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AWARDS & HONOURS

Name of the Award	Award Winner	Additional Information
Ikhamanga Award 2019	Jacques Kallis	
player award at the fourth edition of the annual India Golf Industry Association (GIA) awards	Star golfer Gaganjeet Bhullar	
National Intellectual Property Award	Benny Antony	
Tagore Literary Prize , 2019	Rana Dasgupta	For his 2010 novel “Solo”, a tale of estrangement and the ultimate failure of material existence.
‘AIMA Managing India Award 2019	Indian Oil Corporation (IOC)	For outstanding PSU of the year
Saraswati Samman 2018	Telugu poet K Siva Reddy	For his collection of poetry titled Pakkaki Ottigilite.
Billion Edtech Prize 2019	India’s education technology startup ‘Dost Education’	
Deenanath Mangeshkar Award	National Award-winning filmmaker Madhur Bhandarkar, popular scriptwriter Salim Khan and yesteryears dancing diva Helen	
Beijing International Film Festival , the best cinematography award	Malayalam film Bhayanakam (Fear)	Directed by Jayaraj
Global Sports Fan Award	Sugumar D, fan of Indian skipper Virat Kohli.	

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The Celent Model Bank 2019 Award	Fincare Small Finance Bank (SFB)	in the category of Financial Inclusion, for 'Redesigning Lending to Reach Small Businesses'.
World Press Photo of the Year award	Image titled "Crying Girl on the Border"	
Lifetime Achievement Award during 4th APJ Abdul Kalam Innovation Conclave	Dr A K Singh	
Global Remittances List	India (Top) \$79 billion	India was followed by China (\$67 billion), Mexico (\$36 billion), the Philippines (\$34 billion), and Egypt (\$29 billion)
ESPN India Multi-Sport Awards (sportsperson of the year)	Olympic silver medallist P.V. Sindhu and star javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra	
Comeback of the Year	Saina Nehwal (badminton)	
Coach of the Year	Jaspal Rana (shooting)	
Emerging Sportsperson of the Year	Saurabh Chaudhary (shooting)	
Team of the Year	Women's team (table tennis)	
Match of the Year	Amit Panghal vs Hasanboy Dusmatov (boxing)	
Differently-abled athlete of the Year	Ekta Bhan (para-athletics)	
Moment of the Year	Women's 4x400m relay	
Lifetime Achievement	Pradip Kumar Banerjee	

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Award	(football).	
2019 John Dirks Canada Gairdner Global Health Award	Vikram Patel	
UAE confers prestigious Zayed Medal	Narendra Modi	

APPOINTMENTS

Name of the Person	Name of the Position	Additional Information
Claire Polosak	Australia's first woman umpire to stand in men's ODI	The national honour is bestowed by the President of South Africa
S. H. S Kottegoda	Secretary of Defence, Sri Lanka	
M K Sharma, committee	To formulate design policy for building construction	
Karnam Sekar	The new Managing Director and CEO of Indian Overseas Bank	
Benny Antony, Joint Managing Director,	National Intellectual Property Award	
Ex-army chief Dalbir Singh	India high commissioner to Seychelles	
Rajendra Kumar Nayak	52nd Controller General of Defence Accounts	
Manish Maheshwari	Twitter India MD	
Volodymyr Zelenskiy	Ukrainian President	
Sairee Chahal	Board of directors, Paytm	

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	Payments Bank Ltd	
Kaushik Shaparia	Deutsche Bank , India head	
Ravinder Kumar Passi	Chairman of EPCH	Passi, who was previously the vice chairman of EPCH, has taken charge as the chairman from his predecessor O P Prahladka.
Sanjay Manohar	McAfee , Managing director for India	
Gursimran Singh	Vice President of the Delhi Hockey Association (DHA)	
Mithali Raj	Goodwill ambassador for Street Child Cricket World Cup	
Mohammed Ishtaye	Palestinian PM	
Mahendra Singh Dhoni	RedBus , Brand Ambassador	
Rishabh Pant and Shreyas Iyer	Boost, , Brand Ambassador	Boost is one of the leading brands in the health food/drinks category.
BK Nayak	Chair of Health and Safety Committee of FIH	
Najma Akhtar	First-ever woman vice-chancellor, Jamia Millia Islamia	
Murali Kartik	Brand ambassador of Fantasy	
Jean Michel Lapin	Haiti's new Prime Minister	who once served as a courier in the public administration, to be the new prime minister of this French-speaking Caribbean

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		Community (CARICOM) country
Gargi Kaul	Secretary, Defence Finance	
Justice Vikram Nath	Chief Justice of the Andhra Pradesh High Court	
Vikramjit Singh Sahney	president of ICC India	
Benjamin Netanyahu	Israeli Prime Minister	
Graham Reid	Indian men's hockey coach	
Belinda Jurisic	Veeam Software, Channel Director for	
Justice Pradeep Nandrajog today	Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court	
Siddhartha Lal	CEO of Royal Enfield	
David Malpass	President of the World Bank	
Praful Patel	Member of FIFA Executive Council	First Indian to be elected as a member of the FIFA Executive Council. He got 38 out of 46 votes.
Chandra Shekhar Rajan	Managing Director Of IL&FS	
Keshav Murugesh	Nasscom, Chairman	
Former actress Mayoori Kango,	Google India Industry Head	
Vipin Anand	Managing Director of LIC	
Bi Yunfeng	Huawei's R&D centre	
Sana Dua	Brand ambassador for elections in J&K	
Satish Magar	National president of	

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	CREDAI	
Manu Sawhney	Chief Executive of ICC	

BANKING & FINANCE

Canara Bank, Canara HSBC OBC Life launch 'Webassurance'

Public sector lender Canara Bank and its life insurance partner Canara HSBC Oriental Bank of Commerce Life Insurance announced the launch of 'Webassurance'

Four life insurance products of Canara HSBC OBC Life would be made available to customers of Canara Bank, covering the key needs of child future, savings and investments, retirement planning and protection, a release issued here said.

RBI extends deadline for legal entity identification

The RBI, extended the deadline for Legal Entity Identifier (LEI) codes for participation in non-derivative markets. Now, the deadline for entities with net worth of over Rs1,000 crore to get the code is December 31, 2019, against the earlier deadline of April 30 this year.

This is also the deadline for those with net worth between ₹200 crore and ₹1,000 crore, while for entities with net worth of less than ₹200 crore, the deadline has been extended to March 31, 2020.

HDFC Bank and Max Bupa launch AnyTimeHealth machines to distribute health insurance products

Max Bupa, one of India's leading standalone health insurance players, and HDFC Bank, one of India's leading private sector banks, announced the launch of 'digital first' propositions for the bank's 40+ million customers, spread across its 5,000+ branches.

Max Bupa is committed to provide the best bespoke and comprehensive health insurance solutions and services to HDFC Bank's customers through a slew of digital touch points like AnyTimeHealth (ATH) machines, deep integration with HDFC Bank Net banking and digital seller apps like InstaInsure.

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As part of the corporate agency arrangement with HDFC Bank, Max Bupa provides comprehensive and customisable product variants to the bank's customers, through multiple digital touch points.

Non-deposit taking firms now come under ombudsman scheme for NBFCs

The Reserve Bank of India, extended the coverage of Ombudsman Scheme for Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) 2018 to eligible non-deposit taking NBFCs with asset size of over ₹100 crore.

It had made an announcement to this end earlier this month in the Statement of Developmental and Regulatory Policies that came with the Monetary Policy Statement.

“The NBFC-Infrastructure Finance Company, Core Investment Company, Infrastructure Debt NBFC and an NBFC under liquidation are excluded from the ambit of the scheme,” the RBI said in a statement.

Sebi reduces minimum net worth requirements for clearing corp in IFSC

Sebi in its circular provided the methodology to determine the minimum net worth requirements for clearing corporations that included capital requirement based on credit risk, business risk, orderly winding down or recovery of operations and legal and operational risks assessment.

Clearing corporations operating in international financial services centre should have at least Rs 100 crore net worth from three years of commencing operations, Sebi said Friday as it reduced the minimum requirement level. This net worth requirement in the form of liquid assets has been brought down from the earlier Rs 300 crore.

However, the minimum net worth required to be held in liquid assets for clearing corporations on the commencement of operations remains the same as Rs 50 crore or the capital determined as per the Sebi norms.

IRDAI forms panel to review microinsurance framework

The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) set up Suresh Mathur Committee to review regulatory framework on micro insurance, and to recommend measures to increase demand for such products.

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It was formed because of less than desired offtake of micro insurance products despite of their inherent benefits in the country. India was seen to be an exciting market and a pioneer in micro insurance sector in world, but its market penetration remains low.

It is a 13-member panel chaired by IRDAI's Executive Director Suresh Mathur, and comprises of representatives from IRDAI, life, general and health insurance companies in public and private sectors and NGOs.

Axis Bank plans to raise ₹35,000 crore

Private sector lender Axis Bank said it plans to raise rs35,000 crore debt instrument, including in foreign currency, to fund business growth. The decision in this regard will be taken at the annual general meeting held on July 20.

The board has already given an approval to raise funds in Indian or foreign currency by issue of debt instruments including but not limited to long-term bonds, non-convertible debentures, perpetual debt instruments and tier-II capital bonds up to an amount of ₹35,000 crore, Axis Bank said .

Ombudsman scheme extended to non deposit-taking NBFCs

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) extended the “ombudsman scheme” for non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) to non deposit-taking NBFCs with asset size of at least Rs 100 crore.

The decision comes after the central bank in its “Statement on Developmental and Regulatory Policies” released earlier this month after the monetary policy meet said that it has decided to extend the ambit of the ombudsman scheme.

NBFC-Infrastructure Finance Companies (NBFC-IFC), core investment companies (CIC), infrastructure debt fund-non-banking financial company (IDFNBF) and an NBFC under liquidation, are excluded from the ambit of the scheme.

The scheme was launched on February 23, 2018 for redressal of complaints against NBFCs registered with RBI under Section 45-IA of the RBI Act, 1934 and covered all deposit accepting NBFCs to begin with.

Finance ministry approves EPF interest rate hike

The finance ministry has ratified the hike of the Employees Provident Fund (EPF) interest rate to 8.65% as approved by retirement fund manager EPFO. The finance

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ministry's approval is a procedural formality, but is a requirement before interest rates are passed on to 60 million EPFO subscribers.

Banking ombudsman saw 25% rise in customer complaints in FY18

The banking ombudsman received 24.9% more customer complaints in FY18 over the previous year, said the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

“The 21 offices of the banking ombudsman received 1,63,590 complaints in the year 2017-18 marking an increase of 24.9% over previous year,” the central bank said, adding that the complaint disposal rate stood at 96.5% in FY18, as compared to 92% in the previous year.

The banking ombudsman scheme (BO Scheme) was introduced in 1995 as a cost-free and expeditious grievance redressal mechanism for customers of banks.

RBI to issue new ‘greenish yellow’ coloured Rs 20 notes soon

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has announced that it will shortly issue Rs 20 denomination banknotes, in the Mahatma Gandhi (New) series, bearing the signature of the central bank's governor Shaktikanta Das.

“The Rs 20 note will be greenish-yellow in colour. The new banknote has a motif of Ellora Caves on the reverse, depicting the country's cultural heritage,” a statement by the RBI said.

All the banknotes in the denomination of Rs 20 issued by the RBI in the earlier series will continue to be legal tender, it clarified.

The note has other designs, geometric patterns aligning with the overall colour scheme, both at the obverse and reverse. The dimension of the new Rs 20 note will be 63 mm x 129 mm, the statement said.

The obverse (front) side of the note contains a see-through register with denominational numeral 100, a latent image with the numeral and also a Devanagari version of the same.

It also contains a portrait of Mahatma Gandhi at the centre, with micro letters ‘RBI’, ‘Bharat’, ‘India’ and ‘20’, along with with a guarantee clause, Governor's signature with Promise Clause and RBI emblem towards the right of Gandhi's portrait.

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On the right side of the portrait are an Ashoka Pillar emblem and electrotpe (20) watermarks.

Government raises authorised capital of Allahabad Bank to Rs8,000 crore

State-owned Allahabad Bank said the government has increased its authorised capital by Rs5,000 crore to Rs8,000 crore.

The central government after consultation with the Reserve Bank of India has increased the authorised capital of the bank from Rs3,000 to Rs8,000 through Gazette Notification, Allahabad Bank said .

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IndusInd Bank adds 2% on NCLT nod for merger with BFIL

Shares of IndusInd Bank added nearly 2 percent intraday on April 24 after National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) reportedly approved merger with Bharat Financial Inclusion (BFIL).

According to a report, the merger will be completed within 2-4 weeks. Post-merger, BFIL will become a subsidiary of the private lender. The share of the bank touched its 52-week high of Rs 2,037.90 and 52-week low of Rs 1,333.90 on August 3, 2018 and October 31, 2018, respectively.

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BEML, Syndicate Bank sign MoU, to book Rs100 cr-biz

Public sector BEML, has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for financing earth moving and construction equipment manufactured by BEML with Syndicate Bank. Syndicate Bank and BEML expect to book business worth ₹100 crore, by March 2020 under this window.

The MoU was signed in the presence of Ajay Vipin Nanavati, Chairman, Syndicate Bank; Deepak Kumar Hota, CMD, BEML; and other senior officials of the two entities.

Under the MoU, BEML will nominate Syndicate Bank as a preferred financier. Financing equipments of BEML will be covered under the 'Special' scheme of the bank.

BSE ties up with Network Intelligence to provide security services to its members

BSE, India's largest stock exchange has entered a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Network Intelligence, a global cybersecurity services provider & CERT-IN empanelled vendor to provide cybersecurity services to its members in line with the cybersecurity framework set by SEBI.

In late 2018, SEBI had released its "Cybersecurity & Cyber Resilience framework for Stock Brokers / Depository Participants". After a detailed assessment and capabilities evaluation by BSE, Network Intelligence India (NII) was selected as one of its partners to provide these services to its members.

SBI launches Green Car Loan

State Bank of India announced the country's first 'Green Car Loan' (Electric Vehicle) to encourage customers to buy electric vehicles. The new scheme will offer loan at 20 basis points lesser than the interest rate on the existing car loan schemes.

The EMI per Rs1 lakh will be lower at Rs1,468 for 96 months against Rs1,622 for 84 months, based on the maximum tenor, in line with the existing scheme. "SBI Green Car Loan (Electric Vehicle) scheme, which comes with the longest repayment period of up to eight years, is a strategic inclusion to the bank's auto loan segment offered with zero processing fee for the first six months of the launch," the lender said.

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RBI divests entire stake in NHB, NABARD

The RBI has divested its remaining stake in the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) and National Housing Bank (NHB) in February and March this year. The government now fully owns these two financial institutions. While the RBI stake-sale of 1 per cent in NABARD in February yielded ₹20 crore, 100 per cent disinvestment in NHB brought in ₹1,450 crore.

Divestment of RBI's shareholding in NABARD was done in two phases. It originally held 72.5 per cent of equity in NABARD, which amounted to ₹1,450 crore. It sold off 71.5 per cent, amounting to ₹1,430 crore in October 2010, while the residual shareholding was divested on February 26, 2019.

The RBI held 100 per cent shareholding in NHB, which was divested on March 19, 2019.

Mudra loans miss target by Rs 27,000 crore in FY19

Small business loans disbursed under the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY) have fallen short of the target set for 2018-19.

Against a target of Rs3-lakh crore, only Rs2.73-lakh crore was disbursed as on March 31, 2019, according to government data. This is first time that the target was unmet in the last three years. "Banks and other agencies involved had worked in a mission mode and disbursed nearly ₹72,000 crore last month, without which the disbursement would have been much lower," said the senior executive of a public sector bank.

As on March 1, 2019, disbursement under the Mudra scheme was only Rs2.12-lakh crore.

Kotak Bank launches debit card-based e-mandate on NPCI's API platform

Kotak Mahindra Bank has announced the launch of an industry-first debit card-based authentication solution on NPCI's e-Mandate API platform.

Kotak becomes the first Destination Bank to go live with Net Banking and Debit Card-based e-mandate authentication, the bank said in a statement adding that the capability will enable its customers to create electronic mandates (similar to the erstwhile eNACH with Aadhaar + OTP) via both the Debit Card and Net Banking channels.

This allows Kotak to go live as a sponsor or acquirer bank for corporates and merchants seeking recurring payments.

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RBI first APAC central bank to begin interest rate easing cycle: Fitch

The Reserve Bank of India is the first central bank in the Asia-Pacific region to begin an explicit interest rate easing cycle buoyed by benign food inflation and easier global financial condition, Fitch Ratings said on Wednesday.

The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), headed by RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das, cut rates in February and April, citing prospects of benign inflation. In the four months of 2019, the RBI has cut policy interest rates twice by 0.25 per cent each to one-year low of 6 per cent.

This is the first back-to-back rate cut since the MPC was formed in late 2016. "Benign food inflation and easier global financial conditions following the US Fed's shift to a more dovish policy stance has enabled the RBI to become the first central bank in Asia-Pacific (APAC) to begin an explicit easing cycle," Fitch said in its APAC sovereign credit overview report.

RBI announces another Rs 25,000 crore OMO in May as liquidity dries up

The Reserve Bank of India announced a Rs 25,000-crore liquidity injection through purchase of government securities in May. The purchase, called as open market operations (OMOs), will be undertaken in two equal tranches with the first one on May 2, the central bank said in a statement.

The RBI said the OMOs are being carried out "based on a review of the evolving liquidity conditions and assessment of the durable liquidity needs going forward".

SBI General Insurance launches product to protect businesses from cyber attacks

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SBI General Insurance has launched a product to protect businesses from financial and reputational losses due to cyber attacks. In the initial phase, the focus will be on SMEs and mid-market businesses, but later the product can cater to larger business conglomerates as well, the insurer said in a statement.

This offers protection against the growing threat of cyber breaches and is designed to protect against major insurable cyber exposures like hacking attacks, identity theft, disclosure of sensitive information and business interruption.

HDFC gets RBI approval for holding up to 9.9% stake in Bandhan Bank

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has given its in-principle approval to Housing Development Finance Corporation (HDFC) Ltd for acquiring 9.9 per cent stake in Bandhan Bank following the Gruh Finance deal. Gruh Finance, the affordable housing finance arm of HDFC Ltd, was taken over by Bandhan Bank in a share-swap deal in January.

After the deal was announced, HDFC made an application to the RBI for holding shares in Bandhan Bank. the central bank gave its approval to HDFC to acquire the shareholding of up to 9.9 per cent of the paid-up capital of Bandhan Bank upon the effective date of the scheme of amalgamation.

Deposits in Jan Dhan bank accounts set to cross Rs 1 lakh crore

The total deposits in bank accounts opened under the Jan Dhan scheme are set to cross Rs 1 lakh crore soon. Government data claimed that the cumulative balance in 35.29 crore accounts under the flagship programme of the Modi government reached Rs 97,665.66 crore as on April 3.

The total deposits in Jan Dhan accounts stood at Rs 96,107.35 crore on March 27 and Rs 95,382.14 crore in the week before, government data showed. Rupay debit cards have been issued to a total of 27.89 crore Jan Dhan account holders, as per government records.

The Modi government launched the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) on August 28, 2014, with universal banking access in focus. More than half of the Jan Dhan account holders are women, while nearly 59 per cent accounts are from rural and semi-urban areas.

SBI General launches cyber defence insurance for businesses

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Bajaj Allianz launches Total Health Secure Goal plan

Bajaj Allianz General Insurance and Bajaj Allianz Life Insurance in collaboration launched their first product 'Total Health Secure Goal'. This insurance plan is designed to take care of customers' health and life goals, through one comprehensive insurance policy. Thus, removing hassles of maintaining two separate policies.

The new insurance product is a combination of two existing plans – Health Guard policy by Bajaj Allianz General Insurance, and iSecure from Bajaj Allianz Life Insurance.

Network Intelligence Signs Partnership With BSE to Provide Security Services to its Members Under the SEBI Cybersecurity Guidelines

BSE, India's largest stock exchange & Network Intelligence, a global cybersecurity services provider & CERT-IN empanelled vendor, entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to provide cybersecurity services to its members in line with the cybersecurity framework set by SEBI. SOC Monitoring & Incident Response Governance Network & Data Security Application Security Training & Education Periodic Audits This includes other services that will help the members tackle the ever growing Threat Landscape.

SoftBank, Toyota invest \$1 bn in Uber for its pricey self-driving ambitions

Uber's autonomous vehicle unit has raised \$1 billion from a consortium of investors including SoftBank Group Corp, giving the company a much-needed funding boost for its pricey self-driving ambitions on the eve of its public stock offering.

Uber Technologies Inc said that the investment valued its Advanced Technologies Group, which works to develop autonomous driving technology, at \$7.25 billion. SoftBank will invest \$333 million from its \$100 billion Vision Fund, while Toyota Motor Corp and automotive company Denso Corp will combined invest \$667 million.

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SoftBank Group International CFO Alok Sama to step down

SoftBank Group International Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Alok Sama will step down from his post.

He will remain a senior adviser at the company, according to a memo, which did not provide a reason for his departure. Sama led the execution teams for the \$59 billion merger of Sprint and T-Mobile and the \$34 billion acquisition of ARM Holdings Plc, among other deals, according to the memo.

Banks Board Bureau lists 75 bankers for PSB leadership roles

The Banks Board Bureau (BBB) has identified 75 senior officials of state-run banks for leadership roles across public sector banks (PSB). the Bureau has also sought autonomy for the PSBs to decide on their organisational structure.

The BBB has shortlisted the selected officials from an original list of around 450 people, according to the Bureau's activity report for October 2018-March 2019.

Airtel Payments Bank ties up with Bharti AXA for two wheeler insurance

Airtel Payments Bank has tied up with Bharti AXA General Insurance to offer two-wheeler insurance to its customers across India. This insurance will be available on My Airtel app and at over 40,000 Airtel Payments Bank — banking points, with presence even in rural India.

Bank of Baroda join hands with Srei Equipment Finance

Second largest state-run lender Bank of Baroda and non-bank lender Srei Equipment Finance announced a co-lending for infrastructure equipment finance. Iquippo, a non profit started by Srei's promoters, will facilitate sourcing of loans, an official statement said.

The CSR platform has helped disburse USD 400 million in loans to 70,000 customers till now.

Indiabulls General Insurance gets preliminary nod from Irdai

Indiabulls General Insurance, a subsidiary of Indiabulls Integrated Services said it has received preliminary approval from regulator Irdai to foray into non-life business.

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In January, another subsidiary Indiabulls Life Insurance Company had received R1 approval from Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (Irdai).

The company is in the process of putting in place the necessary systems and move ahead with the next step of filing its application for registration (R2) with Irdai to undertake general insurance business in India, it said.

Exim Bank funds projects worth USD 267 mn in Rawanda

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said Exim Bank has provided soft loans of USD 266.60 million to Rawanda for various projects. The funding, done in three separate tranches to Rawanda, is to support agricultural projects, development of special economic zones (SEZs) and for financing road project in the African nation.

According to the agreements, Exim Bank will provide USD 100 million for financing the development of two SEZs and expansion of the Kigali SEZ in Rwanda; USD 100 million for financing three agriculture project schemes — Warufu Multipurpose Project, Mugesera Irrigation Project and Nyamukana Irrigation Project.

While USD 66.60 million will be funded for the Base-Butaro-Kidaho Road Project.

RBI signs up for FX global code

The RBI has signed a Statement of Commitment (SoC) to the FX Global Code. The code, launched on May 25, 2017, is a compilation of best market practices, formulated by central banks and market participants, developed under the auspices of the Bank for International Settlements (BIS), Basel.

The RBI said the code is applicable to the wholesale FX market participants covering sell-side, buy-side and financial intermediaries, and is voluntary in nature. It does not impose any legal or regulatory obligations, and is intended to be a supplement to the local laws, rules and regulations. It is currently being implemented globally by the Global FX Committee (GFXC) in co-ordination with the Local FX Committee (LFXC) in each jurisdiction.

GRUH Finance, Bandhan Bank gain 3-4% on CCI approval

Shares of GRUH Finance and Bandhan Bank added percent 3-4 percent intraday after CCI approved merger of the companies. Competition Commission of India (CCI) has

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considered the proposed combination and approved the merger of GRUH Finance and Bandhan Bank.

Home Expo India 2019 begins

The 8th edition of Home Expo India 2019 began at India Expo Centre and Mart in Greater Noida .

It covers sectors with maximum thrust and growth potential in home decor, furnishing, furniture, flooring and textiles. About 500 companies in permanent marts will be exhibiting their collection under these categories. The three-day exhibition has been organized by the Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts.

Textile Ministry in a release said, handicrafts exports during the year 2018-19 was to the tune of 26 thousand 590 crore rupees registering a growth of 15.46 per cent over the previous year.

RBI puts into circulation Rs 50 banknotes signed by Governor Shaktikanta Das

The Reserve Bank of India has put into circulation 50 rupees denomination banknotes signed by its Governor Shaktikanta Das. The RBI in Mumbai said the design of these notes is similar in all respects to 50 banknotes in Mahatma Gandhi new series.

It said that all banknotes in the denomination of 50 issued by the Reserve Bank in the past will continue to be legal tender.

CRISIL board gives nod for transfer of ratings business to new subsidiary

CRISIL Ltd, a diversified global analytics company, will transfer its ratings business to its proposed new wholly-owned subsidiary.

The board of CRISIL, gave the nod for the transfer, which is being done to comply with SEBI norms of last year. CRISIL proposes to undertake the transfer of its ratings business through a scheme of arrangement in terms of Section 230 to 232 of the Companies Act, 2013, to be approved by the stock exchanges and the National Company Law Tribunal.

BoM partners with M1Xchange for MSME bill discounting

State-owned Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) has partnered with M1Xchange TReDS platform for MSME bill discounting.

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Trade Receivables Discounting System (TReDS) is a digital platform to support micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to get their bills financed at a competitive rate through an auction where multiple registered financiers can participate.

In addition to TReDS platform of Receivables Exchange of India Ltd (RXIL) & Invoicemart (A.TREDS Ltd), the bank has now on-boarded as financier on the TReDS platform of M1Xchange of Mynd Solutions, BoM said in a statement.

Bandhan Bank gets CCI nod for merger with Gruh Finance

Bandhan Bank has received approval from the Competition Commission of India (CCI) for the proposed scheme of amalgamation of Gruh Finance with the bank.

Bandhan Bank said: “The CCI has by way of its letter dated April 15, 2019, intimated that CCI, at its meeting held on April 15, 2019, considered the proposed combination and approved the same under sub-section (1) of Section 31 of the Competition Act, 2002.”

ADB committed \$3 billion in sovereign loans to India in 2018; highest since 1986

ADB committed to provide USD 3 billion in sovereign loans to India in 2018, the highest level of assistance since sovereign operations began in the country in 1986, said the annual report of multilateral lending agency.

In all, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), owned by 68 member countries, committed a total of USD 3.88 billion, including sovereign loans and co-financing during the year ended December 2018.

The demand for ADB assistance continued to grow in 2018. New commitments included USD 21.6 billion in loans, grants and investments from ADB's own resources, exceeding the target of USD 19.71 billion and up 10 per cent from 2017.

Bajaj Finserv launches industry first proposition to pay electricity bill on EMIs

Bajaj Finserv through its lending arm Bajaj Finance Ltd. has launched a unique proposition through its campaign #BijliOnEMI wherein customers buying air-conditioners on EMI can avail an Insta Credit loan in their Bajaj Finserv Wallet which they can use to pay their electricity bills on EMI.

The campaign is aimed to help their customers finance the high electricity bills that may arise due to extensive usage of conditioners during summer.

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IMF, World Bank Launches Token for Crypto Orientation

The World Bank in collaboration with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has officially launched a cryptocurrency token dubbed “Learning Coin.” The token is set to lay a better knowledge for their staff how the distributed ledger technology works.

Canara Bank becomes the first public sector bank in India to meet RBI's EMV mandate

ACI Worldwide, a global provider of realtime electronic payment and banking solutions, announced that Canara Bank has successfully rolled out major new functionality to support EMV card acquiring across its ATM network and Aadhaar Authentication, leveraging ACI's UP Retail Payments solution to achieve market firsts.

Canara Bank, one of India's largest public sector banks with nearly 6,300 branches and a network of more than 10,000 ATMs, is the first public sector bank to shift to EMV chip and PIN for card present transactions across the country's vast ATM network.

IDBI Bank launches paperless account opening facility for NRIs

IDBI Bank has launched the ‘NRI-Insta-Online’ account-opening process for NRIs residing in Financial Action Task Force (FATF) member countries. The person will not be required to furnish physical documents and KYC proofs for opening an account with the bank.

PAISALO signs up with SBI to disburse 2 lakh MSME loans in FY20

PAISALO Digital, a leading non-deposit-taking NBFC registered with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), signed a co-origination MSME loan agreement with State Bank of India (SBI). The goal of this partnership is empowering the agriculture and MSME segment.

a platform will be introduced where the MSME loan ticket is designed at Rs 10,000 to Rs 2 lakh. The company expects to disburse 200,000 MSME loan applications in FY20.

Govt retains interest rate for General Provident Fund at 8%

The government has retained the interest rate for **General Provident Fund (GPF)**, Contributory Provident Fund and other related schemes at **8 per cent** for the first quarter of current financial year.

The interest rate on these funds was at 8 per cent in January-March quarter of 2018-19 and government kept it unchanged for April to June for 2019-20.

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IndusInd Bank launches a campaign to celebrate turning ‘#Just25’

IndusInd Bank announced the launch of a multimedia campaign to commemorate the completion of the Bank’s journey of 25 years. Christened ‘#Just25’, the all new campaign takes inspiration from the 25 year olds of today.

Individuals who are innovators, who have made a difference, levelled the playing field or beaten the odds to take on the world. The campaign reflects IndusInd Bank’s ethos of being an innovator, an achiever with one cohesive goal of becoming India’s most Convenient Bank.

PNB honours bank veterans and employees on 125th foundation day in Chennai

Punjab National Bank has celebrated its 125th foundation day at Ranchi Mandal office. On 12 April 1895, the first indigenous bank, Punjab National Bank, was founded by the people like late Dayal Singh Majithia, lawyer Kali Prasanna Roy, Lala Harkishan Lal, EC Jessore, Prabhu Dayal, Jayashi Ram Bakshi and Lala Dolan Das.

Since then, the bank has been providing better banking services to more than 110 million customers in its 124 years of work time.

. PayU acquires digital financial security firm Wibmo for USD 70 mn

Digital payments facilitator **PayU** has acquired US-based financial technology firm Wibmo for USD 70 million (about Rs 484 crore), that will help the company scale-up its business. Under the agreement, PayU and Wibmo businesses will continue to run separately.

Wibmo, a digital payment security and mobile payment technologies firm, will continue to operate and serve all of its clients as a wholly-owned subsidiary of PayU.

Former IL&FS Managing Director Ramesh Bawa arrested by SFIO

Former Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Infrastructure Leasing and Financial Services (IL&FS) Limited was arrested by the Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO). **Ramesh C Bawa** was arrested in connection with the ongoing investigation into the affairs of IL&FS and its group entities.

HDFC Bank ranked No. 1 in India by Forbes; Surprise at No. 3; SBI not in top 10

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Once again **HDFC Bank** has added another feather in its cap. This time the private lender has been identified as number 1 bank by customers in India, as per Forbes World's Best Bank survey. In the first edition of this survey, Forbes partnered with market research firm Statista to measure the best banks in 23 countries. HDFC Bank emerged as India's No 1 bank. It was a unique survey as it did not measure financial performance, ignoring balance sheets and P&L statements in favour of customer opinion.

Apart from HDFC Bank, it was another private-owned lender ICICI Bank which took the second spot in Forbes list for India. At third rank was DBS, followed by Kotak Mahindra Bank and IDFC Bank taking fourth and fifth spot.

RBL Bank ties up with CreditVidya to improve customer experience

RBL Bank has partnered with **credit profiler CreditVidya to improve the lender's customer experience**. Through this partnership, the private sector lender will be able to gain significant insights into its customer base, it said in a release.

This in turn will allow it to improve user experience and build customised offerings for over 15 lakh customers, the bank said.

RBI injected Rs 2.98 lakh crore liquidity in 2018-19

The Reserve Bank of India injected a total liquidity of Rs 2.98 lakh crore in the market in 2018-19. From a daily net average surplus of Rs 27,928 crore during February 1-6, 2019, systemic liquidity moved into deficit during February 7-March 31, reflecting the build-up of government cash balances, the First Bi-monthly Monetary Policy Statement, 2019-20 stated.

State Bank of India cuts MCLR by 5 bps, home loans cheaper by 10 bps

State Bank of India (SBI) reduced its MCLR by **5 bps** across all tenors and slashed interest rate on home loans up to **Rs 30 lakh by 10 basis points**.

One-year MCLR will be 8.50% per annum (pa). The interest rates on all loans linked to MCLR stand reduced by 5 bps from April 10, 2019. Now the applicable interest rate for such housing loans below Rs.30 lacs will range from 8.60% p.a. to 8.90% p.a. Prior to the rate cut decision range for rate was 8.70% p.a. to 9.00% pa.

HDFC AMC ranked 1st in terms of Assets: AMFI Report

India's asset management companies (AMCs) own assets under management (AUM) worth Rs24.46 trillion, according to data released by the Association of Mutual Funds in

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India (Amfi). HDFC Asset Management Co. Ltd has claimed the top spot with an average AUM of Rs3.42 trillion, overtaking ICICI Prudential Asset Management Co. Ltd with an average AUM of at Rs3.20 trillion.

Out of the total industry assets, a huge 82.7% is owned by the top 10 AMCs, who have owned around 80% of the industry assets over at least three years now.

Asset management companies (AMCs) :

An asset management company (AMC) is a firm that invests pooled funds from clients, putting the capital to work different investments including stocks, bonds, real estate, master limited partnerships, and more.

Emirates Islamic became world's first Islamic bank to launch banking via WhatsApp

Dubai based Emirates Islamic has announced the launch of Chat **Banking services for customers** via WhatsApp, marking a global first in the Islamic banking sector. The Chat Banking solution allows customers to use features such as checking account balances and temporarily blocking or unblocking of an existing card.

All messages on Emirates Islamic's verified WhatsApp Business account are encrypted, ensuring confidentiality and security.

SBI cuts interest rates on home loans

The State Bank of India has re-priced home loans up to **Rs 30 lakh by 10 basis points**. Accordingly, the interest rate on housing loans of such size will now be in the range of 8.6 to 8.9 per cent.

The bank has also lowered its lending rates by a nominal five basis points across all tenors.

In a statement, the SBI said the new one-year marginal cost of funds-based lending rate is down to 8.50 per cent now from 8.55 per cent. This is the first reduction by SBI in over 17 months.

Irdai asks insurers to share status of claims with policyholders from July 1

Insurance companies will have to inform about claim settlement status to policyholders at various stages of processing from July, Irdai said .

Insurers need to adopt a clear and transparent communication policy to protect the interest of policyholders, it said in a circular. "In case of health insurance, where third party administrators (TPAs) are engaged for rendering claims services, it is the responsibility of insurers to ensure that status of claim

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shall be notified to the claimant at every stage of claim,” the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (Irdai) said.

DBS Bank India launches the first edition of Hack2hire in Bengaluru

DBS Bank India Limited has announced the first edition of its’ **Hack2Hire programme** in Bengaluru. Through the initiative, it aims to hire over 100 of the brightest minds in emerging technologies such as Cloud Computing, AI, Machine Learning and Big Data.

The programme will focus on the theme of ‘**intelligent banking**’. The initiative has received over 2500 applications till date. Hack2Hire Bengaluru will look to expand its scope and target to hire platform stability Engineers, Mobile App Developers, Full Stack Developers, PaaS DevOps, DevOps Engineers, QA Engineers, UI/UX Developers, Data analysts and Scrum Masters.

The programme will consist of two parts- starting with an online technical assessment designed to gauge the basic skill-sets required for the job.

RBI issues norms for banks to set up currency chests

The Reserve Bank of India came out with guidelines for banks to set up new currency chests, which include minimum area of 1,500 square feet for strong room.

“Area of the strong room/ vault of at least 1,500 sq ft. For those situated in hilly/ inaccessible places, the strong room/ vault area of at least 600 sq ft,” the RBI said while specifying minimum standards for setting up new currency chests.

Besides, the new chests should have a processing capacity of 6.6 lakh pieces of banknotes per day.

For those situated in the hilly/ inaccessible places, capacity of 2.1 lakh pieces of banknotes per day.

Airtel gets Sebi nod for Rs25,000 crore rights issue

Telecom operator Bharti Airtel has received market regulator Sebi’s approval to raise up to Rs25,000 crore through rights issue, according to sources. The board of the company had approved the rights issue proposal in February.

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The board has earlier approved the rights issue to raise up to ₹25,000 crore through issuance of fully paid up shares at a price of ₹220 per share, and an additional ₹7,000 crore via foreign currency perpetual bond issue.

The company had said the capital infusion will help it continue investments in future rollouts to build large network capacity and create content and technology partnerships to ensure the strong customer experience.

SBI puts NPAs worth Rs 424 crore on sale via auction

State-run State Bank of India (SBI) has put non-performing assets (NPAs or bad loans) worth Rs 423.67 crore on auction to recover unpaid dues.

The accounts Kamachi Industries owes Rs 364.80 crore and SNS Starch has Rs 58.87 crore due – to SBI, the bank said. The bidding for these properties will start on April 25.

The bank is looking to sell all of these stressed assets on a 100 per cent cash-basis, but the actual realisation will depend on the reserve price and bids received from the buyers.

RBI to set up regulatory sandbox for fintech firms

RBI governor Shaktikanta Das said the central bank will set up a **regulatory sandbox**, for which guidelines will be issued in two months.

The aim is to have appropriate regulatory and supervisory frameworks to ensure an orderly development of fintech, to streamline their influence into the financial system, to protect customers and safeguard the interest of all stakeholders.

RBI tweaks LCR norms to boost liquidity

In a bid to further improve the cash position of banks, **RBI has tweaked liquidity coverage ratio (LCR) norms to provide an additional 2 per cent window to lenders.** RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said, this move will harmonise the liquidity requirements of banks and release additional money for lending.

LCR indicates the proportion of highly liquid assets held by banks to ensure their ability to meet short-term obligations.

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Paytm Money receives Sebi approval to start stock broking services

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has given approval to **Paytm Money — the investment and wealth management platform of the mobile payments company** — to start offering broking services. it had applied for the licence in October last year.

Paytm Money has also received membership of NSE and BSE.

To handle the broking operations, Paytm Money is looking to set up a team to deal with settlements, trade, risks, treasury and other functions of a broking house. The broking services will allow investors to trade in the cash segment, derivatives, exchange-traded funds (ETFs), among other listed entities.

AIIB approves loans for 2 projects in Sri Lanka

The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) has approved loans worth **\$280 million** for its first two projects in **Sri Lanka**, aimed at improving living conditions in the country.

A \$200 million loan will improve housing conditions for low-income communities in Colombo by building affordable housing and redeveloping land while another loan of \$80 million will be used to reduce the risk and damage from landslides in Sri Lanka.

Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) inks an MoU with IIT, Delhi

The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) has inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **Indian Institute of Technology in Delhi** to collaborate in the field of **standardisation and conformity assessment**.

The MoU was signed by IIT Delhi Director Professor V Ramgopal Rao and Director General of BIS Surina Rajan.

BIS and IIT Delhi have also agreed to set up a Centre of Excellence in the field of standardization, testing and conformity assessment.

According to the MoU, IIT Delhi will provide infrastructure support for research and development projects of relevance to standardisation and BIS will provide financial support to IIT Delhi for projects.

Karnataka Bank in pact with Bharti AXA

Karnataka Bank has entered into a memorandum of understanding with **Bharti AXA Life Insurance** Company to distribute the latter's life insurance products. the bank will be able to provide a wide choice of life insurance products to its customers across 836 branches, supported by the products of Bharti AXA Life Insurance Company.

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This is the third such tie-up by the bank after PNB MetLife Life Insurance Company and LIC of India, both of which continue to provide insurance solutions to the customers of Karnataka Bank.

BSE, India INX become first Indian exchanges to sign MoU with Moscow Exchange

BSE (earlier known as Bombay Stock Exchange) and India International Exchange (India INX) have signed a memorandum of understanding with **Moscow Exchange (MOEX)** to connect investor community and companies in both countries besides allowing a capital formation platform.

BSE and India INX are the first Indian exchanges to enter into the MoU with Moscow exchange.

Lakshmi Vilas Bank board approves merger with Indiabulls Housing Finance

Private sector lender Lakshmi Vilas Bank Ltd (LVB) said that its board had approved a merger with mortgage financier **Indiabulls Housing Finance Ltd.** According to the filing, the swap ratio for the merger has been fixed at 1:014, which means that for every 100 shares of LVB held by shareholders, they will be entitled to receive 14 shares of Indiabulls Housing Finance.

The merger is subject to the receipt of approval from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and all other regulatory approvals.

RBI cuts repo rate by 25 basis points

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has cut its repo rate under liquidity adjustment facility (LAF), or the rate at which it lends to banks, **by 25 basis points to 6%**, with immediate effect. This is the second consecutive rate cut from RBI under new Governor Shaktikanta Das, after a rate cut in February.

The RBI announced its first bi-monthly policy statement of the current financial year. Consequently, the reverse repo rate under the LAF stands adjusted to 5.75 per cent, and the marginal standing facility (MSF) rate and the Bank Rate to 6.25 per cent.

The six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) led by RBI Governor also decided to maintain the neutral monetary policy stance.

These decisions are in consonance with the objective of achieving the medium-term target for consumer price index (CPI) inflation of 4 per cent within a band of plus or minus 2 per cent while supporting growth.

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RBI to set up task force on corporate loans' secondary market

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said it would set up a task force to study the international best practices and develop a “thriving” secondary market for corporate loans.

In its statement of developmental and regulatory policies released by the RBI after its first monetary policy meet of financial year 2019-2020, the apex bank said the task force would submit its report by the end of August, 2019.

The RBI statement has brought out an 11-point agenda of regulatory policies. In the 11-point statement, RBI also said that it would constitute a committee to assess the state of housing finance securitisation markets in India. This committee too would come out with its report by August-end.

Growth Outlooks for India and Southeast Asia Cut by ADB

The Asian Development Bank downgraded economic growth forecasts for India and Southeast Asia for 2019 as global risks from trade tensions to Brexit mount.

Gross domestic product in India will probably increase **7.2 percent this year**, down from a **December forecast of 7.6 percent**, according to the ADB's latest Asian Development Outlook report. Southeast Asia's growth estimate was lowered by 0.2 percentage point to 4.9 percent.

RBI tightens NPA disclosure norms, asks banks to reveal bad loans

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) changed the disclosure norms for banks on material divergences on provisioning, stating that banks will now have to disclose their provisions if the divergence found is more than 10 per cent of the bank's profit before provisioning and contingencies.

Earlier, the norms were that banks required to disclose additional provisioning requirements if divergences were found to be exceeding 15 per cent of the published net profits after tax.

The central bank retained the norms on divergence on gross non-performing assets (NPAs), which continues to be a material divergence of 15 per cent, as found by the RBI auditors and as reported by the bank.

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Kotak Mahindra Bank to charge for UPI transactions from May

Kotak Mahindra Bank will begin charging customers for peer-to-peer Unified Payments Interface (UPI) transactions from May 1, becoming the first bank to do so. From May, Kotak Mahindra Bank customers will be able to make 30 free P2P transfers each month using UPI.

After this the bank will charge **Rs 2.50 per transaction for transfers of Rs 1,000 or less, and Rs 5 plus 18% GST for transfers of more than Rs 1,000.**

Reserve Bank to inject USD 5 billion more liquidity into banking system

The Reserve Bank of India, RBI said it will inject long-term liquidity worth 5 billion US Dollars into the banking system through a dollar-rupee buy-sell swap for a tenure of three years on April 23. The RBI statement stated that the move intends to meet the durable liquidity needs of the system.

It stated that the auction is meant to give RBI greater flexibility in managing banking system cash while helping absorb any potential large dollar inflows, which could make the rupee rise sharply.

The swap will be in the nature of a simple buy/sell foreign exchange swap from the Reserve Bankside. Under the swap, a bank would sell US dollars to the RBI and simultaneously agree to buy the same amount of US dollars at the end of the swap period.

Bank of Baroda Becomes 3rd Largest Lender as Dena, Vijaya Bank Merger Takes Effect

State-run Bank of Baroda is catapulting itself for a larger play in the system with the merger of **Dena Bank and Vijaya Bank** with itself. The government-forced merger, announced last in September, creates the third largest bank in the country after State Bank of India and HDFC Bank.

This is the second merger of state-run banks in the recent years in the banking sector after State Bank had merged five of its associate banks—State Bank of Patiala, State Bank of Bikaner and Jaipur, State Bank of Mysore, State Bank of Travancore and State Bank of Hyderabad and also Bhartiya Mahila Bank effective April 2017.

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Reserve Bank of India celebrates its 84th Foundation Day on April 1,2019

The Central Bank of India is celebrating its 84th establishment day today. India's central banking institution -Reserve Bank of India (RBI) was **founded on 1 April 1935** to respond to economic troubles after the First World War. Though originally privately owned, since **nationalisation in 1949**, the Reserve Bank is fully owned by the Government of India.

The establishment of RBI was recommended by Hilton Young Commission to the then British Government. The Bank was conceptualized as per the guidelines, working style and outlook presented by B. R. Ambedkar in his book titled "The Problem of the Rupee – Its origin and its solution".

The Central Office of the Reserve Bank was initially established in Calcutta but was permanently moved to Mumbai in 1937.

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Govt raises wheat import duty to 40% in order to support local farmers

The Centre raised wheat import duty by a third to 40 per cent to support local farmers from further price fall and prevent its possible import on the back of a growing demand for animal feed in drought hit states including Maharashtra, Gujarat, Karnataka, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.

A notification issued by the Ministry of Finance on Friday evening said that wheat import will attract 40 per cent duty from existing 30 per cent effective immediately.

Real life 'Padman' Arunachalam Muruganantham Named in Fortune's World Leaders List

Real life 'Padman', Arunachalam Muruganantham, who made headlines for manufacturing low-cost sanitary napkins with his innovative cellulose-based pads, has made it to Fortune magazine's list of the top 100 world's greatest leaders.

Muruganantham ranks 45 on the list, along with other world leaders like Bill and Melinda Gates, Jacinda Ardern and Robert Mueller. While the Gates made it to the top of the list owing to their charity work, Ardern received critical acclaim for her handling of the New Zealand mosque shootings.

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India Pavilion inaugurated at Abu Dhabi International Book Fair 2019

The India Pavilion at the 29th Abu Dhabi International Book Fair was inaugurated by Deputy Prime Minister of United Arab Emirates, Shri Saif Bin Zayed Al Nahayan on 24th April, 2019 in the presence of UAE's Minister of Culture and Knowledge Development, Shri Noura Bint Mohd Al Kaabi; Indian Ambassador Shri Navdeep Suri and Chairman of National Book Trust Prof. Govind Prasad Sharma. India has been designated as the Guest of Honour for the Book Fair, which is being held from 24th – 30th April, 2019.

The India Pavilion lays special focus on the life and philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi. It displays the 100 volume series titled **Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi**, apart from various publications on freedom struggle.

Unicef, Niti Aayog tie up for children empowerment

Niti Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) and Unicef India signed a Letter of Intent (LoI) to provide an open platform to promote participation, skilling and empowerment among young children across different communities.

As per a release, the plan will be implemented through Atal Tinkering Lab initiative to orient the burgeoning innovation ecosystem towards achieving Sustainable Development Goals with a focus on child rights.

The LoI was signed by Yasmin Ali Haque, Unicef representative in India, and Ramanathan Ramanan, Mission Director, Atal Innovation Mission.

Indian Army signs MoU with NHPC for construction of tunnels on China, Pakistan borders

Indian Army signed an MoU with National Hydroelectric Power Corporation Limited (NHPC) to construct tunnels on borders with China and Pakistan for storage of ammunition and other war-related equipment.

Under the pilot project, three tunnels will be built on China border while one will be built along the Line of Control with Pakistan, Army sources said. The project is meant to bolster the Indian Army's capabilities along the Chinese border where India's infrastructural development is far outpaced by that of China.

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ICMR Launches 'Malaria Elimination Research Alliance'

ICMR launched Malaria Elimination Research Alliance (MERA)- India and organised the stakeholders' meeting at ICMR headquarters, New Delhi to have vibrant discussions on the roadmap of the alliance. National and international leaders of malaria research, officials from Government of India, NGOs participated in the day-long meeting.

Indian Council of Medical Research has established 'Malaria Elimination Research Alliance-India (MERA-India)' which is a conglomeration of partners working on malaria control.

Microsoft reaches \$1 trillion market value for the first time

Microsoft became the third U.S. company to hit \$1 trillion in market value, joining rivals Apple and Amazon. The tech company's Azure cloud software helped deliver third-quarter results that topped analyst estimates, boosting its stock price and pushing its value past the trillion-dollar mark.

Apple was the first to hit the historic mark in August, followed by Amazon, which operates cloud-computing services that compete with Microsoft, in September.

All India Radio, Publication Division & Children's Film Society of India given Swacchta Pakhwada Awards-2019

All India Radio, Publication Division and Children's Film Society of India were given Swacchta Pakhwada Awards-2019 in New Delhi.

Secretary in the Information and Broadcasting Ministry Amit Khare gave away the awards. Director General of All India Radio F. Sheheryar and Director General (News) Ms. Ira Joshi received the Award for All India Radio.

Press Council of India, Press Information Bureau and BECIL were also mentioned during the award ceremony for their efforts during the Swacchta Pakhwada.

IIM-Bangalore becomes only Indian institute to feature in QS EMBA Rankings 2019

The Indian Institute of Management-Bangalore (IIM-B) has once again made a mark at the global level. The institute's post-graduate programme in Enterprise Management

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(PGPEM) has secured the 12th rank in APAC listing and came 61st globally in the QS Executive MBA Rankings 2019.

It is the only Indian B-school to secure a place among the top 100 B-Schools across the world.

QS Rankings uses parameters such as leadership, executive profile, diversity, career outcomes, etc, for ranking.

These rankings mark the world's best universities with respect to specific subjects, which in turn helps students choose their course and the university they want to pursue their degree in, wisely.

Army begins process to induct women as military police for the first time

In a historic first, the Army began the process to induct women in the military police, nearly two years after Army Chief Gen. Bipin Rawat said women will be recruited as jawans.

The Army started the online registration for recruitment in the Corps of military and the last date for filing application has been fixed as June 8.

At present, women are allowed in select areas such as medical, legal, educational, signals and engineering wings of the Army.

Indian-origin Boy is UK's Youngest Accountant Who Has a Firm While at School

A 15-year-old Indian-origin boy has been lauded as Britain's youngest accountant after setting up a successful accountancy firm while still at school.

Ranveer Singh Sandhu, based in south London, has set himself a goal of becoming a millionaire by the time he turns 25 after he set up his first business when he was aged just 12 years. "Young Entrepreneur aged 15 living my best life and trying to make money.

BuyUcoin Introduces First Indian Platform for Wholesale Cryptocurrency Trading

BuyUcoin, which is the second oldest Cryptocurrency Exchange in India, announces the launch of a new and unique platform for wholesale cryptocurrency trading which allows its users to trade on a large scale with low price fluctuations. The platform currently works on free trading model i.e. charges zero fee on any trade.

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This new feature introduced by BuyUcoin will help to improve the liquidity of cryptocurrency in Indian market and lead to quicker transaction, better prices and market stability.

India ranks 80 in Global Talent Competitiveness Index 2019

India remains the laggard in the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) region and was ranked 80 even as Singapore retained its leading position in the Asia-Pacific region for the sixth consecutive year in the Global Talent Competitiveness Index (GTCI) 2019.

This year's report with the theme of 'Entrepreneurial Talent and Global Competitiveness' attempts to identify the ways in which companies, countries, and cities can foster entrepreneurial talent which makes up a critical component of competitiveness and innovation, and will become even more so in a fast-paced world of digitisation and globalisation.

In the 2019 GTCI, six Asia-Pacific countries rank in the top 30: Singapore takes the lead in the region (2nd globally), followed by New Zealand (11th), Australia (12th), Japan (22nd), Malaysia (27th) and South Korea (30th).

Assocham Secretary General U K Varma resigns

Uday Kumar Varma, a former bureaucrat who took over as the Secretary General of Assocham in August last year, has resigned from the post.

According to sources, Varma resigned from the industry chamber last week and Assocham Deputy Secretary General Saurabh Sanyal is discharging the duties of secretary general at present.

G. Ravinder Reddy's first sculptural solo in Kolkata

The first-ever solo exhibition of sculptures by India's eminent artist G. Ravinder Reddy will open in a Kolkata art gallery in June.

Titled 'RASA', the exhibition curated by art critic-curator Anupa Mehta, will open at Emami Art, a contemporary art gallery at the Kolkata Centre for Creativity (KCC). The exhibition is going to showcase a range of works by Reddy spanning from 1989 to 2019. It will include his latest creations along with his important works from the earlier period to highlight shifts in his oeuvre as a known sculptor, whose works are in the collection of global museums.

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MOU signed between Ministry of AYUSH and Council of Scientific and Industrial Research

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between the Ministry of AYUSH and Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), New Delhi for cooperation in research and education in areas of traditional systems of medicine and its integration with modern science.

The MoU was signed by Vaidya Rajesh Kotecha, Secretary, Ministry of AYUSH and Dr. Shekhar C. Mande, Director General, CSIR and Secretary, DSIR in the presence of senior officials from both the organizations.

India ranks 19th in Index of Cancer Preparedness

The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) has released the 2019 Index of Cancer Preparedness (ICP) in which India's overall rank is 19th out of 28 countries, with a score of 64.9.

Index of Cancer Preparedness (ICP) 2019: Australia tops the ICP, followed by the Netherlands and Germany. Saudi Arabia, Romania, and Egypt are at the bottom in Index.

Nasim Zaidi quits Jet Airways board

Nasim Zaidi, the former Chief Election Commissioner, was a non-executive and non-independent director in the Jet Airways board. Citing "personal reasons" and "time constraints", former Chief Election Commissioner Nasim Zaidi has quit the Board of Directors of grounded carrier Jet Airways.

Mr. Zaidi, who was also a former civil aviation secretary, joined the Jet Airways board in August last year as a non-executive and non-independent director.

MS Dhoni becomes first Indian to hit 200 IPL sixes

Chennai Super Kings (CSK) captain MS Dhoni has become the first Indian batsman to hit 200 sixes in the Indian Premier League (IPL). Dhoni achieved this feat during his sensational 84-run knock in Sunday's game against Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) which CSK lost by only one run.

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Reliance Retail Became India's First Retail Company To Cross The Rs.1 Lakh Crore Annual Revenue

The retail venture of Reliance Industries reported an income of Rs 1,30,556 crore for 2018-19, 89% more than the previous year's Rs 69,198 crore, the company. Notably, Reliance Retail is the only Indian retailer to be in the top 100 global retailers list and the 6th fastest growing retailer globally as per the Global powers of retailing 2019, Deloitte.

Mukesh Ambani led Reliance Retail also became the first Indian retailer to cross more than 10,000 stores. It operates 10,415 retail stores in more than 6,600 cities and towns, covering an area of over 22 million sq ft, as on March 31.

Police officer awarded for writing book 'Samvidhan Kavya'

Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D) under the Ministry of Home Affairs has conferred Sunil Kumar Gautam, Special Commissioner of Police (Operations) with "Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant Award" for the year 2018-19 for his book "Samvidhan Kavya" (Constitution of India in Poetic form).

India rises to 17th in global startup ecosystem ranking from 37th

According to data released by StartupBlink, India moved up to the 17th position in 2018 from 37th spot last year in the Startup Ecosystem Ranking for 2019. India ranks 17 globally among 100 countries, based on the strength of its startup ecosystem, according to StartupBlink, which tracks startup ecosystems on a number of parameters.

"The cities with the most vibrant startup ecosystems in India are Bangalore, New Delhi, and Mumbai," the report said about the Indian ecosystem.

Election Commission Launches 'Voter Turnout' App for Android

The Election Commission (EC) launched a new mobile application for near-realtime availability of voter turnout during elections across the country.

The beta version of the "Voter Turnout" app, available for Android via the Google Play store, currently shows the state-wise and constituency-wise voter turnout in the ongoing Lok Sabha elections. Deputy Election Commissioner Sandeep Saxena said the app would increase

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transparency of voter turnout information among public while ensuring easy availability of the same for the media.

Bhopal gas tragedy among world's major industrial accidents of 20th century: UN

The 1984 Bhopal gas tragedy which killed thousands of people is among the world's "major industrial accidents" of the 20th century, a UN report has said, warning that 2.78 million workers die from occupational accidents and work-related diseases each year.

The report released by the the UN labour agency International Labour Organization (ILO) said in 1984, at least 30 tons of methyl isocyanate gas, which was released from the Union Carbide pesticide plant in the Madhya Pradesh capital, affected more than 600,000 workers and nearby inhabitants.

CBSE to allow visual aids for disabled kids from 2020

The CBSE students, from 2020, will be allowed to use magnifying glasses and portable video magnifiers during the Class X final examination.

CBSE, notifying the exemption said, "Alternative-type questions will be provided in lieu of questions having visual inputs for visually impaired candidates in social science. With effect from 2020, in lieu of large-font question papers, candidates will be allowed to use magnifying glasses/ portable video magnifiers."

MOU signed between Ministry of AYUSH and Council of Scientific and Industrial Research

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between the Ministry of AYUSH and Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), New Delhi today for cooperation in research and education in areas of traditional systems of medicine and its integration with modern science. The MoU was signed by Vaidya Rajesh Kotecha, Secretary, Ministry of AYUSH and Dr. Shekhar C. Mande, Director General, CSIR and Secretary, DSIR in the presence of senior officials from both the organizations.

Reliance Retail Q4 pre-tax profit up 77% at Rs 1,923 crore

Reliance Retail reported a 77.07 per cent increase in its pre-tax profit to Rs 1,923 crore for the January-March quarter 2019. Comparatively, Reliance Retail had registered a profit before depreciation, interest and tax of Rs 1,086 crore in the same period a year ago.

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Its fourth quarter revenue saw 51.60 per cent rise at Rs 36,663 crore as against Rs 24,183 crore in the corresponding period of the last fiscal.

For the fiscal 2018-19, Reliance Retail the retail arm of RIL reported a revenue of Rs 1.30 lakh crore, an 88.68 per cent growth, the highest by any retailer in India. It had a revenue of Rs Rs 69,198 crore in FY 2017-18.

DMRC on track to be world's first 100% solar-powered metro

Delhi Metro is now a step closer to powering all its operations with solar energy.

The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) started receiving solar power from Madhya Pradesh's Rewa Solar Power Project, kick-starting an initiative to be the world's first 100% green energy rail network.

The DMRC said the Metro received 27 megawatts (MW) power from the MP-based project and will gradually increase it to 99 MW. "The power received from Rewa will be utilised for the operational as well as auxiliary requirement of Delhi Metro.

Gagandeep Kang becomes first Indian woman to be elected Royal Society Fellow

The Royal Society of London has announced a list of 51 eminent scientists elected to its fellowship in the year 2019. Among these are Gagandeep Kang, who is now with the Translational Health Science and Technology Institute, Faridabad. Dr. Kang is the first Indian woman to be elected to the Fellow of the Royal Society (FRS).

Princeton professors Manjul Bhargava and Akshay Venkatesh have also been elected to the FRS.

OYO launches initiative for asset owners' growth

OYO Hotels & Homes launched the Open Partner Engagement Network (OPEN), an initiative for a year, to help its asset-owner partners in the country in growing their businesses.

"OYO Hotels & Homes has announced the launch of 'OPEN' to reiterate its commitment to asset owner's success and start an industry-first series of year-long initiatives to help its '8,700+' asset owner partners in India reach their business goals.

ETMONEY becomes India's first comprehensive financial services app to integrate UPI

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India's largest app for financial services, ETMONEY announced that it has integrated Unified Payment Interface (UPI) as a payment method on its platform as it looks to double its monthly user base by the end of the year. The integration of UPI will simplify the mutual fund payment experience for millions of ETMONEY users as the company continues its journey to simplify the financial lives of new age Indians.

Bandhan Bank had, in January, announced the merger of Gruh Finance with it. The move was taken to bring down promoter holding in the bank to 61 per cent from 82.3 per cent.

Rushdie's new novel inspired by 'Don Quixote', to release in Aug

Salman Rushdie's new novel is inspired by the classic "Don Quixote" and is the story of an ageing travelling salesman who falls in love with a TV star and sets off to drive across America on a quest to prove himself worthy of her hand.

This book "Quichotte", acquired by Penguin Random House India, will be published in India under the Hamish Hamilton imprint in August.

Mukesh Ambani, Arundhati Katju, Menaka Guruswamy among TIME's list of 100 most influential people

Reliance Industries Chairman Mukesh Ambani and public-interest litigators Arundhati Katju and Menaka Guruswamy, who spearheaded a historic legal battle for LGBTQ rights in India, are among the Indians who have been named by TIME magazine in its prestigious list of the 100 most influential people in the world.

The Time 100 Most Influential People 2019 list was released Wednesday, naming the world's most influential pioneers, leaders, titans, artists and icons of the year.

The list includes Indian-American comedian and TV host Hasan Minhaj, US President Donald Trump, Pope Francis, Chinese President Xi Jinping, Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan, iconic golfer Tiger Woods and Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg.

Cabinet approves creation of one post of Deputy Comptroller and Auditor General in the office of Comptroller and Auditor General of India

The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has given its approval to create one post of Deputy Comptroller & Auditor General (Coordination, Communication and Information System) in Pay Level-17 (by abolishing one STS level post) in the Office of the Comptroller & Auditor General of India.

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The Deputy Comptroller & Auditor General shall oversee the coordination among State Audits, audit of telecommunication and to coordinate the various Information Systems (IS) initiatives within the Indian Audit & Accounts Department (IA&AD).

Cabinet approves extension of duration of New Urea Policy-2015 for existing gas based urea unit

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the proposal of the Department of fertilizers to extend the duration of New Urea Policy-2015 from April 1, 2019 till further orders, except for the provisions which stand already amended vide notification dated March 28, 2018.

India's travel spend to grow to \$136 bn by 2021

The travel spend in India is expected to grow at 13 per cent to a total of \$136 billion by 2021, said a new report by Bain & Company and Google India .

According to the "How Does India Travel" report, the Indian traveller spent around \$94 billion in 2018 on around 2 billion domestic and international trips, thus, helping India's travel and tourism industry achieve unprecedented scale.

First-of-its-kind 'Voter Park' inaugurated in Gurugram

India's first-of-its-kind 'Voter Park' was inaugurated in Gurugram , aimed at increasing voter awareness and educating people about the electoral process. Haryana Chief Electoral Officer Rajeev Ranjan inaugurated the park in Vikas Sadan building complex.

CBDT sets June 30 deadline to dispose of demonetisation cases

Tax authorities have set a deadline of June 30 to clear up all demonetisation-related cases. In its interim action plan for the first quarter of 2019-20, the Central Board of Direct Tax (CBDT) has instructed its officials to "dispose of all cases related to demonetisation where assessment is required to be framed".

The CBDT had earlier identified 87,000 cases where assesses had not filed their responses to income-tax notices issued post the note-ban. It had sent out notices and emails to about 3 lakh people who had made high-value cash deposits in the days following the demonetisation announcement of November 8, 2016, but had not filed their I-T returns.

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India, ASEAN vow to boost ties in maritime sector, strengthen connectivity

India and ASEAN have resolved to strengthen ties by deepening cooperation in the maritime sector and boosting connectivity. The meeting was co-chaired by Vijay Thakur Singh, SOM Leader and Secretary (East), Ministry of External Affairs, and Busaya Mathelin, SOM Leader and Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Thailand.

The two sides also vowed to step up cooperation in renewable energy and hold an ASEAN-India Conference on Renewable Energy in 2019. The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) and the ASEAN Centre for Energy (ACE) would be the co-partners for this project.

The ASEAN-India partnership is being implemented through the “Plan of Action (2016-20) to implement the ASEAN-India Partnership for peace, progress and shared prosperity”.

Airtel, FLO launch app for women's safety

Bharti Airtel in collaboration with **FICCI Ladies Organisation (FLO)** launched a mobile app, **My Circle**, to help women in case they face any problem or a panic situation.

The application is carrier agnostic which would work on phones with any telecom service network, both Airtel and non-Airtel, Bharti Airtel said in a statement.

“My Circle app enables women to send SOS alerts to any five of their family or friends in 13 languages including English, Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Kannada, Marathi, Punjabi, Bangla, Urdu, Assamese, Oriya, and Gujarati,” .

Nation pays tributes to Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar on his 128th birth anniversary

President Ram Nath Kovind led the nation in paying homage to the architect of the Indian Constitution **Dr BR Ambedkar** on his **128th birth anniversary**. Mr Kovind paid floral tributes at the statue of Dr Ambedkar at the Parliament House Lawns in New Delhi this morning.

Railway Board Celebrates 64th Railway Week Function at Rail Bhawan

The 64th Railway Week Function of Railway Board was organized on **12th April, 2019** in Rail Bhavan, New Delhi. Chairman, Railway Board, Shri V.K. Yadav presided over the function and presented Running Efficiency Shield, Merit Certificates & Awards to officials of Railway Board for their outstanding performances during the year 2018-19. Other Railway Board Members and Senior Officials were also present on the occasion.

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Shri V.K. Yadav presented the Running Efficiency Shield to Stationery and O&M Branches (jointly) of Railway Board selected as “Best Maintained Branch” for maintaining high standards of efficiency, prompt disposal of cases and excellent up-keep of records. Besides this, Merit Certificates and Cash Awards were presented to 2 other well-maintained sections namely Project and ERB-V Branches of Railway Board.

Prasar Bharati Chairman releases booklet of ‘Selected speeches of Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar in the Constituent Assembly’

Prasar Bharati Chairman, A Surya Prakash released a booklet of the ‘Selected speeches of Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar in the Constituent Assembly’ , in New Delhi . The event was organized to commemorate the contributions of Baba Saheb in the upliftment of underprivileged in the country.

India’s population grew at 1.2% average annual rate between 2010 and 2019: UN

India’s population grew at an average annual rate of **1.2 per cent between 2010 and 2019 to 1.36 billion**, more than double the annual growth rate of China, according to a report by the United Nations Population Fund.

India’s population in 2019 stood at 1.36 billion, growing from 942.2 million in 1994 and 541.5 million in 1969. The Indian population grew at average annual rate of 1.2 per cent between 2010 and 2019, the UN sexual and reproductive health agency said, in the State of World Population 2019 report.

In comparison, China’s population stood at 1.42 billion in 2019, growing from 1.23 billion in 1994 and 803.6 million in 1969. China’s population grew at an average annual rate of 0.5 per cent between 2010 and 2019, the report said.

Reliance Jio launches news app for web, mobile users

Reliance Jio has launched its own **news platform JioNews** in the form of a web-based service as well as a mobile application for both, Android as well as iOS users.

The platform has been launched as a combined offering of JioXpressNews, JioMags and JioNewsPaper along with the Live TV feature with the aim to bring along the best news content as fast as possible from Live channels, magazines, blogs and news websites from around the world, the company said .

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Maharashtra has highest number of polluted rivers in country: NGT

Maharashtra, a state with the largest economy, has the highest number of polluted river stretches in the country, the NGT has said. Maharashtra also has the most number of cities and towns along polluted stretches, according to a 2015 report and water samples collected from over 30 districts of the state were found to have contaminants, it said.

A bench headed by NGT Chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel directed the state government to notify at least three major cities, towns and panchayats as “model cities/towns/villages” in every district be notified within two weeks which will be made fully compliant within next six months.

India builds maternity hospital in Nepal

India has built a 25-bed maternity hospital in Nepal. The hospital has been built under the Government of India’s Small Development Projects Scheme. Indian Ambassador to Nepal Manjeev Singh Puri inaugurated the Chandra Narayan Yadav Memorial Maternity Hospital in Siraha district.

The Hospital will provide quality maternity and health care services to the people of 50 Village Development Committees in and around Siraha district. It will also help in reducing maternal and child mortality rate.

The Hospital will be run by the Chandra Narayan Yadav Memorial Trust on no profit-no loss basis. The new infrastructure has been constructed with the Government of India’s grant of 26.90 million Nepali Rupees.

Government meets fiscal deficit target of 3.4% for FY19

The government has managed to meet the revised fiscal deficit target of **3.4 per cent** of the GDP after it cut last minute expenditure and rolled over fuel subsidies to make up for the shortfall in tax collection.

The interim Budget presented in February revised upward the fiscal deficit target to 3.4 per cent from 3.3 per cent of GDP estimated earlier for 2018-19.

‘Bold Kurukshetra–2019’: India And Singapore Kick Off Joint Military Exercise In Jhansi

Armed forces of India and Singapore kicked off a joint military exercise, ‘**Bold Kurukshetra–2019**’, in **Jhansi’s Babina Cantonment** (8 March). The three-day exercise is aimed at bolstering cooperation against terrorism, developing defence technology and improving maritime security.

India and Singapore had entered into an official agreement in November 2017 to strengthen defence ties between their respective armed forces. As per the understanding,

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personnel from the Singapore Armed Forces will receive training and undertake firing exercises along with the Indian Armed Forces.

President Ram Nath Kovind pays homage to CRPF martyrs on 54th Valour Day

President Ram Nath Kovind today paid homage to the martyrs at National Police Memorial in New Delhi on the occasion of 54th Valour Day of Central Reserve Police Force, CRPF. He also presented gallantry medals to six Jawans posthumously.

The President said, on this day, 9th of April in 1965 a small contingent of 2nd Battalion of CRPF, successfully fought and repulsed an attack by a Pakistani Brigade at Sardar Post in the Rann of Kutch in Gujarat. They eliminated 34 Pakistani soldiers and captured four soldiers alive.

ITBP organises first National Sky Running Championship

Border guarding force Indo Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) along with Sky Running Association of India organised the National Sky Running Championship at Mountaineering and Skiing Institute of ITBP at Auli in Uttarakhand.

This is the first time such championship was organised at a high altitude of up to 4000 metres. The high altitude marathon was organised for both junior and senior categories from April 4 to April 5, 2019.

Various athletes from ITBP, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Uttarakhand participated in the championship.

IIT Madras topples IISc Bangalore as best educational institute in India

The Indian Institute of Technology Madras, (IIT Madras) has emerged as the best educational institute in India, ahead of Indian Institute of Science Bangalore (IISc Bangalore), the union government said in a fresh university rankings report.

IIT Delhi, IIT Powai in Mumbai and IIT Khargpur, respectively, rounded up the top five, according to the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) released by President Ram Nath Kovind on Monday.

The rankings were declared in nine categories—including engineering, management and medicine—and overall all institutions.

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In the management education category, IIM Bangalore topped IIM Ahmedabad to be the best B-school of India. IIM Calcutta came in third.

Among universities, IISc Bangalore was judged best, followed by Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) in New Delhi, Banaras Hindu University (BHU), University of Hyderabad and Calcutta University.

NGT forms committee to look into Yamuna floodplain erosion in Sonipat

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) formed a committee to look into the alleged erosion of Yamuna floodplain due to movement of heavy vehicles in Haryana's Sonipat district.

A bench headed by NGT Chairperson **Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel** constituted a committee comprising the principal secretary of the Haryana Irrigation and Water Resources Department, member secretary of the Haryana State Pollution Control Board and the director of the Mines and Geology Department.

India in talks with Netherlands to amend bilateral tax treaty

After successfully plugging the loopholes in tax treaties with Mauritius and Singapore, India is now negotiating with the Netherlands to amend the bilateral tax treaty in an effort to gain more powers to tax the sale of shares of Indian companies by Dutch firms.

In the first nine months of 2018-19, India had received \$2.95 billion foreign direct investment from Netherlands, topping the \$2.8 billion investment in 2017-18. The Indian government wants to widen its tax base by ensuring share transactions involving Indian entities do not escape taxation in India.

Morgan Stanley estimates ETF assets will go up 12 times in 10 years

The Indian markets could witness a boom in exchange-traded funds (ETFs) in the coming decade, says Morgan Stanley. The US-based brokerage estimates the ETF assets to jump 12 times from the current level to \$200 billion by 2029. Globally, ETF assets have risen nearly 21 times in the last 15 years from \$240 billion to \$5 trillion currently.

In India, ETF assets have risen from \$240 million to \$15 billion in four years.

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India's economic growth driven by domestic demand, need to focus on exports: WB

India's economic growth in recent years has been "too much" driven by domestic demand and its exports were about one third of its potential, a World Bank official said, asserting that the next government needs to focus on export-led growth.

Praising attempts to liberalize markets within India, Hans Timmer, World Bank Chief Economist for the South Asia Region said "that is what is needed to become more competitive."

IIT-Madras tops HRD's ranking of higher education institutes, IISc second

The Indian Institute of Technology(IIT), Madras, topped the national ranking of higher institutes released by the **Ministry of Human Resources Development (HRD)** . The Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore, and IIT-Delhi ranked second and third in the list respectively. Of the top 10 institutes, seven are IITs.

The Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) and the Banaras Hindu University ranked seventh and 10th respectively. The Delhi University's Miranda House was ranked the best among colleges across the country, while the varsity's St Stephen's College was ranked fourth.

The HRD Ministry has been publishing the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF).

'Ab Hoga Nyay' is Congress' campaign slogan for 2019 Lok Sabha elections

Congress party launched its publicity campaign for 2019 Lok Sabha elections with an over arching slogan of "**Ab Hoga Nyay**" or **justice will happen now**. The word NYAY is also the reference to Nyuntam Aay Yojana which is party's minimum income guarantee promise.

Adani Power receives Letter of Intent for Korba West Power

Adani Power has received the Letter of Intent (LoI) to acquire the insolvent **Korba West Power Company (KWPCCL)** after the latter's Committee of Creditors (CoC) approved Adani's resolution plan for KWPCCL.

KWPCCL owns and operates a 600 megawatt (MW) thermal power plant in Raigarh District, Chhattisgarh.

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According to Adani Power, successful acquisition and implementation of the resolution plan will consolidate its position as India's leading private sector thermal power producer, with a combined thermal power capacity of 11,040 MW.

World Bank Projects India's GDP To Expand 7.5% In FY20

India's GDP growth is expected to accelerate moderately to **7.5 percent in fiscal year 2019-20**, driven by continued investment strengthening, particularly private-improved export performance and resilient consumption, **the World Bank said.**

India's first indigenously built Dhanush howitzer inducted in Army

In a major boost to India's firepower, country's first indigenously designed and developed **Dhanush artillery gun** was inducted in the Indian Army during a ceremony held at Ordnance Factory . Dhanush 155mm/45 calibre towed gun system can be deployed in all types of terrains.

The Dhanush gun system is based on the designs of the Bofors howitzer which was inducted in the Army in the 1980s and would be the third type of artillery gun to be inducted into the force after the K-9 Vajra and the M-777 ultra-light howitzers.

Platinum Jubilee Commemoration of Battle of Kangla Tongbi

The Platinum Jubilee of the Battle of Kangla Tongbi War was commemorated on **07 Apr 2019** by Army Ordnance Corps at Kangla Tongbi War Memorial near **Imphal** honouring the valiant brave hearts of Ordnance Personnel of 221 Advance Ordnance Depot who made their supreme sacrifice in the line of duty during the battle of World War-II on the night of **6/ 7 April 1944.**

Amazon India launches seller-funding programme for small businesses

Amazon India announced the launch of its seller-funding programme—**Amazon Wings--** in partnership with Ketto, a crowd-funding platform.

Through this India first initiative, Amazon looks at enabling the small businesses and entrepreneurs who are sellers on its platform, raise funds for their business expansion, product development and innovation or community development.

Amazon India sellers can use Ketto's platform for a subsidised fee of around 50 per cent to initiate fundraisers. The e-commerce giant has partnered with Ketto to launch a dedicated microsite to feature fundraisers initiated by sellers.

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Govt sells Rs 1,150 cr 'enemy' Wipro shares, state-owned firms major buyers

The government sold “enemy” shares worth Rs 1,150 crore in IT major **Wipro**, aiming to transfer the proceeds to its disinvestment kitty.

Enemy shares are called so as they were originally held by people who migrated to Pakistan or China and are not Indian citizens any longer.

A total of 44.4 million shares, which were held by the Custodian of Enemy Property for India, were sold at Rs 259 apiece on the Bombay Stock Exchange, block deal data provided by the exchange showed.

NTPC signs Rs 2,000 cr term loan with Canara Bank

The country's largest power producer **NTPC** has signed a term loan agreement for **Rs 2,000 crore with Canara Bank.**

The loan facility is extended at an interest rate linked to three months MCLR of the Bank. This loan has a door to door tenure of 15 years and will be utilised to part finance the capital expenditure of the NTPC.

Indian Navy signs MoU with Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)

The Indian Navy and Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) inked a MoU to undertake joint research and development of advanced technologies for the **Indian Navy**. This will be a collaborative arrangement between labs of CSIR, the Indian Navy and Indian industry.

The MoU provides a formal framework for interaction between Indian Navy and CSIR. It would facilitate joint R&D activities in diverse fields of Mechanical, Electronics, Communication, Computer Science, Propulsion systems, Metallurgy and Nanotechnology.

Coal import rises 8% to 212 MT in April-February FY19

India's coal import increased by 7.8% to 212.11 million tonnes in the April-February period of FY19. This comes at a time when the government is looking at relaxing the timeline for the 1 billion tonne coal production target it had set earlier for Coal India (CIL), which accounts for over 80% of the domestic coal output.

The country produced 196.59 million tonnes (MT) of coal in April-February period of fiscal 2017-18.

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Coal imports in the month of February was at 18.31 MT (provisional) as compared to 21.15 MT (revised) in January 2019. Coking coal imports were at 2.93 MT in February 2019, down against 3.32 MT a month ago.

Govt plans to make Andamans major tourist hub like Maldives, Mauritius

A series of development projects have been planned by the government to give a tourism boost to the picturesque **Andaman and Nicobar Islands** to make them a major tourist attraction like **Maldives and Mauritius**.

Key projects for the all-round development of the Andamans include premium tents and tree houses, mangrove interpretation centre, turtle observatory centre, island hopping facility, beach shacks and sunrise points, premium island resorts, beach promenade, nature trail and camping facility besides other infrastructure.

App launched to facilitate elderly voters in Rajouri

Sahulat', a mobile app aimed to facilitate voting by elders was launched **in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district**. District Election Officer Mohammad Aijaz Asad launched the Android-based application to reach out to the voters who are 90 years old or above, they said.

"The app is designed to aid the old-age voters' only. It is free of cost and can be downloaded from the Google Play store. There are two versions of the app one for the citizen where they can fill in their requirements and other for the officer concerned who can access and provide data regarding necessary arrangements," the district poll official said.

NPCI slashes UPI usage fees to boost adoption

The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has dropped the usage fees for small transactions on Unified Payments Interface (UPI) in a bid to expand the system's adoption within banks and payment service providers (PSPs).

As per the rules, for UPI transactions up to Rs 1,000, the charge has been dropped to 10 paise from 25 paise, said NPCI in a notification to banks and PSPs. For transactions exceeding Rs 1,000, the charge has been retained at 50 paise.

Incentive payments levied by NPCI at the same rate as normal transactions have been placed under brought under a fixed price regime of 10 paise for encouraging such promotions by banks and PSPs.

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CCI approves L&T's proposal to acquire up to 66.15% stake in Mindtree

The Competition Commission of India (CCI) approved engineering and construction major Larsen & Toubro's (L&T's) proposal to acquire up to 66.15 per cent stake in Mindtree.

With this nod, L&T has overcome the first major regulatory hurdle in its bid for 'hostile' takeover of the Bengaluru-headquartered IT services firm. "CCI approves acquisition of up to 66.15 per cent of the total equity shareholding of Mindtree, on a fully diluted basis, by Larsen and Toubro.

'Experimental Learning' To Be Punch Line For CBSE In 2019-20 Academic Session

"Experimental learning" will be the punch line for the CBSE in the academic session of 2019-20, the board said. CBSE secretary Anurag Tripathi said from now on every year, the board will have a punch line.

First Kerala tribal woman cracks Civil Services exam

Sreedhanya Suresh, 25, has become the first woman from Kerala's tribal community to crack the Civil Services examination. In her third attempt, she secured the 410th rank to clear the exam.

ED attaches immovable assets valued of M/s Udaipur Entertainment World Pvt. Ltd.

Enforcement Directorate provisionally attached immovable assets valued at **83.92 crore rupees of M/s. Udaipur Entertainment World Pvt. Ltd. in a bank Fraud Case.**

Enforcement Directorate had initiated investigation under Prevention of Money Laundering Act, PMLA based on the FIR and charge sheet filed by CBI against the officials of Syndicate Bank and Others.

Investigation revealed that during 2011 to 2016, master mind of the fraud, Bharat Bomb, a Chartered Accountant, in collusion with bank officials of Syndicate Bank had defrauded the bank to the tune of 1055 crore rupees.

Vice President to inaugurate 3-day National Cardiology Conference in Lucknow

Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu is visiting Lucknow where he will be the chief guest at National Cardiology Conference 2019 being held at Sanjay Gandhi Post Graduate Institute of medical sciences.

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Vice President will inaugurate the 3-day **conference organised by Dept of Cardiology** in which leading national and international experts from Europe, USA, Japan, Singapore South Korea, Indonesia and Australia will deliberate on the latest topics of Interventional cardiology and cutting edge technology.

The conference being held for the **first time in Uttar Pradesh** offers an opportunity to showcase newer innovations in Cardiology that can help deliver cost-effective cardiology care to patients.

Secretary, MoHUA inaugurates seminar on Greenery & Landscaping in New Delhi

Secretary, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Durga Shankar Misra inaugurated a seminar on **Greenery and Landscaping in New Delhi**. The day-long seminar, being organised by the Central Public Works Department, will hold deliberations on the effective measures to increase green cover across the country.

Micromax Co-founder Rahul Sharma to Launch Revolt Electric Motorcycle in June 2019

Homegrown entrepreneur **Rahul Sharma** has announced that his new venture, **Revolt Intellicorp**, will be launching an AI-enabled motorcycle in June 2019.

Sharma said that he aims to gain a double-digit market share with this new venture. The company says that this new venture has been started with Rahul's personal investment, and it will be looking for its first investment soon as growth capital.

BSNL Gets In-Flight Connectivity Licence, On-Air Services to Commence Soon

Bharatiya Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) has received a licence from the Department of Telecommunications **to provide Internet and mobile services on flights**. BSNL and its **satellite partner, Inmarsat**, will be able to offer in-flight connectivity to airlines later this year.

Inmarsat owns and operates the GX Aviation service, which enables passengers to browse the internet, stream videos, check social media during flights. According to the rules, passengers can make phone calls or use the Internet when a flight is at a minimum height of 3,000m in Indian airspace to avoid interference with terrestrial mobile networks.

Fitch keeps India's rating unchanged for 13th year

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Global ratings agency Fitch today retained **India's sovereign rating at 'BBB-'**, the lowest investment grade, with stable outlook, saying a weak fiscal position continues to constrain its rating.

This is the 13th year in a row that global rating agency Fitch has rated India at 'BBB-'. It had last upgraded India's sovereign rating from 'BB+' to 'BBB-' with a stable outlook on August 1, 2006. Fitch said a robust growth outlook continues to support India's credit profile and expects the country to grow at 6.8% to 7.1% in the current fiscal.

Over 1.2 M early deaths in India due to air pollution: Report

A global report has found that life expectancy of children born today will be shortened by 20 months on average, growing up in current high levels of air . According to a study, conducted by the Boston-headquartered Health Effects Institute, the situation in South Asia is much worse with the life expectancy shortened by two years and six months.

The institutes's State of Global Air Report 2019, released , said that overall long-term exposure to outdoor and indoor air pollution contributed to nearly 5 million deaths across the world from stroke, diabetes, heart attack, lung cancer, and chronic lung disease in 2017.

The report said that out of the 5 million, 3 million deaths are directly attributed to PM2.5, half of which is from India and China together. The analysis found that China and India together were responsible for over half of the total global attributable deaths, with each country facing over 1.2 million deaths from all air pollution in 2017.

Government meets fiscal deficit of 3.4% in 2018-19

The Finance Ministry is believed to have met the revised fiscal deficit target of **3.4 per cent** in the last fiscal 2018-19 largely by cutting expenditure, withdrawals from small savings accounts to meet the food subsidy and higher GST collections.

The direct tax collections fell short by Rs 50,000 crore. The GST collections, however, touched Rs 1.06 lakh crore in March and the gross GST revenues overshot the target of Rs 11.47 lakh crore, which also partly helped adjust for the shortfall on the direct taxes front.

Reliance Mutual Fund customers can now carry out voice-based transactions

Customers of **Reliance Mutual Fund** can now carry out voice-based financial transactions, with Reliance Nippon Life Asset Management (RNAM) partnering with internet major Google.

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For the first time in India, Reliance Mutual Fund for its customers is introducing a conversational interface that would help customers shop with the fund “just by listening and speaking to your smartphone or digital device through a series of voice commands.

NuGen Mobility Summit 2019

The International Centre for Automotive Technology (ICAT) is organizing a NuGen Mobility Summit, 2019, at Manesar, NCR, from 27th to 29th November 2019.

The objective of the Summit is to share new ideas, learnings, global experiences, innovations and future technology trends for faster adoption, assimilation and development of advanced automotive technologies for a smarter and greener future. This event will help in building a platform for bringing together all stakeholders in the automotive industry to understand global advancements in technologies.

The Summit is being organized in association with SAENIS, SAE INDIA, SAE International, NATRiP, DIMTS, Department of Heavy Industry, Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, SIAM and ACMA. More than 2500 participants and over 250 exhibitors are expected to take part in the Summit.

Garuda Prakashan launches ‘Modi Again’ and ‘Saffron Swords’

One of India’s homegrown startup publishing houses – Garuda Prakashan – is all set to launch its next two books ‘#Modi Again’ and ‘Saffron Swords – Centuries of Indic Resistance to Invaders’ after the success of its recently launched books – ‘Urban Naxals’ by Vivek Agnihotri and ‘Thank you India’ by Maria Writh.

Tata Power, Indraprastha Gas to offer integrated services

Tata Power and Indraprastha Gas Limited (IGL) signed a memorandum of understanding to set up integrated customer services and optimise value for customers.

The pact will also cover common safeguard activities of underground assets (pipes and cables) including the right of way for activities like maintenance and laying of pipes and cables, routine patrolling of under and above ground assets. Both the entities will also explore possibilities of cooperation in electricity generation, optical fibre network and integrated utility services for water, electricity and gas.

Rajan Anandan quits Google, to join Sequoia Capital

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Google's India and South East Asia President Rajan Anandan has resigned after an eight-year stint at the American tech giant. Anandan, also an investor in multiple startups, is slated to join venture fund Sequoia Capital. He will work with Google till the end of this month.

Vikas Agnihotri will take on the interim responsibility. He is currently serving as Google's Country Director for Sales. Anandan had joined Google from Microsoft India in 2010. Previously, he was also been associated with Dell India and McKinsey & Company.

HCL completes acquisition of Strong-Bridge Envision

IT major HCL Technologies said that its acquisition of US-based Strong-Bridge Envision has been completed. HCL had recently agreed to acquire the Seattle-based company to enhance its digital transformation consulting capabilities. According to reports, the deal was worth 45 million dollars.

Wages rise under MGNREGA with EC endorsement

The Union Rural Development Ministry has increased the rate of wages under the MGNREGA for the 2019-20 fiscal with approval from the Election Commission and has asked state governments not to publicise the enhancement of wage rates under the rural employment scheme.

According to the government notifications, the wages under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, have increased in a range of **two to 8.76 per cent** in most of the states except West Bengal, Karnataka, Kerala and Goa, where the wages have not been increased for the 2019-20 fiscal.

Among the states, the increase of wages in Mizoram was the highest at 8.76 per cent from Rs 194 to Rs 211. As per the notification, the highest wage under the MGNREGA is Rs 284 in Haryana, while the lowest is Rs 171 in Bihar and Jharkhand.

Maitri Bridge over Indus in Leh opened to public

The 260-foot Maitri Bridge, the longest suspension bridge over the Indus River at Choglamsar village in Leh was opened to the public on March 01. The bridge has been named 'Maitri Bridge', symbolising the excellent civil-military relations existing in the Leh-Ladakh region.

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The senior war veterans of 1947-48, 1962, 1971 and 1999 operations in the Ladakh region led by **Naik Phunchok Angdus (retd)**, an 89-year-old war veteran, opened the bridge to the public.

EC clears revised MGNREGA wage rates from April 1

Election Commission has approved a request of the Rural Development Ministry to revise the wages under the MGNREGA scheme from April 1.

The wages paid under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) are linked with the Consumer Price Index for agricultural labourers (CPI-AL) and new wage rates are notified on April 1, the beginning of the new financial year.

The ministry had approached the EC for approval as the model code for the coming Lok Sabha polls is in force. Different states have different wage rates so the increase in wages will also be different. The increase could be up to 5 per cent over and above the current wage.

Govt extends PAN-Aadhaar linking deadline by 6 months

The government extended the deadline for **linking PAN with biometric ID Aadhaar** by **6 months till September 30**, as per an official statement. This is the sixth time the government has extended the deadline for individuals to link their Permanent Account Number (PAN) with Aadhaar.

In June last year, the government had said that PAN has to be linked with the biometric ID by March 31.

The CBDT said there were reports that those PANs which are not linked with Aadhaar number by March 31 may be invalidated, following which the matter was considered by the government and the date extended till September 30.

GRSE Delivers 99th & 100th Warships

Garden Reach Ship Builders and Engineers Ltd., (GRSE) a leading warship building company in the country under the administrative control of the Ministry of Defence delivered its 100th warship to the Indian Navy today, March 30, 2019. This makes GRSE the first Indian shipyard to make and deliver 100 warships to the Indian Navy, Indian Coast Guard and Mauritius Coast Guard.

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The 100th warship, “IN LCU L-56” was formally “Handed Over” by Rear Admiral V. K. Saxena, IN (Retd).

The 100th warship, a Landing Craft Utility (LCU) named IN LCU L56 is the sixth of an order of eight such vessels from the Indian Navy. The entire design of these LCU Mark IV ships has been developed in-house by GRSE as per requirements specified by Indian Navy.

Earlier in the week, on March 27, 2019, GRSE had handed over its 99th warship, “**ICGS Priyadarshini**”, an advanced “Fast Patrol Vessel” to the Indian Coast Guard.

FY19 direct tax collections fall short by Rs 50k cr

Direct tax collections have fallen short by **Rs 50,000 crore** thereby failing to meet the revised target of Rs 12 lakh crore for 2018-19 fiscal on account of poor personal income tax collections.

the target of personal income tax of **Rs 5.29 lakh crore** was not met by almost the same shortfall amount of Rs 50,000 crore, which dragged down the direct tax collections for the fiscal 2018-19.

STATE RELATED CURRENT AFFAIRS

Kerala CBSE schools set up new unit

Heralding a change in the running of CBSE Schools in Kerala, representatives of over 350 schools met in the city and announced the formation of a new body – Kerala State Council of CBSE Schools (KSCCS).

The new Council has been formed at a time when CBSE Schools are faced with a number of issues which include recognition certificate from the state government, rules framed under the Right to Education Act, proposed guidelines regarding salary, fees and service conditions. Another core area that KSCCS aims to address is faculty enhancement programmes.

Assam: Jonai to host 27th convention of National Children’s Sc Congress

Jonai in Assam’s Dhemaji will host the 27th convention of the National Children’s Science Congress (NCSC), Dhemaji district unit in September this year.

The NCSC functionaries sat in a meeting with the functionaries of Aryabhata Science Centre, school teachers, NGO members and civil society members of the district at Jonai

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HS School and resolved to conduct the day-long convention presentation of projects, model exhibition and student-scientist interaction.

Former deputy EC appointed special observer for Tripura

Former deputy election commissioner Vinod Zutshi was appointed as special observer for Tripura where the Lok Sabha polls to one of the seats was postponed in view of the law and order situation.

LSE names a professorship after economist Amartya Sen

The London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) has announced the creation of the Amartya Sen Chair in Inequality Studies, named in honour of the India-born economist, philosopher and Nobel laureate, who was Professor of Economics at LSE from 1971-82.

The London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) has created a new academic position in honor of philosopher and economist Amartya Sen who was a professor there from 1971-82.

FAC gives final clearance to North Koel dam project in Jharkhand

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change's (MoEF&CC's) Forest Advisory Committee (FAC) has given Stage II clearance for the construction of the North Koel Dam in core area of Palamau Tiger Reserve in Latehar and Garhwa districts of Jharkhand.

The clearance also comes with the permission to start construction and settle the villages which will be submerged by the project before closing the sluice gates of the dam.

The project will impact 15 villages in the Palamau Tiger Reserve, and the people have been protesting against the project.

Scientists develop salt tolerant rice variety

A group of Indian scientists has developed a new salt-tolerant transgenic rice plant by over-expressing a gene from a wild rice called *Porteresia coarctata* into the commonly used IR 64 indica rice variety. *Porteresia coarctata* is a native of India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Myanmar and is grown mainly in saline estuaries.

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Tata team meets J&K Governor to explore investment avenues

A team of Tata group called on Jammu and Kashmir Governor Satya Pal Malik to explore investment avenues in the state.

“A team of Tata group comprising Girish Krishnamurthy, Vice President and Head – Strategic Initiatives Chairman’s Office, Tata group, and Shankar Ranganathan, Principal, Tata Strategic Management Group, had a meeting with Governor Satya Pal Malik at the Raj Bhavan here in the evening.

Chandigarh to host Asian Billiards, Snooker C’ships

Chandigarh will host the 18th Asian Billiards, the 20th Under-21 Asian Snooker Championship and the 3rd Ladies Asian Snooker Championship from April 27 to May 3, officials of the Punjab Billiards and Snooker Association (PBSA) said .

The participating countries include India, China, Thailand, Singapore, Hong Kong, Qatar, Syria, Korea, Japan, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Iran and others.

2 West Bengal govt schemes win UN awards

Two schemes of the **West Bengal government** for skill development and distribution of bi-cycles to students have won the prestigious World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) awards of the United Nations, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said . **The schemes are “Utkarsh Bangla” and “Sabooj Sathi”.**

The “Utkarsh Bangla” project aims at creating a pool of skilled candidates who are industry ready, while under the “Sabooj Sathi” scheme, bi-cycles are distributed to students between class IX and XII studying in government run and government aided schools and madrashas of the state.

Tamil Nadu renames Chennai rail station after MGR

The Tamil Nadu government has renamed the iconic Chennai Central Railway Station as Puratchi Thalaivar Dr MGR Central Railway Station. According to a government notification , the station was renamed after the receipt of ‘no objection’ from the Union Home Ministry.

NGT fines Andhra Pradesh govt Rs 100 crore over failure to stop sand mining

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The National Green Tribunal has slapped an interim penalty of **Rs 100 crore** on the **Andhra Pradesh government** for inaction to prevent illegal sand mining in the state.

A bench, headed by NGT Chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel, directed the chief secretary of Andhra Pradesh to forthwith prohibit all unregulated sand mining. The green panel said it is the duty of the government to provide complete protection to the natural resources as a trustee of the public at large.

Sajibu Nongma Panba Cheiraoba celebrated across Manipur

Manipur celebrated **Sajibu Nongma Panba Cheiraoba**, the **New Year of the Manipuris**. It is celebrated on the first day of the Manipuri month, Sajibu, which falls in the month of March or April. Cheiraoba, which marks the beginning of a new cycle of life on the Meitei calendar, was widely celebrated in the state.

EC removes Andhra Pradesh Chief Secretary Anil Chandra Punetha

Election Commission has removed **Andhra Pradesh** Chief Secretary **Anil Chandra Punetha** and appointed **LV Subrahmanyam** in his place.

Election Commission has also removed Kolkata Police Commissioner Anuj Sharma ahead of the Lok Sabha elections. the commission has appointed Additional Director General of State Pollution Control Board Dr Rajesh Kumar as the new police commissioner of Kolkata.

45th Postal Pension Adalat to be held in Mumbai on July 25, 2019

The Chief Postmaster General, Maharashtra Circle, Mumbai will be holding the **45th Postal Pension Adalat for pensioners / family pensioners of Postal Department , 25-07-2019** at the Office of the Chief Postmaster General, Maharashtra Circle.

Grievances regarding pension benefits pertaining to those who retired / died while in service in the Department of Posts, of Maharashtra and Goa, which have not been settled within three months, will be entertained in the Postal Pension Adalat.

IIM Kozhikode launches new doctoral programme in Management

Indian Institute of Management Kozhikode has launched a new doctoral programme, PhD in Management (Practice Track), for working executives with at least eight years of

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experience, claimed to be the first of its kind in India. In this programme, the executives can work towards a doctoral degree while remaining in their jobs.

Prof Debashis Chatterjee, Director of IIM Kozhikode, said “This is the first time in India that we are defining a PhD in the form of a Practice Track. “The entire programme can be completed in 3-5 years and successful PhDs can expect to make meaningful contributions to industry best practices or even seek a shift in career to teaching and research.”

On Foundation Day, Odisha receives GI tag for ‘Kandhamal Haldi’

‘**Kandhamal Haldi**’, a variety of turmeric indigenous to southern Odisha, has earned the Geographical indication (GI) tag from Intellectual Property India, an organisation functioning under the auspices of the Union ministry of commerce & industry.

The recognition coincided with the state’s Foundation Day (Utkal Divas). **Odisha, on April 1 1936**, was carved out as a separate state in the then British India on a linguistic identity.

Kandhamal in Odisha’s southern hinterland is famed for its turmeric, a spice that enjoys its pride of place in an array of cuisines. The agricultural product also stands out for its healing properties and arresting aroma.

Telangana Tops in e-Learning Training for Field Staff

For the second year in succession, **Telangana ranks number 1 in the e-Learning training program** of Dept of Personnel and Training (DoPT), Government India.

During the financial year 2018-19, Dr MCR HRD Institute enrolled over 20,000 field staff in different districts of the State to impart training on 12 soft skills modules and three domain-specific modules on RTI, Office Procedures, and Finance & Accounts, apart from Sustainable Development Goals.

During the last two years, over 40,000 field staff belonging to different departments were trained in the State that marks a new milestone in achieving the goal of ‘training for all’.

FOREIGN RELATIONS

About 200 US companies seeking to move manufacturing base from China to India: Report

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About 200 American companies are seeking to move their manufacturing base from China to India post the general elections, a top US-based advocacy group has said, observing that there is a fantastic opportunity with firms looking at alternatives to the Communist giant.

The US-India Strategic and Partnership Forum's (USISPF) President Mukesh Aghi said that the companies are talking to them about how to set up an alternative to China by investing in India.

Indian-American to challenge Democrat Senator in 2020

Indian-American Hirsh Singh has announced that will seek the Republican nomination for US Senate in 2020 against Democratic New Jersey Senator Cory Booker.

41-Year-Old Man From Pune Becomes First Indian to Contest and Win Elections in Japan

A Pune-born man has become the first ethnic Indian to contest and win an election in Japan. Puranik Yogendra, who goes by the nickname "Yogi", has been elected to Tokyo's Edogawa Ward assembly.

Puranik Yogendra, a naturalized Japanese, secured 6,477 votes, the fifth highest of the 226,561 valid ballots cast, in the April 21 poll, part of unified local elections held across Japan.

India adequately prepared to deal with impact of US decision on buying oil from Iran

India is adequately prepared to deal with the impact of the US decision to end exemptions from sanctions for countries still buying oil from Iran. India will continue to work with partner nations, including with the US, to find all possible ways to protect India's energy and economic security interests.

five countries – India, China, Japan, South Korea and Turkey will no longer be exempt from US sanctions if they continue to import oil from Iran after their waivers end on the 2nd of May.

Indian-American Professor Sree Sreenath inducted into Cleveland International Hall of Fame

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An Indian-American scientist and social activist has been inducted into the prestigious Cleveland International Hall of fame for his contribution in applications in systems biology, global issues and sustainable development.

Prof Sree Sreenath, a long-time faculty at Case Western Reserve University, was inducted this week into the Cleveland International Hall of Fame, along with five other inductees – Dr Akram Boutros, Ingrida Bublys, Paul Burik, Richard Fleischman, and Marilyn Madigan.

The six inductees for the Class of 2019 were selected from among 150 plus nominees through an anonymous process.

Maldivian President to visit Bengaluru for IPL match

Maldivian President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih is flying to Bengaluru today to attend an IPL match on the invitation of BCCI.

He is being accompanied by two of his cabinet members including foreign minister Abdulla Shahid and will be watching today's match between the Royal Challengers Bangalore and Chennai Super Kings.

Indian, US Navies hold anti-submarine warfare exercise

Indian and the US Navies have held a joint submarine-hunting exercise in the Indian Ocean, aiming to lay the groundwork for coordinating maritime patrol and reconnaissance, according to the US Navy.

Indian and the US' P-8 anti-submarine aircraft, along with the USS Spruance, a guided-missile destroyer, participated in the anti-submarine warfare .

The Indian P-8I Neptune aircraft from the Naval Air Squadron 312 based at Naval Station Rajali in Arakkonam, Tamil Nadu, joined the US P-8A Poseidon aircraft from Patrol Squadron VP-8 "Fighting Tigers", based in Jacksonville, Florida, in the exercise.

Book on Jallianwala Bagh poem Khooni Vaisakhi released in UAE

India's Ambassador to the UAE Navdeep Singh Suri has commended the launch of a book containing english translation of the Punjabi poem, Khooni Vaisakhi, saying the 100-year old classic ballad about the Jallianwala Bagh massacre is now reaching a global audience.

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The poem was translated by Suri whose grandfather revolutionary poet and novelist Nanak Singh, a Jallianwala Bagh survivor, wrote it after witnessing first-hand the events of April 13, 1919, when British troops fired upon crowds of protestors peacefully demonstrating against the Rowlatt Act of the British Raj, leading to the loss of well over a thousand lives.

India rebuilds Chhyoiphel Kundeling monastery in Nepal

India has rebuilt Chhyoiphel Kundeling Monastery in Nepal. Shyalpa Tenzin Rinpoche inaugurated newly reconstructed Monastery at Lisankhu village in Sindhupalchok district.

The Monastery has been reconstructed with Government of India grant of 18.9 million Nepalese rupees. The project also included building additional infrastructure such as residences, kitchen, sanitation facilities and compound wall.

The Chhyoiphel Kundeling Monastery was established in 1946 with the active initiation and contribution of Lisankhu villagers.

India and France to hold largest ever 'Varuna' naval exercise off Goa coast

With the objective of expanding their strategic partnership in the Indian Ocean region (IOR), India and France will conduct their largest ever naval exercise 'Varuna'. the exercise will be conducted early next month and will witness the participation of aircraft carriers, destroyers, submarines and fighters. India will deploy its aircraft carrier, INS Vikramaditya with its MiG-29K fighters. Similarly, the French Navy will send its aircraft carrier FNS Charles de Gaulle with its Rafale-M naval jets, and other warships for the "Varuna" exercise.

India to partner with Japan and UAE to set up two projects in Africa

India is joining hands with Japan and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to implement two projects in Africa as it seeks to extend its footprint on the continent where strategic rival China has made deep inroads.

While India will build a cancer hospital in Kenya in collaboration with Japan, it will partner with the UAE to set up an information and communications technology (ICT) centre in Ethiopia, said the two people cited above, requesting anonymity.

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The Indian and Vietnamese Navies Conclude Bilateral Exercise

The second edition of the bilateral maritime exercise between Indian Navy and Vietnam Peoples' Navy (IN – VPN BILAT EX) was held off Cam Ranh Bay in Vietnam from April 13 to April 16, 2019. IN Ships Kolkata participated in the exercise comprising of a harbour and a sea phase.

Cabinet approves MoU between India and Bolivia on Cooperation in the field of Geology and Mineral Resources

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given ex-post facto approval to the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Bolivia on Cooperation in the field of Geology and Mineral Resources. The MoU was signed in Bolivia in March, 2019.

Impact:

The MoU will provide an institutional mechanism between India and Bolivia for cooperation in the field of Mineral Resources. The MoU provides for exchange of information on resources, laws and policy, organization of seminars to exchange views on development strategies, encouragement of transfer of technologies between the two countries, promotion of value addition, which will enable taking up of activities like documentation and dissemination etc.

Cabinet approves MoU between India and Cambodia on Cooperation in the field of Communications

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given ex post-facto approval to the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Cambodia on Cooperation in the field of Communications. The MoU was signed in Cambodia in March, 2019.

Impact:

The MoU will contribute in strengthening bilateral cooperation and mutual understanding between India and Cambodia in the field of communications.

Cabinet approves MoU between India and Bolivia on Cooperation in the Field of Traditional Systems of Medicine and Homoeopathy

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given ex-post facto approval to the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Bolivia in the Field of Traditional Systems of Medicine and Homoeopathy. The MoU was signed in Bolivia in March, 2019.

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Impact:

The MoU will provide a framework for cooperation, and will be mutually beneficial between the two countries for promotion of traditional systems of medicine and homoeopathy.

Cabinet approves Cooperation Agreement between India and Denmark in the field of Renewable Energy with focus on Offshore Wind Energy

The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has given its approval for a Cooperation Agreement between Ministry of New and Renewable Energy of India and Ministry for Energy, Utilities and Climate of the Kingdom of Denmark on strategic sector cooperation in the field of Renewable Energy with a focus on Offshore Wind Energy and a Letter of Intent to establish an Indo-Danish Centre of Excellence for renewable energy in India. The Agreement was signed in March, 2019 in New Delhi.

The objective of the Cooperation Agreement is to promote cooperation between the two countries in the field of renewable energy with special focus on Off-shore wind.

Cabinet apprised about MoU between India and Republic of Korea in issuing jointly Postage Stamp

The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, was apprised about an MoU signed in February, 2019 between India and Republic of Korea.

Department of Posts, Ministry of Communications, Government of India and The Ministry of Science and ICT (Korea Post), Government of the Republic of Korea have mutually agreed to jointly issue Postage Stamps on the theme “Queen Hur Hwang-ok of Korea”.

The joint stamps will be released on a mutually agreed date by the end of 2019.

Cabinet apprised about MoU between India and Brazil in the area of Biotechnology

The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, was apprised about an MoU signed in May, 2018 between India and Brazil.

The MoU has been signed to strengthen the ties between India and Brazil to work out the future agenda for the collaboration for innovation in Science & Technology diplomacy to evolve a concrete strategic plan in the area of biotechnology education, training and research.

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India to be Guest of Honour country at ADIBF 2019

UAE has announced that **India will be the Guest of Honour country at the Abu Dhabi International Book Fair, ADIBF 2019, to be held from 24th to 30th of this month.** The fair aims to highlight the UAE's rich heritage, showcasing its authenticity and modernity, as well as its cultural and literary output.

India's participation in the fair is expected to attract significant increase in the number of visitors with various events and activities which will be held throughout the entire duration of ADIBF.

India, Netherlands vow to strengthen bilateral political & economic ties

India and the Netherlands have discussed ways to strengthen bilateral political and economic ties, including boosting cooperation at the United Nations and other international fora.

The two countries held Foreign Office Consultations in New Delhi, with the Indian side led by A Gitesh Sarma, Secretary, West, Ministry of External Affairs, and Johanna Brandt, Secretary General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, leading the Dutch delegation.

Both countries used this opportunity to review the entire gamut of bilateral relations, including political, economic, commercial, scientific and cultural cooperation, the MEA said.

India, Sweden ink pact to collaborate on solutions for smart cities, clean tech

India and Sweden launched a joint programme that will work towards addressing a range of challenges around smart cities and clean technologies among others. The programme was co-funded by Indian Department of Science and Technology (DST) and Swedish agency Vinnova.

Vinnova will provide funding to Swedish participants up to 2,500,000 Swedish Krona (around Rs 1.87 crore) as grant. On the Indian side, conditional grant of up to 50 per cent (with a limit of Rs 1.5 crore) per project will be provided to the Indian partners.

AITA signs MoU with Serbian Tennis Federation to train junior players

The **All India Tennis Association (AITA)** has signed an MoU with **Serbian Tennis Federation (STF)** to **train Indian junior players under world renowned Serbian coaches**, at the RK Khanna Stadium .

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The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed by Secretary General, AITA, Hironmoy Chatterjee, and CEO, STF Dusan Orlandic. Both the federations have also agreed to work on the education of officials, coaches and physical trainers and their exchange for tournaments.

Namami Gange brings laurels to India at Global Water Summit in London

India's flagship programme, National Mission for **Clean Ganga or Namami Gange** was felicitated with the coveted '**Public Water Agency of the Year**' award at the Global Water Summit on April 9.

The coveted Global Water Awards are presented by the Global Water Intelligence at the Global Water Summit, the major business conference for the water industry worldwide. The Global Water Awards recognise excellence across the entire international water industry and reward those initiatives in the water, wastewater, and desalination sectors which bring remarkable improvements in the lives of people.

India, Sri Lanka agree to increase cooperation in security and defence spheres

India and Sri Lanka have agreed to increase cooperation in security and defence spheres in several areas, including regional security, curbing drug smuggling and human trafficking. The issues came up for discussion when Defence Secretary Sanjay Mitra called on Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirsena in Colombo during his official visit.

Indo-Sri Lanka joint exercise Mitra Shakti VI concludes in Sri Lanka

The sixth edition of the joint military training exercise between the **Indian Army and the Sri Lankan Army**, Exercise **Mitra Shakti** concluded in Sri Lanka. The two-week long training that commenced on 26th March, came to an end with a grand smart and scintillating joint parade by the two continents.

The two army contingents also shared the best practices of each other to further enhance their learning experiences. Started in 2013, exercise Mitra Shakti is in continuation of a series of joint exercises that is conducted annually as part of military diplomacy to enhance cooperation between the armies of India & Sri Lanka.

Russian delegation meets I&B Secretary in New Delhi

A Russian delegation led by the Russian Deputy Minister of Digital Development, Communications and Mass Media, **Alexey Volin** met **Information and Broadcasting Secretary Amit Khare** in New Delhi.

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7th Foreign Office consultations between India and Italy held in Delhi

The 7th Foreign Office consultations between India and Italy were held in New Delhi . The Indian side was led by Secretary (West), Ministry of External Affairs, **A. Gitesh Sarma**. The Italian side was led by Director General of Global Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy, **Luca Sabbatucci**.

In a release, the External Affairs Minister said these consultations provided an opportunity to review the follow-up actions taken after the visit of Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte in October last year as well as the entire range of bilateral relations, including political, defence, scientific, economic and commercial ties.

4th Session of India-Ukraine working group on Trade and Economic Cooperation held in New Delhi

The 4th Meeting of India-Ukraine Working Group on Trade and Economic Cooperation (IU-WGTEC), under the India-Ukraine Inter-Governmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technical, Industrial and Cultural Cooperation was held in New Delhi.

The protocol deals with review of trade, cooperation in the field of small and medium entrepreneurship, cooperation in the field of technical regulation (standardization, metrology, certification, conformity assessment), public-private partnership (PPP) and investment, agriculture, facilitating the access of Ukrainian food products to the market of India, energy sector, finance, granting Ukraine market economy status within the framework of anti-dumping investigations, and banking and cooperation in tourism.

First secure link between India, US Navies set up

India and the US have set up the first ever secure communication link between the naval headquarters and the US Central as well as Pacific Naval Commands under the landmark Indo-US COMCASA pact reached last year.

ET has reliably gathered that the US has also activated the Selective Availability Anti-Spoofing Module GPS system in some of C-130 and C-17 transport aircraft as a result of the implementation of the **COMCASA (Communications, Compatibility & Security Agreement)**.

In a major boost to India's defence diplomacy, the two upgrades will allow both sides to share real-time operational intelligence. In the case of the C-130s and C-17s, the systems were purchased but not activated because the US said it could not part with the encryption codes until the enabling COMCASA pact is signed.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Xi Jinping's wins and losses at second Belt and Road Forum

Chinese President Xi Jinping hosted some 5,000 delegates from across the globe at a Belt and Road Forum in Beijing last week to discuss his signature infrastructure project, which began in 2013 to rebuild ancient trading routes across Eurasia. This year's gathering eschewed the pageantry of the inaugural summit in 2017, as Beijing tried to address international criticism by toning down its rhetoric and tightening oversight.

USTR places India on 'Priority Watch List' for IP rights violations

The US placed India on its 'Priority Watch List' alleging lack of "sufficient measurable improvements" to its Intellectual Property (IP) framework on long-standing and new challenges that have negatively affected American right holders over the past year.

The US Trade Representatives (USTR) in its report identified 11 countries, including India, in its 'Priority Watch List'. China, Indonesia, Russia, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela are among others. It has also placed 25 countries, including Pakistan and Turkey, on the Watch List.

ABU Media Summit on Climate Action and Disaster Preparedness underway in Nepal

5th Asia Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU) Media Summit on Climate Action and Disaster Preparedness began in Kathmandu on Thursday.

The theme of the two-day summit is "Media Solutions for Sustainable Future: Saving Lives, Building Resilient Communities".

World's Largest Medical Drone Delivery Service Started in Ghana

Vice President Dr Mamahudu Bawumia launched the first-ever medical drone delivery service in Ghana, and the largest such drone delivery network in the world, at Omenako, near Suhum, in the Eastern Region.

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The 'Fly-To-Save-A-Life Project', a collaboration between the Ministry of Health and Zipline Technologies, will provide a rapid response to medical emergencies, especially in hard to reach areas, through the flying of unmanned drones to supply 12 routine and emergency services as well as 148 lifesaving medical products selected by the Ministry of Health.

World's only floating nuclear power station dubbed 'Chernobyl on ice' launched by Russia

A floating nuclear power plant that environmental campaigners have dubbed "Chernobyl on ice" is ready to begin supplying electricity, Russia has announced.

The Akademik Lomonosov is reportedly destined to provide power for a region in Russia's far east, although its design means it could be towed wherever there is a need for extra electricity.

Etihad becomes first major airline to fly plastic-free

The UAE's flag carrier Etihad Airways has become the first airline in the Gulf region to operate a flight without any single-use plastics on board, in a bid to raise awareness about pollution on Earth Day. According to the Abu Dhabi-based national airline of the UAE, the flight EY484 landed in Brisbane on April 22, Earth Day.

The milestone flight is part of Etihad's pledge to reduce single-use plastic usage by 80 per cent not just in-flight, but across the entire organisation by the end of 2022, the airline said in a statement.

12. Pakistan's Cyril Almeida Named IPI's World Press Freedom Hero for Exposing Country's Militant Links

The International Press Institute (IPI) named Cyril Almeida, an assistant editor and columnist at Pakistani daily 'Dawn' who is currently facing sedition charges in the country, as the recipient of its 71st World Press Freedom Hero award.

One of the largest diamonds ever found in Botswana

One of the world's largest diamonds weighing a whopping 1,758 carats has been found in Botswana, a mining company said.

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A Canadian company running the Karowe diamond mine in central east Botswana said the retrieved stone was one of the largest diamonds ever to have been unearthed and the largest ever in the southern African nation, reports Xinhua news agency.

OPPO becomes Wimbledon's first sponsor from Asia

China's smartphone maker OPPO has become the first official smartphone partner of Wimbledon tennis championships, the All England Lawn Tennis Club (AELTC) announced.

OPPO, based in South China's Shenzhen, signed a five-year deal with AELTC at the Champions Room of the world's most famous tennis tournament, the Xinhua news agency reported.

The partnership represents the Chinese company's first move into tennis after it has become the official mobile phone partner to FC Barcelona and the International Cricket Council (ICC).

World's first malaria vaccine launched in Africa

The world's first malaria vaccine has been rolled out in Malawi to protect 360,000 children under two in Malawi, Kenya and Ghana in Sub-Saharan Africa from the mosquito-borne disease that causes 435,000 people global deaths each year.

The RTS,S/AS01 (trade name Mosquirix) is an injectible recombinant protein-based vaccine acts against *P. falciparum*, the most prevalent malaria strain in Africa. The vaccine prevents four in 10 cases of malaria in children who received four doses over a four-year period, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO). The WHO welcomed the pilot programme by the government of Malawi.

UN, EU sign joint framework to strengthen partnership in counter-terrorism efforts

The United Nations and the European Union (EU) have signed a joint framework aimed at strengthening partnership in counter-terrorism efforts. The UN Office of Counter-Terrorism said that the framework was enacted on the occasion of the second EU-UN high-level political dialogue on Counter-Terrorism that was held in New York.

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The UN-EU initiative will focus on terrorism and violent extremism prevention in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia, as well as support victims and promote the reintegration of terrorism offenders.

Kazakhstan sets up coordinating council to attract Indian investments

Central Asia's biggest and resource-rich Kazakhstan has set up Coordinating Council for attracting foreign investments including from India.

The Kazakh government held a session to discuss the issues of attracting investments under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister of Kazakhstan Askar Mamin.

Iran, Pakistan to set up border 'reaction force' after attacks

Iran and Pakistan have agreed to set up a joint border "reaction force" following a number of deadly attacks by militant groups on their frontier, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani announced after talks with visiting Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan.

Indonesia releases Ramayana stamp

Indonesia released a special commemorative stamp on the theme of Ramayana to mark the 70th anniversary of diplomatic ties with India. The stamp, designed by renowned Indonesian sculptor Padmashri Bapak Nyoman Nuart, features a scene from Hindu epic Ramayana in which Jatayu valiantly fought to save Sita.

"As agreed during Prime Minister's visit in May 2018, the Department of Posts of the Government of Indonesia released a special commemorative stamp on the theme of Ramayana to mark the event," a statement of Indian Embassy in Jakarta said.

India to skip B&R forum, China's biggest diplomatic event (Curtain Raiser)

A total of 37 countries minus India will gather at China's second edition of the Belt and Road forum, a three-day grand event on the world's largest connectivity project.

The Belt and Road Initiative — a trillion-dollar project floated by Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2013 — aims to connect Asia, Africa and Europe through a network of highways, rail lines, ports and sea-lanes.

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Under the project, China has poured billions of dollars in over 60 partner countries where it's building vast infrastructure that range from seaports to railway lines.

World's first malaria vaccine launched in Africa

The world's first malaria vaccine has been launched in Malawi after concerted efforts of over 30 years to protect children from the deadly disease that claims over 435,000 lives globally every year. The World Health Organization (WHO) welcomed the Government of Malawi's landmark pilot programme. The launch of the first and only malaria vaccine, known as RTS,S, makes Malawi the first of three countries in Africa where it will be made available to children up to 2 years of age. Ghana and Kenya will introduce the vaccine in the coming weeks, WHO said in a statement.

Pakistan launches country-wide anti-polio drive

Pakistan is one of the three countries where polio remains endemic, along with Afghanistan and Nigeria. Pakistan, one of the three countries where polio is still endemic, launched a country-wide campaign to administer anti-polio drops 39 million children under five years of age. The campaign aims to provide anti-polio medicine to children in all four provinces as well as Pakistan occupied Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan, said national coordinator of polio eradication programme Rana Safdar.

Asian Tea Alliance Launched In China

To boost tea trade, cultural and technical exchanges as well as the global promotion of tea, the Asian Tea Alliance (ATA), a union of five tea-growing and consuming countries, was launched in Guizhou, China.

The members of the alliance are the Indian Tea Association, China Tea Marketing Association, Indonesian Tea Marketing Association, Sri Lanka Tea Board and Japan Tea Association.

Saudi government raises India's Haj quota to 2 lakh: Sources

The Saudi Arabian government has issued a formal order, notifying increase in India's Haj quota to 2 lakh from 1.75 lakh, about two months after Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman gave the assurance to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. This is the third hike in three consecutive years. In 2017, the quota was increased by 35,000 while last year, it was raised by 5,000 to take the number to 1,75,000.

Mali's PM resigns along with his entire government

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Mali's Prime Minister has resigned along with his entire government after it came under mounting pressure over handling the violence in the restive Mopti region. A statement from President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita's office said he had accepted Soumeylou Boubeye Maiga's resignation, along with those of his ministers.

Pakistan's Finance Minister Asad Umar steps down

Pakistan's Finance Minister Asad Umar, who was involved in extensive discussions with the IMF to finalise a bailout package for the cash-strapped country, quit the Cabinet after Prime Minister Imran Khan expressed his desire to shift him to the energy ministry.

2019 World Press Freedom Index

India has dropped two places on a global press freedom index to be ranked 140th out of 180 countries in the annual Reporters Without Borders analysis released on Thursday.

Norway is ranked first in the 2019 Index for the third year running while Finland (up two places) has taken second place from the Netherlands (down one at 4th). An increase in cyber-harassment caused Sweden (third) to lose one place. In Africa, the rankings of Ethiopia (up 40 at 110th) and Gambia (up 30 at 92nd) have significantly improved from last year's Index.

At the bottom of the Index, both Vietnam (176th) and China (177th) have fallen one place and Turkmenistan (down two at 180th) is now last, replacing North Korea (up one at 179th).

Kim Jong Un to visit Russia, meet Vladimir Putin

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un will visit Russia later this month for his first meeting with President Vladimir Putin.

The announcement comes after North Korea announced it had tested a new tactical weapon with a powerful warhead, as denuclearisation talks with Washington appear to stall.

The last summit between a Russian and North Korean head of state came in 2011, when Kim's father Kim Jong Il travelled to Siberia to meet Dmitry Medvedev, then Russia's President.

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Hong Kong's stock market overtakes Japan to be world's third largest

According to data compiled by Bloomberg, **Hong Kong's equity market has overtaken Japan** to become the **world's third largest stock market**, in the world, behind only to the U.S. and mainland China.

Sweden stresses on need for EU-India free-trade agreement

Sweden has stressed on the need for a free trade agreement (FTA) between **India and the European Union** for ease of doing business for companies that want “predictability”.

Sudan's security and intelligence chief Salih Ghosh resigns

The head of Sudan's National Intelligence and Security Service, **Salih Ghosh**, has resigned from his post. Salih Ghosh had overseen a sweeping crackdown led by National Intelligence and Security Service agents against protesters taking part in mass demonstrations that led up to the toppling of President Omar al-Bashir in a coup by the army .

US Senate confirms Colorado native David Bernhardt as Interior secretary

The US Senate has confirmed Colorado native **David Bernhardt** as secretary of the Interior Department. The Republican-controlled upper chamber approved Bernhardt's nomination in a 56-41 vote, with support from several Democrats who crossed party lines

London becomes first city to implement 24x7 pollution charge zone

London became the first city in the world to implement a special **Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ)** that would charge an entry fee for older vehicles if they do not meet the emission standards.

In an attempt to reduce air pollution and protect public health, the ULEZ will be operational for 24 hours and seven days a week.

MENA World Economic Forum kicks off in Jordan

The World Economic Forum (WEF) on the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) 2019 kicked off on Saturday in Jordan with over 1,000 participants from more than 50 countries. The 17th WEF meeting in the region called for united efforts to address the most pressing challenges of the area.

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Remaking that Jordan's focus on education and innovation has helped nurture an ecosystem of entrepreneurship and startups, the king said, "We are also looking forward to the growth that comes with abundant and real opportunity. Jordan's economic situation is promising".

Indonesian Nuraeni named best athletic coach in Asia this year

Indonesian Eni Nuraeni was named by **Asian Athletic Association (AAA)** as the **best athletic coach in Asia** for short-haul run category this year, Indonesian athletic sports association (PB PASI) announced .

Eni coaches young sprinter Lalu Muhammad Zohri to win the 100m gold medal in 10.20 seconds in the 2019 Grand Prix Malaysia Open athletics championships. Earlier, Zohri won the 100m in 10.18 in the IAAF World U20 Championships in Tampere, Finland in 2018, where he also won the gold medal in 10.27 in the Asian Junior Championships in Gifu, Japan.

London becomes first city to use pollution charge zone

London is the first city in the world to implement a 24-hour, seven day a week Ultra Low Emission Zone, inside which vehicles will have to meet tough emissions standards or face a charge.

Monday's introduction of the zone, known as the ULEZ, aims to reduce toxic air pollution and protect public health, according to a press release from the office of Sadiq Khan, mayor of London.

The zone will cover the same area as the existing Congestion Charge — collected from drivers in the city center — until 2021, when it will be expanded to cover the area between the major orbital roads known as the North and South Circular.

Indonesia to install tsunami early warning system

Indonesia is set to install buoys and cable base tsunameters (CBT) near Mount Krakatau volcano in a bid to give early warning when tidal waves occur near the volcano. The move came following the tsunami triggered by eruption of Child of Krakatau volcano in December that left over 400 people dead, more than 14,000 injured and massive damages along Sunda Strait.

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Morocco-US Joint Military Exercise 'African Lion 2019' Starts In Morocco

The joint military exercise between Morocco and the US, "African Lion 2019," kicked off in **southern Morocco**. The exercise marks the participation of thousands of military officers. The exercise will include various types of training including command post, manoeuvring, peacekeeping, operations, and aerial refuelling.

UAE announces long-term visas for best 100 Arab start-ups

The UAE Government has announced granting long-term visas for the top 100 start-ups shaping the fourth industrial revolution. The 100 Arab start-ups were selected at the World Economic Forum on the Middle East and North Africa, held in Jordan between 6-7th April. The Forum witnessed for the first time bringing together 100 emerging companies from the Arab region, which are working to shape the future of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

The start-ups will also have a chance to team up with "Area 2071" which serves as a gateway and a platform to design the future, through encouraging creativity, fostering talents as well as attracting local and global partnerships.

South Korea declares national disaster after massive blaze engulfs 5 cities

The South Korean government declared a state of national disaster over the massive blaze that engulfed five cities and counties along the northeastern coast. One person died after being hit by a falling object and 11 were wounded in the blaze. Thousands of residents were ordered to evacuate overnight.

Cholera vaccinations launched in post-cyclone Mozambique

In Mozambique, a vaccination campaign has been launched after Cyclone Idai battered the nation and unleashed an outbreak of cholera.

International relief agencies and the Health Ministry are aiming to immunise nearly 9,00,000 people against the water-borne intestinal disease, which has already killed two people and infected more than 1,400. The vaccinations will be administered at health centres, shelters for the displaced, and at schools and markets.

Chicago makes history electing Lori Lightfoot as first black woman

Chicago has created history by electing **an African-American woman** as its mayor for the first time. Lori Lightfoot, a 56-year-old former federal prosecutor and practicing lawyer who has never before held elected office, won the city's mayoral race by a huge margin. She will also be Chicago's first openly gay mayor.

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Lightfoot will take over office from Mayor Rahm Emanuel, who previously served as chief of staff under former President Barack Obama

UN chief appoints investigation head for Myanmar

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has appointed **Nicholas Koumjian** of the US as head of the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar

Koumjian will be the first head of the Myanmar mechanism, which was established by the Human Rights Council on September 27, 2018 and welcomed by the General Assembly on December 22, 2018.

South Korea to launch world's first national 5G networks

South Korea launches the world's first fully-fledged 5G mobile networks. The system will bring smartphones near-instantaneous connectivity 20 times faster than the existing 4G allowing users to download entire movies in less than a second.

It is crucial for the future development of devices ranging from self-driving vehicles that send data traffic to one another in real time, industrial robots, drones and other elements of the Internet of Things.

China launched 2nd Generation data relay satellite, Tianlian II-01

The Tianlian II-01 satellite was launched by a **Long March-3B carrier rocket** from the Xichang Satellite Launch Centre in southwest China's Sichuan Province. This is the first of China's second-generation data-tracking and relay satellites, which will provide services like data relay, measurement and control, and transmission to manned spacecraft, satellites, carrier rockets and non-spacecraft users.

The launch marks the 301st mission of the Long March carrier rocket series.

China launched its first data relay satellite, the Tianlian I-01, in April 2008.

Tesla builds its 'largest energy storage system in Asia'

In a bid to reduce energy demand and provide emergency backup power to trains in **Japan**, **Tesla** has claimed to develop its largest power storage system in Asia.

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According to Tesla, it has installed a bank of 42 Powerpacks at a train station in Japan's Osaka that can provide sufficient backup power to safely move a train and its passengers to the nearest station in the event of a power outage.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

NASA records first likely 'quake' on Mars

NASA's robotic Mars InSight lander has recorded a likely "marsquake" for the first time ever, the U.S. space agency said. The faint seismic signal, detected by the lander's Seismic Experiment for Interior Structure (SEIS) instrument, was recorded on April 6, the lander's 128th Martian day.

This is the first recorded trembling that appears to have come from inside the planet, as opposed to being caused by forces above the surface, such as wind, NASA said in a statement.

Russia Successfully Tests World's First Floating Nuclear Power Plant

Russia has successfully tested the world's first floating nuclear power plant (NPP), Akademik Lomonosov, a subsidiary of Rosatom nuclear corporation stated. Reactors of the floating atomic block were launched in November 2018.

TCS modernises more than 1.5 lakh post offices in India

India's largest IT services company Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) has helped modernise a network of more than 1.5 lakh post offices in the country. The company said that it has developed an integrated solution for India Post that helped it achieve this feat.

The deal between TCS and India Post was struck in 2013. The Mumbai-based company had received a multi-year contract of more than Rs 1,100 crore from the Department of Posts for an end-to-end IT modernisation project. The project entailed equipping India Posts with modern tech and systems for seamless and effective services.

Indian Navy launches Guided missile destroyer 'Imphal'

The Indian Navy launched guided missile destroyer Imphal at Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders in Mumbai. Imphal is the third ship to be launched under a project in which ships are built to carry and operate two multiple role helicopters.

NASA Astronaut Christina Koch to Set Longest Spaceflight Record by a Woman

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NASA astronaut Christina Koch is set to spend the longest duration in space by a woman, surpassing the previous record of 288 days in spaceflight by astronaut Peggy Whitson. The move comes after recent changes in NASA's change in schedule for astronauts.

Koch, on behalf of NASA, will help determine the effects of long duration spaceflight on the human body, i.e., missions which extend beyond six months. This will seemingly help expand the science of astronomy beyond present standards, and help us prepare for long duration, manned space missions to the moon, Mars and beyond.

ISIS module: NIA carries out search operations in Hyderabad

National Investigation Agency (NIA) carried out search operations in Hyderabad today in connection with the Abu Dhabi ISIS module case.

Senior officials said the searches were necessitated as new names emerged during investigations. The NIA had earlier filed a charge sheet in the Patiala House Court in Delhi in the case after taking one person into custody.

Nepal successfully launches its 1st satellite NepaliSat-1 into space

Nepal successfully launched its first satellite NepaliSat-1 into space from Virginia in the United States. The satellite was developed by the Nepalese scientists.

NepaliSat-1 is a low orbit satellite . It will be stationed at the International Space Station for a month and then it will be sent to orbit the earth. The satellite will take photographs on a regular basis to gather geographical information of the country. It weighs 1.3 kilograms, making it a small satellite with limited capability.

IT authorities seizes Rs 1.48 Cr unaccounted cash from premises of AMMK party functionary at Andipatti in TN

In Tamil Nadu, Income Tax authorities have seized 1.48 crore rupees unaccounted cash from the premises of Mr TTV Dinakaran-led AMMK party functionary at Andipatti.

The AMMK is contesting from the Andipatti Assembly segment under the Theni Lok Sabha constituency which goes for by polls along with the Lok Sabha polls tomorrow.

'First' 3D print of heart with human tissue, vessels unveiled

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Scientists in Israel unveiled a 3D print of a heart with human tissue and vessels, calling it a first and a “major medical breakthrough” that advances possibilities for transplants.

World’s largest plane makes first flight over California

The world’s largest airplane — a Stratolaunch behemoth with two fuselages and six Boeing 747 engines — made its first test flight on Saturday in California. The mega jet carried out its maiden voyage over the Mojave desert.

It is designed to carry into space, and drop, a rocket that would in turn ignite to deploy satellites. It is supposed to provide a more flexible way to deploy satellites than vertical takeoff rockets because this way all you need is a long runway for takeoff. It was built by an engineering company called Scaled Composites.

UAE to host global ‘Ai Everything’ summit

The UAE is set to host the world’s foremost artificial intelligence summit to empower global dialogue on the future of government, business and society.

The inaugural ‘Ai Everything’ will take place at the Dubai World Trade Centre, DWTC, between 30th April and 1st May. Held under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai, the two-day event will bring together world leaders to define the underlying pillars of governance, business and society – augmenting the world’s happiness.

India successfully test fires sub-sonic cruise missile ‘Nirbhay’

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has successfully test fired 1,000 km strike range sub-sonic cruise missile named ‘Nirbhay’ from Odisha coas. India’s Aeronautical Development Establishment has said the cruise missile is India’s first indigenously designed and developed long-range missile.

The cruise missile was test fired early morning. The successful test of the 1,000 km long range missile will definitely provide a boost to India’s defence power.

CMFRI signs agreement with ISRO to save coastal wetlands

In an attempt to build resilience against impact of climate change, the **Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI)** and the **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** have joined hands to map, validate and protect smaller wetlands in coastal

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regions. The programme is aimed at restoring them through coastal livelihood programmes.

A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed between the CMFRI and the Space Applications Centre of ISRO to develop a mobile app and a centralised web portal that will have a comprehensive database of wetlands that are smaller than 2.25 hectares in the country.

TCS, Google join hands to build industry-specific cloud solutions

India's largest software services firm **Tata Consultancy Services (TCS)** has collaborated with tech giant **Google** to build industry-specific cloud solutions.

These solutions will help organisations accelerate their digital transformation and leverage data-driven insights that power superior customer experiences. The collaboration will enable TCS to deliver the right mix of technology and value accelerators that will help customers differentiate themselves and become more agile.

SpaceX launches Falcon Heavy and lands all three rocket boosters for the first time

SpaceX launched the company's **Falcon Heavy rocket** on its inaugural commercial mission on Thursday evening. This was the second flight for Falcon Heavy, which became the most powerful rocket in use in the world after SpaceX's successful test flight in February 2018.

Falcon Heavy launched from SpaceX's launchpad at NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida. Built out of three of the company's Falcon 9 rockets, Falcon Heavy's three cores stand side by side to create a 27-engine colossus. Together, those engines create about 5.1 million pounds of thrust.

Google launches new cloud platform, Anthos

Google launched **Anthos**, a new **open platform from Google Cloud**, that lets users run applications from anywhere. Anthos allows users to run applications, unmodified, on existing on-premise hardware or on the public cloud, and is based on the Cloud Services Platform that Google announced last year.

Anthos is a complete software-based solution. Users can set it up on existing hardware, claimed Google.

INS Shikra hosts Naval Investiture Ceremony

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The Naval Investiture Ceremony for 2019 was held at the naval helicopter base **INS Shikra** of Western Naval Command (WNC), Mumbai on 10 Apr 19.

Admiral Sunil Lanba PVSM, AVSM, ADC, the Chief of Naval Staff (CNS), on behalf of the President of India, conferred Gallantry and non-Gallantry Awards announced on the Republic Day this year to meritorious personnel, as well as citations to Naval units which have distinguished themselves during the past year. The ceremony was witnessed by senior dignitaries of the Indian Navy and families of the awardees.

A 50-men Guard of Honour was paraded during the ceremonial parade which was held as a part of the Investiture ceremony. The Guard of Honour was inspected by Admiral Sunil Lanba prior to reviewing the parade comprising 18 platoons of Naval personnel drawn from various ships and establishments of WNC.

Reliance Jio acquires chatbot making startup Haptik for Rs230 crore

Telecom giant Reliance Jio has acquired an **87% stake** in Mumbai-based Haptik “to build India’s largest AI assistant company across chat, voice and vernacular languages”. In the rs700-crore deal, **rs 230 crore** will go for business transfer and ₹470 crore will go towards expansion. Haptik Co-founders Aakrit Vaish and Swapan Rajdev and employees will have a minority stake in Reliance Jio.

NASA plans to land astronauts on Mars by 2033

After plans to land American astronauts on the Moon by 2024, four years ahead of its previous schedule, **NASA now proposes to put humans on Mars by 2033**. At a congressional hearing on NASA’s budget in fiscal year 2020 on Tuesday, NASA administrator Jim Bridenstine cited the goal of putting astronauts on Mars by 2033, as a reason why NASA need to accelerate its Moon landing plan..

PSLV-C45 successfully launches EMISAT and 28 customer satellites

India’s Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV-C45) today successfully launched **EMISAT** and **28 international customer satellites** from **Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) SHAR in Sriharikota**. This flight marked the first mission of PSLV-QL, a new variant of PSLV with four strap-on motors.

PSLV-C45 lifted off from the Second Launch Pad and injected India’s EMISAT into a 748 km sun-synchronous polar orbit, 17 minutes and 12 seconds after liftoff. After separation, the two solar arrays of EMISAT were deployed automatically and the ISRO Telemetry Tracking and Command Network at Bengaluru assumed control of the satellite. In the coming days, the satellite will be brought to its final operational configuration.

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SPORTS

Winner	Sports	Additional information
Valtteri Bottas	Azerbaijan Grand Prix	Valtteri Bottas resisted an attacking final charge by his Mercedes team-mate Lewis Hamilton to win Azerbaijan Grand Prix and regain the lead in the 2019 drivers title race.
Zheng Saisai	women's singles title at the Kunming Open.	Defeated compatriot Zhang Shuai
Abhishek Verma	Beijing World Cup	won gold in the 10m air pistol event after shooting a score of 242.7 in the final at the Beijing World Cup, Russia's Artem Chernousov (240.4) won silver, while South Korea's Seungwoo Han (220) won bronze.
Pankaj Advani	Inaugural Asian Snooker Tour title	Defeated Ehsan Heydari Nezhad of Iran 6-4 to claim the inaugural Asian Snooker Tour title.
Divyansh Singh Panwar	ISSF World Cup	India's Divyansh Singh Panwar secured the country's fourth Olympic quota place in shooting by winning a silver in the ISSF World Cup in Beijing.
Amit Panghal	Asian Boxing	Asian Games champion

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	Championships	Amit Panghal (52 kg) gave India its first gold medal at the ongoing Asian Boxing Championships
PU Chitra	Asian Athletics Championships 2019	India's middle-distance runner PU Chitra won the country's third gold medal at the Asian Athletics Championships 2019 in Doha, Qatar by finishing on the top step of the podium in the women's 1500m event.
Bajrang Punia	Asian Wrestling C'ship	He defeated Kazakhstan's Sayatbek Okassov 12-7 in a nail-biting 65kg men's freestyle final.
Services	Santosh Trophy Football	beats Punjab
Harsheel Dani	Dutch International title	India's Harsheel Dani recovered from a game down to get the better of Denmark's Mads Christophersen to clinch the Dutch International badminton title in Wateringen, The Netherlands.
Meena Kumari Maisnam clinches 54kg gold medal	Cologne Boxing World Cup	Sakshi (57 kg) and Pwilao Basumatary (64 kg) lost their final bouts and had to settle for the silver while Pinki Rani (51kg) and Parveen (60kg) won bronze as India finished with five medals.

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Lewis Hamilton	Chinese Grand Prix (GP)	Formula One driver Lewis Hamilton secured a record-extending sixth Chinese Grand Prix (GP) victory, snatching the world championship lead from his Mercedes teammate Valtteri Bottas.
Ethiopian Athletes Gelete Burka (women's race) and Abreha Milaw (men's race)	Paris Marathon	
Virat Kohli	'Leading Cricketer' by Wisden	Smriti Mandhana was named the Leading Cricketer in women's cricket
Chinese badminton ace Lin Dan	Malaysia Open	He beats countryman Chen Long
Star raider Siddharth Desai	The second-most expensive player in the history of the Pro Kabaddi League (PKL)	
Viktor Axelsen	India Open 2019	Viktor Axelsen dashed Indian hopes with a 21-7, 22-20 win over Kidambi Srikanth at the India Open 2019 final. Thailand's Ratchanok Intanon created history by becoming the first women's singles shuttler to win the title three times, when she beat the third seed He Bingjiao 21-15, 21-14.
Saurav Ghosal	Professional Squash Association (PSA)	

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Lewis Hamilton (Britain-Mercedes)	Bahrain GP	Lewis Hamilton (Britain-Mercedes) has won the Formula One Bahrain Grand Prix 2019. Valtteri Bottas was second while Charles Leclerc was third in the F1 race.
Roger Federer	4th ATP Miami Open title	In tennis, Roger Federer lifted his fourth ATP Miami Open title with an emphatic 6-1, 6-4 win over defending champion John Isner last night.
Abhishek Verma wins gold	Beijing World Cup	India's Abhishek Verma won gold in the 10m air pistol, Russia's Artem Chernousov (240.4) won silver, while South Korea's Seungwoo Han (220) won bronze.

ISSF World Cup: India wins 3 golds, 1 silver

India topped the standings at the International Shooting Sport Federation, ISSF World Cup on the final day in Beijing, bagging four medals comprising 3 Gold and a Silver.

In the last edition in New Delhi, India had jointly topped the standings with Hungary. China followed India in the Beijing edition by bagging 2 gold, as many silver and a bronze.

For India, Anjum Moudgil and young Divyansh Singh Panwar started the medal hunt with a gold in the 10m Air Rifle Mixed Team competition.

The teenaged pair of Manu Bhaker and Saurabh Chaudhary won another yellow metal in the 10m Air Pistol Mixed Team Pistol event.

Divyansh then won India's first individual medal by clinching a silver in the men's 10m Air Rifle. Abhishek Verma won India's third gold in men's 10m Air Pistol event.

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Bumrah, Shami, Jadeja and Poonam recommended for Arjuna

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) recommended the names of Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Shami, Ravindra Jadeja and Poonam Yadav for the Arjuna Award.

The Supreme Court-appointed Committee of Administrators (CoA) met in the Capital to discuss the matter in the presence of GM Cricket Operations Saba Karim. Karim had proposed the names of the cricketers.

Jamshedpur FC sign Keegan on one-year deal

Jamshedpur FC have completed the signing of Indian defender Keegan Pereira on a one-year deal.

Keegan, primarily a left back, started his football journey with Mumbai FC in the I-League and is remembered for his famous winning goal against Salgaocar in Cooperage stadium.

He then went on to play for Salgaocar, DSK Shivajians and Bengaluru FC with whom he went on to win the I-League twice in the 2013-14 and 2015-16 seasons and the Federation Cup twice in the 2014-15 and 2016-17 seasons. He started his stint in the Indian Super League (ISL) with Mumbai City FC (2015) and won the coveted trophy with Atletico de Kolkata (ATK) in 2016.

Shiva creates history, assured of 4th straight Asian C'ship medal

Shiva Thapa became the first Indian boxer to be assured of a fourth successive medal at the Asian Championships by advancing to the semifinals in Bangkok. The 25-year-old from Assam defeated Thailand's Rujakran Juntrong in a one-sided lightweight (60kg) contest. He prevailed 5-0.

Thapa won a gold in 2013, a bronze in 2015 and a silver in the 2017 edition of the marquee continental event.

He is also former world championship bronze-medallist and a two-time national champion.

Badminton Asia Championships begins at Wuhan in China

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The Badminton Asia Championships began at Wuhan in China today. The Indian contingent comprises PV Sindhu and Saina Nehwal in Women's Singles, and Kidambi Srikanth and Sameer Verma in Men's Singles.

Indian shuttlers will also be seen in action in the Doubles categories. India will be looking to end its 54-year-old title jinx at the Championships. It was Dinesh Khanna who had become the Men's Singles champion in 1965. Last year, Saina and HS Prannoy had won bronze medals.

Bajrang, Sakshi to lead India's challenge at Asian Wrestling Championships

Olympic bronze medallist Sakshi Malik and World No. 1 Bajrang Punia will spearhead India's campaign at the Asian Wrestling Championships starting in Xi'an, China .

Besides Sakshi and Bajrang, Vinesh Phogat would also be vying for top honours during the mega-event.

The championships conclude on the 28th of this month.

AIFF signs coaching convention with AFC

The All India Football Federation (AIFF) has signed a coaching convention with the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) focused on coaching rules and methods. It will highlight the regulations and guidelines of coaches' education.

Coaching convention will help the coaches to manage their schedule in a better way as it will be done in modules and it will also help them to work on their deficiencies during the break. Coaches will also have to undergo assignments which were not there before.

Tech Mahindra and i2Chain collaborate to leverage next gen technologies

Tech Mahindra Ltd., announced a strategic collaboration with i2Chain Inc., a San Francisco-based startup, leveraging next gen technologies to secure customer information and data assets.

Through this partnership, Tech Mahindra and i2Chain will offer a blockchain-based cybersecurity application to customers that is easy to use and provides information owners with an unprecedented level of control as to how, when and where other users can access their information, with the potential to substantially reduce the frequency and costs of security incidents.

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Hardik, Rahul fined 20 lakh rupees each by BCCI ombudsman

India cricketers Hardik Pandya and K.L. Rahul were today fined 20 lakh rupees each by the BCCI ombudsman Justice D.K. Jain for their sexist comments on a popular TV chat show.

Asian Athletics Championships begins in Doha

The Asian Athletics Championships begin in Doha today. The first day will decide eight gold medals.

From the Indian perspective, the Women's 400 metres race will be the most anticipated one. Sprint sensation Hima Das will be running in the preliminary round in the morning, while the final will be held in the evening.

In the 2017 Championships held in Bhubaneswar, India had finished on top with a record-breaking haul of 29 medals – 12 gold, 5 silver and 12 bronze. China had finished second with 20 medals.

India men's hockey team to join FIH Pro League from 2020

Indian men's hockey team would join the elite Pro League in early 2020 after International Hockey Federation's approval recently. The Pro League replaced the Men's FIH Hockey World League since 2019

International Hockey Federation imposes fine on Pakistan

The International Hockey Federation (FIH) has imposed a hefty fine of one lakh seventy-six thousand Euros on Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) for not honouring the Pro League commitments.

The FIH has given the Pakistan sports body time until 20th June to pay the fine or else the penalty would be doubled.

Tiger Woods clinches his fifth Masters

Golfer Tiger Woods clinched his fifth Masters and a 15th major title, ending 11-year wait for a major title after overcoming career-threatening back problems. There were raucous celebrations around the 18th green as 43-year-old Woods finished with a two-under-par 70 to win on 13 under, one clear of fellow Americans Dustin Johnson, Xander Schauffele and Brooks Koepka.

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Asian Championships Gold Medallist Shot Putter Manpreet Kaur Gets 4-Year Doping Ban

Asian shot put champion Manpreet Kaur has been banned for four years by India's anti-doping agency after failing a series of drug tests in 2017. Kaur, 29, will lose the gold medal she won at the 2017 Asian Championships with her suspension backdated to July 20 that year.

Kaur tested positive at four competitions in 2017, starting with the Asian Grand Prix at Jinhua, China on April 24. She won gold at each of them.

Shahid Afridi' autobiography 'Game Changer' set to hit stands on April 30

Former **Pakistan captain Shahid Afridi** has promised his fans a no-holds-barred account of his life in his upcoming biography "**Game Changer**", which will hit the stands on April 30.

The biography written by well-known TV anchor and broadcaster, Wajahat S Khan tracks the career of Afridi and narrates all the scandals and controversies in the all-rounder's career.

Afridi, 39, remains one of the most popular personalities of Pakistan and world cricket and retired from all cricket in April 2016 after a 20-year international career in which he appeared in 27 Tests, 398 ODIs and 99 T20 Internationals.

Rahmat, Naib, Rashid given leadership roles for Afghanistan

Ahead of the World Cup, the Afghanistan Cricket Board has handed leadership roles to **Rahmat Shah, Gulbadin Naib and Rashid Khan taking charge of the Test, ODI and T20I teams respectively.**

Ultimate Kho-Kho: India's First IPL-Style Professional Kho-Kho League Launched

The Kho-Kho Federation of India (KKFI) launched an ambitious franchise-based league for the sport named **Ultimate Kho-Kho**. The KKFI, in collaboration with Dabur India Ltd, will conduct the 21-day IPL-style league, which will see eight franchise teams playing a total of 60 matches in a double round-robin format.

Indian Olympic Association Secretary General and former KKFI president Rajeev Mehta is the chairman of the league.

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Rajasthan Royals launch online coaching community

Rajasthan Royals have launched their **new coaching community on the Hive Learning platform**. Through this community the Royals coaches and players will deliver the latest techniques, best practices and guidance to all those who aspire to join the cricket fraternity. The RR Coaching Community will feature lessons and videos to learn from, as well as insights provided by the experienced members of the Rajasthan Royals team, including their head coach Paddy Upton, head of cricket Zubin Bharucha and the director of the UK-based Rajasthan Royals Academy – Sid Lahiri.

Indian football team rises two places to 101 in FIFA rankings

The Indian men's football team gained two places to rise to 101 in the FIFA rankings issued on Thursday. With 1219 total ranking points, the Indian team lies 18th among the Asian countries. The team did not play any international match after the last rankings.

Iran continued to top the Asian rankings at 21, followed by Japan (26), South Korea (37), Australia (41) and Qatar (55). Belgium holds on to the top spot while England is on the rise, snatching fourth place from World Cup finalists Croatia. The top three positions are unchanged with World Cup winners France in the second spot and Brazil in third place.

Saurav Ghosal becomes first Indian man to enter top-10 in Squash rankings

Saurav Ghosal became the first Indian male squash player to enter the top 10 in the latest PSA world rankings. Indian women squash players Joshna Chinappa and Dipika Pallikal had earlier reached top-10 in the world rankings. Ghosal made it to the quarter-finals of the 2018-2019 PSA World Championships in Chicago, USA for the first time in his career. He was also a quarter-finalist at the prestigious Grasshopper Cup in Zurich, Switzerland.

ICC to join hands with Interpol to fight corruption in sport

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has sought closer working relations with the Interpol to widen the scope of its fight against corruption in the sport. The cooperation was discussed during ICC Anti-Corruption Unit General Manager, Alex Marshall's visit to the Interpol headquarters in Lyon, France.

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India finish with 16 gold medals at Asian Airgun Championships

Indian shooters continued their dominance claiming half a dozen gold medals on the final day of the Asian Airgun Championships to sign off with a total of 25 medals in Taoyuan, Taipei. India finished with 16 gold, five silver and four bronze medals. On the last day of the competition, Yash Vardhan and Shreya Agrawal bagged three gold medals each.

Yash finished on top in 10 metre Air Rifle men's junior event. He then clinched the yellow metal in the team competition with his partners — Keval Prajapati and Aishwary Tomar. Yash scored 249.5, while Keval and Aishwary shot 247.3 and 226.1 for silver and bronze. Earlier Vardhan and Shreya combined to win the Mixed Team Rifle junior event.

Shreya won the gold in the 10m Air Rifle women's junior event. She also won the Team gold along with Mehuli Ghosh and Kavi Chakkaravarthy. Shreya's gold-winning 24-shots ended on an impressive 252.5, while Mehuli settled for individual bronze with an effort of 228.3. Kavi was fourth.

OBITUARY

Name of the Person Died	Associated Field
P. Kannan	Former India footballer
Negasso Gidada	Former Ethiopian president
Vasanthi Stanley	The DMK'S former Rajya Sabha MP
Mark Medoff	Tony Award-Winning Playwright
Rama Sengupta Paul	Veteran lady mountaineer
Amar Paul	Bengali folk singer
Rama Sengupta Paul	Mountaineer
Lorraine Warren	A Paranormal Investigator
S Muthiah	Chronicler and writer-journalist
Con de Lange	Scotland all-rounder

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Jerrie Cobb	NASA's 1st female astronaut candidate
Alan Garcia	Former Peru president
Paripooranand Painuli	Former MP and freedom fighter
Rohit Shekhar	Son of late Uttarakhand Chief Minister N D Tiwari
Dr SK Shivakumar	Space scientist and Padma-Shri awardee
Pradeep Choubey	Renowned Hindi poet
Navtej Hundal	Uri: The Surgical Strike' actor
Drupad Borgohain	Veteran communist leader and former parliamentarian
KM Mani	Veteran Kerala politician
Sydney Brenner	Nobel Prize-winning biologist
Viharidas Gopaldas Patel	Economist and 'Father of Entrepreneurship Movement'
Silamboli Su. Chellappan	Noted Tamil Scholar and orator
Kartik Chandra Rath	Eminent theatre organiser and playwright
J Mahendran	Tamil cinema, director
Prafulla Rajguru	Veteran journalist and academician
Dilip Sarkar	Senior Tripura BJP leader

IMPORTANT DAYS

Date	Day	Theme 2019
4 April	International Day of Mine awareness	United Nations Promotes SDGs – Safe Ground – Safe Home"
5 April	National Maritime Day	Indian Ocean – An Ocean of opportunity

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7 April	World Health Day	'Health for all
10 April	World Homeopathy Day (WHD)	Innovate: Evolve, Progress: Exploring Science since 40 years
11 April	National Safe Motherhood Day (NSMD)	Midwives for Mothers
13 April	Jallianwala Bagh Massacre	
14 April	B.R. Ambedkar Remembrance Day	
17 April	World Haemophilia Day	Reaching out - connect to your community.
18 April	World Heritage Day	
21 April	National Civil Service Day	'Evolving Strategies for Transforming Aspirational Districts
22 April	World Earth Day	Climate Literacy and Environment
23 April	World Book and Copyright Day	
24 April	National Panchayati Raj Day	
25 April	World Malaria Day	Zero malaria starts with me
26 April	World Intellectual Property Day	Reach for Gold: IP and Sports"
28 April	World Day for Safety and Health at Work	
28 April	World Veterinary Day	World Veterinary Day
29 April	International Dance Day	Art of dance
30 April	Ayushman Bharat Diwas	