

Current Affairs - February 2019.

Month Type



- **118** Current Affairs were found in Period - **February 1 - 10, 2019** for Type - **All**

Appointments

- ▶ Egypt's President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi has been elected as chairman of the African Union, during its summit in Ethiopia.
- ▶ Government appointed Rishi Kumar Shukla as new Director of CBI (Central Bureau of Investigation).
- ▶ Misc. Appointments (Feb 2019) -
 1. Sanjeev Ranjan has been appointed as new Indian Ambassador to Colombia (South America).
 2. K.P.Singh has been appointed as Director-General of Haryana State Police. Dinkar Gupta is appointed as Director General of Punjab Police.
 3. Nilambar Acharya has been appointed as Nepal's ambassador to India.
 4. Dinesh Bhatia appointed as Ambassador of India to Argentina.
 5. Ruchira Kamboj is appointed as Ambassador of India to Bhutan.
 6. B.S.Mubarak became Ambassador of India to Honduras.
 7. Sailesh Assumed appointed as Secretary in Ministry of Minority Affairs.
 8. Pradeep Singh Kharola appointed as secretary of Ministry of Civil Aviation.
 9. Cricket Australia appointed Ricky Ponting as assistant coach for Australia's cricket team for 2019 World Cup.
 10. Radheyshyam Julaniya appointed as Union Sports Secretary.
- ▶ Nayib Bukele won presidential elections in Central American Nation El Salvador.
- ▶ World Bank CEO Kristalina Georgieva assumed role of interim President of World Bank, after Former World Bank President Jim Yong Kim's retirement became effective on FEB 1.

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Awards

- ▶ Acclaimed Indo-Canadian filmmaker Deepa Mehta will be given Lifetime Achievement Award by Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television.
- ▶ Bengali Preist Francois Laborde conferred Légion d'Honneur (Legion of Honour), the highest civilian award of France, in recognition of his work for specially-abled children. He is third person from West Bengal to have been awarded Legion of Honor after Satyajit Ray and Soumitra Chatterjee.
- ▶ Eicher Motors MD & CEO Siddhartha Lal named EY Entrepreneur of the Year 2018 India, with Wipro chairman Azim Premji honoured with the lifetime achievement award. Mr. Lal will represent India at EY World Entrepreneur of Year Awards in Monte Carlo in June 2019.
- ▶ Gorkha Brigade received best marching contingent trophy of Republic Day parade, while CRPF won best marching contingent prize for para-military forces.
 1. In category of tableaux , Tripura 's tableau that depicted Gandhian way of fuelling rural economy, won first prize whereas Jammu and Kashmir's tableau won second (depicted the state's composite culture and ethnic diversity).
- ▶ Industrial Awards (Feb 2019) -
 1. Rajiv Nath has been conferred with Award of Appreciation by for his contribution to Global Public Healthcare sector. He is also appointed as Member on Board of National Medical Devices Promotion Council by DIPP (now renamed as Department

for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade(DPIIT)).

2. IIT Roorkee Professor Jayanta Kumar Ghosh has been conferred National Geospatial Award for Excellence-2017 (Lifetime Achievement Award) at Space Application Centre in Ahmedabad.
3. National Film Development Corporation of India selected as Winner under the Miniratna Category (Category II) by Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME).
4. 9th edition of Aegis Graham Bell Award held in Panaji Goa. Uniphore Software Systems received the Aegis Graham Bell Award under Innovation in Data Science for its flagship product auMina.
5. Yes Bank named winner of 9th edition of Aegis Graham Bell Award 2018 for its 'Yes Engage Enrich Excel (EEE)' project in data science. YES EEE program is an industry-first analytics tool that aids Bank's relationship managers with top three talking points to engage with their customers.
6. ▶ K.Veeramani Award for Social Justice 2018 will be conferred on P.S. Krishnan, given by Periyar International Inc.
7. ▶ Manus Island's refugee Behrouz Boochani 's debut book 'No Friends But the Mountains' won both 25,000 dollars non-fiction prize at Victorian premier's literary awards and 100,000 dollars Victorian prize for literature, in Australia.
8. ▶ SBI UK head Sanjiv Chadha honoured with the 'Freedom of the City of London' award in recognition of his contribution to promoting the bilateral relations. Genesis of the 'Freedom of the City of London' is traced to the medieval time of around 1237. It enabled recipients to carry out their trade. Previous Indian recipient of the honour is Jawaharlal Nehru, first PM of India.

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Books

1. ▶ Book *Law, Justice and Judicial Power – Justice PN Bhagwati's Approach*, written by Mool Chand Sharma has been released.
2. ▶ Book *Ramayana Retold With Scientific Evidences*, written by Saroj Bala has been released. It depicts exact dates for events in Hindu Mythological Novel *The Ramayana*.

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Committees

1. ▶ Government constituted a committee under Central Electricity Authority (CEA) to explore prepaid payments by state electricity distribution companies to power plants. Committee will look into problems of delayed payments from distribution companies to power generators.
2. ▶ Maharashtra government has set up a committee to review various schemes being implemented for the welfare of tribals in the state. It is headed by Vivek Pandit.
3. ▶ Punjab government constituted a committee to prepare a comprehensive action plan for boosting the dairy sector with the aim of supplementing income of farmers in a result-oriented manner.

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Days

1. ▶ Feb 02 - World Wetlands Day. 2019 theme is *Wetlands and Climate Change*.
2. ▶ Feb 04 - World Cancer Day. On this Occasion. Union for International Cancer Control launched a new 3-year campaign with the theme: "I Am and I Will".
3. ▶ Feb 10 - First-ever UN World Pulses Day. UN also named 2016 as International Year of Pulses.
4. ▶ Feb 6 - International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation.
5. ▶ Feb 8 is observed as National Cleft Day in India. On this occasion, Smile Train launched India's first toll-free national cleft helpline - 1800 103 8301.

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Defence

1. ▶ Indian Coast Guard and Airport Authority of India (AAI) signed MOU for coordination in aeronautical and maritime search and rescue operations.
2. ▶ Defence Acquisition Council headed by Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman approved acquisition of INR 1,200 crore Milan-2T anti-tank missiles.

1. While requirement is of 70,000 different types of anti-tank guided missiles (ATGM) and 850 different launchers, DAC has approved purchase of 5,000 Milan 2T anti-tank guided missiles from France.
3. ▶ Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) flight tested second indigenously developed 'Solid Fuel Ducted Ramjet (SFDR)' propulsion based missile system. Helicopter-launched anti-tank missile Helina was also successfully test fired. Helina is air-launched variant of Nag, a fire-and-forget ATGM with an estimated range of 4 kilometers. Helina's range is estimated at between 7 to 8 kilometres.
4. ▶ Indian Navy's INS Trikanth participated in a multinational training exercise 'CUTLASS EXPRESS – 19' held at Djibouti Coast. It was sponsored by U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM), and conducted by Naval Forces Africa (NAVAF).
5. ▶ Multinational naval exercise Aman-2019 hosted by Pakistan, with participation of 46 nations.
6. ▶ US approved sale of two missile defence systems for Air India One (Official planes flying the prime minister and the president), named Large Aircraft Infrared Countermeasures (LAIRCAM) and Self-Protection Suites (SPS).
 1. LAIRCM protects large aircraft from man-portable missiles.
 2. SPS will facilitate a more robust capability into areas of increased missile threats.

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Economy

1. ▶ As per Official stats, GST collection for January 2019 is estimated at Rs 1.03 lakh crores.
2. ▶ According to commerce and industry ministry data, Foreign direct investment (FDI) into India has declined 11% to \$22.66 billion during April-September period of current fiscal. Sectors that received maximum foreign investment are services (\$4.91 billion), followed by computer software and hardware (\$2.54 billion).
3. ▶ As per National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) periodic labor force survey (PLFS), India's unemployment rate hit a 45 year high of 6.1% in 2017-18.
4. ▶ Asian Development Bank (ADB) bought 14% stake in micro-financier Annapurna Finance for Rs 137 crores. ADB has backed MFIs to help achieve its broader objective of reducing poverty in Asia and the Pacific.
5. ▶ Finance Minister Piyush Goyal Presented Interim Union Budget 2019 - 20. Detailed Highlights can be accessed [here](#).
 1. Government in interim budget 2019 unveiled its vision for 2030, listing 10 developmental dimensions. These are Physical & Social Infrastructure, Digital India, Clean & Green India, Rural Industrialization, Clean Rivers, Oceans & Coastline, Space, Self-sufficiency in Food Production, Health, Minimum Government, Maximum Governance.
 2. Transparency International conducted a survey to analyse best practices followed by Indian states in the Budget Formulation. It was based on 4 parameters which include public disclosure, budgetary process, post-budget fiscal management and efforts to make budget more transparent and citizen-friendly.
 1. Top slot in survey was occupied by Assam, followed by Andhra Pradesh and Odisha.
 2. Meghalaya, Manipur and Punjab figured in bottom.
 3. Assam is only state to have published a Citizens Budget in public domain. Also, Assam is only state to have conducted budget awareness campaigns across 17 districts.
6. ▶ Financial Firm Paytm launched hotel bookings on its platform and acquired travel start up *NightStay*, which offers deals on last-minute bookings at luxury hotels.
7. ▶ Fino Payments Bank (FPB) launched a sweep account facility in association with Suryoday Small Finance Bank (SSFB), to address issue of deposit limits faced by all payment banks in India (Currently 1 Lakh).
8. ▶ Fitch Group's Fitch Solutions projected India's fiscal deficit to be 3.6% of GDP in 2019-20 fiscal, more than 3.4 % Projected in Interim Budget 2019-20.
9. ▶ Food delivery startup Swiggy acquired Bengaluru-based AI startup Kint.io for an undisclosed amount. Acqui-hiring refers to buying out a company or an entity primarily for skills and expertise of its staff, rather than for its products or services.
10. ▶ Indian Banking Association asked banks to waive off processing, documentation, inspection, ledger folio charges and all other service charges for Kisan Credit Card/crop loans upto 3 Lakhs.
11. ▶ India's new e-commerce policy came into effect on February 1, 2019. It puts several restrictions on e-commerce firms, to make a level playing field for all firms, vendors.
 1. It bars online retailers from selling products through vendors in which they have an equity interest.
 2. It also bars them from entering into exclusive deals with brands for selling products only on their platforms.
 3. Policy disallows e-commerce players to control inventory of the vendors. Any such ownership over inventory will convert it into inventory based model from marketplace based model, which is not entitled to FDI.

4. Under new rules, e-commerce retailer shall be deemed to own the inventory of a vendor if over 25 per cent of the purchases of such a vendor are through it. Hence, not more than a quarter of inventory on an e-commerce platform can come from a single vendor.

The policy has also restricted marketplaces from influencing prices in a bid to curb deep discounting.

12. ▶ Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDAI) imposed fine of 9 lakh on PSU Insurer United India Insurance Company.
13. ▶ Kerala High Court said that banks cannot be absolved from liability to loss caused to a customer on account of unauthorised withdrawals made from his/her account, merely on ground that customer did not respond promptly to SMS alert given by the bank.

1. It is obligation of banks to create a safe electronic banking environment to combat all forms of malicious conduct, which result in the loss to their customers.

14. ▶ Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Issued Categorization of farmers as per agriculture census 2015-16, which is conducted in every five years. Categorisation of operational holdings as per Agriculture Census -

1.

Category	Size-Class
Marginal	Below 1.00 hectare
Small	1.00-2.00 hectare
Semi-medium	2.00-4.00 hectare
Medium	4.00-10.00 hectare
Large	10.00 hectare and above

15. ▶ Ministry of Finance will merge 2 regional rural banks in Tamilnadu, naming new entity as Tamil Nadu Grama Bank. Banks to be merged are Pallavan Grama Bank (Sponsored by Indian Bank) and Pandyan Grama Bank (Sponsored by Indian Overseas Bank).
16. ▶ Penalties Imposed by RBI -
1. INR 2 crore penalty on UCO Bank for non-compliance of instructions issued by RBI on collection of account payee instruments and those on frauds-classification and reporting.
 2. RBI slapped 1-crore penalty on Syndicate Bank for violating several norms.
 3. RBI levied 2.2 Crores Penalty on Axis Bank for violating norms.
 4. RBI levied penalty of 1 crore on State Bank of India (SBI) for not monitoring end use of funds in respect of one of its borrowers.
 5. RBI imposed penalty of 2 crores on Corporation Bank due to some lapses in monitoring of end use of funds and exchange of information with other banks.
 6. RBI imposed penalty of 1.5 crores on Allahabad Bank for violating several norms.
17. ▶ Punjab government approved a rural development scheme worth Rs 384.40 crore to supplement ongoing works to build village infrastructure and provide essential amenities, called 'Smart Village Campaign'.
18. ▶ RBI Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) Sixth Bi-Monthly Review -
1. Decided to reduce Repo Rate under Liquidity Adjustment Facility (LAF) by 25 basis points from 6.5 % to 6.25 %
 2. Reverse Repo Rate under LAF stands came down to 6 %
 3. Marginal Standing Facility (MSF) Rate and Bank Rate came down to 6.5 %
 4. MPC also decided to change Monetary Policy Stance from Calibrated Tightening to Neutral.
 5. CSO estimated GDP growth at 7.2% for 2018-19. GDP growth for 2019-20 is projected at 7.4%.
 6. Current RBI Monetary Policy Rates -
 - Repo Rate - 6.25 %
 - Reverse Repo - 6.00 %
 - Bank Rate - 6.50 %
 - CRR (Cash Reserve Ratio) - 4 %
 - SLR(Statutory Liquidity ratio) - 19.5 % (RBI decided to reduce SLR from existing 19.5% to 18.0% in six quarterly instalments beginning January 2019)
 - Marginal Standing Facility (MSF) Rate - 6.50 %
19. ▶ RBI issued new policy for overseas borrowings, rationalizing earlier policy in consultation with Government.
1. New policy allows all eligible borrowers to raise External Commercial Borrowings (ECB) up to \$750 million or equivalent per financial year under automatic route replacing the existing sector wise limits.
 2. To liberalise framework ECB and rupee-denominated bonds Tracks I and II under existing framework are merged as 'Foreign Currency denominated ECB' and Track III and Rupee Denominated Bonds framework are combined as 'Rupee Denominated ECB' to replace current four-tiered structure (Track I, II and III denotes amount and maturity of funds raised).

3. All-in cost ceiling per annum has been pegged at the benchmark rate plus 450 bps spread. Minimum average maturity period (MAMP) has been kept at three years for all ECBs.
4. List of eligible borrowers has been expanded to include all entities eligible to receive foreign direct investment (FDI).
20. ▶ RBI launched ombudsman scheme for digital payments, to provide free of cost redressal mechanism to grievances raised by customers for digital transactions undertaken by them through non-banking channels, like mobile wallets or tech enabled payment companies using UPI for settlements.
21. ▶ RBI raised criteria for 'bulk deposits' for banks to Rs 2 crore from the current Rs 1 crore, to provide more operational freedom to lenders to raise funds.
 1. Banks have been given discretion to offer differential rate of interest on the bulk deposits as per their requirements and asset-liability management (ALM) projections. Interest rate on bulk deposits are marginally higher than smaller-amount fixed deposits for similar maturity period.
22. ▶ RBI raised limit of collateral-free agricultural loans to 1.6 lakh from the current 1 lakh, to help small and marginal farmers. Currently, banks are mandated to extend collateral-free agricultural loans up to 1 lakh, fixed in 2010.
23. ▶ State Govt. Budgets 2019 - 20 -
 1. Uttar Pradesh -
 1. UP government presented 4.79 lakh crore budget for 2019-20.
 1. Budget comprised of new schemes worth 21,212.95 crores. Surplus (revenue saving) of INR 27,777.36 crores is estimated in 2019-20.
 2. Government launched Kanya Sumangala Scheme for upliftment of women which would give 'handsome' money to all girls in the state when they get married or pass graduation.
 2. Assam -
 1. Assam Govt. presented 4th Deficit Budget of the state for fiscal year 2019-20, with deficit being 1193 crores. Total expenditure in budget crossed 70000 crores.
 1. Under Scheme Arundhati, Brides will be given one tola gold belonging to families having income of less than Rs. 5 lakh per annum.
 2. Students who passes in 12th class examination with first division will be given e-bike.
 3. Widows below 45 years will be given immediate support of Rs. 25,000.
 4. Rice would be sold at Rs.1 per kg to benefit poor families.
 3. Chhattisgarh -
 1. Chhattisgarh Govt. presented Annual Budget for 2019-2020, amounted INR 90,910 crores.
 1. 5000 crore has been marked for farm loan waiver.
 2. 4000 crore had been marked for Mukhya Mantri Khadyanna Suraksha Yojana to provide 35 kg rice per ration card to BPL families.
 4. Odisha -
 1. Odisha Govt presented Interim Budget amounting to Rs. 1,32,660 for 2019-2020.
 1. For first four months, Budget is amounted to Rs. 56,921 crores.
 2. 4,461 crore has been marked for KALIA (Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation) scheme.
 3. 2,935 crore allocated for Rural Water Supply- BASUDHA Sheme.
 4. 2,120 crore has been allocated for Madhubala Pension Yojana.
 5. 400 crore marked to Ama Gaon Ama Bikash-PEETHA.
 5. Tamil Nadu -
 1. Tamil Nadu Govt. presented budget for 2019-20, with revenue pegged at 1,97,721 crores and Revenue Deficit of 14,315 crores.
 1. 1700 crore allocated for 1 lakh concrete houses which are to be built in Cyclone Gaja affected areas.
 2. Will establish a new arts and science college at Rameswaram named after former President APJ Abdul Kalam.
 3. Government would set up a Centre of Excellence for Emerging Technologies under TNeGA (Tamil Nadu e-Governance Agency) to harness artificial intelligence, machine learning, block chain, big data and Internet of Things.
24. ▶ Ujjivan Small Finance Bank Launched 'Kisan Suvidha loan' for small and marginal farmers, available by farmers for both agriculture and allied activities. It provides loans to individuals with an amount ranging from Rs. 60000 to Rs. 2 Lakh.

International

1. ▶ According to *2018 Global Go To Think Tank Index Report*, Observer Research Foundation (ORF) has been marked as India's highest ranked think tank, ranked 118 globally. Brookings Institution is the highest ranked think tank globally and followed by French Institute of International Relations and Carnegie Endowment in second position.
2. ▶ Asian Development Bank (ADB) raised 5,220.4 billion Philippine pesos (\$100 million) from a new issue of local currency bonds in the international market. Currency-linked bonds are denominated in the local currency but settled in US dollars.
 1. ADB issued bonds in Philippine domestic market in 2005 and 2007 but this issue is first time it has mobilized Philippine peso funding from international investors through a currency-linked structure.
3. ▶ ECA international survey declared Singapore to be most liveable location for Asian Expatriates for 14th consecutive year.
4. ▶ European Parliament approved Juan Guaido as interim President of Venezuela, highlighting international crisis and pressure of public against President Nicolas Maduro.
5. ▶ International Intellectual Property (IP) Index 2019, released by US Chamber of Commerce's Global Innovation Policy Center. The Index assesses the Intellectual Property regimes and developments in 50 global economies.
 1. India improved by 8 places to 36th Place.
 2. Top 5 - US, UK, Sweden, France and Germany.
6. ▶ Iran test flighted Hoveizeh long-range cruise missile, on occasion of 40th anniversary of its Islamic revolution. Hoveizeh Cruise Missile has range of over 1,350 km (840 miles).
7. ▶ Macedonia signed an accord to join NATO to become 30th member of the Military alliance.
 1. Conflict over name with Greece had become a damper in its membership to NATO. Conflict recently came to a logical end with conclusion of Prespa Agreement.
 2. Russia Raised Concerns against Macedonia becoming part of NATO. Russia accused NATO of destabilising Balkans by pushing Macedonia and Montenegro to join NATO. Russia sees Balkan nations as its sphere of influence and is against NATO or any other body led by US or EU making inroads to Balkan countries.
8. ▶ Thailand government approved naming Siamese fighting fish as National Aquatic Animal. The Siamese fighting fish was chosen as it's a native, unique species to the kingdom's waters and an important animal for Thailand's economy.
9. ▶ U.K., France and Germany formed a plan to help companies trading to Iran to defy US sanctions on Iran, called INSTEX (acronym of Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges).
 1. US had walked out of Joint comprehensive plan of action (JCPOA) agreement and reimposed sanctions on Iran. Under JCPOA, Iran agreed to curb its nuclear activities in return for the lifting of sanctions that had been imposed by UN, US and EU.
 2. New plan proposes a special purpose vehicle to accept payments from companies that want to trade with Iran. This plan would shield European companies keen to do business with Iran from U.S. sanctions that could result from dollar-based transactions.
 3. INSTEX is registered at Paris with an initial 3,000 Euros in the capital and a supervisory board with members from France and Germany and chaired by the UK. INSTEX will support legitimate European trade with Iran, focusing initially on the sectors most essential to the Iranian population such as pharmaceutical, medical devices and agri-food goods.
10. ▶ UAE Emirate Abu Dhabi included Hindi as third official language used in its courts, alongside Arabic and English, as part of a move designed to improve access to justice.
11. ▶ UN Security Council resolution 2454 has been adopted unanimously, that aims to extend sanctions against the Central African Republic (CAR) for a year.
 1. Central African Republic has been hurt by violence between Muslims and Christians since predominantly Muslim, Seleka rebels overthrew Christian president in March 2013 and seized power. Anti-Balaka militias, mostly Christians, fought back, resulting in thousands of deaths and displacement. As a result, many fled to the country's north and across the border into Chad and Cameroon.
12. ▶ With USA withdrawing from INF treaty, Russia also declared its suspension of treaty, triggering fear about arms race due to suspension of INF treaty.
 1. Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty (signed by USA and Russia in December 1987), prohibited USA and Soviet Union from possessing, testing and deploying ground-launched cruise and ballistic missiles of ranges between 500 and 5,500 kilometres. Treaty exempted the air-launched and sea-based missile systems in the same range.
 2. Under the treaty, both US and Russia destroyed 846 and 1,846 missiles respectively.

3. Now, as the treaty has ended, Both Russia and US would indulge in development of these short and medium ranges missiles, triggerinh hige risks for rest of world, mainly European Union.

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Meetings

1. ▶ 13th Conference of Parties (COP) of Convention on the conservation of migratory species of wild animals (CMS), an environmental treaty under UN Environment Programme, will be hosted by India during 15th to 22nd February, 2020 at Gandhinagar in Gujarat, with Great Indian Bustard (GIB) as mascot for the event.
 1. India has been a Party to CMS since 1983. The Conference of Parties (COP) is the decision-making organ of this convention.
 2. In order to protect migratory species throughout their range countries, a Convention on Conservation of Migratory Species (CMS), has been in force, under UNEP. Also referred to as Bonn Convention, it provides a global platform for conservation of migratory animals and their habitats and brings together.
2. ▶ 2nd ASEAN-India Youth Summit Organized in Guwahati (Assam), organised by India Foundation, with theme *Connectivity: Pathway to Shared Prosperity*.

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National

1. ▶ 2nd Phase of Pasupu-Kumkuma (Turmeric-Kumkum) scheme and welfare pensions launched by Andhra Pradesh Govt. 94 Lakh DWCRA (Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas) women will be given Rs 10000 in three installments under Pasupu-Kumkuma scheme. Annual Expenditure will be around Rs 13200 crores.
2. ▶ 3rd Brahmaputra Literary Festival held at Srimanta Sankardev Kalakshetra in Guwahati (Assam).
3. ▶ 52nd Boori Boot Yullo festival held at at Dollungmukh (Arunachal Pradesh).
4. ▶ A Himalayan Cloud Observatory has been set up in Tehri district of Uttarakhand with a motive to forecast and monitor cloudburst incidents in the Himalayan region and help to minimize the damage.
5. ▶ A dedicated *Asiatic Lion Conservation Project* with contribution of INR 98 crores (for 3 years) has been launched by Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change(MoEFCC). Asiatic Lion, endemic to Gir landscape of Gujarat, is one of 21 critically endangered species identified by Ministry for taking up recovery programmes.
6. ▶ Assam government announced a new scheme called Arundhati to provide gold at free of cost to brides.
 1. Under this, government aims to provide 1 Tola Gold, to brides belonging to all such communities of Assam where it is customary to provide gold at time of wedding. Government has set aside Rs 300 crores for implementation of Arundhati Scheme.
 2. The scheme is named after Arundhati, wife of great sage Basistha.
 3. Scheme is limited for economically weaker sections, whose annual income is below Rs 5 lakh.
7. ▶ Cabinet Approvals -
 1. MOUs -
 1. Malaysia - Cooperation in field of Company Secretaryship.
 2. MoU between India and Election Management Bodies of Namibia and Panama.
 3. Norway - India-Norway Ocean Dialogue.
 4. Brazil - Traditional Systems of Medicine and Homoeopathy.
 5. Maldives - Cooperation in Improve Ecosystems for Agribusiness.
 6. Ukraine - cooperation in Agriculture and Food Industry.
 7. Indonesia - cooperation in the exploration and uses of outer space for peaceful purposes.
 8. United Arab Emirates -Development Cooperation in Africa.
 9. Finland - Biotechnology.
 10. Uzbekistan - e-Governance.
 2. General Approvals -
 1. Approved establishment of Rashtriya Kamdhenu Aayog, for conservation, protection and development of cattle population in country including development and conservation of indigenous breeds. It is in pursuance of the announcement of setting up of the Aayog in the Union Budget 2019-20.

2. Approved allocating 85% power to Government of Telangana generated from Telangana Super Thermal Power Project (4000MW) of NTPC. and 85% power from expansion project of Patratu Thermal Power Station (4000MW) of Patratu Vidyut Utpadan Nigam Limited (PVUNL), a subsidiary company of NTPC Ltd, to the State Government of Jharkhand.
 3. Approved Abolition of Institution of Income-Tax Ombudsman and Indirect Tax Ombudsman, after alternative complaint redressal mechanisms chosen by public and institution of Ombudsman could not prove to be more effective than regular existing parallel channels of grievance redressal.
 1. Institution of Income-Tax Ombudsman was created in 2003 to deal with grievances of public related to settlement of complaints relating to Income Tax. However, it failed to achieve its objectives. Tax payers started preferring alternate methods of grievance redressal like CPGRAMS (Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System), AaykarSevaKendras etc.
 4. Approved establishment of Circuit Bench of Calcutta High Court at Jalpaiguri. It will have jurisdiction over four districts namely Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar.
 5. Approved introduction of National Institutes of Food Technology, Entrepreneurship and Management Bill 2019. It aims to confer status of Institutions of National Importance to National Institute of Food Technology, Entrepreneurship and Management (NIFTEM) at Kundli, Haryana, and Indian Institute of Food Processing Technology (IIFPT) at Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu.
 6. Approved introducing Cinematograph Amendment Bill 2019 , to amend Cinematograph Act 1952. It aims to tackle Films piracy by including penal provisions for unauthorized camcording and duplication of films.
 1. Insertion of new Section 6AA for prohibition of unauthorized recording will make its violation punishable with an imprisonment for a term which may extend to 3 years or with fine which may extend to 10 lakh rupees or with both.
 7. Approved establishment of a unified authority for regulating all financial services in International Financial Services Centres (IFSCs) in India through International Financial Services Centres Authority Bill, 2019.
 1. 1st IFSC in India has been set up at GIFT City, Gandhinagar, Gujarat. An IFSC enables bringing back the financial services and transactions that are currently carried out in offshore financial centers by Indian corporate entities to India, providing them easier access to global financial markets. IFSC would also promote development of financial markets in India.
 2. Currently, banking, capital markets and insurance sectors in IFSC are regulated by multiple regulators, i.e. RBI, SEBI and IRDAI. Dynamic nature of business in the IFSCs necessitates a high degree of inter-regulatory coordination. Hence, need is for having unified financial regulator for IFSCs, to provide world class regulatory environment to financial market participants.
 3. Establishment of a unified financial regulator for IFSCs will result in providing world-class regulatory environment to market participants from an ease of doing business perspective.
 8. Approved amendments to Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Bill 2018, aimed at effectively tackle menace of illicit deposit-taking activities in country, and prevent such schemes from duping poor and gullible people.
 1. It bans Deposit Takers from promoting, operating, issuing advertisements or accepting deposits in any Unregulated Deposit Scheme.
 2. Bill creates three different types of offences - running of Unregulated Deposit Schemes, fraudulent default in Regulated Deposit Schemes, and wrongful inducement in relation to Unregulated Deposit Schemes.
3. CCEA Approvals -
1. Approved creation of a corpus of Rs. 2000 crore for Agri-Market Infrastructure Fund (AMIF) to be created with NABARD for development and up-gradation of agricultural marketing infrastructure in Gramin Agricultural Markets and Regulated Wholesale Markets.
 1. AMIF will provide State/UT Governments subsidized loans for their proposal for developing marketing infrastructure in 585 Agriculture Produce Market Committees (APMCs) and 10,000 Grameen Agricultural Markets (GrAMs).
 2. Approved Prasar Bharati's "Broadcasting Infrastructure and Network Development" scheme at a cost of Rs.1054.52 crore for 3 years from 2017-18 to 2019-20. Amount of 435 Crores is approved for continuing schemes of All India Radio and 619 Crores for schemes of Doordarshan.
 3. Approved continuation of the Scheme of "Exploration of Coal and Lignite" with an expected expenditure of Rs.1875 Crores. The approved scheme is for carrying out 24,41,500 meter of drilling and 3575 line km (LKM) of surface

geophysical survey.

1. Under this, approx 7 billion tonne of resources will be established and 11 billion tonne of resources will be proved.

4. Approved implementation of Central Public Sector Undertaking (CPSU) Scheme Phase-for setting up 12,000 MW grid-connected Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Power Projects, by Government Producers with Viability Gap Funding (VGF) support of 8,580 crores.

1. 12,000 MW or more capacity of grid connected solar power projects will be set up by Government Producers in 4 years. The Scheme will mandate use of both solar photovoltaic (SPV) cells and modules manufactured domestically as per specifications and testing requirements fixed by MNRE.

8. ► Chennai police mobile App 'DigiCop' has been launched, enabling people to track status of stolen two-wheelers and cell phones.

9. ► Commerce and Industry Minister Suresh Prabhu launched two schemes - *Hirkani Maharashtrachi* and *District Business Plan Competition*.

1. Under Hirkani Maharashtrachi, women's Self-help group (SHGs) will display their business plan at taluka level. 10 groups will be selected from each taluka and INR 50,000 will be given to each SHG to implement their idea. 5 SHGs at district level will be selected and 2 lakh will be given to each SHG to take idea forward.

2. Under District Business Plan Competition, competitors at district level will display ideas, out of which 5 ideas will be selected and Work order worth Rs. 5 lakh will be given to 5 selected ideas to implement it.

10. ► Election Commission of India launched a Voter Verification and Information Programme (VVIP) for citizens for verifications of their names, new registrations, changes in voter details and corrections in Voter Id Cards for upcoming General Elections 2019. ECI also enabled Voter Helpline number at number 1950.

11. ► General Conferences (Feb 1 - 10, 2019)

1. A Workshop on MoEFCC-Global Environment Facility, UNDP Small Grants Programme(SGP) held in New Delhi. UNDP has been supporting Ministry Of Environment, Forest and Climate Change in implementing Global Environment Facility (GEF) and SGP since 1997. It has reduced 85000 MTs of CO2 emission through a range of alternative energy and energy efficient technologies.

2. 2nd Words Count Festival 2019 held in Pune (Maharashtra). First Word Smith Award given to Pavan Kumar Varma. Words Count Festival is curretted by noted screenwriter, author Advita Kala.

3. 3rd Indo-German Working Group for cooperation on water and waste management held in New Delhi.

4. Surajkund International Crafts Mela 2019 organized by Surajkund Mela Authority & Haryana Tourism. Maharashtra is Theme State and Thailand is Partner Nation Country for 2019 edition.

5. Government organised a meeting of Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) Cluster Group on Disaster Risk Management (DRM) in New Delhi. IORA is an inter-governmental organisation and has many disaster-prone countries among its 22 members and nine dialogue partners.

6. 2nd Jharkhand International Film Festival (JIFF) organized by an NGO, Navbharat Nirman Sangh at Ranchi.

7. 2019 International Spice Conference 2019 organized in Hyderabad, by International Spice Conference.

8. Celebrating 50-years of formalization of diplomatic ties between India and Bhutan, a two-day international conference on 8th century Himalayan sage Guru Padmasambhava held in New Delhi.

9. WhatsApp announced Startup India-WhatsApp Grand Challenge to encourage entrepreneurs and small businesses in India, in association with Invest India.

1. Top 5 winners would receive a cash prize worth \$250,000 (roughly Rs. 1.8 crores). The themes for this Start-up challenge are healthcare, rural economy, financial and digital inclusion, education and citizen safety.

2. Selected 10 ideas would participate at live pitch day during grand finale and the top 5 would be awarded grants worth \$250,000 (roughly Rs. 1.8 crores).

10. Shehri Samridhi Utsav, an initiative of Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs (MoHUA) has been launched. It aims to extend outreach of Deendayal Antyodaya Mission – National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM) to most vulnerable. Highlight National Exhibition cum sale of SHG products and National Street Food Festival being organized in New Delhi.

11. 34th edition of India International Leather Fair (IILF) held in Chennai (Tamil Nadu), aiming to project India as an investment destination and a manufacturing hub for finished leather product design.

12. First state level awareness programme on agri export policy held in Pune (Maharashtra).

13. 2nd edition of Asia LPG Summit held at New Delhi, with theme *LPG – Energy for Life*, organized jointly by major Indian oil marketing companies (OMCs) with World LPG Association (WLPGA).

14. Ministry of Textiles in association with Central Silk Board organized an event called *Surging Silk – Accomplishment and way forward* in New Delhi.
15. Part 2 of Darwaza Band campaign which aims to promote the use of toilets and to sustain the open defecation free status of villages across India has been launched, under Swachh Bharat Mission Grameen initiative of Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation.
16. Sahapedia and UNESCO organised 2nd edition of India Heritage Walk Festival (IHWF) 2019. This festival offers the opportunity to discover the hidden gems linked to history.
12. ▶ Government e Marketplace (GeM) and Competition Commission of India (CCI) signed a MOU to enable a fair and competitive environment in e-Marketplace.
 1. GeM is national public procurement platform of Ministry of Commerce and Industries, that has used technology to remove entry barriers for bonafide sellers and has created a vibrant e-marketplace with a wide range of goods and services.
13. ▶ Govt. flagged off *Suraksha Yatra* a motor rally to advocate Road Safety, from Rajghat in Nw Delhi. It will cover 7250 km in India, Bangladesh, Myanmar.
 1. 30th National Road Safety Week was also launched on the occasion. On this occasion, Delhi Government launched Zero Fatality Corridor with an aim to curb number of accidents.
 2. Rally will conclude at Yangon in Myanmar on the 24th of February, covering a total distance of 7250 km.
14. ▶ India's first Institute of Advanced Virology, affiliated to Global Virus Network, has been inaugurated in Kerala. It was announced after outbreak of Nipah virus in Kerala in May 2018.
15. ▶ International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) will set up a "World Heritage Centre" housing "spiritual camps" of 45 countries, at its headquarter, Mayapur in Nadia district of West Bengal.
16. ▶ Jammu and Kashmir government announced creation of a separate administrative division for Ladakh region, during ongoing governor rule in state.
 1. J & K State had 2 administrative divisions of Jammu and Kashmir earlier. Ladakh would be 3rd administrative division, with Leh and Kargil districts and headquartered in Leh. Ladakh region was earlier part of the Kashmir division.
17. ▶ Kala Ghoda festival, India's largest multi-cultural street festival begins in Mumbai to celebrate its 20 years of art and culture through cinema, theatre, dance, literature, and sculpture.
18. ▶ Kerala became first State to set up a Price Monitoring and Research Unit (PMRU) to track violation of prices of essential drugs and medical devices under the Drugs Price Control Order (DPCO).
19. ▶ Madras High Court ruled against negative marking in competitive examinations, while hearing a petition. HC said that negative marking is not prevailing anywhere else in world. It acts only as "a bolt in the brain development" of students and prevents them from making intelligent guesses.
20. ▶ Maharashtra government will implement *Tejashri financial services* scheme to help rural women, through state's Mahila Arthik Vikas Mahamandal (MAVIM) and would help understand needs of rural women and bring them into the mainstream of development. INR 10000 as loan per person to poor families and INR 20000 will be provided to Self-help groups (SHGs).
21. ▶ Meghalaya government will rename Dikkibandi stadium after P A Sangma. A junction leading to AMPT road in Tura have been renamed after him.
 1. Purno Agitok Sangma served as Speaker of the Lok Sabha and CM of Meghalaya (from 1988 to 1990).
22. ▶ Minister of State for Agriculture Gajendra Singh Shekhawat launched a mobile application developed by Australia-based agri-tech company MoovFarm to provide advisory services to dairy farmers. MoovFarm provides end-to-end last-mile connectivity solution offering extension and technology to the smallholder dairy farmers.
23. ▶ Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs instituted *PMAY (U) awards for Implementation and Innovation*, to recognize outstanding performance and to promote competition by States/UTs, Urban Local Bodies, Beneficiaries and Housing Finance Corporations (under CLSS).
 1. First level of awards is for States/UTs and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) for performance on key indicators of Mission. There would be separate competition among Municipal Corporations and Municipalities within ULBs.
24. ▶ Ministry of Labour Notified Rules To Allow Employment of Women in Mines, offering Equal Employment Opportunities for Women in Mines. Central Government exempted women employed in any mine from provisions of section 46 of the Mines Act 1952, subject to some conditions related to timings and other terms.
25. ▶ Mizoram government banned import of pigs and piglets to prevent outbreak of a disease that has cost lives of thousands of swine in state.

26. ▶ Music and dance festival 'Sopan 2019', to encourage young artists to take up traditional art organized in New Delhi, by Sahitya Kala Parishad and New Delhi government.
27. ▶ National Board of Wildlife gave wildlife clearance to the Mumbai-Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail Project (MAHSR) (also called *Bullet Train*) that passes through the Thane Creek Flamingo Sanctuary and Sanjay Gandhi National Park in Mumbai. Corridor is expected to be ready by 2022.
28. ▶ Odisha Govt. launched scholarship scheme named 'KALIA Chhatravritti Yojana', for children of farmers who are the beneficiaries of Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation (KALIA) scheme. Under this, beneficiaries will be provided scholarships to pursue higher education in professional courses at free of cost.
29. ▶ PM Narendra Modi dedicated to nation the 1.33 million metric ton capacity Visakhapatnam Strategic Petroleum Reserve facility at Guntur in Andhra Pradesh, along with several other developmental projects.
30. ▶ PM Narendra Modi laid Foundation Stone for Sela Tunnel Project in Arunachal Pradesh across Sela Pass.
 1. Sela Pass is a high-altitude mountain pass located on border between Tawang and West Kameng Districts of Arunachal Pradesh. It connects Tawang with rest of India.
 2. Project involves construction of a road for total distance of 12 km which consist of 2 tunnels. It will also aid travellers in by-passing dangerous snow-covered Sela top at a height of 13,700 feet.
31. ▶ PM Narendra Modi launched 220 kV Srinagar- Alusteng - Drass- Kargil – Leh Transmission System, to ensure quality power supply to Ladakh round the year. This would boost tourism and enhance socio-economic development of Ladakh. Cost of project is INR 2266 crores.
 1. PM Modi also Launched University of Ladakh, as first-ever university in Ladakh region of J & K.
32. ▶ PM Narendra Modi launched *DD Arunprabha*, a dedicated 24x7 Doordarshan satellite channel for Arunachal Pradesh and laid foundation stone of a permanent campus of Film and Television Institute (FTI) at Arunachal Pradesh. DD Arunprabha is s24th satellite channel operated by Doordarshan. Channel will showcase the rich tradition and diversity of local culture.
33. ▶ Punjab Govt. approved declaring endangered Indus River dolphin, found only in Beas River in the country, as state aquatic animal.
34. ▶ Reliance Industries Chairman Mukesh Ambani topped Hurun India Philanthropy List 2018, with highest contribution of Rs 437 crore between October 2017 and September 2018.
 1. Ambani was followed by Piramal Group Chairman Ajay Piramal (200 crores).
 2. Total Indian philanthropy amount in the list stands at Rs 1,560 crore, with 39 Indians Listed.
35. ▶ Sikkim government signed MoU with tech firm Microsoft, Aiming to transform educational landscape in state. Microsoft would support in integrating IT content in state board curriculum and build student capacity besides building teacher capacity.
36. ▶ Social Network Focussing launched a digital skilling and mentorship initiative across five states in India that would encourage tribal girls to become village-level digital young leaders for their communities, Named GOAL (Going Online As Leaders). It will train young girls from West Bengal, Maharashtra, Jharkhand, Odisha and Madhya Pradesh in digital literacy, life skills, leadership and entrepreneurship for an year.
37. ▶ Textiles Minister Smriti Irani launched India Size project in Mumbai, aiming to arrive at a standard Indian Size for the ready-to-wear clothing industry, on lines of the standardized sizes available in other countries.

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Persons

1. ▶ Manipur Filmmaker Aribam Syam Sharma returned his 2006 Padma Shri award, in protest against the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill 2016.
 1. The bill has become controversial? as it aims to amend Citizenship Act of 1955, allowing Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians from Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Pakistan to apply for Indian citizenship. The bill is criticised for being communal as it grants citizenship on the basis of religion.
 2. Heat against the bill is more in North East states as lakhs of illegal immigrants have crossed over to India from bangladesh and are majorly concentrated in northeastern states.
2. ▶ Obituaries (Feb 2019) -
 1. C H Loknath - Noted Kannada Actor.
 2. Ramesh Bhatkar - Noted Marathi actor.
 3. Mahesh Anand - Hindi film actor.
 4. Albert Finney - Oscar-nominated British actor.

3. ▶ Persons Resigned / Retired (January 2019) -

1. South Korean Footballer Ki Sung-yueng announced his retirement.
2. Pralay Mondal - Yes Bank Senior group President and head of retail and business banking.
3. Former Australian Cricketer Greg Chappell will exit from Cricket as selector and national talent manager, after Ashes 2019.

4. ▶ US President Trump nominated David Malpass for post of president of the World Bank.

1. World Bank CEO Kristalina Georgieva assumed role of interim President of World Bank, after Former World Bank President Jim Yong Kim's retirement became effective on FEB 1.

5. ▶ Visits from India (Feb 1 -10, 2019) -

1. Indian Air Force Chief Birender Singh Dhanoa visited Bangladesh.

6. ▶ Visits to India (Feb 1 - 10, 2019) -

1. Prince Albert II of Monaco visited India.
2. Bangladesh Finance Minister A. K. Abdul Momen Visited India. India and Bangladesh signed MOU for training 1800 Bangladesh Civil Servants at National Centre for Good Governance (NCGG) under Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DAR&PG), over next 6 years.

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Science

1. ▶ ISRO inaugurated Human Space Flight Centre (HSFC) at its HQ in Bengaluru, which would be core of ISRO's future manned missions. It will implement first development flight of Gaganyaan with support of existing ISRO Centres, and will be responsible for end-to-end mission planning and development.

1. Gaganyaan is India's first manned space mission, planning to have first unmanned mission in December 2020 and second for July 2021. Manned mission will happen in December 2021.
2. Gaganyaan project is headed by R. Hutton, Director of Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV).
3. Gaganyaan project will take Indian astronauts into space to a height of 350-400 km above Earth and orbits for at least a week.

2. ▶ India's 40th communication satellite GSAT-31 successfully launched from Spaceport in French Guiana, onboard launch vehicle Ariane 5 VA-247 lifted off from Kourou Launch Base, French Guiana (South America). Its lift off mass is 2536 kg.

1. It will provide DTH Television Services, connectivity to VSATs for ATM, Stock-exchange, Digital Satellite News Gathering (DSNG) and e-governance applications. It will also be used for bulk data transfer for a host of emerging telecommunication applications.

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Sports

1. ▶ France's Corentin Moutet won Chennai Open ATP Challenger Tennis title, beating Andrew Harris of Australia.

2. ▶ Haryana Hammers won 4th edition of Pro Wrestling League (PWL), defeating Punjab Royals.

3. ▶ Indian Squash Player Ramit Tandon won Seattle Open Title, defeating Egyptian Mohamed El Sherbini.

4. ▶ Misc. Sports Events (Feb 2019) -

1. Vaani Kapoor became first Indian Golfer to earn a card for Australian Ladies PGA Tour (LPGA).
 2. Indian cricketer Mithali Raj became first female cricketer to play 200 ODIs. Also, Pakistani cricketer Sana Mir become first Female Asian cricketer to play hundred T20Is.
 3. Indian female cricketer Smriti Mandhana become top-ranked batter in women's ODI cricket.
 4. 13th edition of ICC Men's Cricket World Cup will be played in India in 2023. ICC also signed a five-year global partnership deal with beverage manufacturer Coca-Cola Company.
 5. INS Dronacharya won Regatta trophy in Area Pulling Regatta Kochi 2019 of Southern Naval Command.
 6. Indian weightlifter Saikhom Mirabai Chanu won gold medal at EGAT Cup in Thailand.
 7. Former Australian spinner Shane Warne named as brand ambassador of Rajasthan Royals for IPL 2019 Edition.
 8. Indian Players won 4 medals (1 G, 2 S, 1 B) at Bahrain Junior and Cadet Open TT Tournament.
5. ▶ Qatar defeated Japan to win their first ever Asian Cup Football Tournament. It was hosted by United Arab Emirates (UAE).
6. ▶ Vidarbha won their second successive Ranji Trophy Domestic Cricket title, defeating Saurashtra in Final.

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