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National

100% Houses in 25 States Electrified Under Saubhagya Yojana

- i. The country achieved yet another milestone in the power sector with the completion of **electrification in 100% households in 25 states** at year end. Now, only about 10.48 lakh households are left to be electrified in 4 states - **Assam, Rajasthan, Meghalaya and Chhattisgarh**.
- ii. These states are also taking all concerted efforts to achieve, at the earliest, saturation of household electrification.

Important Takeways from above news-

- The central government launched '**Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana**' (Saubhagya) in September 2017 to achieve the goal of universal household electrification in the country by 31 March, 2019.

Veer Savarkar International Airport in Port Blair Declared As Authorized Immigration Check Post

- i. **Veer Savarkar International Airport in Port Blair** has been declared as an authorized Immigration Check post for entry into/exit from India with valid travel documents for all classes of passengers.
- ii. The announcement was made by Information, Public Relations and Tourism Division of Andaman and Nicobar Administration. This decision of the Union Government will open up the Port Blair Airport for direct international flight and immigration facilities.

Important Takeways from above news-

- Port Blair is the capital of Andaman and Nicobar.

PM Modi Inaugurated 106th Indian Science Congress At Jalandhar

- i. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated the 106th **Indian Science Congress (ISC-2019) at Jalandhar, Punjab**. The ISC is an annual congregation that witnesses deliberations by top scientific minds of the country.
- ii. The theme for which is '**Future: India-Science and Technology**'. This will be his **5th address to Indian Science Congress** after assuming office as Prime Minister.

Centre Approves Renaming Of Allahabad As Prayagraj

- i. Days before Kumbh Mela, the **Union Home Ministry** has approved the Uttar Pradesh government's proposal to **rename Allahabad as Prayagraj**. In **October 2018**, the Yogi Adityanath-led government had proposed the change in name of Allahabad to Prayagraj.
- ii. A **No Objection Certificate (NOC)** from the MHA will now ensure that names of other institutes in the district, including railway station, High Court and university, are also changed.

Important Takeways from above news-

- Agartala Airport renamed as **Maharaja Bir Bikram Manikya Kishore Airport**.
- British-era railway station Robertsgang renamed as **Sonbhadra**.
- Iconic Mughalsarai junction renamed after **Deen Dayal Upadhyay**.
- Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport in Mumbai renamed as **Chhatrapati Shivaji 'Maharaj' International Airport**.

Parliament Passes Right Of Children To Free And Compulsory Education (Amendment) Bill, 2018

- i. The Indian Parliament passed the **Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (Amendment) Bill, 2018** that seeks to **do away with the no-detention policy** in schools. The legislation is significant as it brings accountability in the elementary education system.

ii. The Bill seeks to amend the **Right to Education (RTE) Act** to abolish the “no-detention” policy in schools. Under the current provisions of the Act, **no student can be detained up to class VIII.**

Important Takeways from above news-

- **Minister of Human Resource Development:** Prakash Javadekar.

Cabinet Approves Merger of Vijaya Bank & Dena Bank With Bank of Baroda

i. The cabinet has approved the **merger of Vijaya Bank & Dena Bank with Bank of Baroda.** After this merger, Bank of Baroda will become the third biggest public sector bank. The merger will be effective from April 1. This is also the first ever three-way merger in Indian banking.

ii. Bank of Baroda (BoB) finalised the share swap ratio for the merger of Vijaya Bank and Dena Bank with itself. As per the Scheme of Amalgamation, **shareholders of Vijaya Bank will get 402 equity shares of BoB for every 1,000 shares held.** In case of **Dena Bank, its shareholders will get 110 shares for every 1,000 shares of BoB.**

6 Monuments Declared Of National Importance In 2018 By ASI

i. The Ministry of Culture announced that **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)** declared 6 monuments as ‘**protected and of national importance**’ under the **Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958**, in 2018.

These sites are:

- 125-year-old **Old High Court Building** in Nagpur, Maharashtra,
- The **Group of Temples in Ranipur Jharail** in Bolangir district of **Odisha**,
- 2 Mughal era monuments in **Agra- Haveli** of Agha Khan and Hathi Khana,
- The **Neemrana Baori** in Alwar district of **Rajasthan**,
- The **Vishnu Temple in Kotali**, Pithoragarh district in **Uttarakhand**.

New Delhi World Book Fair Begins

i. The **27th New Delhi World Book Fair** has begun at Pragati Maidan. Human Resources Development Minister Prakash Javadekar inaugurated the 9-day annual event.

ii. The **theme** of this year is '**Readers with Special Needs**'.

NGT Imposes Rs 100 Cr Fine On Meghalaya Govt

i. The **National Green Tribunal** has imposed a fine of **100 crore rupees** on **Meghalaya government** for its **failure to curb illegal coal mining** in the state.

ii. The amount of the fine has to be deposited with the **Central Pollution Control Board** within two months. The action comes after a high-level committee submitted an adverse report to a bench headed by **NGT chairperson AK Goel**.

Important Takeways from above news-

- **Meghalaya CM:** Conrad Sangma, **Governor:** Tathagata Roy.

HDFC MF Surpasses ICICI Prudential MF to Become Largest AMC in India

i. **HDFC Mutual Fund** has **pipped ICICI Prudential MF** to become the country's largest asset management company after a gap of over two years.

ii. As of December-end, HDFC MF manages assets to the tune of Rs 3.35 lakh crore, while those of ICICI Prudential MF stood at Rs 3.08 lakh crore, as per the latest data available with Association of Mutual funds in India (Amfi).

Important Takeways from above news-

- Mr. Milind Barve is the Managing Director of HDFC MF.
- It headquarters in Mumbai.

Andhra Tops ACI's Ease Of Doing Business Index

i. Andhra Pradesh emerged on top of Asia Competitiveness Institute (ACI), Singapore's 2018 Ease of Doing Business (EDB) Index ABC rankings for economies of 21 states of India, while Maharashtra and Delhi came in second and third place, respectively.

ii. EDB index is based upon three parameters called ABC - Attractiveness to Investors, Business Friendliness and Competitiveness Policies. Andhra Pradesh rose from the 5th rank in 2016 to the top spot in 2018.

Important Takeways from above news-

- **Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister:** N. Chandrababu Naidu, **Governor:** E. S. L. Narasimhan, **Capital:** Amaravati

Vijay Mallya First Tycoon To Be Named "Fugitive Economic Offender"

i. Vijay Mallya became the first tycoon to be charged under a new anti-fraud law, with a court in Mumbai naming him as an offender under the Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, 2018.

ii. According to the new law, a fugitive economic offender is a person against whom an arrest warrant has been issued for his or her involvement in economic offenses involving at least Rs. 100 crore or more and has left India to avoid prosecution.

Cabinet Approves 10% Job Quota For 'Economically Weaker' Upper Castes

i. The Union Cabinet approved a 10% reservation for 'economically backward' upper castes in government jobs.

ii. Ahead of the General Elections this year, the government has announced reservation in jobs for those belonging to the upper castes and earning less than Rs 8 lakh per year. A bill to amend Article 15 and 16 of the constitution will be moved in Parliament to this effect.

Norwegian PM Erna Solberg In India On 3-Day Visit

i. Prime Minister of Norway Erna Solberg has arrived in New Delhi on a three-day state visit to India. She was accompanied by senior officials from her government and a large business delegation. She will participate in the Indo-Norwegian Business Conference.

ii. The Norwegian Prime Minister will deliver the Inaugural address at the Raisina Dialogue. The visit of PM of Norway will provide an opportunity to review the progress in bilateral cooperation between the two countries.

Important Takeways from above news-

- **Norway Capital:** Oslo, **Currency:** Norwegian krone.

High-level Committee Headed By MP Bezbaruah Notified on Assam Accord

i. The government had notified a High-Level committee for implementation of Clause 6 of Assam Accord. Retired IAS officer M.P. Bezbaruah is chairman of the 9-member Committee. The committee will examine the effectiveness of actions since 1985 to implement Clause 6 of the Assam Accord.

ii. The clause envisaged that appropriate constitutional, legislative and administrative safeguards, should be provided to protect, preserve and promote the cultural, social, linguistic identity and heritage of the people of Assam.

Important Takeways from above news-

- **Assam Capital:** Dispur, **CM:** Sarbanand Sonowal, **Governor:** Jagdish Mukhi.

1st Ever Global Aviation Summit To Be Held In Mumbai

i. In a first, the 2-day long Global Aviation Summit 2019 with the theme "Flying for all" will be organized by the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) in collaboration with FICCI from January 15-16, 2019 in Mumbai, Maharashtra.

ii. The summit is supported by International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), Federal Aviation Administration of US (FAA), International Air Transport Association (IATA), Civil Air Navigation

Services Organisation (CANSO), Airports Council International (ACI) and Association of Asia Pacific Airlines (AAPA).

Amendment Bill 2019 Passed in Lok Sabha

- i. The **Citizenship Amendment bill** seeking to provide Indian citizenship to persecuted minorities from **Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Afghanistan** was passed by Lok Sabha. The Bill provides for Indian citizenship to such immigrants after **six years of residence in India instead of 12 years currently**.
- ii. Home Minister Rajnath Singh moved the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2019 in Lok Sabha and was passed after a discussion. The Bill seeks to amend the **Citizenship Act of 1955** in order to grant citizenship to Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs, Jains, Parsis and Christians from Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Pakistan if they have lived in India for six years.

RBI Forms Committee To Boost Digital Payments

- i. **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has constituted a **High-Level Committee on Deepening of Digital Payments** to encourage digitisation of payments and enhance financial inclusion. The **five-member committee** will be headed by UIDAI's former Chairman **Nandan Nilekani**.
- ii. RBI stated that the committee will review the **existing status of digitisation of payments and suggest ways to bridge any gaps in the ecosystem** if any.

Interim Budget To Be Presented on 1 February

- i. The **interim budget for 2019** will be presented on **1 February** during the budget session of the parliament. The budget session of the Parliament to be held from **31 January to 13 February**.
- ii. The decision was taken in the meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs.

Rajya Sabha Passes Reservation Bill Granting 10% Quota For Upper Caste EWS

- i. The **124th Constitution Amendment Bill, 2019** to award **10% reservation** to **economically weaker sections** was passed with a majority in Rajya Sabha. It was already passed in Lok Sabha.
- ii. The Constitution (124rd Amendment) Bill has passed the Rajya Sabha test with **165 'Yes' and 7 'No' votes**. This was brought to the Upper House after the sitting of the House was extended by a day.

Andaman To Be First Island To Operate Seaplanes Under UDAN-3

- i. According to the **Ministry of Civil Aviation**, islands in **Andaman** will soon be connected by **seaplanes** that can land on or take-off from the water. To facilitate the same, the government has approved flight operations on **13 water aerodrome routes** under the **Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik (UDAN)** scheme.
- ii. The government had opened bidding under the third phase of its **regional connectivity scheme, UDAN-3**, in **November**, and had received a total of 111 proposals by 15 airlines.

Government Amalgamates 3 RRBs Into A Single Bank

- i. The government has amalgamated **three Regional Rural Banks - Punjab Gramin Bank, Malwa Gramin Bank and Sutlej Gramin Bank** - into a single RRB.
- ii. The sponsor banks of the RRBs are National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), the Government of Punjab and Punjab National Bank, State Bank of India and Punjab and Sind Bank.

Important Takeways from above news-

- Father Of RRB is M.Swaminathan.

India's Longest Single Lane Steel Cable Bridge Opened in Arunachal Pradesh

- i. **India's longest 300-meter single lane steel cable suspension bridge** was inaugurated by **Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu**. He also laid the foundation stone for a district secretariat building.
- ii. The bridge across the Siang river at Yingkiong in Upper Siang district has been named **Byorong Bridge**. It is built at a cost of **Rs48.43-crore** provided by the **DONER (Department for Development of**

North Eastern Region) Ministry. The Bridge will reduce the distance from Yinkiong to Tuting by almost 40 km.

iii. The Centre had sanctioned 268 road projects worth Rs3,800-crore under the Prime Minister's Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY). Mr. Khandu also announced Rs10-crore for a project to check river erosion at Yinkiong and Tuting.

29th Indian Paint Conference 2019 Started in Agra

i. The **Indian Paint Association (IPA)**, the apex body of the country's paint industry announced that the **29th biennial Indian Paint Conference** started in Agra, Uttar Pradesh.

ii. The theme of the Conference is 'Paints Pe Charcha - Naye Aayaam'. This is the largest trade show of the estimated INR 500 billion (50,000 Crore) Indian Paints & Coatings industry.

6 States Sign Agreement For Renukaji Multipurpose Dam Project

i. An agreement for Renukaji Dam Multipurpose Project was signed in New Delhi among **the States of Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi, Rajasthan and Uttarakhand** in the presence of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation Minister Nitin Gadkari. All the six Chief Ministers were present on the occasion.

ii. Under the agreement, three storage projects are proposed to be constructed **on the river Yamuna** and two of its tributaries – **Tons and Giri in the hilly regions of Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh.**

India's 1st Manned Mission To Space By December 2021: ISRO

i. **ISRO Chairman Dr. K Sivan** has announced that the organization is well prepared to meet the targets of launching **Gaganyaan manned mission to outer space by December 2021.** Under Gaganyaan project, India is planning to send three astronauts to outer space for seven days and bring them back.

ii. 332 launches are planned this year. Important among them are **Chandrayaan -2 mission to the moon in mid-April.** GSAT-20 Satellite for high bandwidth connectivity to be launched in September-October.

Important Takeways from above news-

- **ISRO Director: K. Sivan, Headquarters: Bengaluru, Established in: 1969.**

Gujarat Becomes The First State To Implement 10% Quota For General Category

i. Gujarat has become the first state to implement the 10% reservation for economically weaker sections of the general category. This comes a day after President Ram Nath Kovind gave his assent to the bill.

ii. Gujarat CM Vijay Rupani stated that it will also be applicable to jobs for which announcement has been made but the procedure is yet to commence.

Sushil Modi To Head Committee On GST Revenue Shortfall Faced By States

i. Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Modi will head the 7-member committee to look into revenue shortfall being faced by the states after the GST roll-out and suggest steps for augmenting collections.

ii. The GST Council, headed by Finance Minister Arun Jaitley and comprising state ministers, had on December 22, 2018, decided to set up a group of ministers (GoM) to analyze reasons for the shortfall in revenue collections by the states since July 2017.

Sikkim CM Launched 'One Family, One Job' Scheme

i. Sikkim Chief Minister Pawan Kumar Chamling launched the 'One Family One Job' scheme, under which for every family one government job has been allotted, in Gangtok. New recruits were taken for Group C and Group D posts in 12 departments.

ii. Thus, Sikkim became the first state in the country to carry out such a programme for the people entitling them to state government employee benefits. He also declared that all loan debts in the farming and agriculture sector would be revoked.

Important Takeways from above news-

- CM Chamling is the longest serving CM of Independent India.
- Sikkim Governor: Ganga Prasad.

India's Largest Startup Ecosystem Inaugurated in Kerala

- i. India got its largest startup ecosystem when **Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan inaugurated a 1.8-lakh-square-foot facility housing incubation set-ups** across a string of segments in modern technology.
- ii. The Integrated Startup Complex under the Kerala Startup Mission (KSUM) includes the ultra-modern facilities of Maker Village that promote hardware startups, the BioNest that promotes medical technologies, BRINC which is the country's first international accelerator for hardware startups.

Important Takeways from above news-

- P Sathasivam is the present governor of Kerala.

Reliance Retail, Jio to Launch New e-Commerce Platform

- i. **Reliance Industries Ltd Chairman and managing director Mukesh Ambani** announced that group companies Reliance Retail and Reliance Jio Infocomm would jointly launch **a new e-commerce platform in the country.**
- ii. **Gujarat would be the first state to get it.** The announcement was made at the inauguration of the three-day Vibrant Gujarat summit.

PM Dedicates Kollam Bypass in Kerala to Nation

- i. **PM Narendra Modi** has dedicated the **Kollam Bypass on the National Highway-66** to the nation. It reduces travel time between Alappuzha and Thiruvananthapuram.
- ii. **This is the first National Highway project in the country taken up on a 50:50 Centre-State partnership.** He also launched development projects worth over Rs 1,500 cr in Odisha.

India's Satyarup Becomes World's Youngest Mountaineer To Climb 7 Peaks, 7 Volcano Summits

- i. Mountaineer **Satyarup Siddhanta** conquered Antarctica's highest point, **Mount Sidley**. With this feat, he became the **first Indian and youngest man** to climb the 7 highest peaks and volcanic summits **across all continents.**
- ii. He achieved the feat at the age of **35 years and 262 days.** Satyarup hails from South Kolkata and is a **software engineer** by profession.

PM Narendra Modi Launches National Museum of Indian Cinema in Mumbai

- i. **Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the National Museum of Indian Cinema (NMIC) in Mumbai.** The development of the Museum was guided by the Museum Advisory Committee **headed by Shyam Benegal.**
- ii. An innovation Committee headed by Prasoon Joshi provided an upgrade to the NMIC. Built at a cost of Rs 140.61 crore, the museum depicts the journey of over a century of Indian cinema in a story telling mode.

India's 2nd Defence Innovation Hub to come Up In Nashik

- i. **Nashik in Maharashtra** will be the site of the country's **second defence innovation hub** after **Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu.**
- ii. Union Minister of State for Defence **Subhash Bhamre** stated that the defence innovation hub at Nashik will help local industries and entrepreneurs in the country's defence sector.

15th Pravasi Bhartiya Divas Begins At Varanasi

- i. **The 15th edition of Pravasi Bhartiya Divas** begins at **Varanasi** in Uttar Pradesh. The 3 day event is being organized in Varanasi for the **first time.**
- ii. The theme this year is, '**Role of Indian Diaspora in building New India**'. Several world leaders of Indian origin, including the Chief Guest **Mr. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth**, Prime Minister of Mauritius, will take part in the event and share their insights on the theme.

IIT-H Launches Full-Fledged B.Tech In Artificial Intelligence

- i. **Indian Institute of Technology-Hyderabad (IIT-H)** has announced the launch of a full-fledged bachelor's programme in **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** technology from the new academic session, a **first for the country** and only **the third globally**.
- ii. Besides IIT, **Carnegie Mellon University** and **Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)**, both of which are in the US, offer full-fledged **B.Tech programmes** in **AI**. The new course will have 20 seats and the eligibility is clearing the JEE-Advanced test.

Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman Inaugurated The Diffo Bridge In Arunachal Pradesh

- i. **Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman** inaugurated the **426 meters** long **Diffo Bridge** over **Chipu River** in Lower Dibang Valley District of **Arunachal Pradesh**. Border Roads Organization (BRO) has constructed the bridge along Indo-China border.
- ii. The construction of the bridge began in **2011**.

Important Takeways from above news-

- **Arunachal Pradesh CM:** Pema Khandu, **Governor:** B. D. Mishra, **Capital-** Itanagar

India To Surpass UK in World's Largest Economy Rankings in 2019: PwC

- i. **India is likely to surpass the United Kingdom** in the world's largest economy rankings in 2019, to become **the world's fifth largest economy**, according to a report by **global consultancy firm PwC**.
- ii. PwC's Global Economy Watch report projects real **GDP growth of 1.6% for the UK, 1.7% for France and 7.6% for India in 2019**.
- iii. The US was the world's largest economy with a size of 19.39 trillion dollars, followed by China at 12.23 trillion dollars at the second place in 2017.

India Among The Most Trusted Nations Globally: Report

- i. India is among the **most trusted nations** globally when it comes to **government, business, NGOs and media**. The **2019 Edelman Trust Barometer report**, noted that the **Global Trust Index** witnessed a marginal increase of 3 points to 52. **China topped the Trust Index** among both the informed public and the general population segments.
- ii. India was at the **2nd place** in the **informed public category** and **3rd place** in the general population category. The findings are based on an online survey in **27 markets** covering over **33,000** respondents.

Microsoft Launches e-Commerce Platform for Handloom Weavers

- i. **Microsoft India** has launched a **new e-commerce platform re-weave.in** for handloom weavers under its Project ReWeave, part of its philanthropic initiatives.
- ii. This e-commerce platform will help connect artisans to buyers directly, enabling them to expand to newer customers and markets.

Important Takeways from above news-

- **Microsoft CEO:** Satya Nadella, **Headquarters:** Washington, United States.

JNPT Becomes Only Indian Port To Be Listed Amongst World's Top 30 Container Ports

- i. **The Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT)**, India's premier container port got listed **amongst the top 30 container ports globally**, as per the latest **Lloyds Report**. JNPT notched up five spots, to be 28th on the list, compared to its previous ranking.
- ii. This is a validation of all the efforts and strategic initiatives being implemented at JNPT in order to enhance overall port efficiency.

Arunachal Government Declares Pakke Hornbill Fest As 'State Festival'

- i. **Arunachal Pradesh** Chief Minister, **Pema Khandu** declared **Pakke Paga Hornbill Festival (PPHF)** as the **"State Festival"** at Sejosa in East Kameng district, Arunachal Pradesh. Pakke Paga Hornbill Festival (PPHF) is **only conservation festival** of Arunachal Pradesh.

ii. He announced that **Arunachal Pradesh Forest Department** will fund the festival from 2020 and permanent infrastructure will be constructed for the festival ground.

Important Takeways from above news-

- **Arunachal Pradesh Governor:** Brigadier BD Mishra (Retd).
- The PPHF festival was celebrated first time in **2015** to recognize the role played by the resident **Nyishi tribe** in **conserving hornbills in the Pakke Tiger Reserve (PTR)**.

Andhra Pradesh Cabinet Decides To Give Quota For Kapu Community, EBCs

i. **Andhra Pradesh cabinet** has decided to cater 5% reservation each for **Kapu community and the economically backward classes (EBCs)** among the forward castes. The cabinet approved the decision of doubling the welfare pensions given **under the NTR Bharosa Scheme**.

ii. Pensions of Rs 1000 and Rs 1500 are doubled to Rs 2000 and Rs 3000 respectively. The cabinet decided to give exemption of life tax for autos and quarterly tax for tractors.

Important Takeways from above news-

- **ESL Narasimhan** is the present Governor of Andhra Pradesh.
- **Chandrababu Naidu** is the present CM of Andhra Pradesh.

India Ranks 80th On Global Talent Competitiveness Ranking: Survey

i. **India has moved up one position to rank 80th** on the **global talent competitive index**, but remains a laggard among the BRICS nations.

ii. **Switzerland continues to top the list**, released on the first day of the World Economic Forum (WEF) Annual Meeting at Davos by INSEAD business school in partnership with Tata Communications and Adecco Group.

iii. **The top 3 countries in the list are:**

1. **Switzerland,**
2. **Singapore,**
3. **The United States.**

ISRO Successfully Launched PSLV C44 Carrying Kalamsat & Microsat R

i. The **Indian Space Research Organisation** successfully launched the **PSLV C 44** carrying **Kalam sat and imaging satellite Microsat R**. The satellite was launched from the **Sathish Dhawan Space Centre Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh**.

ii. **Kalamsat** is a ten cm cube weighing one-kilogram communication satellite with a life span of two months.

Important Takeways from above news-

- **ISRO Director:** K. Sivan, **Headquarters:** Bengaluru, **Established in:** 1969.

India's Fastest Indigenous Train Renamed As Vande Bharat Express

i. **India's fastest indigenous train** which will run from **Delhi to Varanasi** has been named as **Vande Bharat Express**. Its previous name was **Train 18**. The new name has been given after taking suggestions from the general public.

ii. It is a train built completely in India by Indian engineers **in a span of 18 months** and it is an example that it is possible to make world-class trains under Make in India.

Important Takeways from above news-

- The 16-coach train has been built by the Integral Coach Factory, Chennai and cover the distance in 8 hours. It is **the first locomotive-less train in the country**.

Assam Rifles Creates History By Showcasing "Nari Shakti" At Parade

- i. The all-women **Assam Rifles contingent** created history this year by participating for the first time in a **Republic Day (26th January) parade**. Contingents of the Navy, India Army Service Corps and a unit of Corps of Signals were all led by women officers.
- ii. **Capt Shikha Surabhi** from the Corps of Signals became the first woman to perform bike stunts, alongside her male teammates as part of daredevils. **Lt. Bhavana Kasturi**, a lady officer, for the first time led a contingent of the India Army Service Corps and **Capt Bhavna Syal**, a third-generation officer in the armed forces, led the transportable satellite terminal's contingent.

Roshni, An Android App Developed To Help Visually Impaired Identify Notes

- i. The **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Ropar**, has developed an app **Roshni** that would help the **Visually Impaired** to recognise **currency notes**. The app can recognise both old and new notes and gives audio information as to which note you are holding in your hands.
- ii. This app was launched in **Chandigarh**. Roshni is the **first** Android app, which recognise **INR** currency notes.

Nari Shakti Is Oxford Dictionary's Hindi Word Of The Year 2018

- i. The **Oxford Dictionaries** announced '**Nari Shakti**' as the Hindi Word of the Year. The Hindi Word of the Year chosen every year, reflects the conversations, ethos of a particular year.
- ii. The word this year, Nari Shakti, has been derived from **Sanskrit** and when broken down, the word 'nari' means **women** and 'shakti' means **power**.

Madya Pradesh Launched Employment Scheme "Yuva Swabhiman Yojana" For Urban Youth

- i. **Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath** announced the launch of the '**Yuva Swabhiman Yojana**' for youths from the economically weaker sections in urban areas.
- ii. Under this scheme, **100 days** of employment will be provided to youths from **economically weaker sections** in urban areas. They will also be given **skill training**.

Uttarakhand's First Tulip Garden In Pithoragarh

- i. **Uttarakhand's first tulip garden** will come up over **50 hectares** of forest land in **Pithoragarh** district at a cost of **Rs 50 crore**. The state government has obtained the Centre's nod for development of the garden.
- ii. To be developed by the **ONGC**, under its **corporate social responsibility** programme, the proposed tulip garden will be the country's **second** after the one located in **Srinagar (J&K)**.

Important Takeways from above news-

- **Uttarakhand State Governor**– Baby Rani Maurya, **CM-Trivendra Singh Rawat**.

National Salt Satyagraha Memorial Inaugurated At Dandi

- i. In commemoration of the **150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi**, Prime Minister of India **Narendra Modi** dedicated grand and iconic '**National Salt Satyagraha Memorial**' constructed by the Central Public Works Department at **Dandi, Gujarat** to the Nation.
- ii. This prestigious work entrusted to CPWD by the **Ministry of Culture**, Govt. of India has been completed by the dedicated team of CPWD in **20 months'** time well within the sanctioned amount of **Rs. 72.23 crores**.

UP Government Approves Construction Of Ganga Expressway

- i. **Uttar Pradesh** state cabinet has approved construction of a **four-lane Ganga Expressway** connecting **Prayagraj to Western Utter Pradesh** which would cost about **36,000 crore** rupees.
- ii. Chief Minister **Yogi Adityanath** stated that this expressway will provide better connectivity to Prayagraj. **Ganga Expressway** will be **600 kilometres** long and can be expanded to six-lane in future. Chief Minister also stated that after completion it would be **longest in the world**.

India Ranks 54th In 'Bloomberg Innovation Index' Of 60 Economies

i. India has been ranked in **Bloomberg's** 2019 list of most innovative countries in the world - **2019 Bloomberg Innovation Index** - for the **first time ever**. India has grabbed the **54th** spot with a score of **47.93** out of 100 in the **Innovation Index of 60 economies**.

ii. South Korea has topped the Index for the **sixth time** in a row with a total score of 87.38, followed by **Germany** and **Finland**.

Global Corruption Index Released, India Ranks 78

i. Transparency International has released the **Global Corruption Index 2018**. India rose by 3 points to **78** in the list of **180** countries in the world with a score of **41**.

ii. China lagged far behind at **87** and Pakistan ranked **117**.

Hindustan Unilever Board Approves Merger with GSKCH India

i. FMCG major Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL) announced that its board has approved the merger with GlaxoSmithKline Consumer Healthcare (GSKCH India) through an-all equity deal, valuing the total business latter at Rs31,700 crore.

ii. The transaction is an all-equity merger with 4.39 shares of HUL being allotted for every share in GSKCH India, which sells consumer healthcare products, including popular drink brand Horlicks

SPECIAL ON INDIAN REPUBLIC DAY 2019

We have given here some points on what was special on Indian Republic Day 2019:

- The theme of the Republic Day 2019 celebration was 'Gandhi' as India celebrates his 150th birth anniversary in 2019. 16 tableau from states and 6 from ministries took part in the parade based on theme 'Gandhi'.
- President of India, Sri Ram Nath Kovind, in his address, commemorated the values of democracy and emphasized the strength of India's diversity, democracy and development.
- The delegates of the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas 2019 also witnessed the grandeurs of the Republic Day celebration this year.
- M777 Howitzer and K9-Vajra-T guns were also showcased in the parade which were recently inducted in the Indian Army.
- 4 veteran soldiers of Netaji's 'Azad Hind Fauz' also participated in the parade at Rajpath.
- It was first time in the history that an all women contingent of Assam Rifles took part in the parade.
- It was also the first time when an all men Army Services Corps was led by a woman officer, Lt. Bhawana Kasturi.
- Declaration of various awards was also done on the eve of the Republic Day. Former President of India Mr. Pranab Mukherjee was awarded Bharat Ratna. Social activist Nanaji Deshmukh and famous singer Sri Bhupen Hazarika were also awarded Bharat Ratna, posthumously.

21 of the awardees are women and the list also includes 11 persons from the category of foreigners/NRI/PIO/OCI, 3 posthumous awardees and 1 transgender person.

Padma Awards — one of the highest civilian Awards of the country, are conferred in three categories, namely, **Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri**. The Awards are given in various disciplines/ fields of activities, viz. art, social work, public affairs, science and engineering, trade and industry, medicine, literature and education, sports, civil service, etc. ‘**Padma Vibhushan**’ is awarded for exceptional and distinguished service; ‘**Padma Bhushan**’ for distinguished service of high order and ‘**Padma Shri**’ for distinguished service in any field. The awards are announced on the occasion of Republic Day every year.

These awards are conferred by the President of India at ceremonial functions which are held at Rashtrapati Bhawan usually around March/ April every year. This year the President of India has approved conferment of 112 Padma Awards including one duo case (in a duo case, the Award is counted as one) as per list below. **The list comprises 4 Padma Vibhushan, 14 Padma Bhushan and 94 Padma Shri Awards. 21 of the awardees are women and the list also includes 11 persons from the category of foreigners/NRI/PIO/OCI, 3 posthumous awardees and 1 transgender person.**

1. Nanaji Deshmukh (posthumous)
2. Dr. Bhupen Hazarika (posthumous)
3. Pranab Mukherjee

Padma Vibhushan (4)

1. Ms. Teejan Bai — Art-Vocals-Folk — Chhattisgarh
2. Shri Ismail Omar Guelleh (Foreigner) — Public Affairs — Djibouti
3. Shri Anilkumar Manibhai Naik — Trade & Industry-Infrastructure — Maharashtra
4. Shri Balwant Moreshwar Purandare — Art-Acting-Theatre — Maharashtra

Padma Bhushan (14)

Republic Day parade

New Delhi: Gallantry awards to be given out this Republic Day have been announced and it is time to honour our Army personnel who put their duty towards the nation above everything else. Following is a short profile of all the brave Army personnel to be awarded at this year’s Republic Day parade, some of them posthumously:

1. **Lance Naik Nazir Ahmad Wani, Ashok Chakra (Posthumous):** Wani already had two gallantry awards under his belt.
2. **Major Tushar Gauba, Kirti Chakra:** On May 23, 2018, eight militants attempted an infiltration across LoC in Kupwara district of J-K. Major Gauba laid an ambush to deny exfiltration to the terrorists.
3. **Sowar Vijay Kumar, Kirti Chakra (Posthumous):** Sowar Vijay Kumar was part of Operation Vijay Darsu on August 2-3, 2018.

International

Palestine Takes Reins At UN's Group G77

- i. Palestinian President **Mahmoud Abbas** has pledged to protect the interests of all 134 countries in the UN's **Group of 77**, as Palestine took the **chairmanship of the group** from **Egypt** for 2019.
- ii. The **G77** group was originally founded by 77 members in **1964** but has expanded to 134 mainly developing nations. The decision to elect Palestine as the 2019 Chair of the G77 was taken in September **2018** by the **foreign ministers of the Groups' member states**.

Important Takeways from above news-

- **Palestine Capitals:** Ramallah, East Jerusalem.

Trump Signs Asia Reassurance Initiative Act Into Law

- i. U.S. President **Donald J. Trump** signed into law the **Asia Reassurance Initiative Act (ARIA)**, which passed the U.S. Senate earlier in December. According to the White House, the act establishes a multifaceted U.S. strategy to increase **U.S. security, economic interests, and values** in the **Indo-Pacific region**.
- ii. Specifically, the ARIA will authorize **\$1.5 billion** in spending for a range of U.S. programs in **East and Southeast Asia** and develop a long-term strategic vision and a comprehensive, multifaceted, and principled United States policy for the Indo-Pacific region, and for other purposes.

Arunima Sinha Becomes World's 1st Female Amputee To Scale Antarctica's Highest Peak

- i. **Arunima Sinha**, the first female amputee to have conquered **Mt Everest**, created yet another record as she became **world's first woman amputee to climb Mount Vinson**, the highest peak in **Antarctica**.

ii. Apart from Mount Everest, the 30-year-old has climbed the highest peaks of **five continents** and plans to do so in all seven.

India Ranks 79th, Japan Tops List Of Most Powerful Passports

i. According to the **Henley Passport Index**, India jumped two positions from **81st** in 2018 to **79th** in 2019. **Japan** retained its **top spot** as the world's **most travel-friendly passport**.

ii. China jumped almost **20 places** in just **two years**, from 85th in 2017 to 69th this year. The Henley Passport Index is based on data provided by the **International Air Transport Authority (IATA)** and covers **199 passports** and **227 travel destinations**.

Qatar Withdraws From OPEC

i. **Qatar** has withdrawn its membership from **Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)**. The country had sent an official notification to the OPEC expressing its wish to **pull out** and to **focus on its liquefied natural gas production** in December.

ii. Qatar has been in **OPEC for 57 years**. The decision came amid the ongoing **diplomatic and economic blockade imposed** on the country by its Persian Gulf neighbours and several Arab states.

Important Takeways from above news-

- **Qatar Capital:** Doha, **Currency:** Qatari riyal.

India Allows Iran's Bank Pasargad To Open Branch in Mumbai

i. Union Minister Nitin Gadkari has announced that India has allowed an Iranian bank, **Pasargad Bank**, to open a branch in Mumbai. The move is aimed at circumventing US trade and investment sanctions as India builds a strategic port in the West Asian country.

ii. Iran's Pasargad Bank has received the necessary clearances to open its branch in Mumbai. Alongside, **India's UCO Bank will open a branch in Iran**.

Important Takeways from above news-

- India has taken over operations of the Chabahar port in the Sistan-Balochistan province of Iran, the first time India will operate a port outside its territory.

India To Become World's 3rd Largest Consumer Market By 2030: WEF

i. A report by World Economic Forum stated that **India is set to become the world's third largest consumer market behind only USA and China by 2030**. The report was titled as 'Future of Consumption in Fast-Growth Consumer Market – India'.

ii. As per the report, consumer spending in India is expected to grow from 1.5 trillion US dollar at present to six trillion US dollar by 2030. With the annual GDP growth rate of 7.5%, India is currently the world's sixth largest economy.

Important Takeways from above news-

- **The founder and Chairman of WEF-** Klaus Schwab.
- WEF Headquarters in Switzerland.

Malala Pens New Book On Refugee Girls Titled We Are Displaced

i. Nobel Peace Prize winner and Pakistani activist **Malala Yousafzai** pens a new book, titled '**We Are Displaced: My Journey and Stories from Refugee Girls Around the World**,' charting her experiences traveling the world and visiting refugee camps.

US, Israel Quit UNESCO Citing Bias

i. The **United States and Israel** officially quit the **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)** with the close of 2018. The countries had announced their decisions in 2017 of withdrawing from the agency, accusing it of bias against Israel.

ii. America has demanded fundamental reform in UNESCO, which was co-founded by it after World War II to foster peace. Israel joined the agency in 1949.

Important Takeways from above news-

- **France's Audrey Azoulay- 11th DG of UNESCO, UNESCO Headquarters- Paris, France.**

France Introduced GAFA Tax On Global Internet, Technology Firm

i. The finance minister of France Bruno Le Maire announced that France will introduce its own tax on large internet and technology companies from January 1.
ii. France has been pushing hard for a new so-called "GAFA tax" -- named after **Google, Apple, Facebook and Amazon** -- to ensure the global giants pay a fair share of taxes on their massive business operations in Europe.

EIU Democracy Index 2018: Norway Tops, India Ranks 41st

i. The 11th edition of **EIU Democracy Index 2018** was released by the Economist Intelligent Unit compiling the state of democracies in 167 countries in the world. In the list, **Norway topped and India ranked 41st place** on the Economist Intelligence Unit's annual Global Democracy Index.

ii. The Index was started in 2006. The top 3 performing countries on the **Democracy Index 2018** are:

1. Norway
2. Iceland
3. Sweden.

Macedonia Renamed As 'The Republic Of Northern Macedonia'

i. The Parliament of Macedonia has passed the resolution to amend the constitution of the country to rename it as **the Republic of Northern Macedonia.**

ii. The name change will help resolve a decades-long dispute with neighboring Greece opening the way for **Skopje to join NATO and the European Union.**

Important Takeways from above news-

- **Macedonia Prime Minister: Zoran Zaev, Capital: Skopje, Currency: Macedonian Denar.**

Japan Launches Satellite For World's 1st Artificial Meteor Shower

i. **Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency** has launched Tokyo-based startup **Star-ALE's mini-satellite** aimed to deliver the **world's first artificial meteor shower.**

ii. The satellite carries **400 tiny balls**, will be enough for 20-30 events, that will glow as they rush down the atmosphere on being released. ALE plans to deliver its first show in **Hiroshima** in early **2020.**

Nepal's Central Bank Announces Ban of Indian Notes Above Rs100

i. **Nepal's central bank** has banned the use of Indian currency notes of **Rs 2,000, Rs 500 and Rs 200 denominations**, a move that could affect Indian tourists visiting the Himalayan nation where Indian currency is widely used.

ii. **Nepal Rastra Bank** issued a circular prohibiting Nepali travellers, banks and financial institutions from holding or carrying and trading Indian bank notes higher than Rs 100.

Important Takeways from above news-

- Nepal's central bank is called as **Nepal Rashtra Bank.**
- It was established in 1956 under the **Nepal Rashtra Bank Act 1955.**
- **Dr. Chiranjibi Nepal** is the Governor of **Nepal Rashtra Bank.**

Rio de Janeiro Named As 1st World Capital of Architecture for 2020

i. 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.**

ii. Rio will be the **first city to receive the title** under a programme launched together by UNESCO and the

International Union of Architects (UIA) in November 2018. The city beat Paris and Melbourne to get the position.

Important Takeways from above news-

- **France's Audrey Azoulay-** 11th DG of UNESCO, **UNESCO Headquarters-** Paris, France.

Arab Economic And Social Development Summit Held In Beirut

i. The **Arab Economic and Social Development Summit** held in **Lebanon's** capital **Beirut**.

ii. The leaders of many Arab countries took part in the summit aimed to make a joint statement on a 29-item agenda that ranges from discussions on an Arab free trade zone and the economic effect of Syrian refugees on host countries.

WEF Annual Meet Begins in Switzerland

i. The **World Economic Forum (WEF)** annual meet had begun in **Davos, Switzerland**. The meeting will continue for 5 days.

ii. The theme of the event would be '*Globalization 4.0: Shaping a Global Architecture in the Age of the Fourth Industrial Revolution*'.

Important Takeways from above news-

- **The founder and Chairman of WEF-** Klaus Schwab.
- WEF Headquarters in Switzerland.

China's Economy Grew At 6.6% In 2018, Slowest Rate In 3 Decades

i. China's economy grew at **6.6%** in **2018**, its slowest rate in almost **3 decades**. The world's 2nd biggest economy was grappling with the effects of the **current trade war** with the US and declining exports.

ii. In the 3 months to December, the economy grew **6.4%** from a year earlier, down from **6.5 %** in the previous quarter. China's **National Bureau of Statistics (NBS)** stated that last year's growth rate was down from **6.8% in 2017** and was the lowest since **1990** when the growth rate was **3.9%**.

Venezuela Breaks Off Diplomatic Ties With The US

i. **Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro** has announced that he is breaking off diplomatic ties **with the United States** after his American counterpart Donald Trump recognized Opposition leader Juan Guaido as the South American country's interim President.

ii. Nicolas Maduro gave all US diplomatic staff in Venezuela 72 hours to leave the country. The Venezuelan President accused the US government of attempting a coup d'etat.

Important Takeways from above news-

- **Venezuela Capital-** Caracas, **Currency-** Venezuelan bolívar.

Sugarcane Juice Declared As National Drink Of Pakistan

i. The **Pakistan** government declared sugarcane juice as the "**national drink**" of the country. They came at this decision after asking People's opinion in twitter to choose one among **orange, carrot and sugarcane**.

ii. According to the poll, **7,616** people or **81%** cast their votes favouring sugarcane juice, **15%** voted for orange juice while **4%** chose carrot.

UK Parliament Approves Brexit Amendment on Replacing Irish Backstop

i. In Britain, lawmakers voted in favor of an amendment in BREXIT plan seeking alternative arrangements **to replace the Irish border arrangement** known as the *Irish backstop*. The amendment calls for the backstop to be replaced with unspecified "alternative arrangements" to avoid the reintroduction of border checks in Ireland.

ii. The backstop is aimed at keeping an open border between European Union-member Ireland and British-ruled Northern Ireland after Brexit. Another amendment, rejecting a no-deal Brexit, also won the support of Parliament.

UAE, Saudi Central Banks Launch Common Digital Currency Called 'Aber'

- i.** The central banks of the **UAE and Saudi Arabia** have launched a **common digital currency** called "**Aber**", which will be used in financial settlements between the two countries through **Blockchains and Distributed Ledgers technologies**.
- ii.** Through this **digital currency**, both the United Arab Emirates Central Bank (**UAECB**) and the Saudi Arabian Monetary Authority (**SAMA**) are studying the impact on the improvement and reduction of remittance costs and the assessments of risks.

Dubai Airport Retains Top Position As World's Busiest Airport

- i.** **Dubai International Airport (DXB)** retained its position as the **world's busiest airport** for international customer numbers for the **fifth consecutive year** with annual traffic for 2018.
- ii.** It overtook the crown of the world's busiest hub for international travel from **London's Heathrow** in **2014**

Defence

India-Myanmar Joint Training Exercise Begins In Chandimandir

- i.** The second edition of the **India-Myanmar bilateral army exercise, IMBEX 2018-19**, commenced at Chandimandir Military Station, that houses the headquarters of the Western Command, **Chandigarh**.
- ii.** The aim of this joint training programme, spread over six days, is to train the Myanmar delegation for participation in United Nations peacekeeping operations under the UN flag.

Indian Navy Coordinates Largest Ever Coastal Defence Exercise: SEA VIGIL

- i.** Ten years after "26/11", the **Indian Navy commenced the largest coastal defence exercise off the Indian coast**.
- ii.** Exercise **SEA VIGIL**, a first of its kind, is being undertaken along the entire 7516.6 km coastline and Exclusive Economic Zone of India and is involving all the 13 coastal States and Union Territories along with all maritime stakeholders, including the fishing and coastal communities.

IAFTX 2019: India Africa Field Training Exercise Held in Pune

- i. The final planning conference to work out the modalities for **Indian Africa Field Training Exercise (IAFTX)-2019** was conducted at **Pune, Maharashtra**.
- ii. The joint training exercise is being conducted with more than a dozen African countries & India. It aims at synergising humanitarian mine action and joint peace operations.

Navy Chief Admiral Sunil Lanba Commissioned New Naval Air Base 'INS Kohassa'

- i. **Indian Navy Chief Admiral Sunil Lanba** commissioned the new Naval Air Base '**INS Kohassa**' at **Diglipur in Andaman and Nicobar Islands**.
- ii. The airbase will be used to handle operations of helicopters and small aircraft like the Dornier. The new airbase in the northernmost part of the Andaman Nicobar Islands will be used for both Defence and civil aircraft.

DRDO Launches Long Range Surface to Air Missile Off Odisha Coast

- i. The **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** has successfully test fired **Long Range Surface to Air Missile (LR-SAM)** from naval warship **INS Chennai**.
- ii. The test was conducted off the coast of Odisha. The LR-SAM hit a low flying aerial target during the test.

Important Takeways from above news-

- Dr G. Satheesh Reddy is the Secretary, Department of Defence R&D and Chairman, DRDO.
- DRDO was established in 1958.

Its Headquarters in New Delhi



CLATAPULT

CLAT coaching by NLU grads

Appointments or Resign/Retired

Amitabh Chaudhry Takes Charge As Axis Bank MD & CEO

- i. **Axis Bank** announced its **Managing Director and CEO Shikha Sharma** has retired from the post and **Amitabh Chaudhry** will be the new **managing director and CEO** of the bank with effect from January 1, 2019.
- ii. Chaudhry, the former MD and CEO of **HDFC Standard Life Insurance Company**, was in September named the MD and CEO of **Axis Bank** for a period of three years.

Important Takeways from above news-

- **Axis Bank** Headquarters in **Mumbai**.

V K Yadav Assumes Charge of New Railway Board Chairman

- i. **Railway Board Chairman Ashwani Lohani** retired, despite strong indications that the Narendra Modi government could grant him an extension.
- ii. **General Manager, South Central Railway, V K Yadav** has been appointed the national transporter's senior-most bureaucrat by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet.

Important Takeways from above news-

- Piyush Goyal is the Present Railways Minister of India.

Jair Bolsonaro Takes Oath As New President of Brazil

i. **Jair Bolsonaro** was sworn in as **Brazil's President** in a ceremony at Brazil's National Congress Building. Bolsonaro is a former Army captain and admirer of the country's 1964-1985 military dictatorship.

ii. Bolsonaro, 63, was a seven-term fringe congressman who rode a wave of anti-establishment anger to become Brazil's first far-right president since a military dictatorship gave way to civilian rule three decades ago.

Important Takeways from above news-

- **Brazil Capital:** Brasilia, **Currency:** Brazilian real.

Justice TBN Radhakrishnan Sworn In As 1st Chief Justice of Telangana High Court

i. **Justice Thottathil Bhaskaran Nair Radhakrishnan** was sworn in as the **first Chief Justice of the Telangana High Court**.

ii. The oath to the office was administered to Justice Radhakrishnan by Telangana and **Andhra Pradesh Governor ESL Narasimhan** at a ceremony held at Raj Bhavan. With this, the state of Telangana will have its first independent high court.

Saurabh Kumar Appointed As Chairman Of Ordnance Factory Board

i. **Saurabh Kumar** has been appointed as the **Director General of Ordnance Factories (DGOF)** and **chairman of the Ordnance Factory Board (OFB)**. Kumar, a 1982-batch Indian Ordnance Factory Service officer, is an M-Tech in mechanical engineering from the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Kanpur.

ii. An expert in the manufacture of ordnance, Kumar was on deputation to the **Ministry of Defence** as the director of planning and coordination from 2002 to 2009.

Important Takeways from above news-

- **Ordnance Factory Board Headquarters:** Kolkata.

Hemant Bhargava Appointed LIC's Acting Chairman

i. The government has appointed **Hemant Bhargava, Managing Director, Life Insurance Corporation of India, as the Acting Chairman**.

ii. The move comes after VK Sharma retired from the top job at LIC on December 31. While traditionally the senior-most MD is appointed the chairman, Bhargava is due to retire in July 2019.

Important Takeways from above news-

- Life Insurance in its modern form came to India from England in the year 1818.
- Oriental Life Insurance Company started by Europeans in Calcutta was the first life insurance company on Indian Soil.
- LIC Headquarters in Mumbai.

Pentagon Chief of Staff Kevin Sweeney Resigns

i. In the United States, Department of Defence, Chief of Staff, **Rear Admiral Kevin Sweeney** has resigned, a month after Defence Secretary James Mattis announced his departure.

ii. He is now the third senior Pentagon official to announce his resignation since President Donald Trump announced US forces would leave Syria.

Sheikh Hasina Sworn-In As Bangladesh PM For 4th Term

i. **Sheikh Hasina sworn-in as the Bangladesh Prime Minister** for the fourth term. It is her third consecutive term after her victory in the **11th Parliamentary elections**.

ii. **President Mohammad Abdul Hamid** administered the oath of office to Sheikh Hasina in Dhaka. This is the first time Hasina is forming a cabinet with the members of her own party.

Important Takeways from above news-

- **Bangladesh Capital:** Dhaka, **Currency-** Bangladesh taka.

Malaysia's King Muhammad V Becomes 1st Monarch To Resign Before Completing Tenure

i. **Malaysia's King Muhammad V abdicated** after two years on the throne, the first time a monarch has stepped down before completing their five-year tenure.

ii. The king's resignation took effect immediately. A week ago, the king, 49, had resumed duties after spending two months on medical leave.

Important Takeways from above news-

- **Malaysia Capital:** Kuala Lumpur, **Currency:** Malaysian ringgit.

Kumar Rajesh Chandra Appointed Director-General of SSB

i. **Civil Aviation Security head and senior IPS officer Kumar Rajesh Chandra** was appointed as the director general of the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB).

ii. Chandra, a 1985-batch IPS officer of Bihar cadre, is at present the director general of the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS). He has been appointed as SSB DG up to December 31, 2021, i.e., the date of his superannuation, the order said.

Important Takeways from above news-

- The SSB, which has about 80,000 personnel, guards India's borders with Nepal and Bhutan.

Alok Verma Reinstated As CBI Chief By Supreme Court

i. **Alok Verma** has been reinstated as the **CBI chief** by the **Supreme Court**, three months after the government divested him of his powers and sent him on **forced leave**. Alok Verma and his deputy **Rakesh Asthana** were both sent on leave in October amid a bitter feud between the CBI's top two.

ii. Supreme Court strikes down CBI Chief Alok Verma's removal. However, at present, Alok Verma **cannot take any major policy decisions**. Supreme Court stated that the High Power Committee under the **DSPE Act** needs to act within a week to consider Alok Verma's case.

Important Takeways from above news-

- The 46th Chief Justice of India is Mr. Ranjan Gogoi.

ICICI Bank Appoints B Sriram, Rama Bijapurkar Independent Directors

i. Private sector **ICICI Bank** inducted former SBI Managing Director **B Sriram** and management consultant **Rama Bijapurkar** on its board as **independent director**.

ii. Both are appointed for **5 years**, subject to the approval of shareholders, ICICI Bank stated in a regulatory filing on stock exchanges. Sriram retired as the **managing director of IDBI Bank** in September 2018.

Important Takeways from above news-

- **ICICI Bank Headquarters:** Mumbai, **MD& CEO:** Mr. Sandeep Bakshi, **Tagline:** Hum Hain Na!.

Jim Yong Kim Resigns As President Of The World Bank

i. **World Bank President, Jim Yong Kim** has made the surprise announcement that he is **stepping down** after six years in the post. His resignation will take effect from **1 February**.

ii. Mr. Kim, 59, was not due to leave until **2022** after he was re-elected for a second five-year term in **2017**.

Pranav R Mehta Becomes 1st Indian to Head Global Solar Council

i. A visionary in the field of Solar Energy and the **chairman of National Solar Energy Federation, Pranav R Mehta, has taken over as the president of Global Solar Council (GSC)**. He has become the first Indian to head the GSC.

ii. The Global Solar Council (GSC) was launched on December 6, 2015, following the historic United Nations Climate Change Conference (UN COP 21).

Important Takeways from above news-

- The **Global Solar Council (GSC)** has its headquarters in Washington D.C., USA.

Maduro Sworn In As Venezuela President for 2nd Term

i. **Nicolás Maduro** was sworn in for a **second term as Venezuela's President** amid the economic and humanitarian crisis faced by the **Latin American** country. Maduro was re-elected last year.

ii. The US, EU and 13 other countries have stated that they would **not recognise** Maduro's Presidency.

Important Takeways from above news-

- **Venezuela Capital-** Caracas, **Currency-** Venezuelan bolívar.

IWF President Named As Chef de Mission for Tokyo Olympics

i. **President of the Indian Weightlifting Federation (IWF), Birendra Prasad Baishya,** has been named **Chef de Mission for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics**.

ii. It is for the first time that the Weightlifting has been accorded with the honor of Chef de Mission for the Olympics. Baishya is also one of the Indian Olympic Association Vice Presidents.

Important Takeways from above news-

- The 2020 Summer Olympics, officially known as the Games of the XXXII Olympiad and commonly known as Tokyo 2020, is a forthcoming international multi-sport event that is scheduled to take place from 24 July to 9 August 2020.

Ashok Chawla Resigned As NSE Chairman

i. **Ashok Chawla resigned as chairman of the National Stock Exchange of India Ltd (NSE)** with immediate effect "in light of recent legal developments".

ii. Chawla's resignation came on a day the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) told a special court in Delhi that it has obtained the sanction of the ministries concerned to file charges against him and four other former bureaucrats in the Aircel-Maxis case.

Su Tseng-chang Appointed PM of Taiwan

i. **Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen** has appointed **Su Tseng-chang as Prime Minister**, during a Cabinet reshuffle following the ruling Democratic Progressive Party's heavy losses in local elections.

ii. Su is a former premier appointed in 2006 by then-President Chen Shui-bian and was a chairman of Tsai's Democratic Progressive Party for two terms.

Important Takeways from above news-

- **Taiwan Capital:** Taipei, **Currency:** New Taiwan dollar.

Ananth Narayanan Steps Down As Myntra-Jabong CEO

i. **Ananth Narayanan** has stepped down as **CEO of Myntra and Jabong** to pursue external opportunities. **Amar Nagaram** has been named as Head, Myntra and Jabong, reporting to **Kalyan Krishnamurthy, CEO of Flipkart Group**.

ii. Amar, who recently moved to Myntra from Flipkart, has been with the group for around seven years and has played a pivotal role in **making shopping accessible and affordable** on connected devices.

TCS Appoints Daniel Callahan As Independent Director

i. India's largest software exporter Tata Consultancy Services has appointed Don Callahan as an additional and independent director for a period of 5 years, based on the recommendations of the Nomination and Remuneration Committee.

ii. He was the Chief Administrative Officer and Head of Operations and Technology at Citigroup and was a member of Citi's Operating Committee earlier.

Important Takeways from above news-

- Tata Sons Chairman: N Chandrasekaran.

India's 1st CWG Boxing Gold-Medallist Mohammed Ali Qamar Appointed Women's Team Coach

i. **Mohammed Ali Qamar**, the man who won India's first Commonwealth Games gold medal in boxing, has taken over as the chief coach for the country's female boxers.

ii. **He has replaced veteran Shiv Singh.** Qamar, who is set to turn 38, is also the youngest person to land the job. Qamar's CWG gold came in the 2002 Manchester edition in the light flyweight category.

Manu Sawhney Appointed New ICC CEO

i. **The International Cricket Council (ICC)** announced that **Manu Sawhney** has been appointed as the organization's new **Chief Executive Officer (CEO)**.

ii. Sawhney, the former CEO of Singapore Sports Hub and Managing Director of ESPN Star Sports, will join the organization before formally taking over the reins from David Richardson in July following the ICC World Cup 2019.

Important Takeways from above news-

- **Chairperson:** Shashank Manohar, **Headquarters:** Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Prabhat Singh Appointed DG In NHRC

i. The Department of Personnel & Training, Government of India has appointed **Senior IPS Officer Prabhat Singh** as **Director General (Investigation)** in the **National Human Rights Commission**.

ii. Singh, a 1985 batch IPS Officer of AGMUT cadre is at present Special Director, Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF). He has been appointed to the post for a period up to **April 30, 2020**

Important Takeways from above news-

- **NHRC Chairperson:** Shri Justice H. L. Dattu, **Headquarters:** New Delhi.

Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Lofven Reelected For Second Term

i. The **Swedish Parliament** approved **Stefan Lofven** as **Prime Minister** for a second four-year term.

Important Takeways from above news-

- **Sweden Capital-** Stockholm, **Currency-** Swedish krona.

Andry Rajoelina Sworn In As Madagascar President

i. Madagascar president, **Andry Rajoelina**, has sworn into office after taking the oath in Antananarivo before nine judges of the High Constitutional Court.

ii. He won nearly **56%** to defeat another former president, **Marc Ravalomanana**.

Important Takeways from above news-

- **Madagascar Capital:** Antananarivo, **Prime Minister:** Christian Ntsay.

RBI Approves Appointment of V Vaidyanathan as MD, CEO of IDFC First Bank

i. The Reserve Bank of India has approved the appointment of **V Vaidyanathan** as **MD and CEO of IDFC First Bank** for a period of three years.

ii. In December 2018, IDFC Bank and non-banking financial company Capital First completed their merger, creating a combined loan asset book of Rs 1.03 lakh crore for the merged entity IDFC First Bank.

Important Takeways from above news-

- **IDFC First Bank** Headquarters in Mumbai.

Ravneet Gill To Replace Rana Kapoor as Yes Bank MD and CEO

i. **Yes Bank** has appointed veteran banker **Ravneet Singh Gill** as its **new MD & CEO** and the lender has also received the RBI's approval for the same. He will join the bank on or before March 1, 2019.

ii. **Mr Gill is currently the chief Deutsche Bank's India operations.** Gill joined Deutsche Bank in 1991 and has worked across different businesses including corporate banking, capital markets and wealth management.

Important Takeways from above news-

- **Yes Bank Headquarters in Mumbai.**

Sultan Abdullah Elected New Malaysian King

i. **Sultan Abdullah Sultan Ahmad Shah** was elected as **Malaysia's new king by the members of the country's royal families.** The 59-year-old was earlier appointed the Sultan of the Malaysian state of Pahang.

ii. **He replaced Sultan Muhammad V of Kelantan,** who stepped down recently, making it the first abdication in Malaysia's history.

Important Takeways from above news-

- **Malaysia Capital:** Kuala Lumpur, **Currency:** Malaysian ringgit.

IndiGo Appoints Ronojoy Dutta As New CEO

i. IndiGo owner **InterGlobe Aviation** has appointed **Ronojoy Dutta** as the new **Chief Executive Officer (CEO)** of the company with immediate effect.

ii. Ronojoy Dutta will remain as the company CEO for the next **five years.**

Pakistan Appoints Its First Ever Female Hindu Civil Judge

i. **Suman Kumari** has become the **first Hindu woman** to have been appointed as a civil judge in Pakistan after passing an examination for induction of judicial officers.

ii. The first judge from the Hindu community was Justice **Rana Bhagwandas,** who served as the acting chief justice for brief periods between **2005 and 2007.**

Poonam Khetrapal Singh Re-appointed Regional Director Of WHO South-East Asia

i. **Poonam Khetrapal Singh** has been appointed **Regional Director** for **World Health Organization South-East Asia,** for a second five-year term.

ii. The WHO Executive Board unanimously endorsed Dr. Khetrapal Singh, who was earlier also unanimously nominated by 11 Member countries of the Region for another five years.

Important Takeways from above news-

- **WHO Headquarters:** Geneva, Switzerland, **Director general:** Tedros Adhanom.

Dilip Sadarangani Appointed As Chairman Of Federal Bank

i. **Kerala** based private sector lender **Federal Bank** has appointed **Dilip Sadarangani** as the **part-time chairman.** The appointment of Sadarangani, who has been on the bank's board since **2013,** has been cleared by the Reserve Bank.

Important Takeways from above news-

- **Federal Bank Headquarter:** Aluva, Kerala, **MD & CEO:** Shyam Srinivasan, **Tagline:** Your perfect banking partner.

Lt Gen Rajeev Chopra Takes Over as Director General of NCC

i. **Lt Gen Rajeev Chopra** assumed the appointment of **Director General of NCC (DGNCC).** Commissioned in the Madras Regiment in December 1980, Lt Gen Chopra is an alumnus of the National Defence Academy, Khadakwasla and Indian Military Academy, Dehradun.

ii. Lt Gen Rajeev Chopra 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.

Honours/ Awards

Yu Wensheng Wins Franco-German Human Rights Award

i. A detained Chinese rights lawyer **Yu Wensheng** has won a **Franco-German human rights award** for his '**exceptional contribution**' to the **protection and promotion of human rights**.

ii. Yu Wensheng, who is in **pretrial detention** on subversion charges, has been held incommunicado by authorities in Jiangsu's Xuzhou city for more than a year. His wife **Xu Yan** received the Franco-German Prize for Human Rights and the Rule of Law on her husband's behalf from the French and German ambassadors to China.

Important Takeways from above news-

- France and Germany have presented the Franco-German Prize for Human Rights since **2016**.

Gandhi Peace Prize Conferred for Last 4 Years

i. The **Gandhi Peace Prize for the years 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018** has been conferred on the following:

1. For 2015: Vivekananda Kendra, Kanyakumari for their contribution in Rural Development, Education , Development of natural resources.

2. For 2016: Jointly to Akshaya Patra Foundation for its contribution in providing mid-day meals to millions of children across India and **Sulabh International** for its contribution in improving the condition of sanitation in India and emancipation of manual scavengers.

3. For 2017: Ekal Abhiyan Trust for their contribution in providing Education for Rural and Tribal Children in remote areas pan India, Rural Empowerment, Gender and Social Equality.

4. For 2018: Shri Yohei Sasakawa for his contribution in Leprosy Eradication in India and across the world.

Important Takeways from above news-

- The annual award was instituted by the Government of India in 1995 during the commemoration of **125th Birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi**.
- The award carries an amount of Rs 1Crore, a Citation in a scroll, a plaque as well as an exquisite traditional handicraft/handloom item.

Vinesh Phogat Becomes First Indian Athlete To Be Nominated In Laureus World Comeback of Year Award

i. Ace Indian female wrestler **Vinesh Phogat** has become the **first Indian athlete to receive a nomination** in the prestigious **Laureus World Comeback of the Year Award**. She has been nominated alongside US Tour Championship winner **Tiger Woods**, who won his first tournament in five years.

ii. The 24-year-old Vinesh from **Haryana** made a sensational comeback after battling a long injury lay-off to win a **gold medal** at the **Gold Coast Commonwealth Games** and **Jakarta Asian Games**.

Dr. Rattan Lal Honoured With 2019 Japan Prize

i. The **Japan Prize Foundation** announced India born professor **Dr. Rattan Lal**, University Professor of Soil Science at The Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio, U.S.A, as the recipient of the **2019 Japan Prize** for his contributions in the field of "**Biological Production, Ecology**".

ii. **Dr. Yoshio Okamoto** was announced to be the recipient of the 2019 Japan Prize on of "**Materials and Production**" field. A cash award of **50 million Japanese yen** (approximately \$450,000 USD) will also be given to each prize field.

Indian-American Gurinder Singh Khalsa Presented With Rosa Parks Trailblazer Award

i. The **Indian-American Sikh Gurinder Singh Khalsa**, 45, who lives in Fishers of Indiana, US was presented with the prestigious **2019 Rosa Park Trailblazer award** after being selected for champions of the diversity by the **Indiana Minority Business Magazine**.

Mohamed Salah Named African Footballer Of The Year

- i. Liverpool's Mohamed Salah** has been named as the **2018 Confederation of African Football Player of the Year**. For the second consecutive year he has won the award. Egypt forward Salah, 26, beat Liverpool team-mate Sadio Mane of Senegal and Arsenal and Gabon striker Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang to the title.
- ii. Houston Dash and South Africa forward Thembi Kgatlana** was named Women's Player of the Year.

Adi Godrej Conferred ICSI Lifetime Award

- i. Industrialist and Godrej Group Chairman Adi Godrej** was conferred the **ICSI's Lifetime Achievement Award** for '**Translating Excellence in Corporate Governance into Reality**'.
- ii.** The awards were instituted by The **Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI)**, which is celebrating its golden jubilee.
- iii.** The 18th ICSI National Awards for Excellence in Corporate Governance were bagged jointly by **Cipla Ltd and Dabur India Ltd** and five others: ACC Ltd, Hindustan Unilever Ltd, Indian Oil Corp, Tata Metaliks Ltd and Indian Hotels Co Ltd.

D N Chakraborty Gets Assam Republic Day Journalism Award

- i. Assam government** has conferred the **Republic Day Journalism Award 2019** to veteran journalist and former editor **Dhirendra Nath Chakraborty**. Chakraborty has been honored for his lifelong contribution to journalism in the state.
- ii.** The award comprises Rupees one lakh in cash, a citation, the Assamese 'xoraai' (the bell metal memento presented as an honour), 'jaapi' (headgear) and an angavastra.

Bharat Ratna Awarded to Nanaji Deshmukh, Dr Bhupen Hazarika and Pranab Mukherjee in 2019

- i.** The **Bharat Ratna** is the **highest civilian award** of the Republic of India. Instituted in 1954, the award is conferred "in recognition of exceptional service/performance of the highest order", without distinction of race, occupation, position, or sex.
- ii.** The **Bharat Ratna Awardees in 2019** are:
 - 1. Pranab Mukherjee**
 - 2. Bhupen Hazarika (Posthumously)**
 - 3. Nanaji Deshmukh (Posthumously)**

MP Anurag Thakur Honoured With Sansad Ratna Award

- i. Himachal Pradesh MP Anurag Thakur** has been **bestowed with Sansad Ratna Award** for his distinguished performance as a parliamentarian **under Jury Committee Special Award category**.
- ii.** Thakur became the first BJP MP to receive the Jury Committee award. 12 parliamentarians were honored with the Sansad Ratna award, which was set up in 2010 on the suggestion of ex-President APJ Abdul Kalam.

Important Takeways from above news-

- The **Sansad Ratna Award** was set up & launched in 2010 by Former President **Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam**.

Ranjani Murali Wins 'Woman's Voice Award' At AKLF 2019

- i.** US Based **Indian poet Ranjani Murali** was awarded the "**Woman's Voice Award**" at the **Apeejay Kolkata Literary Festival (AKLF)**. The Objective of the award is to **recognize and encourage creative writing by women in India**. The Award carried a cash prize of **Rs 1 Lakh** along with a citation.
- ii.** Ranjani Murali's second book "**Clearly you are ESL**" won the Great Indian Poetry Collectives (GIPCs) Editor's Choice award. Her first book "**Blind Screens**" was published in July 2017.

2018 ICC Awards: Virat Kohli Takes 3 Major Honours

i. Virat Kohli has become the first player in history to win the Sir Garfield Sobers Trophy for ICC Cricketer of the Year, the ICC Men's Test Player of the Year and the ICC ODI Player of the Year awards following an extraordinary 2018.

ii. The International Cricket Council also announced the men's Test and ODI teams of the year with Virat Kohli named captain of both sides.

Important Takeways from above news-

- **ICC Chairperson:** Shashank Manohar, **Headquarters:** Dubai, United Arab Emirates.
- **Manu Sawhney** has been recently appointed as the **ICC's new Chief Executive Officer (CEO).**

Bharat Ratna CNR Rao Chosen For International Prize For Materials Research

i. Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research announced that the Centre for Advanced Materials of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) chose Eminent Scientist and **Bharat Ratna** recipient **CNR Rao** for the **first Sheikh Saud International Prize for Materials Research.**

ii. The Award containing a plaque, a medal and a Cash Prize of USD 100000 will be presented by Sheikh Saud to Professor CNR Rao.

Important Takeways from above news-

- **United Arab Emirates Capital:** Abu Dhabi, **Currency:** UAE dirham.
- **CNR Rao** was awarded the highest Civilian award, **Bharat Ratna** in **2014** and presently he is working as the **Honorary President** of Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research.

Noted Gujarati Poet Sitanshu Yashashchandra Awarded Saraswati Samman 2017

i. Noted Gujarati poet Sitanshu Yashashchandra has been awarded **Saraswati Samman, 2017, for his poetry collection in Gujarati named "Vakhar".** This is the **27th edition** of the prestigious award instituted by K.K.Birla foundation.

ii. The award comprises of a citation and a plaque apart from award money of 15 lakh rupees. Mr. Yashashchandra, recipient of the Padmashri in 2006, is known for seamlessly blending history with poetry.

Indian expats From UAE Win Prestigious Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award

i. Three Indian expats from the UAE are amongst those who **won the prestigious Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award** the highest honor conferred on Indian diaspora. President Ram Nath Kovind conferred the award on **Girish Pant, Surender Singh Kandhari and Dr. Zulekha Daud** and other awardees at the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) Convention in Varanasi.

ii. Girish Pant is a social worker, **Surender Singh Kandhari** is chairman of the Gurudwara Guru Nanak Darbar Sikh Temple and a philanthropist, businessman, **Dr Zulekha** is founder and chairperson of Zulekha Healthcare Group.

Government Institutes Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar

i. The government has instituted an annual award titled Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar. It will be announced every year on **23rd January**, the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose. The Award carries a certificate and a cash prize of 51 lakh rupees.

ii. This year, 8th Battalion of National Disaster Response Force located at Ghaziabad has been selected for the Award for its commendable work in disaster management.

India Bags The Award of Excellence for 'Best in Show' At NYTTS 2019

i. India received the **Award of Excellence for 'Best in Show'** at the **New York Times Travel Show 2019**, the largest travel show in **North America.** India was honoured during the Closing Bell Ceremony at the New York Stock Exchange.

ii. The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India participated as the **'Presenting Partner'** in the **New York Times Travel Show (NYTTS 2019)** organised at Jacob K Javits Centre, New York.

Screen Actors Guild (SAG) Awards 2019 Announced: Complete List of Winners

“**Black Panther**” took home the top award for best performance by a cast in a motion picture at the **2019 Screen Actors Guild Awards**. On the TV front, “This Is Us” nabbed the ensemble award for drama, while “The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel” won the comedy prize. The award ceremony was held at the Shrine Auditorium in LA.

The **25th annual ceremony highlights performances** across film and television. Among individual acting awards, Rami Malek was recognized for playing the iconic Queen frontman Freddie Mercury in “Bohemian Rhapsody” and Glenn Close won for “The Wife.” Here is the complete list of winners in SAG 2019:

S. No.	Category	Winner
1.	Outstanding Performance by a Male Actor in a Leading Role	Rami Malek, “Bohemian Rhapsody”
2.	Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor in a Leading Role	Glenn Close, “The Wife”
3.	Outstanding Performance by a Male Actor in a Supporting Role	Mahershala Ali, “Green Book”
4.	Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor in a Supporting Role	Emily Blunt, “A Quiet Place”
5.	Outstanding Performance by a Cast in a Motion Picture	“Black Panther”

Sports

Khelo India Youth Games Concludes: Maharashtra Tops Medal Tally

- i. Maharashtra topped the medal tally with 37 golds** at the Khelo India Youth Games in Pune. It had 111 medals in its kitty with 37 gold, 31 silver and 43 bronze. Delhi was at second position with 35 gold and Haryana too maintains its third position with 29 gold.
- ii. 10-year old Abhinav Shaw** became the youngest gold medallist in the shooting. He teamed up with Mehuli Ghosh to help West Bengal win the 10m air rifle mixed team event.

Kartik Singh Becomes Youngest Indian to Win Junior World Title

- i. Gurgaon's 8-year-old Kartik Singh** has won the under-8 category at the Kids' Golf World Championship organized by US kids Golf in Malaysia, which makes him the youngest Indian to win the title.

Bengaluru Raptors Won 1st Ever PBL Title

- i. Bengaluru Raptors** have won their first ever Premier Badminton League, PBL title. In the title clash played at Bengaluru, Bengaluru edged out Mumbai Rockets, with a 4-3 win.
- ii. Star player Kidambi Srikanth, Vu Ji Trang** and the Men's Doubles pair of Mohammad Ahsan and Hendra Satiawan won their matches for Bengaluru guiding them to victory.

Albie Morkel Retires From All Forms Of Cricket

- i. Albie Morkel, the South African all-rounder,** announced his retirement from all forms of cricket. Morkel, who played for close to 20 years of professional cricket, made his first-class debut for Easterns against Northerns in the 1999-00 domestic season.
- ii. Morkel earned a call-up into the South African ODI set-up for the series against New Zealand in 2004** after snaring 12 scalps in List A games in the 2003-04 season.

Jasprit Bumrah Becomes Highest International Wicket-Taker in 2018

- i. The 25-year-old fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah** became the highest international wicket-taker across formats in 2018. He took a total of 78 wickets in the calendar year.
- ii. Bumrah surpassed South Africa's Kagiso Rabada's tally of 77 wickets to reach the milestone.** While on the third position is Bumrah's countryman Kuldeep Yadav who took 76 scalps.

Hopman Cup: Roger Federer & Belinda Bencic Retain Title For Switzerland

- i. Switzerland's Roger Federer and Belinda Bencic** secured victory over Germany's Angelique Kerber and Alexander Zverev to win the Hopman Cup for the second year in a row.
- ii. In a rerun of 2018 final, Federer beat Zverev** to give the Swiss an early 1-0 lead. Wimbledon champion Kerber then overcame Bencic to level the tie. However, the Swiss claimed a tight win in the mixed doubles to claim their fourth Hopman Cup title.

Important Takeways from above news-

- Twenty-time Grand Slam champion Federer is the first player to win three Hopman Cups - twice with Bencic and once with Martina Hingis, in 2001.

Sydney and Brisbane Chosen To Host \$15 million ATP Cup In 2020

- Australian cities Sydney and Brisbane** have been announced as the **first two host locations** for the newest team event in men's tennis for the multi-million dollar ATP Cup from 2020.
- The third Australian city for the tournament is yet to be determined. The tournament will comprise more than **100 players** from **24 nations** with **\$15 million** in prize money and 750 ATP Ranking points.

Important Takeways from above news-

- **Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) Chairman:** Chris Kermode, **Headquarters:** London, United Kingdom.
- **Australia Capital:** Canberra, **Currency:** Australian Dollar, **Prime Minister:** Scott Morrison.

Egypt to Host 2019 African Cup of Nations

- Seven-time champions Egypt** have won the hosting rights for the **2019 edition of the African Cup of Nations**.
- Egypt beat South Africa by 16 votes to one at the **Confederation of African Football's (CAF) Executive Committee**.

Important Takeways from above news-

- **Egypt Capital:** Cairo, **Currency:** Egyptian pound.

Harendra Singh Discontinued as Indian Men's Hockey Team Coach

- Indian men's hockey coach Harendra Singh** was removed from the position and offered the task of helming the **junior squad** by the national federation. Harendra Singh was brought in as men's coach in May 2018 after **Sjoerd Marijne** was moved back to the women's camp.
- Hockey India stated that it will be inviting applications for the position of **chief coach** and in the interim, the team will be overseen by Hockey India High-Performance Director **David John** and current Analytical Coach, **Chris Ciriello**.

Mary Kom Attains No. 1 Position in AIBA Rankings

- M C Mary Kom** has attained number one position in the **International Boxing Association's (AIBA) latest world rankings**. She became the most successful boxer in world championships' history when she claimed the **48kg category top honors in Delhi in November 2018**.
- In the 51kg category list, Pinki Jangra is placed eighth. Asian silver-medallist Manisha Maun is placed eighth in the 54kg category. In the 57kg division, **former world silver-medallist Sonia Lather** was placed **at the second spot**.

Important Takeways from above news-

- Mary Kom picked up gold medals at the Commonwealth Games and a tournament in Poland.
- She also won a silver at the prestigious Strandja Memorial in Bulgaria.

Shakil Ahmed Sets World Record In Indoor Rowing

- Asian Cup gold medallist Shakil Ahmed** has set up a world record in **indoor rowing** by completing **1 lakh meters** in **above-40 years** category in Kolkata.
- Shakil began his record-setting indoor rowing feat in **Salt Lake stadium complex** and achieved the milestone of covering 1 lakh meters of simulated distance in **10 hours**.

Chennai's Gukesh Crowned India's Youngest Grandmaster

- Tamil Nadu lad D Gukesh** became the **2nd youngest Grand Master in the world** and the **youngest Indian** to achieve the feat at **12 years, 7 months and 17 days**, erasing the mark set by his state-mate **R Praggnanandhaa** in June 2018.

ii. Gukesh becomes India's **59th Grand Master**. Ukraine's **Sergey Karjakin** remains the youngest-ever GM, having achieved the feat at the age of **12 years and 7 months** in **2002**.

India 1st Away Team To Win Bilateral Series in All Formats in Australia

i. **India defeated Australia** in the third ODI today to clinch the three-match series 2-1.

ii. With this, **India became the first visiting side to win a bilateral series (two or more matches) in all three formats in Australia.**

Ankita Raina Wins ITF's Tournament In Singapore

i. **India's Ankita Raina** has won the **International Tennis Federation's** 25,000-dollar Women's tournament in **Singapore**. In the Final, Ankita defeated top seed **Arantxa Rus** of the **Netherlands**.

ii. She will play two more tournaments before gearing up for the **Fed Cup**, starting in the first week of February at **Astana, Kazakhstan**.

Indonesia Masters Title 2019: Complete List of Winners

The 2019 Indonesia Masters, officially the **DAIHATSU Indonesia Masters 2019**, is a badminton tournament that takes place at the Istora Gelora Bung Karno in Indonesia and has a total purse of \$350,000. **Anders Antonsen** won the men's singles title and **Saina Nehwal** won the women's singles title.

Ace shuttler Saina Nehwal won her first Indonesia Masters title after three-time world champion Carolina Marin limped out of the final due to a leg injury.

Sl. No.	Event	Winner	Runner-Up
1.	Men's Singles	Anders Antonsen (Denmark)	Kento Momota (Japan)
2.	Women's Singles	Saina Nehwal (India)	Carolina Marin (Spain)

Rishabh Pant Named ICC Emerging Player Of The Year

i. **Rishabh Pant** was named the **International Cricket Council's (ICC) Emerging Player Of The Year** following an impressive show in **India's first-ever Test series win in Australia**.

ii. With an unbeaten 159-run knock in the 4th Test in Sydney, Rishabh Pant became the **first Indian wicket-keeper** to score a **Test century in Australia**.

Mohammed Shami Becomes Fastest Indian Bowler To Reach 100 ODI Wickets

i. **Mohammed Shami** became the **fastest Indian bowler to claim 100 ODI wickets**, during the first one-dayer against New Zealand at Napier. Shami reached the milestone in his 56th match, with the wicket of opener Martin Gupthill.

ii. The Indian record was previously held by Irfan Pathan, who got there in his 59th match, against Pakistan in Abu Dhabi in 2006. The **world record is currently held by Afghanistan leg-spinner Rashid Khan**, who needed only 44 games to reach the mark.

Australian Open 2019 Concludes: Complete List of Winners

The Australian Open is a tennis tournament held annually in **Melbourne Park, Australia**. First held in 1905, the tournament is chronologically the first of the four Grand Slam tennis events of the year – the other three being the French Open, Wimbledon and the US Open. **The 2018 Australian Open was the 107th edition of the tournament**. The tournament is run by the International Tennis Federation (ITF).

Sl. No.	Event	Winner	Runner-Up
1.	Men's Singles	Novak Djokovic (Serbia)	Rafael Nadal (Spain)
2.	Women's Singles	Naomi Osaka (Japan)	Petra Kvitova (Czech Republic)
3.	Mix Doubles	Barbora Krejčíková (Czech Republic) and Rajeev Ram (United States)	Astra Sharma (Australia) and John-Patrick Smith (Australia)

Holder Becomes 1st Top-Ranked Windies Test All-Rounder After Sobers

- i. West Indies captain **Jason Holder** has become the **first player from the country in 45 years to top the list of all-rounders in the International Cricket Council Test Player Rankings** after slamming an unbeaten double-century that helped script a memorable 381-run win over England in the first Test in Bridgetown.
- ii. West Indies legend Gary Sobers was at the top last in March 1974 and Holder has now emulated him following his 202 not out off 229 balls in the second innings in Bridgetown, which is the third highest score by a number eight batsman in Test history after the Pakistan pair of Wasim Akram (257 not out) and Imtiaz Ahmed (209).

Kartik Sharma Wins New South Wales Men's Amateur Golf Championship

- i. **India's Kartik Sharma** won the **New South Wales men's Amateur Golf Championship** in **Australia**. Kartik notched up a magnificent win over **Australia's Nathan Barberie** in the scheduled 36-hole final to emerge as champion.

Rohit Paudel of Nepal Youngest Batsman To Hit International Half-Century

- i. **Nepal** batsman **Rohit Paudel** has become the **youngest male cricketer** to score an **international fifty** at the age of **16 years and 146 days**, breaking **Sachin Tendulkar's** previous mark.
- ii. He is also the youngest man to score a **one-day international half-century**, beating **Shahid Afridi**, who smashed a **37-ball century** in an incredible first inning against Sri Lanka aged **16 and 217 days**. Indian legend Tendulkar scored his maiden **Test fifty** when **16 years and 213 days** old.

India Replaces Japan To Become Second-Largest Crude Steel Producer

- i. **India** has replaced **Japan** as the world's **2nd largest steel producing country**, while **China** is the largest producer of crude steel, accounting for more than **51%** of production, according to the World Steel Association.
- ii. China's share increased from 50.3% in 2017 to **51.3%** in 2018. India's crude steel production in 2018 was at **106.5 MT**, up **4.9%** from 101.5 MT in 2017.

73-yr-old Jean-Luc Wins Round-the-World Sailing Race

- i. French sailor **Jean-Luc Van Den Heede** has won the round-the-world yacht race after **212 days** alone at sea without modern instruments.

ii. The **73-year-old**, who completed his sixth circumnavigation of the globe, became the oldest to complete the **30,000-mile Golden Globe race**. Of the 19 sailors who started out in July 2018, only 5 were still in the race.

Obituaries

Fields Medal-Winning Mathematician Passes Away

- i. **Sir Michael Atiyah**, a British mathematician who received the 1966 Fields Medal, also known as the 'Nobel for Mathematics,' passed away at the age of 89.
- ii. Atiyah was best known for his co-development of a branch of mathematics called topological K-theory and the Atiyah-Singer index theorem. Atiyah was also the President of the Royal Society from 1990-1995.

Veteran Actor-Writer Kader Khan Passes Away

- i. **Veteran actor-writer Kader Khan passed away in Canada** at the age of 81. Kader Khan made his acting debut in 1973 with Rajesh Khanna's "Daag".
- ii. Before becoming an actor he had written dialogues for Randhir Kapoor-Jaya Bachchan's "Jawani Diwani".

Sachin's Coach Ramakant Achrekar Passes Away

- i. Veteran **cricket coach Ramakant Achrekar**, who trained **Bharat Ratna Sachin Tendulkar and Vinod Kambli**, among others, passed away following a heart attack.
- ii. He was **87** and breathed his last at his home in Dadar. Achrekar, honoured with **Padma Shri in 2010** and **Dronacharya Award in 1990**, was instrumental in shaping the careers of **Tendulkar, Kambli** and over a dozen other top cricket stars.

Veteran Kannada Actor CH Loknath Passes Away

- i. **Veteran Kannada actor CH Lokanath passed away** after suffering cardiac arrest. He was 91. Lokanath was in the Kannada film industry for nearly six decades and was affectionately addressed as 'Uncle Lokanath' by his fans.
- ii. He had acted in over 600 movies and more than 1,000 plays. His famous movies are Bhootayyana Maga Ayyu, Minchina Ota, Nagarahaavu, Nodi Swami Navidru Heege, Katha Sangama and Kittu Puttu.

Malayalam Director Lenin Rajendran Passes Away

- i. **Malayalam director and screenwriter Lenin Rajendran** has passed away at 67.
- ii. He was a five-time recipient of the **Kerala State Film Awards** and also received the **International Federation of Film Critics Award** for the best Malayalam film for his film '**Makaramanju**'.

Veteran Bengali Writer Dibyendu Palit Passes Away

- i. **Renowned Bengali writer and Sahitya Akademi awardee Dibyendu Palit** passes away due to age-related ailments. He was 79-year-old.
- ii. Palit was conferred the **Sahitya Akademi** for his novel '**Anubhab**' in 1998. He was awarded the '**Bankim Purashkar**' for '**Dheu**' in 1990 and '**Ananda Purashkar**' in 1984 for '**Sahojodha**'.

Pulitzer Prize-Winning Writer Mary Oliver Passes Away

- i. **Mary Oliver, the Pulitzer Prize-winning poet** passed away. She was 83. The cause of death was lymphoma.
- ii. Oliver — author of more than 15 poetry and essay collections — wrote brief, direct pieces that sang of her worship of the outdoors and disdain for greed, despoilment and other human crimes.

Oscar-Winning French Composer Michel Legrand Passes Away

- i. **Oscar-winning French composer Michel Legrand** has passed away aged 86. During a career spanning more than half a century, **Legrand won three Oscars**.
- ii. His first was in 1969 for the song '**The Windmills of Your Mind**' from the film '**The Thomas Crown Affair**'.

World's Oldest Man Masazo Nonaka Passes Away At 113

- i. **The world's oldest man, Masazo Nonaka of Japan**, has died at the age of **113**.
- ii. Nonaka, who was officially recognized as the oldest male in the world by **Guinness World Records** in **April 2018**, passed away at his home in the north of Japan's Hokkaido island.

Former Indian Hockey Player Raghbir Bhola Passes Away

- i. **Former Indian hockey player Raghbir Singh Bhola**, a two-time Olympic medallist, has passed away aged 92. In 2000, he was honored with the **Arjuna Award** for his achievements in hockey.
- ii. He served in diverse roles such as the member of the IHF selection committee, FIH international umpire, manager of the Indian hockey team, TV commentator and government observer at the **Olympic Games**.

Jnanpith Winning Hindi Writer Krishna Sobti Passes Away

- i. **Eminent Hindi author and essayist Krishna Sobti** passed away in Delhi. She was 93. She was a recipient of many coveted awards like Sahitya Akademi, Jnanpith awards and was also offered Padma Bhushan, which she had declined.
- ii. Some of her celebrated works include **Daar Se Bichhudi**, **Mitro Marjani**, **Zindaginama**, **Dil-o-Danish**, **Badalom ke Ghare**, **Ai Ladki** and **Gujarat Pakistan Se Gujarat Hindustan**.

Pulitzer Prize-Winning Columnist Russell Baker Passes Away

- i. **Russell Baker, the Pulitzer Prize-winning** writer who penned thousands of columns for **The New York Times**, and hosted the PBS television program '**Masterpiece Theatre**,' passed away in Leesburg, Va. He was 93.
- ii. Baker won the Pulitzer Prize for commentary in 1979. It was the first Pulitzer for commentary awarded to a humorist.

Former Defence Minister George Fernandes Passes Away

- i. Former Defence Minister **George Fernandes** passed away in Delhi at the age of 88. Fernandes also served as the **Railways Minister** in former Prime Minister VP Singh's government.
- ii. His last stint as a parliamentarian was as a **Rajya Sabha MP** between August 2009 and July 2010.



Important Days with theme

World Hindi Day: 10 January

- i. **World Hindi Day** is celebrated on **January 10** every year, marking the anniversary of **first World Hindi Conference** which was held in **1975**. The first World Hindi Conference was inaugurated by the then prime minister **Indira Gandhi**. World Hindi Day was first observed on **January 10, 2006**.
- ii. World Hindi Day and **National Hindi Diwas** are **completely different**. National Hindi Diwas is celebrated every year on **September 14**. On that day in **1949**, the constituent assembly adopted Hindi, written in **Devanagari script**, as the official language of the Union.

National Youth Day: 12 January

- i. The National Youth Day is celebrated across the country on 12th January. NYD 2019 is the **156th birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda**.
- ii. Since **1985**, his birth anniversary has been celebrated as **National Youth Day**. Vivekananda died at the young age of 39, attaining Mahasamadhi in 1902.

Indian Army Day: 15 January

- i. **Army Day** is observed on **January 15** in India. On this day in 1949, **Field Marshal Kodandera M Cariappa** took over as the first Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army from General Sir Francis Butcher, the last British Commander-in-Chief.
- ii. Army day is dedicated to the soldiers who fought to safeguard the country's honour. This is the 71st celebration of the Indian Army Day.

National Girl Child Day: 24 January

i. National Girl Child Day is celebrated in India on **24 January**. **Women and Child Development Ministry** celebrated the **National Girl Child Day 2019** at Pravasi Bharti Kendra, New Delhi. The programme also observed the anniversary of **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) Scheme**.

ii. The theme of National Girl Child Day 2019 was “**Empowering Girls for a Brighter Tomorrow**” and celebrating with objectives of generating awareness on the issue of declining Child Sex Ratio (CSR).

Important Takeways from above news-

- Maneka Sanjay Gandhi is the Union Cabinet Minister for Women & Child Development.

International Day of Education: 24 January

i. Today (24th January) is International Day of Education.

ii. On 3 December 2018, the **United Nations General Assembly** adopted with consensus a resolution proclaiming **24 January as International Day of Education**, in celebration of the role of education for peace and development.

National Voters Day: 25 January

i. 25 January is celebrated every year as **National Voters Day** to spread awareness about the necessity of voting and to encourage young generation towards the voting rights.

ii. National Voters Day Theme 2019 is “**No Voter to be left behind**”. This is the **ninth** year of celebrating National Voters Day.

iii. 25th January is the **foundation day of the Election Commission of India (ECI)** which came into existence in **1950**.

Data Protection Day: Jan 28

i. The **Council of Europe** had launched a **Data Protection Day** to be celebrated each year on **28 January**, the date on which the Council of Europe’s **data protection convention**, known as “**Convention 108**”, was opened to the signature.

ii. Data Protection Day is now celebrated globally and is called **Data Privacy Day** outside Europe.

World Leprosy Eradication Day: 30th January

i. 30th January 2019, is celebrated as **World Leprosy Eradication Day** which stresses the need of **eradicating the disease**. It also brings to light the discrimination and stigma that people suffer from society every day.

ii. This year’s theme for World Leprosy Day is ‘**ending discrimination, stigma, and prejudice**’. **Leprosy**, also known as Hansen’s disease is a highly contagious infection caused by the **bacterium Mycobacterium leprae**.