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Wishing You All The Very Best !!

DIRECTOR

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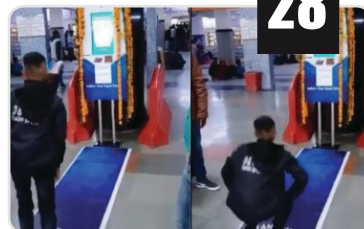
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History



1.1 Important Days

Date	Day	Theme / Remark
February 19	Soil Health Card Day 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> India observed the Soil Health Card Day 2020 on February 19, 2020 to celebrate the launch of Soil Health Card Scheme, which was launched in 2015. To mark the event, the central government organized various awareness programs to make the farmers aware of the use of natural fertilizers.
February 20	World Day of Social Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This year's theme is - Closing the Inequalities Gap to Achieve Social Justice.
February 21	International Mother Language Day	
February 22	World Thinking Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The theme of World Thinking Day 2020 is "Diversity, Equity and Inclusion".
February 24	Girl Child Protection Day'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> February 24, which marks the birth anniversary of former Chief Minister Jayalalithaa, will be observed as the 'State Girl Child Protection Day'.
February 27	India's First Protein Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Right to Protein, a national-level public health initiative, has launched India's 1st Protein Day on February 27, 2020 to raise awareness about the health benefits of protein. Theme of the Protein Day 2020: Protein Mein Kya Hai.
February 28	National Science Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Theme of the NSD 2020: "Women in Science".

1.2 Defence, National Security and Terrorism

First Integrated Tri-Service Command to be set up in June by the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS)

- The Chief of Defence Staff Bipin Rawat aims to set up an integrated tri-service command for the first time by June 2020. This command will be headed by an Air Marshal.



Army establishments to come under one roof at "Thal Sena Bhawan"

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh laid the foundation stone of Thal Sena Bhawan in Delhi Cantt on 21 February. The new Army headquarters will be set up near the Manekshaw Centre, Delhi.

Thal Sena Bhawan:

- The Thal Sena Bhawan is spread over 39 acres. The multi-storeyed building can accommodate over 6000 personnel and will have all the offices of the Army in the complex.
- The army headquarters will be constructed in five years.

Pakistan successfully tests nuclear-capable air launched cruise missile Ra'ad-II

- Pakistan conducted a successful flight test of the air-launched nuclear-capable cruise missile Ra'ad-II with a range of 600 km, significantly boosting the military's "deterrence capability" on land and at sea.

- The Ra'ad-II weapon system is equipped with state-of-the-art guidance and navigation systems ensuring engagement of targets with high precision, according to a press release issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR).
- The cruise missile with a range of 600 km significantly enhances air delivered strategic standoff capability on land and at sea.

Shipping Minister Mandaviya launches Indian Coast Guard Patrol Vessel 'Vajra' in Chennai

- Mansukh Mandaviya, Minister of State for Shipping (I/C) and Chemicals & Fertilizers, was the Chief Guest for the launching ceremony of the 6th Coast Guard Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV-6) 'Vajra' in Chennai. The ship will be utilized for day and night patrol & surveillance along with anti-terrorist and anti-smuggling operations in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) as well as for coastal security.
- The OPV will have two navigation radars with ultra-modern technology, and sophisticated navigational and communication systems.
- The 6th OPV will strengthen the Indian Coast Guard efforts for securing over 7,500 km of the coastline, an exclusive economic zone (EEZ) of over 20 lakh sq km, and more than one lakh merchant ships transiting per year through Indian waters for global trade.

India to get MH-60 'Romeo' in early 2021

- India and the US, during US President Trump's visit, finalized defence deals worth USD 3 billion under which 30 military helicopters will be procured from two American defence majors for the Indian armed forces. Included in this is the Indian Navy's procurement of 24 MH-60 Romeo helicopters at a cost of \$2.6 billion.
- The delivery of these helicopters is planned as early 2021 and comes at a time when the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) is witnessing an increasing security threat due to proliferation of submarines.
- The MH-60 is famously called as 'Romeo' and is known as a helicopter that can hunt submarines deep inside the ocean.

Coast Guard's offshore patrol vessel 'Varad' commissioned

- Indian Coast Guard's offshore patrol vessel 'Varad' was commissioned by Union Shipping Minister Mansukh Mandaviya.
- The vessel fitted with state-of-the-art navigation and communication equipment was commissioned by the Minister in the presence of Coast Guard Director General K Natarajan, Chennai Port Trust Chairman P Raveendran.
- It is the fifth in the series of seven offshore patrol vessels for which L&T had bagged a contract from the Defence Ministry.

1.3 World Organisations – Pacts and Summits

India ranked 35th in Worldwide Education for The Future Index (WEFFI) 2019, Finland tops

- The Worldwide Education for the Future Index (WEFFI) 2019 ranked India in 35th position, whereas in 2018 it was ranked 40th position. The WEFFI report is created by The Economist Intelligence unit and commissioned by Yidan Prize foundation. The index is topped by Finland, followed by Sweden in second place and New Zealand in third place.

Overall Ranking

Rank	Economy
35	India
1	Finland
2	Sweden
3	New Zealand

India ranks 77th in terms of sustainability & 131st in flourishing index: UN report



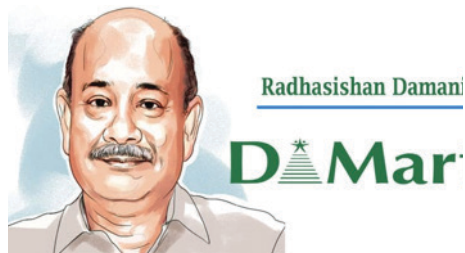
- According to the report, “A future for the world’s children? A WHO–UNICEF–Lancet Commission” commissioned by the World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and The Lancet medical journal, India ranks 77th in terms of Sustainability Index and 131st in the Flourishing Index of Children’s Survival, health, education and Well-being.

1.5 Eminent Persons

Ambala city bus stand renamed after late Sushma Swaraj by Haryana Govt

- The Haryana Transport Minister Mool Chand Sharma announced that the Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar has approved a proposal by Aseem Goel BJP MLA (Member of Legislative Assembly) from the Ambala City Constituency requested to change the name of the newly constructed Ambala city Bus stand as Sushma Swaraj (former Union Minister and BJP veteran) bus stand.

DMart’s Founder Radhakishan Damani becomes India’s 2nd richest person after Mukesh Ambani



- Supermarket chain DMart’s Founder Radhakishan Damani becomes India’s 2nd richest person after Mukesh Ambani, Chairman of Reliance Industries Limited.

IDSA to be named after Manohar Parrikar



- The Union government has decided to rename the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA), a think tank, the Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses.
- Parrikar was the Defence Minister from November 9, 2014, to March 14, 2017 and initiated several reforms in the Ministry.
- The IDSA, an autonomous body under the Ministry of Defence, was established in New Delhi in 1965.
- It is dedicated to objective research and policy relevant studies on all aspects of defence and security.

Former Trinamool Congress MP Krishna Bose passes away

- Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's nephew Sisir Kumar Bose's wife and two-term former TMC MP Krishna Bose passed away morning in a private hospital in Kolkata, following a brain stroke few days ago. She was 89.



Newly discovered species of snail named after teen climate change activist Greta Thunberg

- A newly discovered species of snail has been named after teen climate change activist Greta Thunberg, scientists announced in a new study published.
- The critter, which was discovered in Brunei on the island of Borneo, now has the scientific name Craspedotropis gretathunbergae.
- Time names teen climate change activist its 2019 Person of the Year



US First Lady Melania Trump to attend 'Happiness Class'

- US First Lady Melania Trump, who is on a two-day visit to India along with President Donald Trump, will be attending the 'Happiness Class' at a Delhi Government School.



- This class is a part of Arvind Kejriwal Government's Happiness Curriculum which has been acknowledged by various world leaders. Kejriwal-led AAP government launched the Happiness Curriculum to transform school education in Delhi.

Bengaluru: Vedic scholar and freedom fighter Sudhakar Chaturvedi passes away

- Freedom fighter and Kannada Rajyotsava awardee Pandit Sudhakar Chaturvedi passed away at his residence.
- He was said to be 122 year old at the time of his demise.

Chaturvedi had a long association with Arya Samaj

- During his gurukula days, he was inspired by works of Swami Sharaddananda and later Joined the news daily Vijay, started by Sharaddananda to support the freedom struggle soon after World War 1. Chaturvedi's stint as a reporter with the newspaper took him to the Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar on April 13, 1919 where he is said to have witnessed the massacre.
- He entered the Indian freedom struggle and was an ardent supporter of Mahatma Gandhi.

1.6 Sports and Games

Karnataka Kambala jockey searing bolt with buffaloes



- Mr. Gowda, competing in a kambala event — a traditional race in which the jockey runs along with the buffaloes he is shepherding — covered 142.5 m in 13.62 seconds at the Aikala-Bava kambala near Moodbidri.
- Converting this into 100m sprint, sports buffs said the kambala runner had clocked 9.55 seconds, just a wee bit ahead of Jamaican Usain Bolt's world record of 9.58 seconds!

Hamilton, Messi clinch World Sportsman of the Year honours

- Formula One driver Lewis Hamilton and footballer Lionel Messi were declared joint winners of the prestigious Laureus World Sportsman of the Year Award at a glittering ceremony.
- The Laureus Sporting Moment Award (2000-2020) public fan vote was won by Sachin Tendulkar.



India's Koneru Humpy wins Cairns Cup chess tournament

- Grandmaster Koneru Humpy has won the Cairns Cup Chess tournament held at St. Louis, US (United States). She won the title after finishing 6 points off 9 rounds and a cash prize of \$45,000. This was the second edition of the Cairns Cup.

About Cairns Cup Chess tournament:

- Saint Louis Chess club will host the Cairns Cup, an elite level tournament for the top female players around the world & the total prize fund is \$180,000.

"United by Emotion" to be 2020 Tokyo Olympics Motto



- The Tokyo Organizing Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic games revealed the official motto, "United By Emotion", which reflects the "universal values" and "unifying power of sport", for the upcoming 2020 Olympics to be held in Tokyo, Japan from July 24, 2020 to August 9, 2020.
- Ashu, Aditya Kundu and Hardeep won a bronze medal each in their respective weight categories as Indian wrestlers bagged five medals in Greco-Roman events of the Asian Wrestling Championships in New Delhi.

Mazumdar-Shaw is EY Entrepreneur of the Year

- Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw CMD, Biocon, has been named the EY Entrepreneur of the Year 2019
- She will now represent India at the EY World Entrepreneur of the Year Award (WEOY) in Monte carlo scheduled between June 4 and 6.

Football — India to host 2022 AFC Women's Asian Cup

- The Women's Committee of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) informed that India has been recognized as the first South Asian to host the 2020 AFC Women's Asian Cup, in the meeting held at Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Indian women pin three gols in freestyle

- The senior Asian Championships and India was the biggest beneficiary, winning three gold medals and a silver.
- Asian Games bronze medalist Divya Kakran was the first to ensure a gold in the 68kg.
- Pinki (55kg) and Sarita (59kg) added to the gold.
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- Pinki (55kg) and Sarita (59kg) added to the gold.

First Khelo India University Games to be held in Bhuwaneshwar

- The first Khelo India University Games is to be held in Bhuwaneshwar, Odisha. The game is to be launched by PM Modi through video conferencing.

Asian Wrestling Championships: Sakshi Malik loses gold medal bout, Vinesh wins bronze

- Sakshi Malik had to settle for a silver at Asian Wrestling Championships.
- Sakshi lost against Japan's Naomi Rukie in 65kg freestyle final
- Vinesh Phogat and Anshu Malik secured a bronze medal each. Indian woman wrestler Sakshi Malik had to settle for a silver medal after the Olympic medallist lost her final bout against Japan's Naomi Rukie in 65kg freestyle final at the Asian Wrestling Championships
- Vinesh Phogat and Anshu Malik secured a bronze medal each. While Vinesh defeated Thi Ly Kieu of Vietnam 10-0 in the 53kg bronze medal bout, Anshu got the better of Sevara Eshmuratova of Uzbekistan to finish on the podium.

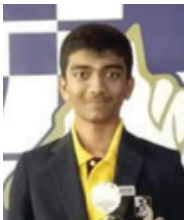
Asian Wrestling Championships: Ravi Dahiya wins gold

- Ravi Dahiya impressed with a gold-winning effort at the Asian Wrestling Championship but India's biggest Olympic medal hope Bajrang Punia looked good until he ran into Japanese Takuto Otoguro in his final.



Indian GM Gukesh wins title at Cannes Open chess

- India's 13-year old Grandmaster D. Gukesh emerged champion in the 34th Cannes Open in Cannes, France, beating Harutyun Bargseghyan of the host nation in the final round to end with 7.5 points.



Birmingham 2022 shooting and archery to take place six months early in India

- A move to stage the 2022 Commonwealth Games archery and shooting competitions in India, six months before Birmingham hosts the rest of the Games, has been approved.
- The Commonwealth Games Federation announced that the competitions would take place in Chandigarh in January of that year.
- Birmingham 2022 will begin on 27 July 2022, five months after the Commonwealth championships in Chandigarh, and with a packed programme of 19 sports.

Joshna Chinappa, Saurav Ghosal advance to semis

- Saurav Ghosal will play Abhay Singh in the semifinals of the 77th Senior National squash championships, while Joshna Chinappa will face Sanya Vats.

Russian tennis star and 5 time Grand Slam winner Maria Sharapova gets retired



- Russian tennis star and 5 time Grand Slam winner Maria Yuryevna Sharapova, 32 years old, announced her retirement. She became the World No.1 in 2005 and as a Grand Slam winner with 2 titles in French Open (2012, 2014), a Australian Open (2008), a US [United States] Open (2006) and Wimbledon Open (2004).

Asian Squash Federation awards

- Saurav Ghosal and Veer Chotrani have been shortlisted among Indians for the Asian Squash Federation performance award list for 2019.

Khelo India University Games 2020 Medal

- Gold - R Rajesh (University of Madras) 47.36 s in 400m.

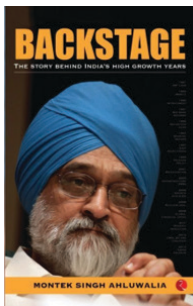
1.7 Books & Authors

"Samir Chaudhary": Ex Mumbai top cop makes stunning revelations in his book

- Former Mumbai Commissioner of Police Rakesh Maria in his tell-all book 'Let Me Say It Now' has revealed that 26/11 Mumbai terror attack terrorist Ajmal Kasab had an ID with Hindu name on it.

Backstage – The Story Behind India's High Growth Years

- Montek Singh Ahluwalia, a former Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission and whose document prepared in 1990 largely influenced the economic reforms unveiled the next year, in his book "Backstage – The Story Behind India's High Growth Years".

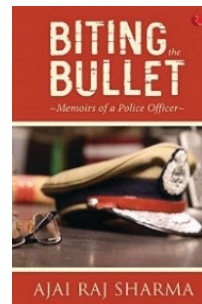


Union Minister Shri Prakash Javadekar unveils an annual reference book India/Bharat 2020

- The Union cabinet Minister for the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change Shri. Prakash Javadekar has released the 64th Edition of the book "The Reference Annual- India/ Bharat-2020" in both English and Hindi and also released the e-version of the book.

Biting the Bullet: Memories of a police officer

- The then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Home Minister L.K. Advani were unhappy over registration of cricket match-fixing case in 2000 against then South African team captain Hansie Cronje and others but it was Cronje's confession that pacified them, former Delhi Police Commissioner Ajay Raj Sharma has revealed.
- In his book "Biting the Bullet - Memories of a Police Officer", Sharma highlighted how the confession of Cronje before journalist was a big relief to him. He said that when the registration of FIR was done, "the Home Minister at the time was out of Delhi and so was the Prime Minister".

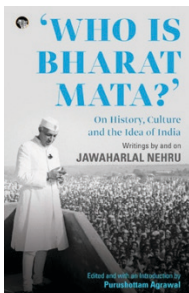


Book of lectures on south Indian heritage released

- After 18 years, the South India Heritage Program(SIHP) officially came to a close.
- Madras Music Academy president N. Murali, who released the book The Magnificent Heritage of South India, comprising details of 350 lectures and other events conducted as part of the SIHP.

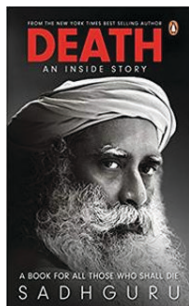
Manmohan singh released the books "who is bharatmata"

- The Former Prime Minister of India Mr. Manmohan Singh has released the books "who is bharatmata" and the English version of the book is penned by professor Purushottam Agarwal, and the Kannada version the book is translated by Professor K E Radhakrishna and titled as "Yaaru Bharat Maate" Published by the Swapna Book House, Bengaluru in association with Delhi Karnataka Sangha.



Vice President Venkaiah naidu released Sadhguru's book 'Death-An Inside Story'

- Vice-President President Muppavarapu Venkaiah Naidu, who was the chief guest at the 26th MahaSivaratri celebrations at Isha Yoga Centre in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu (TN), has launched a book titled "Death; An Inside Story: A book for all those who shall die" penned by Jaggi Vasudev, (generally referred to as Sadhguru), an Indian yogi, author & founder of Isha Foundation.



1.9 Latest Terminology

Baahubali's Kiliki language evolves online

- The language of the kalakeya tribe in Rajamouli's Baahubali
- Marking International Mother Language Day on February 21, the filmmaker and Madhan Karky, the man behind the language, launched a website to help anyone learn the "World's easiest language"
- The website (www.kiliki.in) has a 3,000-word English-Kiliki-English dictionary,

1.9 Awards & Honours

Mangalore's Adline Castelino won LIVA Miss Diva Universe 2020 title

- Adline Castelino from Mangalore, Karnataka has won LIVA Miss Diva Universe 2020 title and was crowned by Vartika Singh, the winner of previous edition, at an event held in YRF (Yash Raj Films) Studios, Mumbai, Maharashtra.



Sahitya Akademi Award for translation

- K.V. Jeyasri, a Tamil teacher from Tiruvannamalai, has won the Sahitya Akademi Award 2019 for her translation of the Malayalam novel Nilam Poothu Malaranna Naal (The day the land bloomed and blossomed) into Tamil as Nilam Poothu Malarantha Naal.
- The award includes a cash prize of ₹50,000 and a copper plaque.



1.10 India and its neighbours

13th Asian Business & Social Investor Forum

- 13th edition of Asian Business & Social Investor Forum 2019-20 & 4th edition – Asia's Greatest Brands & Leaders 2019-20 held at the Marriott Marquis Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand with the aim to improve investment in India and Asia.

1.11 Appointments – Who is who?

Bhaskar Khulbe & Amarjeet Sinha have been appointed as Advisers to PM

- Retired Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officers Amarjeet Sinha and Bhaskar Khulbe have been appointed as the Advisers to Prime Minister Narendra Modi by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet. The appointment of the retired administrative officers as the Advisers to Prime Minister will be on contractual basis.

1.12 Cultural Panorama

Government of India hosts National Organic Food Festival in New Delhi

- The Government of India (GOI) is to host the National Organic Food festival from February (21 to 23, 2020) at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, New Delhi, India.
- Theme: Unleashing India's Organic Market Potential.

Sevalal Jayanti on Celebration

- The birth anniversary celebrations of the spiritual leader of the Banjaras, Sant. Sevalal Maharaj were held on a grand scale at the parade grounds in the town.
- Sevalal Maharaj (15 February 1739 - 4 December 1806) is an Indian, tribal socio-religious reformer and fighter for political right of Banjara/Lambadi community, a great leader and a great guru for the Community. Banjara people consider him to be a super natural person and spiritual guru.

Adivasi Mahotsav 2020

- The Vice President, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu called for active participation from all sections of society for preservation and promotion of tribal culture.
- Addressing the 'Adivasi Mahotsav -2020' at Ramnagar, in Madhya Pradesh the Vice President said that tribal communities represent the ancient most culture and values of India.
- Shri Naidu expressed his deep concern over the fact that around 250 languages have disappeared in last 50 years and most of these extinct languages belonged to tribal communities.

Seed sowing festival 'Lui-Ngai-Ni' celebrated at Ukhrul

- The Naga tribes of Manipur celebrated seed sowing festival 'Lui-Ngai-Ni' at Tangkhul Naga Long (TNL) ground in Ukhrul, Manipur. The 2 day festival was inaugurated by N. Kayisii, Manipur's Minister of Tribal Development and Awangbou Newmai and Tamei MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly), Manipur as Guest of Honour.
- Theme: "Oneness through Culture".

Ganga Kayak Festival celebrated in Uttarakhand

- 8th edition of the "Ganga Kayak festival" was inaugurated by MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly) Vinod Kandari in Dev prayag, Uttarakhand.

Neolithic ash-mound found in Tamil Nadu for first time



- In a first of its kind, students attached to the Madras University's Ancient History and Archaeology department have excavated a Neolithic ash-mound during their field training at Sendoor Malai near Gudiyatham. Though Neolithic ash-mounds have earlier been discovered in other parts of south India, including at Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, this is the first time such mounds excavated in Tamil Nadu.
- In addition, they also unearthed potsherds and stone tools dating back to Neolithic, iron age and early historic periods.

1st edition of Bharat-Bangla Paryatan Utsav commenced in Agartala

- The 1st edition of the Bharat-Bangla Paryatan Utsav-Tourism festival has commenced in Agartala, Tripura to promote tourism in Tripura. The festival has been organized in memories of the contribution of Tripura in 1971 Bangladesh liberation war as well as to boost the tourism sector of Tripura.



2.1 Latest Court Verdicts

Supreme Court permits Permanent Commissioning of Women Officers in Defence

- The Supreme Court of India upheld the judgement of Delhi High Court over the issue of commissioning of women officers in Indian Army.

Highlights

- The Supreme Court has granted permission to commission women officers in the Indian Army.
- Earlier, permanent service commission for women were not allowed, especially in combat units. They were pertained to combat support units such as law, education and logistics. Also, women were not appointed at the level of officers in the combat units. The Judgement was pronounced by Justice D Y Chandrachud.

Magistrates, civil judges not eligible for district judges post through direct recruitment: SC

- The Supreme Court held that members of lower judiciary like magistrates and civil judges are not eligible for direct recruitment to posts of district judges, a route meant exclusively for advocates having seven years continued practice.

- A bench of justices Arun Mishra, Vineet Saran and S Ravindra Bhat unanimously interpreted Article 233 of the Constitution which deals with the appointment of district judges.
- Article 233 sub clause 2 states that a person who is already in the service of the Union or of the State shall not be eligible to be appointed as a district judge.
- Advocates should be in practice in the immediate past for seven years and must be in practice while applying on the cut-off date fixed under the rules and should be in practice as an advocate on the date of appointment. The purpose is recruitment from bar of a practising advocate having minimum seven years' experience.
- The top court overruled a Patna High Court verdict of 2016 which allowed the in-service judicial officers to compete with the lawyers for post of district judge saying the law was not laid down correctly.

Bihar 1st NDA state to adopt resolution against NRC, and to implement NPR

- Bihar became the 1st National Democratic Alliance (NDA) state in India, which passed a resolution against National Register of Citizens (NRC) and also passed a resolution to implement the National Population Register (NPR), according to 2010 format, with an amendment. In this regard, a unanimous resolution has been passed by the Bihar assembly.

Govt approved 32 projects under Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana (PMKSY)

- Government approved a total of 32 projects under 'unit' scheme of Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana (PMKSY) [scheme for Agro-Marine Processing and Development of Agro Processing Clusters] in the meeting of Inter-Ministerial Approval Committee (IMAC) presided over by Union Minister of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI) Harsimrat Kaur Badal.

Election Commission, IIT-M join hands to develop new technology for voting

- The Election Commission has collaborated with IIT Madras to work on a new technology which will allow electors to vote from far away cities without going to the designated polling station of their respective constituencies.

Centre to form new law panel

- The Union Cabinet gave its approval to set up the 22nd Law Commission.
- The Law Commission advises the government on complex legal issues. The term of the previous law panel ended last August.
- The Law Ministry will now notify the new panel, which will have a three-year term.
- The Law and Legislative Secretaries in the Law Ministry will be ex-officio members of the commission.
- "It will also have not more than five part-time members," an official statement said.
- A retired Supreme Court judge or Chief Justice of a High Court will head the commission.
- Originally formed in 1955, the commission is reconstituted every three years and so far, 277 reports have been submitted to the government.

2.2 Political parties and Political system in India

Labour Court

- Minister CV Shanmugam announced that the government has taken steps to set up an integrated labor court in Krishnagiri.

2.3 Govt - Welfare oriented Govt schemes, their utility

Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana: 4th National Conference held in Udaipur

- The fourth National Conference of Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima yojana was held in Udaipur, Rajasthan. The Conference was organized by Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.

Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana

- The scheme was launched in 2016. It replaced the Modified National Agricultural Insurance Scheme and National Agricultural Insurance Scheme.
- Under the scheme the farmers are paid a premium of 2% for Kharif crops and 1.5% for Rabi crops in case of crop damages. The scheme is in line with One Nation-One Scheme theme.

Swachh Bharat Mission second phase gets nod

- The Centre will begin implementing the second phase of its Swachh Bharat mission in rural areas from April, focusing on solid and liquid waste management and the sustainability of the abolition of open defecation.
- The Union Budget for 2020-21 had allocated ₹ 9,994 crore for the first year of the mission's Phase-II.
- The scheme will be implemented by the States, with a fund sharing pattern of 60:40 between the Centre and the States.

- In the northeastern and Himalayan states, the Central share will be 90%.

Centre to promote formation of 10,000 new FPOs, brings hope for small and marginal farmers

- To bring more and more small and marginal farmers on big platform as a joint entity, the Centre approved a scheme for formation and promotion of 10,000 new farmer producer organizations (FPOs) in the country with budgetary support of Rs 4,496 crore by 2024.

February 24: PM-Kisan Scheme completes one year

- The Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana completed one year of its implementation. The scheme was launched to increase the income of farmers. It aims to help farmers by providing them income support of Rs.6,000 per year.
- The scheme was launched by PM Modi on February 24, 2019 at Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh. It is being implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmer Welfare.

PM Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana

- In order to gain the benefits from the scheme, the farmers have to produce citizenship certificate, Aadhaar card, land holding papers and bank account details. The amount are to be deposited directly in to the farmers' accounts under the scheme.

Odisha beats national average in rural employment

- A lead performer in many developmental interventions, the State is now ahead of national average in several indicators of MGNREGS.
- Residents of 20 vulnerable blocks in four Odisha districts will be allowed employment for 200 days in a year under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), as part of a special Rs 500 crore package announced by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik.
- Odisha is ahead of national average in indicators like project completion, geo-tagging, timely payment of wages, individual beneficiary-based projects, e-payment and employment generation.

Jiyo parsi scheme

- According to the Union Minister of Minority Affairs, Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, the population of Parsis (Zoroastrians), a notified minority community under National Commission of Minorities Act 1992, increased by 233 since the year 2013, when the government launched the Jiyo Parsi scheme.
- So far the central Government has spent Rs 14 crore in 7 years for this scheme.

About Jiyo Parsi scheme:

- It is run by the Ministry of Minorities affairs with the aim to increase the population of the Parsi community.
- It has two components: Medical Assistance and Advocacy (Counselling).

3. GEOGRAPHY



3.1 Policy on Environment and Ecology

Climate change to drive 33% of earth's flora, fauna to extinction by 2070

- Climate change may cause one in three species of plants and animals worldwide to become extinct in the next 50 years, according to a study. The researchers from the University of Arizona in the US compiled detailed estimates of global extinction from climate change by 2070.
- The researchers examined local extinctions that have already happened, based on studies of repeated surveys of plants and animals over time. They analysed data from 538 species and 581 sites around the world.

New species of cockroach found in Western Ghats during survey

- The *Allacta Kalakkadensis* species of cockroach found in Kalakkad-Mudanthurai region.
- A new cockroach species has been discovered by scientists of the Southern Regional Centre, Zoological Survey of India, at the Western Ghats, a region with high species richness, and high percent endemism.
- India is home to 182

UN body on Migratory Species



- The Thirteenth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species kicked off in Gandhinagar.
- India marks the beginning of super year of Biodiversity with the hosting of the 13th Conference of Parties (COP) of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), an environmental treaty under the aegis of United Nations Environment Program, from 17th to 22nd February 2020 at Gandhinagar in Gujarat.

Highway threatens tiger territory in Arunachal Pradesh

- Since 2013 to lay a two-lane, 156 km road through the Namdapha National Park, India's easternmost tiger reserve, a new highway project has been cleared through yet another big cat reserve in Arunachal Pradesh.
- State plans to build a 692.7 km highway through the 862 sq km Pakke Tiger Reserve (PTR) in East Kameng district.

- The administrative office of the PTR is in Seijosa, a sub-divisional headquarters situated by the Pakhui or Pakke River.
- Named the East-West Industrial Corridor, the highway aims to connect Bhairabhunda in West Kameng district and Manmao in Changlang district along Arunachal Pradesh's border with Assam.

Asiatic lion population set to double in India

- The world's only abode for Asiatic Lion, Gir National Park in Gujarat, has seen almost 100 per cent increase in the numbers of the big cat in last five years.
- The world's only abode for Asiatic Lion, Gir National Park in Gujarat, has seen almost 100 per cent increase in the numbers of the big cat in last five years. The lion census, set to be released in May by the Gujarat government, reflects that their numbers are likely to cross 1,000, said a senior state government official, who is part of the exercise. Lion census is done every five years.

Monsoon in Sunderbans likely to get longer, warn climate experts

- The monsoon in Sunderbans is likely to last longer and get more intense, according to a fact sheet titled The Sunderbans and Climate Change, which was made public during the ongoing Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals.
- Climate specialists have predicted that as climate change progresses, monsoon seasons in the Sundarbans will become longer and more intense.

American pests spreading in horticultural crops

- White rat attack of 'Rugosspirilling' has increased in horticultural crops in Tamil Nadu. This results in an economic loss of \$ 100 billion annually worldwide.
- Viral pests infect foreign food with imported food products. In the US, the 'Rukos spiraling' white fly virus pests currently attack crops such as coconut, jackfruit, guava, banana, papaya, jackfruit, pomegranate and pomegranate. The most affected is the coconut. Farmers are disturbed that they are unable to control these pests.

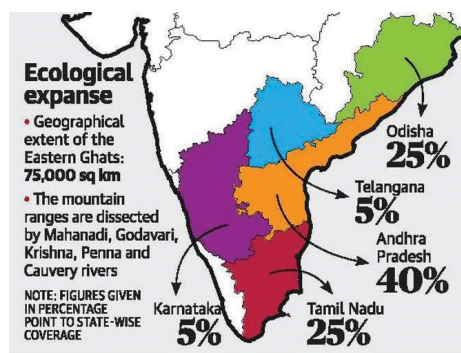


M.M.Hills sanctuary to be a tiger reserve

- The Decks have been cleared to notify the Malai Mahadeshwara Wildlife Sanctuary in Karnataka's Chamarajanagar district as a tiger reserve.

Declare Eastern Ghats UNESCO cultural heritage sites, say environmental groups

- All the historically and culturally significant mountains of the Eastern Ghats should be declared UNESCO cultural heritage sites, and the five States that the Ghats encompass – Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka and Odisha should prepare an action plan to protect and conserve their ecology and natural resources, the Greens' Alliance for Conservation of Eastern Ghats (GRACE) and the Council for Green Revolution (CGR).



21 Indian cities among world's 30 most polluted; Ghaziabad tops list: Report

- Delhi topped the list of most polluted capital cities in the world in 2019, according to a new report which also revealed that 21 of the world's 30 most polluted cities are in India.
- According to the World Air Quality Report 2019 compiled by IQAir Air Visual, Ghaziabad is the most polluted city in the world, followed by Hotan in

China, Gujranwala and Faisalabad in Pakistan and then Delhi in the fifth place.

- The 21 Indian cities which are in world's 30 most polluted cities, in the order of their ranking, are, Ghaziabad, Delhi, Noida, Gurugram, Greater Noida, Bandhwari, Lucknow, Bulandshahr, Muzaffarnagar, Baghpat, Jind, Faridabad, Coraut, Bhiwadi, Patna, Palwal, Muzaffarpur, Hisar, Kutail, Jodhpur and Moradabad.
- According to country-wise data, India ranked fifth in the world's most polluted countries with Bangladesh on top of the list followed by Pakistan, Mongolia and Afghanistan.

Committee to study Ulsoor lake pollution

- The Southern Bench of the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has ordered the constitution of a joint committee to take water samples from Bengaluru's Ulsoor lake and neighbouring areas to ascertain whether the lake is being polluted owing to illegal activity.
- The Bench, comprising Justice K. Ramakrishnan and expert member Saibal Dasgupta.
- The water analysis should include not only Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD), Chemical Oxygen Demand (COD) limit, but also the Total Coliforms and Faecal Coliforms and also the presence of any heavy metals like Arsenic, Phosphorus, etc.



4. ECONOMICS

4.1 New Economic Policy & Govt. Sector

RBI Syncs Financial Year with the Fiscal Year

- The board of Reserve Bank of India (RBI) decided to sync the Financial year of the bank with the Fiscal Year. The Fiscal Year begins in April and ends in March and the Financial year is between July and June

Highlights

- The Central Board of Directors of RBI at the 582nd meeting recommended aligning of Fiscal and financial years. The alignment would change 8-decade practice of RBI.

Jalan Committee

- The alignment was recommended by an expert committee led by Bimal Jalan.

47th India International Knit Fair

- The 47th INDIA INTERNATIONAL KNIT FAIR (IIKF) at Tirupur, Knitwear Capital of India. This Fair is scheduled to be held from 17-19 February, 2020 in the fully Air-Conditioned sprawling exclusive hall of IKFA Complex, at Tirupur, India.



- To build contacts, develop Business prospects, work on major tie-ups and partnerships.

BS-VI Fuel: India To Switch To World's Cleanest Petrol, Diesel From April 1

- India will switch to the world's cleanest petrol and diesel from April 1, when it moves to Bharat Stage VI-compliant fuel from BS-IV grades.
- India will join the select league of nations using petrol and diesel containing just 10 parts per million of sulphur and emission standards are as good as CNG.

Piaggio opens first Ape' electric experience centre showroom in India

- Piaggio Vehicles (PVPL), the subsidiary of the Piaggio Group and a leading manufacturer of small commercial vehicles in India, launched its new electric three-wheeler, the Ape' E-City for the Vijayawada market in Andhra Pradesh.

India becomes 2019's 5th largest economy

- In terms of purchasing power parity (PPP), India's GDP is \$10.51 trillion, exceeding that of Japan and Germany. Due to India's high population, India's GDP per capita is \$2,170.

Rank	Country	GDP
1	United States (US)	\$21.44 trillion
2	China	\$14.14 trillion
3	Japan	\$5.15 trillion
4	Germany	\$4 trillion
5	India	\$2.94 trillion

Sweden's Riksbank begun testing world's 1st digital version of currency, e-krona

- Sveriges Riksbank (or simply the Riksbank), the central bank of Sweden, had begun testing its digital version of currency, e-krona. If this year-long pilot project successful, this would lead to the creation of world's 1st central bank digital currency (CBDC).



"EASE 3.0" launched for tech-enabled banking for aspiring India

- "Enhanced Access and Service Excellence (EASE) 3.0" has been launched by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman along with the EASE 2.0 Annual Report at Indian Banks' Association function. This has been launched for smart, tech-enabled banking for aspiring India.
- EASE 3.0 is expected to provide advanced solutions to make the public sector banking smart and technology-enabled. Some key facilities like Palm Banking for "End-to-end digital delivery of financial service", "Banking on Go" via EASE banking outlets at frequently visited spots like campuses, stations, complexes and malls will be provided by the EASE 3.0 reforms agenda. It also aims to digitize the customer's experience at public sector bank branches.

RBI introduced 12 indicators for calculating India's growth: RBI Working Paper

- Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has come up with a new method of calculating India's growth through a Working Paper titled "Nowcasting Indian GDP growth using a Dynamic Factor Model" under the RBI Working Paper Series, introduced in March 2011.

Here are the 12 indicators:

- Index of industrial production (IIP) – consumer goods
- IIP- core sectors
- Automobile sales
- Non-oil non-gold imports
- Exports
- Rail freight
- Air cargo
- Foreign tourist inflows
- Government tax receipts
- Nominal Effective Exchange Rate (NEER)
- Sensex
- Bank Credit

4.2 Current Socio-Economic Problems

15th Finance commission constitutes 8-member panel headed by ITC chairman Sanjiv Puri to boost agri exports



- The 15th Finance Commission has set up a 8-member group led by ITC chairman and managing director (MD) Sanjiv Puri to recommend measurable performance incentives for the states, so as to promote exports & also to encourage the concerned crops to ensure replacement of more imports.

5. SCIENCE



5.1 Latest Inventions on Science & Technology

ISRO launch 10 EO satellites in 2020-21

- The country will send up an unusually large number of 10 earth observation (EO) satellites during 2020-21, according to the latest annual report of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) for 2019-20.
- The plan includes new categories, such as the first Geo Imaging Satellite, GISAT-1.
- In comparison, only three communication satellites and two navigation satellites are planned for the coming financial year starting April. The plan mentions 36 missions, which include both satellites and their launchers.
- ISRO was recently given a budget of nearly ₹13,480 crore for the next fiscal.
- The upcoming EO satellites include radar imaging satellites RISAT-2BR2, RISAT-1A and 2A, Oceansat-3 and Resourcesat-3/3S.



Kerala CM launched "Yodhavu" mobile app to combat drug menace

- Kerala Chief Minister (CM) Pinarayi Vijayan launched "Yodhavu" (Warrior) mobile app (application) at Kochi, Kerala, through which the public can inform police about drug abuse & its distribution.

Key Points:

- The application was introduced by the Kochi city police and the informer's identity could be kept secret.

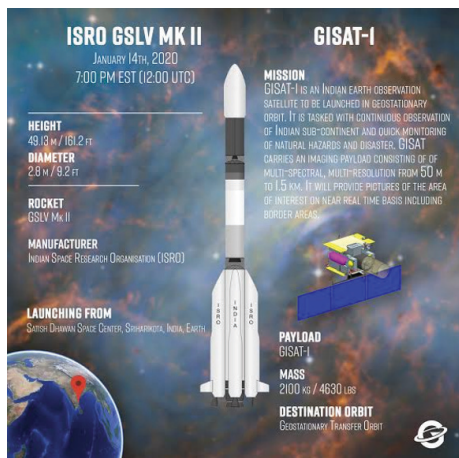
NASA's Juno Update Jupiter Water Mystery

- NASA's Juno mission has provided its first science results on the amount of water in Jupiter's atmosphere. Published recently in the journal Nature Astronomy, the Juno results estimate that at the equator, water makes up about 0.25% of the molecules in Jupiter's atmosphere - almost three times that of the Sun.
- These are also the first findings on the gas giant's abundance of water since the agency's 1995 Galileo mission suggested Jupiter might be extremely dry compared to the Sun (the comparison is based not on liquid water but on the presence of its components, oxygen and hydrogen, present in the Sun).

Sheikh Hamdan unveils new Dubai Jetman stunt

- The stunt took place on February 14, when Vince Reffet took off over Jumeirah Beach Residence. Reffet travelled over 100-metres in the first 8-seconds of the flight, reaching a height of 1,800-metres.

ISRO to launch GISAT-1 on March 5



- GISAT-1, the country's first earth imaging satellite in a geostationary orbit, will be launched on the evening of March 5 from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota.
- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) said that its medium-lift GSLV launcher numbered F10 would orbit the 2,275-kg spacecraft.
- GISAT-1 will facilitate almost realtime observation of the Indian subcontinent under cloud-free conditions and at frequent intervals.

Scientists Discover First Animal that Lives Without Breathing Oxygen



- A common assumption that all multicellular organisms must be breathing oxygen has now been proven wrong as researchers have accidentally discovered the first non-oxygen breathing animal.
- The tiny, less than 10-celled parasite Henneguya Salminicola lives in salmon muscle, according to a study Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. As it evolved, the animal, which is a myxozoan relative of jellyfish and corals, gave up breathing and consuming oxygen to produce energy.

Union Food Processing Industries Minister Harsimrat Kaur Badal Launched Market Intelligence and Early Warning System (MIEWS)

- Union Food Processing Industries (FPI) Minister Harsimrat Kaur Badal Launched Market Intelligence & Early Warning (MIEWS) at Delhi.
- MIEWS portal is a 'First-of -its-kind' platform that monitors the prices of TOP Crops (Tomato, Onion & Potato) & generates alert for timely market intervention under the terms of Operation Greens (OG) scheme for price stabilization during glut situations.

GSLV-F10 is scheduled to launch GISAT-1 on March 05, 2020 from Satish Dhawan Space Centre SHAR

- Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV-F10) will launch Geo Imaging Satellite (GISAT-1) from the Second Launch Pad of Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) SHAR, Sriharikota.
- Weighing about 2268 kg, GISAT-1 is the first state-of-the-art agile Earth observation satellite which will be placed in a Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit by GSLV-F10. Subsequently, the satellite will reach the final geostationary orbit using its onboard propulsion system.
- A 4 metre diameter O shaped payload fairing is being flown for the first time in this GSLV flight. This is the fourteenth flight of the GSLV.
- Operating from geostationary orbit, GISAT-1 will facilitate near real time observation of the Indian sub-continent, under cloud free condition, at frequent intervals.

17 New Planets Including Earth-Sized World Discovered by Astronomy Student

- University of British Columbia astronomy student Michelle Kunimoto has discovered 17 new planets, including a potentially habitable, Earth-sized world, by combing through data gathered by NASA's Kepler mission.
- Over its original four-year mission, the Kepler satellite looked for planets, especially those that lie in the "Habitable Zones" of their stars, where liquid water could exist on a rocky planet's surface.
- The new findings, published in The Astronomical Journal, include one such particularly rare planet. Officially named KIC-7340288 b, the planet discovered by Kunimoto is just 1 ½ times the size of Earth — small enough to be considered rocky, instead of gaseous like the giant planets of the Solar System and in the habitable zone of its star.

Earth has acquired a brand new moon that's about the size of a car

- Earth might have a tiny new moon. On 19 February, astronomers at the Catalina Sky Survey in Arizona spotted a dim object moving quickly across the sky.
- Over the next few days, researchers at six more observatories around the world watched the object, designated 2020 CD3, and calculated its orbit, confirming that it has been gravitationally bound to Earth for about three years.

5.2 Latest Discoveries in Health Science

First ever long Endurance solar-powered unmanned aircraft PHASA-35 flies successfully

- High Altitude Long Endurance vehicle (HALE), Persistent High Altitude Solar Aircraft (PHASA)- 35 has the potential to remain airborne for a year is the First ever long endurance solar-powered unmanned aircraft which has successfully completed its maiden test flight and it developed by BAE systems in collaboration with Prismatic Ltd.

About Phasa-35:

- PHASA-35 is an alternative to satellite having all the qualities of an aircraft, and it remains airborne within the stratosphere but above the weather and conventional air traffic level.

5.2 Mass Media & Communication

Abroad, Google Maps shows J & K as 'disputed'

- Google Maps has redrawn the world's borders by making them look different depending on the location of the viewer. The popular search engine now shows Kashmir's outlines as a dotted" line signaling "disputed" when it is seen from outside India.

Indian Railways launched HRMS Mobile app for its employees



- Shri Vinod Kumar Yadav, Chairman, Railway Board, launched HRMS (Human Resource Management System) Mobile application (app) through which all employees of Indian Railways can view and access data related to their services. The app was designed and developed by CRIS (Centre for Railway Information System).

Himmat Plus app

- Delhi Police along with Uber launched "Himmat Plus app", at the Indira Gandhi International (IGI) airport, New Delhi, to ensure safety and security of the people travelling in cabs.

Observation Mobile App

- It is easy to monitor the progress of the learning outcomes of each student from Grade 1 to 8 through the Tamil Nadu Classroom Mission.
- Observing Mobile App - A Pilot Study is being implemented in Chennai and Thiruvannamalai Districts to enable all Inspection Officers in the School Education Department to make use of Classroom Events.

An e-commerce app "Thirumathi Kart" for SHG products launched at Tiruchi, Tamil Nadu

- An e-commerce mobile application called "Thirumathi Kart" developed by National Institute of Technology, Tiruchi (NIT-T) for promoting products developed by self-help groups (SHG), was launched in Tiruchi, Tamil Nadu .

Key Points:

- The App, Thirumathi Kart will be the main app for usage of public domain, the other 2 apps namely Thirumathi Kart (seller) and Thirumathi Kart (logistics), are for use among the SHGs.

The labour ministry to launch "Santusht" mobile app for ESI beneficiaries

- The Union Labour Minister Shri Santosh Kumar Gangwar on Employees State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) foundation day announced about launching "Santusht" mobile app for the benefit of ESI beneficiaries & launched ESIC's Special Service Fortnight from February 24 to March 10.

6. NATIONAL – DIARY OF EVENT



South Central Railways zone becomes India's 1st to have energy-neutral stations

- The Indian Southern Central Railways (SCR) zone becomes India's first to have 13 energy-neutral stations. The number is highest amongst all the zones across the Indian Railways network.

About energy-neutral railway stations:

- These are capable of meeting 100% energy requirements through solar photovoltaic panels which have been commissioned at the station buildings.
- The total capacity of all the solar panels installed at the 13 energy neutral stations is 99 kWp at a cost of Rs 50 lakh.

Tribal language

- The Asur language figures in the list of UNESCO Interactive Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger.
- The first transmission of a half-an-hour programme was organised near Netarhat on January 19. Since then, the prerecorded radio program have been aired on 16 different occasions
- As per the 2011 census, the tribe has a population of around 23,000 in Latehar and Gumla districts.

Over 8 Lakh under-5 age Children died in India: UNICEF's Report

- The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) recently released its annual State of the World's Children Report 2019. The report stated that India's under-5 age children mortality rate is 37 per 1000 live births. In 2019, around 8 lakh children of under 5 years of age lost their lives.

"Global Investor Summit" for the first time in Jammu and Kashmir; Road Shows to attract investments

- The Government of India is making preparation in full swing for the Global Investors Summit to be held in Jammu and Kashmir in April 2020.

Highlights

- In order to increase the number of investments roadshows are to be conducted from February 17, 2020. The road shows are to be held in Kolkata, Bengaluru, Mumbai, Chennai, Ahmedabad and Hyderabad.
- The Union Territory is to send 54 senior officials to preside over the roadshows. Jammu and Kashmir will also hold International Roadshows.

Nitin Gadkari inaugurated first inter-city electric bus service in Maharashtra

- Nitin Gadkari, Minister of Road Transport and Highways, inaugurated the first inter-city electric bus service, between Mumbai (Maharashtra) and Pune (Maharashtra).

Bihar govt launches 'Pyaar ka Paudha' campaign to promote the practice of planting trees

- The state Government of Bihar's Department of Environment and Forest in Patna has launched 'Pyaar ka Paudha' (a plant of love) drive under the Jal Jeevan Hariyali campaign with an aim to promote the practice of planting trees in the state.

Madhya Pradesh grapples with spiralling neonatal deaths

- Madhya Pradesh has recorded the highest percentage of newborn deaths of 11.5% against the total admissions to government-run sick newborn care units (SNCUs) in the past three years across the country, a rate ominously spiraling since 2017, according to the National Health Mission (NHM). The country's average is 7%.

Jagan to launch scheme to revamp govt. hospitals

- Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister will launch the first phase of the 'Nadu-Nedu' program to revamp the health sector by laying the foundation stone for a sub centre at Kurnool.

- Under the project, the government plans to take up construction and renovation works at the hospitals at a cost of ₹11,737 crore in a span of three years.
- As part of the first phase, ₹1,129 crore has been allocated for the health and wellness centres. Around 530 life-saving drugs are being provided in health care institutions.

Bio Asia Summit 2020 to be held in Hyderabad



- The Government of Telangana is hosting Bio-Asia Summit 2020 in Hyderabad between February 17, 2020 and February 19, 2020.
- The main objective of the summit is to explore the capabilities of Life Science Companies and their investments.
- The theme of the Summit is Theme: Today for Tomorrow

Delhi-based IGIA becomes 1st single-use plastic-free airport of India

- According to the GMR Group-led Delhi International Airport Ltd (DIAL), Delhi-based Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) has become the 1st airport in India to be completely free of single-use plastic usage.

'Ramayana Yatra' to begin from March 5

- The Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC), as part of Bharat Darshan, will be operating 'Ramayana Yatra', a special train covering important temple towns in the country.

Kashi-Mahakal Express flagged off

- Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, recently flagged off Kashi-Mahakal Express from Varanasi. This train will connect Kashi and Ujjain through a religiously important route. Kashi Mahakal Express will connect three Jyotirlingas - Omkareshwar near Indore, Mahakaleshwar of Ujjain and Kashi Vishwanath of Varanasi.
- The first commercial journey of this train is scheduled to begin on February 2020.

Hindi is 3rd most spoken language in world

- As per the 22nd edition of Ethnologue, Hindi language is the third most spoken one in the world with a total of 615 million speakers. English language has the most number of speakers - 1132 million speakers.

Govt. plans research on 'indigenous' cows

- The government has unveiled a program to research on 'indigenous' cows. To be funded by multiple scientific ministries, the initiative, SUTRA PIC, is led by the Department of Science and Technology (DST).

- SUTRA PIC or Scientific Utilization Through Research Augmentation-Prime Products from Indigenous Cows.

11Sc ranked 16th in Times Higher Education Ranking

- The Times Higher Education Ranking was released in London. The ranking was titled -The Emerging Economies University Ranking 2020".
- Around 11 Indian Universities were included in the top 100. However, China had more Universities than India in the ranking. Around 30 Universities of China were in the top 100.

PM Modi visits Hunar Haat at Rajpath in Delhi

- The Hunar Haat being organised by the Ministry of Minority Affairs at India Gate in Delhi.

President to inaugurate The Huddle on February 22

- The fourth edition of The Huddle, The Hindu's annual thought conclave, will be held at the ITC Gardenia in Bengaluru on February 22 and 23.
- President Ram Nath Kovind will address the audience as the Chief Guest and inaugurate the conclave on February 22.



National Payments Corporation of India launches 'UPI Chalega' campaign

- National Payments Corporation of India(NPCI) launches 'UPI Chalega' campaign, which is aimed to guide users towards the right usage of UPI(Unified Payments Interface) and help to create a habitual change, use of UPI in their daily life.
- UPIChalega.com has also been setup where users can access information about live banks and third-party apps on the interface as well as social feeds.

India's tallest pier bridge built by Northeast Frontier Railway in Manipur



- India's tallest railway pier bridge which is 100 m tall has been constructed by the Northeast Frontier Railway Construction Organisation. The bridge has been built across Makru river in the Tamenglong district of Manipur. The bridge has been constructed at the cost of Rs 283.5-crore.

Madhya Pradesh breaks its record in thermal power generation

- Madhya Pradesh has surpassed its earlier record of thermal power generation by producing 1099.7 lakh units in one day.

- The Madhya Pradesh Power Generating Company has created a new record by producing 1099.7 lakh units of thermal power.
- This is the maximum thermal power generated in Madhya Pradesh in one day so far.
- In this record production, Amarkantak Thermal Power Station in Chachai generated 50.6 lakh units, while Sanjay Gandhi Thermal Power Station in Birsinghpur produced 289.6 lakh units.

4th Anniversary of Shyama Prasad Mukherji Rurban Mission observed



- The 4th Anniversary of the Shyama Prasad Mukherji Rurban Mission (SPMRM) was observed.
- It was launched on 21st February 2016 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to transform the Rurban clusters by stimulating local economic development, enhancing basic services and creating well planned Rurban clusters.

NITI Aayog organizes North East Sustainable Development Goal Conclave 2020 in Assam

- NITI Aayog is to organize North East Sustainable Development Goal Conclave 2020 in Assam between February 24, 2020 and February 26, 2020. The Conclave is to be held in the state capital Guwahati.
- Chief Ministers of all the north eastern states namely Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Nagaland, Manipur, Meghalaya, Assam, Tripura and Sikkim are to participate in the conclave.

Gol to launch “TILHAN Mission” to make India Self Reliant in oil seed Production

- The Agricultural Minister Narendra Singh Tomar announced that Government of India is to launch “TILHAN MISSION” to boost the oil seed production. The announcement was made at an occasion of Soil Health Card Day. Soil Health Card Day was celebrated all over India on February 19, 2020.

National Organic Food Festival

- The Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI) with the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoWCD) will host the first National Organic Food Festival in New Delhi between February 21 to February 23, 2020.
- It aims to strengthen the organic market and empower women entrepreneurs in the area of production and processing of organic products.

Theme: Unleashing India's Organic Market Potential.

- India has the 9th largest World's Organic Agricultural Land and the largest number of producers.
- Sikkim is the first organic state in the world. All of its farmland is certified organic.

3,500-tonne goldmine found in Uttar Pradesh

- Uttar Pradesh government, geologists have discovered massive gold deposits in Sonbhadra district of eastern Uttar Pradesh. The discovery comes after two decades of search by the Geological Survey of India and the Uttar Pradesh Directorate of Geology and Mining. As per estimates, there are two goldmines with around 3,500 tonnes of gold ore in the Naxal-affected Sonbhadra district. This is around five times the current gold reserves of the country which stands at around 626 tonne.
- The goldmines are situated in Hardi village and Sonpahadi in Mahuli village of Dudhi Tehsil in the district. Rai said that while 2943.25 tonne gold deposits are located in Sonpahadi, around 650 tonnes are in Hardi.

Squats for free platform tickets at railway station in Delhi



- The Railways initiative to give free platform tickets to anyone doing 30 squats in 3 minutes. The 25-second video clip posted on the social media became all the rage.
- In the clip posted by Railway Minister Piyush Goyal, a young man can be seen doing squats to avail a free platform ticket at the Anand Vihar rail terminus.

'Historical Gastronomica-The Indus Dining Experience' held at National Museum

- The 'Historical Gastronomica - The Indus Dining Experience' exhibition was held at the National Museum in New Delhi which was jointly organized by the National Museum along with One Station Million Stories (OSMS). This is a unique exhibition based on India's ancient food history that goes back to over 5000 years ago.

International Judicial Conference held in New Delhi

- The International Judicial Conference was held in New Delhi recently. The Conference was addressed by PM Modi.
- Theme: Gender Just World

Cherish our biodiversity, says PM

- India's biodiversity was a "unique treasure" for the entire humankind, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Sunday in his monthly Mann ki Baat radio address. He referred to Tamil poetess Avvaiyar to underscore his point.
- Similar was the case with the biodiversity of this country, Mr. Modi said pointing out the recent discovery of new species of fish in the caves of Meghalaya.
- The fish, believed to be the largest among aquatic species found under the surface of caves, is blind and lives in deep dark underground caves.

No-Bag Day on Saturdays for students of Govt school: Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot

- Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on February 20, 2020, announced a 'No-Bag Day' on Saturdays for students of government schools across the state.

Mumbai airport gets world's largest 'Export Cold Zone' to Store Agro, Pharma Products

- Mumbai International Airport Limited (MIAL), a joint venture (JV) between the GVK led consortium and Airports Authority of India (AAI), has unveiled the world's largest airport-based temperature-controlled facility.
- The 'Export Cold Zone' for processing and storage of agro and pharma products, for which Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport will be the largest export gateway.

State of India's Birds 2020 Report

- It is India's first of its kind report that highlights observations by birdwatchers form the basis of the analyses. The final report was released on February 17, 2020, at 13th COP to the convention on migratory species held in Gujarat.



Key Highlights of Report

- The report suggests that about 867 birds were assessed which made it clear that almost all the species are declining.
- The report categorises 101 species as of High Conservation Concern, 59 based on their range size and abundance trends, and an additional 42 based on their IUCN Red List status.
- According to the report, India has witnessed a big decline in migratory shorebirds, raptors, Indian Vulture, Large-billed Lea Warbler, Curlew Sandpiper, Richard's Pipit and White-rumped Vulture.
- The report also highlights that some species have increased in numbers such as Glossy Ibis, Rosy Starling, Ashy Prinia, and Feral Pigeon.

Health Minister launches vaccination drive

- "No child should have to suffer or die due to vaccine preventable diseases," said Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan inaugurating a special campaign on Intensified Mission INDRADHANUSH (IMI 2.0). The campaign aims to immunize children under two years of age and pregnant women against vaccine preventable diseases.

Himachal Pradesh: 1st State to achieve 100% LPG coverage

- Himachal Pradesh became the 1st state in the country to have 100% LPG (Liquified Petroleum Gas) coverage due to the implementation of PMUY (Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana) scheme.

Key Points:

- Following the implementation of the PMUY scheme, the state government launched 'Himachal Grihini Suvidha Yojana' in May 2018 to cover the scheme to remaining households.

About PMUY scheme:

- The scheme was launched by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on 1st May, 2016 in Ballia, Uttar Pradesh (UP). Under this scheme 5 Crore LPG connections will be provided to BPL (Below Poverty Line) families & Rs.8000 crore were allocated towards the implementation of the scheme.

Gol launches "SPICe+" to improve Ease of Doing Business in the country

- The Government of India launched

SPICE+, a web form that integrates 10 services of various ministries and departments. This will help boost Ease of Doing Business in India. It was launched by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs.

- India ranked 63rd in Ease of Doing Business ranking published by World Bank.

NITI Aayog Report: 28% of Aadhaar based payment are going to wrong accounts

- The NITI Aayog has released a progress report on National Nutrition Mission (Poshan Abhilyaan). According to the report, one in three Aadhaar based payments was credited to a wrong bank account, especially in Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana.

Highlights

- This is the second report prepared by the think tank. The report was prepared and released by the Ministry of Women and Child Development. According to the report, 28% of Aadhaar based payments were going to wrong bank accounts.
- The report also says that 66% of direct benefit transfers were based on Aadhaar. Only 60% of the beneficiaries were aware of the receipt of benefits.

Atal Innovation Mission

- The Union Minister for Human Resource Development Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' announced that the Government of India is encouraging schools to provide exposure in science and technology to students so that they can be acquainted with futuristic technology platforms. The Government has setup the Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) at NITI Aayog.
- The objective of establishing AIM is to create scientific temper and cultivate the spirit of curiosity and innovation among young minds.



Dolphin numbers have shrunk in Odisha, reveals Census

- Odisha's recent annual census of dolphins in its waters have thrown up some shocking numbers, with the aquatic mammals' population declining from 307 in 2018 to 126.
- The census was carried out by the state's forest and environment department on January 19 this year. The census report was released on February 14.
- The census covered important aquatic ecosystems in the state including the Chilika lake, India's largest brackish water lagoon, spread over the Puri, Khurda and Ganjam districts, the Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary and its nearby areas

within the Bhitarkanika National Park in Kendrapara district, Balasore district and the mouth of the Rushukulya river in Ganjam district.

National cyber research and Innovation centre, inaugurated by MoS G.K.Reddy in Hyd, T.S

- The Minister of State (MOS) for Home Affairs Ministry, Mr. Gangapuram Kishan Reddy has Inaugurated National Cyber Research, Innovation and capacity centre at Central Detective Training Institute (CDTI) in Hyderabad, Telangana State (T.S). The objective of the centre is to help the nation to combat cyber threats.

Key points:

- The centre, has been set up by the Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR & D) at its CDTI complex, will undertake research and training to check cybercrime and it is one of the seven major units under Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C).

A 3-day international conference on "EMMDA 2020" held in Noida, Uttar Pradesh

- The National Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasting (NCMRWF), functions under the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES), has organized a 3-day international conference on "Ensemble Methods in Modelling and Data Assimilation (EMMDA) 2020" in Noida, Uttar Pradesh (UP) from 24th -26th February 2020. It was inaugurated by Dr. Harsh Vardhan, the Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare, Science

and Technology, Earth Sciences.

INCOIS launched three new advance warning systems

- The Indian National Center for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS), Hyderabad has launched 3 new ocean based specialised products for the benefit of fishermen & people living in the coastal areas of South India.
- The 3 warning systems are Small Advisory and Forecast Services System (SVAS), Swell Surge Forecast System (SSFS) and Algal Bloom Information Service (ABIS).

Concurrent list to Jammu and Kashmir

- The Union Cabinet approved a proposal for issuing orders for adaptation of central laws under concurrent list to Jammu and Kashmir and 37 central laws that were not applicable to the Union territory will now be applicable.
- The government approved the exemption of India Ports Global Ltd (IPGL) from the department of public enterprises (DPE) guidelines for speedier development of Iran's Chabahar Port project, which India sees as a gateway to landlocked Afghanistan and Central Asia.
- The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved a bill to confer the status of institution of national importance to two national institutes of food technology in Haryana and Tamil Nadu.
- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) approved setting up of a National Technical Textiles Mission with a total outlay of Rs 1,480 crore. The move is aimed at increasing exports in this

'futuristic and niche' segment by over a third to Rs 20,000 crore by 2021-22, and expanding the domestic market size for technical textiles nearly three fold to \$40-50 billion by 2024.

Government of India announced 1st Artificial intelligence summit: RAISE 2020- 'Responsible AI for Social Empowerment 2020'

- The Government of India announced 1st Artificial intelligence summit, RAISE 2020- 'Responsible Artificial intelligence (AI) for Social Empowerment', a 'First-of-its kind' summit organized by the Government of India along with Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.

RAISE 2020 & its Aim

- The summit is a drive to India's vision & roadmap for social empowerment, inclusion & transformation through AI. The event will start with Startup Challenge-Pitchfest followed.

MP tops the list for outgoing patients for treatment under PM-JAY: NHA

- According to the analysis carried out by the National Health Authority (NHA) on the portability feature, PM-JAY -Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (generally referred to as the Ayushman Bharat) availed by 81,254 patients, People can seek treatment in other states under the PM-JAY, and MP(Madhya Pradesh) tops the list for outgoing patients at a number of at least 11,765.

- It sends its patients to Gujarat, where People has been treated under 'portability' option, which allows patients to go to the best hospital in any state to avail of free treatment.

Ordnance factory boards becomes the 1st govt entity to adopt centralised invoicing platform, TreDS

- Ordnance Factory Board (OFB), an industrial organisation, functioning under the Department of Defence Production of Ministry of Defence, Government of India (GoI), has become the 1st government entity to adopt centralized invoicing platform, TreDS (Trade Receivables electronic Discount System), under which a total of 41 OFBs adopted this platform, which would help smaller MSME (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises) vendors access working capital easily.

Light Combat Helicopter Production complex inaugurated in Bengaluru



- Defence Minister of India Rajnath Singh inaugurated the production house of Light Combat Helicopter at the HAL campus in Bengaluru. The project is a part of the "Make in India" initiative.

- This light combat helicopter is able to carry 500 km of weight. The government of India targeted to reach defence exports to Rs 35,000 crore by 2024.

24th Meeting of the Eastern Zonal Council at Bhubaneswar

- The 24th meeting of the Eastern Zonal Council, comprising of the States of Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha and West Bengal, held on 28th February, 2020 at Bhubaneswar.
- Five Zonal Councils were set up in the year 1957 under Section 15-22 of the States Reorganization Act, 1956.

Maharashtra: Smart gram yojana will be named after ex-minister R R Patil

- The Maharashtra's Government's "Smart gram yojana" will be named after former Deputy Chief Minister the late Raosaheb Ramrao Patil.

Key Points:

- Smart Gram Yojana: Smart gram yojana (Smart Village) was implemented by the Maharashtra state in 2016 to increase the performance on certain parameters in gram panchayats at taluka and district level.

7. INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS



3rd High Level Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety held in Stockholm



- The 3rd High Level Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety has been recently hosted in Stockholm, the capital city of Sweden.
- The theme of the conference is 'Achieving Global Goals 2030'. The Global Conference is co-sponsored by the World Health Organization (WHO).

Task Force Meet: India and Norway to strengthen their BLUE ECONOMY PARTNERSHIP

- India and Norway jointly inaugurated a Task Force of Blue Economy for Sustainable Development.
- They also launched a new collaboration of Integrated Ocean Management and Research at the meet.



8. TAMILNADU AFFAIRS



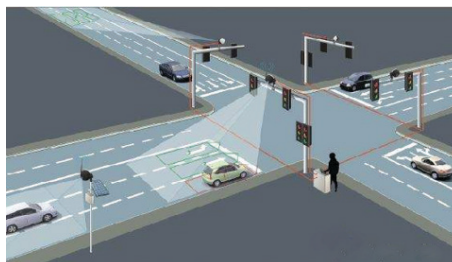
New centralised Kitchen soon for school breakfast scheme

- The Kalai Unavu Thittam scheme was inaugurated last year, and nearly 5,000 children from Corporation schools are currently being provided free breakfast, prepared at the first centralised kitchen in Thiruvannamiyur.
- Under the scheme, Akshaya Patra Foundation and the Greater Chennai Corporation have joined hands to provide free, nutritious breakfast for students of Corporation schools.

T.N. achieves drop in maternal mortality

- Tamil Nadu's Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) has dipped to 57 per one lakh live births in 2019 according to the State Health Management Information System (HMIS) data.
- The State's MMR stood at 60 per one lakh live births in 2018. The latest Sample Registration System (SRS) data on MMR for the period 2015-2017 placed TN's MMR at 63 per one lakh live births.

Integrated Automatic Signal in Chennai



- The 'Integrated Automatic Signal (iNtegratdd Automatik Sign al) is to be introduced soon on 7 roads, including Anna Road, to curb Chennai traffic.
- Chennai has the largest number of vehicles next to New Delhi.
- Integrated Signal: Integrated Automatic Signal Scheme is implemented in countries including the UK, UK and France.

IIT-Madras extends training labs to 20 rural schools

- "1 Lab - 1 School", a rural mentorship program from the Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT-M), does by letting high school students dismantle and reassemble the appliances on their own.

- The program connects top graduate laboratories of premier institutes to high schools in rural areas, and aims to empower rural communities by addressing barriers to digital inclusion.
- Q&A sessions, demonstration-based lectures, etc. are some of the other learning activities in the training. Expansion to 15 more schools is aimed for next year.

TN assembly adopts Bill declaring Cauvery delta as protected agricultural zone

- Tamil Nadu Chief Minister introduced a bill in the state legislative assembly to declare the Cauvery Delta region in the state as a Protected Special Agriculture Zone.
- The bill excludes Tiruchirappalli, Ariyalur and Karur districts and parts of Cuddalore and Pudukottai regions from its ambit. Also, the bill does not address the issues concerned with the existing industrial or oil extraction projects in the Delta region.
- According to the bill, a 30-member committee with the chief minister as its head will be set up to advise the government to protect and improve the farming activities in the region. The committee, which will be headquartered in Chennai, will also advise on increasing the farm production in the region.
- The bill is proposed to protect agriculture and prohibit certain activities in this region as non-farming activities are adversely affecting agriculture and threatening state's food security.

- The proposed agriculture zone, as per the bill, includes Thanjavur, Thirvarur, Nagapattinam and five blocks in Cuddalore and Pudukottai. The bill fails to include Tiruchirappalli, Ariyalur and Karur which are geographically included in the Cauvery Delta.

Pure Tamil Project in Business Established in Chennai

- A new project titled 'Pure Tamil Project in Businesses' was launched in Chennai in the context of the World Mother Tongue at the Saffil of the Tamil Etymology Directorate of Tamil Nadu. According to the plan, employees, niwakis and employees of any company, such as restaurants, textile and grocery stores, must speak to their customers on the 21st of the month in pure Tamil.

CM lays foundation stone for T.N. Polymer Park

- Tamil Nadu Chief Minister laid the foundation stone for the Tamil nadu Polymer Park, a project of TIDCO and SIPCOT on 257 acres of land in Puzhuthivakkam in Tiruvallur District.
- The Tamil Nadu Industrial Development Corporation (TIDCO) and the National Industrial Corridor Development and Implementation Trust (NICDIT) joined hands to develop the Ponneri Node of the Chennai-bengaluru Industrial Corridor
- The Chief Minister released a handbook on "Doing Business in Tamil Nadu" for investors.

India's First Floating Jetty & Immigration office in Goa

- Union Minister of State for shipping Mansukh Mandaviya, inaugurated the India's first floating jetty on the banks of Mandovi river, Goa and also an immigration facility office at a cruise terminal in Vasco, Goa.

Nabard launches e-Shakti for digitisation of SHGs



- The National Bank for Agricultural and Rural Development (Nabard) launched 'e-Shakti' for digitization of all Self-help Groups (SHGs) of the district.
- NABARD had taken up two districts Dhule in Maharashtra and Ramgarh in Jharkhand for digitisation of SHG data last year. Jagatsinghpur is the first district of the State to be covered by 'e-Shakti' programme under Digital India scheme of the Centre.
- In Tamil Nadu, It will be implemented at Tiruvannamalai, Virudhunagar, nammakal and Nagapatnam.

IRCTC 'ASK DISHA' upgraded to converse with Railway Customers in Hindi Language

- Indian Railways Catering & Tourism Corporation Limited (IRCTC) upgraded ASKDISHA (Digital Interaction to Seek Help Anytime) in Hindi language by voice as well as text in order to enhance the customer services and also converse with customers in the e-ticketing site (www.irctc.co.in)
- About ASKDISHA: In order to resolve the queries of railway passengers over the internet related to the various services offered, IRCTC introduced Artificial Intelligence based ASKDISHA chatbot in October 2018, for the benefit of the users of the ticketing website and tourism website (www.irctctourism.com).

Jayalalithaa's 72nd birth anniversary celebrated

- The distribution of solatium of ₹2 lakh each to the legal heirs of 14 deceased members of the AIADMK, the disbursal of assistance of ₹1 lakh each to 109 indigent worker-members of the Anna Thozhir Sangam and the inauguration of a three-day health camp marked the 72nd birth anniversary celebrations of former Chief Minister Jayalalithaa.
- The government is to observe the Girl Child Protection Day on the occasion of Jayalalithaa's birth anniversary.

South India's first gold jewel industrial park

- Coimbatore is one of the major gold jewellery manufacturing hubs in India, renowned for making cast jewellery and machine made jewellery. The city is home to about 3000 jewellery manufacturing companies and to over 40,000 goldsmiths.
- South India's first gold jewel industrial park to be come up in Coimbatore.

World Tamil Union Conference at Madurai

- Tamil International Development Department (SLAF) Secretary K.Pandiyarajan has announced that the World Tamil Union Conference is to be held at the end of March in Madurai.
- Of the 147 dictionaries worldwide, four hundred and 12 thousand words in Tamil are unique. And with the word scheme, 1000 new words have been identified so far.