



# Monthly **GK** Mania



April - 2019

**CAREER**  **FLITE**<sup>TM</sup>  
*giving flight to your career*

"A Leading Coaching Institute For  
Bank PO/ Clerk, SSC, Railway, CAT, MAT, CLAT"

2nd Floor, Prahar Building, Opp. Mamtora Brothers, Danish Road, Panbazar, Guwahati-781001  
Phone : 76700 26262, 98640 93327, email:- [careerflite@gmail.com](mailto:careerflite@gmail.com), website:- [www.careerflite.com](http://www.careerflite.com)



### **Jha: New member of the 15th Finance Commission**

On 1st March 2019, the 1982 batch IAS officer of Manipur cadre, Ajay Narayan Jha has become the new member of the 15th Finance Commission. Prior to this, he was the Finance Secretary to the Government of India and has also served as Secretary to the 14th Finance Commission. In November 2017, the 15th Finance Commission was constituted by President, under the Chairmanship of N. K. Singh to decide the formula for devolution of revenue between Centre and States, for a period of 5 years – April, 2020 to March, 2025.

### **Tamil Nadu: First state to launch TAVI**

On 1st March 2019, Tamil Nadu is the first State in the country to launch Transcatheter Aortic Valve Implantation (TAVI) in the government sector. It was launched at the Tamil Nadu Government Multi Super Speciality Hospital (TNGMSSH), Omandurar Estate, in November 2018. For this, Tamil Nadu State government has signed an MoU with “HeartTeam India” to perform the procedure for patients at the TNGMSSH. In the private sector, this procedure costs Rs.20 lakh to Rs.25 lakh, while it is done free in the government sector.

### **CZPDC Bhopal & WZPDCL Indore gets “Saubhagya Award”**

On 28th February 2019, the Central Zone Power Distribution Company(CZPDC), Bhopal and West Zone Power Distribution Company (WZPDC), Indore were honored with the “Saubhagya Award” under Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana at the National Conference of Energy Ministers. The award carries a cash prize of Rs. 100 crore each. The PM Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana- Saubhagya was implemented by the Central Government in September 2017. It intends to provide electricity to all Below Poverty Line (BPL) houses of rural and urban areas.

### **Pranay Verma: New India's Ambassador to Vietnam**

On 1st March 2019, Pranay Kumar Verma has been appointed as the India's new Ambassador to Socialist Republic of Vietnam. He is a 1994 cadre Indian Foreign Services Officer. Currently, he is working as the Joint secretary at Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). Besides this, Nina Tshering La and Abhay Thakur were concurrently accredited as the respective Ambassadors of India to Gabon and Chad. Currently, La is serving as the Ambassador of India to the Democratic Republic of Congo and Thakur is serving as the Ambassador of India to Nigeria.

### **Hasmukh Adhia : Non-Executive Chairman of BoB**

On 1st March 2019, Hasmukh Adhia, the ex-finance secretary has been appointed as the Non-Executive Chairman of Bank of Baroda for a period of 3 years. He is a 1981-batch IAS officer from the Gujarat cadre. According to the Scheme of Amalgamation, shareholders of Vijaya Bank will get 402 equity shares of Bank of Baroda for every 1,000 shares held. Dena Bank shareholders will get 110 shares of Bank of Baroda for every 1,000 shares held.

### **Lal Sahni appointed Chairman of NCBC**

In March 2019, Bhagwan Lal Sahni has been appointed as the Chairman of the National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC). Other members of the commission are Kaushalendra Singh Patel– BJP leader and former mayor of Varanasi, Sudha Yadav- BJP national secretary and former Haryana MP and Achary Talloju– Telangana BJP general secretary. This committee was approved by President Ram Nath Kovind. The NCBC was constitutionally recognized by Parliament in the year 2017, after repealing the National Commission for Backward Classes Act, 1993.

### **India's first Braille laptop "DotBook" created by IIT-Delhi**

On 3rd March 2019, Pulkit Sapra from Delhi and Suman Muralikrishnan from Chennai, the alumnus and researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Delhi have created a laptop for visually-impaired called "DotBook". The laptop has an interface in form of dots or Braille instead of a visual one. Instead of a screen, the laptop displays embossed text in Braille through a touchpad and the users get to feel everything a website has by touching the pad. It is built in Linux and comes with 4 GB internal storage which is expandable up to 64 GB. The laptop has two versions -20 cell version (Rs. 40,000) and another 40-cell version (Rs. 60,000), each referring to the number of characters displayed in one line.

### **Kumbh Mela 2019 entered Guinness World Records**

The world's largest religious and cultural human congregation, 'Kumbh 2019' that started at Prayagraj (erstwhile Allahabad), Uttar Pradesh on January 15, 2019 got concluded on March 4, 2019 with the sixth and final "Shahi Snan" (royal bath) which was held on the occasion of Mahashivratri. The mela scripted Guinness Records via largest traffic and crowd management plan with rolling of 503 shuttle buses in one go, the biggest painting exercise of public sites under paint my city scheme and the biggest sanitation and waste disposal mechanism engaging 10,000 workers in span of just three days from February 28 to March 3, 2019.

### **National Security Day: 4th March**

Nation celebrated the 48th edition of Rashtriya Suraksha Diwas or National Security Day on 4th March 2019 to applaud security forces like army, para-military, policemen and commandos. The

First National Security Day was celebrated in year 1972. It is worth recollecting here that Indian Military force has a strength of more than 1.3 million active personnel and it is world's third largest military force. And 'Operation Rahat' of the year 2013 Uttarakhand floods, was one of the world's biggest civilian rescue operations conducted by Indian forces.

### **Kavya : the 2019 National STEM Education Awardee**

In March 2019, Indian-American teenager, Kavya Kopparapu has been presented the 2019 National STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) Education Award for her invention in upgrading treatments of deadliest form of brain cancer, glioblastoma. The awardee has developed GlioVision, a high accuracy medicine platform powered by Artificial Intelligence (AI) that predicts brain tumour characteristics by using a scanned image of a biopsy rather than a DNA sample at lower expenditure (\$10,000) in lesser time.

### **P V Ramesh : The new director-general of the National Archives of India**

In March 2019, The Appointment Committee of the Cabinet has approved the appointment of P V Ramesh as the director-general of the National Archives of India which functions under Ministry of Culture. Presently he is serving in capacity of Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of Rural Electrification Corporation. National Archives of India was established as Imperial Records Department (IRD) on 11 March 1891 in the Imperial Secretariat Building at Calcutta (Kolkata). In 1911 the IRD got shifted to Delhi and after the Independence, the government of India rechristened IRD as National Archives of India.

### **Justice SA Bobde became NALSA Executive Chairman**

On 6th March 2019, President Ram Nath Kovind has appointed Justice SA Bobde of the Supreme Court as Executive Chairman of National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) after retirement of Justice AK Sikri on 6th March 2019. National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) is meant to provide free Legal Services to the weaker sections of the society on the basis of equal opportunity. NALSA provides effective legal representation, legal literacy and awareness and bridges the gap between the legally available benefits and the entitled beneficiaries. The Chief Justice of India serves as the Patron-in-Chief and the Senior most Judge of the Supreme Court of India plays as the Executive Chairman of the Authority.

### **Appearance of Rs. 20 coin**

In March 2019, Government of India announced new Rs. 20 coin having 12-edged polygon (dodecagon) shape. It will be made in copper, zinc and nickel. It will be 27mm (millimeters) in dimension and will have weight of 8.54 grams. Its front side will have the Lion Capitol symbol of Ashoka Pillar with inscription of the legend "Satyamev Jayate" below it. The words "Bharat" in Hindi and "INDIA" in English will feature on the right and left-hand side of the symbol respectively. Besides this, the government is also planning to launch new coins of Re 1, Rs 2, Rs 5 and Rs 10 pretty soon.

### **Presentation of Nari Shakti awards**

President Kovind conferred Nari Shakti awards upon 44 women to recognise their relentless service towards the cause of women empowerment and social welfare on occasion of International Women's Day i.e. 8th March 2019. This year a One Stop Centre and a state have also been acknowledged for displaying exceptional progress in improving child sex ratio at birth under the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme. India celebrated the International Women's Day on prescribed 'Think Equal, Build Smart, Innovate for Change' theme. It empowered women of both rural and urban settings and celebrated the activists who worked constantly to assert women's rights to realise their full potential.

### **Placements at IIT-Delhi crossed '10-year benchmark'**

In March 2019 more than 900 students got job offers of their choice at IIT-Delhi. Most placements i.e. 32% were seen in core engineering streams like electrical, civil, mechanical, chemical, etc. 43 students grabbed opportunities in Europe, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, and US, among others. More than 160 pre-placement offers were offered to students, out of which around 90 were accepted. The campus witnessed this record job placement as 15% more companies visited the institute this year.

### **Ausaf Sayeed: The new Ambassador of India to Saudi Arabia**

In March 2019, High Commissioner of India to the Republic of Seychelles, Dr. Ausaf Sayeed got appointed as the next ambassador of India to Saudi Arabia. The appointee is an Indian Foreign Service officer of the 1989 batch who has succeeded Ahmad Javed, who had been an envoy to Saudi Arabia since December 2015. Sayeed has a rich experience in political, economic, consular and cultural work, besides Haj management. Prior to this, he has also served as Ambassador to Yemen and Consul General of India in Chicago and Jeddah.

### **Reshuffle in Central Government bureaucracy**

In March 2019, Central Government did reshuffle in top-level bureaucracy. In this, Additional Secretary and Financial Adviser, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Rakesh Kumar Vats got appointed as Secretary-General of Medical Council of India; Rabindra Panwar (Secretary, Ministry of Women & Child Development); Bhupendra Singh (Special Secretary and Financial Adviser, Home Ministry); Ruolkhumlein Buhiril (Secretary, Department of Land Resources); P. Venkata Ramesh Babu (Director-General of National Archives of India); Rajni Sekhri Sibal (Secretary, Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare); Braj Raj Sharma (Secretary, Department of Border Management, Home Ministry) and Yaduvendra Mathur became Special Secretary, Niti Aayog.



### **Resignation of Mizoram Governor**

In March 2019, Mizoram Governor Kummanam Rajasekharan has resigned from his post to become BJP's candidate in the Thiruvananthapuram Lok Sabha constituency. Governor of Assam, Prof. Jagdish Mukhi, has been entrusted with temporary charge of the Aizawl Raj Bhavan. The resignee has been former State president of the BJP in Kerala, who took oath as Governor of Mizoram in May 2018. Sitting MP Shashi Tharoor of the Congress and C. Divakaran of the CPI will play close opponents in the elections.

### **PM-STIAC's nine missions of national importance**

In March 2019, Prime Minister's Science, Technology and Innovation Advisory Council (PMSTIAC) broke information about nine missions related to artificial intelligence, harnessing of bioscience for improving health, quantum computing, electric vehicles, deep ocean exploration etc .of national importance. Besides these, generation of wealth from waste, conservation of biodiversity, creating innovation ecosystem for start-ups and using a combination of machine and human translation techniques to help Indian students access scientific knowledge comprise rest of the privileged missions.

### **Working group for Ayushman Bharat scheme**

In March 2019, The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) and National Health Authority (NHA) have created a joint working group (JWG) to control fraud in Ayushman Bharat scheme. The 11 member group of JWG, headed by Dinesh Arora, Deputy CEO of NHA and co-headed by Suresh Mathur, Executive Director of IRDAI will suggest ways for more effective implementation of the Centre's Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana and will present a report on a national repository of empanelled hospitals under insurance/government schemes with defined standards for quality and package rates and codes.

### **IIT Mandi created fibre reinforced thermoplastic**

In March 2019, IIT Mandi researchers have developed thermoplastic fibre reinforced composites with jute and kenaf fibres via a simple process of 'Microwave Curing'. As per the publication of the Journal of Thermoplastic Composite Materials, research paper titled 'Development and mechanical characterization of microwave-cured thermoplastic based natural fibre reinforced composites' reveals that the fibre reinforcement holds the polymer matrix together to enhance the properties of the composite. The resultant thermoplastics offer advantages like biodegradability and reduces greenhouse emissions.

### **Appointments of Indian Ambassador**

In March 2019, India announced appointments of Indian Ambassadors to various foreign countries among which Manpreet Vohra of 1988 IFS batch has been appointed as the next

Ambassador of India to Mexico; Ambassador of India to the Republic of Guatemala, B. S. Mubarak of 2001 IFS batch will be the Indian Ambassador to the Republic of El Salvador and Kishan Dan Dewal, Deputy High Commissioner of India, to the Republic of Mauritius got appointed as as the new ambassador to the Republic of Armenia.

### **BBC Journalist Priyanka Dubey: Chameli Devi Jain Awardee**

In March 2019, a bilingual correspondent with the BBC at its Delhi bureau, Priyanka Dubey has been presented the Chameli Devi Jain Award 2018 as an outstanding woman journalist at a function in Delhi. Her multi-faceted, interrogative and investigative reports fetched her this award which is the country's longest running media award for women. She has played a significant role in revealing the reality underlying in the social and political issues. Priyanka was a freedom fighter. This award chose women journalist for upholding standards of excellence via a sustained body of work for the past 37 years.

### **Scholarships For NTSE got 'Doubled' !**

The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) announced increase in number of scholarship awardees from 1000 to 2000 in March 2019. The NTSE scholarships will be awarded to 2000 meritorious students this year onwards. The scholarship amount was already increased last year. The latest statement of NCERT read as "As on date, 2000 scholarships are awarded in the country with reservation of 15 percent for SC, 7.5 percent for ST and 27 percent for other backward classes and 4 percent for group of students with benchmark disabilities".

### **Revised guidelines for White Label ATMs**

In March 2019, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has eased business guidelines for White Label ATMs. The new guidelines increase the avenues of revenue generation for the white label ATMs. The Automated Teller Machines that are established, owned and operated by non-bank entities are called White Label ATMs and are meant to provide banking services to the customers of banks on the basis of the cards (debit/credit/prepaid) issued by banks. The White Label ATM Operators can now buy wholesale cash, above a threshold of 1 lakh pieces (and in multiples thereof) of any denomination, directly from the RBI and currency chests against full payment. They can also source cash from any scheduled bank, including cooperative banks and regional rural banks and can also offer bill payment and Interoperable Cash Deposit services in accordance to technical feasibility and certification by the National Payments Corporation of India.

### **NHPC will acquire LTHPL**

In March 2019, Indian Hydroelectric power generation company, NHPC Limited received Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA)'s approval for acquisition of Lanco Teesta

Hydro Power Ltd's 500 MW Teesta hydro-electric power project at an expenditure of Rs. 907 crore in Sikkim. Besides this acquisition, NHPC Limited will also execute balance work of the Teesta Stage-VI Hydro Electric Project. The project is expected to generate 2,400 million units of electricity with an installed capacity of 500 MW (4x125MW). Teesta Stage-VI is a Run of River (RoR) Scheme in Sirwani Village of Sikkim, meant for use of the power potential of Teesta River Basin in cascade manner.

### **OBC saw hike in reservation quota in MP**

In March 2018, Government of Madhya Pradesh increased reservation quota of OBCs from the current 14% to 27%. According to the announcement of the state's Law and Legal Affairs Minister PC Sharma an ordinance in this context after it received the assent from the state's Governor Anandiben Patel. With the issuance of this ordinance, Madhya Pradesh has become the only state in India to have 27 % quota for OBCs. The state's new ruling party, Congress has done this to woo the OBC community in the view of the upcoming Lok Sabha polls.

### **Distribution of Padma awards**

President Ram Nath Kovind felicitated 56 people out of 112 with Padma awards. The remaining awards are slated to get distributed at the end of this month. President of Djibouti Ismail Omar Guelleh, Folk Singer from Chhattisgarh Teejan Bai, Noted author and Maratha history scholar Babasaheb Purandare and executive chairman of L&T Anil Kumar Manibhai Naik received Padma Vibhushan this year. Fourteen persons including Scientist Nambi Narayan, Malayalam Actor Mohanlal, South African politician Pravin Gordhan and late journalist Kuldip Nayar became Padma Bhushan awardees. Total 94 Padma Shri awards will be given this year that will include Dancer Nartaki Natraj, Sportspersons Sunil Chettri, Gautam Gambhir, Harika Dronavalli, Sharat Kamal, Farmers Kamala Pujhari and Ram Saran Verma and Social Worker Muktaben Dagli who is working for the welfare of Divyangjans.

### **Some appointments**

March 2019 witnessed head of Asia-Pacific capital markets, Ashu Khullar getting appointed as Citibank India head in place of Pramit Jhaveri who will be the Vice Chair of banking, capital markets and advisory for Asia Pacific from April 1st 2019. It is interesting to know that the post of Vice Chair has been specially created for Pramit Jhaveri. Veterinary professor & scientist, Aditya Kumar Misra became new Agricultural Scientific Recruitment Board (ASRB) chief. He has succeeded Gurbachan Singh. He has served as the former Vice Chancellor of the GB Pant University of Agriculture & Technology, India's first full fledged agricultural university.



### **C Lalsawta: the first Lokayukta of Mizoram**

C Lalsawta became the first Chairman of the newly constituted Lokayukta in Mizoram at the Raj Bhawan, Aizawl on 11th March 2019. His oath was administered by the Governor of Mizoram, Jagdish Mukhi in presence of Lalnunmawia Chuaungo, the Chief Secretary of the state, who was the guest of honor. C Lalsawta is an IAS officer from 1981 batch of Bihar cadre. He has been the Principal Secretary of Finance Department of Mizoram from 2008 to 2011 and later on he had also worked as the Vigilance Commissioner of Bihar till 2015.

### **Corporation Bank celebrated its 114th Foundation Day**

On 12th March 2019, Corporation Bank celebrated its 114th Foundation Day at several centres of the bank all over the country. On this occasion, P.V. Bharathi, CEO and MD of the bank, has launched a mobile banking app “Corp Ease” in ten regional languages. Under its CSR scheme, the bank has declared that it would provide funds to the Shivamogga Institute of Medical Sciences for buying three haemodialysis machines. A walkathon from the Centenary library of bank to the head office was organised for the bank employees, articulating the bank’s motto, “Prosperity for all”.

### **Guinness World Record set by Lakshyaraj Singh Mewar**

In March 2019, Lakshyaraj Singh Mewar, a descendant of Rajput ruler Maharana Pratap, has received the certificate from an official of the Guinness Book of World Records-UK. He received the certificate for donating more than 3 lakh clothing items in Udaipur. He started the ‘Vastradan’ campaign under which 3,29,250 clothes from near about 76,000 donors were collected and distributed among the needy people. The campaign reached out to more than 120 schools, 15 colleges and near about 30 NGOs.

### **Rakesh Makhija: Non-Executive Chairman of Axis Bank**

In March 2019, Rakesh Makhija has been appointed as the new Non-Executive Chairman of Axis Bank for a period of three years. He will succeed Sanjiv Misra whose term expires on 17th July 2019. Makhija is also the Chairman of the bank’s Nomination and Remuneration Committee. His appointment is subject to the approval of the Reserve Bank of India and the bank’s shareholders.

### **India Smart Utility Week 2019 Began**

AK Bhalla, Secretary Ministry of Power, has inaugurated the India Smart Utility Week (ISUW) 2019 in New Delhi. It is being held from 12th March to 16th March 2019. (ISUW) 2019 is organized by India Smart Grid Forum (ISGF). The important topics to be discussed in the event are Digitization and Digital customer, energy storage technologies and energy storage roadmap for India, energy and mobility transition, resiliency & future readiness and Electric vehicle roll out challenges in India. The main aim to organize this event is to project India as the top Investment destination for Smart Energy and Smart City.

### **Conferment of Gallantry and Distinguished Service Awards**

On 14th March 2019, President Ram Nath Kovind presented 3 Kirti Chakras and 15 Shaurya Chakras to Armed Forces Personnel for their conspicuous gallantry, indomitable courage and extreme devotion to duty at a solemn ceremony at the Rashtrapati Bhawan. Among these 2 Kirti Chakras ( Sepoy Vrahma Pal Singh of the Rajput Regiment and Constable Rajendra Kumar Nain of 130 Bn, CRPF) and 1 Shaurya Chakra (Dhanawaderavindrababan of 182 BN, CRPF) were given posthumously. The President bestowed 15 Param Vishisht Seva Medals, 1 Uttam Yudh Seva Medals and 25 Ati Vishisht Seva Medals to senior Army Personnel for their distinguished service of an exceptional order.

### **Sundarbans : 'Wetland of International Importance'**

In March 2019, The Indian Sundarban was accorded with the status of 'Wetland of International Importance' in the Ramsar Convention. Indian Sundarban which is famous for Royal Bengal Tiger enjoys place in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) world heritage site list. It succeeded in meeting four of nine criteria required for the coveted status viz. having rare species and threatened ecological communities, biological diversity, significant and representative fish and fish spawning ground and migration path. This new status will highlight conservation issues of the Sundarbans at the international level.

### **Swati Shingade became the first DD Mahila Kisan Awardee**

In March 2019, Prasar Bharati Chairman, A Surya Prakash conferred the first prize of DD Mahila Kisan Award for 2018-19 upon Swati Shingade of Pune, Maharashtra in New Delhi. She was selected among 110 women farmers. The ongoing Kisan Channel has offered a platform to the women farmers and has created awareness about the various schemes of the government. Information and Broadcasting Secretary, Amit Khare used this occasion to highlight the merit of Doordarshan in propagation of positive thought among crowd of the country and applauded its significant contribution in the field of agriculture, health and education.

### **President Kovind distributed National Grassroots Innovators Awards**

On 15th March 2019, President Ramnath Kovind presented National Grassroots Innovators awards at Grambharti near Gandhinagar in Gujarat. Prakash Singh Raghuvanshi from Uttar Pradesh was chosen as lifetime achievement awardee for his innovations in new varieties of agriculture crops. Periyasami Ramasami of Salem, Tamil Nadu was given the first prize in Veterinary, Herbal medication for coccidiosis. Besides this, the President also inaugurated the exhibition of the Festival of Innovation and Entrepreneurship to recognise, respect, display and reward innovations and foster supportive ecosystem for innovators. The National Innovation Foundation organized this festival in association with the department of science and technology of Government of India to provide a platform for new innovators for building linkages with potential stakeholders who can improve their future prospects to develop their ideas into implementable projects for the benefit of society.

### **Goa Chief Minister passed away**

On 17th March 2019, Former Union Defence Minister and Chief Minister of Goa, Manohar Gopalkrishna Prabhu Parrikar died of pancreatic cancer at the age of 63. The deceased was also the first IIT alumnus to become a CM of a state. He graduated in metallurgical engineering from IIT Bombay in 1978. He was a member of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) who represented the Panaji constituency in the Legislative Assembly of Goa and had been CM of Goa thrice viz. first from 2000 to 2005; then from March 2012 to November 2014 and later from March 2017 till his death.

### **Apex Court gave sigh of relief to S Sreesanth**

In March 2019, Indian cricketer S Sreesanth accused of 2013 IPL spot-fixing scandal got little relief in his battle against Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) that imposed life time ban on him. A bench comprising Justice Ashok Bhushan and Justice K M Joseph of the Supreme Court had set aside the life time ban on the cricketer ordering the disciplinary committee of the BCCI to reconsider awarding quantum of punishment to the guilty. This was in response to Sreesanth's plea challenging the decision of a division bench of the Kerala High Court which had restored the life ban imposed on him by the BCCI.

### **The Geographical Indication Tag allotment**

In March 2019, the Coorg Arabica Coffee (Kodagu district of Karnataka), Wayanad Robusta Coffee (Kerala), Chikmagalur Arabica Coffee (Chikmagalur district of Karnataka) , Araku Valley Arabica Coffee (Visakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh and Koraput district of Odisha) and Bababudangiris Arabica Coffee (Chikmagalur district of Karnataka) got privilege of achieving the Geographical Indication Tag. It is certification that these products possess certain qualities and are made according to traditional methods. The tag allots reputation to agricultural, natural and manufactured goods and boosts its marketing.

### **The upcoming new education policy**

New National Education Policy drafted by the Kasturirangan panel is all set to get implemented after the upcoming elections. The Kasturirangan panel was constituted in June 2018 and was granted five extensions to finalize the National Education Policy. The country's national policy on education was framed in year 1986 and was modified in 1992. The new policy is expected to prescribe the way education is disseminated in the country from the most basic to the higher levels. Before this, Subramanian committee with former cabinet secretary TSR Subramanian was constituted in 2016 for the same purpose.

### **Pramod Sawant: The new CM of Goa**

On 18th March 2019, BJP MLA Pramod Sawant took oath as the new Chief Minister of Goa. He has succeeded CM Manohar Parrikar, who passed away on Sunday after a prolonged illness. Sawant represents Sanquelim constituency in Goa Assembly. Governor of Goa, Mridula Sinha administered the oath. Besides him, 11 other ministers from erstwhile Manohar Parrikar-led Cabinet also took oath. Among them were Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party (MGP)'s two MLAs Sudin Dhavalikar and Manohar Ajgaonkar; Goa Forward Party (GFP) MLAs Vijai Sardesai, Vinod Palekar and Jayesh Salgaonkar; BJP MLAs Mauvin Godinho, Vishwajit Rane, Milind Naik and Nilesh Cabral and Independent MLAs Rohan Khaunte and Govind Gawade.

### **ISRO-IIT Roorkee contract for STC**

In March 2019 Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Roorkee and the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) of the Department of Space, Government of India, Bengaluru signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish an ISRO-IITR Space Technology Cell (STC) at IIT Roorkee, Uttarakhand. The proposed STC is expected to strengthen institutional interactions and increase the scope of the activities pursued under STC commensurate with the programmatic goals of ISRO.

### **IIT Kharagpur will adopt the AWS Educate Programme**

The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kharagpur announced its plan of adopting Amazon Web Services (AWS) Educate programme to increase cloud computing skills including hands-on experience in artificial intelligence (AI) in all students irrespective of their branch of study. The programme will ensure no-cost tools, resources and AWS Promotional Credits for students and educators to give impetus to their cloud skills and experience. The programme will open way for topics that are in demand by employers, like machine learning, cybersecurity, software development etc.

### **KVS Manian came on Kotak Mahindra Bank's board**

KVS Manian as well as Gaurang Shah got appointed as Kotak Mahindra Bank's whole-time directors for a three-year term after approval of Reserve Bank of India. Presently, KVS Manian is serving as the president of Corporate investment bank and Gaurang Shah is enjoying presidentship as group chief risk officer of the bank.

### **YONO Cash of SBI**

In March 2019, State Bank of India (SBI) has introduced YONO Cash through which customers will be able to withdraw money from ATMs without using a card. The ATMs equipped with this service will be termed as Yono Cash Point. It involves two-factor authentication. The customers

will have to set a 6-digit Yono PIN for withdrawing cash through the Yono app. They will receive a 6-digit reference code via SMS, which will then have to be entered into a Yono Cash Point. Then the cash withdrawal will have to be completed within the next 30 minutes at an ATM using both the PIN and the reference number.

### **Special Stamp Cover on Ice Stupas**

Department of Post of Government of India introduced a 'Special Stamp Cover on Ice Stupa' during a function organised at the Ice Stupa site at Gangles in Leh in March 2019. Chief Postmaster General, Jammu & Kashmir Circle, D. Tshering released these stamps on the occasion. Ice Stupa team of Himalayan Institute of Alternatives, Ladakh (HIAL) along with Leh-Phodo society and Army, has constructed an Ice Stupa at Gangles to meet water shortage in Leh. Recipient of Rolex Award 2016 and Ramon Magsaysay 2018, Engineer Sonam Wangchuk is the brain behind the artificial glacier, conical shaped Ice Stupa.

### **IIT-D and NII collaborated for cancer diagnosis technologies**

In March 2019, IIT-Delhi and National Institute of Immunology (NII) inked MoU to develop technologies for quick and accurate diagnosis of life-threatening diseases. The collaboration will lead to a joint PhD programme that will work to develop new technologies for cancer diagnosis, tuberculosis etc. The researchers will work together on projects related to cell biology, cancer, tuberculosis etc. to comprehend the mechanical properties of the affected cells and develop a technology that could be used for the smooth treatment.

### **Gauri Sawant emerged as the first transgender election ambassador**

In March 2019, Election Commission of India chose transgender social activist Gauri Sawant, as one of the 12 election ambassadors from Maharashtra. It is worth knowing that the Supreme Court for the first time in 2014 granted right to vote to transgenders of the country and around 918 voters were registered in this third category following the order. This number has just doubled in five years and now it is 2,086. North Mumbai constituency accommodates maximum number of transgenders i.e. 324 whereas Bhiwandi, Kalyan and East Mumbai have 113, 184, and 123 registered transgenders respectively.

### **IBBI and SEBI entered into contract for IBC**

In March 2019, The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) for effective implementation of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 (Code) and its allied rules. It redefined the debt-equity relationship to promote entrepreneurship and debt market at Mumbai. Under this MoU, the two parties will share the information and available resources, train each other's staff for effective utilisation of collective resources, build capacity of insolvency professionals and financial creditors and will conduct periodic meetings to discuss matters regarding fulfilment of their respective statutory obligations.



### **INCOIS & French scientists discovered existence of a new sea level oscillation**

According to the latest issue of Nature Communications, the researchers of Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS) and French scientists discovered existence of 'synchronous oscillation' of sea level across the entire Tropical Indian Ocean with a time period of 30 to 80 days during winter months of December to April. The study reveals that propelled by Madden-Julian Oscillation (MJO) that accounts for cyclone in the region, Indian Ocean routinely gained/lost 3 trillion tonnes of water from the Pacific Ocean every 30-80 days accompanied by a sea level rise/fall of 4 cm which is 30% of total sea-level change in the said months.

### **Indians enjoying privilege in OCA Standing committee**

In March 2019, Standing Committee of the Olympic Council of Asia at its 38th General Assembly in Bangkok inducted 13 Indian Olympic Association members. Among the appointees are former hockey captain Sardar Singh (athletes field), IOA secretary general Rajeev Mehta (cultural field), Hockey India secretary general Mohd. Mustaq Ahmad (media), Athletics Federation of India President Adille J. Sumariwalla (sports for environment) and Lalit Bhanot (sports). All these members have been elected for a four-year term from year 2019 to year 2023.

### **Indian psychologist won international award**

In March 2019, former director of the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), co-founder of the postcolonial theory and Indian psychologist professor, Ashis Nandy has been presented Hans-Kilian Award 2019 worth 80,000 Euros. Hans Kilian Award is one of the best-endowed social sciences biennial awards in Europe. It honors the achievements that provide deeper insight regarding human psyche. With this award, Nandy has joined the row of Dr. Hartmut Bohme (2011), Dr. Hans Joas (2013), Dr. Jessica Benjamin (2015) and Dr. Jaan Valsiner (2017) who received this prize earlier.

### **22nd March : Foundation day of Bihar**

Bihar celebrated its 107th foundation day on 22nd March 2019. On this day Bihar Foundation that has been working to connect Non Resident Biharis (NRB) around the globe found this as an opportunity to unite NRBs. It organised several programmes in India as well as in the US, Britain, Germany, Mauritius and Trinidad and Tobago. The history of the state reveals that on October 22, 1764, the Battle of Buxar was fought between British forces and the joint army of the Nawab of Bengal, the Nawab of Awadh and the Mughal King Shah Alam II that led to the defeat of the joint army. The British forces began the collection and management of revenues from the territories that were comprised of the current state of West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa, and Bangladesh. On March 21, 1912, Thomas Gibson Carmichael, the new governor of Bengal took charge and had split the Bengal Presidency into Bengal, Orissa, Bihar, and Assam.

## **The 60th National Academy Awardees**

With an aim of promoting and propagating understanding of Indian art, Lalit Kala Akademi has organized the 60th National Exhibition of Art on March 25, 2019 which will continue till April 8, 2019 at the National Gallery of Modern Art and Sir JJ School of Art. It will use the occasion to confer the 60th Annual Academy Awards to 15 winners who will receive prize money worth 1 lakh each. Chandan Kumar Samal (Odisha), Jaya Jena (Odisha), Gouri Vemula (Telangana), Hemant Rao (Madhya Pradesh), Hiren Kumar Chotu Bhai Patel (Gujarat), Jayesh K.K (Kerala), Jitendra Suresh Sutar, Douglas Maryan John, Sachin Kashinath Chaudhari and Vasudeo Taranath Kamath of Maharashtra, Pratap Chandra Chakraborty (West Bengal), Rashmi Singh and Sunil Kumar Viswakarma of Uttar Pradesh, Tabassum Khan (Bihar) and Veenita Sadguru Chendvankar (Goa) are the winners of this prestigious award.

## **Demise of Anasuya Devi**

March 2019 witnessed end of Folk Artiste and Radio commentator Anasuya Devi at the age of 99 at Houston, USA. Kala Prapoorna awardee, Vinjamuri Anasuya Devi was also a terrific harmonium player, music composer and author. The deceased belonged to Kakinada, Andhra Pradesh. She had penned two books 'Bava Geetalu' and 'Compilation of Folk Songs' that were released in 2018 in Chennai. In 1977, she was presented a Doctorate by Andhra University and she was also a proud recipient of lifetime achievement award in America and 'Queen of Folk' award in Paris.

## **New appointments**

In March 2019, Justice PK Mishra got appointed as Acting Chief Justice of Chhattisgarh High Court as the Chief Justice of Chhattisgarh High Court, AK Tripathi got selected as the member of Lokpal. With this, he became part of the first ever Lokpal Committee. Past says that Mishra was enrolled as an advocate in year 1987 and had become a senior counsel in 2005. He became Advocate General in 2007 and has also worked as an Additional Advocate General of Chhattisgarh between 2004 and 2007. He had become High Court Judge in 2009.

## **ISRO is on mission**

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will launch 29 satellites including the primary payload EMISAT, on 1st of April 2019 from Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota. It will deploy Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle, PSLV-C45 for the purpose. In this mission the 436 Kg heavy EMISAT of India, meant for monitoring radar network will be placed in an orbit of about 753 km altitude, while the customer payloads from Lithuania, Spain, Switzerland and the US will be hurled at an altitude of about 505 km.

### **India succeeded in A-SAT missile test**

India used a joint programme of DRDO and ISRO, 'Mission Shakti' to prove its capability of defending its outer space assets on 27th March 2019. India achieved success in conducting an Anti-Satellite (ASAT) missile test. It used one of its existing satellites in the Low Earth Orbit (LEO) at an altitude of 300 km from the earth's surface as target which was hit by Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) Interceptor Missile which was released from Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Island in Odisha. The missile took just 3 minutes to hit it in single attempt. With this, India has become the 4th country of globe after United States, Russia, China to achieve this milestone.

### **Oath ceremony of Lokpal members**

On March 27, 2019, Chairperson of the anti corruption ombudsman, Justice Pinaki Chandra Ghose administered oath of four Judicial members and four Non-Judicial members of Lokpal who were appointed by President Ram Nath Kovind. Among them, former first woman Chief of Sashastra Seema Bal Archana Ramasundaram, ex-Maharashtra Chief Secretary Dinesh Kumar Jain, former IRS officer Mahender Singh and ex-IAS officer Indrajeet Prasad Gautam belonged to non-judicial field, while Former Chief Justices - Dilip B. Bhosale, Pradip Kumar Mohanty, and Abhilasha Kumari as well as sitting Chief Justice of Chhattisgarh High Court Ajay Kumar Tripathi from judicial field took oath.

### **Detection of diseases via AI**

On March 26, 2019, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi broke the news of development of an Artificial Intelligence (AI) based electronic hardware system to detect malaria, tuberculosis, intestinal parasite, and cervical cancer in milliseconds. The team of researchers under leadership of Manan Suri employed nanotechnology to develop a diagnostic support system which can read raw data from blood samples and patterns of a patient etc to extract accurate information that led to automation of the entire system.

### **Manohar Aijaonkar : Deputy Chief Minister of Goa**

On 28th March 2019, Tourism Minister of Goa, Manohar Aijaonkar got appointed as the Deputy Chief Minister of Goa and Deepak Prabhu Pauskar took oath as Goa Cabinet Minister. Both the appointees have succeeded Sudin Dhavalikar. Governor Mridula Sinha has administered the oath of office of Deepak Prabhu Pauskar. Manohar Aijaonkar initially belonged to Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party and had switched to Bharatiya Janata Party later on. Currently he is the second deputy chief minister along with Goa Forward Party (GFP) leader and state minister Vijai Sardesai.

### **Artificial Intelligence led to discovery of planets**

In March 2019, Astronomers from the University of Texas at Austin in collaboration with Google have discovered two hidden planets, 'K2-293b' and 'K2-294b' in the data collected via the Kepler space telescope. Astronomers created an algorithm that has explored the available data to detect the signals that were missed by traditional planet-hunting methods. They found that K2-293b orbits a star 1,300 light-years away in the constellation Aquarius, while K2-294b orbits a star 1,230 light-years away, also located in Aquarius. Both of them are hot planets and are slightly larger than Earth.

### **Graham Reid : India's new men's hockey coach**

In March 2019, Australian coach Graham Reid has been selected as Indian men's hockey team chief coach in a meeting between Hockey India and Sports Authority of India (SAI) officials. Three-time Olympic medallist, Jay Stacy was among other contenders of this post. Reid will continue as chief coach till the 2022 World Cup. He has succeeded coach Harendra Singh. Reid is a veteran of 130 international matches and was a member of the Australian team that won the silver medal in the 1992 Barcelona Olympics.

### **Appointment of the new DGNO**

On 27th March 2019, Vice Admiral MA Hampiholi, AVSM NM got appointed as Director General Naval Operations (DGNO). He has succeeded Satish Namdeo Ghormade. After joining the Executive Branch of the Indian Navy on 1st July 1985, he commanded the National Coast Guard, Mauritius for two years (2003 – 05) and worked in the capacity of Commanding Officer of INS Mandovi. The Flag Officer holds rich experience as Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) specialist officer at onboard INShips Himgiri, Agray, and Ganga. Besides this, he has also served as Commanding officer in INS Nashak (missile vessel), INS Magar {Landing Ship Tank (Large)} and INS Talwar (stealth Frigate), Second -in-Command of INS Khukri (Missile Corvette). His service was well acknowledged with the Nao Sena Medal in year 2011 and the Athi Vishisht Seva Medal in 2019.

### **Virender Sehwag became PolicyX.com Brand Ambassador**

In March 2019, an online insurance web aggregator, PolicyX.com has appointed Arjuna & Padmashree Awardee, cricketer Virender Sehwag as its brand ambassador. He will steer company's biggest marketing campaign of insurance products covering term insurance, health insurance, life insurance, car insurance and others. He will raise awareness among people about the significance of having insurance from a trusted advisor.

### **Amartya Sen honoured with Bodley award**

On 27th March 2019, Nobel Prize-winning economist Amartya Sen got felicitated with the prestigious Bodley Medal, the highest honour given by the University of Oxford's world-famous Bodleian Libraries for remarkable contribution in literature, culture, science, and communication. The award brought him in the elite list of former Bodley Medal winners like Nobel Prize-winning novelist Kazuo Ishiguro, physicist Stephen Hawking, novelist Hilary Mantel and inventor of the World Wide Web Tim Berners-Lee.

### **N S Srinath : Non-Executive Chairman of Karur Vysya Bank**

In March 2019, Karur Vysya Bank appointed N S Srinath as its Non-Executive Independent Chairman for upcoming 3 years. The appointee began his career with Information Technology, Projects and HRD of Canara Bank in 1970 after earning graduation in Science and Law, certificate in Industrial Finance and becoming a Certified Associate of Indian Institute of Bankers. He worked in board of Central Registry of Securitisation Asset Reconstruction and Security Interest in India (CERSAI) and had been an Executive Director of the Bank of Baroda (Trinidad and Tobago) Limited and Bank of Baroda Ghana Limited till May 2012.

### **Prafulla Rajguru passed away**

Renowned journalist, Prafulla Rajguru breathed last on 27th March 2019 at the age of 82 in Assam. After getting retired as the head of the department of English from DCB Girls College in Jorhat in 1997, he had joined Assamese daily 'Amar Asom' as resident editor of the Jorhat edition, which he continued till 2000. He had founded Jorhat Press Club and served as its advisor till his death. He had also been a member of several social organisations viz. the Asom Sahitya Sabha and had penned four books.

### **PFC : India's second largest Govt-owned Financial Firm**

In March 2019, based on market capitalization, Power Finance Corporation (PFC) has become India's second largest government-owned financial firm after the State Bank of India (SBI). Recently, PFC has acquired a majority stake in REC Ltd which was formerly known as Rural Electrification Corporation Limited. PFC has purchased the 52.63% controlling stake in REC via Rs. 14,500 crore deal with Union government at Rs. 139.50 per equity share price. The acquisition spelled beneficial for union government as it exceeded the disinvestment target of Rs 80,000 crore for the fiscal year 2018-19.

### **All tribunals under one umbrella**

In order to bring all the quasi-judicial bodies under one central umbrella body to ensure efficient working and streamlining the working of tribunals, the Supreme Court has sought the Centre's



advice on March 27, 2019. The bench of Justice N V Ramana, Justice D Y Chandrachud, Justice Deepak Gupta and Justice Sanjiv Khanna that dealt with vacancies in tribunals was of view that recommendation of the search-cum-selection committee for the appointment of members in National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) and National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) should be immediately implemented within two weeks and with this it listed the matter for further hearing after two weeks.

### **Justice (Retd.) DK Jain has become BCCI's ad-hoc Ethics Officer**

In March 2019, the Committee of Administrators (COA) that runs Indian cricket appointed Justice (Retd.) DK Jain as its ad-hoc Ethics Officer. The appointee is also an ombudsman of the BCCI. For this, the COA had requested the Apex Court to appoint an Ethics Officer in addition to an Ombudsman for looking into the matters of Conflict of Interest in its 10th Status Report that it filed on October 28, 2018.

### **India & US inked pact for checking tax evasion**

On 27th March 2019, India and the United States inked an Inter-Governmental Agreement for exchange of Country-by-Country (CbC) reports to check the tax evasions of Multinational Companies in income allocation and paid taxes. The Chairman of the Central Board of Direct Taxes, PC Mody and US Ambassador to India, Kenneth Juster were the signatories of this agreement. India is well equipped with 62 jurisdictions on account of its earlier signed Multilateral Component Authority Agreement (MCAA).

### **“Baroda Kisan” of Bank of Baroda**

In March 2019, Bank of Baroda has inked a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with six firms viz. Skymet Weather Services, Weather Risk Management Services, BigHaat, Agrostar India, EM3 Agri Services and Poorti Agri Services to develop “Baroda Kisan”. This platform is meant to provide solutions for all major agricultural requirements through its holistic approach. IT Centre of Excellence (ITCoE) of Bank of Baroda and IBM India will together execute this platform.



### **1st March: Zero Discrimination day**

Zero Discrimination Day is observed every year on 1st March. The aim to celebrate this day is to promote equality before the law and in practice throughout all of the member countries of the United Nations (UN). The theme for the year 2019 is 'Act to change laws that Discriminate'. The UN actively promote the day with various activities to celebrate everyone's right to live a full life with dignity regardless of age, gender, sexuality, nationality, ethnicity, skin color, height, weight, profession, education, and beliefs. Butterfly is the symbol for this day and is widely used by people to share their stories and photos as a way to end discrimination.

### **NASA's new mission to study space weather from ISS**

On 28th February 2019, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has launched a new mission named "Atmospheric Waves Experiment (AWE)" that will help scientists understand and ultimately forecast the vast space weather system around the Earth. The estimated cost of the mission is USD 42 million and it will be launched in August 2022. The mission will focus on colourful bands of light in Earth's atmosphere, known as airglow, to determine what combination of forces drive space weather in the upper atmosphere. It was earlier thought that only the Sun's constant outflow of ultraviolet light and particles, the solar wind, could affect the region.

### **India's first policy to protect bank locker**

On 28th February 2019, IFFCO Tokio General Insurance has launched bank locker protector policy. It is the first stand-alone locker cover offered by any insurance company with a plan to protect the contents of a bank locker such as jewelry, title documents, and other valuables. The policy offers a cover against several risks like fire, earthquake, burglary, holdup, infidelity by a bank staff or any act of terrorism. The policy can be sold both as a retail and a group policy for banks.

### **Nobel Prize winner Alferov passed away**

Russian Nobel Prize winner Zhores Alferov passed away on 3rd March 2019 at the age of 88 years. In the year 2000, he received the Nobel Prize in Physics together with US scientists Jack Kilby and Herbert Kroemer, for developing semiconductor heterostructures used in high-speed and optoelectronics. He was an honorary member of numerous research institutions including the

American National Academy of Sciences. He researched in the field of information technology and his research was the backbone of computers, CD players, mobile phones etc. He was also a member of Russian parliament.

### **3rd March: The World Wildlife Day**

The World Wildlife Day is observed every year on 3rd March to spread awareness about wildlife. On 20th December 2013, the United Nations General Assembly has decided to celebrate 3rd March as the World Wildlife Day. On this day, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) was signed. The theme for the year 2019 is 'Life below water: for people and planet'. This is the first World Wildlife Day in the history which focuses on life below water.

### **World Day of the Fight Against Sexual Exploitation**

On March 4, 2019, globe observed the World Day of Fight Against Sexual Exploitation to spread awareness about the prevalent sexual exploitation, largely among women and children. According to the latest Sexual assault statistics 35% of women from across the globe become victim of sexual violence by a non-partner at least once in their lives, Adult women form 51% of all human trafficking victims worldwide and around 71% of girls comprise child trafficking victims. Approximately three out of every four trafficked women and girls are trafficked for sexual exploitation.

### **Sheikh Ahmad is again the President of OCA**

On 3rd March, 2019, Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad Al-Sabah of Kuwait got re-elected as President of the powerful Olympic Council of Asia (OCA). He is considered a major power broker in world of sport. Sheikh will serve a new five-year term until 2024. Past says IOC member Sheikh Ahmad, had stepped down from his position in the global Olympic body in November on account of a forgery accusation in a criminal court against the Kuwaiti and four others.

### **France : President of UN Security Council**

France assumed the Presidency of the United Nations Security Council for the month of March. It is looking forward to establish partnerships, openness to civil society, business world, NGOs and trade unions as well as expansion of the UN Security Council in both permanent and non-permanent categories as part of the envisaged reform. It has recommended India, Japan and Germany as the permanent members of the powerful UN body. Germany will be the next President of the Security Council in April 2019.

### **US-South Korea started Dong Maeng exercise**

On 3rd March 2019, the United States and South Korea replaced their springtime exercises 'Key Resolve' and 'Foal Eagle' with a new modified exercise known as 'Dong Maeng' (or "alliance").

The Dong Maeng exercise that began from March 4 is primarily focusing on strategic, operational, and tactical aspects of general military operations on the Korean Peninsula. The exercise will continue upto March 12 providing an opportunity of training and rehearsing to Republic of Korea and United States' forces. Dong Maeng exercise will exclude all kinds of mass allied mobilization of the sort that was normal for U.S.-South Korea springtime exercises through 2017.

### **Demise of Actor Luke Perry**

On 4th March 2019, American actor, TV actor Luke Perry died of a massive stroke at age of 52. The deceased enjoyed an instant heartthrob status as wealthy rebel Dylan McKay on Beverly Hills, 90210. Perry played role of construction company owner Fred Andrews, father of main character Archie Andrews, for three seasons on Riverdale. He had also acted in films like The Fifth Element, 8 Seconds and American Strays. He also made appearance in HBO's prison drama Oz and voiced cartoons viz. The Incredible Hulk and Mortal Kombat. In recent past he also came in the series Ties That Bind and Body of Proof.

### **Kylie Jenner : World's youngest billionaire**

21 year old American reality television personality, model, entrepreneur and social media personality, Kylie Jenner became world's youngest self-made billionaire in March 2019 Forbes magazine. She had founded Kylie Cosmetics online in 2015 having \$29 lip kits that generated an estimated \$360m in sales last year. It is interesting to learn that she reached the milestone earlier than Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg who became a billionaire at age of 23. According to Forbes the figure of billionaires this year is around 2,153 which is less in comparison to 2018's 2,208 billionaires.

### **Knight Frank Report on prime residential market**

In March 2019, estate agency, residential and commercial property consultancy of London, Knight Frank presented Wealth Report 2019 in terms of the growth in prices of prime residential properties. Capital of the Philippines, Manila topped the global list with the highest price appreciation of 11.1% last year. It was followed by Edinburgh (Scotland) on the second spot with 10.6% rise. The German cities of Berlin and Munich grabbed the third and fourth positions, respectively, followed by the Argentine capital Buenos Aires on the fifth spot. India's Mumbai emerged as the 16th most expensive prime residential market in the world

### **Jerry Merryman passed away**

In March 2019, co-inventor of the world's first handheld electronic calculator, Jerry Merryman died at the age of 86 at Dallas, Texas. He along with James Van Tassel and Jack Kilby, invented electronic calculator in 1960s. They filed a patent for the finished prototype in 1967 for the battery-powered product known as "Cal-Tech" that could fit in the palm of the hand and was capable of addition, multiplication, subtraction and division.

### **Japanese architect got Pritzker Prize**

In March 2019, Japanese architect Arata Isozaki got chosen for the highest international honour in the field of architecture, Pritzker Architecture Prize 2019 for integrating the East and West in his creative designs. Incorporated in 1979, Hyatt Foundation will present this prestigious award in May 2019 at the Chateau de Versailles in France. After this, Arata Isozaki will become the 8<sup>th</sup> Japanese to get honoured with this award.

### **Padma Lakshmi became Goodwill Ambassador of UNDP**

On 7th March 2019, Indian-American television personality, supermodel, food expert, author and executive producer of Top Chef, Padma Lakshmi got appointed as United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)'s Goodwill Ambassador in a ceremony at the UNDP headquarters. In this role she will be mobilising support for the Sustainable Development Goals with an aim to combat inequality, discrimination and empowering the disenfranchised. She will show the globe that inequality can affect people in rich and poor countries alike.

### **The first ever female spacewalk**

On 29th March 2019, Two NASA astronauts Anne McClain and Christina Koch will share the credit of performing the spacewalk at the International Space Station with support on the ground by Canadian Space Agency flight controller Kristen Facciol. This most anticipated spacewalk will be of seven hours. The spacecraft is ready to blast off on March 14 to reach the space station to feature this March 29 spacewalk which is the second in a series of three planned spacewalks according to NASA spokeswoman Stephanie Schierholz.

### **Mohammad Shtayyeh became PM of Palestine**

On 10th March 2019, member of the West Bank's dominant Fatah party Mohammad Shtayyeh got appointed as Palestinian Prime Minister by President of Palestinian Authority Mahmoud Abbas. He has succeeded Rami al-Hamdallah, who tendered his resignation from the post due to the failure of Hamas and Fatah in implementation of a power-sharing deal. This appointment is being viewed as part of Abbas's efforts to further isolate rival political group Hamas that runs the besieged Gaza Strip.

### **Appointments at technical committees of Asian Gymnastics Union**

Asian Gymnastics Union announced new appointments in March 2019 in which 5 Indians viz. Deepak Kabra (Men's Artistic Gymnastics), Akshata Shete (Rhythmic Gymnastics), Sumith MR (Acrobatic Gymnastics), Makarand Joshi (Aerobic Gymnastics), Narayan Shashi (Gymnastics for All) got appointed as members of various Technical Committees. This is the first time in the history that as many as 5 persons from India got appointed to AGU, increasing impact of India in gymnastics at the Asian region. The privileged ones are internationally qualified judges/coaches in their respective fields and have participated in various international tournaments as officials.



### **India got the First Prize at the International 'Golden City Gate Tourism Awards 2019'**

In March 2019, Yogendra Tripathi, Secretary, Tourism, received the first prize in the International Golden City Gate Tourism Award under TV Cinema Spot category on behalf of the Ministry of Tourism of Government of India at Internationale Tourismus-Börse (ITB), Berlin. The awards were distributed for promotional films and TV commercials produced under the Incredible India 2.0 Campaign viz. 'Yogi of the Racetrack', 'The Reincarnation of Mr. and Mrs. Jones Sanctuary in Paris', 'Maharani of Manhattan' and 'The Masala Masterchef'. Ministry of Tourism had begun the Incredible India 2.0 Campaign in September 2017.

### **Resignation of Finnish PM Juha Sipila**

In March 2019, Prime Minister of Finland, Juha Sipila handed over his resignation to President Sauli Niinisto because of his failure of carrying out parliament plans to repair health services and social care in the face of an aging population. According to statistics, more than a quarter of the population will be aged over 65 by 2030, making a more cost-effective welfare state a top priority. Juha Sipila had devised solution of creating regional authorities for health and welfare services, rather than the local municipalities that presently manage the system, and had proposed inclusion of private companies in the healthcare system.

### **The upcoming digital currency "SOV" of Marshall Islands**

In March 2019, Country in Oceania, the Marshall Islands announced its plan of launching Sovereign digital currency called "SOV" this year. Marshall Islands has tied up with an Israel-based company, Neema for development of the digital currency. It will be the first decentralized national digital currency that will be used in the Marshall Islands on an equal footing with the US dollar. The proposed currency is expected to fully identify every account and check buyers against the US Office of Foreign Asset Control to ensure that only legitimate, law-abiding people can use the currency.

### **The global import- export of arms**

In March 2019, a report related to import and export of arms was released. Globally, the volume of international transfers of major arms in 2014-18 was 7.8%. In 2014-18 United States, Russia, France, Germany and China together accounted for 75% of the total volume of arms exports. The flow of arms has increased to the Middle East between in this period while there has been a decrease in flows to all other regions. India has emerged as world's second largest arms importer in which Russia accounted for 58% of Indian arms imports. India has recently imported S-400 air defence systems, four stealth frigates, AK-203 assault rifles, a second nuclear attack submarine on lease, and cracked deals for Kamov-226T utility helicopters, Mi-17 helicopters and short-range air defence systems.

### **British Parliament rejected Brexit deal for second time**

In March 2019, British Prime Minister Theresa May suffered another shattering loss in parliament as lawmakers voted against her Brexit deal by 391 to 242. It is worth knowing that the Brexit deal is 585-page draft withdrawal agreement that says Britain will formally exit the EU on Friday, March 29, 2019 and will not participate in EU decision-making.

However, the UK will still continue to stay inside the bloc's single market and remain subject to EU laws and regulations until the end of December 2020 till establishment of a new trade relationship between the two.

### **New way of powering radio sources**

In March 2019, Indian astronomers reported discovery of a new way of powering radio sources in universe. These first time discovered sources in the universe have been named as 'Extremely Inverted Spectrum Extragalactic Radio Sources' that emit radio waves in a totally new mechanism. Astronomers employed the Giant Metrewave Radio Telescope (GMRT) which is located at Khodad in Junnar, 80 kms away from Pune for this purpose that captured emissions at frequencies around 150 MHz.

### **World Kidney Day is observed today**

The World Kidney Day is observed every year on the second Thursday of March. The main aim to celebrate this day is to create awareness on the importance of the kidneys and reducing the frequency and impact of kidney disease across the world. The theme for the year 2019 is "Kidney Health for Everyone Everywhere". This year theme calls for universal health coverage for prevention and early treatment of kidney disease. The World Kidney Day was started in the year 2006

### **Krishna: the first Thari Hindu woman to be elected to the Senate of Pakistan**

In March 2019, Krishna Kumari Kohli has become the first Thari Hindu woman to be elected as the Senate of Pakistan. She chaired the session of the Upper House of Parliament on March 8 on the occasion of International Women's Day. She is known for her campaigns for women's rights, against bonded labour, and against sexual harassment in the workplace. She has earlier worked as a crusader for the rights of bonded labourers in Pakistan. She is natively from the village-Dhana Gam in Nagarparkar area of Sindh.

### **Russia released coins over annexation of Crimea**

In March 2019, Russia introduced coins that feature the peninsula on the northern coast of the Black Sea in Eastern Europe, Crimea or Kerch Strait Bridge to mark Crimea's reunification with Russia. It released around two million new five ruble (about \$0.08, €0.07) coins that show an outline of the peninsula which was occupied by Russia in year 2014. This is second commemoration of Crimea as the first one was a 200 ruble note released in year 2015 that showed the desire of the people of Russia to see these symbols on notes.

### **Nitin Paranjpe : COO of Unilever**

On 14th March 2019, British-Dutch transnational consumer goods company co-headquartered in London, United Kingdom and Rotterdam, Netherlands, 'Unilever' appointed Nitin Paranjpe as its Chief Operating Officer (COO). He will look after Unilever's go-to-market organisations and will drive and co-ordinate in-year performance in accordance to divisional strategies. Besides this, Unilever elevated CMD-Hindustan Unilever Ltd. (HUL), Sanjiv Mehta as President of Unilever-South Asia. Past says, he has played instrumental role in unlocking robust performance in South Asia, delivering exceptional top and bottom line growth.

### **Padmanaban Gopalan : the Commonwealth Youth Awardee for the Asian region**

In March 2019, Founder of No Food Waste and Social entrepreneur from Tamil Nadu, Padmanaban Gopalan got selected as the winner of the Commonwealth Youth Award for the Asian region worth prize money of 3,000 Pounds at a ceremony at the Commonwealth Secretariat in London. He was acknowledged for his work in achieving the UN's Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) of Zero Hunger with his innovative system of recovering excess food to distribute to the needy. The initiative is about geo-mapping platform, which permits users to drop food at located "hunger spots". So far under this initiative more than 650,000 meals across 14 cities have been recovered. Around 12,000 volunteers have used this platform till now.

### **The Sixth Global Environment Outlook**

In March 2019, The United Nation Environment Program (UNEP) has put out the sixth edition of the Global Environment Outlook (2019) titled 'Healthy Planet, Healthy People'. The GEO-6 has reviewed the state of the health of the environment and the connected health of the people. It came up with the conclusion that the prospects for meeting the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN's Agenda 2030 requires a compulsory transformation in human lifestyles and productive activities regarding industry, agriculture, buildings, transport and the energy system which empowers them.

### **Soyuz Spacecraft reached ISS**

In March 2019 Russian Soyuz spacecraft carrying NASA astronaut Nick Hague and Christina Koch, and Cosmonaut Alexey Ovchinin successfully docked International Space Station (ISS). The spacecraft is meant to carry people, supplies to and from the space station as well as functions as lifeboat in times of emergency for the crew. The ISS is a habitable artificial satellite in low Earth orbit at an altitude between 330 and 435 km. It is a joint project among NASA (United States), Roscosmos (Russia), JAXA (Japan), ESA (Europe), and CSA (Canada) that circles the Earth in roughly 92 minutes and completes 15.5 orbits per day.

### **Raghu Karnad received prize for his debut book**

In March 2019, Indian journalist, author and chief of The Wire, Raghu Karnad was felicitated with the prestigious Windham-Campbell prize worth USD 165,000 for his debut book, 'Farthest Field: An Indian story of Second World War' that was published in the year 2015. Yale University of the United Kingdom acknowledged around 8 English language writers from across the globe. Raghu Karnad's debut book had earlier fetched him the Sahitya Akademi Yuva Puraskar in the year 2015 and in 2016, the book was shortlisted for the Hessel-Tiltman Prize as well.

### **U.K. government removed limit over PhD-level work visas**

In March 2019, in a Budget update, referred as the annual Spring Statement, U.K. Chancellor Philip Hammond made announcement that from Autumn 2019, PhD-level occupations will be exempted from the Tier 2 (General) cap, and the government will soon update the immigration rules on 180-day absences so that researchers conducting fieldwork overseas are not penalised if they apply to settle in the U.K. The move will mainly benefit Indians who form the largest chunk of highly-skilled professionals within the Tier 2 (General) category of work visas.

### **Priyanka among "50 Most Powerful Women in Entertainment" of the USA**

In March 2019, Actress Priyanka Chopra Jonas got listed in America's "50 Most Powerful Women in Entertainment" list. With this she has joined the row of international celebrities Oprah Winfrey, Meryl Streep, Beyonce, Ellen Degeneres, Jennifer Lawrence, Jennifer Lopez, Tina Fey, Nicole Kidman, Reese Witherspoon etc. Her lead role of Alex Parrish in the American TV drama thriller series "Quantico" made Priyanka a global icon. She made her Hollywood debut 'Baywatch' in 2017. She married American singer Nick Jonas in November 2018.

### **Indian-origin Jagmeet: the first non-white leader in Canadian Parliament**

In March 2019, Indian-origin Jagmeet Singh made history by becoming the first non-white leader of a major opposition party in the House of Commons in Canada. He has joined the parliament as the leader of the New Democratic Party and this coincided with the induction of a senior woman member into Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's cabinet. The newly elected lawmaker, Singh raised his first question about the latest terrorist attack on two mosques in New Zealand and housing in Burnaby-South.

### **Lifting objects with light**

As per March 2019 publication of the journal 'Nature Photonics', researchers have designed a way to lift and propel objects using only light, by creating nanoscale patterns on the objects' surfaces. With this technique, objects of different shapes and sizes ranging from micrometres to metres could be manipulated with a light beam. The development of optical tweezers in past

enabled scientists to move and manipulate tiny objects like nanoparticles, using the radiative pressure from a sharply focused beam of laser light that served as base for this latest development. The prospect is a step towards the development of a potential spacecraft that could reach the nearest planet outside of our solar system in 20 years, powered and accelerated only by light.

### **Death of US Economist Alan B. Krueger**

In March 2019, Former White House Economist, Alan B. Krueger committed suicide at the age of 58 in Princeton, New Jersey, United States. The deceased advised two presidents and lent economics a scientific approach to research and policymaking. He worked in capacity of chief economist in Labor Department under President Bill Clinton from 1994 to 1995. He had served as an assistant secretary of the Treasury from 2009 to 2010 in President Barack Obama's administration. He worked as chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers from 2011 to 2013

### **Some global days**

On 20th March 2019 World Sparrow Day was observed to raise awareness about the bird. Indian conservationist and founder of Nature Forever Society (NFS) of India, Mohammed Dilawar accommodated the house sparrow in Nashik and was applauded as the "Hero of the Environment" for year 2008 by Time magazine for his efforts. NFS instituted the first Sparrow Awards in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, on 20 March 2011. On 21st March 2019, International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination was observed on "Mitigating and countering rising nationalist populism and extreme supremacist ideologies" theme. The day reminds of the Sharpeville massacre that took place on 21 March 1960, that led to killing of 69 people by police, at a peaceful demonstration against the Apartheid regime (a regime which embraced racial discrimination) in Sharpeville, South Africa. Besides this 21st March 2019 was also observed as International Day of Forests on "Forests and Education – Learn to Love Forests" theme.

### **Golan Heights belongs to Israel**

In March 2019, President of the USA Donald Trump declared Israel's sovereignty over disputed land, the Golan Heights which Israel captured from Syria in 1967 during Middle East war. With this, America has become the first nation to recognise Golan Heights as part of Israel. There are more than 30 Israeli settlements with around 20,000 people in the picturesque 1,800 sq km plateau of Golan Heights near the Sea of Galilee that borders Israel, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria.

### **March 22: World Water Day**

Globe observed World Water Day on 22nd March 2019 with 'Leaving no one behind' theme which is the central pledge of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development. It is worth knowing that the sustainable development goal 6 advocates availability and sustainable management of



water for all by 2030. The day underlined significance of freshwater and encouraged sustainable management of freshwater resources. Every year, UN's inter-agency, UN-Water sets a theme for World Water Day corresponding to a current or future challenge. 25th March coincided two global days

### **25th March coincided two global days**

Globe observed International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade as well as International Day of Solidarity with Detained and Missing Staff Members on 25th of March 2019. "Remember Slavery: The Power of the Arts for Justice" was the theme of former while the latter marked the anniversary of the abduction of Alec Collett, a former journalist who served the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). He was kidnapped by armed gunman in 1985. The former raised awareness about the dangers of racism and acknowledged people who suffered the slavery system. The latter aimed at preparing action, demanding justice and protecting UN staff and peacekeepers, the workers in non-governmental community and the press.

### **March 24 : World Tuberculosis Day**

World Tuberculosis Day was observed on 24th March 2019 to create public awareness about the devastating health, social and economic results of tuberculosis. The World Health Organization (WHO) and the Global Fund and Stop TB introduced a joint initiative 'Find. Treat. All. #End TB'. 'Its time' was the theme for this year to create emergency for urgency of efforts for ending the global epidemic tuberculosis. As per the latest available data, India showed 84% fall in TB deaths in 2017. The global efforts saved 54 million lives since 2000.

### **Italy's Earth-Watching PRISMA Satellite**

In March 2019, Italy's new Earth-observation satellite named 'PRISMA' (an Italian acronym for Hyperspectral Precursor of the Application Mission) was launched from the Guiana Space Centre in Kourou, French Guiana by 98 foot (30 meters) tall European Vega rocket. PRISMA is an electro-optical instrument, which is well equipped to take medium resolution photos to give information about environmental monitoring, natural resources, pollution and crop health. The satellite will function in a sun-synchronous orbit.

### **World's largest e-waste recycling hub**

Dubai e-waste specialist, Enviroserve inaugurated the world's largest e-waste recycling plant at Dubai Industrial Park, Dubai at an expenditure of \$5 million. With the total processing capacity of 100,000 tonnes of total integrated waste (per year), this recycling hub will recycle around 39,000 tonnes of e-waste including Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE), IT asset disposition (ITAD), refrigerant gas and specialized waste. It will employ state-of-the-art reclamation technology for this purpose. Swiss Government Export Finance Agency has extended full support for this project.

## **LIMA 2019 Aero Expo**

In March 2019, Langkawi International Maritime Aero Expo (LIMA) 2019 was held in Langkawi, Malaysia. India took part in this expo for the first time with its indigenous supersonic fighters jet Tejas and anti submarine warfare corvette INS Kadmat. The Expo presented excellent opportunity for India to showcase its natively developed LCA fighter aircraft and an opportunity to RMAF to assess the capabilities of LCA. 02xLCA, 01xC-130J and one x IL-76ac along with 27 officers, 42 air warriors and 11 HAL personnel have constituted Indian contingent.

## **March 26 : World Purple day**

Globe observed Epilepsy Awareness Day or World Purple Day on March 26, 2019 to create the awareness of Epilepsy. It is a central nervous system (neurological) disorder in which brain activity becomes abnormal, causing seizures or periods of unusual behavior, sensations, and sometimes loss of awareness. On this day people shared stories and started conversations about epilepsy to raise funds. The day invoked people worldwide to come together to make a difference to the lives of the affected people.

## **27th March : World Theatre Day**

International Theatre Institute (ITI) Centres celebrated annual World Theatre Day on 27 March 2019. International theatre community instituted this day in 1961. An award winning and highly esteemed theatre director, playwright, academic and professor, Carlos Celdran from Havana, Cuba was chosen for delivering the message of this year. He is best known for producing works that use the City of Manila as its primary subject. He uses various artistic processes viz. paintings, installations, performance art pieces to express his relationship with the city.

## **Demise of songwriter and producer Scott Walker**

American songwriter and producer Scott Walker died of cancer at the age of 76 years on 26th March 2019. Born in Hamilton, Ohio in year 1943, his real name was Noel Scott Engel. He along with the Walker Brothers created albums in the 1980s and later he continued as a solo artist, producer and composer of uncompromising originality. Song "The Sun Ain't Gonna Shine Anymore" fetched him international acclamation. Record label 4AD, which had been his musical home for the last 15 years of his life broke the information of his demise.

## **Presentation of A.M. Turing Award**

In March 2019, ACM Association for Computing Machinery conferred A.M. Turing Award which is also referred as "Nobel Prize of Computing" upon Yoshua Bengio, Geoffrey Hinton, and Yann LeCun for developing conceptual foundations for the field, identifying surprising phenomena via experiments, and contributing engineering advances that demonstrated the practical advantages of deep neural networks. Deep learning methods gave way to astonishing

breakthroughs in computer vision, speech recognition, natural language processing, and robotics among other applications. Among the awardees, Bengio is Scientific Director at Mila, Quebec's Artificial Intelligence Institute; Hinton is Chief Scientific Adviser of the Vector Institute and University Professor Emeritus at the University of Toronto ; and LeCun is Chief AI Scientist at Facebook.

### **Israel has world's longest salt cave**

In March 2019, world's longest salt cave got discovered in Israel. The Malham Cave in Israel's biggest mountain, Mount Sedom, also known as Mount Sodom, is 6.2 miles or 10 Km long. This cave is said to have expanded in length due to rainwater which flowed down cracks in the surface, dissolving salt and creating semi-horizontal channels along the way that flow down towards the Dead Sea. It surpasses Iran's Cave of the Three Nudes in Qeshm Island, which is almost 4.1-miles or 6.85km in length. This cave of Iran had previously held the record of being the world's longest cave for 13 years since 2006.

### **NASA's Hubble witnessed birth of giant storm on Neptune**

In March 2019, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) broke a news of capturing the birth of a giant storm on Neptune via its Hubble Space Telescope. This new finding will provide an insight for comprehension of the inner workings of the planets and will prove useful in the study of exoplanets of similar size and composition. Hubble Space Telescope, which was launched in 1990 by NASA has taken pictures for the past many years that showed the growth of a new great Dark spot in Neptune.

### **Singapore airport emerged as the world's best aviation again**

On 28th March 2019, Skytrax World Airport Awards chose Singapore's Changi Airport as the world's best aviation hub for the seventh consecutive time. Tokyo International Airport grabbed the second spot whereas Incheon International Airport was ranked third. Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport, New Delhi has climbed 8 places and got spotted at 59th position in this survey.

### **Apple launched an 'Apple Card'**

In March 2019, the tech giant Apple collaborated with Goldman Sachs and Mastercard to launch a new credit card called 'Apple Card' that can be used along the wallet app of the iPhone. Apple Card is a virtual credit card which can be used online and offline to replace the traditional credit card with the smart and secure one. This collaboration will help Apple in payment handling and processing. Users can apply for Apple Card via Apple Wallet App and its uses can also trade expenses on a daily, weekly, monthly or even category-wise basis.

### **Pakistan opened way for Hindu Pilgrims from India**

In March 2019, government of Pakistan approved setup of Sharada Peeth Corridor in PoK for Hindu Pilgrims from India. Built in 237 BC during the reign of Ashoka, the 5,000-year-old Sharada Peeth was one of the leading temple education centres of the Indian subcontinent. There are total 18 Hindu Maha Shakti Peethas viz. Shankari devi (Trincomalee (Sri Lanka)), Kamakshi Devi (Kanchi (Tamil Nadu)), Suvarnkala Devi (Pradyumna (West Bengal)), Chamundeshwari Devi (Mysore (Karnataka)),Jogulamba Devi (Alampur (Andhra Pradesh)),Bhramaramba Devi (Srisailam(Andhra Pradesh)), Mahalakshmi Devi(Kolhapur(Maharashtra)), Ekveerakshi Devi - Nanded (Maharashtra), Mahakali Devi (Ujjain (Madhya Pradesh)), Puruhutika Devi (Pithapuram (Andhra Pradesh)), Purnagiri Temple (Tanakpur (Uttarakhand)), Maniamba Devi (Andhra Pradesh), Kamakhya Devi (Guwahati (Assam)), Madhaveswari Devi (Prayaga (Uttar Pradesh)), Vaishno Devi (Kangra (Himachal Pradesh)), Sarvamangala Devi (Gaya(Bihar)), Vishalakshi Devi (Varanasi(Uttar Pradesh)) and Sharada Devi - PoK.

### **Qatar & France entered into contract**

On 28th March 2019, Qatar and France inked the Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA)World Cup 2022 security agreement in Doha to build a strategic partnership for the preparation of the world cup and management of the security of the event. The agreement was made after the meeting of Qatar Prime Minister, Sheikh Abdallah bin Khalifa al-Thani and French Prime Minister, Edouard Philippe.

### **Gonzalo Higuain took leave from International football**

In March 2019, Chelsea and Argentina striker, Gonzalo Higuain announced retirement from international football. He made his Argentina debut in 2009 against Peru. The Chelsea Football club striker had won 75 caps for his country, scoring 31 goals. He faced harsh criticism when he was part of the Argentina team that lost three major finals. Higuain had reached the finals of the 2014 World Cup and the Copa America in 2015 and 2016 with Argentina.

### **Cricketer Mayank Agarwal : Brand Ambassador of Fast&Up**

In March 2019, Fast&Up appointed Indian test cricketer Mayank Agarwal as its Brand Ambassador. The cricketer has showcased a record-breaking domestic season in 2017-18 that included more than 1000 runs within a single month and other consistent performances for both Karnataka & India A across formats. Now being a Brand Ambassador of the company, he will help it in its next phase of growth focusing on a larger share of the fast-moving healthcare goods business in India. Fast&Up has been supporting sportspersons, athletes and fitness enthusiasts for promotion of active living and the importance of nutritional supplements for enhanced performance.

### **Google's Global Council on AI and Tech Ethics**

In March 2019, Google introduced a Global Council to Advise on ethical issues around artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies. The council is comprised of technology experts, digital ethicists, people with public policy backgrounds and Kent Walker, Google's senior vice president for global affairs. The council will provide recommendations for Google and other companies and researchers working in areas like facial recognition software. The council will meet four times beginning from April 2019.

### **Anti-military parties of Thailand**

In March 2019, Anti-military parties have claimed to form government of Thailand. In Thailand seven political parties formed coalition to stop military's return to power. A military junta has ruled Thailand for the past five years under coup leader turned Prime Minister Prayut Chan-ocha. The coalition of parties has claimed to form the government after winning sufficient seats in the recent general elections on March 24, 2019. The leader of the main opposition party, Pheu Thai party, which headed the last elected government along with the leaders of six other parties held a news conference proclaiming their victory over more than 250 seats in the 500-seat lower house.





### **Dubai Tennis Championship 2019 concluded**

On 2nd March 2019, Dubai Tennis Championship 2019 concluded in Dubai, UAE. Prize money of ATP is \$2887895. Roger Federer of Switzerland has won the ATP Singles title. In the final, he defeated Stefanos Tsitsipas of Greece by 6-4, 6-4 points. Besides this, Belinda Bencic of Switzerland has won women's Singles title by defeating Petra Kvitova of Czech Republic. Rajeev Ram (USA) and Joe Salisbury (UK) won Men's Doubles title by defeating Ben McLachlan (New Zealand) and Jan-Lennard Struff (Germany) by 7-6, 6-3 points. China's Hsieh Su-wei and Czech Republic's Barbora Strycova won women's doubles titles by defeating Czech Republic Lucie Hradecka and Russia's Ekaterina Makarova by 6-4, 6-4 points.

### **Sir Alastair Cook officially got knighthood from Queen**

In February 2019, Alastair Cook, the skipper of the England cricket team was officially received the knighthood for his services to cricket. He was honoured by Elizabeth II, the Queen of England at the Buckingham Palace, London. He is the 11th English cricketer to be awarded knighthood for services to cricket and also the first English cricketer to get the honour after Sir Ian Botham received it in 2007.

### **Resignation of badminton coach Tan Kim**

In March 2019, a native of Malaysia and India's doubles badminton coach Tan Kim Her has laid his resignation due to some personal reasons. His term with Badminton Association of India (BAI) had ended after the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. He had coached men's doubles pair of Chirag and Satwiksairaj Rankireddy who won the silver medal and the mixed team gold medal at the Commonwealth Games. Flandy Limpele and Namrih Suroto from Indonesia will be their new coach now. Tan Kim also coached the women's doubles squad of Ashwini Ponnappa and N Sikki Reddy who claimed a bronze at the Commonwealth Games.

### **Anil Kumble continued to be the ICC Cricket Committee Chairman**

On 2nd March, 2019, former Indian captain and great leg spinner Anil Kumble got re-appointed as International Cricket Council (ICC) Cricket Committee Chairman for a final 3 year term

during the International Cricket Council's latest round of quarterly meetings in Dubai. He is playing this role since 2012. The committee decided to stick to the coin toss as an “integral part” of the Test match narrative. ICC CEO David Richardson in partnership with the ECB, has assured a robust security plan for the upcoming Men's Cricket World Cup after the Pulwama attack incident.

### **India registered 500<sup>th</sup> ODI**

On 5th March 2019, India defeated Australia by eight runs in Nagpur to record their 500th win in ODI cricket. Virat Kohli emerged as star with his 40th ODI ton and he was well supported by bowlers Jasprit Bumrah, Kuldeep Yadav, Kedar Jadhav and Vijay Shankar as India restricted Australia to a total of 242 while chasing a target of 251. India had made its debut ODI in year 1974 and since that time they have played 963 matches. Among these, India has played most of the matches i.e. 158 matches between 1979 and 2017 against Sri Lanka. With this, India has become the second team after Australia to record 500 wins in the 50-over format.

### **Zinedine Zidane will continue as coach of Real Madrid**

In March 2019, Zinedine Zidane has got re-appointed as the coach of Spanish football club Real Madrid till June 30, 2022. He had replaced Santiago Solari, who was terminated from the post after less than five months in charge. The 46-year-old, former Real midfielder Zidane had joined Real Madrid in January 2016 and had resigned from the club in May 2018 after leading it to three consecutive Champions League titles in his first term. Real Madrid's Champions League challenge came to an end after the defending champions were stunned by Ajax in the Round-of-16.

### **China's Liu Hong scripted history in race walk**

In March 2019, China's 2016 Olympic champion, Liu Hong, broke the world record in the 50 km race walk by finishing it in 3 hours, 59 minutes and 15 seconds (3:59:15), at the Chinese Race Walk Grand Prix in Huangshan. With this she has become the first woman to break the 4-hour barrier in the event. She has broken China's Liang Rui race walk record of 4:04:36 that was made at the IAAF World Race Walking Team Championships in Taicang in 2018. Besides this, she also holds record in 20 km race walk after clocking 1:24:38 in La Coruna, Spain in 2015.

### **Upamanyu Dutta clinched Bronze at the Asian Open Laser Sailing Championship**

In March 2019, Young sailor from Mumbai, Upamanyu Dutta won Bronze medal in the Laser Standard race for men in the Asian Open Laser Sailing Championship held in Singapore that became India's first ever medal in this Championship. He earned a total of 56 points to finish

behind Hong Kong's Nicholas Bezy (47 points) and Thailand's Keerati Bualong (28 points). He has claimed the Euromed Championship in Malta in recent past. Besides him, Chennai's Nethra Kumanan grabbed 4th spot in the Laser Radial event for women.

### **Australia win series by 3-2**

On 13th March 2019, Australia has defeated India by 35 runs in the final ODI at the Feroz Shah Kotla Stadium in Delhi to win the five-match series by 3-2. After winning the toss, Australia made 272 runs in the stipulated 50 overs losing nine wickets. Chasing a victory target of 273 runs, India was all out for 237 runs in the stipulated 50 overs in the final match. Indian Vice-Captain Rohit Sharma completed 8000 runs in ODI Cricket. Bhuvneshwar Kumar took three wickets. Ravindra Jadeja and Mohammed Shami shared two wickets each and Kuldeep Yadav claimed one wicket.

### **Virat & Dhoni in ESPN World Fame 100 list**

In March 2019, Indian cricket team captain Virat Kohli and former captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni occupied ranks in the 2019's ESPN World Fame 100 list which is an annual list of the most famous athletes. It was prepared on parameters like Search Score, Endorsements and Social Following. Portuguese footballer Cristiano Ronaldo topped the list followed by basketball player LeBron James and FC Barcelona captain Lionel Messi. Virat Kohli grabbed 7th whereas Dhoni secured 13th spot. The list does contain names of 3 women viz. Serena Williams (17), Maria Sharapova (37) and Sania Mirza (93).

### **Asian Youth Athletics Championships**

In March 2019, China topped the overall medals tally with 31 medals that included 12 gold, 11 silver and eight bronze medals at conclusion of Asian Youth Athletics Championships in Hong Kong. Indian youth team finished second in this championship with a total of 26 medals including eight gold, nine silver and nine bronze medals. Japan grabbed the third spot with 20 medals that included 6 Gold, 8 Silver and 6 bronze.

### **India defeated Sri Lanka in fifth SAFF Women's C'ship**

On 17th March 2019, Defending champion India defeated Sri Lanka by 5-0 in its last group match of South Asian Football Federation (SAFF) Women's Championship in Biratnagar, Nepal. With this victory, India has succeeded in keeping its unbeaten record in the tournament since 2010. India will lock horns with Bangladesh in the semi final of 5th SAFF Women's Championship on 20th March 2019. Grace Dangmei, Sandhya Rangnathan, Indumathi, Sangeeta and Ratanabala Devi scored goals for India.

### **The 2019 Swiss Open Championship**

Badminton tournament '2019 YONEX Swiss Open Championship' got concluded in March 2019 at St. Jakobshalle in Basel, Switzerland. The names of winners of different events include Shi Yuki (China) (Men's Singles); Chen Yufei (China) (Women's Singles); Fajar Alfian and Muhammad Rian Ardianto (Indonesia) (Men's Doubles); Chang Ye Na and Jung Kyung Eun (South Korea)(Women's Doubles); Mathias Bay-smidt and Rikke Soby (Denmark) (Mixed Doubles). It was a six day tournament that started from 12 March and ended on 17 March 2019 .

### **Big win for India at Special Olympics World Games**

Indian contingent of 378 athletes registered 233 medals including 60 gold, 83 silver, and 90 bronze medals at the ongoing 15th edition of Special Olympics World Games in Abu Dhabi till 20th March 2019. Three Indian paddlers scripted history by winning gold medal in the women's singles section. In Judo, Sonu Kumar from Rohtak, Haryana won the gold medal while Muskan earned silver in squat and bench press. She also claimed a gold in deadlifting. In event of Roller Skating, Vijay, Hufeja Ayub Shaikh, Jashan Deep Singh, Harshad Gaonkar and Hardik Agarwal also won medals for the country. Santoshi Vijay Kauthankar from Goa won four silver medals in the female category. The event will get concluded on 21st March 2019.

### **China won Badminton Asia mixed team trophy 2019**

China clinched the second edition of Badminton Asia Mixed Team Championships aka Tong Yun Kai Cup 2019 which was held in Queen Elizabeth Stadium, Hong Kong on 24th March 2019. Badminton Asia and Hong Kong Badminton Association organized this championship in which China got edge over Japan by 3-2. Chinese pair He Jiting and Du Yue has defeated Japanese pair Yuta Watanabe and Arisa Higashino by 21-17, 21-17 in the mixed doubles. Yugo Kobayashi and Takuro Hoki of China defeated Han Chengkai and Zhou Haodong of Japan by 16-21, 21-18, 21-13 in the men's doubles. Li Yinhui and Du Yue of China claimed the women's doubles title by outshining Ayako Sakuramoto and Yukiko Takahata with 21-16, 21-19.

### **Govindaraj is again the BFI President**

In March 2019, the Basketball Federation of India (BFI) unanimously re-elected K. Govindaraj as its president during its annual general-body meeting. Govindaraj announced conduction of a new six-team women's league which will take place in next three months. BFI also has plans of restructuring the National championships, with a new committee constituted for the purpose which is slated to present its proposal in upcoming 45 days. BFI is all set to hold a zone-wise competition before the final round.

### **Indians in Seamaster 2019 ITTF Challenge Plus**

The Seamaster 2019 ITTF Challenge Plus, which is commonly called Oman Open table tennis was held in Muscat, Oman on 24th March 2019. Indian player G Sathyan got defeated by Mattias flack of Sweden in the men's Singles Semifinals by 8-11, 11-7, 9-11, 11-9, 9-11, 11-9, 10-12. While Archana Kamath won silver after getting defeated by the Japanese player Satsuki Odo in U-21 Women's Singles final by 7-11, 8-11, 6-11. Sathyan and Sharath also got defeated by Russian pair Denis Ivonin and Vladimir Sidorenko in the Men's Doubles.

### **Tokyo made the Paralympic torch**

In March 2019, Tokyo Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games unveiled "Sakura Pink" coloured Paralympic torch for representation of the Torch Relay for the games that will be held between 13th and 25th August 2020. This torch has been made from the recycled aluminum and has been modeled after the Japanese cherry blossom or "sakura". The Paralympic torch relay is slated to occur on 13th August 2020 after completion of the Tokyo 2020 Olympics.

### **News from Asian Airgun C'ship**

March 2019 applauded pair of Manu Bhaker and Saurabh Chaudhary for earning gold medal in the 10-metre Air Pistol Mixed team event at the 12th Asian Airgun Championship at Taoyuan in Taipei. The shooting champions' combined score of 784, broke the record established by Russians Vitalina Batsarashkina and Artem Chernousov at the European Championships. Prior to this, the teenagers had won the ISSF World Cup stage gold at the same event in Delhi.



# CURRENT AFFAIRS

- In February 2019, Hemant Bhargava has been appointed as the Non-Executive Chairman of which bank?

(a) Axis Bank (b) UCO Bank (c) IDBI Bank  
(d) HDFC Bank (e) Bank of India
- Which Indian-origin World War II spy has been honored with the Blue Plaque in United Kingdom?

(a) Bhagat Ram Talwar (b) William Sebold (c) Rahmat Khan  
(d) Maulvi Ziauddin (e) Noor Inayat Khan
- Who has won the gold medal in the 10m men's singles Air Pistol event at ISSF World Cup 2019?

(a) Gagan Narang (b) Saurabh Chaudhary (c) Vijay Kumar  
(d) Manavjit Singh Sandhu (e) None of above
- In March 2019, India and which country signed an agreement to exchange information on tax and banking matters?

(a) Brunei (b) Malaysia (c) Myanmar  
(d) Singapore (e) Indonesia
- In February 2019, which insurance company has launched India's first policy to protect bank locker ?

(a) Bajaj Allianz General Insurance  
(b) United India Insurance  
(c) ICICI Lombard General Insurance  
(d) IFFCO Tokio General Insurance  
(e) Reliance General Insurance
- In March 2019, who has been appointed as the new member of the 15th Finance Commission?

(a) Aditya Negi (b) Ajay Narayan Jha  
(c) Aditya Kumar Anand (d) Ajay Kumar (e) None of above

7. In February 2019, Mohamed Tahir Ayala has been appointed as the Prime Minister of which country?  
(a) Algeria (b) Sudan (c) Morocco  
(d) Libya (e) Egypt
8. Which boxer has won the gold medal in the 49 kg men's category at Makran Cup 2019?  
(a) Jaafar Naseri (b) Satish Kumar (c) Deepak Singh  
(d) Manish Kaushik (e) Duryodhan Singh Negi
9. In February 2019, Macky Sall has been elected as the President of which country?  
(a) Burkina Faso (b) Gambia (c) Ghana  
(d) Senegal (e) Liberia
10. In March 2019, India's first Braille laptop "DotBook" created by which IIT scientists?  
(a) IIT-Kharagpur (b) IIT-Roorkee (c) IIT-Madras  
(d) IIT-Bombay (e) IIT-Delhi
11. In March 2019, Manohar Aajgaonkar has been appointed as the Deputy Chief Minister of which state?  
(a) Telangana (b) Goa (c) Odisha  
(d) West Bengal (e) Tamil Nadu
12. In March 2019, who among the following honored with the Turing Award 2018 for their work in Artificial Intelligence?  
(a) Yoshua Bengio (b) Geoffrey Hinton (c) Yann LeCun  
(d) Both a) and b) (e) All a) , b) and c)
13. Nobel Prize-winning \_\_\_\_\_ Amartya Sen has been honored with the Oxford University's Bodley award.  
(a) Economist (b) Scientist (c) Mathematician  
(d) Physiologist (e) Novelist
14. In March 2019, Cave explorers of \_\_\_\_\_ have discovered the world's longest cave named "Malham".  
(a) Iran (b) Iraq (c) Qatar  
(d) Saudi Arabia (e) Israel

15. Who has won gold medal in the 10-meter Air Pistol Mixed team event at the Asian Airgun Championship 2019?
- (a) Anuradha and Abhishek Verma
  - (b) Anuradha and Saurabh Chaudhary
  - (c) Manu Bhaker and Saurabh Chaudhary
  - (d) Manu Bhaker and Abhishek Verma
  - (e) None of above
16. In March 2019, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has imposed a penalty of Rs. 2 crore on which bank?
- (a) UCO Bank
  - (b) Punjab National Bank
  - (c) Bank of India
  - (d) Bank of Baroda
  - (e) State Bank of India
17. In March 2019, the researchers of which IIT developed AI based disease detector?
- (a) IIT-Bombay
  - (b) IIT-Madras
  - (c) IIT-Roorkee
  - (d) IIT-Delhi
  - (e) IIT-Indore
18. In March 2019, Azali Assoumani has been re-elected as the President of which country?
- (a) Kenya
  - (b) Rwanda
  - (c) Uganda
  - (d) Somalia
  - (e) Comoros
19. In March 2019, India has become the \_\_\_\_\_ country to conduct Anti-Satellite (A-SAT) “Mission Shakti” successfully.
- (a) Fourth
  - (b) Fifth
  - (c) Third
  - (d) Sixth
  - (e) Seventh
20. In March 2019, world’s largest e-waste recycling hub has been opened in which city?
- (a) Ajman
  - (b) Al Jeer
  - (c) Abu Dhabi
  - (d) Sharjah
  - (e) Dubai

# • ANSWERS •

- 1.(c) In February 2019, Hemant Bhargava has been appointed as the Non-Executive Chairman of **IDBI Bank** for a period of three years. He also continues as the Chairman-In-Charge and MD of Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC).
- 2.(e) The first Indian-origin World War II spy, **Noor Inayat Khan** has been honored with the Blue Plaque in United Kingdom. She was the daughter of Indian Sufi saint Hazrat Inayat Khan. She was an agent for Britain's Special Operations Executive (SOE) during World War II. She was caught and killed by the Nazis in the year 1944 at the age of 30 years.
- 3.(b) Famous Indian shooter, **Saurabh Chaudhary** has won the gold medal in the 10m men's singles Air Pistol event at ISSF World Cup 2019. He secured Olympic quota with a world record score of 245.0 after some phenomenal shooting. He is the first Indian to win gold medal at the youth Olympic, Asian Games, Junior ISSF World Championship and Asian Airgun championship.
- 4.(a) In March 2019, India and **Brunei** signed an agreement in New Delhi for the exchange of Information and Assistance in Collection with respect to taxes in order to curb tax evasion and tax avoidance. This pact will facilitate both the countries to exchange information, including banking and ownership information for tax purposes.
- 5.(d) In February 2019, **IFFCO Tokio General Insurance** has launched India's first bank locker protector policy. In this policy, security of only declared jewelry and documents is provided. This company's policy covers losses incurred by accident, theft, terrorism or the mistake of the bank staff. This cover is limited to the lockers of scheduled banks only. This is not available for private lockers.
- 6.(b) In March 2019, the 1982 batch IAS officer of Manipur cadre, **Ajay Narayan Jha** has been appointed as the new member of the 15th Finance Commission. Prior to this, he was the Finance Secretary to the Government of India and has also served as Secretary to the 14th Finance Commission.
- 7.(b) In February 2019, the governor of Gezira state, Mohamed Tahir Ayala has been appointed as the Prime Minister of **Sudan**. Besides this, Defence Minister of Sudan, Awad Mohamed Ahmed Ibn Auf was appointed as the first Vice-President of the country.

- 8.(c)** National Boxing champion **Deepak Singh** has won the gold medal in the 49 kg men's category at Makran Cup 2019. In the final, he defeated Jaafar Naseri. In Makran Cup 2019, India has won 8 medals, including one gold, five silver and two bronze. Other boxers who won the silver were Duryodhan Singh Negi, Satish Kumar, P. Lalitha Prasad, Sanjeet, and Manish Kaushik.
- 9.(d)** In February 2019, Macky Sall has been elected as the President of **Senegal**. He got 58.27% of total votes . This majority vote has handed Macky Sall a second term to be the President without the need for a second round of voting. He is known for enhancing infrastructure of the country.
- 10.(e)** In March 2019 , Pulkit Sapra from Delhi and Suman Muralikrishnan from Chennai, the alumnus and researchers at the **IIT-Delhi** have created a laptop for visually-impaired called "DotBook". The laptop has an interface in form of dots or Braille instead of a visual one. Instead of a screen, the laptop displays embossed text in Braille through a touchpad and the users get to feel everything a website has by touching the pad.
- 11.(b)** In March 2019, Goa's Tourism Minister Manohar Ajgaonkar has been appointed as the Deputy Chief Minister of **Goa**. Besides this, Deepak Prabhu Pauskar took oath as Goa cabinet minister. Both will succeed Sudin Dhavalikar. Currently, Manohar Ajgaonkar is the second Deputy Chief Minister along with Goa Forward Party (GFP) leader and state Minister Vijai Sardesai.
- 12.(e)** The three pioneers of Artificial Intelligence (AI), **Yoshua Bengio, Geoffrey Hinton, and Yann LeCun** honored with the Nobel Prize of computing "Turing Award 2018". They received award for conceptual and engineering breakthroughs that have made deep neural networks a critical component of computing. All three winners will share \$ 1 million prize money.
- 13.(a)** Nobel Prize-winning **economist** Amartya Sen has been honored with the Oxford University's Bodley award for his contribution in literature, culture, science, and communication. It is the highest honour given by the University of Oxford . The other winners of Bodley Medal are Nobel Prize-winning novelist Kazuo Ishiguro, physicist Stephen Hawking, novelist Hilary Mantel and inventor of the World Wide Web Tim Berners-Lee.
- 14.(e)** In March 2019, Cave explorers of **Israel** have discovered the world's longest cave named "Malham" near the Dead sea, beating the record-holder in Iran. The cave is spread in an



area of 10 kilometers (6.25 miles). It runs through the Israel's largest mountain, Mount Sodom and spills out to the southwest corner of the adjacent Dead Sea.

- 15.(c)** **Manu Bhaker and Saurabh Chaudhary** have won gold medal in the 10-meter Air Pistol Mixed team event at the Asian Airgun Championship 2019. 17-year-old Manu and 16-year-old Saurabh shot a combined score of 784. With this, they broke the record set by Russians Vitalina Batsarashkina and Artem Chernousov at the European Championships.
- 16.(b)** In March 2019, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has imposed a penalty of Rs. 2 crore on **Punjab National Bank** for non-compliance of regulatory directions with regard to SWIFT operations. SWIFT is a global messaging software, which is used for sharing information on inter-bank transactions by financial entities.
- 17.(d)** In March 2019, the researchers of **IIT-Delhi** have developed a low-power electronic hardware system, based on artificial intelligence (AI). It is capable of detecting malaria, tuberculosis, intestinal parasite and cervical cancer within a few milliseconds. The researchers declared that their system can be used for healthcare access in resource-constrained areas with limited access to human specialists.
- 18.(e)** In March 2019, Azali Assoumani has been re-elected as the President of **Comoros**. He got 60.77 percent votes whereas his opponent Mohamoudou Ahamada got only 14.62 percent votes. In the year 2016, Azali Assoumani was first time elected as the President of Comoros.
- 19.(a)** In March 2019, Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has conducted a successful Anti-Satellite (A-SAT) missile test "Mission Shakti" from the Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam Island in Odisha. It took just 3 minutes. The target was hit by the DRDO developed Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) Interceptor Missile, in Low Earth Orbit (LEO) in a "Hit to Kill" mode at a height of 300 km from the earth's surface. It is a joint programme of DRDO and the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). With this, India has become the **fourth** country to conduct A-SAT missile test successfully.
- 20.(e)** In March 2019, world's largest e-waste recycling hub has been opened in Dubai Industrial Park, **Dubai**. The hub is developed by 'Enviroserve' company with a total cost of \$5 million. It will recycle Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE), IT asset disposition (ITAD), refrigerant gas and specialized waste.