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INTERNATIONAL

UNSC adopts resolution to extend sanctions against CAR for another year
The United Nations Security Council has adopted a resolution to extend sanctions against the Central African Republic (CAR) for another year. Resolution 2454, adopted unanimously yesterday by the 15-member council, decides to renew the sanctions regime - an arms embargo, travel ban and asset freeze till January 31, 2020.

Details of Sanctions
On 5 December 2013 the United Nations Security Council, concerned at the continuing deterioration of the security situation in the Central African Republic, imposed an arms embargo on the Central African Republic. This was followed on 28 January 2014 by a travel ban and asset freeze in connection with individuals who act to undermine the peace stability and security of CAR or who violate the arms embargo.

About Central African Republic (CAR)
The Central African Republic is a landlocked country in Central Africa. It is bordered by Chad to the north, Sudan to the northeast, South Sudan to the east, the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the south, the Republic of the Congo to the southwest and Cameroon to the west.

India now 6th largest economy in the world with high growth
• Under the leadership of the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, the country has witnessed its best phase of macro-economic stability, becoming the sixth largest economy in the world from being the 11th in the World in 2013-14.
• Presenting the Interim Budget for the year 2019-20 in Parliament today, the Union Minister for Finance, Corporate Affairs, Railways & Coal, Shri Piyush Goyal said “India is the fastest growing major economy in the world” with an average GDP growth of 7.3% per annum, the highest ever achieved by any Government since economic reforms began in 1991.
• Shri Goyal said under the leadership of Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, a clean, decisive and stable Government reversed the policy paralysis, laid foundation for sustainable growth and restored the image of the country.

5 countries elected as non-permanent members of UNSC
United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) elected South Africa, Indonesia, Dominican Republic, Germany and Belgium as non-permanent members of UN Security Council (UNSC). They will have two-year term beginning January 1, 2019.
These five non-permanent members were elected according to the following pattern
• Two seats for Group of African states and Group of Asia-Pacific states,
• One for the Group of Latin American and Caribbean states
• Two seats for Western European and other states.

International World Cancer Day celebrated on 4th February
The world celebrates the World Cancer Day on 4th February. World Cancer Day was founded by the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) to support the goals of the World Cancer Declaration, written in 2008. The aim is to raise awareness of cancer and to encourage its prevention, detection, and treatment. The main goal is to significantly reduce illness and death caused by cancer and is an opportunity to rally the international community to end the injustice of preventable suffering from cancer.
India-Germany join hands for cooperation on ‘Water& Waste Management
The 3rd Indo-German Working Group for cooperation on (i) water and (ii) waste management concluded in New Delhi today. Delegations from both the ministries – The Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), Government of India and The Federal Minister for the Environment, Nature Conservation, and Nuclear Safety (BMU), Germany – have met and discussed potential cooperation areas in the field of water and waste management. Though, India-Germany bilateral economic cooperation has been robust and India’s priorities in most areas match with German expertise, but bilateral co-operation in the field of Environment got further strengthened when both the environment ministries organized Second Indo-German Environment Forum during January 2015 wherein these two working groups were constituted, which concluded its third meeting today.

Cabinet approves MoU between India and Malaysia for Mutual Cooperation in the field of Company Secretariyship
The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between India and Malaysia for Mutual Cooperation to raise the status and prestige of the Practicing Company Secretary in both countries, and to facilitate the movement of the Company Secretaries across borders in the Asia-Pacific Region.

Point-wise details
Approval of the Cabinet is in respect of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the "Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI)" and "Malaysian Association of Company Secretaries (MACS)" to strengthen cooperation and to raise the status and prestige of the Practicing Company Secretary in both jurisdictions and to facilitate the movement of the company secretaries across borders in the Asia Pacific region.

Cabinet approves MoU between India and the UAE on Development cooperation in Africa
The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and the United Arab Emirates on Development Cooperation in Africa. The MoU entails setting up of a framework of cooperation between the two countries for implementing development partnership projects and programmes in Africa.

Benefits:
The proposal will help strengthen political and economic linkages between India and the countries of Africa and serve our broader strategic interests.

India-Germany join hands for cooperation.
• The 3rd Indo-German Working Group for water and waste management concluded on 6th February 2019 in New Delhi.
• Delegates from both the sides met and discussed potential cooperation in the field of water and waste management.
• The Indian delegation was headed by Shri Anil Kumar Jain.
• Third Indo-German Environment Forum will meet in New Delhi on February 13, 2019.

• The 5-day multinational maritime exercise ‘AMAN-19’ in which 46 nations participated from all over the world was formally commenced at Pakistan Navy Dockyard, with a colourful flag hosting ceremony.
Pakistan’s Naval Chief, Admiral Zafar Mahmood Abbasi welcomed the participations of Exercise AMAN-19, the 6th episode of the AMAN initiative.
• Principal aim to conduct this exercise is 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.
• Commander Pakistan fleet, Vice Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi genially welcomed the eminent participating nations for a mutual resolve with motto “Together for Peace”.
• The exercise will have 2 phases- Harbour phase and sea phase.

India-Germany join hands for cooperation.
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ADB Debuts in Offshore Philippine Peso Bond Market.
• The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has raised 5.2204 billion Philippine pesos ($100 million) from a new issue of local currency bonds in the international market. Currency-linked bonds are denominated in the local currency but settled in US dollars.
• The bonds pay a fixed interest rate of 5.25% and have a final maturity of 4 years. ADB issued bonds in the Philippine domestic capital market in 2005 and 2007 but this issue is the first time it has mobilized Philippine peso funding from international investors through a currency-linked structure.

INS Trikand Participates In Exercise ‘Cut class Express 2019’.
• INS Trikand, the frontline warship of the Indian Navy, participated in a multi-national training exercise ‘CUTCLASS EXPRESS 2019’. The annual Exercise Cutlass Express is sponsored by U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM) and conducted by Naval Forces Africa (NAVAF).
• It is the eighth iteration of the annual multinational maritime exercise and was held in the vicinity of Djibouti, Mozambique and Seychelles.

Hindi Included As 3rd Official Court Language in Abu Dhabi.
• Abu Dhabi has decided to include Hindi as the third official language used in its courts, alongside Arabic and English, as part of a move designed to improve access to justice.
• The Abu Dhabi Judicial Department (ADJD) announced that it has extended the adoption of interactive forms of statement of claims filed before courts by including Hindi.

Multinational Maritime Exercise ‘Aman 19’ Commenced In Karachi.
• The 5-day multinational maritime exercise ‘AMAN-19’ in which 46 nations participated from all over the world was formally commenced at Pakistan Navy Dockyard, with a colorful flag hoisting ceremony.
• Principal aim to conduct this exercise is 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.

NATO’s 70th anniversary meeting to be held in UK in December
NATO’s next meeting of Heads of State and Government will take place in London this December, marking the 70th anniversary of the military pact. Stoltenberg also highlighted that London was home to NATO’s first headquarters, adding that the UK is one of the alliance’s 12 founding members.

• Extra info.:
  NATO Members: 29
  Headquarters: Brussels, Belgium
Macedonia signs accord to join NATO
Macedonia signed an accord to join NATO to become the 30th member of the US-led alliance. NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said the admittance of a new member highlighted that all European nations who meet the entrance criteria could join the regional alliance.
  • The Macedonia-NATO accord follows a deal with Greece ending a 27-year-old dispute over Macedonia’s name. The accord must now be ratified by allied governments.
  • Extra info.:
  Macedonia Capital: Skopje
  Currency: Macedonian denar

♦ Fifth International Dam Safety Conference to be Held on 13-14 February at Bhubaneswar
• The 5th International Dam Safety Conference–2019 is being held during 13 and 14 February 2019 in Bhubaneswar as a joint initiative of the Government of India, Government of Odisha and the World Bank under aegis of the ongoing World Bank assisted Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (DRIP) as a part of institutional strengthening.
  • Dam Safety Conferences are being organized as an annual event in different DRIP States in collaboration with the Implementing Agencies and leading academic institutes to provide a common platform for all stakeholders including non-DRIP States. Dam professionals, academicians, scientists, as well as industries both from within the country and from around the world to deliberate on all aspects related to dam safety and the solutions that worked best in addressing dam safety concerns.

♦ UAE introduces Hindi as third official language
• While praising the decision of the UAE court, External Affairs Minister of India, Sushma Swaraj in a tweet said, “We thank Abu Dhabi for declaring Hindi as one of the official languages in their judicial system. This will make the justice delivery system simpler and more accessible to our people.” Indians, reportedly form the largest immigrant community in the UAE, with more than three million living in Dubai. The landmark decision undertaken by the judicial department will benefit a major chunk of workers, who mostly come from Hindi speaking regions of central and north India, Gulf News reported

Airbus to stop producing world’s largest passenger jet A380
• European planemaker Airbus has announced it will make its last deliveries of its A380 jet, the world’s largest commercial passenger plane, in 2021.
  • The decision comes after Emirates, the largest customer of the A380, reduced an outstanding order for 53 planes to only 14. The cancellation will affect the jobs of as many as 3,500 Airbus staff.

Google to invest $13 billion in US in 2019: CEO Pichai
• Google aims to invest $13 billion in offices and data centres in the US in 2019, CEO Sundar Pichai revealed.
  • This will enable Google to hire “tens of thousands of employees” alongside creation of over 10,000 construction jobs, Pichai said. “2019 marks the second year in a row we’ll grow faster outside of Bay Area than in it”, he added.
Egypt's Parliament to vote on extending president’s term
• Egypt’s Parliament has begun deliberations over constitutional amendments that could allow President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi to stay in office till 2034.
• The amendments will provide Sissi with 12 more years after his current, second term expires in 2022.
• The 596-seat Egyptian assembly has already given its preliminary approval to the changes last week.
• The amendments are near certain to be overwhelmingly approved by the legislature, packed with el-Sissi's supporters, but will also need to be put to a national referendum to become law.

Cuba warns of possible US military intervention in Venezuela
• Cuba has warned of possible US military intervention in Venezuela under the humanitarian pretext and called for international efforts to avoid the scenario.
• A Cuba government statement issued on February 13, 2019 stated that the US intends to create a humanitarian pretext to initiate military aggression against Venezuela.
• The statement read that US military aircraft had transported troops between February 6 and 10, involving US military bases in Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic and other Caribbean islands without the consent of local governments.

ICJ rules that it has jurisdiction to hear Iranian claim against US over frozen assets
• The International Court of Justice (ICJ) has ruled that it has the jurisdiction to hear part of a case brought by Iran against the US, to unfreeze Iranian assets of nearly 2 billion dollars held in the US.
• The ruling opens the way for the court to hear Iran's case on its merits. Iran filed the case in 2016, based on the 1955 Treaty of Amity between the two nations, from which the US unilaterally withdrew last year.
• The case revolves around assets seized from the Iranian national bank, Bank Markazi, which were taken by the US to compensate victims of a 1983 suicide bombing of a Marine Corps base in Beirut, Lebanon.
• Iran denies involvement in the attack which killed more than 300 and injured many more, most of whom being US military personnel.

Australia government loses bill blocking sick asylum seekers
• Australian legislators have passed a landmark bill making it easier for asylum seekers, being held on remote Pacific islands, to get medical treatment in the country.
• This is the first time in decades the government has lost a vote on its own legislation in the lower house as the bill was passed with an opposition amendment.
• The bill is expected to sail through the upper Senate later this week after which it will become a law.
• Prime Minister Scott Morrison had strongly opposed the legislation. He said there is no form of the bill that does not weaken Australia's border protection.
• Under Australia’s offshore detention policy, asylum seekers arriving by boat are sent to detention centres on Nauru and Papua New Guinea.

Trump to sign spending bill averting government shutdown
• President Donald Trump has decided to sign a spending bill averting a government shutdown but will also issue an emergency declaration to fund his controversial border wall.
• Declaring an emergency, a rare step, would free Trump to seek to redirect federal funds from elsewhere to help pay for a wall along the US-Mexico border.
• US House of Representative Speaker and Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi expressed disdain for the President’s upcoming emergency declaration. She stated that the happening at the border is not an emergency.

William Barr sworn in as US Attorney General
• William Barr was sworn in for second time as the new Attorney General of United States, taking the helm of the Justice Department as special counsel Robert Mueller investigates Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election.
• Earlier, the Senate voted 54-45 to confirm his appointment. Barr, who also served as the Attorney General from 1991 to 1993 during President George HW Bush’s administration, succeeds Jeff Sessions.
• As the country’s chief law enforcement officer, Barr will oversee the remaining work in Mueller’s investigation into potential coordination between the Kremlin and the Trump campaign and decide how much Congress and the public know about its conclusion.

NASA declares Mars rover Opportunity officially dead
• NASA’s Mars rover Opportunity was officially declared dead on February 13, 2019, after having contributed almost 15 years of grand services.
• The declaration came after the long wait of eight months after the robot stopped responding to engineers back on earth after the dust storm hit the red planet.
• Setting off for Mars on the night of July 7, 2003, the golf-cart-sized robot has covered the distance of 28 miles since it has landed on the surface on January 25, 2004.
• After landing the rover, towards its journey to Endurance Crater, started searching intensively for bedrock and sand dunes.
• In an attempt to get a clue of water in its distant past, the rover studied the Victoria crater between the period of two years (2006 to 2008) and discovered how water had entered and left the region billions of years ago.

India withdraws MFN status from Pakistan.
• India has withdrawn the MFN (Most Favored Nation) status that it had granted to Pakistan.
• It followed the attack in Jammu & Kashmir’s Pulwama that left 37 CRPF personnel dead.
• The decision was taken during the Cabinet Committee on Security meeting held in New Delhi.
• India had granted the status to Pakistan in 1996, a year after WTO’s formation.

PM Modi on 2-day visit to South Korea.
• PM Narendra Modi will pay a 2-day visit to South Korea from February 21 2019.
• He will be conferred with the 2018 Seoul Peace Prize on February 22, in recognition of his national and international contributions.
• He will also hold talks with President Moon Jae-in on a host of issues to strengthen strategic ties.

Fake ads bought using PayPal for US election meddling: US
• US Special Counsel Robert Mueller has alleged PayPal was sued to buy fake advertisements on social media to meddle in the 2016 US elections.
• The indictment, which charges 13 Russians, claimed false identities were used to open PayPal accounts to pay for the ads.
Iran willing to relax visa norms for India.
• Iranian President Hassan Rouhani has said his country will simplify visa norms for India so that people of India find it convenient to sustain their relationship with the people of Iran.
• He said Iran is ready to share its oil, gas and energy resources for the development and progress of India.

Pakistan borrows $500 MN from world’s biggest bank: Reports
• Pakistan contracted the loan from the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China.
• The US had suspended a total aid of $1.15 bn to Pak last month over inaction against terrorist havens on its soil.

Amazon overtakes Microsoft as the 3RD most valuable company in the world.
• Tech giant Amazon has overtaken Microsoft to become the world’s most valuable listed company. The online giant was valued at $810 billion as compared to Microsoft at $789 billion.
• It is the first time Amazon - founded by Jeff Bezos in 1994 - has gained the top position in the listed market. The change happened on Monday as shares of the online retail giant rose by 3 percent, increasing its market value to $797 billion.
• Microsoft’s stock to rose but only by 2%, leaving the value at $789 billion by the end of the trade.

Iran launched a submarine.
• Iran launched a new locally-made submarine capable of firing cruise missiles on 17 Feb 2019.
• Named the Fateh, the new submarine is Iran's first in the semi-heavy category.
• The near 600-tonne underwater vessel is equipped with torpedoes and naval mines in addition to cruise missiles.
• It can operate more than 200 metres below sea level for up to 35 days.
• Saudi Arabia became the 73rd nation to sign the International Solar Alliance. ISA was unveiled by PM Narendra Modi and former French President Francois Hollande in 2015.

Trump suggests arming teachers to prevent school shootings
• Trump made the comment while meeting the students who survived the recent Florida school shooting which claimed 17 lives.
• Trump also called for the implementation of strict background checks for gun purchases in the country.

250 civilians killed in Syrian shelling in 2 days
• Continuous shelling by Syrian govt forces in eastern Ghouta has killed around 250 civilians.
• Nearly 5 lakh people have been killed in the Syrian war.

N Korea envoys’ visit cost more than athletes’ training
• The International Olympic Committee paid around $50,000 for the training of 22 N Korea athletes who participated in the 2018 Winter Olympics.
• S Korea spent around 346% more than the amount spent on the athletes’ training.
• Zimbabwe’s central bank began trading a sharply discounted replacement currency, attempting to ease a cash crunch that has hobbled the economy and plunged millions deep into poverty. Zimbabwe adopted the dollar in 2009 but, as a chronic hard currency shortage worsened, introduced a parallel system of bond notes that it pegged at 1:1 to the U.S. currency.
• Effectively reintroducing a national currency, the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) said it would carry out a "managed float" of the surrogate, which fetches far less than a dollar on the black market. The bond notes and electronic dollars, locked in individuals' accounts for months due to a lack of cash, will be merged into a separate currency called RTGS or real-time gross settlement dollars.

Oscars 2019: ‘Bohemian Rhapsody’ wins most Oscars
• The 91st Academy Awards, popularly known as Oscar Awards, were conferred on February 24, 2019 (February 25 as per Indian time). 'Bohemian Rhapsody', nominated for five Oscars, won the most Oscars at the award show.
• The ‘Period. End of Sentence’, a film on menstruation set in rural India, won the Oscar in the Documentary - Short Subject category at the 91st Academy Awards. The film has been directed by Rayka Zehtabchi and produced by Indian producer Guneet Monga’s Sikhya Entertainment.

Afghanistan begins export to India via Chabahar port
• Afghanistan has begun exports to India through Iran’s Chabahar port. At the inauguration of the new export route in Zaranj city in western Nimroz province, President Ashraf Ghani said Chabahar port is the result of healthy cooperation between India, Iran and Afghanistan.
• Afghanistan’s exports will increase to two billion dollar from the current one billion dollar in the next year.
• Indian ambassador Vinay Kumar said Afghanistan’s exports to India have increased by 40 percent after the launch of air corridor between Kabul and New Delhi.
23 trucks carrying 57 tonnes of dried fruits, textiles, carpets and mineral products were dispatched from Zaranj to Chabahar port to be shipped to Mumbai.

Cobra Gold, one of world’s largest multinational military exercises, held in Thailand
• Thailand and the United States hosted the annual Cobra Gold military exercise, the biggest activity of its type in the Asia-Pacific region with 29 nations taking part as participants or observers.
• Apart from the 2 countries, 7 countries who participated in the exercise were India, Singapore, Japan, China, Indonesia, Malaysia and South Korea.
• The Indian Army participated in the military training exercise with a 14-member contingent.
• Thai Chief of Defense Forces, Gen. Pornpipat Benyasri and the commander of the U.S. Army.

India strikes back: IAF jets destroy Jaish terror camps across LoC
• In retaliation to the deadly Pulwama terror attack, the Indian Air Force fighter jets crossed the line of control in the early hours of February 26, 2019 and attacked Jaish-e-Mohammed terror camps in Pakistan occupied Kashmir.
• The same was confirmed by the Indian Foreign Secretary, Vijay Gokhale during a press conference in New Delhi on the same day. The Foreign Secretary revealed that India has struck the biggest training camp of JeM in Balakot.
• The Indian Air Force used Mirage-2000 jets to drop 1000 kg of laser-guided bombs causing an estimated casualty of 200-300. In the intelligence led operation, India struck the biggest training camp of Jaish-e-Mohammed in Balakot, Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa.

Maldives decline India’s invite for naval exercise ‘Milan’.
• This comes amid the state of emergency in Maldives after the government refused a SC order to release political prisoners.
• India had said it is important that Maldives returns to the path of democracy.

China may overtake US as biggest producer of nuclear power
• China is expected to triple its nuclear capacity in the next 20 years.
• The International Energy Agency said that lesser investment in nuclear energy and no lifetime extension of the existing plants threatened the US’ position as the global leader in nuclear power.

Michelle Obama announces memoir
• Her memoir titled ‘Becoming’ will be published on November 13, 2018.
• The book will be published in 24 languages worldwide

Donald Trump and Kim Jong-un held second summit in Vietnam
• US President Donald Trump and North Korea’s leader Kim Jong-un have begun their high-profile second summit in Vietnam’s capital, Hanoi.
• The main focus of the summit is to discuss denuclearization amid claims from Michael Cohen ahead of public hearing.
• US may announce a formal end to the Korean War during the summit.

Muhammadu Buhari re-elected as Nigerian President.
• Buhari, of the ruling All Progressives Congress party, secured 56 percent, or 15.2 million votes, in the February 23 polls.
• His main opponent, former vice president Atiku Abubakar of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), received 41 percent or 11.3 million votes.
• Muhammadu Buhari, 76-year-old, has been re-elected for a second four-year term.
• He was first elected president in 2015, becoming the first opposition candidate to defeat an incumbent and win the presidency.

Highlights of 2019 – 20 Interim Budget
• 6,000 rupees yearly direct support to farmers through PM-KISAN Programme.
• 3,000 rupees pension for unorganised sector workers earning upto 15,000 rupees through a mega Pension Scheme - Pradhan Mantri Shram- Yogi Maandhan.
• Direct tax system simplified; Returns to be processed in 24 hours with immediate refunds.
• Allocations to Health care, MGNREGA, SC/ST welfare programmes, Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, Development of infrastructure in North-East hiked substantially.
• A separate Department of Fisheries.
• Allocations to Defence budget crosses three lakh crore rupees for the first time.
• 10 point vision for 2030 to realize India’s social economic potential; 10 trillion dollars economy in 13 years.
• An All India Institute of Medical Sciences - AIIMS for Haryana.
• Single window clearance for shooting films to be made available to Indian film makers.
• The fiscal deficit pegged at 3.4 percent of GDP are the highlight of the Interim Budget for 2019-20.

Budget
1. What is an interim budget?
An interim budget is the budget of a regime or administration that is going through a period of transition.

NATIONAL
2. When is an interim budget presented?
The government presents an interim budget if it does not have time to present a full Budget or if the
genereal elections may be in the near future.
3. Why do we need an interim budget?
The government needs Interim Budget to work during the time it takes for a new government to make
its own fiscal plan. The budget for the year permitted by Parliament gives the government spending
rights only till 31st March i.e. end of the financial year.

**Government Unveils vision for the Next Decade**
The Government has unveiled its vision for the next decade, listing thereby ten most important
dimensions in 2030. “With this comprehensive ten-dimensional Vision, we will create an India where
poverty, malnutrition, littering and illiteracy would be a matter of the past.
The dimensions of Vision-2030 outlined by Shri Goyal are as follows-
• To create physical and social infrastructure for ten trillion dollar economy and to provide ease of living.
• Digital India led by the youths with innumerable start-ups and million of jobs.
• To make India pollution free by focusing on Electrical Vehicles and renewables.
• Rural industrialisation using modern technologies to generate massive employment.
• Clean rivers, with safe drinking water to all Indians and efficient use of water in irrigation using
  micro-irrigation techniques.
• Besides scaling up Sagarmala, India’s coastline and ocean waters will power development
• Through our space programme – Gaganyaan, India becoming the launch-pad of satellites for the World
• Self sufficiency in food production and producing food in the most organic way.
• A healthy India by 2030 and a distress free health care and wellness system for all. Ayushman Bharat and women participation would be an important component in it.
• Employees working with elected Government, transforming India into Minimum Government
  Maximum Governance nation.

**PETROTECH-2019**
PETROTECH-2019, the 13th International Oil & Gas Conference & Exhibition, being organised under
the aegis of the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas, Government of India. India’s flagship
hydrocarbon international conference is expected to be inaugurated by Prime Minister of India.
Aim : The PETROTECH 2019 exhibition will focus on development in technologies for exploration &
production, process control, refining and pipeline and services, systems, products, oil field hardware,
software, analytical instruments, Renewable, R&D, HSE, training and publications of technical
literature.
About Conference: The PETROTECH series of International Oil & Gas Conference is a biennial
platform for national and international experts in the oil & gas industry to exchange views and share
knowledge, expertise, and experiences. Being held for the last over two decades with growing
participation.

**8th century Himalayan sage Guru Padmasambhava**
An International Conference on 8th century Himalayan sage Guru Padmasambhava was held in New Delhi. The conference was organised as part of events to commemorate 50-years of formalization of
diplomatic ties between India and Bhutan.
Guru Padmasambhava
- Guru Padmasambhava was born in India and travelled all across Himalayan region in the 8th century to spread Buddhism and Buddhist teachings.
- Guru Padmasambhava is highly revered in Bhutan. There is an image or painting of the Guru Padmasambhava in every Bhutanese home or temple.
- Guru Padmasambhava was also known as Guru Rinpoche is widely venerated as a “second Buddha” by adherents of Tibetan Buddhism in Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan, the Himalayan states of India, and elsewhere.

**Human Space Flight Centre Inaugurated**
- The Human Space Flight Centre (HSFC) which would be the core of ISRO’s future manned missions was inaugurated at the ISRO headquarters in Bengaluru.
- The Human Space Flight Centre will implement the first development flight of Gaganyaan with the support of existing ISRO Centres.
- The Human Space Flight Centre would be responsible for end-to-end mission planning, development of engineering systems for crew survival in space, crew selection and training and also pursue activities for sustained human space flight missions.

**New India by 2022**
Shri Goyal said that a New India would celebrate its 75th Independence year in 2022 when every family would have a house with access to water, electricity and toilets; farmers income would have doubled; and the country would be free from terrorism, communalism, corruption and nepotism.

Shri Rajiv Nayan Choubey takes Oath of Office and Secrecy as Member, UPSC (Appointment)
- Shri Rajiv Nayan Choubey, took the Oath of office and Secrecy as Member, Union Public Service Commission today. The oath was administered by Shri Arvind Saxena, Chairman, UPSC.
- An officer of the 1981 batch of Indian Administrative Service of Tamil Nadu Cadre, Shri Choubey during his career spanning over more than 35 years, has held several important positions in the Central Government as well as in the Government of Tamil Nadu.
- He served as Joint Secretary in the Department of Economic Affairs, Development Commissioner (Handloom) in the Ministry of Textiles, Director General in the Directorate General of Hydrocarbons, Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Power, Special Secretary, Ministry of Power and prior to his joining the Commission, he was serving as Secretary in the Ministry of Civil Aviation, In the State also, he held various important positions in the Revenue, Rural Development, Transport, Finance, Industries, Telecommunications and Personnel & General Administration Department.

**New Long Range Missile by Iran**
- Iran unveiled a new cruise missile with a range of 1,300 km (800 miles).
- Reason behind choosing the day: the Middle Eastern country displays its achievements during celebrations marking the 40th anniversary of the 1979 Islamic Revolution.
- Specifications of missile:
  1. Need short time for preparedness
  2. Can fly at low altitude
- 1979 Islamic revolution : Iran is marking the 40th anniversary of the 1979 Islamic Revolution that toppled the shah and ended centuries of monarchy in the country.
Indian embassy in US opens 24/7 hotline to assist Indian students arrested by American authorities
- The Indian embassy in the US has opened a 24/7 hotline to assist Indian students arrested by the American authorities for alleged immigration rules violation. As many as 129 Indians are among the 130 foreign students arrested for allegedly enrolling at a fake university to remain in the US.
- India said it is monitoring the situation arising out of detention of Indian students closely and have impressed upon the US Government the need to address the situation at the earliest.
- Indian ambassador to US: Harsh Vardhan Shringla (He is a career diplomat and a member of the Indian Foreign Service since 1984.)

Kumbh Mela to take place on Mauni Amavasya on 4th Feb
- The third main holy bath Shahi Snan Parv of Mauni Amavasya at on-going Kumbh Mela in Prayag raj will be observed on Monday, 4th February at Sangam.
- Kumbh Mela:
  is a mass Hindu pilgrimage of faith madhav singh kunwargather to bathe in a sacred Kumbh Melas: the Prayagraj Kumbh Mela, Haridwar Kumbh Mela, the Nashik-Trimbakeshwar Simhastha, and Ujjain Simhastha. These four fairs are held periodically at one of the following places by rotation: Allahabad (Prayagraj), Haridwar, Nashik district (Nashik and Trimbak), and Ujjain. The main festival site is located on the banks of a river: the Ganges (Ganga) at Haridwar; the confluence (Sangam) of the Ganges and the Yamuna and the invisible Sarasvati at Allahabad; the Godavari at Nashik; and the Shipra at Ujjain.

PM Narendra Modi to launch two Railway projects at Durgapur in West Bengal
- Mr Modi will dedicate to the nation, the Railway electrification of 294 kilometre long Andal-Sainthia-Pakur-Malda and Khana-Sainthia Sections.
- Advantages:
  1. Ease of transportation of coal,
  2. Stone chips and ballast to North and North East India
- Durgapur:
  Durgapur is the 3rd largest urban agglomeration after Kolkata and Asansol in West Bengal and happens to be the 2nd planned city in India after Chandigarh. It is the only city in Eastern India to have an operational dry dock.

National Road Safety Week to be Launched on Monday
- Union Home Minister will inaugurate the 30th National Road Safety Week, 2019 in New Delhi on Monday, the 4th of February.
- It will be attended by a host of school children, NGOs, and stakeholders in road safety from Government and industry.
- A Motorcar Rally will also be flagged off on the occasion to commemorate the 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.

India has wealth of wetland ecosystems: NITI Aayog
- 2nd February is marked as World’s Wetlands day.
- The day marks adoption of the Convention on Wetlands on 2nd February 1971, in the Iranian city of Ramsar on shores of the Caspian Sea.
The theme of this year is “Wetlands and Climate Change”.

The theme highlights the importance of healthy and intact wetlands to one of the most pressing challenges of climate change.

Speaking at an event organized to mark the occasion, NITI Aayog Vice Chairman Dr Rajiv Kumar stressed on convergence between various Ministries and also between Centre and States to save wetlands in the country.

To provide an assured income support to small and marginal farmers Govt. is launching Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman

To provide an assured income support to the small and marginal farmers, Government is launching a historic programme namely “Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN)”.

Specifications of Scheme:
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 installments of Rs 2,000 each. This programme will be funded by Government of India. Around 12 crore small and marginal farmer families are expected to benefit from this.

Need of the scheme:
1. Reduced income from farming
2. Small and fragmented land holding on account of repeated divisions has also contributed in decline in the income of the farmer family.
3. Declining prices of agricultural commodities in the international market.

22nd AIIMS to come up in Haryana
The 22nd AIIMS would come up in Haryana. The announcement was made regarding this at the Interim Budget 2019. The AIIMS would be established at Manethi village in Haryana’s Rewari district. All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) is the autonomous institutions set up under the act of parliament. The All India Institute Of Medical Sciences Act, 1956 provides for the establishment of AIIMS as Institute of National Importance.

India’s Mithali Raj Becomes First Woman Cricketer to Play 200 ODIs
India’s One-day International (ODI) captain Mithali Raj has become the first woman to play 200 ODI matches with her appearance in the match against New Zealand. The record for largest number of games played by a Woman Cricketer was already in the name of Mithali Raj. Mithali Raj had achieved the milestone when she played her 192 ODI of the career, going past Charlotte Edwards' record of 191 appearances.

The 36-year-old Mithali Raj is playing the game at the international circuit for almost twenty years and she is also the fourth-highest among the cricketers as a whole, as Mithali is just behind Sachin Tendulkar (463), Sanath Jayasuriya (445) and Javed Miandad (233).

Bharathi appointed as the MD and CEO of Corporation Bank
The government has appointed P.V.Bharathi as the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Corporation Bank. Earlier she has served as the Executive Director of Canara Bank. Corporation Bank is public-sector banking The company headquartered in Mangaluru, India. She took charge on
February 1, 2019. The bank has a pan-Indian presence. The bank has a network of 2,600 fully automated CBS branches, 3,040 ATMs, and 4,724 branchless banking units across the country.

**Prime Minister Narendra Modi take on the financial estimates for New India**
Prime Minister Narendra Modi take on the financial estimates for New India is considering three options for a relief package to help farmers suffering because of low crop prices at a cost of as much as Rs. 3 lakh crore, according to three government sources. The possibilities are a direct payment to all landowning farmers, compensation for those who sold produce below government prices, and a loan-waiver programme. The government is keen to find a way to get money to farmers as quickly and simply as possible so that they can feel the benefits before the election.

**Vani Kapoor Becomes First Indian To Grab Australian LPGA Card**
Golfer Vani Kapoor becomes the first Indian to grab Australian Ladies PGA Tour (LPGA) after securing 12th Rank tied with three others in the first-ever qualifying tournament at the Ballarat Golf Club in Australia.

**Tamil Nadu State approved Rs.158 crore for drinking water supply scheme**
Tamil Nadu, Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami sanctioned Rs.158 crore for taking up drinking water supply schemes across the State. This approval is in view of the below normal rainfall during the north-east monsoon. While Rs.122 crore has been earmarked to Chennai Metro Water to take up suitable drinking water supply works, another sum of Rs.36 crore was sanctioned to the Tamil Nadu Water Supply and Drainage Board (TWAD Board) to take up drinking water supply works in the urban and rural areas of Tamil Nadu. The CM also insisted that Metro Water, TWAD Board, Rural Development and MAWS Departments should complete the ongoing water supply works quickly and put them to use.

**South Central Railway gets Rs 5,924 crore**
South Central Railway (SCR) got Rs 5,924 crore for 2019-20 from the year 2019 budget as against last year’s outlay of Rs 5,752 crore with the highest allotment made for doubling works of Rs 1,905 crore. Additional General Manager John Thomas said that the New lines got Rs.834 crore, passenger amenities Rs 229 crore and traffic facilities got Rs138 crore.

**Karnataka State launched MyCityMyBudget initiative**
MyCityMyBudget initiative was launched in Banguluru, Karnataka. The city Mayor Gangambike Mallikarjun launched the initiative. The initiative provides citizens an opportunity to tell the BBMP exactly on what civic infrastructure issue, the money has to be spent on. Citizens may submit their budget inputs online by visiting www.ichangemycity.com. Now the people can send their inputs about the city’s road infrastructure, water, power, safety, transport to ichangemycity’s MyCityMyBudget initiative.

**Kerala State sets up Price Monitoring and Research Unit**
Kerala has become the first State to set up a Price Monitoring and Research Unit (PMRU). This unit will track violation of prices of essential drugs and medical devices under the Drugs Price Control Order (DPCO). The move comes more than five years after the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) proposed such a system for the States and the Union Territories. National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA):
Exercise Rahat
The disaster relief exercise ‘Exercise Rahat’ will be demonstrated in Jaipur, Kota and Alwar in Rajasthan on Feb 11-12.

About the Exercise
The important aspects related to the ‘Exercise Rahat’ are:

• On behalf of the Indian Army, Jaipur based Sapta Shakti Command will conduct the Joint Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Exercise, Exercise Rahat.
• Exercise Rahat is being conducted in coordination with NDMA to synergise efforts for humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations.
• The joint exercise will see participation from Armed Forces, National Disaster Management Response Mechanism (NDMRM), State Disaster Management Authority of Rajasthan and District LMAs.
• The exercise will be conducted simultaneously in three places, beginning at Jaipur in the form of a tabletop exercise and at Kota and Alwar.

Conservation and Promotion of Medicinal Plants
The 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:

National AYUSH Mission (NAM)
The large scale farming/cultivation of medicinal plants is being supported under the ‘Medicinal Plants’ component of the National AYUSH Mission (NAM). The scheme provides support for:

• Cultivation of prioritized medicinal plants on farmer’s land.
• Establishment of nurseries for the supply of quality planting material.
• Post-harvest management.
• Primary processing, marketing infrastructure etc.

Madras High Court Rules against Negative Marking in Competitive Exams
The Madras High Court has ruled against negative marking in competitive examinations saying they are bad in law.

Observations of the Madras High Court
• The Madras High Court while hearing a petition filed by an IIT JEE aspirant who failed to clear the Mains due to negative marking has made the following observations:
• The Madras High Court has accepted the petitioner’s argument that negative marking is not prevailing anywhere else in the world.
• The court said that negative marking acts only as “a bolt in the brain development” of students and prevents them from making intelligent guesses.
• Deducting marks for wrong answers would not in any way help in analysing the intelligence, aptitude or knowledge of the candidates.
Haryana government approved new Pharmaceutical Policy

Haryana government approved new Pharmaceutical Policy and Pharmaceutical Policy 2019, which envisages to establish a state-of-the-art pharma park at Karnal. The decision was taken at a Cabinet meeting held under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar at Chandigarh, Punjab. The new policy aims to develop Haryana into a hub for pharmaceutical manufacturing by facilitating and creating a holistic industry and academia. The Cabinet also gave its nod for the Haryana Micro Small and Medium Enterprises Policy 2019 with an aim to create globally competitive MSMEs in Haryana.

ICS launched Swasth Naari, Shakti Hamaari campaign

The Indian Cancer Society (ICS) launched Swasth Naari, Shakti Hamaari campaign in Mumbai, Maharashtra to spread awareness of cancer among underprivileged women and enable early detection of the disease. The campaign was launched on the occasion of World Cancer Day. ICS in collaboration with pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca organized the campaign. It aims to conduct free and specialized cancer-screening camps for women in high-priority districts of Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Karnataka.

Telangana State approves the creation of Mulugu district

The Telangana State government has approved for the creation of Mulugu as a new district. It is carved out from Bhupalpalli district. This would be the sixth district to be created from the erstwhile Warangal district. The State government has issued a notification calling for objections and suggestions from the public on December 31. The one-month period duration expired on January 30.

India becomes Second Largest LPG Consumer and Importer

India is now 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.

Import of LPG

The import of LPG grew by 12.5 per cent over the past five years to 12 million metric tons (13 million tons) in 2018-19. India now stands at the second position when it comes to the import of LPG surpassing Japan. India is at second place behind China. The exporters of LPG to India include Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Iran.

Delhi to Launch 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.

About the Zero Fatality Corridor

The important facts related to the Zero Fatality Corridor are:

- A 3km stretch between Bhalswa chowk and Burari chowk on the outer ring road has been chosen as a case study in this regard.
- The selected stretch has four blackspots namely Burari chowk, Bhalswa chowk, Mukundpur chowk, and Jahangirpuri bus stand.
- This 3km stretch will be observed for scientific assessment of accidents, road engineering, road-user engagement.
Know India Programme
Know India Programme (KIP) is a flagship initiative for Diaspora engagement. The programme aims to familiarize Indian-origin youth (18-30 years) with their Indian roots and contemporary India.

Features of the Programme
The important features of the Know India Programme are:
- Know India Programme is a three-week orientation programme for diaspora youth.
- The programme aims to promote awareness on different facets of life in India and the progress made by the country in various fields e.g. economic, industrial, education, science & technology, communication & information Technology and culture.
- The programme provides a unique forum for students & young professionals of Indian origin to visit India, share their views, expectations & experiences and to develop closer bonds with contemporary India.

Implementation of PMJAY
Pradhan Mantri – Jan Arogya Yojana (PM JAY) is a scheme of the government under Ayushman Bharat to reduce the financial burden on poor and vulnerable groups arising out of catastrophic hospital episodes and ensure their access to quality health services.

Implementation of PMJAY
The following steps have been undertaken for the effective implementation of the PM JAY:
- The State Governments have been given the flexibility to implement PM JAY either through insurance companies, or directly through trust/society, or in a mixed mode.
- National Health Agency (NHA) has been set up by the Government to implement PM JAY through State level Health Agencies.
- A robust IT system has been put in place for effective implementation of the Scheme.
- Central Grievance Redressal Management System has been set up for receiving grievances. A system has been put in place to acknowledge, record, escalate & resolve grievances as per well-defined process through a three-tier grievance redressal structure.

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 with the theme ‘LPG – Energy for Life’ will deliberate over series of subjects including how India’s successful Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana can become a viable model for other countries to replicate particularly those striving to provide clean cooking fuel to its people.

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).

SBI UK chief honoured ‘Freedom of the City of London’
The State Bank of India’s UK head Sanjiv Chadha has been honoured with the ‘Freedom of the City of London’ award in recognition of his contribution to promoting the bilateral relations. Sanjiv Chadha was nominated for the honour by Lord Mayor of London Peter Estlin and Sheriff Vincent Keaveny.

Sanjiv Chadha and His contributions
Sanjiv Chadha took up the position at the helm of the 98-year-old London office of the State Bank of India in 2014. He was instrumental in expanding the bank’s presence across the UK, and in boosting wider bilateral ties in financial services.
Sanjiv Chadha was an excellent voice leading the Indian banking community and overseeing significant investment into the City.

**Textiles Minister launches Project "India Size"**
- The Union Minister for Textiles Smt. Smriti Zubin Irani launched the India Size project in Mumbai today. A first-of-its-kind project in the history of India, India Size aims to arrive at a standard Indian Size for the ready-to-wear clothing industry, on the lines of the standardized sizes available in countries such as the USA and the UK. A size chart that is specific to Indian consumers' measurements will be developed.
- This will help Indian apparel manufacturers to tailor their cuts closer to the actual body measurements of consumers. This will benefit consumers, manufacturers and the industry as a whole. The project is being undertaken by the Ministry of Textiles, in collaboration with The Clothing Manufacturers Association of India (CMAI).

**Cabinet approves establishment of Circuit Bench of Calcutta High Court at Jalpaiguri**
The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the establishment of Circuit Bench of Calcutta High Court at Jalpaiguri. It will have jurisdiction over four districts namely Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar. The decision comes in the backdrop of the decision of the Calcutta High Court Full Court Meeting in 1988, Cabinet Decision on 16-6-2006 which approved the setting up of Circuit Bench of Calcutta High Court at Jalpaiguri and the visit by a team of Judges led by Chief Justice of Calcutta High Court to the proposed site of the Circuit Bench at Jalpaiguri on 30-08-2018 to assess the progress regarding the infrastructure facilities there.

**Sanjiv Ranjan appointed as the Ambassador of India to the Republic of Colombia**
Ministry of External Affairs appointed Sanjiv Ranjan as the Ambassador of India to the Republic of Colombia. Presently he is the Ambassador of India to Argentina. Ranjan who is a 1993 batch Indian Foreign Service officer Ministry of External Affairs.
External Affairs: Formed: September 1946 Headquarters: Raisina Hill, New Delhi Minister: Sushma Swaraj The Ministry is responsible for the conduct of foreign relations of India Colombia: Capital: Bogota Official languages: Spanish President: Ivan Duque Currency: Peso (COP)

**Amitabh Bachchan stars in national campaign**
- The Swachh Bharat Mission launched the 'Darwaza BandPart 2' campaign on 6th Feb 2019 in Mumbai.
- The campaign was produced by the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation was launched in the presence of iconic actor Amitabh Bachchan.
- The campaign focuses on sustaining the open defecation free status of village across the country.

**Textile Minister launched project India Size**
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- The project is undertaken by the Ministry of Textiles.
Swine flu claimed 226 lives across the country
• Swine flu has claimed 226 lives across the country, with the worst hit in Rajasthan claiming 85 deaths.
• 2,263 patients have been found positive with influenza as per the NCDC report.
• A meeting was held on 6th February 2019 by the Ministry of Health headed by Preeti Sudan to take action to deal with it.
• Swine flu is caused by H1N1 virus and has symptoms similar to the regular flu.

PM to flag off Vande Bharat Express.
• Prime Minister Narendra Modi will flag-off Vande Bharata Express on 15th February, 2019 from the New Delhi Railway Station.
• It is India’s first engineless train.
• The train has been manufactured by the Integral Coach Factory, Chennai and has become India’s fastest train.
• It hit the speed of over 180 kmph during a trial run at the Delhi-Mumbai Rajdhani route.
• Earlier, it was named Train 18.

CCEA approves 12,000 MW power projects.
• The CCEA chaired by PM Narendra Modi approved the proposal for setting up 12,000 MW Solar PV Power Projects
• The proposal was by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy for the implementation of the CPSU scheme Phase-II for setting up these projects.
• The power projects will be set up in 4 years at a cost of Rs. 48,000 crores.

Great Indian Bustard (GIB) announced as the new mascot for the 13th UN Convention on the CMS COP-13.
• Union Environment Minister, Dr. Harsh Vardhan, on Friday announced the Great Indian Bustard (GIB) as the mascot for the 13th Conference of Parties (COP) of the UN Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species (CMS) to be held in Gujarat in 2020. The Government also launched a website for the COP-13.
• CMS-COP 13 is a global platform for the conservation and sustainable use of migratory species and their habitats. It has over 120 participating countries. So far, 12 COPs (Conference of Parties) have been convened.
• COP-13 will be held in Gandhinagar, Gujarat from 15 – 22 February, 2020

Union Minister Suresh Prabhu launches two schemes in Mumbai.
• On February 9, 2019, Union Minister for Commerce and Industry Suresh Prabhu launched two schemes, the Hirkani Maharashtra chi and District Business Plan Competition in Mumbai.
• OVER VIEW OF SCHEMES:
  • Under Hirkani Maharashtra chi, women’s SHGs will display their business plan at taluka level. Ten groups will be selected from each taluka and Rs. 50,000 will be given to each SHG to implement their idea. Five SHGs at district level will be selected and Rs. 2 lakh will be given to each SHG to take the idea forward.
  • Under District Business Plan Competition, competitors at district level will display ideas, out of
which five ideas will be selected from agriculture, social service, education and Work order worth Rs. 5 lakh will be given to the 5 selected ideas to implement the same.

Health Ministry conducts 8th round of National Deworming Day campaign.
- On February 8, 2019, The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) conducted its eighth round of National Deworming Day (NDD) with an objective to reduce the prevalence of Soil Transmitted Helminths (STH) or parasitic intestinal worms so that there will be no longer be public health problem.
- The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) envisioned an open-defecation-free India which holds the capacity to reduce the overall worm burden in a community.

Voter verification and Information Programme was launched by Election Commission.
- On 8th February 2019, Election Commission of India (ECI) launched a Voter Verification and Information Programme (VVIP) for citizens to verify their details, change the details, new registration and corrections. The programme focus on 2019 General Election.
- The ECI has set up helpline centres in all districts in India. The voter helpline number is 1950 and they are well equipped with to help callers with latest information.
- VVIP technology was launched during 2day training cum workshop on the use of Information and Communication Technology which was held in New Delhi.
- ECI also launched a ‘PwD app’ to enable Persons with Disabilities (PWD) to request to change in address, change in particulars and new registration by using mobile application.
- Voter Helpline app was also launched which will help voters to check their names in electoral roll, submit online forms, application status checking and complaints filing.

Two day Bengal Global Summit held in Kolkata.
- On February 7, 2019, the fifth edition of West Bengal Global Business Summit was inaugurated by state Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee. It is a two day summit held in Rajarhat, Kolkata.
- West Bengal bagged over Rs. 40,000 crore worth of investment proposals from Reliance, Group, ITC and others multinational companies on the first day of the business summit.
- The summit came to an end with West Bengal government signing 86 agreements entailing business proposals worth 2.84 lakh crore.
- West Bengal with a Gross State Domestic Product of USD 155.32 billion is the 4th largest contributor to India’s GDP and 6th contributor to India’s manufacturing GDP.

Assam’s Finance Minister presented 1,193 crore Deficit Budget.
- Assam’s Finance Minister, Himanta Biswas has presented the fourth Deficit Budget of the state for the fiscal year 2019-20 in the legislative assembly which amounts to 1,193 crore.
- This budget is the 2nd digital budget of the state.
- The total revenue of the budget in comparison with previous has increased by 20% and the total expenditure has crossed 70,000 crore.
- The budget mainly focuses on dimensions of social security and capital expenditure.
- Brides will be given one tola gold belonging to families having income of less than Rs. 5 lakh per annum.
- Students who passes in 12th class examination with first division will be given e-bike
- Widows below 45 years will be given immediate support of Rs. 25,000.
- Rice would be sold at Rs.1 per kg to benefit poor families.
Nitin Gadkari laid foundation of NH project.
- Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways, Nitin Gadkari, laid the foundation for 5 National Highway projects of length 632 km in Ayodhya on 8 Feb 2019
- The estimated cost is Rs. 7195 crore and the project will establish direct connectivity from Ayodhya to Ambedkar Nagar and Chitrakoot.
- He will also visit Prayag Raj to inaugurate Phase 2 of River Information System on National Waterway-1.

Ujjwala Utsav observed by Oil industry.
- Ujjwala Utsav was observed by the Oil industry in New Delhi on 7th Feb 2019
- It was observed to celebrate the stellar role played by all stakeholders in making PMUY scheme a success.
- PMUY anthem - 'Ujjwala Bharat Ujjwala' composed by Kailash Kher was also launched on the occasion.

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- The power projects will be set up in 4 years at a cost of Rs. 48,000 crores.

PM Modi Inaugurates Visakhapatnam Strategic Petroleum Reserve Facility.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated to the nation the 13.3 million metric ton capacity Visakhapatnam Strategic Petroleum Reserve facility at Guntur in Andhra Pradesh
- He also inaugurated Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited’s Vashishta and S1 development project located in the Krishna-Godavari Offshore Basin.
- Mr. Modi also laid the foundation stone for setting up of a new terminal of Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) at Krishnapatnam.

Centre allocates Rs 59 crore for Asiatic Lion conservation in Gujarat's Gir.
- The Ministry of Environment launched a three-year Asiatic Lion Conservation Project in collaboration with the state of Gujarat. The Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC) allocated Rs 59 crores, which will focus on better management of the lion habitat, disease control and veterinary care for them.
- Gujarat government also implemented Rs 80 crore that will be spent on specialised veterinary hospitals and full-fledged ambulances for lions.

Himalayan Cloud Observatory Set Up In Tehri.
- A Himalayan Cloud Observatory is set up in Tehri district of Uttarakhand with a motive to forecast and monitor cloudburst incidents in the Himalayan region and help to minimize the damage.
- The Observatory is established in the SRT campus, in Tehri and is 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.

Great Indian Bustard Announced As The New Mascot For COP-13.
- Union Environment Minister, Dr. Harsh Vardhan, announced the Great Indian Bustard (GIB) as the mascot for the 13th Conference of Parties (COP) of the UN Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species (CMS) to be held in Gujarat in 2020. He also revealed that the bird has been fondly named by the ministry as 'Gibi'.
- CMS-COP 13 is a global platform for the conservation and sustainable use of migratory species and their habitats. It has over 120 participating countries.

Dharmendra Pradhan Inaugurated 13th PETROTECH 2019 In Greater Noida.
- The 13th International Oil and Gas Conference – PETROTECH – 2019 got underway at India Expo Mart, Greater Noida. Over 95 Energy Ministers from partner countries are expected to participate in the three day Conference.
- The theme of the conference is 'Collaborating For Sustainable and Secure Energy Access for all'.

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Union Minister Harsimrat Kaur Lays Foundation Stone of Mega Food Park in Mathura.
- Union Minister for Food Processing Industries Harsimrat Kaur Badal laid the foundation stone of a Mega Food Park at Chhata-Barsana road in Mathura. The Park will provide direct and indirect employment to five thousand persons and benefit about 25,000 farmers.
- The Mega Food Park is being set up in over 57 acre of land at a cost of around 121 crore rupees. The Centre has also approved financial assistance of 50 crore rupees to the project.

MOU Signed Between EIL and Mongolia for Project Management Consultancy for Oil refinery.
- A MoU was signed between Engineers India Limited (EIL) and Mongolia for Project Management Consultancy for oil refinery. EIL is a PSU under the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.
- The agreement was signed on the sidelines of PETROTECH-2019 event at Greater Noida, UP. The MoU is for Project Management Consultancy services for construction of an oil refinery plant in Mongolia by EIL.

2019 Asia LPG Summit held in New Delhi
- Mr. Dharmendra Pradhan, Union Minister for petroleum and natural gas, inaugurated the 2019 Asia LPG summit in New Delhi. 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) at the Taj Palace Hotel in New Delhi.
- This two-day event will focus on ‘LPG – Energy for Life.’ India is the 2nd largest consumer of liquified natural gas (LPG) in the world.

Cabinet approves establishment of Rashtriya Kamdhenu Aayog
- The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved a proposal seeking the establishment of ‘Rashtriya Kamdhenu Aayog’ to conserve, protect and develop India’s cattle population. The proposal was first made by Finance Minister Piyush Goyal while presenting the interim Budget on February 1.
- The Rashtriya Kamdhenu Aayog will work in collaboration with veterinary, animal sciences or agriculture universities, departments or organisations of the central/state government engaged in the task of research in the field of breeding and rearing of cows, organic manure, and biogas.
- The creation of Rashtriya Kamdhenu Aayog for the conservation, protection, and development of cows and their progeny will provide the policy framework and direction to the cow conservation and development programmes in the country and for ensuring proper implementation of laws with respect to the welfare of cows.

Government approves setting up of 12,000 MW solar power projects
- The government approved a proposal for setting up of 12,000 MW of solar power projects by state-run producers. The producers will be provided with a viability gap funding support of Rs 8,580 crore for self-use or use by both central and state government entities.
- The CCEA decided that 12,000 MW or more of grid connected solar PV power projects would be set up by government producers in 4 years i.e. 2019-20 to 2022-23, thereby creating investment of about Rs 48,000 crores.

Smriti Irani launches India Size project in Mumbai
- Union Minister of Textiles Smriti Irani launched the India Size project in Mumbai. A first-of-its-kind project in the history of the country, India Size aims to arrive at a standard Indian Size for the
ready-to-wear clothing industry, on the lines of the standardized sizes available in countries such as the USA and the UK.

- **India size project** will benefit manufacturers, consumers and generate data which will help tap into the potential of the sector. The Minister also launched a **Study of Apparel Consumption in India**. The report of this study would be ready for release **by July 2019**.

**Maharashtra govt sets up panel to review welfare schemes for tribals**

- The Maharashtra government has set up a committee to review various schemes being implemented for the welfare of tribals in the state. The 17-member committee, headed by former MLA and Shramjeevi Sanghatna president Vivek Pandit, will undertake study of various works done for providing employment opportunities, minimum wages and proper livelihood to tribals, as per a recent government order.

- It will suggest measures to ensure that children in tribal regions were not deprived of education.

**Industrial production grows at 2.4% in December 2018**

- Industrial output growth remained subdued at 2.4% in December 2018 on account of contraction in the mining segment and poor show by the manufacturing sector.

- Factory output as measured in terms of the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) had grown by 7.3% in December 2017, according to the data released by the Central Statistics Office (CSO) on February 12.

- The industrial growth for November 2018 was revised downwards to 0.3% from the provisional estimate of 0.5% released in January 2019.

During April-December 2018, industrial output grew at 4.6% against 3.7% in the same period of the previous fiscal.

**Kusum Scheme to Promote Use of Solar Energy Among Farmers Under Considration**

- The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy has formulated a Scheme ‘Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan (KUSUM)’. The Scheme is currently under the process of seeking approval.

- The proposal on KUSUM Scheme provides for :-

  (i) installation of grid-connected solar power plants each of Capacity up to 2 MW in the rural areas;

  (ii) installation of standalone off-grid solar water pumps to fulfil irrigation needs of farmers not connected to grid; and

  (iii) solarisation of existing grid-connected agriculture pumps to make farmers independent of grid supply and also enable them to sell surplus solar power generated to DISCOM and get extra income.

**PM to address CREDAI YouthCon-19 Today**

- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, will address the CREDAI YouthCon -19, on 13 February 2019, at Talkatora Stadium, New Delhi. The event is organized by the Confederation of Real Estate Developers’ Association of India (CREDAI).

- The Prime Minister will also visit the exhibition organized by CREDAI.

- YouthCon is the annual Youth Conclave of CREDAI, held to bring together the future of the real estate Industry in India.

- Established in 1999, CREDAI is the apex body representing real-estate developers from over 200 cities in India.

**NITI Aayog signs SOI with MSDF to document Systemic Transformation in Education**
• The NITI Aayog and the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation (MSDF) today signed a Statement of Intent (SOI) to codify, document and share best practices to improve learning outcomes in public school education through systemic reforms, based on their collective experiences of working with various state governments in India.
• The SOI was signed in the presence of Mr. Amitabh Kant, CEO, NITI Aayog, by Mr. Alok Kumar, Adviser (HRD), NITI Aayog and Mr. Barun Mohanty, Managing Director (International), MSDF.
• The NITI Aayog was established with the core mandate of promoting cooperative and competitive federalism through evidence-based policy reform and knowledge inputs. Since its inception, NITI Aayog has placed learning outcomes as a key focus area for establishing sustainable education systems.

AYUSH Minister launches e-AUSHADHI portal
• Minister of State for AYUSH, Shripad Yesso Naik on February 13, 2019 launched the e-AUSHADHI portal, for online licensing of Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani and Homoeopathy drugs and related matters at New Delhi.
• The portal aims to increase transparency, improve information management facility, improve data usability and increase 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.
• e-AUSHADHI is an acronym for Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy Automated Drug Help Initiative.

CBDT Chairman Sushil Chandra appointed as Election Commissioner
• Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) Chairman Sushil Chandra has been appointed the third Election Commissioner, completing the team that will oversee 2019 Lok Sabha polls due in April-May.
• The three-member body now comprises Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora and Election Commissioners Ashok Lavasa and Chandra.
• An IIT graduate, Chandra is a 1980 batch officer of the Indian Revenue Service

Bihar Government announces universal old age pension scheme-Mukhyamantri Vridhajan Pension Yojna
• The state government of Bihar has announced a universal old age pension scheme called Mukhyamantri Vridhajan Pension Yojna (MVPY) for all people above 60 years of age.
• The scheme will come into force from April 1, 2019. Except those senior citizens who have retired from government service, all will be eligible for 400 rupees monthly pension irrespective of caste, religion or community.
• The currently old age pension scheme is applicable to only the BPL category.
• Besides this, the state’s Chief Minister Nitish Kumar announced a pension of Rs 6,000 for journalists above 60 years of age.

Pulwama Attack: MIB issues advisory to all private satellite TV Channels
• The Information and Broadcasting Ministry has issued an advisory to all private satellite TV Channels in view of the terrorist attack in Pulwama District.
• The Ministry in its advisory said that all channels are advised to be particularly cautious with regard to any content which is likely to incite violence or contains anything against maintenance of law and order or which promotes anti-national attitude or contains anything affecting the integrity of the nation.
• The Ministry asked them to ensure that no such content is telecast which is violative of programme and advertising code as prescribed in the Cable Television Networks Regulation Act.

Chandigarh woman becomes IAF’s 1st female Flight Engineer
• The Indian Air Force (IAF) inducted flight lieutenant Hina Jaiswal as its first woman Flight Engineer on Friday. Jaiswal, who hails from Chandigarh, studied engineering at Punjab University.
• As a Flight Engineer, Hina will be posted to operational helicopter units of the IAF and routinely called to operate in demanding and stressful conditions.

Train 18 launch despite attack befitting reply to terrorists: Goyal
• Railways Minister Piyush Goyal has said that going ahead with the inauguration of India’s fastest train, Vande Bharat Express (Train 18), was a befitting reply to the terrorists who perpetrated the Pulwama attacks.
• He added the decision to continue with the flagging off programme was inspired by the way Mumbai reacted by showing their resilience following the 26/11 attacks.

Security forces given full freedom to take action: PM on J&K attack
• In light of the terror attack on CRPF jawans in J&K’s Pulwama on Thursday, PM Narendra Modi said, "Our security forces have been given full freedom.
• We have full faith in their bravery." Thanking all the nations who condemned the attack and showed support to India, PM Modi said, "A strong reply will be given to this attack.

SC asks EC to be flexible in applying 3 years domicile for defence personnel
• The Supreme Court of India has asked the Election Commission to be flexible in applying three-year domicile for defence personnel.
• The apex court noted that though people in services are posted at peace place for three years, there is occasion when they are transferred in two-and-half years.
• A bench headed by Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi said it will be open for the Election Commission to prescribe further flexible eligibility criteria to ensure that defence personnel are able to vote.
• The bench said, there was no need to pass any further order. It noted that the Election Commission has taken a decision to allow armed forces personnel to vote at their place of posting which excludes Jammu and Kashmir and Northeastern states.

App launched PMAY (U).
• Hardeep S Puri, Minister of State for Housing and Urban Affairs launched the PMAY (U) Mobile App on 14 Feb 2019.
• The app will allow beneficiaries to capture and upload high-resolution photographs of completed houses along with their families.
• The PMAY (U) mission was launched on 25th June 2015 with an aim to provide houses to every eligible urban household in India by the year 2022.

PM-SYM scheme implemented.
• Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-dhan (PM-SYM).
• Scheme was implemented by the Ministry of Labor and Employment on 15 Feb 2019.
• The features of the scheme are family pension and minimum assured pension.
• The unorganized workers whose monthly income is Rs 15,000/per month or less and belong to the entry age group of 18-40 years are eligible for the scheme.
• Each subscriber under the PM-SYM shall receive minimum assured pension of Rs 3000/- per month after attaining the age of 60 years.
• During the receipt of pension, if the subscriber dies, the spouse of the beneficiary shall be entitled to receive 50% of the pension received by the beneficiary as family pension. Family pension is applicable only to spouse.

16th Lok Sabha session concluded.
• The last session of 16th Lok Sabha concluded on 14 Feb 2019
• There were a total number of 331 sittings for Lok Sabha. 205 bills were passed and the productivity was 85%.
• For Rajya Sabha, 154 bills were passed and the productivity was 68%

Sex ratio dips in 17 of 21 large states: NITI Aayog
• Gujarat witnessed a dip of 53 points.
• Gujarat, where the ratio fell from 907 females per 1000 males in 2012-14 to 854 females in 2013-15 is followed by Haryana, Rajasthan and Uttarakhand.

CBI arrests PNB’s ex-DGM, 2 others in Nirav Modi fraud case.
• The CBI arrested ex-DGM Gokulnath Shetty in relation to $1.77-bn Nirav Modi fraud case.
• The apprehended will be produced before a CBI special court in Mumbai.

Cauvery dispute SC verdict disappointing: TN CM.
• The SC reduced Tamil Nadu’s Cauvery water quota from 192 TMC to 177.25 TMC.
• The CM Edappadi K Palanisami said “We will do our best to ensure that our rights are restored”.

National Banana Festival 2018 to be held in Kerala from 17 to 21 Feb.
• Thiruvananthapuram is going to host National Banana Festival 2018 on February 17. It will be a five-day event to be held at Vellayani Dei Temple grounds at Kalliyoor. This festival will be inaugurated by Union Agriculture Minister Radha Mohan Singh.
• The main draw of this fest will be the 100 varieties of banana, which will be on display. Around 200 stalls will be set up to showcase these banana varieties. And mainly for this fest, all varieties of banana have been sourced from Kerala and various parts of India. Also, special value-added items for consumption, especially prepared from this fruit, will be there in this exhibition.
• Tourism Minister Kadakampally Surendran will be inaugurating this exhibition in National Banana Festival 2018 in Kerala, whereas MP Suresh Gopi will be presiding over the inaugural function.

Kerala Govt to geotag 10 lakh livestock farmer houses.
• Thiruvananthapuram, Feb 18 (PTI) the Kerala government is gearing up to geotag the houses and farms of over 10 lakh livestock and poultry farmers in the state as part of its massive digitisation drive.
• The objective is to compile a comprehensive digital repository of the information of animal husbandry and dairying in the state and integrate the data using the Geographical Information System (GIS), official sources said. The state Animal Husbandry Department has a database of over eight lakh farmers and houses and farms of over 60,000 of them have already been geotagged under the ambitious initiative.
It also plans to make the functioning of the Department paperless in the next 6-7 months as part of the digitisation drive, for which 23 mobile applications will be developed, official sources said. Besides the data of the houses and farms, the status of domestic animals and birds, the information of veterinary hospitals and related offices would also be linked through the GIS technology.

**Iran President Lands in Delhi.**
- Iran President Hassan Rouhani has entered the second day of his three day visit to India.
- Mr. Rouhani reached Hyderabad yesterday and is set to visit a number of tourist landmarks, including Hyderabad's Qutub Shahi tombs, the Salar Jung Museum, Golconda Fort as well as Mecca Masjid.
- He is also set to address a Muslim congregation at the Mecca Masjid, after he performs his Friday prayers. This is Mr. Rouhani's second visit to Hyderabad and his first after he assumed charge as Iran's president.

**Assam govt to set up 3 Terminal Mart for agricultural products.**
- Assam State Government will be setting up 3 Terminal Mart for agricultural products in the state in order to give a boost to agricultural market in the state.
- Assam State Agricultural Marketing Board is working towards setting up such marts at Silchar, Jorhat and Guwahati.
- Chairman of State Agricultural Marketing Board, Palit Kumar Bora has stated that a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed to develop Asia’s largest banana market at Darangiri in Goalpara district of Assam.
- Besides, 6 new Krishi Vigyan Kendras are being set up in Assam to help the farmers in various agro-based sectors

**PM Modi lays foundation stone of Navi Mumbai airport, phase I to be ready in 4 years.**
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of the long overdue airport project at Navi Mumbai on Sunday. PM Modi said, "Issue of Navi Mumbai airport has been pending for years. And, this is not the only project that is pending.
- Estimated cost for constructing this airport is Rs 16700 crore. It will have two parallel runways unlike Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport, which has only one runway.

**Fiji signs Declaration of Partnership with TERI.**
- Island nation Fiji today signed a declaration of partnership with India's The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) for assistance in tackling climate change effects and achieving environmental sustainability.
- The declaration was made on sidelines of the ongoing World Sustainable Development Conference (WSDS 2018) here.
- It was signed by Joshua Wycliff, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Local Government, Housing and Environment of Fiji and Ajay Mathur, the Director General of TERI.

**Infosys launches InfyTQ app for engineering students.**
- Infosys has announced the launch of a digital platform offering learning and engagement experiences for engineering students.
"InfyTQ is a free platform open to all engineering students in their third and fourth year. The platform encourages holistic development by imparting technical as well as professional skills and helps them become industry ready," said a statement from Infosys.

- InfyTQ will be available on both mobile and desktop and is equipped with a plethora of content, courses and news to establish talent readiness at an industry level through online assessments and certification.

During his Jharkhand visit, PM Narendra Modi to inaugurate several development projects.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will lay the foundation stone for hospitals in Hazaribagh, Dumka and Palamau in Jharkhand on Sunday and inaugurate a host of development schemes during his visit to the state, an official statement said.
- The prime minister will lay the foundation stone online for four 500-bedded hospitals in Hazaribagh, Dumka, Palamau and Jamshedpur.
- This apart, he will lay foundation stone for Hazaribagh urban line water supply scheme and rural drinking water supply - four schemes for Hazaribagh and two for Ramgarh.

Banned Punjabi Poem On Jallianwala Massacre To Be Published In English After 99 Years.
- A poem on the Jallianwala Bagh massacre by acclaimed Punjabi writer Nanak Singh, which was banned by the British after its publication in 1920, has now been translated into English.
- Singh was present at Jallianwala Bagh on April 13, 1919. He was 22 years old at the time.
- The name of the poem is 'Khooni Vaisakhi'

Number 112 launched for women safety.
- Home Minister Rajnath Singh launched the Emergency Response Support System, ERSS, for women's safety in 16 states and Union territories.
- Persons in distress can dial a pan-India number: 112.
- The Home Minister also launched 2 portals - Investigation Tracking System for Sexual Offences and Safe City Implementation Monitoring Portal.

Nitin Gadkari launched a portal.
- Shri Nitin Gadkari launched PCS1x at the Regional Maritime Safety Conference in Mumbai on 19 Feb 2019.
- It has been developed in record time by the Indian Ports Association.
- The platform allows improvement in payment cycle, transparency of transaction cycles, detailed tracking of vessels and berthing schedules.

Steel Minister dedicates SPU to nation.
- Union Minister of Steel, Chaudhary Birender Singh dedicated SAIL's Steel Processing Unit (SPU) at Bettiah in West Champaran, Bihar to the nation on 18 Feb 2019.
- This unit will produce high-quality steel tubes and pipes.
- With an installed capacity of 50,000 tons per year, this Unit will play an important role in the development of the predominantly agriculture intensive area.

Drainage-cleaning robot introduced in Chennai.
- A drainage-cleaning robot has been introduced for the first time in Chennai as part of efforts to get rid of manual scavenging.
• The robot named Bandicoot was introduced at a cost of 18 lakh rupees and was inaugurated by Tamil Nadu Minister Kadambur Raju.
• Drainage cleaning can be detected by viewing the blockages on the screen.

Himachal Pradesh assembly passed Bill.
• The Himachal Pradesh Assembly passed a Bill to make Sanskrit the second official language of the state.
• The Himachal Pradesh Official Language Bill, 2019 (Amendment) was introduced by Irrigation and Public Health Minister Mahender Singh Thakur.
• It was passed without any discussion.

Greenpeace welcomes Centre's approval to launch rural solar scheme, KUSUM.
• The Centre's decision to allocate Rs 46,000 crores towards the rural solar scheme KUSUM, aimed to provide farmers with advanced technology to generate power, has been welcomed by environment experts who said it was essential to achieve the country's 100 GW solar target by 2022.
• The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs on Tuesday approved Rs 46,000 crore for KUSUM and rooftop solar schemes to promote adoption of solar power among farmers and residential sector.
• While KUSUM scheme for farmers has been allocated Rs 34,422 crore, rooftop solar program would get Rs 11,814 crore.

Union Cabinet Approves Implementation Of New Rural Livelihood Scheme.
• The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on Tuesday approved the implementation of the National Rural Economic Transformation Project (NRETP).
• This project under the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) will be through loan assistance from the World Bank.
• The technical assistance provided by NRETP and the higher level interventions facilitated by the project will enhance the livelihoods promotion, access to finance and scale-up initiatives on digital finance and livelihood interventions.

Dearness Allowance (DA) For Government Employees, Pensioners Increased By 3%.
• The cabinet on Tuesday announced that it had approved a 3 per cent hike in Dearness Allowance or DA, a move that will benefit more than one crore central government employees and pensioners from January 1, 2019.
• The decision will cost the exchequer over Rs. 9,000 crore.
• Dearness allowance is a component of salary paid to employees to counter the effect of inflation.
• The 3 per cent increase will take the DA and Dearness Rate (DR) for pensioners to 12 per cent.

PM visits BHU in Varanasi; inaugurates Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya Cancer Hospital.
• The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, visited BHU in Varanasi today.
• He inaugurated Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya Cancer Hospital and Homi Bhabha Cancer Hospital, Lahartara. These Hospitals will provide comprehensive treatment to the patients from UP, and nearby states of MP, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and Bihar.
• Governor of UP Shri Ram Naik, CM of UP Shri Yogi Adityanath, and other dignitaries were present on the occasion.

Odisha CM Launches KALIA Scholarship for Farmers’ Children.
• Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik today unveiled KALIA Scholarship (KALIA Chhatra Brutti) at the Secretariat here for the children of the KALIA Scheme beneficiaries, who are studying and aspiring for technical and professional education.
• After taking the historic step towards transforming the economic standards of the farmers of Odisha through Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation (KALIA), the State Government has come up with KALIA Scholarship in order to ensure human resource development among the farming families across the State.
• KALIA Scheme is first of its kind assistance mechanism for farmers in India and has been followed by others as well for its noble means, ideation and inclusiveness.

Civil services marks cannot be disclosed under RTI: SC
• The SC ruled that Civil Services examination marks cannot be revealed under the Right to Information Act.
• The court added that revelation of marks would compromise on the integrity of the exams.

IAF Officer becomes 1st Indian woman to fly fighter jet solo
• Avani Chaturvedi has become the 1st Indian woman to fly a fighter jet solo as she operated the Russian made MiG21 aircraft.
• She is one of the 3 women inducted into IAF fighter stream in 2016.

SC allows withdrawal of cops send during Gorkhaland protests
• Central forces were deployed in the region during violent protests demanding a separate state of Gorkhaland.
• The Calcutta High Court had earlier barred the Centre from withdrawing the forces stating that normalcy had not been established.

President promulgated 4 Ordinances.
• President Ram Nath Kovind promulgated 4 Ordinances on 21 Feb 2019.
  a. Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Second Ordinance
  b. Indian Medical Council (Amendment) Second Ordinance
  c. Companies (Amendment) Second Ordinance
  d. Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Ordinance, 2019

Waste to Wonder’ Park inaugurated.
• The Union Home Minister Shri Rajnath Singh inaugurated the “Waste to Wonder” Park under the South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) in New Delhi on 21 Feb, 19.
• He also lauded SDMC for improving its rank from 202 to 32 in Swachh Sarvekshan, 2018 ranking.
• Some of the main attractions of the “Seven Wonders Park” are the different sized tall replicas of Taj Mahal, the Great Pyramid of Giza, etc.

Scheme for adolescent girls launched in UP.
• UP CM, Yogi Adityanath launched a scheme for girls on 21 February 2019.
• It will focus on girls aged between 11 to 14 years who have left studies and will take steps for proper nutrition and special care for them.
• The state will also observe girls day on 8th of every month at Anganwadi centers across the state.
Global Business Summit held in New Delhi
• The Global Business Summit can be the Davos of the East, said Vineet Jain, Managing Director of the Times group in the welcome address for the Economic Times Global Business Summit 2019 in New Delhi. Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the Global Business summit in New Delhi.
• Top Indian policy makers including, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley, railways minister Piyush Goyal, commerce minister Suresh Prabhu and law minister Ravi Shankar Prasad.

PM Modi unveils Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi scheme in Gorakhpur
• Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) scheme in Gorakhpur. PM-KISAN scheme, announced in the interim Budget, released earlier this month will provide Rs 6,000 per year to small and marginal farmer families having combined land holding/ownership of upto 2 hectares. The amount will be given in 3 installments of Rs 2,000 each.
• The amount will be transferred directly to the bank account of the beneficiaries through Direct Benefit Transfer. After launching the scheme, the Prime Minister also handed over certificates to select beneficiaries of the scheme.

GST on affordable housing properties reduced to 1 pc
The Goods and Services Tax (GST) on affordable housing properties without input tax credit (ITC) has been reduced to one per cent, while effective GST of 5 per cent shall be applicable without ITC on residential properties outside affordable segment, as was decided by the GST Council at its 33rd meeting. The new rate will be effective from April 1, 2019.
• In metros, a flat of 60 square meter carpet area and costing Rs 45 lakh in the apartment will fall in the affordable housing category. In non-metros, the size will be 90 square meter carpet area and costing Rs 45 lakh.

Odisha launches boat ambulance
• The Odisha government launched the boat ambulance service to help patients reach hospitals in remote areas cut off by rivers, at a cost of Rs 5.40 crore. The first boat ambulance was launched at Batighar in the Kendrapara district.
• Six boat ambulances will add to the road fleet and will be part of the 108 ambulance service. Patients from the areas cut off by rivers need to wait long for transportation to the nearest hospital. They would use boats to cross water bodies to be picked up by 108 or 102 ambulance.

TN becomes first state in mainland to get 2 Coast Guard dists
• Necessitated by frequent issues pertaining to fishermen, Tamil Nadu became the first state in the country to get a second Coast Guard district headquarters – Thoothukudi.
• The first district headquarters is Chennai. Inaugurated by state Governor Banwarilal Purohit, the Thoothukudi district headquarters has been set up with an aim to augment security mechanism on the eastern coast and the state in particular.

Chennai to host ‘Science at Sabha’
• The fourth edition of ‘Science at the Sabha’ organized by The Institute of Mathematical Sciences, will be held in Chennai. The programme is part of the institute’s outreach programme to the common man. ‘Science at Sabha’ will be held at The Music Academy in Chennai.
• The event-like feature talks on topics like “Traffic rules in neurons” by Sandhya Koushika, Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Mumbai; “Untwisting the twisted matter” by Vijay Shenoy and “The whole is more than the sum of its parts” by Sitabhra Sinha, The Indian Institute of Mathematical Science, Chennai.

**GST Council reduces GST Rate on Real Estate projects**
• The Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council met on February 24, 2019 for its 33rd meeting and slashed GST rate on under-construction residential properties and the affordable housing projects.
• In case of non-affordable houses, the GST rate for under-construction flats and houses has been brought to 5 percent without Input Tax Credit (ITC), down from the present 12 percent. In case of affordable houses, the GST rate has been reduced to 1 percent without ITC from 8 percent.

**Aero India 2019 culminates; Drone Olympics held**
• The 12th biennial edition of International Aerospace and Defence Exhibition, Aero India 2019 culminated on February 24, 2019 at Air Force Station Yelahanka in Bengaluru.
• For the first time, the 2019 edition of Aero India combined the defence and civil aviation segments into a holistic event with the co-involvement of the defence and civil aviation ministries. The 12th edition of Aero India intended to be a “Runway to a billion opportunities” and put India on the Global map.

**PM-KISAN: PM Modi launches ‘Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana’ from Gorakhpur, UP**
• The Prime Minister Narendra Modi on February 24, 2019 launched the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana (PM-KISAN) from Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh.
• On the launch day itself, the first instalment of Rs 2,000 was directly credited to the bank accounts of selected beneficiary farmers. Around 12 crore farmers are expected to benefit from PM-KISAN. The Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana was announced in the Union Interim Budget 2019 by Finance Minister Piyush Goyal.

**PM Modi dedicates National War Memorial to the nation**
• Prime Minister Narendra Modi on February 25, 2019 dedicated the National War Memorial to the nation in a solemn ceremonial function in New Delhi.
• The National War Memorial, located near the India Gate in New Delhi, is a fitting tribute to the soldiers who laid down their lives defending the nation, post-independence. The Memorial commemorates the soldiers who participated and made the supreme sacrifice in Peace Keeping Missions, and Counter Insurgency Operations.

**Government launches Rail Drishti Dashboard to keep people informed about ongoing Railway works**
• Railway Minister Piyush Goyal launched Rail Drishti Dashboard in New Delhi to keep people informed about the work going on in the Railways across the country. The Ministry of Railways will get suggestions and comments through the platform and will plan on future actions.
• The information gathered by technology and other means can benefit if there is proper data analysis. People will get useful information from Rail Drishti through Railway WiFi facilities that are continuously expanding in the country.
PM Modi Inaugurated 40-Acre National War Memorial in New Delhi
• Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated a new National War Memorial, situated in the India Gate complex in New Delhi, to the nation.
• The National War Memorial, spread over 40 acres in the India Gate complex behind the canopy, is dedicated to soldiers killed during the Indo-China War in 1962, Indo-Pak Wars in 1947, 1965 and 1971, Indian Peace Keeping Force Operations in Sri Lanka and in the Kargil Conflict in 1999, and also those in the UN peacekeeping missions.

FAGMIL Signs MoU with Himachal Pradesh to Establish India’s 4th White Cement Plant Project
• Under its diversification programme, FCI Aravali Gypsum and Minerals India Limited (FAGMIL) has taken up a project to establish a white cement plant near village Nohra Dhar in Himachal Pradesh, at a project cost of approximately Rs. 605 crores.
• It will be the 4th white cement plant in the country. The installed capacity of the plant would be 0.3 million tonnes per annum and it will generate the direct employment of approximately 150 persons.

Madhya Pradesh Government Launched ‘Mukhyamantri Yuva Swabhiman Yojana’
• Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath launched the State Government’s flagship scheme ‘Mukhyamantri Yuva Swabhiman Yojana’ that guarantees 100 days of employment every year to urban youth from economically weaker sections.
• Under the scheme, Rs 4,000 stipend per month during 100 days period, would be given to the youth and they will also be given skill development training in order to become independent. (Only those youths, whose family’s annual income is less than Rs 2 lakh and who are in the age group of 21-30 years, are eligible for the scheme).

Government cuts airfare for Haj pilgrims after withdrawing subsidy
• The move is part of the Centre’s “empowerment without appeasement” policy Minority Affairs Minister Mukhtar Abbas said.
• He said airfare reduction will end the exploitation caused under UPA regime.

Delhi gets streetlights with CCTV, Wi-Fi, pollution monitors
• The “smart poles” will be operational by the end of March.
• The NDMC is aiming to install a total of 55 such poles of which 32 have been installed.

India ranks 47th on inclusive Internet Index: Facebook
• India has been ranked 47th out of 86 countries by the Economist Intelligence Unit.
• The scores on the index is based on the scores of Availability, Affordability, Relevance and Readiness categories.

Piyush Goyal launched ‘Rail Drishti Dashboard’ To Track Train Information.
• Minister of Railways and Coal, Piyush Goyal has launched Rail Drishti dashboard, to promote transparency and accountability of Indian Railways.
• Rail Drishti Dashboard is an online portal containing information related to passenger and freight trains and links to live feeds of IRCTC kitchens.

First Indian made Centaur rocket was successfully launched at Thumb, Kerala.
• The first Indian-made Centaur rocket was successfully launched from the Thumba equatorial rocket station, Kerala on 26th February 2019 to the great jubilation of a large number of scientists.
• Dr. Vikram Sarabhai, Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission and Indian National Committee for Space Research, described that the flight of the two-stage sounding rocket as very satisfactory.
• It was hailed as a momentous event. India is now on the path to long-range development of superior rockets, which will take us to the goal of satellite launching in five years.

Centre brought 42 nonscheduled cancer drugs under price control.
• Centre announced that it had brought 42 non-scheduled anti-cancer drugs under price control, capping trade margin at 30%, which would reduce their retail prices by up to 85%.
• The National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) has invoked extraordinary powers in public interest, under Para 19 of the Drugs (Prices Control) Order, (DPCO) 2013 to bring 42 non-scheduled anti-cancer drugs under price control through trade margin rationalization. Department of Pharmaceuticals (DOP) directed manufacturers to fix their retail price based on the price at first point of sale of a product of the non-scheduled formulations containing any of the 42 drugs.
• The NPPA currently fixes prices of drugs placed in the National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM) under Schedule-I of the DPCO. So far, around 1,000 drugs have been brought under price control under the initiative. Non-scheduled drugs are allowed an increase of up to 10% in prices every year, which is monitored by the NPPA.

Union Textile Minister inaugurated Titanwala Museum in Rajasthan.
• Union Textiles Minister Smriti Irani inaugurated the ‘Titanwala Museum’ that showcases the hand block printing of the Chhipa community in Bagru.
• Bagru printing is one of the traditional techniques of printing with natural color followed by the chippas of Rajasthan.
• Suraj Narayan Titanwala took the initiative of setting up the museum.

India has successfully tested fired 2 indigenously developed QRSAM.
• India has successfully test-fired two indigenously developed Quick Reaction Surface-to-Air missiles (QRSAM) from a test range at Chandipur in Odisha’s Balasore district.
• The missile is an all-weather, all-terrain missile with electronic countermeasures against jamming by aircraft radars. QRSAM uses solid-fuel propellant.
• The missile is an all-weather, all-terrain missile with electronic countermeasures against jamming by aircraft radars.
• QRSAM uses solid-fuel propellant and has a range of 25-30 km.
• QRSAM has been developed by the Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO) in association with Bharat Electronics Limited and Bharat Dynamics Limited as a replacement to Osa-AK and Kvadrat missile systems.

Mukesh Ambani becomes world’s 8th richest with USD 54 bn wealth.
• As per Hurun Global Rich List 2019, Reliance Industries' 61-year-old Chairman Mukesh Ambani is the world’s eighth-richest person with a net worth of $54 billion.
• He is the only Asian among the top 10.
• Amazon’s Jeff Bezos topped the list for the second consecutive year with a net worth of USD 147 billion.
• With a wealth of USD 96 billion, Microsoft founder Bill Gates ranks second, followed by Warren Buffett with net worth of USD 88 billion.

Govt detects Rs 20,000 crore GST evasions in April-Feb FY19.
• The government detected Goods and Services Tax (GST) evasion of around Rs 20,000 crore between April 2018 and February 2019.
• Out of this, 10,000 crore has been recovered.
• Currently, GST has 4-tier slab of 5, 12, 18 and 28 per cent, while essential items are zero rated.

DAC approved purchase of defense equipment worth Rs 2,700 crore
• Defense Acquisition Council (DAC) granted approval for procurement of three cadet training ships for the Indian Navy, which would be utilized to provide basic sea training for officer cadets including women officer under trainees.
• DAC meeting was chaired by Defense Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.
• DAC is the highest decision-making body for defense purchases.

Assam Launches PRANAM Commission To Protect Parents Of State Government Employees
• 28 February 2019 Current Affairs: Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal launched the PRANAM Commission, which is a panel set up to look after the issues concerning a Bill brought in for the protection of parents of state government employees.

Dr. H Chaturvedi’s Book On Quality, Accreditation & Ranking Launched In New Delhi
• 8 February 2019 Current Affairs: Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu launched the book titled ‘Quality, Accreditation, and Ranking – A Silent Revolution in the Offing in Indian Higher Education’
• The book is edited by Education Promotion Society for India’s (EPSI) Alternate President Dr. H Chaturvedi in New Delhi.
• On this occasion, the UGC Chairman, Dr. DP Singh, and Management Guru Padma Shri Dr. Pritam Singh were present as the guest of honor.

ISRO to launch defense satellite 'Emisat' in March for DRDO.
• In the special mission, Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) will also launch 28 third-party satellites and will demonstrate its new technologies like three different orbits with a new variant of ‘Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle’ (PSLV) rocket in March, 2019.
• Electronic intelligence satellite ‘Emisat’ of Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) weighs about 420 kg.
• After launching Emisat at an altitude of 763 km, the PSLV rocket will be brought down to put the remaining 28 satellites into orbit at an altitude of 504 km.

Karnataka launched a major water conservation scheme Jalamrutha.
• Karnataka State government launched a major water conservation scheme titled‘Jalamrutha’, which focuses on drought-proofing measures, including protection and rejuvenation of water bodies. The scheme was initiated by the Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Department and was cleared by the State Cabinet. Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy launched the scheme in Bengaluru.
• Jalamrutha will deploy scientific approaches to water budgeting, water harvesting, and water conservation through the use of geospatial data, satellite imagery, topographical and geological data.
- The scheme will be implemented by key line departments of the government, Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and private sector institutions. It will operate on a four-tier institutional structure with planning and execution committees being set up at village, taluk, district and State levels.

**MCCs budget includes Mysuru Yogalakshmi scheme**
- The Mysuru City Corporation (MCC) presented the budget with an outlay of Rs.775 crore for the year 2019-20. MCC introduced new schemes that included Rs.25,000 for each girl child born in government hospitals in the City, pink toilets for the benefit of women, besides placing dust bins in buses and autorickshaws.
- Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Taxation, Finance and Appeals, Shobha presented the MCC Budget 2019-20. She announced the Mysuru Yogalakshmi scheme for the benefit of girl children born to residents of the city in government hospitals. The scheme will come into force from April 1, 2019.
- Under the scheme, Rs.25,000 will be deposited in the form of a bond in a nationalized bank in the name of each girl child born in a government facility. Rs.2.5 crore has been set aside in the Budget for the scheme. The scheme aimed at helping the girls pursue higher education and become financially independent.

**BANKING AND ECONOMICS**

**Sixth Bi-Monthly Monetary Policy Statement, 2017-18 by Dr.Urjit Patel.**
- Reduce the policy repo rate under the liquidity adjustment facility (LAF) by 25 basis points from 6.5% to 6.25% with immediate effect.
- The reverse repo rate under the LAF stands adjusted to 6.0%, and the marginal standing facility (MSF) rate and the Bank Rate to 6.5%.
- The first advance estimates (FAE) has placed the growth of real gross value added (GVA) at 7.0% in 2018-19 as compared with 6.9% in 2017-18.

**The Cabinet Committee of Economic Affairs (CCEA) approves creation of Agri-Market Fund**
- The Cabinet Committee of Economic Affairs chaired by PM Narendra Modi approved the creation of Agri-Market Infrastructure Fund (AMIF) on 6th Feb 2019.
- It is being created for the up-gradation and development of agricultural marketing infrastructure in Regulated Wholesale Markets and Gramin Agricultural Markets.
- A corpus of Rs. 2000 crore has been approved for the creation of the fund.

**Asian Development Bank raised $100 million in international market.**
- On 8th February 2019, The Asian Development Bank raised $100 million from peso-linked bonds in the international market. It was their maiden issue of Philippine peso.
- The move will help to reduce foreign exchange risk for ADB’s borrowers and support its growing local currency lending operations in Philippines.
- J P Morgan was the sole lead manager and bonds were fully placed with institutional investors in Asia, Europe and the Americas.
- Earlier in 2005 and 2007 ADB issued bond in the Philippine domestic capital market but it was the first time to mobilize Philippine peso funding from international investors through a currency linked structure.
• ADB is an international development finance institution and a regional development bank with a motto to fighting poverty in Asia and the Pacific.

RBI Doubles the limit of bulk deposits from Rs. 1 crore to Rs 2 Crore.
• On 7th February 2019, 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.
• RBI also proposed banks would maintain their bulk deposits interest rate cards in the core banking system for supervisory review.
• The right to offer differential rate of interest in bulk deposits as per their requirements and Asset Liability Management (ALM) projections is vested with banks.
• For a similar maturity period interest rate on bulk deposits are marginally higher than smaller amount fixed deposits.
• National Federation of Urban Cooperative Banks and Credit Societies Limited (NAFCUB) has suggested this proposal.
• The decision in proposal for setting up an Umbrella Organization (UO) for urban cooperative banks in pending with RBI.

RBI fines Allahabad Bank Rs 1.5 crore for not monitoring fund use, fraud reporting delay.
• On Feb. 8 2019, Allahabad Bank said the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has imposed a penalty of Rs 1.5 crore on them for not monitoring end use of funds, delay in classification and reporting of fraud and non-adherence with RBI guidelines during restructuring of accounts in respect of one of its borrowers.

Himachal’s growth rate projected at 7.3% in current financial year.
• Economic Survey Report for 2018-19 has projected the growth rate in Himachal Pradesh to be around 7.3% for the current financial year, 2018-19, while the per capita income is estimated at Rs 1, 76,968. Economic growth was 6.5% in the last fiscal, highest in last 3 years.
• Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) in current fiscal has increased to Rs 1, 36,542 crore and estimated to be about Rs 1, 51,835 crore in 2018-19.

IRDAI imposes fine on United India Insurance.
• Imposed a fine of Rs 9 lakh on state-owned United India Insurance Co Ltd for violating certain procedures.
• 3 violations were found during the inspection, of which 2 attracted the fine.
• UIIC is headquartered in Chennai, while IRDAI is in Hyderabad.

SBI fined by RBI.
• RBI slapped Rs 1 crore penalty on SBI, country’s largest lender on 7th Feb 2019 for violating norms.
• RBI levied the penalty in the exercise of powers conferred under Section 47 A of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949.
• SBI was charged for not monitoring the end use of funds in respect of one of its borrowers.

RBI Monetary Policy of February.
• RBI cuts key lending rate (repo) by 0.25 pc to 6.25 pc
• Reverse repo rate cut to 6pcs, bank rate to 6.5pc, CRR unchanged at 4pc
• Headline inflation estimates revised down to 2.8 pc in Q1, 3.2-3.4 pc in first half of next fiscal
• Projects GDP growth to accelerate to 7.4 pc next fiscal, from 7.2 pc in 2018-19.

Suresh Prabhu addresses interactive session.
• An interactive session on the Indo-Africa Strategic Economic Co-operation was held in New Delhi on 6th Feb 2019.
• It was organised by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
• The bilateral trade between Africa and India has increased from $7 billion in 2001 to $78 billion in 2014 and then $60 billion in 2017.
• Suresh Prabhu is the Union Minister of Commerce & Industry and Civil Aviation.

Sixth Bi-Monthly Monetary Policy Statement, 2017-18 by Dr. Urjit Patel.
• Reduce the policy repo rate under the liquidity adjustment facility (LAF) by 25 basis points from 6.5% to 6.25% with immediate effect.
• The reverse repo rate under the LAF stands adjusted to 6.0%, and the marginal standing facility (MSF) rate and the Bank Rate to 6.5%.
• The first advance estimates (FAE) has placed the growth of real gross value added (GVA) at 7.0% in 2018-19 as compared with 6.9% in 2017-18.

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RBI Doubles The Limit Of Bulk Deposits From Rs. 1 Crore To Rs 2 Crore.
• 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 the operational freedom of Banks.
• According to current RBI rules, last reviewed in January 2013, banks have the option of not permitting premature withdrawals of ‘large rupee term deposits’ of INR 1 crore and above. National Federation of Urban Cooperative Banks and Credit Societies Limited (NAFCUB) has suggested this proposal.

RBI Policy full text: MPC cuts repo rate by 25 bps to 6.25%
On the basis of an assessment of the current and evolving macroeconomic situation at its meeting, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) decided to reduce the policy repo rate under the liquidity adjustment facility (LAF) by 25 basis points from 6.5 per cent to 6.25 per cent with immediate effect.
• Consequently, the reverse repo rate under the LAF stands adjusted to 6.0 per cent, and the marginal standing facility (MSF) rate and the Bank Rate to 6.5 per cent. The MPC also decided to change the monetary policy stance from calibrated tightening to neutral.
Govt may relax FDI norms for single-brand retailers: Report
• The Cabinet is reportedly considering a proposal to relax mandatory 30% local sourcing norms for foreign single-brand retailers.
  • As per existing FDI norms, 100% foreign investment is permitted but with 30% of the value of the goods sourced from the country.
  • The proposal also suggests that retailers may sell online before opening a physical store if they invest $200 million.

Town with Google, FB billionaires US richest with 3.2cr avg income
• Silicon Valley suburb Atherton, home to former Google CEO Eric Schmidt and Facebook COO Sheryl Sandberg, is America’s richest community for the third year in a row, according to Bloomberg Richest Places annual index.
  • Atherton’s household income averaged $450,696 (Rs. 3.2 crore as of now) in 2017. Stanford University and Google and Facebook headquarters are a short drive away from Atherton.

IndiGo to curtail 30 daily flights in February
• The country’s largest airline IndiGo announced curtailing around 30 flights daily for the rest of February as it looks to stabilize operations and adjust crew rosters.
  • IndiGo, which has more than 41 per cent of domestic market share, said the cancellations represent 2 per cent of its flights and that operation would be normalised completely by March 31, 2019.
  • The budget carrier cancelled 49 flights on February 13 and the same has been informed to aviation regulator DGCA. The cancellations were reportedly caused by several factors like anticipated weather conditions and NOTAMS at various airports.
  • This resulted in extended duty times which then made it necessary to re-roster the crew and optimise the operations. Therefore, the airlines has decided to curtail its schedule for the remaining period of this month by approximately 30 flights a day.

RBI imposed penalty on 3 PSU banks.
• The monetary penalty was imposed for non-compliance on monitoring of end-use of funds and on the restructuring of accounts.
  • A penalty of Rs 1.5 crore was imposed on Oriental Bank of Commerce (OBC) and Rs 1 crore each on Punjab National Bank (PNB) and Bank of India.

Bit coin crosses $10,800 for first time in over 2 weeks
• Bit coin slipped below $6,050 on Feb 6th.
  • Bit coin has a total market capitalisation of over $181 bn.

India’s trade deficit rises to 56-month high in January.
• India’s trade deficit was its highest led by a surge in imports of precious stones and crude.
  • The deficit stood at $16.3 bn.

SBI has $212 MN outstanding exposure to PNB fraud case
• SBI has said that it has an exposure of $212 MN with respect to the Lou issued by PNB to Nirav Modi.
  • Hong Kong branches of several Indian banks allegedly gave $1.77 bn to Modi-linked firms based on the LoUs.
JP Morgan: first to create crypto currency.
• US investment bank, JP Morgan Chase became the first US bank to offer its own crypto currency.
• The crypto currency, called 'JPM Coin' will always have a value equivalent to one US dollar.
• It will be initially used internally between JPMorgan Chase's wholesale business clients.

RBI lifts cap on FPI investments.
• The Reserve Bank of India withdrew the 20% limit on investments by FPIs in corporate bonds of an entity.
• It was stipulated in April 2018 that no FPI should have an exposure of more than 20% of its corporate bond portfolio to a single corporate.
• This has been done with a view to encourage more foreign investments.

RBI to inject Rs 12,500 crores.
• The RBI would inject Rs 12,500 crore into the system through purchase of government securities on Feb 21, 2019, to increase liquidity.
• The purchase will be made through open market operations (OMOs).
• The eligible participants should submit their offers in electronic format on the RBI core banking solution (EKuber) system on February 21.

RBI to pay Rs 28,000 cr as interim dividend.
• The Reserve Bank will pay an interim dividend of Rs 28,000 crore to the government.
• This is the second successive year when the RBI will be transferring an interim surplus.
• RBI had given Rs 30,663 crore as dividend to the government in 2017-18.
• The central bank transfers its surplus amount to the government, under Section 47 of the RBI Act, 1934.

RBI released a warning.
• RBI has released a warning regarding an app called Any Desk.
• You should not download this app through social media or any other channel, doing so might empty your bank account within minutes.
• RBI alerted banks about potential fraudulent transactions on the unified payments interface (UPI) platform.

Vijay Mallya’s Rs.300 cr Mumbai house to be auctioned
• Mallya entered into an agreement allowing him to acquire up to 13 domestic properties from USL within a limited time frame after his resignation.
• The company has decided to sell after Mallya failed to buy them back last year.

Gitanjali shares drop 58%
• The company has lost Rs.435.41 cr from its market capitalisation in the last seven days.
• This comes after PNB accused Choksi and jeweller Nirav Modi of defrauding the bank of $1.77 bn.

Brace for difficult times ahead: Aircel CEO
• Aircel CEO Kaizad Heerjee has warned 5k employees to brace for difficult times.
• Aircel, which has 85 mn customers, recently stopped services in six circles to focus on the better performing ones.

**RBI formalised USD 75-billion swap pacts with Bank of Japan**
- This arrangement would bring in greater stability to the foreign exchange and capital markets in India since it will enable the availability of $75-billion in foreign capital for use as and when the need arises.
- In February, the rupee had shown signs of a rebound and it remained one of the best performing among the emerging market currencies.
- The rupee closed at 71.14 on Friday. The local unit fell about 2% so far this year, after an 8.5% drop in 2018 amid sharp swings in global crude oil prices.

**AWARDS AND RECOGNITION**

**P.S.Krishnan is to receive K.Veeramani Award**
K.Veeramani Award for Social Justice 2018 will be conferred on P.S. Krishnan, former Secretary, Government of India. Dravidar Kazhagam leader Veeramani will felicitate the awardee at a function in New Delhi. About the award: Periyar International Inc., (USA) gives an annual award for outstanding contributions to Social Justice, which is named his honor. Mr.V.P.Singh, former Prime Minister of India, was the first recipient of the award. K.Veeramani is an Honorary Associate of Rationalist International.

**Yes Bank wins the Aegis Graham Bell Award 2018 for ‘Innovation in Data Science’.**
• On Feb. 1 2019, Aegis Graham Bell Award 2018 announced Yes Bank as winner in ‘Innovation in Data Science’ category for their industry-first project ‘Yes EEE (Engage Enrich Excel)’ at Panaji, Goa. It was hosted by the Government of Goa.

**Sena Medals awarded to 92 army men, including Lance Naik Wani.**
• Lieutenant General Ranbir Singh, GOC-in-C (General Officer Commanding), Northern Command, presented Gallantry and Distinguished Service Awards to army officers, other ranks and next of kin (for posthumous awards).
• The army commander presented 1 Bar to Sena Medal (Gallantry), 76 Sena Medals (Gallantry), 7 Sena Medals (Distinguished) and 8 Vishist Seva Medals.
• Lance Naik Wani was conferred with the Bar to Sena Medal (Gallantry), received by his wife on his behalf. The brave soldier had sacrificed his life while combating terrorists at Batagund Village in Jammu & Kashmir in November 2018.
• 20 units were also awarded for their overall outstanding performance in the Command Theatre in the year 2018.

**Yes Bank wins Data Science Innovation Award.**
• Yes, Bank was announced as the winner of the 9th edition of Aegis Graham Bell Award 2018 for its ‘Yes Engage Enrich Excel (EEE)’ project in data science.
• Its EEE program is an industry-first analytics tool that aids the Bank’s relationship managers with top 3 talking points to engage with their customers.
• Aegis Graham Bell Award promotes innovations and entrepreneurship in the ICT domain.
Sanjiv Chadha awarded in UK.
• The State Bank of India’s UK Chief Mr Sanjiv Chadha has been honoured with the ‘Freedom of the City Of London’.
• The award was given by the city of London Corporation in recognition of his contribution to promoting bilateral relations
• The previous Indian recipient of the honour is Jawaharlal Nehru, the first PM of India. Other recipients include author J K Rowling and actor Dame Judi Dench.

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• It was hosted by the Government of Goa. Aegis Graham Bell Awards (AGBA) Promotes innovations and entrepreneurship in the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) domain.

BAFTA Awards 2019 Announced: Complete List Of Winners.
• Netflix drama 'Roma' won the top prize at the 72nd edition of the British Academy of Film and Television Arts or BAFTA awards.
• However, with seven BAFTAs in its kitty, director Yorgos Lanthimos's The Favourite emerged the top winner in 2019.

Deepa Mehta to Be Feted With Lifetime Achievement Award.
• Acclaimed Indo-Canadian filmmaker Deepa Mehta will be given the Lifetime Achievement Award by the Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television. Mehta is best known for her Elements Trilogy - 'Fire', 'Earth' and 'Water'.
• The Canadian Screen Awards are awards given annually by the Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television recognizing excellence in Canadian film, English-language television, and digital media productions.

Grammy Awards 2019 Announced:
• The 61st Annual Grammy Awards ceremony was held at Staples Center in Los Angeles.
• The show was hosted by Singer-songwriter Alicia Keys.
• Pat Cummins won the coveted Allan Border Medal at the Australian Cricket Awards on 11 Feb 2019.
• Glenn Maxwell took the T20I award and Matthew Wade bagged the Domestic Player of the Year award
• Bradley Cooper won the best director from PETA.
• Bradley Cooper was awarded the ‘Oscar’ by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA).
• The animal rights organization awarded the best director award to Cooper for his enlightened decision to cast his own canine companion in ‘A Star Is Born’.

President Kovind presents Tagore Award for Cultural Harmony.
• President Ram Nath Kovind on Monday said each region in the country has a distinct cultural identity but this does not divide but unites and harmonizes all of India.
• President made the statement after presenting the Tagore Award for Cultural Harmony here on Monday. He remarked that the award is a celebration of Indian tradition of culture.
• Remembering Rabindranath Tagore, President Kovind said, "Gurudev was a remarkable genius, who became the first Indian Nobel laureate. Gurudev Tagore is remembered every day as a poet who gave India its national anthem. He belongs to the entire world as he was a nationalist as well as an internationalist."

Sudanese refugee wins major human rights award.
• Sudanese refugee, Abdul Aziz Muhamat, who spent 5 years in the Australian detention center on Manus Island in Papua New Guinea, was given the Martin Ennals Award 2019 in Geneva, Switzerland, for exposing "the very cruel asylum seeker policy of the Australian Government".
• It is sometimes referred to as the “Nobel Prize for human rights”. Abdul Aziz Muhamat’s podcast “The Messenger”, created from more than 4,000 WhatsApp messages Muhamat sent from the detention center, had won best radio/audio feature at Australia’s Walkley Awards in 2017.

Sunil Chhetri receives 'Football Ratna' award.
• Talismanic Indian striker Sunil Chhetri was awarded the first-ever ‘Football Ratna’ by Football Delhi, the State Association governing the sport in Delhi. Dr. Shaji Prabhakaran, President, Delhi Football presented the honor a function at the majestic Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium.
• Chhetri, who was recently named as the 6th Indian Footballer in the elite Padma Shri list, said: “I am honored by the kind gesture of Football Delhi for recognizing me with the Football Ratna award.”
• “My support will always be there for the development of football in Delhi. I am sure the current management is working hard to develop football, and make Delhi a model football state in India. My best wishes to everyone associated with the sport in Delhi,” he added.

NGO Yuwa won Laureus Sport.
• Yuwa, a Jharkhand-based NGO won the Laureus Sport for Good award.
• The NGO works for the girl empowerment.
• The NGO, founded by Americans Franz Gastler and Rose Thomson Gastler in 2009, runs a football program in rural Jharkhand covering 450 girls.

PM Modi received Seoul Peace Prize 2018.
• PM Narendra Modi received the prestigious Seoul Peace Prize for 2018 for his contribution to international cooperation and fostering global economic growth.
• The award was presented to him by the Seoul Peace Prize Foundation at a grand ceremony.
• A short film on the life and achievements of Prime Minister Modi was also screened at the event.

Manpreet Singh honored with AHF’s Player of the Year Award
• The Asian Hockey Federation has honored 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.
• Manpreet led the Indian team to an unbeaten streak at the Asian Champions Trophy in Muscat where the team was declared joint winners with Pakistan while Lalremsiami put up an impressive performance as a striker at the 2018 World Cup.

ONGC Rajahmundry wins environmental excellence award
• Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC)’s Rajahmundry unit won the Energy and Environment Foundation Global Clean Awards-2019 for sustained efforts in pursuit of Swachh Bharat Mission as envisioned by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, at a function in New Delhi.
• It has also received Platinum Award under Apex India Environment Excellence Award 2018 from Apex India Foundation for excellence in environmental management in Petroleum Sector.

**Manpreet Singh named as Player of the Year and Lalremsiami as Rising Player of The Year by the Asian Hockey Federation**
• Harmanpreet Singh was awarded the 2018 Player of the Year award while women’s team striker Lalremsiami as the Rising Player of The Year, by the Asian Hockey Federation.
• Harmanpreet Singh led the Indian team to an unbeaten streak at the Asian Champions Trophy in Muscat where the team was declared joint winners with Pakistan and also contributed to the team’s silver medal win at the FIH Champions Trophy in Breda. 18-year-old Lalremsiami, has shown remarkable progress in the women’s team with her impressive performance as a striker at the 2018 World Cup and the Asian Games where the team won Silver medal and was also a part of the Youth Olympics in Buenos Aires where the under-18 team won a silver.
• The Indian men’s team was awarded the Best Performance of The Year for being the only Asian side to have reached the top eight at the World Cup in Bhubaneswar.

**President Conferred 'Gandhi Peace Prize'**
• President Ram Nath Kovind conferred the Gandhi Peace Prize for 2015, 16, 17 and 18 at a function in Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi.
• The award comprises a cash award of one crore rupees, a citation in a scroll, a plaque and a traditional handicraft item.
• Here are the awardees that were facilitated at the occasion:
  1. For 2015: Vivekananda Kendra, Kanyakumari was given the award for its contribution in Rural Development, Education and Development of natural resources.
  2. For 2016: Jointly to Akshaya Patra Foundation for its contribution in providing mid-day meals to millions of children across India and Sulabh International for its contribution in improving the condition of sanitation in India and emancipation of manual scavengers.
  3. For 2017: Ekal Abhiyan Trust for its contribution in providing Education for Rural and Tribal Children in remote areas pan India, Rural Empowerment, Gender, and Social Equality.
  4. For 2018: Japan's Yohei Sasakawa for his contribution in Leprosy Eradication in India and across the world.

**Lifetime Achievement Award For G.R. Karthikeyan**
• G.R. Karthikeyan, father of India’s first Formula One driver Narain Karthikeyan, was honored with the Lifetime Achievement award at the FMSCI annual awards function.
• FIA president Jean Todt was the chief guest and handed over the awards.

**Telanganas 4 ULBs bagged Swachh Survekshan 2019 awards.**
• Telangana’s four Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) bagged Swachh Survekshan-2019 awards. Siddipet, Sircilla, Boduppal, and Peerzadiguda are the four Urban Local Bodies. The awards would be presented by President Ram Nath Kovind and others at a ceremony to be held in Delhi on March 6.
• Every year, cities and towns across India are awarded the title of 'Swachh Cities' on the basis of their cleanliness and sanitation drive as a part of the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan that was launched in 2014.
• The objective of the survey is to encourage large scale citizen participation, ensure sustainability of initiatives taken towards garbage free and open defecation free cities, provide credible outcomes.
which would be validated by third-party certification, institutionalize existing systems through online processes and create awareness amongst all sections of society about the importance of working together towards making towns and cities a better place to live in.

SPORTS

Rohit Sharma becomes 1st Indian to smash 100 sixes in T20 Cricket.
• Indian opener Rohit Sharma became the first man from his country to smash a century of sixes in T20I cricket in the second T20 between India and New Zealand held in Eden Park in New Zealand.
• He made his T20I debut against England but played his first innings against South Africa in 2007 T20I.
• Rohit Sharma surpassed Martin Guptill to become the highest scorer in T20 Internationals with 102 sixes.

Ricky Ponting has been appointed the assistant coach of Australia for 2019 World Cup.
• On 8th February 2019, Cricket Australia appointed Ricky Ponting as assistant coach for Australia’s cricket team for 2019 World Cup. He had won world cup for three times.
• The main coach for Australian Cricket team is Justin Langer. Ponting was appointed after David Saker’s resignation from the post.
• Ricky Ponting worked as assistant for Australia’s T20 in 2017 and 2018. The current batting coach for the team is Graeme Hicks.
• ICC Cricket World Cup 2019 Scheduled to be hosted by England and Wales from 30th May to 14th July 2019.
• Ponting play 375 ODI’s and 168 tests for Australia. He won the World Cup for the 1st time in 1999 before captaining and in 2003 and in 2007.

Corentin Moutet Clinched Chennai Open ATP Challenger Title.
• In Tennis, France’s Corentin Moutet has clinched the Chennai Open ATP Challenger tournament title after beating Andrew Harris of Australia in the singles final.
• It was the second Challenger title for Moutet, who received 80 ATP points, while Andrew got 48 ATP points.

Prajnesh Gunneswaran breaks into men's singles top 100
• India’s Prajnesh Gunneswaran has made it to the top-100 of Men's Singles Tennis rankings with a jump of six places that took him to 97.
• With the feat, Gunneswaran has become the third Indian player to break into the top-100 barrier in the past decade after Somdev Devvarman and Yuki Bhambri.
• He reached the semifinals of the ATP Chennai Challenger last week to ensure his entry into the coveted bracket. If he is able to maintain his rank inside top-100, it will secure him entry into Grand Slam singles main draws.
• In the doubles, Rohan Bopanna stayed put at 37 and was followed by his partner Divij Sharan at 39.

Steyn overtakes Kapil, becomes joint 7th highest Test wicket-taker
• South African pacer Dale Steyn went past former Indian captain Kapil Dev in the list of highest wicket-takers in Test cricket after registering figures of 4/48 against Sri Lanka on Thursday.
• Steyn with 437 wickets to his name in the longest format is now at the joint seventh position in the all-time list of highest wicket-takers in Test cricket.

**Saina, Kashyap, Verma enter semifinals of Senior Nationals**
• Former champions Saina Nehwal, Parupalli Kashyap and Sourabh Verma advanced to the semifinals of the 83rd Yonex-Sunrise Senior Badminton Nationals in Guwahati on Friday.
• Saina will face 22-year-old Nagpur qualifier Vaishnavi Bhale, while Kashyap will face Lakshya Sen. The 26-year-old Sourabh Verma will meet qualifier Kaushal Dharmamer of Mumbai.
• Shane Warne named brand ambassador of Rajasthan Royals
• Australia spin legend Shane Warne has been named as the new brand ambassador of Rajasthan Royals for the upcoming Indian Premier League.
• Warne, who led Rajasthan Royals to its first and only IPL title in 2008, was the mentor of the side last season.

**Deep satisfaction on reaching number one: Roger Federer.**
• Roger Federer became the oldest world number one in history.
• The 36-yr old first became world number one in 2004 and went on to stay at the position for 237 weeks.

**Kohli wins 28th Man of Match award.**
• Indian Captain Virat Kohli has now won the third most Man of the Match awards by an Indian cricketer.
• Kohli is now behind Sourav Ganguly (31) and Sachin Tendulkar (62) among Indians.

**Thompson trumps Bhambri to win Chennai Open Challenger.**
• Saturday's Chennai Open Challenger final had all the ingredients of a nerve-wracking title clash; the top two seeds in action, multiple breakpoints, a missed match point opportunity and hard-hitting end to end action.
• A closely-contested tie, top-seed Jordan Thompson roared past Yuki Bhambri 7-5, 3-6, 7-5 in three gruelling sets to lift the Chennai Open Challenger trophy, his career's fifth Challenger title.
• Bhambri had a chance to get his hands on the winner's cheque but it was Thompson who proved to be the better player on the evening, albeit by a thin margin.

**Vidarbha won Irani Cup.**
• Vidarbha defended its Irani Cup title on 16 Feb 2019 at the Jamtha Stadium in Nagpur.
• The Irani Cup tournament was conceived during the 1959-60 season to mark the completion of 25 years of the Ranji Trophy championship.

**National Championship: Saina Nehwal beats PV Sindhu to clinch second successive title.**
• Saina Nehwal defeated PV Sindhu for the second year running as she claimed the senior national title in women's singles once again with a 21-18, 21-15 win in Guwahati on Saturday.
• Saina had defeated Sindhu in the final in the previous edition of the nationals in November 2017 and the two-time Commonwealth Games gold medalist was at it again.

**Qatar Open: Elise Mertens beats Simona Halep to win her biggest tour title.**
Elise Mertens has claimed the biggest title of her career by beating top seed Simona Halep to win the Qatar Open.

Mertens, 23, recovered from a set and a break down - losing 18 points in a row at one stage in the second set - to beat the world number three 3-6 6-4 6-3.

World number 21 Mertens also overcame a lengthy medical time-out for a back issue in the first set.

Jitendra Singh won 50km event.

Jitendra Singh Rathore claimed the top honours in the men’s 50km race walk competition at the 6th National Open Race Walking Championships that concluded in Chennai.

Suraj Panwar of Uttarakhand won the boys 10km race.

The gold medal in the girls 10km race was clinched by Roji Patel of Uttarakhand.

Nikhat Zareen and Meena Kumari Devi became the first Indian women boxers to win gold medals at the Strandja Memorial Tournament in Sofia, Bulgaria.

ISSF Shooting World Cup held.


Various events in the World cup will start from February 23rd and end on 27th at the Dr Karni Singh Shooting Range.

Around 503 shooters from 58 countries will be competing for top honours with 8 of the 10 events offering Olympic quota places.

India Korea start up hub launched.

PM Narendra Modi launched India Korea start up hub in Seoul on Feb 21, 2019.

India is one of the most open countries for FDI today and more than 90% of its sectors are now on automatic route for approval.

India has become the 6th largest producer of renewable energy in the world, as said by PM Modi during the launch.

Saurabh wins gold at shooting World Cup

Indian shooter Saurabh Chaudhary won gold in the men’s 10 meter air pistol category at the ISSF World Cup in New Delhi. In the final, the shooter created a new world record with a score of 245. This is the second gold for India in this tournament.

Apurvi Chandela had taken the first gold for India when she won the title in the women’s 10m air rifle category.

India suspended by IOC from Hosting International Sporting Events after Pakistan Shooters were Denied Visa

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) suspended all Indian applications to host future events and urged international sports federations not to stage competitions in the country after two Pakistanis were denied visas to compete in New Delhi.

It was after India denied entry visas for two shooters from Pakistan who were due to take part in the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup event held in New Delhi following the attack by a Pakistan-based militant group in Pulwama, which killed at least 40 CRPF paramilitary police.
• The IOC Executive Board decided to suspend all discussions with the Indian National Olympic Committee (NOC) and Government regarding the potential applications for hosting future sports and Olympic–related events in India, until clear written guarantees are obtained from the Indian government to ensure the entry of all participants in such events in full compliance with the rules of the Olympic Charter.

Afghanistan Scores Highest Ever T20 International Score
• Afghanistan scored 278 for the loss of three wickets from their allotted 20 overs, to register the highest-ever total in T20s at the Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium in Dehradun, Uttarakhand.
• Hazratullah Zazai scored 162 runs from just 62 balls. Zazai became the first player from Afghanistan to score 150 or more runs, and his 236-run opening stand with Usman Ghani became the highest partnership in T20Is.

Sri Lanka Becomes 1st Ever Asian Team To Win Test Series In South Africa
• Sri Lanka cricket team became the first Asian side to win a Test series in South Africa after winning the series by 2-0.
• Kusal Perera was given the Man of the Series award. Before Sri Lanka, only Australia and England have defeated South Africa in a Test series at home.

Grandmaster Abhijeet Gupta Wins Cannes International Open Trophy
• Indian Grandmaster Abhijeet Gupta lifted the Cannes International Open trophy. He took an easy draw with Pier Luigi Basso of Italy in the ninth and final round.
• Abhijeet won the tournament with 7.5 points. It is his first solo International tournament victory.

Karnataka defeat Saurashtra to win Vijay Hazare Trophy
• Karnataka won the tournament for the 3rd time.
• Karnataka put up a total of 253/10 before Saurashtra were bowled out for 212 in 16.2 overs.

Usain Bolt to play charity football match at Man Utd’s home.
• Eight time Olympic gold medal winning sprinter Usain Bolt will lead the ‘World XI’ team against team ‘England’.
• The match will be held on June 10th.

APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATION
Radheyshyam Julaniya to replace Rahul Bhatnagar as Union Sports Secretary.
• IAS officer (Madhya Pradesh cadre), Radheyshyam Julaniya will replace Rahul Bhatnagar as the Union Sports Secretary.
• Bhatnagar has been released by the Sports Ministry and is set to join the Ministry on Panchayati Raj.
• Notable achievements of the Sports Ministry during the tenure of Mr. Rahul Bhatnagar include opening of the National Sports University, Khelo India Youth Games, hosting international tournaments like Hockey World Cup in Bhubaneswar and World Women’s Boxing Championship in New Delhi.
Pradeep Singh became Civil Aviation Secretary.
- The government appointed Air India Chief Managing Director and Chairperson Pradeep Singh Kharola as the secretary of the Ministry of Civil Aviation.
- Kharola will take over from Rajiv Nayan Choubey.
- He is an IAS officer of Karnataka cadre from the 1985 batch, who was named chairperson of Air India in November 2017.

Ruchira Kamboj Appointed India's Ambassador to Bhutan.
- Ruchira Kamboj was appointed as the Ambassador of India to Bhutan. She is serving as the High Commissioner of India to South Africa since 2017.
- Kamboj has previously served as the Ambassador/PR to Permanent Delegation of India to UNESCO, Paris.

Egypt’s President El-Sissi Elected as Chairman of African Union.
- Egypt’s President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi has been elected as the chairman of the African Union at the continental body’s summit in Ethiopia.
- El-Sisi’s election brings an end the one-year chairmanship of Rwanda’s President Paul Kagame.

Ashwani Lohani, a retired bureaucrat, was appointed the Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of National carrier Air India, on 13 Feb 2019.
- This will be his second tenure.
- In August 2017, he was named the Chairman to the Railway Board and retired on December 31, 2018.

B P Sharma: CMD Pawan Hans.
- B P Sharma was re-employed as the CMD of the state-run helicopter manufacturer Pawan Hans.
- He was the CMD of Pawan Hans earlier in March 2015.
- He will be serving for a period of 5 months.
- Pawan Hans has a fleet of more than 50 helicopters.

Sushil Chandra became Election Commissioner.
- President Ram Nath Kovind appointed Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) Chairman Sushil Chandra as an Election Commissioner.
- The post had fallen vacant after the appointment of the then Election Commissioner Sunil Arora as Chief Election Commissioner.
- Ashok Lavasa is the senior-most Election Commissioner.

Appointments Committee of Cabinet (ACC) has appointed senior IRS officer Pramod Chandra Mody as chairman of Central Board of Direct Taxes.
- He will succeed Sushil Chandra, who was recently appointed Election Commissioner.
- The Government of India, Government of Himachal Pradesh (GoHP) 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.
- William Barr was sworn for second time as the Attorney General of US.
- Derrick Pereira is set to become the coach of the Indian Under-23 football team for the upcoming Asian Football Confederation (AFC) qualifiers, to be held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan from 22nd March.
• Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Limited (DHFL) has notified that its CEO Harshil Mehta has resigned from his position with immediate effect on 13th February, 2019.

Shoaib Akhtar named Pakistan Cricket Board's brand ambassador.
• Former Pakistan speedster Shoaib Akhtar has been appointed as the advisor to the chairman on cricket affairs and the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) brand ambassador.
• Akhtar announced on Twitter that he “was honoured to be chosen by the PCB” and expressed confidence of taking Pakistan cricket to greater heights.

Former JNU Prof Vinod Kumar Jain appointed Tezpur university VC.
• Former Professor of Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) Vinod Kumar Jain has been appointed as the new Vice Chancellor of Tezpur University.
• Jain has been appointed by the President of India, in his capacity as the Visitor of the Tezpur University, according to an official release issued by the University on Friday.
• He will serve as the vice-chancellor for a period of five years from the date on which he enters upon his office or until he attains the age of 70 years, whichever is earlier.

TCS Recognized as One of the Top Three Employers.
• Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), India’s largest IT services company, is recognized as one of world’s best employers by the Top Employer Institute for the third year running.
• The Top Employer Institute, Amsterdam-based global certification company in employee conditions, selected TCS for its exceptional employee offerings from a pool of more than 1,300 companies in 113 countries.

Anupama elected Astronomical Society of India president, first.
• Dr. G. C. Anupama has been elected president of the Astronomical Society of India (ASI), becoming the first woman to head the prime association of professional astronomers in the country.
• She was elected to the post in the ASI Executive Council elections for triennium 2019-22 held last week, according to the Society website.
• Presently the Dean and Senior Professor at the Bengaluru based Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA), Anupama is in the Indian core team which is part of the international team engaged in establishing the thirty meter telescope (TMT) at cost of over USD 1 billion in USA (Hawaii).
• A.K. Sharma has been re-appointed as the Director (Finance) of Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) for a period of 3 months.

Uma Nath Singh: 1st Lokayukta of Nagaland.
• Justice Uma Nath Singh took oath as the First Lokayukta of Nagaland on February 22, 2019.
• Governor PB Acharya administered the oath of office to Justice Singh at a ceremony at Raj Bhavan in Kohima.

Lt Gen Ravi: 3rd member of CoA.
• The Supreme Court appointed Lieutenant General Ravi Thodge as the 3rd member of the Committee of Administrators (CoA) for BCCI.
• In 2017, the apex court had appointed a 4-member CoA, headed by former Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) Vinod Rai.
• The other 3 members of the CoA were -- former Indian women cricket captain Diana Edulji, Ramachandra Guha and Vikram Limaye.

D.K. Jain appointed as BCCI Ombudsman.
• The Supreme Court appointed retired judge of the court Justice D.K. Jain as the first BCCI ombudsman.
• He was appointed under the new BCCI Constitution approved on August 9, 2018.

Brij Bhushan Sharan elected as WFI President for third time
• Member of Parliament Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh has been elected third time unopposed as the President of Wrestling Federation of India (WFI). Election of the Office Bearers and Executive Committee Members of WFI for the next year’s term (2019-2023) was held in New Delhi at the Constitution Club of India.
• Along with Brij Bhushan, I.D. Nanavati has been elected as the Senior Vice President, V.N. Prasood as the Secretary General and Satyapal Singh Deshwal as the Treasurer.

Indra Nooyi Joins Amazon’s Board of Directors
• PepsiCo’s India-born former CEO Indra Nooyi has joined Amazon’s board of directors, the online retail giant. Starbucks executive Rosalind Brewer has also joined the Amazon Board.
• She was Pepsico CEO from October 2006 to October 2018, where she also served as the Chairman of its board of directors from May 2007 to February 2019.

Govind Prasad Sharma is appointed as the Chairman of NBT
• Educationist and Author Govind Prasad Sharma has been appointed as the Chairman of National Book Trust (NBT). Govind Prasad Sharma has served as the Principal of Government P.G. College in Madhya Pradesh and in other Educational sectors previously.
• National Book Trust National Book Trust (NBT) is an apex body established by the Government of India in the Year 1957 under the Department Of Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

India’s communication satellite GSAT-31 launched successfully from French Guiana
India’s latest communication satellite, GSAT-31 was successfully launched from the Spaceport in French Guiana during the early hours today. The launch vehicle Ariane 5 VA-247 lifted off from Kourou Launch Base, French Guiana at 2:31 am (IST) carrying India’s GSAT-31 and Saudi Geostationary Satellite 1/Hellas Sat 4 satellites, as scheduled.
After a 42-min flight, GSAT-31 separated from the Ariane 5 upper stage in an elliptical Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit with a perigee (nearest point to Earth) of 250 km and an apogee (farthest point to Earth) of 35,850 km, inclined at an angle of 3.0 degree to the equator.

Helicopter-launched anti-tank missile ‘Helina’ test-fired in Balasore, Odisha.
• India test-fired Helina, a helicopter-launched version of the Nag anti-tank guided missile, with a hit range of 7-8 km, from the Odisha Coast on Friday.
• Helina was launched from an Army chopper and the weapon system was tested for its full range at 12:55 PM near the Integrated Test Range in Chandipur in the Balasore District of Odisha.
• Developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), Helina is said to be one of the most advanced anti-tank weapons in the world. It is guided by an Infrared Imaging Seeker (IIR) operating in the lock-on-before-launch mode.

NASA: 2018 4th warmest year on record.
• The global surface temperatures on the Earth in 2018 were the 4th warmest since 1880.
• This was found in an independent analysis by NASA and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).
• The global temperatures in 2018 were 0.83 degree Celsius. 2018’s temperatures rank behind those of 2016, 2017 and 2015.

China unveiled first female AI news anchor.
• China's state-run news agency, Xinhua, unveiled the world's first female AI news anchor (Xin Xiaomeng) to read alongside its male AI news presenters on Feb 21, 2019.
• Earlier, Xinhua also developed Qiu Hao, the world’s first male AI news anchor at the World Internet Conference in Wuzhen held in November 2018.

OBITUARY

Padma Shri R.B. Patil passed away
Padma Shri R.B. Patil, 93-year-old, passed away in Hubballi. He established North Karnataka’s first comprehensive centre for cancer in 1977 from voluntary donations. Dr. Patil completed his education in England and continued to see patients until recently before his health deteriorated. The mortal remains of the surgeon were kept at his nursing home in Vidyanagar, Hubballi, for people to pay tributes.

British actor Albert Finney, five time Oscar nominee died at age of 82.
• On February 9, 2019, five time Oscar nominated actor Albert Finney died at the age of 82 due to chest infection in London.
• The veteran actor was best known for his roles in Tom Jones, Erin Brockovich and Annie.

Ex-Mathura MLA Ram Swarup Sharma passes away.
• Mathura (UP), Feb 17 (PTI) Former MLA and Padma Shri awardee Ram Swarup Sharma passed here this evening following brief illness, his family sources said.
• Sharma represented the Mathura-Vrindavan constituency twice in the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly.
• He was also a popular exponent of the Rasa Lila, a popular form of folk theatre in the regions of Mathura and Vrindavan devoted to lord Krishna.

Acclaimed Hindi Author Namvar Singh Dies At 92.
• Celebrated Hindi author and literary critic Namvar Singh died in the national capital late on Tuesday night. He was 92.
• Mr. Singh breathed his last at 11.51 pm at the All India Institute of Medical Science’s Trauma Centre, family sources said.
• Hindi writer, senior journalist, editor and critic Om Thanvi posted about the author's demise on Facebook and said the cremation ceremony of Namvar Singh would take place at the Lodi crematorium on Wednesday afternoon.
SUMMITS AND MOU's

MOU's approved between India and Namibia
- The Union Cabinet approved the MoU between India and Electoral Tribunal of Panama and Electoral Commission of Namibia on 6th Feb 2019.
- It would promote bilateral cooperation, aimed at building technical assistance/capacity support for the Electoral Commission of Namibia (ECN) and with Electoral Tribunal of Panama (ETP).
- The Cabinet was chaired by PM Narendra Modi.

Cabinet Approvals: February 2019
- MoU between India and Malaysia for Mutual Cooperation in the field of Company Secretary Ship.
- MoU between India and Norway on India-Norway Ocean Dialogue
- MoU between India and Brazil on cooperation in the field of Traditional Systems of Medicine and Homoeopathy.
- MoU between India and Maldives for Establishing Mutual Cooperation to Improve the Ecosystems for Agribusiness.
- MoU between India and the UAE on Development cooperation in Africa
- Signing of Agreement between India and Ukraine for cooperation in Agriculture and Food Industry
- The revised Office Memorandum pertaining to the Cabinet Note on “Amendment of Constitution to provide for reservation for Economically Weaker Sections”
- MoU between India and Finland in the field of Biotechnology
- MoU between India and Uzbekistan for promoting bilateral cooperation in the area of e-Governance.
- Proposal for higher allocation of power to Home State from Under Construction Projects of NTPC Ltd.
- Establishment of a unified authority for regulating all financial services in International Financial Services Centres (IFSCs) in India through International Financial Services Centres Authority Bill, 2019.
- Establishment of Circuit Bench of Calcutta High Court at Jalpaiguri.
- Establishment of Rashtriya Kamdhenu Aayog for Conservation protection and development of cows and their progeny.

Indian Coast Guard signed MoU with AAI.
- Indian Coast Guard and the Airport Authority of India signed a Memorandum of Understanding at Coast Guard Regional Headquarters in Port Blair.
- It is signed for coordination in the aeronautical, maritime search and rescue operations.
- The MoU with AAI is aimed at strengthening mutual interactions, interoperability, and validating procedures during the conduct of search and rescue operations.
Dr Jitendra Singh delivers keynote.

- Dr Jitendra Singh, Minister of the DoNER (The Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region), delivered a keynote address at the 'Parmanu Tech 2019' conference on 6th February 2019 at New Delhi.
- It was organized by the Ministry of External Affairs and Department of Atomic Energy.
- The conference also discussed issues related to Radiation Technologies and Nuclear Energy.

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Rajasthan forms committees to review textbooks.
- The Rajasthan government has set up two committees of experts and educationists to review the syllabus of school textbooks from class 1 to 8 and from class 9 to 12.
- The committee to review the syllabus of class 1 to 8 will be coordinated by I V Trivedi.
- The coordinator for the four-member committee for class 9-12 is the former Chairman of Rajasthan State Public Service Commission BM Sharma.

Conference on Pharmacy inaugurated.
- The 4th edition of India’s biggest Global Conference on Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices was inaugurated in Bengaluru on 18 Feb 2019.
- The theme of ‘India Pharma 2019’ is ‘Enabling Quality Affordable Healthcare & that of ‘India Medical Device 2019’ is ‘Accelerating Growth to Achieve Universal Healthcare’.
- The event was organized by the Department of Pharmaceuticals (DoP) and FICCI.

India and Morocco signed 4 MoUs.
- India and Morocco signed four MoUs in Rabat on 18 Feb 2019.
- The MoUs include setting up of Joint Working Group on Counter Terrorism and Cooperation in Housing and Human Settlement.

Joint Statement between India and Namibia during President’s visit to Namibia.
- The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved the proposal for a MoU between India and the Electoral Commission of Namibia (ECN) and with Electoral Tribunal of Panama (ETP) on cooperation in the field of electoral management and administration.
- MoU contains standard articles/clauses which broadly express promotion of cooperation in the field of electoral management and administration including promotion of exchange of knowledge and experience in the field of organizational and technical development of electoral process; support in exchanging information, institutional strengthening and capacity building, training of personnel, holding regular consultations etc.
- The MOU would promote bilateral cooperation, aimed at building technical assistance/ capacity support for the Electoral Commission of Namibia (ECN) and with Electoral Tribunal of Panama (ETP). It envisages cooperation in the field of electoral management and administration and providing a leg-up to it in conducting elections in their respective countries. This would also result in bolstering India’s international relations.

India-OECD pact approved.
- The Union Cabinet approved the agreement between India and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).
- It has been done for participating in the Programme for International Students Assessment (PISA).
- PISA will be conducted by the OECD in 2021. The agreement was signed on January 28, 2019.
World Day of Social Justice 20 February.
• Social justice is an underlying principle for peaceful and prosperous coexistence within and among nations. We uphold the principles of social justice when we promote gender equality or the rights of indigenous peoples and migrants.
• We advance social justice when we remove barriers that people face because of gender, age, race, ethnicity, religion, culture or disability.
• For the United Nations, the pursuit of social justice for all is at the core of our global mission to promote development and human dignity. The adoption by the International Labor Organization of the Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization is just one recent example of the UN system’s commitment to social justice.

IAF gets its first woman flight engineer.
• Flight Lieutenant Hina Jaiswal became the first woman flight engineer.
• She was commissioned in January 2015 to the IAF’s engineering branch.
• She created history when she was chosen as the first woman candidate to pursue the elite course.
• A flight engineer is a member of an aircraft’s flight crew and requires special skills for constantly monitoring and operating its complex systems.

Vice Admiral SN Ghormade: Takes over as COS.
• He was awarded the Ati Vishisht Seva Medal on 26 Jan 2017 and Nau Sena Medal in 2007 by the President of India.