



Monthly **GK** Mania



February - 2019

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Justice T B N Radhakrishnan : The First Chief Justice of Telangana HC

On January 1, 2018, Justice Thottathil Bhaskaran Nair Radhakrishnan became the first Chief Justice of Telangana HC. His oath ceremony was administered by Telangana and Andhra Pradesh Governor ESL Narasimhan at a ceremony held at Raj Bhavan in presence of Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao and other judges, lawyers and senior government officials. Before this, Justice Radhakrishnan had been the Chief Justice of the High Court of Judicature at Hyderabad for both the states of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh since July 2018.

Justice AK Sikri became Executive Chairman of NALSA

On January 2, 2019, President Ram Nath Kovind has nominated Justice AK Sikri as Executive Chairman of National Legal Services Authority (NALSA). He has succeeded Madan B Lokur. NALSA is meant to provide free Legal Services to the weaker sections of the society to promote justice on the basis of equal opportunity. It organises Lok Adalats for amicable settlement of disputes, spreads legal literacy and awareness, undertaking social justice litigations and formulates various schemes for the implementation of preventive and strategic legal service programmes.

Ramakant Achrekar passed away

In January 2019, cricket coach Ramakant Achrekar died of old-age ailments at age of 86 in Mumbai. He was once a pre-eminent feature of Mumbai cricket culture and guru of cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar. The deceased produced the likes of Vinod Kambli, Pravin Amre and Ajit Agarkar among other professional cricketers and was credited for creating fascination for the game among little boys in Mumbai's maidans. Tendulkar paid rich tribute to him.

ST list of Arunachal Pradesh will be amended

In January 2019, Union Cabinet green flagged Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order (Amendment) Bill, 2018. The bill is meant to amend the Scheduled Tribes list of Arunachal Pradesh. The bill recommends inclusion of 'Nocte', 'Tangsa', 'Tutsa', 'Wancho' in lieu of 'Any Naga Tribes' in serial No. 10 in the list of ST of Arunachal Pradesh, Removal of 'Abor' in serial No. 1, as it is the same as 'Adi' in Serial No. 16 and Replacement of 'Tai Khamti' instead of 'Khampti' at serial No. 6.. Besides these, it also suggests inclusion of 'Mishmi-Kaman' (Miju Mishmi), Idu (Mishmi) and Taraon (Digaru Mishmi) in serial No. 8. And Monpa, Momba, Sartang, Sajolong (Miji) in serial No. 9 in lieu of 'Momba'.

Kaiga Atomic power station scripted new world record

Karnataka's Kaiga Atomic power station revealed its latest achievement in January 2019. It has created a world record for the longest uninterrupted operation for 962 days on December 10, 2018. It has added feather in cap of Nuclear Power Corporation of India (NPCIL). Earlier, this record was held by Unit 2 of Heysham of United Kingdom, which operated non-stop for 940 days. Kaiga has four natively developed Pressurised Heavy Water Reactors of 220 MW each fuelled by domestic fuel. Generating Station-1 (KGS-1) at Kaiga had produced 5 billion units of electricity at a plant load factor of 99.3%.

Marital rape might get declared as crime

In January 2019, Congress MP Dr Shashi Tharoor introduced a private bill titled the Women's Sexual, Reproductive and Menstrual Rights Bill 2018 in the Lok Sabha. The bill advocates inclusion of marital rape under punishable offence and renders more decisional autonomy to women in termination of pregnancy. The bill proposes the deletion of exception 2 to Section 375 of Indian Penal Code, which declares sexual intercourse by a man with his own wife is not rape.

Professor Himanshu Rai : The new director of IIM Indore

Former professor of Human Resource Management at IIM Lucknow, Prof Himanshu Rai has succeeded IIM Indore's director, Professor Rishiksha T. Krishnan in recent past. He said, "We will be focusing on strengthening MOOCs and involving foreign universities in our research." The new director will develop a strategy to help the Institute create responsible leaders who remain contextually relevant to business school with world class academic standards. Besides this, IIM Indore will continuously work towards betterment-both in academics and research, quantity and quality-wise.

Revival of mythical Saraswati river has gained momentum

In January 2019, Haryana government permitted 11 projects to revive mythical Saraswati river at a meeting of the Haryana Saraswati Heritage Development Board (HSHDB) chaired by the chief minister to ensure fresh water flow into the river. The approved projects will lead to construction of Somb Saraswati barrage, Saraswati reservoir and Adi Badri dam on Somb river which is a tributary of the Yamuna that originates in the Shivalik Hills. Besides these, there will be construction of bridges at different locations and a Saraswati ghat.

Distribution of National Entrepreneurship Awards

In January 2019, The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship hosted the third edition of the National Entrepreneurship Awards in New Delhi to recognize commendable efforts of outstanding young first-generation entrepreneurs and those who have contributed significantly in building the entrepreneurship ecosystem. Around 43 awards have been presented this year that

includes 39 awards for Young Entrepreneurs in different sectors and 4 awards for Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Builders. There were special awards for women, persons with disability, scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and entrepreneurs from areas of limited opportunities.

Rakesh Aggarwal : The new JIPMER director

In January 2019, a professor of gastroenterology of the Sanjay Gandhi PG Institute of Medical Sciences, Lucknow, Rakesh Aggarwal took charge as director of the Centrally-administered Jawaharlal Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education & Research (JIPMER). The new appointee has done MBBS course and was MD in medicine at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi, and a DM in gastroenterology in the PG Institute of Medical Education and Research, Chandigarh. He has earned a masters degree in epidemiology from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, UK as per the press release.

Ayush topped CAT with 99.99 percentile

An alumnus of St John's High School and Sri Guru Gobind Singh Collegiate School, Ayush Chauhan of Chandigarh, topped the Common Admission Test (CAT) 2018 with 99.99 percentile. Rishabh Goyal, an alumnus of Punjab Engineering College (PEC) grabbed the second rank. Besides Goyal and Chauhan, around 15 other students scored more than 99 percentile among 2.41 lakhs candidates who appeared in the entrance. The students who cleared the stipulated cut-offs will now be called for essay writing and interview round. Most of the interviews will be conducted in February and March.

10% quota for 'economically weaker' General category !!!

In January 2019 just before the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, Cabinet gave nod to 10 % reservation for 'economically backward' upper castes in direct recruitment in government services and admission to higher educational institutions. Unlike the reservation for SC/ST/OBCs, caste is not going to be a criterion for eligibility to the reservation under this new provision. This reservation is for all those communities/classes that do not come under 50 % quota viz. economically backwards among Hindus, Muslims, Christians etc. Moreover, this won't affect the reservation for SCs, STs and OBCs.

Introduction of the 70-Point Grading Index

In January 2019, the Ministry of Human Resource Development has announced 70-Point Grading Index to evaluate the quality of school education in the states. The index will help the states in identifying their weaker areas. 70 indicators will be used to grade state schooling systems in areas like number of existing teacher vacancies, number of direct entry recruitments especially at leadership positions, school infrastructure etc. The government will be establishing a separate fund over and above existing funding mechanisms to help states take up improvement exercises.

Supreme Court reinstated Alok Verma as CBI chief

In January 2019, the Supreme Court reinstated Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) director Alok Kumar Verma, cancelling the government's October verdict to relieve him as the chief of the probe agency. However, he is not permitted to take any major policy decision until the selection committee comprising Chief Justice of India headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi reviews the probe report against him and decides on his continuation. Verma's two-year term as CBI director ends on January 31, 2018.

Infosys Prize 2018

In January 2019, six eminent professors were felicitated with the global software major's Infosys Science Foundation awards during 10th Infosys Prize 2018 ceremony in Bengaluru. Six-member jury of renowned scientists and professors viz. Kaushik Basu, Pradeep Khosla, Shrinivas Kulkarni, Amartya Sen, Mriganka Sur, and Srinivasa Varadhan chose Navakanta Bhat of IISc Bangalore (Engineering and Computer Science category); Kavita Singh of JNU, New Delhi(Humanities); Roop Mallik of Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Mumbai (Life Sciences); Nalini Anantharaman of University of Strasbourg, France (Mathematical Sciences); S.K. Satheesh, Professor of Centre for Atmospheric & Oceanic Sciences, Indian Institute of Science (Physical Sciences) and Sendhil Mullainathan of University of Chicago Booth School of Business (Social Science) as the awardees. The Infosys annual award comprised of a pure gold medal, a citation and a tax-free prize purse worth \$100,000 (or its equivalent in Indian rupees).

5000 additional seats in Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas

In January 2019, HRD Minister Prakash Javadekar permitted addition of 5000 more seats in residential schools for talented rural children, Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas (JNV) for the Academic Year 2019-20. Currently there are around 46600 seats in JNVs. The addition of 5000 seats implies availability of 51600 seats from AY 2019-20. In upcoming four years, the government is planning to add 32000 more seats. It is worth knowing that Navodaya is the only education system in India where students give entrance examination for admission into Class 6.

Merger of Gruh Finance & Bandhan Bank

In January 2019, affordable housing finance arm of HDFC, Gruh Finance, announced its merger with the newest commercial bank, Bandhan Bank. With this, the latter will be able to cut promoter stake from 82.3% to 61%. As per the deal, 568 equity shares of face value of Rs.10 each of Bandhan Bank will be issued for every 1,000 equity shares of a face value of Rs.2 each of Gruh and it will be a subject to regulatory approvals. The combined entity will be worth Rs.84,000 crore.

Lok Sabha approved Citizenship Amendment bill

On January 8, 2019, Lok Sabha approved Citizenship Amendment bill that seeks to amend the Citizenship Act, 1955 to make illegal migrants who are Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan, eligible for citizenship. Presently, the 1955 Act advocates citizenship for those who have resided in India during the last 12 months and for 11 of the previous 14 years. The bill seeks citizenship for illegal migrants in Assam as well as in other states as well viz. Rajasthan, Punjab and Delhi.

UGC permitted journals for CARE

In January 2019, The University Grants Commission (UGC) gave nod to the list of journals for the Consortium for Academic and Research Ethics (CARE) named “CARE Reference List of Quality Journals”. The CARE has been assigned the task of scrutinizing and compiling a list of journals for social sciences, humanities, language, arts, culture, Indian Knowledge system etc. These so called “credible quality journals” will replace UGC’s own list of journals. This has been done as 88% journals were found to have been dubious out of 1,009 journals that were recommended by universities.

Lok Sabha approved DNA Technology Regulation Bill

On January 8, 2019, Lok Sabha passed DNA (Use and Application) Technology Regulation Bill via voice vote. The bill proposes the use and application of DNA technology for the purpose of establishing the identity of certain category of persons including the victims, offenders, suspects, under trials, missing persons and others. It is to employ the application of DNA-based forensic technologies to support, strengthen and speed up the justice delivery system of the country. It advocates credible DNA test results protected from misuse or abuse in terms of the privacy rights of the country’s citizens.

Nandan Nilekani panel for digital payments

The Reserve Bank of India constituted a 5-member high-level committee under Aadhaar architect and Infosys co-founder Nandan Nilekani to suggest steps to strengthen the safety of digital payments in the country. Former RBI deputy governor H R Khan, former MD and CEO of Vijaya Bank Kishore Sansi and former secretary in ministries of IT and steel Aruna Sharma and chief innovation officer, Centre for Innovation, Incubation & Entrepreneurship (CIIE), IIM Ahmedabad, Sanjay Jain are the other members of this panel. The panel will identify best practices to accelerate digitisation of the economy.

NHAI tied with Oil Marketing Companies

In January 2019, National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) promoted company, Indian Highways Management Company Ltd. (IHMCL) inked Memorandum of Understanding with state-run Oil Marketing Companies viz. IOCL, BPC, and HPC for issuance of FASTags via

petroleum retail outlets. It is worth recalling here that IHMCL had launched the national electronic toll collection program (NETC) under the brand name “FASTag” in April 2016. This program registered success at 450 toll plaza along with national highway and selected state toll plazas.

ISRO's first manned mission to space 'Gaganyaan'

On 12th January 2019, ISRO announced first manned mission to space 'Gaganyaan', which it will launch by December 2021. According to the Chairman Dr K Sivan's information, a human space centre has been set up for this mission. In Gaganyaan project, India will send three astronauts to outer space for seven days and bring them back. Apart from this, other missions involving 332 launches are planned this year among which Chandrayaan -2 mission to the moon has been scheduled in mid-April 2019. And GSAT-20 Satellite for high bandwidth connectivity will be launched in September-October.

India's first railway university will have a Vice- Chancellor

In January 2019, Union Cabinet under chairmanship of Prime Minister Narendra Modi created a post of Vice- Chancellor for the newly started India's first railway university, National Rail and Transport Institute (NRTI). Cabinet decided that the position of Vice-Chancellor will be that of the Principal Executive Officer of the institution and the appointee will exercise general supervision, control the affairs of the institution and implement the decisions of all the authorities of the Institution, deemed to be University for rail and transportation.

Two level Maths paper for class 10 from 2020

In January 2019, the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) announced two levels of maths exam for class 10 from 2020 onwards to provide relief to those who do not wish to pursue mathematics in their higher education. For this in addition to the existing level, an easier mathematics syllabus will be introduced under level-2. According to the latest official circular by the CBSE, the current mathematics subject will be called Mathematics-Standard and the easier level will be called Mathematics-Basic. And those who will appear for Basic-level will not be considered for pursuing mathematics at the higher education level.

India's largest startup ecosystem now in Kerala

On 13th January 2019, Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan launched country's largest startup ecosystem, 1.8 lakh sq ft, integrated startup complex under the Kerala Startup Mission, at the Technology Innovation Zone in Kochi, Kerala. It is a housing incubation infrastructure across a series of sectors in technology viz. biotechnology, computer-aided design, augmented/virtual reality and advanced communication and promotes hardware startups, the BioNEST (Bio-Incubator Nurturing Entrepreneurship for Scaling Technologies) that promotes medical

technologies, BRIC which helps developing solutions for cancer diagnosis and care, BRINC, the country's first international accelerator for hardware startups and a centre of excellence establishment by industry majors such as UNITY. The government is planning to give direct jobs to 2.5 lakh in IT.

Gujarat : first state to exercise 10% quota for EWS in general category

On January 13, 2019, Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani announced implementation of 10 % reservation for Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) of the general category with immediate effect. With this, Gujarat has become the first state to implement this quota. It will be implemented in all ongoing recruitment process too wherein there is the only advertisement published but the first stage of examination is yet to held. Those who have annual household income below Rs 8 lakh, agriculture land below 5 acres, residential house below 1000 sqft, residential plot below 100 yards in notified municipality and below 200 yards in non-notified municipality area will be the beneficiaries of this quota.

IDFC Bank is now IDFC First Bank

On January 13, 2019, private sector lender IDFC Bank changed its name to IDFC First Bank Ltd on account of its merger with Non-Banking Finance Company (NBFC) Capital First on December 2018. This nomenclature has come into effective from January 12, 2019 by virtue of 'Certificate of Incorporation pursuant to change of name' issued by the Registrar of Companies, Chennai. Besides this, V Vaidyanathan, founder and chairman of Capital First Ltd has been appointed as Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of the merged entity.

Namita Gokhale became Sushila Devi Literature Awardee

On January 12, 2019 Writer Namita Gokhale was honored with the Sushila Devi Literature Award for her novel "Things to Leave Behind" in the 'Best Book of Fiction Written by a Woman Author' category at the inaugural edition of Bhopal Literature and Art Festival (BLF) at the Multi Art Centre of the Bharat Bhawan. Former bureaucrat Raghav Chandra is the brain behind this festival. The literary event witnessed participation of more than 70 writers and artists.

CBSE introduced aptitude tests for Class 9 & 10

As per January 2019 circular of Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), an aptitude test 'Know Your Aptitude' (KYA) will be conducted to help students of grade 9th and 10th understand their strengths and limitations before making important career choices. The performance of students will be evaluated on basis of scoring guidelines issued by the board and this will also help parents, teachers and the school administrators to extend support to the student while making such decisions. NCERT has developed KYA which will be available on CBSE website from January 29.

Kumbh Mela 2019 began in UP

On January 15, 2019, seven-week event of world's largest religious and cultural human congregation, 'Kumbh 2019' began at Prayagraj (erstwhile Allahabad), Uttar Pradesh and it will continue till March 4, 2019. More than 12 crores people are expected to take holy bath at Sangam, the confluence of three rivers - Ganga, Yamuna and mythical Saraswati. 21 Snan Ghats and more than 120000 toilets have been set up for clean Kumbh over area of 3,200 hectares of land.

Death of 1956 Olympian footballer Zulfiqar

On January 13, 2019, Former India and 1956 Olympian footballer, Mohammed Zulfiqaruddin died at 83 in Hyderabad. He represented India in the 1958 Tokyo Asian Games and the Merdeka Cup in Malaysia and was the captain of Andhra Pradesh in the Santosh Trophy from 1955 to 1967. Besides this, he also played captain of AP Police team from 1954 to 1967 and clinched IFA Shield, Durand Cup and Rovers Cup tournaments.

Dr. T.C.A Anant is now Member of UPSC

On January 14, 2019, former Chief Statistician of India & Secretary, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Dr. T.C.A Anant, got appointed as Member of Union Public Service Commission (UPSC). His oath was administered by Arvind Saxena, Chairman, UPSC. A member of the UPSC can have a maximum of six-year tenure or till an incumbent attains the age of 65. Presently, former Delhi Police Commissioner Bhim Sain Bassi, Air Marshal A S Bhonsle (retired), Prof. Pradeep Kumar Joshi, Sujata Mehta, Manoj Soni, Smita Nagaraj, M Sathiyavathy and Bharat Bhushan Vyas are other members of the UPSC.

President Kovind approved re-formation of Triple Talaq ordinance

In January 2019, President Kovind has promoted the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Ordinance, 2019. The ordinance advocates protection of the rights of married Muslim women and criminalises the practice of triple talaq or Talaq-e-Biddat announcing a jail term of three years for the husband guilty of this crime. It has prohibited the Islamic practice that allowed men to divorce their wives immediately by uttering the word "talaq" (divorce) thrice.

Sikkim launched 'One Family, One Job' scheme

In January 2019, Longest serving Sikkim Chief Minister Pawan Chamling launched 'One Family, One Job' scheme. The scheme entitles employment to a member of every family which does not have a government job in the state. In all, 11,772 people have been issued appointment letters on the day of inauguration of the scheme. Currently, recruitments are being made for Group C and Group D posts in 12 government departments. The budget allocations have been done for 89 days in the current financial year for paying emoluments to the new recruits. Under this scheme, all loan debts in the farming and agriculture sector will be cancelled.

Good news for SC, ST PhD aspirants

In January 2019, University of Lucknow announced 5% relaxation for SC and ST PhD candidates following notification regarding 'Minimum Standards and Procedure for Award of M Phil/PhD Degrees (first amendment) Regulations, 2018' of HRD Ministry (UGC) dated August 27, 2018. With this, the varsity has become the first state university to adopt this Gazette notification in the interest of the society. The details convey 5% relaxation in marks (from 50% to 45%) in the entrance test for SC/ST/OBC/non-creamy layer/differently-abled candidates in the ongoing PhD admissions. Besides this, the unfilled seats after these admissions will be transferred to the next year for admission in the same respective categories.

Jharkhand is all set to implement 10% quota for EWS of General Category

Jharkhand will soon become the next state after Gujarat to give the 10% reservation benefit in employment and admission to the Economically Weaker Section (EWS) of the unreserved category. Jharkhand Chief Minister Raghubar Das ordered implementation of this quota from 22nd January 2019. This 10 % reservation will be in addition to 50 % reservation given to ST/SC/BC/OBC as per the released official statement. This shows the government's eagerness to bring the poor into the mainstream of development.

Presentation of Gandhi Peace Prize Conferred for Last 4 Years

In January 2019, Vivekananda Kendra, Kanyakumari; Akshaya Patra Foundation & Sulabh International (jointly); Ekal Abhiyan Trust and Shri Yohei Sasakawa received Gandhi Peace Prize for the years 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018 respectively. Vivekananda Kendra contributed in rural development, education and development of natural resources. Akshaya Patra Foundation provided mid-day meals to millions of children across the country. Sulabh International improved sanitation in India and emancipated manual scavengers. Ekal Abhiyan Trust worked for education for rural and tribal children in remote areas pan India, rural empowerment, gender and social equality. Shri Yohei Sasakawa contributed to Leprosy Eradication in India and abroad.

Microsoft's AI labs in 10 Indian universities

On 16th January 2019, Microsoft India announced establishment of Artificial Intelligence (AI) labs in 10 universities to train five lakh youth across India in disrupting technologies. The company is looking forward to raise more than 10,000 developers in the upcoming three years. More than 700 partners are playing supporting role in the AI ecosystem. Earlier in December 2018, Microsoft announced a three-year "Intelligent Cloud Hub" collaborative programme in India for strengthening institutes to groom students in AI and Cloud technologies.

Manu Sawhney: The ICC's new Chief Executive Officer

In February 2019, Manu Sawhney will take charge as the CEO of the International Cricket Council. He will succeed David Richardson whose contract is expiring after the 2019 World Cup

of England and Wales. He is a non-executive director and member of the Audit Committee of Manchester United Ltd. and has worked with ESPN Star Sports for 17 years. He has also been the former CEO of Singapore Sports Hub. His appointment was approved by the ICC Board following a global search and appointment process led by the apex body's chairman Shashank Manohar and the Nominations Committee.

Demise of Malayalam director Lenin Rajendran

January 2019 saw death of Malayalam director-screenwriter Lenin Rajendran in Chennai at 67 due to his liver ailment. The deceased had made his directorial debut with 1982 film Venal. Swathi Thirunal, Daivathinte Vikrithikal, Kulam, Rathri Mazha and Makaramanju were his other films that took him to the top. Edavappathy was his last directed film in 2016. Oscar-winning sound designer Resul Pookutty praised him as ace Malayalam director who directed some of the most inspiring movies.

Mohammed Ali Qamar : the youngest Indian women's boxing coach

In January 2019, India's first Commonwealth Games gold medal winner in boxing, Mohammed Ali Qamar has replaced veteran Shiv Singh at the age of 37 to become the youngest India women's boxing coach. The Arjuna awardee has been an assistant coach in the national camp for more than a year and has ruled the Railways Sports Promotion Board's women's team for more than three years. He had won a gold medal in year 2002 Manchester Commonwealth Games in the light flyweight category.

CCI imposed penalty on CDAB

In January 2019, the Competition Commission of India (CCI) has imposed a penalty on the Chemists and Druggists Association of Baroda (CDAB) for violating the provisions of the Competition Act, 2002. CDAB was found to be limiting and controlling the supply of drugs and medicines in the market by mandating 'No Objection Certificate' before the appointment of stockists and payment of 'Product Information Service' charges prior to the introduction of new products in the market by pharmaceutical companies.

A new fellowship programme in Delhi

In January 2019, Ministry of External Affairs started the First Annual Disarmament and International Security Affairs Fellowship Programme at Foreign Services Institute, New Delhi and it will end on 1st February 2019. It was inaugurated in presence of United Nations Under Secretary General and High Representative for Disarmament, Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, and Foreign Secretary, Vijay Keshav Gokhale. Young Diplomats from across 27 nations are participants of this event. The event is encompassing multiple issues related to disarmament and international security like global security environment, weapons of mass destruction, space security, maritime cooperation, certain conventional weapons, security of cyberspace, export controls, emerging technologies etc.

Beginning of DD Science and India Science channels in New Delhi

In January 2019, India's Department of Science and Technology (DST) along with Doordarshan launched two science communication initiatives 'DD Science' and 'India Science' to develop scientific temperament in the country. According to Science and Technology Minister Harsh Vardhan's information, the two channels will broadcast science based documentaries, studio based discussions, and virtual walkthroughs of scientific institutions, interviews and short films. DD Science has been allotted a one hour slot on Doordarshan National channel while India Science is an internet based science channel. These channels will serve as the first step in creating a national science channel for India.

Appearance of India's second defence industrial corridor

On January 20, 2019, Union Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman inaugurated the Tamil Nadu Defence Industrial Corridor from Tiruchirappalli to give impetus to native production of defence equipment. It is India's second defence industrial corridor which will link leading military manufacturing units in five cities of South India, including Chennai, Hosur, Coimbatore, Salem and Tiruchirappalli at an estimated expenditure of Rs. 3,000 crore. The first defence industrial corridor was established in Uttar Pradesh.

Some new appointments in the Apex Court

In January 2019, President Kovind approved elevation of Justice Sanjiv Khanna from Delhi High Court and Justice Dinesh Maheshwari who was the Chief Justice of the Karnataka High Court to Supreme Court on the recommendations of the Supreme Court collegium headed by Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi. With this, the strength of the judges in the Supreme Court has reached to 28. In addition to this, the President has also appointed senior advocate Sanjay Jain as Additional Solicitor General in Supreme court.

Indu Shekhar Jha became Member of CERC

On 21st January 2019, Indu Shekhar Jha got appointed as the member of Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC). Union Minister of State (I/C) for Power and the New & Renewable Energy, R K Singh administered the oath of Office and Secrecy to Indu Shekhar Jha. Prior to this, Jha was working as the Chief Managing Director of Power Grid Corporation of India Limited since 2015 before joining CERC. Besides him, Lachharliana Pachuau has been appointed as a member of Joint Electricity Regulation Commission for Manipur and Mizoram by Power Ministry for the period of five years or age of 65 years whichever is earlier.

India will be world's fifth largest economy in 2019

According to January 2019 report of British consultancy multinational PwC, India and France are likely to leave behind the UK in the 2019 rankings of world's largest economies. PwC's

annual Global Economy Watch presents real GDP growth in 2019 of 7.6% for India, 1.7% for France and 1.6% for the UK. Britain and France have regularly switched places because of similar levels of development and roughly equal populations while India's climb in the rankings is expected to be permanent.

Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar 2019

On January 22, 2019, President Ram Nath Kovind presented Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar 2019 to 26 shortlisted awardees including one joint award for National Child Award (now renamed as Bal Shakti Puraskar) under the category of innovation, scholastic, sports, art and culture, social service and bravery. The awards were given in two main categories viz. Bal Shakti Puraskar (erstwhile known as National Child Award) and Bal Kalyan Puraskar (erstwhile known as National Child Welfare Award). Any child holding Indian Citizenship and residing in India can apply for these awards by registering on the award portal (www.nca-wcd.nic.in).

Pakke Paga Hornbill Fest is now the 'state festival' of Arunachal Pradesh

In January 2019, Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister, Pema Khandu declared Pakke Paga Hornbill Festival as the "State Festival" during a valedictory ceremony of the 4th edition of the festival at Seijosa in East Kameng district, Arunachal Pradesh. The celebration of this festival began in 2015 to applaud the role of the resident Nyishi tribe in conserving hornbills in the Pakke Tiger Reserve. The festival also provides an alternate source of income to the native people of this region who mainly relies on hunting and logging. After this move, the festival will draw funds from Arunachal Pradesh Forest Department

January 23, 2019 : Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's 122nd birth anniversary

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Subhash Chandra Bose museum at Red Fort in Delhi to mark the occasion of 122nd birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. The museum features several artefacts like wooden chair and sword used by the leader, medals, badges, uniforms etc. related to Subhash Chandra Bose and Indian National Army. The museum also portrays the heroism, valour and sacrifices made by Indian soldiers during the World War-I. Apart from this, the Centre also paid homage to Netaji by naming Ross Island in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands as Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Dweep.

21st January: Manipur, Meghalaya & Tripura's statehood day

On 21st January 2019, Manipur, Meghalaya & Tripura celebrated their 47th Statehood Day. In 1972 all these three states acquired their full-fledged form under the North Eastern Region (Reorganisation) Act, 1971. In the past the princely states of Tripura and Manipur were merged into the Indian Union in October 1949 and became full-fledged states on January 21, 1972, while Meghalaya was part of Assam before becoming an independent state. Meghalaya observed a

week-long programme on the theme, 'Celebrating Meghalaya-India', while Tripura vowed to acquire a drug (ganja) free status and Manipur is looking forward for an all round development of state on the occasion.

24th January: National Girl Child Day

The National Girl Child Day is observed every year on 24th January to promote the position of girl's in the society and make their living better. The main objective to celebrate this day is to create awareness about the rights of girls in the society, equal education and fundamental freedom. The day was first initiated in the year 2008 by the Ministry of Women and Child Development. The day is also celebrated to increase the consciousness of the people and offer new opportunities to the girl child in the society. The theme for the year 2019 is 'Empowering Girls for a Brighter Tomorrow'.

Kalamsat and Microsat-R satellites launched

On 24th January 2019, The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has launched a students' satellite Kalamsat and an imaging satellite Microsat-R from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota. The national space agency's workhorse rocket, PSLV C44, carried these satellites. Kalamsat is a payload developed by students and Chennai based Space Kidz India for the first time. Near about 14 minutes into the flight the rocket would eject Microsat R at an altitude of about 277 km. The Kalamsat is a 10 cm cube nanosatellite weighing about 1.2 kg.

Gujarati poet awarded Saraswati Samman for the year 2017

On 22nd January 2019, the famous Gujarati poet, Sitanshu Yashaschandra has been honored with Saraswati Samman 2017 for his poetry collection in Gujarati named "Vakhar" published in the year 2009. The award comprises of a citation and a plaque apart from award money of 15 lakh rupees. The 27th edition was organised by KK Birla Foundation. Yashaschandra poetry collection 'Jatayu' received Sahitya Akademi Award for Gujarati in the year 1987. Yashaschandra, recipient of the Padma Shri in 2006, is known for seamlessly blending history with poetry.

Ravneet Gill: New MD & CEO of Yes Bank

On 24th January 2019, Deutsche Bank India head, Ravneet Singh Gill has been appointed as the new Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Yes Bank for a period of three years. He will succeed Rana Kapoor. RBI rejected Rana Kapoor's extension to next three years. Gill tenure will begin from 1st March 2019. Gill has been serving as the CEO of Deutsche Bank in India since 2012. He has been at the bank since 1991.

Uttar Pradesh celebrated its 69th foundation day

On 24th January 2019, Uttar Pradesh celebrated its 69th foundation day in Lucknow as “UP DIVAS”. To celebrate the occasion the main function was organised at Awadh Shilp Gram in Lucknow. Uttar Pradesh Governor Ram Naik and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath along with members of state cabinet attended the function. Uttar Pradesh earlier known as United Province, got its name as Uttar Pradesh on January 24, 1950.

Government instituted “Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar”

On 23rd January 2019, the Union Government instituted an annual award titled ‘Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar’ to celebrate the 122nd birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose. The award will recognise the efforts of organisations or individuals who work to alleviate suffering of the affected population in the aftermath of any disaster. Their enormous contribution and selfless service to humanity often goes unacknowledged. The award will be announced every year on 23rd January on the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose. For the year 2019, 8th Battalion of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), located at Ghaziabad, was selected for this puraskar for its commendable work in Disaster Management. The Award recipient will receive a certificate and a cash prize of Rs. 51 lakhs.

India’s First Lithium Ion Giga Factory

In January 2019, Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) & LIBCOIN announced construction of a world class consortium to build the first lithium Ion battery plant in India. The proposed plant will have a capacity of 1GWh which will be scaled up to 30 GWh with passage of time. The project is expected to bring energy independence by replacing oil imports with abundant renewable energy sources. Besides this, it will also create integrated manufacturing ecosystem resulting in self-reliance and lower cost. The project will highlight replacement of high CAPEX and high OPEX processes by the cutting edge digital technologies in the country.

India celebrated its 70th Republic Day

On 26th January 2019, India celebrated its 70th Republic Day with South African President Cyril Ramaphosa as guest of honor. The parade showcased military might and rich cultural diversity. The parade witnessed veteran soldiers of the Indian National Army walking down the Rajpath for the first time. Lieutenant General Asit Mistry, General Officer Commanding, Headquarters Delhi Area, commanded the parade after the unfurling of the national flag and a 21-gun salute. The proud winners of the highest gallantry awards Param Vir Chakra and Ashok Chakra followed the parade commander. The K-9 Vajra and the M777 howitzers were engaged in this parade. Around 22 tableaux from different states and union territories and six Ministries, Departments and other institutions displayed the life, times and ideals of Mahatma Gandhi as the year 2019 marks the 150th birth anniversary of the Father of the Nation. Three state-of-the-art, SU-30 MKIs of Indian Air Force executed the Trishul manoeuvre to conclude the parade.

Padma Awards 2019

On Republic Day eve, one of the highest civilian awards of India, the Padma Awards 2019 were announced. Total 112 Padma Awards were presented. For exceptional and distinguished service, 4 Padma Vibhushan awards were conferred upon Teejan Bai (Chhattisgarh, Art-Vocals-Folk), Ismail Omar Guelleh (Foreigner:Djibouti, Public Affairs), Anilkumar Manibhai Naik (Maharashtra, Trade & Industry-Infrastructure) and Balwant Moreshwar Purandare (Maharashtra, Art-Acting-Theatre). 14 Padma Bhushan awards were presented for distinguished service of high order to John Chambers (Foreigner: USA, Trade & Industry-Technology), Sukhdev Singh Dhindsa (Punjab, Public Affairs), Pravin Gordhan (Foreigner; South Africa, Public Affairs), Mahashay Dharam Pal Gulati (Delhi, Trade & Industry-Food Processing), Darshan Lal Jain (Haryana, Social Work), Ashok Laxmanrao Kukade (Maharashtra, Medicine-Affordable Healthcare), Kariya Munda (Jharkhand, Public Affairs), Budhaditya Mukherjee (West Bengal, Art-Music-Sitar), Mohanlal Viswanathan Nair (Kerala, Art-Acting-Film), S Nambi Narayan (Kerala, Science & Engineering-Space), Kuldip Nayar ((Posthumous) Delhi, Literature & Education (Journalism)), Bachendri Pal (Uttarakhand, Sports-Mountaineering), V K Shunglu (Delhi, Civil Service), Hukumdev Narayan Yadav(Bihar, Public Affairs). 94 Padma Shri Awards were given for distinguished service in different fields which includes 21 women awardees, Gautam Gambhir (Delhi, Sports-Cricket), Sunil Chhetri (Telangana, Sports-Football), Manoj Bajpayee (Maharashtra, Art-Acting-Films), Bajrang Punia (Haryana, Sports-Wrestling), Devendra Swarup ((Posthumous) Uttar Pradesh,Literature & Education-Journalism) etc.

Bharat Ratna 2019

On Republic Day eve, President, Ram Nath Kovind conferred Bharat Ratna, the highest civilian honour upon former President and Congress leader Pranab Mukherjee, RSS ideologue Nanaji Deshmukh (posthumously) and singer Bhupen Hazarika (posthumously). Songs and music of the legendary singer-composer from Assam, Hazarika, radiates the message of justice, harmony and brotherhood. Nanaji Deshmukh contributed towards rural development showed the way for a new paradigm of empowering those living in villages. And Pranab Mukherjee was the 13th President of India and served from 2012 to 2017. Bharat Ratna was instituted on January 2, 1954 by the order of Rajendra Prasad, the former President of India.

Recently launched Android apps

In January 2019, the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Ropar developed an app 'Roshni' to help the Visually Impaired to recognise currency notes launched in Chandigarh. When the currency is brought in front of phone camera, the app provides an audio intimation about the currency note denomination and it can recognise both old and new notes. Besides this, the study published in the journal Diabetes Technology & Therapeutics, informed about the development of an artificial pancreas smartphone app for diabetics is capable of interfacing wirelessly with glucose monitors, insulin pump devices, and decision-making algorithms and thus helps in regulating blood sugar levels in diabetes patients.

Former Defence Minister George Fernandes is no more

On 29th January 2019, Former Defence Minister and Anti-Emergency Crusader George Fernandes passed away in New Delhi at the age of 88. Hailing from Mangaluru in Karnataka, he was one of the most prominent leaders of the socialist movement in the 1970s. He was a senior Janata Dal leader and founder of the Samata Party. He was elected to the Lok Sabha for 9 times and once to the Rajya Sabha. He worked in capacity of Union Minister for Railways, Communications and Industry. In addition to his political roles, he also played as a trade unionist, agriculturist, and journalist. He was a President of the All India Railwaymen's Federation and had led one of the biggest railway strikes of the country involving 1.5 million workers in year 1974.

The first Swadesh Darshan Project in Sikkim

On January 30, 2019, Union Minister for Tourism, K J Alphons inaugurated the first Swadesh Darshan Project named “Development of North East Circuit: Rangpo– Rorathang- Aritar- Phadamchen- Nathang-Sherathang- Tsongmo- Gangtok-Phodong- Mangan- Lachung-Yumthang- Lachen- Thangu-Gurudongmer- Mangan- Gangtok-Tuminlingee- Singtam” at the Zero Point, Gangtok, Sikkim. The project was approved by the Ministry of Tourism in June 2015 at an estimated expenditure of Rs. 98.05 crores. It is worth knowing that the Ministry approved 16 projects worth Rs. 1349.04 crores covering all North Eastern States under its schemes of Swadesh Darshan and PRASHAD.

30th January : Martyrs' Day

Nation observed 71st death anniversary of Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi on 30th January 2019. The leaders from different political parties paid tributes to Mahatma Gandhi who was assassinated on this day in 1948 along with other freedom fighters. A Sarva-Dharma Prarthana was also held at Gandhi Samadhi at Rajghat in New Delhi. On this occasion, Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated the National Salt Satyagraha Memorial in Dandi, Gujarat to the nation as gesture of tribute to Satyagrahis led by Gandhi Ji, who worked for India's freedom.

India is looking forward to PISA 2021

On January 28, 2019, India entered into contract with Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) for participation in Programme for International Student Assessment- PISA 2021. PISA is a triennial international survey that performs a competency-based assessment to evaluate the education system across the globe by testing the skills and knowledge of 15-year-old students. It measures the extent to which students have acquired key competencies that are essential for full participation in modern societies. India's participation in PISA- 2021 will lead to recognition and acceptability of Indian students and will prepare them for the global economy in the 21st century.

ICAR Republic Day tableau won first prize

On 28th January 2019, the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) was awarded the first prize for its Tableau, 'Kisan Gandhi'. The tableau was on theme of integrated farming, "Mishrit Kheti, Khushiyon Ki Kheti". It illustrated Gandhiji's vision to improve agriculture and livestock for the prosperity of rural communities as well as significance of dairy farming and use of native breeds. It is interesting to learn that Gandhiji visited Institute of Plant Industry, Indore in 1935 and appreciated 'Indore method' of composting. Besides this, he also attended a training program on dairy farming for fifteen days in 1927 at Bangalore Centre of the ICAR.

Piyush Goyal : The Carnot Prize winner

On January 30, 2019, University of Pennsylvania conferred Carnot prize upon Union Finance Minister Piyush Goyal in New Delhi for his work regarding Power Reforms and Rural Electrification that contributed to sustainable energy solutions. He brought electricity under reach of 18,000 villages. The commendable energy efficiency programme of government not only lowered consumption but also helped consumers save \$7 billion a year in electricity bills. Besides this, India's power sector is facing a surplus production of electricity.

Maharashtra is curbing infant deaths

On 30th January 2019, Maharashtra government introduced a special scheme to control infant deaths. Child development Minister Pankaja Munde distributed baby care kits to the children born in Primary health centre and Government Hospitals. Each baby care kit worth Rs.2000 has a blanket, a small mattress, a towel, a thermometer, baby oil, shampoo, toys, nail cutter, gloves, socks, among other items. The scheme is applicable only for first child of the parents that will benefit around 4 lakh women across Maharashtra. The government has sanctioned Rs.20cr for the scheme.

Rajiv Saxena & lobbyist Deepak Talwar got extradited to India

In January 2019, Dubai-based businessman Rajiv Saxena, the co-accused in 3,600-crore rupee AgustaWestland chopper deal case, and corporate lobbyist Deepak Talwar have been extradited to India from United Arab Emirates. The Enforcement Directorate had called Saxena multiple times in the AgustaWestland scam and alleged that Rajeev Saxena, his wife and their two Dubai-based firms routed the proceeds of crime and further layered and integrated in buying the immovable properties as well as shares. While Deepak Talwar is being probed for allegedly concealing income of more than 1,000 crores and also for facilitating aviation contracts during the UPA regime.

Dilip Sadarangani is now Chairman of Federal Bank

On 28th January 2019, South India based private sector lender Federal Bank appointed Dilip Sadarangani as its part-time Chairman. He has been on the bank's board since 2013. Dilip Sadarangani had played the role of guide in technology in multiple banks. He has also worked in different capacities for establishing IT infrastructure in different banks in India, Australia and Kuwait. He has been a core member of the team which automated the first 50 branches of State Bank of India.

Interim Budget 2019

Finance minister Piyush Goyal announced Budget 2019 on 1st February 2019. - The government announced the biggest tax sops for middle class, including complete exemption for income up to Rs 5 lakh i.e. individual taxpayers with annual income of up to Rs 5 lakh will now get full tax rebate.-Income tax refunds will be processed within 24 hours and released immediately. Within the next two years, the assessment of all tax returns will be done electronically. -Although it announced a tax rebate for individual taxpayers earning up to Rs 5 lakh, but there's a catch for the rest. The government has not tweaked the income tax (I-T) slabs. Those who are earning more than Rs 5 lakh will have shell out the tax at the same rate as they were paying before. The current tax slabs of 20 per cent tax on income between Rs 5 lakh and Rs 10 lakh and 30 per cent tax on earnings of over Rs 10 lakh would continue in the next fiscal year beginning April 1, 2019. -According to VISION 2030 (1): -Goyal announced Rs 6,000 annual cash dole to poor farmers in a scheme that will cost Rs 75,000 crore per year. The eligibility for the scheme, called Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi, is applicable to owners of less than 2 hectares of cultivable land. -TDS threshold on interest from bank and post office deposits has been raised from Rs 10,000 to Rs 40,000.-Also, TDS threshold for deduction of tax on rent has been increased to Rs 2.4 lakh from current Rs 1.8 lakh. - Over three crore salaried class, pensioners, self-employed and small businesses will save Rs 18,500 crore in income tax annually after the exemption limit was doubled to Rs 5 lakh for the next fiscal from current Rs 2.5 lakh. Also, standard deduction was raised to Rs 50,000 from current Rs 40,000.-Goyal said capital gains of up to Rs 2 crore made from sale of immovable property can now be invested in two residential houses as against current practice of exempting such income if invested in one house within a year. -Mega pension yojana namely 'Pradhan Mantri Shram-Yogi Maandhan' (PMSYM) for the unorganised sector workers with monthly income up to Rs 15,000. This pension scheme will provide workers an assured monthly pension of Rs 3,000 from the age of 60 years on a monthly contribution of Rs 100 per month during their working age --from age 29 to 60. (Source : Times of India)



Chinese spacecraft touched the dark side of the moon

In December 2018, Chinese spacecraft landed on the far side or dark side of the Moon that faces away from the Earth. In this historic landing, the Chang'e-4 lunar probe, made a "soft landing" at 0226 GMT and transmitted the first-ever "close range" wide-angle colour image of the dark side of the moon. A lander and a rover have been launched at a preselected landing area. The probe will begin its work of astronomical observation, surveying the moon's terrain, landform and mineral composition, and measuring the neutron radiation and neutral atoms to study the environment.

President Trump approved 'Asia Reassurance Initiative Act'

On 31st December 2018, President of USA, Donald J. Trump turned the "Asia Reassurance Initiative Act (ARIA)" into a law by his signature. The newly made law has set up a multifaceted U.S. strategy to increase U.S. security, economic interests, and values in the Indo-Pacific region. ARIA is on purpose of authorizing \$1.5 billion over a five year period to upgrade economic, diplomatic and security cooperation with strategic regional allies. It is about U.S. relations with China, India, the ten member states of ASEAN, and Northeast Asian allies, Japan and South Korea.

Hindu religious site got national heritage status in Pakistan

In January 2018, the provincial Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government in northwest Pakistan has declared the ancient Hindu religious site of Panj Tirath in Peshawar as national heritage. Panj Tirath has five pools of water and it also contains a temple and a lawn with date palm trees. It has been listed under the ambit of Chacha Yunus Park and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chamber of Commerce and Industry. It is said to be Pandu's place who was a mythical king in the Mahabharata.

Justice Asif Saeed Khosa: The new chief justice of Pakistan

On January 18, 2019, Justice Asif Saeed Khan Khosa will take charge as Chief Justice of Pakistan as per the notification issued by Ministry of Law and Justice. President Arif Alvi has appointed him and he will serve the post till December 20, 2019. He will take place of incumbent CJP Justice Saqib Nisar. He had been a brilliant student throughout his student life and earned National Talent Scholarship. He was enrolled as an advocate of the Lahore High Court in 1979 and an advocate of the Supreme Court of Pakistan in 1985.

The US-Mexico border

In January 2019, US President Donald Trump has shown inclination over building a wall along the US-Mexico border. He has emphasized a steel barrier in place of concrete wall, to prevent entry of illegal immigrants in America. Moreover, the US President is seeking 5.6 billion US dollar in Congressional funding for the wall. The head of US Steel has invited a couple of steel companies to prepare plate or a design for the physical barrier along the US-Mexico border.

Resignation of Kevin Sweeney

In January 2019, Kevin Sweeney, the chief of staff of the US Department of Defence resigned from the post to work in private sector. Sweeney had retired as a Rear Admiral from the US Navy in year 2014 and was appointed on this post since January 2017. The move came a month later after departure of the Defence Secretary James Mattis who left in December 2018. Besides them, many other Pentagon officials are stepping down from their post on pretext of US pullout from Syria.

Golden Globe winners

The 76th Golden Globe Awards were announced in Beverly Hills on 6th January 2019. Among multiple winning films are Queen biopic "Bohemian Rhapsody" attracted two top prizes viz. best drama film and its actor Rami Malek won the best actor award. Civil rights dramedy "Green Book" won three prizes viz. Best Motion Picture, Musical or Comedy award, actor Mahershala Ali of "Green Book" won Best supporting actor and Nick Vallelonga, Brian Currie and Peter Farrelly won the Best screenplay award for "Green Book". Mexican filmmaker Alfonso Cuarón's "Roma" won Best director award and Best foreign language film award. Besides these, Glenn Close (The Wife) got Best Actress in Motion Picture-Drama; Christian Bale (Vice) got Best Actor in Motion Picture or Musical or Comedy; Regina King (If Beale Street Could Talk) received Best Actress in a Supporting role in Motion Picture; Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse got Best Motion Picture - Animated; Justin Hurwitz (First Man) got Best Original Score - Motion Picture;

Malaysia's king Sultan Muhammad V has left the throne

In January 2019, Malaysia's king Sultan Muhammad V has quit the throne. This is for the first time a king has abdicated in the Muslim-majority country since it gained independence from Britain in 1957. A royal official statement read, "The National Palace informs that his majesty has resigned as the 15th king effective January 6." He had ascended to the throne in December 2016. Malaysia is a constitutional monarchy, with an unique arrangement where the throne changes hands every five years among rulers of the nine Malaysian states ruled by centuries-old Islamic royalty.

Guatemala has quit UN-backed anti-corruption commission

In January 2019, Central American country, Guatemala announced withdrawal from anti-corruption commission. President Jimmy Morales charged International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala or CICIG of polarising the country and putting its security in jeopardy. It is worth knowing here that the CICIG was formed in year 2006 at the request of the Guatemalan government to fight high rates of impunity for crimes. The move has incurred criticism from human rights groups and constitutional lawyers.

Pranav R Mehta: The new chief of Global Solar Council, USA

In January 2019, the chairman of National Solar Energy Federation of India (NSEFI), Pranav R Mehta, has taken charge as the president of Global Solar Council (GSC). The appointee popularly known as the Solar Man of India. On 15th January, 2019 he will receive the 'Visionary Disruptor Award' by Solar Future during World Future Energy Summit in Abu Dhabi. It is worth knowing that India is the third largest solar market and placed among the top 5 solar players in the world.

Gita Gopinath joined IMF as Chief Economist

Indian origin Gita Gopinath became Chief Economist of International Monetary Fund (IMF) in January 2019. With this appointment, she has become the first woman to occupy the top IMF post. Gopinath has succeeded Maurice (Maury) Obstfeld as the eleventh chief economist of the IMF. 47 year old Gita is the John Zwaanstra professor of International Studies and Economics at Harvard University. She will let the IMF continue as a place that provides intellectual leadership on important policy questions and will emphasize on comprehension of role of dominant currencies like the dollar in international trade and finance via research.

The release of Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2018

In January 2019, UN office on drugs and crime (UNODC) released "Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2018" about the number of human trafficking victims worldwide. The armed groups and terrorists are trafficking women and children to generate funds and recruit. This report revealed that human trafficking is on the rise with sexual exploitation of victims which is largely prevalent in European countries, while in the Middle East, forced labour is the main factor driving the illicit trade. Presently, among 30% children being trafficked, there is greater number of girls in comparison to boys.

Nepal requested RBI to declare new Indian currency notes legal

In January 2019, Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB) wrote to the Reserve Bank of India, seek auction in the country. The former MD was with Sotheby's India for two years and had launched the inaugural Mumbai auction. Bhatia was among the big names that were called out in the #MeToo movement in the Indian art world along with the leading artists like Jatin Das, Riyas Komu and most recently Subodh Gupta.

Book “We Are Displaced” took place in bookstores

In January 2019, the youth icon of the world and the Nobel Prize winner, Malala Yousafzai launched her new book “We Are Displaced”. The book is about refugee girls across the globe. Malala who travelled worldwide as an international activist was not welcomed to the very place where she belonged to. ‘I am Malala: The Story of the Girl Who Stood Up for Education and was Shot by the Taliban’ (co-written with Christina Lamb) in 2013 and ‘Malala’s Magic Pencil’ in 2017 are her previous books.

EIU Democracy Index 2018

On January 10, 2019, the Economist Intelligence Unit released the 11th edition of EIU Democracy Index 2018 on democracies of 167 countries worldwide. Norway topped the charts and Iceland (2), Sweden (3), New Zealand (4) and Denmark (5) followed it to form the top five. While, the bottom 5 of the list are Chad (163), Central African Republic (164), Democratic Republic of Congo (165), Syria (166) and North Korea (167). India ranked at 41st position in the ‘Flawed Democracy’ category.

Su Tseng-chang became PM of Taiwan

On January 10, 2019, Su Tseng-chang got appointed as the Prime Minister of Taiwan. Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen made this appointment during a Cabinet reshuffle following the ruling Democratic Progressive Party's heavy losses in local elections. Su had played as former premier in 2006 under then-President Chen Shui-bian and has also been a chairman of Tsai’s Democratic Progressive Party for two terms. And after this appointment came widely-expected resignation of William Lai, the second premier to quit since Tsai took office in 2016.

Nicolás Maduro became Venezuelan President for the second term

On 10th January 2019, Nicolás Maduro took oath as the President of Venezuela for a second term in Capital of Venezuela, Caracas amid the international criticism that his re-election was illegitimate. Around 13 nations have refused to recognise Maduro's presidency. Paraguayan President Mario Abdo tweeted to cut diplomatic ties with Venezuela. The Organization of American States condemned his second term as "illegitimate." Despite of opposition, the 56 year old socialist leader Maduro is all set for his new term.

India will be world's third largest consumer market

In January 2019, World Economic Forum tabled a report 'Future of Consumption in Fast-Growth Consumer Market - India' declaring India as the world's third largest consumer market after US and China by 2030. Consumer spending in India is expected to enlarge from 1.5 trillion US dollar at present to 6 trillion US dollar by 2030. Presently, India is the world's sixth largest economy with the annual GDP growth rate of 7.5 %. The growth of the middle class will lift approximately 25 million households out of poverty.

Use sun's energy for renewable fuels: A new breakthrough

In a recent study from the US Department of Energy's (DOE) Argonne National Laboratory, scientists discovered adaptation of natural membrane to generate hydrogen fuel from water. Researchers employed chemical reaction pathway of Photosystem I which is central to plant biology for the new process that converts water into hydrogen fuel, utilizing energy from the sun. The details are available in paper based on the research, called 'Z-scheme solar water splitting via self-assembly of photosystem I-catalyst hybrids in thylakoid membranes.'

Ending of violence via comic book

In January 2019, 17-year-old Rizka Raisa Fatimah Ramli from Makassar, Indonesia, created a comic book character at Uniting Nations' worldwide comic contest to end violence in schools. Her efforts were acknowledged with UNICEF award. Her comic character 'Cipta' is a make-believe superhero who gives children a sketchbook to draw objects that in turn come to life and stop violence and bullying. It helps in keeping children and young people safe and away from violence in and around schools.

India-Central Asia Dialogue

On January 13, 2019 India and the five Central Asia nations viz. Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan showed their support for the inclusive peace process in Afghanistan during the first ever India-Central Asia Dialogue. India indicated its support for an inclusive Afghan-led, Afghan-owned and Afghan-controlled peace and reconciliation process. The Ministers welcomed the participation of Afghanistan as a significant land link in the regional cooperation and pledged to help in economic reconstruction of Afghanistan via implementation of joint infrastructure, transit and transport, energy projects including regional cooperation and investment projects.

PM Narendra Modi became the first-ever Philip Kotler Presidential awardee

On January 14, 2019, the Prime Minister Narendra Modi was felicitated with the first-ever Philip Kotler Presidential award in New Delhi for making India a Centre for Innovation, a global hub for professional services like Information Technology, Accounting and Finance, starting Make in India initiative, Startup India, Digital India, Swachh Bharat, UIN (Aadhaar) for social benefits and financial inclusion that transformed India as a iconic country. This award has been instituted in memory of contribution done by Philip Kotler, who is an American marketing author, consultant, and professor. And it is focussed on triple P's of the Nation i.e. People, Profit and Planet.

Global Aviation Summit 2019

On January 15, 2019, a two day Global Aviation Summit 2019 started on 'Flying for all- especially the next 6 Billion' theme in Mumbai. The Union Minister of Civil Aviation, Suresh Prabhu inaugurated the Summit for devising solutions of aviation sector problems. In the event, experts and CEOs from Global Aviation Fraternity discussed the latest trends, futuristic aircraft and cutting-edge technologies. In context to India, Maharashtra is planning to make New Mumbai's airport functional, which has the capacity to add 1 percent to the GDP and addition of around 1,000 aircrafts over the next 7-8 years is expected across the country.

Appearance of Iranian bank now in Mumbai

In January 2019, India has allowed an Iranian Pasargad bank to open a branch in Mumbai. Parallel to this, India's UCO Bank will open a branch in Iran. With this, the two banks will facilitate transactions regarding operation of berths at Iran's Chabahar Port that India is developing. India will be able to carry out trade on easier terms with Iran in the wake of US sanctions. According to Union minister Nitin Gadkari, the move seems to circumvent US trade and investment sanctions as India builds a strategic port in the West Asian country.

JLL released the sixth City Momentum Index

On January 15, 2019, property consultant JLL has put out a report titled 'JLL City Momentum: The World's Top 20 Most Dynamic Cities'. Bengaluru topped the list for its robust technology and innovation ecosystem, followed by Hyderabad (2nd), Hanoi (3rd), Delhi (4th), Pune (5th), Nairobi (6th), Chennai (7th), Ho Chi Minh City (8th), Xi'an (9th) and Guangzhou (10th). 19 of the top 20 cities were from Asia Pacific region. And credit of India's success goes to the implementation of reforms like RERA and GST in context to infrastructure and ease of doing business in the real estate sector.

Satyarup Siddhanta : world's youngest mountaineer to climb 7 peaks, 7 volcano summits

On 17th January 2019, Indian Mountaineer Satyarup Siddhanta at the age of 35 years and 262 days climbed Antarctica's highest point, Mount Sidley at a temperature of minus 40-degree Celsius. With this, he became the first Indian and the youngest man to climb the seven highest peaks and volcanic summits across all continents. Satyarup is a software engineer by profession and belongs to Haridevpur in South Kolkata. Before him, Australia's Daniel Bull performed this feat at the age of 36 years 157 days.

The US launched Ten Iridium communications satellites

In January 2019, American aerospace manufacturer and space transportation services company, SpaceX's Falcon 9 rocket delivered 10 satellites to low-Earth orbit from Vandenberg Air Force Base from California arched over the Pacific west of Los Angeles. The Iridium Communications

satellites are meant to replace the original fleet with a new generation of mobile communication technology and added global aircraft tracking capability. With this, Iridium will have a total of 75 new satellites in orbit, including nine spares.

Indian origin Dr. Rattan Lal got 2019 Japan Prize

On January 16, 2019, the Japan Prize Foundation conferred the 2019 Japan Prize upon India born professor Dr. Rattan Lal in “Biological Production, Ecology” category. Besides him, Dr. Yoshio Okamoto also became the 2019 Japan Prize recipient in “Materials and Production” field. Both of them got entitled for a certificate of recognition, a commemorative gold medal and a cash worth 50 million Japanese yen (approximately \$450,000 USD). The 2020 Japan Prize will be given in fields of “Electronics, Information and Communication” and “Life Science”.

14th Global Risks Report is out!

On January 16, 2019, the World Economic Forum released its annual Global Risk Report 2019, edition. Based on the annual Global Risks Perception Survey, the risks in the report has been divided in 2 parts viz. Top 10 Risks by Likelihood and Top 10 Risks by Impact which further shoots out Economic, Environmental, Geopolitical, Societal and Technological categories. The report identifies environmental threats, failure of climate-change mitigation and adaptation, cyber-attacks, data fraud and water crisis as there has been a significant decline in the available quality and quantity of freshwater that has led to harmful effects on human health.

Stefan Lofven has again become the PM of Sweden

In January 2019, Sweden chose Stefan Lofven as its Prime Minister for a second term. 61 years old Swedish Social Democratic Party’s leader Stefan Lofven has succeeded in his second attempt to form government with 153 votes while 115 votes against him. He formed the government in coalition with the Green Party and in budget cooperation with Center Party and the Liberals. In September 2018, Sweden held Legislative Elections in which no main parliamentary bloc succeeded in winning majority.

Death of world's oldest man

On 20th January 2019, the world's oldest man, Masazo Nonaka of Japan passed away at the age of 113 years in the north of Japan's Hokkaido island. The deceased received the official recognition of being the oldest male in the world by Guinness World Records in April 2018. He was born in year 1905 in the town of Ashoro just months before Albert Einstein published his special theory of relativity. Before him, Jiroemon Kimura of Japan, died soon after completing 116th birthday in June 2013. And the oldest verified person was Jeanne Louise Calment of France who died in 1997 at the age of 122.

Andry Rajoelina : The New President of Madagascar

On January 19, 2019, Andry Rajoelina became President of Madagascar. His oath ceremony was administered by nine judges of the High Constitutional Court in Antananarivo. He has succeeded Hery Rajaonarimampianina. Soon after taking oath as the President, he held a bilateral meeting with President Akufo-Addo of Ghana to deepen the relations between the two countries. He wishes to double the electricity production and sell it at low price to his people and to build industries in all the six provinces to equalize the development in all corners of Madagascar.

The First Sheikh Saud International Prize for Materials

On January 18, 2019, the Centre for Advanced Materials of the United Arab Emirates announced eminent Indian scientist, Chintamani Nagesa Ramachandra Rao, popularly known as CNR Rao as winner of the first Sheikh Saud International Prize for Materials. The awardee is the professor of Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR), Bengaluru, who has worked mainly in solid-state and structural chemistry including transition metal oxides and other extended inorganic solids, metal-insulator transitions, nano-materials including nanotubes and graphene, artificial photosynthesis and hydrogen generation by photocatalysis and thermal means. He is proud recipient of Bharat Ratna (2014), Padma Shri (1974), Padma Vibhushan (1985) and Karnataka Ratna (2001), among other honours.

Rio de Janeiro: The First World Capital of Architecture for 2020

In January 2019, Brazilian city of Rio de Janeiro has been named as the first World Capital of Architecture for 2020 by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Rio defeated Paris and Melbourne to win this title. Under this programme of UNESCO and the International Union of Architects (UIA) which was launched in November 2018, Rio de Janeiro will illustrate the key role of architecture and culture in sustainable urban development via various activities. The programme is about raising international forum for debates about pressing global challenges from the perspectives of culture, cultural heritage, urban planning and architecture.

China seems to have a serious row with McDonald

In January 2019, China accused McDonald of supporting independence for Taiwan via its latest advertisement for a breakfast sandwich that features a two-second glimpse of a woman's identity card that lists her nationality as "Taiwan". It considers this advertisement as violation of Chinese law as Beijing claims Taiwan as part of its territory and the advertisement boosts Taiwan's urge for self-ruled island. In this context some Chinese nationalist are of opinion that McDonald whose mainland franchises are owned by a group that includes the Chinese Cabinet's investment arm, should be expelled from China.

The global talent competitiveness index is out

In January 2019, a business school in partnership with Tata Communications and Adecco Group released the 6th edition of Global Talent Competitive Index (GTCI) 2019. Switzerland topped the index followed by Singapore, the US, Norway and Denmark on second, third, fourth and fifth positions respectively. India received 80th rank on this index, while China emerged as the best performer among the BRICS countries. The index compared potential of 125 countries in context to attracting and retaining talents across all groups of income and levels of development.

On 24th January 2019, UN celebrates first International Day of Education

On 3rd December 2018, United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution with full consensus declaring 24th January as the 'International Day of Education.' The objective to celebrate this day is to promote education as a critical aspect of sustainable development. The UN resolution also mentioned every member states, organisations of the UN system, and civil society, non-governmental organisations, academic institutions, the private sector, individuals and other relevant stakeholders to observe the International Day of Education.

Kristin Scott Thomas: New President of France's Cesar Awards

In January 2019, Kristin Scott Thomas has been appointed as the President of the French Academy's most prestigious ceremony, Cesar Awards. As a President, she will be opening the ceremony, that is set to take place in Paris on 22nd February. Nomination for this year's award revealed on 23rd January 2019. The President herself is a three-time Cesar nominee for her roles in "I've Loved You So Long," "Leaving," and "Sarah's Key."

Israel successfully tests Arrow 3 missile system

On 22nd January 2019, Israel has successfully tested the Arrow 3 missile system from Central Israel. It is done in the collaboration with American Missile Defense Agency. Arrow 3 is considered to be the next step in the defence system, which would help the Israel Military Force to attack their enemies from a greater distance and greater height. It is a long range anti-ballistic missile. The system launched toward the target and successfully completed its mission. It is intended to serve as Israel's highest-altitude missile interception system.

Indian expats from the UAE got prestigious Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award

Three Indian expats from the UAE are amongst those who won the prestigious Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award, the highest honour conferred on Indian diaspora. President Ram Nath Kovind presented the award to Girish Pant, Surender Singh Kandhari and Dr. Zulekha Daud. Girish Pant is a social worker who has been instrumental in rescuing several Indian sailors stranded in UAE

waters. Surender Singh Kandhari is the Chairman of the Gurdwara Guru Nanak Darbar Sikh Temple, is a philanthropist, businessman and a long-term Dubai resident. Dr. Zulekha, the founder and Chairperson of Zulekha Healthcare Group, is the first female practising doctor in the country.

Dabire: New Prime Minister of Burkina Fas

On 23rd January 2019, Christophe Joseph Marie Dabire has been appointed as the new Prime Minister of Burkina Faso. He replaced former Prime Minister Paul Kaba Thiéba. Christophe Joseph is a politician and an economist. He takes the reins of government at the time when Burkina Faso is economic and security challenges. He worked as Commissioner for 10 years at the West African economic and Monetary Union. He was a member of the National assembly from 1997 to 2007 under the former ruling partner. He also served as Ministers under former President Blaise Compaore between 1994 and 1996.

India inked MoU with Sri Lanka to modernize facilities in SVIAS

In January 2019, India and Sri Lanka inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that would provide modern infrastructural facilities to Swami Vipulananda Institute of Aesthetic Studies of Eastern University in Batticaloa district of Sri Lanka. The MoU was inked by High Commissioner of India to Sri Lanka Taranjit Singh Sandhu, and Secretary, Minister of City Planning, Water Supply and Higher Education of Sri Lanka, M.M.P.K. Mayadunne. Indian government sanctioned a total amount of 275 million Sri Lankan Rupees as a support to modernise facilities in the institute.

World's longest 3D printed bridge in China

On 22nd January 2019, world's longest 3D printed concrete bridge was opened in China. It is situated on the Wenzaobang River in Shanghai. The Bridge was designed by Professor Xy Weiguo from Tsinghua University in China. The bridge is of 26.3 metre-long and 3.6-metre-wide and is made out of 44 hollowed-out 3D printed concrete blocks. The concrete units for the bridge were printed by two robotic arms, which took about 19 days time. The bridge is inspired by another ancient Chinese bridge called Anji.

China made clones of gene-edited monkeys for research

In January 2019, the researchers of Institute of Neuroscience of Chinese Academy of Sciences in Shanghai have cloned five monkeys for human disease research. The research team will induce several human diseases like Alzheimer in the cloned monkeys. The cloned monkeys share close resemblance with the human beings in physiology, and comprise better models for research on

disease pathogenesis and potential therapeutic treatments. Prior to this, a Chinese journal, confirmed birth of world's first gene-edited human babies that were born in China, which created widespread disquiet in the scientific community.

Demise of Diana Athill & Russell Baker

Editor of VS Naipaul's books, Diana Athill and renowned Columnist of The New York Times, Russell Baker passed away in January 2019. 101 year old Diana Athill had edited 18 books of Nobel laureate VS Naipaul and later penned books on 'growing old'. She had worked in BBC's World Service during World War II and helped Andre Deutsch in establishment of the publishing house Allan Wingate in 1946, before becoming the founding director of the publishing company Andre Deutsch in 1952. Russell Baker had won the prestigious Pulitzer Prize in 1979 for the "Observer," the Times column and was honored in 1983 for his autobiography "Growing Up".

Sultan Abdullah Sultan Ahmad Shah: The new Malaysian king

In January 2019, 59-year-old Sultan Abdullah Sultan Ahmad Shah got chosen as Malaysia's new king taking place of Sultan Muhammad V, who stepped down recently, making it the first abdication in Malaysia's history. The erstwhile ruler of the Malaysia's central Pahang, is now the new king chosen for a five year term under a system of rotational monarchy that is unique to Malaysia. He will take oath as the nation's 16th Yang di-Pertuan Agong, or head of state, in a ceremony on January 31, 2019.

Data Privacy Day

On January 28, 2019, Data Privacy Day was celebrated across the globe. The Council of Europe had instituted this day to commemorate the opening of the Council of Europe's data protection convention, known as "Convention 108" for signature. It is worth knowing that the data protection convention is the only international treaty in this field that is being updated to ensure that its data protection principles align with today's needs. Inside Europe the day is celebrated as Data Protection Day, while outside Europe it is called Data Privacy Day.

Brexit amendment on Irish border arrangement

In January 2019, UK Parliament gave nod to Brexit amendment on replacing the Irish border arrangement known as the Irish backstop. The Irish Border arrangement was made to keep an open border between European Union-member Ireland and British-ruled Northern Ireland after Brexit but now the British lawmakers voted in favour of an amendment in BREXIT plan seeking alternative arrangements for the same. In opinion of the lawmakers, although open border avoided checks on the land border in Ireland, yet it created a "de facto Irish Sea border" i.e. a line

which does not constitute a legally recognized international boundary and anything that separates Northern Ireland from the rest of the UK could threaten the integrity of the Union. Prime Minister Theresa May will now renegotiate the Brexit treaty with European Union for "alternative arrangements" to avoid the reintroduction of border checks in Ireland.

India : World's second largest steel producer

According to the latest report of World Steel Association, India has replaced Japan as the world's second-largest steel producing country, after China, which is the largest producer of crude steel. In 2018, India registered crude steel production of 106.5 MT, which is up by 4.9 % from 101.5 MT in 2017 where as Japan produced 104.3 MT in 2018, which is down by 0.3% as compared to last year. China's crude steel output jumped by 6.6% to 928.3 MT this year from 870.9 MT of last year. With this, China's share also increased from 50.3% in 2017 to 51.3% in 2018.

Currency 'Aber' of UAE & Saudi Arabian central banks

In January 2019, UAE and Saudi Arabian central banks introduced a common digital currency called 'Aber' which is meant to be used in financial settlements between the two nations through Blockchains and Distributed Ledgers technologies. The move is on purpose of conducting a study on the practical application of modern technologies and determining their impact on the reduction of remittance costs and assessment of technical risks and how to deal with them. Currently, the use of this currency will be restricted to a limited number of banks in each state.

The Africa Centre for Climate and Sustainable Development

On 29th January 2019, Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte along with UN representative inaugurated Africa Centre for Climate and Sustainable development near Food and Agriculture Organization headquarters in Rome. The centre will implement the goals of the UN's 2030 Agenda and the landmark 2015 Paris Climate Agreement to stop dependency on fossil fuels and cap global warming in the continent. Recently a meeting of G7 countries was held to devise solutions for environmental degradation and promotion of Africa's sustainable economic growth.



The plan of 2019 ATP World Tour tennis tournament

The Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) has begun the global elite men's professional tennis tournament which is popular with name of the 2019 ATP World Tour from 31st December 2018 that will continue till 24th November 2019. The tour will feature 63 tournaments in 31 nations across six continents, in addition to the four Grand Slams for the 2019 tennis season. The tour will witness nine leading ATP World Tour Masters 1000 tournaments, 13 ATP World Tour 500 events, and 39 ATP World Tour 250 tournaments and many more.

Mary Kom: 'World No 1' Boxer

In the latest rankings of International Boxing Association (AIBA) in January 2019, Chungneijang Mary Kom Hmangte, the most celebrated Indian Olympic boxer from Manipur and the only woman who became World Amateur Boxing champion for a record six times, and the only woman boxer to have won a medal in each one of the seven world championships has topped in the 45-48 kg category weight division with 1700 points. The current Rajya Sabha member had been felicitated with Arjuna Award (2003), Padma Shri (2006), Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna (2009), Padma Bhushan (2013), and many more in past.

Abhinav Shaw : The youngest gold medallist in shooting

On 13th January 2019, ten year old Abhinav Shaw became the youngest gold medallist in shooting at the Khelo India Youth Games in Pune. The champion teamed up with Mehuli Ghosh to help West Bengal win the 10m air rifle mixed team event. While, Delhi's Devanshi Rana won gold in Under-21 girls 25m pistol event. Maharashtra once again dominated the gymnastics arena at the Games with 18 medals comprising nine gold, six silver and three bronze in gymnastics and Maharashtra were also crowned as champions.

Pakistan skipper Sarfaraz Ahmed scripted a new record

On January 13, 2019, Pakistani skipper Sarfaraz Ahmed built a world record to become the wicket-keeper captain with the most number of catches in a match. In the third test at the Wanderers Stadium in Johannesburg against South Africa, Ahmed took five catches in the first innings and repeated the feat in the second innings to surpass Australia's Adam Gilchrist's and India's MS Dhoni's highest 8 catches in a single match. In this way Sarfaraz is said to have scripted a unique world record.

Ivo Karlovic made record in Australian Open

On 15th January 2019, Croatian professional tennis player Karlovic, who will turn 40 next month, defeated Poland's Hubert Hurkacz by 6-7, 7-6, 7-6, 7-6 to become the oldest winner of a men's singles match at Australian Open, the year's opening Grand Slam tournament since Australian icon Ken Rosewall reached the third round of the 1978 tournament at the age of 44. With this win, Karlovic also became the oldest winner at any Grand Slam event since 40-year-old Jimmy Connors reached the second round of the US Open in 1992.

Bengaluru Raptors scripted Premier Badminton League title

In January 2019, Bengaluru Raptors have won their first ever Premier Badminton League title defeating Mumbai Rockets by 4-3. Star player Kidambi Srikanth had outshone World No. 18 Anders Antonsen by a superb 15-7, 15-10. World No. 59 Vu Thi Trang played against Mumbai's 202nd ranked Shreyanshi Pardeshi and defeated her by 15-8, 15-9. The Men's Doubles pair of Mohammad Ahsan and Hendra Setiawan outshone Mumbai's Lee Yong Dae and Kim GI Jung steering Bengaluru to victory.

Laureus World Comeback of Year Award nomination

In January 2019, Ace Indian female wrestler Vinesh Phogat became the first Indian athlete to get nominated for the prestigious Laureus World Comeback of the Year Award. The 24-year-old Vinesh from Haryana made a sensational comeback after battling a long injury lay-off to coin a gold medal at the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games and Jakarta Asian Games. She has got nominated alongside US Tour Championship winner Tiger Woods (golfer), who won his first tournament in five years. The awards will be presented in Monaco, France on the 18th of February 2019.

Andy Murray announced retirement from tennis

In January 2019, British tennis player and former World No. 1, Andy Murray announced retirement from the game after this year's Wimbledon on account of his right hip injury. He claimed victory in the Mubadala World Tennis Championship final in Abu Dhabi. Murray had won three Grand Slam titles viz. Wimbledon in 2013 and 2016 and the US Open in 2012 as well as two Olympic gold medals in singles in 2012 and 2016, 45 ATP crowns, and had steered Britain to their first Davis Cup victory. He became the first singles player from the UK officially to be world No. 1 when he topped the November 2016 rankings.

India's historic ODI series win

On 18th January 2019, India registered a historic win in the decisive third match against Australia in Melbourne. Dhoni's unbeaten 87 and Kedar Jadhav's 61, guided India to a spectacular win. And their unbeaten 121-run stand for the fourth wicket made India overhaul the tricky 231-run

target on a slow wicket with four balls to spare. India ended the show with 234 runs. Earlier, put into bat, Australia posted 230 runs. Peter Handscomb was the top scorer with 58 runs. Leg spinner Yuzvendra Chahal stole the Australian show took six wickets. Dhoni was adjudged as Man of the Series and Chahal became Man of the Match.

Tata Steel Chess tournament

In January 2019, Five-time world champion Viswanathan Anand scored a crushing win over world number three, Shakhriyar Mamedyarov of Azerbaijan in the 8th round to share the lead with Norway's Magnus Carlsen in the Tata Steel Chess tournament in Wijk Aan Zee, the Netherlands. Before this, Anand outclassed Vladimir Kramnik of Russia as black in the previous round. With this, Viswanathan Anand's tally reached to 5.5 points out of a possible 8 and is matched only by reigning world champion Carlsen who himself played a fine game to beat Richard Rapport of Hungary.

India scripted history

In January 2019, India won its first ever series on Australian soil defeating the home team by 2-1 after the fourth and final Test ended in a draw due to unpleasant weather. India posted 622 for 7 in its first innings and then bowled out Australia for 300 thereby enforcing the follow-on. Australia was still trailing by 316 runs when the match was called off. Virat Kohli became the first Indian as well as the first Asian captain to win a Test series in Australia. India ended the series retaining their world's number one test team status.

Novak Djokovic scripted a new record

On 27th January 2019, Serbia's star tennis player, Novak Djokovic won the seventh Australian Open title of his career by defeating Spain's Rafael Nadal by 6-3, 6-2, 6-3 at Melbourne Park. With this, he has surpassed Swiss Roger Federer and Australian Roy Emmerson, who won the tournament six times. With this feat he also prevented Nadal from becoming the first man in the Open era that began in 1968 to win each Grand Slam at least twice. Djokovic had earlier claimed the streak of four consecutive slams - Wimbledon 2015 to French Open 2016; and three - Wimbledon 2011 to Australian Open 2012.

Jason Holder topped ICC rankings

In January 2019, Jason Holder became the first West Indies all-rounder to top ICC rankings after Garfield Sobers who was former cricketer who played for the West Indies between 1954 and 1974, and is widely considered to be cricket's greatest all-rounder who topped the rankings in 1974. Jason Holder got adjudged as the world's leading all-rounder after his superb display against England in Barbados. The West Indies captain Holder struck a commanding 202 not out as well as took two useful first-innings wickets on Kensington Oval ground in Bridgetown, Barbados to help his side complete a crushing 381-run win over England in the first Test.

Stosur & Zhang won women's doubles title

In January 2019, Australia's Samantha Stosur and China's Zhang Shuai won women's doubles title in Australian Open 2019. They defeated the reigning French Open and Wimbledon champions, France's Kristina Mladenovic and Hungary's Tímea Babos by 6-3, 6-4 at Melbourne Park. The victory fetched them their maiden Slam crown as a team, although Stosur had earlier won the 2005 US Open and 2006 French Open in a partnership with Lisa Raymond that earned them 20 titles altogether.

South African all-rounder Johan Botha announced retirement

In January 2019, South African all-rounder cricketer Johan Botha announced retirement from all forms of cricket. The 36-year-old played 5 test matches, 78 one-day internationals and 40 T20 Internationals from 2005 to 2012 for South Africa. He is an all-rounder right-hand batsman and right-arm off-spin bowler. He met greater success in the limited-overs formats while representing his country at the 2009 World Twenty20, 2009 Champions Trophy, 2010 World Twenty20, 2011 World Cup and the 2012 World Twenty20.

Tata Steel Masters Chess Tournament

In January 2019, Magnus Carlsen won the title of Tata Steel Masters Chess for the seventh time with 9 points after setting for a draw against Russian born Dutch Grandmaster, Anish Giri at Wijk aan Zee in Netherlands. Anish Giri was spotted at second place with 8.5 points. Viswanathan Anand grabbed the third spot in the tournament with 7.5 points with 3 victories, one loss and nine draws. With this, he presently holds 6th position in world chess rankings. The young Indian Grandmaster R Praggnan got 11th rank when he settled for a draw with Dinara Saduakassova of Kazakhstan.

Winners of Indonesia Masters

In January 2019, India's top Badminton player, Saina Nehwal won the Indonesia Masters women's singles title following Spain's Carolina Marin's pullout from the game. With this, she has also become the first Indian women's player to win the Indonesia Masters title. Danish player Anders Antonsen of Denmark won his first Indonesia Masters title by defeating Japanese top-seeded Kento Momota in men's single final in Jakarta, Indonesia. This was the first time that Antonsen played in BWF World Tour Super 500 tournament. The World number 1 doubles pair from Indonesia, Marcus Fernaldi Gideon and Kevin Sanjaya Sukamuljo clinched the Indonesia Masters 2019 Title after defeating fellow Indonesian duo Muhammad Ahsan and Hendra Setiawan by 21-17 and 21-11. Ayaka Takahashi and Misaki Matsutomo of Japan scripted the Women's Double against Kim So Yeong and Kong Hee Yong of South Korea by 21-19, 21-15. The Chinese mixed doubles pair of Zheng Siwei and Huang Yaqiong won the final game against the Indonesian opponents Tontowi Ahmad and Lilyana Natsir by 19-21, 21-19 and 21-16.

CURRENT AFFAIRS

- In January 2018, Su Tseng-chang has been appointed as the Prime Minister of which country?

(a) Tajikistan (b) Thailand (c) Sweden
(d) Togo (e) Taiwan
- In January 2019, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated the National Museum of Indian Cinema (NMIC) in _____.

(a) Noida (b) Hyderabad (c) Bengaluru
(d) Mumbai (e) Chennai
- In January 2019, which country has launched satellite for world's first Artificial Meteor Shower?

(a) Japan (b) China (c) Canada
(d) India (e) United States
- In January 2019, who has been honored with the prestigious Rosa Park Trailblazer award?

(a) Gurinder Singh Khalsa (b) Jagmeet Singh (c) Harjit Sajjan
(d) Kanwaljit Singh Bakshi (e) None of above
- In January 2019, Stefan Lofven has been re-elected as the Prime Minister of which country?

(a) Algeria (b) Spain (c) Singapore
(d) Sweden (e) Romania
- In January 2019, who has been selected for the first Sheikh Saud International Prize for Materials Research?

(a) C.N.R. Rao (b) Animesh Chakravorty
(c) Gautam Radhakrishna Desiraju (d) Debashis Mukherjee (e) None of above

7. In January 2019, BJP's Lok Sabha Member from Hamirpur in _____, Anurag Thakur has been honored with the Sansad Ratna Award.
(a) Andhra Pradesh (b) Arunachal Pradesh (c) Assam
(d) Himachal Pradesh (e) Manipur
8. In January 2019, Aparna Kumar, 2002 batch IPS officer of _____, has become the first officer to successfully complete the South Pole expedition.
(a) Madhya Pradesh (b) Uttar Pradesh (c) Gujarat
(d) Rajasthan (e) Jharkhand
9. In January 2019, UNESCO named which city as World Capital of Architecture for 2020?
(a) Manaus (b) Salvador (c) Rio de Janeiro
(d) Curitiba (e) Belem
10. Which country topped the Global Trust Index 2019?
(a) Switzerland (b) Germany (c) Canada
(d) Japan (e) China
11. In January 2019, the Africa Centre for Climate and Sustainable Development has recently launched in which country?
(a) Italy (b) Germany (c) Nigeria
(d) Congo (e) South Africa
12. In January 2019, who has been appointed as the new member of Union Public Service Commission (UPSC)?
(a) Akash Ahluwalia (b) Surabhi Singh (c) S. Rudramoorthy
(d) Rajiv Nayan Choubey (e) None of above
13. In January 2019, which international organization has officially launched the International Year of the Periodic Table of Chemical Elements (IYPT-2019)?
(a) UNIDO (b) FAO (c) UNESCO
(d) ITU (e) None of above
14. In January 2019, who has been appointed as the Director General of National Cadet Corps (NCC)?
(a) M.S. Pawar (b) Ajit Kumar (c) Karambir Singh
(d) G. Ashok Kumar (e) Rajeev Chopra

15. Which country's football team has won Asian Cup Title 2019?
(a) Japan (b) Thailand (c) South Korea
(d) Singapore (e) Qatar
16. Who has become first Indian golfer to grab Australian Ladies PGA Tour (LPGA)?
(a) Vani Kapoor (b) Aditi Ashok (c) Kishi Sinha
(d) Gauri Monga (e) Sharmila Nicollet
17. In January 2019, the Human Space Flight Centre (HSFC) was inaugurated in _____.
(a) Chennai (b) Mumbai (c) Bengaluru
(d) New Delhi (e) Hyderabad
18. In February 2019, Juan Guaido has been appointed as the interim President of which country?
(a) Yemen (b) Vietnam (c) Tunisia
(d) Rwanda (e) Venezuela
19. In February 2019, who has been appointed as the new Director of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)?
(a) Vinod Kumar Chaubey (b) Rishi Kumar Shukla (c) Ashok Kamte
(d) Ajit Kumar Doval (e) Hemant Karkare
20. In February 2019, B.S. Mubarak has been appointed as the Ambassador of India to the _____.
(a) Republic of Honduras (b) Republic of Colombia (c) Republic of China
(d) Republic of Congo (e) Republic of Ireland

• ANSWERS •

- 1.(e)** In January 2018, Su Tseng-chang has been appointed as the Prime Minister of Taiwan. Su is a former premier appointed in 2006 by then-President Chen Shui-bian and was Chairman of Tsai's Democratic Progressive Party for two terms.
- 2.(d)** In January 2019, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated the National Museum of Indian Cinema (NMIC) in Mumbai. The museum has been built at a cost of Rs. 140 crore. The museum will portray century old journey of Indian cinema in a story telling mode.
- 3.(a)** Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency has launched Tokyo-based startup Star-ALE's mini-satellite aimed to deliver the world's first artificial meteor shower.
- 4.(a)** In January 2019, an Indian-American philanthropist and entrepreneur, Gurinder Singh Khalsa has been honored with the prestigious Rosa Park Trailblazer award. He received award for his campaign that forced US authorities change their policy towards headgear of the Sikh community. In 2007, Khalsa was refused access to board an airplane because of his turban.
- 5.(d)** In January 2019, Stefan Lofven has been re-elected as the Prime Minister of Sweden. He has won 153 votes while his opposition has won 115 votes. Government is formed in coalition with the Green Party and in budget cooperation with Center Party and the Liberals.
- 6.(a)** In January 2019, Eminent Scientist and Bharat Ratna recipient C.N.R. Rao has been selected for the first Sheikh Saud International Prize for Materials Research. He will be awarded on 25th February 2019. The Award containing a plaque, a medal and a Cash Prize of USD 100,000
- 7.(d)** In January 2019, BJP's Lok Sabha Member from Hamirpur in Himachal Pradesh, Anurag Thakur has been honored with the Sansad Ratna Award for his performance as a parliamentarian. The award was presented to Thakur by the Tamil Nadu Governor Banwarilal Purohit in Chennai.
- 8.(b)** In January 2019, Aparna Kumar, 2002 batch IPS officer of Uttar Pradesh, has become the first officer to successfully complete the South Pole expedition. She has successfully

reached the South Pole after covering 111 kilometres of walking on the snow. She has already scaled the top six mountain peaks of the six continents of the globe.

- 9.(c)** The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has named the Brazilian city of Rio de Janeiro as the World Capital of Architecture for 2020. The announcement was made by UNESCO's Assistant Director-General for Culture Ernesto Ottone R, Thomas Vonier, President of the International Union of Architects (UIA). Rio de Janeiro becomes the first city to receive the title under a program launched by UNESCO.
- 10.(e)** China topped the Global Trust Index among both the informed public and the general population segments, with scores of 79 and 88 respectively. India was at the second place in the informed public category and third place in the general population category.
- 11.(a)** In January 2019, Prime Minister of Italy, Giuseppe Conte has launched the new 'Africa Centre for Climate and Sustainable Development' in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and FAO to fight climate change and boost sustainable development in Africa. The centre will provide a fast-track, demand driven mechanism for African countries.
- 12.(d)** In January 2019, Rajiv Nayan Choubey has been appointed as the new member of Union Public Service Commission (UPSC). UPSC can have a maximum of 10 members excluding the Chairman.
- 13.(c)** In January 2019, UNESCO has officially launched the International Year of the Periodic Table of Chemical Elements (IYPT-2019) at its headquarters in Paris to raise awareness of chemistry and its applications for sustainable development. The year 2019 also marks the 150th anniversary of its creation by Russian scientist Dmitri Ivanovich Mendeleev.
- 14.(e)** In January 2019, LT Gen Rajeev Chopra has been appointed as the Director General of National Cadet Corps (NCC). He has commanded an infantry battalion in Operation Rhino (Assam). He has commanded a Brigade in Eastern Command and was Inspector General of HQ IGAR (South) in the insurgency-torn state of Manipur.
- 15.(e)** Qatar's football team has won the Asian Cup Title 2019. In the final, they defeated four-time champions Japan by 3-1 goals. Qatar's forward player Almoez Ali broke the record of most goals in a single Asian Cup after netting his ninth goal with an overhead kick, breaking Ali Daei's 1996 record.

- 16.(a)** Vani Kapoor has become the first Indian golfer to grab Australian Ladies PGA Tour (LPGA) after securing 12th rank tied with three others in the first ever qualifying tournament at the Ballarat Golf Club in Australia. Total 81 players participated in the qualifying tournament out of which top-20 earned the card for LPGA.
- 17.(c)** In January 2019, the Human Space Flight Centre (HSFC) which would be the core of ISRO's future manned missions was inaugurated at the ISRO headquarters in Bengaluru. The centre will implement the first development flight of Gaganyaan with the support of existing ISRO Centres.
- 18.(e)** In February 2019, Juan Guaido has been appointed as the interim President of Venezuela. European Parliament appointed Juan Guaido as the interim President, highlighting the international crisis and the pressure of public against President Nicolas Maduro.
- 19.(b)** In February 2019, IPS officer Rishi Kumar Shukla has been appointed as the new Director of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). He is a Madhya Pradesh cadre IPS officer from 1983 batch. The post was vacant since January 10 when the selection panel had removed Alok Verma from the post of CBI director.
- 20.(a)** In February 2019, IPS officer of 2001, B.S. Mubarak has been appointed as the Ambassador of India to the Republic of Honduras. Currently, he is the Ambassador of India to the Republic of Guatemala.