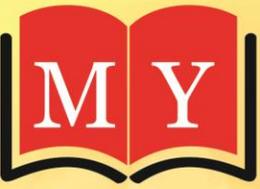
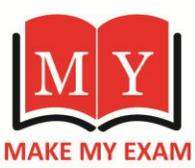


Monthly GK Capsule

February, 2019

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- Pre Exam Training
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National News

1. Shri Nitin Gadkari to Inaugurate Four National Highway Projects in Bikaner and Nagaur in Rajasthan

- ✦ Shri Nitin Gadkari will inaugurate and lay the foundation stone for four NH projects in Rajasthan on the 28th of January. These include three projects in Bikaner and one in Nagaur.
- ✦ This road is being built under Bharatmala on EPC mode at a cost of Rs 687.07 crore.
- ✦ At Bikaner the first project for laying of foundation stones is the 162.46 kms , 2 lane section of NH from Raisinghnagar to Poogal.

2. Sugarcane juice declared as national drink of Pakistan

- ✦ Government of Pakistan has declared sugarcane juice as the nation juice of Pakistan
- ✦ Poll includes three option including orange juice, carrot juice and sugarcane juice. But it is sugarcane juice which won the poll with 81 percent votes.

3. Indian Railways' fastest Train 18 named Vande Bharat Express: Piyush Goyal

- ✦ India's first indigenously built engineless semi-high speed train, Train 18, has been named Vande Bharat Express.
- ✦ The train is set to run between Delhi and Varanasi at a maximum speed of 160 kmph and will soon be flagged off by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- ✦ The 16-coach train, built in 18 months at a cost of Rs 97 crore by the Modern Coach Factory, Rae Bareli, is regarded as a successor to the 30-year-old Shatabdi Express. It's also the first locomotive-less train in the country.

4. Mizoram govt bans import of pigs and piglets

- ✦ Deputy Commissioners of all the eight districts in Mizoram have issued orders banning import of pigs and piglets from other countries in view of possible outbreak of the Porcine Reproductive and Respiratory Syndrome
- ✦ The orders were issued as the dreaded PRRS outbreak always occurred from March to July, during a dry spell after pre-monsoon downpours.
- ✦ It was suspected that the PRRS outbreak was due to illegal and even legal import of pigs and piglets from Myanmar where there was reported prevalence of the porcine disease.

5. Assam tops in budgetary practices followed by states: Transparency International

- ✦ Assam occupied the top slot in the ranking of best practices followed by states in Budget formulation, followed by Andhra Pradesh and Odisha, says a survey by Transparency International.

- ✦ The survey is based on 4 parameters which include public disclosure, budgetary process, post budget fiscal management and efforts to make budget more transparent and citizen friendly.
- ✦ The states which figured lower in the ranking were Meghalaya, Manipur and Punjab.

6. UP to build world's longest Expressway: Yogi Adityanath

- ✦ The Uttar Pradesh cabinet met at Prayagraj, the venue of the Kumbh and cleared the decks to construct what is being touted as the world's longest highway -- the Ganga Expressway between Meerut and Prayagraj.
- ✦ The proposed Ganga Expressway will weave through Meerut-Amroha-Bulandshahr-Budaun-Shahjahanpur-Kannauj-Unnao-Rae Bareli-Pratapgarh and end at Prayagraj, earlier known as Allahabad.
- ✦ The cabinet also decided to make tax free the Bollywood film "Uri", based on the Indian Army's surgical strike on terror bases in Pakistan.

7. New campus of National Museum Institute inaugurated at Noida

- ✦ The new Campus of the National Museum Institute was inaugurated by Shri Prakash Javadekar
- ✦ Speaking at the inauguration, the Chief Guest Shri Prakash Javadekar, Union Minister for Human Resource Development said that there is a huge scope for the courses offered by the Institute like history of arts, conservation, museology among others.
- ✦ He also proposed that Ministry of Culture should consider setting up a national museum of educational history so that the future generations could understand the evolution of education.

8. Finance minister Piyush Goyal present the Interim Budget

- ✦ Finance minister Piyush Goyal will present the Interim Budget for 2019-20 amid heightened expectations that he will announce an income support scheme for distressed farmers who have seen their incomes stagnate because of plunging prices, barely enough to pay for loans and input costs.
- ✦ The budget, the last before April-May Lok Sabha elections, will be keenly watched for cues about the government's intent on creating jobs, in the face of the latest set of data showing four-decade high unemployment rates.
- ✦ Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government's sixth and final budget before the polls due by May is supposed to be an interim budget or a Vote on Account.

9. Paytm enters hotel booking business, buys NightStay

- ✦ Paytm has launched hotel bookings on its platform and acquired NightStay, which offers deals on last-minute bookings at luxury hotels
- ✦ Its hotel partners include chains like Sarovar, Zuri, Treebo, Indian Hotels Co's Ginger, Sterling and Vresorts.
- ✦ Paytm planned to invest 70 million for its growth in the travel segment.

10. Punjab govt gave approval for Smart Village Campaign worth of Rs 385 crores

- ✦ Punjab government approved a rural development scheme "Smart Village Campaign" worth Rs 384.40 crore to build village infrastructure and provide essential amenities.
- ✦ Getting approved by Chief Minister Amarinder Singh, Reformation and implementation of the scheme would be financed with funds from the 14th Financial Commission and MGNREGA.
- ✦ Projects worth Rs 25 lakh would be approved by a committee of deputy commissioner and additional deputy commissioner (Development) while those above Rs 25 lakh would be given sanction by a state-level committee headed by the joint development commissioner.

11. Government sets up committee to explore prepaid payments by discoms to generator companies

- ✦ The government has constituted a committee under the Central Electricity Authority (CEA) to explore prepaid payments by state electricity distribution companies to power plants
- ✦ The formed committee, consist of The chairman of distribution companies of Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra, and representatives from Union power ministry and power associations to look into problems of delayed payments from distribution companies to power generators .
- ✦ The committee will study working capital cycles of power distribution companies and generation companies and identify gaps contributing to stress in the sector.

12. Govt Reduces Import Duties On Electric Vehicle Parts

- ✦ The customs duty on electric vehicle components which are imported in a knocked-down or semi knocked down state, have been reduced to 10%-15%
- ✦ This reduction of the taxes is aimed at encouraging global automobile companies to assemble electric vehicles in India.
- ✦ The Custom duty on battery packs for mobile phones has been doubled by CBIC and hence they will attract a tax of 20% on import.

13. Indus River Dolphin declared Punjab's State aquatic animal

- ✦ One of the world's rarest mammals, Found only in India and Pakistan in the Beas river, the generally playful Indus Dolphins have been declared Punjab's State aquatic animal.
- ✦ The decision was taken in the Punjab State Wildlife Board presided over by the Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh, who shared the information on his official Twitter handle.
- ✦ As per the WWF figures, the number of dolphins presently is 1816, mostly found in the lower parts of the Indus River in Pakistan between Chashma and Kotri barrages in the Indus River.

14. Odisha's Kalia scholarship scheme for farmers' to boost higher education

- ✦ Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik announced the new 'KALIA Chhatravritti Yojana', which is a scholarship for the children of farmers who are the beneficiaries of Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation (KALIA) scheme.
- ✦ Under this scheme, the children of farmers, who are the beneficiaries of the KALIA scheme will be provided scholarships for pursuing higher education in professional courses free of cost.
- ✦ Children of farmers who have taken admission at Government Professional colleges on merit basis will be eligible for the scholarship scheme.

15. 325 child labourers rescued under 'Operation Smile'

- ✦ Operation Smile was launched on January 1 this year to trace missing children. The month-long programme aims to rescue child labourers, children engaged in begging for alms and so on.
- ✦ 325 child labourers have been rescued as part of 'Operation Smile' in Hyderabad.
- ✦ Besides rescuing children belonging to Hyderabad and other parts of Telangana, 100 children belonging to states like Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, and even Nepal were rescued during this operation.

16. Government approves Schemes of National Minorities Development and Finance Corporation

- ✦ The schemes of National Minority Development Finance Corporation (NMDFC) are being implemented for the socio-economic development of the 'backward sections' amongst the notified minorities by the respective State Governments/UT Administration.
- ✦ For availing assistance under NMDFC schemes, the annual family income eligibility criterion under Credit Line-1 is Rs.98,000 for rural areas & Rs.1.20 lacs for urban areas.
- ✦ Higher annual family income eligibility criterion of upto Rs.6.00 lacs has also been introduced as Credit Line-2, for increasing coverage of beneficiaries under NMDFC schemes.

17. Sushma Swaraj and Nitin Gadkari flag off Suraksha Yatra

- ✦ External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and Shri Nitin Gadkari flagged off Suraksha Yatra - a motor car rally from Rajghat in New Delhi to commemorate the 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.
- ✦ The flag off was also part of an event to launch the 30th National Road Safety Week.
- ✦ To underline its commitment and support for promoting safety on Indian roads, the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) has declared 2019 as the Year of Road Safety.

18. Government expects 7.5% GDP growth in FY20

- ✦ The finance ministry expects economic growth to accelerate to 7.5 per cent in 2019-20 from 7.2 per cent projected for the current fiscal.
- ✦ The growth was 8.2 per cent in 2016-17, the year in which the government demonetized high-denomination currency notes of Rs 500 and Rs 1,000.
- ✦ Finance Minister Piyush Goyal in the Budget Speech said that India is solidly back on track and marching towards growth and prosperity.

19. Government launches Shehri Samridhi Utsav to extend outreach of DAY-NULM

- ✦ The Union Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs in February 2019 launched the Shehri Samridhi Utsav, an initiative that aims to extend the outreach of Deendayal Antyodaya Mission – National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM) to the most vulnerable.
- ✦ The event will facilitate access of Self-Help Group (SHG) members to the other government schemes.
- ✦ The Day one of Shehri Samridhi Utsav began with a series of rallies led by women's SHGs across the country. These rallies spread awareness about DAY-NULM in urban poor communities.

20. Government notifies Rules to allow women to work in mines

- ✦ The government allowed women to work in underground mines and eased restrictions that prohibited them from working night shifts in surface mines, striking down a six-decade-old rule that disadvantaged female employees in a sector considered hazardous.
- ✦ Mines Act, 1952, had been amended, "An employer will need to obtain written consent from the female staffer and the underground deployment will be limited to roles that are "technical, supervisory and managerial"
- ✦ According to the new rules, in addition to requiring written consent, employers must provide the workers with adequate facilities and safeguards regarding occupational safety, security and health.

21. Visually impaired, blind voters to get braille voter slips in Lok Sabha polls

- ✦ Visually impaired and blind voters will be provided with braille voter slips in the Lok Sabha elections due this summer.
- ✦ Braille is a script with raised dots that can be read with the fingers by people who are blind or who have low vision.
- ✦ It is a tactile reading and writing system used by blind and visually impaired people who cannot access print material.

22. Govt launches 'India size' project; country to have own standard size for ready-to-wear clothes

- ✦ The Union Minister for Textiles Smt. Smriti Zubin Irani launched the India Size project in Mumbai.

- ✦ A first-of-its-kind project in the history of India, India Size aims to arrive at a standard Indian Size for the ready-to-wear clothing industry, on the lines of the standardized sizes available in countries such as the USA and the UK.
- ✦ The project is being undertaken by the Ministry of Textiles, in collaboration with The Clothing Manufacturers Association of India (CMAI).

23. India becomes world's 2nd largest LPG consumer after government's Ujjawla push

- ✦ The government's push to provide clean cooking fuel to every household has turned India into the world's second largest LPG consumer whose demand is projected to rise 34 per cent by 2025.
- ✦ Under Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) of providing free cooking gas (LPG) connection to poor, over 6.31 crore connections have been provided since the launch of the scheme on May 1, 2016.
- ✦ The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas estimates that LPG consumption would grow to 30.3 million tonnes by 2025 and 40.6 million tonnes by 2040.

24. Swachh Bharat Mission launches 'Darwaza Band - Part 2' campaign

- ✦ The Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) on February 6, 2019 launched the 'Darwaza Band -Part 2' campaign for sustainability of the Open Defecation Free (ODF) status of villages across the country.
- ✦ The campaign was launched in Mumbai in the presence of actor Amitabh Bachchan, Maharashtra's Minister for Water Supply and Sanitation Babanrao Lonikar, Secretary of Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation Parameswaran Iyer and other dignitaries.
- ✦ The 'Darwaza Band- Part 2' campaign is supported by the World Bank and will be rolled out countrywide immediately after the launch.

25. Delhi government launches Zero Fatality Corridor

- ✦ The Arvind Kejriwal-led Delhi govt onlaunched the 'Zero Fatality Corridor' (ZFC) to assess the cause for crashes on the stretch between Burari Chowk and Bhalswa chowk on the outer ring road.
- ✦ The initiative aimed at bringing down injuries and deaths due to road crashes and to be run in partnership with Save LIFE Foundation, a leading road safety non-profit, was launched by Delhi's transport minister Kailash Gahlot.
- ✦ The three km stretch earmarked for the project has four blackspots namely - Burari Chowk, Bhalswa Chowk, Jahangirpuri Bus Stand and Mukundpur Chowk, known among the most dangerous stretches, claiming 67 lives in 2016 and 2017.

26. Vijay Sethupathi launches police App 'DigiCop' in Chennai

- ✦ Actor Vijay Sethupathi launched the mobile App 'DigiCop' of city police department at the Commissioner's office.
- ✦ The actor also released a DVD on CCTV awareness and several other police campaigns to make the police department people friendly.

- ✦ The details of 18,000 stolen mobile phones are stored in the App. So next time someone is buying a phone from a second hand shop they can verify if the phone is stolen or genuine.

27. Linking of PAN Card with Aadhaar Mandatory for Filing IT returns

- ✦ The Supreme Court has said linkage of PAN with Aadhaar is mandatory for filing of Income Tax returns. A bench comprising Justices AK Sikri and S Abdul Nazeer said the top court has decided the matter and upheld the section 139AA of the Income Tax Act.
- ✦ The court's direction came on an appeal filed by the Centre against a Delhi High Court order allowing two people, Shreya Sen and Jayshree Satpute, to file Income Tax returns for 2018-19 without linking their Aadhaar and PAN numbers.
- ✦ Section 139AA of the Income-Tax Act 1961 was introduced by the Finance Act, 2017.

28. Taj Mahal and Agra Fort are among the two highest revenue generating monuments for 2015-2018

- ✦ Taj Mahal, Agra Fort, Qutub Minar, Red Fort, and Humayun's Tomb were the highest revenue generating monuments during 2015-2018. The monuments are protected by Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).
- ✦ The other monuments that made it to the list of top 10 monuments with the highest revenue for 2015-2018 are Sun Temple in Konark, Ellora Caves, Mamallapuram, Khajuraho group of monuments, and Ajanta caves.
- ✦ Taj Mahal is the most prominent monument of India that was built by Mughal ruler Shah Jahan in the honour of his wife Mumtaz. It is globally known as the symbol of love, and attracts a huge number of tourists every year.

29. GeM and CCI join hands for fair environment in e-marketplace

- ✦ To enable a fair and competitive environment in e-marketplace, the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) and the Competition Commission of India (CCI) has entered into a memorandum of understanding (MoU).
- ✦ Competition Commission of India (CCI) is a statutory body of the Government of India, responsible for enforcing the Competition Act, 2002 throughout India and to prevent activities that have an adverse effect on competition.
- ✦ Both CCI and GeM appreciate the importance of advanced analytical tools and processes for identification of malpractices like cartelization.

30. Sikkim signs MoU with Microsoft for digital learning

- ✦ To improve the education system in the state of Sikkim, Microsoft has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Sikkim government.
- ✦ The MoU signed between the state Human Resource Department and the software giant's subsidiary in India aims to boost digital literacy and new age technology knowledge in students and teachers of government schools.

- ✦ Microsoft has also been working with several Indian state governments' to support their digital infrastructure, enhance their citizen services and make their administrative and governance operations much more efficient.

31. Centre allocates Rs 59 cr for Asiatic Lion conservation in Gujarat

- ✦ With the aim to protect and conserve the worlds last ranging free population of Asiatic Lions, the Ministry of Environmentlaunched a three-year Asiatic Lion Conservation Project in collaboration with the state of Gujarat.
- ✦ It will focus on the scientific management of the lion habitat with the involvement of communities, disease control and veterinary care for the overall conservation of Asiatic Lions.
- ✦ The Asiatic Lion in Gir is one of the 21 critically endangered species identified by the Ministry for taking up recovery programmes.

32. Facebook acquires virtual search startup to boost AI capabilities

- ✦ Facebook has acquired US based virtual search start up, Grok Style, at an undisclosed amount.
- ✦ GrokStyle also noted on its LinkedIn page that it has been acquired by Facebook.
- ✦ The basic idea is to allow users to match a piece of furniture or a light fixture in an image to visually find similar ones in stock at stores.

33. Harsimrat Kaur inaugurates Himachal's first mega food park in Una

- ✦ The mega food park has been set up at a cost of Rs 107.34 crore
- ✦ Food Processing Minister Harsimrat Kaur Badal inaugurated Cremica Food Park, which is the first mega food park of Himachal Pradesh.
- ✦ The Cremica Mega Food Park will benefit people of Una district and nearby districts of Kangra, Hamirpur and Bilaspur.
- ✦ The mega food parks create modern infrastructure facilities for food processing along the value chain from farm to market with strong forward and backward linkages through a cluster based approach.

34. 3-day Krishi Kumbh begins in Motihari, Bihar

- ✦ In Bihar, Governor Lalji Tandon and Union Agriculture Minister Radha Mohan Singh jointly inaugurated the three -day Krishi Kumbh in Motihari .
- ✦ Over fifteen thousand farmers from different states and about two hundred agricultural scientists are participating in the Kumbh. The objective of Krishi Kumbh is to promote modern techniques and diversification in agriculture that could help in doubling farmers income.
- ✦ Addressing the function Union Agriculture Minister Radha Mohan Singh said the government is committed to doubling the income of farmers by 2022.

35. India, Norway launch 'India-Norway Marine Pollution Initiative' to combat Marine Pollution

- ✦ The Union Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change signed a Letter of Intent (LoI) with the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to launch the 'India-Norway Marine Pollution Initiative'.
- ✦ The Joint Initiative was signed by Nils Ragnar Kamsvåg, Norwegian Ambassador to India and Anil Kumar Jain, Additional Secretary in the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
- ✦ The India-Norway Marine Pollution Initiative will combat marine pollution, which is one of the fastest growing environmental concerns.

36. PM Modi launches several development projects for Haryana

- ✦ Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated and laid foundation stones of several development projects in Haryana. The projects include National Cancer Institute, Jhajjar and Shri Krishna Ayush University, Kurukshetra.
- ✦ The event was attended by women sarpanchs and women associated with the 'Swachhta' campaign from across the country. Mr Modi distributed the 'Swachh Shakti 2019' awards on the occasion.
- ✦ The Prime Minister highlighted that over 11 lakh people benefited from Ayushman Bharat and his government is making efforts to make the life of farmer, poor and middle class easier.

37. CREDAI's Event YouthCon-19 Held In New Delhi

- ✦ Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the CREDAI YouthCon -19 in New Delhi Talkatora Stadium.
- ✦ The theme for this YouthCon is 'Next Generation'.
- ✦ The annual conference will bring together the next generation of real estate builders and developers to enlighten their young minds and share their thinking and approach.

38. Exercise Rahat Concluded In Jaipur

- ✦ Joint Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Exercise 'Exercise Rahat' concluded in Jaipur, Rajasthan.
- ✦ It was demonstrated in Jaipur, Kota, and Alwar in Rajasthan.
- ✦ Indian Army was represented by Jaipur based Sapta Shakti Command. Representatives from Armed Forces, National Disaster Management Response Mechanism (NDMRM), SDMA Rajasthan and DLMAs participated in the exercise.

39. Lok Sabha Passes Bill To Remove Congress President From Jallianwala Trust

- ✦ A bill to remove the Congress president as a permanent member in a trust that runs the Jallianwala Bagh National Memorial to make the body "apolitical" was passed in Lok Sabha.

- ✦ The bill also confers power to the central government to terminate the term of a nominated trustee before the expiry of the term without assigning any reason.
- ✦ The 2018 bill added a clause to allow the central government to terminate the term of a nominated trustee before the expiry of his term without assigning any reason.

40. Rajasthan introduces 5% quota bill for Gujjars, 4 other castes

- ✦ The Rajasthan government introduced a bill in the assembly to give a five per cent quota in jobs and educational institutes to Gujjars and four other communities agitating for it.
- ✦ The bill was presented in the Rajasthan assembly by Energy Minister B.D. Kalla to pacify members of the Gujjar community who have been holding demonstrations.
- ✦ The bill seeks to increase the backward classes' reservation from the present 21 per cent to 26 per cent with five per cent reservation to Gujjars, Banjaras, Gadia Lohars, Raikas and Gadaria.

41. National Conference on “Sustainable and Environment-friendly Industrial Production” held in new Delhi

- ✦ Under Indo-German Development Cooperation, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) organized Second National Conference in New Delhi on Sustainable and Environment-friendly Industrial Production (SEIP).
- ✦ The project concludes in two weeks and Ministry organized this conference for dissemination of results, successful models and experiences so as to enable replication.
- ✦ The project worked directly with companies and advised them on environment friendly production and wastewater management in 5 industrial areas in three states (Delhi, Uttarakhand and Gujarat).

42. PM Modi Flags Off Vande Bharat Express, India's Fastest Train

- ✦ Vande Bharat Express, India's first semi-high speed train, was flagged off by Prime Minister Narendra Modi from the New Delhi railway station amid sombre mood in the backdrop of the terror attack in Pulwama.
- ✦ Railway Minister Piyush Goyal and members of the Railway Board were also on board the train on its inaugural journey.
- ✦ Vande Bharat Express will travel from Delhi to Varanasi in 9 hours and 45 minutes.

43. Dolphin Numbers Have Shrunk In Odisha, Reveals Census

- ✦ Odisha's recent annual census of dolphins in its waters have thrown up some shocking numbers, with the aquatic mammals' population declining from 469 in 2018 to 259 this year.
- ✦ The census was carried out by the state's forest and environment department on January 19 this year.

- ✦ A total of 16 Bottle Nose dolphins were seen in Odisha. Out of these, 2 were sighted in Balasore and 14 in Gahirmatha.

44. Union Home Minister to launch various women safety initiatives

- ✦ The Union Home Minister Shri Rajnath Singh will launch various initiatives for women safety.
- ✦ To provide effective deterrence against the offence of rape, the Government has enacted the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2018.
- ✦ The Criminal Law Amendment in April 2018 prescribes stringent penal provisions including death penalty for rape of a girl below the age of 12 years.

45. Cabinet approves new company under Department of Space

- ✦ The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi gave its approval to the setting up of a new company under Department of Space (DoS) to commercially exploit the research and development work carried out by Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) Centers.
- ✦ The Cabinet also gave its nod to the Promulgation of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Ordinance, 2019.
- ✦ The areas and avenues provide opportunities for commercial exploitation of ISRO programmes include, small satellite technology transfer to industry, manufacture of small satellite launch vehicle (SLV) in collaboration with the private sector.

46. Modi flags off world's first diesel to electric converted locomotive

- ✦ Prime Minister Narendra Modi flagged off an electric locomotive converted from a diesel engine at the Diesel Locomotives Works (DLW) in his constituency.
- ✦ In a first, the Indian Railways has converted a diesel locomotive into an electric one, as part of efforts to completely electrify the broad gauge network.
- ✦ In keeping with the Indian Railways' Mission 100 per cent electrification and de-carbonization agenda, DLW has developed a new prototype electric locomotive converted from diesel locomotive.

47. Shri K.J. Alphonso to inaugurate Eco Circuit Project

- ✦ Shri K.J. Alphonso, Union Minister for Tourism will be inaugurating the project 'Development of Eco Circuit'.
- ✦ Swadesh Darshan scheme is one of the flagship schemes of Ministry of Tourism for development of thematic circuits in the country.
- ✦ The Ministry of Tourism recognizing the tourism potential of the State has sanctioned 7 projects in the State of Kerala under the Swadesh Darshan and PRASHAD schemes for an approximate amount of Rs. 550 crores.

48. Prabhu launches Swayatt on GeM to promote MSMEs, women and young entrepreneurs

- ✦ Union Minister of Commerce & Industry and Civil Aviation, Suresh Prabhu launched Swayatt, an initiative to promote MSMEs, women and young entrepreneurs through e-transactions on the Government e-Marketplace (GeM).
- ✦ The aim is to bring together the key stakeholders within the Indian entrepreneurial ecosystem to GeM, the national procurement portal.
- ✦ The initiative will also enable MSMEs to conduct market trials with government buyers, seek time-bound feedback, and gain realistic product-price comparisons and market valuation from potential buyers and investors.

49. Tata Consultancy Services ranked as global Top Employer for the 3rd consecutive year

- ✦ Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) has been ranked by the Top Employers Institute as global Top Employer for the third year in a row.
- ✦ TCS has the most employee-friendly workplace policies, good work culture and has done large investments for the skill development of its 4.17 lakh employees globally.
- ✦ TCS also received the Continental Award for the Middle East, where the company was ranked number one in the region for 2018.

50. Tripura's first mega food park inaugurated in Agartala

- ✦ Tripura's first mega food park viz. Sikaria Mega Food Park Pvt Ltd was recently inaugurated at Village Tulakona in state capital Agartala.
- ✦ It is 18th of its kind food park in the country set up under Mega Food Park Scheme implemented by Union Ministry of Food Processing Industries.
- ✦ It will also provide direct and indirect employment to 5000 people in primary field of food processing, agriculture, agro processing and post-harvest agri infrastructure.

International News & Foreign Affairs

1. Election Commission of India hosts International Conference on 'Making our Elections Inclusive and Accessible'.

- ✦ The Chief Election Commissioner of India, Shri Sunil Arora and Election Commissioner Shri Ashok Lavasa inaugurated an International Conference on 'Making our Elections Inclusive and Accessible'.
- ✦ On the sidelines of the conference, the poll panel will also renew Memorandum of Understanding with the Election Commission of Bhutan for co-operation in the field of election management.
- ✦ The Election Commission's quarterly magazine 'Voice International' also released in event.

2. Argentina sign the framework agreement of the International Solar Alliance

- ✦ Argentina became the 72nd country to sign the Framework Agreement of the International Solar Alliance (ISA).
- ✦ Countries which have signed the agreement until now include India, France, Australia, UAE, UK, Japan amongst others. The agreement was opened for signature during the COP22 at Marrakech on November 15, 2016.
- ✦ The International Solar Alliance (ISA) is a group of 121 solar resource-rich countries with headquarters in Gurugram, India.
- ✦ The organisation aims to deploy over 1,000 gigawatt of solar energy and mobilise more than USD 1,000 billion into solar power by 2030, according to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

3. Union Minister Gadkari inaugurates Atal Setu in Goa

- ✦ Union Minister Nitin Gadkari inaugurated four-lane, 5.1-kilometer long “Atal Setu”, the third Cable bridge across river Mandovi in Panaji, Goa.
- ✦ Infrastructure works worth 15 Thousand crore rupees have been sanctioned for the state of Goa.
- ✦ This is the third bridge across Mandovi River. This bridge would overcome the bottlenecks and curb traffic jams at Panaji Circle and Panaji entrance. It is reported that about 66,000 vehicles use this route every day.

4. WHO Reappoints Poonam Khetrapal Singh As South-East Asia Region Director

- ✦ The World Health Organization appointed Dr Poonam Khetrapal Singh as its South-East Asia regional director for a second five-year term.
- ✦ The WHO Executive Board on Saturday unanimously endorsed Ms Khetrapal Singh, who was earlier unanimously nominated by 11 member-countries of the region for another five years.
- ✦ She is the first woman to become Regional Director of WHO South-East Asia Region.

5. GST on Haj reduced from 18% to 5%

- ✦ Union Minister for Minority Affairs Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi said that GST on Haj has been reduced from 18 percent to 5 percent and this will significantly lower the airfare thus saving Haj pilgrims’ 113 crore rupees this year.
- ✦ He was speaking at the inauguration ceremony of a new conference hall and passport section at the Haj House in Mumbai.
- ✦ Mr. Naqvi said this for the first time since the independence that 2,340 women from India will go on 2019 Haj without Mehram.

6. Africa Center for Climate and Sustainable Development inaugurated in Rome

- ✦ The Africa Centre for Climate and Sustainable Development was inaugurated by the Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte at Rome.

- ✦ He also emphasized that global hunger rates are rising in various parts of Africa.. "If we don't step up our actions in the Sahel we will not achieve the Sustainable Development Agenda and the Zero Hunger goal by 2030.
- ✦ It will facilitate much-needed exchange of information and coordination to increase efficiencies and build synergies across Africa, develop and scale-up innovative solutions for sustainable development and implement the goals of the 2030 Agenda and Paris Climate Agreement.

7. Anti-dumping duty imposed on Chinese chemical import

- ✦ The government has imposed an anti-dumping duty on a chemical from China, used in photography and manufacturing of dyes, for five years to protect domestic producers of the chemical intermediate from cheap shipments.
- ✦ The anti-dumping duty on Meta Phenylenediamine (MPDA) imported from China will be in the range USD 573.92-USD 1,015.44 a tonne
- ✦ It is for the second time in a row that anti-dumping duty has been imposed on the import of the chemical from China. The duty was to expire in March 2019.

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

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

9. ICC ropes in Coca-Cola as official sponsor

- ✦ The International Cricket Council (ICC) announced a five-year global partnership deal with beverage manufacturer Coca-Cola Company.
- ✦ The partnership will see Coca-Cola's brands becoming exclusive non-alcoholic beverage partners of the ICC until 2023.
- ✦ ICC also signed sponsorship with Alcobev brands, Royal Stag and Bira 91.

10. International conference on 8th century sage held to mark 50 years of India-Bhutan ties

- ✦ Celebrating 50-years of formalization of diplomatic ties between India and Bhutan, a two-day international conference on 8th century Himalayan sage Guru Padmasambhava was held in New Delhi.
- ✦ The conference, organised by the Centre for Escalation of Peace (CEP) and titled 'Life and Legacy of Guru Padmasambhava.

- ✦ The two countries share formal diplomatic ties for half a century now but the relations between India and Bhutan date back to centuries and has only grown stronger with time.

11. Dinesh Bhatia appointed as the Ambassador of India to the Republic of Argentina

- ✦ Dinesh Bhatia appointed as the next Ambassador of India to republic of Argentina
- ✦ He is presently Consul General, Consulate General of India at Toronto .He is Indian Foreign Service Officer of 1992 batch.
- ✦ Capital of Argentina- Buenos Aires

12. Former Law Minister of Nepal Nilambar Acharya appointed as country's ambassador to India

- ✦ Former Law Minister of Nepal Nilambar Acharya has been appointed as country's ambassador to India.
- ✦ He has been appointed on the recommendation of cabinet. Mr. Acharya served as a member of Eminent Persons Group formed by India and Nepal on bilateral relations. He was Law Minister in the interim government of 1990.
- ✦ Mr. Acharya had also served as Nepal's envoy to Sri Lanka. The position of Nepalese ambassador to India was lying vacant after Deep Kumar Upadhyay resigned in October 2017 to join politics.

13. Cabinet approves abolition of Ombudsman for direct, indirect taxes

- ✦ The Union Cabinet decided to abolish institutions of Ombudsman for income tax and indirect tax. The approval comes against the backdrop of people preferring online grievance redressal mechanism.
- ✦ The institution of Income-Tax Ombudsman was set up in 2003 to deal with grievances of public related to settlement of complaints relating to income tax.
- ✦ However, the institution failed to achieve its objectives as the number of new complaints have fallen to single digits, said an official release.

14. Thailand makes Siamese fighting fish national aquatic animal

- ✦ Tiny, testy and eye-catching with a colourful fin plumage, the Siamese fighting fish was named Thailand's national aquatic animal.
- ✦ Known in the West as a betta fish, the underwater brawler is popular in home aquariums for its iridescent body and many-hued tail.
- ✦ The Siamese fighting fish was registered as intangible cultural heritage in 2013.

15. India jumps 8 places to 36th on International IP Index

- ✦ Recognition of international standards of copyright protection and incentives for intellectual property have helped India jump eight places to 36th position on

the International Intellectual Property (IP) Index, the highest gain for any country this year.

- ✦ The index, which analyses the IP climate in 50 global economies, is brought out by the US Chamber of Commerce's Global Innovation Policy Center (GIPC).
- ✦ India's overall score has also increased substantially from 30.07% (12.03 out of 40) in the previous edition to 36.04% (16.22 out of 45) in the present edition.

16. ICAI signs pact with Invest India to promote foreign investment

- ✦ The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) said it has signed a pact with Invest India to promote foreign investments in the country and Indian investments abroad.
- ✦ Invest India is a government agency that promotes and facilitates investment in the country.
- ✦ The objective of the MoU is to provide necessary guidance and advice to the potential inbound and outbound investors and promote India as an investment-friendly destination.

17. Hindi included as third official court language in Abu Dhabi

- ✦ Abu Dhabi has decided to include Hindi as the third official language used in its courts, alongside Arabic and English, as part of a move designed to improve access to justice.
- ✦ The move will help the Hindi speakers to learn about litigation procedures, their rights and duties without a language barrier.
- ✦ Abu Dhabi Judicial Department has extended the adoption of interactive forms of statement of claims filed before courts by including Hindi.

18. India, US commercial dialogue on Feb 14

- ✦ Commerce and Industry Minister Suresh Prabhu will hold bilateral discussions on trade issues with US Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross on February 14 here.
- ✦ Annual bilateral trade in goods and services between the countries doubled over the last decade, from USD 58 billion in 2007 to USD 126 in 2017.
- ✦ The talks assumes significance as officials of both the sides are negotiating a trade package to boost bilateral commerce.

19. Former Goa deputy chief minister Francis D'Souza passes away

- ✦ Former Goa deputy chief minister and BJP's Mapusa legislator Francis D'Souza passed away
- ✦ Elected for five terms from Mapusa constituency, D'Souza was suffering from cancer for the past few months.
- ✦ D'Souza was dropped from the cabinet while he was in the US and he had reacted bitterly over his ouster.

20. NITI Aayog Delegation, Led By Amitabh Kant, Visits Saudi Arabia

- ✦ Invest India Grid was launched in Saudi Arabia during the visit of a NITI Aayog delegation with 40 opportunities of investment, trade and business also identified during the visit.
- ✦ The delegation, led by NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant, comprised of leading Indian CEOs who took part in discussions with the Saudi Centre for International Strategic Partnerships.
- ✦ Invest India Grid was launched in Saudi Arabia during the workshop, which would be setting up a dedicated team for facilitating Saudi investments in India.

21. Astronomical Society of India gets first woman president

- ✦ Dr G C Anupama, Senior Professor (Dean) from the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA), Bengaluru, became the first woman to be elected president of Astronomical Society of India (ASI), prime association of professional astronomers in the country.
- ✦ She is the India group head of an international team of scientists that is building a 30-metre telescope at a cost of over \$1 billion in Hawaii.
- ✦ She is the recipient of Sir CV Raman Young Scientist Award in 2001 and is a fellow of National Academy of Sciences.

22. India, Sri Lanka ink MoU to establish business centre for ICT incubators in Jaffna

- ✦ India and Sri Lanka signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish a business centre for ICT incubators in Jaffna through grant of 25 crore Sri Lankan rupees from India.
- ✦ The centre would provide opportunities and enhance the enabling environment for Information Communication Technology (ICT) and other professional services in the Northern region inhabited by minority Tamils.
- ✦ India's overall commitment of development assistance to Sri Lanka stands at a total of around 3 billion US\$, out of which 560 million US\$ is pure grant assistance.

23. Australian mammal becomes first to go extinct due to climate change

- ✦ A small brown rat which lived on a tiny island off northern Australia is the world's first mammal known to have become extinct due to "human-induced climate change.
- ✦ The mammal had not been seen for almost 10 years and was initially pronounced extinct after "exhaustive" conservation efforts failed.
- ✦ Critics of Australia's conservation efforts say the extinction of the melomys highlights the lack of resources for preserving wildlife.

Banking & Finance

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

- ✦ Reserve Bank of India released a data on “Census on Foreign Liabilities and Assets of Indian Direct Investment Companies, 2017-18” which shows that the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) has been increased 18 percent to Rs. 28.25 lakh crore.
- ✦ The RBI said as many as 23,065 companies responded to the latest round of the census, of which, 20,732 firms had FDI or ODI in their balance sheet in March 2018.
- ✦ Singapore was the top destination followed by Netherlands, Mauritius and United States of America in case of Overseas investment by Indian companies.

2. Piyush Goyal to Receive Carnot Prize for Power Reforms, Rural Electrification

- ✦ Union Finance Minister Piyush Goyal will receive the Carnot prize for his contribution towards sustainable energy solutions, with a team from University of Pennsylvania coming here to felicitate him on January 30.
- ✦ The award recognises Goyal's tenure as minister of power in which he is credited to have "reformed" the electricity sector and extended access to electricity to 18,000 villages, as documented by the International Energy Agency.
- ✦ Last year This award was skipped before being entitled to the former power minister ,because of the Amritsar tragedy in which over 60 people died after being moved down by a train.

3. Ujjivan Small Finance Bank launches Ujjivan Bank Kisan Suvidha loan for small and marginal farmers.

- ✦ Ujjivan Small Finance Bank (SFB) announced the launch of Ujjivan Bank Kisan Suvidha loan to offer financial credit services to small and marginal farmers.
- ✦ It is the first bank in this category to offer collateral free loans for both agriculture and allied activities such as dairy purchase and maintenance.
- ✦ The product is launched across four states namely, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Karnataka and Odisha.

4. RBI takes three banks out of the PCA framework

- ✦ The Reserve Bank of India has taken three public sector banks — Bank of India, Bank of Maharashtra and Oriental Bank of Commerce — out of the Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) framework and lifted various restrictions on lending and expansion of businesses.
- ✦ The RBI will continuously monitor the performance of these banks under various parameters.
- ✦ The Centre has also assured that the capital requirements of these banks will be duly factored in while making allocations during the current financial year.

5. RRBs of Indian Bank and IOB merge to form Tamil Nadu Grama Bank

- ✦ The Ministry of Finance has announced the amalgamation of two regional rural banks in Tamilnadu- Pallavan Grama Bank, sponsored by Indian Bank and Pandyan Grama Bank, sponsored by Indian Overseas Bank (IOB) into a single regional rural bank in the state and name the new entity as Tamil Nadu Grama Bank.
- ✦ The amalgamated regional rural bank – Tamil Nadu Grama Bank will be under the sponsorship of Indian Bank, with its head office at Salem. The amalgamation would be effective from 1 April, said Indian Bank in a statement.
- ✦ This amalgamation has been conferred by Ministry of Finance under Regional Rural Banks Act 1976.

6. P V Bharathi assumes charge as CEO of Corporation Bank

- ✦ P V Bharathi, executive director of Canara Bank has assumed charge as managing director and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the city-based Corporation Bank.
- ✦ She is the first woman to serve the bank in this capacity,
- ✦ She has served in different branches in the national capital region (NCR) and also in Tamil Nadu. She has experience in rural, semi-urban, urban and metro branches of the bank as also in administrative offices of the bank.

7. RBI lowers repo rate by 25 basis points to 6.25%, first cut since August 2017

- ✦ The Reserve Bank of India lowered the repo rate, or the interest rate at which it lends to commercial banks, by 25 basis points to 6.25%. This is the first time in 17 months that the central bank has cut the rate.
- ✦ The reverse repo rate, too, was lowered to 6%, and the bank rate to 6.25%. The reverse repo rate is the rate at which the central bank borrows money from commercial banks.
- ✦ The six-member monetary policy committee, headed by RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das, changed the policy stance to “neutral” from “calibrated tightening”.

8. RBI doubles 'bulk deposit' criterion for banks to single deposit of Rs 2 crore

- ✦ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) decided to raise the criteria for 'bulk deposits' for banks to Rs 2 crore from the current Rs 1 crore, to provide more operational freedom to lenders to raise funds.
- ✦ Banks have been given discretion to offer differential rate of interest on the bulk deposits as per their requirements and asset-liability management (ALM) projections.
- ✦ Interest rates on bulk deposits are marginally higher than on smaller-amount fixed deposits for similar maturity period.

9. RBI imposes Rs 3.5 cr Penalty on 3 Public Sector Bank

- ✦ The Reserve Bank has imposed Rs 3.5 crore penalties on three public sector banks, including PNB and OBC, for violation of various banking norms.
- ✦ The monetary penalty on the banks has been imposed for non-compliance with various directions issued by the RBI on monitoring of end use of funds, exchange of information with other banks, and on restructuring of accounts.
- ✦ A penalty of Rs 1.5 crore has been imposed on Oriental Bank of Commerce (OBC) and Rs 1 crore each on Punjab National Bank (PNB) and Bank of India.

10. RBI board announced Rs 28,000 cr as interim dividend to govt

- ✦ The central board of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) approved the transfer of Rs 28,000 crore as interim dividend to the government, a much-needed transfer against the backdrop of a tight fiscal situation.
- ✦ This is the second successive year that the Reserve Bank will be transferring an interim surplus.
- ✦ The government has budgeted Rs 74,140 crore from dividend/surplus of RBI, nationalized banks and financial institutions for 2018-19 and next year it expects it to go up to Rs 82,912 crore.

11. Vijaya Bank, Dena Bank merger with BoB to be effective from April 1

- ✦ State-owned Bank of Baroda's proposed merger with Dena and Vijaya Bank will be affected from April 1. The government's amalgamation plan for these state-owned banks has already got all the necessary approvals from the regulators concerned.
- ✦ As per the approved plan, after the commencement of the amalgamation scheme, the boards of Vijaya Bank and Dena Bank will stand dissolved.
- ✦ The Bank of Baroda board in a recent meeting also decided to issue and allot equity shares to Vijaya Bank and Dena Bank on March 11.

New Appointments & Person in News

1. Dilip Sadarangani Appointed Part Time Chairman of Federal Bank

- ✦ Dilip Sadarangani has been appointed as Part Time Chairman of Federal Bank. The Bank obtained approval of Reserve Bank of India in this regard.
- ✦ He has been in the board of Federal Bank since 2013. Shri. Dilip Sadarangani is a renowned banker with experience in various facets of banking, particularly technology, in different countries.
- ✦ He has played key roles in setting up of IT infrastructure in different banks in India, Australia, and Kuwait.

2. Punit Goenka named new BARC India chairman

- ✦ Punit Goenka, managing director and CEO, Zee Entertainment Enterprises Ltd has been elected the new chairman of TV viewership measurement company, BARC India.
- ✦ Goenka will take over from Nakul Chopra who has completed his year-long tenure as chairman of the joint industry body.
- ✦ Goenka was the founder chairman of BARC India and is known to have played an important role in setting up the TV monitoring agency and providing the industry with accurate data and insights.

3. Pakistan Appoints its first Ever Female hindu civil judge

- ✦ Suman Kumari has become the first Hindu woman in Pakistan to be appointed as a civil judge
- ✦ Suman, who hails from Qambar-Shahdadkot, will serve in her native district.
- ✦ The first judge from the Hindu community was Justice Rana Bhagwandas, who served as the acting chief justice for brief periods between 2005 and 2007.

4. LT Gen Rajeev Chopra takes over as Director General of NCC

- ✦ Lt Gen Rajeev Chopra assumed the appointment of Director General of NCC (DGNCC). Commissioned in the Madras Regiment in December 1980, Lt Gen Chopra is an alumnus of the National Defence Academy, Khadakwasla and Indian Military Academy, Dehradun.
- ✦ The General Officer commanded a Corps in Eastern Theatre and has also been the Commandant of the prestigious Infantry School. He is also the Colonel of The Madras Regiment since Jun 2016.
- ✦ He is a graduate of Technical Staff Officers Course, has attended the Higher Command Course at National Defence University, China and National Defence College, New Delhi.

5. Rishi Kumar Shukla, MP cadre IPS, appointed as new CBI chief

- ✦ Rishi Kumar Shukla, 1983 batch IPS officer of Madhya Pradesh cadre, appointed as the new chief of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).
- ✦ The appointment came almost a day after his name was short-listed during the second meeting of the PM Narendra Modi-led selection committee.
- ✦ Shukla is at present chairman of Madhya Pradesh Police Housing Corporation in Bhopal. He was recently transferred from the post of Director General of Madhya Pradesh Police to the police housing corporation.

6. Air India Chairperson Pradeep Singh Kharola appointed civil aviation secretary

- ✦ The government appointed Air India chief managing director and Chairperson Pradeep Singh Kharola the secretary of the Ministry of Civil Aviation.
- ✦ Kharola, an Indian Administrative Services officer of Karnataka cadre from the 1985 batch, was named chairperson of Air India in November 2017.

- ✦ He will succeed Rajiv Nayan Choubey who retired on January 31, 2019, after the resignation he took over as member in the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC).

7. Mukesh Ambani tops Hurun India Philanthropy list

- ✦ Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) Chairman Mukesh Ambani topped the Hurun India Philanthropy List 2018, released on Saturday, with the highest contribution of Rs437 crore between October 2017 and September 2018.
- ✦ Ambani was followed by Piramal Group Chairman Ajay Piramal who made Rs200 crore donations during the period.
- ✦ The total Indian philanthropy amount in the list stands at Rs1,560 crore. The list included 39 Indians.

8. Ruchira Kamboj appointed India's Ambassador to Bhutan

- ✦ Ruchira Kamboj was appointed as the Ambassador of India to Bhutan.
- ✦ She is serving as the High Commissioner of India to South Africa since 2017, according to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).
- ✦ A 1987-cadre Indian Foreign Service (officer), she is expected to take up the assignment shortly. Kamboj has previously served as the Ambassador/PR to Permanent Delegation of India to UNESCO, Paris.

9. NTPC signs pact with SBI for Rs 5000 cr term loan

- ✦ State-owned power giant NTPC said that it has signed a term loan agreement for Rs 5,000 crore with State Bank of India
- ✦ The loan facility is extended at an interest rate linked to 3-Month MCLR of the Bank. This loan has a door to door tenure of 15 years and will be utilised to part finance the capital expenditure of NTPC
- ✦ The loan agreement was signed by Masood A Ansari, General Manager (Finance), NTPC Ltd and Neelabh Sinha.

10. Sushil Chandra appointed new Election commissioner

- ✦ Sushil Chandra was appointed as the new Election Commissioner ahead of the Lok Sabha polls, making the poll panel a three-member entity again.
- ✦ The other two members of the Commission are Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sunil Arora and Election Commissioner (EC) Ashok Lavasa.
- ✦ Chandra is the second Indian Revenue Service (IRS) officer to be appointed to the Commission after T.S. Krishnamurthy, who went on to become the CEC in 2004.

11. Ashwani Lohani reappointed Air India CMD

- ✦ Ashwani Lohani, a retired bureaucrat, has been appointed the Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of national carrier Air India.

- ✦ Lohani held the position for around two years from 2015. In August 2017, he was named the Chairman to the Railway Board. Lohani retired on December 31, 2018.
- ✦ Earlier on February 6, the government appointed Air India CMD Pradeep Singh Kharola as the new Civil Aviation Secretary.

12. DHFL CEO Harshil Mehta resigns

- ✦ DHFL CEO Harshil Mehta has decided to resign from his position with immediate effect.
- ✦ Besides, the board has recommended appointment of Sunjoy Joshi as an Independent Director and Srinath Sridharan as a Non-Executive Director.
- ✦ DHFL's board has further appointed Sunjoy Joshi as an Independent Director and Srinath Sridharan as a Non-Executive director.

13. Arun Jaitley resumes charge as finance minister

- ✦ Arun Jaitley resumed charge as the finance minister after a gap of over a month, which was the second break within a year that he had to take to undergo medical treatment.
- ✦ He had stopped attending office at the beginning of April last year due to his kidney ailment and was back in North Block on August 23, 2018.
- ✦ He was earlier last month named the publicity head of the BJP for the upcoming general elections.

14. PepsiCo's Kurkure signs Taapsee Pannu as brand ambassador

- ✦ Kurkure has also launched a television campaign to celebrate the progressive thinking of young homemakers
- ✦ Taapsee Pannu, who endorses 10 brands, signed five big contracts in 2018
- ✦ The announcement is strategically timed as Kurkure embarks on a new journey with its new positioning – 'Khayal toh Chatpata hai'.

15. Hina Jaiswal becomes India's first woman flight engineer inducted by IAF

- ✦ Flight Lieutenant Hina Jaiswal became the first Indian Woman Flight Engineer of the Indian Air Force.
- ✦ Hina completed the six-month flight engineer course from the 112 Helicopter Unit attached to the Air Force Station in Yelahanka in Bengaluru.
- ✦ Earlier restricted to men, the flight engineer branch was opened to women officers in 2018.

16. Puma signs India's Mary Kom as women's training ambassador

- ✦ World amateur boxing champion M.C. Mary Kom has signed a two-year deal with Puma to be their ambassador for women's training in India.
- ✦ Kom, a bronze medallist at the 2012 Olympics, won her record sixth gold medal at the World Amateur Boxing Championships in November last year.

- ✦ Puma India's managing director Abhishek Ganguly hoped the partnership would inspire women across India.

17. Depinder Singh Ahuja is chief of staff of Southern Command

- ✦ Lieutenant General Depinder Singh Ahuja took charge as chief of staff of headquarters Southern Command.
- ✦ He is an alumni of the National Defence Academy and was commissioned into the Bengal Sappers in December 1981.
- ✦ He has held several important regimental, staff and instructional appointments in his 37-year career. Lt Gen S K Saini is the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief (GOC-in-C) of the Army Southern Command in Pune.

18. Naspers appoints Reliance Jio payment head Anirban Mukherjee as CEO of PayU India.

- ✦ Naspers-owned PayU announced the appointment of Anirban Mukherjee as Chief Executive Officer of PayU India.
- ✦ Anirban will be taking over from Amrisha Rau, who is moving on to a bigger global role with Naspers' fintech practice, as its Head of financial technology partnerships and investments.
- ✦ Amrisha was one of the founders of CitrusPay, which was acquired by Naspers-backed PayU in 2016.

19. Supreme Court appoints former judge Justice DK Jain as ombudsman for BCCI

- ✦ The Supreme Court has appointed former apex court judge Justice DK Jain as the first court-appointed ombudsman for the BCCI.
- ✦ The role of the ombudsman would be to resolve the disputes relating to the players within the state cricket associations as also financial issues.
- ✦ The ombudsman will be resolving any issue that comes with regards to the players, as also financial issues.

20. Kareena Kapoor launches Swasth Immunised India campaign, addresses the importance of vaccination

- ✦ Kareena Kapoor launched the Swasth Immunised India Campaign. Kareena was conferred with Brand Ambassador of Swasth Immunised India earlier in February.
- ✦ The Swasth Immunised India campaign aims to build a robust campaign aimed at spreading awareness on the importance and benefits of immunisation among the masses.

Science Tech & Defence

1. Ministry of Defence Launches 'RDP INDIA 2019'

- ✦ Ministry of Defence had launched a mobile app 'RDP India 2019' on the Republic Day, with the intent of making available the highlights of the Republic Day event.
- ✦ This app contains information about The Parade on Rajpath, New Delhi, including Order of the March, details of the tableaux presented by different States and Ministries.
- ✦ People who desire to know the theme and ideas depicted in the tableaux and also those who for some reason could not witness the Parade on Rajpath or watch it on TV, can still download the app and gather all information about the event.

2. Defence Ministry Acquire 5,000 Milan 2T Anti-tank Guided Missiles

- ✦ In a major decision, the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) approved indigenous construction of six submarines for the Indian Navy. The total worth of these has been estimated at Rs 40,000 crore.
- ✦ The project comes under Defence Ministry's "strategic partnership" (SP) model that aims at providing significant fillip to the government's Make in India program. This is the second such project under the SP model.
- ✦ The first project under SP model was indigenous production of 111 naval utility helicopters in August 2018.

3. ISRO opens doors to India's first human spaceflight centre in Bangalore

- ✦ Gearing up for its maiden manned space mission 'Gaganyaan', ISRO unveiled its Human Space Flight Centre.
- ✦ The space agency is gearing up for the human spaceflight programme by 2021-end that is likely to include a woman astronaut.
- ✦ Gaganyaan is the "highest priority" for ISRO in 2019, according to the space agency, and the plan is to have the first unmanned mission in December 2020 and second for July 2021.

4. Observer Research Foundation named 'highest ranked' Indian think tank

- ✦ Observer Research Foundation (ORF) has been named the "highest ranked" Indian think tank in the "2018 Global Go To Think Tank Index Report
- ✦ Globally, ORF has been ranked as the top think tank in the "Best New Idea or Paradigm Developed by a Think Tank" category.
- ✦ ORF is ranked 118th in the "Top Think Tanks Worldwide" (US and non-US) category. In the top think tanks in China, India, Japan and South Korea category, ORF climbed one spot from 2017 to finish fourth last year.

5. Iran announces successful test of long-range cruise missile

- ✦ Iran announced the "successful test" of a new cruise missile with a range of over 1,350 kilometres.
- ✦ The test of the Hoveizeh cruise missile was carried out successfully at a range of 1,200 kilometres (840 miles) and accurately hit the set target.
- ✦ Iran has voluntarily limited the range of its missiles to 2,000 kilometres (1,250 miles), sufficient to reach Israel and Western bases in the Middle East.

6. GSAT-31: ISRO launches India's 40th communication satellite

- ✦ ISRO launched India's 40th communication satellite, GSAT-31, onboard European launch services provider Arianespace launch vehicle, this morning, from French Guiana.
- ✦ The satellite was placed into the orbit within 42 minutes of its launch from Ariane Launch Complex at Kourou, a French territory located in the northeastern coast of South America, at 02:31 am (IST).
- ✦ The satellite, GSAT-31, derives its heritage from ISRO's earlier INSAT/GSAT satellite series, the space agency said, adding that it provides Indian mainland and island coverage.

7. Parmanu Tech 2019 Showcases Indian Atomic Energy Conference held in new Delhi

- ✦ The Union Minister of State, Dr Jitendra Singh delivered the keynote address at the 'Parmanu Tech 2019' conference, organised by the Ministry of External Affairs and Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) at new Delhi
- ✦ The conference discussed issues related to Nuclear Energy and Radiation Technologies.
- ✦ The Chairman, Atomic Energy Commission and Secretary, Department of Atomic Energy, Shri K. N. Vyas said that the conference aims at showcasing the societal applications that DAE is pursuing.

8. US approves sale of two missile defence systems for Air India One

- ✦ The US has agreed to sell two state-of-the-art missile defence systems to Air India One for an estimated cost of \$190 million, a move that will enhance the security of planes flying the prime minister and the president.
- ✦ The defence systems, which would bring security of Air India One at par with that of Air Force One, would be installed in two Boeing 777 Head-of- State aircraft.
- ✦ US approved the purchase of the two systems known as Large Aircraft Infrared Countermeasures (LAIRCAM) and Self-Protection Suites (SPS) at cost of USD 190 million.

9. Helicopter-launched anti-tank missile 'Helina' test-fired

- ✦ India test-fired its helicopter-launched version of one of the most-advanced anti-tank weapon from the Odisha Coast.

- ✦ Helina, the helicopter-launched version of the Nag anti-tank guided missile with a hit range of 7-8 km, was launched from an Army chopper.
- ✦ The weapon system was tested for its full range at 12.55 pm near the Integrated Test Range in Chandipur in Balasore district.

10. Cobra Gold, one of world's largest multinational military exercises, kicks off in Thailand

- ✦ One of the world's largest and longest-running international military exercises officially began this week in Thailand.
- ✦ The 38th annual Cobra Gold exercise, scheduled to run through Feb. 22, is co-sponsored by the Royal Thai and U.S armed forces. They are joined by another 27 nations, including Japan, Indonesia, Malaysia, South Korea and Singapore. China and India participate in civic-action parts of the exercise.
- ✦ This year's exercise will focus on military field training, civic assistance to communities and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

11. Indian Army shows its artillery firepower during 'Exercise Topchi'

- ✦ Using ultra light Howitzers and indigenous Swathi weapon-locating radar, Indian Army Tuesday demonstrated its artillery firepower at the annual 'Exercise Topchi'.
- ✦ The Army's aviation assets included the indigenous advanced light helicopter, light combat helicopter, Cheetah & Chetak helicopters, it added.
- ✦ The precision of delivering the explosives in the target area, the coordination and timings of the firepower stunned all those present.

12. NASA's Opportunity Rover Mission on Mars Comes to End

- ✦ One of the most successful and enduring feats of interplanetary exploration, NASA's Opportunity rover mission is at an end after almost 15 years exploring the surface of Mars.
- ✦ The Opportunity rover stopped communicating with Earth when a severe Mars-wide dust storm blanketed its location in June 2018.
- ✦ NASA expected 90-day lifetimes for the rovers. Both Opportunity and Spirit far exceeded their expected lifetime.

13. NASA Will Launch a New Space Telescope in 2023 to Investigate the Universe

- ✦ NASA has selected a new space mission that will help astronomers understand both how our universe evolved and how common are the ingredients for life in our galaxy's planetary systems.
- ✦ The Spectro-Photometer for the History of the Universe, Epoch of Reionization and Ices Explorer (SPHEREx) mission is a planned two-year mission funded at \$242 million and targeted to launch in 2023.
- ✦ SPHEREx will survey the sky in optical as well as near-infrared light which, though not visible to the human eye, serves as a powerful tool for answering cosmic questions.

14. INS Trikand participates in multinational training exercise Cutclass Express 2019

- ✦ INS Trikand, a front-line warship of the Indian Navy, participated in a multinational training exercise 'CUTLASS EXPRESS – 19' held from Jan 27 to Feb 06.
- ✦ The aim of the exercise was to improve law enforcement capacity, promote regional security and progress inter-operability between the armed forces of the participating nations for the purpose of interdicting illegal maritime activity in the Western Indian Ocean.
- ✦ The exercise was conducted in two phases. The first, called the Command Post Exercise (CPX) was conducted from Jan 27 to Feb 2. It involved training of personnel on shore for coordination and conduct of VBSS operations.

15. Air Force Jets, Helicopters Destroy Targets In Mega Exercise In Rajasthan

- ✦ The Air Force carried out a mega exercise involving 140 fighter jets and attack helicopters, in a firepower demonstration close to the border with Pakistan that came two days after the Pulwama attack.
- ✦ Top Air Force sources said though the Vayu Shakti was planned in advance, the drill was a demonstration of the force's capability to hit targets with "pinpoint accuracy" and carry out missions at short notice.
- ✦ In the Vayu Shakti exercise, the IAF showcased firepower capability of indigenously-developed platforms like Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas, Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) and efficacy of Akash surface-to-air missile and Astra air-to-air missile.

16. Karnataka Inaugurated India's First Agromet Forecast Centre

- ✦ Union Minister for Science & Technology, Earth Dr Harsh Vardhan, inaugurated the North Karnataka Agromet Forecasting and Research Centre (NKAFC), India's first agreement forecast centre, at University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS) in Dharwad, Karnataka.
- ✦ The main objective of the centre is to give accurate reports on the weather which would enable the farmers to protect the crops and get a good yield.
- ✦ The centre has been established by the union ministry of earth sciences and the India Metrological Department, in association with the University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS).

17. Infosys launches learning app 'InfyTQ' for engineering students

- ✦ Indian IT major Infosys has announced the launch of InfyTQ, a next-generation digital platform to offer the best learning and engagement experiences for engineering students in India.
- ✦ InfyTQ is a free platform open to all engineering students in their third and fourth year across India.
- ✦ The learning courses on the app will be centered around conceptual and practical aspects of technology to help students receive a thorough understanding of the fundamental building blocks.

18. Iran Launches New 'Fateh' Submarine, Capable Of Firing Cruise Missiles

- ✦ Iran launched a new locally-made submarine capable of firing cruise missiles, in the country's latest show of military might at a time of heightened tensions with the US.
- ✦ The launch ceremony, led by President Hassan Rouhani, took place in the southern port city of Bandar Abbas.
- ✦ The underwater-vessel weighs nearly 600 tonnes and is equipped with torpedoes and naval mines in addition to cruise missiles.

19. India's first fulldome 3D Digital theatre inaugurated by Culture Minister

- ✦ India's first 'fulldome 3D Digital Theatre' at the Science City was inaugurated by Union Culture Minister Mahesh Sharma.
- ✦ The 'fulldome 3D Digital Theatre' at the Science city was the first of its kind in India having a 23 metre titled dome to offer a fully immersive experience to the visitors.
- ✦ The new system is capable of screening high resolution, full dome, and digital 2D/3D content by utilising six, high-end projectors in a 23-meter diameter dome using Ulteria Seam technology.

20. BEL Launches Atmospheric Water Generator safe Drinking Water, Straight From the Air

- ✦ Navratna Defence PSU Bharat Electronics Ltd (BEL) has unveiled its new product, the Atmospheric Water Generator (AWG), an innovative solution to meet the ever-increasing need for drinking water worldwide,
- ✦ BEL's Atmospheric Water Generator employs a novel technology to extract water from the humidity present in the atmosphere and purify it.
- ✦ The Atmospheric Water Generator is being manufactured by BEL in collaboration with CSIR-IICT and MAITHRI, a start-up company based in Hyderabad.

21. Israel's First Lunar Lander Launched Into Space From Florida

- ✦ A SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket blasted off from Florida, carrying Israel's first lunar lander on a mission that if successful, will make the Jewish state only the fourth nation to achieve a controlled touchdown on the moon's surface.
- ✦ With this, Israel will become the 4th country after Russia, USA and China to carry out a 384,000km journey and land a spacecraft on the Moon.
- ✦ The rocket's two other payloads were a telecommunications satellite for Indonesia and an experimental satellite for the US Air Force.

Important days

1. World Cancer Day Observed on 4 February

- ✦ World Cancer Day is a campaign built to resonate, inspire change and mobilise action long after the day has passed.
- ✦ A multi-year campaign offers a chance to create long-lasting impact by increasing public-facing exposure and engagement, more opportunities to build global awareness and impact-driven action.
- ✦ Theme 2019 marks the launch of the 3-year 'I Am and I Will' campaign. 'I Am and I Will' is an empowering call-to-action urging for personal commitment and represents the power of individual action taken now to impact the future.

2. World Wetlands Day Observed on 2 February

- ✦ This year's World Wetlands Day under the theme of "Wetlands and Climate Change" highlights the importance of healthy and intact wetlands to one of the most pressing challenges of our times: climate change.
- ✦ Celebrated annually on 2 February, the day the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands was adopted in 1971, World Wetlands Day is a success story of the international community ensuring efficient conservation and legal protection of wetlands worldwide.
- ✦ Almost 90% of disasters are water-related and affects 60% of humanity that lives along coastlines by flooding and tsunamis. Wetlands are key to climate.

3. 6 February is the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation

- ✦ In order to fight this phenomenon, which has affected at least 200 million women alive today in 30 countries, the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation is celebrated on the 6th of February.
- ✦ The aim of the day, established by the United Nations on the 20th of December 2012 is to encourage governments, civil society and all involved parties to implement concrete actions and increase awareness campaigns against FGM.
- ✦ According UNICEF report Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting: a Global Concern, 50 per cent of girls and women who have undergone some form of genital mutilation live in 3 countries: Egypt, Ethiopia and Indonesia.

4. World Pulses Day observed on 10 February

- ✦ February 10, 2019 was celebrated as the First world Pulses Day .
- ✦ Pulses are a type of leguminous crop that are harvested solely for the dry seed.
- ✦ In December 2013, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly voted unanimously to declare 2016 as the International Year of Pulses (IYP), to celebrate, raise awareness and promote the consumption of pulses at events around the globe.

5. World Radio Day observed on 13 February

- ✦ Radio is still the most dynamic, reactive and engaging medium there is, adapting to 21st century changes and offering new ways to interact and participate.
- ✦ Theme of World Radio Day 2019 is Dialogue, Tolerance and Peace
- ✦ World Radio Day is observed on 13 February.

6. International Day of Women and Girls in Science 11 February

- ✦ The United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution declaring 11 February as the International Day of Women and Girls in Science.
- ✦ Theme; "Investment in Women and Girls in Science for Inclusive Green Growth"
- ✦ Over the past 15 years, the global community has made a lot of effort in inspiring and engaging women and girls in science.

7. World Day of Social Justice observed on 20 February

- ✦ Social Equality Justice day is a day recognizing the need to promote efforts to tackle issues such as poverty, exclusion and unemployment.
- ✦ "If You Want Peace & Development, Work for Social Justice" is the theme for the World Day of Social Justice 2019.
- ✦ It highlights how deeply social order and growth is dependent on achieving social justice.

8. World Thinking Day observed on 22 February

- ✦ World Thinking Day, formerly Thinking Day, is celebrated annually on 22 February.
- ✦ The day is celebrated to appreciate the help and guidance of brothers and sisters around the world.
- ✦ The day is significant as it was the birthday of Scouting and Guiding founder Lord Robert Baden-Powell and of Lady Olave Baden-Powell, his wife and World Chief Guide.

Awards

1. Delhi to award MSP as per Swaminathan committee Report

- ✦ The Delhi government has decided to implement the Swaminathan Committee's recommendations with regard to the minimum support price (MSP) for farm produces.
- ✦ The Delhi government had constituted a committee in 2018 to study the techniques adopted for deciding MSP in different states of the country.
- ✦ The move comes just months ahead of the Lok Sabha elections. There are about 20,000 farmers in the national capital.

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

- ✦ India received the Award of Excellence for 'Best in Show' at the recently concluded New York Times Travel Show 2019.
- ✦ It is the largest travel show in North America which is held from January 25 to January 27 in New York.
- ✦ India was honored during the closing bell ceremony at the New York Stock Exchange.

3. Jayant Kaikini's 'No Presents Please' wins prestigious DSC Prize

- ✦ Kannada poet and short story writer Jayant Kaikini was named the winner of the DSC Prize for South Asian Literature for his translated work "No Presents Please."
- ✦ Jayant beat internationally-acclaimed writers including Kamila Shamsie and Mohsin Hamid to win the prize and the generous purse of \$25,000.
- ✦ The announcement was made at the Tata Steel Kolkata Literary Meet at the iconic Victoria Memorial Hall in Kolkata. This marks the first time a translated work has won the prestigious prize.

4. Uniphore Software Systems Secures Prestigious Aegis Graham Bell Award 2019

- ✦ Aegis Graham Bell Award 2019 announced Uniphore as winner in "Innovation in Data Science" category for their innovation "auMina".
- ✦ Uniphore has been lauded as the winner at the 9th edition of Aegis Graham Bell Award 2019 hosted by Government of Goa at Entertainment Society of Goa, Panaji.
- ✦ Aegis Graham Bell Awards (AGBA) has been promoting innovations and entrepreneurship in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) domain.

5. President Kovind confers Sangeet Natak Akademi awards

- ✦ President Ram Nath Kovind gave away the prestigious Sangeet Natak Akademi Awards 2017 at Rashtrapati Bhawan
- ✦ Forty-two artists from the fields including Music, Dance, Theatre, Traditional, Folk, and Tribal music were awarded. Eleven eminent artists were selected in the field of Music.
- ✦ They include Lalith J Rao, Umakant and Ramakant Gundecha in the field of Hindustani Vocal music and MS Sheela in Carnatic music.

6. Deepa Mehta to receive Lifetime Achievement Award from Canadian Academy

- ✦ The Academy of Canadian Cinema & Television has announced that it will be honouring filmmaker Deepa Mehta with the Lifetime Achievement Award.
- ✦ Mehta was born in India but she had moved to Canada in 1973 after her marriage to documentary filmmaker Paul Saltzman.
- ✦ Her film "Water", the third part of her Elements trilogy, was Canada's official entry at the 79th Academy Awards.

7. Indian historian Sanjay Subrahmanyam wins Israel's Dan David Prize 2019

- ✦ Indian historian Sanjay Subrahmanyam won the prestigious Dan David Prize 2019 for his work on inter-cultural encounters between Asians, Europeans and people of North and South America during the early modern era.
- ✦ He won the Israel's prestigious USD 1 million dollar award in the category of "Past Time Dimension" for his work in macro history. He shared the award in the Past category with Professor Kenneth Pomeranz of University of Chicago.
- ✦ Once presented with the award money, Subrahmanyam will donate 10 percent of the prize money towards scholarships for graduate or post-graduate researchers.

8. Sunil Chhetri receives 'Football Ratna' award

- ✦ Star Indian striker Sunil Chhetri was awarded the first-ever 'Football Ratna' by Football Delhi, the State Association governing the sport in the national capital.
- ✦ Delhi Football president of Shaji Prabhakaran presented the honour at a function which was held at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium.
- ✦ Shubham Sarangi, youth player from Delhi who is currently the player of Delhi Dynamos team for Indian Super League (ISL), was also honoured by Football Delhi on this occasion.

**1. Operation Olympics Commences in Kerala**

- ✦ 'Operation Olympics', an expert programme to train athletes in 1 disciplines has commenced in Kerala, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan announced.
- ✦ The objective of 'Operation Olympics' is to provide international standard training with the help of eminent trainers from both India and abroad.
- ✦ At present training in wrestling, cycling, swimming and boxing are being conducted at various stadiums in Thiruvanthapuram district.

2. Nagaland CM inaugurates state's first Astro Turf Football Pitch

- ✦ Nagaland got its first Astro Turf Football Pitch at Indira Gandhi Stadium in Kohima on the occasion of 100th Birth Anniversary of the legendary footballer, Dr. T. Ao.
- ✦ Inaugurating the Astro Turf Football Pitch today, Nagaland Chief Minister Mr. Neiphiu Rio said it is a landmark occasion for the state to have its first Astro Turf Pitch and a dream come true.
- ✦ The Chief Minister expressed hope that the installation of the first Astro turf stadium will begin the process of sports development in regard to football in Nagaland.

3. Vani 1st Indian to grab Australian LPGA card

- ✦ Vani Kapoor became the first Indian to earn a card for the Australian Ladies PGA Tour (LPGA) after coming through its first-ever Qualifying Tournament at the Ballarat Golf Club.
- ✦ Vani shot rounds of 71, 78 and 69 to finish at a 2-over 218 and was tied-12th with three others. The top-20 from a field of 81 earned the playing rights on the Australian LPGA.
- ✦ Diksha Dagar, Astha Madan and Ridhima Dilawari also participated in the qualifying tournament but they could not grab the Card of LPGA.

4. Qatar defeat Japan to secure first-ever Asian Cup crown

- ✦ Almoez Ali scored with a spectacular overhead kick for a record ninth goal of the Asian Cup to set Qatar on their way to a first continental title with a stunning 3-1 win over four-times champions Japan.
- ✦ Sudan born Almoez Ali, became the first player to score nine goals at a single Asian Cup. He broke the record of Iranian Ali Daei, who scored eight goals in 1996.
- ✦ The victory was celebrated wildly by thousands of Omanis who had turned out to support Qatar in the absence of their own fans, who were unable to travel because of a deep political rift with the UAE.

5. Haryana Beat Defending Champions Punjab Royals to Lift PWL 4 Title

- ✦ Haryana Hammers won the fourth edition of the Pro Wrestling League (PWL) as they outclassed Punjab Royals 6-3 in the summit clash at the Gautam Buddha University indoor stadium.
- ✦ It was Aleksander Khotsianivski of Ukraine, who put Haryana on the road to victory winning the 125 kg super heavyweight bout against Canadian Corey Jarvis 3-0.
- ✦ The brilliant performances of Ali Shabanov, Kiran, Ravi Kumar and Anastasia Nichita put the Haryana Hammers on the road to victory.

6. Mithali Raj becomes first woman to play 200 ODIs

- ✦ India captain Mithali Raj became the first woman cricketer to play 200 ODIs, adding another achievement to her illustrious career.
- ✦ Mithali made her ODI debut way back in 1999 and has featured in 200 games out of the 263 ODIs India have played.
- ✦ The 36-year-old is also the highest run-getter in ODIs with 6622 runs at an average of 51.33, including seven hundreds.

7. Meghalaya govt to rename Dikkibandi stadium after P A Sangma

- ✦ The Meghalaya Cabinet has decided to rename the Dikkibandi stadium in Tura town after former Lok Sabha Speaker Purno A Sangma.
- ✦ The state Cabinet has also decided to name a road leading from Mawlai-Mawroh to Madan in honour of Saint Teresa.

- ✦ The Batti Bazar road at Laban was also renamed as Roland Lyngdoh Road, Sylhetipara Road at Laban as Krepsing Swer Road and Jackson Trace Road at Lower Lumparing as Melington Kharkongor Road.

8. Ricky Ponting named Australia's assistant coach for World Cup

- ✦ Former captain Ricky Ponting has been appointed as an assistant coach of Australia's men's team for the 50-over World Cup in England later this year
- ✦ The 44-year-old Ponting will work with Australia's batsmen for the May 30-July 14 tournament, with current batting coach Graeme Hick focussing on preparing the side for the Ashes tour in England, starting in August.
- ✦ Ponting's appointment is the second major shakeup in Australia's backroom staff in as many days, with bowling coach David Saker resigning "effective immediately".

9. Shane Warne named Rajasthan Royals brand ambassador

- ✦ Australia spin legend Shane Warne was named as brand ambassador of Rajasthan Royals for the upcoming Indian Premier League.
- ✦ Warne, who led Rajasthan Royals to its first and only IPL title in 2008, was the mentor of the side last season.
- ✦ Rajasthan Royals has decided to change its jersey colour from blue to pink this year.

10. Clouded Leopard to be Mascot of national Games 2022

- ✦ Clouded Leopard, the state animal of Meghalaya will be the mascot for the National Games 2022.
- ✦ Clouded Leopard is one of the wild cats that inhabit the forests of Garo, Khasi and Jaintia Hills.
- ✦ The meeting has decided that an open completion would be held to design a smiling clouded leopard that will be used as the mascot for the national Games.

11. Prajnesh Gunneswaran becomes the third Indian to reach Top 100 in ATP rankings

- ✦ Reaping rewards of his consistent performance, Prajnesh Gunneswaran broke into men's singles top-100 for the first time in his career with a jump of six places that took him to 97.
- ✦ Prajnesh is only third Indian player to break into the top-100 barrier in the past decade after Somdev Devvarman and Yuki Bhambri.
- ✦ Ramkumar Ramanathan is the second best Indian ranked 128. In the WTA charts, Ankita Raina continues to be country's top singles player at number 165

12. Derrick Pereira named coach of India U-23 football team

- ✦ Derrick Pereira named head coach of the India U-23 team for the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Qualifiers slated to be held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan from March 22.
- ✦ Besides India, the other teams in the group are Tajikistan and Pakistan.
- ✦ The team will also be playing a friendly match against Qatar U-23 National side in Doha on March 11," the All India Football Federation said.

13. Badminton Nationals: Saina Nehwal defeats PV Sindhu to clinch women's singles title

- ✦ Saina Nehwal maintained her stranglehold on PV Sindhu as she clinched her second successive and overall fourth senior national badminton title.
- ✦ The defending champion defeated the world No 6 by 21-18, 21-15 to carve her name on the championship for the fourth time.
- ✦ Nehwal, who had beaten Sindhu in the last edition's final in Nagpur and then twice more, including the Commonwealth Games summit clash, was in control throughout the 44-minute encounter that failed to keep the spectators at the edge of their seats.

14. Chris Gayle to retire from ODIs after ICC World Cup 2019

- ✦ West Indies batsman Chris Gayle announced that he will retire from ODI format after the 2019 World Cup.
- ✦ Gayle will continue to play on the T20 franchise circuit and hopes to be picked for The Hundred, England Cricket Board's new competition, when it begins in 2020.
- ✦ He had the first ever World Cup double century against Zimbabwe 4 years ago. Gayle hit 231 ODI centuries in his career.

15. Jharkhand-based NGO Yuwa Wins Laureus Sport for Good Honour

- ✦ Yuwa, a Jharkhand-based NGO which works for girl empowerment, won the Laureus Sport for Good award, becoming the third Indian entry to bag the honour.
- ✦ The NGO, founded by Americans Franz Gastler and Rose Thomson Gastler in 2009, runs a football program in rural Jharkhand covering 450 girls.
- ✦ The girls are amateurs and, those who have been around for long, have become coaches.

16. Vidarbha Clinches Irani Cup title

- ✦ Ranji champions Vidarbha clinched the Irani cup defeating Rest of India at the Vidarbha Cricket Association Stadium.
- ✦ Vidarbha had scored 425 in their first innings in reply to rest of India's 330 .

17. Squash Queen Nicol David to Retire at End of Season

- ✦ Eight-time world champion Nicol David has announced she will retire at the end of the 2018-19 squash season.

- ✦ The 35-year-old is the most successful woman squash player of all time and spent an unprecedented nine years as world number one between 2006-2015.
- ✦ David, has also won five British Open titles, two Commonwealth Games gold medals, five Asian Games gold medals and three World Games gold medals in a glittering career spanning two decades.

Books & Author

1. Manish Tewari launches book "What Marx Left Unsaid" on economic justice

- ✦ Former Union Minister and author Manish Tewari launched "What Marx Left Unsaid", authored by Malay Chaudhuri, Arindam Chaudhuri and Che Kabir Chaudhuri at the India International Centre here.
- ✦ The book is on a theory of economic justice that creates a case for an exploitation-free world with a maximum wage ratio of the highest paid to lowest paid worker at 3:1.
- ✦ It was launched to commemorate the 200th birth anniversary of Karl Marx.

2. Governor of West Bengal, H.E. Shri Keshari Nath Tripathi Launches Book Dedicated to Swami Pragyananandji at the Kumbh Mela

- ✦ Famous Industrialist and Philanthropist Mr. Dinesh Shahra's book, 'Simplicity & Wisdom' was launched at Parmarth Ashram in Kumbh Mela.
- ✦ The book is dedicated to Late eminent Vedanti Swami Pragyananandji. The book was formally launched by 'His Excellency' Keshari Nath Tripathi Governor of West Bengal, and Swami Chidanand Saraswati, Head of Parmarth Ashram.
- ✦ This book is primarily aimed at offering saintly wisdom and guidance to lead a content and happy life.

3. Banned Punjabi poem on Jallianwala massacre to be published in English after 99 years

- ✦ A poem on the Jallianwala Bagh massacre by acclaimed Punjabi writer Nanak Singh, which was banned by the British after its publication in 1920, has now been translated into English.
- ✦ It will be published by Harper Collins India next month to mark the centenary of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre.
- ✦ The poem narrates the political events in the run-up to the massacre and its immediate aftermath.

Obituaries

1. George Fernandes, former Union minister, dies at 88

- ✦ George Fernandes, former Union minister, and nine-time Lok Sabha MP passed away at the age of 88 following a prolonged illness.
- ✦ Fernandes was born in Mangalore in Karnataka in 1930. An anti-Emergency crusader, Fernandes was a fiery socialist and arch-enemy of Indira Gandhi.
- ✦ During his term, he took on American multinational companies like IBM and Coca-Cola, making them leave the country.

2. Odisha: BJD MP Ladu Kishore Swain passes away at 71

- ✦ Biju Janata Dal (BJD) MP from Aska Lok Sabha constituency in Odisha, Ladu Kishore Swain passed away at the age of 71.
- ✦ Swain was member of the Odisha Legislative Assembly from 2004 to 2009. He was elected to the 16th Lok Sabha in May 2014.
- ✦ The BJD MP was Chairman of Panchayat Samiti from 1984-1990 and 1992-95. From 2002 to 2004, he was member of the Zilla Parishad.

3. Longest-serving US congressman John Dingell dies aged 92

- ✦ John Dingell, the longest serving congressman in US history, has died aged 92.
- ✦ The Michigan Democrat was a driving force behind many key liberal laws, notably health programmers.
- ✦ He was first elected in 1955, serving in the House of Representatives for the next 59 years. He retired in 2015

4. England's World Cup-winning goalkeeper Gordon Banks dies aged 81

- ✦ Gordon Banks, the goalkeeper in England's 1966 World Cup-winning team, has died at the age of 81.
- ✦ He was widely regarded as one of the greatest goalkeepers to have played the game and will perhaps be best remembered for the diving stop he made to deny Brazil's Pele at the 1970 World Cup.
- ✦ Banks denied Brazil's Pele with a spectacular diving effort, which later became known as the "save of the century"

5. Manfred Eigen, pioneer of study of exceptionally fast chemical reactions, dies aged 91

- ✦ Manfred Eigen, who was awarded a one-half share of the 1967 chemistry Nobel prize for developing ways to study extremely fast chemical reactions, has died aged 91.
- ✦ He had shared this prize with R. G. W. Norrish and George Porter.

6. Badge of honor military novelist WEB Griffin passes away

- ✦ American military veteran and novelist, William E. Butterworth III, better known as W.E.B. Griffin (his pen name), passed away at the age of 89.
- ✦ He joined the army at the age of 17 and has served in the Korean War.
- ✦ He wrote more than 200 books under the pen name W.E.B. Griffin and various other names and sold millions of copies. His most popular series include “Badge of Honor,” “Clandestine Operations” and “Presidential Agent.”



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