Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, Edappadi K Palaniswami – sanctioned Rs 122 crore to Chennai Metro water and Rs 36 crore to Tamil Nadu Water Supply and Drainage Board

- The sanctioned budget will be used to implement various projects to ensure the Chennai city has adequate water during summer
- The Government is planning to tide over the situation with various projects like pumping water from agricultural wells, quarries and private wells
- Chennai had a rainfall deficit of 54% during the last north east monsoon, when it had received 343 mm of rainfall, instead of 786 mm

Tamil Nadu Government – is planning to award 2 marks for each subject for every 2 trees planted by the student

- This was announced by the State’s education Minister, K Sengottaiyan, who also said that the proposal is currently waiting for the approval of the Chief Minister

Tamil Nadu Electoral rolls

Tamil Nadu – is ranked at 7th place among other States/UTs to have more Women voters than men

- Tamil Nadu has 5.91 crore voters as per the final revised electoral rolls released on January 31

Voters break-up

- Men Voters – 2.92 crores (up by 8.5% in the last 5 years)
- Women Voters – 2.98 crores (up by 11% in the last 5 years)
- Transsexual voters – 5,472
- There are 1,020 women for every 1,000 men voters in the state
- More than 82% of the population in the state (as per 2011 census) has voting rights now
- Around 97 NRI’s have also registered themselves for the rolls

District wise statistics
Of the 32 districts, 27 have more women voters than men.
Only 5 districts, including Salem, Dharmapuri, Kanyakumari and Krishnagiri notorious for female infanticide some decades ago, had more men voters than women.
Chennai district has the maximum voters with 38.18 lakh voters, of which 19.34 lakh are women and 932 are transgenders enrolled.

Kancheepuram has the second highest voter strength with 36.9 lakh voters.
In terms of Assembly constituencies, Chennai harbor has lowest voter strength with 1.66 lakh voters and Shozhinganallur constituency in the IT highway has maximum voters with 6.18 lakhs.

Age Groups statistics

National scenario
In the 2014 polls, Kerala, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Puducherry had more women than men.
In the current final rolls released, Maharashtra shows the maximum increase of women voters.
- It shows the total of 8.73 crore voters with 4.57 crore men and 4.16 crore women with the voter sex ratio of 911 against 905 in 2014.
- The all-India sex ratio of voters had improved to 883 female voters in 2000s from 715 female voters for every 1000 voters in 1990s.
- It was 940 in 2011, the highest since 1971.

**Presidential Awards to 2 Tamil Nadu officers**

- **The Joint Director of Chennai Zone of Enforcement Directorate, K S V V Prasad** - was conferred with the ‘Presidential Award of Appreciation for Specially Distinguished Record of Service’ by Union Finance Minister Piyush Goel.
  - Prasad, whose Chennai Zone has been conferred with Best Zone award for two consecutive years, has been instrumental in attaching properties over 3,000 crore under Prevention of Money Laundering Act and launching prosecution in 56 cases against 318 persons.
  - He recovered 228 crore of arrears of revenue in Customs and was instrumental in seizure of Red Sanders of 240 Metric tonnes in 18 consignments and 31 consignments of narcotics including 100kg of ephedrine and 250 kg of ketamine.
  - Likewise, Krishnamachari Srinivasan, assistant commissioner, GST and Central Excise, North Commissionerate of Chennai Zone, has been conferred with the ‘Presidential medal and certificate of Specially Distinguished Record of Service’.
  - He was awarded for the smooth implementation of the Government’s major tax reform of Goods and Services Tax (GST).

**Tamil Nadu – to start first-of-its-kind ‘Amma Ambulance’ soon for the maintenance of livestock’s**

- It was announced by the state minister for animal husbandry, Udumalai K Radhakrishnan.
- It will have veterinary surgeons with sophisticated features for the treatment of various animals.
- The Government also plans to launch a toll-free number to inform about any treatment needed to domestic animals.

**Tamil Nadu is expected to get - Rs 3,348.60 crore more in the next financial year as its share from the Centre as part of tax revenue**

- Under this, Tamil Nadu is expected to get Rs 33,978 crore in the financial year 2019-20 as per the interim budget presented in the Lok Sabha.
- As per the 14th Finance Commission, Tamil Nadu will get 4.023% as its share from the tax revenue collected by the Centre.
- In the present financial year (2018-19), the state is set to receive Rs 30,638.80 crore as its share of tax revenue (from Corporate tax, CGST, Income tax and central Excise).

**Aavin milk – is now available in Qatar**
✓ State Dairy development Minister, K T Rajendra Balaji had introduced the milk produced by state cooperative Aavin in Doha, the capital of Qatar
✓ The state had earlier sent a container with a capacity of 15,000 litres of milk along with other products like ghee and flavoured milk to Doha
✓ Around 2.4 lakh litres had been exported to Singapore and 10,000 litres to Hong Kong by the Aavin

**Prime Minister Narendra Modi – laid the foundation stone for ‘Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Career Hub’ in 7 Universities in Tamil Nadu, including Bharathidasan University and Madurai Kamaraj Universities**

✓ The PM had digitally announced the launch of these hubs, set up at a cost of Rs 15 crore each, from Sher-e-Kashmir international convention centre in Sri Nagar
✓ The hub will function as a separate entity in the university which will be registered under Companies Act
✓ The university shall invite innovative ideas from students and develop them into a business model
✓ The hub will be set up using a part of Rs 50 crore given to the universities by the Ministry of HRD under Rashtriya Utchar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) Phase II, which includes funding for research projects

**Tamil Nadu Government – observes 30th ‘Road Safety Week’ between February 4 and February 10**

✓ Theme 2019 – ‘Road Safety – Life Safety’
✓ The State Government had set aside Rs 65 crore for the road safety works and due to its extensive campaigning the road accidents have reduced by 3% and the casualties by 25% in 2018 than the preceding year
✓ The Government had also proposed to institute the ‘Chief Ministers’ award’ for the best 3 districts and 1 police commissioner ate, which implement most initiatives to reduce accidents and casualties


✓ It intends to create a framework that enables accelerated development of solar energy in the state
✓ The policy aims to provide a significant number of green jobs and make solar energy accessible and affordable for all the citizens of the state
✓ The sector is also expected to significantly contribute to reducing carbon and water footprint of the state
Under the Paris Climate Change Agreement, India has to add 100GW solar capacity by 2022

- **Highlights of the new policy**
  - The new policy targets 9000 MW of installed capacity in the state by 2023 from the present capacity of 2,200 MW of installed solar capacity
  - About 40% of the additional capacity of 6,800 MW should come from the consumer (rooftop solar system) category
  - The policy defines 2 categories for solar power generation – Utility category and consumer category
  - The objective of utility category is to sell the solar energy to Tangedco
  - The consumer category will encourage self-consumption and export of surplus energy to the grid
  - The state is also planning to incentivize electricity consumers to set up solar energy systems
  - A single-window system for technical support, funding support and project clearance, encourage public-private partnerships and joint ventures to mobilize investments in solar energy projects, manufacturing facilities, research and technology development is also planned
  - The state seeks to facilitate ‘Ease of Doing Business’ in the solar energy sector, with all its initiative to boost investment in the sector
  - The LT electricity consumers can export surplus solar energy to the grid and has the option of receiving payment at the end of a 12-month settlement period
  - The policy encourages public buildings to install solar energy systems, besides pushing Corporations, municipalities and urban local bodies to use solar PV energy based street lights and water supply installations
  - Suitable incentive schemes will be worked out to promote solar energy generation in agricultural sector and in co-utilisation of land for solar energy projects, crop cultivation and water conservation

**Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami and Deputy Chief Minister O Paneerselvam - have released the Tamil Nadu combined development and building rules 2019 on February 4, 2019**

- The rules aim at efficient and sustainable utilization of scarce land making housing more affordable and achieving inclusive, sustainable and denser developments
As per the TN combined development regulations and building rules, 2019, all rules relating to planning and building permit for construction and layout have been brought into a single document, applicable to the entire State, except Hill areas.

The Rules come into being from February 4, 2019.

Highlights of the new rules:

- Obtaining a completion certificate is made obligatory for all developments excluding residential building upto 12m in height, not exceeding 3 dwelling units or 750 sq.m floor area and all types of industrial buildings.
- To ensure compliance with approved plans and to curtail deviations in construction at the initial stage itself, inspections have been mandated during construction at the plinth level and at the last storey level.
- To reduce the number and length of commutes, mixed use development will be promoted. Accordingly, the primary residential use zone and mixed residential use zone have been combined.
- The planning parameters have been simplified by removing minimum plot extent requirement, plot frontage requirement, and plot coverage for many of the developments.
- For high-rise building on sites abutting 18 m road there is no restriction on number of floors and the maximum setback for high-rise buildings is capped at 20m.

### Other Features

- The planning parameters have been simplified by removing minimum plot extent requirement, plot frontage requirement, and plot coverage for many of the developments.
- In sites abutting road of less than 6m, eight dwelling units will be permitted and on roads having width more than 6m, 16 dwelling units will be permitted. This will also boost development of affordable housing within cities.
- Total area required for parking is maintained at the current levels, but accounting for greater variety in vehicles, the driveway requirement is reduced to 6m from 7m and the aisle width requirement for perpendicular parking is reduced to 6m.
- Affordable housing is defined as a dwelling unit with 40 sqm in Channal Metropolitan Area and 60 sqm in the rest of the State.

### Highlights:

- Minimum road width for non high-rise buildings upto 18.3m is reduced to 9m from 10m.
- In accordance with the National Building Code, extended basements will be permitted in high-rise buildings upto 4.5m from the boundary in the front setback and 3m from the other sides.
- In case of layouts, half of the area reserved as public purpose plots must be gifted to the local authorities free of cost for public purpose use.
- In line with the government’s earlier decision to increase the FSI to permit denser development and make housing more affordable, the Floor Space Index has been revised upward.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl No.</th>
<th>Type of building</th>
<th>Earlier FSI</th>
<th>Proposed FSI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Residential (Non-high-rise buildings)</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Commercial (Non-high-rise buildings)</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Institutional</td>
<td>1.5</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Industrial</td>
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<td>High-rise buildings in 12 m wide road</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>High-rise buildings in 15 m wide road</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>2.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>High-rise buildings in 18 m wide road</td>
<td>2 to 2.5</td>
<td>3.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tamil Nadu Government – appointed Narayanasamy of Dindigul district - as the ward manager at the Government Hospital in Dindigul under the Chief Minister’s Health Insurance Scheme

- 30-year old Naryanaswamy underwent the first double hand transplant in the state last year
- In February 2018, he was performed a 13-hour surgery at Government Stanley Medical college and Hospital, Chennai - for reconstructing his hands, below the elbow, with a pair of hands donated by an accident victim who was declared brain dead
- He was undergoing intensive physiotherapy sessions as inpatient at the Stanley Hospital for the last one year
- In 2015, Narayanaswamy, a mason, lost both hands after he accidentally suffered an electric shock.

IIT, Madras researchers – find new ‘Laser tech’ using carrot - that can help humans to see objects that are otherwise invisible to the naked eye

- The team had found out that Carrots are an effective medium to provide a biocompatible laser with applications in photonics, the branch of technology dealing with photons (units of light)
- The discovery was made when Venkata Siva Gummaluri, a research scholar in IIT-M was shooting a blue laser light onto a processed carrot, he noticed a scattered laser light in the green-to-red wavelength was emitted out
- The effect was something similar to what Nobel winning physicist from Chennai C V Raman had observed in 1922 (for which he won Nobel in 1930)

Two Regional rural banks, Pallavan Grama Bank and Pandyan Grama Bank – merge into a single bank, Tamil Nadu Grama Bank, in the state

- The consolidation, conferred by Ministry of Finance under Regional Rural Banks Act 1976, will be effective from April 1, 2019
- Pallavan Grama Bank is sponsored by Indian Bank and Pandyan Grama Bank is sponsored by Indian Overseas Bank
- This newly integrated bank will be sponsored by Indian Bank and will have its head office located at Salem, Tamil Nadu.
Chennai Corporation – to roll out its new app for Smart parking in Chennai this month

- The new ‘GCC Smart Parking System app’ will facilitate parking across 4,583 spaces in Anna Nagar, Purasawalkam High Road, Marina Beach and Besant Nagar
- The civic body had marked ‘equivalent car spaces’ (ECS) in these 4 places, where the drivers will be charged premium parking fees of Rs 40 per ECS
- The entire parking area will be monitored by the CCTV cameras to identify the violations, for which a penalty of Rs 80 per car will be levied
- For the initial 2 months, visitors to Marina beach will have free access to the parking space

Tamil Nadu – ranked 4th in the entire country in terms of overall GST collections

- The state had collected 34,589 crores in this fiscal year till January (April 2018 to January 2019)
- It had received Rs 24,907 crores in the previous year upto March 2018 from July, 2017, when the GST was implemented
- Overall, Maharashtra tops the country at Rs 70,792 crore collection followed by Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka
- The compensation formula worked out by the Centre and the States allows for an annual growth of 14% in GST revenue

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, Edappadi K Palaniswami – announced that the Athikadavu-Avinashi water scheme will start by February-end

- He added that the tenders for the Rs 1,652 crore project have been already called for and would be finalized soon
- The CM also said that the Godavari-Cauvery river linking scheme, enabling Tamil Nadu to get 200 tmc feet water from the Godavari in Andhra Pradesh, would begin soon at a proposed cost of Rs 60000 crores
- He was speaking at a function in Coimbatore's Vaiyampalayam where he inaugurated the Rs 1.5 crore memorial for farmer leader, C Narayanasamy Naidu

- The construction of the memorial was announced by the former chief minister, Late J Jayalalithaa in 2016
- In the early 1950s, the farmer leader was instrumental in reversing the state’s decision of reducing the amount of electricity delivered to agriculture from 16 hours to 4 hours
- He also said a food park is planned to be constructed in Chennai at a cost of Rs 2,000 crore
- As per the CM, Tamil Nadu is the major beneficiary under the Prime Minister's Crop Insurance scheme for the year 2016-17
A veterinary research centre, the largest in Asia, would be set up in Tamil Nadu, he said.

**The Tamil Nadu Police – have launched a new mobile App ‘Digicop’**

- It helps to trace stolen cellphones and the bikes recovered by the city police
- It will also provide information about the traffic condition in the city apart from providing information about the nearest police station
- It will work in both Android and iOS operating platforms
- It is an initiative of T Nagar DCP, P Aravindan and Adyar DCP, Sashank Sai, along with Thinkinfinity Technology and Consulting Pvt Ltd.,

**IIT-Madras – has launched a research centre on Artificial Intelligence at its campus**

- It is developed jointly in association with Robert Bosch, the Germany-based Electronics and Engineering firm
- The Robert Bosch Centre for Data Science and Artificial Intelligence was established with an investment of Rs 20 crore over a period of 5 years
- It will focus on research in deep learning, reinforcement learning, network analysis, interpretable machine learning and domain aware artificial intelligence

**Prime Minister Narendra Modi – is likely to inaugurate the ‘Tejas Express’ on February 27**

- The Railway Board has approved the Southern Railway to run the train from Chennai to Madurai, with stops at Trichy and Kodai Road, within 6 hours and 30 minutes
- Tejas Express has onboard wifi, a CCTV system, modular toilets and better seating facilities
- It will be the first premier train linking Chennai Egmore with southern districts

**The last leg of 45 km Phase-I of the Metro Rail line – all set to be open for public from February 10**

- It will be between Washermenpet to AG-DMS
- Most stations on the line will be accessible at Rs 40, including a trip between any 2 major transit hubs of Chennai Central, Airport or Koyambedu
- The longest distance from Washermenpet to Airport covering 22 km costs Rs 60

**Tangedco – leads the state-owned discoms in the country in Coal import**

- Discoms owned by Maharashtra, West Bengal and Telangana have not imported any coal due to the availability of coal from mines in their states
Tamil Nadu is dependent on thermal power for most part of the year, except from May to September when wind power is available.

The state needs about 26 million tonnes of coal for full capacity generation of power by North Chennai, Mettur, Ennore and Tuticorin thermal units.

Out of this, 20.445 million tonnes is met by indigenous coal and the balance 5.50 million tonnes is imported.

At present, the power demand in the state is 14,500 MW which will peak more in summer.

Tamil Nadu Deputy Chief Minister and Finance Minister, O Panneerselvam – presented the state budget on February 8 with no new taxes.

36 new schemes were announced at an overall outlay of Rs 20,000 crores by the Government.
Financial Highlights

- The state’s economy is projected to grow at 8.16%, way above the national average of 7.4%
- The revenue deficit, which happens when the expenditure is more than the budgeted revenue, is expected to be at Rs 14,315 crore, much lower than the current year’s actual revenue deficit of Rs 19,319 crore (against the budget estimates of Rs 17,490 crore)
- The Government had cited the huge money spent on relief and rehabilitation in the Gaja-cyclone affected districts as the main reason for the revenue deficit in 2018-19
- The takeover of the Tangedco’s debt of Rs 22,815 crore by the government under the UDAY scheme and the implementation of 7th Pay Commission widened the revenue deficit in recent years.
- With higher SOTR (state's own tax revenue) growth, coupled with the phasing out of the impact of Ujwal Discom Assurance Yojana (Uday) and pay revision, the state expects to bring down the revenue deficit in the coming years
- The state’s fiscal deficit, the difference between the revenue and the expenditure plus interest paid by the government, for 2019-20 will be 2.56% of the GDP against 2.79% in the current year and projected to be 2.39% in 2020-2021 and 2.25% in 2021-2022,
- The fiscal deficit estimated to be Rs 44,176 crore in the budget estimate of 2019-2020.
- The state's total debt now stands at Rs 3.97 lakh crore and it is the 3rd highest debt among all the states in the country, after Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh
- The state’s debt is 25% of Gross state domestic product (GSDP), which is the maximum permissible limit. In 2015, it was 20% and for the current year, it will be 23.2%
- Tamil Nadu’s interest payments are higher than the finance commission stipulation, with 16.80% projected for the next financial year and 16.14% for the current year. These interest payments are due to the loans the government takes from agencies like World Bank, ADB through bonds issued through RBI
Salaries and pension expenditure account for nearly 40% of the total government expenditure.

The state’s tax revenue was 9.07% in 2017-18 and is expected to grow at 14% in 2018-19.

In GST front, the state has received Rs 34,589 crore during the first 10 months of this fiscal with a projected growth in the range of 8% to 10%.

**Schemes Highlights**

- The state Government had allocated Rs 2,361.41 crore to carry out temporary restoration work in cyclone Gaja-hit districts.
- For the ninth year in a row, School education sector received the maximum allocation in the budget, this year an increase of 5.7% with Rs 28,757 crores being allocated.
- A new Government Arts and science college has been proposed at Rameshwaram and it will be named after former President, APJ Abdul Kalam.
- Government colleges and universities have been allocated Rs 482 crore for infrastructure development, out of which Rs 100 crore will be provided to Anna University and other Engineering colleges functioning under the Directorate of Technical Education.
- The Government had allotted Rs 10,550 crore for agriculture, an increase of 18.33% more than the last year’s allocation.
- To encourage farmers shifting to organic farming, the government has decided to set up organic certification centres in all district headquarters.
- The government has allocated Rs 622 crore for paying crop insurance premium for 2019-20.
- The budget has also set aside Rs 84 crore for subsidizing 2,000 solar powered pumps upto a capacity of 10 hp.
- The government has also set side Rs 1,050 crore for the state highways to upgrade 7,964 km of rural road network.
- The Government has announced a Rs 2000 crore 'comprehensive integrated parking management project' – to provide parking facilities for 2 lakh four wheelers and 2 lakh two wheelers in the Chennai city – keeping in mind the population of 2045.
The Government has also announced the setting up of 6th reservoir across Orathur, a tributary of Adyar river, with an annual storage capacity of 1.3 tmcft at a budget of Rs 60 crore – to ease the drinking water supply in Chennai city.

The Government has allocated Rs 247 crore for developing diagnostic facilities in all Government health centres within the next 3 years.

The Government will provide housing to resettle 38,000 families living along the Buckingham canal at a cost of Rs 4,647.5 crore.

Tangedco to float tenders for floating solar power projects worth Rs 3,475 crore for a total capacity of 750 MW. The floating projects are to come up in Theni, Salem and Erode districts, adding upto 250 MW at Rs 1,125 crore and at Kadaladi Ultra Mega Solar Photovoltaic Park for 500 MW at Rs 2,350 crore.

The state has earmarked Rs 5,259.1 crore to revamp the Perungudi and kodungaiyur dump yards and to construct waste-to-energy plants.

Rs 1000 crore has been allotted to the Athikadavu-Avinashi scheme, expected to benefit western belt.

Various infrastructure projects to augment water resources have been planned at Rs 812 crore with the support of NABARD.

Rs 235 crore has been allocated for the rehabilitation of tanks and anicuts, construction of check dams, artificial recharge wells in water spread areas of tanks and improvement of drainage-cum-irrigation channels in the Cauvery delta, the rice bowl of the state.

The government also plans to introduce a new accident-cum-life insurance scheme with Rs 250 crore outlay to help poor families.

The Government has allocated Rs 2,681 crore for Chennai Metro Rail Project in the budget estimates, with the 9 km stretch up to Tiruvottiyur/ Wimco Nagar is expected to be commissioned by June 2020.

Feasibility study was being taken up for the extension of Metro rail line from Meenambakkam Airport to Kilambakkam metro bus terminus in the southern suburbs.

The government will procure 2,000 new electric buses, besides 12,000 new BS-VI vehicles, at an outlay of Rs 5,890 crore.

The State government would introduce 2,000 BS-VI buses across the State and 500 electric buses in Chennai, Coimbatore and Madurai during the first phase.

As part of the State government’s policy of using cleaner energy sources, it has signed a ‘Clean Bus Declaration’ with the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group — the first State in India to do so.

The number of retail Indian Made Foreign Liquor (IFML) shops run by Tamil Nadu Marketing State Marketing Corporation (TASMAC) has been reduced from 7,896 to 5,198.

A sum of Rs 6,724 crore has been included in budget estimate 2018-2019 and Rs 7,262 crore is being included in budget estimate 2019-2020 for retail IMFL shops.
The government also announced 240 units of Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System, 160 units Lsat Phone, 2 Satellite Phone and 160 units of Navtex instruments to 80 clusters or fisher folk, especially deep sea fishing boats.

Intelligent Transport System to be implemented in Chennai at a cost of Rs 660 crore.

Former Chief Minister, J Jayalalithaa’s ambitious project, Chennai Mega City Development Mission received a fillip, with Rs 500 crore being sanctioned for it.

A state career guidance centre will also be established in Chennai to train students for free, to participate in competitive exams in pursuit of employment opportunities.

The Tamil Nadu Government – appointed former state Chief Secretary, K Gnanadesikan as the Chairperson of the Tamil Nadu Real Estate Regulatory Authority (TNRERA)

He will take over the duties from S Krishnan, secretary of the housing and urban development department, who was also serving as the interim chairperson of the regulatory body.

Other appointees
- S Manohar, engineer-in-chief, buildings, public works department – Member
- V Jeyakumar, advocate – Member
- N Balasubramanian, retired district judge – Judicial Member
- Leena Nair, retired IAS officer – Administrative member

TNRERA

It was set up in June 22, 2017 to protect the interest of home buyers in the state, according to the Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act, 2016.

The body must consist of a chairperson and atleast 2 full time members.

IIT, Madras – signs agreement with General Electric (GE) – for ‘Precursor’ technology

It allows the proprietary tech developed by IIT’s researchers to be applied in real-world situations in GE’s gas turbine component test facility.

The term ‘Precursor technology’ denotes early-warning or early signal systems warning of engine malfunctions in gas turbines due to thermo-acoustics interactions between heat and sound.

The tech is suited for applications in a variety of sectors including gas turbines, aerospace engines, liquid fuel rockets among others.

Earlier in 2016, GE and IIT, Madras have collaborated for an Industrial Internet Centre of Excellence at the institute for research related to aluminium smelting plants.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi – to inaugurate the last leg of Chennai Metro Rail’s Phase I, connecting 10-km long AG-DMS.
and Washermenpet, through video conference from Tirupur on February 10

- With this, the 45km phase I becomes fully operational after a period of 6 years, when the construction began at Vadapalani for the elevated corridor in 2009
- The 118.9km phase II is also planned to connect the suburbs with the core city in the next few years
- The Prime Minister will also lay foundation for a terminal building in Trichy airport, modernization of Chennai airport and ESIC hospital in Tirupur
**Tamil Nadu Government – to unveil the draft rules of the ‘State Urban Housing and Habitat Policy’ within the next two weeks**

- With the objective of ‘Homes for all’, it aims to ensure the poorest of poor living across the state have access to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic amenities.
- The policy advocates minimum standards of housing and prescribe directions to all the other departments, where they can coordinate and provide basic civil and social amenities to under-privileged beneficiaries.
- The National Urban Housing and Habitat Policy, 2007 too mandates every state government to prepare the policy in consultation with urban local bodies and other stakeholders to create suitable living environments for people.

**UK-based ‘Laureti Automotive Corporation’ – has proposed to invest Rs 2,800 crore in the Union Territory of Puducherry – to set up an electric vehicle manufacturing plant**

- The British Government is expected to produce 10,000 sports utility vehicles (SUVs) by 2021 initially and expected to be scaled up to 20,000 units per year by 2023.
- The company has also proposed to manufacture and assemble electric SUV ‘DionX’ in Puducherry, which costs Rs 40 lakh in the market.
- The government has suggested a 350-acre site in Karaikal with adequate port connectivity for exporting the vehicles.
- The project is part of a series of initiatives taken up by the Government under the smart city plan.

**Prime Minister Narendra Modi – launched Rs 2,647 crore, Phase II modernization of Chennai airport - through video conference from Tirupur on February 10**

- He also inaugurated the construction of a new terminal at Trichy airport.
- The proposed expansion of Tuticorin airport to operate A 320 narrow-body planes is also underway.
- In Chennai, an integrated terminal is being built between the existing domestic and international terminals, which will augment the peak hour capacity of the airport to 6,900 passengers.
- The AAI has set the target of 42 months to complete the construction of the integrated terminal in Chennai.

**Chennai - received 10 cusecs of water from the Telugu-Ganga project that draws water from Krishna river**

- Water from the Krishna river reached Uthukottai on February 10 and will eventually reach Poondi reservoir in the coming days.
- As per the agreement, around 12tmcft should reach Chennai every year.
- Chennai receives water now from the Veeranam water supply scheme, Nemmeli desalination plant and also water from quarries and agricultural wells apart from the dead storage in reservoirs at Red Hills and Poondi.
At present, around 450mld is supplied to residents

**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, power loom 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-specialty 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**
✓ 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 10 x 2 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 332 A) 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.

**Tamil Nadu Government – introduces a bill in the state legislative assembly, amending the municipal laws to fix the penalty for the violators of single-use plastic ban**

- The fine for a first-time offence of storage, supply, transport, sale and distribution of use-and-throw plastics will be Rs 25,000.
- It will be Rs 50,000 for the second time and Rs 1 lakh for the third offence.
- In case of large commercial establishments such as malls, textile shops and super markets, the use and distribution of single-use plastic will invite a penalty of Rs 10,000, Rs 15,000 and Rs 25,000 for the first, second and third offences.
- In case of medium commercial establishments such as grocery shops and pharmaceuticals shops, the violation will attract a fine of Rs 1,000, Rs 2,000 and Rs 5,000 for the first, second and third offences.
- Small commercial vendors will be levied a fine of Rs 100, Rs 200 and Rs 500 for the first three offences respectively.

**Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami – announced the 900-acre ‘Integrated livestock park’ to come up at Salem district**

- Touted as Asia’s biggest, it will have a business incubation centre and a research facility.
- It will be set up at a budget of Rs 396 crore.
- The park would have several components including a veterinary hospital with modern amenities, a daily farm to demonstrate the latest practices in animal husbandry, a conservation and breeding unit for indigenous cattle.
breeds like Kangayam, Umbalachery, Pulikulam and Burgur, a sheep and goat farm, a piggery unit, a poultry unit and a conservation unit for indigenous dogs like Rajapalayam, Sippiparai, Kombai and Kanni

- It would also have facilities for preservation and processing of milk, meat, fish and egg
- Another highlight of the facility is a business incubation centre for entrepreneurs and modern facilities to enable students of Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal sciences University (TANUVAS) and international veterinary students to get trained and undertake research
- A frozen semen station with high pedigree country and cross breed bulls will also be established in the park at a budget of Rs 100 crore

**Tamil Nadu Government – introduces bills on February 13 to establish 2 new corporations – Hosur in Krishnagiri district and Nagercoil in Kanyakumari district**

- Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami announced the upgrading of Hosur municipality during the centenary celebrations of late Chief Minister MG Ramachandran held on September 23, 2017 in Krishnagiri district
- Similarly, the Chief Minister announced about the Nagercoil municipality’s upgradation during the centenary celebrations of former CM late MG Ramachandran held on September 22, 2018 in Kanyakumari district
- As corporations, the two civic bodies will get an elected mayor each.
- With this, the number of municipal corporations in Tamil Nadu will become 14

- The existing municipal corporations are Chennai, Coimbatore, Erode, Madurai, Dindigul, Salem, Thanjavur, Trichy, Tirunelveli, Tirupur, Thoothukudi and Vellore

**Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami – inspected the ‘demo’ version of the Artificial intelligence-based robot to be procured for Government schools in Tamil Nadu**

- Brigantia is the private form working with the Government in this project
- It had planned to import robots from Taiwan and Germany during the initial stage
Local designers have designed an app to suit the needs of the state students.
The demo version is fed with the syllabus of Class XI and XII state board students.
A single bot-teacher unit costs about Rs 3 lakhs.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi – is likely to flag off the first set of 4 tuna long liners cum gill netters for Palk Bay fishermen in Kanyakumari in March.
They were announced as part of a scheme on Blue revolution two years ago by the Centre.
Cochin Shipyards Limited, a central enterprise that bagged the contract for 16 deep sea fishing vessels, has completed four units so far.
The scheme comes with a subsidy, of Rs 56 lakh per vessel, by the centre and state.

A Snegha Parthibaraja, a lawyer from Vellore – becomes the first Indian in the entire country to obtain ‘No-caste-No-religion’ certificate – from Sathiyamoorthy, a Tahsildar in Tirupattur on February 5, 2019.
She had applied for the certificate nine years back and the Government had now issued the certificate after verification saying ‘This is to certify that she does not belong to any caste or religion’.

The directorate of employment and training – has signed a 3-year contract with French aircraft manufacturer, Dassault Aviation – to train ITI students in Tamil Nadu.
The firm, which manufacturers military jets including Rafale fighter aircraft, has selected 3 Industrial Training Institutes in the country, of which 2 are in Tamil Nadu.
It will train the first-year ITI students in a new course ‘aeronautical structure and equipment fitter trade’ designed by the company itself.
The 2-year course will commence in the next academic year starting August 2019.
The 2 selected institutes in Tamil Nadu are the National Skill Training Institute in Chennai, run by the Central Government and the state-run ITI in Coimbatore.
The third institute selected for the programme is in Nagpur, Maharashtra.
Dassault will supply the required tools, equipment and a model aircraft to the institutes.
After the completion, trainees will be awarded the National trade certificate by the National Council of Vocational Training.
Based on their merit, students can join an apprenticeship programme at a Dassault workshop in Maharashtra or other leading industries.
Tamil Nadu Government – has introduced a bill to establish and incorporate Greenfield universities in the state under the TN Private Universities Act, 2019
✓ The Act aims at creating world class higher-education institutions by any private trust or society of nonprofit organizations with at least 100 acres of land
✓ There will not be any financial assistance from the Government and admissions will be based on the UGC norms

Registered Construction workers in Chennai city – to get free food at Amma Unavagams soon
✓ A new scheme to this effect will be introduced by the Government through the amendment of Tamil Nadu Manual Workers (Construction Workers) Welfare Scheme, 1994
✓ The Municipal administration and water supply department will pass a Government order for it based on a proposal from the Greater Chennai Corporation
✓ The scheme will allow workers to avail free food in the Amma canteens and the monthly bills towards it will be settled at the Production cost (not the subsidized rates) by the Tamil Nadu Construction Workers Welfare Board

Tamil Nadu Innovation Grand Challenge, a startup competition organized by TN’s Entrepreneurship Development & Innovation Institute (EDII) – has seen 80% increase in the applications this year
✓ Teams from over 150 startups, of which 30 are from outside Chennai, will participate in the challenge
✓ Last year 90 startups have participated in the competition
✓ This year, over 30 TN-based business persons were announced as 'mentors' for the teams
✓ They include representatives from local companies like SPI Cinemas, InkMonk, Flintobox, Chai Kings, PickYourTrail and some others
✓ The challenge is structured in the form of a 3-stage event including a 48-hour Sprint Hackathan to enhance prototypes, two-day bootcamp involving workshops and knowledge sessions and a final Pitchfest to showcase solutions
✓ Three startups will be awarded Rs 5 lakh each in grant money and incubation support
✓ Sprint is scheduled to take place on Feb 15-17, Bootcamp on Feb 22-23 and Pitchfest will be hosted on Feb 24

Chennai Airport – sees a fall in its ranking at a survey conducted by Airports Council International
The survey conducted among 20 Airports Authority of India (AAI) airports showed the ranking of Chennai airport dipped from 53 in 2017 to 63 in 2018.

The airport received the quality rating of 4.65 in 2018, higher than 4.60 received in 2017.

An airport receiving the quality rating of at least 4.75 (out of 5 in a scale) will be categorized under ‘excellent’ grade.

Kolkata airport has received the rating of 4.79, surpassing the target set by the Aviation ministry.

11 airports at Mangalore, Lucknow, thiruvananthapuram, Indore, Ahmedabad, Varanasi, Calicut, Bhubaneshwar, Pune and Srinagar have fared better than Chennai.

It has to be recalled that Chennai airport has recently received AirSewa award for better handling of complaints.

**18th Tamil Internet Conference – to be held between 20 and 22 September in Anna University, Chennai**

- Theme – Tamil Robotics and Language Processing
- Organizers - International Forum for Information Technology in Tamil (INFITT) and Anna University
- The 17th Tamil Internet conference was held in the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore

**The Tamil Nadu government - passed a bill to promote ‘Contract farming’ in the state - on February 14, 2019**

- The bill seeks to set up an authority – Contract Farming and Services (promotion and facilitation) Authority – to encourage small and marginal farmers to pool in land for collective farming.
- As per the terms of the partnership, the sponsor would agree to professionally manage inputs, technology, extension education, pre and post-harvest infrastructure and services.
- Under the scheme, a group of farmers can sign an agreement with traders to supply products at a forecast price before the start of cultivation.
- This was announced in the budget of 2018-19 and again mentioned in the 2019-20 budget.
- Contract farming is a preproduction season agreement between farmers (either individually or collectively) and sponsors.
Chief minister Edappadi K Palaniswami – announced an allocation of Rs 6.3 crore to set up memorials for freedom fighters and caste leaders of the past

- Among the projects will be a memorial in Coimbatore for V K Palaniswami Gounder, Kanyakumari for Kavimani Desigavinayagam Pillai, for Mutharayar in Trichy, for Rettamalai Srinivasan near Maduranthakam in Kancheepuram, for A T Panneerselvam in Trichy and a dome with a statue for Allal Eliya Nayakar in Namakkal district.

- Libraries would come up on such memorial premises

The Tamil Nadu government – has allocated Rs 10 crore and identified 3 different spots in and around Chennai - to develop centres for Olympic sports — rowing, sailing and kayaking-canoeing

- New Centres
  - Academy for sailing – at Marina beach
  - Centre for kayaking and canoeing - at a quarry in Melkottaiyur on Kelambakkam - Vandalur Road (600 m long and 5m deep)
  - A 2.9-km stretch for Rowing - on Buckingham canal, at Thoraipakkam

- IIT-Madras has been conducting a technical study to help the government comply with the coastal regulation zone (CRZ) norms and get other regulatory clearances

- The Sports Development Authority of Tamil Nadu (SDAT) will be in charge of maintaining these facilities

- At present, the country is having only one rowing course in Pune, which is 2 km long

The Tamil Nadu Government – to announce the formation of an independent agency for cybercrimes soon

- The proposed agency will deal with all cybercrime cases, including white collar offences such as land grabbing, cheating and bank frauds.
☑ The specialized unit will function under a special unit like the CB-CID to handle all the cybercrime-related cases, headed by an **Additional Director-General Of Police (ADGP)**

☑ Earlier, there was only one cybercrime wing in every district headquarters under the direct control of the superintendents of police and commissioners of police concerned – dealing with the cases of lost mobiles and later to track down the suspect’s cellphone tower locations

☑ At present, the city police have an exclusive cybercrime unit and the CB-CID has another unique cyber lab

**Tamil Nadu – to launch the pan-India single emergency helpline number ‘112’ from February 19**

☑ A single number based emergency service will connect to the police, fire, health and other helplines through an **Emergency Response Centre (ERC)** in the state

☑ An **Emergency Response Centre (ERC)** will be established in the headquarters along with **District Command Centres (DCC’s)**, covering the entire state

☑ The service also includes a ‘112 India’ mobile app that is integrated with a panic button for smartphones and state ERSS websites for ease of citizen in availing immediate assistance.

☑ The ERC has been integrated with police (100), fire (101), health (108) and women (1090) helpline numbers to provide emergency services through the emergency number ‘112’

☑ The centre had allocated Rs 321.69 crore for the project

☑ Along with Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Kerala, Andhra and Telangana are the states to take up the project on February 19

☑ The number can be accessed by long-pressing the number 5 or 9 in an ordinary mobile phone, whereas in a smartphone it can be accessed by pressing the power-on button three times to reach the ERC

☑ It is similar to the 911 all-in-one emergency service in the US

☑ Himachal Pradesh became the first state to launch the Emergency Response Support System (ERSS) with a pan-India single emergency number ‘112’ in November 2018 - followed by Nagaland in the North east

**K Pitchumani – appointed as the vice-chancellor (VC) of Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli, for a period of 3 years - by governor and chancellor of the university, HE Banwarilal Purohit**

☑ He has been appointed to replace K Baskar, who assumed charge in February 2016

☑ Pitchumani has 37 years of teaching experience, authoring 3 books and having more than 190 research papers to his credit

☑ He was awarded UGC Emeritus Professorship in Chemistry in the year 2016 and given the status of Council of Scientific and Industrial Research
(CSIR) emeritus scientist, School of Chemistry in Madurai Kamaraj University (MKU)
✓ He is also a visiting professor in the Academy of Sinica, Taipei and Tokyo Institute of Technology, Japan
✓ He has served as MKU’s registrar in-charge and as chancellor nominee

◆ Aavin – launches full-cream milk (200 ml) at a price of Rs 10 for the first time in the state in Tirunelveli - Tuticorin districts
✓ Similarly, a new high-density milk named ‘Hotel Special’ prepared exclusively for the hotels and eateries was also launched during the ceremony held in Tirunelveli Reddiyarpatti Aavin office

◆ The Union Cabinet - has approved the proposal for allotment of land measuring 30 acres to Pasteur Institute of India (PII) for establishment of New Viral Vaccine Manufacturing Unit at Coonoor, Tamil Nadu
✓ The project entails production of Viral Vaccines (like TCA anti-Measles Vaccine, JE Vaccine etc.) and Anti Sera (like Anti Snake Venom and Anti Rabies Sera) at the PII, Coonoor

TAMIL NADU GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES IN THE LAST 2 YEARS

✓ PONGAL GIFT
✓ The government announced a cash dole of Rs 1000 for the people of Tamil Nadu on the eve of Pongal festival in 2019.
✓ The announcement benefitted the green ration card holders in the state.
✓ Although the initial order that enveloped all ration card holders in Tamil Nadu was struck down by the court, many families under the poverty line benefitted from the scheme, especially during the pongal festival time this year.

✓ POVERTY ALLEVIATION SCHEME
✓ Very recently, the chief minister also introduced a scheme for families below poverty line by which the recipients will receive a cash compensation of Rs 2000.
✓ The scheme is expected to benefit over 35 lakh families in the rural areas of Tamil Nadu and about 25 lakh families in urban Tamil Nadu.
✓ A sum of Rs 1200 crores has been set apart for the scheme.
The chief minister also announced that the poverty alleviation scheme was being implemented as a redressal measure the underprivileged who were hit severely by cyclone Gaja.

Besides this, the drought brought on by the failure of monsoons had robbed many poor families who depended on daily-wage labour of their income.

The supplementary income scheme would especially be of assistance to those working in fire-cracker units, salt pans, crockery making, leather industry, construction labour, craftsmen, weaving industry and such.

**KUDIMARAMATHU PROJECT**

- In the second half of the year, chief minister increased the funds for the Kudimaramathu scheme that was introduced to restore the water bodies in the state.
- An ambitious project by the government, it was launched by the chief minister Edappadi K Palaniswami on March 13, 2017 and administrative sanction was accorded for 1,519 works at a cost of Rs 100 crore in 30 districts of the state.
- Around 1,513 works was completed in the same year.
- For the year 2017-2018, the 100 crore rupees originally allotted in 2016 was tripled to about 328 crore rupees.
- The government also appointed seven IAS officers to oversee the progress of the projects across the districts in Tamil Nadu.
- More than 2000 lakes will be revived for use, under the scheme.
- Construction of dams, supply channels and the canals as required, are also being planned.

**PLASTIC BAN**

- On June 5th 2018, the Tamil Nadu government announced a policy that made the environmentalists in the state happy.
- In a move to make the state plastic-free, the government proclaimed a ban on the use of several plastic items from January 2019.
- The ban was brought in under the Environment Protection Act, 1986.
- In a government order, it was mentioned how usage of plastic bags and other plastic items used in our daily lives caused short term and long term environmental damage besides being harmful to one’s health.
- Around 14 ‘use and throw’ items such as plastic bags, plastic sheets used for wrapping food or spreading on dining table, plastic plates and tumblers and straws were banned by the state government.
- According to the official announcement, “No industry or person shall manufacture, store, supply, transport, sale or distribute ‘use and throwaway' plastic.
- No person including shopkeeper, vendor, wholesaler, retailer, trader, hawker or salesmen shall use ‘use and throwaway' plastic.”
- Over 429 tonnes of plastic waste generated in Chennai alone is expected to be curtailed by the ban.
AMMA TWO-WHEELER SCHEME
• In February 2018, the ‘Amma’ two wheeler scheme was launched by the prime minister in Chennai.
• The scheme was introduced to honour one of the promises of former CM, Late J Jayalalithaa in the electoral manifesto.
• The scheme subsidises the cost of two-wheelers by almost 50%
• The state government had also increased the subsidy amount to Rs 25000 from Rs 20000.
• Over 9000 women in Chennai alone have benefitted from the scheme.
• A quota of 4% is being allocated exclusively for women with disabilities.

GLOBAL INVESTOR’S MEET
• After the successful completion of the first global investor’s meet held under former chief minister Late J. Jayalalithaa, the second edition of the meet took place on January 23rd and 24th this year.
• According to the chief minister, Edappadi Palanisamy, over 10 lakh jobs are expected to be created in the state as a result.
• Memoranda of understanding worth three lakh crores were signed during the event.
• Over 12,300 memoranda were also signed as part of the meet and are expected to attract investments worth Rs 32,206 crores.
• While medium and small scale industries continued to attract investments, school, higher education and tourism besides office infrastructural spaces also seemed to be favoured.
• Tamil Nadu that has been hailed as the ‘Detroit of India’ will continue to live up to its name thanks to the electric car and related spare parts manufacturing companies eyeing the destination.
• Companies from China and Finland are looking at investing heavily in this segment.
• Several foreign companies and home brands like MRF have committed to launch multi-crore projects in the state.

Greater Chennai Corporation – plans to demarcate the vending and non-vending zones in the city by the end of this month
• It is planning to allow hawkers only on four streets in each of the 200 corporation wards.
• Only streets with a minimum width of 40 feet will be chosen as vending zones, which will be on bus routes and near temples and other public spaces.

G Subramanian and C Sivachandran from Tamilnadu - were among the 42 CPRF personnel killed in the Pulwama terror attack
• Subramanian is from Savalaperi village near Kovilpatti in Tuticorin district and Sivachandran belongs to Karugudi village in Ariyalur district.
Subramanian had joined CRPF in 2014 and was moved to Jammu and Kashmir after being posted in Chennai and Uttar Pradesh
Sivachandran had joined the CRPF in 2010
Condemning the terror attack, Tamilnadu Chief Minister K Palaniswami announced a solatium of Rs 20 lakh each to the victims' families

**All the 575 Sub-register offices in the state – becomes ‘cashless’ in the state from February 18, 2019**
- All the offices were installed with CCTV cameras to video record the property registrations
- The captured video grab would be handed to the buyer and seller in DVD format along with the original documents
- The move aims to avoid impersonation, which largely takes place by forging photo identity cards such as Aadhaar card or voter ID

**A new ‘fish waste recycling unit’ – was inaugurated in Foreshore Estate, Chennai**
- Central Institute of Brackish Water Aquaculture (CIBA) has developed the technology to recycle fish waste into manure
- As per the new technology, around 80% of the fish waste would be converted into oil and another 10% becomes solid waste
- The oil will be used in aquaculture farms to enhance the growth of fish or shrimps, which in turn will help in reducing the consumption of feed
- The solid waste generated is used as manure for raising saplings, vegetables or other trees

**Tamil Nadu – seeks Rs 1,064 crore funding under the Dam rehabilitation and improvement project (DRIP) of the World Bank**

![Project So Far](image-url)
The scheme is to improve safety and operational performance of existing dams.

Tamil Nadu Public works department and Tangedco have submitted the proposals for 59 dams under phase II and phase III of DRIP.

Moyar Forebay, Parson's valley dam, Pillur dam and Sandynallah dam are among the structures to be taken up in Phase II.

Pillur dam augments the drinking water supply of Coimbatore.

The state PWD has completed strengthening of 63 dams in Phase I and work on 6 structures (Manimukthanadhi, Cholavaram and Red hills, Manimuthar and Pechiparai and Uppar) in progress.

The state has taken up 89 dams in Phase I in 2012 at a cost of RS 745 crore.

Kodaganar, an earthen dam, is the only one dam failure reported from Tamil Nadu in the last century, even though 36 dams witnessed failure across the country.

The 12.75m high dam breached because of 1977 floods, the same year it was built.

The World Bank has already given in-principal clearance for Rs 11,000 crore funding for dam safety across the country.

Over the next 10 years, 733 large dams across 18 states would be strengthened under the scheme.
Tamil Nadu Directorate of Government Examinations – announced that there will be only multiple choice questions (MCQs) in the objective section for students of Classes XI and XII in the coming state board exams.

- Earlier, the Government had released the model question paper pattern in the last week of January, with the Part-A paper for Mathematics and science including fill in the blanks, match the following and assertion-reasoning type questions.
Tamil Nadu Government – signed a MoU with British Council on February 20, 2019

The agreement, signed in the presence of Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami, aims to strengthen the cultural and educational cooperation of students studying in Government schools and colleges.

The IRCTC – to start a special ‘Ram Sethu Express-Tamil Nadu Temple Tour’ in the state

- It will start from Tambaram railway station in Chennai on February 28 and will return back on March 3
- This is a Bharat Darshan exclusive tourist train, spanning 4 days of travel
- Tourists can board at Chengalpet, Tindivanam, Villupuram and Vridachalam as well

Tamil Nadu Government’s e-Governance Agency (TNeGA) – has signed a MoU with Indian Institute of Management Tiruchi, USA Virginia Tech India Centre for Advanced Research Education and Pontaq-UK India Innovation Fund

The Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami - inaugurated 5 new revenue circles in the state on February 19, 2019

- The new revenue circles are --
  - Tiruvattar, Killiyur in Kanyakumari district
  - Vatthirairupu in Virudhunagar district
  - Gujullamparai in Dindigul district
  - R K Pettai in Tiruvallur district

He had also inaugurated the newly-built Puratchi Thalaivar Bharat Ratna Dr MGR Centenary Library, built at a cost of Rs 2.3 crore on the premises of the International Institute of Tamil Studies, Taramani

President Ram Nath Kovind - unveiled a statue of Mahatma Gandhi at the Dakshina Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha in Chennai on February 21, 2019

- The Dakshina Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha, founded by Mahatma Gandhi, completed 100 years
During the same occasion on February 21, Prime Minister Narendra Modi unveiled the bust of Mahatma Gandhi in premier Yonsei University in South Korea, marking the 150th birth anniversary of Gandhi.

Chennai Metro Rail Limited – to launch a dedicated Mobile app to stream free songs, movies, TV serials on trains – by March end or early April 2019

A mobile-based entertainment system, to be launched by CMRL will make it the first metro rail service in the country to have such facility.

Tamil Nadu Government – notifies the new ‘Tamil Nadu Regulation of Rights and Responsibilities of Landlords and Tenants Act, 2017’ on February 22, 2019

It seeks to replace the Tamil Nadu Buildings (Lease and Rent Control) Act, 1960, which is popularly known as the Rent Control Act, been considered in favour of tenants.

The new tenancy Act aims at balancing the rights and responsibilities of tenants and owners.

As per the new act, a registered written agreement is mandatory for renting a home, an office or any building or property in Tamil Nadu.

Chief minister Edappadi K Palaniswami launched an exclusive portal, www.tenancy.tn.gov.in, where people can create a tenancy registration number using which they can register their agreements with the appropriate Rent authority.

Rent authorities (like Rent courts and tribunals) would be constituted in every district, headed by a deputy collector rank officer to resolve disputes between tenants and owners.

Besides, even people who have already rented out places will have to register their agreements with the rent authority concerned within the next 90 days.

The Union government had emphasised earlier on replacing the Rent Control Act during signing of the memorandum of understanding (MoU) under the ‘Housing for All’ programme.

In 2017, the state government had introduced the bill in the assembly to implement the tenancy act that will cover all the urban areas and it was passed a year later.

Under the 2011 census, Tamil Nadu has 23.4% rental housing.
Chief minister Edappadi K Palaniswami - inaugurated ‘Freedom’ fuel stations at various districts through video conferencing on February 22

- The petrol bunks will be run by convicts from various prisons across the state.
- The initiative is being done with the help of Indian Oil Corporation Ltd
- Prisoners will be recruited based on their good conduct and will be paid Rs 200 a day
- The selected prisoners have been given prior training to carry out the work and will be under the supervision of prison police at the fuel station

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami - laid the foundation stone for the construction of Chennai’s second biggest bus terminal at Kilambakkam – on February 22

- The bus terminus will come up on 44.74 acres of the 88.52-acre land at an estimated cost of Rs 417 crore
- The terminus will cater to buses bound for southern parts of Tamil Nadu and is aimed at decongesting Koyambedu in the heart of Chennai.
- The Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority (CMDA) had floated a tender for the construction of the new terminal which commenced eight years after being announced.
- This is because the site lies within protected and prohibited zone of Archaeological Survey of India as it contains ‘Megalithic Burial Sites’
- According to an amendment to the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act in January 2010, all construction is banned within 100 metres of ASI-protected areas and any construction or reconstruction or repair of a building with 200 metres of such areas requires permission from National Monuments Authority

Coimbatore based Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham - won a $125,000 'Community Challenge Award' in US-based XPRIZE Adult Literacy Competition

- The award was given for an app designed by the institute to boost adult literacy in the US using a mobile solution.
Amrita was one of the four teams selected for demonstrating significant improvement in language skills in both native speakers (NS) and English as a second language (ESL) learners during a 12-month test period.

Overall, a total of 108 teams registered for the event.

Indian Institute of Technology, Madras (IIT-M) – signs agreement with Translational Health Science and Technology Institute (THSTI) – to collaborate on applying advanced analytical approaches for predicting pregnancy outcomes.

THSTI is an autonomous institute of the Department of Biotechnology, Union ministry of science and technology in Faridabad, Haryana.

Justice Senthilkumar Ramamoorthy – appointed as an Additional Judge of the Madras High Court for a two-year term.

Chief Justice VK Tahliramani administered the oath of office to Justice Ramamoorthy in the presence of the Bar and the Bench of the High Court on February 22.

Justice Ramamoorthy obtained his Bachelor’s degree in law from the Madras Law College in 1990.

In 1992, he obtained his Master’s law degree in Constitutional and International law from the Madras Law College.

In 1993, he joined the chambers of Senior Counsel Arvind Datar and worked with him till 1998.

In 2001, he joined Dua Associates as a Partner and headed its Chennai office until his elevation to the Bench.

With Justice Ramamoorthy’s addition, the working strength of the Madras High Court presently stands at 60 judges as against a sanctioned strength of 75 judges.

However, with the Collegium reiterating the proposal to transfer Justice MV Muralidharan to the Manipur High Court, the strength may fall back to 59 judges.

Chief Minister, Edappadi K Palaniswami – to launch Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi, an income support scheme for farmers, at Kalaivanar Arangam in Chennai on February 24, 2019.

The Union Ministers, Piyush Goyal and Pon Radhakrishnan will also be present during the occasion.

Small and marginal farmers with landholdings of up to 2 acres will receive the first installment of Rs 2000 on the occasion.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will launch the scheme in Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh and the Chennai event will take place immediately after the PM’s launch.

More than 13 lakh beneficiaries will be benefitted in the state during the first phase.
The remaining 60 lakh eligible farmers would be given the assistance shortly, before March 31

Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami – launched a virtual learning portal ‘www.tamilnaducareerservices.gov.in’ on February 22, 2019– to help rural students preparing for competitive examinations in the state

In addition, the Chief Minister inaugurated a State Career Guidance Centre at Guindy, which has been established at a cost of Rs 1.31 crore, with an aim to offer proper guidance to job seekers

Tamil Nadu – becomes the first and only state in the entire country to have 2 coast guards

Tamil Nadu Governor, Banwarilal Purohit inaugurated the second Coast Guard district headquarters at Thoothukudi, Tamil Nadu on February 22

It been set up to deal with frequent issues faced by fishermen and provide anti-poaching operations, search and rescue missions and coastal security measures.

It covers about 680 km of the coastline along districts of Pudukottai, Thanjavur, Ramanathapuram, Thoothukudi, Tirunelveli and Kanyakumari.

It will function under Commander Coast Guard Region (East)

Coast Guard DIG Arvind Sharma has been appointed as the first district Commander of the district headquarters (Tuticorin)

The first district headquarters is in Chennai

The State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) and District Institutes for Education and Training (DIET) – won the first place at the EMCFA 18, organized by Commonwealth educational Media for Asia, Canada

SCERT and DIET won the award for the mega initiative ‘TN SCHOOLS LIVE’ (IRAT), developed by them

The second prize went to WAY2SCORE, a free web portal for competitive examinations (like NEET, TNPSC, JEE etc.,) aspirants – under the category of educational apps platform

Tamil Nadu Government – rolls out a massive Tree planting programme in the state – on the eve of former chief minister J Jayalalithaa’s birth anniversary celebrations
Under this programme, 71 lakh saplings will be planted in the state at a cost of Rs 191.85 crore.
The planting work will be completed by December 2019.

Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami - announced that the Tamil Nadu Music and Fine Arts University in Chennai will be named after the late Chief Minister, J. Jayalalithaa as a tribute to her.
This exclusive university for music and fine arts was launched to preserve, foster, popularise and promote the traditional system of Indian music, performing arts and fine arts practised in Tamil Nadu.

Greater Chennai Corporation and Akshaya Patra Foundation - rolled out ‘Kaalai Unavu Thittam’ in Chennai.
It was inaugurated by Tamil Nadu governor Banwarilal Purohit and state minister for fisheries and personnel and administrative reforms, D Jayakumar on February 25.
Currently, it covers around 1,000 students studying at Chennai primary school and Chennai higher secondary school in Thiruvanmiyur and Chennai primary school in Thiruvanmiyur Kuppam.
Akshaya Patra Foundation will cook and deliver the food at these schools at their own cost.
There are 281 corporation run schools in Chennai.

Foundation stone - laid for Rs 32.5 crore Check dam across Palar river in Vayalur on February 25.
Minister for Rural Industries, P. Benjamin and Minister for Law, C.Ve. Shanmugam participated in the “bhoomi puja” at a function on the banks of the Palar near Thirukazhukundram taluk.
The government has planned to construct six more check dams across the Palar at Venkatapuram, Vengudi, Ullavur, Pazhaveli and Esur-Vallipuram in Kancheepuram district.
Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami had announced 7 check dams during the Dr. MGR Centenary function in Kancheepuram district on August 30, 2017.

National Water Awards 2018 – Tamil Nadu Awards

Madurai, Tirunelveli and Sivaganga districts wins Awards in Tamil Nadu.

Madurai

Madurai district - received the first prize in the National Water Awards 2018 for rejuvenating and creating new water bodies.
✓ District collector S Natarajan received the award from Union minister Nitin Gadkari in New Delhi on February 25
✓ The district collector had organized a massive cleaning programme last year to clean Vaigai river with over 25,000 people and about 50,000 students
✓ The district also received the third prize for enriching the ground water level

レンジマスター Narendra Modi - is likely to inaugurate the Chennai-Madurai Tejas Express on March 1
✓ Tickets may cost around Rs 1,000 for a chair car seat, taking into account dynamic pricing

レンジマスター Edappadi K Palaniswami - launched the free laptop scheme for the current academic year for 15.18 lakh students on February 27
✓ The project, started in 2011-12, would cost the exchequer Rs 1,340.44 crore

レンジマスター Edappadi K Palaniswami - announced a high-level committee to study the demand to categorize six subsects of Scheduled Castes as Devendrakula Vellalars on February 27
✓ The committee would look into the demand to categorize the Kudumban, Pannadi, Kaladi, Kadayan, Devendrakulathan and Pallan sects into one grouping
✓ The committee would be led by rural development secretary, Hans Raj Varma
✓ Adi Dravidar and Tribal Welfare secretary and law secretary will be members and Adi Dravidar Welfare director will be the member-secretary

レンジマスター Edappadi K Palaniswami - laid the foundation for 12 projects costing Rs 14,071 crore after MoUs were signed in the recent Global Investors Meet (GIM) providing employment to 12,294 people
Projects inaugurated

- South Korean auto major Hyundai’s Rs 7,000 crore electric car unit and expansion of the company’s existing facility in Irungattukottai
- Expansion project of tyre manufacturer MRF in Perambalur at Rs 3,100 crore
- Sundaram Clayton Group’s Rs 1,200 crore two-wheeler and auto component expansion project in Hosur and Oragadam
- Auto component unit of Wheels India Limited at Rs 600 crore in SIPCOT industrial park in Thervoykandigai in Tiruvallur
Rajasthan – to roll out the new ‘Monthly allowance scheme’ for educated, unemployed youth from March 1 in the state

- From March 1, unemployed boys will get Rs 3,000 and girls Rs 3,500 as monthly unemployment allowance, as announced by its chief minister, Ashok Gehlot
- The new scheme is likely to benefit one lakh educated youth in the state and cost the exchequer an estimated Rs 525 crore
- Currently, the state government gives Rs 600 per month to boys and Rs 750 to girls under the Rajasthan Unemployed Allowance Scheme, 2012, which was launched during the second tenure of Ashok Gehlot earlier
- The condition for the youths to avail the scheme is to have the family income less than Rs 2 lakh per annum

Punjab Government – approves ‘Smart Village Campaign’, a rural development scheme – to develop village infrastructure and provide basic amenities

- The Government has set aside a budget of Rs 384.40 crore for the scheme

Mizoram Government - issued an order to ban the import of pigs and piglets

- The State had cited the reason that there is a possibility of outbreak of Porcine Reproductive and Respiratory Syndrome or Swine Flu
- It is generally transmitted from pigs and affects both pigs and human
- The state had also banned the import of pigs from other countries like Myanmar, which are also the prime suspects of the disease

Punjab Government – declares ‘Indus River Dolphin’ as the state aquatic animal

- Indus River Dolphin, a rare mammal, is found only in Beas River

Sikkim Government – signs MoU with Microsoft – for the improvement of education system in the state

- This agreement will also help the state to upgrade its curriculum from class VI to class X with IT course
- Microsoft will also adopt 2 schools to enhance digital literacy, develop student-teacher capacity in digital skills and improve digital citizenship

Maharashtra - has now become the seventh state in India to give 10% reservation to weaker sections of general category

- Gujarat was the first state to implement the reservation, followed by Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand and Assam

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- **Madhya Pradesh Government – made it mandatory for all industries in the state to hire 70% local youth**
  - The state mandated the condition to seek incentives from the Government as per the new industrial policy of the state

- **Kerala – becomes the first state to set up price monitoring and research unit**
  - The new unit will track violation of prices of **essential drugs and medical devices**
  - It has been set up by the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA)

- **Assam Government – presented its budget for 2019-20 with several new schemes**
  - The state announced 1 tola or 11.6 grams of Gold (costing Rs 38000) for brides from families with annual income of less than Rs 5 lakhs
  - It proposes the launch of ‘Affordable Nutrition and Nourishment Assistance (ANNA) Yojana’ from March 2019 to provide rice at Re 1 per kg instead of the present Rs 3 per kg for the benefit of 53 lakh households
  - It had also promised ‘e-bikes’ for all girls who secure first division in higher secondary examination apart from providing free text books to all the students upto degree level
  - A one-time subsidy of Rs 50,000 on all educational loans sanctioned during the current financial year will also be provided by the state government
  - The Government also announced Rs 50000 cash to 200 sportspersons and artists in the state
  - It had also decided to provide an ‘Immediate family assistance’ of Rs 25,000 to widows below 45 years
  - It had set aside RS 10 lakh for 108 religious places, which are a century old

- **Gujarat – announced that the shops and business in the state can stay open 24x7**
  - It plans to amend its own Shops and Establishments Act, which would also put an end to the need for annual renewal of licenses
  - It also proposes to make mandatory for establishments employing more than 30 women to provide crèche facilities
  - The state becomes 2\(^{nd}\) in the country to do so after Maharashtra, which has already amended its shops and establishments law

- **Delhi Government – has launched ‘Zero Fatality Corridor’ with an aim to curb the number of accidents**
  - A 3km stretch between Bhalswa chowk and Burari chowk on the outer ring road has been chosen as a case study under the project
It will be observed for scientific assessment of accidents, road engineering, road-user engagement
The initiative is part of the state’s action plan to reduce fatalities due to road crashes by 30% by 2020

**Uttar Pradesh Government – proposes a new scheme, “Kanya Sumangala Yojana” at a cost of Rs 1,200 crore, in its annual budget announced on February 7**

- It is aimed to raise health and educational standard of girls, brighten their future and bring in a positive change in the thinking towards women.
- The budget had set aside Rs 612 crore for stray cows -- Rs 247 crore was allocated for new cowsheds, Rs 200 crore for Kanha gaushalas and stray animal homes in urban areas and Rs 165 crore for unproductive and abandoned cows
- It had also allocated a big amount for religious tourism, vedic schools and cow protection

**Jammu and Kashmir Government - granted the ‘Divisional Status’ to Ladakh Region, while exercising its powers under Section 5 of Land Revenue Act, 1996 on February 8, 2019**

- The Ladakh division will comprise Leh and Kargil districts with its headquarters at Leh
- Till now, the Ladakh region formed a part of the Kashmir Division of Jammu & Kashmir.
- With this, Ladakh became the third Division in the state with the other two being Jammu, and Kashmir
- The Ladakh division is now the biggest division in the state with 86,909 sq. km of area, followed by Jammu division of 26,293 sq km at second and Kashmir Division of 15,948 sq km at third.

**Meghalaya – to rename the Dikkibandi stadium in Tura town after former Lok Sabha Speaker, Late P A Sangma**
The construction of the stadium, formerly known as MP stadium, was initiated by late P A Sangma during his tenure as a member of Parliament from Tura.

P A Sangma was also the former Chief minister of the state (1988-1990), elected from Tura constituency many times

He formed the Nationalist Congress Party in 1999 along with Sharad Pawar and Tariq Anwar

He contested the elections for the post of President of India in 2012 and lost the elections to Pranab Mukherjee

**Odisha’s Keonjhar district police – to provide Rs 100 as cash reward for the good drivers who obey traffic rules**

- The initiative, a first-of-its-kind in the country, will offer cash and certificates - for the drivers who are making amendments after they were caught over speeding, drunken driving or flouting traffic rules

**Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister, Yogi Adityanath – flagged off the ‘Sarthi 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

**Rajasthan – passed a bill to give 5% separate quota in jobs and educational institutions to Gujjars and 4 other communities by clubbing them as ‘More Backward Class’ within the OBC (other backward class)**

- The bill also provides for increasing the income limit for the creamy layer in OBC from Rs 2.5 lakh to Rs 8 lakh per annum
- The state assembly had also given its nod for implementing the 10% EWS (economically weaker section) as approved by the centre
- With all these reservations, the total reservation in the state stands at 64% now
- The OBC reservation increases from the present 21% to 26% with 5% exclusive quota for Gujjars, Banjaras, Gadia Lohars, Raikas and Gadarias under MBC category
- The state also passed a unanimous resolution requesting the centre to put the bill in Schedule IX of the constitution to avoid judicial scrutiny, as the reservations breach the 50% cap set by the Supreme Court

**Madhya Pradesh Government - is launching a new mobile ‘App’ - that will link cow owners with animal husbandry officials and field teams**

- The app will also allow the government to monitor its cow plans and projects in real time
- The app, to be launched within a month, is also is expected to cut down on absenteeism in the department and make staff accountable
Andhra Pradesh – launches ‘Godavari Mega Aqua Food Park’ at Tundurru Village in Bhimavaram Mandal, West Godavari District

- It is India’s first aqua mega food park launched exclusively for fish and marine products processing
- It was inaugurated by Union Minister of Food Processing Industries Harsimrat Kaur Badal on February 12, 2019
- It was set up at a cost of Rs 122.60 crore

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu - laid the foundation stone of India’s biggest district cooling system in the state’s capital, Amaravati on February 13

- First of its kind in the country, the district cooling system will help save 40% of the energy currently being used
- All government, residential and commercial buildings in Amaravati will be supplied chilled water through this system’s pipelines.
- The 30-year agreement between the UAE’s National Central Cooling Company (Tabreed) and Andhra Pradesh Capital Region Development Authority (APCRDA) for a contracted cooling capacity of 20,000 refrigeration tonnes was signed recently and this is the UAE Company’s first plant outside its Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) market
- Tabreed’s system will meet cooling requirements for the State’s Assembly, High Court, Secretariat and other government buildings that are currently under construction, for which cooling services will commence from early 2021.
- District cooling was first set up in India at Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT), the first phase of which with a capacity of 10,000 RTs, has been in operation since April 2015.
- The state plans to make all buildings in the new capital green-rated
- In this regard, the corporation will enter into an MoU with a Zurich-based organization for construction of energy efficient residential buildings which have below 2,000 W of energy consumption.
- Every building in Amaravati should have a Green Rating for Integrated Habitat Assessment (GRIHA) or Indian Green Building Council (IGBC) rating

Goa – declares ‘Ghumot’, an indigenous earthen drum - as the state’s heritage musical instrument

- Ghumot is a percussion instrument widely played during Ganesh Chaturthi Aarties
- Ghumot is an indigenous earthen drum fashioned as a designed clay pot, with the skin of the ‘monitor lizard’ stretched taut across the pot’s mouth, forming a drumhead
- Since the monitor lizard was classified as an endangered wildlife species and was listed in Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972, Ghumot was banned by the Goa Forest Department
Nowadays, the instrument is given a new lease of life by replacing the skin of Monitor lizard with the sheep-goat skin.

Portuguese Prime Minister Anotnio Costa, who is of goan origin, was presented with a Ghumot, during his visit to India in 2017.

**Karnataka – to give Kannadigas ‘first priority’ in jobs under Group C and D category in the private sector**

The state government has decided to amend the Karnataka Industrial Employment (Standing Orders), Rules, 1961 - to implement the 1983-constituted Sarojini Mahishi Committee’s recommendations granting primacy for the Kannadigas in the private sector jobs.

Other important recommendations of the Committee:

- 100% reservation for Kannadigas in all state government departments and PSUs
- 100% reservation for Kannadigas for Group C and D jobs in Central government departments and PSUs
- At least 80% reservation for Kannadigas for Group B jobs in Central government departments and PSUs
- 65% reservation for Kannadigas for Group A jobs in Central government departments and PSUs
- All jobs in the private sector to be reserved for Kannadigas except for senior/skilled positions, unless necessitated.

**The Jammu and Kashmir administration - to withdraw security cover of 6 separatist leaders, following the Pulwama attack on February 14, 2019**

The 6 separatist leaders are Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, Abdul Gani Bhat, Bilal Lone, Hashim Qureshi, Fazal Haq Qureshi and Shabir Shah.

Mirwaiz Umar Farooq is chairman of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference.

Abdul Gani Bhat is a senior leader of the Muslim Conference which is part of the Hurriyat.

Bilal Lone represents the ‘Peoples Independent Movement’ in the Hurriyat Conference.

Hashim Qureshi was one of the founding members of the Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) and is now chairman of the Jammu Kashmir Democratic Liberation Party (JKDLP).

Fazal-Haq Qureshi is a senior leader of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC).

Shabir Shah is founder and member of the Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party.

**Jharkhand – bans ‘Popular Front of India’ in the state**

The move is aimed at preventing its anti-national tasks and activities and also due to its alleged association with terror outfits like ISIS.

Earlier in Feb, 2018, PFI was banned by Jharkhand Govt., but few months later, Jharkhand High Court cancelled the state’s decision to ban the PFI.
The Himachal Pradesh Assembly - passed the Official Language (Amendment) Bill 2019 to make Sanskrit the second official language in the state, replacing Punjabi
✓ Once given assent by the Governor, it will amend the Himachal Pradesh Official language Act, 1975.
✓ Before 1966, Himachal Pradesh was an integral part of Punjab, with the areas like Bilaspur, Shimla and Kangra predominantly inhabited by the Punjabis.

Rajasthan assembly – passes 2 new bills ‘The Rajasthan Panchayati Raj (Amendment) Bill, 2019 and the Rajasthan Municipality (Amendment) Bill, 2019’ - to scrap ‘minimum educational qualification’ for civic and panchayat poll candidates
✓ As per the Rajasthan Panchayati Raj Amendment Bill 2015, a candidate must have passed class X for municipal elections, class VIII for panchayat polls for the post of sarpanch and class X for Zila Parishad elections.

The Jammu & Kashmir Government – withdrew the security cover of 18 separatist leaders in the state
✓ Earlier, on February 17, the state government had withdrawn the security cover of 6 separatists
✓ The separatist leaders whose security cover has been withdrawn includes Syed Ali Shah Geelani, Yaseen Malik, Abdul Gani Shah among others

Madhya Pradesh Government – announces India’s first 100-day urban job guarantee scheme
✓ The scheme provides 40 kinds of jobs, covering a wide range of population- regardless of their educational qualification
✓ The government has already started accepting registrations for the scheme and around 1.68 lakh urban unemployed youths have applied and around 64,000 youths have been allotted work under the scheme so far
✓ Once enrolled, beneficiaries will have to work in civic bodies and undergo skills training simultaneously.
The government’s target is to cover at least six lakh youths a year in three phases, which means two lakh every four months.

Jobs offered under the scheme include cattle grazer, accountant assistant, assistant fire operator, assistant storekeeper, caretaker of shelter homes, effluent water treatment plant operator, motor mechanic, electrician, community response person, contract supervisor, courier, glass fitter, garden assistant, JCB driver, JCB helper, driver, dispatch operator, conductor, fireman, photographer, carpenter, billing assistant, mechanic, welder, repair of office electronic equipment, bill distributor, legal advisor assistant, videographer, store attendant, surveyor, cleanliness assistant and security guard.

**Chhattisgarh Government** – to set up ‘Cow Creche’ or ‘Gowthan’ in every village to serve as a shelter for calves and cows.

- For the first time in the country, the state plans to turn the cow ecosystem into a profit-making venture under the Narwa-Garuwa-Ghurwa Badi (NGGB) project.
- Crop stubble will be brought to Gowthans and fed to cows while cow dung will be converted into compost and returned to farmers as fertilizer.
- Gowthans will also be used to market cow products.
- The scheme is modeled as a big step towards promoting organic farming in the state.

**Uttar Pradesh Government** – to announce Hema Malini, actress and current BJP MP from Mathura as the brand ambassador of UP Gau Seva Aayog, an autonomous body with an advisory role.

- The plan, to showcase and promote health benefits of cow products, was conceptualized in May 2018.
- The UP Government had allocated a mammoth Rs 647 crore allocation for bovines in the 2019 budget.
Kerala – hosted the world’s largest religious gathering of women on a single day ‘Attukal Ponkala festival’ in Thiruvananthapuram on February 20, 2019
✓ Lakhs of women prepared ‘Pongala’ - the offering in makeshift brick stoves to worship the presiding deity of Attukal Bhagavathy temple
✓ Attukal temple is also called ‘Women’s Sabarimala’ as only women perform the ritual

Telangana government – announces an Unemployment allowance of Rs 3,016 per month to the eligible youth in the state
✓ This was announced by its Chief Minister in the Interim budget
✓ An outlay of Rs 1810 crore was allocated for the scheme by the state

Odisha government - launched the ‘Boat ambulance’ service on February 23
✓ The service, inaugurated at a cost of Rs 5.40 crore, will help patients reach hospitals in remote areas cut off by rivers
✓ The first boat ambulance was launched at Batighar in the Kendrapara district.

Bihar – becomes the first state in the country to launch ‘dog squads’ to check liquor smuggling
✓ 20 liquor-tracker dogs were trained rigorously for 9 months at Hyderabad-based Integrated Intelligence Training Academy
✓ The state had imposed total ban on liquor on April 2016

Uttarkhand Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat – launches ‘1905’ helpline for quick redressal of public complaints – in Dehradun on February 23, 2019
✓ Citizens can contact any department under this helpline to ensure speedy functioning of the government departments

Kerala Governor P Sathasivam – to inaugurate the M G Ramachandran (MGR) memorial in Palakkad on February 25
✓ The memorial was constructed converting his ancestral home 'Sathya Vilasam' at Vadavannur grama panchayat in Chittur taluk of the Palakkad district

Jammu and Kashmir - bagged ‘Saubhagya Excellence Award’ for being the first state in the country to achieve 100% household electrification under ‘Saubhagya’ scheme
✓ The 100-crore award for achieving 100% household electrification was presented by Union Minister of Power, New and Renewable Energy, R K Singh during the ‘Power Ministers’ Conference’ held in Gurugram
Madhya Pradesh's Central Zone Power Distribution Company, Bhopal and West Zone Power Distribution Company, Indore - have been awarded the Saubhagya award
✓ implemented by the union government from September 25, 2017, aims to provide electricity to all BPL houses of rural and urban areas

Assam – launches ‘PRANAM’ commission – to hear cases of neglect of parents by state government employees
✓ According to the bill, in cases of neglect of parents by the government employees, 10% to 15% of the employee's salary will be deducted by the government and paid to the parents or differently-abled siblings.

Himachal Pradesh – declares monkeys as ‘Vermin species’ again - for next one year for eleven districts and 91 tehsils and sub-tehsils in Himachal Pradesh – as per the centre’s notification dated February 14, 2019
✓ Monkeys have been affecting the crops and causing harm to humans in the State
✓ Earlier on April 24, 2016, Monkeys were declared as vermin in 38 tehsils and sub-tehsils of 10 districts in Himachal Pradesh
✓ Vermin are pests or nuisance animals that spread diseases or destroy crops or livestock.
✓ If an animal is declared ‘vermin’ under the Wild life (protection) act 1972, their killing will not be regulated by the Government
Telecom and Regulatory Authority of India’s (TRAI) new Tariff and Regulatory framework for DTH and Cable TV networks – comes into effect from February 1
✓ As per the new regulations, the customers can choose and pay for channels of their choice
✓ TRAI has capped the network capacity fee at Rs 130 for 100 SD channels with Rs 20 added for every additional 25 channels
✓ In Tamil Nadu, cable TV operators have come up with a bouquet of up to 150 free-to-air channels at the price of Rs 177, including GST

K.J. Alphons, Union Minister for Tourism - inaugurated a project under North East India Circuit of Swadesh Darshan Scheme
✓ The circuit is the first ever project in Sikkim under the scheme
✓ The Swadesh Darshan scheme provides for the development of thematic circuits in the country in a planned and manner
✓ So far 13 thematic circuits have been developed -- North East India Circuit, Buddhist Circuit, Himalayan Circuit, Coastal Circuit, Krishna Circuit, Desert Circuit, Tribal Circuit, Eco Circuit, Rural Circuit, Spiritual Circuit, Ramayana Circuit, Heritage Circuit and Wildlife Circuit

Union Government – renames ‘The Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion’ (DIPP) into ‘The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade’
✓ The renamed new department will work under the Union Ministry of Commerce
✓ The new department will deal with all matters regarding the start-ups, facilitating ease of doing business etc.,
✓ It will also deal with the internal trade, which was under the Ministry of Consumer Affairs so far

The Union Government proposed – 3 models under the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana – namely Insurance model, trust-based model and hybrid model
✓ Insurance model - The premiums are paid to the insurance company which administers and pay the claim
✓ Trust-based model - Each state forms its own trust to manage the scheme and claims will be disbursed from a corpus created from central and state government contributions
✓ Hybrid model - A part of the claim comes under the insurance model while the balance gets processed under the trust
National Sample Survey Office’s (NSSO’s) Periodic labour force survey (PLFS) - estimates India’s unemployment rate remains at 6.1% in 2017-18, the highest since 1972-73
✓ It is the first comprehensive survey on employment conducted by a government agency after demonetization.
✓ The unemployment in urban areas is at 7.8% compared to 5.3% in rural areas
✓ Rate of jobless rural males rose to 17.4% from 5% and among rural jobless females the rate became 13.6% from 4.8%

Indian Navy and Cochin Shipyard – signs agreement worth $93 million with Israel Aerospace industries – for providing naval Medium Range Surface to air missile systems (MRSAM) to India.
✓ The Israel company would also provide complementary systems for the proposed Air defense system

India’s new e-commerce policy - came into effect on February 1, 2019
✓ The policy was drafted to encourage micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) having a level-playing field
✓ The national policy framework in this regard was prepared by a task force headed by commerce secretary, Rita Teotia
✓ The data storage move in the policy will help private sector companies comply with the norms laid down by the Srikrishna committee on data localization
✓ Under the new policy, online retailers should not sell any product in which they have equity interest ‘exclusively in their platforms’
✓ Also, not more than 25% of an item should come from a single vendor, ending the era of bulk sales
✓ The policy also ends the practice of seasonal discounts, cashbacks, extended warranties, faster deliveries etc., to create a common playing field for all
The Prime Minister-led Selection Committee - has short-listed 5 IAS officers for the appointment of the new Central Bureau of Intelligence (CBI) director

- The five selected IAS officers are those who have taken the charge between 1983 and 1984
- The post of CBI chief has been lying vacant since January 10, 2019
- The current interim chief is M Nageswara Rao
- The short-listed Officers
  - Former Madhya Pradesh DGP, Rishi Kumar Shukla (1983 Madhya Pradesh cadre)
  - Central Reserve Police Force chief, R R Bhatnagar (1984 Uttar Pradesh)
  - National Security Guard chief, Sudeep Lakhtakia (1984 Uttar Pradesh)
  - National Institute of Criminology and Forensic Sciences director, Javeed Ahmed (1985 Uttar Pradesh)
  - Bureau of Police Research and Development chief, A P Maheshwari (1984 Uttar Pradesh)

Ministry of Health – signs agreement with Google and telecom providers – to launch trial for ‘Accurate 108 Emergency Ambulance Service’

- As per the initiative, the ambulance will reach the spot without being informed about the location
- One will be able to call the Centre-run 108 emergency ambulance services without even specifying the location or without a mobile app or without internet connection at all
- The service will be run using twin technologies -- Cell Tower Triangulation and Google Emergency Location Services
While Cell Tower Triangulation technology uses information from telecom operator about the location, the Google ESL uses GPS to track the location in a more accurate way.

The idea was pitched by IAS officer Abhijeet Kaplish of the 2015 cadre, currently posted as the Sub-Divisional Magistrate in Mansa.

His idea was converted into a presentation and was shortlisted by the Cabinet Secretary and was delivered to Prime Minister Narendra Modi in September 2017.

The government chose Uttar Pradesh for the pilot trial of the project, which has been initiated since January 2019.

The government has also offered other states to take up the project as part of their yearly planning under the National Health Mission for 2019.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi - laid the foundation stones of two All India Institutes of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Vijaypur and Awantipora in Jammu and Kashmir

The Prime Minister also laid the foundation stone of northern regional centre campus of Indian Institute of Mass Communication in Jammu.

He also launched the University of Ladakh, which will be the first-ever university in the Ladakh region of the state.

The Government – launches ‘Shehri Samridhi Utsav’ to extend the outreach of DAY-NULM

The scheme will be monitored by the Union Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs.

It will facilitate access of Self-Help Group (SHG) members to the other government schemes apart from creating awareness about Deendayal Antyodaya Mission – National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM) to the urban poor.

The Union Ministry of Coal - signed a MoU with Ministry of Energy, Republic of Poland - on cooperation in the field of coal mining

The agreement would promote clean coal technologies through the already established joint coal working group as well as research institutes and academia between the two countries.

Ministry of Union Labour and Employment - has allowed women to work in mines – as part of the efforts to build more opportunities for women

This decision has been taken in line with the recommendations of the section 12 of the Mines act, 1952.

Women will be deployed in work between hours of 7 pm and 6 am.

The Mines act, 1952, restricted the women employment in underground mines and opencast during night hours.
International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) - to set up a World Heritage Centre - housing ‘spiritual camps’ in 45 countries

✓ A similar centre would also be set up at Mayapur in West Bengal in the country
✓ The estimated budget of the proposed project is around 3000 crores

The Cinematograph Amendment Bill, 2019 was approved by the Union cabinet - to amend to the Cinematograph Act, 1952

✓ The amendment was proposed by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting
✓ The Bill aims to tackle Films piracy by including the penal provisions for unauthorized camcording and duplication of films
✓ The bill proposes two major amendments-
  ✓ Insertion of new Section 6AA in the Act for prohibition of unauthorised recording
  ✓ Amendment in Section 7 to introduce penal provisions for violating provisions of section 6AA
✓ The penalty includes an imprisonment for a term which may extend to 3 years or with fine which may extend to 10 lakh rupees or with both
✓ Earlier, Prime Minister Narendra Modi made an announcement at the inaugural function of the National Museum of Indian Cinema at Mumbai on 15th January 2019 to tackle the menace of camcording and piracy

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi - has approved the introduction of National Institutes of Food Technology, Entrepreneurship and Management Bill, 2019

✓ The objective of the bill is to confer the status of Institutions of National Importance to 2 institutes –
  ✓ National Institute of Food Technology, Entrepreneurship and Management (NIFTEM) at Kundli, Haryana
  ✓ Indian Institute of Food Processing Technology (IIFPT) at Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu
✓ The proposed status would provide functional autonomy to these institutes to design and develop their own courses and undertake research activities in their academic pursuits, so that they become world class institutes
✓ The institutes would also implement the reservation policy of the Government to reach various stakeholders

The Union Cabinet - has given its approval to move official amendments to the Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Bill, 2018, pursuant to the recommendations of the Standing Committee on Finance (SCF)

✓ The Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Bill, 2018 was first introduced in Parliament on 18th July, 2018
It was then referred to the SCF, which submitted its Seventieth Report on the said Bill to Parliament on 3rd January, 2019.

The proposed amendments will further strengthen the Bill in its objective to effectively tackle the menace of illicit deposit taking activities in the country, and prevent such schemes from duping poor and gullible people of their hard earned savings.

The Bill creates three different types of offences namely –
- Running of Unregulated Deposit Schemes
- Fraudulent default in Regulated Deposit Schemes
- Wrongful inducement in relation to Unregulated Deposit Schemes

In case of default, the Bill provides for attachment of properties / assets by the Competent Authority, and subsequent realization of assets for repayment to depositors.

The Bill enables creation of an online central database, for collection and sharing of information on deposit-taking activities in the country.

The Bill provides for severe punishment and heavy pecuniary fines to act as deterrent.

The Union Cabinet - has approved the proposal for establishment of ‘Rashtriya Kamdhenu Aayog’ for Conservation protection and development of cows and their progeny

The Rashtriya Kamdhenu Aayog will work in collaboration with Veterinary, Animal Sciences or Agriculture University or departments or organizations of the Central/State Government engaged in the task of research in the field of breeding and rearing of cow, organic manure, biogas etc.

The new agency will work towards conservation, protection and development of cattle population in the country including development and conservation of indigenous breeds.

It is in pursuance of the announcement of setting up of the Aayog in the Union Budget 2019-20.

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) – approves "Broadcasting Infrastructure and Network Development" scheme of Prasar Bharti

As per the scheme, Rs.1054.52 crore will be provided to Prasar Bharti for 3 years from 2017-18 to 2019-20.

Out of Rs. 1054.52 Crore, an amount of Rs. 435.04 Crore is approved for the continuing schemes of All India Radio and an amount of Rs 619.48 Crore is approved for the schemes of Doordarshan.

For All India Radio, the Scheme provides for FM expansion at 206 places, digitalisation of studios at 127 places are envisaged.

Besides, 10 KW FM transmitters would be set up along Indo-Nepal Border and in J&K Border, to improve the Radio and TV coverage along the border areas.
CCEA also approved the setting up of High Definition Television (HDTV) transmitters at Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata.

It had approved the launch of DD ArunPrabha Channel from Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh to fulfil the aspirations of people of North East Region.

**The Union Cabinet - has approved the proposal for Abolition of Institution of Income-Tax Ombudsman and Indirect Tax Ombudsman**

- The Institution of Income-Tax Ombudsman was created in the year 2003 to deal with public grievances related to settlement of complaints relating to Income Tax.
- However, it failed to achieve its objectives, as the tax payers started preferring alternate methods of grievance redressal mechanisms like CPGRAMS (Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System), Aaykar Seva Kendras etc.
- Further, it was also decided in 2011 to close vacant offices of Indirect Tax Ombudsman.

**The Swachh Bharat Mission Grameen - launched the 'Darwaza Band -Part 2' campaign on February 6**

- The campaign focuses on sustaining the open defecation free status of villages across the country.
- The campaign, produced by the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, was launched in Mumbai in the presence of actor, Amitabh Bachchan.
- The campaign has been supported by the World Bank.
- The national sanitation coverage is now in excess of 98%, compared to 39% in 2014.
- Amitabh Bachchan had earlier supported the Swachh Bharat Mission Grameen during the first phase of the Darwaza Band campaign launched in 2017.
- Swachh Bharat Mission was launched on 2nd October 2014.

**The Government - has mandated that all mobile phones sold in India will come with a dedicated panic button to be used in distress by all, including females**

- The Ministry of Home Affairs is implementing a project namely, Emergency Response Support System (ERSS) under Nirbhaya Fund scheme.
- The project intends to provide a single number 112-based emergency support services, which could be accessed through panic button in mobile phone.
- The project has been devised in coordination with the Ministry of Women & Child Development under Nirbhaya Fund scheme.
- As on date, ERSS has commenced in the States of Himachal Pradesh and Nagaland in November & December, 2018 respectively.
- The Department of Telecommunications has issued a Gazette notification for inclusion of panic button in all new mobile phones handsets.
with effect from 1\textsuperscript{st} January 2017, which was subsequently extended to 28\textsuperscript{th} February 2017

\textbullet \textbf{The government - to conduct a survey of all agricultural households in the country - to assess the plight of farmers for the current crop year (July 2018 –June 2019)}
- The survey called the 'Situation Assessment Survey of Agricultural Households' will be conducted during the 77th round of the National Sample Survey in the current calendar year
- It would mainly focus on assessing the income, expenditure and indebtedness of the agricultural households among other issues
- The National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) has been chosen as the nodal agency for the survey, which was last conducted by the agency for the crop year 2012-13
- The inter-ministerial committee formed on doubling farmers' income by 2022 has considered the estimates of agriculture households' income obtained from the 70th round of NSS survey data as the base level income

\textbullet \textbf{Air India’s First ever Flight Simulator known as ‘Boeing 747-200’ - was displayed in an exhibition at Nehru Science Centre, Mumbai}
- It was designed and manufactured by the CAE (Canadian Aviation Electronics), Canada.
- It was acquired by Air India in 1980
- The 21 years serviced Simulator is donated to the Aviation Gallery – Hall of Aerospace, Nehru Science Centre, Mumbai for creating awareness about its significance in the field of aviation, among the general public and students in particular

\textbullet \textbf{Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY) App - has been launched on Google play store - by Indu Bhushan, CEO of PM-JAY on February 6 in New Delhi}
- It was created by the National Health Authority (NHA)
- The app offers users easy access to information on the scheme, besides allowing them to check eligibility, find hospitals nearby, and receive help
- Union Minister for Health & Family Welfare, J. P. Nadda – had inaugurated the newly constituted National Health Authority (NHA) - by inaugurating the office of Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya (AB PM-JAY)
- The Minister formally inaugurated the 7th and 9th floors of the Jeevan Bharati (LIC) Building, in Connaught Place, New Delhi as the Office of NHA on February 5
- The Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana was launched by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi from Jharkhand on September 23
It provides annual health cover of Rs 5 Lakh for secondary and tertiary care hospitalisation through a network of Empanelled Health Care Providers.

- 28 States and Union Territories are on board currently with the scheme.
- The scheme had already helped 10,80,183 patients get hospitalised and has settled Rs 1,041.3 Crore worth claims, out of which Rs 808.2 Crore has been approved.
- While 60,328 hospitals have applied for empanellment, 14,756 (24.45%) have been empanelled.
- The National Health Agency had been restructured as National Health Authority (NHA).

**India – becomes the 2nd largest LPG consumer and importer in the world, following China and surpassing Japan**

- The import of LPG grew by 12.5% over the past 5 years to 12 million metric tons (13 million tons) in 2018-19.
- The exporters of LPG to India include Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Iran.
- The number of active LPG consumers in India has grown at a compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) of 15% – from 14.8 crore in 2014-15 to 22.4 crore in 2017-18.
- Increase in population combined with LPG penetration in rural areas has resulted in an average growth of 8.4% in LPG consumption.
- The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas estimates that LPG consumption would grow to 30.3 million tonnes by 2025 and 40.6 million tonnes by 2040.
- The flagship scheme of the government Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) has made a significant contribution towards the penetration of LPG in rural areas.
- The renewed target under the scheme aims to provide LPG connections to 8 crore households before March 31, 2020.

**A dedicated web portal has been launched – for the beneficiaries of PM-KISAN**
The Centre had launched the portal ‘http://pmkisan.nic.in’ - for the purpose of getting the list of beneficiaries from the states by February 25.

It had recently released detailed operational guidelines specifying exclusion of certain categories of non-eligible landholder farmer families.

The ambitious programme of the government will benefit around 12 crore small and marginal farmers, who have cultivable land up to 2 hectares.

The Rs 75000 crore, fully centrally funded scheme, PM-KISAN, was announced by the Government in its interim budget for 2019-20 on February 1.

Under the scheme, the beneficiary will get Rs 6,000 per annum in 3 equal installments every four months in a financial year.

The Government has made the scheme operational with effect from December 1, 2018.

The first installment of Rs 2,000 will be transferred to the bank accounts of the beneficiaries by March 31, 2019.

**India’s own ‘Air Force One’ for President and Prime Minister’s long-haul flights – is getting ready**

Two new Boeing 777s are being retrofitted with advanced security measures including missile warning and counter-measure dispensing systems along with encrypted satellite communication facilities.

The soon-to-be-named ‘Air India One’ or ‘Indian Air Force One’ will be close to American president’s ‘Air Force One’, the iconic ‘flying Oval office’ in terms of security.

The B777s were purchased from America at the cost of Rs 190 million in January 2018.

The B777 is equipped with ‘large aircraft infrared counter-measures’ (LAIRCM) self protection suites (SPS), which automatically detects and jams the missile threats.

They will replace the 26-year old B747 jumbo, currently used by the Prime Minister and the President for long international flights.

The B747 jumbo have the disadvantage of more fuel consumption, no advanced self-protection suites and needs a stopover in Europe for fuelling for the long air travels to the United States.

**India Meteorological Department officials – said that an ‘El Nino’, which has a negative influence on Indian monsoon – may never form in the next few months before monsoon in the equatorial Pacific Ocean**

Currently, neutral ENSO conditions, which are neither El Nino nor La Nina, are prevailing in the Pacific Ocean.

**Smriti Irani, Union Minister of Textiles - launched the India Size project in Mumbai on February 6, 2019**

It is a first-of-its-kind project that aims to arrive at a standard Indian Size for the ready-to-wear clothing industry, on the lines of the standardised sizes available in countries such as the USA and the UK.
**UNESCO - joining hands with Sahapedia – to organize the 2nd India Heritage Walk Festival (IHWF) across 37 cities**

- The festival is being held from February 2-28, with a focus on heritage education and walks for people with special needs
- It is also supported by the National Mineral Development Corporation
- A primary objective of the festival, which will conclude with simultaneous walks in multiple cities, is to widen access to various aspects of India’s tangible and intangible heritage
- The IHWF had received the PATA Gold Award 2018 for its maiden pan-India event last year
- It will kick-start with a heritage walk in Ahmedabad on February 2, focusing on the religious history and co-existence of multiple faiths in that city
- Sahapedia is an open online resource on the arts, cultures and heritage of India

**Indian Coast Guard – signs MoU with Airports Authority of India - to coordinate the aeronautical and maritime Search And Rescue (SAR) operations – as per the International Aeronautical Maritime Search And Rescue (IAMSAR) standards**

- The MoU seeks to enhance Rescue Coordination Centre (RCC), Kolkata and Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC), Port Blair

**The Government – brings 8 new medical devices under the category of ‘drugs’ with effect from April 1, 2020**

- They includes high-end medical equipment such as implants, X-ray machines, MRI and CT scan equipment and dialysis machines
- The move of the Health ministry is aimed at regulating quality and efficiency of these commonly used devices, which are critical to healthcare
- At present, only 23 medical devices, notified as ‘drugs’, are regulated under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act

**Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs - instituted the ‘PMAY (U) awards for Implementation and Innovation’ under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban) to reward the “Top Performers” in different categories**

- The award scheme aims to promote a healthy competition between States and UTs, Urban Local Bodies and municipalities
- The ranking of States/UTs will be made public every month to recognize outstanding performers to attain the goal of ‘Housing for All’ in a sustained manner
- The winners will be awarded in a special national event to be held in New Delhi tentatively in June 2019

PMAY
Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) or ‘Housing for all’ is a housing scheme for all the people who belong to lower income group, economically weaker section and Middle Income Group in the country.
It was launched in 2015 and is divided into two parts, PMAY (Urban) and PMAY (Gramin).
The scheme is estimated to be completed by 2022.

Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare -
Issued Categorization of farmers in agriculture census, 2015-16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No.</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Size-Class</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Marginal</td>
<td>Below 1.00 hectare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Small</td>
<td>1.00-2.00 hectare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Semi-medium</td>
<td>2.00-4.00 hectare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>4.00-10.00 hectare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>10.00 hectare and above</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scheduled Castes, Scheduled tribes and others are the sub classification of operational holdings on the basis of social groups.
Agriculture census is held once in every 5 years.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi – dedicated projects worth more than Rs 20000 crore to Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Tripura, when he visited the northeast on a two-day tour

PM in Arunachal Pradesh
The Prime Minister laid the foundation of the all-weather tunnel under Se La, a critical mountain pass connecting Tawang to the rest of Arunachal Pradesh.
The proposed tunnel, allowing faster troop mobility along the border, will be constructed by the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) within a period of 3 years at a cost of Rs 687 crore.
The Prime Minister also inaugurated DD Arun Prabha, a new 24-hour Doordarshan channel for Arunachal Pradesh, and dedicated the 110-MW Pare hydroelectric plant to the nation.
He also laid the foundation for a permanent campus of Film and Television institute of India at Jote in Arunachal Pradesh and also claimed 100% household electrification in the state under the Saubhagya scheme.

PM in Assam
In Assam, he launched projects worth Rs 18,000 crore for boosting infrastructure, connectivity and economic growth of the region.
He laid the foundation of the North East Gas Grid project that will ensure uninterrupted natural gas supply across the region.

The PM launched a 729km gas pipeline from Barauni to Guwahati passing through Bihar, West Bengal, Sikkim and Assam, which is expected to feed the network in the region.

The Prime Minister also inaugurated the Hollong Modular Gas processing project, which is proposed to deliver 15% of the total gas produced in Assam.

He laid the foundation of NRL Bio Refinery at Numaligarh, which will be the biggest of 12 such refineries being set up in the country.

Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Environment Minister - announced the Great Indian Bustard as the mascot - for the 13th Conference of Parties (COP) of the UN Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species (CMS) to be held in Gandhinagar, Gujarat during February 2020.

CMS-COP 13 is a global platform for the conservation and sustainable use of migratory species and their habitats.

It has over 120 participating countries.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi – unveiled the statue of Tripura’s last ruler, Maharaja Bir Bikram Kishore Manikya at the Agartala airport.

During the visit, the PM also inaugurated the new complex of Tripura Institute of Technology at Narsingarh.

Maharaja Bir Bikram Kishore Manikya, who ruled Tripura during 1923-47, is considered as the father of modern Tripura.

The entire planning of present-day Tripura was initiated during his rule including planning of the capital city of Tripura, Agartala.

He was responsible for the construction of Tripura’s first airport at Agartala, which is the 2nd busiest airport in the entire northeast now.

A dedicated “Asiatic Lion Conservation Project” – was launched by Union Minister Harsh Vardhan on February 8 - with a budgetary contribution of Rs 97.85 Cr from Central Government.

The Union Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change - approved the project and allocated Rs 59 crore to be spent across 3 financial years FY 2018-19, FY 2019-20 and FY 2020-21.

In addition, the Gujarat Government will fund the specialised veterinary hospitals and full-fledged ambulances for lions.

The Asiatic Lion, endemic to Gir landscape of Gujarat, is one of the 21 critically endangered species identified by the Ministry for taking up recovery programmes.
Asiatic Lions are listed in the Schedule-I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, thereby necessitating the highest degree of protection.

At present, there are about 700 lions presently in the Gir Forest.

**Santosh Kumar Gangwar, Union Minister of State (I/C) for Labour and Employment - inaugurated the International Labour Organization (ILO) centenary celebrations in India - at V.V. Giri National Labour Institute, Noida on February 8**

ILO is a unique agency of the United Nations Organization (UNO) which is tripartite in nature and works on the principal of collaboration among government, employers and workers.

ILO was established in 1919 and India was its founding member.

India has ratified 47 out of 189 ILO conventions during the century.

Out of eight core conventions, India have ratified six and two conventions (C-138 and C-182), which were related to child labour.

As part of its 100th anniversary, ILO is implementing 7 centenary initiatives, namely:

- The future of work initiative
- The end to poverty initiative
- The green initiative
- The standards initiative
- The enterprises initiative
- The governance initiative

**Government - to launch a special drive to reach out to all farmers with more Kisan Credit Cards (KCCs) - in order to bring all landholding cultivators within the institutional credit system**

The Indian Banks Association issued an advisory to all banks - asking them to waive processing, documentation, inspection, ledger folio charges and all other service charges for KCC.

The move is expected to save around Rs 2000 to Rs 5000 for a farmer applying the cards through banks.
Anil Ambani’s Reliance Realty - to develop a 30-million-sqft smart Fintech hub at Dhirubhai Ambani Knowledge City (DAKC) in Navi Mumbai – at a budget of Rs 14,000 crore

- The project would be built in phases to complete 15 million sqft in the next 10 years
- It would host office spaces for fintech, banking, insurance, NBFC, IT and ITeS sectors, providing more than 2.5 lakh jobs
- DAKC is a 132-acre campus that housed the now bankrupt Reliance Communications (RCom)
- Reliance Realty is an independently managed subsidiary of RCom

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 under-privileged 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 impeding 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 Mithilakshar, 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 authorized 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

**3 EU Countries, Germany, Hungary and Netherlands along with IIT, Kanpur – signed agreements with India at the 4th EU-India Water Forum in New Delhi – to join the country’s river rejuvenation project under the India-EU water partnership framework**

- The agreement will enable the implementation of EU’s innovative technologies for the river rejuvenation programme
The India-EU water partnership framework aims to develop an integrated river basin management plan for the ‘Tampi basin’ bringing together Gujarat, MP and Maharashtra that shares the basin.

**Prime Minister Narendra Modi - is expected to formally launch the Centre’s flagship ‘assured income support’ scheme, PM-KISAN, at a farmers’ rally at Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh on February 24**

![PM-KISAN Scheme Poster]

- The scheme called PM-KISAN was announced in interim budget on February 1.
- As per the scheme, each of nearly 12 crore eligible small and marginal landholder farmer families who have cultivable land up to two hectares (little less than five acres) will get Rs 6,000 per annum in 3 equal installments every 4 months in a financial year.
- The scheme was announced operational with effect from December 1, 2018 and the first installment of Rs 2,000 is to be transferred to bank accounts of each of this category of farmers by March 31, 2019.
- All such farmers whose details (bank accounts and verification documents) will be uploaded on the dedicated PM-KISAN portal by February 20 will get Rs 2,000 each on February 24, 2019.

**A new PMAY (U) mobile application – was launched in New Delhi - by Minister of State (I/C) for Housing and Urban Affairs Hardeep S Puri - on February 14**

- The mobile application has been developed to bring beneficiaries directly in contact with the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban) mission.
The PMAY (U) mission was launched on June 25, 2015 with the aim to provide houses to every eligible urban household in India by the year 2022.

Around 40 Lakh houses are at various stages of construction and more than 15 lakh houses have already been completed.

Shripad Yesso Naik, Minister of Ayush - launches e-AUSHADHI portal in New Delhi on February 13

It will facilitate online licensing of Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani and Homoeopathy drugs and related matters.
e-AUSHADHI is an acronym for Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy Automated Drug Help Initiative.
The portal aims to increase transparency in processing of licensing for the manufacturers of drugs along with providing the details of cancelled and spurious drugs with contact details of the concerned authority for specific grievances.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi flagged off the country's first semi-high speed ‘Vande Bharat Express’ train from New Delhi station on February 15

Railway Minister Piyush Goyal and members of the Railway Board were present on the occasion.

In its inaugural run, Vande Bharat Express will travel from Delhi to Varanasi in nine hours and forty-five minutes.

This includes stoppage time of 40 minutes each at Kanpur and Allahabad where there will be special programmes.

The commercial run of the train will start from February 17 between Delhi to Varanasi five days a week.

It has 16 air-conditioned coaches of which two are executive class with the total seating capacity of 1,128 passengers.

The first locomotive-less train in the country is being seen as a successor to the Shatabdi Express, launched in 1988.

The Railways recently named the indigenously manufactured Train 18 as Vande Bharat Express in an acknowledgement of its Made-in-India status.

The semi-high speed train is set to run between New Delhi and Varanasi at a maximum speed of 160 kilometre per hour.

The fully air-conditioned train will stop at Kanpur and Allahabad.

The 16-coach train was built in 18 months at a cost of Rs 97 crore by the Integral Coach Factory, Chennai within 18 months.

All coaches are equipped with automatic doors, GPS-based audio-visual passenger information system, on-board hotspot WiFi for entertainment purposes and very comfortable seating.

All toilets are bio-vacuum type.

The lighting is dual mode, diffused for general illumination and personal for every seat.
Every coach has a pantry facility to serve hot meals and, hot and cold beverages.

- The insulation is meant to keep heat and noise to very low levels for additional passenger comfort.
- Adding up the green footprints, the train has regenerative braking system which can save up to 30% of electrical energy.

**42 Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) Jawans – were killed in the deadliest suicide bomber attack on their bus along the Srinagar-Jammu National Highway in Pulwama on February 14**

- Pakistan-based militant group Jaish-e-Mohammad, formed in 2000 by Masood Azhar, claimed responsibility for the attack, injuring dozens of jawans.
- The incident took place when 2,547 CRPF personnel of 76th battalion of the force were coming in a convoy of 78 vehicles from the transit camp in Jammu and headed to Srinagar.
- Police identified the suicide bomber, who carried over 100 kg of explosives, as Adil Ahmed, who joined the Jaish in 2018.
- This was the first suicide car bomb attack in Kashmir since the 2001 strike on the Legislative Assembly in which 41 people, including three suicide attackers, were killed.
- This was the major strike by the Pakistan-backed militants since the Uri attack, killing 19 soldiers, when a group of fidayeen stormed an Army base close to the LoC in Uri in north Kashmir on September 18, 2016.
- The convoy norms were relaxed in 2003, aimed at not disturbing the civilian vehicle movement, during the tenure of Mufti Mohammed Sayeed as the state’s chief minister.

**The Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) - launched a new portal “LADIS – Least Available Depth Information System” - to aid in ensuring the optimum use of National Waterways**

- LADIS will ensure that real-time data on least available depths is provided to ship and cargo owners so that they can undertake transportation on NWs in a more planned way.
- An assured depth of waterway is required for seamless movement of vessels.
- The portal being hosted on IWAI’s website www.iwai.nic.in has been developed in-house.
- Initially LAD information will be available for NW-1, NW-2, Indo-Bangladesh Protocol route and NW-3, along with the date of survey.

**The Centre – had informed that Supreme court that 63 official websites of various union ministries and central government**
departments have been made ‘disabled-friendly’ and have got Website Quality Certification (WQC)
- Another 14 websites are awaiting certification, as per the centre
- A submission to this effect was made by the additional solicitor-general G Rajagopalan on a PIL seeking the ‘disabled-friendliness’ of all government websites

- India – signs a ‘security protection pact’ with Sweden – to share classified information with each other
  - The agreement was signed during the visit of the Indian Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman to Sweden
  - Sweden has similar agreements with over 30 countries around the world, as well as with the EU and NATO

- Dr Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister for Science & Technology, Earth Sciences, Environment, Forest and Climate Change – inaugurated the North Karnataka Agromet Forecasting and Research Centre in Karnataka
  - It is the country’s first agromet forecast centre established at University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS) in Dharwad, Karnataka
  - The main objective of the centre is to give accurate weather reports - which would enable the farmers to protect the crops and get good yield
  - These information would be provided through various platforms like WhatsApp, SMS, social networking sites and community radio stations to the farmers

- India and European Union – to fund 40 million Euros on 7 Research & Innovation projects – to deal with water challenges in the country
  - Titled ‘Horizon 2020’, these projects will have an average duration of about 4 years
  - The main areas of the projects are to improve the quality of drinking water, waste water management system and real-time monitoring and control systems
  - It will also deal with Ganga rejuvenation initiative
  - Five IITs of Delhi, Bombay, Guwahati, Bhubaneswar, Roorkee, and CSIR-National Environmental Engineering Research (CSIR-NEERI) and TERI will also collaborate in the projects
  - The seven selected projects are - India-H20, LOTUS, PANI WATER, PAVITR, PAVITRA GANGA, SAEASWATI 2.0 and SPRING

- World Bank – to provide Rs 11,000 crore to India to improve safety and operational performance of 733 large dams across 18 states, including Tamil Nadu, over the next 10 years
The assistance would be utilized under the Phase II and III of the ongoing Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Programme (DRIP) beginning 2020.

The government had launched DRIP in 2012, for improving safety and operational standards of 198 large dams in Uttarakhand, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha and Tamil Nadu by June 2020.

More dams will be covered during Phase-II and III of the DRIP, increasing the coverage to over 700, with the government allocating Rs 11,000 crore.

The major dams which are to be covered includes Bhakra dam and Pong Dam (Himachal Pradesh), Srisailam (Telangana), Koyna and Jayakwadi (Maharashtra), Matatila, Ramganga and Raj ghat (Uttar Pradesh), Ukai (Gujarat), Rana Pratap Sagar and Mahi (Rajasthan), Hirakud and Rengali (Odisha) and Umlam (Meghalaya).

**Union Government – issues guidelines for ‘Electric Vehicles’ (EVs) charging stations**

- It had proposed to establish the charging stations for the EVs at every 25 km.
- The Government expects that 25% of the road vehicles will be electric by 2030.

**Infosys – launches a new learning app for engineering students ‘InfyTQ’**

- The app, that can be downloaded free of cost, is designed to provide the students with the necessary technical and professional skills with the best learning experiences.
✓ It will assist the students with latest happenings, conceptual and practical aspects of technology, extensive hands on learning, etc

สะดวกขึ้นเรื่อยๆ ด้วยการให้ความรู้ความเข้าใจในเทคโนโลยี และการเรียนรู้แบบมืออาชีพ.

The Union Government – had identified 106 Coastal and Marine sites as ‘Conservation Reserves’ under its National Wildlife Action plan for the period of 2017-2031.
✓ This was named in the 2nd biennial updated report which was made by the Ministry of Environment and Forests and was submitted to the UN body on Climate change in December 2018

政府已经识别了106个沿海和海洋地点为“保护保护区”，其国家野生动物行动计划覆盖了2017-2031年期间。
✓ 这个名称在2018年12月提交给联合国气候变化会体的第2次定期更新报告中。

The Government of India, Government of Himachal Pradesh and the World Bank - signed a $40 Million Loan Agreement - to help bring clean and reliable drinking water to the citizens of the Greater Shimla area
✓ The newly signed ‘Shimla Water Supply and Sewerage Service Delivery Reform Programmatic Development Policy’ Loan - is expected to improve Water Supply And Sanitation (WSS) services in and around the hill city of Shimla

政府、喜馬拉雅邦政府和世界銀行签署了4000万美元的贷款协议，以帮助带来清洁可靠的饮用水给更大施米拉地区。
✓ 新签署的‘施米拉供水和下水道服务交付改革项目性发展政策’贷款 - 预计将改善供水及污水服务在和施米拉山城周围。

Lok Sabha – passed the Jallianwala Bagh National Memorial (Amendment) Bill, 2018 on February 13, 2019
✓ The new bill seeks to amend the Jallianwala Bagh National Memorial Act, 1951
✓ The act was provided for the erection of a National Memorial in memory of those killed or wounded on April 13, 1919 in Jallianwala Bagh, Amritsar.
✓ The Bill seeks to create a dedicated Trust with the Prime Minister as the Chairperson, to manage the National Memorial.

众議院 - 通过了贾利安瓦拉巴格国家纪念（修正案）法，2018年2月13日。
✓ 新法案旨在修正贾利安瓦拉巴格国家纪念法案，1951年。
✓ 该法案旨在建立一个国家纪念碑，纪念1919年4月13日在贾利安瓦拉巴格被杀害或受伤的人。
✓ 该法案旨在建立一个由总理担任主席的信托，管理全国纪念碑。

Prime Minister, Narendra Modi – to flag off the world's first ‘Diesel to Electric’ converted High Horse Power Twin Rail Engine – on February 19, 2019 at Diesel Locomotive Works (DLW), Varanasi

总理，纳伦德拉・莫迪 – 在2019年2月19日于柴油机车工厂（DLW），瓦拉纳西。

政府以及喜馬拉雅邦政府和世界銀行签署了4000万美元的贷款协议，以帮助带来清洁可靠的饮用水给更大施米拉地区。
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总理，纳伦德拉・莫迪 – 在2019年2月19日于柴油机车工厂（DLW），瓦拉纳西。
The twin loco engine was converted from Diesel loco to Electric loco in just 69 days.

It has the ability to pull heavy freight train, with an increase in power of electric loco up to 92%.

It is completely eco-friendly, providing a saving of Rs 1.9 crore per annum per engine in fuel expense.


The 3 initiatives are:

- Emergency Response Support System (ERSS)
- Investigation Tracking System for Sexual Offences (ITSSO)
- Safe City Implementation Monitoring (SCIM) Portal

They were launched jointly by Union Home Minister, Rajnath Singh along with Women and Child Development Minister, Maneka Gandhi.

ERSS

The ERSS was launched in 16 states and union territories including Andhra Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, UP, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Puducherry, Lakshadweep, Andaman, Dadar Nagar Haveli, Daman & Diu and Jammu and Kashmir.

Earlier, Himachal Pradesh became the first state to implement the ERSS in November 2018, followed later by Nagaland in December 2018.

The Emergency Response Support System (ERSS) is a pan-India single number (112) based response system for persons in distress.

ITSSO

It is an online module available to law enforcement agencies to undertake real-time monitoring and management for completion of investigation in rape cases in two months.

SCIM portal

The Government has identified eight cities (Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Chennai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Lucknow and Mumbai) for implementation of Safe City projects in the first phase at a cost of Rs 2,919 crore, in order to instill a sense of security in women in metro cities.

The projects are funded under the Nirbhaya Fund scheme.

India and Argentina – signs 10 MoU’s for cooperation in several fields including Defence, Tourism, Broadcasting content, Pharmaceuticals, Antarctica research, Agriculture,
ICT, Civil nuclear and to establish the India-Argentina centre for Information and Technology

- The President of the Argentine Republic, Mauricio Macri, is on a state visit to India from February 17-19, 2019 - as part of the celebrations of the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Argentine Republic and the Republic of India.
- The Prime Minister fondly recalled his visit to Argentina to attend the G20 Leaders Summit in November-December 2018 and commended President Macri’s leadership for successfully organising the Summit.
- India will be hosting the G20 Summit in 2022, coinciding with the 75th year of India’s independence
- They also expressed satisfaction over the successful conclusion of the fifth India-Argentina Joint Commission Meeting, held in New Delhi on January 14, 2019

◆ India’s first ‘Fulldome 3D Digital Theatre’ – inaugurated at the Science City in Kolkata, West Bengal

- Union Culture Minister, Mahesh Sharma inaugurated the 23-metre tilted dome, capable of screening high resolution, full dome, and digital 2D/3D content by utilizing 6 high-end projectors using Ulteria Seam technology

- It is fully funded by the Ministry of Culture at a cost of Rs 20 crore

◆ The Union cabinet – re-promulgates the Triple talaq ordinance for the third time

- The ordinance makes the practice of Triple Talaq instant divorce by Muslim men a penal offence
- The bill, passed in Lok Sabha earlier, could not pass through Rajya Sabha and is set to lapse once the Lok Sabha is dissolved
The Union Cabinet - approves the Promulgation of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Ordinance, 2019 on February 19, 2019

- The proposed Ordinance will immediately tackle the menace of illicit deposit taking activities like ponzi schemes in the country
- The Lok Sabha had earlier passed the Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Bill, 2018 on February 13, 2019
- The bill specifies 3 different types of offences, namely, running of Unregulated Deposit Schemes, fraudulent default in Regulated Deposit Schemes, and wrongful inducement in relation to Unregulated Deposit Schemes.
- The Bill bans unregulated deposit taking activities altogether, by making them an offence with severe punishment

The centre – had announced the easing of tax rules for the Start-ups

- As per the new rules, the large listed companies and alternate investment funds can now invest any amount in start-ups without worrying about tax scrutiny on valuations, while angel investors can infuse upto Rs 25 crore
- The start-ups will be allowed to claim 3-year tax holiday during a 10-year period, instead of a 7-year block now
- An entity with a turnover of up to Rs 100 crore, against Rs 25 crore earlier, will be considered a ‘start-up’ through a new system, requiring less paperwork to register with the Department for promotion of industry and internal trade

Justice T B Radhakrishnan – appointed as the Chief Justice of Calcutta High Court

- The 5-member Supreme court collegium headed by CJI, Ranjan Gogoi had reiterated its January 10 recommendation transferring Telangana High Court CJ as the CJ of Calcutta High Court
- The centre had earlier returned the collegium’s recommendation for reconsideration on certain grounds
- The Collegium also comprised Justices A K Sikri, S A Bobde, N V Ramana and Arun Mishra

Centre – to launch ‘Operation Digital Board’ (ODB) across 2 lakh classrooms in higher education institutes at a cost of Rs 2,000 crore from 2019-20 academic season

- It is also planning to implement the scheme across 1.5 lakh secondary and senior secondary government and government-aided schools over a period of 3 years
- The scheme, announced in the 2018 union budget, will set up ‘digital classrooms’ in the educational institutions to make the learning and teaching interactive
UGC will be the implementing agency for ODB in Higher educational institutions
It had already passed a resolution for extending digital education in every classroom in country by 2022

**2 Surya Kiran Aircrafts, part of an IAF aerobatic team – collided mid-air and crashed in Bengaluru on February 19 during a practice session for the 12th edition of Aero India**

- Wing Commander Sahil Gandhi was killed as he failed to eject
- Wing Commander Vijay Shelke, who was the second-in-command of Surya Kiran aerobatic team and Squadron Leader Tejeshwar Singh were admitted in the hospital with fractures and injuries
- The Surya Kiran team had recently upgraded to Hawk Mk-132 aircraft from the earlier Kiran trainer aircraft, which was de-commissioned by the IAF
- The rest of the Surya Kiran team (7 aircrafts in total) landed and grounded in HAL airport safely and they will not perform in the Aero India show
- Aero India kicked off in Bengaluru on February 20

**Prime Minister, Narendra Modi – to transfer Rs 25,000 crore onto the bank accounts of around 12 crore farmers across the country – under the PM Kisan Samman Nidhi scheme**

- According to the scheme, Rs 6000 will be paid annually to 12 crore marginal farmers in the country

The Prime Minister is also scheduled to launch a multi-crore project for manufacture of Kalashnikov assault rifles under Indo-Russian Colloboration in Amethi during his visit to Uttar Pradesh
Employees provident fund organization (EPFO) – to increase the interest rate to 8.65% in the current financial year, compared to last year’s 8.55%

The announcement is expected to improve the returns of six crore subscribers for the current year with a higher interest

Government – announces free air travel for paramilitary personnel posted in Jammu and Kashmir – to either join duty or go on leave

The announcement is aimed at reducing the number of troops travelling in convoys in Jammu and Kashmir

The UGC – restrains the deemed universities from fixing their own fees

The University Grants Commission (Institutions Deemed to be Universities) Regulations, 2019 were released on February 20

According to the new regulations, no deemed university can prescribe more than the fee prescribed by the UGC-mandated fee fixation committee

The latest regulation reiterates the ban on capitation fee under any name

The new rules also ban universities from retaining original certificates of candidates

Vice President, M Venkaiah Naidu – flagged off a new Mainline Electric Multiple Unit (MEMU) express train between Nellore and Chennai (176 km) on February 21 at Nellore

The new train announced by South Central Railway will run from Monday to Friday, leaving Nellore at 5.45 am and reach Chennai suburban terminal at 9.05 am

The Vice-President laid foundation for the redevelopment of Nellore station with Rs 147 crore, which is among 10 stations across the country proposed for converting as smart railway stations, under PPP model

Indian Railways – announces a mega expansion plan, which includes more than doubling its freight capacity and adding new high-speed bullet trains for 10 corridors with a cumulative length of about 6,000km
Currently, there is one high-speed train corridor—Ahmedabad-Mumbai—under implementation.

The immediate focus is on adding 17,000km to the existing 1.2 lakh km rail network at an investment of more than Rs 5 lakh crore.

The plan involves trebling the rail tracks along the Golden Quadrilateral and other lines.

The National Rail Capacity Augmentation Plan, or Rail Vistaar Pariyojna, will focus on increasing the carrying capacity for both passengers and freight to 45-50% as compared to the current trend of 30%.

To decongest major junctions, the railways have also prepared a blueprint of building “rail-on-rail” flyovers and bypasses at 222 locations.

After eliminating all unmanned crossings, the next big step would be eliminating the 7,000 manned crossings with rail overbridges and rail underbridges.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi—inaugurated the ‘Virtual Experiential Museum (VEM)’ at Varanasi.

It is located in a Centrally Protected Monument under Archeological Survey of India, Man – Mahal, situated on the bank of the Ganges at Varanasi.

It has been established by the National Council of Science Museum (NCSM) working under the Ministry of Culture with the assistance of Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage.

The museum showcases various cultural aspects, tangible and intangible, of Varanasi through the use of modern and sophisticated virtual reality technology.

The Centre—has banned mining of coastal beach sand in 4 states—to prevent erosion of sea shores and ecosystems.
The illegal beach sand mining is rampant in 4 coastal states of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Odisha – for the extraction of rare earth minerals which are mixed with the sand. Garnet, ilmenite, rutile, zircon, sillimanite, leucoxene and monazite are some of the rare earth minerals found in coastal sand. Monazite is of special interest since it can be processed to yield thorium. Again, thorium can further be enriched into uranium, which can be used for making nuclear warheads or fuel reactors.

The Gem & Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC) – to set up a ‘common facility centre’ (CFC) for Gold jewellery manufacturers in Coimbatore.

The centre, the first for gold jewellery in the country, is being sponsored by the union ministry of commerce and industry under ‘Ratna Abhushan Suvidha Kendra’, a GJEPC project. GJEPC has already established CFCs for Diamond jewellery in Visnagar, Palanpur, Amreli and Junagadh. GJEPC is planning to set up CFCs in Delhi, Kolkata, Jaipur and Hyderabad during 2019-20.

India and Saudi Arabia – signed 5 MoU’s for cooperation in the areas of investment fund, tourism, housing, investment relations and exchange of audio visual programmes.

Apart from these, another agreement was signed to join Saudi Arabia in International Solar Alliance, launched by PM Narendra Modi. The Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, who is also the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence of Saudi Arabia, visited India on February 19-20, 2019. The visit follows the earlier official visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in April 2016 at the invitation of King Salman bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud; the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques (Head of State & Government).

Prime Minister Narendra Modi held delegation level talks with Royal Highness Crown Prince and released the India-Saudi Arabia Joint Statement.

Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) released the second edition of Startup Ranking for 2019.

The ranking exercise aims to evaluate measures taken by states and union territories during the assessment period from May 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019. The startup ranking framework aims to rank the states/UTs for establishing a robust ecosystem for supporting startups. The Ranking Framework 2019 comprises 7 pillars and 30 action points.
✓ 7 Pillars  
   ✓ Institutional support  
   ✓ Simplifying regulations  
   ✓ Easing public procurement  
   ✓ Incubation support  
   ✓ Seed funding support  
   ✓ Venture funding support  
   ✓ Awareness and outreach related activities  
✓ The states and UTs are to submit their reforms on the State Startup Ranking dashboard hosted on www.startupindia.gov.in.  
✓ 2018 Ranking framework for Startups  
✓ The launch of the ranking framework in 2018 gave impetus to the Startup movement across the country  
✓ It focused on 7 pillars with 38 pointers  
✓ Results were announced in January 2019 under 6 categories — Beginners, Emerging States, Aspiring Leaders, Leaders, Top Performers and Best Performers  
✓ Gujarat was rated the ‘best-performing state’, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Odisha and Kerala came in the next ranking as ‘top-performing states.’  
✓ Till date, 25 States and UTs have launched their dedicated Startup policies  

➢ The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs - approved the launch of ‘Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan’ (KUSUM Yojana)  
✓ Objective – to provide financial and water security to farmers  
✓ Outlay – Rs 34,422 crore  
✓ Goal - to add a solar capacity of 25,750 MW by 2022  
✓ 3 Components of the KUSUM Yojana  
  ✓ Component-A : 10,000 MW of Decentralised Ground Mounted Grid Connected Renewable Power Plants (Pilot mode)  
  ✓ Component-B : Installation of 17.50 lakh standalone Solar Powered Agriculture Pumps (Full-fledged mode)  
  ✓ Component-C : Solarisation of 10 Lakh Grid-connected Solar Powered Agriculture Pumps (Pilot mode)  
✓ Benefits  
✓ Substantial environmental impact with reduction in CO₂ emissions  
✓ Standalone solar pumps may result in saving of 1.2 billion liters of diesel per annum and the related reduction in imports  
✓ Direct employment opportunity  
➢ Union Minister of Commerce & Industry and Civil Aviation, Suresh Prabhu - launched SWAYATT initiative – to encourage more startups to join the Government eMarketplace (GeM)  
✓ SWAYATT - Startups, Women and Youth Advantage Through eTransactions
✓ It aims to promote Start-ups, Women and Youth Advantage through eTransactions on Government e-Marketplace (GeM)
✓ The initiative will bring together the key stakeholders within the Indian entrepreneurial ecosystem to Government e-Marketplace
✓ GeM currently has 801,956 products and 5,197 services, with 199,654 registered sellers, service providers and 33,536 government buyers
✓ Since its launch in 2016, GeM has processed 1,386,030 orders worth Rs 19,214 crore in gross merchandise value

➤ Prime Minister, Narendra Modi – to inaugurate the ‘National War Memorial’, adjoining India Gate, on February 25
✓ The memorial, constructed 60 years after it was first mooted, honours around 26,000 soldiers who have martyred since Independence
✓ It has been built at a cost of Rs 176 crores and has 4 landscaped concentric circles around a 15-metre high ‘central obelisk’ with an external flame, bronze and stone murals, graphic panels and busts of 21 Param Vir chakra awardees

➤ Government – announces the draft ‘E-commerce policy’ on February 23

HOW IT AFFECTS CONSUMERS

➤ Online marketplaces would have to return the amount paid by the customer in case of counterfeit products
➤ A first resolution to all consumer complaints must be provided within one week
➤ Display of phone number and email address for consumer grievances is mandatory for all ecommerce sites and applications
➤ Department of Consumer Affairs would evaluate violations and decide
➤ There should be transparency and non-discrimination in publishing of ratings and reviews
➤ Setting up “data authority” for sharing community data which serves public interest
➤ Sensitive data collected and processed in India but stored abroad cannot be shared with foreign governments, business entities outside India

✓ The draft policy focuses mainly on Consumer protection, Data protection and leveraging the foreign online retailers to help native startups
✓ It aims to strengthen consumer rights regarding counterfeit products and the overall grievance mechanism, apart from restricting the flow of goods through illegal means into the country
✓ Highlights
All e-commerce websites and applications available for downloading in India must have a registered business entity in India as the importer on record or the entity through which all sales in India are transacted.

Consumer/business payments from Indian banks and payment gateways to unauthorised and unregistered (GST non-compliant) sites/apps shall be barred.

The Government seeks to ban all the cross-border gifts sent to India, except the life-saving drugs, to prevent their misuse, as it now exempts gifts of up to Rs 5,000 to enable NRIs to send low-priced products to their families or friends in India.

The Government has sought the public feedback by March 9 on the draft bill.

The Government had recently updated the FDI policy for online marketplace in December, which put restrictions on how large foreign e-tailers operate in India.

Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh - inaugurated ‘Waste to Wonder Park’ at Sarai Kale Khan, Delhi.

It was built by the South Delhi Municipal Corporation.

It houses the replicas of 7 wonders of the world, including the Taj Mahal, the Great Pyramid of Giza, Eiffel Tower, Leaning Tower of Pisa, Christ the Redeemer statue of Rio de Janeiro, Rome’s Colosseum, and the Statute of Liberty.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi - dedicated the National War Memorial to the nation on February 25, 2019.

The National War Memorial is located near the India Gate in New Delhi.

The memorial has 4 concentric circles namely,

- Amar Chakra or Circle of Immortality
- Veerta Chakra or Circle of Bravery
- Tyag Chakra or Circle of Sacrifice
- Rakshak Chakra or Circle of Protection

The memorial also houses the busts of the 21 awardees of Param Veer Chakra, including 3 living awardees - Subedar Major (Hony Capt) Bana Singh (Retd), Subedar Major Yogendra Singh Yadav and Subedar Sanjay Kumar.

The memorial has the names of 25,942 martyrs etched in stone.

The decision was based on recommendations of a Ministerial Panel headed by Gujarat Deputy Chief Minister Nitin Patel.

The GST Council undertook the decisions to boost the government’s vision of ‘Housing for all by 2022’.

- **The Centre - is planning to roll out a new drug combination therapy for the patients with latent tuberculosis infection (LTBI)**
  - In keeping with its objective of eliminating TB by 2025, the Government has allowed drug major Sanofi to import Rifapentine into the country, through its National TB Control Programme
  - Rifapentine, a once-a-week drug regimen for three months to treat LTBI, is on the World Health Organisation’s Essential List and is approved in US and other countries
  - In India, at least 40% of people are estimated to be latently infected
  - The government-monitored Revised National Tuberculosis Control Programme (RNTCP) distributes TB drugs through its designated centres.

- **The Government – hikes ‘Risk and hardship allowance’ (RHA) of central paramilitary forces by 78%**
  - The Home ministry had reclassified 10 districts of J&K — Anantnag, Kulgam, Shopian, Pulwama, Badgam, Ganderbal, Baramulla, Kuwara, Bandipora and Srinagar — in the higher grade for payment of hardship allowance
  - Around 55,000 CRPF personnel and jawans of central paramilitary forces posted in these districts will now get Rs 17,300 per month instead of Rs 9,700 earlier, for personnel up to the rank of inspector
  - Officers above the rank of inspectors will get Rs 25,000 compared to Rs 16,900 earlier

- **Union minister Ashwini Kumar Choubey - launched ‘National Action Plan - Viral Hepatitis’ in Mumbai**
  - It is a national programme aimed at eliminating viral hepatitis, recognized as an important public health problem
Amitabh Bachchan, the goodwill ambassador for Hepatitis, WHO South-East Asia Region was also present during the launch.

The programme is in line with the country’s commitment towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3.3 to eliminate Hepatitis C by 2030.

- Gautam Adani’s infra group – wins bids to operate 5 out of 6 airports under PPP model
- Adani Enterprises was the highest bidder to operate Ahmedabad, Jaipur, Mangalore, Thiruvananthapuram and Lucknow airports for the next 50 years
- This is the second big round of privatizing airports after Delhi and Mumbai were handed out to private players, GMR and GVK, over a decade ago

- Gautam Adani’s infra group – wins bids to operate 5 out of 6 airports under PPP model
- Gautam Adani’s infra group – wins bids to operate 5 out of 6 airports under PPP model
- The Centre – asked the states to ensure 24x7 power for all, starting from April 1, 2019
- According to the Centre’s ambitious ‘Power for all’ scheme, 100% household electrification scheme is nearly complete. Only 22,691 of the 2.52 unelectrified households remain to be electrified by March 31

- Union Government – launches the 2nd edition of Indian Sign Language (ISL) Dictionary with 6000 words
- It was launched by Thaawarchand Gehlot, Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment on February 27, 2019
- The first edition of the dictionary was launched on March 23, 2018 with 3000 words
- According to Census 2011, there are 50.71 lakh hearing impaired persons in India, with most of them using the sign language to communicate

- The recently inaugurated National Cancer Institute (NCI) at Jhajjar, Haryana – to remain as part of AIIMS, New Delhi
- It recently dedicated to the nation by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on February 12
- India’s first public sector ‘Robotic Core Clinical Laboratory’ has been established at NCI at a cost of Rs. 15 crores.

- AIIMS, Rewari – to come up as the country’s 22nd AIIMS and the first in Haryana
- It was announced in the Interim Budget 2019, to be established under the Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY)

- The Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) and Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) - signed a MoU - for jointly developing infrastructure for fuels, lubricating oil, LPG, natural gas and any...
other related fuel and gas for meeting the requirement of national waterways

✓ According to National Waterways Act 2016, 106 new national waterways have been declared in addition to the existing 5 national waterways
✓ The Centre had also launched ‘Jal Marg Vikas’ project for capacity augmentation of NW apart from developing multimodal terminals

- **India’s 4th White cement factory – to come up at Himachal Pradesh**
  ✓ It will be established by The FCI Aravali Gypsum and Minerals India Limited near village Nohra Dhar in Sirmour district, Himachal Pradesh
  ✓ The plant, to be set up at a cost of Rs 605 crores, is expected to be commenced by the year 2022
  ✓ Aravali operates 15 gypsum mines in Rajasthan

- **Two new National Institutes of Design – inaugurated at Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh and Jorhat in Assam**
  ✓ They were inaugurated by Suresh Prabhu, Union Minister of Commerce & Industry and Civil Aviation through video conferencing from New Delhi
  ✓ Four new NIDs have been announced to be set up in Andhra Pradesh (Amaravati), Assam (Jorhat), Madhya Pradesh (Bhopal) and Haryana (Kurukshetra) with a total outlay of Rs. 434 crore.

- **The Government – is planning to announce a subsidy of up to Rs 2.5 lakh for 60,000 electric cars and incentives of up to Rs 20,000 for 20,000 hybrid cars that are bought over the next 3 years**
  ✓ The move follows the initiative of the Government to promote green fuel in the country through a Rs 10,000 package
  ✓ The subsidy calculation will be linked to the battery capacity of the respective vehicle — Rs 10,000 per KWh for all vehicles and Rs 20,000 per KWh for buses
  ✓ The cost of batteries is about 50% of the vehicle price in case of electric ones
  ✓ The scheme will come to effect from April 2019

- **Prime Minister, Narendra Modi – launched the ‘Khelo India’ Mobile App in New Delhi at the Vigyan Bhawan during the Youth Parliament Festival**
  ✓ Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore and other dignitaries were present at the launch.
  ✓ The bi-lingual application (in English and Hindi) has 3 unique sections that will help youngsters to take up sport –
    ✓ Section 1 - How to play – contains information about the basic rules and regulations of 18 sports disciplines.
Section 2 – Where to play - includes an exhaustive repository of data of all sporting facilities across the country
Section 3 – Get fit - has 8 tests that can be used to ascertain the level of fitness and to determine which sport can be taken for a child

**Indian Railways** – announces a new zone ‘South Coast Railway (SCoR)’ in Andhra Pradesh with headquarters in Vishakapatnam
- SCoR will comprise of existing Guntakal, Guntur and Vijayawada divisions
- As per item 8 of Schedule 13 (Infrastructure) of the Andhra Pradesh Reorganization Act, 2014, Indian Railways was required to examine establishing a new railway zone in the successor State of Andhra Pradesh

The Railways – launched a new feature on the IRCTC website on February 27 – to book seats even after the reservation chart is prepared.
- As per the new feature, travellers can book tickets after the second reservation chart is out just 30 minutes before the departure of trains

**Union Tribal Affairs Minister, Jual Oram** - launched the ‘Minimum Support Price’ (MSP) for Minor Forest Produces and the Value Addition component of Van Dhan scheme on February 28 at a TRIFED-sponsored workshop in New Delhi
- The Van Dhan Scheme was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Bijapur District of Chhattisgarh in April 2018.
- It is also proposed to set up around 6000 Van Dan Vikas Kendras in the country comprising 300 tribal gatherers in each
- The Ministry will tie-up with the Ministry of Food Processing Industries to set up two minor forest produce processing units at Jagdalpur in Chhattisgarh and Raigarh in Maharashtra at the cost of almost approximately Rs 11 Crores
- Heritage Mahua, a traditional tribal drink, will be produced and marketed all over the country through these units
- Besides this, the Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED) has also launched the “Friends of Tribes” Scheme for sourcing of CSR funds from Public Sector Organisations

**NITI Aayog’s Atal Innovation Mission (AIM)** - signed an agreement with ‘Adobe’ – to develop creative skills and spreading digital literacy across all Atal Tinkering Labs in India
- Launched in 2018, the Adobe Digital Disha Programme is aimed at creative thinking and technology-based learning
Dharmendra Pradhan, Union Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas & Skill development and Entrepreneurship – hands over the 100th Letter of Intent (LoI) to the Compressed Bio-Gas (CBG) Entrepreneur under the SATAT scheme

SATAT - Sustainable Alternative Towards Affordable Transportation

It is a developmental scheme, which would benefit vehicle-users as well as farmers and entrepreneurs.

SATAT was launched in October 2018 with a four-pronged agenda of utilising more than 62 million metric tonnes of waste generated every year in India, cutting down import dependence, supplementing job creation in the country and reducing vehicular emissions and pollution from burning of agricultural / organic waste.
Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik launched scholarship scheme named ‘KALIA Chhatra Bruti Yojana‘ in Keonjhar district of the state.

Under this scheme, the children of farmers will be provided scholarships to pursue higher education in professional courses at free of cost.

KALIA scheme - Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation

Patnaik also launched Mission Shakti Conclave dedicated the development projects worth Rs 45 crore.

‘Hirkani Maharashtrachi’ – a new scheme to provide a platform for women Self Help Groups (SHGs) was launched in Maharashtra by Suresh Prabhu, Union Commerce minister.

Under the ‘Hirkani Maharashtrachi’, women’s SHGs will provide their business plan at taluk level.

Altogether 10 groups will be selected from each taluk and Rs 50,000 will be given to each SHG to implement their idea while five SHGs at district level...
will be selected and Rs 2 lakh will be given to each SHG to take the idea forward

- The scheme will be completely backed by the Central government
- According to a legend, ‘Hirkani’ was a milkmaid who lived at the base of the Raigad fort during the times of Chhatrapati Shivaji.
- She is known for climbing down the vertical Raigad cliff to breastfed her baby.

**Andhra Pradesh Government – launches ‘Annadata Sukheebhava scheme’**

- The scheme is an open-ended scheme without any conditions
- It provides Rs 10,000 assured financial assistance to each farmer, including tenant farmers, every year
- Recently, the centre announced PM Kisan Samman Nidhi scheme, under which Rs 6000 per year would be provided to farmers holding upto 5 acres of land
- As per the new scheme, those who are covered under the PM-Kisan scheme would be provided Rs 4000 separately
- Those who are not covered under PM-Kisan scheme will get Rs 10,000 each from the State government
- The scheme is similar to Telangana’s Rythu Bandhu scheme, with the addition that it includes tenant farmers as well and ties up with the Central Government
- The scheme will be implemented at a cost of Rs 2,370 crore
- The state has around 76.21 lakh farmers with around 60 lakh having five acres of land or less
- The state cabinet also decided to create a state agriculture council to roll out the benefits of the scheme
- It had also cleared the proposal to give Smart mobile phones to members of Self-help groups (SHGs) for women in the state with a free sim card and 3 years of free talk time
- There are around 94 lakh women in SHGs, who have already received the first instalment (of Rs 2,500) of Rs 10,000 benefit released by the state government under Pasupu-Kumkuma scheme and the balance would be released in 2 instalments of Rs 3,500 and Rs 4,000 within the next 2 months
- The state Government had also increased the old-age monthly pension from Rs 1000 to Rs 2,000 besides withdrawing life tax on autos and tractors

**Mukhyamantri Vridhajan Pension Yojna (MVPY), a universal old age pension scheme – announced by Bihar Government**

- The scheme will come into force from April 1, 2019 for all people above 60 years of age.
- As per the scheme, except the government servants, all will be eligible for Rs 400 monthly pension irrespective of caste, religion or community.
Besides this, the state’s Chief Minister Nitish Kumar announced another pension scheme ‘Bihar Patrakar Samman Yojana (BPSY)’ of Rs 6,000 for journalists above 60 years of age.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi – to flag off India’s first Semi High Speed Train, ‘Vande Bharat Express’ on New Delhi-Kanpur-Allahabad-Varanasi route from the New Delhi Railway Station on February 15

- It is regarded as a successor to the Shatabdi Express, which were introduced in 1988
- It was designed and developed by Integral Coach Factory, Chennai in a record 18 months period at a budget of nearly Rs 100 crore
- Its former General Manager, Sudhanshu Mani was the brain behind the project

Odisha government - approved Khushi scheme for the next 5 year period

- The scheme, with a budget of Rs 466.08 crore, aims at improving menstrual hygiene among adolescent girl students in the state
- As part of the scheme, free sanitary napkins will be provided to 17.25 lakh adolescent girl students of Class 6 to 9 studying in government, non-government aided schools, apart from covering Kendriya Vidyalayas and Jawaharlal Navodaya Vidyalayas
- Each girl student will be provided with 18 beltless sanitary napkins per month
- The cabinet also approved Kalia Scholarship for the education of farmers’ children
- KALIA - Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation

PM-KISAN - LAUNCH

Prime Minister Narendra Modi – launched the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) scheme at national level from Gorakhpur town in Uttar Pradesh on February 24

- The main function was linked on-line with six states - Tamil Nadu, Assam, Jharkhand, Himachal Pradesh and Gujarat, where the PM directly transferred the benefit of the first installment of Rs 2,000 in the accounts of identified beneficiaries from each state
- On the launching day at National Level, the Prime Minister transferred an amount of Rs 2.21 crores in the accounts of the about 1.1 lakh beneficiaries.
- The scheme was announced in the centre’s interim budget 2019-20
- The PM-KISAN is completely funded by the central government and became effective on December 1, 2018
✓ It was started from the Fertilizer Corporation of India by making an electronic transfer of the first instalment to selected farmers.
✓ All the farmers who have land holdings up to 2 hectares are eligible to get the benefit of the Rs 75,000 crore scheme.
✓ Direct Benefit Transfer at Rs 6000 per annum per eligible family shall be made in three equal instalments of Rs 2000 each.
✓ The first instalment of Rs 2,000 will be transferred to bank accounts of farmers by March 31, 2019.
✓ During the occasion, PM Modi said he has also donated the amount of Rs 1.30 crore received as Seoul Peace Prize to 'Namami Gange' Mission.
✓ The Prime Minister also addressed at the 'Swachh Kumbh, Swachh Aabhaar' programme in Prayagraj, hailing the service and washing the feet of sanitation workers and felicitating them at Kumbh.
COURT VERDICT

◆ The Delhi High Court – ordered the Centre to fix a uniform retirement age for all Central Paramilitary officers
  ✓ A bench of Justices S Muralidhar and Sanjeev Narula – held that having different retirement ages for different cadres is a case of 'discrimination' violative of Articles 14 and 16 of the constitution
  ✓ The Government’s current policy has the retirement age of 57 years for the officers in the rank of commandants and below at the ITBP, CRPF, BSF and SSB, while those above commandant rank get 3 more years of service, till 60

◆ The Madras high court – held that 50% wage cut for prisoners in unconstitutional
  ✓ A division bench of Justice K K Sasidharan and Justice G R Swaminathan pointed out that Article 3 of the constitution prohibits 'Begar', a labour or service which a person is forced to give without receiving any remuneration
  ✓ The court also held that the prisoners in Tamil Nadu are not paid the wages as prescribed in the Minimum Wages Act
  ✓ As per the provision in the Tamil Nadu prison rules, a deduction of 50% of wages earned by the prisoners is done for their upkeep and 20% of wages is credited to the victim compensation fund (as per the SC direction)
  ✓ The Government is currently deducting Rs 100, Rs 90 and Rs 80 from the skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled prisoners wages every day to provide for the average cost of food, clothing and other amenities to the prisoners
  ✓ The actual cost for the basic amenities to a prisoner is coming to Rs 153 per day, as per the Government records

◆ The Madras High Court - has ruled against negative marking in entrance examinations on 1 February 2019
  ✓ Justice R Mahadevan held that the practice should be done away with immediately as it prevents students from making intelligent 'guesses' and hence they are bad in 'law'
  ✓ The Judge also directed the CBSE to communicate the order to the National testing Agency which conducts the JEE (Main) exam

◆ The Supreme Court – held that it is mandatory for linking PAN with Aadhaar for the filing of income tax returns – on February 6, 2019
  ✓ A bench comprising Justices A K Sikri and S Abdul Nazeer said that the court had already decided the matter and upheld Section 139AA of the I-T Act on its September 26 verdict
The UID number is also a must for accessing subsidies, as per the observations of the apex court.

**The Supreme Court - has upheld the section 139AA of the Income Tax Act and said that linking of PAN with Aadhaar is mandatory for the filing of Income Tax returns**

- Section 139AA of the Income-Tax Act 1961 was introduced by the Finance Act, 2017.
- The section makes it mandatory to quote Aadhaar / Enrolment ID of Aadhaar application form, for the filing of income returns as well as in the application form to enroll for PAN.
- It also specifies that the PAN numbers must mandatorily be linked with Aadhaar, failing which the PAN number becomes invalid.

**The Kerala High Court - has said banks cannot be absolved of liability for unauthorised withdrawals from their customers' accounts.**

- Justice P B Suresh Kumar, while dismissing an appeal of SBI to compensate a customer who lost Rs 2.4 lakh through fraudsters in Brazil, made it clear that banks are liable for unauthorised withdrawals even if customers did not respond to SMS alerts.
- SMS alerts cannot be the basis to determine the liability of a customer, for there would be account holders who may not be in the habit of checking SMS alerts regularly, the court said.
- It also said it is the banks’ obligation to create a safe electronic banking environment to combat all forms of malicious conduct resulting in losses to their customers.

**The Supreme Court – asked the former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister, Mayawati to refund the public money used for the statues of herself, Bahujan Samaj Party’s founder Kanshi Ram and her party BSP’s symbol, Elephant**

- A bench of Chief justice Ranjan Gogoi and Justices Deepak Gupta and Sanjiv Khanna, while hearing a 2009 PIL filed against the state Government and Mayawati, observed that Mayawati should reimburse to the exchequer the public money spent on these statues.
- The bench had adjudicated the issue and posted the case to April 2 for final hearing.
- The Mayawati Government allocated money from the state budget for 2008-09 and 2009-10 for these statues, with around Rs 2000 crore allegedly spent on the same.
- During her tenure, the PIL observed that, 60 elephant statues were installed in a park at a cost of Rs 52.2 crore.
Justice S M Subramaniam of the Madras high court - has become the first judge in the country to voluntarily go under continuous CCTV monitoring in his chamber

✓ He had strongly recommended that the official chambers of all higher officials in the state be secured similarly to avoid instances of sexual harassment and safeguard the interests of women employees

The Supreme Court, on February 15 - directed all state governments to make their police personnel aware of the scrapping of Section 66A of Information Technology Act – on March 24, 2015

✓ Section 66A of IT Act provided jail term for people sending offensive contents in internet
✓ The Act when in force will attract jail term upto 3 years.
✓ By citing liberty of thought and expression as ‘cardinal’, Supreme Court scrapped section 66A in 2015

➢ The Supreme Court - accepted the recommendation of the court-appointed committee on road safety - to increase the minimum compensation for death in a hit-and-run case from the existing Rs 25,000 to Rs 2 lakh
✓ As per the committee’s report, a minimum compensation of Rs 50,000 should be paid to grievously injured in a hit-and-run case
A GoM (Group of Ministers) panel headed by Nitinbhai Patel, deputy chief minister of Gujarat – has proposed to reduce GST on under-construction real estate projects from the current 18% to 5% and a lower levy of 3% for affordable homes from the current 12%

The move is expected to pave the way for a decision on this by the GST council in the next two weeks

The Expert Committee led by Anoop Satpathy, fellow of V. V. Giri National Labour Institute – had submitted its report on “Determining the Methodology for Fixation of the National Minimum Wage” to the Government.

The Committee was constituted by the Union Ministry of Labour and Employment January 17, 2017 to review and recommend methodology for fixation of National Minimum Wage through an evidence-based approach.

## REGION-SPECIFIC MINIMUM WAGES PROPOSED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REGION</th>
<th>MINIMUM WAGE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>REGION 1</td>
<td>₹342/day or ₹8,892/month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assam, Bihar, Jharkhand, MP, Odisha, UP and West Bengal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REGION 2</td>
<td>₹380/day or ₹9,880/month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, J&amp;K and Uttarakhand</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REGION 3</td>
<td>₹414/day or ₹11,622/month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REGION 4</td>
<td>₹447/day or ₹11,622/month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delhi, Goa, HP, Haryana and Punjab</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REGION 5</td>
<td>₹386/day or ₹10,036/month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Sikkim, Mizoram and Tripura</td>
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- It recommended the fixation of need-based National Minimum Wage for India at Rs 375 per day or Rs 9,750 per month irrespective of sectors, skills, occupations and rural-urban locations for a family
- It recommended to introduce an additional house rent allowance or city compensatory allowance of Rs 55 per day or Rs 1,430 per month for urban workers, over and above the National Minimum Wage
Britain, France and Germany – create a new firm, Instex (Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges) – to do business with Iran without being subject to the sanctions

- The proposed company would allow goods to be bartered between Iranian companies and foreign ones without direct financial transactions or using the dollar
- All these countries were signatories to the Iran deal in 2015 along with US, Russia and China
- US had pulled out of the deal last year and re-imposed punitive banking sanctions

The United Nations Security Council - has adopted a resolution to extend sanctions against the Central African Republic (CAR) for another year

- A 15-member council has renewed the sanctions regime with an arms embargo, travel ban and asset freeze till January 31, 2020

Russia – suspends ‘Intermediate-Range nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty’ after the decision of United States to pull out of it

- The treaty was signed by US President Ronald Reagan and the Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev at the White House in 1987
- The treaty prevented US and Russia from possessing, producing or test-flying ground-launched nuclear missiles with a range of 500 km to 5,500 km
- United States had alleged a new Russian cruise missile, the Novator 9M729, violates the pact and gave a notice period of 6 months to withdraw from the treaty

United Nations General Assembly - elected South Africa, Indonesia, Dominican Republic, Germany and Belgium as 5 new non-permanent members of UN Security council (UNSC) – for a 2 year term beginning January 1, 2019

- UNSC is a body of United Nations responsible for international peace and security
- It has 15 members, including five permanent ones with the power of veto.
- The five permanent members are China, France, Russia, UK and US.
- 10 non-permanent members are elected for two-year terms each

World Cancer Day – February 4

- The day is observed every year with an aim of creating awareness and education about Cancer in order to prevent the deaths associated with the dreaded disease by 2020
The day is organized by The Union for International Cancer Control, which has been initiated to support the goals of 2008 World Cancer Declaration.

Theme for 2019-21 – ‘I Am and I Will’
Theme for 2016-18 – ‘We Can and I Can’
Cancer is one of the leading causes of mortality worldwide, responsible for 9.6 million deaths in 2018.
Tobacco use is the most important risk factor for cancer and is responsible for approximately 22% of cancer deaths.
Lung, prostate, colorectal, stomach and liver cancer are the most common types of cancer in men, while breast, colorectal, lung, cervix and thyroid cancer are the most common among women.

30th Road Safety Week – February 4 to 10
Theme 2019 - 'Sadak Suraksha-Jeevan Raksha'
Organised by – Ministry of Road Transport and Highways
Activities Planned in the Country
Commemorating the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, Home Minister Rajnath Singh, External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and Road Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari will flag off the car rally.
The car rally will go through places historically associated with Gandhi, in India, Bangladesh and Myanmar.
In India, it will cover places like Sabarmati, Porbandar, Dandi, Yerwada, Sewagram, Jabalpur, Lucknow, Gorakhpur, ChauriChaura, Champaran, Shantiniketan and Kolkata.
It will conclude on February 24th in Myanmar covering a total distance of 7,250 km.
The Society of Indian Automobile Industry will also declare 2019 as the Year of Road Safety promoting safety on Indian roads.
Retro Reflective Stickers on Sadak Suraksha Jeevan Raksha will be launched on the occasion.
A new Dash Board for Road Accident Data of India and its states will also be launched during the occasion.

World Wetlands Day – February 2
Theme 2019 - “Wetlands and Climate Change”
The observance of the day aims to create awareness for preserving fragile wetlands, which are taken over by the human activities.
It was first observed on 2 February 1971.
The day commemorates the signing of the ‘Convention on Wetlands’, called the Ramsar Convention at the Iranian city of Ramsar.
The 2 main objectives of Ramsar Convention are –
Conservation and sustainable utilization of wetlands.
To stop the encroachment and loss of wetlands.

Iran - announced the successful flight test of its new Hoveizeh long-range cruise missile on February 2
The day coincides with celebrations for the country’s 1979 Islamic revolution, which deposed the monarch Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, replacing his government with an Islamic republic under the Grand Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

The test run of the Hoveizeh missile is part of an arms exhibition - called 40 Years of Defensive Achievements - which is being held in Tehran.

The Hoveizeh are a part of the Soumar family of cruise missiles unveiled in 2015.

They have a range of over 1,350 km (840 miles) and are designed to be used against ground targets, even at low altitude, within a shortest possible time of preparedness.

Cruise missiles with a range of over 1,000 km are classified as long range.

Hoveizeh is manufactured by the Aerospace Industries Organization and will be used by the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps Aerospace Force.

Iran has voluntarily limited the range of its missiles to 2,000 km (1,250 miles), sufficient to reach Israel and Western bases in the Middle East, even though the United States accuses it of pursuing enhanced missile capabilities to reach European targets.

The United Kingdom along with other European nations such as Germany and France - set up a new transaction channel called ‘INSTEX’ on January 31, 2019.

It will allow companies to continue trading with Iran despite US sanctions.

The company 'INSTEX' was registered in Paris with an initial 3,000 euros in capital and a supervisory board with members from France and Germany and headed by the UK.

The new company is expected to receive the formal endorsement of all 28 EU members.

INSTEX - ‘Instrument in support of trade exchanges’

While the move was praised by Iran, it drew a warning from the United States.

The President of United States, Donald Trump had on May 8, 2018 announced the withdrawal of the US from the landmark 2015 nuclear deal with Iran.

On November 5, 2018, the United States temporarily exempted eight countries (India, China, Japan, Italy, Greece, South Korea, Taiwan and Turkey) from the US sanctions for buying Iranian oil.

UAE Government – to allow the construction of the “Church of Saint Francis” and ‘Mosque of Grand Imam Ahmad Al-Tayyeb’ in Abu Dhabi in honour of the two religious leaders.

They will serve as beacons to uphold the values of tolerance, moral integrity and human fraternity in the UAE, as per the Government.

UAE had also granted 55000 square meters of land for the construction of a Hindu Temple in Abu Dhabi, the ground breaking ceremony of which
was witnessed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi by a live telecast in February 2018

**Macedonia - joins NATO to become its 30th member**
- The Macedonia-NATO accord follows a deal with Greece ending a 27-year-old dispute over Macedonia's name
- Macedonia has recently changed its name to 'Republic of North Macedonia' in January 2019
- To acquire full membership, all 29 current members must ratify the accession protocol, even though Russia is against the move
- North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) is a military and political alliance established through the Washington Treaty

**Thailand - has approved to name ‘Siamese fighting fish’ as the National Aquatic Animal – in a move which is expected to boost its conservation efforts as well as the commercial breeding**
- The Siamese fighting fish was chosen as it's a unique native species found in Thailand waters apart from being an important animal for Thailand’s economy
- It is native to the Mekong basin of Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam and mostly found at Chao Phraya river in Thailand
- The Siamese fighting fish was registered as intangible cultural heritage by the Cultural Ministry in 2013

**US government - has launched a new programme ‘Women's Global Development and Prosperity’ (WGDP) - to economically empower women around the world**
- As part of the programme, 2 projects will be taken up in partnership with the private sector in India
- The scheme, aiming to cover at least 50 million women by 2025, will have Ivanka Trump, senior advisor and daughter to US President Donald Trump as its Head
- The initiative has 3 major objectives –
  - To provide vocational training, technological assistance to women to enhance their productivity at the workplace
  - To help women entrepreneurs with finance and capital enabling them to grow their businesses
  - To create environment and conditions for women to thrive

**Egypt's President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi - took over as the next chair of the African Union (AU)**
- The post of AU’s chair rotates annually between the five regions of the continent
He will be taking over from outgoing chair, Rwandan President Paul Kagame.

It is the first time since the AU was founded in 2002 that Egypt assumes the top seat of the body.

Egypt was removed from the 55-member pan-African body in 2013 following a military coup that overthrew the country's democratically elected leader, Mohamed Morsi and brought Sisi to power, but the decision was revoked later.

**Abu Dhabi – adds ‘Hindi’ as the third official language to be used in ‘Courts’**

- The Abu Dhabi Judicial Department has added Hindi as the third official language alongside Arabic and English.
- The Indian community in the UAE, numbering 2.6 million, is the largest expatriate community in the emirate - constituting 30% of the total population.

**Geneva – bans the wearing of religious symbols by elected officials and public employees**

- The residents of Geneva had voted for a new ‘secularism law’ on February 10, seeking to define limits to religious expressions in the public sphere.

**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 Mureikah 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.

◆ **European Union – adds Saudi Arabia, Panama, Nigeria along with 9 other countries – to a blacklist of nations linked with terrorism financing and money laundering**
✓ The list now has 23 jurisdictions up from the earlier 11.
✓ The newly added countries include Libya, Botswana, Ghana, Samoa, the Bahamas and the four US territories of American Samoa, US Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico and Guam.
✓ The other listed states include Afghanistan, North Korea, Ethiopia, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Syria, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia and Yemen.
✓ The decision by EU commission raises complicated financial relations with EU apart from causing reputational damage to these countries.
✓ The bloc’s banks will have to carry out additional checks on payments involving entities from listed jurisdictions.

◆ **Europe’s Airbus – has decided to stop the production of its world’s largest airliner, A380 – due to dwindling sales of the superjumbo cruise liner**
✓ It was designed to challenge Boeing’s legendary 747, with 2 decks of spacious cabins and room for 544 people in standard layout.
✓ According to Airbus, the last A380 would be delivered in 2021.
It took a charge of 463 million euros for shutdown costs, with over the 3,000-3,500 jobs potentially affected.

Airbus will produce 17 more of the planes including 14 for Emirates and 3 for Japanese airline ANA.

The move is prompted by the new order of Emirates for smaller 40 A330-900neo jets and 30 A350-900 aircraft – as part of its restructuring.

Emirates is the largest A380 customer of Airbus, with 100 of the Airbus superjumbos in its fleet.

Making its maiden flight in 2005, the A380 was a major step in Airbus’s efforts to compete on equal terms with Boeing.
US President Donald Trump - declares national emergency in the United States on February 15, 2019 – to build US-Mexico border wall

- The move intends to provide billions of dollars of federal money to construct a wall along the US-Mexico border
- The construction of wall would protect US from illegal immigrants, drug dealers and criminal cartels, according to the US President
- The building of 322-km wall is one of the poll promises of Donald Trump during his 2016 election campaign
- The disagreement over funding the wall resulted in the longest government shutdown in the US during December-January, which ended on January 25, 2019
- Under the National Emergencies Act, US presidents have declared nearly 60 national emergencies since 1976
- In total, so far, Bill Clinton is set to have declared 17 national emergencies, George W Bush 13 and Barack Obama 12, all for overseas crisis

- The Pakistan government - banned Hafiz Saeed-led Jamat-ut-Dawa (JuD) and its charity arm, the Falah-i-Insaniyat Foundation (FIF) on February 21

- US President Donald Trump - signed an executive order to establish a separate ‘Space Force’ for United States
  - It will function as a new armed service within the Department of Air Force
  - The Space Force will include both combat and combat support functions to enable prompt and sustained offensive and defensive space operations in all domains

- Financial Action Task Force (FATF) - decided to keep Pakistan in the ‘grey’ list owing to continued funding of terrorist groups such as Jaish-e-Mohammad, Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jamat-ud-Dawa
  - FATF is the global watchdog, which keeps the countries serving as a conduit for global terror financing and money-laundering under ‘grey’ list
  - Pakistan has escaped being blacklisted for now but it has bought time only until May this year to clean up its act or risk getting downgraded further
  - Pakistan was ‘grey listed’ in June last year and after two subsequent reviews, the FATF has decided that Islamabad has failed to satisfactorily implement the 27-point action plan.
  - The FATF had also condemned the Pulwama terror attack in Kashmir, which led to death of 40 CRPF jawans
Zimbabwe – announces its new currency ‘RTGS Dollar’ (Real Time Gross Transfer)
- RTGS Dollars is money made up of bond notes, bond coins and RTGS balances (electronic money)
- It started to trade at around 2.50 times to the US dollar
- As per the Central Bank of Zimbabwe, the money consumers have in their bank accounts or mobile money wallets or pockets will be hereafter called RTGS Dollars

Polaris, the world’s first icebreaker to run on liquefied natural gas (LNG) – arrives in Tornio, Finland
- LNG is the cleanest known fuel and a lower-carbon alternative to the diesel fuel which powers most large ships.
- Finland is the only nation in the world where all of its ports regularly freeze in winter, meaning icebreakers are necessary to keeping trade flowing.

The World Court – had ordered Britain to return the ‘Chagos archipelago’ in the Indian Ocean to Mauritius, to which it belonged originally
- Britain split the archipelago off from its colonial island territory of Mauritius in 1965, three years before granting independence to Mauritius — minus the Chagos islands
- In the year 1966, Britain had evicted almost 2,000 residents to Mauritius and the Seychelles to hand over the archipelagos’ largest island, Diego Garcia to US for setting up its military base
- Britain, calling it as British Indian Ocean Territory, was controlling the islands since 1814
- In 2016, Britain extended the US’ lease of Diego Garcia until 2036

US President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un - arrived in Vietnam for their second summit in Hanoi on February 27 and 28 – as part of the efforts to denuclearize North Korea
- The two leaders have met earlier at their first summit in Singapore on June 12, 2018 and signed a historic agreement
India - withdrew the ‘Most-Favoured Nation’ status accorded to Pakistan on February 15, 2019

- The decision follows the Pulwama terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir that led to the killing of 37 CRPF personnel and injuring of many others
- The most favoured nation (MFN) status was accorded in 1996 under WTO's General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).
- The special status is accorded, by default, from one state to another in international trade – to receive equal trade advantages
- The decision to review the MFN status accorded to Pakistan was first thought off in the wake of Uri attack.
- Pakistan’s industry will be highly impacted by this move, especially its basic chemicals and cotton sectors, which were dependent on Indian exports

- UAE – invites India to participate in the OIC Meet scheduled on March 1
  - This is the first time India has been invited in the OIC meet
  - Union Minister, Sushma Swaraj will address the inaugural session of Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)
  - She has been invited by the UAE as a ‘guest of honour’
  - Earlier, Bangladesh had proposed the idea of India becoming an observer at the OIC in 2018

- The first consignment of Afghan exports to India through Chabahar port – was flagged off by Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani on February 24 - at a ceremony held at Zaranj in Afghanistan’s Nimroz Province
  - The ceremony was attended by the ambassadors of India, Iran, Turkey and diplomats of Indonesia and Kazakhstan.
  - The export consignment, loaded in 23 trucks consisted of Afghan carpets, dry fruits, cotton, talc, stones and other items weighing 570 tonnes
  - India had sent consignment of 1.1 lakh tonnes of wheat, pulses and other assistance in over 4,800 containers to Afghanistan through Chabahar port since 2017
  - In December 2018, the Indian company India Ports Global Limited had taken over operations at the Shaheed Behesti port at Chabahar.
CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

International Conference on Guru Padmasambhava – was held in New Delhi
- It was organized as part of various events to commemorate the 50 years of India-Bhutan diplomatic ties, which were established in 1968
- Guru Padmasambhava is was born in India and travelled all across Himalayan region in the 8th century to spread Buddhism
- He is highly revered in Bhutan with every home or temple in the country having his image or painting
- Guru Padmasambhava, also known as Guru Rinpoche, is widely celebrated as “Second Buddha” by the followers of Tibetan Buddhism

The 12th edition of Aero India, Aero India 2019 - to be held at Air Force Station at Yelahanka in Bengaluru from February 20 to 24
- The premier aerospace exhibition, held once in every 2 years, aims to improve business opportunities in the International Aviation sector
- Tagline 2019 – ‘The Runway to a Billion Opportunities’
- Logo – Inspired by Tejas Light Combat Aircraft (LCA)
- Events scheduled
  - February 21 – Start-up Day – to motivate the entrepreneurial skills in the start-up sector
  - February 22 – Technology Day/Students Day – to provide opportunity for students to showcase their products in the aerospace sector
  - February 23 – Womens’ Day – to highlight the achievements of women in the aerospace sector
  - Drone Olympics – for all the UAV manufacturers to display the capabilities of their drones
  - Flying Objects – Theme of the Photography contest

4th edition of International Spice Conference 2019 - was held in Hyderabad, the capital city of Telangana
- Theme 2019 – ‘Challenges of Change, Redefining the Value Chain’
- The last edition of the conference was held in Jaipur with the theme ‘Managing disruptions through Transformation and Collaboration’

2nd edition of ASEAN-India Youth Summit – begins in Guwahati on February 3
- Duration – February 3 to 7, 2019
- Inauguration - Union Minister of State for Tourism, KJ Alphons and Assam Chief Minister, Sarbananda Sonowal
- Theme - "Connectivity: Pathway to Shared Prosperity"
Organised by - India Foundation, in collaboration with ASEAN Secretariat and Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India (MEA)
Participation - Youth delegates from India, Myanmar, Thailand, Indonesia, Brunei, Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia, Singapore, Malaysia, and the Philippines
The first India-ASEAN Youth Summit was held in August 2017 at Bhopal with the theme “Shared Values, Common Destiny”

The 2nd Trump-Kim Summit – to take place in Vietnam on February 27-28, 2019
US President Donald Trump will meet the North Korean leader, Kim Jong Un as part of the efforts to denuclearize North Korea
The two leaders had the historic first meeting in Singapore on June 12, 2018

2nd edition of Words Count Festival 2019 – was held in Pune, Maharashtra
It is a festival of words hosted by Varsha Chordia and Sabina Sanghvi and curated by columnist Advaita Kala
It intends to bring together speakers from several socio-political spheres and share their insights on various issues
Pavan Kumar Verma, a career diplomat and famous writer was honored with first Word Smith Award 2019 for his contribution in Indian Literature

2019 Asia LPG Summit – inaugurated in New Delhi on February 5
The 2-day event with the focal theme ‘LPG-Energy for life’ was unveiled by Dharmendra Pradhan, Union Minister for petroleum and natural gas

‘Parmanu Tech 2019’ – held in New Delhi on February 6
It is a conference organised by the Ministry of External Affairs and Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) to discuss issues related to Nuclear Energy and Radiation Technologies
Union Minister, Dr Jitendra Singh delivered the keynote address in the conference

2nd National Conference of Micro Missions of National Police Mission – held in New Delhi on February 7
It was organized by the Bureau of Police Research and Development
The two day Conference will discuss the issues of Skills and Competence at the grass-root level, attitudinal changes in police, gender sensitisation, harnessing technology and community policing
National Police Mission Awards will be given to 9 officers for their contribution in Micro Missions
The National Police Mission Division of BPRD strives to transform the Police Forces of the country into an effective medium for the maintenance of Internal Security.
The inaugural edition of ‘Star FLOW – The Change Festival’ - India’s first marketing festival – will take place in New Delhi on March 14-15, 2019

- The event will bring together India’s most celebrated marketers and the world’s leading marketing minds in a free-wheeling exchange of ideas to develop innovative strategies for the future
- The event will feature leading international communications, marketing and public engagement professional, Roger Fisk, who played a key behind-the-scenes role in the back-to-back electoral victories of former US President Barack Obama in 2008 and 2012
- It will also have Richard Seymour, co-founder of Seymour Powell, one of world’s leading industrial design firm
- Sports marketing fans will be enthused by the presence of Joan Oliver, the CEO of Barcelona Football club during its very successful 2008-10 phase
- The keynote address will be provided by W Chan Kim, co-director of the INSEAD Blue Ocean Strategy Institute

5th India-Bangladesh Joint Consultative Committee Meeting - was held in New Delhi

- External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and Foreign Affairs Minister of Bangladesh Dr. A. K. Abdul Momen co-chaired the meeting
- The last Joint Consultative Committee Meeting between the two countries was held in October 2017 at Dhaka.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi - inaugurated the 13th International Oil and Gas Conference, PETROTECH-2019 - at India Expo Centre in Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh - on February 11, 2019

- The three-day event is the country’s biggest hydrocarbon conference with the participation from over 95 Energy Ministers and 7000 delegates from around 70 countries
- It is organized by the Union Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.
- The 12th edition of PETROTECH was inaugurated by the PM Narendra Modi in New Delhi between 5 and 7 December, 2016
- India is the third largest consumer of crude oil and petroleum products after United States and China

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.

3rd Indo-German Environment Forum - was held in New Delhi on February 13, 2019

- Theme - "Cleaner Air, Greener Economy"
- Inaugurated by – Dr Harsh Varadhan, Union Environment Minister
- It saw participation from around 250 representatives of ministries, business and science as well as non-governmental organisations.
- During the forum, 2 declarations were signed - to clean air and combat air pollution along with preparing specific reference documents for textile sector.

Indo-US Commercial Dialogue and the Indo-US CEO Forum – were held on February 14, 2019 in New Delhi

- The Indian side was headed by Commerce & Industry and Civil Aviation Minister, Suresh Prabhu, and the US side by Mr. Wilbur Ross, US Commerce Secretary.
- The co-chairs for the US-India CEO Forum are Natarajan Chandrasekaran, Chairman of Tata Sons and James Taiclet, Chairman, President and CEO of American Tower Corporation.

The World Sustainable Development Summit 2019 - was inaugurated by the Vice President of India, M. Venkaiah Naidu in New Delhi

- The 3-day summit themed 'Attaining the 2030 Agenda: delivering on our promise' has been organised by The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) at India Habitat Centre, Delhi from February 11 to 13.
- It provides a platform for global leaders to discuss climatic issues of universal importance.
- The Vice President said that India was on the course to achieving 175 GW renewable energy target and 40% of India's electricity generation is set to be from non-fossil fuels, by 2022.
- Teri, The Energy and Resources Institute.
It is a research institute in New Delhi that specializes in the fields of energy, environment and sustainable development.
Established by Darbari S Seth in 1974, it was formerly known as the Tata Energy Research Institute
Darbari S Seth was the builder of Tata Chemicals Limited

5th International Dam Safety Conference 2019 – concluded in Bhubaneshwar, Odisha
The conference was a part of the Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (DRIP) assisted by World Bank
The project envisages rehabilitation of 223 dams in 7 States

Early ED Asia 2019 – concluded in Jaipur, Rajasthan
The first-of-its-kind conference in India, saw the participation of 6000 eminent early childhood educators, policy-makers, researchers and other stakeholders from India and foreign countries
Motto of the event – ‘Our children. Our future’

4th Agri Leadership Summit 2019 – concluded at the India International Horticulture Market (IIHM) in Ganaur, Sonipat district, Haryana
Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmer’s Welfare, Radha Mohan Singh, had inaugurated the 3-day summit held from 15th February 2019 to 17th February 2019
Theme - “Entrepreneurship & Agri Business; Agri Allied – A Promising Sector and Agri Service- Direct Marketing”
Punjab, Haryana and Delhi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PHDCCI) were the Institutional Partners at the summit
President Ram Nath Kovind, launched ‘Digital Kisan Platform’, while addressing the closing ceremony of the summit
He also conferred Krishi Ratna Puraskar on Vice Chancellor, K. P. Singh for Haryana Agriculture University, Hisar and honoured 9 farmers with the Kisan Ratna Puraskar

40th International Annual Desert Festival - starts in Jaisalmer, Rajasthan on February 17, 2019
The 3-day festival was held amidst the beautiful Sam dunes of the Thar Desert
The festival is organised by the Rajasthan tourism and district administration.

Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman - inaugurated the 12th edition of biennial air show ‘Aero India 2019’ at Air Force Station Yelahanka, Bengaluru on February 20
The lineup at the 5-day event includes 61 aircrafts from India (including HAL’s indigenous product Light Combat Aircraft, Tejas), France, and the United States
The event intends to showcase India's air defence skills apart from providing a platform for aviation companies, the defence sector and government to forge new alliances and contracts.

Besides the Tejas, the HTT-40 (Basic Trainer Aircraft), first indigenously upgraded Hawk Mk132- named as Hawk-i, Civil Do-228, Advanced Light Helicopter (Rudra), Light Utility Helicopter (LUH), Light Combat Helicopter (LCH) are scheduled to fly in the air show.

American defence giant, Lockheed Martin unveiled the F-21 multi-role fighter jets especially for Indian Air Force, to be manufactured under Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s 'Make in India' initiative.

Sarang, the helicopter display team of the Indian Air Force flying HAL Dhruv helicopters was one of the highlights of the event.

More than 600 Indian Companies and 200 Foreign Companies are participating in Aero India 2019, the largest Air show of Asia.

The 5th edition of Economic Times Global Business Summit – kicks off in New Delhi on February 22, 2019

The 2-day event is hosting business leaders and technology entrepreneurs from companies across the globe.

Indian policy makers led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, railway and coal minister Piyush Goyal, commerce minister Suresh Prabhu and law minister Ravi Shankar Prasad are scheduled to speak at the event.

The global industry speakers include Nathan Blecharczyk, co-founder of Airbnb, Martin Eberhard, co-founder of Tesla, Sebastian Thrun CEO of KittyHawk and many more.

25th edition of Medical Fair India (MFI) 2019 - held in Delhi

Organised by - Messe Dusseldorf India, a fully owned subsidiary of Messe Düsseldorf GmbH.

During the occasion, Indu Bhushan, the CEO of Ayushman Bharat, announced that over 12 lakh people received free treatment under the Ayushman Bharat - Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY).

She also said that around 2 crore beneficiary e-cards have been issued since the launch of mission in September 2018.

So far, 15,000 hospitals have been empanelled under the scheme, of which, 15% are private hospitals.

The first Health and Wellness Centre (HWC) under Ayushman Bharat was inaugurated by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Jangla in Bijapur, Chhattisgarh on April 14, 2018.

Since then, 10,252 HWCs have been operationalised.

The states of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala have the highest number of HWCs under the Ayushman Bharat.

Andhra Pradesh has 1361 HWCs, Tamil Nadu has 1318, UP has 912, Karnataka has 700 and Kerala has 678 HWCs.
Ayushman Bharat, the health insurance scheme with 60% funding from Centre, will provide free coverage of up to Rs 5 lakh per family per year.

The scheme is expected to benefit around 10.74 crore beneficiary families and about 50 crore people.

The National Health Agency (NHA) is the apex body implementing the scheme with a dedicated website (mera.pmjay.gov.in).

4th India-ASEAN Expo and Summit - held on February 21-23, 2019 in New Delhi

Organised by - Department of Commerce in association with FICCI

Inauguration by - Union Minister of Commerce & Industry and Civil Aviation, Suresh Prabhu and Trade Ministers of ASEAN countries along with ASEAN Secretary General

200 plus exhibitors from India and ASEAN, and more than 100 buyers from ASEAN participated in the Expo

ASEAN is the second largest trading partner of India, after China, with a total bilateral merchandise trade of $81.33 billion.

The ASEAN-India Business and Investment Meet and Expo 2018 was organised on the sidelines of the ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit in New Delhi in January 2018

The Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) comprises of Vietnam, Thailand, Singapore, Philippines, Myanmar, Malaysia, Lao PDR, Indonesia, Cambodia and Brunei

NITI Aayog – co-hosted the conference on ‘Future of Indian Banking’ in New Delhi

It was jointly organized by the EGROW Foundation, Foundation for Economic Growth and Welfare on February 22

The event was inaugurated by Dr. Rajiv Kumar, Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog

During the event, Chief Economic Advisor (CEA) Krishnamurthy Subramanian suggested taking forward the P J Nayak committee’s recommendations on governance reforms in Public Sector Banks

Union Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad - inaugurated ‘VIVID 2019’

“VIVID-Vision Insight and Voices as India goes Digital” is a District Informatics Officer (DIO) meet

Organised by - National Informatics Centre (NIC)

Duration - 21st and 22nd February, 2019

VIVID is an initiative to interact with the DIO’s to share their experiences as digital change-makers at the grass-root level in the States

During the occasion, the minister also released the Digital India Compendium and launched Digidhan Mitra Chatbot and Technology incubation and development of entrepreneurs (TIDE 2.0) scheme
Ram Nath Kovind, President of India – inaugurated the 3-day ‘International Conference and Exhibition on Energy and Environment’ in New Delhi on February 20

Organised by - Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)
- The conference aims to identify the research and development needs of new innovations, technologies and applications for clean, safe, sustainable development of society, environment, energy and industries in years following 2020.

14th Agricultural Science Congress – held at New Delhi
- Organised by - National Academy of Agricultural Sciences (NAAS) in collaboration with the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and Indian Agricultural Research Institute at National Agricultural Science Complex (NASC)
- Duration - 20th to 23rd February 2019
- Theme - “Innovations for Agricultural Transformation”

44th Global Summit of International Advertising Association - held in Kochi from 20th – 22nd February 2019
- It involved sessions from a wide variety of speakers ranging from a spiritual guru, industrial leaders to technology experts
- The highlight of the event was a robot trying to answer theme-based question “Brand Dharma, What’s coming next?”

Festival of India – begins in Kathmandu, Nepal on February 19, 2019
- Inaugurated by - Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation Rabindra Adhikari and Indian Ambassador to Nepal Manjeev Singh Puri
- Organised by - Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre, Embassy of India
- The festival aims at making the youth aware about the similarities between Nepal and India

The National Disaster Management Authority – to conduct a two-day ‘National workshop on heat wave risk reduction’ in Nagpur from February 27-28, 2019
- The workshop, to be organized in association with the Government of Maharashtra, aims to advise the states to the need of preparing and implementing specific heat action plans.
- The workshop will also provide an opportunity to the most vulnerable states in sharing their experiences and best practices to mitigate the heat wave impact in summer

Suresh Prabhu, Union Minister of Commerce, Industry and Civil Aviation - inaugurated the ‘Aviation Conclave 2019’ on February 27
✓ Theme - “Flying for All”
✓ Organised by – Ministry of Civil Aviation
✓ Objective - The conclave is about the future of Indian aviation, bringing together industry leaders, government and regulators for setting the tone and propelling the country to realize the Vision-2040 of the nation
✓ Over 30 industry leaders participated in 5-key sessions -
  ✓ Drone-Ecosystem Policy Roadmap
  ✓ Roadmap for Manufacturing Aircraft
  ✓ The Project Rupee Raftaar- Aircraft Financing from India
  ✓ The National Air Cargo Policy
  ✓ The Mission to transform Indian Airports into Next-Gen Aviation Hubs

✔ Anupriya Patel, Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare - inaugurated the ‘International Digital Health Symposium’ in New Delhi
✓ Approximately 700 delegates including high level delegates from the government and various stakeholders participated in the symposium
The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) - approved the indigenous construction of 6 submarines under ‘Project 75(India)’

- This the 2nd project under the Strategic Partnership model approved at a budget of Rs 40000 crore
- The council, chaired by Defence Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman also approved the acquisition of around 5000 French-origin MILAN Anti-Tank Guided missiles for the Indian Army
- The first SP model project was the acquisition of 111 utility helicopters for navy at the cost of 21000 crore in August, 2018

Defence Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman – had approved the procurement of around 73000 Sig Sauer rifles from United States within a year – to modernize the infantry

- The Sig Sauer rifles are used by US forces as well as several other European forces
- They will replace INSAS rifles and will be used by the troops deployed along the 3600 km border with China

‘Exercise Rahat’, a Joint Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Exercise - will be conducted in Jaipur, Kota and Alwar in Rajasthan on Feb 11-12

- It will be conducted by Jaipur based Sapta Shakti Command, on behalf of Indian Army, in coordination with National Disaster Management Authority
- The exercise will be conducted simultaneously in Jaipur, Kota and Alwar
- Armed Forces, National Disaster Management Response Mechanism (NDMRM), State Disaster Management Authority of Rajasthan and District LMAs will participate in the exercise

India - successfully test-fired the indigenously developed helicopter-launched version of one of the most-advanced anti-tank weapons ‘Helina’ from the Odisha coast on February 8

- Named after ‘HEL of helicopter and NA of Nag’ (Hindi for cobra), Helina has a hit range of 7-8 km and was launched from an Army helicopter
- It is guided by an infrared imaging seeker (IIR) operating in the ‘lock-on before-launch mode’ with a range capability of 4-7 km — the longest for any anti-tank missile in the world
- By comparison, the US-made Javelin and the Israeli Spike that use the lock-on-before-launch mode, the range capabilities are limited to 2.5 km
HeliNa missiles will arm the weaponized version of Dhruv military helicopters, which will carry 8 such missiles in 2 quadruple launchers mounted on either side.

At present, India uses American, European, Israeli, Russian, and Soviet-made anti-tank missiles.

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has been working on Helina since 2009, spending approximately $47 million on its development.

On July 13, 2015, three round trials of Helina were conducted at a firing range in Jaisalmer in Rajasthan.

Helina was also successfully test-fired from Rudra helicopter at Pokhran test range on August 19, 2018.

**6th Multinational Maritime Exercise ‘Aman-19’ – commenced in Karachi, Pakistan**
- The 5-day exercise will witness the participation of around 46 nations from all over the world.
- Motto of the exercise – ‘Together for Peace’
- The exercise will have 2 phase – Harbour phase and sea phase.

**India - received the first batch of 4 Chinook helicopters from United States on February 10 at the Mundra port in Gujarat**
- The Chinook CH-47F (I) helicopters, manufactured by Boeing Company, will be stationed at Chandigarh air base of the Indian Air Force.
- These choppers will provide a big boost to the heavy-lift capabilities of the air force apart from carrying heavy cargo like road construction equipment over difficult terrain.
- The Chinooks can carry goods and cargo of up to 9.6 tonnes each.
- India had signed a $3 billion contract for the purchase of 15 Chinook and 22 Apache attack helicopters in 2018.
- These helicopters are expected to replace the Russia-made Mi-17 medium-lift helicopters, the Mi-26 helicopters and Mi-35 attack helicopters.

**India – has successfully tested its own propulsion technology named the ‘Solid Fuel Ducted Ramjet technology’**
- The mission to produce indigenous propulsion technology was started in 2013 with a funding of Rs 500 crore to boost the development of long-range air-to-air missiles.
- The Defence Research Development Laboratory (DRDL) at Hyderabad was the lead agency for the project.
- This is the 2nd trial of the technology, with the first trial held in May 2018.
- The Ramject technology helps to power the missiles at high supersonic speeds (above Mach 2) for engaging targets at long ranges.

**8th edition of ‘Cutlass Express’, the annual multinational maritime exercise – concludes in Djibouti on February 7**
- The nine-day exercise, inaugurated on January 28, includes various workshops in Mozambique, Seychelles and Djibouti.
Maritime forces from East Africa, West Indian Ocean nations, Europe and the United States have participated in the exercise.

Representing India, Indian Talwar-class frigate INS Trikand (F 51) participated in the exercise.

The exercise is aimed at identifying and addressing illicit trafficking, piracy, illegal fishing as well as search and rescue situations.

Canada, Comoros, Djibouti, France, India, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Portugal, Seychelles, Somalia, Tanzania, the Netherlands and the United States participated in the exercise.


India – signs Rs 748 crore contract with United States – for 72,400 new assault rifles for its front-line soldiers under the Fast-track procurement (FTP) route

The 7.62 x 51 mm rifles from US firm SiG Sauer, with a longer ‘kill range’ will be delivered within a year.

It will replace the existing glitch-prone 5.56 mm INSAS (Indian Small Arms System) rifles.

Another purchase through FTP is currently in the pipeline for 93,895 close-quarter battle carbines from UAE company, Caracal for the Indian Army.

India – to manufacture iconic ‘Kalashnikov’ rifles within the country soon

The Government has cleared a project to manufacture around 7.5 lakh assault rifles in a joint venture with Russia at the Ordnance factory at Korwa, which falls in the Amethi constituency.

An inter-governmental agreement to manufacture the 7.62 x 39 mm caliber AK-203 guns, which are a derivate of the famous AK-47 rifle, is likely to be signed on February 15, 2019.

The project, costing more than Rs 12,000 crore, is likely to be inaugurated by the Prime Minister on February 28 at Korwa.

For the project, Kalashnikov concern will tie-up with state-run, Ordnance Factory Board.

Indian Air Force – conducts ‘Vayu Shakti 2019’ drill in Pokhran – demonstrating the capability to hit targets with precision under adverse weather conditions through the autonomous bombing capability over the Thar desert

Around 137 aircrafts, including Sukhoi-30MKI, Mirange-2000, Jaguar, Mig-21 Bison, Mig-27, Mig-29, IL78, Hercules, AN-32 aircraft and Tejas flew from 8 airbases.

Vayu Shakti is held once in every 3 years.
Indian army – conducted the annual ‘Exercise Topchi’ at Deolali Camp near Nashik on February 12, 2019

- During the exercise, it had demonstrated its artillery firepower, aviation and surveillance capacity
- The latest ultra-light Howitzer M-777, self-propelled gun K-9 Vajra and indigenous Swathi weapon-locating radar were demonstrated during the exercise
- The indigenous advanced light helicopter, light combat helicopter, Cheetah and Chetak helicopters also took part in the exercise

Indian Air Force – receives the ‘release to service’ from DRDO for the indigenously developed Light Combat Aircraft, Tejas

- This means, the fighter aircraft has secured the final operational clearance for inducting into the service
- Tejas was designed by the Aeronautical Development Agency of DRDO
- The aircraft, conceived first in 1983 and sanctioned only in 1993, is being produced by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)
- The IAF has placed orders for 40 Tejas aircrafts so far, of which HAL has rolled out 14 and the IAF has accepted 10
- Tejas has been in display during Gagan Shakti (in April 2018) and in recently held Vayu Shakti

Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) received the bulk production clearance (BPC) from the Indian Army and the Ministry of Defence - for production of 114 'Dhanush', the first ever indigenous 155 mm x 45 calibre artillery gun

- Dhanush is the first long range artillery gun to be produced in India, by OFB and the Indian Army - with contributions from DRDO, DPSUs such as BEL, PSUs such as SAIL and several private enterprises
- The gun is equipped with inertial navigation-based sighting system, auto-laying facility, on-board ballistic computation and an advanced day and night direct firing system.
- It also has self-propulsion unit to negotiate and deploy itself in mountainous terrains with ease
- Ordnance Factory Board is located in Telangana’s Yeddumailaram in Medak district

HAL (Hindustan Aeronautics Limited) - has signed a contract with Thales, a French aerospace and defence company – for supplying 135 nos. of 2.75-inch (70 mm) rocket launchers - to improve the tactical capabilities of the Indian armed forces

- Thales's 2.75-inch (70-mm) rocket launchers are produced using composite material, making them an average of 50% lighter than metal launchers, and eliminating corrosion issues.
The rocket launchers will be installed on two types of indigenously developed combat helicopter operated by the Indian Air Force and the Army Aviation Corps.

- **Velayat 97, an annual 3-day navy drill – was announced by Iran**
  - It will take place in the Gulf and the Indian Ocean, including a sensitive global shipping route
  - It will showcase Iran’s submarines, warships, helicopters and drones and will also include missile launches from the vessels.
  - It will be held in the waters of Strait of Hormuz, Makran coast, Oman Sea and the north of the Indian ocean covering an area of 2 million square kilometres

- **Cobra Gold, annual military exercise – held in Thailand**
  - Thailand and the United States hosted one of the world’s largest multinational military exercise in the Asia-Pacific region with 29 nations taking part as participants or observers
  - Apart from Thailand and US, 7 countries who participated in the exercise were India, Singapore, Japan, China, Indonesia, Malaysia and South Korea
  - The Indian Army participated in the military training exercise with a 14-member contingent.
  - Cobra Gold is held annually in Thailand since 1982
  - India participated in this exercise for the first time in the ‘Observer Plus’ category in 2016 alongside China.

- ‘Exercise Sampriti 2019’, a joint military exercise between India and Bangladesh – to be held at Tangail, Bangladesh from March 2 to March 15, 2019.
  - It was first held in Assam in 2011
GST collections in the month of January – crossed the Rs 1 lakh crore mark after a gap of 2 months

This is the 3rd time in the current fiscal that GST collections have crossed the Rs 1 lakh crore mark after April and October 2017

Reserve Bank of India – removed 3 Public sector banks, Bank of India, Bank of Maharashtra and Oriental Bank of Commerce – from its PCA framework

The Prompt corrective action (PCA) framework is a watch list for weak banks – which places lending restrictions on them

The move follows the sizeable capital infusion in all these 3 banks during December 2018

Overall, 11 banks were on the PCA list of RBI before the move

The Government – has revised the GDP (Gross Domestic Product) Growth forecast to 7.2% from earlier estimate of 6.7% for the year 2017-18

The revised GDP growth rate shows that the effect of demonetization was not as severe as predicted earlier

The new estimate was released by the Central Statistical Office (CSO) along with the Ministry of Statistics and Programme implementation

The actual growth rate for 2016-17 has also been revised to 8.2% from the earlier estimate of 7.1% by the CSO.

The audit committee of RBI – has cleared the payment of Interim dividend of Rs 28,000 crore to the Government

Now, the proposal needs to be cleared by RBI’s central board

Earlier, the Government was seeking up to Rs 40,000 crore as the interim dividend before the final payout to be decided in July 2019
Last year, RBI had paid out Rs 10,000 crore as the Interim dividend and Rs 50,000 crore as the full payout for the financial year.

Surplus transfer was the bone of contention between the Finance ministry and former RBI Governor, Urjit Patel with the Government seeking higher payout from RBI.

The Government has budgeted for a higher dividend payout from RBI and public sector banks during the current financial year, revising it to Rs 74,140 crore from Rs 54,817 crore as estimated in February 2018.

A separate committee for the issue of economic capital framework has been set up under former RBI Governor Bimal Jalan and Rakesh Mohan, former deputy governor as vice chairman.

**The Government – is forecasting a GDP growth of 7.5% in 2019-20 - from the projected 7.2% for the current fiscal year.**

- The Ministry of Finance expects a nominal growth of 11.5% and inflation at 4% for 2019-20
- The Government had also announced that a growth of 8.2% was achieved in 2016-17, when the demonetization was announced.

**The 6-member RBI Monetary policy committee, headed by its Governor Shaktikanta Das – announced its 6th bi-monthly monetary policy on February 7.**

**Key policy decisions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Repo Rate</td>
<td>6.25%</td>
<td>6.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reverse Repo Rate</td>
<td>6.00%</td>
<td>6.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marginal Standing Facility Rate</td>
<td>6.50%</td>
<td>6.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank Rate</td>
<td>6.50%</td>
<td>6.75%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Headline inflation estimates revised down to 2.8% in March quarter, 3.2-3.4% in first half of next fiscal and 3.9% in Q3 of FY'20
- Projects GDP growth to accelerate to 7.4% next fiscal, from 7.2% in 2018-19
- To revise definition of bulk deposits as single rupee deposits of Rs 2 crore and above from Rs 1 crore currently
- Hikes limit of collateral-free agricultural loans to Rs 1.6 lakh from Rs 1 lakh, to help small and marginal farmers
- Next meeting of the MPC will take place from April 2-4
- The implication of the RBI reducing the repo rate is that the EMIs are likely to become cheaper
- The MPC also said that it is changing its policy stance from 'calibrated tightening' to 'neutral'
- As per the committee, the decisions taken are to keep consumer price index (CPI) Inflation of 4% within +/- 2%
- Repo rate is the interest rate at which it lends money to banks
Reverse repo rate is the interest rate at which banks lend money to the RBI

**The Reserve Bank of India - cleared an interim dividend of Rs 28,000 crore to the Government - based on a limited audit for the current year**

- The official declaration on the same is expected to be declared after the central bank’s board meeting on February 18.
- This was in addition to the Rs 40,000 crore surpluses already paid out by the central bank last year.
- However, the Reserve Bank of India will not immediately transfer surplus capital, which is set aside as reserve over the years, to the government.

On the issue of capital reserve framework, a separate committee under Bimal Jalan has been constituted.

The Jalan committee, which will decide on the appropriate level of reserves for RBI, is expected to submit its report by March 31.

**The Centre – had raised the customs duty on all products imported from Pakistan by 200%**

- India had withdrawn the ‘most favoured nation’ status, granted in 1996 to Pakistan a day earlier.
- The move is seen as a step to put pressure on Pakistan to act against terrorists, following its support to terrorists involved in Pulwama attack on CRPF jawans on February 14.

**The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) - has prepared a draft proposal for a new ‘Digital tax’ to be paid by the multinational internet firms operating in India**

- The draft proposal under the newly introduced concept of “significant economic presence”, also known as digital permanent establishment (PE), seeks to impose tax at 30% to 40% rate, based on the revenues and user base of such companies in India.
The term PE was first proposed during the 2018 budget with the view to bring the digital economy (wherein businesses can run without any physical presence in a country) into the tax ambit.

The draft rules mandate that companies with more than 200K users will have to pay taxes on the basis of the revenue generated in India.

The move is expected to impact global technology giants such as Google, Facebook, Twitter, and Amazon.

**J P Morgan Chase – becomes the first US Bank to launch its own Crypto currency, ‘JPM Coin’**

- The bank is looking at crypto currency to move money around almost instantly, replacing slower conventional method of ‘wire transfer’
- The new digital coin will be used to settle transactions between clients of its wholesale payments business instantly.
- The bank’s coin won’t be something like bit coin with its retail investors will never get to own it.
- Each JPM Coin is redeemable for one U.S. dollar which means that it is not as volatile as crypto currencies such as bit coin
- JPM coin will run on a block chain network called Quorum, which requires permissions and users must be approved by JP Morgan

**Reserve bank of India's Central board – approves the transfer of Rs 28,000 crore as interim dividend to the Government**

- The amount is transferred to the central Government for the half-year period ended December 31, 2018
- This is the 2nd successive year that the RBI is transferring an interim surplus
- RBI’s financial year ends in July and the interim dividend will be usually transferred to the Government by March
- Even though the government was seeking Rs 40,000 crore as the interim dividend, the board opted for Rs 28,000 after considering the policies and requirements of RBI
- Last year, the RBI paid an interim dividend of Rs 10,000 crore and for the full financial year, it amounted to Rs 50,000 crore

**Government – allocates Rs 48,239 crore in 12 public sector banks**

- Corporation bank emerged the biggest beneficiary with Rs 9,086 crore followed by Allahabad Bank at Rs 6,896 crore
- With this capital infusion, the government has provided Rs 1,00,958 crore out of Rs 1.06 crore ‘bank recapitalization plan’, aiming to strengthen better performing banks under PCA (prompt corrective action), so that they can come out of this restriction
- In January 2019, RBI had lifted curbs on 3 out of 11 PSB’s
- Allahabad Bank, United Bank of India, Corporation Bank, IDBI Bank, UCO Bank, Central Bank of India, IOB and Dena Bank are still under PCA framework
Finance Minister Piyush Goyal presented the Interim Budget 2019-20 on February 1, 2019.

Key Financial Inputs from the Union Budget

### Key Numbers

(in ₹ crore)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Revenue Receipts</td>
<td>14,35,233</td>
<td>17,25,738</td>
<td>17,29,682</td>
<td>19,77,693</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Receipts</td>
<td>7,06,742</td>
<td>7,16,475</td>
<td>7,27,553</td>
<td>8,06,507</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Receipts</td>
<td>21,41,975</td>
<td>24,42,213</td>
<td>24,57,235</td>
<td>27,84,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Expenditure</td>
<td>21,41,975</td>
<td>24,42,213</td>
<td>24,57,235</td>
<td>27,84,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenue Deficit</td>
<td>4,43,602</td>
<td>4,16,034</td>
<td>4,10,930</td>
<td>4,70,214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective Revenue Deficit</td>
<td>2,52,568</td>
<td>2,20,689</td>
<td>2,10,630</td>
<td>2,69,474</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiscal Deficit</td>
<td>5,91,064</td>
<td>6,24,276</td>
<td>6,34,398</td>
<td>7,03,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Deficit</td>
<td>62,112</td>
<td>48,481</td>
<td>46,828</td>
<td>38,938</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Rupee comes from

- Corporation Tax: 21p
- Income Tax: 17p
- Customs: 4p
- Goods and Service Tax: 7p
- Non-Tax Revenue: 8p

### Rupee goes to

- Central Sector Schemes: 12p
- Other Expenditure: 9p
- Pensions: 5p
- States’ Share of Taxes & Duties: 23p
- Interest Payments: 18p
- Defence: 8p
- Subsidies: 9p
- Finance Commission and Other Transfers: 8p
New Schemes

WOMEN’S DEVELOPMENT TO WOMEN LED DEVELOPMENT

Securing health of every homemaker - over 6 crore free LPG connections given under Ujjwala Yojana

More than 70% of beneficiaries of Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana are women

Benefits of Maternity leave of 26 weeks and Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana for pregnant women financial empowerment of women by increased participation in work

Pradhan Mantri Shram-Yogi Maandhan

Mega pension yojana for unorganised sector workers with monthly income of ₹15,000 or below

Assured monthly pension of ₹3,000 from the age of 60 years

Small monthly contribution during working age with matching govt. contribution

To benefit 10 crore labourers and workers in unorganised sector
✓ Tax Slabs after the Union Budget 2019

![Tax Slabs chart]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTICULARS</th>
<th>INDIVIDUAL AGE LESS THAN 60 YEARS</th>
<th>SENIOR CITIZENS AGE ABOVE 60 YEARS</th>
<th>SUPER SENIOR CITIZENS AGE ABOVE 80 YEARS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Income up to Rs 2,60,000</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income between Rs 2,60,001 - Rs 3,00,000</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income between Rs 3,00,001 - Rs 5,00,000</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income between Rs 5,00,000 - Rs 10,00,000</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income above Rs 10,00,000</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

✓ Highlights of the Budget

![Highlights of the Budget chart]

- World's largest healthcare programme Ayushman Bharat launched
- Has benefitted almost 10 lakh patients already
- Medicines at affordable prices made available through Pradhan Mantri Jan Aushadhi Kendras
- Prices of essential medicines, cardiac stents and knee implants reduced
- 21 AIIMS operating/already established - 14 announced since 2014; 22nd AIIMS to be set up in Haryana
- Assessee-friendly IT Department: all returns to be processed in 24 hrs and returns issued simultaneously in two years, electronic verification and assessment of returns selected for scrutiny
- Increase in tax collections from Rs. 6.38 Lakh crore in 2013-14 to Rs.12 lakh crore this year
- Number of returns filed, up from 3.79 crore to 6.85 crore - 80% growth in tax base
10 point vision for 2030 to realize India’s social economic potential
90% of GST payers can file quarterly returns - Small and Medium Enterprises to get 2% interest rebate on an incremental loan of 1 crore rupees - A Group of Ministers to examine GST burden on home buyers.
Customs to go for digitalization of export and import transactions
Allocations to Defence budget crosses three lakh crore rupees for the first time
Allocations to Health care, MGNREGA (Rs 60000 crore), SC/ST welfare programmes, Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana hiked substantially.
One lakh more villages to get digital connectivity in the next 5 years
New National Artificial Intelligence portal to support National Program on Artificial Intelligence
Rs. 3,000 monthly pension after 60 years of age for unorganised sector workers through a new Pension Scheme – Pradhan Mantri Shram- Yogi Maandhan - with an affordable contribution of only Rs 100/55 per month
Government e-Marketplace – GeM to be extended to all Central Public Sector Enterprises
Over three lakh 38 thousand shell companies deregistered after demonetization.
A container cargo movement to the North-East through Brahmaputra river - Allocation for infrastructure development in the region hiked by 21%.
A separate Department of Fisheries
Single window clearance for shooting films to be made available to Indian filmmakers
Cinematograph Act to be tightened to check piracy
A programme for genetic upgradation of cow – Rashtriya Kamdhenu Aayog
✓ Comprehensive classification of Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-nomadic tribes by a committee under NITI Aayog (following the list prepared earlier by Dada Idate’s National Commission)
✓ Market (Nifty) behavior vs Union Budgets

MARKETS BEFORE BUDGET DAY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FINANCE MINISTER</th>
<th>BUDGET DAY</th>
<th>NIFTY RETURNS (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P CHIDAMBARAM</td>
<td>28-Feb-07</td>
<td>-1.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>29-Feb-08</td>
<td>0.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRANAB MUKHERJEE</td>
<td>06-Jul-09</td>
<td>1.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26-Feb-10</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28-Feb-11</td>
<td>0.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16-Mar-12</td>
<td>-1.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P CHIDAMBARAM</td>
<td>28-Feb-13</td>
<td>0.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARUN JAITLEY</td>
<td>10-Jul-14</td>
<td>-0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28-Feb-15</td>
<td>1.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>29-Feb-16</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>01-Feb-17</td>
<td>-0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>01-Feb-18</td>
<td>-0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PIYUSH GOYAL</td>
<td>01-Feb-19</td>
<td>1.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Bloomberg

✓ Difference between an Interim budget and Full budget

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interim Budget</th>
<th>Full Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is presented by the outgoing government during the last year of its tenure before elections.</td>
<td>It is presented by the new government during the first term of its tenure after it takes charge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is also known as vote on account or approval, which the government seeks from the parliament for essential spending for a limited period.</td>
<td>The annual budget is presented in two parts. It includes the detailed structure of income and future ways to raise funds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is generally meant for the first 2-4 months of the fiscal year in which the elections are scheduled.</td>
<td>It is prepared for the entire fiscal year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The vote-on-account is treated as a formal matter and passed by Lok Sabha without discussion.</td>
<td>The full budget is passed by the Lok Sabha only after proper discussions and voting on demand for grants.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Child Marriages – Report released by the National Family Health Survey-4 (NFHS-4) conducted in 2015-16

- West Bengal tops the entire country with the highest incidence of girls, aged between 15 and 19 years, getting married.
- All other states showed a steady decline in the rate of child marriages, except a marginal increase in 2 states – Himachal Pradesh and Manipur.
- The national average now stands at 11.9%, with an incidence of 14.1% in rural areas and 6.9% in urban areas.
- In the district level, Murshidabad in West Bengal showed the highest percentage of 39.9% child marriages followed by Gandhinagar in Gujarat (with 39.3%) and Bhilwara in Rajasthan (with 36.4%).
- Bihar has the maximum districts (20) with high prevalence followed by Bengal (14) and Jharkhand (11).
- When the NFHS-3 was conducted in 2005-06, Bihar topped the entire country at 47.8% with Jharkhand at second position with 44.7% and Rajasthan at third position with 40.4% followed by West Bengal at fourth with 34%.

India climbed eight places in the 2019 International Intellectual Property (IP) Index - ranking at 36th position among 50 countries

- India was ranked 44th out of 50 countries in the 2018 IIP Index.
- The 7th edition of International IP Index “Inspiring Tomorrow” was released by the Global Innovation Policy Center of U.S. Chamber of Commerce on February 7, 2019.
- The Index was topped by the United States with 42.66 points out of 45, followed by the United Kingdom (42.22) at 2nd, Sweden (41.03) at 3rd and Germany (41.00) at 4th.

Top 10 Revenue generating Monuments during 2015-18 in the country – announced by Mahesh Sharma, Union Culture Minister

- Taj Mahal
- Agra Fort
- Qutub Minar
- Red Fort
- Humayun's Tomb
- Sun Temple in Konark
- Mamallapuram
- Ellora caves
- Group of monuments in Khajuraho
- Ajanta caves in Aurangabad.
✓ The Minister also announced the year-wise budget allocated by Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) for the conservation of protected monuments
  ✓ Rs 23,746 lakh in 2015-16
  ✓ Rs 31,176 lakh in 2016-17
  ✓ Rs 41,076 lakh in 2017-18

➢ Bloomberg Healthiest Country Index 2019 – released by Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation

✓ It ranks 169 economies according to factors that contribute to overall health

**Bloomberg 2019 Healthiest Country Index**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>2019 Rank</th>
<th>2017 Rank</th>
<th>Change</th>
<th>Economy</th>
<th>Health Grade</th>
<th>Health Score</th>
<th>Health Risk Penalties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>+5</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>92.75</td>
<td>96.56</td>
<td>-3.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>91.59</td>
<td>95.83</td>
<td>-4.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>Iceland</td>
<td>91.44</td>
<td>96.11</td>
<td>-4.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>+3</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>91.38</td>
<td>95.59</td>
<td>-4.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-2</td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>90.93</td>
<td>94.71</td>
<td>-3.78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

✓ India slipped from 119 in the 2017 ranking to 120 now
**APPOINTMENT**

**Vice Admiral MS Pawar, AVSM, VSM** - has assumed charge as Deputy Chief of the Naval Staff on January 30

- An officer with over 25 years of sea experience, he remained as the Navigating Officer of INS Magar during Op Pawan in Sri Lanka, the Fleet Navigating Officer of the Western Fleet during Kargil War and the Fleet Operations Officer of Western Fleet when the IN commenced anti piracy patrols in the Gulf of Aden
- He was also the Commandant of the Mauritius National Coast Guard, during 2003.
- As Vice Admiral he has been the Director General Project Seabird and Chief of Staff, Eastern Naval Command
- He also received prestigious Herbert Lott Prize at Royal Naval Staff college, Greenwich, UK and the Vishist Seva Medal in 2010 and the Ati Vishist Seva Medal in 2016.

**Rishi Kumar Shukla – was appointed as the new CBI Chief for a tenure of 2 years**

- Shukla, a 1983-batch Madhya Pradesh-cadre IPS Officer, was the former DGP of Madhya Pradesh
- He is currently serving as the Chairman of Madhya Pradesh Police Housing Corporation in Bhopal
- He was selected by the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi-led selection panel comprising of CJI, Ranjan Gogoi by a 2-1 vote, with Congress leader in Lok Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge giving a note of dissent
- Shukla was removed as the MP police chief by the newly elected government in the state last week
- Kharge cited the lack of experience of Shukla in anti-graft investigations but the Government cited the criteria of CJI to have 100 months of experience in investigation to overrule his concern as Shukla has 117 months of experience
- He has been appointed in the place of former CBI Director Alok Kumar Verma, who was removed from the post on January 10, 2019

**Nila Vikhe Patil, a person of Indian origin – has been re-appointed as the Political advisor to the Swedish Prime Minister’s Office**
She is the daughter of Ashok, who heads the family’s ‘Pravara’ chain of educational institutions in the family’s Ahmednagar district in Maharashtra.

She had already completed two-year stint after appointed as the Political advisor to PMO in Swedan in 2016.

**Pradeep Singh Kharola, Chief of Air India - has been appointed Civil Aviation secretary**

- Rajiv took over as a member in the UPSC after his retirement.

**Rahul Jain, former Assistant General Manager at Western Railway – appointed as the new General Manager of ICF, Chennai**

- He succeeds Sudhanshu Mani, who retired recently.
- Sudhanshu Mani was better known as the architect of India’s first engineless, self-propelled long distance “Train 18”, which was later named “Vande Bharat Express”.

**Indian-American Engineer Sanjay Ramabhadran - has been appointed as the president of Texas Lyceum, a nonprofit organisation focused on cultivating the next generation of Texas leaders**

- Thus, he becomes the first non-american to hold the post.
- Ramabhadran was sworn in as the Texas Lyceum's 2019 President on the floor of the Texas House of Representatives at the Texas Capital in Austin.
  - Sanjay is the first immigrant and Indian American president of Texas Lyceum.
  - The Texas Lyceum has 96 Directors, from all walks of life in Texas, who joined it before turning 46 years of age.
  - The Lyceum has over 1,000 alumni, some of whom have served as President of the United States, US Senators and House Members, Ambassadors, Governors, members of the Texas Legislature and Corporate and non-profit leaders.

**Ashwani Lohani – appointed as the next Chairman of Air India**

- The Appointment Committee of the Cabinet had appointed Lohani as CMD for a period of 1 year or until further order.
- The AI chairman’s post is remaining vacant on January 31, 2019 when then CMD P S Kharola was made aviation secretary.
- Appointed as AI CMD in September 2015, Lohani was moved as Railway Board Chairman in November 2017.
- He retired as Railway Board chairman on December 31, 2019.
- Lohani started the highly successful ‘Delhi-San Francisco’ non-stop flight in winter of 2015 as a thrice weekly flight.
Sushil Chandra, currently chairman of the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) - has been appointed as an election commissioner

- The appointment fills the only vacancy in the Election Commission of India (EC), which has two election commissioners apart from the chief election commissioner.
- Chandra, a 1980 batch Indian Revenue Service (IRS) officer, is one of the rare non-Indian Administrative Services (IAS) officers to be appointed to the post.
- Chandra’s term as CBDT chairman, a post he is holding since November 2016, ends on 31 May 2019.
- He will join chief election commissioner Sunil Arora and election commissioner Ashok Lavasa in the constitutional body.

Pramod Chandra Mody, a 1982-batch IRS officer - was appointed as the new Chairman of the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) on February 15

- Mody succeeds Sushil Chandra, who was appointed as election commissioner on February 14.
- Prior to his appointment as CBDT chief, Mody was member (administration) in the CBDT.
- He will be in-charge till June this year.
- The CBDT is the apex administrative authority of the income tax department.

India's Chandramouli Ramanathan - has been appointed by the United Nations - as Controller & Assistant Secretary-General for UN Programme Planning, Budget and Finance in the Department of Management strategy, policy and compliance

- He succeeds Bettina Tucci Bartsios of Uruguay.
- He has vast experience leading UN's complex change management initiatives, including implementation of IPSAS (International Public Sector Accounting Standards), and Umoja (the United Nations Enterprise Resource Planning solution).
- He has been serving as Acting Controller since September 2018, concurrently with his position as Assistant Secretary-General for Enterprise Resource Planning since 2016.
- He previously served as Deputy Controller, Director of Accounts Division and Chief of Service, IT Services Division.
- He also served as Assistant Auditor General, India (1993-1995) and Director of Accounts for the Auditor General of India (1989-1993).

- US President Donald Trump – has nominated Kelly Craft, the current US ambassador to Canada, to be the next US ambassador to the United Nations.
She fills the post vacated by Nikki Haley, a former South Carolina governor, in October 2018
She was appointed as US ambassador to Canada in September 2017, being the first woman to take up the job
Earlier on December 7 2018, Trump had nominated former Fox News anchor and State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert, who withdrew from consideration following criticism that she lacked the experience for one of the top diplomatic posts
Jonathan Cohen, a career diplomat who became Haley’s deputy in June 2018, is currently serving as the acting UN ambassador.

- Saudi Arabia - appointed a ‘Princess’ as its new ambassador to the United States - the first time the kingdom has named a woman to such a post
  Princess Reema bint Bandar bin Sultan, appointed by a royal decree, replaces Prince Khalid bin Salman, a son of King Salman and a younger brother of the crown prince, who took the post in 2017
  Prince Khalid was named Deputy defence minister under the Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who heads the ministry

- K Radhakrishnan, the former chairman of Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) - has been nominated as the Chairperson of the board of governors of IIT Kanpur
  He was nominated by the President and will be in the board for a period of 3 years from February 19
  A Padma Bhushan awardee, Radhakrishnan has penned his life story in ‘My Odyssey’
Republic Day Parade Awards

- Best marching contingent trophy – Gorkha brigade
- Best marching contingent prize for the para-military forces – The CRPF
- Category of Tableaux
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Prize – Tripura’s tableau depicting Gandhian way of fuelling rural economy
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Prize – Jammu and Kashmir’s tableau depicting the state’s composite culture and ethnic diversity
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> Prize – Punjab’s tableau with the theme of Jallianwala Bagh massacre of 1919

Behrouz Boochani, an Iranian asylum-seeker detained in Papua New Guinea under Australian asylum laws - has won Australia's top literature prize ‘Victorian Prize for Literature’

- He was awarded for his debut book titled “No Friend But the Mountains: Writing from Manus Prison”
- He was the first non-Australian author to win the award, ever since they were instituted in 1985 to honour Australian writers
- He wrote the book in his native Farsi and sent it through the WhatsApp messaging service to a translator in Australia, Omid Tofighian over a period of 5 years
- The book narrates experiences and fear Boochani felt in the guarded camp
- The Australia Detention Policy deports asylum-seekers who try to enter the country by boat to Manus Island or Nauru in the Pacific, where they are subjected to health crisis and serious mental illnesses
- Boochani has been a prominent critic of the treatment of people under Australia's hardline immigration policy
- He has been banned from visiting Australia permanently

Azim Premji, Chairman of Wipro Ltd - will be felicitated with the Ernst & Young Lifetime Achievement Award

- Ernst & Young, famously known as EY, is a multinational professional accounting services firm
- Premji was earlier conferred the Padma Bhushan in 2005 and Padma Vibhushan in 2011
- Premji is donating $2 billion for improving school education in India, the first of its kind by any Indian billionaire

P.S. Krishnan, former Secretary of Government of India - was conferred with K. Veeramani award for Social Justice 2018

- He was the author of acclaimed books like ‘Social Exclusion and Justice in India’ and ‘Empowering Dalits for Empowering India: A Road-map’
The President of India, Ram Nath Kovind, presented the Sangeet Natak Akademi Awards for the year 2017 at a function held at Rashtrapati Bhavan on February 06, 2019.

The list of the major award winners in the field of music and theatre includes—

### Music

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Winner</th>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Lalith J Rao</td>
<td>Hindustani Vocal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Umakant Gundecha and Ramakant Gundecha (Gundecha Brothers) (Joint Award)</td>
<td>Hindustani Vocal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Yogesh Samsi</td>
<td>Hindustani Instrumental - Tabla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Rajendra Prasanna</td>
<td>Hindustani Instrumental - Shehnai Flute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>M.S.Sheela</td>
<td>Carnatic Vocal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Suma Sudhindra</td>
<td>Carnatic Instrumental – Veena</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Tiruvarur Vaidyanathan</td>
<td>Carnatic Instrumental – Mridangam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Shashank Subramanyam</td>
<td>Carnatic Instrumental – Flute</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Dance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Winner</th>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Rama Vaidyanathan</td>
<td>Bharatanatyam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Shobha Koser</td>
<td>Kathak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Madambi Subramanian</td>
<td>Kathakali</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>L.N.Oinam Ongbi Dhoni Devi</td>
<td>Manipuri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Deepika Reddy</td>
<td>Kuchipudi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Sujata Mohapatra</td>
<td>Odissi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Ramkrishna Talukdar</td>
<td>Sattriya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Janmajay Saibaba</td>
<td>Chhau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Aashit Desai</td>
<td>Music for Dance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The awards are conferred every year since 1952 by the Sangeet Natak Akademi, the National Academy of Music, Dance and Drama, which is an autonomous body of the Union Ministry of Culture.

Sanjiv Chadha, SBI India’s UK Chief - has been honoured with the ‘Freedom of the City of London’ by city of London Corporation.

He was nominated for the honour by Lord Mayor of London, Peter Estlin and Sheriff, Vincent Keaveny.

Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru was the previous Indian recipient of this award and other recipient includes acclaimed author JK Rowling.
Father Francois Laborde, a 92-year-old priest, was conferred with the Legion d’Honneur, the highest civilian award of France
- He was awarded in recognition of his work for specially-abled children in Howrah.
- Father Francois Laborde, French-origin with Indian citizenship, is the third person from the state to be entitled with the Legion of Honor - after film maestro Satyajit Ray and actor Soumitra Chatterjee

Tarun Vijay, former MP hailing from Uttarakhand and speaks Hindi – becomes the first North Indian after Independence to be honoured with ‘Thirukuralin Porwal’ award – for taking up the cause of Tamil language and culture
- The award is conferred to eminent personalities who spread the message and teachings of Thiruvalluvar’s great classics in all parts of India and world
- He was presented the award at Muscat, in the presence of several dignitaries and Tamil organizations, by Director general of Thirukkural sciences, Thangamani

Yes Bank – wins the ‘Aegis Graham Bell Award 2018’ at Panaji, Goa
- It has received the award in the ‘Innovation in Data science’ category for their industry-friendly project ‘Yes EEE (Engage Enrich Excel)’
- The award promotes innovations and entrepreneurship in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) domain
- It was hosted by the Government of Goa

Deepa Mehta, acclaimed Indo-Canadian filmmaker – conferred with ‘Lifetime Achievement Award’ by the Academy of Canadian cinema and television
- Deepa Mehta is best known for her trilogy- “Fire”, “Earth” and “Water”
- She was born in India and later moved to Canada in 1973 after her marriage
- She is working currently on Netflix series ‘Leila’

Noted Indian historian, Sanjay Subrahmanyam - has won Israel’s prestigious Dan David Prize 2019
- He was awarded for his work on inter-cultural encounters between Asians, Europeans and people of North and South America during the early modern era.
- Subrahmanyam, son of strategic analyst K Subrahmanyam and brother of former foreign secretary S Jaishankar, won the award in the category of ‘past time dimension’ for his work in macro history.
- He shares the $1million award with Prof Kenneth Pomeranz of University of Chicago.
President, Ram Nath Kovind – to present the Tagore Award for Cultural Harmony on February 18, 2019 at Pravasi Bhartiya Kendra, New Delhi

- The winners
  - Rajkumar Singhajit Singh, doyen of Manipuri dance – 2014
  - Bangladesh cultural organization, Chhayanaut – 2015
  - Ram Sutar Vanji, acclaimed sculptor – 2016

- The award was instituted by the Union Government in 2012 to recognise the contributions made by Rabindranath Tagore to humanity, as part of the commemoration of his 150th Birth Anniversary

- It is given annually to individuals, associations, institutions or organisations for their outstanding contribution towards promoting values of cultural harmony

- It carries an amount worth Rs one crore, citation in a scroll, a plaque and an exquisite traditional handicraft and handloom item

- The first Tagore award was conferred upon Pt. Ravi Shankar, the Indian Sitar Maestro in 2012 and the second award was conferred upon Maestro Zubin Mehta in 2013.

National Film Development Corporation of India - has been declared winner under the Miniratna Category (Category II) by Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) – for exemplary work in the promotion of SC/ST entrepreneurs.

- National Film Development Corporation Ltd. (NFDC) was incorporated in the year 1975 and it has produced over 300 films so far

Swachhata Excellence awards 2019

- 1st Place – Raigarh Municipal Corporation (Chhattisgarh)
- 2nd Place – Ambikapur Municipal Corporation (Chhattisgarh)
- 3rd Place – Kumbakonam Municipal Corporation (Tamil Nadu)

- All the above cities are ‘AMRUT’ cities

- Other Award winners
  - 1st Prize in the category of Million Plus Cities - Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation
  - Prizes in the ‘Statutory Towns’ category - Nagar Palika Parishad of Jashpur Nagar (Chhattisgarh), Malappuram Municipality (Kerala), and Nagar Palika Parishad Surajpur (Chhattisgarh)
  - Consolation prize in the category of Aspirational Districts - Chas Municipal Corporation (Bokaro district of Jharkhand)

- Overall, 40 awards were distributed to the Area Level Federations (ALFs), City Livelihoods Federations (CLFs) and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs)

- These Awards were given by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) as part of the Shehri Samriddhi Utsav, organized from February 1 to 15, 2019

- Swachhata Excellence Awards were instituted in 2007 to encourage Area Level Federations (ALFs) of SHGs formed under DAY-NULM
Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Urban Livelihoods Mission (NULM) was launched by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation (MHUPA), Government of India on 23rd September 2013 by replacing Swarna Jayanti Rozgar Yojana.

Abdul Aziz Muhamat, a Sudanese refugee in an Australian detention centre – wins Martin Ennals Award 2019 in Geneva, Switzerland

- Muhamat spent 5 years in an Australian detention centre on Manus Island in Papua New Guinea
- The award is given to Muhamat for exposing “the very cruel asylum seeker policy of the Australian Government”
- According to Muhamat, he was referred to as ‘number- QNK002’ without his name and prisoners were fed through a chain-link fence and treated worse than animals in the detention centre
- Abdul Aziz Muhamat’s podcast “The Messenger” had earlier won best radio/audio feature at Australia’s Walkley Awards in 2017
- He created it based on around 4,000 WhatsApp messages sent from the detention centre
- The Martin Ennals Award is the world’s leading human rights honour, sometimes being referred to as the “Nobel Prize for human rights”

Siddhartha Lal, MD & CEO of Eicher Motors - has won the EY Entrepreneur of the year 2018

- The award is in recognition of his efforts in the transformation of Eicher Motors and helping the company resurrect the Royal Enfield motorcycle brand in India and making it a global brand icon
- He will now represent India at the EY World Entrepreneur of the Year Award (WEOY) in Monte Carlo from 6th to 8th June 2019
- Azim Premji, Chairman of Wipro won the Lifetime Achievement Award - for putting the Indian Information Technology industry in the global market and his notable contribution to society as a philanthropist.

Other EY Entrepreneur of the Year 2018 winners in other categories

- Start-up - Byju Raveendran (BYJU’S)
- Business Transformation – Kishore Biyani (Future Group)
- Manufacturing – Nirmal K Minda (Minda Industries)
- Services - Ritesh Agarwal (OYO Hotels and Homes)
- Financial Services – Sanjay Agarwal (AU Small Finance Bank)
- Consumer Products & Retail – Rajesh Mehra (Jaquar Group)
- Life Sciences & Healthcare - BinishChudgar (Intas Pharmaceuticals)
- Entrepreneurial CEO – Bhaskar Bhat (Titan Company)
- Energy, Real Estate & Infrastructure – Atul Ruia (The Phoenix Mills)

Maharashtra State Government’s Shiv Chhatrapati Awards – conferred to Mallakhamb coach, Uday Deshpande and batswoman, Smriti Mandhana among others
✓ Uday Deshpande was awarded with the Shiv Chhatrapati life-time achievement award for dedicating his life to the traditional sport, Mallakhamb

✧ Yuwa, a Jharkhand based NGO – won the Laureus Sports for Good Award
✓ Yuwa, working for girl empowerment, became the third Indian entry to receive this honour
✓ In 2004, Indian Cricket team along with Pakistan shared Laureus Award for the first time and later by Magic Bus in 2014.
✓ Yuwa prepares girls to break the cycle of poverty permanently, by using team sports and education to build character, confidence and courage among girls
✓ Yuwa was founded in 2009 by Americans Franz Gastler and Rose Thomson
✓ It runs a football program in rural Jharkhand with 450 girls
✓ Legendary footballer and coach, Arsene Wenger kicked football with the young Indian girls of Yuwa before the announcement

➢ Prime Minister Narendra Modi -received the prestigious Seoul Peace Prize 2018 on February 22, 2019
✓ The award was given to the Prime Minister for his contribution to international cooperation, global peace and harmony apart from fostering global economic growth, crediting 'Modinomics' for reducing social and economic disparity between the rich and the poor
✓ The award was presented to him by Kwon E-hyock, the Chairman of the Seoul Peace Prize Cultural Foundation at a grand ceremony in Seoul, South Korea.
✓ PM Modi is the 14th recipient of the Seoul Peace Prize.

➢ Swaroop Rawal, - has been selected among the Top 10 finalists for the Global Teacher Prize 2019 as per the list released by the Varkey Foundation Global Teacher Prize
✓ It is for the first time that the organization has announced the US$1 million award, the largest prize of its kind.
✓ Shortlisted by the Global Teacher Prize Committee from a worldwide top 50, she will now be competing with teachers from the Netherlands, UK, US, Georgia, Brazil, Argentina, Australia, Japan and Kenya
✓ Swaroop Rawal is a Life Skills and Drama teacher at Lavad Primary School, Gujarat

➢ 7th National Photography Awards
✓ Presented by - Union Minister of State for Information & Broadcasting and Youth Affairs & Sports, Rajyavardhan Rathore
✓ Presented at - National Media Centre in New Delhi
Total awards – 13 (including one Lifetime Achievement Award and one award each in Professional Photographer of the Year category and Amateur Photographer of the Year category)

- Lifetime Achievement Award - Ashok Dilwali
- Professional Photographer of the Year - SL Shanth Kumar (Theme for the Professional category was “Women led Development”)
- Amateur Photographer of the Year - Gurdeep Dhiman (Theme for Amateur category was “Fairs and Festivals of India”)

- **Indian co-production, “Period. End of Sentence” - won the Oscar’s 91st Academy Award in the Best Documentary (Short Subject) category on February 24, 2019**
  - The Netflix documentary explores the lives of the women of Hapur (Uttar Pradesh) fighting stigma around menstruation and also focusses on India’s Pad Man, Arunachalam Muruganantham’s work.
  - In the documentary, a group of rural women learn to use a machine that produces low-cost biodegradable sanitary pads, which they sell to other women under the brand name FLY
  - It was co-produced by Guneet Monga’s Sikhya Entertainment, directed by Iranian-American filmmaker Rayka Zehtabchi and created by The Pad Project.
  - The film was produced as a part of The Pad Project, started by students at the Oakwood School in Los Angeles and their teacher, Melissa Berton in a rural village outside of Delhi, India
  - Period. End of Sentence features the real Pad Man Arunachalam Muruganantham, on whom, Akshay Kumar and Twinkle Khanna made ‘PadMan’ in 2018
  - Indian film producer Guneet Monga is also the producer of acclaimed movies like Masaan and Lunchbox
  - India’s moment at the Oscars comes exactly a decade after A R Rahman and sound engineer Resul Pookutty won the Academy awards for "Slumdog Millionaire" in 2009.

- **National Water Awards 2018**
  - The awards were presented by Nitin Gadkari, Union Minister for Road Transport and Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation in New Delhi on February 25
  - The Minister had distributed 82 National Water Awards in 14 categories jointly
  - **Maharashtra State was given the ‘Best State Award’ under National Water Awards for the Year -2018, while Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh were second and third best States in this category respectively for their efforts in Water conservation**
2018 FMSCI (Federation of Motor Sports Clubs of India) Annual awards, Mumbai (February 25)

Chennai racer, Raghul Rangasamy won the prestigious 'Upcoming Motorsports Person Of The Year Award'

GR Karthikeyan, Narain Karthikeyan's father and the former president of FMSCI (1981-82 & 1985-87), was handed the Lifetime Achievement Award for his contribution to Indian motorsport in its formative years

TVS Racing won the prestigious “Best Team” and “Manufacturer of the Year” awards in the Super Sport Indian category (upto 165cc) in the Indian National Motorcycle Racing Championship for the 4th successive year

The glittering 91st Academy Awards ceremony, which went hostless for only the second time since 1989, kicked off at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles on February 24

The announcements were made by Randy Thomas, who has been the announcer for the program for the last 10 years

**LIST OF OSCAR WINNERS 2019**

**Best Actor, Actress, Supporting Actress, Supporting Actor and Director with the Awards**

- BEST PICTURE - Green Book
- BEST ACTRESS IN A LEADING ROLE - Olivia Colman, The Favourite
- BEST ACTOR IN A LEADING ROLE - Rami Malek, Bohemian Rhapsody
- BEST DIRECTOR - Alfonso Cuaron, Roma

Indian co-production, “Period. End of Sentence” - won the Oscar’s 91st Academy Award in the Best Documentary (Short Subject) category on February 24, 2019

The Netflix documentary explores the lives of the women of Hapur (Uttar Pradesh) fighting stigma around menstruation and also focusses on India’s Pad Man, Arunachalam Muruganantham's work.

The film was produced as a part of The Pad Project, started by students at the Oakwood School in Los Angeles and their teacher, Melissa Berton in a rural village outside of Delhi, India

Period. End of Sentence features the real Pad Man Arunachalam Muruganatham, on whom, Akshay Kumar and Twinkle Khanna made ‘PadMan’ in 2018

"Slumdog Millionaire" in 2009.

The first "P V Narasimha Rao National leadership and lifetime achievement award" – was conferred to Dr Manmohan Singh by
Former president Pranab Mukherjee - at Teen Murti Bhawan in New Delhi

Dr Manmohan Singh held the portfolio of Finance Minister in Rao’s cabinet and was crucial in the liberalisation of the Indian economy during the early 1990s.
In UAE, he is about to participate in a Aribam Syam Sharma, acclaimed Manipuri filmmaker – returns the Padma Shri conferred on him in 2006
✓ The 83-year old filmmaker returned the award in protest against the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill

Pope Francis - visited Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates (UAE)
✓ Thus, he becomes the first pontiff to visit conference on inter-religious dialogue sponsored by the Emirates-based, Muslim Council of Elders
✓ An estimated 700 participants from different faith are expected to participate in the ‘Human Fraternity Conference’, which includes representatives of the Muslim, Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist and Sikh faiths

Dr Ankit Bharat, a Meerut-based doctor in US – has become the first thoracic surgeon in US to perform a robot-assisted lung surgical procedure
✓ Dr Ankit is the surgical director of the lung transplant programme at Northwestern Memorial Hospital in Chicago
✓ He had successfully performed a robot-assisted lung volume reduction surgery in December 2019
✓ He had studied medicine from Christian Medical College, Vellore and went to US for further studies in 2003
✓ The robot-assisted procedure removes the diseased portions of the lungs, thereby reducing pain and scarring, with less risk of infection and shortened recovery time when compared with the traditional surgery methods

US President, Donald Trump - has nominated senior Treasury official, David Malpass as the next chief of the World Bank
✓ He would replace Jim Yong Kim as the president if voted by the Directors of the World Bank Group.
✓ In his current capacity as the Under Secretary of the Treasury for International Affairs, 62-year-old Malpass oversees the working of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank

Flight Lieutenant Hina Jaiswal - created history by becoming the first female flight engineer to be inducted by the Indian Air Force on February 15, 2019
✓ Hina, who was commissioned in the IAF’s engineering branch in 2015, completed her course at the Air Force Station in Yelahanka
Hina, who earned her Flight Engineer’s wing on February 15, 2019, would be posted at helicopter units.
A flight engineer is part of the crew who monitors and operates aircraft systems.
The IAF, since 1993, has commissioned women in the officers’ cadre and successfully inducted them as pilots too.

**PUMA, German sports and lifestyle brand - has appointed the 6 time world champion woman M C Mary Kom as its new brand ambassador in India**
- Mary Kom will endorse brand’s advertising campaign #DoYou, which aims to motivate women across the country to be strong and accomplish their goals
- Kom has been named as PUMA India’s new ambassador for their women’s training category and will be representing the brand in marketing campaigns.

- Britain’s World War II spy, Noor Inayat Khan - becomes the first Indian-origin woman to be honoured with a ‘Blue Plaque’ at her former London home
Khooni Vaisakhi, a banned Punjabi Poem on Jallianwala Bagh Massacre

- The poem was presented at Jallianwala Bagh on 13th April, 1919 by Nanak Singh, also known as ‘Father of Punjabi Novels’
- But this poem was banned by the British after its publication in 1920 as it is critical of the British
- Now, the poem was rediscovered and translated into English by Navdeep Suri
- To mark the centenary of the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre, this poem will be published by Harper Collins
- Jallianwala Bagh Massacre took place on 13 April, 1919 when troops of the British Indian Army under the command of Colonel Reginald Dyer fired into a crowd of freedom fighters, who had gathered in Jallianwala Bagh, Amritsar, Punjab
Human Space Flight Centre – was inaugurated at the ISRO headquarters in Bengaluru

- The centre will be responsible for the entire mission planning to implement the first development flight of Gaganyaan with the support of existing ISRO Centres
- The first unmanned mission will take place in December 2020 and second in July 2021 followed by the manned mission in December 2021
- The Gaganyaan project is headed by R. Hutton, who was the Director of Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) Programme

ISRO – has selected 10 companies for the Lithium-ion cell technology Transfer

- The Lithium-ion cell technology has been developed by Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC).
- 10 Selected Companies
- Amara Raja Batteries Limited, Chittoor.
- Bharat Electronics Limited, Pune.
- Carborundum Universal Limited, Kochi.
- Exicom Tele-Systems Limited, Gurgaon.
- GOCL Corporation Limited, Hyderabad
- Jyoti CNC Automation Limited, Rajkot
- National Aluminium Co Limited, Bhubaneswar
- Sukhbir Agro Energy Limited, New Delhi.
- Tata Chemicals Limited, Mumbai
- Thermax Limited, Pune

ISRO – to launch its latest communication satellite GSAT-31, aboard Ariane-5 (VA 247) on February 6, 2019 from French Guiana

- In its first mission on 2019, Arianespace would be launching two telecommunications satellites with Ariane 5 –
  - Saudi Geostationary Satellite 1/Hellas Sat 4
  - Hellas Sat along with GSAT-31

- GSAT-31
- Weighing about 2,535 kg, It will provide communications services in Ku-band for at least 15 years
- It is India's 40th communication satellite, providing island and mainland coverage
- Hellas Sat (Greece – Cyprus) aims to provide telecommunications services in the Middle East, South Africa and Europe

Arianespace
✓ Arianespace provides satellite launch services using its three launchers, Ariane, Soyuz and Vega, from launch sites in French Guiana (South America) and Baikonur, Kazakhstan.

**Russia – started to test ‘Accident-tolerant Fuel’ (ATF) for nuclear reactors**
✓ The ATF is resistant to severe accidents at nuclear power plants
✓ Russian national atomic power corporation, Rosatom is the technical consultant for the Kudankulam nuclear power plant in Tamil Nadu
✓ According to Rosatom, the first phase of the reactor tests will be completed in 2019 while the next stage includes the loading in commercial power reactor in Russia

**ISRO’s communication satellite, GSAT-31 - was successfully launched by Arianespace aboard its launch vehicle, Ariane 5 from French Guiana on February 5, 2019**
✓ The launch vehicle Ariane 5 VA-247 carried 2 telecommunication satellites –
✓ Saudi Geostationary Satellite 1/Hellas Sat 4 and Hellas Sat
✓ ISRO’s GSAT-31
✓ GSAT-31 is India’s 40th communication satellite
✓ Weighing 2536 kg, it will provide the Ku-band transponder capacity for the next 15 years
✓ Arianespace has launched more than 590 satellites since 1980, using its three launchers, Ariane, Soyuz and Vega
✓ It has its headquarters in Evry, near Paris, France

**NASA scientists – have announced that 2018 was the 4th warmest year on its record spanning 140 years**
✓ It had said that the 5 warmest years ever recorded were the last 5 years
✓ 18 of the 19 warmest years have occurred since 2001
✓ The Earth’s temperature in 2018 was more than 1 degree Celsius, or 1.8 degrees Fahrenheit, above the average temperature
✓ As per the scientists, an increase of 1.5 degrees or more will produce serious consequences to humanity
✓ The warmest year on record was 2016, when the pacific ocean phenomenon known as El Nino occurred to register record-setting temperatures
✓ In 2018, the world experienced the opposite phenomenon, a cooling La Nina, with a weak El Nino towards the end of the year
✓ 2019 would also end up as probably the second-warmest year on record, as per the prediction of the analysts

➢ Space X’s Falcon rocket – to launch the world’s first private ‘Unmanned lunar flight’ on February 19 from Cape Canaveral in Florida
It will be undertaken by Israel’s Space IL, a non-profit organization established in 2011, which aims to land the first Israeli spacecraft on the Moon. The spacecraft called ‘Beresheet’ (meaning ‘Genesis’ in Hebrew language) is just 2 metres in diameter and 1.5 metres tall with four legs. A significant aspect of the flight is that it carries a time capsule, which has drawings done by Israeli children, the Israeli flag, the Bible and dictionaries in 27 languages, which will remain permanently on the moon. The flight will be assisted by Israel Aerospace Industries and Nasa. Nasa provided a laser reflector, which will help the spacecraft to locate the landing zone on the moon and also assist in communication. The spacecraft, weighing just 585 grams, will touchdown in the northern hemisphere of the moon at a place called ‘Mere Serinitatis’ by end of April. The mission makes Israel the fourth country to soft land on the moon after the US, Russia and China. ISRO’s Chandrayaan-2 is provisionally slated for launch towards the end of April. India’s first private lunar mission, Teamindus, is expected to lift off later this year.

**SaaS major, Zoho-backed team of 50 engineers – creates India’s first LTE Chipset in Bengaluru**

- Sridhar Vembu, founder of Zoho, calls the creation “one-of-a kind in India”.
- With this eight yearlong project, Zoho’s team would potentially be taking on giants such as Qualcomm, Intel, Huawei and others, head on.
- An IIT-Madras alumnus, Vembu is credited with building Zoho’s mail and chat services, which the US National Security Agency (NSA) has found it difficult to crack part of its mass surveillance.
- Vembu is also planning to open a top-notch research and development center in his home town of Thattuvanjeri near Kumbakonam in Tamil Nadu.
- A detailed announcement regarding the invention will be made by the company within the next two weeks.

**NASA’s Opportunity rover, the longest lived robot ever sent from Earth to another planet - is confirmed ‘officially’ dead on February 13, 2019**

- Eight months ago, NASA lost contact with the Opportunity rover on Mars which was hit by a giant dust storm destroying its solar power panels.
- The golf cart-size rover was designed to last only 90 Martian days, but it lasted 5,111 days until its last transmission. (A Martian day is 40 minutes longer than an Earth day)
The steady stream of photographs and data from Opportunity — and from its twin rover, Spirit, which stopped in March 2010 — brought Mars closer to people on Earth.

Opportunity landed on Mars on January 24, 2004, three weeks after its twin, Spirit, which set down on the opposite side of the planet.

Opportunity (and Spirit) made some stunning discoveries, including the presence of gypsum, which is formed from mineral-rich water and suggests Mars’s surface once had much more water.

It also discovered the mineral hematite on the surface, another sign the planet had a wetter past.

Opportunity even spotted the Martian version of a solar eclipse, as the planet’s moons, Deimos and Phobos, traversed the sun.

In its time on Mars, Opportunity traveled more than 28 miles in the reddish planet.

**NASA, the U.S. space agency - plans to send American astronauts back on the Moon by 2028, with unmanned demonstration missions in 2024 and 2026.**

NASA’s plan calls for 4 astronauts to spend as long as 7 days on the Moon.

Earlier, NASA had put humans for the first time on the Moon when Apollo 11 in July 1969 landed with Neil Armstrong as the first man to walk on the lunar surface.

As per the plan document titled ‘Broad Agency Announcement’, NASA calls for commercial ventures to propose concepts for a descent module, a space refueling system and a transfer vehicle by March 25.

**NASA – has announced a new space telescope mission called ‘SPHEREx’ - dedicated exclusively to understand the origins of life and the universe**

It will also focus on the search for water and organic molecules within the Milky Way.

SPHEREx - The ‘Spectro-Photometer for the History of the Universe, Epoch of Reionization and Ices Explorer’

It will be launched in 2023 with an overall budget of $242 million allocation.

Once placed in its orbit, SPHEREx will collect data on over 300 million galaxies, some as far as 10 billion light-years away from Earth, and 100 million stars in our own Milky Way every six months.

**AntBot, the first walking robot to have navigational capabilities without GPS or mapping – has been developed**

It has been designed by French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS) and Aix-Marseille University researchers at ISM.

They are developed based on the concept employed by desert ants who use polarised lights and UV radiation to navigate exceptionally in space.
It is equipped with an optical compass used to determine its path by means of polarised light, and by an optical movement sensor directed to the Sun to measure the distance covered.

Weighing only 2.3 kg, this robot has 6 feet for increased mobility, allowing it to move in complex environments - with precision of up to 1 centimeter after having covered a total distance of 14 metres.

Hayabusa 2, Japanese space probe named after a falcon - has touched down the asteroid Ryugu, more than 300 million km from Earth – on February 21.

Hayabusa 2 fired a small projectile into the surface of Ryugu to collect particles back to Earth for analysis regarding origin of life.

Hayabusa 2 was launched in December 2014 and is scheduled to return to Earth at the end of 2020.

Israel - launches the world’s first privately funded lunar flight mission ‘Beresheet’ on February 22, 2019.

Thus, Israel becomes the fourth nation to soft land on the moon after the former Soviet Union, the US and China.

The nearly $100 million historic flight is made by Israel's Space IL and Israel Aerospace Industry (IAI).

The nearly 585kg Israeli spacecraft called ‘Beresheet’ which in Hebrew means “in the beginning”, was flown by Space X’s Falcon 9 rocket.

Once it touches down on the moon, it will be the smallest spacecraft— 2m in diameter and 1.5m tall — to land ever on the lunar surface.

The achievement is a giant technological leap when the entire world celebrates the 50th year of Nasa’s first manned mission ‘Apollo 11’- undertaken by Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin on July 20, 1969.


Xin Xiaomeng, created by China’s sate news outlet Xinhua and search engine Sogou, will be the world’s first female Artificial intelligence based news anchor.

She will make her debut in March 2019.

China has already debuted the world’s first male AI news anchor in November 2018.

Xinhua has also created a group of robot reporters, who have written over 3,400 reports since last November.

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) – to launch a PSLV mission in March where it will release different payloads in 3 different orbits.

For the first time in the country’s space history, ISRO will launch PSLV-C45 mission in the last week of March.

On January 24, PSLV-C44 rocket had carried a student satellite ‘Kalamsat’ that was attached to PS-4, for doing space experiments.
ISRO is planning to launch the Chandrayaan-2 mission in April end

- **Sir Richard Branson’s Virgin Galactic spaceplane – successfully takes its first human passenger into space on February 22, 2019**
  - The spaceplane, called the VSS Unity, had 3 people onboard - 2 pilots and 1 passenger (for the first time)
  - This is the 5th flight of VSS Unity with all its previous flights containing only the two pilots
  - VSS Unity flew to space with chief pilot Dave Mackay, co-pilot Michael Masucci and the passenger, Beth Moses, who is the chief astronaut instructor at Virgin Galactic
  - Virgin Galactic has yet to announce when its flights will be available for commercial passengers.

- **ISRO – to launch an electronic intelligence satellite ‘Emisat’ for Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) - in March 2019**
  - Weighing about 420 kg, it will be launched at an altitude of 763 km using a PSLV rocket with four strap-on motors
  - In January 2019, the space agency launched a defence imaging satellite Microsat R for the DRDO

- **National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) - has launched a new mission to forecast the weather system around the Earth from International Space Station (ISS)**
  - Titled ‘Atmospheric Waves Experiment’ (AWE), it is expected to cost around $42 million and will be launched in August 2022 under NASA’s Heliophysics Explorers Program
  - NASA has also selected another experiment, called the Sun Radio Interferometer Space Experiment (SunRISE) for a seven-month extended formulation study at a proposed cost of $100,000
**SPORTS**

*The International Cricket Council (ICC) - signed a five-year global partnership deal with beverage manufacturer, Coca-Cola Company*
- The deal will cover all ICC events till 2023
- ICC had also signed sponsorship deals with Alcobev brands, Royal Stag and Bira 91

*Mithali Raj - became the first woman to complete in 200 matches in the One Day International format*
- Mithali made her ODI debut against England in Milton Keynes in January 1999
- She is also the top run-getter in the world with 6622 runs

*Qatar – becomes the new Asian Champions in Football*
- They have defeated four-times champions Japan by 3-1 margin in the final held in Abu Dhabi
- Qatar is scheduled to host the 2022 World cup

- **India – loses to Italy by 3-1 in the Davis Cup Qualifiers at Kolkata**
  - Italy had won all the three singles matches, while India won the doubles encounter
  - The Indian team was represented by Prajnesh Gunneswaran and Ramkumar Ramanathan in the singles while Rohan Bopanna and Divij Sharan represented the country in doubles matches
  - With the win, Italy have qualified for the Davis cup final berth along with Serbia, Australia, Germany, Japan and Kazakhstan
  - Other countries which have qualified automatically for the finals include US, Spain, Argentina, Britain, Croatia and France

*Sana Mir, former captain of the Pakistan women team - became the first Asian woman to play hundred T20Is*
- She became the 6th woman in the world to achieve the feat
- Daendra Dottin of West Indies leads the list with 110 T20Is

*Rohit Sharma, Indian cricket team vice-captain – becomes the 14th Indian cricketer to play 200 One day internationals*
- z of highest Individual score (264 runs) and highest number of double centuries (3 Double Century) in ODIs

*Sundeep Jora, Cricketer from Nepal - became the youngest man to score a half-century in T20 Internationals*
- Jora made his T20I debut for Nepal against the UAE at 17 years and 103 days on January 31
Jora joined teammate Rohit Paudel, who last week became the youngest to score an international fifty, breaking the record held by Sachin Tendulkar.

During the series in which Nepal defeated UAE by 2-1, their captain Paras Khadka became the first Nepalese cricketer to score an ODI hundred.

**Ramit Tandon, Kolkata-based Indian squash player – won the 4th Seattle open title in USA**
- In the final, he defeated Mohamed El Sherbini of Egypt.
- Ramit Tandon rose to his career best ranking of 58 in the latest list released in February 2019 by World Squash Federation.

**Swiss Football Club, FC Basel – to invest 20 million Euros in Chennai City FC, a major I-League franchisee football club**
- The 125-year old swiss club is set to pick up 35% stakes in the Coimbatore-based club.
- FC Basel will have a player exchange programme and help the club with technical know-how.
- They will also help CCFC in improving their infrastructure at their adopted home, Coimbatore.
- Roger Federer, Swiss tennis legend hails from the city of Basel and is a huge fan of the club.

**Tamil Nadu’s fencer, Bhavani Devi – won 2 gold medals at the 29th National Fencing championships held in Guwahati**
- The Sabre fencer won the medals in the individual event and team gold for Tamil Nadu along with Tamilselvi, Carolin sandya and Dharani.

**Divya Deshmukh, 13-year old Indian Woman International Master – won the Velammal-AICF Women International Grandmaster Round Robin Chess Tournament 2019 in Chennai**
- The second place was shared by Osmak Iulija (Ukraine) and Michelle Catherina (India).
- The tournament saw Divya achieving an International Master (IM) norm and a Woman Grandmaster norm.

**Smriti Mandhana, India’s opening batswoman – scored the fastest fifty for India in Women’s T20Is**
- She hit a half century in 24 balls in the first T20 match against New Zealand in Wellington.
- She is currently ranked at 6th place in the list of fastest fifty scorers internationally.
- New Zealand’s Sophie Devine leads the record of the quickest half century in women’s T20Is.
- Sophie had scored the half century in just 18 balls against India in 2005.
Vidharbha – becomes 2018-19 Ranji Champions for the second consecutive year – and becomes the sixth team to defend the Ranji title successfully

- They had defeated Saurashtra by 78 runs to win the final in Nagpur
- Saurashtra have now lost all the three Ranji Trophy finals they have been a part of, twice by Mumbai (2012-13 and 2015-16) and now by Vidharbha
- Aditya Sarvate of Vidharbha was adjudged the Man of the Match
- Milind Kumar (Sikkim) scored the most runs (1331 runs) in the series, while Ashutosh Aman (Bihar) took the most wickets (68 wickets)
- Mumbai, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Rajasthan and Delhi are the other teams who have managed to win consecutive titles.

S Mirabhai Chanu, World Champion wrestler of India – won the Gold medal at the EGAT cup in Thailand

- Chanu won the 48 kg category gold in the event, which is one of the qualifying competition for 2020 Tokyo Olympics
- She was battling lower back injury for the last 9 months, which had kept her out of action for the most part of 2018

Rohit Sharma, Indian Cricketer – becomes the top run-getter in the T20 format

ROHIT TOPS SLAM-BANG CHARTS

Rohit Sharma went past Martin Guptill to become the highest scorer in T20 Internationals on Friday...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Player</th>
<th>Team</th>
<th>Run</th>
<th>Strike Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rohit Sharma</td>
<td>Ind</td>
<td>2288</td>
<td>138.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin Guptill</td>
<td>NZ</td>
<td>2272</td>
<td>132.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoaib Malik</td>
<td>Pak</td>
<td>2263</td>
<td>124.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virat Kohli</td>
<td>Ind</td>
<td>2167</td>
<td>136.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brendon McCullum</td>
<td>NZ</td>
<td>2140</td>
<td>136.21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- He achieved the feat during his knock of 50 runs against New Zealand in the 2nd T20I in Auckland on February 8

P V Sindhu, India’s badminton player – to sign Rs 50 crore endorsement deal with popular Chinese sports brand, Li Ning for a period of 4 years
As part of the deal, Sindhu will get Rs 40 crore as sponsorship while the rest will be for equipment.
Sindhu had signed a landmark deal after her Olympic victory with Baseline Ventures, a sports management company, worth more than Rs 100 crore.
Sindhu is the only Indian shuttler to win an Olympic silver and World championship silver medals.
Another ace badminton player, Kidambi Srikanth had signed Rs 35 crore deal with Li Ning in January 2019.
Currently, India’s cricket captain Virat Kohli has a 10-year deal worth Rs 100 crore with International sports brand giant, Puma.

**Britain's Jamie Chadwick - scripted history in the MRF Challenge - by becoming the first female driver to win the championship in its 7 seasons so far**
Belgium’s Max Defourny won the second spot and Finland’s Patrick Pasma took the third place in the race that took place near Chennai.

**Indian Railways – wins the 9th Senior National Men’s Hockey Championship (A division) in Gwalior**
In the final, the Railway Sports Promotion Board had defeated Hockey Punjab to lift the title.
In the bronze medal match, Petroleum Sports Promotion Board beat Punjab and Sind Bank.

**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.

**The Sports ministry – has rejected the request of ‘Fencing, Kho-Kho and Soft tennis’ – to upgrade them to ‘priority’ category from ‘others’ category**
The rejection means that they will not be eligible for more Government’s financial assistance and foreign exposure for their players.
All the 3 disciplines are presently in the ‘others’ category, which entitles them only to grants for holding the national championships.
As per the ministry’s rules, ‘for a discipline to be in the ‘priority’ category’, it should be 6th or 8th in individual/team events at the Asian Games and Commonwealth Games and should be popular among mass.

In India, sports disciplines have been put in four different categories – high priority, priority, others and general.

Emma, Eloise Sheridan and Mary Waldron – to create history as the first female duo to officiate in a men’s first grade premier (club) cricket match in Adelaide this weekend.

Sheridan and Waldron will stand in a match between Tea Tree Gully and Northern Districts in Adelaide featuring Australia’s vice-captain Travis Head.

Earlier, Sheridan and NSW umpire Claire Polosak officiated in a Women’s Big Bash League match between the Adelaide Strikers and Melbourne Stars to become the first female pair to officiate a professional match in Australia.

Waldron, on the other hand, will be officiating in her first men’s grade match.

Waldron played for Ireland in last year’s International Cricket Council (ICC) T20 World Cup and was also a professional football player.

Vidarba – retains Irani trophy by means of first innings lead - after the match against Rest of India ended in a draw in Nagpur.

The defending champions needed to bat the entire final day to retain the title, which they did with ease.

It became the third team after Mumbai and Karnataka to defend the Irani Trophy and Ranji Trophy.

Vidarba were unbeaten throughout the 2018-19 Indian domestic cricket season.

Akshay Karnewar of Vidarbha was named as Man of the match in the final.

Saina Nehwal – defeated P V Sindhu in the 83rd Yonex Sunrise Senior National Badminton championships held in Guwahati.

With the win, 2012 Olympics bronze medal list Saina had managed to maintain four titles in four appearances.

It was Saina’s back-to-back win in the Nationals after she won in Nagpur last year.

Saina has lost to Sindhu only once in international events at India Open 2017.

Saina had also defeated 2016 Rio Games silver medallist Sindhu at the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games summit clash last year.

In the Men’s singles final, Sourabh Varma defeated Lakshya Sen to win the title.

This is Sourabh’s fifth successive win over Lakshya.

It was the third title for Sourabh after emerging champion in 2011 (New Delhi) and 2016 (Bengaluru).
**South African pacer Dale Steyn - overtook former Indian captain Kapil Dev and England’s Stuart broad - to become joint 7th highest wicket-taker in Test cricket**

- Steyn has an excellent average of 22.77 – the tenth-highest amongst all fast bowlers in Test history (minimum of 40 Tests and 100 wickets). His average is the third-lowest (only after McGrath and Muttiah Muralitharan) in the top-10 wicket-takers’ list.
- Steyn has picked a wicket approximately every 42 deliveries, ie 7 overs – this is the best strike rate (42.1) amongst all bowlers (pace and spin combine) in Test history (min. 40 Tests and 100 wickets).
- Only two fast bowlers – Richard Hadlee (2.87 wickets per innings bowled) and Dennis Lillee (2.69 wickets per innings) have a better wickets per innings ratio than Steyn (2.60)
- Only five fast bowlers – Hadlee (1.91 fives in an innings and tens in a match), Lillee (2.33), Alec Bedser (2.55), Terry Alderman (2.73) and Alan Davidson (2.75) have a better frequency of fifers and ten-wicket hauls (combined) than Steyn (2.97; 26 fifers and 5 ten-wicket hauls) in Test history.

**Smiling Clouded Leopard – was chosen as the mascot for the National Games 2022 by the Sports and Youth Ministry**

- Meghalaya will host the 2022 National Games, coinciding with its 50th year of statehood
- Thus, it becomes the 3rd North eastern state to host the National Games, after Manipur (in 1999) and Assam (in 2007)
- Clouded Leopard is the state animal of Meghalaya, seen throughout the forests of Garo, Khasi and Jaintia Hills

**Sunil Chhetri – honoured with the first ever ‘Football Ratna’ award by Football Delhi**

- He was recently named as the 6th Indian Footballer to win the Padma Shri awards
- On the occasion, Football Delhi also honoured Shubham Sarangi, youth player from Delhi who is currently playing for Delhi Dynamos squad in the ISL
- Sunil Chhetri, popularly known as Captain Fantastic, has scored the second highest number of goals in international football matches among active players after Cristiano Ronaldo.
- Chhetri has also been named AIFF (All India Football Federation) Player of the Year five times in 2007, 2011, 2013, 2014 and 2017.

**Railway Sports Promotion Board - won their sixth straight title as the Champions in the 9th Hockey India Senior Women National Championship 2019 (A Division) in Hisar, Haryana**

- In the one-sided final, RSPB defeated Hockey Madhya Pradesh by a margin of 5-0 goals
Earlier, on Feb 10, Railway Sports Promotion Board (RSPB) defeated defending champions Punjab to lift the 9th Senior Men’s National Hockey Championship in Gwalior

Mukesh Kumar and Punam, a lawyer couple from Chandigarh – won silver medals in table tennis at the International Wheelchair and Amputee Sports Federation World Games in Sharjah

Mukesh won a silver medal in Category 7 (athletes on a wheelchair) and Punam in category 6

1st Mallakhamb World Championship - was held in Shivaji Park in central Mumbai

India emerged as the Winner in the event, which saw the participation of 14 countries including Spain, Germany, Czech Republic, Italy, USA, Iran, Norway, England, France, Malaysia, Singapore, Japan, Vietnam and Bahrain

This sport involves athletes performing various yogic and gymnastic poses while hanging from a rope or on a pole.

Haryana’s Amit Panghal, Asian Games Gold medal list – won a second successive gold in 49 kg category - at the Strandja Memorial boxing Tournament in Sofia, Bulgaria

Former Junior world champion, Nikhat Zareen (51 kg) and Meena Kumari Devi (54 kg) – also became the first set of Indian woman boxers to win gold medals at the 70th edition of the prestigious tournament

Laureus Sports Awards, Monaco

Tennis world No. 1, Novak Djokovic of Serbia won his fourth Laureus World Sportsman of the Year - after claiming both the US Open and Wimbledon tennis championships last year

With his record seventh title at Australian open recently, Djokovic moved ahead of Pete Sampras into third on the men’s all-time list of Grand Slam winners (15), just two behind Spaniard Rafa Nadal with Swiss legend, Roger Federer continues to lead with 20.

American record-holding gymnast, Simone Biles bagged the World Sportswoman of the Year Award - after winning four gold medals, one silver and one bronze at the 2018 World Championships

Also the World Sportswoman of the Year winner in 2017, she made history by becoming the first woman to win four all-around world gymnastics championships.

Biles has a record 14 career world titles under her name at the age of 21, including four Olympic golds.

Japan’s world number one female tennis player Naomi Osaka, who won her first Grand Slam title at US Open last year and also the 2019 Australian Open, won the Breakthrough of the Year award
FIFA World Cup winners France became the first national football team to win a second Laureus World Team of the Year Award.

Golfing star Tiger Woods received the Laureus World Comeback of the Year Award for winning the Tour Championship, his third Laureus Award after the Laureus World Sportsman of the Year accolade in 2000 and 2001.

Legendary football manager Arsene Wenger received the Laureus Lifetime Achievement Award for his contribution to football during his 22 years as manager of Arsenal.

Yuwa, a sport-for-development organization that works in the rural region of Jharkhand in northern India, received the Laureus Sport for Good Award for their life-changing work in using football to improve the lives of young girls from disadvantaged communities.

Laureus Sports Award winners
- Sportsman of the Year - Novak Djokovic (Tennis)
- Sportswoman of the Year - Simone Biles (Gymnast)
- Comeback of the Year - Tiger Woods (Golf)
- Breakthrough of the Year - Naomi Osaka (Tennis)
- Sportsperson of the Year with disability - Henrieta Farkasova (Skiing)
- Action Sportsperson of the Year - Chloe Kim (Snowboarding)
- Team of the Year - France football team
- Laureus Sporting Moment of the Year - Xia Boyu
- Exceptional Achievement Award - Eliud Kipchoge (Athletics)
- Lifetime Achievement Award - Arsene Wenger (Football)
- Spirit for Sport Award - Lindsey Vonn (Alpine Skiing)
- Sport for Good Award - Yuwa (Women’s football in Jharkhand)

West Indies star batsman, Chris Gayle - surpassed Pakistan’s Shahid Afridi to top the list of most international sixes
- He achieved the feat during the 1st ODI between West Indies and England at the Kensington Oval in Bridgetown, Barbados on February 20.
- Gayle now has 488 international sixes, one more than Afridi.
- Former Sri Lanka opener, Sanath Jayasuriya is fourth with international sixes 352.
- Gayle has the most centuries by a West Indian in ODI, with 23, as well as the highest score of 215.
- Gayle has earlier announced that he will retire at the end of 2019 ICC Cricket World Cup in England & Wales.

The Supreme Court – appointed its former judge D K Jain as BCCI Ombudsman to resolve disputes
- The move follows the recent differences of opinion between the Chairman, Vinod Rai and member Diana Edulji of the SC-appointed Committee of Administrators (CoA) – to administer BCCI.
It had also appointed Indian Army’s former Master General Ordnance Lt Gen Ravi Thodge – as the third member of the CoA to assist decision making in BCCI.

Pro Volleyball league 2019, Chennai
- Chennai Spartans defeated Calicut Heroes in the final to win the inaugural edition of the league.
- Naveen Raja Jacob of Chennai was adjudged player-of-the-match.
- Rudy Verhoeff of Chennai emerged as the league’s top scorer and best spiker.
- By virtue of this victory, Chennai Spartans have also qualified for this year’s FIVB Asian Men’s Club Volleyball Championship, 2019.

Sports Minister Rajyavardhan Rathore - inaugurated the International Shooting Sports Federation (ISSF) World Cup 2019 for rifle and pistol - on February 21, 2019
- It will start from February 23 and end on February 27, 2019 at Dr Karni Singh Shooting Range in New Delhi.
- Participating Nations – 60 (without Pakistan).
- Participating Shooters – 500 (without 2 Pakistan shooters).
- 2020 Olympic quota available – 12 out 16 (2 already taken by Indians, Anjum Moudgil and Apurvi Chandela and 2 quotas scrapped in 25m rapid fire pistol).
- Indian team – 35 shooters (23 shooters play for medal/Olympic quota and the rest for MQS, Minimum qualification score).
- Medals – 30 across 10 events.

In News
- India refused to grant visas to two Pakistan shooters and their manager to compete in New Delhi.
- Following India’s move, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) scrapped 2 olympic quota places in the event where the Pakistanis were competing (25m rapid fire pistol).
- The International Olympic Committee (IOC) recommended to all global federations that they ‘neither award nor hold’ sports events in India until they receive written assurances from the Indian government that participants from all nations will be guaranteed entry.

India’s Mohd Mushtaque Ahmad and Asima Ali - were elected as the Vice-President and Executive Committee member of the Asian Hockey Federation (AHF) for a four-year term in Gifu, Japan.
- Mushtaque Ahmad is currently serving as the President of Hockey India, while Ali is the Vice-President of the national federation.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) - banned UAE-based coach Irfan Ansari for 10 years.
The move comes after he was found guilty of making a “corrupt approach” to Pakistan captain Sarfaraz Ahmed in 2017.

Ansari worked with Sharjah Cricket Council for 30 years and was the head coach of the Sharjah Cricket Club.

ISSF Shooting World Cup 2019, New Delhi

- Apurvi Chandela – creates World Record and wins Gold in the Women’s 10m air rifle
- This is the first gold for Chandela in the World cup series, with her earlier gold coming at the 2014 Glasgow Commonwealth games
- With a score of 252.9, she shattered the world record of China’s Ruozhu Zhao score of 252.4 in the World championships in May 2018
- Apurvi had already clinched the quota for the 2020 Tokyo Olympic games in last year’s world series
- Prior to this win, Apurvi had won a bronze in the world cup

Afghanistan – hits the world record T20 score of 278/3 against Ireland in Dehradur

- The score overtakes the earliest high of Australia’s 260/3 scored against Sri Lanka in September 2016
- During the innings, Afghanistan’s Hazratullah Zazai smashed unbeaten 162 runs off just 62 balls, with 16 sixes (which was another record) and 11 fours
- His score is only the second best to Australian Aaron Finch’s record score of 172 scored against Zimbabwe in Harare in July 2018
- The record for most sixes in a T20 march was held so far by Aaron Finch with 14 sixes in a match against England held in Southampton in August 2013

Sri Lanka cricket team – becomes the first cricket team from Asia to win a test series in South Africa on February 23

- They have clinched an historic 2-0 series triumph with a successive 8 wickets win in the second test held in Port Elizabeth, followed by the one wicket win in the first test in Durban
- Incidentally, they are only the third team ever after England and Australia to register a Test series win against South Africa in South Africa

Indian Men’s hockey team defender, Harmanpreet Singh – was adjudged as 2018 Player of the Year by the Asian Hockey Federation

- Indian women’s hockey team striker Lalremsiami had bagged the Rising Player of the Year award
- Harmanpreet contributed to the team’s silver medal win at the FIH Champions Trophy in Breda and was also part of the team which won the Asian Champions Trophy in 2018

Badminton Ace, P V Sindhu – becomes the first woman to fly in a Tejas aircraft
She flew in the indigenous Light Combat Aircraft, Tejas, at the Aero India air show in Bengaluru

The combat jet’s trainer version was piloted by Group Captain Siddharth Singh, while Sindhu was the co-pilot in the tandem-seater cockpit

**ISSF Shooting World Cup 2019, New Delhi**

- 16-year old Saurabh Chaudhary - won the gold with a world record and won a quota place for the Tokyo Olympics in the process in the men’s 10m air pistol event
- Saurabh shot 245 in the final to break Ukrainian shooter Oleh Omelchuk’s record of 243.6 - in his debut World Cup as ‘Senior’ player
- Saurabh has been owning the junior world record (245.5) for almost a year
- Saurabh has shot in 11 international tournaments in the last 3 years, made it to 10 finals and has won 8 gold and 1 silver, including Asian Games, Commonwealth Games, Youth Olympic Games, Junior World Cups and Junior World Championships

**Indian archers - bagged four gold, three silver and three bronze medals and emerged Champions - at the 3rd ISSF International Solidarity Archery Championship in Dhaka**

- Hosts Bangladesh finished runners-up with two gold, three silver and four bronze medals
- In the compound individual girls’ event, Pragati won the gold while Isha Pawar settled for a bronze
- India got a second gold when the recurve boys’ team of Paras Hooda, Bishal Changmai and Karni Singh Chouhan secured the top spot
- Recurve mixed pair of Paras Hooda and Komalika Bari earned India a third gold by beating Iran in a one-sided final
- Compound boys team consisting of Ritik Chahal, Prathamesh Smadhan Jawkar and Chirag Vidyarthi earned the fourth gold for the country by defeating Bangladesh in the final

**Tamil Nadu’s T N Anuradha – wins Gold in 87 kg category in the senior National weightlifting championships at Vishakapatnam**

- Purnima Pandey of Uttar Pradesh won the women’s plus 87kg category gold medal
- K Ravikumar of Odisha won the men’s 89kg gold while 2018 Commonwealth Games gold medallist RV Rahul, clinched bronze in the same event

**Indian Grandmaster Abhijeet Gupta - lifted the Cannes International Open trophy in Chess**

- Having been tied for the top spot in the previous edition, Abhijeet won the tournament with 7.5 points
- It was a clear point lead over nearest rivals Nikita Maiorov of Belarus, Nasuta Grzegorz of Poland and Yuri Solodovnischecko of Ukraine.
Legendary Sri Lanka batsman Sanath Jayasuriya - banned for two years starting backdated from October 16, 2018

Saurabh Chaudhary and Manu Bhaker – won the 10m air pistol mixed event in the ISSF World Shooting Championships on the last day in New Delhi

Dharun Ayyasamy of Tiruppur, Tamil Nadu – wins gold in the 400m hurdles event with a timing of 49.94 seconds at the Indian Grand Prix in New Delhi

- Tamil Nadu’s M Ramachandran ended a close third at 50.83 seconds
- Coimbatore’s S Mithravarun won the men’s discus throw with a distance of 52.62m.
- Tamil Nadu’s SN Mohammed Salahuddin clinched the men’s triple jump with 15.80m
World Cancer Day – February 4

- The day is observed every year with an aim of creating awareness and education about Cancer in order to prevent the deaths associated with the dreaded disease by 2020
- The day is organized by The Union for International Cancer Control, which has been initiated to support the goals of 2008 World Cancer Declaration
  - Theme for 2019-21 – ‘I Am and I Will’
  - Theme for 2016-18 – ‘We Can and I Can’
  - Cancer is one of the leading causes of mortality worldwide, responsible for 9.6 million deaths in 2018
  - Tobacco use is the most important risk factor for cancer and is responsible for approximately 22% of cancer deaths
  - Lung, prostate, colorectal, stomach and liver cancer are the most common types of cancer in men, while breast, colorectal, lung, cervix and thyroid cancer are the most common among women

30th Road Safety Week – February 4 to 10

- Theme 2019 - ‘Sadak Suraksha-Jeevan Raksha’
- Organised by – Ministry of Road Transport and Highways
- Activities Planned in the Country
  - Commemorating the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, Home Minister Rajnath Singh, External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and Road Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari will flag off the car rally
  - The car rally will go through places historically associated with Gandhi, in India, Bangladesh and Myanmar
  - In India, it will cover places like Sabarmati, Porbandar, Dandi, Yerwada, Sewagram, Jabalpur, Lucknow, Gorakhpur, ChauriChaura, Champaran, Shantiniketan and Kolkata
  - It will conclude on February 24th in Myanmar covering a total distance of 7,250 km
  - The Society of Indian Automobile Industry will also declare 2019 as the Year of Road Safety promoting safety on Indian roads
  - Retro Reflective Stickers on Sadak Suraksha Jeevan Raksha will be launched on the occasion
  - A new Dash Board for Road Accident Data of India and its states will also be launched during the occasion

World Wetlands Day – February 2

- Theme 2019 - “Wetlands and Climate Change”
- The observance of the day aims to create awareness for preserving fragile wetlands, which are taken over by the human activities
- It was first observed on 2 February 1971
The day commemorates the signing of the ‘Convention on Wetlands’, called the Ramsar Convention at the Iranian city of Ramsar.

The 2 main objectives of Ramsar Convention are –
- Conservation and sustainable utilization of wetlands
- To stop the encroachment and loss of wetlands

1st World Pulses Day – February 10
- The day is observed by the United Nations to highlight the contribution of Pulses for sustainable food production and towards food security and nutrition surrounding these healthy, nutritious, protein-rich, nitrogen-fixing legumes
- Earlier, UN’s Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has celebrated the year 2016 as the International Year of Pulses
- Pulses are a type of leguminous crops that are harvested solely for their dry seed
- Dried beans, lentils and peas are the most commonly known and consumed types of pulses

National Deworming Day – February 10
- As part of this programme, all the schools and anganwadis in various districts/states’s would administer Albendazole tablets to children and adolescents aged between 1 to 19 years
- A child not dewormed on National Deworming Day due to absenteeism or sickness will be dewormed on 'mop-up day' which would be observed on February 14
- As per the World Health Organisation (WHO) data, more than 22 crore children in ages of 5-14 years are at risk of parasitic intestinal worms
- The Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India is the nodal agency for the implementation of the National Deworming Day
- Only two States namely Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh have reported less than 20% prevalence of the worms in the entire country

International Epilepsy Day – February 11
- The observance of the day intends to promote awareness of epilepsy in more than 120 countries each year
- Every year on the second Monday of February, people join together to celebrate and highlight the problems faced by people with epilepsy and their families
- The Day is a joint initiative by the International Bureau for Epilepsy (IBE) and the International League Against Epilepsy (ILAE)
- ILAE, founded in 1909, is the association of physicians and other health professionals working to treat the disease
- IBE, founded in 1961, is the global voice of people with epilepsy, their families and those who care for them
- Epilepsy is a group of neurological disorders characterized by epileptic seizures

Unani Day – February 11
The observance of the day highlights the important role played by Unani Medicine in public health, especially in combating lifestyle disorders and various chronic diseases at an affordable cost.

The birth of anniversary of Hakim Ajmal Khan is celebrated as Unani Day on February 11 every year.

Hakeem Ajmal Khan was a great scholar, social reformer, distinguished clinician and a freedom fighter.

This year, the Government celebrated his 151st birth anniversary by hosting a two day National Conference on Unani Medicine for Public Health at New Delhi.

The objective of the said event was to pay tribute to the legendary for his wonderful contribution in the sustained development of Unani Medicine in the country.

He built 3 important institutions, the Central College in Delhi, the Hindustani Dawakhana and the Ayurvedic and Unani Tibbia College, better known as Tibbia College, Delhi.

In recognition of the contribution of Hakim Ajmal Khan, the Ministry of AYUSH adopted 11th February as Unani Day in 2017.

**World Radio Day – February 13**

- This day marks a time where people around the world celebrate radio and how it shapes everyone's lives.
- The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) will celebrate the eighth edition of the World Radio Day.
- Theme 2019 – ‘Dialogue, Tolerance and Peace’
- The idea of World Radio Day was first proposed by Spain's Radio Academy in 2010.
- The following year, in 2011, UNESCO declared the first World Radio Day.
- World Radio Day was first celebrated in 2012, following its declaration by the UNESCO General Conference.
- February 13 was chosen to mark World Radio Day, coinciding with the anniversary of the United Nations Radio, the United Nation's international broadcasting service which was established on February 13, 1946.
- The existence of radio waves and the feasibility of radio transmission was predicted by Scottish Scientist, James Clark Maxwell in the 1860s.
- Guglielmo Marconi, an Italian inventor and electrical engineer, has sent and received his first radio signal in Italy in 1895 and is credited for radio's invention.
- With over 415 radio stations in about 23 languages, India's All India Radio is one of the largest radio broadcasters in the world, covering 99% of the population in the country.

**International Mother Language Day – February 21**

- The annual observance of the day is to promote awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity and promote multilingualism among the citizens.
It was first recognized in November 1999, when the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) brought the subject in the UN General Conference.

The day is observed since the year 2000 and later, the resolution was welcomed by the UN General Assembly in 2002.

**Theme 2019** - “Indigenous languages matter for development, peace building and reconciliation”

**History of the Day**

The idea to celebrate International Mother Language Day came from Bangladesh.

The day is known as Bhasha Dibas or Shahid Dibas in West Bengal and Bangladesh for more than six decades now.

Post-independence in 1948, Pakistan government declared Urdu as its national language.

Bangladeshi students fought for recognition for the Bangla language as the national language in erstwhile west Pakistan on February 21, 1952.

This eventually led to Pakistan adding Bengali as one of the national languages in 1956.

East Pakistan declared its independence and became Bangladesh in 1971, with Bengali as their official language.

**National Science Day – February 28**

The observance of the day marks the discovery of the Raman Effect by Indian physicist Chandrasekhara Venkata Raman (CV Raman) in 1928.

The celebrations on the day were organised by the Department of Science & Technology (DST).

**Theme 2019** - "Science for the People and the People for Science"

On the occasion of National Science Day 2019, Prime Minister Narendra Modi conferred the Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prize for Science and Technology for the years 2016, 2017 and 2018 to the awardees.

The Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prize is named after the founder Director of the Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR), Dr. Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar.

For his path-breaking discovery of ‘Raman effect’, CV Raman was knighted in 1929 and awarded the Nobel Prize in 1930, the first Nobel Prize won by an Indian or any Asian in the field of Science.

Raman Effect is a process in which the wavelength of light changes when it passes through a transparent sample of a chemical compound.

The first National Science Day was observed in the year 1987.