World Productivity Congress 2020 to be held in Bengaluru in May:
- The 19th edition of the World Productivity Congress (WPC) is scheduled to be held in Bengaluru from May 6 to May 8, 2020.
- World Productivity Congress is the world’s largest convention for productivity development that shape future productivity growth.
- The theme of 19th World Productivity Congress is “Industry 4.0 – Innovation and Productivity”.

Maharashtra government’s “Smart gram yojana” to be named after ex-minister R RPatil:
- The Maharashtra government’s “smart gram yojana” will be named after former Deputy Chief Minister the late R RPatil.
- Since November 2016, the ‘smart gram yojana’ (smart village) is being implemented in the state where awards are given to gram panchayats at taluka and district level for their performance on certain parameters.

Haryana CM unveils Rs 1,42,343-crore budget for 2020-21:
- Haryana Chief Minister ManoharLalKhattar, who also holds the finance portfolio, announced a Rs 1,42,343-crore budget in the state assembly.
- The debt is set to increase to Rs 1.98 lakh crore in 2020-21 as against Rs 1.76 lakh crore in the previous fiscal. The expenditure will increase to Rs 1,42,343 crore, a rise by 7.7 per cent.

Central Consumer Protection Authority to be established in 2020 April:
- Union Minister of Food and Public Distribution Ram Vilas Paswan announced that the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) will be set up by the first week of April 2020.
- The CCPA will be established under the Consumer Protection Act 2019.
- The authority will address issues related to consumer rights, unfair trade practices, misleading advertisements. CCPA will be empowered to impose penalties for selling spurious and adulterated products.

Maharashtra to become single-use plastic-free by 1 May:
- Maharashtra State government is set to become single-use plastic-free by 1 May 2020.
- The announcement was made by the State environment minister Aaditya Thackeray.

President presented awards to 21 winners on National Science day:
- President Ram NathKovind conferred national awards to 21 winners for science communication and popularization including women excellence awards for meritorious
women scientists on the occasion of National Science Day.

- The awards included Augmenting Writing Skills for Articulating Research (AWSAR) Awards, National Science and Technology Communication Awards, SERB Women Excellence Awards, and National Award for Young Woman Showing Excellence through Application of Technology for Societal Benefits.
- On the occasion, President announced three key initiatives for Gender Advancement and Equality in Academic and Research Institutions.

1) VigyanJyoti:
- VigyanJyoti is an initiative that will create a level-playing field for the meritorious girls in high school to pursue Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) in their higher education.

2) GATI:
- The Gender Advancement for Transforming Institutions (GATI) initiative will develop a comprehensive Charter and a framework for assessing the Gender Equality in STEM.

3) Online portal for S&T resources for women:
- An online portal for science and technology resources for women will provide e-resources related to all women-specific government schemes, scholarships, fellowships, career counseling with details of subject area experts from various disciplines in science and technology.

**BANKING AND ECONOMY**

**ONGC, HPCL buy 34.56% of bankers’ stake in Petronet MHB for Rs 371 cr:**
- State-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corp (ONGC) and its subsidiary Hindustan Petroleum Corp Ltd (HPCL) have bought out lenders in Petronet MHB Ltd, the firm that owns a petroleum product pipeline in Mangalore, for about Rs 371 crore.
- A consortium of eight public sector banks held 34.56 per cent stake in PetronetMHB Ltd, where ONGC and HPCL held 32.72 per cent apiece.
- The two firms paid Rs 185.38 crore each for acquiring 17.28 per cent more share in Petronet MHB Ltd.

**OBITUARY**

**Former India hockey player and Olympic medallist Balbir Singh Kullar passes away at 77:**
- Former India hockey player and a two-time Olympic medallist, Balbir Singh Kullar has passed away.
- He was 77. Kullar was a member of the Indian team that won the Asian Games gold in 1966 (Bangkok) and also won the Olympic Bronze in 1968 (Mexico).

**SPORTS**
Rafael Nadal Clinches 2020 Mexican Open:
- The 2020 Mexican Open professional tennis tournament was held between 24 and 29 February 2020.
- The World Number 2 Rafael Nadal won the ATP Mexico Open 2020, defeating unseeded Taylor Fritz in straight sets, 6-3, 6-2, in the final.

Winners List
- Men’s Single – Rafael Nadal (Spain) defeated Taylor Fritz (USA)
- Women’s Single – Heather Watson (UK) defeated Leylah Annie Fernandez (Canada)

Men’s Double – Łukasz Kubot / Marcelo Melo defeated Juan Sebastián Cabal / Robert Farah:
- Women’s Double – Desirae Krawczyk / Giuliana Olmos defeated Kateryna Bondarenko / Sharon Fichman.

IMPORTANT NEWS

Zero Discrimination Day: 1 March:
- The Zero Discrimination Day is held every year on 1 March to celebrate the right of everyone to live a full and productive life and live it with dignity.
- The Day was launched by UNAIDS in 2014

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NATIONAL NEWS

Food processing ministry approves Rs 162 cr under Operation Greens scheme:
- Centre has approved Rs 162 crore under ‘Operation Greens’ scheme that has an outlay of Rs 500 crore to stabilize the supply of ‘TOP’ crops i.e. tomato, onion and potato. This will ensure their availability throughout the year without price volatility.
- The scheme that was announced in the budget 2018 aims at improving value realization for cultivators by targeted interventions to strengthen production clusters & Farmer Producer Organizations and linking them with the market.
- Harsimrat Kaur Badal, Food Processing Minister stated that 5 projects have been sanctioned in the country and more were lined up for approvals. She stated, The total outlay of the projects is Rs 426 crore and the grant we would give is Rs 162 crore.

SPICE+ Web form, new rules for company incorporation & DIN launched by MCA:
- Ministry of Corporate Affairs has been launched ‘SPICE+’ Web Form (pronounced ‘SPICe Plus’) to offer 10 services by 3 Central Government Ministries/ Departments and of State Government of Maharashtra in a single web form.
- The three department/govt ministries are the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Ministry of Labour & Department of Revenue in the Ministry of Finance. Apart from this, the forms of Maharashtra State Government would also be available on the SPICe+ web form. Registration for EPFO and ESIC shall be mandatory for all new companies to be incorporated through SPICe+ and no EPFO & ESIC registration nos. shall be separately issued by the respective agencies.

**NITI Aayog and NASSCOM roll out AI modules in Indian schools:**
- The National Association of Software and Services Companies (Nasscom), in collaboration with NitiAayog's Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), launched an artificial intelligence (AI) based module for students of Indian schools.
- The AI-Base Module will be implemented across 5,000 Atal Tinkering Labs (ATL), empowering 2.5 million students. The module contains activities, videos and experiments that enable students to work through and learn the various concepts of AI. This is the first-ever industry-government academia initiative on such a scale to keep the school students abreast of latest technologies. It has been estimated that by 2030, the global AI market is likely to be in the range of $15-15.5 trillion, out of which India’s share will be close to $1 trillion.

Important:
- NITI Aayog: National Institution for Transforming India.
- NITI Aayog CEO: Amitabh Kant, Vice Chairman: Rajiv Kumar.
- Chairman of NASSCOM: Keshav Murugesh.

**PM to launch 10,000 FPOs for farmers, lays foundation stone of Bundelkhand Expressway today:**
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will launch 10 thousand Farmer Producer Organizations, FPOs all over the country from Chitrakoot in Uttar Pradesh.
- These FPOs will help in collectivization of small, marginal and landless farmers to give them strength to deal with issues like lack of access to technology, quality seed, fertilizers and pesticides including requisite finances.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will also lay the foundation stone for the Bundelkhand Expressway at The Uttar Pradesh Government is constructing the Expressway which will pass through the districts of Chitrakoot, Banda, Hamirpur and Jalaun.
- It will link the Bundelkhand area to the national capital Delhi through Agra-Lucknow expressway and Yamuna expressway and play a vital role in the development of Bundelkhand region.
- India has huge defence equipment requirements spanning from land systems, ships and submarines to fighter aircraft, helicopters, weapons and sensors. The requirements are worth over 250 billion dollars by 2025. In order to fulfill the requirements, the government had announced setting up of Defence Industrial Corridor in Uttar Pradesh during the Investors Summit on 21st February 2018 at
- The 296-kilometre long Bundelkhand Expressway will pass through the districts of Chitrakoot, Banda, Hamirpur and Jalaun.
NITI Aayog selects J&K for UNDP pilot project:
- NITI Aayog has selected Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir for first pilot project among all States and UTs on Sustainable Developmental Goals. It would get a chance to work with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).
- The programmes would work like that of district indicator framework wherein information would be sought from respective District Commissioners and ranking would be done by setting certain parameters.
- He stated under the Public Outreach Programme, Lieutenant Governor is touring various parts of the UT and taking firsthand accounts of the issues faced by people and ensuring redressal within the shortest possible time frame.

About Niti Aayog:
- Formed: 1 January 2015
- Objectives: Foster involvement and participation in the economic policy-making process by the State Governments of India
- Headquarters: New Delhi
- Chairperson: Narendra Modi
- Rajiv Kumar (economist), (Vice Chairperson)
- CEO: Amitabh Kant.

Marathi language compulsory for all schools: Maharashtra Assembly passes law:
- Maharashtra government has made Marathi compulsory in schools affiliated with all boards with a fine of Rs 1 lakh for institutions that fail to comply with the directive.
- Maharashtra Assembly unanimously approved a bill making Marathi a compulsory subject in all schools of the state.
- This law will be applicable to all boards like CBSE, CISCE, IB, IGSCE, NIOS
- Marathi language shall be taught as a compulsory subject from classes 1-10 in all schools in the state in a phased manner starting the academic year 2020-21
- The language shall be introduced at class 1 and 6 from the academic year 2020-21 and shall be extended to further classes progressively
- The law also states that no restrictions shall be imposed on speaking Marathi in schools in the state, directly or indirectly
- Marathi teaching and assessment of students in Marathi will be a mandatory condition for granting the government’s no-objection certificate for schools
- The person responsible for the management of school affairs violating provisions of this act shall be liable to pay a penalty of up to Rs 1 Lakh

National Parks in Maharashtra
- Chandoli National Park
- Gugamal National Park
- Pench National Park
- Sanjay Gandhi National Park
- Tadoba National Park
• Navegaon National Park

Offshore patrol vessel ICGS Varad commissioned:
• The Indian Coast Guard's Offshore Patrol Vessel, ICGS Varad was commissioned into service by Union Shipping Minister MansukhMandaviya at a function held at Chennai Port on February 28, 2020. The Director-General of the Coast Guard, K Natarajan was also present on the occasion.
• The ICGS Varad will be deployed at Paradip in Odisha, under the operational control of the North-Eastern Region’s Coast Guard. Commanded by Commandant Pintu Bag, the coast guard vessel will be manned by 11 officers and 91 personnel.

ICGS Varad: Key Features-
• The Offshore Patrol Vessel, ICGS Varad has been designed and built by Larsen and Toubro at its shipyard in Kattupalli, near Chennai.
• The vessel is the first major defence ship to clear all the sea trials in one single sea sortie, creating a record of sorts in the Indian shipbuilding industry.
• The 98m-long vessel is fitted with advanced navigation and communication equipment, machinery and sensors. It also comprises 30 mm and 12.7 mm guns.
• Besides this, the vessel has special features including a platform management system, integrated bridge system, high power external fire-fighting system and automated power management system.
• The ship also has the capacity to carry four high-speed boats and a twin-engine helicopter for search and rescue operations and law enforcement and maritime patrol. The vessel can also carry pollution response equipment in case of an oil spill at the sea.
• Further, the vessel propelled by two 9100kw diesel engines can attain a maximum speed of 26 knots. It can operate for almost 5000 nautical miles at a stretch without refueling.

BANKING, FINANCE AND ECONOMICS

India GDP Growth At 4.7% In Q3, Weaker Than Revised Estimates For Q2:
• The Indian economy grew 4.7 per cent in the third quarter ended December 31, 2019, the National Statistics Office
• Core sector grows by 2% in January as power generation picks up
• The first quarter GDP growth for this fiscal has been revised upwards to 5.6 per cent, from the 5.1 per cent estimated earlier. The second quarter GDP growth for the current fiscal has also been revised upwards to 5.1 per cent from 4.5 per cent announced earlier.

About NSC:
• The National Statistical Commission (NSC) of India is an autonomous body which formed in June 2005. The NSC is currently headed by Bimal K. Roy, who was appointed as Chairperson of the Commission on 15th July 2019 for a period of three years. Dr. KiranPandya, ShriPulakGhosh and Dr.Gurucharan Manna are other members of the Commission.
• Shri Amitabh Kant, current CEO of NITI Aayog is the ex-officio Member and ShriPravinSrivastava, Chief Statistician of India and Secretary, Ministry of Statistics and
Programme Implementation is Secretary to the Commission
- Formed July 12 2006
- Headquarters: New Delhi

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Assam’s forest man to be conferred with Swami Vivekananda Karmayogi Award:
- Assam’s eminent environmental activist Jadav Payeng will be awarded with Swami Vivekananda Karmayogi Award for his efforts in creating a man-made forest through reforestation.
- The award ceremony will be organized by My Home India, an NGO which aims at bringing emotional integration between people from different parts of India.
- The award will be handed to Payeng by union environment minister Prakash Javadekar on Saturday.

SPORTS

impact: India pulls out of shooting world cup in Cyprus:
- India on February 28, 2020 withdrew itself from the upcoming shooting World Cup in Cyprus, citing the threat of novel coronavirus (\()\).
- The shooting World Cup is scheduled to be held in the Eastern Mediterranean island nation from March 4-13, 2020. The World Cup is recognised by the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF).
- The Indian Shooting contingent decided to pull out from the tournament on the advice of the Union Government due to the massive across the world.
- Cyprus has not yet reported any confirmed case of the deadly virus but the nation has kept suspected cases under quarantine as a precautionary measure.
- India is also scheduled to host a combined shooting world cup from March 16-26 at the Dr Karni Singh Range in New Delhi. Six countries have already withdrawn from the shooting World Cup including China, North Korea, Taiwan, Turkmenistan, Hong Kong and Macau as they are on complete.

APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS

Abhishek Singh, India’s next Ambassador to Venezuela:
- Abhishek Singh has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. He is currently serving as Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of India in Kabul, Afghanistan. He will succeed Rajiv Kumar Napal, who passed away recently. He is a 2003-batch Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer.

Important:
- Capital of Venezuela: Caracas.
- Currency of Venezuela: Petro Bolivar Soberano.
President of Venezuela: Juan Gerardo Guaido Marquez.

**SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

**Providence opens Global Innovation Centre in Hyderabad:**
- Providence, a US-based healthcare systems provider, inaugurated its global innovation centre in India with plans to invest up to $100 million and induct more than 2,000 technologists.
- This is the $26 billion-company’s first development centre outside the US. It plans to start with 350 techies within a year and gradually ramp it to over 2,000 centre within 3-4 years.
- Murali Krishna, Senior Vice-President and Country Manager, Providence India, who joins from Microsoft, will head the global innovation centre. The centre will focus on engineering, data intelligence, digital innovation, professional services, cyber security, application development and tech support.
- The teams will build and innovate with Big Data, artificial intelligence, machine learning, Oracle Cloud, Microsoft Azure, Web Development, Natural Language Processing, Analytics, and other emerging technologies.

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**INTERNATIONAL NEWS**

**Sri Lanka notifies UN about rights resolution withdrawal:**
- Sri Lankan Government formally notified the United Nations that it will withdraw from the UNHRC (United Nations Human Rights Council) resolution for investigating alleged war crimes. The case was dealing with a decade-old clash with Tamil separatists.
- The UNHRC resolution 40/1 was co-sponsored by Sri Lanka and 11 other countries. The main aim of the resolution is investigation of war time violence against Tamil Tiger rebels. The Tamil Rebels were demanding separate homeland. They were claiming that they were ethnic tamil minority and hence are eligible for separate homeland.
- Important
  - President of Sri Lanka: Gotabaya Rajapaksa.
  - Prime Minister of Sri Lanka: Mahinda Rajapaksa.

**NATIONAL NEWS**

**32 projects sanctioned under PradhanMantriKisanSampadaYojana:**
- The Union Government has approved 32 projects in the food processing sector under PradhanMantriKisanSampadaYojana (PMKSY). The projects will be spread across 17 states.
- The government has earmarked funds worth Rs 406 crores for the projects. They were
approved during the meeting of the Inter-Ministerial Approval Committee, chaired by Food Processing Minister HarsimratKaurBadal in New Delhi on February 26, 2020.

- The main focus area of the projects is to boost employment opportunities in rural areas and create direct and indirect employment for about 15000 people.

Key Highlights

- The government has sanctioned 32 projects under the unit scheme of PMKSY of Ministry of Food Processing Industries. The new projects will cover 17 states with an investment worth Rs 406 crore.
- The projects aim to create employment opportunities and direct and indirect employment for approximately 15000 people in the rural areas.
- The main focus area will be creating more processing and preservation capacities and expansion and modernizing the existing food processing units.
- This will be undertaken to increase the level of processing, resulting in value addition and enhancing the shelf life of the product and reduce wastage.

What is PradhanMantriKisanSampadaYojana (PMKSY)?
The PMKSY scheme aims to create processing and preservation capacities and modernise existing food processing units to increase the quality of processing and reduce wastage. The introduction of modern processing techniques is expected to increase the shelf-life of the processed food or agricultural produce. It will ensure steady income to the farmers, reducing farmer distress.
The implementation period of the PMKSY scheme is 2016-20 and it has a total outlay of Rs 6,000 crore. Overall, the scheme has seven component schemes:

1. Mega Food Parks
2. Integrated Cold Chain and Value Addition Infrastructure
3. Infrastructure for Agro-Processing Clusters
4. Creation of Backward and Forward Linkages
5. Creation/Expansion of Food Processing and Preservation Capacities
6. Food Safety and Quality Assurance Infrastructure
7. Human Resources and Institutions

BANKING, FINANCE AND ECONOMICS

India surpasses France, UK to become world's 5th largest economy: IMF:

- India became world's fifth largest economy in 2019 in terms of nominal GDP, leapfrogging France and the UK, according to data from the IMF’s October World Economic Outlook.
- India’s economy now has a nominal GDP of $2.94 trillion. The report said, "India’s economy is the fifth largest in the world with a GDP of $2.94 trillion, overtaking the UK and France in 2019 to take the fifth spot".
- The UK economy amounts to $2.83 trillion and France with $2.71 trillion.

Following is the list of the world’s largest economies in 2010 vs 2019:
Bank of Baroda launches Start-up Banking initiative:

- Finance Secretary Rajiv Kumar inaugurated “Baroda Startup Banking”. It is an initiative aimed at making the Bank of Baroda (BoB) a preferred banking partner for the start-up community and establishing connect with at least 2,000 start-ups over the next two years. The initiative was launched simultaneously across 15 cities in the country.
- It will include 15 Baroda Startup branches that will offer a bouquet of tailor-made banking products and services that have been designed keeping in mind the unique and specialized banking requirements of start-ups.
- The products include customised current accounts, state-of-the-art payments gateways, corporate credit cards, corporate salary accounts and credit facilities apart from other existing products of the bank.
- Important Headquarters of Bank of Baroda: Vadodara, Gujarat.
  MD and CEO of Bank of Baroda: Sanjiv Chadha.
  Chairman of Bank of Baroda: Hasmukh Adhia.
  Tagline of Bank of Baroda: India’s International Bank.

ACQUISITIONS, Mergers, Business and MOU’S

NTPC, CPCB MoU to set up air quality monitoring stations:

- The NTPC Ltd has signed an agreement with the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB). According to an agreement, NTPC Ltd will provide financial support of Rs 80 Crore for installation and commissioning of Continuous Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Stations (CAAQMS).
A total of 25 Air Quality Monitoring Stations will be installed across six states and three Union Territories. The states include Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Tamil Nadu. The three Union Territories includes Daman & Diu, Dadar & Nagar Haveli and Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

The Air Quality Index will be evaluated for the respective cities with the help of data collected from these air quality monitoring stations.

**SUMMITS AND CONFERENCES**

**Govt to host Artificial Intelligence-focused Raise 2020 summit for the first time:**
- The Union Government will organize India’s first Artificial Intelligence summit- “RAISE 2020: Responsible AI for Social Empowerment 2020” between April 11-12, 2020 in New Delhi. The first-of-its-kind two-day summit will be organized to spearhead social empowerment, inclusion and transformation.
- RAISE 2020 will be organized by the centre in partnership with the industry and academia. The summit will serve as a common platform for people across the world to exchange ideas on how to use AI for social empowerment, inclusion and transformation in key areas and sectors such as agriculture, healthcare, education and smart mobility.
- The international summit will be inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- Objective
  1. The RAISE 2020 summit aims to outline India’s vision for using the power of AI responsibly to transform the social landscape for a better future. The summit will enable the smooth exchange of ideas to create mass awareness about the need to ethically develop and practice AI in the digital era.
- Key Highlights
  1. The summit is the first of its kind global meeting of minds on Artificial Intelligence. It aims to provide a boost to India’s vision and roadmap for social inclusion, empowerment and transformation through the responsible use of Artificial Intelligence.
  2. The RAISE 2020 summit will begin with a startup challenge called ‘Pitchfest’, which will be followed by the two-day summit.
  3. The event will be organized by the union government in coordination with the Union Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.
  4. It will witness participation from a large number of global industry leaders, key opinion makers, AI experts, academia and government representatives.
- Significance
  1. Artificial Intelligence is a powerful tool, which can be used to create a positive impact in the Indian context, helping it become the AI destination for the world. India has the potential to be the world’s leading AI laboratory that can eventually transform lives globally.

**Conference on Enhancing Energy Cooperation in the BIMSTEC region held in Dhaka, Bangladesh:**
- Two Days Conference on Enhancing Energy Cooperation in the Bay of Bengal Initiative for
Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) region held at Bangladesh.
- The bloc of seven countries organised the conference in collaboration with the South Asia Regional Initiative for Energy Integration (SARI/EI) of USAID.
- The Report “prospect of regional energy cooperation and cross-border energy trade in the BIMSTEC region”
- The report showed that the BIMSTEC region has 323,504 million tonnes(MT) of coal, 664 million tonnes of oil, 99 Trillion Cubic Feet(TCF) of gas, 11,346 MT of biomass, 328 Giga Watts(GW) of hydropower and 1,117 GW of renewable energy.
- India tops on all energy resources by having 319,020 MT of coal, 600 MT oil, 45.5 TCF gas, 4,150 MT biomass and 145 GW hydro and 1,000 GW renewable energy respectively.

About BIMSTEC
- BIMSTEC is an International organization formed on June 6, 1997 with seven countries from South and Southeast Asia including Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Nepal and Bhutan. It aims to promote regional cooperation for rapid economic development.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Film editor Sreekar Prasad enters Limca Book of Records for editing films in 17 languages:
- Sreekar Prasad, a veteran editor has entered the Limca Book of Records for ‘films edited in the most number of languages’. Sreekar Prasad has received the certification from the Limca Records for editing films in 17 languages. The 17 languages includes: English, Hindi, Punjabi, Telugu, Malayalam, Kannada, Tamil, Odia, Sinhalese, Bengali, Assamese, Nepali, Pangchenpa, Karbi, Mishing, Bodo, and Marathi.
- The veteran video editor also holds eight National Awards including a Special Jury Award and his recent Bollywood projects includes ‘Saaho’ and ‘Super 30’.

APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS

Next Delhi Police Commissioner : SN Shrivastava to succeed AmulyaPatnaik:
- SN Shrivastava, a senior IPS officer who was posted in Delhi this week while deadly communal violence broke out in the territory’s northeast, is poised to succeed AmulyaPatnaik as the Commissioner of Police. He is currently Special CP (Law and Order).

Puneet Sharma appointed as CFO of Axis Bank:
- Axis Bank announced the appointment of Puneet Sharma as its Chief Financial Officer (CFO).
- Sharma will replace JairamSridharan, who has resigned as the Group Executive and Chief Financial Officer of the bank, with effect from March 5, 2020.

About Axis Bank
- HQ- Mumbai
- CEO-Amitabh Chaudhry
Sumant Kathpalia appointed as new MD and CEO of IndusInd Bank:
- Private sector lender IndusInd Bank announced the appointment of Sumant Kathpalia as its new Managing Director and CEO.
- Kathpalia will take over from Romesh Sobti who is set to retire later next month.
- Kathpalia has been with IndusInd Bank since 2008 and currently heads the consumer banking division at the private sector lender, and has been responsible for building the bank's retail franchise.

About IndusInd Bank
- HQ - Pune
- MD and CEO - Sumant Kathpalia (From March 2020)
- Tagline - We Make You Feel Richer

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Realme X50 Pro 5G world's first phone with India's NavIC navigation system developed by ISRO:
- Realme X50 Pro 5G is touted to be the world's first phone with NavIC.
- NavIC is a satellite navigation system developed by India's ISRO.
- Xiaomi previously said it will launch the world's first phone with NavIC.
- Realme X50 Pro 5G - India's first 5G phone - is also the world's first smartphone that features the NavIC navigation system. NavIC is the satellite navigation system developed by India’s premier space agency, Indian Space and Research Organisation.
- The announcement was made by Realme India CEO Madhav Sheth on Twitter, also revealing the Realme 6 series phones, slated to launch on March 5 in India, will also support NavIC. Interestingly, Realme X50 Pro 5G has bagged one too many titles for being the first it is the first 5G phone in India, the first phone in India with a Snapdragon 865 SoC, and now, the first device to support NavIC not only in India but the world.

IMPORTANT DAYS

28 February – National Science Day:
- National Science Day is celebrated every year in India on 28 February to mark the discovery of the Raman Effect by the Indian physicist Sir Chandrasekhara Venkata Raman.
- He discovered the Raman Effect on 28 February, 1928 and for this discovery, he was honoured by the Nobel Prize in Physics subject in 1930.

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NATIONAL NEWS
Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog partners with NASSCOM to roll out Artificial Intelligence Modules in Indian schools:
- NITI Aayog and Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) have collaborated with the National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM) for the launch of an AI-based Module rolled out for students in Indian schools.
- The launch was done on February 27, 2020. The AI-Base Module has been introduced with an objective for students to leverage the full potential of AIM’s Atal Tinkering Lab (ATL).
- The module contains activities, videos and experiments that enable students to work through and learn the various concepts of AI.

Offshore Patrol Vessel-6 “VAJRA” launched at Chennai:
- The 6th Coast Guard Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV-6) ‘VAJRA’ was launched in at Chennai on February 27, 2020. Shri Mansukh Mandaviya was the chief guest of the event.
- Mandaviya is the Minister of State for Shipping (I/C) and Chemicals & Fertilizers.

Government launches MIEWS Portal for Monitoring prices of TOP Crops:
- Ministry of Food Processing Industries has launched the Market Intelligence and Early Warning System (MIEWS) Web Portal for ‘real time monitoring’ of prices of tomato, onion and potato (TOP) crops.
- Smt. Harsimrat Kaur Badal, Union Minister of Food Processing Industries launched the portal.
- MIEWS system is designed to provide advisories to farmers to avoid cyclical production as well as an early warning in situations of gluts and for simultaneously generating alerts for intervention under the terms of the Operation Greens (OG) scheme.

New Toll-Free Number of GST helpdesk:
- The Goods and Services Tax Network (GSTN) recently launched a new toll-free number for GST related problems. This number will work 365 days for answering queries about the GST.
- GSTN has introduced new features to improve taxpayers’ experience by giving them more power. A new toll-free number is - 1800 103 4786’. Anyone can call on this helpline from 9 am to 9 pm.

Sri Lanka to construct first electric rail track in Kandy:
- The Government of Sri Lanka has decided to build its first electric railway track in Kandy. Sri Lanka government believes that it will ease transportation and provide better infrastructure to the country.
- The Government has planned to build construct a new electric rail track between Kandy to Rambankana, about 78 km from the capital Colombo via Katugastota.
Janez Jansa named as Prime Minister of Slovenia:
- The President of Slovenia recently nominated Janez Jansa as the new Prime Minister of the country. He has decided to form a government with three other political parties.
- He has also been the Prime Minister of Slovenia twice before. He was the Prime Minister of the country from 2004 to 2008 and from 2012 to 2013.

BANKING AND ECONOMY

Analysts foresee 4.5 to 4.7 per cent GDP growth in 3rd quarter:
- India’s GDP growth in the October-December quarter of the financial year 2018 will likely print at 5-4.7 per cent, according to researchers.
- As per SBI Research’s composite leading indicator, which analyses inputs from 33 various indicators, growth will remain flat in Q3, at 4.5 per cent clocked in Q2; ICRA believes third-quarter GDP may settle at around 4.7 per cent led by a modest uptick in services, industry and agricultural growth.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Incois launches three ocean-based services:
- The Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (Incois), Hyderabad, has launched three ocean-based specialised products/services — the Small Vessel Advisory and Forecast Services System (SVAS), the Swell Surge Forecast System (SSFS) and the Algal Bloom Information Service (ABIS).
- Incois, an autonomous organisation under the Ministry of Earth Sciences, provides a number of free services for users in the marine realm, including fishermen.

SPORTS

Five-Time Grand Slam Champion Maria Sharapova Retires From Tennis At 32:
- Five-time Grand Slam winner Maria Sharapova, one of the world’s most recognisable and highest-paid sportswomen, announced her retirement at the age of 32.
- “Tennis – I’m saying goodbye,” Sharapova stated in an article for Vogue and Vanity Fair magazines.
- After 28 years and five Grand Slam titles, though, I’m ready to scale another mountain – to compete on a different type of terrain. Sharapova burst onto the scene as a supremely gifted teenager and won her Grand Slams before serving a 15-month ban for failing a drugs test at the 2016 Australian Open.

APPOINTMENT AND RESIGNATIONS

Mastercard names product chief Michael Miebach as CEO, Ajay Banga moves to executive chairman:
Mastercard’s chief executive officer of 10 years, Ajay Banga, will step down at the start of the next year and be replaced by Chief Product Officer Michael Miebach.

India-born Banga will take on the role of executive chairman, while Miebach will become the company's president on March 1.

Miebach served as managing director at Barclays Bank and general manager at Citibank.

**RANKING**

*Mukesh Ambani Top Indian in Hurun Global Rich List 2020; Jeff Bezos retains No 1 spot:*

- The Hurun Global Rich List 2020 was released on 26 February 2020 to rank the top billionaires in the world.
- The ninth edition of the ranking list has 2,817 billionaires from 71 countries and 2,183 companies.
- The list has been topped by Amazon founder and CEO Jeff Bezos for the third time, with an estimated net worth of $140 billion.

**Current Affairs PDF- February 26, 2020**

**NATIONAL NEWS**

*CCEA approves National Technical Textiles Mission:*

- The CCEA on February 26, 2020 approved the setting up of the National Technical Textiles Mission.
- For the implementation of this mission, the Cabinet has allocated total funds of Rs 1480 Crore.
- The mission has been launched with an objective to position India as a global leader in Technical Textiles.
- The Mission will be implemented in the next four years from 2020-21 to 2023-24.

*Himachal Pradesh became First to achieve 100% LPG coverage:*

- Himachal Pradesh became the 1st state in the country to have 100% LPG coverage due to the implementation of PMUY (PradhanMantriUjjwalaYojana) scheme.
- Under the scheme except families having a pensioner, income taxpayer or any member employed with the government, board, corporation etc, all households of the state without an LPG connection were eligible.
- Nearly 2.64 lakh free gas connections were provided through the state funded Himachal GrihiniSuvidhaYojana & 36 lakh were benefited through PMUY scheme.

*Madhya Pradesh launches unified vehicle registration card:*

- Madhya Pradesh has become the first state in the country to launch the unified vehicle registration card.
MP is only the second state to launch a unified driving license, after Uttar Pradesh. These unified smart cards for driving license and vehicle registration will each have a QR code that will help in verifying authenticity of the data printed on the cards.

Union HRD Minister launches Leadership Development Programme for Higher Education Administrators:
- Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal aka Nishank, Union Minister for Human Resource Development, launched 'Higher Education Leadership Development Programme For Administrator' – a joint initiative of UGC and British Council under the auspices of UK India Education and Research Initiative (UKIERI) today in New Delhi.
- The programme has been launched to enhance the leadership qualities as well as systemic changes with renewed approaches, capacity, tools and skill in the middle and senior level administrative functionaries in Indian Universities.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

3,000 kilometre long power grid from Myanmar-Thailand to India: BIMSTEC:
- Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) is working on connecting about 3,000-kilometre long power grid from Myanmar-Thailand to India.
- This was announced by the Energy Adviser to the Prime Minister of Bangladesh Dr Tawfiq-E-ElahiChowdhury while inaugurating the energy conference of BIMSTEC in Dhaka.

BANKING AND ECONOMY

FM NirmalaSitharaman launches Ease 3.0 for tech-enabled banking:
- “Enhanced Access and Service Excellence (EASE) 3.0” has been launched by Finance Minister NirmalaSitharaman along with the EASE 2.0 Annual Report at Indian Banks’ Association function.
- This has been launched for smart, tech-enabled banking for aspiring India. Some key facilities like Palm Banking for “End-to-end digital delivery of financial service”, “Banking on Go” via EASE banking.
- EASE 3.0 is expected to provide advanced solutions to make the public sector banking smart and technology-enabled.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

GISAT-1 to be launched on March 5:
- Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) to launch the launch GISAT-1 satellite on March 5, 2020 aboard GSLV-F10 from the SatishDhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota.
- GISAT-1 is a Geo Imaging Satellite which will enable real-time observation of Indian sub-continent under cloud-free conditions.
OBITUARY

Former Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak passes away:
- Former Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak who was forced to resign during Arab Spring died on February 25, 2020 in Cairo at the age of 91.
- Mubarak was found guilty of being involved in the murder of protesters during the revolution.
- He ruled Egypt as the President for almost three decades before his removal.

Famous NASA Mathematician Katherine Johnson passes away:
- Famous NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) mathematician Katherine Johnson passed away at the age of 101.
- Johnson’s calculations helped put the first man on the Moon in 1969, but she was little known until the Oscar-nominated 2016 movie that told the stories of three black women who worked at NASA.

Current Affairs PDF- February 25, 2020

NATIONAL NEWS

Elections for 55 RajyaSabha seats Will be on March 26, Schedule released:
- The Election Commission of India (ECI) announcing the schedule of polling for 55 RajyaSabha seats spread over 17 States set to be vacated in April will be conducted on March 26. According to the schedule for the elections, the notification would be issued on March 6, the last date of filing of nominations would be March 13 and polling would be on March 26, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The votes would be counted at 5 p.m. on the same day.

National Cyber Research Centre : inaugurated by Union Minister:
- Union Minister of State for Home Affairs G Kishan Reddy inaugurated National Cyber Research, Innovation and Capacity Building Centre at Central Detective Training Institute (CDTI) campus located at Ramanthapur in Hyderabad.
- Reddy pointed out the need for such a centre with the proliferation of Information Technology in our lives. The Government has anticipated cyber threat and has taken several landmark steps in the recent past. A dedicated division was created in October 2017 under the Ministry of Home Affairs, for addressing the cyber security threat in the country.
- The Minister stated that CDTI is one of the seven verticals under Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) and highlights the growing relevance of continuous research and innovation in the fight against cyber crime.
- The Minister also stated that the MHA is also working on setting up Regional Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (R4C) in the States. It is in collaboration with I4C to further strengthen the cyber combat capabilities of the nation. CDTI Hyderabad will prove to be a central hub for
entire South India. He added.

**First Anniversary of National War Memorial:**
- On 25th February 2020, India observed the first anniversary of the iconic National War Memorial. Get full details here.
- As a part of the main ceremony, Chief of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat will honour the fallen soldiers today along with veterans from all three wings of armed services.
- CDS Gen Bipin Rawat will lay wreaths and pay homage to the fallen soldiers. Since its inauguration last year, around 21 lakh people have visited the memorial with over 5,000-7,000 people foot-fall at the monument every day.

**‘UPI Chalega’: NPCI launches campaign for payment mode to gain currency:**
- The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) is keen to further popularise its flagship Unified Payments Interface (UPI), which has clocked over 100 crore transactions per month.
- While UPI has already shown robust growth, Rai stated, the objective is to reach out to the next set of users, across geographies, and encourage them to switch from cash. With this in mind, NPCI, along with payment service providers, has co-created an industry campaign ‘UPI Chalega’, to promote it as an easy, safe and instant mode of payment.
- The campaign is aimed to guide users towards the right use of UPI and help create a habitual change, to use UPI in their daily lives. The campaign also focusses on the safety aspects while transacting on UPI-enabled apps.
- The number of UPI transactions touched 130.5 crore last month, and the total amount transacted was at an all-time high of ₹16-lakh crore. As many as 144 banks are on the platform.
- The findings of a pre-campaign study conducted among 12,800 people in four zones, across 36 centres, showed a 60 per cent awareness of UPI, Rai stated.
- She added that early adopters of UPI have come from across geographies — metros and smaller cities — and now the idea is to push it to the next set of users.
- Launched in 2016 as a means to boost digital payments, UPI allows users to transfer money on a real-time basis, across multiple bank accounts, without revealing bank account details to the other party.

About NPCI:
- The National Payments Corporation of India is an umbrella organisation for operating retail payments and settlement systems in India.
- Headquarters: Mumbai
- Founded: 2008
- Non-Exe Chairman: Biswamohan Mahapatra
- MD & CEO: Dilip Asbe
NABARD sanctions Rs 400 Cr to boost rural infra in J&K:
- The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) recently sanctioned over Rs 400.64 crore for infrastructural development of rural areas of Jammu & Kashmir.
- The funding will be provided under Trench XXV of the Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF) of NABARD.
- The project includes the construction of roads and bridges which would provide all-weather connectivity to over 450 remote villages of the Union Territory of J&K.
- An amount of 66 crore rupees has been sanctioned for implementation of 38 water supply schemes. The sanction includes augmentation of 27 existing water supply schemes and construction of 11 new water supply schemes.
- These water supply schemes are aimed at providing safe and potable drinking water to rural households. The schemes will benefit over 3.5 lakh people across 86 villages in 17 districts.

About NABARD:
- National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development is an Apex Development Financial Institution in India. The Bank has been entrusted with “matters concerning Policy Planning and Operations in the field of credit for Agriculture and other Economic activities in Rural areas in India.
- Headquarters: Mumbai
- Agency executive: Harsh Kumar Bhanwala (Chairperson)
- Formation: July 12, 1982

India and US have expanded defence cooperation with defence deals worth USD 3 billion:
- India and the United States finalised defence deals worth $3 billion on February 25, 2020. The deals were signed after delegation-level talks between Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and visiting US President Donald Trump. The deals are expected to enhance the joint defence capabilities between the two countries.
- The US President made the announcement in a joint statement with PM Modi on Day 2 of his maiden visit to India. Donald Trump said that India has agreed to purchase USD 3 billion worth advanced American military equipment including Apache and MH-60 Romeo helicopters, which are the finest in the world.
- Trump also stated that the US makes the greatest weapons ever made including planes, ships, missiles, rockets, air defence systems, armed and unarmed aerial vehicles and that the nation is now looking forward to providing India with some of its best and most feared military equipment.

Two key defence deals
India and the US finalised two key defence deals on February 25. The deals are as follows:
- Procurement of 24 MH-60 Romeo helicopters by India for $2.6 billion.
- Procurement of six AH-64E Apache helicopters at a cost of $800 million.
AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

AdlineCastelino wins Miss Diva Universe 2020:
- AdlineCastelino has been crowned as the winner of LIVA Miss Diva Universe 2020 competition. She was crowned by Vartika Singh, the winner of the previous edition at an event held in YRF (Yash Raj Films) Studios, Mumbai, Maharashtra. She hails from Mangalore, Karnataka. She will go on to represent the country at Miss Universe later this year.
- AavritiChoudhary of Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh crowned as LIVA Miss Diva Supranational 2020 and was crowned by his predecessor ShefaliSood. She will be India’s contender for Miss Supranational pageant 2020.

DadasahebPhalke International Film Festival Awards 2020:
Complete List of DadasahebPhalke International Film Festival Awards 2020 Winners:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Award</th>
<th>Award Winner</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Best Film</td>
<td>Super 30</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Best Actor</td>
<td>Hrithik Roshan (Super 30)</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Most Promising Actor</td>
<td>Kiccha Sudeep</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Best Actor in Television Series</td>
<td>Dheeraj Dhoopar</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Best Actress in Television</td>
<td>Divyanka Tripathi</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Most Favourite Television Actor</td>
<td>Harshad Chopda</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Most Favourite Jodi in Television Series</td>
<td>Sriti Jha and Shabbir Ahluwalia (Kumkum Bhagya)</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Best Television Series</td>
<td>Kumkum Bhagya</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Best Playback Singer Male</td>
<td>Armaan Malik</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Best Reality Show</td>
<td>Bigg Boss 13</td>
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SPORTS

Commonwealth 2022 : India will host Shooting and Archery Championships:
- India will host the Commonwealth Shooting and Archery Championships in January 2022. The Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF) announced this decision after the Executive Board meeting in London. The two events will be held in Chandigarh in January 2022, while the Birmingham Commonwealth Games is scheduled from 27th of July to 7th of August, 2022.
- The decision is being considered a big win for India after IOA threatened to boycott the
2022 Birmingham Games for dropping shooting from the roster in July last year.

**ICC bans Omani player YousufAbdulrahim Al Balushi for 7 years:**
- The International Cricket Council (ICC) banned Oman player YousufAbdulrahim Al Balushi from all forms of cricket for 7 years. The player has been reprimanded for breaching the ICC’s Anti-Corruption Code as he was found guilty for breaching various counts in the ICC Men’s T20 World Cup qualifiers 2019.
- Al Balushi breached Article 2.1.1 of the Anti-Corruption Code: being party to an agreement or effort to fix or contrive in any way the result, progress, conduct or any other aspect of matches. Besides, he also breached Article 2.1.4, Article 2.4.4 and Article 2.4.7: All relating to corrupt practices.

**Important:**
1. Chairman of ICC: ShashankManohar;
2. Chief Executive: Manu Sahney;
3. Headquarters: Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

**OBITUARY**

**Former LokSabha MP Krishna Bose passed away:**
- She was the wife of NetajiSubhas Chandra Bose’s nephew Sisir Kumar Bose. She joined politics in the mid90s. She was close to Trinamool Congress chairperson and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.
- Krishna Bose was elected from the JadavpurLokSabha seat in 1998 and 1999 on TMC ticket. She was elected from the same seat on a Congress ticket in 1996. During her time in the LokSabha, she was the Chairperson of the Committee on External Affairs and served as a member in several other important committees. She was the chairperson of the Netaji Research Bureau.

**Katherine Johnson, legendary NASA mathematician, dies at 101:**
- Katherine Johnson’s calculations helped NASA to take humans into space. She was also portrayed in a Hollywood film 'Hidden Figures.'
- Katherine Johnson was an American mathematician, who passed away on February 24, 2020. She was 101. Katherine was famous NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) mathematician who led the American space agency to a new height.
- Her calculations related to space travel played an important role in transporting humans to space. Katherine was one of the first women scientists of NASA who helped humans to reach space. It is believed that the Americans were able to overtake the Soviet Union in the space race because of her contributions.
- Katherine Johnson was a part of NASA’s computer pool. This pool was a group of mathematicians. NASA carried out its first successful space mission with the help of data created by this group. Katherine was one of the black women who worked for NASA. She started her career as a teacher.
Born in 1918 at West Virginia, Katherine was curious to learn math from an early age. According to Katherine’s biography published by NASA, she was one of three black students selected to integrate West Virginia’s undergraduate colleges. She did the mapping of the moon before the 1969’s landing and helped to bring Apollo-13 astronauts back to the Earth.

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INTERNATIONAL NEWS

US to become India’s top trading partner, surpasses China:
- The United States has surpassed China to become India’s top trading partner. According to the Commerce Ministry data, the bilateral trade between the US and India stood at nearly 88 billion dollars in 2018 fiscal. During the period, India’s trade with China was at 1 billion dollars.
- Similarly, during April-December 2019-20, the bilateral trade between the US and India stood at 68 billion dollars against a nearly 65 billion dollars trade with China in the same period.

NATIONAL NEWS

ASKDISHA : AI based chatbot launched by Indian Railway:
- Indian Railways had introduced the services of Artificial Intelligence based ASKDISHA chatbot in October 2018 for the benefit of the users of the ticketing website www.irctc.co.in and tourism website www.irctctourism.com of its PSU, Indian Railways Catering & Tourism Corporation Limited (IRCTC).
- The ASKDISHA Chatbot was initially launched in English language but in order to further enhance the customer services rendered and to further strengthen the services of the chatbot, IRCTC has now powered voice enabled ASKDISHA to converse with customers in Hindi language also in the e-ticketing site www.irctc.co.in. The customers can now ask queries to ASKDISHA in Hindi language by voice as well as text.
- The first-of-its-kind initiative by IRCTC is aimed at facilitating accessibility by answering users’ queries pertaining to various services offered to railway passengers. Since its initial launch, more than 150 million passengers have been benefited by ASKDISHA with 10 billion interactions for seeking help on reservation of tickets, cancellation, enquiry of refund status, fare, PNR search, train running status, enquiry about retiring rooms and tourism products.
- IRCTC plans to launch ASKDISHA in more languages along with many other additional features in the near future.
‘Thal Sena Bhawan’: New Army Headquarters foundation Laid by Rajnath Singh:
- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh laid the foundation stone of a new army headquarters building in Delhi Cantonment recently. This complex will be named as ‘ThalSenaBhawan’. It will be constructed over 39 acres of land.
- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said that this army building will represent the Indian soldiers. He also said that these soldiers wanted India to become capable and empowered. Now their sacrifice has made India a powerful country and this building is dedicated to them. He also said that the building was needed for many years.
- This army building, to be built in 7.5 lakh square meters that will have 6014 offices that will include 1684 offices for military and civilian officers and 4330 offices for sub-staff. The new Army headquarters will also provide employment opportunities to the youth of India. It will be constructed as per the Green Rating for Integrated Habitat Assessment (GRIHA) norms.

‘Happiness Class’ to be attended by Melania Trump:
- US First Lady Melania Trump along with the US President Donald Trump, on their maiden visit to India, will attend a ‘Happiness Class’ at a Government School based in Delhi. ArvindKejriwal led AAP Government’s flagship scheme of ‘Happiness Curriculum’ has won commendations from different corners of the globe.
- What is Happiness Curriculum?
  Happiness Curriculum was launched in 2018 as a scheme to reinvent school education sector in Delhi Government Schools. With school education in India primarily focused on competitive testing model, which lays prime emphasis on scoring marks in order to succeed; AAP Government felt the need to provide a more fulfilling education and learning experience. In line with this, Happiness Curriculum was launched which aims at promoting development of cognition, language, literacy, numeracy and the arts. This in turn aids the mental growth well-being and happiness of students.

‘KrishiMaha-Kumbh’: Chhattisgarh organises agricultural festival to cater to future farming practices:
- A three-day mega agricultural festival organised in Raipur called ‘KrishiMaha-Kumbh’ was inaugurated by Chief Minister BhupeshBaghel. Also known as the National Agriculture Festival, this mela boasted of going beyond the traditional dominant practices of farmers by encouraging the agrarian community to experiment with non-conventional farm activities, adopt modern technologies and secure quality organic produce.

Goa carnival: World famous carnival to begin in Panaji:
- The world-famous Goa Carnival will begin in the capital Panaji. The festival, which displays Goan art and culture, is celebrated with fun, frolic, pomp and splendor.
- The mood in Panaji city is quite festive and all the preparations are done for the float parade that is going to take place. The floats carry different messages and themes and there is also a band of music and troupes of artists on each float vehicle.

About Goa:
• Governor: Satya Pal Malik
• Chief minister: Pramod Sawant
• Capital: Panaji (Executive Branch)

4 railway stations in Uttar Pradesh get new names:
• A move aimed at reviving the identity of the ancient city, Allahabad Junction will now be Prayagraj Junction, Allahabad City will now be known as Prayagraj Rambag, Allahabad Chhioki has been changed to Prayagraj Chheoki and the name of Prayagghat has been changed to Prayagraj Sangam.
• The names of the stations were changed by the central and the state government.

About Uttar Pradesh (UP)
• Capital- Lucknow
• Chief Minister (CM) - Yogi Adityanath
• Governor- Anandiben Patel

Mobile app for employees launched by Indian Railways:
• Indian Railways, Railway Board Chairman Vinod Kumar Yadav launched the HRMS (Human Resource Management System) mobile app, in which the employees can see the data related to their service and communicate with the administration for any changes.
• The app has been developed by the Centre for Railway Information System (CRIS).
• The mobile app allows employees to view their historical data since their date of joining, including details related to increments, promotions, awards, transfers, postings, leave, training and retirement benefits.
• Scanned copies of their physical service record are also available in the app, which is an important milestone in computerisation of HR related functionalities in Indian Railways.

About Ministry of Railways:
• Formed– 16 April 1853
• Headquarters– New Delhi
• Union Minister– Piyush Goyal

ACQUISITIONS, MERGERS, BUSINESS AND MOU’S

Central government approves merger of BhartiInfratel, Indus Towers: Sources:
• The Department of Telecom (DoT) on approved the merger of the country’s largest mobile tower company Indus Towers with BhartiInfratel,
• The combination of BhartiInfratel and Indus Towers will create a pan-India tower company with over 163,000 towers, operating across all 22 telecom service areas.
• The combined entity will be the largest tower company in the world outside China. BhartiInfratel and Vodafone hold 42 per cent stake each in Indus.
• Vodafone Idea holds 11.15 per cent stake in the mobile tower firm.
• As per the plans, the combined company, which would fully own the respective businesses of BhartiInfratel and Indus Towers, would change its name to Indus Towers Ltd and will
continue to be listed on Indian stock exchanges.

**Microsoft collaborated with SBI Foundation to upskill youth with disabilities for BFSI jobs:**
- Microsoft has collaborated with SBI Foundation to create opportunities in the banking and financial services and insurance (BFSI) sector, for youth with disabilities.
- Under the initiative, the two organisations will upskill 500 youth for BFSI jobs across Bengaluru, Mumbai, Chennai, Hyderabad and Delhi-NCR. The programme will be driven in collaboration with various government agencies, industry skilling bodies and non-profits. As a part of this effort, both the companies will develop an AI-powered marketplace that will enable the BFSI industry to better connect with people having disabilities (to upskill them).

**AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS**

**Dr. Niti Kumar receives SERB Women Excellence Award-2020:**
- Dr. Niti Kumar, Senior Scientist of Molecular Parasitology and Immunology Division, CSIR-CDRI, Lucknow, has received the SERB Women’s Excellence Award-2020. She will be awarded by the President of India, Ram Nath Kovind during the National Science Day celebration at Vigyan Bhawan on February 28, 2020.
- The award is given to women scientists under the age of 40, who have received honors from various national academies. Women researchers will be assisted by Science and Engineering Research Board of the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India, with a grant of Rs 5 lakh per year for 3 years.
- Dr. Niti Kumar’s research group is trying to understand the protein quality control machinery in malaria parasites to explore alternative drugs for malaria. Dr. Niti Kumar has received several awards and honors like Innovative Young Biotechnologist Award (DBT-IYBA 2015), INSA Medal for Young Scientist (2010) by Indian National Academy of Sciences and Marie Curie Early Stage Research Fellowship by European Union under 6th Framework Programme (2005-2006).

**What is SERB?**
Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB) is a constitutional body works under the Department of Science and Technology (DoST), Government of India. It was established in 2009 through an Act of the Parliament of India.

**SPORTS**

**Shooters now permitted by Home Ministry to keep up to 12 firearms for shooting practice:**
- The Union Home Ministry has amended Arms Act, 1959 and the Arms Rules, 2016 to increase the number of firearms and ammunition kept by the Indian shooters for their practice during the year. As per the Home Ministry, shooting is an important Olympic sport in India and Indian shooters have excelled in international competitions.
Key Amendments in Arms Act, 1959
- According to the new rules, international medalists and renowned shooters are now allowed to have additional weapons up to a total of twelve under the exempted category. Earlier they were allowed to keep only seven weapons.
- In case a shooter is renowned in one event, he will be allowed to keep a maximum of eight weapons. If he is renowned in two events then he can keep maximum ten weapons. Earlier, the permit was four and seven respectively.
- If a shooter is known in more than two events, then he will now be allowed to keep a maximum of twelve firearms unlike earlier seven.
- For junior target shooters or aspiring shooters, the Home Ministry has decided to amend the rules to allow them to possess two firearms of any category, as against earlier one.
- The shooters will now also be entitled to possess two firearms as normal citizens under provisions of the Arms Act, 1959.

Key Amendments in Arms Rules, 2016
- The Home Ministry has amended the provision under Rule 40 of the Arms Rules, 2016, as per which, the quantity of ammunition that can be purchased by the shooters for practice during a year has been increased considerably.
- Under the amended provisions, the quantity of ammunition that shooters can purchase for .22 LR rifle/pistol has been increased to 5000 instead of 1000, for Pistol/Revolver the quantity has been increased to 2000 instead of 600 and for shotgun calibers, the quantity has been increased to 5000 instead 500.
- The Ministry has also made other necessary amendments in the Arms Rules, 2016 by amending the Arms Act, 1959, under the Arms (Amendment) Act, 2019.
- The amendments clarify that no license will be required for Indian citizens for acquisitions and possession of small arms falling under the category of curio.
- However, the shooters will be required to carry appropriate licenses, as prescribed to use, carry or transport such small arms. No ammunition can be sold for use without the endorsement of such firearms in the prescribed license of the owner.
- Further, the maximum number of firearms to be possessed by any person has been reduced to two from earlier three.
- Those who have three firearms have been given the facility to retain any two of them and deposit the remaining firearm by December 13, 2020.

APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS

Malaysian PM Mahathir Mohamad resigns:
- Malaysian PM Mahathir Mohamad Resigns: Mahathir Mohamad – the Prime Minister of Malaysia, submitted his resignation to the country’s king, Sultan Abdullah Sultan Ahmad Shah on February 24, 2020, as per media reports.
- Mahathir’s PPBM has also pulled out of the ruling PakatanHarapan (Alliance of Hope) coalition, throwing the country into renewed political turmoil. The resignation of 94-year-old veteran politician and two-time Prime Minister comes following an on-going rift with his
presumptive successor Anwar Ibrahim. Following his resignation as the PM, Mahathir also resigned as the chairman of PPBM.

- Resignation of Malaysian PM Mahathir Mohamad comes in the wake of long going battle in the ruling coalition which comprises many stakeholders. The key parties in the PakatanHarapan coalition include Mahathir’s PartiPribumiBersatu Malaysia i.e. PPBM or United Indigenous Party of Malaysia; Anwar Ibrahim’s PartiKeadilan Rakyat (PKR) and Democratic Action Party (DAP) which commands ethnic Chinese as its vote bank.

**USIBC appoints Vijay Advani as new Chairman of Global Board:**

- The US-India Business Council (USIBC) has appointed Vijay Advani as new Chair of its Global Board of Directors. Prior to this, he served as Executive Chairman of the Board in January 2020. The council also announced two new members of the Global Board of Directors Lockheed Martin International Senior Vice President Tim Cahill and GE South Asia President & CEO Mahesh Palashikar. US India Business Council (USIBC) represents top global companies operating across the United States, India, and Indo-Pacific.
  - Important:

**IMPORTANT DAYS**

24 February – Central Excise Day:

- Central Excise Day is observed in India on 24 February every year to encourage the employees of the excise department to carry out the central excise duty in a better way to prevent corruption in the manufacturing business and to carry out the best possible exercise services in India.

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**NATIONAL NEWS**

**Namaste Trump to be held at Motera Stadium on 24 February:**

- The mega event Namaste Trump is to be held at cricket stadium Sardar Patel Stadium, also known as Motera Stadium, in Ahmedabad on 24 February 2020.
- The Donald Trump NagarikAbhivadanSamiti (Citizen Felicitation Committee for Donald Trump) will organize the high-profile public event which will feature cultural performances.

**Vice President inaugurated 2nd Edition of Exhibition and Conference on Agri-technology and Innovation:**

- Vice President of India M. Venkaiah Naidu inaugurated the 2nd Edition of Exhibition and
Conference on Agri-technology & Innovation at Prof. Jayashankar Telangana State Agriculture University in Hyderabad on 22 February 2020.

- It emphasized the need for post-harvest management and providing support to the farmers. The conference highlighted e-NAM should be expanded to all regions in every state.

**Haryana government to open AtalKisan-Majdoor canteens to provide meals:**

- Haryana state government is to open AtalKisan-Majdoor canteens in all mandis and sugar mills across the state. The announcement was made by Governor Satyadeo Narain Arya at the Budget Session of State Assembly which commenced in Chandigarh.
- The aim of the move is to provide affordable and cheap meals to farmers and labourers at a concessional rate of Rs.10 per plate. 25 AtalKisan-Majdoor canteens will be established in 2020 in the state.

**BANKING AND ECONOMY**

**NCAER pegs GDP growth at 4.9% for current fiscal:**

- Delhi-based think tank National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) has pegged the economic growth of India for 2019-20 at 4.9 percent.
- For 2020-21, the Indian economy is expected to improve to 5.6 percent.

**OBITUARY**

**Creator of LEGO Minifigure, Jens Nygaard Knudsen Passed Away:**

- Jens Nygaard Knudsen, the chief designer of the iconic Lego minifigure with interchangeable legs and torsos has passed away. He was 78-year old.
- Nygaard Knudsen was also responsible for developing some of Lego’s classic themes, such as Lego Space and Lego Pirates.
- The LEGO Group is a Danish toy production company located in Billund, Denmark.

**SPORTS**

**India finishes with 20-medals in in Asian Wrestling Championships:**

- The 2020 Asian Wrestling Championships was held at the KD Jadhav Indoor Stadium, Indira Gandhi Arena, New Delhi from February 18 to February 23.
- China was not allowed to participate in the competition due to .
- India won total 20 medals including 5 Gold, 6 Silver and 9 Bronze to be placed at third spot in the medal table.
- Japan stood first with 16 medals (8-4-4) while Iran was second with 17 medals (7-3-7).
- The Championship was held in three categories:
  1. Men’s freestyle
  2. Men’s Greco-Roman
3. Women’s freestyle
4. **APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS**

**RajalaxmiDeo re-elected as Rowing Federation of India President:**
- Mrs Rajlaxmi Singh Deo has been re-elected as the president of the Rowing Federation of India (RFI) on 22nd February 2020.
- Rowing Federation of India headquarter – Mumbai.