

RBI allows lenders to recast debt of MSMEs with loans of up to Rs 25 crore

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Tuesday allowed **lenders to recast loans of stressed micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME)** provided that the total fund and non-fund based exposure to such borrowers is up to Rs 25 crore.
- Such a debt restructuring, RBI said, will not lead to any downgrade in asset classification. **"RBI has decided to permit a one-time restructuring of existing loans to MSMEs that are in default but 'standard' as on January 1, 2019, without an asset classification downgrade,"** the central bank said in a statement.

RBI allows Paytm Bank to restart account opening

- **Paytm Payments Bank**, which was asked to halt on-boarding of new customers six months ago, **is learnt to have resumed the process for signing up new customers after receiving the go-ahead by the Reserve Bank of India.**
- Back in June, after an audit it had done, **the RBI had found lapses in the KYC process employed by Paytm Payments Bank.**

RBI sets up UK Sinha panel to suggest measures for MSMEs

- The Reserve Bank Wednesday **set up an expert committee under former Sebi chairman U K Sinha to suggest long-term solutions for the economic and financial sustainability of the MSME sector.**
- The RBI has announced the panel a day after it allowed a one-time restructuring of existing debt up to Rs 25 crore for the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) which have defaulted on payment but the loans given to them have continued to be classified as standard assets.
- The eight-member committee will also examine the **factors affecting the timely and adequate availability of finance to the sector, the RBI said in a statement.**

Cabinet clears merger of Dena Bank, Vijaya Bank with Bank of Baroda

- The government on Wednesday **approved the merger of Dena Bank and Vijaya Bank with Bank of Baroda (BoB) to make it a globally competitive lender.**
- With the merger, **BoB will become the third largest bank after State Bank of India and ICICI Bank.**
- **The merger has been designed to make BoB as merged entity, a globally competitive lender, Prasad added.**

Govt greenlights Rs 600 crore subsidy sops to merchant exporters

- The government Wednesday **decided to provide 3 per cent interest subsidy to merchant exporters, entailing an expenditure of Rs 600 crore, to enhance liquidity with a view to boosting outbound shipments.**
- **The decision was taken by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs.**

RBI licences two more P2P lending startups

- Two more fintech players have got the **NBFC license from the Reserve Bank of India to operate as peer to peer lending platforms.** One is **RupeeCircle** and the other is **IndiaMoneyMart**, both based out of Mumbai.
- **With this licence the two entities join the list of 11 P2P lending platforms which were registered by the central bank last year.**
- India Money Mart which was a digital lending marketplace entered the P2P lending business in 2017.

RBI scales down printing of Rs 2000 note to minimum: Govt source

- The printing of Rs 2000 banknote, introduced post-demonetisation in November 2016, **has been reduced to the "minimum" by the Reserve Bank, a top finance ministry official said Thursday.**
- **Soon after the sudden decision to ban old Rs 500/1000 currency notes by the government,** the Reserve Bank had come out with the Rs 2000 currency note along with a new look Rs 500 note as part of its massive remonetisation exercise.

- When the Rs 2000 note was launched, it was decided that the printing would be "scaled down" going forward, since the new high currency value note was meant for meeting the remonetisation need.

HDFC MF surpasses ICICI Prudential to become India's top asset manager

- HDFC Mutual Fund has piped ICICI Prudential MF to become the country's largest asset management company after a gap of over two years.
- As of December-end, HDFC MF manages assets to the tune of Rs 3.35 trillion, while those of ICICI Prudential MF stood at Rs 3.08 trillion, as per the latest data available with Association of Mutual funds in India (Amfi).

SEBI allows custodial services in commodity market

- Markets regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has allowed custodial services in the commodity derivatives market.
- The move is aimed at enabling the participation of institutional investors such as mutual funds and portfolio managers in the commodity derivatives market.

Government increases fuel supply to power plants

- The government on January 3, 2019 said that coal stock and coal supply to power plants has been increased to meet the energy demands in the country.
- According to the Ministry of Coal, the increase is about 25 per cent as compared to last year.
- The Ministry said that with the focus on boosting the domestic Coal Supply, the Coal stock in power plants as on December 31, 2018 was over 16 million tonne as compared to December 2017 which was around 13 million tonne.

PM Modi inaugurates development projects in Manipur

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi on January 4, 2019 inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of 12 development projects worth Rs 1,500 crore in Manipur.
- The Prime Minister unveiled the plaque to mark the inauguration of various projects including Integrated Check Post at Moreh, the Dolaithabi Barrage project, FCI food storage godown at Sawombung, Eco Tourism Complex at Thangal Surung and various water supply schemes.

RBI extends customer protection to PPI deals

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has extended its customer protection framework in cases of payment frauds or unauthorised transactions to the users of authorised prepaid payment instruments (PPIs).
- Earlier the framework was restricted just to customer frauds in banks and NBFCs.
- The users of PPIs now will not be liable for losses incurred due to fraud or discrepancy on part of the issuers.
- In cases of third-party interference, there will be no customer liability if the matter is brought to notice within three working days, and up to Rs 10,000 if reported between four to seven days.

Vijay Mallya becomes first person to be declared a 'fugitive economic offender' under new law

- A special court in Mumbai declared absconding liquor baron Vijay Mallya a fugitive economic offender (FEO) on a plea of the Enforcement Directorate.
- Mallya has become the first businessman to be declared EFO under the provisions of the new Fugitive Economic Offenders Act which came into existence in August last year.
- Special judge MS Azmi declared Mallya an FEO under Section 12 of the Act after hearing extensive arguments from the lawyer of Mallya and the ED counsel. Mallya, accused of defaulting on loan repayments and money laundering, had left India in March 2016.

Reliance gets RBI nod for merger of subsidiaries

- Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) has received approval from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for cross-border merger of Reliance Holding USA Inc, a wholly owned, step-down subsidiary of RIL with Reliance Energy Generation and Distribution Ltd (REGDL), the company said in a regulatory filing on Friday.

- REGDL is a wholly owned subsidiary of the company and would be subsequently amalgamated with RIL. RIL had in June 2017 sought RBI's approval for the proposed amalgamation.

PM lays foundation stone for revival of 6 irrigation projects in Jharkhand

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid foundation stone of revival of six irrigation projects, **including North Koel (Mandal Dam) project amounting to 2,500 crore rupees and Kanhar Stone Pipeline irrigation system.**
- The Mandal Dam project will help around one lakh 11 thousand hectares of agricultural land in Jharkhand and Bihar to get irrigation facilities and 24 MW of electricity will also be produced.
- **Other projects are irrigation canal from Sone river in Bihar to Garhwa in Jharkhand,** Baler Wear reservoir for Palamu, Baini Banki Reservoir for Garhwa, Anjanawa reservoir for Chatra and Brahmani irrigation project for Chakradharpur in West Singhbhum.

Centre amalgamates three regional rural banks

- The Centre has amalgamated three Regional Rural Banks (RRB) -- Punjab Gramin Bank, Malwa Gramin Bank and Sutlej Gramin Bank -- into a single RRB with effect from January 1.
- The sponsor banks of the RRBs are National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), the Government of Punjab and Punjab National Bank, State Bank of India and Punjab and Sind Bank, it added.

United Bank of India, Srei Equipment Finance enter pact for MSME sector finance

- United Bank of India and Srei Equipment Finance have entered into an agreement for financing the MSME and agriculture sectors.
- Under the pact, UBI would leverage its low-cost loans with Srei to enable purchase of equipment and vehicles in a seamless manner, a statement by the state-run lender said.

Government revises interest rates on some small savings schemes

- Government has recently changed interest rates on some selected small scheme savings scheme.
- According to the revised rates, investment in time deposits of **one-year, two-year and three-year maturity periods will now fetch interest at the rate of 7 per cent in the quarter ending March 31, 2019.**
- Until December quarter, the government paid interest rates of 6.9 per cent, 7 per cent and 7.2 per cent on **one-year, two-year and three-year time deposits respectively.**
- However, it should also be noted that the interest rates applicable to all other small savings schemes, such as Public Provident Fund (PPF), Savings Deposit, Kisan Vikas Patra (KVP) and Sukanya Samriddhi, were kept unchanged.

ICICI Bank, Small Business FinCredit India to finance MSMEs

- ICICI Bank has announced that it has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Small Business FinCredit India (SBFC), a NBFC (Non-Banking Finance Company) for entrepreneurs, **to jointly provide credit to MSMEs (micro, small and medium enterprises).**
- The agreement enables MSMEs to obtain loans up to Rs 1 crore for a tenure of 15 years. Under this arrangement, ICICI Bank will co-originate loan against property with SBFC at a mutually agreed ratio.

Nitin Gadkari lays foundation stone of 6 road projects in Jodhpur

- **Union Minister Nitin Gadkari inaugurated and laid foundation of six road projects worth 6,000 crore rupees in border areas of Jodhpur** on Saturday.
- The minister dedicated works worth 2,000 crore rupees to the nation after their completion and laid foundation for some projects worth 4,000 crore rupees.

Nepal writes to RBI to declare banned new Indian currency notes legal

- Nepal has asked the RBI to declare newly circulated Indian currency notes of denominations higher than Rs 100 legal tender in the country, according to media report on Sunday.

- **The Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB)**, the country's central monetary authority, has written a letter on Friday to the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)**, asking it to make Indian bank bills Rs 200, Rs 500 and Rs 2,000 legal tender in Nepal, The Himalayan Times reported.
- The NRB has asked the **India's central bank to issue a notification under the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA)**, which will make Indian bank notes of denomination more than Rs 100 legal tender in Nepal and to provide the exchange facilities to get bills of such denominations, it said.

India's GDP estimated to grow at 7.2 per cent in 2018-19

- **India's GDP (gross domestic product) is estimated to grow at 7.2 per cent in 2018-19 compared to 6.7 per cent attained during the previous fiscal**, official data showed on Monday.
- "Real GDP or GDP at Constant Prices (2011-12) in the year 2018-19 is likely to attain a level of Rs 139.52 lakh crore, as against the 'Provisional Estimate of GDP for the year 2017-18' of Rs 130.11 lakh crore, released on 31st May 2018," the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation said in "First Advance Estimates of National Income, 2018-19".

Bandhan Bank to buy mortgage provider Gruh Finance in share-swap deal

- **Bandhan Bank Ltd will buy mortgage provider Gruh Finance Ltd in a share-swap deal to build up its housing loan portfolio**, the companies said on Monday.
- Under the merger cooperation agreement, shareholders of **Gruh Finance will get 568 shares of Bandhan Bank for every 1,000 shares held**.

Kerala to set up country's largest Integrated Startup Complex on 13.5 acres

- **Kerala is setting up the country's largest Integrated Startup Complex, which will house a Maker Village, Bionest, and BRINC**, the country's first international accelerator for Hardware startups, among other facilities.
- **Set up by Kerala Startup Mission (KSUM), the sprawling complex, spread over 180,000 sq ft in Technology Innovation Zone (TIZ)**, will house Maker Village, Bionest and BRINC, the country's first international accelerator for Hardware startups, BRIC, an incubator dedicated for developing solutions for cancer diagnosis care; and a Centre of Excellence set up by industry majors like UNITY and CERA.

RBI issues guidelines on use of tokenisation to make card payments safer

- Reserve Bank of India Tuesday released **guidelines on tokenisation for various card transactions, including from debit and credit cards**.
- **Tokenisation, which aims at improving safety and security of the payment system, refers to replacement of actual card details with an unique alternate code called the 'token'**, which shall be unique for a combination of card, token requestor and identified device.
- Instead of using actual card details, this token is used to perform card transactions in **contactless mode at point of sale (POS) terminals, quick response (QR) code payments**.
- **RBI has given permission to offer tokenised card transactions services to all channels such as near field communication (NFC), magnetic secure transmission (MST) based contactless transactions, in-app payments, QR code-based payments or token storage mechanisms**

RBI forms Nandan Nilekani committee to boost digital payments

- **Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has constituted a High-Level Committee on Deepening of Digital Payments to encourage digitisation of payments and enhance financial inclusion**.
- The five-member committee headed by **UIDAI's former Chairman Nandan Nilekani** will include RBI's former Deputy Governor Mr. H.R. Khan and Former Secretary, Ministry of Information Technology, Mrs. Aruna Sharma among others.
- In a statement, **RBI said the committee will review the existing status of digitisation of payments and suggest ways to bridge any gaps in the ecosystem, if any**.

- The Nandan Nilekani led panel will suggest measures to strengthen the safety and security of digital payments; while also providing a road map for increasing customers' trust while accessing financial services through digital modes.

India takes over operations of Chabahar Port; sets up India Ports Global Chabahar Free Zone

- India took over the operations of a part of Chabahar Port in Iran during the Chabahar Trilateral Agreement meeting held on December 24, 2018 in Iran.
- The heads of Indian, Iranian and Afghanistan delegation jointly inaugurated the office of the Indian SPV - India Ports Global Chabahar Free Zone (IPGCFZ) at Chabahar.
- The absolute take-over of the terminal area, cargo handling equipment and the office building was completed by December 29, 2018.

India's GDP to grow at 7.3% in FY19, 7.5 % in next two years: World Bank

- India's GDP is expected to grow at 7.3 per cent in the fiscal year 2018-19, and 7.5 per cent in the following two years, the World Bank has forecast, attributing it to an upswing in consumption and investment.
- The bank said India will continue to be the fastest growing major economy in the world.
- China's economic growth is projected to slow down to 6.2 each in 2019 and 2020 and 6 per cent in 2021, according to the January 2019 Global Economic Prospects report released by the World Bank on Tuesday.
- In 2018, the Chinese economy is estimated to have grown by 6.5 per cent as against India's 7.3 per cent.

Adani partners Andhra to develop 'world's first green data center parks'

- Andhra Pradesh government today signed an MoU with Adani Group to build data center parks up to 5 gigawatt (gw) capacities in and around Visakhapatnam using 100 percent renewable energy over the next 20 years.
- The move also marks the Adani Group's foray into the digital infrastructure sector.

India's GDP set to eclipse US' by 2030: StanChart

- Seven of the world's top 10 economies by 2030 will likely be current emerging markets.
- The prediction for a shake-up of the world's gross domestic product (GDP) rankings comes in new long-term forecasts by Standard Chartered Plc, which includes a projection for China to become the largest economy by 2020, using purchasing power parity exchange rates and nominal GDP.
- India will likely be larger than the US in the same time period while Indonesia will break into the top 5 economies.
- They project trend growth for India to accelerate to 7.8% by the 2020s while China's will moderate to 5% by 2030 reflecting a natural slowdown given the economy's size.

SEBI constitutes advisory panel to link research to policy making

- Market regulator Security and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has constituted a "Research Advisory" committee that will assist in formulating policy to undertake research relevant for development and regulation of capital markets.
- The committee, headed by Sankar De, would comprise prominent financial economists and market practitioners.

GST exemption limit for MSMEs doubled

- In a major relief to micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), the GST Council chaired by finance minister Arun Jaitley on January 10, 2019 doubled the GST exemption limit for companies in the sector to those with an annual turnover of Rs 40 lakh from the current Rs 20 lakh. For North East and hilly states, the limit has been increased to Rs 20 lakh from Rs 10 lakh.
- Bringing about major changes in the composition scheme, the current turnover limit was increased to Rs 1.5 crore from Rs 1 crore.

RBI makes changes in Gold Monetisation Scheme

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** Wednesday made some changes in the **Gold Monetisation Scheme (GMS)** by including charitable institutions and the central government, among other.
- Apart from individual and joint depositors, **the scheme could now be availed by charitable institutions, the central government, the state government or any other entity owned by the central government or the state government**, the RBI said in a notification.
- In 2015, the government launched the GMS to mobilise the gold held by households and institutions in the country.
- The scheme allows banks' customers to deposit their idle gold holdings for a **fixed period in return for interest in the range of 2.25-2.50%**.

Sri Lanka's Central Bank gets \$400 mn swap from RBI

- **Sri Lanka's Central Bank** on Wednesday said that the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has agreed to provide USD 400 million under a swap arrangement to boost the island nation's reserves.**
- It said that a further request to the RBI for another SWAP arrangement of USD 1 billion is "under consideration". **These are to be made available under the SAARC SWAP facility.**

RBI slaps Rs 3 crore penalty on Citibank India

- **The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has imposed a penalty of Rs 3 crore on Citibank India** for not complying with directions regarding the 'fit-and-proper criteria' for directors of the bank.
- The RBI in a statement, however, added that the action is based on deficiencies in regulatory compliance and is not intended to pronounce upon the validity of any transaction or agreement entered into by the bank with its customers.

Jana Small Finance Bank launches current account with auto-sweep facility

- **Jana Small Finance Bank has launched a current account with auto-sweep facility.**
- The facility will enable the bank's existing and potential new customers **to auto sweep-in and sweep-out idle funds in the current account to the Sweep Fixed Deposit and earn interest on the funds.**
- **For a tenor of 365 days on sweep deposit, customers will be able to earn interest of 8.5 per cent.**

YES Bank signs MoU with Kia Motors

- **YES BANK**, India's fourth largest private sector Bank, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Kia Motors**, world's eighth largest automaker, **to enter into a strategic financing partnership, making it one of the first Indian banks to become their preferred financier.**
- The benefits of this partnership will be extended to the entire auto value chain - **Auto dealers as well as customers, covering multiple car models offered by Kia Motors India.**
- Kia Motors is set to enter Indian market by second half of 2019 with an all-new mid-SUV which was previewed at 2018 Auto Expo.

RBL Bank and Nasscom tie up for customised credit to MSMEs

- **RBL Bank has signed an MoU with Nasscom to provide customised credit solutions to micro, small and medium enterprises.**
- "The two entities will collaborate for various activities, including joint events and knowledge-sharing sessions, and ensure continuous engagement with various chapters in 10 locations across India," the bank said on Thursday.

Ashok Chawla resigns as chairman with immediate effect in light of recent legal developments: National Stock Exchange

- **National Stock Exchange** today said **Ashok Chawla has resigned as chairman with immediate effect in light of recent legal developments.**
- In a statement, NSE said **Mr. Chawla has resigned as Chairman of the Board of Directors of the National Stock Exchange of India Ltd with immediate effect.** However, the exchange did not provide specific details.

IDFC Bank re-named as IDFC First Bank

- Private sector lender IDFC Bank said its name has been changed to IDFC First Bank Ltd with effect from Saturday.
- "The name of the Bank has been changed from IDFC Bank Ltd to 'IDFC First Bank Limited' with effect from January 12, 2019, by virtue of 'Certificate of Incorporation pursuant to a change of name' issued by the Registrar of Companies, Chennai," it said in a BSE filing.
- IDFC Bank and non-banking financial company Capital First had announced the completion of their merger on December 18, creating a combined loan asset book of Rs 1.03 lakh crore for the merged entity.

Government sets up common facility centres for gems and jewellery sector

- With a view to strengthen the gems and jewellery industry, **the Government has taken a number of steps, including the establishment of Special Notified Zone (SNZ) and setting up of common facility centres for gems and jewellery sector.**
- **The measures include the creation of separate ITC HS Code for lab-grown diamond, reduction of GST rates for cut and polished diamonds and precious stones, exempting IGST on the import of gold by specified agencies and banks, official sources said.**

VP Naidu inaugurates 25th edition of Partnership Summit 2019 in Mumbai

- Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu inaugurated the 25th edition of Partnership Summit 2019 in Mumbai today.
- **Governor of Maharashtra C. Vidyasagar Rao and Union Commerce Minister Suresh Prabhu, and other dignitaries were present on the occasion. New India Rising to Global Occasions is the theme of inaugural session of the Summit.**

Reserve Bank of India slaps Rs 1-crore penalty on Bajaj Finance

- **The Reserve Bank of India has imposed a penalty of Rs 1 crore on Bajaj Finance for deficiencies in regulatory compliance.**
- According to RBI, the penalty has been imposed, by an order on January 3, for violation of 'fair Practices Code of Master Direction DNBR'.

RBI to frame rules for bank CEOs' pay

- **The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is working on a set of rules that would link remuneration of banks CEOs to parameters like balance sheet size of a bank, loan delinquency, profits and governance record.**
- **The proposed framework is expected to provide a broad template to the board of directors of banks while approving increase in salary, performance bonus and stock options to the senior most executive.**

Sushil Modi to head committee to look into GST revenue shortfall faced by states

- The Deputy Chief Minister of Bihar, **Sushil Modi will be heading the seven-member group of ministers (GoM) that will look into revenue shortfall being faced by the states after the GST roll-out and suggest steps for augmenting collections.**
- As per terms of reference (ToR) of the GoM, **the seven-member committee will undertake data analysis using econometric and statistical tools and suggest suitable measures and policy intervention for course correction for revenue augmentation, particularly for the states suffering high revenue shortfall.**

All time high Rs. 61,084 Crores for MGNREGA

- The Centre has **allocated an additional 6 thousand 84 crore rupees to Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, MGNREGA.**
- With this the total allocation **for the scheme has reached an all time high of 61 thousand 84 Crore rupees.**
- Over the last 4 years, the Ministry of Rural Development has completed major reforms in the MGNREGA to transform it into a resource for sustainable livelihoods for the poor.

- The Ministry said, there has been a remarkable increasing trend in the **budget allocation and release for the programme from nearly 33 thousand crore rupees in 2014-15 to over 55 thousand crore rupees in 2017-18.**

RBI announces OMO purchase of government securities on Jan 17

- **Reserve Bank will inject 10,000 crore rupees into the system through the purchase of government securities tomorrow to increase liquidity.** The central bank said in a statement that the purchase will be made through open market operations (OMOs).
- **The statement said the eligible participants should submit their offers in electronic format on the RBI Core Banking Solution (E-Kuber) system.** The result of the auction will be announced tomorrow itself and payment to successful participants will be made on the following day.

Sovereign Gold Bond Scheme 2018-19 (Series-V) opens

- **The Sovereign Gold Bond Scheme 2018-19 (Series-V) opened on January 15, 2019 for subion.**
- **The issue price of the Bond during this subion period will be three thousand two hundred and fourteen rupees per gram with the settlement date of January 22, 2019.**
- **The Centre in consultation with the Reserve Bank of India has decided to allow discount of 50 rupees per gram from the issue price to those investors who apply on-line and make the payment through digital mode.**

PM Modi launches development projects worth over Rs 1500 crore in Odisha

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi on January 15, 2019 visited Odisha and launched several development projects worth over Rs 1,500 crore at Balangir, Odisha.**
- **PM Modi dedicated electrified Jharsuguda-Vizianagaram and Sambalpur-Angul lines spanning 813 kilometres to the nation.** These railway lines were electrified at a cost of around Rs 1,000 crore.
- **The Prime Minister inaugurated the doubling of Barpali-Dungaripali and Balangir-Deogaon railway lines in the state.**
- **The 15 km-long Balangir-Bichhupali railway line laid at a cost of Rs 115 crores was also launched.** It is part of the new 289 kilometre Balangir-Khurda road line which connects Howrah-Chennai main line on Khurda Road and Titlagarh-Sambalpur line at Balangir.

Government launches 'Womaniya on Government e Marketplace' initiative

- **The Union Government on January 14, 2019 launched the 'Womaniya on Government e Marketplace (GeM)', an initiative to enable women entrepreneurs and Women Self-Help Groups (WSHGs) to sell handicrafts, handloom, accessories, and other products directly to Government departments and institutions.**
- **The Womaniya on GeM initiative aims to develop women entrepreneurship on the margins of society to achieve gender-inclusive economic growth.**
- **India has approximately 500 million Internet users and nearly 54 percent of them are more than 25 years of age with higher discretionary income and likely to transact more online. Women constitute 33 percent or 143 million Internet users and control 44 percent of household spending in India.**

Maharashtra Government Signs MoU WITH UKIBC on Ease of doing business between UK and INDIA

- **UKIBC had yesterday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Govt of Maharashtra.** This MOU is about **increasing the connections between UK businesses and Maharashtra that deliver investment, jobs, and economic growth for both.**
- **The MoU was signed during a UKIBC delegation to the Partnership Summit 2019 in Mumbai** where leading UK Businesses at showcased their commitment toward intensifying strategic investment in **Maharashtra.**

Cabinet approves Recapitalisation of Export-Import Bank of India

- **The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on January 16, 2019 approved the recapitalisation of the Export-Import Bank of India (EXIM Bank).**

- The Cabinet also approved an increase in **the authorized capital of EXIM Bank from Rs 10,000 crore to Rs. 20,000 crore.**
- The Government will issue the Recapitalization Bonds to the tune of **Rs 6000 crore for capital infusion in the EXIM Bank.**
- The equity will be infused in two tranches. **First tranche will be of Rs 4,500 crore in FY 2018-19, and then of Rs 1,500 crore in FY 2019-20.**

7-Member GoM constituted for boosting Real Estate Sector under GST regime

- **The Ministry of Finance on January 15, 2019 constituted a Group of Ministers (GoM) for boosting the Real Estate Sector under the GST regime.**
- The GoM was constituted in pursuance of the decision of GST Council taken in the 32nd meeting held on January 10, 2019 at New Delhi.
- The Secretary of the GoM will be **Manish Sinha, Joint Secretary (TRU-II), Central Board of Indirect taxes and Customs (CBIC).**

SBI, other banks agree to finance Nagpur-Mumbai Samruddhi Corridor

- A consortium of banks led by **State Bank of India has agreed to provide finance for Nagpur-Mumbai 'SamruddhiCorridor' expressway project.** Bhushan Gagrani, Principal Secretary in the Chief Minister's Office said, SBI has agreed to lend the highest amount, 8,500 crore rupees. Other lenders include **Punjab National Bank, Bank of Baroda, Bank of Maharashtra as well as the Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) of India.**
- **The state government was falling short of 3,000 to 4,000 crores to reach the target of 26,000 crore rupees.** The consortium of banks has agreed to share that shortfall too. It has solved the major issue of financial support.

PM Modi to inaugurate Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit 2019 on January 18

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the ninth edition of the Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit 2019 on January 18, 2019. The summit will be held at the Mahatma Mandir, Gandhinagar, Gujarat.**
- The Summit will witness presence of Reliance Industries Chairman Mukesh Ambani, Tata Sons Chairman N. Chandrashekhara, Chairman of Aditya Birla Group Kumar Mangalam Birla, Adani Group Chairman Gautam Adani, Godrej Group Chairman Adi Godrej, among others.
- The theme of the Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit 2019 will be **"Youth Connect 2019: Shaping A New India – The Story of Billion Dreams".**

9th International Micro irrigation conference begins in Aurangabad

- **The 9th International Micro irrigation conference began on January 16, 2019 in Aurangabad, Maharashtra.**
- The conference will focus on the **theme of "Micro Irrigation and Modern Agriculture".**

MP launches Rs 50000 crore 'Jai Kisan Rin Mukti Yojana'

- **In Madhya Pradesh, Chief Minister Kamal Nath launched the Rs 50000-crore farm debt-waiver scheme named 'Jai Kisan Rin Mukti Yojana'.**
- It would benefit 55 lakh small and marginal farmers.

RBI further simplifies ECB norms

- In an attempt to go one step ahead in ease of doing business **the overseas borrowing norms have been simplified.**
- The Reserve Bank of India has **rationalised the overseas borrowing norms allowing a uniform borrowing limit of Rs 750 million a year across tenors.**
- It has also broadened the scope of borrowers by allowing all entities that are eligible for **foreign direct investment (FDI) to borrow through the external commercial borrowing (ECB) route.**
- The government has been opening up this sector **to attract capital flows ever since the rupee started depreciating steeply vis-a-vis the dollar since April 2018.**

RBI slaps Rs 1 crore fine on Bank of Maharashtra

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** Wednesday imposed a **Rs 1-crore penalty** on state-owned **Bank of Maharashtra (BoM)** for **non-compliance of Know Your Customer guidelines** and **fraud-classification norms**.
- This penalty has been imposed taking into account the failure of the bank to adhere to directions issued by the RBI, the central bank said in a statement.

Suresh Prabhu inaugurated the 10th edition of the India Rubber Expo - 2019

- Union Minister for Commerce and Industries, Suresh Prabhu **inaugurated the 10th edition of the India Rubber Expo - 2019 in Mumbai on January 17, 2019.**
- **The India Rubber Expo is Asia's largest rubber expo.** The event offers a unique opportunity for Indian companies to meet and collaborate with overseas companies.

PMRPY crossed milestone of one crore beneficiaries as on Jan 14

- The Pradhan Mantri Rozgar Protsahan Yojana, **PMRPY has crossed the milestone of one crore beneficiaries as on the 14th of this month.**
- The Centre's flagship scheme launched on **7th August, 2016** incentivises employers to promote employment generation.

PM Modi inaugurates Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit 2019

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi **inaugurated the ninth edition of the Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit 2019 on January 18, 2019.** The summit is being held at the Mahatma Mandir, **Gandhinagar, Gujarat.**
- The Summit witnessed the presence of Reliance Industries Chairman Mukesh Ambani, Tata Sons Chairman N. Chandrashekhara, Chairman of Aditya Birla Group Kumar Mangalam Birla, Adani Group Chairman Gautam Adani, Godrej Group Chairman Adi Godrej, among others.
- The theme of the Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit 2019 was **"Youth Connect 2019: Shaping A New India – The Story of Billion Dreams"**.
- **Fifteen countries including Australia, Canada, France and Japan** have agreed to be **"partner countries"** this year.
- Unlike past summits, **the United States and United Kingdom will not be associating themselves with the Summit as 'Partner Countries'** this year.

India, JICA sign loan agreements on Japan's Official Development Assistance Loan to India

- **India and Japan-India Cooperative Actions (JICA)** on January 18, 2019 **signed the loan agreements under the Japanese Official Development Assistance Loan Program.**
- The Loan Agreements were signed by Dr. C.S. Mohapatra, Additional Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, Union Ministry of Finance, and Katsuo Matsumoto, Chief Representative, JICA in New Delhi.

The agreements under the Japanese Official Development Assistance Loan were signed for two projects. These are:

- (i) Project for the Construction of **Chennai Peripheral Ring Road (Phase 1)** for Japanese Yen **40.074 billion (around Rs 2470 Crore)**
- (ii) Program for Japan-India **Cooperative Actions towards Sustainable Development Goals in India** for Japanese Yen **15.000 billion (around Rs 950 Crore).**

BHEL and LIBCOIN in dialogue to build India's first lithium ion factory

- Consortium to initially build 1 GWh lithium ion battery plant and capacity will be scaled up to 30GWh in due course.
- **Bharat Heavy Electricals (BHEL)** and **Libcoin** are in dialogue to form a world class consortium **to initially build 1GWh lithium ion battery plant in India.** Its capacity will be scaled up to 30GWh in due course. With this, India has finally taken steps into its energy security and clean energy commitment to the world.

Two-day Agri Vision concludes in Hyderabad

- The 2-day Agri Vision 2019 Conference on envisioning Agro solutions for Smart and Sustainable Agriculture, which was inaugurated by Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu on Thursday, has concluded here on Friday.
- The two day conference was jointly organized by Professor Jayashankar Telangana State Agricultural University (PJTSAU), Confederation of Indian Industry(CII) and Cornell University, USA.

RBI starts two quarterly surveys of manufacturing, services, infra sectors

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Monday initiated two quarterly surveys to examine the current situation including the job scenario in India's manufacturing, services and infrastructure sectors.
- Findings of the two surveys -- Industrial Outlook Survey (IOS), and Services and Infrastructure Outlook Survey (SIOS) -- would be significant for the government and the opposition as the country heads for the Lok Sabha polls in May.

ICICI Bank launches premium savings account for men "The One"

- ICICI Bank has launched a new premium savings account for upwardly-mobile male customers, named 'The ONE'. It is available in two variants - Magnum and Titanium.
- It offers the account holder with a range of benefits including the option of opting for health and term life insurance. It also waives the processing fees for home loans for account holders.

Nepal's Central Bank bans use of large-denomination Indian currency notes

- Nepal's central bank has banned the use of Indian currency notes of Rs 2,000, Rs 500 and Rs 200 denominations, a move that could affect Indian tourists visiting the Himalayan nation where Indian currency is widely used.
- Nepal Rastra Bank on Sunday issued a circular prohibiting Nepali travellers, banks and financial institutions from holding or carrying and trading Indian bank notes higher than Rs 100, the Kathmandu Post reported.

LIC completes the acquisition of 51% controlling stake in IDBI Bank

- IDBI Bank Monday said Insurance behemoth LIC has completed acquisition of 51 per cent controlling stake in the bank, making it the lender's majority shareholder.
- "The deal, conceptualised in June 2018, is envisaged as a win-win situation for both IDBI Bank and LIC with an opportunity to create enormous value for shareholders, customers & employees of both entities through mutual synergies," IDBI Bank said in a BSE filing.
- In August last year, the Cabinet approved the acquisition of controlling stake by Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) as a promoter in the bank through a combination of preferential allotment and open offer of equity.

India will remain one of the fastest growing major economies, says IMF

- The International Monetary Fund (IMF) says India's economy is poised to pick up this year. It is projected to grow at 7.5 per cent this year and 7.7 per cent in 2020, an impressive over one percentage point ahead of China's estimated growth of 6.2 per cent in these two years. The IMF attributed the pick up to lower oil prices and a slower pace of monetary tightening.
- In its January World Economy Outlook released in Washington today, it said India would remain one of the fastest growing major economies of the world. Despite the fiscal stimulus that offsets some of the impacts of higher US tariffs, China's economy will slow down due to the combined influence of needed financial regulatory tightening and trade tensions with the US.

Tamil Nadu to set up Rs 250 cr fund to assist start-ups

- The Tamil Nadu government will set up a start-up fund with a corpus of Rs 250 crore for investments in start-up businesses, as per the new Tamil Nadu Startup and Innovation policy 2018-2023 unveiled by Chief Minister K. Palaniswami on Saturday.
- According to the policy, the first tranche of Rs 25 crore will be allotted in the financial year 2019-2020.
- Called Tamil Nadu Startup Fund of Funds, it will be managed by a professional financial agency like the Small Industries Development Bank of India.

- In addition, a Tamil Nadu Startup Seed Grant Fund (TNSSGF) of Rs 50 crore with an allotment of Rs five crore in the first year shall be created in partnership with financial institutions and universities for supporting early stage financing requirements of the start-ups in the form of grants to fill the gap in fund requirement for research and innovations.

CBDT rejects reports regarding en masse issue of prosecution notices to small companies for TDS default

- The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has clarified that certain news items regarding en masse issue of prosecution notices to small companies for TDS default are completely misleading and full of factual inaccuracies.
- The CBDT said that Mumbai Income Tax TDS office has issued prosecution show cause notices only in a limited number of big cases where more than five lakh rupees of tax was collected as TDS from employees but not deposited with the Income Tax Department in time.

India likely to surpass UK in world's largest economy rankings: PwC

- India is likely to surpass the United Kingdom in the world's largest economy rankings in 2019, as per a report by global consultancy firm PwC.
- As per PwC's Global Economy Watch report, while the UK and France have regularly switched places owing to similar levels of development and equal populations, India's climb up the rankings is likely to be permanent.
- The PwC report has projected real GDP growth of 1.6 per cent for the UK, 1.7 per cent for France and 7.6 per cent for India in 2019.

Yes Bank partners with Maharashtra government for electronic PDS

- Private sector lender Yes Bank has partnered with Government of Maharashtra to onboard PDS shops which are popularly referred to as ration shops onto the electronic PDS initiative through which they can become agents of the bank.
- Under the partnership, Yes Bank will empower more than 20,000 ration shops which can offer last mile basic banking services to more than seven lakh beneficiaries. The bank will cover almost 40% of all the PDS shops across locations like Palghar, Thane, Kolhapur, Latur, Pune and others.

IBBI organises Insolvency and Bankruptcy Awareness Programme at Vadodara

- The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India, in association with the three Insolvency Professional Agencies -- the Indian Institute of Insolvency Professionals of ICAI (lead partner), the ICSI Institute of Insolvency Professionals, and the Insolvency Professional Agency of Institute of Cost Accountants of India -- organised an Insolvency and Bankruptcy Awareness Programme at Vadodara in Gujarat recently.
- A large number of stakeholders, including students, professionals, bankers, and business persons participated in the programme.

India signs 11 MoUs worth \$9.5 million with Afghanistan

- India has signed 11 MoUs worth \$ 9.5 million with the Afghan government this week.
- The MoUs were for infrastructure, public services such as health clinics and governance-related projects.
- These projects are part of the 577 development projects funded by India for 2005-2021 worth \$120 million.

4th Edition of 'India Steel 2019' Expo to be Held on January 22-24 in Mumbai

- The 4th edition of 'India Steel 2019 - Exhibition & Conference' is being organised by the Ministry of Steel, Government of India along with the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) in Mumbai on January 22- 24, 2019.
- The annual steel exhibition and conference aims at developing a road map for the growth of the industry.
- With the theme 'Balancing Steel Demand & Supply Dynamics: Building a New India', the event will highlight the current trends, developments, challenges and prospects of the steel industry.

Nitin Gadkari inaugurates 39 National Highways Projects in Andhra Pradesh

- Union Minister for Road Transport & Highways, Shipping, Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, **Nitin Gadkari inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of 39 National Highways Projects in Andhra Pradesh.**
- These include construction of eleven ROBs **under Setu Bhartam programme.**
- These projects have a length of **1384 kms, and involve investment of Rs 16,878 crore.**

Raghubar Das tables Jharkhand Budget 2019-20 worth Rs 85,429 crore

- Jharkhand Chief Minister, **Raghubar Das who also holds the finance portfolio, on January 22, 2019 tabled the annual budget for the state for the year 2019-20 worth Rs 85,429 crore.**
- Out of the Rs 85,429 crore, the state government has set aside Rs 65,803 crore while the institutional expenditure has been pegged at Rs 19,626 crore.

Cabinet approves setting up of a centralised GST Appellate Authority

- The Union Cabinet on Wednesday **approved setting up of a centralised Appellate Authority for Advance Ruling (AAAR) under the goods and services tax** that would decide on cases where there are divergent orders at the state level.
- **The setting up of a centralised AAAR would require amendments to the GST Acts.**

India to surpass China to become 2nd largest oil demand centre in 2019

- **India will surpass China to become the second largest oil demand growth centre globally in 2019 on back of buoyant auto fuel and LPG consumption,** as per a report by research and consultancy group Wood Mackenzie that released on January 22, 2019.
- In the report, Wood Mackenzie said that India's oil demand growth recovered strongly in 2018, overcoming the aftermath of the implementation of Goods and Services Tax (GST) and demonetisation and contributed 14 per cent of the global demand growth or 2,45,000 barrels per day.

Indian Oil signs Rs 16,641 cr MoU with Tamil Nadu at Global Investors Meet

- **Indian Oil Corporation, is planning to invest as much as Rs 16,641 crore in Tamil Nadu.** The PSU company signed a memorandum of understanding to this effect on Wednesday, **with the state government at the Global Investors Meet in Chennai.**
- R Sitharthan, Executive Director (I/c) and State Head for Indian Oil (Tamil Nadu & Puducherry) signed an MoU with Tamil Nadu for an investment of Rs 7,941 crore over the next five years.

Indian economy may grow 7.6% in FY20: UN report

- **India's economy is expected to grow at 7.4 per cent during 2018-19 and improve to 7.6 per cent in the next fiscal, said a UN report Wednesday.**
- The United Nations' World Economic Situation and Prospects (WESP) 2019 report also expects India's gross domestic product (GDP) to expand by 7.4 per cent in 2020-21.

SBI Card and Etihad Guest tie-up to launch premium card for international travel

- **SBI Card and Etihad Guest, the loyalty programme of Etihad Airways, have joined hands to launch a travel specific Visa credit card for members and Indian travellers.**
- **This is the first international co-brand partnership of SBI Card, the country's second largest credit card issuer.**

Royal Enfield signs MoU with Tamil Nadu Govt

- **Royal Enfield, the global leader in the mid-sized motorcycle segment signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Government of Tamil Nadu.**
- The government will extend fiscal and monetary incentives, subject to fulfilment of the conditions of the MoU.
- **The MoU envisages aggregate investment of Rs 1,500 crore in Tamil Nadu over a period of 5 years beginning May 2016, according to an official statement here.**

Gadkari lays foundation stones for two highway projects worth Rs 1,600 cr in Maharashtra

- Union minister Nitin Gadkari today laid the foundation stones for two highway projects worth 1,600 crore rupees in Mumbai metropolitan region of Maharashtra.
- The projects include eight-laning the **Vadape-Thane bypass** and four-laning of the road connecting Shahapur, Murbad, Karjat and Khopoli.

SBM Bank (India) Ltd becomes first foreign bank to set up wholly owned subsidiary in India

- SBM Group, a diversified financial services provider and the second largest listed banking institution on the Stock Exchange of Mauritius, announced the launch of SBM Bank (India) Limited which will operate as a full-fledged universal bank.
- SBM Bank (India) Limited becomes the first foreign bank in India to obtain a banking licence from the Reserve Bank of India to operate as a Wholly Owned Subsidiary (WOS), a release said.

SC issues contempt notices to RBI for denying info under RTI on loan defaulters

- The Supreme Court on Friday issued contempt notices to the RBI for failing to reveal under the Right to Information Act intelligence received on loan defaulters and details of action taken against banks in connection with fraud.
- In December 2015, a bench of the top court — comprising Justices MY Eqbal and C Nagappan — had asked banking sector regulator RBI to reveal such information in the interest of shoring up public confidence in the banking system and as a deterrent to bank frauds, instead of claiming that it held such information in a “fiduciary capacity” and revealing it would ruin the economy.

Sarvatra Technologies accredited as Best Banking Technology provider

- Sarvatra Technologies, India's leading end-to-end payments and banking solutions provider, has been awarded the 'Best Banking Tech' of the year for its world-class Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) switch platform that played a critical role in the effective nationwide participation in National Financial Switch (NFS) network.
- Sarvatra Technologies was presented the prestigious award in a grand ceremony at 9th India Digital Awards 2019 organised by Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI).

Supreme Court upholds constitutional validity of Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code

- The Supreme Court on January 25, 2019 upheld the constitutional validity of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC).
- A Bench headed by Justice R.F. Nariman upheld the constitutional validity of the code “in its entirety”. However, the apex court said that related parties in the Act should mean a person connected with the business.
- The Bench disposed of a batch of pleas filed by companies challenging various provisions of the IBC.

Consortium of 11 Indian Banks Get Together to Launch India's 1st Blockchain-linked Funding for SME

- A consortium of **India's eleven largest banks to launch the country's first blockchain-linked funding for small and medium enterprises (SME)**.
- The 11 big lenders participating in the initiative include **ICICI, AXIS, HDFC, Kotak Mahindra, YES Bank, Standard Chartered, RBL, South Indian Bank, IndusInd Bank, State Bank of India and Bank of Baroda**. The meetings among the participating bank are being organized by a consortium called the Blockchain Infrastructure Company (BIC).

Government empowers PSU banks to seek lookout circulars against wilful defaulters

- In a bid to prevent big economic offenders like Vijay Mallya and Nirav Modi from fleeing the country, **the government has empowered PSU banks to request lookout circulars (LOCs) against wilful defaulters and fraudsters**, officials said on Sunday.

- The Home Ministry has also authorised the Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO), a **statutory corporate fraud investigation agency**, to request LOCs if it feels the suspect may escape from India.

FDI grew 18% in FY18 to Rs 28.25 lakh crore: RBI data

- **Foreign direct investment (FDI)** during the previous fiscal grew 18 per cent to Rs 28.25 lakh crore, data from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) showed Monday.
- FDI increased by Rs 4,33,300 crore, including revaluation of past investments, during 2017-18 to reach Rs 28,24,600 crore in March 2018 at market value, according to RBI data on '**Census on Foreign Liabilities and Assets of Indian Direct Investment Companies, 2017-18**'.
- **Overseas direct investment (ODI)** by Indian companies increased by 5 per cent to Rs 5.28 lakh crore.

French Development Agency, DEA sign credit facility framework agreement for Pune Metro

- The Department of Economic Affairs and the French Development Agency on Monday signed a credit facility framework agreement for extending bilateral funding to the tune of Euro 245 million towards the Pune Metro Project.
- **Maharashtra Metro Rail Corporation Limited (MAHA-METRO)**, a 50:50 joint venture between the Indian government and the Maharashtra government, is currently executing the Pune Metro Project.
- The estimated project cost is Rs 11,420 crore, of which the loan component is Rs 5,831.5 crore.

NSDC inks pact with Renault-Nissan Alliance to upskill workforce

- **Renault-Nissan Alliance India** has signed an agreement with the **National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC)** to train its workforce in the Alliance plant in Chennai for future technologies.
- According to the statement, Renault-Nissan Alliance will customise an engagement and skilling action plan along with NSDC's network for programme design, development and employment sustainability from the demand side.

Assam government launches credit-linked subsidy scheme for farmers

- The BJP-led Assam government on Monday launched a credit-linked subsidy scheme for farmers.
- The state cabinet recently approved the **Assam Farmers' Credit Subsidy Scheme (AFCSS), 2018**, under which the government will reimburse 25% of the loans taken or repaid by farmers this financial year, with a limit of Rs 25,000. This scheme will cover 4 lakh farmers and involve a financial outgo of Rs 500 crore.

Doha Bank signs MoU with Stock Holding Corporation of India

- **Doha Bank** has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Stock Holding Corporation of India Ltd (StockHolding)**, India's premier custodian and depository participant, to facilitate its global customer base to invest in India.
- Under this tie-up, Doha Bank will offer all banking related services while StockHolding will offer compliance, clearing, settlement and reporting services for all investment activities of customers.

India, China sign protocol for exports of Indian tobacco leaves to China

- **India and China** have signed the protocol for exports of Indian tobacco leaves to China. Quality tobacco on par with international standards is available in India at competitive prices and there is a good potential for export of Indian tobacco to China.
- According to an official release, the protocol was signed during the recent visit of Commerce Secretary, Dr. Anup Wadhawan to Beijing.

India replaces Japan to be world's second largest steel producer

- **India** has replaced Japan as the world's second-largest steel producing country, only behind China, which is the largest producer of crude steel accounting for more than 51 per cent of production, as per the latest report by World Steel Association.

- The report noted that India's crude steel production in 2018 was at 106.5 MT, which is up by 4.9 per cent from 101.5 MT in 2017.
- The rise in India's crude steel production in 2018 means that India has replaced Japan as the world's second-largest steel producing country, as Japan produced 104.3 MT in 2018, which is down by 0.3 per cent as compared to 2017.

IndusInd Bank launches co-branded credit card with PAYBACK

- **IndusInd Bank has announced the launch of 'IndusInd Bank PAYBACK Credit Card', a co-branded credit card in partnership with PAYBACK - the country's largest multi-brand loyalty program.**
- With the IndusInd Bank PAYBACK Credit Card, the customer will not only earn PAYBACK Points on all transactions on the co-branded credit card, but will also get additional PAYBACK Points on transactions made at over hundred PAYBACK partner brands - both in-store and online.

High Level Committee approves Central assistance of Rs 7,214.03 crore to States affected by natural disasters

- **The High Level Committee, chaired by the Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh, approved the additional Central assistance from National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) of Rs 7214.03 crore to 6 States and one Union Territory.**
- The funds allotted to these states are - Rs 317.44 crore to Himachal Pradesh, Rs 191.73 crore to Uttar Pradesh, Rs. 900.40 crore to Andhra Pradesh, Rs. 127.60 crore to Gujarat, Rs. 949.49 crore to Karnataka, Rs. 4,714.28 crore to Maharashtra and Rs. 13.09 crore to UT of Puducherry.

Union Steel Ministry announces to set up Safety Directorate

- **The Union Ministry of Steel on January 28, 2019 announced to set up the 'Safety Directorate'.**
- The decision, regarding the same, was taken during the Consultative Committee Meeting of the Ministry in Goa. The meeting was chaired by Union Minister of Steel, **Chaudhary Birender Singh**.

SEBI proposes relaxed norms for REITs, InvITs to increase access to investors

- **The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) on January 30, 2019 proposed a new set of relaxed norms for Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs) and Infrastructure Investment Trusts (InvITs) to increase access to investors.**
- The REITs and InvITs markets have evolved considerably in the global scenario and these investment vehicles have gained enormously in terms of their market capitalisation. However, **the market for REITs and InvITs are still at a budding stage in India.**
- SEBI notified the REITs Regulations in 2014, allowing setting up and listing of such trusts which are very popular in some advanced markets.
- **However, till date, only three InvITs have issued and listed their units, raising about Rs 10000 crore.** On the other hand, only one REIT is in the process of making a public offer. Despite various relaxations given by SEBI earlier, these investment vehicles have failed to attract investors.

Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank to provide local currency financing in India, Pakistan

- **China-based Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), in which India is the second largest shareholder, plans to launch local currency financing in India and some other Asian nations later this year to reduce cross-border investment risks caused by exchange-rate fluctuations.**
- **The first group of countries to have this new service could include India, Indonesia and Pakistan, AIIB President Jin Liqun was quoted as saying by state-run China Daily.**

Finance commission forms committee to settle Rs 31,000 crore Punjab food account

- **The 15th Finance Commission Wednesday announced the formation of a committee headed by finance commission member Ramesh Chand to find ways to settle the food account of Rs 31,000 crore, which the Congress government inherited from previous SAD-BJP regime.**

- Punjab has been consistently seeking the resolution of food account of Rs 31,000 crore from the Centre. The food account, which the erstwhile SAD-BJP government had taken over in 2017, just before assembly election results, arose because of the mismatch between cash credit availed for procuring wheat and paddy and the foodgrain stocks in the account books of the state procurement agencies since 2004.

GST on Haj reduced from 18% to 5%

- The Union Minister for Minority Affairs Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi announced on January 28, 2019 that the GST on Haj has been reduced from 18 per cent to 5 per cent.
- The move will significantly lower the airfare thus saving Haj pilgrims' Rs 113 crore this year. The Minority Affairs Minister was speaking at the inauguration ceremony of a new conference hall and passport section at the Haj House in Mumbai.

India and states

India, Pakistan exchange lists of civilian prisoners & fishermen in their custody

- India and Pakistan today exchanged the lists of civilian prisoners and fishermen in their custody.
- The lists were exchanged through diplomatic channels simultaneously at New Delhi and Islamabad.
- India handed over lists of 249 Pakistan civilian prisoners and 98 fishermen in its custody.
- Pakistan has shared lists of 54 civilian prisoners and 483 fishermen in its custody, who are Indians or believed-to-be-Indians.

Pakistan, India exchange list of nuclear installations

- India and Pakistan on Tuesday exchanged the list of nuclear installations and facilities covered under the Agreement on the Prohibition of Attack against Nuclear installations between them.
- In a statement, the External Affairs Ministry said, the list was exchanged through diplomatic channels simultaneously at New Delhi and Islamabad.

Lok Sabha passes Indian Medical Council (Amendment) Bill

- The Lok Sabha passed the Indian Medical Council (Amendment) Bill yesterday. It amends the Indian Medical Council Act, 1956 and replaces the Indian Medical Council (Amendment) Ordinance, 2018.
- The Bill is aimed at revamping medical education regulatory system in the country.
- The 1956 Act provides for supersession of the MCI and its reconstitution within a period of three years.

ISRO launches Samwad with students to engage them on space science activities

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) launched a new platform called 'Samwad with Students' on January 1, 2019 in Bengaluru, as part of its enhanced outreach programme.
- Through the initiative, ISRO aims to constantly engage youngsters across India in activities concerning space science to capture their scientific temperament. The new conversation mission aims to inspire students cutting across schools and colleges.
- During the inaugural event in Bengaluru, 40 students and 10 teachers from select schools interacted with ISRO Chairman Dr. K Sivan at the Anthariksh Bhavan.

Cabinet clears setting up of committee to implement Clause 6 of Assam Accord

- The Union Cabinet has approved the setting up of a high-level committee for implementation of clause 6 of the Assam Accord and measures envisaged in the Memorandum of Settlement, 2003 and other issues related to Bodo community.
- Briefing media in New Delhi on Wednesday evening, Home Minister Rajnath Singh said, the committee is expected to be set up in the next three days.
- He also announced the establishment of a Bodo museum and modernization of All India Radio Station and Doordarshan Kendra in Kokrajhar.

Cabinet committee clears continuation of umbrella scheme for family welfare

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has given its approval for continuation of five schemes under the **'Umbrella Scheme for Family Welfare and Other Health Interventions'** during the **Fourteenth Finance Commission period 2017-18 to 2019-20**, an official statement said.
- An overall outlay of **Rs 2381.84 crore** for the scheme will be spent during the **Fourteenth Finance Commission period** and would be funded 100 per cent by the Central Government Budgetary support.

Cabinet approves restructuring of National Health Agency as the National Health Authority

- Union Cabinet has approved the **restructuring of National Health Agency as the National Health Authority for better implementation of Pradhan Mantri - Jan Arogya Yojana**.
- He said, the **National Health Authority** will have full accountability, authority and mandate to implement the **Pradhan Mantri - Jan Arogya Yojana** through an efficient, effective and transparent decision-making process.

PM Modi inaugurates Indian Science Congress in Jalandhar

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the **106th Indian Science Congress at Lovely Professional University in Phagwara near Jalandhar** on January 3, 2019.
- He delivered the inaugural address before Nobel laureates, eminent scientists, policymakers, young researchers and school children, from across the country and abroad.
- PM Modi gave away the slogan of **New India as "Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan, Jai Vigyan, Jai Anusandhan"**.
- The **theme of this five-day mega event is 'Future India: Science and Technology'**.

Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana achieves 6 crore mark

- Vice President **M. Venkaiah Naidu** handed over **6 crore** LPG connection under **Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY)** to **Jasmina Khatoon** from **Shivpark, Khanpur, Delhi**.
- In order to provide clean cooking fuel to BPL households in the country, the **Government launched Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana to provide 8 Crore deposit-free LPG connections to women** belonging to the **Below Poverty Line (BPL) families** with a **budgetary allocation of Rs. 12800 crore**.
- Implementation of **PMUY** resulted in significant increase in national LPG coverage, in general and Eastern States, in particular.

Veer Savarkar International Airport in Port Blair declared as authorised Immigration Check post

- **Veer Savarkar International Airport in Port Blair** was declared as an authorised Immigration Check post for **entry into and exit from India** with valid travel documents for all classes of passengers.
- This decision of the Union Government will open up the **Port Blair Airport for direct international flight and immigration facilities**.
- For this purpose, the Superintendent of Police (CID) of the Andaman and Nicobar Police has been appointed as the **'Civil Authority'** for the purpose of the immigration check post.

India Pharma 2019 & India Medical Device 2019 to be held in Bengaluru in February 2019

- The Department of Pharmaceuticals (DoP), Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers, along with Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI), will organise the **4th International Conference on Pharmaceutical & Medical Device sector on February 18-19, 2019 in Bengaluru**.
- The theme for **India Pharma 2019** is **'Enabling Quality Affordable Healthcare'** and that of **India Medical Device 2019** is **'Med-Tech India: Gearing up for Ayushman Bharat'**.

Punjab Cabinet approves plan to distribute smartphones among youth

- **Punjab Cabinet** approved the modalities for the **distribution of smartphones, with graduating students of government schools, colleges and technical institutions to be covered in the first phase of the scheme**.
- Students would be required to submit a self-certification, stating that they do not already possess a smartphone.

- In addition, **one-time bundled 12 GB data and 600 local minutes talk time (voice) valid for one year** would also be provided under the scheme.

Punjab Cabinet approves online transfer policy for teachers

- Punjab Cabinet led by Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh approved the **Online Transfer Policy-2019 of the School Education Department**, thus ensuring equal opportunity for all employees using online method for seeking transfers.
- The transfer policy would **become effective from academic session 2019-20**.
- The policy would be applicable to all teaching cadre posts i.e. **ETT, HT, CHT, Master, C&V, Lecturer, Vocational Masters, Principals and Headmasters**, except employees on extension of services after attaining the age of superannuation.

Saubhagya Scheme: Arunachal Pradesh's East Siang District achieves 100% electrification

- The East Siang District of Arunachal Pradesh achieved **100 percent electrification** under the Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana (Saubhagya Scheme).
- The information was given by the **Arunachal Pradesh's Power Department on January 2, 2019**.
- The **Pasighat Electrical division of the state** has electrified 2,662 households which were earlier left out till the end of December 2017.
- The division has achieved the target covering a total 71 villages under the district, **excluding Pangin sub-division Nari-Koyu**.

FSSAI notifies new food packaging norms, asks food businesses to comply with norms by July 1, 2019

- The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) on January 3, 2019 **notified the new food packaging regulations, replacing all provisions regarding the packaging requirements prescribed in the Food Safety and Standards (Packaging and Labelling) Regulations, 2011**.
- While notifying the new packaging norms, **the regulator asked food businesses to comply with new regulations by July 1, 2019**.
- The new regulations **bar the use of recycled plastics and newspapers to wrap food articles**.

HRD Ministry constitutes task force to look into suicides of JNV students

- The Union Human Resource Development Ministry on December 31, 2018 **constituted a task force to look into the issues of suicides of the students in Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas**.
- The task force has been constituted under the **Chairmanship of Psychiatrist, Dr Jitendra Nagpal**.
- The task force will look into the circumstances leading to the **suicidal deaths of students residing in the hostels of Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas residential schools**.

Government launches nationwide cleanliness survey 'Swachh Survekshan 2019'

- **Hardeep Singh Puri, Union Housing and Urban Affairs Minister, on January 4, 2019 launched the 'Swachh Survekshan 2019'**, the fourth edition of the annual nationwide cleanliness survey of urban India in New Delhi.
- **Launched as a part of the 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan', the Swachh Survekshan 2019 aims to evaluate the achievements in the cleanliness level in urban areas of the country**.
- **The survey will cover 40 crore people across over four thousand towns and cities**.

New Delhi World Book Fair begins at Pragati Maidan

- **The 27th edition of the New Delhi World Book Fair (NDWBF), which has the UAE's third largest emirate Sharjah as its 2019 guest of honour, is set to enthrall book lovers from January 5 to 13 at Pragati Maidan**.
- **Inaugurating the fair, Human Resources Development Minister Prakash Javadekar expressed happiness that books have not lost their popularity even after the advent of various media like audiobooks and e-books**.
- **Over 20 countries including Canada, China, Sri Lanka, and the US are participating in the book fair**. More than six hundred publishers from across the country are participating in the event.

Odisha to participate as partner state in 'Indus Food 2019'

- Odisha will participate as a partner state in the upcoming mega international food and beverage show 'Indus Food 2019', according to state MSME Minister Prafulla Samal.
- The Indus Food meet is a mega international food exposition organized at India Exposition Mart, Greater Noida in Uttar Pradesh on January 14 and 15. The event is organized jointly by Trade Promotion Council of India (TPCI) and Department of Commerce.

NGT imposes Rs 100 crore fine on Meghalaya Government for failing to curb illegal mining

- The National Green Tribunal on January 4, 2018 imposed a fine of whopping Rs 100 crore on the Meghalaya government for its failure to curb illegal coal mining in the state.
- A senior advocate, who is assisting the tribunal as an amicus curiae in the matter, said a report of a high-level committee was submitted on January 2 before a bench headed by NGT chairperson A K Goel.
- The green tribunal imposed Rs 100 crore fine on the state government as a "deterrent" and for its "inaction" to curb illegal mining in the north eastern state.

Govt allocates Rs 10,900 cr for development of 40 satellite launch vehicles in next 4-years: ISRO Chairman

- Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Chairman Dr K Sivan has said that the Union Government has allocated 10,900 crore rupees for the development of 40 satellite launch vehicles in the next four years.
- Dr Sivan said that Chandrayan Mission will be launched within three months.
- It will land in one part of the Moon which is still unexplored. He also said that the human space flight Gaganyaan is planned to be launched by 2022, the 75th anniversary of Independence.

Secunderabad rly station first in SCR zone to hoist tricolour

- Secunderabad Railway Station became the first railway station of South Central Railway (SCR) zone to hoist a huge tricolour on a 100-foot tall pole at its main entrance here Wednesday.
- This is in keeping with the directive of the Railway Board to hoist the national flag at A1 category railway stations.
- The tricolour was unfurled by senior cabin man R Ashoka Chary and senior technician Gopal Reddy.

International Kite Festival kicks off in Ahmedabad

- In Gujarat, the nine-day long international kite festival kicked off at Sabarmati River Front in Ahmedabad this morning.
- Addressing the inaugural ceremony, Chief Minister Vijay Rupani said, development is touching new heights in Gujarat.
- Governor OP Kohli said, kites give a message to people of achieving new heights.
- More than 150 kite fliers from 45 countries are participating in this edition of the festival.

In Railways' Airport-Like Plan, No Boarding 20 Minutes Before Departures

- The railways is planning to seal train stations just like how airports function, and passengers will have to arrive 15-20 minutes before scheduled departure of trains to complete the process of security checks.
- The security plan - with high-end technology - has already been put in motion at Prayagraj, in anticipation of the Kumbh Mela which begins this month and at Hoobly railway station in Karnataka with a blueprint for 202 more stations ready for implementation, Railway Protection Force Director General Arun Kumar said.

Odisha Agriculture Minister Pradeep Maharathy resigns

- Odisha Agriculture Minister Pradeep Maharathy resigned today after he stoked a controversy for his remarks on the acquittal of the accused in a gang rape-and-murder case of 2011-2012. Quoting sources, AIR correspondent reports that Maharathy has sent his resignation letter to the chief minister's office.

Govt notifies High-Level Committee for implementation of Clause VI of Assam Accord

- **The government has notified a High-Level Committee for implementation of Clause six of the Assam Accord.**
- The clause envisaged that appropriate constitutional, legislative and administrative safeguards, should be provided to protect, preserve and promote the cultural, social, linguistic identity and heritage of the people of Assam.
- **The nine-member committee, comprising of eminent Assamese persons from different fields, is headed by former bureaucrat MP Bezbaruah.** The committee will examine the effectiveness of actions since 1985 to implement Clause 6 of the Assam Accord.

Cabinet approves 10% quota for economically backward upper castes

- Union Cabinet has approved **10 per cent reservation** in direct recruitments and for admission in higher educational institutions for the **economically backward section in the general category.**
- Sources said, the reservation benefit is likely to be availed by those **whose annual income is below Rs 8 lakh and have up to five acres of Agricultural land.**
- The government is **likely to bring a constitutional amendment bill in Parliament on Tuesday** as the quota will be over and above the existing 50 per cent reservation.

NCR launches mobile app to help people navigate through Prayagraj during Kumbh Mela

- The North Central Railway, **NCR has launched a mobile application to help people navigate through Prayagraj city during Kumbh Mela starting from January 15.**
- The **'Rail Kumbh Seva Mobile App'** will also provide information regarding all the 'Mela special' trains that will run during the period.

WCD minister Maneka Gandhi confers National Awards to 97 Anganwadi Workers

- The Union Women and Child Development Minister, **Maneka Gandhi conferred National Awards to 97 Anganwadi Workers at a function in New Delhi on January 7, 2018** for exceptional achievements for the year 2017-18.
- The government had formulated the scheme in 2000-2001 to award Anganwadi Workers at the National and State Levels.

Lok Sabha passes bill to remove leprosy as ground for divorce

- **The Lok Sabha on January 7, 2019 passed the Personal Laws (Amendment Bill), 2018, which seeks to remove leprosy as a ground for divorce.**
- Leprosy is being removed as a ground for divorce as it is now a curable disease as against the earlier notion of it being incurable.

Government to soon make Aadhaar linking with driving licence mandatory

- The Union Government will soon make it **mandatory for linking Aadhaar with driving licences**, as per Union Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad.
- The Minister for Law, Electronics and Information Technology said that the Government is soon going to bring a law that will make the linking process mandatory.

Government to introduce redrafted Citizenship Amendment Bill in Lok Sabha

- Home Minister Rajnath Singh will introduce the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2019 in the Lok Sabha during the ongoing parliamentary session.
- The Bill seeks to provide Indian citizenship to non-Muslims from Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Pakistan.
- The bill was first introduced in Parliament in 2016 and was examined by the Joint Parliamentary Committee.

AAI bans single-use plastic items at 129 airports across country

- **The Airports Authority of India (AAI) imposed a ban on single-use plastic items at its 129 airports across the country.**

- The Authority undertook various steps to eliminate single-use plastic items at passenger terminals and city side. These steps include banning of single-use plastic items like straws, plastic cutlery, plastic plates etc.

Norway PM Erna Solberg inaugurates green compound at Royal Norwegian Embassy

- Prime Minister of Norway, Erna Solberg inaugurated a new green compound at the Royal Norwegian Embassy in New Delhi. Solberg is on an official visit to India.
- The embassy obtained a Green Rating for Integrated Habitat by the Government of India.

Open Acreage Licensing Programme Bid Round-II launched

- Union Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas & Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Dharmendra Pradhan launched NIO and MRSC for Open Acreage Licensing Programme (OALP) Bid Round-II.
- In this bid round, 14 E&P blocks, with an area of approximately 30000 sq. km., are being offered for bidding to the investor community under the investor friendly HELP regime.

HRD Minister approves addition of 5000 more seats in Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas

- The Union Human Resource Development Minister Prakash Javadekar on January 7, 2019 approved an increase of 5000 seats in Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya (JNV) for the Academic Year 2019-20.
- The number of seats in JNVs, at present, total to around 46600. The addition of 5000 seats will mean availability of 51000 seats from AY 2019-20. The Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas are residential schools for talented rural children.

Supreme Court reinstates Alok Verma as CBI Director

- The Supreme Court on January 8, 2019 reinstated Alok Verma as the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) Director, three months after the government divested him of his powers and sent him on forced leave.
- Earlier on December 6, 2018, the apex court reserved its order on the pleas filed by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) Director Alok Verma and NGO Common Cause, challenging the decision of the Central Government to remove Verma as the CBI chief.

India, Norway sign MoU, release Joint Statement

- India and Norway released a Joint Statement on January 8, 2019 after extensive talks between Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Norwegian PM Erna Solberg, during the latter's official state visit to India from January 7-9, 2019.
- The Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Norway paid a state visit to India at the invitation of PM Modi. She was accompanied by a high-level delegation comprising state secretaries, senior officials and business leaders.
- MoU between the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Norway on India – Norway Ocean Dialogue.

Lok Sabha passes Citizenship Amendment bill

- The Lok Sabha on January 8, 2019 passed the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, which seeks to amend the Citizenship Act, 1955 to make illegal migrants who are Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan, eligible for citizenship. The bill has now been tabled in the Rajya Sabha.
- Under the 1955 Act, one of the requirements for citizenship by naturalisation is that the applicant must have resided in India during the last 12 months and for 11 of the previous 14 years.

Lok Sabha passes bill to provide 10 per cent reservation to EWS in general category

- The Lok Sabha on January 8, 2019 passed the Constitution (124th Amendment) Bill 2019 to provide 10 per cent reservation in jobs and educational institutions to economically backward section in the general category.

- The lower house of the parliament passed the bill with over two-thirds of majority, almost after four and half hours of debate. While 323 members voted in favour of the bill, only three voted against it. The bill will now be tabled in the Rajya Sabha on January 9, where proceedings have already been extended by a day.

ISRO plans to set up Space Galleries

- Indian Space Research Organisation, ISRO has planned to set up Space Galleries in various locations in the country.
- The Space Galleries are expected to disseminate the knowledge about space science and technology amongst the citizens of the country.
- Initially, Space Galleries are planned to be established at Birla Science Centre at Hyderabad, Nehru Science Centre at Mumbai and National Science Centre at Pragati Maidan in New Delhi.

Selection Committee chaired by PM removes Alok Verma as CBI Chief

- CBI Director Alok Verma, who was reinstated to the post by the Supreme Court on Tuesday, has been transferred.
- He was on Thursday appointed Director General, Fire Services, Civil Defence and Home Guards.
- The Selection Committee, headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, which appoints the CBI chief took the decision.
- The three-member committee also comprises Leader of the single largest Opposition party in Lok Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge and Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi's nominee, Justice A K Sikri.

Women and Child Development Ministry launches '#www: WebWonderWomen' Campaign

- The Union Ministry of Women and Child Development on January 9, 2018 launched an online campaign, 'Web - Wonder Women' also known as '#www'.
- The Campaign aims to discover and celebrate the exceptional achievements of women, who have been driving positive agenda of social change through the social media itself.
- The Ministry partnered with the Breakthrough and Twitter India for '#www: WebWonderWomen' campaign.

Cabinet approves establishment of three new AIIMS

- The Cabinet on Thursday approved the establishment of three more All India Institute of Medical Sciences, AIIMS to boost healthcare infrastructure in the country.
- Two of them will be set up in Jammu and Kashmir's Samba and Pulwama district. The third AIIMS will be set up at Rajkot in Gujarat.

Centre, six states sign agreement for Renukaji Dam Multipurpose Project

- An agreement for Renukaji Dam Multipurpose Project was signed in New Delhi on Friday among the States of Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi, Rajasthan and Uttarakhand in the presence of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation Minister Nitin Gadkari.
- All the six Chief Ministers were present on the occasion.
- Under the agreement, three storage projects are proposed to be constructed on the river Yamuna and two of its tributaries - Tons and Giri in the hilly regions of Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh.

First manned mission to space by December 2021: ISRO

- ISRO announced on January 11, 2019 that it is well prepared to meet the targets of launching Gaganyaan manned mission to outer space by December 2021.
- Addressing a press conference, ISRO Chairman Dr K Sivan said that a human space centre has been set up for the mission.
- Under the Gaganyaan project, India is planning to send three astronauts to outer space for seven days and bring them back.

Environment Ministry launches National Clean Air Programme

- The Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Dr Harsh Vardhan on January 10, 2019 launched the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP), a time-bound national level strategy for pan India implementation to tackle the increasing air pollution problem across the country in a comprehensive manner.
- The National Clean Air Program (NCAP) aims to cut pollution in the 102 worst affected cities by 20-30 percent by 2024, taking 2017 as the base year for the comparison of PM concentration.

Cabinet approves creation of Vice Chancellor post for India's first rail university

- The Union Cabinet has approved the creation of the post of Vice Chancellor for India's first rail and transportation university, National Rail & Transport Institute (NRTI), which has been set up in Vadodara, Gujarat.
- The Vice-Chancellor shall be the Principal Executive Officer of the institution and shall exercise general supervision and control over the affairs of the institution and shall be mainly responsible for implementation of the decisions of all the authorities of the Institution deemed to be University.

Alok Verma resigns after PM Modi-led panel removed him as CBI Chief

- The sacked CBI Chief, Alok Verma on January 11, 2019 announced his resignation from service, refusing to take charge of the new role as DG, Fire Services.
- The move comes a day after a high-powered selection committee headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi removed him from the post of CBI Director in a 2:1 vote, less than 48 hours after he was reinstated to the position by the Supreme Court after he was sent on forced leave by the government.

ISRO to set up Human Space Flight Centre in Bengaluru for manned missions

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is setting up a 'Human Space Flight Centre' in Bengaluru, which will support its quest of making country's maiden manned space mission a success.
- Gaganyaan, an Indian crewed orbital spacecraft intended to be the foundation of the Indian Human Spaceflight Programme. In its maiden crewed mission, it will send three astronauts to orbit the Earth at an altitude of 400 km, for up to seven days. Gaganyaan is a Rs 10,000-crore project and the space agency has kept a target to conduct the manned mission by December 2021. It will, however, conduct two unmanned missions before that.

Rajyavardhan Rathore launches National Youth Parliament Festival 2019

- Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports, Col Rajyavardhan Rathore today launched the National Youth Parliament Festival 2019 at a function in New Delhi. The festival will continue till 24th of next month.
- The theme of the festival is- Be the Voice of New India and Find solutions and contribute to policy. Addressing the media in New Delhi, Col Rathore said, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his Mann Ki Baat programme in December 2017, had shared the idea of organising Youth Parliaments for young people.

Gujarat becomes first state to implement 10 per cent quota for EWS in general category

- Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani announced on January 13, 2019 that his government will implement the 10 per cent reservation for economically weaker sections of the general category with immediate effect.
- The announcement comes less than a week after the Indian Parliament passed a constitutional amendment bill to facilitate 10 per cent reservation for upper castes in higher education and employment.

Puducherry to ban single-use plastic from March 1

- Puducherry government has decided to ban the production, sale and use of single-use plastic products in the Union Territory from March 1, 2019. The announcement was made by Chief Minister V Narayanasamy on January 13, 2019 after a cabinet meeting.
- The neighbouring Tamil Nadu government had in June 2018 announced that it would ban the use of plastic items including non-biodegradable carry bags from January 1, 2019, to "gift a plastic-free state to future generations".

Punjab government to regularise over 5100 teachers with full pay scale

- In Punjab, the government has said that it will regularise over 5100 teachers with full pay scale next month.
- By regularising over 5,100 teachers, the state government is making efforts to uplift educational standards in the state.

Union Minister Harshvardhan launches special weather services for Kumbh Mela

- **Science and Technology Minister Dr Harshvardhan on January 14, 2019 launched the special weather services for Kumbh Mela** at a function in New Delhi.
- For this purpose, four Automatic Weather stations have been installed at four locations at Prayagraj.

PM Modi releases commemorative coin and stamp on Guru Gobind Singh ji

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi on January 13, 2019 **released a commemorative silver coin of Rs 350 and stamp on Tenth Sikh Guru, Guru Gobind Singh Ji to mark his 352nd birth anniversary.**
- Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, former Chief Justice of India JS Khehar and several Sikh leaders were also present at the event.

President gives assent to Constitution (103rd Amendment) Act, 2019

- The President of India, Ram Nath Kovind on January 12, 2019 gave his assent to the Constitution (103rd Amendment) Act, 2019 which aims to provide reservation in public employment and higher education to economically weaker sections in the general category.
- The Rajya Sabha had passed the Constitution 124th (Amendment) Bill, 2019 that seeks to provide 10 per cent reservation in jobs and educational institutions to economically backward sections in the general category on January 9, 2019.

India's first smart electric cabs Blu-Smart launched in Delhi

- Gensol Mobility has launched India's first ever 100 percent smart electric fleet of taxis namely Blu-Smart in Delhi NCR.
- Blu-Smart is a shared travel solution and will be surge-price free according to the company.
- In the first phase, 70 Blu-Smart cabs will be available in Noida, Greater Noida, Gurugram and Aerocity.

Sikkim launches 'One Family, One Job' scheme

- Sikkim Chief Minister Pawan Chamling on Saturday launched 'One Family, One Job' scheme.
- The scheme envisions employment to a member of every family which does not have a government job in the state.
- Under this scheme, all loan debts in the farming and agriculture sector would be revoked.
- At present recruitments are being made for Group C and Group D posts in 12 government departments.

Teachers, academic staff of tech institutes to get 7th Central pay commission benefits

- The government has approved a proposal to extend the 7th Central Pay Commission benefits to teachers and other academic staff of the state government and government-aided degree level technical institutes.
- This will have additional Central government liability of over 1240 crore rupees. The Centre will reimburse 50 per cent of the total additional expenditure from 1st January 2016 to 31st March this year to be incurred by these institutes for payment of arrears.

Tamil Nadu introduces road safety robot 'ROADEO'

- The Chennai Traffic Police inducted a road safety robot into service on January 14, 2019 for traffic management.
- The robot is named as 'ROADEO'.

Union Minister Harsh Vardhan launches DD Science and India Science channels

- The Department of Science and Technology, along with Doordarshan, launched two science communication initiatives - DD Science and India Science.

- The aim is to launch a 24/7 channel dedicated to science.
- The two channels will have **science based documentaries, studio based discussions, and virtual walkthroughs of scientific institutions**, interviews and short films and will be free to access.

PM Modi dedicates Kollam Bypass of Kerala to the Nation

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated the Kollam Bypass of the Kerala to the Nation.**
- **The Kollam Bypass on the National Highway-66 considerably reduces travel time between Alappuzha and Thiruvananthapuram**, besides avoiding traffic congestion in Kollam town.
- **This is the first National Highway project in the country taken up on a 50:50 Centre-State partnership.**

Odisha celebrates 1st Turtle Festival in Puri

- Hundreds of tourists thronged Puri sea beach here to witness **the first Odisha Turtle Festival held today to create awareness and promote ideas on conservation of olive ridley turtles.**
- **The one-day festival organised by Cox & Kings Foundation in association with Humane Society International/India and Action for Protection of Wild Animals (APOWA)** featured events like sand art and painting exhibitions. Several attractive stalls showcasing local artifacts were also put up at the festival.

India-Myanmar begin Army exercise 'IMBEX 2018-19' for UN peacekeeping

- The second **India-Myanmar bilateral Army exercise 'IMBEX 2018-19'** commenced at Chandimandir military station near here on Monday, a Defence Ministry spokesman said here.
- The Myanmar delegation will form the core group of trainers who will further impart training to Myanmar Army personnel who are likely to serve in UN peacekeeping operations.

Newly built broad gauge railway line inaugurated in Una district of Himachal Pradesh

- Minister of State for Railways, Manoj Sinha inaugurated the **newly built broad gauge railway line between Amb Andora and Daulatpur chowk in Una district in Himachal Pradesh.**
- **The Union Government has increased the railway budget from Rs 108 crore to Rs 385 crore.**

Maharashtra cabinet approves schemes for financial welfare of OBCs and SC/ST communities

- **The Maharashtra Cabinet approved schemes worth over Rs 700 crore for financial welfare of OBCs and the SC/ST communities.**
- The State Cabinet approved eight different schemes to provide financial support in the forms of the individual loan, group loan and interest subvention to OBCs, SCs and STs.
- **It cleared Rs 250 crores for the OBCs, while a sum of Rs 300 crores have been allotted to the SCs/STs.**

DBT, ICAR sign MoU for cooperation in agricultural biotechnology research and education

- The **Department of Biotechnology (DBT)** and the **Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)** signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on January 14, 2019 to increase emphasis on multi-disciplinary research and development activities and nurturing innovations in agricultural biotechnology research and education.
- The Department of Biotechnology has undertaken several activities and programs to promote Biotechnology Research & Development in the areas of agriculture biotechnology.

ISRO launches UNNATI Programme; will launch Kalamsat, Microsat-R satellites on January 24

- National space agency, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on January 17, 2019 launched the **UNNATI (UNISpace Nano-satellite Assembly and Training by ISRO) programme at the U R Rao Satellite Centre, Bengaluru.**
- UNNATI is a capacity building programme on nanosatellite development.
- The UNNATI Programme is an ISRO initiative to commemorate the **50th anniversary of the first United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE+50).**

- UNNATI programme is planned to be conducted by U R Rao Satellite Centre (URSC) of ISRO for 3 years in 3 batches and **will target to benefit 90 officials from 45 countries**.
- ISRO will launch a student satellite called '**Kalamsat**' and an imaging satellite known as 'Microsat-R' on January 24, 2019, marking the first launch of the ISRO in 2019.

Government to set up over 460 more Eklavya Model Residential Schools across the country

- The Union government will soon **set up over 460 more Eklavya Model Residential Schools across the country**.
- Addressing the valedictory programme of the **First Eklavya Model Residential Schools National Sports Meet in Hyderabad**, Union Tribal Affairs Minister Jual Oram said that the government is spending about 25 thousand crore rupees on these schools.

SC relaxes conditions for Maharashtra dance bars

- The Supreme Court on January 17, 2019 **set aside some provisions of a law imposing restrictions on the licensing and functioning of dance bars in Maharashtra**.
- A bench headed by Justice A K Sikri quashed certain provisions of the 2016 Maharashtra law like the mandatory installation of CCTV and a partition between barrooms and the dance floor.

CCI imposes penalty on Chemists and Druggists Association of Baroda

- The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has **imposed a penalty on the Chemists and Druggists Association of Baroda (CDAB) after it found it to be in contravention of the provisions of the Competition Act, 2002**.
- The move was undertaken after a complaint was filed with the **Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Commission (MRTPC) in 2009** alleging that the CDAB has indulged in restrictive trade practices.

Government constitutes Group of Ministers on issues relating to lottery

- The Ministry of Finance on January 16, 2019 constituted a **Group of Ministers (GoM) on issues relating to lottery**.
- The GoM was constituted in pursuance of the decision of **GST Council taken in the 32nd meeting held on January 10, 2019 at New Delhi**.
- The GoM is headed **by Sudhir Mungantiwar, Finance Minister, Maharashtra**.

Election Commission of India launches Voter Awareness Forums

- The Election Commission of India on January 16, 2019 **launched Voter Awareness Forum (VAF) in New Delhi**. Similar **VAFs were launched by the Chief Electoral Officers in the state capitals and by District Election Officers in the districts simultaneously**.
- The VAFs will facilitate members to check their **names and details on the electoral roll through online NVSP portal of the ECI and the voter helpline number - 1950**.

Union Home Minister approves report on use of space technology in border management

- Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh has **approved the report of a task force created by MHA to identify areas for use of space technology in improving Border Management**.
- **Headed by Joint Secretary (Border Management)** and comprising members from BSF, Department of Space and BM Division, MHA, the task force consulted all stakeholders including Border Guarding Forces (BGFs), ISRO, National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS) and Ministry of Defence (MoD) to finalise the report.
- The major recommendations of the report include building capacity in **BGFs to use space resources for security, operational planning and border infrastructure development**.
- To execute the project in a time bound manner, the report has **proposed a short, medium and long term plan for implementation in five years in close coordination with ISRO and MoD**.

PM Narendra Modi launches National Museum of Indian Cinema in Mumbai

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi **inaugurated the National Museum of Indian Cinema (NMIC) in Mumbai on January 19, 2019**.

- The development of the Museum was guided by the Museum Advisory Committee headed by Shyam Benegal. An innovation Committee headed by Praseon Joshi provided an upgrade to the NMIC.
- Built at a cost of Rs 140.61 crore, the museum depicts the journey of over a century of Indian cinema in a story telling mode with the help of visuals, graphics, artifacts, interactive exhibits and multimedia expositions.
- The Museum is housed in two buildings – the New Museum Building and the 19th century historic palace Gulshan Mahal – in the Films Division campus in Mumbai.

Narendra Modi inaugurates India's first private Howitzer-manufacturing facility in Gujarat

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday inaugurated the Armoured Systems Complex of Larsen and Toubro in Gujarat, the first private facility in the country where the K9 Vajra self-propelled Howitzer guns will be manufactured.
- L&T had in 2017 won the Rs 4,500-crore contract from the Ministry of Defence to supply 100 units of K9 Vajra-T 155 mm/52 calibre tracked self-propelled gun systems to the Indian Army under the Centre's 'Make in India' initiative.

Bihar Government lifts ban on sale of live fish in Patna

- Bihar Government lifted ban on sale of live fish, three days after it banned the sale, transportation and storage of all kinds of fish dead or alive in Patna for 15 days.
- The ban was lifted following a directive from Chief Minister Nitish Kumar after reports of growing protests by fishermen and vendors selling fish.

Shehri Samridhi Utsav to begin from February 1; will focus on extending outreach of DAY-NULM

- Hardeep S. Puri, Minister of State for Housing and Urban Affairs, on January 18, 2019 informed that a series of events named 'Shehri Samridhi Utsav' will begin from February 1, 2019 and will go on till February 15, 2019.
- The event, organised by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, will focus on urban livelihoods and extending the outreach of National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM) to the poorest of the poor and the most vulnerable, and facilitate access of SHG members to the other government schemes.

NAS Shibpur to be commissioned as INS Kohassa

- Naval Air Station (NAS) Shibpur will be commissioned as INS Kohassa by Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Sunil Lanba on January 24, 2019.
- The move is being undertaken to enhance the operational capability of Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC).
- NAS Shibpur was established in 2010.

IIT-Hyderabad to launch full-fledged bachelor's programme in Artificial Intelligence

- The Indian Institute of Technology-Hyderabad (IIT-H) has announced the launch of a full-fledged bachelor's programme in Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology from the new academic session, which is a first for the country and only the third globally.
- The Institute was already offering a Masters in Technology programme in AI-Machine Learning (ML).

2nd World Orange Festival begins in Nagpur

- The second World Orange Festival began in Nagpur on January 18, 2019.
- The festival, while offering its famed oranges to the world, will also showcase and brand the exquisite fruit in order to boost its export.

Regional Conference on 'Deendayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme' held in Mumbai

- A Regional Conference on 'Deendayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme' was held in Mumbai on January 17, 2019.

- Programme Implementing Agencies including NGOs and state government representatives from Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Goa were present for the conference.

Indians over 65 and under 15 years can use Aadhaar Card to visit Nepal, Bhutan

- The Union Ministry of Home Affairs on January 20, 2019 announced that **Aadhaar Cards are now valid travel documents for Indians under 15 and over 65 years travelling to Nepal and Bhutan.**
- However, **Indians belonging to the age bracket of 15 to 65 years will not be able to use Aadhaar to travel to the two neighbouring countries.**

15th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas begins at Varanasi

- **The 15th edition of the Pravasi Bhartiya Divas (PBD) began at Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh on January 21, 2019,** giving a chance to the Indian diaspora to participate in the ongoing Kumbha Mela.
- **For the first time in the history of Pravasi Bhartiya Diwas, the event is being held in Varanasi,** the cultural and spiritual capital of India.

Defence Minister launches India's second defence industrial corridor

- Union Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on January 20, 2019 **inaugurated the Tamil Nadu Defence Industrial Corridor from Tiruchirappalli,** taking a major step forward to boost indigenous production of defence equipment.
- The TN Defence Industrial Corridor is a mega corridor, which will link **leading military manufacturing units in five cities of South India, including Chennai, Hosur, Coimbatore, Salem and Tiruchirappalli.** The project will require an investment worth Rs 3,000 crore.

Second World Integrated Medicine Forum 2019 to be held in Goa

- **The 2nd World Integrated Medicine Forum 2019 on the Regulation of Homeopathic Medical Products will be held in Goa from January 23, 2019.** The three-day forum will be inaugurated by **AYUSH Minister Shripad Naik.**
- The forum is expected to witness participation from 20 countries.

Tamil Nadu's 'jallikattu' enters world record

- **A grand jallikattu (bull-taming) event held in Pudukottai, Tamil Nadu on January 20, 2019 entered the world record for the maximum number of bulls released into the sporting arena which was over 1,300** and almost double than the previous record.
- The bull taming sporting event, coordinated by Tamil Nadu Health Minister C Vijayabaskar at Viralimalai saw the participation of 1,354 bulls and 424 tamers.

National Women's Party launched in Mumbai

- **The National Women's Party (NWP), which has been formed with the motto of women empowerment,** was launched in **Mumbai, Maharashtra** on January 21, 2019.
- The party has been founded by **Dr Swetha Shetty,** a medical practitioner-cum- activist from Hyderabad, who would also serve as its President.

Government constitutes NITI Aayog-led Committee to monitor pricing of drugs

- The Government on January 21, 2019 constituted a **Standing Committee headed by NITI Aayog to oversee the drug pricing regime.**
- The constitution of the Committee is seen as a move that would curb the powers of the National Pharmaceuticals Pricing Authority (NPPA) when it comes to regulating the prices of medicines in the country.
- **The Standing Committee on Affordable Medicines and Health Products will be headed by NITI Aayog Member (Health).**

PM Narendra Modi inaugurated 15th Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas in Varanasi

- **The Prime Minister, Narendra Modi inaugurated the 15th Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas on January 22, 2019 in his parliamentary constituency, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh.** In the history of Pravasi Bhartiya Diwas, the event is being held for the first time in Varanasi, the cultural and spiritual capital of India.
- **For the first time, the three-day-long Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas convention is being organised from January 21 to 23** instead of January 9 to 11 to allow the NRIs to visit the Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj and attend the Republic Day parade in New Delhi.
- **The convention was inaugurated in the presence of Mauritian Prime Minister Pravind Jugnauth, the Chief Guest of the event.** Around 6,000 non-resident Indians (NRIs) are expected to take part in the three-day event.

Assam to give 10% quota to economically weaker sections in general category

- The Assam Government has **decided to give 10 percent quota in Government jobs and educational institutes to economically weaker sections in general category.**
- The decision was taken in the cabinet meeting held under the **Chairmanship of Chief Minister Sarbanand Sonowal in Guwahati.**

Kinnar Akhara, the new feature at Kumbh Mela 2019

- **Kinnar Akhara**, a group of transgender saints pursuing religious activities, emerged as a very significant feature at **Kumbh Mela 2019 at Prayagraj.**
- **Akhara has provided a forum to transgenders to pursue a dignified life with religious rituals.**
- **Juna Akhara**, a traditional powerful Akhara of Sanyasi saints and seers, has given the recognition to Kinnar Akhara and has allowed to be part of Shahi Snan procession.

Ministry of Culture to organise auction of Mementos received by the Prime Minister

- National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi, under the aegis of Ministry of Culture, **will organise an auction of prestigious memorable gifts presented to the Prime Minister Narendra Modi from all across India.**
- The amount raised in lieu of auction will be used for the **Project 'Namami Gange'.**

Noted Gujarati poet Sitanshu Yashashchandra awarded Saraswati Samman 2017

- **Noted Gujarati poet Sitanshu Yashashchandra has been awarded Saraswati Samman, 2017,** for his poetry collection in Gujarati named "**Vakhar**".
- This is the 27th edition of the prestigious award instituted by K.K.Birla foundation given every year to an outstanding work of an Indian citizen published during the last 10 years in any of the languages mentioned in Schedule 8 of the constitution.
- The award comprises of a citation and a plaque apart from award money of 15 lakh rupees. **Noted film director and author Gulzar gave away the award at a solemn function at National museum auditorium in New Delhi this evening.**

President Ram Nath Kovind confers Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar 2019

- The President of India, Ram Nath Kovind on January 22, 2019 **conferred the Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar 2019.**
- **The awards were presented to 26 shortlisted awardees including one joint award for National Child Award (now renamed as Bal Shakti Puraskar)** under the category of innovation, scholastic, sports, art and culture, social service and bravery.
- **Under National Child Welfare Awards category (now renamed as Bal Kalyan Puraskar), 2 individuals and 3 institutions were awarded.**

Vice President presents Chhatra Vishwakarma, Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana awards

- **Indian Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu presented the second Chhatra Vishwakarma Awards to students and their mentors and Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY) awards to institutions** at an event organised by the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) on January 21, 2019 at New Delhi.

- The awards challenge young students to come up with novel ideas that have a great potential to impact life in villages through technological interventions at the grass root level.

PM Narendra Modi launches Pravasi Teerth Darshan Yojana

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi on January 22, 2019 launched the **Pravasi Teerth Darshan Yojana** under which a group of Indian diaspora will be taken on a government-sponsored tour of religious places in India twice a year.
- The first batch of 40 Indian-origin people are at the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas and they would be beginning their tour from there.
- Under the eligibility criteria, all people of Indian-origin, aged between 45 and 65 can apply and a group will be selected out of them.
- The first preference will be given to people from 'Girmitiya countries' such as Mauritius, Fiji, Suriname, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica.
- Prime Minister Modi, during his, also inaugurated the Centers of Excellence at Deen Dayal Hastkala Sankul.

Indian Navy commences largest-ever coastal defence exercise – 'Sea Vigil'

- The Indian Navy on January 22, 2019 commenced its largest-ever coastal defence exercise - 'Sea Vigil'-off the Indian coast, ten years after the "26/11" attack.
- The exercise, a first of its kind, is being undertaken along the entire 7516.6 km coastline and Exclusive Economic Zone of India and is involving all the 13 coastal States and Union Territories along with all maritime stakeholders, including the fishing and coastal communities.

Maharashtra Government approves Rs 253 cr Nirbhaya scheme for Mumbai

- The Maharashtra cabinet on January 22, 2019 approved the implementation of the Centre's Nirbhaya scheme, which seeks to curb crimes against women, for Mumbai.
- The Nirbhaya Fund was initiated in 2013 by the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government to implement initiatives aimed at enhancing safety and security of women across India.

15th Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas: India, Mauritius agree upon partnership in various sectors

- The Prime Minister, Narendra Modi inaugurated the 15th Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas on January 22, 2019 in his parliamentary constituency, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh. In the history of Pravasi Bhartiya Diwas, the event is being held for the first time in Varanasi, the cultural and spiritual capital of India.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Mauritian counterpart Pravind Kumar Jugnauth held talks on January 22, 2019 on the sidelines of the 15th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas.
- They discussed ways to boost bilateral trade and investment, including finalisation of a comprehensive economic partnership agreement. They also discussed the ongoing bilateral development co-operation projects.

PM Narendra Modi inaugurates Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose museum at Red Fort

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi on January 23, 2019 inaugurated the Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose museum at the iconic Red Fort in Delhi to mark the leader's 122nd birth anniversary.
- The Prime Minister unveiled the plaque to inaugurate the Museum. The museum showcases various artefacts related to Subhash Chandra Bose and Indian National Army.

Cabinet decides to strengthen NE autonomous councils

- Cabinet has approved the landmark amendment to Article 280 of the Constitution to increase powers of Autonomous Councils in Sixth Schedule areas of North East.
- The proposed amendment will give more powers to Autonomous District Councils of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura.

Ayush Minister Shripad Naik inaugurates 2nd World Integrated Medicine Forum 2019

- **Union Minister of State for Ayush Shripad Naik** inaugurated the **2nd World Integrated Medicine Forum 2019** in **Panaji, Goa** this evening. In his inaugural address, Mr Naik said that India is the second home of homoeopathy.
- The forum is themed on **‘Regulation of Homeopathic Medical Products; Advancing Global Collaboration’**. Around 150 delegates from 21 countries are participating in the event.

India testfires indigenous enemy radar-buster missile

- The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has successfully test-fired the **Long Range Surface to Air Missile (LR-SAM)** from naval warship **INS Chennai** off the coast of Odisha.
- India achieved the milestone on January 18 when DRDO successfully carried out test of the **indigenously Next Generation Anti Radiation Missile (NGARM)** which can hit enemy radars at **100 kilometres**.

ISRO to launch Kalamsat, Microsat-R satellites on PSLV-C44 rocket

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will launch a students' satellite **Kalamsat** and an imaging satellite **Microsat-R** from the **Satish Dhawan Space Centre** in **Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh** on January 24, 2019, marking its first launch of the ISRO in 2019.
- The **Kalamsat** is a **10 cm cube nanosatellite** weighing about **1.2 kg** and has a life span of about **two months**.
- It has been developed by **Space Kidz India** and their team including **Rifath Sharook, Srimathy Kesan**, among others.

India, Maldives agree to continue close cooperation on maritime security, counter-terrorism & medical cooperation

- **India and Maldives** have agreed to continue their traditionally close cooperation on issues of **maritime security, counter-terrorism and medical cooperation**.
- This was decided during the meeting between **Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman** and her **Maldivian counterpart Mariya Ahmed Didi** in **New Delhi** on Thursday.

Navy Chief Admiral Sunil Lanba commissions new Naval Air Base ‘INS Kohassa’

- **Navy Chief Admiral Sunil Lanba** commissioned the new **Naval Air Base ‘INS Kohassa’** at **Diglipur** in **Andaman and Nicobar Islands**.
- The **Naval Air Base** will enhance the maritime capability along with keeping the northern part of **Andaman sea** and the area under surveillance.
- The **INS Kohassa** will be used to handle operations of **helicopters and small aircraft like the Dornier**.
- The airport at **Diglipur** will be utilised for both **Defence and civil aircraft**.

Rajyavardhan Rathore inaugurates National Declamation Contest on Patriotism and Nation Building

- **Minister of State for Youth Affairs & Sports, Rajyavardhan Rathore** inaugurated the **National Declamation Contest on Patriotism and Nation Building** during the **National Declamation Contest**, organised by **Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS)** with the support of **Department of Youth Affairs**.
- The aim of the **National Declamation Contest** is to further strengthen the spirit of **Nationalism** amongst youth and masses for wholehearted participation in **nation building**.

Government to launch Technology Mission Centre on Solar Energy & Water Treatment in Chennai

- **Union Minister for Science & Technology Dr. Harsh Vardhan** will launch three important centres, set up by **Department of Science and Technology (DST)**, at **Indian Institute of Technology, Madras (IITM)** on January 25, 2019.
- The first of these is the establishment of **DST –IITM Solar Energy Harnessing Centre**.

DAY-NRLM successful in reducing poverty through livelihood diversification

- The pace of reduction of poverty in India has speeded up in recent years as per the **Global Multi-dimensional Poverty Index 2018** and as per the note published by the **Brookings Institution**.

- **The Deendayal Antodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM)** is aimed at alleviation of rural poverty through building sustainable community institutions of the poor.

ECI to host international conference on making elections inclusive and accessible

- **The Election Commission of India (ECI) will be hosting an International Conference on ‘Making Elections Inclusive and Accessible’ on January 24, 2019**, in consonance with the 9th National Voters’ Day which will be held on January 25, 2019.
- **Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora and Election Commissioner Ashok Lavasa will be attending** the conference along with heads and dignitaries from six Election Management Bodies (EMBs) namely, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Kazakhstan, Maldives, Russia and Sri Lanka and three International Organisations including Malaysian Commonwealth Studies Centre, UK and International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) and International Centre for Parliamentary Studies (ICPS).

Jan Shikshan Santhans: Government launches new reforms, guidelines to align JSS with National Skill Qualification Framework

- Dharmendra Pradhan, Minister of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Petroleum and Natural Gas (MSDE) on January 24, 2019 **launched new reforms and guidelines for Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS)** to further strengthen the skills ecosystem benefiting those in the underprivileged sections of society.
- **The motive behind the new guidelines is to align the JSSs to the National Skill Qualification Framework (NSQF).** By aligning JSSs to the National Skill Framework, the Government aims to provide standardised training across sectors.

CEMILAC clears Biojet fuel for Aircraft; IAF to operate biojet fuel flight on January 26

- After months of ground and flight trials, **the Centre for Military Airworthiness and Certification (CEMILAC), a premier military certification agency, on January 22, 2019 cleared the use of indigenously produced bio-fuel for use in the military aircraft.**
- P Jayapal, Outstanding Scientist and Chief Executive of the Centre for Military Airworthiness and Certification deliberated on the results of various tests conducted on bio-jet fuel as per procedure recommended by top certification agencies.

Government to develop around 400 abandoned airstrips across country

- **The Union Government has decided to renovate and develop around 400 abandoned airstrips across the country to strengthen air-connectivity.**
- The information was **shared by Secretary of Union Civil Aviation department R N Choubey in Jamshedpur on January 25, 2019.**
- **The first such MoU was signed with Jharkhand government to develop the abandoned airstrip at Dhalbhumgarh.**

Fourth edition of Bharat Parv begins in Delhi

- **Fourth edition of Bharat Parv, showcasing the spirit of Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat will begin at Red Fort in Delhi today.** It will continue till 31st January.
- Tourism Ministry said, the five day event is a part of Republic Day Celebrations and the objective of this festival is to generate a patriotic fervour and promote rich cultural diversity of the country.

I&B Ministry to increase advertisement rates by 11% to private TV channels

- **Information and Broadcasting Ministry has decided to revise the advertisement rates offered by the Bureau of Outreach and Communication (BOC) to private TV channels.**
- The Ministry in a statement said, the revision would lead to an increase in **rates of around 11 per cent over the rates of 2017** in respect of most of the private TV channels.

Millennials will be eligible to vote for 1st time in 2019 general elections

- President Ram Nath Kovind said on January 25, 2019 millennials will be eligible to vote for the first time in the general elections this year.
- Addressing the gathering on the National Voters' Day celebrations in Delhi, the President said these first-time voters will determine the fate and future of 21st Century India. He said it is a matter of pride to be a voter in world's largest democracy.

India's fastest indigenous train renamed as Vande Bharat Express

- India's fastest indigenous train which will run from Delhi to Varanasi has been named as Vande Bharat Express. Briefing media in New Delhi today, Minister for Railways Piyush Goyal said, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will flag off the semi high-speed train soon.
- He said, it was named Train 18 and now it has been given a new name after taking suggestions from the general public.
- He said, it is also energy efficient and the first locomotive-less train in the country. Mr Goyal said, the train will be fully air-conditioned and will stop at Kanpur and Allahabad.

Yuva Swabhiman Yojana: Employment scheme launched in Madhya Pradesh

- On the occasion of Republic Day, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath on Saturday announced the launch of the 'Yuva Swabhiman Yojana' for youths from the economically weaker sections in urban areas.
- In his Republic Day address at the Police Parade Maidan here, Kamal Nath said the youths were the future of India and they had immense talent which needed to be honed.
- "Under this scheme, 100 days of employment will be provided to youths from economically weaker sections in urban areas. They will also be given skill training," he said.

Kerala government to launch NRI pension scheme

- The Kerala government will soon launch a 'Pravasi Dividend Pension Scheme' to provide regular pension to Non Resident Keralites on a one-time payment of Rs 5 lakh, Governor P. Sathasivam said on Friday.
- He announced the scheme during his address to the state Assembly.
- There are 2.1 million migrants from Kerala across the world whose estimated total annual remittances to the state have been found to be Rs 85,092 crore, a study said.
- Of these, close to 90 per cent are in the Middle East.

PM Modi lays foundation stone for AIIMS Madurai in Tamil Nadu

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone for All India Institutes of Medical Sciences, AIIMS at Madurai in Tamil Nadu today. He also inaugurated the super speciality blocks of Madurai's Rajaji Medical College and Thanjavur and Tirunelveli Medical Colleges through video conferencing. Mr Modi also dedicated a dozen Post Office Pass Port Seva Kendras to the nation.
- Speaking on the occasion, the Prime Minister said that AIIMS hospitals have a brand name in providing quality health care for people from Kanyakumari to Kashmir and from Gujarat to Guwahati.

Assam Rifles creates history by showcasing "Nari Shakti" at parade

- The all-women Assam Rifles contingent created history this year by participating for the first time in a Republic Day parade.
- Contingents of the Navy, India Army Service Corps and a unit of Corps of Signals were all led by women officers.
- Capt Shikha Surabhi from the Corps of Signals became the first woman to perform bike stunts, alongside her male teammates as part of daredevils.

Union Minister Dr Harsh Vardha inaugurates 3 specialized centres at Madras IIT

- Union Science and Technology Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan inaugurated three specialized centers at Madras IIT on Saturday.
- The new centers would pursue research on solar power generation and storage, waste water management and solar power based desalination.

Southern Railway bags number one position for cleanliness in country

- The Southern Railway has bagged the number one position for cleanliness in the country.
- The Divisional Railway Manager Shirish Kumar Sinha said, **this achievement was under the category of other than Premium Category trains in the recent Trains Cleanliness Survey conducted by IRCTC on all India level.**

70th Republic Day Observed

- **India celebrated its 70th Republic Day** with a grand display of its military might and rich cultural diversity as the ceremonial parade rolled down the majestic Rajpath in the presence of **South African President Cyril Ramaphosa as the chief guest.**
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid his tributes to the martyrs by laying a wreath at Amar Jawan Jyoti before the start of the parade in presence of Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and the three service chiefs.
- **The overall theme for the Republic Day celebrations this year is the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi and tableaux of many states,** themed on the preeminent leader of the Independence movement who championed the idea of non-violence, were lined up during the parade.
- **Officials said Ramaphosa is the second South African president, after Nelson Mandela,** to attend the grand event as its chief guest.

India signs agreement with OECD for participation in PISA 2021

- **Human Resources Development Ministry today signed an agreement with Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) for India's Participation in Programme for International Student Assessment- PISA 2021.**
- He said, **the student assessment by PISA will ensure learning outcome through education. Students will be selected by PISA through random sampling.**
- PISA is a triennial international survey which aims to evaluate the education system worldwide by testing the skills and knowledge of 15-year-old students.

Maharashtra Govt launches housing scheme for construction workers in rural areas

- **Maharashtra state labour department has launched a housing scheme for construction workers in rural areas.** Officials said the **Atal Construction Workers Awas Yojana (Rural)** is aimed at providing financial assistance of **Rs 1.5 lakh each to construction workers to build pucca houses or to convert existing homes into pucca houses.**
- The rural development department's state management room for rural housing could be entrusted with the implementation of the scheme. "The houses will measure 269 sqft in carpet area. Beneficiaries can build larger houses, but at their own cost," the official added.

World's biggest cyclothon Swasth 'Bharat Yatra' culminates in Delhi

- **The Swasth Bharat Yatra, the world's biggest cyclothon to push people to eat right, culminated in New Delhi today.** The campaign was **flagged-off on 16th October last year on the occasion of World Food Day.**
- The yatra began from six different locations - **Leh, Panaji, Thiruvananthapuram, Puducherry, Kolkata and Agartala on six different tracks in which more than ten thousand volunteer cyclists covered over twenty thousand kilometres spreading the message of 'Eat Safe, Eat Healthy and Eat Fortified.**

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari inaugurates Atal Setu in Goa

- Union Minister Nitin Gadkari inaugurated **four-lane 5.1-kilometer long "Atal Setu", the third Cable Bridge across river Mandovi in Panaji, Goa.**
- **Infrastructure works worth Rs 15000 crore have been sanctioned for the state of Goa.**

Nitin Gadkari laid foundation stone for six-lane access-controlled highway to link Akshardham with EPE Junction

- Union Minister for Road Transport & Highways, **Nitin Gadkari** laid the foundation stone for development of a six-lane corridor from Akshardham in East Delhi to the Eastern Peripheral Expressway junction on Baghpat Road.
- The 31.3 km road stretch is part of NH-709B that will run from Akshardham to Saharanpur Bypass.

Kumbh contributes to infrastructure Development at Prayagraj City

- Prayagraj Kumbh 2019 has changed the face of entire city and suburbs.
- Investment of crores for the infrastructure development in the town by Prayagraj Development Authority has widened most of the roads particularly Sangam, Public places and historical buildings bound roads.
- Vehicular Transport has been strengthened and roads have been freed from traffic jams due to removal of encroachments.

Ministry of Defence launched 'RDP INDIA 2019'

- The Ministry of Defence launched a mobile app 'RDP India 2019' on the Republic Day with the intent of making available the highlights of the Republic Day event to the general public all over the world.
- The app contained information about the Parade on Rajpath, New Delhi, including Order of the March, details of the tableaux presented by different States and Ministries, children cultural performances, fly past and names of recipients of Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar 2019.

SC forms Constitution Bench to hear plea challenging 'Hindu prayers' in Kendriya Vidyalayas

- The Supreme Court on January 28, 2019 constituted a Constitution Bench for hearing a plea challenging the mandatory requirement to recite Sanskrit and Hindi prayers in morning assembly sessions of 1,125 Kendriya Vidyalayas (KVs) across the country.
- The bench of Justices R F Nariman and Vineet Saran observed that the matter of Hindu prayer recitation in Kendriya Vidyalayas required examination by constitution bench and accordingly placed the matter before the Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi to constitute bench.

ECI hosts international conference on Making our Elections Inclusive & Accessible

- The Chief Election Commissioner of India, Shri Sunil Arora and Election Commissioner Shri Ashok Lavasa today inaugurated an International Conference on 'Making our Elections Inclusive and Accessible'.
- ECI is hosting the International Conference on the occasion of 9th National Voters Day which is observed on 25th January every year.

K J Alphons to inaugurate first Swadesh Darshan Project in Sikkim

- K.J. Alphons, Union Minister for Tourism will on January 30, 2019 inaugurate the first project under the Swadesh Darshan Project of the Union Ministry of Tourism at the Zero Point, Gangtok, Sikkim. This project was sanctioned by the Ministry of Tourism in June 2015 for Rs. 98.05 crores.
- The project is officially named as "Development of North East Circuit: Rangpo– Rorathang- Aritar- Phadamchen- Nathang-Sherathang- Tsongmo- Gangtok-Phodong- Mangan- Lachung-Yumthang- Lachen- Thangu-Gurudongmer- Mangan- Gangtok-Tuminlingee- Singtam".
- The Ministry sanctioned 16 projects for Rs. 1349.04 crores covering all North Eastern States under its schemes of Swadesh Darshan and PRASHAD.

Beating the Retreat ceremony held in Delhi

- The four-day long celebrations of the 70th Republic Day concluded on January 29, 2019 with 'Beating the Retreat' ceremony, which was held at the historic Vijay Chowk in New Delhi.
- The Beating Retreat' marks a centuries-old military tradition, when the troops ceased fighting, sheathed their arms and withdrew from the battlefield and returned to the camps at sunset at the sounding of the Retreat.

The ceremony began with the arrival of Indian President Ram Nath Kovind guarded by his well decorated bodyguards.

- This year, Indian tunes were the flavour of 'Beating the Retreat' ceremony.

Prakash Javadekar to inaugurate New Campus for National Museum Institute at Noida

- Prakash Javadekar, Union Minister for Human Resource Development will inaugurate the new Campus of the National Museum Institute at A-19, Sector 62, NOIDA (Institutional Area).
- Since its inception, the Institute has been one of the leading centers in the country for training and research in the field of art and cultural heritage.

PM to lay foundation Stone for extension of Terminal Building at Surat Airport; to attend the New India Youth conclave in Surat

- The Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Surat and Dandi in Gujarat on January 30, 2019.
- During the visit, the Prime Minister will lay the Foundation Stone for the extension of Terminal building at Surat Airport. The Terminal building is being constructed at a cost of Rs.354 crore with an area of over 25,500 square metres.

Nari Shakti is Oxford Dictionary's Hindi Word Of The Year 2018

- Nari Shakti was chosen as the Hindi word of the year 2018 by Oxford Dictionary.
- The announcement was made during a session at the ongoing Jaipur Literature Festival.
- In 2017, Oxford Dictionary had chosen 'Aadhar' as the word of the year.

Ministry of Statistics, NCAER sign MoU for improving official statistical system of India

- The Union Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) on January 29, 2019 signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) for improving official statistical system of India.
- Under the MoU, both the sides will use new data technologies, knowledge generation and knowledge sharing and capacity building in the field of Official Statistics.

UP Cabinet approves construction of Ganga Expressway to connect Prayagraj with Western UP

- Uttar Pradesh State Cabinet on January 29, 2019 approved the construction of a four-lane Ganga Expressway connecting Prayagraj to Western Uttar Pradesh.
- Ganga Expressway will provide better connectivity to Prayagraj. Once completed, it would be longest expressway in the world.
- For the first time in the history of Kumbh, UP State Cabinet meeting was held at Prayagraj. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath chaired the meeting.
- The four-lane expressway will be 600 kilometres long and can be expanded to six-lane in future.
- The construction of Ganga Expressway from Meerut to Prayagraj would cost around Rs 36,000 crore.

Maharashtra Government launches special scheme to curb infant deaths

- The state government of Maharashtra on January 29, 2019 launched a special scheme to curb infant deaths. The government started distributing baby-care kits to the children born in primary health centres and government hospitals, as part of its efforts to reduce the infant mortality rate.
- Speaking after the launch, the state's Women and Child Development Minister Pankaja Munde said that the scheme is only applicable for the first child and it is expected to benefit around four lakh women across the state.

PM Modi dedicates National Salt Satyagraha Memorial to the nation

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi **dedicated National Salt Satyagraha Memorial to the nation at Dandi village, situated in South Gujarat on Arabian sea coast.**
- At the memorial site, he also unveiled statues of **Mahatma Gandhi and 80 Satyagrahis who had marched with him during the historic Dandi Salt March in 1930.**

Western Railway provides 'segway' to RPF personnel

- **The Western Railway has provided Segways, the two-wheeled, self-balancing and battery-powered electric vehicles, to the Railway Protection Force (RPF) personnel deployed at major railway stations in Mumbai.**
- **This is the first-of-its-kind initiative by the Indian Railways.** The western railway has got six Segways and five more are expected in the next few weeks.

Appointments

India

Person Name	Appointed as	Organisation/Country
Vinod Yadav	Chairman	Railway Board
Sudhir Bhargava	Chief Information Commissioner	Central Information Commission (CIC)
Sudhi Ranjan Mohanty	Chief Secretary	Madhya Pradesh
Hemant Bhargava	Interim Chairman	Life Insurance Corporation of India
Pramod Kumar Singh	Secretary	Competition Commission of India
T C A Anant	Member	Union Public Service Commission (UPSC)
Brahm Dutt	non-executive part-time chairman	YES Bank
Daniel Houghes Callahan	Independent Director	Tata Consultancy Services
C.P Joshi	Speaker	Rajasthan Assembly
Justice Sanjiv Khanna	Judge	Supreme Court
Justice Dinesh Maheshwari	Judge	Supreme Court
V Vaidyanathan	MD & CEO	IDFC First Bank
Indu Shekhar Jha	Member	Central Electricity Regulatory Commission
Priyanka Gandhi	AICC general secretary	Uttar Pradesh East
Ravneet Gill	MD & CEO	YES Bank
Skandan Krishnan	Advisor	Jammu & Kashmir Governor
Parthasarathi Mukherjee	MD & CEO	Lakshmi Vilas Bank
Ronojoy Dutta	CEO	IndiGo
Meleveetil Damodaran	Chairman	IndiGo
Deepika Padukone	Chairperson	Mumbai Academy of Moving Image (MAMI)

World

Person Name	Appointed as	Organisation/Country
Nancy Pelosi	Speaker of the House of Representatives	USA
Gita Gopinath	Chief Economist (First Woman)	International Monetary Fund
Su Tseng-chang	Prime Minister	Taiwan
Charles Kupperman	Deputy National Security Advisor	USA
Pawan Singh Arora	Public Relations Officer (PRO) at Punjab Governor House	Pakistan
Justice Asif Saeed Khosa	Chief Justice	Pakistan
Poonam Singh	Regional Director	WHO Southeast Asia

Days in January 2019

Day	Observed on	Theme/Info
World Braille Day	4 January	2019 was the first official World Braille Day
Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas	9 January	Held in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh
World Hindi Day	10 January	
National Youth Day	12 January	Birthday of Swami Vivekananda
71st Army Day	15 January	
National Disaster Response Force Rising Day	19 January	
National Girl Child Day	24 January	'Empowering Girls for a Brighter Tomorrow'
9th National Voters' Day	25 January	No Voter To Be Left Behind
First ever International Day of Education	24 January	Education: A Key Driver for Inclusion and Empowerment.
69th Foundation Day of Uttar Pradesh	24 January	
Republic Day	26 January	
International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust	27 January	Holocaust Remembrance: Demand and Defend Your Human Rights
International Customs Day	26 January	SMART borders for seamless Trade, Travel and Transport.
Data Privacy & Protection Day	28 January	A New Era In Privacy
Martyr's Day	30 January	71st death anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi
World Leprosy Day	27 January, 2019	Theme: ending discrimination, stigma and prejudice World Leprosy Day is observed on the last Sunday of January.

Indexes & Reports

Japan tops list of most powerful passports, India ranks 79th

- Japan, for the second time in a row, has topped a global index for the world's most powerful passport in 2019, while India ranked at the 79th position.
- According to the **Henley Passport Index**, which periodically measures the access each country's travel document affords, Japan retained its top spot as the world's most travel-friendly passport due to the document's access to 190 countries.
- India jumped two positions from 81st in 2018 to 79th this year. **Afghanistan, Pakistan and Nepal** ranked further low at **104, 102 and 94** respectively.

Bengaluru world's most dynamic city, Hyderabad ranked second: Survey

- Bengaluru, is the world's most dynamic city among 131 major established and emerging business hubs globally, followed by Hyderabad that is ranked second with Delhi (4th), Pune (5th) and Chennai (7th) featuring in the top 10 cities, according to the sixth **City Momentum Index published by JLL**.
- At 15th position, **Kolkata was the sixth Indian city ranked amongst top 20**.
- JLL's City Momentum Index measures momentum for 131 of the world's most commercially active cities by tracking a range of socio-economic and commercial real estate indicators over a three-year period to identify the urban economies and real estate markets undergoing the most rapid expansion.

India moves up a notch on global talent competitive index, ranked 80th

- India has moved up one position to rank 80th on the global talent competitive index, but remains a laggard among the BRICS nations, a new survey showed Monday.
- Switzerland continues to top the list, released on the first day of the World Economic Forum (WEF) Annual Meeting here by INSEAD business school in partnership with Tata Communications and Adecco Group.
- Switzerland is followed by Singapore, the US, Norway and Denmark in the top five on the list.

India among the most trusted nations globally: Report

- **India is among the most trusted nations globally when it comes to government, business, NGOs and media.**
- The 2019 Edelman Trust Barometer report, which was released today, ahead of the World Economic Forum meet in Davos, noted that the Global Trust Index witnessed a marginal increase of 3 points to 52.
- **China topped the Trust Index among both the informed public and the general population segments.**
- **India was at the second place in the informed public category and third place in the general population category.**
- In terms of trust in companies headquartered in each market, **the most trusted are those from Switzerland, Germany and Canada.**

India improves its ranking on Corruption Perceptions Index 2018; moves to 78th position

- **India improved its ranking on the 2018 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) by three points and moved to 78th position with a score of 41.** India ranked at 81st place on the Corruption Perceptions Index 2017.
- In the list of 180 countries, China and Pakistan lagged far behind India at 87th and 117th position, respectively.
- According to the Index, **Denmark is the least corrupt country followed by New Zealand; while Somalia, Syria and South Sudan are the most corrupt countries in the world.**
- The Index is topped by Denmark and New Zealand at first and second positions respectively.

World

US, Israel quit UNESCO citing bias

- The **United States and Israel officially quit the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)** with the close of 2018.
- The countries had announced their decisions in 2017 of **withdrawing from the agency, accusing it of bias against Israel.**

China's space probe 'Chang'e-4' lands on Moon's far side

- **'Chang'e-4', a Chinese spacecraft, has made the first-ever landing on the far side of the moon.**
- Earlier in 2013, China landed its rover on the moon, joining the United States and the Soviet Union as the only nations to have carried out a "soft landing" there, **but the Chang'e-4 is the first to touch down on the far side of the moon that perpetually faces away from the Earth.**

Belgium, Dominican Republic, Germany, Indonesia and SA assume charge as Non-Permanent Members of UN Security Council

- Five nations, namely, **Belgium, Dominican Republic, Germany, Indonesia and South Africa assumed the charge as the Non-Permanent Members of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).**
- These five countries will hold a two-year term in the Council with effect from January 1, 2019. **This will be the Dominican Republic's first time on the Security Council.** The other four countries have previously served on the body.

Pakistan abolishes visa on arrival for Afghans

- **Pakistan on January 3, 2019 abolished the long-standing facility of visa on arrival for nationals of Afghanistan.**
- The Immigration Wing of the Federal Investigation Agency cited increased security risks from the western border as a reason for the move.
- Furthermore, **the government also restricted the movement of Afghan nationals in Pakistan and stopped issuance of visas at airports and border crossing points.**

Arunima Sinha becomes first woman amputee to scale Mount Vinson

- **Arunima Sinha**, the Indian mountaineer who became the world's first woman amputee to climb Mount Everest in 2013, has now **become the first woman amputee to climb Mount Vinson, highest peak of Antarctica.**
- Sinha is a national level volleyball player who had one of her legs amputated in 2011 after she was pushed from a running train by dacoits she had resisted.

In historic first, Malaysia's king Sultan Muhammad V steps down

- **Malaysia's king has abdicated, royal officials said Sunday, in a historic first for the country** that ended weeks of speculation about his future after he took medical leave.
- **Sultan Muhammad V's decision marks the first time a king has abdicated in the Muslim-majority country** since it gained independence from Britain in 1957.
- The rotating monarchy system has been in place since independence from Britain in 1957, and **Sultan Muhammad V is the first monarch to have renounced the throne.**

Egypt opens West Asia's largest cathedral in its New Administrative Capital

- **Egypt has opened West Asia's largest cathedral in its New Administrative Capital, 45 kilometres east of Cairo.** President Abdul Fattah al-Sisi inaugurated the newly-built Cathedral of Nativity and also a mosque on January 6, 2018, on the **eve of Coptic Christmas.**
- The Grand Sheikh of Al-Azhar, the world's primary seat of learning for Sunni Muslims, said that the two places of worship stand as a symbol in the face of attempts to undermine the country's stability and sectarian seditions.

Global Aviation Summit with theme 'Flying for All' to be held in Mumbai

- **In a first, Global Aviation Summit 2019 with the theme "Flying for all" will be organised by the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA)** in collaboration with FICCI from January 15-16, 2019 in **Mumbai, India.**
- The summit is supported by International **Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), Federal Aviation Administration of US (FAA), International Air Transport Association (IATA), Civil Air Navigation Services Organisation (CANSO), Airports Council International (ACI)** and **Association of Asia Pacific Airlines (AAPA).**

World Bank President Jim Yong Kim to step down on Feb 1

- In a surprise move, **World Bank President Jim Yong Kim announced that he will step down from his position on February 1, 2019,** much before the end of his term in 2022. Kim, 58, has been in this position for over six years now.
- In a statement, the **World Bank said he will join a firm and focus on increasing infrastructure investments in developing countries.**

Guatemala to withdraw from UN-backed anti-corruption commission

- **Guatemala has said it is withdrawing from a UN-backed anti-corruption commission.** It has given the **UN body's staff 24 hours to leave the country.**
- **President Jimmy Morales accused the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala,** commonly known as CICIG, of polarising the country and putting its security at risk.

Macedonia approves deal to rename itself North Macedonia

- **Macedonia late Friday fulfilled its part of a historic deal that will pave its way to NATO membership and normalize relations with neighboring Greece,** after lawmakers approved constitutional changes to rename the **country North Macedonia.**
- The move was hailed by NATO and the European Union, which had lobbied heavily for Macedonia to back the agreement despite strong criticism from the country's main opposition party, and by Greece's prime minister who has invested heavily in the deal.

India-Central Asia Dialogue: India, 5 Central Asian nations back inclusive peace process in Afghanistan

- **India and the five Central Asia nations** on January 13, 2019 showed their support **for the inclusive peace process in Afghanistan following the first ever India-Central Asia Dialogue**. These five Central Asia nations are **Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan**.
- The Dialogue was attended by the **Foreign Ministers of Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan and the First Deputy Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan**. The Indian side was represented by Union External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj.

NASA's Hubble Space Telescope's premier camera shuts down

- The **main camera onboard NASA's Hubble Space Telescope has been shut down after it encountered a hardware problem**.
- The international space agency, however, in a statement said that the telescope will continue to perform science observations with its other three active instruments.

Tulsi Gabbard, first Hindu elected to US Congress to run for President in 2020

- **Tulsi Gabbard, the first Hindu elected to US Congress and a four-time Democratic lawmaker, has said she will run for President in 2020**, becoming the latest member of her party to challenge Republican President Donald Trump.
- The 37-year-old said that she will formally announce her candidacy within a week. The Iraqi war veteran is the second woman after Senator Elizabeth Warren to enter the presidential race from the Democratic party.

World Economic Forum annual meet to begin in Davos

- **The World Economic Forum (WEF) annual meet is scheduled to begin in Davos from January 21, 2019.**
- The world leaders from across the globe are expected to be present at the ski resort town on the Swiss Alps for five days to discuss what's ailing the world amid fears of the global economy sleepwalking into a crisis.

Rio de Janeiro named as first World Capital of Architecture for 2020

- The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) **has named the Brazilian city of Rio de Janeiro as the World Capital of Architecture for 2020**.
- **Rio will be the first city to receive the title under a programme launched together by UNESCO and the International Union of Architects (UIA) in November 2018**. The city beat **Paris and Melbourne** to get the position.

Thai king signs decree approving first election since coup

- **Thailand's king has issued a royal decree endorsing the first general election since a 2014 coup**, the palace announced on January 23, 2019, with the date of the long-delayed poll expected to be announced imminently.
- The decree, published in the Royal Gazette, called for a general "election of members of parliament" and gives the kingdom's Election Commission five days to announce when it will hold the much-anticipated poll.

Israel, US successfully test ballistic missile interceptors

- The **Israeli and US defence ministries** announced on January 22, 2019 **that they have successfully tested ballistic missile interceptors deployed at Israeli airbases**.
- The tests came a day after the latest deadly exchange of fire between Israel and Iranian forces operating in Syria.

China clones five gene-edited monkeys

- **Scientists in China have cloned five monkeys for human disease research. The research team edited genes of monkeys to induce several human diseases like Alzheimer's** claiming that it would help in medical research.
- This experiment may likely to raise fresh ethical concerns about gene-editing. As per reports, this is **the first time multiple clones had been made from a gene-edited monkey for biomedical research**.

UN chief warns against losing the race on climate change

- **United Nations chief Antonio Guterres on January 24, 2019 warned that the world is "losing the race" on climate change** and demanded that governments make bolder commitments beyond the Paris accord.
- UN chief said that he is not hopeful that nations would find the resolve but stressed that world needs political will and governments should understand that this is the most important priority of our times.

UAE, Saudi Arabian central banks launch common digital currency called 'Aber'

- **The central banks of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Saudi Arabia have launched a common digital currency called 'Aber'**, which will be used in financial settlements between the two countries through Blockchains and Distributed Ledgers technologies.
- The UAE central bank said in a statement that it will establish an additional means for the central financial transfer systems of the two countries and enable banks to directly deal with each other in conducting financial remittances.

Sports

Virat Kohli beats Sachin Tendulkar to become the fastest to reach 19000 international runs

- Indian skipper Virat Kohli failed to kickstart 2019 on an impressive note as he was dismissed by Josh Hazlewood for 23 on Day 1 of the 4th Test in Sydney against Australia.
- Before seeing his innings come to an end, however, **Kohli bagged another major record to his name as he became the fastest to reach 19000 international runs**, surpassing his idol Sachin Tendulkar in the list to claim the summit position.
- **The Indian captain broke several records in 2018 and has started off the new year with another big one.**

80th National Table Tennis Championship begins in Cuttack

- **The 80th National Table Tennis Championship began at Jawaharlal Nehru Indoor Stadium in Cuttack on Friday.**
- Medal winners at Commonwealth Games and Asian Games **Manika Batra, Senior players like Sharath Kamal, Madhuriba Patkar, Olympian Ankita Das** are some of the key players who will be in the limelight during the event.

Sunil Chhetri strikes twice in India's first Asian Cup win since 1964

- **India kicked-off their AFC Asian Cup campaign on a high as the Blue Tigers secured a thumping 4-1 win over Thailand.** A brace from Bengaluru FC skipper Sunil Chhetri and a goal each from Anirudh Thapa and Mizo sniper Jeje Lalpekhlua rounded **India's first win in the tournament since 1964.**
- In a game which lived up to its hype, it was an evenly matched first half after which the Blue Tigers decimated their opponents in the final 45 mins and open their account with three crucial points.

India win first series on Australian soil after SCG Test ends in a draw

- **India officially win a Test series in Australia for the first time after turning the final match into a non-result.**
- India played their maiden Test series against Australia in 1947 and were handed a 4-0 drubbing
- **In total, India have toured Australia 12 times (including the 2018-19 tour)**
- India were dominant in all three departments – batting, bowling and fielding

ICC Announces USA Cricket as 105th Member

- **The International Cricket Council (ICC) on January 8, 2019 announced USA Cricket as its 105th member.**
- The development is a **historical milestone for the governing body established in 2017 to unify and develop the cricket community in the United States following the expulsion of USACA.**
- **USA Cricket's application to become the 93rd Associate Member in accordance with the ICC Constitution was approved by ICC Members** following the Membership Committee's recommendation to the ICC Board late last year and is implemented with immediate effect.

Egypt to host 2019 Africa Cup of Nations

- **Egypt will host the 2019 Africa Cup of Nations between June 15 and July 13, 2019.** Confederation of African Football (CAF) President Ahmad Ahmad made the announcement in Senegalese capital Dakar on January 8, 2019.
- **The CAF executive committee preferred Egypt to South Africa as replacement for original hosts Cameroon,** who were dropped due to delays in preparations and concerns over security.

Mary Kom becomes 'World No 1' Boxer in latest AIBA World Rankings

- **MC Mary Kom became the World No 1 Boxer in 45-48 kg category in the latest International Boxing Association's (AIBA) World Rankings released** on January 10, 2019.
- Mary Kom was placed by AIBA at top of the charts in the 45-48 kg category weight division with 1700 points.
- **'Magnificent Mary'** became the most successful boxer in world championships history when she claimed the 48kg category top honours in November 2018, her unprecedented sixth world title triumph.
- **She is also the only woman boxer to have won a medal in each one of the seven world championships. She once won silver.**

ICC offers amnesty for Sri Lankan cricketers to report match-fixing approaches

- **The International Cricket Council (ICC) announced on January 10, 2019 that it would be giving a 15-day amnesty** to participants who have previously failed to report any information concerning corrupt conduct in **Sri Lankan cricket.**
- The amnesty, which will run from 16-31 January, will apply to all participants under both the ICC and Sri Lankan Cricket Anti-Corruption codes.

Harendra Singh removed as head coach of Indian men's hockey team

- Indian men's hockey coach **Harendra Singh was on January 9, 2019 sacked from the position and offered the task of helming the junior squad by the national federation.**
- Explaining the sudden decision, Hockey India said in a statement that though the year 2018 was very disappointing for the Indian Men's Hockey Team with results not going as expected, they believe investing in the junior program will reap long-term benefits.

IWF president named as Chef de Mission for Tokyo Olympics

- **President of the Indian Weightlifting Federation (IWF), Birendra Prasad Baishya, has been named Chef de Mission for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.**
- IWF Secretary Sahdev Yadav said in a release that it is for the first time that the Weightlifting has been accorded with the honour of Chef de Mission for the Olympics.

Virat Kohli, Ravi Shastri receive honorary membership of Sydney Cricket Ground

- **India skipper Virat Kohli and coach Ravi Shastri today received the honorary membership of the Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG) for their contribution to the sport of cricket.**
- **The only other international cricketers to be granted the honorary membership of the SCG are Sachin Tendulkar and Brian Lara of the West Indies.**

8-year-old Kartik Singh becomes youngest to win Junior World title in golf

- **8-year-old Kartik Singh has won the under-8 category at the Kids' Golf World Championship organised by US kids Golf in Malaysia,** which makes him the youngest Indian to win the title.
- Kartik is well known all across DLF Golf and country club for his dedication and hard work.
- **Winner of US Kids World Junior Championship 2018 in an 8-year category,** thereby becoming the **youngest Indian ever do so.**

10-year-old Abhinav Shaw becomes youngest gold medallist in Khelo games

- **10-year-old, Abhinav Shaw teamed up Mehuli Ghosh and won the gold medal in 10 m air rifle mixed team event in Khelo India Youth Games on Sunday.** This makes him the youngest gold medallist at Khelo Games.
- The sixth-standard student had to bide his time to get on the range and display his talent, not being among the 16 shooters chosen to compete in the individual events in either Junior (under-21) and Youth (under-17) categories.

Khelo India: Maharashtra tops Medal tally with 177 medals

- **Maharashtra is leading in the Medal tally of Khelo India Youth Games with 177 Medals including 64 Gold as on January 16, 2019.**
- **Delhi is on number 2 with 121 medals including 47 Gold, and Haryana is on number 3 with 110 Medals including 37 Gold.**
- In semi-finals Maharashtra beat Punjab 7 - 6 and Delhi beat Gujarat 7 - 6. League matches of Basketball.
- Rajasthan and Haryana have won their matches.

Vinesh Phogat becomes first Indian athlete to be nominated in Laureus World Comeback of Year Award

- **Indian star wrestler Vinesh Phogat on January 17, 2019 became the first Indian athlete to be nominated for the prestigious Laureus World Comeback of the Year Award.**
- Vinesh has been nominated in "Laureus World Sporting Comeback" category for the year 2019 and will be competing for the award with some of the world's greatest sportspersons including golfer Tiger Woods, Canadian snowboarder Mark McMorris, American alpine ski racer Lindsey Vonn, Japanese figure skater Yuzuru Anyu and Dutch para-snowboarding star Bibian Mentel-Spee.

Ankita Raina wins ITF's tournament in Singapore

- **India's Ankita Raina has won the International Tennis Federation's 25,000-dollar Women's tournament in Singapore.**
- In the final faceoff on January 20, 2019, Ankita defeated top seed and world number 122 **Arantxa Rus** of the Netherlands, 6-3, 6-2. She toppled four seeded players in the tournament to win her first title of the season and eighth overall.

Virat Kohli named ICC Test, ODI Player and Cricketer of the year 2018

- **Indian skipper Virat Kohli on January 22, 2019 became the first cricketer to win all the top three ICC individual awards including the Sir Garfield Sobers Trophy for ICC Cricketer of the Year, the ICC Men's Test Player of the Year and the ICC ODI Player of the Year for his performances in 2018.**
- **This is the second consecutive time that he has won the Sir Garfield Sobers Trophy for ICC Cricketer of the Year.** This was also his second successive ODI Player of the Year award.
- **Besides, Indian wicketkeeper Rishabh Pant claimed the ICC's Emerging Cricketer of the Year award.**

BCCI announces bonus of Rs 20 lakh each for senior selection committee members

- The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) **announced a bonus of Rs 20 lakh each for the senior selection committee members following India's maiden Test series win in Australia.**
- The selection committee comprises **Chairman MSK Prasad, Devang Gandhi, Jatin Paranjpe, Gagan Khoda and Sandeep Singh.**
- Virat Kohli led India to a historic 2-1 win in the four-Test series before capping the Australian tour with a maiden 2-1 triumph in the ODI series.
- **The Chairman of the Committee Of Administrator (CoA), Vinod Rai lauded the selectors for picking a balanced Indian squad during the Test and ODI series in Australia.**

Veteran South African all-rounder Johan Botha retires from all forms of cricket

- **Veteran South African all-rounder Johan Botha has announced his immediate retirement from all forms of cricket.** The cricketer cited wear and tear on his body and sheer physical fatigue as the main reason behind the decision.

- **Johan Botha had switched nationalities in 2012, to give a shot to his talent in the Australian cricketing circuit.**

Novak Djokovic defeats Rafael Nadal to earn his seventh Australian title

- **Novak Djokovic claimed a record seventh Australian Open crown on Sunday as he demolished Rafael Nadal 6-3, 6-2, 6-3 in his most dominant Grand Slam win in his long rivalry with the Spaniard.**
- **The peerless Serb broke Nadal five times at a stunned Rod Laver Arena while conceding only a single break point to clinch his 15th Grand Slam title and third in succession after winning Wimbledon and the US Open.**

Naomi Osaka wins Australian Open women's singles

- **Japan's Naomi Osaka wins Australian Open 2019 Women's Singles title after defeating Petra Kvitova.**
- **Petra Kvitova tried unsuccessfully to shake Naomi Osaka.** Kvitova earned five break points in the first set, which she could not convert, and saved three championship points in the second, which she ultimately was unable to capitalize on.
- **Osaka came into this tournament last year ranked No. 72.** When the new world rankings come out Monday, Osaka, the reigning US Open champion, **will become the first singles player, male or female, from Japan to reach No. 1.**

Saina Nehwal wins Indonesia Masters 2019

- **Ace shuttler Saina Nehwal claimed her first BWF title in two years after three-time world champion Carolina Marin of Spain limped out of the Indonesia Masters final** due to a leg injury, in Jakarta on Sunday.
- **The London Olympics bronze medallist was trailing 4-10 in the opening game when Marin decided to withdraw from the contest.**

ICC bans Ambati Rayudu from bowling in international cricket with immediate effect

- **Part-time bowler Ambati Rayudu was banned from bowling in international cricket by the International Cricket Council (ICC)** after he failed to submit a test of his bowling action.
- **He was suspended from bowling on an immediate basis by ICC.**

Malaysia stripped of right to host 2019 World Para Swimming Championships over Israel stance

- **Malaysia was stripped of the right to host the 2019 World Para Swimming Championships** for threatening to refuse to allow Israeli athletes to take part in the event.
- **The International Paralympic Committee announced the decision after the Malaysian authorities failed to provide the necessary guarantees that Israeli Para swimmers could participate safely in the Championships, free from discrimination.**

Nagaland CM inaugurates state's first Astro Turf Football Pitch

- **Nagaland today got its first Astro Turf Football Pitch at Indira Gandhi Stadium in Kohima** on the occasion of 100th Birth Anniversary of the legendary footballer, Dr. T. Ao .
- **Inaugurating the Astro Turf Football Pitch today, Nagaland Chief Minister Mr. Neiphiu Rio said it is a landmark occasion for the state to have its first Astro Turf Pitch and a dream come true.**

Awards & Honors

Government honours outstanding young entrepreneurs with National Entrepreneurship Awards

- **The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship hosted the third edition of the National Entrepreneurship Awards in New Delhi** on January 4, 2019.

- The awards recognise and honor outstanding **young first-generation entrepreneurs and those who have contributed immensely in building the entrepreneurship ecosystem.**
- A total of 43 awards were presented this year, which include 39 awards for Young Entrepreneurs in different sectors and four awards for Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Builders.
- **The winners received a trophy, certificate and cash prizes ranging from Rs 5-10 lakhs.** There were also special awards for women, persons with disability, scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and entrepreneurs from areas with limited opportunities.

2019 Golden Globe Awards: Bohemian Rhapsody wins Best Picture Drama

- **The 76th Annual Golden Globe Awards were announced on January 7, 2019 at the Beverly Hilton Hotel in Beverly Hills, California, the United States of America.** These annual awards honour the best in Motion Pictures and Television for the year 2018.
- **This year's event was hosted by actors Andy Samberg and Sandra Oh,** who took over from 2018 host, comedian Seth Meyers. Oh joined a small group of actors who won an award in the same ceremony they hosted.

Film Category

Category	Awardees
Best Motion Picture Drama	Bohemian Rhapsody
Best Motion Picture Musical/Comedy	Green Book
Best Director in Motion Picture-Drama	Alfonso Cuaron (Roma)
Best Actress in Motion Picture-Drama	Glen Close (The Wife)
Best Actor in Motion Picture-Drama	Rami Malek (Bohemian Rhapsody)

Television Category

Category	Awardees
Best Television Series, Drama	The Americans
Best Television Series – Musical/ Comedy	The Kominsky Method
Best Television Limited Series/ Motion Picture made for Television	Assassination of Gianni Versace: The American Crime Story
Best Actress in Limited Series/ Motion Picture made for Television	Patricia Arquette (Escape at Dannemora)
Best Actor in Limited Series/ Motion Picture made for Television	Darren Criss (Assassination of Gianni Versace: The American Crime Story)
Best Actress in Television Series - Drama	Sandra Oh (Killing Eve)

Asha Parekh, Farooque Shaikh to be honoured by Bimal Roy Memorial and Film Society

- **Veterans Asha Parekh and Farooque Shaikh will be honoured by the Bimal Roy Memorial and Film Society** on January 8, 2018 to commemorate the 52nd death anniversary of the renowned filmmaker.
- The Bimal Roy Memorial and Film Society was instituted 22 years ago in memory of the late filmmaker, Bimal Roy. Its aim is to reward unsung heroes of the film industry.

Journalist Dinu Randive conferred with lifetime achievement award

- **Veteran journalist Dinu Randive has been conferred with the lifetime achievement award by the Mantralaya and Vidhimandal Vartahar Sangh**, an association of journalists covering Maharashtra legislature and secretariat.
- Randive started his journalistic career in 1956. He also participated in the freedom struggle, the Sanyukta Maharashtra movement and the Goa liberation movement.

PM Narendra Modi conferred with first-ever Philip Kotler Presidential Award

- **The Prime Minister Narendra Modi** was on January 14, 2019 **conferred with the first-ever Philip Kotler Presidential Award**.
- The Award focuses on the triple bottom-line of **'People, Profit and Planet'**. The award will be offered annually to the leader of a Nation.

Namita Gokhale wins Sushila Devi Literature Award

- **Writer Namita Gokhale has won the Sushila Devi Literature Award** for her novel "Things to Leave Behind".
- She was awarded in the **'Best Book of Fiction Written by a Woman Author'** category at the inaugural edition of **Bhopal Literature and Art Festival (BLF)** that began in Bhopal on January 12, 2019.
- The festival, a brainchild of former bureaucrat Raghav Chandra, is being held at the Multi Art Centre of the Bharat Bhawan here.

Centre announces Gandhi Peace Prize awardees for 2015-18

- After a gap of four years, **the Centre on Wednesday announced the awardees for the prestigious Gandhi Peace Prize for 2015 to 2018.**
- While **Vivekananda Kendra**, Kanyakumari, won the award **for 2015 for rural development and education.**
- For 2016, the award has been jointly given to **Akshaya Patra Foundation** for providing mid-day meals to children across the country and **Sulabh International** for its work towards emancipation of manual scavengers, **the Ministry of Culture announced.**
- For 2017, the award has been given to **Ekai Abhiyan Trust** for its contribution to education for rural and tribal children.
- And for 2018, to **WHO Goodwill Ambassador Yohei Sasakawa** for his role in leprosy eradication.

India's Satyarup becomes world's youngest mountaineer to climb 7 peaks, 7 volcano summits

- **Mountaineer Satyarup Siddhanta today conquered Antarctica's highest point, Mount Sidley.** With this feat, **he became the first Indian and youngest man to climb the seven highest peaks and volcanic summits across all continents.**
- According to the in-Reach Satellite, Communicator Satyarup was carrying, he summited Mount Sidley at 6. 28 in the morning Indian Standard Time at a temperature of minus 40-degree Celsius.

Bharat Ratna CNR Rao chosen for first Sheikh Saud International Prize for Materials

- Eminent Indian scientist, Chintamani Nagesa Ramachandra Rao, popularly known as CNR Rao, was on January 18, 2019 chosen for the first Sheikh Saud International Prize for Materials Research by the Centre for Advanced Materials of the United Arab Emirates (UAE).
- The award will be presented to Rao by Sheikh Saud bin Saqr Al Qasimi, the ruler of one of UAE's seven emirates Ras Al Khaima at the International Workshop on Advanced Materials on February 25, 2019.

Government institutes Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar

- The government has instituted an annual award titled Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar.
- It will be announced every year on 23rd January, the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose. The Award carries a certificate and a cash prize of 51 lakh rupees.
- This year, 8th Battalion of National Disaster Response Force located at Ghaziabad has been selected for the Award for its commendable work in disaster management.

In a first for Kashmir, Lance Naik Wani to be awarded Ashok Chakra

- In a first for Kashmir, Lance Naik Nazir Ahmad Wani belonging to the state, will be awarded the highest peace-time gallantry award "Ashok Chakra" posthumously on Republic Day.
- The award will be presented to his wife Mahajabeen by President Ramnath Kovind.

Central Bank of India received Atal Pension Yojana Award

- The Central Bank of India has been given away the Atal Pension Yojana Award for promoting the scheme across the country.
- Bank MD and CEO Pallav Mohapatra received the Atal Pension Yojana award from Department of Financial Services Secretary Rajiv Kumar for promoting the scheme in various geographical locations of the country, an official statement said on Thursday.
- The award function was organised by Pension Fund Regulatory Development Authority (PFRDA) on Wednesday.

Three Indian expats from the UAE win prestigious Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award 2019

- Three Indian expats from the UAE are amongst those who won the prestigious Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award 2019, the highest honour conferred on Indian diaspora.
- President Ram Nath Kovind conferred the award on Girish Pant, Surender Singh Kandhari and Dr Zulekha Daud and other awardees at the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) Convention in Varanasi.

Pranab Mukherjee, Nanaji Deshmukh Bhupen Hazarika awarded Bharat Ratna

- Social activist Nanaji Deshmukh, Music maestro Bhupen Hazarika and former President Pranab Mukherjee have been awarded with country's highest civilian honour Bharat Ratna.
- As per a press communique issued by President's office, Nanaji Deshmukh and Bhupen Hazarika will be awarded with the honour posthumously.

Government announces Padma Shree award winners, cricketer Gautam Gambhir, Kadar Khan among 94 to be honoured

- President of Djibouti Ismail Omar Guelleh, L&T chairman A M Naik, late journalist Kuldip Nayar, late actor Kadar Khan and cricketer Gautam Gambhir were among the 112 prominent personalities who were named on Friday for conferment of this year's Padma awards.
- India football captain Sunil Chhetri, table tennis star Sharath Kamal, wrestler Bajrang Punia were among the recipients for the the Padma Shri awards announced on the eve of the Republic Day on Friday.
- Harika Dronavalli (chess), Bombayla Devi (archery), Prashanti Singh (basketball) and Ajay Thakur (kabaddi) have also been conferred the Padma Shri award while Bachendri Pal (mountaineering) was honoured with the Padma Bhushan award.

- Folk artist Teejan Bai, Guelleh, Naik and theatre actor Balwant Moreshwar Purandare will be honoured with Padma Vibhushan, former CAG V K Shunglu, former union minister Kariya Munda, Akali leader S S Dhindsa were named for Padma Bhushan, which will be conferred by President Ram Nath Kovind in March-April.

ICAR's 'Kisan Gandhi' tableau wins first prize at R-Day parade

- The ICAR tableau in the Republic Day Parade has won the first prize for its Kisan Gandhi theme. The Indian Council of Agricultural Research tableau with the theme "Mishrit Kheti, Khushiyan Ki Kheti" portrayed Gandhi with goats and a cow and Kasturba engaged with charkha and caring animals. The tableau showcased a view from Bapu Kuti at Wardha Ashram.
- Tripura bagged the first prize for the state tableau while tableau from Jammu and Kashmir was adjudged the second and Punjab won the third prize. The theme of Tripura's tableau was 'Empowering Rural Economy the Gandhian Way'.

India bags the Award of Excellence for 'Best in Show' at New York Times Travel Show 2019

- India received the Award of Excellence for 'Best in Show' at the recently concluded New York Times Travel Show 2019.
- The New York Times Travel Show 2019 is the largest travel show in North America that was held during January 25-27, 2019 in New York, USA.
- Yogendra Tripathi, Secretary in the Ministry of Tourism received the Award of Excellence
- The Union Ministry of Tourism participated as the 'Presenting Partner' in the New York Times Travel Show (NYTTS 2019) organised at Jacob K Javits Centre, New York.

Sahitya Akademi Awards 2018 presented to 24 writers; Hindi writer Chitra Mudgal among winners

- India's national academy of letters, Sahitya Akademi on January 29, 2019 presented the Sahitya Akademi Award 2018 to 24 writers. The awards were given for 24 different Indian languages.
- Renowned Hindi writer Chitra Mudgal, Dogri writer Inderjeet Kesar, Kannada writer KG Nagarajappa and Kashmiri story writer Mushtaq Ahmad Mushtaq were among the 24 winners.
- Sahitya Akademi President, Chandrasekhar Kambar presented these awards at a function in New Delhi during the Festival of Letters, organised by Sahitya Akademi.

Obituaries

Veteran actor-writer Kader Khan passed away

- Veteran actor-writer Kader Khan passed away in Canada yesterday.
- His son Sarfaraz confirmed the sad demise of the 81-year old comedian and character artist.
- Born in Kabul, Khan made his acting debut in 1973 with Rajesh Khanna's "Daag" and has featured in over 300 films.

Indian Olympian footballer Zulfiqar passes away

- Former India footballer Mohammed Zulfiqaruddin, who was a part of the fourth place finishing team in the 1956 Olympics in Melbourne, passed away on January 13, 2019. He was 83 and is survived by three sons and two daughters.
- As a 17-year old, Zulfiqaruddin was a part of the Indian squad which had finished fourth in the 1956 Melbourne Olympics. But he did not play any match.

World's oldest man Masazo Nonaka dies at 113

- The world's oldest man, Masazo Nonaka of Japan, has died at the age of 113.
- Nonaka, who was officially recognized as the oldest male in the world by Guinness World Records last April, passed away at his home in the north of Japan's Hokkaido Island on January 20, 2019.

111-year-old prominent lingayat seer passes away

- **Prominent Lingayat seer of Tumakuru-based Siddaganga Math, 111-year old Shivakumara Swamiji**, who was known as the '**Walking God**', passed away on January 21, 2019 after a prolonged illness.
- The highly revered seer was born on April 1, 1908 in Veerapura village in Karnataka.

Former India hockey player Raghbir Bhola passes away

- Former India hockey player **Raghbir Singh Bhola**, a two-time Olympic medallist, passed away on January 21, 2019 at the age of 92. He is survived by his wife Kamla Bhola, three daughters and three grandsons.
- Bhola had represented India in the 1956 Melbourne and 1960 Rome Olympics, winning a gold and silver medal respectively for the country.

Renowned Hindi author, poet Krishna Sobti passes away

- Eminent Hindi author and poet Krishna Sobti passed away on January 25, 2019 at a hospital in Delhi. She was 93.
- She is a recipient of *prestigious awards such as Sahitya Akademi award, Jnanpith and was also offered Padma Bhushan*, which she had declined.
- She is best known for her **1966 novel Mitro Marjani**, an unapologetic portrayal of a married woman's sexuality.

Former Defence Minister George Fernandes passes away

- **Former Defence Minister and Anti-Emergency Crusader George Fernandes passed away in New Delhi** this morning. He was 88. Mr Fernandes, who hailed from Mangaluru in Karnataka was ailing for a long time.
- One of the most prominent leaders of the socialist movement in the 1970s, George Fernandes was a senior Janata Dal leader before he founded the Samata Party. He was elected to the Lok Sabha 9 times and once to the Rajya Sabha.
- He also served as Union Minister for Railways, Communications and Industry. George Fernandes was also a trade unionist, agriculturist, and journalist.