



Monthly Current Affairs

January 2019 RRB/SSC JE



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January-2019

Dear readers,

This **Monthly GK Digest** is a complete docket of important news and events that occurred in a month of **January 2019**. This file is important for upcoming RRB/SSC JE and all other competitive exams.

Important Dates

1. The Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO) day celebrated every year on **1st January**.
Note: The DRDO was established in 1958 with just 10 laboratories to enhance the research work in defence sector. According to DRDO Chairman Dr G Satheesh Reddy, the country is self-reliant in areas of missiles, radars, sonars and torpedoes and many other systems. The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) is an agency of the Republic of India, charged with the military's research and development, headquartered in New Delhi, India.
2. The World Braille Day is observed across the world every year on **4th January**.
Note: Braille was the inventor of Braille script or Braille code, used by people who are visually impaired. Braille users can read computer screens and other electronic supports thanks to refreshable braille displays. People can write braille with the original slate and stylus or type it on a braille writer, such as a portable braille notetaker (or computer) that prints with a braille embosser.
3. The World Hindi day being celebrated across the world every year on **10th January**.
Note: Hindi is the fourth most spoken language in the world. The first World Hindi Conference was organized in Nagpur on 10th January 1975. The National Hindi Divas is being observed on 14th September every year across India.
4. National Youth Day (Yuva Diwas) is celebrated in India on **12th January**.
Note: According to Ramakrishna Mission, the theme for 2019 is "Youth and Nation Building". Jharkhand Chief Minister Raghubar Das has unveiled the tallest bronze statue of Swami Vivekanand at Ranchi Lake. Renowned sculptor and a recipient of Padma Bhushan Ram V Sutar has designed the 33 feet bronze figurine at a whopping cost of Rs. 15 crores.
5. Three states (**Manipur, Meghalaya and Tripura**) have celebrated their statehood day on 21st January.
Note: On this day in 1972, all the three states became full-fledged states under the North Eastern Region (Reorganisation) Act, 1971.
6. The 71st Army Day is being celebrated formally with an annual parade at the Cariappa Parade Ground in **New Delhi**.
Note: Army Day is celebrated on **15th January** every year to mark the day when (then) **Lieutenant General KM Popularly known as "Kipper"**, KM Cariappa was the first Indian commander-in-chief of the Indian Army. The day is celebrated to **pay homage**, salute to the courageous and brave Indian soldiers who have been sacrificing their lives for protecting the country.
7. Four-day festival is being celebrated in Tamil Nadu and the Indian Union Territory of Puducherry--**Pongal**.
Note: It marks the first day of the auspicious month in Tamil calendar, "Thai." People decked up their homes early in the morning with colourful "kolam's" or rangoli's in view of Pongal. The day marks the start of the sun's six-month-long journey northwards (the Uttarayanam).
8. The National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) is celebrating its 14th Raising Day -- **19th Jan**.
Note: NDRF was raised on 19th January 2006, as a specialized force capable of responding to any type of disaster in the country and abroad. The National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) is a specialized force constituted "for the purpose of specialist response to a threatening disaster situation or disaster" under the Disaster Management Act, 2005.
9. The National girl child day is celebrated every year on -- **24th January**.
Note: The theme this year is 'Empowering Girls for a Brighter Tomorrow'. The Women and Child Development Ministry has organized an event in Delhi to observe the anniversary of 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' scheme. Women and Child Development Minister Maneka Gandhi will be the Chief Guest. This mission raises awareness among

people all over the country about the importance of girl's promotion.

10. The 'Anti-Leprosy Day' observed every year on the Martyrdom Day of -- **Mahatma Gandhi**.

Note: A campaign Leprosy Awareness Campaign 'Spash' has been organized in all the Gram Sabhas throughout the country by the Central Leprosy Division of the Health Ministry. The campaign carries the important information about the disease to help affected people.

11. Uttar Pradesh is celebrating its 69th foundation day on **24th January**.

Note: To celebrate the occasion the main function was organized at Awadh Shilp Gram in Lucknow. Uttar Pradesh was earlier known as United Province but through a Gazette notification, it got its name of Uttar Pradesh on January 24, 1950.

12. India is celebrating National Voters Day across the country -- **25th January**.

Note: This year, India marks the 9th edition of the National Voters Day. The Indian Election Commission was set up on January 25, 1950. Therefore, since 2011, it has been decided to celebrate National Voters Day on this day.

13. Himachal Pradesh is celebrating its 49th Statehood Day -- 25th Jan,

Note: On 18 December 1970 the State of Himachal Pradesh Act was passed by Parliament and the new state came into being on 25 January 1971 making it the 18th state of India. S. Parmar became the state's first chief minister.

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Obituaries

1. Veteran actor-writer **Kader Khan** passed away in Canada due to prolonged illness.

Note: Mr. Khan made his acting debut in 1973 with Rajesh Khanna's "Daag" and has featured in over 300 films. He wrote dialogues for over 250 movies. His films with Desai include "Dharam Veer", "Ganga Jamuna Saraswati", "Coolie", "Desh Premee", "Suhaag",

"Parvarish" and "Amar Akbar Anthony" and films with Mehra include "Jwalamukhi", "Sharaabi", "Lawaaris", "Muqaddar Ka Sikandar".

2. Sachin Tendulkar's childhood coach cricket coach passed away due to age-related ailments in Mumbai -- **Ramakant Achrekar**.

- Note:** Besides Tendulkar, he also coached some prominent players in Vinod Kambli, Pravin Amre, Sameer Dighe and Balwinder Singh Sandhu. He was bestowed with country's fourth highest civilian award Padma Shri (in 2010) and Dronacharya Award (for Outstanding Coaches in Sports and Games) in 1990.
3. Veteran Kannada actor passed away at a private hospital in Bengaluru -- **C H Lokanath**.
Note: Lokanath was in the Kannada film industry for nearly six decades and was affectionately addressed as 'Uncle Lokanath' by his fans. His famous movies are Bhootayyana Maga Ayyu, Minchina Ota, Nagarahaavu, Nodi Swami Navidru Heege, Katha Sangama and Kittu Puttu.
 4. Renowned Bengali writer passes away due to age-related ailments -- **Dibyendu Palit**.
Note: Palit was conferred the Sahitya Akademi for his novel 'Anubhab' in 1998. He was awarded the 'Bankim Purashkar' for 'Dheu' (in 1990) and 'Ananda Purashkar' (in 1984) for 'Sahojodha'.
 5. Banker-turned politician AAP leader passed away due to illness -- **Meera Sanyal**.
Note: She had joined the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) after quitting her job as the country chief executive (CEO) of Royal Bank of Scotland. She contested the Lok Sabha election unsuccessfully in 2014 from Mumbai South constituency. Sanyal also authored a book entitled 'The Big Reverse: How Demonetization Knocked India Out'.
 6. The world's oldest man **Masazo Nonaka (Japan)** passed away in the north of Japan's Hokkaido island at the age of 113.
Note: According to the Kyodo News agency, Nonaka, who was officially recognized as the oldest male in the world by Guinness World Records last April. The record-holder Masazo Nonaka was born in 1905 in the town of Ashoro.
 7. The Pulitzer Prize-winning American poet **Mary Oliver** passed away at her home in Florida, USA.
Note: Oliver (author of more than 15 poetry and essay collections) wrote brief, direct pieces that sang of her worship of the outdoors and disdain for greed, despoilment and other human crimes. Mary Jane was an American poet who won the National Book Award and the Pulitzer Prize.
 8. Senior Congress leader and former chairman of Maharashtra Legislative Council passed away in Mumbai -- **Shivajirao Deshmukh**.
Note: Deshmukh had served as the Revenue Minister in the Vasantsada Patil government from 1976-85.
 9. Noted Malayalam director & screenwriter **Lenin Rajendran** passed away in Chennai.
Note: He was a five-time recipient of the Kerala State Film Awards and received the International Federation of Film Critics Award for the best Malayalam film for his film 'Makaramanju'. He was also chairman of the Kerala State Film Development Corporation.
 10. **Pocharam Srinivas Reddy** has been unanimously elected as the Speaker of Telangana.
Note: Srinivas Reddy is a veteran Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) leader. Pro-tem speaker Mumtaz Ahmed Khan formally declared Mr Reddy elected as the Speaker of the Assembly. Speaker of the Legislative Assembly is a title commonly held by presiding officers of parliamentary bodies styled legislative assemblies.
 11. Former president of Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) **Vishnu Hari Dalmia** passed away in Delhi.
Note: Mr. Dalmia played a crucial role in the Ram Janambhumi agitation. He had also served as 'Prabandh Nyasi' (managing trustee) of Sri Krishna Janmasthan Mathura. The Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) is an Indian right-wing Hindu nationalist organisation based on the ideology of Hindutva.
 12. Renowned Lingayat seer popularly known as 'walking God' **Shivakumar Swami** passes away at Tumakuru, Karnataka.
Note: Shivakumara Swami was born on 1st April 1907 in Veerapura village of Ramanagara, Karnataka. Shivakumar Swami supervised the growth of Siddaganga by expanding the number of educational institutions of the Mutt from 4 (in 1940) to over 70 at present in Karnataka.
 13. Former India hockey player **Raghibir Singh Bhola** passed away recently.
Note: Bhola represented India in the **1956 Melbourne** (winning gold) and **1960 Rome Olympics** (winning silver medals), respectively for the country. He was two-time Olympic medallist, Arjuna awardee and a passionate field hockey player.
 14. Senior journalist **Gopinath Kochattil** passed away at his residence in Kochi.
Note: He authored 'Njaan Kanda Europe' one of the earliest travelogues in Malayalam. Kochattil worked for several publications including Patriot, Morning Post, Hong Kong Standard, South China Morning Post and

Deccan Herald. He served as the executive director of the online wing of Kerala Kaumudi.

15. Legendary Hindi writer **Krishna Sobti** passed away in Delhi.

Note: Sobti began her writings in poetry and then went on to write fiction which won her several awards. Sobti was awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1980 and the Jnanpith award in 2017 for her contribution to Indian literature. Sobti has also received the Shiromani Award in 1981 and Hindi Academy Award in 1982.

16. The Pulitzer Prize-winning writer who penned thousands of columns for The New York Times, passed away -- **Russell Baker**.

Note: Russell Baker won the Pulitzer Prize for commentary in 1979. It was the first Pulitzer for commentary awarded to a humorist.

17. Oscar-winning French composer **Michel Legrand** passed away.

Note: Legrand wrote over 200 film and TV scores, as well as songs (Known for his often jazz-tinged music). Michel Legrand won three Oscars and five Grammys during a career spanning more than half a century. In 1969, he won the first Oscar for the song 'The Windmills of Your Mind' from the film 'The Thomas Crown Affair'. This was followed with Oscars for his music for 'Summer of '42' (in 1972) and for 'Yentl' (in 1984).

18. Former Defence Minister **George Fernandes** passed away in New Delhi.

Note: Mr Fernandes also served as Union Minister for Railways, Communications and Industry. He was elected to the Lok Sabha nine times and once to the Rajya Sabha. As President of the All India Railwaymen's Federation, he led the Railway strike involving 1.5 million workers (in 1974), resulting in thousands being sent to jail.

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New Appointments

1. **Justice T B N Radhakrishnan** sworn in as the first Chief Justice of the Telangana High Court.

Note: Telangana and Andhra Pradesh Governor E.S.L. Narasimhan administered oath of office to him. As per the notification, 12 judges in over 360 districts have been allotted to the new Telangana state. Andhra Pradesh High Court got over 500 district and civil judges as the two high courts began functioning as separate entities today onwards.

2. The Union government has appointed interim chairman of Life Insurance Corporation's (LIC) -- **Hemant Bhargava**.

Note: He replaced V K Sharma who retired on 31st Dec 2018. Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) is an Indian state-owned insurance group and investment company headquartered in Mumbai. LIC's slogan 'Yogakshemam Vahaamyaham' is in Sanskrit which loosely translates into English as "Your welfare is our responsibility"

3. General Manager of South-Central Railway (SCR) **Vinod K. Yadav** has been appointed as the Chairman of Railway Board.
Note: Mr. Yadav succeeds Ashwani Lohani (retired on 31st Jan 2018). The Railway Board is the **apex body** of the Indian Railways. It reports to the Parliament of India through the Ministry of Railways headed by the Railway Minister of India.
4. **Saurabh Kumar** has been appointed as the Director General of Ordnance Factories (DGOF) and chairman of the Ordnance Factory Board (OFB).
Note: Ordnance Factories Board (OFB) consisting of the Indian Ordnance Factories is an industrial organization, functioning under the Department of Defence Production of Ministry of Defence, Government of India. OFB comprises 41-Ordnance Factories, 9- Training Institutes, 3-Regional Marketing Centres and 4- Regional Controllerates of Safety, which are spread across the country.
5. Indian-American **K P George** takes oath as the **Fort Bend County Judge** in Texas.
Note: Indian-American KP George (53-years) has been sworn in as the Fort Bend County Judge, becoming the first person from the community to hold the office of one of America's most diverse counties. The Fort Bend County in Texas has a sizeable population of Indian-Americans.
6. The chief of staff of the US Department of Defence **Kevin Sweeney** has announced his resignation from the post.
Note: Defense Secretary Chief of Staff Kevin Sweeney served in this role since January 2017. The move comes a month after the Defence Secretary James Mattis announced his departure in December 2018. In general, a chief of staff provides a buffer between a chief executive and that executive's direct-reporting team.
7. **Sheikh Hasina** took oath as Prime Minister of **Bangladesh** for the third consecutive term.
Note: President Mohammad **Abdul Hamid** has administered the oath of office to the Ministers at Bangabhaban. Recently, Awami League and its allies secured 288 seats out of elections held for 299-member Parliament.
8. President **Ram Nath Kovind** has nominated Justice **AK Sikri** as Executive Chairman of **National Legal Services Authority (NALSA)**.
Note: He will be replacing Justice Madan B Lokur. The National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) has been constituted under the **Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987** to provide free Legal Services to the weaker sections of the society.
9. **Kumar Rajesh Chandra** has been appointed as the director general of the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB).
Note: Currently, He is the director general of the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS). Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB), in English the Armed Border Force (rarely translated into English in Indian usage), is one of India's Central Armed Police Forces. The SSB has about 80,000 personnel, guards India's borders with Nepal and Bangladesh.
10. **Gita Gopinath** has joined **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** as its chief economist(11th).
Note: She has first woman to hold the top IMF post. Gopinath succeeds Maurice (Maury) Obstfeld (retired on 31st December) as Economic Counsellor and Director of the IMF's Research Department. The Economic Counsellor of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) is also the Director of the Fund's Research Department and is responsible for providing independent advice to the Fund on its policy issues.
11. The World Bank President **Jim Yong Kim** will step down from his position on 1st February 2019.
Note: According to World Bank statement, he will join a firm and focus on increasing infrastructure investments in developing countries. The President is the head of World Bank Group, responsible for chairing the meetings of the Boards of Directors and for overall management of the World Bank Group.
12. Opposition leader of Congo **Felix Tshisekedi** has won the long-delayed **presidential election**.
Note: Tshisekedi has won with 38.57% of more than 18 million ballots cast. If Tshisekedi's victory is confirmed by the constitutional court, Democratic Republic of Congo will see its first peaceful democratic transfer of power since independence from Belgium in 1960.
13. **Nicolás Maduro** sworn in for a second term as **Venezuela's** president.
Note: Thousands of spectators gathered for the ceremony in Caracas, including Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega, and president of Bolivia Evo Morales. The President of Venezuela leads the National Executive of the Venezuelan government and is the commander-in-chief of the National Bolivarian Armed Forces.
14. President of the Indian Weightlifting Federation (IWF) has been named Chef de Mission for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics -- **Birendra Prasad Baishya**.

- Note:** It is for the first time that the Weightlifting has been accorded with the honour of Chef de Mission for the Olympics. Baishya is also one of the Indian Olympic Association Vice Presidents.
15. India's largest IT services company **Tata Consultancy Services** has appointed as an Additional and Independent Director-- **Daniel Hughes Callahan**.
Note: He was the Chief Administrative Officer (CEO) and Head of Operations and Technology at Citi group and was a member of Citi's Operating Committee until November 2018. Callahan has broad experience in driving strategic change across large global organisations and dealing with multiple stakeholders in local and national governments and regulatory bodies.
16. Ashoka Chawla has resigned as chairman of the National Stock Exchange of India Ltd (NSE).
Note: Earlier, Ashok Chawla stepped down from the post of non-executive Chairman of Yes Bank. The National Stock Exchange of India Limited (NSE) is the leading stock exchange of India, located in Mumbai. NSE (established in 1992) was the first exchange in the country to provide a modern, fully automated screen-based electronic trading system.
17. **Su Tseng-chang** has been appointed as the Prime Minister of Taiwan.
Note: Su is a former premier appointed in 2006 by then-President Chen Shui-bian. She was a chairman of Tsai's Democratic Progressive Party for two terms.
18. The Greece Defence Minister has announced his resignation from Alexis Tsipras's coalition government -- **Panos Kammenos**.
Note: The Union Minister had announced his resignation ahead of an upcoming parliamentary vote to end a 27-year name dispute with Macedonia. For the Greeks, Macedonia is the name of a history-rich northern province that was the cradle of Alexander the Great's ancient empire
19. Senior IAS officer **Jaideep Govind** has been appointed as the Secretary General (15th) of National Human Rights Commission.
Note: Earlier, he was posted as Special Secretary and Financial Adviser in the Ministries of Rural Development, Panchayati Raj, Drinking Water and Sanitation. The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) of India is an autonomous public body constituted on 12 October 1993 under the Protection of Human Rights Ordinance of 28 September 1993.
20. **Dr. Rattan Lal** will be the recipient of the 2019 Japan Prize for his contributions in the field of 'Biological Production, Ecology'.
Note: Dr. Rattan Lal is the University Professor of Soil Science at The Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio, U.S. Dr. Yoshio Okamoto will be the recipient of the 2019 Japan Prize on of "Materials and Production" field. The Japan Prize recognizes scientists and engineers from around the world for original and outstanding achievements that "not only contribute to the advancement of science and technology, but also promote peace and prosperity for all mankind.
21. The International Cricket Council (ICC) has appointed media professional **Manu Sawhney** as its new chief executive officer (CEO).
Note: He is replacing incumbent David Richardson, who will step down at the end of this summer's ODI World Cup in England. Sawhney is the former CEO of Singapore Sports Hub and Managing Director of ESPN Star Sports.
22. Senior Congress leader **C.P Joshi** elected as speaker of the 15th Rajasthan Assembly.
Note: Rajasthan Governor Kalyan Singh administered the oath of office. Mr. Joshi has been elected from the Nathdwara assembly constituency. Speaker of the Legislative Assembly is a title commonly held by presiding officers of parliamentary bodies styled legislative assemblies.
23. **Prabhat Singh** has been appointed as Director General (Investigation) in the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC),
Note: Currently Prabhat Singh is Special Director, Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF).
24. Justice Asif Saeed Khosa took oath as the 26th Chief Justice of **Pakistan**.
Note: President Arif Alvi administered oath to the new Chief Justice who took office after the retirement of Chief Justice Saqib Nisar. Justice Khosa studied at the University of the Punjab and Cambridge University. The Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) is the head of the court system of Pakistan (the judicature branch of government) and the chief judge of the Supreme Court of Pakistan.
25. **Andry Rajoelina** has been sworn in as President of Madagascar at the capital city of Antananarivo.
Note: High Constitutional Court had declared him as the winner with 55.66% of the votes. The oath-taking ceremony was attended by a delegation from 35

countries and international organizations. It is the first time in the history of the country since its independence that a democratic power transfer and a peaceful power transition took place between two elected Presidents.

26. Piyush Goyal has been appointed as the interim finance minister, with Arun Jaitley undergoing surgery in the US. **Note:** Currently the minister for railways and coal, Goyal will also be interim minister for corporate affairs, the Arun Jaitley will remain a minister without portfolio.

27. Sultan Abdullah has been named as the Malaysia's new king.

Note: The leaders of Malaysia's royal houses, known as the Conference of Rulers, elected the 59-year-old Sultan Abdullah to a five-year term under a system of rotational monarchy that is unique to Malaysia.

28. Christophe Joseph Marie Dabiré has been appointed as the new Prime Minister of **Burkina Faso**.

Note: Dabiré, a former commissioner representing Burkina Faso at the West African Economic and Monetary Union, served as a minister under former president Blaise Compaoré, with Roch Marc Christian Kaboré as prime minister between 1994 to 1996.

29. Poonam Khetrapal Singh has been appointed as the Regional Director of World Health Organization (WHO) South-East Asia.

Note: She is the first woman to become regional director of WHO South-East Asia Region. Dr Khetrapal Singh started her five-year term as Regional Director on 1 February 2014.

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Important News - India

1. Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) has launched Samwad with Students as part of its outreach programme in Bengaluru.

Note: 40 students and 10 teachers from select schools interacted with ISRO Chairman Dr. K Sivan about the Indian Space Programme and their benefits to the common man. During the three-hour stay at ISRO Head office, the students and teachers also interacted with scientists and engineers. The Indian Space agency will

engage youngsters across the country in activities concerning space science under this programme.

2. The Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) loan subsidy for middle-income group has been extended till 31st March 2020.

Note: Around **one lakh beneficiaries** have taken benefit of the scheme so far. Under PMAY, **68.7 lakh houses** have been sanctioned, **37 lakh houses** have been grounded and **13.5 lakh** have been completed and handed over. More than **6 thousand 9 hundred**

- core rupees** interest subsidy on housing loans have been disbursed to over 3.14 lakh beneficiaries of Credit Linked Subsidy Scheme CLSS under **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana** (Urban).
3. The union Minister **Maneka Gandhi** conferred National Awards to 97 Anganwadi workers for their exceptional achievements for the year 2017-18 in New Delhi
Note: The award is given to motivate the Anganwadi workers and recognize their exemplary services in the field of child development and related areas under the Integrated Child Development Services Scheme. From this year, the cash prize of the national level has been increased from 25,000 rupees to 50,000 rupees. State level award comprises of a cash prize of 10,000 rupees.
 4. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated the Indian Science Congress-2019 (106th edition) in **Jalandhar**.
Note: The theme of this five-day mega event is '**Future India: Science and Technology**'. The Prime Minister addressed about 30,000 delegates, including Nobel laureates, eminent scientists, policymakers, young researchers and school children, from across the country and abroad. Eminent personalities from DRDO, ISRO, AIIMS, UGC, AICTE and many elite universities of the country, USA, UK, and other countries are participating. Indian Science Congress Association (ISCA) is a premier scientific organization of India with headquarters at Kolkata, West Bengal.
 5. The Information and Broadcasting Secretary Amit Khare has inaugurated the ten-days Indian Panorama Film Festival in **New Delhi**.
Note: A total of 26 Feature Films and 21 Non-Feature Films will be screened during the festival. The film festival is being organized by the Directorate of Film Festivals, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. All the films selected under the Indian Panorama section in the 49th International Film Festival of India will be screened during the Festival.
 6. The **Union HRD Ministry** has constituted a task force under the Chairmanship of Psychiatrist, Dr Jitendra Nagpal to look the issues of suicides of the students in **Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas (JNV)**.
Note: According to the report, around 49 students of the residential Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas committed suicide between 2013 and 2017.
 7. The Union HRD Minister Prakash Javadekar has inaugurated the nine-day World Book fair (27th) in **New Delhi**.
Note: This year's theme is 'Books for Readers with Special Needs' and Sharjah is the 'guest of honours' country. More than 600 publishers will display books at more than 1350 stalls at the fair. The World Book Fair is organized every year by the National Book Trust and India Trade Promotion Organization (ITPO).
 8. The Union Government allocates Rs 10,900 crores for development of 40 satellite launch vehicles in next **4 years**.
Note: Chandrayan Mission will be launched within three months. It will land in one part of the Moon which is still unexplored. The human space flight Gaganyaan is planned to be launched by 2022 (the 75th anniversary of Independence).
 9. The food businesses need to comply with new packaging regulations that bar use of recycled plastics and newspapers to wrap food articles by **1st July 2019**.
Note: The new packaging regulations would raise the bar of food safety in India to the next level. The new regulations prohibit packaging material made of recycled plastics including carry bags for packaging, storing, carrying or dispensing articles of food.
 10. The North Central Railway (NCR) '**Rail Kumbh Seva Mobile App**' has launched a mobile application to help people navigate through Prayagraj city during Kumbh Mela.
Note: It will also provide information regarding all the 'Mela special' trains that will be run during the period. Through this app, the users will not only get to know their current location but will also be able to reach to all railway stations, the mela zone, major hotels, bus stations and other facilities within Prayagraj.
 11. Prime Minister of Norway **Erna Solberg** arrived in New Delhi on a three-day state visit to India.
Note: The Norwegian Prime Minister will participate in the Indo-Norwegian Business Conference. The visit of Prime Minister of Norway will provide an opportunity to review the progress in bilateral cooperation between the two countries. India and Norway enjoy close and multifaceted ties and economic and technical cooperation are important facets of the bilateral relation.
 12. The Union government will soon make it mandatory for linking Aadhaar with **driving license**.
Note: At present, the guilty person who causes an accident flees the scene and gets a duplicate license which helps him go scot-free. Digital profile of India -- Aadhaar cards (123 crore), mobile phones (121 crore), smart phones (44.6 crore), internet users (around 56 crore), there has been 51% growth in e-commerce. Digital payment transactions in the country have increased manifold to over 2,070 crore rupees in 2017-18.
 13. The Union Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh Puri has launched nationwide cleanliness survey -- **Swachh Survekshan 2019**.
Note: The Union Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh Puri has launched the 'Swachh Survekshan 2019', the fourth edition of the annual nationwide cleanliness survey of urban India in New

- Delhi. It is a part of the 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan', the Swachh Survekshan 2019 aims to evaluate the achievements in the cleanliness level in urban areas of the country. It will encourage large-scale citizen participation, ensure sustainability of initiatives taken towards garbage free and open defecation free cities, and will provide credible outcomes.
- 14.** The Ministry of Road Transport & Highways has launched a portal to fully digitize and automate the entire process of land acquisition -- **Bhoomi Rashi**.
Note: With the operation of this Portal, the land acquisition process has been expedited significantly, become error-free and more transparent and the notifications at every stage are being processed on real time basis.
- 15.** The Union Minister for Textiles **Smriti Irani** has inaugurated the **Women's Science Congress** at **Jalandhar**.
Note: Women's Science Congress is a part of the 106th Indian Science Congress. The objective of the Women's Science Congress is to showcase the work of women scientists. Many leading women scientists and distinguished women from other disciplines are participating in talks and discussions in the Congress.
- 16.** The fourth edition of the Raisina Dialogue held in **New Delhi**.
Note: The theme of this year Dialogue is "A World Reorder: New Geometries; Fluid Partnerships; Uncertain Outcomes". Ministry of External Affairs in partnership with Observer Research Foundation is organizing the flagship annual geopolitical and geostrategic conference.
- 17.** The **Union Human Resource Development (HRD)** Minister **Prakash Javadekar** has announced to increase **how many seats** in Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya (JNV) for the Academic Year 2019-20 -- **5000**.
Note: This unprecedented expansion of JNVs, nearly free of cost residential schools, will provide more opportunity for talented children from rural areas to get quality education. Navodaya is the only education system in the country where students give entrance examination for admission into Class 6.
- 18.** **Airports Authority of India (AAI)** has imposed a ban on single-use plastic items at its 129 airports across the country.
Note: These steps include banning of single-use plastic items like straws, plastic cutlery, plastic plates etc. Based on a third-party assessment carried out by Quality Council of India (QCI), **16 of its airports** have been declared as **Single-Use Plastic Free**. The QCI will complete its assessment of total 34 airports, which are managed by the AAI, by **31st January 2019**.
- 19.** The Union Cabinet has approved reservation of **10%** in direct recruitments and for admission in higher educational institutions for the economically backward section in the general category.
Note: The reservation benefit is likely to be availed by those whose annual income is below Rs 8 lakh and have up to five acres of Agricultural land. The government will bring a constitutional amendment bill in Parliament, as the quota will be over and above the existing 50 per cent reservation. Articles 15 and 16 of the Constitution will have to be amended for implementation of the decision.
- 20.** The DRDO (Defence Research and Development Organisation) pavilion received 'Exhibitor of the Year Award' at 106th Indian Science Congress held in **Punjab**.
Note: DRDO was formed in 1958 from the amalgamation of the then already functioning Technical Development Establishment (TDEs) of the Indian Army and the Directorate of Technical Development & Production (DTDP) with the Defence Science Organisation (DSO).
- 21.** The Ministry of information and broadcasting has announced a hike in existing advertisement rates for print media with immediate effect -- **25%**.
Note: The decision was taken on the recommendations made by the ministry's Rate Structure Committee. The decision will benefit medium and small newspapers including a large number of papers in regional and vernacular languages. The last revision of advertisement rates was done in 2013 when an increase of 19% was announced on the 2010 rates.
- 22.** **The Union Ministry of Textiles** has launched a Yarn Bank Scheme as one of the components of PowerTex India scheme with an aim to avoid fluctuation in yarn price.
Note: Under the scheme, an interest-free corpus fund up to Rs.2.00 crore would be provided to the Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV)/Consortium formed by power loom waivers. PowerTex India is a comprehensive scheme for power loom sector development.
- 23.** Exports of jute diversified products have risen since 2014 by **24%**.
Note: The ministry is trying to connect the weavers with big companies for realising higher margins. The government is looking at ways and means to raise the income of the weavers and generate employment.
- 24.** The **Global Aviation Summit 2019** will be organized by the **Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA)** in collaboration with FICCI in **Mumbai**.
Note: The theme of the two days summit is 'Flying for all'. The objective of the summit to provide a platform to the aviation fraternity to showcase the challenges of the sector in the newly developing growth spots and

- understand how the technology-driven innovations will change the air travel in future.
25. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has launched a series of development projects worth Rs. 2900 Crores for **Agra city**.
Note: The Prime Minister dedicated to the nation 'Gangajal project' which will provide Agra with better and more assured water supply. Gangajal project aims to bring 140 cusecs of Ganga water to Agra. Prime Minister laid the foundation Stone of Integrated Command and Control Centre for Agra Smart City. In this project CCTVs will be installed throughout Agra City for monitoring and surveillance for the purpose of safety and security.
26. INDUS FOOD-II with the theme of 'World Food Supermarket' has been started at **Greater Noida**.
Note: It will promote value addition to India's agriculture exports and integrate Indian farmers and agricultural products with global value chains. INDUS FOOD is a global platform where top exporters from Food and Beverage Industry of India will be participating and buyers from across the world have been invited.
27. The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Chairman K. Siva has announced setting up of Human Space Flight Centre in **Bengaluru**.
Note: Gaganyaan project (Headed by- R. Hutton), will send three astronauts to orbit the Earth for three to seven days at about 400 kilo meters. The space agency has tied up with the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) and L&T among other firms to manufacture the industry-made PSLV launch vehicles. The Rs. 10,000-crore project is slated to happen before December 2021 and will be preceded by two unmanned trials.
28. The Union Government was an initial budget of Rs. 300 crores for the first two years -- **National Clean Air Programme (NCAP)**.
Note: The NCAP will be a mid-term, five-year action plan with 2019 as the first year. The Centre stepped up its efforts to combat air pollution by launching a five-year action plan with a tentative target of 20-30% reduction in concentrations of PM10 and PM2.5 by 2024, with 2017 as the base year. The approach for NCAP includes collaborative, multi-scale and cross-sectoral coordination between the relevant central ministries, state governments and local bodies.
29. Vice President of India M. Venkaiah Naidu has inaugurated the Partnership summit 2019 (25th edition) in **Mumbai**.
Note: New India Rising to Global Occasions is the theme of inaugural session of the Summit. The summit is expected to build new partnerships and explore investment opportunities in sectors like Artificial Intelligence, big data, food processing, defense, aeronautics, renewable energy and tourism.
30. The Election Commission panel submitted its report on digital media and campaigning during last 48 hours before polls -- **Umesh Sinha panel**.
Note: The panel was mandated to review and suggest modifications in the provisions of Section 126 of the Representation of the People Act dealing with campaigning in the last 48 hours and related provisions of the Model Code of Conduct. No campaigning is allowed in the last 48 hours so that voters can think independently. This period is also called silence period.
31. Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports, **Col Rajyavardhan Rathore** has launched the National Youth Parliament Festival 2019 in **New Delhi**.
Note: The theme of the festival is- Be the Voice of New India and Find solutions and contribute to policy. The Ministry has decided to organise the youth festival at every district of the country so that the youth (18 to 25 years) can participate and discuss and debate about how to make a New India.
32. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has released a commemorative coin of **Rs. 350** as part of the birth anniversary celebrations of Guru Gobind Singh in New Delhi.
33. The Minister of State for Railways Manoj Sinha has inaugurated the newly built broad-gauge railway line **Amb Andora and Daultpur** in Una district, Himachal Pradesh.
Note: The 16 km railway line, includes 10 bridges with no level crossing, spent around 335 core rupees. This project will not only increase the railway connectivity but also play significant role in economic development of the state.
30. Prime minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated the 15th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas at **Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh**.
Note: The theme this year is, 'Role of Indian Diaspora in building New India'. Pravasi Bhartiya Divas (PBD) is celebrated once in two years (before 2015 every year) to mark the contribution of the overseas Indian community to the development of India.
34. Prime minister inaugurated the project "Development of Spiritual Circuit: Sree Padmanabha Swamy Temple-Aranmula-Sabarimala" in **Kerala**.
Note: The project 'Development of Spiritual Circuit: Sree Padmanabhaswamy Temple-Aranmula-Sabarimala' was sanctioned by the Ministry of Tourism in 2016-17 for Rs. 92.22 Crores. Swadesh Darshan scheme is one of the flagship schemes of Ministry of tourism for development of thematic circuits in the country in a planned and prioritized.

35. Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has launched a series of projects as a part of the Tamil Nadu Defence Industrial Corridor in **Tiruchirppalli**.
Note: This will be the country's second defence industrial corridor after the first one was launched in Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh August 2018. The Tamil Nadu Defence Industrial Corridor will include Chennai, Hosur, Salem and Coimbatore, Tiruchirappalli as the nodes.
36. The Union Civil Aviation Minister Suresh Prabhu has inaugurated the two-day 'Global Aviation Summit 2019' in **Mumbai**.
Note: This will be the first-of-its-kind event in the world with participation from more than 86 countries. The Global Aviation Summit with a theme "Flying for all - especially the next 6 Billion", being organised by Ministry of Civil Aviation in association with FICCI. The objective of the Summit is to provide a platform to the aviation fraternity to discuss the challenges facing the sector in the newly developing growth spots and understand how technology-driven innovations will change air travel in the future.
37. The Union Minister for water resources and river development Shri Nitin Gadkari inaugurated the 9th International Micro irrigation conference at **Aurangabad, Maharashtra**.
Note: The theme of the three-day conference is "Micro Irrigation and Modern Agriculture". 740 delegates including 100 foreign delegates from 56 countries and as many 100 Agricultural scientists will also attend the conference. The conference aims to share experiences in the use of new technologies and best management practices in drip, micro-sprinkler, and other localized irrigation systems.
38. **Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO)** will send two unmanned mission to space in December 2010 and in July 2021.
Note: Country's first manned space flight - Gaganyaan - will send three humans into space for seven days by December 2021. ISRO's unmanned test missions for Gaganyaan in 2021 will carry humanoids not animals.
39. India DST Department of Science and Technology along with Doordarshan has launched the two-science communication initiative -- '**DD Science**' and '**India Science**'.
Note: The aim is to launch a 24/7 channel dedicated to science. The two channels will have science-based documentaries, studio-based discussions, and virtual walkthroughs of scientific institutions, interviews and short films and will be completely free to access (24/7). While DD Science is a one-hour slot on Doordarshan National channel, India Science is an internet-based science channel.
40. The Union Minister Smt. Maneka Sanjay Gandhi has inaugurated 5th Regional Centre of National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development (NIPCCD) at **Mohali, Punjab**.
Note: NIPCCD is a premier organisation devoted to promotion of voluntary action, research, training, and documentation in the overall domain of women and children development. NIPCCD already has four such Regional Centres one each at Bangalore, Guwahati, Indore and Lucknow besides the Headquarters at New Delhi.
41. The Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi dedicated to the Nation Multi-Modal Logistics Park (MMLP), at **Jharsuguda, Odisha**.
Note: The Multi-Modal Logistics Park (MMLP) at Jharsuguda is built at a cost of Rs 100 Crores. PM Modi also inaugurated a new railway line from Balangir-Bichupali built at an estimated cost of Rs. 115 crores. It will facilitate EXIM and Domestic cargo including Private Freight Traffic.
42. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated the Global Trade Show in **Gandhinagar, Gujarat**.
Note: Global Trade Show has been organized as a part of Vibrant Gujarat Global Investors Summit 2019 to be held at Mahatma Mandir in Gandhinagar, On Friday. The main theme of this edition of Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit will be "Youth Connect 2019: Shaping A New India - The Story of Billion Dreams".
43. The Union government will set up how many 'Eklavya Model Residential Schools' across the country **460**.
Note: The Centre would spend about Rs 25,000 crore towards the initiative of these schools. Eklavya Model Residential Schools have expanded into a major education system in the country after Kendriya Vidyalaya and Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas. Ekalavya Model Residential School (EMRS) is a Government of India scheme for model residential school for Indian tribals (Scheduled Tribes, ST) across India.
44. India-Myanmar bilateral army exercise 'IMBEX 2018-19' (2nd edition) commenced at Chandimandir Military Station at **Chandigarh**.
Note: The aim of this six days joint training programme is to train the Myanmar delegation for participation in United Nations peacekeeping operations under the UN flag. The exercise includes the participation of 15 officers from Myanmar Army and 15 officers from the Indian Army.
45. The Union Minister Suresh Prabhu has inaugurated the 10th edition of the India Rubber Expo - 2019 in **Mumbai**.
Note: The event offers a unique opportunity for Indian companies to meet and collaborate with overseas companies. The rubber industry will continue to grow faster, create more employment opportunities, increase

- exports and add to the economic output of India. The government is working on a comprehensive technology strategy to increase India's economy and improve ease of doing business at the micro level.
46. Dr. Jitendra Singh inaugurates ISRO's UNNATI programme in **Bengaluru**.
Note: The course will include theoretical work, as well as training on assembly, integration and testing of nano-satellites. UNNATI is an initiative by ISRO to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the first United Nations conference on the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space (UNISPACE-50).
47. **Indian Institute of Technology-Hyderabad** has announced to launch full-fledged bachelor's programme in Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology from the new academic session.
Note: IIT-H is already offering a master's in technology programme in AI-Machine Learning (ML). The B.Tech programme in AI is a step in the direction of addressing this highly skewed demand-supply scenario. The course will also focus on application verticals such as healthcare, agriculture, smart mobility, among many others.
48. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has inaugurated the country's first National Museum of Indian Cinema (NMIC) in **Mumbai**.
Note: 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 New Museum Building has four Exhibition Halls: Gandhi & Cinema, Children's Film Studio, Technology, creativity & Indian cinema and Cinema across India.
49. The 25th International conference and exhibition on terrestrial and satellite broadcasting 'BES EXPO 2019' in **New Delhi**.
Note: Around 300 companies (from 25 countries) are displaying their products at the Expo. On the occasion, an exhibitor's directory was released by the dignitaries and BES awards were presented to the winners. The Information and Broadcasting Ministry is considering bringing a new Integrated Broadcast Policy for the growing broadcasting sector in India.
50. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated the three-days 9th Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit in **Gandhinagar, Gujarat**.
Note: Vibrant Gujarat is the name given to a biennial investors' summit held by the Gujarat government. The event is aimed at bringing together business leaders, investors, corporations, thought leaders, policy and opinion makers; the summit is advertised as a platform to understand and explore business opportunities in the State of Gujarat
51. President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated the three-day Gandhian Resurgence Summit at **Prayagraj Kumbh**.
Note: About 300 Gandhians from different parts of the country and organisations are participating in the Summit. More than one thousand CCTV cameras have been installed in the Mela for the purpose. Prayagraj Kumbh 2019 will be remembered for opening of doors to Akshaya Vat (sacred tree) and Saraswati Koop (sacred well) for common men after 450 years. It was a long pending demand of the devotees.
52. The largest defence exercise coordinated by Indian Navy -- '**Sea Vigil**'.
Note: It has begun in entire 7516.6 km coastline and exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of India. It's a build-up towards the major theatre-level tri-service exercise TROPEX conducted by the Navy. Sea Vigil and TROPEX together will cover the entire spectrum of maritime security including the transition from peace to conflict.
53. India Steel 2019 Exhibition and Conference held in **Mumbai**.
Note: The event provided an opportunity for all the stakeholders to deliberate and identify ways to contribute toward building a robust roadmap for the further growth of the steel sector. Around 10 thousand business visitors both from India and abroad are expected to visit. The event organized by the Ministry of Steel will help chart out the future growth path of the steel industry.
54. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated the Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose museum at Red Fort (in Delhi) to mark the leader's **122nd birth anniversary**.
Note: The museum showcases various artefacts related to Subhash Chandra Bose and Indian National Army. The Prime Minister also visited the Yaad-e-Jallian Museum, which provides an authentic account of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre (held on 13th April 1919). The museum also showcases the heroism, valour and sacrifices made by Indian soldiers during the World War-I.
55. AYUSH Minister Shripad Naik has inaugurated the 2nd World Integrated Medicine Forum 2019 in **Goa**.
Note: The organizers of the forum are the Central Council for Research in Homeopathy, under the Ministry of AYUSH. The regulation of homoeopathic medicinal products is highly variable worldwide. The forum will explore and illustrate the potential benefits and pitfalls of bilateral and multilateral collaboration and advance global cooperation on a synergistic basis.
56. As per Crisil report, **Bihar** state has been ranked the top state in terms of GSDP (Gross State Domestic Product) growth in financial year 2017-18.
Note: Bihar has been ranked the top state in terms of GSDP (Gross State Domestic Product) growth in

financial year 2017-18. The state has topped the list by clocking 11.3 percent GSDP growth in fiscal 2018. It was ranked at eighth spot in fiscal 2017 with 9.9 percent GSDP growth. The second spot has been secured by Andhra Pradesh, whose GSDP growth in FY18 jumped to 11.2 percent. Gujarat listed third with growth of 11.1 percent.

57. The Centre is looking at allowing non-resident Indians to subscribe to municipal bonds issued by various urban local bodies, especially for **'Swachh Bharat' projects.**

Note: The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs is currently looking at letting a part of these bonds be issued for subscription by overseas Indians, specifically for Swachh Bharat activities," according to Manoj Bharti, Additional Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs. Municipal bonds are debt obligations issued by municipal bodies and municipal corporates to fund day-to-day needs and to finance.

58. 15th Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas concludes in **Varanasi.**

Note: The theme of PBD Convention 2019 was "Role of Indian Diaspora in building New India". They will then proceed to Delhi on 25th January and witness the Republic Day Parade at New Delhi on 26th January.

59. Navy Chief Admiral Sunil Lanba today commissioned the new Naval Air Base 'INS Kohassa' at **Diglipur.**

Note: The new airbase, named 'INS Kohassa' at Diglipur, will be used to handle operations of helicopters and small aircraft like the Dornier. The airport at Diglipur will be utilized for both Defence and civil aircraft.

60. South Africa President **Cyril Ramaphosa** was the Chief Guest at the Republic Day Parade 2019.

Note: He is the second President of South Africa after Nelson Mandela to be the Chief Guest at the parade. In 2018, leaders from the 10 ASEAN nations – Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos, and Brunei – were the chief guests at Republic Day celebration.

61. Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched a 'Yojana' under which a group of Indian diaspora will be taken on a government-sponsored tour of religious places in India twice a year -- Pravasi Teerth Darshan Yojana'.

Note: Prime Minister Modi also inaugurated the Centers of Excellence at Deen Dayal Hastkala Sankul in Varanasi. He also released two books – 'Kashi: The Universe of Crafts and Textiles' and 'Indian Textiles: History, Splendour, Grandeur'.

62. Beating Retreat ceremony held at the historic **Vijay Chowk, New Delhi.**

Note: This year, 15 Military Bands, 15 Pipes and Drums Bands from Regimental Centres and Battalions are participating in Beating the Retreat ceremony. The 'Beating Retreat' ceremony is held here every year on 29th January, marking the culmination of the four-day-long Republic Day celebrations. The ceremony traces its origins to the early 1950s when Major Roberts of the Indian Army developed the unique ceremony of display by the massed bands.

63. **BSNL** has partnered with French company Be-Bound to offer data connectivity through SMS in areas where there is no Internet connectivity or signal breaks.

Note: Both the companies signed a business partnership agreement to jointly market the service in India. The technology will be embedded in mobile apps. The app will send a command to Be-Bound server in case it does not get data connectivity for SMS-based connectivity. "Be-Bound server will facilitate SMS connectivity after getting a command from the app

64. Director General of Ministry of Tourism Shri Satyajeet Rajan has inaugurated the six-day cultural extravaganza Bharat Parv (4th edition) in **Delhi.**

Note: The objective of the event is to generate a patriotic mood, promote the rich cultural diversity of the country and to ensure wider participation of the general public. The Bharat Parv is also hosting Theme State Pavilions where each State showcases its strength along with its tourism products.

65. Ministry of Defence has launched a mobile app with the intent of making available the highlights of the Republic Day event New Delhi -- RDP India 2019'.

Note: It is a new initiative in sync with the Digital India campaign of the Government. It also includes 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.

66. The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Ropar has developed an Android app -- **Roshni.**

Note: It would help the Visually Impaired to recognise currency notes in Chandigarh. The Roshni app can recognise both old and new notes and gives audio information as to which note you are holding in your hands.

67. India's fastest indigenous train which will run from Delhi to Varanasi has been named as -- '**Vande Bharat Express**'.

Note: It is a train built completely in India by Indian engineers in a span of 18 months and it is an example that it is possible to make world-class trains under Make in India. The 16-coach train has been built by the Integral Coach Factory, Chennai and cover the distance in 8 hours. The train will be fully air-conditioned and will stop at Kanpur and Allahabad.

68. The HRD Ministry has signed an agreement with Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) for India's Participation in -- **Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2021.**

Note: The student assessment by PISA will ensure learning outcome through education.

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States News

- The union Govt. has approved the additional assistance to Tamil Nadu from National Disaster Response Fund **Rs 1,146 cr.**
Note: The approval was given by a High-Level Committee chaired by Home Minister Rajnath Singh in New Delhi. Cyclone 'Gaja' had crossed the Tamil Nadu coast early on 16th November 2018. It had claimed 46 lives and left a trail of destruction in over 10 districts, including Nagapattinam, Thiruvarur, Puthukottai and Thanjavur.
- The Union Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has launched the Ujjwala Sanitary Napkin initiative in **Bhubaneswar (Odisha).**
Note: The Central scheme will be a counter to the Odisha government's Khushi scheme, in which sanitary napkins are provided free of cost to female students of government and government-aided schools in the state. In the first phase, around 100 local manufacturing units

will be set up by oil marketing companies at Common Service Centres (CSCs) across 93 blocks in all 30 districts of Odisha.

- Entire state of **Nagaland** has declared 'disturbed area' under AFSPA.
Note: AFSPA gives armed forces the power to maintain public order in "disturbed areas". The whole of state of Nagaland is in such a disturbed and dangerous condition that the use of armed forces in aid of civilian power is necessary. Armed Forces (Special Powers) Acts (AFSPA), are Acts of the Parliament of India that grant special powers to the Indian Armed Forces in which each act terms "disturbed areas".
- The West Bengal Govt. has announced two Initiatives for farmers **Krishi Krishak Bondhu.**
Note: The first of the two initiatives will provide Rs 2 lakh to the family of a deceased farmer. Under the

- second initiative, farmers would get Rs 2,500 twice a year for growing a single crop on one acre of land.
5. 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 -- **Veer Savarkar International**.
Note: For this purpose, the Superintendent of Police (CID), Andaman and Nicobar Police has been appointed as the 'Civil Authority' for the purpose of the immigration check post. Efforts are being made for the early operation of international flights from the Airport and extending facilities of e-visa and visa on arrival.
 6. **East Siang District** of Arunachal Pradesh has achieved 100% electrification under the Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana- Saubhagya Scheme -- **East Siang District**.
Note: Pasighat Electrical division has electrified 2,662 households which were earlier left out till the end of December last year. The power department has electrified 1,483 villages under Deen Dayal Upadhyaya-Gram Jyoti Yojana in the state so far.
 7. Odisha agriculture minister **Pradeep Maharathy** has resigned, after strong protests over his dismissive remarks on the acquittal of those accused in a controversial rape case of 2011.
Note: It was alleged that the accused in the case had been sheltered by Maharathy. On December 24, 2018, the court of additional district judge in Bhubaneswar had acquitted the two persons arrested in the case.
 8. **National Green Tribunal (NGT)** has imposed a fine of 100 crore rupees on Meghalaya government for its failure to curb illegal coal mining in the state.
Note: The amount of the fine must be deposited with the Central Pollution Control Board within two months. The action comes after a high-level committee submitted an adverse report to a bench headed by NGT chairperson AK Goel.
 9. On 1st January 2019, around 30 lakh Kerala women stood shoulder to shoulder to form **Vanitha Mathil(women's wall)**.
Note: The wall stretched from Kasaragod in the north to Thiruvananthapuram in the south for about 620 Kms. The event was organized by the Government of Kerala with the support of several political, religious and social groups. The event was also a counterdemonstration against the agitations preventing women of menstruating age from entering the Sabarimala shrine in violation of the Supreme Court's ruling.
 10. The state Government has planned temporary cow sheds (gaushalas) in all villages, panchayats, municipalities, nagar panchayats and municipal corporations -- **Uttar Pradesh Government**.
Note: The Uttar Pradesh cabinet approved a plan to set up and run temporary 'gauvansh ashray asthals' under the urban and rural civic bodies in order to take proper care of stray cattle.
 11. Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of revival of North Koel (Mandal Dam) project at **Palamu (Jharkhand)**.
Note: The Mandal Dam project will help around one lakh 11 thousand hectares of agricultural land in Jharkhand and Bihar to get irrigation facilities and 24 MW of electricity will also be produced.
 12. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath flagged off the direct bus services from Prayagraj to **Katra**.
Note: The service was started on the occasion when the U P State Road Transport Corporation (UPSRTC) signed an inter-state bus pact with its counterpart in J&K. Fare of these AC buses will be Rs 1,333 each. The distance of about 1,387km between Prayagraj and Katra will be covered in almost 24 hours.
 13. Tamil Nadu Youth Welfare and Sports Development Minister **Balakrishna Reddy** has resigned following a special court sentencing him to three years imprisonment.
Note: Earlier, Mr Reddy was convicted in a stone pelting case by a Chennai special court. The case relates to a demonstration in 1998 at Hosur in Krishnagiri district against illicit liquor, in which transport corporation buses were damaged.
 14. The **Odisha** Govt. has announced interest-free loans of up to Rs. 3 lakhs for six lakh women self-help groups (WSHGs).
Note: It will benefit about 70 lakh women of the state. Mr. Patnaik also distributed financial assistance of Rs. 3,000 each to six lakh WSHGs as part of the state government's efforts to digitally empower women. He also launched a scheme to distribute Rs. 15,000 seed money per group to three lakh new self-help groups. The chief minister announced incentives of Rs. 500 per month for Anganwadi workers and Rs. 200 for helpers.
 15. A project of Andhra Pradesh has entered the Guinness Book of World by pouring 32,100 cubic metres of concrete in 24 hours-- **Polavaram project**.
Note: The project beat the existing record of 21,580 cubic metres, achieved by Abdul Wahed Bin Shabib, RALS Contracting LLC and Alfa Eng. Consultant (all UAE), in Dubai (in 2017). Polavaram irrigation project is a multipurpose terminal reservoir, envisaged to cater to the irrigation needs. The representatives of Guinness Book of World Record witnessed the entire event using drone cameras.
 16. The **West Bengal** Government has announced to extend the retirement age of College-university

- professors from 62 to 65 years and Vice-Chancellors from 65 to 70 years.
- Note:** The move was aimed to utilize their services for a longer period. The West Bengal government has also taken the decision to raise the retirement age of Vice-Chancellors from 65 to 70 years.
17. India's longest single-lane **steel cable suspension bridge** (300-metre) over Siang River in Upper Siang district in **Arunachal Pradesh**.
- Note:** The bridge is also known as byorong bridge, built at a cost of Rs 4,843 crore and funded by the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region under Non Lapsable Central Pool of Resources scheme. The bridge will reduce the distance between Yingkong and Tuting in Arunachal Pradesh by almost 40 km (earlier road length- 192 km).
18. An agreement for Renukaji Dam Multipurpose Project has signed among the **Six states**.
- Note:** The agreement has been signed in the presence of the Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation Minister Nitin Gadkari and all six Chief Ministers of the states in New Delhi.
19. The **Union Ministry of Women and Child Development** has launched an online campaign - '**Web - Wonder Women**'.
- Note:** The objective of the campaign is to discover and celebrate the exceptional achievements of women, who have been driving positive agenda of social change through the social media itself. The Ministry partnered with the Breakthrough and Twitter India for '#www: WebWonderWomen' campaign.
20. The state government will regularize over 5100 teachers with full pay scale next month in **Punjab**.
- Note:** The state government is making efforts to uplift **educational standards** in the state. '**Sikhya Providers**' and "**volunteer teachers**" will get a pay hike of **Rs. 1,500** from next month. Those teachers who were suspended during their protests had been reinstated and the teachers who were temporarily sent to distant places had been ordered to join at their parent stations.
21. Sikkim Chief Minister **Pawan Kumar Chamling** has launched a scheme in Gangtok-- **One Family One Job**.
- Note:** Sikkim has become the **first state in the country** to carry out such a programme for the people entitling them to state government employee benefits. Under this Scheme, **every family one government job** has been allotted. New recruits were taken for **Group C** and **Group D** posts in **12 departments**.
22. The Uttar Pradesh Government has reduced the prices of urea fertilizer by **11%**.
- Note:** The decrease in prices of Urea is due to **reduction in additional VAT** levied on natural gas. Now, the bag of **45 kilograms** of urea will be available at the cost of **Rs. 266.50** instead of **Rs. 299.50-**
- kilogram **Urea bag** will cost rupees 295. This is an important step in the direction of the government's effort to **double farmers income** by 2021.
23. Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath has launched the Rs 50,000-crore farm debt-waiver scheme named—'**Jai Kisan Rin Mukti Yojana**'.
- Note:** It would benefit 55 lakh small and marginal farmers. About 70% people of Madhya Pradesh are associated with agriculture and allied sectors. Farmers who have registered themselves to pay GST and are paying income tax, cannot avail benefits under this scheme.
24. Trivendra Rawat flags off the air services from Dehradun to **Amritsar**.
- Note:** Chief Minister of Uttarakhand Trivendra Singh Rawat flagged off the air services from Dehradun to Amritsar from Jolly Grant Airport in Dehradun.
25. The World's largest religious and cultural human congregation "Kumbh-2019" has begun at Sangam at **Prayagraj, Uttar Paresh**.
- Note:** The whole Kumbh area is divided into 20 sectors and 9 zones for keen vigil by sector and zonal magistrates. Forty police stations, 58 police outposts including three women police station are erected where more than 20 thousand security personnel are deployed
26. Puducherry Chief Minister V Narayanasamy has announcement to ban the production, sale and use of single-use plastic products in the Union Territory from **1st March, 2019**.
- Note:** The government wants to gift a plastic-free Puducherry to the future generation and curb the plastic in the larger interest of the environment.
27. A consortium of banks led by State Bank of India has agreed to lend 8,500 crore rupees finance for Nagpur-Mumbai --**Samruddhi Corridor expressway project**.
- Note:** The estimated cost of the project, being constructed by the Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation, is around 50,000 crores, of which around 26,000 crores are required for the construction of the expressway. The corridor will have 25 toll plazas, and the toll will be collected for 40 years. The state government was falling short of 3,000 to 4,000 crores to reach the target of 26,000 crore rupees.
28. The second World Orange Festival has been organised in **Nagpur**.
- Note:** The festival will 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.
29. The **Odisha** Government has announced a hike of Rs 200 per month in the social security pension under Madhu Babu Pension Yojana (MBPY).

- Note:** It will come into effect from 15th February 2019. The Madhu Babu Pension Yojana (MBPY) is a pension scheme under the Department of Social Security and Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities for the disabled, old age persons in the state of Odisha. The Scheme was instituted by merging the two pension schemes i.e. namely, Revised Old Age Pension Rules, 1989 and Disability Pension Rules, 1985.
- 30.** In Assam, Railway Protection Force (RPF) Women Squad launched in Guwahati -- **JOYMATI BAHINI**.
Note: The Objective of the Joymati Bahini is to strengthen women security around Guwahati region within railway premises and trains.
- 31.** The Union Minister Nitin Gadkari laid the foundation stones of 6 Namami Gange projects in **Agra and Mathura**.
Note: Rehabilitation of sewerage infrastructure and augmentation/ upgradation of STP at Vrindavan at a sanctioned cost of 33.82 crore rupees. The projects in Agra include comprehensive Sewerage Scheme for the city with 'One-City-One-Operator' approach on Hybrid Annuity Mode for creating new STPs of 176 MLD, upgradation, rehabilitation of old plants and O&M for 15 years.
- 32.** Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister 'Pema Khandu' has declared Pakke Paga Hornbill Festival (PPHF) as the 'State Festival' at **Seijosa, East Kameng**.
Note: Arunachal Pradesh Forest Department will fund the festival from 2020 and permanent infrastructure will be constructed for the festival ground. The PPHF festival was celebrated first time in 2015 to recognize the role played by the resident Nyishi tribe in conserving hornbills in the Pakke Tiger Reserve (PTR).
- 33.** Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari dedicated to the nation Kerrian Gandyal bridge in -- **Jammu and Kashmir**.
Note: The 1.2 km long bridge has been constructed over river Ravi in Kathua district at a cost of rupees 158.84 crore. This will reduce the distance between the two cities from 45 kms to 8.6 kms and benefit over 2,20,000 people living on the two sides – Kathua (Jammu) and Pathankot (Punjab).
- 34.** The **Odisha** Government has announced "Jiban Sampark" project for the welfare of the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups at the annual Adivasi Mela-2019.
Note: The Jiban Sampark Project undertaken in association with UNICEF to generate awareness among Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTG) in Odisha. The focus areas of Jiban Sampark Project are skill development, empowering communities, cooperation and innovation among the groups.
- 35.** The **Maharashtra** govt. has partnered with private sector lender YES Bank to onboard fair price shops (FPS) as Business Correspondent Agents.
Note: "YES Bank will onboard close to 40 percent of all fair price shops in Maharashtra, spanning 12 districts such as Palghar, Thane, Pune, Kolhapur, Latur.
- 36.** Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone for All India Institutes of Medical Sciences, (AIIMS) at **Madurai**.
Note: Mr Modi also dedicated a dozen Post Office Pass Port Seva Kendras to the nation. In Kerala, Mr Modi unveiled a plaque to dedicate to the nation an integrated refinery expansion complex of Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited and laid the foundation stone for a petrochemical complex in Kochi.
- 37.** Union Minister Nitin Gadkari has inaugurated four-lane **Atal** setu in Panaji, Goa.
Note: This is the third bridge across Mandovi River. This bridge would overcome the bottlenecks and curb traffic jams at Panaji Circle and Panaji entrance.
- 38.** The **Uttarakhand** Government has obtained the permission to develop the Tulip garden.
Note: It will be the second Tulip garden (first in Srinagar, J&K) in the country. It will be developed by ONGC (Oil and Natural Gas Corporation), under its CSR program in over 50 hectares of forest land near Chandak hilltop in Pithoragarh district at a cost of Rs. 50 cr.
- 39.** Nagaland Chief Minister Mr Neiphiu Rio has inaugurated the state's first Astro Turf Football Pitch at Indira Gandhi Stadium in **Kohima**.
Note: The Astro turf has been installed under norms of FIFA. It will begin the process of sports development regarding football in Nagaland.
- 40.** Ministry of Textiles Smriti Zubin Irani has presided the National Conclave on Technical Textiles in **Mumbai**.
Note: Technical textiles are textile material and products manufactured primarily for technical performance and functional properties. The event will also be a curtain raiser for TechnoTex 2019.
- 41.** **Telangana** government has decided to form a 'State Tiger Protection Force' to save the Big Cat population in the State.
Note: The STPF armed (112-member) will be headed by an Assistant Conservator of Forests to protect tiger population in Amarabad and Kawal Tiger Reserves.

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Important News – World

- 1. The United States (US) & Israel** officially quit the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) with the close of 2018.
Note: UNESCO also works to improve education for girls, promote understanding of the Holocaust's horrors, and to defend media freedom.
- 2. Qatar** will cease to be a member of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries.
Note: The country had sent an official notification to the OPEC expressing its wish to pull out and to focus on its liquefied natural gas production in December. The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) is an intergovernmental organization of 14 nations, founded in 1960 in Baghdad by the first five members (Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Venezuela), and headquartered since 1965 in Vienna, Austria.
- 3. Jair Bolsonaro** sworn in as Brazil's 42nd President.
Note: Bolsonaro was a former Army captain and admirer of the country's 1964-1985 military dictatorship, vowed to adhere to democratic norms. The president leads the executive branch of the federal government and is the commander-in-chief of the Brazilian Armed Forces.
- 4. Turkmenistan** has launched its first messaging app -- **BizBarde**.
Note: BizBarde app will allow the exchange of messages, files, photos and videos. Earlier, the ex-Soviet republic has blocked Western services including Twitter, Facebook, Whatsapp, and Viber, along with popular Russian networks Odnoklassniki and VKontakte.
- 5. Pakistan** has abolished the **long-standing facility** of visa on arrival for Afghan nationals.
Note: The Immigration Wing of the Federal Investigation Agency cited increased security risks from the western border as a reason for the move. Earlier, Afghan nationals were granted a 30-day visa on arrival at the entry points but now they will be required to apply for a visa from Pakistani missions in Afghanistan. The move to restrict Afghans came as Pakistan has already decided to issue 'on-arrival' visas to citizens of 24 other countries to increase tourism and investments.
- 6. Five nations** (Belgium, Dominican Republic, Germany, Indonesia and South Africa) assumed the charge as the Non-Permanent Members of the **United Nations Security Council (UNSC)**.
Note: These five countries will hold a two-year term in the Council with effect from 1st January 2019. This will be the Dominican Republic's first time on the Security Council. They will fill the seats vacated by Bolivia, Ethiopia, Kazakhstan, the Netherlands and Sweden on December 31, 2018, after serving two-year term on the 15-member Security Council.
- 7. China** landing a vehicle on the far side of the moon for the first time in history.
Note: The mission is one in a series that underscore the country's ambitions to join and even lead the space race.
- 8. Abdul Fattah al-Sisi (Egypt President)** has opened West Asia's largest cathedral in its New Administrative Capital (45 kilometres east of Cairo).
Note: President al-Sisi inaugurated the newly-built Cathedral of Nativity and mosque on the eve of Coptic

- Christmas. The two places of worship stand as a symbol in the face of attempts to undermine the country's stability and sectarian seditions.
9. The main camera onboard NASA's Space Telescope has been shut down after it encountered a hardware problem-- **Hubble Space Telescope**.
Note: The telescope will continue to perform science observations with its other three active instruments. The defect in the Hubble Wide Field Camera 3 is being investigated. The camera is equipped with back up electronics that can be called to action if the need arises.
 10. The union Government has launched the Plaza to bring Indian IT companies and Chinese enterprises closer to each other on a single AI enabled platform -- **Sino-Indian Digital Collaboration Plaza (SIDCOP)**.
Note: SIDCOP, which is a boundary-less marketplace offers this opportunity for Chinese enterprises in order to assist them in operational optimization and adopting industry best practices in business solutions. This platform could be useful to connect with top providers from India and help Chinese enterprises source the right solution providers for their projects.
 11. The World Economic Forum (WEF) annual meet has begun in **Davos, Switzerland**.
Note: The theme of the event would be 'Globalization 4.0: Shaping a Global Architecture in the Age of the Fourth Industrial Revolution'. The World Economic Forum is an independent and impartial International Organization for Public-Private Cooperation.
 12. According to UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization), the Brazilian city will be the World Capital of Architecture for 2020 -- **Rio de Janeiro**.
Note: Rio (defeated Paris and Melbourne) will be the first city to receive the title under a program launched together by UNESCO and the International Union of Architects (UIA) in November 2018. The city will host the World Congress of UIA, in July 2020, an event that occurs every three years.
 13. **Cosmas Lagat (Kenya)** has won the men's Tata Mumbai Marathon in Mumbai.
 14. Worknesh Alemu (Ethiopia) has won the women's Tata Mumbai Marathon in Mumbai.
Note: India's Sudha Singh finished on top among the Indian runners while setting at a personal best of 2 hours:34 minutes and: 56 seconds.
 15. The 4th edition of International Conference on Pharmaceutical & Medical Device sector held in **Bengaluru**.
Note: The theme for India Pharma 2019 is 'Enabling Quality Affordable Healthcare' and that of India Medical Device 2019 is 'Med-Tech India: Gearing up for Ayushman Bharat'. The two days conference has been organised by the Department of Pharmaceuticals (DoP), Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers, along with Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI).
 16. The Parliament of Macedonia has passed the resolution to amend the constitution of the country to rename as the **Republic of Northern Macedonia**.
Note: The name change will help resolve a decades-long dispute with neighboring Greece opening the way for Skopje to join NATO and the European Union.
 17. Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro announced that the country has cut off diplomatic relations with the **United States**.
Note: The United States has rejected Maduro's move to break diplomatic ties, saying it did not think he had the authority to cut ties and it would conduct relations with a government led by opposition leader Juan Guaido. The European Union has called for the immediate start of the political process in the South American nation.
 18. The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) launched a students' satellite Kalamsat and an imaging satellite Microsat-R from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in **Sriharikota**.
Note: Kalamsat is a payload developed by students and Chennai based Space Kidz India for the first time. The Microsat-R satellite is meant for the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) purposes.
 19. **Indian Africa Field Training Exercise (IAFTX)-2019** is scheduled to be conducted at **Aundh Military Station** and College of Military Engineering in **Pune**.
Note: The joint training exercise is being conducted with more than a dozen African countries & India. It aims at synergizing humanitarian mine action and joint peace operations. The IAFTX-2019 is a positive step towards growing political and military ties with the member nations of the African continent and will boost the already strong strategic cooperation between the countries.
 20. The Union Cabinet has approved the signing Memorandum of Understanding between India and Kuwait for cooperation on the Recruitment of **Domestic Workers**.
Note: 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 MOU is initially valid for a period of five years and incorporates provision for automatic renewal. Around 3,00,000 Indian domestic workers deployed in Kuwait would be major beneficiaries. This includes around 90,000 female domestic workers.

21. The Oxford Dictionaries has announced the Hindi Word of the Year 2018 -- **Nari Shakti**.

Note: The word was selected by the Oxford Dictionaries (India) with help of a panel of language experts. Nari Shakti (derived from Sanskrit), broken down, the word 'nari' means women and 'shakti' means power.

22. Pakistan Govt. has declared **sugarcane juice** as the "national drink" of the country.

Note: According to the Twitter poll, 7,616 people or 81% cast their votes favouring sugarcane juice, 15% voted for orange juice while 4% chose carrot. People were asked to decide on the country's national drink with two other options (orange and carrot).

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Honor & Awards

1. The union Commerce Minister Suresh Prabhu honored outstanding young entrepreneurs with National Entrepreneurship Awards in **New Delhi**.

Note: The awards aim to recognize and honor outstanding young first-generation entrepreneurs and those who have contributed immensely in building the entrepreneurship ecosystem. A total of 43 awards were given this year.

2. The Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu has given Textiles Awards to Seventeen persons for their outstanding contribution in different fields of textiles sector in **New Delhi**.

Note: Mr. Naidu also stressed on improving the quality of products to become competitive in international markets and called upon the textiles industry to create brand for Indian textiles products. Earlier in the day, the national conclave was inaugurated by the Union Textiles Minister, Smriti Zubin Irani.

3. **Bohemian Rhapsody** has won the **Golden Globe 2019** for best motion picture drama.

Note: Bohemian Rhapsody is a 2018 biographical film about the British rock band Queen. Green Book won the most awards for the ceremony with three, including Best Motion Picture – Musical or Comedy. Jeff Bridges was honored with the Cecil B. DeMille Award for career achievement. The 76th Golden Globe Awards honored the best in film and American television of 2018, as chosen by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association.

4. Veteran journalist **Dinu Randive** has been conferred with the lifetime achievement award by the Mantralaya and Vidhimandal Vartahar Sangh.

Note: It is an association of journalists covering Maharashtra legislature and secretariat. Mr. Randive has participated in the freedom struggle, the Sanyukta Maharashtra movement and the Goa liberation movement.

5. **Veterans Asha Parekh and Farooque Shaikh** honored with the Bimal Roy Memorial Trophy.
Note: Awards has also presented to directors Ananth Mahadevan and Amit Rai along with their actors Paresh Rawal and Jackie Shroff for making socially relevant films. The Bimal Roy Memorial Trophy honour experienced artists and other contributors from the Indian film industry as well as a young filmmaker. It has been awarded every year since 1997, by the Bimal Roy Memorial & Film Society.
6. Nobel Peace Prize winner, Pakistani activist Malala Yousafzai is coming up with a new book --**We Are Displaced**.
Note: Malala's experiences visiting refugee camps caused her to reconsider her own displacement - first as an Internally Displaced Person when she was a young child in Pakistan, and then as an international activist who could travel anywhere in the world except to the home she loved.
7. Nepal's Army Chief **Purna Chandra Thapa** visited New Delhi on a four-day official visit.
Note: General Thapa conferred honorary 'General of Indian Army' by President Ram Nath Kovind at Rashtrapati Bhawan. The visit symbolizes the deep-rooted ties between the two armies and will help strengthen defence cooperation.
8. **C N R Rao** has been chosen for the first Sheikh Saud International Prize for Materials Research by the Centre for Advanced Materials of the United Arab Emirates (UAE).
Note: The Prize committee unanimously decided to award this to Professor Rao which involves a plaque, a medal and a cash prize of 1 lakh USD. The award will be presented to Mr. Rao during the International Workshop on Advanced Materials at Ras Al Khaimain UAE on 25th February 2019. Currently, Mr. Rao serves as the Head of the Scientific Advisory Council to the Prime Minister of India.
9. **Namita Gokhale** has won the Sushila Devi Literature Award for her novel "Things to Leave Behind".
Note: She was awarded in the 'Best Book of Fiction Written by a Woman Author' category at the inaugural edition of Bhopal Literature and Art Festival (BLF). Sushila Devi Literature Award is constituted by Ratanlal Foundation, recognises the Best Book of Fiction Written by a woman author.
10. **Narendra Modi** has received the first-ever Philip Kotler Presidential award.
Note: PM Modi has been awarded for his outstanding leadership for the nation. The Philip Kotler Presidential Award recognizes and celebrates achievements of organizations, marketing teams, and individuals in different industries around the world.
11. The Gandhi Peace Prize 2018 will be given to **Yohei Sasakawa**.
Note: The Union government has announced the names of the winners of the **Gandhi Peace Prize** for 2015-2018. For 2017, the award is given to **Ekai Abhiyan Trust** for their contribution to education for rural and tribal children. For 2016, the award has been jointly given to **Akshaya Patra Foundation** for providing mid-day meals to children across the country and Sulabh International for its work towards emancipation of manual scavengers. **Vivekananda Kendra**, Kanyakumari won the award for 2015 for rural development and education. Gandhi Peace Prize carries an award of Rs. one crore, a citation a plaque and a handicraft item.
12. US based Indian poet **Ranjani Murali** has been awarded the "Woman's Voice Award" at the Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival (AKLF).
Note: The Objective of the award is to recognize and encourage creative writing by women in India. Ranjani's first book "Blind Screens" was published in July 2017. Her second book "Clearly you are ESL" won the Great Indian Poetry Collectives (GIPCs) Editor's Choice award. The award carries a cash prize of Rs 1 lakh apart from a citation.
13. MP Lok Sabha **Anurag Thakur** has been bestowed with Sansad Ratna Award for his distinguished performance as a parliamentarian under Jury Committee Special Award category.
Note: He has become the first BJP MP to receive the Jury Committee award. In 2010, the Sansad Ratna Awards were set up after a suggestion from former President Dr A. P. J Abdul Kalam. The idea was to honour parliamentarians who perform.
14. Noted Gujarati poet Sitanshu Yashashchandra has been awarded Saraswati Samman, 2017, for his poetry collection in Gujarati named -- **Vakhar**.
Note: The award comprises of a citation and a plaque apart from award money of 15 lakh rupees. Yashashchandra, recipient of the Padmashri in 2006, is known for seamlessly blending history with poetry. He has explored politics of the times, the larger and more immediate human conditions in his award-winning work "Vakhar"
15. India-set short film gets Oscars nomination -- **Period. End of Sentence**.
Note: Award-winning filmmaker Rayka Zehtabchi has directed the short film, which has been produced by Guneet Monga's Sikhya Entertainment. The documentary feature is set in Hapur village outside Delhi, where women lead a quiet revolution as they fight against the deeply rooted stigma of menstruation.
16. **Lance Naik Nazir Ahmad Wani** conferred with Ashok Chakra award.

Note: Lance Naik Wani (38-years) laid down his life during an anti-terror operation at Shopian in Kashmir in November last year, will be conferred with the Ashoka Chakra, India's highest peacetime gallantry award. Ashok Chakra is the highest peacetime military decoration for valour, courageous action or self-sacrifice away from the battlefield.

17. Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT) has become India's only port to get listed among the top 30 global container ports.

Note: "The JNPT, India's premier container port got listed amongst the top 30 container ports globally, as per the latest Lloyds Report. According to the shipping ministry, JNPT notched up five spots, to be 28th on the list, compared to its previous ranking. It is located Navi Mumbai, Maharashtra.

18. Pranab Mukherjee (Former president), **Nanaji Deshmukh** (Bharatiya Jana Sangh leader) and **Bhupen Hazarika** (singer) were conferred the country's highest civilian award **Bharat Ratna**.

Note: In an official statement, the government said Deshmukh and Hazarika have conferred the award posthumously. This year 112 recipients have been selected for the prestigious awards. This includes 4 Padma Vibhushan, 14 Padma Bhushan and 94 Padma Shri awards.

19. The Union government has instituted an annual award titled -- **Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar**.

Note: It will be announced every year on 23rd January, the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose. The Award carries a certificate and a cash prize of 51 lakh rupees.

20. Numaligarh Refinery Limited' (NRL) has been awarded the best Miniratna PSU (public sector undertaking) in strategic performance (Financial Category).

Note: The award was presented to S K Barua (MD of NRL) by Member of Parliament Manoj Tiwari and Poonam Dhillon at an award function held in New Delhi. The company was awarded for its efforts in the country's growth and strategic performance.

21. Assam Government has given the Republic Day Journalism Award 2019 to Veteran journalist **Dhirendra Nath Chakraborty**.

Note: Chakraborty has been honoured for his lifelong contribution to journalism in the state. The award comprises Rupees one lakh in cash, a citation, the Assamese 'xoraai' (the bell metal memento presented as an honour), 'jaapi' (headgear) and an angavastra.

22. Southern Railway zone has bagged the number one position for cleanliness in all the 17 railway zones in the country.

Note: 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.

Sports News

1. India has won their first ever series on Australian soil beating the home team 2-1.

Note: Now, Virat Kohli has become the first Indian as well as the first Asian captain to win a Test series in Australia. Cheteshwar Pujara was declared man of the match as well as man-of-the-series.

2. India's women's cricketer **Smriti Mandhana** named ICC women's cricketer of the year by ICC

Note: India's Smriti Mandhana (22-years) was crowned women's cricketer of the year by the sport's world governing body ICC. Australia's wicketkeeper-batter Alyssa Healy was voted T20 player of the year. England's teenage spinner Sophie Ecclestone was named emerging player of the year. Mandhana is only the second Indian woman to win an International Cricket Council award after fast bowler Jhulan Goswami who was named the women's player of the year in 2007.

3. International Cricket Council (ICC) has announced T20 Women's team of the year includes three Indians **Smriti Mandhana, Harmanpreet Kaur and Poonam Yadav**.

4. Lady head constable Himachal Pradesh Police **Rani has** won a Gold medal in the Senior National Women's Judo Championship at Visakhapatnam.

Note: She claimed top honours in the 78 kg category. Rani was also declared the best Judoka at the Championship.

5. The 80th National Table Tennis Championship began at Jawaharlal Nehru Indoor Stadium in **Cuttack (Odisha)**.

Note: As many as 35 teams, including 550 players from different parts of the country are participating in the mega championship. Odisha State Table Tennis Association (OSTTA) is hosting the championships after a gap of 18 years.

6. World's 1st female amputee to scale Antarctica's highest peak **Arunima Sinha**.
Note: Arunima Sinha has become the World's 1st woman amputee to climb Mount Vinson, the highest peak in Antarctica. She has already done six peaks: Everest in Asia, Kilimanjaro in Africa, Elbrus (Europe), Kosciuszko (Australia), Aconcagua (Argentina) and Carstensz Pyramid (Puncak Jaya) in Indonesia. She was a national level volleyball player who was pushed from a running train by some robbers in 2011 while she was resisting them.
7. Union Minister for sports Col. Rajyavardhan Tathore has inaugurated the 2nd edition of 'Khelo India Youth Games' in **Pune**.
Note: More than 9000 players from different states is participating in 18 different games at Khelo India Youth Games. Around 14,000 persons, including 9,000 sportspersons and 4,000 managers, will be coming for the Games. Khelo India Youth Games (KIYG) held annually are the national level multidisciplinary grassroot games in India held for two categories (under-17 years school students & under-21 college students). Every year best 1000 kids will be given an annual scholarship of Rs. 500,000 for 8 years to prepare them for the international sporting events.
8. India's wicketkeeper-batsman **Mahendra Singh Dhoni** has become the fifth player to score 10,000 runs for India in One-day International (ODI) Cricket.
Note: Earlier achieved are Sachin Tendulkar, Sourav Ganguly, Rahul Dravid and Virat Kohli. Overall, Dhoni is the 13th player in history to score ten thousand runs in the ODIs. In 2001, India's Sachin Tendulkar became the first player to cross the 10,000 runs mark in ODIs.
9. Indian men's hockey coach **Harendra Singh** was removed from the post.
Note: Mr. Singh was given back the charge of the Junior Men's Hockey team. Harendra Singh was brought in as men's coach in May 2018.
10. **Egypt** will host the 2019 Africa Cup of Nations between 15th June and 13th July 2019.
Note: The CAF executive committee preferred Egypt to South Africa as replacement for original hosts Cameroon. Cameroon were dropped due to delays in preparations and concerns over security. Egypt only entered the running to host the Cup of Nations when fellow north African country Morocco announced they would not bid to do so.
11. Liverpool's player **Mohamed Salah** has been named as the 2018 Confederation of African Football Player of the Year --.
Note: He received the award at a ceremony in Senegal. Houston Dash and South Africa forward Thembi Kgatlana was named Women's Player of the Year. Salah scored 44 goals for Liverpool during the 2017-18 season.
12. **Rohan Bopanna and Divij Sharan** has won maiden ATP tour Tennis title at the Tata Open Maharashtra in Pune.
Note: Indian pair defeated British pair of Luke Bambridge and Jonny O'Maara by 6-3 6-4. This was Bopanna's 18th ATP tour title while Sharan has won his fourth tournament on the circuit.
13. Indian Olympic boxer **M C Mary Kom** has attained number **one position** in the **International Boxing Association's (AIBA)** latest world rankings.
Note: She became the most successful boxer in world championships' history when she claimed the 48kg category top honours in Delhi in November 2018. Mary Kom is placed top of the charts in the weight division with 1700 points. Mary Kom is the only woman to become World Amateur Boxing champion for a record six times, and the only woman boxer to have won a medal in each one of the seven world championships.
14. **Bengaluru Raptors** has won the Premier Badminton League title 2018-19.
Note: Bengaluru Raptors edged the Mumbai Rockets 4-3 to win their first ever Premier Badminton League title. 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. The nine teams are Delhi Dashers, Ahmedabad Smash Masters, Awadhe Warriors, Bengaluru Raptors, Mumbai Rockets, Hyderabad Hunters, Chennai Smashes, North Eastern Warriors and Pune 7 Aces.
15. **Abhinav Shaw** has become the youngest gold medallist in shooting at the Khelo India Youth Games in Pune.
Note: 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.
16. India's Ankita Raina has won the International Tennis Federation's 25,000-dollar Women's tournament in **Singapore**.
Note: In the Final, Ankita defeated top seed and world number 122 Arantxa Rus of the Netherlands, 6-3, 6-2.
17. **Cosmas Lagat (Kenya)** has won the men's Tata Mumbai Marathon in Mumbai.
18. **Worknesh Alemu (Ethiopia)** has won the women's Tata Mumbai Marathon in Mumbai.
Note: India's Sudha Singh finished on top among the Indian runners while setting at a personal best of 2 hours:34 minutes and: 56 seconds.
19. Indian football team head coach has decided to step down after the team's shock 0-1 defeat to Bahrain **Stephen Constantine**.

- Note:** India conceded an injury time goal through a penalty to lose 0-1, which led to its exit from the showpiece Asian Cup 2019. Constantine, who had earlier coached India from 2002 to 2005, was handed over reins of the team again in 2015. He guided India to the Asian Cup after a gap of eight years.
- 20. Indian cricket team** has become the first visiting team to win bilateral series across the three formats against Australia Down Under.
Note: India defeated Australia in the third ODI to clinch the three-match series 2-1. Now, India became the first visiting side to win a bilateral series (two or more matches) in all three formats in Australia. India registered their first Test series win in Australia earlier this month, while they won a T20I series on Australian soil in 2018.
- 21. The first National Level Sports Meet** for the students of **Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS)** was held at **Hyderabad**.
Note: The event has a participation of 1777 Hyderabad students (975 boys and 802 girls) representing 20 States of the country. The union Government in a historic decision has decided to establish EMRS in every block with more than 50% or more tribal population and 20,000 or more tribal persons by the year 2022.
- 22. D Gukesh** has become 2nd youngest Grand Master in the world.
Note: Now, Gukesh becomes India's 59th Grand Master. Ukraine's Sergey Karjakin remains the youngest-ever GM, having achieved the feat at the age of 12 years and seven months in 2002. Grandmaster (GM) is a title awarded to chess players by the world chess organization FIDE.
- 23. Mohammed Ali Qamar** has been appointed as the Women's Boxing team Coach.
Note: Mohammed Ali Qamar (38-years) has taken over as the chief coach for the country's female boxers. He has replaced veteran Shiv Singh.
- 24. Asian Cup gold medalist Shakil Ahmed** has set up a world record in indoor rowing by completing one lakh meters in above 40 years category in Kolkata.
Note: Shakil began his record-setting indoor rowing feat in Salt Lake stadium complex and achieved the milestone of covering one lakh metres of simulated distance in 10 hours. Now, West Bengal Rowing Association certify the feat to the authorities of Limca Book of Records for entering the achievement in their record book.
- 25. India's Mountaineer** becomes world's youngest mountaineer to climb 7 peaks, 7 volcano summits -- **Satyarup**.
Note: With this feat, he became the first Indian and youngest man (35 years and 262 days) to climb the seven highest peaks and volcanic summits across all continents. Australia's Daniel Bull had done it at the age of 36 years 157 days.
- 26. Ace Indian female wrestler Vinesh Phogat** has become the first Indian athlete to receive a nomination in the prestigious Laureus World Comeback of the Year Award.
Note: She has been nominated alongside US Tour Championship winner Tiger Woods. Vinesh (from Haryana) made a sensational comeback after battling a long injury lay-off to win a gold medal at the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games and Jakarta Asian Games.
- 27. In the second edition of Khelo India Youth Games (2nd edition), the state topped Maharashtra**.
Note: Maharashtra topped with 228 medals (85 gold, 62 silver and 81 bronze). Haryana were second with total 178 medals (62 gold, 56 silver and 60 bronze) while Delhi was third with total 136 medals (48 gold, 37 silver and 51 bronze) for a total of 136 medals. Khelo India Youth Games 2019 had an approximate participation of 10,000 persons, including more than 5,925 athletes.
- 28. French sailor Jean-Luc Van Den Heede** has won the round-the-world yacht race after 212 days alone at sea without modern instruments.
Note: He became the oldest to complete the 30,000-mile Golden Globe race. The race involves solo sailors navigating with a sextant and paper maps and communicating only occasionally with the outside world via short-wave radio.
- 29. The International Cricket Council (ICC) has announced the men's Test and ODI teams of the year-- Virat Kohli**.
Note: Virat Kohli (30-years) has become the first player to win the Sir Garfield Sobers Trophy for ICC Cricketer of the Year, as well as the ICC Men's Test Player of the Year and the ICC ODI Player of the Year awards. Kohli has also been named the captain of ICC's Test and ODI teams of 2018 for a fabulous run in international cricket.
- 30. Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has announced a bonus of 20 lakh rupees each for the senior selection committee members following India's maiden Test series win in Australia**.
Note: Virat Kohli led India to a historic 2-1 win in the four-Test series before capping the Australian tour with a maiden 2-1 triumph in the ODI series. Earlier, The BCCI had announced cash awards of 15 lakh rupees per match for each of the playing eleven that featured in India's maiden Test series win on Australian soil. The Indian board had also announced cash awards for all the reserve players, as well as the members of the support staff.
- 31. Mohammed Shami** has become the fastest Indian bowler to claim 100 ODI wickets.

- Note:** Mohammed Shami has become the fastest Indian bowler to claim 100 ODI wickets (in the 56th match), during the ODI match against New Zealand at Napier. Earlier, India's record held by Irfan Pathan (in 59th matches) in 2006. Currently, the World record held by the Rashid Khan (Afghanistan leg-spinner), reached the mark in just 44 ODI games.
- 32.** The ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2020 event will take place later in the year from **18 October to 15th November 2020.**
Note: The International Cricket Council (ICC) has announced fixtures for the ICC T20 World Cup 2020 (Australia) in 2020.
 The Indian men's cricket team is in Group 2, which also includes England, South Africa, Afghanistan and two qualifiers.
- 33.** The ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2020 women's event will take place from **21st February to 8 March 2020.**
Note: This edition marks the first occasion when the men and women tournaments will be held as standalone events in the same year and in the same country. India women are in Group A along with Australia, Sri Lanka, New Zealand and Qualifier 1.
- 34.** Former South Africa all-rounder **Johan Botha** has announced his immediate retirement from all forms of cricket.
Note: Botha played for South Africa in five Test matches, 78 one-day internationals and 40 T20 Internationals from 2005 to 2012. Botha captained the Proteas in 10 ODIs and took the team to the No. 1 ranking after they defeated Australia 4-1 in Australia in 2009.
- 35.** India's Ace shuttler **Saina Nehwal** has won the Indonesia Masters women's singles title.
Note: Carolina Marin (Spain) limped out of the final due to a leg injury. Anders Antonsen (Denmark) has won his first ever Indonesia Masters after defeating world number one Kento Momota (Japan) to claim the 2019 Indonesia Masters title. The DAIHATSU Indonesia Masters 2019 is a badminton tournament that takes place at the Istora Gelora Bung Karno in Indonesia and has a total purse of USD 350,000.
- 36.** India's Kartik Sharma has won the New South Wales men's Amateur Golf Championship in **Australia.**
Note: Kartik (from Gurgaon) win over Australia's Nathan Barberie in the scheduled 36-hole final to emerge as champion. He had been selected to represent Indian Golf Union for three events in Australia.
- 37.** Indian cricketer has been suspended from bowling in International Cricket by the International Cricket Council (ICC)--**Ambati Rayudu.**
Note: According to ICC, the suspension will remain in place until he is tested and can demonstrate he is able to bowl with legal action.
- 38.** Serbian professional tennis player has won the 7th Australian Open Men's Singles title at Melbourne -- **Novak Djokovic**
Note: He defeated Nadal 6-3, 6-2, 6-3 in a largely one-sided match. The 2019 Australian Open (107th edition) was a Grand Slam tennis tournament that took place at Melbourne Park (Australia) from 14th to 27th January 2019.

List of winners of Australian Open 2019:

S.No.	Category	Winner	Runner Up
1	Men's Singles	Novak Djokovic (Serbia)	Rafael Nadal (Spain)
2	Women's Singles	Naomi Osaka (Japan)	Petra Kvitova (Czech Republic)
3	Men's Doubles	Pierre-Hugues Herbert (France) & Nicolas Mahut (France)	Henri Kontinen (Finland) & John Peers (Australia)
4	Women's Doubles	Samantha Stosur (Australia) & Zhang Shuai (China)	Tímea Babos (Hungary) & Kristina Mladenovic (France)
5	Mixed Doubles	Barbora Krejčíková (Czech Republic) & Rajeev Ram (United States)	Astra Sharma (Australia) & John-Patrick Smith (Australia)

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