Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edapaadi K Palaniswami – announced a one-time cash assistance of Rs 2000 to around 60 lakh families living below the poverty line in the state.

- The assistance will be provided to workers in agriculture, fisheries, fireworks units, powerloom and handloom units, construction, weaving, tree climbing, salt pans, footwear and leather units, conservancy, pottery besides craft artists and others.
- The move would benefit 35 lakh families in rural areas and 25 lakh families in urban areas.
- The allocation of Rs 1,200 crore has been made for the scheme in the supplementary budget for FY 2018-19.
Prime Minister Narendra Modi - laid the foundation Stone of Employees’ State Insurance Corporation’s (ESIC) multi-speciality Hospital at Tirupur on February 10

- He also dedicated the 470-bedded ESIC Hospital, Chennai to the nation during the visit
- Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL’s) Ennore Coastal Terminal was dedicated to the nation on this occasion
- He had also inaugurated new Crude Oil Pipeline from Chennai Port to Chennai Petroleum Corporation Limited’s (CPCL) Manali Refinery

Two teams from IIT, Madras – won the first and third prizes in the UK India Social Innovation Challenge

- The challenge aims to find, fund and support innovative and sustainable solutions to the global problem of waste management
The 2nd edition of the competition was conducted by Social Impact Lab, University of Southampton, Centre for social innovation and entrepreneurship, IIT Madras, the open innovation platform ‘Babele’ and the British council.
Ram VG, who won the first prize, had submitted a project on cycling of demolished waste concrete using solar energy along with Rohit Prajapati, a Phd student from the civil engineering department.
Anesh J, who won the third prize, had submitted a project on catalytic degradation of kraft lignin (treatment of wood with water and chemicals) by ultraviolet light and ultrasound along with Akhil T, a 5th year student of chemical engineering.

**Chennai-based National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT) – develops Robo boat, a ‘remotely’ operated boat, to study oceans**

- The boat is designed to aid in oceanographic studies, particularly air-sea interaction.
- Dimensions of the boat: 3.3m long, 0.66m wide, and height is 0.4m.
- Boat can be fitted with cameras and sensors to study ocean and atmospheric parameters like conductivity, temperature, turbidity, dissolved oxygen, humidity, and radiation.
- Due to its size, it can be maneuvered in narrow areas, including estuaries and close to icebergs.
- The boat can also be used to collect data in open ocean surface and sub-surface to corroborate with data collected by buoys.

- It is fitted with ocean and atmospheric sensors and was demonstrated at Muttukadu backwaters by the agency.
- It is primarily meant for research and surveillance purpose and ready for commercialization.
- Built with a low-density polyethylene (thermoplastic) material, the boat can be electrically propelled at a maximum speed of 7.1 kph.
- These kinds of 10x2 feet boats will also be useful to study the ocean water parameters close to icebergs, narrow streams and estuaries, without facing the risk of the floating ice collapsing on the vessel.

**The Rs 600 crore project of widening NH 45 (new number 332A) connecting Chennai and Nagapattinam – to kick start by the end of February**

- It is expected to be completed in two years.
- The project has been taken up under the centre’s Bharatmala pariyojana (phase-I) under hybrid annuity mode.
The four-laning of the 180-km stretch connecting Villupuram and Nagapattinam would traverse through several major towns including Puducherry, Cuddalore, Chidambaram, Sirkazhi and Karaikal.

It would be implemented in four phases.

Government of Odisha – opens ‘Migration support center’ in Tirupur – to establish a grievance redressel mechanism in the knitwear hub

The centre will offer guidance and help resolve problems, including that of remuneration and harassment, faced by its unskilled natives.

It is the third such centre to be set up by the Odisha Government, besides the ones in the National Capital Region (NCR) Delhi and Bengaluru.

More than 5,000 candidates have received training under Deen Dayal Upadhyaya-Grameen kaushalya yojana scheme as ‘sewing machine operators’ and place in the knitwear units in the dollar city, with 80% of them being women.
Tamil Nadu Government – appointed N Muruganandam as principal secretary, industries department

- He replaces K Gnanadesikan, who was recently appointed chairperson of TN Real Estate Regulatory Authority
- Muruganandam is current principal resident commissioner in Tamil Nadu House, New Delhi

Tamil Nadu Government – appointed M Balaji and V Rajaraman as additional chief electoral officers

- They will assist chief electoral officer, Satyabrata Sahoo for the forthcoming general elections
- Balaji, a 2005 batch officer, was district collector of Virudhunagar before being posted in state planning commission and commercial taxes
- Rajaraman, from the same batch, is the chairman of the Medical services recruitment board

6 states, Tamil Nadu, Odisha, Manipur, Mizoram, West Bengal and Nagaland – apprised a bench headed by the CJI in Supreme Court on the steps taken for appointing Lokayukta, anti-graft ombudsman

- The bench, also comprising Justice Sanjiv Khanna, granted search committee for Tamil Nadu government 3 months to complete shortlisting of the persons for appointment of ombudsman
- Meanwhile, the search committee, headed by Justice K Venkataraman, former judge of Madras high court – has already interviewed at least 70 retired judges of high courts from the state and other states including Andhra Pradesh for the appointments
- The aspirants have applied for 4 judicial and non-judicial member posts in the anti corruption watchdog
- Former advocate-general of Tamil Nadu R Krishnamoorthy and retired IPS officer A Pari are the other members of the search committee
- It is expected to submit the final names to the selection committee within the next few weeks
- Then the 3-member selection committee comprising of the Chief minister, assembly speaker and leader of the opposition would make recommendations on appointing the chairperson and members to the Governor, who appoints them
The Tamil Nadu Lokayukta Act, 2018 states that a judge of the high court or a person with 25 years of experience in anti-corruption policy, public administration, vigilance, finance and law can be appointed as chairperson.

The non-judicial members should have 25 years of experience in anti-corruption policy, public administration, vigilance, finance and law.

The Government is expected to complete the entire process of appointing the Lokayukta within 12 weeks.

**Puducherry - has made it mandatory for motorcyclists to wear crash helmets and car drivers to fasten seat-belts from February 11**

Those riding two-wheelers without wearing helmets would be fined Rs. 100 and repeat offenders would face stringent action, as announced by the Director General of Police, Sundari Nanda.

**STATES**

**Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister, Yogi Adityanath – flagged off the ‘Sarthy Sandesh Vahini’ vehicles in the state**

The Sarthi Sandesh Vahini missile is launched by the state family welfare department to spread awareness regarding family planning in urban and rural areas through documentaries and films.
Prime Minister’s visit to Haryana

- Swachh Shakti 2019, Kurukshetra
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi - participated in Swachh Shakti 2019 event and distributed the Swachh Shakti 2019 Awards during his visit to Kurukshetra, Haryana

- Swachh Shakti awards are given to woman sarpanches from across the country in Swachh Shakti 2019 programme.
- Over 15,000 women took part in Swachh Shakti event that was aimed at empowering women.
- This was the third edition of the Swachh Shakti programme.
- The Swachh Shakti programme, launched in 2017, highlights the leadership role played by rural women in Swachh Bharat Mission.
- It is part of Swachh Bharat Mission, launched on October 2, 2014 by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, to achieve a clean and Open Defecation Free (ODF) India by October 2, 2019.
- The inaugural edition of the programme was launched from Gandhinagar, Gujarat by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi on March 8, 2017, International Women’s Day
- The second edition was launched from Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh
- National Cancer Institute, Jhajjar
- Prime Minister - dedicated the India’s premier institute of cancer, the ‘National Cancer Institute’ of Bhadsa, Jhajjar to the nation

- The 700 bed hospital is built within the AIIMS Jhajjar campus
- It will be the nodal institution for all activities related to cancer in the country and will have linkages with regional cancer centers and hospitals
✓ Other Engagements
✓ The Prime Minister – had inaugurated the ESIC Medical College & Hospital of Faridabad, the first ESIC Medical College and Hospital in North India.
✓ He laid the foundation stone of the ‘National Institute of Ayurveda, Panchkula’ – to be set up at Shri Mata Mansa Devi Temple Complex in Panchkula
✓ He also laid the foundation stone of ‘Sri Krishna Ayush University’, the first University related to Indian system of medicine in the entire India as well as Haryana

◆ Prime Minister Narendra Modi – laid the foundation stone of Indian Institute of Technology – Dharwad and Indian Institute of Information Technology – Dharwad

✓ He visited Karnataka for launching several other projects in the final leg of his one day long tour to Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.

◆ Prime Minister Narendra Modi – served the 3 billionth meal to underprivileged school children in Vrindavan, Uttar Pradesh on February 11

✓ He also unveiled a plaque marking the occasion at Vrindavan Chandrodaya Mandir.
✓ The mid-day meal scheme is implemented by Akshaya Patra Foundation covering 1.76 million children in 12 states from 14,702 schools.
✓ In 2016, Akshaya Patra commemorated the serving of 2 billion meals in the presence of the then President of India, Pranab Mukherjee
The Income Tax Appellate Tribunal – has held that a tax payer can avail of tax benefits when he buys ‘one’ residential house from the money arising on sale of more than one flats, within a stipulated time

✓ However, section 54 of the Income Tax Act, has an inbuilt restriction that the money cannot be invested in more than ‘one’ residential house
✓ But, the interim budget proposed by the Government, allows investments to be made in ‘two’ house properties in India, but this option can be exercised only once in a lifetime

From April, India Meteorological department – will start issue warnings about impending outbreaks of dengue and malaria

✓ The alerts about the vector-borne diseases are expected to come 15 to 5 days in advance enabling local governments at the district level to ensure necessary precautions to tackle them
✓ The IMD has developed a forecasting system in association with the Medical council of India and Red Cross society

India and Norway – to jointly launch ‘India-Norway Marine Pollution initiative’

✓ A letter of intent towards the initiative was signed by the Union Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change with the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
✓ The initiative was a follow-up to the ‘India-Norway Ocean Dialogue’ – whose MoU was signed during the Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg’s visit to India in January 2019

✓ To facilitate cooperation in the Blue Economy, a joint task force on Blue economy will be set up as per the agreement
✓ Blue Economy is the ‘sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods and better ocean ecosystem health’
✓ It comprises various activities such as fisheries, marine transport, waste management, tourism, climate change, etc.
Minister of HRD – to take several measures for the promotion and protection of Maithili language and its scripts

✓ These measures were recommended by a committee set up in 2018 for the promotion and protection of Maithili language
✓ Proposed measures
✓ A script and manuscript centre will be established at Darbhanga in either the Kameshwar Singh Sanskrit University or Lalit Narayan Mithila University
✓ It also proposes to complete the work pertaining to unicode scripts of Mithilakshar by Technology Development of Indian Languages (TDIL)
✓ Various audio-visual teaching materials should also be prepared for teaching the Mithilakshar scripts.
✓ History of Maithili language
✓ Mithilakshar or Tirhuta is an extremely ancient script of broader cultural Mithila
✓ The 10th century scripts of Mithilaksar, Bangla, Assamese, Nebari, Odia and Tibetan are all part of the same family
✓ In the later years, these scripts were found to have been used throughout Mithila from Champaran to Deoghar.
✓ But, of late, it is rarely being used with the fears of the culture getting destroyed
✓ Maithili language has been accorded a constitutional status in our constitution.

Dharmendra Pradhan, the Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas & Skill Development and Entrepreneurship - launched the guidelines for ‘Dealer Owned Dealer Operated’ (DODO) model for setting up CNG stations in the country

✓ As per the scheme, an entire earmarked dealer plot will be developed exclusively for setting up of CNG station and allied commercial activities
✓ Under the scheme, 87 Geographical areas serviced by 23 authorised entities will be covered
✓ The country has more than 1500 CNG stations at present, catering to over 33 lakh CNG vehicles
✓ The ongoing 10th round of CGD bidding seeks to cover 50 GAs, covering 124 districts spread over 14 states.
✓ Overall around 10% of the CNG stations might be covered under the DODO model
The Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs – launches ‘Light house’ projects challenge in housing construction technology sector - under Global Housing Technology Challenge- India

- As part of the challenge, the various States/UTs have to select 6 sites across the country for constructing Light house projects
- The states and union territories that score the highest marks will be awarded Lighthouse projects as per Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban) guidelines
- The last date for participation is February 20, 2019.

Harsimrat Kaur Badal, the Union Minister of Food Processing - inaugurated the Cremica Food Park in Una, which is the first mega food park of Himachal Pradesh

- It was set up at a budget of Rs 107.34 crore with several advanced food processing facilities, providing direct employment to 5,000 people

Government e Marketplace (GeM) and Competition Commission of India (CCI) - have signed a MoU to enable a fair and competitive environment in the e-Marketplace

- GeM, an ‘online’ public procurement platform under Ministry of Commerce and Industries, is involved in the procurement of common use items required by various Government agencies
- CCI is a statutory body responsible for enforcing the Competition Act, 2002 to prevent the unjust methods of competition practices
Union Government – has notified 8 equipment under the category of ‘drugs’
✓ The equipment identified by the Union Ministry of Health in consultation with Drugs Technical advisory board is –
  ✓ All implantable devices
  ✓ CT scan
  ✓ PET equipment
  ✓ MRI equipment
  ✓ Defibrillators
  ✓ Dialysis machines
  ✓ Bone marrow separators
  ✓ X-ray machine
✓ The notification has been made under Section 3 of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, with effect from April 1, 2020
✓ The regulation will ensure the quality and efficiency of these equipment

INTERNATIONAL

Abu Dhabi - is all set to get its first Hindu temple soon
✓ The foundation stone laying ceremony of the temple will be presided over by Mahant Swami Maharaj, the present guru and president of the BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha on April 20, 2019
The plan to build the temple was approved by the Abu Dhabi government during Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s first visit to the country in 2015.

BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha, a worldwide Hindu religious and civic organisation, is building the temple.

The temple is being built on a 13.5-acre land gifted by Abu Dhabi’s crown prince, Shaikh Mohammad Bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

The Shiva and Krishna Mandir in Dubai is currently the only Hindu temple in the UAE.

Hindu Temple in UAE

The temple with 7 towers representing the 7 emirates in the UAE will come up at Abu Mureikhah in Al Rahba area on the Abu Dhabi-Sweihan-Al Ain Road, close to the Abu Dhabi-Dubai highway.

The stones for the temple will be carved by temple artisans in India and assembled in the UAE.

While the pink stone is being sourced from Rajasthan, the marble is being brought from the European nation Macedonia.

Hungary – to provide more financial aid and subsidies to families that have more than 3 children

- They are meant to encourage women to have more children and to reverse Hungary's population decline by limiting immigration at the same time.
- Other Government measures:
  - The Government had also proposed to provide a lifetime income tax exemption for women who give birth to at least 4 children.
  - It is also planning to provide subsidy worth $8,825 towards the purchase of a seven-seat vehicle for families with 3 or more children.
  - Home loans will be extended to families with at least 2 children.
  - A low-interest loan of $35,300 for women under the age of 40 who are marrying for the first time has also been proposed.
  - Around 21,000 nurseries will be built up across the country in 3 years and provide grandparents with free childcare if they are raising their grandchildren.

CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

1st LAWASIA Human Rights Conference - was held at New Delhi between 9 – 10 February, 2019

- It was organised by LAWASIA, in association with the Bar Council of India.
- The conference aims to provide a unique opportunity for lawyers and associated professional members to exchange insights and expertise on relevant topics.
✔ Theme 2019 - “State Power, Business and Human Rights: Contemporary Challenges”
✔ The valedictory address was given by the Indian Vice President, Venkaiah Naidu at the first Law association for Asia and the Pacific (LAWASIA) conference
✔ LAWASIA is a regional association of lawyers, judges, jurists and legal organisations

♦ 7th World Government Summit – inaugurated in Dubai, UAE on February 10
✔ It saw the participation of more than 4000 dignitaries from 140 countries

✔ The three-day forum offers a platform to showcase various innovations and ideas in different emerging fields
✔ The summit will also be giving the award for best minister in the world, who is a pioneer in implementing reforms
✔ Former winners include Sri Mulyani Indrawati, Minister of Finance of Indonesia, and Australian environment minister Greg Hunt.
SPORTS

Airport Authority of India – wins maiden national badminton title

 ✓ On February 11, AAI had defeated Railways to clinch the 74th edition of Inter-state senior national badminton championship

Prajnesh Gunneswaran, becomes World No 97 in the latest ATP men’s tennis rankings released

 ✓ He broke into top-100 for the first time in his career with a jump of 6 places
 ✓ Thus, he becomes only the 3rd player in the past decade to break into the top-100 barrier – after Somdev Devvarman and Yuki Bhambri
 ✓ Prajnesh reached the semifinals of the ATP Chennai challenger last week