



livelihoods

today and tomorrow

February 2019

Monthly Livelihoods Update

“A month that was !”

Agriculture

Rural Development

Women, Child and Tribal Development

Cabinet Approved/Appraised

Economy, Trade, Partnerships, Scheme and Policies

Climate Change, Environment & Disaster Management

Education, Health, Skill Development & Employment

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Summary of Daily Livelihoods Update

Agriculture

- A LPG dealer has questioned 'why can't the dealer network be used for selling onions and potatoes'. As on December 2018, there are 22328 LPG distributors in the country with a customer base of over 25 crore.
- The Indian agriculture budgetary allocation has been raised 74 % from four and half years. It means to increase productivity, reduce cost and priorities crops with value and doubling the income of farmers by 2022: Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers welfare told.
- The government has launched a Global Environment Facility (GEF) assisted project namely, “Green – Ag: Transforming Indian Agriculture for global environment benefits and the conservation of critical biodiversity and forest landscapes” in collaboration with FAO during September, 2018 in high-conservation-value landscapes of 5 States namely (i) Madhya Pradesh-Chambal Landscape, (ii) Mizoram-Dampa Landscape, (iii) Odisha-Similipal Landscape, (iv) Rajasthan-Desert National Park Landscape & v) Uttarakhand-Corbett-Rajaji Landscape.
- The Department of Agriculture, Cooperation & Farmers Welfare (DAC&FW) had made budgetary allocations from 2015-16 onwards as Central share under Crop Diversification Programme (CDP), sub-scheme of RKVY to encourage tobacco growing farmers to shift to alternative crops/cropping system in tobacco growing states.
- The restructured National Bamboo Mission (NBM) has been launched in April, 2018 with an outlay of Rs.1290 crore for two year i.e. till the end of 14th Finance Commission. Budget Estimate for the Year 2018-19 is Rs.300.00 crores. The scheme aims to supplement farm income of farmers with focus on the development of complete value chain of bamboo sector to link growers with consumers.
- A PIB release identifies 585 whole sale markets/ APMC markets across 16 states and 2 Union Territories integrated with e-NAM. States persuading the linking of mandis with e-NAM are essentially to carry a 3 step reform includes, single point levy of mandi fee, unified trade license and provision of e-auction.
- The sugar production of India increased from 103.56 Lakh ton to 110.52 Lakh ton reflecting a 6.7, rise until December 31" with 501 sugar mills operational.
- 585 wholesale regulated markets/ Agriculture Produce Market Committee (APMC) Markets have been so far integrated with e-market (e-NAM) platform in 16 States and 2 UTs, who have carried out requisite reforms in their State Agriculture Produce Marketing Committee Act (APMC Act).
- The Government has released a new model “The Agricultural Produce and Livestock Marketing (Promotion & Facilitation) Act, 2017” in April 2017 for its adoption by States/Union Territories (UTs). The provisions therein provides for alternative marketing channels to facilitate farmers in marketing their produce directly at competitive & remunerative prices.
- The Maharashtra Government has decided to give the credit to farmers directly to their bank account on a yearly basis. The State officials told, the amount could be given like Rs. 5000 to Rs.10000 a year per farmer.
- Experts of ICRIER denote that the nation would need 1.97 lakh crore for implementing Rythu Bandhu scheme (the scheme provides financial support to the farmers) across the country with respect to distribution of Rs. 4000, per acre of land in a year.
- India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is expected to grow at 7.2 per cent in 2019 claimed the official estimates

released by the Central Statistics Office (CSO). The surge, from 6.7 per cent per cent in the last fiscal, will be primarily driven due to resurgence in agriculture and manufacturing sectors.

- The Government is implementing several programmes that aim at bringing about the overall improvement in the quality of life of the rural people and bridging the urban-rural gap through the creation of employment opportunities; strengthening of livelihood opportunities; creation of rural infrastructure; provision of other basic amenities; etc. This Information was given by the Minister of State for Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat in Lok Sabha Yesterday.
- Admissible claims under Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) are generally paid by the insurance companies within two months of completion of Crop Cutting Experiments/harvesting period subject to availability of yield data and total State share of premium subsidy from concerned State Government within time.
- With a view to ensuring availability of agriculture credit (Kisan Credit Card) at a reasonable cost/at a reduced rate of 7% per annum to farmers, the Government of India is implementing an interest subvention scheme of 2% for short term crop loans up to Rs.3.00 lakh. The scheme is implemented through the public sector bank, private sector banks, and Cooperatives. It is reimbursement through the NABARD.
- The fisheries and aquaculture production contributes around 1% to India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and over 5% to the agricultural GDP. According FAO report "The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2018" apparent per capita, fish consumption in India [average(2013-15)] lies between a range of 5 to 10 Kg.
- Minister of State for Planning (IC) and Chemicals & Fertilizers, Shri Rao Inderjit Singh has said that in Lok Sabha, the price of urea is determined on the basis of demand and supply of urea in the international market.
- Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh Wednesday asked the chief secretary to examine Nabard proposal for funds to promote small agribusiness amongst poor rural youth and farmers with small land holdings.
- One small detail buried in India's full-year gross domestic product (GDP) estimates for 2018-19, released by the Central Statistics Office (CSO), summarises the country's entire agrarian crisis: the farm growth rate, after being adjusted for inflation is the same as the farm growth not adjusted for inflation. Both stand at 3.8%.
- Prime Minister's flagship program e-NAM has achieved another milestone by commencing inter-State trade between mandis using e-payments. "e-NAM is not just a scheme but it's a journey which aims to reach out to the last mile farmer and transform the way agricultural produce is sold". Sanjay Agarwal, secretary of Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare said.
- Acclaimed journalist and Founder-Editor of the People's Archive of Rural India, P Sainath has said Agrarian crisis can even be described as civilizational crisis.
- Centre, six states sign agreement for Renukaji Dam Multipurpose Project. Under the agreement, three storage projects are proposed to be constructed on the river Yamuna and two of its tributaries - Tons and Giri in the hilly regions of Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh.
- Vice-president M Venkaiah Naidu has called for strengthening agriculture by bringing in long-term structural changes as farming is our basic culture providing livelihood to nearly 60 percent of our population.
- Union Commerce Minister Suresh Prabhu announced here on Sunday that the UAE and Saudi Arabia had decided to use India as a base to address their food security concerns.

- The state government proposes to establish centers equipped with scientific technology to boost mushroom cultivation in Kashmir. The government intended to boost mushroom cultivation in the Valley (10 districts of Kashmir), said Abhinash Chander Peer, project coordinator, Mushroom Kashmir.
- The country records only 38% water-use efficiency in the field of agriculture and much needs to be done to improve it, said U P Singh, secretary of the water resources ministry on Wednesday.
- Minister for Water resources and River development Nitin Gadkari has said that micro-irrigation is a game changer in agricultural development.
- According to the Lancet study, food system changes to land use, leading to climate change, water depletion. Food production needs to be more eco-friendly.
- Union Minister of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare Shri Radha Mohan Singh has said, the role of the Small Farmers' Agri-Business Consortium (SFAC) is commendable in realizing the vision of doubling farmers' income by 2022. And also, he said the work of connecting 415 new mandis with e-NAM by 2020 is in progress.
- Deputy Chief Minister of Bihar Sushil Kumar Modi on Thursday said the NABARD and other banks should make increased credit lending activities in the agriculture sector in the next fiscal, as it was the only area that could absorb loan since the state did not have big industrial units.
- The water storage available in 91 major reservoirs of the country for the week ending on January 17, 2019, was 77.171 BCM, which is 48% of the total storage capacity of these reservoirs. This percentage was at 50% for the week ending on January 10, 2019. The level of water storage in the week ending on January 17, 2019 was 100% of the storage of corresponding period of last year and 93% of storage of average of last ten years.
- Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for increasing MSP moong beans by 25% to 40% and extending the procurement period till January 31.
- The US will continue to be an important market for India's services and products which contribute to the competitiveness of American corporations, according to a KPMG-USIBC report released Friday. According to the report, sectors like aerospace and defence, agriculture, education and tourism, energy, healthcare, infrastructure, manufacturing and digitalisation are major areas for India-US collaboration.
- Sugarcane farming in the Rivona-Colomba-Netravali belt of Goa suffered a setback this year, as farmers complained that production has declined by around 40% as compared to last year, due to damage caused by wild boars.
- Eyeing economic gains through ecological work, non-profit organization Pradan, along with Chhattisgarh government, has launched a watershed project in the state to enhance the income of 1 lakh small and marginal farmers, of whom over 40 percent belong to Scheduled Tribes.
- Indian Sugar Mills Association (ISMA) has lowered India's 2018-19 sugar production estimates by 2.5% to 307 lakh tonnes from the first advance estimate of 315 lakh tonnes issued in October 2018.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government is planning to combine all farm subsidies, including fertilizer costs, and instead pay farmers cash, the people said, asking not to be identified as the discussions aren't public. The additional cost will be limited to 700 billion rupees (\$9.8 billion) annually after a full roll-out of the program, the people said. Finance Minister Arun Jaitley had budgeted 701 billion rupees for farm subsidies in the year ending March 31.

- The Maharashtra state government has urged the Centre to evolve a comprehensive policy to protect the interests of horticulturists facing tough competition from imported fruits and vegetables.
- A team of interdisciplinary scientists has come out with an online system that promises to substantially ease the process of planning and implementing micro-irrigation systems for agricultural fields. The new system developed by the research team addresses this issue. Called DOMIS (short form for Design of Micro-irrigation System), it is a web-based application and helps design customized micro-irrigation systems for individual agricultural fields under different agro-climatic conditions and circumstances for any crop.
- Andhra Pradesh Minister for Agriculture Somireddy Chandramohan Reddy said that Rs. 15,147 crore worth agriculture loans have been waived so far and the state has achieved double digit growth rate.
- Moderate to heavy rain was recorded in several parts north India including national capital late night yesterday. According to the Indian Meteorological Department, an intense western disturbance along with induced cyclonic circulation is affecting Western Himalayan region and plains of northwest India.
- The start of online inter-state trade through the e-NAM portal this month is a landmark achievement in e-NAM history. The first inter-State trade on e-Nam between Andhra Pradesh and Telangana has been carried out on 19.01.2019 between farmers from Gadwal mandi in Telangana State, who sold 8.46 quintal of groundnut to, a trader in Kurnool, Andhra Pradesh through the e-NAM portal.
- Water problems could push the non-performing assets of banks higher as many lenders have loan exposure in sectors where there are risks to water resources, says a report. At a time when the banking sector is grappling with mounting NPAs, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) report released on Wednesday said water risks could pose further "liquidity constraints" on the strained balance sheets of banks.
- It is well-known that Indian farming is predominantly subsistence-oriented. Over 86% of our farmers operate individual holdings below two hectares while cultivating 47% of the country's total cultivated area. The production and productivity of these farms are generally low, and so is the marketable surplus that is generated. Development professionals and policymakers have tried many a scheme to address these issues. One idea that has found resonance in recent times is Farmer Producer Organisations or FPOs.
- Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' welfare yesterday organized a national conference on Agriculture-Zaid/summer campaign 2019 in New Delhi. The objective of the conference was to discuss the prospects of boosting production in the upcoming Zaid/summer cropping season.
- The government will soon announce a package for farmers to boost their income, Minister of State for Agriculture Parshottam Rupala said on Thursday amid speculations that the Centre is considering various measures to address distress in the farm sector.
- Wheat production is estimated to cross 100 million tonne in 2018-19 based on the feedback we are getting from state governments, said Agriculture Commissioner S K Malhotra.
- Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) launches National Agricultural Higher Education Project (NAHEP) to attract talent and strengthen higher agricultural education in the country. The second Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) of the country established in Barahi, Jharkhand.
- Union Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution, Shri Ram Vilas Paswan chairs Inter-Session Consultative Committee Meeting in Bengaluru to review functioning of Food Corporation of India & Bureau of Indian Standards.

- The Himachal Pradesh government warns to people about avalanche. Snow & Avalanche Study Establishment (SASE) Manali has advised people not to venture in avalanche prone slopes for the next two days. This advisory has been issued for Shimla, Chamba, Lahaul- Spiti, Kullu and Kinnaur districts for today and tomorrow.
- Indian agriculture needs serious attention as the majority of the population is dependent on agriculture for their livelihood, says Dr. Pramod Joshi, Director-South Asia at International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) ahead of the interim Budget on 1 February.
- Hyderabad Man Develops App That Helps 75,000 Farmers Get Better Yield. Today, NaPanta App has reached 6,400+ villages and 75,000 farmers. The daily unique farmer visitors are over 3,000, and the daily app interactions are more than 25,000.
- The Delhi government has decided to introduce Minimum Support Price (MSP) based on the report of the MS Swaminathan Commission, minister Gopal Rai said on Monday. The committee has submitted its own report on the MSP for Delhi's farmers.
- The Inter-state trade of farm products in wholesale markets or mandis through the eNAM platform is gathering momentum with the latest transaction taking place at Palanpur mandi in Gujarat that sold green gram to Sumerpur market of Rajasthan.
- The Department of Agriculture and Cooperation has automated the process of application of license. In fact, the entire departmental process has been made online. Digital signing of licenses has also been enabled, says C Parthasarathy, Principal Secretary, Department of Agriculture and Cooperation, Government of Telangana, in conversation with Sudheer Goutham of Elets News Network (ENN).
- Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers Welfare release the 2017-18 Final and 2018-19 of Area and Production of Horticulture Crops. Nation witnesses record production of 311.7 MT Horticulture Crops in 2017-18, 3.7% higher than the previous year and 10% higher than past 5 years' average production.
- The Bihar government on Wednesday lifted a ban here on the sale, storage and transportation of fish from Andhra Pradesh.

Rural Development

- The Gram Panchayats adopted under Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY) prepare Village Development Plans (VDP) through a participatory process under the guidance of MPs. The implementation is satisfactory. As per SAGY website, VDPs have been prepared by 1,155 Gram Panchayats containing 63,586 projects, out of which 32,682 (51%) projects are completed.
- Payments delay in MGNREGA due to implementation issues in the States which include inadequate staffing, non-timely recording and reporting of attendance, measurement, data entry, generation of wage list and Fund Transfer Order (FTO), etc.
- Under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), roads are being constructed, maintained and repaired as per the specification laid down in Ministry of Rural Development Specifications for Rural Roads.
- In order to encourage locally available materials and use of green technologies for construction of road under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), guidelines were issued by the Ministry.
- Minister of State for Finance, Shri Shiv Pratap Shukla has said in Rajya Sabha that, as appraised by banks, as on 26.12.2018, there are 33.66 crore accounts under Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY). Out of these

accounts, 28.16 crore PMJDY accounts are operative accounts.

- Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Friday launched the 'Ama Ghare LED' (LED in our home) scheme. Around 95 lakh households registered under the National Food Security Act or the State Food Security Scheme will get four LED bulbs free of cost.
- Tamil Nadu Chief Minister urges NABARD to offer loans to SHG's to help them shift to plastic alternatives.
- The Loan Agreements were signed here yesterday in New Delhi between the Government of India and JICA, New Delhi under Japanese Official Development Assistance Loan Program. The loan for (i) Project for the Construction of Chennai Peripheral Ring Road (Phase 1) for JPY 40.074 billion (Rs.2470 Crore approx.), and (ii) Program for Japan-India Cooperative Actions towards Sustainable Development Goals in India for JPY 15.000 billion (Rs.950 Crore approx.).
- Shri Narendra Singh Tomar, Union Minister of Panchayati Raj, Rural Development, Mines & Parliamentary Affairs has said that the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) are the back bone of successful and good governance system for any country.
- In partnership with States, the Ministry of Rural Development has completed 1.37 crore Rural Homes since April 2014.
- The Punjab state government will integrate various schemes such as Rural Development Fund, MGNREGA, Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana and the horticulture mission to fund the 'smart villages campaign' announced by Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh recently.
- 'Development of rural areas should not erode their unique identities but must fortify their spirits. The facilities in villages must resemble those of a city but the soul and the values of Indian villages must be preserved', the Vice President of India Shri. M. Venkaiah Naidu said yesterday.
- Ahead of the 2019 election, the Rural Development Ministry has proposed that the monthly pensions of the elderly poor, disabled and widows be increased from the current ₹200 to ₹800. For those above the age of 80, the proposal is to increase the pension from ₹500 to ₹1,200 a month.
- The Maharashtra government is planning a "yellow revolution" with self help groups (SHGs) to address the growing demand for eggs, state Rural Development Minister Pankaja Munde said here Monday.
- DAY-NRLM is aimed at alleviation of rural poverty through building sustainable community institutions of the poor. It seeks to mobilize about 9 crore households into SHGs and link them to sustainable livelihood opportunities by building their skills and enabling them to access formal sources of finance, entitlements, and services from both public and private sectors.
- 'India is continuously focussing on equitable, inclusive growth and on bridging income inequalities. A number of schemes like Jan Dhan Yojana, Saubhagya and Ujjwala stand testament to the core values of inclusiveness that India adheres to', the Vice President of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu has said, in Chennai.
- The Gram Panchayat Parivartaks are key role to shaping of rural economy of Maharashtra. Under the Village Social Transformation programmed, 1000 villages were selected for integrated development through the government says Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis.
- In India's most populous state, Uttar Pradesh, the Centre has been able to recover over Rs 6.5 crore from almost 8,500 ineligible beneficiaries in the past two-and-a-half years. Union rural development secretary

Amarjeet Sinha said.

- Ahead of the elections for the Lok Sabha and state Assembly, Odisha government Tuesday approved the expenditure of about Rs 3,620 crore for development of drinking water facility in rural areas and a road project.
- The Punjab Cabinet on Tuesday okayed a proposal of the Local Government Department for the release of funds of Rs 298.75 crore to Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) for infrastructure development under an Urban Environment Improvement Programme (UEIP).
- States struggling to pay workers under the MGNREGA scheme has received additional funds from the Centre to meet their pending liabilities, but the money is unlikely to be sufficient for the rest of the financial year. They may have to use their own funds to meet unpaid wages for the next two months, says the Centre.
- The state government on Wednesday has decided to provide an additional 50 days of employment to the workers under the MGNREGA scheme in the 5,577 drought-affected villages of 10 districts in Rajasthan.

Women, Child Development and Tribal Development

- All the 640 districts (as per census 2011) of the country covered under Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) scheme.
- The mapping of field functionaries on Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana-Common Application Software (PMMVY-CAS) using Local Government Directory (LGD) Code allows implementing the scheme independently. The various Departments like Health, Women & Child Development or Social Welfare are implementing the scheme in various States/UTs.
- The main objective of Cyber Crime Prevention against Women and Children (CCPWC) Scheme is to have an effective mechanism to handle cybercrimes against women and children in the country. The scheme has a total estimated outlay of Rs. 223.198 crores.
- The Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, has launched an online campaign, '#www: Web- Wonder Women'. The Campaign aims to discover and celebrate the exceptional achievements of women, who have been driving positive agenda of social change via social media.
- Aadi Mahotsav is an effort to scale up the livelihood and income generating opportunity for tribals by giving them the opportunity to interact and sell their goods directly to the customers. Ministry of Tribal affairs and TRIFED through Aadi Mahotsav's provides them with market access across the country. Aadi Mahotsav's this year have provided livelihoods and additional income to around 14,000 Tribal families and around 40,000 Tribal Artisans.

Cabinet Approved/Appraised

- The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has been apprised of the Progress and new initiatives under National Health Mission (NHM) and the Decisions of the Empowered Programme Committee and Mission Steering Group of NHM.
- The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved Amendment to the Trade Unions Act, 1926 to make provisions regarding Recognition of Trade Unions.
- Cabinet approves restructuring of National Health Agency as "National Health Authority" for better implementation of Pradhan Mantri - Jan Arogya Yojana.
- The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the continuation of Rastriya

Yuva Sashaktikaran Karyakram Scheme for the Period 2017-18 to 2019-2020 with budget outlay of Rs.1160 crore as recommended by EFC.

- Cabinet approves Continuation of Umbrella scheme for "Family Welfare and Other Health Interventions" during 2017-18 to 2019-20.
- The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the proposal to allot land to Chandigarh Housing Board for construction of apartments for 3930 allottees under Self-Financing Housing Scheme for UT Employees.
- The Union Cabinet has approved the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Maritime issues between India and Denmark. The MoU is proposed to be signed during the upcoming visit of the WIP from Denmark to India in January, 2019.
- The Union Cabinet has approved the Memorandum of Understanding between India and Japan on Development of Advanced Model Single Window.
- The Union Cabinet has approved the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and France on technical bilateral cooperation in the field of new and renewable energy. The MoU was signed on 3rd October, 2018.
- The Union Cabinet approved the Signing of Terms of Reference (TOR) governing the engagement of the designated Indian Expert to provide tax assistance to Swaziland (now known as Eswatini) under the Tax Inspectors Without Borders Programme between India and Eswatini.
- The Union Cabinet has approved the proposal for entering into an Agreement for Bilateral Swap Arrangement (BSA) between India and Japan and authorizing the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to sign the Agreement for Bilateral Swap Arrangement between the RBI and the Bank of Japan for a maximum amount of USD 75 billion.
- Cabinet approves MoU between India and Australia on the safety in Mines, Testing and Research Station.
- Union Cabinet has approved recapitalization of Export-Import Bank of India to the tune of 6,000 crore rupees and increase in the authorized capital of Exim Bank from 10,000 crores to 20,000 crore rupees.
- The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has given its approval to the Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) between India and Japan in the field of food processing sector.
- The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the signing Memorandum of Understanding between India and Kuwait for cooperation on the Recruitment of Domestic Workers.
- Cabinet approves Amendment to the 'Framework on Currency Swap Arrangement for SAARC Member Countries' to incorporate 'Standby Swap' amounting to USD 400 million operated within the overall size of the facility.

Economy, Trade, Partnerships, Schemes and Policies

- During the month of December 2018, the total gross GST revenue collected is Rs 94726 crore of which CGST is Rs 16422 crore, SGST is 22459 crore, IGST is Rs.47936 crore (including Rs 23635 crore collected on imports) and Cess is Rs. 7888 crore (including Rs 838 crore collected on imports).
- A Government notification said 'India has cut import taxes on crude and refined palm oil from Southeast Asian (ASEAN) countries after a request from suppliers'. The reduction in import taxes will lead to higher imports of

palm 1 by the world's biggest edible oil importer in coming months as it would narrow the difference between the tropical vegetable oil and competitors such as soya oil and sunflower oil.

- The government has infused 10,882 crore rupees in four public sector banks, including UCO Bank and Syndicate Bank. UCO Bank has received 3,074 crore rupees in the equity by way of preferential allotment yesterday. Besides, Bank of Maharashtra got 4,498 crore rupees, Syndicate Bank 1,632 crore and the Central Bank of India 1,678 crore. It is part of 28,615 crore rupees capital infusion to be done in seven public sector lenders.
- Finance Minister Piyush Goyal has said, India Post Payment Bank, IPPB, is bringing transformational changes in the lives of people especially, who are living in rural India.
- The government has waived late fees for non-filers of summary and final sales returns for the July 2017-September 2018 period by businesses registered under the goods and services tax (GST). However, these businesses would have to file their returns for the 15-month period by March 31, 2019, the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) said.
- World Economic Forum says India is set to become the world's 3rd largest consumer market after US, China by 2030.
- The Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) and the Central Public Works Department (CPWD) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) here yesterday. Focus on promoting energy efficient designs and construction of new buildings and star rating of CPWD managed buildings across the country.
- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) on Friday forecast that the Indian economy would grow at 7.3 per cent in FY19. On the back of strong investment and GST stabilisation, the growth would improve to 7.6 per cent in FY20, news agency PTI reported citing the multilateral funding agency. Besides, India's funding would be scaled up to \$4.5 billion in 2019, it added.
- Tejas Networks signs MoU with Govt of Kerala to establish a Telecom Center of Excellence in the state. Tejas CoE will focus on training, skill development, and mentoring of college students, young entrepreneurs, and high-potential electronics startups in the state.
- The Union Cabinet today approved expenditure sanction of over 4200 crore rupees for Integrated E-filing and Centralized Processing Centre 2.0 Project. Union Minister Piyush Goyal said it will help in improving taxpayers' awareness and education through continuous engagement.
- India has signed a long-term contract with Uzbekistan for supply of uranium ore concentrates to widen its source base for the nuclear fuel. The contract was exchanged in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Uzbekistan President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, who is attending the Vibrant Gujarat summit in Gandhinagar. The Ministry of External Affairs in a statement said that the Department of Atomic Energy (DEA) and Novoi Minerals & Metallurgical Company of Uzbekistan exchanged the contract.
- Union Commerce and Civil Aviation Minister Suresh Prabhu said that India has the potential to be a 5 trillion US Dollar economy in the next 7-8 years. Addressing a seminar on exports at Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit in Gandhinagar, Mr Prabhu said that his department had prepared a road map to make this possible by focusing on manufacturing, service sector and agriculture.
- Indian billionaires saw their fortunes swell by Rs 2,200 crore a day last year, with the top 1 percent of the country's richest getting richer by 39 percent as against just 3 percent increase in wealth for the bottom half of the population, an Oxfam study said Monday.

- The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has said India's economy is poised to pick up this year. IMF's World Economic Outlook Update, released yesterday by its chief economist Gita Gopinath in Davos, projected that India will grow at 7.5 percent this year and 7.7 percent in 2020, an impressive over one percentage point ahead of China's estimated growth of 6.2 percent in these two years.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Mauritian counterpart Pravind Kumar Jugnauth held talks on Tuesday. They have discussed ways to boost bilateral trade and investment, including finalization of a comprehensive economic partnership agreement.
- The Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh has said that India is the fastest growing economy in the world and by 2030 it will be the third largest.
- India and Maldives have agreed to continue their traditionally close cooperation on issues of maritime security, counter-terrorism and medical cooperation.
- Union Finance Minister Piyush Goyal will meet the CEOs of public sector banks in New Delhi today. In the meeting, will discuss the improve the banking financial situation and credit flow to MSMEs, agriculture and retail sectors.
- Former Finance Commission chairman Vijay Kelkar has pitched for setting up of a 'New Niti Aayog' and giving it responsibility for allocating capital and revenue grants to the states.
- Reserve Bank of India Governor Shaktikanth Das meets PSU banks' CEOs, conveys regulator's expectations. It is scheduled to announce its sixth bi-monthly monetary policy for 2018-19 on February 7. It would be the first monetary review under the new RBI Governor.
- India wants to triple exports to Argentina, eyeing an additional \$1.5 billion worth of shipments and is seeking market access for apparel, textiles, folding bicycles, and home furnishing products in the South American country.
- India and China have signed the protocol for exports of Indian tobacco leaves to China. Quality tobacco on par with international standards is available in India at competitive prices and there is a good potential for export of Indian tobacco to China.
- Human Resources Development Ministry has signed an agreement with Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) for India's Participation in Programme for International Student Assessment - PISA 2021.
- The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation has signed a MoU with National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) for improving the official statistical system in the country.
- The Vice President of India Shri Venkaiah Naidu handed over 6 croreth connection to beneficiary under the Ujjwala Yojana scherne . The scheme has reached 55% to 90% in December last year. Till now, 1.03 crore people have sacrificed their LPG connection to poor people under Ujjwala scheme.
- Under the Ayushman Bharat scheme, 6.85 lakhs of poor patients have been provides the free hospital treatment after launching the 100 days: Finance Minister told.
- Government of India (G01) reduced the Goods and Service Tax (GST) rates on 23 goods and services like TV and monitor screens, power banks, and movie tickets etc. It affected from 1 January, 2019 onwards.
- Reserve Bank of India (RBI) offer relief to Micro Small Medium Enterprises (MSME) to allow the onetime

restructuring of debt up to Rs. 25 crore. This decision will help to MSME, which are facing the problems with demonetization and GST.

- The direct tax-to-GDP ratio of 5.98 per cent achieved during 2017-18 fiscal is the best in the last 10 years. It was 5.57 per cent in 2016-17 and 5.47 per cent in 2015-16. Finance Ministry Said.
- Maharashtra government set to enroll the private hospital in Ayushman Bharath scheme. The programme already has 79 government hospitals empanelled in the state, in addition to the 500 hospitals enrolled under its state health insurance scheme — Mahatma Jyotiba Pilule Jan Arogya Yojana (MJPJAY).
- Pradhan Mantri Rozgar Protsahan Yojana (PMRPY), the flagship scheme of the Central Government for employment generation has crossed the milestone of one crore beneficiaries as on January 14, 2019.
- Philanthropist Bill Gates lauds to The Government of India, on the success of Ayushman Bharat. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said that Ayushman Bharat stems out of the Government's commitment to providing top quality and affordable healthcare to the poor.
- Women and Child Development Minister Maneka Gandhi today said the government has taken several steps to empower girl child. She said a social transformation can be seen towards girl empowerment after the launch of Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme.
- Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi on Wednesday agreed to look into an oral request from the Centre to set up a Constitution Bench for expeditious disposal of issues relating to amendments in the Land Acquisition Act.
- The Supreme Court on Wednesday refused to stay the SCs and the STs (Prevention of Atrocities) Amendment Act of 2018 which nullified a controversial March 20 judgment diluting the stringent provisions of the Dalit protection law.

Climate Change, Environment & Disaster Management

- The death toll from landslides and devastating floods in the central Philippines triggered by a tropical depression climbed to 85, officials said on Wednesday, and 20 people were missing as rescuers slowly reached cut-off communities. Miscellaneous
- The Telangana Panchayat Election Commissioner V Nagi Reddy announced the Gram Panchayat Elections in three phases such as 21st, 25th and 30th of this month with ballot paper method. The polls would hold from 7 am to 1 pm in 12700 Gram Panchayat in the state.
- The Meteorological Department has issued weather warning on snowfall in Jammu and Kashmir. The transport could get affected and threat from avalanche during the next 48 hours.
- In Uttarakhand, the Meteorological Department has issued warning of heavy snowfall in isolated places of Garhwal, Kumaon in coming next 12 hours.
- Government launches National Clean Air Programme (NCAP). This extensive consultation with all the relevant stakeholders' foundation for formulation of NCAP and it was launched by Dr. Harsha Vardhan, Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
- In spite of a ban on the import of plastic waste into India, the influx of PET bottles has quadrupled from 2017 to 2018 thanks to the legal loophole, says a Delhi-based environmentalist organization, Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Smriti Manch (PDUSM).

- The Centre Tuesday approved the release of Rs 7,214 crore to six states and a Union Territory, including Rs 4,714 crore to Maharashtra, for floods, drought and cyclone damage. A statement by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) said a high-level committee, headed by Home Minister Rajnath Singh, sanctioned the additional central assistance from the National Disaster Relief Fund (NDRF) of Rs 7,214.03 crore to six states and one Union Territory.

Education, Health, Skill Development & Employment

- 'Mission Indradhanush' receives a unique recognition in a special issue of British India Journal, as one of the 12 best practices globally.
- A Direct Benefit Transfer scheme for nutritional support to TB patients is launched under Nikshay Poshan Yojana by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare. Schemes
- Pradhan Mantri Bharatiya Jan Aushadhi Pariyojana Kendras are declared functional in 35 states or Union Territories in the country, as confirmed by Union Minister, Shri Mansukh L Mandaviya. The PMBJP scheme covers a product range of more than 800 medicines, 154 surgicals & consumables casing 23 major therapeutic groups with medicine sold at least 50% below the MRP in the outlets. Rs. 1668 Crore is estimated the savings for the citizens across the country on its implementation.
- 'Swachh Sundar Shauchalaya' the initiative of Ministry of Drinking water and sanitation, is a month long campaign begun from 1. January'19 intended to promote sustained usage of toilets & ownership extended to 2.5 Lakh Gram Panchayats. 'Paint your toilet' is a unique contest which would be spearheaded by Gram Panchayats and coordinated by District administrations.
- An online lending portal which facilitates the principal approval of loans up to Rs. 1 Crore for the MSMEs within 59 minutes of application is launched & rolling. 6 Public Banks/Financial Institutions along with its associated companies constitute the majority ownership.
- Union Minister for Human Resource Development, Shri Prakash Javadekar today said that innovation in teaching is very important and only teachers of this country have the capabilities to change education scenario of the nation. He also said that, only teachers can make education more relevant by their innovative teaching methods.
- The Government of India has launched Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY) with effect from 23rd September 2018, a Centrally Sponsored Scheme, for providing hospitalization cover of up to Rs.5 lac per family per year to over 10 crores poor and the deprived families (approx. 50 crore people) in the empanelled hospitals throughout the country. 33 States/UTs have signed MOU for implementing PMJAY out of which 29 have already launched the scheme.
- The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (Amendment) Act, 2019 which was passed by the Parliament on 3rd January 2019 received the assent of the President of India on 10th January 2019. It has been notified in the Gazette of India.
- The government will soon set up over 460 more Eklavya Model Residential Schools across the country. Union Tribal Affairs Minister Jual Oram said the government is spending about 25 thousand crore rupees on these schools.
- "All State governments have been asked to create awareness about the spread, testing and prevention of swine flu and we have also asked them to ensure that there are enough beds and medicines to treat any cases that are

being reported,” noted a senior Union Health Ministry official. According to the Union Health and Family Welfare Ministry’s IDSP, 14,992 people contracted swine flu in 2018, while 1,103 people died.

- Refusal or hesitation to get the vaccination against deadly diseases despite the availability of vaccines is seen as one of the top threats to public health, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). The UN agency recently released a list of what it considers the top 10 threats to global health for 2019, which include air pollution, obesity, and antibiotic resistance. This is the first time that vaccine hesitancy has made it to the UN agency’s list of ten biggest threats to world health.
- The Centre has hiked its popular research scholarship — called the JRF Rs. 31,000; SRF- 35,000; RA-1- 47,000; RA-2-49,000 and RA-3-54,000 per month, a roughly 25% increase from the existing stipend amount. For months, research scholars across India have organised protests demanding that the scholarship is hiked as the stipend hadn’t been revised since 2014. But scholars unhappy, say 25% raise too low, want the increase to be 56%.
- Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) released a report on employment situation in the country. According to the CMIE report around 11 million people lost jobs in the country in the year of 2018. Around 91 lakh rural informal workers and 18 lakh urban informal sector workers lost jobs in 2018. Apart from this, 37 lakh salaried employees lost jobs in private sector. It stated that cashless transactions and poor investment are the major causes for the job loss.
- Two new Skill Development Schemes have been approved namely (i) Skills Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood (SANKALP); and (ii) Skills Strengthening for Industrial Value Enhancement (STRIVE). This information was given by the Minister of State for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Shri Anantkumar Hegde.
- → SANKALP is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme with a project of total size US Dollar 675 million, including World Bank assistance of US Dollar 500 million with a six-year implementation schedule.
- → STRIVE is a World Bank assisted-Government of India project with the objective of improving the relevance and efficiency of skills training provided through ITIs and apprenticeships.
- Pradhan Mantri Rojgar Protsahan Yojana (PMRPY) was launched on 9th August 2016. Through this scheme 98.38 lakh employees are benefitted.
- India needs competency -enhancing. That master plan should be developed based upon a comprehensive, objective and strategic assessment, including a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis of India's current and future job situation and the employment and employability needs of India's citizens and employers.
- Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said the government's electric mobility programme will promote manufacturing and job creation, besides reducing pollution.
- The/Nudge Foundation, in partnership with National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) recently announced the launch of Centre for Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (CSDE). India is adding one million people into the workforce every month and this institutional approach to work on deeper issues affecting skilling ecosystem is critical and timely.
- The Gujarat government will be coming up with an Android application for students to register themselves in employment exchanges, an official said.
- In a bid to arm painters with a government certificate, Nippon Paint (India) Private Limited’s decorative division

on Friday announced its tie-up with the Tamil Nadu Skill Development Corporation (TNSDC) and the Paints and Coatings Skill Council (PCSC). Through this programme, 10,000 painters across the State will be retrained and provided Recognition of Prior Learning certification.

- India needs 100 million new jobs by 2026 for country's growth. Such a gigantic target cannot solely be achieved through existing jobs or business as usual, but only through creating self-employment and entrepreneurship-driven employment. With three-fourths of India's population living in rural areas, rural development has never been more connected to entrepreneurship.
- Himachal Pradesh government is focussing on skill development of youth, by providing necessary training, to enhance their employability. Presently, three schemes – Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana, Asian Development Bank funded Kaushal Vikas Yojana and Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Kaushalya Vikas Yojana are implemented in the state. Under these schemes, about one lakh youth from the state will be trained to get employment.
- Commissioner Secretary, Forests, Ecology, and Environment Department, Manoj Kumar Dwivedi on Thursday, said that the world's largest solar energy power plant will come up in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. This programme provides Green Skill Development Programme for the benefit of unemployed youths to develop a skill without exploiting or destroying the nature and natural resources.
- In an attempt to skill Indian youths in Artificial Intelligence, Microsoft India has taken an initiative to train five lakh youths. The company aims to train five lakh youths in AI across the country and would set up AI labs in 10 universities.
- The mega Kumbh Mela, which began on January 15 and will continue till March 4, is expected to generate revenue of Rs. 1.2 lakh crore for Uttar Pradesh, according to apex industry body Confederation of Indian Industry. Although the Kumbh Mela is spiritual and religious in nature, the economic activities associated with it generate employment for over six lakh workers across various sectors, CII said in a report.
- The government-owned Railways on Wednesday announced a massive recruitment drive to hire about 2.30 lakh people in the next two years. Following the 103rd Constitutional Amendment, 10% of the vacancies, i.e. around 23,000 vacancies will be reserved for candidates from economically weaker sections, Railway Minister Piyush Goyal said. The 2.30 lakh people to be hired, is in addition to the hiring of 1.5 lakh employees now underway and is expected to be completed by April.
- “Boosting farm incomes and adding job opportunities are the twin tests for Union Budget 2019-20. Real estate and construction industry fit into the Budget 2019-20 schemes as the second largest employer after agriculture and contribute close to 10% of GDP. Alignment of GST and personal income tax so as to boost home ownership is a strategic option that government may well consider exercising,” said CREDAI national president Jaxay Shah.
- Common Services Centres (CSCs) under Digital India mission are providing Citizen Centric Services. CSC has also launched its first Cash and Carry store in Kanth Tehsil of Moradabad district. This step is seen as to promote rural marketing and create employment in Uttar Pradesh. Adding to it, each cash and carry store will provide employment minimum of four persons directly and indirectly. Clubbed with economic census initiative, stage has been set to create 25 lakh job opportunities in the near future in under exposed parts of India.
- India's unemployment rate rose to a 45-year high during 2017-2018, the Business Standard claimed, quoting a government survey. The assessment by the NSSO conducted between July 2017-June 2018, showed the unemployment rate stood at 6.1%, the highest since 1972-73.

- Ministry of Coal has been in a constant endeavor to maintain coal stock at a sufficient level and increase coal supply to meet the energy need of the country. Coal India Ltd. has supplied 389.63 MT coal to the power sector during the current year (up to 22nd January 2019) registering a growth of 8% over the same period of last year.

Miscellaneous

- The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) will record biometric data including the fingerprints and iris scans of about 30 lakh applicants who have sought to be included in the National Register of Citizens (NRC). They have been excluded from the final draft published during last year
- The Department of Personnel & Training (DoPT) has recently issue promotion orders of about 4000 officials at different hierarchy levels.
- Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) launched a new platform "Samwad with Students (SwS)". Through this initiative, ISRO aims to constantly engage youngsters across India to capture their scientific temperament. It is part of the enhanced outreach programme of ISRO.
- Prime Minister Shri. Narendra Modi has made it clear that a decision on Ram Temple at Ayodhya can be taken once after the completion of judicial process.
- Under PAHAL scheme, the authorized subsidy to LPG consumers is transferred directly into the bank account of the consumers. 23.24 Crore Consumers joined Direct Benefit Transfer of LPG subsidies.
- Vice President of India Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu has said achieved over 6 crore LPG connection under Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY).
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurates the Integrated Check post at Moreh along with Dolaithabi Barrage project, FCI Food storage Godown at Sawornbung and other projects related to water supply & tourism in Imphal. A 400 KV Double Circuit Silchar-Imphal Line was dedicated to the nation on this eve. The estimate for all these projects stands over Rs. 1500Crore which also includes the foundation stone laid for Sports Project.
- Minister of State for Finance projects the total net indirect tax collection for the current Financial Year April-November, 2018-2019 to be Rs.612653Crore inclusive of CGST, IGST & GST-Compensation Cess.
- In an effort to promote ownership and sustained usage of toilets and also provide a facelift to the crores of toilets built under the Swachh Bharat Mission, the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation has launched a month-long campaign, "Swachh Sundar Shauchalaya" that commenced on 1st January. The campaign comprises a unique Contest, under which, households are being mobilised to paint and decorate their toilets.
- The Minister of State (I/C), Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Shri Hardeep S Puri has said, Swachh Survekshan 2019 launched across 4,237 Urban Local Bodies. The 'Annual Cleanliness' survey will be from 4 - 28 January 2019. To be completely Digital & Paperless. 7 Cities are (Indore, Ujjain, Khargone, Shahganj, Rajnandgaon, Ambikapur & Bhilai) certified ODF++ & 35 Cities are certified ODF+.
- As per Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC), it has realised a profit of Rs. 20,269.47 crore and Rs.26,147.52 crore in the financial years 2016-17 and 2017-18 respectively. This is an increase of 29 per cent over the previous financial year (2016-17).
- Government of India will soon make linking Aadhar mandatory with driving licenses: Ministry for Law a. Information technology told.

- A survey on 1000 tribal households sample conducted in tribal villages of West Bengal by Amartya Sen's Institute reveals that a one third (30%) are facing food scarcity at varying degrees apart from key findings on living conditions, health and education.
- Finance Minister highlights that till March'18 the Indian Government saved Rs.9000 Crore on linking several schemes to Aadhar which eliminated the duplication of beneficiaries. The Digital Dividend Report of World Bank estimates that India can save Rs.77000 Crore every year with Aadhar.
- Sheikh Hasina takes oath as Prime Minister of Bangladesh today for third consecutive term. The Awami League a. allies secured 288 seats out of 299 in Parliamentary elections.
- The Cabinet has approved 10% reservation in general category in jobs and educational institutions to the economically weaker sections.
- Kerala government planned to set up a country's largest integrated Startup Complex in 13.5 acres of area at Kalamassery industrial region in Kochi.
- Annual procurement of goods & services from Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) by the Central Public Sector Enterprise (CPSE) during 2017-18 stands at Rs. 24226.51 crore in which the share of procurement from MSEs owned by SC/ST Entrepreneur is Rs. 442.52 crore.
- Under the Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen), over 5.4 lakh villages and 585 districts have been declared Open Defecation Free (ODF). 27 States and Union Territories have declared themselves ODF so far. Over 9 crore toilets have been built across rural India so far, taking the national rural sanitation coverage up from 39% in 2014 to over 98%.
- The Prime Minister has said that the constitutional amendment bill providing 10% reservation for general category poor is a historic step for the uplift of the poor and a reflection of the Government's commitment to SabkaSaath, SabkaVikas.
- Union Minister Santosh Kumar Gangwar today said the Centre would place comprehensive legislation in the next session of Parliament to bring labourers of the unorganised sector in its ambit along with those in the organised sector.
- Once again making its priorities clear, the Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh has asked all district magistrates in the state to explore the option of getting companies to run temporary cow shelters as part of their corporate social responsibility (CSR) obligations.
- Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas & Skill Development and Entrepreneurship has attended the Global Skill Summit 2019 held in Ranchi, Jharkhand. On this occasion, in total 1,06,619 youths of Jharkhand were given symbolic offer letter for jobs in the private sector, surpassing the target of giving jobs to 1,00,000 youths.
- Water storage level of 91 major reservoirs of the country goes down by three percent.
- The Ministry of Tourism has sanctioned four new projects for Rs. 190.46 Crores under the tourism infrastructure development schemes, Swadesh Darshan and PRASHAD in the states of Meghalaya, Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh recently.
- The Centre has released nearly Rs 638 crore in current fiscal so far under the Border Area Development Programme (BADP), which is being implemented to ameliorate the problems of people living in isolated forward

locations, officials said Friday.

- Gujarat Government has announced that the benefits of 10 percent quota for Economically Weaker sections of the general category in educational institutions and government jobs will be applicable from midnight tonight.
- Although India's upper caste households earned nearly 47% more than the national average annual household income, the top 10% within these castes owned 60% of the wealth within the group in 2012, as per a recent paper by the World Inequality Database.
- The vice president said the government's initiatives and reforms helped India achieve the 11th rank in the Global FDI confidence index 2018.
- Voter Awareness Forum (VAF) was launched by Election Commission of India in New Delhi today. Similar VAFs were also launched by the Chief Electoral Officers in the State capitals and by District Election Officers in the Districts simultaneously.
- The government has approved a proposal to extend the 7th Central Pay Commission benefits to teachers and other academic staff of the state government and government-aided degree level technical institutes.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said that his Government is committed to providing road connectivity to all the rural habitations in the country. He said 90 percent of the rural habitations are now connected by road. Prime Minister has dedicated Kollam bypass road, Kerala to the nation.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi said here on Thursday that the 10% reservation for the economically backward will be introduced in 40,000 colleges across 900 universities from the current academic year.
- The Government Wednesday announced Goodwill Ambassador to the World Health Organization for Leprosy Elimination, Yohei Sasakawa as the winner of the 2017 Gandhi Peace Prize.
- Uttar Pradesh government has approved 10 per cent reservation in jobs and educational institutions for economically backward in the general category.
- Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma on Friday sought regulated mining with "utmost care on safety of miners and environment" to help the State tide over revenue loss and provide relief to people dependent on coal.
- Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu yesterday said eliminating discriminatory tendencies should be the first step in empowering differently-abled people. Nobody has any right to ill-treat or discriminate against anybody, particularly persons with disabilities.
- Union Minister for Human Resources Development Prakash Javdekar has said that the 10 percent reservations for economically backward people from open category declared by Union Government will be implemented from the coming educational year.
- Aadhaar cards are now valid travel documents for Indians under 15 and over 65 traveling to Nepal and Bhutan, according to a Home Ministry communique. Aadhaar cards to travel to the two neighboring countries, for which no visas are needed, clarified the communique issued recently.
- India is among the most trusted nations globally when it comes to government, business, NGOs and media. The 2019 Edelman Trust Barometer report, which was released today, ahead of the World Economic Forum meeting in Davos, noted that the Global Trust Index witnessed a marginal increase of 3 points to 52.

- The Indian- origin Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella has said, the next phase of globalization needs to deliver an economic growth that is equitable for everyone so that there are no places with people without food and there are no refugees in camps.
- The UN agency that sets international labor standards is asking them to commit to a universal labor guarantee, universal social protection from birth to old age, an international governance system for the gig economy, and a human-in-command approach to artificial intelligence. In a report on the 'Future of Work', released in Geneva on Tuesday to mark its centenary, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) warned that.
- Cold weather conditions continued to prevail in several parts of North India following fresh snowfall in higher reaches.
- A Supreme Court Bench on Monday agreed to hear in April the Central government's curative petition seeking ₹7,844 crore as additional funds from the successor firms of Union Carbide for giving compensation to the victims of the 1984 Bhopal gas tragedy.
- "Under the aegis of Ministry of Textiles, for the first time in the history of India, we have dedicated to the nation 207 HSN codes for technical textiles. This decision alone can enable the sector to grow to a market size of 2 lakh crore rupees by 2020-2021". This was stated by the Union Textiles Minister Smt. Smriti Zubin Irani, at the National Conclave on Technical Textiles, jointly organized by the Ministry of Textiles and FICCI, in Mumbai.
- India has improved its ranking on a global corruption index in 2018 by three points and moved to the 78th position with a score of 41. In the list of 180 countries, China and Pakistan lagged far behind at 87th and 117th position, respectively.
- There are 139 Indian cities that breach air pollution standards but are not included in the Centre's National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) says a report by Greenpeace and made public on Tuesday.
- Cow urine — a minor fount of research in India for its medicinal benefits — may also contribute to global warming. Most times, when cow urine is used in degraded pastures, which are also seen in vast tracts of land in India, N2O emissions are tripled, says a study conducted in Colombia, Argentina, Brazil, Nicaragua, Trinidad and Tobago. ❖

Updates from Weeklies

Livelihoods/Employment/Enterprises/Economy/Tribal and other issues

- Privacy a myth? :** In this rising era of technology we are losing our fundamental right of privacy with mass surveillance! Also, there was constant breaching of privacy norms in past by various companies. It all began with Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) project and finally the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has revealed their motive to setup a technology platform to collect digital media chatters through Facebook, Google, Instagram, Flickr, email, blogs, forums, complaint websites and other mobile rights platforms. Thus, equivalent to creating a surveillance state. This would grant the ability to see historic conversation of each user in a reverse chronological manner with the ability to merge conversations across channels". It was to "strategies recovery for negative publicity" and to be able to categorise what passes in the World Wide Web into "positive, negative and neutral" and to do predictive analysis. A "private data centre" was to be set up to store all data/content in an archive. [For Further Reading... <https://frontline.thehindu.com/cover-story/article25878618.ece>]
- 3 I Strategy for Farmer Progression**-Small & Marginal Farmers, Input intensive-mono cropping, resource poor farmers, unsustainable agriculture practices is often the facet of many dimensions of primary sector in India. Agriculture contributing to 17% of our GDP, occupies 46% of total land use. With the world plunging towards food nutritional security from nutritional security the economic & ecological vulnerability of climate change is also growing as ever. Technological advancement alone is found not to be reaping the result in view of small & marginal land holders. In these scenarios targeting on raising the incomes of farmers, innovation in the approach, integrated farming and integration of complementary and supplementary enterprises by building on the back ward and forward linkages can be a 3-pronged medium for positive growth of every farmer. [For further reading- <https://www.businesstoday.in/magazine/the-buzz/the-three-i-of-farming/story/304085.html>]
- Resilience models to Climate Change**-Begun with the women starting off with crop cultivation when men went away to hunt is considered a nearly 10000 years of brief history of agriculture. Evolving from food gathering phase to food cultivating phase; irrigation canals, crop rotation to cultivation for soil health is the trend. With Climate change on the bang, the need for enhanced coping up mechanism turns essential. In these contexts, the models like Farming system for Nutrition, promotion of per day crop productivity, linking of rivers for water security, promotion of special agriculture zones, soil health monitoring & amelioration centre, gene editing are drawing attention in the building of resilience of the world to the inevitable. [For further reading- <https://www.businesstoday.in/magazine/the-buzz/farming-ripe-for-makeover/story/304069.html>]
- An era of UPI**- India is the world's second largest market for smart phones with 300 Million users, expected to shoot up by 190 Million users by 2022, findings of a US based Market Research firm. When considered the 4G subscription alone 240 Million users were recorded until December 2017 of which 83 Million belonged to rural India alone. Considering the penetration prospects its significance in shift towards Unified Payment Interface Apps seems relevant. Developed with an intend to promote peer to peer transactions without exchange of account numbers provisioning a scope for pre-authorized transactions and over draft facility with just a virtual payment address. Its expansion in person to merchant (P2M) space also shows significant progress in respect to Rural India. With this advancement on one side, how well are we prepared to deal with the accumulation of digital waste? [For further reading- <https://www.businesstoday.in/magazine/the-buzz/the-bharat-breakthrough/story/304075.html>]
- Insights on APLMA act 2017:** Markets are one of the life-lines to Agriculture. In this regard, the progress from

Agricultural Produce Market Committee Act of 2003 to Agriculture Produce & Livestock Marketing Act of 2017 is exposed to appreciation & criticism. Agriculture being a state subject, the adoption of union policy may not be observed absolutely by the states. In the wake of 2017 policy, a draft proposal subjecting contract farming separation from APMC domain to the model act namely, Agricultural Produce and Livestock Contract Farming & services is drawing attention across. With regulation vs. facilitation debate ongoing, a declaration of mere model policy for a single market platform wouldn't alone suffice. A greater need for diversification of crops, technologies and markets, promotion of Farmer Producer Organizations, Cooperatives, Minimum Support price for produce, public & private wholesale markets with free licensing, e-payment of market fee, free and fair auction is to be equally worked upon for reaching out to small & marginal farmers who are in majority in Indian scenario of primary sector. [For further reading- <https://www.epw.in/journal/2018/51/review-rural-affairs/reforming-agricultural-markets-india.html>]

- **What Drives Annual Agricultural Growth Rates in India?** – In India, the agricultural growth rate is linked to rainfall, and medium-term growth to technology adoption, policy frameworks, and institutional interventions. But, growth in a year may be poor as much due to the good monsoon or abnormally wet conditions in the previous year as the poor monsoon during that year, or it may be high due as much to the poor monsoon in the previous year as to a good monsoon of the year or to policy reforms. As the rainfall fluctuates annually, medium-term growth rates should be assessed; the annual rainfall in the base year should be close to normal. [For further reading: <https://www.epw.in/journal/2019/1/perspectives/what-drives-annual-agricultural-growth.html>]
- **Population Challenges in India** – Following the unparalleled decline in fertility, India's population growth has shown signs of deceleration in the recent decades. Despite this, India will overtake China and is slated to be the most populous country in the world within the next decade. Keeping in mind the rising concerns of population scientists over the non-standard demographic transition that the country experienced, it is high time to assess the achievements and the rough paths traversed since independence. Krishnamurthy Srinivasan's book critically studies the demographic changes in India in the context of national and international policies. It brilliantly highlights the lessons learnt from the population policies in the country. [For further reading: <https://www.epw.in/journal/2019/1/book-reviews/population-challenges-india.html>]
- **Traders' Participation in Commodity Futures Markets in Kerala** – Traders' participation and barriers to participation in the commodity futures markets of rubber and pepper in Kerala are explored in the context of increasing debate over the use and benefits of commodity futures markets in India. Rubber and pepper traders depend highly on the futures markets price signals to trade in the spot markets and relate it to spot market prices. Factors like education, income, trading experiences in futures markets and in other financial markets influence traders' participation in futures market. Lack of networking, risks, difficulty in managing spot and futures markets, lack of adequate technological knowledge and skills are the major constraints faced by the traders in futures markets participation. [For further reading: <https://www.epw.in/journal/2019/1/special-articles/traders%E2%80%99-participation-commodity-futures.html>]
- **Women's Reservation Bill | The Power of She** – Two evenings after Christmas, I steeled myself for a task I truly abhor call a stranger and have a formal conversation. Only the thought that hundreds of others from Shakti a non-partisan group I'd recently joined were also steeling themselves across India made me not suddenly develop a headache. The group had only just formed in November but was impressively focused on its one-point agenda get more women elected as MLAs and MPs. [For further reading: <https://www.indiatoday.in/magazine/up-front/story/20190114-women-s-reservation-bill-the-power-of-she-1423184-2019-01-04>]

- Why India Cannot Achieve The Growth It Wants Without Reducing Income, Gender Inequality** – India lags many of its south Asian neighbours on the human development index (HDI) primarily because of inequalities, said a recent report by the United Nations Development Fund. These inequalities, in turn, hamper India's economic growth. India ranked 130 out of 189 countries on the 2018 HDI index with a score of 0.640 which places it in the "medium" category of development. It fared worse than Sri Lanka (HDI 0.77, rank 76) and China (0.75, 86) but better than Pakistan (0.56 and 150), Nepal (0.57, 149) and Bangladesh (0.68, 136). [For further reading: <https://www.indiaspend.com/why-india-cannot-achieve-the-growth-it-wants-without-reducing-income-gender-inequality/>]
- Global Nutrition Report** – In 2017, fewer than one in five children, six to 24 months of age, in the world ate a minimally accepted diet. More than half of them in the same age group did not get the recommended number of meals, and only two-thirds of the infants from six to eight months ate any solid food at all. In short, the burden of malnutrition, globally, was very high. South Asia was home to 38.9 per cent of the world's stunted children, while India, Nigeria and Pakistan accounted for half of all the stunted children. India was also home to 25.5 million "wasted" (low weight for height) children. India, Nigeria and Indonesia were home to the largest number of children in the "wasted" category. These and other dismal statistics are part of the 2018 Global Nutrition Report, the outcome of a multi-stakeholder initiative started in 2013. [For further reading: <https://frontline.thehindu.com/the-nation/public-health/article25771179.ece>]
- Sugarcane growers' struggle** - On November 19, thousands of sugarcane farmers gathered at Freedom Park in Bengaluru under the aegis of the Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha (KRRS) demanding that the government guarantee a minimum support price (MSP) for their crop. A day before this, 20 sugarcane-laden trucks barged into the premises of Suvarna Soudha, where the winter session of the Assembly is held, in Belagavi in north Karnataka, and dumped their contents there. [For further reading: <https://frontline.thehindu.com/the-nation/agriculture/article25771281.ece>]
- Where Will the 10% Be Employed?** – The central government's employment-protection manoeuvres, especially its recent 10% quota politics, bear a striking resemblance to a walking device described in a 19th-century Bengali limerick. The device, strapped to its wearer's shoulders, dangles "carrots" in front of them. It can make its wearer cover miles in minutes in pursuit of the bait that will always be at a constant distance from them no matter how fast they run towards it. Take for instance, the government's latest stunt of reserving 10% of jobs and seats at academic institutions for the "economically" weak upper castes. Given the political ado about it, none can deny its effectiveness as an electoral strategy, but neither can one dismiss its spuriousness in providing employment opportunities. Just like the perpetual motion device in the limerick, which makes hunger satiation unattainable, the recent quota arrangements, too, are equally pointless for any worthwhile recruitment. [For further reading: <https://www.epw.in/journal/2019/2/editorials/where-will-10-be-employed.html>]
- Solar Irrigation Pumps and India's Energy-Irrigation Nexus** – India's groundwater economy is stuck in a perverse nexus between electricity subsidies and groundwater depletion. From Punjab down to Tamil Nadu, free power to farmers has been the cause of rampant groundwater over-exploitation and deteriorating finances of electricity utilities (see for instance, Kumar 2005; Kumar and Singh 2007; Kumar et al 2011). The situation can be salvaged if irrigation tubewells are metered and farmers charged for power consumed in irrigation. But this will have political risks that leaders will be unwilling to accept for much time to come. Solar irrigation pumps (SIPs), considered unviable, are being aggressively promoted with high investment subsidies by governments and DISCOMs (electricity distribution companies of India) to reduce farm power subsidy burden. Since 2014, SIP

numbers have grown at CAGR (compound annual growth rate) of 65% per year; at this rate, India will have 12 million SIPs by 2025. [For further reading: <https://www.epw.in/journal/2019/2/discussion/solar-irrigation-pumps-and-indias-energy.html>]

- **Climate Change and Rural Poverty Levels in India** – Although there is wide recognition of the adverse impacts of climate change and extreme weather events on poverty, there is hardly any empirical evidence to substantiate this. The trends and the role of agricultural growth and other factors on rural poverty in India—which has the largest concentration of the poor in the world—have been analysed, and the likely changes in rural poverty levels in India under alternative climate scenarios have been assessed. Evidence presented here suggests that rural poverty trends in India, which witnessed a significant decline during the post-reform period beginning from 1991, may get reversed and may increase due to the likely adverse impacts of climate change on Indian agriculture, and other drivers of poverty. Not only will the proportion of poor population likely rise, but also the depth and severity of rural poverty measured through the poverty gap index and squared poverty gap index may aggravate sharply in response to warming temperatures and other climatic changes. [For further reading: <https://www.epw.in/journal/2019/2/special-articles/climate-change-and-rural-poverty-levels.html>]
- **Burden of Child Malnutrition in India** – In India, monitoring and surveillance of health and well-being indicators have been focused primarily on the state and district levels. Analysing population data at the level of parliamentary constituencies has the potential to bring political accountability to the data-driven policy discourse that is currently based on district-level estimates. Using data from the fourth National Family Health Survey 2016, two geographic information systems methodologies have been developed and applied to provide estimates of four child malnutrition indicators (stunting, underweight, wasting, and anemia) for the 543 parliamentary constituencies in India. The results indicate that several constituencies experience a multiple burden of child malnutrition that must be addressed concurrently and as a priority. [For further reading: <https://www.epw.in/journal/2019/2/special-articles/burden-child-malnutrition-india.html>]
- **Government Cuts Funding To National Crèche Scheme, Crippling Lifeline for Poor Working Mothers** – The 2006 National Crèche Scheme, previously known as the Rajiv Gandhi National Crèche Scheme, and its network of neighbourhood crèches were set up for parents like Aarti, unable to rely on family members or their employer’s help for childcare. Aarti’s employers are busy, “important-looking” people who often work from home in their smart Colaba apartment, near South Mumbai’s art galleries. They like things to be quiet and wouldn’t take too kindly to having a couple of kids running about the place, making noise, as children tend to do. “I have to bring them to work with me on Sundays, when the crèche is closed,” Aarti Bhansore, 35, a domestic worker told IndiaSpend. “It definitely feels like an issue for my employers, so I’m glad a neighbour told me about the crèche in the neighbourhood.” [For further reading: <https://www.indiaspend.com/government-cuts-funding-to-national-creche-scheme-crippling-lifeline-for-poor-working-mothers/>]
- **Why Rural Women Are Falling Out Of India’s Workforce At Faster Rates Than Urban Women** – The number of women working in rural India is declining at a greater pace than that among women in the urban workforce, according to an IndiaSpend analysis of government data. Sustained high economic growth since the early 1990s has led to improved education and health indicators among India’s women. Yet, women accounted for no more than 25% of the labour force in 2011-12, declining from 33% in 2005, according to national sample survey report (2014) on employment, a rate worse than neighbouring Bangladesh (29%), Nepal (52%) and Sri Lanka (34%), IndiaSpend reported on May 4, 2017. [For further reading: <https://www.indiaspend.com/why-rural-women-are-falling-out-of-indias-workforce-at-faster-rates-than-urban-women/>]

- **After 4 Years of Swachh Bharat, Open Defecation Down 26 Percentage Points, But Toilet Use Does Not Match Construction Spree** – More Indians living in villages owned a latrine in 2018 than four years ago, yet 44% of them still defecate in the open, according to a survey covering Rajasthan, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh that was released on January 4, 2019. These four states together contain two-fifths of India's rural population and reported high open defecation rates, over 68% in 2016, as per this government report. Almost a quarter (23%) of those who own a latrine defecated in the open, a figure that has remained unchanged since 2014, researchers found. This can mostly be attributed to deeply entrenched beliefs about caste “impurity” associated with emptying latrine pits, the paper concluded. [For further reading: <https://www.indiaspend.com/after-4-years-of-swachh-bharat-open-defecation-down-26-percentage-points-but-toilet-use-does-not-match-construction-spree-false-claims-evident/>]
- **Is India Really 96% Open Defecation Free?** – The Census 2011 told us only 32% of India's rural households had toilets. Other studies showed that a fewer number of those households actually used those toilets. Under the Narendra Modi government's Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM), much has changed. Firstly, commitment has come from the highest level of government, especially the prime minister. By all accounts, the secretary in charge of SBM is a remarkably driven man. Secondly, under SBM, for the first time, the government is focusing on changing behaviour on a large scale. In fact, India is implementing the world's largest collective behaviour movement for rural sanitation. [For further reading: <https://thewire.in/government/is-india-really-96-open-defecation-free>]
- **No more stigma: Why retirement communities are finally growing in India** – India currently has a relatively young population, with more than 50% of its citizens under the age of 25, but the demographics will shift. A report by the Confederation of Indian Industry projects that India's senior population will treble to 300 million by 2050, highlighting the need for more infrastructure and services to support this significant section of society. The report points to the current gap between supply and demand for urban senior housing: there are approximately 20,000 units currently operational, under construction, or in the planning phase, while the urban demand is for 2.4 lakh houses. [For further reading: <https://scroll.in/magazine/902402/no-more-stigma-why-retirement-communities-are-finally-growing-in-india>]
- **In India's Poorest State, A Pilot Project Succeeds In Reducing Malnourishment Among Children** – Jharkhand is among the top five Indian states with malnourished--including stunted, wasted and underweight--children, according to an IndiaSpend analysis of data from the ministry of health and family welfare's National Family Health Survey, 2015-16 (NFHS-4). Almost half (45.3%) of Jharkhand's children below the age of five are stunted, compared to the national average of 38.4%. Again, almost half (47.8%) of Jharkhand's children are underweight, placing Jharkhand behind only Bihar and Madhya Pradesh in child malnutrition levels, our analysis shows. The infant mortality rate in Jharkhand is 44 deaths per 1,000 live births and under-five mortality rate is 54 deaths per 1,000 live births, compared to national averages of 41 and 50, respectively, according to the NFHS. [For further reading: <https://healthcheck.indiaspend.com/in-indias-poorest-state-a-pilot-project-succeeds-in-reducing-malnourishment-among-children/>]
- **How Gender-sensitive Are India's Energy Policies?** – In agriculture and allied rural livelihoods, there is a clear gendered division of labour (Contzen and Forney 2017). Women are largely engaged in labour-intensive activities like sowing, transplanting, weeding, and harvesting (Behera and Behera 2013). However, women face barriers in accessing clean energy-based drudgery-reducing implements/machineries due to restrictive gender norms that limit their ownership of productive assets and recognition as farmers (Mokyr 2017; Kelkar and Krishnaraj 2013). Furthermore, women's role in energy supply and value chain is seldom recognised in policies.

Their contribution to energy supply is estimated in the range of 10% to 80% of the total energy in developing countries (Parikh 1995). [For further reading: <https://www.epw.in/journal/2019/3/commentary/how-gender-sensitive-are-indias-energy.html>]

- **The Constitutional Case against the Citizenship Amendment Bill** – The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led Lok Sabha passed the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016 under the shadow of immense opposition and protest.¹ The proposed amendment seeks to make non-Muslim illegal migrants from Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Bangladesh eligible for citizenship. While its fate in the Rajya Sabha may be uncertain, there is a lurking possibility of it coming into effect as an ordinance. [For further reading: <https://www.epw.in/journal/2019/3/commentary/constitutional-case-against-citizenship.html>]
- **Changing Task Content of Jobs in India** – The world has been experiencing a digital revolution. Since the early 1970s, digital technology has invaded all aspects of human life—from communications to finance to manufacturing to social interaction. The use of digital technology is visible everywhere, and this enormous increase in its use has coincided with an occupational upgrading and a sharp increase in wage disparity. Since the mid-1980s, there has been an increase in wage disparities between skilled and unskilled workers in countries across the globe. [For further reading: <https://www.epw.in/journal/2019/3/special-articles/changing-task-content-jobs-india.html>]
- **Financing the Micro and Small Enterprises in India** – The mandate to provide financial support to the micro and small enterprises (MSEs) has been wedded to the social banking priorities in India since the 1960s. The National Credit Council in the late 1960s had identified small-scale industries (SSIs) as a priority sector for lending, along with agriculture. As the country moved into the liberalisation phase in the early 1990s, these priorities have been reset and redefined to match the objectives of developing a primarily profit-oriented, efficient and competitive banking sector. [For further reading: <https://www.epw.in/journal/2019/3/special-articles/financing-micro-and-small-enterprises.html>]
- **The 10% Reservation Is a Cynical Fraud on the Constitution** – Barely two days after it sprang the Constitution (124th Amendment) Bill on an unsuspecting Indian nation, the government managed to get it passed, virtually unanimously, in both houses of parliament. Days later, it was signed into constitutional law. We now have the Union minister of human resource development announcing that “the 10% quota for forward castes”, which is how the Act is being described by the government and media alike, will be implemented in all colleges and universities in the country from the academic year beginning June 2019. [For further reading: <https://thewire.in/government/the-10-reservation-is-a-cynical-fraud-on-the-constitution>]
- **World Bank's global report has something positive to say about India** – The World Bank, in its recently released Global Economic Prospects Report - January 2019, has sketched a gloomy outlook for the global economic growth in the coming years, reiterating the fears of global slowdown, however, it expects India to remain the fastest growing emerging market economy. Worries over trade war, weak global growth and financial stress in the developing economies are likely to weigh on global growth outlook. For 2018, the global growth estimate has been revised downwards by 0.1 percentage point from 3.1 per cent as per June 2018 report to 3 per cent in January 2019 report. [For further reading: <https://www.businesstoday.in/current/economy-politics/world-bank-global-report-has-something-positive-to-say-about-india/story/308990.html>]
- **Farming The Future** – The Modi government has apparently decided not to fall prey to temptation and outdo the Congress in announcing and initiating even bigger loan waivers. (Strictly speaking, it also cannot do so because agriculture is a state subject). Farmer loan waivers are no solution. Apart from the moral hazard it

creates - people may not repay if they expect a loan waiver announcement, and people who have paid dutifully may feel cheated - it is also no solution. Besides burdening state budgets and banks, loan waivers don't solve the farmer's root problem. One idea for farmer distress the government is toying with currently is to offer some sort of minimum income guarantee to the poor farmers or compensating those who have not managed to sell at the minimum support price (MSP) with cash transfers for the difference. [For further reading: <https://www.businesstoday.in/magazine/the-buzz/farming-the-future/story/307513.html>]

- **Who is Bearing the Burden of India's Rising Unemployment?** – Latest employment data once again reinforces the distress about the job situation in India. The Centre for Monitoring the Indian Economy reported a loss of 1.1 crore jobs in 2018 and estimated that the unemployment rate reached a 15-month high of 7.4% in December 2018. The Labour Bureau also recorded a continuous rise in unemployment from 3.4% in 2014 to 3.7% in 2015 and 3.9% in 2016-17. Rising unemployment poses a serious challenge, even more so because the brunt of joblessness falls more heavily on some groups. [For further reading: <https://thewire.in/labour/who-is-bearing-the-burden-of-indias-rising-unemployment>]
- **Wealth Of 10 Richest Indians Combined Equal To 4 State Economies & 6 Ministries** – The fortunes of the 10 richest Indians combined are equal to the gross state domestic product (GSDP) of four states and six government ministries, according to an IndiaSpend analysis of government data. The nine richest Indians now own wealth equivalent to bottom 50% of the country. While the top 1% owns 52% of national wealth, the bottom 60% own only 5%, according to the January 2019 Oxfam report on global inequality. [For further reading: <https://www.indiaspend.com/wealth-of-10-richest-indians-combined-equal-to-4-state-economies-6-ministries/>]
- **India's Missing Middle: 24,000 'Villages' With Populations Greater Than Towns Lose Out On Policies For Urban Areas** – The village of Rarhi in north Bihar's Darbhanga district has a population of over 36,000, with 7,500 households according to the last Census in 2011. That's more than Adoor in Kerala, which is classified three steps above in the size hierarchy as a class 3 town with a population close to 29,000. Rarhi is one of 24,000 such settlements in India with populations larger than towns (a town has a minimum population of 5,000 according to census criteria), but are not classified as urban because less than 25% of the population is engaged in non-agricultural work. [For further reading: <https://www.indiaspend.com/indias-missing-middle-24000-villages-with-populations-greater-than-towns-lose-out-on-policies-for-urban-areas/#>]
- **Equality over faith: India bats for women's rights on Sabarimala, triple talaq in Mood of the Nation poll** – A Supreme Court order allowing women, irrespective of age, to enter and pray at the Sabarimala temple in Kerala contravening the established temple traditions has triggered a contentious debate on two equally strong constitutional principles -- Article 14 guaranteeing equality and Article 25 guaranteeing freedom of religion. Freedom of religion means the right to practice one's own religion, not the freedom to undermine the fundamental rights of others. Nor does freedom of religion warrant contravening the writ of the Supreme Court which grants explicitly to women the right to worship at Sabarimala. Blinkered and diehard conservatism has failed to perceive the role of inspiring figures, particularly in south India, who challenged the bounds of orthodoxy, broke the rules of caste and gender, and triggered popular movements of reform and renaissance over centuries. [For further reading: <https://www.indiatoday.in/magazine/web-exclusive/story/20190204-motn-sabarimala-triple-talaq-1439541-2019-01-25>]
- **Delivering Essential Nutrition: Interventions for Women in Tribal Pockets of Eastern India** – In India, despite provisions for tribal development, 32% of tribal women are chronically undernourished, as opposed to 23%

among those not belonging to tribal households. Large-scale surveys and routine monitoring are currently deficient in measuring the nutrition status of women, especially tribal women. This study was undertaken to analyse the reach of various health-related schemes for tribal women in Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and Odisha. In the light of its findings, it is recommended that all national schemes should be reviewed through a tribal lens, as tribes remain outside the ambit of most nutrition safety nets. Proven measures like strengthening tribal development nodal agencies, motivational incentives to fieldworkers and organised community involvement, need to be scaled up. [For further reading: <https://www.epw.in/journal/2019/4/special-articles/delivering-essential-nutrition.html>]

- **Market Awareness and Profitability** – A case study of mango farmers in Kolar district of Karnataka analyses the determinants of profitability and constraints faced by the horticulture industry in India in general. The mango value chain is explored in-depth to understand the market choices of farmers and the role of market intermediaries. The study is based on data collected from a primary survey of 131 farmers and uses an instrumental variable approach to model the profitability of farmers as a function of market awareness, distance from markets, farming practices, and control variables. It finds that in addition to age and education, distance to markets and farming practices are significant factors influencing the profitability of mango cultivators. [For further reading: <https://www.epw.in/journal/2019/4/special-articles/market-awareness-and-profitability.html>]
- **Gender Norms, Lack Of New Age Skills Threaten To Derail Teenage Indian Girls' Aspirations** – Every fifth teenage Indian girl is currently not studying, dropouts increase with increase in age, nearly every second teenage Indian girl believes boys have better opportunities to pursue education and work, and only one in five believes that boys can do as much household work as themselves. These are some of the findings of a new survey report, the Teen Age Girls report (or the TAG report), released by Nanhi Kali, a project by the Naandi Foundation, which works with adolescent girls. [For further reading: <https://educationcheck.indiaspend.com/gender-norms-lack-of-new-age-skills-threaten-to-derail-teenage-indian-girls-aspirations/>]
- **7 In 10 Teenage Indian Girls Want To Graduate, 3 In 4 Have Career Plan: New Survey** – Seven in 10 teenage Indian girls want to finish graduation, three in four have a specific career path in mind, and nearly three in four do not want to marry before the age of 21. These are some of the findings of a new survey conducted by Nanhi Kali, a project by the Naandi Foundation, which works with adolescent girls. [For further reading: <https://educationcheck.indiaspend.com/7-in-10-teenage-indian-girls-want-to-graduate-3-in-4-have-career-plan-new-survey/>] ❖