

**NATIONAL****22 GPS stations set by GSI across India**

- In order to identify seismically hazardous zones and encourage mapping activities, the Geological Survey of India (GSI) launched 22 permanent Global Positioning System (GPS) stations across India, which is a part of its objective to establish and maintain a network of continuously operating 35 permanent GPS stations in a phased manner.
- 22 GPS permanent stations have been set up and remaining 13 will be operational by March 2020.
- The 22 GPS-Geodetic (pertaining to Geodesy, the science of earth measurement) observatories are located in Kolkata, Thiruvananthapuram, Jaipur, Pune, Dehradun, Chennai, Jabalpur, Bhubaneswar, Patna, Raipur, Bhopal, Chandigarh, Gandhinagar Visakhapatnam, Agartala, Itanagar, Mangan, Jammu, Lucknow, Nagpur, Shillong and Little Andaman.

**As Per NARSS 2018-19, 96.5% of Indian rural households have access to toilets**

- An Independent Verification Agency under the World Bank support project to the Swachh Bharat Mission Grameen (SBM-G) conducted the National Annual Rural Sanitation Survey (NARSS) between November 2018 and February 2019, covering 92040 households in 6136 villages across the country and found that 96.5% of the rural Indian households have access to toilets and they use it.
- It also re-confirmed the Open Defecation Free (ODF) status of 90.7% of villages which were previously declared and verified as ODF by various districts and states.
- 95.4% of the villages surveyed found to have minimal litter and minimal stagnant water
- Since the launch of Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) programme, over 9 crore toilets have been built across rural India and over 5.5 lakh villages and 615 districts have been declared ODF, along with 30 ODF States and Union Territories.

**Project BOLD-QIT inaugurated in Assam by Rajnath Singh**

- BOLD-QIT which is Border Electronically Dominated QRT Interception Technique was inaugurated by Home Minister Rajnath Singh on 61km India-Bangladesh border in Dhubri, Assam.
- It was adopted to deal with the problem of border safeguarding in the areas where border fences can't be constructed due to Brahmaputra river.
- The project was brought to life by Information and Technology Wing of BSF (Border Security Force) under Comprehensive Integrated Border Management system (CIBMS).

**Shakuntala D. Gamlin laid foundation stone for NIMHR in Sehore, MP**

- The foundation stone for the 'National Institute of Mental Health Rehabilitation' (NIMHR), the **first-of-its-kind** institute in **India**, was laid down by **Shakuntala D. Gamlin**, Secretary, Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD), Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment at **Sherpur Village** along **Bhopal-Sehore** highway, District **Sehore**, **Madhya Pradesh**.

**NITI Aayog Development ranking topped by 3 districts of Jharkhand**

- NITI Aayog's list of aspirational districts for the period of **December 2018-January 2019** has been topped by **3** districts of Jharkhand- **Chatra, Sahibganj, and Hazaribagh**.
- These districts are also said to have performed well in '**health and nutrition**' parameters.

**Odisha Government announces financial assistance for craftsmen**

- Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik launched the scheme '**Mukhya Mantri Karigar Sahayata**' for financial assistance to craftsmen. The nodal department of the scheme is the Directorate of handicrafts.
- Craftsmen with **10 years of experience** and having annual income below **Rs.1 lakh** are eligible to get an assistance of **Rs.800 per month**.
- For craftsmen **above 80 years of age** would get **Rs.1000 per month** allowance for those has the same experience and annual income as above.
- **Annual income certificate, residence proof, experience certificate and age proof** are required to produce for availing the benefits of the scheme.

**INTERNATIONAL****Gurugram became world's most polluted city in 2018**

- Gurugram in the National Capital Region (NCR) emerged as the most polluted region in the world in 2018 as per 2018 World Air Quality Report.
- As per the report, Delhi is the most polluted capital in the world. In the list of polluted cities, Delhi ranked 11<sup>th</sup>.
- Out of the top 10 polluted cities in 2018, seven were India, which are Ghaziabad, Faridabad, Bhiwandi, Noida, Patna and Lucknow.
- The report was based on a new study by Swiss based company IQ Air AirVisual and non profit organization Greenpeace on information from over 3000 cities.
- Bangladesh became the most polluted country closely followed by Pakistan and India while Iceland, Finland, Australia, Estonia and Sweden were among the least polluted countries.

**The 12-day Aerial Exercise Red Flag 2019 began in US**

- Red Flag 2019, the 12-day long advanced aerial combat training exercise held several times a year by the US Air Force, has been initiated at Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada, United States.
- The exercise is scheduled from 3rd to 16th March 2019 and air forces from United States, the United Arab Emirates, Belgium, the Netherlands, Singapore and Saudi Arabia are participating in it.

**Loan Agreement worth USD 25.2 Million signed between India and the World Bank for Chhattisgarh Public Financial Management and Accountability Program**

- A loan agreement worth \$25.2 Million was signed between the central government, Chhattisgarh state government and the World Bank.
- The agreement was signed in New Delhi by Mr. Sameer Kumar Khare, Additional Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, on behalf of the Government of India; Ms Kamal Preet Dhillon, Secretary, Finance, on behalf of the Government of Chhattisgarh; and Mr. Hisham Abdo, Acting Country Director, World Bank India, on behalf of the World Bank.

**Loan Agreement worth USD 96 Million signed between India and World Bank for Additional Financing for Uttarakhand Disaster Recovery Project**

- A loan agreement worth \$96 Million was signed between the World Bank, Government of India and Government of Uttarakhand.
- The agreement aims to provide financial support to Uttarakhand for adopting post-disaster recovery plans and disaster management techniques such as reconstruction of bridges, road and river bank protection works, and in the construction of a training facility for the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF).
- The loan amounting to **\$96 Million**, from the **International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)** has a **5-year** grace period and a final maturity of **15** years.
- This initiative to promote yoga was taken by **Overseas President of BJP for Hong Kong and China Sohan Goenka**.

**India offers world's cheapest mobile data: UK report**

- **India has the cheapest mobile data in the world** as per the research by price comparison site **cable.co.uk**. The global average was **USD 8.53 for 1GB**.
- **India is the second largest smartphone market** in the world after **China** with over **4.30 million** smartphone users. The study was based on **6313 mobile data plans in 230** countries.

**Malaysia joined the International Criminal Court**

- **Malaysia** became a member of the **International Criminal Court (ICC)**, the world's only permanent war crimes court which aims to prosecute the worst abuses when national courts are unable or unwilling.

**ECONOMY****ICICI Bank acquired 9.9% stake in Kisan Finance for cash consideration of Rs 17.82 crore.**

- **ICICI Bank** announced that it will buy **1.49 crore shares** to acquire **9.9% stake** in the non-banking finance company (NBFC) **Kisan Finance** for **Rs 17.82 crore**.
- The acquisition is expected to be over by the end of **March 2019**.
- Incorporated in December 2017, **Kisan Rural Finance Ltd (Kisan Finance)** had registered a net loss of **Rs 48 lakh** in **2017-18** at a revenue of **Rs 4 lakh**.

**World Bank to grant 250 Million dollars for NRETP to boost Rural incomes in India**

- In order to provide a boost to rural income across **13 states** on India, **World Bank** shall provide **\$250 million** support to the **National Rural Economic Transformation Project (NRETP)**.
- The agreement was signed between the **World Bank and Government of India**.

**World Bank to provide Rs 2,200 crores for a healthcare project to Andhra Pradesh**

- The **World Bank** has decided to provide a loan of **Rs. 2200 crores (\$328-million)** to **Andhra Pradesh** for implementation of the **AP Health Systems Strengthening Project (APHSSP)**.
- The loan agreement was signed between the **Government of India, government of Andhra Pradesh** and the **World Bank**.

**National Housing Bank proposes stricter regulations for Housing Finance Companies**

- **National Housing Bank (NHB)**, a mortgage sector regulator and a fully owned subsidiary of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has decided to impose stricter regulations on the **Housing Finance Companies (HFCs)** to prevent them from falling prey to liquidity and credit risks.
- Increasing the **capital adequacy ratio (CAR)** of these companies from **12% to 15%**, in a phased manner by **31<sup>st</sup> March 2022**. This will be accomplished by increasing the minimum CAR to **13%** by **31<sup>st</sup> March 2020**, **14 %** by **31<sup>st</sup> March 2021** and **15 %** by **2022**.
- Bringing down the public borrowings to **12 times** of the **Net Owned Fund (NOF)** from the existing **16 times**, by **March 2022**.

**India's Unemployment Rate shot up to 7.2% in Feb'19: CMIE**

- The unemployment rate in **India** rose to **7.2%** in **February 2019**, the highest since **September 2016**, and up from **5.9%** in **February 2018**, according to data compiled by the **Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE)**.
- The number of employed persons in India was estimated at **400 million** in **February 2019** compared with **406 million** last year.

**PERSON IN NEWS****Randhir Singh has been appointed the chairman of Coordination Committee for 2022 Asian Games**

- **Indian Sports Administrator Randhir Singh** appointed as the **Chairman of Coordination Committee of 2022 Asian Games** which will be hosted in **Hangzhou, China**.
- In recognition of his service, he was awarded the **VishishtSeva Medal** in 2006, the **AtiVishishtSeva Medal** in 2014 and **Param VishishtSeva Medal** in 2019 by the President of India.

**KajaKallas appointed as the first female prime minister of Estonia**

- **KajaKallas**, the leader of the **Reform Party** has been appointed as the **first female Prime Minister of Estonia**, after the liberal Reform Party declared victory in the elections against centre-left Prime Minister **JuriRatas's** party.

**Venkata Ramesh Babu appointed as the Director General of National Archives of India**

- **P Venkata Ramesh Babu** has been appointed as the **Director General of the National Archives of India** by the **Central government**.
- The National Archives of India comes under the **Ministry of Culture**.

**Kylie Jenner becomes world's youngest self-made billionaire**

- **Kylie Jenner** was declared by **Forbes magazine** as the **youngest ever self-made billionaire**.

- The credit of this success goes to her company **Kylie Cosmetics** which introduced the popular Kylie Lip kit. She is **21** and holds the **2,057<sup>th</sup>** position in whether her wealth was self-made or inherited.

#### **Mukesh Ambani ranks 13th richest person with \$50 bn net worth in the Forbes Billionaire List**

- Reliance Industries Chairman, **Mukesh Ambani**, jumped six positions to rank **13th** on **Forbes World's Billionaires** list with **USD 50 billion** wealth and leads **106** billionaires from India on the list where **Wipro** Chairman **Azim Premji** ranked **36th** with **USD 22.6 billion** wealth.
- The list was topped by **Amazon's Jeff Bezos** and family with **USD 131 billion** wealth followed by **Bill Gates (USD 96.5 bn)** in the **2nd** place and **Warren Buffet (USD 82.5 bn)** on the **3rd**.

#### **SPORTS**

#### **Imran Tahir announced retirement from ODI cricket post 2019 World Cup**

- **39-year-old** Pakistan-born South African cricket team's leg-spinner, **Imran Tahir**, announced that he will retire from **One Day International (ODI) cricket** after the **ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2019**.

#### **Oceania Nations will participate in 2022 Asian Games**

- **Olympic Council of Asia** decided to invite **Oceania Nations** to compete in **2022 Asian Games** for the **first time** after a meeting held in **Bangkok**.
- Oceania Nations which includes **Australia, New Zealand** and a swathe of Pacific islands will compete in to Volleyball, beach volleyball, basketball, football, swimming and track cycling events.
- Asian Games includes 35 sports with more than 10,000 athletes and it is second only to Olympics as a global multi-sport event.

#### **MISCELLANEOUS**

#### **Swachh Survekshan 2019 Awards presented by President Ram Nath Kovind**

- Indore bagged award for **cleanest city for third straight year** in Swachh Survekshan.
- **New Delhi Municipal Council** area gets **cleanest small city award** while **Uttarakhand's Gauchar** was adjudged **Best Ganga Town** in the survey.

#### **Japanese architect Arata Isozaki wins Pritzker Prize, the highest honour**

- Japanese architect **Arata Isozaki**, who integrated the East and West in his creative designs has been honoured with **Pritzker Architecture Prize 2019**. This prize was incorporated in **1979** and is said to be the highest international honour in the field of architecture.

#### **IMPORTANT DAYS**

#### **March 1, 2019 observed as World civil defence day**

- **World Civil Defence Day** is observed on **1<sup>st</sup> March** every year, all over the world.
- The theme of this year's World Civil Defence Day was **"Children's safety, our responsibility"**.

#### **March 7 to be celebrated as 'JanaushadhiDiwas' across India**

#### **ONE LINER**

- Former **Union Minister V. Dhananjaya Kumar** died in **Mangalore, Karnataka**.
- **Google launches Bolo app to help children in India with reading, comprehension skills**
- A commute-planning app **"ONE Delhi"** was launched by **Kailash Gahlot, Transport Minister of Delhi**.
- **Dr. Mahesh Sharma** Inaugurates 'AzaadiKeDiwane' Museum at Red Fort Complex in Delhi