

25 March

FinTech Conclave commenced in New Delhi

On 25th March, **NITI Aayog** has organized a **FinTech Conclave** at Dr. Ambedkar International Center, New Delhi. The Conclave was inaugurated by RBI Governor, **Shaktikanta Das**.



Key points

- i.** The motive of the conference was to shape India’s continued ascendancy in FinTech, build the narrative for future procedure and policy efforts, and to deliberate steps for complete financial inclusion.
- ii.** The Conclave has attributed 300 representatives from the financial space including central ministries, regulators, bankers, startups, service providers and entrepreneurs.
- iii.** Discussions were held on the themes such as Digital Onboarding of Customers/Merchants for Financial Inclusion, Building Financial Products for Millennial India, Emerging Areas of FinTech, Fast Tracking Investments in FinTech Industry and Financial Inclusion of MSMEs.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

India’s ranks on the second edition of WEF global Energy Transition index is 76

On 25th March 2019, **India** ranks **76th (among 115 countries)** on a **global energy transition index** which was compiled by Geneva-based World Economic Forum (WEF), based on their energy system performance and affordability.

Energy Transition Index 2019



Top 10 Countries

	Score	Rank
Sweden	74.9%	1
Switzerland	74.3%	2
Norway	73.4%	3
Finland	73.0%	4
Denmark	72.2%	5
Austria	70.7%	6
United Kingdom	70.2%	7
France	68.6%	8
Netherlands	68.5%	9
Iceland	68.5%	10

INDIA - 76/115



Key Points:

- i. The top three performers are **Sweden**, followed by **Switzerland and Norway**.
- ii. In the second edition of the Energy Transition Index, India improved its rank by two points from last year (2018) higher than China (82nd).
- iii. Despite the fact that India has high pollution levels and high CO₂ intensity amongst these 115 countries, it has made a significant improvement in its **energy access and regulations** in recent years.
- iv. In the BRICS block of emerging economies, **After Brazil (rank 46th) India ranked second** best. Among the major economies, UK ranked 7th, Singapore ranked 13th, Germany ranked 17th, Japan ranked 18th and the US ranked 27th in this index.
- v. India scored low in terms of **system performance** (ranking 97 and 86, respectively), but it ranks considerably higher in terms of **readiness to adapt to future energy needs** (45 and 61 respectively).

About World Economic Forum (WEF)

- ◆ **Headquarters:** Cologny, Switzerland
- ◆ **Founder:** Klaus Schwab
- ◆ **Founded:** January 1971

BANKING & FINANCE

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has appointed a five-member committee under the chairmanship of Nandan Nilekhani to strengthen digital payments

On 25th March 2019 Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has appointed 5-member committee under the chairmanship of **Nandan Nilekhani** to **strengthen digital payments** as well as to boost financial inclusion through Financial Technology. It will provide recommendations in 3 months.

Key Point

- i. The decision regarding the formation of committee was taken during the first event of Financial Technology (Fintech) Conclave, which was organized by NITI Aayog in New Delhi.
- ii. The purpose of the event was to shape India's predominance in FinTech, build the future strategy and policy to uplift the financial inclusion.
- iii. With the revolution in the FinTech sector India's aim is to emerge as a **10 trillion dollar**

economy.

iv. Financial technology, popularly known as **FinTech**, is the new technology and innovation to make financial services more accessible for the common people. Mobile banking, internet banking, digital payment are examples of Financial technologies.



AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS

Peter Tabichi conferred with Global Teacher Prize for 2019

Peter Tabichi, a Kenyan math and physics teacher and a member of the Franciscan religious order has been conferred with the prestigious \$1 million Varkey Foundation **Global Teacher Prize for 2019** at a ceremony in Dubai hosted by Hollywood actor, **Hugh Jackman**.



i. Peter Tabichi gives away 80 per cent of his monthly income to the poor.

ii. The award recognises the “exceptional” teacher’s commitment to pupils in a remote part of Kenya’s Rift Valley.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

IAF formally inducted four heavy-lift Chinook helicopters

On the lines of Indo-US deal inked in September 2015 for the purchase of 15 Chinooks by India, the **first four heavy lift CH-47F (I) Chinook helicopters** were inducted in the Indian Air Force, at **Air Force Station, Chandigarh**, in **Squadron No 126 Helicopter Flight**. These multi-role helicopters will act as life-saver during HADR (humanitarian assistance and disaster relief) missions.

i. Regarded as one of the most modern heavy lift chopper, the **payload capacity** of Chinook is about **10 tonne**, as it is able to lift artillery, vehicles, road construction and engineer equipment as well as troops and supplies to mountainous sectors. It can also lift M-777 ultra-light howitzers of the Indian armed forces.

ii. India has purchased 15 Chinooks for **\$1.5 billion**. The delivery of remaining helicopters is expected to be completed by 2023.

iii. The **manufacturer of Chinook** is **Boeing** Defense, Space & Security, US.

For over two lakhs Divyang voters, Election Commission comes up with a mobile application called PWD app in Maharashtra

To make voting easier and to implement poll body's slogan of Accessible Elections, Election Commission has come up with a new mobile application called "PWD" On 25th March 2019 across Maharashtra, for over two lakhs Divyang voters.

Key Points:

i. This mobile app provides information such as the **location of voting booth** as well as provide special facilities such as wheelchairs, ramps and transport from home for registered Divyang voters during the next month's Lok Sabha elections.

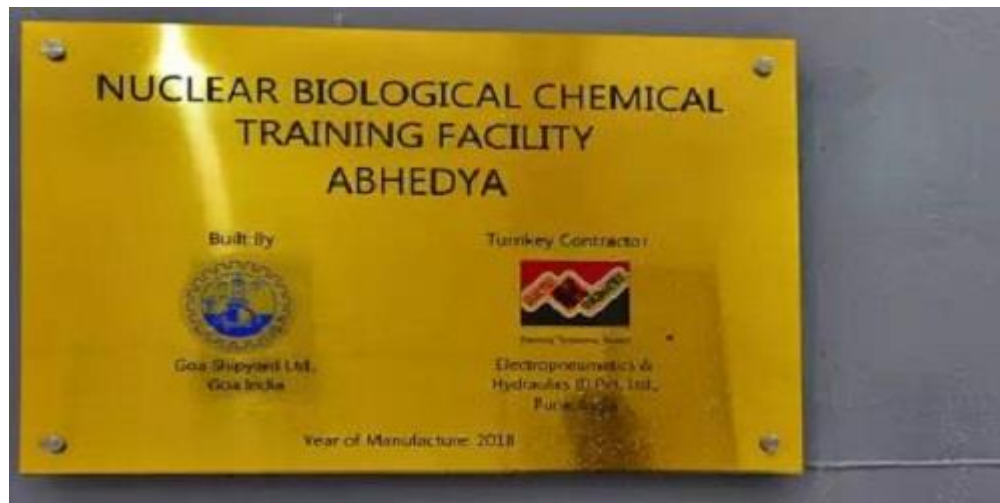
About Maharashtra

- ◆ **Capital:** Mumbai
- ◆ **Governor:** Vidyasagar Rao
- ◆ **Chief Minister:** Devendra Fadnavis
- ◆ **National park:** Chandoli National Park, Gugamal National Park, Nawegaon National Park, Tadoba National Park

26 March

Indian Navy's Nuclear, Biological, Chemical Training Facility ABHEDYA initiated at INS Shivaji, Lonavla

The state of the art **Nuclear, Biological, Chemical Training Facility** (NBCTF) named **ABHEDYA** of Indian Navy has been commissioned at **INS Shivaji**, Lonavla in Mumbai by Admiral Sunil Lanba, PVSM AVSM ADC, Chief of the Naval Staff.



i. It will provide training to naval personnel in detection, protection against and decontamination of nuclear, biological and chemical agents.

ii. The theme of the logo of technical training establishment is "**Propelling the Indian Navy since 1945**".

iii. It was constructed by **Goa Shipyard Limited** (GSL).

World's largest e-waste recycling hub opened at the Dubai Industrial Park, Dubai



On 26th March 2019, the **world's largest e-waste recycling plant** has opened in **Dubai Industrial Park, Dubai** by 'Enviroserve' company with a total cost of \$5 million.

Key Points:

- i. It will recycle Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE), IT asset disposition (ITAD), refrigerant gas and specialized waste. The processing capacity of this recycling hub is **100,000 tonnes** of total integrated waste (per year), of which **39,000 tonnes is e-waste**.
- ii. The recycling hub will use state-of-the-art reclamation technology, which beat the European Union's standards for e-waste.
- iii. The project is supported by the Swiss Government Export Finance Agency.

LIMA 2019 Aero Expo held in Langkawi, Malaysia

The 5 days long, Langkawi International Maritime Aero Expo (LIMA-2019) is being commenced at Langkawi, Malaysia. Indian Air force is participating for the first time to enhance the relationship between the two services.



Key Points

- i. In LIMA 2019, Indian side is representing by its indigenous **supersonic fighters jet Tejas** and **anti submarine warfare corvette INS Kadmat**.
- ii. The Expo will provide Indian Air Force an opportunity to interact with the Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) Counterparts and create a close relationship with them.
- iii. The Indian group consists 02xLCA, 01xC-130J and one x IL-76ac along with 27 officers, 42 air warriors and 11 HAL personnel.

About Malaysia

- ◆ **Capital** : Kuala Lumpur
- ◆ **Currency** : Ringgit
- ◆ **Prime Minister** : Mahathir Bin Mohammed

MITRASHAKTI – VI, a Joint training exercise between Indian and Sri Lanka Army held in Diyatalawa in Sri Lanka

From 26 March to 08 April 2019, the joint training exercise **MITRASHAKTI –**

VI between **Indian and Sri Lanka Army** is being held at **Diyatalawa in Sri Lanka** to strengthen interoperability, mutual understanding and built a better relationship between both the armies.



Key Points:

- i.** An Indian contingent of **120 Army personnel**, including 11 officers took part in this exercise.
- ii.** It is an annual event held in India and Sri Lanka alternatively. The previous exercise (**MITRASHAKTI – V**) was held at **Pune, India** where 120 personnel of Sri Lanka Army had participated.
- iii.** The exercise will also help to build excellence in tackling terrorism, conduct of joint tactical operations and building combat skills.

About Sri Lanka

- ◆ **Capitals:** Colombo, Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte
- ◆ **Currency:** Sri Lankan rupee
- ◆ **Prime minister:** Ranil Wickremesinghe
- ◆ **President:** Maithripala Sirisena

Pakistan approved SharadaPeeth Corridor proposal for Hindu Pilgrims from India

After Kartarpur Corridor, now Government of Pakistan has given its consent to the proposal of opening SharadaPeeth Corridor for Hindu pilgrims to visit **SharadaPeeth** located in **Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (POK)**.



- i. The 5000 years old SharadaPeeth is an **ancient Hindu temple** and cultural site in PoK.
- ii. Through the Apple Wallet App,the application for Apple Card can be made and the users can also track expenses on a daily, weekly, monthly or even category-wise basis.

APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNS

Shambhu S Kumaran appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the Kingdom of Morocco

Shambhu S Kumaran, a 1995 batch Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer has been appointed as next India's Ambassador to Kingdom of Morocco.



i. He presently works as a Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Defence. He will succeed Dr. Kheya Bhattacharya.

N S Srinath appointed as Non-Executive Chairman of KarurVysya Bank

On 26th March 2019, **KarurVysya Bank appointed N S Srinath as Non-Executive Independent Chairman for a period of 3 years.** The appointment is subject to the approval of the Reserve Bank of India and the Shareholders of the Bank.

Key Points

- i. Srinath is graduate in Science and Law and a Certified Associate of Indian Institute of Bankers. He is also a certificate holder in Industrial Finance.
- ii. N S Srinath started his career in Canara Bank in the year 1970 and served in the areas of Information Technology, Projects and HRD.
- iii. He served as an Executive Director of the Bank of Baroda (Trinidad and Tobago) Limited and Bank of Baroda Ghana Limited.
- iv. He also served in board of **Central Registry of Securitisation Asset Reconstruction and Security Interest in India (CERSAI)**.

About KarurVysya Bank

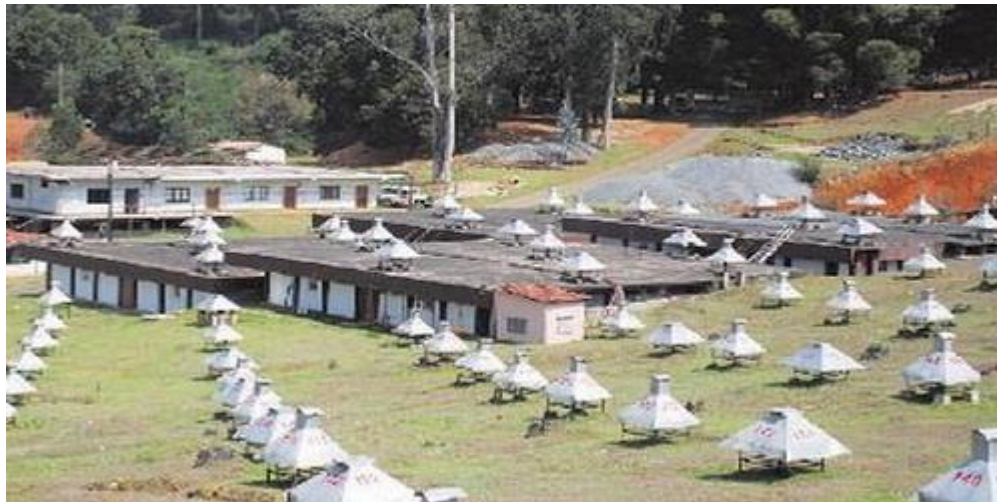
- ◆ **Headquarter** :Karur
- ◆ **MD and CEO** : P R Seshadri



SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

For the first time in the world, Ooty's muon detection facility measures potential of thundercloud

On 23rd March 2019, for the first time in the world, **researchers at the GRAPES-3 muon telescope facility in Ooty** have measured a **thundercloud's electrical potential**, size, and height which was passed overhead on 1st December 2014. This measure will help to navigate aircraft and to prevent short circuits in aeroplanes.



Key Points:

- i. The Thunderstorms can reach voltages **ten times greater** than those previously recorded which was 1.3 billion volts.
- ii. Sunil Gupta at the **Tata Institute of Fundamental Research in Mumbai**, India, and his team used the GRAPES-3 facility in Ooty, India, to record muons.
- iii. The Muon particles are originated when cosmic rays strike into Earth's atmosphere.



NASA's Hubble Captured birth of giant storm on Neptune

On 25th March 2019, the **National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)** stated that its **Hubble Space Telescope** has captured the birth of a giant storm on Neptune.

Key Points

- i. The new finding will help to understand the **inner workings** of the planets and in the study of exoplanets of similar size and composition.
- ii. **Hubble Space Telescope was launched in 1990 by NASA.** The photos was taken by the Hubble for the past several years shows the growth of a new great Dark spot in Neptune.

27 March

ISRO launches Young Scientist Programme for schoolkids

On the lines of Centre Govt mission "**Jai Vigyan, Jai Anusandhan**", Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has initiated Young Scientist Programme named "**YUvaVigyanikAryakram**" – (**Yuvika**) for school children with a purpose to enhance their interest in the emerging areas of Space activities by imparting basic knowledge on Space Technology, Space Science and Space Applications. This two week long programme is regarded as "**Catch them young**".

Features of Yuvika:

- i. The programme will be of two weeks duration during summer holidays (second half of May 2019) and is scheduled to be held at 4 centers of ISRO.
- ii. Students of 9th standard (in the academic year 2018-19) and waiting to join 10th Std (or just joined 10th Std) are eligible for the online registration from 25 March 2019 (1800 hrs) to 03 April 2019 (1800 hrs).
- iii. The selection is based on the 8th Standard academic performance and extracurricular activities.
- iv. The expenses of the selected students during the entire course will be borne by ISRO.

About ISRO

- ◆ Establishment – 1969
- ◆ Headquarters – Bengaluru
- ◆ Director – Kailasavadivoo Sivan

Creation of additional posts of 3 Judicial Members and 3 Technical Members in the NCLAT approved by the Cabinet

On 27th March 2019, Union Cabinet approved the creation of additional posts of three Judicial Members and three Technical Members in the **National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT)**.



Key

Points

- i. It will **ensure the time frame for disposal of cases** and will also meet the mandate provided to NCLAT by the Finance Act, 2017, the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code(IBC), 2016 and the Companies Act 2013.
- ii. The additional posts will be **created in Level 17** which is equal to Rs 2,25,000 as fixed plus allowances as admissible. The total **financial involvement will be Rs 2,27,82,096**.
- iii. The tribunal hears appeals against rulings of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT).

BUSINESS & ECONOMY

Energy demand of India surpassed the global growth, as per IEA

In accordance with the **International Energy Agency (IEA) Global Energy & CO2 status report**, India's energy demand has surpassed the global demand growth in 2018. India's primary demand increased 4% in 2018 in comparison to energy consumption worldwide grew by 2.3%. This accounts for 11 per cent of global demand growth.

- i. The growth in India was led by coal for power generation and oil for transport.

Pact for exchange of reports to check tax evasion by MNCs signed between India and US

On 27th March 2019, India and United States signed an Inter-Governmental Agreement for exchange of Country-by-Country (CbC) reports to **check the tax evasions of Multinational Companies** in income allocation and taxes paid. MNEs with **revenue of 750 million Euros(5500 cr) or more** per annum are required to **file CbC reports** in their parent entity's jurisdiction.



Key Points

- i.** The Bilateral Competent Authority Arrangement for exchange of CbC reports will enable the countries to **automatically exchange the reports** filed by the ultimate parent entities of Multi National Enterprises (MNEs).
- ii.** The **Chairman of Central Board of Direct Taxes, PC Mody** and US Ambassador to India, Kenneth Juster signed the agreement.
- iii.** India has been enabled with 62 jurisdictions by signing the **Multilateral Component Authority Agreement (MCAA)** earlier.
- iv.** The CbC reports requires MNCs to provide information about the name of each country where it operates, names of Subsidiaries and affiliates, performance of each Subsidiary, tax charge in accounts, detail of cost and net book value of fixed asset and gross and net assets details.

About United States

- ◆ Capital : Washington
- ◆ Currency : Dollar
- ◆ President : Donald Trump

AzaliAssoumani re-elected as the President of Comoros



On 26th March 2019, **AzaliAssoumani** was re-elected as the President of **Comoros** after defeating his closest rival, **MohamoudouAhamada** in the election held by the electoral commission of the Indian Ocean Archipelago.

i. 66 years old, Azali Assoumani who first took office in 2016, was credited with **60.77 percent** votes whereas Mohamoudou Ahamada got only 14.62 percent votes.



Eight newly appointed members of Lokpal take oath of office

On 27th March 2019, eight newly appointed members of the **anti-corruption ombudsman Lokpal** has taken oath of office which was administered by **Lokpal Chairperson, Justice Pinaki Chandra Ghose**.

Key Points

- i. The four judicial members are former Chief Justices – Dilip B Bhosale, Pradip Kumar Mohanty, Abhilasha Kumari and the Chief Justice of Chhattisgarh High Court Ajay Kumar Tripathi.
- ii. The non-judicial members are former first women chief of Sashastra Seema Bal, Archana Ramasundaram, ex-Maharashtra Chief Secretary, Dinesh Kumar Jain, former IPS officer, Mahendra Singh and ex-IAS officer, Indrajeet Prasad Gautam.
- iii. Lokpal which means caretaker of people is an **anti-corruption authority or body of ombudsman** who represents the public interest in the Republic of India.

Rear Admiral Rajesh Pendharkar, to be designated as Flag Officer Commanding Maharashtra Naval Area

On 26th March 2019, **Rear Admiral Rajesh Pendharkar** has been appointed as the **Flag Officer Commanding Maharashtra Naval Area**. He will succeed Rear Admiral Puneet Kumar Bahl, VSM.

Key Points:

- i. He was commissioned into the Indian Navy in **Jan 1987** and he is an **Anti-Submarine Warfare specialist**.
- ii. He has experience as Executive Officer of missile corvette **INS Kirpan**, and missile destroyer **INS Mysore**. He also holds his experience as command of missile corvette **INS Kora**, missile frigate **INS Shivalik** and the aircraft carrier **INS Viraat**.
- iii. Also, he is a recipient of the **Vishisht Seva Medal** for distinguished service.

About Maharashtra

- ◆ **Capital:** Mumbai
- ◆ **Governor:** Vidyasagar Rao
- ◆ **Chief Minister:** Devendra Fadnavis
- ◆ **National park:** Chandoli National Park, Gugamal National Park, Nawegaon National Park, Tadoba National Park.

Veteran coach Veselin Matic to be designated as coach for Indian Men's basketball team



On 25th March 2019, veteran coach **Veselin Matic (58)** has been appointed as the **national men's basketball team coach** by Basketball Federation of India. He will succeed Zoran Visic, who is currently on the charge of coach of Indian women's basketball team.

Key Points:

- i.** He led **Iran** to their **Asian Championship title in 2009** which they won after beating China and also led to their first ever **World Championship qualification in 2010**.
- ii.** He not only coached **Iran, Syria** but also coached the **Polish and Lebanese** Basketball teams previously.

India becomes the 4th country to conduct A-SAT missile test "Mission Shakti" successfully

On 27 March 2019, India has proved its capability of defending its outer space assets after **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** has conducted a successful **Anti-Satellite (ASAT)** missile test "**Mission Shakti**" from the **Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Island** (earlier, Wheeler island) in Odisha. It took just 3 minute. This is India's first successful **Anti-Satellite (ASAT)** missile test.



i. The

target was hit by the DRDO developed **Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) Interceptor Missile**, in Low Earth Orbit (LEO) in a “Hit to Kill” mode at a height of 300 km from the earth’s surface. The satellite used as target in the mission was one of India’s existing satellites.

ii. Mission Shakti is a joint programme of DRDO and the **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)**.

iii. There are many countries which have A-SAT capability but it has been demonstrated by only 4 countries: United States, Russia, China and India.

Related Point: International law on weapons in outer space

The principal international Treaty on space is the **1967 Outer Space Treaty**, which prohibits only weapons of mass destruction in outer space, not ordinary weapons. India is a signatory to this treaty. So, adhering to this, this test is just a credible deterrence against threats to India’s space based assets.

Anti-intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) system, was successfully launched by the US Missile Defence Agency

On 26th March 2019, **The US Missile Defence Agency** had successfully tested an **anti-intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) system**, which was launched with a target from the Marshall Islands shot down by two interceptors based in California.

Key points:

i. The US Missile Defence Agency has developed the **Ground-based Midcourse Defense (GMD) system** to protect against the threat from ICBMs. This GMD system designed to fire an interceptor missile into space and use kinetic energy to destroy the incoming target.

ii. In 2017 **North Korea** became the latest entrant to the ICBM club after it tested the Hwasong-15, which is capable of reaching the whole US mainland.

28 March

Cabinet approved 5 year extension of Biomedical Research Career Programme

On 27th March, 2019, the **Union Cabinet** chaired by Narendra Modi approved the extension of the **Biomedical Research Career Programme and Wellcome Trust (WT)/DBT India Alliance** beyond its initial 10-year term(2008-09 to 2018-29) to a new **five year phase (2019-20 to 2023-24)**.

Key Points

- i. It was launched in 2008 and has fulfilled its objectives of building and nurturing talent of highest global standards in cutting-edge biomedical research in India.
- ii. The total financial implication will be **Rs 1092 crore** with DBT and WT.
- iii. In this new phase, the programme will aim to strengthen clinical research and work for addressing important health challenges for India.

Centre has come up with new rules for drugs, clinical trials

The **Ministry of Health** has notified **New Drugs and Clinical Trials Rules, 2019** for the approval of new drugs and conduct of clinical trials in the country. It aims to ensure patient safety and promote clinical research in the country. These rules will be applicable to all new drugs, investigational new drugs for human use, clinical trials, bio-equivalence studies and ethics committees.

About New Rules:

i. **Time required for the approval of application has reduced –30 days for drugs manufactured in India and 90 days for those developed outside the country.**

ii. **Waiving off local clinical trial** – The requirement of a local clinical trial may be waived for approval of a new drug if it is approved and marketed in any of the countries (EU, UK, Australia, Japan and US) specified by the Drugs Controller General with the approval of the government.

iii. **No Communication will led to deemed approval** – In case of **no communication** from **Drugs Controller General of India**, the application will be deemed to have been approved.

Related Points:

Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) – S Eswara Reddy

India and African Union signed MoU to strengthen cooperation in the healthcare sector

On 27th March 2019, **India and the African Union** signed Memorandum of Understanding

(MoU) to establish an **India-Africa health sciences collaborative platform** which is aimed to strengthen the cooperation in the health sector.



Key Points

- i. The agreement aims to formalize this partnership by establishing a framework to pave the way for cooperation in research and development, capacity building, pharmaceutical trade, health services and manufacturing capabilities for drugs and diagnostics.
- ii. The programme would focus on improved diagnostics for diseases which are regional priorities in India and Africa, by training and strengthening capacity of health professionals, researchers, regulators and industry staff.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

India's poverty rate reduced as per Global Multidimensional Poverty Index 2018

In accordance with the **2018 global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)**, India's poverty rate has shown a drastic decrease in 10 years, **from 55% to 28%**. The index has shown that, in the years between 2005-06 and 2015-16, 271 million people are moved out of poverty in India.

- i. Apart from the huge progress, **India** is still a home to the **highest number of MPI poor** comprising **364 million** poor in 2015-16. Although the number is reduced from 635 million in 2005-06.
- ii. More than half of the India's multidimensional poor (196 million) are from the four states viz. **Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh** while **Delhi, Kerala and Goa** have lowest multidimensional poverty.
- iii. On the **global front**, there are **1.3 billion** people live in multidimensional poverty. By region, MPI index is higher in **Sub-Saharan Africa**.

About Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI):

The MPI report has covered **105 countries**, which was compiled by the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** and the **Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative**.

MPI is calculated on the basis of three key dimensions: **health, education and standard of living**, comprising 10 indicators.

Singapore airport named world's best aviation hub for the seventh time

On **28th March 2019**, Skytrax World Airport Awards named **Singapore's Changi Airport** as the the world's best aviation hub for the **seventh time** in a row, while **Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport**, New Delhi climbed 8 places to rank at **59th Position**.



Key

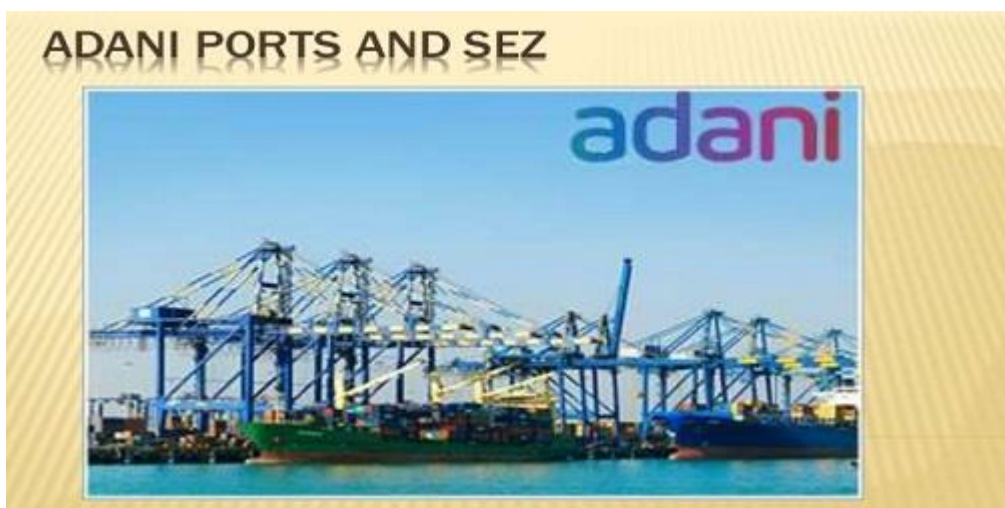
Points

- i. The **Skytrax World Airport Awards** are voted for by customers in a global airport customer satisfaction survey and the awards were distributed at the **Passenger Terminal Expo 2019** in London.
- ii. **Tokyo International Airport**(Japan) was ranked at the second spot whereas Incheon International Airport(South Korea) ranked at the third spot.

BUSINESS & ECONOMY

Adani Port becomes the first Indian port operator to achieve a new record of handling 200 million tonnes (MT) cargo movement

On 27th March 2019, **Adani Port and Special Economic Zone (APSEZ)**, a part of Gautam Adani-led Adani Group becomes **the first Indian port operator** to achieve a new record of handling **200 million tonnes (MT) cargo movement** in **2018-19**.



Key Points:

- i. Adani Port achieved this milestone before their estimate time that is **by 2020**.
- ii. Adani Port and Special Economic Zone (APSEZ) has **10 ports and terminals** including Mundra, Dahej, Kandla and Hazira in Gujarat, Dhamra in Odisha, Mormugao in Goa,

Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh, and Kattupalli and Ennore in Chennai, all this represents **24 percent** of the country's total port capacity.

iii. Also, it has set an aim to **double growth up to 400 MT** by 2025.



AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS

YoshuaBengio, Geoffrey Hinton, and Yann LeCun conferred with Turing Award, the Nobel Prize of computing

Regarded as "Godfathers of AI", **YoshuaBengio, Geoffrey Hinton, and Yann LeCun**, have been recognized with **Nobel Prize of computing, Turing Award 2018**. The **\$1 million annual prize** recognized their work for developing the AI (Artificial intelligence) subfield of deep learning. The troika has developed a base for the recent growth of AI technologies, through their work in the 1990s and 2000.



About Winners:

- i. Geoffrey Hinton** is a faculty member in the University of Toronto and Brain researcher of Google.
- ii. YoshuaBengio** is a professor at the University of Montreal and founder of AI company called Element AI.
- iii. Yann LeCun** is a chief AI scientist of Facebook and a professor at New York University (NYU).

About Turing Award:

Initiated in 1966, this annual award is named after British mathematician **Alan M. Turing**, whose work laid the foundation for computer science and artificial intelligence. It honors the individual for contributing major technical importance in the computer field. First recipient – **Alan Perlis**

Nobel Prize recipient Amartya Sen honoured with Oxford University's Bodley award

On 27th March 2019, **Nobel Prize**-winning economist **Amartya Sen** has been honoured with the **prestigious Bodley Medal**, the highest honour bestowed by the University of Oxford's world-famous Bodleian Libraries for his contribution in literature, culture, science, and communication.



Key Points:

- i. In 1998, he was awarded the prestigious **Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences** for his work in welfare economics and social choice theory.
- ii. The other winners of the Bodley Medal are Nobel Prize-winning novelist **Kazuo Ishiguro**, physicist **Stephen Hawking**, novelist **Hilary Mantel** and inventor of the World Wide Web **Tim Berners-Lee**.

Delhi government school teacher Manu Gulati honoured with Martha Farrell Award 2019

On 28th March 2019, a Delhi government school teacher, **Manu Gulati** has been honoured with the **Martha Farrell award for Excellence in Women's Empowerment 2019** in the **Most Promising Individual category** with prize money of INR 1,50,000 for promoting gender quality and women's empowerment.



Key Points:

- i. She collaborates with **America India Foundation's "Market Aligned Skills Training Program"**, through which she assists the training programs for beauticians, weavers, salesgirls, etc in Jalandhar in Punjab, Betul in Madhya Pradesh and Baramullah in Kashmir.
- ii. The Awards were first awarded in **2017** in the memory of **Dr. Martha Farrell**, a prominent activist for gender equality and women's empowerment.
- iii. The Award is co-sponsored by **RizwanAdatia Foundation (RAF)** and Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA) and backed by Martha Farrell Foundation (MFF).

About Delhi:

- ◆ **Governor:** Anil Baijal,
- ◆ **Chief Minister:** Arvind Kejriwal

- 
- ◆ **Deputy Chief Minister:** Manish Sisodia
 - ◆ **Chief Secretary:** Vijay Kumar Dev
 - ◆ **Commissioner of Police:** Amulya Patnaik



The Indian Green Building Council awarded Gold rating to Vijayawada railway for Green Measure

On 26th March 2019, **The Indian Green Building Council (IGBC)** awarded the Gold Rating to **Vijayawada railway station**, which is known as the busiest railway junctions in India for Green Measures.

Key Points:

- This Railway Station was **ranked fourth** in the Indian Railways for **cleanliness among A-1 category** stations and also it has **100 percent LED lighting**, five star rated fans, pumps, and motors and solar water heating systems.
- With the help of **the Environment Directorate of Indian Railways**, the **IGBC-CII (Confederation of Indian Industry)** developed the **Green Railway Stations Rating System**. It was introduced to help the adoption of green concepts, which in turn minimizes the adverse environmental impact due to station operation and maintenance.

About Andhra Pradesh

- ◆ **Governor:** S. L. Narasimhan
- ◆ **Chief Minister:** Chandrababu Naidu
- ◆ **National Parks:** Sri Venkateswara National Park, Papikonda National Park.

Vice Admiral MA Hampiholi, AVSM, NM to be designated as Director General Naval Operations (DGNO)

On 27th March 2019, **Vice Admiral MA Hampiholi, AVSM NM** has been appointed as **Director General Naval Operations (DGNO)**. He will succeed **Satish Namdeo Ghormade**.

Key Points:

- He was commissioned in the Executive Branch of the Indian Navy on 1st July 1985.
- The Flag Officer has experience as **Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) specialist officer** at onboard **INShips Himgiri, Agray, and Ganga**.
- He has experience as a Commanding officer in **INS Nashak** (missile vessel), **INS Magar** {Landing Ship Tank (Large)} and **INS Talwar** (stealth Frigate), Second-in-Command of **INS Khukri** (Missile Corvette).
- He commanded the **National Coast Guard, Mauritius** for two years (2003 – 05) and served as Commanding Officer of **INS Mandovi**.
- Also, He is a recipient of the **Nao Sena Medal** in 2011 and the **Athi Vishist Seva Medal** in 2019.

Abhay Thakur appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Benin

On 27th March 2019, **Shri Abhay Thakur**, a 1992 batch of Indian Foreign Service officer has been designated as the **Ambassador of Benin**.

Earlier, High Commissioner of India to Nigeria, **Ashok R. Mirchandani**, concurrently

accredited as Ambassador to Benin as India does not have a Resident Diplomatic Mission in Benin.

Key Points:

- i. Presently he is the **High Commissioner of India to Nigeria**
- ii. India does not have a Resident Diplomatic Mission in Benin.

About Nigeria:

- ◆ **Capital:** Abuja
- ◆ **Currency:** Nigerian naira
- ◆ **President:** Muhammadu Buhari

About Benin:

- ◆ **Capital:** Porto-Novo
- ◆ **Currencies:** CFA franc, West African CFA franc
- ◆ **President:** Patrice Talon

Vivek Gupta designated as Director of SAIL in Raw Materials and Logistics

On 27th March 2019, **Vivek Gupta** has assumed the charge of Director (Raw Material & Logistics) of **Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL)**. He joined SAIL in 1980 and has been working for more than 38 years in SAIL.

Vivek Gupta has degree in civil engineer and holds many Diplomas in the field of Business Management, Project management and Construction Management etc.

Justice (Retd.) DK Jain, ombudsman of BCCI appointed as ad-hoc Ethics Officer of BCCI

On 28th March 2019, Retired **Justice DK Jain, ombudsman of the BCCI** (Board of Control for Cricket in India) has been appointed as **BCCI's ad-hoc Ethics Officer** till a permanent appointment takes place.

Key Points:

- i. He will look into all the conflict of interest cases. At present, he is looking into the **chat show controversy of Hardik Pandya and K.L Rahul**, due to which they served provisional suspension which was eventually removed.

About the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI)

- ◆ **President:** K. Khanna
- ◆ **Headquarters:** Mumbai
- ◆ **Women's team coach:** WV Raman
- ◆ **Men's team coach:** Ravi Shastri
- ◆ **Founded:** December 1928

PolicyX.com has named cricketer VirenderSehwag as its Brand Ambassador

An online insurance web aggregator, PolicyX.com has named **Arjuna & Padmashree Awardee, cricketer VirenderSehwag** as its brand ambassador. He will be the face of its **biggest marketing campaign of insurance products** covering term insurance, health insurance, life insurance, car insurance and others.



i. He has personal experience on this campaign, so he wants to raise awareness among people about the importance of having insurance from a trusted advisor.

About PolicyX.com:

- ◆ Establishment – 2013
- ◆ CEO & Founder – Naval Goel

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Researchers from University of Texas has discovered two planets using AI

Astronomers from the University of Texas at Austin, in partnership with Google have discovered two hidden planets in the data collected by the **Kepler space telescope**. They have created an algorithm that has explored the data taken by Kepler to find out signals that were missed by traditional planet-hunting methods.

About newly discovered Planets:

- **K2-293b** – It orbits a star 1,300 light-years away in the constellation Aquarius.
- **K2-294b** – It orbits a star 1,230 light-years away, also located in Aquarius.
- They both are **hot planets** and have **short orbital periods**. They are slightly larger than Earth.
- They are discovered from the **Kepler’s extended mission**, called **K2**.

About the study:

After getting the confirmation of the existence of these planets through AI, the team then used ground-based telescopes to further confirm that the planets are real. These observations were done with the **1.5-meter telescope** at the Smithsonian Institution’s Whipple Observatory in Arizona and the **Gillett Telescope** at Gemini Observatory in Hawaii. The study led by **Anne Dattilo**, is published in the **The Astronomical Journal**.

Telangana government unveiled its Digital portal for MSMEs

On 27th March, 2019, **Telangana** government has launched a digital business networking portal for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises MSMEs – Telangana State **GlobalLinker** ([ts-](#)

msme.globallinker.com). This networking portal will digitise over 2.3 million MSMEs of the State which would connect them to the global economy.



<http://ts-msme.globallinker.com/>



Key points

- i. The motive behind this is to address key challenges faced by MSMEs with the core objective of making their business growth more simpler, more profitable and enjoyable.
- ii. It will also allow MSMEs to create a digital profile for their business, connect with other global MSMEs, enable them to find buyers and suppliers, gain visibility and receive up-to-date industry trends and news.

About Telangana

- ◆ Capital- Hyderabad
- ◆ CM- K. Chandrashekar Rao
- ◆ Governor- E.S.L. Narasimham

29 March

Interaction of India with ambassadors and High Commissioners of European and Oceania Countries in New Delhi

On 28th March 2019, an Interactive session was held between **India and ambassadors & High Commissioners of European and Oceania Countries in New Delhi**. The aim of the interactive session was to take economic ties with European and Oceania countries to a next level. Various trade negotiations were also discussed in the session.

Key Points

- i. Bilateral trade between India and Europe is of **USD 130.1 Billion** and import and export between the countries has registered double digit growth.
- ii. India is the fifth largest exporter for Australia and major exports from India to Australia include refined Petroleum, Business services and Pharmaceutical.
- iii. Companies from Oceania, have invested around **1034.2 million US Dollars** in India market between April 2000 and December 2018.

About European Union

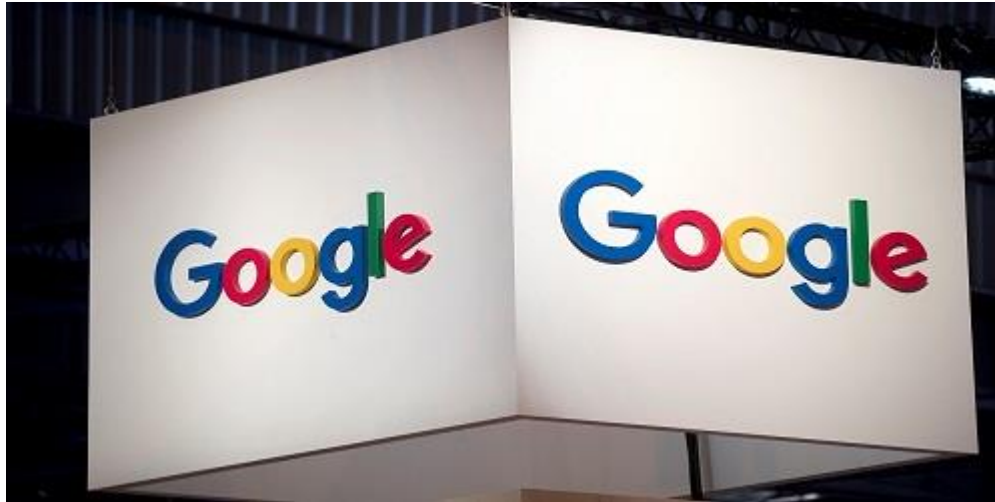
- ◆ Capital: Brussels

- ◆ President of Council: Donald Tusk
- ◆ President of the Parliament: Antonio Tajani



Google has launched global advisory council for AI and Tech Ethics

Google has constituted an **eight-member Advanced Technology External Advisory Council** that will examine the ethical challenges related to artificial intelligence (AI) and other emerging technologies.



i. The aim of the council is to **provide recommendations** for Google and other companies and researchers regarding the AI.

ii. The council will meet four times, beginning in April and will publish its report by the end of 2019.

About Google:

- ◆ Parent organization – Alphabet Inc.
- ◆ Headquarters – Mountain View, California, United States
- ◆ CEO – SundarPichai
- ◆ Founders – Larry Page, Sergey Brin

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Pentagon diversion of US \$1 Billion for US-Mexico border Wall

The **Pentagon**, the headquarters of the United States Department of Defence has notified that it has authorized to shift **US \$1 billion** from a military personnel account to establish a new wall of 57 mile and 18 foot high fence at the southern U.S. Mexico border.

Key points

- i. This wall would prevent illegal migration and drug trafficking from Mexico.
- ii. Department of Defense has authorised the Army Corp of Engineers to begin planning and construction for the project.
- iii. The department will direct the funds towards fencing along the Yuma and El Paso sections of the border.

About United States

- ◆ Capital- Washington, D.C.
- ◆ President- Donald Trump
- ◆ Currency- US Dollar

US signed agreement with Oman to use its Southern Ports

The **United States Navy** has signed an agreement with **Oman** to use the southern Omani ports which will allow American ships and warplanes to take advantage of omani ports and airports.



Key points

- This deal is aimed at bolstering **Omani-American military relations**.
- The deal will benefit the facilities offered at some of the Sultanate's ports and airports during visits of the US military vessels and aircraft, particularly in the port of Duqm.

About Oman

- ◆ Capital- Muscat
- ◆ Currency- Omani Rial

Ottawa hosted 16th meeting of the Canada-India Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism

The 16th meeting of the **Canada-India Joint Working Group** on Counter-Terrorism and its Expert Sub-group was held in **Ottawa** on 26th and 27th March to provide detailed briefings on their respective nation's counter-terrorism priorities, strategies and legislative frameworks.



Key points

- i. The meeting has reviewed the threats posed by terrorist groups worldwide and in their respective countries and regions.
- ii. In this meeting, India and Canada have signed an agreement on a Joint Action Plan outlining to strengthen collaboration in counter-terrorism.

About Canada

- ◆ Capital – Ottawa
- ◆ Currency- Canadian Dollar
- ◆ PM- Justin Trudeau

BANKING & FINANCE

Govt decides to infuse Rs 5042 Cr into Bank Of Baroda ahead of the merger

On 28th March 2019, The government has decided to infuse a capital of **5,042 crore rupees** into state-owned **Bank of Baroda** ahead of its merger with two other public sector lenders Dena Bank and VijayaBank, with Bank of Baroda which would be effective from **1st April 2019**.

Key Points:

- i. With this initiative, the **share price** of Bank of Baroda rose **6.21%** to 129.10 compared to the previous close of 121.55 on BSE (Bombay Stock Exchange).
- ii. According to the Scheme of Amalgamation, shareholders of **Vijaya Bank** and **Dena Bank** will get **402 equity** shares and **110 equity** shares of BoB respectively for every 1,000 shares held.

About Bank of Baroda

- ◆ **Headquarters:** Alkapuri, Vadodara
- ◆ **MD and CEO:** S. Jayakumar
- ◆ **Tagline:** India's International Bank

BUSINESS & ECONOMY

Commerce Ministry unveils Blockchain-based app for Coffee farmers

The commerce ministry has unveiled a blockchain-based coffee e-marketplace which will facilitate farmers to integrate with markets to get aware of fair prices for the commodity.



Key points

- i. It will reduce the number of layers between coffee growers and buyers and help farmers double their income.

AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS

Tashigang becomes the World's highest Polling station

Highest polling booth



Tashigang at an altitude of 15,256 feet has now become the **world's highest polling station** in the sleepy hamlet of Buddhist-dominated Lahaul-Spiti district of **Himachal Pradesh**.

Key points:

- i. Tashigang polling station falls in one of the 17 assembly segments that form the MandiLok Sabha seat.
- ii. This polling station covers two villages of Tashigang and Gete. As per the revised electoral rolls, the two villages have 48 voters, of which 30 are men and 18 women.

About Himachal Pradesh

- ◆ Capital- Shimla
- ◆ CM- Shri Jai Ram Thakur
- ◆ Governor- Acharya Dev Vrat

APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNS

RustomIrani appointed as Hitachi Payment Services' Managing Director

On 29th March 2019, **RustomIrani**, the **CEO of Cash Business of Hitachi Payment** has been appointed as the new **Managing Director** of Hitachi Payment Services Pvt. Ltd. (Hitachi

Payments). He will succeed **Loney Antony**.

Key Point:

- i. Rustom served as the **Chief Operations Officer** of Hitachi Payment Services, before assuming the role of the **CEO of the company's Cash Business** in April 2018.
- ii. He worked with **MindTree** as the Senior Vice President in the IMTS business, also worked with **Sify, Yahoo India, and Citibank India's** Technology Division.

About Hitachi

- ◆ **Headquarters:**Chiyoda, Tokyo, Japan
- ◆ **CEO:**Toshiaki Higashihara
- ◆ **Founded:**1910

About Hitachi Payment Services Pvt. Ltd

- ◆ **Founded:**2005
- ◆ **Parent organization:**Hitachi

Indian Test Cricketer, Mayank Agarwal, appointed as Brand Ambassador of Aeronutrix'sFast&Up

On 29th March 2019, Indian Test Cricketer, **Mayank Agarwal**, appointed as Brand Ambassador of **Aeronutrix'sFast&Up Rope** for the growth of the fast-moving healthcare goods business in India.

Key Points:

- i. He has a record of making **1000 runs** on the domestic season in 2017-18, within a single month.
- ii. This sports nutrition brand is backed by innovative **Swiss technology**.

ACQUISITIONS & MERGERS

PFC has been named as the India's second largest Govt-owned Financial Firm after SBI

After acquiring majority stake in **REC Ltd** (formerly Rural Electrification Corporation Limited), centre backed **Power Finance Corporation** (PFC) has become the India's second largest Govt-owned Financial Firm after State Bank of India (SBI), based on **market capitalization**.





i. PFC has bought the **52.63%** controlling stake in REC through **Rs 14,500 crore** deal with Union government.

ii. The REC' shares were acquired at **Rs139.50 per equity share price**. 70% of the deal was financed through cash inflows and the balance through debt.

iii. This acquisition has impacted union government beneficially, as it exceeded the disinvestment target of Rs 80,000 crore for the fiscal year 2018-19.

Related Points:

- ◆ PFC CMD – Rajeev Sharma
- ◆ REC CMD – Ramesh V Penumaka

CROSS