The Ministry of Environment and Forest - has granted the approval to Vedanta Ltd’s Cairn Oil & Gas - to carry out Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) for drilling a total of 274 offshore and onshore oil and gas exploration wells in the Bay of Bengal, Nagapattinam, Karaikal, Villupuram and Puducherry.

Vedanta proposes to drill 116 exploratory and appraisal wells in project block 1 and 158 wells in project block 2.

The first block covers an area of 1,794 sq.km, of which 1,654 sq.km is offshore in the Bay of Bengal and 141 sq.km is onshore — 139 sq.km in Villupuram and 2 sq.km in Puducherry.

The second block covers 2,574 sq.km consisting of 142 sq.km in Nagapattinam, 39 sq.km in Karaikal and 2,393 sq.km of sea portion of the Bay of Bengal.

In 2017, Vedanta was allocated licence for hydrocarbon exploration and production by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, under a revenue-sharing contract.
The Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation (Tangedco) - has identified a substation to be upgraded into an unmanned substation — the first of its kind in the city.

- The 33 kilo volt (KV)/11 KV substation, located right at the heart of the central business district of Anna Salai, near the Express Mall on Woods Road, has been chosen for the upgrade.
- Once the substation becomes unmanned, there will not be any need for posting maintenance staff and it can be operated remotely.
- Several substations in the State, including in Dindigul, Madurai and Tirunelveli, were already functioning in a similar manner.
- The unmanned substation concept is similar to the successful working model of the Power Grid Corporation India Limited (PGCIL).

**NATIONAL**

India’s Konkan Railways Corporation Ltd – signs contract agreement with Nepal’s Department of Railways to supply two 1600 HP Diesel Electric Multiple Unit (DEMU) train sets

- According to agreement, Nepal will procure two diesel-operated trains, which will arrive in Nepal within five months.
- The trains will be manufactured by Integrated Coach Factory (owned and operated by Indian Railways) in Chennai, Tamil Nadu.
- These trains will be used to operationalise 34 km Jayanagar-Kurtha Railway Link, which was built by IRCON (Ircon International Limited, a construction and engineering PSU in transport infrastructure) with a financial grant from Indian Government under India-Nepal Development Partnership programme.

The government - is looking to make a QR code-based payment option using UPI at all shops mandatory.
Consumers opting for this method of payment will be eligible for GST benefits along with shopkeepers
The move intended to promote digital payments will be a must for establishments beyond a certain threshold
National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) is roped in to roll out the system nationally

The polling for the penultimate sixth phase - closed with 63.67% turnout in 59 parliamentary constituencies across six states and a Union Territory on May 12

- It was matching the exact figure of 63.67% recorded in the 2014 Lok Sabha polls
- With this phase, polling for 483 of the 543 Lok Sabha seats has been completed
- State wise, polling is over in 28 states and Union Territories
- The seventh and last phase of polling on May 19 will cover 59 seats across eight states/UTs —Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Punjab, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Chandigarh
- According to the EC’s final figures, till the fifth phase of polling, the turnout stood at 67.4%, higher than the corresponding figure of 66.07% in 2014.

ISRO Chairman, Dr K Sivan – inaugurated the Young Scientists Programme, Yuva Vigyani Karyakram (Yuvika-2019) through video conferencing from ISRO headquarters in Bengaluru on May 13, 2019

- YUVIKA 2019 is a two week summer vacation residential programme, which will be conducted from 13 to 26 May 2019
The programme aims to get young school children interested in space science and technology.

The course material has already been pre-loaded on Tablets, which the students will be provided with during the programme.

A total 107 students would be trained by ISRO Scientists as part of YUVIKA 2019.

3 Students from 29 States/7 UTs will also get to personally visit ISRO laboratories and interact with senior ISRO scientists.

The Young Scientist Programme will be conducted across 4 centres of ISRO, which includes the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre, Thiruvananthapuram, Space Application Centre, Ahmedabad, UR Rao Satellite Centre, Bangalore and North Eastern Space Applications Centre, Shillong.

INTERNATIONAL

Ireland - became the second nation in the world after Britain to declare a climate emergency on May 9, 2019.

- The British Parliament became the world’s first to declare a climate emergency by passing the largely symbolic motion on May 1, 2019.
- The declaration of the emergency calls for the government to fast track legislative changes with respect to climate deterioration.
- It also involves drastic cut down of greenhouse gas emissions by 2030.

CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

India - is hosting a two-day ministerial meeting of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) from May 13-14, 2019 in New Delhi.

- Ministers from 16 developing nations and six least developed would be taking part in the meeting.
- The meeting is considered as the run-up to the Twelfth Ministerial Conference of the WTO to be held in Kazakhstan in June 2020.
- All the participants together will aim to build consensus on how to move forward on the WTO reforms, while preserving the fundamentals of the multilateral trading system enshrined in the WTO.
PERSONALITIES

Microsoft CEO, Satya Nadella - announced the launch of “Election Guard”, a free open-source Software Development Kit (SDK) to help nations to carry out secure and verifiable voting.

- Developed by Galois, “Election Guard” is a supplement to paper ballots.
- It is verifiable as it allows the voters and third-party organizations to verify election results.
- “Election Guard” provides a unique code, using which the voter can track their votes from the moment he/she casts it to the final step of counting the votes.

Australian flight carrier, Qantas - operated the world’s first zero-waste commercial flight named QF739 from Sydney to Adelaide which disposed of all waste through compost, reuse or recycles.

- This airline has substituted over 1000 single-use plastic items with more environment-friendly items which have helped the airline to achieve zero-waste during a commercial flight.
- The Australian airline Qantas has planned to eliminate 100 million single-use plastics by the end of 2020 and also to reduce 75% of airline’s waste by the end of 2021.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

A new species of reddish brown venomous pit viper – has been located in Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary in the West Kameng district of Arunachal Pradesh.

- It was identified by a team of herpetologists led by Ashok Captain of Pune-based Indian Institute of Science Education and Research.

- The species is scientifically known as ‘Trimeresurus arunachalensis’.
- This new species of reddish-brown pit viper has a unique heat sensing system.
- With this addition, India now has five pit viper species.
- The other four species are – Malabar, Horseshoe, Hump nosed and Himalayan.
- Moreover, it also makes Arunachal Pradesh the only state to have a pit viper named after it.
Japan - started testing its fastest-ever bullet train, ALFA-X version of Shinkansen, capable of reaching 400 kilometres per hour (249 mph)

- The model's futuristic design features 10 cars and a long pointed nose.
- It'll be tested twice a week - on the line between the cities of Sendai and Aomori, which are about 280 kilometres, well after midnight when the line is quiet.
- Its testing debut comes as Japan's new high-speed Shinkansen N700S continues tests that began just over a year ago.
- That model will enter operation in 2020, but its maximum speeds of 300 kph -- the same as other N700 series trains will be easily surpassed by the ALFA-X.

MIT scientists - have developed a movement-tracking system 'Marko' based on wireless radio-frequency signals

- It collects health and behaviour data after the signals bounce off a person’s body.
- The system is originally based on algorithms that detect changing reflections and associate them with specific individuals.
- The system is trained using sensors worn by users for a few days.
- Comparing their movement patterns, scientists can get insights on how people interact with each other and the environment.

DEFENCE

Indian Army - is commemorating ‘2019’ as the ‘Year of Next of Kin’

- As a part of this commemoration, the Army has planned to reach out to the next of kin of battle casualties, ex-servicemen and serving soldiers to resolve their pension-related issues and to let them know of their entitled financial benefits, welfare schemes.

- Last year, stress was laid on the disabled soldiers, while this year its on the next of kin of the deceased soldiers.
- The nodal agency will be The Directorate of Indian Army Veterans.
- The Army will take the help of the defence ministry, Nepal Embassy, Sainik Boards, banks and welfare agencies like the Ex-Servicemen Contributory Health Scheme (ECHS) to embark upon this journey.
ECONOMY

◆ The International Monetary Fund - to provide the cash-strapped Pakistan with a bailout fund worth $6 billion
  ✓ The agreement is Pakistan's 22nd bailout with the IMF amidst the country’s low growth, soaring inflation and mounting debt.
  ✓ As part of the deal, the country will also receive $2 to $3 billion from the World Bank and Asian Development Bank over the next three years.
  ✓ Pakistan has received the last bailout from IMF worth $6.6 billion in 2013.
  ✓ It had joined the IMF in 1950.
  ✓ The country is facing a huge financial crunch after the United States cut $300 million worth military aid to the nation.
  ✓ UAE, which is Pakistan’s largest trading partner in the Middle East, recently offered $3 billion to support the nation’s dwindling economy.
  ✓ Saudi Arabia also pledged $6 billion in funding and entered a 12-month deal with the nation during Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan’s visit to the kingdom in October 2018.

APPOINTMENTS

◆ Justice Abhay Shreeniwas Oka - was sworn-in as the Chief Justice of Karnataka High Court
  ✓ He now becomes 31st Chief Justice of Karnataka HC
  ✓ He replaces Justice Dinesh Maheshwari, who was elevated as a Supreme Court (SC) judge in January 2019.
  ✓ Before the appointment, he was serving as second senior-most judge in Bombay High Court.

◆ Indian actress Dia Mirza and Alibaba co-founder Jack Ma - have been appointed by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres as the new advocates for the UN’s ambitious Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
They will be among the new class of 'SDG Advocates', which includes 17 influential public figures. The key role of the SDG advocates would be to raise awareness, inspire greater ambition, solidify global will and push for faster action on the Sustainable Development Goals. The SDGs were adopted by the world leaders on September 25, 2015 as a part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The adoption year 2015 coincides with other historic agreement like ‘COP21 Paris Climate Conference’ and ‘Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction’, signed in Japan in March 2015. It is a set of 17 Universal Goals, that seeks to meet urgent environmental, political and economic challenges facing our world. Dia Mirza has been the UN Environment Program Goodwill Ambassador for India. Jack Ma has been an SDG Advocate since 2016. The UN Secretary-General has also appointed some members of the previous class of SDG Advocates as SDG Advocate Alumni. The members include Crown Princess Victoria of Sweden, Nobel Laureate Leymah Gbowee of Liberia and Nobel Laureate and Founder of Grameen Bank Muhammad Yunus of Bangladesh.

AWARDS

IPS officer Chhaya Sharma - conferred with the 2019 McCain Institute Award for Courage and Leadership

She headed the investigation team of the infamous Nirbhaya gang-rape and murder case. In 2017, Chhaya performed a crucial role in drafting Standard Operating Procedures and Guidelines to Combat Trafficking of Persons in India. She has also guided teams in the detection and investigation of sensitive criminal cases and protection of human rights.
SPORTS

 Mumbai Indians (MI) – beats defending champions Chennai Super Kings (CSK) to win the IPL-12 title at Hyderabad on May 12

Time to rejoice for Mumbai Indians

1. Rohit became the first player with five IPL titles (Deccan Chargers in 2009 and as captain of MI in 2013, 2015, 2017 and 2019). Rayudu, Pollard and Malinda have figured in four, while Yusuf, Raina, Dhoni and Hardik have three.

2. Dhoni (132 dismissals in 190 games) eclipsed Karthik (131 in 181) to become the most successful wicketkeeper in the IPL.

3. Warner is the first player to wear the Orange Cap thrice (2015, 2017 and 2019).

4. All four MI-CSK finals were won by the team batting first. 2010: CSK won by 22 runs; 2013: MI won by 23 runs; 2015: MI won by 41 runs; 2019: MI won by 1 run.

4-0 MI beat CSK in all the four matches this season. In 2018, CSK beat SRH in a similar manner.

9. Number of finals Dhoni has figure in, the only player to do so. Besides eight finals for CSK as skipper, he had represented for Rising Pune Supergiant in 2017 as a player.

Rohit in IPL knockouts/playoffs: 18 innings, 229 runs, Avg 13.47, SR 101.77, one half-century.

Innings scan

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Roll of honour

Orange Cap (most runs)
David Warner (SRH) 692

Purple Cap (most wickets)
Imran Tahir (CSK) 26

Most Valuable Player
Andre Russell (KKR)

Emerging Player
Shubman Gill (KKR)

Best catch
Kieron Pollard (MI)

Fair Play Award
Sunrisers Hyderabad

Best ground and pitch
Punjab Cricket Association & Hyderabad Cricket Association

- It became the first team to win 4 titles, overtaking Chennai Super Kings, who have won it thrice
- MI have won 4 out of 5 finals they’ve played
- Jasprit Bumrah (MI) was adjudged the Man of the Match, while Andre Russel (Kolkata Knight Riders) was declared as the season’s most valuable player (510 runs)

Manchester City - retained the English Premier League football title in London
City, which won 14 league games at the end of the season, is the first side to retain the title since Manchester United managed the feat in 2009.

Great Britain’s Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes) – won the Spanish Formula 1 Grand Prix at Barcelona

Valtteri Bottas (Finland, Mercedes) finished second, while Max Verstappen of Netherlands finished third for Red Bull.

The event marked the fifth successive one-two finish for Mercedes.

Lewis Hamilton is the defending five-time World Champion.

It was his third win this year, the 76th of his career and his fourth in Spain following victories in 2014, 2017 and 2018.

It was the 16th time that Hamilton won a Grand Prix after leading every lap of the race.
India’s Jehan Daruvala - won the reverse grid FIA Formula 3 Race 2 at the Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya

- Driving for Prema, he produced a dominant drive ahead of Hitech Grand Prix’s Juri Vips and Niko Kari of Trident.

The 2019 International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) World Relays – concludes in Yokohoma, Japan

- The two-day biennial event held on May 11 and 12 was the qualification event for upcoming 2019 IAAF World Athletics Championships to be held in Doha, Qatar in September-October 2019.
- 43 nations from all over the world took part in competition.
- Two new mixed events were introduced in the competition this year – The shuttle hurdles relay and the 2x2x400 relay, replacing the 4x800m relay.
- India competed in 4x400m relays (men, women and mixed relay).
- Men and women’s team finished at 17th position while the mixed team finished at 15th position.

Criczone, the world’s first exclusive women’s cricket magazine – released in India

- It was launched on the sidelines of the inauguration of women’s T20 challenge.
- It features various updates and articles exclusively about the women’s cricket.
- In its launch edition in India, the magazine featured Indian Women’s Cricket team vice-captain Smriti Mandhana as cover story.
- Yash Lahoti is the publisher of magazine.

Amul - to sponsor Afghanistan team in upcoming World Cup 2019

- Amul’s logo will be visible on the leading arm of jerseys of the Afghanistan players in an international match and also in training kit throughout the world cup.
- Earlier in only two instances, Amul sponsored any cricket team in World Cup tournament. These two countries are New Zealand and Holland.
- The ICC World Cup will be held in England and Wales from May 30, 2019.
RANKINGS

Sunday Times Rich List 2019

- Indian-origin Billionaire Hinduja brothers (Sri and Gopi Hinduja) - were named as wealthiest people in the UK continuously for a third time – with a fortune of 22 billion pounds

- Mumbai-born Brothers David and Simon Reuben secured second place with a combined wealth of 18.66 billion pounds

- The richest person on 2018’s Times Rich List, Sir Jim Ratcliffe, founder of Ineos chemicals firm, slipped to third rank

- The Hinduja group holds global interests in various areas which includes oil and gas, IT, energy, media, banking, property and healthcare.

- Their business empire was founded by father Parmanand in Mumbai in 1914.

- The Sunday Times Rich List is an annual list which estimates 1,000 wealthiest people or families resident of United Kingdom (UK)

INTERNATIONAL DAY

International Nurses Day – May 12

- The day honours the contributions that nurses make to society

- It is celebrated on birth anniversary of Florence Nightingale, the founder of modern nursing

- Florence Nightingale, also known as ‘The Lady with the Lamp’, was famous as manager and trainer of nurses during the Crimean War in 1850s

- She established the first professional training school for nurses, the Nightingale Training School at St Thomas' Hospital. Florence Nightingale is also credited with inventing the pie chart and was the first woman to be elected to the Royal Statistical Society.

- She was also the first woman to be awarded the Freedom of the City of London, which she received in 1909

- She inspired the founding of the International Red Cross which still awards the Florence Nightingale Medal for nurses who have given exceptional care to the sick and wounded in war or peace
It was first observed in 1965 by the International Council of Nurses (ICN) after Dorothy Sutherland, a US officer, first proposed Nurses Day in 1953 and was first proclaimed by President Dwight D Eisenhower.

The International Council of Nurses established the day in 1974 to be celebrated every year to highlight the importance of nurses’ role in providing the best healthcare services.

Theme 2019 - "Nurses: A voice to lead - Health for All"

**World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) – May 11, 2019**

The day helps to raise global awareness about threats faced by migratory birds, their ecological importance, and need for international cooperation to conserve them.

The first WMBD was celebrated in 2006.

Starting from 2018, the WMBD is celebrated twice a year, second Saturday in May and in October.

The day is organized by The Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) together with Environment for the Americas (EFTA).

For year 2019 it will be celebrated on 11 May and 12 October.

Theme 2019 - “Protect Birds: Be the Solution to Plastic Pollution”