

## The Most Important Current Affairs FEBRUARY 2019

### List of MOUs/Agreements Signed During State Visit of President of Argentina to India

- MoU between the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of India and the Ministry of Defence of the Argentine Republic on Defence Cooperation.
- MoU between the Republic of India and the Republic of Argentina for cooperation in the field of Tourism.
- MOU on Cooperation and Collaboration between Prasar Bharti, India and the Federal System of Media and Public Contents, Argentina.
- MoU in pharmaceuticals between Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO), GoI, and National Administration of Drugs, Food and Medical Technology, Argentina.
- MoU on Antarctic Co-operation between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Worship of the Argentine Republic and the Ministry of Earth Sciences of the Republic of India.
- Work Plan on Cooperation between the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare of the Republic of India and the Ministry of Production and Labour of the Argentine Republic within the MoU signed in 2010.
- Work Plan for the year 2019-21 between Indian Council of Agriculture Research Republic of India and the State Secretary of Agro-industry of the Ministry of Production and Labour of the Argentine Republic within the MoU signed in 2006.
- Joint Declaration of Intent on Cooperation in the field of Information & Communications Technology and Electronics between the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology of the Government of the Republic of India and the Government Secretary of Modernization of the Republic of Argentina.
- MOU between Global Centre for Nuclear Energy Partnership (GCNEP), India, and CNEA, the Secretariat of Energy, Argentina.
- Agreement for the establishment of India-Argentina Centre of Excellence for Information and Technology.

### List of MoUs Signed During Visit of Prince of Saudi Arabia to India

- MoU on investing in the National Investment and Infrastructure Fund between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
- MoU on Cooperation in the field of Tourism between the Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of India and the Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
- MoU between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of Saudi Arabia for Cooperation in the Field of Housing.

- Framework Cooperation Program between Invest India of the Republic of India and Saudi Arabian General Investment Authority of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on Enhancing Bilateral Investment Relations.
- MoU for Cooperation on Broadcasting between Prasar Bharati, New Delhi, India and Saudi Broadcasting Corporation (SBC), Saudi Arabia for Exchange of Audio Visual Programme.

### President Ram Nath Kovind promulgated four Ordinances

- The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Second Ordinance has been promulgated to give continued effect to the provisions brought in by the earlier ordinance. This Ordinance declares the practice of instant triple talaq to be void and illegal and also to make it an offence punishable with imprisonment up to three years and fine.
- The Indian Medical Council (Amendment) Second Ordinance has been promulgated to give continued effect to the work already done by the Board of Governors as per the provisions of earlier Ordinance.
- The Companies (Amendment) Second Ordinance, has been promulgated with a view, to empower the Central Government to allow certain companies to

have a different financial year instead of as determined by the Tribunal.

- The Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Ordinance has been promulgated to have central legislation to tackle the menace of illicit deposits taking activities in the country.

#### **Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-Dhan Implemented In India**

- Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-dhan (PM-SYM) was rolled out by the Ministry of Labour and Employment from 15 February 2019. The scheme announced in the Interim Budget was notified by the Ministry recently. As many as 42 crore workers are estimated to be engaged in the unorganized sector of the country.
- The Salient Features of PM-SYM:
  1. Minimum Assured Pension: Each subscriber under the PM-SYM, shall receive minimum assured pension of Rs 3000/- per month after attaining the age of 60 years.
  2. Family Pension: During the receipt of pension, if the subscriber dies, the spouse of the beneficiary shall be entitled to receive 50% of the pension received by the beneficiary as family pension. Family pension is applicable only to spouse.

#### **Laureus World Sports Awards 2019 Announced: Complete List of Winners**

- The **Laureus World Sports Award for Sportsman of the Year** is an annual award honoring the achievements of individual men from the world of sports.
- **Novak Djokovic** was named **World Sportsman of the Year** and **United State** gymnast **Simone Biles** was named **Sportswoman of the Year** at the **2019 Laureus World Sports Awards**, while **Tiger Woods** won the **World Comeback of the Year** award.

#### **Complete list of winners of Laureus World Sports Award 2019:**

| Category                              | Winner              |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Sportsman of the Year</b>          | Novak Djokovic      |
| <b>Sportswoman of the Year</b>        | Simone Biles        |
| <b>Comeback of the Year</b>           | Tiger Woods         |
| <b>Team of the Year</b>               | France              |
| <b>Sportsperson with a Disability</b> | Henrieta Farkkasova |
| <b>Lifetime Achievement Award</b>     | Arsene Wenger       |

#### **Various Projects inaugurated by PM Modi at Kurukshetra in Haryana.**

- PM Modi inaugurated and laid foundation stones of several development projects at Kurukshetra in Haryana.
- He dedicated to the nation the National Cancer Institute at Bhadsa in Jhajjar district. He also inaugurated Employees' State Insurance Corporation's (ESIC) medical college and hospital in Faridabad. This will be the first ESIC medical college and hospital in north India.
- Modi also laid the foundation stone of National Institute of Ayurveda in Panchkula which is being set up at Shri Mata Mansa Devi Temple Complex. Foundation stone of Sri Krishna Ayush University, Kurukshetra was also laid by Mr Modi. It will be the first university related to Indian system of medicine in Haryana as well as the first of its kind in India.

#### **BAFTA Awards 2019 Announced: Complete List Of Winners**

- **Netflix drama 'Roma'** won the top prize at the **72nd edition of the British Academy of Film and Television Arts or BAFTA awards**. With seven BAFTAs in its kitty, director Yorgos Lanthimos's *The Favourite* emerged top winner in 2019.
- **Actress Olivia Colman** picked best actress BAFTA for her portrayal of Queen Anne in *The Favourite*. *Roma*, for which director Alfonso Cuarón also picked a trophy, rounded off with four BAFTAs while *Bohemian Rhapsody* – the **Golden Globes favourite** – went home with just one BAFTA for lead actor Rami Malek.

#### **List of important winners for the 72nd edition of the BAFTA Awards:**

| Category             | Winner                              |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Best Director</b> | Alfonso Cuarón, <i>Roma</i>         |
| <b>Best Film</b>     | <i>Roma</i>                         |
| <b>Best Actress</b>  | Olivia Colman, <i>The Favourite</i> |



|                                     |                                  |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
|                                     | Favourite                        |
| <b>Best Actor</b>                   | Rami Malek – Bohemian Rhapsody   |
| <b>Outstanding British Film</b>     | The Favourite                    |
| <b>Best Animated Film</b>           | Spider-Man Into the Spider-Verse |
| <b>Best British Short Animation</b> | Roughhouse                       |
| <b>Best British Short Film</b>      | 73 Cows                          |

#### Grammy Awards 2019 Announced: Complete List of Winners

- The 61st Annual Grammy Awards ceremony was held at Staples Center in Los Angeles. The show was hosted by Singer-songwriter Alicia Keys. The list of important winners of **Grammy Awards 2019** given below:

| Category                         | Winner                              |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Album Of The Year</b>         | Golden Hour, Kacey Musgraves        |
| <b>Record Of The Year</b>        | "This Is America," Childish Gambino |
| <b>Best New Artist</b>           | Dua Lipa                            |
| <b>Best Rap Album</b>            | Invasion Of Privacy, Cardi B        |
| <b>Best R&amp;B Album Winner</b> | H.E.R., H.E.R.                      |
| <b>Best Rap Song</b>             | "God's Plan," Drake                 |
| <b>Best Country Album</b>        | Golden Hour, Kacey Musgraves        |
| <b>Song Of The Year</b>          | "This Is America," Childish Gambino |

#### RBI released the 6th Bi-Monthly Monetary Policy Statement

- RBI has released 6th Bi-Monthly Monetary Policy Statement. On the basis of an assessment of the current and evolving macroeconomic situation at its meeting, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) decided to reduce the policy repo rate under the liquidity adjustment facility (LAF) by 25 basis points from 6.5% to 6.25% with immediate effect.
- Consequently, the reverse repo rate under the LAF stands adjusted to 6.0%, and the marginal standing facility (MSF) rate and the Bank Rate to 6.5%. On the supply side, the FAE has placed the growth of real gross value added (GVA) at 7.0% in 2018-19 as compared with 6.9% in 2017-18.
- **Inflation Rates:**
  - a) Retail inflation declined from 3.4% in October 2018 to 2.2% in December, the lowest print in the last eighteen months.
  - b) Inflation in the fuel and light group fell from 8.5% in October to 4.5% in December.

- c) CPI inflation excluding food and fuel decelerated to 5.6% in December from 6.2% in October.

#### India's 40th communication satellite GSAT-31 launched

- India's 40th communication satellite **GSAT-31** launched successfully from **French Guiana**. The **Ariane-5 rocket** lifted off with it from Kourou Launch Base, and in 42-minutes, placed it in the intended Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit.
- It was immediately taken control by Indian Space Research Organization ISRO scientists from its Hassan facility in Karnataka.
- GSAT-31 will provide transponder capacity for DTH television and connectivity to services like VSATs for ATMs, stock-exchanges, Digital Satellite News Gathering DSNG and e-governance applications.

#### About GSAT-31 in Brief:

1. The satellite GSAT-31 has the footprint over both mainland India and her island territories.
2. It has an operational life of over fifteen years, offering seamless services by replacing the ageing INSAT-4CR satellite.
3. GSAT-31 is India's 40th communication satellite.
4. GSAT-31 had a lift-off mass of 2536 kg.

#### New e-Commerce Policy Comes into Effect: All You Need to Know

- India's new e-commerce policy came into effect From February 1, 2019. A new set of policy rules had been formed for the e-commerce companies.
- **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (previously DIPP)** gave them a 60-day window period for aligning themselves to the government's modified foreign direct investment (FDI) rules.

#### Important Highlights of the new policy:

- **Bars online retailers from selling products** through vendors in which they have an equity interest. Ut also **bars them from entering into exclusive deals with brands** for selling products only on their platforms.
- **All online retailers will be required to maintain a level playing field** for all the vendors selling their products on the platform, and it shall not affect the sale prices of goods in any manner.
- **Disallows e-commerce players to control the inventory of the vendors.** Any such ownership over the inventory will convert it into inventory-based model from marketplace based model, which is not entitled to FDI.
- **The e-commerce retailer shall be deemed to own the inventory** of a vendor if over 25% of the purchases of such a vendor are through it.
- **Restricts marketplaces from influencing prices** in a bid to curb deep discounting.

### Banking Current Affairs

- The government has approved recapitalization of Rs 48,239 crore in 12 public sector banks in this fiscal to help them maintain regulatory capital requirements and finance growth plans. The government will infuse over nine thousand crore rupees in Corporation Bank and six thousand 896 crore rupees in Allahabad Bank, 4368 crores rupees will be provided Bank of India and 205 crore rupees to Bank of Maharashtra.
- Bank of Baroda has tied up with Germany's KfW Development Bank for funding of USD 113 million to refinance solar projects. The tie-up is part of an Indo-German Solar Energy Partnership signed in 2015.
- RBI taken off Allahabad Bank, Corporation Bank and Dhanlaxmi Bank from the Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) framework allowing them to resume their normal lending activities.
- RBI & Bank of Japan have signed a Bilateral Swap Arrangement (BSA). The BSA provides for India to access 75 billion US dollars whereas the earlier BSA had provided for 50 billion dollars.
- RBI announced that it will transfer an interim surplus of 28,000 crore rupees to the central government for the half-year ended 31st December 2018. The central bank follows a July-June financial year and usually distributes the dividend in August after annual accounts are finalised. With this interim transfer, the government will get a total of Rs 68,000 crore from the central bank in the current fiscal.
- JP Morgan rolled out the first US bank cryptocurrency. The currency is designed to be decentralized so that no one has control over transactions being sent over the network. The cryptocurrency, called "JPM Coin."
- RBI withdrew the 20% limit on investments by FPIs in corporate bonds of an entity with a view to encourage more foreign investments.
- RBI decided to treat deposits to over Rs. 2 crores as 'bulk' as they doubled the limit for the same from the earlier Rs.1crore. This move will enhance the operational freedom of Banks. National Federation of Urban Cooperative Banks and Credit Societies Limited (NAFCUB) has suggested this proposal.
- RBI in the exercise of powers conferred under Section 47 A of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 has levied a penalty of Rupees one crore on the State Bank of India (SBI) for not monitoring the end use of funds in respect of one of its borrowers.
- RBI raised the limit of collateral-free agricultural loans to Rs. 1.6 lakh from the current Rs. 1 lakh with a view to help small and marginal farmers. He also announced measures to boost the farming sector in addition to annual payment of Rs. 6,000 to small and marginal farmers.

- Indian Banking Association issued advisory requesting banks to waive off the processing, documentation, inspection and all other service charges for Kisan Credit Card and crop loans up to 3 lakh rupees.
- Fino Payments Bank (FPB) announced the launch of a sweep account facility in association with Suryoday Small Finance Bank (SSFB). This partnership will help FPB address the issue of deposit limits that all the payment banks face at the moment.
- RBI slapped an Rs. 1-crore penalty on Syndicate Bank and Rs. 20 lakh on Axis Bank for violating norms. The penalty on Syndicate Bank is due to non-compliance with the directions regarding frauds and risk management systems. Axis Bank was fined for contravention of the directions on detection and impounding of counterfeit notes and installation of note sorting machines.
- Two regional rural banks (RRBs) - Pallavan Grama Bank and Pandyan Grama Bank - will be merged to form the Tamil Nadu Grama Bank as per the Finance Ministry notification. The integration will be effective from April 1. The new Tamil Nadu Grama Bank will be under the sponsorship of Indian Bank with head office in Salem.
- 'Kisan Suvidha loan' for small and marginal farmers launched by Ujjivan Small Finance Bank. It will attempt to reach the bottom of the pyramid with products and services. It can be used by farmers for both agriculture and allied activities.
- Bank of India, Bank of Maharashtra and Oriental Bank of Commerce have been allowed to exit the PCA framework fully. The three lenders were part of 11 government-owned banks put under the framework in 2017 and 2018.

### Economy Current Affairs

- Employees' Provident Fund Organisation has hiked interest rate on employees' provident fund to 8.65% from 8.55% for the 2018-19 fiscal year.



- World Bank, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), and Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) launched new social impact bonds exclusively for women, called Women's Livelihood Bonds (WLBs), with an initial corpus of Rs 300 crore. It will enable individual women entrepreneurs in sectors like food processing, agriculture, services, and small units to borrow around Rs 50,000 to Rs 3 lakh at an annual interest rate of around 13% to 14% or less and have a tenure of 5 years.
- The Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council met for its 33rd meeting and slashed GST rate on under-construction residential properties and the affordable housing projects. The revised rates will be applicable from April 1, 2019. The decision was based on recommendations of a Ministerial Panel headed by Gujarat Deputy Chief Minister Nitin Patel. In case of non-affordable houses, the GST rate for under-construction flats and houses has been brought to 5% without Input Tax Credit (ITC), down from the present 12%. In case of affordable houses, the GST rate has been reduced to 1% without ITC from 8%.
- Ministry of Commerce and Industry in an attempt to provide relief to and boost investments into start-ups in India decided to simplify the process for them to get exemptions under the Income Tax Act, 1961. It will now recognize an entity as a start-up up to 10 years from the date of its incorporation or registration instead of the existing duration of 7 years. It will also recognize an entity as a start-up if its turnover for any of the financial years since its incorporation or registration does not exceed Rs 100 crore unlike the previous amount of Rs 25 crore.
- India with immediate effect has boosted the Customs Duty on all the goods imported from Pakistan to 200% followed by the day after India repealed Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status from Pakistan.
- Govt. of India gets Rs.10000 crore from Bharat-22 Exchange Traded Fund (ETF) by additional offering. The government has absorbed approximately Rs.46000 crore by way of disinvestment with the successful offering of Bharat-22 ETF. Bharat-22 is an Exchange Traded Fund (ETF) which will closely track the performance of Bharat-22 index.
- National Bulk Handling Corporation (NBHC) released Kharif Crop estimation for the year 2018-2019. As per the report, the basmati rice production is expected to decline by 9.24% to 5.18 million metric tonnes. The total oilseeds production is estimated to be 19.87 million metric tonne which is 5.36 % lower as compared to the year 2018.

#### **Business Current Affairs**

- HDFC ERGO General Insurance Company, India's third-largest non-life insurance provider in the private sector, announced the launch of 'Trip

Protector' insurance policy, a pioneering policy in the non-life insurance segment in India. In the event of a cancellation, either a flight or hotel booking, Trip Protector insurance policy will safeguard travelers financially against the cost of cancellation levied by Hotels or Airlines.

- Infosys, the country's 2nd largest IT firm launched a next-generation digital platform 'InfyTQ' to facilitate engineering students with best learning experiences by imparting technical and professional skills.
- Amazon launched "Amazon Pay Unified Payments Interface (UPI)" for Android users in partnership with Axis Bank to issue UPI IDs to its customers in India.
- State-owned power giant NTPC has announced that it has signed a term loan agreement for Rs 5,000 crore with State Bank of India.
- Food delivery startup Swiggy acquired Bengaluru-based AI startup Kint.io. As part of the deal, Kint.io's founding members Pavithra Solai Jawahar and Jagannathan Veeraraghavan will join the Swiggy team.
- Asian Development Bank (ADB) has bought a 14% stake in micro-financier Annapurna Finance for Rs 137 crore, reinforcing the belief that India's microfinance sector is on course to attract long-term funds from global lenders and investors.
- Paytm launched hotel bookings on its platform and acquired Night Stay, which offers deals on last-minute bookings at luxury hotels, as the Alibaba-backed payments and e-commerce company expands its travel business.

#### **Schemes/ Portals/ Missions/ Apps/ Missions Launched by the Union & State Govt.**

- The Human Resource Development (HRD) Ministry launched Operation Digital Board on the lines of Operation Blackboard to provide better digital education in school.
- Odisha Cabinet approved the 'Khushi' scheme to provide free sanitary napkins to school girls across

the state. The scheme will benefit nearly 17.25 lakh school girls from Class VI to XII studying in government and government-aided schools. Union minister Prakash Javadekar launched 'Scheme for Higher Education Youth in Apprenticeship and Skills' (SHREYAS) for providing industry apprenticeship opportunities to fresh graduates. This scheme is a programme basket comprising the initiatives of three central ministries, including the HRD, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, and the Ministry of Labour and Employment.

- A tele-law mobile application 'Nyaya Bandhu' was launched by the Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad. The application will benefit 73,000 paralegal volunteers (PLVs) of National Legal Service Authority and State Legal Services Authorities (SLSA) in the country who will be associated under Tele-Law service.
- The Union Minister of Human Resource Development, Prakash Javadekar launched the 'Operation Digital Board' to boost quality education in the country. An expert committee has worked out optimum configuration of the Digital Class Rooms under the Operation Digital Board.
- K.J. Alphons, Union Minister for Tourism inaugurated the project 'Development of Eco Circuit: Pathanamthitta – Gavi – Vagamon – Thekkady' under the Swadesh Darshan scheme of Ministry of Tourism at Vagamon, Kerala.
- Union Minister of Commerce & Industry and Civil Aviation, Suresh Prabhu, launched SWAYATT in New Delhi. SWAYATT is an initiative to promote Start-ups, Women and Youth Advantage Through eTransactions on Government e Marketplace (GeM). He also dedicated GeM Start-up Runway- an initiative of GeM in association with Start-up India to facilitate Start-ups registered with Start-up India to access the public procurement market and sell innovative products and services to government buyers.
- Home Minister Rajnath Singh and Minister for Women and Child Development Maneka Gandhi launched a range of citizen safety initiatives in New Delhi. Persons in distress can dial a pan-India number: 112. Under this system, all the states have to set up a dedicated Emergency Response Centre, ERC.
- Minister of State (IC) for AYUSH, Shripad Yesso Naik launched the e-AUSHADHI portal, for online licensing of Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani and Homoeopathy drugs and related matters at New Delhi.
- Actor Vijay Sethupathi launched the mobile App 'DigiCop' of the Chennai police department at the Commissioner's office. Using the App, people can track the status of stolen two-wheelers and cell phones.

- 'Darwaza Band- Part 2' campaign launched by Swachh Bharat Mission Grameen focuses on sustaining the open defecation free status of villages across the country. Earlier Darwaza Band campaign was launched in 2017.

- Shehri Samridhi Utsav, an initiative of Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs (MoHUA), aims to extend the outreach of Deendayal Antyodaya Mission – National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM), to the most vulnerable, showcase its initiatives and facilitate access of Self-Help Group (SHG) members to the other government schemes.

#### National Current Affairs

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated a new National War Memorial, situated in the India Gate complex in New Delhi, to the nation. The National War Memorial, spread over 40 acres in the India Gate complex behind the canopy, is dedicated to soldiers killed during the Indo-China War in 1962, Indo-Pak Wars in 1947, 1965 and 1971, Indian Peace Keeping Force Operations in Sri Lanka and in the Kargil Conflict in 1999, and also those in the UN peacekeeping missions.
- Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated a new park which houses the replicas of seven wonders of the world at South Delhi. The park, which is called the 'Waste to Wonder Park', was built by the South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC).
- Union Minister for Science & Technology, Earth Sciences, Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Dr. Harsh Vardhan, inaugurated the North Karnataka Agromet Forecasting and Research Centre (NKAFC), India's first agromet forecast centre, at University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS) in Dharwad, Karnataka.
- Following the attack in Jammu & Kashmir's Pulwama that left 44 CRPF personnel dead, India has withdrawn the MFN (Most Favoured Nation) status that it had granted to Pakistan.



- Indian Government has signed a deal with the US under Fast Track Procurement (FTP) to avail the Indian Army with 72,400 new 'Sig Sauer Assault Rifles' which will overhaul the army's inventory of frontline rifles.
- The last session of 16th Lok Sabha came to an end on 13th of February 2019. Giving the details for the tenure of 16th Lok Sabha, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Narendra Singh Tomar informed that there were a total number of 331 sittings for Lok Sabha. 205 bills were passed and the productivity was 85%. For Rajya Sabha, 154 bills were passed and the productivity was 68%.
- PM Modi launched a dedicated 24x7 Satellite channel, 'DD Arunprabha' for Arunachal Pradesh during his visit to Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, and Tripura.
- PM Modi dedicated to the nation the 1.33 million metric ton capacity Visakhapatnam Strategic Petroleum Reserve facility at Guntur in Andhra Pradesh. He also laid the foundation stone for setting up of a new terminal of Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) at Krishnapatnam.
- India and Bangladesh signed an MOU for training 1800 Bangladesh Civil Servants at the National Centre for Good Governance (NCGG) an institute under the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DAR&PG), Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions, Govt. of India, over the next 6 years.
- India and Germany joined hands for cooperation on Water and Waste Management.
- External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari flagged off Suraksha Yatra – a motor car rally from Rajghat in New Delhi to commemorate the 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.
- PM Modi inaugurated and laid the foundation stone for various development projects, worth nearly 12,000 crore rupees, at Leh. He laid the foundation stone for a 480 crore rupee Terminal Building at Leh Airport. Mr Modi inaugurated the 9-megawatt Dah hydroelectric project. He also dedicated to the nation the 220 KiloVolt Srinagar-Alusteng-Drass-Kargil-Leh transmission system & also launched the University of Ladakh, the first-ever in the state's region.
- The Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) has been renamed as the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade with a mandate to deal with matters related to start-ups, facilitating ease of doing business among others.
- In Uttar Pradesh, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath launched Scheme for Adolescent girls (SAG). The scheme focuses on girls aged between 11 to 14 years who have left studies and will take steps for proper nutrition and special care for them.
- Union Minister of State for Food Processing Industries, Sadhvi Niranjana Jyoti, inaugurated Tripura's first mega food park named Sikaria Mega Food Park Pvt Ltd at Village Tulakona in Agartala.
- Bihar has become the first state to deploy specially-trained dogs to check smuggling of liquor which continues to take place inspite of the total ban imposed in the state for the last 3 years.
- Tamil Nadu became the first state in the country to get a second Coast Guard district headquarters - Thoothukudi. The first district headquarters is Chennai.
- Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath launched the State Government's flagship scheme 'Mukhyamantri Yuva Swabhiman Yojana' that guarantees 100 days of employment every year to urban youth from economically weaker sections. Under the scheme, Rs 4,000 stipend per month during 100 days period, would be given to the youth and they will also be given skill development training in order to become independent. (Only those youths, whose family's annual income is less than Rs 2 lakh and who are in the age group of 21-30 years, are eligible for the scheme).
- Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal launched the PRANAM Commission, which is a panel set up to look after the issues concerning a Bill brought in for the protection of parents of state government employees. The Parents Responsibility and Norms for Accountability and Monitoring (PRANAM) Bill, stated to be the first-of-its-kind bill in the country, aims to protect elderly parents of government employees in their times of need.
- West Bengal Education Minister Partha Chatterjee inaugurated a web portal, 'Banglar Shiksha', which is set to provide real-time data on state-run and aided schools. The portal, banglarshiksha.gov.in, will be up and running in two months' time, the minister stated. A statement issued by the school education department stated that the portal will store real-time data of 1.5 crore students, 5 lakh teachers and 1 lakh schools.
- Union Minister of Textiles, Smriti Zubin Irani, launched four projects in North East for the development of silk sector through video conference in New Delhi. She inaugurated Muga silk seed production centre in Tura, Meghalaya, silk printing and processing unit in Agartala, Tripura, Eri spun silk mill in Sangaipat, Imphal and development of sericulture in Mamit, Mizoram.
- PM Modi unveiled development projects worth Rs. 3350 crores for Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh. These

#### States Current Affairs

- 'KALIA Chhatra Bruti' scholarship for the children of farmers benefited under the KALIA scheme was launched by the Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik in Bhubaneshwar, Odisha.

projects pertain to various sectors of Health, Sanitation, Smart City, Connectivity, Power, Housing and others. He released commemorative postage stamp on completion of 100 Years of IIT BHU.

- The Legislative Assembly of Rajasthan passed the Rajasthan Panchayati Raj (Amendment) Bill, 2019 and the Rajasthan Municipality (Amendment) Bill, 2019 to end the minimum education criterion for panchayat and civic polls candidates.
- Bihar Chief Minister, Nitish Kumar announced a Universal Old Age Pension scheme, named Mukhya Mantri Vriddha Pension Yojana (MMVPY), irrespective for all caste, community, religion, except for those who are retired from government organizations. The scheme facilitates the amount of Rs. 400 monthly pension for all in the state above the age of 60 who are not getting a pension from the government.
- Union Minister of Food Processing Industries Harsimrat Kaur Badal commissioned Godavari Mega Aqua Food Park at Tundurru Village in Bhimavaram Mandal, West Godavari District & Andhra Pradesh through video conferencing. It will be the first Mega Aqua Food Park operationalised exclusively for fish and marine products processing in the state of Andhra Pradesh.
- Meghalaya Cabinet has decided to rename the Dikkibandi stadium in Tura town after former Lok Sabha Speaker Purno A Sangma.
- In Bihar, Governor Lalji Tandon and Union Agriculture Minister Radha Mohan Singh jointly inaugurated the three-day Krishi Kumbh in Motihari. Over fifteen thousand farmers from different states and about two hundred agricultural scientists are participating in the Kumbh.
- Union Minister for Food Processing Industries Harsimrat Kaur Badal laid the foundation stone of a Mega Food Park at Chhata-Barsana road in Mathura.
- The State Government of Jammu and Kashmir issued a notification of creation of Ladakh as 3rd Division in the state.
- The Union Road Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari laid the foundation stone of three major highway projects with an investment worth Rs 2,345 crores in Odisha. The three highway projects are expected to considerably improve connectivity of mineral-rich Angul and Dhenkanal districts with the rest of Odisha.
- Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh announced a high-powered 5-member committee to prepare a comprehensive action plan to boost the dairy sector with the aim of supplementing the income of farmers in a result-oriented manner.
- Kerala become the first State to set up a Price Monitoring and Research Unit (PMRU) to track violation of prices of essential drugs and medical

devices under the Drugs Price Control Order (DPCO).

- Punjab government approved a rural development scheme worth Rs 384.40 crore to supplement the ongoing works to build village infrastructure and provide essential amenities. It is named as 'Smart Village Campaign'.

#### **New Appointments (National & International)**

- Ajay Singh, president of the Boxing Federation of India has been selected as the president of the Foundation Board for Better Boxing of AIBA (International Boxing Association).
- The Supreme Court appointed a retired judge of the court Justice DK Jain as the first ombudsman under the new BCCI (Board of Control for Cricket in India) Constitution approved by the court in a judgment.
- PepsiCo's India-born former CEO Indra Nooyi has joined Amazon's board of directors, the online retail giant. Starbucks executive Rosalind Brewer has also joined the Amazon Board.
- IDBI Bank has appointed Hemant Bhargava as non-executive, non-whole time chairman. Bhargava is currently the Chairman (in-charge) and Managing Director of Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC).
- Arun Jaitley resumed charge as the finance minister after a gap of over a month, which was the second break within a year that he had to take to undergo medical treatment.



- Chandramouli Ramanathan appointed as Controller, Assistant Secretary-General for Programme Planning, Budget and Finance in the management strategy, policy and compliance department. He succeeds Bettina Tucci Bartsiotas.
  - Appointments Committee of Cabinet (ACC) has appointed senior IRS officer Pramod Chandra Mody as chairman of Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT). He will succeed Sushil Chandra.
  - President Ram Nath Kovind appointed Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) Chairman Sushil Chandra as an Election Commissioner.
  - Ruchira Kamboj was appointed as the Ambassador of India to Bhutan. She is serving as the High Commissioner of India to South Africa since 2017.
  - Egypt's President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi has been elected as the chairman of the African Union at the continental body's summit in Ethiopia.
  - The government appointed Air India chief managing director and Chairperson Pradeep Singh Kharola the secretary of the Ministry of Civil Aviation. Kharola will take over from Rajiv Nayan Choubey.
  - The government has appointed Dinesh Bhatia, the present Consul General, Consulate General of India at Toronto as the next Ambassador of India to Argentina.
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- The former executive director of Canara Bank, P V Bharathi assumed charge as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Corporation Bank. P V Bharati became the first woman CEO of the bank.
  - Rishi Kumar Shukla, 1983 batch IPS officer of Madhya Pradesh cadre, was appointed as the new chief of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). He will be serving for a fixed term of two years.
  - Former Law Minister of Nepal Nilambar Acharya has been appointed as country's ambassador to India.
  - Ministry of External Affairs announced that Sanjiv Ranjan has been appointed as new Ambassador to the Republic of Colombia.

- Yes bank Senior group President and head of retail and business banking, Pralay Mondal resigned from his post.

#### Sports Current Affairs

- The Asian Hockey Federation has honored Indian skipper Manpreet Singh with the 2018 Player of the Year award. Women team's striker Lalremsiami has bagged the Rising Player of The Year prize.
- Sri Lanka cricket team became the first Asian side to win a Test series in South Africa after winning the series by 2-0. Kusal Perera was given the Man of the Series award.
- Indian Grandmaster Abhijeet Gupta lifted the Cannes International Open trophy.
- Manu Bhaker and Saurabh Chaudhary clinched the gold medal in the 10m Air Pistol Mixed Team event at the ISSF World Cup in New Delhi.
- Malaysia's 8-time World Champion Nicol David announced that she will call time on her record-breaking career at the end of the 2018/19 season.
- Elise Mertens, world number 21 from Belgium beat world number 3, Simona Halep to win the Qatar Open held in Doha, Qatar.
- Sunil Chhetri, the all-time leading scorer for India in international football, has been conferred the first ever Football Ratna honour by Football Delhi, the association governing the sport in Delhi. He is popularly known as Captain Fantastic.
- Eva de Goede from Netherlands and Arthur van Doren of Belgium were titled the International Hockey Federation's Players of the Year for 2018. Eva de Goede named the Female Player of the Year and Arthur van Doren won the Male Player of the Year award for the second year in a row.
- Vidarbha became the only 3rd team in Indian Domestic Cricket history after Bombay and Karnataka to defend their Irani cup titles at Jamtha Stadium in Nagpur by defeating rest of India.
- West Indian batsman Chris Gayle announced that he will retire from One-day Internationals after the forthcoming World Cup. The 39-year old left-hander has scored 9,727 ODI runs, second only to the legendary Brian Lara among West Indians in 284 matches.
- In badminton, Saina Nehwal won her fourth title at the Yonex-Sunrise 83rd Senior Nationals. She defeated P.V.Sindhu in the finals in Guwahati. Sourabh Verma completed a hat-trick of titles, claiming the men's singles crown after defeating young Lakshya Sen in straight games.
- The Sports and Youth Ministry in the meeting of Executive Committee of the National Games 2022 has chosen the Smiling Clouded Leopard to be the Mascot for the National Games 2022. Meghalaya will host the 2022 National Games, which is coinciding with its 50 years of statehood.

- Prajnesh Gunneswaran has made it to the top-100 of Men's Singles Tennis rankings with a jump of six places that took him to 97. Prajnesh is the third Indian player to break into the top-100 barrier in the past decade after Somdev Devvarman and Yuki Bhambri.
- Jamie Chadwick from England made history by becoming the first female driver to win the MRF challenge title after scoring a triple win in the final round in Chennai.
- Union Environment Minister, Dr. Harsh Vardhan, announced the Great Indian Bustard (GIB) 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 Gujarat in 2020.
- In Tennis, France's Corentin Moutet clinched the Chennai Open ATP Challenger tournament title after beating Andrew Harris of Australia in the singles final.
- Cricket Australia appointed Ricky Ponting as the assistant coach for Australia's cricket team for 2019 World Cup.
- World champion Indian weightlifter Saikhom Mirabai Chanu notched up a gold medal at the EGAT Cup in Thailand. Chanu won the 48kg category gold with an effort of 192 kg in the silver level Olympic qualifying event.
- Indian opener Smriti Mandhana hammered the fastest fifty for India in Women's T20Is. The left-handed batswoman struck a half-century in just 24 balls in the 1st T20I against New Zealand at Westpac Stadium in Wellington.
- Indian squash player Ramit Tandon defeated Egyptian Mohamed El Sherbini in the finals to win the Seattle Open, a PSA challenger squash Tour event.
- Former captain of the Pakistan women team Sana Mir has become the first Asian woman to play hundred T20Is.
- Haryana Hammers won the fourth edition of the Pro Wrestling League (PWL) as they outclassed Punjab Royals 6-3 in the summit clash at the Gautam Buddha University indoor stadium, Greater Noida.
- Indian women's cricket team opener Smriti Mandhana has become the top-ranked batter in women's ODI cricket, as per the latest rankings released by the ICC.
- India captain Mithali Raj has become the first woman cricketer to play 200 ODIs, adding another achievement to her illustrious career. The 36-year-old is also the highest run-getter in ODIs with 6622 runs at an average of 51.33, including 7 hundreds.
- Qatar defeated four-time champions Japan 3-1 in the final to win their first ever Asian Cup. Qatar forward Almoez Ali broke the record of most goals in a single Asian Cup after netting his ninth goal.
- Midfielder Ki Sung-yueng has announced his retirement from the South Korean national team.
- Golfer Vani Kapoor has become the first Indian to grab Australian Ladies PGA Tour (LPGA) after securing 12th Rank tied with three others in the first-ever qualifying tournament at the Ballarat Golf Club in Australia.
- The INS Dronacharya team won the Regatta trophy in the Kochi Area Pulling Regatta 2019 of the Southern Naval Command (SNC) held in the Ernakulam Channel. Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) School & Diving School secured the runners up position.

#### International Current Affairs

- India-ASEAN trade and investment relations have been growing steadily, with ASEAN being the second largest trading partner of India, after China, with a total bilateral merchandise trade of USD 81.33 billion.
- A month-long 'Festival of India' held in Kathmandu, Nepal to familiarise the new generation of the country about the similarities between the two countries.
- Chinese news agency Xinhua unveiled the world's first female AI news anchor Xin Xiaomeng. She has been developed in collaboration with Sogou Inc, a search engine company.
- Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir has declared a year-long state of emergency, dissolving his cabinet and local governments throughout the country.
- Zimbabwe started to trade its new currency, the RTGS dollar, two days after the central bank announced measures to try and resolve a chronic monetary crisis.
- US President Donald Trump signed Space Policy Directive-4 (SPD-4), ordering the Pentagon to establish the Space Force as the 6th branch of the United States military, to go along with the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, and Coast Guard, in order



to secure and extend American dominance of the space domain.

- Thailand and the United States hosted the annual Cobra Gold military exercise, the biggest activity of its type in the Asia-Pacific region with 29 nations taking part as participants or observers.
- Muhammadu Buhari was re-elected Nigeria's President, results showed, after a delayed poll that angered voters and led to claims of rigging and collusion.
- Saudi Arabia became the 73rd nation to sign the International Solar Alliance. ISA was unveiled by PM Modi and former French President Francois Hollande in 2015.
- Iran's President Hassan Rouhani unveiled the first Iranian made semi-heavy submarine named 'Fateh' ('Conqueror' in Persian), capable of being fitted with missiles, as per the reporting on Iran's state TV.
- The country, formerly known as the Republic of Macedonia officially changed its name to the Republic of North Macedonia, on paper ending a decades-long dispute that should pave the way for NATO membership.
- Asian Development Bank (ADB) raised 5.2204 billion Philippine pesos (\$100 million) from a new issue of local currency bonds in the international market. Currency-linked bonds are denominated in the local currency but settled in US dollars.
- Abu Dhabi decided to include Hindi as the third official language used in its courts, alongside Arabic and English, as part of a move designed to improve access to justice.
- US Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross announced the names of the American private sector members of the US-India CEO Forum among who are MasterCard CEO Ajay Banga and Qualcomm CEO Steve Mollenkopf. The first meeting of the forum will be held in New Delhi.
- Macedonia signed an accord to join NATO to become the 30th member of the US-led alliance.
- The United Nations announced 2019 as the International Year of the Periodic Table of the Chemical Elements to highlight its first publication in 1869.

#### **Defence Current Affairs**

- Indian Air Force conducted mega exercise 'Vayu Shakti' in Pokhran, Rajasthan. The exercise was carried out day and night where the IAF showcased firepower capability of indigenously developed platforms and efficacy of missiles.
- Flight Lieutenant Hina Jaiswal from Chandigarh, became the First Indian Woman Flight Engineer of the Indian Air Force (IAF).
- Indian Army showcased its artillery firepower by using ultralight Howitzers and indigenous Swathi weapon-locating radar at the annual "Exercise

Topchi". The exercise was held at Deolali Camp near Nashik.

- Joint Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Exercise 'Exercise Rahat' concluded in Jaipur, Rajasthan. It was demonstrated in Jaipur, Kota, and Alwar in Rajasthan.
- INS Trikand, the frontline warship of the Indian Navy, participated in a multi-national training exercise 'CUTCLASS EXPRESS 2019'. The annual Exercise Cutlass Express is sponsored by U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM) and conducted by Naval Forces Africa (NAVAF). It was held in the vicinity of Djibouti, Mozambique and Seychelles.
- The 5-day multinational maritime exercise 'AMAN-19' in which 46 nations participated from all over the world was formally commenced at Pakistan Navy Dockyard, with a colorful flag hoisting ceremony.
- Defence Acquisitions Council, DAC chaired by Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman approved indigenous construction of six submarines worth 40 thousand crore rupees. It also approved the acquisition of about five thousand MILAN Anti-Tank Guided Missiles for the Army.
- As part of the ongoing India Bangladesh defence cooperation, a joint military exercise Sampriti-2019 will be conducted at Tangail, Bangladesh from 02 March to 15 March 2019.
- In a major boost for the Navy's firepower, the Defence Ministry has approved the acquisition of more than 100 heavyweight torpedoes which will be equipped on the force's six Scorpene-class submarines being built at Mazagon Dockyards in Mumbai.

#### **Ranks/ Indexes Released**

- India ranked 47th in the 'Inclusive Internet Index 2019' which is prepared by the 'Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) for Facebook. Sweden topped the index whereas Singapore ranked 2nd and the USA ranked 3rd.
- With a net worth of \$54 billion, Reliance Industries Chairman Mukesh Ambani has broken into the global top 10 richest billionaire list compiled by Hurun Research. The Hurun Global Rich List 2019 is topped by Amazon chief Jeff Bezos & Ambani is placed 8<sup>th</sup>.
- The International Labour Organization released World Employment and Social Outlook Trends 2019 report. As per the report, unemployment rates will fall to 4.9% in 2019 and remains steady in 2020.
- India has jumped eight places to 36th position on the International Intellectual Property (IP) Index, which analyses the IP climate in 50 global economies, this year. The US, the UK, Sweden, France and Germany remained the top five economies on the intellectual property index in 2019 retaining their spots from the last year.

- Assam occupied the top slot in the ranking of best practices followed by states in the Budget formulation, followed by Andhra Pradesh and Odisha, as per a survey by Transparency International.
- Fitch Solutions, the research arm of Fitch Group, projected the government's fiscal deficit to overshoot the budgeted target by 0.2% to 3.6% of GDP in 2019-20 fiscal. Accordingly, Fitch Solutions revised its forecast for the central government fiscal deficit to come in at 3.6% of GDP in FY 2019-20, from 3%.
- Union Tourism Minister KJ Alphons announced that the country's tourism sector fetched revenue of 234 billion US Dollar in 2018, registering a growth of over 19%. This revenue was contributed by 87% domestic and 13% foreign tourists. He announced this at the 2nd ASEAN-India Youth Summit in Guwahati.
- As per the National Sample Survey Office's (NSSO's) periodic labor force survey (PLFS) India's unemployment rate hit a 45 year high of 6.1% in 2017-18. It is the first comprehensive survey on employment conducted by a government agency after demonetization. Unemployment is higher in urban areas which is 7.8% as compared to 5.3% in rural areas of the country.

#### **Important Days**

- International Mother Language Day has been observed every year on 21st February since February

2000 to promote linguistic and cultural diversity and multilingualism.

- National Science Day is celebrated across India on February 28. The theme was 'Science for people and people for science'.
- The World Day of Social Justice is celebrated annually all over the world on 20 February. The theme was "If You Want Peace & Development, Work for Social Justice".
- 13 February is celebrated as World Radio Day by UNESCO all over the world. The theme was "Dialogue, Tolerance and Peace".
- 11 February is celebrated as International Day of Women and Girls in Science to recognize the critical role women and girls play in science and technology.
- World Cancer Day is being observed globally on 4th February. The theme was "I Am and I Will."
- World Wetlands Day is celebrated every year on the 2nd of February to raise global awareness on the value of wetlands for humanity and the planet. The theme was 'Wetlands and Climate Change'.

#### **Agreement Signed/ MoU Approved**

- An MoU was signed between Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) and University of British Columbia (UBC), Canada for next 10 years in New Delhi. The MoU will help in exchange of students, researchers, and faculty, developing research projects, livelihood opportunities and augment income of the forest-based communities.
- India and Sri Lanka signed an MoU to establish a business center for ICT incubators in Jaffna (a city in Sri Lanka) through the grant of 25 crore Sri Lankan rupees from India.
- Navratna Defence PSU, Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) and Hughes India have entered into a Teaming Agreement for design, development, supply, installation, integration and commissioning of Satellite Communication solutions for helicopters under the Ministry of Defence, Government of India at Aero India 2019, Bengaluru.
- Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) and Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) signed an 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.
- United Arab Emirates (UAE) based international cooling provider, National Central Cooling Company PJSC (Tabreed) entered into a 30-year concession with Andhra Pradesh Capital Region Development Authority (APCRDA) to build India's first district cooling system in Amaravati.



- Government of India, Government of Himachal Pradesh (GoHP) 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, who have been facing severe water shortages and water-borne epidemics over the last few years.
- NITI Aayog and the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation (MSDF) signed a Statement of Intent (SOI) to codify, document and share best practices to improve learning outcomes in public school education through systemic reforms, based on their collective experiences of working with various state governments in India.
- Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change signed a Letter of Intent establishing the India-Norway Marine Pollution Initiative together with the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- An MoU was signed between Engineers India Limited (EIL) and Mongolia for Project Management Consultancy for oil refinery. EIL is a PSU under the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.
- The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) announced that it has signed a pact with Invest India to promote foreign investments in the country and Indian investments abroad.
- Government e Marketplace (GeM) and Competition Commission of India (CCI) entered into an MoU to enable a fair and competitive environment in the e-Marketplace. Chairman CCI, A.K. Gupta, CEO GeM, S. Radha Chauhan were present on the occasion.
- Indian Coast Guard and the Airport Authority of India (AAI) signed a Memorandum of Understanding at Coast Guard Regional Headquarters in Port Blair for coordination in the aeronautical and maritime search and rescue operations.

#### Awards & Recognition

- 33-year-old Ashoka University teacher and Wipro Sustainable Fellow, Divya Karnad became the First Indian Woman to be honoured with the 'Future for Nature Award' for her work on marine conservation. It was given to Oliver Nsengimana and Fernanda Abra along with Divya Karnad.
- President Ram Nath Kovind conferred the Gandhi Peace Prize for 2015, 16, 17 and 18.
- 1. **For 2015:** Vivekananda Kendra, Kanyakumari given the award for its contribution in Rural Development, Education and Development of natural resources.
- 2. **For 2016:** Jointly to Akshaya Patra Foundation for its contribution in providing mid-day meals to millions of children across India and Sulabh International for its contribution in improving the condition of sanitation in India and emancipation of manual scavengers.
- 3. **For 2017:** Ekal Abhiyan Trust for its contribution in providing Education for Rural and Tribal Children in remote areas pan India, Rural Empowerment, Gender, and Social Equality.
- 4. **For 2018:** Japan's Yohei Sasakawa for his contribution in Leprosy Eradication in India and across the world.
- G.R. Karthikeyan, father of India's first Formula One driver Narain Karthikeyan, was honored with the Lifetime Achievement award at the FMSCI annual awards function.
- Eminent Indian playwright Mahesh Elkunchwar has been chosen for this year's META Lifetime Achievement Award.
- Jharkhand based NGO Yuwa won the Laureus Sports for Good Award. Yuwa works for girl empowerment and became the third Indian entry to receive this honour. Yuwa was founded in 2009 by Americans Franz Gastler and Rose Thomson.
- Mallakhamb coach, Uday Deshpande, and batswoman, Smriti Mandhana, were awarded the Maharashtra State Government's Shiv Chhatrapati Award by the State's Governor C. Vidyasagar Rao at an event held at the Gateway of India, Mumbai.
- Sudanese refugee, Abdul Aziz Muhamat, who spent 5 years in the Australian detention centre on Manus Island in Papua New Guinea, was given the Martin Ennals Award 2019 in Geneva, Switzerland, for exposing "the very cruel asylum seeker policy of the Australian Government".
- Bradley Cooper has been awarded the 'Oscar' by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA).
- Siddhartha Lal, managing director and chief executive officer, Eicher Motors, has been awarded the EY Entrepreneur of the Year for 2018.
- 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).
- Indian historian Sanjay Subrahmanyam won the prestigious Dan David Prize 2019 for his work on inter-cultural encounters between Asians, Europeans and people of North and South America during the early modern era.
- Aegis Graham Bell Award 2018 announced Yes Bank as the winner in 'Innovation in Data Science' category for their industry-first project 'Yes EEE (Engage Enrich Excel)' at Panaji, Goa.
- Netflix drama 'Roma' won the top prize at the 72nd edition of the British Academy of Film and Television Arts or BAFTA awards.
- In a bid to recognize the outstanding performance and to promote a healthy competition by States/UTs, Urban Local Bodies, Beneficiaries and Housing Finance Corporations (under CLSS), Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has instituted the 'PMAY (U) awards for Implementation and Innovation' under the Mission.

- Father Francois Laborde, a 92-year-old priest, was conferred the Légion d'Honneur (Legion of Honour), the highest civilian award of France, in recognition of his work for specially-abled children.
- State Bank of India's UK chief Mr. Sanjiv Chadha honored with the 'Freedom of the City Of London' by the city of London Corporation in recognition of his contribution to promoting the bilateral relations.
- President Ram Nath Kovind presented the Sangeet Natak Akademi Awards for the year 2017 to 42 noted artists in five categories.
- National Film Development Corporation (NFDC) of India has been selected as Winner under the Miniratna Category (Category II) by Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME).

#### Summits/Events Held

- A regional conference on 'Deendayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme (DDRS)' was organised in Kolkata, West Bengal.
- Heeralal Samariya, Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Employment inaugurated the Conference on the VISION ZERO and its relevance to Occupational Safety and Health was held in Mumbai.
- World Corporate Social Responsibility Congress (World CSR Congress 2019) promotes Entrepreneurship, Social Responsibility, Sustainability and Social Development. The 8th World CSR Congress was held in Mumbai, Maharashtra.
- JP Nadda, Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare inaugurated the '4th Global Digital Health Partnership Summit' in New Delhi, in the presence of Ravi Shankar Prasad Union Minister of Law & Justice and Electronics & Information Technology.
- The 4th India-ASEAN Expo and Summit held in New Delhi.
- Dr. Rajiv Kumar, Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog, inaugurated a conference on "The Future of Indian Banking" with the Foundation for Economic Growth and Welfare (EGROW Foundation).
- External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj invited to deliver an address at the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in Abu Dhabi. This is the first time that a leader of the non-Muslim country has been invited to the OIC conference.
- PM MOdi addressed Network-18 Rising India Summit, held in New Delhi and laid out his vision for a 'New India'. The theme was, 'Beyond Politics: Defining National Priorities'.
- The 16th edition of BioAsia 2019 Asia's largest biotechnology and life-sciences forum was conducted in Hyderabad, Telangana.
- The Ministry of Civil Aviation organised a conclave on the theme 'flying for all' where more than 200 delegates including industry leaders and regulators deliberated on issues and opportunities in the sector.
- Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmer's Welfare, Radha Mohan Singh, inaugurated the 4th Agri Leadership Summit 2019 at the India International Horticulture Market (IIHM) in Ganaur, Sonapat district, Haryana. The theme was "Entrepreneurship & Agri-Business; Agri Allied – A Promising Sector and Agri Service- Direct Marketing".
- 40th International Annual Desert Festival held on the sand dune in Jaisalmer with thousands of tourists participating in the colourful event.
- The 5th India-Bangladesh Joint Consultative Committee Meeting, co-chaired by External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and Foreign Affairs Minister of Bangladesh Dr. Abdul Momen was held in New Delhi.
- World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS) 2019, the flagship event of 'The Energy and Resources Institute' (TERI), was inaugurated by Vice President Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi. The theme of WSDS 2019 was 'Attaining the 2030 Agenda: delivering on our promise'. Frank Bainimarama, Prime Minister of Fiji was honoured with the Sustainable Development Leadership Award 2019 for his outstanding contributions towards sustainable development in Fiji.
- Early Ed Asia 2019, the two-day event which is Asia's largest conference on Early Childhood, was held at the City Palace in Jaipur, Rajasthan. The motto of the event was 'Our Children. Our Future'.
- India and the United States held India-U.S. Commercial Dialogue and India-U.S. CEO Forum in New Delhi. Union Minister for Commerce & Industry and Civil Aviation, Suresh Prabhu, chaired the meeting.
- The First Annual Conference of Media Units working under I&B Ministry was organized at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi. Union Minister of State (IC) for Information & Broadcasting and Youth Affairs & Sports Col. Rajyavardhan Rathore chaired the Conference.



- LAWASIA, in association with the Bar Association of India, hosted its 1st LAWASIA Human Rights Conference in New Delhi with a motive to explore a broad range of human rights issues of relevance in the Asia Pacific region.
- PM Modi addressed the CREDAI YouthCon -19 in New Delhi's Talkatora Stadium. The event is organized by the Confederation of Real Estate Developers' Association of India, CREDAI. The theme for this YouthCon is 'Next Generation'.
- 5th International Dam Safety Conference 2019 held in Bhubaneswar as a joint initiative of the Government of India, Government of Odisha and the World Bank under aegis of the ongoing World Bank assisted Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (DRIP) as a part of institutional strengthening.
- The two-day National Conference on Unani Medicine organized by the Central Council for Research in Unani Medicine (CCRUM) as a part of 3rd Unani Day Celebration in New Delhi concluded with the note that integration and synergy of all medical systems is the need of the hour to address the health challenges we are facing today.
- The seventh session of the World Government Summit held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE). More than 4,000 people from 140 countries participated in the event.
- Ministry of Environment launched a three-year Asiatic Lion Conservation Project in collaboration with the state of Gujarat.
- The 13th International Oil and Gas Conference – PETROTECH – 2019 got underway at India Expo Mart, Greater Noida. The theme was 'Collaborating For Sustainable and Secure Energy Access for all'.
- The 13th Conference of Parties (COP) of the Convention on the conservation of migratory species of wild animals (CMS), an environmental treaty under the aegis of United Nations Environment Programme, is going to be hosted by India during 15th to 22nd February 2020 at Gandhinagar in Gujarat.
- Union Minister of State for Tourism KJ Alphons and Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal inaugurated the 2nd ASEAN-India Youth Summit at Hotel Taj Vivanta in Guwahati.
- Ministry of External Affairs and Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) organized Parmanu Tech 2019 in New Delhi to discuss the issues related to Nuclear Energy and Radiation Technologies.
- The 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 India Pavilion at the Berlin International Film Festival (Berlinale) 2019 inaugurated by Mr Matthijs Wouter Knol, Director European Film Market (EFM).
- Mr. Dharmendra Pradhan, Union Minister for petroleum and natural gas, inaugurated the 2019 Asia LPG summit in New Delhi. It is organized jointly by the major Indian oil marketing companies (OMCs) Indian Oil, Hindustan Petroleum and Bharat Petroleum together with the World LPG Association (WLPGA) at the Taj Palace Hotel in New Delhi.
- The second joint secretary level meeting to review the India-Nepal Trade Treaty held in Pokhara, Nepal.
- Maharashtra government has set up a committee to review various schemes being implemented for the welfare of tribals in the state. The 17-member committee to be headed by former MLA and Shramjeevi Sanghatna president Vivek Pandit.
- The Kala Ghoda festival, India's largest multi-cultural street festival held in Mumbai to celebrate its 20 years of art and culture through cinema, theatre, dance, literature, and sculpture. Maneck Davar is Chairman of Kala Ghoda Association.
- The 6-day long music and dance festival 'Sopan 2019', to encourage young artists to take up traditional art took place in New Delhi.
- Dr M. Manikandan, Minister for Information Technology of Tamil Nadu inaugurated 'ICT Academy Bridge 2019' conference in the city that witnessed more than 1,000 participants from government, industry and academia.
- Union Minister of Commerce & Industry and Civil Aviation, Suresh Prabhu inaugurated the Indo-Monaco Business Forum in New Delhi.

#### Committees

- The Expert Committee led by Anoop Satpathy, Fellow of V. V. Giri National Labour Institute (VVGNI), submitted its report on "Determining the Methodology for Fixation of the National Minimum Wage" to the Government. It recommended the fixation of need-based National Minimum Wage (NMW) 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 comprising of 3.6 consumption units. The Present NMW is Rs. 4,576.

- On the recommendation of Cabinet Secretary P K Sinha, the government constituted a committee under the Central Electricity Authority (CEA) to explore prepaid payments by state electricity distribution companies to power plants.
- Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) formed a 4-member committee, headed by income tax commissioner Sanjeev Sharma, to look into the matter of taxation related pain points and submit its final report and recommendations by mid-March.

### Science & Technology Current Affairs

- Cyber Prevention Awareness and Detection (CyPAD) Centre and the National Cyber Forensic Lab (NCFL) were inaugurated by Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh and LG Anil Baijal in Dwarka, New Delhi. To spread awareness among school students and teachers, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) started a popular Twitter handle @CyberDost.
- Bandicoot, a drainage-cleaning robot introduced for the first time in India at the Kumbakonam city corporation as part of efforts to rid of manual scavenging at the cost of Rs 18 lakh in Chennai, Tamil Nadu. It is a semi-automatic robot can enter manholes for cleaning sewage lines with its robotic arm.
- AntBot is the first walking robot to have navigational capabilities without GPS or mapping. It has been designed by Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS) and Aix-Marseille University researchers at ISM.
- Israel is to launch its first moon mission, sending an unmanned spacecraft to collect data to be shared with NASA. According to a report, the 585-kilogram Beresheet (Genesis) spacecraft is to lift off atop a Falcon 9 rocket from Cape Canaveral, Florida.
- NASA announced a new space telescope mission dedicated to understanding the origins of life and the universe. It's called the Spectro-Photometer for the History of the Universe, Epoch of Reionization and Ices Explorer or SPHEREx, for short. The space agency is aiming for a 2023 launch.
- NASA announced that its Opportunity Rover mission is complete after the rover failed to respond despite repeated trials since August 2018. The space agency inferred that a planet-encircling dust storm cut off communications with Opportunity on June 10, 2018, disabling its solar panels from storing power.
- ISRO unveiled its Human Space Flight Centre (HSFC) at ISRO Headquarter campus in Bengaluru, Karnataka for its maiden manned space mission 'Gaganyaan'. It was inaugurated by K Kasturirangan, former ISRO Chairman.

### Books & Authors

- Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu launched the book titled 'Quality, Accreditation, and Ranking - A Silent Revolution in the Offing in Indian Higher Education' edited by Education Promotion Society for India's (EPSI) Alternate President Dr. H Chaturvedi in New Delhi.
- A book 'Simplicity & Wisdom' written by Dinesh Shahra was launched at Parmarth Ashram in Kumbh Mela.
- Former Vice President Hamid Ansari launched the new book of former Finance Minister P Chidambaram named "Undaunted: Saving the Idea of India" at Nehru Memorial Museum, New Delhi.
- Acclaimed Indo-Canadian filmmaker Deepa Mehta will be given the Lifetime Achievement Award by the Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television. Mehta is best known for her Elements Trilogy - 'Fire', 'Earth' and 'Water'.

### Miscellaneous Current Affairs

- Railway Minister Piyush Goyal launched Rail Drishti Dashboard in New Delhi. The dashboard has been launched to keep people informed about the work going on in the Railways across the country.
- A small brown rat of bramble cay melomys species lived on a tiny island off northern Australia becomes the world's first mammal to have become extinct due to "human-induced climate change".
- Wallace's giant bee (Wallace Bee), the largest bee known on the Earth which was considered to be extinct since 1981 was re-spotted in an Indonesian forest.
- Union Textiles Minister Smriti Irani inaugurated the 'Titanwala Museum' that showcases the hand block printing of the Chhipa community in Bagru. Bagru printing is one of the traditional techniques of printing with natural color followed by the chhipas of Rajasthan.
- Under 'Make in India' initiative, Indian Railways created history by converting a diesel locomotive into electric locomotive for the first time in the world. This all new converted energy-efficient electric locomotive has been flagged off by PM Modi in Varanasi. As per the Indian Railways, the entire project is an Indian R&D innovation for the entire world.
- Union Culture Minister Mahesh Sharma inaugurated India's very first 'Fulldome 3D Digital Theatre' at the Science City in Kolkata, West Bengal.
- Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) launched a new portal Least Available Depth Information System (LADIS) for real-time data on available depth on stretches of National Waterways.
- A Himalayan Cloud Observatory is set up in Tehri district of Uttarakhand with a motive to forecast and



monitor cloudburst incidents in the Himalayan region and help to minimize the damage.

- Union Minister of Textiles Smriti Irani launched the India Size project in Mumbai. A first-of-its-kind project in the history of the country, India Size aims to arrive at a standard Indian Size for the ready-to-wear clothing industry, on the lines of the standardized sizes available in countries such as the USA and the UK.
- Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY) App launched on Google play store. Ayushman Bharat Yojana or Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY) is a centrally sponsored scheme; which was launched in the year 2018, under the Ayushman Bharat Mission of MoHFW in the country.
- Ministry of Coal of India entered into an MoU with the Ministry of Energy, Republic of Poland. The objective is to foster relations in the field of coal mining and clean coal technologies.
- Minister of Railways, Piyush Goyal launched the "The Future of Rail" report of the International Energy Agency (IEA). The Future of Rail is the first-of-a-kind report that analyses the current and future importance of rail around the world through the perspective of its energy and environmental implications.

#### Obituaries

- Noted Hindi writer Namvar Singh passed away in New Delhi. He was 92. Singh was the first chairman of JNU's Centre of Indian Languages.
- Veteran Bollywood producer and father of filmmaker Sooraj Barjatya, Raj Kumar Barjatya passed away in Mumbai.
- American military veteran and novelist, William E. Butterworth III, better known as W.E.B. Griffin (his pen name), passed away at the age of 89. He joined the army at the age of 17 and has served in the Korean War.
- Climate scientist Wallace Smith Broecker, who popularised the term "global warming" has passed away in New York.
- The best-selling British author Andrea Levy, who explored the experience of Jamaican British people in a series of novel over 20 years, has died from cancer at the age of 62.
- 77 years old Swiss actor, Bruno Ganz who is famous for his role of German dictator, Adolf Hitler in the Oscar-nominated film Downfall, passed away in Zurich, Switzerland due to Colon Cancer.
- German scientist Manfred Eigen, who jointly won the 1967 Nobel Prize for Chemistry, passed away aged 91.
- One of the world's most famous goalkeeper Gordon Banks passed away at the age of 81 in England.

- Noted actor Mahesh Anand, best known for playing the villain in several Bollywood films in the late 1980s and 1990s has passed away at the age of 57.
- Oscar-nominated British actor Albert Finney passed away peacefully after a short illness. He aged 82.
- John Dingell, the longest-serving congressman in US history, has passed away aged 92. He was first elected in 1955, serving in the House of Representatives for the next 59 years.
- Veteran Marathi actor Ramesh Bhatkar passed away aged 70 after battling cancer for over one and a half years.
- Former Planning Commission member and ex-director of IIMC Hiten Bhaya passed away in Delhi. Bhaya was 98.

#### Countries | Capital | Currencies

- South Korea Capital: Seoul, Currency: South Korean won, President: Moon Jae-in.
- Sri Lanka Capitals: Colombo, Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte, Currency: Sri Lankan rupee, Prime minister: Ranil Wickremesinghe.
- Zimbabwe Capital: Harare, President: Emmerson Mnangagwa.
- Abu Dhabi is the capital city of the UAE.
- South Africa Capital: Cape Town, Currency: South African Rand, President: Cyril Ramaphosa.
- Nigeria Capital: Abuja, Currency: Nigerian naira.
- Monaco Capital: Monte Carlo, Currency: Euro.
- Poland Capital: Warsaw, Currency: Polish zloty.

- Argentina | Capital: Buenos Aires, Currency: Argentine peso.
- Germany Capital: Berlin, Currency: Euro, Chancellor: Angela Merkel.
- North Macedonia Capital: Skopje, Currency: Macedonian denar.
- Bangladesh Capital: Dhaka, Currency- Bangladesh taka.
- France Capital: Paris, Currency: CFP Franc, Euro.
- Mongolia Capital: Ulaanbaatar, Currency: Mongolian togrog.
- Pakistan Capital: Islamabad, PM: Imran Khan, President- Arif Alvi.
- Norway Capital: Oslo, Currency: Norwegian krone.
- President of LAWASIA: Mr. Christopher Leong, President Bar Association of India: Dr. Lalit Bhasin.
- US President: Donald Trump, Capital: Washington, D.C, Currency: US Dollar.
- Iran Capital: Tehran, Currency: Rial, President: Hassan Rouhani.
- Israel Capital: Jerusalem, Currency: Israeli new shekel.

#### **International Organizations / Companies in News**

- World Bank Interim President: Kristalina Georgieva, Headquarters: Washington D. C.
- UN Women Executive Director: Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Headquarters: New York.
- Facebook Headquarters: California, US, CEO: Mark Zuckerberg.
- Nepal's central bank is called as Nepal Rashtira Bank. It was established in 1956 under the Nepal Rashtira Bank Act 1955. Dr. Chiranjibi Nepal is the Governor of Nepal Rashtira Bank.
- Union for International Cancer Control Headquarters in: Geneva, Switzerland, Founded: 1933.
- Asian Development Bank Headquarters: Manila, Philippines, President: Takehiko Nakao.
- ILO Headquarter: Geneva, Switzerland, Director General: Guy Ryder, Formed: 1919.
- United Nations Headquarters: New York, United States, Secretary General: Antonio Guterres.

#### **Financial Organizations in News**

- AIBA President: Gafur Rahimov.
- SIDBI Chairman & Managing Director: Mohammad Mustafa Headquarters: Lucknow.
- IDBI Bank Headquarters: Mumbai, MD and CEO: Rakesh Sharma.
- RBI 25th Governor: Shaktikant Das, Headquarters: Mumbai, Founded: 1 April 1935, Kolkata.
- Ujjivan Small Finance Bank Headquarters: Bengaluru, MD and CEO: Samith Ghosh.
- Yes Bank Headquarters: Mumbai, Maharashtra, Tagline: Experience our Expertise.

- Corporation Bank Headquarters – Mangalore, Tagline – A Premier Public Sector Bank, Prosperity for all.
- Fino Payments Bank Registered Office: Mumbai, MD & CEO: Rishi Gupta, .
- Suryoday Small Finance Bank Headquarter: Navi Mumbai, CEO & MD: R Baskar Babu.
- SBI Headquarter: Mumbai, Chairman: Shri Rajnish Kumar.
- ICICI Prudential Mutual Fund Headquarters: Mumbai, MD and CEO: Nimesh Shah.

#### **States | CMs | Governors | Capital | Ministers | Static General Awareness**

- Dr. Harsh Vardhan is the Minister for Environment, Forest & Climate Change.
- Odisha Capital: Bhubaneswar, CM: Naveen Patnaik, Governor: Ganeshi Lal.
- Kerala CM: Pinarayi Vijayan, Governor: Palaniswamy Sathasivam.
- Tripura Capital: Agartala, CM: Biplab Kumar Deb, Governor: Prof. Kaptan Singh Solanki.
- Telangana Capital: Hyderabad, CM: K. Chandrashekar Rao.
- Punjab CM: Capt. Amarinder Singh, Governor: VP Singh Badnore.
- Hardeep Singh Puri is the Minister of State (I/C) of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.
- Satya Pal Malik is the present Governor of Jammu & Kashmir.
- Andhra Pradesh CM: N Chandrababu Naidu, Governor: ESL Narasimhan.
- Gujarat CM: Vijay Rupani, Governor: Om Prakash Kohli.
- Haryana CM: Manohar Lal Khattar, Governor: Satyadev Narayan Arya.
- Rajasthan Capital- Jaipur, Chief Minister – Ashok Gehlot, Governor – Kalyan Singh.
- Shripad Yesso Naik is the Minister of State (Independent Charge) of the Ministry of Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy (AYUSH).
- Meghalaya Capital: Shillong, Chief Minister: Conrad Sangma, Governor: Tathagata Roy.
- Bihar CM: Nitish Kumar, Governor: Lalji Tandon.
- Karnataka CM: H. D. Kumaraswamy, Governor: Vajubhai Vala.
- Jharkhand Capital: Ranchi, CM: Raghubar Das, Governor: Draupadi Murmu.
- Maharashtra Capital: Mumbai, CM: Devendra Fadnavis, Governor: C. Vidyasagar Rao.
- Governor of UP: Ram Naik, CM of UP: Yogi Adityanath.

#### **Other Static General Awareness Current Affairs**

- BEL Headquarters in Bengaluru, Karnataka.



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- NITI Aayog: National Institution for Transforming India.
  - NITI Aayog CEO: Amitabh Kant, Vice Chairman: Rajiv Kumar.
  - Chairman of IWAI: Jalaj Shrivastava, Head office: Noida, UP.
  - Admiral Sunil Lanba is the present Chief of Naval Staff.
  - Navy Day in India is celebrated on 4th December.
  - ISRO Director: K. Sivan, Headquarters: Bengaluru, Established in: 1969.
  - Indu Bhushan is the CEO of PM-JAY.
  - Indian Coast Guard Headquarters in New Delhi.
  - CMS Headquarters: Bonn, Germany.
  - PM -KISAN stands for Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi.
  - Chief of the Army Staff – General Bipin Rawat.
  - TERI Director-General: Dr. Ajay Mathur, Headquarters: New Delhi.
  - Infosys CEO: Salil Parekh.
  - Radha Chauhan is the CEO of Government e Marketplace (GeM).
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