



## Chaukhandi Stupa declared as Monument of National Importance



Admiral Karambir Singh is the new Chief of Indian Navy.



Narinder Batra elected as a member of International Olympic Committee.

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Pranati Nayak wins bronze at Asian Artistic Gymnastic Championship.



Virat Kohli becomes fastest batsman to reach 20,000 runs.

## Editorial

**Dear Students,**

Students have completed the UPSC IAS Prelims 2019 Exam, the next big hurdle is the Main Exam 2019. Here we are offering some advice for the first timers on how to handle the exam. First step is to create a proper study plan. You must prepare a schedule should include dates for all the GS papers, language papers and the optional subject. Allocate proper time for news paper reading every day. Secondly, reading the basic textbooks for all the subjects. Start with the subjects, which might interest you, later move on to detailed and elaborate books. Thirdly, while reading, start practicing questions from previous years UPSC Paper, which will help to analytical access your knowledge and also make you familiar with kind and pattern of question. Of course, never hesitate to use internet for getting updates on current affairs, tips etc. At the end of each schedule, please revise the topics and subjects.

Best of luck

## Essay of the Month

### One Nation One Election



With newly elected BJP government's decision to hold simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha and the State Assemblies is

a strong step for centralising polls. But it raises a lot eyebrows. One wonder why the BJP government is attaching considerable importance to it, while a lot of issues like water problems, rising inflation, unemployment are still pending before the nation.

### Concept of One Nation One Election

The concept behind 'One Nation, One Election' means conducting the Lok Sabha and the state assemblies' elections together every five years. But it doesn't include elections to panchayats, state municipalities and by-elections. But such a dramatic concept, needs a constitutional amendment, which will have to be ratified by 50 percent of the states. This will involve the re aligning the Election pattern of India in a manner that elections to the states and the centre synchronise in a common platform. This would mean that the voters will cast their vote for choosing both members of the LS and the state assemblies on a single day and at the same time.

### Is it a new concept ?

Simultaneous elections are not a new concept to India. They were followed till 1967. But with dissolution of some Legislative Assemblies in 1968 and 1969, followed by the Lok Sabha in December 1970, resulted in a confusion. So state Assemblies and Parliament elections have been held separately. But once again, the idea of simultaneous polls mentioned and gained prominence in the annual report of the Election Commission in 1983. But the idea was shelved. Once again, the Law Commission's Report recommended the

idea in 1999. The recent push for the initiative came up before 2014 Lok Sabha polls in the BJP manifesto. Later PM Narendra Modi floated the idea once again in 2016, as a result the Niti Aayog prepared a detailed working report in January 2017 and mentioned certain constitutional amendments needed for the report.

### **Two kinds of proposals**

There were two different ideas to conduct simultaneous elections along with 17th Lok Sabha elections. However, both weren't considered. The first proposal was to make the shift to simultaneous polls in a divided and a phased manner. The general elections along few State Assemblies which will be facing elections late 2018 or 2019 and a Union Territory could be consolidated in 2019. While the rest of the states are in the middle of their five-year term. The states were Odisha, Sikkim, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Arunachal Pradesh, Haryana, Maharashtra, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Mizoram, Rajasthan and NCT of Delhi (Union Territory with Legislature) also facing polls in 2019. But for such an electoral implementation there needs to be political consensus and expansion of the term upto 6-8 months. Besides, amendments to the Constitution. Furthermore, elections to the rest of States can be synchronised in the end of 2021. The second proposal involved synchronisation in two sections. First, elections to the 12 State Legislative Assemblies and one Union Territory would be centralised with with 2019 Lok Sabha polls. Next, elections to the remaining

State Legislative Assemblies will be synchronised in the end of 2021.

### **What are the advantages ?**

Simultaneous polls will reduce the enormous costs involved in separate elections in the country. This leads to a system that will help ruling parties focus on governance instead of elections. One should observe, around Rs 55,000-60,000 crore was spent in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, according to a report presented by the Centre for Media Studies (CMS), a not-for-profit organisation. A separate election for each assemblies costs are several thousand crores. This could be reduced. Moreover, it can greatly improve the voter turnout.

### **What are the disadvantages ?**

The issues and problems are different in multi ethnic and language country like India. As a result conducting simultaneous elections is likely to affect the judgment of voters in many aspects. Since elections are held once in five years, it can greatly eliminate the government's accountability to the people. But recurring elections can keep politicians and legislators on their toes, so which makes them more responsible and accountable. Moreover, extended period for a state assembly needs to be postponed till the synchronised phase, which may lead to President's rule which is a blow to the federal structure of the country.

### **Conclusion**

The constitution of India has essentially prescribed a federal structure of state governance. As we are aware that there are

several levels of government such as Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha besides, state governments, Municipal Corporations and the Panchayats, which are forms of local governance. As a result the entire power is not concentrated with one government. But One Nation, One Election can lead to such concentration of power in a single hand. So the new government needs to ensure such vast power is not gathered by a single domain through One Nation, One Election.

## National News

### PM Modi reconstitutes NITI Aayog



Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved reconstitution of government think-tank Niti Aayog (or National Institution for Transforming India).

As per the official sources, Prime Minister chaired the 5th meeting of NITI Aayog's Governing Council (first governing council meeting under new NDA government) to discuss various issues concerning water management, agriculture and security. The council, the apex body of Niti Aayog, includes all chief ministers, lieutenant governors of union territories, several union ministers and senior government officials. Rajiv Kumar will continue as vice-chairman of the body, along with other

full-time members V K Saraswat, Ramesh Chand and V K Paul. Economist Bibek Debroy has been dropped from the panel. Besides Amit Shah (Home affairs Minister), other three ex-officio members are Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister Narendra Singh Tomar. Special invitees to NITI Aayog Panel are, the Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari, Commerce and Industry and Railway Minister Piyush Goyal, Social Justice Minister Thawar Chand Gehlot and Rao Inderjit Singh (Minister of State (Independent Charge) of Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation and Minister of State (I/C) of Ministry of Planning. NITI Aayog was constituted via a resolution of the Union Cabinet on January 1, 2015, replacing the erstwhile planning commission. It was formed with aim to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and to enhance cooperative federalism by fostering state governments' involvement in economic policy-making process using a bottom-up approach unlike the top-down model of planning commission.



## Jal Shakti Ministry formed by Govt



Aiming to create a common ministry for Water Resources, River Development, Ganga Rejuvenation and Drinking Water and Sanitation, the government has created a new 'Jal

Shakti' Ministry.

The Jal Ministry has been formed with Gajendra Singh Shekhawat at its helm while Rattan Lal Kataria will be the Minister of State in the newly formed ministry. This move will bring all aspects of water management and regulation under one department. During the election campaign, Modi had promised to form an integrated ministry dealing with water issues, the 'Nal se Jal' scheme to provide piped drinking water to every household. The ambit of the Ministry will address issues ranging from international and inter-states water disputes and the Namami Gange project which is the flagship initiative to clean the Ganges, its tributaries and sub-tributaries and provide clean drinking water to every household in India by 2024. During the 17th Lok Sabha election campaign, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had promised to create an integrated ministry to deal with water related issues.

## Odisha brings out a flood atlas



Aimed at tackling floods effectively, the system takes into account the flood inundation data from 2001 to 2018, Odisha has come out with a unique flood hazard atlas.

The atlas was created on the basis of historic flood inundation captured through satellite imagery over the period from 2001 to 2018, which is expected to help the State manage floods more efficiently. The National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC) of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), Hyderabad had taken the study on flood hazard zonation for Odisha. The atlas was released by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik at the State-level Natural Calamity Meeting. Vast areas of the State are inundated when there is flooding every year in major rivers, namely, the Mahanadi, Brahmani, Baitarani, Subarnarekha and Rushikulya. Some of the rivers like, the Vamsadhara and Budhabalanga, also cause flash floods due to instant run-off from their hilly catchments.

### HP makes GPS mandatory for trekkers



The Himachal Pradesh government has made GPS mandatory for trekkers to tackle any emergency.

A decision in this regard was taken at a review meeting chaired by Additional Chief Secretary Shrikant Baldi on preparedness for the monsoon in Shimla. He said it was important that trekking and other 'yatras' were restricted during adverse weather. It would be made mandatory for trekkers to have a GPS device so that they can be provided all possible help in case of any emergency. Being a disaster-prone state, it is essential to pay special attention to disseminating weather advisories and installing early warning systems in Himachal Pradesh. While Kullu and Dalhousie have been identified for installation of early warning systems, Rampur and Mandi towns have been zeroed in for setting up the relief and rescue base of National Disaster Response Force.

### Bihar bans felling of trees



The Government of Bihar has announced the banning of felling of trees, citing increasing pollution as well as a fatal heatwave.

According to a release, trees on private land, however, can be felled in the absence of a tree-protection Act in Bihar. The current order was passed under the Forest Conservation Act. All permissions granted to cut trees for development works, have become null and void. The order, put forward by Deepak Kumar (principal secretary, department of environment, forest and climate change) in May, cited increasing pollution in Patna, Gaya, Bhagalpur, Muzaffarpur and other cities in the state. Another reason was the severe heatwave, which killed 90 people in Gaya, Aurangabad and Nawada districts besides rendering many others sick. The government's decision could have been a reaction to the indiscriminate felling of big, old trees in Capital Patna during the last few years for the construction of roads and buildings.

### Punjab bans Online Food Delivery without Hygiene Rating



Punjab is going to ban online delivery of food without hygiene rating.

According to an official release from Food and Drug Administration, the online food

order and supply companies take orders from the consumers and deliver the same after procuring it from the Food Business Operators (FBOs) associated with them. Under normal circumstances, the consumer directly approaches the Food Business Operator and therefore, through primary contact, the consumer is aware about the food quality and the hygienic condition under which it is prepared and served. The online order and delivery mechanism of food supply has created a physical disconnect between the consumer and the food maker. Hence the onus of ensuring the quality of food and the hygienic condition under which food is prepared, has shifted to the intermediate food delivery mechanism.

## Indian Economy

**Payments data must be stored in systems located in India says RBI**



The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has said all data related to payment transactions must be stored in the country and that such information, if processed abroad, will have to be brought back within 24 hours.

In a release, it said that the entire payment data shall be stored in systems

located only in India. Responding to certain issues raised by payment system operators. The data should be deleted from the systems abroad and brought back to India not later than one business day or 24 hours from the payment processing, whichever is earlier. The clarification has come a week after the government said the RBI would examine concerns around its strict data-localisation guidelines. Payment providers have been lobbying at various levels for free flow of data across borders in order to ensure that customer benefits and fraud analysis are not affected.

**RBI has launched Complaint Management System**



The Reserve Bank of India Monday launched an application on its website for lodging complaints against banks and NBFCs with a view to improve customer experience in timely redressal of grievances.

The Complaint Management System (CMS) is a software application to facilitate RBI's grievance redressal process. Customers can lodge complaints against any regulated entity with public interface such as commercial banks, urban cooperative banks, Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs). The complaint would be directed to the appropriate office of



the Ombudsman/Regional Office of the RBI. The CMS will be accessible on desktop as well as on mobile devices. The RBI also plans to introduce a dedicated Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system for tracking the status of complaints. Keeping the convenience of customers in mind, the CMS has been designed to enable online filing of complaints. Complainants can also voluntarily share feedback on their experience in obtaining redressal. Data from CMS can be leveraged by the central bank for analytics which can be used for regulatory and supervisory interventions, if required. Various dashboards provided in the application will help RBI to effectively track the progress in redressal of complaints. With the launch of CMS, the processing of complaints received in the offices of Ombudsman and Consumer Education and Protection Cells of RBI has been digitalised.

#### **RBI asks banks to grout ATMs to wall or floor**



US President Donald Trump has rolled out a merit-based immigration system from which foreigners.

The new scheme will benefit hundreds and thousands of Indian professionals and skilled workers, waiting to get Green Cards or permanent legal residency stand

to benefit. The immigration reform proposals significantly increase the quota for skilled workers from existing nearly 12 per cent to 57 per cent. Besides, under the proposed reforms, immigrants will be required to learn English and pass a civics exam prior to admission.

The major immigration policy, however, is unlikely to see the Congressional node soon, given the bitter across the aisle political divide between the Democrats, who have majority in the House of Representatives, and the Republicans who control the Senate. Trump, in his Rose Garden announcement, himself conceded the difficulties ahead in getting his plan become the law of the day. Signaling to make it an election issue next year, Trump said the Republicans needs to regain control of the House, retain majority in the Senate and he himself be re-elected to the White House.

#### **UAE announces Gold Card residency scheme**



United Arab Emirates (UAE) has launched a permanent residency scheme termed the "Golden Card" for certain foreign nationals.

The UAE government also recently started accepting applications for long-term visas, specifically five-year and 10-year visas Aiming to ensure the safety of ATM, The



Reserve Bank of India (RBI) asked banks to ensure their ATMs are grouted to a wall, pillar, or floor by September-end.

RBI had set up a Committee on Currency Movement (CCM) to review the entire gamut of security of treasure in transit in 2016. Based on the recommendations of the panel, the central bank has now issued instructions aimed at mitigating risks in ATM operations and enhancing security. As part of the security measures, all ATMs shall be operated for cash replenishment only with digital One Time Combination (OTC) locks. Also, all ATMs shall be grouted to a structure (wall, pillar, floor, etc.) by September 30, 2019, except for ATMs installed in highly secured premises such as airports, etc. which have adequate CCTV coverage and are guarded by state/central security personnel.

#### **IRSDC signs agreement with French Railways**



In an effort to develop better railway stations, India and France have signed an agreement under which the French Railways.

The Indian Railway Station Development Corporation (IRSDC) entered an Tripartite Agreement with French Railways (SNCF) & AFD, a French Agency in order to support Railway Station Development Program in

India, on 10th June, 2019. Under the Tripartite Agreement agreement, AFD a French agency, has agreed to provide in-kind grant financing up to 7,00,000 EURO, through French National Railways (SNCF)-Hubs and Connexions as a Technical Partner to Indian Railway Station Development Corporation (IRSDC) to support the Railway Station Development Program in India. The technical know-how will be provided by French National Railways (SNCF)-Hubs and Connexions as a Technical Partner to IRSDC, therefore, this will not impose any financial liability on IRSDC or Indian Railways. The Tripartite Agreement recently signed by India and France will help in positioning its stations in accordance to world class standards and also further help in strengthening cooperation between both the countries.

#### **DMRC becomes first-ever to receive power from waste-to-energy plant**



Delhi Metro has become the first-ever such project in the country to receive power generated from a waste-to-energy plant.

In a statement from Delhi Metro Rail Corporation said, continuing with its various environment-friendly initiatives, the Delhi Metro has started receiving 2 MW power from a 12 MW capacity plant of a company in Ghazipur. This will be the

first-ever attempt by any metro project in the country to procure and utilise energy from waste-to-energy plants and thus contribute towards Swachh Bharat Mission and also help in creating awareness about the importance of waste management. The DMRC is receiving the power since the beginning of this month from this facility which is being utilised at the Vinod Nagar Receiving Sub-station (RSS) of DMRC for meeting the operation requirements of Pink Line metro.

### ONGC becomes the most profitable PSU



ONGC which is the India's top oil and gas producer, has toppled Indian Oil Corp (IOC) to regain the crown of being the country's most profitable public sector company.

According to earnings statements of the listed companies, Oil and Natural Gas Corp (ONGC) reported a 34 per cent jump in 2018-19 fiscal net profit to Rs 26,716 crore. In comparison, IOC registered a net profit of Rs 17,274 crore for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2019. ONGC, in the previous two financial years, had lost the most profitable PSU tag to IOC. With its refining margins under pressure due to falling oil prices, IOC had also lost the title of being India's largest company by turnover tag to billionaire Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Industries in FY19.

## Defence News

### Admiral Karambir Singh is the new Chief of Indian Navy



Admiral Karambir Singh on Friday took charge as the 24th Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS) of India.

Adm. Singh was the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief (FOC-in-C) of the Eastern Naval Command, headquartered in Visakhapatnam. During his long and distinguished service spanning nearly 39 years, Adm. Singh has served in a variety of Command, Staff and Instructional appointments. However, his appointment was overshadowed by a petition filed by a senior officer challenging it. Vice Adm. Bimal Verma, Chief of the Andaman and Nicobar-based tri-Service command, has approached the Armed Forces Tribunal (AFT) questioning the appointment as he was the most senior naval officer after Adm. Lanba.

### **Ration in Kind scheme approved for armed personnel**



Government of India has restored the provision of ration in kind to military officers stationed in peace areas.

According to a defence source, the decision is one of the first major ones taken by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh after he assumed the role in the Modi government's second term. The Government of India has approved the proposal of the Ministry of Defence for restoration of the 'ration in kind' to the defence officers posted in peace areas. Centre had withdrawn the facility given to armed forces officers and replaced it with an allowance two years back. The decision to withdraw the facility was not taken well by the forces, who had not agreed to it. The government had decided on July 1, 2017 that officers would be given an allowance instead of free ration in kind, a practice that was being followed since 1983. The forces had told the Ministry of Defence that if the ration in kind facility was discontinued then an allowance of Rs 205.11 per officer per day without tax exemptions must be paid. However, only an amount of Rs 96 was decided as allowance. A cost analysis done had revealed that in case of free ration, the

cost came up to Rs 100 per officer per day.

### **Operation Sunrise 2 formed to eliminate NE militants**



Aiming to eliminate several militant groups operating in Manipur, Nagaland and Assam, the armies of India and Myanmar carried out a three-week-long coordinated operation from May 16 in their respective border areas.

According to defence sources, the first phase of Operation Sunrise was conducted three months ago along the Indo-Myanmar border, during which a number of camps of scinorth-east-based militant groups were busted. Myanmar is one of the strategic neighbours of India and shares a 1,640-km border with a number of north-eastern states, including the militancy-hit Nagaland and Manipur. India has been pushing for deeper coordination between the armies of the two countries while guarding the border. During Operation Sunrise 2, the armies coordinated with each other to bust camps of militant outfits, including the Kamtapur Liberation Organisation (KLO), the NSCN (Khaplang), the United Liberation Front of Assam (I) and the National Democratic Front of Boroland (NDFB).

### **Govt. approves creation of Defence Space Research Agency**



Aiming to enhancing the capabilities of the armed forces to fight wars in space, the government has approved the setting up of a new agency which will develop sophisticated weapon systems and technologies for the purpose.

According to a defence source, tThe Cabinet Committee on Security headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has cleared the setting up of this new agency called the Defence Space Research Agency (DSRO) which has been entrusted with the task of creating space warfare weapon systems and technologies. The decision was taken at the topmost level by the government some time ago and the agency has started taking shape under a Joint Secretary-level scientist. The agency would be provided with a team of scientists which would be working in close coordination with the tri-services integrated defence staff officers. The agency would be providing the research and development support to the Defence Space Agency (DSA) which comprises members of the three services. The DSA has been created to help the country fight wars in the space.

### **Hypersonic Technology Demonstrator Vehicle test fired successfully**



The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has conducted the maiden test of an indigenously developed Hypersonic Technology Demonstrator Vehicle (HSTDV) along with several technologies.

According to a source, the DRDO launched a technology demonstrator vehicle to prove a number of critical technologies for futuristic missions from Dr Abdul Kalam Island off the coast of Odisha. It didnot identifying what the technology demonstrator was or if it met the objectives. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh witnessed the launch. The missile was successfully launched at 1127 hours and it was tracked by various radars, telemetry stations and electro optical tracking sensors through its course. The test was undertaken to validate several technologies including the HSTDV. Some technologies have been validated while some remained inconclusive of which the data is being analysed.



### IAF sign deal with Israel to buy 100 more Balakot bombs



The Indian Air Force has signed Rs 300-crore deal with the Israeli government to buy as many as 100 SPICE bombs.

According to sources, newly ordered SPICE bombs are an advanced version of SPICE-2000 bombs which were used by the IAF during the air strikes in Balakot on February 26, in which the Indian forces reportedly eliminated Jaish-e-Mohammed militants. Since the deal has been signed under emergency powers, the Israeli government is expected to deliver these bombs in the next three months. It should be noted that SPICE bomb, which stands for Smart, Precise Impact, Cost-Effective, has a stand-off range of 60 km. It comes equipped with a family of weapons used for air-to-ground operations. India has been using SPICE-2000 bombs since 2015 on French-developed fighter jets, Mirage-2000. SPICE-2000: IAF has acquired precision-guided bombs with increased accuracy and penetration for use against fortified and underground command centres. This weapon has been tested and its capabilities have been validated at an IAF firing range.

### Supersonic Cruise Missile BrahMos test fired



Supersonic cruise missile BrahMos was test-fired from the Integrated Test Range at Chandipur in Odisha.

According to a defence sources, the anti-ship version of the missile was launched around noon from the launch complex-3 of the ITR, Defence Research and Development (DRDO). Described as the world's fastest supersonic cruise missile with high rate of precision and accuracy, BrahMos can be fired from land, sea and air. The missile, with a strike range of around 290 km, is a strategic asset for India as it would act as a deterrence against any possible threats from China and Pakistan. Senior defence officials and scientists from DRDO and BrahMos witnessed the trial.

### No survivor in AN-32 crash



There were no survivors in the crash of its An-32 aircraft, wreckage of which was found in Arunachal Pradesh.

According to confirmation from Indian Air Force, An 8-member team of rescuers was airlifted on Wednesday close to the crash site of the IAF's An-32 aircraft in Arunachal Pradesh to look for possible survivors. The wreckage of the An-32 aircraft of the Indian Air Force was spotted in a heavily forested mountainous terrain by an IAF Mi-17 helicopter, eight days after it went missing with 13 people on board on June 3. The Russian-origin An-32 aircraft was going from Jorhat in Assam to Menchuka advanced landing ground near the border with China on June 3 when it lost contact with ground staff at 1 pm, within 33 minutes of taking off.

## India and Neighbour

### Pakistan Gets USD 3 Billion Bailout Package from Qatar



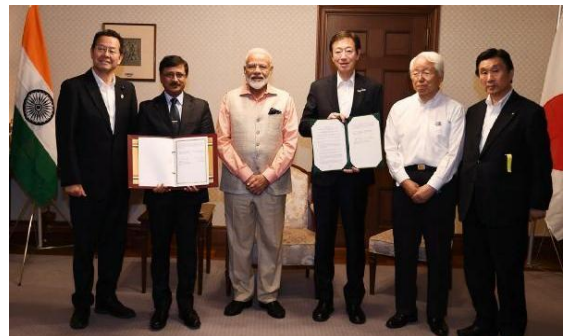
Pakistan has got a bailout package of USD 3 billion from oil-rich Qatar.

The huge fund was sent a day after Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad concluded his visit to Islamabad and agreed to cooperate in the fields of trade, anti-money laundering and curbing terror

financing. The Gulf state is the fourth nation that has come forward to rescue Pakistan from default during past 11 months as the government of Prime Minister Imran Khan tries to overcome a ballooning balance-of-payments crisis. Earlier, China gave USD 4.6 billion in shape of deposits and commercial loans and Saudi Arabia provided USD 3 billion cash deposit and USD 3.2 billion oil facility on deferred payments. The United Arab Emirates also provided USD 2 billion cash deposit. Qatar's financial assistance was announced by its foreign minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani.

## India and World

### Ahmedabad, Kobe exchange LoI for sister city partnership



Aiming to promote mutual cooperation between Gujarat and Hyogo in the fields of academics, business, cultural cooperation, disaster management and environmental protection, sister city partnership has been established.

Authorities from the Japanese city of Kobe on Thursday exchanged a Letter of Intent (LoI) with their counterparts in Ahmedabad for a sister city partnership,

which will pave the way for an enhanced economic relationship between the two vibrant cities as well as the two countries. The Lol was exchanged in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who visited Kobe to address a large Indian diaspora event. "Strengthening people-to-people ties. PM @narendramodi witnessed the exchange of Letter of Intent on Ahmedabad-Kobe Sister City Partnership at Kobe," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Raveesh Kumar tweeted.

It Should be noted that in November 2016, Modi and his Japanese counterpart Shinzo Abe inked a sister-state relationship MoU for Gujarat and Hyogo prefecture. Kobe is the capital city of Hyogo. That time, Modi had also visited a bullet train plant in Kobe. The MoU sought to promote mutual cooperation between Gujarat and Hyogo in the fields of academics, business, cultural cooperation, disaster management and environmental protection.

#### **Canada becomes top country for getting refugees in 2018**



Canada has resettled the largest number of refugees out of 25 countries in 2018.

According to the UN's refugee agency, Canada accepted just over 28,000 refugees last year, with the United States

coming in second with 22,900. Some 92,400 refugees were resettled globally in 2018, fewer than 7% of those awaiting resettlement worldwide. Data release from the US-based Pew Research Center, which looked at the UNHCR data, 2018 was the first time the US did not lead the world in refugee resettlement since 1980. Pew noted that until 2017, the US resettled more refugees on an annual basis than the rest of the world's countries combined. The sharp drop in US refugee resettlement is in part due to the Trump administration's decision to set a considerably lower cap on the number of refugees allowed into the US than in previous years.

#### **Mount Sinabung volcano erupted in Sumatra Island**



Mount Sinabung volcano has erupted in Sumatra Island of western Indonesia and the eruption resulted in column of thick ash being spread 7km high to the sky from the crater of Mount Sinabung volcano in Sumatra Island of western Indonesia.

Mt. Sinabung Volcano is at 2nd highest alert level due to which no one lives inside a previously announced No-Go Zone around five km from the crater. Local residents living alongside the river near volcano's crater were warned for possible lava flows. National Volcanology Agency

of Indonesia urged residents living near the flank of volcano to use masks when rains of ash pour down and those living alongside rivers with upstream in slope of volcano were also warned of cold lava floods during torrential rains. Mt. Sinabung, 2,475 meters high, is located in Karo district 40km from Lake Toba supervolcano North Sumatra province. It roared back to life in 2010 for the first time in past 400 years. After another period of inactivity for few years it again erupted in 2013 and has remained active since then. In its eruption in 2014, 16 people were killed and thousands displaced. Mt. Sinabung is among 129 active volcanoes in Indonesia.

#### **Prayuth Chan ocha elected as Prime Minister of Thailand**



National Assembly of Thailand (The Parliament of Thailand) elected has elected Prayuth Chan-ocha as Prime Minister of the country. Prayuth won 2nd-highest number of seats in House of Representatives (lower house of Thailand's Parliament) in a general election held in March 2019. Prayuth won against his opponent, Future Forward party leader Thanathorn Juangroongruangkit by a vote of 500 to 244. This will be the second term of Prayuth. He is the candidate of the

military-backed Palang Pracharath party. His candidature was also supported by 11 small political parties in Thailand to form next government in Thailand. Palang Pracharath party is seen as a proxy for Thai military, which seized power in a 2014 coup. Prayuth Chan-Ocha who was coup leader also served as prime minister in military government before becoming a candidate to run for office of head of an elected government. Prayuth did not run for office in Thailand's election that concluded in March 2019.

#### **Russia launches its 1st Arctic train service**



For the first time in its history, Russia has launched its first Arctic train service running from St. Petersburg station headed to Norway.

According to new reports, the inaugural trial journey of first tourist train will be a 11-day trip with 91 passengers aboard which will be traveling through Russia's Arctic region and on to Norway. The tourists came from seven countries including the US, Germany, Norway and Russia. The train is named 'Zarengold', which means The Tsar's Gold in German. It is complete with two restaurant cars which will travel from Saint Petersburg through Petrozavodsk (historic town of Kem) and Murmansk. The tourists will get off the train at



Murmansk (largest city north of Arctic Circle) and will continue by bus to the Norwegian city of Kirkenes before ending their journey with a boat trip to Oslo (Norway's capital) or by air to island of Spitsbergen, the largest and only permanently populated island of Svalbard archipelago located in northern Norway. The whole trip will take 11 days in total and allow passengers to discover areas in Arctic region which are difficult to access by other means. Russia, Canada, the United States, Norway, and China all see the Arctic region as a site for future economic and military development.

## People and places

### Om Birla



He is a BJP MP from Kot-Boondi in Rajasthan, was unanimously elected Lok Sabha Speaker. Om Birla is a long-time associate of PM Modi and Amit Shah. Prime Minister Narendra Modi proposed Mr. Birla's name after he received support from almost all parties, including a rather late submission of notices supporting his candidature from even the Congress and the DMK. There was no candidate in the fray other than Mr Birla and the motion moved by the Prime Minister was adopted

by a voice vote. A total of 13 motions were moved in support of Mr Birla but since the motion moved by Mr. Modi, also the Leader of the House, was adopted, the other motions became infructuous.

## Science and Technology

### NASA plans to send a helicopter drone to Titan in search of life



NASA's next mission will take it to Titan. The Agency plans to send a drone helicopter the moon to search for the building blocks of life.

According to news reports, the mission christened 'Dragonfly', the mission will launch in 2026 and land Titan-side in 2034. The copter will then fly to dozens of locations across the moon on the back of Titan's relatively thick atmosphere. Titan is of interest because it is the only body in our solar system (besides Earth) that has liquid rivers, lakes, and seas on its surface. The drone will be propelled by eight rotors over a 2.7-year-long mission, during which it will explore environments ranging from organic dunes to the floor of an impact crater where liquid water and complex organic materials key to life once existed together for possibly tens of thousands of years.

### Railways to deploy Tri-Netra technology



Indian Railways is planning to deploy Tri-Netra Technology for its railway trains.

Tri-Netra technology which stands for 'Terrain Imaging for Drivers Infrared, Enhanced, Optical & Radar Assisted system' comprises Infrared Camera, Optical Camera and Radar assisted imaging system which acts as the three eyes (Tri-Netra) of the Locomotive Pilot. Tri-Netra is to assist Loco pilots to identify obstructions on tracks, especially in foggy conditions and to reduce accidents. Testing on all parameters will be done after its procurement and field trials as proof of concept. This Tri-netra device is making an attempt during fog through ultrasonic waves where it will be able to detect any obstruction on tracks. Railways is also setting up small Reverse Osmosis (RO) water plants at some stations for provisions of drinking water to people.

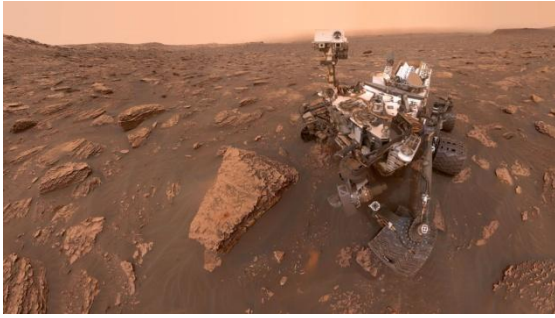
### European Space Agency (ESA) tests Evacuation System Assembly



European Space Agency (ESA) has tested LESA is a pyramid-like structure whose purpose is to rescue an astronaut.

According to a report, when astronaut is suffering an injury on the lunar surface, this structure will rescue it. Astronauts will be wearing heavy extravehicular activity (EVA) suits. There is no way an astronaut could carry their fallen crewmate over their shoulder while wearing an EVA suit. LESA can be operated by a single astronaut to rescue a fallen colleague. It enables an astronaut to lift their crewmate onto a mobile stretcher in less than 10 minutes, before carrying them to the safety of a nearby pressurised lander. Astronauts are testing LESA under the sea. With its rocky, sandy terrain and buoyant salt water, the bottom of the ocean floor has much in common with the lunar surface.

## NASA finds methane in Mars



NASA's Curiosity Mars rover has found the largest amount of methane ever measured during its mission on the Red Planet about 21 parts per billion units by volume (ppbv).

According to report, One ppbv means that if you take a volume of air on Mars, one billionth of the volume of air is methane. The finding came from the rover's Sample Analysis at Mars (SAM) tunable laser spectrometer. It is exciting because microbial life is an important source of methane on Earth, but methane can also be created through interactions between rocks and water.

## Arts and Culture

### Japan gifts Manipur a Peace Museum built on WWII memories



Japan has gifted Manipur a museum of peace built on the memories of one of the fiercest battles of the Second World War.

The Imphal Peace Museum at Red Hill, about 20 km southwest of Manipur's capital Imphal was inaugurated and marked the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Imphal. According to sources, some 70,000 Japanese soldiers, alongside those of Subhash Chandra Bose's Indian National Army, died in battles with the British-led Allied forces in areas around Imphal and Kohima from March to June 1944. The last of these battles was fought at Red Hill, where the Japanese War Memorial was built in 1944 to mark the 50th anniversary of the battle. It took place in the region around the city of Imphal, the capital of the state of Manipur in northeast India from March until July 1944. Japanese armies attempted to destroy the Allied forces at Imphal and invade India, but were driven back into Burma with heavy losses. Together with the simultaneous Battle of Kohima on the road by which the encircled Allied forces at Imphal were relieved, the battle was the turning point of the Burma Campaign,

part of the South-East Asian Theatre of the Second World War. The Japanese defeat at Kohima and Imphal was the largest up until that time, with many of the Japanese deaths resulting from starvation, disease and exhaustion suffered during their retreat.

### **Kolhapuri chappals get 'Geographical Indication' tag**



Kolhapuris, the sturdy leather chappal has received the 'Geographical Indication' tag.

With the Geographical Indication (GI) tag boosting its power, authorities want to promote the made-in-Karnataka footwear here and abroad. Dr Babu Jagjivan Ram Leather Industries Development Corporation (LIDKAR) plans to help artisans export the chappals and also tie up with e-commerce giants. The approval for GI tag was jointly received by Karnataka and Maharashtra recently for making these chappals. There is a perception that these artisans are from Maharashtra alone, but a large number of them are from Karnataka, and have been making these chappals for centuries.

### **Chaukhandi Stupa as Monument of National Importance**



Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has declared Chaukhandi Stupa as a 'protected area of national importance'.

The stupa is considered one of the important ancient Buddhist sites located in Sarnath, Uttar Pradesh (UP). Government sought public feedback on 8 March 2019 for a period of two months for declaring the stupa as protected. The stupa got its name 'Chaukhandi' because of its four-armed plan. It is a lofty mound of brick whose square edifice is surrounded by an octagonal tower. Chaukhandi Stupa was built to mark the place where Lord Buddha met his first disciples, the panchavargiya bhikkhus (Buddha's five companions) who had previously deserted him at Rajgir, as he traveled from Bodhgaya to Sarnath. The stupa is an ancient Buddhist site which evolved from burial mounds and served as a shrine for a relic of Buddha. It appears to be in ruins and was originally constructed in the 5th Century AD. It also finds mention in the account of Hiuen Tsang, celebrated Chinese traveler of 7th century AD. The Chaukhandi Stupa is said to be originally a terraced temple during the Gupta period (4th to 6th century). Govardhan, the son of Raja Todarmal altered and modified the Chaukhandi Stupa to its present shape. He



built an octagonal tower to commemorate the visit of Humayun, the great Mughal ruler.

### **National Maritime Heritage Museum to come up in Gujarat**



The Government of India has announced that it will join hands with Portugal to set up maritime museum.

According to sources, the Indian Navy is keen to be a stakeholder in the project and the Portuguese Navy has agreed to assist with their experience of administering the maritime museum in Lisbon. Initial discussions were held during the visit of Portuguese Defence Minister João Gomes Cravinho to India in April. It was agreed that we could work together to develop the maritime museum at the ancient Indian site of Lothal. Portugal Navy looks after their museum in Lisbon so it was discussed that we in India could follow a similar model," a defence source said. A Defence Ministry-led delegation would visit Portugal to study the existing museum.

## **Sports News**

### **Narinder Batra elected as a member of International Olympic Committee**



Indian Olympic Association president Narinder Batra was elected as a member of the International Olympic Committee.

Batra was elected to the prestigious seat during the IOC Session, where secured 58 votes out of 62 while four voted against him. His election is linked to his function in a National Olympic Committee -- that is president of IOA. Batra now has a rare distinction of becoming a member of the IOC, while heading a National Olympic Committee as well as an international federation. He is the first Indian to have this distinction. He has already become the first Indian to head an international federation of an Olympic sport -- that of FIH.

### Virat Kohli becomes the fastest batsman to reach 20,000 runs



India captain Virat Kohli became the fastest batsman to reach 20,000 international runs, eclipsing batting greats Sachin Tendulkar and Brian Lara.

Kohli broke the long-standing feat held jointly by Tendulkar and Lara during India's World Cup encounter against West Indies. Kohli reached the milestone in only his 417th international innings, while Tendulkar and Lara, both retired now, took 453 innings each to get there. Prior to the match, Kohli was 37 runs short of the milestone and reached the feat with a single off West Indies skipper Jason Holder in the 25th over of the India innings. Kohli, thus, became the 12th batsman and third Indian after Tendulkar and Rahul Dravid to reach 20,000 international runs. The 30-year-old India captain has so far accumulated 11,549 runs in Tests, besides 1,647 runs in T20 cricket. His runs tally in ODIs prior to Thursday's match stood at 11,903.

### Indian Women's Hockey Team Wins FIH Series Finals



Indian women's hockey team on Sunday won the FIH Women's Series Finals Hiroshima 2019 after defeating hosts Japan 3-1 in the Final held at the Hiroshima Hockey Stadium.

The Indian team was helped by an early goal from captain Rani in the 3rd minute, but conceded an equalizer in the 11th minute as Japan's Kanon Mori scored. A brace from Gurjit Kaur scored in the 45th and 60th minutes, however, saw India register an emphatic victory. The World No.9 Indian team had already qualified for the FIH Olympic Qualifiers 2019 on Saturday after securing a place in the final of the competition. A fantastic start to the first quarter for India saw them take the lead in only the 3rd minute as Rani stepped up to score from her team's first penalty corner (PC). The Indian skipper struck the ball sweetly along the ground and beat Japanese goalkeeper Akio Tanaka on her right side to give India a 1-0 advantage.

## Pranati Nayak wins bronze at Asian Artistic Gymnastic Championship



Indian gymnast Pranati Nayak won the bronze medal in vault event at the Senior Asian Artistic Gymnastics Championships in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

The 23-year-old from West Bengal, who had qualified for vault finals with a sixth place, came up with a score of 13.384 to claim the bronze medal. She had scored 13.400 and 13.367 in the first and second vault respectively. China's Yu Linmin (14.350) and Japan's Ayaka Sakaguchi (13.584) won the gold and silver medal at the event.

Riyaz Bhati, vice-President of Gymnastic Federation of India (GFI), also congratulated Pranati for the feat. He said, 'I am extremely happy for Pranati Nayak as she secured a medal at the Asian Championships. She deserved an International medal for long and today is the day where she joins the club of International medallist from India and it's a great day for Indian Gymnastic'.

## Quick and Quickly

### Operation Bandar:



It is the code name of the air strike carried out by the Indian Air Force (IAF) on a terrorist training camp in Balakot, Pakistan. According to defence source, the operation was code-named Operation Bandar but was known to very few. There was no particular reason in the choice of the name. It could have been anything. To maintain secrecy till the mission was executed, the Mirages took off directly from their home base in Gwalior at the time of the mission crossing Himachal Pradesh and Kashmir to the target area and back. Everything was carried on as usual in the run-up to it to maintain secrecy.

As a response to the Pulwama terror attack which claimed the lives of 40 security personnel, 12 IAF Mirage-2000 fighter jets struck on Jaish-e-Mohammed training camp in Balakot inside Pakistan in the early hours on February 26 with precision guided munitions.

### Wholesale price index (WPI)



It is an index that measures and tracks the changes in the price of goods in the stages before the retail level – that is, goods that are sold in bulk and traded between entities or businesses instead of consumers. Usually expressed as a ratio or percentage, the WPI shows the included goods' average price change and is often seen as one indicator of a country's level of inflation. Although many countries and organizations use WPIs in this way, many other countries, including the United States, use the producer price index (PPI) instead – a similar but more accurately named index.

### Operation Sankalp



It is an operation launched by Indian Navy in Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman to reassure safe passage of Indian flagged vessels transiting Persian Gulf. It aimed to reassure Indian flagged vessels transiting through the area following the recent maritime incidents in the region. INS Chennai and INS Sunayna have been

deployed in the region to undertake maritime security operations. In addition, aerial surveillance in the area is also being done by IN aircraft. The Information Fusion Centre - Indian Ocean Region of the Indian Navy is also keeping a close watch on the movement of ships in the Gulf region. The operation has been launched in the wake of escalating tension in the Gulf of Oman, where two oil tankers were attacked last week. The incident has since heightened tensions between Tehran and Washington. It remains unclear who was responsible for the attacks but the United States has put the blame on Iran, which, in turn, has denied the allegations.

### Main Supplement

### The Special Economic Zones (Amendment) Bill, 2019



The Special Economic Zones (Amendment) Bill, 2019 was introduced in Lok Sabha by Mr. Piyush Goyal, Minister of Commerce and Industry on June 24, 2019. It amends the Special Economic Zones Act, 2005 and replaces an Ordinance that was promulgated on March 2, 2019. The Act provides for the establishment, development and management of Special



Economic Zones for the promotion of exports.

The Special Economic Zones (Amendment) Bill, 2019 which seeks to replace the Special Economic Zones (Amendment) Ordinance, 2019 provides for the amendment of clause of said section of the Act so as to include the expression "trust or entity" in the definition of "person". Clause of section 2 of the Act defines the term "person" which includes an individual, whether resident in India or outside India, a Hindu undivided family, co-operative society, a company, whether incorporated in India or outside India, a firm, proprietary concern, or an association of persons or body of individuals, whether incorporated or not, local authority and any agency, office or branch owned or controlled by such individual, Hindu undivided family, co-operative, association, body, authority or company. As the said definition did not include "trust or entity", they could not be considered to be a "person" recognised as an entrepreneur eligible to be given permission to set up a unit in Special Economic Zone.

**Definition of person:** Under the Act, the definition of a person includes an individual, a Hindu undivided family, a company, a co-operative society, a firm, or an association of persons. The Bill adds two more categories to this definition by including a trust, or any other entity which may be notified by the central government.

### **Centre To Remove 'Minimum Education' Rule Needed To Get A Driving Licence**



The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways on Tuesday decided to remove the requirement of minimum educational qualification for driving a transport vehicle.

The process of amendment to Rule 8 of Central Motor Vehicles 1989 and the draft notification in this regard will be issued soon. According to the present Central Motor Vehicle Rules, 1989, a transport vehicle driver needs to have passed class 8. In a move to benefit skilled persons from economically underprivileged sections of society, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has decided to remove the requirement of minimum educational qualification for driving a transport vehicle.

The removal of the requirement will open up employment opportunities for a large number of unemployed youth, and the decision will also help to meet the shortage of nearly 22 lakh drivers in transport and logistics sector, which is hindering its growth. There are a large numbers of unemployed persons especially in rural areas of the country, who may not have a formal education, but are otherwise literate and skilled. In a recent meeting in the Transport Ministry,

the Haryana government had requested for waiver of the educational qualification condition for drivers from the economically backward Mewat region where the population is dependent for livelihood on low-income earning pursuits including driving. The state government had submitted that many people in the region possess the required skill but not the required educational qualification, and were finding it difficult to obtain driving license, it was felt that driving being more a matter of skill than of educational competence, the condition of minimum educational qualification acts as a hindrance for the otherwise eligible unemployed youth.