

## Important Dates

1. The 8th annual pulicat day being observed on **2nd February** to create awareness among people about the importance of protecting the lagoon.  
**Note:** The day is celebrated as the world wetlands day, with activities like catamaran race, rangoli competition, quiz and drawing competition for children, heritage walk and folklore programs. This year's World Wetlands Day under the theme of "Wetlands and Climate Change".
2. The world cancer day is being observed every year on **4th February**.  
**Note:** The day raise awareness about cancer, its treatment and to encourage methods of its prevention. The primary goal of the day is to reduce the illness and related deaths by 2020. This year, Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) is launching a new three years (2019-2021) campaign with the theme: "I Am and I Will." Cancer is a group of diseases involving abnormal cell growth with the potential to invade or spread to other parts of the body.
3. Sri Lanka celebrated the **71st Independence Day** in a grand ceremony at the Galle Face Green in Colombo -- **4th Feb**.  
**Note:** Maldives President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih attended the function as guest of honour. Ending 133 years of colonial rule, Sri Lanka, then Ceylon, gained independence from the Great Britain on 4th February 1948.
4. International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a United Nations-sponsored annual awareness day that takes place on **6th February**.  
**Note:** Female genital mutilation (FGM) comprises all procedures that involve altering or injuring the female genitalia for non-medical reasons. It is recognized internationally as a violation of the human rights of girls and women.
5. The United Nations has announced, 2019 as the International Year of the Periodic Table of the Chemical Elements to highlight its first publication in **1869**.  
**Note:** It will help to raise the profile of how chemistry can provide solutions to global challenges in agriculture, education, energy and health. The periodic table as we know it today was first designed by the Russian scientist Dmitri Ivanovich Mendeleev.
6. **Basant Panchami festival** (Saraswati Puja) is being celebrated every year on the **fifth day** of the month of **Magha**.  
**Note:** On this day, Hindus wearing yellow clothes visit temples and pray to Goddess Saraswati (the goddess of knowledge).
7. The first-ever **World Pulses Day** was celebrated on **10th February 2019**.  
**Note:** The day designated United Nations global event to celebrate pulses worldwide and continue the important gains made with the 2016 International Year of Pulses. Pulses are a type of leguminous crops that are harvested solely for the dry seed and does not include crops that are harvested green.
8. International Day of **Women and Girls** in Science being observed on **11th February**.  
**Note:** The day highlight the work of female scientists throughout its divisions and agencies. The Theme of 2019 is "Investment in Women and Girls in Science for Inclusive Green Growth".
9. The National Productivity Day is observed every year on **12th February**.  
**Note:** The main observance of the day is organized by National Productivity Council (NPC) for encouraging all stakeholders in the implementation of productivity tools and techniques with contemporary relevant themes. 'Circular Economy for Productivity & Sustainability' has been selected as the theme for the National Productivity Week -2019. Every year 12th to 18th of February is celebrated as the National Productivity Week.
10. The World Radio Day (WRD) is celebrated every year on **13th February**.  
**Note:** The theme for this year is "Dialogue, Tolerance and Peace ". The day provides an opportunity to honor how radio is uniquely positioned to bring communities together and promote positive dialogue for change.
11. The birth anniversary of Maratha Warrior King 'Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj' is being celebrated on **19th Feb** all over Maharashtra.  
**Note:** Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu paid tributes to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj on his birth anniversary. Shivaji Bhonsle was an Indian warrior king and a member of the Bhonsle Maratha clan.
12. The birth anniversary of Sant Ravidas is being celebrated across the country on **Magh Purnima**.

**Note:** As per Hindu calendar, it is celebrated on full moon day of the Magh month (Magh Purnima). Ravidas was born in the village of Seer Goverdhanpur, near Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh. Guru Ravidas was a North Indian mystic poet-Sant of the bhakti movement during the 15th to 16th century CE.

13. The United Nations' (UN) World Day of Social Justice is annually observed on **20th February**.

**Note:** The theme for 2019 is "If You Want Peace & Development, Work for Social Justice". The United Nations has approved on 26th November 2007 and starting in 2009, as the World Day of Social Justice.

14. International Mother Language Day is being observed every year on **21st February**.

**Note:** The theme of this year's Mother Language Day is 'Indigenous Languages as a factor in development, peace and reconciliation'.

15. The Central Excise Day being observed every year on **24th February**.

**Note:** The day encourages the employees of excise department to carry out the central excise duty in better way across the country to ensure better tax observance. Commemorate the establishment of the Central Excise and Salt Act on 24 February 1944.

16. India celebrates National Science Day every year on **28th February**.

**Note:** The objective of the day is to spread the message of the importance of science and its application among the people. The theme of National Science Day 2019 was "Science for the People and the People for Science."

## Obituaries

1. Former Planning Commission member **Mr. Hiten Bhaya** passed away in Delhi.

**Note:** Bhaya was a member of the Planning Commission in the Rajiv Gandhi government. He had also served as director of the Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC) and chairman of Hindustan Steel.

2. Veteran Marathi actor **Ramesh Bhatkar** passed away at a hospital in **Mumbai**.

**Note:** Mr. Bhatkar was known for his roles in the TV series 'Commander' and 'Hello Inspector'. He worked for more than thirty years as an actor in mainstream Hindi and Marathi films such as 'Aaj Pahije', 'Kucch To Hai' and 'Bhavesh Joshi Suerhero'. His most recent movie was 'The Accidental Prime Minister'.

3. Odisha MP **Ladu Kishore Swain** passed away at Apollo Hospital in Bhubaneswar, due to kidney ailments.

**Note:** He was the Member of Parliament of Biju Janata Dal (BJD) from Odisha's Aska Lok Sabha constituency from 2004 to 2009. Swain was also elected as an MLA from Kabisuryanagar Assembly constituency in 2004.

4. Legendary Goalkeeper of England **Gordon Banks** passed away in England.

**Note:** He was widely considered as one of the greatest goal keepers of his generation.

5. Noted actor **Mahesh Anand** passes away.

**Note:** The actor has worked in many hit movies like 'Kurukshetra', 'Swarg', 'Coolie No 1', 'Vijeta', 'Shahenshah' and more.

6. The longest-serving congressman in US history **John Dingell** passed away recently.

**Note:** He first elected in 1955, serving in the House of Representatives for the next 59 years.

7. German scientist **Manfred Eigen** who jointly won the 1967 Nobel Prize for Chemistry passed away.

**Note:** Eigen had won the prize for working on a method to calculate speeds of extremely fast chemical reactions, effected by disturbing the equilibrium by means of short energy pulses. In 1971, he founded Max Planck Institute for Biophysical Chemistry in Germany.

8. Former **Afghan Mujahideen commander** Sibghatullah Mojaddedi passed away in Kabul hospital after a long illness.

**Note:** He played many roles in Afghan politics. In 2003, he served as chairman of the Loya Jirga (or Grand Assembly) that approved the Constitution for a post-Taliban era.

9. Bestselling British Author **Andrea Levy** passed away due to cancer.

**Note:** She was known for penning books 'The Long Song' and 'Small Island' (story of Jamaican migrants in Britain). Levy's last novel, "The Long Song," was published in 2010 and was shortlisted for the Man Booker prize.

10. Eminent writer, ex-Goa deputy speaker **Vishnu Wagh** passed away in South Africa.

**Note:** Wagh was a member of the Goa Legislative Assembly from St Andre constituency between 2012 and 2017. He was the chairman of the state-run Goa Kala Academy. Wagh has written over 20 plays in Marathi, three sangeet natak, 18 Konkani play and 16 one-act plays.

11. Iconic German Fashion Designer **Karl Lagerfeld** passed away in Paris.

- Note:** Karl was recognized for his signature white hair, black sunglasses, fingerless gloves, and high, starched detachable collars. Karl Lagerfeld's fashion career in high fashion in the 1950s as Pierre Balmain's assistant.
12. Climate scientist **Wallace Smith Broecker** passed away in New York City hospital.  
**Note:** Columbia University professor Broecker brought "global warming" into common use with a 1975 paper that correctly predicted rising carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere would lead to pronounced warming. He was known in science circles as the "Grandfather of Climate Science".
  13. Bengali singer **Pratik Choudhury** passed away at a City hospital after suffering a cardiac arrest.  
**Note:** Mr. Chaudhary known for his albums on contemporary Bengali songs including "Mukhosh", "Bhusandir Mathe", "Ebar Pratik er Pallay" and so on. He also sung in numerous TV serials, Bengali movies.
  14. Veteran Bollywood producer **Raj Kumar Barjatya** passed away at Reliance Hurlkissondas Hospital in Mumbai.  
**Note:** He helmed several Bollywood hit films including 'Hum Saath Saath Hain', 'Hum Aapke Hain Koun', 'Vivah', 'Prem Ratan Dhan Payo', 'Main Prem Ki Deewani Hoon' among others. He worked in the industry as a producer and mostly backed films that were directed by his son Sooraj.
  15. All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) Member of Parliament (MP) S Rajendran passed away in a car accident  
**Note:** Mr. Rajendran was elected from Villupuram in Tamil Nadu to the Lok Sabha in 2014. He served as a member of the Standing Committee on Chemicals and Fertilizers and the Consultative Committee for the Ministry of Civil Aviation.
  16. Noted Hindi Writer Prof. Namvar Singh passed away in New Delhi.  
**Note:** Mr. Singh was the first Chairman of JNU's Centre of Indian Languages. He has authored over dozen books including 'Kavita Ke Naye Pratiman', 'Chhayavad' and 'Dusri Parampara Ki Khoj' among others. He received Sahitya Academy Award for literary criticism in 1971 for 'Kavita Ke Naye Pratiman'.
  17. Nepal's Tourism and Civil Aviation Minister **Rabindra Adhikari** killed in helicopter crash in Nepal.  
**Note:** The team had gone for a feasibility study for an airstrip in Chuhandanda in neighbouring Tehrathum. Nepal has some of the world's most remote and tricky runways, flanked by snow-capped peaks with approaches that pose a challenge for even accomplished pilots.

## New Appointments

1. **Gupteshwar Pandey** has taken charge as the new **Director General of Police (DGP)** of Bihar.  
**Note:** He succeeds current DGP K S Dwivedi (retired). In India, the Director General of Police (DGP) is a three-star rank and the highest-ranking police officer in Indian States and Union Territories.
2. **LT Gen Rajeev Chopra** has been appointed as Director General of NCC (National Cadet Corps).  
**Note:** Lt Gen Chopra (Commissioned in the Madras Regiment) is an alumnus of the National Defence Academy, Khadakwasla and Indian Military Academy, Dehradun. He has been awarded Ati Vishisht Seva Medal for his distinguished service in January 2018. The National Cadet Corps is the Indian military cadet corps with its Headquarters in New Delhi, India.
3. **Justice Suman Kumari** has become the first Hindu woman in Pakistan to be appointed as a civil judge.  
**Note:** The first judge from the Hindu community was Justice Rana Bhagwandas (the acting chief justice between 2005 and 2007). Hinduism remains the second (only 2%) largest religion in Pakistan after Islam.
4. **Sultan Abdullah** sworn in as the 16th King of Malaysia.  
**Note:** He was elected after Sultan Muhammad V abdicated the throne earlier this month. According to its Constitution, the King is elected every five years from among the nine Sultans on a rotational basis.
5. **Vice Admiral G Ashok Kumar** takes charge as Vice Chief of the Naval Staff.  
**Note:** He served as the Navigating Officer of Indian Naval Ships Beas, Nilgiri, Ranvir and Vikrant. An alumnus of Sainik School, Amaravathi Nagar and National Defence Academy, Khadakwasla, Pune, he was commissioned into the Executive Branch of the Indian Navy on 01 Jul 1982.
6. Senior IPS officer **Rishi Kumar Shukla** has been appointed as the CBI (Central Bureau of Investigation) Director for a period of two years.  
**Note:** Rishi Kumar Shukla (1983 batch- Madhya Pradesh Cadre) served as the DGP of Madhya Pradesh. The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) is the premier investigating agency of India, headed by the Director. CBI Operating under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions.
7. Former Nepal's law minister **Nilambar Acharya** has been appointed as the Country's Ambassador to India.

**Note:** Earlier, Mr Acharya has been served as a member of Eminent Persons Group formed by India and Nepal on bilateral relations. An ambassador is a diplomatic representative that attends international meetings, banquets and parties and acts as a figurehead for their country of origin.

8. The Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Corporation Bank--**PV Bharathi**

**Note:** Corporation Bank is a public-sector banking company headquartered in Mangalore, India. Currently, the bank has a network of 2,600 fully automated CBS branches, 3,040 ATMs, and 4,724 branchless banking units across the country.

9. The Union government has appointed Ambassador of India to Argentina---**Dinesh Bhatia**.

**Note:** Currently, He is the Consulate General of India at Toronto.

10. US President Donald Trump has nominated senior Treasury official as the chief of the World Bank for a five-year term -- **David Malpass'**

**Note:** He would replace Jim Yong Kim, if voted by the Directors of the World Bank Group. The President of the World Bank Group is responsible for chairing the meeting of the Boards of Directors and for overall management of the world Bank Group. The position of Managing Director of International Monetary Fund has gone to Europe.

11. India's envoy to Argentina has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Colombia -- **Sanjiv Ranjan**.

**Note:** An ambassador is a diplomatic representative that attends international meetings, banquets and parties and acts as a figurehead for their country of origin. An ambassador is the ranking government representative stationed in a foreign capital.

12. Senior IAS Officer **Pradeep Singh Kharola** has been appointed as the Secretary of the Ministry of Civil Aviation.

**Note:** Kharola will take over from Rajiv Nayan Choubey. Currently Mr. Kharola is the chief managing director (CMD) and Chairperson of Air India (from 9th January 2018).

13. Senior IPS officer **Dinkar Gupta** has taken over the charge of Director General of the Punjab Police.

**Note:** He succeeds current DGP Suresh Arora. Earlier, Mr. Gupta was posted as Director General of Police, Intelligence, Punjab. In India, the Director General of Police (DGP) is a three-star rank and the highest-ranking police officer in Indian States and Union Territories.

14. US Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross has announced MasterCard CEO and Qualcomm CEO as the American private sector members of the US-India CEO Forum -- **Ajay Banga & Steve Mollenkopf**.

**Note:** The first meeting of the forum will be held in New Delhi (on 14th February). The US-India CEO Forum is critical to the fruitful commercial relationship and strong economic ties between the two great nations. The US CEOs serve two-year terms and are selected from respondents to a Federal Register Notice calling for CEO-level applicants to the US Section of the Forum.

15. Egypt's President **Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi** has been elected as the Chairman of the African Union.

**Note:** El-Sisi's election brings an end to the one-year chairmanship of Rwanda's President Paul Kagame. The Chairperson of the African Union is the ceremonial head of the African Union elected by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government for a one-year term. It rotates among the continent's five regions (Southern Africa, Central Africa, West Africa, East Africa, North Africa).

16. **Ruchira Kamboj** has been appointed as the Ambassador of India to Bhutan.

**Note:** Currently, she is serving as the High Commissioner of India to South Africa. Earlier, Kamboj has served as the Ambassador/PR to Permanent Delegation of India to UNESCO, Paris. An ambassador is the ranking government representative stationed in a foreign capital.

17. **Sushil Chandra** has been appointed as the Election Commissioner of India.

**Note:** He will fill the vacancy caused by the retirement of O.P. Rawat. The Chief Election Commissioner heads the Election Commission of India, a body constitutionally empowered to conduct free and fair elections to the national and state legislatures. Chief Election Commissioner: Sunil Arora & Election Commissioner: Ashok Lavasa.

18. **Shri Pramod Chandra Mody** has been appointed as the new chairman of the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT).

**Note:** Mr Mody succeeds Sushil Chandra who was named as Election Commissioner of India. Mody has worked in various capacities in the I-T Department, has been working as the Member (Administration) in the CBDT. The CBDT Chairperson is ex-officio special secretary and is under the direct charge of the revenue secretary of India.

19. **Hina Jaiswal** has become the first Indian women flight Engineer of the Indian Air Force (IAF).

**Note:** She completed the 6 months flight engineer course from the 112 Helicopter Unit attached to the Air Force station in Yelahanka in Bengaluru.

20. Former Railway Board Chairman **Ashwani Lohani** has been appointed as the CMD of Air India.  
**Note:** Lohani will take over from Pradeep Singh Kharola. Earlier, Pradeep Singh Kharola (IAS officer -1985 batch-Karnataka cadre) has been appointed as the Secretary of the Ministry of Civil Aviation. Air India is the flag carrier airline of India, owned by Air India Limited and operates a fleet of Airbus & Boeing aircraft serving 90 domestic and international destinations.
21. **B P Sharma** has been re-employment as the chairman and managing director (CMD) of Pawan Hans Limited.  
**Note:** Sharma took over as the CMD of Pawan Hans in March 2015. Pawan Hans Limited is a helicopter service company (Mini Ratna-I category PSU) based in New Delhi, India.
22. Senior IPS officer **Anuj Sharma** appointed as Kolkata Police Commissioner.  
**Note:** The West Bengal government has appointed Additional Director General (ADG) of West Bengal Police (law and order) Anuj Sharma (IPS officer-1991-batch) as the new Kolkata Police Commissioner, replacing Rajeev Kumar. Earlier, Rajeev Kumar was transferred as ADG & IGP of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID). The Kolkata Police Commissioner heads the almost 35,000 strong metropolitan police force.
23. **Justice (retired) DK Jain** has been appointed as the BCCI's (Board of Control for Cricket in India) first ombudsman.  
**Note:** The Ombudsman is expected to resolve any issue that comes with regards to the players as also financial issues. Supreme Court has appointed Lt General Ravi Thodge as a third member of Committee of Administrators in Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI). Thodge will join Chairman Vinod Rai and former women's captain Diana Edulji in the panel entrusted with the job of running the BCCI by the apex court.
24. **Justice Uma Nath Singh** has taken oath as the first Lokayukta of Nagaland.  
**Note:** Nagaland Governor PB Acharya administered the oath of office to Justice Singh at a ceremony at Raj Bhavan in Kohima. The 'Lokayukta' is an anti-corruption ombudsman organization in the Indian states. Once appointed, Lokayukta can-not be dismissed nor transferred by the government and can only be removed by passing an impeachment motion by the state assembly.
25. India's boxing chief **Ajay Singh** has been elected as the president of the Foundation Board for Better Boxing of AIBA.  
**Note:** Currently, Mr. Singh is the president of Boxing Federation of India. AIBA formed the Foundation Board for Better Boxing in the last meeting of its Executive Committee to formulate an action plan for global development of the sport in future.
26. India-born former PepsiCo's CEO **Indra Nooyi** has joined the online retail giant Amazon's board of directors.  
**Note:** She is the second woman of colour to be added on the Amazon's board of Directors. She was Pepsico CEO from October 2006 to October 2018, where she also served as the Chairman of its board of directors from May 2007 to February 2019.
27. **Brijbhushan Sharan Singh** has been elected unopposed as President of Wrestling Federation of India (WFI).  
**Note:** He was the chef-de-mission of the Indian contingent for the Asian Games 2018 held in Jakarta and Palembang. Mr. Sharan is also a Member of Parliament from the Kaiserganj constituency of Uttar Pradesh.
28. Nigeria's President **Muhammadu Buhari** has secured a second four-year term in office.  
**Note:** Buhari defeated his main challenger Atiku Abubakar by a margin of nearly four million votes. Mr. Buhari first came to power in 2015 after defeating then-incumbent Goodluck Jonathan. Mr Buhari's All Progressives Congress (APC) won in 19 of the 36 states while the PDP was victorious in 17 states.
29. **Govind Prasad** has been appointed as the National Book Trust (NBT) Chairman.  
**Note:** Mr. Sharma has served as the Principal of Government P.G. College, Madhya Pradesh. National Book Trust (NBT) is an autonomous body (founded in 1957) under the Ministry of Education of the Government of India. Now, NBT functions under aegis of Ministry of Human Resource Development, Govt. of India.

### Important News - India

1. Scientists have developed an artificial pancreas smartphone (iAPS) app that will help in regulating blood sugar levels in **diabetes patients**.  
**Note:** This app is capable of interfacing wirelessly with glucose monitors, insulin pump devices, and decision-making algorithms. The app is effective in regulating glucose levels under challenging conditions and is suitable for use in unconstrained environments.

2. In an official order, The **Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP)** has been renamed as the **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade**.  
**Note:** The order has been approved by President Ram Nath Kovind. The newly-named department under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry will look matters related to promotion of internal trade, including retail trade, welfare of traders and their employees, facilitating ease of doing business and start-ups.
3. The Defense Acquisitions Council (DAC) chaired by Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman approved indigenous construction of **6 submarines**.  
**Note:** It is the second project under the Ministry's ambitious strategic partnership model aiming to boost the government's 'Make in India' program. The first project to get the government's nod for implementation under the new model was the acquisition of 111 utility helicopters for the Navy at a cost of over 21 thousand crore rupees in August 2018.
4. PM Narendra Modi launches 294 kilometres long two Railway projects **Andal- Sainthia-Pakur-Malda and Khana-Sainthia Sections** in West Bengal.  
**Note:** Electrification of this section will enable ease of transportation of coal, stone chips and ballast to North and North East India in a seamless manner. He will also dedicate the 20 kilometre-long Hijli- Narayangarh third line to the nation
5. Union Ministers Nitin Gadkari flag off a motor car rally to commemorate the 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi in **New Delhi**.  
**Note:** The rally will travel through places historically associated with Gandhiji, both in India, as well as in Bangladesh and Myanmar. It will conclude at Yangon in Myanmar on the 24th of this month, covering a total distance of 7250 km.
6. President 'Ram Nath Kovind' has opened Rashtrapati Bhavan's annual **Udyanotsav**.  
**Note:** About 10,000 programmed Tulip bulbs in 8 varieties of different color were imported from the Netherlands and have been planted in the Mughal Gardens. The people will also be able to visit the Spiritual Garden, Herbal Garden, Bonsai Garden and Musical Garden. The Mughal Gardens will remain open to the general public from 6th Feb to 10th of March between 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM.
7. The Union Government to launch **Kisan Credit Cards (KCC)** campaign to saturate farmers for financial inclusion under.  
**Note:** The Campaign will be launched through the Financial Institutions in collaboration with the State Governments. There are around seven crores active KCCs and issuing of KCCs in large numbers have helped increasing the agriculture credit. It has contributed significantly in not only fulfilling the objective of food security but also increasing the farmer's income.
8. The union Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh Puri launched a mobile app for booking of Bungalow number -5, Ashoka Road in New Delhi **Mashoka5**.  
**Note:** It is a step towards ensuring the commitment of the government for speedy provision of services to the citizens in a transparent and efficient manner. This Mashoka5 app will enable an applicant to complete the entire booking process from anywhere and at any time through mobile.
9. 'ICT Academy Bridge 2019' conference inaugurated in **Tamil Nadu**.  
**Note:** Minister for Information Technology of Tamil Nadu Dr M. Manikandan has inaugurated 'ICT Academy Bridge 2019' conference. The conference was organized under the theme "Fostering India for Industry 4.0", by ICT Academy. It witnessed more than 1,000 participants from government, industry and academia.
10. Union Minister of state for Communications **Mr Manoj Sinha** has released a **special postage stamp** of the Indian Postal Department on **Kumbh Mela**.  
**Note:** It is a commemorative **postal stamp** (cost-5 rupees) on Second Shahi Snan holy bath of **Mauni Amavasya**.
11. India's communication satellite '**GSAT-31**' has been launched successfully from French Guiana from Kourou Launch Base.  
**Note:** The Ariane-5 (VA 247) rocket placed it in the intended Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit in 42-minutes. GSAT-31 (India's 40th communication satellite) will provide transponder capacity for DTH television and connectivity to services like VSATs for ATMs, stock-exchanges, Digital Satellite News Gathering DSNG and e-governance applications.
12. The Union Cabinet has approved the proposal for the establishment of Rashtriya Kamdhenu Aayog for conservation, protection and development of **cows**.  
**Note:** It will lead to the development of the cattle population in the country including the development and conservation of indigenous breeds. Rashtriya Kamdhenu Aayog was announced in the budget on the 1st of this month.
13. Around 35 thousand farmers in the country received payments of three hundred crore rupees through e-payment facility of **e-NAM platform**.  
**Note:** Till date, 585 marts in 16 States and two Union Territories have been linked with e-NAM platform.
14. Former Governor of Jammu and Kashmir N. N. Vohra has inaugurated the 2nd National Conference of Micro Missions of National Police Mission in **New Delhi**.  
**Note:** The conference has been organised by the Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPRD). The National Police Mission Division of BPRD strives to transform the Police Forces of the country into an effective instrument for the maintenance of Internal Security.

15. The Textile Minister Smriti Irani has launched the India Size project (first-of-its-kind project in the history of the country) in **Mumbai**.  
**Note:** The objective of the India Size to arrive at a standard Indian Size for the ready-to-wear clothing industry. India size project will benefit manufacturers, consumers and generate data which will help tap into the potential of the sector. The Minister also launched a Study of Apparel Consumption in India, study report will release by July 2019.
16. The National Conference of Principals of **Kendriya Vidyalaya** and Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti held in **New Delhi**.  
**Note:** One thousand and 800 principals of these schools are participating in the conference. The Ministry had signed an agreement for India's Participation in Programme for International Student Assessment- PISA 2021. This will lead to improvement in the learning levels of the children and enhance the quality of education in the country.
17. The **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs** (CCEA) has approved **Broadcasting Infrastructure** and Network Development scheme of '**Prasar Bharti**'.  
**Note:** An amount of 1054 Crore rupees have been approved for a three years period. CCEA also approved the creation of Agri-Market infrastructure fund for development and upgradation of Gramin Agriculture Markets. A corpus of 2 thousand crore rupees will be created with NABARD. CCEA also approved the continuation of the Central Sector Scheme of Exploration of Coal and Lignite for a period of 3 years from 2017-18.
18. Tamil films actor Vijay Serthupathi has launched mobile app of city police department at the Commissioner's office **DigiCop**.  
**Note:** Using the App, people can track the status of stolen two-wheelers and cell phones (details of 18,000 mobile phones stored), know the nearest police station and traffic alerts. Serthupathi also released a DVD on CCTV awareness and several other police campaigns to make the police department people friendly.
19. The 5th India-Bangladesh Joint Consultative Committee Meeting held in **New Delhi**.  
**Note:** The last Joint Consultative Committee Meeting between the two countries was held in October 2017 at Dhaka (Bangladesh).
20. Indian Coast Guard has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for coordination in the aeronautical and maritime search and rescue operations **Airport Authority of India (AAI)**.  
**Note:** The objective of the MoU to strengthening mutual interactions, interoperability and validating procedures during conduct of search and rescue operations.
21. Bihar Governor **Lalji Tandon** and Union Agriculture Minister **Radha Mohan Singh** jointly inaugurated three-day **Krishi Kumbh in Motihari (Bihar)**.  
**Note:** The objective of Krishi Kumbh is to promote modern techniques and diversification in agriculture that could help in doubling farmers income. About two hundred different stalls in the fair will inform farmers about modern agricultural technologies.
22. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has formally inaugurated the three-day International Oil and Gas Conference 'PETROTECH-2019' (13th) in **Greater Noida, UP**.  
**Note:** The 'PETROTECH-2019' is being organized under the aegis of the **Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas**, Government of India. The **PETROTECH series** of International Oil & Gas Conference is a biennial platform for national and international experts in the oil & gas industry to exchange views and share knowledge, expertise, and experiences.
23. The first of the fifteen Chinook **heavy lift helicopter** ordered by the Indian Air Force (IAF) received at the **Mundra Port, Gujarat**.  
**Note:** Now Chinooks (carry around 10 tonnes of load) will be transported to its home base at Chandigarh. Chinooks have a unique twin engine, tandem rotor design which has become one of the most visibly recognised symbols of the American armed forces.
24. President **Ram Nath Kovind** unveiled the life size portrait of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee at the **Central Hall of Parliament**.  
**Note:** Vajpayee became the Prime Minister for the first time in 1996 for 13 days, then for 13 months (1998 to 1999) and then from 1999 to 2004. He passed away on 16th August 2018 at the age of 93 years after a prolonged illness.
25. The **Dera Baba Nanak land Check post** in **Gurdaspur district of Punjab** will be authorized immigration checkpoint to exit and entry for visiting **Kartarpur Sahib Gurdwara** in Pakistan.  
**Note:** All classes of passengers with valid travel documents can exit or enter through the post. The government also appointed the Chief Immigration Officer as the Civil Authority for the purpose.
26. **Clouded Leopard** will be the mascot for the National Games 2022, coinciding with the 50th year of the creation of the state.  
**Note:** Clouded leopard is one of the wild cats that live throughout the forests of Garo, Khasi and Jaintia Hills. An estimated 14,450 athletes and officials are expected to visit Meghalaya during the Games. Meghalaya will be the third north eastern state after Manipur and Assam hosted the National Games in 1999 and 2007, respectively. The National Games comprises various disciplines in which sportsmen from the different states of India participate against each other.
27. The **Information and Broadcasting Ministry** has organized the first annual conference of Media Units in **New Delhi**.

- Note:** The conference has been chaired by Information and Broadcasting Minister **Rajyavardhan Rathore**. The objective of the conference to give a unique platform to the officers of the Indian Information Service working in different Media Units to converge at an All-India level.
28. Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the **CREDAI YouthCon -19** at Talkatora Stadium in **New Delhi**.  
**Note:** The theme for this YouthCon is Next Generation. Mr. Modi also visited the exhibition organized by Confederation of Real Estate Developers' Association of India (CREDAI). The Confederation of Real Estate Developers Association of India (CREDAI) is the apex body of all registered real estate builders and developers in India (established in 1999).
29. The 5th '**International Dam Safety Conference-2019**' is being held in **Bhubaneswar, Odisha**.  
**Note:** The basic objective of the events is to give exposure to non-DRIP States as well as other stakeholders across the Country and World, to the best global practices and technological advancements to address the emerging dam safety challenges. The event jointly organized by the Odisha government, the CWC and the World Bank under aegis of the ongoing World Bank assisted Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (DRIP) as a part of institutional strengthening.
30. Joint **Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Exercise** concluded in Jaipur, Rajasthan **Exercise Rahat**.  
**Note:** Indian Army was represented by Jaipur based Sapta Shakti Command. The exercise was conducted in three places, in Jaipur it was in the form of a table top exercise and at Kota and Alwar it demonstrated on-ground capability and coordination among various stakeholders. Representatives from Armed Forces, National Disaster Management Response Mechanism (NDMRM), SDMA Rajasthan and DLMAs participated in the exercise.
31. The book titled "**Let's Talk On Air: Conversations with Radio Presenters**" has been released on **World Radio Day**.  
**Note:** The book has been authored by Rakesh Anand Bakshi. This book is depicted as the comprehensive guide on radio-presenting in India. This book explains the lives of 14 popular radio presenters in India from the legendary Ameen Sayani to present-day RJs who have been entertaining us via the airwaves.
32. The Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has released a publication titled **India Spearheading Climate Solutions**.  
**Note:** This document mentions India's key actions taken towards combating and adapting to climate change. International Solar Alliance (ISA) is an alliance of 121 countries, most of them sunshine countries.
33. The **Union Cabinet** has approved the proposal for Extension of tenure beyond **31st of March 2019** for three years of **National Commission for Safai Karmacharis (NCSK)**.  
**Note:** The Union Cabinet approved the signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Saudi Arabia on cooperation and mutual assistance in Customs Matters. It also approved the signing of MoU between the two countries in the field of tourism and establishing a mechanism for Investment Infrastructure in India.
34. Minister of State (IC) for AYUSH **Shripad Yesso Naik** has launched '**e-AUSHADHI**' portal.  
**Note:** The new 'e-AUSHADHI portal' is intended for increased transparency, improved information management facility, improved data usability and increased accountability. This e-portal is an acronym for Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy Automated Drug Help Initiative.
35. The National Conference on Unani Medicine held in **New Delhi**.  
**Note:** The two-day National Conference on Unani Medicine inaugurated by Dr. Najma Heptulla (Governor of Manipur). The Conference has been organized by the Central Council for Research in Unani Medicine (CCRUM). The conference witnessed exchange of MoU for scientific collaboration in Unani Medicine between the CCRUM and Jamia Hamdard, New Delhi.
36. Under the scheme, **workers of the unorganized sector** will receive a minimum assured pension of **three thousand rupees per month** after attaining the age of 60 years **Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-Dhan**.  
**Note:** The workers whose monthly income is 15 thousand rupees per month or less and belong to the entry age group of 18 to 40 years are eligible for the scheme. During the receipt of pension, if the subscriber dies, the spouse of the beneficiary will be entitled to receive 50% of the pension.
37. Former Vice President Hamid Ansari has launched the **new book** of former Finance Minister P Chidambaram **Undaunted: Saving the Idea of India** in New Delhi '  
**Note:** The book is a collection of essays on the country's atmosphere of fear and how the constitutional values are being threatened.
38. Indian army Carried Out the annual exercise at **Deolali Camp** near Nashik named **Exercise Topchi**.  
**Note:** There were a showcase of display of rockets, missiles, surveillance, and target acquisition radars, remotely piloted aircraft and hi-tech equipment in addition to gunfire. The precision displayed while delivering the explosives in the target area stunned all those present.
39. Former President **Pranab Mukherjee** has released the book '**Selected Speeches: Volume-1**' containing selected speeches (92 speeches) of Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu.  
**Note:** The book is categorized into six broad sections - 'Functioning of Legislatures', 'Nation and Nationalism', 'Polity and Governance', 'Economic Development', 'Media' and 'India and the World'. The Publications Division of the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting has brought out the compilation.
40. The union Home Minister Rajnath Singh has launched single emergency helpline number '**112**' in Sixteen States and UT

**Note:** The 16 states and UTs are Andhra Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Puducherry, Lakshadweep, Andaman, Dadar Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu, Jammu and Kashmir. To access the emergency services, a person can dial 112 on a phone or press the power button of a smartphone three times quickly to send a panic call to the Emergency Response Centre (ERC).

41. PM Narendra Modi flagged off the world's first electric engine converted from diesel locomotive at the Diesel Locomotive Works (DLW) in **Varanasi**.  
**Note:** Under Make in India initiative, The 10,000 HP freight locomotive has been converted from two units of old diesel locomotives of 2,600HP each with indigenous technology. The converted locos will result in less green-house gas emissions and better efficient locomotives for the Indian Railways.
42. Defence Minister **Nirmala Sitharaman** has inaugurated the five-day long biennial '**Aero-India-2019**' (12th edition) in **Bengaluru**.  
**Note:** 61 aircraft, including **HAL's indigenous** products **LCA Tejas** are all set to roar in the city skies. The tagline for Aero India 2019 is "**The Runway to a Billion Opportunities**". The event will see participation from countries like Israel, US, UK, Germany, Russia and France to name a few.
43. **Human Resource Development Ministry** has launched '**Operation Digital Board**' to provide better digital education in schools.  
**Note:** Under the initiative, **seven lakh classrooms** of **9th, 10th and 11th** standards and **two lakh classrooms** of colleges and Universities will be equipped with digital boards in the next three years. It will improve the quality of education and offer new opportunities and new ways of teaching and learning. It will revolutionize the education system in the country with different kinds of digital teaching materials, quality lectures and other facilities.
44. Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has announced **Annadata Sukhibhava scheme** for farmers.  
**Note:** Under Annadata Sukhibhava scheme 2019, an amount of Rs 9,000 will be given to the farmers having land less than 5 acres. This will be in addition to the Rs 6,000 announced by the Central government. Farmers having land more than 5 acres, will be given Rs 10,000.
45. Union Cabinet approves continuation of **Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana (PMAY)** to build nearly **2 crore houses** for **Rural poor**.  
**Note:** The Union Cabinet has approved the implementation of Phase-2 of the Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana - Gramin beyond March 2019. Under this, government has set a target to construct one crore 95 lakh houses by 2022. In Phase-2, the scheme will continue as per the existing norms of PMAY-G Phase-1, with a target of 60 lakh houses till 2019-20 involving financial implication of 76,500 crore rupees.
46. The Union Minister Suresh Prabhu has launched **SWAYATT** initiative in New Delhi.  
**Note:** SWAYATT is an initiative to promote Start-ups, Women and Youth Advantage using e-Transactions on Government e Marketplace (GeM). This will bring together the key stakeholders within the Indian entrepreneurial ecosystem to Government e-Marketplace the national procurement portal. GeM Start-up Runway will address goals and objectives under United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.
47. The **Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI)** has organized workshop on "**Committee of Creditors: An Institution of Public Faith**" in **Mumbai**.  
**Note:** The workshop was jointly organized with the **State Bank of India (SBI)** and the **Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA)**. The Workshop was unique and the First of its kind for the benefit of Financial Creditors who comprise Committee of Creditors (CoC) under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016. 28 Senior Officers (General Managers and Executive Directors) of the major Scheduled Commercial Banks participated in the Workshop.
48. PM Narendra Modi flags off India's first semi-high-speed train **Vande Bharat Express**.  
**Note:** A two-minute silence observed before the launch in memory of at least 37 CRPF soldiers who lost their lives in one of the deadliest attacks in J&K. The Vande Bharat Express will run between Delhi and Varanasi at a maximum speed of 130 km/hr and is expected to cover distance of 750 kilometres in eight hours.
49. A new book '**What Marx Left Unsaid**' released by Manish Tewari.  
**Note:** The book has been authored jointly authors by 3 generations of the same family Dr. Malay Chaudhari, Dr. Arindam Chaudhari and Che Kabir Chaudhari. The book speaks about why human beings must earn as per their skills, which will in turn determine their ability to contribute to society. The book is published by Times Group.
50. Challachitram National Film Festival will be held from 1st March 2019 at **Guwahati**.  
**Note:** The theme of this three-day film festival is 'Our Heritage, Our Pride'. Chalachitram is a Guwahati-based organization working for showcasing the heritage and culture of the northeast to national and international audience through films. The first prize winner in the competitive section would get Rs one lakh, the special prize for participants from the region would be Rs 50,000.
51. The 3rd Indo-German Environment Forum held with the theme "Cleaner Air, Greener Economy:" in **New Delhi**.

- Note:** Around 250 representatives of ministries, business and science as well as non-governmental organizations participated in the forum. The Forum provided a platform for the bilateral exchange of high-level policy-makers and other key players on international environmental and climate policy and cooperation between the two countries.
52. The Union Govt. has cleared the **National Policy on Electronics 2019** (NPE 2019) proposed by the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)**.  
**Note:** The NPE- 2019 aims to position India as a global hub for Electronics System Design and Manufacturing (ESDM) by encouraging and driving capabilities in the country for developing core components. It envisions positioning India as a global hub for Electronics System Design and Manufacturing.
53. The book 'Simplicity & Wisdom' authored by **Mr. Dinesh Shahra**.  
**Note:** The book authored by famous Industrialist and Philanthropist Mr. Dinesh Shahra (Chairman of Ruchi Group). The book aims at guiding towards saintly wisdom and leading a content and happy life.
54. The **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs** (CCEA) approved the launch of '**KUSUM Yojana**' to provide financial and water security to farmers.  
**Note:** The objective of the KUSUM Yojana is to provide financial and water security to farmers. The scheme aims to add a solar capacity of 25,750 MW by 2022. The Central Government will provide a total financial support of Rs 34,422 crore for the scheme.
55. **Ordnance Factory Board (OFB)** has received a bulk production clearance from the Indian Army and the Defence Ministry for production of 114 'Dhanush' artillery guns.  
**Note:** 'Dhanush' is the first long-range artillery gun to be produced in India. It is the product of efforts by the OFB and the Army with various contributions.
56. Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the '**National War Memorial**' in **New Delhi**.  
**Note:** The memorial is a commemoration of the sacrifices made by Indian soldiers since Independence with the names of 25,942 martyrs (scope to add more names) etched in stone forever. The main structure has been built in the form of four chakras with the eternal flame and obelisk located in the inner-most chakra (Amar Chakra). The obelisk stands at a height of 15.5 metres and is visible even from a distance as one enters the complex. The memorial will help strengthen the sense of belonging, high moral values, sacrifice and national pride in the citizens.
57. Prime Minister Narendra Modi delivered keynote address at 'Rising India Summit 2019' in **New Delhi**.  
**Note:** Theme for this year's event is "Beyond Politics: Defining National Priorities". People of eminence and exceptional achievements from various walks of life come together in New Delhi to celebrate India's successes and deliberate the future. 'Rising India', an incontrovertible truth, is one of most anticipated thought leadership forums in India.
58. The Minister of state for health **Ashwini Kumar Choubey**, has launched a national action plan '**Viral Hepatitis**' in **Mumbai**.  
**Note:** The programme is also in line with the country's global commitment towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3.3. The objective of the programme is to combat hepatitis and achieve countrywide elimination of Hepatitis C by 2030. Amitabh Bachchan is the goodwill ambassador for hepatitis, WHO South-East Asia Region.
59. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has launched the '**PM-KISAN scheme**' at **Gorakhpur (Uttar Pradesh)**.  
**Note:** The Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana was announced in the interim Budget 2019-20. Under the Scheme, Rs 6,000 will be given per year to small and marginal farmer families having combined land holding of up to 2 hectares. The Scheme becomes effective from 1.12.2018 for transfer of benefit to eligible beneficiaries.
60. NITI Aayog Vice Chairman **Dr. Rajiv Kumar** inaugurated a conference on "**The Future of Indian Banking**" in **New Delhi**.  
**Note:** The **objective of the conference** was to increase and elevate the discourse on the banking sector in India and help develop insights to inform the continued evolution of the Indian banking sector for optimally supporting the growing credit needs of the Indian economy. The conference was organized with Foundation for Economic Growth and Welfare (EGROW Foundation).
61. Railway Minister has been launched a **Rail Drishti Dashboard** for passengers to keep track of train punctuality as well as other such information from anywhere in the country.  
**Note:** The 'eDrishti' dashboard has been developed by the Centre for Railway Information System (CRIS) and can be accessed at 'www.raildrishti.cris.org.in'. Now, people can now track any information related to Indian Railways in a swipe - even while on the move. The dashboard has been linked to the base kitchens of the Indian Rail Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) to allow monitoring of the goings-on in IRCTC kitchens through live video.
62. Union Minister of Health Minister **J P Nadda** inaugurated the **4th Global Digital Health Partnership Summit** in **New Delhi**.  
**Note:** The **objective of the summit** is to provide an **opportunity to support governments** and health system reformers to improve the health and well-being of their citizens through digital technologies. The **Global Digital Health Partnership** (GDHP) is a **collaboration of governments and territories**, government agencies and the World Health Organization, formed to support the effective implementation of digital health services.
63. Prime Minister Narendra Modi attended the **Gita Aradhana Mahotsav** at **ISKCO** in **New Delhi**.

**Note:** It is measuring over 2.8 meters and over 800 kilograms the Bhagwad Gita is one of this kind in the world. It will have the original verses of Bhagwad Gita along with commentary.

**64. Skill Development Minister inaugurates Skill Saathi Youth Conclave in Odisha.**

**Note:** The Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has inaugurated a “Skill Saathi Youth Conclave” to create awareness about various programmes under Skill India Mission in Bhubaneswar, Odisha. The Skill Saathi model was created to impart information on vocational education and available market opportunities to the youth.

**65. Home Ministry has announced the hike in Risk and Hardship allowance for Central Armed Police Forces personnel deployed in Left Wing Extremism states and Jammu and Kashmir.**

**Note:** Troops up to the rank of Inspector will get Rs. 17,300 (existing Rs. 9,700) while the officers will get Rs. 25,000 (existing Rs. 17,300) per month. This will be a huge morale booster for all CAPF deployed in these areas.

**66. The Union Minister for Civil Aviation Suresh Prabhu has inaugurated the ‘Aviation Conclave 2019’ in New Delhi.**

**Note:** The theme of Aviation Conclave 2019 is “Flying for All”. It brings together industry leaders, government and regulators for setting the tone and propelling us to realize our Vision-2040. Aviation Conclave 2019 has been organized by the Ministry of Civil Aviation, in association with Airports Authority of India, AAICLAS and Confederation of Indian Industry.

**67. The Union Minister Piyush Goyal has launched the ‘Online Platform for Display and Booking’ of vacant berths after chart preparation -- www.irctc.co.in.**

**Note:** The **user-friendly interface** will give a graphical representation of the train coaches and berth-wise accommodation status on www.irctc.co.in. The **new feature in the ticketing system** is a dynamic system which will keep upgrading itself as the train proceeds for the destination and passengers can see the real-time availability of berths.

**68. The Union minister Jual Oram has launched ‘Minimum Support Price’ (MSP) for Minor Forest Produce and Value Addition Component of Van Dhan Scheme in New Delhi.**

**Note:** The Ministry of Tribal Affairs is scaling up the “Van Dhan Scheme” and extend it to all tribal Districts of the Country in phases starting with the Aspirational Districts with substantial tribal population. The Ministry also expanded the coverage of the Minimum Support Price for Minor Forest Produce Scheme to 50 Minor Forest Produce.

**69. Rail Minister Piyush Goyal has announced a new Zone of Indian Railways -- South Coast Railway (SCoR).**

**Note:** The South-Central Railway will then consist of the Hyderabad, Secunderabad and Nanded divisions. The new zone will comprise the existing Guntakal, Guntur and Vijayawada divisions that currently fall under the South-Central Railway

### States News

**1. 33rd Surajkund International Crafts Mela held at Faridabad (Haryana).**

**Note:** This year Maharashtra is the theme state and Thailand is the Partner Nation. At least 20 countries and all the states of India will be participating in the Mela. Surajkund is located near the Surajkund village between the villages of Baharpur and Lakkarpur in Faridabad district of Haryana.

**2. The Union Information and Broadcasting Minister Rajvardhan Singh has inaugurated the second Jharkhand International Film Festival in Ranchi.**

**Note:** The objective of promoting the Festival is to encourage states that have showcased potential of promoting cinema. It will also promote Jharkhand as a filming destination, while simultaneously giving a fillip to tourism in the region.

**3. Punjab government has approved a rural development scheme ‘Smart Village Campaign’ to supplement the ongoing works to build village infrastructure and provide essential amenities.**

**Note:** The scheme would be financed with funds (Rs 384.40 crore) from the **14th Financial Commission** and MGNREGA works. The objective of the ‘Smart Village Campaign’ to improving the condition of rural areas by supplementing the ongoing government schemes for building infrastructure and providing essential amenities.

**4. The Chief Justice of India (CJI) Ranjan Gogoi has inaugurated the new two-storied building of Andhra Pradesh High Court in Amaravathy.**

**Note:** Amaravati region has 16 court halls and the building costing Rs 150 Crore houses a 2.70 lakh square feet office space. Now, Andhra Pradesh is getting its own court four and half years after the state bifurcation.

**5. India’s largest multi-cultural street festival ‘Kala Ghoda Arts Festival’ (KGAF) begins in Mumbai.**

**Note:** The theme of KGAF 2019 is retrospection. KGAF 2019 has been celebrated in two glorious decades of art and culture through cinema, theatre, dance, literature and sculpture. The Festival is organized by the Kala Ghoda Association and curated by teams handling each of the 12 sections of the festival.

**6. The Punjab Government has declared the endangered Indus River dolphin as the state aquatic animal.**

**Note:** Dolphin mostly found in the lower parts of the Indus River in Pakistan between Chashma and Kotri barrages in the Indus River. As per the WWF report, the number of dolphins presently is 1816. Punjab has Black Buck as its state animal, and Baaj as the official state bird.

**7. Kerala has become the first Indian State to set up a Price Monitoring and Research Unit (PMRU) to track violation of prices of essential drugs and medical devices under the Drugs Price Control Order (DPCO).**

**Note:** The move comes more than five years after the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) proposed such a system for the States and the Union Territories. As a part of the proposal, the first PMRU was established by NPPA in Kerala in collaboration with State Drug Controller, Kerala.

8. State's Nyishi tribe celebrated its **Boori Boot Yollo festival** (52nd) to welcome spring and a successful harvest in **Arunachal Pradesh**.  
**Note:** Boori Boot Yollo is observed every year in the month of February. The festival witnessed the grand display of Punu/Jajin and Boori Yapa dance.
9. Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister **Pema Khandu** flagged off the **Arunachal leg of the Startup India Yatra** from civil secretariat in Itanagar.  
**Note:** The Startup Yatra van will travel across the state with two Boot camps and 4 van stops to provide a platform to entrepreneurs at grassroots to pitch their ideas. The yatra will create awareness among the youths on government's policy for startups, startup India and other schemes aimed at supporting the entrepreneurs.
10. The **Union Home Ministry** banned the J&K outfit **Tehreek-ul-Mujahideen (TuM)** under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA)  
**Note:** The central government believes that TuM is involved in terrorism as it has committed and participated in various acts of terrorism in India. Its members are getting financial as well as logistic support from their handlers based abroad. The TuM came into existence in 1990 with the objective of "liberation of Kashmir" and has been actively pursuing it by way of acts of terror.
11. Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone for the strategically important Sela Tunnel Project in **Arunachal Pradesh**.  
**Note:** It will give a fillip to the overall development of the area as it will provide all-weather connectivity to Tawang and other areas. This tunnel will cut across and reduce the distance between Dirang and Tawang by 10 km. The project is being constructed by the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) in next three years.
12. K J Alphons lays foundation stone for Sree Narayana Guru spiritual pilgrimage circuit in **Varkala, Kerala**.  
**Note:** This project covers all the places in Thiruvananthapuram district where the Guru spent most of his life. This project which was sanctioned last month will help improve the infrastructure and facilities at these centres.
13. The Union Minister for Food Processing Industries Harsimrat Kaur Badal laid foundation stone of a Mega Food Park in **Mathura, UP**.  
**Note:** It will prove to be a big boost to the growth of the food processing sector in Uttar Pradesh.
14. A Himalayan Cloud Observatory has been set up in Uttarakhand's **Tehri district**.  
**Note:** The Observatory has been established in the SRT campus Badshahithaul and is currently in the testing period. The observatory will receive forecast and monitor cloudburst incidents in the Himalayan region and help minimise the damage. Cloudburst incidents are very frequent in the hilly areas of Uttarakhand, resulting in a huge loss of life.
15. The Meghalaya Government has decided to rename the Dikkibandi Stadium in Tura town after **P. A. Sangma**.  
**Note:** The Dikkibandi Stadium was formerly known as MP stadium. Earlier, the recommendations received from the state naming authority tasked with the job to name roads, and institutions after personalities.
16. The Union Minister of Food Processing **Harsimrat Kaur Badal** has inaugurated the mega food park at Village Singhain in **Una District, HP**.  
**Note:** This is the first Mega Food Park operationalized in the State of Himachal Pradesh at a cost of Rs 107.34 crore. It will boost to the food processing sector by adding value and reducing food wastage at each stage of the supply chain with particular focus on perishables. These mega food parks create modern infrastructure facilities for food processing along the value chain from farm to market along with strong forward and backward linkages through a cluster-based approach.
17. The **Rajasthan** government passed a Backward Classes Amendment Bill, 2019 to provide 5% quota in jobs and educational institutions to 'Gurjars' and four other communities.  
**Note:** The state government has also decided to increase the ceiling of creamy layer from **Rs. 2.5 lacks to Rs. 8 lacks**. The Gurjar community has been holding agitations since Friday across the state demanding five per cent separate quota for them.
18. Bihar government has announced a universal old age pension scheme '**Mukhyamantri Vridhajan Pension Yojna (MVPY)**' for all people above 60 years of age.  
**Note:** Currently old age pension scheme is applicable to only the BPL category. All will be eligible for Rs. 400 monthly Pension irrespective of caste, religion or community. The Scheme will come into force from the 1st of April 2019. The Chief Minister Nitish Kumar also announced a pension of Rs. 6,000 for journalists above 60 years of age.
19. Union Minister of Food Processing Industries **Harsimrat Kaur Badal** commissioned India's first Aqua Mega Food Park Commissioned in **Andhra Pradesh**.  
**Note:** The mega park has been set up in 57.81 acres at a cost of Rs 122.60 crore. It will be the first Mega Aqua Food Park operationalized exclusively for fish and marine products processing in the state of Andhra Pradesh.
20. The three-days International **Annual Desert Festival** (40th) held in **Jaisalmer**.

- Note:** The festival exhibits the rich cultural heritage of the desert state, commenced with a colourful procession from Gadsisar lake fort. It had interesting events like Mr. Desert and Ms. Moomal competitions, mustache competitions, turban tying, musical and cultural performances, among others.
21. The Telangana state government has announced to create two more districts **Narayanpet and Mulugu**.  
**Note:** Now the number of districts in the State is 33. Narayanpet has been carved out of Mahbubnagar district and Mulugu from Jayashankar Bhupalpally. When Telangana was carved out of erstwhile Andhra Pradesh (on June 2, 2014), it had just 10 districts.
  22. **Sanskrit** has become the 2nd official language of Himachal Pradesh.  
**Note:** Himachal Pradesh states assembly passed Official Language (Amendment) Bill 2019 to make Sanskrit as the second official language of the state (first - Hindi).
  23. Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has launched **KALIA Chhatra Bruti** scholarship for the children of farmers in the state.  
**Note:** The objective of the scheme is to provide financial assistance for technical and professional education to farmers' children. The scholarship will be sent directly to the bank accounts of students via. DBT (Direct Benefit Transfer).
  24. The **Uttar Pradesh** Govt. has announced **phenomenal increase** in the wages of Anganwadi workers, Mini Anganwadi workers, Sahayikas and Prantiya Raksha Dal members.  
**Note:** The salary increase will benefit around 4 lakhs Anganwadi and helper workers. There will be an increase of Rs. 1500 in the present honorarium of Anganwadi workers, Mini Anganwadi (Rs. 1250), Sahayikas (Rs.750) increase in their present monthly salary. Prantiya Raksha Dal will also get a daily increase of 125 rupees.
  25. Kerala Chief Minister, **Pinarayi Vijayan** has inaugurated **India's first Humanoid Police Robot 'KP-BOT'**.  
**Note:** The robot's gender is declared female (ranked as Sub-Inspector) keeping in mind women empowerment and gender equality. The work on the project was started by state police Cyberdome and a Kochi based start-up, Asimov.
  26. The **West Bengal** government has set up a **separate Directorate** to deal with the cases of tax evasions.  
**Note:** The headquarters of the Directorate will be situated at Kolkata and will have seven branch offices in the Districts. The state government has estimated that evasion of commercial taxes, excise duties and taxes on the building and land registration leads to revenue losses of one thousand crore rupees in the State.
  27. **Uttar Pradesh** Government has launched 'Scheme for Adolescent girls'.  
**Note:** The objective of the scheme is to take care of the education of girls, aged between 11 to 14 years, till graduation, who have left studies. The state government has also decided to observe 8th of every month as Adolescent Girls Day at Anganwadi centres across the state.
  28. Union Textiles Minister Smriti Irani has launched the Integrated Large Scale Eri Farming under North East Region Textile Promotion Scheme (NERTPS) in **Itanagar**.  
**Note:** The Project will cover five districts of the state (Papumpare, East Kameng, Siang, East Siang and West Siang). Around one thousand acres land will be covered for Eri Farming in the chosen districts of the state. The Union Government has decided to provide financial assistance to 4000 (four thousand) beneficiaries under NERTPS.
  29. The **Madhya Pradesh** Government has launched 'Mukhyamantri Yuva Swabhiman Yojana'.  
**Note:** The State Government's flagship scheme 'Mukhyamantri Yuva Swabhiman Yojana' to urban youths (21-30 years) from economically weaker sections. Under the scheme, Rs 4,000 stipend per month will be given for 100 days of employment every year. Only those youths, whose family's annual income is less than Rs 2 lakh are eligible for the scheme.
  30. The **Assam** Government has inaugurated the Assam Employees Parents Responsibility and Norms for Accountability and Monitoring (PRANAM) Commission.  
**Note:** PRANAM bill is an effort from the state government to protect the old parents and divyang siblings in their times of need and give them financial security. It will benefit 8 lakh parents of 4 lakh state government employees. PRANAM bill makes mandatory for the employees of the State government to look after their parents and unmarried divyang siblings who do not have their own source of income.

### Important News – World

1. **Air India** is resuming its services after **25 years** from New Delhi to the holy city of **Najaf, Iraq**.  
**Note:** Indian Ambassador to Iraq Dr Pradeep Rajpurohit said, the services will commence from the 14th of next month, and it is initially being planned for twice a week. Najaf is a city some 160 kilometres from Baghdad. It is an important pilgrimage place considered sacred by Shia Muslims
2. **Macedonia** formally signed an **agreement to join NATO** (the North Atlantic Treaty Organization) to become the **30th member** of the US-led alliance.  
**Note:** The Macedonia-NATO accord follows a deal with Greece ending a 27-year-old dispute over Macedonia's name. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is an intergovernmental military alliance between 29 North American and European countries.

3. UAE leaders has announced the construction of the 'Church of Saint Francis' and 'Mosque of Grand Imam Ahmad Al-Tayyeb' in **Abu Dhabi**.  
**Note:** They will serve as beacons to uphold the values of tolerance, moral integrity and human fraternity in the UAE.UAE had also granted 55000 squares meters of land for the construction of a Hindu Temple in Abu Dhabi.
4. Director European Film Market (EFM) **Matthijs Wouter Knol** has inaugurated the Indian Pavilion at 69th Berlin International Film Festival (Berlinale) 2019 at Berlin, Germany.  
**Note:** The stakeholders of EFM will actively consider participating in the Golden Jubilee year of IFFI.India Pavilion is being act as a platform to popularize Indian Cinema in overseas market and facilitate new business opportunities.Ministry of I&B, in collaboration with Confederation of Indian Industry, is participating in the Berlin International Film Festival.
5. An independent analysis by **NASA** and the **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration** have found that earth's global surface temperatures in 2018 were the fourth warmest since **1880**.  
**Note:** Globally, 2018's temperatures rank behind those of 2016, 2017 and 2015.The past five years are collectively the warmest years in the modern record.It found that 2018 global temperatures were 0.79 degrees Celsius above the 20th-century average.
6. Mascot for the 13th Conference of Parties (COP) of the UN Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species (CMS) --- **Great Indian Bustard (GIB)**.  
**Note:** The 13th Conference of Parties (COP) of the UN Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species (CMS) will be held in Gujarat in 2020. He also revealed that the bird has been fondly named by the ministry as 'Gibi'.The Government also launched a website for the COP-13.CMS COP is also known as the Global Wildlife conference.
7. **Abu Dhabi** declared Hindi as the third official language in its courts to make the justice delivery system simple.  
**Note:** It will help Hindi speakers to learn about litigation procedures, their rights and duties without a language barrier.It will also make the justice delivery system simpler and more accessible to Indian expatriates in that country.
8. Women in the **Hungary** country with **four children** or more will be exempted for life from paying income tax.  
**Note:** The move aims at boosting the country's population. For women who raise at least four children, a subsidy of 8,825 US dollars will be given for the purchase of a seven-seat vehicle. A low-interest loan of 35,300 US dollars for women under the age of 40 who are marrying for the first time will be introduced.
9. **India** has raised the basic customs duty to **200%** on all goods imported from **Pakistan** with immediate effect.  
**Note:** Earlier, India withdraw the **Most Favoured Nation (MFN)** status in the aftermath of the Pulwama terror attack.The main items which Pakistan exports to India include fresh fruits, cement, petroleum products, bulk minerals and ores and finished leather.
10. Vice President **Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu** has inaugurated the **World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS) 2019** in **New Delhi**.  
**Note:** The World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS) is The Energy and Resources Institute's (TERI) annual flagship event. The **theme of the 2019 edition** of the Summit is 'Attaining the 2030 Agenda: Delivering on Our Promise'.Frank Bainimarama (Prime Minister of Fiji) has been honoured with the Sustainable Development Leadership Award 2019 for his outstanding contributions towards sustainable development in Fiji.
11. **Iran** has launched new locally-made submarine capable of firing cruise missiles.  
**Note:** Iran President Hassan Rouhani has launched a new locally-made submarine 'capable of firing cruise missiles. The submarine, named the Fateh, Persian for 'conqueror', is Iran's first in the semi-heavy category.
12. India has announced withdrawal of Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status for **Pakistan**.  
**Note:** The decision was taken during the Cabinet Committee on Security meeting (CCS) in New Delhi.India had granted the status to Pakistan in 1996, a year after WTO's formation. In the World Trade Organization (WTO), this status means non-discrimination treating virtually everyone equally.
13. The 4th **India-ASEAN Expo and Summit 2019** begins in **New Delhi**.  
**Note:** Trade **Ministers of ASEAN Countries**, Secretary General of ASEAN, business delegations, 200 plus exhibitors from India and ASEAN are participating in the Expo and Summit.This is a flagship event being organized with FICCI to carry forward the momentum and to further strengthen India-ASEAN relations under the Act-East Policy.
14. **Saudi Arabia** will invest 100 billion dollars in India in range of areas including energy, refining, petrochemicals, infrastructure, agriculture and manufacturing.  
**Note:** On the visit of Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, the two sides also expressed satisfaction at the positive trend in the bilateral ties and stressed on the need to tap the untapped potential in trade particularly in Non-Oil trade.

### Honor & Awards

1. The world's busiest airport for international customer numbers for the **fifth consecutive year** with annual traffic for 2018 --- **Dubai International Airport (DXB)**.

- Note:** Indian travelers emerging as the largest source of traffic for the airport which registered a record footfall of over 89 million. It overtook the crown of the world's busiest hub for international travel from London's Heathrow in 2014. The Dubai International Airport (DXB) was opened for civil aviation in July 1937.
2. India received the award of excellence for '**Best in Show**' during the Closing Bell Ceremony at New York Times Travel Show 2019 (NYTTS 2019).  
**Note:** It is the largest travel show in North America, held in New York, USA. The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India participated as the 'Presenting Partner' in the New York Times Travel Show (NYTTS 2019).
  3. According to Culture Minister **Mahesh Sharma**, who has revealed the top revenue-generating monuments in the country between 2015 and 2018 -- **Taj Mahal**.  
**Note:** The top revenue-generating monuments during 2015-18 is Taj Mahal. Others in the top 10 list for the period of 2015-2018 include Agra Fort, Red Fort, Qutub Minar, Sun Temple in Konark, Humayun's Tomb, Mamallapuram, Ellora caves, group of monuments in Khajuraho, and the Ajanta caves in Aurangabad. Tourism contributes nearly 9.4% of the country's GDP and supports 8% of its total employment.
  4. **92** Army men were awarded Sena medals for their gallantary and distinguished services at an investiture ceremony in Udhampur.  
**Note:** Lieutenant General Ranbir Singh (GOC-in-C of Northern Command) presented 76 medals for gallantry services, 7 medals for distinguished services and 8 for Vishist Seva. Lance Naik Nazir Ahmed Wani, (recipient of Ashok Chakra) was also awarded Bar to Sena Medal posthumously which was received by his wife.
  5. **Father Francois Laborde** conferred the Légion d'Honneur (Legion of Honour), the highest civilian award of France, in recognition of his work for specially-abled children.  
**Note:** He is the third person from the state to have been awarded the Legion of Honor after Satyajit Ray (film maestro- in 1987) and Soumitra Chatterjee (actor). Father Laborde had set up Howrah South Point, an organisation working for the development of specially-abled children, the destitute and the most deprived sections of the society.
  6. State Bank of India's UK chief **Mr. Sanjiv Chadha** has been honored with the 'Freedom of the City Of London' in recognition of his contribution to promoting the bilateral relations.  
**Note:** Mr. Chadha was nominated for the honor by Lord Mayor of London Peter Estlin and Sheriff Vincent Keaveny. Sanjiv Chadha took up the position in 2014.
  7. The five-day Multinational Maritime Exercise '**AMAN-19**' commenced in Karachi with the slogan "Together for Peace".  
**Note:** The flag of 46 countries including Pakistan presented a march-past. According to Pakistan Vice Admiral Amjad Khan Niazi, it is a step to enhance cooperation, take benefit from mutual advantage and understand each other. Ambassadors and delegates of various countries are also present in the inauguration ceremony.
  8. Indo-Canadian filmmaker **Deepa Mehta** will be given the Lifetime Achievement Award by the Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television.  
**Note:** Mehta was born in India, but she had moved to Canada (in 1973) after her marriage to documentary filmmaker Paul Saltzman. Mehta is best known for her Elements Trilogy – 'Fire', 'Earth' and 'Water'. The Canadian Screen Awards are given annually by the Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television recognising excellence in Canadian film, English-language television, and digital media productions.
  9. The **61st annual Grammy Awards** were announced at Staples Center in **New York (USA)**.  
**Note:** The award show was hosted by American singer-songwriter Alicia Keys. Cardi B became the first woman to win best rap album as a solo artist. Childish Gambino's "This Is America" won four awards and Gaga's "Shallow," from the movie "A Star Is Born," won two awards.
  10. Noted Indian historian **Sanjay Subrahmanyam** has won Israel's prestigious **Dan David Prize 2019**.  
**Note:** He shares the USD 1 million award in this category with Prof Kenneth Pomeranz of University of Chicago. The award in the "Present" category was won jointly by Reporters without Borders and Professor Michael Ignatieff for "Defending Democrac". The international Dan David Prize is awarded annually to those who have made outstanding scientific, technological and humanistic accomplishments in fields representing the past, present and future of human achievement.
  11. Film **The Favourite** has won seven honours in British Academy Film Awards (BAFTA)- 2019 in London.  
**Note:** The Favourite won best actress for Olivia Colman and best supporting actress for Rachel Weisz, Outstanding British Film, Original Screenplay, Costume Design, Production Design, Makeup and Hair. Also, Netflix production 'Roma' also had a successful night picking up four prizes - best film, best director, best cinematography and best film not in the English language. Rami Malek won best actor for playing Freddie Mercury in the film Bohemian Rhapsody.
  12. **Bradley Cooper** won the best Director from PETA for 'A Star Is Born'.  
**Note:** Bradley Cooper (43-years) has been awarded the 'Oscat' by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA). The animal rights organization awarded Cooper "for his enlightened decision to cast his own canine companion in 'A Star Is Born' rather than using one supplied by a notorious animal exhibitor".
  13. Prime Minister Narendra Modi talked with Argentinian President **Mauricio Macri** in New Delhi.

**Note:** Mr Macri's visit comes at a time when India and Argentina are celebrating the 70th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations.

18. **Abdul Aziz Muhamat** has won the Martin Ennals Award 2019 in Geneva (Switzerland).
14. Badminton legend **Prakash Padukone** has been honored for the Lifetime Achievement at the Taj Mahal Palace, Mumbai.
 

**Note:** In the Sportsman of the Year (Cricket) category, India skipper Virat Kohli and pacer Jasprit Bumrah were declared as joint winners. Indian women's cricket team opener Smriti Mandhana bagged the Sportswoman of the Year (Cricket) award.
15. **Narendra Modi** received the 'Seoul Peace Prize' in recognition of his dedication to international cooperation, global growth and human development.
 

**Note:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi will receive the 'Seoul Peace Prize' in recognition of his dedication to international cooperation, global growth and human development.
15. US President Donald Trump has signed an executive order to establish its Space Force as a new armed service within the **Department of Air Force**.
 

**Note:** The Space Force will include both combat and combat support functions to enable prompt and sustained offensive and defensive space operations in all domains. The force will be organized, trained, and equipped to meet and protect the US national interests in the space, consistent with international laws. It will organize and train the next generation of warriors to deter aggression and defend the United States.
16. Month-long 'festival of India' organized by the Indian Embassy and Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre begins in **Kathmandu**.
 

**Note:** Buddhism has been established as a major religion in both the countries as Lord Buddha was born in Nepal and attained enlightenment in India.
17. Sudanese President **Omar al-Bashir** has declared a **year-long state** of emergency throughout the country.
 

**Note:** He also dissolved his cabinet and local governments throughout the country. Omar al-Bashir's term ends in 2020 and he has repeatedly promised over the years not to make new runs for the presidency.
18. External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj has been invited to deliver an address at the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in **Abu Dhabi**.
 

**Note:** This is the first time that a leader of the non-Muslim country has been invited to the OIC conference. She will be the Guest of Honour and address the inaugural plenary of the 46th Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of OIC.
19. **Indonesian** team of researchers spotted the world's giant bee which is as big as a human thumb.
 

**Note:** Wallace's giant bee (scientific name -Megachile pluto) is the world's largest bee species. It was first discovered in 1859 by the prominent scientist Alfred Russel Wallace and was presumed extinct.
20. The 8th World Corporate Social Responsibility Congress 2019 was held in Mumbai.
 

**Note:** The theme of the year 2019 is 'Sustainable Development Goals' (SDGs) to focus on corporate strategies, innovation, and strategic alliances. Dr. Soumitro Chakraborty won 'CEO of the year' award.
21. **Narendra Modi** received the prestigious '**Seoul Peace Prize - 2018**' for contribution to international cooperation and fostering global economic growth.
 

**Note:** The award was presented to him by the Seoul Peace Prize Foundation at a grand ceremony in Seoul. PM Modi gives the prize money of Seoul Peace Prize USD 200,000 to 'Namami Gange fund'. The Seoul Peace Prize was established in 1990 to commemorate the success of the 24th Olympic Games held in Seoul.
22. **Olivia Colman** won the best actress award for "**The Favourite**", at the **91st Academy Awards ceremony** in Los Angeles.
 

**Note:** The British actress got the award for her performance as Queen Anne in the period comedy-drama. Rami Malek won the best actor for a biographical film "Bohemian Rhapsody". An American biographical comedy-drama film, "Green Book" won the Best Picture. Filmmaker Alfonso Cuarón has won the Best Director Oscar for 'Roma' which is an American and Mexican drama. Pop diva Lady Gaga got the Best Original Song Academy Award for "Shallow" from her feature debut "A Star is Born".
23. The first Indian-origin woman honoured with a Blue Plaque at her former London home\_\_ Noor Inayat Khan.
 

**Note:** The Blue Plaque scheme run by English Heritage honours notable people who lived or worked in particular building across London. Khan's plaque is set to go up at 4 Taviton Street in Bloomsbury, where she lived as a secret agent during the war. Khan was the daughter of Indian Sufi saint Hazrat Inayat Khan.
24. Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh has presented National e-Governance Awards, 2019 in six categories in \_\_ New Delhi.
 

**Note:** The awards are given every year to recognize and promote excellence in implementation of e-Governance initiatives.

Railway's ticket booking mobile application 'Rail Connect mobile' and the Chhattisgarh government's 'Khanij online' are among 14 such IT projects that have been chosen for this year's National e-Governance Awards.
25. **G.R. Karthikeyan** was honored with the **Lifetime Achievement award** at the **FMSCI annual awards** function.
 

**Note:** Mr. Karthikeyan is the father of India's first Formula One driver Narain Karthikeyan. FIA president Jean Todt was the chief guest and handed over the awards.
26. Eminent Indian playwright '**Mahesh Elkunchwar**' has been chosen for this year's **META Lifetime Achievement Award**

**Note:** The playwright will be conferred upon with the award on 12th March, along with the winners of the 14th Mahindra Excellence in Theatre Awards (META) festival. Elkunchwar is critically-acclaimed and widely-known for having experimented with a wide range of drama and is considered a powerful force in both Indian and Marathi theatre scene.

## Sports News

1. **Mithali Raj** has become the first woman to play 200 matches in the ODI (One-day Internationals) format.  
**Note:** India's women's cricket team Captain Mithali Raj already holds the record for being the most capped woman in one-day internationals. Mithali's international career is fourth-highest behind only Sachin Tendulkar, Sanath Jayasuriya, and Javed Miandad. She is the highest run-scorer in women's international cricket and the only female cricketer to surpass the 6,000 runs mark in WODIs.
2. **Qatar** won the AFC Asian Cup 2019 crown in Abu Dhabi.  
**Note:** For the first time, the Asian Cup final tournament was contested by 24 teams. The 2019 AFC Asian Cup (17th edition) was the quadrennial international men's football championship of Asia organised by the Asian Football Confederation (AFC).
3. The first Indian golfer **Vani Kapoor** to receive Australian Women's PGA Tour (LPGA) card.  
**Note:** Vani played 71, 78 and 69 cards in the first qualifying tournament played at Balatar Golf Club. In this competition 81 participants had participated, out of which the top 20 will get an opportunity to play in the Australian LPGA. Vani has also qualified for Vic Open, co-sanctioned by the Australian LPGA and the US LPGA.
4. South Korean footballer **Ki Sung-yueng** has announced his retirement from the South Korean national team.  
**Note:** Ki played for South Korea in three World Cups (2010, 2014, 2018) and three Asian Cups (2011, 2015, 2019). Sung-yueng made his international debut on 5th September 2008 and ended his international career as the eighth-most capped South Korean player. He is also a three-time KFA Player of the Year, having received the top honour in 2011, 2012 and 2016.
5. **Haryana Hammers** lifted the Pro Wrestling League season 4 title at the Gautam Buddha University indoor stadium, Greater Noida.  
**Note:** The Pro Wrestling League (PWL) is an Indian sport wrestling promotion that was established in 2015. The Pro Wrestling League includes six franchises (Delhi Sultans, UP Dangal, Haryana Hammers, MP Yodha, Mumbai Maharathi and the NCR Punjab Royals) which represent cities throughout India.
6. **Vidarbha** won the **Ranji Trophy 2018-19 edition** (85th season) at the Vidarbha Cricket Association in Nagpur.  
**Note:** The Ranji Trophy is a domestic first-class cricket championship played in India between teams representing regional and state cricket associations.
7. Minister of State for Culture, **Dr. Mahesh Sharma** inaugurated the 21-day-long nationwide theatre spectacle 'Bharat Rang Mahotsav' in **New Delhi**.  
**Note:** It is the international theatre festival of India, Organized by National School of Drama (NSD). The 20th BRM comes with 111 national and international acts in its basket that includes folk and other traditional theatre forms, invitee plays, and productions by the students of the National School of Drama. The National School of Drama (NSD) is an autonomous institution under the Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India.
8. **Smriti Mandhana** has become the number-1 batter in latest ICC ODI rankings.  
**Note:** Earlier, she was named ICC Women's Player of the Year 2018. Recently, she played a key role in India's maiden ODI series on New Zealand soil.
9. Indian left-handed batswoman **Smriti Mandhana** scored the India's fastest-ever T20 fifty.  
**Note:** She scored 50 off 24 deliveries (India vs NZ - T20I in Wellington). She bettered her own record of a fifty in 25 balls, which she created in 2018 against England.
10. World champion Indian weightlifter **Saikhom Mirabai Chanu** notched up a gold medal (in 48kg category) at the EGAT Cup in Thailand.  
**Note:** Chanu (from Manipuri) won the 48kg category gold with an effort of 192 kg in the silver level Olympic qualifying event. She lifted 82 kg in snatch and 110 kg in clean and jerk to finish on top of the podium.
11. The 9th Senior Women's Hockey National C'ship kicks off in **Hisar**.  
**Note:** Top India stars will turn up for their respective state units and employers for the tournament. RSPB will begin their campaign against Hockey Rajasthan in the Pool A opening match during the 11-day domestic extravaganza.
12. **Rohit Sharma** has become the highest run scorer in the Twenty20 International history.  
**Note:** Sharma overtook New Zealand's Martin Guptill, who has scored 2,272 runs in 74 innings in T20I. He also became first India and the third overall player to smash 100 sixes in T20 cricket. Rohit made his T20 debut against England in 2007 and has played 92 matches, averaging 33.15.

13. The top-seeded Indian squash player **Ramit Tandon** defeated Egyptian Mohamed El Sherbini to win PSA challenger squash Tour event 'Seattle Open'.  
**Note:** He rose to his career high ranking of 58 in the latest February list. Mr. Tandon won his first PSA title in the new year and fourth title overall in his career.
14. Former Australian captain **Ricky Ponting** has been appointed as an assistant coach of Australia's men's team for the 50-over World Cup in England.  
**Note:** Ponting will work with Australia's batsmen for the May 30-July 14 tournament. Now, current batting coach Graeme Hick preparing the side for the Ashes tour in England (held in August).
15. Corentin Moutet (France) has won the Chennai Open ATP Challenger tennis singles tournament in Chennai.  
**Note:** The Chennai Open Challenger is a professional tennis tournament played on hard courts annually in Chennai, India since 2018. Currently it is a part of the Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) Challenger Tour.
16. Australia spin legend **Shane Warne** has been named the brand ambassador of Rajasthan Royals (RR) for the Indian Premier League (IPL)-2019.  
**Note:** Warne went on to captain Rajasthan Royals for four seasons until 2011, after which he retired from all forms of cricket. Besides, Rajasthan Royals has also decided to change its jersey colour from blue to pink this year.
17. **Railway Sports Promotion Board** lifted the 9th Senior National Men's Hockey Championship crown at Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh.  
**Note:** They dished out a scintillating performance to stun defending champions Punjab 3-2 and claim the gold medal. Petroleum Sports Promotion Board beat Punjab and Sind Bank, 4-1 to clinch the Bronze medal.
18. India's young paddlers clinching four medals (1-gold, 2-silver and 1-bronze) at the Bahrain Junior and Cadet Open Table Tennis tournament in **Manama, Bahrain**.  
**Note:** In the final, The India-A team of Suhana Saini and Anargya Manjunath proved too strong for India-B and clinched the Gold. In the Junior girls' competition, the Indian team of Manushree Patil and Swastika Ghosh beat three teams before losing to eventual champions Russia to settle for a Silver.
19. The **83rd edition** of the Senior National Badminton Championships has begun in **Guwahati**.  
**Note:** The top eight singles players will be placed directly in the pre-quarterfinals. Similarly, the top four teams in the doubles will start their campaign from the quarters. The Indian National Badminton Championships is a tournament organized to crown the best badminton players in India since 1934.
20. British driver **Jamie Chadwick** has become the first female driver to win the MRF challenge title after scoring a triple win in the final round in Chennai.  
**Note:** Earlier, Chadwick became the first woman to win a British F3 race.
21. Youth Olympics gold medalist **Jeremy Lalrinnunga** has won the silver in men's 67-kilogram category in the EGAT's Cup International Weightlifting Championships in Chiang Mai, Thailand.  
**Note:** Lalrinnunga lifted 131 kilograms in the snatch and 157 kilograms in clean and jerk for a total of 288 kilograms. Deni (Indonesia) total lifted 303 kilograms and won Gold medal. Ruben Katoatau (Kiribati) took the bronze with a total lift of 285 kilograms.
22. Indian **Prajnesh Gunneswaran** has made it to the top-100 of Men's Singles Tennis rankings.  
**Note:** He ranked 97 with a jump of six places. Prajnesh is the third Indian player to break into the top-100 barrier after Somdev Devvarman and Yuki Bhambri.
23. Indian professional footballer **Sunil Chhetri** has been conferred the first ever Football Ratna honour.  
**Note:** He is popularly known as 'Captain Fantastic'. He has scored the 2nd highest number of goals in international matches among active players after Cristiano Ronaldo.
24. **Saina Nehwal** has won women's Yonex-Sunrise 83rd Singles Senior Badminton Title.  
**Note:** Saina Nehwal won her fourth title at the Yonex-Sunrise 83rd Senior Nationals.
25. **Sourabh Verma** won men's Yonex-Sunrise 83rd Singles Senior Badminton Title.  
**Note:** Sourabh Verma claiming the men's singles crown after defeating young Lakshya Sen in straight games of 21-18, 21-13.
26. West Indian batsman **Chris Gayle** will retire from **One-day Internationals** after the forthcoming World Cup.  
**Note:** Gayle has scored 9,727 ODI runs, second only to the legendary Brian Lara among West Indians in 284 matches. Gayle has scored a Windies record of 23 ODI hundreds, including the first ever World Cup double century against Zimbabwe. The World Cup will be held in England and Wales from 30th May till 14th July 2019.
27. **Elise Mertens** won the women's singles 2019 Qatar Open title.  
**Note:** Belgium's Elise Mertens (23-years) beat top seed Simona Halep (Romania) 3-6, 6-4, 6-3 to win the Qatar Open 2019. This is world number 21 Mertens' first-ever WTA Premier-level crown, and the fifth title of her career overall.
28. **Roberto Bautista Agut** won the men's singles 2019 Qatar Open title.  
**Note:** Roberto Bautista Agut (Spain) beat Tomas Berdych (Czech Republic) 6-4, 3-6, 6-3 to win the Qatar Open 2019. The Qatar Open is a professional Tennis tournament played on outdoor hard courts.

- 29. Vidarbha** won the Irani Cup 2018-19.  
**Note:** Vidarbha (Ranji Trophy champions) successfully defended their title and defeated Rest of India on first-innings basis to win the tournament in Nagpur. Player of the Match: Akshay Karnewar (Vidarbha).
- 30. Nikhat Zareen and Meena Kumari Devi** won the gold medals at the Strandja Memorial Tournament in Sofia, Bulgaria.  
**Note:** Zareen claimed a 5-0 win in the 51kg category finals against Filipino Irish Magno. Devi defeated another Filipino Aira Villegas 3-2 in the bantamweight (54kg) summit clash.
- 31. Sports Minister Rajyavardhan Rathore** has inaugurated the International Shooting Sports Federation (ISSF) World Cup in **New Delhi**.  
**Note:** The ISSF World Cup is crucial for Indian shooting as it has 16 quotas up for grabs for Tokyo 2020 Olympic qualification. India is fielding a 23-member squad with 11 shooters in the non-competition Minimum Qualification Score category. The International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) is the governing body of the Olympic Shooting events in Rifle, Pistol and Shotgun disciplines, and of several non-Olympic Shooting sport events.
- 32. United Arab Emirates (UAE) coach Irfan Ansari** has been banned from all forms of cricket for ten years.  
**Note:** The Anti-Corruption Tribunal of ICC found him guilty of breaching three counts of the ICC Anti-Corruption Code. Ansari approached Pakistan captain Sarfaraz Ahmed during Pakistan series with Sri Lanka in the UAE in October 2017.
- 33. Malaysia's 8-time World Champion Nicol David** announced her retirement.  
**Note:** She is one of the most successful squash players of all time and spent an unprecedented 9 years at World No.1 (in 2006-2015). David also lifted 5 British Open titles, 2 Commonwealth Games gold medals, 5 Asian Games gold medals and 3 World Games gold medals.
- 34. Indian skipper Manpreet Singh** honoured with 2018 Asian Hockey Federation (AHF) AHF's Player of the Year.  
**Note:** Women team's striker Lalremsiami (18-year-old) has bagged the Rising Player of The Year prize. Manpreet led the Indian team to an unbeaten streak at the Asian Champions Trophy in Muscat, joint winners with Pakistan.
- 35. Apurvi Chandela** has won the gold medal in the women's 10-metre air rifle event at the Dr Karni Singh Shooting Range in New Delhi.  
**Note:** This is India's first medal of the ISSF World Cup 2019. She set a new world record by registering a score of 252.9 points in the final. Silver medallist Zhao Ruozhu (China) scored 251.8 points, Xu Hong (China) settled for the bronze medal with 230.4 points.
- 36. Saurabh Chaudhary** has won the gold medal in the men's 10m air pistol event at ISSF World Cup in New Delhi.  
**Note:** Saurabh shot a total of 245 (World Record) to claim the top spot. He has also booked a spot in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.
- 37. Indian Grandmaster Abhijeet Gupta** lifted the Cannes International Open Chess trophy.  
**Note:** Abhijeet won the tournament with 7.5 points. Then two more wins and three draws happened on the way to his first solo International tournament victory.
- 38. Former Sri Lankan Cricket Captain Sanath Jayasuriya** has been banned from Cricket for two years, after he failed to cooperate in a corruption investigation.  
**Note:** According to ICC statement, Jayasuriya admitted to breaching two counts of the ICC Anti-Corruption Code. He served as chair of the selection committee during 2016-17 during which team performance dipped and has remained uneven since then.
- 39. Veronika Major** has won a gold medal in 10-metre air pistol event at ISSF World Cup at the Dr Karni Singh Shooting Range in New Delhi.  
**Note:** She bagged the medal with 245.1 points in the tournament. Taipei's Chia Ying Wu won a silver medal, with 238.4 points Korean Bomi Kim came third, with 218.3 points.
- 40. Indian duo Saurabh Chaudhary and Manu Bhaker** won the Gold medal in 10-metre air pistol mixed team event at the ISSF world cup Shooting in New Delhi.  
**Note:** They shot a total of 483.5 points to finish on top of the podium. The Chinese duo of Ranxin Jiang and Bowen Zhang won the Silver with 477.7 points. India jointly topped the standings with Hungary in the ISSF World Cup claiming three gold medals but managed to secure only one Olympic quota.
- 41. Afghanistan** scored highest-ever total in T20s at the **Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium, Dehradun --278/3**.  
**Note:** First player from Afghanistan Hazratullah Zazai scored 162 runs from just 62 balls. Earlier, in 2016 Australia's record score of 263/3 which they achieved back against Sri Lanka. Zazai's 236-run opening stand with Usman Ghani became the highest partnership in T20Is.

## Banking & Financial Awareness

- 1. The Interim Union Budget 2019-20** presented by the Union Finance Minister **Piyush Vedprakash Goyal** in **Lok Sabha**.

**Note:**

- An interim budget is a temporary financial document that helps a business or public agency get through a period that's shorter than a typical budget cycle, which is normally one year.
- An Interim Budget gives the complete financial statement, very similar to a full Budget.
- The Fiscal deficit has also been reduced to 3.4% in the revised estimate of 2018-19
- The Union government has announced a financial support package for farmers "Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi" (PM-KISAN), includes direct cash transfer of Rs 6,000 per year in three instalments.
- The scheme will apply to only farmers with less than two hectares of land holding.
- Rashtriya Gokul Mission - 750 crores.
- "Rashtriya Kamdhenu Aayog" to upscale sustainable genetic up gradation of cow resources and to enhance production and productivity of cows
- A Separate Department of Fisheries for the welfare of 1.5 crore fisherman to promote further growth over 7% to promote the livelihood of about 1.45 crore people dependent on the sector.
- 10% quota to EWS of General category (Without disturbing the existing reservation system) & a 10% reservation for Economically weaker sections in educational institutions and government jobs has been ensured."
- Vande Bharat Express (Train 18) will provide speed, service and safety and will give a boost to Make in India.
- Defence budget enhanced beyond 3 lakh crore rupees.
- Individual taxpayers with income up to Rs. 5 lakh taxable income will get a full tax rebate.

2. **Dilip Sadarangani** has appointed as the part-time chairman of Kerala based private sector lender Federal Bank.

**Note:** The Federal Bank is a major scheduled commercial bank in India, headquartered at **Aluva, Kerala**.

3. The **Sovereign Gold Bond Scheme 2018-19** (Series 6) continued till **8th Feb 2019**.

**Note:** The issue price of the Bond during this subion period will be three thousand three hundred twenty-six rupees per gram with the settlement date of 1st of February. The Centre in consultation with the Reserve Bank of India has decided to allow discount of 50 rupees per gram from the issue price to those investors who apply online and make the payment through digital mode. The issue price of Gold Bond will be three thousand two hundred seventy-six rupees per gram of gold.

4. Fino Payments bank partners with **Small Finance Bank** to Offer Sweep Account Facility **Suryoday SFB**.

**Note:** This partnership will help FPB address the issue of deposit limits that all the payment banks face at the moment.

5. The country's tourism sector fetched 234 billion US Dollar revenue last year, registering a growth of over **19%**.

**Note:** The country is ranked third in the tourism sector, according to the 2018 report of the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC). This revenue was contributed by 87% domestic and 13% foreign tourists.

6. The **Reserve Bank of India** slapped a one crore Rupees penalty on Syndicate Bank & Rs 20 lakh on Axis Bank for violating norms.

**Note:** The penalty on Syndicate Bank is due to non-compliance with the directions regarding frauds and risk management systems. Axis Bank was fined for contravention of the directions on detection and impounding of counterfeit notes and installation of note sorting machines.

7. **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** has bought 14% stake in micro-financier Annapurna Finance for Rs 137 crore.

**Note:** ADB has backed MFIs to help achieve its broader objective of reducing poverty in Asia and the Pacific. The investment by ADB will expand Annapurna's net worth to Rs 580 crore.

8. As per the Finance Ministry notification, the two regional rural banks (RRBs) **Pallavan Grama Bank & Pandyan Grama Bank** will be merged to form the Tamil Nadu Grama Bank.

9. 'Kisan Suvidha loan' for small and marginal farmers has been launched by **Ujjivan Small Finance Bank**.

**Note:** The scheme will attempt to reach the bottom of the pyramid with products and services.

10. RBI (Reserve Bank of India) cuts repo rate by 25 basis points to **6.25%**.

**Note:** The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) decided to reduce the key policy rate or the repo rate by 25 bps to 6.25% in bimonthly policy review of 2018-19. The reverse repo rate under the LAF stands adjusted to 6.0 per cent. The marginal standing facility (MSF) rate and the Bank Rate to 6.5 per cent.

**Current Policy Rates:**

Policy Repo Rate	6.25%
Reverse Repo Rate	6.0 %
Marginal Standing Facility Rate	6.50%
Bank Rate	6.50%

11. India has jumped eight places on the **International Intellectual Property (IP) Index**, which analyses the IP climate in 50 global economies, this year at **36th** position.  
**Note:** India's eight-point jump in 2019 from 44th position in 2018 is the highest increase among 50 nations mapped by the index. The US, the UK, Sweden, France and Germany remained the top five economies on the intellectual property index in 2019 retaining their spots from the last year.
12. The RBI has slapped Rs 1 crore penalty on the country's largest lender **State Bank of India (SBI)** for not monitoring the end use of funds in respect of one of its borrowers.  
**Note:** RBI in exercise of powers conferred under Section 47 A of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 has levied a penalty. SBI not share details of the borrower and the loan amount given to the borrower.
13. As per data released by the ministry of **statistics and Programme Implementation**, Retail inflation decline in January -- **2.05%**.  
**Note:** As per Central Statistics Office data, the inflation in the 'fuel and light' category also fell to 2.2% in January this year (in Dec 2018-4.54%). Retail inflation means the increase in prices of certain products or commodities compared to a base price.
14. The **Reserve Bank** has imposed monetary penalty of two million rupees each on **HDFC Bank, IDBI Bank and Kotak Mahindra Bank**.  
**Note:** The Reserve Bank has imposed monetary penalty for non-compliance of various Know Your Customer/ Anti-Money Laundering norms.
15. **Fino Payments Bank** has announced the launch of a sweep account facility in association with Suryoday Small Finance Bank (SSFB).  
**Note:** This partnership will help FPB address the issue of deposit limits that all the payment banks face at the moment. As per the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), payment banks can only take deposits upto Rs1 lakh per account.
16. **Reserve Bank of India** has decided to treat deposits to over Rs 2 crores as 'bulk' as they doubled the limit for the same.  
**Note:** This move will enhance the operational freedom of Banks. According to current RBI rules, last reviewed in January 2013. RBI also proposed banks would maintain their bulk deposits interest rate cards in the core banking system for supervisory review.
17. RBI imposed **1 crore rupees** penalty on **Andhra Bank**.
18. RBI also imposed monetary penalty of 1.5 Crore rupees each on **Allahabad Bank, Bank of Maharashtra & Indian Overseas Bank**.  
**Note:** According to RBI, the action is purely based on deficiencies in regulatory compliance and is not intended to pronounce upon the validity of any transaction by the banks with their customers.
19. The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has approved the Credit Linked Capital Subsidy and Technology Up-gradation Scheme (CLCS-TUS) with a total outlay of **Rs. 2900 crore**.  
**Note:** The objective of the scheme is to improve the competitiveness of MSMEs by integrating various ongoing schematic interventions aimed at up-grading technology through Credit Linked Capital Subsidy (CLCS). The scheme will facilitate technology up-gradation improvement in Quality of products by MSMEs, enhancement in productivity, reduction in waste.
20. The Union Government has increased the **Minimum Support Price (MSP)** of sugar for the year 2018-19 from Rs. 29 **per Kilogram to Rs. 31**.  
**Note:** With this step the appropriate amount will be available to sugar mills, which will enable them to pay the sugarcane farmers on time. Minimum Support Price (MSP) is an Agriculture product price set by the Government of India to purchase directly from the farmer.
21. **NTPC** has signed a term loan agreement for Rs 5,000 crore with State Bank of India (SBI).  
**Note:** This loan has a tenure of 15 years and will be utilized to part finance the capital expenditure of NTPC. NTPC Limited is India's largest energy conglomerate with roots planted way back in 1975 to accelerate power development in India.
22. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has imposed Rs 1.5 crore penalties on **Oriental Bank of Commerce (OBC)** for violation of various banking norms\_\_\_\_
23. According to the latest data available with depositories, **Foreign investors** put in over 5300 Crore rupees into the Indian equity market in the first half of this month.

24. The infusion into the equity market comes following a pull-out of 5,264 crore rupees by foreign portfolio investors (FPI) in January.  
**Note:** However, **FPIs** pulled out a net amount of **248 crore rupees** from the bond market during the period. This has translated into a net investment of **5,074 crore rupees** in the country's capital markets (equity and debt together).
25. Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has imposed Rs 1 crore penalties on two public sector banks for violation of various banking norms **Punjab National Bank (PNB) and Bank of India**.  
**Note:** The **monetary penalty** on the banks has been imposed for **non-compliance** with various directions issued by the RBI on monitoring of end use of funds, exchange of information with other banks, and on restructuring of accounts.
26. The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** will transfer **interim dividend 28,000 crore rupees** to the central government for the half-year.  
**Note:** The decision has been based on a limited audit review and after applying the extent economic capital framework. In the interim Budget 2019-20, the government has projected a fiscal deficit target of 3.4% for the financial year 2019-20.
27. President **Ram Nath Kovind** has directed that the Finance and **Corporate Affairs portfolios** be assigned to **Arun Jaitley**.  
**Note:** Mr. Jaitley, who left for New York last month, returned home last week after undergoing medical treatment. On 23rd January 2019, the charge of the Finance Ministry and Corporate Affairs was given to Union Minister Piyush Goyal on a temporary basis.
28. Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) has launched a new micro insurance plan **Micro Bachat**.  
**Note:** It is a regular premium, non-linked participating endowment micro insurance plan, offers a combination of protection and saving. For the first time, a micro insurance plan has been launched providing coverage up to Rs 2 lakh. This plan is available for standard healthy lives only in the age group of 18-55 years without undergoing any medical examination.
29. **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** withdrew the **20% limit on investments by FPIs** in corporate bonds of an entity with a view to encourage more foreign investments.
30. Employee's Provident Fund Organization (EPFO) interest rate on employee's provident fund for the 2018-19 fiscal year 8.65% (earlier- 8.55%).  
**Note:** The Central Board of Trustees (CBT) headed by the Labour Minister is the apex decision making body of the EPFO which finalizes rate of interest on PF deposits for a financial year. As many as over 6 crore subscribers of EPFO will benefit from the interest hike.
31. The GST Council slashed tax rates on under-construction housing properties to **5% (existing 12%)**.  
**Note:** The Council also cut GST rates on affordable housing to 1% (current 8%). The council altered the definition of affordable housing, any house built on an area of 60 square metres or less in the metro cities of India will be categorised as affordable housing. The new tax rates will come into effect from 1st April 2019.
32. **Britannia Industries** will replace **Hindustan Petroleum Corporation (HPCL)** in the National Stock Exchange Fifty (NIFTY) 50 index.  
**Note:** Britannia Industries hand gained 1.43% to settle at Rs 3,056 on the bourse, on the other hand HPCL share dropped 1.54% to Rs 227.40 on NSE. The NIFTY 50 index is National Stock Exchange of India's benchmark broad based stock market index for the Indian equity market.
33. **Zimbabwe** started to trade its new currency 'the RTGS dollar' after the central bank announced measures to try and resolve a chronic monetary crisis.  
**Note:** The bank unveiled a foreign exchange trading system that effectively devalued its quasi-currency, the bond note, which was officially pegged at parity with the US dollar. The new currency replaces electronic bank savings called digital dollars and the bond notes and was named after the real-time gross settlement system that banks use to transfer money between each other.
34. **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has taken off Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) from **Allahabad Bank, Corporation Bank and Dhanlaxmi Bank**.  
**Note:** The Board for Financial Supervision (BFS) met to review the performance of banks under PCA and noted that the government has infused fresh capital into various banks including some of the banks currently under the PCA framework.
35. **Bank of Baroda** tied up with Germany's KfW Development Bank for funding of USD 113 million to refinance solar projects.  
**Note:** The tie-up is part of an Indo-German Solar Energy Partnership signed in 2015.
36. Reserve Bank of India and Bank of Japan have signed a **Bilateral Swap Arrangement (BSA)**.  
**Note:** The BSA provides for India to access 75 billion US dollars whereas the earlier BSA had provided for 50 billion dollars. The BSA was approved by the Union Cabinet in January. India can access the agreed amount of 75 billion dollars for its domestic currency, for the purpose of maintaining an appropriate level of balance of payments or short-term liquidity.

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