

# WEEKLY GK UPDATES

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## General Awareness

(Apr 29-May 05' 2019)



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## Weekly GA Capsule 29<sup>th</sup> April to 5<sup>th</sup> May 2019

### Economy & Banking

#### 1. Public sector banks' long-term strategy on Jan Dhan begins to pay off

- Five years after its launch, the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) scheme has almost achieved a total balance of ₹1-lakh crore.
- According to the latest data, the total balance in these basic bank accounts stood at ₹99,752 crore with 35.50 crore beneficiaries.
- Public sector banks have the lion's share in total balance at ₹79,177 crore, followed by regional rural banks and private sector banks maintaining ₹17,648 crore and ₹2,926 crore, respectively.
- The scheme focusses on rural areas with primacy given to women. Of the 35.50-crore account holders, those from rural and semi-urban regions were 21 crore. Female beneficiaries were 18.88 crore.

#### **About PMJDY:**

- *The primary aim of this scheme is to provide poor people access to bank accounts.*
- *The scheme covers both urban and rural areas of India.*
- *All bank accounts will be linked to a debit card which would be issued under the Ru-Pay scheme. Rupay is India's own unique domestic card network owned by National Payments Corporation of India and has been created as an alternative to Visa and Mastercard.*
- *Under the first phase of this scheme, every individual who opens a bank account becomes eligible to receive an accident insurance cover of up-to Rs 1 Lakh for his entire family.*
- *Life Insurance coverage is also available under PMJDY. Only one person in the family will be covered and in case of the person having multiple cards/accounts, the benefit will be allowed only under one card. One person per family will get a single cover of Rs 30,000.*
- *The scheme also provides incentives to business and banking correspondents who serve as link for the last mile between savings account holders and the bank by fixing a minimum monthly remuneration of Rs 5000.*

#### 2. HPCL-MRPL merger hits cash hurdle as ONGC rules out share-swap

- Hindustan Petroleum Corp Ltd's (HPCL) plans to amass Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd (MRPL) has hit a money hurdle, with mother or father ONGC preferring a money deal moderately than a share-swap.
- Oil and Natural Gas Corp (ONGC), India's greatest oil and gasoline producer, final 12 months accomplished acquisition of Hindustan Petroleum Corp Ltd (HPCL) for Rs 36,915 crore.
- After this takeover, ONGC has two refining subsidiaries — HPCL and MRPL.
- Since then, HPCL is eager to get MRPL in its fold citing operational synergies. It has been speaking of a mix of money and share-swap for the deal that can make it India's third-largest oil refiner.

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### 3. RBI to issue new Rs 20 banknote

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will shortly issue Rs 20 denomination banknotes in the Mahatma Gandhi (New) Series, bearing signature of Shaktikanta Das, Governor of the Reserve Bank of India.
- The new Rs 20 banknote has motif of Ellora Caves on the reverse, depicting the country's cultural heritage. The base colour of the note is Greenish Yellow.

### 4. Officer's Committee of GST Council

- GST Council has formed an **Officer's Committee** to look into the **feasibility of e-invoices (electronic invoices)** in paying GST taxes in India by studying the existing systems of South Korea, Latin America etc.
- A threshold limit will be set by the officer's committee, based on either the turnover or the value of invoice for businesses to be eligible to generate an e-invoice.
- **Rajiv Ranjan, Special Secretary of GST council** is the convener of the officer's committee.

### 5. RBI moves to tighten current account operating norms to check fund diversion

- According to RBI's proposed norms for opening and regulation of current accounts for the corporates, the current accounts of corporate borrowers can 'only be opened' with the main bank in a lending consortium, while other lenders having collection accounts will have to ultimately transfer funds to the main lender's current account.
- It will be applicable to corporates having 50 crores or more amount of loans from banks.
- The purpose is to check fund diversion in current account.
- There will be no limit on "credits" in collection accounts with other banks (which are not leading consortium), but the 'debits' should be restricted to remitting the proceeds to the current or escrow accounts maintained with the main bank.

### 6. SBI launches Green Car Loan

- State Bank of India (SBI) has recently launched India's first 'Green Car Loan' to encourage customers to buy electric vehicles.
- Green Car Loan is part of its environment friendly commitment towards building a cleaner and greener environment. With this initiative, SBI has become India's first bank to offer a loan specifically for electric cars.

### 7. Vistara may induct some of Jet's Boeing 737s planes and its pilots

- Vistara currently has Airbus A320 in its narrow-body fleet and for wide-body, the airline, the paper said, placed an order for six Boeing 787 Dreamliner 787-9.
- If Vistara inducts B737s, it will be the second Indian airline, after Air India, to have a mix fleet of narrow-body Boeing and Airbus aircraft.

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### 8. India's oil import dependence jumps to 84 per cent

- According to data sourced from the Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics, Iraq, for the second year in a row, is India's top crude oil supplier.
- Total crude oil import: India imported 207.3 mt of crude oil in 2018-19, down from 220.4 mt in the previous financial year. India is 80 % dependent on imports to meet its oil needs.
- Iraq: Iraq has, for the second year in a row, become India's top crude oil supplier, meeting more than a fifth of the country's oil needs in 2018-19 fiscal year. Iraq sold 46.61 million tonnes (mt) of crude oil to India in 2018-19.
- Saudi Arabia: Saudi Arabia has traditionally been India's top oil source, but it was for the first time dethroned by Iraq in 2017-18 fiscal year. In 2018-19, Saudi exported 40.33 mt of crude oil.
- Iran: While India stopped importing crude oil from Iran following reimposition of economic sanctions this month by the U.S., the Persian Gulf nation was the third largest crude oil supplier to India. It sold 23.9 mt of crude in 2018-19, up from 22.59 mt in the previous year.
- Other countries: Nigeria was one of the biggest supplier with 16.83 mt of exports in 2018-19, down from 18.11 mt in the previous year. Kuwait supplied 10.78 mt of oil and Mexico another 10.28 mt.
- United States: The U.S., which began selling crude oil to India in 2017, is fast becoming a major source. Supplies from the U.S. jumped more than fourfold to 6.4 mt in the 2018-19 fiscal year.

### 9. SBI linked its interest rate to the Repo rate

- State Bank of India (SBI), the country's largest bank, linked its interest rates on savings bank deposits and short term loans to the repo rate of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
- The repo rate - the interest rate at which the RBI lends funds to banks - is currently 6%.
- SBI has linked savings bank deposits with balances of more than Rs. 1 lakh to the repo rate.
- This will replace the previous practice of linking these deposits to the Marginal Cost of Funds based Lending Rate (MCLR), an internal benchmark.
- Marginal Cost of Funds based Lending Rate (MCLR) is the minimum interest rate, below which a bank is not permitted to lend, though RBI can give authorization for the same in exceptional cases. It depends on factors such as fixed deposit rates, source of funds and savings rate.
- Advantage of external benchmark linking: It is expected that the new system of external benchmark will bring in more transparency in fixing interest rates, and help in faster transmission of rates.

### 10. Sebi finds NSE guilty of lapses in algo trade case

- In the co-location case, the SEBI has barred the National Stock Exchange (NSE) from accessing the securities market for six months and imposed a fine of ₹1,000 crore.
- In 2015, SEBI received complaints against NSE where it was alleged that the system that NSE used while disseminating data through co-location facilities allowed certain users to get information before others, thereby creating an information asymmetry.

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- Co-location refers to the system wherein a broker's server is kept in the exchange premises to reduce latency, or delay in computing terms, while executing trades.
- SEBI announced that NSE has committed a fraudulent and unfair trade practice as contemplated under the SEBI (PFUTP) Regulations. It did not exercised the requisite due diligence while putting in place the TBT architecture, thus affecting market fairness. PFUTP refers to Prohibition of Fraudulent and Unfair Trade Practices rules. TBT refers to tick-by-tick data feed.
- It has barred the NSE, which has the largest market share in equity segment and almost a monopoly in equity derivatives, from accessing the securities market for six months as its actions.

### 11. Is banking ombudsman consumer-friendly?

- RBI released its annual report of the Banking Ombudsman for the year 2017-18.
- The report states that 21 Offices received 1,63,590 complaints in the year 2017-18 which is an increase of 24.9% over the previous year.
- The complaints were resolved at a rate of 96.5% as compared to 92% in the previous year.
- The Banking Ombudsman Scheme, 1995 was notified by RBI under Section 35-A of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 to provide a faster complaint redressal platform to the customers of banks.

### 12. Bhel commissions two units of Telangana lift irrigation project

- Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project was previously known as Pranahita-Chevella Lift Irrigation Project.
- It is an under-construction multi-purpose irrigation project at the confluence point of Pranahita River and Godavari River i.e, at Kaleshwaram village in Telangana. Pranahita river in itself is a confluence of various other smaller tributaries like Wardha, Penganga and Wainganga Rivers.
- Under the scheme, 89 cumecs (cubic metres per second) of water will be lifted to a height of 106 metres from the Sripada Yellampalli reservoir to Medaram reservoir and will be used for irrigation and water supply in nearby drought-prone areas.
- The Central Public Sector undertaking Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) is the executing the project.
- Lift irrigation is a method of irrigation in which water instead of being transported by natural flow (as in gravity-fed canal systems) requires external energy through animal, fuel based or electric power using pumps or other mechanical means.
- Lift irrigation schemes are useful where the target land is at higher level. The advantage of lift irrigation is the minimal land acquisition problem and low water losses.

### 13. In frozen Europe, Gujarat salt provides some warmth

- For the past three years, the salt export from Gujarat has significantly shot up with the major chunk being used in de-icing the roads in the countries reeling under heavy snowfall.
- Generally, the salt export for de-icing starts from the month of September. During this period, the salt export touches around 7-8 lakh tonnes per month from the average four lakh tonnes.

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- De-icing is the process of removing snow or ice from the surface of the roads, mostly done by using sodium chloride or other chemicals. This is done to prevent fatal accidents caused by slippery roads in sub-zero conditions.
- Salt or sodium chloride is preferred as it is comparatively inexpensive.
- Gujarat accounts for 90% of the salt exported from India.
- The salt made in Gujarat is routed through China to the European and American countries and Russia due to lesser logistics cost.
- China also exports its inferior quality salt for de-icing in Polar countries.

### 14. 14th edition of Sino-Indian border trade opens at Nathu La

- The 14th edition of the annual Sino-Indian border trade recently opened at Nathu La. Every year bilateral border trade between two countries is organised four days a week for period of six months, between May 1 and November 30.
- The three open trading border posts between India and China are:
  - Nathu La in Sikkim.
  - Shipkila in Himachal Pradesh.
  - Lipulekh (or Lipulech) in Uttarakhand.

### 15. RBI slaps penalty on Vodafone m-pesa, PhonePe and 3 others

- The Reserve Bank of India has slapped monetary penalty on five pre-paid payment instrument (PPI) issuers including Vodafone m-pesa and Phonepe, for violating regulatory guidelines under the provisions of the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007.
- PPIs are instruments that facilitate purchase of goods and services, including financial services, remittance facilities, etc., against the value stored on such instruments.
- Prepaid instruments can be issued as smart cards, magnetic stripe cards, internet accounts, internet wallets, mobile accounts, mobile wallets, paper vouchers and any of the instruments used to access the prepaid amount.
- PPIs that can be issued in India are classified under three types viz.
  - **Closed System PPIs:** These PPIs are issued by an entity for facilitating the purchase of goods and services from that entity only and do not permit cash withdrawal. The operation of such instruments doesn't require approval by the RBI.
  - **Semi-closed System PPIs:** These PPIs are issued by banks (approved by RBI) and non-banks (authorized by RBI) for purchase of goods and services at merchant locations which have a specific contract with the issuer to accept the PPIs as payment instruments.
  - **Open System PPIs:** These PPIs are issued only by banks (approved by RBI) and are used at any merchant for purchase of goods and services. Cash withdrawal at ATMs / Points of Sale (PoS) terminals / Business Correspondents (BCs) are also allowed through such PPIs.

### 16. India's forex reserves jumps US\$ 4.37 billion in the week ended 26 April

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- The India's foreign exchange reserves soared by USD 4.3 billion to USD 418 billion in the week of April 26.
- Foreign-exchange reserves (also called forex reserves or FX reserves) are reserve assets held by a central bank in foreign currencies, used to back liabilities on their own issued currency as well as to influence monetary policy.
- Importance of Forex:
  - It provides confidence that the authorities are committed to the timely discharge of external obligations and to supporting the value of the local currency.
  - It is an important component of the Balance of Payment and an essential element in the analysis of an economy's external position.
  - The aftermath of the global financial crisis has, however, triggered a debate on the costs of building up foreign exchange reserves as a self-insurance mechanism. It needs to be acknowledged that Forex reserves have helped insulate India from the worst.

### 17. Why global FDI flows fell sharply in 2018

- A new report by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) shows that global foreign direct investment (FDI) flows, one of the critical indicators of economic activity, decreased by 27% to \$1.1 trillion in 2018 from the previous year.
- The report attributes the sharp decline in FDI flows to the short-term consequences of tax reform in the US, which compelled US companies to bring home large sums of money that were held with foreign affiliates.
- The FDI in 2018 is equivalent to 1.3% of global GDP indicating the lowest level since 1999.

### 18. U.S. lawmakers urge Trump administration to not end India's trade privileges

- The U.S. should not terminate the GSP programme with India after the expiry of the 60-day notice period, a group of 25 influential American lawmakers urged the U.S. Trade Representative, warning that companies seeking to expand their exports to India could be hit.
- The Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) is a U.S. trade program designed to promote economic growth in the developing world by providing preferential duty-free entry for up to 4,800 products from 129 designated beneficiary countries and territories.
- GSP was instituted on January 1, 1976, by the Trade Act of 1974.
- GSP has been given on non-reciprocal basis yet the US has linked it with market access and tariff reduction which is against the basic tenets of GSP.
- Indian exporters benefit indirectly – through the benefit that accrues to the importer by way of reduced tariff or duty free entry of eligible Indian products
- Reduction or removal of import duty on an Indian product makes it more competitive to the importer – other things (e.g. quality) being equal.
- This tariff preference helps new exporters to penetrate a market and established exporters to increase their market share and to improve upon the profit margins, in the donor country.

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### 19. Gujarat Passes Landmark Bill to Let Shops & Malls Remain Open 24x7

- Gujarat Shops and Establishments (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 2019' came into force from May 1.
- It allows that shops, commercial establishments and businesses running in state can now remain open round the clock (24X7). The act was passed by state Assembly in February 2019, but was notified on occasion of Gujarat's foundation day, 1 May.
- It replaces 'Gujarat Shops and Establishments Act of 1948' which prohibited shops and other businesses from remaining open between 12 am to 6 am.
- Now shops and commercial establishments employing less than ten persons will need no registration and those employing more than 10 workers will require one-time registration with no need for annual renewal.
- Increase Employment: In Gujarat about seven lakh shops and businesses employ less than ten persons and generate direct employment of about 10-12 lakh persons. As per new law they do not require registration.
- Overtime Perks: Employees working overtime will get paid twice their pay, against one and half time under previous law.
- Biggest beneficiaries of amendments to existing law would be markets, malls, food outlets and retailers, especially during festive season.

### 20. State-owned NewSpace creates a flutter among space startups

- Officials in the Department of Space (DoS) and ISRO have been trying to figure out how exactly Antrix and newly created NSIL would operate their respective businesses in the common, niche area.
- In February 2019, the Union Cabinet had cleared a new business arm for Department of Space (DoS). On March 6, 2019, the DoS registered NewSpace India Ltd. (NSIL) as its commercial entity.
- NSIL is the second commercial entity of the Department of Space (DoS) after Antrix Corporation Limited, which was set up in 1992 to market the products and services of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).
- Headquarters: Bengaluru.
- Financial administration: NSIL has an authorised capital of ₹10 crore and a paid up capital of ₹1 crore.
- The new company has following mandates:
  - transfer technology to industry for producing the commercially successful PSLV spacecraft launchers;
  - outsource assembly of small satellites and the upcoming Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV) and
  - to commercially exploit the R&D work done by ISRO centres and DoS constituents.

### 21. IIT Hyderabad-incubated startup PuREenergy launches electric two-wheelers

- PuREenergy, an Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad-incubated startup has launched its long-range, high-performance electric Pure EV two-wheelers designed for Indian conditions.

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- Launching four models-Egnite, Etrance, Epluto and Etron, the startup aims to deploy over 10,000 electric vehicles on road during 2019-20. It is developing a network of channel partners and plans to commercially launch across the country next month.
- Pure EV is the electric vehicle vertical of PuREnergy, incubated by IIT Hyderabad. It manufactures high performance Lithium batteries. The company has developed a 18,000-sqft co-located facility with IIT Hyderabad for large scale production of electric vehicles and electric batteries.

### 22. Wipro Consumer Care acquires Splash Corp of the Philippines

- Wipro Consumer Care on Monday announced that it has signed a definitive agreement to acquire Splash Corporation, a personal care company based in the Philippines.
- Without disclosing the deal value, Vineet Agrawal, CEO Wipro Consumer Care & Lighting, and Executive Director, Wipro Enterprises, said: "This transaction will strengthen the company's consumer care portfolio in personal care and complete the South-East Asian footprint."

### 23. Reliance Nippon Life March-quarter profit rises to Rs 151 crore

- For the entire 2018-19 financial year, the company's net profit was Rs 486.09 crore, as against Rs 455.74 crore in the previous year .
- Reliance Nippon Life Asset Management (RNAM) on Monday posted a rise of 34.16 per cent in consolidated net profit at Rs 151.08 crore for the quarter ended March 31, 2019.
- The company had logged a profit of Rs 112.61 crore in the same quarter a year ago, according to a BSE filing.
- For the entire 2018-19 financial year, the company's net profit was Rs 486.09 crore, as against Rs 455.74 crore in the previous year.

### 24. US sanctions on Iran, rise in crude oil prices stoke inflation fears

- The United States (US) government's sanctions on oil imports from Iran and the subsequent rise in crude oil prices are driving up the risk of higher inflation in the country.
- The US Government had last week made it clear that India needs to cut oil imports from Iran to zero to avoid sanctions.
- Crude oil imports have been growing in double digits in value terms (at about 15 per cent during 2017-18 compared to the previous year as per Govt data), and the rise in price will have a sure impact on domestic economy in a big way as the increase will be passed on the consumers.

### 25. RCom to begin insolvency process

- Insolvency proceedings against Reliance Communications (RCom) are set to begin, following the debt-laden telco's inability to carry through the Rs. 25,000-crore deal between the Ambani brothers. The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT), on Tuesday approved

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RCom's application for lifting the moratorium on insolvency and bankruptcy, and directed that the moratorium on RCom's assets be maintained.

- RCom has moved insolvency proceedings in the Mumbai bench of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT), which will hear the case on May 7.
- The IBC process will begin with the appointment of an Insolvency Resolution Professional, a source in the know of the development told The Hindu . RCom had moved the NCLAT on February 4, 2019 to withdraw its earlier appeal of stay on the proceedings for insolvency so that it could move ahead with the resolution plan through the NCLT process.

### 26. Now, only Indian firms can access VAHAN big data and for a fee

- Big data generated by the Road Ministry will no longer come free or without riders.
- The Ministry has become sensitive to misuse of such data and has said its vehicle database can only be used by companies that are registered in India and at least 50 per cent Indian owned.
- The Road Transport and Highways Ministry recently shaped a bulk data sharing policy and procedure – for sharing data regarding vehicle registration from the VAHAN database – following a wide demand for such data which can be used for varied purposes.

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### Government & Polity

#### 1. SC: filthy language not criminal intimidation

- Abusing a person with filthy language alone does not constitute the offence of criminal intimidation, the Supreme Court has held.
- “The threat must be with intention to cause alarm to the complainant to cause that person to do or omit to do any work. Mere expression of any words without any intention to cause alarm would not be sufficient to bring in the application of this section.

#### 2. Army invokes emergency powers for missile deal

- The Army is in the process of procuring Spike-LR Anti-Tank Missiles from Israel and Igla-S Very Short Range Air Defence Systems (VSHORAD) from Russia through a set of new financial powers for emergency procurements sanctioned by the Defence Ministry earlier this month
- “Under the latest emergency financial powers, armed forces have been given a free hand to procure equipment worth upto Rs. 300 crore on a priority basis. The Request For Proposal (RFP) for the two deals have been issued and negotiations are ongoing,” the source said. Entirely new systems not in use can also be procured under the new powers
- Under the emergency route, the Army is looking to procure about 12 launchers and around 250 missiles for each system.

#### 3. HC refuses to gag media in CJI case

- The Delhi High Court on Monday dismissed a petition seeking to restrict the media from reporting on the sexual harassment allegation levelled against Chief Justice of India (CJI) Ranjan Gogoi.
- “Go to the Supreme Court... We will not interfere,” a Bench of Chief Justice Rajendra Menon and Justice Anup J. Bhambhani told the petitioner Anti-Corruption Council of India, an NGO.
- The Bench said the Supreme Court was seized of the issue. “The Supreme Court has already expressed itself... judicial propriety and discipline require that this court should not interfere in the matter at all.”
- In its plea, the NGO sought a direction to the government to restrain media, including newspapers and TV channels and even social media platforms, from publishing the allegation.

#### 4. Telangana exams fiasco: Probe panel reports stunning lapses

- The Telangana Board of Intermediate Education (BIE) appears to have failed in adhering to the basic standards of intermediate examination process, going by the report of the investigating panel.

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- The committee submitted its report to the Department of Education on Saturday and its findings reveal stunning lapses which could have been avoided with better care and coordination.
- The BIE did not adhere to any standards in the project/contract given to the private firm Globarena for processing the examination work right from the payment of fee to the declaration of results.
- The lapses in the software platform or application were noticed in September itself and the company did not respond properly after being told about them, the panel has found. But, there was no follow-up action in this regard from the board.

### 5. GRSE to build anti-submarine craft for Navy

- The Ministry of Defence (MoD) on Monday signed a contract with Kolkata-based defence shipyard Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers Limited (GRSE) for the construction of eight Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Crafts (ASWSWs) at a cost of Rs. 6,311 crore.
- “The first ship is to be delivered within 42 months from the contract signing date and subsequent balance ships delivery schedule will be two ships per year. The project completion time is 84 months from today,” the MoD said in a statement.

### 6. Storm Fani intensifies into very severe cyclonic storm

- The Met Department has said that the severe Cyclonic storm Fani in the Bay of Bengal intensified into a very severe cyclonic storm in the last six hours.
- It is likely to cross Odisha coast around Friday afternoon.
- The Bhubaneswar Met centre said under the impact of the cyclonic storm, heavy to very heavy rainfall is likely to occur in the districts of Gajapati, Ganjam, Puri, Khordha, Rayagada and Kandhamal districts tomorrow.
- It also said heavy to extremely heavy rainfall is likely to occur in the coastal areas and some isolated places including southern districts Sambalpur, Deogarh, and Kalahandi on Friday.

### 7. Rafale case: SC gives 5 days for govt. to respond

- The Supreme Court on Tuesday refused the Union government’s request for a whole month to repond to the Rafale case review petitions and instead gave it five days till Saturday.
- A Bench led by Chief Justice of India (CJI) Ranjan Gogoi ordered the government to file its reply in an affidavit “on or before Saturday.”
- The Bench also directed the government to respond by affidavit to a separate application for initiating perjury proceedings against those in the government who had allegedly “suppressed” vital documents and circumstances of the Rafale jets’ purchase from the court.
- The court upheld the 36 Rafale jets’ deal on December 14, saying it had limited jurisdiction over defence deals.

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### 8. Mangaluru police gets all-women patrol unit

- Mangaluru City Police has launched an all-women police patrol unit in the city.
- Flagging off the 'Rani Abbakka Force' in Mangaluru on Tuesday, Sandeep Patil, Commissioner of Police, said the Karnataka police is giving utmost importance to the protection of women and children.

### 9. Maharashtra: Sixteen persons, including 15 policemen, killed in Naxal blast

- Sixteen persons, including 15 security personnel, were killed in an IED blast triggered by Naxals in Maharashtra's Gadchiroli district on Wednesday.
- The incident took place when a Quick Response Team (QRT) of Gadchiroli police was on patrolling duty in a vehicle, an official said. The blast took place as the vehicle reached Lendhari nallah in Kurkheda area.

### 10. Kerala Muslim educational group bans face-covering attire on campus

- Amid a raging debate on prohibiting burqa in the country on grounds of national security, a Muslim educational group in Kerala has banned its students from covering their faces with any attire on the campuses of its institutions.
- The Kozhikode-based Muslim Education Society (MES), a progressive group which runs several educational institutions, including professional colleges, issued a circular urging its students not to attend classes wearing any face-covering attire.
- While the dress code mentioned in a circular triggered opposition from orthodox Muslim organisations and scholars, the MES maintained that covering women's faces was a new trend and had not been in practice in the community in the state earlier.

### 11. Girls outshine boys in CBSE Class 12

- The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) announced Class 12th results on Thursday.
- Girls outperformed boys in this year's Central Board of Secondary Education's Class 12 examinations with a nine percentage point advantage in pass percentages. Overall, 83.4% of the 12.87 lakh students who attempted the examination held in February and March 2019 have passed.
- While 88.7% of girls cleared the examination, only 79.4% of boys did so. Among transgender students, the pass percentage was 83.3%.

### 12. Fani: Govt takes extensive safety measures

- Extensive safety measures have been taken by the Government with zero casualty target.
- A massive exodus got underway in coastal Odisha as Lakhs of people left their homes in probably the largest evacuation ahead of a natural disaster in the country.
- Our correspondent reports that the Odisha government has moved more than 11 lakh people to safety and advised the public to remain indoors.
- After crossing Odisha, cyclone Fani is likely to move towards West Bengal. It is also likely to impact parts of the northeast, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.

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- There is a forecast of massive tides up to 5 metres and fishermen have been advised not to venture into the sea. Our Kolkata Correspondent reports that leaves of the Government employees in the coastal districts have cancelled.

### 13. Ready to deal with impact of end of waivers from US sanctions on import of Iranian oil: India

- External Affairs Ministry has said that India is prepared to deal with the impact of the end of waivers from US sanctions on import of oil from Iran.
- Ministry Spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said at a media briefing in New Delhi on Thursday that there will be additional supplies from other major oil-producing countries based on the plan drawn up by the Ministry of Petroleum.
- He said the decision will be taken keeping in view the country's energy security, commercial consideration and economic interests.
- In November, the US had granted a six-month waiver to India, China, Greece, Italy, Taiwan, Japan, Turkey and South Korea to continue importing oil from Iran.

### 14. Karnataka mulls geographical indication policy

- The Karnataka government is planning to come out with a GI (geographical indication) Policy in the State, according to an official of the State government.
- SR Satheesha, Managing Director of the Bengaluru-based Visvesvaraya Trade Promotion Centre (a Karnataka government organisation), said the State has 45 GI products in different sectors, including handicraft, horticulture, etc. Karnataka has maximum number of GI products among other states in the country.

### 15. All-weather railway line, solar park in pipeline for Ladakh

- Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday lambasted the Congress for allegedly neglecting Ladakh over the past six decades and said various initiatives like railway line and biggest solar park are in the pipeline for the region for its overall development. She assured all the pending defence issues, including rent for the land which is under the army's use, would be resolved as she listed out various steps taken by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government for the region.
- The Ladakh region usually remains cut-off from the rest of the country for nearly six months annually due to closure of the 434-km long Srinagar-Leh national highway during winter.

### 16. India, Australia agree to further deepen counter-terrorism co-operation

- India and Australia have agreed to further deepen counter-terrorism co-operation through regular exchange of information and sharing of best practices on countering extremism and radicalization.
- The two countries held the 11th Meeting of Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism at Canberra yesterday. In a release, the External Affairs Ministry said, the two sides discussed contemporary counter terrorism challenges such as financing of terrorism, the use of the internet for terror purposes, radicalization and Foreign Terrorist Fighters.
- Both sides welcomed the listing of Masood Azhar, leader of the Jaish-e-Mohammad, as a Global Terrorist by the UNSC 1267 Sanctions Committee.

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### International

#### 1. IMF delegation arrives in Pakistan to hold talks on bailout package

- A delegation of the IMF arrived in Pakistan on Monday to hold technical discussions for a bailout package to the cash-strapped country, days after Prime Minister Imran Khan met IMF chief Christine Lagarde in China.
- Pakistan is seeking USD 8 billion from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to bail itself out from a severe balance-of-payments crisis that threatens to cripple the country's economy.
- With the generous Chinese assistance, Pakistan has so far received a total of USD 9.1 billion in financial aid packages from friendly countries during the current fiscal year.

#### 2. India to wait for US 'proclamation' on GSP withdrawal before imposing retaliatory tariffs

- India is likely to wait and see if the US government comes up with the 'Presidential proclamation' or executive order for withdrawal of the generalised system of preference (GSP) scheme that would put an end to zero duty benefits for about 3,500 goods from the country before it imposes retaliatory duties on 29 goods imported from the US.
- A new notification further pushing the date of implementation of the retaliatory duties by 14 days to May 15 is expected to be notified by the Finance Ministry soon.

#### 3. Sri Lanka to introduce tough laws to eliminate jihadism: PM Ranil Wickremesinghe

- Introducing a tough new legislation to eliminate jihadism and extremism from Sri Lanka is the government's top priority, Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe has said in the aftermath of country's worst terror attacks on Easter Sunday.
- The deadly attacks could have been prevented if the new Counter Terrorism Bill, which provides for territorial jurisdiction, was passed in Parliament without delay, he said on Sunday after joining the Sunday Mass in Colombo and the mass at the Saint Anthony's church in Kochchikade, a week after the deadly suicide bombing killed over 250 people.
- "No anti-terrorism law in Sri Lanka provides for territorial jurisdiction under which a cadre belonging to an international terrorist organisation could be arrested in Sri Lanka if they are found. Not even the penal code provides that provision,"

#### 4. Google's parent firm shares dive as YouTube changes, competition hurt revenue

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- Alphabet Inc's Google on Monday saw its slowest revenue growth in three years from increased competition in advertising, stumbles in its smartphone business and disruptive changes at YouTube that left the leading internet ad company lagging rivals.
- Shares of Alphabet dropped 7.5 per cent after hours, setting them up for the biggest one-day drop since falling 8 per cent in October 2012. They had closed Monday at a record-high of \$1,296.20. Alphabet Chief Financial Officer Ruth Porat attributed slower revenue growth to currency fluctuations, competition and unspecified product changes.

### 5. Japan's Emperor Naruhito pledges to work as symbol of the people

- Japanese Emperor Naruhito formally took up his post on Wednesday a day after the abdication of his father, saying he felt a "sense of solemnity" but pledging to work as a symbol of the nation and the unity of its people.
- Former Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko stepped down on Tuesday after three decades as the nation's top royals in a brief, simple ceremony, with Akihito thanking the people of Japan and saying he prayed for peace. Naruhito, 59, technically succeeded his father but his ascension to the Chrysanthemum Throne was formalised in a mid-morning ceremony, the first part of which his wife and other royal women were unable to attend.

### 6. European Union extends ban on selling arms to Myanmar

- The European Union has extended a ban on selling arms to Myanmar and prolonged sanctions against high-ranking officials till 30th April 2020, over their role in the Rohingya crisis.
- The EU said in a statement that the sanctions include an embargo on arms and equipment that can be used for internal repression, an export ban on dual-use goods for use by the military and border guard police, and export restrictions on equipment for monitoring communications that might be used for internal repression.

### 7. Sri Lanka lifts social media blockade imposed after Easter Sunday blasts

- The Sri Lankan government on Tuesday lifted a nationwide blanket ban on social media imposed to curb the spread of misinformation and maintain communal harmony soon after the devastating Easter Sunday bombings on churches and luxury hotels that killed 253 people.
- According to the Sri Lankan Information Department, President Maithripala Sirisena has instructed the Telecommunications Regulatory Commission to lift the ban on Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube and other popular platforms from April 30.
- The government has asked the public to share content on social media sites with "utmost responsibility" while bearing in mind the current situation of the country.

### 8. In diplomatic win for Delhi, UN designates JeM's Masood Azhar as global terrorist

- In a huge diplomatic win for India, the United Nations on Wednesday designated Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammed chief Masood Azhar as a "global terrorist" after China lifted its hold on a proposal to blacklist him.

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- A UNSC designation will subject Azhar to an assets freeze, travel ban and an arms embargo.
- China removed its hold on the proposal, which was moved by France, UK and the US in the Security Council's 1267 Al Qaeda Sanctions Committee in February just days after the deadly Pulwama terror attack carried out by the Pakistan-based terror outfit JeM.

### 9. Julian Assange sentenced to 50 weeks in British prison

- Julian Assange, the founder of Wikileaks — who took refuge in the Ecuadorian Embassy in London in 2012, to avoid being extradited to Sweden on sexual assault charges — has been sentenced to 50 weeks in jail, just under the maximum possible sentence of 12 months for flouting bail conditions, by a court in London.
- The sentence comes ahead of a hearing due to take place later this week at the Westminster Magistrates Court as part of efforts to extradite him to the US.

### 10. Pakistan holds talks with IMF delegation on bailout package

- Senior Pakistani officials on Wednesday held technical discussions with a visiting IMF delegation for a bailout package to the cash-strapped country. The talks will continue for about a week. Pakistan is seeking USD 8 billion from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to bail itself out from a severe balance-of-payments crisis that threatens to cripple the country's economy.
- With the generous Chinese assistance, Pakistan has so far received a total of USD 9.1 billion in financial aid packages from friendly countries during the current fiscal year.

### 11. British PM Theresa May sacks Defence Secretary

- British Prime Minister Theresa May has sacked Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson following a probe into the leak of news that Britain had conditionally allowed China's Huawei to develop the UK 5G network.
- A spokeswoman from the Downing Street office in London said, Ms May has asked Mr Williamson to leave the government, having lost confidence in his ability to serve in the role of Defence Secretary and as a member of her Cabinet.
- Britain's government was rocked by the scandal over who leaked the news that Ms May was to let Huawei develop Britain's 5G network.

### 12. Tata Steel workers do not support Thyssenkrupp deal: European works council

- European workers at India's Tata Steel no longer believe that a joint venture with Thyssenkrupp is in the best interests of the company, the European works council.
- The two companies agreed last year to combine their European steel activities, a move that would create the continent's second-largest steelmaker but still needs approval from the European Commission, which plans to make a decision by June 17.

### 13. UAE President orders release of 3,005 prisoners ahead of Ramadan

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- United Arab Emirates President Sheikh Bin Zayed Al Nahyan has ordered the release of 3,005 prisoners, serving various sentences, ahead of the Holy Month of Ramadan. The President has also pledged to settle the financial obligations of the released prisoners.
- The Emirates News Agency said that this gesture is part of UAE President Sheikh Khalifa's attempt to provide prisoners an opportunity to start a new life and alleviate their families of the hardships .

### 14. World Bank gives 545 million dollars for cyclone-hit southern Africa

- The World Bank will extend more than half-a-billion dollars in grants for cyclone-ravaged southern African countries.
- A total of up to 545 million US dollar will be disbursed to Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi - the three countries hit by Cyclone Idai in March.
- World Bank's president David Malpass made the announcement as he concluded his visit to Mozambique, the worst affected country.
- Cyclone Idai devastated the port city of Beira and its surrounding areas when it hit on March 14, killing more than 600 people.
- Weeks later a fresh massive storm, Cyclone Kenneth, lashed the northern coastal regions of Mozambique which killed 41 people.

### 15. Militants in Gaza Strip fire more than 200 rockets into Israel

- Militants in the Gaza Strip fired more than 200 rockets into Israel yesterday, prompting air strikes and tank fire on the Palestinian territory. Gaza officials said, while three Israelis were wounded by the rockets, the retaliatory Israeli fire killed four Palestinians including a mother and her baby daughter. Israel said, the rockets were fired from the Palestinian enclave and its air defences intercepted dozens of them.
- The Israeli army said, its tanks and planes hit some 120 militant targets in its response. As the exchange of fire continued, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu held consultations with security chiefs.

### 16. Asia Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU) Media Summit

- 5th Asia Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU) Media Summit on Climate Action and Disaster Preparedness was held recently in Kathmandu, Nepal. Kathmandu Media Action Plan for Media Integration in Climate Action and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) was adopted at summit.
- Theme: "Media Solutions for Sustainable Future: Saving Lives, Building Resilient Communities".

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### **About Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU):**

- *It is a non-profit, non-governmental, non-political, professional association of broadcasting organisations, which assist development of broadcasting in region.*
- *It was established in 1964, and has Secretariat in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. With over 272 member in 76 countries on four continents, ABU is biggest broadcasting union in the world.*
- *ABU is also member of the World Broadcasters' Union.*

### **17. Global Food Policy Report-2019 released**

International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) has recently released Global Food Policy Report-2019.

- The report reviews the major food policy issues, developments, and decisions of 2018, and considers challenges and opportunities for 2019.
- This year's Report highlights the urgency of rural revitalization to address a growing crisis in rural areas.
- Rural population account for 45.3% of the world's total population and at least 70% of the world's population remains extremely poor.
- The rural population suffers from rapid population growth rates, inadequate job and enterprise creation, poor infrastructure, scarce financial services.
- They also bear the brunt of climate change impacts.
- Nearly 50% of rural youth all over the world do not have any formal job they are either unemployed or under-employed.
- The world is not yet on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. Poverty and malnutrition rates are falling in many places, but not fast enough.

### **18. ICRISAT Hosts Meet to Tackle Fall Armyworm**

- Eight nations have come together at the ICRISAT (International Crops Research Institute for Semi-Arid Tropics) to understand the challenges and find solutions to tackle the rapidly growing problem of Fall Armyworm (FAW).
- Representatives from Bangladesh, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, India and some other South and South-East Asian countries are attending a regional workshop on 'Fall Armyworm management in Asia'.
- The U.S. is working to address the FAW in several African countries. As the FAW has emerged in South and South-East Asia, collaboration is urgently required to manage its spread and minimise crop loss.
- First reported in West Africa in 2016, the FAW pest quickly assumed epidemic proportions and spread to over 44 African countries. In India, its infection was first

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reported in Karnataka and also parts of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and Gujarat.

- FAW (scientifically known as *Spodoptera frugiperda*) is a lepidopteran pest that feeds in large numbers on the leaves and stems of more than 80 plant species, causing extensive damage to crops such as maize, rice, sorghum and sugarcane. It also attacks vegetable crops and cotton.

### 19. International Religious Freedom 2019 report released

- United States Commission has released its International Religious Freedom 2019 report.
- US Commission on International Religious Freedom is a bipartisan, independent federal government commission, created by International Religious Freedom Act of 1998.
- In its Annual Report, USCIRF unflinchingly describes threats to religious freedom around the world and recommends to the State Department countries for designation as “countries of particular concern” (CPCs) for engaging in or tolerating “systematic, ongoing, egregious violations.”
- USCIRF also recommends to the State Department that non-state actors cited for similarly severe violations be designated as “entities of particular concern” (EPCs).
- This year, USCIRF has recommended 16 countries for CPC designation and five entities for EPC designation.
- Burma, China, Eritrea, Iran, North Korea, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Central African Republic (CAR), Nigeria, Russia, Syria, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam.
- India saw an “overall deterioration of religious freedom conditions in 2018”. India continues to remain a Tier II country. It is in same list since 2009.

### 20. GLOBAL REGISTRY OF VIOLENT DEATHS (GREVD)

- STOCKHOLM INTERNATIONAL PEACE RESEARCH INSTITUTE (SIPRI) has set up a new initiative named Global Registry of Violent Deaths (GReVD) which is aiming to establish the annual number of violent deaths worldwide.
- SIPRI’s Global Registry of Violent Deaths (GReVD) will count deaths caused by all forms of violence and display these in an open-source database.
- This will allow researchers, policymakers and the general public to track trends in violence at global, regional, national, provincial, city and municipal levels.
- The database will hold a single entry for every violent death, including time, location, perpetrator, victim and type of violence.

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- The sources will be verifiable news reports of lethal events and processing will involve machine coding to handle the volume of entries, as well as human coding to ensure accuracy and consistency.
- The first-phase of the project is funded by the Swedish Postcode Foundation and the United Kingdom's Department for International Development.

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### Sports

#### 1. Bajrang and Vinesh nominated for Khel Ratna

- The Wrestling Federation of India on Monday recommended recently-crowned Asian Champion Bajrang Punia and last year's Asian Games gold-medallist Vinesh Phogat for the country's highest sporting honour — the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna.
- In a similar move, the National shooting federation has suggested the names of pistol ace Heena Sidhu and trap shooter Ankur Mittal for the Khel Ratna.
- World No. 1 Bajrang recently stamped his authority in Xi'an, China, by clinching a gold medal in the men's 65kg freestyle event.

#### 2. Raheem Sterling named 2019 FWA footballer of the year

- Raheem Sterling has been named the 2019 footballer of the year by the Football Writers' Association (FWA). The Manchester City and England forward topped the poll of the 400-strong FWA membership as a clear winner, with 62 percent of the votes.
- It was more than 100 votes ahead of Liverpool defender Virgil Van Dijk. Hours earlier, Sterling lost out to Van Dijk in the race for the Professional Footballers' Association (PFA) award, but was announced PFA young player of the year.

#### 3. New Zealand Open Badminton tournament begins in Auckland

- The New Zealand Open Badminton tournament began in Auckland this morning. Some Qualification matches are being played today along with Mixed Doubles opening round fixtures.
- Ace Indian shuttler Saina Nehwal will be aiming to win her second title this year. She will take on China's Wang Zhiyi in the Women's Singles first round tomorrow. Olympic silver medalist PV Sindhu is not competing in this tournament.
- Parupalli Kashyap, B Sai Praneeth, HS Prannoy, Subhankar Dey and Laskshya Sen will be seen in action in the Men's section. Doubles categories will also witness the Indian participation.

#### 4. Indian para-athletes clinch medals at Asian Road para-cycling championships

- Indian para-athletes came up with brilliant performance to secure a silver and two bronze medals at the Asian Road para-cycling championships at Tashkent, Uzbekistan.
- Divij Shah clinched silver while Asian Para Games bronze medallist Gurlal Singh and Hand cyclist Sudhakar Marathe claimed bronze.

#### 5. Apurvi Chandela attains world number one spot in women's 10 m air rifle event

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- Indian shooting ace Apurvi Chandela today attained the world number one position in the women's 10 metres air rifle event while compatriot Anjum Moudgil rose to number two after consistent performances in recent years.
- The rifle ace from Jaipur is among the five Indian shooters to have already secured 2020 Olympics quotas for the country.
- Meanwhile, Moudgil attained the world number two rank in 10 metres Air Rifle after her mixed team gold at the ISSF World Cup in Beijing. Manu Bhaker is the world number 10 in 25 metres pistol women category.

### 6. Bajrang Punia bags gold in Ali Aliyev wrestling tournament

- World number one Bajrang Punia won the gold medal as he defeated Viktor Rassadin in the finals of men's 65kg freestyle in the Ali Aliyev wrestling tournament in Kaspiisk, Russia on Thursday.
- Bajrang got the better of the local favourite 13-8 in his final bout after being down 0-5 at one stage.
- The 25-year-old Indian grappler had won a gold medal last week at the Asian Championships in Xi'an, China.

### 7. Jeev, China Open and many golf memories.

- Jeev Milkha Singh's fortunes at the 25th edition of the Volvo China Open brought back a flood of memories about this champion.
- It was the summer of 2006 when Jeev ended a seven-year drought by winning the then \$1.8-million Volvo China Open by a single stroke over Gonzalo Fernandez-Castano of Spain. I was the only Indian journalist at the event.
- Jeev had been winless since the 1999 Lexus International on Asian Tour. The event did not count towards the world rankings. Jeev had come in second seven times since then and he also had 23 Top-10s in the period. But a win remained elusive.

### 8. India retains top spot in ICC Test rankings

- India retained its top position in the ICC Test rankings, while England remained the number one ODI side in the latest annual rankings released in Dubai today. India also moved two points in second position in the ODI rankings behind England.
- The results from 2015-16 season were purged and outcomes from the 2016-17 and 2017-18 were weighted at 50 per cent. This resulted in New Zealand gain three points in the Test rankings to move two points behind India.
- Australia has been overtaken by arch rival England at fourth, after six points from its 2015-16 season gained through four series wins were removed. Eighth-ranked West Indies closed the gap between seventh-placed Pakistan to two points.

### 9. India slips to fifth spot in latest ICC T20I rankings

- The world body governing cricket, ICC on Friday unveiled an expanded men's Twenty20 International team rankings with 80 teams.

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- India with 260 points have dropped three places to fifth in the latest list. The ICC T20 World Cup champions of 2009, Pakistan have consolidated their top position with 286 points. The next three teams are South Africa (262), England (261) and Australia (261).
- The launch of expanded ICC T20 team rankings coincides with the annual rankings in which series results from 2015-16 are removed and outcomes from 2016-17 and 2017-18 are weighted at 50 per cent.

### 10. Saurav Ghosal, Joshna Chinappa to play for titles of Asian Individual Squash C'ship

Ace Indian Squash players - Saurav Ghosal and Joshna Chinappa - will play for the titles of the Asian Individual Squash Championship in Kuala Lumpur today. Ghosal, Men's top seed, will take on Leo Au Chun Ming of Hong Kong, while Joshna, the reigning champion, will face Annie Au, also from Hong Kong.

In the semi-finals yesterday, Joshna had defeated sixth seed Sivasangari Subramaniam of Malaysia, while Ghosal beat another Malaysian Eain Yow Ng.

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### Appointments

#### 1. Sangram Chaudhary is Mother Dairy MD

- The Board of Directors of Mother Dairy Fruit & Vegetable Pvt Ltd on Tuesday appointed Sangram Chaudhary as the new Managing Director. He will take charge on May 1. Chaudhary replaces Sanjee Khanna.
- Chaudhary has over three decades of experience in the dairy sector. He was earlier the Executive Director at National Dairy Development Board (NDDB). “During his stint at NDDB, he has been instrumental in rolling out the National Dairy Plan apart from national and State-level policies, implementation of animal nutrition, health, breeding and related livestock issues,”

#### 2. Benjamin Netanyahu sworn-in as Israel's PM

- Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was among the 120 newly-elected members who were sworn-into country's new Parliament on Tuesday, three weeks after his victory in national election.
- Ahead of the swearing-in ceremony in Jerusalem, Israeli President Reuven Rivlin delivered a message of national unity to the 120 members of Parliament. He called upon the new members to fight for their common home where secular, religious, ultra-Orthodox, Jews and Arabs can find themselves equal.

#### 3. ADVISORY COUNCIL OF THE FIFTEENTH FINANCE COMMISSION

- The Chief Economic Advisor, Government of India, Dr. Krishnamurthy Subramanian had been included as Member of the Advisory Council of the Fifteenth Finance Commission.
- In April, 2018 the Fifteenth Finance Commission had constituted an Advisory Council.
- The role and function of the Council:
  - To advise the Commission on any relevant issue related to the Terms of Reference (ToR) of the Commission.
  - To assist in the preparation of any research study which would enhance the Commission's understanding on the issue contained in its ToR; and
  - To help in broadening the Commission's understanding to seek best national and international practices on matters pertaining to fiscal devolution.
- *Naruhito has become the 126th emperor of Japan, to the Chrysanthemum Throne, replacing his father, Akihito.*
- *Kumar Sangakkara (Sri Lankan) has become the first non-Britisher to be appointed as the President of European Marlyebone Cricket Club.*

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- *Bombay Stock Exchange has appointed M Jayshree Vyas its first independent woman Director to its board.*

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### Person/Event/Award

#### 1. Industrialist-politician SPY Reddy dead

- An industrialist known for the popular 'Nandi' brand of PVC pipes, a three-time Lok Sabha MP, and popular in Kurnool for philanthropic activities, SPY Reddy died due to health complications. He was 69.
- For many in Andhra Pradesh, especially the poor in Kurnool districts in 2000s, SPY Reddy will remain etched in their memory forever. His Nandi Group had launched a plate of Jowar roti and a cup of dal for just Rs2. Thousands of people, including his workers in the Nandi factories of PVC and dairy benefited.

#### 2. Chandrayaan-2 Mission launched date announced

- India's highly ambitious Rs. 800-crore Chandrayaan-2 mission will be launched between July 9 and July 16 this year.
- The moon landing is expected to be around September 6, 2019, nearly two months after the launch.
- The second lunar mission of ISRO will have three modules — Orbiter, Lander (Vikram) and Rover (Pragyan).
- The Orbiter and Lander will be interfaced mechanically, stacked together as an integrated module and accommodated inside the GSLV MK-III launch vehicle. The Rover will be housed inside the Lander.
- After the launch into the earth bound orbit, the integrated module will reach the Moon's orbit using Orbiter propulsion module.
- Subsequently, Lander will separate from the Orbiter and soft land at the predetermined site close to the lunar South Pole.
- Further, the Rover will roll out for carrying out scientific experiments on the lunar surface.

#### 3. Indian and French Navies conduct Varuna

The first part of the Indo-French joint naval exercise, Varuna 19.1 will be conducted off the Goa coast.

##### **About the exercise:**

- The bilateral naval exercise initiated in 1983 form a vital part of the Indo-French strategic partnership.
- Having grown in scope and complexity over the years, this exercise exemplifies the strong relations between the two nations, in line with the Joint Strategic Vision of India-French Cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region.

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- The exercise aims at developing interoperability between the two navies and fostering mutual cooperation by learning from each other's best practices to conduct joint operations.
- The exercise underscores the shared interests and commitment of both nations in promoting maritime security.

### 4. ISRO to launch radar imaging satellite 'RISAT 2BR1'

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) planned to launch its latest Radar Imaging Reconnaissance Satellite 'RISAT 2BR1' towards the end of May 2019.
- The RISAT is a remote sensing satellite which provides all-weather surveillance using Synthetic Aperture Radars (SAR).
- RISATs are the first all-weather observation satellites from ISRO.

### 5. ISRO planning to send a probe to study sun early next year

- Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) is planning to send a probe named Aditya-L1 to study the sun early next year.
- The probe named Aditya-L1 will be sent by PSLV-XL from Sriharikota to observe the solar corona, the outer layers of the Sun.
- It will be inserted in a halo orbit around the Lagrangian point 1 (L1) of the Sun-Earth system, which is 1.5 million km from the Earth.
- Significance of Mission:
  - A Satellite placed in the halo orbit around the Lagrangian point 1 (L1) of the Sun-Earth system has the major advantage of continuously viewing the Sun without any eclipses.
  - Only NASA and ESA have successfully placed satellites at the L1 point as of date.
  - This will be the first Indian space mission to study the Sun.
  - It will be India's third big extra-terrestrial outing after Moon and Mars.

### 6. Football Writer's Association's Footballer of the Year award

Raheem Sterling, English professional footballer has won the Football Writer's Association's Footballer of the Year award.

### 7. Asian College of Journalism's Award

'Coalgate 2.0', which is authored by Nileena M.S. was awarded the Asian College of Journalism's Award for Investigative Journalism 2018. The article investigated the allotment of captive coal blocks in Parba East and Kanta Basan regions of Chhattisgarh.

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### Important Days

#### 1. World Veterinary Day

- World Veterinary Day was observed on April 27 by the World Veterinary Association. Theme for 2019: – “Value for Vaccination”.

#### 2. Labour Day

- Labour Day or Worker’s Day, celebrated around the globe on 1st May, is a day dedicated to labourers of the working class, marked with a public holiday in over 80 countries.
- The holiday originated in the U.S. city in 1886 as a protest in support of an eight-hour workday and saw thousands of labourers around the country take to the streets. The day commemorates the Haymarket affair, which took place on 4th May.
- While the day stands for different things depending on the country, the overall theme of the public holiday is celebrating the achievements of workers.
- The theme of International Labour Day 2019 is “Sustainable Pension for all: The Role of Social Partners”.
- Although the labour movement has its roots in the U.S., Labour Day there is celebrated on the first Monday of September rather than in May.

#### 3. WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY

- The 26th celebration of World Press Freedom Day is being jointly organized by UNESCO, African Union Commission and the Government of Ethiopia. The main event is being held at the African Union Headquarter’s at Addis Ababa.
- World Press Freedom Day was proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in December 1993, following the recommendation of UNESCO's General Conference.
- 3rd May, the anniversary of the Declaration of Windhoek is celebrated worldwide as World Press Freedom Day.
- Objective of the Day: To celebrate the fundamental principles of press freedom, assess the state of press freedom throughout the world, defend the media from attacks on their independence, and pay tribute to journalists who have lost their lives in the line of duty.
- Theme of this year: This year's theme “Media for Democracy: Journalism and Elections in Times of Disinformation” discusses current challenges faced by media in elections, along with the media’s potential in supporting peace and reconciliation processes.

#### 4. Coal Miner Day

- Coal Miners Day is observed every year on 4 May to highlight the toughest profession and the people working in coal mines.

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- On this day several organisations, communities raises funds and awareness for other organisations in the coal mining area and workers.
- This day show appreciation for the sacrifices, honour the accomplishments and remember the tragedies that these hardworking individuals experience.

#### 5. International Firefighters' Day

- **International Firefighters' Day (IFFD)** is observed on **May 4** each year.

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### Science & Technology

#### 1. IIT Delhi 3D prints human skin

- Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi have successfully 3D bioprinted human skin models that have certain anatomically relevant structural, mechanical and biochemical features similar to native human skin. The bioprinted skin produced in the lab by the team is already being used by ITC Ltd for experiments.
- The bioprinted skin model will have wide applications in testing cosmetics. It can also reduce and probably even replace testing on animals.
- It can also be used for testing dermatology drugs on human skin and at a future date even help in testing drugs for personalised medicine.

#### 2. IIT Kanpur identifies novel molecule to control hyper inflammation

- Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kanpur have identified and characterised a novel small protein molecule that can effectively control inflammation leading to better treatment outcomes. In contrast, inflammation control by molecules that are undergoing clinical trials may not be optimal due to inherent drawbacks. The work was done in collaboration with the University of Queensland.