President Ram Nath Kovind - conferred “Vayoshreshtha Samman 2019” to Tamil Nadu Government in recognition of its services to senior citizens through various programmes

- Social welfare minister V Saroja received the award at a function in Delhi.
- Vayoshreshtha Samman is the annual national award given by the Union ministry of social justice and empowerment.
- This year, Tamil Nadu was adjudged by the Ministry as the best state in implementing Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007 and providing various services and facilities to help senior citizens.
- The state introduced social security pension schemes way back in 1962, before Union government.

The Department of social welfare - will be conducting a social audit in government schools in Chennai, Kancheepuram, Trichy, Dharmapuri and Vellore districts soon - to check the implementation of the mid-day meal scheme in the state.

- The audit will be conducted with the assistance of the Department of evaluation and research.
- The auditors will inspect quality, quantity and regularity in providing meals, infrastructure of the kitchens, gas connection etc.
- After covering schools in these five districts, the department will proceed to the other districts, in a phased manner.
- The department had conducted a similar audit around four years ago.
- Around 50 lakh children in Tamil Nadu are benefitted through this scheme.
Defence minister Rajnath Singh – to fly the country’s first twin-seater Rafale fighter jet on October 8 in France, when it will be formally handed over to India

- The first Rafale jet has the tail number “RB-001” to mark the role played by the new IAF chief Air chief marshal R K S B Bhadauria, as chairman of the Indian negotiating team, in finalising the deal for ₹59,000 crore in September 2016.
- The first four Rafale jets will arrive in Ambala only in May next year after training of the “main” induction team of around 10 pilots, 10 flight engineers and 40 technicians in France.
- All the 36 jets – eight of them twin-seaters – will be delivered by April 2022.
- IAF has recently resurrected its 17 ‘golden arrows’ squadron at Ambala for the first 18 Rafale jets meant for the western front with Pakistan.

Union home minister Amit Shah - flagged off the second Vande Bharat Express train connecting Delhi with the Vaishno Devi shrine in Jammu on October 4

- He was accompanied by railway minister Piyush Goyal, health minister Dr Harshvardhan and Minister of State, PMO Jitendra Singh.
- The Vande Bharat Express will cover the entire Delhi to Katra stretch in 8 hours as compared to 12 hours taken by other trains to cover the same distance.
INDIA AND NEIGHBOURS

Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Punjab CM Amarinder Singh will lead the first all-party Indian delegation to Gurdwara Kartarpur Sahib in Pakistan to attend the 550th Prakash Purb celebrations of Guru Nanak Dev on November 9

The delegation to Pakistan would comprise all the 117 Punjab legislators, Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha MPs from Punjab, Shriomani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) members, as well as members of the Sant Samaj and representatives of each recognised political party in the state.

The construction of the 4.2 km-long Kartarpur corridor is expected to be completed by October 31 and opened for public on November 9.

It will facilitate visa-free movement of Indian pilgrims, who have to just obtain a permit to visit Kartarpur Sahib.

Gurdwara Kartarpur Sahib is located in Pakistan's Narowal district across the Ravi river, about 4 kilometres from the Dera Baba Nanak shrine.

The Kartarpur Sahib Gurudwara is known to have been established by Guru Nanak Dev in 1522.

It is a highly revered Sikh shrine where Sikhism founder Guru Nanak Dev spent 18 years of his life and is his final resting place.

The Kartarpur corridor is being built jointly by India and Pakistan.

It connects Darbar Sahib -- the final resting place of Guru Nanak Dev -- in Pakistan's Kartarpur with Dera Baba Nanak shrine in Gurdaspur district of India’s Punjab State.

Earlier, Pakistani foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi had announced that it would invite Manmohan Singh to Pakistan for the corridor’s inauguration.

However, the Indian delegation will visit only Kartarpur Sahib and not attend the opening ceremony of the Kartarpur Corridor organised by the Pakistan government.

DEFENCE

The Indian Army – has started to induct a limited number of Israeli Spike anti-tank guided missiles (ATGMs) to its armoury.

The “first lot” of the 210 Spike missiles, with a dozen launchers, has arrived in India recently.

The fire-and-forget Spike ATGMs, which have a strike range of up to 4-km, were bought by the Indian Army for around ₹280 crore after the Jaish-e-Muhammed training facility at Balakot in Pakistan was bombed on February 26.
Simultaneously, the indigenous man-portable “tank killers” (MP-ATGMs) were being developed by DRDO.

They will be available for “user trials” in 2020 as DRDO has recently conducted three successful trials of the weapon system at the Kurnool range in Andhra Pradesh.

The Army’s existing second-generation Milan-2T (2-km range) and Konkurs (4-km) ATGMs, do not have night-fighting capabilities.