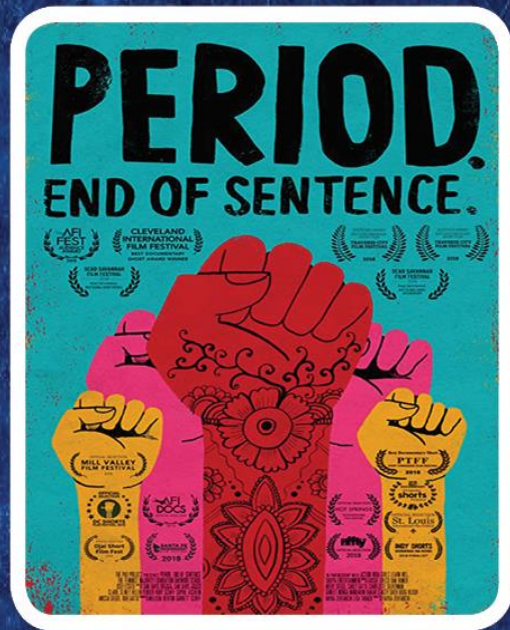
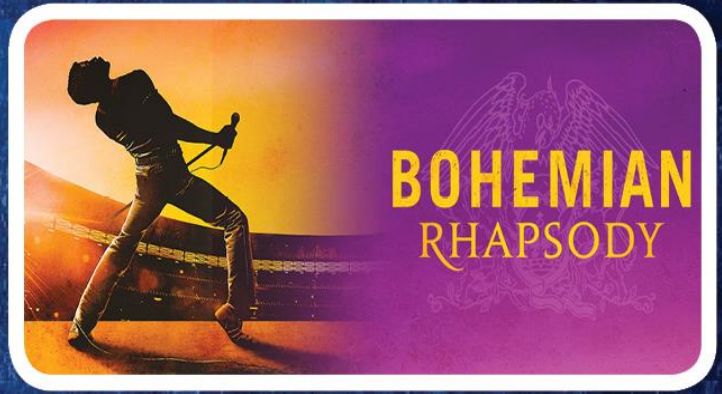


# TNPSC THERVUPETTAGAM CURRENT AFFAIRS – FEBRUARY 2019

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## TNPSC BITS

- ❖ The central banks of the UAE and Saudi Arabia will launch a common digital currency called 'Aber', which will be used for financial settlements between the two countries through Blockchains and Distributed Ledgers technologies.
- ❖ The Wayanad district administration confirmed that the two cases of Kyasanur Forest Disease (KDF), also known as monkey fever, has been confirmed in Wayanad.
  - The viral disease can be transmitted to humans through a species of ticks usually found on monkeys.
- ❖ The Senior diplomat Sunjay Sudhir was appointed as India's Ambassador to the Maldives.
- ❖ Senior bureaucrat Rajiv Nayan Choubey appointed as the member of UPSC. The Chairman of UPSC, Aravind Saxena administered him the oath of office.
- ❖ As per the recent ranking, Tamil Nadu is ranked at 18th in implementing the self-employment programme under the Centre's Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM). Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat occupy the top two places among the 27 states.
  - Last year TN was ranked at 4<sup>th</sup> under the same category.
- ❖ The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) approved indigenous construction of six submarines for the Indian Navy under Project 75(I). This is the second project under the Ministry of Defence's ambitious Strategic Partnership (SP) model.
- ❖ Lt Gen Rajeev Chopra assumed the office of Director General of NCC (DGNCC).
- ❖ New Campus of the National Museum Institute was inaugurated by the Union Minister for Human Resource Development Praksh Javedkar at NOIDA in Delhi.
- ❖ 3<sup>rd</sup> International Oil & Gas Conference & Exhibition, being organised under the aegis of the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas, Government of India, is all set to be inaugurated on February 10, 2019.
- ❖ High Level Committee chaired by the Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh, approved the additional Central assistance from National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) of Rs 7214.03 crore to 6 States and one Union Territory.
  - Assisted states are Himachal Pradesh (floods & landslides), Uttar Pradesh (floods), Andhra Pradesh (drought), Gujarat (drought), Karnataka (drought), Maharashtra (drought) and UT of Puducherry (cyclone).
- ❖ The Prime Minister dedicated the National Salt Satyagraha Memorial at Dandi in Navsari district, Gujarat to the nation on Mahatma Gandhi's death anniversary day.

- He also unveiled statues of Gandhi and 80 Satyagrahis who had marched with him during the historic Dandi Salt March in 1930 at the memorial site.
- ❖ The celebration of 'Bharat Parv' concluded at Red Fort of Delhi in the presence of Union Tourism Minister Alphons Kannanthanam which is held from 26<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> January, 2019.
  - It is aimed to generate a patriotic fervour and promote the rich cultural diversity of the country.
- ❖ India received the Award of Excellence for 'Best in Show' at the recently concluded New York Times Travel Show 2019, the largest travel show in New York, USA.
- ❖ The Punjab government approved a rural development scheme worth Rs 384.40 crore to supplement the ongoing works to build village infrastructure and provide essential amenities named 'Smart Village Campaign'.
  - This scheme would be financed with funds from the 14th Financial Commission and MGNREGA works.
- ❖ An agreement was signed between Israel Aerospace Industries, Indian Navy and Cochin Shipyard for providing Naval Medium Range Surface to air missile systems to India.
- ❖ The Army Dental Corps celebrated 78<sup>th</sup> Corps Day on February 01.
  - ❖ The Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) selected 10 companies jointly with the NITI-Aayog from a list of 141 companies for transfer of its Lithium-ion cells technology developed by the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC), Thumba in Thiruvananthapuram.
    - These Li-ion batteries are originally developed for use in launch vehicles and satellites.
  - ❖ The International Monetary Fund has cut its forecast for world economic growth this year, citing heightened trade tensions and rising U.S. interest rates. It has lowered the growth rate in its World Economic Outlook, projecting the world's economy will expand 3.5 per cent for 2019, and 3.6 per cent in 2020.
    - This is 0.2 and 0.1 per cent lower than last October's forecast, respectively.
  - ❖ According to World Steel Association's report, India has replaced Japan as world's second largest steel producing country.
    - India's steel production was at 106.5 MT in 2018. It went up by 4.9 % from 101.5 MT in 2017.
  - ❖ The Ministry of External Affairs appointed 1993 batch IFS Officer Sanjiv Ranjan who is current Ambassador to Argentina as the new Ambassador to the Republic of Colombia.
  - ❖ The Government reduced the import duty on parts and components of electric vehicles to 10-15 per cent from 15-30 per cent in order to promote domestic assembling of electric vehicles.
    - The new rates will come into effect from 30th January 2019.



- ❖ 36 years old India's Women Cricket team captain, Mithali Raj became the first female player to play 200 ODIs during the 3rd and Final ODI against New Zealand.
- ❖ Golfer Vani Kapoor has become the first Indian to grab Australian Ladies PGA Tour (LPGA) after securing 12<sup>th</sup> Rank tied with three others in the first ever qualifying tournament at the Ballarat Golf Club in Australia.
- ❖ The Interim Budget 2019 has increased the allocations to the Defence Ministry by 6.87 per cent to Rs 3.18 lakh crore against last year's allocation of Rs 2.98 lakh crore.
- ❖ The Cooperatives Department of Maharashtra has decided to appoint managers at six major cities across the country to enhance agribusiness between cooperatives in Maharashtra and other States.
- ❖ Manipur filmmaker Aribam Syam Sharma returned his 2006 Padma Shri award in solidarity with the ongoing public protests against Citizenship (Amendment) Bill 2016.
  - The former Indian president Dr APJ Abdul Kalam had conferred the Padmashree award to the noted filmmaker for his contribution to Manipuri cinema and world of the films.
- ❖ In order to improve the education system, the Sikkim state Human Resource Department signed a MoU with Microsoft.
- ❖ Facebook-owned messaging app WhatsApp has announced Startup India-WhatsApp Grand Challenge to encourage entrepreneurs and small businesses in India.
- ❖ Indian's woman cricketer Smriti Mandhana has topped the ICC rankings for Women's batters after scoring her fourth ODI century and an unbeaten 90 in the three-match series in New Zealand.
  - Mandhana moved up 3 places to reach the top spot. She is followed by Australians Ellyse Perry and Meg Lanning.
- ❖ The Tamil Nadu Government observes 30<sup>th</sup> 'Road Safety Week' (RSW) between February 4 and February 10.
  - Theme for the 2019 RSW "Road Safety – Life Safety".
- ❖ 12<sup>th</sup> edition of Aero India, Aero India 2019, will be held at Air Force Station at Yelahanka in Bengaluru from February 20 to 24.
  - It aims to provide a significant platform in encouraging business opportunities in the International aviation sector.
- ❖ The TN Dairy development had introduced the milk produced by the state cooperative Aavin in Doha, the capital of Qatar. It was earlier exported to Singapore and Hong Kong.
- ❖ Kochi City Police has started a special drive named 'Operation Broken Window' to curtail activities of goonda gangs, anti-social elements and drug mafia in the city.
- ❖ Maharashtra has now become the seventh state in India to give 10% reservation to weaker sections of general category.

- Gujarat was the first state to implement the reservation, followed by Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand and Assam.
- ❖ 2<sup>nd</sup> Jharkhand International Film Festival (JIFF) was organized by an NGO, Navbharat Nirman Sangh at Ranchi, Jharkhand on 1-3 February.
  - This was funded by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting with a support of 5 lakh.
- ❖ Pope Francis marked the first-ever visit by a head of the Catholic Church to the Arabian Peninsula (United Arab Emirates) to inaugurate the UAE's Year of Tolerance.
- ❖ The former captain of the Pakistan women cricket team Sana Mir has become the first Asian woman to play hundred T20Is.
  - She became the 6<sup>th</sup> woman in the World to achieve the feat and Deandra Dottin of West Indies leads the list with 110 T20Is.
- ❖ The Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi and Andhra Pradesh CM N. Chandrababu Naidu inaugurated the judicial complex in Amaravati.
  - This judicial complex will house the interim High Court for Andhra Pradesh.
- ❖ The First ever National Conference on "Prison Design" was held in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.
- ❖ Sopan 2019, 6-day long music and dance festival, was inaugurated in New Delhi to encourage the young artists to take up traditional art.
  - It was organised by Sahitya Kala Parishad and the New Delhi government, in partnership with New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC).
- ❖ Azim Premji, the Chairman of Wipro Ltd, was named to the Ernst & Young Lifetime Achievement Award.
  - Ernst & Young, famously known as EY is a multinational professional services firm and is one of the "Big Four" accounting firms.
- ❖ K.Veeramani Award for Social Justice 2018 will be conferred on P.S. Krishnan, former Secretary, Government of India.
- ❖ Ministry of Textiles has organised National Conclave on Technical Textiles- 'TechnoTex 2019' in Mumbai.
- ❖ Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY), popularly known as the Ayushman Bharat launched PM-JAY app in New Delhi.
- ❖ Sunjay Sudhir, presently Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Maldives.
- ❖ The Supreme Court reserved its judgment on a batch of review petitions over the entry of women into the Sabarimala temple, while the Travancore Temple Board (TDP) pledged to support entry of women of all ages into the temple.
- ❖ The National Film Development Corporation of India (NFDC) has been selected as winner under the Miniratna Category by Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME).
  - This has been done as part of endeavour by Ministry of MSME to felicitate selected Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) to

recognize their exemplary work towards promotion of SC/ST entrepreneurs.

- ❖ 8th meeting of India - China Joint Working Group on Counter-terrorism was held in Beijing.
- ❖ The Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs (MoHUA) has launched Shehri Samridhi Utsav to extend the outreach of DAY-NULM to the most vulnerable.
  - This event showcases its initiatives to facilitate access of Self-Help Group (SHG) members to the other government schemes.
- ❖ The 2019 edition of Kochi Area Boat Pulling Regatta, which is one of the most prestigious and traditional naval sporting activities conducted in Indian Navy, was held in Kochi.
  - The team from INS Dronacharya won the overall regatta trophy.
- ❖ Prime Minister launched University of Ladakh, the first-ever varsity in the Ladakh region of Jammu and Kashmir.
- ❖ Indian squash player Ramit Tandon has won the 2019 Seattle Open title by defeating Mohamed El Sherbini of Egypt in the final in USA. It is his fourth title in his career.
- ❖ Union Cabinet has approved the abolition of institutions of Ombudsman for income tax and indirect tax.
  - The office of Income-Tax Ombudsman was set up in 2003 to deal with grievances of public related to the settlement of complaints relating to income tax.
- ❖ India's largest state-owned lender SBI's regional head in the UK has been honoured with the 'Freedom of the City of London' award in recognition of his contribution to promoting the bilateral relations.
- ❖ India become the second largest consumer and importer of the LPG in the world. This is attributed to government initiatives to push for cleaner alternatives to traditional cooking fuels such as firewood and cow dung.
- ❖ Union Cabinet has approved the proposal of Ministry of Information and Broadcasting for introducing the Cinematograph Amendment Bill, 2019 to amend to the Cinematograph Act, 1952.
  - This Bill aims to tackle Films piracy by including the penal provisions for unauthorized camcording and duplication of films.
- ❖ Young Maharashtra-based artist Shashikant Patil was declared winner of the CIMA Award.
- ❖ Dinesh Bhatia has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to Argentina.
  - ❖ The Indo-Canadian filmmaker Deepa Mehta was named to the Lifetime Achievement Award by the Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television.
  - ❖ The Union Cabinet has approved the MoU between India and Brazil on cooperation in the field of Traditional Systems of Medicine and Homoeopathy.

- ❖ The Senior IPS officer A P Maheshwari has been appointed as Special Secretary (Internal Security) in the Home Ministry.
- ❖ Andhra Pradesh Government has introduced a new scheme, called Annadata Sukhibhava to give economic support to Annadatas (farmers).
- ❖ The Indian Coast Guard and the Airport Authority of India signed a MoU for coordination in the aeronautical and maritime search and rescue operations.
- ❖ Vidarbha claimed their second successive Ranji Trophy title and second overall beating Saurashtra in the final of the Ranji Trophy 2018-19.
- ❖ As per the new report, Philippines have the World's heaviest internet users where people spent an average of 10 hours a day online in 2018.
  - Brazil came in second place followed by Thailand.
- ❖ The World champion Indian weightlifter Saikhom Mirabai Chanu notched up a gold medal at the EGAT Cup in Thailand.
  - Chanu won the 48kg category gold in the silver level Olympic qualifying event.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu ranked 4<sup>th</sup> in the entire country in terms of overall GST collections.
  - Overall, Maharashtra tops the country at Rs 70,792 crore collection followed by Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka.
- ❖ IIT-Madras has launched a research centre on Artificial Intelligence at its campus.
  - It is developed jointly in association with Robert Bosch, the Germany-based Electronics and Engineering firm.
- ❖ The Prime Minister has launched DD Arun Prabha Channel in Itanagar of Arunchal Pradesh. It is Doordarshan's 2<sup>nd</sup> channel in north-eastern region after DD North East.
- ❖ The Ministry of Textiles in association with Central Silk Board had organized an event "Surging Silk – Accomplishment and Way Forward" on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2019 at in New Delhi.
- ❖ Ministry of Environment launched a three-year Asiatic Lion Conservation Project in collaboration with the state of Gujarat, which is the last habitat of the big cat.
  - Gujarat government also implemented Rs 80 crore that will be spent on specialised veterinary hospitals and full-fledged ambulances for lions.
- ❖ The Government of Meghalaya has decided to rename the Dikkibandi stadium after P A Sangma.
  - Along with the Dikkibandi stadium, a junction leading to AMPT road in Tura have been renamed after P.A Sangma.
- ❖ The Prime Minister unveiled a statue of Tripura's last ruler, Maharaja Bir Bikram Kishore Manikya at the Agartala airport.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu Chief Minister inaugurated a statue and Mani Mandabam for Narayanaswamy Naidu, a farmer leader at Vaiyampalayam in Coimbatore.
- ❖ India's National Centre for Good Governance (NCGG) and the Ministry of Public Administration of Bangladesh signed a MoU for training 1800 Bangladesh Civil Servants.



- ❖ The Union government announced the Great Indian Bustard (GIB) as the mascot for the 13th UN Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species (CMS - COP 13), scheduled to be held in Gujarat next year. CMS COP is also known as a Global Wildlife Conference.
  - The mascot was launched by Union Minister Harsh Vardhan, who also revealed that the bird has been fondly named by the ministry as 'Gibi'.
- ❖ The book “Law, Justice and Judicial Power – Justice P N Bhagwati’s Approach” written by Mool Chand Sharma was launched by the Chief Justice of India.
- ❖ The US President Trump has nominated David Malpass for the post of the president of the World Bank.
- ❖ Government e Marketplace (GeM) and Competition Commission of India (CCI) entered into a MoU to enable a fair and competitive environment in the e-Marketplace.
- ❖ Kerala High Court has ruled that banks cannot be absolved from the liability to the loss caused to a customer on account of unauthorised withdrawals made from his/her account.
- ❖ Reserve Bank of India decided to treat deposits to over Rs.2 crore as ‘bulk’ as they doubled the limit for the same from the earlier Rs.1 crore. This move will enhance operational freedom of Banks.
- ❖ The 5-day multinational maritime exercise ‘AMAN-19’ in which 46 nations participated from all over the world was formally commenced at Karachi’s Pakistan Navy Dockyard, with the Motto of ‘Together for Peace’.
  - It is aimed to facilitate a forum of understanding of each other’s maritime concepts and operation cultures and to produce ways and means to confront common threat at sea.
- ❖ Hindi is included as the third official language in the Abu Dhabi court system with a motive to improve access to justice for foreign workers.
  - Also, Authorities have created bilingual language guides to explain complex legal terms in an effort to help people understand court process.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu Chief Minister inaugurated the CODISSIA (Coimbatore District Small Industries Association) Industrial Park Limited (CIPL) at Coimbatore. Established in 1969 as a small Industries Association, it celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> year Golden Jubilee.
- ❖ TN government has appointed K Gnanadesikan, Additional Chief Secretary to the Industries department, as chairperson of the Tamil Nadu Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA).
- ❖ Union Minister for Food Processing Industries Harsimrat Kaur Badal inaugurated Cremica Mega Food Park Pvt Ltd in Village Singhain, Una District of Himachal Pradesh.
  - This is the first Mega Food Park operationalized in the State of Himachal Pradesh.
- ❖ 2 day 2<sup>nd</sup> Joint Secretary Level meeting to assess the India-Nepal Trade Treaty was organized in Pokhara, Nepal to deliberate upon various bilateral issues and non-tariff barriers in bilateral trade.
- ❖ India and Norway signed a letter of Intent for establishing the India-Norway Marine Pollution Initiative.

- ❖ Ruchira Kamboj, currently serving as the High Commissioner of India to South Africa, was appointed as the Ambassador of India to Bhutan.
- ❖ Geneva banned elected officials and public employees to wearing visible religious symbols after 55% residents voted in favour of a controversial new “secularism law”.
- ❖ Snegha Parthibaraja, a female lawyer has received an official certificate declaring that she does not belong to any caste or religion and become the first person in the entire country to get such certificate.
- ❖ An integrated, state-of-the-art multidisciplinary animal husbandry park (over 900 acres), the largest such facility in Asia, will be set up in Salem.
- ❖ The World Day of the Sick is a feast day of the Roman Catholic Church which was instituted on 13 May 1992 by Pope John Paul II beginning on 11 February 1993.
- ❖ Sibghatullah Mujadidi, Afghanistan’s first president after the withdrawal of invading Soviet troops from Afghanistan and the collapse in 1992 of Kabul’s pro-communist government, has died.
- ❖ 19-year-old Corentin Moutet of France defeated Andrew Harris of Australia in the singles final and won the title in Chennai Open ATP Challenger tennis tournament.
- ❖ Egyptian President, Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi has been elected as the chairman of the African Union (AU) at the continental body's summit in Ethiopia.
- ❖ Union Cabinet has recently approved the establishment of Circuit Bench of Calcutta High Court at Jalpaiguri.
  - This proposed bench will have jurisdiction over four districts namely Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar.
- ❖ Sushil Chandra, the chairman of the Central Board of Direct Taxes or CBDT, has been appointed as the new Election Commissioner.
  - The appointment came ahead of this year's general elections.
- ❖ Day after the dastardly terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Pulwama district on February 14, India has withdrawn the Most Favoured Nation (MNF) status accorded to Pakistan.
- ❖ Senior bureaucrat Pramod Chandra Mody has been appointed as chairman of Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), a top policy making body for income tax department.
- ❖ Reliance Industries chairman Mukesh Ambani and also richest person in Asia, topped the Hurun India Philanthropy list with donation amount of 437 crores.
- ❖ International Paralympics Committee (IPC) lifted the ban on Russian Para athletes under certain conditions, which was active since August 2016.
- ❖ TN government introduced a Bill for the establishment of a private unitary university in Tamil Nadu by trusts or societies or not-for-profit companies.
  - The proposed private university would be both a greenfield and multidisciplinary.

- ❖ Tamil Nadu Innovation Grand Challenge (TNIGC), a start-up competition was organised by TN's Entrepreneurship Development & Innovation Institute (EDII).
- ❖ Hina Jaiswal, the Chandigarh-origin lieutenant, becomes the first woman flight engineer of the IAF (Indian Air Force). Until last year, the Flight Engineer branch was exclusively the men's domain.
- ❖ The Union Home ministry has designated Dera Baba Nanak land post located in Punjab's Gurdaspur district as an authorised immigration checkpoint to exit and enter for visiting Kartarpur Sahib Gurdwara in Pakistan.
- ❖ The President of India has unveiled the portrait of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee at the Central Hall of Parliament on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2019.
- ❖ The Union Cabinet has approved the Proposal for allotment of land to Pasteur Institute of India (PII) for establishment of New Viral Vaccine Manufacturing Unit at Coonoor, Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ Vice Admiral SN Gharmade took charge as the Chief of Staff at Eastern Naval Command, Vishakhapatnam.
- ❖ The Finance Ministry inaugurated the Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Mandhan Yojana on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2019 which is a pension scheme for the labours, associated in the unorganized sector.
- ❖ Government of India, Government of Himachal Pradesh and the World Bank signed a \$40 million loan agreement to help bring clean and reliable drinking water to the citizens of the Greater Shimla area.
- ❖ Ahead of World Hearing Day (March 3), WHO and International Trade Union have issued a new international standard regarding fabricating and utilization of musical devices, which includes smart phones.
- ❖ Piyush Pandey, The Hindu's Corporate Editor, has received the IFFCO Indian Institute of Mass Communication Alumni Association (IIMCAA) Special Mention award in the Economic and Business Reporting category.
- ❖ Indian Prime Minister flagged off the first ever diesel-to-electric converted locomotive at the Diesel Locomotive Works (DLW) at Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh.
- ❖ 150 students of Srilanka from all 25 districts were awarded the prestigious Mahatma Gandhi scholarships for study in India.
- ❖ Minister of State for Home Hansraj Gangaram Ahir announced that National Awards, such as Bharat Ratna, Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri do not amount to titles within the meaning of Article 18(1) of the Constitution and hence, cannot be used as prefixes or suffixes to the name of the recipient.
- ❖ Union Minister of Commerce & Industry and Civil Aviation Suresh Prabhu launched SWAYATT in New Delhi.
  - SWAYATT is an initiative to promote Start-ups Women and Youth Advantage Through e-Transactions on Government e Marketplace (GeM).

- ❖ Tamil thatha U.Ve. Saminadha Iyer's 165<sup>th</sup> birthday was celebrated on 19 February 2019.
- ❖ Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu presented the Living Handloom Treasure awards, the Poompohar State Awards and cash awards to three silk farmers.
- ❖ Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) has announced that candidates can avail of the 10% quota for the upper-caste poor from 2019 civil services exam.
- ❖ UN has appointed Indian official Chandramouli Ramanathan to one of the topmost positions in the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance (DMSPC).
- ❖ Saudi Arabia signed the framework agreement of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) becoming the 73<sup>rd</sup> country to join the India-led renewable energy organisation.
  - With this ISA has a total of 122 members now.
- ❖ TN governor appointed, K Pitchumani as the VC of Manonmaniam Sundaranar University for a period of three years with effect from the date of assuming the office.
- ❖ Justice S M Subramaniam of the Madras high court has become the first judge in the country to go under continuous CCTV Surveillance in his chambers.
- ❖ The North-Eastern States of Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram celebrated Statehood Day on February 20.
  - Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh celebrated the 32<sup>nd</sup> and 47<sup>th</sup> Statehood Day respectively.
- ❖ Government of Punjab has sought an apology from the British government for the Jallianwala Bagh massacre.
  - A resolution demanding an apology from the British government was passed unanimously from the Punjab Assembly.
- ❖ South Central railway launched a new Mainline Electric Multiple Unit (MEMU) express train between Nellore and Chennai.
- ❖ Union Minister of State for Food Processing Industries Sadhvi Niranjana Jyoti inaugurated Sikaria Mega Food Park Pvt Ltd at Village Tulakona in Agartala.
  - This is the 17<sup>th</sup> Mega Food Park in the country and first in the state of Tripura.
- ❖ 4<sup>th</sup> India-ASEAN Expo and Summit was inaugurated by Union Minister for Commerce and Industries, Suresh Prabhu in New Delhi.
- ❖ US defence producer Lockheed Martin unveiled the F-21 multi-role fighter jet at Asia's biggest air show Aero India-2019 in Bengaluru.
  - Lockheed Martin will manufacture the plane in collaboration with Tata Advanced Systems under India's flagship programme Make in India.
- ❖ Union Minister of Food Processing Industries Harsimrat Kaur Badal on February 12, 2019 commissioned Godavari Mega Aqua Food Park at Tundurru Village in West Godavari District, Andhra Pradesh
  - It is India's first aqua mega food park launched exclusively for fish and marine products processing
- ❖ Central government has signed a (MoU) with the University of British Columbia (UBC), Canada to work on various environmental issues including climate change, forest resource management and wildlife.



- ❖ Central government decided that all the personnel of central paramilitary forces can take commercial flights to either join the duty or to go on leave free of cost.
  - Till now, officers in the rank of Inspectors and above were given this air travel facility.
- ❖ West Indies player Chris Gayle breaks former Pakistan cricketer Shahid Afridi's record of 476 sixes by hitting 477 sixers on the international arena in the first ODI between West Indies and England.
- ❖ Umpires Eloise Sheridan and Mary Waldron are on the verge of making history as they will be the first women pair to preside in a men's first grade premier (club) cricket match.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu Chief Minister launched the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) on February 24.
  - He handed over the first instalment of Rs 2,000 to a few farmers at Kalaivanar Arangam of Chennai to launch the scheme. During this function, Union Minister Piyush Goel was also there.
- ❖ PM inaugurated the scheme of giving Rs. 6,000 annual financial assistance to farmers which was announced in the interim budget on February 24 at Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh.
- ❖ Justice Senthilkumar Ramamoorthy was sworn in as the additional judge of the Madras High Court on February 22.
  - With this appointment the strength of the high court stands at 60 judges against the sanctioned strength of 75.
- ❖ Central Information Commission has ruled that, an Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) also is a "information" under the Right to Information Act.
  - So now Election Commission has to respond to an RTI application seeking the EVM either by providing it or refusing it under exemption clauses in the Act.
- ❖ Professional services firm Deloitte will provide education and skills training to 10 million girls and women in India with an aim to equip them to find a meaningful work.
- ❖ Saurabh Chaudhary won gold in the ISSF Shooting World Cup in New Delhi, also shattering World Record to finish top of the 10m air rifle men's event.
- ❖ GST Council decided to slash the levy on under-construction houses to 5% with a special rate of 1% introduced for affordable homes.
  - It withdraws the benefit of tax credit on inputs such as steel, cement and paint, arguing that builders were pocketing the gains.
- ❖ Prime Minister laid the foundation stone for Patna Metro Rail Project in Bihar's Barauni.
- ❖ 155 houses built by India under the Indian Housing Project in Sri Lanka, were on handed over to the residents of the country's plantation area.
- ❖ 3 days 4<sup>th</sup> edition of Agri Leadership Summit held at the proposed International Fruit and Vegetable Terminus in Ganaur at district Sonapat, Haryana.
- ❖ Sunil Chhetri, 34-year-old Padma Shri holder, was conferred the first ever Football Ratna honour by Football Delhi, the association governing the sport in the city.

- ❖ Himachal Pradesh Assembly passed the Official Language (Amendment) Bill 2019 to make Sanskrit the second official language in the state.
- ❖ Telangana government announced the creation of two new districts - Narayanpet and Mulugu, taking the number of districts in the state to 33.
- ❖ Chennai Spartans defeated Calicut Heroes to win the inaugural edition of the Pro Volleyball League.
- ❖ Leg-spinner Rashid Khan of Afghanistan became the first bowler to bag four wickets off successive deliveries in Twenty20 Internationals.
- ❖ Tamilnadu Governor Banwarilal Purohit inaugurated the morning breakfast scheme of Greater Chennai Corporation on 25 February at the Tiruvanmiyur government school.
  - Chennai Corporation has teamed up with NGO Akshaya Patra to provide the breakfast in government schools around the city.
- ❖ ICAR-Central Institute of Brackish water Aquaculture (CIBA) inaugurated a “Fish Waste Processing Unit” at Nambikkai Nagar, Pattinapakkam at Chennai.
  - This unit will be operated by a Self-Help Group (SHG) of Nambikkai Nagar
- ❖ 40<sup>th</sup> edition of International Annual Desert Festival 2019 has concluded in Jaisalmer, Rajasthan on February 17.
  - The 3-day festival exhibits rich cultural heritage of the desert state, commenced with a colourful procession from Gadsisar lake fort.
- ❖ Meghalaya state animal ‘Clouded Leopard’ was chosen as the mascot for the upcoming National Games to be hosted by the state in 2022.
- ❖ Elise Mertens from Belgium defeated Simona Halep of Italy in the Qatar Open Tennis final and won the biggest title of her career.
- ❖ Abdul Aziz Muhamat, a Sudanese refugee activist who spent four years in an Australian detention centre has won an international human rights prize Martin Ennals award 2019 in Geneva, Switzerland for exposing “the very cruel asylum seeker policy of the Australian government”.
- ❖ Myanmar clinched the Hero Gold Cup women's international football tournament title in style, beating Nepal 3-1 in the final at the Kalinga Stadium, Odisha.
- ❖ Ranji champions Vidarbha beat Rest of India in Nagpur to retain the Irani Cup in cricket match. Vidarbha has now become the 3<sup>rd</sup> team after Mumbai and Karnataka to clinch two Irani Cup titles in a row.
- ❖ Saina Nehwal beat P V Sindhu to retain her women’s singles crown at the 83rd Yonex Sunrise Senior Badminton Nationals in Guwahati at Assam.
- ❖ Madras High Court ruled that MPs as well as MLAs are liable to refund salaries and other emoluments, along with penalty, if a court of law declares their election to be illegal.
  - This null and void verdict is applicable either before or after the completion of their tenure.

- ❖ TN state government has extended the tenure of the Justice A. Arumugasamy Commission for another four months.
  - On September 25, 2017, the state government had appointed this one-man commission to probe the circumstances leading to the death of former CM J. Jayalalithaa.
- ❖ TN state government has announced that New frozen semen station with high pedigree country and cross bred bull will be established in the Integrated livestock park, Salem at the cost of Rs 100 crore.
- ❖ The Indian Air Force (IAF) carried out air strikes at the biggest training camp of the Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) terror group in Balakot of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province in Pakistan, eliminating over 300 terrorists and their trainers. For this, Miraj 2000 class aircrafts were used.
- ❖ RBI is working on a set of rules that would link salaries of banks CEOs to parameters like balance sheet size of a bank, loan delinquency, profits and governance record.
- ❖ Union Cabinet gave its nod to issue the Triple Talaq ordinance, Third Time in less than one year on February 19.
  - It makes the practice of instant triple talaq by Muslim men a penal offence.
- ❖ Government of Maharashtra celebrates 19th February as a Maharaja Shivaji day to commemorating Shivaji's birthday (Shivaji Jayanti).
- ❖ Actress Kareena Kapoor Khan has been appointed as an ambassador of Swasth Immunised India campaign.
  - The Swasth Immunised India campaign has been launched by Serum Institute of India (SII) and Network 18.
- ❖ Ministry of Home Affairs directed to Assam Rifles to shift their battalion headquarters from capital city of Mizoram, Aizawl to Zokhawsang area by May 31.
  - Presently, the Assam Rifles' headquarters is located in Treasury and Zodin square in Aizawl city.
- ❖ India's Tennis player Prajnesh Gunneswaran achieved his career-best ATP ranking, rising to 94th in the latest list.
- ❖ President Ram Nath Kovind unveiled a statue of Mahatma Gandhi at the Dakshina Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha in Chennai on February 21, 2019.
- ❖ Bihar government has issued notification to provide 10 percent quota for weaker sections in general category in jobs and educational institutions.
- ❖ Marathi Language Day, also referred to as 'Marathi Bhasha Din' and 'Marathi Bhasha Diwas', is celebrated every year on 27 February to commemorating the birth anniversary of eminent Marathi Poet Vishnu Vaman Shirwadkar.

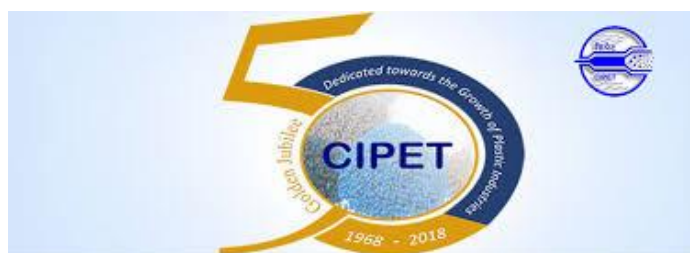
- ❖ National Aids Research Institute (NARI) has decided to drop its focus on research into the Acquired Immuno-deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and to undergo a name change in the coming months.
- ❖ Prime Minister inaugurated a Virtual Experiential Museum (VEM) at Man Mahal, a centrally-protected observatory under the Archaeological Survey of India in Varanasi.
- ❖ Shisht Bharat campaign, launched by an NGO, aims to strengthen the moral character of Indian citizens by sensitizing them about values of morality, civic sense, politeness, decorum and dignity. It is an effort of the Dr. Angeli Qwatra Safety Trainings Initiative.
- ❖ Indian Prime Minister launched the India-Korea Start-up Hub in Seoul during his visit to South Korea.
- ❖ National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) conducted a two-day national workshop on heat wave risk reduction at Nagpur.
- ❖ Asian Hockey Federation has honoured Indian skipper Manpreet Singh with the 2018 Player of the Year award.
  - Women team's striker Lalremsiami has bagged the Rising Player of The Year prize.
- ❖ The Union Minister of Railways, Piyush Goyal launched the Rail Drishti dashboard.
  - It will encompass all the digitisation efforts in the Indian Railways and aims to promote transparency and accountability.
- ❖ The World Sustainable Energy Days (WSED) are one of Europe's largest annual conferences in this field. The 2019 conference will take place from 27 February - 1 March 2019 in Wels, Austria.



## TAMILNADU

### CIPET - Golden Jubilee

- ❖ The Central Institute of Plastics Engineering & Technology (CIPET), an organization devoted to development of plastics and allied industries celebrated its Golden Jubilee (50 years) Celebrations.
- ❖ The Central Institute of Plastics Engineering & Technology (CIPET) was established in 1968 with the assistance of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) at Chennai.



- ❖ International Labour Organization (ILO) served as the executing agency.
- ❖ It was the first institution in the country in the area of plastics under the aegis of Department of Chemicals & Petrochemicals, Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilizers, Government of India.
- ❖ It is devoted to Skill Development, Technology Support Services, Academic and Research (STAR).
- ❖ Headquartered at Chennai, CIPET operates from various locations spread across the country catering to the needs of Polymer and allied industries.

### Road Safety Fund

- ❖ TN Chief Minister has allocated a total fund of Rs 65 crore to implement various strategies to spread awareness on road safety.
- ❖ The funding was announced ahead of the annual road safety week in the State which is observed from February 4-10.
- ❖ The police commissioners of the 3 districts that has the least number of accidents this year, will be conferred with the Chief Minister's award.

### 102 Service

- ❖ Chief Minister of Tamilnadu launched 15 new ambulances for the 102 service which is used for drop and pick up services for women and new-born children.
- ❖ Former CM J Jayalalithaa had first launched the 102 vehicles service in 2013 at Chennai and later it was extended to other districts.

### Digicop Mobile App

- ❖ Tamil Nadu police has launched a mobile application called 'Digicop'

- ❖ The user can lodge mobile theft complaints using the app and can check if the user's mobile is in the police list of retrieved mobiles.
- ❖ Using DigiCop App, people can verify IMEI, report lost two-wheelers and phones, know the nearest police station, police news and traffic alerts.



### Uzhavan app - JFarm

- ❖ Tamilnadu has launched a new service in State government's Uzhavan App to enable farmers get equipment meant for agricultural operations at reasonable rent.
- ❖ This has been done by integrating JFarm Services App of Chennai-based Tractor and Farm Equipment Limited (TAFE) with Uzhavan App.




- ❖ JFarm Services App aims to increase easy access to farm mechanisation solutions through renting out tractors and modern farm equipment to small and marginal farmers.
- ❖ The app also provides localised weather forecast, agri-news alerts and advisory, enhancing their productivity and increasing their income significantly.

### Tamil Nadu Solar Policy

- ❖ The Tamil Nadu government has unveiled a new solar energy policy 2019 that aims at generating 9,000 MW for the state by 2022.

- ❖ Tamil Nadu has announced in June 2018 that a similar policy released in 2012 would be upgraded by combining the Vision 2023 document released by former late chief [minister](#) J Jayalalithaa and also the target set by the Ministry of New and Renewable [Energy](#) of 9,000 MW installed capacity.
- ❖ According to the new policy, Vision [Tamil Nadu](#) 2023 document includes a solar [energy](#) target of 5,000 MW.
- ❖ Of the total 9,000 MW, 40 per cent would be earmarked for consumer category solar energy systems.

 <p><b>TARGET FOR 2023</b>   9,000MW installed solar energy generation</p> <p>Current capacity   2,200MW</p>	<b>2023 DEADLINE</b>	
	<p><b>CHALLENGES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; TN has been adding an average of 400MW/yr solar energy capacity for five years, but will have to add 6,800MW over the next four years</li> <li>&gt; Rooftop solar systems did not work well in the past; authorities were keener about large-scale projects. With 40% new capacity to come from consumers (rooftop), renewed focus is the need of the hour</li> </ul>	<p><b>INCENTIVES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Consumer category is exempted from electricity tax for two years from Feb 4, 2019</li> <li>&gt; Schemes to promote solar energy generation in agricultural sector, besides encouraging co-utilization of land</li> <li>&gt; Incentives in form of providing land, single-window approval to promote manufacturing of solar energy components</li> </ul>

## Tamil Nadu Budget 2019-20

- ❖ Tamil Nadu Deputy Chief Minister O. Panneerselvam presented the State's Budget for the Financial Year 2019-20 in the Tamil Nadu Assembly on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2019.

### Highlights

- ❖ Tamil Nadu's fiscal deficit is estimated to be Rs. 44,176.36 crore in 2019-20. It will be 2.56% of state GSDP, below the norm of 3% fiscal norm.
- ❖ 3000 scooters will be provided for differently-abled persons.
- ❖ Organic Certification Centres will be set up in all districts to promote Organic Farming.
- ❖ Government proposes to distribute 240 units of Navic, 160 units Isat-2 satellite phones and 160 units of Navtex instruments to 80 clusters of deep-sea fishing boats.
- ❖ Government proposes to purchase 2,000 electric buses.
- ❖ State govt has earmarked Rs 25 crore to support NGOs for starting new schools in interior tribal areas for the benefit of tribal students.
- ❖ "CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE" under TNeGA to harness artificial intelligence, big data, machine learning, drones and IoT will be set up.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu Health Systems Reforms Programme will be launched with World Bank's support.
- ❖ Government proposed solar power projects in Theni, Salem and Erode with a capacity of 250 MW.

### Special assistance to BPL families

- ❖ Tamil Nadu government unveiled a poverty alleviation scheme to dole out Rs 2,000 towards every family categorised Below Poverty Line.
- ❖ This scheme give assistance especially farm workers, the urban poor, labourers in the sectors of fireworks, fishing, power and handlooms, construction and other industries.
- ❖ The scheme is expected to reach out to 35 lakh families in the villages and 25 lakh urban poor families thus total to 60 lakh families.
- ❖ The Government allocates 1200 crores for this purpose.
- ❖ Chief Minister K Palaniswami made the announcement under Rule 110 at the assembly.

### Tamil Nadu's first bilateral hand transplant

- ❖ First successful hand transplant was performed on 29-year-old Narayanaswamy from Dindigul and the patient was finally discharged on recently.
- ❖ In February 2018, 13-hour Tamil Nadu's first bilateral hand transplant surgery took place at Government Stanley Medical College Hospital, Chennai.

**ROAD TO RECOVERY**

**WHAT HAPPENS TO A HAND TRANSPLANT PATIENT**

- Bones, muscles, arteries, nerves, tendons veins and soft tissues in the recipient's hand are attached to the donor hand
- Like any other organ transplant, hand transplant patients will have to be on medicines to suppress immune system so that it doesn't fight the new hand or reject it
- Long-term intensive physiotherapy is given to restore function. While some functions can be quickly restored, some take time
- Patients may feel pressure or pain but may take time to regain feelings of fine touch



- ❖ Doctors reconstructed both hands below the elbow with a pair of hands donated by an accident victim who was declared brain dead.

### **PM TN Visit**

- ❖ Prime Minister inaugurated the last leg of the Chennai metro rail's blueline and declared six underground metro stations through video-conferencing from Tiruppur.
- ❖ He laid a foundation stone for following facilities:
  - Modernisation of Chennai International Airport (Phase-II)
  - New integrated terminal building at Tiruchirappalli airport
  - 100-bedded ESI hospital in Tirupur.
- ❖ Also, He dedicated BPCL Ennore Coastal installation state-of-the-art and fully automated oil storage and distribution facilities.

### **Codissia Defence Innovation and Incubation Centre**

- ❖ Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman launched the Defence Innovation Hub of Codissia (Coimbatore District Small Industries Association) in Trichy.
- ❖ She handed over a certification to its office-bearers during the launch of projects under Tamil Nadu Defence Industrial Corridor.
- ❖ This Codissia Defence Innovation and Incubation Centre (CDIIC) is the first of its kind hub in the country.

### **Migration support Centre in Tamil Nadu**

- ❖ Odisha State government has opened a migration support centre in Tirupur.
- ❖ It will provide guidance and support to people who have migrated from Odisha to Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ This centre would mainly address the grievances of unskilled labourers trained under the DDU-GKY (Deen Dayal Upadhyaya-Grameen Kaushalya Yojana) scheme.
- ❖ It is the third centre set up by the Odisha government besides the two in the National Capital Region (NCR), Delhi, and Bengaluru.
- ❖ Odisha was the first to open such centre, mandated under the DDU-GKY scheme, in Tamil Nadu

### **UK India Social Innovation Challenge**

- ❖ Students from the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras were bagging the first and third positions in the UK India Social Innovation Challenge.
- ❖ Second place went to a team from Kongu Engineering College, Erode.
- ❖ The competition was launched by the UK India Social Entrepreneurship Education Network (UKISEEN) and this year saw its second edition.
- ❖ Top-ranked projects are:
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Place: Recycling of demolished waste concrete using solar energy.



- 2<sup>nd</sup> Place: Eco-Friendly Construction blocks from Construction & Demolition Debris using the Innovative CO<sub>2</sub> Sequestration Technique.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Place: Catalytic Degradation of kraft lignin by Ultraviolet Light and Ultrasound.



### **Two New municipalities**

- ❖ Tamil Nadu State government has passed a bill to will upgrade the Hosur and Nagercoil municipalities into municipal corporations.
- ❖ A Bill to this effect was introduced and passed by a voice vote in the Assembly on 14 February 2019.
- ❖ With the upgrading of the two municipalities into corporations, Tamil Nadu will have a total of 14 corporations.

### **Policy framework for agricultural produce and livestock**

- ❖ Tamil Nadu Agricultural Produce and Livestock Contract Farming and Services (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill-2019 was passed by a voice vote at State Assembly.
- ❖ It envisages setting up "TN Contract Farming and Services (Promotion and Facilitation) Authority".
- ❖ This authority will make contract farming more transparent, easier and successful and shall have the powers of a civil court in specified areas.
- ❖ The objective of adopting the bill, was drafted on the lines of a model legislation suggested by the Central government.

## Awards and Recognition received by Tamil Nadu

- ❖ India Today Magazine presented 4 Awards to TN Government for
  - Overall Best Performing State in all sectors,
  - Best State in maintenance of Law and Order,
  - Best performing State in Tourism and
  - Most improved State in Law and Order.
- ❖ Prestigious Krishi Karman award, the highest award given by Government of India, bagged 4 times in the past 5 years.
- ❖ “Public Affairs Centre”, Bengaluru in their report for 2018 has ranked Tamil Nadu 2<sup>nd</sup> in good governance, on the basis of socio-economic growth.
- ❖ TN ranked as the 2<sup>nd</sup> biggest economy in India due to rich human resources, strong infrastructure facilitates, surplus power and natural resources.
- ❖ TN ranked first on the basis of number of factories and number of employees.
- ❖ TN ranked as the 2<sup>nd</sup> ideal State for industrial investment in 2018 in the survey conducted by National Economic Utility Research Bureau.
- ❖ Periyakulam Police Station selected as the 8<sup>th</sup> best Police Station in India.
- ❖ Five Awards from Central Government for effective implementation of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme.
- ❖ Best Practice Award for end to end computerisation of Public Distribution System.
- ❖ Government of India Award for best infrastructure facilities in Non-conventional Energy Sector.
- ❖ Best State Award consecutively for the 4<sup>th</sup> year from the Government of India for implementation of Organ Transplantation from deceased persons.
- ❖ 11 Awards to Tamil Nadu Transport Corporations from Government of India for their best performance.
- ❖ National and International Awards to Coimbatore, Erode, Madurai and Tiruchirappalli Corporations for good governance.
- ❖ Skoch Platinum Award for Solid Waste Management.
- ❖ Government of India Award to TWAD Board for Integrated Management Information System.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu ranked first in the country for effective implementation of “Protech girl children and educated girl children” programme.

## Amendment of TN Manual Workers Welfare Scheme 1994

- ❖ The Registered construction workers in the city will be able to avail free food at Amma Unavagam as a new scheme will be introduced through the amendment of Tamil Nadu Manual Workers (Construction Workers) Welfare Scheme -1994.
- ❖ The municipal administration and water supply department will be passing a government order for it based on a proposal from the Greater Chennai Corporation.
- ❖ The scheme will allow workers to avail food free of cost and their monthly bills, to be maintained by the canteens.

- ❖ It will be settled by the Tamil Nadu Construction Workers Welfare Board (TNCWWB).

### **Penalty for the violators of plastic ban**

- ❖ Tamil Nadu government introduced a bill in the state legislative assembly to amend the municipal laws to fix the penalties.
- ❖ The fine for a first-time offence of storage, supply, transport, sale and distribution of use-and-throw plastics will be 25,000.
- ❖ It will be 50,000 for the second time and Rs1 lakh for the third offence.
- ❖ Use and distribution of use-and-throw plastics in large commercial establishments such as malls, textile shops and super markets will invite a penalty of 10,000, 15,000 and 25,000 for the first, second and third offences.
- ❖ The bill will amend the following Acts
  - Chennai City Municipal Corporation Act, 1919,
  - Tamil Nadu District Municipalities Act, 1920,
  - Madurai City Municipal Corporation Act, 1971, and
  - Coimbatore City Municipal Corporation Act, 1981

### **18<sup>th</sup> Tamil Internet Conference**

- ❖ International Forum for Information Technology in Tamil (INFITT) and Anna University have come together to organise 18<sup>th</sup> Tamil Internet Conference.
- ❖ It will be held between 20 and 22 September 2019.
- ❖ Theme of the conference: 'Tamil Robotics and Language Processing'.
- ❖ 17<sup>th</sup> World Tamil Internet Conference held at Coimbatore Tamil Nadu Agricultural University with the theme of the conference is 'Arivusaar Tamil Theduporigal' (Intellectual Tamil search engines).

### **Announcement under Rule 110 of Assembly**

- ❖ The Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu has issued the following statements under Rule 110 of Assembly.
- ❖ The government has allocated funds to construct memorial halls and libraries to commemorate the following leaders / eminent personalities.

<b>Leaders/Personalities</b>	<b>Planned location of memorial</b>
Kavimani Desigavinayagam Pillai	Theroor – Kanyakumari district
Sir Arogyaswami Thamaraiselvam Pannirselvam	Trichy District
V.K. Palanisamy Gounder	Vettaikaaran Pudur – Coimbatore
Rettamalai Srinivasan	Kozhiyaalam – Mathuranthagam District
King Perumbidugu Mutharaiyar Alaala Ilaiya Naicker	Jedarpalayam – Namakkal District

- ❖ The government has also decided to pay respect for the following personalities on their birth anniversary
  - Si. Pa. Adithanar
  - M. P. Sivagnanam
- ❖ The government will renovate the existing memorials of the following leaders
  - Veeran Sundaralingam memorial located in Kavanagiri, Tuticorin.
  - Ondiveeran memorial located in Thirunelveli.
- ❖ The government also decided to celebrate the birthday of John Pennycuick (January 15) who constructed the Mullai Periyar dam.

### **Dr MGR Centenary Library**

- ❖ TN Chief Minister inaugurated the newly-built Puratchi Thalaivar Bharat Ratna Dr MGR Centenary Library.
- ❖ It was built at the premises of the International Institute of Tamil Studies, Taramani in Chennai.
- ❖ This centre was created for research and to translate the best literature of other languages into Tamil.



### **New revenue circles**

- ❖ TN Chief Minister inaugurated new revenue circles for the Tamil Nadu Revenue and Disaster Management Department on 19 February 2019.
- ❖ Newly created circles are
  - Tiruvattar and Killiyur in Kanniyakumari,
  - Vatthirairupu in Virudhunagar
  - Gujliamparai in Dindigul, and
  - R.K. Pettai in Tiruvallur.

### **Centre for Olympic sports**

- ❖ Tamil Nadu government has allocated Rs 10 crore and identified 3 different spots in and around Chennai to develop centres for Olympic sports.
  - Academy for sailing at Marina beach



- Centre for kayaking and canoeing at a quarry in Melkottaiyur on Kelambakkam - Vandalur Road
- 2.9-km stretch for rowing on Buckingham canal at Thoraipakkam.
- ❖ Sports Development Authority of Tamil Nadu (SDAT) will be in charge of maintaining these facilities, as well as identifying.



### TN New tenancy Act

- ❖ Tamil Nadu government introduced the new tenancy Act, which is aimed at balancing the rights of the tenants and owners.
- ❖ It was modelled on the Centre's Tenancy Act.
- ❖ This Tamil Nadu Regulations of Rights and Responsibilities of Landlords and Tenants Act 2017 will replace the Tamil Nadu Buildings (Lease and Rent Control) Act, 1960, which is popularly known as Rent Control Act.
- ❖ CM launched an exclusive portal [www.tenancy.tn.gov.in](http://www.tenancy.tn.gov.in), where people can create tenancy registration number under the tenancy act.

### Free Laptop Scheme

- ❖ Tamil Nadu Chief Minister on 27<sup>th</sup> February launched the free laptop scheme for students for the academic year 2018-19.
- ❖ During this academic year, about 15.18 lakh students will be given free laptops.
- ❖ The government took a policy decision to give away the laptop to students of Class XI from this year onwards to benefit 5.12 lakh students in government and government-aided schools.
- ❖ From this year onwards students studying in class XI of government and government-aided schools along with class XII students, students in first year of government and government-aided polytechnics, and Class XI and XII students in government and government-aided differently abled schools would obtain this benefit.



## NATIONAL

### Interim CBI chief's case

- ❖ The Supreme Court Justice A K Sikri has recused himself from hearing a PIL challenging the appointment of IPS officer M Nageshwar Rao as interim director of CBI.
- ❖ The case was allotted to Justice AK Sikri after CJI Ranjan Gogoi also withdrew from it as he had to attend the high-powered selection committee to select the new CBI chief.

### Rag Rag Mein Ganga

- ❖ The Union Minister for Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation Nitin Gadkari launched travelogue program “Rag Rag Mein Ganga” and quiz show “Meri Ganga” on Doordarshan.
- ❖ This show relays the message of the need of rejuvenating River Ganga and also informing about the efforts of the Government to clean Ganga – presented in a unique and interesting format.

### Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban)

- ❖ The Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs has approved the construction of another 4,78,670 more affordable houses for the benefit of urban poor under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban).
- ❖ This approval was given in the 42<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Central Sanctioning and Monitoring Committee.
- ❖ The cumulative number of houses sanctioned under PMAY (U) now is 72,65,763.

### Name change of Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion (DIPP)

- ❖ The government has notified changing the name of the Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion (DIPP) to the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, and has enhanced its role.
- ❖ The notification has also included four new categories of responsibilities to the renamed body.
  - The promotion of internal trade (including retail trade)
  - The welfare of traders and their employees
  - Matters relating to facilitating Ease of Doing Business
  - Matters relating to start-ups.

## The Future of Rail report

- ❖ The Union Minister of Railways Piyush Goyal launched the “The Future of Rail” report of the International Energy Agency (IEA).
- ❖ “The Future of Rail” is the first-of-a-kind report that analyses the current and future importance of rail around the world through the perspective of its energy and environmental implications.
- ❖ The report reviews the impact of existing plans and regulations on the future of rail.

### International Energy Agency (IEA)

- ❖ IEA is an inter-governmental organisation that works to ensure reliable, affordable and clean energy for its 30-member countries and 8 association countries.
- ❖ It was established in the framework of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development in 1974.
- ❖ Its mission is guided by four main areas of focus: energy security, economic development, environmental awareness and engagement worldwide.

## First Swadesh Darshan project

- ❖ The Union Minister for Tourism Alphons Kannanthanam inaugurated the project “Development of North East Circuit” in Gangtok, Sikkim.
- ❖ The project is implemented under Swadesh Darshan Scheme of Ministry of Tourism and it is the first ever project in Sikkim under the scheme.
- ❖ Under this project, the Ministry has developed tourism infrastructure facilities like Tourist Information Centre, Meditation Centre, Organic Eco Tourism centre, Log Huts, Last Mile Connectivity, Parking, Public Toilets etc.



## **Budget 2019**

- ❖ The Union Finance Minister Piyush Goyal presented an Interim Budget for 2019 in Parliament on 2019 February 01.
- ❖ An Interim Budget usually doesn't list out any new schemes or doesn't unveil any policy measures.
- ❖ The government will present the vote on account for the next four-to-five months.
- ❖ A full-fledged Budget will be presented after the House reassembles after the general election.

### **Some important Highlights of the Budget**

- ❖ No income tax for earnings up to Rs 5 lakh.
- ❖ Target of 3% of fiscal deficit to be achieved by 2020-21.
- ❖ Decision taken to increase MSP (Minimum Support Price) by 1.5 times the production cost for all 22 crops.
- ❖ 12 crore small and marginal farmers are to be provided with assured yearly income of Rs. 6000 per annum under Pm-Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana.
- ❖ Mega pension scheme for workers in the unorganised sector with an income of less than Rs 15,000. They will be able to earn Rs 3000 after the age of 60. The scheme will be called Pradhan Mantri Shramyogi Maan Dhan Yojana.
- ❖ 25 per cent of sourcing for government projects will be from the MSMEs, of which three per cent will be from women entrepreneurs.
- ❖ A new committee under NITI Ayog to identify all the remaining De-notified nomadic and semi-Nomadic tribes.
- ❖ National Artificial Intelligence portal to be developed soon.
- ❖ One lakh digital village planned in the next five years.
- ❖ Within the next 2 years, all verification of tax returns to be done electronically without any interface of officials with the taxpayer.
- ❖ All income tax returns to be processed within 24 hours and refunds to be issued simultaneously.

### **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi**

- ❖ Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi announced in 2019 budget is to provide assured income support to all small and marginal farmers.
- ❖ Under this programme, vulnerable landholding farmer families, having cultivable land upto 2 hectares, will be provided direct income support at the rate of Rs. 6,000 per year.



- ❖ This income support will be transferred directly into the bank accounts of beneficiary farmers, in three equal instalments of Rs. 2,000 each.
- ❖ The programme would be made effective from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2018 and the first payment for the period upto 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

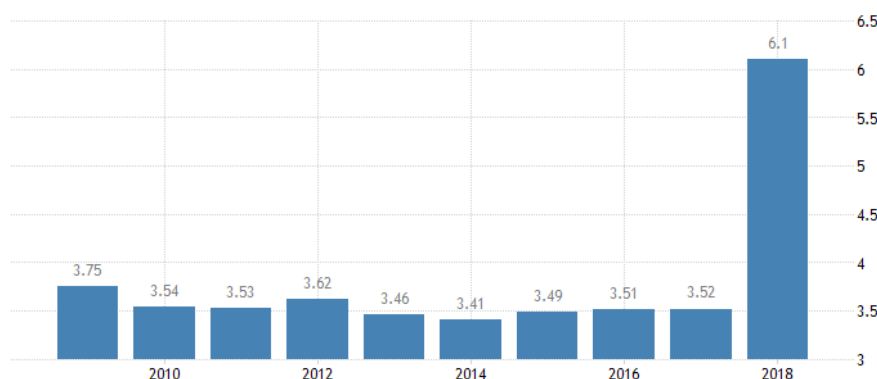
### **Padma awardees 2019**

- ❖ The government announced names of the Padma awardees 2019 on the day before the 70<sup>th</sup> Republic Day (25.01.2019).
- ❖ Padma Vibhushan and the Padma Bhushan are the second and third highest civilian awards of the country respectively.
- ❖ This year 112 recipients have been selected for the prestigious awards. This includes 4 Padma Vibhushan, 14 Padma Bhushan and 94 Padma Shri awards.
  - Padma Vibhushan is awarded for exceptional and distinguished service.
  - Padma Bhushan is for distinguished service of high order.
  - Padma Shri is for distinguished service in any field.
- ❖ 21 of the awardees are women and the list also include 11 persons from the category of Foreigners/NRI/PIO/OCI, 3 Posthumous awardees and 1 transgender person.
- ❖ Following Seven peoples from Tamil Nadu are selected for Padma Shri awards.

Awardees	Fields of activities
<b>Bangaru Adigalar</b>	Spiritualism
<b>Sharath Kamal</b>	Sports (Table Tennis)
<b>Nartaki Natraj</b>	Art-Dance (Bharatanatyam)
<b>Madurai Chinna Pillai</b>	Social Work (Microfinance)
<b>R V Ramani</b>	Medicine (Ophthalmology)
<b>Anandan Sivamani</b>	Art-Music
<b>Ramaswami Venkataswami</b>	Medicine (Surgery)

## India's Unemployment Rate

- ❖ It is an official survey that has been withheld by the government.
- ❖ As per the National Sample Survey Office's (NSSO's) periodic labor force survey (PLFS) India's unemployment rate hit a 45 year high of 6.1% in 2017-18.
- ❖ It is the first comprehensive survey on employment conducted by a government agency after demonetization.
- ❖ Unemployment is higher in urban areas which is 7.8% as compared to 5.3% in rural areas of the country.
- ❖ The unemployment rate is at its highest level as in 1972-73.



- ❖ Rate of jobless rural males rose to 17.4% from 5% and among rural jobless females, the rate became 13.6% from 4.8%.

## Swachh Bharat Grand Challenge Award

- ❖ As part of the Swachhta Pakhwada held from 1-15<sup>th</sup> November, 2018, the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) organized a Swachh Bharat Grand Challenge.
- ❖ This was organized to reward innovative solutions by DIPP recognized Start-ups in the country.
- ❖ The following four areas were selected for the grand challenge
  - Sanitation
  - Waste Management
  - Water and Wastewater management
  - Air Management





### **CDSCO's safety guidelines for Isotretinoin**

- ❖ The Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) has issued safety guidelines for Isotretinoin, an oral drug, which is used in the treatment of severe acne.
- ❖ It stated that the Drug Controllers of all the States and Union Territories have to monitor the sale, manufacture and distribution of Isotretinoin.
- ❖ Isotretinoin can cause birth defects in progeny if not taken without proper guidance.
- ❖ Isotretinoin may be sold by retailers only against a dermatologist's prescription.

### **Committee to explore prepaid payments**

- ❖ The Government has constituted a committee under the Central Electricity Authority (CEA) to explore prepaid payments by state electricity distribution companies to power plants.
- ❖ This committee constitutes chairmen of distribution companies of Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra, representatives from Union power ministry and power associations.
- ❖ It will look into problems of delayed payments from distribution companies to power generators.

## Braille Voter Slips for Blind Voters

- ❖ Visually impaired and blind voters will be provided with braille voter slips in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections.
- ❖ Braille is a script with raised dots that can be read with the fingers by people who are blind or who have low vision.
- ❖ The braille enabled slips were used in the recently held Rajasthan assembly elections also.
- ❖ Electronic voting machines already have the braille feature. The ballot paper pasted on the machine with name and symbol of candidates is braille enabled.
- ❖ Election Commission also plans to provide braille election photo identity cards to visually challenged voters across the country.


## New CBI Director

- ❖ IPS officer Rishi Kumar Shukla has been appointed as the chief of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) for a fixed tenure of two years.
- ❖ His tenure starts from February 2<sup>nd</sup>. And he assumed his post on February 4<sup>th</sup>.
- ❖ Rishi Kumar Shukla is currently serving as the chairman of Madhya Pradesh Police Housing Corporation in Bhopal.
- ❖ The Appointment of the Rishi Kumar was approved by the Appointments Committee of the cabinet based on the recommendation of the selection committee headed by the Prime Minister.
- ❖ The CBI Director Selection Committee includes Prime Minister, Chief Justice of India and Leader of Opposition in Loksabha.
- ❖ The CBI Director search committee is comprising the Central Vigilance Commissioner as chairperson, other vigilance commissioners Home Secretary and Secretary (Co-ordination and Public Grievances in the Cabinet Secretariat) as members.

### SHUKLA

- 1983-batch IPS officer
- Played a key role in the extradition of Abu Salem and Monica Bedi in 2005
- Considered close to National Security Adviser Ajit Doval
- Was appointed DGP of Madhya Pradesh on July 1, 2016
- Put 10 IPS

- officers under investigation and dismissed 169 cops
- Was transferred as DG, police housing on Jan 30



**KHARGE'S OBJECTION TO APPOINTMENT:**

- Govt ignored Shukla's lack of experience in anti-corruption investigation

### **Implementation Models under the PMJAY**

- ❖ The Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY) proposes following three models through which the states can implement the scheme.
- ❖ Insurance Model
  - Under this Model, the premiums are paid to the insurance company, which administers and pays the claim.
- ❖ Trust-based model
  - Under this Model, each State forms its own trust to manage the scheme and claims will be disbursed from a corpus created from central and State government contributions.
- ❖ Hybrid model
  - Under this Model, a part of the claim comes under the insurance model while the balance gets processed under the trust.

### **Union Health Ministry agreement with Google**

- ❖ The Union Health Ministry recently has entered into an agreement with Google and telecom service providers to offer the service in which the 108 ambulance will reach the spot without being informed about the location.
- ❖ The service will be run using twin technologies such as Cell Tower Triangulation and Google Emergency Location Services (ESL).
- ❖ While Cell Tower Triangulation technology uses information from telecom operator about the location, the Google ESL uses GPS to track the location in a more accurate way.
- ❖ This is an app-free and Internet-free platform and hence it is universal so one can avail the service if their phone does not have Internet.

### **ASEAN-India Youth Summit**

- ❖ Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal inaugurated the 2<sup>nd</sup> ASEAN-India Youth Summit in Guwahati.
- ❖ Theme of the 2<sup>nd</sup> ASEAN-India Youth Summit is “Connectivity: Pathway to Shared Prosperity”.
- ❖ The ASEAN-India Youth Summit is organised by India Foundation, in collaboration with ASEAN Secretariat and Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).
- ❖ The first India-ASEAN Youth Summit was held in 2017 and the theme was “Shared Values, Common Destiny”.

### **Sangeet Natak Akademi Awards 2017**

- ❖ President of India presented the Sangeet Natak Akademi Awards for the year 2017 at a function held at Rashtrapati Bhavan.

- ❖ Forty-two artists from the fields including Music, Dance, Theatre, Traditional, Folk, and Tribal music were awarded.
- ❖ Eleven eminent artists were selected in the field of Music.
- ❖ Sangeet Natak Akademi, an autonomous body of the Ministry of Culture had selected the awardees. It was established in 1952.

### **Employment of Women in Mines**

- ❖ Union Ministry of Labour & Employment has lifted the time bar for women working in mines.
- ❖ In a notification issued on February 4, 2019, Ministry announced that women could now be deployed in mines above ground (including opencast mines) as well as mines below ground between 7 pm and 6 am.
- ❖ Earlier, as per section 46 of the Mines Act-1952, mine owners were allowed to send women workers into the mines only between 6 am and 7 pm. Now the government has exempted women from this rule.

### **Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Bill- 2018 Amendment**

- ❖ Union Cabinet has given its approval to move official amendments to the Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Bill- 2018.
- ❖ This amendment will further strengthen the Bill in its objective to effectively tackle the menace of illicit deposit taking activities in the country.

### **Parmanu Tech 2019**

- ❖ The Parmanu Tech conference was organised by the Ministry of External Affairs and Department of Atomic Energy (DAE).
- ❖ The main motive of this conference is to showcase India's capabilities in Nuclear Energy with environmental responsibility.
- ❖ During the conference sector-specific sessions were held on the following topics:
  - Health care: Nuclear Medicine and Radiation therapy – Care to cure.
  - Food Preservation, Agricultural & Industrial Applications: From farms to factories – Serving the National Cause.
  - Showcasing India's capabilities in Nuclear Energy: Energy Security with environmental responsibility.

### **Measures for the protection of Sentinelese Tribe**

- ❖ Government has promulgated various laws/regulations from time to time to ensure that the rights and wellbeing of the Sentinelese are safeguarded.
- ❖ These are being strictly implemented and enforced by the UT Administration. These Laws/Regulation include

- A &N Islands (PAT) Regulation 1956,
  - Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989,
  - Restrictions under Foreigner (Restricted Area) Orders, 1963,
  - Visa Manual Conditions/Passport Act 1920, and
  - Indian Forest Act, 1927 and Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
- ❖ Besides, some major steps taken to ensure the protection of Sentinelese are:
- The entire North Sentinel Island along with 5 km coastal sea from high water mark is notified as tribal reserve.
  - The Government respects their way of life style, therefore, has adopted an 'eyes-on and hands-off' practice to protect and safeguard the Sentinelese tribe.
  - A protocol of circumnavigation of the North Sentinel Island has been notified.
  - The ships and aircrafts of Coast Guard and boats of Marine Police make sorties around North Sentinel to keep surveillance.

### **Darwaza Band – Part 2**

- ❖ Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) launched the 'Darwaza Band Part 2' campaign for sustainability of the Open Defecation Free (ODF) status of villages across the country.
- ❖ This campaign is supported by the World Bank and will be rolled out countrywide immediately after the launch.
- ❖ This campaign was produced by the Union Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation.
- ❖ Primary focus of the campaign is on behaviour change and promoting usage of toilets, at both community and village levels.

### **India Size Project**

- ❖ The Indian textiles minister Smriti Irani has launched the 'India Size' project in Mumbai.
- ❖ It aims to arrive at a standard Indian size for the ready-to-wear apparel industry, similar to the standards available in many Western countries.
- ❖ The project is being undertaken by her ministry in collaboration with the Clothing Manufacturers Association of India (CMAI).
- ❖ The Minister also launched a study of Apparel Consumption in India.

### **Swasth Naari - Shakti Hamaari Campaign**

- ❖ The Indian Cancer Society (ICS) launched a **“Swasth Naari, Shakti Hamaari”** campaign to spread awareness of cancer among underprivileged women and enable early detection of the disease.



- ❖ It was kicked off on the occasion of World Cancer Day (February 4).
- ❖ It has been organised in collaboration with pharmaceutical company Astra Zeneca.
- ❖ It aims to conduct free and specialized cancer-screening camps for women in high-priority districts of Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Karnataka.

### **NIFTEM Bill 2019**

- ❖ The Union Cabinet has approved the introduction of National Institutes of Food Technology, Entrepreneurship and Management (NIFTEM) Bill, 2019.
- ❖ Objective of the bill is to confer the status of Institutions of National Importance to following institutes.
  - National Institute of Food Technology, Entrepreneurship and Management (NIFTEM) at Kundli, Haryana,
  - Indian Institute of Food Processing Technology (IIFPT) at Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu.

### **Rashtriya Kamdhenu Aayog**

- ❖ The Union Cabinet has approved the proposal for establishment of Rashtriya Kamdhenu Aayog for Conservation protection and development of cows and their progeny.
- ❖ It will work in collaboration with Veterinary, Animal Sciences or Agriculture University or departments or organizations of the Central/State Government engaged in the task of research in the field of rearing of cow, organic manure, biogas etc.
- ❖ The setting up of Rashtriya Kamdhenu Aayog will lead to protection and development of cattle population in the country including development and conservation of indigenous breeds.

### **8 medical equipment appraised as 'drugs'**

- ❖ The Union Health ministry has notified eight medical equipment, including all implantable devices, as "drugs" under Section 3 of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, with effect from April 1, 2020.
- ❖ The medical equipment includes
  - All implantable medical devices,
  - CT scan,
  - MRI equipment,
  - Defibrillators,
  - Dialysis machine,
  - PET equipment,
  - X-ray machine and
  - Bone marrow cell separator.

- ❖ The Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO), a national medical device regulator is meanwhile working to make a way to regulate the sale and use of medical devices.

### **Ban on insurgency Group**

- ❖ Union Home Ministry has banned the Tehreek-ul-Mujahideen (TuM) under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) for promoting terrorism and radicalising and recruiting youth for terrorist activities in India.
- ❖ It was set up in the 1990s, and claims to be fighting for the “liberation of Kashmir.”

### **About UAPA Act**

- ❖ This law is aimed at effective prevention of unlawful activities associations in India.
- ❖ Its main objective is to make powers available for dealing with activities directed against the integrity and sovereignty of India.
- ❖ The Act makes it a crime to support any secessionist movement or to support claims by a foreign power to what India claims as its territory.
- ❖ The UAPA, framed in 1967, has been amended twice since: first in 2008 and then in 2012.

### **Health and Wellness Centres**

- ❖ The Ayushman Bharat scheme has two sub-components such as Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY) and Health and Wellness Centres.
- ❖ PMJAY- which is a health insurance scheme for 10.74 crore families-identified beneficiaries through SECC 2011 (Socio Economic Caste Census) database.

### **8<sup>th</sup> Round of National Deworming Day campaign**

- ❖ Health and Family Welfare Ministry conducted its 8<sup>th</sup> round of National Deworming Day (NDD) across the country.
- ❖ It aims to reduce the prevalence of parasitic intestinal worms among children.
- ❖ It is being held on 10 February and 10 August each year.
- ❖ During the programme, Albendazole tablets were orally administered to pre-school and school-going children in the age group of 1 to 19 years.
- ❖ As per World Health Organisation report, 64 per cent of the Indian population under 14 years are at risk of such infections.
- ❖ During this round, over 24 crore Children and Adolescents will be covered.

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare  
Government of India

150  
YEARS OF  
CELEBRATING  
THE INDEPENDENCE

**WORM FREE CHILDREN FOR HEALTHY FUTURE**  
| More than 24 crore children and adolescents to be given deworming tablet |

**Did you know?**  
Worms can make your child

Anaemic | Undernourished | Weak | Tired and Sick

All children and adolescents aged 1-19 will be dewormed free-of-cost in Schools/Anganwadi Centres on

**NATIONAL DEWORMING DAY**  
8 FEBRUARY 2019

Practices to reduce worm infections, in addition to deworming

- Keep your surroundings clean
- Wash your hands with soap, especially before eating and after using the toilet
- Drink clean water
- Wear shoes
- Wash fruits and vegetables with clean water
- Keep nails clean & short
- Do not defecate in the open. Always use a toilet
- Keep food covered

For more information contact your nearest ANM/ASHA/Anganwadi worker/School Teacher

## Exercise Rahat

- ❖ The disaster relief exercise 'Exercise Rahat' was demonstrated in Jaipur, Kota and Alwar in Rajasthan on February 11-12.
- ❖ On behalf of the Indian Army, Jaipur based Sapta Shakti Command conducted the Joint Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Exercise.
- ❖ Exercise Rahat is being conducted in coordination with NDMA.
- ❖ The joint exercise will see participation from:
  - Armed Forces,
  - National Disaster Management Response Mechanism (NDMRM),
  - State Disaster Management Authority of Rajasthan.
- ❖ The exercise will be conducted simultaneously in three places, beginning at Jaipur in the form of a table top exercise and at Kota and Alwar.

## Voter Verification and Information Programme (VVIP)

- ❖ Election Commission of India has launched a Voter Verification and Information Programme (VVIP) for citizens for verifications of their names, new registrations, changes in the voter details and corrections in the Voter Id Cards for the upcoming General Elections 2019.



- ❖ ECI has also set up Contact centres in all districts across India with Voter Helpline number as 1950. The Contact Centres are equipped with latest information and telecom infrastructure to help the callers.
- ❖ 'PwD App' to enable Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) to request for new registration, change in address, change in particulars and mark themselves as PwD through the use of the mobile application was also launched.

### **Constitution (125<sup>th</sup> Amendment) Bill**

- ❖ Government has introduced Constitution (125th Amendment) Bill in Rajya Sabha to increase the financial and executive powers of the 10 Autonomous Councils in the Sixth Schedule areas of the northeastern region.
- ❖ The amendment will impact one crore tribal people in Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram.
- ❖ The proposed amendments will provide for elected village municipal councils, ensuring democracy at the grassroot level.
- ❖ The village councils will be empowered to prepare plans for economic development and social justice.
- ❖ The Finance Commission will be mandated to recommend devolution of financial resources to them.
- ❖ The Autonomous Councils now depend on grants from Central ministries and the State government for specific projects.
- ❖ At least one-third of the seats will be reserved for women in the village and municipal councils in the Sixth Schedule areas of Assam, Mizoram, Meghalaya and Tripura if this amendment approved.

### **6th schedule:**

- ❖ The Sixth Schedule of the Constitution deals with the administration of the tribal areas in the four northeastern states of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram.

## **Conservation and Promotion of Medicinal Plants**

- ❖ As per information of the Botanical Survey of India (BSI), more than 8,000 species of medicinal plants are found in India.
- ❖ National Medicinal Plants Board (NMPB) under the Ministry of AYUSH is implementing following schemes to encourage farming/cultivation, conservation, processing and promotion of medicinal plants throughout the country
  - Centrally Sponsored Scheme of National AYUSH Mission (NAM).
  - Central Sector Scheme on “Conservation, Development and Sustainable Management of Medicinal Plants”.
  - Voluntary Certification Scheme for Medicinal Plants Produce (VCSMPP).

## **PETROTECH -2019**

- ❖ The 13<sup>th</sup> Edition of PETROTECH - 2019, India’s flagship hydrocarbon Conference was inaugurated by the Prime Minister at India Expo Centre, Greater Noida in Uttar Pradesh.
- ❖ The 3-day event is the country’s biggest hydrocarbon conference with the participation from over 95 Energy Ministers and 7000 delegates from around 70 countries.
- ❖ It is organized by the Union Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.
- ❖ The 12<sup>th</sup> edition of PETROTECH was held in New Delhi on December, 2016
- ❖ India is the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest consumer of crude oil and petroleum products after United States and China.

## **Sena medal**

- ❖ In Udampur of Kashmir , 92 army men were awarded Sena medals at an investiture ceremony for their gallantry and distinguished services.
- ❖ In the event, 76 medals for gallantry services, 7 medals for distinguished services and 8 for Vishist Seva were presented to awardees.
- ❖ Lance Naik Nazir Ahmed Wani, a recipient of Ashok Chakra was also awarded with Bar to Sena Medal posthumously which was received by his wife.

## **Schemes for improve Research Ecosystem**

- ❖ Government has launched following schemes to improve the research ecosystem of India’s higher educational institutions and to attract and retain young researchers.
- ❖ Prime Minister’s Research Fellowship includes
  - To attract the bright and meritorious students into research within the country, attractive fellowship is given.
  - Selected students are given fellowship for 5 years
    - Rs.70,000/- per month for the first two years,
    - Rs. 75,000/- per month in the third year and



- Rs.80,000 per month in 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> year with an annual research grant of Rs. 2 lakhs.
- ❖ Setting up of Research Parks:
  - Setting up of Research Parks at IIT Kharagpur, IIT Bombay, IIT Delhi, IIT Guwahati, IIT Kanpur, IIT Hyderabad, IIT Gandhinagar and IISc Bangalore.
- ❖ Impacting research in Innovation and Technology (IMPRINT).
- ❖ Uchhatar Avishkar Yojana (UAY)
  - It aims to promote innovation of a higher order that directly impacts the needs of the Industry and thereby improves the competitive edge of Indian manufacturing.
- ❖ Smart India Hackathons are being organized on yearly basis.
- ❖ Institution's Innovation Council (IIC) are established in 960 Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) for promoting innovation ecosystem within their campuses.
- ❖ Trainee Teacher Scheme had been initiated in NITs with the objective to attract, motivate and sponsor best graduate engineers for part time M.Tech and Ph.D. programmes.

### **Measures to protect Maithili language**

- ❖ Union ministry of human resource development (MHRD) accepted some recommendations of the committee set up for promotion and protection of Maithili language and its script.
- ❖ Accepted recommendations of the committee are as follows:
  - Establishment of a script and manuscript centre in Darbhanga of Bihar either at Kameshwar Singh Sanskrit University or Lalit Narayan Mithila University
  - Early completion of work pertaining to Unicode scripts of Mithilakshar by the Technology Development of Indian Languages and
  - Preparation of audio-visual materials for teaching of Mithilakshar scripts

### **Maithili language & Script**

- ❖ Maithili is an Indo-Aryan language native to the Indian subcontinent, mainly spoken in India and Nepal.
- ❖ It is spoken in the states of Bihar and Jharkhand and is one of the 22 recognised Indian languages in 8<sup>th</sup> schedule.
- ❖ Mithilakshar or Tirhuta is the script of broader cultural Mithila.
- ❖ It is an extremely ancient script and is one of the scripts of the broader North Eastern India.
- ❖ The scripts of Mithilakshar, Bangla, Assamese, Newari, Odia and Tibetan are part of the family.

## **National Gas Grid**

- ❖ Union Government has envisaged the development of the National Gas Grid.
- ❖ Under the Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board Act, 2006 the Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB) has been recognised as the authority.
- ❖ It would grant authorization to the entities for the development of City Gas Distribution (CGD) network in Geographical Areas.
- ❖ The objectives of the National Gas Grid are:
  - To remove regional imbalance within the country with regard to access for natural gas and provide clean and green fuel throughout the country.
  - To connect gas sources to major demand centres and ensure availability of gas to consumers in various sectors.
  - Development of City Gas Distribution Networks in various cities for the supply of Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) and Piped Natural Gas (PNG).

## **LAWASIA Human Rights Conference 2019**

- ❖ The first LAWASIA Human Rights Conference was organised by LAWASIA, in association with the Bar Association of India in New Delhi.
- ❖ The conference aims to provide a unique opportunity for lawyers and associated professional members to exchange insights and expertise on topics of significant importance to all.
- ❖ Theme of the LAWASIA Human Rights Conference 2019 was “State Power, Business and Human Rights: Contemporary Challenges”.

## **Vande Bharat Express**

- ❖ Vande Bharat Express, also known as Train 18, is India’s first semi-high-speed train.
- ❖ Its inaugural trip was flagged off by Prime Minister at New Delhi on 15 February 2019.



- ❖ The centrally air-conditioned luxury train will connect New Delhi to Varanasi, a distance of more than 750 km at a speed of 130 kmph, completing the journey in around eight hours.
- ❖ It will make stops at Kanpur and Allahabad or Prayagraj.

### **Contract with Dassault Aviation**

- ❖ The Directorate of Employment and [Training](#) has entered into a three-year contract with French aircraft manufacturer [Dassault Aviation](#).
- ❖ It has selected three Industrial Training Institutes in the country, of which two are in Tamil Nadu to train students in aeronautical structure and equipment fitter trade.
- ❖ Two institutes selected in Tamil Nadu are:
  - National Skill Training Institute in Chennai run by the Union government,
  - The state run ITI in Coimbatore.
- ❖ The third institute selected for this programme is in Nagpur, Maharashtra.

### **Jallianwala Bagh National Memorial (Amendment) Bill 2018**

- ❖ The Jallianwala Bagh National Memorial (Amendment) Bill, 2018 was passed in last session of 16<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha.
- ❖ Jallianwala Bagh National Memorial Act, 1951 provided for the erection of a National Memorial in memory of those killed or wounded on April 13, 1919, in Jallianwala Bagh, Amritsar.
- ❖ 1951 Act also provided for a Trust to manage the National Memorial consist of,
  - Prime Minister, as Chairperson,
  - President of the Indian National Congress
  - Minister in-charge of Culture,
  - Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha,
  - Chief Minister and Governor of Punjab,
  - Three eminent persons nominated by the central government.

### **2018 Amendment**

- ❖ 2018 amendment bill removes the President of the Indian National Congress as a Trustee.
- ❖ Further, the bill clarifies that when there is no Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, the leader of the single largest opposition party in the Lok Sabha will be the Trustee.
- ❖ 1951 Act provided that the three eminent persons nominated by the central government will have a term of five years and will be eligible for re-nomination.
- ❖ 2018 bill added a clause to allow the central government to terminate the term of a nominated trustee before the expiry of his term without assigning any reason.

### **Guidelines DODO CNG stations**

- ❖ On the Side-lines of the Petrotech 2019, the Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas released the guidelines for setting up of Dealer Owned and Dealer Operated (DODO) CNG (Compressed Natural Gas) stations in India.
- ❖ New guidelines will act as an advisory for bringing the uniform system in line with DODO policy.
- ❖ It will help further in bringing hygiene and cleanliness in the environment.
- ❖ This new guideline will help to easy availability of CNG across the country and encourage more people to switch to eco-friendly and economical CNG.

### **CAG report on Rafale deal**

- ❖ The Comptroller and Auditor (CAG) report on the Rafale deal was presented to the President of India and it was tabled in both the Houses of Parliament.
- ❖ This CAG document was titled “Capital Acquisitions of the Indian Air Force”.
- ❖ It runs into two volumes and one volume talks about the Rafale deal and throws light upon the pricing and the acquisition process of the deal.

### **Extension of CLCS-TUS**

- ❖ The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved the Credit Linked Capital Subsidy and Technology Up-gradation Scheme (CLCS-TUS) beyond the 12th Plan period for three years from 2017-18 to 2019-20.
- ❖ The scheme will facilitate:
  - Technology up-gradation to MSMEs,
  - Improvement in Quality of products by MSMEs,
  - Enhancement in productivity, reduction in waste and
  - Promote a culture of continuous improvement.
- ❖ This scheme will provide a capital subsidy of 15 per cent for induction of well-established and improved technology in the specified 51 sub-sectors/products approved.

### **National Commission for Safai Karmacharis**

- ❖ Union Cabinet approved the proposal for extending the tenure of the National Commission for Safai Karmacharis (NCSK) beyond March 31 of this year for the next 3 years.
- ❖ NCSK was established in the year 1993 as per the provisions of the NCSK Act 1993.
- ❖ Initially it was setup for the period up to March 31, 1997.
- ❖ Later the validity of the Act was first extended up to March 31, 2002 and thereafter up to February 29, 2004.
- ❖ NCSK Act ceased to have effect from February 29, 2004.
- ❖ After that the tenure of the NCSK has been extended as a non-statutory body from time to time.
- ❖ The tenure of the present Commission is up to March 31 of this year.

## **Registration of Marriage of NRI Bill – 2019**

- ❖ The Union Cabinet has approved the introduction of Registration of Marriage of Non-Resident Indian (NRI) Bill-2019.
- ❖ Its aims to create more accountability and offer more protection against the exploitation of Indian citizens, mostly women by their NRI spouses.
- ❖ Under the new bill, a marriage between an NRI and an Indian citizen will have to be registered in India or Indian missions and posts abroad within 30 days from the date of marriage.
- ❖ If the marriage is not registered within 30 days, the passport of the NRI will be revoked, summons and warrants be issued.
- ❖ This bill will make necessary changes in the following Acts
  - Passports Act, 1967; and
  - Code of Criminal Procedure 1973 by insertion of Section 86A.

## **Swachh Shakti 2019**

- ❖ Erravalli village of Markook mandal bagged Swachh Shakti-2019 award in New Delhi.
- ❖ This award given by Central government's prestigious programme Swachh Sundar Shauchalaya.
- ❖ Swachh Shakti-2019 is a national event which is aimed at empowering women. It was attended by women Panchs and Sarpanchs from across the country.

## **Dr. Anoop Satpathy Committee Report**

- ❖ Ministry of Labour and Employment had constituted an expert committee under the Dr. Anoop Satpathy, to review and recommend methodology for fixation of National Minimum Wage (NMW).
- ❖ Expert Committee has submitted its report on "Determining the Methodology for Fixation of the National Minimum Wage" to the Government on 14-02-2019.
- ❖ The Report has now been placed on the Ministry's website ([www.labour.gov.in](http://www.labour.gov.in)) for facilitating the process of consultation and seeking necessary approval of methodology from tripartite bodies.
- ❖ The report using scientific approach for fixation of minimum wages was based on the overall guidelines of the ILC (Indian Labour Conference) 1957 and the Supreme Court Judgment of Workmen vs Reptakos Brett & Co. in 1992.

### **Recommendations of the Committee**

- ❖ A balanced diet approach which is culturally palatable for fixation of national minimum wage.
- ❖ Minimum wage should include reasonable expenditure on 'essential non-food items such as clothing, fuel and light, house rent etc.



Region I	Region II	Region III	Region IV	Region V
Assam, Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal	Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Jammu & Kashmir and Uttarakhand	Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu	Delhi, Goa, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Punjab	Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Sikkim, Mizoram and Tripura
Rs 342 per day  (Rs 8,892 per month)	Rs 380 per day  (Rs 9880 per month)	Rs 414 per day  (Rs 10,764 per month)	Rs 447 per day  (Rs 11,622 per month)	Rs 386 per day  (Rs 10, 036 per month)

- ❖ Fix the need based national minimum wage for India at INR 375 per day (INR 9,750 per month) as of July 2018.
- ❖ Introduce an additional house rent allowance (city compensatory allowance), averaging up to INR 55 per day.
- ❖ Different national minimum wages for different geographical regions of the country to suit the local realities.

### LADIS Portal

- ❖ Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) launched a new portal LADIS to aid in ensuring of optimum use of National Waterways.
- ❖ It will ensure real-time data on ship and cargo owners on which they can undertake transportation on National Waterways (NW) in a more planned way.
- ❖ It is a step towards ensuring optimum use of National Waterways.

### Swachhata Excellence Awards 2019

- ❖ Shehri Samriddhi Utsav was organised by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) from 1st – 15th February 2019.
- ❖ During the event totally 40 awards were distributed to the Area Level Federations (ALFs), City Livelihoods Federations (CLFs) and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs).
- ❖ Raigarh Municipal Corporation of Chhattisgarh has won the “Swachhata Excellence awards 2019”.



- ❖ The municipal corporations of Ambikapur of Chhattisgarh and Kumbakonam of Tamil Nadu have bagged the second and third prizes respectively.

### **Exercise Vayu Shakti - 2019**

- ❖ The Indian Air Force carried out a mega exercise involving 140 fighter jets and attack helicopters, in a firepower demonstration close to the border with Pakistan at Pokhran in Rajasthan.
- ❖ In this Vayu Shakti exercise, the IAF showcased firepower capability of indigenously-developed platforms like Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas, Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) and Akash surface-to-air missile and Astra air-to-air missile.

### **North Karnataka Agromet Forecasting and Research Centre (NKAFC)**

- ❖ The Union Minister for Science & Technology, Earth Sciences, Environment, Forest and Climate Change Harsh Vardhan inaugurated the North Karnataka Agromet Forecasting and Research Centre (NKAFC) at University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS) in Dharwad, Karnataka.
- ❖ It is an India's first agro-met forecast centre.
- ❖ The main objective of the centre is to give accurate reports on weather which would enable the farmers to protect the crops and get good yield.
- ❖ It will also educate farmers on how to manage the crops in different weather conditions and plan their actions in advance.

### **International Dam Safety Conference 2019**

- ❖ Two-day long 5<sup>th</sup> International Dam Safety Conference 2019 was held in Bhubaneswar, odisha.
- ❖ The conference was a part of the Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (DRIP) assisted by World Bank envisages rehabilitation of 223 dams in seven States.

- ❖ 26 large dams in Odisha are covered under DRIP for rehabilitation including construction of an additional spill way for the Hirakud dam at Rs 600 crores.



### **Second ordinance on triple talaq**

- ❖ The Cabinet has given its nod to the Triple Talaq ordinance.
- ❖ The ordinance makes the practice of instant triple talaq by Muslim men a penal offence.
- ❖ The bill which seeks to make the practice of talaq-e-biddat void is pending in Rajya Sabha and will lapse on 3 June when the Lok Sabha dissolves.
- ❖ Once signed by President Ram Nath Kovind, the triple talaq ordinance will come into force for the third time in less than one year.

### **DRIP – Tamilnadu**

- ❖ Tamil Nadu has sought Rs 1,064 crore funding under the [dam](#) rehabilitation and improvement project (DRIP) of the World Bank.
- ❖ The scheme is to improve [safety](#) and operational performance of existing dams and ensure that dam safety institutional mechanisms in the state are strengthened to handle the infrastructure.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu public works department (PWD) and TANGEDCO submitted proposals for 59 dams under phase II and phase III of DRIP.

**PROJECT SO FAR**

**Dam Rehabilitation & Improvement Project mission identified Kerala, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh & Tamil Nadu in 2008 for work**

- The phase I of DRIP, which commenced in 2012, is being executed at ₹745.49cr covering 69 PWD dams and 20 Tangedco dams. Deadline is March 2020
- The phase II & III of the project estimated at ₹1,064cr, covering 37 PWD dams and 22 Tangedco dams. Duration set is 10 years
- Dam failures are caused by age, deficiency in construction, inadequate maintenance, extreme weather or seismic event, wrong operation

### Sterlite issue

- ❖ The Supreme Court dismissed NGT's directions allowing the operation of the Vedanta Group's Sterlite copper smelting plant.
- ❖ The Supreme Court said that the NGT has no jurisdiction to pass such an order.
- ❖ The NGT had on December 15 directed the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB) to pass a fresh order for allowing the operation of the plant within three weeks.
- ❖ Sterlite Copper smelting plant has been shut down since May 28, 2018.

### Loan Waiver – CRPF Jawans

- ❖ State Bank of India announced that it would waive all outstanding loans taken by 23 CRPF personnel who were killed in the Pulwama terror attack.

**SBI**

**SBI initiatives to honour our martyred CRPF soldiers:**

- Insurance of ₹30 lakh for all CRPF personnel under the SBI Defence Salary Package and expedited release of funds to the next of kin
- Waiver of the soldiers' outstanding loans with immediate effect
- Creation of a UPI for the Bharat Ke Veer initiative
- Setting up of an alternative mode of contribution by logging into onlinesbi.com and then following the path <Payment/Transfer -> Donations -> Bharat Ke Veer>
- Voluntary contributions from SBI employees, through the official Gol portal <https://bharatkeveer.gov.in>

**#SBIStandsByOurSoldiers**

- ❖ The state-owned lender would also expedite payment of insurance amount of Rs 30 lakh each to the families of CRPF personnel killed.



## **Exercise Topchi**

- ❖ Indian Army demonstrated its artillery firepower using ultra-light Howitzers and indigenous Swathi weapon-locating radar at the annual "Exercise Topchi".
- ❖ The event took place at the vast firing ranges at Deolali Camp near Nashik.



- ❖ It also showcased the aviation and surveillance capabilities including the indigenous advanced light helicopter, light combat helicopter, Cheetah & Chetak helicopters.

## **New company under Department of Space**

- ❖ Union Cabinet has given its approval to the setting up of a new company under Department of Space (DoS).
- ❖ It will commercially exploit the research and development work carried out by Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) Centers and constituent units of DOS.

## **All-In-One Emergency Helpline Number**

- ❖ Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh and Minister for Women and Child Development Maneka Gandhi launched the Women Safety initiative of Emergency Response Support System (ERSS) in 16 States/UTs and Mumbai city.





- ❖ 112 would provide immediate assistance to services like police (100), fire (101), health (108), women safety (1090) and child protection (1098).
- ❖ The single number for emergency services is similar to "911" in the United States.
- ❖ The 16 states and Union Territories are Andhra Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Puducherry, Lakshadweep, Andaman, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu, Jammu and Kashmir.
- ❖ The emergency services can also be accessed online by logging on to Emergency Response Support System (ERSS) website.
- ❖ A "112 India" mobile app by the Ministry of Home Affairs was also be launched on Google Playstore and Apple store.
- ❖ Union Home Minister also announced the approval of Rs. 78.76 crore for a special project under the Nirbhaya Fund for strengthening DNA analysis capacities in the State Forensic Science Laboratories of four States of Tamil Nadu (Chennai and Madurai), Uttar Pradesh (Lucknow and Agra), West Bengal (Kolkata) and Maharashtra (Mumbai).

### Investigation Tracking System for Sexual Offences

- ❖ The government has launched an Investigation Tracking System for Sexual Offences and the safe city implementation monitoring portal.



- ❖ The system is an online module available to law enforcement agencies to undertake real-time monitoring and management for completion of investigation in rape cases in two months.



**Investigation Tracking System for Sexual Offences (ITSSO)**

- Online module for Smart Policing
- ITSSO to be available to law enforcement agencies at all levels - National, State, District and Police Station
- Police to monitor rape cases investigation
- Mandatory for probe to be completed within two months, as per Criminal Law Amendment, 2018

- ❖ It leverages the existing Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS) data base, which covers nearly 15,000 police stations in the country.

### **7<sup>th</sup> National Photography Awards**

- ❖ Union Minister of State for Information & Broadcasting Col Rajyavardhan Rathore presented the 7th National Photography Awards.
- ❖ Theme for the Professional category was 'Women led Development', while the theme for Amateur category was 'Fairs and Festivals of India'.
- ❖ The seventh edition of National Photography Awards was organised at National Media Centre in New Delhi.
- ❖ Winners are,
  - Lifetime Achievement Award – Ashok Dilwali.
  - Professional Photographer of the Year – SL Shanth Kumar.
  - Amateur Photographer of the Year – Gurdeep Dhiman.

### **Aero India 2019**

- ❖ The 12<sup>th</sup> edition of Aero India 2019, the International Aerospace and Defence Exhibition was inaugurated at Yelahanka, Bengaluru.
- ❖ The mega event was organized biennially.
- ❖ The Aero India 2019 will be held for 5 days from February 20 to 24 and each day of the 5-day air show would have a special theme.
  - Day one would be Inaugural Day
  - The theme for day two is Start-Up Day
  - Day three is Technology Day
  - Day four would be Women's Day and
  - Day five will be Public Day
- ❖ During this event Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman launched a Coast Guard offshore patrol vessel (OPV) of the Goa Shipyard Limited, a public sector undertaking.

## **Stop Flow of Our Share of Water to Pakistan**

- ❖ Government has decided to "stop" the flow of India's share of water to Pakistan from rivers under the Indus Water Treaty.
- ❖ Under the Indus Water Treaty signed in 1960,
  - Western rivers - Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab – are given to Pakistan.
  - Eastern rivers - Ravi, Beas, and Sutlej – are given to India.
- ❖ India's share of water from Ravi, Beas and Sutlej rivers came to 33 million acres feet (MAF).
- ❖ Around 95 % of the water was being used in the country after the construction of three main dams across the rivers.
- ❖ Close to 5 % water would flow to Pakistan.

## **Special power to Assam Rifles**

- ❖ Assam Rifles personnel have been empowered by the central government to arrest anyone and search a place without warrant in North-eastern states of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Nagaland and Mizoram.
- ❖ "An officer of the rank corresponding to that of the lowest rank of members of the Assam Rifles" has been given these powers under the Code of Criminal Procedure.
- ❖ The Assam Rifles is the leading counter-insurgency force in the Northeast.
- ❖ It also guards the sensitive India-Myanmar border.
- ❖ The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, which is operational in some parts of the Northeast, also gives similar powers to the Army operating in the region.

## **Amendments to the Indian Stamp Act 1899**

- ❖ President gave his assent to changes in the Indian Stamp Act 1899.
- ❖ It will rationalise and harmonise the system of levying stamp duty and help curb tax evasion.
- ❖ Amendments to the Indian Stamp Act, 1899, were introduced as part of the Finance Act 2019, and was approved by the Parliament.
- ❖ This amendment was proposed to create the legal and institutional mechanism to enable states to collect stamp duty on securities market instruments at one place by one agency.

## **National War Memorial**

- ❖ Prime Minister inaugurated the first ever National War Memorial near India Gate at Delhi.
- ❖ This structure has been built in the memory of our valiant soldiers who laid down their lives protecting India since Partition.



### National Water Awards 2018

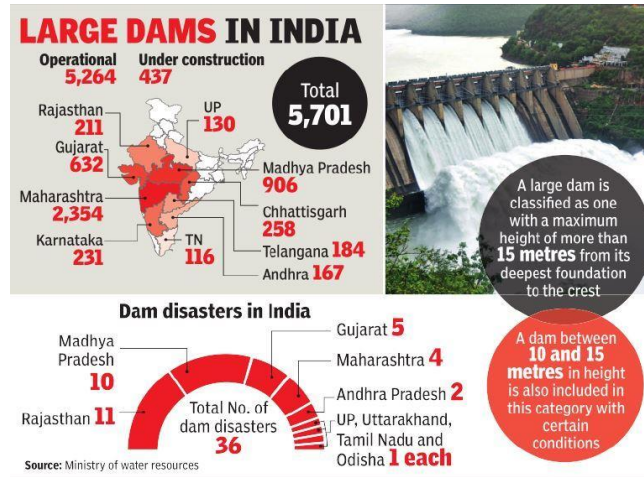
- ❖ Union Minister for Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation & Road Transport and Highways & Shipping Nitin Gadkari distributed 82 National Water Awards in 14 categories at New Delhi.
- ❖ Maharashtra, Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh were given first, second and third National Water Awards respectively in best state category.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu bagged 9 awards in following category.

Category	Place	Winners
Best Education/Mass Awareness efforts	1	Isha Foundation- Rally of Rivers, Coimbatore
Best Medium & Small-Scale Industry for Industrial Water Conservation	1	KGFL, Erode
Best District-Rejuvenation/Creation of water Bodies (South Region)	1	Madurai District
	3	Sivgangai District
Best Municipal Corporation	2	Tharangambadi Town Panchayat, Nagapattinam
Best Resident Welfare Association (RWA)	2	Jains Green Acres Flat Owner's Association, Zamin Pallavaram, Chennai.
Best Municipal Corporation	3	Manalmedu Town Panchayat, Nagapattinam District.
Ground Water Recharge	3	Madurai District
Best District Revival of River	3	Tirunelveli District

### Fund to improve safety and operational performance of Dams

- ❖ World Bank approved Rs 11,000 crore to India to improve safety and operational performance of its 733 large dams across 18 states over the next 10 years.

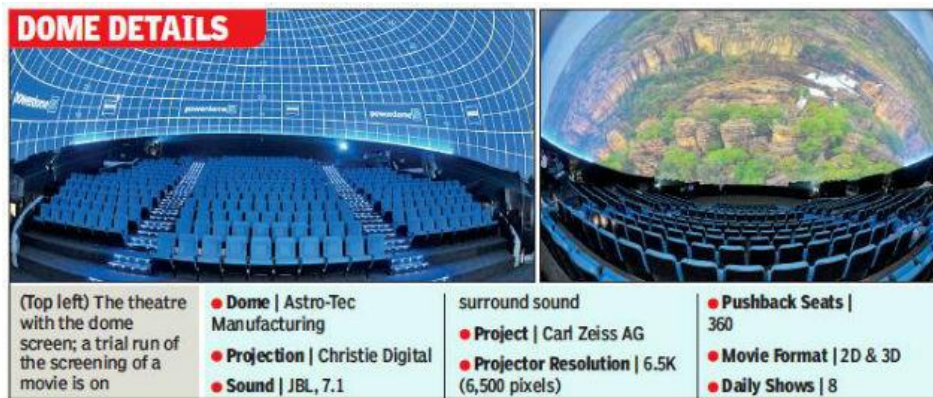




- ❖ This money will be utilised under the ongoing Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Programme (DRIP), besides operation, maintenance and emergency action plans.
- ❖ This programme will also focus on revenue generation at dams through tourism, fisheries, water recreations and solar and hydro power.

### India's first fulldome 3D Digital theatre

- ❖ India's first 'fulldome 3D Digital Theatre' at the Science City was inaugurated by Union Culture Minister Mahesh Sharma in Kolkata.
- ❖ It was fully funded by the union Ministry of Culture.



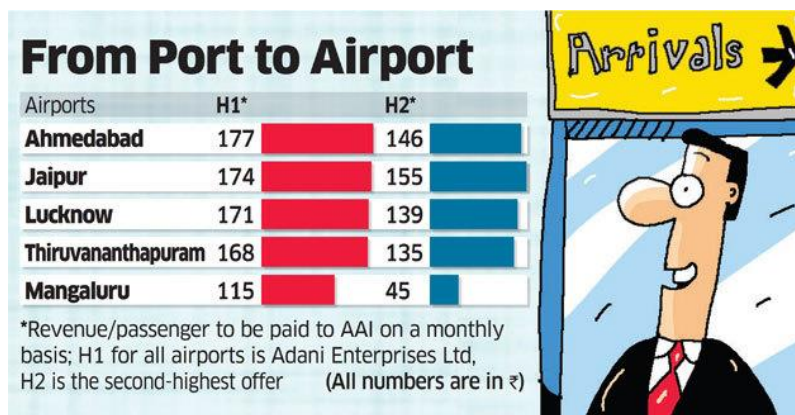
- ❖ It was the first of its kind in India having a 23-metre titled dome to offer a fully immersive experience to the visitors.
- ❖ Poor and disabled children who are visiting the theatre will be allowed to watch the movie free of cost.

### 5 Airports Operation under Adani Group

- ❖ Adani group has won the bid to operate five out of six airports put up for privatisation by the government.



- ❖ Adani group won the bid of the Ahmedabad, Thiruvananthapuram, Lucknow, Mangaluru and Jaipur airports. Guwahati airport will be opened later.
- ❖ This move to manage the six airports on PPP basis is the part of an initiative to provide world-class infrastructure and services to stakeholders.



### Poem on Jallianwala massacre

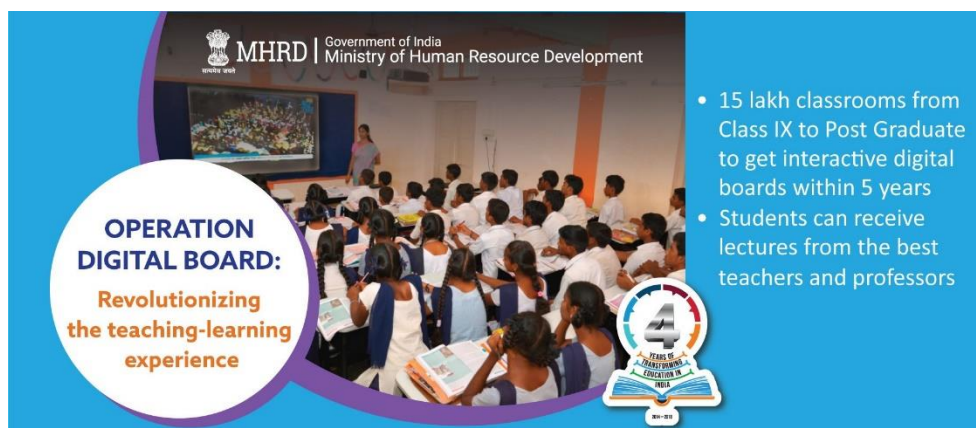
- ❖ Poem on the Jallianwala Bagh massacre was written and presented by Punjabi writer Nanak Singh, also known as 'Father of Punjabi Novels' on 13th April, 1919.
- ❖ The poem was a scathing critique of the British Raj and was banned soon after its publication. Its manuscript was subsequently lost.
- ❖ After 99 years, the poem has been rediscovered and now translated into English by the author's grandson and diplomat, Navdeep Suri.
- ❖ It will be published by Harper Collins India next month to mark the centenary of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre.

### New rules for deemed-to-be Universities

- ❖ University Grants Commission (UGC) has instituted new rules for educational bodies that seek Deemed to be University status.
- ❖ These new rules will also apply to those existing deemed to be universities seeking to maintain such status as.
- ❖ The first criterion is that the institution should provide courses at undergraduate, post-graduate and research degree levels.
- ❖ Secondly, an institution applying to be declared as an Institution Deemed to be University should be in existence for not less than twenty years.
- ❖ Also, it must have a valid accreditation by National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) with at least 3.26 CGPA for three consecutive cycles.
- ❖ In the case of technical institutions, two-thirds of the eligible technical programmes must be accredited by the National Board of Accreditation (NBA).

## Operation Digital Board

- ❖ Union Human Resource Minister, Prakash Javadekar launched Operation Digital Board to leverage technology to boost quality education in the country.
- ❖ Operation Digital Board (ODB) is a revolutionary step which will make both learning as well as the teaching process interactive and popularize flipped learning as a pedagogical approach.
- ❖ It has been launched on the lines of Operation Blackboard to provide better digital education in schools.



- ❖ UGC will be the implementing agency for ODB in Higher Education institutions.
- ❖ Central government will implement the scheme in the schools in association with state government.

## Promulgation of Ordinance

- ❖ The Union Cabinet has approved the Promulgation of Ordinance for the following proposals.
- ❖ Indian Medical Council (Amendment) Second Ordinance, 2019.
  - It enables the Board of Governors appointed in supersession of the Medical Council of India (MCI) to continue to exercise the powers of MCI for a period of two years or till the Council is reconstituted.
- ❖ Companies (Second Amendment) Ordinance 2019.
  - It will empower the Central government to allow certain companies to have a different financial year instead of as determined by the Tribunal.
- ❖ Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Ordinance, 2019.
  - It aims at preventing unregulated deposit schemes or arrangements at their inception and makes soliciting, inviting or accepting deposits pursuant to an unregulated deposited scheme as a punishable offence.

## Digital India Awards 2018

- ❖ Digital India Awards have been instituted under the ambit of the National Portal of India by National Informatics Centre, MeitY (Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology).
- ❖ It is aimed to promote exemplary initiatives in e-governance using the medium of World Wide Web.
- ❖ Minister of Electronics & IT, Law & Justice Ravi Shankar Prasad conferred “Digital India Awards 2018” in an exclusive ceremony.
- ❖ The Winners are given below

Category	Platinum	Gold	Silver
Web Ratna – MINISTRY / DEPT	Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises	Department of Financial Services	Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports
Exemplary Online Service	Government e-Marketplace	Central Board of Secondary Education	Goods and Services Tax
Best Mobile App	eCourts Services	ePathshala	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• T App Folio</li> <li>• Mobile Meeseva App - Andhra Pradesh</li> </ul>
Emerging Technology	Rajkot Eyeway Project	Blockchain Implementation in Land Records, Andhra Pradesh	Crop Area Estimation and Loss Assessment for the State of Gujarat
Open Data Champion	Marketing Research and Information Network (AGMARKNET)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Department of Agriculture, Cooperation &amp; Farmers Welfare</li> <li>• Ministry of Drinking water and Sanitation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surat Municipal Corporation</li> <li>• Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion</li> </ul>
Web Ratna – STATE / UT	Tripura	Himachal Pradesh	Kerala
Web Ratna – District	Kurukshetra	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vellore</li> <li>• Mahbubnagar</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Koraput</li> <li>• East Champaran</li> </ul>
Outstanding Digital initiative by Local body	Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation	Municipal Corporation, Gurugram	Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai
<b>Jury Choice</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MCA21 Application (Ministry of Corporate Affairs)</li> <li>• UMANG - Mobile App</li> </ul>			
<b>Special Mention</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• E-District Project (Meghalaya)</li> <li>• Andhra Pradesh Real Estate Regulatory Authority</li> <li>• Arunachal Pradesh in Web Ratna – State / UT (North East)</li> <li>• South Tripura District Web Ratna – District (North East)</li> </ul>			

## Khelo India Mobile App

- ❖ Prime Minister launched the Khelo India Mobile App at the Youth Parliament Festival held in New Delhi.
- ❖ This App was developed by the Sports Authority of India.



- ❖ It helps to create awareness about sports and fitness, especially among youngsters.
- ❖ It has three features which will help identify potential champions among children.
  - First section is a beginner's guide which gives the user information about the basic rules and regulations of 18 sports disciplines.
  - Second section includes data of sporting facilities across the country.
  - Third section has eight tests which can be taken to ascertain not just a young athlete's level of fitness.

## **INTERNATIONAL**

### **First Ever Female Hindu Civil Judge**

- ❖ Suman Kumari has become the first Hindu woman to be appointed as a civil judge in Pakistan.
- ❖ The first judge from the Hindu community was Justice Rana Bhagwandas, who served in Pakistan from 2005-2007.
- ❖ In 2018, Krishna Kumari Kohli was also a non-Muslim female to win a place in Pakistan Senate.

### **Africa Centre for Climate and Sustainable Development**

- ❖ Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte has inaugurated the Africa Centre for Climate and Sustainable Development at Rome.
- ❖ The centre has been opened by the Italian government in association with the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and Food & Agricultural Organisation (FAO).
- ❖ The centre would facilitate coordination among the G7 and African countries on common initiatives in Africa to achieve the goals set by the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda.

### **Corruption Perceptions Index 2018**

- ❖ The global Corruption Perception Index for the year 2018 was released by anti-corruption watchdog Transparency International recently.
- ❖ India improved its ranking on the 2018 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) by three points and moved to 78th position with a score of 41.
- ❖ Denmark is the world least corrupt country scoring 88 out of 100 points, followed by New Zealand and Finland.
- ❖ Somalia has been ranked at last with a score of 10 behind South Sudan and Syria.
- ❖ For the first time since its inception, the United States dropped out of the top 20 and it was ranked at 22nd rank.
- ❖ Along with Brazil, US was placed in the watch list by Transparency International.
- ❖ Since its inception in 1995, the Index, Transparency International's flagship research product, has become the leading global indicator of public sector corruption.



**TI CORRUPTION PERCEPTIONS INDEX 2018**  
BANGLADESH'S POSITION IN SOUTH ASIA

COUNTRY	RANK FROM TOP	SCORE
Bhutan	25	68
India	78	41
Sri Lanka	89	38
Pakistan	117	33
Maldives	124	31
Nepal	124	31
Bangladesh	149	26
Afghanistan	172	16

**GRAFT INDEX: TOP FIVE, BOTTOM FIVE**

LEAST CORRUPT	MOST CORRUPT
Denmark	Somalia
New Zealand	Syria
Finland	South Sudan
Singapore	Yemen
Sweden	North Korea

### International conference on 8th century sage

- ❖ Two-day international conference on 8<sup>th</sup> century Himalayan sage Guru Padmasambhava was held at New Delhi to mark the 50-years of formalization of diplomatic ties between India and Bhutan.
- ❖ This conference was organised by the Centre for Escalation of Peace (CEP) and was titled 'Life and Legacy of Guru Padmasambhava'.
- ❖ Scholars from both countries participated in the conference and discussed about the Guru who was born in India and moved towards Bhutan in the 8th century to spread Buddhism and Buddhist teachings all across the Himalayan region.

### Extension of Sanctions against Central African Republic

- ❖ The United Nations Security Council decided to extend its sanctions on the Central African Republic (CAR) including an arms prohibition, travel ban and assets freeze until 31 January 2020.
- ❖ It is also extending the mandate of the Panel of Experts assisting the Central African Republic Sanctions Committee until 29 February 2020.

### Sanctions against the CAR

- ❖ The CAR has been haunted by violence between Muslims and Christians since predominantly Muslim Seleka rebels overthrew the Christian president in March 2013 and seized the power.

- ❖ Anti-Balaka militias, mostly Christians, fought back resulting in thousands of deaths and displacement.
- ❖ As a result, many fled to the country's north and across the border into Chad and Cameroon.

### **Russia suspends INF Treaty**

- ❖ Russia has suspended its involvement in the Cold War-era (1987) Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) after a similar decision by the US.
- ❖ This treaty prevented US and Russia from possessing, producing or test-flying ground-launched nuclear missiles with a range of 500 km to 5,500 km.
- ❖ US had alleged a new Russian cruise missile, the Novator 9M729, violates the pact and gave a notice period of 6 months to withdraw from the treaty.

### **Asian Infrastructure Finance Report 2019**

- ❖ China-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) released Asian Infrastructure Finance 2019 report recently.
- ❖ According to the report,
  - It expects the cost of infrastructure financing in India to increase over the next one year.
  - It sees slowing global economy, higher borrowing costs and geopolitical tensions leading to greater uncertainty among investors.
  - Infrastructure financing scenario in India has been dominated by public spending, while significant breakthrough in the mobilization of private capital for infrastructure is yet to be seen.

### **Asia LPG Summit**

- ❖ The second edition of the Asia LPG Summit was inaugurated by Union Minister for Petroleum & Natural Gas at New Delhi.
- ❖ The two-day summit held with the theme 'LPG – Energy for Life'
- ❖ The summit has been organized jointly by the major Indian oil marketing companies (OMCs) Indian Oil, Hindustan Petroleum and Bharat Petroleum together with the World LPG Association (WLPGA).

### **Macedonia join NATO**

- ❖ NATO members signed an accord with Macedonia to allowing the tiny ex-Yugoslav republic to become the 30<sup>th</sup> member of the U.S.-led alliance.
- ❖ The Macedonia-NATO accord follows a deal with Greece ending a 27-year-old dispute over Macedonia's name.
- ❖ This signing of accession papers allows Macedonia take part in NATO ministerial meetings as an invitee.

- ❖ To acquire full membership, all 29 current members must ratify the accession protocol.

### North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)

- ❖ North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) is a military and political alliance established through the Washington Treaty.
- ❖ NATO aims to promote democratic values and enables members to consult and cooperate on defence and security-related issues to solve problems, build trust and, in the long run, prevent conflict.
- ❖ Article 5 of the Washington Treaty states that an armed attack against one of the member states would be considered as an attack against all members, and other members would assist the attacked member, with armed forces if necessary.

### **National Aquatic Animal of Thailand**

- ❖ Government of Thailand has approved the proposal to name Siamese fighting fish as the National Aquatic Animal.
- ❖ The decision for based on the recommendation of the National Identity Committee of Thailand which promotes Thai cultural pride forwarded its endorsement of the fighting fish.



- ❖ The government has approved the proposal owing to the cultural and historical significance of the Siamese fighting fish for Thailand.
- ❖ The Siamese fighting fish was chosen as it's a native, unique species to the kingdom's waters and an important animal for Thailand's economy.

### **Exercise Cutlass Express 2019**

- ❖ The annual multinational maritime exercise Cutlass Express was held from 27 January to 06 February 2019.

- ❖ Exercise Cutlass Express 2019 is the eighth edition of the annual multinational maritime exercise and was held in the vicinity of Djibouti, Mozambique and Seychelles.
- ❖ The Indian Navy was represented in the exercise through INS Trikand.
- ❖ It is aimed to improve law enforcement capacity, promote regional security and progress inter-operability between the armed forces of the participating nations for the purpose of interdicting illegal maritime activity in the Western Indian Ocean.
- ❖ The annual Exercise Cutlass Express is sponsored by U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM) and conducted by Naval Forces Africa (NAVAF).

### **40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Islamic revolution**

- ❖ [Iran](#) has concluded the formal celebrations of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Islamic revolution.
- ❖ Islamic Revolution or the 1979 Revolution overthrown the monarch of Iran, Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi.
- ❖ His government was replaced with an Islamic republic under the Grand Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, a leader of one of the factions in the revolt.
- ❖ The movement against the United States-backed monarchy was supported by various leftist and Islamist organizations and student movements.

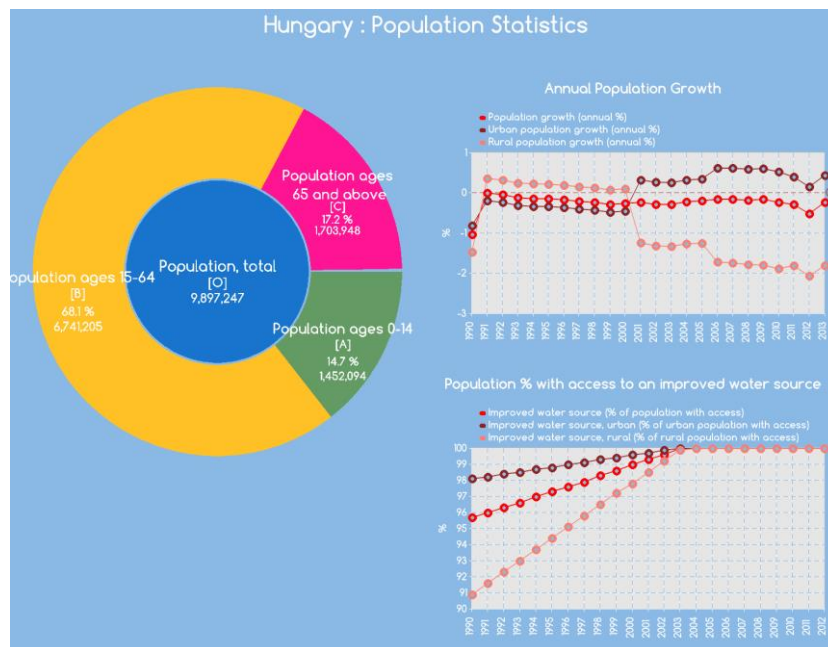
### **World Government Summit 2019**

- ❖ Seventh annual World Government Summit was held in Dubai (UAE).
- ❖ The three-day forum offers a platform to showcase various innovations and ideas in different emerging fields.
- ❖ The Summit is being attended by 4,000 decision-makers from 140 countries including heads of state, ministers and business leaders.
- ❖ In this summit “Best M-Government Award” in Gamification Service was awarded to India's Traffic Guru App.



## Financial aid for Family

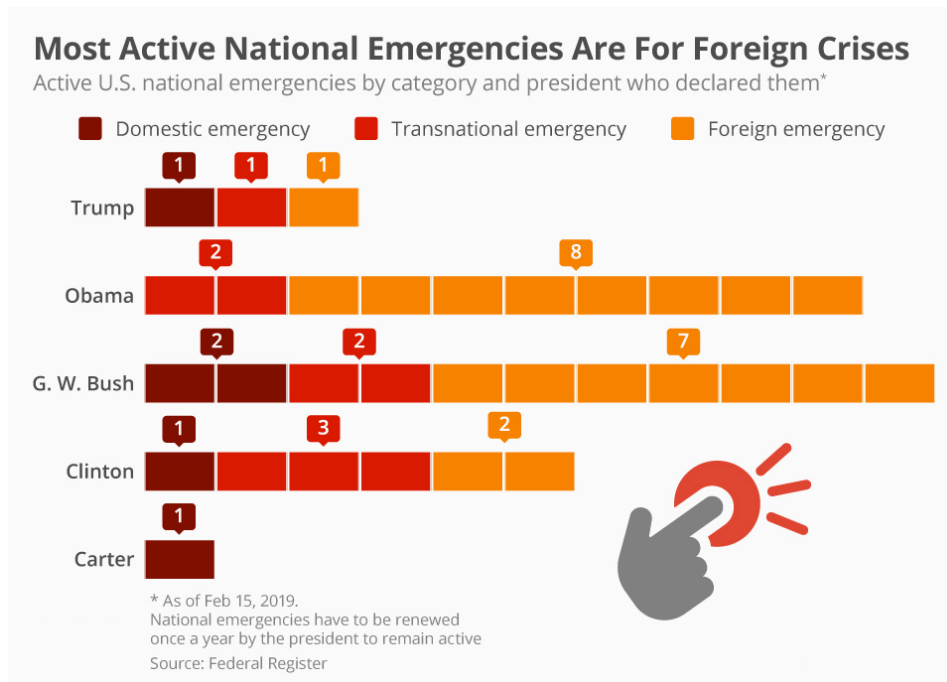
- ❖ Hungary's government is greatly increasing financial aid and subsidies for families with several children.
- ❖ This measure was announced to encourage women to have more children and reverse Hungary's population decline.
- ❖ The financial benefits include
  - Lifetime personal income-tax exemption for women who give birth and raise at least 4 children
  - Subsidy of \$ 8,825 towards the purchase a 7-seat vehicle for families with 3 or more children
  - Low-interest loan of \$ 35,300 for women under age 40 who are marrying for the first time.



## National emergency in USA

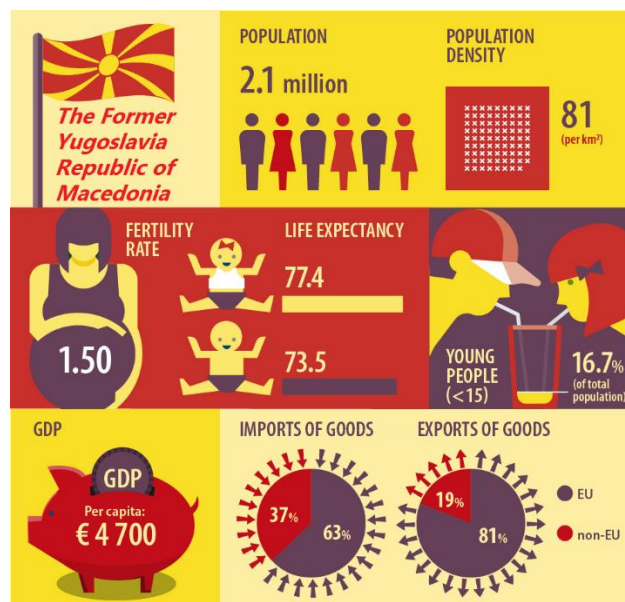
- ❖ U.S. President Donald Trump declared a national emergency to fulfil his pledge to construct a wall along the U.S.- Mexico border on 15 February 2019.
- ❖ Now he can access billions of dollars that Congress refused to give him to build a wall on the border of Mexico.
- ❖ Declaring a national emergency gives a U.S. president special powers, like suspending certain laws, authorizing military projects single-handedly and re-allocating defence funds.
- ❖ Previously, lawmakers voted to fund in the bill for border barriers, about \$1.4 billion, is far below the \$5.7 billion Mr. Trump insisted.
- ❖ Trump's declaration was unprecedented in that no previous declaration involved circumventing Congress to spend money it had not authorized.
- ❖ It is Trump's third in overall emergency as well as first in Domestic Category.





## Rename of Macedonia

- ❖ The country formerly known as Macedonia has officially changed its name to North Macedonia, in a bid to end a long-running dispute with its neighbour Greece.
- ❖ This Balkan country lays between Bulgaria and Albania.



- ❖ It is one of the successor states of the former Yugoslavia, from which it declared independence in September 1991.
- ❖ The name change, which was agreed last year, came into force under the so-called Prespa Agreement.

### **Multinational Cobra Gold Military Exercise**

- ❖ Thailand and the US have begun the Cobra Gold annual multinational military exercise at Phitsanulok of northern Thai province in Thailand.
- ❖ The exercise will include three components: military field training, humanitarian assistance, and disaster relief training.
- ❖ It is one of the Asia-Pacific region's largest multinational military exercises that is held in Thailand every year.
- ❖ It was first held in 1982 and its headquarters is in Bangkok, Thailand.
- ❖ This is a Thai-American initiative with an aim to improve coordination between the armed forces.
- ❖ India joined this exercise for the first time in 2016 while China was admitted for the first time in 2015 but was only allowed to participate in humanitarian assistance training.

### **Creation of Military Space Force**

- ❖ US President signed Space Policy Directive 4 (SPD-4) and ordering the Pentagon to establish the Space Force as the sixth branch of the United States military.
- ❖ It will go along with the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines and Coast Guard.
- ❖ But establishing the Space Force will require the Congressional approval.
- ❖ The proposed space force will
  - focus on national security and preserving the satellites and vehicles that are dedicated to international communications and observation.
  - Ensure autonomous access to, and freedom to operate in space, and to provide vital capabilities to joint and coalition forces.
  - Space could be a new warfighting domain and the US aims to be combat ready with Military Space Force.

### **Festival of India in Nepal**

- ❖ One month-long Festival of India is being held at Nepal.
- ❖ The Festival has been organised by the Swami Vivekananda Cultural Center at the Indian embassy in Kathmandu with support from India's Ministry of culture.
- ❖ The Festival aims to contribute towards sustaining and enhancing mutual understanding between India and Nepal.

### **Velayat-97 Navy Drill**

- ❖ Iran concluded its three-day navy drill Velayat 97 in the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean including a sensitive global shipping route.

- ❖ The navy drill held in the Strait of Hormuz, Makran coast, Oman Sea and the north of the Indian Ocean, covering 2 million square kilometres.
- ❖ It showcased the performance of Iran’s submarines, warships, helicopters and drones.
- ❖ Iran has launched a cruise missile from a Qadir-class submarine for the first time during the drill in the Strait of Hormuz.

### Seoul Peace Prize

- ❖ Prime Minister Narendra Modi was honoured with Seoul Peace Prize in South Korea.
- ❖ Modi is the only Indian to bag the Seoul Peace Prize.



- ❖ The award is given for his “contribution to international cooperation and fostering global economic growth”.
- ❖ He is the fourteenth recipient of the award, received an honorarium cash prize of \$200,000 and he gave that to the Namami Gange Programme (National Mission for Clean Ganga).

### Seoul Peace Prize

- ❖ Established in 1990, the Seoul Peace Prize was an effort to crystallise the Korean people’s yearning for peace on the Korean Peninsula and in the rest of the world.
- ❖ It was initially established to commemorate the success of the 24th Olympic Games held in Seoul, Republic of Korea.

### Referendum on New Constitution

- ❖ In Cuba, voters took part in a referendum on a new constitution that expands recognition of private property.
- ❖ The referendum contained only two options: yes or no to the new constitution.
- ❖ More than eight million were registered to voters.

- ❖ This new constitution, replacing the 1976 version, recognises a limited role for the free market and private investment, but only under the control of the Communist Party.
- ❖ It enshrines socialism as the country's only ideology.
- ❖ Cuba's banned opposition party, which normally calls for abstention at elections or spoiling ballot sheets, this time campaigned for a no vote.

## **ECONOMY**

### **First Revised Estimates of 2017-18**

- ❖ The Central Statistics Office (CSO), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation has released the First Revised Estimates of National Income, Consumption Expenditure, Saving and Capital Formation for the financial year 2017-18.
- ❖ Along with this, the Second Revised Estimates for the financial year 2016-17 and the Third Revised Estimates for the financial year 2015-16 (with Base Year 2011-12) also are released as per the revision policy.

### **Salient features of the Estimates**

- ❖ Nominal GDP or GDP at current prices is exhibiting a growth of 11.3 per cent during 2017-18 as against 11.5 per cent during 2016-17.
- ❖ Real GDP or GDP at constant (2011-12) prices is showing growth of 7.2 per cent during 2017-18 and 8.2 per cent during 2016-17.
- ❖ Nominal Net National Income (NNI) at current prices is showing an increase of 11.3 per cent during 2017-18 as against an increase of 11.8 per cent in the previous year.
- ❖ Gross National Disposable Income (GNDI) at current prices is showing a growth of 11.2 per cent in 2017-18 as against 11.0 per cent in 2016-17.

### **Kisan Suvidha loan**

- ❖ 'Kisan Suvidha loan' for small and marginal farmers was launched by Ujjivan Small Finance Bank.
- ❖ This can be used by farmers for both agriculture and allied activities.
- ❖ Ujjivan Small Finance Bank launched the product in Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Karnataka and Odisha.
- ❖ The loan does not require any collateral.
- ❖ Ujjivan becomes the 1<sup>st</sup> Small Finance Bank to offer loans for agriculture and allied activities.

### **RBI Lifted up restrictions on 3 banks**

- ❖ RBI eased out the operational curbs on three banks, Bank of India (BoI), Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) and Oriental Bank of Commerce (OBC) and also allowed them to have an exit from the Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) framework fully.
- ❖ These 3 lenders were among the 11 public sector banks that were put under the so-called PCA framework that placed restrictions on extending big loans, distributing dividends, and expanding the branch networks.



## **INSTEX - Iran Trade Promotion Plan**

- ❖ Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges (INSTEX) is a project of the three governments of UK, France and Germany to bypass US sanctions on Iran.
- ❖ INSTEX is a special payment system which will help to save the Iran nuclear deal by allowing Tehran to keep trading with EU companies despite Washington re-imposing sanctions.
- ❖ INSTEX would receive payments from companies that want to trade with Iran, either by receiving waivers for oil imports or permissible trade in goods like food and medicine.
- ❖ As a result, there would be no direct transfer of funds between Iran and European companies.
- ❖ This would theoretically insulate firms from U.S. penalties.

## **New e-commerce policy**

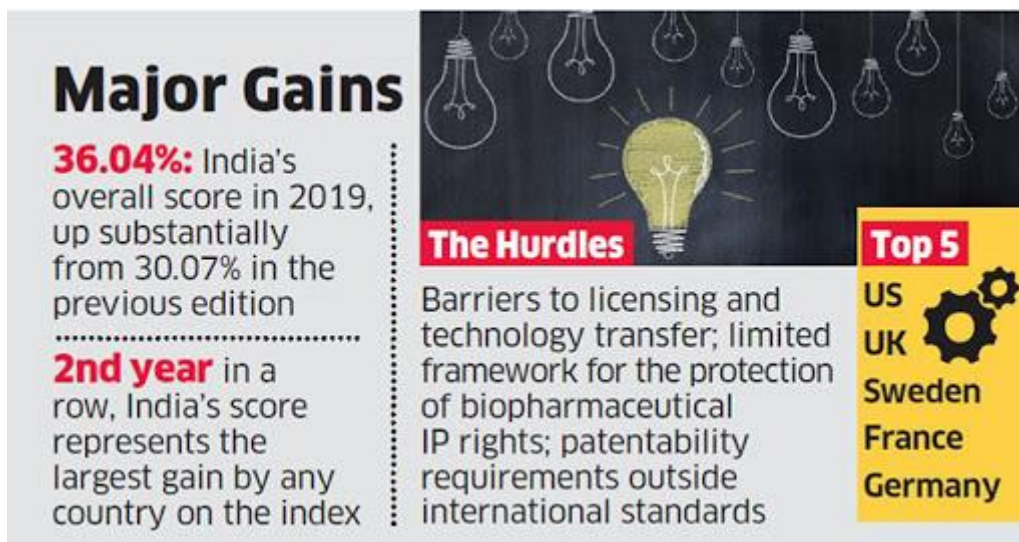
- ❖ India's new e-commerce policy came into effect on February 1, 2019. A new set of policy rules had been formed for the e-commerce companies.
- ❖ DIPP gave them a 60-day window period for aligning themselves to the government's modified foreign direct investment (FDI) rules.

### **Highlights of the new policy**

- ❖ Bar online retailers from selling products through vendors in which they have an equity interest.
- ❖ Also bars them from entering into exclusive deals with brands for selling products only on their platforms.
- ❖ All online retailers will be required to maintain a level playing field for all the vendors selling their products on the platform.
- ❖ It disallows e-commerce players to control the inventory of the vendors.
- ❖ It restricts marketplaces from influencing prices in a bid to curb deep discounting.

## **36<sup>th</sup> International IP index 2019**

- ❖ US Chambers of Commerce released the annual International IP Index of top 50 economies in the world.
- ❖ In the index, India climbed 8 position up to the 36<sup>th</sup> rank from 44<sup>th</sup> rank.



- ❖ USA has topped in the index, Pakistan is at 47<sup>th</sup> spot and Venezuela is at the last place.

### **Authority for regulating all financial services**

- ❖ The Union Cabinet has approved establishment of a unified authority for regulating all financial services in International Financial Services Centres (IFSCs) in India.
- ❖ It is done through International Financial Services Centres Authority Bill, 2019.
- ❖ The first IFSC in India has been set up at GIFT City, Gandhinagar, Gujarat.

### **Generalized System of Preferences - India**

- ❖ Vowing to reduce the U.S. deficit with large economies, the US President is planning to withdraw the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) from India.
- ❖ India is World's largest beneficiary of this scheme that has been in force since the 1970s.
- ❖ The trigger for the latest downturn in trade ties was India's new rules on e-commerce that restrict the rapidly growing online market.
- ❖ With this, India could lose a vital U.S. trade concession, under which it enjoys zero tariffs on \$5.6 billion of exports to the United States.

#### **Generalised System of Preferences (GSP):**

- ❖ The Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) is a U.S. trade program designed to promote economic growth in the developing world by providing preferential duty-free entry for up to 4,800 products from 129 designated beneficiary countries and territories.

## Collateral-Free Farm Loan Limit

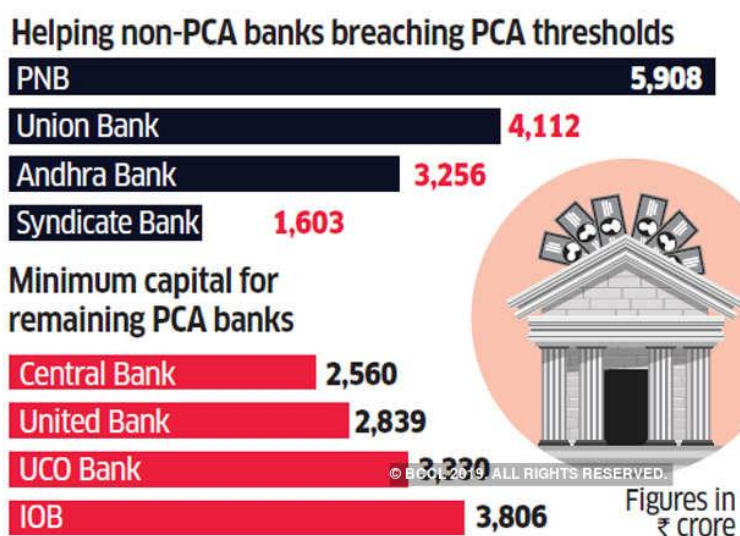
- ❖ Reserve Bank of India (RBI) raised the limit of collateral-free agricultural loans to Rs. 1.6 lakh from the current Rs. 1 lakh with a view to help small and marginal farmers.
- ❖ The central bank also decided to set up an internal working group (IWG) to review agricultural credit and arrive at a workable policy solution.
- ❖ The one lakh limit was fixed in the year 2010.
- ❖ Keeping in view the overall inflation and rise in agriculture input costs since then, it has been decided to raise the limit for collateral-free agriculture loans.
- ❖ This will enhance coverage of small and marginal farmers in the formal credit system.

## Norms for Start-up

- ❖ Giving a major relief to start-ups, the government has decided to relax [angel tax](#) norms for start-up.
- ❖ Investment limit was increased to Rs 25 crore for availing income tax concessions by start-up from 10 crores.
- ❖ An entity shall be considered a start-up up to 10 years from its date of incorporation/registration instead of the previous period of 7 years.
- ❖ An entity would be considered as a start-up up to a turnover of Rs 100 crore as against the earlier limit of Rs 25 crore.

## Capital infusion to 12 public sector banks

- ❖ The Finance ministry announced a Rs 48,239 crore capital infusion in 12 public sector banks.
- ❖ It would help them to meet regulatory capital requirements and make growth capital available for the stronger lenders.



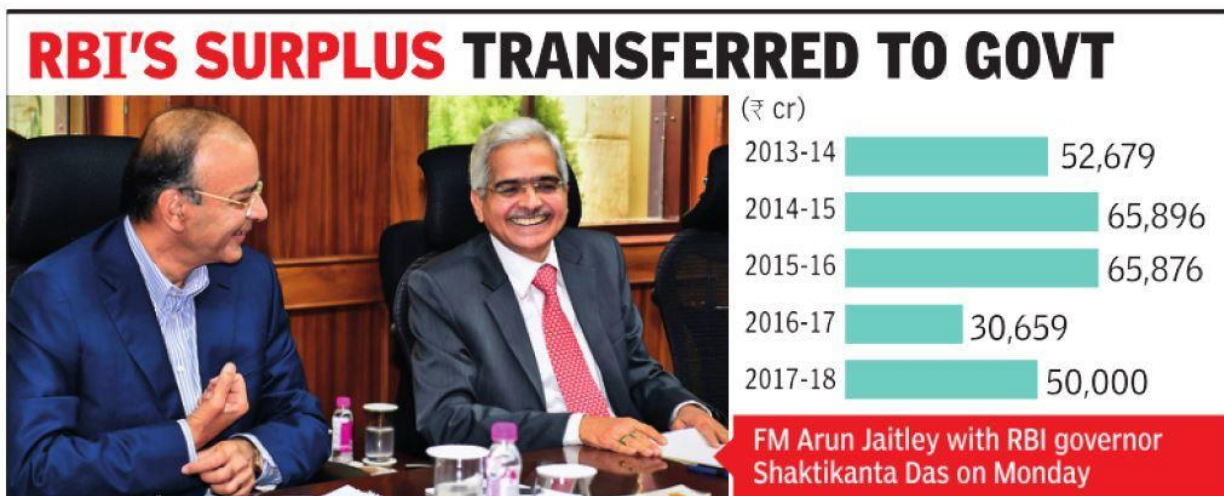
- ❖ The capital was allocated keeping in mind the thresholds set by the Reserve Bank of India in the Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) framework.
- ❖ The RBI removed Bank of India, Bank of Maharashtra and Oriental Bank of Commerce from the PCA framework on January 31.

### 3 working groups to facilitate exports, curb tax evasion

- ❖ Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) has constituted three Working Groups to study and recommend measures to facilitate trade, promote exports and improve compliance.
- ❖ The working groups will focus on export promotion and facilitation with emphasis on boosting exports through
  - e-commerce,
  - Addressing the trade facilitation barriers faced in India's export market and
  - Improving the quality of logistics services for exporters.

### Interim surplus transfer to government

- ❖ RBI board approved transfer Rs 28,000 crore interim dividend to the government.
- ❖ This is the second successive year that the Reserve Bank transferring an interim surplus.
- ❖ RBI's financial year ends in July and the interim dividend will be usually transferred to the Government by March.
- ❖ While the government was seeking up to Rs 40,000 crore as interim dividend but the audit committee of the central bank opted for Rs 28,000 crore after taking into account policies and requirements of the RBI.
- ❖ The government has already received Rs 40,000 crore from the central bank during the financial year 2018-19.





## SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

### World's largest digital sky survey

- ❖ The Space Telescope Science Institute (STScI) in US in partnership with the University of Hawai's Institute for Astronomy released the second edition of data from Pan-STARRS (Panoramic Survey Telescope & Rapid Response System), the world's largest digital sky survey.
- ❖ Pan-STARRS observatory consists of a 1.8-meter telescope equipped with a 1.4-billion-pixel digital camera.
- ❖ This was the first survey to observe the entire sky visible from Hawai.

### Artificial Pancreas Smartphone App for Diabetics

- ❖ Scientists developed an artificial pancreas smart phone app that will help to analyze blood sugar levels in diabetes patients.
- ❖ This application is formed with the capacity of to connect with glucose monitors, insulin pump devices, and decision-making algorithms.
- ❖ This application system is formed with a glucose range of 70-180 micrograms per decilitre.

### Acquisition of Milan-2T Anti-Tank Missiles

- ❖ The Defence Acquisition Council headed by the Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has approved the acquisition of the Milan-2T anti-tank missiles.
- ❖ Milan is a portable medium-range, anti-tank missile produced by Euromissile, based in Fontenay-aux-Roses in France.



- ❖ The Milan munitions consist of the missile in a waterproof launch tube.
- ❖ This newer variety was developed specifically to counter the adoption of 'reactive armour' by militaries in the 1990s.
- ❖ The upgraded 2T can penetrate reactive armour.



## Russia tests accident-tolerant fuel

- ❖ The Russian national atomic power corporation Rosatom has started testing accident-tolerant fuel (ATF) for nuclear reactors.
- ❖ The ATF is resistant to severe accidents at nuclear power plants.
- ❖ According to Rosatom, the first phase of the reactor tests will be completed in 2019 while the next stage includes the loading in commercial power reactor in Russia.

## Hoveizeh Cruise Missile

- ❖ Iran announced the successful test flight of Hoveizeh long-range cruise missile on February 2<sup>nd</sup> which marks the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of 1979 Islamic revolution.



- ❖ This Hoveizeh Cruise Missile is part of the Soumar family of cruise missile and has a range of over 1,350 km (840 miles). It is designed to use against ground targets.
- ❖ The Hoveizeh missile needs a very short time for its preparedness and can fly at a low altitude and is manufactured by the Aerospace Industries Organization of Israel.

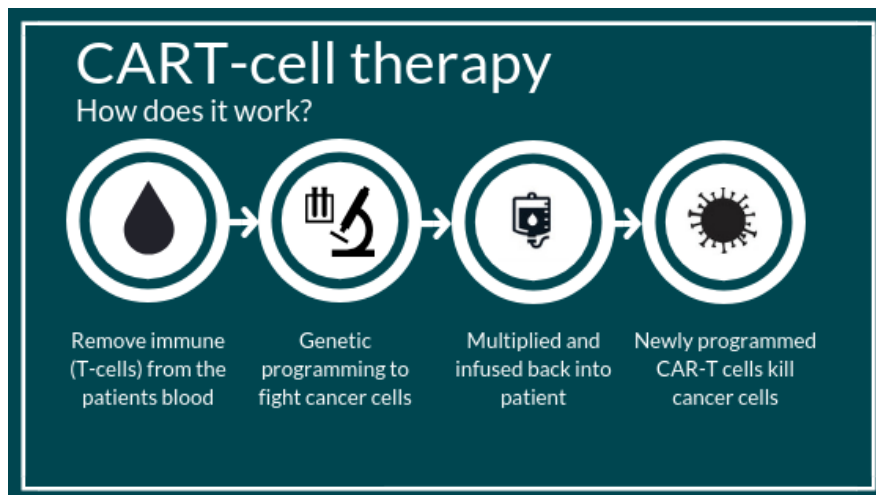
## Short Range Ballistic Missile 'Nasr'

- ❖ Pakistan Army successfully test-fired the short-range surface-to-surface ballistic missile 'Nasr'.
- ❖ It is claimed that it would defeat any ballistic missile defence system now available in the country's neighbourhood or any other system being developed.
- ❖ Nasr, with a strike range of about 70-km, is a high precision, shoot and scoot weapon system with the ability of in-flight manoeuvrability.



## CAR-T therapy

- ❖ An 11-year-old Indian-origin boy has become the first patient to receive a pioneering new cancer therapy (CAR-T) by the UK's state-funded National Health Service.
- ❖ CAR-T is a personalized form of cancer treatment.
- ❖ CAR-T involves removing immune cells and modifying them in a laboratory so they can recognize cancer cells.
- ❖ Immunotherapy is a treatment that uses your body's own immune system to help fight cancer.



- ❖ Blood taken from patient and the white blood cells are separated out in the first stage, the rest of the blood being returned to the patient.
- ❖ Then harmless virus is used to insert genes into T-cells, a special type of immune cell.
- ❖ These genes cause the T-cells to add a hook on to their surface, known as a chimeric antigen receptor (CAR).

- ❖ These engineered CAR-T cells - programmed to recognize and destroy the patient's cancer cells - are multiplied in huge numbers and then infused back into the patient.


### Communication satellite GSAT-31

- ❖ India's latest communication satellite GSAT-31 was successfully launched by European launch services provider - Arianespace's rocket (Ariane-5) from French Guiana.
- ❖ GSAT-31 is the country's 40<sup>th</sup> communication satellite which is configured on ISRO's enhanced 'I-2K Bus', utilising the maximum 'bus capabilities' of this type.
- ❖ This satellite will augment the Ku-band transponder capacity in Geostationary orbit and it is going to serve & replace some of the satellites (InSAT) that are going to expire soon.
- ❖ GSAT-31 will be used for supporting VSAT networks, Television uplinks, Digital Satellite News Gathering, DTH-television services, cellular backhaul connectivity and many such applications.

**GSAT-31**, the communication satellite of India configured on ISRO's enhanced I-2K Bus, utilising the maximum bus capabilities of this type. This satellite will augment the Ku-band transponder capacity in Geostationary Orbit.

GSAT-31, launched by Ariane-5 (VA 247), will provide continuity to operational services on some of the in-orbit satellites.

The satellite derives its heritage from ISRO's earlier INSAT/GSAT satellite series. The satellite provides Indian mainland and island coverage.



**GSAT-31**  
40th communication satellite of india

**Salient Features**

Lift off Mass	: 2535 kg
Spacecraft Power	: 4.7 kW
Payload	: Ku-band transponders
Coverage Area	: Indian mainland and island
Mission Life	: Around 15 years

### Himalayan Cloud Observatory

- ❖ Himalayan Cloud Observatory has been set up in Tehri district at Uttarakhand with a motive to forecast and monitor cloudburst incidents in the Himalayan region and help minimizing the damage.

- ❖ The Observatory has been established in the SRT campus Badshahithaul and is currently in the testing period.
- ❖ This is the second observatory in the country to monitor cloud activities by the Indian Science and Technology Department and Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kanpur that can function in high-altitudes.

### **Anti-tank Missile Helina**

- ❖ Helicopter-launched anti-tank missile Helina was successfully test fired from the Integrated Test Range in Chandipur in Balasore district of Odisha.
- ❖ Helina is the indigenously designed and built missile system and one of the most advanced anti-tank weapons in the world.
- ❖ It is the air-launched variant of the Nag, a fire-and-forget ATGM (anti-tank guided missile) with an estimated range of 4 kilometers.
- ❖ Its range is estimated at between 7 to 8 kilometres.



### **Missile defense systems for Air India One**

- ❖ The US has agreed to sell two advanced missile defence systems to India for two Boeing-777 Head-of-State aircraft.
- ❖ The two missile defence systems are Large Aircraft Infrared Countermeasures (LAIRCAM) and Self-Protection Suites (SPS).
- ❖ LAIRCM protect large aircraft from man-portable missiles.
- ❖ LAIRCAM system increases crew-warning time, decreases false alarm rates and automatically counters advanced intermediate range missile systems.
- ❖ It will enhance the security of the planes flying the president and the prime minister.



### **Solid Fuel Ducted Ramjet (SFDR)**

- ❖ The second indigenously developed "Solid Fuel Ducted Ramjet (SFDR)" propulsion-based missile system was successfully flight tested in Odisha by the DRDO.
- ❖ Unlike conventional rockets that carry propellant and oxidizer, Ramjet uses the air as an oxidizer just like a jet engine, and hence, the weight of the fuel required is eliminated.
- ❖ With it, India can have fastest long-range missiles in two categories, providing full-fledged and multi-layered aerial protection from hostile attacks.
- ❖ Its successful use in missiles will mark India's entry into select club of nations that use next-generation missile technology against manoeuvring targets, compromising effectiveness of conventional missiles.
- ❖ First flight of SFDR, developed under a joint Indo-Russian R&D project, was tested in 2018.
- ❖ The Indian SFDR will be used as variants of missiles such as the advanced version of ASTRA.

### **Boeing heavy-lift Chinook helicopters**

- ❖ India received the first 4 of 15 Boeing Co.'s Chinook helicopters from US at the Mundra port in Gujarat.
- ❖ This helicopter would replace the Russia-made Mi-17 medium-lift helicopters, the Mi-26 helicopters and Mi-35 attack helicopters.



- ❖ Chinooks can carry goods and cargo of up to 9.6 tonnes each. This includes men and machines like artillery guns and light armoured vehicles to high altitudes.
- ❖ It can also offer support during disaster relief, medical evacuation, search and rescue missions, aircraft recovery and parachute drops, according to Boeing.



## **Expiry of Opportunity rover's mission**

- ❖ NASA announced the end of its Opportunity rover's mission 15 years after its arrival on Mars.
- ❖ This decision to end the mission was made after all the efforts to restore contact with the Opportunity Mars rover didn't yield desired results.



- ❖ Opportunity last contacted Earth in early June as “an historic” global dust storm reached its location on Mars.

### **About the Mission**

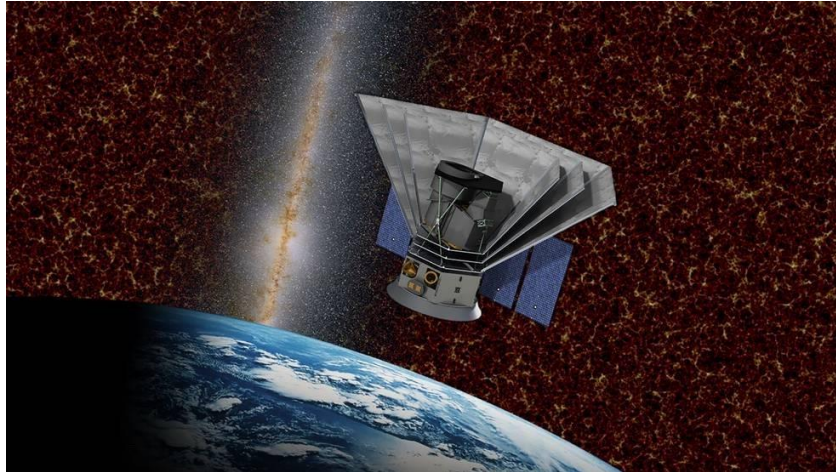
- ❖ Opportunity was the second of the twin Mars Exploration Rovers to land on Mars in January 2004.
- ❖ Opportunity landed 90 days after its twin rover Spirit landed.
- ❖ Spirit landed at Gusev Crater and Opportunity landed on the opposite side of Mars at Meridiani Planum.
- ❖ NASA expected 90-day lifetimes for the rovers. Both Opportunity and Spirit far exceeded their expected lifetime.

### **e-AUSHADHI portal**

- ❖ Minister of State for AYUSH launched the *e-AUSHADHI* portal, for online licensing of Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani and Homoeopathy drugs and related matters at New Delhi.
- ❖ This e-AUSHADHI portal is intended for increased transparency, improved information management facility, improved data usability and increased accountability.
- ❖ Timelines will be fixed for processing of application through this portal with SMS and e-mail status updates at each step of the process.

## SPHEREx mission

- ❖ NASA is launching an ambitious new mission SPHEREx to map the entire sky in order to understand the origins of the universe.
- ❖ SPHEREx stands for Spectro-Photometer for the History of the Universe, Epoch of Reionization and Ices Explorer.
- ❖ This mission will be launched in 2023.

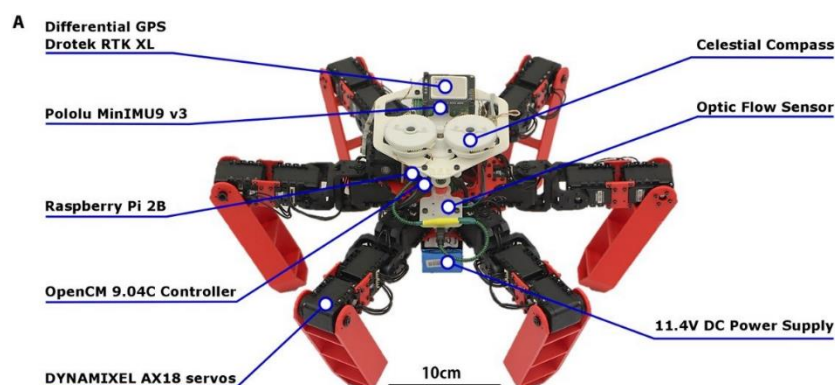


## PMAY (U) Mobile Application

- ❖ Union Minister of State for Housing and Urban Affairs (Independent Charge) Hardeep Singh Puri launched the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna – Urban (PMAY-U) mobile application at New Delhi.
- ❖ This App will allow beneficiaries to capture and upload high resolution photographs of completed houses along with their families.
- ❖ It also allows uploading of selfies of beneficiaries with their house and a 30 - 60 seconds video clip where beneficiaries share their stories of owning a house under PMAY (U).

## AntBot robot

- ❖ Scientists claim to have developed the first walking robot that can explore its environment and find its way home without GPS or mapping.
- ❖ Its opening new avenues for the navigation of autonomous vehicles.



- ❖ Researchers from the French National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS) took inspiration from desert ants, which are extraordinary solitary navigators, to design the AntBot.
- ❖ Ants use polarised light and ultraviolet radiation to locate themselves in space.
- ❖ AntBot copies the desert ants' exceptional navigation capacities, allowing it to explore without using Global Positioning System (GPS).

### **Fateh Submarine**

- ❖ Iran recently launched a new locally-made submarine capable of firing cruise missiles.
- ❖ This submarine was named the Fateh (Conqueror). It has been equipped with torpedoes and naval mines in addition to cruise missiles.



- ❖ This new submarine is Iran's first in the semi-heavy category.
- ❖ It is filling a gap between the light Ghadir class and the heavy Kilo class submarines that the country possesses.
- ❖ This launch is one of the most important projects Iran's military have undertaken in the last 40 years mostly because of its vertical launching system.

### **Long Range Artillery Gun -Dhanush**

- ❖ Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) has received a production clearance from the Indian Army and the Defence Ministry for production of 114 'Dhanush' artillery guns.
- ❖ Dhanush is the first long-range artillery gun to be produced in India and it is a major success story of the 'Make in India' initiative.
- ❖ Dhanush has been mechanically and electronically upgraded to increasing the range and enhance the firing accuracies respectively.



### Indigenous firepower

A look at Dhanush, an upgraded version of the Swedish Bofors gun which was procured by India in the mid-1980s



It is a 155-mm, 45-calibre gun with a range of 36 km, and has demonstrated a range of 38 km with specialised ammunition. It is also compatible with all North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) 155 mm ammunition systems

**SPECIFICATIONS**

**Length** 45 caliber

**Crew** 6-8

**Caliber\*** 155 mm

**Breech:** Screw type

**Recoil:** Electro-rheological/ Magneto-rheological

**Elevation:** -3 to 70 degree

**RATE OF FIRE**

**Burst:** 3 rounds in 15 seconds

**Intense:** 15 rounds in 3 minutes

**Sustained:** 60 rounds in 60 min

**Maximum firing range** 38 km

\*DIAMETER OF THE PROJECTILE IT SHOOTS)

- ❖ The self-propulsion unit allows the gun to negotiate and deploy itself in mountainous terrains with ease.

### First Diesel to Electric Locomotive

- ❖ Prime Minister flagged off the first ever 10,000 HP diesel-to-electric converted locomotive at the Diesel Locomotive Works (DLW) in Varanasi.

**DLW CREATES WORLD'S FIRST**

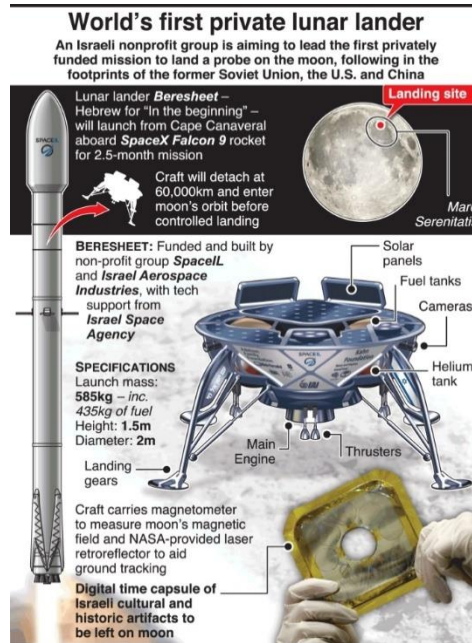
**First time in the world, DLW successfully converted two old diesel locos (WDG3A) into Electric loco (WAGC3) with indigenous technology under 'Make In India' initiative**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Two diesel locomotives of WDG3A class converted to one permanently coupled 12-axle, electric locomotive of 10,000 hp</li> <li>➤ Work began in December, 2017 and completed in February 2018</li> <li>➤ Engineers from Research Designs and Standards Organisation (RDSO), Chiitranjan Locomotive Works (CLW), DLW and Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd. (BHEL) collaborated in this project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Only old diesel locos of 18-year-old due for mid life rehabilitation were converted into electric loco</li> <li>➤ DLW so far manufactured 8149 locomotives till March 31</li> <li>➤ DLW has won the 'Best Production Unit Shield 2017-18' for third consecutive year</li> <li>➤ It has supplied locomotives to countries like Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bangladesh, Mali, Senegal, Sudan Tanzania, Angola, and Vietnam</li> </ul>
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- ❖ The conversion has proved to be cost effective as it requires half of the rehabilitation cost of old locos.
- ❖ It is also an environment-friendly Locomotive with enhanced traction power to double the average speed of goods train.

### World's first privately funded mission to moon

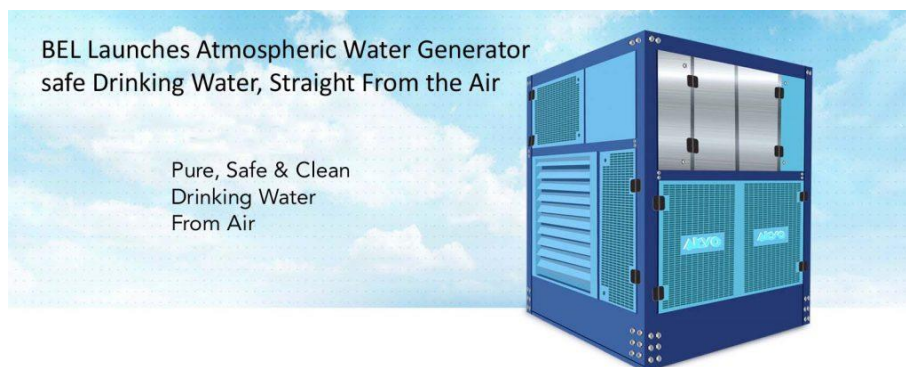
- ❖ An Israeli spacecraft aboard a SpaceX rocket has launched from Cape Canaveral in Florida of USA.
- ❖ It will travel two-month to land on the Moon.
- ❖ It is a washing machine sized robotic lander named Beresheet, the Hebrew word for Genesis.



- ❖ If successful then Israel will join the club of countries which includes Russia, the US and China who have made successful controlled landing on the surface of moon.

### Atmospheric Water Generator

- ❖ Bharat Electronics has unveiled the Atmospheric Water Generator (AWG), an innovative solution to meet the ever-increasing need for drinking water worldwide, at Aero India 2019.
- ❖ It can be used to generate water straight from the humidity present in the atmosphere.



- ❖ It employs a novel technology to extract water from the humidity present in the atmosphere and purify it.
- ❖ It uses heat exchanger for condensing the atmospheric moisture to produce pure, safe and clean potable water.



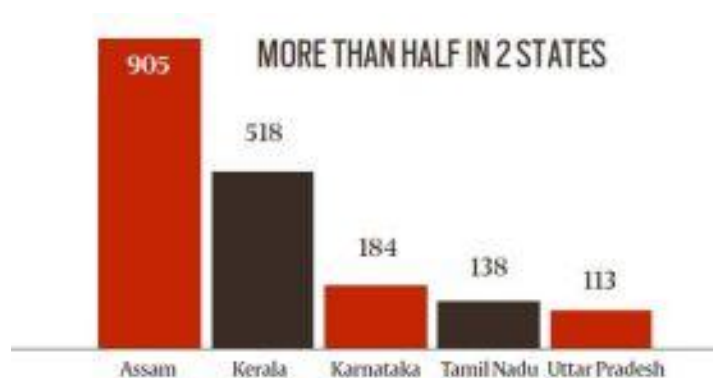
## ENVIRONMENT

### National Clean Air Programme (NCAP)

- ❖ The National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) in a new study says the life expectancy of people in Delhi can go up by nearly three years if the air pollution is reduced by 25%.
- ❖ NCAP is a programme launched by Union Environment Ministry to improve air quality by 20 to 30% in the next 5 years.
- ❖ The programme takes 2017 as the base year to improve air quality.

### First survey of captive elephants

- ❖ The details of the first survey of captive elephants in the country were submitted in an affidavit by the MoEFCC to the Supreme Court.
- ❖ According to the affidavit, there are 2,454 elephants in captivity, of which 560 are in possession with forest departments and 1,687 with private individuals.



- ❖ It shows that Assam and Kerala account for more than half the nationwide total of 2,454.
  - Assam has 37% of these captive elephants and Kerala has 21%

### Superbug gene – first detected in Arctic

- ❖ An antibiotic-resistant superbug gene first detected in India has been found in one of the last pristine places on the Earth, the Arctic.
- ❖ This finding has huge implications for global antibiotic resistance spread.
- ❖ Soil samples taken in Svalbard have now confirmed the spread of blaNDM-1 (New Delhi Metallo-beta-lactamase-1) into the High Arctic region.
- ❖ Svalbard is a Norwegian archipelago between mainland Norway and the North Pole.
- ❖ This Antibiotic-Resistant Gene (ARGs) provides multidrug resistance in microorganisms.
- ❖ An example is NDM-1, which is a protein that can confer resistance in a range of bacteria.

## **Polar vortex**

- ❖ Many parts of the northern United States are experiencing record cold temperatures during the first week of February, attributed to the polar vortex.
- ❖ Polar vortex is a band of strong winds high in the atmosphere around the north pole that normally keeps bitterly cold air locked around the Arctic region.
- ❖ They are called 'vortexes' because of the mass of cold, dense air that spins counter-clockwise like a hurricane.
- ❖ Normally, the cold air remains in the far north.
- ❖ However, higher temperatures than usual in the Arctic region have forced it to travel south.
- ❖ The vortex has broken into two air masses, with one sitting over North America and the other over Europe and northern Asia.
- ❖ It is capable of delivering sub-zero temperatures in the new areas for several days at a time.
- ❖ 2014 polar vortex was notable because it recurred throughout the winter months.

## **Global warming's impact on El Nino in 2019**

- ❖ According to the recent reports, El Nino is forecasted to give a rise in vector-borne diseases, including those spread by mosquitoes, in Central and South America.
- ❖ Also, drought caused by El Nino can be widespread, affecting southern Africa, India, Southeast Asia, Australia, and the Pacific Islands.
- ❖ El Nino is a climatic chain characterized by high air pressure in the Western Pacific and low air pressure in the eastern Pacific.
- ❖ El Nino occurs once in every 15 years and results in heavy drought, flood, dust and snow storm resulting in millions of dollar loss to the public in Tropical Pacific region.

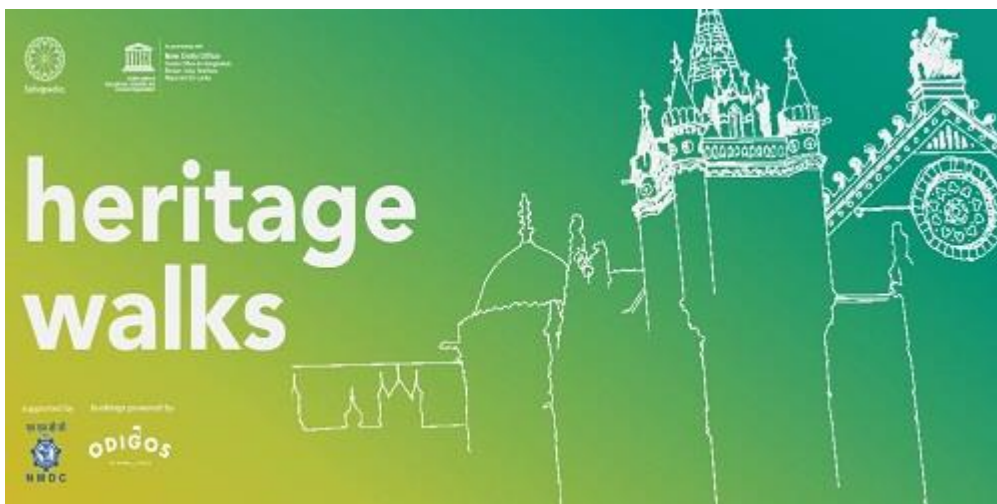
## **Global assessment of environmental laws**

- ❖ United Nations released its first ever global assessment of environmental laws.
- ❖ According to the report, the world fares poorly on implementation of environmental laws and regulations despite 38 times more green laws have been framed and approved in the last four decades.
- ❖ Almost 88 countries have adopted the constitutional right to a healthy environment and more than 350 environmental courts and tribunals exist in around 50 countries.
- ❖ But, failure to fully implement and enforce the environmental laws is one of the greatest challenges towards mitigating climate change, reducing pollution and preventing widespread species and habitat loss.

- ❖ Other problems behind the poor effectiveness and implementation of environmental regulations are
  - Poor coordination across government agencies,
  - Weak institutional capacity,
  - Lack of access to information,
  - Corruption and stifled civic engagement.

### **India Heritage Walk Festival Second edition**

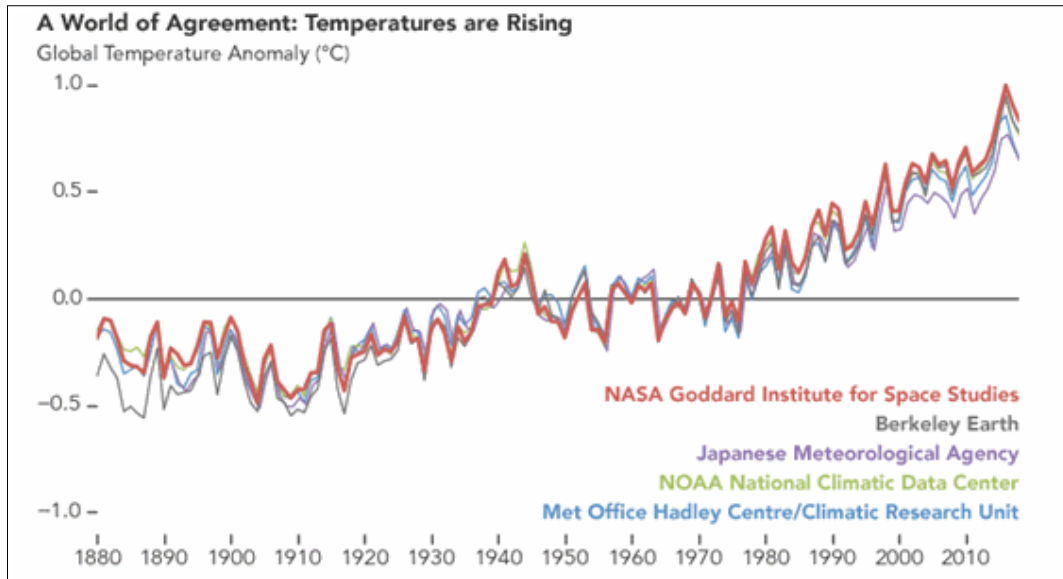
- ❖ Sahapedia in partnership with UNESCO organised the second edition of India Heritage Walk Festival (IHWF) 2019.
- ❖ It is also supported by the National Mineral Development Corporation.



- ❖ This festival offers the opportunity to discover the hidden gems linked to history.
- ❖ This heritage walk planned to introduce Sanjhi- a paper-cutting art by a stencil of Vrindavan in Bandra, Mumbai.
- ❖ The first edition of the festival, went on to receive the PATA Gold Awards 2018 in Heritage and Culture.

### **Fourth-hottest year on record**

- ❖ As per the NASA and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Data 2018 was the fourth-hottest year since 1880.



- ❖ The previous three hottest years on record were 2015, 2016 and 2017.
- ❖ The average global surface temperature has risen about 2 degrees Fahrenheit (1 degree Celsius) since the 1880s.
- ❖ Global temperatures in 2018 were 1.42 degrees F (0.79 degrees C) above the 20<sup>th</sup> century average.

### Remotely operated boat to study oceans

- ❖ National Institute of Ocean Technology has developed Robo Boat, a remotely operated oceanic surface vehicle.
- ❖ It is fitted with ocean and atmospheric sensors.
- ❖ This 10x2 feet size boat can be operated from a remote location to measure ocean parameters close to large ice chunks, narrow streams and estuaries.

<p><b>ROBO BOAT</b> The National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT) has designed and developed 'robo boat', a remotely operated surface vehicle</p>		
<p>➤ The boat is designed to aid in oceanographic studies, particularly air-sea interaction</p>		<p>➤ Due to its size, it can be maneuvered in narrow areas, including estuaries and close to icebergs</p>
<p><b>DIMENSIONS OF THE BOAT</b>   3.3m long, 0.66m wide and height is 0.4m</p> <p>➤ Boat can be fitted with cameras and sensors to</p>		<p>➤ The boat can also be used to collect data in open ocean surface and sub-surface to corroborate with data collected by buoys</p>
<p>study ocean and atmospheric parameters like conductivity, temperature, turbidity, dissolved oxygen, humidity and radiation</p>		

### World Sustainable Development Summit 2019

- ❖ World Sustainable Development Summit 2019 was inaugurated by the Vice President of India in New Delhi.

- ❖ It was organized by The Energy and Resources Institute – TERI.



- ❖ It is an annual flagship event of The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) and the sole summit on global issues taking place in the developing world.
- ❖ Theme of the 2019 edition of the Summit is 'Attaining the 2030 Agenda: Delivering on Our Promise'.

### **Small Grants Program (SGP)**

- ❖ Workshop on Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) -Global Environment Facility, UNDP Small Grants Programme (SGP) was held recently in New Delhi.
- ❖ It was launched in 1992 with 33 participating countries.
- ❖ Small Grants Program (SGP) is implemented by UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) on behalf of the GEF (Global Environment Facility) partnership.
- ❖ It is specifically designed to mobilize bottom-up actions by empowering local civil society organizations, and poor and vulnerable communities, including women and Indigenous Peoples.
- ❖ It is functioning through a decentralized, national-level delivery mechanism.
- ❖ SGP finances community-led initiatives to address global environmental issues.

### **Indo-German Environment Forum**

- ❖ Third Indo-German Environment Forum with the theme "Cleaner Air, Greener Economy" was held at New Delhi.
- ❖ The one-day event through panel discussions and parallel sessions focuses on challenges, solutions and necessary framework conditions of air pollution control, waste management and circular economy.
- ❖ It also focusses the implementation of NDCs (Nationally Determined Contributions) and SDGs based on Paris Agreement and Agenda 2030 of UN.



## India – Spearheading Climate Solutions

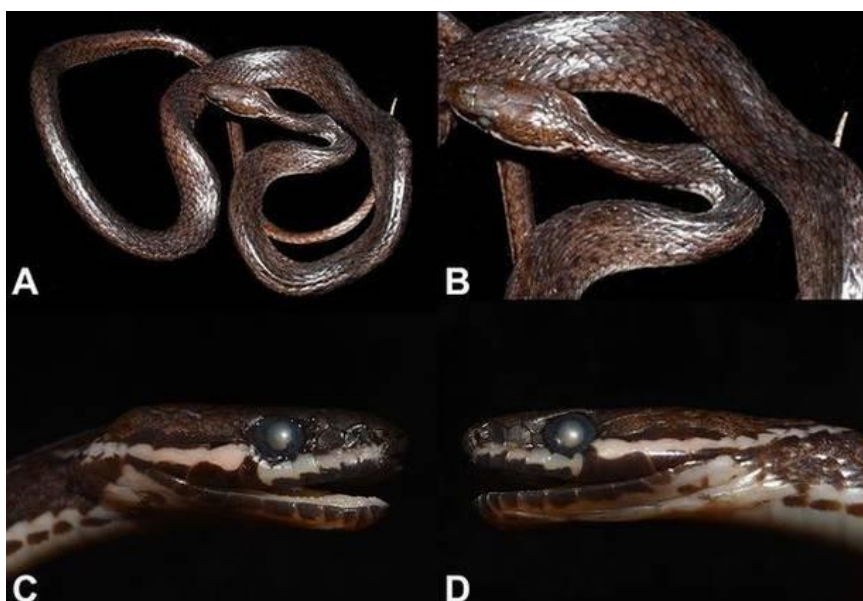
- ❖ The Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change Harsh Vardhan has released a publication titled “India – Spearheading Climate Solutions” on 12 February, 2019.
- ❖ This document mentions India’s key actions taken towards combating and adapting to climate change.

### Some of the major initiatives included in the publication are:

- ❖ India’s National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC).
  - It will cover 8 major missions on Solar, Enhanced Energy Efficiency, Sustainable Habitat, Water, Sustaining the Himalayan Ecosystem, Green India, Sustainable Agriculture and Strategic Knowledge on Climate Change.
- ❖ International Solar Alliances (ISA).
- ❖ State Action Plan on Climate Change (SAPCC).
- ❖ FAME (Faster Adoption and Manufacture of Hybrid and Electric Vehicles) Scheme – for E-mobility.
- ❖ Atal Mission for Rejuvenation & Urban Transformation (AMRUT) – for Smart Cities.
- ❖ Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana – for access to clean cooking fuel.
- ❖ UJALA scheme - for embracing energy efficient LED bulbs.
- ❖ Swachh Bharat Mission.

## Discovery of ‘crying’ snake

- ❖ New species of ‘crying’ snake has been discovered in Lepa-Rada district of Arunachal Pradesh.



- ❖ Discovery of the non-venomous crying snake (*Hebius lacrima*) has been published in the New Zealand-based scientific mega-journal for animal taxonomy *Zootaxa*.
- ❖ Crying snake refers the mark below its eyes, that gives the illusion that it is crying.
- ❖ Globally snakes are represented by 3,709 species.
- ❖ The northeast is home to some 110 species, with Arunachal Pradesh accounting for 55.

### **Pacts - India's river rejuvenation project**

- ❖ 3 European countries signed agreements with India to support the country's river rejuvenation project under the India-EU water partnership (IEWP) framework.
- ❖ This pact will enable the implementation of EU innovative technologies for the river rejuvenation programme.
- ❖ MoUs were exchanged between the IEWP and Germany, Hungary, Netherlands, international organisations as well as IIT Kanpur at the 4th EU India Water Forum (IWF).
- ❖ 4th EU India Water Forum (IWF) was hosted by the IEWP and TERI as part of the World Sustainable Development Summit, New Delhi.

### **Bramble Cay melomys**

- ❖ [Australia](#) officially declared a Great Barrier Reef rodent extinct, making it the first mammal believed to have been killed off by human-induced climate change.
- ❖ The rat-like Bramble Cay melomys has not been spotted in a decade.



- ❖ The rodent lived solely on a tiny sand island in the Torres Strait, near the coast of Papua New Guinea (PNG).



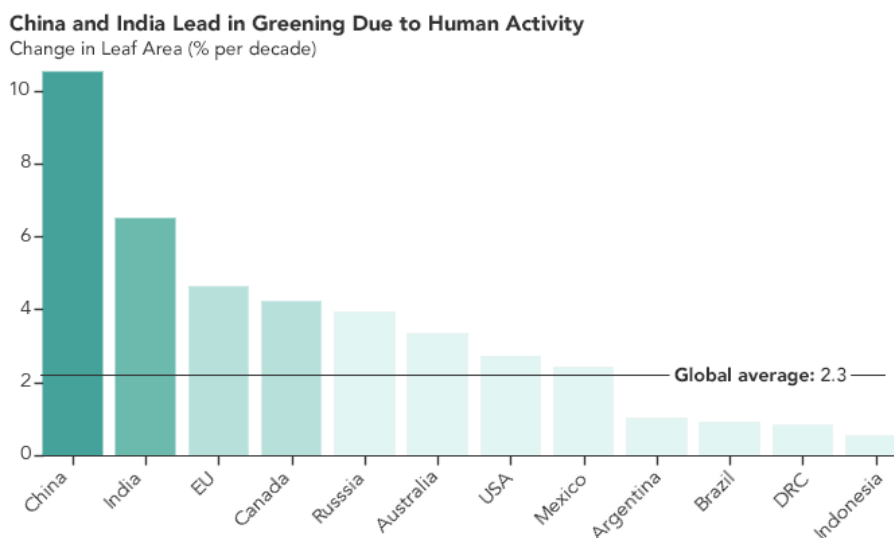
- ❖ The species has not been seen since 2009.

### Greenhouse gas emission cut for trucks

- ❖ The European Union (EU) agreed to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) from new trucks and buses by 30 per cent by a 2030.
- ❖ The deal proposes a binding CO<sub>2</sub>-reduction target for trucks at the EU-level for the first time which includes a clear stimulus for zero and low-emission trucks.
- ❖ Trucks account for almost one-quarter of the EU's transport-related emissions and the EU did not have limits on emissions from heavy-duty vehicles till now.
- ❖ Also, EU agreed in December on targets for cutting emissions from cars and vans.

### NASA report on Forests

- ❖ A study by NASA, based on extensive satellite imagery, that India and china were responsible for the largest increase in green vegetation.
- ❖ After the year of 2000, the planet's green leaf area has been increased by 5%, or over two million square miles.



- ❖ China and India account for one-third of the global greening, but contain only 9% of the planet's land area covered in vegetation.
- ❖ China possessing 6.6% of the world's vegetated area. Forests account for 42 percent while croplands make up a further 32%.
- ❖ India has contributed a further 6.8% in green leaf area, with 82% from croplands and 4.4% from forests.

### **Conservation Reserves**

- ❖ The Centre has identified over 100 coastal and marine sites as conservation reserves under its National Wildlife Action Plan for 2017-2031.
- ❖ This was mentioned in the second biennial update report (BUR) of the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, submitted to the UN body on climate change in December 2018.

## STATE

### Special Scheme to Curb infant deaths - Maharashtra

- ❖ The state government of Maharashtra has launched a special scheme to curb infant deaths.
- ❖ The scheme was launched by distributing baby care kits to the children born in Primary health centre and Government Hospitals.
- ❖ The scheme is applicable only for first child of the parents.
- ❖ Infant mortality rate is the death of young children under one year.

### First Astro Turf Football Pitch - Nagaland

- ❖ Nagaland CM Neiphiu Rio inaugurated the first Astro Turf Football Pitch of the State at Indira Gandhi Stadium in Kohima, Nagaland.
- ❖ The pitch was inaugurated on the occasion of 100th birth anniversary of the legendary footballer Dr. T. Ao.
- ❖ The Astro Turf has the size of 105×66 metres for playground which is FIFA approved size.

### Golden Langur Conservation Breeding Program - Assam

- ❖ The Assam Environment and Forest Minister Pramila Rani Brahma announced the success of the Golden Langur Conservation Breeding Program in the State.
- ❖ Purpose of this program is to breed langurs which is currently placed in endangered category, so that they can be repopulated in the wild.



- ❖ Golden Langur (*Trachypithecus geei*) was discovered in 1953 by naturalist E.P. Gee.



- ❖ These langurs are arboreal leaf-eating monkeys.
- ❖ It is only found in the forests in Assam (primarily in the areas of the Manas Biosphere Reserve) and Bhutan.

### **Ban on import of pigs and piglets**

- ❖ The Mizoram government has banned import of pigs and piglets to prevent outbreak of a disease that has cost the lives of thousands of swines in the state.
- ❖ The porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome (PRRS) has cost the lives of over 10,000 swines in Mizoram since 2013.
- ❖ It is believed that it happened due to import of pigs and piglets from Myanmar where the disease was known to be prevalent.
- ❖ PRRS disease is also called as Swine Flu.
- ❖ This disease generally transmitted from pigs and affects both pigs and humankind.

### **Punjab's State aquatic animal**

- ❖ The Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh declared one of the rarest mammals, Indus River Dolphin, which is only found in Beas River, as Punjab State Aquatic Animal.
- ❖ He approved to declare Kanjli Wetland and holy Kali Bein River as a wildlife conservation reserve to mark the historic celebration of 550<sup>th</sup> Parkash Purb of Sri Guru Nanak Dev.
- ❖ The CM also approved for the implementation of Karnataka model of jungle lodges in coordination with private organisations.



## Monthly allowance scheme- Rajasthan

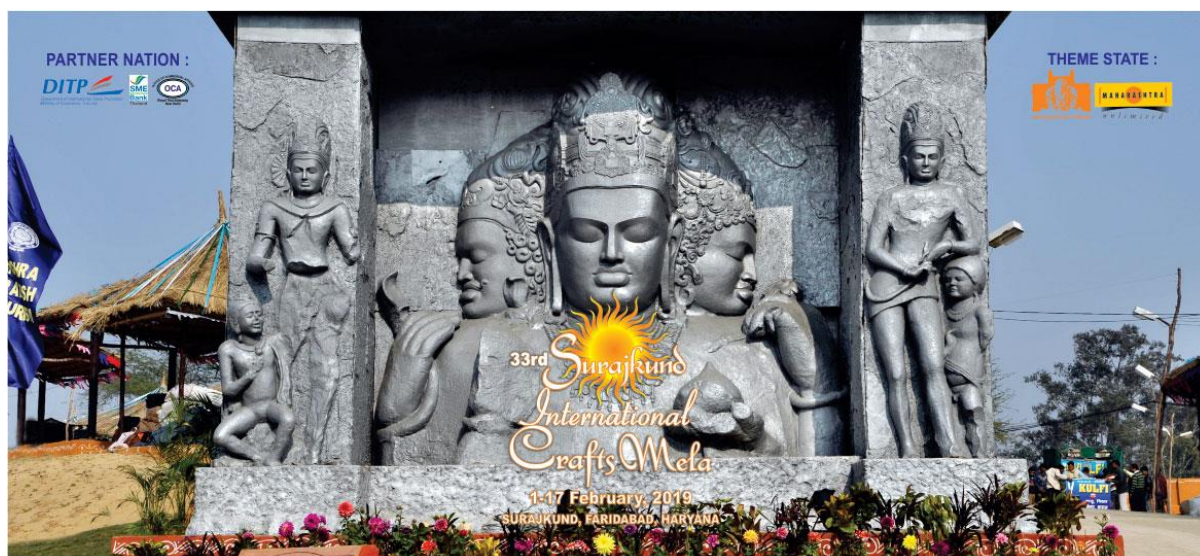
- ❖ Rajasthan CM Ashok Gehlot announced that the monthly allowance scheme for educated, unemployed youth, will be rolled out from March 1.
- ❖ The condition for the youths to avail the scheme is to have the family income less than Rs 2 lakh per annum.
- ❖ Currently, under the Rajasthan Unemployed Allowance Scheme - 2012, girls and boys respectively get an employment assistance of Rs 650 and Rs 750 per month from the government.

### monthly allowance schemes in other states

- ❖ West Bengal presently has two different schemes for unemployed youths and one more for closed factory workers. The monthly stipend is Rs 1,500 to Rs 2,000 in both cases.
- ❖ In Punjab, this allowance ranges from Rs 150 to Rs 600.
- ❖ Haryana provides Rs 1,500 to graduates and post-graduates, and Rs 900 for class-XII passed.
- ❖ In Kerala, the allowance is Rs 120 per month.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu gives Rs 600 per month to Class X-pass youths, Rs 750 to those who have passed class XII and Rs 1,000 to graduates.

## Surajkund International Crafts Mela-2019

- ❖ Surajkund International Crafts Mela is organized every year by the Surajkund Mela Authority & Haryana Tourism in collaboration with Union Ministries of Tourism, Textiles, Culture and External Affairs.
- ❖ The state of Maharashtra is the Theme State and Thailand is the Partner Nation Country for the Surajkund International Crafts Mela-2019.
- ❖ It aims to promote handicrafts, handlooms with the aid of craftsmen invited from all over the country and identify languishing and lesser-known crafts and to introduce them to patrons.



### **Price Monitoring and Research Unit**

- ❖ Kerala has become the first State to set up a price monitoring and research unit (PMRU).
- ❖ It aims to track violation of prices of essential drugs and medical devices under the Drugs Price Control Order.
- ❖ This move comes more than five years after the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) proposed such a system for the States and the Union Territories.
- ❖ State Health Secretary would be the Chairman of the society and the Drugs Controller would be its member secretary.
- ❖ Its members include a State government representative, representatives of private pharmaceutical companies, and those from consumer rights protection fora.
- ❖ The society would also have an executive committee headed by the Drugs Controller.

### **Best Budget formulation Practice**

- ❖ As per the survey of Transparency International, Assam occupied the top slot in the ranking of best practices followed by states in Budget formulation.
- ❖ It is followed by Andhra Pradesh and Odisha.
- ❖ Meghalaya, Manipur and Punjab figured in the bottom list.
- ❖ This survey is based on following 4 parameters
  - public disclosure,
  - budgetary process,
  - post budget fiscal management,
  - efforts to make budget more transparent and citizen friendly.
- ❖ Assam is the only state out of the 29 states and 2 UTs, which has published a Citizens Budget in the public domain.
- ❖ Assam government is the only government that has conducted budget awareness campaigns across 17 districts.

### **Kala Ghoda festival**

- ❖ The Kala Ghoda festival, India's largest multi-cultural street festival begins in Mumbai.
- ❖ It celebrates 20 years of art and culture through cinema, theatre, dance, literature, and sculpture.
- ❖ Maneck Davar is the Chairman of Kala Ghoda Association.

- ❖ The festival hosted the exhibition at the Jehangir Art Gallery to celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi and some rich history of Mumbai.
- ❖ The theme for this year is “A Measure of Time”.

### **Biodiversity Tags**

- ❖ Goa State Biodiversity Board (GSBB) recently introduced a biodiversity tagging system.
- ❖ It aims to ensure communities residing within the biodiversity zone to get Access Benefit Share (ABS) from their profits.
- ❖ The tag will show that the ingredients used are sourced from the nature.
- ❖ Sellers are supposed to pay 0.01 % of their annual profit to the GSBB.
- ❖ The board will then use this amount to protect the habitat from where the ingredients are.

### **Committee to review welfare schemes for tribals**

- ❖ Maharashtra government has set up a 17-member committee to review various schemes being implemented for the welfare of tribals in the state.
- ❖ The committee will be headed by former MLA and Shramjeevi Sanghatna president Vivek Pandit.
- ❖ The panel will undertake the study of various works done for providing employment opportunities, minimum wages and proper livelihood to tribals.
- ❖ As per a recent government order, the committee will suggest measures to ensure that children in tribal regions were not deprived of education.
- ❖ The committee will hold its meetings every three months and submit its recommendations to the government.

### **Zero Fatality Corridor**

- ❖ Delhi Government has launched Zero Fatality Corridor with an aim to curb the number of accidents.
- ❖ The announcement was made by the Minister of Transport, Delhi during the opening ceremony of the Road Safety Week.
- ❖ 3km stretch between Bhalswa chowk and Burari chowk on the outer ring road has been chosen as a case study in this regard.
- ❖ This 3km stretch will be observed for scientific assessment of accidents, road engineering, road-user engagement.
- ❖ Experts will also ensure that safety and security measures such as police enforcement and rapid emergency care are made available on this stretch.
- ❖ The initiative is a collaborative approach of the transport, health, education, public works department, together with Delhi traffic police to ensure that road fatalities in Delhi are reduced.



### **7<sup>th</sup> Edition of Kolhapur International film festival**

- ❖ The 7<sup>th</sup> edition of the eight-day long Kolhapur International film festival began on February 7<sup>th</sup> of 2019 in Kolhapur, Maharashtra.
- ❖ Focus country of the festival is the Hungarian cinema.
- ❖ Veteran filmmaker Govind Nihalani was honoured with the Kalamaharshi Baburao Painter Award for his contribution to the film industry.

### **Pravasi Dividend Pension Scheme**

- ❖ The government of Kerala has launched 'Pravasi Dividend Pension Scheme'.
- ❖ The scheme has been introduced as part of welfare measures towards Pravasi Malayalis.
- ❖ Under the scheme, a regular pension would be provided to Non-Resident Keralites on a one-time payment of Rs 5 lakh.
- ❖ This onetime payment would be deposited with KIIFB (Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board) for financing infrastructure projects.

### **Rajiv Gandhi Career Portal**

- ❖ Rajasthan School Education Minister launched 'Rajiv Gandhi Career Portal' for students from classes 9 to 12.
- ❖ This portal aims to provide career guidance with information on entrance examinations, scholarships and employment-oriented courses.
- ❖ It is a big step of the government towards providing employment-oriented education to students.
- ❖ The portal is developed with support from UNICEF and is a first-of-its-kind in the country

### **KALIA Chhatravritti Yojana**

- ❖ The Odisha Chief Minister announced the new 'KALIA Chhatravritti Yojana'.
- ❖ It is a scholarship for the children of farmers.
- ❖ Under this scheme, the children of farmers will be provided scholarships for pursuing higher education in professional courses.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> administrative division of Jammu and Kashmir**

- ❖ The cold desert region of Ladakh has been declared as the third administrative division of Jammu and Kashmir.
- ❖ Governor Satya Pal Malik's administration granted divisional status to the cold desert region which remains cut off from the outside world for six months due to harsh winter.
- ❖ This division will comprise Leh and Kargil districts, with Leh as the division's headquarters.
- ❖ The creation of two posts of Divisional Commissioner and Inspector General of Police (IGP) has been sanctioned for the new division.



### **Arundhati Scheme**

- ❖ The government of Assam has announced a new scheme called Arundhati to provide gold at free of cost to the brides.
- ❖ Under the scheme, the government of Assam aims to provide 1 Tola Gold (10 gram) to brides belonging to all such communities of Assam where it is customary to provide gold at the time of the wedding.
- ❖ The scheme is named after Arundhati, wife of great sage Basistha.
- ❖ The scheme is limited for economically weaker sections, whose annual income is below Rs 5 lakh.

### **River Information System**

- ❖ To boost cargo movement on Ganga, Union Minister Nitin Gadkari inaugurated the second phase of river information system (RIS) between Farakka and Patna.
- ❖ 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of RIS will enhance swift electronic data transfer between mobile vessels and base stations on shore through advance and real-time exchange of information.
- ❖ This would facilitate:
  - Enhancement of inland navigation safety in ports and rivers.
  - Better use of the inland waterways.
  - Environmental protection.
- ❖ RIS is being implemented under the overall responsibility of Inland Waterway Authority of India, a statutory body administered by the Ministry of Shipping.

### **Computer education on wheels**

- ❖ Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister inaugurated the 'HP on Wheels-Mobile Computer School.
- ❖ This school has been started in collaboration with the famous computer company HP India, and it will be operated through social organisation 'Sewa Bharti'.
- ❖ In this kind of a school, the materials and advance facilities related to the studies of students from class 1 to 12 will be provided in both English and Hindi languages.

### **Annadatha Sukhibhava scheme**

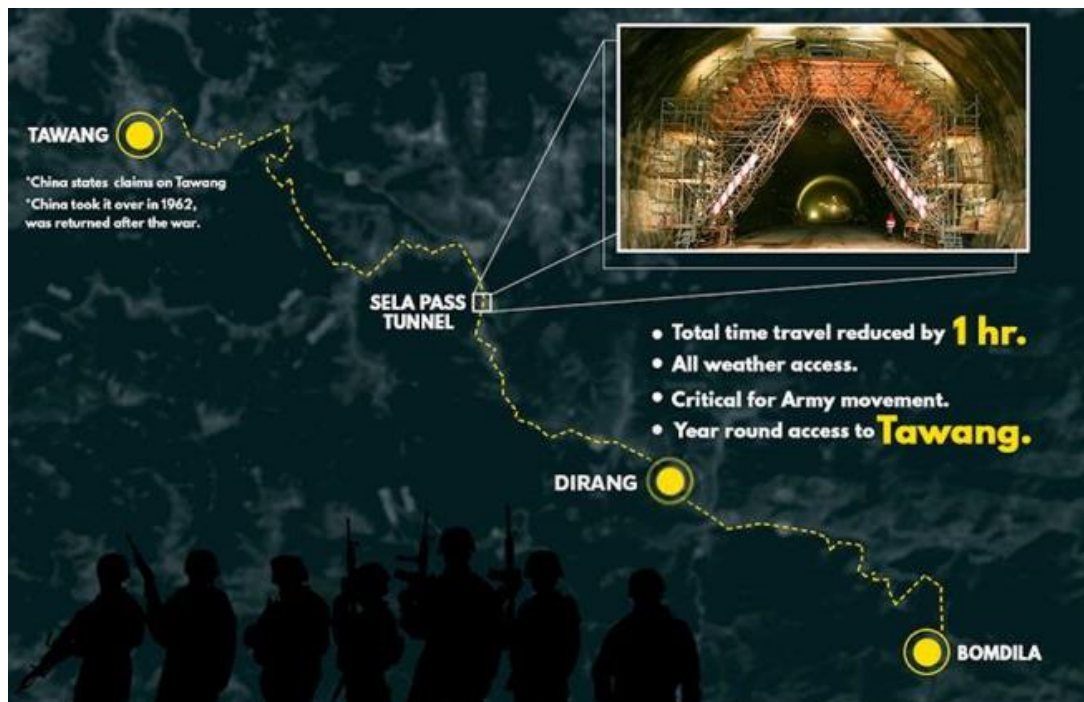
- ❖ Andhra Pradesh government introduced a new scheme, called 'Annadatha Sukhibhava' to give economic support to Annadathas (farmers).
- ❖ This scheme will pay an additional Rs 4,000 with Union government's minimum income support of Rs 6,000 (PM Kisan Samman Nidhi) to small and marginal farmers who own less than 5 acres of land, taking up the total to Rs 10,000.

### Statue of Guru Padmasambhava

- ❖ Odisha Chief Minister unveiled a 19-foot-high statue of Guru Padmasambhava, the founder of Tibetan Buddhism, at Jirang in Gajapati district.
- ❖ This 29-tonne stone statue is placed in the middle of 'Padma Sarovar', a large tank near Padmasambhava Mahavihara, the largest Buddhist monastery in eastern India.
- ❖ Historians claim that Guru Padmasambhava, also known as second Buddha, was born and brought up in Odisha before he left for Tibet.



### Sela Pass Tunnel



- ❖ Prime Minister laid the foundation stone for Sela Tunnel in Arunachal Pradesh.
- ❖ Once the tunnel is ready, the travel time to Tawang will be cut short.
- ❖ And the security forces will have all-weather access in that region of Arunachal Pradesh throughout the year.
- ❖ The Sela tunnel will be built to boost the tourism industry and economic activities in the region as well as north-eastern states.
- ❖ Sela pass tunnel will be constructed by the Border Roads Organisation (BRO).

### Operation Smile-V

- ❖ 'Operation Smile-V' initiative launched by Hyderabad Police has helped in rescuing 325 children, who were either working as labourers or begging on the streets, since January 1 this year.
- ❖ Operation Smile also called as Operation Muskaan is an initiative of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) to rescue/rehabilitate missing children.
- ❖ It was launched on January 1 across Telangana.

### Sarthi Sandesh Vahini vehicles

- ❖ Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister flagged off 33 'Sarthi Sandesh Vahini' vehicles.
- ❖ It is a mission started by the state family welfare department with an aim to spread awareness regarding family planning in urban and rural areas.
- ❖ The vehicles will provide family planning information to the viewers through various documentaries and films.
- ❖ The state health department will also appoint nodal officers to supervise the campaign and ensure that several targets set by the department including women and child development and education for all are being fulfilled.



## **Rajasthan Backward Classes Amendment Bill- 2019**

- ❖ Rajasthan government on introduced a Rajasthan Backward Classes Amendment Bill- 2019 in the assembly.
- ❖ It aims to give a five per cent quota in jobs and educational institutes to Gujjars and four other communities agitating for it.
- ❖ This bill seeks to increase the backward classes' reservation from the present 21 per cent to 26 per cent with five per cent reservation to Gujjars, Banjaras, Gadia Lohars, Raikas and Gadaria.
- ❖ The statement on the objective and reasons of the bill stated that the five castes are most backward and require five per cent separate reservation.
- ❖ With this Reservations in Rajasthan crosses the 50 % cap on reservations set by the Supreme Court.
- ❖ To avoid the possible legal tussle the Rajasthan Assembly passed a resolution and urged the Centre to incorporate it in the 9th schedule to ensure the reservation for these communities.

### **Above 50 percent**

- ❖ Already Tamilnadu is providing 69 percent reservation.
- ❖ The Maharashtra state, which already had 52 percent reservation, had in November 2018 added another 16 percent for Marathas thus became the second highest state to the tune of 68 percent.
- ❖ Moreover Haryana, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh have also passed laws to provide reservation 67, 62, 55 respectively.

## **Awareness of Trans Fatty Acids (TFA)**

- ❖ The Health Department of Kerala has drawn up an action plan to generate public awareness on the harmful effects of trans fatty acids (TFA) in commercially available food items.
- ❖ It also encourages the local food industry to meet the current statutory limits set for TFA.
- ❖ This Year-long action plan has specific components on
  - Trans fat amongst food business operators (FBOs) and
  - Giving them scientific sessions and training on how they can keep their food TFA-free.
- ❖ As per WHO Statements
  - Trans-fat intake be limited to less than 1% of total energy intake.
  - It has called for the total elimination of TFAs in global food supply by 2023.
- ❖ FSSAI has proposed to limit TFA limit in foods to 2% and eliminate trans fats from foods by 2022.




**Trans fatty acids**

**Action plan**

**Massive awareness campaigns**

- On harmful effects of trans fat and HFSS<sup>1</sup> in foods at public places, hospitals, movie halls
- IEC<sup>2</sup> campaigns to rope in celebrities as ambassadors of healthy food



**Enforcement activities**

- Identify manufacturers and suppliers of PHVOs<sup>3</sup> to bakeries, restaurants; collect samples
- Monitor retail sales of PHVOs and test samples of various brands
- Scientific sessions on TFA and training on using TFA-free alternatives
- Monitor oils, fats used for frying, making snacks; test samples
- Testing of a range of food products to assess trans fat content
- Meetings with bakers, restaurant owners, unorganised sector FBOs<sup>4</sup>
- Preparing guidelines on action to be taken against violators

1. HIGH FAT, SUGAR, SALT  
2. INFORMATION, EDUCATION, COMMUNICATION  
3. PARTIALLY HYDROGENATED VEGETABLE OILS  
4. FOOD BUSINESS OPERATORS

### First District Cooling System of India

- ❖ India's First District cooling system will come up in Amravati, capital of the Andhra Pradesh.
- ❖ UAE-based international cooling provider (Tabreed) has entered into a 30-year agreement with AP government to build, own, operate and transfer district cooling system.
- ❖ District cooling systems produce chilled water, steam or hot water at a central plant and then pipe that energy out to buildings for air conditioning.
- ❖ The system will meet cooling requirements for the State's Assembly, High Court, Secretariat and other government buildings.
- ❖ This district cooling uses only 50 % of primary energy consumption for cooling urban buildings.
- ❖ It also reduces carbon emissions.

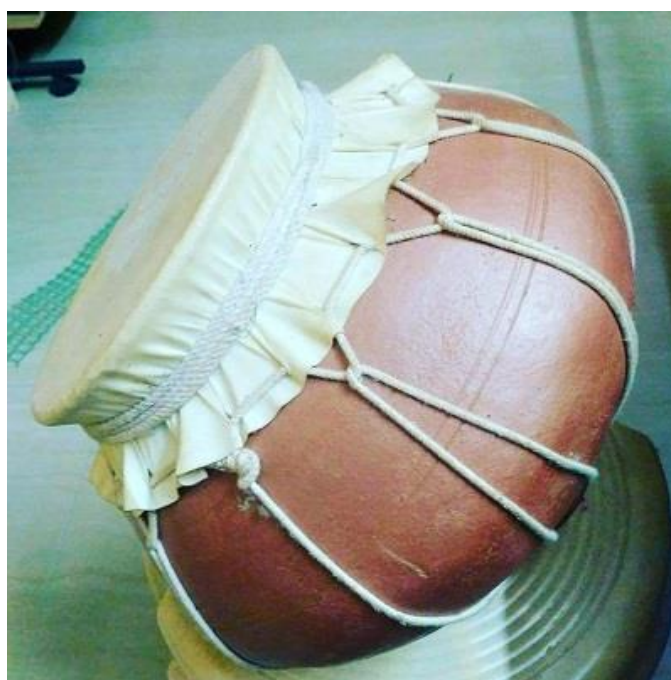
### Pension schemes for senior citizens

- ❖ Bihar govt's Current old age pension scheme is applicable to only the BPL (Below Poverty Line) category.
- ❖ In this situation, the following new old age pension schemes has been introduced to cover all old-age persons.
- ❖ Mukhyamantri Vridhajan Pension Yojna- MVPY
  - CM announced a universal old age pension scheme Mukhyamantri Vridhajan Pension Yojna- MVPY for all people above 60 years of age.
  - For this scheme, all will be eligible for 400 rupees monthly pension irrespective of caste, religion or community except those senior citizens who have retired from government service.
- ❖ Bihar Patrakar Samman Yojana (BPSY)
  - CM also announced a pension of 6,000 rupees for journalists above 60 years of age.
  - Those who have been in regular service in the field of media and not getting any other pension will be eligible for Bihar Patrakar Samman Yojana (BPSY).
- ❖ Both schemes will be implemented from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019.



### **Goa's heritage musical instrument**

- ❖ Goa Art and Culture Minister announced that the government will declare Ghumot as state's heritage instrument soon.
- ❖ Ghumot is an indigenous earthen drum.
- ❖ Ghumot is a percussion instrument widely played during Ganesh Chaturthi festival.
- ❖ Forest Department had banned the instrument due to use of skin of a monitor lizard which is a highly endangered wildlife species listed in schedule I of Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972.
- ❖ In Andhra Pradesh, this drum is known as gummata, and it is played in the storytelling folk tradition.



### **K-SWIFT software application**

- ❖ Kerala Chief Minister launched an online mechanism to ensure clearance to investment proposals within 30 days of the application.
- ❖ K-SWIFT (Kerala Single Window Interface for Fast, Transparent Clearances) was unveiled at the ASCEND Kerala 2019.
- ❖ It is a software application to simplify and speed up approval of government clearances for those looking to launch enterprises in the state.

### **Monkey declared as vermin**

- ❖ Monkeys have again been declared vermin for the next one year in 11 districts' 91 tehsils and sub-tehsils of Himachal Pradesh.

- ❖ The Centre has issued a notification on February 14, 2019 and this notification would be applicable for a period of one year.
- ❖ Centre urges that it is necessary to declare monkeys as a vermin species as these animals have been adversely affecting crops and causing harm to humans.

### Designation of Vermin

- ❖ Vermin refers to pests or nuisance animals which spread diseases or destroy crops or livestock.
- ❖ In India, Section 62 of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 empowers the states to send a list of wild animals to the Centre requesting it to declare them vermin for selective slaughter.
- ❖ Such wild animal shall be included in Schedule V of the law, depriving them of any protection under that law.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Edition of water conservation scheme**

- ❖ Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani launched the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the state government's water conservation drive called "Sujalam Sufalam Jal Sanchay Abhiyan".
- ❖ This scheme aims to deepen water bodies in the state before monsoon to increase storage of rainwater to be used during times of scarcity.
- ❖ 1<sup>st</sup> edition witnessed an increase in the water storage capacity of more than 11,000 lakh m<sup>3</sup> rainwater through different sources like ponds, reservoirs, check dams and others.

### **Two silk projects in Assam**

- ❖ Union Minister Smriti Irani inaugurated two projects under the ministry of textiles at Udalguri district in Assam.
- ❖ It is aimed at the economic uplift of the people below the poverty line by Eri silk farming.

### Soil to Silk Project

- ❖ This project envisages new Eri plantation on 100 hectares and will facilitate post cocoon activities for an on-farm sector like plantation, spinning and reeling.

### Eri Spun Silk Mill

- ❖ It will be implemented directly by the state government in co-ordination with the Central Silk Board.
- ❖ Eri Silk Development Project has been dedicated for sustainable livelihood for women of Bodoland Territorial Council through tapioca plantation at Kokrajhar.

- ❖ Objective of the project is to utilize tapioca plantation for dual purpose –
  - Tuber for food and the leaves for Eri silkworm to cover tribal families below poverty line.
  - Exploiting available natural resources to the best advantage of the Eri silkworm and rearing and weaving sector.

### **Mukhyamantri Yuva Swabhiman Yojana**

- ❖ Madhya Pradesh government rolled out its flagship ‘Mukhyamantri Yuva Swabhiman Yojana’.
- ❖ It guarantees 100 days of employment every year to urban youth from economically weaker sections.
- ❖ Youths would get Rs 4,000 stipend per month and total Rs 13,500 for the 100 days period would be provided.
- ❖ During this period, they would be given skill development training, so that they become independent.
- ❖ The scheme defines Economically weaker sections as those whose family’s annual income is less than Rs 2 lakh.
- ❖ The scheme is limited to youth in the age group 21-30 years.

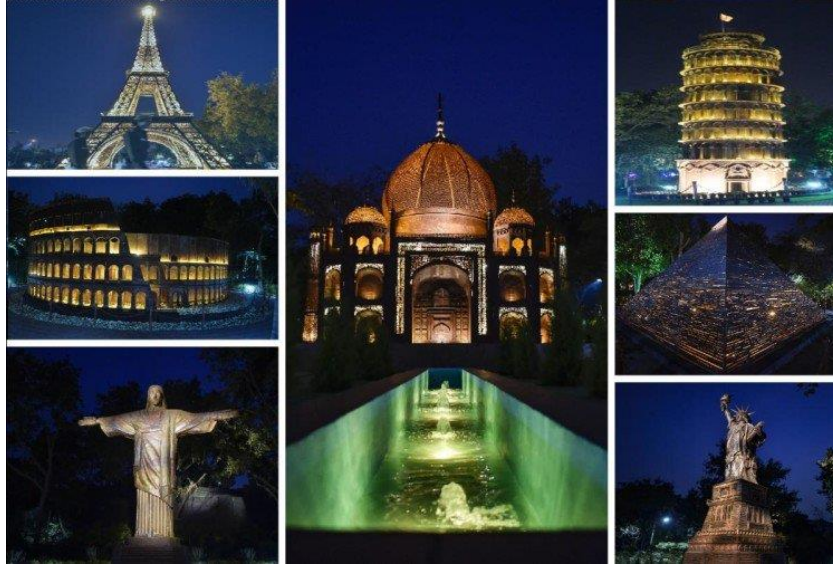
### **Mallakhamb World Championship**

- ❖ The two-day first Mallakhamb World Championship was held at Shivaji Park in central Mumbai.
- ❖ It has seen participants almost from 15 countries.
- ❖ The team championship was won by India, while Singapore stood second with Malaysia as third.



### **“Waste to Wonder” Park**

- ❖ The Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated the “Waste to Wonder” Park under the South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC).
- ❖ The park has replicas of seven World Wonders.



- ❖ All these sculptures have been made using industrial waste and other kinds of waste. This justifies the name 'Waste to Wonder'.
- ❖ The South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) governed the construction of this park. This park is powered by solar and wind energy.

### **PRANAM Commission**

- ❖ Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal had launched the PRANAM Commission.
- ❖ This panel was set up to look after the issues concerning a Bill, Protection of parents of state government employees.
- ❖ PRANAM stands for Parents Responsibility and Norms for Accountability and Monitoring.
- ❖ PRANAM Bill was approved by the Assam cabinet last year.
- ❖ This bill makes it mandatory for state government employees to look after their parents and unmarried differently abled siblings who do not have their own sources of income.



## **PERSONALITIES, AWARDS AND EVENTS**

### **New chairman of BARC India**

- ❖ The MD & CEO of Zee Entertainment Enterprises Limited (ZEEL), Punit Goenka has been elected as the new chairman of Broadcast Audience Research Council of India (BARC).
- ❖ Punit Goenka as a founder Chairman of BARC had played a key role in institutionalizing BARC.
- ❖ BARC India is a collaborative Industry Company founded in 2010 by stakeholder bodies that represent Broadcasters, Advertisers, and Advertising and Media Agencies.
- ❖ BARC India analyses the viewership habits of over 197 million TV households making it the world's largest television audience measurement service.

### **Award of Appreciation**

- ❖ Rajiv Nath was conferred with the prestigious 'Award of Appreciation' by the Minister of State for Health & Family Welfare Ashwini Kumar Choubey.
- ❖ He was honoured for his valuable, remarkable and outstanding achievements in the field of healthcare & community services for affordable Medtech access & patients safety initiatives.
- ❖ Rajiv Nath has also been appointed as the Member on Board of National Medical Devices Promotion Council by Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP).

### **Australia's richest literary prize**

- ❖ Behrouz Boochani, an Iranian asylum-seeker detained in Papua New Guinea under Australian asylum laws has won the Victorian Prize for Literature.
- ❖ Behrouz Boochani was awarded for his work "No Friend But the Mountains: Writing from Manus Prison".
- ❖ This book narrates experiences and fear Boochani felt in the guarded camp, which was shuttered last year after a local court ruling and the asylum-seekers moved elsewhere on the island.

### **Thirukuralin Porwal award**

- ❖ Tarun Vijay, former MP hailing from Uttarakhand and speaks Hindi becomes the first North Indian after Independence to be honoured with 'Thirukuralin Porwal' award for taking up the cause of Tamil language and culture.





- ❖ The award is conferred to eminent personalities who spread the message and teachings of Thiruvalluvar's great classics in all parts of India and world.

### **Commonwealth of Learning Goodwill ambassador**

- ❖ 96 years old, Kerala's oldest student Karthyayani Amma was appointed as a Commonwealth of Learning Goodwill ambassador.
- ❖ Despite not going to school in the past, she scored 98 out of 100 in 'Aksharalaksham' literacy programme and received a merit certificate from Kerala Chief Minister in October last year.
- ❖ The Commonwealth of Learning is an intergovernmental organisation of The Commonwealth headquartered in Metro Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.
- ❖ It aims to promote distance education and open learning among its 53-member nations.

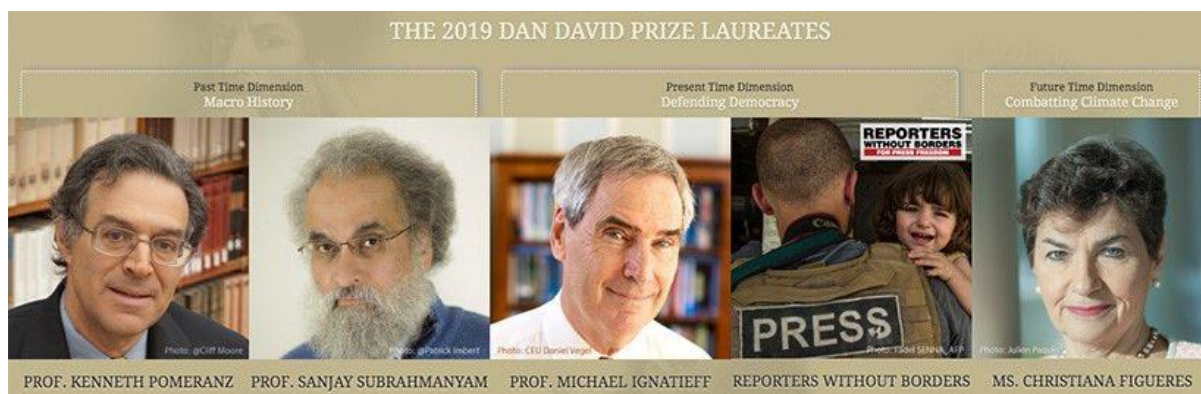


## Dan David Prize 2019

- ❖ Noted Indian historian Sanjay Subrahmanyam has won Israel's prestigious Dan David Prize for this year.
- ❖ This award was given for his work on inter-cultural encounters between Asians, Europeans and people of North and South America during the early modern era.
- ❖ He won the award in the category of 'past time dimension' for his work in macro history.
- ❖ He shares the USD 1 million award in this category with Prof Kenneth Pomeranz of University of Chicago.

### International Dan David Prize

- ❖ Dan David Prize is a joint international enterprise endowed by the Dan David Foundation headquartered at Tel Aviv University.
- ❖ This Prize is awarded annually to those who have made outstanding scientific, technological and humanistic accomplishments in fields representing the past, present and future of human achievement.
- ❖ Three Dan David Prize are given every year.



## Grand Cross of the Order of Civil Merit Award

- ❖ During the External Affairs Minister's 3 nations visit, the Spanish government will confer a prestigious award the 'Grand Cross of the Order of Civil Merit' to her (Sushma Swaraj).
- ❖ This award will be given to the Minister as recognition by the Spanish government for India's "swift response" through Operation Maitri.
- ❖ Operation Maitri was a rescue and relief operation which rescued 71 Spanish nationals from Nepal in April 2015 during the disastrous earthquake.

## CBDT chairman

- ❖ IRS officer Pramod Chandra Mody took over as the new chairman of the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT).
- ❖ CBDT is the policy making body of the Income Tax Department.
- ❖ Mody is a 1982-batch Indian Revenue Service (Income Tax) officer.



- ❖ He has been appointed in place of Sushil Chandra, who was appointed as Election Commissioner ahead of the Lok Sabha polls.
- ❖ The CBDT is headed by a chairman and can have a maximum of six members.

### **Top Think Tanks in China, India, Japan, and the Republic of Korea**

- ❖ The Hindu Centre for Politics and Public Policy has been ranked 33rd in the 'Top Think Tanks in China, India, Japan, and the Republic of Korea' category by the 2018 Global go To Think Tank Index Report.
- ❖ The report has been published by the Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program, The Lauder Institute, University of Pennsylvania.

#### **Countries with the Largest Number of Think Tanks**

RANK	COUNTRY	NUMBER OF THINK TANKS
1	United States	1871
2	India	509
3	China	507
4	United Kingdom	321
5	Argentina	227
6	Germany	218
7	Russia	215
8	France	203
9	Japan	128
10	Italy	114

- ❖ According to the report, the largest number of think tanks are in the United States (1,871), followed by India (509) and China (507), Japan (128) and South Korea (60).

- ❖ The Hindu Centre for Politics and Public Policy, a part of The Hindu Group, was inaugurated by then President Pranab Mukherjee on January 31, 2013.

### High Court judge – Senthil Kumar Ramamoorthy

- ❖ The President on February 18 notified the appointment of Senthil kumar Ramamoorthy as an additional judge of the Madras High Court for a period of two years.
- ❖ The proposal for elevation of Advocate Senthilkumar Ramamoorthy was forwarded by the Supreme Court collegium on December 19, 2016.
- ❖ The Collegium approved it on December 4, 2017. However, his name was remitted back by the Centre.

### Laureus Sports Awards 2019

- ❖ World No. 1 tennis player Novak Djokovic and American gymnast Simone Biles were the top winners at the Laureus Sports Awards in Monaco on February 18.



Laureus Sports Award 2019		
Category	Winner	Sport
Sportsman of the Year	Novak Djokovic	Tennis
Sportswoman of the Year	Simone Biles	Gymnast
Comeback of the Year	Tiger Woods	Golf
Breakthrough of the Year	Naomi Osaka	Tennis
Sportsperson of the Year with disability	Henrieta Farkkasova	Skiing
Action Sportsperson of the Year	Chloe Kim	Snowboarding
Team of the Year	France football team	Football
Laureus Sporting Moment of the Year	Xia Boyu	
Exceptional Achievement Award	Eliud Kipchoge	Athletics
Lifetime Achievement Award	Arsene Wenger	Football
Spirit for Sport Award	Lindsey Vonn	Alpine Skiing
Sport for Good Award	Yuwa	Women's football in Jharkhand



### Future of Nature award

- ❖ Dr [Divya Karnad](#) has become the second Indian and the first woman to receive the 'Global Future of Nature Award' for her work on [marine conservation](#).
- ❖ The only other Indian received the award is Dr Charudutt Mishra.



- ❖ The award is given to three people each year and this year Fernanda Abra (Brazil) and Olivier Nsengimana (Rwanda) also received this award apart from Divya.
- ❖ Future for Nature 2019 Award, awarded by Future for Nature foundation, celebrates tangible achievements in protecting wild animal and plant species.

### Academy (Oscars) Awards

- ❖ 91<sup>st</sup> Academy Awards, commonly referred to as Oscars and presented by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS), honoured the best films of 2018.
- ❖ The ceremony was held on February 24, 2019 at the Dolby Theatre in Hollywood, Los Angeles, California.
- ❖ AMPAS presented Academy Awards in 24 categories.
- ❖ India's UP-based documentary film "Period. End of Sentence" starred by Arunachalam Muruganantham of Tamilnadu, won the Academy Award for the Best Documentary (Short Subject) for the year 2018.

Category	Winners
Best Picture	Green Book
Best Actress	Olivia Colman
Best Actor	Bohemian Rhapsody
Best Animated Feature Film	Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse
Best Documentary	Period. End of Sentence



## SPORTS

### Tata steel masters

- ❖ Viswanathan Anand settled for 3rd place in Tata Steel Masters Chess tournament held in Wijk aan Zee, The Netherlands.
- ❖ Magnus Carlsen won the title and it is his 7th Tata Steel Chess title after setting for a draw against Anish Giri.
- ❖ Anish Giri secured 2nd position.

### Asian Cup Title in Football

- ❖ Qatar won its first major soccer title by beating four-time champion Japan 3-1 in the 17<sup>th</sup> edition of the AFC Asian Cup held in United Arab Emirates (UAE).
- ❖ In this match, Sudan born Almoez Ali became the first player to score nine goals at a single Asian Cup. He broke the record of Iranian Ali Daei, who scored eight goals in 1996.



### Fastest fifty in T20I

- ❖ India's opening batswoman Smriti Mandhana struck to be the fastest fifty for India in Women's T20Is.
- ❖ She struck a half century in 24 balls in the 1st T20I against New Zealand at Westpac Stadium in Wellington.
- ❖ Smriti Mandhana is entitled in the 6th position in the list.
- ❖ New Zealand's Sophie Devine leads the record of the quickest half century in women's T20Is.

### MRF Challenge

- ❖ England's Jamie Chadwick scripted history in the MRF Challenge.

- ❖ She became the first female driver to claim the championship in seven seasons.
- ❖ Belgium's Max Defourny won the second spot and Finland's Patrick Pasma took the third place in the race that took place at the MMRT near Chennai.



### **FIH Player of the Year Awards**

- ❖ International Hockey Federation (FIH) Player of the Year Awards are the annual awards for the best men's and women's player in international hockey.
- ❖ FIH Player of the Year Awards were established in 1998 and have been awarded annually ever since.
- ❖ In 2001 the FIH Young Player of the Year award was instituted to award the best young field hockey player of the year.
- ❖ Since 1998, no Indian hockey player has won the award.
- ❖ Winners of the year:
  - Male Player of the Year - Van Doren (Belgium) 2nd consecutive time.
  - Female Player of the Year - Eva De Goede (Netherlands)
  - Goalkeeper of the Year:
    - Men- Vincent Vanasch (Belgium)
    - Women- Maddie Hinch (Great Britain)
  - Rising Star of the Year:
    - Men- Arthur de Sloover (Belgium)
    - Women- Lucina von der Heyde (Argentina)

### **83rd Senior National Badminton Championships 2019**

- ❖ Sourabh Verma has won the Men's Singles event at the Yonex-Sunrise 83rd Senior National Badminton Championships 2019 in Guwahati.
- ❖ In the final, he defeated Lakshya Sen and This is Verma's 3rd nationals title.
- ❖ Earlier, the pair of Pranaav Jerry Chopra and Chirag Shetty clinched the men's doubles title after beating Arjun M R and Shlok Ramchandran.

## Olympic qualifying events

- ❖ International Olympic Committee (IOC) suspended all Indian applications to host future Olympic-related events until New Delhi guarantees in writing the entry of all participants.
- ❖ The IOC measure comes after two Pakistani shooters were denied visas to compete in the ISSF Shooting World Cup.
- ❖ It also urged all international sports federations not to hold events in India, or grant hosting rights to the country for future competitions.

## Strandzha Memorial Tournament

- ❖ Asian Games gold-medallist Amit Panghal (49 kg) claimed a second successive gold at the Strandzha Memorial Tournament in Sofia, Bulgaria.
- ❖ Nikhat Zareen and Meena Kumari Devi became the first Indian women boxers to win gold medals at this tournament.



- ❖ Manju Rani (48 kg) settled for a silver after a defeat from Filipino Josie Gabuco.
- ❖ Pwilao Basumatari (64 kg), Neeraj (60 kg) and Lovlina Borgohain (69 kg) had settled for bronze medals after losing their semi-final.
- ❖ India signed off with three gold, a silver, and three bronze medals in this 70<sup>th</sup> edition of the boxing event.

## IMPORTANT DAYS

### Indian Coast Guard Day - February 1

- ❖ The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) celebrated its 42<sup>nd</sup> foundation day on 2019 February 1.
- ❖ The interim Indian Coast Guard was established on 1 February 1977 to prevent sea-borne smuggling of goods which were hampering India's domestic economy.



- ❖ The Coast Guard Act was passed by Parliament on 18<sup>th</sup> August 1978 and came into immediate effect. It defined the duties and functions of the service.
- ❖ As part of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Coast Guard Day celebrations, a mega event 'Storm Rider Fitness Challenge' which aimed at spreading awareness about sports and fitness among the public, was conducted at Chennai.

### World Wetlands Day- February 2

- ❖ World Wetlands Day (WWD) is celebrated every year on 2<sup>nd</sup> February.
- ❖ This day marks the date of the adoption of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands on 2 February 1971 in the Iranian city of Ramsar.



# World Wetlands Day

## 2 February 2019

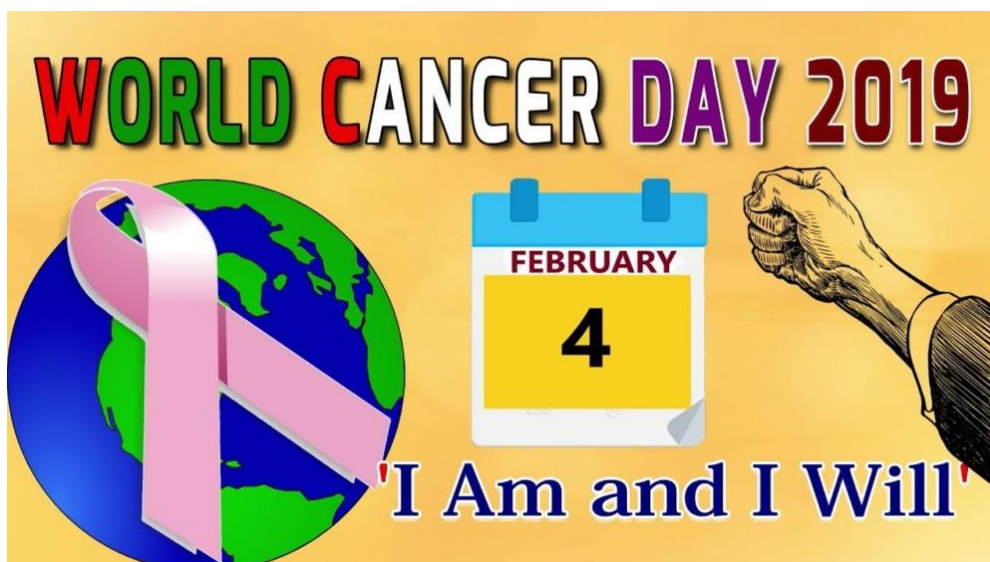


## Wetlands and climate change

- ❖ WWD 2019 was celebrated with the Theme of “Wetlands and climate change”.
- ❖ This theme aims to highlight the important role played by wetlands, as natural solutions, in adapting and mitigating the impact of climate change.

### **World Cancer Day – February 04**

- ❖ The World Cancer Day (WCD) is observed every year on 4<sup>th</sup> February across the World to raise awareness of cancer and to encourage its prevention, detection, and treatment.
- ❖ This year marks the launch of the 3-year (2019-2021) ‘I Am and I Will’ campaign.
- ❖ The WCD was instituted by Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) in 2008 by formally writing goals of the World Cancer Declaration.
- ❖ The primary goal of observing the day is to reduce illness and death caused by it by 2020.
- ❖ The origin of day can be traced to 2000 at first World Summit Against Cancer, which was held in Paris, France.



### **Safer Internet Day – February 05**

- ❖ Safer Internet Day is an international day observed every year on to create awareness for the risks of the Internet.
- ❖ It was created in 2004 by the Insafe Network of European Union.
- ❖ The Theme for Safer Internet Day 2019 is “Together for a Better Internet”.



### **International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation – February 6**

- ❖ Female Genital mutilation (FGM) comprises all procedures that involve altering or injuring the female genitalia for non-medical reasons and is recognized internationally as a violation of the human rights of girls and women.
- ❖ It is nearly always carried out on minors and is a violation of the rights of children.

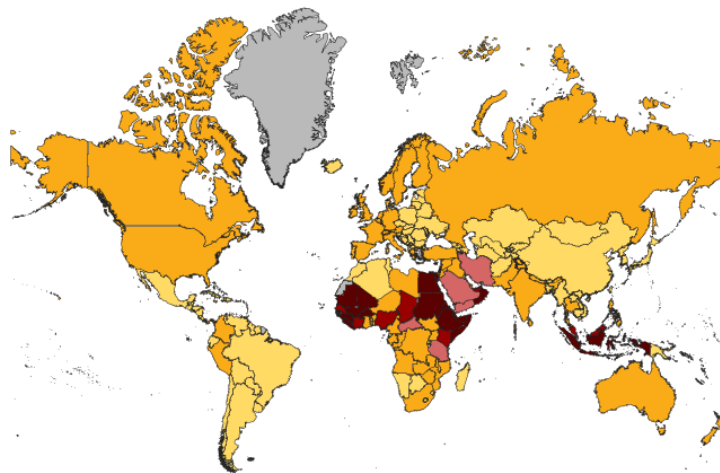


6 FEBRUARY  
International Day of  
**ZERO TOLERANCE**  
for  
**FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION**

**#EndFGM**

- ❖ In 2008, United nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and UNICEF jointly lead the largest global programme to accelerate the abandonment of female genital mutilation (FGM).
- ❖ The Day is also related to the aims of the ongoing [Spotlight Initiative](#), a joint project of the European Union and the United Nations to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls.

### Prevalence of Female Genital Cutting



- Essentially never
- Rare, limited to ethnic minority enclaves or within migrant communities where FGM is common (<11%)
- 11-25% have had their genitals cut
- 26-50% have had their genitals cut
- More than half of women have had their genitals cut
- No data

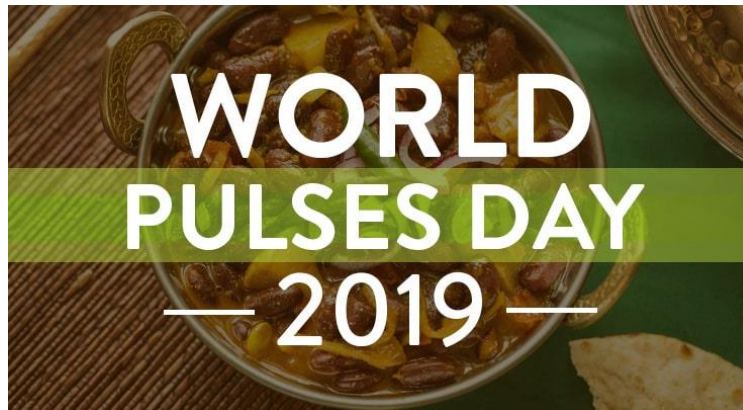
This scale includes both mild and severe forms of cutting.

Source: The Woman Stats Projects, scaled 2015

BBC

## **World Pulses Day 2019 - February 10**

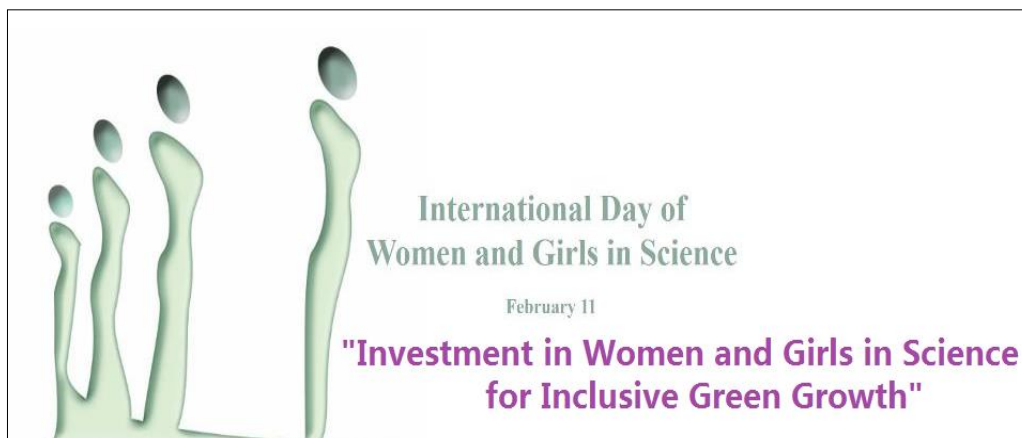
- ❖ February 10, 2019, was celebrated as the first World Pulses Day.
- ❖ The Year 2016 was celebrated as International Year of Pulses to highlight the contribution of Pulses to sustainable food production and towards food security and nutrition.



- ❖ Building on the positive momentum of the International Year of Pulses, the UN General Assembly passed the resolution to celebrate 10 February as World Pulses Day.
- ❖ It aims to keep the positive momentum surrounding these healthy, nutritious, protein-rich, nitrogen-fixing legumes alive after the FAO's (Food and Agriculture Organization) successful 2016 International Year of Pulses Campaign.

## **International Day of Women and Girls in Science – February 11**

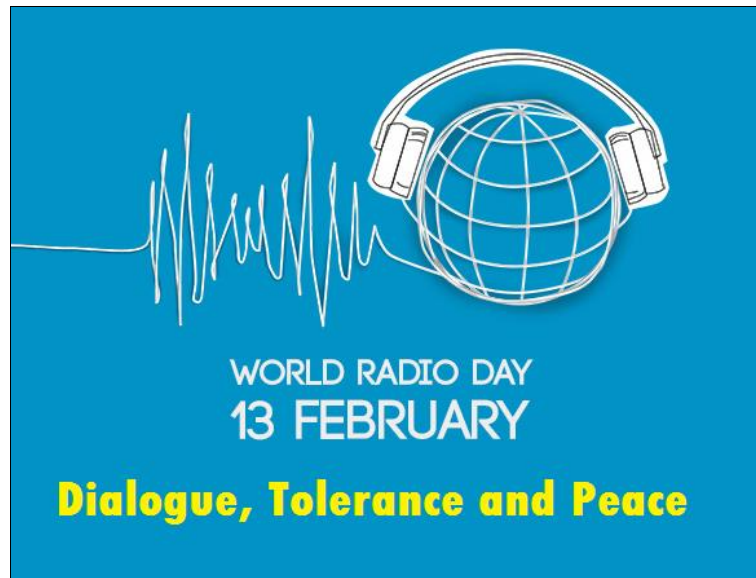
- ❖ International Day of Women and Girls in Science is observed every year on February 11 to promote gender equality and encourage girls and women to get involved in science and research.
- ❖ This year is observed with the theme of "Investment in Women and Girls in Science for Inclusive Green Growth".
- ❖ This event is a collective effort by several UN agencies including UNESCO, UN-Women, and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU).





## World Radio Day - February 13

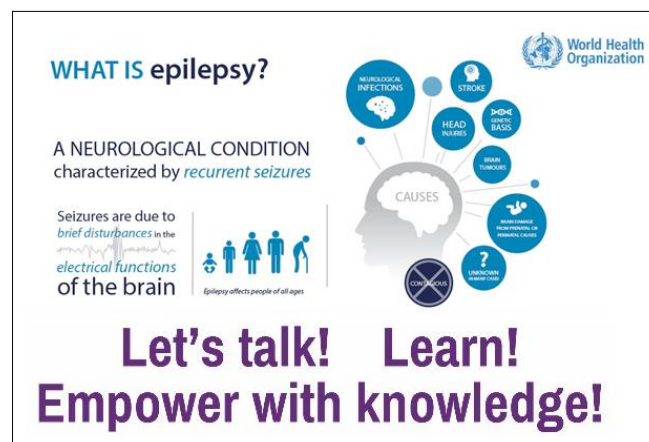
- ❖ The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on February 13<sup>th</sup> celebrated the World Radio Day.
- ❖ Theme of this year was - Dialogue, Tolerance and Peace.



- ❖ The date of 13 February marks the day of United Nations Radio was established in 1946.

## International Epilepsy Day 2019

- ❖ International Epilepsy Day is observed on the 11<sup>th</sup> of February all over the world.
- ❖ Every year on the second Monday of February people join together to celebrate International Epilepsy Day.

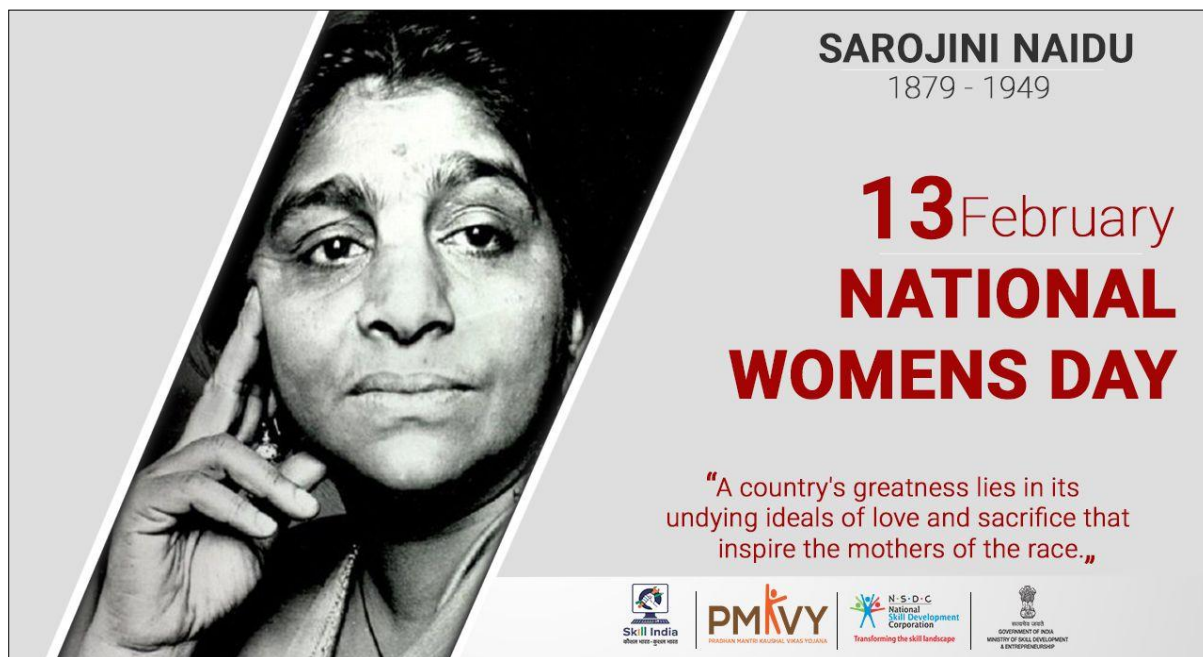


- ❖ The global health event is celebrated to create awareness about the disorder, it impacts on the lives of patients, their families, personal lives, and career.

- ❖ The day was started and organized by the International Bureau for Epilepsy (IBE) and the International League Against Epilepsy (ILAE).

### **National Women's Day- February 13**

- ❖ National Women's Day of India was first observed on 13 February 2014.
- ❖ This day is observed on the date of birth of India's first women governor Sarojini Naidu.
- ❖ Sarojini Naidu was born on 13 February 1879 and died on 2 March 1949.
- ❖ This was the 135<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Sarojini Naidu.
- ❖ Sarojini Naidu is also known as the Nightingale of India.
- ❖ Her birthday has been selected to observe as a National Woman Day in recognition of the works done by her for upliftment and development of women in India.
- ❖ Her name and birth date were proposed to celebrate as the National Women's Day in India by members of Bhartiya Mahila Sangh and Akhil Bhartiya Mahila Sammelan.



### **National Unani Day – February 11**

- ❖ February 11 every year is observed as the Unani Day in India.
- ❖ 11<sup>th</sup> February, the birthday of Hakim Ajmal Khan, was adopted as Unani Day by the Ministry of AYUSH in 2016 in recognition of his contribution as an eminent Indian Unani physician.

- ❖ To commemorate the Unani Day 2019 a two-day National Conference on Unani Medicine for Public Health was held at New Delhi.
- ❖ The Ministry of AYUSH also adopted a scheme for AYUSH Awards for Unani Medicine which has the provision of conferring 12 Awards each year in following categories
  - Best Research Paper Award,
  - Young Scientist Award,
  - Best Teacher Award, and
  - Lifetime Achievement Award.



### **World Day of Social Justice - February 20**

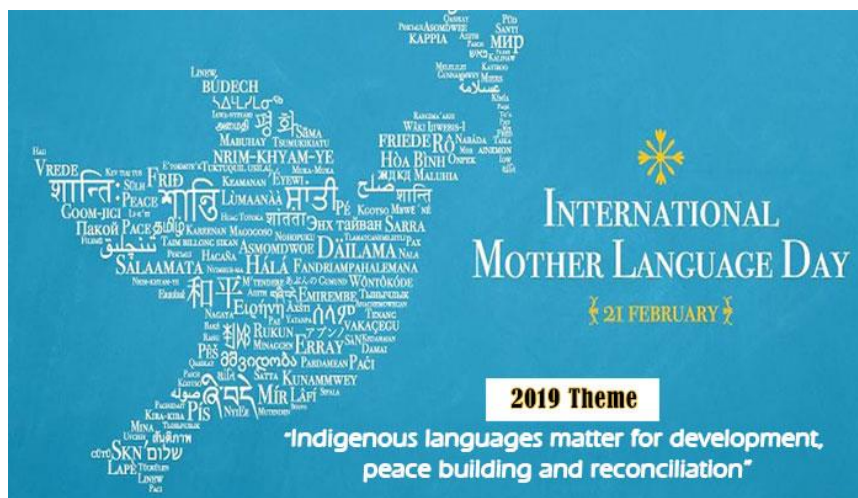
- ❖ To promote equal rights and opportunities among people within a country and between nations, 20 February is observed annually as the World Day of Social Justice.
- ❖ United Nations General Assembly had approved the day on 26 November, 2007 and every year since 2009 social justice day is observed.



- ❖ This day is aimed at encouraging people to look at how social justice affects eradication of poverty, enhances employment and bring forth communal integration.
- ❖ The theme of 2019 World Day of Social Justice is 'If You Want Peace & Development, Work for Social Justice'.

### International Mother Language Day - February 21

- ❖ International Mother Language Day is every year celebrated on February 21 since the year 2000.
- ❖ The annual observance is marked to promote awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity and promote multilingualism.
- ❖ It was first recognized in November 1999, when the UNESCO brought the subject in the UN General Conference.
- ❖ Later, the resolution was welcomed by the UN General Assembly in 2002.



- ❖ Theme of this year's International Mother Language Day was indigenous languages as a factor in development, peace and reconciliation.



- ❖ This year, India and Bangladesh will celebrate the International Mother Language Day together at Benapole in Bangladesh.
- ❖ The idea to celebrate International Mother Language Day was the initiative of Bangladesh.
- ❖ In Bangladesh, the 21 February is the anniversary of the day when Bangladeshis fought for recognition for the Bangla language.

### Central Excise Day 2019 - February 24

- ❖ Central Excise Day is commemorated every year all across the India on 24<sup>th</sup> of February to encourage the employees of excise department to carry out the central excise duty all over the India in better way.
- ❖ It is encouraging the equality among the officers of the Central Board of Excise and Customs Department as well as assist them to ensure better tax observance.
- ❖ It is celebrated to commemorate the establishment of the Central Excise and Salt Act on 24<sup>th</sup> of February in the year 1944.

### World NGO Day - February 27

- ❖ World NGO Day is an international calendar day annually observed on the 27<sup>th</sup> of February.
- ❖ It was officially recognized and declared by the 12-member countries of the 9<sup>th</sup> Baltic Sea NGO Forum of the Council of the Baltic Sea States in 2010.



- ❖ First time it was marked by the UN, EU leaders and international organizations in 2014.
- ❖ The universal concept of the World NGO Day is “Celebrate, Commemorate and Collaborate” the various NGOs around the world, and the people behind them.

## International Polar Bear Day - February 27

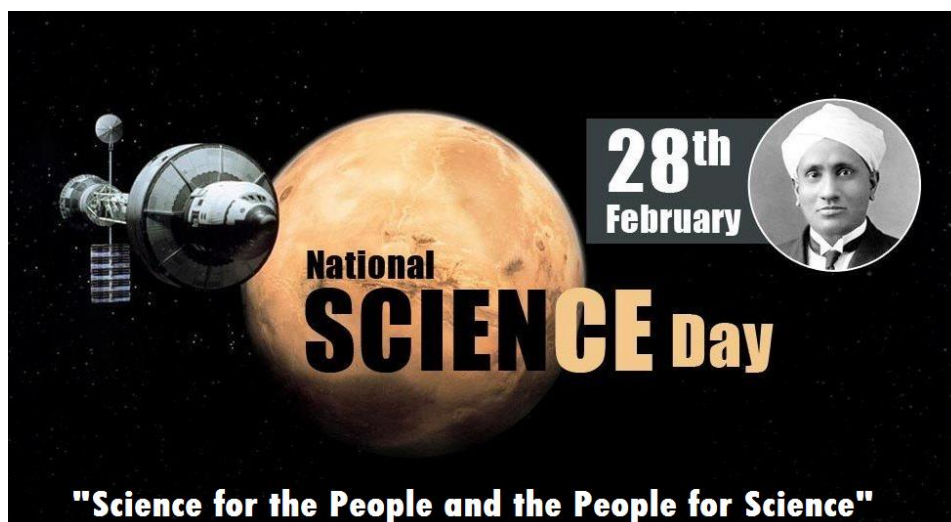
- ❖ International Polar Bear Day is observed on February 27<sup>th</sup> every year.
- ❖ This day has been recognized at least since 2011.



- ❖ It was founded by Polar Bears International which sponsors educational challenges annually.
- ❖ This day was designed to raise awareness of the declining number of Polar Bears Worldwide.

## National Science Day - February 28

- ❖ The National Science Day is celebrated on February 28 every year to remember the Nobel laureate Sir C V Raman's contribution to the field of science.
- ❖ Famous Indian scientist CV Raman discovered the Raman Effect on this day in 1928.
- ❖ National Science Day was marked for the first time on February 28, 1987.
- ❖ This year's theme for the National Science Day is: Science for people and people for science.
- ❖ Last year's theme was "Science and Technology for a sustainable future."



## Rare Disease Day - February 28

- ❖ 28 February 2019 will be the twelfth International Rare Disease Day coordinated by EURORDIS (European Organisation for Rare Diseases).

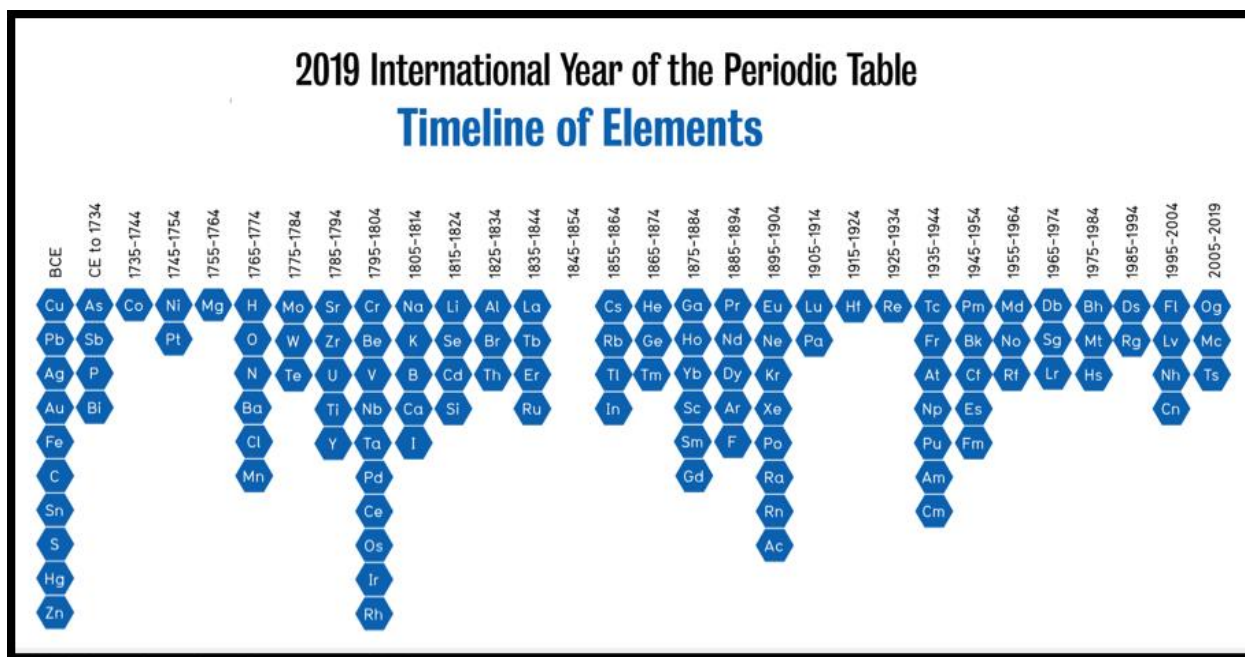


- ❖ Rare Disease Day is held on the last day of February every year to raise awareness of rare diseases.
- ❖ The theme for Rare Disease Day 2019 is 'Bridging health and social care'.
- ❖ This day was first launched by EURORDIS and its Council of National Alliances in 2008 and the first Rare Disease Day was celebrated in 2008 on 29 February.

## MISCELLANEOUS

### International year of the periodic table

- ❖ The United Nations General Assembly and UNESCO has announced 2019 as the international year of the periodic table of chemical elements.
- ❖ This year will coincide with the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the table's creation by Dmitry Mendeleev.



### International Spice Conference 2019

- ❖ The fourth edition of International Spice Conference was held in the City of Pearls and the capital city of Telangana-Hyderabad.
- ❖ The conference is hosted by the All India Spices Exporters Forum (AISEF) which represents around 80% of spices export from India.
- ❖ It is considered as platform for all business houses, the spice associations, the policy makers, the farmers and the users, to connect and interact.
- ❖ The theme for the conference 2019 is 'Challenges of Change, Redefining the Value Chain'.
- ❖ Third edition of this conference was held in Jaipur with the theme 'Managing Disruptions through Transformation and Collaboration'.

### Aegis Graham Bell Award 2019

- ❖ Winners for the 9<sup>th</sup> edition of Aegis Graham Bell Awards hosted by Government of Goa are announced in Goa at the Entertainment Society of Goa, Panaji.



- ❖ Aegis Graham Bell Awards (AGBA) has been promoting innovations and entrepreneurship in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) domain.



- ❖ This Awards is an initiative of Aegis School of Business, Data Science, Cyber Security and Telecom as a tribute to the father of the telephony, Sir Alexander Graham Bell.

### **ILO Centenary Celebrations**

- ❖ International Labour Organisation (ILO) Centenary Celebrations in India were inaugurated by the Minister of State for Labour and Employment Santosh Gangwar at V.V. Giri National Labour Institute, Noida.



- ❖ India being a founding member has played an active role in every field of the organization.
- ❖ India has ratified 47 out of 189 ILO conventions during the century which includes all eight core conventions.

### **International Labour Organisation**

- ❖ The International Labour Organization (ILO) is a United Nations agency that sets international labour standards and promotes social protection and work opportunities for all.

- ❖ ILO has 187-member states, 186 of the 193 UN member states plus the Cook Islands are members of the ILO.
- ❖ The tripartite structure is unique to the ILO where representatives from the government, employers and employees openly debate and create labour standards.

### **Toll free cleft helpline number**

- ❖ India's first toll free national cleft helpline named "Smile Train India cleft Helpline" was launched by Smile Train India on National Cleft Day (08 February 2019).
- ❖ The number 1800 103 8301 is accessible to people throughout India and they can receive 100% free, quality and safe cleft treatment.
- ❖ It will create awareness about cleft surgery support by Smile Train and their partner hospitals across India.



### **Forbes's 30 Under 30 Europe List**

- ❖ Forbes released the fourth annual edition of its "30 Under 30 Europe" list.
- ❖ It is featuring 300 young disruptors, visionaries and rising stars from across the region who are transforming industries and setting a new agenda.
- ❖ The list includes 30 honourees in each of the 10 categories, all aged under 30 years old.
- ❖ The 2019 list features a diverse set of Under 30 honourees, with women making up 36% of the list and 56 different countries represented.
- ❖ Among those featured on this year's list is Antoine Greizmann, French National Football Player;

### **BAFTA FILM AWARDS 2019**

- ❖ BAFTA awards are presented in an annual award show hosted by the British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) to honour the best British and international contributions to film.
- ❖ The Favourite, an English movie dominated in the Bafta film awards, picked up seven awards.

- ❖ Mexican film Roma bagged 4 awards.

### **Early Ed Asia 2019**

- ❖ Early Ed Asia 2019, the two-day event was held at the City Palace in Jaipur, Rajasthan.
- ❖ The event will focus on relevant research and education and policies for the betterment of Early Childhood Education.
- ❖ The motto of the event was 'Our Children: Our Future'.
- ❖ It was presented by Princess Diya Kumari, the Royal Family of Jaipur.

### **National Productivity Week - February 12 to 18**

- ❖ National Productivity Council (NPC) is celebrating National Productivity week from February 12th to 18th, 2019.
- ❖ Theme of this year is "Circular Economy for Productivity & Sustainability".
- ❖ This theme will help NPC to meet its zero-waste goal.

### **National Productivity Council**

- ❖ National Productivity Council is an autonomous registered society under DIPP, Ministry of Commerce & Industry.
- ❖ It was established in the year 1985.
- ❖ Its core function is to promote and adopt the new and improved culture of productivity in India.

### **Forbes India's 30 Under 30**

- ❖ Forbes India released sixth annual 'Forbes India 30 Under 30' list for extraordinary achievements in business.
- ❖ Forbes chooses these achievers on the basis of four broad criteria across 16 categories
  - Impact of their achievements,
  - Ability to disrupt the environment they operate in,
  - Scalability of the business or line of work, and
  - Potential to stay a long-term talent.
- ❖ Famous athlete Hima Das, cricketer Smriti Mandhana and Aayush Agrawal of Wok Express are among the top 30 achievers.
- ❖ Vijay Deverakonda was the only actor placed in the list.

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