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AWARDS & HONOURS

Name of the award	Award Winner	Additional Information
Best Bank Award from the Tamil Nadu government	Indian Bank	For meeting the needs of women's self-help groups (SHGs).
Green Era Award for Sustainability	TVS Motor Company	
Assocham Non-Life Insurer of The Year Award	Bharti AXA General Insurance	
Bhagwan Mahavir Ahimsa Puraskar	Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman	
world's youngest ever self-made billionaire	Kylie Jenner	
Best director award at Dublin International Film Festival	Assam filmmaker Rima Das	For her film "Bulbul Can Sing"
Chameli Devi Jain Award	BBC journalist Priyanka Dubey	For an Outstanding Woman Journalist for the year 2018.
Yashwantrao Chavan award 2018	Former RBI Governor Raghuram Rajan	For his contribution to economic development.
Golden Peacock award	ACKO General Insurance	For their contextual microinsurance product - "Ola Ride Insurance"
DD Mahila Kisan Award for 2018-19.	Swati Shingade	
Abel Prize in mathematics , 2019	Karen Uhlenbeck (First Woman)	For her fundamental work in geometric analysis and gauge theory

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Sheikh Shaurya Chakra	Jammu & Kashmir teenager Irfan Ramzan Sheikh	
Vyas Samman 2018	Hindi writer Leeladhar Jagudi	For his collection of poems "Jitne Log Utne Prem" published in 2013
Pravasi Bhartiya Samman	Swiss-based NRI scientist Dr Rajendra Joshi	

Nobel Prize recipient Amartya Sen to be awarded with Oxford University's Bodley award

Nobel Prize-winning economist Amartya Sen was awarded with the prestigious Bodley Medal, the highest honour granted by the University of Oxford's world-famous Bodleian Libraries.

The medal is awarded to individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the fields in which the Bodleian is awarded are, including literature, culture, science, and communication.

Other people to win the award:

The other winner of the Bodley Medal this year is Nobel Prize-winning novelist Kazuo Ishiguro, who will hold an in-conversation event with Ovenden next week to celebrate the honour.

Turing Award: 'Godfathers of AI' receive highest honour in computer science

Three researchers have won the 2018 Turing Award, known as the 'Nobel Prize of computing,' for conceptual and engineering breakthroughs in artificial intelligence (AI).

Yoshua Bengio, Geoffrey Hinton and Yann LeCun were named the recipients of the award by the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM).

About the recipients:

Bengio is a professor at the University of Montreal in Canada, Hinton is vice president and engineering fellow, Google and professor emeritus at the University of Toronto, and LeCun is a professor at New York University and vice president and chief AI scientist at Facebook.

The World's Best Airports in 2019 are announced

Changi Airport Singapore is voted the World's Best Airport 2019 by international air travellers for the seventh consecutive year. The awards were held at Passenger Terminal EXPO in London, United Kingdom on 27th March 2019.

The Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport in New Delhi featured at number 59.

Other Indian Airports in the list includes Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport, Mumbai (64), Rajiv Gandhi Hyderabad International Airport (66) and Bengaluru's Kempegowda International Airport (69).

The World's Top 10 Airports of 2019 are:

- Singapore Changi Airport
- Tokyo Haneda International Airport
- Incheon International Airport
- Hamad International Airport
- Hong Kong International Airport
- Chubu Centrair International Airport
- Munich Airport
- London Heathrow Airport
- Narita International Airport
- Zurich Airport

APPOINTMENTS

Name of the Person	Name of the Position	Additional Information
Debeswar Malakar	Commissioner of Guwahati Municipal Corporation	
Hasmukh Adhia	Non-executive chairman of BoB	

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Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad Al-Sabah	President of the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA)	For an eighth term despite being embroiled in a forgery case brought by Swiss investigators.
Pranay Kumar Verma	India's next Ambassador to Vietnam	
Sanjeev Ranjan	Secretary of Road Transport and Highways Ministry	
Bhagwan Lal Sahni	Chairman of the National Commission for Backward Classes	Kaushalendra Singh Patel, Sudha Yadav and Achary Talloju have been appointed as members of the commission.
Ajit Kumar Mohanty	BARC Director	For a tenure of three years.
Dr. Ausaf Sayeed	Ambassador of India to Saudi Arabia	
Padma Lakshmi	UNDP Goodwill Ambassador	
Soumya Swaminathan,	Chief Scientist at WHO	
Jagdish Mukhi	Governor of Mizoram	
Ashu Khullar	Citibank India head	Khullar succeeds Pramit Jhaveri
Subhash Chandra Garg	Finance Secretary	
Hasmukh Adhia	Chancellor of Central University of Gujarat	
Mohammad Shtayyeh	Palestinian PM	

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C Lalsawta	Mizoram's first Lokayukta	
Rakesh Makhija	Axis Bank, Chairman	Makhija will take over from current Axis Bank Chairman Sanjiv Mishra
M R Kumar	LIC chairman	T C Suseel Kumar and Vipin Anand have been appointed as Managing Directors of the LIC for five years
M Ravi Kanth	HUDCO chief	
Santosh Jha	Ambassador to Uzbekistan	Anurag Bhushan (IFS:1995), presently Joint Secretary in the Ministry, has been appointed as the next High Commissioner of India to Malawi.
Amitabh Kant	Head transformative mobility panel	
Pankaj Kumar	Vedanta Ltd, CEO	
Justice Pinaki Chandra Ghose	India's first Lokpal	
Rear Admiral Krishna Swaminathan	Flag Officer Sea Training (FOST)	
Pramod Sawant	Goa CM	
Rear Admiral Sanjay Jasjit Singh	Western Fleet Commander	
Karambir Singh	Chief of Naval Staff	

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Cricketer Suresh Raina	Fantasy Sports company – ‘Fantain’, brand ambassador	
Chacko Purackal Thomas	Tata Coffee, MD And CEO	
Rear Admiral Rajesh Pendharkar	Flag Officer Commanding Maharashtra Naval Area	
N S Srinath	Karur Vysya Bank, non-executive chairman	
Vice Admiral MA Hampiholi	Director General Naval Operations (DGNO)	
Azali Assoumani	Comoros President	
Ole Gunnar Solskjaer	Manchester United manager	
Indian cricketer Mayank Agarwal	Fast&Up, brand ambassador	
Veselin Matic	Head coach of the Indian men’s basketball team	Veselin Matic, who took Iran to an Asian Games bronze medal in 2010
Justice D.K. Jain	Ethics officer of the Indian cricket board	
Rear Admiral Mahesh Singh	Flag Officer Commanding Karnataka Area	
Rear Admiral Suraj Berry	Flag Officer Commanding Eastern Fleet	
Lawyer Zuzana Caputova	Slovakia’s first female president	
Vijay Chandok	MD and CEO, ICICI Securities	

Sohail Mahmood	Pakistan Foreign Secretary	
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BANKING & FINANCE

PNB RANKS 1ST IN IMPLEMENTATION OF 'REFORMS AGENDA'

According to BCG-IBA Report – EASE Reforms for Public Sector Banks, released by Union Minister of Finance & Corporate Affairs, Punjab National Bank (PNB) secured the top spot among all public sector banks in the implementation of 'Reforms agenda'.

PNB which topped the list with a score of 78.4 out of 100 in the EASE-index was followed by BoB (77.8), SBI (74.6), and Oriental Bank of Commerce (69).

The EASE (Enhanced Access and Service Excellence) report has shown significant enhancement in PSB performance on the back of Government's 4R's strategy- recognition, recovery, recapitalisation and reforms. The index has measured Banks on 140 objective metrics across 6 themes including customer responsiveness, credit off-take and digitalization.

Government of India and ADB sign \$926 Million Loan Agreement for Mumbai Metro Rail Project

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Government of India signed a \$926 Million Loan Agreement to operationalize two lines for the Mumbai Metro Rail System that will ease the distress of millions of commuters each day and help provide a cleaner, less congested city.

The Single Largest Infrastructure Project Loan in ADB history approved by the ADB Board will help fund lines 2A (Dahisar to D.N. Nagar), 2B (D.N. Nagar–Bandra–Mandale), and 7 (Dahisar [East] to Andheri [East]), totaling about 58 kilometers (km).

Usha Thorat-led task force to ensure stability of external value of rupee

The Reserve Bank of India has constituted an eight-member task force on offshore rupee markets, headed by Usha Thorat, former Deputy Governor, to look

into issues related to the markets and recommend appropriate policy measures to ensure the stability of the external value of the rupee.

IDBI Bank gets govt nod to handle import, export transactions with Iran

The IDBI Bank has received government nod to handle import and export transactions with Iran, a move which would help in promoting two-way trade amid US sanctions on the Persian Gulf nation.

Iran is India's third-largest oil supplier after Iraq and Saudi Arabia. It was India's second biggest supplier of crude oil after Saudi Arabia till 2010-11 but sanctions by the West over its suspected nuclear programme relegated it to the seventh spot in the subsequent years. In 2013-14 and 2014-15, India bought 11 million tonnes (MT) and 10.95 MT of crude, respectively from Iran.

ICICI Bank to buy 9.9% in NBFC Kisan Finance for Rs18 crore

ICICI Bank said it will acquire 9.9% stake in non-banking finance company Kisan Finance for cash consideration of Rs 17.82 crore. The acquisition is expected to be over by the end of March 2019,

Kisan Rural Finance Ltd (Kisan Finance), was incorporated in December 2017. The company had registered a net loss of ₹48 lakh in 2017-18 at a revenue of Rs4 lakh.

India home to 22 of the Top 30 Most Polluted Cities

As per reports by IQ Air Visual and Greenpeace, the battle of South-Asia regarding the deteriorating air quality and the global climate accord. India is said to be comprised of seven of the top 10 of the most polluted cities existing in the world. Gurgaon located in the capital of India New Delhi, is the most polluted city in the world.

The index measures the presence of PM 2.5 which is a pollutant which can go deep in the lungs and bloodstream of a human being causing several respiratory and other lung diseases. Along with the death toll arising with these pollution figures, there's an estimated cost of USD 225 billion in lost labour and trillions in medical costs. India has 22 of the top 30 most polluted cities in the world with China having 5, Pakistan with 2 and one in Bangladesh.

LIC Housing-IMGC Partnership

LIC Housing Finance has partnered with India Mortgage Guarantee Corporation (IMGC) to offer special loan scheme, under which borrowers can repay the amount till the age of 75 years.

Under the new partnership, IMGC will provide LICHFL with mortgage guarantee which is a kind of financial product that compensates financial institutions for losses that may arise from a default on a mortgage loan, LICHFL said in a release. This strategic tie-up will help the LICHFL to accommodate more home loan borrowers, increase market penetration besides combating NPAs.

SBI, Hitachi arm to roll out digital payments platform

State Bank of India (SBI) and Hitachi Payment Services Pvt Ltd, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Hitachi Ltd, launched their merchant-acquiring joint venture, SBI Payment Services Pvt Ltd (SBIPSPL), in Mumbai, for establishing a digital payments platform for India and other countries in the region.

The joint venture (SBI has a 74 per cent stake, and the balance is with Hitachi Payment Services) will facilitate expansion of the digital payments landscape in India via its digital payments platform. This will offer innovative products to suit the requirements of all segments of merchants by leveraging the brand value and vast distribution network of SBI, and bring Artificial Intelligence and other technological capabilities of Hitachi to SBI Payment Services, SBI said in a statement.

RBI imposes Rs 11 crore fine on 4 banks for delayed implementation of Swift operations

The RBI has imposed a total monetary fine of Rs 11 crore on four banks – Karnataka Bank, United Bank of India, IOB and Karur Vysya Bank – for non-compliance of directions on Swift messaging software.

While the RBI imposed a Rs 4 crore penalty on Karnataka Bank, it slapped a fine of Rs 3 crore each on United Bank and Indian Overseas Bank. Besides, the regulator has also levied Rs one crore fine on Karur Vysya Bank.

The Reserve Bank of India has levied an aggregate penalty of Rs 40 million on the bank for delayed implementation of four of the Swift related operational controls, Karnataka Bank said in a regulatory filing.

United Bank, HDFC Life sign bancassurance deal

United Bank of India has signed a bancassurance deal with private life insurer HDFC Life Insurance Company. Through this partnership, United Bank's customers will be able to take advantage of HDFC Life's expertise in life insurance products, distribution and customer service.

White label ATM operators allowed to source cash directly from RBI

The Reserve Bank relaxed norms for white label ATM (WLA) operators and allowed them to buy wholesale cash directly from the central bank. The RBI also permitted WLA operators to source cash from any bank, including cooperatives and regional rural banks.

Centre, ADB sign 26 million dollar loan pact for improving drainage infrastructure in Dibrugarh

The Centre and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) have signed a 26 million dollar loan agreement to provide additional financing for improving drainage infrastructure in Dibrugarh town of Assam.

The ongoing loan of 51 million dollars under the Assam Urban Infrastructure Investment Program is helping to improve water supply infrastructure in Guwahati and solid waste management and drainage infrastructure in Guwahati and Dibrugarh.

IDBI Bank plans three-year extension for current CEO Rakesh Sharma

IDBI Bank on Sunday said it is considering to appoint Rakesh Sharma, the current chief of the bank, as its managing director and chief executive officer for a further period of three years. Sharma's six-month term at IDBI Bank was set to end in April.

World Bank Signs Agreement to Provide Additional Funding of \$137 million to Enhance Dam Safety in India

The World Bank, Government of India and representatives of 5 state governments of India and implementing agencies signed the loan agreement for additional financing of \$137 million for the Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (DRIP) that will help rehabilitate and modernize over 220

selected large dams in the states of Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Tamil Nadu and Uttarakhand.

World Bank to provide 250 Million dollar for NRETP to boost Rural incomes in India

World Bank to provide 250 Million dollar for the National Rural Economic Transformation Project (NRETP) to boost Rural Incomes across 13 States in India.

The Agreement was signed by Mr. Sameer Kumar Khare, Additional Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, on behalf of the Government of India and Mr. Hisham Abdo, Acting Country Director, World Bank India, in New Delhi .

World Bank to help Sri Lankan farmers tackle climate change

The World Bank approved a \$125 million loan for Sri Lanka to help small farmers improve productivity and tackle climate change. The programme will benefit more than 470,000 small farmers in six provinces in the dry zone of the country, selected for being most exposed to climate impacts.

RBI slaps penalties on 36 major banks for non-compliance in SWIFT operations

The Reserve Bank on Friday said it has imposed penalties worth Rs71 crore on 36 public, private and foreign banks for non-compliance with various directions on time-bound implementation and strengthening of SWIFT operations.

SWIFT is a global messaging software used for transactions by financial entities. The massive Rs14,000-crore fraud at the PNB was a case of misuse of this messaging software. The banks include, Bank of Baroda, City Union Bank, HSBC, ICICI Bank, SBI and YES Bank.

The penalties, ranging from Rs1 crore to Rs4 crore, were imposed by orders dated 31 January, 2019, and 25 February, 2019,

HDFC Bank Becomes 3rd Indian Firm To Cross Rs6 trillion Market Cap

India's most valued lender HDFC Bank Ltd crossed the Rs6 trillion market capitalisation for the first time, making it only the country's third firm to achieve the milestone.

Intra-day, the stock touched a fresh record high of Rs2,233 on the BSE, up 2.87% from its previous close. The scrip closed at Rs2,226.10 on the BSE, up 2.56%, with a market capitalisation of Rs6.06 trillion. The Sensex rose 0.58% to end at 37,752.17 points.

HDFC Bank's stock gained for the fifth session in a row, rising as much as 6% during the period. Year-to-date, it has advanced 5%.

SEBI lifts foreign investment cap in corporate bonds

Markets regulator SEBI withdrew the 20 per cent limit on investments by Foreign Portfolio Investors in corporate bonds of an entity. In a notification, the regulator said the restriction is being withdrawn in accordance with a circular issued by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

In June last year, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) had mandated that no Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) shall have an exposure of more than 20 per cent of its corporate bond portfolio to a single corporate.

Internet of Things India Congress 2019 to be held in Bengaluru on August 22-23, 2019

The IoT India Congress 2019 will include tracks on segments such as healthcare, manufacturing, telecom, smart cities, energy, retail, cyber security, skills and development, IoT Standards, legal and regulatory, and agriculture. The Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET) IoT Panel held a conference to announce the upcoming 4th edition of the IoT India Congress.

Delhi: High-level committee set up to reform higher education

The Delhi government's Dialogue and Development Commission (DDC), a think-tank that advises the government on key issues, has set up a 17-member high-level committee to "reform higher education" in the capital. The committee, chaired by DDC vice-chairperson Jasmine Shah, will "recommend goals, metrics,

policies, and actionable plans for reforming Delhi's higher education system within a year".

RBI to take steps to infuse liquidity

In a move to infuse liquidity into the market, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said it will conduct a three-year buy-sell swap for the rupee through an auction process. RBI will buy \$5 billion on 26 March for a period of three years and reverse it through sales at pre-determined rates fixed via auction.

Authorised dealers are allowed to participate in the auction . In the first leg of the transaction, the central bank will buy dollars in the spot market from them in exchange for rupees.

RBI re-categorizes IDBI Bank as a Private Sector Bank

LIC acquire 51% of the total paid-up equity share capital of the bank Reserve Bank of India has categorized IDBI Bank as a 'Private Sector Bank' for regulatory purposes by with effect from 21 January 2019.

The move is consequent upon Life Insurance Corporation of India acquiring 51% of the total paid-up equity share capital of the bank.

RBI relaxes norms for trade credit

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) relaxed norms for imports of capital and non-capital goods by raising the trade credit limit to \$150 million under the automatic route.

Announcing the modified revised framework for 'Trade Credit Policy', the RBI, however, reduced the all-inclusive cost (all-in-cost) for overseas loans to benchmark rate plus 250 basis points from the earlier 350 bps. Trade credits (TCs) refer to the credits extended by the overseas supplier, bank, financial institution and other permitted recognised lenders for maturity for imports of capital and non-capital goods permissible.

According to the revised framework, TCs up to \$150 million or equivalent per import transaction for oil and gas refining & marketing, airline and shipping companies can be availed under the automatic route.

RBI issues guidelines to prevent market abuse

The Reserve Bank of India has come out with guidelines to prevent misuse of price-sensitive information by participants in markets for financial instruments. The RBI said market participants, either acting independently or in collusion, shall not undertake any action with the intention to manipulate the calculation of a benchmark rate or a reference rate. The guidelines have become effective from yesterday.

About regulatory action on market abuse, the RBI said market participants who are indulging in any such activity are liable to be denied access to markets in one or more instruments for a period that may not exceed one month at a time.

India's trade deficit narrows; exports up by 2.44%, imports decline by 5.4%

India's trade deficit narrowed in the month of February this year to 9.6 billion dollars.

According to data released by the Commerce Ministry, the country's exports grew by 2.44 per cent year-on-year to 26.67 billion dollar while imports declined by 5.4 per cent to 36.26 billion dollars.

The exports grew on account of higher shipments in sectors such as pharmaceuticals, engineering and electronics, the ministry said.

Got RBI nod for Gruh Finance merger: Bandhan Bank

Bandhan Bank has received "no objection" from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for the proposed merger of Gruh Finance with it.

The merger would help the bank to achieve product and geographic diversification while improving penetration in its core customer segment. On the other hand, the housing finance company would get access to a wider distribution network, a larger customer base and low cost deposit base of the bank.

Aviva Life Insurance launches WINGS program to empower women at workplace

Aviva Life Insurance announced the launch of WINGS, a specially designed mentorship program to empower women workforce. The WINGS program is an

initiative of the SHE division of Aviva Life Insurance for mentoring all the women employees in Aviva. SHE was conceptualised in 2016 by Aviva India's Women Network, an active community of socially enabled women who take up the charge of addressing causes in the interest of women empowerment. The new initiative has been aimed to empower the women in Aviva to fulfil their professional and personal goals.

SBI launches cardless ATM withdrawal with YONO Cash

India's largest bank State Bank of India (SBI) announced the launch of YONO Cash using which customers can withdraw money from ATMs without using a card. This feature on YONO is designed to help its users withdraw cash without a physical debit card. It also maximizes convenience and enhances the banking experience for its customers.

YONO will be secured with two-factor authentication and will also eliminate the risk of skimming and cloning.

RBI names SBI, ICICI and HDFC as systemically important banks

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) named State Bank of India (SBI), ICICI Bank and HDFC Bank as Domestic Systemically Important Banks (D-SIBs), which in other words mean banks that are too big to fail.

As per the norms, these banks will have to set aside more capital for their continued operation. RBI comes with the list every year since 2015. Inclusion in D-SIB indicates that failure of any of these banks would have a cascading effect on Indian financial system.

Inclusion in the list gives additional comfort to investors that these banks won't be allowed to fail and therefore, borrowing costs of these banks from the markets are cheaper than their peers.

ICICI Lombard, MobiKwik join hands to provide cyber-insurance cover of Rs 50,000

ICICI Lombard and Mobikwik announced a partnership to offer cyber-insurance cover of Rs 50,000 to protect against online frauds. General insurer ICICI Lombard and digital financial services platform Mobikwik said the partnership aims to provide protection against unauthorised and fraudulent transactions online, across bank accounts, debit/credit cards and mobile wallets.

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The cyber-insurance can be availed digitally through an app at only Rs 99 per month and with a sum insured of Rs 50,000. MobiKwik users can avail the 'Commercial Cyber Insurance' policy underwritten by ICICI Lombard and enjoy the benefit of a stress-free and secured transaction for its users who opt for this cover.

IBBI, SEBI sign MoU for better implementation of IBC

The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI).

The IBBI and the SEBI seek effective implementation of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 (Code) and its allied rules and regulations, which have redefined the debt-equity relationship and aims to promote entrepreneurship and debt market.

The MoU provides for:

- (a) sharing of information between the two parties, subject to the limitations imposed by the applicable laws;
- (b) sharing of resources available with each other to the extent feasible and legally permissible;
- (c) periodic meetings to discuss matters of mutual interest, including regulatory requirements that impact each party's responsibilities, enforcement cases, research and data analysis, information technology and data sharing, or any other matter that the parties believe would be of interest to each other in fulfilling their respective statutory obligations;
- (d) cross-training of staff in order to enhance each party's understanding of the other's mission for effective utilisation of collective resources;

4th CII-EXIM Bank Conclave on India-Africa Project Partnerships Concludes in New Delhi

The 14th CII-EXIM Bank Conclave on India-Africa Project Partnerships concluded in New Delhi . The three-day conclave was organised by the Ministry of Commerce in association with Confederation of Indian Industry and EXIM Bank of India.

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India's development cooperation ranges from power projects and dams in Sudan and Rwanda to water treatment plants in Tanzania, sugar factories in Ethiopia and IT Parks in Mozambique and Swaziland, building of the Presidential Place in Ghana and National Assembly building in the Gambia, besides other numerous projects.

Dr. AnupWadhawan informed that as part of India's outreach in Africa, Ministry of External Affairs, on 10th September 2018 signed an agreement with the Telecommunications Consultants India Limited (TCIL) to establish a pan- Africa e-Arogya Bharti Network Project to serve as a digital bridge between India and Africa shrinking the distance between India and Africa even more.

SBI to auction NPA assets worth Rs 6,169 cr in March

The State Bank of India will auction non-performing assets (NPAs) amounting to Rs 6,169 crore in the next 10 days to recover its dues from various defaulting business outfits.

The country's largest lender carries out auctions of financial assets of those defaulters who have not paid their dues. From March 22-30, the bank, which has already put out a list of the assets, will auction these to asset reconstruction companies (ARCs), banks, non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) and FIs.

Exim Bank extends \$800 mn credit to Maldives for developmental projects

The Export-Import Bank of India (Exim Bank) said it will provide USD 800 million (about ₹ 5,500 crore) credit to Maldives to finance developmental projects. Exim Bank has extended a Line of Credit (LoC) of USD 800 million to Maldives for financing developmental projects, Exim Bank said in a release.

An agreement for the LoC was signed between Maldives Finance Minister Ibrahim Ameer and Exim Bank Chief General Manager Sudatta Mandal. The LoC agreement was exchanged during the visit of External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj to Maldives.

SBI inks pact with Bank of China

The country's largest lender SBI has signed a pact with the Bank of China to boost business opportunities. SBI has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Bank of China (BoC), the third-largest bank in the world by capital size and

one of the major players in the Chinese banking sector, to enhance business synergies between both the banks, State Bank of India (SBI) said in a release.

Through this pact, both SBI and BoC will gain direct access to their respective markets of operation, it said. Both banks' clients will be able to use the vast combined network to expand their businesses abroad.

ADB to Invest \$50 Million in Avaada Energy for Expansion of Solar Projects in India

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has announced that it will invest \$50 million in Indian renewable energy independent power producer Avaada Energy Private Limited. Avaada aims to use the capital to expand its solar energy generation capacity in India.

The ADB and Avaada entered into an agreement which was signed by the chairman of the company Vineet Mittal and ADB's principal investment specialist Mayank Choudhary.

SBI raises Rs 1,251 crore by issuing Basel III-compliant bonds

The country's largest lender State Bank of India (SBI) has raised Rs 1,251.30 crore by issuing Basel III-compliant bonds. "The Committee of Directors for Capital Raising at its meeting held today on 22 March 2019 deliberated and accorded approval to allot 12,513 non-convertible, taxable, perpetual, subordinated, unsecured Basel III-compliant additional tier-I bonds, for inclusion in additional tier-I capital of the bank...aggregating to Rs 1,251.30 crore," SBI said in a regulatory filing.

The bonds with a face value of Rs 10 lakh each bears a coupon rate of 9.45 per cent per annum payable annually with call option after 5 years or any anniversary date thereafter.

Canara Bank issues bonds from London branch to raise up to USD 400 mn

State-owned Canara Bank has launched a bond issuance programme through its London branch to raise up to USD 400 million (about Rs 2,750 crore). The bonds are set to mature on March 28, 2024.

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Canara Bank said the bonds are priced at 5-year US Treasury plus 170 basis points carrying a coupon of 3.875 per cent fixed payable half yearly. The bonds will be listed on the Singapore Stock Exchange.

Karnataka Bank reports Rs 13.26 crore fraud to RBI

Private sector lender Karnataka Bank has reported a fraud amounting to Rs 13.26 crore in the fund-based working capital facility extended to SRS Finance.

“The bank has reported a fraud to RBI amounting to Rs 13.26 crore in the fund based working capital facility that was extended to SRS Finance

RBI's dollar-rupee swap to release Rs 35,000 cr liquidity

The RBI's latest step on the rupee-dollar swap mechanism will unleash Rs 35,000 crore liquidity in the system, while the credit situation is comfortable

Under the new swap arrangement, the RBI plans to buy dollars from banks instead of bonds, but will return these dollars at the end of three years for a forward premium. This premium would be determined through an auction on March 26 .

The RBI will buy \$5 billion from banks for its reserves by giving them rupees, and reverse the trade in 2022. This pre-emptive move would prevent the currency's appreciation, say a section of experts.

RBI appoints five-member committee to deepen digital payments

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das has said that the central bank of the country has appointed 5-member committee under the chairmanship of Nandan Nilekani to further deepen digital payments and enhance financial inclusion through Fintech. He said, the RBI has requested the committee to give recommendations in 3 months in this regard.

The objective of the conclave is to shape India's continued ascendancy in FinTech, build the narrative for future strategy and policy efforts, and to deliberate steps for comprehensive financial inclusion.

RBI slaps Rs 2 crore penalty on PNB

The Reserve Bank of India has slapped a penalty of Rs 2 crore on Punjab National Bank for non-compliance of regulatory directions with regard to SWIFT operations.

SWIFT is a global messaging software used for sharing information on inter-bank transactions by financial entities.

Axis Bank opens 4,000th branch

Private sector lender Axis Bank opened its 4,000th branch at EON, Kharadi, in Pune. The new branch was inaugurated by Amitabh Chaudhry, Managing Director and CEO, Axis Bank, and Ravi Narayanan, President and Head Branch Banking, Axis Bank.

“The initiative is in line with the government’s vision of providing banking services within 5 km for every Indian citizen. The bank has added 297 branches in the current fiscal across India,” the lender said in a statement.

Govt decides to infuse around Rs 5000 Cr into Bank Of Baroda

The government has decided to infuse around five thousand crore rupees into state-owned Bank of Baroda ahead of merger of two other public sector lenders Dena Bank and Vijaya Bank with Bank of Baroda. The merger of Dena Bank and Vijaya Bank with Bank of Baroda would be effective from 1st April.

The Bank of Baroda, in a regulatory filing, said that the finance ministry through its notification conveyed its decision to infuse capital of 5,042 crore rupees in the bank.

BoB set to develop digital agri platform for farmers

Bank of Baroda has signed a memorandum of understanding with agriculture services companies to develop an agriculture digital platform, Baroda Kisan, which will provide solutions for agricultural requirements.

The initiative is being executed by ITCoE of Bank of Baroda, in partnership with IBM India. The platform intends to make a holistic approach towards solving agricultural plights by means of providing reliable and customised information,

inputs for use, convenience of renting farm equipment, and market linkage for sale of agriculture produce.

India Inc's foreign borrowings fall 9% to \$2.81 bn in February; Oil India emerges as top borrower

India Inc's borrowings from foreign markets fell to USD 2.81 billion in February, down by 9 per cent as compared to the year-ago month, data from the Reserve Bank of India showed .

The domestic firms had raised as much as \$3.1 billion through the external commercial borrowing (ECB) route in the corresponding month of 2018. No firms tapped the rupee-denominated bonds route to borrow capital from foreign markets during February.

Among the major borrowers were Oil India Ltd (USD 550 million for overseas investment), Indian Oil Corporation (USD 400 million as working capital loan), Shriram Transport Finance Company (USD 400 million for sub-lending) and Mahindra & Mahindra Financial Services (USD 300 million for sub-lending).

RBI clears Rs19,240 crore CCL for Punjab for Rabi marketing season

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) cleared Rs 19,240.91 crore towards Cash Credit Limit (CCL) for Punjab for the purchase of wheat in the Rabi marketing season. With this, the bulk of the CCL sought by the state government for the purchase of 130 lakh tonne of wheat for this season has been released by the central bank.

The release of the CCL would facilitate the state government in making timely payments to farmers against purchases of food grains in the current season, which would begin from April 1 and culminate on May 25, it said.

India's forex reserves rise for 3rd week in a row, now at \$407 billion: RBI

India's foreign exchange (forex) reserves continued to surge for a third week, **adding \$1.029 billion to \$406.667 billion in the week to 22 March**, according to data from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). Forex reserves had increased by **\$3.6 billion to \$405.6 billion** in the previous reporting week driven by an increase in foreign currency assets.

Gold reserves were unchanged at \$23.408 billion in the reporting week, according to data from the central bank. The special drawing rights with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) dipped by \$0.7 million to \$1.460 billion.

Sebi exempts govt from PNB open offer to bring its stake below 75%

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has exempted the government from making an open offer for the shareholders of **Punjab National Bank (PNB)** but directed reduction in non-public shareholding in the lender post capital infusion.

After capital infusion in lieu of preferential allotment of over 80.2 crore shares, the government's stake in the bank would rise **by 5.19% to 75.41%**.

RBI raises FPI investment limit in G-Secs

The Reserve Bank of India upped the investment limit for FY2019-20 for foreign portfolio investors (FPI) in **Central government securities (G-Secs) to 6 per cent** of outstanding stock of securities from 5.5 per cent in FY2018-19.

The limit for FPI investment in **State development loans (SDLs) and corporate bonds** has been left unchanged at **2 per cent and 9 per cent of outstanding stocks**.

As against the current limit of ₹6,49,900 crore, the revised limit for FPI investment in debt for FY2020 has been set at ₹6,98,300 crore for the first half, and ₹7,46,500 crore for the second half of the financial year.

Govt leaves interest rate on small-saving schemes unchanged

The Finance Ministry has decided to keep **the interest rate unchanged on small savings schemes for the three-month period beginning April 1**.

The announcement covers small-saving schemes such as the Post Office Saving Accounts, Post Office Time Deposits, the National Saving Certificates (NSC), the Public Provident Fund (PPF), the Kisan Vikas Patra (KVP) and Sukanya Samriddhi.

The unchanged interest rate means the NSC (5 years) and the PPF (15 years) will fetch **8 per cent interest**, while money deposited in KVP will double in little over nine years. At the same time, if one is parking money in a fixed deposit with a maturity of five years with the State Bank of India, he/she will get 6.85 per cent. **Senior citizens will get half a per cent more: 7.35 per cent.**

India's April-February fiscal deficit at 134% of FY target: Govt data

The country's fiscal deficit touched 134.2 per cent of the full-year revised budgeted estimate at the end of February 2019, mainly due to tepid growth in revenue collections.

In absolute terms, the fiscal deficit for April-February 2018-19 was Rs 8.51 lakh crore as against the revised estimate (RE) of Rs 6.34 trillion for the entire year, according to Controller General of Accounts (CGA) data.

RBI sets NBFC-MFIs' average base rate at 9.21% for Apr-Jun

The Reserve Bank set the average base rate to be charged from borrowers by non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) and micro-finance institutions (MFIs) at 9.21 per cent for the first quarter of the next fiscal.

The applicable average base rate to be charged by Non-Banking Financial Company Micro Finance Institutions (NBFC-MFIs) to their borrowers for the quarter beginning April 01, 2019 will be 9.21 per cent, the RBI said in a notification.

BNP Paribas Cardif sells 5 crore shares in SBI Life Insurance for Rs 2,889 crore

BNP Paribas Cardif sold 5 crore shares of SBI Life Insurance through a block deal for Rs 2,889 crore, which saw shares skidding over 6 per cent on the local bourses. SBI Life Insurance is a joint venture life insurance company between State Bank of India, the country's largest bank, and French multinational bank BNP Paribas Cardif.

BNP Paribas sold its stake in the company through the open market at average price of Rs 577.93 per equity share.

Infosys arm to buy 75% stake in Dutch bank subsidiary

Global software major Infosys said its consulting arm would buy 75 per cent equity stake in Starter N.V., a subsidiary of the Dutch-based ABN AMRO Bank for Rs 999 crore (\$144 million) in cash for strategic partnership in The Netherlands.

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The Amsterdam headquartered third largest Dutch bank ABN will hold the remaining 25 per cent of the shareholding in Stater.

Vijaya Bank, Dena Bank to merge with Bank of Baroda

In a first three-way amalgamation, Vijaya Bank and Dena Bank will merge with Bank of Baroda from tomorrow to create the third-largest lender of the country.

The Reserve Bank of India had said in a statement that customers including depositors of Vijaya Bank and Dena Bank will be treated as customers of Bank of Baroda with effect from 1st April this year.

PNB Sells 13.01% Stake In Housing Finance Arm for Rs1851.60 crore

State-owned lender Punjab National Bank (PNB) had sold stake in its housing finance arm, PNB Housing Finance (PNBHF) to General Atlantic Group and Varde Partners for Rs 1,851 crore at Rs 850 per share. Both VardePartners and General Atlantic Group will buy 1.089 crore shares each at Rs 850 per share in the housing finance company from Punjab National Bank.

After the transaction, Punjab National Bank will continue to hold a strategic stake of 19.78% in the housing finance company and will remain the promoter and strategic shareholder of the company, the lender informed the stock exchanges.

INDIAN AFFAIRS

AYUSH Minister lays foundation stone for National Institute of Unani Medicine

AYUSH Minister Shripad Yesso Naik laid the foundation stone for National Institute of Unani Medicine at Ghaziabad in Uttar Pradesh.

Addressing the ceremony, Mr Naik informed that his Ministry is establishing the Institute in Ghaziabad as a part of its commitment towards provision and promotion of quality education, research and healthcare services through Unani Medicine and other AYUSH systems. this institute would be developed with an approximate cost of 300 crore rupees on 10 acres of land. It would be one of the largest institutes of Unani Medicine in Northern India.

Cabinet approves National Policy on Software Products – 2019

Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the National Policy on Software Products – 2019 to develop India as a Software Product Nation.

The Software product ecosystem is characterized by innovations, Intellectual Property (IP) creation and large value addition increase in productivity, which has the potential to significantly boost revenues and exports in the sector, create substantive employment and entrepreneurial opportunities in emerging technologies and leverage opportunities available under the Digital India Programme, thus, leading to a boost in inclusive and sustainable growth.

Initially, an outlay of Rs.1500 Crore is involved to implement the programmes/schemes envisaged under this policy over the period of 7 years. Rs1500 Crore is divided into Software Product Development Fund (SPDF) and Research & Innovation fund.

Cabinet approves Kanpur Metro Rail Project

The Union Cabinet meeting, chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved Kanpur Metro Rail Project having two corridors, which will connect major public nodes and city cluster areas of Kanpur. Implementation of Metro Rail System will result in less vehicular traffic and better movement on the roads leading to reduction in congestion, travel time, cost of journey and pollution.

India's GDP growth slows down to 6.6% in December quarter, fails to meet expectations

India's GDP growth has slowed down to 6.6 per cent in the December quarter, as per the latest government data. The growth rate is below expectations. A Reuters poll had anticipated a GDP growth of 6.9 per cent.

India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth was revised down to 7 per cent from 7.1 per cent in the second quarter ended September 30, 2018, according to data released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation. The growth in GDP during 2018-19 is estimated at 7 per cent as compared to the growth rate of 7.2 per cent in 2017-18, the Ministry of Statistics said. Last month, the Central Statistics Office (CSO) has projected Indian economy to grow at 7.2 per cent for this fiscal under its first advance estimates.

Indian economy expected to grow at 7.3% in 2019-20: Moody's

Indian economy is expected to grow at 7.3 per cent in calendar years 2019 and 2020, the US-based rating agency Moody's said .

The agency said the country is less exposed to a slowdown in global manufacturing trade growth than other major Asian economies and emerging markets and is poised to grow at a relatively stable pace in the two years.

Moody's said the announcement in Interim Budget 2019-20 on direct cash transfer programme for farmers and the middle-class tax relief measures will contribute a fiscal stimulus of about 0.45 per cent of GDP.

GST collection in February stands at Rs 97,247 cr

The GST collection in the month of February stood at 97 thousand 247 crore rupees. However, the collection in previous month was over one lakh crore rupees. the total number of GSTR 3B returns filed for the month of January up to 28th February is over 73 lakh.

Arun Jaitley releases book titled 'Mann Ki Baat – A Social Revolution on Radio'

A book titled, 'Mann Ki Baat – A Social Revolution on Radio' was released by Finance Minister Arun Jaitley in New Delhi . The book is a compendium encompassing 50 editions of the 'Mann Ki Baat' programme by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on All India Radio.

Government to celebrate 'Poshan Pakhwada' from 8th to 22nd March 2019 across the Country: Smt Maneka Sanjay Gandhi

The Minister for Women and Child Development, Smt. Maneka Sanjay Gandhi announced that the Government will celebrate the first anniversary of POSHAN Abhiyaan on 8th March, 2019 by organising Poshan Pakhwada across the Country. Poshan Pakhwada will be celebrated as part of Jan Andolan under POSHAN Abhiyaan from 08th to 22nd March, 2019.

Shri Ajay Narayan Jha joins as Member Finance Commission

Shri Ajay Narayan Jha joined the Fifteenth Finance Commission as its Member. He joins in place of Shri Shaktikanta Das who had resigned as a Member of the Commission after being appointed as Governor, Reserve Bank of India.

Prior to joining the Commission, Shri Jha, a 1982 batch IAS officer of Manipur cadre, was the Finance Secretary to the Government of India. Earlier he had also served as Secretary to the Fourteenth Finance Commission which was headed by former RBI Governor, Shri Y.V. Reddy.

PM addresses Construction Technology India Event

The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi addressed the Construction Technology India Event, 2019 event at Vigyan Bhavan . The Prime Minister emphasized the commitment of the Union Government towards ensuring that every family's dream of a home, becomes a reality.

The Prime Minister said that the need for the Global Housing Technology Challenge, was felt in the light of rapid urbanization in India. He said that elements from several schemes, including PM Awas Yojana, HRIDAY and AMRUT, are oriented towards transforming the housing sector. He said that adapting technology to different geographical conditions is also a challenge.

Rs 9,000 cr gas-grid project for NE approved: Pradhan

Union petroleum and natural gas minister Dharmendra Pradhan said in Agartala that a Rs 9,000 crore gas-grid project has been approved to transport natural gas among northeastern states and West Bengal.

“There is huge amount of natural gas available in Assam, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh and other northeast states is being tapped into for the Rs 9,265 crore North East Gas Grid (NEGG). The government has okayed this project to transport gas among the northeastern states as well as West Bengal via Siliguri,” Pradhan said while inaugurating the Rs 215 crore Sonamura Gas Collecting station of ONGC here.

PM Modi announces 'April 2019-March 2020' as Construction-Technology year

Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared 'April 2019-March 2020' as Construction-Technology year and stressed on use of advanced technology to meet the increasing demand of housing in the country caused by rapid urbanisation.

He also sought the support of private sector in fulfilling the government's mission of providing brick house to every Indian by 2022.

Aadhaar can be used voluntarily as ID proof, President signs ordinance

President Ram Nath Kovind has given his assent to an ordinance that allows voluntary use of Aadhaar as ID proof for obtaining mobile SIM cards and opening bank accounts.

Shri Rajnath Singh to inaugurate BOLD-QIT project along international border in Dhubri, Assam

The Union Home Minister Shri Rajnath Singh will inaugurate the project BOLD-QIT (Border Electronically Dominated QRT Interception Technique) under CIBMS (Comprehensive Integrated Border Management system) on India-Bangladesh border in Dhubri District of Assam tomorrow.

BOLD-QIT is the project to install technical systems under the Comprehensive Integrated Border Management System (CIBMS), which enables BSF to equip Indo-Bangla borders with different kind of sensors in unfenced riverine area of Brahmaputra and its tributaries.

IIT-Delhi develops India's first Braille laptop for visually impaired

The researchers of the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi have created India's first Braille laptop for the visually-impaired. The laptop is named DotBook, and it has a feature-packed, affordable Braille display. The laptop comprises 10-cell refreshable Braille Cell modules.

The DotBook is expected to create a positive impact for the visually impaired community as independent digital access has become a vital part of day-to-day living.

India Design Week to launch its first edition of Spring Summer

India Design Week is coming up with its first edition of Spring Summer season in April 2019. The design week aims at giving the platform to artisans of art and craft, handloom sector which is on the verge of extinction and also to promote young talent in the field of Textile, Knitwear and Lifestyle along with fashion which is again an untouched segment of the fashion industry.

BHEL installs first solar EV charging station on Delhi-Chandigarh Highway

Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) announced that the company has set up its first solar-based electric vehicle charger on the Delhi-Chandigarh Highway.

The first in a series of charging stations was inaugurated at Ethnic India Resort in Sonapat district by A.R. Sihag, Secretary at the Department of Heavy Industry, in the presence of BHEL Chairman and Managing Director Atul Sobti and senior officials of Haryana Tourism.

India tops Global Consumer Confidence Survey

This was revealed in the latest Conference Board Global Consumer Confidence Survey, which is conducted in collaboration with Nielsen. The survey which was conducted over the internet, polls more than 32,000 consumers in 64 countries across Asia-Pacific, Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, Africa and North America.

India had a Consumer Confidence Index (CCI) score of 133 in the fourth quarter of 2018 edging past the Philippines (131) and Indonesia (127). India maintain its number one position from the third quarter when it scored 130 on the index whereas Philippines and Indonesia were joint fourth in Q3 of 2018 with an identical score of 126.

PM Modi launches Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-dhan (PM-SYM) Yojana

The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi launched the Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-dhan (PM-SYM) Yojana at Vastral in Gujarat. He also distributed the PM-SYM pension cards to select beneficiaries. Over two crore workers at three lakh Common Service Centers across the country witnessed the launch event through video conference.

The Prime Minister dedicated PM-SYM Yojana to the forty two crore strong unorganized sector workers in the country. the scheme will assure a monthly pension of Rs.3000 for the enrolled unorganized sector workers during their old age.

PM lays Foundation Stone of Shikshan Bhavan and Vidhyarthi Bhavan

The Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of Shikshan Bhavan and Vidhyarthi Bhavan at Annapurna Dham Trust in Adalaj, Gujarat.

Prime Minister said that India had the rich tradition of communities taking lead, to solve the challenges faced by an era. He mentioned about communities coming together to improve education and irrigation. Such community efforts have greatly benefitted people, PM added.

Reliance Infrastructure Limited wins bid for greenfield airport in Rajkot for Rs 648 crore

Anil Ambani-led Reliance Infrastructure Limited has received the Letter of Award (LOA) from the Airports Authority of India (AAI) of a contract worth Rs. 648 crores for the construction of new greenfield Airport at Hirasar in Rajkot district of Gujarat.

Reliance Infrastructure had scored the highest technical score of 92.2% among nine qualified bidders like Afcons and L&T. The airport is to be completed within 30 months from the date of issue of letter of award (LoA).

Azaadi Ke Diwane' museum inaugurated at Red Fort

Union Minister Mahesh Sharma inaugurated 'Azaadi Ke Diwane' museum, dedicated to the unsung heroes of the country's freedom struggle, on the Red Fort premises here and said it would inspire the younger generation.

Built by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), the museum is the fifth in a series of recently inaugurated ones — the others being the Subhash Chandra Bose and INA museum, the Yaad-e-Jallian museum, the Museum on 1857 (on the country's first war of Independence) the Drishyakala (a museum on Indian Art) — on the sacrifices of India's freedom fighters.

India Nominates NITI Aayog Member Ramesh Chand for Post of UN's FAO Director General

India has nominated NITI Aayog member and agricultural economics and policy expert Ramesh Chand to lead a specialised agency of the United Nations focussed on achieving food security for all. The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), in a statement said that five candidates have been presented by FAO member countries for the post of Director-General to be elected in June 2019.

Delhi Most Polluted Capital in World, Gurugram Worst City, Reveals Greenpeace Report

Delhi has been ranked the most polluted capital in the world, while Gurugram is the most polluted city, according to a Greenpeace report. According to the latest data compiled in the IQ Air Visual 2018 World Air Quality Report and interactive world's most polluted cities ranking, which is prepared in collaboration with Greenpeace Southeast Asia in order to reveal the state of particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) pollution in 2018, Delhi had an average yearly PM_{2.5} concentration at 113.5 micrograms per cubic metre.

India to get first jewellery park set on 21 acres at Navi Mumbai

A year after signing a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Maharashtra government, the gems and jewellery sector is set to get India's first jewellery park in Navi Mumbai.

Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Suresh Prabhu is scheduled to lay the foundation stone of the park, which would be developed on co-operative housing model basis, accommodating about 4,800 large and small units encompassing the entire jewellery value chain.

7th March 2019 to be celebrated as 'Janaushadhi Diwas' across India

"With the initiative of Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi in the direction of making quality healthcare affordable for all, the Government has taken important steps to make affordable and quality generic medicines popular among the people through Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP).

The Minister informed that for providing further impetus & creating awareness about use of generic medicines, it has been decided to celebrate 7th March 2019 as 'Janaushadhi Diwas' across India.

NABL launches Quality Assurance Scheme for Basic Composite Medical Laboratories

For sensitizing small laboratories to basic doable quality practices, NABL has launched another voluntary scheme called Quality Assurance Scheme (QAS) for Basic Composite (BC) Medical Laboratories (Entry Level) in February, 2019. The laboratories performing only basic routine tests like blood glucose, blood counts, rapid tests for common infections, liver & kidney function tests and routine tests of urine will be eligible to apply under this scheme.

Shri Nitin Gadkari Lays Foundation Stone for Development and Maintenance of Inter-Modal Station in Nagpur

Union Minister for Road Transport & Highways, Shipping and Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation Shri Nitin Gadkari laid the foundation stone for development and maintenance of Inter-Modal Station IMS at Ajni Railway Station in Nagpur .

IMS is a passenger terminal infrastructure which integrates various transportation modes like rail, road, mass rapid transit system (MRTS), bus rapid transit (BRT) and other para-modal transportation modes. Inter-modal stations allow passengers to change transportation modes during transit without leaving the station premises.

The station has been designed for horizon year 2050 with the capacity to handle 3.24 lakh passengers every day.

PM Modi launches several development projects in Karnataka

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is on a day long visit to Karnataka and Tamil Nadu to launch various development projects. In Karnataka, Mr. Modi dedicated the ESIC Hospital and Medical College, Bengaluru to the nation.

The Super Specialty Block of KIMS, Hubballi was also inaugurated by the Prime Minister. Prime Minister Modi also interacted with the beneficiaries of Ayushman Bharat at Kalaburagi. Ladies hostel for north east regional students

was also dedicated to the nation by Prime Minister digitally . He also laid the foundation stone for Bharat Petroleum Depot in Kalaburugi.

‘Simplicity & Wisdom’ authored by Dinesh Shahra launched

Famous Industrialist and Philanthropist Dinesh Shahra’s book, ‘Simplicity & Wisdom’ was launched in Indore . The book is dedicated to Late eminent Vedanti Swami Pragananandji.

‘150 years of Mahatma Gandhi’ theme for India Pavilion at Venice Biennale

Extending Mahatma Gandhi’s 150th birth anniversary celebrations to foreign shores, the India pavilion at the upcoming Venice Biennale has been themed ‘150 years of Mahatma Gandhi’.The pavilion has been commissioned by the National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA) and will be curated by the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art (KNMA).

This will be the second pavilion from India at the Biennale, after 2011.

India’s participation in one of the world’s most important art events is facilitated by the Ministry of Culture and the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).

Air India crew asked to say Jai Hind after every in-flight announcement

National carrier Air India’s crew is going to say “Jai Hind” after every flight announcement “with much fervor” from now, its official advisory said .Amitabh Singh, Director Operations, Air India stated in the advisory issued by him that all crew of Air India are required to announce Jai Hind at the end of every announcement.

The official announcement has been marked to all crew members of Air India. A similar advisory has been issued by the cash-strapped carrier’s Chairman and Managing Director, Ashwani Lohani to pilots during his first stint at the airline in May 2016.

NITTTRC Bhopal, Shri Vishwakarma Skill University sign MoU to strengthen skill development facilities

National Institute of Technical Teacher’s Training and Research(NITTTRC), Bhopal and Shri Vishwakarma Skill University Gurugram today signed an

memorandum of understanding(MoU) to further strengthen the skill development facilities provided to the youth.

Amendment in Hazardous Waste (Management& Transboundary Movement) Rules, 2016

In order to strengthen the implementation of environmentally sound management of hazardous waste in the country, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has amended the Hazardous and Other Wastes (Management & Transboundary Movement) Rules, 2016 .

The amendment has been done keeping into consideration the “Ease of Doing Business” and boosting “Make in India” initiative by simplifying the procedures under the Rules.

Some of the salient features of the Hazardous and Other Wastes (Management& Transboundary Movement) Amendment Rules, 2019 are as follows:

- Solid plastic waste has been prohibited from import into the country including in Special Economic Zones (SEZ) and by Export Oriented Units (EOU).
- Exporters of silk waste have now been given exemption from requiring permission from the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
- Electrical and electronic assemblies and components manufactured in and exported from India, if found defective can now be imported back into the country, within a year of export, without obtaining permission from the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
- Industries which do not require consent under Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act 1974 and Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act 1981, are now exempted from requiring authorization also under the Hazardous and Other Wastes (Management & Transboundary Movement) Rules, 2016.

PM releases new series of visually impaired friendly coins

The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi released the new series of visually impaired friendly circulation coins, in New Delhi. Rs.1, Rs.2, Rs.5, Rs.10 and Rs.20 are the various denominations of coins released as part of the new series.

The new circulation coins with various differentiating features, will greatly aid the visually impaired. The new series of coins will facilitate the visually impaired, and will instil them with confidence.

The coins are characterized by the increasing size and weight from lower to higher denominations. The newly included coin of Rs.20, will be a 12 sided coin with no serrations. The rest of the denominations would be of round shape.

Cabinet approves Continuation of Atal Innovation Mission

The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved Continuation of Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), and for incurring expenditure up to Rs. 1000 crore till 2019-20 by Atal Innovation Mission for expanding Atal Tinkering Labs to 10,000 schools in view of their huge success at school level.

Details:

- AIM has multiple programs to encourage and support innovation in the country.
- State of the art Atal Tinkering Labs (ATLs) are being established in thousands of schools, world class Atal Incubation Centres (AIC) and Atal Community Innovation Centers (ACIC) are being established for universities and industry,
- Promotion of product development in areas of national relevance and social importance is being supported through Atal New India Challenges (ANICs).

Financial implications:

- Each ATL receives a grant in aid of Rs. 12 lakhs in the first year, and upto 2 lakhs per year for subsequent 4 years, for maintenance of the ATL equipment and operational expenses.
- Each selected AIC would be receiving grant in aid upto Rs 10 crore over 3-5 years in tranches per year, based on review and evidence of planned milestones reached.
- Innovators will receive commercialization and technology deployment grants upto Rs. 1 crore under the ANICs.

Cabinet approves Scheme to Rebate State and Central Embedded Taxes to Support the Textile Sector

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved the Scheme to Rebate State and Central Embedded Taxes to Support the Textile Sector. This will enable the Government to take various measures for making exports of apparel and made-ups zero rated.

Details:

At present, apparel and made-ups segments are supported under the Scheme for Rebate of State Levies (RoSL). However, certain State as well as Central Taxes continued to be present in the cost of exports. The Cabinet decision provides for a scheme to rebate all embedded State and Central Taxes/levies for apparel and made-ups which have a combined share of around 56% in India's textile export basket. Rebate of taxes/levies has been permitted through an IT-driven scrip system at notified rates.

Cabinet approves continuation of National AIDS Control Programme-IV (NACP-IV)

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs chaired by the Prime Minister has given its approval for continuation of National AIDS Control Programme-IV (NACP-IV) beyond 12th Five Year Plan for a period of three years from April, 2017 to March, 2020. The total outlay will be Rs.6434.76 crore.

Benefits:

- More than 99% of population will be kept HIV free.
- More than 70 lakh of key population covered annually through a comprehensive HIV prevention programme.
- Around 15 crore of vulnerable population (including five crore pregnant women) will be tested for HIV in three years of project.
- Two crore 32 lakh units of blood will be collected at NACO's supported blood banks during three year of project.
- Two crore 82 lakh episodes of sexually transmitted infections will be managed under project during three years of project.
- Seventeen lakh of PLHIV will be put on free anti-retroviral treatment by end of project period.

NGT imposes Rs 500 cr fine on Volkswagen for cheating emission tests

The National Green Tribunal slapped a fine of 500 Crore rupees on German auto major Volkswagen for damaging the environment using cheat device in its diesel cars in India. A bench headed by NGT chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel directed the carmaker to deposit the amount within two months.

CCEA approves investment approval for 1320 megawatt Khurja Super Thermal Power Plant in Bulandshahar

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The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, CCEA has approved the investment approval for a 1320 megawatt Khurja Super Thermal Power Plant (STPP) in Bulandshahar of Uttar Pradesh.

Eleven thousand eight nine crore rupees will be spent on the plant. Investment approval for 1320 Mega Watt Buxar thermal Power Project in District Buxar of Bihar was also approved.

The project will be completed at an estimated cost of ten thousand 439 crore rupees. The Buxar Thermal Power Project will improve the deficit power scenario in Bihar and Eastern Region. It will start yielding benefit from 2023-24.

The CCEA also approved Amelia Coal Mine in Singrauli, Madhya Pradesh. Cabinet has also approved Delhi Metro Phase -4 Project.

National Centre for Good Governance inks pact with Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs

A Memorandum of Understanding, MoU, was signed between the National Centre for Good Governance (NCGG) and the Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA) to ensure better utilisation of infrastructure facilities during training programmes.

IICA will support the good governance centre for utilization of infrastructure facilities during training programme of NCGG at Delhi, and for academic and intellectual interactions for five years.

The NCGG has been set up by the government of India under the aegis of DARPG. It aims to promote good governance through capacity building on public policy and governance both at national and international level and carrying out studies research on issues relating to governance.

10-day Entrepreneurship Development Programme concludes in Kargil

10-day Entrepreneurship Development Programme (EDP) for budding entrepreneurs under Jammu and Kashmir Rural Employment Generation Programme (JKREGP) concluded at the Language Center in Kargil .

The programme was organized by Jammu and Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI), District Centre Kargil in collaboration with J&K

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Khadi and Village Industries Board, Ministry of Micro, Medium and Small Enterprises (MSME), Government of India.

India's Unemployment Rate Rose to 7.2%

The unemployment rate in India was at 7.2 percent in February 2019, the highest since September 2016, according to data compiled by the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) . The rate was at 5.9 percent in February 2018. CMIE estimated the number of employed persons in India at 40 crores in February compared with 40.6 cr a year ago.

Chennai Central station to be renamed after MGR

Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that the Chennai Central railway station will be renamed after former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MG Ramachandran.

“MG Ramachandran worked extensively for the downtrodden. His social welfare schemes gave strength to the fight against poverty. We have decided to rename the Chennai Central station after the great MGR,” PM Modi said.

Cabinet approves setting up of 50 new Kendriya Vidyalayas

The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved the setting up of 50 new KendriyaVidyalayas under Civil/Defence Sector all over the country.

The Vidyalayas are proposed to be opened in the Civil/Defense Sector and once they are fully functional they will provide quality education to approximately 50,000 students once they become fully operational.

Consolidated list of 50 proposals recommended by the ‘Challenge Method’ Committee for opening of new Kendriya Vidyalayas.

Cabinet approves Kiru Hydro Electric (HE) Project (4 X 156 MW) in Jammu and Kashmir

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Hon’ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the investment sanction for construction of Kiru Hydro Electric(HE) Project (624 MW) by M/s Chenab Valley Power Projects Private Limited (M/s CVPPPL) in Jammu & Kashmir.

The project is located on River Chenab in Kishtwar district of Jammu & Kashmir.

Suresh Prabhu releases a Coffee Table Book: “Cruising New Heights- Flying For All” on achievements of Ministry of Civil Aviation

The Minister for Civil Aviation, Shri Suresh Prabhu released a Coffee Table Book- “Cruising New Heights- Flying For All” The Coffee Table Book is an attempt to capture achievements and the roadmap for sustaining and stimulating further growth and development in the aviation sector.

Income tax exemption for gratuity enhanced Up to Rs. 20 lakhs

Ministry of Finance has enhanced the income tax exemption for gratuity under section 10 (10) (iii) of the Income Tax Act, 1961 to Rs. 20 lakhs. Shri Santosh Kumar Gangwar, Minister of State for Labour and Employment has expressed hope that this would benefit those employees of PSUs and other employees not covered by Payment of Gratuity Act, 1972 .

Reference Annuals ‘Bharat 2019’ and ‘India 2019’ released by Shri Amit Khare

The popular Reference Annuals ‘Bharat 2019’ and ‘India 2019’ were released by Shri Amit Khare, Secretary, Ministry of I&B . These have been compiled by the New Media Wing and edited and published by Publications Division under the Ministry. This is the 63rd Edition of the prestigious publication.

Ministries of WCD & Skill Development sign MoU to improve women livelihood

Women and Child Development Ministry and Skill Development Ministry signed an MoU for improving women livelihood and empowering them through skill development. Women and Child Development Minister Maneka Gandhi said, the new initiative will help impart skills to the women which are relevant and will help them to find employment and generate income immediately.

President Kovind to give Nari Shakti awards on International Women’s Day

International Women’s Day is being observed today. Governments, NGOs and other organisations across the world observe the day on 8th of March every year to highlight the achievements of women.

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The theme for this year's women's day is **'Think Equal, Build Smart, Innovate for Change'**. The purpose of the theme is to achieve gender equality by putting innovation by women and girls, for women and girls, at the heart of efforts.

This year, 44 awardees have been selected for these Puraskar.

Hardeep S Puri launches e-Dharti App

Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Puri launched e-Dharti app where all the three modules- Conversion, Substitution and Mutation related to properties have been made online. The payment system in Land and Development Office, L&DO has also been completely digitized.

Work is also going on other three small modules namely Sale Permission, Mortgage Permission and Gift Permission will be completed soon. The public can now submit their applications online by visiting the L&DO website and are not required to visit this office for submission of them and for follow up of their applications.

Mr Puri also launched e-Dharti GeoPortal, through which the lessee of the property will be able to see the basic details of property along with map showing its location.

Jaitley releases book on PM's selected speeches

Finance Minister Arun Jaitley released a book "Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas", a compilation of selected speeches delivered by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Releasing the book on the occasion of International Women's Day, Jaitley said that the Prime Minister has an excellent knowledge of subjects and his speeches are a clear reflection of that knowledge.

Uttarakhand CM launches free milk scheme for anganwadi children

Uttarakhand Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat launched the Mukhyamantri Anchal Amrit Yojana. under which 2.5 lakh children at 20,000 Anganwadi kendras in the state will be given 100 ml milk twice a week for free. Flavoured, sweet, skimmed milk powder will be made available to the 20,000 Anganwadi kendras across the state under the Amrit Yojana, Rawat said.

West Bengal Government launches Yuvashree Arpan Scheme for the youth

West Bengal has launched Yuvashree Arpan Scheme 2019 to generate employment opportunities for youths. Under this new scheme, every youth interested in starting their own business will get financial assistance from the state govt. to setup an enterprise. Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) department is going to provide funding for this Yuva Shree Arpan Scheme.

CM Mamata Banerjee has announced Yuvashree Arpan Scheme for unemployed youths on 6 March 2019. Around 50,000 youths in the West Bengal state would be benefited from this self employment scheme. The main motto of this scheme to promote entrepreneurship.

Business Organisations Need To Pay Up To Rs. 20 For Using Aadhaar Services: UIDAI

Business organisations using Aadhaar services will now have to pay Rs. 20 for each customer verification and 50 paise for authentication of each transaction carried out by the entities, the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) said .

“Aadhaar authentication services shall be charged at the rate of Rs. 20 (including taxes) for each e-KYC transaction and Rs. 0.50 (including taxes) for each Yes and No authentication transaction from requesting entities,” a notification by the UIDAI said.

UP, Bihar fall behind in human development index as Rajasthan, UP improve

Uttar Pradesh and Bihar did poorly on the human development index (HDI), as smaller states Haryana and Himachal improved in the last 27 years . Industrial Gujarat and Maharashtra slipped in the HDI ranking between 1990 and 2017, while Haryana has improved the most, finds SBI Research in a report that is based on the data from Subnational HDI for the states.

Southern states continue to lead the pack on the crucial measure, where the country is ranked 130th globally, but are staring at a different trouble, the report noted.

IGIA declared as 'Best Airport' in 2018 ASQ Awards

The Indira Gandhi International (IGI) airport here has been adjudged as the best airport in the category of over 40 million passengers per annum (MPPA) in Asia Pacific by Airports Council International (ACI) in the Airport Service Quality Programme for 2018.

This award is a testimony of continued improvements in passenger-service that Delhi Airport has witnessed since DIAL took over its operations in 2006.

In 2011, the Airport had achieved the position of World No. 2, which it retained for three consecutive years till 2013. In 2014, it stepped up its position to World 1 rank in the 25-40 MPPA category and retained the rank in 2015.

O.P. Jindal varsity launches online course in 'Impact investment'

O.P. Jindal Global University has launched a 4-week long online course in 'impact investment', aiming to train people in how to invest in companies to generate measurable social and environmental gains and at the same time earn from it too.

The course was launched on FutureLearn (<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/impact-investing>) — Europe's leading online social learning platform — by the Jindal Centre for Social Innovation & Entrepreneurship (JSiE) of the university.

Lalit Kala Akademi's annual exhibit to take place in Mumbai

The 60th National Exhibition of Art, an annual event by the Lalit Kala Akademi, is all set to host works by artists selected in Tier 1 of the 60th National Academy Awards, which are expected to be announced by March 13.

As per Lalit Kala Akademi data, the awards, which will be given to 15 winners, received over 6,100 entries by 2,836 artists this year. The figures indicate a significant — almost double — jump from last year's 1,433 artists applying for the awards.

PM attends 50th Raising Day celebrations of CISF

The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, today, attended the 50th Raising Day celebrations of Central Industrial Security Forces (CISF), at Indirapuram in Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh.

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The Prime Minister reviewed the parade of the CISF personnel. He presented the service medals for distinguished and meritorious services. He laid wreath at the Martyr's Memorial and signed the visitor's book.

NCRB to celebrate its 34th Inception Day

National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) will celebrate its 34th Inception Day on March 11, 2019 .

Formed in 1986, NCRB is mandated to empower the Indian Police with Information Technology and is responsible for collecting, maintaining and analysing the crime data of the country. It facilitates Investigating Officers with updated IT tools and information in Investigation of Crimes.

Centre approves two corridors of Surat Metro project

The Centre has approved two corridors of the Surat Metro project to be executed at an estimated cost of around 12,000 crore rupees. The Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry said in a statement that the project will be implemented by the Gujarat Metro Rail Corporation and it will be completed in five years.

The length of the first corridor – Sarthana to Dream City line – will be 21.61 kilometers and the second – Bhesan to Saroli – will be 18.74 kilometres. The project will be financed mainly through equity from the Centre and state government on 50-50 basis.

PM lays foundation stone of Buxar and Khurja Thermal Power Plants

Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas & Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Shri Dharmendra Pradhan held a meeting with Minister of Energy, Industry and Mineral Resources of Saudi Arabia and Chairman of Saudi Aramco, H.E. Eng. Khalid A. Al-Falih in New Delhi .

Saudi Arabia is the second largest supplier of crude and LPG to India. In 2017-18, India's crude oil imports from Saudi Arabia were 36.8 MMT, accounting for 16.7% of our total imports.

Dipa Karmakar Gets a Barbie Modelled After Her, Complete With Bronze Medal

Dipa Karmakar, who became the first Indian female gymnast to win a bronze medal at the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, was recently honoured by Barbie for “breaking boundaries to inspire” the next generation girls.

Over the past years, Barbie, the fashion doll manufactured by the American toy company Mattel, has seen many avatars. The doll brand, which was launched in 1959, has transformed from featuring “pretty” dolls to Barbie being a surgeon, a news anchor, an astronaut and a president among other roles.

IIT-Kharagpur team creates app to detect fake currency notes

A team of IIT-Kharagpur students has developed the code for a smartphone app that can detect counterfeit currency. The team leader explained that the app verifies a note’s authenticity, uploaded by a user, using 25 features extracted from the front and rear side of it. In the case of fake note detection, the user is also notified of failure checkpoints.

34th edition of Aahar – the International Food and Hospitality Fair commences in New Delhi

The 34th edition of Aahar – the International Food and Hospitality Fair commenced in New Delhi . The five-day fair, organised by India Trade Promotion Organisation, ITPO, features wide range of food products, machinery, food and beverages equipment, hospitality and decor solutions, confectionery items from over 560 participants from India and foreign countries.

EC appoints three special observers for Jammu and Kashmir

The Election Commission (EC) has formed a three-member committee to assess the situation on the ground in Jammu and Kashmir before it takes a decision about holding the Assembly elections in the troubled state.

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sunil Arora said , the three members of the committee are two retired IAS officers Noor Mohammed and Vinod Zutshi and a retired IPS officer, A.S. Gill.

Airtel to transfer 32% stake in Bharti Infratel to Nettle

Bharti Airtel Ltd will transfer as much as 32% stake it owns in tower company Bharti Infratel Ltd to wholly owned unit Nettle Infrastructure Investments Ltd to explore opportunities to monetize the asset, the telecom operator said on Tuesday.

Airtel and Nettle own 50.33% and 3.18%, respectively, in Bharti Infratel now. After the transfer of stake, which is scheduled to be completed on or after 18 March, Airtel and Nettle will own 18.33% and 35.18%, respectively.

Digital media powered growth in India's M&E industry in 2018: Report

India's media and entertainment (M&E) sector grew 13.4% year-on-year to touch Rs1.67 trillion in 2018, powered by digital platforms that grew 42% to Rs16,900 crore during the period. The M&E sector in India is expected to cross Rs2.35 trillion (\$33.6 billion) by 2021, at a compounded annual growth rate of 11.6%, according to the report by lobby group Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (Ficci) and consulting firm EY.

National Company Law Appellate Tribunal reserves its order on petition by Reliance Communications

The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal has reserved its order on a petition by Reliance Communications which has approached the tribunal seeking the release of income tax refunds to clear dues of Ericsson.

Lenders of RCom opposed the plea, saying that it will lead to outgo of public money for settling payment of a private party. After hearing both the sides yesterday, the Tribunal bench headed by Chairperson S J Mukhopadhaya reserved the order in the case.

United States to set up six nuclear power plants in India

India and the United States have committed to strengthen bilateral security and civil nuclear cooperation, including the establishment of six US nuclear power plants in India. US reaffirmed its strong support of India's early membership in the Nuclear Suppliers Group. This commitment was made at the 9th round of the India-US Strategic Security Dialogue held in Washington DC yesterday.

RBI to infuse Rs 12,500 crore via OMOs

The Reserve Bank of India will infuse 12,500 crore rupees into the system through open market operations (OMOs). The purchase will happen through multi-security auction using the multiple price method. OMOs are money market tools to infuse or suck out liquidity from the system.

Industrial growth slows to 1.7% in January 2019

Industrial output growth stood at 1.7 per cent in January this year on account of slowdown in the manufacturing sector.

According to the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation data, factory output as measured in terms of the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) had grown by 7.5 per cent in January last year.

During April-January 2018-19, industrial output grew at 4.4 per cent as against 4.1 per cent in the same period previous fiscal.

Arecanut gets 'Sirsi supari' geographical indication tag

Arecanut (also known as supari or betel nut) is the latest entrant in the list of agricultural produce with a GI (geographical indication) tag. the Registrar of Geographical Indications, Government of India, accorded a GI tag, 'Sirsi Supari', to arecanut grown in Sirsi, Siddpaur and Yellapur taluks of Uttara Kannada district in Karnataka.

The Totagars' Cooperative Sale Society (TSS) Ltd, a Sirsi-based agri cooperative, is the registered proprietor of the GI 'Sirsi Supari'.

The World Intellectual Property Organisation defines GI as a sign used on products that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities or a reputation that are due to that origin.

India ranks 11th in gold holding'

India, which is the world's largest consumer of gold, has the 11th largest gold reserve, with the current holding pegged at 607 tonnes, as per the latest report by the World Gold Council (WGC).

India's overall position in terms of total gold holding would have been tenth had the list included only countries. Whereas, International Monetary Fund (IMF) is included and is third on the list with total gold reserves of 2,814 tonnes.

Infosys to open digital centre in Romania

Infosys would open a digital innovation centre at Bucharest in Romania to develop software for clients based on cloud, big data, artificial intelligence and machine learning.

“We will invest in training our current employees and new hires for competencies, including user experience, cloud, big data, digital offerings, core technology skills and computer science skills,” said the city-based company .

Skill varsity launches ‘Abhinandan’ reservation scheme

To honour Indian Air Force Wing Commander Abhinandan Vartham and celebrate his safe return from Pakistan, Shri Vishwakarm Skill University (SVSU), Haryana has launched a new reservation scheme for children and widows of soldiers killed in the line of duty and the gallantry award winners. The scheme will enable army kids to pursue skill and formal education.

Sanjana Singh Becomes The First Transgender To Get A Government Job In Madhya Pradesh

Sanjana Singh, a transgender woman, has been appointed the Personal Secretary (PS) to Krishna Gopal Tiwari, Director, Department of Social Justice and Disabled Welfare (DSJDW), Madhya Pradesh government.

First Workshop on India Energy Modelling Forum Held

The NITI Aayog and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) organized the first workshop on development of the India Energy Modelling Forum (IEMF), which has been envisaged as a pan-stakeholder platform for debating ideas, scenario-planning & discussing the India’s energy future.

The two-day workshop, being held with the support of the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL), was organized under the Sustainable Growth Pillar of the India-U.S. Strategic Energy Partnership.

Sourav Ganguly joins Delhi Capitals as Advisor

Former India captain Sourav Ganguly has been named the advisor of Delhi Capitals. Former India captain and Cricket Association of Bengal president

Sourav Ganguly said that he has taken up an advisory role with IPL franchise Delhi Capitals after consulting Committee of Administrators (CoA).

Rahul Bajaj to step down as chairman, non-executive director of Bajaj Finserv

Leading industrialist Rahul Bajaj will step down as the Chairman and Non-Executive Director of Bajaj Finserv from May 16 as part of succession planning, the diversified non-banking financial company said .

Hyderabad, Pune most liveable for expats: survey

Hyderabad and Pune continue to be the most liveable cities in India for expatriates, a Mercer survey found, even though their overall global ranking remains a lowly 143.

According to Mercer's 21st annual Quality of Living Rankings, released on Wednesday, the two cities are followed by Bengaluru (149), Mumbai (154) and New Delhi (162), whose rankings remained unchanged from last year. Mercer's survey provides assessment for more than 450 cities; this ranking is for 231 of these cities.

Vienna retained the top rank for the 10th year running, followed by Zurich at second spot. In joint third place are Auckland, Munich and Vancouver. Luxembourg was the safest city in the world. In 105th place, Chennai ranks as the Asia-Pacific region's safest city, while Karachi (226) is the least safe.

President of India inaugurates Festival of Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Gandhinagar

The President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, inaugurated the Festival of Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Gandhinagar, Gujarat . He also presented the 10th Biennial National Grassroots Innovation Awards.

The President said that an innovative idea in itself is not enough. It is important to ensure that a creative idea gets the support it needs for its maturing, diffusion and delivery on the ground.

National convention of 'War Decorated India' begins

The two-day national convention of War Decorated India began at the Manekshaw Auditorium in Chandimandir, the headquarters of the Western Command, near here, on Friday. Some living gallantry award winners and relatives of the deceased awardees attended the Convention.

Sonam Kapoor partners with LA tourism for campaign

Actress Sonam A. Kapoor and her husband, businessman Anand Ahuja have partnered with Los Angeles Tourism for a new campaign. The digital initiative highlights the city's vibrant arts, culture, culinary and hotel scenes. Los Angeles Tourism began investing in travel trade efforts in India back in 2016 and consumer marketing efforts began in 2017. In 2018, the city welcomed more than 130,000 visitors from India, a 5.1 percent year-over-year increase.

The destination aims to grow its share of visitors from India and will undertake continued trade and consumer marketing initiatives throughout 2019 to include thematic familiarization tours, and trainings.

Modi launches 'Main Bhi Chowkidar' campaign

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the 'Main Bhi Chowkidar' campaign, calling everyone who were fighting corruption, social evils and working hard for the progress of India, as watchmen.

"Your Chowkidar is standing firm and serving the nation. But, I am not alone. Everyone who is fighting corruption, dirt, social evils is a Chowkidar. Everyone working hard for the progress of India is a Chowkidar," Modi said

Wipro opens third industrial IoT centre in Kochi

IT major Wipro Ltd opened its centre of excellence for Industrial Internet of Things (IIoT) in Kochi in Kerala.

"The centre marks Wipro's commitment to developing innovative IIoT solutions that span across technologies for customers in the industrial manufacturing, automotive, healthcare and pharmaceuticals, consumer products and goods, and utility space," Bengaluru-based Wipro said .

Sushant Divgikar to star in pride anthem

Sushant Divgikar, who won Mr Gay India 2014, features in a single “Love is love”, a pride anthem by Swedish artiste Petter Wallenberg.

Wallenberg, founder of international LGBTQ organization Rainbow Riots, has been in Mumbai for over a year, collaborating with the country’s queer pioneers. The result is the upcoming music and activist project Rainbow Riots India, part of the movement behind one of the greatest victories for human rights of our time.

Kent RO receives the Best Domestic Water Purifier Award 2019

One of the leading brands in the water purifier industry, Kent RO Systems Pvt. Ltd. has been bestowed with the Best Domestic Water Purifier Award 2018-19 for its RO+UV+UF technology at the Water Digest Water Awards organized at The Lalit, New Delhi.

Water Digest Water Awards backed by the Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation and UNESCO, is a prestigious domestic water award with the vision to awaken the ‘Eco-Consciousness’, it is an eminent platform to appreciate the outstanding and exceptional accomplishment in the environment sector.

Tata, Reliance and Airtel emerge best Indian brands of 2019

Tata, Reliance and Airtel emerged as the top three Indian brands of 2019, according a report published by Interbrand, part of the Omnicom Media Group, an advertising and public relations conglomerate.

Tata continued to hold the top position in the best Indian Brands ranking as its brand value grew by 6%, mainly due to Tata Consultancy Services (TCS). Knocking its competitor Airtel off from the second spot, Reliance’s brand value grew by 12%, bolstered by the success of Jio.

The Interbrand’s annual ranking is based on three key components — financial performance, the brand’s role in influencing customer choice and strength, and the premium price that the brand commands. The combined value of the top 40 brands stood at ₹50.03 billion in 2018, a 5.2% growth over the previous year.

Nara Lokesh, Poonam Mahajan among Indians in Young Global Leaders list: WEF

Andhra Pradesh IT minister Nara Lokesh, BJP MP Poonam Mahajan and Xiaomi India head Manu Kumar Jain are among the Indians featuring in the list of Young Global Leaders, according to the World Economic Forum (WEF).

The list has 127 of the world's "most promising social activists, business leaders, public servants, artists and technologists under the age of 40".

Apart from Lokesh, Mahajan and Jain, Telangana government's Chief Innovation Officer Phanindra Sama, SaveLife Foundation's Piyush Tewari and Kaleidofin's co-Founder Sucharita Mukherjee are also in the list.

NGT fines Adani Group ₹5 cr for Udupi plant, cancels extension plan

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has imposed a Rs5-crore fine on the Adani Group over its power plant in Karnataka's Udupi. The NGT also cancelled the environmental clearance given to Adani Group to expand its power plant in the area. This comes after nearby residents complained about the ill-effects on public health and decreasing agricultural yield due to the plant.

1st J&K IAS topper Shah Faesal launches political party in Srinagar

Former IAS officer Shah Faesal, who became the first IAS topper from J&K in 2009, has launched a political party named 'Jammu and Kashmir Peoples' Movement' at a function in Srinagar. He resigned from the Indian Administrative Service in January to protest killings in Kashmir.

Mukesh Ambani tops list of world's richest sports team owners

In the recent 'World's Richest Sports Team Owners 2019' list released by Forbes magazine, the chairman and managing director of Reliance Industries Limited (RIL), Mukesh Ambani, made it to the top with a net worth of around \$50 billion.

The Indian Premier League (IPL) team Mumbai Indians was bought by Ambani for over \$100 million through RIL's 100 percent subsidiary IndiaWin Sports. The team had won the IPL crown in 2013, 2015 and 2017.

IRCTC introduces four Holi special trains from Delhi for various destinations

IRCTC has introduced four special trains considering the number of people travelling for Holi 2019. It's that time of the year again when people rush home to be with their families on the famous festival of colours. Understanding this, IRCTC has introduced four Holi special trains from Delhi for different parts of the country. These special trains will run only during the Holi time and the tickets can be booked from the official website of the Indian Railways.

Anil Ambani's RCom pays ₹4.62 billion to Ericsson

Swedish telecom equipment maker Ericsson has received rs 4.62 billion from Anil Ambani-led Reliance Communications Ltd (RCom).

Late last month, the Supreme Court had ordered RCom and two of its directors to pay Ericsson ₹4.5 billion within four weeks or face a three-month jail term for contempt of court.

RCom owes a total 5.71 billion to Ericsson, including a one-time settlement of 5.5 billion and interest payments of 210 million.

Steel Ministry organizes Vigilance Conclave

Ministry of Steel organized a two-day Vigilance Conclave in New Delhi . The Conclave was aimed at sensitizing the officials of Steel PSUs on the basic principles and procedures to be followed while taking important administrative and commercial decisions relating to various functions including procurements, contracts, personnel and finance.

In the 2-day conclave, basic issues concerning vigilance, adherence to rules and regulations relating to public procurements, transparency in tendering processes, e-procurement, GeM, GFR, e-auction, ethics in governance, complaint handling system and other matters of importance were deliberated upon.

IPRS, Google sign music licensing deal for India

Mumbai-based Indian Performing Right Society Limited (IPRS) that represents composers, lyricists and music publishers on Tuesday granted a license to Google to utilise the group members work in India across Google-owned YouTube and related services.

Priyanka Chopra features in powerful women list

Global icon Priyanka Chopra Jonas has joined international celebrities including Oprah Winfrey and Meryl Streep in USA Today's list of "50 most powerful women in entertainment".

Priyanka became a popular name in the West through her lead role of Alex Parrish in the American TV drama thriller series "Quantico". She made her Hollywood debut opposite Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson and Zac Efron in the action-comedy "Baywatch" in 2017.

India has some of the world's cheapest cities to live in: EIU

Some of India's biggest cities are among the cheapest in the world to live in, according to findings of the Worldwide Cost of Living Survey by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU).

Cities of Bengaluru—India's technology capital, the southern city of Chennai, and the country's capital city New Delhi ranked among the world's ten cheapest cities in a ranking released by the Economist Intelligence Unit in its bi-annual survey on March 19. EIU ranked 133 cities in 93 countries surveying 50,000 individuals.

Bangalore is Asia's cheapest city, being more than twice cheaper than the three most expensive cities, according to the rankings.

Amongst the most expensive cities in the world, Singapore and Hong Kong topped the rankings, along with Paris, followed by Zurich and Geneva. Singapore has continued to hold on to the ranking for five years now.

Karnad's 'Indian Story' gets him Windham-Campbell Prize in UK

Journalist and writer Raghu Karnad won the \$165,000 Windham-Campbell Prize in the non-fiction category for his debut book, *The Farthest Field: An Indian Story Of The Second World War*.

Karnad is the second Indian to receive the prestigious prize, since Jerry Pinto won it for his novel, *Em And The Big Hoom*, in 2016. Karnad is one of the eight winners chosen across four categories—fiction, non-fiction, drama and poetry—this year. American writer Rebecca Solnit is the other awardee in the non-fiction category for the diverse body of work she has produced over her career.

JGU launches report on higher education in India

The Jindal Global University (JGU) has launched a report on improving higher education quality in India.

In the report “Diversity and Inclusion: Towards Building a Diverse, Equitable and Global University”, the JGU highlighted its progress on 16 indicators including national origin, state origin, gender parity, age, religion and caste, education and professional background, disability, academic offerings and interdisciplinary, pedagogy, research and disciplinary diversity.

The other indicators are international collaborations and partnerships, governance and leadership, student financial inclusion, inclusive teaching and learning, gender identity and sexual orientation, and community outreach and engagement.

Designer Ritu Beri, First Indian to be Appointed as Cultural & Tourism Ambassador of Uzbekistan in India

Popular Indian fashion designer Ritu Beri has been appointed as the Cultural and Tourism Ambassador of Uzbekistan in India by the Ministry of Tourism of Uzbekistan. This is in recognition of her contribution towards bringing the two countries together by way of fusing cultures in her clothing line.

She is the first Indian to be appointed to this position.

SAIL launches smart garbage bins made of steel

Steel Authority of India Ltd (SAIL) has launched ‘smart garbage bins’ made of stainless steel. These smart garbage bins will be able to send a signal to the garbage collection vehicle about the ‘fill-up’ position of the bin, aiding better cleaning and lower human intervention.

The environment-friendly garbage bins will be made of SAIL SALEM stainless steel. These will be installed in underground Reinforced Cement Concrete (RCC) pits at the Smart Garbage Station. This will help prevent the spread of stink and diseases.

From Vivo to PhonePe, Aamir Khan to be the face of 3 brands

Bollywood heavyweight Aamir Khan will be the face of three brands this Indian Premier League (IPL) season. He will be seen selling the wares of Vivo, the title sponsor of the league, digital payments company PhonePe, and shoe brand Walkaroo.

Vivo appointed Khan as its brand ambassador in March 2018, while PhonePe made the announcement on 20 March 2019, days ahead of the launch of this year's IPL. PhonePe is also the lead on-air sponsor of the IPL, which airs on the Star India network and Hotstar.

Indian Statistical Institute presents report on VVPAT sample size to EC

Indian Statistical Institute presented its report on the sample size of Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail, VVPAT slip counting to the Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora.

In a statement, the commission said, in view of the varying demands for an enhanced percentage of VVPAT Slip count during elections in the country, it had engaged the Indian Statistical Institute to systematically analyse and scientifically examine the issue of VVPAT Slip verification with an electronic count of the Electronic Voting Machines.

India one of world's fastest-growing large economies: IMF

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has said India has been one of the fastest growing large economies in the world.

IMF asserted that the country has carried out several key reforms in the last five years and more reforms are needed going forward to sustain the high growth, including to harness the demographic dividend opportunity.

This was stated by IMF communications director Gerry Rice while responding to a question on India's economic development in the last five years at a fortnightly news conference yesterday night in Washington.

Fitch cuts India's GDP growth forecast for FY20 to 6.8%

Fitch Ratings cut India's economic growth forecast for the next financial year starting April 1, to 6.8 per cent from its previous estimate of 7 per cent, on weaker than expected momentum in the economy.

"While we have cut our growth forecasts for the next fiscal year (FY20, ending in March 2020) on weaker-than-expected momentum, we still see Indian GDP growth to hold up reasonably well, at 6.8 per cent, followed by 7.1 per cent in FY21," Fitch said in its Global Economic Outlook.

LKA announces 60th National Academy Award winners

The Lalit Kala Akademi (LKA) announced 15 winners of the 60th Annual Academy Awards .

All the awardees will be honoured with a plaque, a shawl and prize money of Rs 1 lakh at the 60th National Exhibition of Art, scheduled from March 25 to April 8 at the National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA) and Sir JJ School of Art. The winners will also display their artworks at the exhibition. This year, the Akademi received over 6,100 entries by 2,836 artists. The figures almost doubled from last year's 1,433 applicant artists.

The 60th National Exhibition of Art this year will exhibit artistic brilliance and provide a platform to give appreciation and recognition to outstanding artists on a nationwide scale, LKA said.

India cut 84% TB deaths in AIDS patients by 2017

India achieved 84 per cent reduction in tuberculosis deaths among people living with HIV by 2017 – three years ahead of the target, said a report by The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS).

The report showed that India is among the five low or middle-income countries Eritrea (83 per cent), Djibouti (78 per cent), Malawi (78 per cent) and Togo (75 per cent) ,that achieved or exceeded the target of a 75 per cent reduction in TB deaths among people living with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), by 2017, three years ahead of the 2020 target.

Asian Rich List 2019: Hinduja family tops with net worth of £25.2 billion

Leading London-based NRI industrial tycoons, the Hinduja family top the Asian Rich List 2019 for the sixth successive year with an estimated net worth of £25.2 billion, an increase of over £3 billion over the previous year. According to the Asian Rich List 2019 released at the Asian Business Awards, Steel magnates Lakshmi Mittal and his son Aditya Mittal remained in second place, with £11.2 billion — down £2.8 billion.

India's High Commissioner to the UK Ruchi Ghanashyam released the list which is a compilation of the 101 wealthiest Asians in Britain, highlighting exceptional entrepreneurial achievement over the last 12 months.

S P Lohia (Petrochemicals) took the third place with £5.8 billion.

NSEIT acquires cybersecurity company Aujas

NSEIT, the IT-services focused subsidiary of the National Stock Exchange has acquired Aujas Networks Ltd, a company which provides information security consulting and IT risk management services.

Founded in 2008, Aujas has operations in India, the Middle East and North America. It employs about 400 cybersecurity professionals and has over 390 customers globally. The service portfolio includes information risk advisory, identity & access management, threat management and security analytics.

Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport 12th busiest in the world

The nation capital's Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) has now become the world's 12th busiest airport, moving up four places from the 16th spot in 2017. According to the preliminary world airport traffic rankings for 2018 released by the Airports Council International (ACI), it overtook mega-hubs like Frankfurt, Dallas Fort Worth, Guangzhou and Istanbul Ataturk airports. The four airports above the IGI Airport are Amsterdam Schiphol, Paris-Charles de Gaulle, Shanghai Pudong and Hong Kong, managing over 46 lakh passengers more than IGIA.

“India became the world's third-largest aviation market in terms of passenger throughput, behind the US and China, in 2018.

The ACI's World Airport Traffic Forecasts also predicts the country will represent

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the third largest aviation market in terms of passenger throughput after the US and China by 2020.

Filmfare Awards 2019: Complete winners list

The 64th Filmfare Awards were held in Mumbai with Alia Bhatt, Ranbir Kapoor, Ranveer Singh, and Vicky Kaushal winning big at India's most famous awards show. Sara Ali Khan bagged the Best Debut Award for Kedarnath.

Here's a look at the list of winners:

Category	Winner
Best Film	Raazi
Critics' Award for Best Film	AndhaDhun
Best Actor in a Leading Role (Female)	Alia Bhatt for Raazi
Best Actor in a Leading Role (Male)	Ranbir Kapoor for Sanju
Critics' Award for Best Actor (Female)	Neena Gupta for Badhaai Ho
Critics' Award for Best Actor (Male)	Ranveer Singh, for Padmaavat
Best Debut Actor (Female)	Sara Ali Khan for Kedarnath
Best Debut Actor (Male)	Ishaan Khatter for Beyond The Clouds
Best Director	Meghna Gulzar for Raazi
Best Debut Director	Amar Kaushik for Stree
Best Actor in a Supporting Role (Female)	Surekha Sikri for Badhaai Ho

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Best Actor in A Supporting Role (Male)	Vicky Kaushal for Sanju and Gajraj Rao for Badhaai Ho
Best Original Story	Anubhav Sinha for Mulk
Best Dialogue	Akshat Ghildial for Badhaai Ho
Best Actor (Female) in a Short Film	Kirti Kulhari for Maya
Best Actor (Male) in a Short Film	Hussain Dalal, for Shameless
People's Choice Award for Best Short Film	Plus Minus
Best Short Film (Non Fiction)	The Soccer City
Best Short Film (Fiction)	Rogan Josh
Best Music Album	Padmaavat
Best Playback Singer (Female)	Shreya Ghoshal for Ghoomar, "Padmaavat"
Best Playback Singer (Male)	Arijit Singh for Ae Watan, Raazi
Best Lyrics	Gulzar for Ae Watan for Raazi
Best Lyrics	AndhaDhun
Best Editing	Pooja Ladha Surti for AndhaDhun
Best Cinematography	Pankaj Kumar for Tumbbad
Best Choreography	Kruti Mahesh Midya , Jyoti Tomaar for Ghoomar and Padmaavat

Best Sound Design	Kunal Sharma for Tumbbad
Best Production Design	Nitin Zihani Chaudhary and Rajesh Yadav for Tumbbad
Best Costume	Sheetal Sharma for Manto
Best Background Score	Daniel George for AndhaDhun

NITI Aayog to hold FinTech Conclave

The NITI Aayog will organise the FinTech Conclave 2019 on financial technologies in the national capital. The conclave, to be inaugurated by Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das, will be attended by senior government and RBI officials, as well as more than 300 representatives from the leading financial institutions.

“The Conclave will be featuring representatives from across the financial space – central ministries, regulators, bankers, startups, service providers and entrepreneurs.

“The conclave will host more than 300 representatives from the leading financial institutions, including HDFC Bank, IndusInd, ICICI Bank, SBI Card, Tata Capital and fintechs like BankBazaar, PhonePe, Capital Float, Zerodha, PayTM, MobiKwik and PayU.

Sale of ‘enemy shares’, buybacks of stocks by CPSEs yield Rs 11,300 crore to govt in FY’19

Sale of ‘enemy shares’ and buyback of stocks by CPSEs have together yielded the government over Rs 11,300 crore, thus helping the exchequer mop up Rs 85,000 crore from disinvestment in the current fiscal – the second highest receipt ever. The government has garnered Rs 700 crore through the first ever sale of ‘enemy shares’ after the Cabinet in November 2018 gave its go-ahead to the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) to sell such shares held in companies.

Navin Chawlas new book titled “Every Vote Counts” was launched by former Vice President of India, Hamid Ansari

Former Chief Election Commissioner of India Navin Chawla's book 'Every Vote Counts' was launched by former Vice President of India, Hamid Ansari in New Delhi. This book is about how the electoral machinery works in India.

The book explains about India is on the cusp of change, and with its parliamentary elections coming up.

India ranks 76th on WEF's global Energy Transition index; Sweden on top

India has moved up two places to rank 76th on a global energy transition index, which has ranked 115 economies on how well they are able to balance energy security and access with environmental sustainability and affordability.

Sweden remains on the top on this annual list compiled by Geneva-based World Economic Forum (WEF) and is followed by Switzerland and Norway in the top three, as per its latest report.

Naresh Goyal steps down from Jet Airways board, lenders to infuse Rs1,500 crore

Jet Airways founder Naresh Goyal and his wife Anita Goyal will step down from the board of the cash-strapped airline. In addition, Naresh Goyal will also cease to be the chairman of the airline, he set up with his wife in 1993. Jet Airways communicated this to the exchanges after its board held a meeting . Naresh Goyal owns a 51% stake in Jet Airways.

Jet Airways to get Rs 1,500 cr 'immediate support'

Jet Airways said that it will receive an “immediate funding support” of up to Rs 1,500 crore by lenders for operational requirements.

The financially-struggling airline also announced the constitution of an Interim Management Committee “at the instructions of the lenders to manage and monitor the daily operations and cashflow of the company”.

Government notifies Drugs and Clinical Trials Rules 2019

Health and Family Welfare Ministry have notified the Drugs and Clinical Trials Rules, 2019 with an aim to promote clinical research in the country. The new rules will change the regulatory landscape for the approval of new drugs and conduct of clinical trials in the country.

These rules will apply to all new drugs, investigational new drugs for human use, clinical trial, bioequivalence study and Ethics Committee. It has reduced the time for approving applications to 30 days for drugs manufactured in India and 90 days for those developed outside the country.

The rules stated that in case of no communication from Drugs Controller General of India, the application will be deemed to have been approved.

Navy's nuclear, biological, chemical training facility launched

Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Sunil Lanba inaugurated the Indian Navy's Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Training Facility (NBCTF) at INS Shivaji in Lonavala . The NBCTF, christened "Abhedya", impenetrable in Sanskrit, will help train personnel of naval ships fitted with nuclear, biological and chemical detection and protection systems.

Admiral Lanba launched the INS Shivaji's website on the Indian Navy portal. He also released the platinum jubilee logo, with the theme "Propelling the Indian Navy since 1945", for the premier technical training establishment.

IAF inducts first four heavy-lift Chinook helicopters

Indian Air Force (IAF) formally inducted the four heavy-lift Chinook helicopters. Air Chief Marshal BS Dhanoa announced the induction at a ceremony held at Air Force base in Chandigarh. Chinook helicopters will be deployed at Chandigarh's Air Force Station 12 Wing.

these helicopters are capable of vertical lift and heavy lifting in hilly areas. He said that vertical lift capability across a diversified terrain was required as India faces multiple security challenges.

The Chinook helicopter has fully integrated digital cockpit management system and is capable of transporting fully-equipped infantry soldiers for specialised operations.

India, China, US see 70% rise in energy demand: IEA

China, the US and India together accounted for nearly 70 per cent of the rise in energy demand, even as such demand worldwide grew by 2.3 per cent last year, at its fastest pace this decade, the International Energy Agency (IEA) said .

This exceptional rise in energy demand was driven by a robust global economy and stronger heating and cooling needs in some regions.

These findings are part of the IEA's latest assessment of global energy consumption and energy-related carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions for 2018.

Cabinet approves acquiring land of Central Water Commission at Nallagandla, Hyderabad by Telangana State Government

The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has given its approval for acquiring 372 sq. yards out of 10 acres of land including compound wall (about 200m) in the eastern side of Central Water Commission land by the Telangana State Government for improvement of Radial Road No.30 by widening of road with nil charges.

Cabinet approves five year's extension of Biomedical Research Career Programme

The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has approved the continuation of the Biomedical Research Career Programme (BRCP), and Wellcome Trust (WT) / DBT India Alliance beyond its initial 10-year term (2008-09 to 2018-29) to a new five year phase (2019-20 to 2023-24) with Department of Biotechnology (DBT) increasing its commitment to two times that of WT.

The total financial implication will be Rs. 1092 crore with DBT and WT contributing Rs.728 crore and Rs.364 crore respectively.

EC appoints special expenditure observers in six states

Election Commission has appointed Special Expenditure Observers for six States in view of the forthcoming elections. These states are Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Nagaland and Telangana.

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The poll body appointed former member of CBDT, Gopal Mukherjee as special expenditure observer for Andhra Pradesh and Telangana while former Director General I-T(Investigation), D D Goel has been deployed in Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland.

JCB Literature Prize announces 2019 jury, includes Arvind Subramanian

The JCB Prize for Literature, India's richest literary prize given out annually, announced the jury for its second edition. It includes former Chief Economic Adviser Arvind Subramanian.

The five-member 2019 jury comprises author and critic Anjum Hasan, authors K.R. Meera and Parvati Sharma and economist and former Chief Economic Adviser Arvind Subramanian. Filmmaker and environmentalist Pradip Krishen is the jury's Chair, JCB said.

The Rs 25-lakh prize, presented each year to a distinguished work of fiction by an Indian author selected by the jury, aims to create greater visibility for contemporary Indian writing.

Adani becomes first Indian port operator to record 200 MMT cargo movement

Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone (APSEZ) has recorded cargo movement of more than 200 million metric tonnes (MMT) at nine ports along the east and west coasts, becoming the first Indian port operator to achieve the milestone.

"Our projections were to reach this milestone by 2020 but we could achieve it ahead of schedule, courtesy the tech-driven operational efficiency and enhanced asset utilisation," said APSEZ Chief Executive Officer Karan Adani.

GI Certification for five varieties of Indian coffee

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India has recently awarded Geographical Indication (GI) to five varieties of Indian coffee. They are:

- **Coorg Arabica** coffee is grown specifically in the region of Kodagu district in Karnataka.

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- **Wayanaad Robusta** coffee is grown specifically in the region of Wayanad district which is situated on the eastern portion of Kerala.
- **Chikmagalur Arabica** coffee is grown specifically in the region of Chikmagalur district and it is situated in the Deccan plateau, belongs to the Malnad region of Karnataka.
- **Araku Valley Arabica coffee** can be described as coffee from the hilly tracks of Visakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh and Odisha region at an elevation of 900-1100 Mt MSL. The coffee produce of Araku, by the tribals, follows an organic approach in which they emphasise management practices involving substantial use of organic manures, green manuring and organic pest management practices.
- **Bababudangiris Arabica** coffee is grown specifically in the birthplace of coffee in India and the region is situated in the central portion of Chikmagalur district. Selectively hand-picked and processed by natural fermentation, the cup exhibits full body, acidity, mild flavour and striking aroma with a note of chocolate.

Reliance Jio buying Haptik for Rs 200 cr

Reliance Jio is reportedly acquiring Mumbai-based Haptik one of the world's largest conversational Artificial Intelligence (AI) platforms **for over Rs 200 crore**, the media reported.

Former Governor's Book Titled 'Indian Fiscal Federalism' Launched

The Chairman of 15th Finance Commission of India, N.K. Singh launched the book "**Indian Fiscal Federalism**". The book has been written by Dr. Y. V. Reddy, former Governor of RBI and Chairman of the 14th Finance Commission of India along with Dr. G. R. Reddy, Advisor (Finance) to the Government of Telangana.

Wipro and IIT Kharagpur partner for advanced research in 5G and AI

Wipro Limited, a leading global information technology, consulting and business process services company, and **Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur (IIT Kharagpur)**, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to collaborate on high-impact, industry-focused applied research in the areas of 5G and AI.

Research outcomes from this partnership will be leveraged by Wipro to develop solutions for its customers, across industry verticals. IIT Kharagpur will benefit from the commercialization of the joint research insights and Wipro's real-world industry expertise.

Manohar Ajgaonkar replaces Dhavlikar as Deputy CM of Goa

A day after Goa Tourism minister Manohar Ajgaonkar broke away from the Maharashtra Gomantak Party (MGP) and joined the BJP, he was on Thursday designated as the Deputy Chief Minister of the state.

Mr Ajgaonkar is now the second deputy chief minister along with Goa Forward Party (GFP) leader and state minister **Vijai Sardesai**.

L&T announces new strategic initiative to focus on AI, cybersecurity

Infrastructure giant Larsen & Toubro (L&T) announced a new initiative, **L&T-Nxt**, to focus on new-age technologies such as artificial intelligence and cybersecurity.

L&T-Nxt will focus on areas of artificial intelligence, internet of things (IoT), virtual reality, augmented reality, geospatial solutions and cybersecurity, and leverage the experience that L&T has garnered over the decades.

Zydus Cadila gets USFDA nod for generic drug

Drug maker Zydus Cadila has received the final approval from the US health regulator to market Ambrisentan tablets, used to treat high blood pressure in the lungs, in the American market.

The Ahmedabad-based group has received the approval from the US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) to market the drug in strengths of 5 mg and 10 mg, Zydus Cadila said in a statement.

The product would be manufactured at the group's formulations manufacturing facility at SEZ, Ahmedabad. The sales of Ambrisentan tablets USP in the US market stood at USD 943 million (about Rs 6,500 crore) last year.

Zydus said it now has 258 approvals from the USFDA and has so far filed over 350 abbreviated new drug applications (ANDAs) since the commencement of its filing process in 2003-04.

Dhanbad best city for 4G availability in India, Srinagar grabs 3rd spot

In terms of 4G availability, Dhanbad in Jharkhand has topped the list of 50 cities in India, according to London-based wireless coverage mapping company OpenSignal. Ranchi, capital of Jharkhand, came second after scoring 95 per cent in 4G availability. Srinagar came third with a score of 94.9 per cent.

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New Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru and Kolkata did not make it to the top 10 in the list.

For the study, Data analytics firm OpenSignal looked at 50 of India's largest cities and analysed them by their 4G availability, based on a combined score for all

GAIL, BHEL sign pact for development of solar power projects

State-owned gas utility **GAIL India Ltd** has signed an agreement with **Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd (BHEL) for cooperation in the development of solar power projects**. "GAIL shall be the project developer and BHEL shall act as an engineering, procurement, construction and project management contractor.

BHEL shall also provide operation and maintenance services during the initial period upon becoming successful bidder.

"This development will help both the companies to leverage their competitive strengths to build a substantial portfolio in solar power projects.

Next Census Of India Will Be Carried Out In 2021

The next census of India will be carried out in **2021** with March 1 of that year as the reference date, the **Home Ministry** announced. In a notification, the ministry said the decision has been taken by the central government under the powers conferred by **section 3 of the Census Act, 1948 (37 of 1948)**. For Jammu and Kashmir and snow bound non-synchronous areas of Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, the reference date shall be the **first day of October, 2020**, the notification said.

Government to borrow Rs 4.42 lakh crore in H1FY20

Announcing the borrowing calendar for the first half of the next financial year (April to September 2019), the Union Ministry of Finance said that the government will borrow Rs 4.42 lakh crore during the period.

Economic Affairs Secretary Subhash Chandra Garg said the government will raise the Rs 4.42 lakh crore through gilts and that borrowing for the second half is set at Rs 2.68 lakh crore. In the current fiscal year set to end on Sunday, borrowing for the whole year is estimated at Rs 5.71 lakh crore.

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As per the Union Budget, the government's gross borrowing was pegged at Rs 7.1 lakh crore for 2019-20, which also includes repayments of past loans. Net borrowing was pegged at Rs 3.4 lakh crore in the first half of the next fiscal.

HCAH becomes India's first accredited home healthcare provider

In this backdrop, the pioneer of ICU at home and critical care at home in India, HealthCare atHOME (HCAH), have become the first home healthcare solution provider to be accredited QAI for their home healthcare solutions.

They have been awarded the 'Mark of Sustained Quality' for maintaining high-quality services to their patients at the comfort of their home, by QAI (Quality and Accreditation Institute) for a period of 3 years starting January 2019.

Hyper local connectivity app launched in Mumbai

The Mumbai-based company Linkus Infratech has launched a hyper-local connectivity app called "Bhonga" to connect users to people in their neighbourhood in the city even without an Internet connection.

"Bhonga" is a word in Marathi language that translates to meaning megaphone or loudspeaker.

STATE RELATED CURRENT AFFAIRS

Assam CM launches Affordable Nutrition & Nourishment Assistance Yojna

Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal launched the Affordable Nutrition and Nourishment Assistance (ANNA) Yojna of Food and Civil Supplies Department at the GMCH Auditorium in the city.

"ANNA scheme aims enable the underprivileged people to live a life of dignity with their heads held high. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has propagated the motto of 'sabka sath sabka vikash' to empower all sections of the society so that they can receive equal opportunity to grow. This scheme is embodiment of this spirit of equal development.

Chapchar Kut Festival 2019 celebrated in Mizoram

Chapchar Kut, which is the biggest festival of the Mizo people, was celebrated with traditional fervour at AR Lammual Ground in Aizawl as well as other districts of Mizoram with the theme, 'Unity of Zo People'.

Thousands of people wearing traditional attires gathered at AR Lammual Ground and joined the celebration where traditional dances, songs and games were presented with participation of a large number of artistes.

Cabinet approves railway zone at Vishakhapatnam

Union Cabinet approved setting up of a Railway Zone at Vishakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh and a new division with headquarter at Rayagada in Odisha by reorganizing the existing South Central Railway and East Coast Railway.

Southern Coast Railway will be 18th Railway zone of the Indian Railways. The new zone will comprise the existing Guntakal, Guntur and Vijayawada divisions that currently fall under the South Central Railway.

7TH Guinness Book of World Record created by DEPwD in Bharuch, Gujarat

A National Conference on “Deendayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme (DDRS)” was inaugurated by the Union Minister of Social Justice & Empowerment Shri Thaawar chand Gehlot .

The objective of the conference was to sensitize the stakeholders of the scheme i.e. Programme Implementing Agencies (PIAs), District level officers & State Government officers.

Setting up of Centre for Disability Sports at Gwalior in Madhya

The Government has approved the proposal regarding setting up of a Centre for Disability Sports at Gwalior in Madhya Pradesh, to be registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860, which is to function under the name of Centre for Disability Sports, Gwalior. Setting up of the Centre shall entail an estimated cost of Rs 170.99 crore (Non-recurring Rs.151.16 crore and Recurring Rs 19.83 crore), spread over a period of 5 years.

The Centre will have an Outdoor Athletic Stadium, Indoor Sports Complex, Basement Parking Facility; Aquatic Centre having 2 Swimming Pools, one covered Pool and an Outdoor Pool; High Performance Centre with classrooms; medical facilities; Sports Science Centre; hostel facilities for athletes, support facilities including accessible lockers, dining, recreational amenities and Administrative Block.

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Taking 1st April, 2019 as the zero date, the project is expected to be completed in two years time, i.e, by 31st March, 2021. Thereafter, it will take another 6 months for the Centre to become operational.

Shri Nitin Gadkari will lay the foundation stone for National Highways projects worth Rs 515 Crore in Bundelkhand region of Uttar Pradesh

The Union Minister for Road Transport & Highways, Shipping, Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation Shri Nitin Gadkari will be in Jhansi to lay the foundation stone for National Highways projects worth nearly Rs 515 Crore in Bundelkhand region of Uttar Pradesh.

Secretary, DEPwD Lays Foundation Stone of 'National Institute of Mental Health Rehabilitation' at Sehore, Madhya Pradesh

SmtShakuntala D. Gamlin, Secretary, Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD), Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment laid the foundation stone of the 'National Institute of Mental Health Rehabilitation' at Sherpur Village along Bhopal-Sehore highway, District Sehore, Madhya Pradesh .

This Institute will be first of its kind in the country. The Central Government has approved an outlay of Rs 180 crore for this project for an initial period of three years. The land for this institute measuring about 25 acre was allocated free of cost by the Government of Madhya Pradesh in October 2018.

Maha govt de-notifies proposed petrochemical refinery to be set up in Nanar

The Maharashtra government de-notified the proposed petrochemical refinery to be set up in Nanar in Konkan region of the state. The decision to this effect was taken after a meeting between Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, Industries minister Subhash Desai and other senior government officials held today.

PM visits Jamnagar in Gujarat : Dedicates new building of Guru Gobind Singh Hospital to Nation : Flags off Bandra- Jamnagar Humsafar Express

The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, flagged off the Bandra- Jamnagar Humsafar Express, at Jamnagar in Gujarat. He dedicated the new 750 bed annexe of Guru GobindSingh Hospital to the nation and unveiled various SAUNI

projects. He also launched other development projects at Jamnagar including the 51 km pipeline from Aaji-3 to Khijadia.

Hailing the health sector revolution in Gujarat, Prime Minister said that the hospitals that have come up in the past few years in Gujarat will greatly benefit the poor and Ayushman Bharat scheme rolled out by the Union Government will ensure affordable and quality healthcare for the poor.

Assam CM lays foundation stone of Tingkhong Polytechnic Institute

Assam CM Sarbananda Sonowal laid the foundation stone of Tingkhong Polytechnic Institute to be setup at No 1 Betoni Village under Tingkhong LAC in Dibrugarh district .

The institute will be constructed with financial outlay of Rs. 50 crore under SOPD Scheme by the Directorate of Technical Education in an area of 35 bigha land.

Assam's Hailakandi top aspirational district: Niti Aayog study

Assam's Hailakandi district has shot up to number one from the 52nd position, among the aspirational districts of the country, a new report released by the Niti Aayog said.

Hailakandi ranked first among the 112 aspirational districts of India on the basis of its performance during November-December 2018 and January 2019, an official release said.

Uttar Pradesh to get Highways Projects Worth Over Rs one Lakh Crore

Union Home Minister Shri Rajnath Singh will inaugurate and lay the foundation stones for National Highways projects worth Rs 1,10,154 crore in Lucknow in Uttar Pradesh tomorrow. He will also inaugurate/lay foundation stone for several works under Namami Gange programme worth over Rs 1969.57 crore there tomorrow.

The Minister will be accompanied by Union Minister for Road Transport & Highways, Shipping and Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation Shri Nitin Gadkari and UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

MP: Ancient tribal language Gondi to be taught in tribal districts

In Madhya Pradesh, ancient tribal language Gondi will be taught in tribal districts. Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath has decided to include Gondi in the primary education curriculum of the state's tribal-dominated districts.

He said the rapid decline in the number of people who speak that tongue is a matter of concern. Hence, the Chief Minister stressed on the need to save it from becoming a thing of the past.

Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh get new NCLT benches

The Government has approved establishment of two new benches of National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT), one at Amaravati in Andhra Pradesh and the other at Indore in Madhya Pradesh. This step has been taken keeping in view the increasing case load, especially under the Insolvency & Bankruptcy Code 2016.

The jurisdiction of the Bench at Amaravati will be the state of Andhra Pradesh and that of Indore will be the state of Madhya Pradesh. At present Andhra Pradesh comes under the Jurisdiction of NCLT Bench at Hyderabad and Madhya Pradesh comes under the jurisdiction of NCLT Bench, Ahmedabad. It is expected that creation of new benches will enable faster disposal of cases.

Mizoram Governor Kummanam Rajasekharan resigns

Governor of Mizoram Kummanam Rajasekharan has resigned from his post. President Ram Nath Kovind has accepted the resignation of Rajasekharan.

Mr. Kovind has appointed Prof. Jagdish Mukhi as the Governor of Mizoram, in addition to his own duties of Assam Governor, until regular arrangement for the office of the Governor of Mizoram is made.

World Bank to give Rs 2,200 cr for Andhra healthcare project

The World Bank will provide Rs 2,200-crore loan to Andhra Pradesh for a project aimed at strengthening the state's overall healthcare systems. The Central and state governments and the World Bank signed the loan agreement for a \$328-million project to improve the quality and responsiveness of public health services and increasing access of population to an expanded package of primary health services.

Maharashtra govt launches scheme for construction workers

the Maharashtra government launched a special scheme for construction workers in the state. The scheme, “Atal Aahar Yojna,” will provide good quality and hygienic food to construction workers at a highly subsidised rate.

The yojana will be implemented in some areas of the state on a pilot basis and later its scope will be expanded. in the first phase, the target is to cover 20,000 workers and provide them with good quality food at a nominal cost of Rs five.

Kerala’s Marayur jaggery gets GI tag

Kerala’s Marayur jaggery has finally got the geographical indication (GI) tag, making it safe for consumption while rejuvenating the traditional way of production and ensuring a safe market in future.

Nagaland launches 1st round polio immunization

Nagaland launched the first round of immunisation as part of the nationwide Pulse Polio programme. One-and-a-half lakh children of less than five years will be given polio drops to sustain polio eradication.

According to the Directorate of Health and Family Welfare, 2,274 polio booths have been set up to administer polio drops to children.

MP govt issues ordinance to give 27% quota to OBCs

In Madhya Pradesh, the state government has issued an ordinance raising reservation for Other Backward Classes (OBC) to 27 per cent from the present 14 per cent.

2 Delhi metro stations renamed in honour of martyrs

Two stations on Delhi Metro’s red line extension have been renamed in honour of martyrs. Rajendra Nagar Metro Station has been renamed as Major Mohit Sharma Rajendra Nagar station and the New Bus Adda station has been renamed to Shaheed Sthal (New Bus Adda). This comes days after Pulwama attack where 40 CRPF jawans were martyred.

Lucknow to host biggest children's film festival

The Uttar Pradesh capital Lucknow will host the biggest children's film festival in which several eminent personalities from India and abroad will be present. The nine-day fest, starting from April 4, is being organised by the City Montessori School (CMS), the world's largest city school as per the Guinness World Records.

Matildas launch new kit for Women's World Cup

Australian women's national team will wear brand new kit with the words "Never Say Die" printed inside at the upcoming FIFA Women's World Cup, starting on June 7 in France.

The all-new Australia home kit unveiled by Nike is part of a first-ever national team collection designed exclusively for the Australian team, which shows the growing popularity of the top quadrennial event of women's football. The words "Never Say Die", a reference to a common rallying cry among the players, are printed inside the kit.

Jharkhand bans e-cigarettes

The Jharkhand government banned the sale and usage of e-cigarettes in the state, according to an official notification.

"E-cigarettes are the new method of nicotine use. It affects the embryos in pregnant woman. It also causes mental problem. The sale, distribution, advertisement, import and usage of e-cigarettes have been banned with immediate effect," the notification issued by the state's health department said.

Indian media, entertainment to cross \$33 bn by 2021

The Indian media and entertainment sector revenues reached \$23.9 billion in 2018, and are expected to cross \$33.6 billion by 2021, at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 11.6 per cent, said a study released. The report by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (Ficci) and Ernst & Young LLP was launched at the inaugural session of the Ficci Frames 2019.

While television retained its position as the largest segment, growth is expected to come from digital, which is expected to overtake filmed entertainment in 2019 and print by 2021.

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In 2018, the media and entertainment sector registered a growth of 13.4 per cent over 2017.

India Pavilion inaugurated at London Book Fair

Ms. Sadhana Rout, Director General, Publications Division & Shri Vikram Sahay, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting inaugurated the India Pavilion at London Book Fair .The Fair is being held in the London Olympia from 12th to 14th March.

India beat Maldives by 6-0 in 5th SAFF Women's Championship

Defending champion India defeated Maldives by 6-0 in the 5th South Asian Football Federation (SAFF) Women's Championship. Keeping its unbeaten record India easily defeated Maldives in its first group match in Nepal's Biratnagar.

Ola signs MoU with Telangana govt

Ride-hailing platform Ola has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Government of Telangana to support the latter's efforts in strengthening traffic infrastructure in the city. The partnership would see Ola 'share intelligent insights' that enable the Government to implement smart solutions to enhance 'mobility experience' in the city.

The first pilot project proposed to be implemented under the MoU is the dynamic mapping of riding quality of various major roads in Hyderabad through the network of vehicles operating on the Ola platform.

Assam gets digital awareness, launches i-help initiative to promote electoral literacy

Assam launched an initiative 'i-help' to promote digital electoral literacy in the state launched in view of the forthcoming Lok Sabha polls. The 'i-help' is a joint initiative of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) and Common Service Centres (CSC) in Assam.

The CSCs are internet-enabled access points spread throughout the country delivering various government and non- government digital services to the citizens and is uniquely positioned in rural areas to significantly extend the awareness and outreach activities of CEO, Assam.

Pine Labs buys Bengaluru-based Qwiksilver for \$110mn

Singapore-based merchant platform firm Pine Labs announced it has acquired Bengaluru-based gift card solutions provider Qwiksilver for \$110 million. The combined gift solutions business will be the largest in India with a customer base of over 250 brands and retailers and 1,500 enterprise customers.

Founded in 2006, Qwiksilver is a full-stack gift card service provider, powering nine out of every 10 gift cards in the country and managing an annualised gross transaction value of \$1.5 billion across India, Middle East and South East Asia.

Kerala firm bags contract to build Manipur airport

State-owned KITCO Ltd has bagged the project management consultancy (PMC) contract from Airports Authority of India (AAI) for setting up a new Rs 600 crore integrated terminal building at Imphal International Airport. The deadline for the completion of the project is 54 months.

This is the second PMC contract received from AAI after the Mangalore Airport expansion project, which is currently under process. Both the projects were awarded through competitive bidding.

Mumbai social worker Gauri Sawant becomes first transgender election ambassador

The Election Commission of India has appointed transgender social activist Gauri Sawant, as one of the 12 election ambassadors from Maharashtra. During 2004 and 2009 Lok Sabha elections there was no record of transgender voters.

Following the Supreme Court order, transgenders got the right to vote for the first time in 2014. In 2014, 918 voters were registered in this third category. This number has doubled in five years and now it is 2,086.

Bihar celebrates its 107th foundation day

Bihar is celebrating its 107th foundation day on 22 March . It was on this day in 1912, Bihar was carved out of Bengal presidency.

A number of programmes are being organised to mark the occasion. Bihar Foundation organises Bihar day abroad including in US, Britain, Germany, Mauritius and Trinidad and Tobago.

Ola's licence in Bengaluru suspended for six months

In a major development, the Karnataka transport department has suspended the licence of taxi aggregator Ola and ordered immediate stoppage of its services in Bengaluru. The action follows illegal operation of bike taxis by the company.

Vice President to attend 16th Convocation of IGIDR in Mumbai

Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu will attend the 16th Convocation of Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research in Mumbai .

Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research, Mumbai is an autonomous advanced research institution established by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in 1987, on its golden jubilee.

The Institute focuses on research on developmental issues from a multi-disciplinary point of view. The Governor of RBI is also the chairman of this institute.

Assam CEO Mukesh Sahu launches Enajori initiative in Guwahati

Assam Chief Electoral Officer Mukesh Sahu launched the **Enajori initiative** in Guwahati. It is a special initiative for persons with disabilities with an aim that 'No Voter to be Left behind'. It is a joint initiative of CEO Assam and Social Welfare Department with an objective to make Lok Sabha Elections accessible to Persons with Disability, PwD voters.

Under this initiative comprehensive mapping of PwDs will be done in consultation with Booth Level Officers, Divyang Sarothis and a woman mascot-Chandraprabha, to facilitate the PwD voters for barrier-free and inclusive accessible elections.

Assam: Bongaigaon dist admin develops 'Sankalp' app to reach out to 1st-time voter

In Assam, the Bongaigaon district administration has developed a **mobile app Sankalp** to particularly reach out to the first-time voters.

Bongaigaon Deputy Commissioner Adil Khan said that a special initiative has been taken to encourage the first-time voters. Mr. Khan said that the NIC team has developed the app and it will be launched soon. The new voters will also be able to sign a digital 'sankalp patra', promising to cast their votes on the day of polling.

Rima Das becomes ambassador of Toronto International Film Fest

Critically acclaimed **Assam filmmaker Rima Das** has joined **Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF)**'s **'Share Her Journey'** as its **official ambassador**.

TIFF launched the 5-year campaign in 2017 with a view to increase participation, skills, and opportunities for women behind and in front of the camera.

WB: EC appointed Special Police Observer Bibek Dubey to reach Kolkata

The Election Commission-appointed Special Police Observer, Bibek Dubey will reach Kolkata to oversee poll preparedness in West Bengal.

Mr. Dubey will meet representatives of major political parties besides the top brass of the security forces in Kolkata.

Lalthlamuani is first woman to fight Mizoram LS poll

For the first time in the Lok Sabha elections in Mizoram, a woman, Lalthlamuani, 63, is trying her luck. The fate of all six candidates, including independent aspirant Lalthlamuani, will be decided on April 11.

Though women voters outnumber men in the parliamentary constituency, it's the first time that a woman has joined the race to challenge the hegemony of men to represent the lone Mizoram seat in the Lok Sabha.

Rename Sultanpur as Khush Bhawanpur: UP Governor to Yogi

Uttar Pradesh Governor Ram Naik has written a letter to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath to rename Sultanpur city as Khush Bhawanpur. Sultanpur is a city in Ayodhya Division of the state.

The Chief Minister has gained attention in the past for changing the names of Allahabad to Prayagraj and Faizabad to Ayodhya.

Govt sets up multi disciplinary terror action group for J&K

The Centre has set up a multi-disciplinary terror monitoring group (MDTMG) to ensure synergised and concerted action against terror financing and terror-related activities in Jammu and Kashmir.

According to an official order, the MDTMG will have representatives from the Jammu and Kashmir Police, Intelligence Bureau, CBI, NIA, and Income Tax Department. It will also take action against hardcore sympathisers among government employees, including teachers, who are providing covert or overt support to terror activities.

The ADGP CID of JK Police will head the MDTMG which will meet on a weekly basis and submit their action taken report regularly.

FOREIGN RELATIONS

The 7th Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Intersessional Ministerial Meeting Concludes in Cambodia

The Ministers from the 16 RCEP Participating Countries (RPCs) attended the 7th RCEP Intersessional Ministerial Meeting held in Siem Reap, Cambodia. Union Minister of Commerce & Industry and Civil Aviation, Suresh Prabhu attended the 7th RCEP Intersessional Ministerial Meeting in Cambodia.

The Ministers recalled the Leaders' determination to conclude a modern, comprehensive, high quality, and mutually beneficial RCEP in 2019, and resolved to exert utmost effort to achieve this target.

Historic Guinness World Record in Yoga Made in Hong Kong

Taking the Yoga Day initiative of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the next level, the Overseas President of BJP for Hong Kong & China, Sohan Goenka conducted a Japan Auction House Guinness World Record in Yoga.

The first of its kind in the history of Hong Kong; beating the previous record of 387, more than 1011 yoga practitioners attempted Virabathrasan (Warrior II Pose) for 3 minutes in one place and achieved the Guinness World Record at Sun Yat Sen Memorial Park, Hong Kong on 24th February.

CURTAIN RAISER: AL NAGAH 2019

Exercise Al Nagah III, third in the series of bilateral joint exercise between India and Oman is scheduled to be held from 12 to 25 March 2019 at Jabel Al Akhdar Mountains in Oman. The exercise will see both the armies exchanging expertise and experience in tactics, weapon handling and firing, with an aim to enhance interoperability in counterterrorist operations in semi urban mountainous terrain.

India-Oman bilateral security ties have continued to develop since the beginning of India-Oman Joint Military Cooperation meetings in 2006. Exercise Al Nagah III follows the first two joint exercises that were held in Oman in January 2015 and India in March 2017 respectively.

National Common Mobility Card – India's First Indigenously developed Payment Platform launched by PM in Ahmedabad

One Nation, One Card for transport mobility was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at a function in Ahmedabad . The Indigenous Automatic Fare Collection System based on One Nation One Card Model , National Common Mobility Card (NCMC) is the first of its kind in India. India's First Indigenously Developed Payment system for transport consisting of NCMC Card, SWEEKAR (SwachalitKiraya: Automatic Fare Collection System) and SWAGAT (Swachalit Gate) is based on NCMC Standards.

These are bank issued Debit/Credit/Prepaid cards and the customer may use this single card for payments across all segments including metro, bus, suburban railways, toll, parking, smart city and retail. The stored value on card supports offline transaction across all travel needs with minimal financial risk to involved stakeholders.

Independent Verification of Swachh Bharat Grameen confirms over 96% usage of toilets

The National Annual Rural Sanitation Survey (NARSS) 2018-19, conducted by an Independent Verification Agency (IVA) under the World Bank support project to the Swachh Bharat Mission Grameen (SBM-G), has found that 96.5% of the households in rural India who have access to a toilet use it.

The survey was conducted between November 2018 and February 2019 and covered 92040 households in 6136 villages across States and UTs of India.

The key findings of NARSS 2018-19 are as follows:

- 93.1% of households were found to have access to toilets during the survey period (the corresponding figure as per the SBMG MIS in November 2018 was 96%)
- 96.5% of the people who had access to toilets used them
- 90.7% of villages which were previously declared and verified as ODF were confirmed to be ODF. The remaining villages also had sanitation coverage of about 93%
- 95.4% of the villages surveyed found to have minimal litter and minimal stagnant water.

Textiles Minister inaugurates Refurbished Handloom Haat

Union Textiles Minister, Smriti Zubin Irani, inaugurated the renovated Handloom Haat in New Delhi. She also launched three projects of NIFT – VisionNXT – Trend Forecasting Initiative, Indian Textiles and Craft Repository and Design Innovation and Incubation.

The Haat at Janpath in New Delhi has been set up by Ministry of Textiles to provide marketing opportunities to authentic handloom products from various States, PSUs and cooperative societies.

Project related to trend innovation lab ‘VisionNxt’ initiative being set up by NIFT in the building will create an indigenous fashion forecasting service that endeavours to design seasonal directions for our country.

Nepal Govt officials join INGAF training course in New Delhi

The Third group of 22 officials of Nepal’s Ministry of Finance joined their training course on ‘Global Perspectives on Public Financial Management’ at the Institute of Government Accounts and Finance (INGAF) in New Delhi .

The training is being held under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme of the Ministry of External Affairs. The training will enhance capabilities of these officials in global practices dealing with e-payment system, accounting & cash management, public borrowing system, accounting of foreign loans/grants and repayments, pension payment system, internal audit, fiscal responsibility and budget management.

India Signs Loan Agreement with the World Bank for USD 25.2 Million for Chhattisgarh Public Financial Management and Accountability Program

The Government of India, the State Government of Chhattisgarh and the World Bank signed a \$25.2 Million Loan Agreement to support the State's Reforms in Expenditure Management. This support will cover Expenditure Planning, Investment Management, Budget Execution, Public Procurement and Accountability.

The Chhattisgarh Public Financial Management and Accountability Program, which is the First Bank-Financed State-Level Project in Chhattisgarh in nearly a decade, will also help the State strengthen its Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) and Tax Administration Systems.

India signs Loan Agreement with the World Bank for USD 96 Million for Additional Financing for Uttarakhand Disaster Recovery Project

The World Bank, Government of India and Government of Uttarakhand (GoUK) signed a \$96 Million Loan Agreement to provide additional funds to the State of Uttarakhand in its post-disaster recovery plans, ongoing since the floods of 2013, as well as strengthen its capacity for Disaster Risk Management.

Andhra Pradesh signs MoUs worth Rs 21,000 cr

The Andhra Pradesh Economic Development Board signed Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) worth Rs 21,000 crore with various companies. The MoUs were signed in the presence of Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, APEDB Chief Executive Officer J. Krishna Kishore and representatives of different companies.

These MoUs would fructify into the investment potential of Rs 21,000 crore and generate direct employment of around 57,000 and indirect employment of around 1,65,000, said APEDB, which is responsible for sustainable economic growth through trade, investments, partnerships and collaborations.

3-day International Women's Film Fest to be held across India

The Federation of Film Societies of India (FFSI) will celebrate the International Women's Day with the International Women's Film Festival 2019 from March 8 to 10 throughout India.

The fest will be held in Kolkata, Guwahati, Imphal, Hyderabad, Pune, Bengaluru, Puducherry, Jamshedpur, Kohlapur, Madurai, Karimnagar, Mumbai and as well as other cities, showcasing a melange of internationally acclaimed films by woman filmmakers.

President of India presents Swachh Survekshan Awards

President Ram Nath Kovind presented Swachh Survekshan-2019 Awards in New Delhi. Indore bagged award for cleanest city for third straight year in Swachh Survekshan.

New Delhi Municipal Council area gets cleanest small city award while Uttarakhand's Gauchar was adjudged Best Ganga Town in the survey. Top ranked cities received a statue of Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi as award for their work towards cleanliness. Swachh Survekshan 2019 covered all Urban Local Bodies in the country, making it the largest such cleanliness survey in the world.

Cabinet approves MoU between India and UK on Cancer Research Initiative

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and U.K. on Cancer Research Initiative. The MoU was signed on 14th November 2018.

Details:

The India-UK Cancer Research Initiative will identify a core set of research challenges that address issues of affordability, prevention and care of cancer by bringing together leading Indian and UK experts across clinical research, demographic research, new technologies and physical sciences.

Funding pattern:

Over 5 years, the total research funding for the Initiative shall be £10 million (approx. Rs. 90 crores). CRUK's share for such funding shall be £5 million (approx. Rs. 45 crores). DBT shall match such funding by £5 million (approx. Rs.45 crores).

Cabinet approves MoU between India and Germany on Cooperation in the field of Occupational Safety and Health

The Union cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Germany on Cooperation in the field of Occupational Safety and Health (OSH). The MoU was renewed on 13th November 2018.

Benefits:

The collaboration till date has immensely helped in adopting the modern training techniques and tools on various aspects of Occupational Safety and Health in different sectors of economic activity.

Cabinet approves MoU between India and Austria

The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, India and the Federal Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology, Austria on Technology Cooperation in the Road Infrastructure Sector.

The MoU aims to create an effective framework for bilateral cooperation in the field of Road Transportation, Roads/Highways infrastructure development, management and administration, Road safety and Intelligent Transport Systems between both countries.

Modi Cabinet approves amendment to Article 3 of Indo-Bhutan power pact

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved amendment to the Article 3 of the Agreement between India and Bhutan regarding Mandeckhu Hydro Electric Project (MHEP) in order to extend the loan repayment tenure by two years extended by India to Bhutan.

It aims for implementation of the said project in Bhutan from fifteen to seventeen years.

India, Japan hold inaugural space dialogue

The inaugural India-Japan Space Dialogue was held in New Delhi. The dialogue brought together Ministries and agencies related to outer space in the two

countries and provided an opportunity for information exchange on the respective space policies. Discussions were also held on bilateral cooperation between JAXA-ISRO, their space industries, global navigation satellite system, space situational awareness, space security and space-related norms.

M Modi, Bangladesh counterpart jointly inaugurate development projects

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Bangladesh counterpart Sheikh Hasina jointly unveiled e-plaques for development projects in Bangladesh, through video conferencing.

Both the leaders unveiled e-plaques for the supply of buses and trucks, the inauguration of 36 community clinics, 11 water treatment plants, and extension of National Knowledge Network to Bangladesh.

New visa agreement between Maldives & India comes into force

The new visa agreement between Maldives and India has come into force . The agreement will provide a liberal visa policy for Maldivians seeking medical treatment as well as education and business opportunities in India.

The visa deal will allow Maldivian businessmen and tourists to stay in India for 90 days without a visa. Maldivians with tourist visas can also stay in India for treatment if they suffer a sudden medical issue.

Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale to meet US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo

Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale will meet US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo in Washington . Bilateral, regional and global issues of common interest will be discussed during the meeting.

The visit is part of regular high-level dialogue mechanisms to review bilateral relations, exchange views on major foreign policy and security-related developments and coordinate respective positions on issues of common interest.

14thCII-EXIM Bank Conclave on India-Africa Project Partnerships to be held in New Delhi on March 17 – 19

Ministry of Commerce & Industry will be organising the 14th CII-EXIM Bank Conclave on India-Africa Project Partnerships, in association with Confederation

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of Indian Industry and EXIM Bank of India in New Delhi from March 17-19, 2019.

The event will mark the deepening of India-Africa economic and business ties and pave the way for a whole range of cross-border project partnerships.

Japan announces Rs 22 lakh for Kolkata museum

The Japanese government announced a donation of some Rs 22 lakh (\$31,800) to the Rabindra Bharati Museum in a bid to strengthen historical and cultural ties with India.

To refurbish the Japan Gallery of the museum, a MoU will be signed between the Consul General of Japan in Kolkata, Masayuki Taga, and the Vice Chancellor of Rabindra Bharati University, Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury.

New visa agreement between Maldives & India comes into force

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Saudi Minister of State for Foreign Affairs meets PM Modi

Saudi Arabia's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Adel al-Jubeir on Monday met Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi. The visiting dignitary is on a day-long visit to India.

Earlier, Mr Adel al-Jubeir also met External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj. This is the third meeting between the two leaders in over a fortnight. The two leaders had met during the meeting of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation in Abu Dhabi earlier this month.

Cultural festival to celebrate Indo-Thai relations

The Royal Thai Embassy is organising a cultural fest – 'Namaste Thailand Festival' to commemorate 72 years of Indo-Thai diplomatic relations. The festival of Thai food, products, music, performances and culture is all set to offer a unique Thai experience, the organisers of the festival said.

“India and Thailand have a history of good and cooperative relations. To strengthen these relations we need to co-opt culturally and understand each other. The festival is a move in this direction.

Indo-Oman joint military exercise commences.

A joint military exercise between India and Royal Army of Oman commenced at Jabel regiment headquarters, Nizwa, in the Arab country. A 60-member strong Indian Army contingent, based in northern command headquarters at Udhampur in Jammu and Kashmir, is taking part in the military exercise ‘Al-Nagah III’.

India-Africa joint field training exercise to kick off on March 18

A 10-day long Africa-India Joint Field Training Exercise (**AFINDEX-19**) between the Indian Army and 16 African nations will be conducted in Pune from March 18 to 27.

As many as 10 personnel, each from the participating nations from the African continent and personnel of Maratha Light Infantry of Indian Army, will participate in the joint exercise which will be conducted at two locations in Pune’s Foreign Training Node at Aundh Military Station and College of Military Engineering in Kirkee.

India, Myanmar conduct coordinated operation against insurgents posing threat to Kaladan project

The armies of India and Myanmar conducted a “coordinated operation” from February 17 to March 2 against insurgents in Myanmar territory to avert a possible threat to the Kaladan multi-modal transit transport project. However, the Indian Army did not cross the border during the operation.

The focus of the operation was to crack down on the members of the Arakan Army, an insurgent group in Myanmar.

U.S. spl Ops Forces hold exercise with NSG in Hyderabad

The United States Special Forces Group stationed in Japan is involved in a joint exercise with India’s National Security Guard, aimed at enhancing the capabilities of the armed forces of the two countries.

The US forces are from the 1st Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) stationed out of Okinawa in Japan. The Hyderabad-exercise would help build

interoperability and comradeship between the two forces and was designed to enhance the capabilities of both Indian and U.S. armed forces, it said.

Sushma Swaraj holds high-level meeting at Maldives Foreign Ministry

External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj is holding a high-level meeting at the Maldives Foreign Ministry during her two-day visit to Male. Several ministers, including Foreign Minister Abdulla Shahid, are present at the meeting to discuss bilateral cooperation and development assistance to the Maldives.

Both sides will discuss ongoing and future collaboration arrangements, including the implementation of the agreed outcome, of the State Visit to India by President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih.

Guinean PM arrives in India on 10-day visit

Guinean Prime Minister Ibrahima Kassory Fofana arrived Here for a 10-day visit during which he will participate at a key India-Africa business conclave and hold talks with the top leadership to deepen ties.

Fofana will participate at the CII-EXIM Bank Conclave on the India-Africa Project Partnership .

‘Vijit’ becomes the first Indian Coast Guard ship to visit Indonesia

Highlighting the close maritime proximity between India and Indonesia, Indian Coast Guard Ship ‘Vijit’ became the first-ever Coast Guard ship to visit Sabang, Indonesia.

This visit of the coast guard ship follows from the first-ever-visit of Naval Ship INS Sumitra to Sabang in July 2018. Vijit’s visit also highlights strengthening cooperation in the area of maritime security and safety between New Delhi and Jakarta.

‘Vijit’ meaning “Winner or Victorious” is the testimony of India’s shipbuilding capabilities and the resolve of Govt of India to safeguard country’s maritime interests,”.

Indo-Bangla Army teams go rafting over Siyom river in Arunachal Pradesh

The three-day long joint Indo-Bangladesh White Water Rafting Expedition started from Tumbin in Arunachal Pradesh and came to an end at Pangin. The expedition was led by Lieutenant Colonel BN Jha comprising three officers, one junior commissioned officer (JCO) and seven other ranks of Indian Army. The Bangladesh side was led by Captain Hasibur Rehman, one JCO and seven other ranks of Bangladesh Army.

MoU to boost Indo-Afghan digital education initiative

The Ministry of Human Resource Development has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Afghanistan government to work on digital education initiatives, which include many prominent programs developed by Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs). The MoU was signed at IIT-Madras .

One of the main objectives of the MoU is to facilitate students and faculty from Afghanistan to enrol and learn from the courses offered on Study Webs of Active Learning for Young Aspiring Minds (SWAYAM), which is an online education platform developed by Government of India.

India, Maldives sign three agreements

External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj called on Maldives President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih before concluding her two-day visit to Male. She also held a meeting with the country's home minister and leader of Adaalath party Sheikh Imran Abdulla.

A joint statement said that three agreements were signed on visa facilitation for diplomatic and official passport holders, development cooperation and renewable energy.

India to provide aid to people affected by cyclone 'IDAI' in Mozambique

India has decided to divert three Indian naval ships to the port city of Beira in Mozambique to provide humanitarian assistance to the people affected by tropical cyclone 'IDAI'.

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External Affairs Ministry in a release said the ships will provide relief materials in the form of food, clothes and medicines. Three medical practitioners and five nurses will provide immediate medical help.

Opening ceremony: Africa-India Field Training Exercise-2019

The inaugural Africa-India Field Training Exercise-2019 for India and African nations called AFINDEX-19 scheduled from 18 March to 27 March 2019 started with a grand opening ceremony on 18 March 2019 at Aundh Military Station, Pune.

The aim of the exercise is to practice the participating nations in planning and conduct of Humanitarian Mine Assistance and Peace Keeping Operations under Chapter VII of United Nations Peace Keeping Operations.

Indo-Sri Lanka joint Exercise Mitra shakti-VI

Exercise MITRA SHAKTI is conducted annually as part of military diplomacy and interaction between armies of India & Sri Lanka. The joint exercise for the year 2018-19 will be conducted from 26 March to 08 April 2019 in Sri Lanka.

The aim of the exercise is to build and promote close relations between armies of both the countries and to enhance ability of joint exercise commander to take military contingents of both nations under command.

33rd Edition of India-Indonesia Coordinated Patrol (Ind-Indo Corpat) Commences at Port Blair

Indonesian Naval Ship KRI Sultan Thaha Syaifuddin and Maritime Patrol Aircraft CN-235 led by Cmde Dafit Santoso arrived at Port Blair, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, India for the Opening Ceremony of the 33rd edition of the India-Indonesia Coordinated Patrol (IND-INDO CORPAT) to be held from 19 Mar to 04 Apr 2019.

His Excellency Ambassador of Indonesia to India, Mr. Shidharto Raza Suryodipuro is also visiting Port Blair to attend the Opening Ceremony to be held at Port Blair from 20 – 21 Mar 19. The Indian delegation is led by the senior officer from the Indian Navy, Commodore Ashutosh Ridhorkar, VSM Naval

Component Commander, Andaman and Nicobar Command.

Indian-origin Jagmeet creates history, enters Canada parliament

Indian-origin Jagmeet Singh has created history in Canada when he made his debut in the House of Commons as the first non-white leader of a major opposition party in the country.

Singh, the leader of the New Democratic Party, was elected in federal by-elections held on February 25. Singh's first words as an elected lawmaker were about last week's terrorist attack on two mosques in New Zealand.

Indian Air Force to participate in Langkawi International Maritime Aero Expo (LIMA) 2019

Langkawi International Maritime Aero Expo (LIMA-2019) is planned in Langkawi, Malaysia from 26 March 2019 to 30 March 2019. Indian Air Force is participating in the Maritime Aero Expo for the first time, during which it will showcase its indigenously developed LCA fighter aircraft. The team departed from Air Force Station Kalaikunda for Langkawi today i.e 22 March 2019 via Myanmar (Yangon).

Participation of IAF in LIMA-2019 will provide an opportunity to air-warriors to interact with their Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) counterparts and foster close relationship between the two services. This will serve as a foundation for any future interaction with the Malaysian Air Force. It will also provide an opportunity to RMAF to assess the capabilities of LCA.

India-funded educational campus inaugurated in Nepal

Educational campus constructed with Government of India's financial grant of 35.5 million Nepalese rupees was inaugurated. An educational campus constructed with Government of India's financial grant of 35.5 million Nepalese rupees was inaugurated in Nepal.

The newly constructed three storey building of Siddheshwar Education Public Campus in Ramechhap district comprises of 12 classrooms, faculty room, principal room, library, laboratory, a meeting hall and toilets for girls and boys.

The newly built infrastructure will not only boost the learning environment of students but also enhance access to education to needy, poor and marginalized students of Ramechhap District and adjoining area.

Exercise Al Nagah – III 2019 Validation and Closing Ceremony

The third edition of joint military training exercise between Indian Army and Royal Oman Army, Exercise AL NAGAH 2019 concluded at Jabel AI Akhdar training camp, Oman on 25 March 2019. Closing ceremony witnessed final validation by observer delegation group of both the nations.

MG Motor signs Benedict Cumberbatch as India brand ambassador

China's SAIC-owned British vehicle manufacturer Morris Garages announced the signing of actor Benedict Cumberbatch as the brand ambassador for its India operations. MG Motors is expected to launch its first car—a sports utility vehicle named Hector—in 2019. MG Motor along with South Korean manufacturer Kia Motor Co. are the two new entrants in India's automobile market.

MG Motor India will manufacture its vehicles at its Halol plant, which has a capacity of 80,000 units per annum.

President Kovind receives Croatia's highest civilian award

President Ram Nath Kovind was honoured with Croatia's highest civilian award the Grand Order of the King of Tomislav. Kovind is in the European country as part of his eight-day three-nation visit to Croatia, Bolivia and Chile to further strengthen bilateral ties between India and the three countries.

The civilian order is awarded to heads of state for their important contribution towards the development of state relations between Croatia and their respective countries.

President Kovind reaches Zagreb

President Ram Nath Kovind has reached the Croatian capital Zagreb on the first leg of his three-nation tour to Croatia, Bolivia and Chile.

Indian-Sri Lankan armies to conduct military exercise Mitra Shakti

The joint training exercise MITRASHAKTI – VI between Indian and Sri Lanka Army is being held at Diyatalawa in Sri Lanka. An Indian contingent of 120 Army personnel, including 11 officers arrived last evening to take part in the two-week long exercise. The exercise is an annual event held in India and Sri Lanka alternatively.

ADNOC awards onshore block to Indian consortium

A consortium of two Indian oil companies, Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited and Indian Oil Corporation Limited have been awarded the exploration rights for Abu Dhabi Onshore Block 1.

The Abu Dhabi National Oil Company, ADNOC, signed agreements awarding the exploration rights.

The award has been endorsed by Abu Dhabi's Supreme Petroleum Council. In an exclusive interaction with AIR Ambassador Navdeep Suri said that the bilateral partnership between India and UAE is growing in many dimensions.

Cabinet approves MoU between India and Croatia in the field of tourism

The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has given its ex-post facto approval on the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Croatia in the field of tourism.

The MoU in the field of Tourism will help the two parties in creating an institutional mechanism for enhancing cooperation in the tourism sector. The MoU has been signed on 26 March, 2019 during the visit of President of India to Croatia.

Cabinet apprised about MoU between India and Saudi Arabia for cooperation in the field of Housing

The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, was apprised about an MoU signed in February, 2019 between India and Saudi Arabia for cooperation in the field of Housing.

The MoU will promote technical cooperation in the field of Housing, including affordable/low income housing and enhance participation of authorities and companies in the housing and infrastructure projects undertaken in both the countries. .

Cabinet approves MoU between India and Indonesia on combating illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and its precursors

The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has approved the signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Indonesia on combating illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and its precursors.

The MoU will help in mutual cooperation in regulation of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and in combating drug trafficking. It will come into force on the date of signing and will remain in effect for a period of five years.

Cabinet apprised about MoU on Antarctic cooperation between India and Argentina

The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, was apprised about an MoU signed in February, 2019 between India and Argentina on Antarctic cooperation.

The MoU will help scientific cooperation on projects in the fields of Earth sciences, as well as those related to the protection and conservation of the natural environment of Antarctica and the Southern Oceans.

Cabinet approves MoU between India and Republic of Korea on Startup Cooperation

The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has given its ex-post facto approval on the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Republic of Korea on Startup Cooperation. The MoU was signed in February, 2019.

Apple CEO Tim Cook's biography's India launch soon

The India edition of the first biography of Apple CEO Tim Cook, **'Tim Cook: The Genius Who Took Apple to the Next Level'**, will hit the stands here on April 18, publisher Penguin India said.

The book will draw on authorised insiders to give a peek into the life of the man who led Apple to become the world's first trillion-dollar company. He is also the first openly gay CEO of a Fortune 500 corporation.

India-African Union sign MoU on strengthening cooperation in healthcare sector

An agreement has been signed between India and the African Union to establish an India-Africa health sciences collaborative platform. the MoU will pave the way for cooperation in research and development, capacity building, health services, pharmaceutical trade and manufacturing capabilities for drugs and diagnostics.

President Kovind inaugurates plaque of Gandhi Hall at Gabriel Rene Moreno University in Bolivia

President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated the plaque of the **Mahatma Gandhi Hall at the Gabriel Rene Moreno University in Santa Cruz during his visit to Bolivia.**

President said that India is the first major economy that is seeking to make that leap for industrialisation while combating climate change, and also reducing the dependence on fossil fuels. India has set a target of 175 gigawatts of renewable energy by 2022, of which 100 gigawatts will comprise solar energy.

President also participated in the India – Bolivia Business Forum. President is in Bolivia on the second leg of his three nation tour. He is on a three-nation visit to Croatia, Bolivia and Chile from March 25th to April 4th.

India & Bolivia sign 8 MoUs in various fields including culture, mining, space

India and Bolivia have signed eight MoUs on the second day of President Ram Nath Kovind's three-day visit to that country.

These MoUs were signed in the fields of culture, Visa waiver arrangement for diplomats, the exchange between diplomatic academies, mining, space, traditional medicine, establishment of Centre of Excellence in IT and Bi-Oceanic Railway project.

Foreign secy Vijay Gokhale holds bilateral talks with Nepalese counterpart

Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale held bilateral talks with his **Nepalese counterpart Shanker Das Bairagi in Kathmandu** . They reviewed all aspects of bilateral partnership between India and Nepal and exchanged views on issues of mutual interest.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

World Bank's ED Aparna Subramani meets Bhutan PM

World Bank's Executive Director (ED) for Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Sri Lanka, Aparna Subramani called on Bhutan Prime Minister Dr Lotay Tsheringat Thimpu .

The ED of World Bank for Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Sri Lanka has made the visit to Bhutan after release of a working paper of World Bank titled 'Bhutan Development Report-A Path to Inclusive and Sustainable Development' where it was stated that due to Bhutan's small domestic market, sparse population, and high transportation costs, the risks associated with private investment are comparatively higher.

US, South Korea Call Off Foal Eagle and Key Resolve Exercises, Announce New Exercise

The United States and South Korea decided to call off their joint exercise "Foal Eagle" and "Key Resolve" and instead bifurcate them into smaller exercises. This is being done to ease tensions with North Korea. "Key Resolve" will be replaced by "Dongmaeng" which is also known as alliance in English, Foal Eagle drills will be replaced by a smaller battalion-sized exercise.

This decision has been made after there was a failure to reach an agreement on denuclearisation during the summit in Hanoi, Vietnam between President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

Two Nobel Prizes for literature will be awarded this year: Swedish Academy

The Swedish Academy has said that two Nobel Prizes for literature will be awarded this year. The decision comes after a sex scandal causing the suspension of the award last year. The Academy in a statement at Stockholm yesterday said the Nobel Prize in Literature will awarded this autumn for both 2018 and 2019.

The much-awaited award had to be postponed last year for the first time since 1949 after the Academy, which annually chooses the winner.

China slashes GDP growth target to 6-6.5% amid slowdown, trade war with US

China has slashed its official GDP target to 6 to 6.5 per cent this year as the world's second largest economy grapples with the ongoing trade war with the US and a continued economic slowdown.

The lowered growth rate was proposed by Chinese Premier Li Keqiang in his work report for this year at the opening session of the annual session of the “rubber-stamp” Parliament, the National People's Congress (NPC).

Google launches ‘Bolo’ App to tutor children to read Hindi, English

Tech giant Google unveiled a new app ‘Bolo’ that aims to help children in primary school learn to read in Hindi and English. The free app, which is being launched in India first, uses Google's speech recognition and text-to-speech technology.

The app features an animated character ‘Diya’, who encourages children to read stories aloud and helps if the child is unable to pronounce a word. It also lauds the reader when he/she completes the reading.

OECD cuts global growth forecast

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, OECD, has again cut its 2019 forecast for global economic growth due to ongoing trade tensions and Brexit uncertainty. The OECD lowered its forecast to 3.3 per cent for this year, down from the 3.5 per cent it predicted in November, which was itself a downgrade from a previous 3.7 per cent.

Malaysia joined International Criminal Court

Malaysia has become a member of the International Criminal Court in a boost for the beleaguered institution at a time it faces growing criticism. Malaysia becomes the 124th member of the court since its establishment in 2002. “By joining the ICC, Kuala Lumpur can now play an important role in issues related to crimes against humanity.

Venezuela orders German ambassador to leave the country

The Venezuelan government ordered the German ambassador Daniel Kriener to leave the country after he expressed support for Juan Guaido, escalating a

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diplomatic standoff with a group of about 50 nations that recognize the opposition leader as the country's interim president.

116-year-old Japanese woman officially named oldest person

A 116-year-old Japanese woman has been honoured as the world's oldest living person by Guinness World Records. The global authority on records officially recognised Kane Tanaka in a ceremony at the nursing home where she lives in Fukuoka, in southwest Japan. Her family was present to celebrate.

Born in January 1903, Tanaka loves playing the board game 'Othello' and enjoys studying mathematics.

The previous oldest living person was another Japanese woman, Chiyo Miyako, who passed away last July, aged 117.

Bill Shine resigns as Donald Trump's communications director

US has said Former Fox News executive Bill Shine has resigned as President Donald Trump's communications director.

Saudi Arabia replaces India as world's largest arms importer

Saudi Arabia has now become the largest importer of arms in the world, having pushed India to the second spot, according to the premier Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).

the institute identified Saudi Arabia, India, Egypt, Australia and Algeria as the five top arms importing countries and the United States, Russia, France, Germany and China as the five top arms exporting nations.

For more than the last eight years, India was the largest arms importer in the international market.

Avengers: Endgame' co-director Joe Russo to visit India in April

"Avengers: Endgame" co-director Joe Russo will be visiting India in April to engage with the Indian audience. He is looking forward to his trip.

Joe, one half of the Russo brothers, has picked up India as his first destination as a part of their "Avengers: Endgame" promotion tour in the Asia Pacific region. He will be in Mumbai on April 1 and April 2.

Google phases out instant messaging app ‘Allo’

After pausing investments in its “Allo” mobile messaging app, Google has finally bid goodbye to the platform that was launched with much fanfare in 2016.

Swedish activist nominated for Nobel Peace Prize

Greta Thunberg, a 16-year-old Swedish activist who is a prominent voice in the fight against climate change, has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize this year.

This year’s Nobel Peace Prize has 304 candidates, of which 219 are individuals and 85 organisations, the Norwegian Nobel Committee reported last month. The Nobel prizes are awarded each year on December 10, coinciding with the anniversary of the death of its founder Alfred Nobel.

US jury awards Qualcomm \$31 mn in Apple case

A US jury has decided that Apple needs to pay chip-maker Qualcomm \$31 million for violating three of its patents. “Apple violated three Qualcomm patents and should pay the chip-maker \$31 million for infringing on its technology,” the jury decided.

One Qualcomm patent allows a smartphone to quickly connect to the Internet once the device is turned on. Another one deals with graphics processing and battery life, while the third lets apps on smartphone download data more easily.

Interactive art ‘theme park’ to open in New York

A New York-based design studio is set to unveil an interactive art ‘theme park’ in the city that will host three playful installations a year. The exhibition titled “Snark Park”, will be displayed at a space in the city’s Hudson Yard area.

Previous interactive installations by the design studio, Snarkitecture, which was established in 2008 by Daniel Arsham and Alex Mustonen, took over galleries, shopping malls and public spaces around the world.

World commits to reduce single-use plastics by 2030

After five days of talks at the Fourth UN Environment Assembly in Nairobi ,Kenyan capital, ministers from more than 170 UN member states delivered a

bold blueprint for change, saying the world needed to speed up moves towards a new model of development in order to respect the vision laid out in the Sustainable Development Goals for 2030.

They also expressed support for UN Environment's efforts to develop a global environmental data strategy by 2025.

Cyclone Idai hits Mozambique, Malawi, Zimbabwe

Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi have been hit by a vicious cyclone that has killed nearly 150 people, left hundreds more missing and stranded tens of thousands.

According to the UN and government officials, Cyclone Idai has affected more than 1.5 million people in the three southern African countries.

Golden Globes sets 2020 date

The Hollywood Foreign Press Association has set next years Golden Globes ceremony for January 5, 2020.

The Globes fall just two days before Oscar nomination balloting closes on January 7 so Globes outcomes likely won't have as much of an impact on Academy voters as they may have had in 2019 when there was a bigger gap between the two dates.

Nominations for the 92nd Oscars will be announced on January 13, 2020 with the ceremony set for February

The 76th Golden Globe Awards held on January 7, 2019, witnessed all the diverse men and women take home trophies in a proud evening which turned slightly surprising when Bohemian Rhapsody and its lead star Rami Malek were declared as the Best Motion Picture (Drama) and the Best Actor, respectively.

China conducts world's 1st remote surgery using 5G

The first remote surgery on a human using 5G technology was successfully conducted in China.

The process was made possible with the low-latency 5G technology provided by Huawei and China Mobile, which enabled near instantaneous data transmission.

5G technology was used in a surgery conducted on a pig last year, when a doctor from 301 Hospital in Beijing removed part of a pig's liver using two robot arms in Fuzhou, the capital of East China's Fujian Province.

It was the world's first remote surgery using 5G mobile network technology on an animal.

SaaS start-up Freshworks opens office in Singapore

Chennai-based Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) unicorn Freshworks which provides Cloud-based business software has expanded to the Asean market with the setting up of a regional hub in Singapore.

By opening its first regional hub for the Asean market, Freshworks said it aims to expand adoption of its customer engagement suite and increase its network of partner resources to meet rising customer demand in the region.

The Freshworks regional hub was set up with support from the Singapore Economic Development Board (EDB).

EU regulators fine Google €1.49 billion for blocking rival online search advertisers

European Union (EU) antitrust regulators handed down a €1.49 billion fine to Google for blocking rival online search advertisers, marking the company's third penalty in two years.

EU's competition commissioner Margrethe Vestager announced the results of the long-running probe of Google's AdSense advertising business at a news conference in Brussels on Wednesday.

The commission found that Google and its parent company, Alphabet, breached the EU antitrust rules by imposing restrictive clauses in contracts with websites that used AdSense, preventing Google rivals from placing their ads on these sites.

Russian defence minister meets Syrian president

Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu visited Syria on the instruction of President Vladimir Putin and held talks with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

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Shoigu delivered a message from Putin to Assad, and they discussed fighting international terrorism in Syria, various aspects of security in the Middle East and post-conflict settlement.

US, Brazil sign space technology safeguard agreement

The US has signed an agreement with Brazil to protect its technology associated with US participation in space launches in the South American country.

The agreement is about “technology safeguards associated with US participation in space launches from Brazil.

Russia-US’ Venus space probe to be launched in 2027

A Russian-US joint interplanetary probe to Venus will be possibly launched in 2027.

“The launch windows in 2026, at the end of 2027, in 2029 and 2031 are being discussed. Even if the financing starts this year, we are missing the first date, so it will most likely be 2027”, Lyudmila Zasova, a researcher at the Space Research Institute under the Russian Academy of Sciences, was quoted as saying in an interview with Sputniknews agency.

The Venera-D space mission, a joint project to land on Venus, involves Russian orbital and landing gear and a small US scientific station.

US to build first exascale supercomputer in 2021

The US has disclosed its plan to build an exascale supercomputer, about seven times the speed rating of the most powerful system built to date.

The US Department of Energy (DOE) granted a \$500 million contract to Intel and sub-contractor Cray Computing and the supercomputer, called Aurora, will be delivered to the department’s Argonne National Laboratory near Chicago in 2021.

The IBM supercomputer is currently ranked the fastest computing system in the world, a notch occupied by China’s Sunway TaihuLight and Tianhe 2A for five years.

Kazakhstan President resigns after nearly 30 years in power

Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev has announced his resignation after nearly 30 years in power.

The 78-year old leader had ruled the country since it emerged from the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s.

Kazakhstan renames capital 'Nursultan' after ex-President

Kazakhstan has renamed its capital Astana to Nursultan to honour outgoing leader Nursultan Nazarbayev, who unexpectedly resigned .

The change was announced after Kassym-Jomart Tokayev was sworn in as president, promising to seek his predecessor's opinion on key decisions.

Mr Nazarbayev, 78, served nearly 30 years as leader of the oil-rich nation.

Finland ranked happiest country for second year

Finland has topped a global happiness ranking for the second year in a row. It beat Nordic peers Denmark, Norway and Iceland in a ranking of 156 countries by the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network.

The ranking saw the US drop one place, to 19th, while people in South Sudan were the least happy. India dropped seven ranks to the 140th place.

The results are based on an average of three years of surveys taken by Gallup between 2016 and 2018 and include factors such as gross domestic product, social support from friends and family, healthy life expectancy, freedom to make life choices, generosity, perceived corruption and recent emotions — both happy and sad.

Flipkart introduces robot-based sortation technology

Flipkart has introduced a robot-based sortation technology — Automated Guided Vehicles (AGVs) at its Soukya sortation center in Bengaluru. Designed to optimise efficiency and precision on the back-end of the supply chain, these AGVs will help Flipkart meet growing customer demand, ensuring faster delivery and a better experience for online shoppers.

The Soukya set-up involves over 100 self-guided bots that automatically sort packages to the right customer pincodes by identifying encoded information on

each package. It can process up to 4,500 shipments in an hour and can be scaled over five times with minimal changes, enabling better throughput from an existing facility, removing the need for space expansion and enabling the current manpower allocated to the task to be upskilled to do higher value-adding work.

Pakistan to receive over 2 billion US Dollars loan from China

Cash-strapped Pakistan will receive over 2 billion US Dollars loan from China to provide a boost to its ailing economy.

Pakistan's Finance Ministry has announced that all procedural formalities for the transfer of the 2.1 billion US Dollars loan being provided by the Chinese government have been completed, and the funds will be deposited in the State Bank of Pakistan's account .

Pakistan has received 1 billion US dollars each from Saudi Arabia and the UAE, as part of the bailout packages by the two Gulf nations to help shore up Islamabad's dwindling foreign currency reserves.

British PM at European Council summit in Brussels

British Prime Minister Theresa May is attending the crucial European Council summit at Brussels. At the meeting, Ms May will put her case before European Union leaders for an extension to the Brexit withdrawal process till 30th of June.

Talking to reporters ahead of the summit, the Prime Minister said, a short extension would give British Parliament time to make a final choice that delivers on the result of the referendum. She said, what matters is that they recognize that Brexit is the decision of the British people and they deliver on the vote of the people.

Marcelo Gleiser, Physicist, Wins 2019 Templeton Prize

Dartmouth College physicist and astronomer Marcelo Gleiser is the 2019 Templeton Prize winner, the Templeton Foundation announced. Born in Brazil, Gleiser is the first Latin American to be awarded the prize, which "recognizes living individuals for their contribution to affirming life's spiritual dimension," according to a statement from the foundation.

In addition to his role as Appleton professor of natural philosophy and a professor of physics and astronomy at Dartmouth, Gleiser is the author of five

books, including *The Dancing Universe* (Plume, 1998) and *The Island of Knowledge* (Basic, 2015).

Jimmy Carter becomes longest living chief executive in American history

Former US president Jimmy Carter has reached a milestone. Elected as the 39th President, Carter is now the longest living chief executive in American history. Today is the 172nd day beyond Carter's 94th birthday. It exceeds by one day the lifespan of former President George H.W. Bush, who died last November at the age of 94 years, 171 days. Both men were born in 1924: Bush on June 12, Carter on Oct. 1.

Italy becomes first G7 nation to join China's BRI

Despite a warning by United States, Italy joined China's signature foreign policy Belt and Road initiative (BRI), making it the first G7 country to officially do so reports Xinhua.

Norway to put world's 1st wireless e-cab charging stations

Norway's capital Oslo will become the world's first city to install wireless induction-based fast-charging systems for electric taxis, Reuters reported. Charging plates will be installed in the ground where taxis are parked, which will connect with receivers in taxis and allow them to charge for up to 75 kilowatts. Finland's Fortum is working on the project with America's Momentum Dynamics.

Oman signs agreement allowing United States military to use its port

Oman has signed an agreement with the United States that allow American ships and warplanes to take advantage of his ports and airports. The state-run Oman News Agency said the framework agreement is aimed at bolstering Omani-American military relations.

The agreement will allow the US forces to take advantage from the facilities offered at some of the Sultanate's ports and airports during visits of the US military vessels and aircraft, particularly in the port of Duqm, it said.

World's largest e-waste recycling hub opens in Dubai

The world's largest e-waste recycling facility has opened in Dubai. Located at the Dubai Industrial Park, the 280,000 square feet plant will process Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE), IT asset disposition (ITAD), refrigerant gas and specialised waste.

The facility will utilise state-of-the-art reclamation technology, which surpasses the European Union's standards for e-waste. It has a processing capacity of 100,000 tonnes of total integrated waste per year, of which 39,000 tonnes is e-waste.

Sri Lanka to launch Smart City concept

A Sri Lankan telecom official said that plans were underway to transform Polonnaruwa district into the country's first "Smart City" following several projects launched to upgrade education, health and transportation.

Sri Lanka Telecom (SLT) Chairman Kumarasinghe Sirisena told the media that the government was discussing the transformation of Polonnaruwa by launching the smart health, smart education, and smart transportation concept, which will accelerate economic development and social progress in the district, reports Xinhua news agency.

Under the government's Smart City project, 2,500 schools will be connected through a wireless connection to enable smart education in Sri Lanka.

Nikki Bella announces retirement from WWE

Actress-wrestler Nikki Bella has announced her retirement from the WWE. On the show "Total Bellas", Bella announced her decision saying she wanted to explore some new arena in her life.

Bella made her WWE debut back in 2007, her SmackDown debut with her twin sister, Brie Bella was in 2008, and has won the Divas Championship twice.

Kenyan science teacher Peter Tabichi wins \$1m global award

A science teacher from rural Kenya who donates most of his salary to help poorer students has been crowned the world's best teacher and awarded a \$1m prize, beating 10,000 nominations from 179 countries.

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Peter Tabichi, 36, a maths and physics teacher at Keriko secondary school in Pwani Village, in a remote part of Kenya's Rift Valley, has won the Varkey Foundation Global Teacher Prize 2019.

Apple partners with Goldman Sachs and Mastercard for Apple Card

Tech giant Apple is known for its hardware devices like the iPhone, MacBooks, iPods, Watch and software services like iOS, MacOS, Apple Music, Apple Pay, etc. At the 'It's Show Time' event held at the Steve Job's Theatre, Apple announced a new credit card called the Apple Card.

Apple card is a virtual credit card that can be integrated into the Wallet app of the iPhone. The company has partnered with Goldman Sachs and Mastercard for payment handling and processing.

Nepal Investment Summit to be organised on March 29-30

The Government of Nepal is organizing "Nepal Investment Summit 2019" on March 29 -30 in Kathmandu. Nepal's Finance Minister Dr. Yuba Raj Khatiwada said, the main objective of the event is to project Nepal as a favourable investment destination.

He said that summit will unveil potential opportunities for investment in various sectors in Nepal including Hydropower, Tourism, Infrastructure, Industry, Transport, Agriculture and Information and Communication Technology.

77 projects worth 31.93 billion dollars in various sectors will be showcased and 12 Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) will be signed during the summit. Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli will inaugurate the summit .

Israel unveils world's longest salt cave

Israeli researchers say they have discovered the world's longest salt cave near the desert site where, according to the Bible, Lot's wife was turned into a pillar of salt.

The 10-km long warren of underground passages and chambers in Mount Sodom, overlooking the Dead Sea, was mapped out over two years by cavers from nine countries, led by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. The cave is called Malham.

Germany adds six months to Saudi arms export ban

NSD Logo Germany has extended by six months an embargo on weapons exports to Saudi Arabia, instituted last October.

Government spokesman Steffen Seibert said in a statement order to halt authorised weapons exports to Saudi Arabia is extended by six months from March 31 to September 30, 2019.

Google dropped from LGBT equality index

An anti-LGBTQ app on the PlayStore that influences a person's sexual orientation using psychological or spiritual interventions has raised questions about Google's corporate equality ideals leading to the search engine's suspension from the CEI rating.

US-based LGBTQ civil rights advocacy group Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Foundation has suspended Google from its 2019 Corporate Equality Index (CEI) for failing to remove the app from PlayStore.

In 2018, Google scored a full 100 per cent on the CEI report.

2019 UNDP human development report to focus on inequality

The 2019 Human Development Report (HDR), with its **focus on inequality**, will be released around this year's last quarter, the UNDP said. The report will provide a comprehensive picture of the many forms of inequality that are shaping the 21st century. In a statement, the United Nations Development Programme acknowledged that today's world remains deeply unfair.

It said: "The life and prospects faced by a newborn in a poor country or in a poor household are radically different from those of wealthier children. In all societies, long-standing forms of inequality persist while gaps are opening in new aspects of life".

In world first, HIV-positive woman donates kidney to HIV-positive recipient

An Atlanta woman Nina Martinez became the first living HIV-positive kidney donor in the world when surgeons at Johns Hopkins Medicine in

Baltimore transferred her organ to a recipient who is also HIV-positive. Both the donor and the recipient, who wishes to remain anonymous, are doing well.

Nina Martinez, a 36-year-old public health consultant, acquired HIV as a 6-week-old in 1983, when she received a blood transfusion in the years before blood banks began routine testing for the virus. HIV damages the immune system and interferes with the body's ability to fight the organisms that cause disease.

Shanghai world's first district with 5G coverage, broadband gigabit network

Shanghai claimed has become the world's first district using both 5G coverage and broadband gigabit network as China seeks to establish lead over the US and other countries in the race to develop next generation cellular mobile communications.

5G is the next generation of cellular technology with download speeds that are 10 to 100 times faster than 4G LTE networks.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

GIMT to host two-day Smart India Hackathon in Guwahati

To solve the problems faced by the common people, MIRI, MIC, AICTE, i4c and Persistent Systems have come together to organise Smart India Hackathon (SIH) 2019. The two-day event will be held at Girijananda Chowdhury Institute of Management and Technology (GIMT) .

The SIH involves over 1 lakh technical students, more than 3000 technical institutions and 200 plus organizations from across India, said organisers in a statement.

For the first time, SI1-2019 in the series of such events also included problem statements from private sector and non-governmental organisations.

SpaceX launches unmanned US space capsule to space station

A SpaceX rocket with a newly designed unmanned crew capsule blasted off for the International Space Station, in a key milestone for Elon Musk's space company and NASA's long-delayed goal to resume human spaceflight from U.S. soil later this year.

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SpaceX's 16-foot-tall (4.9 meter) Crew Dragon capsule, atop a Falcon 9 rocket, lifted off from Florida's Kennedy Space Center .

DRDO Chairman honoured with Missile Systems Award by US-based AIAA

DRDO Chairman G Satheesh Reddy has been honoured with the prestigious Missile Systems Award by the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) for his excellence in the field of missile systems technology.

Mr. Reddy will be awarded the Missile Systems Award 2019 along with Arizona-based Raytheon Missile Systems' Rondell J Wilson, the Virginia-based professional society of aerospace engineering announced in a statement. The 55-year-old renowned scientist was appointed as the chairman of Defence Research Development Organisation (DRDO) last year.

ISRO Unveils 'Young Scientist' Programme to Train Students in Space Science

State-run Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) announced the launch of its Young Scientist programme to train class 9 students in space technology and its applications.

"ISRO has launched the special programme for school children 'Yuva Vigyani Karyakram' (Young Scientist programme) to impart basic knowledge on space technology, space science and applications to the young ones to arouse their interest in space activities.

Nasa astronauts to carry out first all-female spacewalk

NASA astronauts Anne McClain and Christina Koch will conduct an all-female spacewalk for the first time in history, along with Canadian Space Agency flight controller Kristen Facciol.

As part of Expedition 59, NASA astronauts McClain and Koch will carry out the spacewalk on March 29. They'll be supported on the ground by Facciol, who will be on the console at NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston.

Pinaka guided weapons system successfully test fired

Defence Research and Development organisation, DRDO successfully test fired the PINAKA guided WEAPON rocket system from Pokhran range in Rajasthan. the weapon system is equipped with state-of-the-art guidance kit comprising of an advanced navigation and control system. The weapon systems impacted the intended targets with high precision and achieved desired accuracies.

PNB sanctions loans worth Rs 689 crore to 1,600 MSMEs via 59-minute loan portal

State-owned Punjab National Bank (PNB) has sanctioned loans worth Rs 689 crore to over 1,600 Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) through the psbloansin59minutes.com portal as part of its effort to promote such industries.

Under the Mudra Yojana, the bank has offered loan to over 2.69 lakh small entrepreneurs this fiscal (till February 14, 2019).

DRDO test fires successfully Man Portable Anti-tank Guided Missile

In a major boost for Army, Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully test fired indigenously developed, low weight, fire and forget Man Portable Anti-Tank Guided Missile (MPATGM) for the second time in the ranges of Rajasthan desert.

MPATGM is incorporated with advanced features including state-of-the-art Imaging Infrared Radar (IIR) Seeker with integrated avionics. The first test was conducted on 13th March 2019. In both the missions, the missiles hit the designated targets precisely at different ranges. All the mission objectives have been met.

IIT Roorkee ties up with ISRO for space tech cell

The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Roorkee in Uttarakhand tied up with the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) to set up a Space Technology Cell at its campus. The ISRO-IIT Roorkee Space Technology Cell shall pursue advanced research in the areas of relevance to the future technological and programmatic needs of the Indian space programme.

The cell shall ensure to maximise the use of research potential, infrastructure, expertise and experience that exist in ISRO and IIT Roorkee. The institute will be providing the infrastructure and administrative support in setting up of the cell.

First Afghan shipment to India via Chabahar arrives in Mumbai's Nhava Sheva port

In a major boost to ties between India and Afghanistan, the first Afghan shipment to India via Chabahar arrived at Nhava Sheva port in Mumbai. The 570 tonnes of consignment contained mung beans and talc.

Xiaomi launches Mi Pay to take on Google Pay, Paytm

Aiming to take on the likes of Google Pay and Paytm, Chinese handset maker Xiaomi launched its Unified Payments Interface (UPI)-based payments application "Mi Pay" for its MIUI users in India.

According to the company, the Mi Pay service aims to be an all-in-one payments solution for its users. It would be available for all Xiaomi devices running its proprietary MIUI OS based on Android.

Mobile app developed by IIPHG, PHFI to combat exam pressure

A mobile application to cope with exam related stress and anxiety for students and their parents has been developed by Indian Institute of Public Health Gandhinagar, Gujarat, (IIPHG) in collaboration with National Mental Health Program, Department of Health and Family Welfare, Government of Gujarat. The mobile application is called 'Conquer Exam, Be a Warrior.'

IBM creates Blockchain-based global payment network

Information Technology (IT) major IBM has created a Blockchain-based global payment network that transmits monetary value in the form of digital assets, commonly known as cryptocurrencies or "stable coins."

The payment network called World Wire uses the Stellar protocol that reduces intermediaries and allows users to accelerate settlement time. World Wire has already enabled payment locations in 72 countries, with 47 currencies and 44 banking endpoints.

SpiceJet becomes first Indian low-cost airline to join IATA

SpiceJet has joined global airlines' grouping IATA as a member, becoming the first Indian low-cost carrier to get the membership. The International Air

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Transport Association (IATA) represents more than 290 airlines, including Air India, Jet Airways and Vistara.

The membership allows the airline to “explore and grow its collaborations with international member airlines of IATA through interlining and code shares, enabling SpiceJet to seamlessly expand the network options for its passengers in future.

India will launch electronic intelligence satellite Emisat on April 1

India on April 1 will launch an electronic intelligence satellite Emisat for the Defence Research Development Organisation (DRDO) along with 28 third party satellites and also demonstrate its new technologies like three different orbits with a new variant of PSLV rocket, ISRO said .

According to Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), a new variant of its Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) rocket will first put the 436 kg Emisat into a 749 km orbit.

INS Kadmatt at Langkawi, Malaysia to Participate in LIMA-19

Indian Navy's frontline ASW corvette, INS Kadmatt arrived at Langkawi, Malaysia on a seven days official visit. The ship is scheduled to participate in the 15th edition of Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace Exhibition, LIMA-19 during the visit. Vice Admiral Karambir Singh, PVSM, AVSM, ADC, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Naval Command would also be attending various engagements as part of LIMA 19 as head of Indian Navy Delegation

INS Kadmatt (P 29) is an indigenous stealth anti-submarine warfare corvette and was commissioned into the Indian Navy in January 2016.

ISRO to launch 29 satellites including EMISAT on first of April

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will launch 29 satellites including the primary payload EMISAT, on the first of April. Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle, PSLV-C45 will take off from Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota tentatively at 9:30 AM carrying the satellites onboard.

EMISAT has been developed for monitoring radar network by India. An ISRO release says, EMISAT, weighing 436 kg, is intended for electromagnetic spectrum

measurement. It will be placed in an orbit of about 753 km altitude. The customer payloads are from Lithuania, Spain, Switzerland and the US. They will be hurled into space at an altitude of about 505 km.

India successfully tests anti-satellite missile

Defence Research and Development Organisation, DRDO on Wednesday successfully conducted an Anti-Satellite (A-SAT) missile test, Mission Shakti from Dr A P J Abdul Kalam Island in Odisha.

A DRDO – developed Ballistic Missile, Defence Interceptor Missile successfully engaged an Indian orbiting target satellite in Low Earth Orbit (LEO) in a Hit to Kill mode. the interceptor missile was a three-stage missile with two solid rocket boosters. Tracking data from range sensors has confirmed that the mission met all its objectives.

India gets anti-satellite capability to become space superpower: PM

India became “a space superpower” by becoming the fourth country to acquire anti-satellite capability, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced.

“Our scientists, a little while ago, have targeted a live satellite in space 300 km away in low earth orbit,” he said .

“The pre-fixed target was destroyed by the A-SAT in just three minutes. With this, India has established itself as a space superpower.”Mission Shakti was a difficult operation but a huge success,” the Prime Minister added.

IIT-Delhi develops AI-based system to detect malaria, other diseases

Researchers at the **Indian Institute of Technology-Delhi** have developed an Artificial Intelligence-based electronic hardware system to detect malaria, tuberculosis, intestinal parasite, and cervical cancer in milliseconds. their system can be used for healthcare access in resource-constrained areas with limited access to human specialists.

“Microscopy-based diagnosis depends on availability of skilled technicians, of which there is a critical shortage. As a result, diagnoses are often made on the basis of clinical signs and symptoms alone, which is error-prone,” the institute said.

ISRO to launch country's latest observation satellite EMISAT

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will launch the country's latest observation satellite EMISAT.

The launch vehicle PSLV-C45 will lift off from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre, in Sriharikotta at with EMISAT and 28 other customer payloads. The countdown for the launch mission is progressing smoothly at the launchpad.

SPORTS

Federer 2 wins from 100th title after reaching Dubai semis

In Dubai Tennis Championship, Swiss tennis star Roger Federer moved to within two wins of a 100th career title after a tough win against Marton Fucsovics to reach the semi-finals. The seven-time champion beat his Hungarian opponent 7-6 6-4. The 20-time Grand Slam winner will face Borna Coric today after the Croatian defeated Nikoloz Basilashvili of Georgia 4-6, 6-2, 7-6.

Shashank Shekhar wins 10 km race of Nepal's COAS Open Marathon and Run for Fun in Kathmandu

India's Shashank Shekhar won the 10 kilometre race of Nepal's Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Open Marathon and Run for Fun held in Kathmandu. Shekhar of Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) Contingent at Embassy of India in Kathmandu secured first position.

RD Murgan also from CISF got third place. A total nine CISF personnel participated in 10 KM race category. The remaining seven personnel also successfully completed run and received Certificate of Achievement.

COAS Open Marathon and Run for Fun is an annual event organised by the Nepal Army.

Cricket set for Asian Games return in 2022

Cricket is set for a return at the Asian Games after the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) on March 3 included it in the sports programme for the 2022 edition in Hangzhou. The decision was taken at the OCA's General Assembly in Bangkok.

Cricket was dropped from the 2018 Asian Games in Indonesia after featuring in 2010 and 2014, albeit without the presence of game's powerhouse India. India opted out of the quadrennial event owing to the team's congested scheduling.

Wrestler Bajrang Punia wins gold in Bulgaria

India's star wrestler Bajrang Punia has won a gold medal in 65-kilogram freestyle in Bulgaria. The tournament is being held at the Dan Kolov-Nikola Petrov in Ruse. Punia dedicated the victory to Indian Air Force Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman, from whom Punia said he got inspiration.

Punia, a World Championship silver medallist, overpowered Jordan Oliver of USA 12-3 in the final yesterday. He also secured the maximum ranking points from the tournament.

This was Punia's 10th medal in as many international tournaments since the 2017 World Championships in Paris.

ICC bans former Zimbabwe Cricket Director Enock Ikope for 10 years

Former Zimbabwe Cricket Director Enock Ikope has been banned from all cricket for 10 years after the ICC Anti-Corruption Tribunal found him guilty of non-cooperation and obstruction of investigations.

The Tribunal heard evidence that the ACU had established information during its investigation into the corrupt approach made by Rajan Nayer to Zimbabwe cricket Captain Graeme Cremer, which gave the ACU reasonable grounds to suspect that Ikope may have engaged in corrupt conduct under the Code.

Sultan Azlan Shah Cup: Manpreet Singh named captain of Indian hockey team

Manpreet Singh was named captain of the 18-member Indian hockey team to play in the upcoming 28th Sultan Azlan Shah Cup. The prestigious tournament will be held in Ipoh, Malaysia from the 23rd of this month.

Apart from India and hosts Malaysia, the other participating nations in the tournament are Canada, Korea, South Africa, Asian Games gold medallist Japan. India, will start its campaign against Japan on the opening day itself.

Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports recognises Kudo International Federation India as National Sport Federation

Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports has granted provisional recognition to Kudo International Federation India(KIFI) as National Sport Federation with immediate effect. The grant of recognition is subject to compliance of the provisions of National Sports Development Code of India, 2011 as modified from time to time, by the federation including displaying information on their website as per the instructions issued by the Ministry.

Rohit joint-fastest to reach 3,000 ODI runs in a country

Indian opener Rohit Sharma became the joint-fastest to reach 3,000 ODI runs in a country after going past the landmark in the fourth ODI against Australia on Sunday. Rohit achieved the feat in India in his 57th innings, with Hashim Amla achieving the feat in 57 innings in South Africa. Virat Kohli achieved the feat in India in 63 innings.

Assam's Shiva Thapa wins silver at GeeBee Boxing Tournament in Finland

Three-time Asian medallist Shiva Thapa (60 kg) has brought laurels to Assam and the country by winning silver at the 38th GeeBee Boxing Tournament in Finland's Helsinki .

India's Kavinder Singh Bisht (56kg) struck gold while four others including Thapa claimed silver medals to end a fine Indian campaign at the tournament on Sunday.

Besides Shiva Thapa, the other silver medallists are Govind Sahani (49 kg), Commonwealth Games bronze-medallist Mohammed Hussamuddin (56 kg) and Dinesh Dagar (69 kg).

Prajnesh Gunneswaran stuns Nikoloz Basilashvili at Indian Wells

In tennis, Indian qualifier Prajnesh Gunneswaran achieved the biggest win of his career when he stunningly knocked world number 18 Nikoloz Basilashvili out of the Indian Wells ATP Masters event in the USA.

Playing his maiden singles main draw at this level, Prajnesh secured a hard-fought 6-4, 6-7, 7-6 victory over the Georgian in two hours 32 minutes. Prajnesh will next face world number 89 Croatia's Ivo Karlovic in the third round.

India hunt for 5th straight title at SAFF Women's Championship

The Indian women's football team will be gunning for their fifth consecutive title when the SAFF Women's Championship kicks off. Six teams are taking part in this edition. Indian eves are scheduled to take on the Maldives and Sri Lanka in the group stage on March 13 and 17, respectively.

Zinedine Zidane re-appointed as coach of Spanish football club Real Madrid till 2022

Zinedine Zidane has been re-appointed as the coach of Spanish football club Real Madrid till 2022. The Frenchman replaces Santiago Solari, who was sacked after less than five months in charge. Former Real midfielder Zidane had resigned from the club after leading it to three consecutive Champions League titles.

Sailor Upamanyu Dutta clinches bronze in Asian regatta

Young Mumbai sailor Upamanyu Dutta bagged the bronze medal in the Laser Standard race for men in the Laser Asian Sailing Championship which concluded in Singapore. Nethra Kumanan of Chennai achieved a creditable 4th position in the Laser Radial event for women. The championship saw tight racing between the top Asian Laser sailors who used the event to warm up before the Olympic sailing qualifier event for the upcoming Laser class scheduled in Japan.

Indian Embassy awards 200 scholarships to meritorious Nepali students

The Embassy of India, Kathmandu awarded 200 Golden Jubilee Scholarships to meritorious Nepali students for continuing their studies in various undergraduate courses at different Universities and Colleges in Nepal.

Awarding the certificates to meritorious students in Kathmandu, Nepal's Secretary of Education Khaga Raj Baral said India has been providing valuable support for the development of education in Nepal. He said with the Government of India scholarships Nepali students have excelled in various fields and it has helped in human resource development of Nepal.

SBI launches doorstep banking service for senior citizens over 70 & differently-abled

State Bank of India (SBI) has launched doorstep banking service for senior citizens over 70 years of age and differently-abled customers. Eligible customers can avail this service at a nominal fee of 100 rupees per transaction for financial transactions and 60 rupees for non-financial transactions.

doorstep banking services are available to KYC- compliant account holders, with a valid mobile number registered with the bank and residing within 5 kilometres radius from their home branch. This service will not be available for accounts operated jointly, minor accounts, and accounts of non-personal nature.

Special Olympics World Games 2019 to begin at Abu Dhabi in UAE

Special Olympics World Games 2019 begin at Abu Dhabi in UAE . The event has already made history by welcoming a record-breaking 200 nations at the Games. Of the 200 nations, 195 will compete in the Games and five will observe.

Held in the West Asia for the first time, 7,500 athletes will take part in 24 Olympic-style sports over seven days. With the highest number of women taking part and the largest number of Unified teammates on board, the World Games will capture the attention of the globe.

SC appoints P.S. Narasimha as mediator to resolve disputes of cricket administration in BCCI

The Supreme Court appointed senior advocate P.S. Narasimha, who is assisting the apex court as an amicus curiae in the BCCI matter, as mediator for resolving various disputes related to cricket administration in the country.

A bench of Justices S.A. Bobde and A.M. Sapre was informed by Mr. Narasimha that former apex court judge Justice (retd) D.K. Jain has assumed charge as the ombudsman of Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI).

JP Duminy to retire from ODIs after ICC World Cup 2019

South African all-rounder JP Duminy announced that he would retire from ODIs after the ICC World Cup in England. Duminy will, however, continue to be available for South Africa in T20 internationals.

Duminy, who announced his retirement from Test and first class cricket in 2017, said “the time is right” to close this chapter of his international career.

FIFA mulls expanding 2022 World Cup to 48 teams

The 2022 football Qatar World Cup may see an expansion from 32 to 48 teams, the FIFA President Giovanni Infantino, has said.

FIFA decided in 2018 that the 2026 World Cup, to be hosted by the US, Canada and Mexico, would use the new 48-team format. The feasibility study has identified potential venues in Qatar’s neighbourhood Bahrain, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Oman and the United Arab Emirates that could host the 16 additional matches.

India to host FIFA U-17 Women’s World Cup in 2020

India were awarded the rights to host the FIFA U17 Women’s World Cup in 2020. The decision to award the rights to India was taken at the FIFA Council meeting in Miami .

By virtue of being the host country, India will take part in the tournament for the first time in its history. In 2017, India had hosted the Under-17 Men’s FIFA World Cup.

Argentina, Colombia set to be co-hosts of 2020 Copa America

Argentina and Colombia are poised to co-host the 2020 Copa America after South America’s ruling body CONMEBOL once again ruled out a US proposal to host the tournament.

CONMEBOL, which comprises the 10 member federations in South America, said in a statement it had accepted “the nomination of Argentina and Colombia as joint venues for the 2020 edition of the Copa America.”

India thrash Sri Lanka by 5-0 in 5th SAFF Women’s C’ship

Defending champion India thrashed Sri Lanka by 5-0 in the 5th South Asian Football Federation, SAFF Women’s Championship in Biratnagar, Nepal . Indian girls dominated the entire game and took a 4-0 lead in the first half. Grace Dangmei, Sandhya Ranganathan, Indumati and Sangeeta scored goals.

This is team India's 21st victory and it has won the championship four times in the past.

Kohli, Bumrah retain top spots in ICC ODI rankings

India skipper Virat Kohli and pacer Jasprit Bumrah have retained their top positions in the batsmen and bowlers' list of the latest ICC ODI rankings. Kohli remained at number one spot after scoring 310 in the recently-concluded home series against Australia while his deputy Rohit Sharma hit 202 runs to maintain the No.2 spot in the batting chart.

Kedar Jadhav's all-round effort has helped him move up 11 places to a career-best 24th after the five-match series, which India lost 2-3. Meanwhile, South Africa opener Quinton de Kock has grabbed fourth position after playing a huge part in his team's 5-0 victory over Sri Lanka. New Zealand's Ross Taylor has maintained the number three spot.

In bowlers' list, Bumrah is sitting at the top with 774 points. Among others, New Zealand fast bowler Trent Boult has moved up a place to second. The all-rounders' table continued to be headed by Rashid Khan. However, there are no Indian figures in the top-5.

Special Olympics: India bags 70 medals

In Special Olympics, India have bagged 70 medals including 18 golds, 22 silver and 30 bronze, so far, at Abu Dhabi. Team Bharat clinched a whopping 55 medals, including 14 gold.

In Roller Skating, Supreet Singh from Haryana in 1000-meter, Rishabh Jain from New Delhi in 1000-meter and Priya Prakash Gada from Maharashtra in 100-meter won a Gold Medal each. Amanjot Singh won gold in the squat contest after lifting 385kg.

Indian roller skaters bagged a staggering 29 medals comprising nine golds, 13 silver and two bronze.

FIFA to make public the vote for 2023 Women's World Cup

FIFA will make public its vote on the host for the 2023 Women's World Cup. It could be the most hotly contested bidding process for the tournament, which was

first staged in 1991. Australia, Colombia, Japan and South Africa have been exploring bids. South Korea submitted a proposal to DPK Korea to jointly bid.

The United States, Canada and Mexico were chosen last year to host the 2026 World Cup. The votes by the FIFA Congress of all member associations were published. Previously, the decisions were taken in private by FIFA executive committee, which was renamed the FIFA Council in 2016.

Athlete Irfan qualifies for Tokyo Olympics

Indian athlete K.T. Irfan has qualified for the Tokyo Olympics as he finished fourth in the men's 20 kilometre category at the Asian Race Walking Championships .

The 29-year-old clocked 1 hour 20 minutes and 57 seconds to finish inside the Olympic qualification standard of 1 hour and 21 minutes.

The Kerala athlete holds the national record of 1:20:21 which he achieved during his 10th place finish at the 2012 Olympics in London. He also qualified for this year's World Championships as he bettered the qualifying mark of 1:22:30.

18-yr-old Diksha 2nd Indian golfer to win on Ladies European Tour

Eighteen-year-old Diksha Dagar became the second Indian to win an event on Ladies European Tour after clinching South African Women's Open in Cape Town. Aditi Ashok was the first Indian to win on the Ladies European Tour after clinching Hero Women's Indian Open in Gurugram in 2016. Dagar had finished tied-fifth at the NSW Open last week.

Athletics: India finishes second in medal tally at Asian Youth C'ships

In Asian Youth Athletics Championships in Hong Kong, boys medley relay team won a gold medal for India on the final day to help Indian youth team finish second in the overall medals tally with a total of 26 medals including eight gold, nine silver and nine bronze medals.

China topped the overall medals tally with 31 medals that included 12 gold, 11 silver and eight bronze medals and Japan finished third with 20 medals that included 6 Gold, 8 Silver and 6 bronze.

Senior journalist, environmental activist Darryl D'Monte passes away at 74

Senior journalist and environmental activist Darryl D'Monte, who worked with leading English dailies, died at a hospital in Mumbai after a brief illness. He was 74.

Gopi Thonakal qualifies for World Athletics Championships

In marathon, India's Asian champion Gopi Thonakal has qualified for the World Athletics Championships to be held in the Qatari capital Doha in September-October this year. He achieved qualification after finishing 11th in the Seoul International Marathon yesterday, clocking his personal best time of 2 hours 13 minutes 39 seconds.

The Seoul International Marathon is a world class IAAF Gold label event. Gopi's time was the second best ever by an Indian after the four-decade old national record of 2 hours 12 minutes, held by Shivnath Singh. Gopi also bettered the World Championships qualification mark of 2 hrs. and 16 minutes.

Rajasthan Royals launches cricket academy in UK

The Indian Premier League (IPL) franchise Rajasthan Royals launched its first cricket academy in the UK.

The Star Cricket Academy based at Reed's School in Surrey joined hands with Rajasthan Royals to relaunch the facility as the 'Rajasthan Royals Academy'. It has a state-of-the-art cricket centre named the Jarrett Centre with an indoor cricket training facility run by former professional batsman Siddharth Lahiri, along with his team of elite coaches including former England international and mentor to the academy, Keith Medlycott.

India loses hosting rights of Davis Cup, Fed Cup due to closure of Pak air space

The closure of Pakistan's air space in the aftermath of the Balakot air strikes has resulted in India losing the hosting rights of the junior Davis Cup and Fed Cup. The junior Davis Cup was to be held at the DLTA complex from April 8-13 while the Fed cup matches were scheduled from April 15-20.

Both the competitions will now be held in Bangkok, Thailand.

Hockey India Coaching Education Pathway launched

In an effort to develop coaches from the grassroot level and enable them to meet the requirements and the ever-growing demands of international hockey, the sport's governing body in India launched the Hockey India Coaching Education Pathway.

The meticulously designed programme aims to provide certification to those candidates who are already coaches or wish to pursue coaching as a career. The programme consists of a combination of web-based modules and face-to-face interactive courses, underpinned by a competency based assessment process.

IPL opening ceremony funds donated to armed forces

In the wake of the Pulwama terror attacks and keeping in mind the sentiments of the people, the Supreme Court appointed Committee of Administrators (CoA), administering the BCCI, has decided to cancel the opening ceremony of the Indian Premier League (IPL) and donate the money budgeted for it to the armed forces.

“The estimated cost of hosting an IPL opening ceremony is Rs 20 crore. It was unanimously decided that a sum of Rs 11 crore be contributed to the Indian Army, Rs 7 crore to the CRPF and Rs 1 crore each to the Navy and Air Force respectively,” the board said in a statement .

World boxing chief Rahimov resigns

International Boxing Federation (AIBA) president Gafur Rahimov has resigned on the eve of the decisive IOC executive meeting, In a statement, Rahimov rejected the allegations of him having ties to organized crime and announced his resignation late on Friday, reports Xinhua news agency.

Rahimov, an Uzbek businessman who has been accused by the US authorities of having ties to organized crime, was elected the president of AIBA in November last year.

India clinch SAFF Women's C'ship for fifth time

In football, India has clinched the SAFF Women's Championship for the fifth time in a row, defeating hosts Nepal 3-1 in the final at Biratnagar. In the first half,

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Dalmia Chhibber of India scored the first goal of the match which was equalled by Nepal's Sabitra Bhandari at the 33rd minute.

In the second half, Grace Dengmei scored the second goal at 63rd minute and Anju Tamang scored third and decisive goal in the 76th minute. This was India's 23rd straight victory in the championship since its inception in 2010.

Suresh Raina Beats Virat Kohli, Becomes First Player To Reach 5000 Runs In IPL

As the twelfth edition of the Indian Premier League (IPL) came calling with a scintillating contest between Chennai Super Kings (CSK) and Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB), the cricket fans geared up for multiple individual clashes that the opening match had to offer.

Amongst the key battles, there was one between Suresh Raina and the RCB skipper in the race to reach 5,000 runs in the IPL. Ahead of the IPL opener, Raina had amassed 4,985 runs in 3,601 balls (1167 dots, 1533 singles, 256 twos, 11 threes, 448 fours, 1 five and 185 sixes) in the tournament. He was just 15 runs shy of becoming the first player to score 5,000 IPL runs.

Shotgun legend Rhode wins World Cup gold medal

The 40-year-old shotgun legend Kimberly Rhode added another gold to her enormous shooting-medal collection by claiming the title at the women's skeet event of the 2019 ISSF Shotgun World Cup here.

A total of 57 targets hit brought the American her 19th personal ISSF World Cup gold medal on Sunday. New Zealander Chloe Tipple brought home the silver with 48 hits. Zhang Donglian from China won the bronze medal.

Savita Punia to lead Indian women's hockey team in Malaysia tour

Goalkeeper Savita will captain an 18-strong Indian women's hockey team for the five-match series against Malaysia starting from 4th of next month. Hockey India announced that Savita will stand in for regular skipper Rani Rampal, who is nursing an injury.

Manu Bhaker-Saurabh Chaudhary bag Gold medal in 10m Air Pistol Mixed event at Asian Airgun C'ship

In Shooting, Manu Bhaker and Saurabh Chaudhary have bagged a Gold medal in the 10-metre Air Pistol Mixed team event at the 12th Asian Airgun Championship at Taoyuan in Taipei. The teenage Indian duo went on to win the five-team final with a score of 484.8 points.

The pair made it to the Final after smashing the world record in the qualification. 17-year-old Manu and 16-year-old Saurabh shot a combined score of 784, breaking the record set by Russians Vitalina Batsarashkina and Artem Chernousov at the European Championships.

Bajrang, Rani, Pant, Bhaker receive DSJA awards

Asian Games gold medallist wrestler Bajrang Punia, hockey star Rani Rampal, cricketer Rishabh Pant and pistol shooting sensation Manu Bhaker were presented the Delhi Sports Journalists Association (DSJA) best sportspersons awards by the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) President Narinder Dhruv Batra.

31-year-old Hopman Cup replaced by new ATP Cup

The city of Perth in Western Australia (WA) will no longer play host to the Hopman Cup, Tennis Australia confirmed. Instead, the mixed tournament format will be replaced with an all men's event called the ATP (Association of Tennis Professionals) Cup.

Played across three cities, Perth will join Sydney and Brisbane as the hosts of the new competition which is set to feature 100 of the world's top male players.

"With 750 ATP ranking points and approximately 22 million Australian dollars (\$15.6 million) in prize money, the ATP Cup is guaranteed to attract the best international tennis players to Perth every summer," WA tourism minister Paul Papalia said.

BCCI ombudsman Jain doubles up as ethics officer

Supreme Court-appointed BCCI ombudsman retired Justice D.K. Jain will now double up as the ethics officer of the Indian cricket board. It comes after the

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Committee of Administrators (CoA) requested the apex court to appoint an ethics officer who would look into matters of conflict of interest.

India beat Poland 10-0 at Azlan Shah Cup

India defeated Poland 10-0 in their final league match of Sultan Azlan Shah Cup hockey tournament at Ipoh in Malaysia .

Aussie football legend Tim Cahill officially retires

After four World Cups, an illustrious club career and having risen to the rank of Australian sporting icon, **Tim Cahill** has officially quit professional football. In November, the 39-year-old announced he will no longer represent Australia at an international level even though he continued to play for Jamshedpur FC in the Indian Super League.

Gonzalo Higuain retires from international football

Argentine striker Gonzalo Higuain has announced his retirement from international football at the age of 31. Higuain has not played for the Albiceleste since last year's World Cup in Russia as manager Lionel Scaloni looks to revamp his squad for this year's Copa America, reported Xinhua news agency. Higuain is sixth on the list of Argentina's all-time top scorers with 31 goals in 67 matches in an international career that spanned a decade.

OBITUARY

Name of the Person Died	Associated Field
Valmiki Mehta	Delhi High Court judge
Zhores Alferov	Russian physicist and Nobel laureate
Qazi Mohammad Afzal	Former Jammu and Kashmir minister and senior Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) leader
V. Dhananjaya Kumar	Former Union minister

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Luke Perry	American actor
Mohan Adhikari	Former Deputy Prime Minister
Vinod Kashyap	Veteran Hindi Newsreader
Kelly Catlin	US Olympic medallist cyclist
Y.S.Vivekananda Reddy	YSR Congress party leader and former Andhra Pradesh Minister
Johnny “Lam”	Former Texas Longhorns star and Olympic gold medalist
Manohar Parrikar	Goa Chief Minister and former defence minister
Chinmoy Roy	Veteran Bengali actor
Alan Krueger	Economic adviser to former US President Barack Obama
C.S. Shivalli	Karnataka Minister for Municipal Administration
Haku Shah	Renowned Indian artist
Vinjamuri Anasuya Devi	Noted folk artist, music director and writer
Bruce Yardle	Former Australian Test cricketer, coach and commentator
Ranking Roger	British musician
Ashita	Malayalam writer and poet
Valery Bykovsky	Pioneering Russian cosmonaut
Agnes Varda	French filmmaker

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IMPORTANT DAYS

Date	Day	Themes
1 March	Zero Discrimination Day	
1 March	World Civil Defense Day	'Children's safety, our responsibility'
3 March	World Wild life Day	'Life below Water: for People and Planet'
3 March	National Defense Day	
3 March	World Hearing Day	
4 March	National Safety Day	'Cultivate and Sustain a Safety Culture for Building Nation'
8 March	International Women's Day	'Think equal, build smart, innovate for change'
10 March	CISF Raising Day	
11 March	Commonwealth Day	A Connected Commonwealth'
14 March	Pi Day	
14 March	International Day of Action for Rivers	
15 March	World Sleep Day	'Healthy Sleep, Healthy Aging'
15 March	World Consumer Rights Day	'Trusted Smart Products'
16 March	National Vaccination Day	
18 March	Ordnance Factories Day (India)	

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18 March	Global Recycling Day	'Recycling into the Future'
20 March	World Sparrow Day	'I Love Sparrows'
20 March	International Day of Happiness	'Happier Together'
21 March	World Forestry Day	Forests and Education
21 March	World Down syndrome Day	'Leave No One Behind'
21 March	World Poetry Day	
22 March	World Water Day	'Leaving no one behind'
23 March	World Meteorological Day	'The Sun, the Earth and the Weather'
24 March	World Tuberculosis (TB) Day	'It's Time'
27 March	World Theatre Day	