



Newsletter for the month of May 2019

India

General Elections 2019:



*PM Narendra Modi was presented with a garland
Photo: Reuters*

PM Shri Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) won a clear victory in the Indian General Elections 2019 held in April-May, securing 303 of the 545 seats in Lok Sabha, the lower house of the Indian national assembly. The party's popularity has increased since the 2014 General Elections, as the party this year got 21 more representatives/MPs compared to 2014. The alliance of parties led by BJP, the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) won 353 seats in total, while the main opposition alliance, United Progressive Alliance (UPA) led by Indian National Congress (INC) won 91 seats, of which 52

seats were won by INC. The rest of the 98 elected seats were won by regional state parties. A number of state leaders congratulated Modi on his victory, among them China's President Xi Jinping, Russia's President Vladimir Putin, Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Norway's Prime Minister Erna Solberg. On Twitter, US President Donald Trump stated that great things were in store for the US-India partnership with the return of PM Modi at the helm, and that he looked forward to continuing the two countries' important work together.

Oath-taking ceremony:



Shri Narendra Modi took oath as Prime Minister of India

Shri Narendra Modi was sworn in for the second consecutive term as Prime Minister of India during an oath-taking ceremony on 30 May. India's President Ram Nath Kovind administered the ceremony of the oath of office and secrecy to the Prime Minister and other Cabinet Ministers. The ceremony took place in the forecourt of the Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi. More than 6,000 people including world leaders, leaders of the BIMSTEC Member States, captains of industry, diplomatic corps, and media along with a huge number of well wishers attended the oath-taking ceremony. Some of the new Cabinet Ministers who also took oath were Shri Amit Shah as Minister of Home Affairs, Shri Raj Nath Singh as Minister of Defence, Dr. Subrahmanyam Jaishankar as Minister of External Affairs and Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman as Minister of Finance and Minister of Corporate Affairs.

2019 Indian Premier League (IPL):



*Mumbai Indians celebrates victory in the IPL 2019
Photo: The Times of India.com*

The 2019 season of the Indian Premier League (IPL 12), a professional Twenty20 cricket league established by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) in 2007, was played between 29 March and 19 May. Eight teams representing eight different cities and states participated (Chennai, Delhi, Punjab, Kolkata, Mumbai, Rajasthan, Bangalore and Hyderabad). In

the 2019 IPL Final to determine the winner of the 2019 season, the Mumbai Indians defeated Chennai Super Kings by one run (149/8-148/7) to win their fourth IPL title.

Indian States / Festivals

Telangana:



*Cyber Towers, Hyderabad
Photo: Noah Seelam/AFP/Getty Images*

Telangana is located on the uplands of the Deccan plateau, and is the link between the North and South of India. Considering its location, the state has long been a meeting place for diverse languages and cultures, and the state is a good example of India's cultural diversity, pluralism and inclusiveness. Separated from Andhra Pradesh in 2014, Telangana's economy ranks 8th among India's 33 states and union territories with an estimated GDP of USD 120 billion in 2018-2019, and is a fast-growing state economy with estimated GDP growth of 15% from 2017-18 to 2018-19. The economy of Telangana is mainly supported by agriculture, and the state capital Hyderabad has over the past couple of decades become a hub for information technology, pharma and biotech companies. Major tech companies like Microsoft, Google, Facebook, Amazon and Apple have offices in the capital, and in the Ease of Doing Business 2018 ranking of Indian states, Telangana was

only second to Andhra Pradesh. The state has implemented business promotion initiatives such as the Telangana State Industrial Project Approval and Self-Certification System Act, which came into effect in 2015. Under the Act, any new enterprise in manufacturing or services with an investment of more than Rs 200 crore will be approved within 15 days, and all other proposals will be green-lit in 30 days. Also, the Telangana government has transferred 1.5 lakh acres of land which can be used for industrial purposes to the Telangana State Industrial Infrastructure Corporation.



Charminar, Hyderabad
Photo: Theculturetrip.com

For tourists, Telangana can offer heritage spots such as Charminar, Salar Jung Museum, Golconda Fort and Qutb Shahi tombs in Hyderabad and Warangal Fort in Warangal. Charminar is a monument and mosque which is the landmark of Hyderabad, and which is considered to be in the top ten monuments of the country. Also, Telangana offers divine destinations like Alampur Jogulamba and Ramappa temples, and nature discovery such as the Bogatha and Pochera Waterfalls in Adilabad. The Ramappa Temple, which dates back to 1213 AD, is characterized by its architectural brilliance. The temple has been referred to as the brightest star in the network of medieval temples in the Deccan

region, which is home to the classic Kakatiya art.

Buddha Purnima Festival:



Buddha Purnima Festival
Photo: Tripsavvy.com

On 18 May, Buddha Purnima, which is the most sacred Buddhist festival and also known as Buddha Jayanti, was celebrated across India to commemorate the birth, enlightenment and death of Lord Buddha. The celebrations took place at various Buddhist sites, including Bodh Gaya, Bihar which is the most important Buddhist pilgrimage destination in the world, as it was here that Lord Buddha became enlightened during intense meditation under a Bodhi tree. Activities related to the festival include prayers, sermons and religious discourses, recitation of Buddhist scriptures, group meditation, processions and worshipping of Buddha statues.

International commercial & business activities in India

5th Smart Cities India 2019 Expo: The 5th Smart Cities India 2019 Expo was organized by the India Trade Promotion Organisation (ITPO) & Exhibitions India Group in New Delhi from 22 to 24 May. Since its launch in 2015, the Expo has developed into Asia's largest trade fair and conference on smart cities, attracting

business delegations from across the world. The 2019 Expo featured key smart city sectors such as construction, energy, transportation, water, ICT and other relevant technologies.

India-Norway:

NHIDCL awarded contract to NGI:



*Signing of contract between NHIDCL and NGI
Photo: NGI*

On 9 May, India's National Highways & Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd (NHIDCL), a Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) under the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, awarded a contract to the Norwegian Geotechnical Institute (NGI) for Airborne Electromagnetic (AEM) Survey of four tunnels to be built in the Ladakh region of the Himalayas. This is the first time that the AEM non-intrusive method of geophysical survey is being used in India. The survey would enable creation of engineering models and provide a sound basis for decision-making on new road routes. The work is expected to be completed in summer 2019, and geological engineering models would be delivered in early autumn 2019. Earlier in February 2019, India's Union Cabinet had approved a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Norway for undertaking non-intrusive geological surveys.

Presentation of books to Department of Culture Studies and Oriental Languages, University of Oslo (UiO):



Ambassador Krishan Kumar presented books

H.E. Mr. Krishan Kumar, Ambassador of India to Norway, presented a set of 51 books on India to the prestigious Department of Culture Studies and Oriental Languages, Faculty of Humanities, University of Oslo. The book presentation was part of the Government of India's initiative "Bharat Ek Parichay – Sharing Knowledge with the World".

Indian Community:

Lecture on Mahatma Gandhi at Schools:

As part of the outreach programme on the occasion of the 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, the Embassy organized a lecture on the life and philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi at Edvard Munch Videregående School on 13 May. Ms. Arundhati Das, Counsellor gave the presentation.

Ekal Donors' Meet 2019: Ekal Donors' Meet 2019 was organized by HSS Norway on 26th May in Oslo. Mr. Ramesh Shah, Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation of USA and Chairman/Global Coordinator gave a detailed presentation on the Ekal Movement. Several sponsors attended the event. Of the 80,000 Ekal schools in India, over 60 schools are taken care of by sponsors in Norway.