

JANUARY CURRENT AFFAIRS – 2019

ENGLISH VERSION



The 42nd Indian Social Science Congress (ISSC-2018) was inaugurated by Manipur governor Dr. Najma Heptulla at KIIT University campus in Bhubaneswar, Odisha on December 27. The theme of the Congress was 'Human Future in Digital Era'.

Smriti Mandhana has won the Rachael Heyhoe Flint Award for the ICC Women's Cricketer of the Year and also been named as the ICC Women's ODI Player of the Year. She scored 669 runs at an average of 66.90 in 12 ODIs and 622 runs at a strike-rate of 130.67 in 25 T20Is during the voting period, which ran from 1 January to 31 December 2018.

As per 2nd schedule of the RBI Act of 1934, the ESAF Small Finance Bank (SFB) Ltd has got approval from Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to operate as a scheduled bank. This makes ESAF the fifth scheduled bank from Kerala after Federal Bank, South Indian Bank, Catholic Syrian Bank, and Dhanlaxmi Bank. Being a scheduled bank, ESAF can step up resource mobilisation through the issue of certificate of deposits and inter-bank borrowings at competitive rates of interest.

Sudhir Bhargava, a former Secretary to the Ministry of Social Justice, has taken charge as new Chief Information Commissioner (CIC) on January 1. Beside him, President Ram Nath Kovind has also appointed four new members as Information Commissioners - ex-IFS officer Yashwardhan Kumar Sinha, former IRS officer Vanaja N Sarna, former IAS Neeraj Kumar Gupta and former Law Secretary Suresh Chandra.

Norman Gimbel(91), the Oscar & Grammy-winning American lyricist has passed away in New York on December 17, 2018.

Rishab Pant became the first Indian wicket-keeper to claim 20 catches in Test series, during the final day of the 'Boxing Day Test' in Melbourne against Australia on December 30.

Recently, the Delhi High Court has ruled that Section 354A of Indian Penal Code (IPC) can be used by transgender persons to register complaints of sexual harassment. The Section 354A of the IPC deals with sexual harassment and punishment for sexual harassment.

Justice (retd) H L Dattu, the Chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), has recently launched a toll-free number -- 14433 -- and also a facility to file complaints through Common Service Centre (CSC) at the Manav Adhikar Bhawan, New Delhi.

President of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoye has recently announced 2019 as the 'Year of Active Investment and Social Development' in the backdrop of proposed investments from India to boost economy of this Central Asian country, in his annual address to the Parliament.

A government committee, headed by IIT-Hyderabad chairman B V R Mohan Reddy, has advised the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) to stop setting up new colleges from 2020 and review the creation of new capacity every two years after that.

The Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) has recently launched Samwad with Students as part of its outreach programme. The Indian Space agency will engage youngsters across the country in activities concerning space science under this programme.

Justice Thottathil B. Radhakrishnan has taken charge as first Chief Justice of Telangana High Court. Governor ESL Narasimhan administered the oath to him at a ceremony held at Raj Bhavan. The separate High Court for Telangana came into existence on 1st January, 2019 after the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh in 2014.

In Kerala, around 50 lakhs of women assembled under the aegis of the Left Democratic Front (LDF) to create an almost unbroken human wall that stretched 620 km from Kasaragod in north Kerala to Thiruvananthapuram in the south on 1st January 2019.

On 1st January 2019, Jair Bolsonaro has been sworn-in as new president of Brazil for a four-year term.

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

India has slashed import taxes on crude and refined palm oil sourced from Southeast Asian (ASEAN) countries after a request from suppliers.

On January 2, US-based Kathak exponent Anindita Neogy Anaam has been honoured with the National Nritya Shiromani award for promoting the dance form across the world. The award was conferred on her in Cuttack at the 10th Cuttack Mahotsav: International Dance and Music festival in Odisha.

Union Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has recently launched the Ujjwala Sanitary Napkin initiative in Bhubaneswar to improve female hygiene and health and employability of rural women. Under the new initiative, 100 manufacturing units will be set up at Common Service Centres (CSCs) covering 93 blocks in the State at an estimated cost of Rs 2.94 crore. Each manufacturing unit will employ five or six Ujjwala beneficiaries.

Recently, German authorities approved an \$8 billion rail and road tunnel linking Denmark and Germany, despite environmental objections. The project comprises a four-lane motorway and a two-track railway. It is part-funded by the European Union (EU).

Vinod Kumar Yadav, the South Central Railway (SCR) general manager, has been appointed as Chairman of the Railway Board under the Ministry of Railways and ex-officio Principal Secretary to the Government of India. He succeeded Ashwani Lohani.

France has recently introduced a new “GAFA tax” - named after the large internet and technology companies viz. Google, Apple, Facebook and Amazon - to ensure the global giants pay a fair share of taxes on their massive businesses in Europe.

Indian pacer Jasprit Bumrah has become the highest international wicket-taker all formats in the calendar year 2018. He took 48 wickets in 9 Tests, 22 wickets in 13 ODIs and 8 wickets in 8 T20I matches. Hence, a total of 78 wickets in 2018 was taken by Bumrah.

The 106th Indian Science Congress (ISC-2019) has been inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Lovely Professional University (LPU) in Jalandhar, Punjab from 3rd January 2019. The theme of the 5-day science congress is ‘Future India: Science & Technology’.

On 2nd January 2019, the Union Cabinet approved the merger of Vijaya Bank and Dena Bank with Bank of Baroda (BoB). With the merger, BoB will become the third largest bank after State Bank of India and ICICI Bank.

The Union Cabinet has recently approved amendment to the Trade Unions Act of 1926 to make provisions regarding Recognition of Trade Unions. The amendment provides for insertion of section 10A in the principal Act to power centre and state governments to recognize trade unions and federation of Trade Unions at Central as well as State level.

The Veer Savarkar International Airport in Port Blair has been declared as an authorized Immigration Check post for entry into/exit from India with valid travel documents for all classes of passengers. It was declared under sub-rule (b) of rule 3 of the Passport (Entry into India) Rules of 1950.

President Ram Nath Kovind nominated Justice AK Sikri as the Executive Chairman of National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) with effect from December 31, 2018. The post got vacant after the retirement of Justice Madan B Lokur. The NALSA was constituted on 5th December 1995 under the authority of the Legal Services Authorities Act 1987.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has appointed an 8-member expert committee headed by former SEBI chairman U.K. Sinha to comprehensively review and propose long-term solutions for the economic and financial sustainability of the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector.

Prof. Manoj Das, an eminent English and Odia Litterateur, received the Kabi Samrat Upendra Bhanja National Award for Lifetime Achievement in Literature. This ceremony was instituted by the Berhampur University, Odisha.

The West Bengal government has launched Krishak Bandhu scheme to provide financial assistance to farmers and landless labourers. The state government will give an annual financial assistance of Rs 5,000 per acre in two installments – one during kharif and another during Rabi.

Saurabh Kumar, a 1982-batch Indian Ordnance Factory Service officer, has taken charge as new Director General of Ordnance Factories (DGOF) and chairman of the Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) in Kolkata.

The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) hosted third edition of the National Entrepreneurship Awards (NEA) in New Delhi on January 4, 2019. The awards aim to recognize and honor outstanding young first-generation entrepreneurs and those who have contributed immensely in building the entrepreneurship ecosystem. Total of 43 awards will be presented this year.

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved the introduction of a Bill to modify the list of Scheduled Tribes (STs) of Arunachal Pradesh. Now, the bill - Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order (Amendment) Bill, 2018 - will be introduced in the Parliament for certain amendments in the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950.

Prof. Jayanta Kumar Ghosh of IIT Rourkela was conferred with ISRS National Geospatial Award for Excellence-2017 (Life Time Achievement Award) at the Space Application Centre in Ahmedabad. He won the award for his contribution towards the development of geospatial science and applications.

The Indian Panorama Film Festival (IPFF) has started at Siri Fort Auditorium II, New Delhi from 4th January. The 10-day Festival is being organized by the Directorate of Film Festivals, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting (I&B). The directors of the opening feature film 'Olu' and of the opening non-feature film 'Kharvas' viz.

Hemant Bhargava, the senior-most MD at LIC, has been appointed acting Chairman of LIC. The move comes after VK Sharma retired from the top job at LIC on 31st December 2018.

C. H. Lokanath (91), a noted Indian Kannada language veteran stage and cine artist, has passed away in Bengaluru, Karnataka on 31st December 2018. He had acted in more than 1000 plays and 650 films. He has even acted in several episodes of Malgudi Days.

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) declared six structures to the list of monuments of national importance in 2018. These are – the 125-year-old Old High Court Building in Nagpur (Maharashtra), two Mughal-era monuments in Agra — Haveli of Agha Khan and Hathi Khana, the ancient Neemrana Baori in Rajasthan's Alwar district; the Group of

Temples at Ranipur Jharail in Odisha's Bolangir district; and the Vishnu Temple in Kotali, Pithoragarh district, Uttarakhand.

On 2 January 2019, President Arif Alvi appointed Justice Asif Saeed Khosa as the new Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP). Khosa will succeed Mian Saqib Nisar on 18th January and will remain at seat till December 20, 2019.

In Thailand, Tropical storm Pabuk caused floods and blackouts leaving nearly 30,000 people in evacuation shelters across the southern part of the country on January 5, 2019.

The Union Ministry of Human Resource Development has recently approved the establishment of a Centre for Classical Language at the Thunchath Ezhuthachan Malayalam University in Tirur, Kerala. The Ministry has communicated the decision to the Central Institute of Indian Languages, Mysuru. In view of this, the State government would be required to prepare a detailed project report and sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry.

Parliament has passed the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (Amendment) Bill, 2018, with the Rajya Sabha approving it on 3rd January 2019. The bill seeks to amend a law to abolish the 'no detention policy' till Class VIII by enabling state governments to allow schools to fail students. The Lok Sabha had already passed the bill seeking to further amend the Right to Education (RTE) Act of 2009 to abolish the no-detention policy in schools on July 2018.

U.S. President Donald J. Trump has recently signed the Asia Reassurance Initiative Act (ARIA) into law. The act seeks to establish a multifaceted U.S. strategy to increase U.S. security, economic interests, and values in the Indo-Pacific region.

Indian mountaineer Dr. Arunima Sinha has become the world's first female Amputee to scale Antarctica's Highest Peak - Mount Vinson. Apart from this, she was also the world's first woman amputee to climb Mount Everest in 2013.

HDFC Mutual Fund has surpassed ICICI Prudential MF to become the India's largest Asset Management Company (AMC). As per the latest data available with Association of Mutual funds in India (Amfi), HDFC MF manages assets worth Rs 3.35 lakh crore, while ICICI Prudential MF stood at Rs 3.08 lakh crore as of December 2018.

Markets regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has recently allowed custodial services in the commodity derivatives market. Under the new framework, existing custodians will be permitted to add commodities as an asset class and provide physical delivery of both the securities and commodities.

Dibyendu Palit (79), the renowned Bengali writer and Sahitya Akademi awardee, has passed away in Kolkata, West Bengal on 3rd January 2019. He was awarded the 'Bankim Purashkar' for 'Dheu' in 1990 and 'Ananda Purashkar' in 1984 for 'Sahojodha'. He was conferred the Sahitya Akademi for his novel 'Anubhab' in 1998.

The 13th edition of Global Healthcare Summit (GHS-2019) will be held in Hyderabad, Telangana from July 21 to 24. The summit is being organized in partnership with the Global Association of Physicians of Indian Origin. It would have over a 100 speakers, who would share their expertise on clinical practice.

The 80th National Table Tennis Championship began at Jawaharlal Nehru Indoor Stadium in Cuttack on January 4, 2019. As many as 35 teams, including 550 players from different parts of the country are participating in the mega championship.

On 8th January 2019, the 4th edition of the Raisina Dialogue started in New Delhi with theme “A World Reorder: New Geometries; Fluid Partnerships; Uncertain Outcomes”. The 3-day Raisina Dialogue is India’s flagship annual geopolitical and geostrategic conference.

The first-ever Global Aviation Summit (GAS-2019) with the theme “Flying for all” is scheduled to be held in Mumbai from January 15-16, 2019. Organised by the Ministry of Civil Aviation along with FICCI, the GAS-2019 will discuss how to ride this strong tailwind of growth and pave the way forward for the aviation sector.

Kumar Rajesh Chandra (1985: IPS) has been appointed the new Director-General of Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) and will hold the post till 31st Dec 2021 i.e. date of his retirement on superannuation or until further orders. He succeeded S.S. Deswal.

The Malaysian King, Sultan Muhammad V has become the Malaysia’s first monarch to step down from the throne before completing his five-year tenure on 6th January 2019. No reason was given and palace officials did not respond to requests for comment.

The Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD) has introduced a 70-point grading index to assess the quality of school education offered by states. Here, the states will be marked out of 1,000 scores on 70 parameters to assess quality of education.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has appointed a 5-member committee headed by Nandan Nilekani to suggest ways to improve digital payments. The committee will review the existing status of digitisation of payments in the country, identify the current gaps in the ecosystem and suggest ways to bridge them and assess the current levels of digital payments in financial inclusion.

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) pavilion received ‘Exhibitor of the Year Award’ at 106th Indian Science Congress (ISC-2019) held at Lovely Professional University (LPU), Phagwara, Punjab. The pavilion narrated the saga of self-reliance & national pride with the ‘Make in India’ spirit, which gained a lot of attention from visitors who also got an opportunity to interact with DRDO’s scientists.

The Central Statistics Office (CSO) has recently released the First advance estimates of National Income for the current fiscal FY 19, under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation. In it, Indian economy is expected to grow at 7.2% in FY19, against 6.7% in FY18, due to improvement in the performance of agriculture and manufacturing sectors.

The 6th 'Women of India Organic Festival 2019 will be hosted by Ministry of Women and Child Development at Leisure Valley in Chandigarh from 12th to 14th January to celebrate and promote women farmers and entrepreneurs in the organic sector from the remotest parts of India. Over 100 women are coming together at Leisure Valley, which will become the epicentre of an organic extravaganza.

The World Bank has recently released 2019 Global Economic Prospects report titled "Darkening Skies", which forecasted that India's GDP is expected to grow at 7.3% in the fiscal year 2018-19, and 7.5% in the following two years. While, China's economic growth is projected to slow down to 6.2% each in 2019 and 2020 and 6% in 2021.

On January 8, the Lok Sabha has passed the controversial Citizenship (Amendment) Bill 2019 that seeks to provide Indian citizenship to non-Muslims from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan. It will pave way for the religious minorities --the Hindus, Jains, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Parsis -- from these countries to get Indian citizenship. According to Union Home Ministry, the purpose of the bill is to provide Indian citizenship to those who had been forced to seek shelter in India because of religious persecution or fear of persecution in their home countries.

Pranav R Mehta has become the first Indian to head the Global Solar Council (GSC) on 01 January 2019. He is a visionary in the field of Solar Energy and the chairman of National Solar Energy Federation of India (NSEFI).

The 2019 Africa Cup of Nations will be hosted by Egypt between 15th June and 13th July, after original host nation Cameroon was stripped of due to delays in preparations and concerns over security. The Confederation of African Football (CAF) President Ahmad Ahmad has recently made the announcement in Senegalese capital Dakar.

On 9th January, the Union Ministry of Women and Child Development has launched an online campaign, '#www: Web - Wonder Women'. The purpose of the campaign is to discover and celebrate the exceptional achievements of women, who have been driving positive agenda of social change via social media. The Ministry in collaboration with Twitter India and Breakthrough India (a human rights organization) has started this campaign.

On 9th January 2019, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched a series of development projects worth Rs. 2900 Crores for the Agra city and the adjoining areas during his second visit to the city.

Chief Minister Pema Khandu has recently inaugurated India's longest 300-meter single-lane steel cable suspension bridge over River Siang in Upper Siang district of Arunachal Pradesh, which borders China. The suspension bridge - also known as Byorong Bridge - was built at a cost of Rs 4,843 crore and funded by the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER) under Non Lapsable Central Pool of Resources (NLCPR) scheme.

The Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF) ruled government has recently decided to include UBI in its manifesto ahead of 2019 state assembly polls and aims to implement the scheme by 2022. If everything goes according to the plan, it will be the Indian first state to roll out UBI scheme aimed at providing a fixed monthly income to residents irrespective of their economic, social status.

The first-ever India-Central Asia Dialogue at the level of Foreign Ministers is scheduled to be held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan on January 12 and 13 will be co-chaired by External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and the Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan, Abdulaziz Kamilov.

Jehan Daruvala of Sahara Force India Academy has become the first Indian driver to win in the FIA Formula 3 European Championship in Race 3 at the Nuremberg circuit. Jehan's victory in race 3 comes 18 years after Narain Karthikeyan won in the British F3 Championship. FIA Formula 3 is the toughest junior racing category in the world.

The North Central Railway has launched a 'Rail Kumbh Seva Mobile App' to help people navigate through Prayagraj city during Kumbh Mela starting from January 15. The app will also provide information regarding all the 'Mela special' trains that will be run during the period. Additionally, the app will provide a link to the user to buy both unreserved and reserved train tickets.

Andhra Pradesh has topped the 2018 Ease of Doing Business (EDB) Index of Asia Competitiveness Institute (ACI). The ACI team, led by Tan Khee Giap, mentioned that despite Andhra Pradesh's excellent performance in ACI's EDB Index, the government needs to bridge numerous institutional and infrastructural gaps in order to sustain its position in the future.

Former liquor baron Vijay Mallya has become the first Indian businessman to be declared a Fugitive Economic Offender (FEO) under the newly enacted Fugitive Economic Offenders Act of 2018 by the Special Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) court in Mumbai. The tag now allows the government to confiscate and sold his properties in alleged Rs. 9,000 crore loan default case in India.

Egypt has recently opened West Asia's largest cathedral in its New Administrative Capital, 45km east of Cairo. President Abdul Fattah al-Sisi inaugurated the newly-built Cathedral

of Nativity and Al-Fattah Al-Aleem mosque on the eve of Coptic Christmas in a symbolic message of tolerance in the predominantly Muslim nation.

Lady Head constable Rani of 5th Indian Reserve Battalion (IRB) of Himachal Pradesh Police won Gold in 78 kg category in the Senior National Women's Judo Championship at Visakhapatnam on January 7, 2019. Rani was also declared the best Judoka at the Championship.

The 27th New Delhi World Book Fair has started at Pragati Maidan in New Delhi on January 5 with theme "Readers with Special Needs". The All India Radio (AIR) is the radio partner for book fair. Over 20 countries including Canada, China, Sri Lanka, and the US are participating in the book fair.

As part of the Mission Shakti scheme, Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has recently announced interest-free loans of up to Rs 3 lakh for Women Self-Help Groups (WSHGs) in the state. The initiative would benefit around 70 lakh women associated with six lakh SHGs. He also distributed financial assistance of Rs 3,000 each to six lakh WSHGs as part the state government's efforts to digitally empower women.

Veteran journalist Dinu Randive (93) has been conferred with the lifetime achievement award by the Mantralaya and Vidhimandal Vartahar Sangh, an association of journalists covering Maharashtra legislature and secretariat. Mr. Randive started his journalistic career in 1956.

On 2nd January 2019, the Haryana government approved 11 projects for the rejuvenation of the mythical Saraswati River. The purpose of the projects is to revive the ancient Sarasvati River in the state and ensure regular flow of fresh water into it.

On January 11, an agreement for Renukaji Dam Multipurpose Project was signed in New Delhi among 6 States - Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi, Rajasthan and Uttarakhand. Under the agreement, three storage projects are proposed to be constructed on the river Yamuna and two of its tributaries - Tons and Giri in the hilly regions of Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh.

Taiwanese president Tsai Ing-wen has appointed Su Tseng-chang as the island's new Prime Minister, during a Cabinet reshuffle following the ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP)'s heavy losses in local elections.

President of the Indian Weightlifting Federation (IWF), Birendra Prasad Baishya has been named as India's Chef de Mission for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. It is for the first time that the sport of Weightlifting has been accorded with the honour of Chef de Mission for the Olympics.

As per 2019 Henley and Partners Passport Index, the Indian passport has been ranked as the 79th most powerful in the world. The Henley index ranks world's passports based on how many countries they can get the holder access to without a prior visa.

Ace Indian pugilist Mary Kom has been ranked No.1 in the Light Fly (45-48kg) category by the International Boxing Association (AIBA), after scoring 1700 points. Earlier, Kom won the historic sixth gold medal at the 2018 Women's World Boxing Championship by defeating Hanna Okhota of Ukraine in the 48kg category in New Delhi.

IIT Kharagpur will launch a six-month course on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning for working professionals and engineering students. The aim of the certified programme is to strengthen India's talent pool in Machine Learning and AI. The course will begin from March 2019 & will be offered at institute units in Kharagpur, Bangalore and Kolkata and possibly in Hyderabad.

On January 10, Union Environment Minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan launched the much-awaited National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) to combat air pollution. The NCAP is a pollution control initiative that was launched with the intention to cut the concentration of coarse (PM10) and fine particles (PM2.5) by at least 20% in the next five years, with 2017 as the base year for comparison.

The book titled 'We are Displaced: My Journey and Stories from Refugee Girls Around the World' has been authored by Malala Yousafzai, the Nobel Peace Prize winner and Pakistani activist. In it, the author is charting her experiences travelling the world and visiting refugee camps. Here, Malala not only explores her own story but she also shares the personal stories of some of the incredible girls she has met on her various journeys.

Security and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has recently constituted a Research Advisory Committee (RAC) to strengthen its research function and enhance its linkage to policy making. It will be headed by Dr. Sankar Dev. The RAC will assist in formulating policy to undertake research relevant for development and regulation of capital markets.

The World Economic Forum (WEF) has recently released its latest report titled 'Future of Consumption in Fast-Growth Consumer Market – India'. The report stated that India is set to become the world's third largest consumer market behind only USA and China by 2030.

The Election Commission (EC) appointed Committee has submitted its report on digital media and campaigning during last 48 hours before polls to the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sunil Arora. The Committee was constituted under the chairmanship of Sr. Deputy Election Commissioner Umesh Sinha.

On January 12, Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu inaugurated the 25th edition of Partnership Summit 2019 in Mumbai. This edition of the Summit will showcase India in the present landscape of an emerging “New India”, the “New Global Economic Address”.

Indian skipper Virat Kohli and coach Ravi Shastri has received the honorary membership of the Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG) for their contribution to the sport of cricket.

Narasimhan Ram, chairman of THG Publishing Private Limited, has been appointed president of the Alliance for Media Freedom (AFMF), a cross-media advocacy and action group of media organisations, promoters and journalists.

Bihar left-arm spinner Ashutosh Aman broke the 44-year old record of most wickets in a single Ranji Trophy season by finishing the 2018-19 tournament with 68 wickets. He break the previous record of 64 dismissals set by former India captain Bishan Singh Bedi in the 1974–75 tournament. Aman now holds the record for most wickets taken in a Ranji Trophy season by any bowler. He is employed with the Indian Air Force.

Industrialist and Godrej Group Chairman Adi Godrej for 'Translating Excellence in Corporate Governance into Reality'. The awards were instituted by The Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI), which is celebrating its golden jubilee.

The 29th biennial Indian Paint Conference has started in Agra, Uttar Pradesh from 11th January 2019. It is organized by the Indian Paint Association (IPA), the apex body of the country's paint industry.

Nicolas Maduro has been sworn-in for a second term as Venezuela's president on 10th January 2019, despite international criticism that his re-election was illegitimate. The result was denounced as fraudulent by many neighboring countries, including Argentina, Mexico, Chile, Colombia, Brazil, Canada and the United States, as well as organizations such as the European Union, and the Organization of American States.

On the occasion of National Youth Day (NYD- 2019), Union minister Col Rajyavardhan Rathore (Retd) launched the National Youth Parliament Festival 2019. It is organised on the theme of “Be the Voice of New India” and “Find solutions and contribute to policy”.

The Gujarat Government has recently announced that the benefits of 10% quota for Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) of general category in educational institutions and government jobs will be applicable from 14th January 2019 midnight. It is clarified that the eligibility of the new quota will be applicable only for which the announcement for jobs and admissions have been made but the process has not yet begun.

The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has drafted a five-year action plan to address the problem of drug and substance abuse in the country. The aim of the National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction (for 2018 to 2023) is to employ a multi-pronged strategy to address the issue.

On January 14, the first-ever Annual Disarmament and International Security Affairs Fellowship Programme has started at the Foreign Services Institute in New Delhi. It was inaugurated by the United Nations under-secretary-general and high representative for disarmament affairs Izumi Nakamitsu and foreign secretary Vijay Keshav Gokhale.

The 352nd birth anniversary of Guru Govind Singh has recently celebrated as Prakash Utsav with religious fervour and gaiety in various parts of the country. The main function is organised at Takhat Sri Harmandir Sahib Gurdwara, Patna Sahib, where thousands of pilgrims across the globe are offering prayers.

The Andaman and Nicobar Command is the first and only Tri-service theater command of the Indian Armed Forces, based at Port Blair in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The archipelago is straddled strategically near the mouth of the Malacca Straits which is an important Sea Lane of Communication used by the navies of several countries.

National award-winning filmmaker Buddhadeb Dasgupta has been honoured with the Lifetime Achievement Award by the West Bengal Film Journalists Association (WBFJA). The award is in the name of the late Satyajit Ray. He was awarded the award in the third edition of the 'Cinemas Samabartan' ceremony on January 13, 2019. As a director, he has won the National Film Award for Best Direction twice, for 'Uttara' (2000) and 'Swapner Din' (2005).

The first edition of Bhopal Literature and Art Festival was held at the Multi Art Centre of the Bharat Bhawan in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh from January 12 to 14, 2019. The festival is a brainchild of former bureaucrat Raghav Chandra. Over 70 writers and artists participated in the literary event. In it, Namita Gokhale has won the Sushila Devi Literature Award for her novel "Things to Leave Behind".

Sikkim Chief Minister Pawan Chamling has recently launched 'One Family, One Job' scheme which entitles one government job for every family in the state. Though, the employment will be awarded only to members of those families which do not have a government job at present. As per scheme, CM Chamling handed over appointment letters to over 12,000 unemployed youths at a "Rojgar Mela" (employment fair) at the Paljor stadium, Gangtok.

Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Kumar Modi will head the 7-member Group of Ministers (GoM) to look into the revenue shortfall being faced by states following the roll out of Goods and Services Tax (GST).

The Prime Minister Narendra Modi received the first-ever Philip Kotler Presidential award in New Delhi for his outstanding leadership for the nation. According to the award citation, under his leadership, India is now identified as the centre for innovation and value added manufacturing (Make in India), as well as a global hub for professional services such as information technology, accounting and finance.

The United States has launched a new innovation initiative titled 'Fair Value for Innovation' at the 4th edition of the Raisina Dialogue in New Delhi. The initiative was launched by the Global Innovation Policy Center (GIPC) of United States Chamber of Commerce.

Bengaluru Raptors have won their first-ever Premier Badminton League (PBL) title at Bengaluru on 13th January 2019. In the title clash played, Bengaluru edged out Mumbai Rockets, with a 4-3 win. Star player Kidambi Srikanth, Vu Ji Trang and the Men's Doubles pair of Mohammad Ahsan and Hendra Satiawan won their matches for Bengaluru guiding them to victory.

Shakil Ahmed, who is Asian Cup gold medalist and noted oarsman, has set up a world record in indoor rowing by completing one lakh metres in above-40 years category in Kolkata. A FISA level one coach, Shakil began his record-setting indoor rowing feat in Salt Lake stadium complex at 8 am on 13 January 2019 and achieved the milestone of covering 1, 00,000 metres of simulated distance in 10 hours. He also has the record of completing 50,000 metres of simulated rowing in four hours and 13 minutes which is already in the Limca Record Book.

In Maharashtra, the 9th International Micro Irrigation Conference will be held at Aurangabad on 16th January 2019 with theme "Micro Irrigation in Modern Agriculture". The 3-day event will be a multi-disciplinary dialogue in the form of a conference discussing issues related to micro irrigation for modern agriculture and various related issues like new techniques in micro irrigation for increased crop productivity, micro irrigation in cluster level farming etc.

On 15th January 2019, Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated to the nation the 13 km, 2 lane Kollam bypass on NH-66 in Kerala. Constructed at a cost of Rs 352 core, this highway has three major bridges over Ashtamudi Lake. The Kollam bypass project will ease traffic congestion around Kollam town and reduce the travel time between Alappuzha and Thiruvananthapuram.

On 13th January, Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan launched the India's largest startup ecosystem -named as 'Integrated Startup Complex (ISC)' - with a 1,000-seat capacity in Kalamassery, Kochi. The 8-floor facility, which is spread across 1.82 lakh sqft area, is set up by Kerala Startup Mission (KSUM).

Puducherry government has decided to impose a ban on the production, sale, and use of single-use plastic products in the Union Territory from 1st March 2019. The massive drive would also be launched to create awareness among the merchants and the public on the necessity of the ban. The decision has been taken to keep the environment clean. The ban on non-biodegradable bags will open up a new market for canvas / cotton, denim and jute bags.

Civil Aviation Minister Suresh Prabhu inaugurated the first-ever Global Aviation Summit (GAS-2019) in Mumbai on January 15. The two-day summit, with a theme “Flying for all-especially the next 6 Billion”, is being organised by Ministry of Civil Aviation in association with FICCI. It offers stakeholders an opportunity to explore, deliberate and understand how technology-driven innovations will change air travel in the decades to come.

Lenin Rajendran (67), an eminent Malayalam filmmaker and chairman of the Kerala Film Development Corporation (KFDC), has passed away in Chennai, Tamil Nadu on 14th of January 2019. Known for his unique style of filmmaking, Rajendran had entered tinsel town by directing the movie ‘Venal’ during the early 1980s.

Abhinav Shaw (10) has become the youngest gold medalist in shooting at the Khelo India Youth Games 2019 in Pune. He teamed up with Mehuli Ghosh to help West Bengal win the 10m air rifle mixed team event. Delhi’s Devanshi Rana bagged gold in Under-21 girls 25m pistol event.

The Government of India has constituted a 7-member Group of Ministers to boost the real estate sector under the GST regime. Deputy Chief Minister of Gujarat Nitin Patel will be the convener of the GoM. The panel will analyse tax rate of GST and suggest a composition scheme for residential construction units. It will also look into the issue of the legality of inclusion or exclusion of land or any other ingredient in the composition scheme and suggest valuation mechanism.

In Madhya Pradesh, Chief Minister Kamal Nath launched the Rs 50,000-crore farm debt-waiver scheme named ‘Jai Kisan Rin Mukti Yojana’ on January 16, 2019. It would benefit 55 lakh small and marginal farmers. Under this scheme, Farmers who have registered themselves to pay GST and are paying income tax cannot avail benefits.

The National Board for Wildlife (NBWL) has recently given its approval for the Trishna Gas project of ONGC to extract Natural Gas from Trishna Wildlife Sanctuary (TWS) in Belonia subdivision of Gomati district of Tripura.

Sarfaraz Ahmed, the current captain of the Pakistan cricket team, has set a new wicket-keeping record during the final Test match against South Africa at the Wanderers Stadium in Johannesburg on January 13. He took 10 catches in the on-going Test match and surpassed Australia’s Adam Gilchrist and former Indian captain, MS Dhoni, to become the only wicket-keeper captain with the most number of catches in a match. Furthermore, the Pakistani captain has also made another record; taking five catches in each innings of a Test match.

On 14th January 2019, the 2nd edition of India-Myanmar bilateral Army exercise 'IMBEX 2018-19' has commenced at Chandi Mandir military station in Haryana that houses the headquarters of the Western Command of the Indian Army.

Prof. Sir Michael Atiyah (89), the noted British mathematician has passed away in United Kingdom on 11th January 2019. He was best known for his co-development of a branch of mathematics called topological K-theory and the Atiyah-Singer index theorem.

The Madras High Court has expressed serious concern over the exotic invasive species that have stifled the growth of the native shola forests and grasslands on the Western Ghats. It observed that such species are the second largest cause of biodiversity loss in the world and impose high costs to agriculture, forestry, and aquatic ecosystems.

The State of Palestine has launched the historical phase by presiding Group of 77 (G-77) for 2019 on January 15. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas succeeded Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi with a promise to confront 'assaults' on multilateralism and a pledge to seek a peaceful two-state solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has recently launched 'AmaGhare LED' scheme, under which about 95 lakh families in the State will each get four LED bulbs free of cost. Under the scheme, each beneficiary registered under National Food Security Act (NFSA) and the State Food Security Scheme (SFSS) will be provided four LED bulbs of 9 watt each free of cost.

On 14th January 2019, the 1st National Level Sports Meet for the students of Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) was held at G.M.C Balayogi Stadium in Gachibowli, Hyderabad. The event has a participation of 1777 students comprising of 975 boys and 802 girls representing 20 States of the country.

Mohammed Ali Qamar, India's first Commonwealth Games gold medal in boxing, has been named as the chief coach for the Indian women boxers.

Detained Chinese lawyer, Yu Wensheng has won the Franco-German Human Rights Award for his exceptional contribution to the protection and promotion of human rights. His wife, Madam Xu Yan, received the Franco-German Prize for Human Rights and the Rule of Law on her husband's behalf from the French and German ambassadors to China at an event organized by the German embassy in Beijing on January 14, 2019.

D Gukesh from Chennai has become the 2nd youngest Grandmaster (GM) in the world and the youngest Indian to achieve the feat at 12 years, seven months and 17 days. He erased the mark set by his state-mate R Praggnanandhaa in June 2018.

Manu Sawhney, a veteran media professional, has been appointed the new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the International Cricket Council (ICC). He will join the

organisation in February and take formal charge of his position in July, once incumbent David Richardson steps down following the 2019 ICC Men's Cricket World Cup. Sawhney is the former CEO of Singapore Sports Hub and Managing Director of ESPN Star Sports.

In a first, the government of Delhi has proposed a specialised treatment facility for birds in the National Capital Territory, as part of its Animal Health and Welfare Policy 2018. It aims to strengthen overall animal health cover through prevention, control and eradication of various disease conditions, disease monitoring, surveillance and extension of veterinary services.

The 10th edition of the India Rubber Expo (IRE-2019) has been inaugurated by Union Minister Suresh Prabhu at the Bombay Convention & Exhibition Centre in Mumbai on January 17. The IRE will showcase the latest technological developments in rubber industry and also talk about the current market status, facilities and services on R&D and quality control.

In pursuance of decision in the 32nd Meeting of GST Council held on 10th January 2019 at New Delhi, a Group of Ministers (GoM) on issues relating to lottery has been constituted. The ministerial panel headed by Maharashtra Finance Minister Sudhir Mungantiwar will examine uniformity of taxation on lottery under GST or other issues arising out of it.

Saksham 2019 is an annual high intensity one-month long people-centric mega campaign, which is organised by Petroleum Conservation Research Association (PCRA) under the aegis of Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.

Indian female wrestler Vinesh Phogat from Haryana has become the first Indian athlete to receive a nomination in the prestigious Laureus World Comeback of the Year Award.

Haryana chief minister Manohar Lal Khattar has announced a 'Shaurya Award' to students in the name of 71 martyrs of state police force who laid down their lives in the line of duty while protecting society and maintaining law and order in the state. It was announced by the state government while organizing the first state-level function at the National Police Memorial in New Delhi to honour the families of all 71 policemen who died in various attacks and encounters since the formation of the state in 1966.

Prabhat Singh, a 1988 batch IPS officer of Jharkhand cadre, has been appointed as new Director General (Investigation) in the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC). Singh is at present Special Director in Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF). He has been appointed to the post for a period up to April 30, 2020, the date of his superannuation.

On 18th January, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the 9th edition of Vibrant Gujarat global investors' summit – 2019 at Mahatma Mandir Exhibition cum Convention Centre in Gandhinagar. The main theme of the 3-day summit is "Shaping a new India".

Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has decided to organize an event named Shehri Samridhi Utsav from 1st -15th February 2019 all over the country focusing on urban livelihoods. The purpose of the event is to extend the outreach of Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM) to the poorest of poor and the most vulnerable.

The Union Ministry of Finance has started 'Know Your Budget' fortnight series on its Twitter handle to educate general public about the budgetary process. The series would explain the importance of Union Budget and its making, and would continue for about a fortnight. In the first series of tweets, the Ministry explained the terms - Union Budget and Vote on Account.

Mountaineer Satyarup Siddhanta conquered the highest point Antarctica 'Mount Sidley' on 19th of January 2019. With this feat, he became the first Indian and youngest man to climb the seven highest peaks and volcanic summits across all continents. He achieved the feat at the age of 35 years and 262 days. Australia's Daniel Bull had done it at the age of 36 years 157 days.

In Maharashtra, the 2nd World Orange Festival has started in Nagpur from 19th January, which will continue till to 21st of this month. The festival, while offering its famed oranges to the world, will also showcase and brand the exquisite fruit in order to boost its export. Agricultural experts and scientists from various countries will participate in the workshops and guide farmers.

The world's first television channel dedicated to human rights has been launched in London with a promise to deliver hidden stories ignored by mainstream media into people's living rooms. The International Observatory of Human Rights stated that its web-based channel would bring human rights issues to audiences in over 20 countries across Europe, Latin America and the Middle East.

On 19th January, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the National Museum of Indian Cinema (NMIC) in Mumbai, Maharashtra. The state-of-the-art Museum has been built at a cost of over Rs 140 crore. The objective of the Museum is to take its visitors through an absorbing journey of over a century of Indian cinema in a story telling mode with the help of visuals, graphics, artifacts, interactive exhibits and multimedia expositions.

The Government of India has approved setting up of three new naval air squadrons in Tamil Nadu and Gujarat as part of efforts to bolster the Indian Navy's overall strength. Besides this, the Central Government has also sanctioned manpower towards manning additional aircraft in existing Dornier Surveillance Squadrons in Kerala and Andaman Islands.

The German parliament has recently adopted a draft law that classifies the North African states of Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco as well as Georgia as safe countries of origin. The move is meant to deter migrants from those countries and streamline the handling of asylum applications. Once the law is approved by the German Federal Council, asylum procedures for people arriving from these countries will be accelerated.

In Sweden, Prime Minister Stefan Lofven has been elected for a second term on 18th January 2019 after an agreement was struck between the Social Democrats, Greens, Liberals, and Centre Party, and after the Left Party agreed to abstain from voting against Lofven. He is expected to formally present his new government and its full programme on 21st January 2019.

After Gujarat and Jharkhand, the Uttar Pradesh government has approved 10% reservation in jobs and educational institutions for economically backward in the general category. The decision was taken at the state cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath in Lucknow.

In Arunachal Pradesh, Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has inaugurated the Diffo Bridge over Diffo River in Lower Dibang Valley district on 18th January 2019. The bridge is 426 mts long Pre Stressed Concrete Box Girder type bridge on Roing-Koron-Paya road in the state.

The 7th ASEAN-India Tourism Ministers was held in Ha Long City, Viet Nam on 18th January 2019. Here, Union Tourism Minister of India, K J Alphons co-chaired the Tourism Ministers' meeting with the Vietnamese minister, Mr. Nguyen Ngoc Thien.

India's first Policy Hack for Teachers has been launched by Dell in partnership with the UNESCO Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development (MGIEP) and Ignus.

The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Hyderabad will launch India's first full-fledged B.Tech (Bachelors of Technology) programme in Artificial Intelligence (AI) for the academic year 2019-20. The course will have an intake of around 20 students and the admission will be done on the basis of the JEE-Advanced score.

India's First Lithium Ion Giga Factory will be build by Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) and Libcoin. Both the companies are in dialogue to form a world class consortium to initially build 1GWh lithium ion battery plant in India. Its capacity will be scaled up to 30GWh in due course.

Shivakumara Swami (111), a revered seer of the Lingayat-Veerashaiva faith, has passed away in Tumkur, Karnataka on January 21, 2019. He was affectionately referred to as Nadedaduva Devaru (Walking God) in the State.

The 2nd World Integrated Medicine Forum (WIMF-2019) on the 'Regulation of Homeopathic Medical Products' will be held in Goa from 23-25 January, 2019. The 3-day forum, which will be inaugurated by AYUSH Minister Shripad Naik, will explore and illustrate the potential benefits and pitfalls of bi-lateral/multilateral collaboration and advance global cooperation on a synergistic basis. In it, approx 20 countries are participating.

The Youth Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (YPBD-2019) has started at Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh on January 21. The theme for this year PBD is "Role of Indian Diaspora in building New India". Prime Minister Narendra Modi will formally inaugurate the event tomorrow, with Prime Minister of Mauritius, Pravind Kumar Jugnauth being the Chief Guest.

The Government of India has decided to induct women in Personnel Below Officer Rank (PBOR) role in Corps of Military Police for the first time ever. The women will be inducted into the military police in a graded manner, and will eventually comprise 20% of its total strength. The decision to induct women in the military police will enhance their representation in the armed forces. Their role would range from probing rape and molestation cases to assisting the Army wherever required.

India will host the 14th session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD COP-14) to address the issue of land degradation and desertification. The conference is scheduled to be held in October 2019, and will have participation from over 100 countries.

The Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB), the central bank of Nepal, has recently announced the ban of Indian currency notes with denominations above Rs.100. Under the new rule, Nepali citizens cannot carry these denominations to other countries except India. Similarly, Nepalis are also not allowed to bring such notes from other countries.

Eminent scientist and recipient of Bharat Ratna, C N R Rao has been chosen for the first Sheikh Saud International Prize for Materials Research, given by the Centre for Advanced Materials of the UAE. The award includes a plaque, a medal and a cash prize of \$100000.

On January 19, the Tamil Nadu government roll out 'Startup & Innovation policy 2018-2023' with a mission of providing an enabling and innovative ecosystem for startups registered in the State and to make Tamil Nadu a 'Global Innovation hub for startups' by 2023. The mission shall aim for a minimum of 1, 00,000 high skilled job creation, direct and indirect, in the Startup ecosystem.

The Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) has launched a rocket carrying a satellite capable of delivering an artificial meteor shower into the Earth's atmosphere. This will be the world first artificial meteor satellite if the missions succeed. The satellite was launched by Epsilon-4 Rocket from the JAXA Uchinoura Space Center.

The insolvency regulator Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) has set-up a working group under the Chairmanship of former SEBI chief UK Sinha to go into the concept of 'Group Insolvency' and suggest a suitable framework.

The Arab Economic and Social Development Summit held in the Lebanese capital Beirut, in which the Arab leaders and officials issued a joint statement called Beirut Declaration. The declaration calls for the establishment of an Arab free trade zone.

An Indian-American philanthropist and entrepreneur, Gurinder Singh Khalsa has been conferred with the prestigious 2019 Rosa Park Trailblazer award for his campaign that forced US authorities to change their policy towards headgear of the Sikh community.

On 20th January 2019, Masazo Nonaka, a Japanese super centenarian, has passed away in Japan at the age of 113 after living a stress-free life. The Guinness World Records officially recognized Nonaka as the world's oldest living man after the death of 113-year old Spaniard Francisco Olivera in 2018. Nonaka was born on 25th July 1905, months before Einstein published his theory of relativity.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has recently announced the men's Test and ODI teams of the year 2018. Three players, each from India and New Zealand, were named in Test team while four players, each from India and England, were named in ODI squad. Virat Kohli has been named captain of both sides following a remarkable 2018 as batsman and skipper.

The annual meet of World Economic Forum (WEF) has started in Davos with theme 'Globalization 4.0: Shaping a Global Architecture in the Age of the Fourth Industrial Revolution'.

On 19th January, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the India's first Armoured Systems Complex (ASC) built by a private company - Larsen & Toubro (L&T) - at Hazira in Surat, Gujarat. This is the India's first private facility where the K9 Vajra self-propelled Howitzer guns will be manufactured. Spread over 40 acres within L&T's 755-acre Hazira Manufacturing Complex, the ASC is executing the K9 Vajra guns programme.

Raghubir Singh Bhola (92), the former India hockey player, has passed away in New Delhi on January 21, 2019. He represented India in the 1956 Melbourne and 1960 Rome Olympics, winning gold and silver medals respectively for the country. In 2000, he was honoured with the Arjuna Award for his life time achievements in Field Hockey.

The states of Manipur, Meghalaya and Tripura celebrated their 47th statehood day on 21st January 2019. On this day in 1972, all the three states became full-fledged states under the North Eastern Region (Reorganisation) Act, 1971. The erstwhile princely states of Tripura and Manipur were merged with India in 1949 and became full-fledged states in 1972.

According to recent Union Home Ministry communique, Aadhaar cards are now valid travel documents for Indians under 15 and over 65 years travelling to Nepal and Bhutan. Indians other than those in the two age brackets will not be able to use Aadhaar to travel to the two neighboring countries, for which no visas are needed.

India Steel 2019 Exhibition and Conference has started in Mumbai on January 23. The three-day event organised by Ministry of Steel will help chart out the future growth path of the steel industry. The event will provide an opportunity for all the stakeholders to deliberate and identify ways to contribute towards building a robust roadmap for the further growth of the steel sector.

On 23rd January, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Subhash Chandra Bose museum at the iconic Red Fort in New Delhi to mark the leader's 122nd birth anniversary. The Museum on Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose and Indian National Army provides a detailed account of Subhash Chandra Bose and the history of Indian National Army (INA).

Andry Rajoelina has been sworn-in as the new President of Madagascar after taking the oath of office in Antananarivo before 9 judges of the High Constitutional Court. He won the 2018 Malagasy presidential election with 56% of the vote.

US-based Indian poet Ranjani Murali has been bestowed the 'Prabha Khaitan Woman's Voice Award' at the Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival (AKLF-2019). The award carries a cash prize of Rs 1 lakh and a citation.

Team India skipper Virat Kohli has become the first player-ever in history to win all three of top ICC awards after being named captain of the ICC's Test and ODI teams of 2018 for a fabulous run in international cricket. These are: the Sir Garfield Sobers Trophy for ICC Cricketer of the Year, the ICC Men's Test Player of the Year and the ICC ODI Player of the Year awards.

Microsoft India has launched a new e-commerce platform re-weave.in for handloom weavers under its Project ReWeave, as part of its philanthropic initiatives. This e-commerce platform will help connect artisans to buyers directly and enables them to expand to newer customers and markets.

The Indian Navy, in coordination with the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) and other stakeholders, conducted the massive coastal defense exercise codenamed 'SEA VIGIL-2019' off the Indian coast on January 22-23, 2019.

The Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT) has got listed amongst the top 30 container ports globally, as per the latest Lloyds Report. Hence, JNPT has become the only Indian port to

be listed amongst the world's top 30 container ports. JNPT notched up five spots, to be 28th on the list, compared to its previous position.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has recently released its biannual World Economic Outlook (WEO) update at the World Economic Forum (WEF-2019) in Davos. In it, IMF estimates India's economic growth at 7.3% in 2018-19, 7.5% in 2019-20 and 7.7% in 2020-21. With the latest outlook, India will remain the fastest-growing economy in the world, at least for the next two years.

The Union Cabinet has approved recently the signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Kuwait for cooperation on the recruitment of domestic workers. The MOU provides a structured framework for cooperation on domestic workers related matters and provides strengthened safeguards for Indian domestic workers including female workers deployed in Kuwait.

The Arunachal Pradesh government has recently declared the PakkePaga Hornbill Festival (PPHF)–the state's only conservation festival, as a "State Festival". The purpose of the fest is to recognize the role played by the resident Nyishi tribe in conserving hornbills in the Pakke Tiger Reserve. As part of the festival, visitors are treated to cultural programmes, food stalls, plays as well as local tribal sports and dances.

The Andhra Pradesh government has approved a proposal to grant 5% quota to the Kapu community in the state, after the Central Government recently passed a Bill to provide 10% reservation to Economically Backward Classes (EBCs) from the general category in jobs and education.

Noted Gujarati poet Sitanshu Yashash chandra has been awarded the 27th edition of the Saraswati Samman 2017 for his poetry collection in Gujarati named "Vakhar". He received the award by the film director & author Gulzar at a solemn function at National museum auditorium in New Delhi.

India has been ranked 80th at the Global Talent Competitive Index 2019, according to a report released by INSEAD business school in partnership with Tata Communications and Adecco Group. It was released during the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting in Davos on 22nd Jan 2019. The list is topped by Switzerland, followed by Singapore, the US, Norway and Denmark.

India has been ranked at 54th position in the list of world's most innovative countries, according to Bloomberg 2019 Innovative Index. It is for the first time that India has made it to the rankings. South Korea has topped the Index for the sixth time in a row with a total score of 87.38, followed by Germany, Finland, Switzerland, Israel, Singapore, Sweden, U.S., Japan and France in the top 10.

The Indian Africa Field Training Exercise (IAFTX-2019) will be conducted at Aundh Military Station and College of Military Engineering in Pune from March 18 to 27. The joint training exercise is being conducted with more than a dozen African countries and India to synergise humanitarian mine action and joint peace operations.

Bhanu Prakash Singh (90), the former Union minister, ex-Goa Governor and head of the Narsingharh royal family, has passed away in Indore, Madhya Pradesh on Jan 24. He was elected as an MP from Rajgarh Lok Sabha seat in 1962 as an independent candidate. Singh later became close to former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and joined the Congress in 1964.

The Government of India (GoI) has recently instituted an annual award titled Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar. The award is to be announced every year on 23rd January on the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose. For the year 2019, 8th Battalion of National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) located at Ghaziabad has been selected for the award for its commendable work in Disaster Management.

As per latest United Nations' World Economic Situation and Prospects (WESP) report 2019, India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is expected to grow at 7.4% during 2018-19 and improve to 7.6% in FY20. The report also expected that India's economy to expand by 7.4% in 2020-21. Referring to the global economy, the report said it would continue to grow at a steady pace of around 3% in 2019 and 2020 amid signs that growth has peaked.

The first-ever UN's International Day of Education is observed on January 24 to highlight the role of education for peace and development. Education is a human right, a public good and a public responsibility. The day recognizes the importance of ensuring inclusive quality education & access to lifelong learning opportunities for all. The right to education is enshrined in article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Krishna Sobti (94), the famous Hindi fiction writer and essayist, has passed away in New Delhi on January 25, 2019. She had won the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1980 for her novel Zindaginama and was awarded the Jnanpith in 2017 for her contribution to Indian literature. Sobti is best known for her 1966 novel Mitro Marajani.

The new naval air base 'INS Kohassa' has recently commissioned by Navy Chief Admiral Sunil Lanba into the Indian Navy at the Shibpur Naval Air Station in Diglipur, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, as part of efforts to expand operational presence in the Indian Ocean where China has been increasing its military presence. This is the India's fourth air base and the third naval air facility in the region that overlooks key sea lanes of communication and strategic points.

IIT Ropar has launched an android app 'Roshni' to help the blind in recognizing the denomination of the currency notes, using image processing and analytics. At present,

notes of Rs 10, 20, 50, 100, 200, 500 and 2,000 are in circulation, which the blind people find it difficult to recognize due to their size and the tactile marks. The app can recognize both old and new notes and gives audio information as to which note you are holding in your hands. The app is developed by assistant professor Dr Puneet Goyal and his students — Mandhatya Singh, Joochi Chauhan, and R Ram.

The Union cabinet has approved the landmark amendment to Article 280 of the Constitution to increase the financial and executive powers of the 10 autonomous councils in the Sixth Schedule areas of the Northeast Region. The amendment would impact a population of about 1 crore tribals living in Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram. The Finance Commission would be mandated to recommend devolution of financial resources to the councils.

ISRO has successfully launched a military satellite 'Microsat-R' and a student satellite 'Kalamsat-V2' into their designated orbits from PSLV-C44 launch vehicle. The launch was the 46th flight of the PSLV which lifted off from Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh. PSLV-C44 is the first flight of PSLV-DL, a new variant of PSLV with two strap-on motors. With this launch, India also becomes the first country to use the fourth stage of a space rocket as an orbital platform for microgravity experiments.

In China, the world's longest 3D-printed concrete bridge has recently opened across a canal on the Wenzaobang River in Shanghai. The newly-opened bridge is 26.3 metre-long and 3.6-meter-wide, and is designed by Professor XyWeiguo from Tsinghua University in China. Its design was inspired by an ancient Chinese bridge named "Anji Bridge" in Hebei Province.

The Telangana government has decided to set up an armed "State Tiger Protection Force" (STPF) to save the Tiger population in the State. The 112-member-armed STPF will be headed by an Assistant Conservator of Forests to protect tiger population in Amarabad and Kawal Tiger Reserves. The State and Central government will share the cost of the force on 40:60 basis. The cases under the Preventive Detention Act would be registered against violators.

The Kerala Sahitya Akademi Awards for the year 2017 have been announced on 23rd January 2019. In it, 'Nireeswaran' by V.J. James has been adjudged the best novel of 2017, while Aymanam John's Ethara Characharangalude Charitra Pusthakam has secured the award for the best short story.

Aparna Kumar has become the India's first woman Indian Police Service (IPS) DIG and Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) officer to successfully complete the South Pole expedition. She unfurled the National and the ITBP flags at the South Pole on 13th January 2019 after covering 111 km of walking on the snow. Aparna will now attempt to conquer the North Pole this April.

On 26th January 2019, President Ram nath Kovind conferred the Bharat Ratna, the nation's highest civilian honour, on former President Pranab Mukherjee, along with social activist Nanaji Deshmukh (posthumous), and Assamese musician Bhupen Hazarika (posthumous). Nanaji Deshmukh was a senior RSS leader who also worked for rural development and welfare of farmers, and was considered a stalwart of the Sangh Parivar.

On 70th Republic Day parade 2019, women power displayed at Rajpath, with contingents of the Indian Navy, India Army Service Corps and a unit of Corps of Signals (transportable satellite terminal) were all led by women officers and a woman officer exhibiting stunts on bike. In it, Major Khushboo Kanwar led all-women Assam Rifles contingent has created history by participating for the first time in a Republic Day parade.

Sultan Abdullah of Pahang has been elected as the new King of Malaysia, after Malaysian King Sultan Muhammad V step down from the throne before completing his five-year tenure on 6th January 2019. Sultan Abdullah will be sworn-in as the Nation's 16th Yang di-Pertuan Agong (or head of state) in a traditional ceremony on 31st January 2019.

Atin Bandyopadhyay (85), the renowned Bengali writer, has passed away in Kolkata on 19th January, 2019. He won the 2001 Sahitya Akademi award for his compilation of short stories 'Panchashati Galpo'.

Russell Baker (93), the two-time Pulitzer Prize-winning author has passed away in Virginia, United States on January 21, 2019. He won Pulitzers in 1979 for the 'Observer', the Times column he wrote for 35 years, and in 1983 for his autobiography 'Growing Up'. It was the 1st Pulitzer for commentary awarded to a humorist.

The Airports Authority of India (AAI) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Swedish aerospace and defence company (Saab) to explore Air Traffic Management (ATM) solutions for airports operating under the UDAN regional connectivity scheme.

Scientists from Ulsan National Institute of Science and Technology (UNIST) in South Korea have developed a system that can produce electricity and hydrogen fuel from carbon dioxide. The Hybrid Na-CO₂ system can continuously produce electrical energy and hydrogen through efficient carbon dioxide (CO₂) conversion with stable operation for over 1,000 hours.

Naomi Osaka from Japan has won the women's singles 2019 Australian Open Tennis Tournament. She beat Czech Petra Kvitova in a seesaw Australian Open final by 7-6 (7-2) 5-7 6-4 to win back-to-back Grand Slams and become the new World No.1. Osaka is known for her multi-ethnic background and her shy, candid personality.

The Southern Railway has bagged the number one position for cleanliness in the country. This achievement was under the category of other than Premium Category trains in the recent Trains Cleanliness Survey conducted by IRCTC on all India level. During the year 2018, Southern Railway's gross earnings also stood at more than Rs six thousand

crores rupees which is almost 10% higher than the last year earnings. To cater to the growing demands of passengers, Southern Railway has also introduced 54 trains over past four years.

Kartik Sharma from India has won the New South Wales men's Amateur Golf Championship in Australia. Kartik notched up a magnificent win over Australia's Nathan Barberie in the scheduled 36-hole final to emerge as champion.

The South Asian Nitrogen Hub (SANH) is a major international research programme to tackle the challenge that nitrogen pollution poses for environment, food security, human health and the economy in South Asia. The SANH will be established with funding from UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) under its Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF).

The Indian Railways has named the indigenously manufactured Train 18 as Vande Bharat Express. The train is set to run between Delhi and Varanasi at a maximum speed of 160 kmph. The 16-coach train is designed and manufactured by the Chennai-based Integral Coach Factory (ICF) at a cost of approx Rs 97 crore. It is regarded as a successor to the 30-year-old Shatabdi Express.

Oxford dictionaries have declared "Nari Shakti" as the Hindi word for the year 2018. The announcement was made during a session at the ongoing Jaipur Literature Festival (JLF) at the Diggi Palace. According to the Oxford dictionaries, the word has been derived from Sanskrit and is used today to symbolise women "taking charge of their lives".

The Government of Pakistan has recently declared sugarcane juice as the 'national drink' of the country. The announcement came after the government conducted a Twitter poll where people were asked to decide on the country's national drink with two other options – orange and carrot – besides sugarcane. According to the poll, 7,616 people or 81% cast their votes favouring sugarcane juice, 15% voted for orange juice while 4% chose carrot. Upon securing majority votes, sugarcane juice was declared as the 'national drink' of Pakistan.

Jayant Kaikini, renowned Kannada poet short-story writer, columnist and playwright and lyricist, has won the prestigious 2018 DSC Prize for South Asian Literature for 'No Presents Please: Mumbai Stories' at the Tata Steel Kolkata Literary Meet. The novel is a collection of short stories set in Mumbai dating back to the 1980s.

Novak Djokovic from Serbia defeated Rafael Nadal to win his 7th Australian Open Men's Singles title at Melbourne on 28th January 2019. The resurgent world No.1 outplayed the second-ranked Nadal 6-3, 6-2, 6-3 in a largely one-sided match. With this, Djokovic has surpassed American legend Pete Sampras to elevate himself to outright third on the all-time Grand Slam title leaderboard.

Malaysia has been stripped of the right to host the 2019 World Para Swimming Championships for threatening to refuse to allow Israeli athletes to take part.

On 27th January 2019, Ace shuttler Saina Nehwal won her first Indonesia Masters title after three-time world champion Carolina Marin of Spain limped out of the final due to a leg injury in Jakarta. Marin was leading 10-4 in the first game when she developed an injury in the knee.

In New Delhi, the Union Human Resources Development (HRD) Ministry signed an agreement with Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) for India's Participation in Programme for International Student Assessment- PISA 2021. The student assessment by PISA will ensure learning outcome through education.

Dr. Poonam Khetrapal Singh has been appointed the South-East Asia regional director of the World Health Organization (WHO) for a second five-year term. Under her leadership, the Region has made remarkable progress.

The Ministry of Defence launched a mobile app 'RDP India 2019' to let people watch highlights of the 70th Republic Day event all over the world. 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, children cultural performances, fly past and names of recipients of Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar 2019.

Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari inaugurated Atal Setu — the third Cable bridge across river Mandovi in Panaji, Goa. The new bride is four-lane and 5.1Km long, and is expected to overcome the bottlenecks and curb traffic jams at Panaji Circle and Panaji entrance.

Dhirendra Nath Chakraborty, the veteran journalist and former editor, has been conferred the Assam Republic Day Journalism Award 2019 for his lifelong contribution to journalism in the state.

Narthaki Nataraj, a renowned dancer from Tamil Nadu, has become the first Indian transgender to be honoured with Padma Shri, the third highest civilian award of India. She is a Bharatanatyam exponent and specializes in the Thanjavur-based Nayaki Bhava tradition. Born in the temple town of Madurai, Nataraj learned the art under Tanjore Shri K P Kittappa Pillai.

Insurance regulator IRDAI has constituted a committee that will not only facilitate in identifying the Systemically Important Insurers (SIIs), but also recommend enhanced supervision measures for them. The committee headed by IRDAI member (finance and investment) Pravin Kutumbe will submit its report within six months.

Suman Kumari has become the first Hindu woman in Pakistan to be appointed as a civil judge after passing an examination for induction of judicial officers. She hails from Qambar-Shahdadkot & will serve in her native district. Suman passed her LLB examination from Hyderabad and did her masters in law from Karachi's Szabist University.

On 28th January 2019, Tamil Nadu was declared the 'Best State Overall' for its active participation in the national campaign 'Swasth Bharat Yatra'. The campaign was a 100-day consumer outreach programme of the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), which was launched on 16th October 2018 to amplify its Eat Right India initiative.

On the occasion of 70th Republic Day 2019, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath announced the launch of the 'YuvaSwabhimanYojana' for youths from the Economically Weaker Sections (EWSs) in urban areas. The purpose of the scheme is to empower the unemployed youth candidates.

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has recently announced to launch "Jeevan Sampark" project in partnership with UNICEF India to generate awareness about the development and welfare initiatives of state government among the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTG) of the state.

As per latest report of the World Steel Association (WSA), China is the largest producer of crude steel accounting for more than 51% of production. While, India has replaced Japan as world's second largest steel producing country.

On 29th January, the 8-member Lokpal search panel hold its first meeting to select members of anti-corruption ombudsman Lokpal. The committee, headed by former Supreme Court judge Ranjana Prakash Desai, is understood to have discussed modalities related to the appointments of the chief and members of Lokpal.

The 3rd International Stock Taking Conference on Tiger Conservation was held in New Delhi on January 28, 2019. The 2-day conference was hosted by the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) in close collaboration with the Global Tiger Forum (GTA) which is an International, Intergovernmental Organization for conserving tigers in the world.

The Delhi government has decided to provide the Capital's farmers a Minimum Support Price (MSP) for their crops based on the recommendations of the M.S. Swaminathan Committee's report. In its 2006 report, the National Commission on Farmers' chairman Prof. M S Swaminathan suggested the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) to fix MSP at least 50% more than the weighted average cost of production.

On 26th January 2019, Nepalese batsman Rohit Paudel created history by becoming the youngest player in men's international cricket to hit a half-century surpassing the likes of batting legends Sachin Tendulkar (in Tests) and Shahid Afridi (in ODIs). He accomplished the feat in the 2nd ODI against the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in Dubai at the age of 16 years and 146 days.

India received the Award of Excellence for 'Best in Show' at the recently concluded New York Times Travel Show (NYTT – 2019). It is the largest travel show in North America which is held from 25th – 27th January at the Jacob K Javits Centre in New York, United States.

The Maharashtra government has launched a special scheme to curb infant deaths. The scheme is applicable only for the first child and will benefit around four lakh women across the state, Women. Each kit contains a blanket, a small mattress, a towel, a thermometer, baby oil, shampoo, toys, nail-cutter, gloves and socks among other things.

First time in the history of Kumbh, UP State government's cabinet meeting was held at Prayagraj Kumbh on 29th of January 2019. It is also 2nd time in the history of UP that cabinet meeting held outside the state capital. Here, the State cabinet decided to construct 600 km long Ganga Expressway from Meerut to Prayagraj with a cost of Rs. 36000 crores to provide better connectivity from Western districts to Prayagraj.

IMPORTANT DAYS

Global Family Day – January 1

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas or NRI Day - January 9

This day also commemorates the return of Mahatma Gandhi from South Africa to Mumbai on 9 January, 1915.

Death anniversary of Lal Bahadur Shastri – January 11

He was the second Prime Minister of Independent India. Due to cardiac arrest he died on 11 January, 1966.

National Youth Day - January 12

The birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda is celebrated as National Youth Day every year on 12 January. He was born on 12 January, 1863.

Indian Army Day - January 15

M Cariappa took over as the first Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army.

Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Jayanti – January 23

National Girl Child Day – January 24

National Voter's Day – January 25

In 2011 first time this day was celebrated to mark Election Commission's Foundation Day.

National Tourism Day – January 25

Republic Day – January 26

Martyrs Day – January 30

World Leprosy Eradication Day – January 30