

CURRENT AFFAIRS

NATIONAL

- Lok Sabha passed the Consumer Protection Bill, 2018 that seeks to replace the Consumer Protection Act, 1986, on December 20, 2018. The Bill enforces consumer rights and provides a mechanism for redressal of complaints regarding deficiencies in goods and services. It seeks to establish Consumer Disputes Redressal Commissions at District, State and National levels. Lok Sabha also passed the National Trust for Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental retardation and Multiple Disabilities (Amendment) Bill, 2018.
- President's rule came into force in Jammu and Kashmir from December 19, as the six-months of Governor's rule came to an end. The state had plunged into political turmoil following BJP withdrawal of its support to the Mehbooba Mufti-led coalition government, reducing People's Democratic Party to minority. Earlier, Union Cabinet had given its go-ahead for President's Rule beyond December 19.
- On 19th December, NITI Aayog unveiled its comprehensive national Strategy for New India, which defines clear objectives for 2022-23. Releasing the Document, the Finance Minister Mr. Arun Jaitley said, reforms and entrepreneurship have to be accompanied by social consciousness. The Finance Minister said that the various verticals of NITI Aayog's Strategy Document give form to the Indian model which emphasizes on faster growth and better resource utilization to improve the quality of life for all.
- The Indian Space Research Organization's (ISRO) Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle GSLVF11 successfully launched the communication satellite GSAT-7A from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) on December 19, 2018. The exclusive advanced communication satellite separated from the rocket after 19 minutes of the launch. Congratulating ISRO team for completing 17 launches this year, Chairman ISRO K. Sivan assured that he was looking forward to 32 launches including Chandrayaan 2 next year.
- President Ramnath Kovind, on December 15, laid the foundation stone of new ultra modern Railway Station at Kevadia in Narmada district of Gujarat. The station will connect the Statue of Unity project to the rest of India through broad gauge railway line.
- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi dedicated the Bogibeel Bridge in Assam, to the nation on December 25, 2018. The bridge, which spans the River Brahmaputra between Dibrugarh and Dhemaji districts of Assam, is of immense economic and strategic significance for the nation. At a massive public meeting in Kareng Chapori, on the northern bank of the Brahmaputra, the Prime Minister also flagged off the first passenger train passing through the bridge. Speaking on the occasion, the Prime Minister paid homage to the famous Assamese singer Deepali Borthakur, who passed away recently. He also paid homage to many other famous and historical figures from the State, who have brought laurels for the State and the country in various fields. He greeted the people on the occasion of Christmas. He said that today is the birth anniversary of former Prime Minister, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, and is also celebrated as "Sushaasan Divas" or "Good Governance Day".
- Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, visited Odisha on 24th December, 2018. At the IIT Bhubaneswar campus, the Prime Minister released a commemorative stamp and coin on the Paika Rebellion. The Paika Rebellion (Paika Bidroha) was fought against British rule, in

Odisha in 1817. The setting up of a Chair on the Paika Rebellion, in Utkal University, Bhubaneswar, was announced. The Prime Minister inaugurated the Lalitgiri Museum. Lalitgiri in Odisha is a famous Buddhist centre of archaeological importance, comprising Stupa, Viharas (monasteries) and images of Lord Buddha.

- Prime Minister launched website of Cyber Coordination Centre during 2018 DGP Conference, organized at Kevadiya in Narmada district of Gujarat, under the shadow of the Statue of Unity. Drawing inspiration from Sardar Patel's contribution to National Unity, the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi announced the institution of a new national honour for National Unity on the pattern of Padma Awards. This will be awarded once every year. This Award would be open to every Indian who has contributed to National Unity in any manner. The Prime Minister also released a commemorative postal stamp on the National Police Memorial. Prime Minister also released a special issue of Indian Police Journal on Police martyrdom, published by the BPR&D.
- Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Information & Broadcasting and Youth Affairs & Sports, Col. Rajyavardhan Rathore (Retd.) released the Administrative Handbook of Ministry of I&B. The handbook is a blend of a telephone directory and a diary and displays contact details of all officers of the Ministry and Media Units, including, inter-alia, Press Information Bureau, Bureau of Outreach and Communication, Registrar of Newspapers for India, DD News, NSD - All India Radio, Publications Division, Electronic Media and Monitoring Centre, New Media Wing, Autonomous Organizations, IIS Officers at DPR Defence, IIS Officers posted in other organizations, IIS Officers on Deputation and IIS Officers on Probation at IIMC.
- The NITI Aayog released the Second Delta ranking for the Aspirational Districts which measures the incremental progress made by them between June 1, 2018 and October 31, 2018, across six developmental areas of Health and Nutrition, Education, Agriculture and Water Resources, Financial Inclusion, Skill Development, and Basic Infrastructure. The ranking factors in validated data from Household Surveys conducted by NITI Aayog's knowledge partners, namely, TATA Trusts and Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (IDInsight). The Surveys were carried out in all Aspirational Districts during the month of June 2018 covering more than 1,00,000 households. These surveys were used to validate critical data-points and provide inputs for nine further data-points for which district-level data is not readily available at regular intervals.
- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi delivered the inaugural address at the 106th session of the Indian Science Congress. Reflecting on the theme of the event this year – 'Future India: Science and Technology' – the Prime Minister said that India's true strength will be in connecting its science, technology and innovation, with its people. He recalled the great Indian scientists of the past, including Acharyas J.C. Bose, C.V. Raman, Meghnad Saha and S.N. Bose, and said that they served the people through 'minimum resources' and maximum struggle'. The Prime Minister recalled our former Prime Ministers Shri Lal Bahadur Shastriji and Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayeeji. He said that Shastriji gave us the slogan: 'Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan', while Atalji added 'Jai Vigyan' to it. He said that now the time has come to take a step further, by adding 'Jai Anusandhan'. The Prime Minister emphasized that the pursuit of science is fulfilled through the achievement of two objectives: generation of profound or disruptive knowledge; and use of that knowledge for socio-economic good.

- The Prime Minister inaugurated the Integrated Check Post at Moreh in Manipur. He also inaugurated the Dolaithabi Barrage Project, the FCI Food Storage Godown at Sawombung, and projects related to water supply and tourism. He dedicated to the nation the 400 kV Double Circuit Silchar-Imphal line. He also laid the foundation stone for sports projects. Addressing the gathering, Mr. Modi paid homage to the brave freedom fighters, especially the women freedom fighters of Manipur. He recalled that undivided India's first interim government had been established at Moirang in Manipur. He also recalled the support that the Azad Hind Fauj had received from people in the North East. He said Manipur has an important role to play in New India's growth story.
- Handing over LPG connection to a woman beneficiary that marked a milestone of six crore such connections under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, the Vice President, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu hailed it as a revolutionary scheme that transformed the lives of women from poor families. 'In short, this is a spectacular achievement by any government in such a short time', he observed. Speaking after handing over connections to several women at a function organized by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, he termed it as a 'momentous occasion' that celebrates clean cooking fuel reaching six crore homes. It was even more heartening as the achievement came when the country is celebrating the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, who envisioned a self-reliant India, a country that occupies a place of pride and dignity in the world order.
- The Parliament has passed the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (Amendment) Bill, 2018, with the Rajya Sabha approving it on January 3, 2019. The Lok Sabha had already passed the bill seeking to further amend the Right to Education Act, 2009 to abolish the no-detention policy in schools. No student can be detained upto class 8th under current provisions of the Act. As per the amendment, it would be left to the States to decide whether to constitute the no-detention policy.
- The Parliament has passed the National Council for Teacher Education (Amendment) Bill, 2018 with the Rajya Sabha approving it on January 3, 2019. The Lok Sabha had already passed it. The bill seeks to grant retrospective recognition to Central and State institutions which had conducted teacher education course without approval by the Council. This will be a one-time measure to ensure that the future of about 17 thousand students having degrees from such institutions is secured. All institutions running teacher education courses, such as B.Ed, have to obtain recognition from the Council.
- Parliament has passed the Constitution 124th (Amendment) Bill, 2019. The legislation provides for ten per cent reservation in government jobs and admission in educational institutions to economically backward people among upper castes. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has described the passage of the quota bill as a victory of social justice and said it will ensure a wider canvas for the youth to showcase their prowess and contribute towards the country's transformation. In a tweet, Mr. Modi said he is delighted over the passage of the Constitution (124th amendment) Bill, which provides 10 per cent reservation to general category poor in jobs and education. Prime Minister said he is glad to see such widespread support for it. Mr. Modi said the passage of the bill is a tribute to the makers of the Constitution and great freedom fighters, who envisioned an India that is strong and inclusive. Prime Minister said, the house also witnessed a vibrant debate, where several members expressed their insightful opinions.

- The Lok Sabha has passed the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill. The Bill seeks to amend the Citizenship Act, 1955 to make illegal migrants who are Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan, eligible for citizenship. Under the 1955 Act, one of the requirements for citizenship by naturalization is that the applicant must have resided in India during the last 12 months, and for 11 of the previous 14 years. The bill relaxes this 11-year requirement to six years for persons belonging to the all the six religions from the three countries. Replying to a debate on the Bill, Home Minister Rajnath Singh said, the bill is not just for Assam but for other states too. He said it is also for migrants who have come from the Western borders and have settled down in Rajasthan, Punjab and Delhi.
- Giving a major push to develop and enhance Tourism infrastructure in Agra, the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi launched a series of development projects worth Rs. 2900 Crores for the Agra city and the adjoining areas. The Prime Minister dedicated to the nation, Gangajal project, which will provide Agra with better and more assured water supply, at an estimated cost of Rs. 2880 crores. Gangajal project aims to bring 140 cusecs of Ganga water to Agra. This will help meet the drinking water demands in the city. Prime Minister laid the foundation Stone of Integrated Command and Control Centre for Agra Smart City. In this project CCTVs will be installed throughout Agra City for monitoring and surveillance for the purpose of safety and security. This will help to develop Agra as a modern world class smart city, befitting its stature as a premium tourist destination, at a total cost of Rs. 285 crores.
- Information and Broadcasting Minister Rajyavardhan Rathore launched 'Sharing of All India Radio News with Private FM broadcasters' in New Delhi. Private FM channels can now carry All India Radio News free of cost on trial basis up to 31st May this year. News Services Division of All India Radio has permitted its news bulletins in English and Hindi to be carried in unaltered form by Private FM Channels as per certain terms and conditions. Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Rathore said it is a matter of happiness that a common citizen can now listen to the news on any FM channel. He said an aware citizen is an empowered citizen and added that this step is a collaborative effort of bringing together all the Radio Stations of India to inform, educate and empower people.
- An agreement for Renukaji Dam Multipurpose Project was signed in New Delhi on Friday 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. 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. These include Lakhwar project on river Yamuna in Uttarakhand, Kishau on river Tons in Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh and Renukaji on river Giri in Himachal Pradesh.
- The government launched Web- Wonder Women Campaign to celebrate the exceptional achievements of women who have influenced and impacted society through social media. The Campaign aims to recognize the fortitude of Indian women stalwarts from across the globe who have used the power of social media to run positive campaigns to steer a change in society. Launching the campaign in New Delhi, Women and Child Development Minister Maneka Gandhi said, Indian women have always been enterprising and have created a positive impact on society with their hard work, experience and knowledge.

- External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj said, her ministry is working constantly to promote Hindi language at a world level. Addressing a function to mark World Hindi Diwas in New Delhi on January 10, Mrs. Swaraj said, several steps has been taken by her ministry to popularize the language. She also commended Kendriya Hindi Sansthan for teaching the language to students and promoting it.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said that the Constitutional amendment to provide 10 per cent reservation to economically poor in the general category was achieved due to the political will of his government. Mr. Modi said, the economic reservation has been given without impacting the existing social reservations. He said, the new reservation will be implemented in 40,000 colleges across 900 universities in the country from this academic year. Prime Minister said, the number of seats will be increased by 10 per cent. Mr. Modi was addressing a gathering after inaugurating the 1500 bed Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Institute of Medical Science and Research at Ahmedabad in Gujarat. Mr. Modi said the Institute will be linked to the Ayushman Bharat scheme so that poor people can avail medical facilities free of cost. Prime Minister said, this will be the first government hospital to have a helipad. Mr. Modi said the new medical facility will help boost health sector in Gujarat.
- President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated the three-day Gandhian Resurgence Summit at Parmarth Niketan camp at the ongoing Prayagraj Kumbh. About 300 Gandhians from different parts of the country and organizations are participating in the Summit. Speaking at the event, the President said that Kumbh is the biggest congregation of humanity of the world and this provides for a great platform to spread the messages of Cleanliness and eradication of untouchability as was practiced by Mahatma Gandhi. He said that this would be true homage to the Father of the Nation.
- The Pradhan Mantri Rozgar Protsahan Yojana, PMRPY has crossed the milestone of one crore beneficiaries as on the 14th of this month. The Centre's flagship scheme launched on 7th August, 2016 incentivizes employers to promote employment generation. An official release said one lakh 24 thousand establishments have benefitted from the scheme. Under the scheme, government pays full employers' contribution of 12 per cent towards Employees' Provident Fund and Employees' Pension Scheme for a period of 3 years to new employees registered with EPFO, with salary up to Rs. 15,000 per month.
- India will train participants from 45 countries in nano-satellite making through a new capacity building programme. The programme named Unispace Nanosatellite Assembly and Training by ISRO (UNNATI) was flagged off by Minister of State in Department of Space Jitendra Singh in Bengaluru. Speaking on the occasion, ISRO chairman K Sivan said, the programme allows India to share its knowledge and expertise in space sector with other countries. ISRO will train 90 officials from 45 countries in three batches. The first batch will have 30 participants from 17 countries. The programme is the space agency's initiative to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the first United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE50) in 1968.
- 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. IIT-H is already offering a Masters in Technology programme in AI Machine Learning (ML). 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.

- 15th Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas (PBD) culminated on January 23, 2019 with valedictory address of President Ram Nath Kovind in Uttar Pradesh. The President also conferred the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards to persons of Indian origin for excellence in various fields. The three day long convention was organized in Varanasi. The theme of PBD Convention 2019 was "Role of Indian Diaspora in building New India".
- The Indian Space Research Organisation successfully launched the PSLV C 44 carrying Kalamsat and Microsat R. Speaking after the launch, ISRO chairman, Dr. K.Sivan termed the mission as a grand success. He said that the rocket precisely injected the Microsat R in its designated orbit. He said that Kalamsat was a great gift on the Republic Day for the Nation.
- The 9th National Voters' Day was celebrated across the country on January 25 for enhanced participation of citizens in the electoral process. The National Awards for the Best Electoral Practices was conferred on Officers for their outstanding performance in the conduct of elections. President Ram Nath Kovind was the Chief Guest at the main function being organized by Election Commission in New Delhi. Chief Election Commissioners and senior officials from Bangladesh, Bhutan, Kazakhstan, Maldives, Russia and Sri Lanka also joined the occasion. The National Voters' Day is celebrated all over the country on January 25 every year since 2011 to mark the Foundation day of Election Commission of India, which was established on 25th January 1950. The main purpose of the celebration is to encourage, facilitate and maximize the enrollment, especially for the new voters. In view of the upcoming Lok Sabha Elections, No Voter to be Left Behind was selected as the theme for the National Voters' Day.
- Famous Hindi writer and essayist, Krishna Sobti passed away. She was 94. She had won the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1980 for her novel Zindaginama and was awarded the Jnanpith in 2017 for her contribution to Indian literature.
- Navy Chief Admiral Sunil Lamba commissioned the Naval Air Base 'INS Kohassa' at Diglipur in Andaman and Nicobar Islands. This will be the country's third Naval air facility after INS Utkarsh at Port Blair and INS Baaz at Campbell Bay in the Andaman that overlooks key sea lanes of communication and strategic points. Speaking on the occasion, Admiral Lamba emphasized that INS Kohassa will enhance Indian Navy's operational capabilities in the region. He said the Naval Air Station has been developed to meet both military and civil needs as it will also provide impetus to the UDAN scheme.
- President Ram Nath Kovind has said the government has commenced its journey towards building a New India. Addressing the joint sitting of both Houses of Parliament on January 31, he said, it is an India where every person has access to basic amenities, gets justice with dignity and is healthy, secure and educated. The President said it is an India where there are equal opportunities of advancement for everyone and where every daughter feels safe. He said it is an India, which commands the respect of the entire world. The President said the government has taken numerous steps to ensure social and economic development in the last four-and-a-half years. He said sanitation coverage under Swachh Bharat Mission has reached 98 per cent from less than 40 per cent till 2014. Mr. Kovind said improved sanitation coverage has led to better health of citizens, especially the poor who are vulnerable to diseases, such as malaria and diarrhoea. Mr. Kovind informed that 13 crore households have been provided with free LPG connections. He said in the last four months, more than 10 lakh

people have availed themselves of free medical treatment under the Ayushman Bharat programme. Mr. Kovind reiterated the government's commitment to double farmers' income by 2022.

- Former defence minister George Fernandes passed away aged 88 on January 29 2019. Fernandes, who served as the defence minister in the NDA government headed by Atal Bihari Vajpayee between 1998 and 2004, was suffering from Alzheimer's and had withdrawn from public life over the past decade. His last stint as a parliamentarian was as a Rajya Sabha MP between August 2009 and July 2010.
- NITI Aayog Vice Chairman Rajiv Kumar said the government will release the job data when it is ready. Addressing media in New Delhi, Mr. Kumar said, media reports that joblessness had reached a four-decade high post-demonetisation are not verified. He said the government will release its employment report by March this year after collating quarter-on-quarter data.
- Six days cultural extravaganza Bharat Parv concluded in New Delhi on 31 January. The festival was organized by the Ministry of Tourism at the Red Fort from 26th to 31st of this month. The major attractions of the festival were the replica of the Statue of Unity and also a Gandhi Gram in which 10 painting artists created paintings on the theme ideology of Mahatma Gandhi. Twenty-seven states participated in the festival by showcasing their food, handicrafts and tourism products. Addressing the gathering at the closing ceremony Tourism Minister K.J. Alphons said that everyone should travel and promote tourism in the country.
- Supreme Court Judge, Justice, Deepak Gupta has said that institutionalization of Arbitration in the country is the need of the hour and it should be a full-time career-oriented activity. Justice Gupta was speaking at a Conference on Strengthening Arbitration in India in New Delhi. Talking about the long-pending legal cases, Justice Gupta said, in country like India where legal process is very slow, inclusion of Arbitration into legal system is very much essential. He said lack of infrastructure and judges is the main reason behind delay in justice.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that crores of new jobs have been created in the country in formal and unorganized sectors including transport, hotels and infrastructure. Replying to the Motion of Thanks on the President's Address in the Lok Sabha, Mr. Modi rejected the opposition's allegations of rising unemployment. He said, jobs have been created both in informal and formal sectors in last four and half years. He said, informal sector accounts for 85 to 90 per cent while the formal sector provides only 10 to 15 per cent employment in the country. The Prime Minister said in 15 months till November 2018, 1.8 crore people got enrolled in the Employees Provident Fund for the first time. Of these 64 per cent were below 28 years of age. He said, about 6 lakh 35 thousand new professionals have filed income tax returns in the last four years. Mr. Modi said, the government has launched several initiatives like Skill India, Stand-Up India and Digital India aimed at promoting self employment in the country.
- The President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, presented the Sangeet Natak Akademi Awards for the year 2017 at a function held at Rashtrapati Bhavan on February 06, 2019.
- In Udhampur, 92 army men were awarded Sena medals at an investiture ceremony for their gallantry and distinguished services. Lieutenant General Ranbir Singh, GOC-in-C of Northern Command presented 76 medals for gallantry services, 7 medals for distinguished services and 8 for Vishist Seva. Lance Naik Nazir Ahmed Wani, a recipient of Ashok Chakra was also awarded Bar to Sena Medal posthumously which was received by his wife. Twenty

units of the army were also awarded appreciation for their outstanding performance in the Command Theatre in 2018.

- India has withdrawn the Most Favoured Nation status granted to Pakistan following the Pulwama terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir in which 39 security personnel were martyred. A decision in this regard was taken during the meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security, CCS in New Delhi. Briefing reporters after the meeting, Union Minister Arun Jaitley said, it has also been decided that Ministry of External Affairs will initiate all possible diplomatic steps which are to be taken to ensure the complete isolation Pakistan from the international community. He said the CCS chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi also observed a two minute silence in honour of the CRPF personnel who laid down their lives for the nation. He said a detailed assessment of the incident was also carried out in the CCS meet. Mr. Jaitley said people who are responsible and have supported this act of terrorism will have to pay a heavy price for it. He also said Home Minister Rajnath Singh is visiting Srinagar to assess the situation and after his return, an all-party meeting will be convened.
- The last session of 16th Lok Sabha came to an end on February 13, 2019. Giving the details for the tenure of 16th Lok Sabha, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Narendra Singh Tomar informed that there were a total number of 331 sittings for Lok Sabha. 205 bills were passed and the productivity was 85 percent. For Rajya Sabha, 154 bills were passed and the productivity was 68 percent. Mr. Tomar said the Interim Budget Session has been successful in terms of wide participation of all political parties in discussions on various issues of national importance. The just concluded Parliament session provided 10 sittings spread just-concluded of 14 days. The productivity of Lok Sabha was 89 percent and that of Rajya Sabha was 8 percent. The Interim Budget for 2019-20 was presented the 1st of this month.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched various development projects worth over Rs 20000 crore at Jhansi in Uttar Pradesh on February 15, 2019. Mr. Modi laid the foundation stone of the Defence Corridor. Jhansi is one of the six nodal points of the UP defence corridor. He also laid the foundation stones of two drinking water projects. Speaking on the occasion, the Prime Minister said, the defence corridor from Jhansi to Agra will strengthen the defence production in the country and stop migration. He said Centre as well as the state government is doing everything for the development of Bundelkhand region.
- Union Minister Arun Jaitley has assumed the charge of Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Corporate Affairs. The charge of the Ministries was given to Union Minister Piyush Goyal on a temporary basis on the 23rd of January. President Ram Nath Kovind, as advised by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has directed that the Finance and Corporate Affairs portfolios be assigned to Union Minister Arun Jaitley.
- Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has approved the continuation of sub-schemes under Umbrella programme for the development of Scheduled Tribes from the period till March 2020. Briefing reporters after the Cabinet meeting, Finance Minister Piyush Goyal said, over 10 crores Scheduled Tribe people will benefit from it. The total layout for the programme is 11,900 crore rupees. The scheme will also promote efficiency in the delivery of service and enhance the reach of welfare schemes of government in service deficient tribal areas in the sectors such as livelihood, health, education, through efforts of Voluntary Organizations.
- The Supreme Court has directed all state governments to sensitize their police personnel about scrapped Section 66A of Information Technology Act, so that people are not

unnecessarily arrested under the provision. Section 66A of IT Act provided for jail term to people who post offensive content online and it was scrapped by the apex court in March 2015.

- Sushil Chandra has assumed charge as the new Election Commissioner of India in New Delhi. He is an Indian Revenue Service officer of 1980 batch. The poll body now has Sunil Arora as Chief Election Commissioner and Ashok Lavasa and Sushil Chandra as Election commissioners.
- President Ram Nath Kovind has promulgated four Ordinances. These are the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Second Ordinance, the Indian Medical Council (Amendment) Second Ordinance, the Companies (Amendment) Second Ordinance and the Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Ordinance, 2019.
- The Government has decided to stop the share of river waters which flow into Pakistan. In a series of tweets, Minister for Water Resources Nitin Gadkari said, Government of India will divert water from Eastern rivers and supply it to the people in Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab. According to the Indus Waters Treaty, subject to certain conditions, India has the right to use water flowing in eastern rivers, namely, the Beas, the Ravi and the Sutlej while Pakistan controls the right to use water in western rivers, namely, the Indus, the Jhelum and the Chenab.
- The Indian Air Force conducted an air strike on the biggest terror camp of Pakistan based Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) in Balakot in the wee hours on February 26. Briefing the media in New Delhi, Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale said, credible information was received that JeM was attempting other suicide terror attacks in the country and terrorists were being trained for that purpose.
- India has said it has conclusive evidence of Pakistan F-16 jets violating Indian airspace to target its military posts following which the Indian Air Force shot down one F-16 in aerial engagement. In a joint press briefing of the three Services in New Delhi, Air Vice Marshal R.G.K. Kapoor said, Pakistan Air Force's jets attempting to target military installations were intercepted by Indian Air Force fighter aircraft which thwarted their plans.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated to the nation the National War Memorial near India Gate in New Delhi. He lighted the eternal flame at the central obelisk in the war memorial complex. The memorial honours about 26 thousand soldiers, who have laid down their lives in the service of the nation since Independence. The National War Memorial commemorates the soldiers who participated and made the supreme sacrifice in Peace Keeping Missions and Counter Insurgency Operations. The complex includes a central obelisk, an eternal flame and six bronze murals depicting famous battles fought by Indian Army, Air Force and Navy. Busts of the 21 awardees of Param Veer Chakra have been installed at Param Yoddha Sthal.
- External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj briefed the Opposition leaders on the air strike conducted by Indian Air Force on Jaish-e-Mohammed terror camp. Talking to media after an all-party meeting convened in New Delhi, Ms Swaraj said leaders of all the parties praised the security forces and supported the government's anti-terror operations.
- President Ramnath Kovind gave away the Gandhi Peace Prize for four years from 2015 to 2018. Vivekananda Kendra, Kanyakumari, got the award for 2015 for their contribution to rural development, education, development of natural resources. For 2016, it has been jointly given to Akshaya Patra foundation for its contribution in providing mid-day meals to children and Sulabh International for improving the condition of sanitation and emancipation

of manual scavengers. Ekal Abhiyan Trust has won the award for 2017 for their contribution in providing education to rural and tribal children in remote areas, rural empowerment, gender, and social equality. Goodwill Ambassador of the World Health Organisation for Leprosy Elimination Yohei Sasakawa has been honoured with Gandhi Peace Prize for 2018 for his role in leprosy eradication.

- Union Cabinet approved setting up of a Railway Zone at Vishakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh and a new division with headquarter at Rayagada in Odisha by reorganizing the existing South Central Railway and East Coast Railway. Setting up of the new Railway Zone will bring optimality with regard to size and scale of railway operations and also meet the persistent demand and aspirations of the people of the area. Southern Coast Railway will be 18th Railway zone of the Indian Railways.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi stressed the need to connect people with innovation, science and technology. He was speaking after giving away the Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prizes for Science and Technology for the years 2016, 2017 and 2018 in New Delhi. Mr. Modi said the theme for this year's National Science Day, which is, Science For Society and Society For Science is very relevant. Eleven scientists were given the Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prize for 2016. The awardees include Dr Rishikesh Narayan of Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru and Dr. Amalendu Krishna of Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Mumbai. Among the ten scientists who got the prize for 2017 are Dr. Deepak Gaur of Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi and Dr. S Suresh Babu of Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre. There were thirteen prize winners for 2018. They include Dr. Amit Kumar of IIT, Delhi and Dr. Nitin Saxena, IIT, Kanpur. The Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prize is the most coveted national recognition bestowed upon young scientists and engineers to honour their research and developmental work in India. It was first instituted in 1957 to honour the eminent scientist Dr. Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar who was also the founder Director and the chief architect of Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, CSIR. It is awarded annually for notable and outstanding research, applied or fundamental, in Biological Sciences, Chemical Sciences, Earth, Atmosphere, Engineering Sciences, Mathematical Sciences, Medical Sciences and Physical Sciences.
- Civil Aviation Minister Suresh Prabhu released the passenger charter which specifies rights of air travellers, at an event in New Delhi. The charter states that if a domestic flight is expected to be delayed by more than six hours, then the airline will offer an option of alternate flight to the passenger within that time, or it will refund the full price of the ticket. It also said that if a passenger is informed of flight cancellation less than two weeks before departure, the airline must offer an alternate flight to passenger or refund the ticket completely.

Modi Government Re-elected With Thumping Majority

- Sealing its phenomenal electoral victory, Shri Narendra Modi-led BJP crossed the 300 mark and was leading in one seat as counting for votes for 542 Lok Sabha seats neared its end on May 24. The NDA's tally is 351.
- Election Commission figures showed that the BJP has won 302 seats and was leading in one.
- The massive exercise began on May 23 with early trends establishing the BJP's conclusive lead. With the BJP riding a Modi wave that took it past its 2014 tally of 282, the opposition was left way behind with the Congress winning only 52 seats, two less than it needs for a

Leader of Opposition post in the lower house and marginally more than the 44 it got in the last general elections.

- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has termed his party's victory as the victory of democracy. Addressing a gathering at party headquarters in New Delhi, he said this is democracy's biggest event. Mr. Modi dedicated this victory to the people saying it is a mandate for a new India.
- Earlier in a tweet, the Prime Minister said, India has won yet again following Lok Sabha poll verdict. Shri Modi said the faith placed by the people in their alliance gives them strength to work even harder to fulfill people's aspirations.
- Regional parties followed the Congress in the electoral table. The DMK with 23 wins, the Trinamool Congress and the YSR Congress with 22 each, the Shiv Sena with 18 and the Janata Dal-United with 16 made their presence felt in an election. Left parties CPI and CPI-M were left with five seats -- three for the CPI-M and two for the CPI. This is about half of their tally of 10 in 2014.
- Congress Leader Sonia Gandhi retained Rai Bareilly while the party president Rahul Gandhi lost Amethi to Union Minister Smriti Irani by a margin of over 55,000 votes. Union Minister Maneka Gandhi won from Sultanpur. Other Union Ministers who emerged victorious include General V.K. Singh from Ghaziabad, Mahesh Sharma from Gautam Buddha Nagar, Santosh Kumar Gangwar from Bareilly, Anupriya Patel of NDA ally Apna Dal(S) from Mirzapur, Dr. Satyapal Singh from Baghpat and Niranjana Jyoti from Fatehpur.
- In Uttar Pradesh, results for all the 80 seats have come in. BJP has bagged 62 seats and its ally Apna Dal 2. BSP has secured 10 seats while its ally Samajwadi party won 5 and Congress one.
- In Odisha, 20 results out of 21 seats have been declared so far. While Biju Janata Dal has bagged 11 seats, 8 has gone in favour of BJP and Congress one. Results of only two constituencies are yet to come in.
- In Gujarat, the BJP has won all the 26 Lok Sabha seats at stake as the people in the home state of Prime Minister Narendra Modi stood firmly behind him for the second consecutive time after 2014.
- In Tamil Nadu, DMK-led UPA has wrested 37 of 38 seats from the AIADMK in the Lok Sabha elections. State ruling party retained only the Theni seat. Congress candidate Su Thirunavukkarasar won by biggest margin of over 4 lakh 59 thousand votes in Thiruchirapalli seat and the VCK leader and DMK ally Thol. Tirumavalavan won by the thin margin of 3219 votes.
- In one of the biggest ever assembly bye-elections in the state, AIADMK bagged nine seats, whereas DMK won in 13. DMK's strength in the Assembly has now gone up to 110 while the ruling AIADMK has increased its tally to maintain a comfortable majority on the floor of the house.
- The DMK has emerged as the second largest opposition party in the Lok Sabha. Within the state, the people have given a mandate for the ruling dispensation to save itself from any loss of majority in the Assembly. Parties like PMK, DMDK, Puthiya Tamizhakam, AMMK floated by T.T.V. Dinakaran, actor Kamal Haasan's fledgling Makkal Needhi Maiyam and Naam Tamilar party have drawn a blank in both the Parliament elections and the Assembly bye-elections.

- In Andhra Pradesh, YSR Congress has clean swept, winning 22 out of 25 parliamentary seats. Telugu Desam Party (TDP) has won 3 seats Guntur, Srikakulam and Vijayawada.
- BJP has swept Madhya Pradesh also winning 28 seats while Congress could get only one in Chhindwada. BJP's Sadhvi Pragya Singh Thakur defeated Former Chief Minister Digvijaya Singh of Congress by over 3 Lakh 64 thousand votes. Union Minister Narendra Singh Tomar wins Morena seat. Senior Congress leader Jyotiraditya Scindia has lost his traditional Guna seat by over 1 lakh 25 thousand votes to BJP's Krishna Pal Singh.
- In Uttarakhand, BJP has won all the five seats.
- In Delhi, BJP has won all the seven parliamentary seats with overwhelming margins.
- In Punjab, result of all the 13 Lok Sabha seats have come in. Congress has won eight seats followed by BJP and the Shiromani Akali Dal two each while AAP one. Former Union Minister Manish Tewari of the Congress has won from Anandpur Sahib. The party has also won Amritsar, Faridkot, Fatehgarh Sahib, Jalandhar, Khadoor Sahib, Ludhiana and Patiala. BJP candidates have won Gurdaspur and Hoshiarpur seat and SAD candidates bagged Bathinda and Ferozpur seats.
- In Chandigarh, Kirron Kher has defeated Congress candidate Pawan Kumar Bansal.
- In Himachal Pradesh also the ruling BJP has won all the 4 Lok Sabha seats. Anurag Thakur has won in Hamirpur, Suresh Kumar Kashyap in Shimla, Ram Swaroop Sharma in Mandi and Kishan Kapoor in Kangra.
- In Rajasthan, out of 25 seats, BJP has won 24 while its ally Rashtriya Loktantrik Party one. Union Minister Col. Rajyawardhan Rathore of BJP retains Jaipur Rural, by a margin of nearly 4 lakh votes. Son of former CM Vasundhara Raje and Sitting MP Dushyant Singh of BJP retains Jhalawar Baran.
- In Maharashtra, all the 48 results have been declared. Out of this BJP gets 23 seats and its ally Shiv Sena 18. NCP has bagged 4 seats while Congress and All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen get one seat each.
- In Goa, both BJP and Congress have bagged one seat each while Union Minister of state Shripad Naik has won North Goa seat, Congress leader Francisco Sardinha gets South Goa seat.
- In West Bengal, all the 42 results have come in. Out of this Trinamool Congress has bagged 22, BJP 18, and Congress 2.
- In Bihar, all the results have been declared. Out of 40 seats BJP has bagged 17 seats while its ally Janta Dal (United) gets 16 and Lok Janshakti Party got six.
- Congress could manage only one.
- In Jharkhand, all the 14 results have been declared. BJP has got eleven while AJSU party, Congress and Jharkhand Mukti Morcha gets one each.
- In Chhattisgarh, out of 11 seats BJP has won in 9 and Congress 2.
- In Karnataka, BJP secured a landmark victory winning 25 seats out of 28 seats. The Congress, JDS and independent one each. Congress won from Bangalore rural and JDS has got the Hassan seat.
- In Telangana, result has been declared for all the 17 seats. TRS has won 9 seats. BJP has won 4 seats. Congress has won 3 seats.
- In Kerala, results have been declared for all 20 seats. The Congress led UDF got comfortable victory with Congress won 15 seats. Congress President Rahul Gandhi has won from

Wayanad constituency by securing a margin of over 4 lakhs 31 thousand votes over CPI candidate P.P.Suneer. IUML has won 2 seats. Kerala Congress (M), RSP and CPM have won in one seat each.

- In Assam, all the 14 results have been declared. BJP has won nine seats and Congress three. All India United Democratic Front and an Independent have bagged one each.
- In Arunachal Pradesh, BJP has bagged Arunachal East seat. Party candidate and Union Minister Kiren Rijiju is leading in Arunachal West by margin of over one lakh 57 thousand votes.
- In Manipur, BJP candidate Dr. Rajkumar Ranjan Singh has won from Inner Manipur Lok Sabha seat while Naga People's Front candidate Lorho S.P Foze has won Outer Manipur seat.
- In Meghalaya, Congress candidate Vincent H. Pala has won by a margin of 1,52,000 votes. Agatha K. Sangma of National People's Party has defeated Mukul Sangma of Congress by margin more than 64 thousand votes.
- In Mizoram constituency, C Lalrosanga of Mizo National Front has won by margin of more than 8,000 votes. He defeated Independent candidate Lalnghinglova Hmar.
- In Nagaland, the lone Lok Sabha seat has been bagged by Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party candidate Tokheho Yepthomi defeating Congress candidate K L Chishi by more than 16300 votes.
- Sikkim Krantikari Morcha candidate, Indra Hang Subba has bagged the lone seat of the state.
- In Tripura, BJP has won both the parliamentary seats. Nationalist Congress Party has retained lone parliamentary seat of Lakshadweep. Independent candidate Delkar Mohanbhai Sanjibhai has bagged Dadra & Nagar Haveli seat. And Daman & Diu seat has gone in favour of Lalubhai Babubhai Patel of BJP. In Puducherry, Congress candidate V. Vaithilingam has won the lone Lok Sabha seat.
- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi took the oath of Office and Secrecy along with a new Council of Ministers for the second term at a glittering ceremony at Rashtrapati Bhawan on May 30, 2019. President Ram Nath Kovind administered the oath of Office and Secrecy to the Prime Minister. 24 persons were sworn in as Cabinet Ministers. Ministers of State with (Independent Charge) and Ministers of States were also administered the oath by the President.
- The function was attended by leaders from BIMSTEC countries and foreign envoys, Governors, Chief Ministers, Opposition leaders, corporate heads and film stars. President of Sri Lanka Maithripala Sirisena, President of Myanmar, U Win Myint, President of Bangladesh, Md. Abdul Hamid, Prime Minister of Bhutan, Dr Lotay Tshering, Prime Minister of Nepal, K P Sharma Oli, Special Envoy of Thailand, Grisada Boonrach, President of the Kyrgyz Republic, Sooronbay Jeenbekov and Prime Minister of Mauritius, Pravind Jugnauth witnessed the event.
- Shri Prakash Javadekar took charge as Union Minister of Information & Broadcasting on May 31. Speaking on the occasion, he expressed his gratitude at having been given the opportunity to work in the Cabinet of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. He highlighted the important role played by Media in a democracy, reiterating the commitment of the Government towards a free press. He talked about the importance of freedom of speech and expression which is an important part of the democratic ethos of the country. He also appreciated the leadership and dynamism of his predecessors. Shri Javadekar also met senior officials of Ministry of I&B and Heads of Media Units under the Ministry. He urged

everyone to work as a team and expressed hope of a healthy and sustained partnership in future endeavours.

- Newly appointed Ministers have taken over their Ministries. Ms. Nirmala Sitharaman today took the charge of Finance Ministry. Shri Santosh Gangwar took the charge of Ministry of Labour and Employment. Talking to media in New Delhi, he said, he will work for the betterment of unorganized sector and ensure social security for those working in the this sector.
- Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat has taken the charge of Jal Shakti Ministry. He said, water scarcity is the biggest challenge in the world now and keeping this challenge in mind, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has integrated all water related issues with Jal Shakti Ministry. He said, only four per cent of total potable water of world is in India and government will ensure preservation of water for the country.
- Shri Piyush Goyal has taken the charge of Commerce and Industry Ministry. Talking to media, Mr. Goyal said, he is thankful to Prime Minister for reposing faith in him.
- Newly sworn-in minister Shri Shripad Naik thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for selecting him as a member in the Union Council of Ministers for the second consecutive term. Mr. Naik was retained as the minister of state (independent charge) for Ayush, a position he held in the previous NDA government, while being also allocated the responsibility of minister of state for defence on Friday. Speaking to AIR, Shri Naik said that retaining the Ayush ministry would help him focus on related projects that were initiated in his previous term.
- Dr S. Jaishankar has taken over as the External Affairs Minister.
- Shri Ram Vilas Pawan has taken over as Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution. Shri Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi assumes the office of Ministry of Minority Affairs. Dr. Jitendra Singh took charge as the Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office.
- Goa celebrated its statehood day on May 30. It was on this day in 1987 that Goa became the 25th state of the Indian Union. Before this, Goa, along with Daman and Diu, was a union territory. The Statehood helped in shaping Goa's distinct identity. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has greeted the people, saying Goa epitomizes harmony, brotherhood and progressive values.
- The Government has reconstituted eight Cabinet Committees. These are Appointments Committee, Committees on Accommodation, Economic Affairs, Parliamentary Affairs, Political Affairs, Security, Investment and Growth and Cabinet Committee on Employment and Skill Development. Some of the important committees are as follows:
 - **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs:** Prime Minister; Shri Rajnath Singh, Minister of Defence; Shri Amit Shah, Minister of Home Affairs; Shri Nitin Jairam Gadkari, Minister of Road Transport and Highways & Minister of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises; Shri D.V. Sadananda Gowda Minister of Chemicals & Fertilizers; Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman, Minister of Finance & Minister of Corporate Affairs; Shri Narendra Singh Tomar, Minister of Agriculture & Farmer Welfare, Minister of Rural Development, and Minister of Panchayati Raj; Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad, Minister of Communications and Information Technology and Minister of Law and Justice; Smt. Harsimrat Kaur Badal, Minister of Food Processing Industries; Dr. Subrahmanayam Jaishankar, Minister of External Affairs; Shri Piyush Goyal, Minister of Railways, Minister of Commerce & Industry; and Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, Minister of State

(Independent Charge) of the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas and Minister of Steel.

- **Cabinet Committee on Security:** Prime Minister; Shri Rajnath Singh, Minister of Defence; Shri Amit Shah, Minister of Home Affairs; Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman, Minister of Finance & Corporate Affairs; and Dr. Subrahmanayam Jaishankar, Minister of External Affairs.
- **Cabinet Committee on Investment and Growth:** Prime Minister; Shri Rajnath Singh, Minister of Defence; Shri Amit Shah, Minister of Home Affairs; Shri Nitin Jairam Gadkari, Minister of Road Transport & Highways, Minister of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises; Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman, Minister of Finance & Corporate Affairs; and Shri Piyush Goyal, Minister of Railways & Minister of Commerce & Industry.
- **Cabinet Committee on Employment & Skill Development:** Prime Minister; Shri Rajnath Singh, Minister of Defence; Shri Amit Shah, Minister of Home Affairs; Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman, Minister of Finance & Corporate Affairs; Shri Narendra Singh Tomar, Minister of Agriculture & Farmer Welfare, Minister of Rural Development: and Minister of Panchayati Raj; Shri Piyush Goyal, Minister of Railways & Minister of Commerce & Industry; Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank', Minister of Human Resource Development; Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, Minister of Petroleum & Natural Gas: and Minister of Steel; Dr. Mahendra Nath Pandey, Minister of Skill development & Entrepreneurship; Shri Santosh Kumar Gangwar, MOS (I/C) Labour & Employment; Shri Hardeep Singh Puri, Minister of State (I/C) of the Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs & Minister of State (I/C) of the Ministry of Civil Aviation, and Minister of State in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved the reconstitution of National Institution for Transforming India, NITI Aayog. Mr. Modi will be the chairperson of the Aayog and Rajiv Kumar will be the Vice Chairman. An official release said, V K Saraswat, Ramesh Chand and Dr V K Paul will be the full-time members of the NITI Aayog. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Home Minister Amit Shah, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar will be the Ex-Officio Members. Road, Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari, Social Justice and Empowerment Minister Thaawarchand Gehlot, Rail Minister Piyush Goyal and Statistics and Programme Implementation Minister Rao Inderjit Singh will be the special invitees of NITI Aayog.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said the government is leaving no stone unturned for a healthy India by ensuring good quality healthcare facilities for the poor, disadvantaged and the under-privileged sections of the society. He said, in this context, the quality and safety of food acquires critical dimensions. In his message on first-ever World Food Safety Day on July 7, Mr. Modi said, the food safety is of prime importance for the well-being and health of the nation and its people.
- The results of the National Eligibility Cum Entrance Test, NEET 2019 has been declared. Nalin Khandelwal of Rajasthan topped the exam. Bhavik Bansal of Delhi secured the second position while Akshat Kaushik from Uttar Pradesh secured the third position. The NEET is conducted by the National Testing Agency for admission to MBBS and BDS courses in medical and dental colleges. Madhuri Reddy of Telangana emerged as the topper among girls and secured an all-India rank of seven. As many as 14 lakh 10 thousand 755 candidates had appeared for the exam out of which seven lakh 97 thousand 42 candidates qualified the test.

- Union Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh Puri launched Swachh Survekshan 2020 League in New Delhi. The league will be a quarterly cleanliness assessment of cities and towns in India and will be integrated with Swachh Survekshan 2020, the 5th edition of the annual cleanliness survey of urban India to be conducted between January-February 2020. The objective of the Swachh Survekshan survey, which is conducted by an independent third party, is to encourage large scale citizen participation, ensure sustainability of initiatives taken towards garbage free and open defecation free cities and create awareness amongst all sections of society about the importance of working together towards making towns and cities a better place to live in.
- Government has decided to reduce the rate of contribution towards ESI scheme from 6.5% to 4% for the first time in over two decades, a post-poll gift to 3.6 crore employees. The Employees' State Insurance Act 1948 (the ESI Act) provides for medical, cash, maternity, disability and dependent benefits to the Insured Persons under the Act. The ESI Act is administered by Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC). Benefits provided under the ESI Act are funded by the contributions made by the employers and the employees. Under the ESI Act, employers and employees both contribute their shares respectively. The Government of India through Ministry of Labour and Employment decides the rate of contribution under the ESI Act. Presently, the rate of contribution is fixed at 6.5% of the wages with employers' share being 4.75% and employees' share being 1.75%. This rate is in vogue since 01.01.1997.
- The Indian Air Force confirmed that there are no survivors from the recent crash of AN-32 aircraft. Official sources said the "black box" of the aircraft has been recovered from the crash site and it will help the investigators reconstruct the events leading to the crash. The IAF has already ordered a court of inquiry into the accident. The Russian-origin aircraft went missing on the afternoon of June 3, around 33 minutes after taking off from Jorhat in Assam for Menchuka in Arunachal Pradesh.
- Farmers will have to contribute Rs. 100 per month under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Pension Yojana that seeks to provide a minimum fixed monthly pension of Rs. 3,000 on the attainment of 60 years. The central government will also contribute an equal amount to the pension fund to be managed by the LIC, which will be responsible for the pension payout. The government in its first cabinet meeting had approved a separate pension scheme for farmers with an aim to cover 5 crore beneficiaries in the first three years. Discussing the new scheme with state agriculture ministers through a video conference, Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar urged all states and union territories to roll out the programme at the earliest.
- The 5th International Day of Yoga was celebrated across the globe on June 21. Prime Minister Narendra Modi participated in a Mass Yoga Demonstration at Ranchi on the occasion. The Prime Minister said that he now wants to take the message of modern Yoga, from the cities to the villages, and to the homes of the poor and tribal communities. He emphasized that Yoga must become part of the lives of the poor and the tribals, because they suffer the most on account of illness. The Prime Minister said Yoga transcends the barriers of age, colour, caste, community, thought, sect, rich or poor, State, and border. He said Yoga belongs to everyone. Mass yoga demonstration programmes were held at various places in New Delhi. President Ram Nath Kovind participated in the Yoga day event organized at the Rashtrapati Bhavan. Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Kovind said, yoga is India's gift to

humanity and it holds the key to healthy living and to that fine balance between mind and body. Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu participated in the Yoga Day celebrations organized by Brahma Kumaris at Red Fort.

- President Ram Nath Kovind has said a strong national economy is possible only on the foundation of a strong rural economy. Addressing the joint sitting of both the Houses of Parliament, Mr. Kovind said, farmers are the pillars of rural economy and large scale investments have been made to strengthen rural India. Mr. Kovind said in order to enhance agriculture productivity, an investment of 25 lakh crore rupees will be made in the coming years. The President said rural women are the biggest beneficiaries of freedom from smoke through Ujjwala Yojana, vaccination through Mission Indradhanush and free electricity connections under Saubhagya Yojana. He said women are also being given priority in the registration of houses built under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana in the rural areas. He said, under the housing scheme, nearly 2 crore new houses will be built in the villages during the next three years. The President said, the Government accords top most priority to national security and effective steps are being taken to tackle Terrorism and Naxalism. Mr. Kovind said, work is underway to transform India into a Global Manufacturing Hub and a New Industrial Policy will be announced shortly. He said people after evaluating the government's first term, have given even stronger support for the second term in the Lok Sabha elections. Listing the government's initiatives, the President said it has been decided to provide the 'Prime Minister Kisan Samman Nidhi', to every farmer in the country. He said the government's 'pension scheme' for small shopkeepers and retail traders, will benefit around three crore small shopkeepers in the country. The President said, the world's biggest healthcare scheme Ayushman Bharat Yojana has been implemented, providing 'Health-Protection-Cover' to 50 crore poor people. Mr. Kovind said the objective is to set up about 1.5 lakh Health and Wellness Centres in all rural areas by 2022.
- NDA nominee and BJP MP from Kota, Om Birla was unanimously elected as the Speaker of 17th Lok Sabha. All major political parties including Congress, DMK, TMC, BJD, TDP, YSR Congress, JD (U) and Shiv Sena supported the motion moved by Prime Minister and Leader of the House, Narendra Modi to choose Mr. Birla as the Speaker. Later, Pro-tem speaker Dr. Virendra Kumar declared Mr. Birla as the Speaker. Prime minister along with other leaders of different political parties escorted Om Birla to the Speaker's chair.
- Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar has said the government has put in place an institutional mechanism to deal with matters of misleading advertisements. Replying to a question in Lok Sabha, Mr. Javadekar said the government takes cognizance of the rise in misleading advertisements in different media including television in the country. He said the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting had constituted a standing and permanent Inter ministerial committee to examine content related matters of programmes and advertisements telecast on TV. The minister informed the House that for Print media, the Press Council of India is mandated to maintain and improve the standards of newspapers and news agencies in the country. Mr. Javadekar said in 2015, the department of Consumer Affairs launched a portal, Grievances Against Misleading Advertisements (GAMA). He said between March 2015 and May 2019, 6710 complaints related to advertisements have been successfully resolved. The minister also informed the House that the Advertising Standards Council of India looks into complaints across all media such as Print, TV, Radio, hoardings, brochures and SMS.

- Environment Forest and Climate Change Minister Prakash Javadekar has said that his ministry has issued letters to all states to consider the inclusion of bamboo and medicinal plants in the afforestation activities being undertaken on degraded forest land and contiguous areas. Replying to a question in the Lok Sabha, he said the ministry also issued advisories to states to take up plantation of local and indigenous species which would also include Neem, Peepal and Banyan on various occasions like Van Mahotsav and World Environment Day. The Minister said Human Resource Development Ministry has already taken up the programme of Smart Campus, where greening of the campus is a major component.
- The Lok Sabha has approved the resolution seeking an extension of President rule in Jammu and Kashmir for a further period of six months with effect from 3rd July 2019. The House also passed the Jammu and Kashmir Reservation (Amendment) Bill 2019. The bill proposes to give reservation in educational institutions and government jobs to people living within 10 km of the International Border in Jammu. The Bill will replace the Ordinance promulgated in this regard. Home Minister Amit Shah had moved the resolution and the bill related to Jammu and Kashmir. Replying to a debate, the Home Minister gave a stern message through Parliament that those who want to break the country, should have fear in their minds as the national security, the security of the Indian Citizen and securing border are the top priority of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi led government.
- Environment, Forest and Climate Change Minister Prakash Javadekar has said that BS-VI emission norms will be implemented across the country next year which will drastically reduce vehicular pollution. In reply to supplementaries in the Lok Sabha, Mr. Javadekar said, from next year, BS-VI complaint vehicles will be available and the move will help reduce 90 percent vehicular pollution. He said, due to the opening of the peripheral expressway in Delhi, over 60 thousand vehicles which earlier used to pass through the national capital are now going to their destinations without coming to Delhi. Mr. Javadekar also said the government has installed air pollutant monitor system in over 3500 industries.
- Food and Consumer Affairs Minister Ram Vilas Paswan said there is sufficient capacity of storage of central pool food grains at the national level. In reply to a question in the Rajya Sabha, the Minister said, the total storage capacity available for central pool stocks is over 862 lakh tonnes. He said a total number of two thousand and 68 godowns are available with Food Corporation of India for central pool food stocks. Mr. Paswan also informed the House that the government is implementing various schemes for construction of godowns and silos in the country depending on the requirement.
- US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo called on Prime Minister Narendra Modi at his residence in New Delhi. In a tweet, External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said, Secretary Pompeo exchanged views on various aspects of Indo-US relationship with the Prime Minister. The External Affairs Ministry spokesperson said that the two sides are working together to further strengthen the strategic partnership. Earlier, the meeting of US Secretary of State and External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar discussed a gamut of issues concerning both the sides. Briefing the media after the meeting, the two leaders said that the talks have made progress on many matters.
- The Supreme Court has directed Karnataka Assembly Speaker K.R. Ramesh Kumar to maintain status quo as on 12th of this month with regard to resignation and disqualification of 10 rebel MLAs. The Apex court had asked whether the Speaker had the power to challenge its order, while hearing a plea moved by the Speaker against the top court order

asking him to take a decision on the resignation of 10 rebel MLAs on 11th July. A bench headed by Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi concluded the hearing on a bunch of pleas moved by the speaker and the rebel Congress and JD(S) MLAs. The MLAs told the bench that the speaker had not taken any decision on their decision to step down, adding that he had no immunity with regard to the acceptance of the resignations. However, the counsel appearing for the Karnataka Assembly speaker said he was constitutionally obligated to decide on a plea for disqualification of the rebel MLAs. Union Minister Narendra Singh Tomar said that Speaker of Karnataka Assembly should play an unbiased role in the ongoing political crisis in Karnataka.

- The Supreme Court on 12th of this month sought the Maharashtra government's response on pleas challenging a Bombay High Court order that upheld the grant of reservations to the Maratha community in education and jobs. A bench headed by Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi did not stay the Bombay High Court order upholding the constitutional validity of the Maratha quota law, but made it clear that the aspect allowing the reservation for Marathas with a retrospective effect from 2014 would not be made operational. The bench was hearing two appeals, including one filed by J Laxman Rao Patil challenging the high court order that upheld the constitutional validity of the quota for the Maratha community in education and government jobs in Maharashtra.
- The Supreme Court on the 11th July sought a fresh status report on the ongoing mediation proceedings in the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid Ayodhya land dispute case within a week. The court made it clear that if the vexatious issue was not resolved amicably, it would hear the matter on a day-to-day basis from 25th of this month. A five-judge constitution bench, headed by Chief Justice of India, Ranjan Gogoi, requested former apex court judge Justice F.M.I. Kalifulla, Chairperson of the three-member mediation panel, to submit the report by 18th of this month.
- The Enforcement Directorate, ED has provisionally attached properties of Mehul Choksi worth over 24 crore rupees in Punjab National Bank Fraud Case. These include three commercial properties in Dubai, valuables, one Mercedes car and Fixed Deposit Account. In a statement, the ED said, it had initiated investigation in money laundering case against Mehul Choksi and others in February last year under Prevention of Money Laundering on the basis of FIR registered by CBI. Choksi and others have committed the offence of cheating the Punjab National Bank in connivance with certain bank officials. Out of total proceeds of crime worth over six thousand 97 crore rupees, the ED has attached and seized properties worth two thousand 534 crore rupees.
- The Central Bureau of Investigation, CBI conducted searches at five locations in Mumbai and Delhi at the residence of noted lawyer Indira Jaising and offices of Lawyers Collective, a Non-Governmental Organization run by her husband Anand Grover. The agency said certain incriminating documents have been recovered during these searches. Grover was booked by the agency for alleged Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA) violations in receiving foreign aid.
- India has said that it has the capability of taking care of its territorial integrity and sovereignty and there is no need to take seriously the threats on Kashmir by Al Qaeda chief Ayman al-Zawahiri. External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said Al Qaeda is an UN-prescribed terror organization and their leader is UN-designated terrorist. He said

India's security forces are capable and equipped therefore there is no need to give importance to such threats.

- Union Cabinet has approved Rs. 1,600 crore for Dibang Multipurpose Project in Arunachal Pradesh. Briefing media persons in New Delhi after the meeting, Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar said the project is envisaged as a storage-based hydro-electric project with flood moderation as the key objective. Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, also approved a bill to scrap 58 redundant laws. The move is aimed at weeding out archaic and dead statutes which have lost their relevance. The NDA government in its two terms has sent to the chopping block 1,824 old laws which had become redundant. Cabinet also approved the doubling of a vital railway line connecting Guwahati with New Bongaigaon at a cost of Rs. 2,042 crore.
- India has asked Pakistan to release the former Navy officer Kulbhushan Jadhav forthwith and vowed to vigorously continue efforts to bring him back. A day after the International Court of Justice ordered review of death penalty to Kulbhushan Jadhav, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar made statement in both houses of Parliament on the ICJ judgement. He said that Jadhav is innocent of the charges made against him. He expressed confidence that the entire House stands united in welcoming the ICJ judgment.
- Union Home Minister Amit Shah has said that all illegal residents across the nation will be deported as per international law. Defending the National Register of Citizens, he said no false person will be included in the NRC and no genuine person will be left behind. Speaking on the NRC issue in Rajya Sabha, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said that all illegal residents who are staying in India will be deported according to international laws. NIA (Amendment) Bill was also introduced in Rajya Sabha.
- The celebrations of 20th Anniversary of the victory in Operation Vijay at Kargil began in Delhi on July 14, 2019. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Army Chief General Bipin Rawat paid tributes to the martyrs at National War Memorial where a Victory Flame was illuminated. The Victory Flame will traverse through eleven towns and cities, to finally culminate at Dras wherein the flame will be merged with the eternal flame at the 'Kargil War Memorial'.
- The Lok Sabha has passed the Central Universities (Amendment) Bill, 2019 by voice vote. The Bill seeks to establish two new universities- the Central University and the Central Tribal University in Andhra Pradesh. Replying to a debate on the bill, Human Resource Development Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank said, the Universities will be set up with a cost of 1700 crore rupees in four years in Andhra Pradesh. He said, in the first phase, 450 crore rupees will be provided for the Central University and 420 crore rupees for the Central Tribal University.
- In Bihar, the death toll due to floods has climbed to 67, with the highest 17 deaths reported in Sitamarhi. The flood situation however has slightly improved in several districts with water either receding or becoming steady. Meanwhile, in Assam, the government has intensified relief and rescue measures in flood hit areas. 57 lakh people in 29 districts are reeling under the fury of flood though most of the rivers are receding. The army, NDRF, SDRF and civil administrations have evacuated over 14 thousand people on July 17. 1.5 lakh people are still taking shelter at relief camps and essential food items are being distributed.
- The 20th Anniversary of Kargil Vijay Diwas was celebrated across the country on July 26. The day marks the victory of Indian armed forces in Operation Vijay in 1999, when they

evicted the infiltrators backed by Pakistani army of high outposts in Kargil sector. The Kargil war was fought for more than 60 days and ended with India regaining control of all the previously held territory. The central theme of this year's celebrations is 'Remember, Rejoice and Renew'. On the occasion, President Ram Nath Kovind, who is also the Supreme Commander of the armed forces, paid tributes at Chinari Corps Headquarters, Badami Bag at Srinagar. President's earlier programme of paying homage to war soldiers at Dras was cancelled due to bad weather. Prime Minister Narendra Modi also paid tributes to the brave soldiers of Indian Army who laid down their lives protecting their motherland. In a tweet, he said, the day reminds us of the courage, bravery and dedication of our soldiers.

- India's second Moon spacecraft Chandrayaan-2 put into earth orbit on July 22, successfully completed its second earth bound orbit raising maneuver, ISRO said. It was "performed successfully on July 26, 2019 at 0108 hrs (IST) as planned, using the onboard propulsion system for a firing duration of 883 seconds. The orbit achieved is 251 x 54829 km. All spacecraft parameters are normal," the Indian Space Research Organization tweeted. With the successful launch of Chandrayaan-2 India on July 22 scripted history. Chandrayaan-2 lifted off at 2.43 pm from the second launch pad at Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh. The mission was carried by the GSLV MK-III dubbed as 'BAAHUBALI'. The mission will make India the fourth nation after, US, Russia and China to make a soft landing on Moon Surface. The objectives of India's second expedition to the moon using Chandrayaan-2 include studying mineralogy and chemical composition of lunar soil, to search for water or ice in the near-South Pole of the moon, examining its atmosphere, studying lunar seismic activities and to carry out mapping of the moon using high-resolution cameras.
- The Lok Sabha has passed the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage), Bill, 2019 commonly known as Triple Talaq bill by voice vote. Replying to the debate on the Bill, Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said it was important to bring in a law banning instant triple talaq as the practice has continued despite a Supreme Court verdict passed in 2017. Mr. Prasad said, despite Supreme Court's direction against the Triple Talaq, the practice is still continuing in different parts of the country. Several hundred cases have been reported.
- The Parliament has passed the Right to Information (Amendment) Bill, 2019 with the Rajya Sabha approving it amid opposition walkout. The Lok Sabha has already passed the bill. The Bill seeks to empower the Centre to make rules to decide the tenure, salary, allowances and other terms of service of Information Commissioners of the Central Information Commission and also of State Information Commissions.
- Union Cabinet has approved Official Amendments to the Aadhaar and Other Laws (Amendment) Bill 2019. Briefing the reporters after the Cabinet meeting, Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar said, the government has decided to make Aadhaar as identification document so that people can avail the benefit of state subsidies directly in their bank account and to eliminate middlemen. He said, there are around 128 crore Aadhaar cardholders in the country.
- Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan has said, around ten crore people have become the beneficiaries under Ayushman Bharat- Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana. Replying to supplementaries during the Question Hour in the Lok Sabha, Dr Harsh Vardhan said, states are free to add additional families at their own cost. The Minister said, 16 thousand 39

hospitals including 8059 private hospitals and 7980 public hospitals have been empanelled under the Yojana.

- The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (Amendment) Bill, 2019 has been passed by Rajya Sabha. The bill seeks to enhance punishment, including a provision for death penalty, for committing sexual crimes against children. Replying to the debate on the Bill, Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Irani said government has sanctioned 1023 fast track courts for speedy dispensation of pending cases under POCSO and sexual assault.
- The government has made key appointments in several ministries. IAS officer Ajay Kumar Bhalla, who was Secretary in the Ministry of Power, has been appointed as Officer on Special Duty in the Ministry of Home Affairs with immediate effect. IAS officer Subhash Chandra Garg, who was Secretary in Department of Economic Affairs in Finance Ministry will now be the Power Secretary. Senior IAS officer Atanu Chakraborty, has been appointed as Secretary in Department of Economic Affairs. An official order said, the appointments have been approved by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet.
- President Ram Nath Kovind has given his nod to the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill, 2019 that abolishes the practice of instant Triple Talaq. The law comes into force retrospectively from 19th September 2018. The Parliament had passed the bill on July 30th 2019. The bill seeks to declare the practice of instant Triple Talaq as void and illegal and makes it a cognizable offence. It also provides allowance to women victims and their dependent children. The offence is made compoundable with the permission of the Magistrate at the instance of the married Muslim woman upon whom talaq is pronounced. President Ram Nath Kovind has also given his assent to the Companies (Amendment) Bill, 2019. The Bill seeks to amend the Companies Act, 2013. It aims to tighten Corporate Social Responsibility-CSR compliance, transfer certain responsibilities to National Company Law Tribunal and re-categorize certain offences as civil offences. The President has given his assent to the Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Bill 2019. The law comes into force retrospectively from 21st February, 2019. The bill seeks to provide for a comprehensive mechanism to ban the unregulated deposit schemes other than deposits taken in the ordinary course of businesses and to protect the interest of depositors.
- On the occasion of International Tiger Day on July 29, 2019, Prime Minister Narendra Modi released the results of the fourth cycle of All India Tiger Estimation - 2018, at Lok Kalyan Marg in New Delhi. The count of tigers in India has risen to 2967, in 2018, according to this census. Speaking on the occasion, the Prime Minister described this as a historic achievement for India, and reaffirmed India's commitment towards protecting the tiger. The Prime Minister appreciated the speed and dedication with which various stakeholders worked to achieve this. The Prime Minister said that with almost 3000 tigers, India is today among the biggest and most secure habitats.
- Parliament has passed the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Bill, 2019 with the Rajya Sabha approving it on August 2, 2019. The Lok Sabha has already passed the bill. The bill was passed with 147 members voting in favour of the bill and 42 against. Replying to discussion on the bill, Home Minister Amit Shah reiterated NDA government's commitment to fight against terrorism. He said there is a need to speak in one voice against terrorism. Referring to some members' objection to naming an individual as a terrorist, Mr. Shah said the countries like US, Pakistan and China also has similar provisions to name an individual

as a terrorist. He emphatically said a terrorist does not belong to any religion and the law should be amended along with time.

- The Rajya Sabha has passed the National Medical Commission Bill, 2019 with few amendments. The bill will be again sent to the Lok Sabha for approval. The Bill seeks to repeal the Indian Medical Council Act, 1956. Replying to a debate on the bill in the Rajya Sabha, Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan said, the legislation will bring major reform in the medical education in the country. He assured the members that government will also put a cap on the fee on the fifty per cent of those seats in private medical colleges which are not regulated by NMC.
- President Ram Nath Kovind has given his nod to National Medical Commission Bill 2019. The move came after Parliament passed the bill in the just-concluded session. The Bill seeks to repeal the Indian Medical Council Act, 1956. It has provisions to set up the National Medical Commission which will frame policies for regulating medical institutions and medical professionals and assess the requirements of healthcare-related human resources and infrastructure. Union Health Minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan hailed the NMC Act as historic and milestone in the medical education sector. Addressing a press conference in New Delhi, Dr Harsh Vardhan said, the rules will be framed and the NMC will be constituted within six months. He said, the NMC Act is progressive legislation which will reduce the burden on students and bring down costs of medical education.
- Former External Affairs Minister and veteran BJP leader Smt. Sushma Swaraj, passed away following a cardiac arrest on 6th August. She was 67. She died at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in New Delhi. Sushma Swaraj's sudden death triggered a wave of shock and grief among the common man and leaders cutting across political spectrum paid glowing tributes to the astute leader and star minister of the Modi-1 government. Smt. Sushma Swaraj had a kidney transplant in 2016 but had continued to work through her recovery period. Despite a severe medical condition and prolonged hospitalisation, she continued to work. Due to health reasons, she had announced not to contest the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. Hours before her demise, Sushma Swaraj congratulated Prime Minister Narendra Modi after the government revoked the special status for Jammu and Kashmir, saying she was waiting to see this day in her lifetime.
- The President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, presented Bharat Ratna Awards to Shri Nanaji Deshmukh (posthumously), Dr. Bhupendra Kumar Hazarika (posthumously) and Shri Pranab Mukherjee at an Investiture Ceremony held at Rashtrapati Bhavan on August 8, 2019.
- The Supreme Court of India has said it will wait for sometime before passing any direction on the plea seeking removal of restrictions on the media in Jammu and Kashmir in the wake of abrogation of special status of Jammu & Kashmir under Article 370. During the hearing, the Centre told the apex court that the situation is improving in Jammu and Kashmir and the curbs are being lifted gradually. Kashmir Times Executive Editor Anuradha Bhasin had sought directions to restore of all modes of communication, including mobile Internet and landline services.
- The government has reconstituted the Inter State Council and the Standing Committee of the Inter State Council. While Prime Minister Narendra Modi is the Chairman of the Inter State Council, Chief Ministers of all States and six Union Ministers including Rajnath Singh, Amit Shah and Nirmala Sitharaman are the members of the Council. Ten other Union Ministers including Nitin Gadkari, Ravi Shankar Prasad, Ram Vilas Paswan, S. Jaishankar and Piyush

Goyal are the permanent invitees in the Council. The Standing Committee of the Inter State Council is headed by Home Minister Amit Shah. Union Ministers Nirmala Sitharaman, Narendra Singh Tomar, Thaawar Chand Gehlot and Gajendra Singh Shekhawat and Chief Ministers of eight states viz. Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Odisha, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh are its members.

- Information and Broadcasting Ministry has implemented Accessibility Standards for Persons with Disabilities in television programmes for private TV channels. Taking a major step towards implementation of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, the channels have been told that they may either make their own programme with sign language interpretation, or they may carry a bulletin prepared by DD News free of cost if they wish.
- India's second lunar craft Chandrayaan-2 has sent its first picture of the moon's surface to the earth. National space agency ISRO tweeted the picture was taken by the camera on-board the lander of Chandrayaan-2, from above 2650 kilometers above the lunar surface. It may be noted that the lunar craft earlier sent the pictures of the earth when it was revolving around it on the fourth of August 2019.
- Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh took oath as a member of the Rajya Sabha. Singh has come back as a member of the Rajya Sabha from Rajasthan. He was elected unopposed as the BJP did not put up a candidate against him.
- The Supreme Court has agreed to examine the validity of a newly enacted law which makes the practice of instant divorce through triple talaq among Muslims a punishable offence entailing imprisonment of upto three years. A bench of justices N.V. Ramana and Ajay Rastogi issued notice to the Centre on a batch of petitions which has sought to declare The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act 2019 as 'unconstitutional' on ground that it allegedly violates the provisions of the Constitution.
- Road Transport and Highways Ministry has announced that FASTags will become mandatory for all vehicles from December this year. FASTag enabled vehicles can cruise through the dedicated FASTag lane without stopping at toll plazas on National Highways. FASTags are being issued by 22 certified banks through various channels such as Point-of-Sale at NH toll plazas and selected bank branches.
- Human Resources Development Ministry has launched the Integrated Teachers Training Programme, NISHTHA, National Initiative for School Head's Teacher's Holistic Advancement. The integrated programmes aims to build the capacities of around 42 lakh participants covering all teachers and Heads of the school at the elementary level in all government school, faculty members of state councils of Educational Research and Training and other educational departments of all States and Union Territories. The integrated training will motivate and equip teachers to encourage and foster critical thinking in students, handle diverse situations and act as first level counselors.
- Union Home Secretary Rajiv Gauba will be the new Cabinet Secretary. Mr. Gauba who is a 1982 batch IAS officer of Jharkhand cadre will replace P.K. Sinha. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the appointment of Mr. Gauba as the Cabinet Secretary with a tenure of two years from 30th August 2019. It has also approved the appointment of Mr. Gauba as Officer on Special Duty in the Cabinet Secretariat from the date of his assumption of charge till he takes over as Cabinet Secretary. Meanwhile, Ajay Kumar Bhalla has been appointed the new Home Secretary. He belongs to 1984 batch of Assam Meghalaya cadre of Indian Administrative Service (IAS) and is currently serving as

Officer on Special Duty in Home Ministry. The government has appointed Ajay Kumar as Defence Secretary. Ajay Kumar is a 1985 batch IAS officer of Kerala cadre and is currently serving as Secretary, Department of Defence Production. Brij Kumar Agarwal has been appointed as Secretary to the Lokpal and Subash Chandra as Secretary of Department of Defence Production.

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched a nation-wide Fit India Movement from New Delhi on the occasion of National Sports Day on 29 August. It is aimed at encouraging people to inculcate physical activity and sports in their day to day life. Speaking on the occasion, the Prime minister said a fit and a healthy nation is the call of a New India. He urged people to lead Fit India campaign saying the initiative is the need of the hour and it will take the country towards a healthier future. He said many lifestyle diseases, such as Diabetes and Hypertension, are spreading in the country, adding that small lifestyle changes can prevent them.
- In a major step towards increasing afforestation in the country, Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Prakash Javadekar has handed over forty seven thousand crore rupees from Compensatory Afforestation Fund to various states. The fund will be utilized for the compensatory afforestation, catchment area treatment, wildlife management, natural regeneration, forest fire prevention, soil and moisture conservation, improvement of wildlife habitat. Monitoring of the efforts pertaining to afforestation will be done with the help of technology like geo-tagging and video shooting.
- Human Resource Development Ministry has directed the University Grants Commission to immediately constitute a high-level committee to inquire into allegations of sale of fake degrees by certain universities. This came following media reports about rackets in several parts of the country where agents claim to arrange degrees of recognized universities without the need for students to attend classes or sit for examinations. In a tweet, Ministry said the committee will complete its enquiry within three weeks and identify institutions and individuals that have resorted to such illegal practices so that strict action can be taken.
- Condemning the recent statements made by Pakistani leadership on internal matter of India, India's Ministry of External Affairs has said Pakistan needs to understand that the world has seen through their provocative and unsubstantiated rhetoric which is based on lies and deceit. Briefing media in New Delhi, MEA Spokesman Raveesh Kumar said these statements include references to Jihad and incite violence in India. He said this is intended to project an alarmist situation which is far from ground reality. Responding to a query, Mr. Kumar said no hospital in Jammu and Kashmir has reported a shortage of drug or of any disposable item. Mr. Kumar said there has been a gradual and positive improvement in the situation on the ground.
- President Ram Nath Kovind has conferred the Swachh Bharat Awards in various categories for outstanding contribution to Swachh Bharat Mission. Vaishno Devi Shrine Board in Jammu and Kashmir received the Best Swachh Iconic Place award. Ministry of Railways was given Swachh Award in the category of Swachhta Action Plan. Swachhta Pakhwada Award was given to the Department of Defence. Power Grid Corporation received the award in the category of Public Sector Undertakings. Gujarat and Sikkim were given award for ODF and Behavior Change. Speaking on the occasion, the President said cleanliness is also an essential condition for the success of 'Jal Jeevan Mission' launched by the government this year.

- Union Minister for the Development of North East Region (DoNER) Dr. Jitendra Singh has said that the Centre has no plan to scrap Article 371. Talking to newsmen in Guwahati, Dr. Singh made it clear that though the issue is being raised in North East, Article 371 will not be scrapped.
- Former Finance Minister P Chidambaram has been sent to Tihar Jail by a Special CBI court in Delhi in connection with the INX Media corruption case. Special Judge Ajay Kumar Kuhar sent him to 14-day judicial custody till the 19th of September. P Chidambaram was produced before the Delhi Court on 05 September after the expiry of his 15-day CBI custody, ordered by the special court in five spells, which started after his arrest on 21st of August. The CBI had registered an FIR against him in May 2017 for alleged irregularities in the Foreign Investment Promotion Board clearance granted to the INX Media group for receiving overseas funds of 305 crore rupees in 2007 during his tenure as Finance Minister. After that, the Enforcement Directorate lodged a money laundering case in this regard in 2017.
- More than six thousand railway stations will be equipped with free Wi-Fi facilities by the end of September 2019. People can use the Wi-Fi service free of cost for net surfing, for streaming videos and other on-line activities. RailTel has taken a lead in providing fast Wi-Fi for the use of passengers. RailTel CMD Puneet Chawla said that so far the facility is available at four thousand railway stations and that approximately five lakh people are availing the facility every day. Free Wi-Fi is a pro-passenger initiative of the Railway Ministry which is in line with the Prime Minister's 'Digital India' programme.
- The Indian Army has begun recruitment drive for the first batch of women soldiers, who will be inducted in non-combat roles. Recruitment rallies are being conducted in different cantonments for selection of the first batch of 100 women soldiers who will be taken into the Corps of Military Police. At present, women in the Army work only in areas like engineering, medical, legal, signals and educational wings.
- Ministry of Human Resource and Development has prepared a module to introduce the study of Artificial Intelligence at the school level by joining hands with the technology leaders like Intel. Addressing the Central Board of Secondary Education's Teachers Awards 2018-19, Union Human Resource and Development Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank said, it is a big leap in our education system that artificial intelligence which was otherwise taught at the college level, is now being introduced from class 8th.
- Women and Child Development Ministry has extended the last date of receipt of applications for the Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar - 2020, till 30th of September. Earlier, the last date was 31st of August. Deserving candidates can submit their nominations only through online mode on the web portal. Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar was instituted to felicitate meritorious children, individuals and institutions of the country. It is given under two categories - Bal Shakti Puraskar and Bal Kalyan Puraskar.
- E-cigarettes have been completely banned in the country following President Ram Nath Kovind's assent for promulgation of the ordinance to this effect. The ordinance bans production, import, distribution and sale of electronic cigarettes. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, who headed a Group of Ministers (GoM) on the issue, said the Cabinet decided to ban e-cigarettes and similar products as they pose health risk to people, especially the youth. She said a bill replacing the ordinance will be brought in the next session of Parliament. The production, import, export, transport, sale or advertisements of e-cigarettes

will now be a cognizable offence. First time violators will face a jail term of up to one year and a fine of one lakh rupees. For subsequent offences, there will be a jail term of up to three years or a fine of five lakh rupees or both. The storage of e-cigarettes shall now be punishable with imprisonment of up to six months or a fine of up to 50 thousand rupees or both.

- Government has approved 8.65 per cent interest rate on deposits in Employees Provident Fund for 2018-19. Sources said, Ministry of Labour and Employment has notified 8.65 per cent rate of interest on EPF deposits for its over six crore subscribers. The EPFO has been settling EPF withdrawal claims at 8.55 per cent interest rate, approved for 2017-18. Now, the EPFO will settle accounts on higher rate of 8.65 per cent for 2018-19.
- Air Marshal Rakesh Kumar Singh Bhadauria will be the next chief of Indian Air Force. Air Marshal Bhadauria, who took over as the Vice Chief of the Indian Air Force in May this year, will take charge from the incumbent Chief Air Chief Marshal BS Dhanoa on 30th of September. An alumnus of the National Defence Academy, Bhadauria was commissioned into the fighter stream of the IAF in June 1980 and won the coveted Sword of Honour for standing first in the overall order of merit.
- Four Chief Justices of High Courts have been appointed as the Supreme Court judges. With this, the total strength of the Apex court has gone up to the highest ever number of 34. The appointees are Himachal Pradesh High Court Chief Justice V. Ramasubramanian, Punjab and Haryana High Court Chief Justice Krishna Murari, Rajasthan High Court Chief Justice S. Ravindra Bhat and Kerala High Court Chief Justice Hrishikesh Roy. Four separate notifications have been issued by the Ministry of Law and Justice on the appointments. The Supreme Court Collegiums led by Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi had recommended their names for appointment to the apex court on 28th August. The Parliament had recently increased the number of judges in the Supreme Court from 31 to 34, including the Chief Justice of India.
- The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, under Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has developed a Management Information System, MIS for stakeholders of Accessible India Campaign. The MIS portal will bring all the nodal ministries and States and Union Territories on a single platform for monitoring the progress being made against each target of Accessible India Campaign. Further, the portal will be useful in maintaining all the function on digital platform and capture data on a real-time basis.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a series of bilateral meetings on the sidelines of the 74th United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in New York. The leaders with whom he held such bilateral meetings included the Prime Ministers of Belgium, New Zealand and Armenia, and President of Estonia. In his meeting with the Armenia PM Nikol Pashinyan, Mr. Modi stressed on the need to considerably enhance the volume of bilateral trade and investment. PM Modi also sought Armenia's support for concluding an expeditious trading arrangement between India and the Eurasian Economic Union (EaEU) of which Armenia is a member. Mr. Modi also thanked Pashinyan for Armenia's consistent support for India's candidature for the permanent membership of an expanded UN Security Council. Mr. Modi discussed bilateral ties during his meeting with New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern. During the meeting with his counterpart from Belgium Charles Michel, the two leaders agreed to intensify efforts on early conclusion of negotiations on the bilateral investment and trade

agreement and enhance closer cooperation on counter-terrorism, multilateral institutions and migration and mobility. Mr. Modi's fourth bilateral of the day was with President of Estonia Kersti Kaljulaid.

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi was conferred the "Global Goalkeeper" award by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan launched by his government. Mr. Modi dedicated the award to those Indians who transformed the Swachh Bharat campaign into a "people's movement" and accorded topmost priority to cleanliness in their day-to-day lives. Speaking on the occasion, Prime Minister said, when 130 crore people take a pledge, any challenge can be overcome. Mr. Modi said, over 11 crore toilets were built in the country in the last five years, which is a record. Prime Minister said, the poor people and the women of India were benefitted the most by it.
- The social media platforms will observe a voluntary code of ethics in the ongoing Haryana and Maharashtra Assembly polls as well as in all future elections. The Internet and Mobile Association of India and social media platforms Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Google, Sharechat and TikTok have agreed to observe the code of ethics during the elections. Under it, social media platforms have created a high priority dedicated grievance redressal channel for taking prompt action on the cases reported by the Election Commission. The social media platforms and the Commission have developed a notification mechanism by which poll panel can notify the platforms for potential violations of electoral laws.
- Centre has approved construction of 1.23 lakh more houses under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban). The 47th Central Sanctioning and Monitoring Committee approved 630 proposals from participating states for construction of 1.23 lakh houses with an overall investment of 4,988 crore rupees. An official release said the commitment from government as central assistance will be 1,805 crore rupees.
- The Centre has instituted the highest civilian award for contribution to the unity and integrity of India in the name of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. The award seeks to recognize notable and inspiring contributions to promote the cause of national unity and integrity and to reinforce the value of a strong and united India. The award will be announced on the occasion of the National Unity Day on the birth anniversary of Sardar Patel on 31st of October. The award will be conferred by the President at a presentation ceremony along with the Padma awards at Rashtrapati Bhawan. An official release said, an Award Committee would be constituted by the Prime Minister, which would include the Cabinet Secretary, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, Secretary to the President, Home Secretary as Members and three-four eminent persons selected by the Prime Minister. The award would consist of a medal and a citation. No monetary grant or cash award would be attached to this Award.

INTERNATIONAL

- India has reiterated its continued support to usher in a new era of peace and stability in the Korean peninsula. External Affairs Minister Mrs. Sushma Swaraj said, India and South Korea also shared the view that terrorism in all its forms and manifestations is a global scourge and resolved to combat it through coordinated regional and global efforts. Both sides agreed to raise the quantum of the bilateral trade to 50 billion dollars by the year 2030.

- US Defence Secretary Jim Mattis resigned from his post citing policy differences with President Donald Trump on December 21. In his resignation letter sent to the President yesterday, Mr. Mattis hinted at his differences with him as a reason for stepping down. Announcing that the Defence Secretary will be retiring at the end of February next year, Mr. Trump tweeted that General Mattis was a great help in getting allies and other countries to pay their share of military obligations.
- The UN General Assembly has adopted the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, the first-ever negotiated global framework on a common approach to international migration in all its dimensions. It is meant to address issues that concern the world's 258 million people on the move and countries of origin, transit and destination.
- The US has praised New Delhi's contributions to the peaceful development of the war-torn Afghanistan and said India is a most reliable regional partner of the war-torn country. The Pentagon said in its semi-annual Afghan report to the US Congress, that India interpreted the new US South Asia policy as an opportunity to increase its economic involvement with Afghanistan.
- US President Donald Trump has named budget director Mick Mulvaney as the acting chief of staff, a week after he announced John Kelly's scheduled departure. In a tweet, Trump said he look forward to working with Mulvaney. The latest announcement came as Trump spent almost a week considering a nominee to fill the vacancy left by Kelly, a retired U.S. Marine Corps general.
- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has announced a Rs. 4,500 crore financial assistance to Bhutan for its 12th five-year plan after holding wide-ranging talks with his Bhutanese counterpart Dr. Lotay Tshering. The new five-year plan of Bhutan began this year and will continue till 2022. In his media statement after the talks in New Delhi, Mr. Modi said hydropower cooperation with Bhutan is a key aspect of bilateral ties and that work on the Mangdechhu project will soon be completed.
- Saudi Arabia's King Salman has appointed a new Foreign Minister as part of a major Cabinet reshuffle, following international fallout from the killing of Saudi writer Jamal Khashoggi. A royal decree has named Ibrahim al-Assaf as new Foreign Minister, demoting outgoing top diplomat Adel al-Jubeir to the position of Minister of State for Foreign Affairs.
- Mr. Jair Bolsonaro has been sworn in as Brazil's President in a ceremony at Brazil's National Congress Building. Addressing a joint session of Congress minutes after taking the oath of office, Bolsonaro, a former Army captain and admirer of the country's 1964-1985 military dictatorship, vowed to adhere to democratic norms. He said his government would be guided by the promises he made to Brazilian voters fed up with graft, high levels of violent crime and a still-sputtering economy. 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.
- Cuba's former president Raul Castro marked the 60th anniversary of the country's revolution, amidst pressing diplomatic relations with the United States and a flailing economy. On New Year's Day of 1959, Cuba's U.S.-backed dictator Fulgencio Batista fled Cuba as Fidel Castro and his bearded revolutionaries seized control of the Caribbean country. Alongside Fidel was his brother, Raul Castro, who now heads the country's Communist Party. Speaking at an event in the city of Santiago de Cuba to mark the anniversary, Raul Castro said Havana seeks mutual bilateral with the U.S.A. Under President Donald Trump, warming diplomatic

relations have been under strain with Washington unwinding economic ties and putting in place new sanctions.

- India and Norway have agreed to closely collaborate on ocean economy and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The two countries also decided to step up bilateral trade. Prime Minister Narendra Modi held delegation-level talks with his Norwegian counterpart Erna Solberg in New Delhi. They discussed ways to give new energy and direction to bilateral ties. The two countries also signed a MoU for holding an India-Norway Ocean Dialogue.
- The main camera onboard NASA's Hubble Space Telescope has been shut down after it encountered a hardware problem. The international space agency, however, in a statement said that the telescope will continue to perform science observations with its other three active instruments. It added that the defect in the Hubble Wide Field Camera 3 is being investigated. The camera is equipped with back up electronics that can be called to action if the need arises.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi and South African President Cyril Ramaphosa held talks in New Delhi on bilateral, regional and global issues of mutual interest. In his press statement, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, visit of the South African President is crucial. He said all bilateral issues including trade and investment were discussed. The Prime Minister said India is partner in South Africa's skill development programme. He added that India and South Africa have agreed to take the relationship to a newer level. Mr. Modi highlighted that India and South Africa are partners in several international foray like BRICS and IBSA.
- The United States has ordered its non-emergency embassy staff to leave Venezuela but refused to comply with a full expulsion demanded by Nicolas Maduro, who Washington says, is no longer president. Maduro gave US diplomats 72 hours to leave the country after President Donald Trump, backed by major Latin American nations refused to recognize him as Venezuela's legitimate president and instead recognized Juan Guaido, the opposition head of the National Assembly.
- The Indian embassy in the US has opened a 24/7 hotline to assist Indian students arrested by the American authorities for alleged immigration rules violation. As many as 129 Indians are among the 130 foreign students arrested for allegedly enrolling at a fake university to remain in the US. The two numbers - 202-322-1190 and 202-340-2590 – would be manned by senior embassy officials round the clock. The arrested students, their friends and family members can contact the embassy at cons3.washington@mea.gov.in. The Indian embassy has appointed a nodal officer to handle and coordinate all issues related to helping Indian students. India has said it was monitoring the situation arising out of detention of Indian students closely and has impressed upon the US Government the need to address the situation at the earliest. In response to media queries on the detention of Indian students, External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said, India has accorded highest priority to the detention of Indian students.
- US President Donald Trump has said there is a good chance that he will declare a national emergency to build his proposed wall along the US Mexico border to prevent flow of illegal immigrants into the country. Talking to the reporters at White House, Mr. Trump said, he would use his State of the Union address next week to once again make a case for the barrier. He also asserted that he has a very strong legal standing on the issue of declaring emergency.

- The 5th India-Bangladesh Joint Consultative Committee Meeting was held in New Delhi. External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and Foreign Affairs Minister of Bangladesh Dr Abdul Momen co-chaired the meeting. In a tweet, External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said Mrs. Swaraj and Mr. Momen took stock of progress in security, defence, trade and connectivity, development partnership, water, power and energy sectors and consular and cultural cooperation. The last Joint Consultative Committee Meeting between the two countries was held in October 2017 at Dhaka. Earlier, Mrs. Swaraj held a bilateral meeting with Mr. Momen.
- France recalled its ambassador to Rome in a move unprecedented since World War II saying it was fed up with "repeated, baseless" attacks by Italian political leaders on the country. The move came amid mounting tensions between the two European Union members after Italy's deputy Prime Minister met French yellow vest protesters. France's foreign ministry recalled its ambassador to Rome for consultations after a series of comments from Italy's two deputy prime ministers, Luigi Di Maio and Matteo Salvini. Di Maio and Salvini, who formed a populist coalition government together last year, have repeatedly criticized French President Emmanuel Macron, who has, in turn, targeted their "eurosceptic actions" before high-stakes European Parliament elections in May.
- Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale summoned the Pakistan High Commissioner to India Sohail Mahmood and issued a very strong demarche in connection with the Pulwama terror attack. In view of the attack, India also called its High Commissioner to Pakistan Ajay Bisaria to New Delhi. Ministry of External Affairs is taking all steps to expose the complicity of Pakistan in the Pulwama terror attack and demand immediate and verifiable action against Jaish-e- Mohammed and its leader Masood Azhar. As part of the diplomatic efforts, Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale met around 25 Heads of Missions based in New Delhi.
- India has said it will take care of its commercial considerations with regard to import of oil from Venezuela. Responding to a media query, Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson said, New Delhi is monitoring the evolving situation in that country. The spokesperson said India is in favour of constructive dialogue process to solve the situation in Venezuela.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has received the prestigious Seoul Peace Prize - 2018 for his contribution to international cooperation and fostering global economic growth. The award was presented to him by the Seoul Peace Prize Foundation at a grand ceremony in Seoul. A short film on the life and achievements of Prime Minister Modi was also screened at the event. While conferring the award on Modi, the award committee recognized his contribution to the growth of Indian and global economies, crediting 'Modinomics' for reducing social and economic disparity between the rich and the poor. Prime Minister dedicated the award to the 1.3 billion people of India.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said that time has come for Global community to move beyond words and act unitedly against menace of terrorism. Addressing the joint press conference after delegation level talks with South Korean President Moon Jae In in Seoul, he said that India and Korea are committed to further strengthen bilateral and international coordination against terrorism. Prime Minister thanked President Moon for his support to India after Pulwama terror attack. He further said that both the countries have also agreed for a roadmap in Defense technology and co-production.
- India and Saudi Arabia have agreed to cooperate further in the fight against terrorism and put pressure on those countries which are supporting terror to deal with its growing threat, Prime

Minister Narendra Modi has said. In his press statement after talks with Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia Mohammad Bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud in New Delhi, Prime Minister said, Saudi Arabia is one of the most crucial strategic partners of India and both the countries will further increase their cooperation in the defence sector and improve their economic ties. In his press statement, Crown Prince said his country will cooperate with India in its fight against terrorism. Prince Mohammad said both countries can collaborate in several areas, including agriculture and culture. The two countries signed five agreements in various areas.

- The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has urged the international community to cooperate actively with India in bringing the perpetrators, organizers, financiers and sponsors of terrorism to justice. In a statement, the 15-nation body, which also includes China, strongly condemned the terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Pulwama that claimed the lives of over 40 CRPF personnel last week. The UNSC members expressed their deepest sympathy and condolences to the families of the victims, as well as to the Indian people and the government, and wished a speedy and full recovery to those injured. The UNSC termed the attack as heinous and cowardly. The condemnation also named the Pakistan-based terror group Jaish-e-Mohammed which claimed responsibility for the attack.
- The US has reaffirmed its demand that Pakistan abide by its UN Security Council commitments to deny safe havens to terrorists and block their access to funds. The US welcomed Islamabad's decision to release the captured Indian Air Force pilot. Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan said that Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman will be released as a gesture of peace.
- The United States and North Korea have failed to reach a formal deal at the Hanoi Summit. Talking to reporters after the summit, US President Donald Trump said, the talks ended with no agreement after he refused North Korean demand to lift all international sanctions.
- The United States, Britain and France have asked the United Nations Security Council to blacklist Masood Azhar, the head of Pakistan-based terror group Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM).
- Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari has been re-elected for a second four-year term, after the election commission declared the results of the poll plagued by claims of rigging.
- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi held bilateral meetings with visiting leaders of BIMSTEC countries and Prime Minister of Mauritius Mr. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth. In the first of a series of bilateral meetings with foreign leaders, Prime Minister had a warm meeting with President of Sri Lanka Shri Maithripala Sirisena, at Hyderabad House in New Delhi. External Affairs Ministry spokes-person Shri Raveesh Kumar said, the two leaders discussed bilateral issues of interest. President Sirisena reiterated his desire to work together to strengthen relations between the two countries for peace, prosperity and security in the region. Shri Modi conveyed his government's continued commitment to further foster friendly bilateral ties with Sri Lanka. The leaders noted that terrorism and extremism continue to pose threat to humanity and committed to closer bilateral cooperation for peace and security in South Asia and the Indian Ocean region. Prime Minister Modi also met Mauritius Minister Shri Pravind Kumar Jugnauth. The two leaders exchanged views on a range of bilateral issues, including development cooperation. Prime Minister Modi reiterated his commitment to further strengthening the fraternal and enduring bilateral ties between the two countries in all spheres. Both leaders agreed to work together to achieve the shared vision of security and growth of the two countries and the Indian Ocean region. Shri Modi also held bilateral meetings with Nepal Prime Minister Mr. K. P. Sharma Oli, and Bhutan

Prime Minister Lotay Tshering. Prime Minister Shri Modi also held a bilateral meeting with President of Kyrgyz Republic, Mr. Sooronbay Jeenbekov at Rashtrapati Bhawan. This was his first engagement after being sworn in as Prime Minister for the second term. President Mr. Jeenbekov congratulated Prime Minister Modi and invited him to visit Kyrgyzstan for the SCO Summit and a bilateral visit during 13-15 June. The Prime Minister also held bilateral meeting with President of Bangladesh Mr. Md. Abdul Hamid and exchanged views on matters of mutual interest.

- UN Secretary-General Mr. Antonio Guterres has described India as a very valuable partner of the United Nations and that he looks forward to working with the new government led by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. Mr. Farhan Haq, Deputy Spokesman for the Secretary-General has said this at the daily press briefing on Guterres' message for Prime Minister Modi as he was sworn-in as India's Prime Minister for a second five-year term. Haq said UN Secretary-General Guterres has worked very closely with Prime Minister Modi, including on the issue of climate change.
- In France, hundreds of veterans gathered to honour the sacrifice of those who died in the D-Day landings by Allied troops. World leaders attended ceremonies honouring Allied forces who fought in the largest combined land, air and naval operation in history. Wreaths were laid, a minute's silence was held and veterans linked arms and sang, before watching an RAF fly-past. UK Prime Minister Theresa May and French President Emmanuel Macron thanked veterans who took part in June 1944. President Donald Trump called former US soldiers the pride of the nation.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has called for the united efforts from the global community to eliminate the terrorism from its root. Addressing the plenary session of SCO Summit at Bishkek in Kyrgyzstan, Mr. Modi said that all humanitarian forces should have to unite to counter the terrorism. He said that we should make our society free from terrorism. Prime Minister Modi also called for International conference against terrorism. He said that nations supporting, promoting and funding terrorism should be held responsible and made accountable for their actions. Mr. Modi also said that terrorism and drug trafficking should not be seen as a separate menace. Referring to the gruesome terror attack in Sri Lanka, the Prime Minister said that terrorism is taking the lives of innocent people daily. Mr. Modi said that peace is the utmost necessary in Afghanistan. Prime Minister Modi emphasized on sharing India's expertise in health care and telemedicine with member countries. He also emphasized on people to people contact and health care services among the member countries. Giving HEALTH formula to members' countries of the SCO, Mr. Modi said that multilateral trade is the need of the hour. Mr. Modi said that India has set up a helpline for the tourist of SCO countries.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi held bilateral meetings with Presidents of China and Russia at Kyrgyzstan capital Bishkek. The talks were held on the sidelines of Shanghai Cooperation Organization- SCO summit. In a series of tweets, Prime Minister Modi said, he had a fruitful meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping. He said their talks included the full spectrum of India-China relations. The Prime Minister said, the two countries will continue working together to improve economic and cultural ties. In a tweet, External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said, both the leaders discussed all aspects of enriching the bilateral relations between two countries. They recognized the positive role of strategic communication in deepening their partnership. Mr. Xi also congratulated Prime Minister

Modi on his poll victory. On his meeting with the Russian President, the Prime Minister said, he had a wonderful meeting with Mr. Vladimir Putin. He said various subjects pertaining to India-Russia relations were discussed during the meeting.

- Bangladesh has unveiled a growth-friendly budget focused on infrastructure development. Introducing the budget proposal on behalf of the ailing Finance Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal in Dhaka, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina set a GDP growth rate of 8.2 percent for the current financial year. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina announced that the poverty rate will be brought down by 10 percent in the next four years through a coordinated approach engaging the private sector to supplement the government's anti-poverty initiatives. The budget envisages creation of jobs for 30 million people by 2030 and attain a double digit GDP growth in four years.
- Bangladesh has emerged as the fastest growing economy among the 45 countries of the Asia-Pacific region according to Asian Development Bank (ADB). In the financial year 2018-19 Bangladesh attained growth rate of 7.9 % which is its fastest rate since 1974. The bank predicted that the growth will be 8% in the next financial year. The ADB country director handed over the report to the Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina.
- Mexico has ratified the US-Mexico-Canada agreement. This makes it the first country to give the new North American trade deal final approval despite recent tensions with the US. The Mexican government called the deal's passage a clear message in favor of an open economy and deepening economic integration in the region. President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador claimed the deal would bring in more foreign investment and jobs in Mexico, and access to the US market. The deal aims to replace the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which helped turn Mexico into an exporting powerhouse over the past 25 years. It now falls to Canada and the US to ratify the deal.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi held many bilateral meetings with top leaders of the world on the first day of the G-20 Summit in Osaka, Japan. Mr. Modi also held trilateral discussions with his Japanese counterpart and US President under JAI (Japan, America, and India). Prime Minister Modi and President Trump discussed a host of bilateral and global issues including Iran, trade, defence and 5G communications networks on the sidelines of the summit. Mr. Modi thanked President Trump for expressing his love towards India in a letter recently delivered by the US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. Mr. Trump also congratulated Prime Minister on the election victory and said the two countries would work together in many areas including military Speaking to media, Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale informed that the meetings were mostly focused on peace, stability, infrastructural development and new initiatives in the Indo-Pacific region. He said during the JAI meet, Prime Minister highlighted the importance India attaches to the grouping. Mr. Gokhale informed that Mr. Trump expressed hope that oil prices will remain stable and Mr. Modi outlined that India is having a billion consumers and both the countries need to collaborate communication networks.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired the informal meeting of the RIC (Russia, India and China) framework on the sidelines of the G-20 summit. The meeting was attended by Russian president Vladimir Putin and Chinese leader Xi Jinping. In his opening remarks, the Prime Minister said, the interactions at the level of the leadership of these countries to discuss global issues are of immense importance.

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi held an informal meeting of the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) nations at the summit and discussed issues faced by the global economy. He also discussed the threat of terrorism with Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, Russian President Vladimir Putin, Chinese President Xi Jinping and South African President Cyril Ramaphosa and exchanged ideas. Speaking at the informal BRICS meeting, Mr. Modi said terrorism is the biggest threat to humanity. He said not only it takes lives of the innocents; it negatively affects economic development and communal harmony. Mr. Modi also highlighted the need to bring reforms into the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in order to ensure equal growth for all.
- Batting for strong Indo-US ties, senior adviser to US President, Jared Kushner has said there are very few countries like India that possess the potential for growth and the administration was very much focused on further cementing the bilateral strategic ties. He was addressing the Second Leadership Summit of the US India Strategic and Partnership Forum in Washington. Listing out the various steps being taken by President Trump to make America more competitive globally, Kushner said, India is a fast-growing economy having an amazingly educated population and a lot of people share similar values with US.
- US India Strategic and Partnership Forum has said, the bilateral trade between the two countries could reach 238 billion Dollars by 2025 from the current 143 billion Dollars given the present dynamics of the commercial engagement. In a report released on the occasion of its second annual leadership summit, the US-based group USISPF said, this growth will occur if trade grows by 7.5 per cent each year, as has been the trend for the last seven years.
- A UAE court sentenced seven years in jail to the bus driver who caused the deaths of 17 people including 12 Indians in a road crash. The driver was also ordered to pay 3.4 million dirhams in compensation for the families of the victims. The tragedy took place last month when the passengers were returning to the UAE from the Omani capital of Muscat.
- Garuda VI came to a spectacular end at Mont de Marsan Airbase in France. Announcing the successful conclusion of the 6th edition of the two weeks of joint India and France Air force exercise Garuda, the dignitaries from both the nations expressed their satisfaction. Lauding the Indian pilots, the French Air force chief says that it's been Mission Successful. The two weeks saw 400 flights of Indian and France war planes with French pilots taking 300 flights. After the press briefing, the dignitaries from both the nations went for the static display of Rafale, Su 30 and IL 78. IL 78 has played a crucial role for the success of Garuda 6.
- The 2008 Mumbai attack mastermind and chief of the banned terror group Jamaat-ut-Dawa, Hafiz Saeed has been arrested in Pakistan. The arrest has been made by the Counter Terrorism Department of the Punjab province Police. According to Pakistani media reports, the Counter Terrorism Department on July 3 registered 23 FIRs against 13 leaders of the JuD including Saeed on the charges of "terror financing" in different cities of Punjab province.
- Conservative leader Boris Johnson took over the charge as British Prime Minister after Theresa May handed in her resignation to the Queen. As she relinquished power after three years, Mrs. May said being Prime Minister had been the greatest honour and wished her successor well. Mr. Johnson has appointed Indian origin Priti Patel as the country Home Secretary. The Prime Minister named former Home Secretary Sajid Javid to take over from Philip Hammond as the Finance Secretary or Chancellor.

- President Ramnath Kovind said that trade and investment ties between India and Africa are growing. India has become the fifth largest investor in Africa with cumulative investment at over 54 billion US dollars. He was addressing Special Session of National Assembly of Gambia in capital Banjul. President said African continental Free Trade Area Agreement launched this month will make Africa the largest free trade area in the world. India views this development as yet another opportunity to boost economic ties with Africa. He said after South Asia, the African Continent is the largest recipient of Indian overseas assistance. President has promised India's support to Gambia in areas of skills development. Later President participated in a community reception at Banjul.
- External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar held a series of bilateral meetings in Bangkok with his counterparts from Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Mongolia and Timor Leste during which he discussed a host of key issues, including the fight against terrorism. After meeting with Vietnamese counterpart, he tweeted that strong traditional friendship stands reaffirmed. He also reiterated India's strong support in the fight against terrorism with Sri Lanka, which saw the country's worst terror attack on Easter Sunday. The foreign minister also had a cordial conversation with the foreign minister of Timor Leste where both sides agreed to step up engagement across all sectors. He also discussed a range of issues of mutual interest with his Mongolian counterpart Damdin Tsogtbaatar.
- With no change in US policy on Kashmir, America will continue to support direct dialogue between India and Pakistan on Kashmir and other issues of concern. A State Department spokesperson said in Washington that the US is also closely following India's legislation regarding the new territorial status and governance of Jammu and Kashmir and its broader implications. The Spokesperson also urged for calm and restraint along the LoC. The official was responding to a question on the situation in South Asia after Pakistan downgraded the diplomatic ties with India. Earlier, India had rejected any mediation effort by US President Donald Trump on the Kashmir issue. New Delhi has consistently maintained that there is no room for a third party mediation on Kashmir.
- India and Bangladesh have agreed to set up a Joint Technical Committee for optimum utilization of Ganges water as being received by Bangladesh under the Ganga Water Sharing Treaty 1996. After the Secretary-level meeting in Dhaka last week, both the countries also agreed to prepare a framework for interim water-sharing agreement for eight rivers including Feni, Gumti and Teesta. Both the countries also discussed issues related to pollution of trans boundary rivers. The Secretary-level meeting was held after a gap of more than 8 years.
- Maryam Nawaz, Pakistan's former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's daughter, was arrested from the Kot Lakhpat jail in a money laundering case, while she was on her way back from visiting her father, who is lodged in the same prison. According to an official press release issued by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB), her cousin Yousuf Abbas has also been arrested in connection to the Chaudhry Sugar Mills (CSM) case. According to the NAB officials, Maryam had excused herself from appearing before the accountability bureau and had gone to meet Sharif in the jail. Her arrest came the day after she accused Prime Minister Imran Khan of "fall of Kashmir" and demanded registration of a treason case against him.
- A U.N. Independent International Fact-Finding Mission has urged foreign businesses and governments to sever ties with more than 140 companies owned or controlled by the Myanmar military Tatmadaw. In the report released by UNHRC, it said these companies help the Myanmar army to avoid public scrutiny and carry out human rights violations with

impunity. It also called for immediate imposition of targeted sanctions against companies run by the military. The report accused the military of carrying out extensive human rights violations against civilians in Kachin, Shan and Rakhine provinces, including the forced deportation of more than 700,000 ethnic Rohingya to Bangladesh.

- India has contributed one million US Dollars to the United Nations Special Purpose Trust Fund for the Resident Coordinator System. According to the UN information, Special Purpose Trust Fund (SPTF) is a specific fund housed within the UN Secretariat, established to receive, consolidate, and manage all contributions and financial transactions of the new Resident Coordinator system in a transparent and effective way.
- An Iranian oil super tanker VLCC Grace 1 and its captain and crew members including 24 Indians were released by Gibraltar authorities despite a last-minute claim on the vessel by the US Department of Justice. The Iranian tanker was held on suspicion of smuggling oil to Syria in breach of European Union sanctions. A total of 28 crew on board the vessel included majority Indians but also Russians, Latvians and Filipinos, who had spent over a month in detention on board the ship since it was seized in early July. European countries do not have sanctions against Iran but have had them in place against Iran's ally Syria since 2011. Meanwhile, the United States has threatened a visa ban on the crew of a seized Iranian supertanker after failing to block its departure from Gibraltar. State Department spokeswoman Morgan Ortagus said, the Grace 1 was assisting Iran's Revolutionary Guards, which the U.S. deems a terrorist organization, by transporting oil from Iran to Syria.
- During his France visit, Prime Minister Narendra Modi met French President Emmanuel Macron at Chateau de Chantilly and reviewed the entire gamut of the dynamic and multi-faceted bilateral relations during their more than 90-minute long one-on-one meeting. The meeting was followed by the delegation level talks which culminated with the signing of four MoUs. Addressing a joint press conference with French President, Prime Minister Modi said India and France will expand cooperation in counter terrorism and security. Both leaders reaffirmed that terrorism cannot be justified on any grounds whatsoever and it should not be associated with any religion, creed, nationality and ethnicity. Both leaders also agreed to work for early convening of the Global Conference, proposed by India, to tackle the threat of terrorism around the world. The French President said that India and Pakistan should resolve the Kashmir issue bilaterally and no third party should interfere or incite violence in the region. He said France will deliver first of the 36 Rafael fighter jets to India next month.
- India and the United States reviewed the progress and development of bilateral relations in cross-cutting defence, security and foreign policy areas in the two plus two inter-sessional meetings. The two countries explored further possibilities of cooperation in these fields based on common interest. They also discussed regional developments and agreed to pursue their quest for a free, open, inclusive, peaceful and prosperous Indo-Pacific. The meeting took place in Monterey, California. The Indian delegation was led jointly by Joint Secretary in Ministry of External Affairs Gourangalal Das and Joint Secretary in Ministry of Defence V. Anandarajan. The U.S. delegation was led jointly by Ambassador Alice Wells, Acting Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs and Randall Shriver, Assistant Secretary of Defence for Indo-Pacific Security Affairs.
- External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar and his Nepalese counterpart Pradeep Kumar Gyawali co-chaired the 5th meeting of India-Nepal Joint Commission. The main focus was on connectivity and economic partnership; trade and transit; power and water resources and

culture and education. The commission also expressed happiness over momentum generated in overall aspects of Nepal-India relations following the exchange of high-level visits in the last two years.

- Asian Development Bank (ADB) has pledged to support the government's new flagship initiatives commending the government's vision to make India a five trillion dollar economy. ADB President Takehiko Nakao met Prime Minister Narendra Modi and discussed how to further enhance the partnership in areas such as promotion of new technologies and innovation, renewable energy, solar-pump irrigation, electric vehicle and battery, sustainable tourism, and the recycling of plastic. Mr. Nakao said ADB stands ready to commit more than 12 billion dollar lending in the next three years. ADB expects India's growth in 2019 at 7.0 percent and in 2020 at 7.2 percent, despite downside risks in the global economy.
- India has said it has an abiding interest in the peace and stability in the South China Sea region as South China Sea is part of the global commons. External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said India firmly stands for the freedom of navigation and over-flight and unimpeded lawful commerce, in the international waters, in accordance with international laws. He said India also believes that differences must be resolved peacefully by respecting the legal and diplomatic processes and without resorting to threat or use of force.
- Brazil has banned setting fires to clear land for 60 days in response to a massive increase in the number of fires in the Amazon rainforest. The decree was signed by President Jair Bolsonaro, who has faced intense criticism at home and abroad for failing to protect the rainforest. The fires devastating parts of the Amazon rainforest have led to global scrutiny of Brazil's commitment to environmental conservation. Thousands of troops and firefighters have been deployed to combat the fires, along with two C-130 Hercules and other aircraft that are dumping water over the hardest hit areas in the country's north.
- India and Russia have signed 15 agreements taking bilateral cooperation to a new high at the 20th annual summit in Vladivostok. The agreements were exchanged in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin after the restricted and delegation-level talks. The agreements include four in the area of oil and gas, LNG and cooking coal, five in trade and investments, two in infrastructure and one each in defence and audiovisual production. The MoU on defence is about the production of spare parts for Russian origin arms under Make-in-India program through joint ventures. The MoUs in infrastructure relate to the establishment of maritime links between Vladivostok and Chennai to improve connectivity. Other MoUs relate to the exploration of cooking coal in the Arctic region, sourcing LNG from Russia. An agreement has also been exchanged for combating customs violations during 2019- 22. An agreement between Invest India and the Russian Direct Investment Fund has been signed for Investment Collaboration. Mr. Modi said, both countries have decided to roll out a five-year road map in the area of exploration and exploitation of oil and gas fields in both countries.
- India has announced a line of credit worth one Billion US dollars for the development of the Far East region of Russia. This will be a take off point for India's Act Far East Policy, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said during his two-day visit to Russia. During his tour to Vladivostok, Far East region of Russia, Prime Minister Modi attended the 5th Eastern Economic Forum (EEF), India-Russia Annual Summit and held bilateral meetings with several world leaders including his Japanese and Malaysian counterparts and Mongolian President. Mr. Modi expressed hope that with the start of proposed Vladivostok-Chennai sea

route, the relation between India and Russia will be further strengthened. During his meeting with Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad, Mr. Modi raised the issue of extradition of Zakir Naik and asserted that the Indian officials will continue to hold deliberations with Malaysia in this regard.

- The United States has imposed sanctions on a shipping network, it said was run by Iran's Revolutionary Guards. The US blamed that shipping network sold millions of barrels of oil to benefit Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. The sanctions on 16 entities, 10 people and 11 vessels by US were announced just as Iran was threatening to cut further its commitments under a nuclear deal unless the United States eases its pressure.
- Bangladesh Telecom Regulatory Commission (BTRC) has directed mobile phone operators to halt sale of SIM cards to Rohingyas and ensure that mobile phone use by them is stopped. Following the directive, the mobile operators are reported to have weakened their networks in the border areas including Cox Bazar and Bandarban. Bangladesh government had imposed a ban on the sale of mobile SIM cards to Rohingyas in September 2017 citing security reasons. The government had proposed to set up phone booths in the Rohingya camps to meet their communication requirements. However, the sale of SIM cards to Rohingya refugees continued illegally.
- Seventeen Indian peacekeepers deployed with the UN mission in South Sudan have been awarded medals in recognition of their service to the people in the world's youngest country. They were awarded the UN service medals during a special ceremony at the UN House in Juba. The Indian police officers have served the UN and the people of South Sudan for almost a year. Their duties included protecting displaced civilians, community policing and building local police skills. India is among the largest troop contributing countries in the world to UN peacekeeping missions. As of March this year, India is the second highest troop contributor to the United Nation Missions, with 2,337 troops deployed in various countries. In addition, India contributes 22 police personnel to the UN Missions.
- In the United States, the Supreme Court has given a go-ahead to Trump administration plans that severely limit the ability of migrants to claim asylum. Under the rule, people arriving via a third country must claim asylum there first before arriving at the US border. Legal challenges against it continue but the ruling means for now it can be enforced nationwide. The plan will affect tens of thousands of Central American migrants who travel north, often on foot, through Mexico. The Trump administration unveiled the new asylum policy in July but it was almost immediately blocked from taking effect by a lower court ruling by a judge in San Francisco. Curbing migration levels has been a key goal of Donald Trump's presidency and forms a major part of his bid for re-election in 2020.
- The US wants a peaceful solution to the crisis sparked by attacks on Saudi oil facilities, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said, after Iran raised the prospect of all-out war. Pompeo has blamed Iran for the dramatic weekend assault on two facilities, condemning as an act of war which knocked out half the kingdom's oil production. After meeting with allies in Riyadh and Abu Dhabi, Pompeo said there was an enormous consensus in the region that Iran carried out the attacks, despite its denials and Yemeni rebels' claims that they were responsible. But Pompeo said the US is intent on finding a way out of the confrontation. Tehran-linked Huthi rebels in Saudi Arabia's southern neighbour Yemen have claimed responsibility, but both Washington and Riyadh have said the operation was beyond the Yemeni insurgents' capabilities. French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian also said the

Huthi claim lacks credibility. The rhetoric has raised the risk of an unpredictable escalation in a tinderbox region where Saudi Arabia and Iran are locked in a decades-old struggle for dominance.

- More than eight years after the Fukushima nuclear disaster, a Japanese court has cleared three former executives of the firm operating the plant, of professional negligence. It was the only criminal case to arise out of the disaster, which was the worst since Chernobyl in 1986. In 2011 a plant operated by Tokyo Electric Power (Tepco) was hit by a tsunami causing a triple meltdown. More than 470,000 people were evacuated from their homes as a result. Nearly, 18,500 died or are missing from the wider disaster. The three former executives - ex-chairman Tsunehisa Katsumata and Vice-presidents Sakae Muto and Ichiro Takekuro - were indicted for failing to implement tsunami countermeasures leading to the deaths of 44 people. Though no-one died directly in the nuclear meltdown, more than 40 hospital patients died after having to be rushed out of the evacuation zone. Thirteen people were also injured in hydrogen explosions at the plant.
- India along with Brazil, Germany and Japan have made a strong pitch for berths as permanent members in the reformed United Nations Security Council. In a Joint Statement the four countries reiterated their support for each other's candidatures as aspiring new permanent members in a reformed Security Council given the capacity and willingness to take on major responsibilities with regard to the maintenance of international peace and security. The statement said there is a clear need for an enhanced role of developing countries and of major contributors to the United Nations to make the Council more legitimate, effective and representative.
- 9th India-China Financial Dialogue was held in New Delhi during which high-level Chinese delegation led by Ms. Zou Jiayi, Vice Minister, Ministry of Finance, China interacted with the Indian delegation led by Atanu Chakraborty, Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs on wide-ranging issues of mutual interest. The India-China Financial Dialogue is a mechanism between the two countries with an aim to promote cooperation in the financial sector. During this dialogue, both sides had an in-depth exchange of views on macroeconomic situation and policy, cooperation in a multilateral framework, bilateral investment and financial cooperation.

BUSINESS

- The rupee fell by 37 paise to 70.07 against the US dollar in early trade on December 21, amid strengthening of the US dollar against some currencies overseas and foreign fund outflows. The 30-share index fell 31 points to trade at 36,399. In similar movement, the NSE Nifty was trading 12 points lower at 10,939.
- On 20th December, Gold prices rose by Rs 150 to close at Rs 32,000 per 10 gm at the bullion market in the national capital, following a firm trend overseas amid fresh buying by local jewelers. Silver, on the other hand, fell by Rs 130 to close at Rs 37,750 per kg, owing to slackened demand from coin makers and industrial units. Traders said gold prices shot up on the back of a firm trend overseas amid increased buying by local jewelers at the domestic spot market.
- Minister of State for Finance Shiv Pratap Shukla informed Parliament that Public Sector Banks (PSBs) have recovered 2.33 lakh crore rupees worth of bad loans during the four years

from financial year 2014-15 to fiscal 2017-18. In a written reply to the Lok Sabha, Mr. Shukla informed that as per RBI data on global operations for PSBs, during the financial years 2014-15 to 2017-18, PSBs recovered 2,33,339 crore rupees, of which 32,693 crores were from written-off accounts.

- Reserve Bank of India has named former Governor Bimal Jalan as the head of the expert panel that will decide on the appropriate size of reserves that the central bank should maintain and the dividend it should give to the government. RBI said in a statement that expert committee has been asked to study global practices and suggest if the central bank was holding reserves and buffer capital in surplus of the required. It will submit its report in 90 days from the first day of its meeting. Former secretary Rakesh Mohan has been named the vice chairman. The panel will include Economic Affairs Secretary Subhash Chandra Garg and RBI Deputy Governor NS Vishwanathan.
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will capture payment habits of individuals in six cities, including four metropolitan towns. For the purpose, the central bank has launched a 'Survey on Retail Payment Habits of Individuals (SRPHI)'. According to RBI release, the survey will cover a sample of 6,000 individuals from various socio-economic backgrounds across six cities including Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai, Bengaluru and Guwahati. The survey seeks qualitative responses from individuals on their payment habits. The findings may provide some idea about awareness and usage habits of digital payment products.
- Union Government clarified that there has been no decision recently regarding the production of the 2000 rupees notes. In a tweet, Economic Affairs Secretary Subhash Chandra Garg said the printing of notes is planned as per the projected requirement. He said the country has more than adequate such notes in the system with over 35 percent of them by value in circulation. His comments came in the wake of media reports that the government has stopped the printing of the two thousand rupees currency notes.
- The government said that it has allocated funds to the banking sector and other Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) with a view to improve their conditions. Replying to questions in the Lok Sabha, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said Rs. 90,000 crore was allocated in the Union Budget and infused in various Public Sector banks by the government during financial year 2017-18. In the budget estimates of financial year 2018-19, Rs. 65,000 crore has been allocated for recapitalization of PSBs and an amount of Rs. 51,533 crore has been infused in PSBs till December 31st last year. Mr. Jaitley informed the House that India Infrastructure Financial Company Limited (IIFCL) is the only Central Public Sector Enterprise under the administrative control of the department of financial services. He said an amount of Rs. 100 crore each in financial year 2017-18 and 2018-19 was allocated in the Union Budget and infused in IIFCL by the government.
- In a bid to give relief to small businesses, the GST Council doubled the GST exemption limit to Rs 20 lakh for northeastern states and Rs 40 lakh for the rest of the country. Speaking to media after a meeting of GST Council in New Delhi, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said, the scope of GST Composition Scheme, under which small traders and businesses pay a small tax based on turnover rather than value addition is raised to Rs 1.5 crore from Rs 1 crore. Mr. Jaitley said the twin move would give relief to micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs). The Finance Minister said, the changes will come into effect from 1st April this year. He said, those who come under the composition scheme will pay tax quarterly, but the

return will be filed only once a year. Mr. Jaitley said that a committee has been set up to consider real estate GST rates.

- The Cabinet has approved the merger of Vijaya Bank and Dena Bank with Bank of Baroda. The move will help create a strong globally competitive bank with economies of scale and enable the realization of wide-ranging synergies, leveraging of networks and low-cost deposits and substantial rise in customer base and operational efficiency. The scheme will come into effect from 1st of April this year. The pay and allowances and services of the employees of all three banks will remain same as earlier.
- Union Textiles Minister Smriti Irani has said that exports of jute diversified products have risen by 24 per cent since 2014. Speaking at a textile outreach programme in Kolkata, the minister said, jute is the currency of the day and it has contributed for West Bengal to flourish for years. She said insurance and marketing assistance to weavers are also being given in 40 districts of India. Textiles Secretary Raghavendra Singh said the ministry is trying to connect the weavers with big companies for realizing higher margins.
- Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has constituted a High-Level Committee on Deepening of Digital Payments to encourage digitization of payments and enhance financial inclusion. The five member committee headed by UIDAI's former Chairman Nandan Nilekani will include RBI's former Deputy Governor Mr. H.R. Khan and Former Secretary, Ministry of Information Technology, Mrs. Aruna Sharma among others. In a statement, RBI said the committee will review the existing status of digitization of payments and suggest ways to bridge any gaps in the ecosystem, if any. The committee will also undertake cross country analysis to identify best practices that can be adopted to accelerate digitization of the economy and financial inclusion through greater use of digital payments.
- The Centre has decided to renovate and develop around 400 abandoned airstrips across the country to strengthen air-connectivity. Disclosing this at Jamshedpur in Jharkhand, Secretary of Union Civil Aviation department R.N. Choubey said a drive has been launched to renovate and develop abandoned airstrips to improve air connectivity on the directive of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Mr. Choubey said, the Airports Authority of India prepared a Memorandum of Understanding in this regard and sent it to all the 29 states and seven Union Territories expressing its willingness to develop those air strips along with the respective state governments.
- The total gross GST revenue collection in January was over Rs. One lakh crore of which Central Goods & Services Tax, CGST, is Rs. 17,763 crore and State Goods & Services Tax, SGST, is Rs. 24,826 crore .Integrated Goods & Services Tax, IGST, is 51,225 crore rupees, including Rs. 24,065 crore collected on imports and the Cess is Rs. 8,690 crore, including Rs. 902 crore collected on imports. In the Financial Year 2018-2019, it is for the third time that GST Revenue collection has crossed One Lakh Crore. The total number of GSTR 3B Returns filed for the month of December up to 31st January this year is 73.3 lakh.
- Reserve Bank of India in its bi-monthly monetary policy has reduced repo rate by 25 basis points to 6.25 per cent. RBI's six-member monetary policy committee also brought down reverse repo rate to 6 per cent. The repo rate is the rate at which the Reserve Bank lends short-term money to the banks, while the reserve repo rate is the rate at which the central bank borrows money from commercial banks. It was the first policy review by the RBI after appointment of its governor Shaktikanta Das in December last year.

- RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das has announced that the limit of collateral free agricultural loans has been increased from one lakh to 1.6 lakh. Addressing the post monetary policy announcement in Mumbai, Mr. Das said the decision has been taken in view of the overall inflation and rise in the agricultural input costs since 2010 when the limit was last revised. Mr. Das said this move will enhance coverage of small and marginal farmers in the formal credit system.
- The Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-Dhan scheme has been implemented from February 15, 2015. Under the scheme, workers of the unorganized sector will receive a minimum assured pension of three thousand rupees per month after attaining the age of 60 years. The workers' whose monthly income is 15 thousand rupees per month or less and belong to the entry age group of 18 to 40 years are eligible for the scheme. Around 42 crore workers are estimated to be engaged in the unorganized sector in the country. The scheme was announced in the interim Budget. During the receipt of pension, if the subscriber dies, the spouse of the beneficiary will be entitled to receive 50 per cent of the pension. It said family pension is applicable only to a spouse. The scheme is a voluntary and contributory pension scheme on a 50:50 basis where prescribed age-specific contribution shall be made by the beneficiary and the matching contribution by the Central Government. The subscriber will be required to have a mobile phone, savings bank account and Aadhaar number. All the branch offices of LIC, ESIC and EPFO and all Labour offices of Central and State Governments will guide the unorganized workers about the Scheme, its benefits and the procedure to be followed.
- Employees' Provident Fund Organisation, EPFO has decided to provide 8.65 per cent interest on Provident Fund deposits for 2018-19 against 8.55 per cent in the last year. Labour Minister Santosh Gangwar said in New Delhi that all members of the Central Board of Trustees of EPFO have agreed to give a higher interest for subscribers for the current fiscal. The Central Board of Trustees (CBT) headed by Labour Minister is the apex decision making body of the EPFO which finalizes rate of interest on PF deposits for a financial year.
- The country's goods and services exports will cross 500 billion dollars during the current fiscal despite challenges being faced on the global trade front. This was stated by the Commerce and Industry Minister Suresh Prabhu while speaking at the Rising India Summit 2019 in New Delhi. Mr. Prabhu said that exports are recording healthy growth so far and this fiscal will record the highest-ever growth rate. He said the ministry is working on identifying new products and new markets to further push the shipments.
- Indian economy is expected to grow at 7.3 per cent in calendar years 2019 and 2020, the US based rating agency Moody's has said. In its quarterly Global Macro Outlook for 2019 and 2020 released, the agency said the country is less exposed to a slowdown in global manufacturing trade growth than other major Asian economies and emerging markets and is poised to grow at a relatively stable pace in the two years. Moody's said the announcement in Interim Budget 2019-20 on direct cash transfer programme for farmers and the middle-class tax relief measures will contribute a fiscal stimulus of about 0.45 per cent of GDP. Moody's growth estimates are based on the calendar year. India, however, measures its economic growth on the basis of the fiscal year from April to March.
- External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj addressed inaugural plenary of Foreign Ministers' meet of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in Abu Dhabi. Mrs. Swaraj said that the fight against terrorism is not a confrontation against any religion. She said that every religion in the world stands for peace, compassion & brotherhood. The Minister said that in

the past four years, few relationships have seen as much engagement, or has been so transformed, as India's relationship with UAE and with the entire Gulf and West Asia Region. The Minister said that Terrorism and extremism bear different names and labels and it uses diverse causes and in each case it is driven by distortion of religion, and a misguided belief in its power to succeed. Mrs. Swaraj also said she carries the greetings of 1.3 billion Indians, including more than 185 million Muslim brothers and sisters adding that India's Muslims brothers and sisters are a microcosm of the diversity of India itself. This is for the first time that India has been invited to an OIC meeting as guest of honour.

- A report by the United Nations says India's economy is projected to grow at 7.1 per cent in the fiscal year 2020 on the back of strong domestic consumption and investment. The report which was released recently said, the Indian economy expanded by 7.2 per cent in 2018.
- To facilitate high-value fund transfers, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has announced an extension of timings for customer transactions through Real Time Gross Settlement (RTGS) by one and half hours from 4:30 PM to 06 PM. In a notification, issued from Mumbai RBI said that new timing will be effective from 1st June. The RTGS is an online fund transfer system, supported by the RBI, which enables money transaction on a real-time basis. The minimum amount for the transaction under this system is Rs 2 lakh. There is no upper limit on the value of funds that can be transferred via the RTGS system.
- The Reserve bank of India in its bi-monthly monetary policy review has reduced the repo rate by 25 basis points to 5.75 per cent from 6.0 per cent with immediate effect. Consequently, the reverse repo rate stands adjusted to 5.50 per cent, and the marginal standing facility rate and the Bank Rate to 6.0 per cent. The six-member Monetary Policy Committee headed by RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das also unanimously decided to change the stance of monetary policy from neutral to accommodative. Taking into account the weak global demand due to the escalation in trade wars and weakened private consumption in rural areas, Mr. Das informed that the RBI has lowered the GDP growth forecast for 2019-20 to 7 percent from 7.2 percent. With a view to boosting digital transactions, RBI has decided to do away with charges levied on RTGS and NEFT transactions and banks will be required to pass this benefit to their customers. The next meeting of the MPC is scheduled from August 5 to 7.
- The Reserve Bank of India has constituted a six-member committee to review the entire gamut of ATM charges and fees. In a press release, the RBI said, Chief Executive of Indian Banks' Association V.G. Kannan will chair the committee consisting of senior officers from National Payments Corporation of India, SBI, HDFC Bank, Confederation of ATM Industry and Tata Communications Payment Solutions Limited. The committee will review existing patterns of costs, charges and interchange fees for ATM transactions. It is to submit its report within two months from the date of its first meeting.
- A UN report said Foreign Direct Investment to India grew by 6 percent to 42 billion dollars in 2018, with strong inflows in the manufacturing, communication and financial services sectors, and cross-border merger and acquisition activities. The report ranked India among the top 20 host economies for FDI inflows in 2017-18. The World Investment Report 2019 released by the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) said, Foreign Direct Investment inflows to South Asia increased 3.5 percent to 54 billion dollars. The report added that India has historically accounted for 70 to 80 per cent of inflows to the sub region. Further, the growth in cross-border Merger & Acquisitions for India to 33 billion dollars in

2018 was primarily due to transactions worth 16 billion dollars in retail trade, which includes e-commerce, and telecommunication.

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- India's exports grew by 3.93 per cent to around 30 billion dollars in May on account of healthy growth in sectors such as chemicals, pharmaceuticals and engineering. According to Commerce Ministry data, the imports have also rose by 4.31 per cent to 45.35 billion dollars. The trade deficit has widened to 15.36 billion dollars in May. The Ministry said India's overall exports (Merchandise and Services combined) in April-May 2019-20 are estimated to be 92.33 billion dollars, exhibiting a positive growth of 4.32 per cent over the same period last year.
- Reserve Bank of India has advised all banks to immediately direct all their branches to accept coins of all denominations. RBI's advisory came after it received complaints about non-acceptance of coins by branches of various banks. Reserve Bank advised all banks to accept coins of all denominations tendered at their counters for transactions or exchange and ensure strict compliance in the matter.
- The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has issued draft regulations aiming to mandate packaged food companies to label high fat, sugar and salt contents in front of the package itself in red colour. Alarmed by rising rate of obesity and diabetes, India has been planning rules from as early as two years ago, requiring food manufacturers to display fat, sugar and salt content on their labels and was also considering a nationwide 'fat tax' on so-called 'junk food'. The food labels will also declare, per serve percentage contribution to RDA (recommended dietary allowance) on the front of the pack, the FSSAI said in a statement dated June 25. The food industry has expressed concerns over the proposed changes.
- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has said that government's target to make India a five trillion dollar economy by 2024- 2025 is based on a proper plan. Replying to the Budget discussion in the Rajya Sabha, Ms. Sitharaman listed out several measures proposed in the Union Budget in this direction. She said the big picture presented in this Budget is backed with a plan to increase investment without compromising on the fiscal consolidation roadmap. She said the Budget shows government's commitment to boost investment in agriculture, social and health sectors. The Minister highlighted several measures taken by the Centre for the welfare of the farmers saying steps of the NDA government for agriculture is focused not just on a single scheme, but on the recovery of the sector as a whole. Rejecting opposition criticism with regard to government estimates of different sectors, the minister asserted that every projection mentioned in the budget is realistic. She also said there is no cut in fund allocations for SCs/STs, Women, MGNAREGA and Housing but even they have been increased. The Finance Minister said the inflation has been kept under check and NPAs issue is being comprehensively dealt with.
- Eighty-two new medical colleges are to be established under the central sponsored schemes in two-phases. Replying to supplementaries in Lok Sabha, Minister of Health and Family

Welfare Dr. Harsh Vardhan said under the Phase-1 of the scheme, 58 districts in 20 states and UTs have been identified and approved by the Central government. Dr Harsh Vardhan also informed the House that around four thousand 800 seats of MBBS seats are reserved for economically weaker and backward section candidates in various medical colleges who cleared NEET examination this year.

- Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari has said that the government has prepared a 14 thousand crore rupees project to identify accident black spots and plug gaps on National Highways to reduce casualties. In reply to a question in the Lok Sabha, Mr. Gadkari said, the Finance Ministry has given its in-principle approval to the project.
- Wholesale price-based inflation declined for the second consecutive month to its 23-month low of 2.02 per cent in June, helped by a decline in prices of vegetables as well as fuel and power items. According to official data, the Wholesale Price Index (WPI)-based inflation was at 2.45 per cent in May. It was 5.68 per cent in June last year. Inflation in food articles basket eased marginally to 6.98 per cent in June from 6.99 per cent in May. Vegetable inflation softened to 24.76 per cent in June, down from 33.15 per cent in the previous month. Inflation in the fuel and power category cooled substantially to minus 2.20 per cent from 0.98 per cent last month. Manufactured items too saw a decline in prices with inflation at 0.94 per cent in June, against 1.28 per cent in May. WPI inflation data for April has been revised upwards to 3.24 per cent from provisional 3.07 per cent.
- Retail inflation increased marginally to 3.18 per cent in June this year over the previous month, mainly due to rise in food prices. According to Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation data, the retail inflation based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) stood at 3.05 per cent in May and 4.92 per cent in June last year. The retail inflation is on the rise since January this year.
- Industrial production grew at 3.1 per cent in May, mainly on account of improvement in power generation. According to Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation data, Index of Industrial Production (IIP) had expanded by 3.8 per cent in corresponding period last year. The expansion in power generation sector stood at 7.4 per cent compared to 4.2 per cent in the year-ago month. Mining growth was at 3.2 per cent in May as against 5.8 per cent in the corresponding month of the last fiscal.
- Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflow has increased during the last six years from 36.05 billion US Dollars in 2013-14 to 64.38 billion US Dollars in 2018-19, registering a growth of 79 per cent. Giving details about the FDI inflow, sources in the Commerce Ministry said it has been the endeavour of the government to put in place an enabling and investor-friendly FDI policy. The intent is to make the FDI policy more investor-friendly and remove the policy bottlenecks that have been hindering investment inflow into the country.
- The government has permitted the export of 1,239 tonnes raw sugar under its tariff-rate quota (TRQ) to the US, which enables shipments to enjoy relatively low tariff. TRQ is a quota for a volume of exports that enter the US at relatively low tariffs. After the quota is reached, a higher tariff applies on additional imports. Directorate General of Foreign Trade in a public notice said that additional quantity of 1,239 tonnes of raw cane sugar to be exported to US under TRQ up to September 30, 2019 has been notified. The country enjoys duty-free sugar exports to the US for up to 10,000 tonnes annually under preferential quota arrangement.
- Growth of eight core industries dropped to 0.2 per cent in June mainly due to a contraction in oil-related sectors as well as in cement production. According to official data released, the

eight-core sector industries - coal, crude oil, natural gas, refinery products, fertilizer, steel, cement and electricity - had expanded by 7.8 per cent in June last year. According to the data, crude oil output contracted by 6.8 per cent while the refinery segment de-grew by 9.3 per cent. The cement output declined by 1.5 per cent. Snapping its two-month declining trend, the production of fertilizers grew by 1.5 per cent. However, steel production increased by 6.9 per cent and electricity production increased by 7.3 per cent during the month under review. During April-June, the eight sectors grew by 3.5 per cent compared to 5.5 per cent in the same period last year.

- The Reserve Bank has imposed a fine of about Rs. 26 lakh on two online payment solutions providers for non-compliance of regulatory guidelines. The central bank said in a release that Mobikwik Systems Private Limited has been slapped a fine of Rs. 15 lakh while Hip Bar Pvt. Ltd faced a fine of Rs. 10.85 lakh. It stated that these two prepaid payment instrument (PPI) issuers were levied a monetary penalty for non-compliance of regulatory guidelines.
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- Loans are set to get cheaper as Reserve Bank of India cut repo rate by 35 basis points to 5.40 per cent last week. The move is said to give a fillip to the economy. This was the fourth consecutive time that the Monetary Policy Committee reduced the rates. Consequently, the reverse repo rate under the liquidity adjustment facility stands revised to 5.15 per cent, and the marginal standing facility rate and the Bank Rate to 5.65 per cent. Within hours of the steep reduction in the repo rates, country's largest lender, State Bank of India announced a 15 basis points reduction in its lending rates. The SBI, in a statement, said, the new rates of 8.25 per cent will be effective from 10th of this month. After this cut, SBI home loans have become cheaper by 35 bps since April. The bank is offering a repo linked home loans from 1st July this year.
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) says farm loan waivers and income support schemes are increasing risks to fiscal consolidation of the states. The remarks were made during a meeting between the members of the 15th Finance Commission and the RBI senior officials, including governor Shaktikanta Das and the deputy governors, at the central bank headquarters in Mumbai. A statement from the RBI said that the central bank, in its presentation, listed out the specific factors that will drive fiscal slippages in the revised estimates of FY19, including "the Uday scheme in the past and farm loan waivers and income support schemes in the FY19 revised estimates". Terming it as "poor fiscal marksmanship", the RBI also expressed its concerns on deviation in revised estimates, stating that the budget estimates presented during the beginning of FY20 had indicated a lower fiscal deficit.
- Gold prices last week crossed the 38,000 rupees mark for the first time by soaring 550 rupees to hit a fresh high of 38,470 rupees per 10 gram in Delhi bullion market. The precious metal surged as investors continued to prefer it as a safe-haven asset amid the ongoing US-China trade tensions and over domestic economic concerns. Crossing the 44,000 rupees mark, silver

surged 630 rupees to hit 44,300 rupees per kg on increased off-take by industrial units and coin makers.

- India's exports grew by 2.25 per cent to 26.33 billion US dollar in July this year. According to data released by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Imports, however, slipped by 10.43 per cent to 39.76 billion US dollar, narrowing trade deficit to 13.43 billion US dollar in July. The deficit was 18.63 billion US dollar in July last year. Export sectors that recorded positive growth in the last month include chemical, iron and pharmaceuticals. Shipments of gems and jewellery, engineering goods, petroleum products recorded negative growth. As per data, oil imports declined 22.15 per cent to 9.6 billion US dollar. Cumulatively, from April to July 2019, exports dipped 0.37 per cent to 107.41 billion US dollar, while imports were contracted by 3.63 per cent to 166.8 billion US dollar.
- Consumer price index-based retail inflation eased marginally to 3.15 per cent in July on the back of softening fuel prices. Retail inflation was 3.18 per cent in June 2019, while it stood at 4.17 per cent in year-ago period. According to the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, the overall food inflation, measured on Consumer Food Price Index moved up to 2.36 per cent during July this year which was 2.25 per cent in June 2019. The rate of price rise in vegetables softened to 2.82 per cent during the latest month as against a rise of 4.66 per cent in June, while prices of pulses and products went up to 6.82 per cent from 5.68 per cent. In fuel and light category, deflation was witnessed and it remained at 0.36 per cent as against a rise of 2.32 per cent a month ago. Currently, the retail inflation is well below the RBI's comfort level. The government has asked the central bank to keep inflation in the range of 4 per cent.
- Wholesale price-based inflation in July fell to a multi-year low of 1.08 per cent mainly on account of cheaper fuel and food items. Data released by the Government showed inflation in food articles was 6.15 per cent in July as against 6.98 per cent in the previous month. Similarly, wholesale inflation in fuel and power segment contracted further to (-) 3.64 per cent as against (-) 2.2 per cent in June. The retail inflation last month too had eased to 3.15 per cent over the previous month when it was 3.18 per cent. Inflation based on Wholesale Price Index, WPI was at 2.02 per cent in June this year and 5.27 per cent in July 2018.
- The Central Board of Direct Taxes-CBDT has said that all communications made by the tax department to assesseees from 1st of October will carry a Document Identification Number - DIN. It said issuance of DIN is another step towards better delivery of taxpayer services while ensuring accountability in official dealings.
- Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has asked banks not to count failed transactions at ATMs due to technical reasons as part of "free ATM transactions" permitted every month. The RBI clarified that transactions which fail on account of technical reasons, non-availability of cash, and any other reason attributable to the bank should not be counted as valid ATM transactions for the customer. It said, consequently, no charges will be levied.
- Ministry of Environment has decided to relax the mandatory charging of lease rent of 30 thousand rupees per Mega Watt for wind power projects. Environment Minister Prakash Javdekar said that the step will boost the investment in wind power projects and will help in providing wind power at a cheaper rate.
- Easing the regulatory framework for foreign portfolio investors, capital market regulator SEBI has simplified KYC requirements for them and permitted them to carry out of the off-market transfer of securities. The step is part of SEBI's efforts to simplify and expedite the

registration process for foreign portfolio investors. Under the new framework, foreign portfolio investors would be classified into two categories instead of three. IN another significant regulation, SEBI announced new norms to make it mandatory for companies to provide details of delayed loan payments and possible defaults to credit rating agencies. SEBI also announced relaxation in norms for 'Muni Bonds' to help smart cities and other registered entities working in areas of city planning and urban development work like municipalities to raise funds through issuance and listing of their debt securities.

- The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has clarified that small start-ups with turnover upto 25 crore rupees will continue to get the promised tax holiday as specified in the section of the Income Tax Act. The Act provides deduction for 100 percent of income of an eligible start-up for 3 years out of 7 years from the year of its incorporation. The CBDT has also clarified that all the start-ups recognized by Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) which fulfilled the conditions specified in the DPIIT notification did not automatically become eligible for deduction.
- The total horticulture production of the country is estimated to be over 313 million tonnes which is 0.69 percent higher than the production in 2017-18. Going by the Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers Welfare's Third Advanced Estimate (2018-19) of area and production of various Horticulture Crops, onion production is estimated to be around 23.48 million tonnes, which is 0.95 percent higher than the production last year. Tomato production is estimated to be around 19.39 million tonnes, which is 1.8 percent lower than the production last year. The overall increase is observed in the production of fruits, vegetables, spices, flowers and honey whereas decrease is observed in the production of plantation and aromatics and medicinal crops as compared to last year.
- The Union Cabinet has relaxed Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) rule for foreign single-brand retailers and also permitted foreign investment in contract manufacturing and coal mining. Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said that 100 percent FDI under automatic route in coal mining and associated infrastructure has been approved. He said to boost domestic manufacturing, 100 percent FDI in contract manufacturing under automatic route has been allowed. Mr. Goyal said that 26 percent FDI has also been allowed under government route for uploading and streaming of News and Current Affairs through Digital Media. On FDI in single-brand retailing, the Cabinet has expanded the definition of mandatory 30 percent domestic sourcing norm. It also allowed single-brand retailers to start online sales, waving the previous condition of setting up a mandatory brick-and-mortar store.
- Reserve Bank has said early recognition and resolution of stressed assets have helped banks contain their Gross Non-Performing loans ratio at 9.1 percent down from 11.2 percent a year before. The RBI has said the steadfastly pursued recognition, repair and resolution has resulted in the gross NPA ratio declining. The initial teething difficulties, the insolvency and bankruptcy code is proving to be a game-changer. The recoveries have gradually improved and as a result, deadlock in the potential path of the investment cycle are easing. The Capital buffers have been strengthened by recapitalization to the tune of Rs. 2.7 lakh crore, including the budgetary allocations for FY20 and the abatement of stress has rekindled bank credit inflows, which are getting broad-based. The report also notes that the new NPA recognition and resolution norms issued in June 2019 provide incentives for early resolution, with discretion to lenders on the processes.

- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has categorically said the proposed merger of banks would not lead to any job losses. Talking to reporters she said not even a single employee would be removed following the amalgamation. She dismissed reports of job loss due to the merger, saying it is absolutely ill-informed. This comes at the backdrop of the Finance Ministry unveiling a mega plan to merge ten public sector banks into four. It is aimed at creating stronger lenders of global scale. However, some of the bank unions are agitated fearing loss of jobs. Ms Sitharaman sought to reassure the unions, saying it is not an anti-staff move.
- The Reserve Bank of India has made it mandatory for banks to link all of their new loan products, be it personal, housing or auto to an external benchmark like the policy repo rate. Stating that transmission of policy rate benefits under the current framework has not been satisfactory, RBI issued a circular saying that banks will have to link their products to an external benchmark with effect from 1st October 2019. This move is likely to cheer borrowers ahead of the festive season as banks will now be forced to pass the entire rate cut benefit announced by RBI in recent months and offer lower interest rates.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has launched the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Maan Dhan Yojana, a scheme that aims to secure the lives of Small and Marginal Farmers by providing a pension of Rs 3000 per month to those who attain 60 years of age. According to an estimate, five crore farmers across the country will be benefited by this scheme. The Prime Minister also launched the National Pension Scheme for Traders and Self-Employed. The scheme aims at providing a minimum assured pension of Rs 3000 to small traders and self-employed after attaining the age of 60 Years. Around three crore small traders would be benefited from the scheme.
- Indian Railways have announced certain freight incentives to give a boost to the economy. The busy season surcharge of 15 per cent on freight, which is levied between 1st of October to 30th June, has been deferred. The five per cent supplementary charges applicable on loading on mini and two-point rakes have also been waived off.
- In the biggest ever joint operation by Directorate General of GST Intelligence, DGGI and Directorate General of Revenue Intelligence, DRI pan-India searches were carried out at 336 different locations across the country against exporters who were claiming a refund of IGST fraudulently. The operation covered entities in 14 states and national capital Delhi and involved about 1200 officers from both the agencies. On the basis of data analytics, an intelligence developed in close coordination by both agencies revealed that some exporters are exporting goods out of India on payment of IGST, being done almost entirely out of the Input Tax Credit (ITC) availed on the basis of ineligible or fake supplies. Such IGST payment was claimed as a refund on export. It was also noticed that there was no or negligible payment of tax through cash by the exporters as well as their suppliers. On the basis of this intelligence, massive searches were conducted on the premises of exporters and their suppliers.
- A new provision has been added in the Income-tax Act which allows any domestic company an option to pay income-tax at the rate of 22% if they do not avail any exemption/incentive. It will be effective from the current Financial Year. Another new provision allows any new domestic company incorporated on or after 1st October 2019 making fresh investment in manufacturing and commences their production on or before 31st March, 2023, will have to

pay income-tax at the rate of only 15%. The Finance Ministry has also announced the government decision to expand the scope of 2 percent CSR spending.

- Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das has said that only a limited impact on inflation is expected in view of spiked crude oil prices amidst the ongoing crisis in Saudi Arabia. Drone attacks on the world's largest oil refinery in Saudi Arabia have resulted in a massive 20 percent surge in crude prices. Speaking at an economic summit in Mumbai, Mr. Das said, he expects inflation to remain below 4 percent in the next 12 months and there is room for more rate cuts given the growth slump. He maintained that domestic economy remains resilient as foreign debt is only 19.7 percent of GDP.
- The Airport Authority of India (AAI) has taken up projects of Rs. 3,500 crore for expansion and upgradation of the airports in the North East region. According to the Regional Executive Director of AAI Sanjeev Jindal, AAI has allocated Rs 1,250 crore for Guwahati airport, Rs 650 crore for Imphal (Manipur), Rs 500 crore for Agartala (Tripura), Rs 650 crore for a Greenfield airport at Hollongi in Arunachal Pradesh, and Rs 450 crore for Lengpui Airport in Mizoram and other airports in the region. He said that all modern facilities would be installed in these airports as several international airlines have shown interests to operate flights from the region. He said that the air connectivity developments in North East Region will soon play a 'change agent' role towards overall development of the region in terms of tourism industry, industrialization, trades, and employment generation etc.
- Moody's Investors Service has termed the central government's decision to cut corporate tax rate as a credit positive move. The rating agency said that the tax cut would give a boost to net income of Indian firms. Speaking to media, Senior Vice President of the Moody's Investors Service Vikas Halan said, that eventual impact of the corporate tax cut on credit profiles of Indian corporates will hinge on whether they utilize the surplus earnings for reinvestment in the business, debt reduction or high shareholder returns. Moody's said, the cut in corporate tax is credit positive for companies because it will enable them to generate higher post-tax incomes. The government, slashed the income tax rate for companies by almost 10 percentage points to 25.17 per cent and offered a lower rate to 15.01 per cent for new manufacturing firms to boost economic growth.

SPORTS

- Olympic silver medalist PV Sindhu climbed 3 spots to Number 3 in the latest world badminton rankings released on December 20, 2018. She moved up after claiming a 21-19, 21-17 win against Nozomi Okuhara of Japan in last week's BWF World Tour Finals in Guangzhou, China, for her first title of the year.
- Former India opener, W. V. Raman has been appointed the new coach of the Indian women's cricket team. The BCCI said in a statement in Mumbai (on December 21) that the selection of 53-year-old Raman was based on recommendations of the ad-hoc committee comprising Mr. Kapil Dev, Mr. Anshuman Gaekwad and Ms. Shantha Rangaswamy. Raman is a vastly-experienced coach having been in charge of Tamil Nadu and India Under-19 teams in the past. Raman has represented India in 11 Tests and 27 ODIs.
- Indian woman Vedangi Kulkarni has become the fastest Asian to cycle the globe. Hailing from a suburb of Pune, 20-year old Vedangi cycled into Kolkata, completing the 29,000 kilometers' distance required to qualify as bicycling across the globe. Vedangi told news

agency PTI that she spent 159 days peddling up to 300 kilometers a day in 14 countries. Starting off from Perth in July, she will now be flying back to the Australian city to complete the record by cycling a 15 kilometer distance to reach the same place from where she started. Vedangi is a student of the University of Bournemouth in the United Kingdom pursuing a degree in sports management.

- The Sports Ministry has earmarked Rs. 100 crore for the funding of athletes under the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) for their preparations for 2020 Olympics, according to Sports Authority of India. The TOPS, which was launched in September 2014, is a flagship programme of the sports ministry to provide financial assistance to potential Olympic medal winners. Athletes have also been given financial assistance to prepare for Commonwealth Games and Asian Games under the TOPS.
- The Prime Minister has congratulated Arunima Sinha for scaling Mount Vinson, the highest peak in Antarctica. She became World's 1st woman amputee to climb Mount Vinson. In a tweet, Mr. Modi said Arunima has scaled new heights of success and she is the pride of India, who has distinguished herself through her hard work and perspective.
- 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 48 kg category top honours in Delhi in November last year. In the d rankings put out by AIBA, Mary Kom is placed top of the charts in the weight division with 1700 points. She will have to jump to 51 kg in pursuit of her 2020 Olympic dream as 48 kg is not yet included in the Games roster.
- The second edition of Khelo India Youth Games was officially inaugurated by Union Sports Minister Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore at Shiv Chhatrapati Sports Complex in Pune. Maharashtra was leading the medals tally with 57 medals, including 15 Gold, at the end of day 2 of Khelo India Youth Games in Pune on 10 January. 11 of the Gold medals were won on January 10 itself, with 5 coming in Gymnastics, three in Swimming, two in Athletics and one in Weightlifting. Apart from the 15 Gold, the hosts have, so far, bagged 19 Silver and 23 Bronze medals. A media release said, Delhi is close second with 13 Gold, 10 Silver and 13 Bronze medals, while Haryana are placed third with 12 Gold, 10 Silver and 18 Bronze. Haryana won all seven gold medals in Wrestling in the Girls' under-17 category. In Weightlifting, the victory podium was dominated by Mizoram who clinched two gold.
- India created history by winning their first ever Cricket Test series on Australian soil after beating the home team 2-1 as the fourth and final Test ended in a tame draw due to inclement weather. India scored 622 for 7 in their first innings and then bowled out Australia for 300 thereby enforcing the follow-on. However, persistent drizzle washed out day five thereby keeping the victory margin down to 2-1. The Hosts were still trailing by 316 runs when the match was called off. It is the first time India managed the feat since they began touring Australia in 1947-48. Consequently, Virat Kohli became the first Indian as well as the first Asian captain to win a Test series in Australia.
- Mahendra Singh Dhoni struck an unbeaten 87 to guide India to a historic ODI bilateral series win against Australia. Visitors beat the hosts by seven wickets in the decisive third match in Melbourne. Dhoni and Kedar Jadhav who made 61, shared an unbeaten 121-run stand for the fourth wicket. India overhauled the tricky 231-run target on a slow wicket with four balls to spare. India made 234 runs. Dhoni was declared Man of the Series and Chahal Man of the Match. Before this, India had become first team from the subcontinent to win a Test series.

- Tamil Nadu's D Gukesh became India's youngest and the world's second youngest Grandmaster on Tuesday after achieving his third and final GM norm at the 17th Delhi International Open Chess tournament. At 12 years, seven months and 17 days, Gukesh missed Sergey Karjakin's record of becoming the youngest GM in the history of chess by only 17 days. However, he eclipsed the previous record held by close friend R Praggnanandhaa in June 2018. With this feat Gukesh is now India's 59th Grand Master.
- The Khelo India Youth Games concluded in Pune on January 20, 2019. Maharashtra topped the Medal tally with 228 medals, whereas Haryana and Delhi claimed the second and third spot. Addressing the concluding ceremony, the Union HRD Minister Prakash Javadekar announced that Sports will be made compulsory in all schools from next year. Host Maharashtra topped the medals tally with 227 Medals, while Haryana was second with 176 Gold and Delhi on third with 136. Hosts Maharashtra bagged General Championship of Khelo India this year with 85 Gold Medals. Haryana is on number 2 with 62 Gold and Delhi is on number 3 with 48 Gold medals. 12 Gold Medals were decided on last day. Khelo India Youth Games brought many young talents to national level. Karnataka's Swimmer Srihari Nataraj ended the competition with seven gold medals. Notably, sport person from Union territory Daman and Diu also won three bronze medals. The Khelo India Games helped the budding players of the country to get the environment of international standard competition in domestic Games.
- Union Sports Minister Col. Rajyavardhan Rathore has urged young athletes to give priority on building self-confidence than any other thing. Addressing a function at the National Conference on Anti Doping in New Delhi, he cautioned them against doping and said that self-confidence is the only drug they require. Col Rathore said the zeal with which one participates in games is more important than winning medals. Speaking on the occasion, boxing champion Mary Kom said she has never taken any dope in her sporting career. She emphasized on the importance of consulting one's doctor and coach before taking any medication. She said the country should not face any embarrassment due to doping scandals.
- Vidharbha lifted the Ranji Trophy for the second time in a row, defeating Saurashtra by 78 runs at Nagpur. Requiring five wickets to defend their title, the home team bundled out the visitors for 127 with more than two sessions to spare at the VCA stadium of Nagpur. Chasing the 206 runs target in the second innings, top order of Saurashtra collapsed. They required 148 runs on the fifth and final day, but Aditya Sarwate's six-wicket haul denied them their maiden title.
- World champion Indian weightlifter Saikhom Mirabai Chanu has notched up a gold medal at the EGAT Cup in Thailand. Chanu won the 48 kg category gold with an effort of 192 kg in the silver level Olympic qualifying event. Making a strong comeback from the lower back injury that kept her out of action for nearly nine months, the 24-year-old Manipuri lifted 82 kg in snatch and 110 kg in clean and jerk to finish on top of the podium.
- In Table Tennis, India's young paddlers clinched four medals, including gold, at the Bahrain Junior and Cadet Open tournament in Manama. Besides the gold, India won two silver and a bronze. India fielded three teams in the cadet girls' team event and swept all the three medals on offer. India-A team won the gold, India-B - Silver and India-C - Bronze. The India-B team of Yashaswini Ghorpade and Kavya Sree Baskar beat Egypt in the first semifinal, while India-A defeated India-C in the other semifinal. In the final, the India-A team of Suhana Saini and Anargya Manjunath proved too strong for India-B and clinched the Gold. In the

Junior girls' competition, the Indian team of Manushree Patil and Swastika Ghosh beat three teams before losing to eventual champions Russia to settle for a Silver.

- The Supreme Court has appointed former apex court judge Justice DK Jain as the first court-appointed ombudsman for the BCCI under the terms of newly approved constitution of the cricket board. The role of the ombudsman would be to resolve the disputes relating to the players within the state cricket associations as also financial issues. The apex court, while dealing with the issue related to importance and urgency in appointing an ombudsman, expressed its happiness that all the parties before it agreed on the name of Justice (retired) Jain.
- Nikhat Zareen and Meena Kumari Devi became the first Indian women boxers to win gold medals at the Strandja Memorial Tournament in Sofia, Bulgaria. Zareen, a multiple time national medalist, claimed a 5-0 win in the 51 kg category finals against Filipino Irish Magno. Devi defeated another Filipino Aira Villegas 3-2, in the bantamweight (54 kg) summit clash. However, Manju Rani (48 kg) settled for a silver after a defeat from Philippine's Josie Gabuco in a split 2-3 verdict. Pwilao Basumatari (64 kg), Neeraj (60 kg) and Lovlina Borgohain (69 kg) had settled for bronze medals after losing their semifinal bouts.
- National champion Deepak Singh was the lone Indian boxer to notch up a gold while five others claimed silver medals in the Makran Cup in Chabahar, Iran. Deepak (49-kilogram) defeated Jaafar Naseri in the finals. However, none of the other five Indian finalists could win their summit clashes. Finishing second on the podium were P Lalitha Prasad (52 kg), Commonwealth Games silver-medalist Manish Kaushik (60 kg), Duryodhan Singh Negi (69 kg), Sanjeet (91 kg) and Commonwealth Games silver-medalist Satish Kumar (91 kg). Manish, also a national champion, lost to Daniel Shah Baksh, while Satish was beaten by Mohammad Mlias.
- India lost to Uzbekistan 0-1 in their opening match of the Turkish Women's Cup football in Alanya, Turkey. An early goal by Uzbekistan's Burhanova Malika in the 4th minute made the difference as India struggled for the equalizer in the remainder of the game. The Indian team will also be facing Turkmenistan and Romania in group A of the tournament. The group B comprises teams from Jordan, Northern Ireland, France (B) and hosts Turkey. The tournament is part of the Indian team's preparation for the AFC Olympic Qualifiers Round 2 in April and also next month's SAFF Women's Championship.
- In Shooting, India produced their best ever show at the ISSF World Cup with a total tally of five gold medals in Munich, Germany. India topped the medals tally with five golds and a silver. Second-placed China bagged nine medals - two gold, two silver and five bronze medals. India gold medallists included Apurvi Chandela in the Women's 10 metre Air Rifle, Rahi Sarnobat in the Women's 25 m Pistol and Saurabh Chaudhary in the men's 10 m Air Pistol, besides the Mixed Team titles won on the last day.
- Sunil Chhetri became the most capped India player by surpassing Bhaichung Bhutia's 107 international matches. In his milestone match of the King's Cup football tournament in Buriram, Thailand, he scored the lone goal for his side in the 31st minute from a spot kick for his 69th goal. His effort, however, did not make any difference as India, ranked 101, lost 1-3 to higher ranked Curacao.
- ICC World Cup match between India and New Zealand called off due to heavy rain in Nottingham. Both shared a point each. Rain shattered the hopes of spectators at Trent Bridge and fans all around the world as the match between India and New Zealand was called off.

This was the fourth washout of this tournament, third one of the week and it's already started to rile up the fans across the globe.

- India's ace cueist Pankaj Advani beat compatriot Aditya Mehta in the quarterfinals of the Asian Snooker Championship in the Qatari capital Doha. With this victory, Advani assured himself of a medal. Mehta was one frame away from ousting the 21-time world champion from the tournament but Pankaj's resilient efforts saw him enforce the decider.
- Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju felicitated the Indian archery contingent for their superlative performance at the World Archery Championships held recently in The Netherlands. Meeting the archers at the Sports Authority of India headquarters in New Delhi, Mr. Rijiju congratulated them for winning an Olympic quota for Tokyo 2020 and bagging three medals in the Championship. India won one silver and two bronze medals at the event, making it the best-ever medal haul in an Archery World Championship. India had won two silver medals in the same event in 2015, which is the country's second-best performance at the Championship. The Indian men's recurve team comprising Atanu Das, Tarundeep Rai and Pravin Jadhav won a silver medal at the Championships
- India captain Virat Kohli became the fastest batsman to reach 20,000 international runs, eclipsing batting greats Sachin Tendulkar and Brian Lara. Kohli reached the milestone in only his 417th international innings. Prior to it, Kohli was 37 runs short of the milestone and reached the feat with a single off in the 25th over of the Indian innings. Kohli, thus became the 12th batsman and third Indian after Tendulkar and Rahul Dravid to reach 20,000 international runs.
- A total number of 2437 sporting talents have been identified for support under the Khelo India Scheme. Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju informed this in a written reply in the Lok Sabha. Under the scheme, the government provides financial assistance of about five lakh rupees per annum for a period of eight years.
- In Weightlifting, Youth Olympics gold medalist Jeremy Lalrinnunga smashed three records in a power-packed performance but failed to register a clean and jerk lift on day three at the Commonwealth Championships in Apia, Samoa. In a remarkable performance, the 16-year-old Jeremy, in the 67 kg category, obliterated the Youth World, Asian and Commonwealth records in the snatch category with a lift of 136 kgs. Other Indian lifters continued impressive show by winning four golds, two silvers and a bronze. Achinta Sheuli lifted a total of 305 kgs to win the senior and junior men's 73 kg gold. In the women's 76 kg category, Manpreet Kaur lifted 207 kg to clinch the yellow metal.
- Star Indian sprinter Hima Das clinched her fourth gold in a fortnight as she won the 200 m race with a creditable timing in the Tabor Athletics Meet in Czech Republic. Hima won the race in 23.25 seconds, which had a mediocre field with most of the competitors representing clubs of Czech Republic. Hima's compatriot V.K. Vismaya was second with a season of best 23.43 seconds. Hima has a 200 m personal best of 23.10 seconds. This was 19-year-old Hima's fourth gold since July 2 when she ran her first competitive race in Europe.
- India bagged two Gold and one Silver medal in the Women's 10-meter Air Rifle event at the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) Junior World Cup in Suhl, Germany. In the Individual section of the category, Elavenil Valarivan claimed the top honours with a total score of 251.6, while another Indian Mehuli Ghosh settled for a Silver with 250.2 points. India also clinched a Gold in the team section by creating a junior world record.

- In Table Tennis, hosts India completed a clean sweep, claiming all the seven gold medals at the 21st Commonwealth Championships in Cuttack. Harmeet Desai and Ayhika Mukherjee won the men's and women's singles titles. Harmeet defeated favourite G. Sathiyar 4-3 in a hard-fought final to claim the men's singles title.
- Indian bodybuilder Ravinder Kumar Malik has clinched Mr. South Asia title. He has crowned the overall champion at 12th South Asian Bodybuilding and Physique Sports Championship in Kathmandu. Malik, the winner of 80 kg category, was adjudged best bodybuilder among the winners of nine senior men's weight categories. Afghanistan won team championship by securing a top position with 535 points. Host Nepal finished second with 445 points, while India remained third with 380 points.
- Six-time world champion Mary Kom in 51 kg category and Simranjit Kaur in 60 kg category grabbed a gold each in 23rd President's Cup Boxing Tournament in Labuan Bajo, Indonesia. The Olympic bronze medallist Mary decimated Australian April Franks 5-0 in finals. Simranjit Kaur defeated Indonesia's Asian Games bronze medallist Hasanah Huswatun 5-0 in the final bout. With this, Indian boxers finished their campaign in the Tournament with nine medals. The rich haul comprised seven gold and two silver.
- Indian Test opener Prithvi Shaw has been suspended by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) till November 15, 2019, for a doping violation. According to a BCCI release, Shaw had inadvertently ingested a prohibited substance, which can be commonly found in cough syrups. Shaw had provided a urine sample as part of the BCCI's anti-doping testing program during the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy match on 22nd February 2019 in Indore. His sample was subsequently tested and found to contain Terbutaline. Terbutaline, a specified substance, is prohibited both In & Out of Competition in the WADA Prohibited List of Substances. On 16th July 2019, Shaw was charged with the commission of an Anti-Doping Rule Violation (ADRV) under the BCCI Anti-Doping Rules (ADR) and provisionally suspended pending determination of the charge.
- Star India grappler Vinesh Phogat has bagged gold in women's 53-kg category of the Poland Open wrestling tournament in Warsaw. The 24-year-old prevailed 3-2 over local wrestler Rokhsana in the final of the competition. This was her third consecutive gold in the 53-kg category after winning Gold at Grand Prix of Spain and at the Yasar Dogu International at Istanbul, Turkey last month.
- South African batsman Hashim Amla has retired from international cricket. Amla played 124 Tests, 181 ODIs and 44 T20Is between in his 15-year-long cricketing career. His more than nine thousand runs in Test cricket are the second-most by a Proteas cricketer, after the veteran Jacques Kallis. He also collected the country's third-most runs in ODI cricket after former skipper AB de Villiers and Kallis. He went on to make 18,000 runs including 55 centuries and 88 fifty-plus scores across all formats of the game. He is the only South African to have scored a triple century in the Test format.
- Wrestler Deepak Punia has become India's first junior World Champion in 18 years. He claimed a gold medal at the Junior Worlds with a win over Russia's Alik Shebzukhov at Tallinn, Estonia. The score was tied 2-2 at the end of the 86-kg men's freestyle bout. However, Deepak was declared champion because he had scored the last point. In 92-kg weight category, Vicky claimed bronze after he defeated Batmagnai Enkhtuwacin of Mongolia 4-3.

- India clinched the three-match ODI series against the West Indies 2-0 with a six-wicket win in the rain-curtailed final match in Port of Spain. The West Indies posted 240 for seven in 35 overs after electing to bat but India were given a revised 255-run target on Duckworth-Lewis method. Skipper Virat Kohli (114 not out) smashed his 43rd ODI century to lead India to win. India had won the second ODI while the series-opener was washed out.
- Union Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju has said that a new sports policy was under consideration where every player would be supported by the government. He also expressed hope that India will do better at the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo. The minister said that this policy will be introduced after consultations with various sports organizations and the private sector. He was speaking after the inauguration of the 6th Asian School Table Tennis Championship in Vadodara. Mr. Rijiju said his ministry will soon convene a meeting with sports departments of all states and private sector representatives to protect interests of athletes and ensure their welfare.
- Constable Monali Jadhav from Maharashtra won three medals, including two goals, at the recently concluded World Police and Fire Games International Championship held in Chengdu, China. Jadhav is attached to the Jalamb police station in Buldhana district of Maharashtra. Representing the Indian police force, Jadhav also made a new record with a score of 716 out of 720 points in the game. She won the gold in target and field archery while settled for a bronze medal in the '3D Archery'. She had previously secured a ninth position at the World Championships in Shanghai held in May.
- The World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) has suspended the accreditation of India's National Dope Testing Laboratory (NDTL) for six months in what could be a massive blow to anti-doping movement in the country with less than a year left for Tokyo Olympics. It is understood that National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) can still carry on with sample collection of blood and urine but will have to get it tested by a different WADA accredited laboratory outside India during the suspension period of NDTL. This suspension has been imposed due to non-conformities with the International Standard for Laboratories (ISL), WADA stated in a media release on its website.
- Former opener Vikram Rathour will replace Sanjay Bangar as India's new batting coach while Bharath Arun and R. Sridhar have been retained as bowling and fielding coaches. The senior national selection committee headed by M.S.K. Prasad recommended three names each for all the support staff positions and the top-names in each category will be appointed after the formalities with regard to Conflict of Interest declaration is complete.
- Para-athlete Deepa Malik was conferred with Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award by President Ram Nath Kovind on the occasion of National Sports Day which is dedicated to the legendary hockey player Dhyan Chand on 29th August. A total of fourteen sports persons were conferred with Arjuna Awards for the year 2019. They included cricketer Poonam Yadav, athlete Swapna Barman, wrestler Pooja Dhanda, footballer Gurpreet Singh Sandhu, bodybuilder S. Bhaskaran, boxer Sonia Lather, Kabaddi player Ajay Thakur, table tennis player Harmeet Rajul Desai and badminton player Bhamidipati Sai Praneeth. Dronacharya Awards in the regular category were given to Sandeep Gupta in Table Tennis and Vimal Kumar in badminton. Dronacharya Awards in lifetime category were given to Sanjay Bhardwaj in Cricket, Rambir Singh Khokar in Kabaddi and Merzban Patel in Hockey. Dhyan Chand Awards were given to Manoj Kumar in Wrestling, C. Lalremsanga in Archery, Arup

Basak in Table Tennis, Nitten Kirrtane in Tennis and Manuel Fredricks in Hockey. President also conferred Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Awards, 2018 to six persons.

- The schedule of FIH Pro League season 2 has been released. The Indian hockey team will play a total of 16 home and away games. Eight games will be played on home soil. Indian men's hockey team will open its campaign against the Netherlands at home on January 18 and 19 next year. India will then host world champions Belgium on February 8 and 9. This will be followed by two home fixtures against Australia on February 22 and 23. India will host New Zealand on May 23 and 24. In away games, the Indian team will travel to Germany, Great Britain, Argentina and Spain in April, May and June. India will play the last leg of the Pro League round-robin matches in Spain in June.
- Indian cyclist Ronaldo Laitonjam won his fourth gold medal on the concluding day of Track Asia Cup competition in New Delhi. India emerged overall champions as its players picked up three medals in the day, two gold and one bronze. Overall, India topped the medals tally, with 10 gold, 8 silver and 7 bronze as the tournament came to an end at the IGI Sports Complex. Uzbekistan finished second, with 4 gold and 3 silver. Malaysia secured third place, with 4 gold and 1 silver.
- India's star wrestler Vinesh Phogat qualified for the 2020 Olympics after beating fancied American Sarah Hildebrandt in the World Championships in Nur Sultan, Kazakhstan. She scored an impressive 8-2 win over the world championship silver medalist to secure her place at the Tokyo Games. Earlier, she had stormed to a 5-0 win over Ukraine's Yuliya Khalvadzhy in the first round of repechage in the 53-kg category to remain in contention for an Olympic quota and a bronze medal.
- Bajrang Punia and Ravi Dahiya have qualified for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics winning their respective quarterfinal matches in World Wrestling Championships at Nur Sultan in Kazakhstan. However, they lost their semi-final bouts in the men's freestyle category. Bajrang lost the semi-final to the home wrestler Daulet Niyazbekov while Ravi Dahiya lost his match to reigning world champion Zaur Uguev from Russia. Vinesh Phogat had already booked an Olympic quota for India in women's 53 kilogram.
- In the latest rankings issued by the international wrestling federation, World Championship silver medalist wrestler Deepak Punia has jumped to world number one position in 86-kg category. But, Bajrang Punia lost the top rank in the 65-kg category. In 57-kg, world bronze medalist Ravi Dahiya has entered the top-five bracket. He is ranked five, while Rahul Aware stands at number two. Meanwhile, in women's rankings, Vinesh Phogat has jumped to number two in 53-kg category. In 50-kg, Seema Bisla has dropped a rung to number three while Pooja Dhanda is ranked five in 59-kg, two places behind compatriot Manju Kumari. „
- The world athletics governing the body, International Association of Athletic Federations, IAAF, has honoured the Indian track and field legend PT Usha with a Veteran Pin in recognition of her contribution to the growth of the sport. IAAF chief Sebastian Coe presented her the Veteran Pin during the 52nd IAAF Congress at Doha. Usha was one of three persons from Asia to receive the honour. Often called the "queen of track and field", Usha is one of the greatest sprinters to have come out of India. At the 1982 New Delhi Asian Games, she won silver medals in 100 m and 200 m events. At the Asian Championships in Kuwait City in 1983, she won gold in 400 m. In the 1985 Jakarta Asian Championships, Usha won six medals - five gold and a bronze.