

## CURRENT AFFAIRS FEBRUARY 2019 PDF

### AWARDS & HONOURS

Name of the award	Award Winner	Additional Information
National Equestrian Championship, silver	Randeep Hooda	
Hurun Global Rich List 2019	Jeff Bezos of Amazon (Top)	
Gandhi Peace Prize , 2015	Vivekananda Kendra, Kanyakumari	Vivekananda Centre has promoted self-help, sustainability and development throughout our country
Gandhi Peace Prize, 2016	Akshaya Patra Foundation and the Sulabh International	The Akshaya Patra Foundation has advanced education and cognition by working to remove hunger and enhance nutrition. The Sulabh International and its founder Dr Bindeshwar Pathak were sanitation pioneers
Gandhi Peace Prize, 2017	Ekal Abhiyan Trust	The Ekal Abhiyan Trust is helping 2.2 million children - 52 per cent of them girls - access education.
Gandhi Peace Prize, 2018	Yohei Sasakawa	Yōhei Sasakawa is chairman of The Nippon Foundation,
Cannes International Open trophy (Chess)	Abhijeet Gupta	
META Lifetime Achievement Award	Mahesh Elkunchwar	One of Indias most progressive playwrights
Seoul Peace Prize	Prime Minister Narendra Modi	From the South Korean government
Football Ratna Award	Sunil Chhetri	

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Oscat award, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA)	Bradley Cooper	
Israel's Million Dollar Dan David Prize	Indian historian Sanjay Subrahmanyam	For his work on inter-cultural encounters between Asians, Europeans and people of North and South America during the early modern era.
Lifetime Achievement Award by the Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television.	Indo-Canadian filmmaker Deepa Mehta	
Hurun India Philanthropy List 2018, TOP	Mukesh Ambani	

### APPOINTMENTS

Name of the Person	Name of the Position	Additional Information
IDBI Bank, non-executive, non-whole time chairman	Hemant Bhargava	
Nigerian President	Muhammadu Buhari	Re-elected for a second four year term.
Amazon Board of Directors	Indra Nooyi	
Wrestling Federation of India (WFI), President	Brij Bhushan Sharan	
President AIBA elite foundation	Ajay Singh	
First Lokayukta of Nagaland	Justice Uma Nath Singh	Justice Uma Nath Singh was a former Chief Justice of Meghalaya High Court.
D.K. Jain	BCCI ombudsman	

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Anirban Mukherjee	PayU India, CEO	Mukherjee was co-CEO of Reliance Payments Solutions Ltd and was part of the leadership team of Jio.
Mary Kom	Brand ambassador of PUMA	
Taapsee Pannu	PepsiCo's Kurkure, brand ambassador	
Analjit Singh	Chairman of Max India and Max Life	
Pramod Chandra Mody	CBDT chairman	
Ashwani Lohani	Air India CMD	
Prafulla Chhajed	CA Institute President	
Sushil Chandra,	New Election Commissioner	Sushil Chandra was the chairman of the Central Board of Direct Taxes or CBDT.
Shane Warne	Brand ambassador of Rajasthan Royals	Rajasthan Royals has also decided to change its jersey colour from blue to pink this year
Senior IPS officer Dinkar Gupta	Punjab's new DGP	Succeeding Suresh Arora
Pradeep Singh Kharola	Civil aviation secretary	
PV Bharathi	Corp Bank MD	
Kristalina Georgieva	World Bank Interim President	
P.V.Sindhu	PNB MetLife brand ambassador	
Alok Verma	Director of CBI	
G V Krishna Rao	Chief Commissioner of CGST	

## **BANKING & FINANCE**

### **IDBI Bank, LIC ink bancassurance pact**

IDBI Bank and Life Insurance Corporation of India have signed a bancassurance agreement under which the lender will offer LIC's insurance products at its branches. IDBI Bank as a corporate agent of LIC would get a window to provide LIC's entire gamut of insurance offerings to the bank's 1.80-crore customer base spread over 1,800 branches across the country. As part of the service-level agreement, the bank will become the preferred bank for LIC premium payments and also function as premium point to boost sale of LIC products, thereby gaining from fees and float income, it further said.

### **Allahabad Bank, Corporation Bank out of RBI's weak-bank watchlist**

The RBI on Tuesday lifted lending curbs on two more public sector banks (PSBs) – Allahabad Bank and Corporation Bank – by removing them from its weak-bank watchlist. Private sector Dhanlaxmi Bank too has been taken out of the Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) Framework.

### **RBI forms new NBFCs' category by merging 3 to ease operational flexibility**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has merged three categories of NBFCs — asset finance, loan companies and investment companies — into one new category called NBFC-investment and credit company (NBFC-ICC) to ease operational flexibility of these institutions.

In its endeavor to replace entity-based regulations with activity-based ones, the RBI in its last bi-monthly monetary policy had decided to harmonise major categories of non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) engaged in credit intermediation into a single category.

### **Srei Equipment Finance to co-lend with Syndicate Bank**

Srei Equipment Finance, a wholly owned subsidiary of Srei Infrastructure Finance, has tied up with state-owned Syndicate Bank to jointly provide financing for construction and farm equipment.

Under the arrangement, Syndicate Bank would leverage on its low-cost funds and co-lend equipment loans with Srei at a mutually agreed rate .

### **MobiKwik offers instant life insurance for Rs 20 on its App**

MobiKwik, India's largest digital financial services platform, announced the launch of digital life insurance on its app to its users. MobiKwik in association with ICICI Prudential Life Insurance Company has rolled out first-of-its-kind group micro insurance product.

The offering begins with a life cover of Rs 1 lakh available for a monthly premium as low as Rs 20 per month. This is the second big announcement by MobiKwik in the digital insurance space, post the launch of accidental insurance in November 2018. The users have an option to choose from three sums assured policies: Rs 1 lakh, 1.5 lakhs and 2 lakhs, available against monthly premiums of Rs 20/-, 30 per month and 40 per month respectively.

### **HDFC ERGO Launches The First-of-its-kind Trip Protector' Policy**

HDFC ERGO General Insurance Company, India's third-largest non-life insurance provider in the private sector, announced the launch of 'Trip Protector' insurance policy, a pioneering policy in the non-life insurance segment in India. In the event of a cancellation, either a flight or hotel booking, Trip Protector insurance policy will safeguard travellers financially against the cost of cancellation levied by Hotels or Airlines.

### **EPFO hikes interest rates, PF deposits to give more returns for 2018-19**

The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) on Thursday hiked the interest rate on employees' provident fund by 10 basis point from 8.55 per cent to 8.65 per cent for the 2018-19 fiscal year. it would benefit around 6 crore subscribers of the retirement fund body.

At 8.55 per cent for 2017-18, the interest rate on the provident fund, the EPFO had provided a five-year low rate of returns on the PF deposits. The EPFO has brought the interest rate at the level of 2016-17, when the same 8.65 per cent rate was announced.

### **World Bank, UN Women and SIDBI plan 'women's livelihood bond' to raise Rs300 cr.**

The World Bank, UN Women (a United Nations entity dedicated to gender equality and empowerment of women), and Small Industries Development Bank of India

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(SIDBI) have come together to launch a five-year tenor 'women's livelihood bond' to raise Rs300 crore.

The bonds, which will be raised by SIDBI with the support of World Bank and UN Women, will be placed with leading wealth managers and corporates in the country on private placement basis. The coupon rate on these bonds will be 3 per cent per annum.

### **LIC launches 'Micro Bachat'**

The Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) introduced 'Micro Bachat', a non-linked, participating endowment micro-insurance plan, which offers a combination of protection and savings. The first time a micro insurance plan has been launched providing coverage up to ₹2 lakh.

### **Govt. announces ₹48,239 cr recapitalisation plan for 12 public sector banks**

The Finance Ministry announced to pump in ₹48,239 crore in 12 public sector banks (PSBs) in this fiscal to help them maintain regulatory capital requirements and finance growth plans.

Government will infuse ₹9,086 crore in Corporation Bank and ₹6,896 crore in Allahabad Bank — the two "better-performing" banks currently under the Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) supervision of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

### **SBI launches Nayi Disha for employees to maintain work-life balance**

The nation's largest lender State Bank has begun a massive employee engagement programme to ensure its 2.6 lakh-strong staff does not work mechanically and is sufficiently motivated to take on newer challenges that the future will throw up.

The programme christened Nayi Disha or the new path focuses on work-life balance and also involves the staffs immediate family members, also giving them the ability to inform the bank if an employee is not able to leave work on time.

### **RBI to pay ₹28,000 crore as interim dividend to govt**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said it would give ₹28,000 crore to the Union government as interim dividend. The decision was taken at a meeting of the RBI's Central Board in New Delhi.

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“Based on a limited audit review and after applying the extant economic capital framework, the Board decided to transfer an interim surplus of Rs280 billion to the Central government for the half-year ended December 31, 2018,” the RBI said in a statement.

### **RBI lifts cap on FPI investments in corporate bonds**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) withdrew the 20 per cent limit on investments by FPIs in corporate bonds of an entity with a view to encourage more foreign investments.

As part of the review of the FPI investment in corporate debt undertaken in April 2018, it was stipulated that no FPI should have an exposure of more than 20 per cent of its corporate bond portfolio to a single corporate (including exposure to entities related to the corporate).

### **JP Morgan creates first US bank-backed crypto-currency**

US investment bank JP Morgan has created a crypto-currency to help settle payments between clients in its wholesale payments business. JPM Coin is the first digital currency to be backed by a major US bank.

The crypto-currency, which runs on blockchain technology, has been used successfully to move money between the bank and a client account.

### **NTPC signs pact with SBI for Rs 5K crore term loan**

State-owned power giant NTPC said that it has signed a term loan agreement for Rs 5,000 crore with State Bank of India. The loan facility is extended at an interest rate linked to 3-Month MCLR of the Bank. This loan has a door to door tenure of 15 years and will be utilised to part finance the capital expenditure of NTPC.

The loan agreement was signed by Masood A Ansari, General Manager (Finance), NTPC Ltd and Neelabh Sinha, Dy General Manager, SBI in the presence of Saptarshi Roy, Director (Finance), NTPC Ltd , Sudhir Arya, CFO, NTPC Ltd and Pradeep Kelshikar, General Manager, SBI.

### **PM launches DD Arunprabha – a dedicated 24×7 Satellite channel for Arunachal Pradesh**

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi launched DD Arunprabha at Arunachal Pradesh. He also laid foundation stone of Film and Television Institute (FTI) and several other projects in the state.

In order to strengthen and develop the culture of the State, a dedicated 24×7 Satellite TV channel DD Arunprabha has been launched by the Government. PM expressed hope that the channel will act as an ambassador of the culture of the state and will familiarize people across India with the beauty and the culture of the State.

### **RBI doubles limit, banks to treat Rs 2 crore and more as bulk deposits**

Banks will treat deposits of over Rs2 crore as 'bulk' after the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) doubled the limit for the same from the earlier Rs1 crore. This would enhance operational freedom of banks. RBI said in a release. Commercial banks normally offer a lower rate of interest on bulk deposits.

### **ADB raises \$100 mln via maiden offshore peso-linked bonds**

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has raised 5.22 billion pesos (\$100 million) from its maiden issue of Philippine peso-linked bonds in the international market. The four-year bonds pay a fixed interest rate of 5.25 percent and will be settled in U.S. dollar.

### **RBI changes threshold for bulk deposit to Rs 2 crore**

Reserve Bank of India has chosen to alter the definition of bulk deposits in the recent monetary policy review. The threshold for bulk deposit has been revised as single deposits of Rs 2 crore and above. The banks are also asked to maintain their bulk deposit card rates in the core banking system for supervisory review. RBI will issue final guidelines regarding this by end of February 2019.

CRISIL estimates bank credit to grow at 13% to 14% over fiscal years 2019 and 2020 as compared to 8% in fiscal year 2018.



### **RBI increases limit on collateral-free agriculture loans to Rs 1.6 lakh**

To boost liquidity in the farming sector, particularly among small and marginal farmers, the RBI on Thursday announced increasing the limit on collateral-free agriculture loans to Rs 1.6 lakh from Rs 1 lakh. In 2010, the collateral-free limit for crop loans and term loans was hiked from Rs 50,000 to Rs 1 lakh.

That move has been taken “keeping in view the overall inflation and rise in agriculture input costs” since 2010. “This will enhance coverage of small and marginal farmers in the formal credit system. It also decided to set up an internal working group to review agricultural credit and address issues such as regional disparity, and extent of coverage, among others.

### **RBI cuts repo rate by 25 basis points to 6.25%**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) lowered the repo rate—its key lending rate—by 0.25 percentage points to 6.25 percent and changed its stance to “neutral” from “calibrated tightening”, signalling higher chances of more cuts in the coming months if inflation persisted within tolerable limits.

The central bank also sounded bullish about the prospects in the real sector, only marginally reducing its 2019-20 GDP growth forecast to 7.4 percent from 7.5 percent earlier, amid sprouting investment revival signs.

### **RBI slaps Rs2-cr fine on Axis Bank and UCO Bank; Rs1 cr on Syndicate Bank**

The RBI has imposed a monetary penalty of Rs2 crore each on UCO Bank and Axis Bank, and Rs1 crore on Syndicate Bank. In the case of UCO and Axis Bank, the penalty has been imposed for non-compliance with the Circular on ‘Collection of Account Payee Cheques – Prohibition on Crediting Proceeds to Third Party Account’, and Master Directions on ‘Frauds – Classification and Reporting by Commercial Banks and select FIs’.

In the case of Syndicate Bank, the penalty has been imposed for non-compliance with the directions contained in Master Circular on Frauds – Classification and Reporting and Circular on Risk Management Systems in Banks.

### **Fino Payments Bank partners with Suryoday Small Finance Bank to offer sweep account facility**

Fino Payments Bank (FPB) has announced the launch of a sweep account facility in association with Suryoday Small Finance Bank (SSFB). This partnership will help FPB address the issue of deposit limits that all the payment banks face at the moment. As per the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), payment banks can only take deposits up to Rs1 lakh per account. However the partnership would allow customers to seamlessly transfer the excess amount from their account in FPB to SSFB (partner bank) account.

### **ADB buys 14% stake in Annapurna Finance**

Bhubaneswar-based micro-financier (MFI) Annapurna Finance has raised Rs 137 crore as a primary equity investment from Asian Development Bank (ADB), which will allow the MFI to extend micro-credits to women members of Joint Liability Groups (JLGs). According to media reports, ADB has picked up a 14-percent stake in Annapurna Finance.

### **SBI UK chief awarded 'Freedom of the City of London'**

India's largest state-owned lender SBI's regional head in the UK has been honoured with the 'Freedom of the City of London' award in recognition of his contribution to promoting the bilateral relations. Sanjiv Chadha, who oversaw State Bank of India (SBI) UK's transition into a subsidiary in April last year, was nominated for the honour by Lord Mayor of London Peter Estlin and Sheriff Vincent Keaveny.

The award, given by the City of London Corporation, dates back to the 13th century and has since developed into an honour bestowed upon individuals who make an impact in the financial hub of London, referred to as the City or the Square Mile.

### **RBI launches Ombudsman Scheme for digital payments**

The RBI has launched an ombudsman scheme to tackle frauds associated with digital transactions. The banking regulator had indicated in December that it would set up a separate ombudsman for digital payments.

"The scheme is introduced to facilitate the satisfaction or settlement of complaints regarding digital transactions undertaken by customers of system participants as defined under the scheme," the RBI said in a statement on Thursday.

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The scheme, launched under Section 18 of the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007, will provide a cost-free and expeditious complaint redressal mechanism related to deficiency in customer services in digital transactions conducted through non-banking entities regulated by the RBI, it added.

### **Ujjivan Small Finance Bank launches Ujjivan Bank Kisan Suvidha loan for small and marginal farmers**

Ujjivan Small Finance Bank (SFB) announced the launch of Ujjivan Bank Kisan Suvidha loan to offer financial credit services to small and marginal farmers.

It is the first bank in this category to offer collateral free loans for both agriculture and allied activities such as dairy purchase and maintenance, post-harvest transportation, farm implements purchase, fishery, sheep rearing, sericulture, floriculture, mushroom farming and ad hoc requirements like coconut farm maintenance and vegetable farm development.

The product is launched across four states namely, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Karnataka and Odisha. The product provides hassle free loans to individuals with amount ranging from Rs60, 000 – Rs2 lakhs.

## **INDIAN AFFAIRS**

### **Suresh Prabhu addresses Diplomats of LAC Region**

Union Minister of Commerce & Industry and Civil Aviation, Suresh Prabhu, interacted with diplomats of India-Latin America and Caribbean Strategic (LAC) Economic Cooperation in New Delhi. In his keynote address Suresh Prabhu stressed on the need for a multi-pronged strategy to enhance our bilateral trade, both in merchandise and services. He said that establishing value chain linkages will help to boost trade relations between LAC-India.

### **Textiles Minister launches Short Term Courses at NIFT Panchkula**

Union Minister of Textiles, Smriti Zubin Irani, launched five short term courses at NIFT Panchkula, Haryana, through video link from New Delhi. The campus is being set up with the support of Department of Technical Education, Government of Haryana.

The proposed one-year Certificate Programmes are:

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- Fashion Clothing & Technology
- Design Development for Indian Ethnic Wear
- Fashion & Media Communication
- Textile for Interiors & Fashion
- Fashion Knitwear Production and Technology

### **Steel Minister to present 25th Prime Minister's Trophy for Excellence in Performance of Integrated Steel Plants**

Union Steel Minister, Chaudhary Birender Singh, will give away 25th Prime Minister's Trophy for Excellence in Performance of Integrated Steel Plants for 2016-17 in New Delhi on 1st March 2019.

Ministry of Steel has a scheme for award of Prime Minister's Trophy, Steel Minister's Trophy and Certificates of Appreciation. The scheme for awarding integrated steel for excellence in performance began in 1992-93 and 2016-17 was the 25th year of evaluation.

There are four categories of awards:

- Prime Minister's Trophy along with prize money of Rs. 2 crore is given to a plant whose performance is best amongst all participating plants.
- Steel Minister's Trophy with a prize money of Rs. 1 crore is given for 2nd best overall performance.
- Other categories of awards include "Certificate of Appreciation for Maximum Improvement" and "Theme Based Awards".

### **Shri Dharmendra Pradhan hands over 100th Letter of Intent under SATAT scheme**

Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas & Skill development and Entrepreneurship Shri Dharmendra Pradhan handed over the 100th Letter of Intent (LOI) to the Compressed Bio-Gas(CBG) Entrepreneur (producer) under the SATAT scheme.

SATAT is an initiative aimed at providing a Sustainable Alternative Towards Affordable Transportation as a developmental effort that would benefit both vehicle-users as well as farmers and entrepreneurs.

### **India and Brunei sign Agreement for the Exchange of Information and Assistance in Collection with respect to Taxes (TIEA)**

The Government of Republic of India and the Government of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam signed an Agreement for the Exchange of Information and Assistance in Collection with respect to Taxes (TIEA) in New Delhi.

### **19. 101 police personnel awarded 'Union Home Minister's Medal for Excellence in Investigation' for 2018**

The 'Union Home Minister's Medal for Excellence in Investigation' for the year 2018 have been awarded to 101 Police personnel belonging to 25 States/UT/ Central Investigating Agencies .

This medal, constituted in 2018, with the objective to promote high professional standards of investigation of crime and to recognize such Excellence in Investigation by Investigating officers.

Among the personnel receiving this Awards, 11 are from Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra Police each, 9 are from CBI, 8 are from Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh police, 7 are from Tamil Nadu police and the remaining from the other States/UT and Central Investigating Agencies. These include twelve (12) women police officers.

### **TECH-SOP 2019 for MSMEs**

With a view to enhance awareness among MSMEs about latest technological innovations available, and sensitize them on the role of technology in creating competitiveness and opportunities, the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) organized a programme on Technology Support and Outreach (TECH-SOP 2019) in New Delhi.

TECH - SOP 2019 is an initiative to bridge the gap between the technological innovations and MSMEs so that they can harness the technologies and grow in the global value chain.

'India Green Tech Open Challenge' was also launched during this occasion which aims to encourage MSMEs to adopt sustainable and green technologies.

### **Prakash Javadekar launched SHREYAS**

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To provide industry apprenticeship opportunities to graduates in non-technical fields, passing out from the National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS) in April 2019, the Minister for Human Resource Development Prakash Javadekar launched the Scheme for Higher Education Youth in Apprenticeship and Skills (SHREYAS) for youth pursuing higher education.

The objective is to enhance the employability of Indian youth by providing 'on-job work exposure' and stipend.

SHREYAS is a programme basket comprising the initiatives of three Central Ministries — the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship and the Ministry of Labour and Employment.

### **IRCTC launches payment aggregator, IRCTC iPay**

The Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) has launched its own payment aggregator system, IRCTC iPay, a step which will help promote government's Digital India initiative.

The exclusive digital payment gateway will provide an improved online digital payment convenience and ease of doing business to passengers availing online travel related services through the IRCTC website.

"With the launch of IRCTC iPay, the passengers will not need any third-party platforms as the IRCTC iPay provides payment options like credit card, debit card, UPI – Unified Payment Interface, International Card.

### **Govt releases passenger charter specifying rights of air travellers**

Civil Aviation Minister Suresh Prabhu released the passenger charter which specifies rights of air travellers . The charter states that if a domestic flight is expected to be delayed by more than six hours, then the airline will offer an option of alternate flight to the passenger within that time, or it will refund the full price of the ticket.

It also said that if a passenger is informed of flight cancellation less than two weeks before departure, the airline must offer an alternate flight to passenger or refund the ticket completely.

### **DAC approves acquisition of defence equipment worth Rs 2700 cr**

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The Defence Acquisition Council has approved the acquisition of defence equipment for about 2700 Crores rupees. The approval include acquisition of three Cadet Training ships for the Navy, which will provide basic sea training to officer cadets including women officer under trainees.

The ships will be capable of undertaking Hospital Ship duties, providing Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief, undertaking Search and Rescue missions and Non-Combatant Evacuation Operations.

### **Jitendra Singh presents National e-Governance Awards 2019**

Minister of State in Prime Minister's Office, Dr Jitendra Singh presented National e-Governance Awards, 2019 in New Delhi. The awards are given every year to recognise and promote excellence in implementation of e-Governance initiatives. He gave the award in six categories.

### **Petroleum Minister gives Rs 34 cr of IOC for clean Ganga movement**

Petroleum Minister Dhramendra Pradhan gave 34 crore rupees of Indian Oil Corporation for clean Ganga movement. After receiving the grant , Union Minister Nitin Gadkari said, nearly 40 Ganga tributaries will be cleaned.

### **Bharti Airtel partners with Nokia to automate data centre network**

Finnish telecommunication giant Nokia said Bharti Airtel would deploy solution from Nokia's Nuage Networks to upgrade its data centres. Nuage Networks is a Nokia venture focused on software-defined networking solution.

Airtel will deploy Nuage Networks VSP (virtualised services platform) solution in 15 circles (service areas) in the northern and southern parts of the country to automate its data centre networks.

### **Shri M Venkaiah Naidu Launches BIMTECH Director Dr. H Chaturvedi's Book on 'Quality, Accreditation & Ranking' at New Delhi**

Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu launched the book titled 'Quality, Accreditation, and Ranking – A Silent Revolution in the Offing in Indian Higher Education' edited by Education Promotion Society for India's (EPSI) Alternate President Dr. H Chaturvedi in New Delhi.

### **IWAI signs MoU with Indian Oil on fuel needs for national waterways**

Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) and Indian Oil Corporation (IOCL) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for jointly developing infrastructure for fuels, lubricating oil, LPG, Natural Gas and any other related fuel and gas for meeting the requirement of National Waterways.

The MoU will provide for an understanding over general modalities of mutual cooperation leading to addressing futuristic demand of any form of energy for Inland Waterways and associated services.

### **PM Modi launches Khelo India App**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched Sports Authority of India's (SAI) first-of-its-kind mobile application, 'Khelo India App' in order to create awareness about sports and fitness in the country.

The application, developed by SAI as part of the Khelo India Scheme, aims to further the Prime Minister's vision to develop the sporting ecosystem in India and turn it into a global sporting superpower in the years to come.

### **NDMA to conduct national workshop on heat wave risk reduction**

The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) is conducting a two-day national workshop on heat wave risk reduction on 27-28 February, 2019. The workshop, to be held at Nagpur, has been organised in collaboration with the Maharashtra Government.

This workshop aims to sensitise the States to the need of preparing and implementing specific Heat Action Plans.

### **Col Rajyavardhan Rathore (Retd) inaugurates National Level Finals of National Youth Parliament Festival**

Minister of State (I/C) for Youth Affairs and Sports & Information and Broadcasting Col Rajyavardhan Rathore (Retd) inaugurated the National Level Finals of National Youth Parliament Festival at Dr. Ambedkar International Centre, New Delhi. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi will confer the National Youth Parliament Festival 2019 awards to the winners on 27th February, 2019 at Vigyan Bhawan.



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### **PM attending Gita Aradhana Mahotsav at ISKCON in Delhi**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is attending the Gita Aradhana Mahotsav at ISKCON Temple in New Delhi. Mr Modi unveiled the Bhagwad Gita prepared by ISKCON devotees.

### **Skill Development Min inaugurates Skill Saathi Youth Conclave in Odisha**

Union Skill Development Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has said Odisha has the potential to soon emerge as skill capital of the country. Inaugurating a "Skill Saathi Youth Conclave in Bhubaneswar, he said the youth of Odisha has intellect, skill and courage and with these qualities, they can meet any challenges and work together to create a New Odisha. Mr Pradhan said, the Skill Saathi model was created to impart information on vocational education and available market opportunities to the youth.

### **Civil Aviation Ministry organising 'Aviation Conclave 2019' with theme of "Flying for All"**

The Ministry of Civil Aviation, in association with Airports Authority of India, AAICLAS and Confederation of Indian Industry, is organizing the Aviation Conclave 2019 with an overarching theme of "Flying for All" in New Delhi.

### **Tata Motors to launch premium hatchback Altroz in mid-2019**

Tata Motors officially named the 45X Concept as Altroz. The upcoming premium hatchback will have its global premier at the Geneva Motor Show next month and will be commercially launched in mid-2019. Upon its introduction in India, the car will take on the likes of Maruti Suzuki Baleno, Hyundai Elite i20 and Honda Jazz.

### **India gets its war memorial**

Prime Minister dedicated the National War Memorial at the iconic India Gate complex in New Delhi to the fallen soldiers who laid their lives in the several wars India has fought since Independence as rose petals were showered on the newly built structure.

### **Indian passport improves its ranking on global index, jumps 10 ranks in 5 years**

Indian passport is gaining strength on the global index as more and more countries are offering visa on arrival and visa-free entry to Indians. As per the 2019 Passport

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Index, the Indian passport has steadily strengthened its position over the past five years. It has jumped from 77th position in 2015 to 67th position in 2019. UAE passport is the most powerful passport in the world.

### **Adani group wins bids to operate five airports**

The Adani group has won the bid to operate five out of six airports that were put for privatisation by the central government. Adanis were the highest bidder for Ahmedabad, Thiruvananthapuram, Lucknow, Mangaluru and Jaipur airports, AAI chose the winner on the basis of “monthly per-passenger fee”.

### **Govt launches Rail Drishti Dashboard to keep people informed about ongoing Railway works**

Railway Minister Piyush Goyal launched Rail Drishti Dashboard in New Delhi . Mr Goyal said the Dashboard has been launched to keep people informed about the work going on in the Railways across the country.

People will get useful information from Rail Drishti through Railway WiFi facilities that are continuously expanding in the country.

### **Health Minister inaugurates 4th Global Digital Health Partnership Summit**

Health Minister JP Nadda inaugurated the 4th Global Digital Health Partnership Summit in New Delhi . Mr Nadda said, the government is committed to secure Universal Health Coverage for the underprivileged and deprived section of the society. nearly 13 lakh poor people have availed the benefits of Ayushman Bharat scheme.

### **M Rajnath Singh to inaugurate 29 infra projects of CAPF in New Delhi**

Home Minister Rajnath Singh will inaugurate 29 infrastructure projects both residential and non-residential buildings of Central Armed Police Forces in New Delhi. These projects have been constructed at various locations across the country at a total cost of Rs. 1,714.97 crore. the projects involve 53 non-residential buildings and 4,723 residential quarters.

### **PM Modi to deliver keynote address at 'Rising India Summit 2019' in New Delhi**

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Prime Minister Narendra Modi will deliver the keynote address at the Rising India Summit 2019 in New Delhi. Mr Modi is likely to define national priorities at the two-day event beginning.

Theme for this year's event is "Beyond Politics: Defining National Priorities".

### **NID at Bhopal and Jorhat Inaugurated**

Union Minister of Commerce & Industry and Civil Aviation, Suresh Prabhu, inaugurated National Institutes of Design (NID) at Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh and Jorhat in Assam through video conference from New Delhi.

The National Design Policy 2007 had recommended setting up design institutes on the lines of NID, Ahmedabad in other parts of India to promote design programs. Four new NIDs have been set up in Andhra Pradesh (Amaravati), Assam (Jorhat), Madhya Pradesh (Bhopal) and Haryana (Kurukshetra) with a total outlay of Rs. 434 crore.

### **Modi Launches PM-KISAN Scheme, Slams Opposition**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi rolled out the ambitious PM-KISAN (Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi), a cash-transfer scheme.

The Centre had announced the PM-KISAN scheme in the 2019-20 Interim Budget. Under this, Rs 6,000 will be paid to 12 crore small and marginal farmers holding cultivable land of up to two hectares per year in three instalments.

### **India rolls out National Viral Hepatitis Control Program**

In line with the Government of India's deep commitment towards elimination of viral hepatitis, the "National Action Plan – Viral Hepatitis" was launched by Union Minister of State, Health & Family Welfare, Shri Ashwini Kumar Choubey in Mumbai.

### **Aero India 2019: Badminton star PV Sindhu goes 'Supersonic' in Tejas aircraft**

India's ace badminton player and Olympic silver-medallist PV Sindhu flew in homemade combat fighter jet Tejas aircraft at the ongoing Aero India air show in Bengaluru.

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### **Rajnath Singh inaugurates Waste to Wonder Park in Delhi**

Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated a new park which houses the replicas of seven wonders of the world at Sarai Kale Khan. The park, which is called the 'Waste to Wonder Park', was built by the South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC).

### **DAE Media Meet held at Anushakti Bhavan**

The Department of Atomic Energy (DAE), in collaboration with PIB Mumbai, organized a half-day event to provide an opportunity for the media interested in the sector to get a deeper understanding of issues germane to the field. The theme chosen for the Media Meet was "Radioisotopes in Healthcare – Radiopharmaceuticals for Nuclear Medicine: DAE Roles and Contributions".

### **In a first, India to attend OIC meet as 'guest of honour'; Swaraj to attend**

In a significant move, India has been invited to the inaugural plenary of the foreign ministers' conclave of the OIC, a powerful grouping of Muslim majority nations, and External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj will attend it in Abu Dhabi next month as the 'guest of honour'.

The 46th Session of the OIC's Council of Foreign Ministers will be held in Abu Dhabi from March 1 to 2.

### **Free clinical laboratory services introduced in Tripura**

Tripura Health and Family Welfare Minister Sudip Roy Barman launched a mega free clinical laboratory service across the northeastern state. The Minister said that "worldclass standard" 24-hour free clinical laboratory services were introduced in six districts and 12 sub-divisional government-run hospitals and the Indira Gandhi Memorial Hospital in Agartala on a public private partnership (PPP) model.

### **President of India graces 18th anniversary celebrations of Swarna Bharat Trust at Venkatachalam, Nellore**

The President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, graced the 18th anniversary celebrations of the Swarna Bharat Trust at Venkatachalam, Nellore, Andhra Pradesh.

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### **Over 12 lakh people treated free of cost under Ayushman Bharat**

Over 12 lakh people have been treated free of cost under Ayushman Bharat scheme, the world's largest health care programme, the CEO of Ayushman Bharat Dr Indu Bhushan said at the Medical Fair India 2019 in Delhi. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had launched the scheme in September last year.

### **Vice President inaugurates Nellore FM Station**

The Vice President of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu inaugurated Nellore All India Radio FM Station in Andhra Pradesh and asserted that radio broadcasting has made a comeback in the era of continuous bombardment of visual content by myriad channels.

### **Dr Jitendra Singh addresses at the launch of 'Shisht Bharat Campaign'**

The Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Development of North-Eastern Region (DoNER), MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr Jitendra Singh said that the elders should set example in their conduct before the younger generation, so that the youth can inherit these values naturally by emulating their elder generations.

The theme of the event was to discuss the importance of moral science education in schools and colleges and to include Moral Science as a subject in the educational curriculum.

### **Digital Bharat, Saksham Bharat -A Compendium on Digital India released**

A Digital India Compendium on Digital Bharat, Saksham Bharat was released by Hon'ble Minister for Electronics & Information Technology and Law & Justice, Sh. Ravi Shankar Prasad at Stein Auditorium, India Habitat Centre, New Delhi.

The objective of the document is to disseminate and propagate the success of Digital India among masses. The document is divided in two sections- Digital profile of India and Digital profile of States & UTs. Digital profile of India comprises a in-depth analysis, comparative study of implementation of Digital India Programme and transformation it has brought out in the lives of citizens.

### **4TH India-Asean Expo Summit on 21 – 23 February 2019 in New Delhi**

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The 4th India-ASEAN Expo and Summit will be held on 21-23 February, 2019 in New Delhi. This is a flagship event of Department of Commerce, being organised with FICCI to carry forward the momentum and to further strengthen India-ASEAN relations under the Act-East Policy.

The 4th India-ASEAN Expo and Summit, 2019 will build upon the success of the previous edition of ASEAN-India Business and Investment Meet and Expo which was held in 2018 as a precursor to India-ASEAN Commemorative Summit.

### **Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad to Inaugurate VIVID 2019**

“VIVID-Vision Insight and Voices as India goes Digital”- the District Informatics Officer (DIO) meet, is being organised by National Informatics Centre (NIC) on 21st and 22nd February, 2019.

The meet is held as an initiative to interact with the DIO's and to share their experiences as well as contribution, as digital change-makers at the grass-root level in the States.

### **MoU between Environment Ministry and University of British Columbia on forestry science**

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) and University of British Columbia (UBC), Canada for next 10 years in New Delhi.

Both the institutions shall explore opportunities for future collaborations in the field of forestry science through their respective organizations namely Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education, Wildlife Institute of India, Forest Survey of India, Indira Gandhi National Forest Academy and Directorate of Forest Education, Dehradun, Uttarakhand, India and University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada.

### **HRD Minister launches Operation Digital Board**

The Minister of Human Resource Development, Shri Prakash Javadekar launched Operation Digital Board to leverage technology in order to boost quality education in the country. Operation Digital Board is a revolutionary step which will make the learning as well as the teaching process interactive and popularize flipped learning as a pedagogical approach.

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The digital board will be introduced all over the country in government and government aided schools from class 9th onwards as well as in higher education institutions. The process will begin from the coming session of 2019 itself .

### **Cabinet Approves New Solar Energy Scheme For Farmers**

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the launch of Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan with the objective of providing financial and water security to farmers. The proposed scheme consists of three components.

All three components combined, the scheme aims to add a solar capacity of 25,750 MW by 2022 . The total central financial support provided under the scheme would be Rs. 34,422 crore .

Component-A is 10,000 MW of decentralized ground mounted grid connected renewable power plants, Component-B is installation of 17.50 lakh standalone solar-powered agriculture pumps and Component-C is solarisation of 10 lakh grid-connected solar powered agriculture pumps.

### **3 Day International Conference and Exhibition On Energy and Environment to be inaugurated by President of India**

The President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, inaugurated the International Conference and Exhibition on Energy and Environment in New Delhi.

The 3 day conference organized by Council of Scientific and Industrial Research(CSIR) aims to deliberate and identify the R&D needs to innovate new techniques, technologies and applications for clean, safe, symbiotic sustenance of society, environment, energy and industries in post-2020 era.

### **PM Modi inaugurates supercomputer 'Param Shivay' at IIT-BHU**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated 'Param Shivay' Supercomputer of 833 teraflop capacity built at the cost of Rs 32.5 crore under the National Super Computing Mission at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Banaras Hindu University (BHU).

The 'Param Shivay' will include 1 peta byte secondary storage and appropriate open source system and application software suite using 223 processor nodes, 384 GB per node DDR4 RAM, parallel file system, including CPU and GPU.



### **Rajnath Singh inaugurates cyber crime fighting facility**

Boosting country's efforts in tackling cyber crimes, Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated a state-of-the-art national cyber forensic lab (NCFL) and the Delhi Police's cyber crime unit 'CyPAD'. Both the cyber crime fighting units are based in a complex at Dwarka, Sector 16C.

### **Mahatma Gandhi Scholarships awarded to 150 Sri Lankan students**

Sri Lanka's 150 students from all 25 districts were awarded the prestigious Mahatma Gandhi scholarships for study in India. Sri Lankan Education Minister Akila Viraj Kariyawasam and Indian High Commissioner Taranjit Singh Sandhu gave the scholarships at a special ceremony in Colombo .

### **Nasscom ends annual growth forecast**

The apex software industry lobby Nasscom ended the practice of forecasting annual growth and said it was cautiously optimistic about 2019, citing rising global economic uncertainties arising out of trade wars and protectionism. In 2018 also, the association had first delayed the announcement in February and later issued the projections in May, pegging it at 7-9%.

### **Governor of West Bengal, H.E. Shri Keshari Nath Tripathi Launches Book Dedicated to Swami Pragyananandji at the Kumbh Mela**

Famous Industrialist and Philanthropist Mr. Dinesh Shahra's book, 'Simplicity & Wisdom' was launched at Parmarth Ashram in Kumbh Mela. The book is dedicated to Late eminent Vedanti Swami Pragyananandji. The book was formally launched by 'His Excellency' Keshari Nath Tripathi Governor of West Bengal, and Swami Chidanand Saraswati, Head of Parmarth Ashram.

### **Govt gets Rs 10,000 crore from additional offering of Bharat-22 ETF**

The government has raised Rs 10,000 crore by additional offering of Bharat-22 Exchange Traded Fund (ETF) on Thursday. The additional 'on-tap' offering of Bharat-22 ETF was opened for a single day with a base issue size of Rs 3,500 crore and an option to retain over-subscription.

### **Indian Oil signs first annual deal for US oil, to pay \$1.5 billion**



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The country's largest refiner Indian Oil has signed its first annual deal to buy US oil, paying about \$1.5 billion for 60,000 barrels a day in 2019-20. Indian Oil is the first state-owned refiner to buy US oil under an annual contract.

### Swachhata Excellence Award 2019

AMRUT cities and Municipal Corporationsof Raigarh, Ambikapur and Kumbakonamhavebagged the first, second and third prizes respectively of Swachhata Excellence awards 2019. Nagar PalikaParishadJashpur Nagar, Malappuram Municipality, and Nagar PalikaParishadSurajpurhave claimed the prizesin the category of Statutory Towns. For Million Plus Cities, Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation has been awarded with first prize. For Aspirational Districts, Chas Municipal Corporation has been awarded with a consolation prize.

### Flight Lieutenant Hina Jaiswal becomes IAF's first woman flight engineer

In an historic moment, Indian Air Force inducted Flight Lieutenant Hina Jaiswal as the first woman flight engineer . Until last year, the Flight Engineer branch was exclusively the men's domain. the Chandigarh-origin lieutenant, successfully completed the six-month course at the 112 helicopter unit, Air Force Station, Yelahanka.

### President Kovind launches Digital Kisan Platform in 4th Agri Leadership Summit

President Ram Nath Kovind launched Digital Kisan Platform in the Fourth Agri Leadership Summit, organised by the Haryana government at Gannaur in Sonipat district .

The President visited the Agri exhibition in the International Horticulture Market and later honoured nine farmers with Krishi Rattan Pursakar and also conferred Kisan Rattan Pursakaar on Vice Chancellor K P Singh for Haryana Agriculture University, Hisar. The President will address the participants of the Summit.

### Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) organizes two day Workshop on "Committee of Creditors: An Institution of Public Faith"

The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI), jointly with the State Bank of India (SBI) and the Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA), organised a two-day

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workshop on “Committee of Creditors: An Institution of Public Faith” on 15th and 16th February, 2019 in Mumbai.

### **Expert committee recommends Rs 9,750 monthly national minimum wage**

A uniform national minimum wage of Rs 9,750 per month or region-wise minimum wages ranging from Rs 8,892-Rs 11,622 per month for five regions (as of July 2018) have been recommended by an expert committee on determining the methodology for fixing the national minimum wage.

The report of the 7-member expert panel, which was submitted in January and made public for consultations, has also recommended an additional house rent allowance, averaging up to Rs 55 per day, that is, Rs 1,430 per month for urban workers over and above the national minimum wage saying house rent accounts for a significant proportion of the overall non-food component.

### **PATA conference-mart inaugurated in Rishikesh**

The State’s Tourism and Culture minister Satpal Maharaj inaugurate the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) adventure travel and responsible tourism conference and mart-2019 at the Ganga Resort in Rishikesh .

### **Govt panel proposes national minimum wage of Rs 375 per day**

In an official statement made public , a government panel has recommended a national minimum wage of “Rs375 per day or Rs9,750 per month plus an additional housing allowance of RS 1,430 per month for workers in cities”.

The minimum wage would be “irrespective of sectors, skills, occupations and rural-urban locations”. Currently, minimum wages are decided by respective state governments.

### **President of India to present Tagore Award for Cultural Harmony in national capital on 18 th February 2019**

The President of India will present the Tagore Award for Cultural Harmony to Shri Rajkumar Singhajit Singh; Chhayanaut (a cultural organization of Bangladesh); and Shri Ram Sutar Vanji for the years 2014, 2015 & 2016 respectively on 18.02.2019 at Pravasi Bhartiya Kendra, New Delhi.

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Tagore Award for Cultural Harmony was instituted by the Government of India from 2012 recognizing the contributions made by Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore to humanity at large with his works and ideas, as part of the Commemoration of his 150th Birth Anniversary in 2012, for promoting values of Cultural Harmony.

The First Tagore Award – 2012 was conferred upon Pt. Ravi Shankar, the Indian Sitar Maestro and the Second Award – 2013 was conferred upon Maestro Zubin Mehta.

Shri Rajkumar Singhajit Singh, Chhayanaut (a cultural organization of Bangladesh); and Shri Ram Sutar Vanji have been selected for the year 2014, 2015 & 2016.

### **Expert committee suggests Rs 9,750 a month as national minimum wage**

A government-appointed expert committee has proposed doubling the national-level minimum wage for a worker in the country to Rs 9,750 a month, up from a floor of Rs 4,576 at present. The committee has alternatively proposed a national minimum wage at various regional levels in the range of Rs 8,892-11,622 a month (depending on local factors) and suggested an additional house rent allowance for urban workers.

The report of the expert committee, led by V V Giri National Labour Institute (VVGNI) Fellow Anoop Satpathy, was made public by the Union labour and employment ministry .

### **PM flags off Vande Bharat Express**

Vande Bharat Express, India's first semi-high speed train, was flagged off by Prime Minister Narendra Modi from the New Delhi railway station amid sombre mood in the backdrop of the terror attack in Pulwama. Railway Minister Piyush Goyal and members of the Railway Board were also on board the train on its inaugural journey.

The semi-high speed Train 18, which has been recently rechristened Vande Bharat Express, can run up to a maximum speed of 160 kmph. Vande Bharat Express will travel from Delhi to Varanasi in 9 hours and 45 minutes. This includes stoppage time of 40 minutes each at Kanpur and Allahabad.

The Vande Bharat Express train, with its plush purple interiors, has 16 air-conditioned coaches of which two are executive class. It has a seating capacity of 1,128 passengers.

## **India withdraws Most Favoured Nation status to Pakistan**

Just a day after at least 40 Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel lost their lives in a dastardly suicide bombing attack in Pulwama, the Indian government has withdrawn “Most Favoured Nation” or MFN status accorded to Pakistan.

### **What is MFN status?**

Most Favoured Nation status is given to an international trade partner to ensure non-discriminatory trade between all partner countries of the WTO. A country which provides MFN status to another country has to provide concessions, privileges, and immunity in trade agreements. It is the first clause in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).

## **Inland Waterways Authority of India launches portal for real-time information**

Moving a step ahead towards ensuring optimum use of National Waterways, the Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) launched a new portal LADIS – Least Available Depth Information System.

LADIS will ensure that real-time data on least available depths is disseminated for ship/barge and cargo owners so that they can undertake transportation on NWs in a more planned way.

## **CCEA approves Rs 2,900 Cr for Credit Linked Capital Subsidy and Technology Upgradation Scheme for MSMEs**

The Credit Linked Capital Subsidy and Technology Upgradation Scheme (CLCSTUS) was approved by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, for the next three years, with a total outlay of Rs 2,900 crore.

The scheme aims to boost the competitiveness of MSMEs by integrating ongoing technology upgradation efforts with the Credit Linked Capital Subsidy (CLCS), hand-holding zero defect zero effect manufacturing (ZED), increasing productivity through waste reduction, design intervention, cloud computing, facilitation of intellectual property, and nurturing new ideas.

### **Prime Minister addresses CREDAI YouthCon-2019**

The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi addressed the CREDAI YouthCon-2019, at Talkatora Stadium, in New Delhi.

Prime Minister said that work is progressing at a fast pace to ensure that every homeless person has a house by 2022. around 1.5 crore houses has been built through PM Awas Yojana, out of which 15 lakh houses were built for the poor in urban areas.

The Prime Minister said that Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA) has strengthened the trust between the customers and the Real Estate Developers. He said that RERA has been notified in 28 states. More than 35000 Real Estate Projects and 27000 Real estate agents have registered under RERA, and lakhs of flats are being built.

### **Parallel Taxi Track Operation by all women crew**

In a first for the IAF, the "OTTERS" squadron of Western Air Command has undertaken Parallel Taxi Track (PTT) Operations with a full women crew in the Dornier 228 aircraft. T

he pilots, Sqn Ldr Kamaljeet Kaur and her co-pilot Sqn Ldr Rakhi Bhandari carried out successful parallel taxi track landing and take-off operations at Sirsa. This achievement highlights the theme of Aero India 2019 which is earmarked on 23 February as the day to highlight the Achievements of Women in Aviation Sector.

### **Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-Dhan (PM- SYM) to be Implemented from February 15**

Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-dhan (PM-SYM) rolled out by the Ministry of Labour and Employment . The scheme announced in the Interim Budget was notified by the Ministry recently. As many as 42 crore workers are estimated to be engaged in the unorganized sector of the country.

The unorganised workers mostly engaged as home based workers, street vendors, mid-day meal workers, head loaders, brick kiln workers, cobblers, rag pickers, domestic workers, washer men, rickshaw pullers, landless labourers, own account workers, agricultural workers, construction workers, beedi workers, handloom workers, leather workers, audio- visual workers and similar other occupations whose

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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.

Following are the salient Features of PM-SYM:

- **Minimum Assured Pension:** Each subscriber under the PM-SYM, shall receive minimum assured pension of Rs 3000/- per month after attaining the age of 60 years.
  - **Family Pension:** 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.
- (iii) If a beneficiary has given regular contribution and died due to any cause (before age of 60 years), his/her spouse will be entitled to join and continue the scheme subsequently by payment of regular contribution or exit the scheme as per provisions of exit and withdrawal.

### **Cobra Gold, one of world's largest multinational military exercises, kicks off in Thailand**

One of the world's largest and longest-running international military exercises officially began this week in Thailand.

The 38th annual Cobra Gold exercise, scheduled to run through Feb. 22, is co-sponsored by the Royal Thai and U.S armed forces. They are joined by another 27 nations, including Japan, Indonesia, Malaysia, South Korea and Singapore. China and India participate in civic-action parts of the exercise.

### **Rocket Display And Artillery Firepower At Army's "Exercise Topchi"**

Using ultra light Howitzers and indigenous Swathi weapon-locating radar, Indian Army demonstrated its artillery firepower at the annual "Exercise Topchi" held near Nashik .The event took place at the vast firing ranges at Deolali Camp . It not only showcased the artillery firepower, but also the aviation and surveillance capabilities.

### **I&B Ministry to organize First Annual Conference of Media Units**

Ministry of Information & Broadcasting is organizing the First Annual Conference of Media Units under the Ministry on at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi. The opening session of the Conference will be chaired by Col. Rajyavardhan Rathore, Union Minister of State (IC) for Information & Broadcasting and Youth Affairs & Sports.

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The Conference aims to give a unique platform to the officers of the Indian Information Service working under different Media Units to converge at an All-India level where they can discuss and deliberate upon the emerging areas of the evolving communication paradigm.

### **PM Modi to address CREDAI's YouthCon event in Delhi**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address the Confederation of Real Estate Developers' Association of India, CREDAI YouthCon -19 at the Talkatora Stadium in New Delhi today. He will also visit the exhibition organized by Confederation of Real Estate Developers' Association of India, CREDAI.

### **NITI Aayog signs SOI with MSDF to document Systemic Transformation in Education**

The NITI Aayog and the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation (MSDF) 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.

### **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.

### **Steel Ministry participates in Safeguard inquiry in Canada**

A delegation led by Additional Secretary Steel visited Canada recently to participate in the safeguard inquiry on Stainless Steel Wire (SSW) and Energy Tubular Products (ETP).



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Canada has imposed provisional safeguard measures in the form of Tariff Rate Quota against the imports of seven product categories of steel. Canada has also initiated safeguard inquiry and requested submissions from interested parties. Since Indian exporters have a huge stake in two product categories, namely SSW and ETP, Ministry of Steel decided to participate in the inquiry.

### **Major Ports register positive growth of 3.11%**

The major ports in India have recorded a growth of 3.11% and together handled 578.86 Million Tonnes of cargo during the period April to January, 2019 as against 561.39 Million Tonnes handled during the corresponding period of previous year. For the period from April'18- January 2019, Nine Ports Kolkata (incl. Haldia), Paradip, Visakhapatnam, Kamarajar, Chennai, Cochin, New Mangalore, JNPT and Deendayal have registered positive growth in traffic.

### **Kusum Scheme to Promote Use of Solar Energy Among Farmers Under Consideration: Shri R. K. Singh**

The Government is formulating a Scheme 'Kisan Urja Suraksha evamUtthaanMahabhiyan (KUSUM)' which inter-alia aims to promote use of solar energy among the farmers. The proposed scheme provides for:

- setting up of grid-connected renewable power plants each of 500KW to 2 MW in the rural area; installation of standalone off-grid solar water pumps to fulfil irrigation needs of farmers not connected to grid; and
- solarization of existing grid-connected agriculture pumps to make farmers independent of grid supply and also sell surplus solar power generated to Discom and get extra income.

### **AYUSH Minister launches e-AUSHADHI portal for Online Licensing System of AYUSH Medicine**

Minister of State (IC) for AYUSH, Shri Shripad Yesso Naik launched the e-AUSHADHI portal, for online licensing of Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani and Homoeopathy drugs and related matters today at New Delhi. Addressing the gathering Shri Naik said that this e-AUSHADHI portal is intended for increased transparency, improved information management facility, improved data usability and increased accountability.



### **Textiles Ministry to Organize Outreach Programme for Stakeholders**

Ministry of Textiles is organizing an outreach programme for Textiles Sector MSMEs , in New Delhi to hold interactions with the stakeholders to help them avail the support and outreach for 100 days programme announced by the Prime Minister. Minister of Social Justice & Empowerment, Dr. Thawar Chand Gehlot will be the Chief Guest. Minister of Textiles, Smriti Zubin Irani will preside over the function. An exhibition showcasing achievements of the textiles sector MSMEs will also be held during this occasion.

### **India and Norway launch initiative to combat Marine Pollution**

The Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change today signed a letter of Intent establishing the India-Norway Marine Pollution Initiative together with the Norwegian ministry of Foreign Affairs. In January, 2019, the Indian and Norwegian governments agreed to work more closely on oceans by signing a MoU and establishing the India-Norway Ocean Dialogue during the Norwegian Prime Minister's visit to India in January.

### **3-Day Long Krishi Kumbh Held In Bihar**

In Bihar, Governor Lalji Tandon and Union Agriculture Minister Radha Mohan Singh jointly inaugurated the three-day Krishi Kumbh in Motihari. Over fifteen thousand farmers from different states and about two hundred agricultural scientists are participating in the Kumbh.

The objective of Krishi Kumbh is to promote modern techniques and diversification in agriculture that could help in doubling farmers income. The government is creating strong infrastructure from "Beej to Bazar" for enhancing the income of farmers.

### **IIP grows at 2.4% in December as compared to 7.3% in year-ago period**

Industrial output growth remained subdued at 2.4 per cent 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 per cent in December 2017, according to the data released by the Central Statistics Office (CSO) .

### **Light House Projects challenge” launched**

The Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs has instituted a challenge for States/ UTs to select six sites across the country for constructing the Lighthouse projects under GHTC-India. MoHUA encourages all States/ UTs to participate in this challenge proactively. The winning six States/ UTs that score the highest marks across the prescribed criteria will be awarded lighthouse projects.

In addition to this, a Technology Innovation Grant (TIG) for the States/ UTs is provisioned to offset the impact of any additional cost implication due to the use of new technology and to absorb the issues related to economies of scale and other related factors.

### **Indian smartphone market grew by 10% in 2018**

The Indian smartphone market grew 10% in 2018 in terms of total shipments with Xiaomi leading the pack. This, even as the global market has been shrinking, according to a new report by Singapore-based industry tracker Canalys. India now accounts for more than 10% of the global smartphone market with a total of 137 million smartphones shipped in 2018—up from 124.9 million in 2017.

China and the US, however, still account for a majority of the market with shipments of over 350 million and 150 million units, respectively, even though their numbers fell in 2018 as buyers upgraded to newer phones less frequently.

### **Country’s first Institute of Advanced Virology inaugurated**

The country’s first Institute of Advanced Virology, affiliated to the Global Virus Network, which has 45 centres of excellence in over 29 countries, was inaugurated by Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan.

The institute, which was announced after the outbreak of the Nipah virus in the state in May last year, is located at the Bio 360 Life Sciences Park at nearby Thonnackal. The Nipah outbreak claimed the lives of 17 people— 14 in Kozhikode district and three in neighbouring Malappuram since its outbreak.

### **Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan inaugurates 13th PETROTECH 2019 at India Expo Mart, Greater Noida**

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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. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will formally inaugurate the event.

### **Suresh Prabhu releases book on Ramayan**

Union Minister Suresh Prabhu has released a book — Ramayan Retold With Scientific Evidences – written by Saroj Bala. The book narrates the biography of Lord Ram with exact dates of important events, depicting corresponding sky views and weaving other supporting scientific evidences into the story told by Maharshi Valmiki. Saroj Bala, an IRS officer of 1972 batch, had retired as Member of CBDT in 2009.

### **Government e Marketplace (GeM) and Competition Commission of India (CCI) entered into a MOU**

Government e Marketplace (GeM) and Competition Commission of India (CCI) entered into a Memorandum of Understanding to enable a fair and competitive environment in the e-Marketplace. Chairman CCI, A.K. Gupta, CEO GeM, S. Radha Chauhan, Members of CCI, U.C.

Nahta and Sangeeta Verma were present on the occasion along with officers of CCI and GeM. Both CCI and GeM appreciate the importance of advanced analytical tools and processes for identification of malpractices like cartelization. In order to pool their knowledge of the public procurement domain for detection of Anti-competitive practices the MoU has been signed.

### **Government proposes to launch mega pension yojana ‘Pradhan Mantri Shram-Yogi Maandhan’**

The Government proposes to launch a mega pension yojana namely ‘Pradhan Mantri Shram-Yogi Maandhan’ for the unorganised sector workers with monthly income upto Rs. 15,000. While presenting the Interim Budget 2019-20 in Parliament.

To the health coverage provided under ‘Ayushman Bharat’ and life & disability coverage provided under ‘Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana’ and ‘Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana’, Government proposes to launch a mega pension yojana namely ‘Pradhan Mantri Shram-Yogi Maandhan’ for the unorganised sector workers with monthly income upto Rs. 15,000.

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This pension yojana shall provide an assured monthly pension of Rs. 3,000 from the age of 60 years on a monthly contribution of a small affordable amount during their working age.

### **Centre announces mascot for COP-13 on conservation of migratory species**

The Centre announced that the Great Indian Bustard (GIB) will be its mascot for the 13th Conference of Parties (COP) of the UN Convention on the conservation of migratory species (CMS) to be held in Gujarat next year.

Launching the logo and the mascot along with a website for the international event, Union Environment Minister Harsh Vardhan said that hosting the 13th COP would give India an opportunity to showcase its conservation initiatives for wildlife species. It will provide a global platform for deliberations on the conservation and sustainable use of migratory wild animals and their habitat.

### **Parmanu Tech-2019' Conference concludes in New Delhi**

The Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) of the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER), MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr Jitendra Singh delivered the keynote address at the 'Parmanu Tech 2019' conference, organised by the Ministry of External Affairs and Department of Atomic Energy (DAE). The conference discussed issues related to Nuclear Energy and Radiation Technologies. The conference aims at showcasing the societal applications that DAE is pursuing.

### **Nitin Gadkari to lay foundation stone for 5 national highway projects in Ayodhya**

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari will lay the foundation stone for five national highway projects worth Rs 7,195 crore in Ayodhya, that includes sections of Ram Vangaman Marg and Kosi Parikrama Marg. Foundation stone will be laid for five national highway projects with a total length of 632 km. The projects will establish direct connectivity from Ayodhya to Chitrakoot and Ambedkarnagar.

The projects include beautification of Ayodhya section of Lucknow-Ayodhya highway for Rs 55 crore, 4-laning of Ayodhya-Akbarpur section of Ayodhya-Varanasi highway (Rs 1,081 crore), construction of 46 km, 4-lane Ayodhya Ring Road (Rs 1,289 crore), 44 km Mohanganj-Shringverpur section of the Ram Vangaman Marg (Rs 478 crore)

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and 91 km Bikapur-Rudauli-Murthihanghat section of Ayodhya's 84 Kosi Parikrama Marg (Rs 896 crore).

### **Govt expects Rs69000 crore in dividend from RBI in 2019-20**

Finance Minister in Parliament gave estimation of Reserve Bank of India paying a dividend of Rs 69,000 crore . The government also budgeted a Rs 68,000 crore dividend from the central bank for FY 19. Total of Rs82,911 crore through dividend from banks, financial institutions in the next fiscal of 2019-2020.

### **Mobile application 'MoooFarm' launched to cater to small dairy farmers**

Minister of State for Agriculture Gajendra Singh Shekhawat launched a mobile application developed by Australia-based agri-tech company MoooFarm to provide advisory services to dairy farmers.

MoooFarm, founded by Param Singh, is a mobile application that provides end-to-end last-mile connectivity solution offering extension and technology to the smallholder dairy farmers. It has announced a tie-up with Prabhat Dairy to help farmers. Through this application, MoooFarm aims to build a self-sustained dairy farming community by leveraging information and communications technology (ICT) applications and creating employment opportunities for the youth and financial empowerment for women. As India is the world's largest milk producer and consumer of milk products, the dairy sector has huge growth potential.

### **India jumps 8 places to 36th on International IP Index**

Acknowledging the improvement in India's innovation ecosystem, the US Chamber of Commerce has moved India up eight places in its international intellectual property (IP) index by ranking it 36th amongst 50 countries in 2019. The index, which analyses the IP climate in 50 global economies, is brought out by the US Chamber of Commerce's Global Innovation Policy Center (GIPC). "The improvement reflects important reforms implemented by Indian policymakers towards building and sustaining an innovation ecosystem for domestic entrepreneurs and foreign investors alike," it said in a statement. The index ranks countries based on 45 indicators.

India's overall score has also increased substantially from 30.07% (12.03 out of 40) in the previous edition to 36.04% (16.22 out of 45) in the present edition.

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United States has topped the index followed by UK on second.

### **CCEA approves creation of Agri-Market infrastructure fund**

The Cabinet Committee of Economic Affairs Chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi today gave its approval for the creation of a corpus of Rs. 2000 crore for Agri-Market Infrastructure Fund (AMIF) to be created with NABARD for development and up-gradation of agricultural marketing infrastructure in Gramin Agricultural Markets and Regulated Wholesale Markets.

AMIF will provide the State/UT Governments subsidized loan for their proposal for developing marketing infrastructure in 585 Agriculture Produce Market Committees (APMCs) and 10,000 Grameen Agricultural Markets (GrAMs).

### **President presents 2017 Sangeet Natak Akademi Awards to 42**

President Ram Nath Kovind presented the prestigious Sangeet Natak Akademi Awards for 2017 to 42 artists from the fields of music, dance, theatre, traditional/folk/tribal music/dance/theatre and puppetry. The awards were presented during a special ceremony at the Rashtrapati Bhawan .

According to the Akademi, the awards symbolize the highest standard of excellence and achievements and recognise sustained individual work and contribution. The award carries with it Rs 100,000, a 'tamrapatra' and an 'angavastram'.

### **App of world's largest health insurance launched**

The world's largest cashless health insurance scheme — the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY), popularly known as the Ayushman Bharat — is now active on Google Playstore and one can download the PM-JAY app to access scheme details. the app will help people check if they are eligible for the scheme.

The National Health Authority (NHA), which runs PM-JAY, was keen to release the app at the earliest so that it would figure at the top of the Google Playstore and users can download the right app.

### **itin Gadkari Launches Highway Projects Worth Over Rs. 2,300 Crore In Odisha**

Union Road Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari launched three major highway projects entailing an investment of Rs. 2,345 crore in Odisha, saying it will go a long way in ensuring speedy development in the state.

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The projects will considerably improve connectivity of mineral-rich Angul and Dhenkanal districts with the rest of Odisha, Mr Gadkari said while laying the foundation stone for the projects.

### **Justice DK Jain appointed to oversee IL&FS asset sale**

The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) has given its consent to appoint Justice (Retd) DK Jain to supervise the operation of the resolution process undertaken by debt-laden IL&FS.

The new board of IL&FS has proposed a multi-pronged strategy to revive the beleaguered company, including significant capital infusion at the group level from credible and financially strong investors, selling of subsidiaries at the vertical level and resolution at the asset level.

### **Textiles Minister launches Project “India Size”**

The Union Minister for Textiles Smt. Smriti Zubin Irani launched the India Size project in Mumbai. 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).

### **ISRO launches Human Space Flight Centre in Bengaluru**

The Human Space Flight Centre (HSFC), the hub of ISRO’s future manned missions, was inaugurated at ISRO headquarters in Bengaluru. Announced on August 15 2018, the country’s first crewed mission is set to happen by 2022, the 75th year of Independence.

### **Sushma Swaraj and Nitin Gadkari inaugurated 30th National Road Safety Week in New Delhi**

External Affairs Minister Smt Sushma Swaraj and Union Minister for Road Transport & Highways, Shipping and Water Resources, River Development and Ganga



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Rejuvenation Shri Nitin Gadkari inaugurated the 30th National Road Safety Week, 2019 at Gandhi Smriti and Darshan, Rajghat, New Delhi. The main aim of the event is to generate awareness and sensitizing people about safe road usage.

The theme of the 30th National Road Safety Week is “Sadak Suraksha-Jeevan Raksha”.

### **National Road Safety Week 2019 Begins**

30th Road Safety Week 2019 will be celebrated in India from 04th February (Monday) to the 10th February (Sunday). There have been various awareness campaigns and events which are being conducted across the country in all the states. The theme for this year campaign is Sadak Suraksha – Jeevan Raksha

Delhi Police has organised a week-long awareness campaign to make people aware about traffic rules and regulations. The campaign will also make people aware about the importance of wearing helmets and seat belts. Cyclist will be given reflective tapes to be used on bicycles and to use the cycle tracks wherever available.

### **Kala Ghoda Arts Festival 2019 Begins**

India's biggest cultural street festival, Kala Ghoda Arts Festival (KGAF) is back with a bang. In 2019, the festival celebrates two glorious decades of art and culture, across various forms and communities including design, cinema, theatre, dance, literature and much more. The festival is centered on a theme each year.

This year, the Kala Ghoda Arts Festival commemorates 20 years of its inception and also marks the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. The festival this year is paying tribute to Bapu's philosophy and contribution to the nation. The nine-day festival that began today, February 2, will conclude on February 10.

### **Minister for IT inaugurates 'ICT Academy Bridge 2019' conference in Tamil Nadu**

Dr. M. Manikandan, Minister for Information Technology, Government of Tamil Nadu, inaugurated 'ICT Academy Bridge 2019' conference in the city that witnessed more than 1,000 participants from government, industry and academia. Dr. Santhosh Babu IAS delivered the special address. Organized by ICT Academy, the 37th edition of the conference is the largest Industry-Institute Interaction Event of Asia.



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Themed “Fostering India for Industry 4.0”, the event brought together industry experts, academic leaders and government policy-makers to address the challenges faced by India Inc. in the era of Fourth Industrial Revolution, thus creating a correlated education ecosystem and formulating a strategic regulatory framework.

### **53rd Edition of “Know India Programme” Held in New Delhi**

The 53rd edition of Know India Programme for Young Indian Diaspora involves 40 participants (24 female and 16 males) from Fiji, Guyana, Mauritius, Portugal, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Suriname and Trinidad & Tobago. The partner states of this edition are Maharashtra and Daman & Diu.

The Know India Programme is organised by the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India with the objective of familiarizing the India Diaspora Youth, in the age group of 18-30 years, with developments and achievements made by the country and bringing them closer to the land of their ancestors.

### **Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan inaugurates WLPGA 2019 Asia LPG Summit**

The Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas & Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Shri Dharmendra Pradhan has said that India has emerged as a bright spot in the global economy in the recent years. Inaugurating the WLPGA 2019 Asia LPG Summit , he said that with strong economy and supportive policy environment, Our Government remains committed to inclusive, holistic and sustainable high economic growth.

The Asia LG summit is being organized by the World LPG Association (WLPGA), which is the voice of the global LPG Industry representing the full LPG value chain. The primary goal of the Association is to add value to the sector by driving premium demand for LPG, while also promoting compliance to good business and safety practices. The Association was established in 1987 and granted Special Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council in 1989.

### **PM Narendra Modi to launch two Railway projects at Durgapur in West Bengal**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Durgapur in West Bengal .According to an official release, Mr Modi will dedicate to the nation, the Railway electrification of 294 kilometre long Andal- Sainthia-Pakur-Malda and Khana- Sainthia Sections.

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Electrification of this section will enable ease of transportation of coal, stone chips and ballast to North and North East India in a seamless manner. During the visit, He will also dedicate the twenty kilometre long Hijli- Narayangarh third line to the nation .

### **Unemployment rate at four-decade high of 6.1% in 2017-18: NSSO survey**

The country's unemployment rate stood at a 45-year-high of 6.1 per cent in 2017-18, according to the National Sample Survey Office's (NSSO's) periodic labour force survey (PLFS). The report is at the centre of a controversy after two National Statistical Commission (NSC) members, including acting chairman, resigned on Monday, alleging that the government had withheld its release despite the NSC's approval.

### **DAC approves indigenous construction of 6 submarines worth Rs 40000 cr**

The Defence Acquisitions Council, DAC chaired by Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman approved indigenous construction of six submarines worth 40 thousand crore rupees. It is the second project under the Ministry's ambitious strategic partnership model aiming to boost the government's Make in India' program. The first project to get the government's nod for implementation under the new model was the acquisition of 111 utility helicopters for the Navy at a cost of over 21 thousand crore rupees in August last year. The construction of six advanced submarines under project 75(India) will provide a major boost to submarine design and manufacturing ecosystem in India through the transfer of design, equipment technology and skill sets.

## **STATE RELATED CURRENT AFFAIRS**

### **West Bengal Launches 'Banglar Shiksha' Portal**

West Bengal Education Minister Partha Chatterjee inaugurated a web portal "Banglar Shiksha" which is set to provide real-time data on state-run and aided schools. The portal, Banglar Shiksha ([banglarshiksha.gov.in](http://banglarshiksha.gov.in)), will be up and running in two months time.

A statement issued by the school education department stated that the portal will store real-time data of 1.5 crore students, 5 lakh teachers and 1 lakh schools.

### **MP: CZPDC Bhopal, WZPDC Indore bag Saubhagya award**

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In Madhya Pradesh, the Central Zone Power Distribution Company, Bhopal and West Zone Power Distribution Company, Indore have been awarded the Saubhagya award under Pradhanmantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana at the National Conference of Energy Ministers. The award included 100 crore rupees each.

### **Assam CM inaugurates PRANAM Commission**

Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal inaugurated the Assam Employees Parents Responsibility and Norms for Accountability and Monitoring (PRANAM) Commission.

PRANAM bill, which was approved by the state cabinet last year, is first-of-its-kind bill in the country which makes it mandatory for the employees of the State government to look after their parents and unmarried divyang siblings who do not have their own source of income.

### **Odisha cabinet approves State Film Policy 2019**

With an aim to promote Odia films and create a conducive eco-system for production of films in the region, Naveen Patnaik-led state cabinet gave its nod to the Odisha State Film Policy-2019. The policy will promote quality Odia films, facilitate film tourism in the state, establish Odisha as a destination for film shooting and improve screen density in the state.

### **Assam CM lays foundation stone of Bhogeswar Baruah Sports School**

Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal laid the foundation stone of Bhogeswar Baruah Sports School at Sarusajai Sports Complex in Guwahati .

The school which is the first of its kind in the state will be built at a sprawling 20 bigha of land where theoretical and practical coaching will be provided at six prescribed disciplines namely athletics, boxing, football, weightlifting, archery and taekwondo.

### **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi launched in Manipur**

Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh formally launched Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) at Mayang Imphal under Imphal West district. Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh said Mobile Diagnostics Service (MDS) would be launched in the state on February 27 so that people can avail around 76 medical tests at their doorsteps.

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In the first phase, 10 MDS each would be launched in hill and valley districts and people don't need to go to hospitals for medical tests.

### **Dharavi project: Railways gives 50-acre plot to Maharashtra government**

The Indian Railways and the Maharashtra government clinched a deal under which the Railways will part with up to 50 acres of land held by it for the Dharavi redevelopment plan.

### **FAGMIL signs MoU with Himachal Pradesh Government to establish Rs. 605 crores 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 NohraDhar in Sirmour district, Himachal Pradesh, at a project cost of approximately Rs. 605 crores. It will be the 4th white cement plant in the country.

### **IIFL Home Finance, Maharashtra govt sign MoU for building houses under PMAY**

IIFL Home Finance signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Maharashtra government for capacity building for affordable housing through credit-linked subsidy scheme (CLSS) under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY).

Through this MoU, housing department of Maharashtra will make provisions and facilitate permissions for IIFL Home Finance (IIFL HFL) to educate customers and enlighten them about the benefits of PMAY.

### **Assam: Ankiya Bhaona Samaroh to begin at Goalpara**

The six-day 11th Ankiya Bhaona Samaroh organised by Guwahati-based Sattriya Kendra of Sangeet Natak Akademi, New Delhi in collaboration with the Goalpara district administration and Goalpara College, will get underway at Goalpara .

### **Odisha to give free sanitary napkins to 17 lakh school girls**

The Odisha Cabinet approved the 'Khushi' scheme to provide free sanitary napkins to school girls across the state. The scheme will benefit nearly 17.25 lakh school girls from Class VI to XII studying in government and government-aided schools. The state

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government will spend ₹466 crore over a period of five years to implement the scheme.

### **Jharkhand CM launches Rs 100-crore Sweet Revolution scheme**

Jharkhand Chief Minister Raghubar Das launched the first phase of the Rs 100-crore Sweet Revolution Scheme under which 1,207 farmers will be given Rs 1 lakh for bee keeping.

1,207 farmers, after training, will be given Rs 1 lakh for bee keeping. Of the amount, Rs 80,000 is in the form of grant. Farmers can earn Rs 1.30 lakh every year by just investing Rs 20,000.

### **Shri Nitin Gadkari to lay foundation stone for a Flyover in Jabalpur**

Union Minister for Road Transport & Highways, Shipping and Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation Shri Nitin Gadkari will lay the foundation stone for a flyover project at Jabalpur in Madhya Pradesh . The 5.9 km long flyover from Damoh Toll Plaza to Ranital Madan Mahal Chowk, Medical College Road is estimated to cost Rs 758.54 crore.

### **Sh.Nitin Gadkari, inaugurated and laid foundation stone for projects worth Rs 5,894 crore at Chandi**

The Union Minister for Road Transport & Highways, Shipping and Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation Shri Nitin Gadkari inaugurated and laid foundation stone for projects worth Rs 5,894 crore at Chandi Ghat in Haridwar.

### **UP CM launches Scheme for Adolescent girls**

In Uttar Pradesh, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath launched Scheme for Adolescent girls . The scheme focuses on girls aged between 11 to 14 years who have left studies and will take steps for proper nutrition and special care for them.

### **President Ram Nath Kovind unveils 15.2 feet tall statue of Gandhi Ji in Chennai**

President Ram Nath Kovind unveiled a 15.2 feet tall statue of Mahatma Gandhi in the premises of Dakshina Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha in Chennai . The event was organized in view of 150th year of Gandhiji and centenary year of the Sabha.

### **'International Vision Zero Conference' to Promote Occupational Safety and Health Inaugurated in Mumbai**

Shri Heeralal Samariya, Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Employment inaugurated the three days Conference on the VISION ZERO and its relevance to Occupational Safety and Health being held in Mumbai.

The concept of 'Vision Zero' is fast gaining international acceptance and is expected to leverage the efforts of the Government of India to raise the occupational safety and health standards in the country so as to improve the occupational safety and health situation.

### **Eighth World CSR Congress 2019 in Mumbai**

World Corporate Social Responsibility Congress (World CSR Congress 2019) promotes Entrepreneurship, Social Responsibility, Sustainability and Social Development. The 8th World CSR Congress was held in Mumbai, Maharashtra.

The theme of the year 2019 is 'Sustainable Development Goals(SDGs)' to focus on corporate strategies, innovation, and strategic alliances. Dr. Soumitro Chakraborty won 'CEO of the year' award.

### **Kerala Police introduces country's first humanoid robot into force**

The Kerala State Police claims to have created history by becoming one of the world's first and the very first police force in the country to induct humanoid robots.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan formally introduced the humanoid robot into the state police force evening, at a function at the State Police Headquarters.

### **Kerala: Thiruvananthapuram to host Attukal Pongala, world's largest religious congregation of women**

In Kerala, the capital city of Thiruvananthapuram is all prepared to host the Attukal Pongala festival which is considered as one of the world's largest religious gathering of women on a single day.

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lakhs of women will prepare 'Pongala'- the offering in makeshift brick stoves to worship the presiding deity of Attukal Bhagavathy temple.

### **India's first fulldome 3D Digital theatre inaugurated in Kolkata**

India's first 'fulldome 3D Digital Theatre' at the Science City Kolkata was inaugurated by Union Culture Minister Mahesh Sharma . The 'fulldome 3D Digital Theatre' at the Science city was the first of its kind in India having a 23 metre titled dome to offer a fully immersive experience to the visitors.

### **Naidu inaugurates Millennium Tower I in Vizag**

Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu inaugurated the 10-floor Tower-1 of the Millennium Tower at Rushikonda in the city. This is one of the major projects contemplated by the TDP to promote Visakhapatnam as a destination for investment in IT and ITES.

The Tower-1 was built in an area of four acres with an investment of ₹145 crore. It has a built-up space of two lakh sft and 1.5 lakh sft for parking.

### **India's First District Cooling System To Be Built In Amravati**

CM Chandrababu Naidu to lay stone for India's biggest district cooling system in Amaravati

First of its kind in the country, the district cooling system will help save 40 per cent of the energy currently being used.

First of its kind in the country, the district cooling system will help save 40 per cent of the energy currently being used.

### **Andhra farmers with less than 5 acres land to get Rs 9000 under Annadata Sukhibhava scheme 2019**

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu announced Rs 9000 each to the farmers with less than 5 acres land under Annadata Sukhibhava scheme 2019. Earlier in the day, the Chief Minister laid a foundation stone for the Muktyala Lift Irrigation Project and addressed students and farmers.

Under Annadata Sukhibhava scheme 2019, an amount of Rs 9,000 will be given to the farmers having land less than 5 acres. This will be in addition to the Rs 6,000 announced by the Central government."



### **Himachal Assembly passes Bill to make Sanskrit the 2nd official language**

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 in the ongoing budget session. The bill was passed without any discussion.

### **All govt offices will become paperless by 2021: Arunachal CM**

All the state government offices in Arunachal Pradesh will become paperless by 2021, announced chief minister Pema Khandu recently.

While launching WiFi hotspots for Tawang and Dirang districts at Tawang, Khandu said the government has taken steps to fully use the information technology (IT) in governance and by 2021 all government offices will become paperless e-office. The advantage of having paperless e-office is to stop manipulation, ensure transparency and provide easy access of services to the people.

### **PM Modi to visit Jharkhand, lay foundation stone for hospitals, water schemes**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will lay foundation stone for hospitals in Hazaribagh, Dumka and Palamau and inaugurate a host of development schemes during his visit to the state. The prime minister will lay the foundation stone for four 500-bedded hospitals in Hazaribagh, Dumka, Palamau and Jamshedpur.

### **PM launches projects worth Rs 33,000 cr in Bihar, lays stone of Patna Metro**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated and laid foundation stone of projects worth over Rs 33,000 crore in Bihar, including the Patna Metro Rail Project. He inaugurated the Patna City Gas Distribution project.

The prime minister laid the foundation stone of the Barauni Refinery Expansion Project and the ATF Hydrotreating Unit (INDJET) at Barauni Refinery.

### **India's First Agromet Forecast Centre Inaugurated In Karnataka**



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Union Minister for Science & Technology, Earth Sciences, Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Dr. Harsh Vardhan, inaugurated the North Karnataka Agromet Forecasting and Research Centre (NKAFRC), India's first agromet forecast centre, at University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS) in Dharwad, Karnataka.

The main objective of the centre is to give accurate reports on the weather which would enable the farmers to protect the crops and get a good yield.

### **Arunachal receives second highest central funds under BADP**

New Delhi has released second highest central funds to Arunachal Pradesh after Jammu & Kashmir under the border area development project (BADP). Official statistics in possession of this correspondent said that a total of Rs 1,100 crore central funds have been released to all the 17 states that share its border with foreign countries during 2017-18.

Arunachal Pradesh has received a sum of Rs 154.14 crore during 2017-18 whereas Jammu & Kashmir has received a sum of Rs 198.89 crore. Assam has received Rs 56.00 crore during the same period.

### **Three-day Udaipur World Music Festival**

The annual Udaipur World Music Festival will commence from . The three-day festival exhibits and hosts artists from all around the world. Festival will continue till January 17. During its course, the festival will cater to a variety of music enthusiasts from the country and abroad. Over 50,000 visitors are expected at the music festival this year. Organisers are not charging any fee from the visitors.

### **Bihar govt announces universal old age pension scheme-Mukhyamantri Vridhajan Pension Yojna**

Bihar government has announced a universal old age pension scheme – Mukhyamantri Vridhajan Pension Yojna- MVPY for all people above 60 years of age. the scheme will come into force from the 1st of April this year. He said, 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.

Currently old age pension scheme is applicable to only the BPL category. The Chief Minister also announced a pension of 6,000 rupees for journalists above 60 years of age.

## **India's first Aqua Mega Food Park commissioned in Andhra Pradesh**

Union Minister of Food Processing Industries Harsimrat Kaur Badal commissioned Godavari Mega Aqua Food Park at Tundurru Village in Bhimavaram Mandal, West Godavari District, Andhra Pradesh through video conferencing.

The park is promoted by Godavari Mega Aqua Food Park Pvt. Ltd. It will be the first Mega Aqua Food Park operationalised exclusively for fish and marine products processing in the state of Andhra Pradesh. The Godavari Mega Aqua Food Park Pvt. Ltd has been set up in 57.81 acre of land at a cost of Rs. 122.60 crores.

## **Sikkim CM Pawan Chamling conferred with honorary doctorate**

Sikkim chief minister Pawan Chamling was conferred with the honorary Doctorate of Literature [Honoris Causa] by Desh Bhagat University at Gobindgarh in Punjab.

The honour was conferred on him for his 'Exceptional vision, deep commitment and continuous efforts to uplift the weaker section, backward class and women; for his leadership and good governance with moral and spiritual wisdom'.

## **45th Karbi Youth Festival: Assam**

One of the biggest and oldest ethnic festivals in the Northeast is underway in Karbi People's Hall at Taralangso, Assam. The 45th Karbi Youth Festival (KYF), organised by the Karbi Cultural Society (KCS), will begin with a grand procession in the morning of February 15 and will continue till February 19.

## **Joint exercise 'Rahat' for disaster relief held in Jaipur**

In Rajasthan, Jaipur based Sapta Shakti Command of Indian Army is conducting a two-day Joint Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Exercise "Exercise Rahat". The exercise began in Jaipur. It involves all stake holders at the national and state level. This is the eighth such exercise conducted by the Indian Defence Forces.

## **Special National Standards Conclave Held in Mumbai**

A Special National Standards Conclave was organized by the Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India in Mumbai, in association with the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), Confederation of Indian

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Industry (CII), Export Inspection Council (EIC), Centre for Research in International Trade (CRIT) and National Accreditation Board for Certification Bodies (NABCB). Commerce Secretary, Shri Anup Wadhawan inaugurated the conclave.

### **Third Indo-German Environment Forum held in New Delhi**

Third Indo-German Environment Forum with the theme “Cleaner Air, Greener Economy:” is being held in New Delhi. The one-day event through panel discussions and parallel sessions focuses on challenges, solutions and necessary framework conditions of air pollution control, waste management and circular economy as well as implementation of NDCs and SDGs based on Paris Agreement and Agenda 2030 of UN respectively.

### **Rajasthan assembly passes Bill to grant 5% quota to Gujjars, 4 other castes**

The Congress government in Rajasthan passed a bill earmarking 5 per cent reservation for Gujjars in jobs and education amid a huge protest by the community, which has paralysed road and rail traffic since last week in parts of the state. Rajasthan has already touched the 50 per cent ceiling on reservation placed by the Supreme Court.

Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra have crossed fifty per cent quota. Also, parliament has just given 10 per cent quota to the Economically Backward Classes.

### **Harsimrat Kaur inaugurates Himachal's first mega food park**

Food Processing Minister Harsimrat Kaur Badal inaugurated Cremica Food Park, which is the first mega food park of Himachal Pradesh. The Park is located at Village Singhain Una District of Himachal Pradesh. The mega food park has been set up at a cost of Rs 107.34 crore.

This is the first mega food park operationalised in Himachal Pradesh. The park has been set up in 52.40 acre of land at a cost of Rs 107.34 crore.

### **3rd Brahmaputra Literary Festival, 2019 begins**

The 3rd Brahmaputra Literary Festival which is a three-day literary Fest from February 9 to 11, 2019 has been opened at Srimanta Sankardev Kalakshetra. The primary aim is to promote the habit of reading amongst the youth.

### **Meghalaya govt to rename Dikkibandi stadium after P A Sangma**

The Meghalaya Cabinet has decided to rename the Dikkibandi stadium in Tura town after former Lok Sabha Speaker Purno A Sangma. Purno A Sangma is also a former chief minister of Meghalaya. He was elected from the Tura Lok Sabha seat a number of times. Conrad K Sangma and James K Sangma are sons of Purno A Sangma.

### **2nd ASEAN-India Youth Summit Held in Guwahati**

Building on the success of the first India-ASEAN Youth Summit, 2017, India Foundation and Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India (MEA) are organising the 2nd ASEAN-India Youth Summit on the theme “Connectivity: Pathway to Shared Prosperity” in Guwahati from 03-07 February 2019.

### **Mega Silk Event to be Held in New Delhi**

Ministry of Textiles, in association with Central Silk Board, is organizing an event, Surging Silk – Accomplishment and way forward, in New Delhi . Union Minister of External Affairs, Sushma Swaraj will be the chief guest and the event will be presided over by Union Minister of Textiles, Smriti Zubin Irani.

The event is being organized to highlight the growth of silk industry in India over the past 4 years. It focusses on distribution of Buniyaad Tasar Silk Reeling Machines to women reelers from tribal areas, as part of total eradication of the age old practice of thigh reeling.

### **Arunachal Pradesh CM Pema Khandu Attends 52nd Boori Boot Yullo Festival**

Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu attended the 52nd Boori Boot Yullo festival at Dollungmukh along with Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein and MLA Tamar Murtem. Chief Minister inaugurated the new Sub-Divisional Office and laid foundation for PWD Sub-Division Office. DCM laid foundation for 100-bedded VKV girls hostel.

### **MP govt announces “Yuva Swabhiman Yojana” for youth**

The Madhya Pradesh government announced ‘Yuva Swabhiman Yojana’ scheme, under which unemployed urban youths will get a hundred days’ employment and a

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stipend of Rs 13,000. It also announced 'Indira Grah Jyoti Yojana' under which 100 units of power would be provided to all households at Rs 100.

Under the Yuva Swabhiman Yojna, youths between the ages of 21 to 30 having annual family income of less than Rs 2 lakh will be eligible. They will get employment for 100 days, including 10 days of training, and will get a stipend of Rs 13,000 per annum.

under the Indira Grah Jyoti Yojana, 100 units of power will be provided at Rs 100 to all sections of society including general classes. It will cost the government about Rs 2,226 crore. However, there is a rider for general consumers. If they consume more than 100 units in a month, they will have to pay for the entire consumption at the existing rate.

### **Assam Budget Proposes 1 Tola Gold To Brides, Rice At Re 1 Per Kg**

Assam Finance Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma presented a Rs 1,193 crore deficit budget for 2019-20 with no fresh taxes and introducing new schemes like providing rice to poor at Re 1 a kg and gold for brides. The budget also proposed to provide financial assistance to students, including girls from the minority community. With an opening balance of minus Rs 1,799.84 crore, the budget proposed to have transactions of Rs 606.80 crore during 2019-20.

### **Ladakh region granted Divisional Status by J&K**

The Jammu and Kashmir administration under Governor Satya Pal Malik approved creation of a separate division of Ladakh, comprising Kargil and Leh districts, by carving it out of Kashmir division. The state thus far had two divisions – Kashmir and Jammu, Ladakh being part of the former.

Saugat Biswas, a 2006-batch IAS officer of J&K cadre, has been appointed the Divisional Commissioner for Ladakh.

### **Delhi government launches bike ambulance services**

To ensure timely health assistance in traffic-congested areas and small lanes, the Delhi government launched bike ambulance services. The bikes, to be known as the First Responder Vehicles, will have a portable oxygen cylinder, glucometer, a portable manual suction machine, first aid kit and dressing materials, air-splints, GPS and communication device, among others.

### **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.

### **Ministry of Finance to merge two regional rural banks in Tamil Nadu**

The Ministry of Finance has decided to merge two regional rural banks and name the new entity as Tamil Nadu Grama Bank. The banks include Pallavan Grama Bank (Sponsored by Indian Bank) and Pandyan Grama Bank (Sponsored by Indian Overseas Bank). The new entity, namely Tamil Nadu Grama Bank, will be under the sponsorship of Indian Bank, with its head office in Salem. The merger would be effective from April 1, 2019. Tamil Nadu Grama Bank reported around Rs 21,000 crore of business with 625 branches and 800 business correspondent outlets spread over the entire length and breadth of the state.

### **Odisha announces scholarships for KALIA beneficiaries' children**

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Sunday announced the 'KALIA Chhatra Bruti', which will provide scholarships to the children of the KALIA scheme beneficiaries for pursuing higher education. The government has launched the 'KALIA Chhatra Bruti' programme so that the children of the farmers excel in the future.

Under the scholarship scheme, the government will bear the educational expenses of the children of the Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation (KALIA) beneficiaries, who are studying in government professional colleges on merit, a statement said.

### **Indus river dolphin is Punjab's state aquatic animal**

Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh gave approval to declare the endangered Indus River dolphin, found only in the Beas River in the country, as the state aquatic

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animal, an official statement said here. Chairing a meeting of the State Board for Wildlife here, Singh said the Indus dolphin, a rare aquatic mammal, would be the flagship species for the conservation of the Beas River ecosystem.

### **Assam tops in budgetary practices followed by states: Transparency International**

Assam occupied the top slot in the ranking of best practices followed by states in Budget formulation, followed by Andhra Pradesh and Odisha, says a survey by Transparency International. The survey is based on 4 parameters which include public disclosure, budgetary process, post budget fiscal management and efforts to make budget more transparent and citizen friendly.

The states which figured lower in the ranking were Meghalaya, Manipur and Punjab.

“Assam is the only state out of the 29 states and 2 UTs, which has published a Citizens Budget in the public domain. The Assam government is the only government that has conducted budget awareness campaigns across 17 districts,” Transparency International .

### **Sikkim govt signs pact with Microsoft for education sector**

Aiming to transform the educational landscape in the state, the Sikkim government has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with tech giant Microsoft, officials said. Sikkim Minister for Human Resource Development RB Subba said the state government was committed to harnessing the power of technology to transform e-governance and core sectors and partnering with Microsoft was a much-needed step to help prepare the future generation

### **Tejashri' scheme for women: Maharashtra**

The Maharashtra government will implement the “Tejashri financial services” scheme to help rural women, state Finance Minister Sudhir Mungantiwar said . it would be implemented by the state’s Mahila Arthik Vikas Mahamandal (MAVIM) and would help understand the needs of rural women and bring them into the mainstream of development.

The minister informed that Rs 68.53 crore will be distributed in the next three years as part of the programme, including Rs 10,000 as loan per person to those from very poor families. Self-help groups (SHGs) will get financial assistance of Rs 20,000 for



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repayment of loans and working capital of Rs 2 lakh will be made available to women entrepreneurs.

### **Three-day international leather festival begins in Tamil Nadu**

The 34th edition of India International Leather Fair (IILF) will kick off in Chennai, highlighting the export prowess of Indian leather entrepreneurs, the industry's achievements, use of latest technologies and innovations with an eco-friendly tag.

### **Punjab approves Smart Village Campaign**

In a major initiative to boost infrastructure and facilities in rural areas, the Punjab government on Tuesday approved the Smart Village Campaign with an outlay of Rs 384.40 crore. The decision was taken at a Cabinet meeting here under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Amarinder Singh .

The campaign is based on the premise that each village would achieve goals in different fields like infrastructure, health, education and environment.

### **47th Manipur Shumang Leela Festival 2018-19 underway**

The 47th Manipur Shumang Leela Festival 2018-19 was inaugurated at Th Iboyaima Shumang Leela Shanglen in Imphal. The festival which, participated by 21 Shumang Leela groups comprising 12 female groups and 9 male groups, is being organised by Manipur State Kala Akademi, Imphal.

'Shumang Leela' stands for 'Open Air Performance' generally performed in the courtyards of residential houses. Originally, it started as a comic genre presented before the kings and noblemen which ultimately developed into the present form of courtyard enacted play.

### **Sonowal inaugurates Mission Assam QualiTea**

Assam Chief Minister Sarbandna Sonowal inaugurated Training of Small Tea Growers on Tea Quality titled 'Mission Assam QualiTea' at Assam Agricultural University in Jorhat. Assam Chief Minister Sonowal also distributed cheques to small tea growers under new plantation scheme 2018-19 at the same programme.



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Rs. 5000 is given for every bigha of land with highest allocation for a land of 20 bigha. In the first phase, 3397 tea growers were benefitted and in the second phase which was launched, a total of 1099 tea growers will be benefitted.

### **Assam CM lays foundation stone of 70 MW Solar Park in Sivasagar**

Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal laid the foundation stone of 70 MW Solar Park at Japisajia village of Amguri in Sivasagar district in a bid to boost power production and promoting clean energy in the state. The solar park to be set up in an area of 340 acre with production life of 25 years will also provide facilities for research and development in the field of solar energy.

Chief Minister Sonowal said that the state government has set a target to generate 6500 MW power in the state by 2030 and this goal could be achieved only through leveraging power production capacity of the state.

### **Smriti Irani inaugurates Titanwala Museum in Rajasthan's Bagru**

Union Textiles Minister Smriti Irani inaugurated the 'Titanwala Museum' in Bagru that showcases the Chhipa community's hand-block printing.

The museum is an example that art and culture are not dependent on the government for being nurtured or preserved. It will go a long way in taking the name of Bagru on the world map," Irani said .

## **FOREIGN RELATIONS**

### **Agreement for Bilateral Swap Arrangement (BSA) between India and Japan and provides for India to access 75 billion in US dollars.**

Reserve Bank of India and Bank of Japan have completed signing of the Agreement for Bilateral Swap Arrangement (BSA) between India and Japan. It may be recalled that the BSA was negotiated between India and Japan during the visit of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi to Tokyo on 29.10.2018. This BSA provides for India to access 75 billion in US dollars whereas the earlier BSA had provided for US \$50 billion. The BSA was approved by the Union Cabinet on 10.01.2019.

### **India-Bangladesh joint military exercise 'Sampriti 2019' in Tangail**

A joint military exercise Sampriti 2019 between India and Bangladesh will be conducted at Tangail in Bangladesh. It will be the eighth edition of the exercise which is hosted alternately by both countries.

### **20th Session of India-Italy Joint Commission for Economic Cooperation Begins**

The meeting of 20th India-Italy Joint Commission for Economic Cooperation (JCEC) began in New Delhi . The JCEC is an institutional mechanism for bilateral trade engagement held at the level of Minister of Commerce and Industry of the two countries.

### **Adobe, Atal Innovation Mission partner to enhance digital literacy, creativity skills**

Software firm Adobe has partnered with Niti Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) to collaborate on enhancing digital literacy and creativity skills.

The two parties have signed a statement of intent (SOI) to collectively drive the charter of developing creative skills and spreading digital literacy across all Atal Tinkering Labs in India with the support of Adobe's resources and expertise.

Adobe will also implement its Digital Disha Programme across 100 schools under Atal Tinkering Labs (ATL) initiative, it added.

### **US ambassador to India arriving in Guwahati on maiden visit**

US Ambassador to India, Kenneth Juster will arrive in Guwahati on his maiden visit to the state of Assam. the US Ambassador to India, Kenneth Juster will land at the Lokapriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport at Borjhar .

### **India, Sri Lanka ink MoU to establish business centre for ICT incubators in Jaffna**

India and Sri Lanka signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish a business centre for ICT incubators in Jaffna through grant of 25 crore Sri Lankan rupees from India.

### **India, South Korea sign 7 pacts to enhance cooperation in infra, start-ups**

India and South Korea signed seven agreements to enhance cooperation in key areas, including infrastructure development, media, start-ups and combating trans-border and international crime, during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the country.

### **Sushma Swaraj Addresses Indian Community in Bulgaria, Pays Floral Tribute at Gandhi Statue**

External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj has hailed India as a land of opportunity and invited the diaspora living in Bulgaria to invest in the country and participate in its transformative journey.

She is the first-ever Indian External Affairs Minister to visit the Balkan nation.

### **India and Brunei sign Agreement for the Exchange of Information and Assistance in Collection with respect to Taxes (TIEA)**

The Government of Republic of India and the Government of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam signed an Agreement for the Exchange of Information and Assistance in Collection with respect to Taxes (TIEA) in New Delhi.

### **Argentina President Mauricio Macri arrives in India on 3-day visit**

Argentina's President Mauricio Macri arrived on a three-day India visit during which he will hold talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi to enhance cooperation in key sectors such as economy, nuclear technology and space. President Macri was received at the airport by Information and Broadcasting Minister Rajyavardhan Rathore.

### **5th India-Bangladesh Joint Consultative Committee Meeting held in Delhi**

The 5th India-Bangladesh Joint Consultative Committee Meeting was held in New Delhi. External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and Foreign Affairs Minister of Bangladesh Dr Abdul Momen co-chaired the meeting.

The last Joint Consultative Committee Meeting between the two countries was held in October 2017 at Dhaka. Earlier, Mrs Swaraj held a bilateral meeting with Mr Momen.

### **India, Sweden ink security protection agreement**

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India and Sweden signed a security protection agreement that will enable the two countries to share classified information with each other.

The agreement was signed during Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's visit to the Nordic country. Sitharaman also met Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Lofven and her Swedish counterpart Peter Hultqvist.

### **India signs Legal Agreements with the World Bank**

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, who have been facing severe water shortages and water-borne epidemics over the last few years.

### **Cabinet approves signing of Memorandum of Understanding between India and Argentine in tourism**

The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has approved the signing of Memorandum of Understanding between India and Argentine in the field of Tourism.

The signing of MoU between India and Argentine in the field of tourism will help the two parties in creating an institutional mechanism for enhancing cooperation in the tourism sector.

### **Cabinet approves MOU between India and Finland on Cooperation in the field of peaceful uses of outer space**

The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given its approval for Memorandum of Understanding between India and Finland on cooperation in the field of peaceful uses of outer space. The MoU has already been signed in 10th January, 2019 at New Delhi.

### **Engineers India bags Mongolian oil refinery deal**

An MoU for this was signed on the sidelines of the Petrotech 2019 event. Under the deal, EIL will provide project management consultancy (PMC) services to Mongol Refinery. The Mongolia government is setting up the 1.5 million tonnes per annum

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greenfield crude oil refinery through Mongol Refinery State Owned LLC under a line of credit (LoC) extended by India.

### **PM Narendra Modi lays foundation for Sela Tunnel**

In a key move aimed at improving all weather connectivity and enabling the swift movement of Indian troops to Arunachal Pradesh bordering China, Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone for the Sela Tunnel Project. The tunnel is being built at an estimated cost of ₹687 crores by the Border Roads Organisation and is to be completed in three years.

It aims to provide all weather connectivity to Tawang in Arunachal Pradesh — an area claimed entirely by China — and other forward areas.

It (the project) covers a total distance of 12.04 kms which consist of two tunnels of 1790 metres and 475 meters.

### **.India exports to China touch \$12.7 billion in Apr-Dec**

India's exports to China has reached \$12.7 billion during April-December 2018 on account of growth in shipments of marine products, chemicals, plastics, petroleum products, grapes and rice. The commerce ministry has identified and shared with Indian exporters and other stakeholders, specific items where the US would lose competitiveness in China and where India had an export potential and encouraged the exporters to seize this opportunity.

### **Facebook launches digital skilling initiative for girls**

Focussing on its mission to empower women, social networking giant Facebook launched a digital skilling and mentorship initiative across five states in India that would encourage tribal girls to become village-level digital young leaders for their communities.

Named GOAL (Going Online As Leaders), the initiative will train young girls from West Bengal, Maharashtra, Jharkhand, Odisha and Madhya Pradesh in digital literacy, life skills, leadership and entrepreneurship for an year.

## **India-Korea Startup Hub Launched**

India Korea Business Symposium was hosted by Invest India and Korean Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) in Seoul. The Symposium was organized to felicitate the Korean business community on their success in India and to present more opportunities for Korean business in India.

## **INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**

### **Booker Prize for fiction secures new financial backer**

Booker Prize for fiction secures new financial backer Britain's leading literary award, the Booker Prize, found a new financial backer after its sponsor of almost two decades pulled out.

Prize trustees said the Crankstart Foundation will become the sponsor in June. The charity was founded by Silicon Valley venture capitalist Michael Moritz and his wife, writer Harriet Heyman. Crankstart has committed to funding the Booker Prize for English-language novels and the International Booker Prize for translated works for at least five years.

The prize's previous sponsor, the investment firm Man Group PLC, announced last month that it was stopping its funding after 18 years.

### **91st Academy Awards**

The 91st Academy Awards, presented by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS), honored the best films of 2018. The ceremony was held at the Dolby Theatre in Hollywood, Los Angeles, California. AMPAS presented Academy Awards (commonly referred to as Oscars) in 24 categories.

The ceremony was televised in the United States by American Broadcasting Company (ABC) and produced by Donna Gigliotti and Glenn Weiss, with Weiss also serving as director.

Green Book won three awards, including Best Picture, and Bohemian Rhapsody won four awards, the most for the ceremony, including Best Actor for Rami Malek's portrayal of Freddie Mercury. Roma and Black Panther also received three awards, with the former winning Best Director for Alfonso Cuarón. Olivia Colman was awarded Best Actress for portraying Anne, Queen of Great Britain in The Favourite.

## **Iran launches cruise missile from submarine during drill**

Iran has launched a cruise missile from a submarine for the first time during an ongoing annual military drill in the Strait of Hormuz . anti-ship cruise missile” was launched from a Ghadir-class submarine.

## **Saudi Arabia Names a Princess as Ambassador to Washington**

Saudi Arabia appointed a princess as its new ambassador to the United States , the first time the kingdom has named a woman to such a post. The appointment of Princess Reema bint Bandar bin Sultan by royal decree came amid strained relations between Saudi Arabia and the United States

## **Philippines leads Asia in gender equality**

According to the World Economic Forum’s Global Gender Gap Report for 2018, the Philippines was ranked eighth among the 10 best performers. Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Nicaragua, Rwanda, New Zealand, Ireland, and Namibia are the other countries on the list. In the study, 149 countries were tested for economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment. The report also took into consideration skills gender gaps related to artificial intelligence (AI).

## **China unveils world’s first AI female news presenter**

In a groundbreaking technological move, China’s state-owned TV channel Xinhua has introduced the world’s first ever Artificial Intelligence news anchor. Xinhua announced that in collaboration with Sogou (search engine) has created the world’s first female AI news anchor, known as Xin Xiaomeng.

## **Canon wins Caledonia Novel Award 2019**

American author Dakota Canon has won the Caledonia Novel Award 2019 with her unpublished novel The Unmaking of Eden. The Caledonia Novel Award is an international, Edinburgh-based award for unpublished and self-published novelists in any genre for adults and YA. This year saw more than 350 entries submitted from 31 different countries.

Canon won £1,000 and a trophy specially designed by Edinburgh artist Astrid Jaekel.

### **Pakistan confers highest civilian award Nishan-e-Pakistan on Saudi Crown Prince**

Pakistan conferred its highest civilian award Nishan-e-Pakistan on Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman for his “outstanding support” in reinvigorating the ties between the two countries. The award was presented by Pakistan President Arif Alvi at a special ceremony held at the President House in Islamabad.

### **Sudanese refugee wins major human rights award**

Abdul Aziz Muhamat, a Sudanese refugee who has been held in Australia’s notorious offshore Manus Island processing centre for over five years, has won the prestigious Martin Ennals human rights prize, the UN refugee agency UNHCR has said.

### **Trump Declares National Emergency Amid US-Mexico Border Wall Crisis**

President Donald Trump declared the southern border of the United States to be a national emergency, catapulting the country into uncertain legal and political battles as he seeks to fulfill a campaign promise that eluded him for two years. He made the designation in an attempt to redirect taxpayer money from other accounts and use it to erect more than 230 miles of barriers along the U.S.-Mexico border.

### **UN appoints Chandramouli Ramanathan as ASG in Management Strategy dept**

The UN has appointed an Indian official in one of the top most positions in its Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance.

### **WHO issues new international standard for music devices**

The World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) issued a new international standard for the manufacture and use of musical devices.

The aim behind the move is to prevent young people from going deaf. Nearly 50 per cent of people aged 12-35 years — or 1.1 billion young people — are at risk of hearing loss due to prolonged and excessive exposure to loud sounds, including music they listen to through personal audio devices.



### **India signs contract with U.S. firm for 72,400 assault rifles**

After repeated attempts to equip the infantry soldier with a basic rifle, the Army signed a contract with Sig Sauer of the U.S. for 72,400 SIG 716 assault rifles for the frontline soldier deployed in operational areas.

Of the 72,400 rifles, 66,400 are for the Army, 2,000 for the Navy and 4,000 for the Indian Air Force. The broad parameters for the assault rifle are an effective range of 500m and weigh less than 3kg. The entire quantity would be delivered within 12 months from the date of signing the contract.

### **ICC Women's T20I Rankings: Jemimah Rodrigues, Smriti Mandhana climb charts**

Jemimah Rodrigues and Smriti Mandhana have both made impressive gains among batswomen in the latest ICC Women's T20I Player Rankings despite seeing India go down 3-0 to New Zealand. Meanwhile, Windies all-rounder Deandra Dottin has grabbed the top spot among all-rounders in the latest update. Windies beat Pakistan 2-1 in a historic away trip to the sub-continent.

### **Egypt's President el-Sissi Elected New Chairman of African Union**

Egypt's President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi has been elected chairman of the African Union at the continental body's summit in Ethiopia.

### **YES BANK Bags Data Science Innovation Award**

YES BANK has been 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. YES EEE program is an industry-first analytics tool that aids the Bank's relationship managers with top three talking points to engage with their customers.

Graham Bell Awards, in its 8th edition this year, specifically in the area of data science.

### **Asia's largest early Childhood Conference – Early Ed Asia 2019 begins**

Jaipur organised the Early Ed Asia 2019. This two day educational event, touted to be Asia's largest conference on Early Childhood will be held at the pink city's most revered heritage structure – The iconic City Palace.

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Conceived and presented by Early Childhood Association (ECA) and ScooNews under the patronage of the Royal Family of Jaipur, the conference will bring together the brightest minds in Early Childhood Education on 12th and 13th February to discuss the latest trends in teaching and research to provide a stronger foundation to our children.

It is the first time that a conference of this magnitude is organised around early childhood education in India.

### **BAFTA Awards 2019**

Awards season moved across the pond with this year's BAFTA Awards in London.

"The Favourite" took home the most awards with seven, including both actress categories for Rachel Weisz and Olivia Colman and best original screenplay, though "Roma" nabbed the top prize for best film.

The Yorgo Lanthimos film also took home prizes for best production design, best costume design, best hair & makeup and the outstanding British film prize. "Roma" came in second with four prizes, including best director for Alfonso Cuarón, best film not in the English language, and best cinematography.

The leading actor prize went to Rami Malek for "Bohemian Rhapsody" while favorite Mahershala Ali was lauded for "Green Book." "Vice" surprised with the award for best editing, while "BlacKkKlansman" took home the best adapted screenplay trophy.

### **Abu Dhabi adds Hindi as third language in courts**

The Abu Dhabi Judicial Department (ADJD) has added Hindi as the third official language to be spoken in the city's courts, alongside Arabic and English.

According to the ADJD, this step was aimed at helping foreigners to learn about litigation procedures, their rights and duties without a language barrier, in addition to facilitating registration procedures via unified forms available through the Department's website.

### **Five-day multinational maritime exercise begins in Pak**

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The five-day multinational maritime exercise 'AMAN-19', in which 46 nations are taking part, commenced near the coastal city of Karachi. The Pakistan Navy's ships, submarines, boats, marines and special forces will all take part in the exercise, along with the Pakistan Air Force, Pakistan Army and Pakistan Rangers.

### **World Government Summit begins in Dubai, UAE**

seventh edition of the World Government Summit (WGS) kicks off in Dubai. The pope, who recently made a historic three-day visit to the UAE, will deliver a speech from the Vatican during the WGS that will run till February 12.

The summit will see the attendance of almost 100 ministers from around the world, with more than 120 presidents and officials from leading international companies all joining forces to address the issues of today and tomorrow on the global platform of WGS 2019.

More than 4,000 dignitaries from 140 countries and some of the world's movers and shakers are expected to attend the seventh edition of the summit, held every year under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai. The event will also be hosting 600 world-famous speakers in more than 200 interactive sessions

### **American members of the US-India CEO Forum announced**

US Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross has announced the names of the American private sector members of the US-India CEO Forum, among whom are MasterCard CEO Ajay Banga and Qualcomm CEO Steve Mollenkopf.

The first meeting of the forum under the Trump Administration will be held in New Delhi on February 14. It will be co-chaired by Ross and Minister of Commerce and Industry and Civil Aviation Suresh Prabhu. James Taiclet, chairman, president, and CEO, American Tower Corporation will be the US private sector co-chair of the forum.

### **Macedonia signs Nato accession agreement**

Macedonia has taken a big step toward joining NATO after allies signed a key document that could see the tiny Balkans country become the 30th member of the world's biggest military alliance over the next year. NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg and Macedonian Foreign Minister Nikola

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Dimitrov led the “accession protocol” signing ceremony at the alliance’s Brussels headquarters.

### **China welcomes ‘Year of the Pig’**

China welcomed the Lunar New Year in which the “carefree and generous” pig, the 12th symbol of the Chinese horoscope, replaces the “cheerful but non-conformist” dog. For a week, hundreds of millions of people will visit their families to welcome the Earth Pig year 4717, associated with fertility and prosperity.

The Chinese begin the year with ancestral traditions – a combination of superstitions and customs – with the aim to ward off misfortunes and bring good luck, prosperity and abundance. Many rituals including spring-cleaning homes, decorating streets and hosting large family banquets on New Year’s Eve are common practice.

### **Pakistan Successfully Test-fires Short Range Ballistic Missile ‘Nasr’**

Pakistan Army successfully test-fired the short range surface-to-surface ballistic missile ‘Nasr’ which it claimed can defeat any ballistic missile defence system now available in the country’s neighbourhood or any other system being developed.

### **South Korean footballer Ki Sung-yueng announces retirement**

Midfielder Ki Sung-yueng announced his retirement from the South Korean national team. In a letter to the Korea Football Association, Ki said it had been a “big honour and responsibility” playing with the national team for the past 11 years. The 30-year-old also thanked his fans for their love and support, reports Efe news.

The midfielder had hinted at retirement after the 2018 FIFA World Cup in Russia but decided to compete in the 2019 AFC Asian Cup, currently being held in the United Arab Emirates, at the insistence of the new national team coach Paulo Bento.

## **SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

### **NASA’s new mission to study space weather from ISS**

NASA has selected a new mission that will help scientists understand and, ultimately, forecast the vast space weather system around our planet.

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The Atmospheric Waves Experiment (AWE) mission will cost \$42 million and is planned to launch in August 2022, attached to the exterior of the Earth-orbiting International Space Station (ISS).

### **India successfully test fires QRSAM missiles off Odisha coast**

Defence Research and Development Organisation, DRDO, successfully test fired indigenously developed Quick Reach Surface-to-Air missiles, QRSAMs, from ITR Chandipur, off the Odisha Coast. The two missiles were tested for different altitude and conditions. The test flights successfully demonstrated the robust Control, aerodynamics, propulsion, structural performance and high manoeuvring capabilities thus proving the design configuration.

### **NASA renames facility after Katherine Johnson who fought racism**

NASA has honoured Katherine Johnson, who defied racism at the US space agency and became a legendary mathematician, by renaming its Independent Verification and Validation (IV&V) facility in West Virginia in her name.

### **IAF Carries Out Vayu Shakti Exercise at Pokhran**

The Indian Air Force carried out a mega exercise involving almost all variants of its fighter jets and attack helicopters, in a fire power demonstration near the border with Pakistan. The exercise came two days after 40 CRPF personnel were killed in a suicide attack in Kashmir's Pulwama by Pakistan-based terror group Jaish-e-Mohammed.

In the Vayu Shakti exercise, the IAF showcased fire power capability of indigenously-developed platforms like Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas, Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) and efficacy of the Akash surface-to-air missile and Astra air-to-air missile.

### **UpGrad & IIIT-B launch a Hybrid PG program in Data Science**

UpGrad, in collaboration with IIIT Bangalore, is launching a hybrid 11-month PG program in Data science. Along with 1-1 mentorship from industry experts and 360 degree career support, the program will include 100+ hours of offline classroom sessions at IIIT Bangalore campus in addition to 400+ hrs of online lectures. Early applicants into the program can also earn RS30,000 scholarship.

### **INS Trikand participates in exercise Cutlass Express 2019**

INS Trikand, a front-line warship of the Indian Navy, participated in a multinational training exercise 'CUTLASS EXPRESS - 19' held from 27 Jan to 06 Feb 19. The aim of the exercise was to improve law enforcement capacity, promote regional security and progress inter-operability between the armed forces of the participating nations for the purpose of interdicting illegal maritime activity in the Western Indian Ocean.

### **India's 40th Communication Satellite, GSAT-31, Launched**

India's latest communication satellite GSAT-31 was successfully launched from French Guiana this morning, making it the third successful mission by Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) this year. The satellite was placed into the orbit within 42 minutes of its launch from Ariane Launch Complex at Kourou, a French territory located in northeastern coast of South America, at 02:31 am (IST).

GSAT-31 is the 40th communication satellite of India. It will replace the InSAT satellite which is nearing the end of its life. Weighing about 2,535 kg, the GSAT-31 will provide continuity to operational services on some of the in-orbit satellites. This satellite will augment the Ku-band transponder capacity in Geostationary Orbit, the space agency said.

### **INS Dronacharya wins Kochi area boat pulling regatta trophy**

The INS Dronacharya team won the Regatta trophy in the Kochi Area Pulling Regatta 2019 of the Southern Naval Command (SNC) held in the Ernakulam Channel. The Boat Pulling Regatta is one of the most prestigious and traditional naval sporting activities conducted by the Navy.

## **SPORTS**

### **India lose to Uzbekistan 0-1 in Turkish Women's Cup football**

India lost to Uzbekistan 0-1 in their opening match of the Turkish Women's Cup football in Alanya, Turkey. An early goal by Uzbekistan's Burhanova Malika in the 4th minute made the difference as India struggled for the equaliser in the remainder of the game.

The Indian team will also be facing Turkmenistan and Romania in group A of the tournament.

### **England women beat India by two wickets in third ODI**

England women's team defeated India by two wickets in the third and final ODI in Mumbai .England scored 208-8 in 48.5 overs to grab two crucial points as the three-game series is part of ICC Women's Championship.

The World Champions are placed in seventh place and need to be in the top four to qualify directly for the 2021 World Cup.

India had already sealed the series after the winning the first two games. The two teams will now head to Guwahati to play the three-match T20I series.

### **Sanath Jayasuriya banned from cricket for two years**

Former Sri Lanka Cricket captain Sanath Jayasuriya has been banned from cricket for two years. ICC said Jayasuriya admitted to breaching two counts of the ICC Anti-Corruption Code.

### **ISSF World Cup: Manu Bhaker, Saurabh Chaudhary win gold in 10m Air Pistol Mixed Team**

Manu Bhaker and Saurabh Chaudhary clinched the gold medal in the 10m Air Pistol Mixed Team event at the ISSF World Cup in New Delhi . Ranxin Jiang and Bowen Zhang of China won silver while the Republic of Korea pair Minjung Kim and Daehun Park got the bronze.

Manu and Saurabh combined to shoot a total of 483.4 points in the final.The pair had earlier equalled Qualification World Record and also set a new Qualification World Record Junior by shooting 778 points.

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

National champion Deepak Singh was the lone Indian boxer to notch up a gold while five others claimed silver medals in the Makran Cup in Chabahar, Iran.

Deepak (49-kilogram) defeated Jaafar Naseri in the finals held last night.However, none of the other five Indian finalists could win their summit clashes.



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Finishing second on the podium were P Lalitha Prasad (52kg), Commonwealth Games silver-medallist Manish Kaushik (60kg), Duryodhan Singh Negi (69kg), Sanjeet (91kg) and Commonwealth Games silver-medallist Satish Kumar (91kg).

### **Indian women's team beat England by 7 wickets in 2nd ODI**

Indian women's team defeated England by seven wickets in the second ODI at Mumbai to take an unassailable 2-nil lead in the three-match series. The Indian eves had bundled out England for just 161 in 43.3 overs after the visitors won the toss and opted to bat.

### **Prajnesh Gunneswaran rises to career-best 94th in Tennis**

In Tennis, India's Prajnesh Gunneswaran achieved his career-best ranking, rising three places to 94th in the latest list. Ramkumar Ramanathan dropped nine spots to 137, while Yuki Bhambri further slipped to 171.

Saketh Myneni is placed at 250th and following him is Sasi Kumar Mukund, who has also jumped to a career-best 269th. In Doubles rankings, Rohan Bopanna remained at 38th and Divij Sharan at 39th, while Leander Paes rose two spots to 73rd. Following them was Jeevan Nedunchezhiyan at 75th and Purav Raja at 96th.

### **SM Ali Trophy T20 Cricket: Assam thrash Mizoram**

The Assam cricket team thrashed Mizoram by 131 runs in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy T20 Cricket championship held at Cuttack. The Assam team restricted Mizoram to 70-6 in their 20 overs.

### **Harmanpreet Singh named 2018 Player of the Year by Asian Hockey Federation**

India defender Harmanpreet Singh was awarded with the 2018 Player of the Year award by the Asian Hockey Federation while women's team striker Lalremsiami bagged the Rising Player of The Year prize.

### **India to start preparations for U-23 AFC championship**

India U-23 mens football team, which has never qualified for the U-23 AFC championship since its inception in 2014, will start preparation for the qualifying round matches, under coach Derrick Pereira in Goa from March 2.

### **ISSF World Cup 2019: Apurvi Chandela scales 'China Wall' to win women's 10m Air Rifle gold**

Apurvi Chandela broke World Record to register India's first gold medal at the ISSF World Cup 2019. The 26-year-old shooter shot 252.9 in a thrilling 10m Women Air Rifle finale to bag the yellow metal on Day 1 of the tournament at Dr. Karni Singh Shooting Range in New Delhi.

### **Sports Minister Rajyavardhan Rathore to inaugurate ISSF Shooting World Cup**

Sports Minister Rajyavardhan Rathore will inaugurate the International Shooting Sports Federation (ISSF) World Cup in New Delhi . Various events in the world cup will start from February 23rd and end on the 27th.

The ISSF World Cup is crucial for Indian shooting as it has 16 quotas up for grabs for Tokyo 2020 Olympic qualification. Hosts India is fielding a 23-member squad with 11 shooters in the non-competition Minimum Qualification Score category.

### **Turkish Women's Cup 2019: 2 Sikkimese women footballers in Team India**

There will be two Sikkimese women footballers to play for the Senior Women National Team for the upcoming Turkish Women's Cup 2019. International footballers Lako Phuti Bhutia and Anju Tamang from Sikkim have been shortlisted by the All India Football Federation in Senior Women National Football Team to play in Turkish Women's Cup 2019 to be held from February 25, 2019 to March 6, 2019.

### **Nikhat, Meena win gold medals at Strandja Memorial Boxing**

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

Zareen, a multiple-time national medallist, claimed a 5-0 win in the 51kg category finals against Filipino Irish Magno. Devi defeated another Filipino Aira Villegas 3-2, in the bantamweight (54kg) summit clash. However, Manju Rani (48kg) settled for a silver after a defeat from Filipine's Josie Gabuco in a split 2-3 verdict.

### **Laureus Sports awards: Djokovic, Biles win Sportspersons of the Year awards**

Tennis world No. 1 Novak Djokovic of Serbia won his fourth Laureus World Sportsman of the Year , and American record-holding gymnast Simone Biles bagged

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the World Sportswoman of the Year Award thanks to her dominant world championship performance last year.

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### **ICC bans coach Irfan Ansari for 10 years**

The International Cricket Council (ICC) banned UAE-based coach Irfan Ansari for 10 years after he was found guilty of making a “corrupt approach” to Pakistan captain Sarfaraz Ahmed in 2017.

### **Gayle to Retire From ODIs After 2019 World Cup**

Veteran West Indies batsman Chris Gayle will retire from One-Day International cricket after this year’s World Cup in England and Wales. The 39-year-old opener is set to play his first international since last July against England .

Post the 2015 World Cup, the big-hitting southpaw has played only 15 ODIs including the World Cup Qualifiers last year in Zimbabwe.

### **De Goede and Van Doren named Players of the Year in 2018 FIH Hockey Stars Awards**

The Netherlands’ Eva de Goede and Arthur Van Doren of Belgium have been revealed as the FIH Players of the Year in the 2018 Hockey Stars Awards, the International Hockey Federation (FIH) has announced.

Female Player of the Year Eva de Goede, 29, was one of the superstars of the all-conquering Netherlands team that dominated the Vitality Hockey Women’s World Cup London 2018 in July and August last year, having been a consistently brilliant midfield performer as the Oranje stormed to the title.

### **Virat Kohli maintains top spot in ICC Test batsmen chart, Cheteshwar Pujara holds on to third spot**

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India captain Virat Kohli remained on top while teammate Cheteshwar Pujara managed to hold on to his third position in the latest ICC Test rankings, where Sri Lankan Kusal Perera made a quantum leap of 58 places.

Kohli is leading the chart with 992 rating points ahead of New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson (897 points) and Pujara (881). Besides Kohli and Pujara, no other Indian feature in the top 10 list.

### **Vidarbha beat Rest of India to retain Irani Cup**

In cricket, Ranji champions Vidarbha beat Rest of India in Nagpur to retain the Irani Cup. Vidarbha has now become the third team after Mumbai and Karnataka to clinch two Irani Cup titles in a row.

Set to chase a target of 280, Vidarbha were well on course at 269 for five, needing only 11 runs for an outright victory.

### **Nehwal beats Sindhu to become national champion for 4th time**

World number nine Saina Nehwal became the national champion for the fourth time, defeating world number six PV Sindhu in the women's singles final of Senior National Badminton Championship. Nehwal, who had previously won senior nationals in 2006, 2007 and 2017, won with the scoreline of 21-18, 21-15. Saina had defeated Sindhu in the 2017 final as well.

### **Meghalaya: Clouded Leopard chosen as mascot for National Games 2022**

Meghalaya state animal 'Clouded Leopard' was chosen as the mascot for the upcoming National Games to be hosted by the state in 2022. At the first meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Games 2022 chaired by Meghalaya sports minister Banteidor Lyngdoh in the presence of officials from various departments, the members agreed that 'Clouded Leopard' will be the mascot for the National Games and a competition to design a smiling Clouded Leopard will be opened to all.

### **ICC Cricket World Cup 2019 schedule**

The ICC Cricket World Cup 2019 will be held in England and Wales from May 30, 2019 to July 14, 2019. This time, in the first round of the tournament the ten teams will play against each other. The top four teams will progress to the semifinals. The participating teams are

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England (hosts), Australia, Bangladesh, India, New Zealand, Pakistan, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and West Indies.

### **Senior National Badminton C'ships begin in Guwahati**

The Senior National Badminton Championship has begun in Guwahati. The event which is being held in Guwahati after 9 years will see the participation of some of the top players including Saina Nehwal, P V Sindhu, Sameer Verma and P Kashyap among others. The top 8 players ranked below 50 in the BWF- world rankings will directly start their games from the Pre- Quarter finals that begin on 14th February.

### **Corentin Moutet wins Chennai Open ATP challenger title**

France's Corentin Moutet, the second-seed, beat Andrew Harris of Australia 6-3, 6-3 in the singles final to win the title in Chennai Open ATP Challenger tennis tournament in Chennai. The 19-year old left-hander displayed a range of exquisite shots, tremendous agility and exemplary court-craft in subduing Harris, a former junior doubles champion at the French Open and Wimbledon.

### **Pankaj Advani wins 86th senior snooker national championship**

Country's ace cueist Pankaj Advani Sunday defeated Lakshman Rawat by 6-0 to clinch the 86th Senior Snooker National Championship title. Advani won by 70-36, 91-22, 66-06, 65-51, 77-49, 59-18 in the finals .

### **Mirabai Chanu lifts gold on her comeback tournament**

World champion Indian weightlifter Saikhom Mirabai Chanu notched up a gold medal at the EGAT Cup in Thailand, making a strong comeback from the lower back injury that kept her out of action for more than half of 2018. Chanu won the 48kg category gold with a effort of 192 kg in the silver level Olympic qualifying event, the points from which will come in handy when the final rankings for Tokyo 2020 cut are done.

### **Young Indian girls clinch 4 medals in Bahrain Open TT**

India's young paddlers stole the limelight in the Bahrain Junior and Cadet Open, clinching a rich haul of four medals, including a gold, two silver and a bronze . All three Indian teams in fray in the Cadet Girls' Team category displayed great skill and grit to pave their way into the semifinals of the tournament that is part of the ITTF Premium Junior Circuit.

### **Vidarbha beat Saurashtra to win Ranji Trophy for second consecutive time**

Vidarbha defeated Saurashtra by 78 runs to win Ranji Trophy 2018-19 edition and lift the coveted domestic trophy for the second consecutive time. It took only one session on Day 5 for the Faiz Fazal-led Vidarbha to dismiss Saurashtra for 127 in the final match, which was played at the Vidarbha Cricket Association in Nagpur.

### **Australia appoint Ricky Ponting as assistant coach for World Cup**

Former Australia captain Ricky Ponting will be head coach Justin Langer's assistant at the World Cup in England this summer. Ponting has held a similar role with his country's Twenty20 side and was part of the Australia one-day team's coaching set-up in England last summer.

### **Sana Mir becomes first Asian woman cricketer to play 100 T20Is**

Former Pakistan women's cricket team skipper Sana Mir became the first Asian woman cricketer to play hundred T20 international matches. The 33-year-old reached the milestone when she walked into the field for the ongoing third and final T20I against West Indies in Karachi.

The right-arm bowler was part of Pakistan inaugural T20I team which played against Ireland in 2009. Since then, she has missed just two matches for Pakistan and that too because of an injury. Overall, Sana is the sixth woman cricketer to complete a century of T20 Internationals. Daendra Dottin of West Indies tops the list with a total of 109 T20Is to her name.

### **Haryana Hammers beat Punjab Royals to win PWL-4 title**

It was fourth time lucky for Haryana Hammers as they beat Punjab Royals 6-3 in the summit clash to win the Pro Wrestling League (PWL) season 4 title here . Riding on Aleksander Khotsianivski, Ali Shabanov, Kiran, Ravi Kumar and Anastasia Nichita's dominating performance, Haryana Hammers, the runners-up in the last three editions, turned the tables on the defending champions Punjab Royals by winning all the first five bouts to clinch the title.

### **Vani Kapoor becomes first Indian to grab Australian LPGA card**

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Vani Kapoor became the first Indian to earn a card for the Australian Ladies PGA Tour (LPGA) after coming through its first-ever Qualifying Tournament at the Ballarat Golf Club in Ballarat, Australia.

Vani shot rounds of 71, 78 and 69 to finish at two-over 218 and was tied-12th with three others. The top-20 from a field of 81 earned playing rights on the Australian LPGA but there were many other benefits and spots available too.

### **Mithali Raj becomes first woman to play 200 ODIs**

India captain Mithali Raj became the first woman cricketer to play 200 ODIs, adding another achievement to her illustrious career. The 36-year-old is also the highest run-getter in ODIs with 6622 runs at an average of 51.33, including seven hundreds. Mithali could not make a big impact in her 200th game, scoring nine off 28 balls as India were bowled out for 149 in the third and final ODI against New Zealand.

### **India to host ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023**

International Cricket Council CEO and former South Africa cricketer David Richardson announced that the 13th edition of Men's Cricket World Cup will be played in India in 2023.

Speaking at an event, Richardson said: "There is so much to look forward to. We have two T20 events (Women and Men) in Australia in 2020, followed by the first Test Championship final. Then we have the Women's World Cup in New Zealand in 2021, Under 19 World Cup. And of course, then we have two events in India — the next T20 World Cup at the end of 2021 and the Men's World Cup itself in 2023."

## **OBITUARY**

<b>Name of the Person Died</b>	<b>Associated Field</b>
Donald Keene	U.S.-born scholar of Japanese literature
Raj Kumar	Veteran film producer
Pratik Choudhury	Bengali singer

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Namvar Singh	Hindi writer
Bruno Ganz	Swiss actor
Andrea Levy	British author
K.R. Subbian	Former DMK MP
Gordon Banks	England goalkeeper
Mahesh Anand	Popular Bollywood actor
Ladu Kishore	Biju Janata Dal (BJD) MP
Rajabhau Oak	Former Cricket Coach
Ramesh Bhatkar	Veteran Marathi actor
Matti Nykänen	Finnish ski-jumping Champion
Priyanath Dey	Freedom fighter and former Odisha MLA
K. Mahesh	Chairman of Sundaram Brake Linings
Hiten Bhaya	Former IIMC director

### Important Days

Date	Day	Theme
2 February	World Wetlands Day	Wetlands and Climate Change
4 February	World Cancer Day	I am and I will



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6 February	International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation	
7 February	Safer Internet Day	Together for a better internet.
10 February	National Deworming Day	
11 February	International day Women and girls in Science	Investment in Women and Girls in Science for Inclusive Green Growth
12 February	National Productivity Day	
13 February	National Productivity Day	Dialogue, Tolerance and Peace....
20 February	World Day of Social Justice	If You Want Peace & Development, Work for Social Justice
21 February	International Mother Language Day	Indigenous languages matter for development, peace building and reconciliation
22 February	World Thinking Day	
24 February	Central Excise Day	
28 February	National Science Day	Science for people and people for science