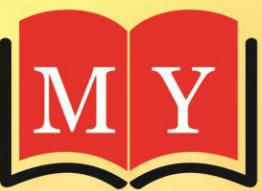


Monthly Gk Capsule

March 2019

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National News

1. Rajnath Singh inaugurates Waste to Wonder Park in Delhi

- ✦ Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated a new park which houses the replicas of seven wonders of the world at Sarai Kale Khan
- ✦ The park, which is called the 'Waste to Wonder Park', was built by the South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC).
- ✦ It is the first-of-its-kind tourist attraction in the world, with the replicas of the Taj Mahal, the Great Pyramid of Giza, Eiffel Tower, Leaning Tower of Pisa, Christ the Redeemer statue of Rio de Janeiro, Rome's Colosseum, and the Statute of Liberty.

2. Odisha approves Rs 466 crore sanitary napkin scheme for girls.

- ✦ Odisha government Friday approved a Rs 466 crore Khusi scheme aimed at improving menstrual hygiene among adolescent girl students in the state.
- ✦ The state cabinet approved the scheme Khusi with an outlay of Rs 466.08 crore over a period of five years.
- ✦ Under the scheme, free sanitary napkins will be provided to 17.25 lakh adolescent girl students of Class-VI to XII studying in government and non-government aided schools of the state.

3. Union Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad inaugurated VIVID 2019

- ✦ VIVID-Vision Insight and Voices as India goes Digital"- the District Informatics Officer (DIO) meet, is being organised by National Informatics Centre (NIC)
- ✦ The meet is held as an initiative to interact with the DIO's and to share their experiences as well as contribution, as digital change-makers at the grass-root level in the States.
- ✦ The National meet will cover a wide range of relevant topics in various technical sessions sessions including Emerging Technologies , Cyber Threats & Counter , Enterprise Level Applications, and many other relevant topics.

4. Odisha launches boat ambulance service for remote areas

- ✦ The Odisha government has launched a boat ambulance service to ferry patients to hospitals in remote areas at a cost of Rs 5.40 crore.
- ✦ While the first such boat ambulance was introduced at Batighar under Mahakalpada tehsil in the coastal Kendrapara district.
- ✦ The floating ambulances will cater to the needs of people in areas where the '108' ambulance service has failed to make headway, due to lack of proper road route.

5. Tamil Nadu becomes first state in Mainland to get 2 Coast Guard Dists

- ✦ Tamil Nadu became the first state in the country to get a second Coast Guard district headquarters - Thoothukudi.

- ✦ Inaugurated by state Governor Banwarilal Purohit, the Thoothukudi district headquarters has been set up with an aim to augment security mechanism on the eastern coast and the state in particular.
- ✦ This is the first state to have two district headquarters, which were necessitated by frequent issues pertaining to fishermen.

6. Govt launches Rail Drishti Dashboard to keep people informed about ongoing Railway works

- ✦ Railway Minister Piyush Goyal launched Rail Drishti Dashboard in New Delhi.
- ✦ Mr Goyal said the Dashboard has been launched to keep people informed about the work going on in the Railways across the country.
- ✦ People will get useful information from Rail Drishti through Railway WiFi facilities that are continuously expanding in the country.

7. PM Modi Inaugurates 40-Acre National War Memorial Near India Gate

- ✦ Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated a new National War Memorial, situated in the India Gate complex in New Delhi, to the nation.
- ✦ The National War Memorial complex, spread across 40 acres, includes a central obelisk, an eternal flame, and six bronze murals depicting famous battles fought by the Army, the Air Force and the Navy.
- ✦ The design of the National War Memorial has a layout comprising four concentric circles, namely, the 'Amar Chakra' or Circle of Immortality, the 'Veerta Chakra' or Circle of Bravery, the 'Tyag Chakra' or Circle of Sacrifice, and the 'Rakshak Chakra' or Circle of Protection.

8. Union Minister Ashwini Kumar Choubey launches national programme to eliminate viral hepatitis

- ✦ Union minister Ashwini Kumar Choubey launched a national programme aimed at eliminating viral hepatitis, recognized as an important public health problem.
- ✦ The minister of state for health launched the National Action Plan - Viral Hepatitis at Mumbai in presence of Amitabh Bachchan, the goodwill ambassador for hepatitis,
- ✦ The Minister said, the aim of the programme is to combat hepatitis and achieve countrywide elimination of Hepatitis C by 2030.

9. Madhya Pradesh rolls out 100-day employment scheme for youths

- ✦ The Congress government in Madhya Pradesh rolled out its flagship 'Mukhyamantri Yuva Swabhiman Yojana' that guarantees 100 days of employment every year to urban youths from economically weaker sections (EWS).
- ✦ The scheme, as part of which youths would be imparted skill development training, was launched by Chief Minister Kamal Nath here.
- ✦ Only those youths, whose family's annual income is less than Rs 2 lakh and who are in the age group of 21-30 years, are eligible for the scheme.

10. Rising India Summit 2019 held in New Delhi

- ✦ PM Narendra Modi delivers the keynote speech at the News18 Rising India Summit 2019 in New Delhi.
- ✦ Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, Kamal Nath fields a question during 'Matters of States' session at the News18 Rising India Summit in New Delhi.

11. Union Textile Minister Inaugurates Titanwala Museum in Rajasthan

- ✦ Union Textiles Minister Smriti Irani inaugurated the 'Titanwala Museum' in Bagru that showcases the Chhipa community's hand-block printing.
- ✦ The museum is an example that art and culture are not dependent on the government for being nurtured or preserved.
- ✦ The museum is an effort towards preserving the art of traditional Bagru block printing. The museum will be open from Monday to Sunday between 9 am and 6 pm.

12. Assam launches PRANAM Commission to protect parents of govt employees

- ✦ Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal had launched the PRANAM Commission, a panel set up to look after the issues concerning a Bill for protection of parents of state government employees.
- ✦ Assam government would ensure that no state government employee can ignore their elderly parents and unmarried differently abled siblings.
- ✦ PRANAM Bill, which was approved by the cabinet last year, makes it mandatory for state government employees to look after their parents and unmarried Divyang siblings who do not have their own sources of income.

13. PM Modi unveils 'world's largest Bhagavad Gita' at Delhi's ISKCON temple

- ✦ A giant Bhagavad Gita, running into 670 pages and weighing about 800 kgs, was unveiled at Delhi's ISKCON temple by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- ✦ Modi termed the Bhagavad Gita as the "largest manual for human beings" and claimed that the holy book has solutions to all problems one faces in life.
- ✦ According to ISKCON, this book will have the largest principle sacred text ever to be printed. The book has an artistic touch of 18 exquisite paintings and an innovative elegant layout.

14. IRCTC launches 'IRCTC iPay', its own payment gateway

- ✦ Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC), which handles catering, tourism and online ticketing operations for the Indian Railways, has launched its own payment aggregator called 'IRCTC iPay'.
- ✦ With the launch of IRCTC iPay, passengers will not need any third-party platforms as all payment options like credit card, debit card, UPI – Unified Payment Interface, International Card are integrated into the platform.
- ✦ The option of IRCTC Prepaid Card cum wallet, Auto Debit shall also be available shortly.

15. Textile Ministry launches scheme to develop knitting and knitwear sector

- ✦ The Union Textile Ministry has launched a comprehensive Scheme for the development of the knitwear sector under PowerTex India.
- ✦ Apart from financial incentives the two key interesting elements are Yarn Bank and financial assistance for the solar energy scheme. The scheme was launched simultaneously in three major clusters, Tirupur, Ludhiana and Kolkata.
- ✦ The yarn bank scheme for knitting and knitwear units will provide an interest-free corpus fund of a maximum of up to Rs 2 crore per yarn bank to a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV).

16. Cabinet approves 'Pradhan Mantri JI-VAN yojana' for financial support to Integrated Bioethanol Projects

- ✦ The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved the 'Pradhan Mantri Jaiv Indhan- Vatavaran Anukool fasal awashesh Nivaran (JI-VAN) Yojana' for providing financial support to the Integrated Bioethanol Projects.
- ✦ The scheme aims to incentivise 2G Ethanol sector and support the industry by creating a suitable ecosystem for setting up commercial projects and increasing Research & Development in this area.
- ✦ The Pradhan Mantri JI-VAN Yojana will be supported with the total financial outlay of Rs 1969.50 crore for the period 2018-19 to 2023-24.

17. PM launches One Nation, One Card in Ahmedabad for Mobility Single Card for seamless travel

- ✦ Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched One Nation, One Card for transport mobility at a function in Ahmedabad.
- ✦ The Indigenous Automatic Fare Collection System based on One Nation One Card Model i.e. National Common Mobility Card (NCMC) is the first of its kind in India.
- ✦ The customer may use this single card for payments across all segments including metro, bus, suburban railways, toll, parking, smart city and retail.

18. President gives assent to Ordinance allowing voluntary use of Aadhaar

- ✦ President Ram Nath Kovind has given his assent to an ordinance that allows voluntary use of Aadhaar as ID proof for obtaining mobile SIM cards and opening bank accounts.
- ✦ The ordinance was necessitated because the Rajya Sabha could not approve a Bill after its passage by the Lok Sabha.
- ✦ The amendments also make it clear that anyone not offering Aadhaar cannot be denied any service, be it opening of a bank account or obtaining a mobile phone SIM card.

19. Ayushman Bharat and Uber ink partnership to facilitate free healthcare for drivers

- ✦ A ride-sharing company has partnered with the government's flagship healthcare insurance scheme, Ayushman Bharat, to facilitate free healthcare for several drivers associated with the firm.
- ✦ The National Health Authority (NHA), the apex body implementing the Ayushman Bharat - Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) has inked an MoU with Uber.
- ✦ According to the agreement, Uber, under its Uber CARE initiative for driver and delivery partners, will facilitate the setting up of common service centres (CSC's) at Partners Seva Kendras across India.

20. 'Azaadi Ke Diwane' museum inaugurated at Red Fort

- ✦ Union Minister Mahesh Sharma inaugurated 'Azaadi Ke Diwane' museum, dedicated to the unsung heroes of the country's freedom struggle, on the Red Fort premises.
- ✦ Built by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), the museum is the fifth in a series of recently inaugurated ones — the others being the Subhash Chandra Bose and INA museum, the Yaad-e-Jallian museum.
- ✦ This new museum 'Azaadi ke Diwane' is started in the series of Kranti Mandir to inspire the younger generation and let them know the cost of freedom that the great fighters achieve by sacrificing their lives.

21. Tripura government launches Notun Disha initiative to provide training to teachers

- ✦ Tripura government has announced to distribute laptops to 800 school teachers under the Notun Disha (new direction) initiative.
- ✦ The Notun Disha is a one-month project to provide training to teachers.
- ✦ 'Notun Disha' is aimed at making the students efficient and capable in all subjects from the 3rd to 8th standard

22. Assam's hailakandi became the top aspirational district

- ✦ According to the Delta ranking report released by NITI Aayog, Assam's Hailakandi has become the top aspirational district among the 112 aspirational districts of the country.
- ✦ Hailakandi in Assam has made a giant leap from 52nd position to no. 1 position on the basis of its performance during November-December 2018 and January 2019.
- ✦ For securing the first rank as an aspirational district, Hailakandi will be given an allocation of Rs. 10 crore.

23. Uttar Pradesh to get Highways Projects Worth Over Rs one Lakh Crore

- ✦ Union Home Minister Shri Rajnath Singh will inaugurate and lay the foundation stones for National Highways projects worth Rs 1,10,154 crore in Lucknow in Uttar Pradesh.
- ✦ He will also inaugurate/lay foundation stone for several works under Namami Gange programme worth over Rs 1969.57 crore.

- ✦ He will also lay the foundation stone for construction of Amethi Bypass and widening and construction of important sections of highways in the State.

24. Home Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurates BOLD-QIT project in Assam

- ✦ Home Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated the project BOLD-QIT on India-Bangladesh border in Dhubri District of Assam.
- ✦ Border Security Force, BSF is responsible for safeguarding of over four thousand kilometer long International Border with Bangladesh. At various places, it is not possible to erect Border Fence due to the geographical barriers.
- ✦ The implementation of this project will not only help BSF to curb all types of cross border crimes but also provide respite to the troops from round the clock human surveillance.

25. CM Mamata Banerjee announces plan to launch scheme to help youth set up business

- ✦ Chief minister Mamata Banerjee unveiled a new scheme to encourage entrepreneurship among youths.
- ✦ Youths who have passed out of ITI or other polytechnic institutes will be eligible to get financial support from the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) department
- ✦ Under Yuvashree Arpan, 50,000 youths will receive financial assistance of Rs 1 lakh each for setting up an enterprise. The Yuvashree I scheme is implemented by the state labour department.

26. Income Tax exemption limit on gratuity doubled to Rs 20 lakh

- ✦ Income Tax exemption limit on gratuity has been doubled to Rs 20 lakh from the existing Rs 10 lakh, a move that will benefit employees who are not covered by the Payment of Gratuity Act, 1972.
- ✦ The latest enhancement of tax exemption limit on gratuity follows a government notification issued on March 29, 2018, under which the ceiling was increased from Rs 10 lakh to 20 lakh effective March 29, 2018.
- ✦ Gratuity is the monetary benefit provided by the employer to his/her employee for the services rendered by him during the period of employment.

27. Uttarakhand CM launches free milk scheme for anganwadi children

- ✦ Uttarakhand Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat launched the Mukhyamantri Anchal Amrit Yojana in Dehradun under which 2.5 lakh children at 20,000 Anganwadi kendras in the state will be given 100 ml milk twice a week for free.
- ✦ Flavoured, sweet, skimmed milk powder will be made available to the 20,000 Anganwadi kendras across the state under the Amrit Yojana.

28. Marayur jaggery finally gets Geographical Indication tag

- ✦ The Marayur jaggery has finally got the geographical indication (GI) tag, making it safe for consumption while rejuvenating the traditional way of production and ensuring a safe market in future.
- ✦ It has been a long-term demand of farmers in Marayur and Kanthallur grama panchayats, where jaggery is produced without adding any chemicals.
- ✦ It has high sweetness with less saltiness, high content of iron and less sodium.

29. Government achieves 87 per cent of 8 crore free LPG connections target

- ✦ The government gave out the 7-crore free cooking gas (LPG) connection as the scheme to make available cleaner fuel in every household kitchens runs ahead of schedule.
- ✦ PMUY was launched on May 1, 2016, with a target to give 5 crore connections to women member of poor households by March 2019.
- ✦ Under the scheme, the government provides a subsidy of Rs 1,600 to state-owned fuel retailers for every free LPG gas connection that they give to poor households.

30. PM Modi Inaugurates Pt Deendayal Upadhyaya Institute of Archaeology at Greater Noida

- ✦ Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurates the Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya Institute of Archaeology, at Greater Noida.
- ✦ Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), under the Ministry of Culture, is the premier organization for the archaeological researches and protection of the cultural heritage in India.
- ✦ The state-of-the-art institute, built at an estimated cost of Rs. 289 crore is spread over 25 acres.

31. CII releases roadmap for 8% growth in coming years

- ✦ Industry lobby CII released a 'Suggested Election Manifesto' for political parties to achieve an average growth rate of 8 per cent per annum in the next five years.
- ✦ It covers a range of subjects including agriculture, education, health, infrastructure, manufacturing, technology as well as environment.
- ✦ The CII has shared the manifesto with all the major political parties, national and regional, for their consideration and inclusion in their party manifesto.

32. Govt Approves A National Mission On E-Mobility To Boost EV Manufacturing

- ✦ The Centre formed the National Mission on Transformative Mobility and Battery Storage for a Phased Manufacturing Program (PMP), aimed at localising the production of electric vehicles (EV) and its components within the country.
- ✦ The announcement comes less than a week after the Indian government launched the FAME II scheme to boost the adoption of clean energy vehicles.
- ✦ The CEO of government think-tank NITI Aayog, Amitabh Kant, has been appointed to lead the Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee of the mission who will recommend and drive the strategies for transformative mobility in India.

33. Centre allows state governments to put enemy properties to 'public use'

- ✚ The Centre has allowed state governments to put to "public use" some enemy properties that were left behind by people who migrated to Pakistan since the Partition and to China after the 1962 Sino-Indian war.
- ✚ The move comes amid the central government's efforts to sell more than 9,400 enemy properties, worth over Rs 1 lakh crore, and Rs 3,000 crore worth of enemy shares.
- ✚ "The estimated value of all enemy properties is approximately Rs 1 lakh crore," Union Minister of State for Home Hansraj Gangaram Ahir had told the Rajya Sabha last year.

34. Madhya Pradesh Governor passes ordinance to increase OBC quota

- ✚ Madhya Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel has approved an ordinance to increase reservation for Other Backward Classes (OBCs) from 14 per cent to 27 per cent.
- ✚ The Chief Minister had also assured that 10 per cent reservation for the economically weaker section in the general category will also be implemented in the state.
- ✚ State Minister for Law and Legal Affairs P C Sharma has announced the ordinance. The ordinance got its approval just before Lok Sabha election model code of conduct picks on.

35. Ethiopian Airlines crash: India bans Boeing 737 MAX 8 planes

- ✚ Joining an ever-growing list of countries, India has decided to ban Boeing 737 MAX 8 planes following the Ethiopian Airlines crash that killed 157 people
- ✚ Current Indian airlines that operate these aircraft are SpiceJet that has twelve of these planes in its fleet and Jet Airways that has five.
- ✚ These planes will be grounded till appropriate modifications and safety measures are undertaken to ensure their safe operations.

36. 12 states ban e-cigarettes, health ministry urges all to follow

- ✚ 12 states in India have banned Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS).
- ✚ States of Punjab, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Kerala, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Jharkhand have taken steps to ban the use of ENDS.
- ✚ Naming 'e-cigarette' is a tactic used by the industry to fool public by giving it a tubular shape and putting a red LED at the tip which lights up when the tube is sucked to mimic cigarette smoking.

37. President Kovind inaugurates Festival of Innovation and Entrepreneurship

- ✚ President Ramnath Kovind today inaugurated the Festival of Innovation and Entrepreneurship at Grambharti near Gandhinagar in Gujarat.
- ✚ He also presented the 10th Biennial National Grassroots Innovation Awards on this occasion.

- ✦ Mr. Prakash Singh Raghuvanshi of Uttar Pradesh got life time achievement award for his innovations in new varieties of agriculture crops.

38. IIT Kharagpur Inks MoU with C-DAC for High Performance Computing Facility & Data Center

- ✦ The IIT Kharagpur has signed a MoU with Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) to set up a Petaflop high performance computing facility and data center funded under the National Supercomputing Mission.
- ✦ PetaFlop is the measurement of computing power based on the frequency of mathematical calculations that can be done per second.
- ✦ With the growing importance of high performance computing in newer research areas in cancer, data protection etc, such facilities as the one being built at IIT Kharagpur will become a core factor in various research domains.

39. National convention of 'War Decorated India' commences in Chandimandir

- ✦ Several living gallantry award winners and relatives of the deceased awardees attended the two-day National Convention of War Decorated India (WDI), which began at Western Command Headquarters in Chandimandir.
- ✦ Among Victoria Cross awardees, the relatives of Late Naib Subedar Nand Singh (Sikh Regiment), Late Subedar Ram Sarup Singh (1 Punjab) and Late Badlu Ram (Cavalry) were felicitated.
- ✦ Among Param Vir Chakra awardees, relatives of Late Col. Hoshiar Singh (Grenadiers) and Late Subedar Joginder Singh (Sikh Regiment) were felicitated.

40. Niti Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant to head transformative mobility panel

- ✦ Niti Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant will head the National Mission on Transformative Mobility and Battery Storage, which is being set up to promote clean and sustainable mobility initiatives in the country.
- ✦ The Union Cabinet on March 7 had approved setting up of the National Mission on Transformative Mobility and Battery Storage.
- ✦ The panel will also propose and recommend policy guidelines and government interventions and possible strategies for holistic, sustainable and transformative mobility and energy storage in India.

41. 3rd Indo-Japan Workshop on Disaster Risk Reduction held in New Delhi

- ✦ About 140 delegates from Japan and India attended the 3rd Indo-Japan Workshop on Disaster Risk Reduction held in Delhi.
- ✦ The 3rd workshop was organised with an objective of enhancing collaboration between research institutes, cities and the private sector in the field of Disaster Risk Reduction.
- ✦ This emphasised on the collaboration between India and Japan should be strengthened in the areas of Early Warning Systems, build-back-better, capacity development, Science & Technology application and institution strengthening.

42. 'i-help' initiative launched in Assam

- ✦ The 'i-help' initiative to promote digital electoral literacy in Assam has been launched in view of the forthcoming Lok Sabha poll.
- ✦ The 'i-help' is a joint initiative of the office of the Chief Electoral Officer(CEO) and Common Service Centres (CSC).
- ✦ This particular initiative will fill the digital divide and fulfill the objective of turning the General Election more inclusive and participatory.

43. India's deepest shaft cave discovered in Meghalaya

- ✦ Barely a year after the discovery of the world's longest sandstone cave Krem Puri in Mawsynram region of Meghalaya's East Khasi Hills district, now a cave with the deepest shaft in the country has been discovered.
- ✦ The discovery was made during the 28th edition of the annual 'Caving in the Abode of the Clouds Expedition'.
- ✦ The milestone of this year's expedition was the 503 km of cave passage explored and mapped in Meghalaya.

44. PM launches "PM-KISAN" from Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh

- ✦ The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, launched the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) from Gorakhpur.
- ✦ The Prime Minister said that farmers can now avail credit upto Rs. 1.60 lakh, through Kisan Credit Cards. He also touched upon other welfare schemes for the benefit of farmers.
- ✦ The Prime Minister congratulated the farmers for the launch of Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi. He also congratulated farmer families engaged in dairy farming, and fisheries, as they now have access to Kisan Credit Cards.

45. Bihar Becomes First State in India to Have Special Dog Squad For Detecting Liquor Consignment.

- ✦ The state, two years after imposing a complete ban on liquor, has now become the first state in India to have a special dog squad for detecting liquor consignment.
- ✦ At present, 20 trained dogs are part of the squad. The canines were provided with nine months of training.
- ✦ The Bihar Police has spent Rs Rs 1.71 lakh on each dog, including the purchase and training cost.

International News & Foreign Affairs

1. JioSaavn only Indian company to make it to '50 Most Innovative Companies' list

- ✦ India based global audio and music streaming service JioSaavn announced that it has secured the first rank India-wise and 28th rank globally in the 2019 list of "50 Most Innovative Companies".
- ✦ JioSaavn is the only Indian company that made it to the list, published by US-based business publication Fast Company.
- ✦ The other domestic companies that ranked top on the India list of "Most Innovative Companies" include branded budget hotel marketplace OYO, biodegradable sanitary pad manufacturers Sathi and ride-hailing service Ola.

2. 4th Global Digital Health Partnership summit inaugurated

- ✦ Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare J P Nadda along with Union IT Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad inaugurated the 4th Global Digital Health Partnership Summit in New Delhi.
- ✦ The Global Digital Health Partnership is an international collaboration of governments, government agencies and multinational organisations dedicated to improving the health and well-being of their citizens through the best use of evidence-based digital technologies.
- ✦ The summit will provide an opportunity to support governments and health system reformers to improve the health and well-being of their citizens through digital technologies.

3. Indian passport improves its ranking on global index, jumps 10 ranks in 5 years

- ✦ Indian passport is gaining strength on the global index as more and more countries are offering visa on arrival and visa-free entry to Indians.
- ✦ As per the 2019 Passport Index, the Indian passport has steadily strengthened its position over the past five years. It has jumped from 77th position in 2015 to 67th position in 2019.
- ✦ The Tourism Ministry for India is also offering e-tourist visa facilities to 166 countries, following a number of amendments in the e-visa regime of the country in order to make this process more tourist friendly.

4. Afghanistan opens new export route to India through Iran's Chabahar port

- ✦ Afghanistan began exports to India through an Iranian port as the landlocked, war-torn nation turns to overseas markets to improve its economy.
- ✦ Chabahar port is the result of healthy cooperation between India, Iran and Afghanistan this will ensure economic growth.
- ✦ At the inauguration of the new export route, President Ashraf Ghani said Afghanistan was slowly improving its exports in a bid to reduce its trade deficit.

5. India Ranks 47th Out of 100 Countries in The Facebook Inclusive Internet Index 2019

- ✦ India has been ranked 47th in the overall "Inclusive Internet Index 2019" score while Sweden topped the chart, followed by Singapore and the US, a Facebook-led study has revealed.

- ✦ The 'Inclusive Internet' score was based on the scores of availability, affordability, relevance and readiness categories.
- ✦ The United Kingdom, Namibia and Ireland are top performers of the year.

6. Banglar Shiksha web portal to provide Real-Time Data on schools

- ✦ West Bengal Education Minister Partha Chatterjee inaugurated a web portal, which is set to provide real-time data on state-run and aided schools.
- ✦ This is probably the first-of-its-kind online initiative in the state as well as in the country.
- ✦ The system will enable the headmaster and class teacher to access the academic performance of a student.

7. India, Brunei Sign Agreement to Exchange Information on Tax And Banking Matters

- ✦ India and Brunei signed an agreement for the exchange of information in tax matters which will help curb tax evasion and tax avoidance.
- ✦ The pact, based on international standards of tax transparency, will enable the exchange of information, including banking and ownership information between the two countries for tax purposes.
- ✦ Notably, Brunei and India share a fair degree of commonality in their perceptions on major international issues.

8. India tops Global Consumer Confidence Survey

- ✦ The global consumer confidence in India is at peak. This was revealed in the latest Conference Board Global Consumer Confidence Survey, which is conducted in collaboration with Nielsen.
- ✦ The survey which was conducted over the internet, polls more than 32,000 consumers in 64 countries across Asia-Pacific, Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, Africa and North America.
- ✦ The main indicators measured by Conference Board CCI are optimism towards job prospects, health of personal finances and spending intentions in the next 12 months.

9. US, South Korea Call Off Foal Eagle and Key Resolve Exercises

- ✦ The United States and South Korea, announced the inauguration of a new exercise known as Dong Maeng.
- ✦ The exercise was announced as a modification of the springtime exercises the allies have held in recent years known as Key Resolve and Foal Eagle.
- ✦ The Dong Maeng exercise will run from March 4 to March 12 and focus primarily on “strategic, operational, and tactical aspects of general military operations on the Korean Peninsula.

10. Over 1,000 People Set Guinness World Record In Yoga In Hong Kong

- ✦ Over a thousand yoga enthusiasts attempted to do the Virabathrasan for three minutes at one place, setting a Guinness World Record in Yoga.
- ✦ The record is a first of its kind in the history of Hong Kong, beating the previous record of 387, when more than 1011 yoga practitioners attempted the Virabathrasan.
- ✦ The previous record was of 387 people.

11. India launches 3rd IT corridor in China

- ✦ India has launched its third IT corridor in China that will facilitate partnerships between Indian and Chinese companies.
- ✦ The National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM) entered into a partnership with China's Xuzhou city from Jiangsu Province in China to help develop the IT corridor.
- ✦ The primary aim of this IT corridor will be to facilitate partnerships between Indian and Chinese companies.

12. India, ASEAN clock fastest growth for e-commerce, digital trade sectors

- ✦ India and 10-member ASEAN are among the fastest growing economies in the world with even faster growth rates for e-commerce and digital trade sectors.
- ✦ By 2021, global e-commerce sales are expected to reach 4.5 trillion dollars, up from 1.3 trillion dollars in 2014.
- ✦ The e-commerce market in India is estimated to reach 165.5 billion dollars by 2025 while the ASEAN is estimated to reach a volume of 90 billion dollars.

13. UN-founded University For Peace Confers Honorary Doctorate On Vice President Venkaiah Naidu

- ✦ Vice President Venkaiah Naidu conferred with an Honorary Doctorate by the University for Peace founded by the United Nations Organisations (UNO) for his contribution "to the Rule of Law, democracy and sustainable development in India".
- ✦ He received the degree of "Doctor Honoris Causa" from the Dean of the University for Peace in Costa Rica .
- ✦ The University of Peace aims to be a forward-thinking, transformational and inspirational educational institution dedicated to the goals of quality teaching, research and service for serving humanity in building a peaceful world.

14. Japan announces Rs 22 lakh for Kolkata museum

- ✦ The Japanese government announced a donation of some Rs 22 lakh (\$31,800) to the Rabindra Bharati Museum here in a bid to strengthen historical and cultural ties with India.
- ✦ Tagore, Asia's first Nobel Prize recipient, visited Japan in 1916, 1924 and 1929, renewing relations between the countries as India's leading cultural ambassador.
- ✦ Japan Currency- Japanese Yen, Capital- Tokyo

15. HGS, NASSCOM Foundation launch centre to train differently-abled persons

- ✦ Hinduja Global Solutions (HGS) has teamed up with NASSCOM Foundation, to launch a centre of excellence in Bengaluru for training differently-abled persons.
- ✦ The centre will train a minimum of 100 PwDs making them industry-ready over the next 12 months with a goal to place at least 50 per cent of them in companies already sensitised for hiring them.
- ✦ This is third such centre set up under the partnership, after Noida and Delhi.

16. UK issues new 'black hole' coin in honour of Stephen Hawking

- ✦ The UK's Royal Mint unveiled a new commemorative 50 pence coin inspired by the late legendary British physicist Stephen Hawking's seminal work on black holes.
- ✦ Edwina Ellis, who designed the unusual coins, explained her inspiration behind it.
- ✦ The coin, on sale in silver and gold forms for a price range between 55 and 795 pounds on the Royal Mint's website, is a nod to Hawking's research into black holes.

17. Retail inflation increases to 2.57% in February 2019

- ✦ Retail inflation jumped to a four-month high of 2.57 per cent in February due to costlier food articles
- ✦ In the fuel and light category, the rate of price rise slowed to 1.24 per cent from 2.20 per cent in January.
- ✦ The retail inflation number for February 2019 is the highest since October 2018 when it stood at 3.38 per cent.

18. Russia releases coin commemorating annexation of Crimea

- ✦ Russia's central bank has issued a new coin featuring the Crimea, or Kerch Strait, Bridge to commemorate Crimea's "reunification with Russia".
- ✦ Two million new five ruble (about \$0.08, €0.07) coins were pressed which also show an outline of the peninsula annexed by Russia in 2014.
- ✦ This is second commemoration of Crimea, the first being a 200 ruble note released in 2015 and depicted the desire of the people of Russia to see these symbols on notes.

19. India gets first TIR shipment via Chabahar Port from Afghanistan

- ✦ The first shipment on 'Transports Internationaux Routiers' (TIR) from Afghanistan to India through Iran Chabahar Port arrived at the port of Nhava Sheva, Mumbai .
- ✦ The convention allows goods to be outlined in a TIR carnet and sealed in load compartments. Customs verify the carnet and check the seals, with no need for physical checking of the contents, enabling shipments to pass through countries without being opened at borders.

- ✦ This enables a facilitative and non-intrusive environment for multi-modal transport of goods through several countries.

20. Vienna Ranked Best City In The World To Live In For 10th Year Running

- ✦ Vienna has been ranked the most liveable city in the world for the 10th year in a row.
- ✦ The Austrian capital topped the new Mercer Quality of Living Survey, whose 2019 ranking was dominated by European cities. Thirteen out of the world's 20 best places to live are in Europe.
- ✦ Mercer's annual index ranks 231 cities around the world on factors including political stability, crime, personal freedoms, healthcare, education, housing, recreation and public transport.

21. India, Bangladesh Jointly Inaugurate 4 Projects

- ✦ Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Bangladesh counterpart Sheikh Hasina jointly inaugurated four projects, via video conferencing, in the areas of transport, health and education.
- ✦ Both leaders unveiled "e-plaques" for the supply of buses and trucks, inaugurated 36 community clinics, 11 water treatment plants and the extension of the National Knowledge Network to Bangladesh.
- ✦ In the years ahead, Prime Minister Modi visualised a fully-integrated neighbourhood in which transport and energy links are restored or built anew to permit easy movement of goods, services and people.

22. Fifa slaps lifetime ban on Ecuador football head Luis Chiriboga over bribery

- ✦ Fifa slapped a lifetime ban on the disgraced former head of Ecuador's football federation, Luis Chiriboga, after finding him guilty of taking bribes.
- ✦ Chiriboga was one of the executives arrested in 2015 amid a massive US-led crackdown on corruption in world football.
- ✦ After finding him guilty, Fifa's ethics judges banned Chiriboga from all football-related activities for life and fined him 1 million Swiss francs

23. India & Afghanistan Signed an MOU On Digital Education Initiatives

- ✦ The Ministry of Human Resource Development has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Afghanistan government to work on digital education initiatives.
- ✦ This MOU include many prominent programs developed by Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs).
- ✦ Afghanistan President: Ashraf Ghani

24. Paris, Hong Kong join Singapore as the world's most-expensive cities

- ✦ According to the annual Worldwide Cost of Living survey by the Economist Intelligence Unit, the title of most expensive city is shared by Paris, Hong Kong,

and Singapore—the first time in the survey’s 30-year history that three cities are in the top spot.

- ✦ The report looks at 133 cities and the cost of 160 items, such as food and drink, utility bills, rent, and transportation. Using New York as a benchmark, it determines whether prices for these items have gone up or down.
- ✦ The survey will help the companies to calculate cost of living allowances and build compensation packages for business travelers and expatriates.

25. Finland is the happiest nation, India slips 7 spots, ranks 140th

- ✦ Indian figures at 140th place, seven spots down from last year, on UN World Happiness Report- 2019.
- ✦ The list is topped by Finland for the second year in a row.
- ✦ The report was released by the Sustainable Development Solutions Network for the United Nations on March 20, which was designated as the World Happiness Day by the UN General Assembly in 2012.

26. International Workshop on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure-2019 concludes successfully

- ✦ The two-day International Workshop on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (IWDRI) successfully concluded.
- ✦ In his special address, the Chairman of the 15th Finance Commission of India, Shri N. K. Singh called for collective action on resilient infrastructure so that people-centric solutions are found.
- ✦ The need and practical issues concerning finance and insurance for infrastructure were also discussed during the workshop.

27. SpiceJet joins global airlines' grouping IATA

- ✦ SpiceJet has joined global airlines' grouping IATA as a member, becoming the first Indian low-cost carrier to get the membership.
- ✦ The International Air Transport Association (IATA) represents more than 290 airlines, including Air India, Jet Airways and Vistara.
- ✦ SpiceJet has become the first Indian low-cost carrier to join the IATA as a member.

28. Fitch cuts India GDP growth forecast for FY20 to 6.8% from previous 7%

- ✦ Fitch Ratings cut India's economic growth forecast for the next financial year starting April 1, to 6.8 per cent from its previous estimate of 7 per cent, on weaker than expected momentum in the economy.
- ✦ The rating agency has also cut growth forecasts for FY20 and FY21 to 7 per cent from 7.3 per cent and 7.1 per cent from 7.3 per cent, respectively.
- ✦ Fitch said, it's benign oil price outlook and expectations of accelerating food prices in the coming months should support rural households' income and consumption.

Banking

1. PNB ranks highest in implementation of 'reforms agenda' in 2018

- ✦ Punjab National Bank has been ranked first among public sector banks in the implementation of 'reforms agenda', followed by Bank of Baroda and State Bank of India.
- ✦ PNB with a score of 78.4 out of 100 has been ranked first in the EASE index, followed by BoB (77.8), SBI (74.6), Oriental Bank of Commerce (69), Canara Bank (67.5) and Syndicate Bank (67.1).
- ✦ EASE Index makes first ever independent and objective measurement of each PSBs on 140 metrics across 6 themes. Responsive, Responsible, Clean and customer friendly banking to be the new normal.

2. RBI, Bank of Japan sign Bilateral Swap Arrangement

- ✦ Reserve Bank of India and Bank of Japan have signed a Bilateral Swap Arrangement (BSA).
- ✦ It may be recalled that the BSA was negotiated between India and Japan during the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Tokyo in October last year.
- ✦ The BSA provides for India to access 75 billion US dollars whereas the earlier BSA had provided for 50 billion dollars. The BSA was approved by the Union Cabinet in January this year.

3. Cabinet approves Rs. 1,450 crore for share capital of RBI in NHB

- ✦ The Union Cabinet approved Rs1,450 crore for the share capital of Reserve Bank of India in the National Housing Bank.
- ✦ Subsequent to the payment of this amount to RBI, the subscribed capital of NHB shall stand transferred to and vested in the central government.
- ✦ The Finance Bill 2018 amended the National Housing Bank Act, 1987 to transfer RBI's stake in the NHB to the government.

4. IFFCO Tokio launches India's first policy to protect bank locker

- ✦ IFFCO Tokio General Insurance Company announced the launch of Bank Locker Protector Policy, which is the first policy in the industry to protect the contents of a bank locker such as jewellery and other valuables.
- ✦ The policy offers a cover against various risks including fire, earthquake, burglary, holdup, infidelity by a bank staff or any act of terrorism.
- ✦ The Bank Locker Protector policy bridges the gap offering protection to valuables stored in a bank locker.

5. AIIB to provide USD 455 mn for Andhra rural roads project

- ✦ The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) will provide a loan of USD 455 million to finance the Andhra Pradesh Rural Roads Project, which will connect

about 3,300 habitations with a population of more than 250, and benefit around two million people.

- ✦ The project is likely to improve the life of a common man living in the remote and isolated areas in the state of Andhra Pradesh
- ✦ An agreement in this regard was signed between the AIIB and the government.

6. Asian Development Bank To Lend \$926 Million For Mumbai Metro Rail Project

- ✦ Marking its single largest infrastructure loan ever, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) signed a \$926 million loan agreement with India to operationalise two lines for the Mumbai metro rail system.
- ✦ It aims to ease the distress of millions of commuters each day and help provide a cleaner and less congested city
- ✦ The project will fund 63 six-car trains, signalling and safety systems and help establish a new dedicated metro operations organisation to manage the entire metro network in Mumbai.

7. RBI imposes Rs 11 crore fine on 4 banks for delayed implementation of Swift operations

- ✦ The RBI has imposed a total monetary fine of Rs 11 crore on four banks - Karnataka Bank, United Bank of India, IOB and Karur Vysya Bank - for non-compliance of directions on Swift messaging software.
- ✦ While the RBI imposed a Rs 4 crore penalty on Karnataka Bank, it slapped a fine of Rs 3 crore each on United Bank and Indian Overseas Bank.
- ✦ The Reserve Bank of India has levied an aggregate penalty of Rs 40 million on the bank for delayed implementation of four of the Swift related operational controls.

8. Government of India and World Bank Sign \$250 Million Agreement for the National Rural Economic Transformation Project

- ✦ The World Bank and the Government of India signed a \$250 Million Agreement for the National Rural Economic Transformation Project (NRETP) which will help women in rural households shift to a new generation of economic initiatives.
- ✦ A Key Focus of the Project will be to promote women-owned and women-led farm and non-farm enterprises across value chains; enable them to build businesses that help them access finance and generate employment.
- ✦ The Project will continue to give technical assistance, skills building and investment support to strengthen women-owned and women-led producer.

9. LIC Housing Finance partners with IMGIC for loan scheme

- ✦ LIC Housing Finance has announced a tie-up with India Mortgage Guarantee Corporation (IMGIC) to offer a special loan scheme under which borrowers can repay the amount till the age of 75 years.
- ✦ IMGIC will provide LIC Housing Finance with mortgage guarantee which is a

financial product that will compensate financial institutions for any losses that may arise on the mortgage loans due to default.

- ✚ This strategic partnership will help LIC Housing Finance attract more home loan borrowers, combat NPAs and increase market penetration.

10. SBI, Hitachi arm to roll out digital payments platform

- ✚ State Bank of India (SBI) and Hitachi Payment Services Pvt Ltd, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Hitachi Ltd, launched their merchant-acquiring joint venture.
- ✚ The joint venture (SBI has a 74 per cent stake, and the balance is with Hitachi Payment Services) will facilitate expansion of the digital payments landscape in India via its digital payments platform.
- ✚ This will offer innovative products to suit the requirements of all segments of merchants by leveraging the brand value and vast distribution network of SBI, and bring Artificial Intelligence and other technological capabilities of Hitachi to SBI Payment Services.

11. RBI eases business guidelines for white label ATMs

- ✚ RBI has eased business guidelines for white label ATMs allowing companies that manage these machines to source cash directly from the central bank, offer non bank services like bill payments and advertise even non financial products in their premises.
- ✚ White label ATM Operators (WLAO), can now source cash directly from RBI offices and currency chests, and will no longer be dependent on sponsor banks for procurement of cash.
- ✚ The RBI has allowed the operators to source cash from any scheduled bank including rural and cooperative banks.

12. United Bank of India signs Bancassurance deal with HDFC Life to serve its large customer base

- ✚ United Bank of India, one of India's premier Nationalized Banks signed a Bancassurance deal with HDFC Life Insurance Company.
- ✚ United Bank has a strong presence in rural and semi-urban areas with over 2,000 branches and offices while HDFC Life is India's largest non-bank promoted private life insurer.
- ✚ This corporate-agency partnership is significant as United Bank of India undertook a rigorous selection process and evaluated 18 private Life insurers and finally selected HDFC Life.

13. HDFC just became the third Indian company after Reliance and TCS to achieve a market value of more than ₹6 trillion

- ✚ On 13th March, HDFC Bank became the third Indian company after Reliance Industries (Rs. 8.52 trillion) and TCS (Rs. 7.49 trillion) to achieve a market value of Rs. 6 trillion, owing to a sudden upsurge in its share prices.

- ✦ HDFC Bank has been on a remarkable run as of late. The shares of the bank have risen in each of the last five trading sessions, capping a 6% jump to a record high of ₹2,227.40.
- ✦ The bank started as housing finance company in 1977, before commencing operations as a scheduled commercial bank in 1995 as part of the RBI's drive to liberalise India's banking sector.

14. SEBI lifts foreign investment cap on corporate bonds

- ✦ Markets regulator Sebi withdrew the 20 per cent limit on investments by Foreign Portfolio Investors in corporate bonds of an entity.
- ✦ To give effect to the directions of the RBI, the regulator said provisions of its June 2018 circulars with respect to exposure of more than 20 per cent "stands withdrawn with immediate effect.
- ✦ In a notification, the regulator said the restriction is being withdrawn in accordance with a circular issued by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

15. SBI launches doorstep banking for senior citizens, differently-abled

- ✦ Public lender State Bank of India launched 'Doorstep Banking' for senior citizen customers over 70 years of age, differently-abled customers and infirm customers including visually impaired customers.
- ✦ Eligible customers can avail these services with a nominal fee of Rs 100 per transaction for financial transactions and Rs 60 per transaction for non-financial transactions.
- ✦ Doorstep Banking Services are available to fully KYC compliant account holders, with a valid mobile number registered with the bank and residing within 5 km of radius from their home branch.

16. RBI categorises IDBI Bank as private sector lender

- ✦ RBI categorises IDBI Bank as private sector lender.
- ✦ This follows Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) acquiring 51 per cent of the total paid-up equity share capital of the bank.
- ✦ In April 2005, IDBI Bank was categorised under a new sub-group, 'other public sector banks,' by the RBI.

17. SBI ICICI HDFC remain D-SIBs

- ✦ SBI, ICICI Bank and HDFC Bank continue to be in the Reserve Bank of India's list of Domestic Systemically Important Banks (D-SIBs) for 2018.
- ✦ D-SIBs are required to maintain higher capital as compared to other banks.
- ✦ The additional Common Equity Tier 1 (CET1) requirement for D-SIBs has already been phased-in from April 1, 2016, and will become fully effective from April 1, 2019.

18. SBI launches cardless ATM withdrawal with YONO Cash

- ✦ India's largest bank State Bank of India (SBI) announced the launch of YONO Cash using which customers can withdraw money from ATMs without using a card.
- ✦ SBI chairman Rajnish Kumar said the new initiative will address concerns over using debit cards at ATMs for cash withdrawals by eliminating the possible associated risks.
- ✦ SBI customers can initiate the cash withdrawal process on the YONO app and set a six-digit pin for the transaction.

19. IBBI, SEBI sign MoU for better implementation of IBC

- ✦ The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI).
- ✦ The IBBI and the SEBI seek effective implementation of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 (Code) and its allied rules and regulations, which have redefined the debt-equity relationship and aims to promote entrepreneurship and debt market.
- ✦ The MoU was signed by Shri Anand Baiwar, Executive Director, SEBI, and Shri Ritesh Kavdia, Executive Director, IBBI, at Mumbai.

20. ICICI Lombard partners with MobiKwik for cyber insurance cover

- ✦ ICICI Lombard General Insurance, a leading non-life insurance company, has entered into a strategic partnership with MobiKwik, a digital financial services platform, to provide cyber insurance cover for the latter's mobile wallet users.
- ✦ The relationship aims to provide protection against unauthorised and fraudulent transactions online, across bank accounts, debit/credit cards and mobile wallets.
- ✦ MobiKwik users can enroll under this insurance product at the time of loading money into their wallet or in a standalone format, as per their wish.

21. SBI inks pact with Bank of China for business opportunities

- ✦ The country's largest lender SBI has signed a pact with the Bank of China to boost business opportunities.
- ✦ This MoU will facilitate the clients of both the banks to access banking products and services of each other, which will lead to a mutually beneficial relationship.
- ✦ Both banks' clients will be able to use the vast combined network to expand their businesses abroad.

22. ADB to Invest \$50 Million in Avaada Energy for Expansion of Solar Projects in India

- ✦ The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has announced that it will invest \$50 million in Indian renewable energy independent power producer Avaada Energy Private Limited.
- ✦ Avaada aims to use the capital to expand its solar energy generation capacity in India.

- ✦ Avaada is a developer of utility-scale, rooftop, and off-grid solar projects. The company has secured power purchase agreements of about 1,700 megawatts.

New Appointments & Person in News

1. Trump nominates Kelly Craft as United Nations ambassador

- ✦ Trump announced that he planned to nominate Kelly Craft, who's served as the US ambassador to Canada since September 2017.
- ✦ The post of the US ambassador to the UN was vacant due to the resignation of Nikki Haley.
- ✦ Kelly Knight Craft who is currently serving as ambassador to Canada was the first woman to ever hold the post.

2. Muhammadu Buhari re-elected as Nigeria President

- ✦ Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari has been re-elected for a second four-year term, the election commission says.
- ✦ The 76-year-old defeated his main rival, former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, with a margin of nearly four million votes.
- ✦ Nigeria Capital - Abuja, Currency - Nigerian Naira

3. PepsiCo's Former CEO Indra Nooyi joins Amazon's Board of Directors

- ✦ PepsiCo's India-born former CEO Indra Nooyi has joined Amazon's Board of Directors, the online retail giant has announced.
- ✦ Nooyi, who stepped down as CEO of Pepsico in October last year, is the second woman of colour to be added on the Amazon's Board of Directors.
- ✦ She was elected to PepsiCo's board of directors and became its President and Chief Financial Officer in 2001.

4. IDBI Bank appoints LIC's Hemant Bhargava as non-executive chairman

- ✦ IDBI Bank has appointed Hemant Bhargava as non-executive, non-whole time chairman. Bhargava is currently the Chairman (in-charge) and Managing Director of Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC).
- ✦ The bank said Bhargava has been appointed for three years or until he continues in his position at LIC.
- ✦ LIC has also proposed a change of name of the bank to either LIC IDBI Bank or LIC Bank.

5. Mukesh Ambani breaks into top-10 on Hurun Global Rich List

- ✦ Mukesh Ambani has become the first Indian to break into the top-ten of the Hurun Global Rich List of 2,470 billionaires having a net worth of \$1 billion.

- ✦ The 2019 edition of 'Loong Palace Hurun Global Rich List 2019' compiles a list of the richest individuals across the globe.
- ✦ Jeff Bezos, Chairman & Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Amazon, topped the list for the second consecutive year with total net worth of \$147 billion (Rs 10,44,000 crore).

6. Former finance secretary Jha joins 15th Finance Commission as member

- ✦ Former finance secretary Ajay Narayan Jha joined the 15th Finance Commission as a member, pursuant to the resignation of Shaktikanta Das.
- ✦ Jha, a 1982 batch IAS officer of Manipur cadre, superannuated as a finance secretary to the Government of India on February 28.
- ✦ He joins in place of Shaktikanta Das who had resigned as a member of the Commission after being appointed as governor.

7. Hasmukh Adhia Appointed as Non-Executive Chairman of Bank of Baroda

- ✦ Former finance secretary Hasmukh Adhiawas appointed as the non-executive chairman of Bank of Baroda.
- ✦ Adhia, a 1981-batch IAS officer of Gujarat cadre who was known to be close to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, retired in November 30, 2018.
- ✦ As per the Scheme of Amalgamation, shareholders of Vijaya Bank will get 402 equity shares of Bank of Baroda for every 1,000 shares held.

8. Controversial Sheikh Ahmad al-Fahad al-Sabah re-elected Asian Olympic chief

- ✦ Kuwait's Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad Al-Sabah was re-elected president of the powerful Olympic Council of Asia
- ✦ An IOC member, stepped down from his position in the global Olympic body in November because of his forgery accusation in a criminal court against the Kuwaiti and four others.
- ✦ Sheikh Ahmad, considered a major powerbroker in world sport, won a new five-year term until 2024.

9. Kallas wins Estonia election - set to become first female PM

- ✦ Kaja Kallas, the leader of the Reform Party has been appointed as the first female Prime Minister of Estonia.
- ✦ Kallas' party won 28.8 percent of the vote and 34 of the 101 seats in Estonia's parliament, closely followed by Ratas' Center party.

10. Subhash Chandra Garg designated as Finance Secretary

- ✦ The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved designating Garg as the Finance Secretary.
- ✦ Garg, 58, a 1983 batch IAS officer of Rajasthan cadre, has been working as the Secretary in Department of Economic Affairs since June 2017.

- ✦ As per the convention, the senior-most among the five secretaries in the Finance Ministry is designated as the Finance Secretary.

11. Kummanam Rajasekharan resigns as Mizoram Governor

- ✦ Kummanam Rajasekharan, the Governor of Mizoram, has resigned and the President of India has accepted his resignation. Kummanam, the former Kerala State BJP president, had been sworn in as Mizoram Governor on May 25, 2018.
- ✦ President Ram Nath Kovind has appointed Jagdish Mukhi, Governor of Assam, to discharge the functions of the Governor of Mizoram, until regular arrangements for the office of the Governor of Mizoram is made.
- ✦ Kummanam contested the Assembly elections in 2016 from the Vattiyoorkavu constituency in Thiruvananthapuram.

12. Tamil Nadu's 16-year-old, P Iniyan, becomes India's 61st chess Grandmaster

- ✦ India got its 61st Grandmaster when P Iniyan defeated GM Fedorchuk at the ongoing Noisiel Open in France.
- ✦ The victory saw the 16-year-old from Erode cross the 2500-point in ELO ratings.
- ✦ Iniyan had bagged his third and final GM norm at the 41st International Barbera del Valles chess tournament at Barcelona in July last year.

13. Manpreet Vohra appointed as the next India's Ambassador to Mexico

- ✦ Manpreet Vohra, presently Additional Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) here, has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to Mexico.
- ✦ Mexico-Capital – Mexico City, Currency – Mexican peso

14. 116-year-old Japanese woman honored as world's oldest person alive by Guinness World Records

- ✦ A 116-year-old Japanese woman who loves playing the board game Othello is being honored as the world's oldest living person by Guinness World Records.
- ✦ Tanaka was born January 2, 1903, the seventh among eight children. She married Hideo Tanaka in 1922, and they had four children and adopted another child.
- ✦ The previous oldest living person was another Japanese woman, Chiyo Miyako, who died in July at age 117.

15. A K Misra Appointed as Chairman of Agricultural Scientific Recruitment Board

- ✦ Shri Aditya Kumar Misra has been appointed as the new Chairman of the Agricultural Scientific Recruitment Board (ASRB), as per sources.
- ✦ Aditya Kumar Misra, who is a veterinary scientist specializing in economically significant diseases of goat is the acting Vice Chancellor of the GB Pant University of Agriculture & Technology.

- ✦ The former chairman Gurbachan Singh took voluntary retirement in May 2017, has been working without a chairman since then.

16. Dr AK Mohanty takes over as BARC Director

- ✦ A distinguished Scientist and Director of physics group of the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC), Dr AK Mohanty took over as BARC Director.
- ✦ He took over from the charge from Chairman, Atomic Energy Commission and Secretary to the Government of India Mr NK Vyas.
- ✦ While taking over as Director-BARC, Dr Mohanty has expressed gratitude towards his predecessors in Physics Group who have helped him in understanding finer nuances of low and high energy nuclear physics.

17. Rahul Bajaj resigns as Bajaj Finserv Chairman

- ✦ Bajaj Finserv Chairman and Non-Executive Director Rahul Bajaj has resigned and will take over as the Chairman Emeritus.
- ✦ The board of directors has appointed Nanoo Pamnani as Independent Non-Executive Chairman of the company in place of Rahul Bajaj, with effect from May 17, 2019.
- ✦ The company has also approved reappointment of independent directors D J Balaji Rao, Nanoo Pamnani and Gita Piramal for a second term of five years.

18. Pramod Sawant sworn in as Goa Chief Minister

- ✦ Pramod Sawant (45), former Speaker of Goa legislative Assembly and MLA from Sankhelim in North Goa was sworn-in as 11th Chief Minister of Goa, succeeding Manohar Parrikar
- ✦ He was given the oath of office and secrecy at Raj Bhavan near here by Goa Governor Mridula Sinha.
- ✦ Along with the Chief Minister, Sudin alias Ramkrishna Dhavlikar of Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party (MGP) and Vijai Sardesai of Goa Forward Party were sworn in as Deputy Chief Ministers.

19. Santosh Jha Appointed Next Ambassador of India to Republic of Uzbekistan

- ✦ Shri Santosh Jha presently Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of India, Washington, has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Uzbekistan.
- ✦ A press release from the Ministry of External Affairs stated that Jha, an Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer of the 1993 batch, was expected to take up the assignment shortly.

20. Kotak Mahindra Bank elevates KVS Manian, Gaurang Shah as board directors

- ✦ Kotak Mahindra Bank has appointed KVS Manian and Gaurang Shah as whole-time directors for a three-year term effective from the date of approval from the Reserve Bank of India.

- ✦ Manian is currently working as the president - corporate, investment bank. Shah is the president- group chief risk officer of the bank.
- ✦ The appointment of KVS Manian and Gaurang Shah is also subject to shareholders' approval.

21. Pinaki Chandra Ghose set to be India's first Lokpal

- ✦ Former Supreme Court judge and current member of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), Pinaki Chandra Ghose, is likely to be India's first Lokpal.
- ✦ Other members of the committee are Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi, Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan and eminent jurist Mukul Rohatgi.
- ✦ Mr. Ghose was appointed as judge of the Calcutta High Court in 1997 and went on to become Chief Justice of Andhra Pradesh before his elevation to the Supreme Court in 2013.

22. Mukesh Ambani became the world's richest sports team owner

- ✦ Ambani- the 13th richest person on earth is also the richest sports team owner according to Forbes' The World's Richest Sports Team Owners 2019 list.
- ✦ Ambani's fortune jumped from \$40.1 billion in 2018 to \$50 billion in 2019 as he climbed up six spots, from 19th to 13th on the Forbes World's Billionaire list.
- ✦ The top 20 owners in the list of richest sports team owners comprise of 13 rising fortunes, two static and five decliners.

23. Kazakhstan President resigns after nearly 30 years in power

- ✦ Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev has announced his resignation after nearly 30 years in power.
- ✦ The 78-year old leader had ruled the country since it emerged from the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s.
- ✦ The announcement came less than a month after the President sacked his government, citing a lack of economic development despite the country's vast energy resources.

24. Mumbai social worker Gauri Sawant becomes first transgender election ambassador

- ✦ The Election Commission of India has appointed transgender social activist Gauri Sawant, as one of the 12 election ambassadors from Maharashtra.
- ✦ According to the Election Commission, Gauri Sawant's appointment would help in more people from this category getting registered during the final phase of voters enrollment.
- ✦ Election Commission has nominated the renowned sportsmen, film-makers, literary personalities of the respective constituencies as the goodwill ambassadors to induce more voters to vote in the Lok Sabha elections.

25. Phone pe appointed Aamir Khan as Brand Ambassador

- ✦ PhonePe, India's fastest growing payments platform announced appointed of Bollywood superstar Aamir Khan as its brand Ambassador.
- ✦ PhonePe is also an official co-presenting sponsor for the television broadcast of VIVO IPL 2019, and will be launching a series of new TV ads featuring Aamir Khan during this season.
- ✦ PhonePe stands for innovation and trust and has been instrumental in simplifying digital payments for millions of Indians in a very short span of time.

Science Tech & Defence

1. Cobra Gold joint military exercise held in Thailand

- ✦ Twenty-nine countries, including Indonesia, concluded the biggest Asia-Pacific military joint exercise ever in Thailand.
- ✦ Around 4,500 personnel from the army, navy and the air forces participated in the 2019 Cobra Gold to evaluate their troops through the Combined Arms Live Fire Exercise (Calfex), among other activities.
- ✦ This year's event also marks the first joint cyber operation that aims to identify and protect important information in case of a cyberattack.

2. Govt releases draft e-commerce policy.

- ✦ The government released the draft national e-commerce policy proposing setting up a legal and technological framework for restrictions on cross-border data flow.
- ✦ The draft policy said the framework would be created to provide the basis for imposing restrictions on cross-border data flow from specified sources.
- ✦ The policy aim at sector growth along with make in India, Digital India.

3. India successfully test fires surface-to-air missile QRSAM amid tensions with Pakistan

- ✦ India successfully test fired the short range Quick Reaction Surface-to-Air Missile (QRSAM) from a test range along the coast of Odisha.
- ✦ Developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), the missile has a strike range of 25 km to 30 km and has a capability of engaging multiple targets. The sleek and highly mobile air defence system has been developed for the Indian Army.
- ✦ The indigenously developed QRSAM will replace the 'Akash' missile defence system which is on its way out due to technological obsolescence.

4. India-Bangladesh joint military exercise Sampriti 2019 to be held from March 2

- ✦ India and Bangladesh will be conducting a joint military exercise, 'Exercise Sampriti 2019' at Tangail, Bangladesh from March 2 to March 15, 2019.

- ✦ This will be the eighth edition of the exercise which is hosted alternately by both countries.
- ✦ The exercise is aimed to strengthen and broaden the aspects of interoperability and cooperation between the Indian and Bangladesh Armies.

5. Adobe, Atal Innovation Mission partner to enhance digital literacy, creativity skills

- ✦ Software firm Adobe has partnered with Niti Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) to collaborate on enhancing digital literacy and creativity skills.
- ✦ The two parties have signed a statement of intent (SOI) to collectively drive the charter of developing creative skills and spreading digital literacy across all Atal Tinkering Labs in India.
- ✦ Adobe will also implement its Digital Disha Programme across 100 schools under Atal Tinkering Labs (ATL) initiative.

6. ISRO launches 'Young Scientist Programme' for school children

- ✦ The Indian Space Research Organisation has launched a special programme for school children called Yuva Vigyani Karyakram or Young Scientist Programme.
- ✦ ISRO has come up with this young scientist programme to 'catch them young'. The residential training programme will be conducted during the summer holidays. It will be held for a duration of around two weeks.
- ✦ The programme aims at imparting basic knowledge on space technology, space science and space applications to the younger ones with the intent of arousing their interest in the emerging areas of space activities.

7. Bharat Electronics launches SWAGAT - Automatic Fare Collection Gating System

- ✦ BEL is taking up the large-scale manufacturing and deployment of the System at its manufacturing facilities.
- ✦ Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL), a defence public sector undertaking, presented SWAGAT - the Automatic Fare Collection Gating System.
- ✦ SWAGAT is an initiative steered by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) in collaboration with BEL and Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC) with the support of Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC), National Payment Corporation of India (NPCI) and State Bank of India (SBI).

8. Soumya Swaminathan named Chief Scientist at WHO

- ✦ Soumya Swaminathan, a Deputy Director-General of the World Health Organisation has been named Chief Scientist of the WHO.
- ✦ The new division is being seen as the fifth pillar to strengthen the WHO's core scientific work, ensure quality and consistency of norms and standards.
- ✦ As Deputy Director-General Programmes (DDP), she was one of the three DDGs assisting WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

9. PINAKA guided weapons system successfully test fired

- ✦ Defence Research and Development organisation, DRDO successfully test fired the PINAKA guided WEAPON rocket system from Pokhran range in Rajasthan.
- ✦ The weapon system is equipped with state-of-the-art guidance kit comprising of an advanced navigation and control system.
- ✦ The indigenously developed Guided PINAKA by DRDO will significantly boost the capability of the artillery to make precision hi

10. After 8 years at top, India drops to No 2 in arms import

- ✦ After having cut down on imports of weapons and military equipment, India has dropped down to be the second largest importer of weapons.
- ✦ The five biggest exporters in five-year block period 2011-2015 were the US, Russia, France, Germany and China.
- ✦ Last year (for the period 2013-17), India accounted for 13 per cent of all imports and was the world's largest importer.

11. INDO-OMAN Joint Ex Al Nagah 2019

- ✦ Indo Oman Joint Exercise Al Nagah III 2019, a joint military exercise between Indian and Royal Army of Oman (RAO), at HQ Jabel Regiment, Nizwa, Oman with a brief but impressive opening ceremony that saw the unfurling of the national flags of both countries.
- ✦ Ex Al Nagah 2019 will contribute immensely in developing mutual understanding and respect for each other's military as also facilitate in tackling the worldwide phenomenon of terrorism.
- ✦ Both sides will jointly train, plan and execute a series of well-developed tactical drills for neutralization of likely threats that may be encountered in such a scenario.

12. United States to set up six nuclear power plants in India

- ✦ US reaffirmed its strong support of India's early membership in the Nuclear Suppliers Group. This commitment was made at the 9th round of the India-US Strategic Security Dialogue held in Washington DC
- ✦ India and US also exchanged views on a wide range of global security and nonproliferation challenges.

13. Pakistan Successfully Test-fires 'Smart Weapon' From JF-17 Fighter Jet

- ✦ Pakistan Air Force has announced successfully test-firing an indigenously developed "smart weapon" from a JF-17 Thunder fighter jet to provide it a very potent day and night capability to engage a variety of targets with pinpoint accuracy.
- ✦ The successful trial has provided JF-17 Thunder a very potent and assured day and night capability to engage variety of targets with pinpoint accuracy.

- ✦ The JF-17, which was previously referred as FC-1 Xiaolong, a single-engine multi-role light fighter was being jointly produced by Pakistan with China for several years with engines supplied by Russia.

14. President Kovind confers 3 Kirti Chakras and 15 Shaurya Chakras to Armed Forces Personnel

- ✦ President Ram Nath Kovind conferred three Kirti Chakras and fifteen Shaurya Chakras to Armed Forces Personnel for displaying conspicuous gallantry, indomitable courage and extreme devotion to duty.
- ✦ The President also conferred fifteen Param Vishisht Seva Medals, one Uttam Yudh Seva Medals and twenty-five Ati Vishisht Seva Medals to senior officers of the Armed Forces for distinguished service of an exceptional order.
- ✦ One of the Param Vishisht Seva Medal was conferred on Army Chief General Bipin Rawat.

15. IIT Kharagpur to Adopt Amazon Web Services Educate Programme To Accelerate Cloud Learning and AI Skills

- ✦ The Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur will adopt Amazon Web Services (AWS) Educate programme to help students gain cloud computing skills including hands-on experience in artificial intelligence (AI)
- ✦ The programme offers a robust set of no-cost tools, resources and AWS Promotional Credits for students and educators to boost their cloud skills and experience.
- ✦ As part of AWS Educate, the students will gain access to 12 Cloud Career Pathways covering topics that are in demand by employers, such as machine learning, cybersecurity.

16. Indian Army Holds Military Exercise With 17 African Nations

- ✦ The Indian Army began a 10-day military exercise with armed forces of 17 African nations at Aundh in Maharashtra, reflecting the growing strategic ties between India and the Africa continent.
- ✦ The inaugural ceremony of the exercise held at the Aundh military station was attended by defence attaches and other senior officials of the participating nations.
- ✦ The countries participating in the inaugural edition of the Africa-India Field Training Exercise (AFINDEX) include Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Benin.

17. WhatsApp and NASSCOM Foundation collaborate for digital literacy in India

- ✦ WhatsApp and NASSCOM Foundation have come together to impart digital literacy training to help tackle the challenge of misinformation.
- ✦ This partnership aims to reach approximately 100,000 Indians with training to spot false information and provide tips & tricks to stay safe on WhatsApp.

- ✦ The curriculum will be disseminated in multiple regional languages to address the diversity of India.

18. Mobile app developed by IIPHG, PHFI to combat exam pressure

- ✦ A mobile application to cope with exam related stress and anxiety for students and their parents has been developed by Indian Institute of Public Health Gandhinagar, Gujarat, (IIPHG) in collaboration with National Mental Health Program.
- ✦ The mobile application is called 'Conquer Exam, Be a Warrior.'
- ✦ It is designed to provide assistance to empower students to do the best use of their ability and knock the exams season with help of parents.

19. Mi Pay a UPI Based Payments app launched by Xiaomi in India

- ✦ Xiaomi launched 'Mi Pay' in India. They are calling it the 'UPI app for Xiaomi users.'
- ✦ Xiaomi has tied up with ICICI Bank for the role of the payment service provider while the NPCI monitored Unified Payments of India (UPI) will be the digital wallet interface.
- ✦ Xiaomi has also assured that the data will be stored in encrypted form and will be secure.

20. CBSE launches new 'Shiksha Vani' app to upload podcast on Class 10, 12 exam evaluation process

- ✦ The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) launched a new podcast app 'Shiksha Vani' earlier this week. This app will disseminate crucial information to students and parents in a timely manner.
- ✦ The CBSE board also mentioned that its first episode, on the evaluation process of Class 10 and 12 board examinations, has been released on the platform.
- ✦ This episode is helpful for all the students, as when the examinations proceed, the episode helps students understand how their completed papers will be evaluated.

Important days

1. National Science Day Celebrated on 28 February

- ✦ National Science Day is celebrated in India on 28 February each year to mark the discovery of the Raman effect by Indian physicist Sir C. V. Raman on 28 February 1928.
- ✦ The event is now celebrated all over the country in schools, colleges, universities and other academic, scientific, technical, medical and research institutions.

- ✦ The theme of the year 2019 is "Science for the People, and the People for Science"

2. Zero Discrimination day observed on 1st March

- ✦ March 1 is Zero Discrimination Day, an annual worldwide event that promotes diversity and recognizes that everyone counts.
- ✦ The symbol for Zero Discrimination Day is the butterfly, widely used by people to share their stories and photos as a way to end discrimination and work towards positive transformation.
- ✦ Organizations like the United Nations (UN) actively promote the day with various activities to celebrate everyone's right to live a full life with dignity regardless of age, gender, sexuality, nationality.

3. World Wildlife Day 2019 Observed on 3 March

- ✦ World Wildlife Day is observed on 3rd March every year to spread awareness about wildlife.
- ✦ This date was designated as the World Wildlife Day on 20 December 2013 at the 68th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).
- ✦ World Wildlife Day is an opportunity to celebrate the many beautiful and varied forms of wild fauna and flora and to raise awareness of the multitude of benefits that conservation provides to people.

4. International Women's Day observed on 8 November

- ✦ International Women's Day observed on 8 November every year to celebrate acts of courage and determination by ordinary women
- ✦ The theme for International Women's Day (8 March) this year, "Think Equal, Build Smart, Innovate for Change", puts innovation by women and girls, for women and girls, at the heart of efforts to achieve gender equality.
- ✦ Achieving a gender-equal world requires social innovations that work for both women and men and leave no one behind.

5. World Kidney Day 2019: kidney Health for Everyone Everywhere

- ✦ The World Kidney Day 2019 was observed on March 14, 2019, the second Thursday of March, with an aim to raise awareness of the importance of our kidneys.
- ✦ The theme of World Kidney Day 2019 was "Kidney Health for Everyone Everywhere".
- ✦ The theme calls for Universal Health Coverage (UHC) for prevention and early treatment of kidney disease.

6. World Consumer Rights Day 2019 observed on 16 March

- ✦ World Consumer Rights Day is celebrated every year on 15 March as part of an initiative by Consumer International, a membership organisation for consumer groups around the world.

- ✦ The day is celebrated every year, to celebrate consumer rights and build a world where everyone has access to safe and sustainable products and services.
- ✦ The theme for World Consumers day 2019 is "Trusted Smart Products"

7. Global Recycling Day 2019: "Recycling into the Future"

- ✦ Global Recycling Day is held on 18th March every year, with an aim to change the mindset of governments, businesses, communities and individuals around the world, to see recyclables as resource – not waste.
- ✦ As part of this year's Global Recycling Day on March 18, the theme "Recycling into the Future" will focus on the power of youth and education in ensuring a brighter future.
- ✦ In honor of this year's theme, through its youth outreach program, ISRI offers a number of free resources to teachers to educate children on the science of recycling.

8. International Day of Happiness 2019 celebrated on March 20

- ✦ International Day of Happiness 2019 was celebrated on March 20
- ✦ United Nations has celebrated the International Day of Happiness as a way to recognize the importance of happiness in the lives of people around the world.
- ✦ Happier Together is the theme for International Day of Happiness 2019.

9. World Water Day observed on 22 March

- ✦ World Water Day celebrated annually on March 22.
- ✦ An international day to celebrate freshwater was recommended at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro.
- ✦ The theme for World Water Day 2019 is 'Leaving no one behind'.

Books & Authors

1. Shri M Venkaiah Naidu Launches BIMTECH Director Dr. H Chaturvedi's Book on 'Quality, Accreditation & Ranking' at New Delhi

- ✦ The book titled 'Quality, Accreditation and Ranking - A Silent Revolution in the Offing in Indian Higher Education' edited by EPSI's Alternate President, Dr. H Chaturvedi was released by the Hon'ble Vice President Naidu.
- ✦ The book released by the Vice President contains articles, essays and research papers authored by some of the prominent educationists, policy makers.
- ✦ Dr. H Chaturvedi is Professor and Director at Birla Institute of Management Technology, Greater Noida, India.

2. FM Arun Jaitley releases the book 'Mann Ki Baat – A Social Revolution on Radio'

- ✦ Shri Arun Jaitley, Union Minister of Finance & Corporate Affairs, released a book titled 'Mann Ki Baat – A Social Revolution on Radio' in a function organized in National Media Centre, New Delhi.
- ✦ The book is based on 50 episodes of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's heart to heart talk with the citizens of India broadcast on All India Radio.
- ✦ The book has been collated by BlueKraft Digital Foundation, a not for profit organization, and brought out by Rupa Publication, India, a reputed publishing house.

Sports

1. Manpreet Singh honoured with AHF's Player of the Year

- ✦ Indian Hockey Team captain Manpreet Singh has been honoured with the 2018 Player of the Year award by the Asian Hockey Federation.
- ✦ Indian Hockey Women team's striker Lalremsiami bagged the Rising Player of The Year prize.
- ✦ Manpreet led the Indian team to an unbeaten streak at the Asian Champions Trophy in Muscat where the team was declared joint winners with Pakistan.

2. One gold, five silver medals for India at Makran Cup : Boxing

- ✦ National champion Deepak Singh was the lone Indian boxer to notch up a gold while five others claimed silver medals in the Makran Cup in Chabahar, Iran.
- ✦ Deepak (49-kilogram) defeated Jaafar Naseri in the finals. Earlier, Rohit Tokas (64kg) and Manjeet Singh Panghal (75kg) lost in the semifinals to sign off with bronze medals.
- ✦ Manish, also a national champion, lost to Danial Shah Baksh, while Satish was beaten by Mohammad Mlias.

3. Federer claims the 100th ATP title of his career

- ✦ Roger Federer claimed the 100th ATP title of his career by beating 20-year-old Greek Stefanos Tsitsipas 6-4 6-4 in the final of the Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championships.
- ✦ The 20-times Grand Slam champion became the second man in the Open Era to claim 100 titles after American Jimmy Connors who won 109.
- ✦ Swiss Federer also avenged his shock defeat by Tsitsipas in the Australian Open fourth round in January.

4. World Fame 100: Virat Kohli only Indian in top 10, MS Dhoni in 13th spot

- ✦ This year's ESPN World Fame 100 list, an annual list of the most famous athletes on the planet, placed the Portuguese footballer Cristiano Ronaldo at the top spot, followed by basketball player LeBron James and FC Barcelona captain Lionel Messi.
- ✦ Kohli bagged the seventh position and is the only Indian athlete in the top 10, whereas Dhoni is placed in the 13th spot.
- ✦ There were only three women in the list- Serena Williams (17), Maria Sharapova (37) and Sania Mirza (93), making the latter the only Indian woman athlete to feature in the list.

5. Abu Dhabi 2019 Special Olympic World Games kicks off

- ✦ Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi Sheikh Mohamed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan announced the start of the Special Olympics World Games 2019 at a marvelous opening ceremony in Abu Dhabi.
- ✦ With great joy and pride, thousands of athletes stepped on the stage, danced and waved to the cheering audiences.
- ✦ Several new records have already been set in Abu Dhabi according to the organizing committee. For the first time there are 200 delegations taking part with 195 of them competing while five observing.

6. K T Irfan becomes first Indian athlete to qualify for Tokyo Olympics

- ✦ National record holder KT Irfan became the first Indian from athletics to qualify for the next year's Olympics while finishing fourth in the 20 km event of the Asian Race Walking Championships in Nomi, Japan.
- ✦ The Olympics qualification period for all other athletics events will start from May 1 this year and will run till June 29, 2020.
- ✦ No other Indian from athletics has so far qualified for Tokyo Olympics.

7. India to host U-17 Women's World Cup in 2020

- ✦ India will host the U-17 Women's World Cup in 2020, International Football Federation (FIFA) President Gianni Infantino announced.
- ✦ This will be the second FIFA tournament India will be hosting, after the U-17 Men's World Cup in 2017
- ✦ The U-17 women's tournament began in 2008, when New Zealand hosted it. Spain is the current champion and they had beaten Mexico 2-1 in the final in Uruguay last year. The tournament in India will be the seventh edition.

8. Dipa Karmakar Gets a Barbie Modelled After Her, Complete With Bronze Medal

- ✦ Dipa Karmakar, who became the first Indian female gymnast to win a bronze medal at the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, was recently honoured by Barbie for "breaking boundaries to inspire" the next generation girls.
- ✦ Karmakar was immortalised with a doll wearing a red leotard along with a bronze medal.

- ✦ The doll brand, which was launched in 1959, has transformed from featuring “pretty” dolls to Barbie being a surgeon, a news anchor, an astronaut and a president among other roles.

9. Diksha Dagar becomes second Indian to win Ladies European Tour title

- ✦ Diksha Dagar became only the second Indian woman to win on Ladies European Tour after clinching the South African Open, eking out a one-shot victory with a bogey-free final round, in Cape Town.
- ✦ Dagar, 18, was trailing by two shots, but pipped the much-experienced Lee Anne Pace with a three-under final round.
- ✦ A left-hander, Diksha is well-known for brand of aggressive and fearless golf. Her brother, Yogesh, who is also deaf, also plays golf and has been playing in age-group events.

10. India Beat Nepal To Win 5th Successive SAFF Women's Championship

- ✦ India continued their dominance at the SAFF Women's Championship with the team lifting their fifth straight title with a 3-1 win over Nepal in the final.
- ✦ Indian Midfielder Indumathi Kathiresanand Nepali forward player Sabitra Bhandari became the top scorers in the match with four goals each.
- ✦ This win has extended India's run in the tournament history to 23 games.



1. Oscars Awards 2019 announced ; Bohemian Rhapsody wins four Academy Awards

- ✦ Bohemian Rhapsody might have won the most Oscars at the 2019 Academy Awards with four wins. Black Panther and Netflix's Roma also ended up with three awards on the night.
- ✦ Colman, 45, earned one of the highest honors for her role as Queen Anne in The Favourite as she beat out Close, 71, whom many predicted would reign victorious for her role in The Wife.
- ✦ Best Picture- Greenbook, Best Actress in a Leading Role- Olivia Colman for the Favourite
- ✦ Best Actor in a Leading Role- Rami Malek for Bohemian Rhapsody.

2. Playwright Mahesh Elkunchwar to be honoured with META lifetime achievement award

- ✦ Eminent Indian playwright Mahesh Elkunchwar has been chosen for this year's META Lifetime Achievement Award.
- ✦ The playwright will be conferred upon with the award on March 12, along with the winners of the 14th Mahindra Excellence in Theatre Awards (META) festival.

- ✦ He has written more than 30 plays and essays, like 'Sultan', 'Holi', 'Garbo', 'Yatanagar', and 'Atmakatha' and is also a receiver of the Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowship.

3. Manu Bhaker, Saurabh Chaudhary Win Gold In 10m Air Pistol Mixed Team Event

- ✦ India's pair of Manu Bhaker and Saurabh Chaudhary clinched a gold medal in the 10m Air Pistol mixed team event on the closing day of the ISSF World Cup at the Dr Karni Shooting Range in New Delhi.
- ✦ The pair registered a total score of 483.5 to finish on the top in the mixed team event. This is India's third medal at the World Cup as Saurabh Chaudhary and Apurvi Chandela won a gold medal each.
- ✦ The Indian shooters in 10m air rifle mixed team event - Ravi Kumar and Anjum Moudgil and Apurvi Chandela and Deepak Kumar finished seventh and 25th respectively.

4. PM Modi Confers National Youth Parliament Festival 2019 Awards

- ✦ Prime Minister Narendra Modi presents the 1st prize to Shweta Umre of Maharashtra during the National Youth Parliament Festival, 2019 Awards function.
- ✦ National Youth Parliament Festival 2019 has been jointly organised by National Service Scheme (NSS) and Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS) under the aegis of Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, on the theme of "Be the Voice of New India" and "Find solutions and contribute to policy".
- ✦ The best three speakers at the National Youth Parliament will be awarded Rs 2 lakhs, Rs 1.50 lakhs and Rs 1 lakh respectively in order of merit along with a certificate by the Prime Minister Modi.

5. DRDO chief Satheesh Reddy conferred Missile Systems Award by AIAA

- ✦ India's aerospace scientist and Chief of the Defence Research Development Organisation (DRDO), G Satheesh Reddy, has been conferred the Missile Systems Award 2019 by the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics.
- ✦ Satheesh is the first Indian to win the award, which recognises his leadership role in the Indian missile programme.
- ✦ AIAA is the world's largest and reputed aerospace technical society.

6. Bharti AXA General wins 'Assocham Non-Life Insurer of The Year Award'

- ✦ Bharti AXA General Insurance has been conferred with the 'Non-Life Insurer of The Year Award 2019 by the Assocham, one of the apex trade associations of India.
- ✦ The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (Assocham) honored Bharti AXA General Insurance with this recognition for its excellence and contribution to the non-life insurance sector during the recently-held Insurance Leaders Meet 2019 and Excellence Awards in Kolkata.

- ✦ The company has achieved significant distribution scale with a sharp focus on profitability. It posted its maiden profit in the first nine months of the current financial year 2018-19.

7. Abhinandan Varthaman To Be Awarded Bhagwan Mahavir Ahimsa Puraskar

- ✦ Indian Air Force Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman will be the first recipient of the 'Bhagwan Mahavir Ahimsa Puraskar' instituted by the Akhil Bharatiya Digambar Jain Mahasamiti.
- ✦ Abhinandan Varthaman spent nearly 60 hours in Pakistani captivity after his MiG-21 Bison fighter went down. He had hit a Pakistani F-16 before he was forced to eject and landed across the Line of Control.
- ✦ The award, instituted this year, carries a cash prize of Rs. 2.51 lakh, a memento and a citation and will be presented to Abhinandan Varthaman on April 17, coinciding with Mahavir Jayanti.

8. Indian Bank receives Best Bank Award

- ✦ Public sector Indian Bank has bagged the Best Bank Award from the Tamil Nadu government for meeting the needs of women's self-help groups (SHGs).
- ✦ At a function in Salem recently, Chief Minister of the state K Palaniswami handed over the award to the executive director of the bank M K Bhattacharya.
- ✦ Salem district collector Rohini and senior officials of the bank were present on the occasion

9. President Presents Swachh Survekshan 2019 Awards

- ✦ Indore has been awarded the cleanest city in the country in the Swachh Survekshan 2019 (SS 2019) awards while Bhopal has been declared as the cleanest capital.
- ✦ Ujjain has bagged the award for being the cleanest city in the population category of 3 lakh to 10 lakh. The awards were presented by the President.
- ✦ The Swachh Survekshan exercise was started with the objective of inculcating a spirit of healthy competition among cities in their race towards becoming India's cleanest cities.

10. Bhubaneswar's Biju Patnaik International Airport wins the prestigious ASQ award

- ✦ The Biju Patnaik International Airport (BPIA) in Bhubaneswar has won the 2018 Airport Service Quality (ASQ) award as the leading airport in size and region.
- ✦ The award is accorded on the basis of independent survey amongst passengers on various parameters of security, safety, experience, ambience, ease of availability and cleanliness, Hota stated.
- ✦ Chandigarh Airport, Devi Ahilyabai Holkar Airport in Indore, SM Badaruddin II Airport in Indonesia, SS Kasim II Airport in Indonesia and Yichang Sanxia Airport in China were also chosen for the award.

11. India Bags First Prize at The International 'Golden City Gate Tourism Awards 2019'

- ✚ India Bags First Prize at The International 'Golden City Gate Tourism Awards 2019' In 'TV Cinema Spot' Category at ITB
- ✚ The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India has won the First Prize in the category of TV Cinema Spot at the prestigious international Golden City Gate Tourism Awards 2019
- ✚ The Golden City Gate Tourism Multi-media Awards are given annually in various categories related to the Tourism and Hospitality sectors. The 'Golden City Gate' is a creative multi-media international competition for countries, cities, regions and hotels.

12. Acko Awarded the Coveted Golden Peacock Award for Innovative Product

- ✚ ACKO General Insurance a new-age digital insurance company, was awarded the coveted Golden Peacock Innovative Product Award – 2019, for their contextual micro insurance product -“Ola Ride Insurance”.
- ✚ Established by the Institute of Directors, India in 1991, The Golden Peacock Awards for Corporate Leadership and Excellence are now regarded as a benchmark of business excellence, both locally and globally.
- ✚ The Golden Peacock Innovative Product/Service Award is designed to encourage systemic innovation in an organization to develop products and services that are aligned with the current market demands.

13. Indian social entrepreneur wins Commonwealth award

- ✚ A social entrepreneur from Tamil Nadu bagged the Commonwealth Youth Award for the Asian region from among hundreds of nominations for his technology-based food rescue organisation.
- ✚ Padmanaban Gopalan, founder of No Food Waste, was named the winner of the award worth 3,000 pounds at a ceremony at the Commonwealth Secretariat in London.
- ✚ The awards recognise their outstanding initiatives in line with the SGDs with a focus on poverty, gender, clean water, education, health and climate change.

14. Journalist and author Raghu Karnad wins \$165,000 Windham-Campbell Prize

- ✚ Delhi-based journalist and author Raghu Karnad was announced as one of eight recipients of Yale University's Windham-Campbell Prize this year, in London.
- ✚ One of the world's most lucrative literary awards, the prize is open to English language writers from across the world, with each winner receiving \$165,000 to support their writing.
- ✚ Past winners of the prize include Jerry Pinto, Maya Jasanoff, Teju Cole and Geoff Dyer.

Obituaries

1. Russian Nobel Prize winner for physics Alferov dies aged 88

- ✦ Zhores Alferov, a Russian scientist who won a Nobel prize in physics, has died.
- ✦ The physicist was also a Communist deputy in the lower house of parliament, where Alferov had been a deputy since 1995.
- ✦ In his Nobel Prize acceptance speech, Alferov noted that physics had brought both benefits and disasters to mankind in the 20th century and warned that the mass media could be abused in the wrong hands.

2. Olympic Cycling Medalist Kelly Catlin Dead At 23

- ✦ Olympic cycling medalist Kelly Catlin died in her dorm at Stanford University, an abrupt end to the 23-year-old's accolade-filled life.
- ✦ Kelly Catlin was most known as being a member of the U.S. women's pursuit team that earned a silver medal during the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro.

3. Goa Chief Minister Manohar Parrikar passes away

- ✦ Goa Chief Minister Manohar Parrikar had passed away at the age of 63
- ✦ Manohar Parrikar (13 December 1955 – 17 March 2019) was an Indian politician and leader of Bharatiya Janata Party who was the Chief Minister of Goa from 14 March 2017 till his death. Previously he was Chief Minister of Goa from 2000 to 2005 and from 2012 to 2014.
- ✦ Parrikar led a coalition government, which is supported by the Goa Forward Party (GFP), the Maharashtra Gomantak Party (MGP), and three independent lawmakers in Goa.



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