



Legendary moviemaker Mrinal Sen passed away at 95 on - 30th December 2018

Legendary moviemaker Mrinal Sen decreased on December 30th, 2018 in Kolkata, following a prolonged age-related ailment. He was 95 years old and is survived by his son. His wife, actor Geeta Sen, deceased in 2017. The Padma Bhushan & Dada Saheb Phalke awardee was well known mainly for paving the way for parallel cinema in the nation with movies including 'Ek Din Achanak', 'Padatik, Mrigaya', 'Akaler Sandhane', 'Chorus', 'Kharij', 'Kandahar', 'Bhuvan Shome', 'Akash Kusum' & 'Calcutta 71'.

More about Mrinal Sen

- Mrinal Sen was a well-known Bengali moviemaker located in Kolkata. He was born on May 14th, 1923, in the town of Faridpur, which now is in Bangladesh and completed his post-graduation from the Calcutta University.

- In a career spanning for above 6 decades, Sen along with his contemporary stalwarts Satyajit Ray & Ritwick Ghatak, opened new era in Indian cinema with content driven, issue-based realistic cinema which fascinated to the global diaspora, besides creating ripples in the Indian movie industry.

- The 3 directors were known to be the greatest ambassadors of Bengali parallel cinema on the worldwide stage.

- Like the works of Ray & Ghatak, Sen's cinema is recalled primarily for its meticulous & artistic depiction of social reality.

- He made his directorial debut with "Raat Bhore" in 1955 & found local approval with "Neel Akasher Neechey" and "Baishey Shravana".

- However, it was the movie Bhuvan Shome, that finally launched him as a major moviemaker, both nationally & internationally.

- Sen was also a member of the Rajya Sabha from 1998-2003. His last movie as a director "Aamaar Bhuvan" released in 2002.

Sheikh Hasina wins third consecutive term as prime minister in - Bangladesh Elections 2018

Bangladesh's PM Sheikh Hasina won her 3rd consecutive term & 4th overall with a landslide victory in the country's general elections. The results were declared by the Election Commission on December 31st, 2018.

Sheikh Hasina's ruling party Bangladesh Awami League & its associates secured 288 of the 299 parliamentary seats contested, outstanding its previous election victory when it had secured 234 seats. This is an unprecedented feat in the nation's political history as no other leader in Bangladesh has been able to secure a 3rd consecutive term.

Important Points

- The Election Commission confirmed that Hasina secured her Gopalganj-3 seat bagging more than 2.29 lakh votes, while her Bangladesh Nationalist Party opponent got only 123 votes.

- The ruling coalition has reportedly earned above 80% of votes, making it the strongest governments in South Asia.

- As per to reports, the Grand Alliance led by the Awami league secured as many as 288 seats, while the opposition alliance won below 10 seats.

- The main opposition party Bangladesh Nationalist Party won 5 seats & the Gano Forum is reported to have won 2 seats. The remaining 4 seats were secured by Independents.

- The voting occurred in 299 out of 300 seats on December 30th. The voting was suspended for 1 seat due to the death of a candidate.

Smriti Mandhana named International Cricket Council Women's Cricketer of the Year on - 31st December 2018

India's left-handed opener Smriti Mandhana has secured the Rachael Heyhoe Flint Award for the International Cricket Council Women's Cricketer of the Year. Mandhana was also pronounced as the International Cricket Council Women's One-Day



International Player of the Year. The declaration was made by the International Cricket Council on December 31st, 2018.

The 22 years old Mandhana, has also been named in the International Cricket Council Women's One-Day International Team of the Year & the International Cricket Council Women's T20I Team of the Year, scored 669 runs at an average of 66.90 in 12 One-Day Internationals & 622 runs at a strike-rate of 130.67 in 25 T-20 Internationals during the voting period, which ran from January 1st-December 31st, 2018.

The cricketer had played a crucial role in India's semi-final appearance at the International Cricket Council Women's World T-20 in the West Indies, scoring 178 runs in 5 matches at a strike-rate of 125.35.

Important Points

- Smriti Mandhana has become the 2nd Indian woman player to secure an International Cricket Council award after fast bowler Jhulan Goswami, who was named the International Cricket Council Women's Player of the Year in 2007.

- Australia's opening batter & wicketkeeper Alyssa Healy, who ended with 225 runs in 6 matches at the International Cricket Council Women's World T-20 2018 in the West Indies, has been named the International Cricket Council Women's T-20 International Player of the Year.

- England's 19 years old left-arm spinner Sophie Ecclestone has been voted the International Cricket Council Women's Emerging Player of the Year after she took 18 wickets in 9 One-Day Internationals & 17 in 14 T-20

Internationals during the calendar year.

- The International Cricket Council Fans' Moment of the Year award, which will be selected by cricket fans worldwide who will get a chance to vote for their favourite moment of 2018, will be declared subsequent month.

- The voting window for this award is now open & the winning moment will be declared along with the men's International Cricket Council Awards, which will be declared in January 2019.

Fiscal Stability Report released by - RBI

The bi-annual Fiscal Stability Report deliberating issues concerned to the development & regulation of the financial sector has been published by the Reserve Bank of India. The Fiscal Stability Report shows the collective assessment of the Subcommittee of the Financial Stability & Development Council on risks to the financial stability of the nation, as also the resilience of the financial system.

Findings of the Fiscal stability Report

- Banking system's Asset quality has amazingly started to show progress. The gross Non-Performing Assets have decelerated during September 2018 quarter.

- The asset quality of Scheduled Commercial Banks showed a progress with Gross Non-Performing Assets ratio declining from 11.5 percent in March 2018 to 10.8 percent in September 2018 & the net non-performing assets ratio has also registered a decrease during the period.

- The number of banks with Gross Non-Performing Assets ratio below 10 percent has decreased in September 2018 as compared to March 2018.

- Due to the removal of various restructuring schemes, the Restructured standard advances ratio steadily dropped in September 2018 to 0.5 percent.

- The provision coverage ratio of all Scheduled Commercial Banks was higher in September 2018 as compared to March 2018.

- The Capital to Risk-weighted Assets Ratio of Scheduled Commercial Banks has weakened marginally from 13.8 percent in March 2018 to 13.7 percent in September 2018.

- Based on the Data, Reserve Bank of India predicts that projected Scheduled



Commercial Banks ratio under the baseline scenario may weakening from 10.8 percent in September 2018 to 10.3% in March 2019.

- Analysis of portfolio of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises highlights that, the performance of PSBs in the Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises segment trails that of other intermediaries including private banks & non-banking financial firms.

Loan subsidy for middle-income group under PMAY extended till - 31st March 2020

The Minister for Housing & Urban Affairs Hardeep Singh Puri has informed that the loan subsidy for the middle-income group under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, has been stretched till 31st March 2020.

The Minister informed that above Rupees 6900 crore interest subsidy on housing loans has been distributed to more than 3.14 lakh beneficiaries of Credit Linked Subsidy Scheme under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban).

Credit Linked Subsidy under PMAY-Urban

- The Credit Linked Subsidy Scheme is a component under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban.

- Under the scheme, the central government provides interest subsidy or purchase or construction or extension or progress of a house to cater Economical Weaker Section, Lower-Income Group and Middle-Income Groups.

- The Credit Linked Subsidy Scheme is being implemented by 2 central nodal agencies in India, namely Housing Urban Development Corp & National Housing Bank.

- The Credit Linked Subsidy Scheme is deliberate as a demand-side intervention to expand institutional credit flow to the housing desires of the urban poor.

- The Credit Linked Subsidy Scheme is the only central scheme under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban & the

remaining ones are applied as sponsored schemes.

For Middle-Income group

Credit Linked Subsidy Scheme for Middle-Income group covers two income segments in the Middle-Income group including Rupees 600001 to Rupees 1200000 and Rupees 1200001 to Rupees 1800000 per year.

Madhya Pradesh Government to create an - Adhyatmik Vibhag

The Government of Madhya Pradesh has declared formation of a new Adhyatmik Vibhag (spiritual department). The planned new department will be formed by merging several current departments.

According to the tweet from the CM's office of MP Dharmik Nyas Evam Dharmasv Department (Religious Trust & Endowment Department), Anand Vibhag- Happiness Department, in addition to the Directorate of Religious Trust & Endowment, MP Teerth Evam Mela Pradhikaran & Rajya Anand Sansthan would be fused to form the planned Adhyatmik Vibhag-spiritual department.

More about Anand Vibhag

- MP had become the 1st state in the nation to create Happiness Department. The government had also declared the formation of the Happiness Institute.

- Previously announcing the formation of Happiness Department, the state government had undertaken a deep study of the measures taken to evaluate the status of happiness among the inhabitants by the UN as well as the Government of Bhutan & America's International Management Institute.

Pakistan to issue Panda Bonds to raise capital in - China

The government of Pakistan has finalised to issue Panda Bonds to increase loans from Chinese capital markets. Launching of Panda Bonds is part of Pakistan's strategies to move towards issuing the Chinese money, a status at par with that relished by the



United States dollar. The interest rates & the size of the bonds would be finalised at a later stage. The Finance Ministry of Pakistan has informed that the Panda Bonds are part of its multi-pronged approach for linking the foreign financing necessities & building foreign exchange capitals. Panda Bonds will benefit Pakistan to diversify the investor base of capital market issuance & deliver a source of raising renminbi. China is Pakistan's largest trading partner. Pakistan has the highest trade shortfall with China. The floating of capital in Chinese currency will benefit Pakistan to bridge the deficit.

Panda Bonds

- Panda bonds are Chinese renminbi-denominated bonds from a non-Chinese issuer, retailed in the People's Republic of China.

- The 1st 2 Panda bonds were released in October 2005 on the by the International Finance Corporation & the Asian Development Bank on the same day.

- The Philippines released its inaugural Panda bonds in 2018. It was the 1st ASEAN member to release Panda bonds.

India to achieve 100 percent electrification before - 2019 Republic Day

India is likely to attain 100% family electrification earlier to 2019 Republic Day. India has already issued electricity access to 2.39 crore out of the aimed 2.49 crore families under the Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana, Saubhagya scheme.

Status of Electrification

- India has attained the 100% electrification of the families in 25 states by December 2018. Around 10.48 lakh families are remained to be electrified in Four states of Assam, Rajasthan, Meghalaya Chhattisgarh.

- The electrification got overdue in these states due to elections & Maoist issues.

- These states are now preparing concerted efforts to attain 100% family electrification in their respective states.

Saubhagya scheme

- The centre had released the Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana, Saubhagya scheme to deliver electricity to all families by December 2018.

- The families identified via the Socio-economic & Caste Census of 2011 are delivered with free electricity connections & others were charged a minimal fee of Rupees 500.

- The scheme intends at providing last mile connectivity & electricity connections to all remaining families in rural and urban areas.

Panel suggests not to allow new Engineering colleges from - 2020

The Panel led by IIT-Hyderabad chairman B.V.R.Mohan Reddy has proposed All India Council for Technical Education- AICTE, not to permit formation of new Engineering colleges from 2020.

Recommendations of the Panel

- To stopover formation of new colleges from 2020 & review the creation of new capacity every 2 years after that.

- No added seats should be approved in traditional engineering areas including mechanical, electrical, civil & electronics & advises that institutes should be fortified to convert current capacity in traditional disciplines to developing new technologies.

- To introduce under-graduate engineering programs exclusively for artificial intelligence, blockchain, robotics, quantum computing, data sciences, cybersecurity and 3D printing & design.

Reasons for recommendations

- Present capacity utilisation in traditional disciplines is just 40 percent as opposed to 60 percent seat occupancy in branches such as computer science & engineering, aerospace engineering & mechatronics.



○ According to the reports, there were no takers for 51 % of the 15.5 lakh B.E/B.Tech seats in 3,291 engineering colleges in 2016-17.

Telangana to have separate High Court from - 1st January 2019

Separate High Courts will initiate working for the states of Telangana & Andhra Pradesh from January 1st, 2019. The High Court for Telangana is the 25th High Court in the nation. Telangana was carved out of Andhra Pradesh in 2014 & the 2 states continued to have a common high court in Hyderabad.

Separate High Courts

○ The High Court for Telangana will work from the present High Court building in Hyderabad.

○ The High Court for Andhra Pradesh will initiate working from a temporary building at Amaravati until it gets a permanent structure.

○ 16 judges have been assigned to Andhra Pradesh High Court & 10 have been assigned to Telangana High Court.

○ Justice T.B.N. Radhakrishnan will take oath as Chief Justice of the Telangana High Court.

Veteran Bollywood actor-writer Kader Khan passed away on - 1st January 2019

Veteran Bollywood actor, director and scholar, Kader Khan deceased on January 1st, 2019 after a prolonged illness in Toronto, Canada. He was 81 years old and is survived by his wife Hajra, son Sarfaraz, daughter-in-law, and grandchildren.

He had been hospitalised for about 4 months due to various old-age related ailments including progressive Supranuclear Palsy, a degenerative disease that results into loss of balance, difficulty in walking and dementia.

He was well-known for his comic roles in movies including Dulhe Raja, Aakhein, Coolie No.1, Haseena Maan Jayegi, and various others.

More about Kader Khan

○ He was a professor, scholar, writer, producer and actor.

○ Kader Khan was born on October 22nd, 1937 in Afghanistan to a Pashtun family, and did his education in a municipal school and later graduated from Mumbai's Ismail Yusuf College, Jogeshwari.

○ He was an engineer by training & a civil engineering professional who taught the theory of structure, hydraulics, strength of material, & RCC steel.

○ He began his career as an actor with the film 'Daag' in 1973. In his acting career of more than 35 years, he acted in above 300 movies in memorable roles.

○ Despite being an actor, he was also a prolific writer and wrote the story/dialogues for above 250 movies in Hindi & Urdu, starting with Randhir Kapoor & Jaya Bhaduri starrer 'Jawani Diwani' in 1972.

○ He penned the story-dialogues for movies including Jawani Diwani, Benaam, Amar Akbar Anthony, Parvarish, Muqaddar Ka Sikandar, Suhaag, Mr. Natwarlal, Yaarana, Lawaaris, Desh Premee, Sharaabi, etc.

○ He also produced a movie 'Shama' in 1981. He will be last seen in movie 'Hera Pheri-3' in the role of a doctor.

○ The movie is expected to release this year.

Females's wall for Gender Equality in Kerala on - 1st January 2019

Around 30 lakh females, on 1st January, stood shoulder to shoulder to make Vanitha Mathil, 'female's wall' that ran across the length of Kerala. The wall overextended from Kasaragod in the North to Thiruvananthapuram in the south for around 620 Kilometres.

More about Vanitha Mathil, Females's Wall

○ The programme was planned by the Government of Kerala with the help of several political, religious and social groups.



○ The members at the Female's Wall resolved to sustain the values of Kerala's renaissance, ensure gender justice, & counter initiatives to turn the state into a lunatic asylum.

○ The programme was also a counterdemonstration against the agitations avoiding females of menstruating age from entering the Sabarimala shrine in violation of the Supreme Court's governing.

○ During the programme, participants took an initiate to safeguard the values of social reformation movement, to support the idea of gender equality as perceived by the Constitution to clash with any efforts to turn Kerala into "a lunatic asylum".

Reserve Bank of India launched - SRPHi

The RBI has launched Survey on Retail Payment Habits of Individuals- SRPHi. The Survey will collect payment habits of individuals in cities of Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Bengaluru & Guwahati.

More about the Survey

○ Sigma Research & Consulting Pvt Ltd has been affianced by Reserve Bank of India to demeanour the fieldwork of the survey. Approximately 6000 persons from various socio-economic backgrounds across six cities would be counted under the survey.

○ The survey pursues qualitative responses from entities on their payment habits.

○ The findings of the survey will deliver insights into awareness & usage habits of digital payment products.

Samwad with Students by - ISRO

Indian Space Research Organisation has released an outreach programme known as Samwad with Students. During Samwad with Students on 1st January, Indian Space Research Organisation Chairman K Sivan interacted with 40 students & 10 teachers from choice of schools.

Important Highlights

○ Indian Space Research Organisation's outreach programme was intended at motivating young India & tapping their scientific potential. During the interaction the Indian Space Research Organisation

○ Chairmen engaged with students on a series of subjects ranging from rockets, satellites, Chandrayaan, Gaganyaan and other space applications.

○ Further, Indian Space Research Organisation will be planning guided tours thrice in a year, especially during summer & winter holidays for students of class 11 & 12.

○ The students would be taken to Indian Space Research Organisation facilities in Thiruvananthapuram & Bengaluru & the launch centre at Sriharikota.

○ Students would also be taken to space laboratories & would be permitted to make small satellites.

Indian Bridge Management System by - The Ministry of Road Transport & Highways

The Ministry of Road Transport & Highways has inventoried 172517 bridges or structures under Indian Bridge Management System. It includes 134229 culverts, 32806 minor bridges, 3647 major & 1835 extra-long bridges.

More about IBMS

○ Indian Bridge Management System was released by the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways to develop an inventory of all bridges in the nation & rate their structural condition so that in-timely repair & rehabilitation work can be accomplished based on the criticality of the structure.

○ Lack of clear aim database on bridges in the nation has pushed to a situation where the authorities were neither clear about the precise number and location of the bridges nor they were able to uphold this asset in proper working condition.

○ Indian Bridge Management System has been brought-in to address this anomaly.



○ Under the Indian Bridge Management System, each bridge is allocated a unique identification

number/National Identity Number based on the state, RTO zone and whether it is located on a National Highway/State Highway/district road.

○ The exact location of the bridge in terms of latitude-longitude is gathered through GPS & based on these, the bridge is allocated a Bridge Location Number.

○ Engineering characteristics like the design, materials, type of bridge, its age, loading, traffic lane, length, the width of carriageway etc are collected & are used to assign a Bridge Classification Number to the structure.

○ The Engineering characteristics are then used to do a structural rating of the structure on a scale of 0 to 9, and each bridge is assigned a Structural Rating Number.

○ Socio-Economic Bridge Rating Number will be assigned based on the importance of the structure in relation to its contribution to the daily socio-economic activity of the area in its vicinity.

• Renaming Allahabad to "Prayagraj" approved by - The Union Home Ministry

The Union Home Ministry has permitted the proposal of the UP Government to rename Allahabad as Prayagraj.

Name change proposal

The government of UP has informed that it is re-establishing the original name of the city. The government informs that the city was rechristened during the sovereignty of Mughal Emperor Akbar. Akbar named the city Illahabas, meaning the abode of God. Formerly, renaming by Akbar, the city was called as Prayag. Medieval texts, counting Akbar's court historian Abul Fazl, named the city as Piyag.

Procedure for changing Names

The suggestions of the states would be scrutinised by the Union Home Ministry as per to the current strategies in consultations with concerned agencies. The Ministry sanctions the proposal after taking NOC from the Ministry of Railways, Department of Posts & Survey of India, which authorizes that there is no such city/town/village in their records with a name same as to the projected one. Then an executive order is approved on the renaming of cities.

Krishak Bandhu scheme of West Bengal declared by - The government of West Bengal

The government of West Bengal has declared the Krishak Bandhu scheme to address the farm distress in the state.

Features of the Scheme

The West Bengal government will issue yearly financial help of Rupees 5000/acre in two instalments, including 1 during Kharif & 2nd during Rabi season. Farmers can also avail the financial help at one go. The scheme also delivers for a life insurance cover of Rupees 200000 in case of death, irrespective of the reason, of an earning farmer aged between 18-60 years. Framers are not needed to pay any premium to gain the insurance advantage. The scheme would cover 72 lakh farmer & share-cropper families in the State.

Financial burden on the exchequer

The average land holding per farmer in West Bengal is attached at about 1.2 acres. Hence the average financial aid to a farmer would calculate about Rupees 6000. To even cover 50 lakh farmers, the burden on the exchequer would be Rupees 3000 Crore.

New chairman for the Ordnance Factory Board - Saurabh Kumar

Saurabh Kumar has been designated as the Director General of Ordnance Factories & chairman of the Ordnance Factory Board in Kolkata.

Indian Ordnance Factories

Indian Ordnance Factories organisation is a family of 41 Ordnance Factories under



the sponsorship of its corporate HQ Ordnance Factory Board, Kolkata. It is salaried under the sponsorship of Ministry of Defence. The ordnance factories arrange a combined base for the indigenous production of defence hardware & tools. The primary aim of the ordnance factories is attaining self-reliance in preparing the armed forces with state-of-the-art battlefield equipment.

More about Saurabh Kumar

- Saurabh Kumar is a 1982 batch Indian Ordnance Factory Service officer has completed his M-Tech in mechanical engineering from IIT, Kanpur.

- Saurabh Kumar has worked in the Ministry of Defence as the director of planning & co-ordination from 2002-2009.

- He has played a contributory role in drafting the Indian offset policy for defence purchases & the "Make" process in the Defence Procurement Procedure of 2003-2004 during his tenure in the Defence Ministry.

- Saurabh Kumar has also worked as the GM of the Engine Factory at Avadi, was involved in operationalising the project & starting an indigenisation program which finished in the handing over of completely indigenous engines of T-90 "Bhishma" & T-72 "Ajeya" tanks to the Raksha Mantri in July 2018.

India-Pakistan exchange list of Nuclear Installations as per - Prohibition of Attacks against Nuclear Installations & Facilities

Both India & Pakistan have interchanged their list of nuclear installations. The inter-change was in agreement with the Agreement on Prohibition of Attacks against Nuclear Installations & Facilities between Pakistan & India.

Agreement on Prohibition of Attacks against Nuclear Installations & Facilities

- The Agreement was inked between India & Pakistan on 31st December 1988

at Islamabad & came into force on 27th January 1991.

- Both India & Pakistan would exhortation from undertaking, inspiring/participating in, directly/indirectly, any action intended at causing the destruction of, or damage to, any nuclear installation/facility in the other nation.

- Both India & Pakistan will notify each other about their nuclear installations and facilities on 1 January each year & also whenever there is any change.

- Both nations have accepted the agreement as part of their actions to uphold durable peace & progress friendly & pleasant-sounding bilateral ties.

Justice AK Sikri nominated as Executive Chairman of NALSA by - President Ram Nath Kovind

President Ram Nath Kovind has designated Justice A.K.Sikri as Executive Chairman of National Legal Services Authority- NALSA. He will be replacing Justice Madan B Lokur.

National Legal Services Authority

- The NALSA has been formed under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 to deliver free Legal Services to the weaker sections of the society.

- National Legal Services Authority was formed to fulfil the provisions under the Article 39A of the constitution which provides for free legal assistance to the poor & weaker sections of the society, to encourage justice on the basis of equal opportunity.

- National Legal Services Authority plans Lok Adalats for amicable settlement of disputes.

- The roles of the National Legal Services Authority also include spreading legal literacy & awareness, undertaking social justice proceedings.

- The CJI is the Patron-in-Chief & the Senior most Judge of the Supreme Court of India is the Executive Chairman of the Authority.

- National Legal Services Authority identifies detailed categories of the marginalized and excepted groups from



the diverse populace of the nation & frames various schemes for the implementation of preventive & strategic legal service programs to be undertaken & executed by the Legal Services Authorities at the various levels.

- National Legal Services Authority works in close co-ordination with the various State Legal Services Authorities, District Legal Services Authorities & other interventions for a regular exchange of appropriate data, monitoring & updating on the execution & progress of the various schemes.

• Heritage conservation in Indian Railways started by - The Ministry of Railways

The Ministry of Railways has started several steps to encourage heritage conservation. The conservation measures undertaken by railways consists of a revival of Steam Engines, up-keeping Hill Railways, a special delegation of powers to Divisions for promoting Hill & Steam tourism, consolidating Railway museums, preservation of built heritage, digitization of Railway Heritage & bringing it online for universal access etc.

Measures undertaken for Heritage conservation

- Zonal Railways is organising drives time to time for identification & preservation of Railway heritage properties like buildings, bridges, rolling stocks, documents, photographs, artefacts, tools, clocks, benches etc, which currently lying unnoticed at different locations.

- A specific provision was ended by the Ministry of Railways in the budget for 2018-19 for the revival of steam engines including restoration & gaining of spares.

- A weekly timetabled train on steam traction has been planned operational between Garhi Harsaru & Farukhnagar.

- Maintenance of 5 hill railways of India including Darjeeling Himalayan Railway, Nilgiri Mountain Railway, Kalka Shimla Railway, Matheran Light Railway & Kangra Valley Railway are undertaken

according to the codal provision of Indian Railways & UNESCO Guiding principle.

- Special powers have been substituted to Divisional Railway Managers of 5 hill railways for promoting tourism in these 5 hill railways.

Aadhaar modification Bill presented in - Lok Sabha

The government has presented the Aadhaar modification bill in Lok Sabha. The bill goals to provide legal support for voluntary seeding of biometric Aadhaar identity card for mobile SIM card & bank account authentication purposes.

Features of the Bill

- The bill pursues to amend the Aadhaar- Targeted Delivery of Financial & Other Subsidies, Benefits & Services Act, 2016, the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885 & the Prevention of Money-laundering Act, 2002.

- The modification allows children, who would turn 18 years old, to choose out of the system. The modifications make sharing of Aadhaar details voluntary for starting bank accounts, school admissions & getting mobile SIM cards.

- The bill provides for rigid penalties for violation of norms set for the usage of Aadhaar.

- The modification bill prohibits storing of core biometric information and Aadhaar number by service providers in cases of persons who have voluntarily offered the national ID as a means of authentication.

- The bill makes it transparent that anyone not offering Aadhaar cannot be left without any service, be it a bank account or a SIM card.

- The bill initiates the process for offline verification of an Aadhaar number bearers & confers improved regulator-like power on UIDAI to give instructions as it may consider essential to any entity in the Aadhaar ecosystem.

The cases of Malaria minimised by - Odisha

Odisha is highly susceptible for malaria & bears almost a quarter of the nation's disease burden. Through its ground-



breaking methods involving non-health workers in malaria control, Odisha was able to minimise the number of cases by 80 percent.

Efforts

○ The battle of Odisha has resulted in the decrease in the number of cases. Approximately, 444850 cases of malaria in 2016 in the State & it fell to about 55360 till October 2018. Deaths were also minimised from 77 in 2016 to 4 in 2018.

○ Odisha attained this noteworthy achievement via additional investments were provided for the Indian Council of Medical Research under the Comprehensive Case Management Program to experiment with the interventions needed.

○ Challenges for instance, unavailability of medicines when roads get cut off due to heavy rain, or health workers fronting difficulty in reaching remote villages when jammed by elephants, were addressed.

○ Alternative providers including teachers, forest animators were trained to accomplish mass screening by running blood tests & delivering medicines to villagers in the areas where ASHA workers were unable to reach.

○ Districts were segregated into a control block & an intervention block, grounded on instances of malaria under the Case Management Programme & activities were intensified while in the control block things went on as usual.

○ People were screened even if they had no indications of malaria in hill-top areas. If their blood indicated the presence of parasites, they were treated with anti-malarial medicines.

Paper Sensor to detect freshness of Milk by - IIT Researchers

Researchers from the IIT, Guwahati, have developed a paper kit to assess the freshness of milk & determine how well the milk has been pasteurized. The kit can also help in ensuring that milk is used before it turns too sour with the aid of a smartphone app.

Kit Efficiency

○ The Kit utilises an ordinary filter paper to formulate the detector. The filter paper which is cut into small pieces, is saturated with chemical probes that preferentially react with Alkaline Phosphatase, which is a pointer of the quality of the milk.

○ When the filter paper saturated with probes in contact with the milk, its colour shows variations.

○ The colour variation is photographed by a Smartphone.

○ The images are then managed to obtain corresponding colour values. These values are then equated with standard information stored in the phone.

○ This delivers data about the quality of the Milk. Since the sensors utilised works in both qualitative & quantitative mode, the kit can also be utilised to calculate the quantity of the milk.

Kit

○ The probe discs are connected to a 2cm square clear cellulose acetate film.

○ Another layer cellulose acetate covering is coated as cover on the probe. The milk is injected via the tiny hole on the cover.

○ The colour variation is photographed & processed using a smartphone to get the results.

Bill to make marital rape a crime presented in - Lok Sabha

A private bill named the Females's Sexual, Reproductive & Menstrual Rights Bill 2018 has been introduced in the Lok Sabha by Congress MP Dr. Shashi Tharoor. The bill suggests to make marital rape a crime & gives more decisional autonomy to females in termination of pregnancy.

Key Provisions of the Bill

The bill suggests the deletion of exception 2 to Section 375 of IPC, which explains that sexual intercourse by a man with his own wife is not rape. The bill also enhances a provision to explanation 2 that 'the females' ethnicity, religion, caste, education, occupation, clothing, entertainment preference, social circle, personal opinion, previous sexual conduct/any other



concerned grounds shall not be a reason to believe her consent to the sexual activity.

Abortion rights

- The bill suggests alterations to the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act 1971.

- The bill recommends renaming of the act to Legal Termination of Pregnancy Act.

- The modification of name of the act has been anticipated on the ground that the use of the word medical in the title of the Bill formed ambiguity, which mainly obstructed rural areas as the doctors there feared to interpret the law in case of an arrest under Section 312 of the IPC.

- The bill grants females an absolute right to removal of pregnancy where they may terminate pregnancy merely by appeal until the 12th week of pregnancy.

- The bill also allows females the conditional right to terminate their pregnancy until the 20 weeks of pregnancy.

- The pregnancies resulted due to rape/failure of birth control methods are considered to constitute a grave injury to the mental health of a female.

- The bill also allows a limited right of abortion until the 24-week of pregnancy.

- The Act partial termination of pregnancy to the 20-week of pregnancy unless the existence of the woman was at risk.

Cabinet approves first-ever three-way merger in Indian Banking merger of Vijaya Bank, Dena Bank & Bank of Baroda on - 2nd January 2019

The Union Cabinet, led by PM Narendra Modi, on January 2nd, 2019 sanctioned the "Scheme of Amalgamation" for union of Bank of Baroda, Vijaya Bank & Dena Bank. The unification will be the 1st-ever 3-way consolidation of banks in India. The union of Bank of Baroda, Dena Bank & Vijaya Bank was projected by the Union Finance Ministry on September 17th, 2018.

Crucial Highlights of the Unification

- Vijaya Bank & Dena Bank are the Transferor Banks & the Bank of Baroda is

the Transferee Bank and the 'Scheme of Amalgamation' will come into existence on April 1st, 2019.

- The undertakings of the transferor banks will be shifted to the transferee bank, including all business, assets, rights, titles, claims, licenses, sanctions & all property, all borrowings, liabilities & obligations.

- Every permanent & regular employee of the transferor banks will become an employee of the transferee bank.

- The pay & stipends offered to the employees of transferor banks shall not be least favourable as compared to what they are getting in their respective transferor banks.

- The Board of the transferee bank, that is Bank of Baroda, will make sure that the interests of all transferring employees of the transferor bank are protected.

- The transferee bank will release shares to the stakeholders of transferor banks according to the share exchange ratio.

- Stakeholders of the transferee bank & transferor bank shall be allowed to raise their complaints, if any, in concerned to the share exchange ratio, via an expert committee.

China's Chang'e 4 probe makes historic touchdown in - Lunar exploration mission

China's Chang'e 4 probe spaceship has become the 1st spaceship to land on the far side of the moon. Chang'e 4 is a Chinese lunar exploration mission that intends to attain soft-landing on the far side of the Moon. The mission goals to deliver samples of Moon rock and soil to Earth.

More about the Mission

- For the 1st time, there would be soft-landing on the far side of the Moon. China's mission consists of a static lander & rover.

- The rover will touch down on the Von Kármán crater, situated on the side of the Moon which never faces Earth.



• During the landing, the probe will slope on thrusters & touch down on the rocky terrain of the lunar far side.

• The landers will benefit in characterising the region's geology & the structure of rock & soil.

• Chang'e-4's instruments would inspect whether the impression which created the South Pole Aitken Basin has punched through the crust down to the Moon's mantle layer.

• This will shed light on the early history of our only natural satellite.

• The Chang'e-4 mission will also characterise the 'radio environment' on the far side to lay the groundwork for the formation of future radio astronomy telescopes on the far side, which is isolated from the radio noise of Earth.

• To learn the respiration of the seeds & the photosynthesis on the Moon, the static lander is carrying a container with potato & Arabidopsis plant seeds to perform a biological trial.

• The lander will send the information through the satellite Queqiao of China.

NASA's New Horizon spaceship flew past - Ultima Thule

The New Horizon Spaceship has hovered past Ultima Thule, a trans-Neptunian entity located in the Kuiper belt. This character a new foundation in the era of exploration from the enigmatic Kuiper Belt region.

Discoveries about Ultima Thule

• Ultima Thule- TOO-lee, has 2 reddish globes combined by a narrow neck.

• Ultima Thule is 6.4 billion kms from Earth.

• Ultima Thule is rotating like a propeller.

New Horizon Mission

• New Horizon Mission is an inter-planetary space probe share of NASA's New Frontiers program.

• The New Horizon was released in 2006 to with the prime mission to perform a fly by study of the Pluto system in 2015.

• The secondary mission to fly by & study 1 or above other Kuiper belt objects.

• The New Horizons mission was intended at getting insights about the edge of our solar system by making the 1st reconnaissance of the dwarf planet Pluto & by offering deeper into the distant, enigmatic Kuiper Belt which is a relic of solar system establishment.

Pakistan's Provincial Government declares Panj Tirath Hindu religious site as - National heritage

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa- KP provincial government of Pakistan has announced the ancient Hindu religious site of Panj Tirath in Peshawar of North-Western Pakistan as National Heritage.

The Directorate of Archaeology & Museums of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has released a notification under the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Antiquities Act 2016 announcing the land in the Panj Tirath Park as a heritage land.

Significance of the Site

• Panj Tirath got its name from the 5 pools of water in the site which also has a temple.

• As per to the epic of Mahabharat, the mythical king Pandu gone to this area & Hindus were coming to these pools for bathing during the auspicious month of Karteek & worship for 2 days under the trees.

106th Session of Indian Science Congress Inaugurated by - Indian PM Narendra Modi

Indian PM Narendra Modi brought the inaugural address at the 106th session of the Indian Science Congress. The 106th Indian Science Congress is being organised at Jalandhar. The subject of the 106th science congress is "Future India: Science & Technology".

Reflecting on the subject of "Future India: Science & Technology", Prime Minister Modi said that he would like to augment Jai Anusandhan to previous PM Lal Bahadur Shastri's famous slogan of Jai Jawan,



Jai Kisan & Atal Bihari Vajpayee's Jai Vigyan. He gave the country a new slogan "Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan, Jai Vigyan & Jai Anusandhan".

Indian Science Congress

- Indian Science Congress is held by the Indian Science Congress Association on yearly basis in the 1st week of January.

- The Indian Science Congress Association was initiated in the year 1914 in Kolkata & has a membership of above 30000 scientists.

- The 2 British chemists, namely, Professor J.L. Simonsen & Professor P.S. MacMahon believed that scientific research in India might be inspired if a yearly meeting of Research workers, slightly on the lines of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, could be planned.

- This directed to the formation of the Indian Science Congress Association & the yearly session of the Indian Science Congress.

New Delhi World Book Fair organised at - Pragati Maidan

The New Delhi World Book Fair will be organised at the Pragati Maidan. The subject of the 27th edition of the New Delhi World Book Fair is 'Readers with special needs.' The United Arab Emirate's 3rd largest emirate Sharjah is the guest of honour for the New Delhi World Book Fair.

New Delhi World Book Fair

- The New Delhi World Book Fair would be initiated by the Minister for Human Resource Development Prakash Javadekar.

- The subject 'Readers with special needs' has been selected to produce emotions of not sympathy but respect & equality.

- A high-class exhibition of Braille books, audio books, integrated print-braille books & books for people & children with different incapacities will be exhibited in the Fair's theme pavilion.

- An International Disability Film Festival 'We Care' has also been planned

where 45 films from 27 nations would be screened.

- To celebrate the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, an exhibition of books on and by Gandhi ji & his acquaintances will also be showcased at the book fair.

Who has honoured with National Nritya Shiromani award ? - Anindita Neogy Anaam

Kathak exponent Anindita Neogy Anaam has been bestowed with the prestigious National Nritya Shiromani award for her contribution towards preserving & encouraging the dance form worldwide. The award was deliberated during the 10th Cuttack Mahotsav-International Dance & Music festival.

Cuttack Mahotsav: International Dance & Music Festival

The Cuttack Mahotsav is an International Dance & Music festival planned by Utkal Yuva Sanskrutik Sangh, in association with the state government's department of Odia language.

Anindita Neogy Anaam

- United States-based Kathak exponent Anindita Neogy Anaam has been proficient under Pandit Rajendra Gangani & Pandit Jaikishan Maharaj.

- She has accustomed herself with both Jaipur & Lucknow Gharana of the art-form.

- She has been bestowed the National Nritya Shiromani award for her contribution towards preserving & encouraging the Kathak dance form around the world.

Parliament passes Right of Children to Free & Compulsory Education (Amendment) Bill, 2018 on - 3rd January 2018

The Indian Parliament on January 3rd, 2018 sanctioned the Right of Children to Free & Compulsory Education (Amendment) Bill, 2018 that pursues to do away with the no-detention policy in schools. The motive to pass the bill was acknowledged by voice vote in the upper



house of the Rajya Sabha. Union minister for Human Resources Development Prakash Javadekar's initiative to amend the name of the bill to imitate that it was approved in 2019 was also accepted by voice vote. The Lok Sabha had already approved the bill in July 2018.

Significance

The legislation is noteworthy as it brings responsibility in the elementary education system. The proposal acknowledged the support of a majority of state governments.

RTE modification Bill: Important Provisions

- The Bill pursues to modify the Right to Education- RTE Act to abolish the "no-detention" policy in schools.
- Under the present provisions of the Act, none of student can be held up to class VIII.
- According to the modification, it would be left to the states to resolve whether to continue the no-detention policy.
- This Bill has been studied by a Parliamentary standing committee, which also suggested bringing back the concept of detention in schools.
- The policy has been introduced back as it was realised that compelling children to replicate a class was demotivating, often compelling them to abandon school.
- The bill provides for regular exam in classes V & VIII, if a child fails, the amendment bill endowments a provision to give her/him extra opportunity to take a re-examination within 2 months.
- Such children will be issued with 2 months remedial coaching to perform better in the next examinations.
- If the students still do not clear the exam, the state government may choose to detain them.

FSSAI notifies new food packaging norms, asks food businesses to comply with norms by - 1st July, 2019

The Food Safety & Standards Authority of India- FSSAI, on January 3rd, 2019 advised the new food packaging regulations, substituting all provisions regarding the packaging necessities

arranged in the Food Safety & Standards (Packaging & Labelling) Regulations, 2011.

While informing the new packaging standards, the regulator asked food businesses to conform with new guidelines by 1st July 2019. The new norms bar the usage of recycled plastics & newspapers to wrap food articles.

Crucial Points

- The norms forbid packaging material made of re-cycled plastics including carry bags for packaging, storing, carrying/dispensing food items.
- Considering that the inks & dyes may result into formation of Cancer, the guidelines also ban the usage of newspaper & such other materials for packing/wrapping of food articles.
- The new guidelines also prescribe overall migration & specific migration limits of pollutants for plastic packaging materials.
- It requires the suggestive list of packaging materials to be utilised for different food product groups.
- The norms state respective Indian standard for printing inks to be utilised on food packages.
- The packaging materials utilised for packing/storing the food products should assure to the Indian standards provided in the schedules.

Government launched nationwide cleanliness survey 'Swachh Survekshan 2019' on - 4th January 2019

Hardeep Singh Puri, Union Housing and Urban Affairs Minister launched the 'Swachh Survekshan 2019', the fourth edition of the annual nationwide cleanliness survey of urban India on 4th January 2019 in New Delhi.

Launched as a part of the 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan', the Swachh Survekshan 2019 is aiming to evaluate the achievements in the cleanliness level in country's urban areas.

It will be encouraging large-scale citizen participation, ensure sustainability of



initiatives taken towards garbage free and open defecation free cities, and will be providing credible outcomes.

Highlights of the survey

- The survey will be covering 40 crore people in more than four thousand towns and cities.
- Expected to be more than the previous cleanliness surveys, Swachh Survekshan 2019, completely digital and paperless survey, will complete in a record time of 28 days only.
- For the first time ever, inspection will conduct without giving any fore information to the concerned official for real-time check and survey will going to be based on people's feedback.
- An independent third party will be conducting this.

Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (Clean India Mission)

On 2nd October, 2014, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan or Clean India Mission, India's largest cleanliness drive, to achieve an Open-Defecation Free (ODF) India by 2nd October, 2019, the 150th anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi's birth .

Recruitment for 13487 posts announced by - Railway

The Ministry of Railways has announced recruitment for 13487 posts of JE(Junior Engineers), DMS (Depot Material Superintendent), Junior Engineers (Information Technology) and CMA (Chemical & Metallurgical Assistant). The scale of the posts is Rs 35,400- 112400/- (Level 6) as per the 7th CPC (Central Pay Commission). The notification for the posts has also been issued on the Railway Recruitment Board (RRB) website. The last date for applications for this 2 stage recruitment (1st stage- CBT, 2nd stage- Document Verification) is 31st January 2019.

Important Highlights

- It is to be noted that the notified 13487 vacancies are spread over different

railway zones and states and candidates from all over India may apply against these Indian vacancies all over India.

- The qualifications to apply for junior engineers posts are three years diploma in specified disciplines or various streams combination of the basic engineering disciplines from a recognised institution.
- For depot store superintendent, three years diploma in engineering in any discipline from an Institute and recognised university.
- The degree in engineering disciplines will be acceptable in lieu of diploma in engineering as well.
- For junior engineer (IT), PGDCA, B.Tech (Computer Science), B.Sc. (Computer Science), DOEACC 'B' level course of three years duration or equivalent from recognised university and institute is needed qualifications for application.

Two years of insolvency and Bankruptcy Code by - The Union Finance Minister

The Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley has written a FB post named "2 years of Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code". In the written post, he elucidates how things have been altered after the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code was approved by the Parliament.

Once the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code was approved by the government, the government took instant points to form Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India & National Company Law Tribunal-NCLT.

Recovery of Debt

- The section 29 A of Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code mandated that individuals who have contributed to the defaults of the commercial debtor/undesirable due to incapacities as mentioned in the section or are a "related party" to another defaulting party, are prohibited from gaining control of the commercial debtor by being declared disqualified to submit a resolution plan under the Code.



- As a result, the firms are paying up in anticipation of not crossing the line and being mentioned to National Company Law Tribunal.

- Many debtors are paying up once the creditor has filed the PIA at a pre-admission stage so that the announcement of insolvency does not occur.

- National Company Law Tribunal has resolved some major cases and many are on the way of resolution.

Yarn Bank Scheme launched by - The Ministry of Textiles

The Ministry of Textiles, Government of India had initiated a Yarn Bank Scheme as one of the mechanisms of PowerTex India scheme with an objective to evade fluctuation in yarn price.

Objectives

To provide interest-free quantity fund to Special Purpose Vehicle to enable them for purchasing yarn at a wholesale price and give the yarn at a sensible price to the small weavers. To evade middleman and local supplier's brokerage amount on sales of yarn.

Financial Assistance under the Scheme

Under the scheme, an interest-free quantity fund about Rupees 2 crore would be issued to the Special Purpose Vehicle or Consortium set up by power loom weavers. PowerTex India

i. In-situ Upgradation of Plain Power looms.

ii. Group Work-shed Scheme.

iii. Yarn Bank Scheme.

iv. Common Facility Centre.

v. Pradhan Mantri Credit Scheme for Power loom Weavers.

vi. Solar Energy Plan for Power looms.

vii. Facilitation, Information and Technology, Awareness, Market

Development and Publicity for Power loom Schemes.

viii. Tex Venture Capital Fund.

ix. Grant-in-Aid & Modernisation and Upgradation of Power loom Service Centres.

Prime Minister Modi lays Foundation Stone for - Mandal Dam Project

PM Narendra Modi has placed the foundation stone for the Mandal Dam Project on the North Koel River. The Mandal Dam Project would be benefit for the states of Jharkhand & Bihar.

Mandal Dam Project

- The Mandal Dam project will assist around 111000 hectares of agricultural land in Jharkhand & Bihar to get irrigation amenities.

- 24 megawatts of electricity will also be generated.

- The project is planned to be accomplished in 30 months at the projected cost of Rupees 1622.27 crores.

- 60% would be funded by the central government as a grant from Long-Term Irrigation Fund under Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana.

- Balance 40% will be accepted by the States via loan financed by NABARD.

Purpose for this project

- The building of the Mandal Dam started in 1972 & sustained till 1993.

- Later it was stalled over the concerns elevated by the Bihar Forest Department.

- This project impends to submerge the shares of the Palamau Tiger Reserve and Betla National Park.

- The central government has now sanctioned the "in principle" for diversion of forest under Palamu Tiger Reserve for the structure of Mandal Dam. The Central Government has formed some conditions for this.

North Koel River

North Koel River initiates on Ranchi plateau in Jharkhand & connects the Sone River, a few miles North-West of Haidarnagar in Jharkhand. The river wanders via the northern part of Betla National Park. The principal branches of the North Koel River are Auranga & the Amanat.

Who has declared as Fugitive Economic Offender ? - Vijay Mallya

The Prevention of Money Laundering (PMLA) court in Mumbai has declared Vijay Mallya as a Fugitive



Economic Offender. Vijay Mallya is the first businessman to be charged under the new fugitive economic offender's act 2018.

Declaration of the Fugitive Economic Offender

- According to the Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, 2018 a fugitive economic offender is a person against whom an arrest warrant has been issued for his or her involvement in economic offences involving at least Rs. 100 crore or more & has left India to avoid prosecution.

- The investigating agencies have to file an application in a Special Court under the Prevention of Money-Laundering Act, 2002 containing details of the properties to be confiscated, & any information about the person's whereabouts.

- The Special Court will issue a notice for the person to appear at a specified place & date at least six weeks from the issue of notice.

- Proceedings will be terminated if the person appears. If not the person would be declared as a Fugitive Economic Offender based on the evidence filed by the investigating agencies.

PM Modi inaugurated developmental works in - Manipur

Prime Minister Modi initiated a slew of developmental works & laid the foundation stone for 4 projects during his visit to the North-Eastern state of Manipur.

Development Works Inaugurated

Prime Minister Modi inaugurated 8 projects during his visit to the Manipur including-

1. Integrated check-post in Tengnoupal district.
2. Dolathabi Barrage Project of Imphal East district.
3. Food Corporation of India's food storage godown in Imphal East district.
4. Buffer water basins in Ukhrul district.
5. Improved & upgraded water supply for Churachandpur zone.
6. Eco-tourism complex at Thangapat in Kangpokpi district.
7. Combined tourist destination in Noney district.
8. Water supply plan at JNV, Lambui & its nearby villages.

Foundation Stone for New projects

I. Infrastructure development of Dhanamanjuri University in Imphal west district.

II. Flood-lighting of hockey stadium as well as of the main stadium at the Khuman Lampak Sports

Complex in Imphal East district.

III. Astro-Turf laying in Langjing Achouba of Imphal West district.

These developmental projects will benefit in reaching-out to the people of North-East particularly

Manipur & help in the bridging of the gap between North-East & the rest of India.

United Nations observes First-Ever World Braille Day on - 4th January 2019

The UN celebrated the 1st official World Braille Day on 4th January to spread awareness about the importance of Braille for about 1.3 billion people living with some form of distance/near vision impairment.

The announcement for the celebration of World Braille Day was accomplished by the UN General Assembly as a means for realising the human rights of visually-impaired & partially-sighted persons, & bringing written language to the forefront as a critical precondition for promoting fundamental freedoms.

More about 4th January

- World Braille Day is observed on the January 4 to honour Louis Braille, who is attributed for inventing the Braille script.

- Louis Braille was born in France on 4th January 1809.

- The World Braille Day is observed on his Birthday.

Lok Sabha passes bill to eliminate leprosy as ground for divorce on - 7th January 2019

The Lok Sabha on January 7th, 2019 application roved the Personal Laws (Amendment Bill), 2018, which pursues to eliminate leprosy as a ground for divorce due to the reason that it is now a curable disease as against the previous belief of it



being incurable. The Bill pursues to amend 5 personal laws- the Hindu Marriage Act 1955, Dissolution of Muslim Marriages Act 1939, Divorce Act (for Christians) 1869, Special Marriage Act 1954 & the Hindu Adoptions & Maintenance Act 1956- to eliminate leprosy as a ground for divorce.

Important Points

- Leprosy as a ground for divorce is a 'discriminatory' provision.

- The 1st attempt towards eradicating the bias against people suffering from the leprosy was done in 2008 when the National Human Rights Commission had underlined the necessity to make modifications in certain personal laws & other legislations.

- In 2010, the UN General Assembly accepted a Resolution on the "Elimination of discrimination against individual suffering from leprosy & their family members", which was inked & ratified by India.

- Subsequently, the 20th Law Commission of India in its 256th Report named 'Eliminating Discrimination Against Individuals Affected by Leprosy' had suggested repeal of laws & provisions that were prejudiced against leprosy- affected people.

- In 2014, the Supreme Court had also asked the Centre & the state governments to take the required steps for rehabilitation & integration of leprosy-affected people into the mainstream including the steps to repeal the necessities where leprosy has been treated as a stigmatic disability.

- Thus, Government finalised to omit such discriminatory provisions from the Personal Laws.

Government to soon make Aadhaar connecting with driving licence compulsory on - 6th January 2019

The Union Government will soon make it compulsory for connecting Aadhaar number with driving licences, according to Union Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad. The Minister for Law, Electronics & IT said that the Government is soon going to bring a law that will make the connecting

process compulsory. The Minister was delivering his presidential address at the continuing 106th Indian Science Congress in Jalandhar on January 6th, 2019.

Need for linking Aadhaar with driving license

- Currently, the guilty individual who causes an accident flees the scene & gets a duplicate licence which aids him escape blame & prosecution.

- However, with the Aadhaar connection, one can change his/her name but cannot change his/her biometrics, neither iris nor his/her fingerprints.

- Hence, connecting Aadhaar with DLs would prevent guilty individuals from escaping the scene of an accident & then getting duplicate licences.

- The moment anyone will try to get a duplicate licence, the system will notify that the individual already has a driving licence & should not be given a new one.

2019 Golden Globe Awards: Bohemian Rhapsody wins Best Picture Drama on - 7th January 2019

The 76th Annual Golden Globe Awards were declared on January 7th, 2019 at the Beverly Hilton Hotel in Beverly Hills, California, USA. These yearly awards honour the best in Motion Pictures & Television for the year 2018. Present year's programme was hosted by actors Andy Samberg & Sandra Oh, who took over from 2018 host, comedian Seth Meyers. Sandra Oh joined a small group of actors who secured an award in the same ceremony they hosted.

Important Points

- The Globes present year pulled a twist at the end of the ceremony, with Green Book & Bohemian Rhapsody staging upset victories.

- While Green Book completed with 3 awards-the maximums for the evening, Bohemian Rhapsody- the Queen biopic & Alfonso Cuarón's Roma won 2 each.

- Though 'A Star Is Born' was the odds-on favourite for the Best Motion Picture (Drama), 'Bohemian Rhapsody' gained the award.



○ The other major awards consisted Best Actress in Motion Picture (Drama), which was given to Glenn Close for the film 'The Wife' & Best Actor in Motion Picture (Drama) that was given to Rami Malek for 'Bohemian Rhapsody' & Best Director - Motion Picture that was given to Alfonso Cuaron for the film 'Roma'.

○ Lady Gaga & Bradley Cooper, measured by many as the favourites to secure Best Actress & Best Actor Drama awards, returned home empty handed.

Chief of Staff Kevin Sweeney from United States - Resigned

Kevin Sweeney, the chief of staff of the United States Department of Defence, has declared his resignation from the position. Explaining his decision, Rear Admiral Sweeney informed in a statement that "the time is right to return to the private sector".

Important Points

○ Défense Secretary Chief of Staff Kevin Sweeney worked in this role since January 2017.

○ He is now the 3rd senior Pentagon official to resign since President Donald Trump declared the withdrawal of United States troops from Syria.

○ His resignation closely follows that of United States Secretary of Défense James Mattis who stood down in December after recognizing policy differences with the United States president.

○ General Mattis left his position early, after initially planning to stay in his role until February 2019.

○ Mattis chooses Sweeney to be his chief of staff in early 2017. Sweeney retired as a Rear Admiral's post from the United States Navy in 2014.

The Impact of Crude Price Shock on CAD, Inflation & Fiscal Deficit by - The Reserve Bank of India

The Reserve Bank of India has published a paper titled "The Impact of Crude Price Shock on CAD, Inflation & Fiscal Deficit". The paper outlines how the crude price shock will have a contrary influence on Current Account Deficit- CAD, Inflation &

Fiscal

Deficit.

Important Highlights

○ Since India is deeply dependent on oil imports for meeting its domestic need, it remains susceptible to global crude price shocks.

○ An upsurge in crude price worsens the Current Account Deficit & this adverse impact cannot be suggestively contained through higher growth. Hence a crude price shock will consequence in high Current Account Deficit to GDP ratio.

○ The crude price of USD 85 per barrel in the worst scenario will result in deficit upsurges by USD 106.4 billion, which is 3.61% of the GDP on account of the oil shock.

○ Every rise of USD 10 per barrel in crude prices results into an extra USD 12.5 billion deficit. This is applicationroximately 43 bps of the nation's GDP. Hence every USD 10 per barrel upsurge in crude price will shoot up the Current Account Deficit/GDP ratio by 43 bps.

○ It is projected that a USD 10 per barrel rise in crude price at the price of USD 65 per barrel will result into a 49 basis points rise in headline inflation & a USD 10 per barrel rise in crude price at the price of USD 55 per barrel gives around a 58 bps increase in headline inflation.

○ If the government chooses not to pass on the USD 10 per barrel rise in crude price to customers the fiscal deficit would rise by 43 bps.

Law to make Islam compatible with socialism passed by - China

The Peoples Republic of China has applicationroved a new law to legalize Islam & make it more compatible with socialism by "Sinicizing Islam".

Necessity for the new law

○ China has about 20 million Muslims & Islam is one of the 5 formally recognised religions in atheist China. Even then the leading officials in the Chinese government have often



associated the religion to 'mental disease' which 'necessities to be cured'.

- China has imprisoned above One million Muslim Uyghur's at the indoctrination camps of Xinjiang.

- Many heavy-handed measures including confiscating copies of the Quran, delivering diktats to Muslims not to raise beards, & not choose names for their wards which sound too Islamic, have been witnessed in China.

- Therefore, to address the criticisms China has brought in a law to 'Sinicise' Islam.

China justifies the move

- The Chinese Media qualifying the law has stated that the modern nations are secular & diverse in a globalized world. But the renewal & spread of religion have affected secular society.

- Fundamentalism has caused extra religious violence. Religious nationalism is threatening nations' legitimate governments & is coming out as social instability.

Rail Kumbh Seva Mobile Application released by - North Central Railway

Rail Kumbh Seva Mobile Application has been released by the North Central Railway to assist the devotees arriving in Allahabad for the Kumbh Mela.

More about the Mobile Application

- The Mobile Application 'Rail Kumbh Seva' has been outlined to provide critical & valuable data to the devotees, tourists & other passengers who will visit Allahabad during the Kumbh Mela days.

- The application will guide the devotees in many ways including-

- The application will benefit to navigate through the city & the mela grounds.

- The application will also provide data regarding all the 'Mela special' trains that will be run during the Kumbh period.

- The application will deliver a link to the subscribers to buy both unreserved & reserved train tickets.

- The application will benefit in knowing their present location & also benefit in getting directions to reach railway stations, the mela zone, major hotels, bus stations & other facilities within Allahabad city.

- The application will also provide info about passenger amenities available at the stations including parking lots, refreshment rooms, waiting rooms, book stall, food plaza, ATMs & train enquiry

Kumbh Mela at Allahabad

- During a continuing war between the demons & the demigods for the possession of the elixir of immortality (Amrit), few drops fell to earth at 4 places including Allahabad, Haridwar, Nasik, & Ujjain.

- At each of the 4 places, Kumbh Mela is organised. At Allahabad, the drop of Amrit is believed to be dropped near Sangam & people gather near the Sangam during Kumbh Mela to purge themselves of all sins by taking a dip in the waters & attain Moksha.

- The Kumbh Mela is organised in these 4 places based on the astrological calculations it returns to each place after a gap of 12 years.

Pulses to states under the scheme of Central Government sold by - Nafed

The National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd-Nafed has vended more than Five lakh tonnes pulses to 10 States & a UT at discounted rates under the scheme of central government.

Need for scheme

- The 1st of its kind scheme was initiated by the central government to clear the stock obtained during the past few years & recover nutritional indicators for poor households. The aims of the scheme are:

- Making pulses available to poor people at reasonable rates.

- Lessening of the sale of pulses, obtained by the government procurement firms, in the open market as it often dips in the mandi prices of the freshly harvested crop, which in turn is in contradiction of the



interests of farmers.

Features of the scheme

- The subsidised price of the pulses is Rupees 15 lower than the calculated average mandi price of any of the pulses.
- There is no limit on how much a State can purchase from 'National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd' under the scheme, but the states are needed to justify the demand.
- The states are needed to distribute the pulses only through welfare schemes & should generate the evidence.

Lok Sabha passes DNA (Use and Application) Technology Regulation Bill on - 8th January 2019

The Lok Sabha passed the DNA Technology (Use and Application) Regulation Bill, 2019 by voice vote after a brief discussion on 8th January 2019. The bill is seeking to provide regulation for the use and application of DNA technology for the purpose to establish the identity of certain category of persons including the victims, suspects, under trials, offenders, missing persons and others.

Important Features

- The DNA Technology (Use and Application) Regulation Bill provides for mandatory accreditation and regulation of DNA laboratories.
- Through this, it is seeking to ensure that with the proposed expanded use of this technology in the country, there is also the assurance that the DNA test results are reliable and the data remain protected from misuse or abuse in terms of the privacy rights of the citizens of country.
- The bill is also seeking to ensure speedier justice delivery and increased conviction rate.
- It is also seeking to establish a National DNA Data Bank and Regional DNA Data Banks.
- The bill's provisions will be enabling cross-matching between persons who have been reported missing on one hand and unidentified dead bodies found in various parts of the country on the other.

- It will help in establishing the identity of victims in mass disasters.

Citizenship Amendment Bill approved in - Lok Sabha

The Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2019 was approved in Lok Sabha. The objections have raised in Assam against the passage of the bill. The people of Assam fear that the amendment bill undermines the Assam Accord of 1985.

Citizenship (Amendment) Bill 2019

- The bill goals to grant Indian citizenship to all mistreated religious minorities including Hindus, Jains, Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists & Parsis from 3 neighbouring nations of Bangladesh, Pakistan & Afghanistan.
- The bill is appropriate to all states & UTs of the nation & the beneficiaries of the can stay in any part of the nation.
- The bill when approved would provide a huge relief to the mistreated immigrants who have come through western borders of the nation to States like Gujarat, Rajasthan, Delhi, MP, & other states.
- According to the reports, the government would form the cut-off date at December 31st, 2014, to provide citizenship to mistreated religious minorities.

Addressing the concerns against the Bill

- The burden of the mistreated immigrants will be shared by the entire nation & not by Assam alone.
- The Union Home Minister also guaranteed full support for the state governments in the implementation of the bill.

Who has been appointed Director General of the Sashastra Seema Bal? - Kumar Rajesh Chandra

The designation of Kumar Rajesh Chandra as the Director General of Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) has been sanctioned by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet. According to the notification, he would continue in the position up to 31st December 2021 i.e. date of his retirement on



superannuation/until further orders, whichever is earlier. Kumar Rajesh Chandra is a 1985 batch IPS officer of the Bihar cadre.

Appointments Committee of the Cabinet

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet led by the PM decides on the appointments to numerous top positions under the Government of India. The committee also has Union Home Minister as the member.

Sashastra Seema Bal

- Post Chinese incursion of 1962, it was realised that the borders of the nation could not be safeguarded with the force of rifles alone.

- The government felt the significance of the backing & resolute will of a committed border population together with an in-depth thoughtful & familiarity of the terrain and the culture & ethos of the border population was needed to defend the borders effectively.

- Hence a unique, unconventional yet particular organization, which would work in the far, flung, weak, strategic, remote, climatically & topographically difficult border areas & encourage the border population across several states towards the cause of defending our National sovereignty was apprehended as Special Service Bureau in 1962.

- It was finally created in March 1963. This Special Service Bureau was retitled the 'Sashastra Seema Bal' in January 2001.

Who will be there to strengthen the Digital Payments Ecosystem? - Nilekani Panel

The RBI has formed a high-level committee under Nandan Nilekani to propose measures to reinforce the safety & security of digital payments in the nation.

Members of the Committee

Nandan Nilekani will be leading the committee which consists of earlier Reserve Bank of India deputy governor H.R. Khan, former Managing Director & CEO of Vijaya Bank Kishore Sansi, earlier

secretary in ministries of IT & steel Aruna Sharma & Chief Innovation Officer, Centre for Innovation, Incubation & Entrepreneurship, IIM Ahmedabad, Sanjay Jain.

Terms of the Reference

- To inspire digitisation of payments & improve financial inclusion through digitization.

Revising the existing status of digitisation of payments in the nation, identifying the present gaps in the ecosystem & guiding ways to bridge them.

- Evaluating the present levels of digital payments in financial inclusion.

- Propose measures to fortify the safety & security of digital payments.

- Guide a road map for increasing customer confidence & trust while retrieving financial services through digital modes.

- Undertake cross-nation examination to identify best practices to quicken digitisation of the economy & financial inclusion through greater usage of digital payments.

- Propose a medium-term strategy for deepening of digital payments.

Global Aviation Summit with theme 'Flying for All' to be held from - 15th January 2019 onwards

In a first, Global Aviation Summit 2019 with the subject 'Flying for all' will be held by the Ministry of Civil Aviation in association with FICCI from January 15-16th, 2019 in Mumbai, India. The summit is backed by International Civil Aviation Organization, Federal Aviation Administration of United States, International Air Transport Association, Civil Air Navigation Services Organisation, Airports Council International & Association of Asia Pacific Airlines.

Objective

The Summit goals to emphasis on the celebration of "Flying for All" & to deliver a platform to the aviation fraternity to present the challenges of the sector in the newly developing growth areas & understand how the technology-driven innovations will



transform the air travel in future. The Summit also goals to be the most comprehensive platform for civil aviation, observing a vivid representation from the global aviation ecosystem involving global leaders from airlines, producers, investors, sellers, cargo, space industry, banks, skill development agencies & states as well as UTs of India.

Important Points

- The 2-day summit will host a conference, expo & will endeavour expressive engagements via G2G, G2B, B2B meetings & other networking openings.
- The platform will bring together projecting leaders from worldwide to share their experiences on firming national aviation ecosystems.
- Protruding transport ministers worldwide would be sharing their experiences on upgrading the Aviation ecosystem & put forth crucial analytical inputs on their success stories, experience & knowledge to progress aviation in their respective nations.
- The civil aviation authorities of the world will also deliberate how to ensure that safety & security norms are preserved across a fast-growing & vast aviation ecosystem.
- The programme will also study the future of drones, sustainable growth of aviation, cargo & logistics in the aviation industry, all the aspects behind structuring great aviation business.
- Above 1000 delegates from global aviation society are anticipated to take part in 1st of its kind Global Aviation summit 2019.

Gita Gopinath becomes the first female chief economist of - IMF

Gita Gopinath has united International Monetary Fund as its Chief Economist. She is the 1st female to grab the position of Chief Economist of International Monetary Fund and became the 11th Chief Economist of the International Monetary Fund.

She was born in Mysore, and holds a degree in B.A. from Lady Shri Ram

College for Women, University of Delhi in 1992, Masters in economics from Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi in 1994. She also accomplished her M.A. at the University of Washington 1996. In 2001, she finished her PhD at Princeton University.

Role of Chief Economist of IMF

- The Chief Economist of International Monetary Fund is also the Director of the Fund's Research Department which is accountable for providing independent advice to the Fund on its policy matters, integrating thoughts of the research in the design of policies, passing on these ideas to the policymakers inside & outside the fund & managing all research accomplished at International Monetary Fund.

- The Chief Economist is part of the senior leadership team of the International Monetary Fund & directly advises the MD.

- The Chief Economist also leads about 100-PhD economists in the Research Department.

More about Gita Gopinath

- Gita Gopinath is an Indian-American Economist.

- Earlier to her current role as the Chief Economist of International Monetary Fund, she was working as the John Zwaanstra Professor of International Studies & Economics at Harvard University.

UGC approves journals for Consortium for Academic & Research Ethics- CARE

The UGC has sanctioned the list of journals for the 'CARE Reference List of Quality Journals'. The Consortium for Academic & Research Ethics- CARE, is tasked to scrutinise & then accumulate a list of journals for social sciences, humanities, language, arts, culture, Indian Knowledge system and many more.

Consortium for Academic & Research Ethics

University Grants Commission had formed Consortium for Academic & Research Ethics to make a



'CARE Reference List of Quality Journals'. The Consortium would form a list of 'credible quality journals' that would eventually replace University Grants Commission's own list of journals. The Consortium would be led by the University Grants Commission Vice Chairman & would consist of government bodies & statutory councils.

Need for the Consortium

- A research paper headed by Professor Bhushan Patwardhan had studied that 88 percent of 1009 journals suggested by universities & consisted in the white list were dubious & only 112 journals fitted into the criteria set by University Grants Commission to be encompassed in the list.

- This high instance of the dubious journals had unfavourably impacted the image of University Grants Commission & as well as India at the international stage.

- Hence the University Grants Commission had declared the formation of Consortium for Academic & Research Ethics to scrutinise & then compile a list of quality journals.

Government approves around 5000 additional seats in - Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas

The Union Minister of Human Resource Development Prakash Javadekar has declared an upsurge of about 5000 seats at Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas across the nation. This is the biggest-ever expansion & the number of seats has raised from 46600 to 51000 at the Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas.

Reason behind increasing seats

- The upsurge in the number of seats was part of the government efforts to upsurge the access to quality education for the student, especially from rural areas.

- Over the time there has been an upsurge in the number of students smearing for the examination to get admitted in the Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas. The number of candidates raised from 5.50 lakh

applicants in 2001 to 31.10 lakh applicants in 2019.

- The upsurge in the number of candidates reflects the growing applicants of rural children for acquiring quality education.

- Hence the government has increased the number of seats to deliver more opportunity for talented children from rural areas to receive a quality education in the closely free of cost residential schools.

Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas

JNVs were formed under the provisions of National Policy on Education in 1986. The Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas were formed to nurture & deliver opportunities for children with special talent and to progress at a faster pace by making good quality education available to them irrespective of their paying capacity.

Single-usable plastic products banned by - Airports Authority of India

The Airports Authority of India has banned the single-usable plastic products at its 129 airports across the nation. The Airports Authority of India has started numerous steps including prohibition of single-usable plastic products like straws, plastic cutlery, plastic plates and many more. The Airports Authority of India has already acknowledged 16 of its airports as 'Single-Usable Plastic Free' based on the 3rd-party assessment completed by Quality Council of India.

More about Single-usable plastics

- Single-usable plastic products are utilised only once before they are thrown away/recycled.

- Petroleum-based plastic is non-biodegradable & usually goes into a landfill where it is buried/thrown into the water & finds its way into the ocean. They decay into tiny particles after many years.

- In this process of breakdown, they release toxic chemicals which eventually enter into our food & water supply system.

Airports Authority of India

- The AAI was established under the Airports Authority of India Act, 1994. The



AAI came into effect being on 1 April 1995.

- The Airports Authority of India was formed as a single Organization commended with the accountability of creating, upgrading, maintaining & handling civil aviation infrastructure both on the ground & airspace in the nation by amalgamating erstwhile National Airports Authority & International Airports Authority of India.

Name of India Boxer who became World No 1 Boxer in latest AIBA World Rankings - Mary Kom

Among Important Sports Current Affairs, On 10th January 2019 as per latest International Boxing Association's (AIBA) World Rankings MC Mary Kom became the World No 1 Boxer.

She was placed numero uno in the 45-48 kg category weight division with 1700 points.

Apart from Mary Kom other Indian female players rankings are :

- Pinki Jangra - 8th in the 51kg category
- Manisha Maun - 8th in 54kg category
- Sonia Lather - 2nd in 57kg category
- Simranjit Kaur - 4th in 64kg category
- Lovlina Borgohain - 5th the 69kg category

About MC Mary Kom :

Mary Kom hails from Manipur and important to mention here that she is the only woman to become World Amateur Boxing champion for a record six times.

She has won a medal in each of seven world championships. She became the first Indian Woman boxer to win a gold medal at the 2014 Asian Games, held at Incheon, South Korea.

She was nominated as a member of the Rajya Sabha by President of India in April 2016.

She was honoured with Padma Shri in 2006, Arjuna Award in 2003 and the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna award in 2009.

Harendra Singh removed as head coach of Indian men's hockey team on - 9th January 2019

Indian men's hockey coach Harendra Singh was sacked from the position and offered the task of helming the junior squad by the national federation on 9th January, 2019 .

Explaining the sudden decision, Hockey India said in a statement that though the year 2018 was very disappointing for the Indian Men's Hockey Team with results not going as expected, they believe investing in the junior program will reap long-term benefits.

More about Harendra Singh

- He is from Chhapra, Bihar and started his career as a halfback playing with IFFCO Tokio in Delhi.

- He joined the Mahindra & Mahindra team in Mumbai on the insistence of former India coach JM Carvalho in 1988.

- In 1990, he switched to Air India where he became the company's senior manager.

- He made his international debut during 1990 Asian Games in Beijing, where team won silver medal.

- He represented the Indian hockey team in 43 matches before retiring at the age of 26 citing too much politics in the game.

- His coaching career started , when he began playing for the French club HC Lyon in 1995 under Coach Tony Fernandes who asked Singh to manage the club's junior side as well.

- He returned to India after having coaching for few years in France and worked in various coaching and managerial roles of national senior and junior teams in tournaments such as 2000 Summer Olympics, 2005 Men's Hockey Junior World Cup, 2006 Asian Games, 2009 Men's Hockey Asia Cup, 2006 Men's Hockey World Cup, and 2010 Men's Hockey World Cup.

- In 2012, he was awarded the Dronacharya Award.

- In 2014, he was appointed as the head coach of the Indian junior team , and the team won the 2016 Men's Hockey Junior World Cup.



Women and Child Development Ministry launched '#www: WebWonderWomen' Campaign on - 9th January 2019

The Union Ministry of Women and Child Development launched an online campaign, 'Web - Wonder Women' on 9th January 2018 which is also known as '#www'. The Campaign is aiming to discover and celebrate the exceptional achievements of women, who have been driving positive agenda of social change through the social media itself.

Important Highlights

- Through the '#www: WebWonderWomen', the Ministry and the Campaign's Partners is aiming to recognize the Indian women stalwarts strength across the globe who have used the power of social media to run positive campaigns to make a change in society.

- The Campaign will be recognizing and acknowledge the efforts of these meritorious Women.

- The Campaign is inviting the Entries through nominations from across the world as per the laid out criteria. Nominations will be opening till 31st January 2019.

- Indian-origin women, working or settled anywhere in the world, are eligible for the nomination.

- The shortlisted entries will be open for public voting on Twitter and the finalists will also be selected by a specialized judges panel.

- Nominations have been invited in a large number of categories including Literature, Art, Health, Media, Sports, fashion and Environmental protection among others.

India set to become third-largest consumer market by - WEF

India is set to become the third-largest consumer market behind US and China only and consumer spending in India is expected to grow from USD 1.5 trillion at present to approximately USD 6 trillion by 2030, This report has been published as per a World Economic Forum report that was released on 9th January 2019.

The report titled 'Future of Consumption in Fast-Growth Consumer Market – India'

noted that growth of the middle class will be lifting nearly 25 million households out of poverty in India.

Important Highlights

- According to the World Economic Forum, with an annual GDP growth rate of 7.5 percent, At present India is currently at sixth-largest economy.

- As per the report, growth in income will be transforming India from a "bottom of the pyramid economy" to a middle class-led one.

- By 2030, Domestic private consumption, which accounts for 60 percent of the country's GDP, is expected to develop into a USD 6-trillion growth opportunity.

- This report stated that if realized, this would be making India's consumer market the third-largest in the world, just after the US and China.

- The future consumption growth is expected to come from rich and densely populated cities and thousands of developed rural towns.

- The report stated that India's top 40 cities will be forming a USD 1.5 trillion opportunity by 2030, many thousands of small urban towns will also be driving an equally large spend in aggregate.

- Parallely, it has noted that there will be an opportunity to unlock nearly USD 1.2 trillion of spending in developed rural areas to improve infrastructure and provide access to organised and online retail.

Environment Ministry launched National Clean Air Program on - 10th January 2019

The Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Dr Harsh Vardhan on 10th January 2019 launched the NCAP (National Clean Air Program) which is a a time-bound national level strategy for pan India implementation to tackle the increasing air pollution problem across the nation in a comprehensive manner.

Important Highlights

- The National Clean Air Program (NCAP) is aiming to cut pollution in the 102 worst affected cities by 20-30 percent



by 2024, taking 2017 as the base year for the comparison of PM concentration.

- This program is planned to be a mid-term, five-year action plan with 2019 as the first year.

- The international experiences and national studies though indicate that significant outcome in terms of air pollution initiatives are visible only in the long-term and hence the program may be further extended to a longer time horizon after a mid-term review of the outcomes.

- The approach for NCAP includes collaborative, multi-scale and cross-sectoral coordination between the relevant state governments, central ministries and local bodies with focus on all sources of pollution.

- The interlocking of the existing policies and programs includes the NAPCC(National Action Plan on Climate Change) and other initiatives of the Government of India in reference to climate change will be made while execution of NCAP.

• Alok Verma resigned after PM Modi led panel removed him as CBI Chief on - 11th January 2019

The sacked CBI Chief, Alok Verma announced his resignation from service on 11th January 2019, refusing to take charge of the new role as DG of Fire Services. This move comes a day after a high-powered selection committee headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi removed him from the post of CBI Director in a 2:1 vote within 48 hours after he was reinstated to the position by the Supreme Court after he was sent on forced leave by the government.

Important Points

- The selection panel has removed Verma from the post over corruption charges and doubtful integrity as per the findings of the Central Vigilance Commission.

- There were eight counts of charges against him in the CVC report presented in front of the Committee, making him the

first chief in the CBI history to be ousted from the post.

- Other than this the Prime Minister, the high-level committee comprised Chief Justice of India's nominee Justice AK Sikri and the leader of the opposition, Mallikarjun Kharge.

- While the PM and Justice Sikri held that the CVC report had provided enough grounds for Verma's removal, including evidence to start a criminal investigation, opposition leader Mallikarjun Kharge dissented on the decision, stating that the committee should not arrive at a conclusion without hearing the side of Verma.

- On the basis of Panel's recommendation, the PM-headed Appointments Committee of the Cabinet issued orders to transfer Verma as Director General Fire services, civil defence and home guards for the remainder of his term immediately, ending on 31st January 2019.

- In addition to that, the ACC appointed M Nageswara Rao, CBI Additional Director to look after the duties of the CBI Director until the appointment of a new director.

Currency Swap Contract with Japan approved by - Cabinet

The Union Cabinet has sanctioned India's Currency Swap Contract with Japan. The \$75-billion bilateral currency swap contract is a milestone in mutual economic co-operation & special strategic & global partnership between both nations.

Currency Swap Contracts

A Currency swap contract is a foreign exchange contract between both parties to exchange a given amount of single currency for another &, after a specified period of time, to issue back the original amounts swapped.

Benefits

- The currency swap provisions make it easier for India to pay for its imports., which benefits in addressing the challenge of depreciation.



- The Currency swap contract involves trading in local currencies. Nations pay for imports & exports via their own currencies rather than involving a 3rd nation currency.

- This does away with the charges intricate in multiple currency exchanges.

- The currency swap makes it relaxed to advance liquidity conditions.

- Currency swap contracts aid in saving for a rainy day when the economy is not feeling in better shape.

- The swap contracts also subsidize towards stabilising the nation's balance of payments position.

- The contract benefits in progressing the confidence in the Indian market.

- Together with making sure that the decided amount of capital is available to India, it also decreases the cost of capital for Indian entities while retrieving the foreign capital market.

Tata Steel's Netherlands plant recognised as the Factory of the Future by - The World Economic Forum

The World Economic Forum has recognised Tata Steel's plant IJmuiden in the Netherlands as 'Manufacturing Lighthouse' with state-of-the-art production amenities which effectively approve & integrate the cutting-edge skills of the future & drive financial & operational influence.

Recognition to Tata Steel

- Acknowledgement of the flourishing culture of innovation at Tata Steel & advanced analytics team's dream & commitment to realise much efficient, productive & responsible steel manufacturing.

- The pioneering usage of advanced analytics to optimise the usage of raw materials, upsurge the yield at every step of the steel manufacturing process & further advance logistics between the different processes & the quality of the product for clientele.

- The Advanced Analytics Academy issues Tata Steel employees a motivation to find ways for waste

reduction, quality improvement & overall dependability of production processes.

Manufacturing Lighthouses

- The World Economic Forum systematizes a network of leading intelligent production firms as 'Manufacturing Lighthouses' under its "Shaping the Future of Production" motive to permit the exchange of knowledge & promote associations in the area of the "Fourth Industrial Revolution" in production.

- These "Manufacturing Lighthouses" displays how best a plan for the Fourth Industrial Revolution be industrialized by training employees, co-operating with other parties, executing changes in the workplace & in the value chain via greater efficiency & contribute to decreasing the climate footprint of production corporations by 50%.

Setting up of 3 New AIIMS by - Union Cabinet

The Union Cabinet headed by PM Narendra Modi has sanctioned the formation of 3 new AIIMS institutions. The 3 new institutions would be constructed at Vijaynagar, Samba of Jammu Region, Awantipora in Pulwama of Kashmir Region & Rajkot in Gujarat under the Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana. The 2 new AIIMS for J&K, 1 each for Jammu Region & Kashmir Region was declared by the PM under the Prime Minister's Development Package & the AIIMS in Rajkot, Gujarat was declared by the Finance Minister in his budget speech.

Prime Minister's Development Package

- PM's Development Package was declared as a reconstruction plan for Jammu & Kashmir.

- The Reconstruction Plan goals at expanding economic infrastructure, expanding provision of basic amenities, providing thrust to employment & salary & providing relief & rehabilitation to the victims of September 2014 floods &



to reinforce Disaster Management Framework of the State.

- The reconstruction plan also pursues to fortify the economic & social infrastructure & deliver for the balanced development of the 3 regions of Jammu & Kashmir.

Benefits of New AIIMS institutions

- Each new AIIMS will add 100 MBBS seats & 60 BSc (Nursing) seats, along with 15-20 super speciality departments.

- This will work as the dual purpose of providing super speciality healthcare to the citizens closer to their homes & benefit in creating a large pool of doctors as well as other health workers in these regions to reinforce the primary & secondary level institutions & amenities being created under the National Health Mission.

Amendments to Indian Cinematograph Act, 1952 by - The Ministry of Information & Broadcasting

The Ministry of Information & Broadcasting has published the draft amendment bill to modify the Indian Cinematograph Act, 1952. The modifications are brought in counter the film piracy.

Amendments proposed

- To check piracy, particularly issue of the pirated version of movies on the internet which causes enormous losses to the film industry & government exchequer, an enabling establishment in the Cinematograph Act, 1952 would be added.

- The modification bill goals to add a new sub-section (4) of section 7 of the Cinematograph Act, 1952.

- under which the piracy would be a punishable offence with detention of 3 years & fines of up to Rupees 10 lakh or both.

- The punishment is arranged those, who utilise any recording device to make/transmit a copy of the visual recording/sound recording of a film/attempts to make or transmit/assist the making/transmission of such a replica

without the written authorisation of the copyright owner.

6 states sign agreement for Renukaji Multipurpose Dam Project on - 11th January 2019

6 states including UP, Haryana, HP, Delhi, Rajasthan & Uttarakhand inked a MoU for Renukaji Dam Multipurpose Project on January 11th, 2019. The project is focused at meeting the drinking water requirements of these states.

The pact was inked in the presence of Union Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation Minister Nitin Gadkari in New Delhi. All the 6 CMs were also present on the occasion.

Renukaji Dam Multipurpose Project

- Under the project, 3 storage projects are suggested to be built on the river Yamuna & 2 of its tributaries including Tons & Giri in the hilly regions of Uttarakhand & HP.

- These include:
 - Lakhwar project on river Yamuna in Uttarakhand
 - Kishau on river Tons in Uttarakhand & HP
 - Renukaji on river Giri in HP
- These 3 projects were perceived in 2008 & were identified as National Projects.
- The 90% funding of the cost of irrigation & drinking water component of these projects will be given by the union government as central assistance.

- The outstanding 10% cost of the irrigation & drinking water component will be contributed by the beneficiary states.

Virat Kohli, Ravi Shastri receive honorary membership of Sydney Cricket Ground on - 11th January 2019

Indian cricket team's skipper Virat Kohli & coach Ravi Shastri on January 11th, 2019 got the honorary membership of the Sydney Cricket Ground for their role to the sport of cricket. The Indian team defeated Australia 2-1 in the 4-match Test series, ending the nation's 71-years old wait for a rare series victory Down Under. The Sydney Cricket Ground congratulated India and Indian Cricket team on attaining



the feat & its Chairman Tony Shepherd was quoted that it is wonderful to realize the world's largest cricketing nation putting its attention resolutely on Test cricket - a step that will strengthen the pre-eminence of Tests in the global cricketing landscape.

Crucial Highlights

- The only other international cricketers to be settled the honorary membership of the Sydney Cricket Ground, apart from Kohli & Shastri, are the iconic Sachin Tendulkar & Brian Lara from West Indies.

- Speaking on the occasion, the Sydney Cricket Ground Chairman Shepherd informed that Virat Kohli & Ravi Shastri have been at the forefront & Test cricket is well working having both placing such importance on the 5-day format.

- Kohli has repeated his love for Test cricket on various occasions throughout India's tours of England & Australia while Ravi Shastri ranked the series victory bigger than the 1983 World Cup & the 1985 World Championship for him on a personal level just because it came in the longest format of the game.

- Commenting via a tweet, Shastri informed that it is a great honour to get the honorary life membership of the Sydney Cricket Ground along with Kohli.

Sino-Indian Digital Collaboration Plaza initiated by - NASSCOM

The Sino-Indian Digital Collaboration Plaza- SIDCOP, has been initiated by the National Association of Software and Services Companies in collaboration with Municipal Governments of Guiyang & Dalian.

More about the SIDCOP

- The initiative goals to bring Indian Information & Technology companies & Chinese enterprises closer to each other on a single AI enabled stage.

- This stage will be managed by a combine venture comprising of one Indian & Chinese firms.

- The initiative goals to encash the knowledge of Indian Information & Technology enterprises in

business transformation & operational optimization by utilising Information & Technology tools in complex business environments.

- Indian Information & Technology firms are successfully working many international clients to transform their businesses & globalize & revolutionize with changing times.

- The Sino-Indian Digital Collaboration Plaza proposes a boundary-less marketplace for Chinese initiatives in order to backing them in operational optimization & adopting industry best practices in business solutions by connecting with Indian firms.

National Association of Software & Services Companies (NASSCOM)

- National Association of Software & Services Companies is a non-profit industry association & is the top body for the Indian Information & Technology-BPM industry.

- The membership of the National Association of Software & Services Companies is open for firms registered in India & are focused on providing Information & Technology-BPM products & services.

- National Association of Software & Services Companies goals to ensure that service quality & enforcement of Intellectual Property Rights have been properly implemented in the Indian software & BPM industry.

Delhi to Open 6 World-Class Skill Centres declared by - CM Arvind Kejriwal in 2017

The government of Delhi has finalised to open 6 World-Class Skill centres- WCSCs, in the national capital to make students to obtain different professional skills.

More about the World Class Skill Centres

- The decision to initiate the World Class Skill Centres was declared by the Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal in 2017.

- The 6 skill centres would be initiated at Institute of Basic Business Studies; Integrated Institute of Technology Dwarka, Delhi Pharmaceutical



Sciences & Research University; Society for Self-Employment Wazirpur; SSE-Jhandewalan & RIT Rajokari.

- These skill centres would be formed at the non-used space in the current buildings of ITIs, polytechnics, degree colleges & universities.

- The courses in Health & Wellness, Information and Technology & IT-based Services, Retail Management, Hospitality & Tourism, Accounts, Banking & Finance, Automobile, Electronics, Media & Event Management, Production, Apparel & Food Production will be available in these skill centres.

- The government would form 6 World class Skill Centres in phase-1 & 19 extra Skill centres in Phase-2.

- The government of Delhi had announced the decision to initiate 25 WCSCs after the success of the first World-Class Skill centres at ITI, Vivek Vihar, ongoing in 2013.

25th Edition of Partnership Summit to be held in Mumbai, initiated by - Vice President of India

The Partnership Summit delivers for a global platform to dialogue, debate, deliberate & engage Indian & global leaders on economic policy & development trends in India. The 25th edition of the Partnership Summit would be initiated by Vice President of India, M Venkaiah Naidu in Mumbai.

The Partnership Summit is being held by the Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India, State Government of Maharashtra & Confederation of Indian Industry. The Partnership Summit-2019 will resent India in the present landscape of a developing “New India” & the “New Global Economic Address”.

The sessions will be organised on the following themes in the Partnership Summit:

Partnering with New India, Reforms & De-regulation– Strategies to Boost Investment, The Infra Expanse– A Super Imperative for

Growth,

The Inclusion Dynamics– A Digital Wireframe for all. The Summit will be chaired by Union Minister of Commerce & Industry, Suresh Prabhu. He will deliver the important address.

A Special address will be given by Minister of Trade of South Korea, Kim Hyun Chong & Minister of Economy of United Arab Emirates, Sultan bin Saeed Al Mansoori.

Sanskriti Kumbh inaugurated at - Prayagraj UP

The UP-Governor Shri Ram Naik initiated the Sanskriti Kumbh at Prayagraj. The Sanskriti Kumbh rejoices the composite of Spiritual Consciousness & Cultural Heritage of India in the main grounds of Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj. It is being held by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India under the Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat initiative.

Celebrating the Diversity of India

- The Sanskriti Kumbh is focused at presenting the vibrancy of India. The Sanskriti Kumbh will deliver a chance to people to experience all the colours of Indian Culture at single place.

- This cultural extravagance goals to encourage & reconnect the people especially the youth with their magnificent & multifaceted culture along with the wealth & its historical importance.

- The cultural performances would display the legacy of India’s Spiritual & Mythological performs.

- The presentations will display the feeling of visitors towards devotion & Kumbh tradition.

- The folk dances, on behalf of states from East-West-North-South India, will display the spirit of Unity in Diversity that is Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat.

- Under the realm of Sanskriti Kumbh, Rashtriya Shilp Mela is being planned to display handicrafts & live presentation of the skill by craftsmen. **Kumbh Mela at Prayagraj** Kumbh Mela is one of the oldest & biggest audience in the world. The Kumbh Mela is



now part of the UNESCO list of Intangible Cultural heritage for humanity. This year Kumbh Mela is being held in the city of Prayagraj which is situated at the convergence of the Ganges, the Yamuna & Mystic river of Saraswati in UP.

One family One Job scheme of Sikkim by - Sikkim CM

The CM Sikkim Pawan Kumar Chamling has declared the 'One family One job' Plan to provide employment to the youngsters of Sikkim.

More about the Plan

- One family one job plan permits single government job for every family in the state.

- The CM gave appointment letters to more than 12000 unemployed youngsters at an employment fair held at the Paljor Stadium in Gangtok. Only members of those families which do not have a government job currently were eligible for government employment under the plan.

- The government has declared that the nature of the job is not temporary & would be regularised after 5 years.

- Sikkim is the 1st state in the nation to launch an exclusive program which permits every family in the state with a government job & Sikkim earmarks 70% of its revenues towards salaries for state government employees.

Atal Tinkering Lab Handbook Released by - NITI Aayog

The Atal Tinkering Lab Handbook Nayee Dishayen, Naye Nirman, Naya Bharat was publicised by the NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission. During the programme, an announcement of 10 Months Student Entrepreneurship Program to assist the top 6 innovations across 6 crucial themes having wider social impact, namely, Clean Energy, Waste Management, Agritech, Healthcare, Smart Mobility & Water Resources under the Atal Tinkering

Marathon 2017 to convert these innovative prototypes into working, scaled & Go-to-Market products was accomplished.

Atal Tinkering Lab Handbook Nayee Dishayen, Naye Nirman, Naya Bharat

- The Atal Tinkering Lab Handbook together with catching the experiences of the young innovators of the nation with the Atal Tinkering Lab, issues for a compendium of rules, resources, methodologies, significant learning, case studies of the Atal Tinkering Lab ecosystem.

- The handbook displays the outcome & impact that is being developed by the Atal Tinkering Labs has been displayed, including some case examples of celebrating & rewarding innovation, over the past 2 years.

- The Handbook also functions as an action plan to deliver for a smooth scale-up method for the Atal Tinkering Lab initiative, through the public-private-partnership & Centre-State co-operation.

Atal Innovation Mission

- Atal Innovation Mission is the Government of India's flagship enterprise to promote a culture of innovation & entrepreneurship in the nation.

- Atal Innovation Mission goals to create a parasol structure to supervise innovation ecosystem of the nation & revolutionize the innovation eco-system by moving upon the whole innovation life cycle through various programmes.

Trishna Gas Project of ONGC approved by - National Wildlife Board

The National Wildlife Board has given its consent for the Trishna Gas project of ONGC which comes under the Trishna Wildlife Sanctuary in the Gomati district of Tripura.

Trishna gas project

Oil and Natural Gas Commission has found 10-12 gas bearing wells in the Trishna Wildlife sanctuary. The gas filtered from these wells would be delivered to the North-Eastern Electric Power Corporation Ltd maintained 100 megawatts gas-based thermal power project at Monarchak in Sonamura subdivision of Sipahijala district of Tripura. The Tripura unit of Oil and Natural Gas Commission has also



promised to issue Rupees 25 crore to the state government for ongoing Swacch Bharat Abhiyan.

Trishna Wildlife Sanctuary

- The Trishna Wildlife Sanctuary was found in 1988.

- The flora and fauna in the sanctuary fall under 4 broad categories of tropical semi-evergreen forest, the East Himalayan lower Bhanar sal, Moist mixed deciduous forest & the Savanah woodland.

- Protruding medicinal plant species include Kurcha, Tulsi, Vasak, Sarpaganda, Rudraksha, Bel, Chirata, & Kalamegh that can be found here.

- The wildlife prominent in the sanctuary consists of Indian Gaur, Deer, Hooklock Gibbon, Golden Langur, Capped Langur, Pheasants & Reptiles.

- National Wildlife Board National Board for Wild Life is a statutory society constituted under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972. It is a top body to review all wildlife-linked matters & supports projects in & around national parks & sanctuaries.

Hunar Haat Expositions Inaugurated in - New Delhi

Finance Minister Arun Jaitley & Union Minority Affairs Minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi initiated Hunar Haat expositions in New Delhi. Hunar Haat plays an imperative role in national & international branding of the heritage of master artisans in India. Hunar Haat is goaled at 'Development with Dignity' of the artisans & craftsmen from the minority communities.

Key Benefits

- Highlighting the talent of Indian artisans.

- Build a trustworthy brand of Indigenous Talent of Indian artisans & craftspersons.

- Encouraging the artisan & craftsperson's heritage of India which had been marginalised for a long time.

- Delivers an Empowerment & Employment Exchange platform for master artisans & crafts-persons.

- Delivers a platform to achieve the commitments under 'Make in India', 'Stand-Up India' & 'Start-up India'.

More about Hunar Haat

- Hunar Haat expositions are planned by the Ministry of Minority affairs under its Upgrading the Skills & Training in Traditional Arts/Crafts for Development scheme.

- Upgrading the Skills & Training in Traditional Arts/Crafts for Development scheme goals to preserve the heritage of traditional art & craft of minority communities, shaping the capacity of traditional craftsmen & artisans & establish connection of traditional skills with the global market.

Women of India Organic Festival Celebrated in - Chandigarh

The Women of India Organic Festival has been planned by the Ministry of Women & Child Development at Leisure Valley, Sector-10, Chandigarh, to observe & promote females' farmers & entrepreneurs in the organic sector from the remotest parts of India.

More about the Festival

- To inspire Indian female's entrepreneurs & farmers to connect with extra buyers & thus, empower them via financial inclusion, while promoting organic culture in India.

- To teach people about its various initiatives & plans relating to females & children.

- To deliver a platform to showcase the varied products of female farmers & entrepreneurs.

- The festival would issue an opportunity to display more than 1000 varied organic products, including fabric, wellness, grains, seeds, jewellery, bakery items & a lot more.

- The Festival is being organised annually since 2015 & for the 1st time, it is being organised in Chandigarh.

PM Narendra Modi receives first ever - Philip Kotler Presidential Award

PM Narendra Modi was bestowed 1st ever Philip Kotler Presidential Award. Philip Kotler Presidential Award goals to



spread examples of individuals & organisations who create an innovative culture for the economic, social & technological advancements of an industry/nation.

Reason behind award

- Prime Minister Modi was nominated for his outstanding leadership for the country.
- Prime Minister Modi's selfless service towards India, joint with his tireless energy has resulted in extraordinary economic, social & technological advances in the nation.
- Under Prime Minister Modi's leadership, India is now recognized as the centre for innovation & value-added manufacturing, and a global hub for professional services including Information Technology, accounting & finance.
- Prime Minister Modi's visionary leadership has also led to in the digital revolution, including the Aadhaar, for social assistances & financial inclusion.
- Initiatives such as Make in India, Start-up India, Digital India & Swachh Bharat have placed India as one of the most lucrative industrial & business destinations in the world

Philip Kotler Presidential Award

Philip Kotler, a professor of marketing at North-Western University, Kellogg School of Management is also known as "Father of Modern Marketing". Apart from marketing, Philip Kotler has widely written on education, environment, government marketing, healthcare, hospitality & innovation.

Who will be heading to committee to look into GST revenue shortfall faced by states ? - Sushil Modi

The Deputy CM Bihar, Sushil Modi will be leading the 7-member group of ministers that will examine revenue shortfall being faced by the states after the Goods & Services Tax roll-out & suggest steps for expanding collections.

Besides Sushil Modi, the other members of the committee would be Punjab Finance Minister Manpreet Singh Badal, Kerala Finance Minister

Thomas Isaac, Karnataka Rural Development Minister Krishna Byre Gowda, Odisha Finance Minister Shashi Bhushan Behera, Haryana Taxation Minister Captain Abhimanyu & Goa Panchayat Minister Mauvin Godinho.

Significant Role

According to the terms of reference of the Group of Ministers, the 7-member committee will undertake information analysis using econometric & statistical tools & guide suitable measures & policy intervention for course correction for revenue growth, particularly for the states suffering mega revenue shortfall.

The committee would also consider trends of revenue assortment before & after implementation of GST. It would also seek structural patterns of major sectors of the economy affecting revenue collection, including the services sector.

It would also classify the reasons for deviation in revenue collection trends & compare it with unique assumptions worked out at the time of design & implementation of Goods & Services Tax.

Puducherry to Restrict Single-Utilise Plastic from - 1st March 2019

The government of Puducherry has finalised to restrict the manufacturing, sale & utilise of single-usable plastic products from March 1st. To make sure the restriction is effective on the ground both in letter & spirit, the government of Puducherry would be conducting a massive drive to spread awareness among the merchants & the public on the need of the restriction.

The government of the neighbouring state of Tamil Nadu had declared on World Environment Day 2018, that it would restrict the usage of plastic items including non-biodegradable carry bags from January 1st, 2019.

Industrialists contend that it is not the plastics which have become a problem. It is the way in which

human beings deal with disposable plastics is the real cauterise concern. Thus, it would be intelligent to regulate the usage rather than restriction so that it



doesn't harm the industry. The government has informed that the decision to restriction of single-usable plastic was taken to gift a plastic-free Puducherry to the future generation & control the plastic in the larger interest of the environment.

Right to Disconnect Bill introduced in - Lok Sabha

A private members bill, Right to Disconnect Bill, was presented in the Lok Sabha by MP Supriya Sule.

Features of the Bill

- The bill authorizes the employee with the right not to respond to employers' calls, texts/emails after their office hours.
- The bill goals to decrease work-related stress & strive for a better work-life equilibrium.
- The bill applicable to organisations with above Ten employees.
- Such organisations are needed to form an Employee Welfare Committee to ensure compliance.
- The bill specifies that no disciplinary action can be taken against you if you select to not respond to your employer after your specified working hours.

Global Examples

Some measures have been already taken in authorizing the employees with Right to disconnect. France has already issued Right to disconnect since 2017 in organisations with above 50 employees with an objective to re-build the boundary between professional & personal life.

Even Spain has an alike law which provides Right to Disconnect without any least employee criterion. German automobile manufacturer Daimler had taken this bold action of introducing software that inevitably deletes any emails you get while on vacation, back in 2014.

World's largest religious & cultural human congregation Kumbh Mela 2019 begins in -UP

The world's major religious & cultural human flock, "Kumbh 2019" started at Prayagraj, UP on January 15th, 2019 & will go till March 4th, 2019. This seven-week programme started with the holy dip

at Sangam of Ganga, Yamuna & mythical Saraswati. The 1st bathing was taken by saints & seers of different Akharas.

Crucial initiatives undertaken by Yogi Adityanath Government

- As per to the Uttar Pradesh Government, more than 12 crores devotees & tourists are anticipated to visit Prayagraj during the Kumbh.
- The Kumbh 2019 is spread over an area of 3200 hectares of land. It is approximately 700 hectares above the area used during the 2013 Maha Kumbh.
- 21-Snan Ghats have been formed for bathing.
- Special measures have been done for female devotees & for the 1st time 3 female police units have been pushed into service.
- More than 120000 toilets have been formed for making Clean Kumbh.
- The whole kumbh area is alienated into 20 sectors & 9 zones for intense vigil by sector & zonal magistrates.
- 40 police stations, 58 police out-posts including 3 female police station are created where above 20000 security employees are deployed.
- Traffic management at Kumbh 2019 is prearranged to ensure co-ordination of traffic movement on multiple channels which will be combined with google maps as well before the Mela.

Government launches 'Womaniya on Government e Marketplace' initiative on - 14th January 2019

The Union Government on January 14th, 2019 released the "Womaniya on Government e Marketplace", an initiative to enable female entrepreneurs & Women Self-Help Groups to trade handicrafts, handloom, accessories, & other products directly to Government departments & institutes. India has around 500 million Internet subscribers & nearly 54% of them are above 25 years of age with higher discretionary income & expected to transact extra online. Female constitute



33% or 143 million Internet subscribers & control 44% of domestic spending in India. Approximately 80% female-owned establishments in India are self-financed & above 60% of 8 million units are owned & headed by female businesspersons from socially-challenged sections.

Important Highlights of the “Womaniya on GeM” initiative

- Artist Anukta M Ghosh’s artwork “Magan”, an illustration of female empowerment & elegance, is the face of Womaniya on Government e Marketplace.

- The Womaniya homepage-gem.gov.in/womaniya, will update obtaining officers in various government ministries, departments & CPSEs about the initiative to encourage procurement of common utilised goods & services from female businesspersons.

- Items like handicrafts & handloom, accessories, jute/coir products, home decor & office furnishings are segregated for ease-in-procurement.

- The initiative bring into line with Government’s initiatives for MSMEs, particularly to reserve 3% in government procurement from female businesspersons.

Development projects worth over Rs 1500 crore in Odisha by - PM Modi

PM Narendra Modi on January 15th, 2019 visited Odisha & released various development projects worth more than Rupees 1500 crore at Balangir, Odisha. Prime Minister Modi dedicated electrified Jharsuguda-Vizianagaram & Sambalpur-Angul electric lines straddling 813 kms to the country. These railway lines were electrified at a cost of approximately Rupees 1000 crore.

Projects Released

- The PM initiated the doubling of Barpali-Dungaripali & Balangir-Deogaon railway lines in the state.

- The 15 kilometres long Balangir-Bichhupali railway line placed at a cost of Rupees 115 crores was also issued. It is part of the new 289-km Balangir-Khurda road line which joins Howrah-Chennai

main line on Khurda Road & Titlagarh-Sambalpur line at Balangir.

- A new train on Balangir-Bichhupali route was also initiated. It would profit commuters of the region, besides joining Bichhupali to Jharsuguda & Vizianagaram main line via Balangir.

- Prime Minister Modi also devoted to the country the Multi-Modal Logistics Park at Jharsuguda.

- The Park encourages undertaking of goods for domestic and global trade. It will start Jharsuguda as a prime logistics hub & enhance ease of doing business in the state.

- A bridge between Theruvali & Singapur Road station was initiated on the occasion. The bridge re-establishes the connection above Nagavali River which was damaged during floods in July 2017.

- The Passport Sewa Kendras were initiated at Jagatsinghpur, Kendrapara, Puri, Phulbani, Bargarh & Balangir.

- The foundation stone was also placed for a perpetual building of KV at Sonepur.

- The PM also initiated renovation & refurbishment works at Nilamadhav & Siddheswar Temple at Gandhaharadi in Boudh, Paschim Somnath group of temples in Boudh & Ranipur Jharial group of memorials in Balangir.

Pune to have Traffic Robot on its Roads by - The Traffic Police Department of Pune

The Traffic Police Department of Pune is seeking at a futuristic model to maintain traffic flow & create awareness about the traffic rules.

Roadeo

- The traffic police establishments of Pune are preparing to announce a robot baptized “Roadeo” which would move around the city roads, working as a quasi-traffic policeman & cautioning traveller about traffic rules & crimes.

- ‘Roadeo’ contains 16-inch LED display to display traffic rules & other significant messages including “Wear a helmet”, “Do not jump the signal” & others.

- The Hands of the ‘Roadeo’ is also planned to move & display stop symbols to vehicles. ‘Roadeo’ is also fitted with a



siren, skid-steering wheels & obstacle-detection devices.

- It is a 1st of its kind initiative in the whole nation. If this pilot project came out to be effective, it would go a long way in facilitating the traffic management load & minimising the workload of overburdened traffic police cops.

- The Robot 'Roadeo' is industrialized by SP Robotics Maker Lab, which is Pune based laboratory that skills people to learn about robotics & figure tech themselves.

• Supreme Court issues notice to Centre on PIL against notice under - IT Act

The Supreme Court has released a notice to the Central government on PIL which asked the notice authorising Ten central agencies to intercept, monitor & decrypt any computer system.

Reason behind notice

Under the notice, the central government had authorized 10 agencies, IB, Narcotics Control Bureau-NCB, Enforcement Directorate- ED, the Central Board of Direct Taxes (for Income Tax Department), Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, CBI, National Investigation Agency, the Research & Analysis Wing, Directorate of Signal Intelligence (in service areas of J-K, North East & Assam) & Delhi Police commissioner to intercept, monitor & decrypt any computer system.

PIL challenges the Notice

- The notice was unlawful, unconstitutional & ultra vires to the law.

- The notice issues State the right to contact every communication, computer & mobile & to utilise it to safeguard the political interest & object of the current executive political party.

- The notice was an effort to form a surveillance state.

The Hindu Literary Prize 2018 Announced during The - Hindu Lit for Life 2019

The Hindu Literary Prize-2018 was bestowed during The Hindu Lit for Life 2019. The winners under various categories are mentioned as-

- English writer Neelum Saran Gour, author of Requiem in Raga Jankibagged The Hindu Prize 2018 for Fiction.

- Futuristic Manoranjan Byapari, author of 'Interrogating my Chandal Life: An Autobiography of a Dalit', captured The Hindu Prize 2018 for non-fiction.

- The Hindu Young World- 'Goodbooks Award' for Best Book Fiction was presented to Venita Coelho for 'Boy No: 32'.

- 'A Brush with Indian Art' by Mamta Nainy got The Hindu Young World-Goodbooks Award for Best Book Non-Fiction.

- Vinayak Varma's Angry Akku got The Hindu Young World-Goodbooks Award for Best Picture Book: Story.

- Rajiv Eipe's Ammachi's Amazing Machines got The Hindu Young World-Goodbooks Award for Best Picture Book: Illustration.

- The Hindu Literary Prize was introduced to honour writers who have spent their whole life mining the human spirit via their words & ideas.

Army Day celebrated on - 15th January 2019

India rejoices Army India on January 15th. Army Day is observed to salute the brave soldiers who sacrificed their lives to safeguard the nation & its inhabitants. It is in gratitude of Field Marshal Kodandera M. Cariappa taking over as the 1st Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army from General Sir Francis Butcher, the last British Commander-in-Chief of India, on 15th January 1949.

Rise of Women Power

- For the 1st time in the history of Indian Army, Lt. Bhavana Kasturi will head the Indian Army's Service Corps contingent.

- Female officer, Captain Shikha Surabhi, will be leading the Army's Daredevils Motorcycle Display team containing 33 men riding 9 bikes in a



pyramid formation.

Indian Army

o Indian Army hints its origin to the Military Department which was formed within the Government of the East India Company at Kolkata in the year 1776.

o With the aim of “service before self”, Indian Army is on the assignment to ensure national security, national unity, defend the country from external aggression & internal threats, & maintain peace & security within its borders.

World Dynamic City 2019 launched by - The City Momentum Index of JLL

The City Momentum Index of JLL which finds World Dynamic Cities has been published by the property consultant JLL.

More about the Index

The City Momentum Index of JLL calculates momentum for 131 of the world’s most commercially active cities by following a range of socio-economic & commercial real estate indicators over a 3-year period to identify the urban economies & real estate markets experiencing the most rapid expansion. The Index calculates short-term momentum over a 3-year horizon & locates urban economies & real estate markets which are presently undergoing significant rapid growth.

World Dynamic Cities 2019

o Silicon Valley of India, Bengaluru has come out as the world’s most dynamic city among 131 major recognized & emerging business hubs globally.

o The 2nd place is occupied by Hyderabad.

o Other Indian cities which included in the top 20 list are Delhi at 4th, Pune at 5th, Chennai at 7th & Kolkata at 20th.

o 19 of the top 20 cities from are from the Asia Pacific. This demonstrates the region’s rapid urbanisation & robust economic growth.

o The Index specifies that implementation of reforms such as RERA

& GST with a focus on improving infrastructure & improving ease of doing business has brought in extra transparency in the real estate sector & has given a strong impetus to the sector.

DD Science & India Science launched by - The Minister of Science & Technology

The Minister of Science & Technology Harsh Vardhan released the initiatives DD Science & India Science to feminise science in India. The initiatives goals to develop the scientific temper in India. DD Science DD Science is a 1-hour slot on Doordarshan National channel which will be broadcast Monday-Saturday from 5-6 pm. DD Science may be scaled-up to a fully-fledged channel in the future.

India

Science

India Science is an Internet-based channel which will be accessible on any internet-capable device & will give live, programmed play & video-on-demand services. India Science will have a 24x7 occurrence via www.indiascience.in.

Implementation of DD Science & India Science

DD Science & India Science have been considered & supported by the Department of Science & Technology & are being executed & managed by Vigyan Prasar. A contract has been inked between Vigyan Prasar & Doordarshan for this.

Vigyan

Prasar

Vigyan Prasar is an independent organisation under the Department of Science & Technology. Vigyan Prasar goals to feminise science in India via various strategically important approaches.

UK Parliament rejects Brexit Deal, May to face no-confidence vote on - 15th January 2019

British PM Theresa May suffered a devastating defeat in the Parliament on January 15th, 2019 when more than 100 lawmakers of May's Conservative party including both Brexiteers & Remainers, voted against the Brexit pact.



Impact

Theresa May's downfall is the biggest-ever downfall felt by a British premier in modern history. The only other analogous party split & parliamentary defeat occurred in 1886, when PM William Gladstone's support for Irish home rule dividing the Liberal Party in 2. The devastating defeat marks the collapse of May's 2-year strategy of forging a friendly exit with close relations to the European Union. The refusal has also complicated & increased doubts about how or whether Britain will leave the EU on March 29th.

Motion of No-Confidence

- Opposition Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn named May's loss 'the greatest defeat' for a British government since the 1920.

- After the vote, Labour listed a no-confidence motion against May's minority government, which will be discussed on January 16th, 2019.

- However, following the vote, the leaders of Northern Ireland's Democratic Unionist Party, which favours May's minority government, declared that they would favour the PM.

- The declaration makes it unlikely for May to miss the confidence vote.

DBT, ICAR sign MoU for cooperation in agricultural biotechnology research & education on - 14th January 2019

The Department of Biotechnology- DBT & the Indian Council of Agricultural Research- ICAR inked a MoU on January 14th, 2019 to raise pressure on multi-disciplinary research & development activities & developing innovations in agricultural biotechnology research & education.

The Department of Biotechnology has undertaken various activities & programmes to encourage Biotechnology Research & Development in the areas of agriculture biotechnology.

Objective

- To plan & execute mutually the joint agreed major National programs via joint

funding & sharing of resources in the priority areas of agricultural biotechnology.

- To design a common think-tank of experts from Indian Council of Agricultural Research & Department of Biotechnology & others to make policies related to:

- Transgenic crops, animals, fish & biological agents along with attribute prioritisation of traits. Plans to employ the emerging areas of biotechnology tools, including genome editing, synthetic biology & Nano-biotechnology in agriculture.

- Harmonise the laws overriding bio-diversity, bio-safety, patents protection & food safety.

Modalities of PP partnerships.

- To develop national platform & centres for services concerned to genomics, genotyping, data banking, agriculture bioinformatics, Genetically Modified food detection, validation of technologies including vaccines, diagnostics of veterinary & fisheries usage, molecular markers in crop & animal breeding.

- To design & introduce courses & training programs in the area of biosafety, biodiversity conservation & germplasm interchange, genomic selection & breeding for faculty & students via suitable mechanisms.

Prime Minister Modi to inaugurate Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit 2019 on - 18th January 2019

PM Narendra Modi will initiate the 9th edition of the Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit 2019 on January 18th, 2019. The event will be organised at the Mahatma Mandir, Gandhinagar, Gujarat. The Event will see participation of Reliance Industries Chairman Mukesh Ambani, Tata Sons Chairman N. Chandrashekhara, Chairman of Aditya Birla Group Kumar Mangalam Birla, Adani Group Chairman Gautam Adani, Godrej Group Chairman Adi Godrej, among others. The subject of the Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit 2019 will be 'Youth Connect 2019: Shaping A New India—



The Story of Billion Dreams’.

Key Highlights

o Heads of 5 nations including Uzbekistan President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, Rwanda President Paul Kagame, PM Denmark Lars Lokke Rasmussen, PM of the Czech Republic Andrej Babis & PM of Malta Joseph Muscat would taking part in the event.

o Besides, 21 ministers from various nations will be attending the event.

o 15 nations including Australia, Canada, France & Japan have decided to be ‘partner nations’ this year.

o Unlike last events, the USA & UK will not be connecting themselves with the Event as ‘Partner Countries’ this year.

o More than 20000 national & international delegates are predictable to attend the ninth edition of the Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit.

o Few of the major events that will be organised during the 3-day event are include roundtable interaction, ‘Africa Day’ & an MSME Convention.

President gives assent to Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (Amendment) Act, 2019, on - 3rd January 2019

The Right of Children to Free & Compulsory Education (Amendment) Act, 2019 which was approved by the Parliament on January 3rd, 2019 got the assent of the President of India on January 10th, 2019. It has now been reported in the Gazette of India. The bill pursues to do away with the no-detention policy in schools.

Importance

The legislation is noteworthy as it brings accountability in the elementary education system. The suggestion received the support of a majority of state governments.

RTE amendment Bill: Important Provisions

o The Bill pursues to amend the Right to Education Act to eliminate the “no-detention” policy in schools.

o Under the present provisions of the Act, no student can be held up to class VIII.

o According to the modification, it would be left to the states to finalise whether to continue the no-detention policy.

o This Bill has been studied by a Parliamentary standing committee, which also suggested bringing back the concept of detention in schools.

o The policy has been brought back as it was felt that captivating children to repeat a class was discouraging, often forcing them to unrestraint school.

o The bill delivers for regular examination in classes V & VIII, & if a child fails, the modification bill grants a provision to give her/him extra opportunity to take a re-examination within 2 months. Such children will be provided with 2-month remedial teaching to do better in the re-examinations.

Election Commission of India launches Voter Awareness Forums on - 16th January 2019

The Election Commission of India on January 16th, 2019 released Voter Awareness Forum in New Delhi. Same Voter Awareness Forums were released by the Chief Electoral Officers in the state capitals & by District Election Officers in the districts instantaneously.

Objective

The main aim of the Voter Awareness Forums is to encourage informed & ethical electoral contribution, commencement from the 1st step, which is voter registration.

Main Highlights

o The Election Commission has well-ordered all the respective nodal officers & agencies to instantly form the forums & simplify enrolment of all employees & officials on the electoral roll.

o The Voter Awareness Forums will ease members to check their names & other details on the electoral roll via online NVSP portal of the Election Commission of India & the voter helpline number 1950.



- The half-day meeting was conducted to familiarise the officers from different Ministries & Federations with the concept of voter awareness forum and explaining them about their role as nodal officers of the Voter Awareness Forums.

- Same briefing sessions were organised across the nation by the Chief Electoral Officers & District Election Officers where nodal officers of govt and non-govt departments, CSOs, Corporate media houses in the state & district were explained respectively.

- The voter awareness forum is a part of the Electoral Literacy Club program of the Election Commission of India.

- The Electoral Literacy Club program, which was released on 25th January, 2018, envisages formation of ELC in every educational institution & Chunav Pathshala at every booth to cover those outside the formal education system.

Penalty on Chemists & Druggists Association of Baroda imposed by - CCI

The Competition Commission of India-CCI, has forced a penalty on the Chemists & Druggists Association of Baroda after it found it to be in breaking of the provisions of the Competition Act, 2002. The initiative was undertaken after a complaint filed with the Monopolies & Restrictive Trade Practices Commission in 2009 claiming that the Chemists & Druggists Association of Baroda has indulged in restrictive trade practices.

Main Highlights

- The complaint suspected that the Chemists & Druggists Association of Baroda, through its practices, was limiting & supervising the supply of drugs & medicines in the market by mandating "NOC" preceding to the appointment of stockists & payment of "Product Information Service" charges previous to the introduction of new products in the market by pharmaceutical corporations.

- There were also accusations that Chemists & Druggists Association of Baroda was fixing the trade margins for the wholesalers as well as retailers.

- The case was relocated to the Commission by Monopolies & Restrictive Trade Practices Commission under the provisions of Section 66(6) of the Act.

- The Commission after forming a prima-facie opinion instructed the office of DG to conduct an investigation into the matter. The investigation accomplished by the Director-General recognized contravention on part of the Chemists & Druggists Association of Baroda.

- Following complete enquiry, the Commission approved an order where it was found that the Chemists & Druggists Association of Baroda was imposing the need of mandatory No Objection Certificate & was also fixing margins for the wholesalers & retailers by enforcing the standards laid down by AIOCD.

India's Satyarup becomes world's youngest mountaineer to climb 7 peaks, 7 volcano summits on - 16th January 2019

Indian mountaineer Satyarup Siddhanta on January 16th, 2019 became the world's youngest mountaineer to hike the 7 highest peaks & volcanic summits across all continents afterward conquering Antarctica's highest point Mount Sidley. Satyarup summited Mt. Sidley at 6:28 am in the morning, at a temperature of -40 degree Celsius as per to the inReach Satellite Communicator he was carrying.

Records Broken

- Satyarup attained the unique feat at the age of 35 years & 262 days, forming a new world record by thrashing Australia's Daniel Bull who did it at the age of 36 years & 157 days.

- Thus, Satyarup also became the 1st Indian to conquer the 7 mountain peaks & 7 volcanic summits.

Satyarup Siddhanta

- He is West Bengal-based software engineer professional, who presently works in Bengaluru, belongs to Haridevpur in South Kolkata.

- Despite being an asthma patient, Satyarup grabs an illustrious record of winning several treacherous summits.



- The biggest challenge Satyarup had to face was managing his funds for such expensive expeditions.

- It was difficult to get sponsors.

- However, he did not let this stop him & apart from funding, crowdfunding he took personal loans & sold his summit mementos to make his dream come true.

Satyarup's

Summits-

7 summits, 9 peaks

1. Mt Kilimanjaro, Africa height 5895 m, on June 29th, 2012 & June 14th, 2018

2. Mt Elbrus, Europe height 5642 m on June 27th, 2013

3. Mt Aconcagua, South America height 6962m on January 13th, 2014

4. Mt Denali, North America, height 6190m, on June 23th, 2014

5. Mt Mont Blanc, Western Europe, height 4810m, on September 23th, 2014

6. Mt Kosciuszko, Australia, height 2228 m, on June 12th, 2015

7. Mt Everest, Asia, height 8848m, on May 21th, 2016

8. Mt Carstenz, Oceania, height 4884 m, on June 13th, 2017

9. Mt Vinson Massif, Antarctica, height 4892 m, on December 15th, 2017

Volcanic

Summits

1. Mt Kilimanjaro

2. Mt Elbrus

3. Mt Ojos Del Salado, South America, height 6893 m on January 15th, 2018

4. Mt Damavand, Asia, height 5610 m, on September 10th, 2018

5. Mt Giluwe, Oceania, height 4367 m, on November 9th, 2018

6. Mount Pico de Orizaba, North America on December 5th, 2018

First human rights TV channel Launched by - International Observatory of Human Rights

The world's 1st TV dedicated to human rights was released in London by the International Observatory of Human Rights. It would be a web-based TV channel & would issue human rights matters to audiences in more than 20 nations across Europe, Latin America & the Middle East. The telecast of the channel can be viewed via the netgem.tv

interactive platform. The programs are presently telecasted in English & eventually hopes to telecast in other languages including Farsi, Turkish, Arabic & Russian.

Important Highlights

- The Human Rights Channel goals to bring hidden stories ignored by mainstream media into person's living rooms.

- The Channel would emphasis on matters including refugees, press freedom & the incarceration of journalists, extremism, female's rights, LGBT issues & the dilemma of the world's stateless people.

- The channel has the various programs in the pipeline including China 30 years after the crackdown on the Tiananmen Square pro-democracy objections, the positive & negative influences of technology on females, & the human rights suggestions of Brexit, Britain's departure from the EU.

GST ministerial panel on lotteries by - The Central government

The Central government has established Goods and Services Tax ministerial panel on lotteries. The ministerial panel will investigate the present Goods and Services Tax provisions associated to lotteries. The panel will investigate the existing system under Goods and Services Tax wherein a state-organised lottery entices 12% Goods and Services Tax while a state-authorized lottery attracts 28% GST tax. The inter-ministerial panel is led by Maharashtra finance minister Sudhir Mungantiwar & has West Bengal finance minister Amit Mitra, Kerala finance minister Thomas Isaac, Assam's Finance Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, Punjab Finance Minister Manpreet Singh Badal, Goa Panchayat Minister Mauvin Godinho, Karnataka Panchayat Minister Krishna Byre Gowda & Arunachal Tax & Excise Minister Jarkar Gamlin as associates.



Terms of Reference
Whether the difference in tax structure on lottery be sustained or a unvarying rate be prescribed for both.

Whether private peoples authorised by the states are exploiting the lower rate & receiving enriched themselves at the cost of the state & propose measures to control it.

Inspect problems related to enforcement including the legal agenda to avoid evasion of tax on the lottery & propose suitable tax rate to address the issue.

Government approves Capital Infusion to the Exim Bank by - The Union Cabinet

The Union Cabinet led by PM Narendra Modi has sanctioned a capital infusion of Rupees 6000 crore in state-owned Export-Import Bank of India-Exim Bank, to increase its business.

Capital Infusion

- The government would release recapitalisation bonds to the tune of Rupees 6000 crore for capital infusion of Exim Bank.

- The wealth infusion would occur in 2 tranches of Rupees 4500 crores in 2018-19 & Rupees 1500 crores in 2019-20 individually.

- The government has also sanctioned an increase in the bank's authorised wealth from Rupees 10000 crores to Rupees 20000 crores.

Export-Import- EXIM Bank of India

Export-Import Bank of India is a premier export finance institution of India. It was recognized in 1982 under the Export-Import Bank of India Act to encourage the Indian exports. Exim Bank contributions the Industries across wide avenues including import of technology, export product development, export production, export marketing, pre & post-shipment & abroad investment.

PM Narendra Modi to launch National Museum of Indian Cinema on - 19th January 2019

PM Narendra Modi will initiate the National Museum of Indian Cinema-

NMIC, in Mumbai on January 19th, 2019. The development of the Museum was directed by the Museum Advisory Committee led by Shyam Benegal. An innovation Committee led by Prasoon Joshi issued an upgrade to the National Museum of Indian Cinema.

National Museum of Indian Cinema

- Constructed at a cost of Rupees 140.61 crores, the museum portrays the journey of more than a century of Indian cinema in a story-telling mode with the benefit of visuals, graphics, artefacts, interactive displays & multimedia expositions.

- The Museum is contained in 2 buildings including the New Museum Building & the 19th century historic palace Gulshan Mahal, in the Films Division campus in Mumbai.

- The Gulshan Mahal is an ASI Grade-II Heritage Structure which has been reinstated as part of the National Museum of Indian Cinema project.

- It is divided into nine sections, known as, The Origin of Cinema, Cinema comes to India, Indian Silent Film, Advent of Sound, The Studio Era, The impact of World War-II, Creative Resonance, New Wave & Beyond and Regional Cinema.

NAS Shibpur to be commissioned as INS Kohassa on - 24th January 2019

Naval Air Station- NAS Shibpur will be commissioned as INS Kohassa by Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Sunil Lanba on January 24th, 2019. The initiative is being undertaken to improve the operational capability of Andaman & Nicobar Command. Naval Air Station Shibpur was recognized in 2010. The Naval Air Station Shibpur was formed as a Forward Operating Air Base for surveillance in North Andaman. Situated in the Northern-most part of the islands, the airfield grasps strategic significance not only for the security of the islands but also for its overall development.

More about INS Kohassa

- INS Kohassa has been termed following a White-Bellied Sea Eagle, which



is a big bird of prey endemic to Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

- By commissioning Naval Air Station Shibpur as INS Kohassa, the Andaman & Nicobar Command's capacity to operate autonomously from all the areas of Andaman & Nicobar Islands will receive a great boost.

- After commissioning, the station will work as a base for combine operation of both military & civil aircraft in keeping with the UDAN scheme of the government.

- INS Kohassa will become the 3rd NAB in the Andaman & Nicobar islands after INS Utkrosh at Port Blair & INS Baaz at Campbell Bay.

- As part of the Phase-II expansion plan, the airstrip length would next be extended to 3000 metres. This would enable the action of wide-bodied civil & defence aircraft in the future.

Vinesh Phogat becomes first Indian athlete to be chosen in Laureus World Comeback of Year Award on - 17th January 2019

Indian star wrestler Vinesh Phogat on January 17th, 2019 became the 1st Indian athlete to be chosen for the prestigious "Laureus World Comeback" of the Year Award.

Vinesh Phogat has been chosen in "Laureus World Sporting Comeback" group for the year 2019 & will be competing for the award with few of the world's greatest athletes including golfer Tiger Woods, Canadian snowboarder Mark McMorris, American alpine ski racer Lindsey Vonn, Japanese figure skater Yuzuru Manyu & Dutch para-snowboarding star Bibian Mentel-Spee. The Awards will be given on February 18th, 2019 in Monaco, city on France's Mediterranean coastline.

Crucial Highlights

- Phogat has been chosen for the award alongside United States Tour Championship winner Tiger Woods, who secured his 1st tournament in 5 years.

- The 24 years old from Haryana made an extraordinary comeback in 2018 after battling a long injury lay-off.

- She not only secured Gold at the 2018 Gold Coast Commonwealth Games but also secured a silver in the 2018 Asian Championships in Bishkek & a Gold at the Asian Games in Jakarta.

- Vinesh Phogat was one of the favourites to secure a medal for India at the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, but a terrible knee injury pushed her out of the tournament during the quarter-finals.

- Though the damage was viewed virtually as a death sentence for her career, the wrestler progressively worked her way back to fitness.

- Aged just 24, she was one of the candidates for the Padma Shri award in 2018 & is predictable to be a favourite to secure a medal in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

Infosys to develop advance Tax filing System sanctioned by - The Union government

The Union government has sanctioned Integrated E-filing & Centralised Processing Centre 2.0 Project of the Income Tax Department to improve the efficiency of income tax administration system in the nation.

Integrated E-filing & Centralised Processing Centre 2.0 Project

- Faster & precise outcomes for taxpayer.

- 1st time accurate approach.

- Enhancing manipulator experience at all stages.

- Enlightening taxpayer awareness & education via nonstop engagement.

- Promoting voluntary tax compliance.

- Handling outstanding demand.

- The project would help in dropping the time it takes the department for processing returns to only 24 hours from 63 days.

- The project is also anticipated to decrease the rectification requests from the present 2 per cent to 0.1 percent



together with decreasing the time taken to process rectification desires.

- The decision to instrument the advance tax filing system was taken to have transparency & accountability besides quicker processing of returns & release of refunds to the taxpayers' bank accounts directly without any edge with the Income Tax Department.

Sustainable Catchment Forest Management launched in - Tripura

Tripura CM Biplab Kumar Deb released the Sustainable Catchment Forest Management- SCATFORM, project which is undertaken with the help of Japan International Cooperation Agency.

Sustainable Catchment Forest Management project

- The Sustainable Catchment Forest Management project goals to address matters including forest cover loss & forest degradation have been mostly caused by shifting cultivation, which upsurges soil erosion risks on hill slopes especially in upper catchment areas.

- The Sustainable Catchment Forest Management project being would be applied mainly in upper catchments where forest degradation & soil erosion are unadorned & income improvement desires are high.

- The actions undertaken under the project includes promotion of bamboo plantation, agroforestry-based income, eco-tourism expansion, development of value addition for bamboo & other Non-Timber Forest Product in order to generate alternate income opportunities for local communities.

- The 80% of the cost is issued by Japan International Cooperation Agency & the balance would be paid by the state & central governments.

Japan International Cooperation Agency

- Japan International Cooperation Agency goals to encourage international co-operation as the Japanese governmental agency in charge

of official development support implementation.

- Japan International Cooperation Agency which is a combined administrative establishment under the Government of Japan is the world's chief bilateral donor agency.

Haryana announces Shaurya Award for Students by - CM Haryana Manohar Lal Khattar

The CM Haryana Manohar Lal Khattar has declared the Shaurya awards for students in the name of 71 state police martyrs.

More about the Shaurya Awards

- The Shaurya Awards with award money of Rupees 11000 will be bestowed to students in the name of 71 personnel of the state police forces who lost their lives while protecting society & maintaining law & order in the state.

- The award would be issued to a student for brave deeds every year in a village block where the school is situated & where a martyr studied during his childhood.

- The declarations were done by the CM while addressing the family members of Haryana Police martyrs at while addressing the National Police Memorial in New Delhi.

- The CM also declared the construction of a state-level police memorial in the state of Haryana & issued the book titled "Martyrs of Haryana police".

National Police Memorial

- Renovated & restored Police Memorial was initiated by the PM Narendra Modi on 21st October 2018.

- National Police Memorial honours the 34844 police staffs from all of the central & state police forces in India who have lost their lives in the line of duty since the country's Independence in 1947.

- The National Police Memorial honours the police personnel whose lost their lives in the fight against terrorism, militancy & insurgency in states including Punjab, Assam, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, J&K red corridor-affected areas in India.



Sanjay Jain, K M Nataraj selected as Additional Solicitor Generals by - President Ram Nath Kovind

President Ram Nath Kovind has designated senior advocates Sanjay Jain & KM Nataraj as Additional Solicitor Generals of India. The designations were accomplished by the President according to the endorsements of the Appointments Committee of the cabinet. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet is led by PM & the Home Minister is the member of the committee. The Appointments Committee of the cabinet is answerable for making approvals for the several significant positions under the Government of India.

Additional Solicitor General
Additional Solicitor General- ASG, is the 3rd significant law office of the nation in the hierarchy. The position of Additional Solicitor General is neither constitutional nor statutory. The position of Additional Solicitor General is administered by Law Officers (Conditions of Service) Rules, 1987.

India, JICA sign loan agreements on Japan's Official Development Assistance Loan to India on - 18th January 2019

India and Japan-India Cooperative Actions (JICA) signed the loan agreements under the Japanese Official Development Assistance Loan Program on 18th January, 2019.

The Loan Agreements were signed by Dr. C.S. Mohapatra, Additional Secretary, Union Ministry of Finance, Department of Economic Affairs, and Katsuo Matsumoto, JICA, Chief Representative, in National Capital.

These agreements under the Japanese Official Development Assistance Loan were signed for two projects. These are:

(i) Project for the Construction of Chennai Peripheral Ring Road (Phase 1) for

Japanese Yen 40.074 billion (approximately Rs 2470 Crore)

(ii) Program for Japan-India Cooperative Actions towards Sustainable Development Goals in India for Japanese Yen 15.000 billion (approximately Rs 950 Crore).

Exclusive Satellite to help in securing Pakistan & Bangladesh borders by - ISRO

Indian Space Research Organisation will launch a satellite exclusively for the Union Home Ministry to help it in firming its frontiers with Pakistan & Bangladesh among others.

Features of the exclusive satellite for Border Management

○ The exclusive satellite will be used for the purpose of space resources usage for security, operational planning & border infrastructure expansion.

○ It would reinforce island & border security & simplify the development of infrastructure in border & island areas.

○ A short, medium & long-term plan has been suggested for execution in 5 years in close co-ordination with the Indian Space Research Organisation & the Union Defence Ministry for the execution in a time-bound manner.

○ Under short term strategy, immediate requirements of border guarding forces will be accomplished by gaining of high-resolution imagery & the hiring of bandwidth for transportations.

○ Under the mid-term strategy, Single satellite is being released by the Indian Space Research Organisation for the limited use of the Ministry of Home Affairs.

○ Under long term strategy, the Ministry of Home Affairs will progress ground segment & network infrastructure to stake satellite resources by operator agencies, progress a central archival facility for storage various imagery resources & propagation of the same to operator agencies.

Methanol Blending to cut Carbon-dioxide Emissions by - ARAI

Biofuels are being measured as an alternative to decrease the nation's crude oil imports worth Rupees 7 lakh crore.



They can also be a latent weapon to fight rising pollution. The results of the research by the Pune-based Automotive Research Association of India- ARAI, have authenticated the potential decrease in the releases of the carbon dioxide by the adoption of methanol blending.

Research by the Pune-based ARAI

- Pune-based Automotive Research Association of India directed a study utilising 15 percent M-15 methanol blend in vehicles & verified them for 3000 kms to assess emissions in real-world conditions and to check the performance of the automobiles.

- The results of the study presented that methanol blending with petrol in the present BS-IV standard automobiles resulted in the decrease of the carbon-dioxide emissions significantly.

- The study also discovered that hydrocarbon emission decreased marginally, with a slight rise in the levels of nitrogen oxides.

- The results of the research were submitted to Union Minister of Road Transport & Highways, Nitin Gadkari.

- The Minister guaranteed full support for Automotive Research Association of India in furthering the methanol blending program, repeating the government's commitment to upsurge the methanol blending to 20 percent by the year 2030.

Amazon-Witzig bid to acquire Birla's retail store chain gets - CCI noda

The Competition Commission of India-CCI, has accepted the contract wherein Samara Capital-backed Witzig Advisory Services & Amazon will get Aditya Birla Retail Ltd, that runs a supermarket store chain "More".

According to the contract, 99.99% of the equity share capital of Aditya Birla Retail would be assimilated by Witzig & 49% share buys in Witzig by Amazon's subsidiary Amazon NV Investment Holdings LLC.

Competition Commission of India

CCI is a statutory body recognized under

The Competition Act, 2002. To avoid practices having an adverse effect on competition. To encourage & sustain competition in markets.

To guard the interests of customers. To ensure freedom of business carried on by other members in markets, in India. To ban anti-competitive agreements. To ban abuse of dominant position. To control combinations. Competition advocacy.

The CCI includes of a Chairperson & 6 members selected by the Central Government.

Females to get 20% jobs in - Military Police

The Union Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has declared the decision to initiate females in Personnel Below Officer Rank, PBOR, role in Corps of Military Police. The females will be initiated in a graded manner to ultimately encompass 20 percent of total Corps of Military Police. Consequently, the Army chalked out introduction of about 800 females in military police with a yearly intake of 52 personnel every year.

More about Military Police

- Military Police are the forces responsible for the enforcing discipline & the law maintenance, order in the military environment & for military resolutions.

- The roles of the Military Police include policing cantonments & Army institutions, preventing a break of rules & regulations by soldiers, preserving movement of soldiers and logistics during peace & war, handling prisoners of war & extending aid to civil police whenever essential.

- The declaration is seen as a precursor for permitting the females in combat roles.

- Army Chief Gen Bipin Rawat had earlier informed that the process to permit females in a combat role, presently, an exclusive domain of males was moving fast & initially, females will be employed for positions in the military police.



PM Narendra Modi launches National Museum of Indian Cinema on - 19th January 2019

PM Narendra Modi initiated the National Museum of Indian Cinema- NMIC, in Mumbai on January 19th, 2019. The development of the Museum was directed by the Museum Advisory Committee led by Shyam Benegal. An innovation Committee led by Prasoon Joshi delivered an upgrade to the National Museum of Indian Cinema.

National Museum of Indian Cinema

○ Constructed at a cost of Rupees 140.61 crores, the museum portrays the journey of more than a century of Indian cinema in a story telling mode with the support of visuals, graphics, artefacts, interactive exhibits & multimedia expositions.

○ The Museum is kept in 2 buildings, the New Museum Building & the 19th century historic palace Gulshan Mahal as in the Films Division campus in Mumbai.

○ The Gulshan Mahal is an ASI Grade II Heritage Structure which has been reinstated as part of the National Museum of Indian Cinema project.

○ It is divided into nine sections, know as, The Origin of Cinema, Cinema comes to India, Indian Silent Film, Advent of Sound, The Studio Era, The impact of World War-II, Creative Resonance, New Wave & Beyond & Regional Cinema.

Young Scientist Program by - ISRO

ISRO has declared Young Scientist Program to inculcate & nurture space research fervour in youngsters' mind. Young Scientist program is part of Indian Space Research Organisation's hard work to reach out to the student community. On the New Year day, Indian Space Research Organisation had held Samwad with Students & a declaration was made about the student outreach program.

More about Young Scientist Program

○ It would be a 1-month program.
○ Mostly 8th standard passed-out students will be specified lecturers & access to research laboratories.

○ 3 students from each of the 29 States & 7 UTs will be carefully chosen for the Young Scientist program.

○ The students will be allowed to the take practical experience of building small satellites.

○ Indian Space Research Organisation also declared about setting-up of an incubation centre in Tripura, Trichy, Nagpur, Rourkela, & Indore.

Logo for Tripura tea unveiled by -Biplab Kumar Deb

The CM of Tripura Biplab Kumar Deb revealed the authorized logo of Tripura Tea. The Tripura Tea logo features Neermahal, which is the iconic landmark of Tripura.

More about Neermahal

• Neermahal was constructed by then Tripura King Bir Bikram Kishore Debbarman Manikya in the middle of Rudrasagar Lake, as his summer home. It is situated in Melaghar, about 53 kilometres west of Agartala.

• This is the largest water palace in India & 1 of 2 water palaces in India. The other water palace of India is situated at Jal Mahal in Rajasthan.

• Climatic Conditions favourable for Tea Cultivation

-A temperature of 21 to 29 degree Celsius.

-Yearly Rainfall of 150-200 centimetres.

-The soil must be rich in humus because tea shrubs need fertile mountain soil mixed with lime & iron.

-Well drained land to avoid stagnation of water.

Tripura & Tea cultivation

• The tea cultivation in Tripura started at Hiracherra estate in Unakoti district in 1916. Currently,

• Tripura is the 2nd largest tea producing state in the Northeast & harvests 10 million kilograms of tea yearly with an area of 6430 hectares under cultivation.

Tamil Nadu Defence Industrial Corridor Inaugurated by - Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman



The Union Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman initiated the Tamil Nadu Defence Industrial Corridor. During the induction, investments worth more than Rupees 3038 crore in this defence corridor were declared. Lockheed Martin, a global security giant, also declared its intention to invest in the corridor.

More about the Corridor

- It is also known as Tamil Nadu Defence Production Quad as the nodal cities of Chennai, Hosur, Salem, Coimbatore & Tiruchirappalli form a 4-sided with one of them at the centre.

- The 5 nodal cities already have current defence ecosystem in the form of ordnance factory boards, vendors working with defence PSUs, & other associated industries.

- Together with serving in accelerated growth & regional industry accumulation, the defence corridor will also enable a well-planned & efficient industrial base which will result into increased defence production in the nation & the region.

- The corridor will benefit the industry to assimilate with the global supply chain of Defence production.

- Tamil Nadu Defence Industrial Corridor would be a specialised facility of aero component production.

- Tamil Nadu Defence Industrial Corridor is the nation's 2nd defence industrial corridor after the 1st one was released in Aligarh, UP August past year.

National conference on Self Reliance in Defence Production at - Hyderabad

National Conference on Self Reliance in Defence Production is held at Hyderabad. The National Conference is being organised by Forum for Integrated National Security in connotation with Indigenous Defence Entrepreneurs Association.

Self-Reliance in Defence Production

Self-Reliance in defence production in India is a matter of great reputation to attain multidimensional credible deterrence & to protect national interests in fast-changing international ties

with respect to geopolitical and geo-economic influence on our country's rightful place in the world order. Under Make in India initiative various creativities taken towards attaining self-reliance in defence production, are:

- Predilection for procurement from Indian vendors under the Defence Procurement Procedure.

- Universalization of Make procedure.
- Introduction of an easy procedure for Make II sub-category.

- Liberalization of the licensing command.

- Changes in FDI policy by increasing the cap on FDI in the defence sector,

- Simplification of the export process.
- Rationalization of defence offset norms etc.

- Strategic Partnership Model which imagines the founding of long-term strategic corporations with Indian units through a transparent & competitive procedure, wherein they would tie-up with global Original Equipment Manufacturers to pursue technology transfers to set-up domestic production infrastructure & supply chains.

Indians can visit Nepal & Bhutan producing Aadhaar as - Id Proof

The Union Home Ministry has pinched the travel document guidelines for visiting Nepal & Bhutan. According to the new guidelines, Indian can travel to Nepal & Bhutan by using Aadhaar as ID proof but this is only for those Indians who are aged under 15 & more than 65 years. Indians other than in those age limit will not be able to utilise Aadhaar to travel for Nepal & Bhutan.

Open Door Policy

India has an open-door policy with Nepal & Bhutan. Indians don't need a passport to travel to either of these nations. Indians can enter these nations by showing any of the satisfactory photo ID documents like Passport, Voter ID card and many more.

Reason behind the Open-Door Policy



- India's open-door policy with Nepal & Bhutan is in gratitude with the shared history, culture & old age interpersonal relations of Indians with the residents of these nations.

- Article 7 the 1950 Indo-Nepal Treaty of Peace & Friendship and the 1949 Treaty of Friendship between India & Bhutan permits free movement of persons between the two countries on a reciprocal basis.

- Hence as a consequence of these 2 treaties stated above Indians doesn't essential a visa to enter Nepal or Bhutan.

Indian-American Gurinder Singh Khalsa Presented with - Rosa Park Trailblazer award

Indian-American Businessperson Gurinder Singh Khalsa has been bestowed with Rosa Park Trailblazer

award for his campaign to encourage United States authorities to modify policy towards Sikh headgear.

Fight for Justice & Faith

Gurinder Singh Khalsa was not permitted to board an aeroplane in 2007 due to his refusal to eradicate the turban. Strongminded to stand up for his faith & fight for justice, Gurinder Singh Khalsa presented the issue all the way to the United States Congress, convincing Transportation & Security Administration to upgrade its headgear policy towards the Sikh community. As a result, Sikhs can now wear their turban over airport security in the United States.

Turbans

- There precise origin of Turban is not known but there are situations to Turban dating back almost 4000 years from Mesopotamia & ancient India.

- Turban is a type of headgear grounded on cloth winding & wearing turbans is most common among the Sikh Community.

- Guru Gobind Singh, the 10th & last human Guru of the faith started Khalsa & asked the associates of Khalsa to uphold 5 articles of faith, mentioned to as the 5 K's.

Rio de Janeiro recognised as World Capital of Architecture 2020 by - UN Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organisation

Rio de Janeiro has been announced as "World Capital of Architecture" for 2020 by The UN Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organisation. Rio de Janeiro will be holding the World Congress of the International Union of Architects in July 2020. The subject of the 2020 World Congress of the International Union of Architects is 'All the worlds. Just one world.'

UN Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organisation in the release informed that "Concluded the range & excellence of its activities, the World Capital of Architecture in Rio de Janeiro will validate the critical role of architecture & culture in supportable urban development."

World Capital of Architecture

- The World Capital of Architecture initiative underlines the common obligation of UN Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organisation & the UIA to reserve architectural heritage in the urban background.

- UN Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organisation entitles the World Capital of Architecture according to the partnership contract with the UIA.

- The World Capital of Architecture also swarms the UIA's World Congress, a programme that occurs every 3 years.

- The World Capital of Architecture goals to become an International forum for discussions about pressing global contests from the standpoints of culture, cultural heritage, urban planning & architecture.

Bharat Ratna CNR Rao chosen for first Sheikh Saud International Prize for Materials on - 18th January 2019

Eminent Indian scientist, Chintamani Nagesa Ramachandra Rao, commonly known as CNR Rao, was on January 18th, 2019 was selected for the 1st Sheikh Saud International Award for Materials Research by the Centre for Advanced Materials of the United Arab



Emirates.

The prize will be presented to Rao by Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi, the ruler of one of United Arab Emirates' 7 emirates Ras Al Khaima at the International Workshop on Advanced Materials on February 25th, 2019. The Sheikh Saud International Prize committee unanimously decided to award Professor Rao of the Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research, Bengaluru. The award consists of a plaque & cash prize of USD 100000.

More about C N R Rao

- Chintamani Nagesa Ramachandra Rao was born on 30th June 1934, who has worked mainly in solid-state & structural chemistry.

- Chintamani Nagesa Ramachandra Rao has honorary doctorates from 60 universities from worldwide.

- He has authored about 1600 research papers & 50 scientific books.

- Few of his areas of research comprise transition metal oxides & other extended inorganic solids, metal-insulator transitions, Nano-materials including Nanotubes & graphene, artificial photosynthesis & hydrogen generation by photocatalysis & thermal means.

- In 2014, he was bestowed with the Bharat Ratna, the highest civilian award in India, making him the 3rd scientist after C.V. Raman & A.P.J. Abdul Kalam to receive the prize.

- Chintamani Nagesa Ramachandra Rao has also been conferred with "Padma Shri" in 1974, "Padma Vibhushan" in 1985 & "Karnataka Ratna" in 2001, among other awards.

President Ram Nath Kovind conferred Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar 2019- 22nd January 2019

The President of India, Ram Nath Kovind conferred the Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar 2019 on 22nd January 2019. The awards were presented to 26 shortlisted awardees including one joint award towards National Child Award which is now renamed as Bal

Shakti Puraskar under the category of innovation, sports, scholastic, art and culture, social service and bravery.

Under National Child Welfare Awards category, 2 individuals and 3 institutions were awarded.

Important Highlights

- There were total of 783 applications were received for the Bal Shakti Puruskar this year.

- The awardees were finalised by the National Selection Committee under the Chairpersonship of Minister of Women and Child Development, Maneka Sanjay Gandhi.

PM Narendra Modi launches Pravasi Teerth Darshan Yojana

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the Pravasi Teerth Darshan Yojana on 22nd January 2019 under which a group of Indian diaspora will going to be taken on a government-sponsored tour of religious places in India twice an year. The first batch of 40 Indian-origin people are at the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas and they would be starting their tour from there.

Important Highlight

- The group will take to the religious places of all major religions in India.

- The tour would be completely government sponsored, as the government will be bearing all the expenses including the airfare from their country of residence.

- Under the eligibility criteria, all people of Indian-origin, aging between 45 years to 65 years can apply and a group will be selected out of them.

- 'Girmitiya countries' such as Mauritius, Fiji, Suriname, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica will be given top preference.

Indian Navy commences largest-ever coastal defence exercise on - 22nd January 2019

The Indian Navy commenced its largest-ever coastal defence exercise - 'Sea Vigil'-off the Indian coast, ten years



after the "26/11" attack on 22nd January 2019.

The exercise, which is a first of its kind, is being undertaken along the entire coastline which ranges to 7516.6 km and Exclusive Economic Zone of India and is involving all the 13 coastal States and UTs along with all maritime stakeholders, like the fishing and coastal communities.

Key Highlights

- The seaward monitoring during the exercise will be involving patrolling off the coast, in offshore development areas and islands by the Indian navy, Indian coast guard, supported by the state marine police.

- It would also be including inputs from technical means, like intelligence sources.

- In addition to that, the closer coast, strategic assets, ports, Single Point Moorings (SPMs) will going to be patrolled by designated agencies.

- The shore-based monitoring will be including enhanced vigil by the state police along the coast, monitoring of fish landing centres by state fisheries departments and monitoring of port areas by respective port authorities also.

- The exercise will be covering a wide frontage, covering for the first time the entire coast of India, including island territories.

- It will also be going deeper, being spread over seaward, coastal, and hinterland areas.

- It will be involving the evaluation of critical areas and processes, including inter-agency coordination, information sharing and technical surveillance.

Environment Ministry notifies CRZ Regulations 2019 on - 22nd January 2019

The Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change on 18th January 2019 notified the 2019 CRZ (Coastal Regulation Zone) norms, replacing the existing CRZ norms of 2011.

- The new CRZ norms, issued under Section 3 of the Environment Protection Act, 1986, aiming to promote sustainable development based on scientific principles taking into account the natural hazards such as the increase of sea levels due to global warming.

- The norms also seek to conserve and protect the environment of coastal stretches and marine areas, other than livelihood security to the fisher communities and other local communities in the coastal area as well.

PM Narendra Modi inaugurates Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose museum at Red Fort

PM Narendra Modi on January 23rd, 2019 initiated the Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose museum at Red Fort in Delhi to honour the leader's 122nd Birth Anniversary.

The PM revealed the plaque to initiate the Museum. The museum displays various articles connected to Subhash Chandra Bose & Indian National Army.

Important Highlights

- The museum on Bose & the Indian National Army displays various articles connected to Subhash Chandra Bose & Indian National Army.

- The articles are a wooden chair & sword utilised by the leader & medals, badges, uniforms & other articles connected to the Indian National Army.

- Visitors can also see a documentary on Netaji & the Indian National Army to recognize the vision of the freedom fighter.

- Bollywood actor Abhishek Bachchan has lent his voice for the same.

- PM Modi had placed the foundation stone of the museum during the celebrations of the 75th anniversary of Azad Hind Government in October 2018.

- The Prime Minister also revealed 2 extra new museums inside the Red Fort complex including the Yaad-e-Jallian Museum on the Jallianwala Bagh & World War-I & the Museum on 1857 for India's 1st war of Independence.

Important Highlights



○ Prime Minister Modi also initiated Drishyakala-Exhibition on Indian Art. The whole complex of museums will be acknowledged as Kranti Mandir as a tribute to the revolutionary zeal & courage of our great freedom fighters.

Unconditional Cash Transfer to Farmers recommended by - SBI Ecowrap Report

The State Bank of India 'Ecowrap' report acclaims the government to choose for the unconditional cash transfer to farmers to ease agrarian distress rather than Universal Basic Income scheme.

Motive behind initiative

○ Presently, it is not possible to implement 'Rythu Bandhu Scheme' at the national level due to reason that land information is yet to be digitized in various states including Jharkhand, Bihar, Gujarat, & Tamil Nadu.

○ Thus, the unconditional cash transfer scheme is a best available choice as it will be more equitable with a meaningful influence & once the problems are ironed-out in terms of proper tenancy laws, then it can be ended conditional.

○ The report remarks that many nations have found that Universal Basic Income does not highlight the structural issues & is at best a solution in interval.

○ The report approximates various subsidy advantages the farmers are availing & suggests if a farmer is availing 1/all the 3 modes of subsidy including Crop Insurance, Interest Subsidy & Fertilizer Subsidy, then farmer will get a minimum of Rupees 5335 up to maximum Rupees 10162 per year as cash support.

○ The report forecasts that government would be needed to issue cash support in the range of Rupees 10000 to 12000 per year to make it completely cash neutral & the annual cost of such a scheme is Rupees 1.2 lakh crore per year.

Non-obese & lean Indians are also prone to type 2 diabetes : Study

A new study has discovered that contrary to popular belief, not only obese & overheavy but also non-obese & slim individuals may be prone to type-2

diabetes. The study points that approximately 20-30% people suffering from diabetes are non-obese & slim.

Type 2 Diabetes

○ Type-2 diabetes is a chronic condition that disturbs the way body metabolizes glucose. With Type-2 diabetes body either resists the insulin effects, which is a hormone that controls the movement of glucose into cells of human body or doesn't produce enough insulin to sustain normal glucose levels.

○ The popular acceptance was that obesity & sedentary lifestyle are measured to be the main essential factors for insulin resistance & consequent diabetes.

○ The new study has broken this fairy-tale that increasing obesity alone is the main causative factor for diabetes.

Reason

○ The study notes that non-obese with BMI below 25 & even slim people with BMI below 19, have high body fat, excess fats in the liver & skeletal muscles & lesser skeletal muscle build.

○ More significantly, a large number of non-obese & slim Indians has ectopic fat in their liver & pancreas which may result to insulin resistance leading to diabetes even in young age.

ECI to host international conference on making elections inclusive & accessible on - 25th January 2019

The Election Commission of India- ECI will be holding an International Conference on Making Elections Inclusive & Accessible on January 24th, 2019, in consonance with the 9th "National Voters' Day" which will be organised on January 25th, 2019.

Important Highlights

• The International conference is being held with the motive of sharing the experience of different EMB's, International institutions & specialists with concern to analysis of barriers, policy interventions, policies, programs, good practices & technological innovation for inclusive & accessible election.



- The conference will have 2 sessions in which representatives from the EMBs & International Groups will take part & share their experiences, best practices & initiatives focused at electoral engagement, enrolment & active participation in inclusive & accessible voting practises in various nations.

- The international representatives will also witness the national voters' day merriments in New Delhi besides visiting the new campus of the India International Institute of Democracy & Election Management at Dwarka in New Delhi.

- The January 2019 concerns of Election Commission of India's quarterly magazine 'Voice International' will also be out during the conference, which will carry articles on the theme of 'Making polling stations accessible & voter-friendly'.

World Integrated Medicine Forum held to advance global cooperation in Homoeopathy on - 23rd January 2019

The World Integrated Medicine Forum on the directive of Homoeopathic Medicinal Products with the theme "Advancing Global Collaboration" was initiated by Sripad Naik, Union Minister of State (I/C), Ministry of AYUSH on January 23rd, 2019. The 3-day forum is being planned by Central Council for Research in Homeopathy, with the help of Ministry of AYUSH, Homoeopathic Pharmacopoeia Convention of the United States & European Coalition on Homeopathic & Anthroposophic Medicinal Products, Pharmacopoeia Commission of Indian Medicine & Homoeopathy & Central Drugs Standard Control Organization.

Crucial Highlights

- The forum would witness participation from important public & private sector shareholders, including senates from World Health Organisation & drug regulatory authorities, pharmacopoeia experts & industrialists from different nations worldwide.

- It would also get participation from veterinary experts and the regulators & drug controllers of various states of India.

- The forum debates will primarily explore the unities and differences in regulatory affairs among numerous nations, discuss strategic regulatory & industry perspectives & possible situations in advancing international partnership.

- It would also emphasis on the ways to further improve pharmaceutical quality standards, cautious on integrating traditional medicine systems in primary healthcare, public health & bring out the perspectives on forming suitable requirements on various dimensions of drug supports including veterinary medicine.

ISRO launched Kalamsat, Microsat-R satellites on PSLV-C44 rocket on - 24th January 2019

The Indian Space Research Organisation- ISRO released a students' satellite Kalamsat & an imaging satellite Microsat-R from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh on January 24th, 2019, marking its 1st launch in 2019. The national space agency's rocket, PSLV-C44 took the satellites into the orbit. Afterward about 14 minutes into the flight, the rocket ejected the 700 kilograms Microsat R satellite at an altitude of about 277 kilometres.

Kalamsat Satellite

- The Kalamsat is a 10cm cube Nano-satellite weighing approximately 1.2 kilograms & has a life span of about 2 months.

- Kalamsat, arranged by a student & Chennai-based Space Kidz India, is a small satellite with dimensions 10 x 10 x 10 cm & is meant for HAM radio services.

- It has been settled by Space Kidz India & their team including Rifath Sharook, Srimathy Kesan, among others.

- The Kalamsat satellite was the 1st to utilise 4th stage PS4 of the launch vehicle PSLV-C44 as an orbital platform.



- The 4th stage moved to higher circular orbit so as to start an orbital platform for carrying out experiments.

Configuration of PSLV-C44 rocket

- The Polar Satellite Launching Vehicle is a 4-stage engine expendable rocket with alternating solid & liquid fuel.

- One of the specialisms of the release was the configuration of the rocket. Indian Space Research Organisation utilised the aluminium tank for the 1st time in the 4th stage of the launch of PSLV-C44.

- In its regular configuration, with 6 strap-on motors hugging the its 1st stage. However, for the launch of Kalamsat & Microsat-R satellites, the rocket accepted only 2 strap-on motors by the sides of the 1st fuel stage at the bottom.

- This was the 1st time the launch vehicle is manufactured in this configuration known as PSLV-DL.

- This will decrease the weight & upsurge the mass in the 4-stage engine expendable rocket with alternating solid & liquid fuel.

National Voters Day 2019 celebrated on - 25th January 2019

India is celebrating 9th 'National Voters Day' on 25th January 2019 for improved participation of residents in the electoral process. The main initiative of celebrating 'National Voters Day' is to encourage, simplify & maximize the enrolment, especially for the fresh voters.

Genesis of the National Voters Day

According to the suggestion mooted by the Ministry of Law & Justice, the Union Cabinet led by then PM sanctioned the suggestion to rejoice 'National Voters Day' on 25th January. The National Voters Day was 1st renowned on 25th January 2011. January 25th is observed as the 'National Voter's Day' vowing to the statistic that it was on this day the Election Commission of India was established on 25th January 1950.

National Voters Day 2019

- India would be perceiving the parliamentary elections in 2019, in order to make sure a wide-ranging

election, process the subject of the 'National Voters Day' is No Voter to be Left Behind.

- President Ram Nath Kovind would be the Chief Guest at the core function being held by Election Commission in New Delhi. The programme is also decorated by Chief Election Commissioners & senior officers from Bangladesh, Bhutan, Kazakhstan, Maldives, Russia & Sri Lanka.

Indian Navy's largest-ever coastal defence exercise 'Sea Vigil' concluded on - 23rd January 2019

Indian Navy's largest-ever Coastal Defence Exercise- "Sea Vigil" was directed by the Navy & Coast Guard, in close harmonization with State Governments & UTs settled on January 23rd, 2019.

Objective

The important purpose of the exercise was to widely & holistically validate the efficacy of the events taken since the "26/11" attack in Mumbai. It intended to instantaneously activate the coastal security mechanism across all states & UTs.

Significant Highlights

- Sea Vigil was the largest such exercise the nation had ever observed in recent times & witness participation by above 100 ships, aircraft & patrol boats manned & functioned by various security agencies.

- It covered a wide frontage, covering for the 1st time the complete coast of India, including island territories, seaward, coastal & hinterland areas.

- The exercise contained 2 distinct phases. In the 1st phase, all the involved agencies evaluated the robustness of their own associations.

- During the 2nd phase, pretend attacks were carried out on vital installations & assets by insightful through the sea, in Kerala & Lakshadweep.

- The security groups were able to thwart efforts by the opposing force to insinuate onto the coast using commandeered fishing boats.



- The rejoinder of agencies to other security possibilities including hijacking of a ship & attack on offshore installations off Kochi Harbour was also evaluated.

Government institutes Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar on - 23rd January 2019

The Union Government on January 23rd, 2019 introduced an annual prize named "Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar" to mark the 122nd Birth Anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose.

The prize scheme will cater the efforts of organisations/individuals who work to improve suffering of the pretentious population in the aftermath of any disaster. The prize will be declared every year on 23 January on the Birthday of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose. All Indian People & groups who have excelled in areas of Disaster Management like Prevention, Mitigation, Preparedness, Saving, Response, Relief, Rehabilitation & Early Warning will be qualified for the prize.

Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar 2019

- For the year 2019, 8th Battalion of the NDRF, situated at Ghaziabad, was nominated for the Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar for its admirable work in Disaster Management.

- The 8th Battalion of National Disaster Response Force was elevated in 2006 & is a highly specialised Rescue & Response Force with large area of accountability covering National Capital Region, Uttarakhand, Western UP & Haryana.

- It contributed in 314 major operations & saved more than 50000 people. In the recent Kerala Floods, the battalion saved 5338 victims & displaced 24000 persons to safety.

- Other major disasters in which this National Disaster Response Force battalion took part are Leh Cloud Burst in 2011, Kedarnath Floods in 2013, Cyclone Hudhud in 2014, Chennai Floods in 2015 & Tripura Floods in 2018.

- The battalion had served efficiently to neutralise the threat during Radiation Incident at Mayapuri, Delhi during the year 2010.

- The battalion has also done admirable Disaster Management related work Internationally. In the result of Nepal Earthquake in 2015, 6 teams of the battalion were amongst the 1st responders to land at Kathmandu.

ICC awards 2018 recognised by - The International Cricket Council

The International Cricket Council awards recognise & honour the best International Cricket players of the previous year.

ICC prizes 2018

- Sir Garfield Sobers Trophy for ICC Cricketer of the Year presented to Indian Cricket team Skipper Virat Kohli.

- ICC Men's Test Player of the Year award presented to Indian Cricket team Skipper Virat Kohli.
- ICC One-Day International Player of the Year presented to captain of Indian Cricket team Virat Kohli.

- ICC Emerging Player of the Year was presented to Rishabh Pant.

- ICC Associate Player of the Year award presented to Calum MacLeod.

- T-20 International Performance of the Year award was given to Aaron Finch.

- ICC Spirit of Cricket prize was presented to Williamson.

- Umpire of the Year award was presented to Kumar Dharmasena.

- Fans' Moment of the Year award was presented to India's victory in the Under-19 World Cup Selection Process

- The awardees are nominated by a process wherein ICC Selection committee includes eminent former players picks the finalists for the various prizes. Then the awardees are nominated via votes by an electoral college encompassing present national team skippers of Test playing countries, members of the Elite Panel of ICC umpires & referees, prominent former players & cricket correspondents. The prizes are shared in case of a draw.



Amul Camel Milk launched in - Gujarat

The Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation Limited- GCMMF has released Amul Camel Milk in particular markets of Gandhinagar, Ahmedabad & Kutch in Gujarat.

Benefits of Camel Milk

- Camel milk supports healthy bacteria growth in the gut, making it easy to digest & it also recovers gastro-intestinal health & systemic immunity.
- Camel milk is rich in Vitamin B1 and can provide 70 percent of the recommended daily value per serving.
- Camel Milk is rich in calcium which benefits to develop stronger bones.
- Being a good source of potassium & phosphorus, calcium milk benefits in maintaining a healthy BP level, in combination with a low-sodium diet, which diminishes the risk of a stroke.
- Camel Milk has minimum levels of saturated fats. This move of Amul will give camel farmers better prices & will help customers by giving them hygienically-processed, greater quality camel milk.

BSNL to Offer Data Connectivity Services via - SMS in India

Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited- BSNL has inked a partnership pact with the French company Be-Bound to offer data connectivity via SMS in areas where there is no Internet access or signal breakages.

Effectiveness The SMS based data linking will assist with the support of a technology embedded in a mobile Application. The application will sense if the user's area has poor network connectivity. If yes, then the application will send directions to the Be-Bound server. These directions would be forwarded via SMS from the user's account. Be-Bound server will ease SMS based data connectivity after receiving a command from the application. The connectivity is based on SMS sent to & fro among the application & the Be-Bound server. This technology was 1st introduced in France & it is also being tested in few of

the African nations. In India, Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited is in talks with few applications to execute the technology.

Amendments to Currency Swap arrangement for SAARC nations approved by - Cabinet

The Union Cabinet led by PM Narendra Modi has sanctioned the modifications to the framework on currency swap arrangement for SAARC member nations. The modifications incorporate a standby capability of USD 400 million. This stand-by capability enables India to provide a prompt reply to the present request from SAARC member nations for enjoying the swap amount beyond the present limit prescribed under the SAARC Swap Framework.

SAARC Swap Framework

The Framework on Currency Swap Arrangement for SAARC Member Nations was formed with the motive to provide a line of funding for short term foreign exchange necessities/to meet the balance of payments disasters till longer-term preparations are made/the concern is resolved in the short-term itself. It was sanctioned by the Government of India on March 1, 2012. Under the framework Reserve Bank of India offers swaps of varying sizes to each SAARC Member nations dependent on their 2 months import needs, not exceeding US\$ 2 billion in total, in USD, Euro/INR.

Profits to SAARC & India

The pact has enabled India to fortify its relations with the SAARC nations together with enlightening financial stability in the region. This pact also bolsters the trustworthiness of India among the SAARC nations.

Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Prizes 2019 organised in - Varanasi

President Ram Nath Kovind discussed Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Prize 2019 to 30 awardees. The prizes were presented



during the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas being organised at Varanasi. The winner of this prestigious award includes Gita Gopinath chief economist of IMF, Nihal Singh Agar, founding president of VHP in Australia & Ramesh Chotai, ex-president of Hindu Mandir & Cultural Centre in Canada.

Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Prizes

Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Prize is the highest award deliberated on overseas Indians. The prizes are conferred on a Non-Resident Indian, Person of Indian Origin/an organization/institution established & operated by the Non-Resident Indians/Persons of Indian Origin, who has accomplished a crucial contribution in any one of the following fields:

- a) Better considerate about India abroad;
- b) Support to India's causes & concerns in a perceptible way;
- c) Producing closer ties between India, the overseas Indian community & their nation of residence;
- d) Social & humanitarian causes in India/overseas;
- e) Welfare of the local Indian community;
- f) Philanthropic & altruistic work;
- g) Eminence in one's field/ outstanding work, which has enhanced India's respect in the nation of residence;
- h) Distinction in skills which has enhanced India's prestige in that nation.

Goods & Services Tax Appellate Tribunal

The Union Cabinet led by PM Narendra Modi has sanctioned the formation of National Bench of Goods & Services Tax Appellate Tribunal. Features of the National Bench of Goods & Services Tax Appellate Tribunal The National Bench of the GST Appellate Tribunal will be situated in New Delhi. The National Bench of Goods & Services Tax Appellate Tribunal would contain President & include 1 technical member from the centre & 1 technical member from the state. The National Bench of GST Appellate

Tribunal will serve as a forum for the 2nd appeal in Goods & Services Tax laws & the 1st common forum for dispute resolution between Centre & states.

The 1st appeal against the decisions of the Appellate Authorities under the Central & State Goods & Services Tax Acts lie before the National Bench. National Bench of Goods & Services Tax Appellate Tribunal will make sure uniformity in redressal of arguments arising under Goods & Services Tax, & therefore, in the execution of Goods & Services Tax across the nation. Provisions for the National Bench of the Goods & Services Tax Appellate Tribunal Chapter XVIII of the CGST Act delivers for the Appeal & Review Mechanism for disagreement resolution under the Goods & Services Tax.

Section 109 of Chapter XVIII Chapter of CGST Act authorizes the Central Government to form an Appellate Tribunal known as the GSTAT for hearing on the sanction of Council, by notification, with effect from such date as may be definite therein on the approval of Goods & Services Tax Council.

IPS officer Aparna Kumar completes South Pole expedition located in -continent of Antarctica

Indian Police Service officer Aparna Kumar who is on deputation to Indo Tibetan Border Police- ITBP, become the 1st woman Indian Police Service & Indo Tibetan Border Police officer to effectively conquer the South Pole.

More about South Pole

- The South Pole is the Southernmost point on the surface of the Earth & is at the middle of the Southern Hemisphere. It is located on the continent of Antarctica.
- The South Pole is the coldest as well as driest place on Earth.
- The temperature there varies from -37 degrees to -48 degrees. As a result of this harsh climate, there are no native



inhabitant plants/animals at the South Pole.

- South polar skuas & snow petrels are infrequently seen there.

About the Expedition

- The expedition started from Chile.
- Indian Police Service officer Aparna Kumar started her journey with a team of 7 members & 2 guides.
- The team walked for 111 miles.

Aparna

Kumar

Aparna Kumar is an Indian Police Service officer of UP cadre & volleys from Karnataka. The IPS officer is working Indo Tibetan Border Police on deputation as Deputy Inspector General.

Renowned Hindi author, poet Krishna Sobti passed away on - 25th January 2019

Renowned Hindi author & poet Krishna Sobti deceased on January 25th, 2019 at a hospital in Delhi. She was 93 years old. The author had been admitted to a Delhi hospital for the past 2 months. She was about to finish her 94 years in February. Since the past 1 week, she was in the ICU.

More about Krishna Sobti

- She was born in 1925 in Gujrat, Punjab (now a part of Pakistan), Krishna Sobti was a famous Hindi fiction writer & essayist.

- She was known mainly for writing about issues of woman identity & sexuality. She is well known for her 1966 novel Mitro Marjani, an unapologetic portrayal of a married females' sexuality.

- Sobti also wrote under the pen name of Hashmat & has printed Hum Hashmat, a compilation of pen portraits of writers & friends.

- Her other novels comprised Daar Se Bichchuri, Surajmukhi Andhere Ke, Yaaron Ke Yaar, Zindaginama. In 1996, she was bestowed the Sahitya Akademi Fellowship, the highest award of the Akademi.

- A number of her works are now available in English & Urdu languages. Krishna Sobti earned the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1980 for her novel Zindaginama.

- In 2017, she got the Jnanpith Award for her contribution to Indian literature. She

was also the recipient of the 1st Katha Chudamani Award in 1999 for Lifetime Literary Achievement.

- She also earned the Shiromani Award in 1981, Hindi Academy Award in 1982 & Shalaka Award of the Hindi Academy Delhi. In 2008, her novel Samay Sargam was nominated for Vyas Samman, instituted by the K.K.Birla Foundation.

Veteran South African all-rounder Johan Botha declared retirement from all forms of cricket on - 23rd January 2019

Famous South African all-rounder Johan Botha has declared his instant retirement from all forms of cricket. The cricketer cited wear & tear on his body & complete physical fatigue as the main cause behind the decision. The news of his retirement was declared on the formal website of Botha's Australian T20 league team, the Hobart Hurricanes on January 23rd, 2019.

More about Johan Botha

- The ex-cricketer had played for the South African national team from 2005-2012.

- In 2012, he accomplished the decision to move to Australia to play in the nation's domestic leagues & in 2016 he was formally granted Australian citizenship.

- Born in Johannesburg, Botha represented the South African under-19s at the 2000 Under-19 World Cup & completed his 1st-class debut for Eastern Province in the same year at the age of 18.

- The all-rounder was a right-handed batsman & right-arm off-spin bowler. He did his international debut in November 2005, in an ODI against India.

- He had much greater achievement in the limited-overs arrangements, representing South Africa at the 2009 World T20, 2009 Champions Trophy, 2010 World T20, 2011 World Cup the 2012 World T20.

- He skippered the team for periods at both One-Day International & T20 International level, generally during the absence of more senior players. He



skipped the team in 10 One-Day Internationals & took it to the No.1 ranking after they defeated Australia 4-1 in Australia in 2009.

- He retired from international cricket following the 2012 World T20, inking a contract to captain South Australia in Australian domestic cricket.

48 people conferred Jeevan Raksha Padak awards on - 26th January 2019

The Indian President has approved the Jeevan Raksha Padak Series of Awards – 2018 conferment on 48 people, 8 of them posthumously.

These Jeevan Raksha Padak series of awards are conferred for the meritorious act of human nature in saving the human life. They are given under three categories: Sarvottam Jeevan Raksha Padak, Uttam Jeevan Raksha Padak and Jeevan Raksha Padak. Every common person who has done this type of great and noble work is eligible for these awards.

This year, the Sarvottam Jeevan Raksha Padak is granted to 8 people, Uttam Jeevan Raksha Padak to 15 and Jeevan Raksha Padak to 25 people. Among all, 8 awards were conferred posthumously.

The award decoration included a medal and a certificate signed by the Union Home Minister and monetary allowance presented to the awardee in due course by the respective organisations, Union Ministries, and state government to which the awardee belongs.

Jammu & Kashmir Governor gives assent to Jammu & Kashmir Reservation (Amendment) Bill, 2014 for - Pahari Community

J&K governor Satya Pal Malik has given his agreement to the Jammu & Kashmir Reservation (Amendment) Bill, 2014, giving reservation in government jobs for Pahari community. **Features of the Amendment Bill** The modification provides for reservation in government jobs for the individuals belonging to the Pahari community,

clan/tribe having a distinct cultural, ethnic & linguistic identity among the Socially & Educationally Backward classes which are other than SC & STs. The bill empowers the government of J&K to inform method & authority for documentation of Pahari Community.

Pahari Community

- The Pahari Community also known as Pahadi & Parbati belongs to Indo-Aryan ethnic group residing Himalayan areas of Nepal & India.

- Pahari community has archaeologically faced economic distress resulting in an inclusive socio-economic backwardness of the community due to the remoteness & inaccessibility of the areas that they have been residing in.

- Thus, to address these breaks the government of J&K has stretched the reservation in Jobs.

President confers Ashoka Chakra to Lance Naik Nazir Wani

India's highest peacetime gallantry award, Ashoka Chakra was honoured to Lance Naik Nazir Wani posthumously. The prize was given by President Ram Nath Kovind and was received by Wani's wife & mother at the Republic Day celebrations organised at Rajpath. Lance Naik Nazir Wani also grasps the distinction of being the 1st Kashmiri to be deliberated the Ashoka Chakra.

Lance Naik Nazir Wani sacrificed his life fighting the terrorists

Lance Naik Nazir Wani single-handedly killed 2 terrorists during the Shopian operation & bruised a 3rd one despite receiving deep injuries. Lance Naik Nazir Wani prohibited the escape of the terrorists from the target house. He made a vast contribution in neutralising 6 hardcore terrorists. In this process, he sacrificed his life.

More about Ashoka Chakra

Ashoka Chakra is India's highest Peacetime Military Decoration prized for valour, courageous activities/self-sacrifice away from the



battlefield & it is peacetime equivalent to Param Vir Chakra which is prized for the most noticeable bravery/some daring/pre-eminent valour/self-sacrifice in the battlefield.

Bharat Ratna Awards 2019 conferred on - 26th January 2019

The 2019 Bharat Ratna prize has been conferred upon former President Pranab Mukherjee, Nanaji Deshmukh & singer Bhupen Hazarika. Nanaji Deshmukh & singer Bhupen Hazarika were given Bharat Ratna posthumously.

Pranab Mukherjee

Pranab Mukherjee worked as the 13th President of India from 2012-2017. A veteran congressman, Pranab Mukherjee had apprehended various important portfolios including Finance, Defence & External Affairs as Union Minister. He is the outstanding statesman of the existing time. Pranab Mukherjee has also worked as a professor of Political Science at Vidyanagar College in West Bengal. Previously entering Politics, he was served as a journalist with Desher Dak.

Nanaji Deshmukh

Nanaji Deshmukh laid great attention on education as a social worker. The 1st Saraswati Shishu Mandir was recognized by him at Gorakhpur in 1950. He was a member of RSS & also worked as general secretary of Bharatiya Jana Sangh. Nanaji Deshmukh participated in Jai Prakash Narayan movement during the Emergency. He was selected as a member of Lok Sabha from Balrampur in 1977. He has also worked as a nominated member of Rajya Sabha. Nanaji was bestowed Padma Vibhushan in 1999.

Bhupen Hazarika

Bhupen Hazarika was a playback singer, lyricist, musician, singer, poet & film-maker from Assam, generally known as Sudhakantha. He chiefly wrote & sang in the Assamese

language. His works were highlighted by humanity & universal brotherhood & have been translated & sung in various languages. He also worked as a channel to announce the culture & folk music of Assam & Northeast India to Hindi cinema at the national level.

Memorandum of Understanding between India Kuwait on - Domestic Workers recruitment

The Union Cabinet led by PM Narendra Modi has sanctioned the inking of MoU between India & Kuwait for co-operation on the recruitment of domestic workers.

Features of the Memorandum of Understanding

- The Memorandum of Understanding will deliver a structured outline for collaboration on domestic workers related issues.
- It delivers supported safeguards for Indian domestic workers including woman workers deployed in Kuwait.
- Primarily valid for 5 years, it has a provision for automatic renewal.
- The Memorandum of Understanding also proposes formation of a cooperative committee will also be formed to follow up the execution.
- The Memorandum of Understanding will advantage about 3 lakh Indian workers positioned in Kuwait, including approximately 90000 women domestic workers & encourages bilateral assistance in domestic workers-related issues between the both nations.

LRSAM Successfully Tested from - Coast of Odisha

India has effectively flight-tested Long-Ranged Surface-to-Air Missile- LRSAM from a warship off the Odisha coast. The Long-Ranged Surface-to-Air Missile effectively damaged a low flying aerial target. This paves way for its deployment in the armed forces.

Features of the LRSAM

- Long-Ranged Surface-to-Air Missile has been mutually developed by Defence Research & Development Organisation



(DRDO), India & M/s Israel Aerospace Industries for the Indian Navy.

- The Long-Ranged Surface-to-Air Missile was test fired in operational configuration on-board INS Chennai deployed in the Arabian Sea.

- The missile was 1st tested from INS Kolkata on western seaboard in 2015. It had completed all aims.

- Long-Ranged Surface-to-Air Missile has an operational range of 75 kilometres & it can terminate airborne threats including jets, aircraft, anti-ship missiles & rockets including projectiles launched instantaneously.

- The Long-Ranged Surface-to-Air Missile has a length of about 4.5m, a diameter of 0.54m, a wingspan of 0.94m & weighs about 275 kilograms including a 60 kilograms warhead which explodes at propinquity.

South Asian Nitrogen Hub declared by - The British government

The British government has declared a research project, South Asian Nitrogen Hub, to investigate nitrogen pollution in India and South Asia. The project headed by United Kingdom's Centre for Ecology & Hydrology will partner with 50 groups from the United Kingdom & South Asia. The Indian Institutions

partnering the investigation are:

- National Institute of Oceanography
- Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University GGSIU

- Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology

- Jawaharlal Nehru University JNU

- Aligarh Muslim University AMU

- National Physical Laboratory

- TERI University

The project goals to investigate the influence of different forms of nitrogen pollution, particularly looking at nitrogen in agriculture in 8 nations of South Asia which consists India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Bhutan & Maldives.

Nitrogen Pollution
Pollutant Gases including ammonia &

nitrogen dioxide are generated from chemical fertilizers, livestock manure, & burning of fossil fuels & is linked to air pollution, biodiversity loss, the pollution of rivers & seas, ozone depletion, health, economy & livelihoods.

Yuva Swabhiman Yojana declared by - MP Government

The government of MP has declared the Yuva Swabhiman Yojana to deliver employment for the unemployed youngsters from the economically weaker sections of the society.

More about the Scheme

- It goals to deliver employment to the youngsters belonging to the weaker section of the society chiefly in urban areas of the state.

- The scheme goals to deliver 100-days of employment to youngsters from economically weaker sections of the society in urban areas.

- The youngsters would also be issued skill training by the government.

- The factor of skill training has been added to enable the youngsters to explore the available options.

- To augment the job opportunities the government of MP has also declared variations in industrial policy with a clause under which industries would be eligible to get the state government incentives only if they hire 70% workers from MP.

- With this scheme, the government goals to cover those from urban centres who are left out from the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act.

- Since those in rural areas are covered under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act-MNREGA, the scheme focuses on urban areas.

Australian Open 2019 concluded at - Melbourne

Australian Open which is the 1st of the 4 Grand Slam tennis programmes concluded at Melbourne in Australia. Nicknamed as the 'Happy Slam', the Australian Open has expanded to



become the largest yearly sporting programme in the Southern Hemisphere.

Novak Djokovic of Serbia become the 1st man to secure 7 titles at Australian Open. The victory of Naomi Osaka of Japan strengthens her place as number 1 women singles player of the world.

Winners of the Australian Open 2019

In Women's Singles, Naomi Osaka of Japan won the title.

In Men's Singles, Novak Djokovic of Serbia won the title.

In Women's Doubles, Samantha Stosur of Australia & Zhang Shuai of China won the title.

In Men's Doubles, Pierre-Hugues Herbert & Nicolas Mahut of France won the title.

In Mixed Doubles, Czech Republic's Barbora Krejckova & Rajeev Ram of the United States won the title.

Bharat Parv Begins at - Red Fort, New Delhi

Bharat Parv is a 5-day programme hosted as part of Republic Day celebrations. Bharat Parv held at Red Fort, Delhi goals to produce a patriotic fervour & promote the rich cultural diversity of the nation.

Bharat Parv has been held by Ministry of Tourism in association with other Central Ministries & State Governments.

Attractions of Bharat Parv

Bharat Parv displays the spirit of 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat'. The significant attractions of Bharat Parv are:

- Replica of the Statue of Unity.
- Gandhi Gram in which Ten painting artists will produce paintings on the theme of Ideology of Mahatma Gandhi.
- Exhibition of Republic Day parade tableaux
- Performances by the Armed Forces bands.
- Theme based State Pavilions where each state displays its strong point along with its tourism products.
- Daily cultural performances by North Zone Cultural Centre.

Three Mission Centres Inaugurated at - IIT Madras

The Union Minister for Science & Technology inaugurated the 3 Department of Science & Technology mission centres at the IIT Madras at the communal cost of Rupees 50 crores. These centres are emphasised on critical technologies for sustainability including harnessing of solar energy in myriad ways, scientific recycling & water conservation.

DST Mission Centres

The 3 Department of Science & Technology mission centres inaugurated were:

1. Department of Science & Technology-IITM Solar Energy Harnessing Centre which will emphasise on a wide range of research & technology development including silicon solar cells that guarantee high efficiency & are suitable for Indian conditions.

2. Department of Science & Technology-IITM Centre for Sustainable Treatment, Reuse & Management for Efficient, Affordable & Synergistic Solutions for Water and it emphasises on coordinated research & training programmes on various matters related to wastewater management, water treatment, sensor development, stormwater management & distribution as well as collection systems.

3. Department of Science & Technology-IITM-KGDS Test-bed on Solar Thermal Desalination Solutions in Narippaiyur which has been recognized with an objective to deliver customised technology solutions to address prevalent water trials in the arid coastal village situated on the shores of the Bay of Bengal.

'No Presents Please' secures DSC Prize for South Asian Literature 2018 during - Tata Steel Kolkata Literary Meet

'No Presents Please' is an English Novel translated from Kannada version of Jayant Kaikini. The novel was translated to English by Tejaswini Niranjana and award was declared for this



novel during the Tata Steel Kolkata Literary Meet. The award was given by eminent writer Ruskin Bond to Jayant Kaikini & translator Tejaswini Niranjana.

For the 1st time the award was being presented to a translated work & the jury wanted to recognise the outstanding contribution of the translator Tejaswini Niranjana. The novel represents illustrate life in Mumbai with the Mumbai City represented as a character of a coherent narrative.

DSC Prize for South Asian Literature

- Instituted in 2010, the annual DSC Prize for South Asian Literature honours the best work in South Asian fiction writing.
- The Prize is honoured to writers of any ethnicity/nationality writing about South Asia themes including culture, politics and history/people.
- The DSC Prize for South Asian Literature was introduced by Surina Narula & Manhad Narula in 2010 for an original long novel written/translated into English.

Fastest Indian Cricketer to reach 100 ODI wickets - Mohammed Shami

Fast Bowler Mohammed Shami has become the quickest Indian to get 100 wickets in ODIs. Mohammed Shami got this feat in his 56th One-Day International game. Mohammed Shami's wicket number 100 was New Zealand's opener, Martin Guptill.

Prior to Mohammed Shami, the record was with Iran Pathan who had attained the 100 wickets mark in 59 One-Day Internationals. Other Indians in the list of quickest Indians to reach 100 One-day International wickets are Zaheer Khan in 65 matches, Ajit Agarkar in 67 matches & Javagal Srinath in 68 games.

More about Mohammed Shami

- Mohammed Shami is a reverse swing specialist, who completed his 1st-class debut in 2010 against Assam.
- He was chosen for the West Indies tour of India-A squad in 2012.

- Mohammed Shami played his One-day International debut against Pakistan in January 2013 & Test debut against West Indies in November 2013.

Delhi to award MSP as per - Swaminathan Committee Report

The Delhi government has finalised to announce the Minimum Support Price-MSP for farmers grounded on the sanctions of the National Commission on Farmers led by M.S.Swaminathan.

Swaminathan Committee sanctions on MSP

- The National Commission on Farmers was formed on November 18th, 2004 under the leadership of Professor M.S.Swaminathan.
 - The committee completed some significant sanctions on land reforms, irrigation, credit & insurance, food security, employment, the productivity of agriculture & farmer competitiveness.
 - On the matter of Minimum Support Price, the committee recommended delivering farmers with a MSP at 50% profit more than the cost of production classified as C2 by the Commission for Agricultural Costs & Prices.
- ### **Production costs in Agriculture**
- The Commission for Agricultural Costs & Prices suggests 3 definitions of production costs in agriculture. They are:
- A2: It is the actual paid-out expenses experienced by farmers which is in cash & kind on seeds, fertilisers, pesticides, hired labour, fuel, irrigation & other inputs from outside.
- A2+FL: It comprises A2 cost +an credited value of unpaid family labour.
- C2: It accounts for the rentals/interest loans, owned land & fixed capital assets more than A2+FL.

India to participate in the International Student Assessment (PISA) in - 2021

The Programme for International Student Assessment- PISA, is a triennial international survey which goals to assess education systems around the world by testing the skills & knowledge of 15 years



old students. India would be participating in the Programme for International Student Assessment in 2012.

More about PISA

- Programme for International Student Assessment co-ordinated by the Organization for Economic Cooperation & Development is a 2-hour long test. Programme for International Student Assessment calculates the 15 years old students reading, mathematics, & science literacy.

- Programme for International Student Assessment does not assess a student's memory & curriculum-based knowledge rather Programme for International Student Assessment highlights functional skills that students have attained as they near the end of compulsory schooling.

- Programme for International Student Assessment calculates the student's ability to utilise their ability to tackle the real-life challenge.

- Students who are 15 years old & have completed/near the end of their compulsory education & those have finished minimum 6 years of formal schooling would be assessed.

- Programme for International Student Assessment is criticised for the fact that it is preoccupied with standardised testing relying deeply on quantitative calculates.

India & PISA

- India had participated in Programme for International Student Assessment 2009.

- The performance of Indian students was terribly poor & India was placed 72nd rank among 74 participating nations.

- Then government of India refused Programme for International Student Assessment, blaming "out of context" questions for India's dismal performance.

- India would be participating in the 2021 test. KVs, Navodaya Vidyalayas, all schools, private & government, in Chandigarh will take part in the 2021 test.

- Organization for Economic Cooperation & Development would also be

conducting Programme for International Student Assessment- like assessment for students of KVs & Navodaya Vidyalayas yearly from 2019 to familiarise themselves with their testing outline in the run-up to the grand assessment in 2021.

India replaces Japan to be world's second largest steel manufacturer behind - China

India has replaced Japan as the world's 2nd-largest steel producing nation, only behind China, which is the largest manufacturer of crude steel accounting for above 51% of production, according to the latest report by World Steel Association. The report informed that India's crude steel production in 2018 was at 106.5 MT, which is up by 4.9% from 101.5 MT in 2017.

Significant Highlights

- The increase in India's crude steel production in 2018 means that India has swapped Japan as the world's 2nd-largest steel producing nation, as Japan manufactures 104.3 MT in 2018, which is less by 0.3% as compared to 2017.

- On the other hand, China's crude steel output increased by 6.6% to 928.3 MT in 2018 from 870.9 MT in 2017.

- China's share also raised from 50.3% in 2017 to 51.3% in 2018.

- The global crude steel production remained 1808.6 MT for the year 2018 from 1729.8 MT in 2017, displaying a rise of 4.6%.

- The other nations in the list of top 10 steel producing nations are the United States of America, which is at the 4th position as the nation manufactured 86.7 MT of crude steel in 2018, trailed by South Korea at the 5th place with 72.5 MT of crude steel, Russia at 6th place with 71.7 MT, Germany at 7th place with 42.4 MT, Turkey at 8th place with 37.3 MT, Brazil at 9th with 34.7 MT & Iran at the 10th place with 25 MT crude steel in 2018.

- Among other nations, Italy manufactured 24.5 MT of crude steel in 2018, France manufactured 15.4 MT & Spain produced 14.3 MT & Ukraine manufactured 21.1 MT of crude steel in the same year.



Iran Trade Promotion Plan by - 3 European Powers

3 European Powers United Kingdom, France & Germany are about declare a plan to assist organisations trading to Iran to rebel the permissions on Iran. **US permissions on Iran** United States President Trump had unilaterally walked out of the Joint comprehensive Plan of Action pact & re-imposed the permissions on Iran. Under the Joint comprehensive Plan of Action pact, Iran had decided to curb its nuclear activities in return for the lifting of permissions that had been imposed by the United Nations, United States & European Union. This unilateral action of United States developed a lot of resentment & other parties to pact China, Russia, United Kingdom, France & Germany reiterated their pledge to the deal. The permissions would restrict the organisations with a presence in Iran to utilise the dollar as a medium of exchange.

Iran trade promotion plan

Iran trade promotion plan has been suggested by the United Kingdom, France & Germany as part of their promises to save the nuclear deal with Iran. This plan suggests a special purpose vehicle to receive payments from organisations that want to trade with Iran, by receiving waivers for oil imports/permisible trade in goods like food & medicine. With no direct transfer of funds between Iran & European organisations, it would hypothetically insulate companies from United States penalties.

This plan would protect European organisations intense to do business with Iran from United States permissions that could result from dollar-based transactions.

75 years since WWII siege of Leningrad known as - ST. Petersburg

Russian noticed the 75th anniversary of the end of the shocking World War-II siege by Nazi forces with a large military parade

at ST. Petersburg which was then known as Leningrad.

Siege of Leningrad

After the incursion of Soviet Union by Nazi Germany in June 1941, the German Army move toward Leningrad from the west & their ally Finish Army move toward the city from the south, down the Karelian Isthmus. Leningrad's population combined hands to build antitank fortifications along the city's area in the support of the Red Army defenders. Even though the defence devices soon stabilised, the city was almost entirely encircled, with all the vigorous rail & other supply lines cut off by early November. This barrier & siege claimed above 650000 lives in 1942 alone. The nominal supplies which were coming kept the city's arms factories working & its 2 million inhabitants barely alive in 1942. Soviet released an offensive in early 1943 & cracked the German encirclement & permitted

more copious supplies to reach Leningrad along the shores of Lake Ladoga. By January 1944, an effective Soviet offensive drove the Germans westward from the city's outskirts, finishing the siege. The government of the former Soviet Union awarded the Order of Lenin to Leningrad in 1945 & conferred the title Hero City of the Soviet Union in 1965. A monument to celebrate the victims & heroism of the siege was revealed in 1975.

Vande Bharat Express train under - Make In India Project

India's fastest indigenous train, Train-18 christened as Vande Bharat Express will run between Delhi & Varanasi. Train-18 is an indigenously produced world-class train under Make in India initiative. The 16- coached train has been developed completely in India by Indian engineers in a time span of 18-month at the Integral Coach Factory, Chennai.



Features of the Vande Bharat Express

- Vande Bharat Express is the energy efficient & the 1st engine-less train in the nation & will be fully air-conditioned.
- These trains operate on electric traction like Metro trains & will begin replacing the Shatabdi Express fleet from coming year.
- The fares in these world-class trains are 40-50% higher than the Shatabdi Express. The train will cover 755 kilometres distance in 8 hours with stoppages at Kanpur & Prayagraj making it as the fastest train on the route.
- The new train delivers number of features to improve passenger comfort which consist inter-connected fully sealed gangways, automatic doors with retractable footsteps, onboard Wi-Fi & data, GPS-based passenger information system, linked toilets with bio-vacuum systems, rotational seats which can be positioned in the direction of travel, only in the executive class, roller blinds, diffused LED lighting & disabled-friendly toilet.

Supreme Court refuses to stay modifications to SC/ST Act as per - Amendment Bill, 2018

The Supreme Court has declined to stay the modifications to SCs & the STs (Prevention of Atrocities) Amendment Bill, 2018. These modifications were brought in to nullify the protections instituted by the Supreme Court to avoid its misuse.

Safeguards proposed by Supreme Court

Expressing concerns over the misappropriation of the various provisions under the SCs & the STs (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, the Supreme Court had proposed some safety mechanisms including-

- Provision of anticipatory bail.
- Sanction of SSP to arrest those accused under this act.
- Deputy Superintendent of Police to conduct an initial enquiry to find out whether there is a prima facie

case under Act. Scheduled Castes & the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Amendment Act, 2018

Investigating officer-IO will not need the sanction of any authority for the arrest of an accused. Initial enquiry will not be needed for the registration of a FIR against a person accused under the Act. Persons suspect of committing an offence under the Act cannot go for anticipatory bail.

Indonesia Masters Badminton Tournament 2019 planned by - Badminton Association of Indonesia

The Indonesian Masters Badminton Tournament 2019 is planned by the Badminton Association of Indonesia. It was the 3rd tournament of the 2019 BWF World Tour. The tournament was organised at the Istora Gelora Bung Karno in Jakarta, Indonesia from 22nd-27th January 2019 presented a total purse of \$350000.

The winners under the various categories are registered-

Women's Singles title to Saina Nehwal, from India.

Men's Singles title to Anders Antonsen from Denmark.

Women's Doubles title to Misaki Matsutomo & Ayaka Takahashi from Japan.

Men's Doubles title to Marcus Fernaldi Gideon & Kevin Sanjaya Sukamuljo from Indonesia.

Mixed Doubles title to Zheng Siwei & Huang Yaqing from China.

K J Alphons to inaugurate first Swadesh Darshan Project in Sikkim on - 30th January 2019

K.J. Alphons, Union Minister for Tourism will be inaugurating the first project under the Swadesh Darshan Project of the Union Ministry of Tourism at the Zero Point, Gangtok, Sikkim on 30th January 2019. The Ministry of Tourism sanctioned this project in June 2015 for Rs. 98.05 crores.



This project is officially termed as “Development of North East Circuit: Rangpo– Rorathang- Aritar- Phadamchen- Nathang-Sherathang- Tsongmo- Gangtok- Phodong- Mangan- Lachung-Yumthang- Lachen- Thangu-Gurudongmer- Mangan- Gangtok-Tuminlingee- Singtam”.

Important Highlights

- Swadesh Darshan Scheme is one of the flagship scheme of Ministry of tourism for development of thematic circuits in a planned manner in the country.
- The Government is focussing on development of quality infrastructure in the country with objective to provide better experience and facilities to the visitors under this scheme and on fostering the economic growth.
- The scheme was launched in 2014 - 15 when the Ministry sanctioned 77 projects worth projects for Rs. 6121.69 crore to UTs and 30 States.
- These 30 projects are expected to be completed by the 2019 end , Out of them 11 projects have already been inaugurated.

Common digital currency called 'Aber' launched by - UAE, Saudi Arabian central banks

The central banks of the UAE and Saudi Arabia have launched a common digital currency called ‘Aber’, which will use in financial settlements between both the countries through Distributed Ledgers technologies and Blockchains. The UAE central bank mentioned that in a statement that it will establish an additional means for the central financial transfer systems of both the countries and enabling banks to directly deal with each other in conducting financial remittances.

Important Highlights

- In order to implement Aber project, both the two countries have emphasised that concentration in the initial stages will be on technical aspects.
- The use of the currency will be getting restricted to a limited number of banks in each state.

- In case that no technical obstacles are economic, encountered and legal requirements for future uses will be considered.

- The central bank-based digital currency will be making cross-border financial transactions financially efficient and more secure.

- The Central Bank of UAE and SAMA share the same desire in launching pilot projects in using the Blockchain and Distributed Ledgers technologies to identify them and learn how to benefit from them.

Maharashtra Government launched special scheme to curb infant deaths on - 29th January 2019

The state government of Maharashtra has launched a special scheme to curb infant deaths on 29th January 2019. The government has started distributing baby-care kits to the children born in government hospitals and primary health centres, as part of its efforts to minimize the infant mortality rate.

While speaking after the launch, the state’s Women and Child Development Minister Pankaja Munde mentioned that the scheme is only applicable for the first child and it is expected to benefit around 4 lakh women all across the state.

Important Highlights

- Each of the baby-care kits contains a blanket, a towel, a thermometer, nail-cutter, gloves, a small mattress, baby oil, shampoo, toys and socks among other things.

- The total cost of each kit is around Rs 2,000.

- The baby-care kits will be given to the women, who get admitted to a state-run hospital, after their first delivery.

- The government has also allocated Rs 20 crore for the scheme but would be increasing the amount if needed.

PM Modi inaugurated National Salt Satyagraha Memorial on - 30th January 2019



Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated the National Salt Satyagraha Memorial at Dandi in Navsari district, Gujarat to the nation on 30th January 2019 on the occasion of Mahatma Gandhi's 71st death anniversary.

The Prime Minister also unveiled at the memorial site, the statues of Mahatma Gandhi and 80 Satyagrahis who had marched with him during the historic Dandi Salt March to make salt from sea water against the British law in 1930.

Important Highlights

- The memorial has 24-narrative murals which depicts various stories and events from the historic 1930 Dandi March.
- Other than that, solar trees are also installed around the site in order to meet the energy requirements of the memorial complex.
- The main motto of this memorial is to serve as a reminder of the great sacrifices made by the people of the nation for the freedom cause.
- It is a tribute to the Satyagrahis led by Gandhi Ji, who worked for India's freedom and simultaneously is expected to be a major attraction for the tourists.
- The memorial encapsulates the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi- Agra for Swatchagrah, Swadeshi and Satyagraha.

Did you know?

The Government has declared 7th August to be celebrated as Handlooms Day, every year in order to promote handlooms.

Corruption Perceptions Index 2018 released on - 29th January 2019

Corruption Perceptions Index of Transparency International ranks nations & territories grounded on how corrupt a nation's public sector & judiciary are professed to be by specialists & business executives.

It is the most widely utilised indicator of corruption around the world & it does not consider corruption in the business sector. The corruption perception index draws on

13 reviews & skilful assessments to measure public sector corruption in 180 nations & territories. The scores indicate the apparent level of public sector corruption on a scale of 0-100. A score of 0 points that a nation is perceived as highly corrupt & a 100 points that a nation has sound integrity systems.

India's Position

- India's position has been marginally improved 41 from 40 in 2017.
- India's position increased from 81st in 2017 to 78th in 2018. India had slipped down from 79th rank in 2016.
- The report cities nations including India along with Malaysia, Maldives & Pakistan will be significant to watch moving forward.
- The report records that all these nations stated above have witnessed massive public mobilisation against corruption coupled with significant political participation & voter turnout ensuing in new governments that assured extensive anti-corruption reforms.
- The report references that these encouraging expansions are yet to show some tangible solid action, particularly when it comes to combating elusive forms of grand corruption.
- The report noted that since India gears-up for general elections, there was a little important movement in its Corruption Perceptions Index score, which moved from 40th in 2017 to 41st in 2018.
- The report notes that in-spite of spectacular public mobilisation in 2011, where residents necessitated the government to take action against corruption & support for the passage of the comprehensive Jan Lokpal bill, with little to no movement on the basis to develop the specialist anti-corruption infrastructure needed.

Africa Centre for Climate & Sustainable Development initiated at - Rome

The Africa Centre for Climate & Sustainable Development was initiated by the Italian PM Giuseppe Conte at Rome.



The centre has been initiated by the Italian government in connotation with the UN Development Program & the Food & Agricultural Organisation.

More about the Centre

- The centre's origin can be outlined to a declaration permitted by the G-7 meeting of the Environment Ministers in 2017.

- The centre would ease co-ordination among the G-7 & African nations on common initiatives in Africa to attain the goals formed by the Paris Agreement & the 2030 Agenda.

- The Centre would effort towards addressing the desires of Africa by delivering a platform for G-7 nations to steer their co-operation to contrast environmental degradation & encourage sustainable economic growth in the region.

- The centre will deliver a fast-track, demand-driven process for African nations to access grant resources that support policies, initiatives, & best practices on climate change, food security, access to water, clean energy, & accelerating progress on the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa.

- The centre would be hosted by United Nations Development Programme which would use its extensive nation office network & programmatic hubs, & global expertise & knowledge, to enable the African nations to access the resources available through it.

Attaining the Sustainable Development Goals by - Africa

Africa referred to as Dark Continent still has up to 330 million of its population residing in poverty & up to 60 percent of unemployed Africans are youngsters. The centre will benefit to speed-up progress & quickly resource national development primacies in the African nations to address these challenges & achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

Punit Goenka named as new chairman of - BARC India

The Broadcast Audience Research Council of India has selected Punit Goenka MD & CEO of Zee

Entertainment Enterprises Limited as the Chairman. Punit Goenka as a founder Chairman of Broadcast Audience Research Council had played a crucial role in institutionalizing Broadcast Audience Research Council.

Broadcast Audience Research Council of India

- BARC India, is a cooperative Industry Company originated in 2010 by shareholder bodies that represent Broadcasters, Advertisers, & Advertising & Media Companies.

- The promoters of Broadcast Audience Research Council India are Indian Broadcasting Foundation, Indian Society of Advertisers & Advertising Agencies Association of India.

- Broadcast Audience Research Council India was formed according to the strategies of the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Government of India.

- Broadcast Audience Research Council India has evolved a transparent, accurate, & inclusive TV audience measurement system on the groundwork of robust & future-ready technology backbone.

- Together with the audience measurement system, Broadcast Audience Research Council India provides a suite of Insight products intended for Broadcasters, Advertisers & Agencies.

- The information produced & the insights provided by Broadcast Audience Research Council India benefits in making efficient decision making by the shareholders.

- Broadcast Audience Research Council India analyses the viewership habits of more than 197 million TV households. This makes it the world's mega television audience measurement service.

- Broadcast Audience Research Council India's measurement system is grounded on the sample of 44000-panel homes.



International Year of the Period Table of Chemical Elements announced by - UNESCO

UNESCO has announced 2019 as the International Year of the Period Table of Chemical Elements to honour the 150th birth anniversary of the periodic table of chemical elements. The Periodic table of the Chemical elements was 1st printed by Russian scientist Dmitry Mendeleev in the year 1869.

Periodic Table

The Periodic Table of Chemical Elements is the tabular preparation of the chemical elements, settled by atomic number, electron configuration, & recurring chemical properties. The significant features of the periodic table are:

The 7 rows of the table are known as periods & generally lodge metals on the left & non-metals on the right side. The columns of the table are known as groups & comprise elements with same chemical behaviours.

The elements from atomic numbers 1 to 118 have been revealed in nature/synthesized in laboratories.

The 1st 98 elements registered in the periodic table occur naturally, though few are found only in trace amounts & a few were revealed in nature only after having 1st been synthesized. Elements from 99 to 118 have only been produced in laboratories/nuclear reactors. Efforts are on to elements having higher atomic numbers, these elements would start the 8th row, & theoretical work has been completed to propose possible candidates for this extension.