❖ The conference aims to address the issues of land degradation and desertification.
- ❖ UNCCD COP-14 aims to showcase the India's commitment to achieve land degradation neutrality by 2030.

### **Sustainable Catchment Forest Management**

- ❖ The Tripura CM Biplab Kumar Dev has recently launched a project for Sustainable Catchment Forest Management (SCATFORM) at Hatipara in West Tripura.
- ❖ It is a Rs. 1,000 crore project for a span of 10 years to improve forestlands in targeted catchment areas of Tripura.
- ❖ The project is jointly funded by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and Government of India.
  - 80% - JICA & 20% - state and central government (India)
- ❖ Under the SCATFORM project, a total of 1,447 check dams will be set up in hilly areas in seven districts of Tripura.

### **Methanol Blending to cut Carbon-di-oxide Emissions**

- ❖ The Pune-based Automotive Research Association of India (ARAI) conducted a study using 15% methanol (M-15) blended with petrol in vehicles and tested them for 3,000 km.
- ❖ The study revealed that methanol blending with petrol in the existing BS-IV standard cars resulted in the reduction of the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions substantially.
- ❖ The objective of the study was to evaluate emissions in real-world conditions as well as check the performance of the vehicles.
- ❖ The study also found that hydrocarbon emission reduced marginally, with a slight increase in nitrogen oxides.

### **Two new species of moss rose**

- ❖ Botanists have discovered the two new species from Badami hills in Bagalkot district of Karnataka.
- ❖ The species have been named *Portulaca badamica* and *Portulaca lakshminarasimhaniana*.
- ❖ *Portulaca badamica* is named after the site of its discovery that is, the Badami hills.

- ❖ *Portulaca lakshmi narasimhaniana* is named after Pakshirajan Lakshminarashimhan for his significant contribution to plant taxonomy.
- ❖ IUCN Status - *Portulaca badamica* - data deficient category and *Portulaca lakshminarasimhaniana*- critically endangered.

### **Small Woodbrown butterfly**

- ❖ Researchers of Sikkim rediscovered the Small Woodbrown butterfly species from Bakhim in Khanchendzonga National Park after a span of 120 long years.
- ❖ The Small Woodbrown butterfly was first discovered in Sikkim in 1887 by a scientist named de Nicéville.
- ❖ The Small Woodbrown butterfly, scientifically known as *Lethe nicetella* is named after its brown-coloured wings patched with white round spots.
- ❖ It is amongst the smallest members of the genus *Lethe*, with wings that are up to 50mm long.



### **Triple-drug therapy to fight elephantiasis**

- ❖ Maharashtra in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) has recommended triple-drug therapy for lymphatic filariasis to speed up elimination of the disease in Nagpur.
- ❖ Lymphatic filariasis, commonly known as elephantiasis, is a neglected tropical disease.
- ❖ Actor Swapnil Joshi is assigned as brand ambassador for this project.
- ❖ This disease is transmitted through mosquitoes.
- ❖ The infection is usually acquired in childhood, causing hidden damage to the lymphatic system.

### **WHO list of 10 global health threats**

- ❖ The WHO list of 10 global health threats, which demands immediate attention from WHO and health partners in 2019, has been released. These are
  - Air pollution and climate change
  - Non-transmissible diseases
  - Global influenza pandemic
  - Fragile and vulnerable settings
  - Antimicrobial resistance
  - Ebola and other high-threat pathogens

- Weak Primary Health Care
- Vaccine hesitancy
- Dengue
- HIV

### State Tiger Protection Force - Telangana

- ❖ The Telangana government has decided to form a 'State Tiger Protection Force' to save the Big Cat population in the State.
- ❖ The State Forest Protection Committee headed by Chief Secretary S K Joshi took the decision to form the STPF.
- ❖ The 112-member-armed STPF will be headed by an Assistant Conservator of Forests to protect the tiger population in Amarabad and Kawal Tiger Reserves.
- ❖ The State and Central government will share the cost of the force on 40:60 basis.

### India accounts more than half leprosy cases globally - WHO

- ❖ The WHO stated that over 2 lakh new leprosy cases are detected around the world every year with India accounting for more than half of these cases.
- ❖ India accounts for 60% of new cases detected in 2017 — 1.26 lakh out of 2.10 lakh.
- ❖ New cases have declined gradually since 2008. However, they hit a sudden spike in 2012 and 2016. This was the trend for both India and globally.
- ❖ It also stated that disease is 100% curable if detected early.
- ❖ Leprosy is a chronic infectious disease which mainly affects the skin, the peripheral nerves, mucosal surfaces of the upper respiratory tract and the eyes.

TOP 5 INDIAN STATES, BY NUMBER OF CASES		PREVALENCE (EXCLUDING UTs) PER LAKH POPULATION	
Bihar	14,338	Chhattisgarh	2.25
Uttar Pradesh	12,583	Odisha	1.38
Maharashtra	9,836	Bihar	1.18
West Bengal	9,175	Jharkhand	1.05
Chhattisgarh	6,499	West Bengal	0.92

Source: National Leprosy Eradication Programme; figures as of March 2018



## STATE

### Minimum educational qualification abolished

- ❖ The Rajasthan government abolished the condition of a minimum educational qualification to contest local body elections.
- ❖ It also decided to set up a committee to frame rules for its farm loan-waiver scheme.
- ❖ The Previous government had introduced the following conditions in 2015
  - Candidates were required to have passed Class X for contesting municipal elections,
  - Class VIII for contesting panchayat polls for the post of a sarpanch, and
  - Class X for contesting zillah parishad or panchayat samiti elections.

### 2 initiatives under Krishi Krishak Bandhu

- ❖ The West Bengal government has announced two welfare initiatives for farmers as a part of the 'Krishi Krishak Bandhu' scheme.
  1. If a farmer aged between 18 to 60 years dies a natural or unnatural death, the state government will pay his family Rs 2 lakh.
  2. Farmers would get Rs 2,500 twice a year for growing a single crop on one acre of land.

### Maharashtra - 100% electrification

- ❖ The Maharashtra government has achieved 100% electrification on 27 December, 2018.
- ❖ The government had set itself a deadline of December 31, 2018 for 100% electrification under the Centre's Saubhagya Yojna, launched in September 2017.

### Telangana hospital enters Guinness Book of World Records

- ❖ The MNJ Institute of Oncology and Regional Cancer Centre has become the first State-run hospital in Telangana to enter into Guinness Book of World Records.
- ❖ The Guinness recognition to the hospital has come for conducting the largest men's health awareness programme on prostate cancer.



- ❖ The awareness programme was attended by 487 men in a single day.

### **ACI's Ease of Doing Business index**

- ❖ The latest ranking of Singapore's Asia Competitiveness Institute's (ACI), Ease of Doing Business (EDB) index 2018 has been released recently.
- ❖ Andhra Pradesh emerged on top of the 21 states of India that were considered for the ranking.
- ❖ While Maharashtra and Delhi came in second and third place, respectively.
- ❖ Andhra Pradesh rose from the 5th rank in 2016 to the top spot in 2018.

### **World Book Fair**

- ❖ The New Delhi World Book Fair was recently held at the Pragati Maidan.
- ❖ The theme of the 27th edition of the New Delhi World Book Fair is "Readers with special needs".
- ❖ The UAE's third largest emirate Sharjah is the guest of honour for the New Delhi World Book Fair.

### **Prana Raksha app of police**

- ❖ The Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister has recently launched the Prana Raksha web application developed by the Chittoor police at Kuppam.
- ❖ The app has been designed to save the lives of road accident victims and reach out to women in distress.

### **Buddhist site museum at Lalitgiri**

- ❖ One of the earliest Buddhist settlements in Odisha, Lalitgiri, where excavations have yielded ancient seals and inscriptions, has been converted into a museum.
- ❖ Located in Cuttack district, it will be the third site museum of the Bhubaneswar circle of the Archaeological Survey of India after Ratnagiri and Konark.
- ❖ The Excavations at Lalitgiri have yielded the remains of four monasteries, showing cultural continuity from the post-Mauryan period till the 13th century CE.



### **CBIP award for Polavaram project**

- ❖ Andhra Pradesh was conferred with CBIP's (Central Board of Irrigation & Power) "Best Implementation of Water Resources Project".
- ❖ It has been conferred for the better planning, implementation, monitoring and speedy execution of Polavaram multipurpose project on the Godavari River.



### **Atal Solar Krushi Pump Yojana**

- ❖ The government of Maharashtra introduced the Atal Solar Krushi Pump Yojana to reduce losses due to non-payment of electricity bills and also promote solar energy.
- ❖ The features of the Atal Solar Krishi Pump Yojana are,
  - The government would provide solar pumps at subsidised rates for the farmers.
- ❖ The government has decided to give two LED bulbs, a DC fan and a mobile charging socket as freebies to farmers enrolling under the scheme.

### **Polavaram project enters Guinness Book of World Record**

- ❖ The Polavaram project of Andhra Pradesh got its place in the Guinness book of world record.



- ❖ This project entered the Guinness by pouring 32,315.5 cubic meters of concrete non-stop in 24 hours.
- ❖ This project surpassed the leading record of 21,580 cubic metres which was achieved by Abdul Wahed Bin Shabib project.

### **State law commission – J&K**

- ❖ The Jammu and Kashmir Law Department set up a State law commission, for three years, under the chairmanship of Justice (Retd) M K Hanjura.
- ❖ It will have a chairperson, two full-time members and two part-time members.
- ❖ The Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Secretary Achal Sethi will be the ex-officio member of the commission.



### Functions of the Commission

- It will identify redundant and obsolete laws that can be repealed and suggest measures for quick redress of public grievances
- It will examine the laws that affect the poor and carry out post-audit of socio-economic legislations
- It will ensure speedy clearance of arrears and reduction in costs and quick and economical disposal of cases

### General Consent withdrawn

- ❖ The government of Chhattisgarh has withdrawn the general consent accorded to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to probe the cases in the state.
- ❖ With this it has joined the list of West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh which have withdrawn the general consent for CBI to undertake investigations.

### India's longest single lane steel cable suspension bridge

- ❖ The Arunachal Pradesh CM has inaugurated India's longest 300-meter single-lane steel cable suspension bridge over Siang River in Upper Siang district of state bordering China.
- ❖ The suspension bridge, also known as Byorong Bridge, was funded by the ministry of development of North Eastern Region under Non-Lapsable Central Pool of Resources scheme.
- ❖ It will reduce the distance from Yingkiong to Tuting town by almost 40 km. The earlier road length was 192 km.



### West Bengal Ayushman Bharat scheme

- ❖ The West Bengal government has decided to exit from the Centre's ambitious Ayushman Bharat- Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana.



- ❖ With this, it has joined states of Telangana, Kerala, Odisha, and Delhi which have opted out of the scheme for varied reasons.

### **Ama Ghare LED**

- ❖ Odisha launched the 'Ama Ghare LED' (LED bulbs in our houses) scheme which will benefit about 95 lakh families in the State.
- ❖ Each beneficiary family will get four LED bulbs free of cost under the scheme.
- ❖ The LED bulbs (9-watt each) will be distributed to the beneficiaries registered under the National Food Security Act (NFSA) and the State Food Security Scheme (SFSS).
- ❖ Distribution of the bulbs will be started at the PEETHA (Peoples Empowerment – Enabling Transparency and Accountability of Odisha Initiatives) schemes.

### **Ban on formalin fishes**

- ❖ The Bihar government banned the sale, transportation and storage of fish for 15 days in Patna Municipal corporation area.
- ❖ The ban was imposed after high contents of formalin, lead, mercury and cadmium were found in fish samples.

<b>SOMETHING FISHY ABOUT IT</b>		<b>HOW TO DEAL WITH IT?</b>
<p><b>WHAT IS FORMALIN?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Formalin (chemical formaldehyde in water), is a common adulterant used by traders and suppliers to extend the storage life of fish</li> <li>&gt; There is increasing use of formalin in freshwater fish sent from AP to northeastern states</li> </ul>	<p><b>ITS DANGERS</b></p> <p>Ingesting large amounts of formaldehyde can cause abdominal pain, vomiting, coma, renal injury and possible death</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Wash fish thoroughly with running tap water</li> <li>&gt; Cook fish to a temperature of 75 degrees C</li> <li>&gt; Check fish for adulteration with a paper strip-based kit, 'CIFTest'</li> </ul>
		<p><b>SOME STATES AT SEA</b></p> <p>Goa, Assam, Nagaland, Manipur, TN, Kerala &amp; Meghalaya</p>

- ❖ The ban has been imposed under the provisions of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006.
- ❖ The use of formalin and other heavy metals beyond the normal limit may cause various ailments in humans like pneumonia, bronchitis, Hepatitis and cancer.

### **Turtle Festival – Odisha**

- ❖ Odisha's Puri beach witnessed its first turtle festival on January 13, 2019.



- ❖ Odisha has half of the world’s Olive Ridley turtle population and 90 per cent of India’s turtle population lives in the state.

**Background**

- ❖ There are five sea turtle species in the Indian waters — Leatherback (Vulnerable), Loggerhead (Endangered), Hawksbill (Critically Endangered), Green (Endangered) and Olive Ridley.
- ❖ In India, sea turtles are protected under the Indian Wildlife Protection Act of 1972.
- ❖ Olive Ridley is recognized as Vulnerable by the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) Red list.



- ❖ International trade in these turtles and their products is banned under CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) Appendix I.

**10 % Reservation for economically weaker sections**

- ❖ Days after the bill on 10 per cent reservation was passed in the parliament, the Gujarat government implemented the amended law of reservation in state government jobs and education for the economically weaker sections (EWS) in the general category from 14th January, 2019.
- ❖ With this, Gujarat has become the first state in the country to implement the new provision.

- ❖ After Gujarat, Telangana is also set to become the 2<sup>nd</sup> state in the country to implement the 10% reservation for economically weaker sections (EWS).

### **Jai Kisan Rin Mukti Yojana**

- ❖ The Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath launched his government's Rs 50,000-crore farm debt-waiver scheme named 'Jai Kisan Rin Mukti Yojana'.
- ❖ The State cabinet gave its nod to waive crop loans of 55 lakh farmers while extending the eligibility cut-off date to December 12, 2018, from March 31, 2018.

### **Shaurya Award - Haryana**

- ❖ The Haryana CM Manohar Lal Khattar has recently announced “Shaurya Award” to students in the name of 71 state police force martyrs who laid down their lives while maintaining law and order and protecting society since the formation of state in 1966.
- ❖ A prize money of Rs. 11,000 will be given to students for courageous deeds every year in a village block where school is located under this award.
- ❖ He also released a book titled “Martyrs of Haryana Police” which highlights the heroic deeds of the police personnel.

### **Kerala HC disqualifies MLA Karat Razack**

- ❖ The High Court of Kerala had disqualified an independent MLA Karat Razack from the Koduvally Assembly constituency
- ❖ He has been disqualified for his defamatory campaign against the rival candidate during the 2016 Assembly polls.
- ❖ The disqualification was as per the provisions of the Representation of the Peoples Act 1951.

### **B.Tech. in Artificial Intelligence – First in India**

- ❖ The Hyderabad IIT is launching a full-fledged Bachelor of Technology (B. Tech.) Program in Artificial Intelligence (AI) from the coming academic year (2019-2020).
- ❖ With this, it will become the first Indian educational institution to offer such a program.
- ❖ It is also likely the 3<sup>rd</sup> institute globally after Carnegie Mellon University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), both of which are in the US.

### Logo for Tripura tea unveiled

- ❖ The CM of Tripura has recently unveiled the official logo of Tripura Tea.
- ❖ The Tripura Tea logo features Neermahal, the iconic landmark of Tripura.
- ❖ Neermahal was built by then Tripura King Bir Bikram Kishore Debbarman Manikya in the middle of Rudrasagar Lake, as his summer residence.



- ❖ This is the largest water palace in India and one of two water palaces in India. The other water palace of India is located at Jal Mahal in Rajasthan.

### Madhu Babu Pension Yojana

- ❖ The Odisha CM Navven Patnaik has announced a hike of Rs 200 per month in the social security pension under Madhu Babu Pension Yojana (MBPY).
- ❖ The state government launched Madhu Babu Pension Yojana on January 1, 2008, by merging two pension schemes – Old Age Pension and Odisha Disability Pension schemes.
- ❖ The objective of MBPY is to provide financial assistance to the destitute elderly and destitute differently abled persons in the state.

### Bengal's tableau for the Republic day parade 2019

- ❖ The Central Government has accepted West Bengal's tableau theme of 'Gandhi-Tagore' unity for the Republic day parade this year.
- ❖ The Bengal tableau showcases 'Shantiniketan and Gandhi at Beliaghata' as the theme revolving around two father figures, Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore.
- ❖ West Bengal's CM has conceived the theme remembering Gandhi meeting Tagore in March 1915 at Tagore's 'Shyamoli' home.

#### Background

- ❖ This is for the first time when the Defense ministry had selected the theme of the tableaux for the Republic Day Parade.

- ❖ Gandhiji was selected as the theme to mark the occasion of his 150th birth anniversary.

### **First inter-state bridge - J&K**

- ❖ The Union minister of Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari inaugurated the 1.2 km-long Keediyani-Gandiyal bridge on the Ravi river in Kathua district of Jammu and Kashmir.
- ❖ The first inter-state bridge links the secluded areas of Kathua district with Punjab.

### **Pakke Paga Hornbill Festival declared State Festival**

- ❖ Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister has declared Pakke Paga Hornbill Festival (PPHF) as the “State Festival”.
- ❖ Pakke Paga Hornbill Festival (PPHF) is only conservation festival of Arunachal Pradesh.
- ❖ He announced that Arunachal Pradesh Forest Department will fund the festival from 2020.
- ❖ The PPHF festival was celebrated first time in 2015 to recognize the role played by the resident Nyishi tribe in conserving hornbills in the Pakke Tiger Reserve (PTR).

### **Yuva Swabhiman Yojana**

- ❖ The Madhya Pradesh CM Kamal Nath has launched ‘Yuva Swabhiman Yojana’ for youths of the weak section in urban areas of Madhya Pradesh.
- ❖ Under this scheme, 100 days of employment will be provided to youths from economically weaker sections in urban areas.
- ❖ They will also be given skill training.

### **Jammu and Kashmir Reservation (Amendment) Bill, 2014**

- ❖ The Governor of Jammu and Kashmir has given his assent to the Jammu and Kashmir Reservation (Amendment) Bill, 2014.
- ❖ The amendment bill provides for reservation in government jobs for Pahari community.
- ❖ The amendment creates a separate category for the persons belonging to Pahari community among the Socially & Educationally Backward classes (other than SC’s & ST’s).
- ❖ The Pahari Community also called as Pahadi and Parbati belongs to Indo-Aryan ethnic group inhabiting Himalayan regions of Nepal and India.



## Operation Olympics

- ❖ An expert programme 'Operation Olympics' managed by Kerala's Sports Department and State Sports Council was commenced.
- ❖ Under this programme 123 athletes in 11 disciplines will be trained for 2020 Tokyo Olympics.
- ❖ The programme has the objective to provide international standard training to the athletes with the help of eminent trainers from both India and abroad.

## Kerala Sahitya Akademi Awards

- ❖ The Kerala Sahitya Akademi Awards for 2017 have been announced.
- ❖ Nireeswaran by V.J. James has been selected the best novel.
- ❖ Mindaprani, written by Veerankutty, has been selected as the best poetry.
- ❖ Aymanam John's Ethara Characharangalude Charitra Pusthakam has secured the award for the best short story.



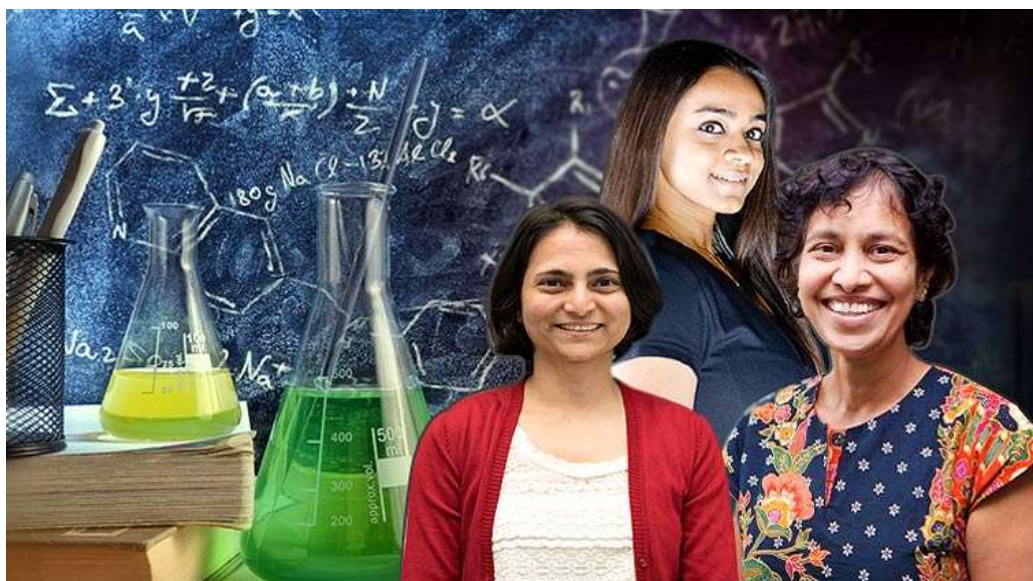
## Jiban Sampark Project

- ❖ The Odisha CM has announced the Jiban Sampark project of Odisha for the welfare of the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups at the annual Adivasi Mela-2019.
- ❖ The Project undertaken in association with UNICEF aims to generate awareness among Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTG) in Odisha.
- ❖ The focus areas of Jiban Sampark Project are skill development, empowering communities, cooperation and innovation among the groups.
- ❖ The highest numbers of PVTGs are found in Odisha.
- ❖ A separate category of PVTGs was constituted based on the recommendations of the Dhebar Commission in 1975.

## PERSONALITIES, AWARDS AND EVENTS

### Superstar of STEM initiative

- ❖ Three Indian-origin women scientists made it in the list of 60 Superstars of STEM list announced recently by the Australian government's under Superstar of STEM initiative.



- ❖ Onisha Patel, Devika Kamath and Asha Rao are born and brought up in India and have done pathbreaking work in the field of science.

### National Nritya Shiromani award

- ❖ The US-based Kathak exponent Anindita Neogy Anaam will be honoured with the National Nritya Shiromani award for promoting the dance form across the world.
- ❖ The award would be conferred on her in Cuttack on the opening day of the 10th Cuttack Mahotsav: International Dance and Music festival in Cuttack.
- ❖ Anindita Anaam is a recipient of prestigious national awards like Jayadev Rashtriya Puraskar and Bidagdha Nartaki Samman for her outstanding achievement in the preservation and promotion of Indian art in India and abroad.

### National Legal Services Authority Executive Chairman

- ❖ The President has nominated Justice of Supreme Court Arjan Kumar Sikri as the Executive Chairman of the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA).

- ❖ The NALSA was constituted under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987
- ❖ It has been constituted to provide free legal services to the weaker sections of the society and to organise Lok Adalat's for settlement of disputes.
- ❖ The Chief Justice of India is the Patron-in-Chief and the Senior most Judge of the Supreme Court of India is the Executive Chairman of the Authority.

### **National Bravery Award**

- ❖ Wahengbam Lamnganba Singh (15) of Manipur has been selected by the Indian Council for Child Welfare (ICCW) for receiving the National Bravery Award.
- ❖ He will be honoured because he had saved his two and half year's old cousin brother from drowning in a pond.
- ❖ The National Bravery Awards are given under the aegis of the Indian Council for Child Welfare (ICCW) on every Republic Day.
- ❖ These awards are broadly classified into 5 categories, including the Bharat Award, Sanjay Chopra Award, Geeta Chopra Award, Babu Gaidhani Award and the General National Bravery Awards.

### **World's first female amputee to climb Mount Vinson**

- ❖ Arunima Sinha became the world's first female amputee to climb Mount Vinson, the highest peak of Antarctica.
- ❖ The Padma Shree Awardee, Arunima Sinha became the first woman amputee to climb Mount Everest in 2013
- ❖ Arunima Sinha's aim is to summit seven peaks across seven continents.



- ❖ She had already scaled five peaks which are Mt Everest, Mt Kilimanjaro, Mt Elbrus, Mt Kosciuszko and Mt Aconcagua.

### **Ramnath Goenka Excellence in Journalism Awards**



- ❖ The 13th edition of the Ramnath Goenka Excellence in Journalism Awards was held at New Delhi.



- ❖ The Union Home Minister presented awards to 29 winners in 18 categories, across print, broadcast and purely-digital, for outstanding work done in 2017.
- ❖ The Indian Express Group instituted the Ramnath Goenka Excellence in Journalism Awards in 2005.
- ❖ The award has been instituted as part of the centenary year celebrations of Indian Express Group's founder, Ramnath Goenka.

<b>Journalists – Tamil Nadu</b>	<b>Media</b>	<b>Category of Award</b>	<b>For</b>
M Gunasekaran	News 18	REGIONAL LANGUAGES	For his reports on fisherfolk during Cyclone Ockhi
Vijay Kumar S	The Hindu	INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING	For his reports on how taxmen alerted officials about payoffs in the Tamil Nadu gutka scam
Sandhya Ravishankar	Thewire.in	ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTING	For her investigative reports on illegal beach sand mining in Tamil Nadu.

### **First female chief economist of IMF**

- ❖ Mysore-born Gita Gopinath joined the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as its 11th chief economist, thus becoming the first woman to occupy the top IMF post.

- ❖ She succeeded Maurice (Maury) Obstfeld who retired on December 31, 2018.



- ❖ The Chief Economist is also the Director of the Fund's Research Department.

### **First Indian to Head Global Solar Council, USA**

- ❖ The chairman of National Solar Energy Federation of India (NSEFI), Pranav R Mehta, has taken over as the President of Global Solar Council (GSC).
- ❖ He is dubbed as the Solar Man of India.
- ❖ He has been recently conferred with the 'Visionary Disruptor Award' by Solar Future Today at the side-lines of the World Future Energy Summit in Abu Dhabi.

### **Confederation of African Football Player of the Year award 2018**

- ❖ Liverpool's Mohamed Salah was conferred with the 2018 Confederation of African Football Player of the Year award, for the second time, in Senegal.



- ❖ He also won the BBC African Footballer of the Year award for the second time in December 2018.
- ❖ Among other awardees, Houston Dash and South Africa forward Thembi Kgatlana was named Women's Player of the Year.

### **African Cup host nation**



- ❖ The Confederation of African Football's (CAF) Executive Committee announced that Egypt will host African Cup for the 5<sup>th</sup> time in 2019.

### **Jeevan Gaurav Puraskar lifetime award**

- ❖ Dr G Viswanathan, Founder and Chancellor of Vellore Institute of Technology, has been bestowed with the 'Jeevan Gaurav Puraskar' – a lifetime award by the National Teachers' Congress and MIT World Peace University, Pune.
- ❖ This award has given for an inspiring teacher throughout, and for showing his excellent performance in teaching, research and institution building.
- ❖ The award ceremony took place at the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of 'Global National Teachers' Congress' which was held at MIT World Peace University, Kothrud, Pune.

### **Philip Kotler Presidential award**

- ❖ The Prime Minister Narendra Modi was awarded the “first ever” Philip Kotler Presidential Award by the World Marketing Summit India.
- ❖ The WMS has previously only given awards to recognise achievements in advertising and marketing.
- ❖ The Award focuses on the triple bottom-line of People, Profit and Planet.



- ❖ It will be offered annually to the leader of a Nation.

### **Gandhi Peace Prize**

- ❖ The Gandhi Peace Prize for the years 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018 has been conferred on the following
  - 1) Vivekananda Kendra, Kanyakumari for the year 2015 for their contribution in Rural Development, Education, Development of natural resources.
  - 2) For 2016 jointly to Akshaya Patra Foundation for its contribution in providing mid-day meals to millions of children across India and Sulabh

International for its contribution in improving the condition of sanitation in India and emancipation of manual scavengers.

- 3) Ekal Abhiyan Trust for the year 2017 for their contribution in providing Education for Rural and Tribal Children in remote areas of pan India, Rural Empowerment, Gender and Social Equality
  - 4) Yohei Sasakawa for the year 2018 for his contribution in Leprosy Eradication in India and across the world.
- ❖ The annual award was instituted by the Government of India in 1995 during the commemoration of 125th Birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.

### Gandhi Peace Prize

- ❖ The Gandhi Peace Prize is given to individuals and institutions for their contribution towards social, economic and political transformation through non-violence and other Gandhian methods.
- ❖ The Ministry of Culture is the nodal agency to receive the proposals for conferring the award.
- ❖ This is the first time that the awardees of four years have been announced together ever since the award was instituted in 1995.
- ❖ The award carries a cash prize of Rs 1 crore, a citation and a handicraft item.

### **The Hindu Prize 2018**

- ❖ The Hindu Literary Prize or The Hindu Best Fiction Award is an Indian literary award sponsored by The Hindu Literary Review which is part of the newspaper The Hindu.
- ❖ It was established in 2010.
- ❖ It recognizes the Indian works in English and English translation.

### The Hindu Prize 2018 Fiction Shortlist

<b>Book</b>	<b>Author</b>
Half the Night is Gone	Amitabha Bagchi
A Day in the Life: Stories	Anjum Hasan
All the Lives We Never Lived	Anuradha Roy
Requiem in Raga Janki	Neelum Saran Gour
Poonachi	Perumal Murugan & N Kalyan Raman

The Aunt Who Wouldn't Die	Shirshendu Mukhopadhyay & Arunava Sinha
---------------------------	---

***The Hindu Prize 2018 Non-Fiction Shortlist***

<b>Book</b>	<b>Author</b>
Interrogating My Chandal Life	Manoranjan Byapari & Sipra Mukherjee
The Bengalis	Sudeep Chakravarti
Remnants of a Separation	Aanchal Malhotra
Indira Gandhi: A Life in Nature	Jairam Ramesh
The Most Dangerous Place: A History of the United States in South Asia	Srinath Raghavan

**Sushila Devi Literature Award**

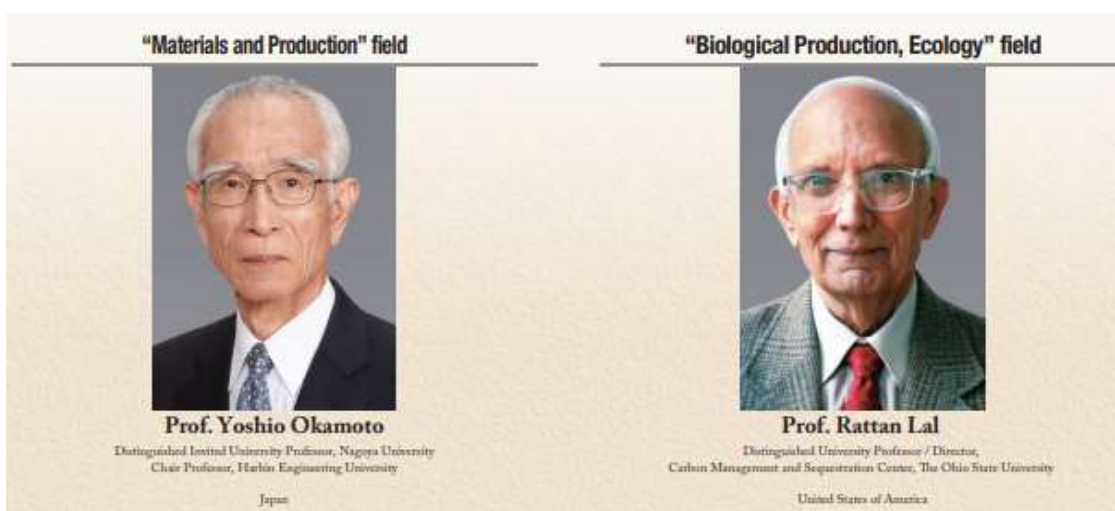


- ❖ The Writer Namita Gokhale has won the Sushila Devi Literature Award for her novel "Things to Leave Behind".

- ❖ She was awarded in the ‘Best Book of Fiction Written by a Woman Author’ category at the inaugural edition of the Bhopal Literature and Art Festival (BLF).

### Japan Prize

- ❖ The Japan Prize Foundation announced India born professor Dr. Rattan Lal as the recipient of the 2019 Japan Prize in the field of “Biological Production and Ecology”.
- ❖ Dr. Yoshio Okamoto was announced to be the recipient of the 2019 Japan Prize on of “Materials and Production” field.
- ❖ Each laureate will receive a certificate of recognition and a commemorative gold medal.



### About Japan Prize

- ❖ This Prize is presented by the Japan Prize Foundation annually to scientists and engineers from around the world who have made significant contributions to the advancement of science and technology, thereby furthering the cause of peace and prosperity of mankind.
- ❖ Since its inception in 1985, the Foundation has awarded 81 people from 13 countries.
- ❖ 2020 Japan Prize will focus on the fields of “Electronics, Information and Communication” and “Life Science”.

### Rosa Park Trailblazer award

- ❖ An Indian-American philanthropist and entrepreneur, Gurinder Singh Khalsa (45), has been presented with the prestigious Rosa Park Trailblazer award.



- ❖ He has been awarded for his campaign that forced US authorities change their policy towards headgear of the Sikh community.
- ❖ In 2007, Khalsa was refused access to board an airplane because of his turban.

### **Franco-German human rights award**

- ❖ A detained Chinese rights lawyer Yu Wensheng has won a Franco-German human rights award.



- ❖ It has been awarded to him for his ‘exceptional contribution’ to the protection and promotion of human rights.
- ❖ Yu Wensheng, who is in pretrial detention on subversion charges, has been held incommunicado by authorities in Jiangsu’s Xuzhou city for more than a year.
- ❖ His wife Xu Yan received the Franco-German Prize for Human Rights and the Rule of Law on her husband’s behalf from the French and German ambassadors to China.

### **ICSI lifetime Achievement award**



- ❖ Industrialist and Godrej Group Chairman Adi Godrej was conferred the ICSIs Lifetime Achievement Award for 'Translating Excellence in Corporate Governance into Reality.



- ❖ The awards were instituted by The Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI), which is celebrating its golden jubilee.
- ❖ The 18th ICSI National Awards for Excellence in Corporate Governance were bagged jointly by Cipla Ltd and Dabur India Ltd and 5 others
  - ACC Ltd, Hindustan Unilever Ltd, Indian Oil Corp, Tata Metaliks Ltd and Indian Hotels Co Ltd.
- ❖ The 3rd CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) Excellence Awards
  - GMR Hyderabad International Airport Ltd, (Emerging category)
  - Tata Power Co Ltd. (Medium category)
  - Ambuja Cements Ltd. (Large category)

### **Woman's Voice Award - AKLF 2019**

- ❖ US Based Indian poet Ranjani Murali was awarded with the "Woman's Voice Award" on the last day of Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival (AKLF).
- ❖ The Objective of the award is to recognize and encourage creative writing by women in India.
- ❖ Ranjani Murali's second book "Clearly you are ESL" won the Great Indian Poetry Collectives (GIPCs) Editor's Choice award.
- ❖ Her first book "Blind Screens" was published in July 2017.

### **Sansad Ratna Award**

- ❖ Tamil Nadu Governor Banwarilal Purohit presented the Sansad Ratna Award to BJP leader Anurag Thakur in Chennai.
- ❖ He was bestowed with Sansad Ratna Award for his distinguished performance as a parliamentarian.

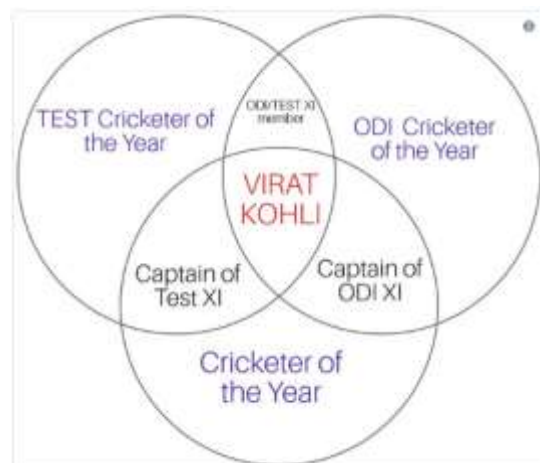
- ❖ With the win he became the first MP from the BJP, besides being the only Member of Parliament from north India, to have been awarded by the Jury Committee Special Award.
- ❖ The Sansad Ratna Awards was set up in 2010 upon the suggestion of former President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, with the purpose of celebrating the performers of Indian Parliamentarians.

### **Sheikh Saud International Prize for Materials Research**

- ❖ Eminent Indian scientist, CNR Rao, was chosen for the first Sheikh Saud International Prize for Materials Research by the Centre for Advanced Materials of the United Arab Emirates (UAE).
- ❖ Chintamani Nagesa Ramachandra Rao, popularly known as CNR Rao was awarded with the highest Civilian award, Bharat Ratna in 2014.
- ❖ Presently he is working as the Honorary President of Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research.

### **ICC Awards 2018**

- ❖ The International Cricket Council (ICC) announced the 2018 Men's Awards after a competitive year of matches across all formats.
- ❖ Indian skipper Virat Kohli became the first player in history to win all the top 3 ICC's annual individual awards in a single calendar year.
- ❖ Thus, he won the
  - Sir Garfield Sobers Trophy for ICC Cricketer of the Year (2<sup>nd</sup> time in a row),
  - ICC Men's Test Player of the Year and
  - ICC ODI Player of the Year awards (2<sup>nd</sup> time in a row)
- ❖ While this is the first time, he has bagged the Test Cricketer of the Year award.
- ❖ He has also been named captain of ICC's Test and ODI teams of 2018
- ❖ Wicketkeeper batsman, Rishabh Pant was named the "ICC's Emerging Player of the year" for his brilliant performance in Test Cricket in 2018.
- ❖ New Zealand captain Kane Williamson bagged the ICC Spirit of Cricket award while Kumar Dharmasena was adjudged Umpire of the Year.
- ❖ Aaron Finch's 76-ball 172 vs Zimbabwe was adjudged T20I Performance of the Year.



## CAPTAIN KOHLI GOES WHERE NO CRICKETER HAS GONE BEFORE

Virat Kohli becomes first player in history to win all top 3 ICC awards. He is named:

**1** Sir Garfield Sobers cricketer of the year

**2** Test player of the year

**3** ICC men's ODI player of the year

**KOHLI SKIPPER OF 2018'S DREAM TEST & ODI TEAMS**

- > Pant, Bumrah also in world Test XI
- > Rohit Sharma, Kuldeep Yadav & Bumrah in ODI team

**A VIRAT 2018 PERFORMANCE**

1,322 runs in 13 Tests at average of 55.1, with 5 centuries	1,202 runs in 14 ODIs at 133.6, 6 centuries	No.1 in both Test and ODI rankings
---	---	------------------------------------

### Chhatra Viswakarma & Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY) awards

- ❖ The Vice president of India presented the 2nd Chhatra Viswakarma Award to Students and their mentors and Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY) awards to educational institution.
- ❖ These awards were presented at an event organized by All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) at New Delhi.
- ❖ The theme of 2nd Chhatra Viswakarma Award was **'Empowerment of villages through technologies'**.
- ❖ Whereas the theme of Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana was **"Developed Village – Developed Nations"**.
- ❖ The Chhatra Viswakarma Award Awards were given to encourage the young students to come up with novel ideas in order to improve the life of people in villages.
- ❖ Under Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana, College of Technology and Engineering Udaipur, Rajasthan got the first prize.

Category	Winner
Educational skill initiative and startups	Gokaraju Rangaraju Institute of Engineering and Technology, Telangana
Any other rural appropriate technologies	Army Institute of Technology, Maharashtra
Rural Craft and Livelihood, Rural infrastructure, tourism	Shri Venkateshwara College of Engineering, Andhra Pradesh
Agriculture and food	Sri Krishna College of Technology, Tamil Nadu
water and irrigation	Aditya Engineering College, Andhra Pradesh

### Bharat Ratna Award 2019

- ❖ The President conferred the 2019 Bharat Ratna Award, country's highest civilian honour, on former president and Congress leader Pranab Mukherjee.

- ❖ The award was also conferred on RSS ideologue Nanaji Deshmukh and singer Bhupen Hazarika, both posthumously.
- ❖ Bharat Ratna is the highest civilian award of India that was instituted on January 2, 1954 by the order of Rajendra Prasad, the former President of India.

### **Ashoka Chakra**

- ❖ India's highest peacetime gallantry honour, Ashoka Chakra was awarded to Lance Naik Nazir Wani posthumously.



- ❖ Lance Naik Nazir Wani also holds the distinction of being the first Kashmiri to be conferred the Ashoka Chakra.
- ❖ He single-handedly killed two terrorists during the Shopian operation and injured a third one despite receiving serious injuries.
- ❖ Ashoka Chakra is India's highest peacetime military decoration awarded for valour, courageous action or self-sacrifice away from the battlefield.

### **Best Miniratna PSU**

- ❖ Numaligarh Refinery Limited (NRL) received best Miniratna PSU in strategic performance financial category award at 6th PSU awards function held in New Delhi.
- ❖ NRL is a mini ratna company in Assam owned by Bharat Petroleum.
- ❖ It is a joint venture between Bharat Petroleum, Oil India and Government of Assam.
- ❖ The awards are given out in recognition to the effect of Public Sector Undertakings (PSU) who have played a key role in Country's growth.

### **DSC Prize for South Asian Literature 2018**



- ❖ 'No Presents Please', an English Novel translated from Kannada Work of Jayant Kaikini, has won the DSC Prize for South Asian Literature 2018.
- ❖ The award was announced during the Tata Steel Kolkata Literary Meet.
- ❖ The novel was translated to English by Tejaswini Niranjana.
- ❖ For the first time the award was being given to a translated work.
- ❖ The DSC Prize for South Asian Literature was instituted by Surina Narula and Manhad Narula in 2010.
- ❖ It awards the best work in South Asian fiction writing each year.

### **New CEO of Indigo Air**

- ❖ The Aviation veteran and former president of United airlines Ronojoy Dutta was appointed CEO of Indigo airlines. He succeeds Aditya Ghosh.
- ❖ IndiGo also appointed former SEBI chairman M Damodaran as chairman of the board and non-executive independent director.

## **SPORTS**

### **34-year-old record broken**

- ❖ Indian pace trio of Ishant Sharma, Mohammed Shami and Jasprit Bumrah broke the 34-year record of highest test wickets in a calendar year.
- ❖ They have become the most successful pace trio with 131 wickets in 2018.
- ❖ The record was previously held by the West Indies seamers Joel Garner, Michael Holding and Malcolm Marshall who had taken 130 wickets in 1984.

### **Rishabh Pant - Equaling World Record**

- ❖ Rishabh Pant (India) has equalled the world record of most catches in a Test by a wicket keeper with Englishman Jack Russell & AB de Villiers (South Africa).
- ❖ Rishabh Pant equalled the record by taking 11 catches against Australia in the 3rd Test Match.
- ❖ He also became the 1st ever Indian player to take 20 catches in a Test series by surpassing former Indian cricketers Naren Tamhane and Syed Kirmani.



- ❖ Brad Haddin from Australia holds the record for taking most catches in a Test series (29).

### **Hopman Cup**

- ❖ The Hopman Cup, which is an annual international eight-team indoor hard-court tennis tournament, was held in Perth, Western Australia.
- ❖ This year Switzerland's Roger Federer and Belinda Bencic secured victory over Germany's Angelique Kerber and Alexander Zverev to win the Hopman Cup for the 2nd year in a row.



- ❖ It was Switzerland's fourth title overall, behind only the United States with six.
- ❖ This year's tournament is the 31st edition of the Hopman Cup and potentially be the final edition of the tournament as it will be replaced by an ATP tournament from next year.
- ❖ Twenty-time Grand Slam champion Roger Federer is the first player to win three Hopman Cups.

### **Brisbane International 2019**

- ❖ The 11th edition of the Brisbane International 2019 took place as part of the Australian Open Series at Queensland, Australia.
- ❖ K. Nishikori (Japan) won the Men's Singles event by defeating D. Medvedev (Russia).
- ❖ K. Pliskova (Czech Republic) won the Women's Singles by defeating L. Tsurenko (Ukraine).



### **AFC Asian Cup 2019**

- ❖ The Indian national team scripted history at the Al Nahyan Stadium, Abu Dhabi as they registered a 4-1 win over Thailand.
- ❖ It is the India's biggest win in the Asian Cup history.



- ❖ India's last win in the Asian Cup came against Hong Kong which was by a 3-1 margin back in 1964 at Israel, which was incidentally their biggest win.
- ❖ Chhetri's brace not only made him India's top-scorer at the Asian Cup but also the second-highest active goal scorer in the world, behind Cristiano Ronaldo.

### **India's First-Ever Test Series Win in Australia**

- ❖ The Indian cricket team has recently won their first ever Test series in Australia after a 71-year wait by a margin of 2-1 and retained the Border-Gavaskar Trophy.

- ❖ India Became the first ever Asian team and 5th overall to win a Test series in Australia.
- ❖ Virat Kohli became the first Asian captain to win a Test series in Australia.
- ❖ India have toured Australia since 1947 but never before managed to win a series in the country.



- ❖ India which enforced the follow-on during the 4th test at Sydney, was the first time since 1988 that Australia was asked to follow on at their home.
- ❖ The winning of the 3rd test of the series was India's 150th in Test cricket.
- ❖ The 150th win made India the 5th team after Australia (384), England (364), West Indies (171) and South Africa (162) to reach the milestone.
- ❖ Cheteshwar Pujara was adjudged the player of the series.
- ❖ Pujara has set the record for facing the greatest number of balls (1,258) faced by an Indian batsman in a Test series in Australia overtaking former India captain Rahul Dravid (1,203).
- ❖ Rishabh Pant became the only Indian wicketkeeper to score a hundred in Australia and only the fourth Indian wicketkeeper to score over 150 in Tests.

### **Khelo India Youth Games**

- ❖ Hosts Maharashtra picked up 15 gold medals to race ahead of the other states in the Khelo India Youth Games.
- ❖ Top three states have all crossed the 100-mark in medals and Maharashtra have gone past 150.
- ❖ The 10-year-old Abhinav Shaw became the youngest gold medallist at the Khelo India Youth Games.

RANK	STATE	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE	TOTAL
1	MAHARASHTRA	56	44	56	156
2	DELHI	42	27	38	107
3	HARYANA	33	34	36	103
4	KARNATAKA	19	20	11	50
5	UTTAR PRADESH	19	18	27	64
6	TAMIL NADU	17	27	14	57
7	PUNJAB	15	11	16	42
8	KERALA	10	12	20	42
9	WEST BENGAL	10	8	7	25
10	GUJARAT	9	5	10	24

- ❖ Tamil Nadu's Balakumar Nithin and Karnataka's AT Daneshwari emerged as the country's top sprinters as both of them completed the 100-200 metres double in the under-21 section.

### 1<sup>st</sup> away team to win bilateral series in all formats - India

- ❖ India defeated Australia in the 3rd ODI at Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) to win the ODI series by 2-1.
- ❖ With this, India became the first Visiting team to win bilateral series across the 3 formats against Australia in Australian soil.
- ❖ The Indian team lead by Virat Kohli also became the first ever Indian side to win bilateral ODI series in Australia.
- ❖ Yuzvendra Chahal was given the player of the match award whereas Veteran Player M. S. Dhoni was honoured with Player of the series award.

### Laureus World Comeback of Year Award

- ❖ The Indian female wrestler **Vinesh Phogat**, who hails from Haryana, became the first Indian athlete to receive a nomination in the prestigious Laureus World Comeback of the Year Award.
- ❖ She was nominated due to her comeback after battling a long injury lay-off to win a gold medal at the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games and Jakarta Asian Games.
- ❖ Besides her, US Tour Championship winner Tiger Woods, Canadian snowboarder Mark McMorris, American alpine ski racer Lindsey Vonn, Japanese figure skater Yuzuru Manyu, and Dutch para-snowboarding star Bibian Mentel-Spee have also been nominated for the same.

### National Table Tennis champion 2018

- ❖ The Senior National Table Tennis Championships of the year 2018 was held recently in Cuttack, Odisha.



- ❖ Achanta Sharath Kamal (TN) has created history at the 80th National Table Tennis Championship by winning the title for the 9th time by beating G Sathiyam (TN) in the final.
- ❖ Sharath broke the long-standing record of Kamlesh Mehta who had 8 wins in the National Table Tennis Championship.
- ❖ Archana Kamath (18) from Karnataka beat Krittwika Sinha Roy of West Bengal and won her first senior singles national title.
- ❖ Thus, Archana become the 2<sup>nd</sup> paddler from Karnataka after Usha Sunder Raj, a 5-time national champion, to win the crown.



### **Federer - Australian Open 2019**

- ❖ The Australian Open tennis tournament has begun on 14th January at Melbourne, Australia.
- ❖ Defending champion Roger Federer has been knocked out of the Australian Open 2019 after losing to Stefanos Tsitsipas.
- ❖ Tsitsipas, thus became the first Greek in history to reach the quarter-finals of a Slam.

### **Chennai Open International Grand Master chess tournament**

- ❖ Georgia's Levan Pantsulaia defeated GM Maxim Lugasov (Russia) and won the 11th Chennai Open International Grand Master chess tournament.
- ❖ This was Levan 's second successive win after he had won the Delhi open a fortnight ago.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu 's M Pranesh, secured his maiden International Master (IM) norm during the tournament.

### **Australian Open 2019**

- ❖ The Australian Open which is the first of the four Grand Slam tennis event concluded at Melbourne in Australia.
- ❖ The Winners of the Australian Open 2019 are

Category	Winners
Men's Singles	Novak Djokovic (Serbia)



Women's Singles	Naomi Osaka (Japan)
Men's Doubles	Pierre-Hugues Herbert & Nicolas Mahut - France
Women's Doubles	Samantha Stosur (Australia) & Zhang Shuai (China)
Mixed Doubles	Barbora Krejčíková (Czech Republic's) & Rajeev Ram (US)

- ❖ Novak Djokovic of Serbia become the first man to win seven titles at Australian Open.



- ❖ Apart from Australian Open, Other Grand Slam tennis events are French Open, Wimbledon, and the US Open.

### **Indonesia Masters Title 2019**

- ❖ The Indonesia Masters 2019 Title, a badminton tournament, officially known as DAIHATSU Indonesia Masters 2019, took place at Jakarta, Indonesia.
- ❖ The tournament was organized by the Badminton Association of Indonesia in recognition with Badminton World Federation (BWF).
- ❖ India's Saina Nehwal won her first-ever Indonesia Masters women's singles title after Carolina Marin of Spain pulled out in the final due to injury.
- ❖ Danish player Anders Antonsen won his first ever Indonesia Masters after defeating world number one Kento Momota of Japan.
- ❖ Men's doubles - Marcus Fernaldi Gideon & Kevin Sanjaya (Indonesia).
- ❖ Women's Doubles - Ayaka Takahashi & Misaki Matsutomo (Japan).
- ❖ Mixed doubles - Zheng Siwei & Huang Yaqiong (China).

## **IMPORTANT DAYS**

### **DRDO day – 01 January**

- ❖ The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) celebrated its establishment day on 1st January, 2019 throughout its laboratories and facilities in the country.

- ❖ The DRDO has made the country self-reliant in areas of missiles, radars, sonars and torpedoes and many other systems.

### **World Braille Day - 04 January**

- ❖ United Nations observed the first official World Braille Day on 04 January 2019.
- ❖ The day commemorates the birth anniversary of Louis Braille who was the inventor of Braille for the people with visual disabilities.
- ❖ It aims to raise awareness on the importance of Braille for approximately 1.3 billion people living with some form of distance or near vision impairment.
- ❖ Louis Braille was born on 4th January 1809 in France and he lost his vision at the age of 3.



### **Bharatiya Pravasi Day/Non-Resident Indian Day – 09 January**

- ❖ The Non-Resident Indian (NRI) Day or Bharatiya Pravasi Day is celebrated on 09<sup>th</sup> January every two year.
- ❖ It marks the contribution of overseas Indian community in the development of India.
- ❖ Mahatma Gandhi came to India from South Africa on 9th January 1915, and became the greatest Pravasi who led India's freedom Struggle.
- ❖ Earlier till 2015, it was celebrated every year and now in every two year.

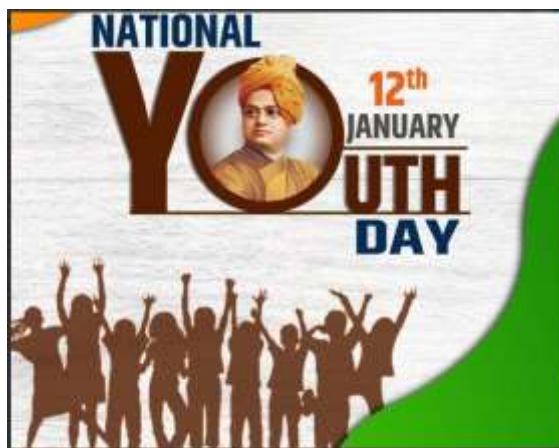


### **World Hindi Day – 10 January**

- ❖ The World Hindi day is celebrated every year on 10 January.
- ❖ It marks the anniversary of first World Hindi Conference which was held in 1975 and inaugurated by the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.
- ❖ The main focus of World Hindi Day is “to promote the language at the global stage”.
- ❖ The National Hindi Diwas is celebrated every year on 14th September, marks the adaption of Hindi, written in Devanagari script as the official language.
- ❖ The World Hindi Conference was first observed on 10th January, 2006.

### **National Youth Day – January 12**

- ❖ The National Youth Day observed every year on January 12 throughout India.
- ❖ This day marked Swami Vivekananda's birth anniversary, also called Swami Vivekananda Jayanti.
- ❖ In 1984, the government said that "the philosophy of Vivekananda and the ideals for which he lived and worked could be a great source of inspiration for the Indian youth".
- ❖ From 1985 Swami Vivekananda's birth anniversary is being celebrated as National Youth Day.



### **Indian Army Day – January 15**

- ❖ The Indian Army celebrated its 71st Army Day on January 15, 2019.
- ❖ Every year Indian Army celebrates 15th January as ‘Army Day’ to commemorate the day when General (later Field Marshal) K M Cariappa took over the command of Army from General Sir FRR Bucher, the last British Commander-in-Chief in 1949 and became the first Commander-in-Chief of Indian Army post Independence.

### **47th Statehood Day – 21 January**

- ❖ Manipur, Meghalaya and Tripura are celebrating their 47th statehood day on 21 January, 2019.
- ❖ On this day in 1972, all the 3 states became full-fledged states under the North Eastern Region (Reorganisation) Act, 1971.
- ❖ The erstwhile princely states of Tripura and Manipur were merged with India in 1949.
- ❖ Meghalaya was a part of Assam before it was carved out as a full-fledged state.



### **National Girl Child Day - 24 January**

- ❖ The National Girl Child Day is celebrated in India on 24 January with an aim to raise awareness about Child Sex Ratio (CSR) levels and promote the empowerment of girls.





- ❖ The theme of National Girl Child Day for the year 2019 is “Empowering Girls for a Brighter Tomorrow”.
- ❖ The observance of the day focuses on important issues pertaining to Girls such as declining sex ratio, female foeticide, child marriage, gender inequality and disparity in India.
- ❖ On the same occasion, the Women and Child Development Ministry also observed the anniversary of the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) Scheme.

### **International Day of Education - 24 January**

- ❖ The 24th January is observed as International Day of Education all over the world.
- ❖ The UN General Assembly on 03 December 2018, decided to celebrate 24 January as International Day of Education, in a way to appraise the role of education for peace and development.
- ❖ The right to education is represented in article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

### **National Voters Day 2019 – 25 January**

- ❖ India is celebrating 9th National Voters Day on 25th January 2019 for enhanced participation of citizens in the electoral process.



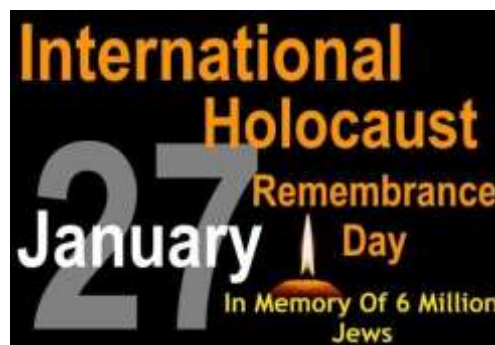
- ❖ The theme of this year’s National Voters Day (NVD) is ‘No voter to be left behind’.
- ❖ The Day is celebrated all over the country every year since 2011 to mark the Foundation day of Election Commission of India, which was established on 25th January 1950.

### **International holocaust Remembrance Day – 27 January**

- ❖ International Holocaust Remembrance Day was observed all over the world on 27th January 2019.



- ❖ The day commemorates the tragedy of the Holocaust that occurred during the 2nd World War.
- ❖ 27th January was designated as the International Holocaust Remembrance Day by the UNGA resolution on 1st November 2005 in the 42nd Plenary session.
- ❖ On 27 January 1945, Auschwitz-Birkenau, the largest Nazi concentration and death camp, was liberated by the Red Army.



### **World Leprosy Day - last Sunday of January**

- ❖ The World Leprosy Day is observed internationally every year on the last Sunday of January to increase the public awareness of the Leprosy or Hansen's Disease.
- ❖ In 2019 the World Leprosy Day falls on 27th January and will be observed in India on January 30 (Gandhi's death anniversary).
- ❖ This year the day focuses on the target of zero cases of leprosy-related disabilities in children.
- ❖ The day was initiated in 1954 by French philanthropist and writer, Raoul Follereau, as a way to raise global awareness of this deadly ancient disease.

### **Republic Day - 26 January**

- ❖ India Celebrated its 70th Republic Day on 26th January 2019.
- ❖ This Day honours the date on which the Constitution of India came into effect on 26th January 1950 replacing the Government of India Act (1935) as the governing document of India.
- ❖ South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa, was the Chief Guest of the 70th Republic Day.
- ❖ This is the 2nd time, South African President is Chief Guest for Republic Day.
- ❖ The first such occasion was held in 1995 when the late Nelson Mandela visited India as the Chief Guest for the Republic day.

#### **First in Republic Day**

- ❖ 4 Indian National Army (INA) veterans
  - Parmanand,
  - Lalti Ram,
  - Hira Singh and
  - Bhagmal,

all Aged above 90 took part in the Republic Day parade for the First time, under the theme 'Veterans: Accelerators in Nation's Growth'.



- ❖ First time in history, 'Nari Shakti' (women power) was displayed as the Assam Rifles tableau had all women contingent, led by Major Khushboo Kanwar.
- ❖ Lieutenant Bhavana Kasturi has become the first woman officer to lead an all-men Army contingent in the Republic Day parade.
- ❖ Captain Shikha Surabhi from the Corps of Signals became the first woman to perform bike stunts, alongside her male teammates as a part of daredevils.



- ❖ For the first Time, IAF flies plane using blend of Jet Fuel and Biofuel During Republic Day Parade.

### **International Customs Day – 26 January**

- ❖ The International Customs Day has been observed on January 26 every year to commemorate the first Conference of World Customs Organizations.



- ❖ The day recognizes the role of custom officials and agencies in maintaining border security.

- ❖ This year international Customs day is celebrated with a slogan “SMART borders for seamless Trade, Travel and Transport.”

### **Data Protection Day – 28 January**

- ❖ Data Protection Day also known as Data Privacy Day was observed in some parts of the world on 28 Jan world to raise awareness and promote privacy and data protection.
- ❖ It is an annual event which was observed for the first time on 28th January 2007 by Council of Europe as European Data Protection Day.
- ❖ The Day is currently observed in the 47 European Countries, United States, Israel and Canada.

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

### **Lifetime achievement award to Dinu Randive**

- ❖ The Veteran journalist Dinu Randive was conferred with the lifetime achievement award for his lifelong contributions in journalism, who started his journalistic career in 1956.
- ❖ The award was given by the Mantralaya and Vidhimandal Vartahar Sangh which is an association of journalists covering Maharashtra legislature and secretariat.

### **Khelo India Youth Games - 2nd edition**

- ❖ Maharashtra is going to host the 2nd edition of the Khelo India Youth Games which includes competitions in 18 different disciplines at Balewadi Sports Complex in Pune.
- ❖ Khelo India Youth Games (KIYG) is a part Khelo India which is the revamped national programme for development of sports in India.

### **Kumbh JioPhone application**

- ❖ Reliance Jio Infocomm launched the Kumbh JioPhone application.
- ❖ This is specially designed for millions of pilgrims who will congregate during this year’s Ardh Kumbh Mela at Prayagraj.
- ❖ The new app has a feature called ‘Khoaya Paya’ that will help users stay close to near and dear ones by finding their exact location.

### **Must-see global destinations**

- ❖ The ruins of Hampi in Ballari district in Karnataka has been ranked 2nd among the 'Must-see global destinations' as per the 'New York Times list of 52 Places To Go in 2019'.



- ❖ This city under the Vijayanagar Empire thrived as one of the richest towns during the 16<sup>th</sup> century.
- ❖ Puerto Rico, a Caribbean island and unincorporated US territory, topped the list.

### **World Tamil Conference (WTC)**

- ❖ The 10th World Tamil Conference (WTC) will be held in Chicago for four days from July 4-7, 2019.
- ❖ It will be sponsored by,
  - International Association of Tamil Research (IATR),
  - Federation of Tamil Sangams of North America (FeTNA) and
  - Chicago Tamil Sangam (CTS),
- ❖ This is for the first time a world Tamil conference is being held on the American soil.
- ❖ The Chicago International conference has main stress on “seminar on Tamil studies” with the central theme titled “Keezhadi nam Thai madi” (On our Tamil mother’s lap—Keezhadi excavation).
- ❖ It is also dedicated to Tamil scholar Revenant G. U. Pope, this being his 200th birth anniversary.

#### **Background**

- ❖ The first conference was held in Malaysia in 1966 at the initiative of Thani Nayagam Adigal.
- ❖ Three were held in Tamil Nadu in the years 1968, 1981 and 1995.



❖ The 9<sup>th</sup> World Tamil Conference was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in 2015.

Official title	Host city	Host country	Year	Arranged by
1st World Tamil Conference	Kuala Lumpur	Malaysia	1966	Thani Nayagam Adigalar
2nd World Tamil Conference	Chennai	India	1968	M. Bhaktavatsalam and C. N. Annadurai
3rd World Tamil Conference	Paris	France	1970	
4th World Tamil Conference	Jaffna	Sri Lanka	1974	
5th World Tamil Conference	Madurai	India	1981	M. G. Ramachandran
6th World Tamil Conference	Kuala Lumpur	Malaysia	1987	
7th World Tamil Conference	Port Louis	Mauritius	1989	
8th World Tamil Conference	Thanjavur	India	1995	J. Jayalalithaa
9th World Tamil Conference	Kuala Lumpur	Malaysia	2015	
10th World Tamil Conference	Chicago	USA	2019	International Association for Tamil Research, FeTNA & Chicago Tamil Sangam




## Vision 2040 – Civil Aviation

- ❖ The Ministry of Civil Aviation unveiled the Vision 2040 document.
- ❖ India's air passenger traffic is expected to grow six-fold to 1.1 billion and the number of operational airports is expected to increase around 200 in 2040.
- ❖ As per the document, the government may consider establishing a Nabh Nirman Fund (NNF) with a starting corpus of around USD 2 billion to support low traffic airports in their initial phases.

## World's Youngest to Climb 7 Volcanic Peaks

- ❖ The Mountaineer Satyarup Siddhanta, 35, climbed Antarctica's highest point, Mount Sidley.
- ❖ With this he become the youngest man in the World to have climbed the seven highest volcanic peaks.
- ❖ He holds the record of conquering several summits such as Mt Kilimanjaro in Africa, Mt Elbrus in Europe, Mt Denali in Alaska and Mt Mont Blanc in France.



**Brink of breaking the world record – Youngest person to climb the 7 summits and 7 volcanic summits**


To be the **first Indian** to climb the 7 volcanic summits  
 To be the **first Indian** to climb Mt Sidley, the highest volcano in Antarctica  
 To be the **first Indian** to climb both the 7 summits and 7 volcanic summits

**5th civilian** from India to climb the 7 summits - the highest mountain of each of the continents

**2nd Indian** to climb the highest volcano in the world – Mt Ojos Del Salado


**1st person** to play the **National Anthem** of India in flute at Antarctica  
 Skied the last degree to **South Pole** covering 111 km over 6 days

**1<sup>st</sup> person** to sing the **National anthem** at the top of Pico De Orizaba – the highest volcano of North America



**7 Summits**

Kilimanjaro      Everest  
 Denali  
 Elbrus      Kosciuszko  
 Aconcagua      Vinson Massif  
 Mont Blanc      Carstensz Pyramid  
 Wilhelm



**Volcanic 7 Summits**

Ojos Del Salado      Damavand  
 Elbrus      Kilimanjaro  
 Giluwe      Pico De Orizaba  
 Mt Sidley

## World Orange Festival

- ❖ The 2nd world Orange Festival commenced for the first time in the city of oranges, Nagpur on 18th January, 2019.
- ❖ The festival will also showcase and brand the exquisite fruit in order to boost its export.
- ❖ The festival is bring presented by UPL and hosted by the Maharashtra Tourism.

## Operation Kabaddi

- ❖ The book 'Line on Fire: Ceasefire Violations and India-Pakistan Escalation Dynamics' has revealed an operation codenamed 'Operation Kabaddi' in the post-Kargil scenario.
- ❖ The operation plan envisaged the capture of some 25-30 Pakistani posts along the LoC in September 2001 to prevent the infiltration of terrorists into Kashmir.
- ❖ Apparently, the operation was aborted by the intervention of 9/11 terror attacks and onset of the United States' led Operation Enduring Freedom in the region.
- ❖ The book was authored by the JNU academic Professor Happymon Jacob.



## 75th anniversary of WWII siege of Leningrad

- ❖ Russia marked the 75th anniversary of the end of the 872-day siege of St Petersburg, the city - then known as Leningrad, during World War II by Nazi forces with a large military parade.
- ❖ The siege of the city, then called Leningrad, lasted nearly 2½ years until the Soviet Army drove the Nazis away on Jan. 27, 1944.
- ❖ The government of the erstwhile Soviet Union awarded the Order of Lenin to Leningrad in 1945 and bestowed the title Hero City of the Soviet Union in 1965.

## Australia Day - 26 January

- ❖ Australia Day is the official national day of Australia and it is celebrated annually on 26 January.
- ❖ It marks the anniversary of the 1788 arrival of the First Fleet of British ships at Port Jackson, New South Wales.
- ❖ From 1946, January 26 was celebrated as Australia Day all over the country with the public holiday.

