# Important Current Affairs

For

(UPPCS – Pre 2019)

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1. National

1.1 India’s child well-being index:

Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Himachal Pradesh and Puducherry topped the charts in the child well-being index, a tool designed to measure and tracks children’s well-being comprehensively.

Meghalaya, Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh featured at the bottom, as per a report released by the non government organisation World Vision India and research institute IFMR LEAD recently.

NIA Amendment Bill-2019:

Why in News? The Lok Sabha has recently passed the National Investigation Agency (Amendment) Bill 2019.

Key features of the Bill:

- The Bill amends the NIA Act, 2008 and provides for a national-level agency to investigate and prosecute offences listed in a schedule (scheduled offences).
- It allows for the creation of Special Courts for the trial of scheduled offences which include offences under Acts such as the Atomic Energy Act, 1962 and the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act, 1967.
- As per the Bill, the NIA will now have the power to investigate the following offences.

  (i) human trafficking,
  (ii) offences related to counterfeit currency or bank notes,
  (iii) manufacture or sale of prohibited arms,
  (iv) cyber-terrorism, and
  (v) Offences under the Explosive Substances Act, 1908.
• **Jurisdiction:** The officers of the NIA have the same powers as other police officers in relation to the investigation of such offences, across India. In addition, officers of the NIA will have the power to investigate scheduled offences committed outside India, subject to international treaties and domestic laws of other countries.

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<th>RTI Amendment Bill 2019 :</th>
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**Why in News?** The government recently introduced in Lok Sabha the Right to Information (Amendment) Bill, 2019.

**What are the key changes proposed?**

- The Bill primarily amends **Sections 13 and 16 of the Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005.**
- **Term** - Section 13 of the original Act sets the term of the central Chief Information Commissioner (CIC) and Information Commissioners (ICs) at 5 years (or until the age of 65, whichever is earlier).
- Likewise, Section 16 sets the term for state-level CICs and ICs at 5 years (or 65 years of age, whichever is earlier).
- The amendment now proposes that the appointment for both will be “for such term as may be prescribed by the Central Government”.
- **Salary, etc** - Under Section 13, salaries, allowances and other terms of service of the CIC shall be the same as that of the Chief Election Commissioner.
- Those of an Information Commissioner shall be the same as that of an Election Commissioner.
- Similarly, under Sec 16, the original Act prescribes salaries, allowances and other terms of service of the state CIC and state ICs as the same as that of an Election Commissioner and Chief Secretary to the State respectively.

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<th>Van Dhan Yojana :</th>
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**Why in News?** The Prime Minister of India has announced the launching of **Van Dhan Yojana in Bijapur**, Chhattisgarh under which one Van Dhan Vikas Kendra was set up, as a pilot project. This Van Dhan Vikas Kendra is to cater to **ten Self Help Groups** of thirty tribal gathers each.
About Van Dhan Vikas Kendras initiative:

- The initiative aims to promote MFPs-centric livelihood development of tribal gatherers and artisans.
- It mainstreams the tribal community by promoting primary level value addition to MFP at grassroots level.

Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage), Bill 2019:


Background:

- The Supreme Court’s judgment in the Shayara Bano case held that the practice of talaq-e-biddat (or triple talaq) unconstitutional.
- After the judgement, government passed Muslim protection Bill also known as, Triple Talaq Bill in Lok Sabha but there has been criticism about the legal and procedural aspects of the bill.

Significance of the bill:

- The proposed Bill will protect the rights of married Muslim women and prevent divorce by the practice of instantaneous and irrevocable ‘talaq-e-biddat’ by their husbands.
- It provides the rights of subsistence allowance, custody of minor children to victims of triple talaq i.e. talaq-e-biddat.

Key provisions of the Bill:

- The Bill makes all declaration of talaq, including in written or electronic form, to be void (i.e. not enforceable in law) and illegal.

Definition: It defines talaq as talaq-e-biddat or any other similar form of talaq pronounced by a Muslim man resulting in instant and irrevocable divorce.

Rajasthan Passed Lynching Bill, 2019:
Why in News? The Rajasthan legislative assembly has recently passed a Bill providing for life imprisonment and a fine from Rs 1 lakh to Rs 5 lakh to those convicted in cases of mob lynching leading to victim’s death.

About the Bill:

- The Bill defines the mob as a group of two or more individuals.
- It also defines lynching as “an act or series of acts of violence or those of aiding, abetting or attempting an act of violence, whether spontaneous or preplanned, by a mob on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth, language, dietary practices, sexual orientation, political affiliation or ethnicity”.

PM Kisan Maan Dhan Yojana:

Why in News? Registration opens for PM Kisan Maan Dhan Yojana.

Aim: To improve the life of small and marginal farmers of the country.

Salient features of the scheme:

1. The scheme is voluntary and contributory for farmers in the entry age group of 18 to 40 years.
2. A monthly pension of Rs. 3000/- will be provided to them on attaining the age of 60 years.
3. The farmers will have to make a monthly contribution of Rs.55 to Rs.200, depending on their age of entry, in the Pension Fund till they reach the retirement date i.e. the age of 60 years.
4. The Central Government will also make an equal contribution of the same amount in the pension fund.
5. The spouse is also eligible to get a separate pension of Rs.3000/- upon making separate contributions to the Fund.

GI tag for T.N.’s Dindigul lock, Kandangi saree:

Dindigul lock and the Kandangi saree were given the GI tag by the Geographical Indications Registry in Chennai.

Dindigul Lock:
The famous **Dindigul locks** are known throughout the world for their superior quality and durability, so much so that even the city in **Tamil Nadu is called Lock City**.

**Kandangi saree:**

- The **Kandangi saree**, manufactured in Karaikudi taluk in Sivaganga district, Tamil Nadu.

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**Ethanol:**

**CCEA** has approved an increase in the price of ethanol to be procured by public sector **oil marketing companies (OMCs)** from sugar mills for blending with petrol for the **2019-20 supply year from December 1.**

- It has also allowed conversion of **old sugar into ethanol.**

**What is ethanol?**

- Ethanol is basically alcohol of **99%-plus purity**, which can be used for blending with petrol.
- Produced mainly from molasses, a byproduct of sugar manufacture.
- India is the **third largest** consumer of energy in the world after China and the US.
- India is dependent on imports for about **82.1%** of its crude oil requirement and to the extent of about **44.4% in case of natural gas.**
- India is expected to need **10 billion litres** of ethanol annually to meet the **20% blending target in 2030** if petrol consumption continues to grow at the current pace. **At present, the capacity stands at 1.55 billion litres a year.**

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**The North East Council (NEC):**

At the 68th plenary session of the NEC in Guwahati, The home minister assured that the Centre would never touch Article 371 of the Constitution that **grants special provisions to the region.**
About the Article 371:

While Article 370, which limited purchase and inheritance of property to permanent residents, was scrapped for J&K, similar provisions are also provided under Article 371 in many states.

- Article 371A prohibits anyone who is not a resident from buying land in Nagaland, which may only be bought by tribals who are residents of the state.
- Article 371F bestows on Sikkim government the right of ownership of all land in the state, even if it was owned by private individuals prior to the state’s merger with India.

About the North East Council (NEC):

Headquarter: Shillong
Ministry: Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region
Chairman: Union Minister, Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region
Consists of: Eight states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura.
The chief ministers and governors represent them.

The world’s most liveable city:

Vienna tops the Mercer’s index of most liveable cities for the 10th year in a row.

- Vienna was closely followed by Zurich in Switzerland. Auckland, Munich, and Vancouver came in joint third.
- The Quality of Living Index 2019 was released by the Consulting Agency Mercer.
- Hyderabad and Pune topped the list among the Indian cities with a rank of 143.
  - Bengaluru was the second best with the ranking of 149.
  - Mumbai with the ranking of 154 stood third among Indian cities.
- The capital of India, New Delhi ranked at 162 in Mercer’s Quality Of Living Index.
The Constitution (103rd Amendment) Act, 2019, the Act providing 10 percent reservation in government jobs and educational institutions to Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) of General Category, came into effect on January 14, 2019.

The Act amends Articles 15 and 16 of the Constitution.

The Rajya Sabha had passed the Constitution 124th (Amendment) Bill, 2019 that seeks to provide 10 per cent reservation in jobs and educational institutions to economically backward sections in the general category on January 9, 2019.

Paika Rebellion:

Why in news? President Ram Nath Kovind to lay the foundation of a memorial dedicated to the 1817 Paika Rebellion.

Who are Paikas?

- Paikas had been recruited since the 16th century by kings in Odisha from a variety of social groups to render martial services in return for rent-free land (nish-kar jagirs) and titles.
- They were the traditional land-owning militia of Odisha and served as warriors.

Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas 2019:

- The Prime Minister, Narendra Modi inaugurated the 15th Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas on January 22, 2019 in his parliamentary constituency, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh.
- In the history of Pravasi Bhartiya Diwas, the event was held for the first time in Varanasi, the cultural and spiritual capital of India.
- The theme 15th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas was 'Role of Indian Diaspora in building New India'.
• The convention was inaugurated in the presence of Mauritian Prime Minister Pravind Jugnauth, the Chief Guest of the event.
• The main convention center of PBD 2019 is the Deen Dayal Trade Facilitation Centre at Bada Lalpur, Varanasi.

### India’s rank in Swiss Bank:

- India has moved down one place to 74th rank in terms of money parked by its citizens and enterprises with Swiss banks, while the U.K. has retained its top position, as per data released by the central banking authority of the Alpine nation.
- India was ranked 73rd last year, after jumping from its 88th rank a year ago.
- Among the top-ranked jurisdictions, the UK is followed by the US, West Indies, France and Hong Kong in the top five.

### The Gangetic dolphins:

- The Gangetic dolphins have been declared as the National Aquatic Animal of India.
- Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin Sanctuary is located in Bhagalpur District of Bihar, India.

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### International

#### 1. E-2020 initiative:

About:

- A progress report on WHO’s E-2020 initiative held that five countries reported no indigenous cases of malaria in 2018.

- These countries were **China, Iran, Malaysia** Timor-Leste from Asia and El Salvador from Central America.

- They were part of **WHO’s E-2020 initiative**.

### BASIC Countries:

**Why in News?** The BASIC countries recently held their **28th Ministerial meeting on Climate Change in Sao Paulo, Brazil.**

**Who are the BASIC?**

- The BASIC group was formed as the result of an agreement signed by **the four countries on November 28, 2009**.

They are a bloc of four large newly industrialized countries **– Brazil, South Africa, India and China**

### Financial Action Task Force (FATF):

**Why in News?** Financial Action Task Force affiliate **Asia Pacific Group (APG)** places **Pakistan on Blacklist for failing to combat terrorism**, money laundering and meeting the required global standards.

- In collaboration with other **international stakeholders**, the FATF works to identify national-level vulnerabilities with the aim of protecting the international financial system from misuse.

As of now there are only **two countries in the blacklist — Iran and North Korea** — and seven on the grey list, including Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Syria and Yemen.

### Samudrayaan’ project:

www.vaidicslucknow.com
Why in News? India to undertake deep ocean mining with ‘Samudrayaan’ project.

About Samudrayaan:

- It is a pilot project of the Ministry of Earth Sciences for deep ocean mining for rare minerals.
- It proposes to send men into the deep sea in a submersible vehicle for ocean studies.
- The project is expected to become a reality by 2021-22.
- The project has been undertaken by the National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT).

Malé Declaration:

Why in News? The fourth South Asian Speakers’ Summit was held recently in Maldives capital with the secretary general of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and senior lawmakers from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

Background:

- This is the fourth event in a series of Speakers’ Summits for the region on SDGs, the previous three having been hosted by the Jatiya Sangsad of Bangladesh (in 2016), the Sansad of India (in 2017) and the Parliament of Sri Lanka (2018).

Outcome of the summit:

- At the end of the summit, Male Declaration was adopted by the leaders.

About the Male Declaration:

- The Declaration “unanimously” felt that Kashmir was an “internal matter” of India and overlooked all assertions made by Islamabad on the issue.
UNESCO World Heritage Site list: Jaipur

The Walled City of Jaipur, known for its iconic architectural legacy and vibrant culture, on July 6 made its entry into the UNESCO World Heritage Site list.

The announcement was made after the 43rd Session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee (WHC), underway at Baku (Azerbaijan) from June 30 to July 10, examined the nomination of the Walled City of Jaipur for inclusion in the World Heritage list.

About Walled City of Jaipur:

- The Jaipur city wall is the city wall encircling the old Jaipur city in Rajasthan state in India.

India placed on ‘Tier 2’ in human Trafficking Report:

- Why in News? The U.S. State Department has released its 2019 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report. India continued to be placed in Tier 2 on the 1-3 country trafficking scale.

- Why India was placed in Tier 2?

  - India was placed (i.e., remained) in Tier 2, which comprises “countries whose governments do not fully meet the TVPA’s minimum standards but are making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance with those standards.”

The best performing State in Health:

Why in News? Kerala continued to top the list for the best performing State in the health sector among the 21 large States, while Uttar Pradesh retained the worst performer tag, according to the second edition of NITI Aayog’s Health Index released recently.

The top 3 States:

1. Kerala, which got an overall score of 74.01
2. Andhra Pradesh (65.13)
3. Maharashtra (63.99)
Highlights of report:

- Uttar Pradesh continued to be at the bottom of the list with its score falling to **28.61**. Other States at the bottom of the list were Bihar (32.11), Odisha (35.97) and Madhya Pradesh (38.39).
- The index has ranked the states/UTs into three categories — larger States, smaller States and Union Territories.
- Among the UTs, Chandigarh jumped one spot to top the list with a score of **(63.62)**, followed by Dadra and Nagar Haveli (56.31), Lakshadweep (53.54), Puducherry (49.69), Delhi (49.42), Andaman and Nicobar (45.36) and Daman and Diu (41.66).

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**India to be most populous by 2027: UN**

**Why in news?** According to the UN’s recent report India is set to overtake China as the most populous country by **2027** and will have almost **1.64 billion** inhabitants by **2050**.

**Details of the report:**

- India is expected to add **273 million people** by **2050**.
- China, on the other hand, is expected to become smaller, dropping from its current 1.43 billion people to approximately 1.4 billion by **2050**.
- While India may have the **highest absolute increase** in numbers, its rate of growth is slowing.
- The rate of population growth is the highest in sub-Saharan Africa, where the fertility rate stand at **4.6 births per woman over a lifetime**.
- India is still among the countries where the working-age population (25-64 years) is growing faster than other groups, creating an opportunity for accelerated economic growth.
- The “demographic dividend” will peak by **2047 in the Asian region**.

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**India’s Rank in Swiss bank:**
Why in News? India has moved down one place to 74th rank in terms of money parked by its citizens and enterprises with Swiss banks, while the U.K. has retained its top position, as per data released by the central banking authority of the Alpine nation.

About:

- India was ranked 73rd last year, after jumping from its 88th rank a year ago.

3. Economy

Economic Capital Framework (ECF):

Why in News? The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) at its board meeting recently decided to transfer 1.76 lakh crore to the Centre which is likely to address the precarious fiscal situation of the government to a great extent.

The 1.76 lakh crore includes the central bank’s 2018-19 surplus of 1.23 lakh crore and 52,637 crore of excess provisions identified as per the
revised **Economic Capital Framework (ECF)** adopted at the Board meeting.

**Background:**

**Jalan panel:**

The RBI had formed a committee chaired by former Governor **Bimal Jalan** to review its economic capital framework and suggest the quantum of excess provision to be transferred to the government.

**Main recommendations of Bimal Jalan Committee:**

The panel recommended a clear distinction between the two components of economic capital - realized equity and revaluation balances.

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**Key Highlights of Union Budget 2019/20:**

**Economy:**

- Fiscal deficit in FY 19 has been set at **3.3% of the GDP**.
- Indian economy will become a 3 trillion dollar economy in 2019. Government aspires to make India a **5 trillion dollar economy by 2024-25**. To achieve this, there is a need for investment in:
  - **Infrastructure**
  - **Digital economy**
  - **Job creation in small and medium firms**
- PAN and Aadhaar will become interchangeable. One can use Aadhaar number to file I-T Returns.
- **Rs. 5 lakh** minimum limit announced for taxpayers.
- In view of rising income levels, those in the 2-5 crore and 5 crore-and-above brackets will see an increase in effective tax rate by 3% (39%) and 7% (42.74%), respectively.
- **No change** in personal income tax rates.
- Increase in cess on fuel by 1 rupee, petrol & diesel to get costlier; while customs duty on gold and precious items increased.
- Corporate tax with a turnover of up to Rs 400 crore slashed to **25% from a current rate of 30%**.
- **GST Council** advised to reduce tax rate on Electric Vehicles from 12% to 5%.
• No charge on digital payments: **Merchant Discount Rate** charges waived on cashless payment.

• **Measures related to MSMEs:**
  o Proposed **easing angel tax** for startups.
  o 2% interest subvention for GST-registered MSME on fresh or incremental loans.
  o **‘Stand Up India’ Scheme** to continue till 2025.
  o New television channel for start-ups.
  o Pension benefit extended to retail traders with annual turnover less than **Rs 1.5 crore**.

• Proposal to provide Rs 70,000 crore capital for PSU Banks.

• **Divestment target of Rs 1.05 lakh crore for FY 20.**

• **Strategic disinvestment of Air India** proposed to be re-initiated.

• **Global Investors Meet** to be held in India.

**Rural India and Agriculture**

• **Gaon, Garib and Kisan** are the focus of the government.

• **New Jal Shakti ministry** will work with states to ensure Har Ghar Jal for all rural houses by 2024.

**Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana phase 3** is envisaged to upgrade 1,25,000 km of road length over the next 5 years.

• Govt will set up 100 new clusters for 50,000 artisans in FY 20.

• Every single rural family to have electricity by 2022.

• Govt to promote **Zero Budget Farming.**

• 10,000 new farm produce organisations.

• 80 Livelihood business incubators and 20 technology business incubators to be set up in 2019-20 under **Scheme for Promotion of Innovation, Rural Industry and Entrepreneurship (ASPIRE)** to develop 75,000 skilled entrepreneurs in agro-rural industries.

**Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY)**

• A robust fisheries management framework through PMMSY to be established by the **Department of Fisheries.**

• To address critical gaps in the value chain including infrastructure, modernization, traceability, production, productivity, post-harvest management, and quality control.

**Youth:**

• To popularise sports at all levels, **National Sports Education Board** for development of sportspersons to be set up under 'Khelo India.'
Govt to launch 'Study in India' programme to attract foreign students in higher education.

Rs 400 crore allocated for world-class higher education institutions in FY 20.

To make the Indian youth ready to take up jobs in foreign countries, more emphasis on new-age skills like Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things, Big Data, etc.

Study in India proposed to bring foreign students to study in Indian higher educational institutions.

Social

Nari tu Narayani: Women SHG Interest Subvention Programme to be expanded to all districts in India.

Rs 1 lakh loan to be provided for SHG women members under Mudra Scheme.

Rs 3,000 pension per month for workers from the informal sector.

Gandhipedia being developed by the National Council for Science Museums to sensitize youth and society about positive Gandhian values.

Infrastructure:

State road networks to be developed in the second phase of Bharatmala project.

Rs. 50 lakh crore investment needed in Railway Infrastructure during 2018-2030.

Key Highlights of Uttar Pradesh Budget 2019/20:

The total expenditure in 2019-20 is targeted at Rs 4,79,701 crore. This is 6.7% higher than the revised estimate of 2018-19.

This expenditure is proposed to be met through receipts (other than borrowings) of Rs 3,97,416 crore and borrowings of Rs 73,268 crore. Receipts (other than borrowings) is expected to be 3.2% higher in 2019-20 than the revised estimate of 2018-19.

Budget Highlights

The Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) of Uttar Pradesh for 2019-20 at current prices is estimated to be Rs 15,79,807 crore,
which is 7% higher than the revised estimate for 2018-19.

- **Total expenditure** for 2019-20 is estimated to be Rs 4,79,701 crore, a 6.7% increase over the revised estimate of 2018-19. In 2018-19, as per the revised estimate, there is estimated to be an increase of Rs 21,189 crore (4.9%) of expenditure over the budgeted estimate.

- **Total receipts (excluding borrowings)** for 2019-20 are estimated to be Rs 3,97,416 crore, an increase of 3.2% as compared to the revised estimate of 2018-19. In 2018-19, total receipts (excluding borrowings) is estimated to be higher than the budgeted estimate by Rs 31,402 crore (8.9%).

- **Revenue surplus** for the next financial year is targeted at Rs 27,777 crore, or 1.76% of the GSDP. **Fiscal deficit** is targeted at Rs 46,911 crore (2.97% of GSDP).
- Sectors such as police (44%), irrigation and flood control (19%), social welfare and nutrition (16%), and health and family welfare (15%) saw the highest increase in allocations.

**Policy Highlights**

- **Cess on liquor sales:** A cess will be levied on liquor sales, through which a revenue of Rs 165 crore is estimated. This will be used towards feeding of stray cattle.
- **Rural development:** Rs 6,240 crore has been allocated towards Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Rural. Rs 3,488 crore has been allocated under the National Rural Livelihood Mission. Rs 2,954 crore has been allocated towards the National Rural Drinking Water Mission.
- **Woman and child development:** A new scheme, Kanya Sumangala Yojana has been announced to improve the health and education levels of girls. Rs 1,200 crore has been allocated towards it.
- **Education:** Rs 500 crore has been allocated towards improving infrastructure in primary and higher primary schools. Rs 272 crore has been allocated towards Sanskrit medium schools. Rs 4,433 crore has been allocated towards scholarships for students belonging to poor sections of society.

**Uttar Pradesh’s Economy**

- **GSDP:** The GSDP of Uttar Pradesh (at current prices) has grown at a rate of 10% during the period 2011-16.
• **Sectors:** In 2016-17, Agriculture, Manufacturing, and Services contributed to 27%, 26% and 47% of the State Gross Value Added (GSVA) by sectors. In the same year, these sectors grew by 9%, 11%, and 9%, respectively.

• **Per capita GSDP:** The per capita GSDP of Uttar Pradesh in 2016-17 (at current prices) was Rs 57,480. This is 8% higher than the per capita GSDP of 2015-16 (Rs 53,085).

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**Key Highlights of Economic Survey 2018/19:**

This is the first survey by the new chief economic advisor Krishnamurthy V Subramanian.

• The theme of Economic Survey, 2018-19 is "Shifting Gears towards a $5 trillion Indian economy by 2024-25".

• Sustained real GDP growth rate of 8% needed for a $5 trillion economy by 2024-25.

• “Virtuous Cycle” of savings, investment and exports catalyzed and supported by a favorable demographic phase required for sustainable growth.

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**Behavioural Economics for Social Change:**

• The survey has drawn on Nobel Laureate Richard Thaler’s Behavioural Economics Theory to lay out an “ambitious agenda” for behavior change that will bring in social change, which in turn, will help India transit to a $5 trillion economy by 2024-25.

Using insights from behavioral economics to create an aspirational agenda for social change:

• From ‘Beti Baco Beti Padhao’ to ‘BADLAV’ (Beti Aapki Dhan Lakshmi Aur Vijay Lakshmi).

**From ‘Swachh Bharat’ to ‘Sundar Bharat’.”**
• From ‘Give it up” for the LPG subsidy to ‘Think about the Subsidy’.
• From ‘Tax evasion’ to ‘Tax compliance’.

State of the Economy in 2018-19:
• India still is the fastest growing major economy in 2018-19.
• Growth of GDP moderated to 6.8 per cent in 2018-19 from 7.2 per cent in 2017-18.
• Inflation contained at 3.4 per cent in 2018-19.
• Non-Performing Assets as percentage of Gross Advances reduced to 10.1 per cent at end December 2018 from 11.5 per cent at end March 2018.
• Current account deficit manageable at 2.1 percent of GDP.
• Fiscal deficit of Central Government declined from 3.5 percent of GDP in 2017-18 to 3.4 percent in 2018-19

India to be a $5-trillion economy:
The government has announced that its main goal is to make India a $5-trillion economy by the end of this term.

Present state:
• In 2014, India's GDP was $1.85 trillion. Today it is $2.7 trillion and India is the sixth-largest economy in the world.
• Essentially, the reference is to the size of an economy as measured by the annual GDP.

Are Indians the sixth-richest people in the world?
No. That India is the sixth-largest economy does not necessarily imply that Indians are the sixth-richest people on the planet.

For instance, on average, a UK resident’s income was 21 times that of an average Indian in 2018.

Merger of Public sector Banks:
Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has announced a big consolidation of public sector banks.

- Under the scheme of amalgamation, **10 public sector banks** are to be merged into **four banks**.

- After the amalgamation, the total number of Public Sector Banks in the country will come down to **12 from 27 banks in 2017**. The amalgamation of banks will be in the following manner:

  - **Punjab National Bank, Oriental Bank of Commerce and United Bank of India** to be merged into one single bank, with business of Rs 17.95 lakh crore to make India’s 2nd largest bank.

  - **Canara Bank and Syndicate Bank** are to be merged to become the 4th largest public sector bank with business of Rs 15.2 lakh crore.

  - **Union Bank of India, Andhra Bank and Corporation Bank** are to be merged to become the 5th largest public sector bank with business of Rs 14.6 lakh crore.

  - **Indian Bank** will be merged with Allahabad Bank to become the 7th largest public sector bank with business of Rs 8.08 lakh crore.

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**Revision of Whole Price Index:**

The Central Government has constituted Working Group for the revision of the current series of **Wholesale Price Index (Base 2011-12)**.

- It will be chaired by Prof. Ramesh Chand, Member, NITI Aayog. Office of Economic Adviser, Department for Promotion of Industry & Internal Trade will be nodal office for Working Group.

- It will process report / recommendation of this Working Group for further necessary action.

EAC-PM releases a detailed analysis on robustness of India’s GDP estimation methodology – The Economic Advisory Council to the Prime
Minister released a detailed note titled ‘GDP estimation in India: Perspectives and Facts’.

The new methodology that uses 2011-12 as the base year includes two major improvements,

a) Incorporation of MCA21 database, and  

**World Investment Report 2019: UNCTAD**

- According to the World Investment Report 2019, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows to India grew by 6% to USD 42 billion in 2018. India was ranked among the top 20 host economies for FDI inflows in 2017-18. • The report is published by United Nation Conference on Trade & Development (UNCTAD)

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**External Benchmark Rate :**

**Why in News?** The Reserve Bank of India has made it mandatory for all banks to link all new floating rate loans (i.e. personal/retail loans, loans to MSMEs) to an external benchmark with effect from 1st October 2019. The move is aimed at faster transmission of monetary policy rates.

- Banks can choose from one of the four external benchmarks — repo rate, three-month treasury bill yield, six-month treasury bill yield or any other benchmark interest rate published by Financial Benchmarks India Private Ltd.
- At present, interest rates on loans are linked to a bank’s marginal cost of fund-based interest rate, known as the Marginal Cost of Lending Rate (MCLR).
- Existing loans and credit limits linked to the MCLR, base rate or Benchmark Prime Lending Rate, would continue till repayment or renewal.
- Those customers wanting to switch to the repo-linked rate can do so on mutually acceptable terms.
- The interest rate under the external benchmark shall be reset at least once every three months.
**Key Terms:**

**Marginal Cost of Lending Rate:** It came into effect in April 2016.
- It is a benchmark lending rate for floating-rate loans.
- This is the minimum interest rate at which commercial banks can lend.
- This rate is based on four components—the marginal cost of funds, negative carry on account of cash reserve ratio, operating costs and tenor premium.
- MCLR is linked to the actual deposit rates. Hence, when deposit rates rise, it indicates the banks are likely to hike MCLR and lending rates are set to go up.

**Base Rate:** Banks stopped lending on base rate from April 2016.
- Loans taken between June 2010 and April 2016 from banks were on base rate.
- During the period, base rate was the minimum interest rate at which commercial banks could lend to customers.
- Base rate is calculated on three parameters — the cost of fund, unallocated cost of resources and return on net worth. Hence, the rate depended on individual banks and they changed it whenever their cost of funds and other parameters changed.

**Benchmark Prime Lending Rate:** BPLR was used as benchmark rate by banks for lending till June 2010.
- Under it, bank loans were priced on the actual cost of funds.
- However, the BPLR was subverted, resulting in an opaque system. The bulk of wholesale credit (loans to corporate customers) was contracted at sub-BPL rates and it comprised nearly 70% of all bank credit.
- Under this system, banks were subsidizing corporate loans by charging high interest rates from retail and small and medium enterprise customers.

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**Steps to spur Economic Growth:**

Why in News? The Finance Minister has announced a number of measures to help reignite the slowing economy.

- The primary reasons for this slowdown include weak consumption (e.g. reduction in auto sales, housing sales etc.) and a deteriorating global environment (US-China trade war, Brexit etc.).

Measures To Boost Export Sector:

Use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT): Number of measures have been announced to leverage technology to promote exports.

- Fully electronic refund module for a quick and automated refund of Input Tax Credits (ITC) will be implemented by end September 2019.

1. ITC means deducting the tax paid on inputs from the tax payable on the final output.

- An Online "Origin Management System" for exporters to enable them to obtain Certificates of Origin – CoO will be launched.

Benchmark Brent Crude Prices:

Why in News? Prices of petroleum products like petrol and diesel are likely to go up by up to Rs 5 a litre each over the course of the next few days as international crude oil prices shot up after the drone attack on Saudi Aramco’s facility at Abqaiq.

Benchmark Brent crude prices were up by over $6 at $67 a barrel recently, which is a jump of over 10%, and could rise further.
What is Brent Crude Prices?

- Brent Crude is a major trading classification of sweet light crude oil that serves as a major benchmark price for purchases of oil worldwide.
- The Brent blend of crude oil is a type of sweet crude oil that is used as a benchmark for the prices of other crude oils. Brent blend is most often found in parts of the North Sea off the coast of the U.K. and Norway.
- It is a mix of crude oil from several facilities in the Ninian and Brent fields on the North Sea.

Brent futures are traded on both the ICE and NYMEX exchanges, with delivery dates for all 12 months of the year.

Corporate Income Tax:

Why in news? Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has recently announced major changes in corporate income tax rates to revive growth in the broader economy. This has been achieved through an ordinance – the Taxation Laws (Amendment) Ordinance 2019.

What has the government done?

1. Corporate tax rate to be 22 per cent without exemptions.
2. No Minimum Alternate Tax (MAT) applicable on such companies.
3. Effective corporate tax rate after surcharge and cess to be 25.17 percent.
4. To attract investment in manufacturing, local companies incorporated after October 2019 and till March 2023, will pay tax at 15 percent.

How do these rates compare globally?

The new corporate income tax rates in India will be lower than USA (27 percent), Japan (30.62 percent), Brazil (34 percent), Germany (30 percent) and is similar to China (25 percent) and Korea (25 percent).
New companies in India with an effective tax rate of **17 percent** are equivalent what corporates pay in Singapore (17 percent).

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4. **Science & Technology**

**China’s new ballistic missile : JL-3**

*Why in News?*  China has successfully tested its latest submarine-launched ballistic missile, the JL-3.

*About the JL-3:*  
- Military experts told the daily that the JL-3 is China’s latest SLBM under development that is expected to reach targets farther away with higher accuracy and capable of carrying more warheads than China’s current SLBMs.

The SLBM might have a range of up to 14,000 km and be equipped with **10** independent guided nuclear warheads.

**Gravitational lensing :**

*About:*  
- Using NASA’s James Webb Space Telescope researchers plan to investigate how **new stars are born**.
- For this, a natural phenomenon called “Gravitational lensing” is to be used.
- The gravitational field of a massive object will extend far into space, and cause light rays passing close to that object to be bent and refocused somewhere else.
• This phenomenon is ‘Gravitational lensing’, simply put, ‘mass bends light’.

NIPGR :

Why in News? The scientists at the National Institute of Plant Genome Research (NIPGR) in New Delhi have identified a gene that is involved in regulating the size of rice grain.

Important Facts:

• The researchers had found in earlier studies that expression of a particular gene, OsMed15a, was higher at different stages of seed development.

• The observation led them to explore its role further. They scanned 509 different rice genotypes and found that the nucleotide sequences of the OsMed15a gene varied depending on size of grain.

• OsMed15a was also found to play major role in regulating the expression of three other genes — GW2, GW5 and DR11I- which determine grain size and weight.

• When Researchers suppressed the expression of OsMed15a in transgenic plants using RNAi technology, the seeds became smaller and wider.

UNNATI Programme :

• National space agency, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has launched the UNNATI (UNispace Nano-satellite Assembly and Training by ISRO) programme at the U R Rao Satellite Centre, Bengaluru.

• UNNATI is a capacity building programme on nanosatellite development.

Chandrayaan 2:
Chandrayaan 2 Mission was launched from the **Satish Dhawan Space** on July 22, 2019, by **GSLV Mk III**.

**Highlights:**

- Chandrayaan 2 fostered the findings of Chandrayaan 1 as reported by the ISRO.
- The mission targeted the “**South Polar region**” of the Moon which was completely unexplored.
- India the **1st to soft land on the Moon’s south polar region** & **4th country** ever to soft-land on the lunar surface.

**USA, Russia and China** already landed on lunar surface

**Components of Chandrayaan 2:**

- S200 solid rocket booster
- L110 liquid state
- C25 Upper stage

The Chandrayaan 2 consisted of three modules:

1. lunar orbiter
2. Vikram lander (named after Vikram Sarabhai, the late father of India’s space program)
3. lunar rover named Pragyan

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5. **Environment & Biodiversity**

**Palani temple gets GI tag:**

**Why in News?** The renowned ‘Palani Panchamirtham’ which is served as the prasadam in Palani temple was bestowed with the tag recently.

- This is the first time a temple ‘prasadam’ from Tamil Nadu has been bestowed with the GI tag.
- Panchamirtham finds mention in the ancient Tamil texts and this offering is said to be dating back to the 9th-century AD.
- In Tamil, ‘Pancha’ means five and ‘amirtham’ refers to divine nectar.

**Blue Flag Certification:**

**Why in News?** The Union Environment Ministry has selected 12 beaches in India to give the ‘Blue Flag’ certification.

**What is Blue Flag’ certification?**
- The Blue Flag is a certification by the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) that a beach, marina or sustainable boating tourism operator meets its stringent standards.
- These beaches are at Shivrajpur (Gujarat), Bhogave (Maharashtra), Ghogha (Diu), Miramar (Goa), Kasarkod and Padubidri (Karnataka), Kappad (Kerala), Eden (Puducherry), Mahabalipuram.
(Tamil Nadu), Rushikonda (Andhra Pradesh), Golden (Odisha), and Radhanagar (Andaman & Nicobar Islands).

**18th Conference of Parties (CoP18):**

**Why in News?** A resolution calling for Japan and the European Union (EU) to close their legal domestic ivory markets was not adopted at the ongoing 18th Conference of Parties (CoP18) to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) in Geneva on August 21, 2019.

**Background:**

- Currently, EU regulations afford too many opportunities for criminals to pass off ivory from poached elephants as antiques and export to other markets around the world.
- Legal ivory markets and a lack of action against large illegal markets in certain countries continue to provide opportunities for criminal syndicates to traffic ivory.

**About Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES):**

1. It is an International agreement to regulate worldwide commercial trade in wild animal and plant species.
2. It restricts trade in items made from such plants and animals, such as food, clothing, medicine and souvenirs.
3. It was signed on March 3, 1973 (Hence world wildlife day is celebrated on March 3).
4. It is administered by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).
5. Secretariat— Geneva (Switzerland).
6. CITES is legally binding on state parties to the convention, which are obliged to adopt their own domestic legislation to implement its goals.

**Classifications:**
It classifies plants and animals according to three categories, or appendices, based on how threatened.

They are.

1. **Appendix I**: It lists species that are in danger of extinction. It prohibits commercial trade of these plants and animals except in extraordinary situations for scientific or educational reasons.

2. **Appendix II species**: They are those that are not threatened with extinction but that might suffer a serious decline in number if trade is not restricted. Their trade is regulated by permit.

3. **Appendix III species**: They are protected in at least one country that is a CITES member states and that has petitioned others for help in controlling international trade in that species.

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### Star tortoise, otters get higher protection at CITES:

**Why in News?** The Indian star tortoise was upgraded to CITES Appendix I (threatened with extinction). It got the highest level of international protection from commercial trade.

**About:**

- The Indian star tortoise is an IUCN-listed ‘Vulnerable’ species.
- It is being illegally trafficked despite restrictions on its trade.
- To combat the stress (largely from trading), range states like Sri Lanka and India, submitted a proposal to CITES summit.
- It is to move the star tortoise from Appendix II to Appendix I, it was passed with a majority by nations participating in CITES.
- Now it prohibits international trade of these species except when the purpose of the import is for scientific research.
- They are native to India and found only in Sri Lanka, some parts of India and adjoining Pakistan.

### Sharks’ gets special protection -

1. **18 species of sharks and rays**, threatened by the scale of international trade in their fins and meat, were included in Appendix II of the Convention.
2. This will limit the trade to sustainable levels.
No more trade in ‘African elephants’ -

1. Parties vote to restrict trade from Zimbabwe and Botswana.
2. They can no longer be shipped to zoos and circuses worldwide
3. This will save an untold number of baby elephants from being torn from their mothers, beaten during capture and conscripted into a lifetime of captivity.

• ‘Giraffes’ accorded protection from trade for the first time -

1. The giraffe has been placed in Appendix II of CITES.
2. This places prohibitions on uncontrolled trade.
3. They have been listed as ‘Vulnerable’ on the IUCN list.
4. 40% decline of African giraffe has been recorded over the last 30 years.

About the CITES :

- CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) is an international agreement between governments.
- Its aim is to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival. The ideas for CITES were first formed, in the 1960s.

Single-use plastic ban :

Why in News? Single-use plastic items will be banned in India from October 2, 2019.

What is single-use plastic?

- A form of plastic that is disposable, which is only used once and then has to be thrown away or recycled.
- The single-use plastic items include plastic bags, water bottles, soda bottles, straws, plastic plates, cups, most food packaging and coffee stirrers.
**Why is it being banned?**

- With **climate and environment becoming a rising global concern**, plastic pollution and plastic waste management have become the focal point of worry.
- Millions of tons of plastic is being produced every year, which is not biodegradable. Hence, the countries across the globe are adopting and implementing strategies aimed at eliminating the use of single-use plastic.

**India’s efforts:**

- India has won global acclaim for its “**Beat Plastic Pollution**” resolve declared on **World Environment Day last year**, under which it pledged to eliminate single-use plastic by 2022.

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**Global Climate Strike Movement:**

Students in more than **2,000 cities across** the world are holding demonstrations under the **#Fridays for Future movement**.

**ABOUT:**

- The **#Fridays for Future movement**, also known as the ‘Youth Strike for Climate Movement’, started in August 2018.
- It was started by Swedish student ‘**Greta Thunberg**’, who skipped school to protest outside parliament for more action against climate change.
- ‘**Thunberg**’ called for a strike **every Friday until the Swedish parliament revised its policies** towards climate change.
- Gradually, students and adults from across the world started mobilising and demonstrating in front of parliaments and local city halls in their respective countries.

Thousands of events are planned from **September 20th to 27th**,

1. Millions of students to walk out of classrooms, workplaces and homes,
2. To join together in the streets and demand climate action and climate justice.
3. The strikes are registered to take place in over 2,350 cities.
• In India, strikes have been scheduled in New Delhi, Chennai, Pune, Mumbai, Phagwara (Punjab), Nagercoil (Tamil Nadu), Kishangarh (Rajasthan) and several other places.

• Students are demanding ‘urgent’, ‘decisive’ action to keep global average temperatures from rising above 1.5 degree Celsius.

• The global strikes will commence just as the “UN Climate Action Summit 2019” set to take place in New York on September 23, where Thunberg has been invited.

• These global school movements have been supported by scientists as well.

The sentiments behind these school student movements are:
1. The “broken promises” of older generations,
2. Members of which continue to extract and use fossil fuels,
3. leading to increased CO2 emissions and
4. Subsequently, increasing average global temperatures.

• Thunberg sailed through transatlantic, from Britain to the United States to take part in a United Nations climate summit.

5. Important Facts for Prelims:

National Thowheeth Jama'ath (NTJ):
- National Thowheeth Jama'ath was a Sri Lankan jihadist group implicated in the 2019 Sri Lanka Easter bombings.
- It is believed to have ties with Islamic State.
- The Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena banned National Thowheed Jamath on 27 April 2019 and designated it as a terrorist organisation as well as Jammiyathul Millathu Ibrahim.

Indian Roofed turtle:
- The Indian Roofed turtle is a part of the Asian river turtle family, Geoemydidae. It is most commonly found in Southeast Asia (India, Bangladesh).
- It is locally known as the Kori Kaitta.
- Indian Roofed turtles often have green shells, red or orange plastrons (underbelly that connects to shell) and black and yellow-striped heads.
PC4 Protein:

- **Autophagy Pathway** is a molecular mechanism which recycles unnecessary or dysfunctional cell components.
- When a cell experiences stress, its **DNA gets damaged**, Cells with damaged DNA can either die or can activate the autophagy pathway and recycle the damaged cell components and survive.
- According to recent discovery absence or down regulation of a particular protein positive co-activator 4 (PC4) is responsible for enhanced **autophagy**.
- Lack of **PC4 protein** leads to irregular nuclear shape and defects in chromosome distribution in daughter cells.

Hypoglycin A:

- Hypoglycin A is a naturally occurring **amino acid** derivative found in the unripened fruit of the Ackee tree and in the seeds of the box elder tree.
- **methylene cyclo propyl glycine, MCPG**, also known as hypoglycin A) is naturally present in litchi fruit.

About the Hypoglycin A:

- Hypoglycin A is a naturally occurring amino acid derivative found in the unripened fruit of the Ackee tree (Blighia sapida) and in the seeds of the box elder tree (Acer negundo).
- It is toxic if ingested, and is the causative agent of Jamaican vomiting sickness.
- A 2017 Lancet report established a link between the consumption of unripened lychees (containing **hypoglycin A** or methylene cyclo propyl glycine (MCPG) resulting in hypoglycaemia and death from acute toxic encephalopathy.

Global Peace Index 2019:

- Global Peace Index is released by the **Australian think tank Institute for Economics & Peace**.
The report covers 99.7 per cent of the world’s population and uses 23 qualitative and quantitative indicators from highly respected sources to compile the index.

It ranks countries according to their level of peacefulness based on three thematic domains:

1. The level of societal safety and security.
2. The extent of ongoing domestic and international conflict.
3. The degree of militarization.

- India’s rank has slipped five places to 141 this year.
- According to the report, Iceland remains the most peaceful country in the world, a position it has held since 2008.
- Afghanistan is now the least peaceful country in the world, replacing Syria, which is now the second least peaceful.

Abujh Marias Tribes:

- Abujh Marias are Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) community living in Abujhmahr forest, Bastar region of Chhattisgarh. Abujh Marias have their own governance structure.
- Since Abujh Marias is a PVTG community, they are entitled to the habitat rights under the Forest Rights Act (FRA).
- Recently Chhattisgarh government has initiated the processing of habitat rights for Abujh Marias, a (PVTG).

The Grey wolf (Canis Lupus):

- It is found in Sundarbans, West Bengal. It was recently killed in Bangladesh.
- It is also known as the 'Timber Wolf' & is the largest of the wild dog family.
- The Grey Wolf is listed as an endangered species under the 1973 Endangered Species Act as they continue to be hunted in many areas of the world as a perceived threat to livestock, humans and also for sport.

Libra:
- It is a Cryptocurrency to be launched by Facebook.
- Facebook has announced a digital currency called Libra that will allow its billions of users to make financial transactions across the globe, in a move that could potentially shake up the world’s banking system.
- DigiCurrency: Facebook’s cryptocurrency Libra will allow smartphone users to buy services digitally from their phone.
- DigitalWallet: Libra will be stored in a digital wallet called Calibra.

Operation Hidden Idol:
- It is related to illegally stolen valuable cultural properties from several nations that were sold in USA.

Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA):
- SOFAs are multilateral or bilateral agreements that generally establish the framework under which U.S. military personnel operate in a foreign country and how domestic laws of the foreign jurisdiction apply toward U.S. personnel in that country.

U.P. site exected to get ‘National Importance’ tag:
- An ancient site with chariots, swords and other objects pointing to the presence of a warrior class around 4,000 years ago at Sadikpur Sinauli in Uttar Pradesh’s Baghpat district could be declared a site of national importance soon.

Cat Fox’ a new species:
- The "cat-fox," also known as the ‘ghjattu-volpe’, was recently identified as a new species in the French island of Corsica.

Four New Products get GI Tag:
The Geographical Indication (GI) under the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade has registered 4 new GIs.

They are:

- PalaniPanchamirtham from Palani Town in Dindigul District of Tamil Nadu State.
- Tawlhlohpuan and Mizo Puanchei from the state of Mizoram.
- Tirur Betel leaf from Kerala.

KH – 9 HEXAGONS:

- KH-9 HEXAGON commonly known as Big Bird or Keyhole-9, was a series of photographic reconnaissance satellites launched by the United States between 1971 and 1986.

HR 1044:

It is a Bill passed by the US lawmakers aimed at lifting the current seven per cent country-cap on issuing Green Cards.

Operation Bandar (monkey):

- It was IAF’s code name for Balakot air strikes
- The Army also gave a code name ‘Operation Zafran’ to alert the border areas.

Karkidaka Vavu 2019:

- Karkidaka Vavu (Malayalam) or ‘Karkidaka Vavu Bali’ is the name for the rituals performed by the Hindus in the state of Kerala for their deceased ancestors.
- This day is also known as ‘Vavu Bali’ and is held in the month of ‘Karkidakam’ in the Malayalam calendar.

The 82nd parallel north:

- The 82nd parallel north is a circle of latitude that is 82 degrees north of the Earth’s equatorial plane in the Arctic. It passes through the Arctic Ocean and North America.
Gogabeel is Bihar’s first community reserve:

- Gogabeel, an **ox-bow lake in Bihar’s Katihar district**, has been declared as the state’s **first ‘Community Reserve’**.
- Gogabeel is formed from the flow of the **rivers Mahananda and Kankhar in the north and the Ganga in the south and east**.

It is the **fifteenth Protected Area (PA) in Bihar**.

Special 301 Report:

- The Special 301 Report is prepared annually by the **Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR)** that identifies trade barriers to United States companies and products due to the intellectual, property laws, such as **copyright, patents and trademarks**, in other countries.

Locus standi:

- It means a person who approached the court should show himself that he suffered a **legal injury**.
- The Locus standi says that a **Writ** can be filed by an effected person. However, in case of **Mandamus and Certiorari**, it can be filed by any person having a common interest with the case. Mere interest is **generally not sufficient to file the writ**. The person should have more interest than that of an ordinary member.
- A common citizen has the **right to challenge an election** if it is held contrary to the provisions of law.

Kheoni Wild Life Sanctuary:

- It is located in Dewas district of **Madhya Pradesh**. The primary fauna found in Kheoni Sanctuary are **cheetal, sambar, blue bull**, four-horned antelope, wild boar, barking deer, wolf etc.
Zero chance:

- The message of Zero Chance is simple. Anyone who tries to come illegally to Australia by boat has zero chance of success.

SHE Teams:

- SHE Teams is a division of Telangana Police for enhanced safety and security of women. They also work to prevent child marriages in Telangana State.
- The teams work in small groups to arrest eve teasers, stalkers and harassers.
- They operate mainly in busy public areas in Hyderabad.

‘One Nation one Ration Card’:

- The union govt. is working on a plan to launch a “One Nation One Ration Card” scheme for beneficiaries to access to any PDS shop across the country.
- The scheme is aimed at providing freedom to beneficiaries, as they will not be tied to one PDS shop.
- It aims to reduce their dependence on shop owners and curtail corruption.
- The biggest beneficiaries will be migrant workers who move to other states to seek better job opportunities.

Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES):

- Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES) including Japanese Encephalitis (JE) is a group of clinically similar neurologic manifestation caused by several different viruses, bacteria, fungus, parasites, spirochetes, chemical/ toxins etc.
- The outbreak of JE usually coincides with the monsoon and post monsoon period when the density of mosquitoes increases while encephalitis due to other viruses especially entero-viruses occurs throughout the year as it is a water borne disease.

Who is affected?

- It predominantly affects population below 15 years.
There is seasonal and geographical variation in the causative organism.

JEV has its endemic zones running along the **Gangetic plain** including states of **UP (east), Bihar, West Bengal and Assam**, and parts of Tamil Nadu.

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**The United States EB-5 visa:**

- It is popularly called as the **‘Green Card for greenback’ scheme**. The EB-5 programme was created in **1990** with the approval of the US Congress — **America’s highest law-making body**.
- It aims to boost the American economy by attracting investment from foreign nationals and generating employment for locals.
- In **1992**, its scope was widened through an Immigrant Investor Programme, or the Regional Centre Programme.
- Simply put, the programme grants rich entrepreneurs — as well as their spouses and unmarried children below the **age of 21** — an opportunity to bag the coveted U.S. Green Card **(or status of permanent residence) and Citizenship**.
- The programme is named **EB-5** as it is the fifth preference category under the Employment-Based (EB) immigration visas.
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- The programme is named **EB-5** as it is the fifth preference category under the **Employment-Based (EB)** immigration visas.

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**Bavin Award:**

- Conservationist **Vivek Menon wins Clark Bavin Award**.
**About the Award:** The Bavin award is instituted by the Animal Welfare Institute for wildlife law enforcement officers, law enforcement agencies, agency administrators, criminal investigators, forensic scientists, attorneys, informants and others who have gone beyond the call of duty and demonstrated a commitment and dedication to combating wildlife crime.

**‘San-Sadhan’ Hackathon :**

- ‘San-Sadhan’ Hackathon is an initiative to ease lives of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan) by making toilets smarter, more accessible, and easier to use.
- In this hackathon, the government is looking for smart, scalable and innovative solutions for economical toilets for individual and community use in rural and urban contexts.
- The initiative is being organized jointly by the Ministry of Jal Shakti and the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, in collaboration with Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and 91springboard.

**Ansupa :**

- Ansupa is Odisha’s largest freshwater lake. It is famous for its sweet water fish, especially labeo bata locally known as pohala.

**Bavar-373 :**

- It is Iran’s new home-grown air defence system. It is being touted as Islamic republic’s 1st domestically produced long-range missile defence system.
- It is a long-range mobile surface-to-air missile system.
- **Range:** more than 200 kilometres (124 miles)

**Rare tarantula :**
Researchers have sighted a critically endangered species of tarantula for the first time beyond its known habitat in the Eastern Ghats.

The spider belonging to the genus Poecilotheria, commonly known as the Peacock Parachute Spider or Gooty Tarantula was spotted by a team of researchers of the Puducherry-based Indigenous Biodiversity Foundation (IBF) in the Pakkamalai Reserve Forests near Gingee in Villupuram district.

Qingdao port:

- The Port of Qingdao is a seaport on the Yellow Sea in the vicinity of Qingdao, Shandong Province, People's Republic of China.
- It is one of the ten busiest ports in the world (7th in 2010 considering total cargo volume according to the Institute of Shipping Economics & Logistics).

Amur-1650:

- The Amur-class submarine (named for the Amur River), is one of the latest Russian submarine designs.
- The Amur-1650 is larger and intended for longer missions. Sonar signatures of these submarines are several times lower than the older Kilo-class submarines.

Interpol Red Notice(RN):

- Interpol describes an RN as “a request to law enforcement worldwide to locate and provisionally arrest a person pending extradition, surrender, or similar legal action”.
- RNs contain information that helps identify wanted persons, such as their names, dates of birth, nationality, and physical attributes such as the colour of their hair and eyes, as well as
pictures and biometric data such as fingerprints, if they are available.

- **RNs also mention the crime(s)** they are wanted for.
- An RN is published by Interpol at the request of a member country.

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**AH-64 Apache combat helicopters:**

- Boeing **AH-64** Apache combat helicopters inducted into **IAF**.
- These are **US-made helicopters**.
- **It is one of the world’s most advanced** attack helicopters with multi-role combat capabilities.
- The Apache’s capabilities range from greater thrust, lift and joint digital operability to cognitive decision aiding and improved survivability.

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**The 2019 JCB Prize for Literature:**

- Noted Tamil writer **Perumal Murugan’s twin novels**, Trial by Silence and Lonely Harvest and Malayalam author Paul Zacharia’s maiden work in English, **A Secret History of Compassion (Westland)** are among the 10 authors
- **JCB Prize for Literature** is an Indian literary award established in 2018. It is awarded annually with 25 lakh INR (38400 USD) **prize** to a distinguished work of fiction by an Indian writer working in **English or translated fiction by an Indian writer**.

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**Benchmark interest rate:**

- It is also called **base interest rate**. It is the minimum interest rate investors will demand for investing in a **non-Treasury security**.
- It is also tied to the yield to maturity offered on the comparable-maturity treasury security that was most recently issued (on-the-run).
Nilgiri Tahr:

- Nilgiri tahr, its sightings in the Mukurthi National Park (TN) have risen from 568 in 2018 to 612 this year.
- It is state animal of Tamil Nadu.
- It is endemic to Western Ghats from the Nilgiris to Kanyakumari.
- It is confined to a narrow belt of higher elevation (altitudes) of Shola Forests in Western Ghats.

About Nilgiri Tahr:

Nilgiri tahrs are stocky goats with short, coarse fur and a bristly mane. Males are larger than the females, and have a darker colour when mature.

The Nilgiri Tahr, (Nilgiritragus hylocrius Ropiquet and Hassanin, 2005) is an endangered caprid listed in Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 and categorized as ‘endangered’ by the IUCN.

‘Rudrashila’:

- It is the white water Rafting Expedition being undertaken by Kalidhar Battalion under the aegis of Battle Axe Division.
- It has been organised to commemorate the 75th Raising day of the Kalidhar Battalion.
- ‘Rudrashila’ takes its name from the famed Rudraprayag tributary of the Ganges River in the Mountains of Uttarakhand.

World University Rankings 2020:

Key facts:

- 56 Indian institutions (up from 49 last year) made entry into the table this year, making India the fifth most-represented country in the list and the third in Asia (behind Japan and China).
- The University of Oxford retained the top position for the consecutive fourth year.
- The Indian Institute of Science (IISc) Bangalore topped the Indian universities.
Hindi Diwas 2019 :

- **National Hindi Divas or Hindi Day** is observed every year on **September 14**.

**Objective:** The day is a celebration of the Hindi language and its cultural heritage and values among the people of the country and abroad.

**Why do we celebrate National Hindi Diwas?**

- The Constituent assembly of India adopted Hindi as the official language of the country on **September 14, 1949 under Article 343**.
- Hindi is the **fourth** language of the world.

**11th International Hrant Dink Award :**

- Meghalaya-based rights activist **Agnes Kharshiing**, who survived an assault by the coal mafia almost a year ago, received the 11th International Hrant Dink Award along with **Turkish activist** against male violence **Nebahat Akkoç**.
- It is given in the memory of **Turkish-Armenian journalist Hrant Dink**, who was killed in 2007, in Istanbul.
- The **Hrant Dink Award** is presented every year to individuals, organisations or groups that work for a world free from discrimination, racism and violence.

**Howdy Modi :**

- “Howdy” is a short for ‘**How do you do?**’ This is a friendly greeting commonly used in the southwestern United States.
- It is one of the most anticipated **global events of 2019**.
- Prime **Minister Narendra Modi** will address over 50,000 attendees during his US visit in Houston, Texas later this month. The USA president will also join PM Modi.
- Tag line was ‘**shared dreams, bright future**'
**NIRVIK (Niryat Rin Vikas Yojna):**

- The ECGC (Export Credit Gurantee Corporation of India) has launched This Yojana to provide more comfort to banks to lend to exporters.

**Akademik Lomonosov:**

- It is **the world’s only floating nuclear power unit**. The plant was launched by Russia on May 19, 2018 at the St Petersburg shipyard.

- Recently, this floating nuclear power plant completed its 5,000-km journey along the Northern Sea Route. This has sparked fears among environmentalists over the safety of the Arctic region.

**Yellow fever mosquito:**

- *Aedes aegypti*, the yellow fever mosquito, is a mosquito that can spread dengue fever, chikungunya, Zika fever, Mayaro and yellow fever viruses, and other disease agents.

- The mosquito can be recognized by white markings on its legs and a marking in the form of a lyre on the upper surface of its thorax.

**King Bibi:**

- The Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu is called ‘King Bibi’ by his supporters.

**Diclofenac:**

- The major reason behind the vulture population getting nearly wiped out was the drug Diclofenac, found in the carcass of cattle the vultures fed on.
The drug, whose veterinary use was banned in 2008, was commonly administered to cattle to treat inflammation.

**Ladakhi Shondol dance:**
- This dance has entered into the Guinness Book of World Records.
- It is known as the ‘royal dance of Ladakh’.
- It is famous dance which was earlier used to be performed by artists for King of Ladakh on special occasion.

**The SASTRA Ramanujan Prize for 2019:**
- The SASTRA Ramanujan prize for 2019 will be awarded to mathematician Adam Harper, Assistant Professor with the University of Warwick, England.
- The prize carries a citation and an award of $10,000 and is conferred annually on mathematicians from across the world who are less than 32 years of age, working in an area influenced by the genius Srinivasa Ramanujan.
- Every year, this prize is awarded by SASTRA University on its campus near Kumbakonam in Tamil Nadu, on Ramanujan’s birth anniversary, December 22.

**Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM):**
- EAC-PM is an independent body constituted to give advice on economic and related issues to the Government of India, specifically to the Prime Minister.
- The terms of reference of EAC-PM include analyzing any issue, economic or otherwise, referred to it by the Prime Minister and advising him thereon, addressing issues of macroeconomic importance and presenting views thereon to the Prime Minister.
- These could be either suo-motu or on reference from the Prime Minister or anyone else.
- It also includes attending to any other task as may be desired by the Prime Minister from time to time.
**********

Schemes/ Programmes

Honey Mission:

- The Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) distributed more than one lakh bee-boxes among farmers and unemployed youths across India in less than two years under its ‘Honey Mission’ initiative.

SHREYAS Programme:

- The Union Minister of Human Resources and Development Prakash Javadekar launched the SHREYAS programme to provide industry-specific apprenticeship opportunities to fresh graduates.
- SHREYAS stands for Scheme for Higher Education Youth in Apprenticeship and Skills.

‘Khushi’ scheme:

The Odisha Cabinet approved the ‘Khushi’ scheme to provide free sanitary napkins to school girls across the state.

- The scheme will benefit nearly 17.25 lakh school girls from Class VI to XII studying in government and government-aided schools.
- The state government will spend INR 466 crore over a period of 5 years to implement the scheme.

FAME II scheme:

- It aims to encourage faster adoption of electric vehicles by right incentives and charging infra.

Key points:

- The Union cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the proposal for implementation of scheme titled ‘Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Electric Vehicles in India Phase II (FAME India Phase II)’ for promotion of Electric Mobility in the country.
- Only advanced-battery-operated and registered e-vehicles to be incentivized under FAME.
Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) –

- In the Union Budget 2019-20, the allocation for the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY), a maternity benefit programme, was Rs 2,500 crore.

Key points - Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh were the top three performing states under the maternity benefit programme ‘Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana’ (PMMVY).

SATHI:

- IIT Kharagpur to assist academic institutes in neighbouring region – Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT) Kharagpur has been selected for setting up a Sophisticated Analytical and Technical Help Institute (SATHI), a Department of Science and Technology (DST) initiative of Centre.

SAMARTH Scheme:

- 16 states ink MoU with Textiles Ministry – 16 states out of 18 selected states have signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Union Ministry of Textiles for skilling about 4 lakh workers as part of Scheme for Capacity Building in Textile Sector (SAMARTH).

STRIDE Scheme:

- UGC approves a scheme “STRIDE” to boost research culture in India – University Grants Commission has approved a ‘Scheme for Trans-disciplinary Research for India’s Developing Economy’ to boost research culture in India.

- STRIDE stands for Scheme for Trans disciplinary Research for India’s Developing Economy.

One nation one ration card’ scheme from July 1, 2020:

‘One Nation One Ration Card’ scheme will be available across the country from July 1, 2020.
The scheme will allow portability of food security benefits according to which the **poor migrant workers** will be able to buy **subsidised rice** and **wheat from any ration shop** in the country.

**Rythu Bandhu scheme:**

- Telangana enhances Rythu Bandhu scheme to Rs 5000 per acre per season - The **Telangana Government** has issued a notification to extend the Rythu Bandhu scheme for 2019-20, while enhancing the amount **from Rs 4000 to Rs 5000.**

**Aapki Beti’ scheme:**

- **Rajasthan government** has increased the financial assistance given to school girls under the ‘Aapki Beti’ scheme.
- Under the Aapki Beti scheme, girls living under the Below Poverty Line (BPL) and whose mother or father or both have died to get annual financial assistance in the state.
- The amount has been increased to **Rs 2,100 from Rs 1,100 for the girls studying in class 1 to 8.**

**Gram Samridhi Yojana:**

- A Rs 3,000 crore scheme funded by the **World Bank and the Government of India,** is being worked upon by the **Ministry of Food Processing Industries** in order to strengthen the unorganised food processing sector concentrated in rural areas.

**The Mukhyamantri Yuva Swabhiman Yojana :**

- The government of Madhya Pradesh has launched the Mukhyamantri Yuva Swabhiman Yojana to provide employment for youth.
  **Key points :**
  - The scheme guarantees 100 days of employment every year to urban youths from economically weaker sections (EWS).
  - The youth would get Rs 4,000 stipend per month and total Rs 13,500 for the 100 days period would be provided.

**KALIA Chhatra Bruti scholarship Scheme:**
• The government of Odisha has launched the KALIA Chhatra Bruti scholarship for the children of farmers.

• The Scholarship is under the KALIA, Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation, a scheme for financing farmers in Odisha.

**PRANAM Commission:**

• The Chief Minister of Assam Sarbananda Sonowal has announced a PRANAM Commission to look after the issues related to the Parents Responsibility and Norms for Accountability and Monitoring (PRANAM) Bill.

**UP CM launches Scheme for Adolescent Girls:**

• In Uttar Pradesh, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath launched Scheme for Adolescent girls (SAG).

• The scheme focuses on girls aged between **11 to 14 years** who have left studies and will take steps for **proper nutrition and special care for them**.

**Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Mandhan:**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on March 05, 2019 launched the Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Mandhan (PM-SYM) Yojana at Vastral in Gandhinagar, Gujarat.

**Key points of the scheme:**

• An assured monthly pension will be provided to workers in the unorganised sector.

• Under the scheme, an assured monthly pension **of Rs 3,000 per month** will be provided to workers in the unorganised sector after **60 years of age**. Age limitation: Minimum age to invest in the scheme is **18 years and maximum age is 40 years**.

**Arundhati Scheme:**

The government of Assam has announced a new scheme called **Arundhati** to provide gold at free of cost to the brides.
Note: Under the scheme, the government of Assam aims to provide 1 Tola Gold, at about Rs 38K as on today, to brides belonging to all such communities of Assam where it is customary to provide gold at the time of the wedding.

**Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana, Saubhagya scheme:**

100% Houses in 25 States Electrified Under Saubhagya Yojana.

- The country achieved yet another milestone in the power sector with the completion of electrification in **100% households in 25 states** at year end.

- Now, only about 10.48 lakh households are left to be electrified in 4 states – Assam, Rajasthan, Meghalaya and Chhattisgarh.

**Kerala to launch ‘Pravasi Dividend Pension Scheme’:**

- The Kerala government has floated a ‘Pravasi Dividend Pension Scheme’ to provide regular pension to **Non Resident Keralites** on a one-time **payment of Rs 5 lakh**.

**Jiban Sampark Project:**

- Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has announced “Jiban Sampark” project in partnership with UNICEF India to generate awareness about the development and welfare initiatives of state government among the **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups** of the state.

**‘Jai Kisan Rin Mukti Yojana’:**

- Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath has launched the Rs 50,000-crore farm debt-waiver scheme named ‘**Jai Kisan Rin Mukti Yojana**’. It would benefit 55 lakh small and marginal farmers.

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**Summits & Conferences:**

**Fourth Indian Ocean Conference 2019:**

www.vaidicslucknow.com
Fourth Indian Ocean Conference 2019 was recently held in Male, capital of Maldives.

- The two-day conference was held from 3-4 September 2019.
- Indian External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar was one of the speakers at Indian Ocean Conference 2019 event.

**20th India-Russia Summit talks conclude in Vladivostok:**

- The 20th India-Russia annual summit held in Vladivostok, Russia.
- During the summit, India and Russia have signed 15 agreements in several areas in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Putin.

**India is hosting COP14 of UNCCD:**

- For the first time, India is hosting the Conference of Parties (COP14) to the United Nations Convention to combat desertification (UNCCD).
- The 14th session of the Conference of Parties (COP) of UNCCD began at the India Mart and Expo, in Greater Noida.
- The conference began on September 2 and will end on September 13, 2019.

**45th G7 Summit:**

The 45th edition of the G7 Summit was held in Biarritz, France from 24-26th August 2019.

- It is an informal meeting between France, the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Japan, Italy and Canada as well as the European Union.
- India has been invited as a special guest in the summit. PM Narendra Modi will address sessions on environment, climate, oceans and digital transformation at the G7 Summit.
- The 46th G7 summit will be held in 2020 in the United States.

**CoP18 of CITES held in Geneva:**
• The 18th Conference of the Parties (CoP18) of Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) was recently held in **Geneva, Switzerland**.

**12th India Security Summit :**

• The 12th India Security Summit was held in **New Delhi**.

• The theme of the summit was **“Towards New National Cyber Security Strategy”**

**5th BRICS Minister of Environment Meeting held in Sao Paulo, Brazil:**

• The Indian delegation was led by Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Shri Prakash Javadekar.

**Global Investors Summit 2019:**

• A 3-day Global Investors Summit 2019 starting from October 12, 2019, **was held in Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir(J&K)** which provided the state an opportunity to showcase its strengths, strategies, and potential.

**The 52nd ASEAN summit**

• Foreign Ministers from South East Asia are attending the 52nd **ASEAN summit in Bangkok**.

• The annual meeting opened with a call from the host Thailand for deeper integration to expand trade and bolster prosperity in the region amidst rising global challenges.

**22nd National Conference on e-Governance :**

• It was held at Shillong, Meghalaya.

• The theme of the conference is **‘Digital India: Success to Excellence’**.

**‘5 I vision’ :**

• PM Modi has focus on vision **‘5 I’ in G-20 meet at Osaka** to maximize digital technology for social benefit.
• The 5 I’s (5I Vision) are — Inclusiveness, Indigenisation, Innovation, Investment in infrastructure & International cooperation.
• Over the next five years, India aims to become a 5 trillion dollar economy and setting up of 50,000 start-ups in 5 years was the goal.

14th conference of Parties to be hosted by India:
• India will host the 14th conference of the parties from September 02 to 13, 2019 in Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh.
• Three crucial issues in this conference are desertification, land degradation and drought.

UN to host 2020 Ocean Conference in Lisbon:
United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) decided to hold its 2020 high-level conference in Portugal’s Lisbon to support the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources.

72nd World Health Assembly:
It was held at Geneva, Switzerland.
• The theme of 2019 World Health Assembly (72nd session) was “Universal Health Coverage” focusing strongly on primary health care.

World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS) 2019 held in - New Delhi:
• The theme of WSDS 2019 was ‘Attaining the 2030 Agenda: delivering on our promise’.

• Frank Bainimarama, Prime Minister of Fiji was honoured with the Sustainable Development Leadership Award 2019 for his outstanding contributions towards sustainable development in Fiji.
India to host 13th Conference of Parties of Convention on Conservation of Migratory Species:

- The conference will be held from 15th to 22nd February 2020 at Gandhinagar in Gujarat.
- The Great Indian Bustard (GIB) will be as the mascot for the 13th Conference of Parties (COP) of the UN Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species (CMS) to be held in Gujarat in 2020.
- It was also revealed that the bird has been fondly named by the ministry as ‘Gibi’.

7th World Government Summit held in Dubai:

The seventh session of the World Government Summit held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE).

World Economic Forum (WEF) annual Meet-2019:

It was held in Davos, Switzerland.

- The theme of the event is ‘Globalization 4.0: Shaping a Global Architecture in the Age of the Fourth Industrial Revolution’.

15th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas:

- It was held in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh
- The theme of PBD convention 2019 is “Role of Diaspora in Building New India”.

4th edition of Raisina Dialogue held in New Delhi:

- The theme of the Dialogue was “A World Reorder: New Geometries; Fluid Partnerships; Uncertain Outcomes”.
- It was organized by Ministry of External Affairs in partnership with Observer Research Foundation.

106th Session of Indian Science Congress:

- It was concluded in Lovely Professional University, Jalandhar on 07 January 2019.
- Theme was "Future India: Science and Technology".
- It was inaugurated by Hon’ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and attended by Union Science & Technology Minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan.

**Awards/Prizes:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nobel Laureates</th>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Contribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>William G. Kaelin Jr, Sir Peter J. Ratcliffe and Gregg L. Semenza</td>
<td><strong>Physiology or Medicine</strong></td>
<td>Discovered how cells sense and adapt to oxygen availability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Peebles, Michel Mayor and Didier Queloz</td>
<td><strong>Physics</strong></td>
<td>James Peebles: theoretical discoveries in physical cosmology And Michel Mayor and Didier Queloz discovered an exoplanet orbiting a solar-type star.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John B. Goodenough, M. Stanley Whittingham and Akira Yoshino</td>
<td><strong>Chemistry</strong></td>
<td>Discovered the development of lithium-ion batteries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Handke</td>
<td><strong>Literature</strong></td>
<td>Discovered an influential work that with linguistic ingenuity has explored the periphery and the specificity of human experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abiy Ahmed Ali</td>
<td><strong>Peace</strong></td>
<td>For his efforts to achieve peace and international cooperation, and in particular for his decisive initiative to resolve the border conflict with neighbouring Eritrea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abhijit Banerjee, Esther Duflo and Michael</td>
<td><strong>Economic Sciences</strong></td>
<td>For their experimental approach to alleviating global poverty.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Gandhi Peace Price :

President Ram Nath Kovind on February 26, 2019 conferred the Gandhi Peace Prize for the years 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Awardees</th>
<th>Contribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Vivekananda Kendra, Kanyakumari</td>
<td>Contribution in rural development, education, development of natural resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Akshaya Patra Foundation and Sulabh International</td>
<td><strong>Akshaya Patra Foundation</strong> was chosen for its contribution in providing mid-day meals to millions of children across India. <strong>Sulabh International</strong> was chosen for its contribution in improving the condition of sanitation in India and emancipation of manual scavengers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Ekal Abhiyan Trust</td>
<td>Contribution in providing <em>education for rural and tribal children</em> in remote areas pan India, rural empowerment, gender and social equality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Yohei Sasakawa</td>
<td>For his contribution in Leprosy Eradication in India and across the world</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bharat Ratna Award 2019 :

The President, Ram Nath Kovind on January 25, 2019 conferred the 2019 Bharat Ratna Award, country's highest civilian honour, on former president and Congress leader **Pranab Mukherjee**. The award was also conferred on **RSS ideologue Nanaji Deshmukh** and singer **Bhupen Hazarika**, both posthumously.

Philip Kotler Presidential Award:

- The Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** was recently conferred with the first-ever **Philip Kotler Presidential Award**.
• The Award focuses on the triple bottom-line of ‘**People, Profit and Planet**’. The award will be offered annually to the leader of a Nation.

• The Philip Kotler Presidential Award has been named after **Professor Philip Kotler**, a world renowned Professor of Marketing at Northwestern University, Kellogg School of Management.

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**Carnot Prize:**

**Union Minister of Railways Piyush Goyal** was formally conferred with the fourth annual **Carnot Prize** by the Kleinman Center for Energy Policy at the University of Pennsylvania School of Design in New Delhi. The award aims to **recognise India’s efforts** towards eliminating energy poverty with sustainable energy solutions.

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**Oscars Award 2019:**

**Bohemian Rhapsody**, nominated for **five Oscars**, won the most Oscars at the award show. It bagged Oscars for Best Sound Editing, Best Sound Mixing, Best Film Editing and Best Actor.

It is a biographical film about **British rock band Queen’s** lead singer ‘Freddie Mercury’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Award</th>
<th>Winner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Best Picture</td>
<td><strong>Green Book</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Actor</td>
<td><strong>Rami Malek, Bohemian Rhapsody</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Actress</td>
<td><strong>Olivia Colman, The Favourite</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Director</td>
<td><strong>Alfonso Cuaron, Roma</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Animated Feature Film</td>
<td><strong>Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Foreign Language Film</td>
<td><strong>Roma (Mexico; Alfonso Cuaron)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Best Documentary Feature – Free Solo

Best Animated Short Film – Bao

Best Documentary Short Subject – Period. End Of Sentence

- The ‘Period. End Of Sentence’, a film on menstruation set in rural India, won the Oscar in the Documentary - Short Subject category at the 91st Academy Awards.
- The film has been directed by Rayka Zehtabchi and produced by Indian producer Guneet Monga’s Sikhya Entertainment.
- The film came into being as a part of ‘The Pad Project’, started by students at the Oakwood School in Los Angeles and their teacher Melissa Berton.

BAFTA Awards 2019:


King Hamad Order of the Renaissance :

Prime Minster of India Narendra Modi has been conferred King Hamad Order of the Renaissance by Bahrain’s King Hamad bin Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa in Manama, capital of Bahrain.

- He was conferred this prestigious honour in recognition of his efforts to strengthen bilateral relations with Bahrain.
- PM Modi is the Ist Indian prime minister to visit Bahrain.

Order of Zayed - Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi was honoured with prestigious ‘Order of Zayed’, United Arab Emirates’ (UAE) highest civilian award.
Note: The award in name of Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, founding father of UAE.

- Sachin Tendulkar 6th Indian to be inducted into ICC Hall of Fame – International Cricket Council has inducted India’s batting icon Sachin Tendulkar, South African pace legend Allan Donald and two-times World Cup-winning Australian woman cricketer Cathryn Fitzpatrick into the ICC’s Hall of Fame.

Other Indians on the list are Bishan Singh Bedi, Sunil Gavaskar, Kapil Dev, Anil Kumble, Rahul Dravid.

**Laureus World Sports Awards 2019:**

The Laureus Sport for Good Award honours the achievements of those who have demonstrated a tremendous contribution to the sport or to society through sport.

List of awards is as follows:

- Sportsman of the Year: **Novak Djokovic**, (Serbia) Tennis.
- Sportswoman of the Year: **Simone Biles** (USA) Gymnastics.
- Comeback of the Year: Tiger Woods (USA) Golf.
- Breakthrough of the Year: Naomi Osaka (Japan) Tennis.
- Team of the Year: France **World Cup Team** (France) Football
- Lifetime Achievement Award: Arsène Wenger, France.
- Sport for Good Award: **NGO Yuwa** (India).

**Ramon Magsaysay award 2019:**

**Ravish Kumar** has been awarded the 2019 Ramon Magsaysay Award for “harnessing journalism to give voice to the voiceless”.

**2019 Global Excellence Awards:**
The US-India Strategic Partnership Forum has announced that Mastercard CEO and President Ajay Banga and Wipro Chairman Azim Premji will receive the 2019 Global Excellence Awards

Pulitzer Prize 2019:

- For Fiction - “The Overstory” by Richard Powers
- For Drama - “Fairview” by Jackie Sibblies Drury
- For Poetry - “Be With” by Forrest Gander
- For Music - Prism, by Ellen Reid

Templeton Prize 2019:

Brazilian physicist and astronomer Marcelo Gleiser has been awarded the 2019 Templeton Prize

Saraswati Samman 2018:

- Telugu poet K Siva Reddy has been selected for the prestigious Saraswati Samman, 2018 for his collection of poetry titled Pakkaki Ottigilite.

Note: The award, instituted by the KK Birla Foundation in 1991.

World Press Freedom Prize 2019:

Reuters journalists, Kyaw Soe Oo, and Wa Lone selected for the award

Note:

- The World Press Freedom Prize also known as UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize

Abel Prize 2019 - University of Texas professor Karen Uhlenbeck has become the first woman to win the Abel Prize.

Global Teacher Prize For 2019 - Peter Tabichi, a member of the Franciscan religious order has been conferred with the prestigious Global Teacher Prize for 2019 at a ceremony in Dubai.

Swachh Survekhshan-2019 Awards:
• **India’s cleanest city** – **Indore** (MP) bagged award for the for third straight year. Note: The second and third positions were clinched by Ambikapur in Chhattisgarh and Mysore in Karnataka.

• **Cleanest big city** - **Ahmedabad** has been named the cleanest big city with a population of more than ten lakh.

• **Cleanest Small city** - New Delhi Municipal Council area was given the “Cleanest Small City” award.

• **Best Ganga Town** - Uttarakhand’s Gauchar was adjudged the “Best Ganga Town”.

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**Sports/Games:**

Indian skipper **Virat Kohli** on January 22, 2019 became the first cricketer to win all the top three ICC individual awards including the Sir Garfield Sobers Trophy for ICC Cricketer of the Year, the **ICC Men's Test Player of the Year** and the ICC ODI Player of the Year for his performances in 2018.

• Indian wicketkeeper **Rishabh Pant** claimed the ICC’s Emerging **Cricketer of the Year** award.

**IPL 2019**

Mumbai Indians defeated Chennai Super Kings at Hyderabad by only one run and won IPL 2019 title. This was Mumbai Indians 4th Indian Premier League (IPL) trophy and became first team to do so.

**Important Facts**

• **David Warner** of Sunrisers Hyderabad won **Orange Cap** for most runs. He scored 692 runs.

• **Imran Tahir** of Chennai Super Kings (CSK) won **Purple Cap** for taking most wickets. He was the highest wicket-taker in tournament with 26 wickets. Tahir also became the oldest player to feature in an IPL final and is only 2nd spinner after **Pragyan Ojha** to win **Purple Cap**.
• **Andre Russell** of Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) was named *Most Valuable Player*. He scored 510 runs, took 11 wickets and hit the most sixes in 2019 season. He also won the title of *Super Striker of the Season* for a strike rate of 204.81

• **Shubman Gill** of KKR was named *Emerging Player of the IPL Tournament*.

• **Sunrisers Hyderabad** bagged the *Fairplay award* of IPL 2019.

• **Hardik Pandya** of Mumbai Indians (MI) won *Fastest Fifty* of Season.

• **Kieron Pollard** of MI won *Perfect Catch* of the Season.

• **Rahul Chahar** of MI was named *Game Changer* of the Season.

• **KL Rahul** of Kings XI Punjab was named Stylish Player of the Season.

• **Raina** becomes first player to score 5,000 IPL runs

**ICC World Cup title 2019:**

England lifted the ICC Cricket World Cup Trophy 2019 at the Lord’s cricket stadium in London.

• England defeated New Zealand with more number of boundaries in the Super Over thriller in the grand finale of *ICC Cricket World Cup Trophy 2019*.

  - **Player of the tournament**: Kane Williamson (New Zealand).
  - **Player of the Match Award**: Ben Stokes (England).
  - **Highest run scorer of the tournament**: Rohit Sharma (India).
  - **Highest wicket taker of the tournament**: Mitchell Starc (Australia).

• Indian batsman Rohit Sharma became the first batsman in the world to score five hundred in a single World Cup

The 13th edition of ICC Cricket World Cup will be held in India from **February 9 to March 26, 2023**.

**Grand Slams 2019:**

**Wimbledon 2019:**

• **Simona Halep** (Romanian) beats **Serena Williams** to win first Wimbledon title.

• Novak Djokovic (Serbian) won his fifth Wimbledon title after defeating Swiss tennis ace Roger Federer
**US Open -2019:**

- Winner - **Rafael Nadal** (Spain)
- Runner-up - **Dom Daniil Medvedev** (Russia)
- **Bianca Andreescu** becomes the first Canadian singles player to win a Grand Slam event.
- She defeated **Serena Williams** 6-3, 7-5 in her first Grand Slam title.

**French Open -2019:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Men’s Singles</th>
<th>Rafael Nadal (Spain)</th>
<th>Austria Dominic Thiem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Singles</td>
<td>Ashleigh Barty (Australia)</td>
<td>Marketa Vondrousova (Czech Republic)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Australian Open 2019:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Men’s Singles</th>
<th>Novak Djokovic (Serbia)</th>
<th>Rafael Nadal (Spain)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Singles</td>
<td>Naomi Osaka (Japan)</td>
<td>Petra Kvitova (Czech Republic)</td>
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- **Indian shooter Yashaswini Singh** Deswal won gold in the women’s 10 meter Air Pistol event at the **ISSF World Cup at Rio de Janeiro in Brazil.**
- **Manu Bhaker and Saurabh Chaudhary** won the gold medal in mixed 10m air pistol at the **ISSF World Cup in Rio de Janeiro.**
- Ace Indian shuttle **PV Sindhu** has won the World Championships title defeating Japan’s **Nozomi Okuhara** in the final at Basel, Switzerland.
- Ravichandran Ashwin named “**PCA Player of the Month**
• **Irani Cup** title 2018-19 - **Vidarbha** beat Rest of India to retain 2018–19 Irani Cup title in Nagpur

• **Sunil Chhetri** was named as the **AIFF Men's Footballer of the Year** for a record-extending sixth time.

• FIFA rankings: **India drops two places to 104 in the latest** – **Belgium** leads the overall FIFA rankings, followed by Brazil, France, England, and Uruguay.

• For the first time in the **Olympic Games’ history**, Table Tennis Mixed Doubles event added in a new **Tokyo 2020 Olympics Games**.

**Wisden’s Five Cricketers of the Year for 2018:**

• The Wisden has named **Virat Kohli** as the Leading Cricketer of the Year for 2018.

• Indian player **Smriti Mandhana** bagged the Women’s Leading Cricketer of the Year.

• **Rashid Khan** of Afghanistan bagged the **Leading T20 Cricketer of the Year**.

**FIFA Women’s World Cup 2019:**

The U.S. women's national soccer team defeated the **Netherlands 2-0** in the 2019 FIFA Women’s World Cup final.

• Host country – **France**

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**Committees/commission:**

**Nandan Nilekani committee:**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has constituted a High-Level Committee on Deepening of **Digital Payments to encourage digitisation of payments** and enhance financial inclusion. The five-member committee will be headed by **UIDAI’s former Chairman Nandan Nilekani.**
**Tapan Ray committee** – The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has set up a working group to review the regulatory and supervisory framework for core investment companies (CICs).

**Ramesh Chand (Member, NITI Aayog) committee** – Central Government has constituted Working Group for the revision of the current series of Wholesale Price Index (Base 2011-12).

**Devendra Fadnavis (CM of Maharashtra)** - PM Narendra Modi has constituted a high-powered Committee of Chief Ministers (CMs) for ‘Transformation of Indian Agriculture’.

**Aruna Sundararajan Committee** - Union Telecom Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad had constituted a committee chaired by Telecom Secretary Aruna Sundararajan to spell out revival plans for Telecom sector.

**Kasturirangan committee** - Former ISRO chief Dr. Kasturirangan led Committee submitted the draft National Educational Policy (NEP) to HRD Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank in New Delhi.

**Amitabh Kant (Niti Aayog CEO) committee** - National Mission on Transformative Mobility and Battery Storage, which is being set up to promote clean and sustainable mobility initiatives in the country.

**Suresh Mathur committee** – to review the regulatory framework on microinsurance and recommend measures to increase the demand for such products.

**Bimal Jalan Panel** - to suggest how the central bank should handle its reserves and whether it can transfer its surplus to the government.

**Nitin Patel committee** - The government has constituted a seven-member Group of Ministers (GoM) to boost the real estate sector under the GST regime. Deputy Chief Minister of Gujarat Nitin Patel is the
*convener of the GoM.*

**Akhilesh Ranjan committee** - replace the Income Tax Act with a new Direct Tax Code (DTC)

**Injeti Srinivas Committee** - A high level steering committee on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

**Subhash Chandra Garg panel** - on Virtual Currencies
BOOKS/Publications:

Every Vote Counts : Navin Chawla

'Mind Master: Winning Lessons from a Champion's Life: Vishwanathan Anand

The Third Pillar – Rahguram Rajan

Gun Island – Amitav Ghosh

My Life My Mission - Baba Ram Dev

India Positive – Chetan Bhagat

(Undaunted: Saving the Idea of India) – P Chidambaram

Moving On, Moving Forward: A year in Office – Venkai Naidu

We are Displaced - Malala Yousafzai

Changing India ---- Manmohan Singh

"Finding The Gaps’ - Simon Taufel

Turbulence & Triumph -The Modi Years - Rahul Agarwal
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Defence Exercises - 2019:

SLINEX 2019’ - the bilateral maritime exercise between India and Sri Lanka held at Visakhapatnam (Andhra Pradesh).

EX TSENR 2019: India, Pakistan forces to be part of military exercise in Russia.

AUMX: 1st ASEAN-US Maritime Exercise

• The first ASEAN-US Maritime Exercise (AUMX) between regional bloc-Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and United States kicked off at the Sattahip Naval Base in Thailand.

“Yudh Abhyas 2019” - joint military exercise between India & US.

SIMBEX-19 Naval Exercise – Naval exercise between India & Singapore.

Exercise Pacific Vanguard 2019 - US, Japan, South Korea, Australia hold 1st Naval Drills in Western Pacific in Guam.

Varuna 19.1 - Naval exercise between India & France.

Bold Kurukshetra-2019 - joint military exercise between India & Singapore

Mitra shakti-VI - bilateral joint exercise between India and Sri Lanka.

Mainamati Maitree Exercise 2019’/ Sampriti 2019’ – b/w India & Bangladesh.

IMBEX 2018-19: bilateral army exercise between India & Myanmar

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**Important facts for UPPCS (Pre – 2019):**

- The State Government of Rajasthan has recently launched the first-ever public information portal named “Jan Soochna Portal-2019”. The portal aims to provide information to the public about government authorities and departments.
- **Saudi Arabia** replaces **India as world’s largest arms importer**
- **Qatar** withdraw its membership from **OPEC**
- Macedonia renamed as ‘**The Republic of Northern Macedonia’**
- **Meghalaya** launches ‘**Walk to Work’ campaign**
- **Global Water Summit 2019** was held at **London, United Kingdom.**
- **Operation Thirst**” was launched by RPF
- **Guwahati railway station** 1st to Get ISO Certification in India.
- India’s first foreign interactive **bird park launched in Mumbai.**
In the National Institutional Ranking Framework 2019 - The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Madras has topped the overall rankings of higher education institutions and is followed by IISc Bangalore and IIT-Delhi ranked second and third in the overall rankings.

PM Modi inaugurates National War Memorial in New Delhi.

Rajnath Singh launches Pan-India Number 112 for Women Safety.

Kareena Kapoor Khan appointed ambassador of Swasth Immunised India campaign.

Saudi Becomes 73rd Nation to Sign International Solar Alliance.

Vande Bharat Express - India’s fastest indigenous train, Train 18 named as Vande Bharat Express will run between Delhi and Varanasi.

India’s first Dinosaur Museum cum fossil Park was inaugurated in Gujarat’s Mahisagar district.

Kajin Sara Lake of Nepal set to be world’s highest lake

Papua New Guinea has the highest number of ‘living’ languages in the world, India ranks 4th.

France to impose green tax on plane tickets from 2020

PM Modi has been chosen by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation for the 2019 Global Goalkeeper Award’. He was given this award for his ‘Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan’.

The headquarters of Global Tiger Forum (GTF) is in New Delhi.
The Indo-US military training Exercise “Yudh Abhyas 2019” was recently conducted in Washington.

The world’s most liveable city, according to EIU’s Global Liveability Index 2019- **Vienaa**.

India ranks **34th** place at the WEF’s World Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index (TTCI) 2019. **Spain** got the 1st place in the list. It was released by **world Economic Forum (WEF)**.

Indian pacer **Jasprit Bumrah** became the **fastest Indian bowler** to take 50 Test wickets.

**Ishant Sharma** of India surpassed the record held by **Kapil Dev** as the most successful Indian pacer **outside Asia**.

In the ICC Test Rankings, **Steve Smith** of Australia has got the 1st position.

Russia is planning to set up more than **20 nuclear power** units in India in next 20 years.

5th Eastern Economic Forum was recently held in **Vladivostok, Russia**.

Indian vice-captain **Rohit Sharma** is launching **Rohit4Rhinos campaign**, in partnership with **WWF India and Animal Planet**.

India ranks **10th** position in **gold reserves** according to World Gold Council. **U.S.** leads the country list with total gold reserves of 8,133.5 tonnes followed by Germany with 3,366.8 tonnes.

The 24th **World Energy Congress** was held in Abu Dhabi. The theme was- **‘Energy for prosperity’**.
- **Manipur** Govt launches “School Pagadaba” scheme to improve infrastructure of government schools.

- **West Bengal** launches awareness campaign ‘Save Green, Stay Clean’

- **India’s first underwater train** will be launched in **Kolkata**

- **Uttar Pradesh** becomes No.1 in implementation of **Pradhanamntri Suraksha Beema Yojna** in the country.

- **India gets** its first dinosaur museum and **fossil park in Gujarat**

- **The 36th National Games** to be held in Goa from October 20 to November 4, 2020.

- **Rishabh Pant** became fastest Indian wicket-keeper to claim 50 dismissals in Test cricket

- **Qatar** will host the FIFA World Cup in 2022.

- The Cricket Australia has announced new transgender inclusive policy. This policy will enable transgender players to play the game of cricket at the highest levels.

- **ICC suspends** Zimbabwe Cricket

- Russia is hosting the multi-nation Exercise **TSENTR 2019**.

- **Lasith Malinga** has become the first bowler to take **100 wickets** in T20 International Cricket.

- **Vietnam** has inaugurated Southeast Asia’s largest solar power farm.

- **Megan Schutt** of Australia has become the first woman to claim **two hat-tricks** in international cricket.
Mary Kom has become the first Indian woman athlete to be recommended for Padma Vibhushan.

Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina was conferred Dr Kalam Smriti International Excellence Award 2019 in Dhaka (Bangladesh Capital). She received the prestigious award for vision of a peaceful and prosperous South Asia, free of tension, conflicts and terrorism.

The book “Turbulence & Triumph: The Modi Years” has been written by Rahul Agarwal.

Vinesh Phogat has become the first Indian wrestler to qualify for 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

The Indian documentary film “Moti Bagh” has been nominated for 2019 Oscars. It was directed by Nirmal Chander. The film is based on the life of Vidyadutt Sharma, a farmer living in Pauri Garhwal region, Uttrakhand.

The Union Minister has recently launched three citizen centric services of the Chandigarh Police, in Chandigarh. The services include the Emergency Response Support System (ERSS - Dial 112), ‘E-Beat Book’ System and the ‘E-Saathi App’

Pusa Yashasvi is a new variety of wheat crop.

The official mascot of the 2022 Beijing Winter Paralympics will be - Shuey Rhon Rhon.

The Delhi government has recently launched “champions campaign” to fight against dengue.
The Indian film ‘Gully Boy’ has been named as India’s official entry to Oscars 2020.

The noted journalist Ravish Kumar has won the first Gauri Lankesh National Award for Journalism.

Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu has released books – ‘Loktantra Ke Swar’ in Hindi and ‘The Republican Ethic’ in English, which are the compilations of speeches of President Ram Nath Kovind.

Gujarat becomes first state to implement 10 per cent quota for EWS in general category.

Indian star wrestler Vinesh Phogat has become the first Indian athlete to be nominated for the prestigious Laureus World Comeback of the Year Award. Phogat has been nominated for the award alongside US Tour Championship winner Tiger Woods, who won his first tournament in five years.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the ninth edition of the Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit 2019 at the Mahatma Mandir, Gandhinagar, Gujarat. The theme of the Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit 2019 was “Youth Connect 2019: Shaping A New India – The Story of Billion Dreams”.

The central banks of the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia have launched a common digital currency called Aber, which will be used in financial settlements between the two countries through Blockchains and Distributed Ledgers technologies.
Prime Minister Narendra Modi has recently flagged off India's first Semi High Speed Train, ‘Vande Bharat Express’/Train- 18 on New Delhi-Kanpur-Allahabad-Varanasi route from the New Delhi Railway Station.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has recently inaugurated the National Cancer Institute at Badhsa, Jhajjar, Haryana.

Reliance Industries Chairman Mukesh Ambani topped the Hurun India Philanthropy List 2018 with the highest contribution of Rs 437 crore between October 2017 and September 2018.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of the Sela Tunnel Project in Arunachal Pradesh.

Food Processing Minister recently inaugurated Cremica food Park, which is the first mega food park of Himachal Pradesh.

In a first, the Delhi government launched its pilot project of creating the national capital’s first “zero fatality corridor.

Meghalaya state animal Clouded leopard will be the mascot for the National Games 2022 coinciding with the 50th year of the creation of the state.

One of the world’s largest and longest running international military exercise “Cobra Gold” exercise began in Thailand.

Godavari Mega Aqua Food Park will be set up in Tundurru Village in Bhimavaram Mandal, West Godavari District, Andhra Pradesh.

The government of Assam has announced a new scheme called “Arundhati” to provide gold at free of cost to the brides.
Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared **100 percent electrification** of all households in Arunachal Pradesh.

The “**Parmanu Tech 2019**” conference was organized by the Ministry of external Affairs and Department of Atomic Energy in New Delhi.

Minister of State for AYUSH, Shripad Yesso Naik launched the **e-AUSHADHI portal**, for online licensing of Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani and Homoeopathy drugs and related matters in New Delhi.

India has replaced Japan as the **world’s second-largest steel producing country**, **only behind China**, which is the largest producer of crude steel accounting for more than **51 per cent** of production, as per the latest report by **World Steel Association**.

UAE has decided to include **Hindi** as the third official language in courts.

Rajasthan assembly has passed bill to end the **minimum education** criterion for panchayat and civic poll candidates.

**South Korea** is officially set to be the world’s first country to roll out **5G networks**.

Asian Hockey Federation has **honoured Indian skipper Manpreet Singh** with the **2018 Player of the Year award**.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared the 2019-2020 as the year of **construction technology**.

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has launched “**Young Scientist Programme**” for school children.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi released the new series of visually impaired friendly coin of **one, two, five, ten and twenty rupees** in New Delhi.
London Mayor **Sadiq Khan** has been named the 'Politician of the Year' of UK for his ongoing Contribution to the political life.

National Women Livelihood Meet-2019 held at **Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh**.

Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu has been conferred an Honorary **Doctorate by the “University of Peace”** for his contribution “to the Rule of Law, democracy and sustainable development in India”.

The **new railway zone - Southern Coast Railway** will be headquartered in Visakhapatnam, it will be the 18th zone in the country.

**Renowned Indian artist Haku Shah**, best known for his themes of **tribal and folk art**. Fondly known as “**Haku bhai**”, the award-winning artist also set up the first of its kind **Crafts Village – Shilpgram in Udaipur in Rajasthan in the 1980s**.

**World Water Day** is celebrated every year on **March 22**. The idea behind observing this day is focusing on the importance of water and need to conserve it. The World Water Day **theme 2019** is “**Leaving no one behind**”.

**The Theme of The International Women’s Day - 2019** was “**Think Equal, Build Smart, Innovate for change: Balance For Better**” is a call-to-action for driving gender balance across the world.

US President Donald Trump recently met North Korean leader Kim Jong Un at the **Demilitarized Zone**.

**Garuda VI** is a bilateral air exercise between **Indian Air Force and French air force**. The latest edition is being held in France.

Japan resumes commercial whaling after three decades as it withdrew from the **International Whaling Commission (IWC) last year**. Its headquarter is at **Cambridge, England**.
The river Ganga continues to be unfit for bathing or drinking in Kanpur despite the plugging of Kanpur's infamous 'Sisamau drain'.

The French government is to impose a tax (Green Tax) of up to €18 on plane tickets for all flights from airports in France to fund less-polluting transportation projects.

Utkarsha 2022 is a three-year road map for medium-term objective to be achieved for improving regulation & supervision of RBI.

The Union Environment Ministry has selected 12 beaches in India to give the 'Blue Flag' certification.

World Economic Forum (WEF) has ranked India at 76th on a global energy transition index- 2019. Sweden ranks 1st.

HR 1044 is a Bill passed by the US lawmakers aimed at lifting the current seven per cent country-cap on issuing Green Cards.

The 82nd parallel north is a circle of latitude that is 82 degrees north of the Earth’s equatorial plane, in the Arctic.

Zero Defect and Zero Effect"(ZED) manufacturing is a scheme of 'Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises'(MSME).

The World Science Day for Peace and Development 2019 will be devoted to the theme of "Open Science, leaving no one behind".

Rani Mukerji has received the 'Most Influential Cinema Personality in South-East Asia' award for her phenomenal work in 'Hichki'.

The Assam government has decided to start Arundhati gold scheme by January 2020.

Virat Kohli has been named PETA India's Person of the Year for 2019

Kandla port has been renamed as Deen Dayal Upadhyay port.
Mahatma Gandhi International Convention Centre has been set up in Niger.

Ireland becomes 2nd country to declare Climate Emergency - Ireland has declared a climate emergency in their country, to be the second country after Britain to do so.

Mahatma Gandhi Information Technology and Biotechnology Park (MGIT-BP) built with India’s assistance was recently inaugurated at Grand-Bassam in Cote d’Ivoire.

UAE Cabinet adopts ‘National Strategy for Wellbeing 2031’ - The United Arab Emirates (UAE) Cabinet adopted a National Strategy for Wellbeing 2031 during its meeting at Presidential Palace in Abu Dhabi (UAE Capital).

The French parliament approved a law dubbed as Gafa Tax (an acronym for Google, Apple, Facebook and Amazon), the legislation will impose a 3% levy on sales generated in the country by non-tax paying online giants.

New Zealand has officially banned single-use plastic shopping bags with effect from 1 July 2019.

United States has officially labeled China a “currency manipulator”. The US has accused China of using yuan to gain “unfair competitive advantage” in trade.

World’s largest burn and plastic surgery institute inaugurated in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Kenya’s marathon sub-two hour man Eliud Kipchoge and American 400m hurdles world record holder Dalilah Muhammad (Woman) were named World Athletics’ athletes of the year - 2019.

United Nations has announced 2019 as the International Year of the Periodic Table of the Chemical Elements to highlight its first publication in 1869.

Meghalaya becomes 1st state to ensure water conservation.
• Karnataka Government has decided to declare 2019 as the ‘Year of Water’.
• Telangana has set up ‘Save Tiger Protection Force’.
• Khelo India Youth Games 2020 to be held in Guwahati.
• The Italian city Milan was named as host of 2026 Winter Olympics.
• US removes India, Switzerland from its currency monitoring list.
• Elephant Bond: A government-appointed high-level panel has suggested for issuance of ‘Elephant Bonds’ for infrastructure projects and people who are declaring undisclosed income will have to mandatorily invest half of that amount in these securities.
• Lionel Messi Wins UEFA Goal of the Season Award 2018-19.
• ISRO announces Vikram Sarabhai Journalism Award 2019.
• Ruhan Rajput honoured with ‘Entrepreneur of the Year Award, 2019’ –
• Maldives to confer its highest award ‘Nishan Izzuddin’ on PM Modi –
• Amitav Ghosh becomes first English writer to get 54th Jnanpith award.
• Priyanka Chopra to be honoured with humanitarian award by UNICEF.
• Former foreign secretary Shyam Saran will be conferred with Japan’s second highest national award, ‘Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star.
• CBSE was honoured with the Digital India Award 2019 under ‘Exemplary Online Service’ category.
• Former ISRO chairman A S Kiran Kumar was conferred with France’s highest civilian honour, Chevalier de l’Ordre national de la Legion d’Honneur, for his contribution to India-France space cooperation.
• Swiss-based NRI scientist Dr Rajendra Joshi has been conferred with the Pravasi Bhartiya Samman Award by the President of India Ram Nath Kovind.
• Pritzker Prize 2019 - Japanese Architect Arata Isozaki has received the Pritzker Prize 2019.
Asian Hockey Federation has honored Indian skipper Harmanpreet Singh with the **2018 Player of the Year** award. Women team’s striker Lalremsiami has bagged the **Rising Player of The Year prize**.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been honoured with the **Seoul Peace Prize**.

The Ministry of Development of **North East Region** conducted a four day long North East festival in **Varanasi**. It aims to fuse the cultures of Ganga and Brahmaputra.

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विष्क 30 वर्षों से लखनऊ का सबसे प्रतिष्ठित सिविल सेवा शिक्षण संस्थान जिसमें अभी तक 610+ IAS तथा 1400+ PCS और PCS-J में 325 सफल परिणाम हुए हैं।

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Dr. P.M. Tripathi
LL.B., M.P.A., Ph.D.

Mr. Harish Kumar
Chief Managing & Administrative Officer

Alambagh Branch
3rd Floor, Panchwati Complex,
Sector-B, LDA Colony Kanpur
Road, Alambagh, Lucknow.
9415001686

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