# GKTODAY

# Current Affairs [PDF] - October 1-31, 2019

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# News Headlines: October 1-15, 2019

## Current Affairs – News Headlines: October 1, 2019

### India

- DRDO test fires land-attack version of 290-km range BrahMos supersonic cruise missile off the coast of Odisha.
- UNESCO and Doordarshan to telecast TV bilingual programme 'Mahatma Lives'/'Bapu Zinda Hain' on Oct 1-2
- IIS (Information Service) Officer Kuldeep Singh Dhatwalia appointed Principal Spokesperson of the government
- India records highest rainfall since 1994 this monsoon, says IMD as season officially ends
- PM Modi awards winners of Singapore-India Hackathon 2019 in Chennai
- Kerala tops NITI Aayog releases School Education Quality Index (SEQI) for 2016-17; Uttar Pradesh last
- National Health Authority (NHA) organising 'Arogya Manthan' on Sept 30-Oct 1 to mark 1st anniversary of Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana
- Veteran Bollywood actor Viju Khote dies at the age of 77
- EC cuts disqualification period of Sikkim CM Prem Singh Tamang from 6 years to 1 year, 1 month

### Economy & Corporate

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- Eight core industries grow at 0.5% in August, the lowest growth rate in over three-and-half years
- India's external debt rises to US$ 557.4 billion end-June 2019
- PSU NBCC bags Rs 400-crore contract to develop National Sports University at Imphal
- Website of 11th edition of DefExpo, to be held in Lucknow February 5 to 8, 2020, launched
- Maruti launches mini SUV S-PRESSO priced at Rs 3.69 lakh

### World

- The International Translation Day celebrated on September 30
- Typhoon 'Mitag' bearing down on northern Taiwan

### Sports

- India's Sumit Nagal wins men's singles title at Buenos Aires Challenger tennis tournament
- Japan wins FIBA Women's Asia Cup Division-A basketball tournament in Bengaluru

## Current Affairs – News Headlines: October 2, 2019

### India

- SC recalls directions of its March 2018 verdict diluting provisions on arrest under SC/ST Act
- Book 'The RSS: Roadmaps for the 21st Century', written by Sunil Ambekar of RSS student wing, launched
- IAS officer Abhishek Singh appointed CEO of MyGov India, government's citizen-centric online platform
- AIM (Atal Innovation Mission), NITI Aayog's Atal Tinkering Labs (ATL) and UNICEF India launch 'The Gandhian Challenge' for school children
- IRCTC to compensate Lucknow-Delhi Tejas Express passengers for delay

### Economy & Corporate

- India crosses one-crore LED street light mark, installed under the Street Light National Programme (SLNP)
- Ch S. S. Mallikarjuna Rao appointed new MD and CEO of Punjab National Bank
- Govt appoints economist Surjit S Bhalla as Executive Director for India at IMF
- Union Consumer Affairs Minister Ram Vilas Paswan launches 'Consumer App' for registering consumer grievances
- TRAI prescribes rate of Rs 6.46 for mobile number portability service
- Elgi Equipments wins 2019 Deming Prize for Total Quality Management (TQM)
- Mahindra & Mahindra (M&M) acquires 51% stake in Indian business of Ford Motor Company of US
- Book by Indian Ambassador to the Netherlands Venu Rajamony titled 'India and the Netherlands –

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Past, Present and Future' released
- PM Imran Khan appoints Munir Akram as Pakistan's new Permanent Representative to the UN
- WTO cuts global trade growth forecasts for 2019 to 1.2% amid slowdown
- International Day of Older Persons observed on October 1, theme: 'The Journey to Age Equality'

### World Athletics Championships In Doha

- In Men's 5000 metres, Muktar Edris of Ethiopia won gold medal in 12 min 58.85 sec.
- In Men's 400 metres hurdles, Karsten Warholm of Norway won gold medal in 47.42 sec
- In Men's Triple jump, Christian Taylor of US won gold in 17.92 metres
- In Men's Discus throw, Daniel Ståhl of Sweden won with a throw of 67.59 m
- In women's 100 m, Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce of Jamaica won gold medal in 10.71 sec
- In women's 800 m, Halimah Nakaayi of Uganda won gold medal in in 1 min 58.04 sec
- In women's 3000 metres steeplechase, Beatrice Chepkoech of Kenya won gold in 8 min 57.84 sec
- In women's 20 kilometres walk, China's Liu Hong won gold in 1 hr 32 min 53 sec
- In women's High jump, Russia's Mariya Lasitskene won in 2.04 metres
- In women's Pole vault, Russia's Anzhelika Sidorova won in 4.95 metres
- In Mixed 4 × 400 metres relay, United States won gold in 3 min 9.34 sec

## Current Affairs – News Headlines: October 3, 2019

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### India

- PM declares India open defecation-free at 'Swachh Bharat Diwas' programme at Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad
- PM releases commemorative stamps, Rs 150 coins on Mahatma Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary
- Defence Minister unveils statue of Mahatma Gandhi in Delhi Cantonment
- Ministry of Tourism organising Paryatan Parv 2019 from October 2 to 13; its 3 components: Dekho Apna Desh, Tourism for All and Tourism & Governance.
- Railway cleanliness survey: Jaipur, Jodhpur, Durgapura in Rajasthan emerge top three clean stations among 7200 stations
- Most effective Swachchta Ambassador award presented to Sachin Tendulkar in Delhi
- Noted nephrologist and Padma Shri awardee H L Trivedi dies at 87 in Ahmedabad
- Chhattisgarh govt. launches Mukhyamantri Suposhan Scheme to fight malnutrition, Chief Minister Haat-bazaar Clinic Scheme for improving healthcare
- Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik launches 'Mo Sarkar' (my government) initiative, speaks to people

### Guinness World Records

- Students from Delhi and NCR created two Guinness World Records on October 2, 2019.
- First is the largest number of assembly and lighting of solar lamps (5000)
- Second is environmental sustainability lessons to the largest number of students (5000) at one place

### Economy & Corporate

- WEF organising India Economic Summit in New Delhi on October 3-4 under the theme — 'Innovating for India: Strengthening South Asia, Impacting the World'
- Samsung unveils smartphone Galaxy Fold — that comes with a foldable display —at a price tag of ₹1,64,999

### World

- K. Court dismisses Pakistan's claim over Nizam's funds, now worth 35 million pounds, transferred to a London bank in 1948
- Kyrgyz human rights lawyer Azizbek Ashurov wins UNHCR's Nansen Prize
- Ecuador to withdraw from OPEC in January 2020
- US military tests 6750 km range Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missile
- Viola Davis to receive Lifetime Achievement honour at Rome Film Festival
- Global opera legend Jessye Norman dies at the age of 74 in New York
- International Day of Non-Violence observed on October 2

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### Sports

- Sports Ministry organises the Fit India Plog Run across the country to promote clean and fit India

## Current Affairs – News Headlines: October 4, 2019

### India

- President presents Vayoshreshtha Sammans to eminent senior citizens & institutions
- Ambassadors of five nations present credentials to President of India: Freddy Svane: Denmark, Emannuel Lenain: France, Ugo Astuto: European Union, Federico Salas Lotfe: Mexico and Yerlan Alimbayev: Kazakhstan
- India-Kazakhstan joint military exercise KAZIND-2019 being held in Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand from October 3 to 15
- National Health Systems Resource Centre (NHSRC) designated as a WHO Collaborating Centre for Priority Medical Devices and Health Technology Policy
- Ministry of Tourism launches Audio Guide facility App 'Audio Odigos' for 12 sites of India (including Iconic Sites)
- Union Home Minister Amit Shah flags off the New Delhi-Katra 'Vande Bharat' Express
- Railways rename the New Delhi – Lohian Khas – New Delhi Intercity Express as 'Sarbat da Bhala Express'
- PM Modi, Mauritian PM Pravind Jugnauth jointly inaugurate metro express service, hospital in Mauritius

### Economy & Corporate

- Interest rate on house building advance (BA) for central govt employees cut to 7.9% for 1 year from Oct 1
- RBI increases scam-hit Punjab & Maharashtra Cooperative (PMC) Bank depositors' withdrawal limit to Rs 25,000
- launches PRAKASH (Power Rail Koyla Availability through Supply Harmony) portal for transparency and better coordination in coal supplies to power plants
- Rs 645-crore IPO of (IRCTC got subscribed 111.91 times on the final day of bidding
- IT Ministry launches 'automated real time performance smart-board' for monitoring its key programmes
- An inter-State portability for ration cards launched for Rajasthan and Haryana for distribution of foodgrains to beneficiaries of the National Food Security scheme

### World

- External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar meets U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo in Washington
- World Space Week being celebrated from October 4 to 10, 2019, theme: 'The Moon: Gateway to the Stars'
- 7 killed as Typhoon Mitag hits South Korea

## Current Affairs – News Headlines: October 5, 2019

### India

- Anand Kumar of Super 30 wins Mahaveer Award-2019 given by Bhagwan Mahaveer Foundation
- AP launches YSR Vahana Mitra scheme of Rs 10,000 annual allowance to self-employed drivers of autos, taxis
- MONETARY POLICY REVIEW
- The RBI on October 4, 2019 cut repo rate to 5.15% from the current 5.4%
- Reverse repo rate under liquidity adjustment facility stands reduced to 4.9%
- Marginal standing facility (MSF) rate and the bank rate stand reduced to 5.4%
- GDP growth forecast for current financial year 2019-20 lowered to 6.1% from 6.9% earlier.
- Retail inflation projection revised slightly upwards to 3.4% for Q2 of 2019-20
- All members of the MPC voted to reduce the policy repo rate
- MPC members: Shaktikanta Das (RBI Governor and MPC head), Chetan Ghate, Pami Dua, Michael Debabrata Patra, Bibhu Prasad Kanungo and Ravindra H. Dholakia

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### Microfinance

- RBI hikes lending cap for microfinance institutions to Rs 1.25 lakh, against the earlier limit of Rs 1 lakh, in rural and semi-urban areas
- Household income limit for borrowers of non-banking financial companies-micro finance institutions (NBFC-MFIs) raised from the current level of Rs 1 lakh for rural areas and Rs 1.60 lakh for urban/semi urban areas to Rs 1.25 lakh and Rs 2 lakh, respectively"

### Economy & Corporate

- India's foreign exchange reserves surge by US$ 5.02 billion to US$ 433.59 billion in the week ended September 27
- 4th tranche of Bharat-22 exchange traded fund (ETF) targeted to raise Rs. 2000 crore subscribed 12 times
- AIM (Atal Innovation Mission), NITI Aayog, UNDP India jointly launch Youth Co:Lab to accelerate youth-led social entrepreneurship and innovation in India
- National Health Authority (NHA), Google tie up to strengthen implementation of Ayushman Bharat health insurance scheme
- 'Trans Fat Free' logo of FSSAI launched at the 8th International Chefs' Conference in New Delhi
- IRCTC's Tejas Express train from Delhi to Lucknow starts
- Italy's Benelli launches Leoncino 250 motorcycle with a price tag of Rs 2.50 lakh
- Tata Motors launches limited edition Tiago Wizz priced at Rs 5.4 lakh

### World

- External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar holds meeting with US National Security Advisor Robert O'Brien in Washington
- Dutch children's rights organisation KidsRights awards annual prize to Greta Thunberg and Divina Maloum
- Farook Khan, Indian-origin journalist in South Africa, dies at 77

### World Athletics Championships In Doha Gold Winners

- Men's 200 metres: Noah Lyles (USA) in 19.83 sec
- Men's 800 metres: Donavan Brazier (USA) in 1 min 42.34 sec
- Men's 110 metres hurdles: Grant Holloway (USA) in 13.10 sec
- Men's Pole vault: Sam Kendricks (US) 5.97 m
- Men's Hammer throw: Paweł Fajdek (Poland) 80.50 m
- Decathlon: Niklas Kaul (Germany): 8691 points
- Women's 200 metres: Dina Asher-Smith (Great Britain) in 21.88 sec
- Women's 400 metres: Salwa Eid Naser (Bahrain) in 48.14 sec
- Women's Shot put: Gong Lijiao (China) in 19.55 m
- Women's Javelin throw: Kelsey-Lee Barber (Australia) 66.56 m
- Women's Heptathlon: Katarina Johnson-Thompson (Britain) 6,981 points

## Current Affairs – News Headlines: October 6, 2019

### India

- PM Modi holds bilateral talks Bangladesh's PM Sheikh Hasina in New Delhi
- Defence Minister approves four-fold hike in monetary aid for battle casualties from Rs. 2 lakh to Rs. 8 lakh
- CSIR introduces improved formulations for green crackers to reduce pollution hazard

### World Parliament

- The fifth World Parliament of Science, Religion and Philosophy 2019 was organised by MIT World Peace University in Pune from October 3 to 5, 2019
- 'Vishwa-Vigyan-Darshanik Award' given to Prof Dr Vishwanath D Karad for his outstanding contribution to science, spirituality, and philosophy by creating the world's largest dome dedicated to world peace.
- Dr Karan Singh conferred with Philosopher Saint Dnyaneshwara World Peace Prize 2019

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### Economy & Corporate

- Project for import of LPG (Liquefied Petroleum Gas) from Bangladesh for distribution in the North Eastern states inaugurated
- 22nd India International Security Expo 2019 organised at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi from October 3 to 5 by PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PHDCCI) in collaboration with ITPO

### World

- World Teachers' Day celebrated by UNESCO on October 5 with its theme as 'Young Teachers: The Future of the Profession'
- BIFF
- 24th Busan International Film Festival (BIFF) being organised in Busan, South Korea from October 3 to 12
- Tannishtha Chatterjee wins Asia Star Award for her directorial debut 'Roam Rome Mein'
- Bhumi Pednekar wins Face of Asia award

### Sports

- Niki Poonacha (men's) and Sowjanya Bavisetti (women's) win singles titles at Fenesta Open National Tennis Championship in New Delhi

### World Athletics Championships In Doha Gold Winners

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- In women's 400 metre hurdles, Dalilah Muhammad (US) wins gold in 52.16 seconds and improves her own world record
- In men's 400 metres, Steven Gardiner of Bahamas wins gold in 43.48 seconds
- In men's 20 km walk, Japan's Toshikazu Yamanishi wins gold in 1 hour 26 minutes 34 seconds

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## Current Affairs – News Headlines: October 7, 2019

### India

- 39th World Congress of Poets 2019 organised in Bhubaneswar on Oct 2-6 with its theme as 'Compassion through Poetry'
- India-Mongolia joint military training Exercise Nomadic Elephant–XIV in Himachal Pradesh from Oct 5 to 18
- India, Bangladesh sign MoU for setting up Coastal Surveillance Radar System in Bangladesh
- Indian Navy organises Goa Maritime Conclave on October 4-5; attended by 10 Indian Ocean littoral states

### World

- USAID presents 'Inclusive Health Access Award' to Indian NGO Piramal Swasthya

### Sports

- India (502/7 d, 323/4 d) beat South Africa (431, 191) by 203 runs in the first test at Visakhapatnam
- Rohit Sharma hits 13 sixes in Visakhapatnam test against South Africa, breaks record of most sixes in a test match (12) held by Pakistan's Wasim Akram
- Indian-South Africa match at Visakhapatnam saw most sixes (36) hit in a Test match
- Serbia's Novak Djokovic wins men's singles title at Japan Open tennis
- Japan's Naomi Osaka (women's), Austria's Dominic Thiem (men's) win singles titles at China Open tennis

### World Athletics Championships In Doha Winners

- In men's marathon, Lelisa Desisa of Ethiopia won gold in a time of 2 hours, 10 minutes and 40 seconds
- In men's 4X100 metres relay, the US team of Justin Gatlin, Christian Coleman, Noah Lyles and Michael Rodgers won gold in 37.10 seconds
- In men's 3000m steeplechase, Conseslus Kipruto (Kenya) won gold in 8 min, 1.35 sec
- In men's shot put, Joe Kovacs (USA) won gold with a throw of 22.91 metres
- In women's 1500m, Sifan Hassan (Netherlands) won gold in 3 min, 51.95 sec
- In women's 5000m, Hellen Obiri of Kenya won gold in 14 min, 26.72 sec
- In women's discus throw, Yaime Perez of Cuba won gold with a throw of 69.17 metres

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## Current Affairs – News Headlines: October 8, 2019

### Ganga Aamantran Abhiyan

- National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) is organising 'Ganga Aamantran Abhiyan' river rafting expedition on Ganga from October 10 to November 11
- The Abhiyan would comprise of members primarily from the Indian Armed Forces.
- The Abhiyan will start at Devprayag and culminate at Ganga Sagar covering the entire 2500 km stretch of Ganga River

### India

- Healthy Ministry launches eDantseva website and mobile app for oral health information
- Indian Forest Service officer Ramesh Pandey wins UNEP's Asia Environmental Enforcement Award
- India launches e-VidyaBharti tele-education and e-ArogyaBharti tele-medicine project for African countries

### Economy & Corporate

- E-Assessment Centers launched to implement the faceless assessment system for Income Tax Returns
- India gets first tranche of Swiss bank account details under Automatic Exchange of Information (AEOI) framework
- Vedanta wins Golden Peacock GLOBAL award of Institute of Directors, Delhi for excellence in Corporate Governance

### World

- World Habitat Day celebrated on October 7 (first Monday in October) with its theme as 'Frontier Technologies as an innovative tool to transform waste to wealth'
- World Trade Organisation (WTO) hosts the first World Cotton Day celebrations in Geneva on October 7
- William Kaelin and Gregg Semenza of US, Britain's Peter Ratcliffe win 2019 Nobel Prize in Physiology/Medicine for discoveries on how cells sense and adapt to oxygen availability
- Socialist Party of Portugal's incumbent PM Antonio Costa wins general election
- Anumula Gitesh Sarma appointed India's High Commissioner to Australia

### World Athletics Championships

- IAAF World Athletics Championships concludes
- United States tops medals tally with 29 medals (14 gold, 11 silver and 4 bronze)
- In men's 1,500m, Timothy Cheruiyot of Kenya won gold in 3 min, 29.26 sec
- In men's 10,000m, Uganda's Joshua Cheptegei won gold in 26 min 48.36 sec
- In men's 4x400m, US quartet of Fred Kerley, Michael Cherry, Wil London and Rai Benjamin won gold in 2 min 56.69 sec
- In men's Javelin throw, Anderson Peters of Grenada won with a throw of 86.89m
- In women's 100m hurdles, Nia Ali (USA) won gold in 12.34 sec
- In women's 4x100m, Jamaica's quartet of Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce, Shericka Jackson, Natalliah Whyte and Jonielle Smith won gold in 41.44 sec
- In women's 4x400m, US quartet of Phyllis Francis, Dalilah Muhammad, Sydney McLaughlin and Wadeline Jonathas won gold in 3 min 18.92 sec
- In women's triple jump, Yulimar Rojas of Venezuela won gold in 15.37 metres
- In women's long jump, Malaika Mihambo of Germany won gold in 7.30 metres

### Sports

- Austria's Christine Wolf wins the Hero Women's Indian Open at the DLF Golf and Country Club course in Gurugram
- Thailand's Suradit Yongcharoenchai wins Mercuries Taiwan Masters golf tournament at Tamsui in Chinese Taipei

## Current Affairs – News Headlines: October 9, 2019

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### India

- IAF receives its first Rafale fighter jet from a series of 36 aircraft purchased from France in presence of Defense Minister Rajnath Singh in Merignac, France
- Two squadrons and one signal unit of the Indian Air Force that were part of the Balakot operation were decorated with citations on 87th Indian Air Force Day on October 8

### Economy & Corporate

- India International Cooperative Trade Fair to be held in New Delhi from October 11 to 13

### World

- James Peebles (US), Michel Mayor (Swiss) and Didier Queloz (Swiss) win Nobel Physics Prize for research that increases the understanding of our place in the Universe.
- US blacklists 28 Chinese entities involved in a crackdown on Uighur Muslims in Xinjiang province

## Current Affairs – News Headlines: October 10, 2019

### India

- PM releases a commemorative stamp to honour Marshal of the Air Force late Arjan Singh
- BJP national spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi elected unopposed to Rajya Sabha in by-election from UP
- launches 'The WHO India Country Cooperation Strategy (CCS) 2019–2023: A Time of Transition'
- CCS provides a strategic roadmap for WHO to work with the Government of India towards achieving its health sector goals
- launches GEMINI device for ocean states forecast and mapping potential fishing zones
- GEMINI: Gagan Enabled Mariner's Instrument for Navigation and Information

### Economy & Corporate

- Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) launches Mahatma Gandhi National Fellowship Programme with IIM Bangalore to boost skill development at the district level
- Motoroyale launches MV Agusta Dragster Series motorcycles with price starting at Rs 18.73 lakh

### World

- 3 researchers — John Goodenough of USA, UK's Stanley Whittingham and Japan's Akira Yoshino – win Nobel Chemistry Prize for development of lithium-ion batteries
- India ranked 68th among 141 economies on 2019 Global Competitiveness Index by Geneva-based World Economic Forum (WEF), Index topped by Singapore
- US imposes visa restrictions against Chinese govt. officials over human rights violations of Uighur Muslims in Xinjiang
- Defence minister Rajnath Singh holds Second India-France Ministerial level Annual Defence Dialogue in Paris with his French counterpart Florence Parly

### Sports

- Indian sprinter Nirmala Sheroen banned for 4 years for doping, stripped off her 2 golds won at 2017 Asian Athletics Championships in 400 m and 4×400 m relay

## Current Affairs – News Headlines: October 11, 2019

### India

- Pradhan Mantri Innovative Learning programme-DHRUV launched by HRD Ministry at the ISRO headquarters in Bengaluru
- Centre launches Surakshit Matritva Aashwasan (SUMAN) initiative aimed at assuring free health care for every woman and newborn and zero tolerance for denial of services
- Air India training IAF pilots to fly new Boeing 777 aircraft for VVIP fleet
- President presents Colours to the Army Aviation Corps in Nashik
- National Postal Week being celebrated in India from October 9 to 15
- EAM S. Jaishankar holds talks with Thailand's Foreign Minister Don Pramudwinai in New Delhi

### Economy & Corporate

- RBI quashes the proposed merger of Indiabulls Housing Finance with Lakshmi Vilas Bank
- Moody's Investors Service cuts 2019-20 GDP growth forecast for India to 5.8% from 6.2% earlier

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- India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra) lowers India's GDP growth forecast in 2019-20 to 6.1% from 6.7% in August

### World

- Nobel Prize in Literature awarded to Olga Tokarczuk of Poland for 2018 and Peter Handke of Austria for 2019
- USD 13.92 billion raised for the next three years at a conference of the Global Fund to fight against AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria held in Lyon, France
- Turkey launches ground offensive against Kurdish-controlled areas in northeastern Syria
- Romania: Govt. of PM Viorica Dancila collapses in a no-confidence vote
- Saudi Arabia to allow women to serve in the armed forces
- World Post Day celebrated on October 9
- World Sight Day observed by International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IPAB) on October 10
- World Mental Health Day observed on October 10 with 'suicide prevention' as theme

### Sports

- 'India Sports Summit – Fitness: $10 Billion Opportunity' organised by CII in New Delhi

## Current Affairs – News Headlines: October 12, 2019

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### India

- PM Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping meet at Mamallapuram in Tamil Nadu for their second informal summit
- Environmentalist Chandi Prasad Bhatt awarded Indira Gandhi award for national integration for the years 2017 and 2018
- West Bengal govt. to set up a Kanyashree University in Nadia district to empower girls
- Bru refugee families start returning to Mizoram from Tripura
- Navies of India, Bangladesh organising Coordinated Patrol (CORPAT) at Visakhapatnam from October 12 to 16
- Eminent saxophone exponent Kadri Gopalnath dies at 69 in Mangaluru

### Kayakalp Awards

- Health Minister gives Kayakalp Awards to government hospitals for cleanliness
- AIIMS Delhi wins Rs. 3 crore first prize among 'A' Group hospitals in 'Kayakalp Awards Scheme of Health & Family Welfare Ministry for cleanliness
- In 'B' group hospitals, Vinoba Bhave Civil Hospital (VBCH), Silvassa, received Rs 2 crore first prize

### Economy & Corporate

- Industrial production declines 1.1% in August 2019, lowest growth in seven years
- allows import of urea for industrial or non-agricultural use without any restrictions
- 97,689 individuals had taxable income of over Rs 1 crore during assessment year (AY) 2018-19: CBDT
- Forbes India rich list 2019: Mukesh Ambani of Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) retains top spot
- EY launches mobile platform to provide STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) learning experience to girls in Delhi-NCR
- Brides from economically backward sections in MP to get Rs. 51,000 from govt. under 'Mukhya Mantri Kanya Vivah/Nikah Yojna' on proving before marriage that the groom's family has toilet.

### PII-ICRC Annual Awards

- Awards given jointly by the Press Institute of India (PII) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
- Awards given for best article and best photograph on the theme 'Impact of Climate Change on Humanitarian Issues'
- In the article category, independent journalist Urvashi Sarkar, won the first prize for her article, 'Our houses are vanishing. Nobody cares', that appeared on the PARI (People's Archive of Rural India) website.
- In the photography category, first prize was shared by G. Sivaprasad, news photographer,

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Mathrubhumi, for his picture, 'Close to the heart', and Rijo Joseph, chief photographer, Malayala Manorama, for his photo, 'Running for life'.

### World

- Ethiopian PM Abiy Ahmed wins Nobel Peace Prize for resolving conflict with neighbouring foe Eritrea
- International Day of the Girl Child celebrated on October 11, 2019 Theme — GirlForce: Unscripted and Unstoppable
- 'How to Avoid a Climate Disaster' announced as title of the new book by Microsoft Founder Bill Gates
- France's Pacific island territory of New Caledonia to hold a second referendum on independence in 2020
- NASA launches Icon (Ionospheric Connection Explorer) satellite to explore the region where air meets space
- Russia honours NASA astronaut Nick Hague with 'Order of Courage'
- India joins WEF's G20 Global Smart Cities Alliance on Technology Governance
- Comoros: Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu given 'The Order of the Green Crescent', the country's highest civilian honour in capital Moroni
- Alexei Leonov, a Soviet-era cosmonaut who was the first man to conduct a spacewalk in 1965, dies at 85

### Sports

- Legendary athlete Milkha Singh (92) wins lifetime achievement at Indian Sports Honours (ISH)
- Dutee Chand breaks her own women's 100 m national record clocking 11.22 seconds in National Open Athletics Championships at Ranchi.
- Virat Kohli (254) hits seventh double hundred in tests, the highest number by an Indian

## Current Affairs – News Headlines: October 13, 2019

### India

- India-Japan to organise Dharma Guardian military exercise in Mizoram from Oct 19 to Nov 2
- India to offer e-Tourist visa of a 5-year validity to Chinese tourists with multiple entries from October 2019
- Union Minister Sadhvi Niranjan Jyoti inaugurates SARAS Aajeevika Mela in New Delhi: October 12-23

### Xi Jinping Visit

- Chinese President Xi Jinping was gifted a hand-woven portrait of his by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the final day of the 2-day Mamallapuram Informal Summit on October 12, 2019.
- The portrait was created by Sri Ramalinga Sowdambigai Handloom Weavers Co-operative Society in Sirumugaipudur in Coimbatore District.
- The two leaders discussed several key issues, including ways to enhance trade and investment and confidence building measures

### Economy & Corporate

- India's foreign exchange reserves rise US$ 4.24 billion to US$ 437.83 billion in the week ended October 4

### World

- Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla to lead Indian delegation at the Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in Belgrade, Serbia from Oct 13 to Oct 17
- Mastercard, Visa quit Facebook's global digital currency Libra
- Hollywood actor Robert Forster dies at the age of 78 in Los Angeles
- Typhoon Hagibis slams into Japan killing one
- Turkish forces have taken control of the Syrian border town of Ras al-Ain from Kurds
- Hazzaa al-Mansoori becomes UAE's first astronaut to return to earth after stay at the International Space Station

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### World Migratory Bird Day

- World Migratory Bird Day was observed by UNEP on October 12, 2019.
- This year's theme is 'Protect Birds: be the Solution to Plastic Pollution'.
- The day is observed on 2nd Saturday of October.

### Sports

- Tajinder Pal Singh Toor breaks his national record in men's shot put by throwing 20.92m (previous 20.75 m) in Ranchi
- Kenya's Eliud Kipchoge breaks 2-hour barrier (1 hr 59 min 40.2 sec) in men's marathon on a specially prepared course in Vienna.
- Peter Gilchrist of Singapore wins men's world billiards championship in the long-up format in Melbourne.

### World Youth Chess

- The World Youth Chess Championship concluded in Mumbai on October 12, 2019 as India won 7 medals
- U18 Open: Praggnanandhaa R. (IND) 9.0; Shant Sargsyan (ARM) 8.5; Artur Davtyan (ARM) 8.0
- U18 Girls: Polina Shuvalova (RUS) 8.5; Vantika Agrawal (IND) 8.0; Alexandra Obolentseva (RUS) 7.5
- U16 Open: Rudik Makarian (RUS) 8.5; Stefan Pogosyan (RUS) 8.0; Aronyak Ghosh (IND) 8.0
- U16 Girls: Leya Garifullina (RUS) 8.5; Nurgali Nazerke (KAZ) 8.5; Anousha Mahdian (IRI) 8.0
- U14 Open: Aydin Suleymanli (AZE) 9.0; Srihari L R (IND) 8.0; Sreeshwan Maralakshikari (IND) 8.0
- U14 Girls: Meruert Kamalidenova (KAZ) 8.5; Divya Deshmukh (IND) 8.0; Rakshitta Ravi (IND) 8.0.

### Women's World Boxing

- AIBA Women's World Boxing Championships being held at Ulan-Ude, Russia from October 3 to 13
- India's Jamuna Boro wins bronze medal in 54kg after losing to Chinese Taipei's Huang Hsiao-Wen in the semifinal bout of the
- India's Mary Kom wins bronze in 51 kg after losing in semifinal to Turkey's Busenaz Cakiroglu
- India's Lovlina Borgohain wins bronze in 69kg after losing in semifinal to China's Yang Liu

## Current Affairs –News Headlines: October 14, 2019

### India

- India-US joint military exercise 'Vajra Prahar' being held in Seattle (US) from October 13 to 28
- Ministry of Culture of the central government organising Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav in Jabalpur (MP) from October 14 to 21
- Malayalam and Hindi film producer Priyadarshan awarded MP's National Kishore Kumar Samman for 2018-19; actor Waheeda Rehman wins the award for 2017-18

### Economy & Corporate

- India International Cooperative Trade Fair organised at Pragati Maidan in New Delhi from Oct 11 to 13

### World

- PM Modi crosses 30 million follower-mark on Instagram, becomes most followed world leader
- Indian nun Mariam Thresia (1876-1926) declared Saint by Pope Francis at the Vatican City
- Union Minister of State for Culture and Tourism (Independent charge) Prahlad Singh Patel attends BRICS Culture Ministers' meeting in Curitiba, Brazil
- Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu announces opening of a High Commission in Sierra Leone in capital Freetown
- International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction observed on October 13 with its theme as 'Reduce disaster damage to critical infrastructure and disruption of basic services'

### Chicago Marathon

- Kenya's Brigid Kosgei shattered Paula Radcliffe's 16-year-old women's marathon world record, winning in 2 hours, 14 minutes and 4 seconds.
- Men's race won by Kenya's Lawrence Cherono in 2:05:45.

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### Sports

- Women's World Boxing Championship at Ulan-Ude (Russia): India's Manju Rani wins silver medal in 48 kg
- Mercedes driver Valtteri Bottas wins Formula One Japanese Grand Prix at Suzuka
- Russia's Daniil Medvedev wins men's singles title at Shanghai Masters tennis
- India's Lakshya Sen wins men's singles title at Dutch Open Badminton at Almere
- India (601/5 d) beat South Africa (275, 189) by an innings and 137 runs in second Test at Pune, clinch series
- All national and state sports federations, leagues and clubs allowed to organise sports events in all sporting facilities owned by the government from November 1

## Current Affairs – News Headlines: October 15, 2019

### India

- PM Modi holds talks with King of the Netherlands Willem-Alexander and Queen Maxima in New Delhi
- India and Netherlands launch 2nd phase of LOTUS-HR (Local Treatment of Urban Sewage Streams for Healthy Reuse) project in Delhi
- Names of 25 members of National Medical Commission (NMC) finalised by Union Health Ministry; NMC to replace Medical Council of India (MCI)

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### UNESCO Awards

- Four sites from India have been chosen for the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation announced in Penang, Malaysia on October 14, 2019
- Award of Distinction: Vikram Sarabhai Library, Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Ahmedabad
- Award of Merit: Keneseth Eliyahoo Synagogue (Mumbai) and Our Lady of Glory Church (Mumbai)
- Honourable Mention: Flora Fountain (Mumbai)

### Economy & Corporate

- RBI raises withdrawal limit to Rs 40,000 for account holders of troubled Punjab & Maharashtra Cooperative (PMC) Bank
- Wholesale Price Index (WPI)-based inflation dips to 39-months low of 0.3% in September
- Consumer Price Index-based inflation climbed to a 14-month high of 3.99 per cent in September
- World Bank cuts India's GDP growth forecast to 6% in 2019-20 from 7.5% in April in its South Asia Economic Focus report
- Third India Energy Forum of CERAWeek organised in New Delhi

### World

- Abhijit Banerjee, Esther Duflo and Michael Kremer of US win 2019 Nobel Economics Prize for 'experimental approach to alleviate global poverty'
- World Standards Day celebrated on October 14 with its theme as 'Video Standards Create a Global Stage'
- Kais Saied elected new President of Tunisia
- Sri Lanka: Jaffna international airport, built with Indian assistance, to commence its operations from Oct 17
- WTO gives US final authorisation to impose tariffs on EU products in retaliation for illegal subsidies given to Airbus

### World Artistic Gymnastics

- World Artistic Gymnastics Championships was organised in Stuttgart, Germany
- US topped medals tally with 5 gold, 2 silver and 1 bronze followed by Russia and Great Britain in 2nd and 3rd positions respectively
- Simone Biles of US won 5 gold medals.

## October 1, 2019

### National Nutrition Survey

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare organized first National Nutrition Survey. The ministry took

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help from UNICEF to complete the survey. The survey was conducted between 2016 and 2018.

In India, for the first time the ministry measured malnutrition that included micro nutrient deficiencies. It was done by collecting urine samples and blood samples. Apart from this, details of non – communicable diseases like hypertension, diabetes, cholesterol, kidney function in children were also collected during the survey.

## Key findings of the survey

- Around 10% of children in the age group of 5 to 9 years and adolescents in the age group 10 to 19 years are pre – diabetic. 5% of them were overweight and 5% suffered from blood pressure.
- The survey for the first time proved the coexistence of obesity and under nutrition.
- One in five children in the age group 5 to 9 years were stunted.
- Tamil Nadu and Goa had the highest number of adolescents who were obese or overweight.

## About the survey

The survey covered more than 1,20,000 children and adolescents in rural and urban area. It aims to assess the following

- Micro nutrient deficiencies
- Sub clinical inflammation
- Worm infestation.
- Overweight or obesity
- Cardio – metabolic risks

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CDSA – Clinical Development Services Agency was selected as the monitoring agency.

## National Nutrition Week

Recently India marked the National Nutrition Week between September 1 and September 7, 2019 and marked September as Poshan month. It is important to encourage such measures as the country has around 194.4 million undernourished people. According to Food and Agriculture Organization, they constitute 14.5% of the total Indian population.

Global Hunger Index, 2018

It ranked India at 103 out of 119 countries based on the following factors

- Prevalence of stunting and wasting
- Child mortality rate
- Undernourishment

According to the index, India is suffering from serious problem of malnutrition

## Global Nutrition Report, 2018

The Global Nutrition Report 2018, prepared by WHO, states that India is home to 46.6 million stunted children out of 150.8 million stunted children all over the world. The report also says that

- Out of 50.5 million children who are wasted globally, 25.5 million are in India.
- India is the third most obese nation in the world. WHO states India as Diabetes capital with 69.2 million suffering from diabetes.
- India might lose 46 billion USD to malnutrition by 2030.

## Steps taken by the Government of India to combat malnutrition

- Poshan Abhiyan – It was launched in 2017 – 18 to reduce anemia, stunting, under – nutrition.
- National Food Security act, 2013 – The act made food a legal right of the citizens. It aims to ensure food and nutrition security to the vulnerable.
- Mid – day meal scheme
- Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana – Under the scheme, Rs 6,000 is transferred directly to bank accounts of pregnant women to avail facilities for their delivery.

## What is malnutrition and under nutrition?

- Malnutrition refers to the imbalanced in a person's intake of nutrients or energy.
- It broadly covers the following
    - Under nutrition – It includes
        - Stunting – Low height for age
        - Wasting – low weight for age

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- Underweight – Low weight for age
- Micro nutrient deficiencies – lack of vitamins and minerals

- Obesity – It includes overweight and non – communicable diseases like diabetes, stroke, cancer, etc.

## DRDO successfully test fires land-attack version of BrahMos missile

BRAHMOS Supersonic Cruise Missile, with major indigenous systems, was successfully test fired from Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur in Odisha. The missile was test-fired for its full strike *range of 290-km during the launch jointly conducted by* Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) and *BrahMos Aerospace*.

The first extended version of BrahMos missile was successfully tested on 11 March, 2017, which had a strike range of 450 kilometres.

### About BrahMos Missile

The versatile BrahMos has been jointly developed by India and Russia and is operationalised in the Indian Armed Forces with all the three services.

The recent test fire was conduted on land-attack version of 290-km range BrahMos supersonic cruise missile which featured Indian propulsion system, airframe, power supply and major indigenous components.

The missile can be fired from land as well as sea-based platforms. The missile has been fitted with increased indigenous equipment and is a version used by Indian Army.

**Significance**: With this successful mission, the indigenous content in formidable weapon has reached a high value for the country, which further bolsters defence indigenisation of India and flagship '***Make in India' programme***.

## 'Mahatma Lives': UNESCO and DD to telecast TV Show on Gandhi's 150th Anniversary

UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) and Doordarshan, country's public service broadcaster has join hands to telecast TV bilingual programme '*Mahatma Lives*' or 'Bapu Zinda Hain' on 1-2 October 2019, to commemorate the 150th birth anniversary of the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi.

The objective of programme is to celebrate his ideas and teachings and how it has shaped the lives of people in India as well as around the world.

### Key Highlights of 'Mahatma Lives'/ 'Bapu Zinda Hain' programme

It is an hour-long bilingual television programme that will feature rarely heard audio clips of Mahatma Gandhi. The clips include his speech from 1947, before Independence (i.e. before 15 August 1947), in which he addresses corporate leaders and exhorts them to give wealth for welfare of the society. Other clips include Gandhi talking about music and his speech on the caste system and eternal set of duties (Sanatam Dharam) on 7 June 1947.

These audio clips will remind countrymen vividly of Mahatma's thoughts and philosophy, focusing specifically on education, culture and the sciences.

As per UNESCO programme will help discover/rediscover Mahatma Gandhi's teachings about different themes and contemplate how Gandhi still remains the most influential person of 20th century who continue to inspires the old and the young today. It also shows how various aspects of Gandhi's legacy remain relevant in todays' times, not just to India but to world as well.

The programme will be telecast on 1 October 2019 at 10 pm and repeated on 2 October at 5 pm across the country on DD News. It will be jointly hosted by Eric Falt, UNESCO New Delhi Director, and renowned academician and historian Pushpesh Pant.

## Typhoon 'Mitag' approaches Northern Taiwan

Rapidly-moving Typhoon 'Mitag' is bearing down on northern Taiwan, where it is expected to bring high winds and heavy rain. With the worst of the weather expected to arrive in the island country, the warnings have been issued for parts of island's east and north, including the capital, Taipei.

The Taiwan's weather bureau has categorized Typhoon Mitag been as at the second-strongest typhoon level.

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### Key Highlights

Taiwan's weather bureau reported that Mitag was strengthening gradually as it approach the coast of Yilan county at about 27 kilometers per hour with winds gusting at up to 162 kilometers per hour (100 mph).

The storm's center is expected to pass just east of the island before heading toward China's eastern city of Shanghai (on mainland China), then weakening as it moves toward South Korea and Japan.

### What are Typhoons?

Typhoon is the regional names for Tropical Cyclones that occurs in Western Pacific and South China Sea i.e. in Philippines islands, eastern China and Japan the tropical cyclones are called typhoons.

A typhoon is a mature tropical cyclone that develops between 180° (or 180th meridian or antimeridian is meridian 180° both east and west of Prime Meridian) and 100°E in the Northern Hemisphere. This region is referred to as *Northwestern Pacific Basin* which is the most active tropical cyclone basin on Earth. This region accounts for almost one-third (33%) of the world's annual tropical cyclones.

## Trade apprentices to get minimum monthly stipend: Govt

Union Ministry for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) has notified changes in Apprenticeship Rules (1992) as **Apprenticeship (Amendment) Rules, 2019** with an aim to increase skilled manpower in the country, and raise minimum stipend payable to trade apprentices.

### Key Highlights

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As per the government the minimum stipend payable to trade apprentices will be on qualification based and would range from Rs.5000 per month to Rs.9000 per month from now onwards.

Also, the employers having four or more workers are eligible to engage apprentices. Government appealed to the states to take all possible steps to implement the law related to apprenticeship in companies.

MSDE Ministry has also launched **'Apprenticeship Pakhwada'**, a 15-day cross-country event aimed at driving widespread awareness of the Apprenticeship. It is in collaboration with 22 organizations to provide apprenticeship training to more than 2.5 lakh youth in India.

With skill development being the priority, the government also seeks to create a new structure of Kaushal Vikas Mitra from the state level to the village level.

### Who is a Trade apprentice?

A person who undergoes apprenticeship training in any *designated trade* i.e. any occupation/trade/any subject field in technology/engineering/non – engineering/any vocational course as notified by Union Government.

**Eligibility**: Class 8, 10, 12 and ITI (a certificate course) pass- outs are eligible to undergo apprenticeship in designated trades for trade apprentices. In some trades, B.Sc. pass is also a prescribed qualification.

## MNRE to organise Global Student Solar Assembly

The Union Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) in association with IIT Bombay, is organizing the Global Student Solar Assembly on 2 October 2019, to commemorate *150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi* as well as to promote the Gandhian idea of sustainable living.

For India fight against climate change is a matter of faith and commitment and thus the country has committed to reduce its carbon intensity by 33-35% by year 2030 as well as to install cumulative renewable energy capacity of 175 GW (by 2022) and 450 GW (by 2030).

### About Global Student Solar Assembly

**Objective**: The Workshop aims to sensitize young minds about energy sustainability and environmental care.

**Participants**: The day-long event scheduled at Indira Gandhi Stadium Complex in New Delhi will see participation of more than 10,000 students from across the institutions from National Capital Region (NCR) and Delhi. These students will be accompanied by their trainers who would provide them hands-on training on how to assemble their own solar study lamps.

The making of once own solar lamps, would introduce students to the concept of self-sufficiency (quality or condition of being self-sufficient), an idea that was so close to the heart of Mahatma Gandhi.

At the end of the event, all students will switch-on their self-assembled solar lamps in remembrance of Mahatma and will take pledge of non-violence towards the environment.

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During this workshop, Two **Guinness world records** will be attempted by the students-
1) Sustainability lessons to the largest number of participants at a single place
2) Largest number of solar lamps lit together

**Global Observance**: In addition to the event at New Delhi, similar workshops will be organised in other Indian cities and also in foreign countries. This global event is expected to be joined by over 1 million students in 60 countries on a single day and the students will become **Renewable Energy Ambassadors** to carry the message green energy far and beyond.

## 'Arogya Manthan' event being organised in New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will preside over the valedictory function of Arogya Manthan in New Delhi on 1 October 2019. At the event PM Modi will launch a new mobile application of Ayushman Bharat and '**Ayushman Bharat Start-Up Grand Challenge**'. He will interact with select beneficiaries of Ayushman Bharat or PM-JAY and will also release a commemorative stamp on the occasion.

### About Arogya Manthan

It is a two-day national workshop which is being organised by **National Health Authority (NHA)** to mark the first year anniversary of Ayushman Bharat or PM-JAY (Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana). The PM-JAY was launched on 23rd September 2018.

**Objective of Arogya Manthan**:

- To provide a platform to meet all important stakeholders of PM-JAY and discuss challenges faced in the implementation of the scheme in 2018.
- To forge a new understanding and create pathways towards improving implementation.

### About National Health Authority (NHA)

On 2 January 2019 Centre government approved the restructuring of existing National Health Agency as 'National Health Authority' for better implementation of PM-JAY. Therefore with this approval the existing society "National Health Agency" was dissolved and was replaced by National Health Authority.
The National Health Authority is as an attached office to Union Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.
NHA have full accountability, authority and mandate to implement PM-JAY through an efficient, effective and transparent decision-making process.

## Sports Ministry inks MoU with NBCC to develop National Sports University at Imphal

State-owned construction firm NBCC (India) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Department of Sports under Union Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports (MYAS) to provide Project Management Consultancy for development of National Sports University at Imphal, Manipur. The approximate cost of project would be Rs.400 crore.

### About NBCC (India)

It is a Central-owned Public Sector Navratna Enterprise. Its operations are spread across India & Overseas.
It was founded in 1960 and is headquartered in New Delhi.
NBCC is organized into 3 market focused segments-

1. Project Management Consultancy (PMC)
2. Engineering Procurement & Construction (EPC)
3. Real Estate

### About National Sports University (NSU)

It is a sports university in Imphal, Manipur. The foundation of National Sports University was laid down by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 16 March 2018. However, the University is presently functional from its temporary campus at Khuman Lampak Sports Complex of Imphal.
The University, once developed, will be the first one of its kind to promote sports education in areas of sports sciences, sports medicine, sports technology, sports management, and sports coaching.
NSU will have the flexibility to open new schools or departments in consonance with the advances and developments in sports science, sports medicine, as well as allied areas. It will also function as national training centre for selected sports disciplines by adopting best international practices.

## 1 October: 94th Raising Day of MNS celebrated

The 94th Raising Day of the Military Nursing Service (MNS) is being celebrated on 1 October 2019. On the

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occasion, nursing officers would re-dedicate themselves to render high quality, selfless nursing care to their patients by reading the *Florence Nightingale Pledge*, a modified version of the Hippocratic Oath.

To mark the day a function is also being organized at Army Hospital (Referral and Research) which would be attended by Chief of the Army Staff as a chief guest.

### About Military Nursing Service (MNS)

It is the *only all women corps in the Armed Forces* and is a part of Armed Forces Medical Services of Indian Army. The Military Nursing Service is today ranked as one of best Army Nursing Services of the world.

It came was founded on 28 March 1888 with the arrival of first batch of 10 qualified British Nurses in Bombay, to organize nursing in Military hospitals in India. Later in 1893, it was designated as Indian Army Nursing Service (IANS) and in 1902 as Queen Alexandra Military Nursing Service (QAMNS). Since the time of inception MNS has been a part and parcel of the country's war efforts.

**Enrolment into MNS**: It is based on the selection which is done based on merit at all India level. The candidates are enrolled at 6 Colleges of Nursing for Basic BSc (N) from various health sciences universities and on successful completion of course they are granted Permanent or Short Service Commission (SSC) in Military Nursing Service in the rank of Lieutenant.

**Mission of the MNS**: *'Excellence In Patient Care'* both in peace and war.

**Nursing officers have served with**–

- Troops in armed conflicts and humanitarian endeavours in troubled states of J&K and North East sector
- Combat troops deployed abroad in UN Missions and Foreign Friendly Missions in active war zone as Lebanon, Congo, South Sudan and Tazikistan.

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## October 2, 2019

### 'The Gandhian Challenge': launched by AIM, Atal Tinkering Labs and UNICEF India

On the occasion of 150th birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, *Atal Innovation Mission* (AIM), NITI Aayog's *Atal Tinkering Labs* (ATL) and *UNICEF India*, including *Generation Unlimited*, launched 'The Gandhian Challenge' for school children. This innovation challenge provides a platform for every child across India to ideate innovative solutions for a sustainable India of their dreams, using Gandhi's principles.

### About The Gandhian Challenge'

**Objective**: To support children to thrive as young innovators and entrepreneurs.

**Problem statement for Gandhian Challenge is**– *'Share your innovative solutions or ideas to create a futuristic and sustainable world of your dreams, following Gandhi's principles.'*

The contest celebrates 70 years of partnership between Government of India and UNICEF India to enable *Every Right for Every Child.* It is open for every child in India from 2-20 October 2019.

Through this partnership, AIM and UNICEF would recognize every child's ability and right to voice their dreams for a world of their choice, following Gandhi's principles.

**Broad Categories** through which ideas and solutions to Gandhian Challenge may be expressed: Art & Innovation (Letters, poems, painting, videos and photos, among others) and Science, Technology & Innovation (Robotics, IoT, sensors and 3D printers, among others).

**Winners**:

The winners of The Gandhian Challenge will be awarded in New Delhi by NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission and UNICEF on the occasion of Children's Day on 14 November 2019.

The most innovative, sustainable ideas/solutions will be showcased as a symbol of a larger movement by children taking root in every district of India. Also, Children across India can access to over 8000 Atal Tinkering Labs (ATLs) across all districts to support their innovative ideas. In ATLs, 6th to 12th class students can acquire a problem-solving attitude, develop innovative solutions leveraging technologies like 3D printers, robotics, miniaturised electronics, Internet of Things (IOT) and programming and DIY kits, with support from teachers and mentors.

### About UNICEF India and Generation Unlimited:

**UNICEF** (United Nations Children's Fund) is an integral part of United Nations. It is guided by *Convention*

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*on the Rights of the Child*. It works with governments, civil society organizations, communities, private sector, and other partners worldwide to advance children's rights.

**Generation Unlimited**: It is a new *UNICEF-led global partnership* that aims to ensure that every young person age 10-24 is in some form of learning, school, self-employment, training, or age-appropriate employment by 2030. It seeks to co-create and scale up proven solutions related to secondary age-education, skills for learning, employability and decent work, and empowerment, with a focus on girls.

## India crosses 1 Cr LED street light mark, installed under SLNP

India has doubled the number of LED street lights from 49 lakh in March 2018 to 1 crore as on 1 October 2019. This one crore target has been reached by the country even as it missed the scaled-down target to replace 1.34 crore conventional street lights with energy efficient LED lights by March 2019.

These lights have been installed under **Street Light National Programme (SLNP)** and are being implemented by state-owned **Energy Efficiency Services Ltd (EESL)**.

As on date, under SLNP, about 1,502 urban local bodies (ULBs) across India have been enrolled under programme and out of these ULBs, work has been completed in around 900 such bodies.

**How was target achieved?**

To bring large scale transformation, EESL adopted **Pay-As-You-Save (PAYS) model**, where it makes the entire upfront investment in installation of LED street lights and no additional budget allocation from the municipalities is required. However, the contract with municipalities/ULBs (Urban Local Bodies) is for a period of 7 years. This 7-year contract with Local Bodies guarantees a minimum energy saving of usually 50% as well as provides free replacements and maintenance of lights at no additional cost to civic partners. The municipalities' then pay EESL from their savings in energy and maintenance cost over a period of 7-year, which further makes LED lights affordable and accessible.

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### Significance

The one crore LED street lights have covered 2.7 lakh kilometers which resulted in annual savings of 6.7 billion units and avoided 1,119.40 MW of peak power demand.

These 1 crore lights reduce green house gases (GHG) emission by 4.63 million tonnes (MT) every year.

### Way Forward

By March 2020, SLNP aims to replace 1.34 crore conventional street lights in India with smart LEDs street lights. This will make a huge difference, enabling peak demand reduction of about 1,500 MW, annual energy savings of 9 billion kWh, and reduction in 6.2 MT of $CO_2$/year.

Also, EESL is planning to bring Rs.8,000 crore investment by 2024 for covering entire rural India in coming 4-5 years. It is also expected that more than 30 million LED street lights will be retrofitted/installed by EESL.

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## Surjit S Bhalla appointed as Executive Director for India at IMF

The Appointments Committee of Cabinet (ACC) has approved the appointment of Economist Surjit S Bhalla as Executive Director for India on board of International Monetary Fund (IMF). The 71 year old Bhalla is appointed for a period of three years from the date of assumption of charge of the post or until further orders, whichever is earlier.

He will be succeeding former RBI deputy governor Subir Gokarn as Executive Director for India at IMF who died in the US on July 30 after a brief illness. S Gokarn (59) was appointed ED for India on the board of the IMF in November 2015 and was supposed to complete his term in October.

### About Surjit S Bhalla

He is an economist, columnist and also a Contributing Editor with The Indian Express.

He holds a PhD in Economics from Princeton University, a Masters in Public and International Affairs (PIA) from Woodrow Wilson School, Princeton University, and a BSEE (Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering) degree from Purdue University.

In December 2018 he resigned as part-time member of Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM).

## CBDT launches Documentation Identification Number

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has launched a computer-generated Document Identification Number (DIN) to ensure greater transparency and accountability in tax administration. Thus from now

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onwards, every CBDT communication will have to have a documentation identification number. The DIN system has been created as per the direction of Nirmala Sitharaman, Union Minister of Finance.

### About Documentation Identification Number (DIN)

The path-breaking DIN system became operative from 1 October 2019 and will apply to all kind of communications from Income Tax (IT) Department, whether it is related to investigation, assessment, rectification, appeals and penalty among other things. On first day of systems' implementation, nearly 17,500 communications have been generated with DIN.

**Mandate**: Any communication from IT Department without a computer-generated DIN, be it a notice, letter, order and summon or any other correspondence, would be treated as invalid and shall be deemed as if it has never been issued. Also, all such communications with DIN would be verifiable on e-filing portal and no communication would be issued manually without DIN. The only exceptional circumstances is in the case if the communication is issued manually and it would have to be uploaded and regularised on the system portal within 15 days of its issuance.

**Benefits**: DIS system would ensure greater accountability and transparency in tax administration. This development would also help taxpayers detect fake notices and letters as the notice would be verifiable on e-filing portal of department.

## October 1: International Day of Older Persons Observed

The International Day of Older Persons is observed to highlight contributions made by the older population to the society. It aims at raising awareness of opportunities and challenges of ageing in the world.

According to the United Nations, between 2017 and 2030, the number of persons in the age group above 60 years will grow from 962 million to 1.4 billion. This is expected to be greater than youth and children under the age 10.

**Theme: "The Journey to Age Equality"**

The theme is aligned with SDG 10 – To reduce inequalities. This includes promoting their active participation in social, economic and political lives. The theme of 2019 aims at the following

- To create awareness about the existing old age inequality
- To explore societal and structural changes that aims to bring social protection for the old population
- Change the negative narratives involving old age.

### India

Around 10 crore old age people live in India. Out of that 1.5 crore live alone. The crime cases against older population in India has increased since 2014. It was around 14,000 in 2014 and has increased to 16,000 in 2016.

### Background

The first International Day of Older Persons was observed by the United Nations in 1990. It was observed following several initiatives like Vienna International Plan of Action on Ageing in 1982 and Madrid International Plan of Action on ageing in 2002.

### Vienna International Plan of Action on Ageing

It is the first international conference on ageing. It was endorsed by the United Nations in 1982. The purpose of the plan was to strengthen the capacities of the governments to deal with the dependency of older people.

### Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing

It was the second international conference after the first conference in Vienna. It issued new bold agenda handling the issues of old people in 21st century.

## President of India to Confer 'Vayoshreshtha Samman–2019'

President Ram Nath Kovind will be conferring 'Vayoshreshtha Samman-2019' on Eminent Senior Citizens & Institutions in recognition of their services towards the cause of elderly persons on 3 October 2019. The awards will be conferred at a function organized by Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment in Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi and Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment Thaawarchand Gehlot will preside over the function.

### About Vayoshreshtha Samman

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It is a scheme of awards which was instituted by Union Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment (D/o Social Justice & Empowerment) and gradually upgraded to status of National Awards. These awards are presented as part of celebration of International Day of Older Persons (IDOP) on 1st October. The day is celebrated every year on 1st October since the year 2005.

**Objective**: The Awards are intended-

- To show case Government's concern for senior citizens and its commitment towards them with the aim of strengthening their legitimate place in society.
- To provide an opportunity to younger generation to understand contribution of elderly in building of society and nation.

**It is awarded to**–

- *Institutions* which are involved in providing distinguished service for the cause of elderly persons (especially indigent senior citizens)
- *Eminent* senior citizens in recognition of their service and achievements
- *Individuals* from any part of the country

The recipients are drawn from diverse fields and nominations are invited from Governmental and Non-Governmental Agencies.

## India records highest monsoon rains in 25 years

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The IMD (Indian Meteorological Department) said that India received 10% above average monsoon rains in 2019. It is the highest in 25 years.

States like Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Karnataka received 35% more rainfall than the normal. It is the highest recorded rains in the history of these states.

Heavy rains damaged the summer sown crops like pulses, soybean and cotton that were close to harvest.

### What caused heavy rains?

The monsoon begins in June and ends by September. However, this year it delayed its retreat. This caused increased rainfall that led to floods. Climatologists believe that climate change is the main reason for the increased floods. However, anthropogenic activities are hastening climate change and resulting in disasters.

### Extreme climate in India

India has been experiencing extreme weather conditions in several parts of the country. In July the GoI said that 2,400 people were killed in 2018 due to extremities of the weather.

### Deficiency of rains in June

By the end of June, India was 33% monsoon rain deficit. In the past 146 years whenever deficit rainfall in June has been more than 30% it either led to below normal monsoon or drought. Never in the history of India, it has received above average monsoon as it has happened this year.

### Significance of South West Monsoon

- It brings rain to all parts of the country except Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana between June and September
- The monsoon helps farmers expand areas under winter – sown crops like rice, wheat, chick peas, rapeseed.

### Floods

Floods created havocs in most parts of the country this monsoon. According to Central Water Commission that monitors dams and flood levels around 25 stations crossed the HFL – Highest Flood Level till August 2019. The rivers Warna and Krishna in Maharashtra and Karnataka crossed the HFL. The levels were the greatest of those in the past.

### Kerala and monsoon

Till August Kerala was under seasonal rainfall deficit of 27%. However, between August 1 and August 7 it received 368% more rainfall than normal that led to floods. Again, after August 13, the state faced seasonal rainfall deficit. This season around 100 were killed in Kerala and more than a lakh displaced.

### What made June month dry?

The South West monsoon that sets on June 1 delayed and began on June 9. After being set, the monsoon progressed as Cyclone Vayu. The cyclone disrupted the regular trade winds that are the carriers of the monsoon. This arrested the monsoon in Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu till June 21. The warming of

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Indian Ocean decreased the temperature difference between the land and sea. The disturbance in the trigger of monsoon is also a reason for their delay.

## Website of 11th DefExpo launched

The 11th DefExpo is scheduled to be held for the first time in Lucknow between 5th and 8th February 2020. It is an exhibition where the Indian Defense industry showcase its capabilities and promotes its export potential. It is a biennial exhibition. The last DefExpo was held in Chennai in 2018.

**Theme: India: The Emerging Defense Manufacturing Hub.**

The website www.defexpo.gov.in was launched by Defense Minister Rajnath Singh on September 30, 2019. The website provides online services to the exhibitors. It also hosts informative content about the product profile of DPSU – Defense Public Sector Undertaking.

The site allows to register and book spaces that will be awarded on first come first serve basis. The public entry is free and is fixed on February 8. However, the interested should pre – register on the website and obtain e – ticket sent to their registered mail.

## IRCTC to compensate Lucknow-Delhi Tejas Express passengers for delay

In a first of its kind offer from any national carrier, the IRCTC will compensate passengers of new Lucknow-Delhi Tejas Express in case of delay in train schedule. The train is schedules to be flagged off on 4 October 2019.

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### Key Highlights

An amount of Rs.100 will be paid in case the delay is for more than an hour and Rs.250 for delay of more than 2 hours.

This compensation is in addition to the Rs.25-lakh free insurance that will be given to passengers of the train.

Many countries over the globe compensate passengers for delays although some do so as monetary compensation and some in kind.

### About Tejas Express

It is first semi-high speed fully air-conditioned train of India, introduced by Indian Railways. Its inaugural run was in 2017 from Mumbai Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus to Karmali in Goa.

In March 2019, second Tejas Express of India was flagged off between Chennai Egmore and Madurai Junction by PM Narendra Modi. The new Tejas Express will run on New Delhi-Lucknow route for 6 days a week.

## What is Fit India Plog Run?

Plogging is picking up plastic and waste while jogging. The campaign signifies two effects namely 'Swasth' and 'Swacchta' which is staying fit while keeping the city clean.

The Fit India Plog run is a part of the Fit India Movement launched by Prime Minister Modi on August 29, 2019. The Fit India Plog Run will catalyze PM Modi's "Swachh Bharat Abhiyan" and "Fit India movement" The run was organized at several parts of India to celebrate 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhiji. It was flagged off by the sports minister Kirren Rijju.

Swachh Bharat Abhiyan

Swachh Bharat Abhiyan was launched 2nd October, 2014, marking the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. The campaign aimed to achieve clean India by 2019. The campaign turned into national movement evoking sense of responsibility among the citizens.

# October 3, 2019

## Single use plastics to be banned inside monuments: Govt

Single-use plastic will be banned inside and within a 100 metre periphery of all Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) protected monuments across the country. The announcement in this regard was made by Union Tourism Minister Prahlad Patel on the sidelines of the launch of the tourism ministry's annual 'Paryatan Parv' in New Delhi. The Paryatan Parv showcases traditional cuisines and handicrafts from across Indian states and is an attempt by tourism ministry to promote tourism in India.

### Key Highlights

Efforts are being made to phase out single-use plastics in various organisations of ASI and Union Ministry

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of Tourism. While the efforts to this effect began on 17 September 2019 but complete clamp down is likely to be achieved soon.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had already urged people to shun single-used plastics and had asked the general public to make it a mass movement. PM Modis' call to people to stop using single-use plastic is in line with Mahatma Gandhi's Thoughts on sustainable and clean tourism.

However, the government has shelved the plan to outlaw single-use plastics on the 150th anniversary of the birth of Mahatma Gandhi on grounds that it would have be disruptive to a stressed industry as it copes with an economic downturn.

## Consumer Affairs Ministry launches 'Consumer App' for registering grievances

Union Consumer Affairs Ministry launched a mobile app called 'Consumer App' to help consumers across the country to register their grievances online at the same time provide suggestions on several consumer-related issues. It is a step taken towards achieving the objective of digital India.

### About Consumer App

The app has been developed by ***National Informatics Centre*** (NIC). It is available for free in English and Hindi and can be downloaded on Android and iOS platforms from Play Store/Apple Store.

The complaint lodged by a consumer via this app would be forwarded and referred to respective consumer platform.

The complaints will be monitored on a daily basis and once in a week a meeting will also be conducted with in-charges of app, secretary, joint secretary in-charge and other officials. At this meeting the stock of weekly complaints reported, the nature of the complaint and other aspects will also be discussed.

**Services Offered:**

- It is a user-friendly app and any consumer can file a complaint via this app which will be further referred to respective companies. There are almost **42 sectors** of consumer durables, e-commerce, air travel, real-estate, banking, electronic products and several other categories, about which a consumer can gain information and register complaint via this app which also includes tracking his complaint status via this app.
- The ministry will process the complaints for redressal for nearly 250 categories of products and services and consumers will get regular update about the status of their complaints and these will be closed only when consumers submit that issues are resolved or they are satisfied.
- As per the claims made by Ministry the consumer complaints will be redressed at least *within 20 days and a maximum of 60 days*.

## WEF Organizing India Economic Summit in New Delhi

The World Economic Forum is organizing India Economic Summit on October 3 – 4, 2019 in New Delhi. It is hosted in collaboration with CII – Confederation of Indian Industry. The summit will have special focus on collaboration with South Asia and ASEAN countries.

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has arrived in India to attend the summit. She would co – chair the summit along with Singapore Deputy Prime Minister Heng Swee Keat, Sania Mirza representing UN Women. Ore than 800 leaders from 40 countries are expected to attend the forum.

### Objective

The summit aims to accelerate Fourth Industrial Revolution. It will convene key leaders from government, private sector and civil society to facilitate dialogues on policy tools, industry standards and guidelines.

Economy of South Asia is to be the top agenda in the summit. Summit will also focus on emerging technologies like AI, environmental reforms, start – ups, education, infrastructure and gender parity.

**Theme: Innovating India: Strengthening South Asia, Impacting the World.**

### Agenda

The summit is to address strategic issues based on 4 thematic pillars

- New Geopolitical reality – effects of geo – political shifts and complexity of the global system
- New Social System – Inclusive growth, health and inequality
- New Ecological System – Climate Change, Environment and Food
- New Technological System – Science, innovation, entrepreneurship and fourth industrial revolution

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## Fourth Industrial Revolution

The first industrial revolution machineries used steam to mechanize production. The second industrial revolution used electric power to mechanize production. The third industrial revolution used electronics and information technology to mechanize production. The fourth industrial revolution is building on the third revolution. It is the digital revolution that has been occurring since the middle of the last century.

The technologies that are ruling fourth industrial revolution includes Internet of Things, Block chain technology, 3 – D printing, artificial intelligence, biotechnology, nanotechnology, quantum computing and energy storage.

## World Economic Forum

It is an international organization was founded in 1971 in Cologny – Geneva, Switzerland. The organization acts as a think tank publishing wide range of reports. Some of the most significant reports published by the forum includes

- Global Competitiveness Report
- Global Gender Gap Report
- Global Risks Report
- Global Travel and Tourism Report

These reports are published annually. More than 1000 companies contribute to the funds of the forum.

# Paryatan Parv 2019 being organised by Ministry of Tourism

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Union Ministry of Tourism is organising 'Paryatan Parv 2019' from 2 to 13 October 2019 across the country. The nationwide festival was inaugrated by Union Minister of Petroleum & Natural Gas and Minister of Steel, Dharmendra Pradhan in New Delhi.

## About Paryatan Parv

The Delhi leg of Paryatan Parv is being held from 2-6 October 2019 at Rajpath lawns between Rafi Marg and Janpath. The 2019 edition of Paryatan Parv is dedicated to 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.

**Objective**: The idea of celebrating Paryatan Parv is to propagate the message of '*Dekho Apna Desh*', with the objective of encouraging Indians to visit various tourist destinations of country, drawing focus on the benefits of tourism, showcasing the cultural diversity of the country and reinforcing and spreading the principle of 'Tourism for All'.

**Three Components of Paryatan Parv:**

**Dekho Apna Desh**: To encourage Indians to visit their own country, several activities have been organised during parv across country such as promotion on Social Media, Photography contest covering tourism attractions and experiences, Tourism related Essay, Quiz, Debate and Painting Competitions for Students. General public engagement for event will be promoted through *MyGov platform*.

**Tourism for All**: Tourism Events at sites across all states are being organised and activities at these sites will include illumination in and around Sites, Cultural Programmes of Theatre, Story Telling, Music, Dance, Sensitisation Programmes for Stakeholders around Showcasing Culture, Sites, Tourism Exhibitions, Guided Heritage Walks, Cuisine and Handicrafts or Handlooms, etc.

**Tourism & Governance**: Interactive Sessions & Workshops with Stakeholders on varied themes have been organised across the Country as a part of Paryatan parv activities.

# Modi – Xi Second Informal Summit in Mamallapuram, Tamil Nadu

The Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jingping would be visiting Mamallpuram, Tamil Nadu for the second edition of informal summit between India and China.

The shore temple at the town is to get world class illumination for the summit.

## Issue

The Tamil Nadu Government has approached the Madras High Court to seek permission to erect digital banner to welcome the leaders. The state was compelled to take the move in view of the death of 23 – year old Technocrat Miss Subashree who was killed by an illegally erected banner.

## Mamallapuram

The place is also known as Seven Pagodas or Mahabalipuram. Marco Polo and other Europeans named it Seven Pagodas. It is believed that 6 more temples stood along with the lone standing shore temple. Hence

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the name Seven Pagodas. The 2004 Tsunami exposed an old collapsed temple built of granite and was a part of Seven Pagodas.

It is a historic town and was a seaport in the 1st millennium. It was declared as UNESCO World Heritage site. The famous monuments in the town include temples in the form of chariots, giant open rock sculpture, cave sanctuaries, Descent of the Ganges and a Shore temple

### Shore Temple

The temple overlooks Bay of Bengal. It was built during the Pallava dynasty. It is a cave temple. Lord Vishnu shrine is placed between two shrines of Lord Shiva. The structures have multi – storied pyramidal superstructures typical of the Dravidian style.

The leaders are to meet in the temple. They will have a pradhakshan (a walk around the temple) and hold talks in a bench that is to be installed facing the temple.

### Descent of the Ganges

It is a monument at Mamallapuram. It is an open – air relief carved on two monolithic rocks. The monument depicts the story of descent of the sacred river Ganges to the earth from heavens. It also portrays Arjuna's penance. The monument was sculpted in the period of Pallavas.

### Wuhan summit

The first informal meet between the leaders was held at Wuhan, China in April 2018. The leaders exchanged views on issues of bilateral and global importance. The simultaneous emergence of India and China as two large economies has implications in regional and global significance. The summit was to address the imbalances created in the process. They agree that proper management of the bilateral relationship will be conducive for the development of the region. They also discussed about terrorism, disaster risk reduction, combating diseases, addressing climate change, etc.

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## Swachh Rail Swachh Bharat 2019

The Swachh Rail Swachh Bharat is a cleanliness survey that is carried out by QCI – Quality Council of India. The council tool 720 Non – Suburban stations and Suburban Stations for the survey.

### Findings of the survey

- Jaipur was ranked first with a cleanliness score of 931.75 out of 1000
- Jodhpur was ranked second with a score of 927.19
- The other top cleanest cities include Durgapura, Jammu Tawi, Gandhinagar, Suratgarh, Vijayawada, Udaipur, Ajmer and Haridwar.
- Southern Railways dropped five places. IT slipped to 7th position from 12th postion in 2018.
- The North Western Railway zone was awarded the cleanest railway zone of 2019

During the survey the inspectors inspected the station premises for presence of different forms of waste such as stain, stagnant water, litter and excreta. They also observed the frequency of cleaning activities in the customer interface areas. The condition of uniform, equipment, protection gear of the cleaning staff were also considered in ranking the stations.

## New Commemorative Rs.150 coin launched on Mahatma Gandhi's 150th anniversary

On the occasion of 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, Prime Minister Narendra Modi released the commemorative coins of Rs.150 denomination. PM Modi released the coins at an event held at Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad, Gujarat on 2 October 2019. Sabarmati Ashram is the seat from where father of nation launched most of his freedom fight related movement.

### Key Highlights

A few days before 150th birth anniversary of the Mahatma, the United Nations (UN) released a postal stamp to mark the event.

The first commemorative coin in India was issued in 1964 with the image of Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India to commemorate his birth anniversary.

This is not the first commemorative coin to be launched this year as in January 2019, PM Modi released a commemorative coin of Rs.350 denomination marking birth anniversary of Guru Gobind Singh. In 2018, PM launched a commemorative coin of Rs.100 in honor of Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the former prime minister.

### About Commemorative Coins

The commemorative coins are released to mark some special events such as birth anniversaries of popular

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historical figures. Although these coins sport a distinct design to signify occasion on which they are issued but most of the commemorative coins are treated as collectibles and are a bountiful treasure for coin collectors. Some countries issue commemorative coins for regular circulation too.

The lower denomination coins are used in general circulation while higher denomination coins are meant for collection purposes and they usually contain some gold and silver in them so they are found with some coin dealers with marked-up prices. According to law, commemorative coins are not legal tenders unless notified.

**Three different kinds of commemorative coins-**

**Regular Issue Coins**– They are meant for day to day commercial use and they are issued in the same design for many years

**Circulating Commemorative Coins**– They are also meant for day to day commerce use, however, their design will be used only for a limited time to mark an event. These are Non-circulating legal tender (NCLT) which means they are commemorative coins that are still legal tender and can be used to buy goods and services. Usually, the purpose of such coins is to draw attention of world to a particular person or event.

## Sachin Tendulkar gets the most effective Swachhata ambassador award

At the Safaigiri 2019 organized by the India Today group, the Cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar was awarded "The most effective Swachhata Ambassador". The former Indian Cricketer was chosen as he utilized his fame and popularity to ensure India achieved its goal of Swachh Bharat.

Mr Sachin was nominated as one of the ambassadors by PM Modi in 2014. He had launched Mission – 24 that aimed at improving the quality of Mumbai East ward as Mumbai was ranked the lowest in the Human Development Report.

### Safaigiri Awards

It is an initiative of India Today group to celebrate the champions of Clean India campaign. The awards include cleanest village, cleanest religious place, cleanest railway station and cleanest city.

This is the fifth award function organized by the group. The award function ended with an address delivered by President Ram Nath Kovind.

## India declared open defecation free by PM Modi

On the eve of Mahatma Gandhi's 150$^{th}$ birth anniversary, PM Modi declared India Open Defecation Free. The PM said in 60 months 600 million people have been given access to toilets and more than 110 million toilets have been built.

On October 2, 2014, Clean India campaign was launched by PM Modi with the aim of making India Open Defecation Free by 2019. Open Defecation Free was the main objective of the Clean India Campaign. The other objectives of the campaign include clean streets, building solid waste management plants, door – door waste collection and adopt better sanitation practices.

### About Open Defecation

Open Defecation is the process where people defecate in forests, open bodies of water, bushes or other open spaces. According to World Bank, more than 300 million Indians were still defecating in the open till 2017.

PM said 99% of rural India has become ODF. The concerns that stand in the way of eradicating the practice completely are lack of water and poor maintenance.

## October 2: International Day of Non – Violence

The United Nations marks October 2 every year as the International Day of Non – Violence. It is being marked since 2007. The objective is to promote non – violence through education and public awareness.

The day has strong connection with the works, methods and beliefs of Mahatma Gandhi. It is observed by organizing seminars, lectures, discussions and press conferences. There are also events like multi – faith meetings, street awareness campaigns and photo exhibitions being organized on the day.

### Background

The idea was proposed by an Iranian Nobel Laureate Shrin Ebadi in 2004. The idea attracted the Congress party. Following the Satyagraha Conference resolution in 2007, the party called up the UN to adopt the idea.

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## Government of Chattisgarh launches 5 new schemes

On October 2, 2019, the Chattisgarh government launches 5 new schemes. They include

- Mukhyamantri Suposhan Abhiyan
- Mukhyamantri Haat Bazaar Clinic Yojana
- Mukhyamatri Shahariya Slum Swasthya Yojana
- Universal PDS Scheme
- Mukhyamantri Ward Karyalaya

### Key features of the schemes

- Under Mukhyamantri Suposhan Abhiyan, the CM Nutrition Scheme that was started in June 2019 fresh nutritious food will be provided to malnourished children and anemic women. The mission is to be achieved through panchayats and self – help groups
- Under the Muhyamantri Sahariya Slum Swasthya Yojana a mobile medical team will cater to the health needs of more than 7 lakh people.
- Under Mukhyamantri Haat Baxaar Clinic Yojana, a mobile team of doctors and nurses with necessary equipment will visit local haat – bazaars to provide health facilities to tribal and forest areas.
- Under Mukhyamantri Ward Karyalayas, citizen services and facilities will be provided immediately to city people

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- Under Universal PDS (Public Distribution System) scheme, the general category families are eligible for food grains. Families with more than 3 members will receive 35kg of rice per month, family of 2 will receive 20kg rice per month and single member will be eligible to get 10 kg of rice per month.

## What is Monsoon Mission Coupled Forecast Model (CFS)?

India's new monsoon model, called the Monsoon Mission Coupled Forecast Model (CFS), has failed to forecast the excess rainfall received during August-September 2019. It was deployed by the IMD (India Meteorological Department) under National Monsoon Mission (NMM).

CFS model was developed as part of a 'Monsoon mission' that was underway for over 10 years and was meant to improve both short term as well as long term forecasts. While in 2019, India recorded its highest monsoon rain in 25 years, an analysis suggests that CFS don't do better than the older ones in long-range forecasting.

### About Coupled Forecast Model (CFS)

It is a dynamical model which is also called *Climate Forecast Model* (CFS). It has been developed based on a climate model developed by National Center for Environmental Prediction (NCEP), U.S. and it has been implemented on Prithvi High Performance Computers (HPC) at Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), Pune.

The Dynamical models employ a different approach to forecasting monsoon i.e. they roughly relies on capturing the interactions between land, ocean and atmosphere and tracking how the changes in each affect other. The land, atmosphere and ocean state at a particulate time (generally March) is mathematically simulated on supercomputers and extrapolated into monsoon months.

### About National Monsoon Mission (NMM)

It was has launched by Union Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES). The Ministry has bestowed the responsibility of execution and coordination of this mission to Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), Pune.

The project is worth Rs.1200 crore.

**Mission Objective**:

To build an ocean atmospheric model for –

- Improved prediction of monsoon rainfall on extended range to seasonal time scale of up to 16 days to about one season
- Improved prediction of rainfall, temperature as well as extreme weather events on short to medium range time scale up to 15 days

## Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina arrives in New Delhi on 4-day visit

Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina arrived in New Delhi on a four day visit to India. She will be

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attending **India Economic Summit** of World Economic Forum in Delhi on 3 October 2019. This is the first visit of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina after assuming office for third consecutive term as Bangladesh PM and in second term of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

### Key Highlights of Visit

During the visit Sheikh Hasina will hold bilateral talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The two Prime Ministers will jointly inaugurate 3 bilateral projects via video link and exchange Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs). The two countries are likely to sign 10-12 MoUs and agreements during the visit.

The two leaders will discuss issues including Teesta water sharing, Rohingya repatriation and will also discuss ways to enhance connectivity between Bangladesh and India through river and sea routes.

Both Prime Ministers are also likely to discuss joint celebration of birth centenary of *Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman*, 50- years of Bangladesh's independence as well as diplomatic ties between Bangladesh and India.

## Ecuador to withdraw from OPEC in January 2020

Ecuador will withdraw from 14-nation Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) from 1 January 2020. The country stated its internal fiscal problems as the reason for the withdrawal from the group.

### Key Highlights

The Andean nation (ie. a group of nations in South America connected by Andes mountain range) is attempting to increase its production of crude oil in a bid to raise more income. On multiple occasions Ecuador has not compiled with the output quota fixed by OPEC.

This measure is also in line with national government's plan to reduce public spending and generate new income. Despite leaving OPEC, the country will however continue to support efforts to stabilize the world oil market.

### Background

Ecuador joined OPEC in 1973 had earlier withdrawn from the bloc in 1992. However, it rejoined the organization in 2007. It is also not the first country to do so, as earlier other small former OPEC members have also left the organisation for fiscal reasons such as Indonesia suspended membership in 2016 as the country sought to increase oil exports.

Currently, Ecuador produces about 545,000 barrels per day (bpd) of crude, but is struggling with tight liquidity because of a wide fiscal deficit and huge foreign debt. In February 2019, Ecuador reached a $4.2 billion deal with IMF (International Monetary Fund) which allowed it to receive an immediate disbursement of $652 million and opened the door for an additional $6 billion in loans.

# October 4, 2019

## Ambassadors of 5 nations present credentials to President of India

Ambassadors of five nations namely Kazakhstan, European Union (EU), France, Denmark and Mexico present credentials to President of India Ram Nath Kovind, at a ceremony held at Rashtrapati Bhavan on 3 October 2019.

### Key Highlights

The envoys who presented their credentials were: –

1. Freddy Svane- Ambassador of Denmark
2. Emannuel Lenain- Ambassador of France
3. Ugo Astuto- Ambassador of the European Union
4. Federico Salas Lotfe- Ambassador of Mexico
5. Yerlan Alimbayev- Ambassador of the Republic of Kazakhstan

## PM Modi inaugurates Metro Service and ENT hospital in Mauritius

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Mauritian Prime Minister Pravind Jugnauth jointly inaugurated two landmark projects in Mauritius via video conferencing. These projects are Phase-1 of Metro Express service and a new ENT Hospital.

### Key Highlights

India and Mauritius are both diverse democracies which are committed towards working for prosperity of their people and for peace in Indian Ocean region (IOR) and in world.

As per the two leaders, both of these projects will serve the people of Mauritius and are symbols of India's

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strong commitment to development of Island nation. Moreover, the inauguration of project heralds a new chapter in shared history, heritage and cooperation between India and Mauritius.

The metro will provide a clean, efficient and time-saving transport service and will contribute to economic activities as also tourism.

### Background

India is already involved in a number of projects in Mauritius which includes Hospitals and Housing projects. In 2016, India provided a Special Economic Package (SEP) of $353 million for execution of five projects in Indian Ocean country. India has also partnered with Mauritius in projects of direct public interest such as in 2018, a joint project provided e-tablets to young children. Also, new Supreme Court building and 1,000 social housing units are coming up rapidly in Mauritius. PM Modi has also conveyed India's decision to support Mauritius in construction of a Renal unit and Medi-Clinics and Area Health Centres (AHC) through grant assistance.

The partnership between India-Mauratius is also important as Indian Ocean Economy holds great promise for people of both nations and it is crucial for well-being of citizens as well as peace and prosperity in Indian Ocean region and in world.

## INS Tarkash arrives at Reunion Islands, France

As part of Indian Navy's Overseas Deployment to Africa, Europe and Russia, the Indian Naval Ship (INS) Tarkash arrived at St Denis, Reunion Island, France on 3 October 2019 for a three day visit. Indian Navy ships are regularly deployed overseas as part of Indian Navy's mission of building *'bridges of friendship'* as well as strengthening international cooperation with friendly countries.

### Key Highlights

During port call, the Commanding Officer will pay courtesy calls on various dignitaries and government officials at Reunion Island (in France). To further enhance co-operation professional interactions will be held between French and Indian Navies. In addition to this social engagement, sports events and best practices will also be shared between Indian and French Navies.

### India-France

Since ages India and France have traditionally enjoyed warm and friendly bilateral relations. Both countries share common values of democracy, development and secularism which was in 1998 upgraded to level of a *'Strategic Partnership'*.

India and France have been engaged in regular high level exchanges and interactions in numerous fields and the Navies of both nations have recently engaged in one of the most complex and major ***Maritime Exercise 'VARUNA 2019'*** in Indian Ocean. This involved the participation of Carrier Task Groups from both sides and conduct of full-spectrum Naval operations.

### About INS Tarkash

It is a potent frontline frigate and second Talwar-class frigate constructed for the Indian Navy. It is part of 2nd batch of Teg-class frigates ordered by Indian Navy and was built at Yantar shipyard in Kaliningrad, Russia.

It was commissioned on 9 November 2012 and is equipped with a versatile range of weapons and sensors. The ship is part of Indian Navy's Western Fleet. It is under Operational Command of Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Western Naval Command, based at Mumbai, Maharshtra.

## RBI cuts Repo Rate

RBI today released its 4th bi – monthly policy review.

- The Reserve Bank of India cut repo rate by 25 base points to 5.15%. It is the lowest since 2010. This is the fifth consecutive rate cut of the Shaktikanta Das led panel.
- The RBI also cut GDP growth estimates to 6.1% from earlier 6.9%

All the members of the MPC – Monetary Policy Committee unanimously voted to reduce the repo rate. Last month Government cut the corporate tax rate from 30% to 22% to revive the slow growth rate.

### Repo rate

Repo rate is the rate at which the central bank lends money to the commercial banks. With RBI cutting repo rate, inflation would increase in the future. The current inflation of India is 3.21%. This is below the RBI target of 4%.

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## IT Ministry launches Smart-board for effective monitoring of key programmes

Union Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MEITY) have launched an **Automated Real Time Performance Smart-board** for effective monitoring and measurement of key programmes of government. The key programmes include Digital India, Aadhaar, Digital Payments among others.

The dashboard was launched by Union Minister for Electronics and IT Ravi Shankar Prasad, while celebrating the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. During the Mahatma Gandhi's birth anniversary celebrations,

Minister Prasad also unveiled ***'Digital Charkha',*** an art installation at IT Ministry. The Digital Charkha is an amalgamation of traditional design with a digital spin with the wheel of Charkha being made up of interlinked digital grids in place of fine threads thus portraying that core of Digital India is embedded in Gandhian philosophy of equality, unity, corruption free and empowerment of ordinary citizens.

### About Smart-board

It will act as a single window access for Centre, State as well as for District specific projects implemented by MeitY.

It will provide real-time, dynamic analytical project monitoring for critical and high priority Programme undertaken by MeitY. Thus this automated real-time performance smart-board will promote transparency and enhance ease of working.

It will also enhance analysis through data integration by using APIs (Application programming interface) or (web services) by consolidating multiple data sources into single centralized, easy-to-access platform.

**Need**: The government is implementing different welfare programmes or schemes at various levels for citizens' benefit and thus the effective monitoring and measurement of outcome and impact of such programmes or schemes is imperative at different levels through identified Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

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## US military test fires Minuteman III ballistic missile

After North Korea tested a ballistic missile from the coast of Wonsan, US tested an unarmed Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missile. The missile was launched from the California base.

The missile traveled 6,750 km across Pacific Ocean to the Kwajalein Atoll in Marshall Islands.

On 2nd October North Korea tested a ballistic missile which is believed to be launched from a submarine. The test was confirmed by the South Korea officials.

### About Minuteman III

The program was started in 1966. The missile is armed with 170 kilo tons of TNT. Airborne Launch Control System is a part of the missile. When Minuteman was first discovered the Soviet had no target to counter it. However, they gained pace after a few years. The airborne launch system offers a survivable launch capability to the US air force.

US North Korea Talks

Following missile test by the countries, the leaders have agreed to hold talks in Stockholm. Since June, the US officials struggled to make North Korea to return to table. Currently North Korea is under many sanctions. The United Nations had earlier complained that the country had circumvented many sanctions.

### Kwajalein Atoll

It is a part of the Marshall Islands in Pacific Ocean. The US hosts naval base in the atoll. The total island area is just over 6 square miles.

Atoll is a ring-shaped coral reef. It is formed due to volcanic action. Long after the volcano receded into the ocean, corals begin to settle around the crater forming a ring-shaped colony called atolls

## Sarbat Da Bhala Express: Train flagged off at New Delhi railway station

Union Ministers Piyush Goyal, Harsh Vardhan and Harsimrat Kaur Badal flagged off 'Sarbat Da Bhala Express' train at New Delhi railway station. The *'New Delhi-Lohian Khas-New Delhi Intercity Express'* was recently renamed as 'Sarbat da Bhala Express' by Indian Railways. The renamed train will ply from New Delhi to Lohian Khas via holy city Sultanpur Lodhi.

The 550th anniversary of Guru Nanak will be celebrated on 12 November 2019. Several trains have been started by government to facilitate people but this train is a gift for Delhiites and countrymen.

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### Renaming of Train

The request to rename the train was made by Union Minister of Food Processing Industries Harsimrat Kaur Badal on occasion of 550th Parkash Purb. Her request was later accepted by Railway Minister Piyush Goyal. The renaming of this train is an initiative to follow the path shown by Guru Nanak ji, who was a messenger of peace.

The Prakash Utsav (or Parkash Purb) is celebrated every year to mark the publishing of teachings of Sikh gurus and saints of various communities in the form of hymns and sayings that continue to give the message of love and service to society.

**NOTE**: It was in Sultanpur Lodhi only that Guru Nanak ji spent 14 years of his life and taught that all communities are one.

## KAZIND -2019: India Kazakhistan Joint Military Exercise commence

The annual military exercise called KAZIND 2019 between India and Kazakhstan army commenced at Pithoragarh in Uttarakhand on 3 October 2019. The year 2019 is the 4th edition of joint military exercise. The exercise will conclude on 15 October 2019 with a 72 hour exercise which will showcase the joint skills of soldiers while conducting Counter Terrorism and counter insurgency operations.

### About KAZIND -2019

**Objective of exercise**: To jointly train troops of both countries in Counter Insurgency and Counter Terrorism operations in both Jungle as well as Mountainous terrain.

The Exercise KAZIND 2019 can be termed as a façade (face) of long standing strategic ties between India and Kazakhstan.

**Taks Undertaken**:

As part of military exercise, important lectures, demonstrations and drills related to counter insurgency and counter terrorism operations will be conducted.

Both Armies will also share their valuable experiences in countering such situations.

It will also refine drills and procedures for joint operations whenever the need so arises.

## Delhi Cabinet approves bill to setup India's first Sports University

The Delhi Cabinet on 3rd October, 2019, approved the bill to set up India's first Sports University. It will offer graduation, post-graduation and doctorate degrees in hockey, football and cricket. The announcement was made by the CM Kejriwal. He said the university is to come up in 90 acres of land.

The University will act as State University. It will also have a full-fledged Delhi Sports school affiliated to CBSE.

The curriculum of the university is still in the idealization process. It will be developed after deliberations with the experts.

## Delhi – Katra Vande Bharat Luxurious Express launched

The Home Minister Amit Shah inaugurated the luxurious Vande Bharat Express -that will run between Delhi and Katra station in Jammu and Kashmir. The train is second of its kind. The first such train was launched between Delhi and Varanasi. The train can run up to a maximum speed of 160 km per hour. It is the fastest train in India. However, the train will maintain a speed of 130 km per hour in the Katra route due to track limitations in the route.

The train has plush interiors, Wi – Fi, bio – vacuum toilets, CCTV surveillance, GPS systems

Apart from this the train also includes plastic crusher machines.

### About Katra

It is locally called Katra Vaishno Devi. It is situated in the foothills of Trikuta mountains. The Ban Ganga river passes through the town. Dogri is the native language of Katra. The town acts as the base camp to pilgrims visiting Vaishno Devi Temple.

The train is one of the steps of the GoI towards development of Kashmir.

## Govt. launches PRAKASH Portal for monitoring coal supply to power plants

Union Power Minister (Independent charge) Raj Kumar Singh and Coal, Mines and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi have jointly launched **PRAKASH**– *Power Rail Koyla Availability through Supply Harmony* **Portal** in New Delhi.

### About PRAKASH Portal

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**Objective of Portal**: To bring better coordination for coal supplies among all stakeholders.

**Need**: After rainy season in 2019, coal stocks are higher at 17 million tonne (MT) as compared with over 11 MT in 2018 due to work done by the ministry in this direction. Also the coal production has increased 165 MT in past five years.

**Developed By**: The portal is developed by NTPC (Electric power distribution company). It sources data from different stakeholders such as CEA (Central Electricity Authority), Centre for Railway Information System (CRIS) and coal companies.

**Reports Format**: Although all reports are available in PDF and Excel format but to present information in a user-friendly method, the portal gives graphical representation of reports with details shown on the map of India. At present, the portal will make available four reports- Daily Power Plant Status, Plant Exception Report, Coal Dispatch Report and Periodic Power Plant Status.

**Function**:

The portal is designed to help in mapping as well as monitoring entire coal supply chain for power plants, coal stock at supply end (mines), coal quantities/rakes planned, coal quantity in transit and coal availability at power generating station.

It makes available valuable information on a single platform, which will help coal companies track stocks and coal requirement at power stations for effective production planning.

The Indian Railways will plan to place rakes as per actual coal available at siding and stock available at power stations, but besides this, power stations can also plan their future schedule by knowing rakes in pipe line and also the expected time to reach. Portal will also provide information about coal stock at power generating station.

The Union Ministries of power and coal, Central Electricity Authority (CEA) and Power System Operation Corporation Ltd (PSOCL) can review overall availability of coal at thermal power plants in different regions.

The portal is for transparency and better coordination among stakeholders, including Coal India Ltd (CIL), Indian Railways, power utilities as well as ministries of coal and power, for coal supplies to power plants. It is designed in a way to help in mapping and monitoring entire coal supply chain for power plants.

**Significance**: The portal is an important step in ensuring adequate availability and optimum utilization of coal at thermal power plants.

## US widens trade war with European states; Indian Sensex dips 200 points

The US imposed tariffs on 7.5 billion USD worth European exports. The WTO had earlier ruled that US could target goods from EU nations as they had failed to comply ruling regarding subsidies for Airbus.

The US had imposed tariff on 25 billion USD worth goods of European items. They were mainly on Airbus production sites like France, Germany, Spain and UK.

The root of the problem dates back to 2004. In 2004, the EU authorities said the Boeing received 19 billion USD in unfair way from state and federal governments. The US also filed similar complaints over European subsidies to Airbus.

### Asian markets fell due to the US EU trade war

The markets in Japan, India, Indonesia saw great fall as the tariffs were imposed. In India the Sensex dipped by 200 points. The impose of tariff was greatly felt on agricultural and industrial products, butter, cheese, camera parts, etc.

## Clean water mission to be launched for access to safe drinking water

The Cabinet Minister of Consumer Affairs, food and public distribution mooted the clean water mission that is to set standards for safe drinking water

The safety of drinking water is measured based on 42 different parameters.

The indicators of drinking water safety are

- Color of the water – Though water is colorless, the pure water can be identified by light blue color
- Alkalinity – The alkalinity of water is its capacity to resist changes in pH levels.
- Taste – Water should be tasteless
- Dissolved metals and salts like Chloride, Magnesium, Sodium, Manganese should not be present

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- Micro organisms like fecal coliform, Giardia lamblia, Cryptosporidium should not be present.
- It should not contain colored dissolved organic matter and dissolved organic carbon
- It should also be free of pharmaceuticals, radon, hormones, etc.

## Indian Oil launches drive to turn plastic to bitumen

The Indian Oil had taken several initiatives to support Government drive to eliminate single use plastic. The Corporation announced about the conversion of plastic to bitumen on 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. The initiatives are part of Clean India Campaign

The company is set to supply bitumen commercially for road construction. The project was first launched in Faridabad where a bituminous road was laid by the corporation. The performance of these bituminous roads will be monitored by Indian Oil R&D.

### About Bitumen

Bitumen is also called Asphalt. It is highly viscous and road construction is its primary use. It is also used to seal flat roofs and in producing water proof products.

# October 5, 2019

## Audio Odigos: Audio Guide facility App launched by Tourism Ministry

Union Ministry of Tourism launches Audio Guide facility App called 'Audio Odigos' for 12 sites of India (including Iconic Sites). The launch was made during the ongoing celebrations of nationwide 'Paryatan Parv 2019'. This year is the 3rd edition of Paryatan Parv.

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### Key Highlights

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for Gol Gumbad, Delhi with Government of Delhi and Resbird Technologies was also exchanged for development of Tourism Amenities during the programme at Paryatan Parv celebrations in New Delhi.

On the sidelines, a 26th MoU under Tourism Ministry's '***Adopt a Heritage, Apni Dharohar Apni Pehchan***' scheme was exchanged for development of Tourism Amenities. The project aims to develop synergy amongst all stakeholders and involves active participation of local communities and other key players to promote responsible tourism. Earlier, 42 Letters of Intent (LoI) have been issued to 38 agencies for 106 sites and 25 MoUs have been signed with 12 agencies for 23 sites and two technological interventions under the project across India.

### Audio Guide: Audio Odigos app

The app is launched for the benefit of tourists. With Audio Odigos, tourists will now be able to enjoy a more enriching experience and take back historical insights of Indian culture and heritage. The app is now available for download on all Android and iOS supported mobile phones.

This app is the outcome of MoU signed by Tourism Ministry with ***Resbird Technologies*** in 2018 under which they have developed the audio guide app as a part of their Corporate social responsibility (CSR).

**Features**:

The Audio Odigos app contains an inbuilt map of site for a smooth navigation during tour of the site.

The Audio guide odigo offers Government of India verified content, with visuals & voice over support. Listeners will be offered various versions of history such as Podcasts, Synopsis and Detailed History. The audio can be chosen in their preferred language & version of history.

**12 sites where Audio Guide facility Audio Odigos can be used-**

- Rajasthan- Amer Fort
- Delhi- Chandni Chowk, Red Fort, Purana Quila and Humayun's tomb
- Uttar Pradesh- Fatehpur Sikri and Taj Mahal,
- Gujarat- Somnath and Dholavira
- Madhya Pradesh- Khajuraho
- Tamilnadu- Mahabalipuram,
- Bihar- Mahabodhi Temple

### Adopt a Heritage: Apni Dharohar, Apni Pehchaan

It is flagship scheme of Union Ministry of Tourism. The scheme is a collaborative effort between Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Culture and Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and State Governments or Union Territories Administrations.

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**Objective**: To involve both public as well as private sector companies and corporate citizens/individuals to take up the responsibility of making heritage and tourism more sustainable in India.

The efforts involve development, operation and maintenance of world-class tourist infrastructure and amenities at ASI (Archaeological Survey of India) or State heritage sites and other important tourist sites in India.

## IAF Chief: Shooting down Mi 17 was a big mistake

The Indian Air Force said that the accidental shoot down of Mi 17 chopper in February 2019 was a big mistake. A Spyder air defence system of India shot the chopper near Srinagar airfield. It was an unmanned aerial vehicle that mistook the chopper for a Pakistani chopper.

The Mi 17 chopper crashed during the Balkot strikes

The Balkot strike was conducted by India on February 26. The Indian warplanes crossed the disputed regions of Kashmir and dropped bombs in the town of Balkot. Pakistan military was the first to announce airstrike on February 26. Indian confirmed and characterized its attack as a preemptive measure

The military court completed the inquiry last week. 5 IAF officers were held guilty for shooting their own chopper. The court held a Group captain, 2 Flight Lieutenants and 2 Flight Lieutenants guilty for not following correct procedure while shooting their own helicopter.

### Milittary Justice

India has its own Army act, Air Force Act and Navy Act. There are also separate laws for paramilitary forces like Border Security Force Act, Coast Guard Act, Assam Rifles Act, Indo Tibetan Border Police Force Act.

The Armed Forces Tribunal was established in 2007.

## NHSRC to be WHO Collaborating Centre for Medical Devices and Health Technology Policy

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), Governmnet of India in collaboration with World Health Organization (WHO) re-designated the National Health Systems Resource Centre (NHSRC), as the *WHO Collaborating Centre for Priority Medical Devices and Health Technology Policy*.

### About National Health Systems Resource Centre (NHSRC)

It was established in 2006. The NHSRC is mandated to assist in policy and strategy development in provision and mobilization of technical assistance to states. It is also mandated to provide capacity building for Health Ministry.

The mandate of *Division of Healthcare Technology* at NHSRC is to draw up technical specifications for technologies procured under National Health Mission (NHM), draft policies for medical device maintenance and management, undertake evaluations of health product innovations, conduct Health Technology Assessments (HTA), and support MoHFW on issues related to diagnostics initiative, National Dialysis Program (NDP) and other technology intensive services.

### NHSRC and WHO

In 2019 NHSRC in collaboration with WHOs' country's office developed a guidance document for Health Ministry's free diagnostics initiative to further strengthen agenda of Universal access to affordable diagnostics. In past NHSRC (as a collaborating centre) also supported WHO in formulating technical specifications for medical devices like resuscitation devices (devices wich initiate spontaneous breathing by mechanically ventilating the lungs), oxygen concentrators and now continues to support evaluation of innovations for WHO's compendium on innovative devices.

NHSRC also works with WHO on development of technical specification of Blood pressure measuring devices, in-vitro diagnostics and devices for cardiovascular diseases (CVD) and cancer.

Future collaboration between two includes work on International Classification and Nomenclature for Medical Devices (ICMD), which would improve access to affordable health technologies.

**Significance**: Such global collaborations in area of health technology ensures that research and development (R&D), scientific and technological advances and innovative technologies play a substantial supportive role in healthcare. It also enables both players involved to reach public health goals and achieve universal health coverage (UHC).

## Sheikh Hasina meets PM Modi

PM Modi held meeting with the Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina at Hyderabad House. The leaders jointly

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inaugurated 3 projects and signed seven agreements during the meeting.

The issues of Teesta water sharing and Rohingya were also discussed. The issue of NRC was not of focus in the talks.

### Highlights

- It is the second meeting of the leaders in 10 days. Earlier they met at the UNGA in New York.
- The talks focused on bilateral cooperation between the countries
- 3 projects related to LPG imports, social facilities and vocational training were inaugurated. The leader signed 7 agreements on trade, development, connectivity, cooperation, culture and mutual contact between the people.

### Onion a source of Friction?

On 29th September, 2019, the Indian Government banned onion exports and imposed stock limits on vegetables. This has become an irritant between the bilateral relations between India and Bangladesh.

Speaking at the India Bangladesh business forum Bangladesh PM claimed for an early warning.

India's onion exports fell by 10.7%. Malaysia, UAE, Sri Lanka are the other top onion importers from India.

### India Bangladesh trade

The trade between the countries has grown significantly in the last decade. In 2016 – 17, India exported 4489 million USD worth goods. India imported 672.4 million USD worth goods the same year.

Since 2011, India offers duty free access to Bangladesh to all tariff lines except alcohol and tobacco under SAFTA (South Asian Free Trade Agreement)

### River sharing

India and Bangladesh share 54 rivers in common. A bilateral JRC – Joint River Commission is working since 1972 to maximize the benefits from these rivers.

### Teesta river issue

Teesta flows through West Bengal and Sikkim before draining into Bay of Bengal. In 1983, India and Bangladesh signed an Ad – Hoc agreement that was valid till 1985. According to the agreement India will use 39% and Bangladesh will use 36% of Teesta waters. In 1998, Bangladesh started the "Teesta Barrage" irrigation project under which 3 crops were cultivated in a year.

In 2011, GoI proposed an agreement by which India will use 42.5% and Bangladesh will use 37.5% during the lean season. The plan was shelved opposition from Sikkim and West Bengal Governments. Many glaciers of Teesta river are retreating. The lean season of the river is between October and April for which the problem now persists.

## YSR Vahana Mitra scheme: launched in Andhra Pradesh

Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh YS Jagan Mohan Reddy launched YSR Vahana Mitra scheme which provides Rs.10,000 allowance to self-employed drivers of the state. This latest scheme which is available only in Andhra Pradesh is the fulfilment of an election promise made by YS Jagan Mohan Reddy during his 3,648 km padayatra.

### About YSR Vahana Mitra Scheme

Under the scheme an allowance of Rs.10000 would be given every year to the beneficiaries. It will provide Rs.50,000 to self-employed drivers in 5 years. This amount will be credited into bank accounts directly while processing will be done in a transparent manner.

**Beneficiary includes**: Self-Employed driver-cum-owners of autos, taxis and maxi cabs of the state.

The annual allowance would be provided to meet the recurring expenses such as insurance premium, licence fee and maintenance of vehicle to procure fitness certificate.

**Implementation**:

The state government issued a GO in this regard on September 9 to frame guidelines for eligibility criteria. The government also allocated a budget of Rs.400 crore in annual budget for implementation of welfare scheme. Of the total amount the SCs would get Rs.68 crore, STs Rs.20 core and remaining amount is for others.

Out of the 1,75,352 applications received by government 1,73,102 were cleared and the allowance amount was directly credited into their respective bank accounts. Within the state, Visakhapatnam tops the list of beneficiaries followed by Krishna with and East Godavari.

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Those people who could not make it on time can apply till month-end and their applications would be considered.

## NHA and Google tie up for Ayushman Bharat Implementation

The National Health Authority (NHA) has joined hands with international giant Google to collaborate as well as strengthen the implementation of government's flagship health insurance scheme, Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY).

### Key Highlights of Collaboration

The NHA and Goggle will be working closely to explore various user cases for increasing process efficiencies in day-to-day applications.

Google will support NHA in improving and strengthening PM-JAY's digital/online presence and showcasing relevant content to Rs.50 crore entitled beneficiaries.

Moreover, Google will also help to provide training and support to NHA personnel to build on digital skills as well as explore the best possible ways to extend PMJAY benefits to the citizens.

With advancements in technologies like machine learning (ML), the two organizations will also explore the best solutions that can help NHA to efficiently scale the process of PM-JAY.

**Significance**:

The collaboration will bolster PM-JAY's objective of reaching the poor and vulnerable, thereby reducing their high out-of-pocket health expenditure, and improving access to quality healthcare.

Robust technology is the mainstay of PM-JAY such as in areas of fraud prevention and detection, claim approvals. Thus the use of technology can help reduce turnaround time and aid in faster closure of processes which will further enable the states to implement the scheme more effectively.

The collaboration of NHA with Google will also improve online presence.

### Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana

It is a centrally sponsored scheme (CSS) that launched in 2018. The scheme aims to make interventions in primary, secondary and tertiary care systems. It covers both preventive and promotive health, to address healthcare holistically.

It is aimed to bring quality healthcare to around 50 crore poor and vulnerable Indians across India. It is touted as the world's largest public funded health insurance scheme.

The National Health Authority (NHA) is implementing of PM-JAY. **NHA Mission** is to create world's best health assurance programme on an efficient and technologically robust eco-system.

## Rapid spread of Dengue fever in Telangana

In the last 10 days, around 1,700 cases of Dengue were reported in multiple districts of Telangana. The state received rains for few days that washed away the mosquito larvae collected in dumps and stagnant water.

### Causes

Changes in rainfall pattern, rise in humidity level and long spell of warmer temperatures are the main reasons for the recent outspread of Dengue in Telangana. The state is urbanizing at a faster rate after the partition, the construction projects like Amaravati (the capital city being built) have increased. The state Government estimates over 50% of the Telangana population will reside in urban areas by 2023

With unplanned construction projects dumping of discarded objects and stagnation of water have made Telangana conducive for spread of dengue and Chikungunya.

### What is Dengue?

Dengue is a vector borne disease transmitted by female Aedes mosquito according to WHO. It is caused by the Dengue virus that belongs to the Flavivirus.

### Strains of Dengue

There are 4 strains of Dengue namely DEN – 1, DEN – 2, DEN – 3, DEN – 4. When a person becomes infected with one strain and treated, he becomes immune to that particular strain of virus. However, there are possibilities for him to get infected by other strains.

### Occurrence

The virus is present in India, south east Asia, China, South America, Africa, Pacific Islands, Mexico and Caribbean. At the rest of the world, Dengue has been eliminated.

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### Measures of India to control Dengue

- The disease is monitored, controlled and treated under the program National Vector Borne Disease Control Program. The program covers the following
  - National Anti-Malaria program
  - Japanese Encephalitis Control Program
  - Kala – Azar Control Program
  - National Filaria Control Program
  - Dengue and Dengue Hemorrhagic fever
- National Dengue Day is observed on May 16 every year by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

## Cabinet approves new strategic disinvestment process

On 4th October, 2019, Cabinet approved new process of strategic disinvestment to privatize selected PSUs – Public Sector Units. The process was approved by PM Modi under which DIPAM – Department of Investment and Public Asset Management operating under Ministry of Finance will be the nodal agency to implement the process.

The PSUs to be put under sale will be identified by NITI Aayog along with DIPAM.

The Finance Minister Nirmala Seetharaman announced during the Budget that the divestment target from 90,000 crore rupees will be increased to 1.05 lakh crore rupees.

### Divestment history of India – Major events

When the government sells its share of PSU to a private sector or an individual it is called divestment.

The divestment process in India began in 1991 when 20% of selected PSUs were announced to be divested in the interim budget. In 1993, it was increased to 49%. However, this was not implemented.

In 1996, GV Ramakrishna Committee was formed to make suggestions about the divestment process.

Between 1998 and 2000 under Vajpayee Government several divestment processes were included

- The PSUs were divided into strategic and non – strategic. Strategic included railway, arms – ammunition, energy, etc. Non – strategic included others that were not part of the above category.
- Department of Disinvestment was set up under Ministry of Finance to complete the projects successfully.

### NIIF – National Investment Fund

The money earned by the government through the disinvestment policy will be deposited in NIIF. It does not go into the Consolidated funds of India. It is managed by UTI, SBI and LIC.

The money from the NIIF can be used to execute government schemes and reviving or expanding other PSUs. The rule is that 75% of the money should be used for government schemes and 25% for reviving PSUs

## FSSAI launches 'Trans Fat Free' logo

Union Minister of Health Harsh Vardhan launched the 'Trans Fat Free' logo of FSSAI (Food Safety and Standards Authority of India) at **8th International Chefs' Conference** held in New Delhi.

### Key Highlights

Food Facilities or Establishments that use trans-fat free fats/oil as well as do not have industrial trans-fat over 0.2g per 100g of food, in compliance with ***Food Safety and Standards (Advertising and Claims) Regulations, 2018*** are eligible to display the logo. However, the use of the logo by restaurants and food manufacturers is voluntary.

Under the slogan '*Chefs 4 Trans Fat Free*', at the international conference, nearly 1,000 chefs from different parts of country took a pledge to use trans-fat free oils/fats in their recipes and work towards its elimination from diets of Indian populace at large.

### Why Trans Fat is a concern?

It is the worst type of fats with known health risks. They are largely present in partially hydrogenated vegetable fats or oils, vanaspati, margarine and bakery shortenings, and can also be found in baked and fried foods.

Industrial trans fats are made by adding hydrogen to liquid vegetable oils so as to make them more solid, and to increase shelf life of foods.

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Every year about 5,40,000 people die globally of cardiovascular diseases, and for this the consumption of food laced with industry trans fats is a contributing factor. In India itself the number of deaths is around 60,000.

**Initiative by India**: As part of '***Eat Right India***' led by Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), India targets to reduce industrially produced trans fatty acids on food supply to less than 2% by 2022. The country's objective of trans fat elimination by 2022 in a phased manner is a year ahead of global target set by WHO.

## Goa Maritime Conclave, 2019

The Goa Maritime Conclave was inaugurated by the National Security Advisor of India Sri. Ajith Kumar.

**Theme of the conclave: Common Maritime Priorities in IOR and need for Regional Maritime Strategy**

The Conclave was held under three sessions. It focused on capacity building of IOR (Indian Ocean Region) Navies to encounter emerging maritime threats

### Why is IOR important?

The Indian Ocean Region is rich in tin, gold, uranium, cobalt, aluminum, nickel and cadmium. 80% of world's sea borne trade transits through India Ocean Region. The waters are home to continually evolving strategic development that include India and China, Islamist terrorism, increase in incidence of piracy, potential nuclear confrontation between India and Pakistan, etc.

US has deployed many of its Combined Task Forces to safeguard oil flow in the region. France makes its significance presence with its naval bases at Abi Dhabi and Djibouti.

### Why is IOR important to India?

India imports about 70% of oil through this region. India has its listening posts in Seychelles, Mauritius and Madagascar. Maldives is co – opted as part of India's southern Naval command.

With China's String of Pearl strategy to surround India, it is essential for India to strengthen its presence in the IOR.

### Maritime Threats

- Maritime Terrorism – Explosives are smuggled through the region. The Mumbai serial blasts in 1993 and infiltration of 10 Pakistani terrorists were executed by using sea routes. The 2008 Mumbai attack also proved how vulnerable the coasts are.
- Piracy – Somalia and Gulf of Aden are predominantly attacked by pirates. The attacks were in their peaks between 2005 and 2012.
- Smuggling and human Trafficking
- Illegal Migration, Infiltration and Refugee Influx

### Choke points of IOR

Straits of Hormuz, Bab – el Mandeb and Malacca are considered as choke points of the Indian Ocean Region.

## October 5: World Teachers Day

The World Teachers Day is commemorated by UNESCO since 1994. It is on this day the Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers was adopted in 1966. In 1997, Status of Higher – Education Teaching Personnel was adopted.

SDG 4 adopted on Education recognizes teachers as a key to the achievement of Education 2030 agenda. Since then, World Teachers Day became the occasion to mark progress and reflect ways to counter the challenges in teaching profession

**Theme: Young Teachers: The Future of the Profession.**

The official event of the day is to be conducted in collaboration with UNICEF, UNDP and ILO.

### Significance of the theme

The 21st century is not an easy time for a teacher. Teachers were once respected as highly qualified professionals. Unfortunately, today they are the scape goats for the failure of education according to UNESCO.

The biggest problem is that the young professionals are not showing interest to take the profession. Over 69 million teachers are required to achieve the SDG 4 education targets. They are as follows

- Ensure all girls and boys have access to early childhood development and pre- primary education

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- Ensure there are equal access to all men and women to vocational, technical and vocational skills
- Ensure the youth have skills for employment, entrepreneurship and decent jobs.
- Expand the scholarships available to the developing countries.
- Increase the supply of qualified teachers through international cooperation

### Need for action

According to UNDP,

- In developing countries, around 91% of children remain out of school. There are around 57 million children out of school
- More than half of the children are not enrolled in primary education in Sub – Saharan Africa
- 103 million youth lack basic literacy skills
- Especially in conflict – affected zones, more than 50% of children are out of school.

## US unemployment falls to a 50-year low

The US Labor Department reports that the unemployment rate fell to 3.5% from 3.7%. The main reason behind the development is that the economy added 136,000 jobs in September 2019.

On the other hand, the report claim that the manufacturing jobs fell in September 2019 following the slow down in-service industry growth. Professionals claim that 15-month US – China trade war has eroded business confidence. The central bank of US cut rates in July 2019 for the first time since 2019

### Why American Economy is a matter to the world?

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US is one of the biggest economies in the world. The slow down in US economy will slow down other economies across the world.

## Nomadic Elephant 2019: Indo-Mongolian Joint Exercise

14th edition of Indo–Mongolian joint military training called Exercise Nomadic Elephant-XIV commenced from 5 October 2019. It is being conducted over a period of 14 days from 5-18 October 2019 at Bakloh, a town in Himachal Pradesh.

### About Nomadic Elephant 2019

The Mongolian Army is being represented by officers and troops of elite *084 Air Borne Special Task Battalion* while Indian Army is being represented by a contingent of a battalion of *Rajputana Rifles*.

**Objective of Nomadic Elephant-XIV**:

- To evolve various tactical drills in counter-terror environment such as Convoy Protection Drill, Room Intervention Drills, Ambush & Counter Ambush Drills.
- To train troops in counter insurgency & counter terrorism operations under United Nations (UN) mandate.

**Signifiacnce**:

The Joint Exercise is an ideal platform for armies of both nations to share their experiences and best practices and gain mutually. It will also enhance defence co-operation and military relations between two nations.

The training by both contingents will also lay emphasis in capacity building for conducting joint operations by a cohesive subunit, comprising of troops from both armies, in an adverse operational conditions thus enhancing the interoperability between the two armies.

## Home minister inaugurates North East Handloom and Handicraft exhibition

During his maiden visit to Mizoram, Home Minister Amit Shah inaugurated the North East Handloom and Handicraft Exhibition, 2019.

The exhibition is funded by the North Eastern Council. It has participants from the other North Eastern States as well. The Home Minister highlighted on recent developing projects like National Bamboo Mission, rail links between Vairabi and Aizwal, Rs 40 crore hopital projects, Broad Gauge rail projects, the land border agreement with Myanmar. He also announced that the centre is planning to allocate Rs 300 crore more funds to 50 more North East Council projects

### National Bamboo Mission

The mission was launched in April 2018. IT aims to increase area under bamboo cultivation and also adopting region based strategies to promote bamboo products.

In India Bamboo covers 13.96 million hectares. The mission has special cover the North Eastern States.

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They encourage Bamboo cultivation to make sure the grass is available in the manufacturing process of Bamboo handicrafts. Apart from North Eastern Regions, the mission is also spread across Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, Bihar, Uttarakhand, Karnataka, Odisha, Chattisgarh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh.

### Broad Gauge rail projects

In March 2019, the Railway Minister announced that the North Eastern Capitals would be connected by broad Gauge. The target for completion of the project is set as 2020.

### North East Council

The Council is the nodal agency for economic and social development of the North Eastern Region. It was established in 1971 under the North East Council Act 1971. According to the act, the council coordinated development facilitating cooperation with the states. The act was amended in 2002 to function as a regional planning body. In June 2018, the Union Cabinet approved the nomination of Union Home Minister as the ex – offico Chairman of the North Eastern Council. The Governors and the Chief Ministers of all the 8 states are members of the council.

## October 6, 2019

## Researchers see individual virus formation for the first time

The researchers of USA captured images of formation of viruses from particles. The research provided a detailed view of mechanism with which the particles self – assembled to form a parasite. The study was performed on single stranded RNA virus. The researchers believe that this new advancement will help to find new treatment approaches for viral diseases.

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### About Research

The research proved that virus can derive from any kind of particles. As the proteins from the particles arranged themselves around the nucleic acid, the scientists introduced RNA substrate. The arrangement around the nucleic acid then began to create spots. The spots when grew turned out to be viruses. The arrangement was not growing till the nucleic acid was introduced.

Hence, the study shows that viruses can derive themselves from any particle. However, they require specific strata like that nucleic acid.

### Key findings of the research

- The viruses when formed were of 30 nanometers in diameter and had about 180 identical proteins
- The proteins arranged themselves around the RNA (Ribo – Nucleic Acid) to form hexagons and pentagons during the virus formation. This formation is called capsid
- The technique called Inferometric Scattering Microscopy was used to capture the formation process. The technique does not show virus structure, however, reveals its size and how it changes with time
- The researchers are still puzzled about the nucleus assembly.

## Indian Army begins its first mountain combat exercise 'Him Vijay' in Arunachal Pradesh

The Indian army will begin its first ever mountain combat on October 7. The exercise is to test the mobility, coordination and communication of the troops in difficult terrain. The exercise is to be conducted in two phases.

### Highlights of the exercise

- The first phase will be held between October 7 and October 10, 2019. The second phase will be held between October 20 and October 24, 2019.
- The exercise will include threes battle groups, each comprising of 4,000 soldiers. This is the largest military exercise in the history of Indian defense. The exercise includes mountain assault and air assault as well.
- The exercise is done more than 100 km in the Indian Territory from the Line of Actual Control
- The army helicopters and air force are to transfer the troops and equipment at the terrain up to 15,000 feet.

### Significance of the exercise

The exercise is important for the validation of the Integrated Battle Group (IBG) that was newly raised with new operational concepts. The IBG was established to meet the modern warfare considering the military progress of the enemy threats.

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## IBG – Integrated Battle Group

IBG was created in 2018. It was created for quicker and formidable launch of attack on enemy. There are about 5 to 6 IBG units. The configuration of the unit depends on the aim the forces require to achieve at that point of time and also depends on the operational terrain.

The Combat arms of the IBG namely armored, Infantry, Artillery, mechanized infantry will be trained together at one place. Based on the terrain desert, mountain or plains the intelligence team of engineers, signal support, communication support, supply will be integrated.

### Concerns

The exercise is to be conducted almost on the same timeline of Chinese President Xi Kingping arrival to India between October 11 and 13. He is to attend a second informal meeting with the Indian PM Modi at Mamallpuram, Tamil Nadu.

India and China share boundary of 3,488 km. Of which, 1126 km lies between Tibet and Arunachal Pradesh. The exercise is to be conducted at a distance of 100 km from the Line of Actual Control in the Indian Territory.

Each troop holds more than 4,000 soldiers. The protocol requires that if either sideline of Actual Control, it shall not be targeted against the other side.

## India calls for increased cooperation between FATF and UN

To deal with the nexus of terrorist groups India called for increased cooperation between the United Nations (UN) and the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). Speaking at the General Assembly the first Secretary to India's Permanent Mission said that the activities of terror groups Boko Haram, ISIL, Al Shabab has increased in recent days. In these situations, UN should cooperate with other bodies like FATF to prevent terrorism.

### FATF

The Paris based FATF – Financial Action Task Force is an international organization developed to combat terrorism and money laundering. The objectives of the FATF are to set standards, regulate and combat money laundering. It is basically a policy making body. It works to bring about national legislation and regulatory reforms.

It meets thrice in year. It was formed in 1989 at the G – 7 Summit, Paris. Initially it was formed to combat money laundering. Later in 2001, it expanded towards terrorism

## Wildlife Week India, 2019

The Wildlife Week is celebrated all over the country every year between 2nd October and 8th October. The aim is to preserve animal life in India. Through out the week events and campaigns are organized to teach people about animal life and encourage them save large number of animals by not killing them for food and other purposes.

**Theme: Life Below Water: For people and planet**

### Significance

It is because of animal population in forest and other areas the environmental balance is preserved in nature. There is lack of awareness about this fact.

According to The Science Magazine, around 5,500 species of birds, amphibians and reptiles are being sold in world markets. It is a multi – dollar business and is considered as the most severe threats of biodiversity

During the week, many experts conduct seminars to introduce challenging aspects of wildlife conservation.

### Background

The week was first celebrated in 1972. The event is organized by National Board of Wildlife since its establishment in 1972.

### Highlights

- The forest departments organize bird watching at wetlands. Bengaluru – Jakkkur lake bird watch was organized in Bangalore.
- Symposiums, Conferences, workshops, lectures and education trainings are also conducted in schools, colleges and universities.
- The Government of India has already declared Eco – sensitive zones like Sanctuaries, Biosphere

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reserves and Nationals parks to prohibit human activities.

## PMJAY – First Year with 90,000 Cancer claims; Tamil Nadu tops the list

The Union Health Ministry released its data on PMJAY – Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana. The scheme aimed at helping economically vulnerable persons. It aimed to cover more than 10 crore families.

### Key Findings

- According to the report, every year there are 11.57 lakh new cancer patients in India and 7.84 lakh cancer deaths.
- In the first year, PLJAY has funded 90,000 cancer patients
- There are around 22.5 lakh Indians living with cancer at a given point of time. Tamil Nadu tops the list with 40,056 cases followed by Kerala (22,000), Madhya Pradesh (19,455), Chattisgarh (15,997) and Gujarat (14,380)
- The report says that there is a steep rise in cancer care for patients and treatment facilities.
- On the whole, the National Health Authority, the nodal agency for implementation of PMJAY has sanctioned Rs 321 crores so far for cancer care.

### Steps under the PMJAY

- Under PMJAY, HWC (Health and Wellness Centers) were started for 3 types of cancer namely oral, breast and cervical.
- The scheme was launched in September 2018 with cancer care as its top priority.
- The National Cancer Grid and National Health Authority collaborated to battle cancer under the scheme. The main objective of the collaboration included developing uniform standards of patient care of prevention, diagnosis and treatment.

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# October 7, 2019

## Modi – Xi informal summit town Mamallapuram – Traded with China 2000 years ago

While the Pallavas sea port Mamallapuram is getting a historic fillip for India – China meet next week, archaeological evidences show that trade links between them existed since ancient times. The Land of Dragon (China) traded silk, pots with the ancient sea port Mamallapuram 2000 years ago.

### Evidences

- The Celadon ware (pottery) that were recovered from the eastern coast of Tamil Nadu belonged to first and second centuries. They give clues to Chinese maritime activities.
- Along with Mamallapuram, the Kancheepuram district in Tamil Nadu also had links with China. Chinese coins dating to the same period were found here
- The ancient poems "Pattinapalai" that was written in Sangam period (1$^{st}$ to 6th century BC) cites anchorage of Chinese ships in the east coast of Tamil Nadu.
- The Chinese text Han Annals written in the same period as that of Sangam period has reference with the Tamil country.
- Emperor Wei (185 – 149 BC) has sent gifts to the rulers of Tamil Nadu.

## IMD: Monsoon to withdraw from October 10

The Indian Meteorological Department said that the retreat of monsoon that was delayed by more than a month is to happen by October 10, 2019. The monsoon this year was 110% of Long Period Average (LPA) with above average precipitation. The LPA between 1961 and 2010 was 88 centimeters.

The retreat of monsoon is set to be the most delayed in 60 years. The delay ravaged Bihar raising death toll to 100. UP and Bihar were the worst affected states due to the delay. Hospitals, schools and health care facilities were hampered in the states due to heavy rains. Failure of desilting of lakes, ponds and rivers in the states were the main reason behind floods.

### The unusual events that caused the shift

Monsoon usually starts retreating from west Rajasthan from September 1. However, this time the retrieval began on September 16. The reasons behind the late retrieval include

- Easterly winds – This year they were still blowing in upper latitudes.

The Easterly winds originate from sub tropical high-pressure belt of northern hemisphere. They blow towards south Equatorial Low 0 Pressure area. They shift to lower latitudes causing the retreat of monsoon.

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By the end of September, the low-pressure trough of Ganga plains moves southwards in response to the southward march of the sun. (The sun in the months of August – September shifts from Summer Solstice to Autumnal Equinox). This causes the shift of easterly winds.

- Monsoon Trough remained south of its usual position because of successive low pressure in the Bay of Bengal. The number of such low pressure were more than usual this year.

The axis of monsoon trough during the retreating period usually extends between Punjab in the west and West Bengal in the East. However, this year the axis shifted over northern plains causing rains in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. Monsoon trough is the confluence of winds.

- The break in period of the monsoon began late during August. It usually breaks in July.

During the break in period the monsoon trough shifts towards north bringing rainfall to the north eastern states and Himalayan states. During this period the rest of the country remains dry. This failed to happen this year.

The above factors led to the unusual and untimely rainfall in central India and in southern states.

## India to set up coastal surveillance system in Bangladesh

On 5th October PM Modi and his Bangladesh counterpart signed several MoUs that included connectivity, trade, transport and defense. The agreements include

- A Coastal Surveillance system
- Standard Operating Procedure on the use of Chattogram and Mongola ports
- Withdrawal of 1.82 cusec of water from Feni river for drinking water scheme for Sabroom town, Tripura.
- Implementation of Line of Credit committed committed by India to Bangladesh
- Renewal of Cultural Exchange program – Cooperation in Youth Affairs.
- MoU between University of Dhaka and University of Hyderabad.

The leaders also inaugurated three bilateral development projects

- Import of LPG from Bangladesh
- Inauguration of BIPSDI – Bangladesh – India Professional Skill Development Institute
- Inauguration of Vivekananda Bhaban, students hostel at Ramakrishna mission in Dhaka.

**Highlights of the meet**

- Under India's Act East Policy, Bangladesh is provided opportunities to expand connectivity corridors. Both India and Bangladesh are set to increase air, water and rail connectivity to enhance trade between Bangladesh and North Eastern India. As part of this decision, the countries decided to operationalize
  - Dhulian – Gadagari – Rajshahi – Daulatida – Aricha route
  - Daukandi – Sonamura route
- The BBIN Vehicles motor agreement was agreed to operate early. This will encourage other partner countries of BBIN to join the agreement
- The leaders jointly agreed that the Indo – Bangla coastal Shipping Agreement should be taken as template for BIMSTEC. This will enhance the security of the Indo – Pacific region.

## 39th World Congress of Poets organized in Bhubaneswar

The 39th World Congress of Poets was inaugurated at the Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology.

**Theme: Compassion through Poetry.**

The theme aims to promote peace and brotherhood through poetry.

The event was inaugurated by the Odisha Chief Minister. Vice President Venkaiah Naidu attended the event.

### Significance of WCP

The congress is essential to achieve SDG 4 – Quality Education.

### About World Congress of Poetry (WCP)

The WCP was founded in 1969. It was held at Manila, Philippines the first time. It is being organized by WAAC – World Academy of Arts and Culture. The WAAC conducts poetry workshops, art exhibits, dance, music, cultural exchange programs. The organization maintains a library at Taipei, Taiwan. WAAC serves

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UIA – Union of International Associations. UIA is a research institute and documentation center headquartered at Brussels. It was founded in 1907. It monitors international organizations, association and their challenges.

## Pakistan PM on a three-day visit to China – To take up J&K issue; To engage in high level talks – oil, hydropower, steel

PM Imran Khan will arrive in Beijing on 8th October, 2019. He will engage China at the highest level of talks. It includes projects in hydro power, steel mills and oil refinery that are part of the 60 billion USD CPEC – China – Pakistan Economic Corridor. He will also hold talks with Chinese top leaders and discuss about the stalled CPEC projects.

PM is visiting the country for the third time since he took over in August 2018. The visit acquires significance as it comes days ahead of India – China informal summit.

CPEC that passes through Pakistan occupied Kashmir connecting China's Xinjiang province with the strategic Gwadar port of Balochistan is the flagship project of BRI – Belt Road Initiative. India gained strong opposition from Pakistan and China on diluting Article 370. It is expected that the Pakistani leader will take up the Kashmir issue during his visit.

## FATF report on money laundering: slams Pakistan for terror funding

The Asia – Pacific Group of FATF (Financial Action Task Force) slammed Pakistan as the later failed to take actions against terror groups. On 5th October, 2019, the group published report on Money Laundering and terror financing in Pakistan.

### Key statements of the report

- The watchdog reported that Pakistan failed to implement the UNSC (United Nations Security Council) resolution against Hafiz Saeed, JeM – Jaish – e – Mohammed, LeT – Lashkar – e – Taiba.
- The report disagreed Pakistan's self – assessment that it only faces 'medium' category risks.
- It also said that the key banking institutions in the country like the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan and State Bank of Pakistan had very limited or no understanding of the terror financing regimes of the country.
- The report alerted Pakistan that it could be black listed alongside North Korea and Iran unless it takes actions against the UN – designated terrorists in its soil

### FATF

FATF is the Finacial Action Task Force. It is an inter – governmental body that was established in 1989. The main objective of the organization is to set standard and promote implementation of legal regulatory measures for money laundering and terror financing. It issued a series of recommendations as international standard to combat money laundering. It now forms the base for coordinated response to threats faced by financial systems

## Defence Minister on a 2-day visit to France; To receive 36 Rafale fighter jets

Defense Minister Raj Nath Singh to visit France on 7th October, 2019. He will receive the Rafale Fighter Jets manufactured for India. He will meet French President Macron the next day. He will also hold annual defence dialogue with his French counterpart.

### The Rafale Issue

The IAF – Indian Air Force announced Rafale fighter jets as preferred bidder in 2012. The proposal was that 18 Rafales would be supplied in fly away condition while remaining 108 would be manufactured by HAL – Hindustan Aeronautics Limited under transfer of technology agreements. The contract negotiations begun but were stalled due to lack of agreement terms. Reasons of stalling were RFP compliance and cost – related issues.

In 2016, issue rose when the stalled deal was provided to a private party (Anil Ambani).

### Why was the deal important to India?

After Kargil war, IAF were of the opinion that the its ability to strike targets require radical improvement. Hence, the government stepped on to initiatives to increase its IAF fleet.

### About Rafale aircraft

They are produced by the French Air Force. The countries that are currently using aircraft include Egypt, Qatar, Libya, Mali, Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria.

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### Significance of Rafale

The aircraft has the capability to perform several actions in the same time. It includes firing air – to – air missiles at low altitude, air to ground missile launching. Both the actions can be intercepted at the same time.

## Ministry of S&T launches Eco friendly crackers developed by CSIR

On 6th October, 2019, Ministry of Science and Technology launched new set of crackers called Eco – friendly crackers. These crackers help to reduce particulate emissions by 30% by producing same level of light and sound.

The crackers were developed by CSIR – Council of Scientific and Industrial Research. They were developed in the wake of SC directions on use and restrictions of fireworks

### Implementation

The Ministry has signed contracts with around 230 firework manufacturers to use the formulations developed by CSIR. The crackers are expected to reach markets for this Diwali.

### Significance

The regular crackers release Barium Nitrate the main pollutant. It is now replaced with Potassium Nitrate. Also, crackers pollute the environment by leaving dangerous toxins, metal particles, smoke and harmful chemicals.

### SC on firecrackers

In 2018, SC directed the CPCB – Central Pollution Control Board to monitor the levels of metals in the atmosphere before and after Diwali. Also, the court restricted the time of bursting crackers between 8 pm and 10 pm.

SC also encouraged use of green crackers and improved crackers. Improved crackers are those which use ash as filler and reduces the particulate emission by 15 to 20%. It also uses charcoal within the limit prescribed by Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organization. Green Crackers are those that reduces emission of Nitrogen dioxide and sulfur dioxide and reduces the overall harmful particualte emissions by 30 to 35%.

## India gets first tranche of Swiss account details

Under the new Automatic Information Exchange pact, India received its first tranche of Swiss Bank Account details. India hence is legally one among 75 countries with which the Switzerland Federal Tax Administration (SFTA) has exchanged information. The next exchange of information will take place in September 2020. This is because according to international agreement, the information exchange has to happen within nine months after the end of the calendar year. By which the next information exchange will take place by September 2020.

The SFTA said that it collected information from around 7,500 institutions. It has the largest exchange program with Germany of all other countries.

### Automatic Information Exchange Pact

The pact was a major milestone in Indian Government's fight against black money. The pact came into existence in 2017. The Swiss banks through the pact agreed to exchange information with countries abroad. The objective of the pact is to make tax evasion possible. The member countries OECD, G20 and other important financial centers were committed to implement the pact.

### Working

According to the pact, the Swiss bank shares the information of the accounts to the domestic tax officials. They then share the information to the pact's partner country.

### Significance of the pact

The data received will help India establishing strong prosecuting cases against those who have unaccounted wealth. There are minimum of 100 cases that were closed before 2018 for which Swiss will now share details with India.

### Concerns

It is believed that many Indians have closed their accounts after Swiss Government adopted the law due to international pressure. The details that are to be collected from Swiss Government includes mostly of business men who have now settled in South – East Asian, African, UK and other South American countries.

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## 2019 Nobel Prize: Medicine

Britain's Peter Ratcliffe and William Kaelin and Gregg Semenza of US shared the 2019 Nobel Medicine Prize for their work on how cells sense and adapt to oxygen availability. The team revealed the understanding of how oxygen levels affect cellular metabolism.

Kaelin works at Howard Hughes Medical Institute, US. Semenza is the director of Vascular Research program at Hopkins Institute of Cell Engineering. Ratcliffe is the director of Francis Crick Institute in London.

The trio will share prize money of 914,000 USD.

### About the research

- The team identified the molecular machinery that regulates the activity of genes to varying levels of oxygen.
- It has paved way to understand the strategies to fight cancer, anemia and other diseases.
- Based on their findings,many laboratories and pharmaceutical companies are now on the path of developing drugs that can interfere with disease states by activating or blocking the oxygen – level in the cells.

### What is the research about?

Oxygen levels vary in different parts of the body at different instances after a wound, while exercising or during a brisk walk. Based on the availability of oxygen, the metabolism of these cells differ. The cells produce new RBC or construct new blood vessels in a wound based on the oxygen levels. The trio found 'how to adapt to changes in oxygen levels'. The fundamental job of cells is to convert oxygen into food. The drawback is that these cells experience constant variations in availability of oxygen.

When the level of oxygen in the cells drops, HIF in the cells increases. HIF is Hypoxia – Inducible Factors and are protein complexes. this increases the activity of gene that are used in production of Erythropoietin Hormone. This increases the production of RBC. Hence, the research aids in treating anemia and cancer by controlling RBC growth.

## October 7: World Cotton Day; Textile Minister attends the program

The World Cotton Day (WCD) is being organized by the WTO in collaboration with UN, FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization), UNCTD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development), International Trade Center and International Cotton Advisory Committee.

The World Cotton Day is being observed for the first time. The resilience of farmers will be recognized and celebrated on the day.

### Objective

The Objective of World Cotton Day is

- to provide exposure to cotton and its stakeholders
- To seek new collaboration for developing countries with private sectors and investors
- To engage beneficiaries and strengthen development od assistance for cotton.

Global Celebration

The WCD will be celebrated in different countries with events that will provide exposure to farmers, researchers and business participants.

Several conferences, seminars and discussions will be conducted to mark the event.

### Significance

Cotton is produced in 75 countries. It accounts to 18 billion USD of annual trade. Around 26 million farmers are involved in cotton farming. China is the largest producer of cotton followed by India, USA, Brazil, Pakistan, Turkey.

#### Usage of water

Cotton is a draught resistant crop. The deep root system of cotton is ideal for arid climate.

#### Usage of land

Cotton occupies 2.1% of world's arable land and yet accounts to 27% of world textile needs.

### Cotton Technical Assistance Program

Between 2011 and 2018, India conducted CTAP in 7 African countries namely Benin, Faso, Burkina, Mali, Chad, Uganda and Malawi. It focusses on increasing the competitiveness of cotton and cotton-based

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industries. This was a huge success.

Textile Minister attended the WCD program in Geneva. She announced that India is set to launch second phase of CTAP for Africa. It will be introduced in 5 additional countries Mali, Togo, Ghana, Zambia and Tanzania. India already had the program implemented in 6 African countries Benin, Chad, Burkin Faso, Malawi, Nigeria.

## October 8, 2019

### Ganga Aamantran initiative launched by Jal Shakti Minister

Ganga Aamantran is an initiative to connect stakeholders of the Ganga river. It is the first effort of National Mission for Clean Ganga. It is an open – water rafting and kayaking expedition that is to be held on the Ganges between 10th October 2019 and 11th November 2019.

#### Highlights of the initiative

- The expedition starts at Devprayag and ends at Ganga Sagar covering 2,500 km in the Ganges
- This is the first and largest campaign in Indian history to create awareness about River Rejuvenation and Water Conservation on a large scale.
- Swimmers and rafters from all three services of Indian Armed forces will join as 9 member teams. The teams will also be joined by members from CSIR – IITR (Indian Institute of Toxicology Research) and NDRF. The team from CSIR – IITR will collect samples from different ranges of the river.
- The team will conduct public awareness campaigns in locations they stop. They will organize mass cleaning drives. The team will also interact with students of villages and cities alongside of the journey.
- The initiative is joined by the Wildlife Institute of India to conduct flora and fauna census of 2019.
- The initiative encompasses 5 Ganga basin states that include UP, Jharkhand, Bihar and West Bengal.
- The complete program is to be headed by Paramvir Singh from IAF (Indian Air Force). He is the only person who swum the entire length from Devprayag to Gangasagar.

#### Awareness exercises and programs

- Painting and slogan competitions on the theme "Water Conservation and Ganga Rejuvenation"
- Test water samples
- Educate students and youth on wetlands, bio diversity conservation
- Celebrate festivals
- Public outreach

The objective of the initiative is to draw attention of the citizens of the country towards ecological challenges faced by the river.

#### Significance of Devprayag and Alkananda

The Bhagirathi and Alakananda rivers merge to form river Ganga at Devprayag. Gangasagar is an island in the Ganges delta

### World Space Week: 4-10 October: Important Facts

World Space Week is the largest space event on the Earth. More than 80 countries are participating commemorating the week this year

**Theme: The Moon: Gateway to the stars**

The World Space Week was launched on October 4, 1957. The date was selected to mark the launch of first human – made earth satellite, Sputnik 1

#### Significance

The theme celebrates the 50th anniversary of human kind's first step on moon on 20 July, 1969. The theme sparks consideration of value of the Moon in human's future space endeavors.

The World Space Week is the largest space annual event. It inspires students and educates public about space activity. Also, it fosters international cooperation in space outreach and education. During the celebration of the event public are encouraged towards greater use of space for sustainable economic development.

#### History

The World Space Week Association began to coordinate World Space Week from 1980. In 1981, Space Week headquarters was formed in the US to organize national wide celebration in US.

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From 1999, the UN serves as the global coordinator of World Space Week.

### About Sputnik

Sputnik was the first human made satellite that was launched into the space in 1957. It was launched by Soviet Union. The satellite orbited elliptically in the lower orbits of the earth. The batteries died after three weeks and the satellite fell back into the atmosphere. This triggered the space race between USSR and USA that was a part of the cold war.

## RBI Consumer Confidence Survey, 2019

According to RBI Consumer Confidence Survey, the consumer confidence dipped to a six-year low. The federal bank says that this is mainly due to decline in employment, income and discretionary spending. The CSI – Current Situation Index fell to 89.4 whereas it was recorded as 95.7 in July. Previously the index hit its low in 2013, when it reached 88.

### Key findings of the survey

- Perception and Expectation of employment continued to decline. It was -24.5 in September. The was -13.1 in July.
- The sentiment around income turned negative for the first time.
- Around 47.9% of participants opined that the economic situation of the country has worsened.
- 5% said that the employment market has worsened
- 4% believe the situation will get worsen next year.
- Majority of them believe the prices of essential commodities to increase further.

Around 5,192 households from 13 major cities were involved in the survey. The members were asked general questions about their expectation and perceptions on current economic situation, price situation, employment scenario, personal income and spending.

## Government launches eDant Seva

On October 7, 2019, the eDant Seva was launched by the Ministry of Health and Family welfare. It is an initiative under the National Oral Health Program. The initiative aims to sensitize the importance of maintaining oral health. It provides information about nearest oral health service facility. It also provides oral health information collected from authentic scientific sources.

### Objectives of e-Dant Seva

- To improve determinants of oral health. It includes oral hygiene improvement, healthy diet and also to reduce disparity in oral health accessibility.
- It intends to integrate oral health promotion and preventive services of the general health care systems.
- It aims to promote PPP – Public Private Partnership to achieve public health goods.

### History

- The first National Oral Health Policy was launched in 1986. It was drafted by the Indian Dental Association.
- In 1999, the first National Oral Health Care Program was launched.
- In the 11$^{th}$ five-year plan, between 2007 and 2012, under National Rural Health Mission a token amount was allocated for research in oral health.
- In 12$^{th}$ five-year plan, National Oral Health Cell was set up under Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

### National Oral Health Program

In 2014, the National Oral Health Program was launched. It operated under two components namely

- National Health Mission – Under the mission, the states and UTs can seek permission to set up Dental care units in district level hospitals.
- Tertiary components – It included activities carried out in central level.

## SEBI new rule to impact foreign funds

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) notified that only FPIs – Foreign Portfolio Investors located in FATF countries or managed by an enterprise based under FATF jurisdiction can deal in Participatory Notes.

Participatory Notes are financial instruments required by investors to invest in Indian stock markets

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without being registered with SEBI.

### Effects of notification

The step will majorly affect funds from Mauritius and Cayman Islands. They are not FATF members and a major portion, 15 to 20% of FPI comes from these countries. Now these entities can neither issue nor subscribe to Participatory Notes.

In simple terms, SEBI says that to be registered under category – I FPI, the entity should be from a FATF member country. The category – II FPIs are not barred from accessing PNs. The category I funds include pension, sovereign wealth funds, endowment funds and funds from FATF member countries. Funds from non – FATF countries come under category II.

### HR Khan Committee

The new rule is based on the HR Khan Committee's recommendation. HR Khan Committee was formed by SEBI under chairmanship of former deputy governor of RBI to streamline FPI. The reforms initiated by SEBI based on the committee's recommendation

- It eased eligibility terms of FPIs and KYC norms.
- NRIs, resident Indians are now allowed to be constituents of FPI if they own a share less than 25% of holding

### Necessity of the step

The global economic scenario happening in different parts had great effect over Indian economy. It included

- Since 2016, rupee value has depreciated over 16%. This implies that there is a risk of increased inflation
- The small and mid – caps were tumbling. In October 2018, the small – cap index fell to 13,800 which was a 31% decrease. The mid cap index fell by 23%.
- Fear of US sanctions over India importing oil from Iran.
- Trade war between US and China
- Rising crude oil prices

### About FATF

FATF is Financial Action Task Force that monitors money laundering and terrorism funding all over the world. It also develops policies to curb money laundering and terror financing. It was established in 1989 G7 summit that was held in Paris.

## Government launches National E-Assessment Scheme

The National E – assessment scheme was launched to make income tax assessment faster, smoother and hassle – free. The system focuses on eliminating the middle men between the tax payer and the officer. It aims at communicating directly to the tax payer when an issue arises in the process of tax assessment.

### Highlights of the scheme

- The system generated uses digital technology for risk management. Artificial Intelligence, Automated examination tools and machine learning are predominantly used in framing the system
- The scheme aims at removing physical interface between assessing officer and tax payer
- The chief commissioner of the Income Tax department will head the Center in New Delhi
- The regional E – Assessment Centers are to be established in Chennai, Mumbai, Kolkata, Pune, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad and Pune.

### Working of the scheme

The tax payer receives notice under section 143(2) if he under reported his income or stated losses. The notices will be sent electronically through his registered e – mail. He is provided with a duration of 15 days to reply to the notice

The tax payer is not required to appear physically. He is to reply through his registered account for which he receives an acknowledgement from the NeAC (National e – Assessment Center)

### Section 143(2) of Income Tax act of India

The section allows the Income Tax Department to send 3 types of notices to the tax payers. They include

- Limited Scrutiny – These notices are sent when there is a mismatch in reporting. Here the scrutiny is restricted to a particular area of the tax payer's return
- Complete Scrutiny – In these notices the tax payers return are subjected to complete scrutiny.

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- Manual Scrutiny – These are notices that are issued based on predefined criteria. These criteria are listed by the Central Board of Direct Taxes.

## 2019 Nobel Prize – Physics

The 2019 Nobel prize for Physics was awarded to Swiss Scientists Michel Mayor and Didier Queloz and Canadian – American physicist James Peebles. One half of the prize was won by the American for his contribution towards "Theoretical discoveries in physical cosmology". The other half was shared between the Swiss scientists for their work on "Discovery of an exoplanet orbiting a star similar to sun".

The prize consists of 914,000 USD that will be split with one half to the American scientist and the other half to be shared between the Swiss scientists.

### Discovery of exoplanet

In 1955, the Swiss astronomers discovered an exoplanet at an observatory in France. It was named orbiting a sun like star called 51 Pegasi b (or 51 Peg b). It orbits very close to the sun. The mass of the exoplanet is half of Jupiter and its temperature are around 1200 degree Celsius.

At the time of its discovery by the astronomers this close distance for a planet to its start was not compatible with the theories of planet formation. Hence it led to discussions of planetary migration.

However, their discovery was proved right and it created revolution in astronomy. Since then 4,000 exoplanets have been found in Milky way.

### James Peebles discoveries

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The Canadian – American physicist James Peebles had contributed several discoveries in the field of physical cosmology for which he is awarded with the prize. His discoveries are as follows

- In 1987, Peebles proposed Primordial Isocurvature Baryon Model which explains the development of early Universe
- He is also known for the Ostriker – Peebles criterion that related to the stability of galactic formation
- He has made significant contributions towards cosmic microwave background radiation, Big Bang nucleosynthesis, dark energy and dark matter.
- He was the pioneer in the theory of Cosmic structure formation.

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## October 7: World Habitat Day

The World Habitat Day is organized by the United Nations. The organization has designated the first Monday of every October to commemorate the day.

**Theme: Frontier Technologies as an innovative tool to transform waste to wealth.**

The theme is built based on last year's theme "Municipal Solid Waste Management".

The focus of this year World Habitat Day (WHD) is to promote contribution of FRONTIER TECHNOLOGIES towards sustainable waste management that helps to achieve SDG 11.

The SDGS 11 is about building inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities.

### Highlights

- The 2019 WHD is to be observed in Mexico

### Significance of Frontier Technologies

- The Frontier technologies include robotics, automation, renewable energy technologies, Artificial Intelligence and bio technologies. Some of the top frontier technologies are Big Data Analysis, Sustainable polymers, Internet of Things, Artificial Intelligence, 3D printing, Nanotechnology, renewable energy technologies, drones and customized satellites.
- They are technologies that offer potential for cheaper, faster, scalable and easy to use solutions for every day problems. It includes waste management as well.

### Significance of the WHD

- The world's cities produce 7 to 10 billion tons of waster per year.
- Low income countries spend around 20% of their budget on waste management. In most of the countries this allocated budget is not sufficient to finance waste and sanitation management systems.
- In most of the urban areas of developing countries, around 16% of urban dwellers lack access to basic sanitation services.

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The lack of waste management has led to air, soil and water pollution that in turn threaten public health. Another biggest challenge is dumping of waste in the oceans. The plastics from these wastes are killing around 100,000 marine animals annually.

The SDG goals 6, 11, 12 and 14 and the Paris Agreement all focus on waste management and considers it as an urgent and issue to be addressed.

### How can Frontier technologies help?

- The use of sustainable polymers reduces waste generation and also reduces the need of recyclable wastes
- The technology of 3D printing has the potential of creating less waste during production.
- Smart bins using AI can help in garbage sorting.

### UN Habitat Strategic Plan 2020 – 2023

The plan reinforces all the global agendas on waste management. Under the plan the UN is to focus on Frontier Technologies that help in safe, resilient, sustainable and smart cities.

## C40 cities climate summit

The C40 Summit is to take place in Copenhagen between 9th October and 12th October, 2019. The aim of the summit is to show how cities are delivering their strong commitments for healthier, sustainable, resilient and inclusive future.

The 2019 summit in specific aims to build global coalition of cities, citizens and businesses that rallies around ambitious climate action that the earth needs right now.

### About C40

The summit connects more than 94 of the world's greatest cities. The cities constitute to more than 700 million population which is one – fourth of the global economy. The mayors of these cities are dedicated in delivering the goals of Paris Agreement.

The 2019 marks 14 – year establishment of C40 Leadership group. The organization takes its climate actions through city – to – city collaboration.

The summit intends to Paris agreement of climate change as well.

The summit was launched in London in 2005 when the then London Mayor convened representatives from 18 megacities.

# October 9, 2019

## India starts sharing maritime data

At the Goa Maritime Conclave, 2019, the National Security Advisor offered countries in the IOR use of facility to track the movement of vessels on high seas. India has a specialized center operating for the purpose called the IFC – IOR (Information Fusion Center – Indian Ocean Region). The center acts as an information sharing hub.

### About IFC – IOR

The center was inaugurated in 2018. It links all the coastal radars to create a seamless real – time picture to cover the entire stretch of 7,500 km. It was established at the Navy IMAC, Gurgram. IMAC is Information Management and Analysis Center.

The center exchanges data about white shipping or commercial shipping with countries in the IOR. Currently, the center has linkages with more than 18 countries. The centers that exchange maritime security information includes Maritime Security center – Horn of Africa, Virtual Regional Maritime Traffic Center, Regional Cooperation Agreement on combating piracy and armed robbery, Information fusion center – Singapore, International Maritime Bureau – Piracy reporting center.

## MOSAIC Expedition in Arctic

Among 300 scientists from the world, a 32 – year polar researcher from Kerala will be the only person to join MOSAIC expedition

### MOSAIC expedition

MOSAIC is Multidisciplinary drifting Observatory for the Study of Arctic Climate. It is the largest Arctic expedition in the history. It is being conducted Alfred Wegner Institute of Germany. It helps researchers understand the impact of climate change. The expedition intends to parameterize geophysical, atmospheric and oceanographic variables of Arctic.

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### What is special about the expedition?

Previous studies were for shorter duration as the thick ice sheets in the Arctic prevent access in winter. This research vessel will lock itself into a large ice sheet and will drift along with it.

125 years ago, a Norwegian explorer managed to seal his wooden ship into the ice during his 3 -year expedition in the North Pole.

### Significance

- The researcher will study about climate change in Arctic. The shift in polar vortices that shifted south and blasted cold air in Florida and heat wave in Europe are some of the impacts that prove climate change in Arctic has global influence.
- The mission is important to understand the processes in far north for the world leaders to make right decisions.

## Global Competitiveness Index, 2019

India ranked 68th in the annual Global Competitiveness Index. It is the worst performing among the BRICS nations along with Brazil that is ranked at 71. The Global Competitive Index is compiled by World Economic Forum. The Forum has mapped 141 countries using 103 indicators.

India had dropped 10 places. A number of similar economies like South Africa, Turkey and Colombia have improved over the past year and have overtaken India.

This year Singapore has replaced US as the world's most competitive country. The US was positioned at 2nd place and was followed by Hong Kong at third place and Netherlands and Switzerland at 4th and 5th places respectively. China was ranked at 28th position and was the highest ranked among BRICS nations. Vietnam showed higher improvements in the region and was ranked at 67

The report also said that Asia Pacific was the most competitive region globally. It was followed by Europe and North America.

### Key findings of the report on India

- India ranked high in terms of macroeconomic stability and market size.
- India also ranked high in terms of corporate Governance. India was at 15th place in the category.
- In terms of market India ranked third.
- India had positive remarks in terms of renewable regulation.
- In terms of innovation, India has punched above its development status. It was well ahead of most of the emerging economies that are on par with the advanced economies.
- Poor health conditions and low Life Expectancy were the shortcomings in the country according to the report. In terms of life expectancy India ranked 109 out of 141 countries. This is one of the shortest as compared to South Asian average.
- According to the report, India also needs to grow its skill base, market efficiency. Trade openness and worker protection rights according to the report are insufficiently developed.
- The ratio of female workers to male workers in India was 0.26. It ranked 128th place and was very low as compared certain other developing countries.
- India ranked 118 in incentivization and 107th place for skills

The US Economy

- Though US performance as compared to 2018 slowed own, it scored in sub categories like employee skills, venture capital availability and business dynamism pillar
- The decline of life expectancy in the US was huge. It was lower than China. Singapore ranked first in terms of life expectancy.

Concerns

- The education system of the world's largest and most innovative economies failed to keep up the pace of innovation. IT included India, China, Brazil, France and South Korea.
- Economic stagnation was widespread. This has happened in spite of the central banks injecting more than 10 trillion dollars last year
- Many of governments and central banks failed to use correct monetary policies to stimulate economic growth

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## 20 new moons of Saturn discovered

On 8th October 2019, 20 new moons of Saturn were discovered. With this Saturn has a total of 82 moons today. It is the highest of any planet in solar system. Till date Jupiter had the highest number of moons. It has 79 moons.

The moons of Saturn discovered are relatively smaller moons. The discovery was made at the Subaru telescope set up atop Hawaii's Mauna Kea volcano.

Of 82 moons, 17 of them orbit in opposite direction. These moons take more than three years to complete their orbit. The moons were discovered by a team of astronomers led by Sheppard.

The newly discovered moons belong to Norse group. The Saturn's Norse group of moons are retrograde irregular satellites. There are unique and different from other moons of the solar system. Their inclinations are between 136 degrees and 175 degrees. These moons are clusters formed from different parent body that Saturn captured. This might have happened during the early days of Solar System according to the astronomers who discovered the moons. The other moons belong to Gallic group. They are prograde moons that take less than 2 years to complete their orbit. Also they orbit in the same direction as that of Saturn.

## Nobel Prize 2019: Chemistry

The 2019 Nobel Prize in Chemistry has been awarded to **John B Goodenough**, **M Stanley Whittingham** and **Akira Yoshino** for the **development of lithium-ion batteries**. These three scientists created the right conditions **for a wireless and fossil fuel-free society**.

**Lithium ion batteries:**

- The foundation of the lithium-ion batteries were laid by **Stanley Whittingham** in the 1970s, during the oil crisis.
- **Stanley Whittingham** started developing methods that could lead to fossil fuel-free energy technologies. The battery's anode — the point where current flows in from outside — were made of metallic lithium, which is reactive. The batteries, therefore, were too explosive to be viable.
- **John B Goodenough** worked on this and demonstrated that cobalt oxide with intercalated lithium ions can produce as much as four volts.
- **Japanese Chemist Akira Yoshino** later created the first commercially viable batteries in 1985. He replaced pure lithium with lithium ions, which are safer and made the batter workable.

The Nobel Prize in Chemistry is awarded annually by the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences to scientists in the various fields of chemistry. It was first awarded in 1901.

## October 9: World Post Day

The World Post Day was declared by the UPU (Universal Postal Union) Congress in Tokyo, Japan. The proposal for the commemoration of the day was submitted by a member of Indian Delegation Mohan Narula.

It was started in Switzerland in 1874. The Union laid the first stone of global communication revolution. It introduced the system of writing to others all over the world.

### UN

Today the day is supported by the United Nations as well. It believes that the day supports to raise awareness of postal sector in today's life. Every year more than 150 countries celebrate the day. Communication among the world citizens is necessary to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Hence, the World Postal Day has its role of spreading information and creating awareness

## New Antibiotic discovered in Mexican forests

The properties of newly discovered antibiotic have specific application in agriculture greatly. It is a soil bacterium and is known as "phazolicin". This compound was unknown previously and was recently isolated in the tropical rain forests of Mexico.

The antibiotic is found in the root nodules of wild beans. They have their application both in medicine and agriculture. This antibiotic is fixed in the nodules by the symbiotic soil bacterium.

The antibiotic is a peptide. These peptides can bind to the ribosomes of the bacteria and are capable of messing with the protein synthesis.

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### Symbiotic Soil Bacterium

Nitrogen is the most commonly deficient nutrient in the soil. The plants cannot consume nitrogen directly from the atmosphere. However, it is highly essential nutrient for their growth. Plants absorb nitrates from the soil.

The Symbiotic Soil Bacterium infects the roots of leguminous plants and produce nodules. At these nodules, they fix nitrogen from the atmosphere in the form of nitrates and nitrites. Nitrates and nitrites are the absorb-able form of nitrogen for plants. The bacteria in turn receives food and shelter from the plant.

## Meghalaya tribes: Stop Excluding us from Schedule VI

The minor tribes of Meghalaya Hajong, Bodo – Kachari, Mann, Rabha are together put under the category of "unrepresented tribes" for nominations in the state's autonomous councils. They are in the name of Garo, Khasi and Jaintia. These tribal groups have now asked the CM to exclude them from their provisions of VI schedule of the Constitution.

On September 26, the state Government deciding to recommend to the Standing Committee of the Parliament to remove the word "unrepresented tribes" from the amended special provision. This will deprive certain democratic rights of the communities in the district councils according to MHWA – Meghalaya Hajong Welfare Association.

### Sixth Schedule of Constitution

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The Schedule – VI in the constitution makes provisions for the administration of tribal areas in 4 states namely Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram. It is different from Schedule V that discusses administration of Scheduled areas and Scheduled tribes of other parts of the country.

These areas do no come under regular administration. They have alternate or special governance mechanisms to protect the rights of these people. It is exclusively for welfare and advancement of the ST.

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## World Athletics Championship, 2019

The World Athletics Championship is organized by IAAF – International Association of Athletics Federations. This year it was held between September 27 and October 6, 2019 in Doha, Qatar. Athletes from 209 countries from all over the world participated in more than 49 athletic events.

The competition was previously known as World Championship in Athletics. It is the first time it is being conducted in its new name.

The competition had several record breakers this year. The 200m winner Noah Lyles and Niklas Kaul of Germany in Decthlon victor were the youngest gold medalists in their respective events. Ukraine athlete Yaroslava Mahuchikh broke her own record twice winning silver medal. She is one of the athletes born after 200 to hold the record.

USA bagged maximum gold in the event. India ranked 7$^{th}$ in 100 metres, 6$^{th}$ in 400 meters, 8$^{th}$ in 200 meters and 1500 meters respectively.

# October 10, 2019

## October 10: World Mental Health Day

The World Mental Health Day (WHD) is organized by World Federation for Mental Health and is supported by WHO – World Health Organization all over the world. The main objective of WHD is to raise awareness about mental health issues all over the world. It provides an opportunity to the stakeholders to talk about their work and inspire others.

This year WHO is joined by International Association for Suicide Prevention and United for Global Mental Health to support the event.

**Theme: Suicide Prevention**

This year, the focus of WHD is on suicide prevention. According to WHO, every 40 seconds, a person loses their life to suicide.

### Significance

According to WHO, every year around 800,000 people die of suicide all over the world. 79%of the suicides happen in middle – income counties. The people dying of suicides belong to the age of 15 to 29 years. It is the second leading cause of death in the category of age.

The day plays an important role in achieving SDG 3: To ensure healthy lives and promote well – being for

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all ages. The target is to reduce one third premature deaths from non – communicable disease that includes suicides as well.

### India and suicides

According Lancet Public Health journal, in 2018 there were around 2.3 lakh deaths due to suicide. There is no other medical related condition that causes such huge number of deaths.

India is yet to frame policies towards suicides. In 1990, China had the highest rate of suicides in the world. The suicide rates reduced greatly after China reduced the access to pesticides! The other countries who have successful policies on suicide include Finland, Sri Lanka and Scotland.

## DHRUV – Pradhan Mantri Innovative Learning Programme launched

Pradhan Mantri Innovative Learning Programme – DHRUV is a 14 day learning programme launched on October 10, 2019 from Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) headquarters in Bengaluru. The programme was launched by Human Resource Development Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' in presence of Dr K Sivan, Chairman, ISRO, Wing Cdr. Rakesh Sharma, AC (Retd.) and others.

### Salient Features of DHRUV

The programme is named after a pole star called DHRUV TARA. The main objective of the program is to allow students realize their complete potential and contribute to the society.

- The program is to cover two areas namely Science and Arts.
- The program is to be launched from ISRO.
- Around 60 students are selected broadly from Class 9 to Class 12 all over the country.

The target of the program is to help the nation achieve the target of 5 trillion Dollar economy.

## 14 states penalized under NHM

Under National Health Mission (NHM) at least 14 states were penalized for not performing in various health parameters. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare runs the scheme in terms of "result based funding". The penalized states will lose funds from Central Government.

### Best and Worst Performers

According to the Health system Strengthening Conditionality Report of states 2018 – 19 report, Uttarkhand, Bihar, West Bengal, Nagar Haveli, Mizoram, J&K, Himachal Pradesh remained worst performers of the scheme. These worst performers will be cut 20% of their funds. The top performing states under the scheme were Punjab, Haryana, Kerala, Assam.

The states Meghalaya, Nagaland, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh could not meet the minimum criteria of full immunization of 75% and hence were not considered for assessment.

Under NHM, the funds were to be shared between the center and state governments. 80% of the funds to be contributed by the central government and 20% by the state governments.

### Assessing Parameters

The States were assessed based on the following parameters

- Immunization status
- Health and Wellness Centers (HWC)
- Screening of 30 people around the HWC for non – communicable diseases
- Provisioning of mental health services at the district headquarters
- Performance of district hospitals
- Rating PHC – Primary Health Center.

The report was released by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

## Key Cabinet decisions on NHM

On October 9, 2019, the cabinet appraised decisions under Empowered Program Committee (EPC), Mission Steering Group (MSG) and National Health Mission. The press release statements of the cabinet are as follows

### Key achievements

- MMR (Maternal Mortality Rate), U5MR (Under 5 Mortality Rate) and IMR (Infant Mortality Rate) has declined since the launch of NHM. India will reach its SDG goal of MMR – 70 and U5MR – 25 by 2030 at this rate. The rate of MMR decline is 8% (2013 – 2016).
- India achieved the biggest success in bringing down Malaria cases and deaths by 49.09%. It is now leading with its initiatives against malaria among the other Malaria endemic countries

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## New decisions and schemes

- Similar to Clean India Mission where districts and states were declared ODF – Open Defecation Free, the districts and states will be declared disease free under the awarding scheme. This will promote competitiveness among the states. The diseases to be certified are TB, Leprosy, Malaria, Kala – Azar, Cataract, Lymphatic Filariasis.
- National Viral Hepatitis Control Program was approved
  - It was rolled out to treat Hepatitis A, B, C and E
  - More than 5 crore patients are estimated to be benefited from the program.
- Home Based Care for Young Child program was introduced under POSHAN Abhiyan.

## PM releases commemorative stamp to honour IAF Marshal late Arjan Singh

Prime Minister Narendra Modi released commemorative stamp to honour Marshal of Air Force late Arjan Singh in New Delhi. It was released 'at home' programme of the Indian Air Force to mark its 87th raising day. The stamp was released as a tribute to his exemplary service to nation.

**About Arjan Singh**

Born on 15 April 1919 in Lyalpur (now Faislabad, Pakistan). Died on 16 September 2017 in New Delhi.

**Airforce Career:** He was selected to Empire Pilot training course at Royal Air Force Cranwell at age of 19 years. During British India rule, he had served on different positions in RAF. He holds unique honour of leading fly-past of over hundred IAF aircrafts over Red Fort in Delhi on 15 August 1947. He had served as IAF chief from August 1964 to 69. He was first Indian Air Chief to be elevated to rank of Air Chief Marshal in 1966. He had led Indian Air Force (IAF) in 1965 India-Pakistan war, during which he had launched IAF's Operation Grand Slam that targeted at vital town of Akhnoor of Pakistan. He retired from IAF in August 1969.

**Important posts held:** He had served as Ambassador of India to Switzerland. He also had served as Lieutenant Governor of New Delhi (1989-90).

**Awards and Honours**: Government of India had conferred rank of "Marshal of the Indian Air Force" on him in 2002. *He was first and only 'Five Star rank IAF officer*. He was awarded Padma Vibhushan. In his honour, Union Government had renamed IAF's Panagarh Air Force Base in West Bengal as 'Air Force Station Arjan Singh' in 2016.

## GoI launches GEMINI

The Government of India launched the GEMINI device that will provide information related to disaster warning. This is exclusively designed for fishermen about disasters when they are 10 to 12 km away from the coast.

### GEMINI

GEMINI is Gagan Enabled Mariner's Instrument for Navigation and Information. It disseminates seamlessly about emergency situations, communication on disaster warnings, potential fishing zones and ocean states forecasts to the fishermen.

### GAGAN

GAGAN is GPS Aided Geo Augmented Navigation. It is a step by the Indian Government towards satellite – based navigation services in the country. It provides a navigation system. The satellites GSAT – 8 and GSAT – 10 have GAGAN payloads.

GAGAN covers entire area from Australia to Africa. Apart from this, it also studies the ionospheric behavior over the Indian region.

## MSDE launches Mahatma Gandhi National Fellowship Programme with IIM Bangalore

Union Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) signed a contract with Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Bangalore for introducing a two-year fellowship programme called '*Mahatma Gandhi National Fellowship (MGNF) programme*'. The step is taken to boost skill development at the district level.

### About Mahatma Gandhi National Fellowship Programme

The program has been developed under able guidance and leadership of Union Minister for Skill Development and Entrepreneurshi, Dr. Mahendra Nath Pandey.

The programme is designed under *Skills Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion*

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*(SANKALP).*

**Objective**: MGNF seeks-

- To address challenge of non-availability of personnel for implementation of various programmes at national, state and district levels.
- To create a cadre of young individuals and train them in a blended academic programme that provides both academic inputs and a component of field immersion at district level.

**Features of Course**:

MGNF programme has an in-built component of on-ground practical experience with district administration.

It is launched on a pilot basis in 75 districts across Gujarat, Meghalaya, Uttarakhand, Karnataka, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

**Eligibility of fellows for Programme**–

Age group has to be in 21-30 years age-group and must be citizens of India.

They must have a graduation degree from a recognized university and also proficiency in official language of state of fieldwork will be mandatory.

## 5% additional Dearness Allowance approved

Additional installment of Dearness Allowance and Dearness Relief was approved by the Union Cabinet on October 9, 2019. According to the approval, the central government employees are provided with a increase of 5%. Currently it is 12% of the basic pay. Similarly, the Dearness Relief to the pensioners was increased to 5% while its current rate is 12% of the pension.

The increase is being done to compensate the price rise. The increase is based on the recommendations 7th Pay commission

### Analysis

The RBI recently has been cutting off the repo rate. It now stands at 5.15% in the last bi – monthly policy review. With this, the inflation is predicted to increase. The increase of the allowances by the cabinet is a precautionary step. The current inflation is around 3% which lies within the boundaries of target inflation set by RBI.

The DA and DR paid to the Central Government employees and pensioners are to adjust the cost of living and to protect their basic pay. Generally, it is revised twice a year.

## Prez Kovind presents colours to Army Aviation Corps in Nashik

President Ram Nath Kovind presented prestigious President's Colours to the Army Aviation Corps. The president, who is also the Supreme Commander of armed forces, awarded the Colours at a grand ceremonial parade held at Combat Army Aviation Training School in Nashik, Maharashtra. He also visited the School of Artillery at Deolali.

### About President's Colours

Presentation of President Colours is an acknowledgment of meritorious service rendered by Army Aviation Corps over the years.

The honour is a visible symbol of excellence and has been earned by Army Aviation Corps through dedication and worthy contribution both during war and peace.

The presentation of colour is an acknowledgement of the meritorious service rendered by the Army Aviation Corps over the years by the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces.

**Why Army Aviation Corps?**

The Corps has proved their mettle and lived up to the motto of Swift and Sure.

They made their presence felt from highest battlefield of Siachen Glacier to Rann of Kutch in Gujarat.

The Army Aviation Corps has also been conferred with 2 Maha Vir Chakra, 16 Vir Chakra, 13 Shaurya Chakra, 115 Sena Medals and 45 Mention in Despatches.

## WHO – India Country Cooperation Strategy 2019 – 2023

The Country Cooperation Strategy (CCS) is a document of WHO that guides countries for a medium term. The cooperation supports the country's national health policy, plan and strategy. The strategy generally identifies the country needs, gaps and required areas of strategic collaboration.

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### CCS for India 2019

The CCS for India is to achieve its health sector goals. It intends to bring about transformative change in the health sector by improving health of the people in the country. The Union Minister launched the WHO – India CCS for the years 2019 to 2023.

### Strategy

The strategy is basically built on India's National Health Policy 2017 and Ayushman Bharat mission. The strategies have been identified in 4 areas of cooperation namely

- Accelerating the progress of UHC
- Identifying health determinants and promoting health and wellness by improving the determinants
- Providing better health emergency services to protect the population
- Enhancing India's global leadership in health.

### Other initiatives of India

For the past 5 years, India has been stressing the need to adopt healthy lifestyle. This has been done through mass yoga programs, Fit India movement, Eat right India movement, Poshan Abhiyan, etc. As compared to the schemes in the past that focused on providing sufficient food, recently the government is focusing on healthy food and diet. Various awareness campaigns are conducted to spread the importance of nutritious diet. Through Clean India Mission, the government intended to keep the disease causing germs away.

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## Ramesh Pandey selected for UNEP's Asia Environmental Enforcement Award

Senior Indian Forest Service (IFS) officer Ramesh Pandey was selected by United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) for prestigious Asia Environmental Enforcement Award. This is the fourth time the Awards will be given and there will be also a separate category for Africa-Asia cooperation in the area of illegal trade in wildlife.

### Key Highlights

The selection panel of Asia Environmental Enforcement Award recognised the excellent work done by Ramesh Pandey in combating trans-boundary environmental crime. He will receive the award on 13 November 2019 at the United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok, Thailand.

### About Asia Environmental Enforcement Awards

**Objective**: To publicly recognise excellence in enforcement and outstanding achievements made by public organisations/individuals in Asia in combating transboundary environmental crime like illegal trade in wildlife, chemicals or waste, in Asia.

The 2019 Awards are presented by UNEP in partnership with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), USAID, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), INTERPOL, Freeland Foundation, and Government of Sweden.

**Categories**: The 5 categories in which award will be given are-

(1) Collaboration
(2) Impact
(3) Innovation
(4) Integrity
(5) Gender leadership.

### About Ramesh Pandey

He is a 1996-batch IFS officer. He is posted as Chief Conservator Forests in Lucknow and Secretary, Uttar Pradesh State Bio-diversity Board. He is known for his investigation and intelligence gathering on poachers.

## India International Cooperatives Trade Fair held in India

The First Ever India International Cooperatives Trade Fair (IICTF) will commence from 11 October 2019 at Pragati Maidan in New Delhi. The three day fair is scheduled from 11-13 October 2019. It is unique initiative that provides single platform to farmers, artisans & other members of cooperatives directly to global trade arena.

### Key Highlights of IICTF

It is conceived as a major platform to promote exports of Indian cooperative produce and is packed with exhibitions, B2B/C2C meetings, conferences, cultural programmes etc.

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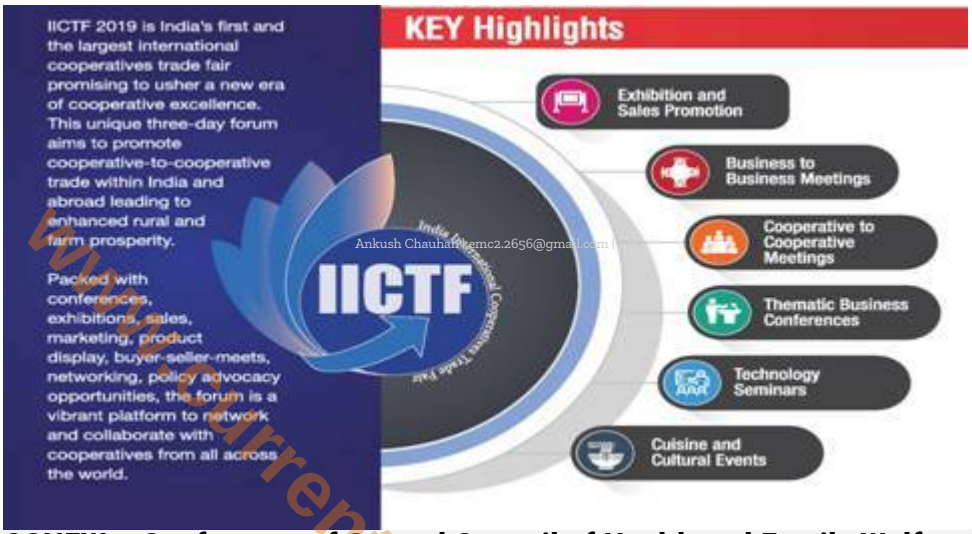
**Objective**: (i)To double farmers' income by promoting cooperative to cooperative trade within India and abroad (ii) To promote exports of key agriculture commodities and products leading to enhanced rural and farm prosperity.

**Why Cooperative sector?** This initiative is part of Agriculture Export Policy (AEP) 2018 which aims at doubling agriculture export and integrating Indian farmers and agriculture products with global value chains. As per AEP 2018, the Cooperative sector has big role to play in doubling agriculture exports from present $30 billion to $60 billion by 2022.

**Organizations Involved**: IICTF has been steered by National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC) with support of one international organization-NEDAC (Network for the Development of Agricultural Cooperatives), 3 Ministries, 4 State Governments and several apex level Indian cooperative organizations.




## CCHFW – Conference of Central Council of Health and Family Welfare

The 13th Conference of Central Council of Health and Family Welfare was inaugurated by the Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare. The conference is to be held for one and half days on various issues in seven sessions.

### About the Conference

The purpose of the conference is to build a consensus on National wealth priorities. It includes Universal Health Coverage through various flagship programs like Ayushman Bharat, National Control of Tuberculosis Program, National Nutrition Mission, etc. The conference also aims to promote steps towards the target of National Health Policy 2017, that is, to allocate 2.5% of GDP to health by 2025.

### Highlights

- The conference is to be conducted on 4 pillars of healthcare namely
  - Universal Health Coverage
  - Mission mode interventions
  - Quality and accessible affordable healthcare services
  - Adequate Infrastructure
- At the inaugural function the Union Health Minister Dr Harsha Varshan released the following reports
  - National Diabetes and Diabetic Retinopathy Survey India (2015 – 19)
  - Report on National Diabetes and Diabetic Retinopathy survey India (2015 – 19)
- The minister also unveiled leaflets on Suicide Prevention marking the World Mental Health Day
- The following guidelines were released
  - Guidelines on Drugs and Diagnostic Service Initiative
  - Guidelines for Biomedical Equipment Management and Maintenance Program
  - Guidelines for Peritoneal Dialysis under Pradhan Mantri National Dialysis Program.
- SUMAN – Surakshit Matritva Aashwasam – A new initiative for zero preventable maternal and new born deaths was launched.

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### Issues included in the agenda of the conference

- Strengthening National Health Mission
- Control programs for TB, Vector Borne diseases, Leprosy, Viral Hepatitis
- National AIDS program
- Reproductive health
- Cardio – vascular diseases, Non – communicable diseases
- Regulation in medical education
- National Organ Transplant program
- Clinical establishment acts

## Nobel Prize, Literature, 2019

The Nobel Prize in Literature for the year 2018 was awarded to Polish author Olga Tokarczuk and for the year 2019 was awarded to Austrian author Peter Handke.

### Olga Tokarczuk

Olga was born is a Polish writer, activist and public intellectual. She is a trained psychologist from the University of Warsaw. She has published poems, novels. Her books "Flights" won the Nike award. Nike Award is considered as one of hte top literary prizes of Poland. She had also won the German – Polish international Bridge prie for her accomplishments in promotion of peace and democratic development among the Europeans in different nations.

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### Peter Hanke

Peter is an Austrian novelist, translator and playwright. He has won several awards like International Ibsen award in 2014, Mulheimer Dramatikerpreis in 2012, Fraz Kafka PRize in 2009, etc. HE has also collaborated with directors and written scripts for movies like The Goalkeeper's Fear of the Penalty, the wrong move, the left handed woman, the absence, etc.

The Nobel prize of literature category was postponed last year due to a scandal

### The Scandal

Since 1901 only 14 laureates were women out of 114 winners. This created criticisms that the Swedish academy is male oriented and Euro – centric. Apart from this, last year a sex scandal forced to postpone the Nobel Prize 2018. It was postponed after the rape accusations made against Jean – Claude Arnault, husband of academy member Katarina Frostenson. The scandal forced many to vacate the seats damaging the century old reputation of Nobel laurels.

The Nobel Prize in Literature has been awarded 110 times since 1901.

## Surakshit Matritva Aashwasan launched

SUMAN scheme – Surakshit Matritva Aashwasan scheme was launched by the Union Minister Dr Harsha Vardhan at the conference of Central Council of Health and Family Welfare. The scheme provides free medicines for pregnant women. It focuses to bring down the Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) and Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) in the country.

### Key features

- Under the scheme the mother up to 6 months after delivery and the sick new born will be able to avail free health care benefits
- All the beneficiaries visiting the health care under the scheme are entitled to free services. It includes
  - At least four ante – natal check up
  - One check up during the 1st trimester
  - One check up under Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan
  - Iron Folic acid supplementation
  - Tetanus Diphtheria injection
  - Six home based new born care visits
- Free transport will be provided from home to the health institutions by GoI.
- Referral services are to be offered under the scheme with the scope of reaching the health facilities within an hour of critical emergencies
- Zero expenses for C – section facilities in case of complications during pregnancy.

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India's maternal mortality rate has declined from 254 per 1 lakh births in 2004 – 06 to 130 per 1 lakh births in 2014 – 16. The IMR has come down as well. It was 66 per 1,000 live births in 2001 and is now 34 in 2016.

## India, China, Pakistan to work together to study impact of climate change on Hindu-Kush-Himalayan region

India Meteorological Department (IMD) is collaborating with meteorological agencies in China and Pakistan, among others, to provide climate forecast services to countries in Hindu-Kush-Himalayan (HKH) region. These countries have agreed to establish regional climate centre that will provide forecasting services and climate analyses. This centre will be under World Meteorological Organisation (WMO). It will help to better forecast impact of climate change on Hindu Kush mountains. It will take a few years to take shape. It will also provide data services, training and capacity-building, research and development.

### About Hindu-Kush-Himalayan (HKH) region

It is considered the Third Pole [after North and South Poles]. It contains vast cryospheric zones and is also the world's largest store of snow and ice outside the polar region. It spans Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. It traverses about 5 million square kilometres and has significant implications for climate. Recent report by Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) also had highlighted threat to HKH region from global warming. It had mentioned that floods will become more frequent and severe in mountainous and downstream areas of Ganges, Indus and Brahmaputra river basins, because of increase in extreme precipitation events. It also had warned about severity of floods to be more than double towards the end of the century in this region.

## 9th RCEP Intersessional Ministerial Meeting to be held in Thailand

The 9th Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Intersessional Ministerial meeting will be held in Bangkok in Thailand. India will be represented by Union Commerce Minister Piysuh Goyal. This will be the last Ministerial before 3rd Leaders Summit to be held on 4 November 2019 in Bangkok. It also comes at a crucial stage where RCEP is scheduled to be announced as concluded in November 2019.

### Background

So far 21 chapters out of total 25 chapters of RCEP negotiations have been concluded. Crucial chapters of Investment, Electronic Commerce, Rules of Origin and Trade Remedies are yet to be settled. Recently, 28th round of negotiations for RCEP at the expert level was concluded at Da Nang in Vietnam in September 2019. In this round of negotiations meeting of the Trade Negotiating Committee was held in which senior officials participated in negotiations regarding market access on Trade in Goods, Trade in Services and Investment as well as on other areas like Rules of Origin, Intellectual Property and Electronic Commerce.

### About Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)

It is a proposed free trade agreement (FTA) between 10 member states of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and its six free-trade agreement (FTA) partners- India, China, Australia, New Zealand, Japan and South Korea. RCEP negotiations were formally launched in November 2012 at 21st ASEAN Summit held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

**10 ASEAN Members countries**: Cambodia, Brunei, Indonesia, Vietnam, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Myanmar.

## 38th India Carpet Expo, Varanasi

The CEPC – Carpet Export Promotion Council is organizing 38th India Carpet Expo between October 11 and October 14, 2019. The aim of the expo is to promote cultural heritage and weaving skills of hand made Indian carpets. It acts as a platform for international carpet buyers, architects, exporters to meet and establish business relationship. It is organized twice in a year, once in Delhi and once in Varanasi.

### Highlights of the Expo

- It is one of the largest handmade carpet fairs in Asia.
- The unique capability of the fair is that it adapts any type of design, quality, color and size according to the specifications of the carpet buyers
- The carpet industry has immense potential for growth in terms of production and exports.

### Carpet producing belt

The major carpet producing centers in India are located in UP, J&K, Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana, Himachal

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Pradesh, North East Regions, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Jharkhand, Telangana and Chattisgarh.

### Carpet Exports

The carpet producing belt exported around 1,765 million USD worth carpets in 2018 – 19 financial year. They are exporting carpets to more than 70 countries in the world. The major carpet importees from India are USA, Canada, UK, Australia, Italy, Brazil.

### Significance of the expo

Germany and other European countries were the traditional importers of Indian carpets. However, these markets are now completely developed and are saturated. Hence, the Carpet Export Promotion Council is now focusing on Latin American countries, New Zealand and Australia.

There is also a huge scope of investment in floor coverings apart from carpets in the industry. Over 20 lakh workers and artisans are involved in the business. Predominantly rural women are directly and indirectly are employed in the industry. Most of the carpet workers are from weaker section of the society and the trade provides extra occupation to them at their homes.

## PM-Kisan: Cabinet approves relaxation of Aadhaar seeding of data of beneficiaries

Union Cabinet has approved relaxation of mandatory requirement of Aadhaar Seeded data as pre-condition for release of funds to beneficiaries under Pradhan Mantri KisanSamman Nidhi (PM-Kisan) scheme.

### About Pradhan Mantri KisanSamman Nidhi (PM-KISAN)

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It is Central Sector Scheme to provide income support to land-holding farmers' families. It provides income support of Rs 6,000 per year to landholding families, subject to certain exclusions. The amount is released in three four-monthly instalments of Rs. two thousand each directly to beneficiaries bank accounts through DBT mode.

**Implementation Progress:** Total amount of more than Rs.27000 crores have already been released under PM-KISAN scheme through 1st instalment to 6,76,76,073 beneficiaries, 2nd instalment to 5,14,27,195 beneficiaries and 3rd instalment to 1,74,20,230 beneficiaries.

### Need for Relaxation

Under this scheme, release of third instalment from August 2019 onwards to those beneficiaries who got first and second instalments was to be made only on basis of Aadhaar seeded database. However, 100% Aadhaar seeding for release of funds as per prescribed time schedule was not possible before release of instalments after August, 2019. Therefore, mandatory requirement of Aadhaar seeding for release of benefits from August 2019 has been relaxed till 30th November, 2019.

**Benefits of relaxation of aadhar seeding**: It will enable immediate release of PM-KISAN benefits to large number of farmers who are not able to avail same due this requirement. This mandatory requirement will remain applicable for release of benefits from December, 2019 onwards.

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## Kerala govt gets RBI's nod for formation of Kerala Bank

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has given its final nod to Kerala Government for the formation of **Kerala Bank**. The final nod by RBI was subjected to certain conditions. RBI's approval is valid only till 31 March 2020.

### Key Highlights

The proposed Kerala Bank would be formed by merging 13 District Co-operative Banks (DCBs) with Kerala State Co-operative Bank. With its formation, the proposed Kerala Bank will be the largest banking network in the state.

The setting up of new bank would also be in accordance with final verdict of some cases pending before a court in this regard.

As per the state government the objective behind formation of Kerala Bank was to strengthen cooperative sector. However it is also suspected that the move would destroy the traditional cooperative sector.

## Cabinet approves Rs.5.5 lakh package for PoK families who initially settled outside J&K

Union Cabinet has approved one-time payment of 5.5 lakh rupees as resettlement package for 5,300 displaced families which had come from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) and initially settled outside Jammu and Kashmir but later relocated. It will be provided under Rehabilitation Package approved by Union Cabinet in November 2016 for Displaced Families PoJK and Chhamb Niabat area under PM's

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*Development Package 2015* for J&K.

**Benefits:**

It will enable such DP Families, who had suffered on account of wars and hostilities to become eligible to get one-time financial assistance of Rs 5.5 lakhs under existing scheme. It will also enable them to earn reasonable monthly income and be part of mainstream economic activities. This will also upgrade Central Government's capacity to respond effectively to such DP families need of financial assistance.

**Background**

In the wake of 1947 Pakistani aggression in J&K, 31,619 families had migrated from Pakistan Occupied Areas of J&K (PoJK) to J&K. Of these, 26,319 families had settled in J&K and 5300 families initially opted to move out of J&K to other parts of the country. Further during Indo-Pak wars of 1965 and 1971, 10,065 more families were displaced from Chhamb Niabat area. 36,384 displaced families were initially covered under package approved by Union Cabinet in November 2016, which included 10,065 displaced families displaced from Chhamb Niabat area settled in J&K and 26,319 displaced families from PoJK.

## October 11, 2019

### National Coordination Center – A database of Maoists

The Government of India is planning to set up a National Coordination Center (NCC) that will function as a data bank of Maoists. It will act as a synergy point for anti – Maoist operations and intelligence gathering.

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#### Key features of the NCC

- It will create a strategy for security agencies to counter support received by the Maoist leaders. It will also control the sympathy gained or created by the Maoists in the social media
- It will utilize knowledge of retired police officers who served in anti – Maoist operations in Odisha, Andhra Pradesh and Chattisgarh.
- NCC will identify the sources of finance to the Maoists and work to neutralize the network

#### Maoism in India

- The number of Maoist incidents was 500 in 1989. It has come down to 354 in 2018
- The Geographical spread of Maoism has reduced in the last five years
- In the last 10 years before 2018, the number of police stations affected with violence has come down to 250 from 465.

#### Main regions of Maoism

The most formidable strong hold of Maoism is southern areas of Chattisgarh, Andhra – Odisha border, parts of Jharkhand. In particular the three districts Bijapur, Sukma and Dantewada have strong hold of Maoists. South Sukma has encountered around 150 Maoist attacks.

The prospective base areas of Maoist leaders include Saranda forest, Parasnath hills, areas adjoining districts of Bihar.

#### Concerns of Maoism

- Gaining the trust of the locals is the major challenge. The locals were killed mercilessly in public on mere suspicion of being alleged police informers.
- The mobile towers in and around these areas are very less. This affects the flow of intelligence from the core areas to execute operations against the Maoists. In Bijapur district, there were only 50 towers for a combined area of 6,000 square kilometers.

#### Significance of NCC

- Government takes measures to address the administrative vacuum which is the major challenge in addressing Maoism. Around 20 camps were established in South Bastar last year
- The Andhra – Odisha border and some districts of Odisha are inaccessible. The continuous exploitation of inter – state boundaries by the Maoists is the major concern. The NCC will help to combat this exploitation.
- The Center will work with the Indian Institute of IED Management to analyze various types of IEDs used by the Maoists.
- Joint operations between the state police is also being suggested. This will help to concentrate on tri – junctions of the LWE affected states, especially in the borders. NCC will work towards achieving

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this goal
- NCC will also help in real time information sharing, joint action and coordination among different states, etc.

## October 11: International Day of Girl Child

Every year, October 11 is commemorated as International Day of Girl Child by the United Nations. The day is important as it raises awareness of issues faced by girls internationally. The major problems faced by girls includes forced child marriage, legal rights, medical rights, education, nutrition.

**Theme: Girl force – Unscripted and unstoppable**

### Background

The day is being observed all over the world since October 11, 2012. The proposal for the day was initiated by Canada.

In 1995, at the fourth World Conference of Women in Beijing, around 30,000 women and men from 200 countries determined to recognize the rights of women and girls as human rights. The movement has expanded today supporting adolescent girls, tackling issues like child marriage, gender-based inequality, gender-based violence and girls rights to enter places of worship during menstruation. Girls are proving they are unscripted and unstoppable!

### History

The day began as a project called "Plan International" by a Canada based NGO that operated worldwide. The campaign of the NGO, "Because I am a Girl" raised awareness about the importance of nurturing girls globally.

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## UN Financial Crisis

On October 9, 2019, the United Nations called its member states to pay their outstanding dues. As the organization is facing severe financial crisis, there may not be enough funds to pay staff salaries next month. According to the United Nations, out of 193 members, 129 had paid their regular budget. The regular budget for the UN for a year is 5.4 billion USD. This is separate from the peace keeping budget of 6.3 billion USD.

India paid its regular contributions of 230 million USD on January 30, 2019 and India was one of the few countries to pay on time.

### The Scenario

There are around 37,000 employees in the UN secretariat. The member states have so far paid only 70% of total amount needed till September 2019. This has created a cash shortage of 280 million USD. In order tackle the crisis the UN is reducing services, postponing conferences and meetings and restricting official travel.

### Role of US in UN funding

The US funding covers 22% of UN regular budget. It is more than any other nation. The US is to obligated to contribute 674 million USD for the budget 2018 – 19. Cumulatively, since the previous year, US owes 1.055 billion USD.

US already has its outstanding dues from previous year as well. A country that fails to pay its contributions for 2 consecutive years loses its right to vote in the General Assembly.

Under Trump administration the US had been withdrawing from number of international commitments lately. Soon US is also planning to exit the "Open Skies treaty". According to the treaty, it allows 34 member states to conduct unarmed surveillance flights over one another's territories. It was signed in 1992.

### Other Contributors of UN Funding

Next USA, China is the largest contributor paying 12% of UN budget. This is 15 times to what India pays. Japan is the third largest contributor with paying 3% of UN funding. Following Japan there are other European countries that contribute to the UN funding.

### The real problem

UN was established to provide security and prevent war situations in the world. Slowly it gained its momentum towards providing social and economic security to the world nations. The security decisions in the UN are controlled by the 5 major permanent members of the UN namely USA, China, UK, France and Russia. They are the major contributors of the funding as well.

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The UN wants its member nations to pay their contributions by the end of January every year. None of these contributors paid on time this year. Why? The countries want to push their individual strategic interests. For instance, the US voted for declaring Jerusalem as Israel's capital while the resolution was opposed by its own allies

## Solar Wind Farms along Indo – Pakistan border

India has a target of 175 GW of clean energy by 2022. In order to achieve the target, India plans to set up solar and wind projects on fallow lands along the international border with Pakistan.

Currently India is generating 82,580 MW of solar power which is 23% of its total power production.

### Key features of the project

- A 30 km by 20 km wide parcel of land is identified along the border in Kutch district of Gujarat to implement the project.
- As the land allocated is fallow, it will help tackle the problem of agricultural land being diverted for such projects.
- The proposed energy power parks will generate 2,000 MW of energy each
- The project is being constructed on deserted lands with no habitats.

### Concerns and Solutions

- The border where the project is to be implemented is fragile. Weapon funneling and hawala money operations are predominant in these areas. However, GoI has recently launched several steps to fortify border
    - CIBMS – Comprehensive Integrated Border Management System was launched to deploy technological solutions on pilot basis.
    - Smart Fencing
    - Solar Powered BSF posts – The border areas were fitted with solar power panels to help the jawans recharge their communication and safety gears. Earlier soldiers guarding the border had to travel 4 to 5 kms to charge their gadgets.
    - Also, other technologies like underground monitoring sensors, laser barriers, night vision devices, surveillance radar help monitor the border.
- Recently, the renewable energy sector has been seeing steep fall. This is was mainly due to lack of interest from the investors and developers. The Solar Energy Corporation of India in September 2019 saw its last two auctions go under subscribed. The project is a boost for investors as the area and solar output planned is vast!

### Significance

The GoI aims to meet the needs of the people living in the borders. In order to achieve this, GoI allocated 8,606 crores of rupees in 2018 to meet their needs. The umbrella scheme Border Infrastructure and Management that contains 60 projects includes tourism, cleanliness mission, supplying drinking water, community centers, drainage, supply of drinking water, etc. The Solar Power Grid will aid the projects by providing sufficient power.

### Solar Power in India

Till August 2019, India's installed solar power was 30 GW. India has a potential of 5000 trillion KWhr per year. It exceeds the possible energy output of all fossil fuel energy reserves in India.

Till March 2019, of all the states Rajasthan leads in solar power producing 3,226 MW of solar power. It is followed by Punjab, UP, Uttarkhand and Haryana.

## National Diabetes and Diabetic Retinopathy Survey, 2019

On October 10, 2019, at the Conference of Central Council of Health and Family Welfare, Union Minister Harsha Vardhan released National Diabetes and Diabetic Retinopathy survey, 2019. The survey was conducted between 2015 and 2019. Diabetes and Diabetic retinopathy have been emerging as significant non – communicable diseases that lead to ocular morbidity.

The survey was conducted by Rajendra Prasad Center for Ophthalmic sciences and AIIMS, New Delhi

### Key findings of the survey – Diabetes

- One in 46 diabetic patients in India become visually impaired due to diabetes. And one in 7 diabetic patients have vision impairment

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- The prevalence of Diabetes has remined at 11.8% in the last four years. Prevalence of known diabetes cases were 8% and new cases were 3.8%
- Males showed prevalence of 12% and females 11.7%
- The highest prevalence was observed in the age group of 70 – 79 years
- Around 5.3% of the patients were diagnosed in past one year. While, 5.3% of cases were known diabetic cases

### Key findings of the survey – Diabetic Retinopathy (DR)

- DR was prevalent in diabetic population aged up to 50 years. Around 16.9% of the population suffered from DR
- Among males DR was prevalent among 17% of males and 16.7% of females
- DR among different age groups were observed as follows
    - 60 – 69 years – 18.6%
    - 70 – 79 years – 18.3%
    - Above 80 years – 18.4%
- Prevalence of blindness among diabetic patients was 2.1% and visual impairment was 13.7%

The report says that lack of data on DR is a major concern in India. This is the first survey to include DR along with diabetes.

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### Diabetic Retinopathy

It is a diabetic eye disease. It affects 80% of those who have diabetes. DR is a condition in which damage occurs in retina due to diabetes mellitus. The longer a person suffers from diabetes higher are his chances to develop DR.

### WHO on Diabetes

The WHO estimated that in 2014 around 8.4% were diabetic globally. In India around 72.96 million diabetes cases were identified. It was between 10% and 14% in urban areas and between 3% and 7% in rural areas.

### Reasons

- Poor Awareness is the major cause of diabetes in India. Around 60% of Indians have poor control over their sugar level according to the survey
- Majority of the diabetic patients never sought an eye check up
- 90% of diabetic patients never gone for fundamental evaluation for diabetic retinopathy
- The main reason for diabetes leading to vision impairment or blindness is mainly due to poor blood sugar control. Around 85.7% of surveyed patients were on oral tablets while only 39.5% had controlled blood glucose level.

## UNICEF: First UN organisation to accept donation through Cryptocurrencies

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Children's agency of the United Nations has now become the first UN organization to hold and make transactions in cryptocurrency. UNICEF now joins a number of other aid agencies that accept donations in cryptocurrencies, such as American Red Cross.

### Key Highlights

The UNICEF has established **UNICEF Cryptocurrency Fund**, making UNICEF able to receive, hold as well as disburse donations via cryptocurrencies such as bitcoin and ether. Through the received donations, UNICEF will be funding open source technology that aims to benefit children and young people globally.

The *Ethereum Foundation* will be first one to be contributing to UNICEF through Cryptocurrency Fund, in form of donations to three grantees of **UNICEF Innovation Fund**. UNICEF is one of the co-leaders of *UN Innovation Network* and thus it already helps in researching the potential of blockchain (also other emerging technologies) and problems associated with them.

The organization's latest move is another major step in its ongoing work related to blockchain and this move would help showcase Etherium and blockchain technology's power to benefit communities all over the world.

## POSHAN Atlas to map crops

In order to tackle malnutrition, GoI is planning to develop an atlas to map crops and food grains grown all over the country. The initiative was launched by the Union Minister of Women and Child Development

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Smriti Irani during the fifth National Council on India's Nutrition Challenges

### Aim of the initiative

This is done to promote regional cropping pattern and nutritious protein rich food in local areas. It is being developed and implemented by the Ministry of Women and Child Development. The initiative will aid Poshan Abhiyan that is focusing on ensuring nutrition of women, children and pregnant mothers. The atlas is to be developed along with Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Deenadayal Research Institute.

### Outcomes of the Council meet

- A system of ranking is to be introduced to acknowledge the unsung heroes of Poshan Abhiyan. It includes Anganwadi workers and ASHA workers who work tirelessly and selflessly. The ranking will be based on health and nutritional parameters and is to be developed by NITI Aayog
- The council discussed about the challenges faced by aspirational districts that are lagging behind
- The Anganwadi workers are to be trained in use of smart phones, tools to upload data, etc
- The Ministry submitted its report of POSHAN Maah that was observed in September 2019

### National Council on India's Nutrition Challenges

The National Council was established under Poshan Abhiyan. The key role of the council is to coordinate and review convergence among ministers. This is to help them providing policy directions to address nutrition challenges in India.

### Objectives of the council

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- It provides policy directions through coordinated inter – sectoral action
- The Council reviews programs for nutrition on quarterly basis.
- It also reviews and coordinates convergence among ministries.

### Nutrition Challenges in India

According to World Bank Global Nutrition Report, 2018, malnutrition costs around 10 billion USD annually in India. According to National Family Health Survey – 4 (2015 – 16), 48% of undernourished children suffer from stunting, 19.8% of undernourished children suffer from wasting and 42.5% of undernourished children suffer from underweight.

According to NITI Aayog, the problem of under nutrition was predominant in the states of Maharshtra, Goa, Karnataka, UP and Rajasthan.

### Poshan Maa

The entire month of September was celebrated as Rashtriya Poshan Maah. The Theme of 2019 Poshan Maa was "Complementary Feeding". The purpose of celebrating Poshan Maa is to take the message of importance of nutrition to every nook and corner of the country. Also it aims to create awareness on complimentary food, treatment and prevention from infections in children.

## Draft Arms (Amendment) Bill

On October 10, 2019, the Union Home Ministry proposed an amendment to convict makers and users of illegal arms. According to the amendment, the makers of "prohibited" arms and those carrying such arms have to spend remainder of their life in prison if convicted.

The bill is to be introduced in the winter session of the parliament.

### Main Features of the Amendment bill

- Anyone possessing more than 2 licensed gun has to deposit the third one with the authorities. This is because GoI is planning to ban the practice of multiple licenses to individual
- Section 25 (1AA) of Arms act 1959 is to be amended. According to the amendment punishment from usual 14 years to imprisonment for remainder of the person's life.
- The amendment also categorizes illegal import of guns and their sales as "illicit trade". Also, it has provisions to send an authorized gun dealer to jail up to 7 years.
- A sports person can possess a third weapon – 0.22 calibre rifle only, provided, if the user is a dedicated sports person whose participation is recognized in national and international events in the last 2 years.

### Significance

India has a total of 35 lakh gun licenses. Around 13 lakh have licenses to carry weapons in UP alone. In J&K around 3.7 lakh citizens hold active gun licenses. These licenses were issued in the last two decades. Punjab has around 3.6 lakh active gun licenses. All these licenses were simultaneously issued when

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militancy has engulfed the state.

### Arms Act, 1959

The act was legislated to consolidate and amend the laws related to arms and ammunition. It replaced the Arms Act 1878. The act has undergone many changes since 1959. The most recent change in the act was done in 2010 through an amendment for the arms act.

The act briefs rules and regulations about acquisition, manufacture, possession, sale, import and export ammunition in India. It also provides provisions related to licenses. The act lists the punishments associated with breaking rules related to the act. IT alsi provides details on powers that the officials possess to enact it.

### Arms Act 1878

The act stipulated that no Indians shall be allowed to bear arms prior to proper permit. On the other hand, no such rules were imposed to the British living in India. The act was seen as a major humiliation for the newly emerging middle class. Surendranth Bannerjee called the act as a badge for racial inferiority.

The act was passed during the period when Lord Lytton was the Viceroy of India.

## Saudi Arabia allows women to serve in Armed Forces

As the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia embarks on a broad programme of economic and social reforms, the country announced that it will allow women in kingdom to serve in armed forces. This move is the latest in a series of measures aimed by country towards women empowerment and increasing the rights of women in kingdom, even as rights groups accuse Saudi Arabia of cracking down on women activists.

### Reforms Undertaken in Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabiaw which is the world's largest crude exporter is now pushing to improve its image and attract tourists as part of a plan to diversify its economy away from oil.

Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the kingdom's de facto ruler, has also approved a handful of reforms aimed at widening women's rights. This includes allowing women to drive and to travel abroad without consent from a male 'guardian'. Saudi Arabia has also allowed foreign couples to rent hotel rooms.

Earlier in 2018, Saudi Arabia had authorised women to join its security forces and now it has allowed women in kingdom to serve in armed forces. The women would now be able to serve as private first class, corporal or sergeant.

## Panel to review regulations of cooperative banks

The Union Finance Minister on 10th October, 2019 announced that a high level committee will be formed to look into the regulations that govern multi state cooperative banks. RBI imposed banking restrictions on PMC bank in September. This has left 1000s of investors and account holders worried. The amended framework is to be submitted in the winter session of the parliament.

### Cooperative Banking in India

- The rural cooperative credit system in India ensures flow of credit to the agriculture sector. The short-term cooperative structures operate under a three-tire system namely
  - Primary Agricultural credit societies (PACS). They operate at village levels
  - Central Cooperative Banks (CCB) – they operate at district level.
  - State Cooperative Banks (SCB) – they operate at state level
- The PACS are outside the purview of Banking Regulation act, 1949 and hence is not regulated by RBI
- The inspection of CCB And SCB are conducted by NABARD – National Bank for Agricultural and Rural Development. This is being done according to Section 35 of the Banking Regulation act, 1949. RBI can conduct inspection once a year if in need.
- The needs of customers in urban and semi – urban areas are catered by Primary Cooperative bank (PCB) and Urban Cooperative Bank (UCB) respectively.

### Multi – State Cooperative Banks

- RBI constitutes state level task forces for cooperative urban banks (TAFCUB). This is done to bring all the decision makers on one table under the central TASFCUB.
- The viable and non – viable UCBs in the state are identified by the TAFCUB. It suggests a revival path as well.
- The exit of non – viable banks are done

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- Through mergers
- Amalgamation with stronger banks
- Conversion of these banks into societies
- Liquidation, which is the last option.

- Section 22 and Section 23 of Banking Regulation act, 1949 regulates the banking functions of UCB, SCB and DCCB.

## India Sports Summit–Fitness: $10 Billion Opportunity organised in New Delhi

The 'India Sports Summit- Fitness: $10 Billion Opportunity' was held on 10 October 2019 in New Delhi. It was organised by Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), in partnership with Union Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports (MYAS), Sportscom, and Sportskeeda

### Key Highlights of Summit

**Objective**: It is focused on driving objective of 'Sports and Industry' through various initiatives, advocating for new policies for the sector, encourage investments in the sector of sports, create roadmap in encouraging fitness programmes in school education and industry participation in the FIT INDIA Movement.

**Participation:** It was attended by many noted names from Sports Fraternity and governing bodies.

**Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju's Address:** He noted that if every Indian starts paying attention to sports, every sport will become an industry. He also stressed on the need for building sports culture, creating opportunities for youth, partnerships between Ministries and corporates to leverage potential of 10 billion dollar fitness industry. He also reiterated importance of citizen involvement to fully leverage potential of fitness as an opportunity in India.

## Pangio Bhujia: New eel-loach species discovered in Kerala

Researchers from Kerala have discovered new species of eel-loach named *'Pangio bhujia'* in Kozhikode district of state. It is unique species of miniature well-dwelling subterranean fish. *It is the first species of eel-loach in the world that has been discovered to be living in subterranean environments*. Eel-loaches are generally found in fast-flowing streams in the south and the south-east Asia.

### About Pangio bhujia

**Discovery:** It was discovered living in a six-metre-deep homestead well used for potable and irrigation purpose, as well as from channel connecting pond to an adjacent paddy field in the village of Cherinjal in Kozhikode.

**Name and Genus:** It has been named 'Pangio bhujia', due to its resemblance to the North Indian snack, bhujia. It belongs to genus *Pangio*.

**Characteristics:** It is approximately 3 centimetres long and pinkish-red in colour. It resides in purest waters of deep subterranean aquifers. It has several unique characters including absence of dorsal fin, which has never been encountered in genus Pangio to which this new species belongs to. It is also unique among order Cypriniformes (an order of ray-finned fish, including the carps, minnows, loaches, and relatives) and highly unusual even among teleost or bony fishes generally.

## 9-15 October: National Postal Week 2019 celebrated

National Postal Week is being celebrated in the country from 9 October to 15 October 2019 to create awareness about the role and contributions of postal sector in social and economic development as well as in lives of people and business. The National Postal Week involves various programmes which started with celebration of the World Post Day on October 9.

### About National Postal Week 2019

The week is celebrated to commemorate the establishment of Universal Postal Union (UPU) in 1874 in Swiss capital Berne. The weekly celebrations which will conclude on 15 October 2019 are also aimed at generating a broader awareness about India Post's role and activities among the public and media at national level.

**Regions Celebrated**: The postal circle is observing National Postal Week in each of 6 regions under its jurisdiction- Goa, Mumbai, Navi Mumbai, Nagpur, Pune and Aurangabad.

To focus on various services provided by Department of Posts as part of week-long exercise, the

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department would celebrate-

1. World Post Day- on October 9
2. Savings Bank Day- 10 October
3. Postal Life Insurance Day- 11 October
4. Philately Day- 12 October
5. Business Development Day- 14 October
6. Mail Day- 15 October

## State Power Ministers Conference

A two – day state power ministers conference starting on October 11, 2019, is to be held in the banks of Narmada river at Kevadia, Gujarat. The conference will be inaugurated by Union Minister of State for Power RK Singh.

The conference is to be held near the Statue of Unity, the tallest structure in the world. The congregation of the state energy departments is to be held on the banks of River Narmada. This is to signify that Narmada was the first river to have a canal top solar power plant in India.

### Highlights of the conference

- Schemes to promote clean energy is to be the prime focus of the conference.
- Discussions related to emerging technologies in renewable and sustainable energy sector
- Implementation of Prime Minister Kusum Scheme. The major components of the scheme are as follows
    - Provide solar run irrigation pumps to the farmers
    - Solarization of 10 lakh existing grid connected pumps.
- Renewable energy development in the border areas. Recently GoI has also proposed construction of wind and solar projects in the Indo – Pakistan border.
- Ease of doing business in solar and wind energy space
- Issues related to regulatory matters, land and infrastructure
- Discussions about projects for Ultra Mega Renewable Energy parks
- The scheme of roof top solar projects will also be discussed. This is a scheme which certainly needs the support of the states.

The conference is being hosted by the Gujarat Government. In the event, there will be presentation on the achievement in the power and energy sector by the government in the past 10 years. There will also be detailed briefing about how Gujarat provides 24 – hour electricity through Jyoti Gram Scheme

### Jyoti Gram yojana

It was an initiative of the Gujarat Government to ensure 24 – hour power supply to rural areas to farmers in scattered farm houses.

### Instructions by the Center

The Union Ministry will make the following request to the states

- PPAs should not be re – negotiated. The provisions under PPAs has to be enforced in letter and spirit. The payment to the generators, especially solar and wind, by the DISCOMS should be made on FIFO (First In First Out) basis
- The Center will also instruct to expedite supply reforms, renewable capacity addition and improve energy efficiency standards.

### The PPA issue

Recently many states reviewed or cancelled PPA with the renewable projects. The State's decision to review renewable PPAs created controversies. The power generators moved to the High Court. The HC asked them to raise their grievances before the AP Electricity Regulatory Commission.

## SARAS Aajeevika Mela launched

SARAS Aajeevika Mela is an initiative under Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY – NRLM). The objective of the initiative is to bring the rural women SHGs – Self Help Groups under one platform. This is to help them show – case their skills, sell their products and build linkages with buyers. Through the initiative the women will get exposure to understand the demand of urban customers.

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### About the Mela

The Mela is being organized by the CAPART – Council for Advancement of People's action and rural Technology, the marketing arm of the ministry of rural development.

The Mela is to be organized in the lawns of India Gate between 10th October 2019 and 23rd October 2019. Over 200 stalls are to be set up. More than 500 SHG women from all over the country are expected to participate.

During the Mela the ministry has also planned to conduct workshops to sharpen the skills of the participating women in GST, marketing, e – marketing, product design, book keeping, etc.

### Highlights of the Mela

- Kalamkari sarees of Andhra Pradesh – Kalamkari is the ancient style of painting done on cotton or silk fabric. They are hand painted. Only natural dyes are used in the process. It involves 23 steps.
    - Apart from these, there are also Kosa sarees from Chattisgarh, IIkal saress from Karnataka,Tasar silk from Jharkhand, etc.
- Madhubani painting from Bihar – It is an art that has eye – catching geometrical patterns. It includes ritual content like Kali Puja, surya shasti, upanayana, holi and durga pooja.
    - It also includes Sikki crafts and lac bangles from Bihar, terracotta from Haryana, Dokra craft, Sabai grass products
- Natural food Products

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## US $13.92 billion raised for next 3 years to fight against AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria

Donors from across the world including governments, philanthropists and private firms have pledged just over $14 billion for the next three years to save 16 million lives and help end AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria by 2030. It was promised at the Sixth Replenishment Conference of Global Fund to fight against AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria (GFTAM) held in Lyon, France.

### Key Donors

United States will provide $1.56 billion a year, maintaining more than 30% of all contributions. France has pledged to provide $1.29 billion. India also has announced contribution of $22 million, an increase of 10% over the earlier amount contributed in 5th cycle. Private donors also pledged more than $1 billion. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has pledged to provide $760 million, (RED) has pledged US$150 million.

### About Global Fund to fight against AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria

It was created in 2002 to raise, manage and invest the world's money to respond to three of the deadliest infectious diseases the world has ever known viz. AIDS, TB and malaria. It aims to attract, leverage and invest additional resources to end epidemics of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria to support attainment of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) established by the United Nations. Its secretariat are in Geneva, Switzerland.

**Note:** GFTAM is financing mechanism rather than implementing agency. It is also the world's largest financier of AIDS, TB, and malaria prevention, treatment, and care programs.

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## MEV-1: 1st Satellite Servicing Spacecraft launched

The robotic Mission Extension Vehicle-1 (MEV-1) was successfully launched atop of Russian Proton rocket from Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan. It is first of its kind commercial satellite-servicing spacecraft. It is designed to dock with aging spacecraft more than 22,000 miles above Earth, then extend its life with aid of solar-electric thrusters. Its successful launch marks beginning of era of commercial satellite servicing in the space.

### About Mission Extension Vehicle-1 (MEV-1)

It was built by Virginia-based company Northrop Grumman. It will attempt first-ever docking between two spacecraft near geostationary orbit (nearly 36,000 kilometers over the equator that is popular with communications satellite operators). It will link up with 18-year-old *Intelsat communications satellite* early next year. Once docked, with this old satellite, it will take over propulsion for Intelsat 901 satellite, which is running low on fuel. It will then put Intelsat back into an ideal target orbit — thus extending its useful life by as many as five years.

**MEV-1's Life span:** It is designed for 15-year useful life, and can dock and undock multiple times, thus, it will be providing well in excess of 15 years of mission extension to orbital geosynchronous satellites l

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running low on its own propellant supply.

## Nobel Peace Prize – 2019

The 100th Nobel Prize for peace has been awarded to the Ethiopian Prime Minister Abhiy Ahmed Ali for his efforts towards peace and international cooperation. The prize was awarded in particular to honor his initiatives to resolve border conflict with Eritrea.

### Abhiy Ahmed Ali

Ali became the Prime Minister of Ethiopia in 2018. Since then he was keen in resuming peace talks with Eritrea. He quickly worked out principles of peace agreement with the president of Eritrea Isaias Afwerki and ended the long "no peace no war" stalemate.

Apart from this, he also initiated many reforms in Ethiopia. He spent his first 100 days of power in lifting the state of emergency in the country. He granted amnesty to 1000s of political prisoners, legalized outlawed opposition groups, discontinued media censorship, increased the influence of women in Ethiopian political and community life.

### The Greta Factor

There had been great speculation over the prize with the climate activist Greta Thunberg being tipped as the favorite. The 16 year school girl is a Swedish teenager who became famous for her activism in August 2018. She initiated a mass movement "School strike for climate" where the teenagers quit school demanding for action towards climate change.

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She had inspired a number of school children that it is now been addressed as the "The Greta Effect"

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## GeM signs MoU with Union Bank of India

Government e-Marketplace (GeM) signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Union Bank of India (UBI). Through this partnership, UBI will be able to offer array of services including transfer of funds through GeM Pool Accounts (GPA), advising of Performance Bank Guarantees (e-PBG) and Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) to the registered users on the GeM portal. It will also facilitate cashless, paperless and transparent payment system on GeM portal and will create an efficient procurement system for government entities.

### Background

Online integration for payments and various banking services is one of the priorities for GeM. So far, GeM has signed MoU with 14 Public Sector and private banks to enable this. It is also working with others banks, TReDs, and SIDBI to provide invoice financing and Bill Discounting to MSMEs registered on GeM. This will help MSMEs access easy credit and do better business with Government Departments.

### About Government e-Marketplace (GeM)

It is an online marketplace launched by Union Government in 2018 to facilitate procurement of goods and services by various Ministries and agencies of the Government. It offers online, end to end solution for procurement of commonly used goods and services for all central government and state governments departments, public sector units (PSUs) and affiliated bodies. Its main aim is to enhance transparency, efficiency and speed in public procurement of goods and services and eliminate corruption. It provides tools for Direct Purchase, bidding and reverse auction in a transparent manner for government departments.

## Ind-Ra lowers India's GDP growth forecast in 2019-20 to 6.1% from 6.7% in August 2019

India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra), a part of Fitch group has lowered India's gross domestic product (GDP) forecast for financial year (FY) 2019-20 to 6.1%. This was second downgrade in the last two months. Earlier in August 2019, Ind-Ra had revised GDP growth estimate to 6.7% from its earlier forecast of 7.3%. It has cited slowdown in both rural and urban consumption demand growth as one of the key reasons for the downward revision of GDP in its August 2019 forecast.

### Ind-Ra Projections

**Growth Forecast**: GDP growth in the first half of FY 2019-20 to be 5.2% and forecasts it to recover to 6.9% in 2HFY20, mainly on account of the base effect.

**Government Measures:** The recent measures announced by government to arrest economic slowdown are likely to support growth only in medium-to-long term. Most of the measures announced by government are essentially supply-side response to revive growth.

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**Bigger challenges faced by economy**: It is from demand side as consumption demand has collapsed and private corporate investment is not forthcoming.

**Way Forward:** There is need is to take measures that will enhance disposable income and put additional money in the hands of rural and urban households. Government-initiated spend on rural infrastructure activities will help to generate large-scale employment that could add/stimulate consumption demand.

**Key drivers of inflation in India**: They are food and crude oil prices and they stand favourable/benign currently. They are likely to remain the same during the remainder of the financial year.

**Fiscal deficit**: It has been budgeted at 3.3% of GDP. It could increase to 3.6% of GDP in FY20. Additionally, current account deficit is expected to decline to 1.8% of GDP in FY20 from 2.1% of GDP in FY19, aided by softer crude oil prices. In terms of the domestic currency, Indian rupee will average 70.86 against the dollar in FY20.

## October 12, 2019

### Yuva Sahakar- Cooperative Enterprise Support and Innovation Scheme 2019 launched

'Yuva Sahakar'- Cooperative Enterprise Support and Innovation Scheme 2019 was launched at the opening ceremony of first ever *'India International Cooperatives Trade Fair'* in New Delhi on 11 October 2019 by Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Narendra Singh Tomar.

With organisations from 35 countries and more than 150 Indian cooperatives participating in the Fair, the trade fair is a major platform to promote export of products of cooperatives which will lead to enhanced rural and farm prosperity. Since cooperation is the key to development of vilages, thus this mela will prove to be a milestone in the growth of rural India and will discuss the challenges being faced by Cooperatives, like delivery and available markets.

Ankush Chauhan (emc2.2650@gmail.com)

#### About Yuva Sahakar Cooperative Enterprise Support and Innovation Scheme 2019

The scheme has been formulated by **National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC)** in line with Government's focus on programmes such as *Start-up India* and *Stand-up India* which is aimed at young entrepreneurs with new and innovative ideas.

The Scheme has an annual outlay of 100 crores and is aimed at cooperatives in North Eastern Region, cooperatives registered and operating in Aspirational Districts as identified by NITI Aayog, cooperatives with 100% SC/ST/ women/Persons with Disability members.

### October 12: World Migratory Bird Day

World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) is an awareness – raising campaign organized by CMS (Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of wild animals) and AEWA (Agreement on the Conservation of African – Eurasian Migratory water birds) that highlights

- the conservation of migratory birds,
- threats faced by them,
- their ecological importance
- the need for international cooperation to conserve them.

Different Countries organize different activities based on the theme to mark the WMBD all around the world. This year theme is as follow

**Theme: Protect birds – Be the solution to plastic pollution.**

#### Significance of the theme

With an annual production of more than 300 million tons of plastic, 8 million tons enter the world's ocean every year. These plastics are broken down into smaller particles by water, sunlight and wind that often leads to ingestion and entanglement.

These broken pieces floating on the surface of water covered in algae are easily mistaken for prey by these migrating birds. Ingestion and Entanglement are the two main problems faced by the migrating birds.

#### Ingestion of Plastics

Ingestion of sharp plastic particles cause immediate death by piercing their internal organs. Plastic consumption predominantly leads to chronic feeling of hunger and starvation without nutritional value affecting the migrating process. The birds lose their strength to fly 1000s of km. This affects the survival of the species as birds migrate mainly to breed, hatch eggs, nurture them and return homeland with their

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young ones.

### Entanglement

Layers of plastic in the wetlands lead to entanglement, trapping and eventually death. These caught birds are either injured, pick up infections and end up drowning. They easily become prey to other animals.

## History

The WMBD was started in 2006 by the AEWA – Agreement on the Conservation of African – Eurasian Migratory Water birds. The first World Migratory Birds Day was launched in April 8 – 9, 2006.

The idea began in 1993 when the US Fish and Wild life Services, Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center and the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology began the celebrations of International Migratory Bird Day. However, the celebrations were restricted to the western hemisphere alone. So, in 2005, in its 10th anniversary function AEWA initiated Migratory Water bird Days that were to be held in Europe, Asia and Africa as well.

In 2017, at COP12 in Manila, the other leading environmental organization, the EFTA – Environment for the Americas joined the campaign. This partnership united the world's two largest education campaigns International Migratory Bird Day and World Migratory Bird Day.

In 2018, it was decided to be celebrated twice a year, on second Saturday of May and October.

# Ganges Dolphin census begins

The annual Ganges river Dolphin census is conducted by the World Wide Fund in collaboration with Uttar Pradesh Forest Department. The census is undertaken along the 250 km stretch of Upper Ganga between the Hastinapur Wild life sanctuary and Narora Ramsar site

This year tandem boat survey method is being used. Previous years, direct counting was done. This is because, the tandem boat survey method is more accurate where in the officials use two boats that move in tandem to count the dolphins. Also, this year the upstream of Bijnor Ganga Barrage has also been included.

In 2015, the count was 22 and has so far remained stable. As the animal is a mammal, it certainly has to come to the surface for breathing that helps the census to count. They are also spotted by their strange sounds when they breathe. They are also identified by detecting their high – frequency ultra sound waves.

The National Aquatic animal is important as it is a reliable indicator of the health of the river ecosystem.

## About Ganges Dolphins

The Ganges Dolphins are one of the oldest creatures as that of crocodiles, sharks and turtles. They were first discovered in 1801. During its early days of discovery, the species lived in the Ganges – Brahmaputra – Meghna and Karnaphuli – Sangu river systems in India, Nepal and Bangladesh. However, it is extinct from most of its distribution ranges.

These dolphins can live only in freshwater. They hunt by emitting ultrasonic sounds. The rays bounce off fish and other prey that enables them to see an image in their mind. They dwell alone and also in groups. But the mother and calf always travel together. Female dolphins are larger than the males and they give birth once in 2 to 3 years.

It was declared the National Aquatic animal in 2009.

## Threats to Dolphins

### By catch

The habitat of the Ganges river dolphins is within the most densely populated areas of the world. Both fishermen and the dolphins prefer areas of the river where the fish is plentiful and the river current is slower. Hence, more dolphins die as they accidentally get caught in the fishing nets. They are also hunted for meat and oil to be used in medicinal purposes.

### Pollution

Every year 9,000 tons of pesticides and 6 million tons of fertilizers are used in the vicinity of the river. River Dolphins are the top predators in the Ganges ecosystem. Hence, they tend to have high levels of toxic chemicals in their bodies that affects their health adversely.

## IUCN

The Ganges River Dolphins are placed under "Endangered Category" in the IUCN Red List.

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## West Bengal govt. to set up Kanyashree University in Nadia district to empower girls

The state government of West Bengal is setting up Kanyashree University in Nadia district and Kanyashree colleges across the state so as to empower girls. The Kanyashree university would be only for women.

Earlier in January 2019, the West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee laid the foundation stone of new Kanyashree university at Krishnagar in Nadia district.

### About Kanyashree scheme

**Background**: The Kanyashree scheme was started by state government to empower girls in 2013. In 2017, the Kanyashree scheme won the first prize in UN award and the state government was awarded by *United Nations for Public Service* for its Kanyashree scheme. So far the scheme has been allocated a budget of Rs 7,000 crore and has empowered over 60 lakh girl students.

**Objective**:

- To ensure that girls study in schools and delay their marriages until they attain 18 years of age.
- To empower girls from school to university level so that they can become independent women.
- To improve the status and well-being of girls, particularly those from socio- economically disadvantaged families through conditional cash transfers.

**Cash transfer components of Scheme**–

An annual incentive of Rs.750 is given to girls in age group 13 to 18 years and studying in Class 8 for every year till they continue their education, the only condition being that they are unmarried at the time.

One-time grant of Rs.25,000 is also given to girls once they attain 18 years of age, provided they are engaged in an academic/occupational pursuit and unmarried.

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## Gaganyan training begins in Russia: VSSC Chairman at Citizen Familiarization Program

The Indian Space flight mission Gaganyaan will orbit the Earth for seven days and is scheduled in December 2021. Four Indian Air Force Pilots are to participate in the mission. The training for the pilots to enter space has commenced in Russia.

The mission is undertaken in the low earth orbit at 300 – 400 km from the earth. It would comprise an effective crew escape system and ejection provisions for the pilots in case of rocket explosion.

### Russia's contribution in the mission

Russia will offer semi cryogenic rocket engine technology to India under India's Make – in – India Program. Later the rocket engines will be made in India

Apart from this India is planning to set a NaviC station in Russia and Russia will also be allowed to set up a NaviC station base in Bengalaru, India. The negotiations are on and the deal is yet to be signed.

The announcement about the training was made at the inaugural function of "Citizen Familiarization Program" by the VSSC – Vikram Sarabhai Space Center Director S Somnath

### Citizen Familiarization Program

The Program was conducted during the celebrations of World Space Week 2019. The main purpose of the program is to inform the citizens of the country for what purpose their tax money is being utilized in ISRO. ISRO had invited senior citizens of the country and was attended by more than 400 senior citizens. ISRO also sought their advises and suggestions

The ISRO research and programmed have contributed greatly towards economic development of the country. It has helped to improve digital communication, defence communication, mapping, accurate weather forecast, agricultural production, etc

## Indira Gandhi Award for National Integration awarded to Chandi Prasad Bhatt

Environmentalist Chandi Prasad Bhatt was awarded Indira Gandhi Award for National Integration for the years 2017 and 2018 for his services in promoting and preserving national integration in the country. The award would be presented on 31 October 2019, in a function at Jawahar Bhawan, New Delhi.

**Why 31 October?** It was on 31 October 1984, when former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was killed.

### About Chandi Prasad Bhatt

The 85 year old noted environmentalist and social activist hails from Uttarakhand.

In 1964 he had founded the Dasholi Gram Swarajya Sangh (DGSS) in Gopeshwar, Uttarakhand which later became a mother organisation to *Chipko Movement*, in which he was one of the pioneers.

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He has earlier been awarded Ramon Magsaysay Award (in 1982) for community leadership, followed by Padma Bhushan (2005) and has also been a recipient of Gandhi Peace Prize.

### About Indira Gandhi Award for National Integration

The Congress in its centenary year instituted 'Indira Gandhi Award for National Integration', in memory of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in order to uphold the cause of national integration and understanding which was dearest to her heart. It gives recognition to outstanding contribution to this cause by individuals or institutions.

The year 2019 is the 31st edition of Indira Gandhi Award for National Integration for the year 2017 and 2018.

The award consists of a citation and Rs.10 lakh in cash. The award is given to the awardee by Chairperson Sonia Gandhi, the Congress president.

**Other Prominent recipients of Award**– Ramakrishna Mission Ashram, APJ Abdul Kalam, MS Swaminathan, Rajiv Gandhi, Swami Ranganathananda, Shankar Dayal Sharma, Aruna Asaf Ali, Beant Singh, PN Haksar, MS Subbulakshmi, Javed Akhtar, Bharat Scouts and Guides, Shyam Benegal, AR Rahman, Gulzar, T M Krishna.

## The Order of the Green Crescent: awarded to Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu

Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu was given ***'The Order of the Green Crescent'***, the highest Civilian Honour of Comoros, in Moroni (Comoros capital). He was conferred the honour by Azali Assoumani, President of the Union of Comoros. He is the first to receive the honour from India.

Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu is on a first-ever high-level official visit to Comoros from 10 – 14 October 2019.

### About The Order of the Green Crescent

It is the highest civilian honour of Comoros. This honour was actually started by a Turkish organization in the year 1920. The aim of this organization was to ban de-addiction and drugs.

## mHariyali app launched

The mHariyali mobile application was launched by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs to encourage public engagement in planting trees and Green drives. The application provides automatic geo – tagging of plants. It will hence enable the nodal officers to periodically monitor the plantation.

### What is the initiation all about?

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs in September 2019, had selected 103 Central Government colonies to implement the following

- Awareness and Construction of Roof top rain water harvesting
- Cleaning and Greening of open space through plantation
- Sensitization on Source Segregation of household waste
- Orientation and Capacity building on Home Composting.

The application is a part of the campaign to keep the participants motivated. As a part of the campaign the Hariyali Mahostav was also launched

### Hariyali Mahotsav

The Mahotsav is a mass plantation drive that was conducted in Chanakyapuri, New Delhi. Under the program around 500 plants were planted by 150 people.

Under this mass initiative till date, 25 rain water harvesting structures have been constructed, 21,756 plants have been planted and more than 3800 people participated.

## 2021 census through mobile application

Every 10 years the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, India operating under the Ministry of Home Affairs carry out the massive exercise to count different aspects of India's billion plus population. At the recently held conference of state coordinators and directors of Census operations it was decided that the 2021 census will be conducted through mobile phone application.

### Key Highlights

The official reference date of the census is to be March 1, 2021 and for the snow bound Himachal Pradesh, Uttarkhand and Himachal Pradesh it is to be October 1, 2020. Training of the officials participating in the program is to begin by October 14, 2019. The exercise is to be carried out in 16 different languages at a cost

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of 12,000 crore rupees

This is the first time Government is adopting a Digital method moving away from the traditional pen and paper method.

After the publish of NPR – National Population Register, the government is planning to prepare NRIC – National Register of Indian Citizens

### About India Census

The last and 15th Census began in 2010. Around 2.7 million officials visited households in 7,935 towns and 600,000 villages. The Government spent around 2,200 crores rupees to conduct the census. In 2011, the transgender population was counted in population census in India for the first time. There were around 490,000 transgenders in the country according to 2011 census.

### SECC

The SECC – Socio Economic and Caste Census was conducted in 2011. So far, the GoI has conducted SECC census four times in 1992, 1997, 2002 and 2011.

In 2017, the GoI agreed to use SECC instead of below poverty line as main instrument for identifying beneficiaries.

## Panel to revive GST Collections

The GST collection in September 2019, dropped sharply to a 19-month low. This reflects the widening slowdown of the economy. The tax collections were Rs 91,916 crore in September. This was 2.67% less as compared to September 2018.

### GST Collection

The Gross GST collection in September 2019 comprises of Rs 16,630 crore collection of CGST – Central GST, Rs. 45,069 of IGST – Integrated GST and Rs 22,598 crore of SGST – State GST.

The GST that was amalgamated from July 1, 217, includes different central and state tax, service tax, VAT, excise duty and decline in collection indicate a downturn. Hence, GST Council has set up a panel to suggest measures that will revive GST collection.

### Panel

On October 10, 2019, the GST Council set up a 12-member panel. The panel will not propose tax rate increases or decreases. Rather, it will find ways to widen tax base, prevent evasion, improve voluntary compliance. The main objective of the panel is to augment the revenue other than tax rate increase.

The GST Council has already resisted pressure from industries and automobiles for rate cuts and raised rates on caffeinated drinks that were imposed in September 2019.

The Government will also face pressure on central government's fiscal position for reducing corporate tax rate for businesses announced in September 2019.

## India- Bangladesh Navies to participate in maiden bilateral drill at Visakhapatnam

Navies of India and Bangladesh will participate for the first time in a IN-BN Bilateral Exercise at Visakhapatnam from 12 to 16 October 2019. This exercise which takes place a week after Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to India, will entail development of mutual communication and sharing of best practices, thus adding a new dimension to India- Bangladesh maritime relations.

### About India-Bangladesh maiden Bilateral Navy Exercise

The maiden edition of IN-BN Bilateral Exercise will be held after the second edition of Indian Navy (IN) and Bangladesh Navy (BN) Coordinated Patrol (CORPAT). The first edition of CORPAT commenced in 2018.

**Objective**: To develop mutual communication and sharing best practices between the two navies.

The exercise would include air familiarisation of Bangladesh Navy aircrew and a 10-day training exercise between Indian Navy Marine Commandos and Bangladesh Navy SWADS (or Special Warfare Diving and Salvage, an elite special operations unit of Bangladesh Navy).

### About IN-BN CORPAT 2019

The two-day IN-BN CORPAT 2019 that commenced in northern part of Bay of Bengal, is aimed towards upgrading to a bilateral exercise with navies of both countries engaging in seamanship evolutions, flying exercises with integral helicopters as well as maritime patrol aircraft at sea. During the current edition of CORPAT, the navies of both countries aim to practice and hone their mutual cooperation whilst patrolling near the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL).

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**Participants in CORPAT**: In the bilateral exercise, Indian Navy's guided-missile destroyer Indian Naval Ship **INS Ranvijay** and ingeniously built missile Corvette **INS Kuthar** are participating along with Bangladesh's **BNS Ali Haider**, a Type 053 frigate and **BNS Shadinota**, a Type 056 stealth guided missile corvette.

**NOTE**: India and Bangladesh have a common territorial boundary of more than 4000 km and a maritime boundary.

## PM Modi – President Xi Informal Summit

On October 11, 2019, the Chinese President Xi Jing Ping arrived at the Chennai airport along with 90 delegations for a 2 day long informal summit. His welcome ceremony was grand and was organized by the Tamil Nadu Government in a traditional way. Ahead of the summit 2,000 children wore Xi Jing Ping masks on their faces and created formations of "Welcome" in Mandarin. The leaders held a 2 and half hour talks over lunch.

### About the Summit

The ancient town Mahabalipuram where the summit happened had a colorful change over. The town was decorated in a traditional way with fruits, vegetableas and banana trees.

There are archaeological evidences that proved that the ancient sea port had trade links with the Chinese even before 1000s of years ago. PM Modi guided President Xi around the iconic monuments in the town from the Pallava era.

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Trade and Terrorism were the major discussion between the leaders

### Highlights of the summit

- The leaders discussed about India's concerns over RCEP
- the leaders also discussed about global trading system, regional and global issues
- The unilateral liberalization of e – TV for Chinese nations will enhance people – to – people exchanges between the countries. This will also encourage Chinese tourists to choose India as a tourist destination
- The leaders have agreed to promote and exchange mutual learning among the countries
- The Chinese President urges to take the 70th anniversary of their diplomatic relations next year to conduct broader and deeper cultural people to people exchanges
- The trade deficit between India and China was in China's favor around 57 billion USD last year. China agreed to tackle the deficit.
- The Kashmir issue was not discussed during the talk between the leaders.
- A new Trade and Defence mechanism was also a part of the discussions.
- India will relax e – Visa provisions for Chinese citizens.

## ICON Space Weather Satellite: launched by NASA to Study Earth's Ionosphere

NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) has launched a satellite called ICON or Ionospheric Connection Explorer to explore the mysterious, dynamic region where air meets space. The ICON satellite rocketed into orbit following a two-year delay and was dropped from a plane flying over the Atlantic off the Florida coast.

### About ICON (Ionospheric Connection Explorer)

It will study the link between space weather and Earth weather. Five seconds after the satellite's release, the attached Pegasus rocket ignited and sent Icon on its way.

Icon, a refrigerator-size satellite should have soared in 2017, but problems with air-launched Pegasus rocket interfered. Despite the long delay, as per the NASA this $252 million mission did not exceed its price cap.

The satellite has been built by *Northrop Grumman*, an American global aerospace and defense technology company.

**Purpose**: It will study the airglow formed from gases in ionosphere and also measure the charged environment right around the 580-kilometer-high (360-mile-high) spacecraft.

**Way Forward**: A NASA satellite called Gold was launched in 2018 is also studying the upper atmosphere, but from much higher up. Similarly, more missions are planned in coming years to study the ionosphere, including from International Space Station (ISS).

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### What is Ionosphere?

The ionosphere is the charged part of upper atmosphere extending several hundred miles up. It is in constant flux as space weather bombards it from above and Earth weather from below, sometimes disrupting radio communications.

It is our frontier with space and thus act as a protected layer present at the top of our atmosphere.

**Importance**: Besides Sun, the hurricanes, tornadoes and other extreme weather conditions on Earth are also adding energy in this region. Therefore, the more scientists know, the better spacecraft and astronauts can be protected in orbit through improved forecasting.

## India extends over $60 million line of credit to Comoros

India has extended more than $60 million line of credit to Union of Comoros in the field of Energy and Maritime Defence Cooperation. The announcement was made during the first-ever high-level official visit to Comoros by Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu from 10 – 14 October 2019.

### Key Highlights

Both India and East African island nation Comoros have signed some important agreements including cooperation in defence and energy sectors.

India will be extending a Line of Credit of over $41.6 million for setting up of 18 MW Power Plant in Moroni (Comoros capital).

India will also be gifting $1 million worth of Medicines and medical equipments, $1 million for transport vehicles, $20 million for procurement of High-Speed Interceptor Boats and 1000 MT of rice.

### India and Comoros

Even as political stability and peaceful transition takes place in Comoros, terrorism has, time and again, threatened to derail this process and piracy, maritime threats, cross border transnational crimes, including cybercrimes, have only added new dimensions to country's problem. However, as Comoros continues to be a victim of cross border terrorism, India is willing and ready to partner with it, and supplement its efforts to neutralise these threats, particularly in the maritime domain.

To expand bilateral relations in various fields **India and Comoros have signed 6 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** for Cooperation in the fields of-

- Defence
- Health and Medicine
- Arts and Culture
- Tele-education (or *e-Vidya Bharati)*
- Tele-medicine (or *e-Arogya Bharati)*
- Exemption of Visa for Diplomatic and Official Passport holders for short visits and protocol on foreign office consultation

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# October 13, 2019

## India relaxes e-visa rules for Chinese nationals

India has announced significant relaxations in its e-visa policy or rules for Chinese nationals. The announcement comes at a time when the leaders of the two nations Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese Premier Xi Jinping had met for the second informal summit, in Mamallapuram, Tamil Nadu.

The decision to offer multiple-entry 5-year visas is offered for a much longer duration than offered till now and meets a long-standing demand from China.

### Relaxed e-visa rules for Chinese nationals

October 2019 onwards, the Chinese nationals can apply for an e-Tourist visa (e-TV) of 5-year validity with multiple entries.

The visa fee for this 5-year multiple entry e-TV will be $80. Moreover, the prospective tourists can avail of single-entry 30-day validity e-TV at a reduced visa fee of $25, while for a 30-day e-TV during months of April to June, the visa fee will be only $10.

The one-year multiple-entry e-TV will continue to be offered but at a reduced visa fee of $40.

**Other relaxations**– the existing e-conference visa, e-medical visa and 1-year multiple-entry e-business visa will continue to be issued from online platform of Indian visas.

**Significance**: This unilateral liberalisation of e-TV for Chinese nationals will enhance people-to-people

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exchanges between two nations. It will also encourage more Chinese tourists to choose India as a tourist destination.

## Key Facts: Deep Carbon Observatory

The Deep Carbon Observatory (DCO) is a global research program to outreach carbons role on Earth. It is a community of scientists including physicists, biologists, geo – scientists and chemists working across several traditional disciplinary lines.

### Key highlights of DCO research

- It has found that there are ultra – deep diamonds at 670 km depth in the mantle. It has signatures of geochemical signature of organic material from Earth's surface.
- There may be significant amounts of iron carbide in the Earth's core that accounts to two – thirds of Earth's carbon
- It has identified abiogenic sources of methane from crust and mantle. Abiogenesis is a hypothetical theory which proposes that fossil fuels are formed from inorganic matter rather than by decomposition of organisms or organic matter.
- The complex links between biosphere and geosphere and their evolution. The links are reflected in major events like Great Oxidation Event
    - Great Oxidation Event – Around 2.4 billion years ago, biologically induced molecular oxygen accumulated in the Earth's atmosphere. This changed the atmosphere to an oxidizing atmosphere from a weak reducing atmosphere. The even caused almost all lives on the Earth to go extinct. Scientists are still unable to determine causes of the event.
- The Volcanic flux of carbon – dioxide is twice as that of previously determined.

### DCO Explorations

The DCO explores

- High pressure and Extreme temperature organic synthesis
- Complex interactions between organic molecules and minerals
- Conducts field observations of deep microbial eco systems
- Constructs theoretical models of lower crust and upper mantle carbon sources
- Conducts observations of anomalies in petroleum geochemistry

### Reservoir and Flux community of DCO

The subduction of tectonic plates and volcanic outgassing are the main sources of carbon fluxes. But the process and rates of these carbon fluxes are poorly understood. The main function of the Reservoir and Flux community of DCO is to explore the storage and transport of carbon in the deep interior of the Earth.

The Deep Earth Carbon Degassing Project of DCO is examining if large reservoirs of carbon are hidden in the mantle and core. It also works on finding how this carbon outgasses from the Earth's deep interior into the surface environment.

### Deep Energy wing of DCO

It quantifies the processes and environmental conditions that control origins, forms, quantities and movements of carbon compounds. This community of DCO predominantly works around carbon compounds that were reduced from deep carbon compounds through geologic time.

It conducts investigations in 25 global terrestrial and marine environment to determine the processes controlling movements of abiotic gases and their origin, form, quantities. It also discriminates abiotic and biotic methane gas and organic species.

The Deep Energy community also quantifies the rates of fluid rock interactions that produce abiotic hydrogen.

### Deep life wing of DCO

It documents the interaction between the carbon cycle and diversity of Earth's deep biosphere. It marks the diversity of subsurface marine and continental microorganisms in space and time and their interaction with the deep carbon.

The wing conducts Census of Deep life annually. This census identifies the diversity and distribution of microbial life in continental and marine deep subsurface environments.

According to the 2018 census by the Deep life wing of DCO, life forms on the earth including 70% of

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bacteria comprises up to 23 billion tons of carbon. They live up to 4.8 km deep underground including 2.5 km below the seabed.

## Dubai to host 2019 First Global DXB Challenge

Dubai will be hosting the 2019 First Global DXB Challenge, a large gathering for creative young minds in the fields of robotics and artificial intelligence. It will be held for the first time in the region from 24 to 27 October 2019 at the Festival Arena in Dubai, UAE.

### About 2019 First Global DXB Challenge

**Objective**: First Global Challenge seeks-

- To encourage and empower youth with a passion for science, technology, mathematics, engineering, and develop their skills and equip them with tools necessary to contribute to shaping future.
- To address the world's most critical environmental issues like sustainability and pollution, wastage of energy and water through a global robotics competition.

**Organised by**: The Dubai Future Foundation

**Theme** of the event: '*Ocean Opportunities*'.

The event will bring together over 1,500 youth from over 191 countries to collaborate, create and compete for a better future, thus making it one of the largest events of its kind in the Middle East region.

The Challenge focuses on developing robots to clean up millions of tons of pollutants in oceans. Each team will receive a robotic kit and is tasked with assembling a robot that will be able to address various issues related to ocean and marine life.

## October 13: International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction

The International Day of Disaster Risk Reduction (IDDRR) was begun in 1989 by the United Nations General Assembly. The purpose of the day is to promote global culture towards risk awareness and disaster reduction. It celebrates how people and communities around the world reduce their exposure to disasters. Also, the day raises awareness towards the importance of reining in the risks that are faced by the global citizens.

**Theme: Reduce disaster damage to critical infrastructure and disruption of basic services**

### Significance of the Theme

The theme is one of the seven targets of Sendai framework. It focuses

- to reduce the disaster damage to infrastructure
- Prevent disruption of basic services due to disaster damages, especially health and education.

As the death tolls due to tsunamis and earthquakes is increasing, it becomes essential to ensure if schools and hospitals are following regulations and building codes. The other areas of critical infrastructure that requires frequent monitoring includes potential life – saving utilities and services like energy, food and water supply, telecommunications and transport.

### Sendai Seven Framework (2015 – 2030)

In 2015, the UNDRR – United Nations Disaster Risk Reduction launched the Sendai Seven Framework. It is a campaign that integrates all the organizations including government, NGOs, local governments, community groups, private sectors, etc. to promote the best practices to reduce disaster risks and disaster loses.

It was adopted by the UN at the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction that was held at Sendai, Japan. It is the successor agreement to the Hyogo Framework for action (2005 – 2015).

Every target is to be accomplished by the end of the corresponding year The seven global targets set by the Sendai Framework is as follows

- 2016: Reduce the global disaster mortality by 2030 as compared to the 2005-2015
- 2017: Reduce the number of people affected due to disaster as compared to 2005-2015
- 2018: Reduce direct disaster economic losses in relation to global GDP by 2030.
- 2019: Reduce disaster damage and disruption of basic services and developing their resilience by 2030
- 2020: Increase number of countries that frame their own local disaster risk reduction strategies by 2030.
- 2021: Enhance international cooperation to develop countries through adequate and sustainable

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support to complement their national actions.

- 2022: Increase the availability and access to multi – hazard early warning systems.

### International Association for Preparedness and response

It was formed in 1962. It is a non – profit organization that has volunteers and associations active in preparedness schemes and calamity emergencies. It provides resource distribution, professional networking and leading opportunities in response to disasters.

### India and disasters

About 58.6% of Indian landmass is prone to earthquakes. Over 12% of Indian lands are prone to floods and river erosion, 68% of cultivable areas are prone to landslides especially in the hilly areas.

## PM Modi chairs meeting on Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat programme

Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired a meeting on 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat' programme. Under the initiative, the government plans to hold people-to-people exchange between states to enhance knowledge about each other's culture.

### About Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat

The programme is a personal initiative of Prime Minister Narendra Modi that highlights India's diversity and furthers national unity. It was announced by the Prime Minister in 2015 on the 140th birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

**Objective**: The unique Mission seeks to develop a holistic national perspective on important issues as well as encourage celebration of India's vibrant regional cultures.

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It also aims to actively enhance interaction between people of diverse cultures living in different states and union territories in India with the objective of promoting greater mutual understanding amongst them.

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## Technology Summit, 2019

The 25th Technology Summit is a bilateral platform that provides opportunities to industries, government agencies and institutes from India and other countries to interact with each other. In 2017, Canada participated in the Summit and in 2018 it was Italy. This year Netherlands has been invited. The summit acts as a forum to forge partnerships, explore new avenues and to create joint ventures to explore new avenues of collaborations to boost trade and investment. The summit is to be held in New Delhi between 15 and 16 October, 2019. It is being organised by Ministry of Science and Technology.

Next year, India has planned to take the summit globally. It intends to invite participants from different countries.

**Theme: Young entrepreneurship**

The 2019 India – Netherlands technology summit is being organized by DST and CII, DST-Department of Science and Technology and CII-Confederation of India Industry.

### Objectives

- To profile the Netherlands–India technologies
- Showcase opportunities for Netherlands and India on technology and scientific research across key areas, especially in the fields of water, agriculture and Health
- To increase the visibility of Dutch and Indian entrepreneurial ecosystem.
- To highlight the cooperation between India and Netherlands.

### Significance in choosing Netherlands

The bilateral research cooperation between India and Netherlands in fields like Internet of Things, medical devices, big data, urban water system would be enhanced through the summit. There are great scopes for closer partnership between the countries to leverage emerging digital technologies.

### Investment

According to the Ministry of External Affairs, there are over 200 Indian companies operating in Netherlands. It is the third largest investor in India in 2017 – 18 with investments valued at 2.67 billion USD. The top 5 sectors that are attracting FDI equity flows from Netherlands include computer, hardware, software, automobile industry, trading and fermentation industries.

### Trade

The bilateral trade between India and Netherlands between April 2017 and March 2018 was around 6.28

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billion USD. Netherlands is the fourth largest trading partner of India after EU, UK, Germany and Belgium.

### Indian Diaspora

There are around 2,35,000 Indian living in Netherlands. Of which, 2 lakh are Suriname-Hindustani community that are well integrated to the Dutch society. Apart from this there are 3,000 Indian students pursuing their masters, bachelors and research courses in various universities in Netherlands.

### Outcomes of the summit

- The Indian and the Netherlands governments are to sign MoUs based on the summit and the requirements identified by it.
- New public-private partnerships between India and Netherlands
- New opportunities for fast tracked market entry for existing Dutch and Indian stakeholders.
- Solutions for societal challenges
- Deepening the ties between India and Netherlands in multiple verticals of knowledge.

## DHARMA GUARDIAN – 2019: Indo-Japan Joint Military Exercise

India and Japan will be holding a two-week-long joint military exercise called Dharma Guardian-2019 in Mizoram from 19 October to 2 November 2019. This Joint Military Exercise will be conducted at Counter-Insurgency and Jungle Warfare School in Vairengte, Mizoram.

### About Exercise Dharma Guardian

It is an annual training event, which is being conducted in India since 2018.

**Objective**:

- To increase interoperability between forces of two nations and enhance coordination in dealing with various security challenges including counter-terrorism
- To cover platoon-level joint training on counter-terrorism operations in jungle and urban scenario

**Participants**: Indian Army and Japanese Ground Self Defence Forces (JGSDF) comprising 25 soldiers each, will participate in exercise aimed at sharing experience gained during various Counter-Terrorism Operations in respective Countries.

**Significance**: In the backdrop of global terrorism, the exercise is crucial and significant in terms of security challenges faced by both nations. The joint military exercise will enhance level of defence co-operation between Indian Army and Japanese Ground Self Defence Forces (JGSDF) which in turn will further foster bilateral relations between two nations.

## World Youth Chess Championship 2019

The World Youth Chess Championship concluded in Mumbai, Maharashtra on 12 October 2019. India ended the World Youth Chess Championship by bagging 7 medals including 1 gold and 3 silver and 3 bronze medals. Only the Under-16 Girls category proved to be elusive for India in the chess championship.

The 14 year old R Praggnanandhaa of India emerged as unconquered king in World Youth Chess Championship by claiming the coveted gold in Under-18 Open category.

**NOTE**: The World Youth Chess Championship is a chess competition for boys and girls under the age of 8, 10, 12, 14, 16 and 18. Every year 12 world champions are crowned.

### Winners of World Youth Chess Championship 2019:

**U18 Open**: Praggnanandhaa R. (INDIA) 9.0; Shant Sargsyan (ARMENIA) 8.5; Artur Davtyan (ARM) 8.0

**U18 Girls**: Polina Shuvalova (RUSSIA) 8.5; Vantika Agrawal (INDIA) 8.0; Alexandra Obolentseva (RUSSIA) 7.5

**U16 Open**: Rudik Makarian (RUSSIA) 8.5; Stefan Pogosyan (RUSSIA) 8.0; Aronyak Ghosh (INDIA) 8.0

**U16 Girls**: Leya Garifullina (RUSSIA) 8.5; Nurgali Nazerke (Kazakhstan) 8.5; Anousha Mahdian (IRI) 8.0

**U14 Open**: Aydin Suleymanli (Azerbaijan) 9.0; Srihari L R (INDIA) 8.0; Sreeshwan Maralakshikari (INDIA) 8.0

**U14 Girls**: Meruert Kamalidenova (Kazakhstan) 8.5; Divya Deshmukh (INDIA) 8.0; Rakshitta Ravi (INDIA) 8.0

## Vajra Prahar: India-US Joint Military Exercise, 2019

A joint military training exercise "Vajra Prahar" is conducted in Seattle between October 13, 2019 and October 28, 2019. The exercise is conducted alternately in India and US. The Special Forces and the Southern Command of Indian Armed Forces will participate in the exercise

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## Significance of Vajra Prahar

Around 45 – member special forces team will train alongside US special forces. It will enable the soldiers to train in areas such as operational tactics and joint mission planning.

## Special Forces of India

The special forces of the Indian army are those forces that are under the direct command of the Indian military. They are specifically organized, trained and equipped. They support special operations. Special operations are law enforcement, military and intelligence operations that are carried out using unconventional methods and sources. The primary goal of these operations is to achieve a political or military objective where a conventional force might affect the overall outcome. The US relied on special operations between 2003 and 2012 for its national security. The purpose of the special operations was to identify, hunt and kill terrorists.

The Special Forces was created in 1966 during the Indo – Pakistan war, 1965. The Parachute Regiment was the first Special operations unit. The special forces were involved in Operation Blue star, Operation Pawan, Operation Cactus and Kargil war.

## Southern Command

The Southern Command was formed in 1895. It has seen the action of integration of several Princely states. The commendable jobs of the command include 1961 Indian Annexation of Goa, 1965 and 1971 Indo – Pakistani wars. It also participated in World War II.

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A month back, in September 2019, the joint Exercise "Yudh Abhyas" was conducted in Washington DC.

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# World Bank: South Asia Economic Focus, 2019

The World Bank recently released its South Asia Economic Focus, 2019. The report says that Bangladesh and Nepal are growing faster than India. However, it assured that India is still a fast-growing economy. India is relatively hit hard by the recent global economic slowdown.

The report is titled "Exports Wanted" highlighting the export potential of the South Asian region being not used to the fullest.

## Key findings of the report: India

- The projected growth of India in 2019 according to the report is 6%. However, India is expected to recover gradually. The report said that the growth rate of India will reach 6.9% in 2021 and 7.2% in 2022.
    - In 2016-17, the growth rate of India was 8.2%
    - In 2017-18, the growth rate was 7.2%
    - In 2018-19, the growth rate was 6.8%
- The domestic demand (the major driver of growth rate in India according to the report) of the India has slipped. The private consumption is growing at the rate of 3.1%. It was 7.3% last year
- The manufacturing growth dropped to below 1% in the second quarter as compared to 10% last year. The reason for the drop down is mainly due to the global slowdown in their investments
- The industrial output growth increased to 6.9% due to increase in construction and manufacturing activities
- The growth in agricultural sector and service sector was 2.9% and 7.5% respectively
- The Current Account Deficit of India widened from 1.8% in last year to 2.1% this year
- 80% of the causes of the economic slowdown is coming from international causes.

## Key findings of the report : South Asia

- South Asia remains the fastest growing region in the world, despite of the report's estimation of growth in South Asia to fall to 5.(% in 2019.
- The exports growth of South Asia accelerates and import growth is slowing. The growth of imports has declined by 15 to 20% in the region. Under these circumstances the GDP growth is expected to accelerate
- South Asian countries are exporting only a third of their potential
- The growth rate of South Asia was 7.7% in 2016, 7.2% in 2017 and 6.9% in 2018
- Among all the countries India and Sri Lanka showed the lowest growth rates
- Foreign Exchange reserves declined in South Asian region

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- Food inflation decelerated in the region. It was stable around 3%. The prices fell mainly due to good harvests.

### Key findings of the report: Country wise growth rates

- In Nepal, the GDP growth is projected to be 6.5%. The growth will be backed by construction activities, tourist arrivals and higher public spending
- In Afghanistan the growth is expected to reach 3%. It will be mainly due to improved farming conditions and assuming political stability after elections
- In Sri Lanka the growth is expected to soften to 2.7% in 2019. IF supported by recovering investment and exports, political uncertainty dissipated and tackling security challenges the growth is projected to reach 3.3% in 2020

### Key Findings of the report: Trade Policy changes affecting South Asia

- Import tariffs to protect domestic industries
- Trade tensions between India and US
  - US imposed tariffs in steel and Aluminum imported from India. India in response to the move, postponed the retaliatory tariffs on selected US products like chickpeas, walnuts, Artemis, lentils, etc.
  - India had benefited greatly under the GSP – Generalized System of Preferences that gave 2,00 products duty free access to the US. Around 5.7 billion USD worth goods were covered under GSP in 2017. In 2019, the US withdrew its GSP following the market access strategy to open India's market for US products.
- India – Pakistan trade tensions
  - The MFN – Most Favored Nation status was withdrawn after the Pulwama attack. The custom duties on all goods imported from Pakistan was raised to 200%. It is expected that Pakistan will retaliate imposing tariffs on Indian goods.
- Trade war between China and USA
  - The garment industry of Bangladesh has benefited immensely from the ongoing trade tensions between China and USA.

## PM Modi to inaugurate Kartarpur corridor on November 8

On November 8, 2019, PM Modi will inaugurate the Kartarpur corridor to Sri Kartarpur Sahib in Pakistan. The opening is being done on the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev

### About the corridor

Kartarpur Sahib is located in the Narowal district of Pakistan across the Ravi river. It is about 4 km from the Dera Baba Nanak shriince in India. As a major initiative India and Pakistan agreed to set up the Kartarpur corridor that will connect the holy shrines.

The corridor will connect Dera Baba Nanak Shrine in Gurdaspur district in Punjab and Darbar Sahib in Kartarpur. The corridor will facilitate visa free movement of Indian pilgrims to the shrine.

Till now, Indian devotes had to contend darshan using binoculars installed at the Dera Baba Nanak Sahib.

### Significance of the shrine

The Gurudwara was built to commemorate the place where the Sikh founder Guru Nanak settled after completing his missionary works. He lived at the site for around 18 years till his death in 1539. The shrine is built where Guru Nanak is said to have died.

## India joins WEF's G20 Global Smart Cities Alliance on Technology Governance

India has joined the World Economic Forum's (WEF) G20 Global Smart Cities Alliance on Technology Governance, a league of 15 of world's leading city networks and technology governance organisations that will work towards advancing responsible and ethical use of smart city technologies.

India's joining the league is a critical first step towards accelerating global best practices, fostering greater openness and public trust as well as mitigating risks regarding the collection of data in public spaces.

### The G20 Global Smart Cities Alliance on Technology Governance

**Background**: The G20 Global Smart Cities Alliance on Technology Governance was established in June 2019, in conjunction with G20 Summit held in Osaka, Japan. It is an Alliance that comprises of 15 of the

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world's leading city networks and technology governance organisations. It seeks to create global norms and policy standards for the use of connected devices in public spaces.

**Secretariat**: World Economic Forum

**Founding set of Institutional Partners include**–

- Presidents and host nations of Group of 20 (G20) in 2019 and 2020
- Japan and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
- The Smart City Mission of India
- Cities for All
- Cities Today Institute
- Commonwealth Local Government Forum
- Commonwealth Sustainable Cities Network among others.

The partners represent over 2,00,000 cities and local governments, start-ups, research institutions, leading companies, and civil society organisations.

**Significance**: As growth and expansion of cities brings both enormous opportunities and significant challenges, these smart city technologies can help decrease traffic congestion, improve resilience during natural disasters combat crime, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Also, without proper governance, these technologies pose significant risk, notably to privacy and security.

### Way Forward

The new global policy standards for privacy, security and sustainability of smart technologies will be rolled out in advance of 2020 G20 Summit scheduled to be held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The first policy design workshops with city leaders will be held in November 2019 in conjunction with Smart City Expo World Congress in Barcelona, Spain.

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## Chinese President Xi in Nepal

After Chennai Connect, the second informal summit at Mahabalipuram, India, the Chinese President visited Nepal. This is the first visit by a Chinese President in 22 years. The trade of the land locked Himalayan nation is dominated by the Indian sub-continent. Increasing its connectivity with Beijing it now seeks to end Indian dominance in its trade.

### Key take-away of the visit

- A 70-km rail link to be constructed as a part of China's Belt and Road initiative. The link will connect Kathmandu, the capital city with Gyiron in Tibet.
- 28-km Kerung-KAthmandu road tunnel is also proposed to halve the distance between Kathmandu and Chinese border. Nepal believes that these road projects are alternates to the trade routes through India. In 2015 and 2016, Nepal faced acute shortage of fuel and medicine due to the blockade along its border in India.
- Nepal and China signed around 20 deals covering water supply, trade, traditional medicines.
- The Chinese President pledged Rs 56 billion assistance to Kathmandu
- President Xi promised to replenish the Arniko highway that links Kathmandu with Tatopani transit point. The highway was badly damaged in 2015 earthquake.
- China is to provide further support in the post-quake reconstruction to promote "Visit Nepal Year 2020". The program will support education and urban development in the country.

Both India and China are trying to influence Nepal, the natural buffer between them. India accounts to nearly two-thirds of Nepal's trade and fuel supply.

## Women's World Boxing Championships 2019

AIBA Women's World Boxing Championships 2019 was hosted by Ulan-Ude, Russia from 3 to 13 October 2019. The best female boxers in the world competed in 11th edition of the female elite competition for the most prestigious boxing titles in word. Around 224 competitors from 57 nations participated.

The AIBA Women's World Boxing Championships will be returning to Russia after 2005 when the city of Podolsk hosted the tournament.

### India's Performance

India's Debutant **Manju Rani** (48kg) scripted history as she became the first Indian woman boxer in 18 years to enter the finals of Women's World Boxing Championship in her maiden appearance. She stormed

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to the finals of World Boxing Championships in Russia with a win 4-1 win over her opponent Chuthamat Raksat of Thailand.

In the finals she won silver medal after going down 1-4 against the host nation's second-seeded boxer *Ekaterinal Paltceva*.

**Other three Indian pugilists**, includes- Mary Kom, Jamuna Boro and Lovlina Borgohain

**M C Mary Kom** lost her semi-final bout against Busenaz Cakiroglu of Turkey and won bronze medal in 51 kg category.

India's Debutante **Jamuna Boro** also had to content with a bronze medal (in 54kg semifinal) after she lost to Huang Hsiao-Wen of Chinese Taipei with an unanimous 5:0.

**Lovlina Borgohain** won bronze in 69kg after losing in semifinal to Yang Liu of China.

## October 14, 2019

### Typhoon Hagibis hits Japan

Torrential rain and tornado-like winds lashed large parts of Japan, as the country was hit by Typhoon Hagibis. The typhoon is being touted as the strongest storm the country faced in past 60 years since *Kanogawa Typhoon* (1958).

#### Key Highlights

Typhoon 'Hagibis' means '*speed*' in Philippine language, Tagalog.

**Evacuation**: More than 7 million people were urged to leave their homes amid severe flood and landslide warnings. Train services were halted, and over a thousand flights grounded. Amid the warnings Formula 1 had cancelled its Japanese Grand Prix as well as two Rugby World Cup games scheduled were also cancelled.

**Landfall**: After typhoon Hagibis made landfall on Japan's main island of Honshu, it ripped through Japan including Tokyo's metropolitan area, caused multiple rivers to overflow, triggered landslides and power blackouts in nearly, 3,76,000 houses, more than 100 people were injured across country.

**Current Status**: The typhoon has now weakened to an extra-tropical cyclone off Japan's northeastern coast, and most train services as well as most of the flights of Japan Airlines Co. and All Nippon Airways Co. resumed operations after large-scale suspensions.

### India ADB sign 190 million USD loan

On 12 October, 2019, the GoI signed a 190 million USD loan with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to upgrade road transport in the state of Rajasthan. The project includes upgrading of 754 km of state highways, major district roads to two lane. The project will benefit 26 million people in 14 districts of Rajasthan.

The project also includes construction of more than 200 bus stops and 2 km of raised side walk.

In 2017, the bank offered 220 million USD of loan to upgrade 1,000 km of road.

#### India and ADB

India is one of the founding members of the ADB. It is the fourth largest shareholder in the bank. In 1980s and 1990s the bank supported the government's program of industrialization. India got its first loan from the bank in 1986 as Industrial credit to introduce new technologies and to modernize medium-sized industries.

#### About ADB

The bank was established in 1966. The headquarters of the bank is located in Philippines. The bank was modeled close to World Bank. Every year ADB releases an annual report that summarizes its budget, operations and other materials for review by the public.

ADB is a UN observer. Japan and US hold the largest shares of the bank as of 2016. China is the third largest shareholder followed by India and Australia.

### Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav

The flagship and premier festival of Ministry of Culture, the Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav is to be conducted in Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh on 14th October, 2019. It is a part of the Ek Bharat Shreshta Bharat initiative that is being organized between 14th October, 2019 and 21st October 2019.

The festival began in 2015. It showcases rich cultural heritage of India. It includes classical and contemporary handicrafts, painting, arts-folk, sculpture, etc. It covers the fushion of folk art forms from 22

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states and will offer the best chance to experience the emerging virtuosity.

### Significance of the mahotsav

The aim is to promote engagement of different states and UTs to enhance mutual understanding and bonding between people of diverse culture. This will secure stronger unity and integrity of India.

### Ek Bharat Shreshta Bharat

It was announced by PM Modi in October 2015 on the occasion of 140th birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. The following are the main objectives of the initiative

- To celebrate unity and diversity of the Nation
- To promote the spirit of national integration
- To show case the rich heritage and culture, traditions and customs of the country
- To establish long-term engagements
- To create environment that promotes learning between states

Recently after India-china informal summit, PM Modi chaired the meeting on Ek Bharat Shreshta Bharat.

## India, Sierra Leone sign six agreements including $30 mn line of credit

To expand the bilateral relations in various fields, India and Sierra Leone signed six agreements including extending a credit line of $30 million for rice cultivation. The agreement was signed during the second leg of Vice President Venkaiah Naidu's five-day visit to the West African countries, as part of which he reached Freetown, capital of Sierra Leone.

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During the visit, Vice President Venkaiah Naidu and Sierra Leone President Julius Maada Bio showed committed towards further strengthening bilateral relations.

### Key Highlights of Visit

In support of the Line of Credit extended by India to the tune of $30 million for Irrigation development in Tomabum to achieve self-sufficiency in rice production, an agreement was also signed with EXIM Bank of India in this regard.

**UNSC Reforms**: Both countries also agreed to push for United Nations Security Council (UNSC) reforms so that one-third (33%) of mankind residing in Africa and India occupy their rightful place in decision making bodies of UN. Moreover, UN also need to be reformed to reflect realities of today and address current global challenges.

India announced its decision to **establish a High Commission in Sierra Leone**.

Both countries have agreed to enhance cooperation in agriculture, infrastructure development, food processing, capacity building and Information Technology.

**MoU Signed**

For Sierra Leone to participate in India's Pan-African tele-Education, tele-Medicine initiatives, e-Arogya Bharati and e-VidyaBharati.

To initiate a cultural exchange program between governments of India and Sierra Leone for the years 2019-23.

### India- Sierra Leone

**UNAMSIL**: India was among the first countries to contribute to United Nation Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) with the deployment of 4000 strong Indian Military contingent.

So far, India's developmental assistance to Sierra Leone is about $217.5 million for various sectors such as water resources, agriculture, energy and telecommunication.

**e-Visa facility**: India has extended e-Visa facility to the nationals of Sierra Leone for ease of mobility and both sides are also negotiating a visa waiver agreement for holders of diplomatic and official passports thus enhancing people-to-people linkages between the two countries.

During the recent visit, India proposed a line of credit for construction of a new President's Office complex in Freetown.

## Rozgar Mela in Bikaner concludes

The Skill India Rozgar Mela is conducted by the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) under Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship. It was recently organized on 12th and 13th October, 2019. 100+ corporate participated in the event and 2000 youths were shortlisted.

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### Significance

The Mela is one of the largest job fairs organized by the NSDC. The job fair also included Kaushal Mela. Under Kaushal Mela, counselling is provided for candidates and parents as well. It helps them understand the various opportunities that are available in the skill development ecosystem.

At the mela, the aspirants have opportunities to register with PMKVY – Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana and PMKKY – Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendra Yojana.

### About Rozgar Mela

The program is one of the key initiatives of the NSDC. NSDC intends to provide vocational training and job opportunities to the youth through the program. In the last 18 months more than 1088 Roz Melas have been organized.

### PMKVY

It is a flagship program of the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship. The program is implemented by the NSDC. The main objective of the program is to increase productivity and align training and certifications according to the requirement of the country. The scheme was launched in 2016 and is planned to operate till 2020. Under the scheme, around 10 million youths are aimed to be trained by 2020. The budget allocated to the scheme is Rs 12,000 crores.

## Sports Ministry Makes Sporting Infrastructure Accessible to All

In order to further the Fit India Movement, Union Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports (MYAS) has decided to allow national and state sports federations, leagues and clubs to organise sports events in all sporting facilities owned by the government, without paying any fee.

This first-of-a-kind decision would provide access to government's playfields and sporting infrastructure to federations and to all sports persons free of cost from 1 November 2019. The new policy was taken in consideration that people must have access to playfields and sporting infrastructure so that culture of playing sport and therefore of fitness, becomes a way of life for Indians.

### Highlights of MYAS New Policy

The sporting facilities will also be accessible free of cost to coaches training athletes who are not part of camps organised in Sports Authority of India (SAI) centers. From 1 November onwards, Training sessions can be booked by a coach online and the coach can charge a reasonable training fee from his/her trainees.

**In first phase**: The stadiums in Delhi including Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium (JNS), Major Dhyanchand Stadium, Indira Gandhi Stadium (IGS) and Karni Singh Shooting Range (KSSR) will be opened up for state and national federations for hosting leagues, tournaments and competitions of all sporting disciplines. The Federations and Leagues will not be charged for use of facilities in these stadiums.

**Non-SAI (Sports Authority of India) coaches**: The new policy will also allow non-SAI coaches to train their athletes at the available stadiums without any charge, provided that the non-SAI coach has a minimum of at least 10 wards under his/her training.

Even youngsters who are not getting trained for any sport professionally will also have access to these stadia and can play a game of their choice by advance online booking against available slots, provided they have got their photo identity cards made from Sports Authority of India.

**Stadium Earmarked**: To ensure optimum utilization of available infrastructure, each stadium is being earmarked for a specific sport such as IG stadium will be earmarked for boxing, badminton, wrestling and judo while JLN will host football competitions, leagues and training organised by federations, KSSR will host shooting competitions and National Stadium will host hockey and swimming.

## National Kishore Kumar Samman for 2018-19

Noted director and producer Priyadarshan, was conferred the Madhya Pradesh government's National Kishore Kumar Samman for 2018-19 at a function held in Khandwa, the birthplace of the legendary singer-actor, Kishore Kumar.

### Key Highlights

Priyadarshan has made several blockbuster Malayalam and Hindi films. He was conferred the award on 13 October 2019.

**Why 13 October?** Kishore Kumar died on 13 October 1987 in Mumbai, Maharashtra. His death anniversary was marked by a large number of people who arrived at his memorial here and played some of his golden

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hits.

Kishore Kumar Samman jury selected noted Hindi cinema actor ***Waheeda Rehman*** award for 2017-18. The venue and date for honouring Waheeda Rehman would be announced soon.

### About National Kishore Kumar Samman for 2018-19

The National Kishore Kumar Award has been instituted in memory of eminent playback singer and all-rounder, Kishore Kumar.

The award was instituted by *MP Department of Culture* and is awarded for excellence in cinematic achievements. It carries a citation and a cash prize of Rs.2 lakh.

**First Recipient**: Hrishikesh Mukherjee (1997–98)

## RCEP to meet again as India fails to agree on a common ground

The RCEP – Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership hosted meeting on October 11 and 12, 2019 in Xinhua Thailand. The trade ministers of 16 nations met and discussed on economic affairs in the region. However, due to India's tough stand on market access, e – commerce and investment the grouping will meet once again.

RCEP includes 10 members of ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) and six Asia – Pacific countries that includes Australia, India, China, Japan, South Korea and New Zealand.

### India's Demands

- India wants its concerns on investment, e – commerce, taxation, MSME and policies framed by local bodies to be reworked before it signs the deal.
- India wants its Chinese imports to be checked via automatic safeguards
- It demanded favorable rules on investments
- The Policy changes on Indian Taxation System should not be challenged
- The policies framed for local bodies should not be questioned
- E – Commerce talks are still underway with Japan and needs to be addressed.

### Highlights

- Negotiators to sort differences by October 19 ahead of November 4 (The RCEP Summit)
- India participated in deliberations to promote trade and investment to achieve mutual economic growth. Out of 25 deliberations, 6 are remaining. It includes e – commerce, investment, trade remedies, competition and rules of origin
- A TNC – Trade Negotiations Committee is to be set up.

### Issue

There is strong opposition against RCEP in India by the domestic constituencies like diary cooperatives (Amul), farmer organizations, industrial sectors and civil society organizations. This is mainly because, they fear that the Indian market will be flooded by cheap Chinese goods and farm items, especially from New Zealand and Australia.

The GoI has asked to keep the commerce ministry out of dairy sector out of the proposed RCEP free trade pact. This is because opening of free trade in dairy sector will affect farmers in India, the largest producer of milk.

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## BRICS Culture Ministers' meeting held in Brazil

Union Minister of State for Culture and Tourism (Independent charge) Prahlad Singh Patel participated in BRICS Culture Ministers' meeting held in Curitiba, Brazil. At the meet the minister reaffirmed India's commitment to contribute towards strengthening bonds between member countries.

### Key Highlights of Meet

Since, BRICS countries have witnessed cultural cooperation scaling to new heights, thereby India proposed to add literature as another field of cooperation between countries to enhance cooperation in field of literary works.

Minister Prahlad Singh Patel also put forward thoughts on Letter of Intention (LoI) on Creative Economy in BRICS Countries to set a milestone in the BRICS cultural cooperation. He further requested his fellow counterparts to develop a thorough knowledge of creative markets of BRICS member states and encourage mobility of *professionals of creative economy* in order to stimulate opportunities.

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## India-BRICS

BRICS is an association of- Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. These are five major emerging national economies.

For India, BRICS is a valuable forum for coordination, consultation and cooperation on contemporary global issues of mutual interest.

Under the aegis of collaborations in various fields well participated by all the member states, the institutions have made commendable efforts to organise a number of events in these fields. One such event is joint exhibition titled '***Bonding Regions and Imagining Cultural Synergies***' that will be hosted during November-December 2019, by *National Gallery of Modern Arts of India* under the auspices of BRICS Alliance of Museums and Art Galleries.

## National Blindness and Visual Impairment Survey, 2019

The National Blindness and Visual Impairment Survey was released by the Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan at the 13th Conference of Central Council of Health and Family Welfare.

The survey was conducted by the AIIMS, Delhi and Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. The report was released in October 10, 2019. The survey was conducted between 2015 and 2019.

India is the first country to launch National Program for Control of Blindness in 1976. The aim of the program is currently to reduce the blindness prevalence to 0.3% by 2020.

### Key findings of the report

- Cataract is the leading cause of blindness in people above 50 years. OF these around 93% of blindness cases and 96.2% of visual impairment cases are avoidable
- The prevalence of blindness in India is 1.99%. Bijnor, Uttar Pradesh has the highest population suffering from blindness. Around 3.67% of the district are blind and 21.82% suffer visual impairment.
- Blindness is more pronounced among illiterates as compared to literates. Around 3.23% illiterates are blind and 0.43% literates are blind
- Also, blindness is more prevalent in rural population (2.14%) as compared to urban (1.8%)

### Causes of blindness according to the report

- The causes included
  - Aphakia – Absence of lens in the eye
  - Untreated non-infectious corneal opacity-scarring of cornea
- Cataract related surgical complication was the second highest cause for blindness.
- The outcomes of cataract surgery are not good everywhere. Around 40% of cataract were done in government facilities. Rest of the surgeries took place in private and non – profit facilities. Of these, only 57.8% saw good visual outcome.
- Cost was the biggest barrier in accessing cataract surgeries. Around 22.1% of blindness was caused because of cost as a barrier.
- Around 22.1% of blindness were caused due to lack of awareness

## Sourav Ganguly set to be new BCCI president

Former Indian captain Sourav Ganguly is all set to become the new president of Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) with elections unlikely to be held at BCCI's Annual General Meeting on October 23. He defeated Brijesh Patel in a see-saw battle and is expected to be the only presidential nominee.

The 47-year-old Sourav Ganguly currently holds the presidency of Cricket Association of Bengal (CAB). He will have to demit his post in September 2020 due to a compulsory cooling-off period.

### Key Highlights

In an informal setting held in Mumbai, all the BCCI members came together in a unanimous stand against Supreme Court *Committee of Administrators' (COA)* functioning, and signalled their return to the corridors of Indian cricket administration by choosing Sourav Ganguly to be next president of BCCI.

At the meet, two powerful lobbies, one backed by Anurag Thakur and another by N Srinivasan, pushed for their candidate Sourav Ganguly and Brijesh Patel respectively, to be appointed next BCCI president.

It was later agreed that Sourav Ganguly would become hold the next BCCI presidency while Karnataka's Brijesh Patel would now take over as chairman of IPL Governing Council.

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

It is the national governing body for cricket in India that was formed in December 1928. It was established as a society and registered under Tamil Nadu Societies Registration Act.

**Organisation Structure:** BCCI will have a *nine-member apex council*. It will constitute of- President, vice-president, secretary, joint secretary, treasurer, a male and a female representative of cricketers' association, a representative from central government and a representative from IPL Governing Council .

**Other Recent Appointments**:

Gujarat's Jay Shah, son of Union Home minister Amit Shah, is likely to be *secretary* while Himachal Pradesh's Arun Singh Thakur is likely to become *treasurer*. Devajit Saikia from Assam Cricket Association is in contention to be Board's *joint secretary*.

Former India opener Anshuman Gaekwad has been elected as *male representative* of cricketers association while former India women's captain Shantha Rangaswamy has been elected *female representative* of cricketers' association and former Delhi cricketer Surinder Khanna will be the *IPL Governing Council representative* at Council.

## FATF Plenary meet: Pakistan to be scrutinized

The six-day plenary meeting of FATF – Financial Action Task Force is to be held in Paris. It is a part of the FATF Week that is being celebrated between October 13 and October 18, 2019. The meeting is attended by representatives from 205 countries and jurisdictions all around the world. It includes IMF, UN, World Bank and other leading organizations. The meeting will focus on financial flows that are linked to terrorism and crime.

### The China Factor in the Meet

It is the first Plenary meeting under the Presidency of China. Among the important factors to be discussed in the meet the progress by Pakistan, Iran and other countries that present risk to the financial system is highly crucial, especially for China. This is because, Pakistan being an all-weather ally of China, all eyes are to be focused on China.

In the June Plenary meet, Pakistan received 3 needed votes from China, Turkey and Malaysia. This prevented the country from entering the blacklist.

India, UK and USA want Pakistan to be included in FATF Black list while China and Turkey are against the move.

### FATF on Pakistan

The countries are recommended to the blacklist category based on the Mutual Evaluation Report. According to the report published in 2019, of 10 effective ratings, Pakistan was found low in 9 areas.

In its money laundering report, 2019, FATF slammed Pakistan for its terror funding.

### Plenary meet

The FATF plenary year begins in July and ends in June. Every year, the FATF holds three plenary meetings. They usually take place in October, June and February. This October the following discussions are to be made in the plenary meet

- To assess if the countries are regulating virtual asset sector to prevent misuse of crime and terror
- To assess Russia and Turkey measures to combat money laundering
- To discuss the impact of "stable coins" on the supervision of virtual assets
- Actions taken by Ireland, Denmark, Norway, Singapore, Spain and Saudi Arabia since their assessments
- Developments in financing of Al – Qaeda, ISIL and Affiliates

### FATF Blacklist

The FATF black list or the OECD black list is issued by the FATF since 2000. Such description is given to those countries that are non – cooperative in the global fight against money laundering and terrorist financing. The FATF is updated regularly.

Current South Korea and Iran are in the FATF Blacklist category.

### FATF Grey list

The FATF Grey list comprises of those countries that have flaws in their financial regulation. The countries that are currently under FATF grey list are Bahamas, Botswana, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Ghana,

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Pakistan, Panama, Sri Lanka, Syria, Trianidad and Tobago, Tunisia and Yemen

Pakistan was added to the Grey list category in 2012 and later was removed from the list in 2015. However, in 2018 it was again added to the grey list category.

## Sangam Youth Festival organised by Indian Army

More than 1,500 students from 32 different colleges and universities participated in the 'Sangam Youth Festival' held at Bhadarwah, Jammu and Kashmir. The festival is being organised from 11 October to 15 October 2019.

### About Sangam Youth Festival

The event was inaugurated by the Northern Army commander Lt General Ranbir Singh.

The 5 day festival was organised by Indian Army in collaboration with Jammu University with the aim of spreading message of peace, prosperity, communal harmony and national integration.

This event comes in continuation with Indian army and administration's effort to engage youngsters in productive activities. It is being organised in a manner so that the youngster students explore and learn from each other and are inducted into mainstream at the same time maintaining country's rich cultural heritage.

During the event a total number of 35 events, including outdoor and indoor activities are planned in such a way that students can showcase their talent, skills, and performances in sports, cultural and fine arts.

## South Asia Economic Focus, Making (De)Centralization Work Report: World Bank

As per the report released by World Bank on '**South Asia Economic Focus, Making (De)Centralization Work'**, Bangladesh has become the second-fastest growing economy in South Asia after Bhutan. According to the World Bank, Bangladesh and Nepal are estimated to grow faster than India in 2019.

The latest edition of this World Banks's report finds that strong domestic demand, which support high growth in past, has weakened, driving a slowdown across the south Asian region.

### Key Highlights of Report

The overall growth in **South Asia** is projected to slow down this fiscal in line with a global downward trend. Growth in South Asia is projected to fall to 5.9% in 2019, down 1.1% points from April 2019 estimates, casting uncertainty about a rebound in short term.

In **India**, growth is projected to fall to 6% this fiscal year and is then expected to gradually recover to 6.9% in fiscal year 2021 and to 7.2% in 2022.

The growth rate of **Pakistan** is projected to decrease further to 2.4% this fiscal year, as monetary policy remains tight, and planned fiscal consolidation will further compress domestic demand.

As per the report, the GDP growth rate of **Bangladesh** is projected to moderate to 7.2% this fiscal year and 7.3% in 2020. The country's economy is likely to maintain growth above 7%, supported by a political stability, robust macroeconomic framework, and strong public investments.

In 2018 Bangladesh has reduced current account deficit due to rising export and remittances which was above $15.5 billion. However, the report indicates that the financial sector vulnerability, fiscal pressures and loss of external competitiveness pose challenges to its growth rate.

Moreover, despite slowdown in industrial growth rate, the industrial sector remains strong as Bangladesh's garment industry benefited immensely from trade tensions between United States and China.

The World Bank report suggests Bangladesh to address key structural challenges such as reducing infrastructure deficit, improving urban management, managing climate change risks and enhancing human capital.

# October 15, 2019

## October 15: International Day of Rural Women

The International Day of Rural Women is commemorated every year by the United Nations. It was first passed under a resolution in 2007. The role of rural women is important to fulfil the vision of SDG – Sustainable Development Goals. The 3 main goals namely ending poverty and hunger, empower women and girls, achieve food security can be achieved only by improving the role of rural women in every aspect of global development

**Theme: Rural Women and girls building climate resilience**

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### Significance

Rural women play a major role in food security, agriculture, land and resource management, nutrition and domestic care work. One in three rural women are employed in agriculture. They are at the front battle lines when natural resource and agriculture are threatened. This is mainly because, around 80% of households without piped water all over the world till today rely on women to collect water.

On the International Day of Rural Women, the UN Women Community along with other organizations are drawing attention towards implementation of following commitments

- UN Framework Convention on Climate Change – Gender Action Plan
- Call for actions to support capacities of rural women towards climate change through agricultural production and food security.

## BIS celebrates World Standards Day

The members of IEC, ITU and ISO celebrated the World Standards Day on October 14. The day is celebrated to pay tribute to the experts all over the world who develop voluntary technical agreements that are published as International Standards

The Day celebrates the achievements of following organizations

- ASME – American Society of Mechanical Engineers
- ISO – International Organization for Standardization
- IEC – International Electro technical Commission.
- ITU – International Telecommunication Union
- IETF – International Engineering Task Force
- IEEE – International Electrical and Electronics Engineers

### India

In India the World Standard Day was celebrated by BIS under the

**Theme: Video Standards create a global stage**

The theme is important as mobile phones, IT and other electronic devices boosted video production and is estimated that by 2020 80% of internet traffic will be consumed by video streaming data.

### History

The day is marked as the World Standards Day since 1946. It was resolved when the delegates from 25 countries gathered in London to create an international organization that focus on facilitating standardization.

### Significance

The idea is to set standardization at international level. This helps to travel efficiently.

## President Kovind on a seven day visit to Philippines, Japan

President Ram Nath Kovind will begin his seven-day visit to Philippines and Japan on 17th October, 2019. The President's first visit will be Philippines. He will hold delegation level restricted talks with his Filipino counter part Rodrigo Roa Duterte. He leaves for Japan on October 21, 2019. President is visiting Japan to attend the Enthronement ceremony of the Japanese emperor Naruhito.

### India-Japan

The bilateral trade between India and Japan is around 15.71 billion USD. India has been the most attractive destination of Japanese manufacturing countries. The FDI to India from Japan has been electrical equipment, automobile, telecommunications, pharmaceuticals and chemicals.

There are around 34,348 Indians living in Japan.

### India-Philippines

The trade between India and Philippines is around 1.6 billion USD (2016-17). Around 1,20,000 Indians are living in Philippines as of December 2018.

## 2nd phase of LOTUS-HR launched in New Delhi

The second phase of an Indo-Dutch project called **Local Treatment of Urban Sewage Streams for Healthy Reuse**, or LOTUS-HR was launched at Barapullah drain in New Delhi by Minister of Science and Technology Harsh Vardhan and the Dutch Royal couple, Netherlands King Willem-Alexander and Queen Maxima.

The Dutch Royal couple is on a five-day visit to India at the invitation of President Ram Nath Kovind. This trip will be King Willem-Alexander's first state visit to India following his ascension to the throne in 2013.

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The visit is expected to boost political and economic cooperation between two countries.

### About LOTUS-HR

It is a water treatment laboratory that seeks to treat dirty water of Barapullah Drain before it deposits into Yamuna. The project was set up in 2017 at the Sun Dial Park in New Delhi as part of collaboration between governments of India and Netherlands. Upon commissioning, this innovative pilot scale modular plant will treat 10,000 litre sewage water per day and will also showcase a self-sustaining model for end user.

**Objective**: To demonstrate a holistic waste-water management approach that will produce clean water which can further be reused for various purposes.

**Bodies Involved**: It is jointly supported by Department of Biotechnology, under Union Ministry of Science and Technology and Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research. Moreover, IIT-Delhi and The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) are partners in this project.

**Technology** being used in LOTUS-HR is called *wetland technique.*

## UNICEF: The State of World's Children Report

The United Nations Children's Emergency Fund-UNICEF provides emergency and healthcare to children and mothers in countries that were devastated by world war II. The organization releases "The State of the World's Children Report" annually.

The report stated that despite of 40% drop in stunting of children in poor countries between 1990 and 2015, 149 million are still too short for their age.

### Key findings of the report

- A third of world's children under five years of age, which is around 700 million, have nutrition problems. They are undernourished or face overweight problems.
- 50 million are affected by wasting. Wasting is chronic thinness of the body which is mainly due to poverty.
- Only 2 out of 5 infants of breast fed. This is also a primary cause for increased undernourished children
- Japan has the least Infant Mortality Rate. In Japan no packed lunches are allowed in schools. School lunches are created by nutritionists and are provided in all schools through out Japan. Each meal is designed to have 600 to 700 calories.
- Japan has the lowest IMR. Out of children that are under age 5, 14.42% are obese or overweight. The US tops the UNICEF ranking with 41.86%, followed by Italy with 36.87% and France at 30.09%

## 2019 Nobel Prize in Economics: Abhijit Banerjee, Esther Duflo and Michael Kremer

The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences awarded the prestigious 2019 Nobel Prize for Economics to Indian-American Abhijit Banerjee, his wife, Esther Duflo, and Michael Kremer of United States for their '*experimental approach to alleviating global poverty*'. Their research will help the world community to understand, address and fight the formidable challenge of poverty.

Abhijit Banerjee, Esther Duflo work at Massachusetts Institute of Technology while Michael Kremer is at Harvard University.

### Key Highlights

As per the Nobel committee, the research conducted by 2019's Economics Nobel laureates has considerably improved the ability to fight global poverty. Moreover, in mere two decades, their new experiment-based approach has transformed development economics, which is now a flourishing field of research. The trio's experimental research methods have benefited over 5 million Indian children, who are part of remedial tutoring programmes in schools.

*Esther Duflo* has become the **second woman to win prize** after *Elinor Ostrom* (2009) of US. She is also the youngest-ever to win prize.

The announcement of Nobel Prize for Economics wraps up the 2019 Nobel season as the last week, 6 Nobel prizes were given in fields of- medicine, physics and chemistry plus two literature awards, and Peace Prize.

### About Nobel Prize for Economics

It is officially known as *Bank of Sweden Prize in Economic Sciences* in Memory of Alfred Nobel. Unlike other

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prizes, the Nobel prize for Economics, was not created by the prize founder but was created by Riksbanken, the Swedish central bank, in 1968. The first winner of prize was selected in 1969. As of now, 81 Nobel laureates in economic sciences have been awarded.

It carries a gold medal, a diploma and a 9 million-kronor (or $918,000) cash award.

### About Abhijit Vinayak Banerjee

**Academic**: The 58-year-old was educated at Jawaharlal Nehru University, University of Calcutta and Harvard University, where he received his PhD in 1988. In 2003 he founded Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL), along with his wife Esther Duflo and Sendhil Mullainathan, and he remains one of the lab's directors. At present, he is the Ford Foundation International Professor of Economics at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

**Career**: Banerjee is a past president of Bureau for Research in Economic Analysis of Development, a Research Associate of National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER), International Research Fellow of Kiel Institute, a CEPR (Center for Economic and Policy Research) research fellow, a fellow of American Academy of Arts and Sciences and Econometric Society (AAASES), and has been a Guggenheim Fellow and an Alfred P. Sloan Fellow and a winner of the Infosys Prize. He also served as U.N. Secretary-General's High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

## 5G Spectrum Auction by year end

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The Union Telecom Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad recently announced that the 5G spectrum auction will be conducted by the year end or early next year. Under 5G spectrum the GoI plans to auction around 8,293 MHz of air waves. The total base prize of the wavelengths is set as Rs 5.86 lakh crore rupees.

The last spectrum sale, 4G spectrum was conducted in 2016.

### Spectrum Auction

Spectrum Auction is a process where a government uses an auction system to sell the rights to transmit electromagnetic signals overs specific bands. The 5G spectrum will deliver faster and better broad band services as compared to 4G. It can deliver up to 20 Gbps (Giga Bytes per second). In addition, 5G spectrum will also deliver lower latency and higher data rates even when users are moving around

### Use of millimeter waves in 5G

There are plans to use millimeter waves in 5G. Millimeter waves are the shorter range of micro waves. Hence, the cells are limited to smaller size in these waves. Also, they have smaller antenna as compared to the previous networks.

## 2019 Booker Prize: Margaret Atwood and Bernardine Evaristo jointly win

The 2019 Booker Prize was jointly won by Margaret Atwood and Bernardine Evaristo after judges defied the rules by declaring a tie. Even though the organisers told 2019's judges that they were not allowed to pick two winners, but *Peter Florence*, the chair of the five-member judging panel, decided to flout the rules anyways. The rules were changed after the last tie in 1992.

### 2019 Booker Prize

Although as per the Booker rules the prize must not be divided, however the judges insisted they could not separate the 79-year-old Canadian author Margaret Atwood's – *'The Testament'* and *'Girl, Woman, Other'* by Bernardine Evaristo. Evaristo is the first black woman to win prestigious award since its creation in 1969.

**Others Shortlisted Entries**: The other 4 authors (out of 6) shortlisted for the prize included Lucy Ellmann for *'Ducks, Newburyport'*, Chigozie Obioma for *'An Orchestra of Minorities'*, Elif Shafak for *'10 Minutes 38 Seconds in this Strange World'* and British Indian novelist Salman Rushdie's tragicomic 'Quichotte'. This was the 5th time that Mumbai-born novelist was shortlisted, including the 1981 win where he bagged award for "Midnight's Children".

The 2019 shortlisted entries were selected from 151 submitted books published in UK/Ireland between October 2018 and September 2019. Each of the shortlisted authors received GBP 2,500 and a specially-bound edition of their book.

### Booker Prize

It is a literary prize which is awarded each year for the best original novel written in the English language and published in United Kingdom (UK). The prize is open to writers of any nationality.

For the first time in 2019, the Booker Prize for Fiction is supported by venture capitalist Michael Moritz

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and novelist wife Harriet Heyman's charitable foundation Crankstart, rather than the Man Group.

The prize was first awarded in 1969. In 2018 Northern Irish writer Anna Burns won the Booker Prize for 'Milkman'

## WTO gives US final authorisation to impose tariffs on EU products

The World Trade Organisation (WTO) has given United States the final authorisation to impose tariffs on European Union (EU) products in retaliation for illegal subsidies given to Airbus. Earlier in October 2019, a WTO arbitrator gave US the green light to slap tariffs on US $7.5 billion worth of European Union imports. The move comes as a landmark moment in the 15-year legal battle between Airbus and American plane-maker Boeing.

### Key Highlights

**WTO Ruling**: WTO has found that both Airbus and its United States' rival Boeing received billions of dollars of illegal subsidies in a pair of cases that have now run for nearly 15 years. An adjudication or arbitrators award in the Boeing case is due in 2020.

The **arbitrator's award**, which is the largest in WTO's history was rubber-stamped by the **Dispute Settle Body** (DSB) of WTO which is made up of representatives from its 164 members. At a special meeting, the WTO's DSB cleared US to take countermeasures against EU and Airbus-producing countries Britain, Germany, France and Spain.

**Proposed Tariffs**: Even though United States have stated that it will impose a 10% tariffs on Airbus planes and 25% duties on a range of products, such as French wine, Scottish whiskies and cheese from across the continent which could be in place by 18 October 2019, but the EU officials are trying to reach a negotiated settlement with US so as to avoid escalating trade tensions that risk battering economies across the globe.

**Parallel Dispute Over Subsidies**: However, in case the negotiations fail to produce a deal, then EU will get the chance to impose its own WTO-approved tariffs on billions of dollars of U.S. exports, after convincing WTO judges that Boeing had benefited from illegal US government subsidies for domination of the world aircraft market.

## India Mobile Congress

India Mobile Congress is the largest mobile technology event in South Asia. It is organized by Department of Telecommunications along with Cellular Operation Association of India (COAI). This year the event is being conducted between October 14, 2019 and October 16, 2019.

The Congress brings together Government entities, industries and other ecosystem players. It acts as a common platform to discuss and display the latest technology in the world. Apart from being the largest digital technology event, it is also the largest networking event in India.

### Highlights of the event

During the event exhibition and conferences are organized. It also presents most recognized awards in the technology industry, especially in digital technology.

### Objectives of the event

- The event is organized to promote start-ups, innovators and enterprises
- It also promotes local manufacturing
- It drives in investments
- The event acts as a platform to spread knowledge about the ongoing research and development in the field
- It enhances international regional cooperation in the South and South east region.

## Kais Saied elected as new President of Tunisia

Kais Saied is elected as the new President of Tunisia after a landslide victory in recently concluded Presidential runoff. The Independent law professor Kais Saied won against his rival, Nabil Karoui. He won Tunisia's presidential election with 72.71% of votes.

### Key Highlights

The 61 year old Saied is an independent candidate with no political experience.

The poll was the second free Presidential elections in Tunisia since 2010-11 uprising that toppled long-standing ruler Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. The elections followed the death of President Beji Caid Essebsi in July 2019.

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## British Prince and Princess arrives in Pakistan

Prince Williams, the Duke of Cambridge and his Duchess arrived in Pakistan on October 15, 2019. This is the first high official visit from Britain to Pakistan since 2006. The visit was organized upon request of UK and commonwealth office. The UK aims at access to quality education to girls and young women in Pakistan.

### Highlights of the visit

- The Prince is to focus on climate change and tour around Pakistan during his visit
- The couple will also visit the mountainous country side in Pakistan during their 5 day stay in the country

The program and purpose of the visit is being kept a secret due to security constraints. The Late Princess Diana had visited Pakistan in 1996 to attend a fund-raising ceremony built by the then cricketer and now PM Imran Khan.

## US sanctions on Turkey

The US Government has imposed sanctions against the Turkish ministries for their military actions in Northern Syria. Actions has been taken against Turkish defence and energy ministries. The sanctions also freeze Turkish assets held by the ministry in US and has banned all the financial transactions with them related to US.

### The Syria issues

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Recently the Kurdish forces in the Syrian border stuck a deal with the Syrian Government marking a major shift in the 8-year war. This started series of disturbances in the region. Recently, the Turkish forces launched attacks against the Kurds on the Syrian border. According to the UN, around 160,000 have fled the area and dozens of civilians are killed and injured.

The Kurdish-led forces are a key ally to the US against the IS (Islamic State) in Syria. Russia stays silent over the issue.

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## 3rd India Energy Forum by CERAWeek held in New Delhi

The third India Energy Forum by CERAWeek was held in New Delhi from 13-15 October 2019. At the forum the Union Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas & Steel Dharmendra Pradhan called for the inclusion of petroleum products under GST regime and urged Union finance minister to at least begin by including natural gas and ATF (aviation turbine fuel) in GST.

### Key Highlights

**Participants**: Hundreds of delegates from Indian as well as regional energy companies, institutions, and governments, and also a number of international speakers gathered at 3rd India Energy Forum by CERAWeek under the patronage Union Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas & Steel and Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan.

**Key topics explored at Forum include**:

- India's energy transition
- Low-carbon & sustainable energy solutions for India
- The provision of heat, light, and mobility
- Game-changing industry technologies
- Outlook for global oil and gas markets & investment
- Growing domestic oil and gas production and expanding use of natural gas across the economy
- An opportunity to understand new government's priorities and response from public and private sectors

### Way Ahead

India is expected to get $58 billion investment in the exploration and production sector by 2023 and an estimated investment of $60 billion is underway for augmenting gas infrastructure.

As the energy sector is on the top of government's priority list, it is committed to do everything it takes to meet renewable targets. The government is pushing to achieve 10% blending percentage of ethanol in petrol by 2022, which in turn will boost farm economy.

## Conference on 'One Nation One Tag – FASTag' held in New Delhi

Union Minister for Road Transport & Highways Nitin Gadkari inaugurated a conference on 'One Nation

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One Tag – FASTag' in New Delhi, to roll out the process for having a unified electronic system across the country. MoS Road Transport and Highways, Gen. (Retd.) V.K Singh and ministers and senior officials from several states were also present on the occasion.

### Key Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed at Conference

*MoU was signed between Indian Highways Management Company Ltd (IHMCL) and Goods and Services Tax Network (GSTN) for integration of FASTag with GST e-way bill system.* This integration of FASTag with e-way bill system will not only help revenue authorities track movement of vehicles but will also ensure that the vehicles are travelling to same destination that transporter/trader had specified while generating e-way bill. Moreover, the supplier or transporter will also be able to track their vehicles via SMS alerts generated at each toll plaza.

*IHMCL also exchanged MoUs with several state departments/other agencies/ authorities for integrating with FASTag*. This would mean that the same FASTag affixed on the windscreen of a vehicle can be used at every toll plaza in country under jurisdiction of different states or agencies and other entities, thus providing seamless services to consumers across the country. The move assumes special significance because from 1 December 2019, toll collections on all National Highways will mandatorily be done through FASTag only.

**What is FASTag?** It is a simple to use, reloadable tag or device that employs Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology which enables automatic deduction of toll charges and lets vehicle pass through toll plaza without stopping for cash transaction.

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## Four Indian sites win UNESCO Cultural Heritage Conservation Awards

Four sites from India have been chosen for the **UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation**. The awards were announced in Penang, Malaysia on 14 October 2019. This year marks the 20 years since the institution of awards.

### Key Highlights

In this year's awards, 16 projects from 5 countries namely– India, Bhutan, China, New Zealand and Australia have been recognized by international jury of conservation experts. The jury met in August 2019 to review 57 entries from 14 countries across Asia-Pacific region.

Among the four sites that have been chosen from India for 2019's UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation, three are in Mumbai, Maharashtra.

The award has given a major recognition to Mumbai's heritage conservation movement.

Three of chosen landmark of city are- Flora Fountain, Gloria Church at Byculla and Keneseth Eliyahoo Synagogue at Kala Godha.

**List of Awards Category-**

- **Award of Distinction**: *Vikram Sarabhai Library*, Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Ahmedabad. It is restored by architect Brinda Somaya
- **Award of Merit**: *Keneseth Eliyahoo Synagogue* (Mumbai), a Jewish Synagogue restored by Abha Narain Lambah and *Our Lady of Glory Church* (Mumbai) restored by David Cardoz and and Ainsley Lewis
- **Honourable Mention**: Flora Fountain (Mumbai). It is restored by conservation architect Vikas Dilwari and his team.
- **Award of Excellence**: historic Tai Kwun – Centre for Heritage and Arts, Hong Kong.

### The UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation

The award recognises the efforts made by private individuals as well as organizations that have successfully restored and conserved the structures, historic properties and buildings of heritage value in region.

**Objective**: To encourage other property owners to undertake conservation projects within their communities, either independently or by seeking public-private partnerships (PPP).

## Multiple Choice Questions

1. Dr. K Siva Reddy, who has been awarded the Saraswati Samman 2018, is associated to which language?

[A] Malayalam

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[B] Tamil
[C] Telugu
[D] Odia

**Answer:** Telugu

Telugu poet Dr. K Siva Reddy has been awarded the prestigious Saraswati Samman 2018 for his collection of poetry titled 'Pakkaki Ottigilite (Turning Aside While Lying Down)'. The award has been conferred by the KK Birla Foundation & carries a cash prize of Rs 15 lakh, a citation and a plaque.

2. What is the theme of the 2019 edition of World Rabies Day (WRD)?

[A] End Rabies by campaigning
[B] Rabies: Vaccinate to Eliminate
[C] Rabies: Defeat this horrifying disease
[D] Rabies- Educate, Vaccinate, Eliminate

**Answer:** Rabies: Vaccinate to Eliminate

The World Rabies Day (WRD) is celebrated annually on 28th of September to raise awareness about rabies prevention and to highlight progress in defeating this horrifying disease. The day also marks the anniversary of the of the death of French chemist and microbiologist Louis Pasteur , who developed the first rabies vaccine. The 2019 theme is 'Rabies: Vaccinate to Eliminate'.

3. Which team has clinched the 2019 SAFF U-18 Championship title?

[A] India
[B] Bangladesh
[C] Nepal
[D] South Africa

**Answer:** India

In Football, India defeated Bangladesh by 2-1 in the final of SAFF Under-18 Championship 2019 to lift the title in Kathmandu on 30th September. This is India's first SAFF U-18 trophy. Ninthoinganba Meetei from India was declared Most Valuable Player (MVP) of the championship.

4. Which Assam district has launched 'Plants for Plastic' campaign?

[A] Karbi Anglong
[B] Dhemaji
[C] Bongaigaon
[D] Goalpara

**Answer:** Bongaigaon

In Assam, the 'Plants for Plastic' campaign has been launched by the Bongaigaon District administration in a bid to gradually collect and remove the harmful plastics from the eco- system. The aim of the campaign is to encourage people to collect and remove plastic from their houses, commercial establishments and educational institutions. Under this unique initiative, any person can deposit 1Kg plastic in the Municipality office and get a valuable sapling for free.

5. Sumit Nagal, who has become first Indian tennis player to win on South American clay court, is from which state?

[A] Haryana
[B] Punjab
[C] UP
[D] Jharkhand

**Answer:** Haryana

In Tennis, Sumit Nagal from Haryana has won the men's singles title of 2019 ATP Challenger Tournament at Buenos Aires in Argentina. He defeated local favourite Facundo Bognis in straight-sets 6-4, 6-2 to claim the $54,160 prize money. With this feat, Nagal became first Indian to win on South American clay court. Earlier, Nagal grabbed headlines after he made his Grand Slam debut and produced a spirited fight against the legendary Roger Federer in the first-round of the US Open.

6. The Bada Dashain is the biggest festival of which country?

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[A] Bangladesh
[B] Nepal
[C] Sri Lanka
[D] India

**Answer:** Nepal

The biggest festival of Nepal – Bada Dashain – has begun at famous Hanumandhoka Dashain Ghar in Kathamndu with Vedic rituals. The 15-day festival starts on first day of Navaratri with Ghatsthapana (traditional urn). Devotees performed Ghatsthapana and sowed maize and barley seeds for germination of the auspicious Jamara (barley shoots) in various parts of the country today. During Dashain, people worship goddess Durga for nine days. On tenth day of festival, elders give golden barley shoots and put Tika on the forehead of younger members of the family and bless them for peace, progress and prosperity in the life.

7. Who led Indian delegation at the 64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC) 2019?
[A] Raj Nath Singh
[B] Ram Nath Kovind
[C] Narendra Modi
[D] Om Birla

**Answer:** Om Birla

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Recently, India has strongly opposed Pakistan's propaganda on Kashmir at the General Assembly of 64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC-2019) in Uganda's capital Kampala. The Indian parliamentary delegation was led by the Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla. Earlier, Pakistan had raised the same issue during the 4th South Asian Speakers' Summit in Male, Maldives. Though, the issues raised by Pakistan were rejected and left out of the Male Declaration.

8. Which Indian scientist has won the M P Birla Memorial Award 2019?
[A] Jayant Narlikar
[B] Thanu Padmanabhan
[C] Yamuna Krishnan
[D] Sulabha K. Kulkarni

**Answer:** Thanu Padmanabhan

Noted Physicist Thanu Padmanabhan, a professor of Inter-university Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics in Pune, has won the M P Birla Memorial Award 2019 for his contributions to the world of cosmology. It consists of a citation, trophy and a cheque for Rs 2,51,000.

9. Viju Khote, who passed away recently, was the renowned actor of which regional cinema?
[A] Tamil
[B] Marathi
[C] Telugu
[D] Malayalam

**Answer:** Marathi

Viju Khote (77), the veteran Hindi and Marathi film-theatre actor, has passed away in Mumbai, Maharashtra. He had acted in more than 300 Hindi and Marathi films. He gained fame for his character Kaliya in the blockbuster film Sholay. Khote was popular for his comedy roles in many films including 'Andaz Apna Apna' and 'Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak'. His role in TV serial 'Jaban Sambhal Ke' also gained popularity.

10. The floral festival 'Bathukamma' of which state has started recently?
[A] Telangana
[B] Andhra Pradesh
[C] J&K
[D] Odisha

**Answer:** Telangana

The floral festival titled 'Bathukamma'has started in Telangana on 28th September 2019, which is celebrated particularly by the women of state. The 9-day festival takes place towards the end of the

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monsoon season, just before the onset of winter. Traditionally, Bathukamma is all about worshipping the local goddesses of Telangana and revering to their power during the monsoon season.

11. International opera singer Jessye Norman, who has passed away recently, is from which country?

[A] France

[B] Sweden

[C] United States

[D] United Kingdom

**Answer:** United States

Jessye Norman (74), the renowned international opera singer of the 20th Century, has passed away in New York, United States. She was a pioneering young black woman in the white world of classical music & showcased her majestic the voice in performances around the world. She won four Grammy Awards and the National Medal of Arts.

12. Who has been appointed as new Principal Director General of Press Information Bureau (PIB)?

[A] KS Dhatwalia

[B] Sitanshu Kar

[C] Ira Joshi

[D] Satyendra Prakash

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**Answer:** KS Dhatwalia

KS Dhatwalia, the senior Indian Information Service (IIS) officer, has been appointed as the Principal Director General of Press Information Bureau (PIB). Mr. Dhatwalia will continue to hold the additional charge of Director General, Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC).

13. N Wilson Singh is associated to which sports?

[A] Chess

[B] Swimming

[C] Boxing

[D] Wrestling

**Answer:** Swimming

In Swimming, Indian duo of N Wilson Singh and Satish Kumar Prajapati produced impressive performances to win a gold in 10m platform synchronized event at the ongoing 10th Asian Age Group Championships 2019 in Bengaluru, Karnataka. Therefore, India extended their total tally to 60 medals (17 gold, 23 silver and 20 bronze) in the prestigious championships, which is the largest aquatic event in Asia.

14. The 94th Raising Day of the Military Nursing Service (MNS) has recently celebrated on which date in India?

[A] September 30

[B] October 1

[C] October 2

[D] September 29

**Answer:** October 1

The 94th Raising Day of the Military Nursing Service (MNS) has celebrated on 1st of October 2019. The MNS is the only all women corps in the Armed Forces. It came into existence on 28th March 28 1888 with the arrival of first batch of 10 qualified British Nurses in Bombay, to organize nursing in Military hospitals in India. In 1893, it was designated as Indian Army Nursing Service and in 1902 as Queen Alexandra Military Nursing Service (QAMNS). On October1,1926, a permanent Nursing Service for the India troops was formed and was designated as the Indian Military Nursing Service (IMNS).

15. What is the theme of the 2019 edition of International Translation Day (ITD)?

[A] Enthusiasm in translation and interpreting

[B] Translation and interpreting: connecting worlds

[C] Translate with respect for everyone

[D] Translation and Indigenous Languages

**Answer:** Translation and Indigenous Languages

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The International Translation Day (ITD) is celebrated every year on 30th of September to pay tribute to the work of language professionals. The 2019 theme "Translation and Indigenous Languages", focuses on the indigenous languages that are in danger of disappearing.

16. Which state has topped the NITI Aayog's report titled 'The Success of Our Schools-School Education Quality Index' (SEQI)?

[A] Puducherry

[B] Kerala

[C] Rajasthan

[D] Karnataka

**Answer:** Kerala

Kerala has topped the NITI Aayog's report titled 'The Success of Our Schools-School Education Quality Index' (SEQI) in list of 20 states, followed by Rajasthan and Karnataka. While the most-populous state Uttar Pradesh was ranked at the bottom position during 2016-17. The report is based on indexing of states and Union Territories (UTs) on the learning outcomes for school-going children. Of the 7 UTs, Chandigarh came at the top position, followed by Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Delhi, Puducherry, Daman & Diu, Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep. This school education report has considered 2015-2016 as the base year and 2016-2017 as the reference year.

17. Who has been awarded India's Most Powerful Women in Media award at British Parliament?

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[A] Rana Ayyub

[B] Kalli Purie

[C] Neha Dixit

[D] Shoma Chaudhury

**Answer:** Kalli Purie

Renowned journalist Kalli Purie, who is India Today Group Vice-Chairperson, has been conferred the India's Most Powerful Women in Media award at the famed Confluence Excellence Awards in British Parliament. Earlier, she was honoured with the 'Outstanding Media & Entertainment Award' at the annual 21st Century Icon Awards 2019 in London.

18. Who has been appointed Chairman of International Egg Commission (IEC)?

[A] Harish Khare

[B] Anuranjan Jha

[C] Suresh Chitturi

[D] Patricia Mukhim

**Answer:** Suresh Chitturi

Suresh Chitturi, Vice Chairman and Managing Director of Hyderabad-based Srinivasa Farms, has become the first Indian and Asian to be elected as Chairman of the International Egg Commission (IEC) for 2 years. The London-based organisation 'IEC'was established at the 2nd International Egg Conference in Bologna, Italy in 1964.

19. What is the theme of the 2019 edition of International Day of Older Persons?

[A] Longevity: Shaping the Future

[B] Rights of Older Persons

[C] Take A Stand Against Ageism

[D] The Journey to Age Equality

**Answer:** The Journey to Age Equality

The International Day of Older Persons is observed every year on 1st October to highlight the important contributions that older people make to society and raise awareness of the opportunities and challenges of ageing in today's world. The 2019 theme is 'The Journey to Age Equality'.

20. The first-ever National Nutrition Survey have been conducted by the Indian government & which international organisation?

[A] UNICEF

[B] WHO

[C] UNCTAD

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[D] FAO

**Answer:** UNICEF

The first-ever National Nutrition Survey have been conducted by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) and UNICEF between February 2016 and October 2018 to measure malnutrition. The key findings of the survey, which are yet to be made public,are as follows: nearly 10% of children in the age group of 5-9 years and adolescents in the age group of 10-19 years are pre-diabetic, 5% are overweight and another 5% suffer from Blood Pressure (BP). The report is providing first time hard evidence of the coexistence of obesity and under-nutrition among school going children.

21. Who has become the first Indian musician to have minor planet named after him?

[A] Parveen Sultana

[B] Pandit Jasraj

[C] Kumar Gandharva

[D] Prabha Atre

**Answer:** Pandit Jasraj

The International Astronomical Union (IAU) has named an asteroid after Indian classical singer Pandit Jasraj. With this, Pandit Jasraj has become the first Indian maestro to have a planet named after him. The asteroid, which is located between Mars and Jupiter, was discovered by Mt. Lemmon Survey at Mount Lemmon in Arizona (United States) in November 2006.

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22. Who is the author of the book 'The RSS: Roadmaps for the 21st Century'?

[A] Sunil Ambekar

[B] Vivek Aggarwal

[C] Yasmin Ali Haque

[D] M S Golwalkar

**Answer:** Sunil Ambekar

The book titled 'The RSS: Roadmaps for the 21st Century' has been authored by Sunil Ambekar of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) student wing. The book represents RSS roadmap and vision for every sector in the country.

23. Who has been appointed the new CEO of MyGov India?

[A] Mahesh Kale

[B] Ajay Chakrabarty

[C] Abhishek Singh

[D] Arvind Gupta

**Answer:** Abhishek Singh

Abhishek Singh, the 1995-batch IAS officer of Nagaland cadre, has been appointed the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of MyGov India, the government's citizen-centric online platform. He succeeded tech entrepreneur Arvind Gupta. The aim of MyGov India is to empower people to connect with the government and contribute towards good governance.

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24. The NITI Aayog & which international organization has launched 'The Gandhian Challenge'?

[A] UNESCO

[B] UNICEF

[C] FAO

[D] WHO

**Answer:** UNICEF

'The Gandhian Challenge' have been launched by Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), NITI Aayog's Atal Tinkering Labs (ATL) and UNICEF India on the occasion of 150th birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. This innovation challenge provides a platform for every child across India to ideate innovative solutions for a sustainable India of their dreams, using Gandhi's principles. The problem statement for the Gandhian Challenge is: "Share your innovative solutions/ideas to create a futuristic and sustainable world of your dreams, following Gandhi's principles". The contest – open for every child in India from 2 October to 20 October – also celebrates 70 years of partnership between Government of India and UNICEF India to enable 'Every Right for Every Child'.

25. Which Indian company has won the 2019 Deming Prize for Total Quality Management (TQM)?

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[A] Infosys
[B] Reliance
[C] Elgi Equipments
[D] Wipro

**Answer:** Elgi Equipments

The Coimbatore-headquartered company "Elgi Equipments" has bagged the coveted 2019 Deming Prize for Total Quality Management (TQM). ELGi is the first globally established Industrial air compressor manufacturer, outside of Japan, to win the prestigious award in over 60 years and will formally receive the prize on the 6th of November 2019 in Tokyo, Japan.

26. Which IIT has organized the Global Student Solar Assembly (GSSA) in collaboration with Union Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE)?

[A] IIT Madras
[B] IIT Bombay
[C] IIT Delhi
[D] IIT Indore

**Answer:** IIT Bombay

The Union Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) in association with IIT Bombay have organized the Global Student Solar Assembly (GSSA) at Indira Gandhi Stadium Complex in New Delhi on 2nd October 2019 to commemorate 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi and to promote the Gandhian idea of sustainable living. The aim of GSSA is to sensitize young minds about energy sustainability and environmental care.

27. Which bank has become the first Indian bank to have office in Australia's Victoria?

[A] Dena Bank
[B] SBI
[C] BoB
[D] PNB

**Answer:** SBI

The State Bank of India (SBI) has opened its Melbourne office & became the first Indian bank to have a branch in the Australian state of Victoria. The Melbourne office will assist the growing trade and investment relations between Victoria and India and is the outcome of the state's 10-year India Strategy – our shared future.

28. Who became the new president of Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC)?

[A] Glenn McGrath
[B] Kapil Dev
[C] Kumar Sangakkara
[D] James Anderson

**Answer:** Kumar Sangakkara

Former Sri Lanka captain Kumar Sangakkara has become the first non-British official to take charge of the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) as the President and he will hold the post for one year. His tenure will include two Tests at Lord's – against West Indies and Pakistan – and the launch of The Hundred competition.

29. Where is the headquarters of National Buildings Construction Corporation (NBCC)?

[A] Pune
[B] New Delhi
[C] Lucknow
[D] Shimla

**Answer:** New Delhi

The Union Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with State-owned construction firm National Buildings Construction Corporation (NBCC) to provide project management consultancy for development of National Sports University at Imphal, Manipur. The approximate cost of project would be Rs 400 crore. The headquarters of NBCC (India) is located in New

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Delhi.

30. Annu Rani is associated to which sports?

[A] Javelin Throw

[B] Cricket

[C] Wrestling

[D] Boxing

**Answer:** Javelin Throw

Annu Rani has become the first Indian to qualify for Women's Javelin Throw final at World Athletics Championships (WAC) in Doha. She smashed her own national record during the qualification round of the Championships with best attempt of 62.43 metres.

31. Which union ministry has instituted the Vayoshreshtha Samman-2019?

[A] Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

[B] Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare

[C] Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment

[D] Ministry of Culture

**Answer:** Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment

As part of the celebration of the 2019 International Day of Older Persons, President Ram Nath Kovind has conferred the Vayoshreshtha Samman-2019 on the eminent senior citizens and institutions in recognition of their services towards the cause of the elderly persons. The Vayoshreshtha Samman is a Scheme of awards instituted by the Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment and gradually upgraded to the status of National Awards for institutions involved in rendering distinguished service for the cause of elderly persons. The awards are intended to show-case the government's concern for senior citizens and its commitment towards them with the aim of strengthening their legitimate place in the society.

32. Who has been conferred the 'Most Effective Swachhata Ambassador' award?

[A] Amitabh Bachchan

[B] Mary Kom

[C] P V Sindhu

[D] Sachin Tendulkar

**Answer:** Sachin Tendulkar

On the occasion of 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, Cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar bagged the 'Most Effective Swachhata Ambassador' award by the President Ram Nath Kovind for making use of his popularity and fame to ensure India achieves its goal of a Swachh Bharat. He has been promoting cleanliness drives in India for almost 10 years.

33. Which station has topped the list of cleanest railway stations in the non-suburban group of stations, as per report 'Swachh Rail, Swachh Bharat 2019'?

[A] Jaipur

[B] Jodhpur

[C] Durgapura

[D] Jammu Tawi

**Answer:** Jaipur

According to a report 'Swachh Rail, Swachh Bharat 2019' released by Ministry of Railways, the Jaipur station has topped the list of cleanest railway stations in the non-suburban group of stations with a total score of 931.75, followed by Jodhpur, Durgapura, Jammu Tawi, Gandhinagar-Jp, Suratgarh, Vijayawada, Udaipur city, Ajmer and Haridwar. In the suburban group of stations, Maharashtra's Andheri station has topped the list. The cleanest railway zone 2019 award has been given to the North Western Railway Zone under which the Jaipur railway station falls. The survey has been carried out by the Quality Council of India (QCI).

34. IRCTC has decided to compensate the passengers of which train for delays?

[A] New Delhi-Jaipur Tejas Express

[B] New Delhi-Lucknow Tejas Express

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[C] New Delhi-Agra Tejas Express

[D] New Delhi-Bhopal Tejas Express

**Answer:** New Delhi-Lucknow Tejas Express

In a first of its kind offer from any national carrier, IRCTC will compensate passengers of India's first corporate train – New Delhi-Lucknow Tejas Express – in case of delay in the train schedule. An amount of Rs 100 will be paid in case the delay is for over an hour and Rs 250 for delay of over two hours. The latest offer is in addition to the Rs 25-lakh free insurance that will be given to passengers of the train. This travel insurance also includes coverage of Rs 1 lakh against household theft and robbery during travel period of the passengers, which is again a first for those travelling on board trains. The train will be flagged off on October 4.

35. India's largest 'charkha' made of waste plastic inaugurated in which city?

[A] Kolkata

[B] Gandhi Nagar

[C] Bikaner

[D] Noida

**Answer:** Noida

On the eve of Mahatma Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary, India's largest 'charkha' (the 1,650-kg spinning wheel) made of used plastic waste was inaugurated by Union Minister Smriti Irani in Noida. The 'charkha' symbolizes Gandhi's dream of Swadeshi (self sufficing and self reliance). It measures 14 ft × 20 ft × 8ft and is made of 1,250 kg of used plastic. The charkha has been recognized as the largest made of used plastic waste in the country by India Book of Records.

36. Babita Tade, who won Rs 1 crore on KBC, has been chosen as EC ambassador of which district for Maharashtra Assembly polls?

[A] Nagpur

[B] Amravati

[C] Hingoli

[D] Nanded

**Answer:** Amravati

Babita Tade, who won Rs. 1 crore on quiz show 'Kaun Banega Crorepati', has been appointed as the Amravati district ambassador for the Election Commission (EC)'s SVEEP programme ahead of the Maharashtra Assembly polls. The Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) is a flagship programme of the Election Commission for spreading voter awareness and promoting voter literacy in the country. Tade works as a mid-day meal cook in a government school for a meager sum.

37. The Swachh Bharat Diwas 2019 has inaugurated from which city?

[A] Raipur

[B] Indore

[C] Ahmedabad

[D] Surat

**Answer:** Ahmedabad

In Gujarat, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Swachh Bharat Diwas 2019 in Ahmedabad & declared India as Open Defecation Free (ODF) country. He also released postage stamp and silver coin to commemorate the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. PM Modi also underlined that the government would achieve its target of single-use plastic-free India by 2022.

38. Scientists have excavate 'ancient river' in which state that linked the Ganga and Yamuna rivers?

[A] Uttar Pradesh

[B] Uttarakhand

[C] West Bengal

[D] Bihar

**Answer:** Uttar Pradesh

The Union Water Ministry has excavated an old, dried-up river in Prayagraj (formerly Allahabad) that linked the Ganga and Yamuna rivers. The aim is to develop a newly discovered river as a potential groundwater recharge source. This "ancient buried river" is around 4 km wide, 45 km long and consisted

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of a 15-metre-thick layer buried under soil. The discovery was made by a team of scientists from the CSIR-NGRI (National Geophysical Research Institute) & the Central Groundwater Board (CGB) during a helicopter-borne geophysical survey covering the Prayagraj and Kaushambi region in Uttar Pradesh.

39. Who is the author of the book 'India and the Netherlands – Past, Present and Future'?

[A] P C Chagla

[B] Navtej Sarna

[C] Venu Rajamony

[D] Harsh Vardhan Shringla

**Answer:** Venu Rajamony

The book titled 'India and the Netherlands – Past, Present and Future' has been penned by Indian Ambassador to the Netherlands Venu Rajamony. The book highlights the significant place India occupied in the Dutch worldview and the relationship between the two nations secured by strong economic ties and vibrant exchanges in culture, sports, and yoga.

40. Which union ministry has organised the Fit India Plog run?

[A] Ministry of Youth Affairs And Sports

[B] Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

[C] Ministry of Human Resource Development

[D] Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

**Answer:** Ministry of Youth Affairs And Sports

Union Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju has flagged off the nation-wide 'Fit India Plog run' at Indira Gandhi stadium in New Delhi to mark 150th Gandhi Jayanti. Plogging is a concept brings together fitness and cleanliness as participants pick up plastic and other waste from the road while jogging. The run is being organised at over two thousand places all over the country including 225 places in the national capital.

41. India's first-ever Floating Basketball Court has opened near which city?

[A] Kolkata

[B] Kochi

[C] Hooghly

[D] Mumbai

**Answer:** Mumbai

India's first-ever Floating Basketball Court has opened in the Arabian Sea near Bandra Worli Sealink in Mumbai. It was installed by the National Basketball Association (NBA). The NBA India Games 2019 will feature the Sacramento Kings and Indiana Pacers, who will play two pre-season games on October 4 and 5 at the Dome in NSCI, SVP Stadium.

42. Which union ministry has launched the Audio Odigos app?

[A] Ministry of Tourism

[B] Ministry of AYUSH

[C] Ministry of Home Affairs

[D] Ministry of Jal Shakti

**Answer:** Ministry of Tourism

On the occasion of nationwide Paryatan Parv 2019, the Union Ministry of Tourism launched the Audio Guide facility App "Audio Odigos" for 12 sites of India (including Iconic Sites) for the benefit of the tourists. It offers Government of India (GoI) verified content with visuals & voice over support. The app contains an inbuilt map of the site for a smooth navigation during the tour. Listeners will be offered various versions of history like Synopsis, Detailed History and Podcasts. The audio can be chosen in their preferred language & version of the history.

43. Which bank has signed MoU with Indian Army for customised services?

[A] BoB

[B] SBI

[C] PNB

[D] BoI

**Answer:** BoB

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The Bank of Baroda (BoB) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Indian Army under which the bank would offer customised services along with a host of facilities to account holders. The MoU offers handsome free personal accident insurance cover, free air accident insurance cover of Rs 15 lakh to Rs 50 lakh and an overdraft facility up to 3 times of monthly net salary. The features are also applicable for pensioners of Indian Army up to the age of 70 years.

44. Which state cabinet has approved India's first sports university?

[A] Punjab

[B] UP

[C] Delhi

[D] MP

**Answer:** Delhi

The Delhi Cabinet has recently approved a Bill to set up India's first sports university in Delhi, which will offer graduation, post graduation and doctorate degrees in cricket, football, and hockey among other sports. The Delhi Sports University (DSU) is proposed to be set up as a State university and it will have a full-fledged Delhi Sports School (affiliated to the CBSE) for imparting education with emphasis on sports and to groom the students for a career in sports. The university will come up in 90 acres of land in Mundka and there will also be sports schools.

45. Which state has become the India's third state to ban certain categories of pan masala?

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[A] Rajasthan

[B] Bihar

[C] Maharashtra

[D] Karnataka

**Answer:** Rajasthan

Under the Food Safety Act of 2006, the Rajasthan government has recently announced a ban on paan masala containing magnesium carbonate, nicotine, tobacco, mineral oil and flavoured 'supari' in the state to reduce addiction among the youth. With this, Rajasthan has become the third State after Maharashtra and Bihar to announce such a move.

46. Which union ministry has launched an Automated Real Time Performance Smart-board?

[A] Ministry of Law and Justice

[B] Ministry of Human Resource Development

[C] Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology

[D] Ministry of Information and Broadcasting

**Answer:** Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology

Union Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MEITY) has launched an Automated Real Time Performance Smart-board for effective monitoring and measurement of the key programmes of the government such as Digital India, Aadhaar, Digital Payments etc. The aim of Smart-board is to be a single window access for Centre, State or District specific projects implemented by MeitY. It will provide real-time, dynamic analytical project monitoring for critical and high priority Programme of the ministry.

47. What is the current repo rate as per RBI's 4th bi – monthly Monetary Policy Statement for 2019-20?

[A] 5.75%

[B] 5.15%

[C] 5.50%

[D] 5.25%

**Answer:** 5.15%

As per 4th bi – monthly Monetary Policy Statement for 2019-20, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has cut its key lending rate — repo rate – by 25 basis points to 5.15% in an effort to boost a sluggish economy as inflation remains in a comfortable zone. This is the 5th consecutive rate cut by the apex bank this year.

48. What is the theme of the 2019 edition of World Space Week (WSW)?

[A] Exploring New Worlds In Space

[B] The Moon: Gateway to the Stars

[C] Remote Sensing: Enabling our Future

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[D] Mysteries of the Cosmos

**Answer:** The Moon: Gateway to the Stars

The 2019 edition of World Space Week (WSW) is celebrating the 50th anniversary of humankind's first step on the Moon on 20th July 1969 with theme "The Moon: Gateway to the Stars" from 4th to 10th October. The theme is devoted to our nearest space neighbor to celebrate the incredible achievement of landing on the Moon and to spark consideration of the value of the Moon in humankind's future space endeavors.

49. On which date, the 2019 edition of World Animal Day (WAD) is observed?

[A] October 3

[B] October 4

[C] October 6

[D] October 5

**Answer:** October 4

The World Animal Day (WAD) is celebrated every year on 4th October to educate humans about how their actions impact animals and create awareness about the protection of animals all over the world.

50. Which bank has launched a short-term online fixed deposit product "Express FD"?

[A] Axis Bank

[B] ICICI bank

[C] HDFC bank

[D] SBI

**Answer:** Axis Bank

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Axis Bank has launched a short-term online fixed deposit product 'Express FD' that allows a customer to open a FD account in 3 minutes through the digital mode without opening a savings account with the bank. The new product offers a host of features like attractive interest rates, zero issuance fees and no penalty on pre-mature withdrawal (up to 25% of the amount). A customer can now open an Express FD account by investing a minimum Rs 5,000 up to Rs90,000, for a tenure of 6 to 12 months.

51. Which state government has launched Urjagiri campaign to stop power theft?

[A] Uttarakhand

[B] Jharkhand

[C] Bihar

[D] Punjab

**Answer:** Uttarakhand

The Uttarakhand government has launched an awareness campaign – Urjagiri – to stop power theft & saving. Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat has instructed the officers of UPCL Vigilance Cell to effectively stop the power theft so that honest customers do not have to bear the brunt of the power theft.

52. Buddhist leader Satyapriya Mohathero has passed away recently. He was from which country?

[A] Myanmar

[B] Nepal

[C] Bangladesh

[D] Sri Lanka

**Answer:** Bangladesh

Satyapriya Mohathero (89) was the 2nd highest Buddhist leader of Bangladesh and head of Sima Bihar of Ramu in Cox's Bazar. He was passed away in Dhaka on 5th October 2019. He was awarded the second-highest civilian award of Bangladesh Ekushey Padak in 2015 for social work. The Ramu monastery had provided shelter to a large number of people during the Liberation War of Bangladesh 1971 in the face of Pakistani atrocities. However, in September 2012, it suffered massive damage as mobs attacked it, angered by an alleged post on Social Media derogatory to Islam.

53. What is the theme of the 2019 edition of the International Teachers' Day?

[A] Empowering Teachers

[B] Young Teachers: The Future of the Profession

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[C] Valuing Teachers, Improving their Status

[D] A Call for Teachers

**Answer:** Young Teachers: The Future of the Profession

The International Teachers' Day is celebrated every year on 5th October with an aim to acknowledge the significant role of educators across the world. The 2019 theme "Young Teachers: The Future of the Profession", recognizes the critical importance of reaffirming the value of the teaching mission. The day also aims to address some of the issues that are key to attracting the brightest minds and young talents in the profession and retaining them.

54. Dr. HL Trivedi, who passed away recently, was the renowned specialist in which field?

[A] Nephrology

[B] Endocrinology

[C] Cardiology

[D] Pulmonology

**Answer:** Nephrology

Dr Hargovind Laxmishanker Trivedi (87) was the renowned nephrologist, immunologist and stem cell researcher. He passed away in Ahmedabad, Gujarat on 2nd October 2019. He was an expert in handling kidney transplant surgeries & was awarded Padma Shri in 2015 for his contribution to society as a nephrologist.

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55. Which state government has launched a new governance initiative 'Mo Sarkar'?

[A] West Bengal

[B] Tripura

[C] Nagaland

[D] Odisha

**Answer:** Odisha

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has recently launched a new governance initiative 'Mo Sarkar' on the occasion of 150th Gandhi Jayanti. The objective of the 'Mo Sarkar' is to provide service with dignity to people who are coming to government offices for different purposes. The phone numbers of people who are coming to government offices will be collected randomly with the purpose to improve the governance system by collecting feedback on behaviour and professionalism of government officers. The employees will be ranked as good or bad on the basis of the feedback and those with good rank will get out-of-turn promotion and action will be taken against employees with bad rank.

56. The Union government has launched Prakash portal to monitor _____ supply?

[A] Coal

[B] Petroleum

[C] Electricity

[D] Water

**Answer:** Coal

The Union government has launched a Prakash portal – 'Power Rail Koyla Availability through Supply Harmony' – for better coordination among the Ministries of Power, Coal and Indian Railways for coal supply to power plants. The portal, which is developed by NTPC, is designed to help in mapping and monitoring entire coal supply chain for power plants, viz – – coal stock at supply end (mines), coal quantities/ rakes planned, coal quantity in transit and coal availability at power generating station

57. Which state government has launched a welfare scheme "YSR Vahana Mitra"?

[A] Kerala

[B] Tamil Nadu

[C] Karnataka

[D] Andhra Pradesh

**Answer:** Andhra Pradesh

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has launched the YSR Vahana Mitra welfare scheme under which the owner-driver of an auto-rickshaw (or taxicab) gets Rs 10,000 grant per annum. The amount is meant to meet maintenance expenses, and for obtaining insurance and fitness certificates among other documents.

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58. Which oil company has launched drive to turn plastic to specialized bitumen?
[A] IOC
[B] ONGC`
[C] Hindustan Petroleum
[D] GAIL
**Answer:** IOC

Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) has launched drive to convert the single use plastic waste into specialized bitumen (CRMB55) that can be used for construction of roads and highways. This initiative was launched to mark the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatama Gandhi and as part of the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan.

59. Who has been named the PCA Player of the Year 2019?
[A] Virat Kohli
[B] Ben Stokes
[C] Rohit Sharma
[D] Joe Denly
**Answer:** Ben Stokes

England all-rounder Ben Stokes has been named the 2019 PCA (Professional Cricketers' Association) Player of the Year award after his splendid show in the 2019 ICC Cricket World Cup and a remarkable unbeaten 135 run to win the third Ashes Test against Australia at Headingley.

60. Which state government has launched the Pragati Rath of the HDFC bank?
[A] Madhya Pradesh
[B] Himachal Pradesh
[C] Uttar Pradesh
[D] Arunachal Pradesh
**Answer:** Himachal Pradesh

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur has launched the Pragati Rath of the HDFC bank that will provide financial and digital literacy to the people during a month-long initiative by moving to different parts of the state.

61. Surender Singh is associated to which sports?
[A] Wrestling
[B] Boxing
[C] Powerlifting
[D] Weightlifting
**Answer:** Powerlifting

Surender Singh of India created three world records at the ongoing 2019 World Powerlifting Championship in Berlin, Germany. Surender bagged gold in 110 kg category, Classic Raw and the Best Lifter Award in Classic Raw and Single Ply. While, 3-time World Champion Mukesh Singh went on to add another feather to his cap by winning yet another gold only to be known as 4-time World Champion.

62. WTO is hosting the first-ever World Cotton Day (WCD) in which city?
[A] Geneva
[B] New Delhi
[C] Paris
[D] New York
**Answer:** Geneva

The World Trade Organisation (WTO) is hosting the first-ever World Cotton Day (WCD) in Geneva on 7th October 2019. Union Textiles Minister Smriti Irani is representing India in the 5-day event of WCD. The WCD will celebrate the many advantages of cotton, from its qualities as a natural fibre, to the benefits people obtain from its production, transformation, trade and consumption. It will also serve to shed light on the challenges faced by cotton economies around the world because cotton is important to least developed, developing and developed economies worldwide.

63. Who won the 2019 Japan Open tennis title?

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[A] Andy Murray
[B] Rafael Nadal
[C] Novak Djokovic
[D] Roger Federer

**Answer:** Novak Djokovic

Novak Djokovic, World No. 1 won his 76th tour-level title by defeating Aussie John Millman 6-3, 6-2 to win the Rakuten Japan Open Tennis Championships. It is the 10th time the Serbian has lifted a trophy on his main draw debut at a tour-level event.

64. The paintings of Jodhaiya Bai Baiga of which Indian state are being showcased at exhibition in Italy?
[A] Rajasthan
[B] Gujarat
[C] Madhya Pradesh
[D] Chhattisgarh

**Answer:** Madhya Pradesh

In Italy, the paintings and artworks created by an 80-year-old tribal woman "Jodhaiya Bai Baiga" has being showcased at the ongoing exhibition at Milan, which is the global capital of fashion and design. Jodhaiya hails from Umaria district's Lorha village of Madhya Pradesh. Her painting style mainly includes nature and animals. Her teacher Ashish Swami said that this will motivate other members of the Adivasi community to engage in different activities.

65. Indian Army has started its mountain combat exercise 'Him Vijay' in which state?
[A] J&K
[B] Sikkim
[C] Himachal Pradesh
[D] Arunachal Pradesh

**Answer:** Arunachal Pradesh

Indian Army has started its first-of -its kind biggest ever mountain combat exercise titled 'Him Vijay' in Arunachal Pradesh. It is the first-ever such drill that the military is holding in the northeastern state i.e., 100 km away from the Line of Actual Control (LAC). The exercise is to test mobility, communication and coordination of such huge body of fast-moving troops in difficult terrain. The exercise is to be conducted in two phases. The first phase will be held between 7th to 10th October 2019 and the other phase will be from 20th- 24th October 2019.

66. As per latest data on the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY), which state's most cancer patients availed treatment under the scheme?
[A] Tamil Nadu
[B] Chhattisgarh
[C] Madhya Pradesh
[D] Gujarat

**Answer:** Tamil Nadu

The Union Health Ministry has recently released data on the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY), which is the tertiary care arm of Ayushman Bharat. According to report, Tamil Nadu (with 40,056 cases) tops the state where the most cancer patients availed treatment under PMJAY, followed by Kerala (22,000), Madhya Pradesh (19,455), Chhattisgarh (15,997) and Gujarat (14,380). The report revealed that there are 11.57 lakh new cancer patients and 7.84 lakh cancer deaths every year in India. At any given point of time, there are 22.5 lakh Indians living with cancer.

67. Salwa Eid Naser, who became the first woman athlete from Asia to win 400m gold, is from which country?
[A] Lebanon
[B] Bahrain
[C] Mongolia
[D] Oman

**Answer:** Bahrain

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Bahrain sprinter Salwa Eid Naser has become the first woman athlete from Asia to win the 400m gold in the ongoing IAAF World Athletics Championships (WAC) Doha 2019. She clocked 48.14 seconds i.e., the third-fastest lap in history and the fastest in 34 years.

68. Who has become the first Indian cricketer to play 100 T20 internationals?

[A] Rohit Sharma

[B] Smriti Mandhana

[C] Virat Kohli

[D] Harmanpreet Kaur

**Answer:** Harmanpreet Kaur

Indian captain in the shortest format, Harmanpreet Kaur has become the first Indian cricketer to play 100 Twenty20 Internationals (T20Is) as she took the field against South Africa in Surat on 5th October 2019. She achieved this milestone before MS Dhoni and Rohit Sharma, who have played 98 T20Is for India. Beside this, she is also the first Indian cricketer – male or female – to sign a Big Bash League contract with Sydney Thunder in Australia. In June 2017, she became the first Indian to sign with Surrey Stars in ECB's Kia Super League.

69. Who has become the first-ever batsman to score twin hundreds in his first Test as opener?

[A] Shikhar Dhawan

[B] Rohit Sharma

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[C] Virat Kohli

[D] K L Rahul

**Answer:** Rohit Sharma

Rohit Sharma from India has become the first-ever batsman to score hundreds in each innings of his maiden Test as an opener in Visakhapatnam against South Africa. He also broke the record for most sixes in a Test with 13 hits over the fence & surpassed Pakistan's Wasim Akram who smashed 12 in a game against Zimbabwe in 1996. Beside this, Rohit also became the first Indian batsman to be stumped in both innings of a Test.

70. Mohammad Hasnain, who has become the youngest-ever cricketer to take a hat-trick in T20I, is from which country?

[A] South Africa

[B] Afghanistan

[C] Pakistan

[D] Bangladesh

**Answer:** Pakistan

Pakistan pacer Mohammad Hasnain has become the youngest-ever cricketer to take a hat-trick in T20I. He achieved the feat against Sri Lanka in the first Twenty20 international in Lahore.

71. The 2019 Nobel prize in physics has been awarded for discovery in which field?

[A] Cosmology

[B] Laser

[C] Gravitational waves

[D] Neutrino oscillations

**Answer:** Cosmology

The Nobel Prize 2019 for Physics has jointly been awarded to three scientists – James Peebles, Michel Mayor and Didier Queloz – groundbreaking discoveries about the evolution of the universe and the Earth's place in the cosmos. One half of the award was given to James Peebles for theoretical discoveries in physical cosmology and the other half jointly to Michel Mayor and Didier Queloz for the discovery of an exo-planet orbiting a solar-type star. They will share a 9-million kronor cash award, a gold medal and a diploma. The laureates will receive them at a ceremony in Stockholm on December 10.

72. The 63rd Dhammachakra Pravartan Day 2019 has recently for which noted personality?

[A] Mahatma Gandhi

[B] B R Ambedkar

[C] Lal Bahadur Shastri

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[D] Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

**Answer:** B R Ambedkar

In Maharashtra, the 63rd Dhammachakra Pravartan Din has celebrated at Deekshabhoomi in Nagpur on 9th October 2019. The Buddhist followers from the different parts of the country and abroad reached at the venue to pay homage to the Architect of Indian Constitution Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. It is a day to celebrate the Buddhist conversion of Dr. Ambedkar.

73. India's first e-waste clinic is being set up in which city?

[A] Bhopal

[B] New Delhi

[C] Jaipur

[D] Nagpur

**Answer:** Bhopal

India's first e-waste clinic is being set up in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh. For this noble cause, the Bhopal Municipal Corporation (BMC) and the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) have signed pact that would enable segregation, processing and disposal of waste from both household and commercial units. Initially, it will be 3-month pilot project and being successful, it would be replicated elsewhere in the country. The clinic will be formed in compliance with the Solid Waste Management Rules of 2016.

74. The 2019 World Parliament of Science, Religion and Philosophy was held in which city?

[A] Jabalpur

[B] New Delhi

[C] Pune

[D] Kolkata

**Answer:** Pune

The 5th edition of the World Parliament of Science, Religion and Philosophy has been organized by the MIT World Peace University in Pune on October 2. The theme of the 5-day event for year 2019 is 'Role of science, religion and philosophy for world peace and well-being of mankind'. The aim of the Parliament was to create and promote interfaith and inter-religious movement for World Peace.

75. NITI Aayog has launched Youth Co:Lab in collaboration with which international organisation?

[A] UNDP

[B] WHO

[C] UNESCO

[D] WTO

**Answer:** UNDP

The Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), NITI Aayog and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) India have jointly launched Youth Co:Lab that aims to accelerate youth-led social entrepreneurship, innovation in India. Through Youth Co:Lab, young entrepreneurs and innovators will get a chance to connect with governments, mentors, incubators and investors, who will help equip them with entrepreneurial skills. It will invite young people in the age group of 18-29 years and start-ups to showcase their proposed ideas and solutions to tackle some of the region's biggest social challenges.

76. Who is the author of the book '150 Years of Celebrating the Mahatma the South African Legacy'?

[A] Tulsi Jain

[B] Siddharth Kapoor

[C] Prabhas Jayawardhan

[D] Fakir Hassen

**Answer:** Fakir Hassen

The book titled '150 Years of Celebrating the Mahatma the South African Legacy' has been penned by author and journalist Fakir Hassen. It is a 160-page coffee table that records how commemorations of Gandhi's activities (including his birth and death anniversaries) were confined to the local Indian community only.

77. Yalitza Aparicio, who has been named UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador, is from which country?

[A] Canada

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[B] Mexico
[C] United States
[D] Argentina

**Answer:** Mexico

Mexican actress Yalitza Aparicio has been named UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for Indigenous Peoples. She made history as the first indigenous performer nominated for a best actress honor at the 2019 Academy Awards for her performance in the film "Roma", in which she speaks in an indigenous language and in Spanish.

78. The Indo-Mongolian Joint Exercise – Nomadic Elephant 2019 – has started in which state?
[A] Himachal Pradesh
[B] Jharkhand
[C] Arunachal Pradesh
[D] Sikkim

**Answer:** Himachal Pradesh

The 14th edition of Indo – Mongolian joint militarytraining – Exercise Nomadic Elephant 2019 – from 05 to 18 Oct at Bakloh in Himachal Pradesh. It is aimed at training troops incounter insurgency & counter terrorism operations under United Nationsmandate. It is an ideal platform forthe armies of both the nations to share their experiences & best practicesand gain mutually during the joint training.

79. Who has been selected for the UNEP's Asia Environmental Enforcement Award?
[A] Vivek Kundra
[B] S H Khan
[C] Subodh Kumar
[D] Ramesh Pandey

**Answer:** Ramesh Pandey

Ramesh Pandey, the 1996-batch Indian Forest Service (IFS) officer, has been selected for the prestigious UNEP's Asia Environmental Enforcement Award for his excellent work in combating transboundary environmental crime. He will receive the award on November 13 at the United Nations Conference Centre (UNCC) in Bangkok. Pandey is posted as Chief Conservator Forests (CCF) in Lucknow and Secretary of UP State Bio-diversity Board. He is known for his investigation and intelligence gathering on poachers. The purpose of the Asia Environmental Enforcement Awards is to publicly recognise outstanding achievements by public organisations and individuals in Asia to combat transboundary environmental crime.

80. On which date, the 2019 edition of World Post Day (WPD) is observed?
[A] October 8
[B] October 10
[C] October 7
[D] October 9

**Answer:** October 9

The World Post Day (WPD) is celebrated every year on 9th of October to create awareness of the role of the postal sector in people's and businesses' everyday lives and its contribution to the social and economic development of countries. The day also marks the anniversary of the establishment of the Universal Postal Union (UPU) in 1874 in the Swiss Capital, Bern.

81. Which company's Mutual Fund has been renamed as Nippon India Mutual Fund (NIMF)?
[A] Aditya Birla
[B] Wipro
[C] TATA
[D] Reliance

**Answer:** Reliance

The Reliance Mutual Fund has been renamed as Nippon India Mutual Fund (NIMF). The name change came after Nippon Life Insurance of Japan completed the acquisition of 75% stake in Reliance Nippon Life Asset Management from Reliance Capital. Nippon Life is Japan's largest life insurance company and a

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global financial services conglomerate. It manages assets worth over $700 billion.

82. Who has become the 1st female player to complete 20 yrs in international cricket

[A] Mithali Raj

[B] Jhulan Goswami

[C] Veda Krishnamurthy

[D] Lisa Sthalekar

**Answer:** Mithali Raj

Indian women's cricket captain & right-handed batswoman, Mithali Raj has become the 1st female player to complete 20 yrs in international cricket. She achieved the feat while leading India to an emphatic 8-wicket win over South Africa Women in the first ODI at Vadodara on 10th October 2019. Mithali made her ODI debut against Ireland on 26th June 1999 & completed 20 years and 105 days in the 50-over format. She has played 204 ODIs till now, the most by a female.

83. What is the theme of the 2019 edition of World Mental Health Day (WMHD)?

[A] Living with Schizophrenia

[B] Mental health and older adults

[C] Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention

[D] Dignity in Mental Health

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**Answer:** Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention

The World Mental Health Day (WMHD) is observed every year on 10th of October by World Federation for Mental Health to raise awareness of the scale of suicide around the world and the role that each of us can play to help prevent it. The 2019 theme is "Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention".

84. The 2019 Nobel prize in Chemistry has been awarded for discovery in which field?

[A] Directed evolution of enzymes

[B] Cryo-electron microscopy

[C] Lithium-ion batteries

[D] Phage display of peptides and antibodies

**Answer:** Lithium-ion batteries

The Nobel Prize 2019 for Chemistry has jointly been awarded to three scientists – John D. Goodenough, M. Stanley Whittingham and Akira Yoshino – for the development of lithium-ion batteries that we use in everyday life from mobile phones to electric vehicles.

85. The 2019 Nobel prize in Physiology or Medicine has been awarded for discovery in which field?

[A] Cellular Respiration

[B] Cancer therapy

[C] Circadian rhythm

[D] Autophagy

**Answer:** Cellular Respiration

The Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine 2019 was awarded jointly to William G. Kaelin Jr, Sir Peter J. Ratcliffe and Gregg L. Semenza "for their discoveries of how cells sense and adapt to oxygen availability". The discoveries made by these scientists have fundamental importance for physiology and have paved the way for promising new strategies to fight anemia, cancer and many other diseases.

86. What is the India's rank at the 2019 WEF Global Competitiveness Index?

[A] 54th

[B] 66th

[C] 68th

[D] 75th

**Answer:** 68th

India has slipped sharply by 10 places to rank 68th on the 2019 WEF Global Competitiveness Index due to improvements witnessed by several other economies. The index is compiled by the Geneva-based World Economic Forum (WEF). In the overall competitiveness ranking, Singapore replaced the US to take the first position.

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87. Who is the director of the award-winning short film "Spirit Of Kerala"?

[A] Rayka Zehtabchi

[B] Sujoy Ghosh

[C] Arun Joseph

[D] Maitrey Bajpai

**Answer:** Arun Joseph

The "Spirit Of Kerala", which is directed by Arun Joseph, has become the first Indian short film that bagged the People's Choice Award at the recently concluded My Rode Reel film competition. It is a short film by a group of Malayali youngsters on Vallamkali (boat racing) that showed the celebration of the spirit of survival in the face of disaster. My Rode Reel film competition is touted as the 'world's largest short film competition'.

88. Nirmala Sheoran, who has been banned for 4 years, is associated to which sports?

[A] Sprint

[B] Wrestling

[C] Boxing

[D] Weightlifting

**Answer:** Sprint

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Indian sprinter Nirmala Sheoran has been banned for four years for doping and stripped of her 400m and 4x400m relay titles from the 2017 Asian Championships. The Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) has stated that she tested positive for steroids drostanolone and metenolone in sample taken at the Inter-State meet in Guwahati in June 2018. Hence, the ban was backdated to June 29, 2018 & her results from August 2016 to November 2018 were disqualified.

89. The 1st Government-sponsored Day Care Recreation Centre for senior citizens has been inaugurated in which city?

[A] Delhi

[B] Leh

[C] Shimla

[D] Dehradun

**Answer:** Leh

The first Government-sponsored and operated day-care cum recreation centre for senior citizens has been inaugurated by Supreme Court judge – Justice S. Abdul Nazeer – in Leh. The centre will be one stop-shop for entertainment, medical services and legal aid for the aged people of the Ladakh region. It will also provide a raft of medical facilities including geriatric care, health consultations and check-ups, physiotherapy as well legal service the senior citizens would require on various legal issues. The premise will also be equipped with computer learning and a library and the aged citizens can entertain themselves with indoor games and recreational activities.

90. The Union Health Ministry has launched e-DantSeva in collaboration with which institute?

[A] Tata Memorial

[B] Apollo

[C] AIIMS

[D] Fortis Healthcare

**Answer:** AIIMS

The All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in collaboration with the Union Health Ministry has recently launched the first-ever website and mobile application "e-Dantseva" on oral health awareness. The digital platform will provide oral health information gathered from authentic scientific resources and connect the people to timely advise for managing any dental emergency or oral health problem. It contains information about the National Oral Health Programme (NOHP), a detailed list of all the dental facility and colleges, Information, Education and Communication (IEC) material and a unique feature called the 'Symptom Checker'. The website also provides GPRS route and satellite images of the facility for easier access to the people.

91. The first-ever National Hindi Science writers conference has started in which city?

[A] Jabalpur

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[B] New Delhi
[C] Shimla
[D] Lucknow

**Answer:** Lucknow

In Uttar Pradesh, the first -ever National Hindi Science writers conference has started on 11th of October in Lucknow with an aim to release science writing from the clutches of English and to promote use of Hindi and other Vernacular languages. More than one thousand science writers from across the country are participating in this conference which is aimed to bring all Hindi and vernacular language science writers at one platform and to promote Hindi in the field of science writing.

92. Olga Tokarczuk, who has been awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature for 2018, is from which country?
[A] Poland
[B] Austria
[C] France
[D] Britain

**Answer:** Poland

Polish author Olga Tokarczuk has won the 2018 Nobel Prize in literature for a narrative imagination that with encyclopedic passion represents the crossing of boundaries as a form of life. Her first novel, "The Journey of the People of the Book," was released in 1993. She has also won the Booker International Prize for her 2007 novel "Flights". She became the 15th woman to have won the prestigious distinction, out of 116 literature laureates honoured since 1901. It must be noted that the 2019 Nobel Prize in Literature was announced along with the 2018 Prize as the latter was delayed by a year following a scandal that included allegations of sexual misconduct.

93. Who is the author of the book "A Sorrow Beyond Dreams"?
[A] Kazuo Ishiguro
[B] Peter Handke
[C] Olga Tokarczuk
[D] Bob Dylan

**Answer:** Peter Handke

Austrian author Peter Handke has been honoured with the 2019 Nobel Prize in literature for an influential work that with linguistic ingenuity has explored the periphery and the specificity of human experience. His notable works include "Short Letter, Long Farewell" and "A Sorrow Beyond Dreams". He will receive 9 million Swedish kronor (£740,000), as well as a medal and a diploma.

94. The SUMAN initiative has been launched for which purpose?
[A] Explore Ionosphere
[B] Alert fishermen from upcoming disasters
[C] Student learning Programme
[D] Quality health care

**Answer:** Quality health care

On 11th October 2019, Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan has launched Surakshit Matritva Aashwasan (SUMAN) initiative in New Delhi during the 13th Conference of Central Council of Health and Family Welfare. The aim of the initiative is to assure dignified, respectful and quality health care at no cost and zero tolerance for denial of services for every woman and newborn visiting the public health facility in order to end all preventable maternal and newborn deaths. It also provides a positive birth experience to both mother and infant.

95. Kadri Gopalnath, who passed away recently, was eminent personality in which musical instrument?
[A] Ukulele
[B] Violin
[C] Saxophone
[D] Flute

**Answer:** Saxophone

Kadri Gopalnath (69), the well known Saxophone master & Padma Shri awardee, has passed away in Mangaluru on 11th October 2019. He was considered as a pioneer in playing Carnatic ragas on his

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Saxophone. His production East-West is a fusion of western and Indian music.

96. The first ever India International Cooperatives Trade Fair (IICTF) has started in which city?

[A] Chennai

[B] New Delhi

[C] Bangaluru

[D] Pune

**Answer:** New Delhi

The first-ever India International Cooperatives Trade Fair (IICTF) has started at Pragati Maidan in New Delhi on 11th October 2019. The 3-day fair is a major platform to promote export of Indian cooperative produce which will lead to enhanced rural and farm prosperity. The event is also packed with exhibitions, B2B/C2C meetings, conferences, cultural programmes etc. The organizations from 36 countries are participating in the Fair.

97. Which space agency has launched Icon satellite to explore where air meets space?

[A] ISRO

[B] NASA

[C] JAXA

[D] Roscosmos

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**Answer:** NASA

NASA has recently launched its new Ionospheric Connection Explorer (Icon) satellite from the Cape Canaveral Air Force Station in Florida to explore the mysterious, dynamic region where air meets space. The refrigerator-size Icon satellite will study the airglow formed from gases in the ionosphere and also measure the charged environment right around the 360-mile-high (580-kilometer-high) spacecraft. Apart from this, a NASA satellite 'Gold' ( launched in 2018) is also studying the upper atmosphere, but from much higher up.

98. Which satellite-based advisory service has been launched for deep sea fishermen?

[A] Aries

[B] Gemini

[C] Virgo

[D] Aquarius

**Answer:** Gemini

The Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS) and Airport Authority of India (AAI) has launched a new satellite-based GEMINI system that will alert deep-sea fishermen of upcoming disasters. The acronym 'GEMINI' stands for "GAGAN Enabled Mariner's Instrument for Navigation and Information"& is works on GAGAN (GPS-Aided Geo Augmented Navigation) satellite system of ISRO & AAI. Through GEMINI, all key alerts and messages would be sent through GAGAN and the designated device would receive and transfer it to a mobile phone through Bluetooth communication. The related mobile application would then decode and display the information to the user. It can be decoded into 9 languages. The technology for the device has been transferred to a Bengaluru-based company 'Acord'.

99. The union ministry has launched which Pradhan Mantri Innovative Learning Programme?

[A] Gemini

[B] Libra

[C] Pisces

[D] Dhruv

**Answer:** Dhruv

On 9th October 2019, the Pradhan Mantri Innovative Learning Programme "DHRUV" has been launched by Union HRD Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank from Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Headquarters at Bengaluru and will conclude on 24th of this month at IIT Delhi. 60 brightest and talented students from Science, Mathematics and Performing Arts have been chosen for the programme. The programme is named after the Pole Star and every student to be called 'DHRUV TARA'. It aims to sharpen innovative imagination, skills and knowledge of the students who are expected to contribute to bringing solutions to socio-economic, political and environmental issues in the country.

100. Which union ministry has launched a month long exploratory open water rafting expedition "Ganga

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Aamantran Abhiyan"?

[A] Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

[B] Ministry of Jal Shakti

[C] Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare

[D] Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

**Answer:** Ministry of Jal Shakti

The Union Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat has recently launched a unique initiative called 'Ganga Amantran' to connect with the stakeholders of the river. It is one-month-long pioneering exploratory open- water rafting and kayaking expedition on the Ganga river. The expedition has started at Devaprayag and will culminate at Ganga Sagar covering the entire stratch of over 25,000 kilometres of the River. This is the first ever effort by National Mission for Clean Ganga to raft across the entire stretch of the river and also the longest ever social campaign undertaken through an adventure sporting activityy to spread the message of River Rejuvenation and Water Conservation on a massive scale.

101. Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has won the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize for his role in ending the 20-year war between Ethiopia and which country?

[A] Tanzania

[B] Kenya

[C] Eritrea

[D] Sudan

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**Answer:** Eritrea

Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has won the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of his efforts to end his country's long-running border conflict with neighboring Eritrea. His peace deal with Eritrea ended a 20-year military stalemate following their 1998-2000 border war. Abiy was named as the winner of the 100th Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo, where he will receive the award in December 2019. The award is seen as a welcome boost for Africa's youngest leader as he faces worrying inter-community violence ahead of a parliamentary election in May 2020.

102. Pangio bhujia, which is in news recently, is associated to which kind of animal?

[A] Fish

[B] Tortoise

[C] Tiger

[D] Lion

**Answer:** Fish

A research team led by Kerala University of Fisheries and Ocean Studies (KUFOS) has discovered a unique species of miniature well-dwelling subterranean fish 'Pangio bhujia' from Kozhikode. It is the first species of eel-loach in the world that has been discovered to be living in subterranean environments. Eel-loaches are generally found in fast-flowing streams in the south and the south-east Asia. The Pangio bhujia is approximately 3 centimetres long & pinkish-red in colour, and resides in the purest waters of deep subterranean aquifers.

103. Which union ministry has organized the 2019 SARAS Aajeevika Mela?

[A] Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship

[B] Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare

[C] Ministry of Rural Development

[D] Ministry of Textiles

**Answer:** Ministry of Rural Development

On 12th October 2019, the SARAS Aajeevika Mela has been organised by the Ministry of Rural Development at India Gate Lawns in New Delhi and will carry on till October 23. It was formally inaugurated by Rural Development Minister Narendra Singh Tomar. The aim of this SARAS Mela to bring the rural women Self Help Groups (SHGs) formed with support of Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM), under one platform to show-case their skills, sell their products and help them build linkages with bulk buyers.

104. "Ex Dharma Guardian" is the joint military exercise between India & which country?

[A] Sri Lanka

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[B] Japan
[C] Nepal
[D] Myanmar

**Answer:** Japan

India and Japan will hold the 2nd edition of joint military exercise 'DHARMA GUARDIAN-2019' in Mizoram from 19th of October to 2nd of November 2019. The focus of the 2-week-long exercise will be to increase the interoperability between the two forces and enhance coordination in dealing with various security challenges including counter-terrorism. The scope of this exercise covers platoon-level joint training on counter-terrorism operations in jungle and urban scenario.

105. Who is the author of the book "How to Avoid a Climate Disaster"?

[A] Satya Nadella
[B] Sundar Pichai
[C] Bill Gates
[D] Mark Zuckerberg

**Answer:** Bill Gates

The book titled "How to Avoid a Climate Disaster: The Solutions We Have and the Breakthroughs We Need" has been authored by founder of Microsoft Corporation and American philanthropist Bill Gates. In the book, Gates will explain why he cares so deeply about climate change and what makes him optimistic that the world can prevent the worst impacts of the climate crisis. The book will hit the stands on June 24, 2020.

106. Who has been awarded the Indira Gandhi award for national integration for 2018?

[A] Vandana Shiva
[B] Chandi Prasad Bhatt
[C] Sunita Narain
[D] Sugathakumari

**Answer:** Chandi Prasad Bhatt

Noted environmentalist and social activist, Chandi Prasad Bhatt has been awarded the Indira Gandhi award for national integration for the years 2017 and 2018 in recognition for his services in promoting and preserving national integration in the country. This award is consists of a citation and Rs 10 lakh in cash to be given to the awardee by Congress president Sonia Gandhi. Bhatt hails from Uttarakhand and was a pioneer of the Chipko movement.

107. Who has been bestowed with the lifetime achievement award at the 2019 Indian Sports Honours (ISH)?

[A] Kapil Dev
[B] Milkha Singh
[C] Pullela Gopichand
[D] Karnam Malleswari

**Answer:** Milkha Singh

Milkha Singh (92) has been bestowed with the lifetime achievement award at the 2nd edition of the Indian Sports Honours (ISH) in Mumbai. He is best known as the 'Flying Sikh' and most remembered for finishing fourth in the 400m final in the 1960 Rome Olympic Games. While star batsmwoman Smriti Mandhana got the sportswoman of the year award for the team category. Beside this, the Indian Cricket's men team bagged the honour of the 'Team of the Year'. The ISH is an initiative by Sanjiv Goenka, Chairman of RP-SG Group and Indian cricket team captain Virat Kohli.

108. Which Indian personality has been conferred the highest Civilian Honour of Comoros?

[A] Rajnath SIngh
[B] Narendra Modi
[C] Ram Nath Kovind
[D] M Venkaiah Naidu

**Answer:** M Venkaiah Naidu

Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu has been conferred the highest Civilian Honour of East African island

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nation Comoros — The Order of the Green Crescent – at its capital Moroni. The honour was conferred by the President of the Union of Comoros Azali Assoumani. India and Comoros signed 6 agreements on defence, health and culture. Both the countries also decided to exempt each other from Visa for diplomatic and official passport holders for short visits. India has also extended over 60 million dollar line of credit to Comoros in the field of energy and maritime defence cooperation.

109. Brides of which state are eligible to receive Rs. 51,000 under the "Mukhya Mantri Kanya Vivah / Nikah Yojna" on proving groom's house has toilet before marriage?

[A] UP

[B] MP

[C] Bihar

[D] Rajasthan

**Answer:** MP

In Madhya Pradesh, brides from economically backward sections under the "Mukhya Mantri Kanya Vivah / Nikah Yojna" are being eligible to receive Rs 51,000 provided they prove that the groom's house has a toilet before the wedding. And for that, it has been made mandatory for the groom to click a selfie while standing in the toilet in his residence. The aim of the initiative is to ensure that toilets are constructed in every household in the state.

110. Which state government has decided to set up Kanyashree University to empower girls?

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[A] Karnataka

[B] West Bengal

[C] Odisha

[D] Assam

**Answer:** West Bengal

The West Bengal government has decided to set up a Kanyashree University at Krishnagar in Nadia district and Kanyashree colleges across the state. The university would be only for women. Earlier, in 2013, CM Mamatat Banerjee started the Kanyashree scheme to improve the life and the status of the girls by helping economically backward families with cash so that families do not arrange the marriage of their girl child before eighteen years because of economic problem. The scheme has been given international recognition by the United Kingdoms Department of International Development and the UNICEF.

111. The 10th National Cultural Festival is being held in which state?

[A] Rajasthan

[B] Himachal Pradesh

[C] Madhya Pradesh

[D] Uttar Pradesh

**Answer:** Madhya Pradesh

In Madhya Pradesh, the 10th edition of the Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav National Cultural Festival is being organized by the Union Ministry of Culture from 14th to 21st of October under the 'Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat' campaign in Jabalpur, Sagar and Rewa. The fest will display diverse forms of folk, art and culture of 22 states. It will showcase the cultural heritage of India through performances of art, folk music, dance, handicrafts and cuisines of Leh, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab and West Bengal.

112. Which international organization has recently released its report 'South Asia Economic Focus, Making (De) Centralization Work'?

[A] IMF

[B] World Bank

[C] ADB

[D] United Nations

**Answer:** World Bank

The World Bank has recently released its report titled 'South Asia Economic Focus, Making (De) Centralization Work'. As per report, Bangladesh has become the 2nd fastest growing economy in south Asia after Bhutan. The report point out that Bangladesh's economy is likely to maintain growth above 7% i.e. supported by a robust macroeconomic framework, political stability, and strong public investments. However, the report stated that the financial sector vulnerability, fiscal pressures and loss of external

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competitiveness pose challenges to its growth rate.

113. Simone Biles is associated to which sports?

[A] Wrestling

[B] Boxing

[C] Weightlifting

[D] Gymnastics

**Answer:** Gymnastics

American artistic gymnast Simone Biles broke the all-time record for most medals by any gymnast at the world championships by winning the balance beam competition at the 2019 World Gymnastics Championship in Stuttgart, Germany. She surpassed Belarusian Vitaly Scherbo's record 23 world medals by winning her 24th and 25th world medals (both gold).

114. What is the theme of the 2019 edition of International Girl Child Day?

[A] With Her: A Skilled Girl Force

[B] GirlForce: Unscripted and Unstoppable

[C] Empower Girls: Before, during and after crises

[D] Girls' Progress = Goals' Progress

**Answer:** GirlForce: Unscripted and Unstoppable

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The International Day of the Girl Child is celebrated on every year on 11th of October to highlight and address the needs and challenges girls' face. It aims to promote girls' empowerment and the fulfillment of their human rights. The 2019 theme is "GirlForce: Unscripted and Unstoppable". The day also reflects the successful emergence of girls and young women as a distinct cohort in development policy, programming, campaigning and research.

115. Ex Vajra Prahar 2019 is the joint military exercise between India & which country?

[A] United States

[B] Japan

[C] Germany

[D] Sri Lanka

**Answer:** United States

The 10th edition of the joint military exercise "Vajra Prahar" between India and the United States gas started at the Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM) in Seattle on October 13 & will last till October 28. It is a Special Forces joint training exerciseconducted alternately in India and the US.

116. Who led Indian delegation at the 2019 BRICS Culture Ministers' meeting in Brazil?

[A] Smriti Irani

[B] Amit Shah

[C] Nirmala Sitharaman

[D] Prahlad Singh Patel

**Answer:** Prahlad Singh Patel

Union Minister of State for Culture and Tourism Prahlad Singh Patel participated in 2019 BRICS Culture Ministers' meetingheld in Curitiba, Brazil. He reaffirmed India's commitment to contribute towards strengthening bonds between member countries and also proposed to add literature as another field of cooperation between the countries to enhance cooperation in the field of literary works.

117. Who has been conferred the National Kishore Kumar Samman for 2018-19?

[A] Waheeda Rehman

[B] Amitabh Bachchan

[C] Priyadarshan

[D] Shahrukh Khan

**Answer:** Priyadarshan

On 13th October 2019, the noted director and producer Priyadarshan has been conferred the National Kishore Kumar Samman for 2018-19 in Khandwa, the birthplace of the legendary singer- actor. According to the official, the Kishore Kumar Samman jury selected noted actor Waheeda Rehman for the award for 2017-18. The award was instituted by the Madhya Pradesh Department of Culture. It carries a cash prize

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of Rs 2 lakh and a citation. Kishore Kumar, who passed away on 13th October 1987, is considered as one of the most popular and successful singers of Hindi film industry and from soft numbers to peppy tracks to romantic moods.

118. 'The Don' award is the sports highest individual honour of which country?

[A] England

[B] New Zealand

[C] Australia

[D] South Africa

**Answer:** Australia

Ashleigh Barty has won 'The Don' award at the annual Sport Australia Hall of Fame and was recognized as currently the top Australian athlete. She won the 2019 French Open tennis tournament and is currently the top-ranked WTA player in the world. Barty became only the 2nd tennis player to win the prestigious award after Pat Rafter in 2001. 'The Don' award is Australian sport's highest individual honour.

119. On which date, the 2019 edition of International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction (IDDR) is observed?

[A] October 14

[B] October 13

[C] October 12

[D] October 11

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**Answer:** October 13

The International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction (IDDR) is observed every year on 13th of October to promote a global culture of risk-awareness and disaster reduction. The 2019 theme "Reduce disaster damage to critical infrastructure and disruption of basic services" is based on Target (d) of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030: 'Substantially reduce disaster damage to critical infrastructure and disruption services, among them health and education facilities, including through developing their resilience by 2030'.

120. 'Binisutoy', which has been selected for International Film Festival of Kerala, is associated to which language?

[A] Bengali

[B] Marathi

[C] Khasi

[D] Hindi

**Answer:** Bengali

National award winning director Atanu Ghosh's upcoming Bengali film 'Binisutoy' (Without strings) has been selected for International Film Festival of Kerala. The movie tells the story of how two strangers meet at the audition of a game show, become friends and try to find out the meaning of their lives through some strange pattern of existence. Besides 'Binisutoy', the six other films selected in the 'Indian Cinema Now' section of the festival are Anandi Gopal (Marathi), Axone (Hindi/English), Mai Ghat: Crime No 103/2005) (Marathi), Hellaro (Gujarati), Market/Lewduh (Khasi), and The Funeral/Ram Prasad Ki Tehrvi (Hindi). Every year, Indian Cinema Now of prestigious International Film Festival of Kerala features only 7 noteworthy Indian films.

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## Current Affairs – News Headlines: October 16, 2019

### India

- Air Forces of India and Japan to conduct joint military exercise 'Shinyuu Maitri' in Panagarh, West Bengal from October 17 to 23
- Indian railways start 9 Sewa Service trains to connect small towns with closest major cities

### Economy & Corporate

- to set up 14 Authorized World Skills India Training Centres across 9 cities for media and entertainment sector

### India's Merchandise Trade in April-September

- Exports fell 2.6% to US$ 159.57 billion
- Imports declined 6.6% to US$ 243.28 billion
- Trade deficit eased to US$ 83.70 billion from US$ 96.45 billion in April-September 2018

### IMF'S WEO

- IMF's World Economic Outlook (WEO) was released on October 15, 2019
- World economy is projected to grow 3% in 2019 and 3.4% in 2020
- India's GDP growth forecast for 2019-20 cut to 6.1% from 7.3% in April
- India's economy to pick up and grow by 7% in 2020-21

### World

- India hands over second pair of Mi-24V helicopters to Afghan forces in Kabul
- Global Handwashing Day observed on October 15, theme for 2019 'Clean Hands for All'
- International Day of Rural Women observed on October 15; 2019 Theme: Rural Women and Girls Building Climate Resilience

### 2019 Booker Prize In Literature

- Awarded jointly to two writers for the 1st time
- Canadian writer Margaret Atwood chosen for her novel 'The Testament'
- British writer Bernardine Evaristo chosen for her novel 'Girl, Woman, Other'
- Both authors to share 50,000 pounds prize

### Sports

- ICC scraps boundary count rule; in case of a super over tie there will be a repeated super over until one team has more runs than the other
- FIFA World Cup Qualifier match between India, Bangladesh at Kolkata ends in 1-1 draw

## Current Affairs – News Headlines: October 17, 2019

### India

- India's longest Chenani-Nashri tunnel (9.2 km) that links Kashmir with Jammu on NH 44 will be named after Bharatiya Jansangh founder Dr Shyama Prasad Mukherjee
- Malnutrition behind 69% deaths among children below 5 years in India: UNICEF's State of the World's Children Report
- Indian Army inducts American precision-guided Excalibur artillery ammunition for indigenous Dhanush howitzer
- 2nd edition of Indo-French Knowledge Summit to be held at University of Lyon in France on October 17-18
- Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) awards for excellence in biomedical research given to 46 scientists

### Food Safety Mitra Scheme

- Health and Family Welfare Minister Harsh Vardhan launches Food Mitra Scheme aimed at encouraging food vendors and people to maintain food hygiene. The scheme also aims to strengthen 'Eat Right India' movement.
- The Food Safety Mitra will be a professionally trained person with certification from FSSAI who would assist in compliances related to Food Safety and Standards Act.

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- The Food Safety Mitra will have three avatars – Digital Mitra, Trainer Mitra and Hygiene Mitra.

**Economy & Corporate**

- Bajaj Auto launches Chetak e-scooter
- MasterCard, M S Dhoni launched 'Team Cashless India' campaign to boost digital payments in India

**World Food Day**

- World Food Day was celebrated on October 16
- The day marks the founding of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in 1945.
- Theme for 2019: "Our Actions Are Our Future, Healthy Diets for A #ZeroHunger World"

**Global Hunger Index**

- India 102nd among 117 countries in Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2019, was 95th in 2018
- GHI Report prepared jointly by Irish aid agency Concern Worldwide and German organisation Welt Hunger Hilfe

**World**

- JSW Steel CMD Sajjan Jindal elected Vice-Chairman of World Steel Association (worldsteel)

**Sports**

- Barcelona captain Leonel Messi wins Golden Shoe for being the top scorer in the European leagues with 36 goals

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## Current Affairs – News Headlines: October 18, 2019

**Buddhist Circuit Train**

- The Railways will run its first Buddhist Circuit train from October 20 to 26, 2019 covering sites related to Gautam Buddha in India and Nepal.
- IRCTC will run the train covering destinations like Lumbini, where Buddha was born; Bodhgaya, where he gained enlightenment; Sarnath, where he gave his first sermon; and Kushinagar, where he attained nirvana

**India**

- Kapurthala-Taran Taran road declared as NH- 703 A A named as Shri Guru Nanak Dev Ji Marg
- V. Krishnamoorthy, who served as Station Director of the All India Radio (AIR) in Chennai, dies at 98
- Former PTI journalist Kanwar Sain Jolly died at the age of 86 in Gurugram

**India Innovation Index**

- NITI Aayog with Institute for Competitiveness as the knowledge partner released the India Innovation Index (III) 2019 on October 11, 2019
- Karnataka is the Most Innovative State among Major States
- Sikkim is the Most Innovative State among North-Eastern & Hill States
- Delhi is the Most Innovative among Union Territories

**Economy & Corporate**

- Neelkanth Mishra, Nilesh Shah and Anantha Nageswaran appointed as part-time members to the Economic Advisory to the Prime Minister
- Facebook to train 5000 tribal girls in Indian villages in digital leadership skills under its 'GOAL' (Going Online as Leaders) initiative

**World**

- International Day for the Eradication of Poverty observed on October 17, theme: Acting Together to Empower Children, their Families and Communities to End Poverty
- Air Forces of India and Oman holding Exercise Eastern Bridge-V in Oman from October 17 to 26
- Sri Lanka's third international airport inaugurated in Jaffna with flight arriving from Chennai
- EU and UK reach an agreement on Brexit deal; UK's PM Boris Johnson and European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker called it a fair outcome
- Qatar to end the 'kafala' system that ties foreign workers to their employer and requires them to have their company's permission to leave the country: ILO

**Sports**

- Malaysians Ivan Yuen (Men's) and Rachel Arnold (Women's) win singles titles at HCL-Squash Racket

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Federation of India tour in Chennai

## Current Affairs – News Headlines: October 19, 2019

### India

- IPS officer Anup Kumar Singh appointed new Director General of National Security Guard (NSG)
- Defence Minister approves admission of girls in Sainik schools from next academic session
- India-UK research collaboration creates robot named Pepe which encourages children to wash their hands
- Veteran actor Deepti Naval was honoured with the Excellence in Cinema Award at Jio MAMI Mumbai Film Festival
- SC orders transfer of Assam NRC (National Register of Citizens) coordinator, Prateek Hajela, to MP on deputation
- Declaration of holiday by govt under Negotiable Instruments (NI) Act not applicable to private firms: Madras HC
- 11th Nuclear Energy Conclave organised in New Delhi with its theme as 'Economics of Nuclear Power- Innovation towards Safer & Cost-Effective Technologies'

### Economy & Corporate

- Reliance Industries (RIL) becomes first Indian company to hit market capitalisation (m-cap) of Rs. 9 lakh crore
- directs banks to waive Merchant Discount Rate charges on digital payments made to establishments having turnover in excess of Rs 50 crore from November 1
- Foreign exchange reserves reach a life-time high of USD 439.712 billion, in the week to October 11
- Common Service Centres that provide digital government services in rural areas can now open Amul Café
- Govt to bring all medical devices under Drugs and Cosmetics Act for quality check
- Vibrant Goa Global Expo and Summit 2019 being held on October 17-19

### World

- President Kovind and Philippine's President Rodrigo Duterte hold talks at the Malacanang Palace in Manila
- International terror financing watchdog FATF (Financial Action Task Force) retains Pakistan on the Grey List
- US imposes tariffs on USD 7.5 billion worth of EU goods including Airbus aircrafts, French wine and Scottish whiskies
- NASA astronauts Christina Koch and Jessica Meir went on the first all women spacewalk outside the International Space Station
- The Interpol will hold its General Assembly in India in 2022.
- Internationally acclaimed Bangladeshi painter Kalidas Karmakar dies in Dhaka at 73

### Sports

- 7th Military World Games being held in Wuhan (China) from October 18 to 27

## Current Affairs – News Headlines: October 20, 2019

### India

- CM Arvind Kejriwal inaugurates 100 more Mohalla Clinics in Delhi, taking the total to 302
- Centre has ruled out a separate flag and Constitution for the Nagas says interlocutor for the Naga talks and Nagaland Governor R N Ravi
- 'India Myanmar Naval Exercise' IMNEX-2019 being organised in Visakhapatnam from October 19 to 22
- Indian Army organises "The Ultimate Run" to honour the next of kin and disabled soldiers in Delhi Cantonment
- International Criminal Police Organisation (Interpol) to hold general assembly in India in 2022

### Economy & Corporate

- India's livestock population increases to over 535 million: Livestock Census -2019

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### World

- British Parliament votes to delay decision on PM Boris Johnson's fresh Brexit deal
- Chile's President Sebastian Pinera declares a state of emergency in capital Santiago after a day of violent protests over an increase in the price of metro tickets
- Indian President addresses the India-Philippines Business Conclave and the 4th ASEAN-India Business Summit in Manila
- Indian President gifts a statue of goddess Tara to his Philippine counterpart Rodrigo Duterte
- Union Finance Minister. Nirmala Sitharaman attends Annual Meetings of IMF and the World Bank Group in Washington DC
- IMF Members agree to double pool of money to aid distressed countries

### Sports

- Great Britain beat India 2-1 in final to win men's Sultan of Johor Cup hockey tournament in Malaysia

## Current Affairs – News Headlines: October 21, 2019

### India

- Ex Attorney General K Parasaran given the 'Most Eminent Senior Citizen Award' by Age Care India in New Delhi
- Tamil Nadu CM K. Palaniswami conferred honorary doctorate by the Dr MGR Educational and Research Institute in Chennai
- 14-day long India-Maldives joint military exercise 'Ex EKUVERIN – 2019' culminates in Pune

### Economy & Corporate

- 'Bridgital Nation', book written by N. Chandrasekaran and Roopa Purushottam, released

### World

- Second World Statistics Day celebrated on October 20, theme: 'Theme: Better Data, Better Lives'
- Indian President unveils bust of Mahatma Gandhi at the Centre for Peace Education in Miriam college in Quezon City
- in Philippines
- Union Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan attends G20 Health Ministers' Meeting in Okayama City, Japan
- Britain asks EU for Brexit delay beyond the current October 31 deadline, EU leaders to decide

### Sports

- 15th Airtel Delhi Half Marathon: Ethiopians Andamlak Belihu (men's) and Tsehay Gemechu (women's) win titles
- Ajeetesh Sandhu wins Jeev Milkha Singh Invitational golf tournament in Chandigarh
- Kuhoo Garg and Dhruv Rawat win the mixed doubles title at the Egypt International Badminton in Cairo
- Wrestling legend Dadu Chougule dies in Kolhapur, Maharashtra at 73, was a recipient of the prestigious Dhyan Chand Award for lifetime achievement in sports

## Current Affairs – News Headlines: October 22, 2019

### Bridge In Ladakh Inaugurated

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on October 21, 2019 inaugurated 'Col Chewang Rinchen Setu'
- The strategically important bridge is over Shyok river in Ladakh region.
- The 430-meter-long bridge, built by Border Roads Organisation, connects Durbuk and Daulat Beg Oldie in Eastern Ladakh.

### Police Commemoration Day

- Police Commemoration Day observed on October 21, 2019.
- The day is observed every year in memory of the policemen killed at Hot Springs in Ladakh by Chinese troops on this date in 1959.

### India

- Siachen area, world's highest battlefield, now open to tourists: Defence Minister
- Union Culture Minister Prahlad Singh Patel launches E-Portal, YouTube Channel of Centre for Cultural Resources and Training (CCRT)

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- UN World Food Programme (WFP) launches campaign 'Feed Our Future' against hunger and malnutrition in India
- Nepali officers begin training on 'Anti Money Laundering and Countering Financing of Terrorism' in India at the National Academy of Customs, Indirect Taxes and Narcotics (NACIN), Bengaluru
- AYUSH ministry signs MoU with the Defence ministry to provide traditional medicine services at the armed forces' hospitals
- Pakistan has unilaterally stopped postal services to and from India after August 27: Union Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad

**Economy & Corporate**

- Govt rolls out 6th tranche of Sovereign Gold Bond (SGB) Scheme from October 21 to 25; fixes issue price at Rs 3835/gram
- Govt launches BHIM 2.0 with new functionalities, additional language support
- Members of US India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF) led by Chairman John Chambers meets PM Modi in Delhi

**World**

- Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces withdraw from border town of Ras al Ain
- DENMARK OPEN BADMINTON WINNERS
- Japan's Kento Momota: men's singles
- Japan's Nozomi Okuhara: women's singles
- Indonesia's Marcus Fernaldi Gideon & Kevin Sanjaya Sukamuljo: men's doubles
- South Korea's Baek Ha-na & Jung Kyung-eun: women's doubles
- Indonesia's Praveen Jordan & Melati Daeva Oktavianti: mixed doubles

**Sports**

- Raunak Sadhwani becomes India's 65th chess Grandmaster at 13 years, nine months and 28 days
- Andy Murray wins men's singles title at European Open tennis in Antwerp

## Current Affairs – News Headlines: October 23, 2019

**India**

- Indian Army to conduct exercise codenamed 'Sindhu Sudarshan' in the deserts of Rajasthan from Nov 29 to Dec 4.
- Bureaucrat Braj Raj Sharma appointed Chairman of Staff Selection Commission (SSC)
- Bureaucrat Pankaj Kumar appointed CEO of Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI)
- Union Health Ministry to launch nationwide immunisation program under 'Mission Indradhanush 2.0' from December 2
- Deepika Padukone and P. V. Sindhu named ambassadors for 'Bharat Ki Laxmi' by PM Modi
- With registration of 3.1 lakh FIRs, UP topped the crime list in India accounting for 10.1% of total crimes in 2017: NCRB
- Ashok Malik, former press secretary to President, appointed policy advisor in the Ministry of External Affairs
- Actor Ayushmann Khurrana joins hands with UNICEF and Ministry of Women and Child Development to raise awareness against sexual abuse of children
- IAF conducts test firing of 300 km range BrahMos surface-to-surface missiles from a mobile platform in Andaman Nicobar Islands

**Economy & Corporate**

- Benelli launches Imperiale 400 motorcycle priced at Rs 1.69 lakh
- ITC launches world's most expensive chocolate priced at Rs 4.3 lakh per kilogram under its Fabelle brand

**World**

- Liberal Party, led by Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau wins 157 seats in 338-seat House of Commons
- President Kovind attends enthronement ceremony of Japan's new Emperor Naruhito in Tokyo

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### Sports

- India (497/9 d) beat South Africa (162, 132) by an innings and 202 runs in third and final test at Ranchi on October 22, 2019, complete 3-0 whitewash.

## Current Affairs – News Headlines: October 24, 2019

### India

- Union Cabinet decides to confer ownership rights to 40 lakh residents of Delhi's unauthorised colonies
- approves raising of 2 operational commands for the ITBP, which guards the LAC with China, at Chandigarh and Guwahati
- International Snow Leopard Day celebrated on October 23
- Economist Bibek Debroy launches English translations of Hindu mythological texts in Sanskrit – 'Markendya Purana' and 'The Bhagavad Gita'
- Delhi HC directs Facebook, Google, Twitter to globally remove links to video disparaging Ramdev
- CBSE, NCERT to launch 'Tamanna' (Try And Measure Aptitude And Natural Abilities) aptitude test for Class 9, 10 students

### Panchayat Awards

- Minister of Panchayati Raj Narendra Singh Tomar conferred the national Panchayat Awards, 2019 in New Delhi
- 246 Awards were given to awardee Panchayats and States in various categories for their best performance at different levels, including the delivery of services.
- 195 awards were conferred under Deen Dayal Upadhyay Panchayat Sashaktikaran Puraskar category
- 20 Gram Panchayats in Nanaji Deshmukh Rashtriya Gaurav Gram Sabha Puraskar category
- 3 Gram Panchayats in Gram Panchayat Development Plan Award category.
- 22 Gram Panchayats were awarded in Child-Friendly Gram Panchayats Award
- Six states were awarded under e-Panchayat Puraskar category.

### Economy & Corporate

- relaxes norms for setting up petrol pumps allowing non-oil companies to venture into the business
- MSPs of rabi crops of 2019-20 hiked: Lentil by Rs 325 per quintal, gram by Rs 255 per quintal and of wheat by Rs 85 per quintal
- accords 'Maharatna' status to PSUs HPCL and Power Grid Corporation, thus giving them greater operational and financial autonomy
- Govt to merge BSNL, MTNL; unveils Rs 68,751-cr revival package for both loss-making PSUs
- India improves ranking in Melbourne Mercer Global Pension Index from 33rd in 2018 to 32nd in 2019

### World

- Indian President lays foundation stone for Sri Sathya Sai Sanathana Samskruti Project at Sai no Sato, Kakegawa, Japan
- External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar attends Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Ministerial Meeting in Baku, Azerbaijan

### Sports

- Former India captain Ganguly takes over as 39th President of BCCI for nine months
- Praveen Kumar becomes the first Indian man to win a Wushu World Championships gold in Shanghai in men's 48 kg Sanda

## Current Affairs – News Headlines: October 25, 2019

### Assembly Election Results

- Haryana Assembly poll results (90/90): BJP: 40, Haryana Lokhit Party: 1, Independent: 7, Congress: 31, Indian National Lok Dal (INLD): 1, Jannayak Janta Party (JJP): 10
- Maharashtra Assembly poll results (281/288): BJP: 102, Congress: 41, Nationalist Congress Party (NCP): 53, Shiv Sena: 56, Independents: 13, Others: 15

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### Assembly Byelection Results

- GUJARAT: Congress wins from Tharad, Radhanpur, Kheralu, Bayad; BJP from Amraiwadi and Lunawada
- ARUNACHAL PRADESH: Independent wins from Khonsa (West)
- ASSAM: BJP wins from Rangapara, Sonari and Ratabari; All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) from Jania
- BIHAR: Rashtriya Janata Dal wins from Simri Bakhtiarpu and Belhar, All India Majlis-E-Ittehadul Muslimeen wins from Kishanganj, Independent wins from Daraundha, JD-U from Nathnagar
- CHHATTISGARH: Congress wins from Chitrakoot
- HIMACHAL PRADESH: BJP wins from Dharamshala and Pachhcad
- KERALA: Communist Party of India (Marxist) wins from Vattiyoorkavu and Konni, Congress wins from Ernakulam and Aroor, Indian Union Muslim League wins from Manjeshwar
- MADHYA PRADESH: Congress wins from Jhabua
- MEGHALAYA: United Democratic Party wins from Shella
- ODISHA: Biju Janata Dal wins from Bijepur
- PUDUCHERRY: Congress wins from Kamaraj Nagar
- PUNJAB: Congress wins from Phagwara, Mukerian, and Jalalabad; Shiromani Akali Dal wins from Dakha
- RAJASTHAN: Congress wins from Mandawa, Rashtriya Loktantrik Party wins from Khinwsar
- SIKKIM: BJP wins from Martam-Rumtek(BL) and Gangtok (BL); Sikkim Krantikari Morcha wins from Poklok-Kamrang
- TAMIL NADU: All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam wins from Nanguneri and Vikravandi
- TELANGANA: Telangana Rashtra Samithi wins from Huzurnagar
- UTTAR PRADESH: BJP wins from Gangoh, Iglas, Lucknow Cantt, Balha (SC), Govindnagar and Manikpur; Samajwadi Party wins from Rampur, Jalalpur, Zaidpur; Apna Dal (Soneylal) wins from Pratapgarh

### Lok Sabha Byelection Results

- Ram Vilas Paswan's Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) retains Samastipur reserved seat in Lok Sabha byelection in Bihar.
- Sharad Pawar's Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) retained Satara seat in Lok Sabha byelection in Maharashtra

### New Appointments

- Senior IAS officer Arvind Singh is new Chairman of Airports Authority of India
- Senior IAS officer Sukhbir Singh Sandhu is new Chairman of NHAI
- Senior IAS officer Arvind Singh has been appointed as the chairman of Airports Authority of India
- Senior IAS officer Ganji Kamala V Rao appointed new CMD of India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) Ltd
- Senior IAS officer Pramod Kumar Tiwari, appointed new Director General of the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)

### India

- Armies of India and France to conduct joint exercise code-named 'Ex Shakti -2019' from Oct 31 to Nov 13 at Mahajan Field Firing Ranges in Rajasthan

### Economy & Corporate

- Fitch Ratings slashes India's GDP growth forecast in 2019-20 to 5.5% from 6.6% made in June

### World

- New Zealand tops World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Ranking, India 63rd (77th in 2018)
- India-Pakistan agreement on Kartarpur corridor to allow Indian pilgrims visa-free visit to the shrine of Guru Nanak Dev in Pakistan
- European Parliament awards Sakharov Prize for human rights to Uighur intellectual Ilham Tohti, jailed by China

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- France and US agree to develop systems on space situational awareness and traffic management for the commercial space industry
- S. Supreme Court judge Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg wins $1 million Berggruen Prize for philosophy and culture
- The ozone hole over Antarctica is the smallest observed since 1982: NASA
- United Nations Day celebrated on October 24 with its theme as 'UN75: 2020 and Beyond – Shaping Our Future Together'
- World Development Information Day celebrated on October 24

### Sports

- India's D. Harika won the 'best women's player' prize at the FIDE Chess.com Grand Swiss tournament in Douglas (Isle of Man). The tournament was won by Wang Hao of China.

## Current Affairs – News Headlines: October 26, 2019

### Appointments

- BJP leader P.S. Sreedharan Pillai appointed Governor of Mizoram
- Satya Pal Malik appointed new Governor of Goa
- Girish Chandra Murmu appointed as the first Lt Governor of Jammu and Kashmir
- Radha Krishna Mathur appointed as the first Lt Governor of Ladakh
- Former IB Chief Dineshwar Sharma appointed as the new Administrator of Lakshadweep

### India

- Lucknow-based City Montessori School entered Guinness Book of World Records for having largest number of students at 55,547
- Odisha govt. launches social service initiative 'Odisha Mo Parivar' (Odisha, my family) aimed at encouraging environment protection, blood donation and the welfare of Odias in distress.
- CVC to observe vigilance awareness week from Oct 28 to Nov 2 with 'Integrity – A way of life' as theme

### Economy & Corporate

- India's foreign exchange reserves rise to a new life-time high of USD 440.751 billion for the week ended October 18
- Mahindra Two Wheelers Europe to fully acquire France-based Peugeot Motocycles (PMTC) for an undisclosed amount

### Nam Summit

- The 18th Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) was organised in Baku, Azerbaijan on October 24-25, 2019.
- Vice President Venkaiah Naidu led the Indian delegation to the Summit.
- Established in 1961 in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, NAM is a forum of 120 developing world states that are not formally aligned with or against any major power bloc.

### World

- Evo Morales re-elected as President of Bolivia
- Incumbent Mokgweetsi Masisi wins another five-year term as President of Botswana
- Britain's Natural History Museum names blind and wingless beetle after Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg

### Sports

- Karnataka defeat Tamil Nadu to lift the Vijay Hazare trophy in cricket in Bengaluru

## Current Affairs – News Headlines: October 27, 2019

### Postal Ballot

- Disabled and people over 80 years of age can now cast their vote through postal ballot
- At present, voting through postal ballot is available to armed forces and those assigned poll duties.
- On the recommendation of the EC, the Law & Justice Ministry has amended the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961

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**India**

- UP govt. breaks its own Guinness World Record for the largest display of oil lamps by lighting 5.5 lakh diyas or earthen lamps in Ayodhya
- Odisha Govt. ties up with UNICEF to provide safe drinking water to every household under 'Drink From Tap Mission'
- Birender Singh Yadav appointed as India's next Ambassador to Iraq
- Nanammal, yoga teacher and 2018 Padma Shri awardee, dies in Coimbatore at the age of 99

**Economy & Corporate**

- World Bank President David Malpass calls on PM Modi and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in Delhi

**World**

- Third International Day of Diplomats was celebrated in Madagascar's capital Antananarivo on October 24
- Ministerial meeting of BASIC (Brazil, South Africa, India, China) countries on Climate Change held in Beijing on October 25-26

**Wisden India Awards**

- Wisden India Almanack Cricketer of the Year awards were won by India's Jasprit Bumrah and Smriti Mandhana, Pakistan's Fakhar Zaman, Sri Lanka's Dimuth Karunaratne and Afghanistan Rashid Khan.
- Former Indian cricketers Gundappa Viswanath and Lala Amarnath inducted into the Wisden India Hall of Fame
- Wisden India Book of the Year won by 'Cricket Country: The Untold History of the First All India Team' by Prashant Kidambi

## Current Affairs – News Headlines: October 28

**India**

- Haryana: BJP's Manohar Lal Khattar (65) sworn in as CM for 2nd time, Dushyant Chautala (31) of JJP (Jannayak Janta Party) as Deputy CM by Governor Satyadev Narayan Arya in Chandigarh
- Infantry Day celebrated by Indian Army on October 27

**World**

- Islamic State Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi announced dead in a secret US special forces raid in northwest Syria
- Filipe Nyusi of Frelimo party declared re-elected President of Mozambique
- World Day for Audiovisual Heritage celebrated on October 27 with its theme as 'Engage the Past Through Sound and Images'

## Current Affairs – News Headlines: October 29, 2019

**India**

- Delegation of European Union Members of Parliament (MPs) calls on PM Modi and VP M. Venkaiah Naidu in Delhi
- Nicaragua's Foreign Minister Denis Moncada Colindres visits India, to reopen country's embassy in New Delhi

**Economy & Corporate**

- Air India depicts 'Ik Onkar' on tail of aircraft on Amritsar-Stansted flight to mark 550th birth anniversary of Sri Guru Nanak Dev

**World**

- European Union agrees new January 31, 2020 Brexit deadline; UK not leaving EU on October 31
- Alberto Fernandez of Frente de Todos party elected new President of Argentina
- Prominent Soviet-era dissident Vladimir Bukovsky dies at the age of 76 in England

**Sports**

- Mercedes driver Lewis Hamilton wins Formula One Mexican Grand Prix at Mexico City
- Armenia's Evgeny Shtembuliak (Open) and Russia's Polina Shuvalova (Girls) win World Junior

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(under-20) Chess titles in Delhi
- FRENCH OPEN BADMINTON WINNERS
- China's Chen Long: Men's singles
- South Korea's An Se-young: Women's singles
- Indonesia's Marcus Gideon & Kevin Sanjaya Sukamuljo: Men's doubles
- South Korea's Lee So-hee & Shin Seung-chan: Women's doubles
- Praveen Jordan & Melati Daeva of Indonesia: Mixed doubles

## Current Affairs – News Headlines: October 30, 2019

### India
- Justice Sharad Arvind Bobde appointed next Chief Justice of India (CJI), will take oath on Nov 18
- Odisha Disaster Preparedness Day observed on October 29
- Delhi Police doubles 'PRAKHAR' anti-street crime vans

### Paramhansa Yogananda Coins
- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman released a special commemorative coin to mark 125th birth anniversary of Paramahansa Yogananda
- Yogananda was the founder of two organisations — Yogoda Satsanga Society of India and Self-Realisation Fellowship

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### Economy & Corporate
- Finance Minister chairs Governing Council (GC) meeting of the National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF)
- RBI imposes penalty of Rs 1 crore on Bandhan Bank for not bringing down the promoter shareholding to 40%
- India exported organic products worth Rs 5,151 crore in 2018-19: APEDA
- APEDA: Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority
- India, US sign SOI (Statement of Intent) to strengthen dialogue on defence technology cooperation
- CBI arrests Pailan group chief Apurba Saha in Kolkata Rs 574-crore ponzi scam case
- National Corporate Social Responsibility Awards (NCSRA), instituted by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, presented by the President in New Delhi
- HCP Design, Planning and Management wins consultancy bid to redevelop Parliament and the Central Vista

### World
- 2 killed in as an earthquake measuring 6.6 on the Richter scale struck the southern Philippines
- Argentina's Rafael Grossi elected new Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)
- PM Modi calls on Saudi Arabian King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud in Riyadh.
- PM Modi meets King Abdullah II of Jordan in Riyadh
- Actor Nawazuddin Siddiqui wins Golden Dragon Award at the Cardiff International Film Festival in Scotland
- Japan's Sadako Ogata, the first woman to head the UN's refugee agency UNHCR, dies at 92

### Sports
- ICC bans Shakib Al Hasan of Bangladesh for two years over breach of Anti-Corruption Code for not reporting being approached by a bookie during IPL in April 2018.

## Current Affairs – News Headlines: October 31, 2019

### India
- Hindi writer Leeladhar Jagoori wins Vyas Samman for his poetry collection- 'Jitne Log Utne Prem'
- Health Minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan releases the 14th National Health Profile (NHP), 2019 and its e-book in New Delhi
- Former Maharashtra DGP Datta Padsalgikar appointed Deputy National Security Advisor (NSA)
- Former Karnataka Lokayukta and former Supreme Court Judge N. Venkatachala dies at 89

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### Economy & Corporate

- 5th International Conference on Road Tech (sustainable roads and highways) held in New Delhi
- India signs agreement with Saudi Arabia to launch the RuPay card in the country
- Overseas Citizens of India (OCI) will now be eligible to apply for the National Pension System (NPS) at par with NRIs

### World

- India and Saudi Arabia sign Strategic Partnership Council Agreement to coordinate on important issues
- Pakistan issues Rs 50 commemorative coin to mark the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev
- Lebanon Prime Minister Saad Hariri resigns
- 6th Parliamentary Speakers' Summit of the G20 countries to be held in Tokyo from November 3 to 5

### Sports

- Minerva Punjab FC renamed as Punjab Football Club.

## October 16, 2019

## Air India: 1st airline in world to use Taxibot on A-320 aircraft

Air India, the flag carrier airline of India has become the first airline in the world to use a Taxibot on an A-320 aircraft with passengers on board. Ashwani Lohani, Chairman and MD of Air India flagged off the flight AI665 (Delhi – to Mumbai) and it was carried to runway using Taxibot at Terminal 3 of Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGI), New Delhi.

**Significance**: It is the first such usage on any Airbus aircraft worldwide and is a giant step forward towards a cleaner environment. It is expected to bring down the consumption of fuel by 85% and reduce engine wear and tear as the ignition will be turned on only when the aircraft reaches runway. Taxibots will also help in decongesting boarding gates and the apron area by providing efficient pushbacks.

### What is Taxibot?

It is a robot-used aircraft tractor for taxiing an aircraft from parking bay to runway and vice-versa. Since taxibot is a pilot controlled semi-robotic towbar-less aircraft tractor which is used as alternate taxiing equipment, therefore it is possible to tow an aircraft from parking bay to runway with its engines switched off.

Taxibots for now will be used for departing flights only and will be significantly used during taxiing of an aircraft.

## October 16: World Food Day

The World Food Day (WFD) is held annually on 16th October by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), UN (United Nations). It is celebrated to commemorate the creation of FAO. The day is marked by more than 150 countries all over the world. FAO organizes various events worldwide to create awareness and action for those who suffer from hunger. The aim is to ensure food security and nutritious diets for all.

**Theme: Our Actions are our Future Healthy Diets for a Zero Hunger World**

### Significance of the theme:

There are around 820 million people hungry all over the world according to the FAO. The world is facing a crisis of extremes due to food insecurity and people becoming obese day by day. This is mainly because of the shift from plant-based, fibre-rich diets to refined starch, fats, salts, processes foods that are high in calories. It is also marked by excessive consumption of meat.

The main reason behind the scenario is globalization, urbanization and income growth. Out of 30,000 edible plant species known to humans, only 200 are cultivated.

Another factor that can help reduce hunger is food wastage. According to the State of Agriculture report published by FAO, around 14% of world's food is wasted after harvesting. It also says that around 60% of micro nutrients are lost because of wastage of fruits, animal based products and vegetables.

The WFD focuses on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)-2: Zero Hunger

### Significance of SDG2

- According to FAO, there are more than 3.1 million children who die of children every year.
- Ending child undernutrition will help to increase GDP of developing countries by 16.5%
- Investing 1 USD to remove hunger will bring return between 15 USD and 139 USD.

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- Ending child mortality due to nutrition deficiency will increase productivity in work places by 20%

## Make in India: Diagnostic kits released

The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and the Indian Veterinary Research Institute (IVRI) have developed two diagnostic kits under Make in India initiative. The kits are called Blue tongue sandwich ELISA (sELISA) and Japanese Encephalitis lgM ELISA.

**Purpose of the kits: For control of Swine and Detection of Antigen**

### Key features

- The kit helps to assess the active infection of the Japanese-Encephalitis virus in the swine population
- These kits are highly inexpensive as compared to the commercial kits that are available in the market at price of Rs. 52,000/-. These kits cost Rs.5,000/- only.
- Every kit can test around 45 samples
- The kits also help in the detection of antigens in the cattle. Antigens are antibodies generated by the mammals when attacked by viruses, bacteria or other foreign matter. Based on the type of antigen being generated, the type of virus infesting the cattle can be identified.

### Blue tongue virus

The Blue tongue virus is an insect-transmitted viral disease that is common among domestic animals. It is widespread among sheep, cattle, goats, camels and buffaloes. The virus can be controlled by proper vaccination to the susceptible animals. Apart from vaccination, early diagnosis and isolation of infected animals will also help control spreading of the disease. The sELISA kit helps to identify the Blue Tongue Virus.

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## Govt. to set up 14 World Skills India Training Centres across 9 cities

Union Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Minister Mahendra Nath Pandey unveiled plans to set up 14 Authorized World Skills India Training Centres across 9 cities in country for media and entertainment sector.

### Key Highlights

**Objective**: The new institutes will be set up for advanced skill training of candidates in media and entertainment sector and to further develop skilling eco-system for training candidates for international market.

Through these institute government seeks to encourage more youth to get skilled and not just participate, but come back with a medal (in competitions) and make country proud.

**Nine Cities are**– Chandigarh, New Delhi, Chennai, Trivandrum, Indore, Pune, Mumbai, Hyderabad, and Shillong.

The centres will offer certification courses of 9 months to 36 months duration on graphic design technology, 3D digital game and print media technology.

**Significance**: There are a lot of avenues for skilled workforce across evolving sectors such as graphic design, print media, 3D digital game art, among others. These world class state of the art centres will help in preparing candidates to be ready in making India proud at various competitions and also equip them with enhanced skills in order to become industry read.

## IMF: World Economic Outlook, 2019

The World Economic Outlook is a biennial report that is released in April and October. According the report released recently on October 15, 2019, the global economy is at its slowest pace of growth at 3%. This is a serious climb down from 3.8% in 2017.

### Key highlights of the report

- The Global growth rate is projected to improve to 3.4% by 2020.
- The growth of advanced economies is projected to slow down by 1.7%
- The emerging and developing economies are projected to experience a growth pick up from 3.9% in 2019 to 4.6% in 2020.
- The report downgraded India's growth projections to 6.1% in 2019 and 7% in 2020.
- According to the report, China is projected to grow at 6.1% in 2019 and 5.8% in 2020.

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- The trade volume reached the lowest since 2012. It reduced by 1% since 2012.

### Justifications

- About half of the economic slow down comes from shallower recessions in stressed emerging markets like Argentina, Turkey, Iran
- Higher tariffs and prolonged uncertainty in the trade policy are the major reasons for dented investment and the slowdown in the growth. This is very well seen in the effects of trade wars and imposed sanctions
- The automobile industry is contracting mainly due to the disruptions from new standard emission standards. This predominantly has effect in China.
- Trade barriers and geopolitical tensions like Brexit is hampering investment, confidence and growth

### Recommendations

- The countries should support the economy slow down with tax-base enhancing measures, rationalizing subsidy-spending, efficient credit allocation and governance of public sector banks.
- India should keep its Fiscal Deficit under check

## Railways starts 10 Sewa Service trains to connect small towns with closest major cities

Indian Railways has launched 10 'Sewa Service' trains, in a bid to improve last-mile connectivity. These Sewa Service trains will connect small towns with their closest major cities and ease the hassle of travelling for daily passengers. These trains will also help divert short distance traffic from roads to the railways.

### Key Highlights

**Objective**: The railways introduced Sewa Service trains to ensure congestion free roads and faster ease of movement for public.

Daily trains will be introduced between Bhubaneswar and Nayagarh town, Delhi and Shamli, Murkongselek and Dibrugarh, Coimbatore and Palani and Kota and Jhalawar city.

Other 'Sewa Service' trains will run from Asarva to Himmatnagar, Vadnagar to Mahesana, Karur to Salem, Yesvantpur to Tumkur and Coimbatore to Pollachi. These will run six days a week.

The biggest beneficiary in first set of launches will be Tamil Nadu, as 3 out of 10 trains to be flagged off are in Tamil Nadu and under jurisdiction of Southern Railways.

### The 10 'Sewa service' Trains are-

1. *Vadnagar to Mahesana* DEMU train- It will be operational 6 days a week, and it will have commercial stoppages at all stations enroute.
2. *Asarva (Ahmedabad) to Himmatnagar* DEMU- It will run 6 days a week, and it will have commercial stoppages at all stations enroute.
3. *Karur to Salem* DEMU- It will run 6 days a week (except for Sundays). The train will have commercial stoppage at Mohanur, Vangal, Namakkal, Puduchatram, Rasipuram, Mallur and Kalangani.
4. *Murkongselek to Dibrugarh* passenger train- It will be operational on all days, and it will have commercial stoppages at all stations enroute.
5. *Yesvantpur to Tumkur* DEMU- It will run on all days (except Sundays) and will have commercial stoppages at all stations enroute.
6. *Delhi to Shamli* daily passenger train- It will have commercial stoppages at Delhi Shahdara, Khekra, Noli, Baraut, Qasimpur Kheri, Kandhla and Baghpat Road.
7. *Bhubaneswar to Nayagarh* Town Express- It will have stoppages at Bhubaneswar, Khurda Town, Khurda Road Jn, Rajsunakhala, Begunia, Nayagarh Town and Bolagarh Road.
8. *Kota to Jhalawar City* Passenger train- It will have halts at Dakaniya Talav, Dadhdevi, Alniya, Dara, Kanwalpura, Ravtha Road, Ramganj Mandi Jn, Julmi and Morak.
9. *Palani to Coimbatore* Passenger train- It will have halts at Pushpattur, Udumalaipetti, Madattukulam, Pollachi Jn, Gomangalam, Podanur and Kinattukkadavu.
10. *Coimbatore to Pollachi* Passenger train- It will run daily (except for Sundays) and will have stoppages at Kinattukkadavu and Podanur.

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## World Students Day on Sir Kalam's birthday

The world remembers Dr APJ Abdul Kalam, the former President of India as a loved teacher. The United Nations declared his birthday, October 15, 2019, as World Students Day.

### Significance

Bharat Ratna Dr Kalam was known with various nick names like People's President, as he focused on people centric issues during his presidency, Missile man, for his contributions towards defence programs in India, etc. His pivotal role in the Pokhran II nuclear tests actually earned him the name "Missile Man".

Above all he had unique connect with youngsters, especially students. His love for students and his focus on promoting education was the driving force for the UN to declare his birthday as World Students Day in 2010.

### Awards of Dr Kalam

He was awarded Padma Bhushan in 1981, Padma Vibhushan in 1990, Bharat Ratna, and received 7 honorary doctorates from 40 Universities. The missile test site, Wheeler Island was renamed Abdul Kalam island in September 2015.

## Shinyuu Maitri-2019: Indo-Japan Joint Air Force Exercise

The Indian Air Force will be carrying out a joint military exercise called **'Shinyuu Maitri'** with Japanese Air Self Defence Force (JASDF) from 17 to 23 October 2019. The joint exercise will be held at Air Force Station, Arjan Singh in Panagarh town, West Bengal.

Within few days of India and Japan Air Force joint exercise, another drill between armies of same countries will also get underway in eastern theatre.

### Key Highlights

**Objective**: To undertake Joint Mobility and Tactical interoperability among two forces.

**Participants**: IAF's C-130 J aircraft of Special Operations Squadron of and JASDF's C-130 H of Tactical Airlift Squadron will participate in the exercise.

## Global Hunger Index, 2019

The Global Hunger Index (GHI) is jointly published by Concern worldwide and Welthungerhilfe. The score

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if the index is calculated by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). It measures and tracks hunger at regional, national and global levels. The 2019 Global Hunger Index measures hunger of 117 countries. India was ranked 102nd and was the lowest ranked among ranked among South Asian countries. The rest were ranked 66, 94, etc. Especially, India was far behind as compared to the BRICS nations.

The GHI score is based on the proportion of country's child population that is undernourished, children who are under 5 years of age and have insufficient weight for their height, Infant Mortality Rate (IMR under 5 years old children) and children whose height is not commensurate to their age

### Key findings of the report

- India was at rank 93 in 2015 and has slipped places terribly
- Pakistan had pulled ahead and was at rank 94.
- Among the BRICS nations, Brazil topped on 18th rank, followed by Russia on 22nd, China on 25th, followed by South Africa (59), Sri Lanka (66), Nepal (73), Bangladesh (88), Pakistan (94), and India (102).
- India's child wasting is extremely high at 20.8%
- Only 9.6% of children (6 to 23 months) were fed minimum acceptable diet

The report praised Bangladesh and Nepal for their progresses.

## ISRO Reusable Launch Vehicle to land in Karnataka

The Reusable Launch Vehicle Program was launched by ISRO in 2016. It aims to cut down the launch cost by reusing the spacecraft. So far, the RLV (Reusable Launch Vehicle) has been tested over water. For the first time, ISRO will test in land.

The RLV will function as a space shuttle that will carry a payload to space and glide back to the earth. While returning, it is to land like a normal aircraft. The landing of the RLV is to be tested at Challakere in Chitradurga district in Karnataka.

### Highlights

- The Aeronautical Test Range has 2.2 km runway
- The RLV will be dropped from a helicopter
- The test is critical to India's Human Space Flight program – Gaganyaan.
- The following four aspects of the RLV are to be tested
    - Hypersonic flight
    - Autonomous landing
    - Powered Cruise flight
    - Hypersonic Flight with air – breathing propulsion.
- There are two stages in the recovery process. The first stage is similar to that of SpaceX's Falcon 9 booster. The second stage is an advanced version of RLV testing done in 2016.

## CBIC launches programme to strengthen Make in India

Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC), India's nodal national agency responsible for administering Central Excise, Service Tax, Customs, GST, & Narcotics has launched a revamped and streamlined programme to attract investments into India and strengthen Make in India through manufacture and other operations. The programme is launched under bond scheme of ***Customs Act, 1962*** as this section enables conduct of manufacture and other operations in a customs bonded warehouse.

Moreover, CBIC in collaboration with *Invest India* has launched a dedicated microsite [https://www.investindia.gov.in/bonded-manufacturing>] for providing information as well as promoting scheme and for facilitation of investors.

### Key Highlights of Scheme

It prescribes a single application cum approval form for uniformity of practice.

**Jurisdictional Commissioner of Customs** will function as a single point of approval to set up and oversee operations of such units. Moreover, there is no geographical limitation on where such units can be set up.

The unit can import goods (both inputs as well as capital goods) under a customs duty deferment program and the duties are fully remitted if processed goods are exported.

The units will benefit through improved liquidity as there will be *no interest liability*.

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GST compliant goods can be procured from domestic market for use in manufacture and other operations in a section 65 unit.

A single digital account has been prescribed for ease of doing business and easy compliance.

The Scheme has been modernized with simplified compliance requirements Information and Communication Technology (ICT)-based documentation, clear and transparent procedures and account keeping, by issue of ***Manufacture and Other Operations in Warehouse Regulations 2019.***

**Significance**: Scheme will also enable efficient capacity utilization, as there is no limit on quantum of clearances that can be exported or cleared to the domestic market. It is expected to play a critical role in promoting investments in India and in enhancing ease of doing business (EDB). It can provide impetus to Make in India programme by encouraging exports, creating hubs for electronics assembly, repairing/refurbishing operations, inward/outward processing, facilitating global e-commerce hubs among others.

## Program GOAL: Young Tribal Women to Receive Digital Training

The GOAL (Going Online As Leaders) program aims to inspire, guide and encourage tribal girls across India to become village level digital leaders for their community. The program was launched by Facebook to empower women by providing digital literacy, leadership, life skills and entrepreneurship skills. In order to become a beneficiary of the program the girls should be above 18 years of age and should have dropped out of school. Also, it is important that the girl is of tribal origin.

The Union Minister of Tribal Affairs recently announced the second phase of the program. The first phase of the program was launched in March 2019.

### Highlights of the second phase

- The Facebook and the Ministry of Tribal Affairs will together mentor 5,000 young women in India's tribal dominated districts
- The program includes weekly one-to-one mentoring sessions. It focuses on online safety, entrepreneurship, etc.
- More than 125 young women have enrolled in the program

# October 17, 2019

## October 17: International Day for the Eradication of Poverty

The United Nations declared October 17 as the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (IDEP) in 1992.

### Significance

According to internationally agreed poverty line, one in 10 people in developing regions are still living on less than 1.90 USD per day. Though significant progress has been made in certain countries in Eastern and South Eastern Asia, around 42% of the population in Sub-Saharan Africa still lives below poverty line. According to the United Nations, there are 783 million people living below international poverty line which is 1.90 USD per day

**Theme: Acting together to Empower Children, their families and Communities to End Poverty**

### SDG and Poverty

The target 1A of SDG-Sustainable Development Goal is "Ensuring significant mobilization of resources from a variety of sources, including enhanced development cooperation, in order to provide adequate and predictable means for developing countries"

### Inspiration

The Call to Action by Father Joseph Wresinski was the major inspiration to commemorate the day. Joseph Wrensinski was born to immigrant parents in a poor neighbourhood of France. He grew up in chronic poverty and was ordained a priest in 1946. He served in industrial and rural parishes. It was him who urged the UN to declare the IDEP. He is the founder of International Movement ATD Fourth World.

### History

In 1987, more than 100,000 people gathered on the Human Rights and Liberties Plaza, Paris, France. Father Joseph Wresinski unveiled a commemorative stone honoring victim of poverty, hunger, violence and fear.

## IHGF-Delhi Fair begins

The 48th Indian Handicrafts and Gifts Fair (IHGF) organized by the Ministry of Textiles began in Greater

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Noida on October 16, 2019. More than 3,200 Indian exhibitors are participating in the fair. Around 110 overseas buyers from 110 countries are participating in the event as well. They are here to source furniture, fashion, lifestyle and textiles products of the exhibitors.

In the event, the Ministry extended its support to the proposal of EPCH for setting up handicraft parks for apparel and handloom.

### Significance of IHGF

Handicrafts are important in terms of economic development. The sector provides a number of opportunities for the unemployed with a minimal investment. The sector earns around Rs 43,000 crores (2015) of rupees annually. Out of this, it earns an export of Rs 10,000 crores annually.

### About EPCH

The EPCH is the Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts and was established under Companies act (1986-87). It is the apex body for the handicraft exporters in India. It is the nodal agency to promote exports of handicrafts to different destinations. The Council has set up Handicrafts Carpet Sector Skill Council that implements the VRIKSH initiative. Apart from this, it has also launched the Indian Timber Legality Assessment and Verification Scheme that aims to establish a chain of custody and legality of wood.

## ICMR awards Scientists for Excellence in Biomedical Research

Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) awarded 46 biomedical scientists from different institutes across the country for excellence in biomedical research. The scientists were felicitated at the event held at ICMR, Delhi for their remarkable contribution. The event was attended by Union Health & Family Welfare Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan.

### Key Highlights

The award ceremony for distinguished contributions in area of Biomedical Research was organized by ICMR's Department of Health Research, and Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

These Scientist have done pioneering work in the area of health research to solve various health issues and helped in uplifting health status of the country.

A total 39 awards for the year 2017 and 2018 were presented to 46 scientists, including 14 women scientists. Out of the 39 awards, 2 were given to scientists belonging to underprivileged communities and 1 to a scientist who has conducted research in under-developed areas.

**Awardees belong to**– ICMR, AIIMS (New Delhi), CSIR-labs, JIPMER (Puducherry), PGI (Chandigarh), SGPGI (Lucknow), IITs, Lady Hardinge Medical College (New Delhi), Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences & Technology (SCTIMST) (Thiruvananthapuram), state and central universities and other reputed institutions.

## Van Dhan Internship Programme to help Tribals

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs launched the Van Dhan Internship Programme on October 17, 2019. Under the ministry, the program will be organized by the TRIFED (Tribal cooperative marketing Development Federation of India). The program will train the interns and the interns will help the tribal population in becoming self reliant and entrepreneurs.

### Highlights of the program

- 18 interns from the reputed Government institutes of social work/ social services/ management institutions/ rural management will be participating in the program
- The interns will be the pioneer field workers of the program
- They will have inclination towards matters related to tribal livelihood.
- The period of internship is 6 months.
- The interns are to be provided proper training for a week.

### About TRIFED

TRIFED was established in 1987. The objective of the organization is to provide good price for the goods and products made or collected by the tribal people. It fixes prices for the goods collected by them.

### Objectives of TRIFED

- To ensure sustainable harvest and fair price for the "Minor Forest Produce".
- To protect the tribes from exploitation of business men
- TRIFED arranges for compensation of the price of the products produced by the tribal population

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fluctuates.
- It provides adequate training to the tribes to increase value addition to their products.

## Leonel Messi wins 6th Golden Shoe award

Barcelona FC captain Leonel Messi won the Golden Shoe for the 2018/19 season, for being the top scorer in the European leagues with 36 goals (in 34 games). This is his sixth Golden Shoe.

### Key Highlights

Messi has won the trophy for a 3rd straight year (or consecutively) after scoring 36 goals. His goals are only three more than his closest challenger, **Kylian Mbappe** of Paris Saint-Germain.

Leonel Messi now has two more Golden Shoes than his legendary rival Cristiano Ronaldo, a Portuguese professional footballer.

### About European Golden Shoe (or European Golden Boot)

The award was originally called *Soulier d'Or*, which in French translates means as Golden Shoe/Boot. The award was created in the 1967–68 season when it was won by *Eusebio*. Since 1996–97 season the award is given by European Sports Media.

This award trophy is in shape of a football boot and is presented each season to leading goal scorer in league matches from top division of every European national league.

## Team Cashless India: Mastercards' campaign to promote digital payments in India

Payment technology major Mastercard along with its brand ambassador MS Dhoni launch a nationwide campaign dubbed as 'Team Cashless India' to accelerate the acceptance and adoption of digital payments in India.

The Team Cashless India' is in line with government's 'Digital India' vision and is an important step towards Mastercard's goal to equip 10 million merchants in India with digital payments acceptance capabilities by 2020.

### About 'Team Cashless India' campaign

**Objective**:

- To bring consumers and merchants on board to forefront of digital payments dialogue.
- To encourage Indian citizens to nominate one or more merchants who currently do not accept digital payments to go digital.

**Participants**: Mastercard will work together with ***Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT)***, *acquirer banks* and *fintech* (Financial technology) *companies* to support nominated merchants to deploy digital payments acceptance infrastructure. CAIT is apex body of India's trading community.

For the initiative, CAIT will provide necessary scale and reach via on-the-ground outreach to merchants. Moreover, the payment facilitators and partner banks will work with merchants to install digital payments infrastructure at points of sale (POS).

**Process Followed**:

To take part in 'Team Cashless India', any individual can either nominate a merchants online or can give a missed call to '9016861000'.

An outreach program across multiple cities will be conducted by Mastercard to educate merchants on benefits of accepting digital payments as well as to provide a platform for consumers to nominate merchants. Mastercard will also provide select nominated merchants and consumers with a chance to join Mahendra Singh Dhoni's Team Cashless India.

Moreover, M.S. Dhoni will interact with merchants and encourage them to 'bat' for a cashless India by accepting digital payments to further garner support of merchants for this digital movement.

**Benefits**:

It promotes the idea of a less-cash economy. Digital payments benefits small merchants in several ways like lower cost of managing cash, safety and security of money and credit history that opens avenues for more business.

Nominations are expected to create a social movement for making India a cashless society.

## Eat Right India movement: Food Safety Mitra Scheme

To mark World Food Day, on October 16, 2019, the Health and Family Welfare Ministry launched the Food Safety Mitra Scheme. The main objective of the scheme is to scale up Eat Right India movement. The

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campaign along with Fit India movement will achieve huge success according to the ministry.

### Key Features of the Scheme

- The Food Safety Mitra will undergo training and be certified by the FSSAI (Food Safety and Standards Authority of India). They can earn from food businesses for their services.
- The scheme will support small and medium scale food business.
- The scheme will also make periodical checks if the food safety laws, licensing, hygiene training and ratings are rightly followed.
- Along with the scheme the Eat Right Jacket and Eat Right Jhola were also introduced.
- The "Eat Right Jacket" was introduced for the field staffs. The jacket is designed to hold smart phone, RFID tag, QR code for identification and tracking purposes. This will help to bring in efficiency and transparency in food safety administration
- The "Eat Right Jhola" is a reusable cloth bag. The purpose is to replace plastic with these bags.

## Indian Army inducts US made precision-guided Excalibur artillery ammunition

To boost to its firepower, the Indian army has inducted US made precision-guided Excalibur artillery ammunition and indigenous Dhanush howitzer in its inventory. The announcement regarding ammunition's induction was made in an Army Commander's Conference.

### About Excalibur Artillery Ammunition

This precision-guided Excalibur is capable to annihilate targets at extended ranges. It is capable of hitting targets within 50 kilometre range, with less than 2 metres error margin.

It is made by American company Raytheon and has been acquired by Indian army under fast track procedure.

### About Dhanush Howitzer

It is a 155 mm *towed howitzer* (a short gun for firing shells on high trajectories at low velocities) used by Indian Army. Its design is based on *Bofors Haubits FH77* which was acquired by India in 1980s.

In 2018 the development trials of gun was completed development and in 2029 its series production was approved.

## GoI: 20th Livestock Census

The Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying, operating under Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying released 20$^{th}$ Livestock Census. According to the census, total Livestock population is 535.78 million and has increased by 4.6% as compared to the previous census. The previous census was conducted in 2014.

### Highlights of the census

- The total Bovine population that includes Buffalo, cattle, Mithun and Yak is around 302.79 million and has increased by 1% in 2019
- Total number of cattle is 192.49 million and has increased by 0.8%. The Female cattle is 145.12 million and has increased by 18% as compared to the previous census (2012)
- The Exotic and Indigenous female cattle population has increased by 10% in 2019.
- The population of Non-Descript cattle has declined
- The cross bred cattle population has increased by 26.9%
- The total Buffalos are 109.85 million and has increased by 1%
- The Goat Population is 148.8 million and has increased by 10.1%
- The Total population is pig is 9.06 million. It has declined by 12.03%
- The Commercial Poultry has increased to 534.74 million and has increased by 4.5%

## UAE to establish 1st graduate-level, research-based AI university in world

United Arab Emirates (UAE) has announced the establishment of first graduate-level, research-based Artificial Intelligence (AI) university in the world. The university is named as **Mohamed bin Zayed University of Artificial Intelligence (MBZUAI)** after Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of UAE Armed Forces. He has for long advocated for UAE's development of human capital via knowledge and scientific thinking to take the nation into future. The university campus will be in Masdar City.

### About Mohamed bin Zayed University of Artificial Intelligence

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MBZUAI will introduce a new model of academia and research to the field of AI, providing students and faculty access to some of world's most advanced AI systems so as to unleash its potential for economic and societal development.

The university will enable graduate students, businesses and governments to advance AI field.

MBZUAI aligns with UAE's leadership vision that is based on sustainable development, progress and overall well-being of humanity. It is underpinned by capacity-building and active participation in finding practical solutions based on innovation and state-of-the-art technology.

The University will work with leading local as well as global companies to secure internships, and will also assist students in finding employment opportunities. It is being touted as an open invitation from Abu Dhabi to world to unleash full potential of AI.

**Admission**: Graduate students can now apply to MBZUAI via University's website with registration scheduled to open in August 2020. First bacth of graduate students will commence coursework at MBZUAI's Masdar City campus in September 2020.

MBZUAI will provide all admitted students with a full scholarship, in addition to benefits like health insurance, monthly allowance and accommodation.

## Switzerland Glaciers Shrink 10%

Switzerland Glaciers have lost a tenth in their volume in the past five years. The melting is the largest in the last 5 years of observation. The Cryospheric commission at the Swiss Academy of Sciences published the annual study on the state of glaciers. According to the study, around 20 glaciers have shown melt rates that have reached record levels

### Highlights of the study

- In April and May the snow cover in the glacier was 20% to 40% higher than usual and reached depths of 6 meters.
- In late June and July, the volume of snow and ice that melted was equal to the country's total annual consumption of drinking water
- Though the snow cover is higher, the ice that is lost has increased voluptuously. In the last 12 months Switzerland has lost 2% of total glacier volume despite of increased snowing.
- The rate of melting has also increased by 10% in the last 5 years

### About Swiss Glaciers

There are more than 500 glaciers in the country. There are campaigns and awareness programs being conducted all over the country about the fast melting of the glaciers. Recently, "Funeral March" was undertaken to mark the disappearance of Pizol Glacier in the beginning of 21$^{st}$ century.

More than 4,000 glaciers are to disappear from the Alps at the end of this century if green house gas emissions are not controlled

## J&K's Chenani-Nashri Tunnel to be renamed after SP Mukherjee

The 9.2-kilometer-long Chenani-Nashri tunnel to be renamed after Bharatiya Jana Sangh founder Dr Shyama Prasad Mukherjee. The renaming is homage by Central government to Dr. Shyama Prasad whose battle for Kashmir, One Nation One Flag has immensely contributed in national integration.

The announcement in this regard was made by Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari. This decision comes two months after India abrogated Article 370 in August 2019.

### About Chenani-Nashri tunnel

It was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2017 and is also known as the **Patnitop tunnel**. It is the longest tunnel in Jammu and Kashmir and is located on National Highway (NH) 44.

The tunnel bypasses snow-bound upper reaches and provides a safe, all- weather route to commuters travelling from Jammu and Udhampur to Ramban, Banihal and Srinagar.

This bi-directional tunnel reduces distances between Jammu and Srinagar by 30 km and travel time by 2 hours.

**Key Features of Tunnel**

It is a single-tube bi-directional tunnel, with a 9.35-metre carriageway, and a vertical clearance of 5-metres. There is also a parallel escape tunnel with 'Cross Passages' connecting to main tunnel at intervals of 0.30 Km.

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It is equipped with world-class security systems and has smart features like ventilation, surveillance and broadcast systems; fire-fighting system; integrated traffic control system (ITCS); and SOS (emergency) call-boxes at every 150 metres.

Besides being India's longest road tunnel with a length of 9.28 km (5.8 mi) it is also India's first tunnel with a fully integrated tunnel control system.

### About Dr Shyama Prasad Mukherjee

In 1951, he founded Bharatiya Jana Sangh, the predecessor to present Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). On 23 June 1953, he died in police custody, after he was arrested by the J&K police for entering the erstwhile state without permit.

## India supported Jaffna International Airport commence its operations

The Jaffna International Airport (JIA) in Sri Lanka received its inaugural flight from Chennai, Tamil Nadu in presence of country's President Maithripala Sirisena and Prime Minister Ranil Wickremsinghe. Alliance Air, the subsidiary of Air India sent its inaugural flight from Chennai to newly upgraded Jaffna International Airport at Palaly, (20 km north of Jaffna city of Sri Lanka). It carried Air India CMD Ashwini Lohani and its CEO C.S.Subbiah among other invitees from aviation sector.

This inaugural flight is yet another example of India's commitment to continue with people-oriented development projects in Sri Lanka.

### Key Highlights

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Currently, there will be 3 flights a week to Chennai but connectivity to Tiruchirapalli and Kochi is also planned in coming months. This will provide a big boost to Jaffna connectivity with Southern India.

Alliance air services from Chennai is the beginning and efforts are being made to start services between Jaffna and Colombo.

The flight is expected to improve people-to-people contact between India and Sri Lanka as well as boost tourism and trade between the two neighbours.

### About Jaffna International Airport

The airport is built with Indian assistance and is located in Sri Lanka's Tamil-majority North. It completion marks an important development for region as well as for whole of Sri Lanka. It is equipped with a 2.3-km runway and is third international airport in Sri Lanka.

The airport has now been developed afresh and the runway length has been extended from 950 metres to 1400 metres to facilitate ATR 72 aircraft that carries 70 passengers. Under Phase II of project the runway length will be further extended up to 2,300 metres for bigger aircraft.

**Background**: The Jaffna airport was operational during 1960s and 1970s but was closed down following eruption of LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) war or *Sri Lankan Civil War*. India then extended assistance for development of war-affected Jaffna in northern province.

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## 2nd Indo-French Knowledge Summit held in France

The second edition of Indo-French Knowledge Summit is being held from17-18 October 2019 at University of Lyon in France. The summit is dedicated to higher education, research and innovation.

### Key Highlights of Summit

The two-day summit is being organised by Embassy of France in India in association with Union Ministry of Science and Technology and Union Human Resource Development (HRD) Ministry.

More than 300 participants from Indian and French academia, competitive clusters & start-ups, corporate houses, research organisations, andpublic authorities are expected to attend second Knowledge Summit.

The summit will involve a series of interactive sessions that will launch concrete initiatives as well as will allow participants to deepen academic and scientific cooperation between two countries.

**Significance**: The two-day summit is an essential step to develop and structure India-France collaborations in fields of education and research, stimulate connections between research and industry, and encourage the mobility of students and scholars. These matters are a fundamental aspect of France partnership with India.

### Background

The first edition of Indo-French Knowledge Summit was held during 2018 state visit of French President Emmanuel Macron to India. After the success of first edition in India, the second edition of Knowledge

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Summit is taking place in France.

## October 18, 2019

### Postal Stamp on National Institute of Nutrition released

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare released a commemorative postal stamp of National Institute of Nutrition. It was introduced under the "Corporate My Stamp" scheme of India Posts. The stamp was released during the completion of Centenary Celebrations of National Institute of Nutrition. The theme of the celebration was "Empowering the nation through nutrition"

#### Corporate My Stamp Scheme

The scheme was launched in 2016. Under the scheme a corporate entity or an individual can get their photo printed inside the postage stamp at a price of 12 lakh rupees. The stamps can be used for general postal mail. The Postal department has issued customized stamps for e-commerce platforms like Amazon India, HAL, etc.

The scheme helped the Postal Department earn revenue of 2.83 crore rupees in 2016-17.

#### National Institute of Nutrition

The institute is an Indian public health, nutrition and research center located in Hyderabad. It is one of India's largest and oldest center under the UCMR-Indian Council of Medical Research. It was founded in 1918 by Sir Robert McCarrison as a laboratory in Coonoor, Tamil Nadu. It was moved to Hyderabad in 1958 and was renamed National Institute of Nutrition.

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The institute carries out research in clinical nutrition, endocrinology, ophthalmology, community nutrition, regenerative medicine, molecular biology, etc.

### NCERT: 14-year-old curriculum to be revised

The National Council of Educational Research and Training is planning to revise the 14-year-old National Curriculum Framework in accordance with a new National Education Policy. The Council will set up a new committee to frame the curriculum.

The National Curriculum Framework has been revised four times so far in 1975, 1988, 2000 and 2005. The proposed revision is the fifth framework.

The Council is in the process of taking survey on the primary education available across the country. Shillong, Bhopal, Rajasthan, Mysore blocks have been identified for the preliminary survey.

#### National Education Policy

The existing education policy was framed in 1986 and was revised in 1992. A new education policy draft was submitted by the former ISRO chief K Kasturirangan and his team. According to the policy draft, the revised curriculum should contain only essential core material in each subject. It should be discovery-based, engaging and provide enjoyable style of learning.

### EX-EASTERN BRIDGE-V: India-Oman Joint Exercise

Indian Air Force is participating in a bilateral joint exercise with Royal Air Force of Oman (RAFO), dubbed as EX-EASTERN BRIDGE-V at Masirah Air Force Base in Oman. The Joint Exercise will be held from 17 to 26 October 2019.

#### About EX-EASTERN BRIDGE-IV

The last Indo-Oman Air Force exercise was held in 2017 at Jamnagar, City in Gujarat.

**Participants**: IAF contingent comprising of MiG-29 UPG (upgrade) combat aircraft along with C-17 Globemaster transport aircraft will be participating. MiG-29 will be exercising with RAFO's Eurofighter Typhoon, F-16 and Hawk 200 combat aircraft. This is for the first time, MiG-29 fighter aircraft will be participating in an International Exercise outside India.

**Significance**: The bilateral exercise will enhance inter-operability during mutual operations between two Air Forces and will provide an opportunity to learn from each other's best practices. The IAF participation in exercise will also promote professional interaction, exchange of operational knowledge and experience.

### Sajjan Jindal appointed Vice Chairman World Steel

Sajjan Jindal, Chairman and Managing Director, JSW Steel has been appointed as the Vice-Chairman of World Steel Association (Worldsteel). He is appointed for a period of one year. The association also elected YU Yong, Chairman, HBIS Group Co, as Chairman. Apart from this, the board also elected a 14-member Executive Committee.

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**Other elected members of association include**– T V Narendran, Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director, Tata Steel, and Lakshmi Mittal, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, ArcelorMittal. Furthermore, RL Steels and Energy Limited (India) elected as regular members and Steel Ministry's Joint Plant Committee (JPC) as an affiliated member.

### About World Steel Association (worldsteel)

It is international trade body for iron and steel industry and is one of the largest industry representations in world. It was established on 10 July 1967 and is headquartered in Brussels, Belgium.

The worldsteel members represent approximately 85% of world's steel production, including more than 160 steel producers, national and regional steel industry associations and steel research institutes.

## Indian Army launches "OASIS"

The Indian Army has begun to digitize its official records under its new programme called "OASIS"- Officers Automated Structures Information System. Under the programme, the records of the army officers are to be digitized. The software is to be hosted in the Army's intranet.

### About the Programme

- The records were manually preserved by Manpower Planning Directorate before the launch of the software. The whole process of collecting the records, keeping track and checking the records were cumbersome.
- Though new to the Army, a similar programme is already functioning for the Army Jawans.
- The records are expected to be digitized in 5-6 months. Oasis will also carry the photographs of the dependents of the army officers. This is essential to prevent frauds where people create fake dependent cards.
- When the officer retires, the whole data will migrate from Oasis to Retired Officers Digital Records Archive (RODRA). The RODRA holds the pension details of the officers.
- The programme will also allow the army officers to check their salary slips and other details instantly. In far off border posts it takes many days for army officers to receive their records through mails. This programme helps to eliminate such difficulties.

## India Bangladesh old rail links of 1965 prewar to be reopened

The Bangladesh PM Sheik Hasina announced that India Bangladesh rail links that were closed after 1965 war will be reopened. The announcement was made at the inaugural function of the first intercity train between Dhaka and Kurigam.

### Rail Links between India and Bangladesh

- The first rail link between India and Bangladesh was opened in 2008. The first train was the Maitri Express that connected Dhaka and Kolkata.
- In 2017, the Bandhan Express was launched that connected Kolkata and Khulna
- In September 2019, the Governments of India and Bangladesh jointly laid foundation stone for the up gradation of missing tracks on Haldibari-Chilahati track that connects Bengal and Assam via Bangladesh. The track was a part of the broad-gauge main route from Kolkata to Siliguri during British rule.
- On the whole there are 4 rail links between India and Bangladesh.
- Two more rail tracks are to be revived

Till 1965, the trains from Bangladesh to Darjeeling via Siliguri were operated. However, the services were stopped after the war in 1965. These tracks are to be revived jointly by both the governments.

## New Draft Rules for CICs and ICs

The CIC-Chief Information Commissioner and IC-Information Commissioner currently hold tenure of 5 years and their perks are similar to that of the Chief Election Commissioners as defined in Right to Information Act, 2005. According to the new draft rules from DoPT (Department of Personnel and Training), the terms and perks of the CICs and ICs are to be fixed as that of Cabinet Secretary and Secretary to the GoI level.

### Significance

The Government believes that these jobs are becoming sinecures for the favored few. It also means that they are likely to be downgraded in the "Table of Precedence". Their positions are to be several notches

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down the CAG and Chairman, UPSC. They are likely to be reached to position 23 as occupied by the Secretary to GoI. The Table of Precedence is a list prepared by the Ministry of Home Affairs based on the hierarchy and rank of government officials.

### RTI act

The tenure and perks of the CIC and IC officials are defined in the Right to Information Act. In July 2019, the GoI amended the act to lay down terms and conditions of services to the officials.

At present, according to the act, the CICs and ICs avail Rs 34,000 as allowance. It includes rent-free full furnished accommodation, 3 LTCs and unlimited medical allowances to their spouses and dependents. According to the new rules, the allowances are to be reduced to Rs 10,000.

### SC's ruling

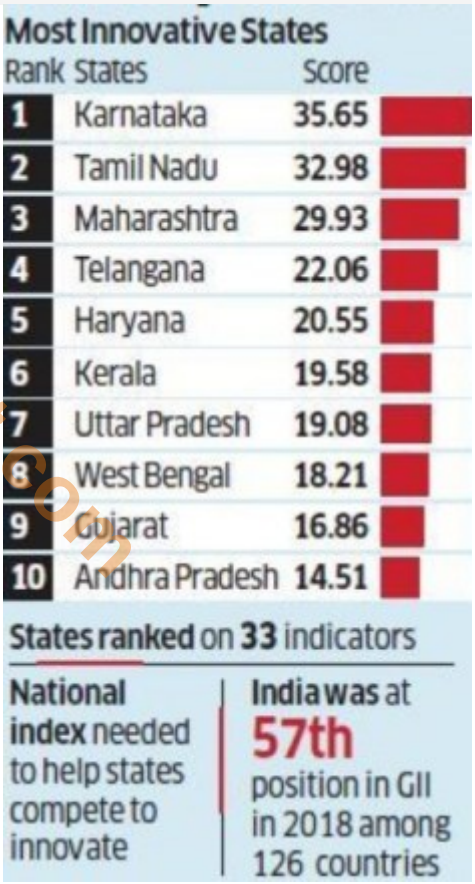
In February 2019, SC on its landmark verdict, in a PIL filed by RTI activist Anjali Bhardwaj rules that the CICs should have same status as that of Chief election Commissioner thwarting the Centre's bid to bring it under its ambit.

## Karnataka tops NITI Aayog's India Innovation Index

As per the India Innovation Index (III) 2019 released by NITI Aayog, Karnataka emerged as the Most Innovative State among Major States. The index was released by NITI Aayog's vice chairman Rajiv Kumar and CEO Amitabh Kant.

The India Innovation Index (III) 2019 was released by NITI Aayog along with *Institute for Competitiveness* as its knowledge partner. The index has been developed into lines of Global Innovation Index (GII). This is the first-ever India Innovation Index released by NITI (National Institution for Transforming India) Aayog, a policy think tank of Indian Government.

### Key Findings of Index




Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Telangana and Haryana secured 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th position respectively in innovation, followed by Kerala, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh.

In the list of 17 major states, Chattisgarh, Bihar and Jharkhand are at bottom of the index with Jharkhand finishing last.

Among **North-Eastern & Hill States**, Sikkim, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand have occupied

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the top spot of Most Innovative State in index while among Union Territories Delhi, Chandigarh and Goa have topped the list.

### About India Innovation Index (III)

The idea behind index is to analyse innovation at state level and promote competitiveness among the states. It seeks to move states from competitive populism to competitive good governance. The innovation index will also help to pursue interventions that play an important role in developing cooperative and competitive federalism.

It ranks the states based on their innovation capability, opportunities and challenges that lie for states and actions needed by policy makers to foster innovation.

The Index is based on *seven pillars* which include 5 enablers and 2 performance indicators such as human capital, knowledge workers, investment and knowledge output. It has been developed over a period of last 18 months.

## National Highway in Punjab named after Guru Nanak Dev

Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari has announced the road starting from Kapurthala, connecting Gobindwal Sahib and terminating near Taran Tarana in the State of Punjab as new National Highway, **NH- 703AA** and named it as '***Shri Guru Nanak Dev Ji Marg***', after the first Sikh guru. This decision has been taken to mark 550th Birth Anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev.

### Key Highlights

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The naming of stretch near India-Pakistan border from *Kapurthala-Goindwal Sahib-Sultanpur Lodhi-Taran Taaran* named as Guru Nanak Dev Ji Marg would be effective from November 2019.

The demand to name the National Highway was raised by Union food processing industry minister Harsimrat Kaur Badal in a letter to Nitin Gadkari on 13 September 2019.

## CII: Asia Health Conference, 2019

The National Health Authority and CII (Confederation of Indian Industry) are together organizing the Asia Health Conference, 2019. It includes CII National Biotechnology Conclave, CII 12$^{th}$ Medical Technology Summit, CII Ayurveda Conclave, CII 16$^{th}$ Health Summit, CII Health Tech, CII Public Health Conference, CII 13$^{th}$ Health Insurance Summit and CII National Pharmaceuticals Conclave,

### Highlights

- Certification courses on healthcare management and medical ethics are to be conducted during the conference.
- The conference is to act as a platform of interaction between policy makers, Indian and Global thought leaders and Global investors.
- Asia Health 2019 will also showcase an Exhibition. It will provide a platform to exchange information on the entire healthcare gamut. The exhibition also aims at promoting multi sectoral convergence under one roof with various stake holders focusing on Model Health care centers, Cutting-edge Technologies, Health Care Products and Services, Innovative Ideas and Solutions.

### Significance

India is set to become a 5 trillion USD economy in the next five years. Indian Industries will remain the main growth engine to achieve the target. In order to achieve this, CII is focusing on 5 major areas namely rural-urban connect, employment generation, energy security, governance and environmental sustainability. The conference is also a part of its theme for the year 2019-20 "Competitiveness of India Inc-India@75: Forging Ahead"

## Biswa Bangla Sharad Samman 2019

On the occasion of Durga Puja, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee presented Biswa Bangla Sharad Samman 2019 to 79 community Durga Pujas that received awards in different categories.

The Durga Puja festival helps in community development, building relations among people to people besides generating income. From past your years the state government of West Bengal is organizing *Durga Puja Carnival* that has created a good impact among people. UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) has also agreed to recognize Durga Puja as World Cultural Heritage.

### About Biswa Bangla Sharad Samman (BBSS)

On the occasion of Durga Puja, West Bengal Government has come up with a unique initiative called

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'Biswa Bangla Sharad Samman'. The initiative was started in 2013 and is in its 7th year.

**Objective**: To recognise and appreciate the brilliance and innovation in organising Durga Puja.

**Organised by**: Information and Cultural Affairs Department of Government of West Bengal.

It is a unique event which annually attracts local, national and international participation in an immensely healthy competition for excellence.

This initiative involves Baroari (or Community) pujas from Kolkata, districts of West Bengal, other Indian states as well as from foreign countries to participate and get honoured for their innovative ideas about idols, ambience, pandals, environment and artistry.

**Award Zone Categories**:

- Kolkata
- Rest of West Bengal
- Rest of India
- Rest of World

## Justice Bobde recommended as next CJI

Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi has recommended Justice SA Bobde as his successor. CJI Gogoi will demit his office on November 17, 2019. He was sworn in as the 46th CJI on October 3, 2018.

According to the Memorandum of Procedure, the appointment to the office of Chief Justice of India should be of the senior most judge of the Supreme Court. The CJI vacating the office recommends the name to the law minister and the minister puts it before the PM who advises the president on the matter.

### Justice Bobde

Sharad Arvind Bobde is the current Judge of Supreme Court(SC) of India and a former Chief Justice of Madhya Pradesh High Court. He is due to retire on 23 April 2021. He comes from a Nagpur-based lawyer family. His grandfather was a lawyer and his father Arvind Bobde was an advocate in Maharashtra. Bobde elder brother late Vinod Arvind Bobde was a constitutional expert and was a senior Supreme Court Lawyer

Notable Judgements of Justice Bobde

- Aadhar-Along with Justice Chelameswar and Chokkalingam Nagappan he ratified an earlier order of SC. The judgement clarified that no Indian citizen without an Aadhaar card can be deprived of basic services and government subsidies
- Religious-The ban by the Karnataka Government of a book by Mate Mahadevi on the ground it outraged religious feelings of the followers of Lord Basavanna. The judgement was pronounced by a 2-judge bench of Supreme Court that comprised of Justice Nageswara Rao and Justice Bobde
- Environment-The sales of fire crackers were suspended due to extreme pollution based on the judgement pronounced by a 3-judge bench that comprised of Justice TS Thakur, Justice Arjan Kumar Sikri and Justice Bobde

## Jammu & Kashmir Legislative Council abolished

The 62-year-old State Legislative Council of Jammu and Kashmir has come to an end with State Administration issuing formal orders for its abolition with immediate effect. The transition of Ladakh region as the youngest Union Territory will be done on 31 October 2019.

### Key Highlights

The State Administration issued orders in terms of *Section 57 of J&K Reorganization Act, 2019* and has asked 116-member staff of Legislative Council to report to *General Administration Department* by 22 October 2019.

As per the government order, all the vehicles purchased for council were transferred to state motor garages.

In addition to this the Jammu and Kashmir government also issued formal orders for opening of new administrative secretariat in Ladakh under the *Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Bill*, (passed in August 2019). Through this legislation the central government revoked special status granted to J&K and bifurcated state into two Union territories of J&K and Ladakh.

### Background

The J&K legislative council was created in year 1957 following adoption of a new constitution by state

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constituent assembly and passing of Legislative Councils Act in Parliament. These legislations created a bicameral legislature for the state of J&K. It then had a strength of 36 members.

The council was used by political parties across the spectrum to adjust and rehabilitate their senior members and prominent party supporters. This also allowed party members who lost elections to enter power structure and grab ministerial posts despite losing.

**Office Term**: The J&K legislative council members remained in office for a period of six years. It comprised of 22 elected by state assembly, 2 members elected from local authorities, 2 from panchayat constituency and J&K governor would nominate 8 members from eminent persons from various fields.

## Indian Railways to run its first Buddhist Circuit train

Indian Railways will run its first Buddhist Circuit train from 20 to 26 October 2019 covering sites related to Gautam Buddha in India and Nepal.

### Key Highlights

IRCTC will run train covering destinations such as-

- *Lumbini* (where Buddha was born)
- *Bodhgaya* (where Buddha gained enlightenment)
- *Sarnath* (where Buddha gave his first sermon)
- *Kushinagar* (where Buddha attained nirvana)

**Why these destination?** The significance of these destinations can be seen in *Mahaparinirvana sutra*, wherein the Lord Buddha tells his followers that they can attain merit and a noble rebirth by going on pilgrimage to these places.

**Cost**: The package will cost Indians Rs.1,23,900 per couple in AC first class and Rs.1,01,430 per couple for AC II-tier. This includes accommodation, meals, road transport by AC deluxe coaches for Nepal tour, visits to monuments and locations, services of tour manager, guides, entrance fees and travel insurance. But, passengers will have to pay their visa fee for Nepal leg of journey and any other expenditure including laundry and other such services.

**Train Accomodation**: The train will have 4 first AC coaches with 96 seats, 2 second AC class coaches with 60 seats, two exclusive dining cars with a capacity of 64 guest in each and a pantry car. It will be covered with unique vinyl wrap that will be promoting Incredible India.

The train is also equipped with personal digital lockers, foot massagers, cubicles shower, separate sitting area with single seated sofas. Each coach will be deployed with private security guards.

# October 19, 2019

## DanX: Defence of Andaman and Nicobar Islands Exercise

The second edition of the Defense of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, 2019, a large joint exercise was conducted by the ANC (Andaman and Nicobar Command) between October 14 and October 18, 2019. Mobilisation and Field manoeuvres were carried out by the Indian Army, Coastal Guard, Air Force and Indian Navy to validate defensive plans of the ANC.

Apart from the forces of ANC the newly formed AFSOD (Armed Forces Special Operation Division) and accretional forces from the mainland comprising ships and aircraft also participated in the exercise.

### ANC-Andaman and Nicobar Command

The command was created in 2001. It is the first and only tri-service command of the Indian Armed Forces based at Port Blair, Andaman and Nicobar Islands. It was created to safeguard India's interests in Strait of Malacca and in South East Asia. The ANC provides logistics and administrative support to Indian ships that are deployed in East Asia and Pacific Ocean.

### AFSOD-Armed Forces Special Operation Division

It is the tri service of Indian Armed Forces. They carry out special operations. It draws personnel from all the three special warfare branches. The special warfare branches are organized, trained and equipped using unconventional tactics and techniques.

### Special Forces of India

The special Forces of India are trained and equipped to conduct and support special operations. The branches of the Indian Special Force units include

- The Para SF of the Indian Army

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- Commando Force of Indian Air Force
- Part of the forces are also deputed in AFSOD
- Special Group of the Research and Analysis Wing

## IPS Anup Kumar Singh appointed as new NSG Chief

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has appointed Senior Indian Police Service (IPS) officer Anup Kumar Singh as the new Director-General of National Security Guard (NSG), also known as 'black cats commando' force. He is a 1985-batch Gujarat cadre IPS officer. His appointment will be from the date of joining post and up to 30 September 2020 or till further orders, whichever is earlier.

The NSG Chief post was lying vacant for more than two months after the retirement of Sudeep Lakhtakia, a 1984-batch IPS officer of Telangana cadre.

### About National Security Guard (NSG)

It was raised in 1984 following Operation Blue Star, assassination of Indira Gandhi and Akshardham Temple attack.It is a federal contingency force to counter terrorists and hijack-like incidents with a view to protect states against internal disturbances. This counter-terrorism unit is under Union Ministry of Home Affairs.

NSG commandos are based in five hubs across country, apart from their main garrison in Manesar, Gurgaon. They also render personal security to some of most high-profile VVIPs such as Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and some chief ministers.

## FSSAI: Processed milk samples fail to meet quality norms

According to the FSSAI (Food Safety and Standard Authority of India), 37.7% of samples tested failed to meet the quality norms. This was mainly because, the presence of contaminants like sugar, Maltodextrin and fats were above permissible limits. The study noted that processed milk including that of major brands failed to meet the prescribed quality norms. Around 10.4% of the samples were non-compliant.

### Highlights of the study

- Milk samples from Telangana followed by Madhya Pradesh and Kerala accounted for the highest number of cases of adulteration
- Around 6,432 samples were collected from 1,103 towns and cities. The collection process was done between May 2018 and October 2018. Of the collected samples, 40.5% of the samples were processed milk and the rest were raw milk.
- The problem of Aflatoxin-M1 is more dominant in processed milk than that of raw milk. Tamil Nadu, Delhi and Kerala were the top states where the residue was found maximum. Aflatoxin-M1 present in milk comes from feed and fodder. It is currently not regulated in the country. A detailed survey of the presence of the residue is being done for the first time in the country. There are no labs in the country to test the residue.

India is the largest producer of milk. The annual milk production of the country is 176.35 million tons (according to 2017-18 data).

A new scheme of "Testing and Inspection" was launched, which the diary units have to comply with by January 1, 2020.

## 11th Nuclear Energy Conclave

The India Energy Forum organized the 11th Nuclear Energy Conclave in New Delhi. The theme of the event was "Economics of Nuclear Power-Innovation towards safer and cost-effective technologies". It was inaugurated by the Union Minister of State for development of North Eastern Region, Minister of State Atomic Energy and Space, Prime Minister's Office and Personnel, public grievances and pensions.

### Key Highlights

- A nuclear power plant is to be constructed in Gorakhpur, Haryana
- The DAE (Department of Atomic Energy) is working along with TATA Memorial Centre towards the implementation of flagship programmes of the Government. The priority is given to shifting towards cashless transactions.
- The event organized three technical sessions on the following themes
    - Use of Nuclear Energy in Health care and Municipal Waste Treatment

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- Growth of Nuclear Power for meeting base load demands-Opportunities and Challenges in manufacturing industry
- Emerging Technologies for Economy and Enhanced safety; Molten salt reactors, passive safety features, small and medium size reactors.

- A hall of Nuclear Energy was opened at the Pragati Maidan in Delhi. The aim is to use the hall in the process of educating students and the public about the applications of nuclear energy.

## DRDO: Technology Transfer Agreements signed

The Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO) signed 30 licensing agreement for ToT-Transfer of Technology with 16 Indian companies. The list of companies includes start-ups as well. The main purpose of the agreement is to fulfill the requirements of the armed forces.

Earlier, the Indian Armed Forces have procured ready-to-eat meals from companies that acquired ToT from DRDO. They have high nutritional value and shelf life.

### About the Agreement

The products according to the agreement are to cater the requirements of the forces deployed in inhospitable terrain and hostile weather conditions. The agreements were signed at the Vibrant Goa Expo and Summit 2019.

The key focus of the Summit is inclusive development in areas such as technology, youth, innovation, sustainability, innovation, industries, skill development, networking and knowledge sharing. The summit also acts as a platform for opportunities of investment, joint ventures, technology transfer and Business to Business and Business to Government meetings. There are video conferencing and multi-sectoral exhibition being organized in the meeting as well.

## Shirui Lily Festival: Manipur

The northeastern state of Manipur is hosting the 3rd state level Shirui Lily Festival, 2019 from 16-19 October. The festival was inaugurated by Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Tourism and Culture Prahlad Singh Patel at Shirui Vangayan Ground of Ukhrul in Manipur. Minster Patel along with State Chief Minister N. Biren Singh inaugurated the *Strength of Unity Statue* as a mark of opening 3rd edition of four-day state festival.

### About Shirui Lily Festival

The annual festival is hosted by state Department of Tourism in Ukhrul district. The event features demonstrations of age-old traditions and culture of inhabitants of district of Ukhrul. The festival is organized during this time keeping in mind the peak blooming season of flower.

Festival seeks to spread the awareness about the *endangered Shirui Lily* and promote the district of Ukhrul as a tourist destination in Manipur.

Scottish rock band Nazareth and American rock band Extreme will be performing on at the festival. This is Extreme's debut performance in the country and Nazareth's second performance in India, as the band had previously performed in Mizoram back in 2017.

**The lilies of Shirui**: The lilies, here in Shirui (about 3 hours from Imphal), play a significant role in festival. The rare, pink-white flower is only found in this area. The lilies are also known as Siroy Lily, or Lilium Macklinae, named after Jean Macklin, who supposedly spotted these flowers in 1946. The Shirui Lily has also been awarded at Royal Horticultural Society's Flower Show in London in 1948.

**Significance**: Manipur Tourism recognizes importance of Shirui Lily as **State Flower of Manipur** and event is a part of its efforts to develop and implement sustainable and responsible tourism State. Such cultural events also reflect beauty and treasure of North Eastern culture. The joint efforts of State Government and Central Government can only promote tourism and culture of a region to level of people's expectation.

### About Ukhrul District

It is the highest hill station of Manipur and is located at a distance of about 83km to east of Imphal, Manipur capital. The district is inhabited by tribes namely- the Angamis, the Kukis and *Tangkhul Nagas* (the colorful warrior tribe and one of the oldest major tribes of Manipur).

## Defence Minister approves admission of girls in Sainik Schools from 2021

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has approved a proposal for admission of girl children in Sainik schools

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across the country. These admissions will start from next academic session (2021-22) in a phased manner. For the smooth implementation of this directive, Defence Ministry has directed all concerned authorities for ensuring availability of necessary infrastructure as well as sufficient female staff in Sainik schools.

### Key Highlights

The decision has been taken following the success of pilot project that was started by Union Ministry of Defence for admission of girl children in *Sainik School Chhingchhip* in Mizoram two years ago.

This decision is in line with Government's objective towards gender equality, greater inclusiveness and enabling greater participation of women in Armed Forces. It also strengthens the '*Beti Bachao Beti Padhao*' motto, propagated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

### About Sainik Schools

These are a system of schools in India established and managed by *Sainik Schools Society* under Union Ministry of Defence. These schools were conceived by V. K. Krishna Menon (then Defence Minister) in 1961. The objective behind establishing these school was to rectify the regional and class imbalance amongst Officer cadre of Indian Military, and to prepare students for entry into National Defence Academy (NDA) in Khadakwasla, Pune and Indian Naval Academy. As of now there are 27 sainik schools running and proposed for future covering all the Indian states.

## Raunak at 13, becomes India's 65th Grand Master

Raunak Sadhwani will be the 65th Indian Grand Master (Chess) at the age of 13 years! On October 18, 2019, Sadhwani with a rating of 2479 has already gained 23 points to cross the stipulated mark of 2500 in live ratings. He just needs to turn up for the next two rounds to gain his final norms.

Even Viswanathan Anand and Adhiban were battling on the leading boards. However, the youngster drew with Gabriel Sagrissian to take four points from seven rounds.

Sadhwani is from Nagpur and is an international master. He got his first master title at Aeroflot Open 2019 and second title at Poticcio Open 2019. He was trained by the former world champion Vladimir Kramnik. He worked with the Russian player as a part of Kramnik-Microsense India Chess program. It was held in Switzerland in August, 2019.

### About Grand Master

Grand Master is the title awarded to chess players by the world chess organization FIDE. FIDE is Federation Internationale des Ethecs or International Chess Federation. It connects various national chess federations all over the world. It is the governing body of the international chess competition. It was founded in Paris.

## RIL becomes first Indian company to hit Rs. 9 lakh crore m-cap

Mukesh Ambani-led Oil-to-telecom major Reliance Industries (RIL) has become the first company in India to hit the market capitalisation (m-cap) of Rs.9 lakh crore. RIL was also the first company to reach Rs.8 lakh crore mark in August 2018. IT giant Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) was at a distant second with a m-cap of Rs.7.66 lakh crore. It was the also second company to reach Rs.8 lakh crore mark.

### Key Highlights

On 18 October 2019, the market-cap of Reliance Industries (RIL) stood at Rs.9.03 lakh crore when the stock traded at Rs.1,428, up 2% on the BSE SENSEX, ahead of its September quarter earnings. This rise in share price helped the company reach the news milestone.

In 2007, RIL was the first Indian company to hit $100 billion mark in market-cap. RIL also became first domestic firm to cross Rs.8 lakh crore mark in terms of market valuation in August 2018. In calendar 2019, the stock has climbed 28% so far.

RIL now aims to double the revenue of energy-to-telecom behemoth, riding on retail and telecom segments by 2025.

**What is market capitalisation (m-cap)?** It is calculated by multiplying total number of company's outstanding shares by the current market price of one share. The market-cap figure of listed companies changes daily with stock price movement.

## Pepe: India-UK collaborated hand-washing robot

A team of researchers from India and United Kingdom collaborated to create a new robot named Pepe which encourages children to wash their hands. The research project outcomes were presented at *28TH*

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*IEEE International Conference on Robot and Human Interactive Communication* (held in New Delhi) on Global Handwashing Day 2019 (marked on 15 October every year).

### About Robot 'Pepe'

**Bodies involved**: The project was led by researchers from University of Glasgow's School of Computing Science in partnership with Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham University in Kerala. The project is the second '**social robot' research project** conducted by University of Glasgow and Amrita University. In 2018 they introduced a four wheeled robot to help residents of *Ayyampathy* in southern India carry 20-litre bottles of water from local well to their homes.

Pepe was recently mounted to the wall above a hand washing station at Wayanad Government Primary School in Kerala as a fresh approach to hygiene. It was used by around 100 pupils aged between 5 and 10 years.

**Working**: A small video screen mounted behind Pepe"s green plastic exterior acted as a 'mouth', which allowed researchers to tele-operate robot to speak to pupils and draw their attention to a poster outlining steps of effective handwashing. A set of moving 'eyes' helped create a illusion that Pepe was paying attention to children's actions.

**Findings**: The researchers found that Pete helped pupils to wash their hands more effectively and more consistently, boosting their rates of hand washing by 40%. Pupils spent twice as long washing their hands after Pepe's arrival. After the intervention, more than 95% of students could correctly determine when handwashing with soap has to be done- before a meal and after a visit to toilet.

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### Why Hand-washing?

As per data from Water Aid India and World Health Organisation (WHO), handwashing is one of the most effective defences against spread of diarrhoea and respiratory infections, which cause deaths of nearly 1,300 young children each day around world (320 of which are in India alone.

## India and Philippines sign agreements

President Ram Nath Kovind is on his official tour to Philippines and Japan. In the first leg of his visit he reached Manila, Philippines on October 17, 2019. He met his Philippines counter part and signed four agreements on science and technology, culture, tourism and maritime. The agreement includes sharing of white shipping data. White shipping includes information about identification and movement of commercial and non-military vessels.

China claims most of the contested sea in the region. It includes waters close to the Philippines waters as well. In June 2019, a Chinese fishing trawler sank a Philippines boat. Many such mishaps are common in these waters. China had also dismissed a UN-backed international tribunal ruling that said that its assertion to the South China Sea is without legal basis.

### Significance of the visit

- India believes that engagement with ASEAN countries is a critical element of India's Act East Policy
- Philippines is an important focus country for India's corporate sector. There is immense potential to deepen India-Philippines economic ties
- India is looking forward to participate in the infrastructural development and defense modernization of Philippines
- Indian companies are interested to invest in Philippines health, pharma, innovation start-ups and digital industries.

### Highlights of the visit

- President paid his tributes to Dr Jose Rizal, the national hero of Philippines
- The President visited Malaccan Palace. He was accorded a ceremonial welcome at the palace.
- The visit was to commemorate 70$^{th}$ anniversary of India-Philippines relations

## Army Commanders Conference

The October 2019, iteration of the Army Commander Conference was conducted between October 14 and October 18, 2019. Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh addressed the conference. All important issues such as operational readiness of the field formation, issues related to higher defence management, aspects of organizational restructuring and reforms were debated in the conference

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### About the conference

The Army Commanders conferred in New Delhi to procure slow moving UAVs. These vehicles are known as loiter munition drones to counter threat from across the border. A loiter munition drone is designed to engage beyond line-of-sight ground targets. They are mainly helpful in providing the infantry the capability to strike when they move carrying out surveillance.

### Highlights of the conference

- The major decision of the army commanders conference was procurement of slow-moving UAVs (Unmanned Aerial Vehicle). These UAVs are highly helpful in countering threats across border. The decision of the conference came after the IB (Intelligence Bureau) submitted a detailed report on Pakistan drones.
- It was also decided to frame artificial intelligence-based solutions to carry out surveillance at high altitude border areas.
- At the conference more than 40 companies showcased their defense equipment

## First all-women spacewalk conducted outside International Space Station

NASA astronauts Jessica Meir and Christina Koch made history when they ventured outside International Space Station (ISS) for first ever *all women* spacewalk. It was the first time in more than half a century of space exploration that two women astronauts walked in space together.

### Key Highlights

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Christina Koch had already carried out four spacewalks but it was the first such mission for Jessica Meir, who became the 15th woman to walk in space.

They spent seven hours outside ISS replacing a failed power control unit and made their way to a location called Port 6 truss structure to replace battery charge-discharge unit (BCDU).

NASA was hoping to have an all-female spacewalk in March 2019 but it was then canceled after astronaut Anne McClain discovered that spacesuit she was to wear did not fit properly, due to which astronaut Nick Hague went in her place.

**NOTE**:

*First woman to spacewalk*– Russian *Svetlana Savitskaya* on 25 July 1984. She went outside USSR's Salyut 7 space station for 3 hours, 35 minutes.

*First person (in history) to spacewalk*– Soviet cosmonaut Alexei Leonov.

## 7th Military World Games being held in China

The 2019 Military World Games (also known as Olympic Games for military) is being held from 18–27 October 2019 in the capital of Hubei Province, Wuhan, China. Its opening ceremony was held on 18 October 2019 and the event was officially inaugurated by Chinese President Xi Jinping.

### About Military World Games

The games are officially known as 7th CISM Military World Games. It is top multi-sport event for military personnel from across the globe.

Following the conclusion of 2015 Military World Games (held in South Korea), China won the bid to host the Games for the first time in 2015.

#### 7th Military World Games 2019

Besides being the first international military multi-sport event to be held in China, it is also the largest ever military sports event to be held in China.

**Organized by**: Military Sports Commission of China, Ministry of National Defense of People's Republic of China (PRC) and military commands (Army) in accordance with CISM regulations and rules of International Sports Federations (ISF).

For the first time in history of Military World Games, an Olympic village is set up for participating athletes prior to commencement of Games.

**Participants**:

More than 10,000 athletes from over 140 countries are scheduled to compete in 329 events in 27 sports. The multi-sport event includes 25 official and 2 demonstrative sports and 6 new sport disciplines like table tennis, badminton, tennis, men's gymnastics and women's boxing are set to make their debuts in event.

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China's has sent 553 persons delegation for participating in games, which would mark record number of participants to represent a nation at a single Military World Games. Nearly, 230,000 volunteers were recruited for event to be staged in China.

India has sent a delegation of around 100 soldiers selected from 3 wings of armed forces to participate in World Military Games.

## October 20, 2019

### IMNEX-2019: India Myanmar Naval Exercise

The India Myanmar Naval Exercise called IMNEX-2019 is being organised in Visakhapatnam from 19 to 22 October in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh. The opening ceremony of the second edition of Indo-Myanmar joint naval exercise was conducted onboard INS Ranvijay.

#### About IMNEX-2019

Myanmar naval ships UMS Sin Phyu Shin (F-14) and UMS Tabinshweti (773) arrived at Visakhapatnam and would engage in professional interaction with Indian Navy personnel for sharing of expertise on various maritime issues between both the navies.

This year's edition includes increased scope and complexity and is a testimony of growing maritime cooperation between two navies.

The exercise would be conducted in two phases:

**Harbour phase**– which includes visits to Indian Naval units, training and maintenance facility at Visakhapatnam.

**Sea Phase**– During this phase Indian Navy's INS Kuthar, a missile corvette and INS Ranvijay, a guided-missile destroyer will be carrying out a joint exercise with Myanmar ships UMS Tabinshweti, a corvette and UMS Sin Phyu Shin, a frigate in the Bay of Bengal.

Joint exercise will also encompass a variety of operations such as flying exercises using integral helicopter, seamanship evolutions at sea and anti-air and surface firing exercises.

### October 20: World Statistics Day

The World Statistics Day was celebrated for the first time in 2010. It was declared by the United Nations Statistical Commission. It is celebrated once in 5 years. India celebrates Statistics Day on 29th June, on the birthday of the legend statistician Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis.

The next World Statistics Day is to be celebrated on October 20, 2020. On October 15, 2015 the second World Statistics Day was celebrated under the

**Theme: Better Data, Better Lives.**

#### Significance

Statistics describe reality of people's every day life. It is essential for framing sound social and economic policies. According to the United Nations, Statics is the path finder for solution as well as a veritable tool in assessing the extent of level of development of a country in a given period of time.

The information obtained from statistics is used for central and local financial allocation, and use planning, providing education facilities, health care planning, etc. Statistics also help to monitor and evaluate ongoing economic reforms.

### New Kiln technology in Punjab: 70% emissions cut

Following orders from NGT (National Green Tribunal) and CPCB (Central Pollution Control Board) the Punjab Government had ordered the closure of traditional kilns in March 2019. This was mainly to control the toxicity of the NCR (National Capital Region). The stubble burning, industrial and kiln smoke from Punjab, brought by the retreating monsoon during this time, slogged Delhi making lives difficult. Schools are closed and the routine normal life is highly disrupted.

#### Scenario in Punjab

The new Kiln Technology cuts the emissions by 70-80%. It also saves fuel for the users. The districts of Punjab like Barnala and Sangpur have seen 100% conversion. Around 800-900 kilns in Punjab are yet to convert to the new technology according to Department of Science and Technology (DST).

The kiln industry in Punjab employs 5 lakh workers. It contributes to 8% of brick production in the country producing 15-20 billion bricks.

#### Implementation

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The new technology is being implemented by the DST. The DST provides technical assistance to the traditional kilns to get converted. This is being done through the Punjab State Council for Science and Technology

### About the Technology

In the new kiln technology, the bricks are arranged in zig-zag pattern. This allows hot air to cover long path unlike traditional kilns. The heat transfer is improved due to zig-zag pattern. This makes the operation more efficient and reduces coal consumption by 20%. It also uses fans to regulate air.

## India-ASEAN Business Summit

On 19 October, 2019, the 4th India-ASEAN Business summit and the India-Philippines Business Conclave was organized. President Ram Nath Kovind who is on a 7-day official visit to Philippine and Japan addressed the summit.

### Highlights of the address

- ASEAN-India trade relations are important for India to achieve its Act East Policy. The ASEAN-India trade increased by 19% in 2018 reaching 96.79 billion USD. India targets to increase the trade to 200 billion USD by 2022.
- The Indian investment in Philippines has grown especially in concrete projects like LNG pipelines, waste management solutions and airport terminals
- The major gain between India and Philippines relations has been in IT-BPO sector. Leading Indian IT companies have created job opportunities in Manila by setting up enterprises.
- The "Make in India" infrastructure program of India and "Build, Build, Build" infrastructure initiative of India have immense opportunities.

## Ekuverin 2019: Indo Maldives joint Exercise

Indian Army and the Maldives National Defence Force participated in a Joint Military Exercise called 'Ekuverin' at Aundh Military Station in Pune, Maharashtra. This year was the tenth edition of the joint military exercise which was organised from 7 to 20 October 2019.

### About Ex- Ekuverin

**Background**: The word 'Ekuverin' means 'Friends' in Dhivehi language. Indian Army and Maldives National Defence Forces have been conducting Exercise Ekuverin since 2009. The 14 days joint military exercise is held alternatively in India and Maldives. The last exercise was held in Maldives in 2018 at Northern Area Headquarters, Lh. Maafilaafush.

**Objective**:

- To enhance interoperability between the forces of two countries for carrying out counter insurgency and counter-terrorism operations in a semi-urban environment under United Nations (UN) mandate.
- To share best practices and acquaint each other with operating procedures being followed while undertaking counter insurgency and counter-terrorism operations.

**Significance**: India shares very close cultural, ethnic, linguistic, religious as well as commercial ties with Maldives and the joint Exercise Ekuverin will assist in further strengthening of these ties between two nations.

## October Big Day: International Bird Survey

The International Bird Survey is being conducted by eBird organization biennially. Once in May and once in October. The aim is to gather information in the form of checklists of birds and share it to the environmental conservation and education institutes. The Cornell University Ornithology Lab, that holds world's largest birds' database helped in conducting the survey.

### About the survey

- "Go Out and Count the Birds" is the caption of the survey.
- The survey invited every citizen in the world. It encouraged them to identify the birds in their area with the help of photos from their smartphones and enter the number of birds they see in the app created by eBird
- The survey was begun by the Cornell Labs as "Great Backyard Bird Count"
- The survey done in the month of May is the major survey. However, the survey done in October is

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equally important as this data is required to learn about the shifts in migration and species at risk.
- According to the survey, India stood fourth in the first Big October Day and Andhra Pradesh stood fifth in the country.

## Sultan of Johor Cup 2019: Great Britain beats India

Great Britain beats India with 2-1 in final to win men's Sultan of Johor Cup hockey tournament held at Johor Bahru in Malaysia. The Indian junior men's hockey team suffered defeat as Great Britain score 20 seconds before full-time. Great Britain was this years' defending country after they were crowned champions in 2018.

### Key Highlights

In their road to final, Great Britain had scored just 8 goals in comparison to India's 23 but the 2018 title-holders have conceded just 5, while India conceded as many as a 12 goals in 5 matches.

**Top scorer(s)**– India Shilanand Lakra (5 goals). With five goals to his name, India's *Shilanand Lakra* has been one of the standout performers and remained the highest scorer of tournament.

**Best player-** Japan Kosei Kawabe

### About Sultan of Johor Cup

It is an international men's under–21 field hockey tournament. It started in 2011 and this year is the ninth edition of Sultan of Johor Cup. So far, five teams have emerged victorious.

Great Britain is the most successful team now having won the tournament thrice (2015, 2018 2019), followed India (2013 and 2014) and Australia who have all won the tournament twice.

In 2019 edition, 6 teams competed in the tournament (including the host nation), namely- India, Australia, Great Britain, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand.

## India to host Interpol's General Assembly in 2022

India will be hosting the 91st Interpol General Assembly in 2022. The announcement comes after a proposal in this regard received the overwhelming support of member countries at 2019's congregation held at Santinago in Chile on 19 October 2019. The proposal was given to Interpol Secretary General Jürgen Stock by Union Home Minister Amit Shah when the two met in New Delhi during Stock's official visit (August 2019).

### Key Highlights

In the ongoing 88th Interpol General Assembly in Santiago, Rishi Kumar Shukla, the director of Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) that represents Interpol in India as the country's national central bureau, moved the proposal which was then put to vote. The CBI director was accompanied by Delhi police commissioner Amulya Patnaik and Madhya Pradesh police chief V K Singh at the general assembly.

The 91st Interpol General Assembly, 2022 in India will be held as part of celebrations of 75th anniversary of Indian Independence. Earlier, Interpol (International Criminal Police Organisation) had hosted general assembly, where representatives of all member countries converge, in India in 1997.

### About Interpol

It is an international police cooperation organization based in Lyon, France. The organisation has 194 member states and 100 years of experience of international cooperation in policing. It also has 90-million records spread across 17 databases with which it assist law enforcement agencies of its member countries. Interpol is equipped with- incident response teams, a worldwide network of NCBs (Narcotics Control Bureau), command and control centre and secure global data communication channel I-24/7 (Interpol's secure global police communications system through which databases are accessed).

**Interpol General Assembly**: The general assembly of Interpol is an annual exercise hosted by its member countries. At the general assembly the representatives discusses and deliberates upon all major decisions affecting general policy, working methods, the resources needed for international cooperation and finances.

## Uzbekistan Investment Summit modeled on Vibrant Gujarat Summit

During the Vibrant Gujarat Summit held by the Gujarat State Government in January 2019, a partnership memorandum was signed by the Uzbekistan President and the Gujarat Government. Following the summit, Uzbekistan sought India's help for conducting similar event. India extended its support and Gujarat CM Rupani is to visit Uzbekistan to attend the summit.

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### Significance

- The Gujarat CM will attend India-Uzbekistan regional investment forum
- The summit will be of great help for Gujarat pharmaceuticals companies. Gujarat being the hub of pharmaceuticals, can very well utilize the resources of Uzbekistan

### Vibrant Gujarat Summit

Vibrant Gujarat is a biennial investors summit that is held by the Government of Gujarat. The purpose of the event is to bring policy makers, investors, corporations and business leaders together. It was begun in 2003. The conventions in the event predominantly include the industrial sectors like Biotech-Pharma, Agro-Processing, Natural Gas and Oil, Mining, Tourism, etc.

## FSSAI guidelines to sweet manufacturers

Ahead of Diwali, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India issued guidelines to the sweet manufacturers. The team interacted with sweet manufacturers and tested food samples. They also gave them a 10-point guidelines.

### Guidelines

- The details of ghee, oil used in the preparation of sweets should be displayed on the box
- The ingredients and presence of allergens should also be displayed on the label of the sweet
- The milk sweets and other sweets should not be mixed in assorted gift packs. This is because, the milk sweets have different packaging, shelf life and norms from that of the other sweets
- The sweet makers should wear gloves, head cover and aprons. They should possess credible fitness certificates. They should also hold water analysis report to assess the quality of water used for preparation.

### FSSAI

The FSSAI is an autonomous body under Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. It was established under Foods Safety and Standards Act, 2006. It is responsible to protect and promote public health through regulation and supervision of food safety. The headquarters of FSSAI is located in Delhi and the regional offices are located in Kolkata, Guwahati, Delhi, Mumbai, Cochin and Chennai.

## Sri Lanka removed from FATF's Grey List

Sri Lanka has been removed from 'Grey List' of Financial Action Task Force (FATF) following the new measures taken by the country on financial security. The word 'Grey List' identified by FATF refers to a jurisdiction with strategic *Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT)* deficiencies.

### Key Highlights

The announcement regarding removal of Sri Lanka's name from the list of countries at risk for money laundering was made by Sri Lankan Minister of Finance Mangala Samaraweera, after a 5-day FATF plenary concluded in Paris, France.

FATF, the international terror financing watchdog, noted that Sri Lanka set out a sound framework to bring the commitment of all stakeholders for enhancing *AML/CFT* standards in order to improve compliance and country rating.

### Background

Sri Lanka was first included in FATF's blacklist in 2011, and by 2012, Sri Lanka was listed in the list as a dangerous country with no commitment to financial security plan.

Later in October 2016, FATF subjected Sri Lanka to a review of FATF's International Cooperation Review Group (ICRG) for assessing the progress of AML/CFT effectiveness in country.

However, since 2016, Sri Lankan government together with country's Central Bank and other financial institutions has taken several measures to ensure the financial security of country. As a result these efforts, Sri Lanka was declared a cooperating state in 2016 and FATF putted Sri Lanka on its grey list from November 2017. The island nation has reported the progress achieved in the implementation of action plan regularly to FATF.

### What is Financial Action Task Force (FATF)?

It is a Paris (France) based inter-governmental organisation established in 1989.

It is the international terror financing watchdog that combats terrorist financing, money laundering as well as other related threats to integrity of international financial system.

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## NAM Summit, 2019

The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Summit is to be held in Baku, Azerbaijan. The summit is to be held between October 25 and October 26, 2019. The 18th NAM summit will be preceded by Ministerial meetings and senior official meetings.

### Nepal and Bangladesh

Nepal PM Oli and Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina are to attend the summit. Nepal is a founding member of NAM and has been an active participant since its inception. The principles of non-alignment constitute one of the basic tenets of Nepal's foreign policy

### NAM

The Non-Alignment Movement was founded in 1961. It was based on Bandung principles that was adopted at the Belgrade Summit (an Afro-Asian Conference) in 1955. It was founded during the collapse of colonial system and independence struggles of Asia, Africa and Latin American countries. The movement worked towards the attainment of independence for many countries. India is a founding member of the NAM summit.

## Chile declares state emergency in Santiago

President of Chile Sebastian Pinera has declared a state of emergency in Santiago (Capital of Chile), following the worst violence the city has seen in years. The state emergency decision was taken after violent protests over an increase in the price of metro tickets held in the state, following which protesters blocked the railway system and clashed with the police. Protestors clashed with riot police in several parts of Santiago, and attacked the subway system.

### Key Highlights

President has clarified that the objective behind emergency declaration is to ensure public order and peace for the seven million inhabitants of Santiago.

President Pinera has given all the powers to country's military for bringing security, peace and harmony in the state. He has also appointed Major General Javier Iturriaga del Campo as the head of national defence.

The state of emergency which restricts freedom of movement and assembly has been put in place initially for a period of 15 days. Also at present the curfew would not be imposed but the military would continuously patrol major trouble spots in the state.

## UP Govt. to organise training & performance programme of KHON Ramlila

The Culture Department of Uttar Pradesh government is organising India's first training and performance programme of world famous **KHON Ramlila**, a masked form of Ramlila art of Thailand, in collaboration with Thailand government.

### Key Highlights

UP Government will prepare some artists from the state for this art, who will be getting training from experts of Thailand as part of cultural exchange programme between two nations.

A group of officials of culture department of Thailand government and experts of KHON Ramlila has reached Lucknow to train 15 Indian artists in this form of ancient Ramlila. The trained artists will perform at Grand Deepotsav function which will be organised on 26 October 2019 in Ayodhya, UP and later in the other parts of country also.

### About Khon Ramleela

It is a form of masked dance depicting the scenes of Ramlila. It has no dialogues and background voices narrate complete story of Ramayana, one of the major Sanskrit epics of ancient India. The performance in KHON Ramlila's is also a famous visual delight for its beautiful attire and golden masks.

KHON Ramlila of Thailand is included in UNESCO's list of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

# October 21, 2019

## PM Modi releases book titled 'Bridgital Nation'

Prime Minister Narendra Modi unveiled a book titled '*Bridgital Nation: Solving Technology's People Problem*' in New Delhi on 20 October 2019. He presented books' first copy to eminent industrialist and philanthropist Ratan Tata. The book has been authored by *N Chandrasekaran*, Chairman, Tata Sons and *Roopa Purushothaman*.

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### About the Book

The book 'Bridgital Nation' presents a powerful vision of future where technology and human beings co-exist in a mutually beneficial ecosystem. It stresses that instead of accepting technology as replacement of human labour, India can use it as an aid to generate more jobs. The cutting edge digital tools can act as bridge between aspirations and achievements – hence the term '*bridgital*'.

The book strengthens the vision of government on technological approach. It stresses that technology is a bridge not a divider and it is a multiplier not a threat.

Technology and talent are not a threat but force multiplier, moreover, technology builds a bridge between aspirations and achievements; and also a bridge between government and governance.

When technology becomes bridge it leads to transparency and targeted Delivery and thereby, effective use of technology turns challenges into opportunities. However, technology was not the only solution but human intention and right intention is also very important.

## Most Eminent Senior Citizen Award

The Vice President Shri Venkaiyah Naidu presented the "Most Eminent Senior Citizen Award" to scholar, legal luminary and former Attorney General of India Shri K Parasaran. He was honored with the award on the occasion of Elder's Day celebration organized by Age Care India.

### About Parasaran

K Parasaran was born in 1927. He is an Indian lawyer. He was Advocate General of Tamil Nadu in 1976 and Attorney General of India under former PMs Rajiv Gandhi and Indira Gandhi. He was awarded Padma Bhushan in 2003 and Padma Vibhushan in 2011.

### Advocate General

The Advocate General of the state is the highest law officer of the state. Articles 165 deals with the Advocate General of the state and Article 177 deals with rights Advocate General in respective houses. He gives advices to the government in the legal matter. He also discharges duties assigned on him by the State Government.

### Attorney General

The Attorney General is the chief legal advisor to Government of India. He is a primary lawyer in the Supreme Court. He is appointed by the President of India on the advice of Union Cabinet. Article 76 deals with the Attorney General of India.

The 15th and the current attorney general of India in October 2019, is K.K.Venugopal.

## Bali Jatra: Odisha's biggest trade fair

Bali Jatra, one of the biggest trade fairs of Odisha, is scheduled to begin on 12 November 2019. The trade fair will continue for 8 days and this year's Baliyatra will be jointly organized by Cuttack District Administration, Cuttack Municipal Corporation (CMC) and District Cultural Council.

### About Bali Jatra

It is also known Boita Bandaṇa, which literally means 'A Voyage to Bali'. The annual festival is celebrated from day of Kartika Purnima (according to Odia Calendar), which comes around end of October and November. It is held in Cuttack city of Odisha, at Gadagadia Ghata of Mahanadi river.

In Cuttack, Bali Jatra is celebrated every year as a large open fair near *Barabati Fort* area with several cultural programs, different games and food stalls selling Odia delicacies.

**Why Celebrated?** It is celebrated to mark the day when ancient *Sadhabas* (Odia mariners) would set sail to distant lands of Bali, Java, Sumatra as well as Sri Lanka for trade and cultural expansion.

People of Odisha gather near banks of Mahanadi river, Brahmani river, or other river banks, ponds to float miniature toy boats, made of colored paper as a symbolic gesture of their ancestors' voyage.

## G20 Health Ministers Meeting

The Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare attended the G20 Okayama Health Minister Meeting that was held between October 19 and October 20, 2019. It was held under the Presidency of Japan.

### Highlights of the meeting

- The deliberations of the meeting focused on the following
    - Achievement of Universal Health Coverage
    - Management of health risks and health security management including Anti-Microbial Resistance

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- Response of population aging
- Okayama Declaration was adopted at the meeting. It had 52 articles. It includes commitment of G20 countries to address the major global health issues. It also highlighted 2030 SDG-Sustainable Development Goal.
- The next meeting is to be held in Saudi Arabia. The commitments of the Declaration will be reviewed then.

### India's intervention in the meeting

- The Union Minister Dr Harsha Vardhan represented India at the meeting
- He shared India's achievement in the health sector at the meeting. He highlighted the success of Ayushman Bharat, FIT India Movement and Eat Right Movement. The Minister also confided that India is on the path to Universal Health Coverage.
- The Minister in his intervention shared India's vision towards its 20% elderly population by 2050. He also mentioned about National Programme for Health Care of Elderly, health measures to tackle Dementia, etc.
- As a part of the meeting, on 20th October, 2019 a simulation exercise on "Public Health Emergency during mass gathering" was conducted. The Minister speaking at the exercise shared the two best India practices
  - Successful polio campaign in India
  - The Bring down of mass hysteria created by Social media during Nipah outbreak in Kerala in 2018

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## Col. Chewang Rinchen Setu inaugurated in Ladakh

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated Col. Chewang Rinchen Setu (Bridge) in Ladakh. It is named in honor of *Colonel Chewang Rinchan* who was one of the highly decorated officers in Indian Army from Ladakh. He was also a Maha Vir Chakara awardee (1952).

### About Col. Chewang Rinchen Setu

The bridge has been constructed at an altitude of 14,650 feet in forward area of Ladakh region. It has been built on strategically important road *Durbuk Shyok Daulat Beg Oldie* in sub sector north in eastern Ladakh. It is 45 km east of Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China.

The bridge is 4.5 metres wide and can accommodate vehicles of 70 tonnes class. It will also reduce travel time by about half and help in development of border areas and villages across *Shyok River*.

The Bridge has been built by **Border Roads Organisation (BRO)**. During the foundation of the bridge, the BRO used the *micro pile technology* to overcome the technological challenges in this remote area of Ladakh.

The construction of the Bridge was completed within 15 working months using 6900 cubic meters of concrete and 1984 metric tons of steel.

## Netaji's Azad Hind Government Commemorated

The 76th anniversary of Azad Hind Movement was commemorated at Red Fort, Delhi. The Union Minister of Culture and Tourism Shri Prahlad Singh attended the celebration. Last year PM Modi attended the celebrations unveiling the plaque to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the formation of Azad Hind Government.

The commemoration of the event also saw the presence of the Secretary General of the INA trust, its members and other higher officials from the Ministry of Culture.

### Azad Hind Movement

The Provisional Government of Free India or Azad Hind was established in Singapore in 1943. It was supported by the Japanese Empire, Italian social Republic, Nazi Germany and other allies. The purpose of the movement was to ally with the Axis Powers to free India from British rule.

The movement was established by the Indian Nationalists in exile during the later part of Second World War. The movement was founded on October 21, 1943 being inspired by the concepts of Subhash Chandra Bose.

## EU calls for ceasefire in Afghanistan

The officials of European Union (EU) have called for a ceasefire in Afghanistan, stating that the breakdown in talks between United States and Taliban presented an opportunity to push anew for a truce (an

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agreement to end the fighting). In September 2019, citing a Taliban attack that killed a US soldier, US President Donald Trump declared talks with insurgents 'dead'.

### Key Highlights

A ceasefire called by EU would be a token, a guarantee of goodwill and good preparation for normalisation of these relationships. EU also believes that in coming months, Taliban might return to power in one form or another so the move would would entertain a truce to help normalise future relations with European bloc.

EU special envoy for Afghanistan, Roland Kobia, stated that the US-Taliban talks' collapse provide a chance to push for a ceasefire and is the right moment and right opportunity to go one step ahead of a simple reduction in violence and explore ways in which ceasefire will take place.

European Union officials stated that US can reduce its force in Afghanistan to 8,600 without hurting counterterrorism fight against *Al-Qaida* and *Islamic State* group. US has nearly 4,000 American troops in Afghanistan as part of US-led coalition. Moreover, the aim is to still get a peace agreement at some point and any withdrawal would happen as part of a peace agreement with Taliban.

## IIT-Delhi Endowment Fund: 1 billion USD

IIT Delhi will announce its Endowment Fund on October 31, 2019 ahead of its Golden Jubilee Convocation ceremony. The aim is to collect funds from the alumni, bankers and industrialists. The institute has set its target as 1 billion USD.

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The Endowment funds are big source of income for top global universities. For instance, the endowment funds of Harvard and Stanford are over 39 billion USD and 27 billion USD respectively

### Endowment funds

The Endowment Fund is an investment fund established by an organization. There are three main types of Endowment Funds.

- Investment Policy-Here, there are constraints for investors. The investor is dictated on making his investments.
- Withdrawal Policy-a piece of the fund is established for the institution and it is allowed to withdraw a fixed amount at periods of installment.
- Usage Policy-the purpose of usage of funds are defined. The usage of the funds should be appropriate and adhere to the purposes.

### Working of University Endowment Funds

The Endowments are designed in such a way that the principals are to be kept in tact while using the investment income for charitable efforts. Universities are allowed to use the rest of the amount as standard income. This helps to lower tuition costs for students.

## October 20: World Osteoporosis Day

The World Osteoporosis Day is observed by the International Osteoporosis Foundation annually. The purpose is to create awareness for the prevention, treatment and diagnosis of osteoporosis. It was launched in 1996. Only in 1998 and 1999, the WHO acted as a co-sponsor of the campaign.

### Osteoporosis

Osteoporosis is characterized by low bone mass. It leads to enhanced bone fragility and increases the susceptibility of fractures for the person. In India, around 50 million are osteoporotic with bone mass less than 2.5. A person with osteoporosis is claimed to have bone mass between 1 and 2.5

### Significance

In India, Osteoporosis is one of the major health problems. Around 230 million Indians are above the age of 50 years. Out of these 46 million women are with osteoporosis. In India, the problem is more common among women than men. This is mainly because of following reasons

- Reduced intake of calcium during the development of bone mass
- Lack of exercises
- Improper exposure to sunlight

## Fire Resistant Lithium-Ion Batteries

The scientists at John Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory, US, have developed Lithium-Ion batteries that can operate under extreme conditions like submersion, ballistic impact, cutting and heat. In simple lay man terms, they can operate even under fire!

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### Lithium-Ion Batteries

The Lithium-Ion batteries that are commonly used in every household item starting from smartphones are susceptible to catastrophic fire and explosion. Because of this, many phones were banned from airlines and ships. The US Navy had prohibited the use of e-cigarettes on ships and submarines because of the danger the batteries possessed.

### The Technology behind the battery

The scientists have used water-in-salt and water-in-bisalt electrolytes in the batteries. These electrolytes were incorporated in a polymer matrix to reduce water activity and elevate energy capabilities of the battery. This gives the batteries higher energies to withstand heat and pressure.

## Indonesia's President Joko Widodo sworn in for second term

Indonesia's President Joko Widodo popularly known as Jokowi has been sworn into office for his second and final five-year term. The 58-year-old Jokowi took oath at a ceremony in Indonesian capital, Jakarta. The ceremony was attended by politicians and many foreign dignitaries.

### Key Highlights

He was re-elected in presidential election polls that took place in 17 April 2019. He clinched victory with 55.5% of vote. His election comes amid a string of fresh challenges around security, corruption and economic slowdown.

During the oath ceremony, President stated that his final term would be aimed at eradicating poverty and catapulting Indonesia into a developed country with one of the world's top 5 economies by 2045.

Along with Jokowi, 76-year-old vice president Maruf Amin was also sworn into office. He now replaces Widodo's vice president in his first term, Jusuf Kalla.

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## Facts Box: Vizag's Battle against Plastics

The Vishakhapatnam Municipal Corporation has achieved great results from its long battle against plastic bags. The measures taken by the corporation and their strict implementation is the sole success in the battle.

### Measures against use of Plastics

The corporation framed strict guidelines, fines against the local community using plastic bags. Especially, they were extended to the shop-keepers and vendors.

#### Fine

A fine of Rs 2,000/- was imposed on persons found using plastic carry bags. The Corporation has collected Rs 20 Lakh as fine in the last few months. An alternate of providing reusable bags on payment was encouraged among the shop keepers and street vendors.

#### Strict Vigil

The sellers, shop keepers and vendors were scrutinized largely as compared to the public. There around 40,000 shops in and around Vizag. Though it is difficult to keep an eye on every shop, around 20,000 of them are under strict vigil.

#### BRING YOUR OWN (BYO)

The Bring Your Own Campaign that was launched locally was a huge success. The effect is visible even at departmental stores.

After the imposition of the strict rules, the plastic waste being collected has greatly reduced. The Vizag Municipal Corporation collects 1,000 tons of garbage every day. Of this the plastic waste that contributed 10% has reduced to 6% after the implementation of rules and regulations. Of this 8% of the plastic waste collected is being used as substitute for bitumen in laying roads.

#### Recycling

Apart from this, the corporation had also encouraged recycling greatly. With the help of NGOs, the corporation has set up few recycling plants. Though their capacities are low (about 15-20 tons a day), they are expected to grow eventually.

## CCRT e-portal and YouTube Channel inaugurated

Union Minister of State for Culture, Prahlad Singh Patel, inaugurated an e-portal and a YouTube channel of Rashtriya Centre for Cultural Resources and Training (CCRT) at an '*Digital Bharat-Digital Sanskriti*' program being held at CCRT headquarters, in New Delhi. Union Minister will also release a book titled

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'Dewas Ki Sanskritik Parampara' written by Jeevan Singh Thakur and published by CCRT.

### Key Highlights

The CCRT e-portal and YouTube Channel (with support from Routes 2 Routes) was inaugurated with an aim to take India to a newer digital pinnacle and to promote Indian culture.

CCRT has also started publishing a books from the series- *'Untold Tales of India's Cities*, in order to explore and understand unknown aspects of lesser-known places in India and their rural and semi-urban culture.

CCRT has also produced a documentary film called '*Rahas*', with the objective that knowledge of different regional cultures provides understanding of Indian traditions. The program will have a brief presentation of film 'Rahas', which is based on Rasalila in Chhattisgarh.

### About Centre for Cultural Resources and Training (CCRT)

It is autonomous organisation under Union Ministry of Culture. It was established in May 1979, to support cultural education in country.

With its establishment it took over *Scheme-Propagation of Culture* among College as well as School students, which was earlier being implemented by Delhi University since 1970.

## 9th India-US Defence Technologies and Trade Initiative

The ninth India-US Defence Technologies and Trade Initiative (DTTI) group meeting is scheduled to happen in New Delhi in last week of October. DTTI is a *flexible mechanism* and not a treaty or law, which makes sure that senior leaders from both countries are engaged consistently to strengthen opportunities in field of defence.

### What is Defence Technologies and Trade Initiative (DTTI)?

**Objective**: Its main aim includes strengthening India's defence industrial base, exploring new areas of technological development and expanding U.S.-India business ties.

DTTI came about to expedite scope of cooperation between partner countries on defence technology that become narrow due to presence of differing bureaucratic processes and legal requirements. But essentially, DTII is an initiative to provide increased US senior level oversight and engagement to get beyond these obstacles.

DTTI initiative is led by Undersecretary of Defence for Acquisition and Sustainment from US and Secretary for Defence Protection from India.

### Background

The 8th session of DTTI was held on February 2018 in New Delhi and was co-chaired by Deputy Chief of Integrated Defence Staff from India and Acting Director, International Cooperation from US. Also, in August 2018, US granted to India the designation of Strategic Trade Authority Tier 1 (or STA-1). The STA-1 authorisation is equivalent of NATO allying with Japan, South Korea and Australia and it provides India with greater supply-chain efficiency by allowing US companies to export a greater range of dual-use as well as high-tech items to India under a smmoth streamlined processes.

# October 22, 2019

## USISPF meets PM Modi

The US-India Strategic Partnership Forum met PM Narendra Modi on October 21, 2019. The discussion of the meeting was based on the steps to ensure Ease of Doing Business.

### Inferences from the meeting

- The meeting expressed the reposing faith on Indian Economy among the US industries and commerce circles.
- In spite of hindrances in the path of Indo-US trade like US reducing Generalized System of Preferences, CAATSA, withdrawal from JCPOA and sanctions, the meet highlighted the interests of US investors in the Indian soil
- Also, the meet comes during the period when the world leading financial institutions like World Bank and International Monetary Funds (IMF) are projecting an economic slow-down for India in the consecutive year.

### About USISPF

The US-India Strategic Partnership Forum is a non-profit organization. The primary objective of the organization is to strengthen Indo-US strategic partnership through policy advocacy, employment creation, entrepreneurship and innovation.

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## India to attend GFSEC ministerial meeting

Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas and Steel Shri Dharmendra Pradhan is to visit Russia and Japan between October 22 and October 26 2019. This is a follow up visit of PM Modi for the Eastern Economic Forum in September 2019.

### Highlights of the visit

- The Minister will meet Russian Ministers for Development of Russian Far East and Arctic, ship building complexes.
- The Minister is looking forward for collaboration in sectors like coking coal and discussions on shipping routes.
- The Minister will also sign MoUs to strengthen symbolic bilateral energy cooperation.
- He will participate in the Global Forum on Steel Excess Capacity Ministerial Meeting

### GFSEC ministerial meeting

The GFSEC Ministerial meeting is to be held in Tokyo, Japan between October 25 and October 26 2019. The meeting will involve policy discussions.

The GFSEC meeting was formally established in December, 2016 in Berlin. The meeting brings together all the G20 members and the OECD members. The meeting represents 90% of global steel production.

### India in Russia and Japan

ONGC has recently joined Sakhalin-1 consortium. It has so far acquired 20% participation in the project. It is the largest foreign direct investment by any country in any project in Russia. Sakhalin in a consortium for production of oil and gas on Sakhalin island in Russia in Okhotsk sea. It holds six of the world's 10 record-setting extended reach drilling wells.

The Agreement between EIL and Russian National Chamber of Engineers strengthens bilateral energy cooperation in the hydrocarbon exploration in Russia

There are a lot of synergies between India and Japan. India is collaborating on a big scale with Japan in the LNG sector.

## October 21: Police Commemoration Day

Police Commemoration Day (Police Martyr's Day) is observed every year on 21 October in memory of the policemen killed at Hot Springs in North Eastern Ladakh by Chinese troops on this date in 1959.

On Police Commemoration Day 2019, Prime Minister Narendra Modi saluted police forces and their families and urged people to visit *National Police Museum*. PM Modi inaugurated this refurbished and renovated memorial and museum on 21 October 2018. The underground museum is first police museum of its kind in India, and showcases over 2000 years of policing in region, since the time of Kautilya's system of law and order in 310 BCE.

### Background

Till October to November of 1959, Indian Police personnel were responsible for defending 2,500 mile long border of India with then Tibet. On 21 October 1959, 20 Indian Police personnel were attacked by Chinese troops in Ladakh. This altercation between troops led to the death of 10 policemen and 7 others sustained injuries. These 7 injured were taken prisoners by Chinese while remaining managed to escape. On 28 November 1959, the Chinese troops handed over the dead bodies of martyred policemen to India. Their cremation was held with full Police honours at Hot Springs in North Eastern Ladakh. Ever since this incident, the 21 October is celebrated every year as Police Commemoration Day in remembrance of martyrs.

## Defence Acquisition Council meet

On October 21, 2019, Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh chaired the Defence Acquisition Council. The objective of the council is to ensure expeditious procurement to meet the requirements of the armed forces.

### Highlights of the meet

- The Council approved a capital procurement of Rs 3300 crores for indigenously designed and developed equipment for the Defence forces
- It also approved 3 projects that are to be indigenously designed, developed and manufactured. This is a part of Make in India initiative
    - The first two projects include ATGM-Anti Tank Guided Missile and APU-Auxiliary Power

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Units for T-72 and T-90 tanks. These 2 projects are to be progressed under Make II category. It will also provide boost to the private sectors
    - The third generation ATGM will provide "Fire and Forget" and "Top Attack" capabilities to the Indian forces in the battle field
    - The APUs will upgrade the Fire Control Systems and Night Fighting capabilities in the tanks.
- The third project pertains to discrete Electronic Warfare (EW) systems. This project is for mountains and high-altitude terrains. These systems are to be designed and developed by DRDO

## Ministry of Electronics and Information: First Start Up Summit

The Minister of Electronics and Information Technology (MeiTY) Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad unveiled a series of new initiatives at the Start-Up Summit at New Delhi

### Highlights of the summit

- The MeitY Startup Hub was launched. The Hub will facilitate the vision of the Ministry towards technology, startups, innovation and creation of intellectual properties. The Software Technology Parks of India will act as the nodal agency in implementing the scheme
- The summit aims to bring the key stake holders and startups of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Internet of Things (IoT) together
- During the summit the entrepreneurs and startups will share effective techniques and strategies.
- The participators of the summit will also work together to bring in focus of venture capital and government around their processes and strategies.

### Highlights of the Ministers' speech in the event

- "Reform, Preform and Transform" are the key focus areas of the GoI
- The Transformation Technology schemes in India are playing a vital role. It includes Digital India, make in India, Startup India and Smart Cities
- The Digital Initiatives like eNam, Digital payments and eVisas have shown tremendous maturity and growth
- Around 1.25 lakh Gram Panchayats are connected to optical fiber.
- The TIDE-Technology Incubation and Development of Entrepreneurs launched in 2008 and the TIDE 2.0 version launched in June 2018 has multi prolonged approach in diverse areas like ICT, management and Electronics.

## Govt launches BHIM 2.0

Union Minister of Electronics and Information Technology (MeiTY) Ravi Shankar Prasad unveiled a slew of new initiatives and programmes, including BHIM 2.0 that packs-in new functionalities, supports additional languages and has increased transaction limits.

He also launched a host of new initiatives including **MeitY Startup Hub (MSH) portal**, **Indian Software Product Registry** and selected **Incubation Centres** under *Technology Incubation Development for Entrepreneurs 2.0* (TIDE 2.0).

**TIDE 2.0**– It is aimed at strengthening nearly 2000 technology based startups in areas of national concern by taking advantage of emerging technologies as well as empowering 51 incubation centers across the country.

### About Bharat Interface for Money (BHIM)

BHIM is a UPI based payment interface application that allows real time fund transfer. It is developed by National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) and was launched in December 2016. It is in line with government's vision of Digital India.

**BHIM 2.0 Features**

The upgradation has added a bunch of new functionalities and has made app more feature-rich and effective.

The new version of BHIM also supports three additional languages- Konkani, Haryanvi and Bhojpuri, over and above existing 13.

***Other features-***

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- 'Donation' gateway
- Increased transaction limits for high value transactions- increasing the existing cap of Rs. 20,000 and now up to Rs. 1,00,000 from verified merchants.
- Llinking multiple bank accounts
- Offers from merchants
- Option of applying in IPO
- Gifting money

## A new Catalyst: To Convert Carbon Dioxide into Natural Gas

The Engineers at the Stanford University have developed a new catalyst that helps to turn carbon dioxide from cars into fuels like propane or natural gas.

### About the Research

Catalysts induce chemical reactions without being used up in the reaction. In this new research scientists have combined ruthenium and iron oxide nano particles to form the new catalyst. The ruthenium nuggets sit in the core of the catalyst surrounded by an outer sheath of iron. This arrangement activates the hydrocarbon formation from Carbon-Dioxide.

### Earlier methods

The earlier methods invented so far have only produced the simplest hydrocarbon methane from effluents of vehicles. This method produces propane and other higher hydro carbons including natural gas. Also, earlier methods involve two steps of processes. They first reduce carbon dioxide to carbon monoxide and then the second step involves combining carbon monoxide and hydrogen to form hydrocarbons

### Ruthenium

It is a transition element belonging to platinum group of elements. It is gaining importance in the recent years after scientists discovered its electrical applications in contacts and thin film resistors. Since then the annual production of ruthenium from the platinum ores have increased from 19 tons in 2009 to 35.5 tons in 2017.

## Siachen: World's highest battlefield, now open to tourists

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh announced that the Siachen Glacier, the world's highest battlefield, is now open for tourists and Tourism. He made the announcement on Siachen while inaugurating newly constructed 'Colonel Chewang Rinchen Bridge' over Shyok River in Eastern Ladakh.

### Key Highlights

The government gave its nod to the proposal moved by Indian Army for opening up Siachen to tourists with a focus to showcase working conditions of troops serving in sector.

The entire area from *Siachen Base Camp* to *Kumar Post* that lies above 15,000 feet has been opened for tourism purposes. **Siachen Base Camp**– at Partapur is at an altitude of 12,000 feet and temperatures there can dip as low as -60 degrees during winter. Highest post in Siachen is *Bana Post* (at 23,000 feet).

Other than an annual civilian expedition, this is the first time that area has been opened by Indian army for tourists. Indian army, which is deployed in glacier, will be examining who all will be coming to area.

The step has been taken by government to boost tourism in Ladakh as well as to give people a window to appreciate the tough work done by Indian Army jawans and engineers posted in the extreme weather and inhospitable terrains.

### About Siachen Glacier

The glacier is at the height of around 20,000 feet in Karakoram range. It is known as the highest militarised zone in world. It has been a bone of contention between India and Pakistan for long and Indian Army gained strategic control of glacier in 1984 following '*Operation Meghdoot*'.

## Indian Railways set to carry E-commerce consignment

The Indian Railways has started its pilot project of allowing e-commerce consignments in non-peak hours. The project was earlier launched by the Eastern Railways for the first time in India when it allowed the Amazon consignments in its EMU local (suburban services)

### Regulations

- The rate chargeable is that of Luggage Rate that is Rs 5,537 per day.
- The Railways has permitted the usage of the vendor compartment alone to fulfill the consignment. This therefore will not create disruptions to the existing systems.

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- The Railways have fixed the non-peak hours for the transit. It is between 11.00 hours and 16.00 hours.
- The agreement was signed by Indian Railways and Amazon Group for a period of three months. Sources say that this is just a trial. Upon success, it will be extended to other e-commerce groups as well.

### Significance

This will benefit both the railways and the e-commerce industries. The Railways can earn revenue without additional stress or burden on existing system. It helps e-commerce to reduce its transit time. With new rail routes, gauge up gradation, private trains, new tourism connects the railways recently have undergone massive change over. Inclusion of e-commerce into its transit is yet another major transformation being introduced. The purpose of all the new initiatives is to earn additional revenues to the railways sector.

The transformation and up gradation are essential as Railways fetch around 2 lakh crore (2018-19) revenue to the country.

## National Crime Bureau Statistics released

The National Crime Bureau Statistics for the year 2017 was released on October 21, 2019. The report reveled that Tamil Nadu topped in grave crimes followed by Maharashtra.

The report was created by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) operating under the Home Ministry. The NCRB brings out 3 reports annually namely Crime in India, India and Prison statistics and Accidental Deaths and suicide in India.

### Highlights of the report

- The rise in IPC crimes were the highest in Delhi, Assam and Kerala. On the other hand, the IPC crimes decreased greatly in Mizoram, Gujarat, Himachal, Tripura and Nagaland.
- Around 50 lakh crimes were registered in 2017. This is a rise of 3.6% from the previous report published in 2016.
- Murder cases registered across the country declined by 6%. Number of murders in 2016 were 30,450 and in 2017 the number has come down to 28,653
- The NCRB reported that the number of kidnapping and abduction cases increased by 9% since 2016
- Haryana topped in sedition cases (the offences committed against state). This increase was mainly due to the huge Jat reservation stir in Haryana in 2017. The sedition cases include damaging public property, providing aid to anti-social elements, etc.
- The maximum number of crime cases against women were from UP. Majority of the crimes against women under the IPC were registered as follows
    - Out of crime cases against women 33.2% were under cruelty by husband or relatives
    - Assault on women with intent to outrage her modesty contributed 33.2%
    - Kidnapping and Abduction of women contributed 21%
    - Rape contributed 10%
- Crime against SCs were reported as
    - 30% of crime against SCs were simple hurt cases
    - Cases under SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) act accounted to 13.4%
    - Criminal intimidation accounted to 7.6% of crime cases against SCs.

## AYUSH, Defence ministry inks MoU to provide traditional medicine

Union Ministry of AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, Sowa Rigpa and Homoeopathy) and Ministry of Defence signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for integration of AYUSH under health establishments of Directorate General of Armed Forces Medical Services (DGAFMS) i.e. to provide traditional medicine services at the armed forces' hospitals and dispensaries. The MoU was signed on the occasion of inauguration of **Ayurveda Palliative Care Unit** at Palliative Care Centre at the Base Hospital, Delhi Cantonment, New Delhi by Union Minister of AYUSH Shripad Yesso Naik.

### Key Highlights of MoU

Under the MoU, **Ayurveda Units** will also be established at the Palliative Care Centres at the Army Research and Referral Hospital, Air Force Hospital, Hindon (Ghaziabad) and 5 identified Ex- Servicemen

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Contributory Health Scheme (ECHS) Polyclinics (in Delhi –NCR).

**Significance**: Indian soldiers work in challenging environmental conditions right from glaciers of Siachin to desserts of Thar, which takes a toll on their physical as well as mental health, thus Ayurveda and Yoga can help Indian army soldiers to attain best of physical and mental health and improve their endurance. Ayurveda medicines and Panchkarma procedures such as *Snehana* and *Swedana* are very effective in treating work-related musculoskeletal disorders.

## India's highest bridge inaugurated

Raksha Mantri Rajnath Singh inaugurated the highest bridge in India. The bridge was named after the "Lion of Ladakh" Col Chewang Rinchen. It stands at 14,650 feet across the Shyok river.

### Features of the bridge

- It is located at 45km from India's border from China.
- It connects Leh's Darbuk with Daulat Beg Oldi. The bridge is said to reduce the travel time by half-an-hour.
- The bridge is an all-weather permanent bridge. Some bridges in the Ladakh, Siachen regions become inaccessible in winter.
- It is located in the Sub-Sector North
- The super structure of the bridge is called "Extra Wide Bailey Bridge".
- The bridge has been built in a span of 15 months.
- Micro piling technique has been used in the construction of the bridge. The technique is used in India for the first time.
    - Micro piling is a technique used to transfer the load to the ground. Micro piles are small diameter piles constructed by drilling process and are keyed into rock.
- The bridge is 4.5-metre-wide and is designed to support 70 tons class vehicles. Thus, it is expected to facilitate the movement of Indian battle tanks like T-90 that weigh 48 tons and are 3.5 metre wide.

### Colonel Chewang Rinchen

The Lion of Ladakh is a recipient of Maha Vir Chakra twice. In 1948, the Pakistan tribal raiders had captured Kargil and set their eyes in Leh. The region was defended by Lt Col Prithi Singh with just 33 men under him. When he raised the tricolor flag and sought for help, Rinchen was the first person to respond at the age of 17 years. He then recruited 28 of his friends forming the "Ladakh Scounts" and won eventually. For his bravery, he was awarded the Maha Vir Chakra in 1952

He was awarded with Maha Vir Chakra again in 1971 for his heroic act in freeing nine enemy points located in Ladakh's Partapur sector.

### Shyok River

- The River originates from Rimo Glacier, Karakoram Range and is called the "The River of Death"
- It is a tributary of River Indus
- It is also known as Sindhu
- It is a transboundary river flowing through China (Tibet), India and Pakistan. Originating in China, the river joins the Indus river in PoK.
- Chang Chen Mo River, Galwan River, Nubra River and Saltoro River are the tributaries of Shyok river.
- The river holds several Quatenary period (2.58 million years ago) depositions that help Geologists to learn more about evolution of the earth.

## India's Nex-Gen Hypersonic Missiles: DRDO begins manufacturing

The Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) begins manufacturing of hypersonic missiles. These missiles are five times faster than the speed of sound. DRDO is set to operate a wind tunnel to test and fine tune the technology

### Significance

There is a race across the globe to possess hypersonic weapons technology. The US, Russia and China have already been testing the technology to improve their strategic nuclear deterrence and strengthen their front-line combat units. China had demonstrated that it has the technology. Other countries like US and Russia have been silent about it.

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### Hypersonic Weapons

The Hypersonic weapons are capable of carrying conventional and nuclear payloads at extreme speeds. This technology increases the survival against modern ballistic missile defence system. Though, the existing ballistic missile systems deliver loads at extremely high speeds, the hypersonic glided vehicles make tracking and interception impossible.

## What is MeitY StartUp Hub portal?

Union Minister of Electronics and Information Technology (MeiTY) Ravi Shankar Prasad unveiled a MeitY Startup Hub (MSH), a platform to connect startup ecosystem, at the MeitY Startup Summit 2019. This hub will facilitate MeitY's vision of promoting startups, technology innovation and creation of Intellectual Properties.

### Salient Features

MeitY Startup Hub (MSH) has been envisaged as a comprehensive collaborative platform to act as a national facilitation, coordination and interconnected centre for all activities in technology startup ecosystem.

It will support startups to reach out to mentors and facilitate startups to scale from ideation stage to marketplace.

It is also mandated to integrate existing innovation related activities and programmes of MeitY.

MSH portal act as a platform to bring onboard and connect key constituents of tech startup ecosystem with startups, mentors, Centres of Excellence (CoEs), Technology Incubation Centres (TIC), Venture capitalist (VCs) and Angels funds together.

## Delhi Govt agrees to implement Central scheme PM-KISAN

Ahead of scheduled assembly elections, Delhi Government has agreed to implement ambitious Central scheme Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) that promises small and marginal eligible farmers an income support of Rs.6,000 a year in three instalments.

Earlier, West Bengal and Delhi Governments had refused to implement the scheme in respective state/UT but even though West Bengal has stood firm on its decision, the Delhi Government has now sent names of 11,000 farmers for availing the benefits under PM-KISAN.

### About Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN)

It is a Central Sector scheme (CSS) with 100% funding from Central government. Under the scheme, the Centre is crediting an income support of Rs.6,000 per year in three equal instalments directly into the bank accounts of farmers.

It was launched in February 2019 just before the Lok Sabha polls.

**Beneficiary**: Small and marginal farmer families having combined land holding/ownership of upto 2 hectares. The definition of family for scheme is husband, wife and minor children.

The farmer families which are eligible for support as per PM-KISAN guidelines will be identified by State Government and UT Administration.

The fund will be directly transferred to the bank accounts of beneficiaries.

**Key Changes in Scheme**

Until September 2019, farmers could not get benefits of PM-KISAN scheme without involvement of state government, but on 26 September 2019, Union Ministry of Agriculture launched a direct enrolment feature in PM-KISAN under which farmers could now register directly on PM-KISAN portal with a self-declaration of land holding. This made nearly 7 crore farmers of West Bengal to be able to directly enrol for scheme bypassing the state government, which is not keen to pursue the scheme. However, the state government will have to verify Aadhaar seeding and other eligibility of farmers before payment is transferred.

## Assam: No Govt. jobs for people with more than 2 children

On October 21, 2019, the Assam Cabinet decided that no Government jobs will be provided to persons with more than 2 children after 1 January 2021. In September 2017, the Assam government had passed the "Population and Women Empowerment Policy of Assam". Under the policy, job candidates with two children alone would be eligible for government employment and the existing government staff were to strictly follow the two children family norms.

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### Significance: India

According to 2011 census Indian population is 121.08 crores. The current population of India, the second most populous country in the world is 133.92 crores (2017) according to World Bank. China being the most populous country has a population of 138 crores (2017) according to World Bank Data. However, the population density of China (375 per sq km) is less than the population density of India (416 per sq km)

### Significance: Assam

Population of Assam is 3.09 crores. Population Density of Assam is 398 per sq km (greater than that of China). The population in Assam has grown exponentially higher as compared to other states. The history of population growth in Assam is as follows

- 2013-31.86 million
- 2104-32.28 million
- 2015-33.41 million
- 2016-33.90 million
- 2017-34.92 million

It is clearly evident that the population in Assam has been growing by a million every year.

### Reasons for Population Explosion in Assam

Migration is the major cause for the population explosion in Assam. Even in the past between 1901 and 2011, population in Assam has increased 9 times. The major explosion happened during the 1971 war. The prevailing conditions in Bangladesh during its liberation forced many Pakistani refugees to migrate to Assam. Illiteracy is another major cause for population explosion in Assam.

## World's oldest known natural pearl discovered on Abu Dhabi Island

The oldest known natural pearl in the world was discovered recently off the coast of Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (UAE) by Abu Dhabi archaeologists working at a Neolithic site on Marawah Island. It has been dubbed as 'Abu Dhabi Pearl'. It was discovered in soil layers that have been radiocarbon dated to 5,800-5,600 BCE, during the Neolithic period.

### Highlights

**Significance of this discovery:** It gives proof that pearls and oysters were being used in UAE nearly 8,000 years ago. It also represents the earliest known evidence for pearling yet discovered anywhere in the world.

**Previous Oldest Pearl:** Prior to the Abu Dhabi Pearl discovery, the earliest known pearl in the UAE was discovered in Neolithic site of Umm Al Qaiwain. Besides, ancient pearls also have been found at a Neolithic cemetery close to Jebel Buhais, in UAE's another province Sharjah.

### Marawah Island's neolithic sites

They were first identified in 1992 during a survey carried out by Abu Dhabi Islands Archaeological Survey (ADIAS). Subsequent excavations on these sites have shown them to include numerous collapsed stone structures, the earliest architecture yet discovered in the UAE. Aside from the priceless Abu Dhabi Pearl, significant finds from these sites includes imported ceramic vase from Ubaid civilisation in Mesopotamia (Iraq), beautifully worked flint arrowheads and shell and stone beads. Moreover, numerous painted plaster vessel fragments were also discovered, representing earliest known decorative art yet discovered in the UAE.

## WFP launches campaign 'Feed Our Future' against hunger and malnutrition in India

United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) has launched its cinema ad campaign 'Feed Our Future' against hunger and malnutrition in India. It has been launched by WFP in collaboration with UFO Moviez – India's largest in-cinema advertising platform and SAWA -the Global Cinema Advertising Association. It is also supported by Showbox Music TV Channel, LF (Living Foodz TV Channel) and Red FM 93.5. It will help drive the message of zero hunger deeper into the hearts & minds of India.

### About Feed Our Future Campaign 2019

This is for second time WFP has launched this campaign in India to raise awareness on hunger and malnutrition, a reality facing millions of people around the world. It is based on success of previous campaign in collaboration with UFO Moviez and SAWA. It will connect with audiences and garner support it deserves to highlight urgent attention for critical issue of hunger and malnutrition in India.

The creative force behind this new campaign is Sir John Hegarty, of The Garage SOHO. It highlights

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potential loss to the world when children's voices are silenced due to hunger. Its poignant narrative sees group of Syrian refugee children selected from local community playing in rubble and gazing out of bombed-out buildings in apparent war zone.

### Background

Last year's global results of UNWFP's 2018 campaign had showed that the advertisement helped to double awareness of WFP among those who saw it. It also had helped to raise more than half a million dollars through online giving and in 38% increase in downloads of WFP's Share the Meal donation App.

### About World Food Programme (WFP)

It is the food-assistance branch of United Nations. It is a member of UN Development Group (UNDG) and part of its Executive Committee. It was established in 1961 after Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) Conference 1960. It is headquartered in Rome, Italy. It has more than 80 country offices around the world. It is the world's largest humanitarian organization promoting food security and addressing hunger. It provides food assistance to around approx. 80 million people in 75 countries each year. It works to help people who cannot obtain enough food or produce enough food for themselves and their families.

## October 23, 2019

## Environment Flows and Assessment Workshop

Union Minister for Jal Shakti inaugurated the International Workshop on Environment Flows.

### Highlights

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- The Minister released the Guidance Document on Environment Flow Assessment. It is the first of its kind.
- The workshop aims at answering the following questions
  - What is the overall aim for environment flows assessment in India?
  - What are the long term and short-term goals to implement environment flows according to overall aims and targets?
- The workshop brings together the Indian and European experiences.
- National and International experts from Germany, UK, Africa, Bhutan, Poland, Netherlands and South Africa are participating in the workshop

### Significance

According to the IUCN,

- Environmental flow is the water provided within the river, wetland or coastal zone to maintain ecosystems and their benefits.
- It is a tool for allocating water among multiple, competing uses in a river basin or watershed.
- The Environmental Flows provide the means for integrated management of river flows to meet the needs of the people, industry, agriculture, energy and ecosystems.

For instance, River Ganga

- Supports 400 million people
- It provides unique ecosystem to the India's National Aquatic animal Gangetic Dolphins, turtles and gharials

## GoI organises "Hunar Haat"

The Ministry of Union Minority Affairs organizes "Hunar Haat". The event intends to provide employment opportunities to traditional culinary experts, artisans and craftsmen. The theme of the events to be organized between 2019 and 2020 will be based on

**Theme: Ek Bharat Shresth Bharat**

### Highlights

- The artisans will bring indigenous handmade exquisite pieces of bamboo and cane
- The event also includes the participation of Jute products from Assam, marble products from Uttar Pradesh, Copper products from Gujarat, Mangalgiri and Kalamkari products from Andhra Pradesh, Madhubani painting from Bihar, rare Ayurvedic herbs from Kashmir, etc.

### Significance

- The event has proved to effective providing employment opportunities to more than 2 lakh 50 thousand artisans and craftsmen in the last three years.
- A large number of women artisans from various parts of the country will participate in the event

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- This will provide traditional delicacy to the visitors

### About Hunar Haat

Hunar Haat is an exhibition of handicrafts and traditional products made by artisans from the Minority communities. It is organized by Ministry of Minority Affairs. The scheme aims to establish Hunar Hub in all the states where programs like Hunar Haati and other cultural events are to be organized.

Hunar Haat is organized under USTTAD (Upgrading the Skills and Training in Traditional Arts/Crafts for Development) scheme.

## Pankaj Kumar appointed CEO of UIDAI

The Appointments Committee of Cabinet (ACC) has approved the appointment of IAS Pankaj Kumar as the chief executive officer (CEO) of Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI), which issues Aadhaar.

### About Pankaj Kumar

He was currently serving as Additional Secretary in Union Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY). He is appointed as CEO of UIDAI in the rank and pay of Secretary by temporarily upgrading the post.

### About Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI)

It is a statutory authority under the provisions of the Aadhaar Act, 2016. It functions under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), with the mandate to issue UID or Aadhaar, a 12-digit random number to all residents of India to eliminate duplicate and fake id entities. It is founded by on Government of India 28 January 2009 and is headquartered in New Delhi.

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## KVIC's initiatives to generate employment

The Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) joined hands with the Goa Government to generate employment opportunities in Goa. They inaugurated a series of initiatives. The initiatives were all first of their kind. There were no spinning and weaving activities in Goa earlier.

### Highlights

- Electric potter wheels to 160 families were distributed
- New Model Spinning wheels to 50 trained women were also distributed
- A Lijjat Papad unit was established. This will generate employment to 700 people.
- The aim of the initiatives is to assist the locals and help create jobs.

### Significance

In India, the crafts sector sustains over 20 million practitioners. Handicrafts bring in good fortune with minimal investment. Indian crafts have good value in the international markets.

### KVIC

The Khadi and Village Industries Commission is a statutory body that was established in 1956. The commission took over the works of the former All India Khadi and Village Industries Board. The main objectives of KVIC are as follows

- To provide social employment.
- To produce saleable articles.
- To create self-reliance amongst the poor.

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## India trains Nepali officers in AML and CFT

Government of India is training officers of Government of Nepal on 'Anti Money Laundering (AML) and Countering Financing of Terrorism (CFT)' in India at the Regional Centre of National Academy of Customs, Indirect Taxes and Narcotics (NACIN) in Bengaluru.

The course is divided into three batches. This is the second group of 18 Nepali officers that are undergoing training. Initially, the 1st group of 20 Nepali officers had successfully completed their 6-days training module on 24 August 2019 and the third batch of 21 officers will undergo training in December 2019.

### Key Highlights

The course undertaken by officers is fully supported by Government of India under Union Ministry of External Affairs' **Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme**.

This is a special tailor-made course designed at the request of Government of Nepal and is an example of India's commitment to enhance capacities of various agencies of Nepal Government. The training will enhance capabilities of participating officers to effectively deal with matters pertaining to AML and CFT.

### About National Academy of Customs, Indirect Taxes and Narcotics (NACIN)

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It is a premier training institute of Government of India with state-of-the-art learning facilities in field of financial investigations and anti-money laundering matters. It is an accredited Regional Training Centre of World Customs Organization (WCO) for Asia/Pacific Region. NACIN also works in collaboration with other international organizations like UNEP, UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime), SASEC (South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation) etc.

## Sanjeev Nandan Sahai appointed new Power Secretary

The Appointments Committee of Cabinet (ACC) has approved the appointment of senior IAS officer Sanjeev Nandan Sahai as the new power secretary. The order in this regard was issued by Union Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions.

### About Sanjeev Nandan Sahai

He is a 1986-batch IAS officer of union territories (UT) cadre. He is at present serving as the special secretary in power ministry.

He would be replacing Subhash Chander Garg who superannuates on 31 October 2019. Garg, who would have retired next year (2020) after completing 60-year age of superannuation, was removed as finance secretary soon after budget was passed by Parliament and appointed power secretary in July 2019. Garg had sought voluntary retirement after being shunted out from the post of finance secretary and was serving a 3-month notice period pending acceptance of his voluntary retirement.

### Other Key Appointments

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**B R Sharma appointed Chairman, Staff Selection Commission-** Jammu and Kashmir cadre IAS officer B R Sharma, who has been serving as Secretary in Border Roads Organisation (BRO) under the Home Ministry, was appointed Chairman, Staff Selection Commission.

**Nagendra Nath Sinha appointed NHAI Chairman-** He is a 1987 batch IAS officer as the Chairman of National Highways Authority of India (NHAI). He is will take Sharma's place in BRO.

## IAF test fires 300 km range BrahMos surface-to-surface missiles

Indian Air Force (IAF) has carried out successful firing of two BrahMos surface-to-surface missiles from a mobile platform at Trak Island in Andaman Nicobar group of islands. The drill was conducted to check IAF's capability to hit targets with 'pin-point' accuracy at designated mock targets close to 300 km and a direct hit on the target was achieved in both the cases.

### About BrahMos Missile

It is a 2.5-tonne ramjet supersonic surface-to-surface missile with a medium-range of nearly 300 km. The missile is produced by BrahMos Aerospace, an India-Russian joint venture (JV). The missile can be launched from ships, submarines, aircraft, or from land platforms. It is world's fastest supersonic cruise missile.

The recent test firing of missile has enhanced IAF's capability to engage direct hit on grounds targets with pin point accuracy from a mobile platform.

## Deepika Padukone, P. V. Sindhu named ambassadors for 'Bharat Ki Laxmi'

Actor Deepika Padukone and shuttler PV Sindhu has been named as the ambassadors for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's new initiative called 'Bharat Ki Laxmi' movement.

### What is Bharat Ki Laxmi?

This initiative by PM Modi aims to bring commendable work done by women across the country to light ahead of the Diwali festival. The Bharat Ki Laxmi campaign underscores the cause of women empowerment as well as celebrates extraordinary achievements of extraordinary women of India. PM Modi also shared a video in this regard.

### Some Indian Government Schemes for Women Empowerment

1. **Mahila E-haat**– It is a direct online marketing platform launched by Ministry of Women and Child Development.
2. **Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao-** It is a joint initiative run by Ministry of Women and Child Development, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the Ministry of Human Resource Development.
3. **One Stop Centre Scheme**: Popularly known as '*Sakhi*'.
4. **Working Women Hostels**
5. **Swadhar Greh The Swadhar scheme-** for rehabilitation of women in difficult circumstances was

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launched by Union Ministry of Women and Child Developmentin 2002.

6. **STEP Scheme**: STEP stands for- 'The Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women'

## Stable form of Plutonium discovered accidentally

Scientists led by Helmholtz Zentrum Dresden Rossendorf have found new compound of Plutonium unexpectedly in France. The team was actually trying to create plutonium dioxide nano particles using different precursors. In the process, the plutonium at its pentavalent state showed a peculiar behavior. The scientists then learnt that the strange behavior of Plutonium at its pentavalent state was because it was stable! The team confirmed its stability using Pu M4 edge technology.

The experiment was repeated after 3 months and the element showed the same behavior. The scientists thus confirmed that Plutonium exhibited stability properties at its pentavalent state.

### Significance

- The unstable radioactive dangerous plutonium that is predominantly used in nuclear applications are tricky to transport, store and dispose.
- The scientists were in the process of creating Plutonium Dioxide as it is relatively stable as compared to other radioactive materials. It does not dissolve in water
- The major drawback of Plutonium waste is that when dumped underground, they contaminate water table to a radius of 10 km.

## Researchers developed renewable energy storage device

The researchers, including those from Queen Mary institute of London in United Kingdom (UK) have developed a new **dielectric capacitor**, a device that stores energy (like battery). The study was published in journal Nature Communications.

### Key Findings about Device

**Working**: The researchers found that by pressing and folding a polymer film capacitor, they were able to store 30 times more energy than best-performing commercially available dielectric capacitor. The researchers took the inspiration for this new energy storage device from a French pastry called croissant which is made by folding multiple layers of dough.

**Function**: The study noted that dielectric capacitors in general have ultrahigh power density which makes them suitable for technologies that require accumulating energy over a period of time and then releasing it very quickly like motor drives and even space vehicle power systems. Until now, such capacitors had limitation of storing low amounts of energy but this new finding promise a significant impact on the field of pulse power applications and could produce a step-change in field of dielectric capacitors, which was so far limited by their low energy storage density.

**Significance**: As this is the highest energy density ever reported in a polymer film capacitor, so the advances in technology may pave a way for low-cost, efficient, and environmentally-friendly electric energy storage systems for wind as well as solar sources. Even though storing energy can be tricky and expensive, especially with renewable energy sources, but with this technique, large amounts of renewable energy can be stored.

## Sindhu Sudarshan: Indian Army's exercise in deserts of Rajasthan

Indian Army to conduct exercise codenamed as 'Sindhu Sudarshan' in the deserts of Rajasthan from 29 November to 4 December 2019. More than 40,000 troops will be participating in an all-arms battle array of Divisions and Brigades carrying out offensive operations in deserts. The exercise will showcase a high degree of synergy between the Indian Army and Indian Air Force.

### About Exercise 'Sindhu Sudarshan'

The Exercise underscores Indian Army's resolve to implement integrated launch of Strike Corps in developed and desert terrain in unison with its clear pro-active strategy using *Integrated Battle Groups* (IBGs) along the Western Front. The IBGs are the new formations being raised by force for warfighting in future.

The military exercise will witness Indian Army assessing operational efficiency of *Strike Corps* to fight in desert terrain as well as Indian Air Force (IAF) to provide intimate support in terms of destruction of targets and airlifting troops. It will be conducted to evaluate defence services capabilities to strike deep into enemy territory in an integrated air-land battle.

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This will also provide unique opportunity to employ entire mechanised formations consisting of Tanks and Infantry Combat Vehicles (ICV) in order to evaluate capability to strike deep along Western Borders.

The exercise is unique in scope as well as scale. It will simulate battlefield conditions and will focus on fine-tuning destruction and/or surveillance mechanisms to support precision strikes as well as manoeuvres by network-enabled forces.

## Ozone Hole: Smallest on record

NASA reported that ozone hole near south pole is in its smallest size since it was discovered. In 2006, the hole was 10.3 million square miles. However, recently it has reduced to 3.6 million square miles. Scientists say that the hole is smaller than it was found in 1985.

Every year, the ozone hole reaches its peak in September and October and disappears by late December.

### Significance

Earth's ozone layer shields life from harmful solar radiation. The man-made chlorine compounds that can last in air for 100 years nibbled at the Ozone particles. This led to thinning of the Ozone layer in the Southern Hemisphere.

After it was found in 1985, the International Montreal Protocol was framed in 1987. It is the only protocol ratified at the United Nations that bans chlorine compounds in refrigerators and aerosols.

Unfortunately, the reason for the reduction of ozone hole is not the steps to reduce the usage of chlorine compounds. It is because of climate change.

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### Climate Change-a Reason

Chlorine in air requires cold temperatures in stratosphere to form chemical clouds that actually react with ozone. The clouds now go away as they are being warmed up due to elevated temperatures. The temperatures were 29 degrees warmer than the average. The winds dropped from 161 miles per hour to 67 miles per hour.

Though Climate change is the sole reason, it is being hastened by global warming. The Southern Polar Vortex just like the northern one started to break down. This is the main reason for the sudden and huge reduction in ozone hole.

## GOI: World's largest Face Recognition system in India to track criminals

GoI has asked the IT companies across the world to send proposals to NCRB (National Crime Record Bureau) to install world's largest facial recognition system. The winner of the bids will create National Automated Facial Recognition System (AFRS). The step is an effort towards information gathering, police force modernization, criminal identification and verification.

### About AFRS

The System will match images from India's CCTV camera network. The network will include data from various government agencies. This will help to create a robust system to identify criminals, missing chinldre, unidentified dead bodies, etc. With NCRB's recent report on India's crimes, the system will help to change the current scenario. The crimes have increased by 3.6% in 2017 as compared to 2015.

### Constraints

There are possibilities for misuse of the technology. The system should have a strong security wall to protect the data collected. Also there should be a strong regulatory framework for facial recognition as it is linked to prople's right to privacy. There is no such framework in India to regulate the storage of facial recognition data.

# October 24, 2019

## Indian Railways installs most advanced Electronic Interlocking System

Indian Railways has installed the most advanced Electronic Interlocking System on the **Grand Chord route**, one of the busiest section of railways. This most advanced and safer Electronic Interlocking System was installed at Tundla Junction in Uttar Pradesh by railways as part of upgradation process.

### Key Highlights

This new Electronic system has replaced outdated 65-year old Mechanical Signalling System at Tundla Junction in UP on the route.

The introduction of advanced system is expected to help railways to speed up trains and achieve the goal of reducing travel time between Delhi and Howrah to nearly 12 hours from existing 17-19 hours. Besides improving the punctuality of trains on New Delhi-Howrah mainline, the work will also have manifold

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benefits during incoming foggy season through safe and detention free handling of trains at Tundla Junction.

**Why Tundla Jn.?** It is an important station on this super-saturated route that operates 160% of its designed capacity. Tundla was having 613 route combinations which is only 2nd to Kharagpur in South Eastern Railway with 800 routes.

### About Grand Chord route

Grand Chord is part of *Howrah-Gaya-Delhi line* and *Howrah-Allahabad-Mumbai line*. It acts as a link between Sitarampur in West Bengal and Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyay Junction in Uttar Pradesh (UP). A lot of important trains pass through this route which connects national capital with eastern region of country. It covers a stretch of 450 kilometres falling in North Central Railway Zone (NCRZ).

## October 24: UN Day

The UN Day marks the entry into force of the UN Charter in 1945. However, the day is being commemorated since 1948. In 1971, UN recommended that the day be observed as public holiday by member nations.

Next year, October 24, 2020 UN completes its journey of successful 75 years. In order mark the anniversary, UN has launched "**UN75: 2020 and Beyond-Shaping our future together"**. The celebrations are being begun this year. Throughout the year, UN will hold meetings with nations and will invite them to participate in its collective action to realize peace, development and human rights for all.

### Highlights

- From January 2020, UN will hold dialogues around the world.
- It will work towards the aim of reaching global public, listen to their hopes and fears and learn from their experiences.
- UN75 will undertake global opinion polling, internet analysis to collate robust, representative and comparative data.
- It will also collect video and audio recordings with testimonials from people who have participated in illustrating people's views and ideas.

### Need of the commemoration

In many countries public trust in traditional institutions are declining. The relations between the countries are under strain. Apart from this, tackling issues like climate crisis, new patterns of violence, inequality, major changes in population and technology requires cooperation across borders, sectors and generations.

The SDG (Sustainable Development Goals) help solve above solutions. As an international organization, it is essential for the United Nations to bring the world together to achieve this.

## India US to sign deal on Science and Technology

The Union Cabinet on October 24, 2019 approved the proposal for Agreement on Science and Technology Cooperation between India and USA.

### Features

- The countries will share scientific and technical information and experts
- They will convene seminars and meeting
- The agreement would enable cooperation between the countries in training the scientists and experts according to the requirements.
- They will conduct cooperative research projects
- The countries will establish science and innovation-based public-private partnerships.

### Significance

- As the countries will leverage complementary strengths spurred by a significant convergence of mutual interests in science and technology, it will open new chapters in bilateral relations.
- It will also provide opportunities to promote high impact innovative partnerships
- The agreement will help to broaden and expand relationships between extensive scientific and technological communities.

### India-US

Both India and US have good cooperation in terms of science. The space organizations of the countries ISRO and NASA have several information exchanging programs. Similarly, the defence sector of the

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countries are also cooperative in terms of technology transfer and in safeguarding the Indo-Pacific region. The agreement therefore will help to boost the existing cooperation between them.

## M. Venkaiah Naidu to lead Indian delegation at 18th NAM Summit

Vice President, M. Venkaiah Naidu will lead the Indian delegation at 18th Summit of Heads of State and Government of Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). The summit will be held at *Baku, Azerbaijan* on 25 to 26 October 2019 and will be preceded by Senior Officials Meeting and Ministerial Meeting.

### Highlights 18th NAM Summit

The Summit will focus on a complete set of contemporary issues like Terrorism, UN reform, threats to peace and security, sustainable development, climate change, south-south cooperation and economic governance.

**Theme for Summit**– *'Upholding the Bandung Principles to ensure concerted and adequate response to the challenges of the contemporary world'*. The theme is significant as it relates to upcoming 65th anniversary of Bandung Principles in 2020 and 60th anniversary of NAM establishment in 2021.

**What are Bandung Principles?** It is a set of ten principles that were formulated at the Asian-African Conference in 1955. They are a political statement that encapsulates the need to promote world peace and cooperation.

**India at NAM**

The participation of Vice President would further strengthen India's engagement with NAM and its member countries. He will deliver national statement at NAM Summit and hold bilateral meetings with other Heads of States and Governments including President of host country, Azerbaijan, on the sidelines.

Vice President will lead the delegation comprising of External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, India's Permanent Representative to United Nationsi Syed Akbaruddin and Secretary to Vice President I.V Subba Rao.

### About Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)

It is a forum of 120 developing world states that are not formally aligned with or against any major power bloc. After United Nations (UN), NAM is the largest grouping of states globally.

**Members**: It was established in 1961 in Belgrade, Serbia with 29 members and has since grown to 120 members, 17 states (observers), 10 international organisations, to become one of the largest groupings of nation-states. India is one of the founding members of NAM.

**Headquarters**: Central Jakarta, Indonesia

**Founders**: Josip Broz Tito, Kwame Nkrumah Sukarno, Jawaharlal Nehru, Gamal Abdel Nasser

## October 25: India to celebrate Ayurveda Day

On 25th October, 2019, Government of India is to organize 4th Ayurveda day. The day is being celebrated by Ministry of AYUSH as Dhanvantari Jayanti falls on the day. Dhanvantari is a Hindu god who cures diseases.

### Highlights

- The Ministry of Ayush will distribute "National Dhanwantari Ayurveda Award" on National Ayurveda Day. The award comprises of trophy and cash reward of Rs 5 lakhs.
- The other participants of the celebration include
    - AIIA-All India Institute of Ayurveda
    - CCRAS-Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences
    - IPGT&RA-Institute for Post Graduate Training and Research in Ayurveda
    - NEIAH-North Eastern Institute of Ayurveda and Homeopathy

### Significance

- Ayurveda is a system of medicine with historical roots.
- GoI launched National AYUSH Mission during its 12th five-year plan. The focus of the mission is to promote Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani and Homeopathy drugs. The Ayurveda Day is being celebrated as a part of the mission's role in creating awareness about the medicines. Government has also upgraded a lot of Ayurvedic institutions as a part of AYUSH Mission.

## Praveen Kumar wins Gold in Wushu World Championship

Praveen Kumar has scripted the history by becoming the first Indian man to win a gold medal at Wushu

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World Championships. He defeated Russel Diaz of Philippines with 2-1 in the 48kg category event. The Indian saw off his Filipino opponent in men's Sanda event of 15th World Wushu Championships held in Shanghai, China.

**What is Wushu?** It is a Chinese martial art which combines full-contact kickboxing, including close-range punches and kicks, with wrestling, throws, takedowns, kick catch and sweeps.

### Key Highlights

In the semi-final, Praveen had earlier defeated Khasan Ikromov of Uzbekistan' with 2-0 to set up the summit clash with Diaz.

India has finished third overall in championship in event with a gold, 2 silvers and a bronze.

**Other Indian Winner**:

Poonam in women's 75kg category and Sanathoi Devi in women's 52kg category secured silver medals.

Vikrant Baliyan bagged bronze in men's 60kg category.

**NOTE**: In 2017, ***Pooja Kadian*** became the first Indian to be crowned world champion in wushu after she defeated Russia's Evgeniya Stepanova in women's 75 kg sanda event.

## National Panchayat Awards 2019

Union Minister of Panchayati Raj Narendra Singh Tomar conferred the National Panchayat Awards 2019 at a function in New Delhi. The Minister also launched a Spatial Planning Application called '**Gram Manchitra'** which is a Geo Spatial based decision support system for panchayats. The panchayats can utilize this App to plan, develop and monitor developmental activities on real time basis.

### About National Panchayat Awards 2019

Panchayati Raj Ministry has been incentivizing the best performing Panchayats as recommended by State Governments since 2011-12.

The awards are given to best performing Panchayats in recognition of their good work at different levels such as delivery of services and sanitation.

As many as 246 Awards were given to awardee Panchayats and States in various categories. The awards were conferred in following categories –

- 195 awards were conferred under *Deen Dayal Upadhyay Panchayat Sashaktikaran Puraskar* category, in recognition of good work done for improving delivery of services and public goods.
- 20 Gram Panchayats in *Nanaji Deshmukh Rashtriya Gaurav Gram Sabha Puraskar* category, for their outstanding contribution to socio-economic development by involving Gram Sabhas.
- 3 Gram Panchayats in *Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) Award*
- 22 Gram Panchayats were awarded in *Child-Friendly Gram Panchayats Award*, for best performing Panchayats/Village Councils (one in each State/UT) for adopting child-friendly practices.
- 6 states were awarded under *e-Panchayat Puraskar* category, for promoting e-enablement of PRIs (Panchayati Raj Institutions) for bringing in efficiency, transparency and accountability in their functioning.

## BSNL Revival Plan

The Union Cabinet on October 23, 2019 approved the proposal for revival of BSNL and MTNL. It allotted the 4G spectrum to the institutions. The MTNL will act as a subsidy to BSNL. A four-step revival plan has been announced for BSNL. Also, the GoI plans to raise Rs 15,000 crore through sovereign bonds.

### Significance

Both BSNL and MTNL were making losses for the state since a long time. MTNL is Mahangar Telephone Nigam Limited, a state-owned entity that provides telecom services at New Delhi and Mumbai and in Mauritius. It was founded in 1882. There are around 25,191 employees working with the company.

The BSNL loss is estimated to be around Rs 14,000 crore with a decline in revenue of Rs 19,308 crores during 2018-19. The loss of MTNL was around Rs 755 crores (in Q4, May 2019). The companies hold salary dues and pension dues for the employees. The total debts held by the companies amount to Rs 40,000 crores.

With merger under Rs 70,000 crore plan and 4G spectrum offering will help the entities in monetizing their assets. They can raise capital expenditure required to roll out the network and bring in efficiency in their operations.

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## Credit Suisse's Global Wealth Report 2019

The Credit Suisse Group which is a Switzerland-based multinational investment bank, has released the 10th edition of its annual Global Wealth Report. The report tracks both growth and distribution of wealth, in terms of numbers of millionaires and billionaires, proportion of wealth that they hold as well as the status of inequality globally.

**Definition of Wealth**: Wealth is defined in terms of 'net worth' of an individual, which, in turn, is calculated by adding up value of financial assets like money and real assets like houses and then subtracting any debts an individual may have.

### Key Findings of Credit Suisse's Global Wealth Report 2019

Only 47 million people who account for just 0.9% of world's adult population owned $158.3 trillion, which is almost 44% of world's total wealth.

While at the other end of spectrum, 2.88 billion people who account for almost 57% of world's adult population owned merely $6.3 trillion, which is almost 1.8% of world's wealth.

China has overtaken United States (US) in 2019 to become 'the country with most people in top 10% of global wealth distribution'.

The report states that India, along with China and Vietnam as best examples of how wealth can be raised by pushing for higher economic growth as a multiple of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by addressing institutional as well as financial-sector deficiencies.

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## TechSagar: National Repository of India's cyber tech capabilities

National Cyber Security Coordinator's office in partnership with Data Security Council of India (DSCI) launched a platform called 'TechSagar'. It is a platform to discover consolidated and comprehensive repository of India's cyber technological capabilities through a portal.

### About TechSagar

It is a dyanmic platform to discover capabilities of Indian Industry, academia and research across 25 technology areas such as Internet of Things (IoT), Machine Learning (ML), Artificial Intelligence (AI), Cloud & Virtualisation, Blockchain, Robotics & Automation, Wireless & Networking. At present the repository features more than 4,000 entities.

This portal (www.techsagar.in) will list business and research entities from startups, academia, Information Technology (IT) industry, and individual researchers.

It will allow granular navigation, targeted search and drilldown methods using more than 3,000 niche capabilities. It will also be frequently updated with new entities and information to maintain its relevancy and usefulness.

**Need**: As India aspires to become a trillion dollar digital economy, the tech sagar repository will facilitate as a new opportunities for academia and businesses to connect, innovate and collaborate in future.

**NOTE**:

The DSCI is a not-for-profit, industry body on data protection in India. It is setup by NASSCOM (National Association of Software and Services Companies), a trade association of Indian IT and Business Process Outsourcing industry.

## First national protocol to count India's Snow Leopard population launched

On the occasion of ***International Snow Leopard Day***, Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) launched the first national protocol to enumerate the population of this elusive and endangered species of snow leopard in India. The Day is celebrated on 23 October every year to protect and conserve snow leopards and preserve beautiful wildlife of Himalayas.

### Key Highlights

The **Snow Leopard Population Assessment in India (SPAI)** will contribute to global 'Population Assessment of the World's Snow Leopard's (PAWS) initiative.

Its launch was announced at the inaugural session of 4th steering committee meeting of *Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Program (GSLEP)*, held in New Delhi. In the GSLEP, delegates from countries including Nepal, Bhutan and Mongolia discussed conservation efforts and reviewed steps to be taken for future protection of the high-altitude predator.

It was decided at the meet that-

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- All Snow leopard range countries can work together and enumerate the number of snow leopards. Also, these countries must strive to double snow leopard population in the coming decade.
- Need of the hour is green economy and cross country cooperation for the conservation of wildlife.

### Snow Leopards in India

India is believed to have about 400 to 700 snow leopards spread across Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim.

Snow leopards are top predators, thus play a critical role in their ecosystem. Poaching is a major threat for them.

**Project Snow Leopard** is an initiative of Environment Ministry. It aims to safeguard and conserve India's unique natural heritage of high altitude wildlife populations and their habitats by promoting conservation via participatory policies and actions.

### NOTE:

Snow leopards, which live primarily in mountainous regions of Central and Southern Asia are extremely difficult to spot, which further makes it tough to accurately estimate their population. Worldwide, less than 2% of snow leopard habitats have been sampled to assess their population.

## World Bank's Ease of Doing Business

India was raked 63rd in World Bank's Ease of Doing Business ranking released on October 24, 2019. The ranking comes when the leading financing institutions including RBI, World Bank and IMF are slashing country's growth forecasts. In 2014, India was ranked 142 among 190 countries. As compared to 2018, India moved up 14 places in the ranking mainly due to several reforms in the trade and commerce sector.

### Highlights

- India for the third time in a row was among the top 10 performers on the list.
- The other top 10 performers other than India were Saudi Arabia at rank 62, Togo in the African continent at rank 97, Jordan (75), Tajikistan, Pakistan at rank 108, Kuwait (83), China (31) and Nigeria (131)
- In 2015, India set a goal to join top 50 economies on ease of doing business ranking by 2020.
- The experts believe that resolving insolvency with the Bankruptcy law, tax reforms, trading across borders, initiatives like Make in India are the major reasons for the leap in the rank

### Ease of Doing Business

The ranking is framed based on 10 indices. It includes starting a business, registering a property, dealing with construction permits, getting credit, paying taxes, enforcing contracts, trading across borders, protecting investors, etc. The first set of ranking was prepared by the world Bank in 2003.

## India Pakistan sign Kartarpur Sahib Corridor Agreement

On October 24, 2019, India signed the Agreement with Pakistan for the operationalization of the Kartarpur Sahib Corridor at Zero Point, International Boundary. The representatives from Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Home Affairs and the representatives from Punjab Government were present during the ceremony.

### About Kartarpur Sahib Corridor

To celebrate the occasion of 550th Birth anniversary of Sri Guru Nanak the Indian Government passed a resolution in November 2018 for the construction of Kartarpur Sahib Corridor. The 4.2 km corridor connects the Dera Baba Nanak in the Indian side with the Kartarpur Sahib Gurdwara in Pakistan

### Highlights of the agreement

- Every Indian pilgrim of all faiths and persons of Indian origin can use the corridor
- The travel is Visa free and the pilgrims have to carry a valid passport alone
- The persons of Indian origin are required to carry the OCI card
- The corridor will remain open from dawn to dusk. However, pilgrims have to return on the same day

The main issue that still prevails is that Pakistan is to levy 20 USD as service charge per pilgrim per visit. India had consistently urged Pakistan not to levy charges. India still went ahead and signed the agreement.

The prakashpur550.mha.gov.in has gone live on October 24, 2019 for the pilgrims to register. The pilgrims are to be provided with Electronic Travel Authorization on registration that they need to carry when they

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arrive at the Passenger Terminal Building.

## China constructing a huge Observatory to probe origins of Cosmic Rays

The Chinese scientists are constructing a huge cosmic ray observation station that is equivalent to 200 soccer fields in Sichuan province. The observatory is located 4,400 meters above sea level.

### Key Facts

- The rocks from Ice Age were blasted for the construction
- Three huge underground pools more than triple the size of Aquatic centers are to hold the detectors. The detectors collect high energy photons generated by remote celestial bodies
- Around 12 telescopes are to be erected to conduct high-precision measurement of cosmic rays
- The observatory is named as "Large High-Altitude Air Shower Observatory" (LHAASO). The project is to be completed by 2020.
- The main objective of the observatory is to study the origin of cosmic rays, their acceleration and transmission mechanism.
- Research teams from Australia and Thailand are directly participating in the project.

Significance

Cosmic Rays are atom fragments that rain down on the surface of the earth from the outer space. The study on Cosmic rays are important as they carry source of information about the origin of the universe. The cosmic rays can also be used for applications outside astronomy. In 2017, a team of scientists found a void at the The Great Pyramid of Giza using cosmic rays.

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# October 25, 2019

## Guidelines for evaluation of Nano Pharmaceuticals released

Ministry of Science and Technology issued the "Guidelines for the Evaluation of Nano pharmaceuticals in India" on October 24, 2019. This is the most crucial step for delineating quality, safety and efficacy assessment of the novel nano formulations. The guidelines are important as they help to provide predictable regulatory pathways and transparency for nano pharmaceuticals in India.

The guidelines were framed by the inter-ministerial expert committee constituted by Department of Biotechnology in May 2019.

### Key points of the Guidelines

- The impact of nano material waste disposal on environment should be declared
- The guidelines have been prepared for finished formulation and API-Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients.
- It makes it compulsory for the pharma companies to present the data on how the plasma, off-target tissue and disease sites are affected by repeated dosing
- It provides guidelines for animal toxicology data. It allows the toxicology studies to be performed only on rodent species and dogs in both the sexes.
- The guidelines have been provided for information on the ingredients, physio chemical characterization data on nano pharmaceuticals, waste disposals, nano carriers, stability studies and analytical method validations.

### Significance

- The guidelines will help to facilitate transitional research in line with regulatory requirements.
- It will help in making decision in clearing new products based on nano technology
- It will help to initiate activities for developing safety guidelines for other domains like agri-inputs, cosmetics, implantable devices, etc
- As the regulatory system of nano pharmaceuticals are strengthened it would attract private investments.

## Global Bio-India Summit, 2019

The Global Bio-India summit is to be held for the first time in India between November 21 and November 23, 2019. It is being organized by BIRAC and DBT of Ministry of Science and Technology. The purpose of the summit is to attract investments, showcase the country's indigenous strengths and aspirations.

### Significance

- Biotech is identified as one of the key sectors in Make in India 2.0.

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- The event is planned to bring in stakeholders of 30 countries together.
- It will include 200 exhibitors and 250 startups. The Central and state regulatory bodies are also participating in the summit. On the whole, around 3500 participators are expected
- Biotechnology and its contributions are important for India in achieving its 5 trillion USD target.
- Biotechnology is also one of the thrust areas for driving GDP growth of the country.

### Key Objectives of the Summit

- To identify funding and collaboration opportunities for research and Development
- To attract major projects from international companies
- To discuss policy interventions and key trends across the sub sectors like bio-agriculture, bio-energy, bio-industrial, bio-manufacturing, bio-services, etc.

To facilitate interactions of research institutions with industry

## World Bank: Integrated Irrigation Project for Climate resilient Agriculture in Odisha

The Government of Odisha and the World Bank have signed 165 million USD loan agreement to strengthen smallholder farmers. The aim of the loan is to implement "Integrated Irrigation Project for Climate Resilient Agriculture".

The loan will help strengthen the resilience of the farmer production and to improve the marketing of their produce. The scheme will be implemented in rural areas that are largely rain fed and vulnerable to droughts

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### Key Features

- The scheme is to benefit 125,000 smallholder farmers from 15 districts of Odisha
- It aims to cover 128,000 hectares of land.
- The project aims to strengthen the resilience of the small holder farmers against adverse climate. It will help to improve access to resilient seed varieties, diversify towards climate resilient crops. It also aims at improving access to better water management and irrigation services.
- The project will also support rehabilitation of 532 water tanks and irrigate 91,435 hectares of land.

### Aim of the project

The main objective of the project is to support farmers to reduce the current emphasis on food grains, especially paddy and wheat. The project will help to increase the share of high-value and more nutritious products like fruits and vegetables

### Significance

The scheme will help to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. It is one of the major objectives of the GoI's National Action Plan on Climate Change that largely includes adaptation of climate-smart agricultural practices and technologies.

The frequency of drought in the state has increased to one in five years to one in two years since 2009. In 2019, about 70% of the agricultural land in Odisha are prone to droughts as compared to 40% in 1970s.

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## CBSE, NCERT to launch 'Tamanna' aptitude test for Class 9, 10 students

Under the aegis of Union Ministry of Human Resource Development, the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) have launched an online aptitude test dubbed as 'Tamanna' (Try And Measure Aptitude And Natural Abilities) in a bid to help students make right career choices.

### What is Tamanna?

It is an aptitude test for Senior School Students to enable stakeholders knowing the aptitude of students of Classes 9 and 10. It aims to help students of Class 9 and Class 10 make a better choice of subjects, and eventually help them in making an informed decision while choosing subjects in Class 11 and 12. However, there is no pass or fail in this test as Tamanna only provides information about the weaknesses and strengths of students.

**CBSE (Know your aptitude) KYA exam** will assess a student's strengths and weaknesses in academics. The test should be taken voluntarily by interested students and must not be used to impose any subject, courses of study and/or vocations etc. on students. CBSE initially conducted piloting of test with 17,000 students of Class 9 and 10 across India.

**CBSE KYA registration process:** As per CBSE circular, the registration process for KYA will begin from 29

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January 2020 on CBSE's official website – *cbse.nic.in*. Students can appear for the test on any working day, by using school's log-in id.

CBSE has also availed a test manual in which details about use of aptitude test, dimensions measured in test, construction and standardization of test, administration and scoring and understanding meaning of aptitude test scores are available.

## Indian Railway launches one touch ATVM

On October 24, 2019, the Indian Railways launched the "one touch ATVM" at 42 suburban stations. The purpose of the service is to render fast ticketing to millions of commuters, especially in the Mumbai Suburban Network.

### Features

- The machine will reduce wasting time of the passengers.
- It will greatly ease the load on ticketing system of Mumbai Suburban Network.
- The features of the one touch ATVM is that a passenger can obtain ticket in two steps. Earlier machines had 6 steps
- The machine will also provide platform tickets.

### About ATVM

- ATVM are Automatic Ticket Vending Machines. They work on Linux software.
- The machines operate on a smart card. The card is to be placed on a slot and the user has to select the route and destination. The machine confirms the details and ticket is printed.
- The menu options are tri lingual.
- After issuance of the ticket, money is deducted from the card.

## Ministry of Home Affairs releases Data on Police Organizations

The Ministry of home Affairs on October 24, 2019, released the Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D). The data are being updated to date 01.01.2018.

The report is important for various police analyses and resource allocation in Ministry of Home Affairs as well as at the state level.

### Highlights of the report

- Since 2017, there has been increase in Police personnel. Their numbers have increased by 19,686. Also, the strength of CAPF (Central Armed Police Forces) has increased by 16,051.
- The women police strength has increased by 20.95%. Today there are 1,69,550 women police personnel working in different ranks.
- The expenditure spent on training the police personnel has increased by 20.41%
- The Police Population Ratio (PPR) stood at 192.95 policemen per lakh population.
- Around 20,149 family quarters have been constructed for the police personnel
- The Police stations have increased from 15579 to 16422.
- The Cyber Police stations have increased from 84 to 120
- Around 2,10,278 new CCTV cameras have been installed for surveillance

## GIA presents 'Report from Ground Zero' on J&K, Ladakh

A delegation of Group of Intellectuals and Academicians (GIA) presented a '*Report from Ground Zero*' on Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh after setting aside of Article 370 & 35A to Dr Jitendra Singh, Minister of State (MoS) in PMO.

The delegation briefed Minister about findings of their observations after field study of situation in Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh. The briefings included that common man across religions, sections and various professional backgrounds in J&K has expressed happiness about the decision of Government to scrap Article 370.

### About Group of Intellectuals and Academicians

GIA was founded in 2015. It is a group of empowered professional Indian women and entrepreneurs, media persons, intellectuals & academicians working together to elevate the position of women in our society, committed to work in service of nation.

**Objective**: To become the voice of most silent and underprivileged section of our nation with legal and academic support.

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**Composition**: National leaders, distinguished lawyers of Supreme Court, industrialists, sportswomen, writers, poets, President Awardees, principals of colleges, professors of prestigious institutions, directors of institutes, internationally renowned artists/dancers, IT professionals and many others from various fields.

## Govt. approves raising of 2 operational commands for ITBP at Chandigarh and Guwahati

Cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved a full cadre review for the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP). This has resulted in creation of more than 3,000 new posts and raising of two operational commands for ITBP that guards Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China.

### Key Highlights

The decision comes on the eve of **ITBP's 58th Raising Day** observed every year on 24 October. The new commands are expected to be in place by 2020 and will help in effective domination and control of LAC that is marred by harsh weather and high-altitude locations.

Union government has cleared an about-1.5-year-old proposal of the force. The cadre review exercise of ITBP has been conducted after 18 years, as the last review was done in 2001.

The review, for Group 'A' general duty (executive) cadre and non-general duty officials, will create more than 3,000 new posts, including 60 in top command. It will also allow raising two commands along 3,488-km-long LAC with China that force guards.

**Two New Commands**: Western command to be based at Chandigarh and Eastern command at Guwahati, Assam. It will be headed by Additional Director General (ADG)-rank officers and will have several frontiers under them that will oversee troops and battalion deployments along China front, starting from Ladakh to Arunachal Pradesh. This command structure would allow better planning of operations as well as resource mobilisation in times of peace and war.

In 2019, Union government had moved the North West (NW) frontier of ITBP from Chandigarh to Leh for better dominance of front. The frontier is headed by an Inspector General-rank officer who is equivalent to a Major General of Indian Army.

### About Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP)

It is one of the seven Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) of India under the authority of Union Ministry of Home Affairs. It was raised in the wake of the Sino-Indian War (1962) on 24 October 1962 under the CRPF Act. It was intended for deployment along India and Tibet border.

## Sakharov Prize: Jailed Uighur intellectual Ilham Tohti wins

The European Union (EU) Parliament awarded the 'Sakharov Prize for Human Rights' to Uighur intellectual Ilham Tohti (49), who has been jailed and sentenced to life imprisonment in China for "separatism". The award was announced by European Parliament head David Sassoli, who also urged China to immediately release Ilham Tohti as well as called for the respect of minority rights in China.

### About The Sakharov Prize

It is awarded by the European Union (EU) Parliament annually for free speech. It was constituted in memory of Soviet physicist and dissident Andrei Sakharov.

**Previous Winners**: Cuban dissident Guillermo Farinas (2010), Pakistani schoolgirl and girl education campaigner Malala Yousafzai (2013) and two Yazidi women who escaped Islamic State (2016).

### About Ilham Tohti

He was a former Professor of economics at a Beijing university. In 2014, he was sentenced to life in prison following a show trial. He has worked for more than 20 years on the situation of Uighur minority and on fostering inter-ethnic dialogue and understanding in China.

In September 2019 he also won another of Europe's top human rights awards called '***Vaclav Havel prize***', for "giving the entire Uighur people a voice". He was also nominated by US lawmakers for 'Nobel Peace Prize', amid growing scrutiny of China's treatment of Uighurs.

## India, Bhutan, Nepal: Trans Border Conservation Park

A Memorandum of Understanding has been drafted by India, Nepal and Bhutan to create a trans-boundary wildlife conservation park. The park will include bio-diversity rich landscapes

### Significance

Unlike other parks that are species oriented, this peace park will be landscape oriented. Such a kind

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already exists in Manas park region. However, only a part of the trans-boundary protected area in India and Bhutan is being conserved based on the landscape. In the new peace park, the entire park will have its conservation protocols completely based on landscape.

### About the park

- The park will be an extension of the Manas park
- The initiative was started by India keeping in view the migratory wildlife species in the region, especially elephants.

### Manas National Park

- Manas National Park is a UNESCO Natural World Heritage site, Project tiger reserve and a biosphere reserve.
- The park is contiguous with the Royal Manas National Park of Bhutan.
- It is home to many endangered species like Assam roofed turtle, golden Langur, hispid hare, pygmy hog.
- The park is famous for its wild water buffaloes
- It is located on the Manas river, a major tributary of Brahmaputra

## PM Modi to visit Saudi for Future Investment Initiative

On October 29, 2019, the Prime Minister Modi is to attend the third session of Future Investment Initiative Forum in Saudi Arabia. The PM will deliver a keynote address at the forum. He will also meet the Saudi king Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud. He will hold delegation level talks with Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman

### Highlights

- During his visit, India and Saudi Arabia will sign a raft of key pacts to ramp up ties in several key sectors. It includes renewable energy, civil aviation and oil and gas.
- An India-Saudi Arabia Strategic Partnership Council will be launched
- Also, an MoU will be signed to roll out RuPay card, India's digital payment system and also a smart card to bring coordination between e-migration systems of the two countries
- The countries will also deliberate on enhancing defence and security cooperation during the 2-day visit of the PM. On the side lines of the agreement, a naval exercise between the two nations will be conducted by the end of this year.

### Significance

- Saudi Arabi is a key pillar of India's energy security. Around 17% of crude oil and 32% of LPG requirements of India are imported from Saudi Arabia
- The trade between the countries amount to 27.48 billion USD (2017-18). The Indian exports to the country stood at 22.06 billion USD while the imports were 5.41 billion USD.
- Recently the Saudi crown prince visited India in February 2019. Following his visit, Saudi Arabia agreed to release 200 Indian prisoners and also agreed to increase the number of pilgrims performing Hajj to 200,000 per year.

### Future Investment Initiative (FII)

FII is an annual investment forum organized by the Public Investment Fund of Saudi Arabia. It was begun in 2017. The first event announced the launch of NEOM, a 500 billion USD economic zone in north west of Saudi Arabia.

## Govt. accords 'Maharatna' status to Power Grid Corp, HPCL

Government of India has accorded 'Maharatna' status to public sector undertaking's (PSU's) Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) and Power Grid Corporation. Two separate orders to this effect were issued by Department of Public Enterprises, under Union Ministry of Heavy Industry and Public Enterprises.

### Key Highlights

The grant of Maharatna status to state-owned enterprises Hindustan Petroleum and Power Grid Corporation will impart greater operational and financial autonomy thus enhancing powers to their Boards to take financial decisions.

Boards of Maharatna PSU can make equity investments to undertake financial joint ventures (JV) and wholly owned subsidiaries and undertake mergers and acquisitions (M&A) in India as well as abroad. This

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is however subjected to a ceiling of 15% of net worth of concerned CPSE, limited to Rs 5,000 crore in one project.

The Boards can also structure and implement schemes relating to personnel as well as human resource management and training. They can also enter into technology JVs or other strategic alliances, among others.

Holding companies of a 'Maharatna' PSU are also empowered to float fresh equity, transfer assets, divest shareholding in subsidiaries, but are subjected to condition that the delegation will only be in respect of subsidiaries set up by holding company.

### Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) & Power Grid Corporation of India

It is an Indian oil and natural gas company which is headquartered at Mumbai, Maharashtra. It was incorporated in 1974 after the takeover and merger of erstwhile Esso Standard and Lube India. The merger was done through the Esso (Acquisition of Undertaking in India) Act passed by Parliament.

Power Grid Corporation of India Limited is state-owned Maharatna company. It is India's largest electric power transmission utility firm engaged mainly in Transmission of Power. It is a listed company since 2007 and is headquartered in Gurugram, Haryana.

## October 26, 2019

### 58th Raising Day of Indo-Tibetan Border Police

The Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) celebrated its 58th raising day on 24th October, 2019. The function was held at Greater Noida and was attended by Union Minister of state Home Kishan Reddy.

### ITBP

The ITBP is one of the seven Central armed forces that was raised on October 24, 1962 under the CRPF act. They were formed in the wake of Sino-Indian war in 1962. On the whole there are 56 service battalion and specialist battalions that constitute ITBP.

### Current Status

Today, the ITBP is deployed in guarding duties. They guard the Karakoram Pass in Ladakh to Jachep La in Arunachal Pradesh. This covers over 3,488 km in the delicate and porous Indo-china border. They are also manning border outposts on altitudes ranging between 9,000 and 18,700 feet in the Western, Easter and Southern sectors of Indo-China border.

ITBP is a specialized mountain force. Most of the officers in the unit are professionally trained mountaineers and skiers. They are the first responders of natural disasters. They carry out numerous rescue operations and relief operations across the country.

### UNEP's Colombo Declaration to tackle global nitrogen challenges

On October 24, 2019, the member states of United Nations endorsed a proposed road map for action on nitrogen challenges called Colombo Declaration on Sustainable Nitrogen Management. It was organized by Sri Lanka with the support of UN and its member nations. A two-day event was conducted to frame the declaration

### Highlights

- The aim of the Declaration is to halve nitrogen waste by 2030
- Environment ministers and officials from more than 30 countries attended the event
- The event endorsed UN plans for a campaign called "Nitrogen for Life". The campaign aims at sustainable management of Nitrogen. It is based on the Sustainable Management Resolution that was adopted during the fourth session of the UN Environment Assembly that was held in Nairobi, Kenya in March 2019
- The Declaration was developed with technical support from International Nitrogen Management System (INMS). INMS is a joint activity of UNEP and Internationals Nitrogen Initiative

### Significance

There is need to reduce reactive nitrogen. This will help to reduce Eutrophic zones that are affecting fishing and tourism.

Reactive Nitrogen is the scientific term used for nitrogen compounds like nitrogen oxides, nitrous oxide, ammonia, etc. Most of them are result of intensive farming and misuse of fertilizers. These compounds enter Nitrogen Cycle. Excess reactive nitrogen affects environment very badly. They make the

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underground water unfit for drinking. They leach out the soil and pollute aquatic ecosystems. As they reach the aquatic eco systems they promote growth of algae extensively leading to eutrophication.

## Vigilance Awareness Week

Last week of October is observed as Vigilance Awareness Week under the aegis of Central Vigilance Commission (CVC). This year, the week falls from 28th October, 2019 to 2nd November, 2019.

**Theme: Integrity-a way of life.**

The week is to be launched with an Integrity-pledge of the staff and officers of the ministry to fight against corruption

### Significance

The CVC observes Vigilance Awareness week every year to promote transparency, integrity and accountability. The observance creates increased awareness among the public and encourages the stakeholders to participate in the fight against corruption.

### Highlights

- During the week long campaign, activities like public interaction for redress of grievances, debates among students, surprise inspections, poster competitions, essay writing, quiz, paining competitions will be conducted.
- Also workshops for employees and other stakeholders on preventive vigilance measures will be conducted.
- Organize human chains in villages and towns
- Display banners and posters in prominent locations and also places with public interface (Railway station, petrol pumps, etc.)
- Organize awareness programs in Gram Sabhas and in Gram Panchayats.

The aim of the programs is to motivate and sensitize the officers and staff to remain vigilant and transparent in their work.

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## Rudrashila-The White-Water Rafting Expedition

On 25 October, 2019, at the Jodhpur Military station, the white-water rafting expedition called the "Rudrashila" was flagged in by Lt General VS Sreenivas. It was undertaken by the Kalidhar Battalion. The aim of the expedition is to prepare the soldiers to overcome adversities with grit and determination. The team will also spread awareness on social issues of "Swachh Bharat" campaign and "Preservation of river eco-system"

The expedition will be led by Major Ravi Kant Gaurav. Two officers, four junior officers and 18 soldiers will raft a total distance of 140 km. The expedition will start from Rudhraprayag and end in Rishikesh. It is considered to be the most difficult and dangerous rapids in the mighty Ganges river.

### Rudrashila

The name Rudrashila is framed from the Rudraprayag tributary of the Ganges river. It originates in the mountains of Uttarkhand

### Kalidhar Battalion

The force was formed in November 1943. It has participated in many of major army operations. Also, it was assigned two overseas assignments namely Korea assignment in 1953 and UN peace keeping mission in Congo in 2005.

## Lucknow-based school enters Guinness Book of World Records

Lucknow-based City Montessori School (CMS) has won the Guinness World Record for becoming the **'world's largest school'** *in terms of strength of students.*

City Montessori School (CMS) has won the global award for having largest number of students in 2019-20. At present, the CMS has 18 branches and approximately 56,000 students all over the city.

### About City Montessori School (CMS)

It is a co-educational English medium private school that offers education from Pre-school up to Grade 12 level in Lucknow. It is affiliated to Council for Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE) and Cambridge Assessment International Education (CAIE).

In 2014 CMS society was accredited with United Nations Department of Public Information as affiliated NGO. In 2002 CMS was awarded UNESCO Prize for Peace Education. The school has also received 'Hope of

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Humanity' Award from spiritual leader, Dalai Lama.

## Indians no longer require Visa to visit Brazil

Indian tourists will be now be exempted from visas to enter Brazil for tourism or business purposes. The exemption is also available for Chinese tourists. Both India and China are part of BRICS, an association of 5 major emerging national economies. Other three are Brazil, Russia and South Africa.

### Key Highlights

South American nation will drop its requirement that visiting Indian and Chinese tourists or business people must compulsorily obtain visas.

The announcement in this regard was made by Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro during an official visit to China. He also clarified that there will be no reciprocity in the beginning. This was the first time Brazilian government has expanded that policy to the developing world.

In early 2019 the Brazilian government ended visa requirements for short-term tourists and business people from United States, Canada, Australia and Japan. However, these countries have not in return dropped their visa requirements for Brazilian citizens.

## DEFCOM 2019 to be held in New Delhi

The DEFCOM 2019 is scheduled to be held on 26 and 27 November 2019 at Manekshaw Centre, New Delhi. The curtain raiser ceremony for event was held on 22 October 2019 at India Habitat Centre (IHC) New Delhi. DEFCOM 2019 will seek to deliberate on theme, **'***Communications as a Decisive Catalyst for Jointness***'**.

### About DEFCOM

It is a landmark symposium for collaboration between Indian armed forces, academia and industry, research and development organisations, and the Industry on aspects pertaining to Information and Communications Technology (ICT).

DEFCOM seminar is jointly organised by *Corps of Signals* and *Confederation of Indian Industry* (CII).

The seminar stresses on the need for the three services to be able to seamlessly communicate with each other from strategic to tactical level.

Over the years, most crucial role played by DEFCOM was in promoting collaboration between armed forces and industry in Information and Communications Technology (ICT) domain.

## Odisha launches 'Odisha Mo Parivar' initiative

Chief Minister of Odisha and Biju Janata Dal (BJD) supremo Naveen Patnaik launched a social service initiative of the party dubbed as 'Odisha-Mo Parivar' (Odisha, my family). The initiative is aimed at encouraging environment protection, blood donation and the welfare of Odias in distress.

### About 'Odisha Mo Parivar'

Under the programme, BJD party leaders will dedicate themselves to protect environment and undertake massive plantation drive of trees by creating awareness among people about environment protection. Apart from 4.5 crore Odias, the 'Odisha-Mo Parivar' programme' will also come to the rescue of Odias stranded in foreign countries.

The programme will be transformed into a social movement just like BJD's success in its blood donation programme called **'Jeevan Bindu**'.

The initiative is a tribute to late Biju Patnaik (former Chief minister of Odisha), who had always been working for welfare of Odisha people and lending support to poor and needy people. Following the footprints of legendary leader, the BJD is committed to serve the State.

**Major focus areas of initiative**

- Environment,
- Health Care Services
- Assistance to poor and deprived people

CM Naveen Patnaik has appointed **Arup Patnaik**, former Mumbai Police Commissioner and BJD leader as convenor of programme for its implementation., five other BJD leaders as co-convenors and several party leaders as members of the programme.

## Study: Traffic Noise affects physiology and reproductive health of birds

The Study published in the Conservation Biology Journal noted that the chicks of birds that were exposed to noise were smaller than the ones in quiet nests. On the whole 88 birds were put under observation.

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They were split into two group. One half were bred in noisy environment and the other half were bred in no noise environment.

### Highlights of the study

- The research team recorded the level of stress before, after and during the breeding period. Also, the measure of functioning of birds' immune system, reproductive system and the growth rate of the chicks were monitored.
- The study revealed that birds in constant traffic had lower levels of corticosterone hormone. This was surprising as stress often resulted in higher level of hormones. According to the researchers, the low level of hormones was mainly due to an adopted natural defence mechanism that ensures that the corticosterone levels do not affect the immune system
- The chicks that whose parents were exposed to noise were smaller in size than those from parents that were bred in quiet environments.

The entire study suppressed other factors affecting the bird population like air pollution, chemicals, light pollution, etc. The study was conducted on the basis of traffic disturbances alone.

## Bio Bricks from Agri waste

The researchers from IIT Hyderabad and School of Architecture, Bhubaneswar have developed bio-bricks from agricultural waste. The product serves dual purposes of development of eco-friendly sustainable material and also waste management.

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### The Process

- The Bagasse from agricultural waste is chopped to desired size.
- A lime-based slurry is prepared.
- The chopped agro-waste is added to the slurry and mixed thoroughly using a mixer to form a homogenous mixture.
- The mixture is then poured into the molds.
- The molds are then rammed with wooden blocks to create compact bricks.
- The bricks attain strength after a month of air drying.

### Significance

- The bricks are made from agro-waste like wheat straw, paddy straw, sugarcane bagasse and cotton plant.
- Bio-bricks are more sustainable than clay bricks.
- They also act as carbon sinks as they fix more carbon dioxide than they produce during their lifecycle.
- The bricks also provide good insulation to heat and sound
- They help in maintaining humidity of buildings and make the house more suitable for hot-humid climates.

The bricks will help in building climate change resilient homes. In India as 84 to 141 million tons of agricultural wastes are burnt causing severe air pollution, these steps help in reducing these incidents.

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# October 27, 2019

## ISRO to launch 14 small satellites

In next 2 months, ISRO will launch 14 small foreign satellites in its next three PSLVs (Polar Satellite Launch Vehicles). The projects are to be implemented by November and December.

### Highlights

- The payloads are to be launched in three PSLV flights namely PSLV-C47, PSLV-C48, PSLV-C49.
- The Indian payload Cartosat-3 will be the primary payload of PSLV-C47. The Cartosat satellites are a series of Indian earth observatory satellites built and operated by ISRO. The Cartosat-3 is a remote sensing satellite.
- So far ISRO has launched 300 small satellites to low earth orbits for foreign customers.

### Small Satellite

The small satellites weigh around 500 kg. These satellites reduce large economic costs of launch vehicles. They are of lower cost, more frequent, quicker and offer broader access to space. They are primarily used for communication, research, meteorology and insurance.

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The small satellites are mini-satellites, micro-satellites and nano-satellites.

### ISRO's Nano-satellites

The INS-ISRO Nano Satellites have capability to carry up to 3 kg. The primary objective of the INS is to provide an opportunity to carry payloads for universities and R&D laboratories. They also provide an opportunity for ISRO technology demonstration payloads.

## PM Modi to meet Germany's Merkel

German Chancellor Angela Merkel is to visit India on November 1, 2019 for the fifth biennial Inter Governmental Consultations. She will meet PM Modi during her visit. The leaders will have separate engagement with the CEOs and business nations of both nations. The countries will discuss deepening of cooperation in traditional sectors like skill development, energy and transport

### Significance

- The Chancellor will be accompanied by several ministers and state secretaries of Federal Government
- Germany is India's largest trading partner in Europe. In 2018-19, the Indian exports were 8.9 billion USD. The imports from the country in the same year were 15.16 billion USD.
- There are more than 1,700 German companies working in Germany
- There are over 600 Indo-German joint ventures in operation
- The German investments in India are predominantly in the sectors of electrical equipment, transportation, metallurgical industries, chemicals, trading, construction activity, automobiles and trading.

## Gandhinagar becomes Gujarat's first kerosene free district.

On October 25, 2019, Union Minister Amit Shah allocated 1000 LPG connections to women in Gandhinagar district of Gujarat. This makes Gandhinagar first district in Gujarat to become kerosene-free.

### Highlights

- The cooking gas was allotted to the women as a part of Ujjwala Yojana. The scheme has covered more than 75,000 beneficiaries at a cost of 6.13 crore rupees
- The home minister also handed over 480 middle income group houses in the same event
- Also, drinking water schemes were launched locally for the areas like Kudasan, Raysan, Sargasan in the district
- The minister laid foundation stones for development projects that includes underpass and two roads.
- A control center was inaugurated by the minister. The center will distribute beneficiary cards for the schemes of old age persons, widow women and Ayushman Bharat beneficiaries.

### Kerosene free states

Chandigarh became the first city to become kerosene free. Government has been making plans since 2016 to reduce the usage of kerosene all over the country. The subsidies to kerosene will be completely removed by 2020. By 2018, over 8 states and Union Territories in the country became kerosene free namely Puducherry, Daman-Diu, Dadra Nagar Haveli, Andhra Pradesh, Chandigarh, Delhi, Haryana and Punjab.

## Basic ministerial meet on climate change

The 29th ministerial meet of BASIC countries was held at Beijing between October 25-26, 2019. The BASIC countries include Brazil, South Africa, India and China.

### Highlights of the meet

- The ministers emphasized comprehensive implementation of Paris agreement. They also underlined the importance of effective and sustained implementation of United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).
- The countries announced their implementations of climate actions as follows
    - China reduced its carbon dioxide emissions by 45.8% from 2005 level
    - India achieved its 21% reduction plan in 2014 as compared to 2005.
    - In 2015, Brazil achieved its 58% emission reduction
    - South Africa has launched carbon tax and has reduced its consumption by 14.3%
- The countries also upheld multi lateralism and expressed their willingness to nature-based solutions, innovation and technology

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- They appreciated Polish Presidency contribution to the Paris Agreement Work Program. They also appreciated Costa Rica for hosting the upcoming Pre-COP25
- They underlined their commitment to NDCs
- The reiterated that a balanced allocation of funds towards Green Climate Funds should be made by the developed countries for adaptation and mitigation

### BASIC countries

The BASIC countries are the block of Brazil, India, China and South Africa formed based on an agreement in 2009. They committed to act jointly at the Copenhagen Climate Summit. The countries announced plans and targets accordingly. The grouping also agreed to provide technical aid to G77 countries.

## Postal ballot for disabled & voters aged above 80

On the recommendation of Election Commission, the Union Ministry of Law and Justice has amended **Conduct of Election Rules, 1961,** on October 22 that will now allow senior citizens and person with disabilities (PwD) in absentee voter list. The absentee voter refers to a vote cast by someone who is unable to go to polling station.

### Key Highlights

The disabled and people with more than 80 years of age can now cast their vote through postal ballot. This will enable people from these two categories to cast their votes with ease and will also thus increase voter turnout.

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In both these categories there are people who are unable to reach polling stations and thus are unable to cast their votes. Currently voting through postal ballot is available to Indian armed forces and to those assigned poll duties.

The poll officer will attest absentee voter in case of senior citizens and PwDs in form 13A.

In 2019 Lok Sabha elections, about 60.14% of absentee voters voted through e-postal ballot while in the general election during 2014 this figure was just 4%.

## First-ever Ladakh Literature Festival

Ladakh administration is organizing the first-ever Ladakh Literature festival. The three day Literature Festival is being organized from 29 to 31 October 2019. At venues like historic *Leh palace* and *Central Asian Museum* the Ladakh Literature Festival will now be held annually.

### Ladakh Literature Festival Highlights

**Objective**: To celebrate the uniqueness of the region in the fields of Literature, Art and Culture.

The first-ever Ladakh Literature Festival is going to witness transformation of Ladakh from a division to Union Territory (UT). During the festival the screenings of Ladakhi films, discussions on Heritage and presentations on History and Archeology of Ladakh will take place.

To attract the visitors of all age groups, different programmes are planned. To provide an opportunity to women, children and youth to participate in three day Ladakh Literature Festival several competitions and events such as Calligraphy, Culinary art are also incorporated.

Along with local artists, literary personalities, historians, musicians and senior IAS officers who turned authors such as Anil Swarup, Parvez Dewan and Dr MK Ranjith Sinh are also participating in festival.

# October 28, 2019

## President Trump: IS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi is dead

On October 27, 2019, USA president Donald Trump announced that the Islamic State leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi died in a raid conducted by US special forces in north western Syria. According to the announcement, Baghdadi killed himself by detonating a suicide vest. He died running into a dead-end tunnel. He ignited the vest killing himself and his three children. His body was mutilated by the blasts.

### Islamic State

The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria also known as Daesh gained global prominence in 2014 when it drove Iraqi government forces out of the key cities in Iraq. The group was designated terrorist organization by the United Nations as well as by many other individual countries. It was widely known for its beheadings and other type of executions of soldiers, civilians and destruction of cultural heritage sites. It was also committed to ethnic cleansing on an unprecedented scale in Northern Iraq.

### Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi

Baghdadi headed Islamic State between 2013 and 2019. He was an Iraqi born militant who was designated

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Global terrorist by United States. In 2011, a reward was 10 million USD was announced for information about his whereabouts and it was increased to 27 million USD in 2017. He was born in a tribal group known as Al-Bu-Badri tribe.

## Kanya Sumangala Yojana

The Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi Adityanath launched flagship scheme "Mukhya Mantri Kanya Sumangala Yojana". It was launched in Lucknow for the state of Uttar Pradesh. Smriti Irani, the Union Minister was present in the occasion.

### Key Features of the scheme

- The scheme will provide Rs 15,000 to every family where a girl child is born. It will be released in a phased manner.
- The design of the scheme is in such a way that the parents will have to take care of the girl child with proper care with respect to her health and education in order to get the benefit
- The funds will be released when the girl child completes various milestones like vaccination, admission to class 1, 5, 9 and graduation.
- The Kanya Sumangala web portal was also launched along with the scheme.
- The launch of the scheme was conferred with symbolic cheques and certificated to some of the beneficiaries.
- Around 1.25 lakh registrations had already been initiated under the scheme. The girl child born after April 1, 2019 are eligible for the fund.

## ASI finds 2,000-year-old trade center in Andhra Pradesh

The ASI (Archaeological Survey of India) recently discovered that the present-day state of Andhra Pradesh had a maritime center near the banks of Swarnamukhi river around 2,000 years ago.

### Highlights

- The excavations were performed at the state's Gottiprolu that began in December, 2018.
- The ASI unearthed brick-built structures in varied shapes. The sizes of the bricks were common in the Satavahana/Ikshvaku period of the Krishna valley.
- Also, the team unearthed four armed sculptures of Lord Vishnu. The sculpture belongs to Pallava period according to the analysis of headgear and drapery.
- Also, a series of broken terracotta pipes were found. This suggests that the period had a good system of drainage.
- So far, the ASI has excavated about 10% of the site in the first round. The second round is set to begin in November or December, 2019.

### Swarnamukhi river

- The river is located in southern India
- The Kalyani Dam is constructed across the river at Tirupati city. The shrines Tirupati and Kalahasti are located in the banks of the river.

## UPI to be launched globally after hitting One Billion transactions in October

The Government of India in its major boost towards cash less digital economy launched the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) channel. The transactions through the channel has reached One Billion in the month of October

### Highlights

- The milestone has been achieved after three years of launch of technology backed payments solution. The system was built by National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)
- The platform is one of the fastest growing initiatives of GoI and also the fastest adoption among all other payment systems anywhere in the world.
- The system is to be taken to the global market. The plan is to be executed by NPCI. The team will first launch UPI in Singapore and then in UAE.

### UPI

The UPI was launched before demonetization in 2016. It enables the users to send money from their account to any account without entering bank details. The transactions in UPI are made using email ids and QR codes. The main objective behind the launch of UPI was to promote digital payments.

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## World Guinness Record for lighting 4 lakh diyas

On October 26, 2019, in the city of Ayodhya 4 lakh earthen lamps were lit along the banks of Sarayu river. The event was organized by the Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi Adityanath. It was the third and largest Deepotsav in Ayodhya after he came to power.

Last year around 3 lakh lamps were lit. The lamp lighting festival comes ahead of SC judgement on Ram Jan Bhoomi.

### Guinness Record

The Guinness World Record begun in 1955. It is a book of World Records that is published annually listing human achievements and extremes of natural world. It is published in 100 countries in 23 languages.

### Sarayu river

The river flows through the Indian states of Uttar Pradesh and Uttarkhand. It is formed at the confluence of rivers karnali and mahakali. It is a tributary of River Ganges. At Ayodhya, the birth place of Lord Ram devotees take dip in the Sarayu river. The river has spiritual significance and is well related to epic Ramayan.

## India approaches ICAO

India has approached the world body ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organization) after Pakistan denied permission for PM Modi to use its air space. The overflight clearances are granted by other countries according to ICAO guidelines.

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PM Modi is to visit Saudi Arabia to attend the Future Investment Initiative. In September 2019, Pakistan rejected India's plea to allow PM Modi's flight to use its air space. It had also refused to allow President Ram Nath Kovind to use its airspace in the same month for his visit to Iceland.

Pakistan completely closed its airspace to India after Indian Air Force strikes on Jaish0e-Mohammed terror camp in Balakot.

### ICAO

ICAO is International Civil Aviation Organization. It is an UN specialized agency that was established in 1944 to manage governance and administration of Convention on International Civil Aviation (Chicago Convention).

The organization classifies the principles and techniques of international air navigation. It also plans and develops international air transport to ensure safety and security.

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# October 29, 2019

## Aarambh: First ever foundation civil service course

The GoI has launched the first ever common foundation course called the "Aarambh" for civil servants at the Statue of Unity, Kevadia, Gujarat. Around 500 newly recruited bureaucrats will undergo six-day training. The World Bank president David Malpass addressed the probationers near the statue on 27th October, 2019.

The event is to be launched on October 31, 2019. PM Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah and other top functionaries will attend the event.

### Highlights

- The GoI also launched the "Nurture the Future" at the event.
  - Under this program the civil servants will be divided into teams to visit villages in Kevadia
  - Each probationer will take a youth under his wing, provide career and professional guidance

### Significance

- The initiative will ensure better and brighter future for the youth
- The initiative will cover one lakh youth in next five years

### Statue of Unity

- The Statue of Unity is a colossal statue of Sardar Vallabhai Patel
- It is the world's tallest statue with a height of 182 meters
- It is located in the Narmada river.
- Sir Patel is highly respected for his leadership in uniting 552 princely states of India

## Drink From Tap Mission: Odisha Govt. inks LoU with UNICEF

The state government of Odisha has signed a Letter of Understanding (LoU) with UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) to provide safe drinking water to every household in the state. The LoU was signed by

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state **housing and urban development department (HUDD)** to provide 24-hour safe drinking water. The project has been named as 'Drink from Tap Mission'.

### About 'Drink from Tap Mission'

The project is being undertaken with financial support from UNICEF, which will hopefully help in achieving state government's target.

**Implementation**: As providing safe drinking water to every household in the state is one of top priorities of Odisha government, the project will be launched on a pilot basis for about 1.2 lakh people involving 22,000 families in pockets of Puri and Khurda district of Odisha. The pilot project will also be implemented in five areas of Bhubaneswar and two areas of Puri and will be completed by March 2020. It will be extended to other parts of the state in next phases.

The women self-help groups (SHGs) will also be engaged and trained for the implementation of programme.

## Members of EU meet PM Modi; visit Kashmir

A 28-member delegation from European Union met PM Modi on October 28, 2019. The delegation will visit Kashmir on October 29, 1019. The delegation is to check on the reality of the situation in Kashmir. This is the first trip to the region by a foreign delegation after India revoked Article 370 and integrated Kashmir with the rest of the country. India rejected US 's plea to visit the region earlier in October.

### Highlights of PM's speech to the delegates

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- PM asserted that there should be Zero Tolerance for terrorism
- He also highlighted India's jump in Ease of Doing Business Index from 142$^{nd}$ rank in 2014 to 63 in 2019
- He mentioned about the success of swachh Bharat, Ayushman Bharat, India's commitment to eliminate TB by 2025

### Significance

- The delegation will get a clear understanding about the cultural and religious diversity of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh
- GoI's decision to allow a foreign delegation implies that situation is coming under control
- It will also take the wind out of the sails of Pakistan and Pakistan inspired anti-India liberal lobbies.
- As Europe is not in a position to wield the big power stick as that of US, experts believe that it is wise to let the EU first

## What is Open General Export Licence issued by Defence Minister?

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has approved issuance of two **Open General Export Licences (OGELs)** for export of certain parts and components as well as intra-company transfer of technology to select countries. This decision is expected to give a boost to defence exports and enhance ease of doing business (EDB).

### Key Highlights of OGEL

The OGEL is a one-time export licence to be granted to a company for a specific period which would initially be only two years.

The OGEL policy was formulated by DPP, following a demand by exporters and after holding extensive consultations with various stakeholders. Once formulated, the policy was submitted for Defence Minister's approval.

**Countries allowed under OGELs**: France, Belgium, Germany, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Mexico, Canada, Italy, Japan, Poland, UK and USA.

The application for grant of OGEL will be considered by Department of Defence Production, Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP) on a case-to-case basis. Export of items to a Special Economic Zone (SEZ) is not permitted.

The applicant is mandatory to have Import-Export certificate, for acquiring licences. The quarterly and end of the year reports on all transactions done under OGELs should be submitted to DPP for examination and post-export verification.

**Items permitted under OGEL includes:** components of fuse and ammunition setting device without energetic and explosive material, firing control and related warning equipment as well as body protective

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items. Complete aircraft or complete unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and any components specially designed/modified for UAVs are *excluded* under this licence.

**Condition**: The transfer of technology to permitted countries is subjected to condition that- export is an intra-company transfer either from an Indian subsidiary or applicant exporter to its foreign parent company and/or to the subsidiaries of the foreign parent company.

### India's Defence Export

India has made significant strides in improving its defence exports and these have grown seven fold over last 2 years and reached to Rs.10,500 crore rupees in 2018-19. This has been made possible due to the reforms brought in standard operating procedure (SOPs) and ushering in a portal for online clearance of applications. Moreover, the processing time has been brought down significantly.

## Indo-French Joint Exercise Shakti 2019

The joint military exercise of India and French troops is to be held between 31st October 2019 and 13th November 2019. It is a biennial exercise conducted alternately in India and France. The exercise is to be conducted at the Foreign Training Node at Mahajan Field Firing Range, Rajasthan.

A contingent of Sikh regiment of South Western command will represent Indian army in the exercise.

### Highlights

- The exercise will focus on Counter Terrorism operations in a semi-desert terrain under United Nations Mandate
- It will focus on sharing of drill at tactical level, high degree of physical fitness, and learning of best practices from each other.
- It aims at enhancing cooperation, understanding and inter operability between the two armies
- The exercise will also culminate a 36 hours ling validation which involves neutralization of terrorists in village hide out

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## What is Cosmic Yeti?

Scientists have accidentally discovered 'the footprints a monstrous galaxy' being called as 'Cosmic Yeti' in early universe that has never been seen before. The discovery provides new insights into the first growing steps of some of biggest galaxies in universe. The astronomical findings were published in Astrophysical Journal.

### Why the name?

The scientists have equated the newly found monstrous galaxy to the mythical Yeti as earlier the scientific community generally regarded these galaxies as folklore, given the lack of evidence of their existence, but recently the astronomers in United States and Australia managed to snap a picture of the beast for first time.

### Key Findings

Recent studies found that some of the biggest galaxies in young universe matured extremely quickly, this is something that is not yet understood theoretically.

The "cosmic Yeti" galaxy so far might have been concealed by dust clouds and had as many stars as the Milky Way. It was forming new stars at a rate that was over 100 times faster than in Milky Way.

The major puzzle remains that these mature galaxies appear to come out of nowhere as the astronomers never seem to catch them while they are forming. But now the new finding could provide insights into universe's infancy.

The research team discovered a faint light blob during observations using *Atacama Large Millimeter Array* (ALMA) and estimated that light from this galaxy has taken 12.5 billion years to reach Earth.

## Philippines army to buy India's Brahmos missile

Brahmos missile is considered as one of the fastest supersonic missiles. Philippines army is acquiring Indian-manufactured weapon in order to strengthen its coastal defences. In 2018, Indian PM Modi signed 4 bilateral agreements during his visit to Philippines, and acquiring Brahmos is one among them.

### Significance

- The acquisition proves that India's Act East Policy is being strengthened.
- India's bilateral relation with the South Asian Countries and also with Philippines has diversified
- It will also help achieve India's defence exports target of Rs 35,000 crore in the next 5 years.

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### Brahmos missile

The Brahmos is a medium range cruise missile that can be launched from submarine, aircraft, ships and land. It is the fastest supersonic missile in the world. The design of the missile was a joint venture between Russian federation and India's DRDO. The name of Brahmos is formed from the names of two rivers Brahmaputra in India and Moskva in Russia.

In 2016, India became a part of Missile Technology Control Regime after which India and Russia are now planning to develop a new generation of Brahmos missile with a target range of 500-km.

## Facts Box: Effects of El-Nino, Equinod and IOD on Indian Monsoon, 2019

The ongoing frenetic of the North-East Monsoon in the Peninsular India were supported by the same factors that propelled the South-West monsoon. The Indian monsoon of 2019 saw a neutral Pacific (neither El Nino nor La Nina), a positive Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) and a positive Equatorial Indian Ocean Oscillation (EQUINOO).

### El nino

- The variation in sea surface temperature drives the Indian Ocean and the Pacific phenomena and thereby Indian Monsoon.
- The El Nino is a phenomenon in the equatorial Pacific where the temperature rises over a threshold of 0.5 degree Celsius. During El Nino the Equatorial East Pacific warms up relative to the west and has adverse impact on Indian monsoon. Ritwik P | ritwikp41@gmail.com |
- The monsoon winds and rains are strong during La Nina and weak during El Nino. La Nina years bring heavy rains and El Nino years are dry.
- Between 1950 and 2012, there were 16 La Nina years with monsoon rains ending up above or around average every time. Also, there were 14 other occasions. The 2002 was the driest monsoons in all these years when El Nino occured.
- The weak El Nino in the Pacific Ocean this year is one of the reasons for rainfall deficit in the month of June.

### IOD

In a positive IOD, the western basin of the Indian Ocean warms up creating a low pressure. This rises warm air clouds to set up storms and heavy rains in the South and South east Asia. A positive IOD aids in Indian monsoon. 2019 Monsoon witnessed a positive IOD

### EQUINOD

The positive EQUINOD translates more or less positive IOD. The Positive EQUINOD aids in North East Monsoon. 2019 monsoon witnessed a positive EQUINOD.

## Kartarpur visit: Pakistan to issue tourist visas to non-Indian Sikhs

To mark the celebrations of 550th birth anniversary celebrations of Guru Nanak Dev, the Pakistan government will now issue tourist visas to non-Indian Sikhs visiting Kartarpur corridor and other gurdwaras in the country.

### Key Highlights

Under the historic **Kartarpur Corridor agreement** signed between India and Pakistan on 24 October 2019, the pilgrims coming from India for one day would not require visa but they can only visit Gurdwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur, also called Kartarpur Sahib. On 9 November 2019 Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the Indian side of Kartarpur corridor.

The Indian pilgrims will have to obtain a visa for touring other holy sites in Pakistan. However, the pilgrims coming from other countries will need a visa and will be free to visit other religious places.

The Pakistan government will issue tourist visas to non-Indian Sikhs coming from United States America (USA), Europe and Canada for their visit to *Gurdwara Darbar Sahib*, Kartarpur.

## Air India depicts 'Ik Onkar' on tail to mark Guru Nanak's birth anniversary

In a unique gesture to mark 550th birth anniversary of Baba Guru Nanak Dev (founder of Sikhism and the first of ten Sikh Gurus), Air India has painted Sikh religious symbol *'Ik Onkar'* on the tail of one of its aircraft. 'Ik Onkar' religious symbol is a central tenet of Sikh religious philosophy.

### Key Highlights

To commemorate the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev also known as *Prakash Purb*, the national carrier has put the symbol on its Boeing 787 Dreamliner aircraft which will fly on 31 October. Air India will

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fly its aircraft thrice a week on Mumbai-Amritsar-Stansted route on Monday, Thursday and Saturday.
The international flight is set to fly from Amritsar to Stansted in London, United Kingdom (UK) and will facilitate Sikh pilgrims visiting Punjab on the occasion.
The gesture is unique as the national carrier Air India has never depicted any religious symbol on its planes, although earlier in October 2019 a tribute to Mahatma Gandhi on his 150th birth anniversary, it had painted an image of Father of Nation on tail of one of its Airbus A320 aircraft flying on Delhi-Mumbai route.

## President Kovind presents National Corporate Social Responsibility Awards

President Ram Nath Kovind presented the National Corporate Social Responsibility Awards (NCSRA) to selected companies in New Delhi. These awards are highest recognition given by Government of India in domain of CSR and are awarded to companies for their outstanding contribution in area of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

### About National Corporate Social Responsibility Awards (NCRSA)

The awards have been instituted in 2017 by *Union Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA)* to recognize corporate initiatives in area of CSR to achieve inclusive growth and sustainable development. The awards were instituted subsequent to the recommendations of High Level Committee on CSR.
In 2019 edition of NCRSA, 19 companies from a total of 528 entries have been selected for the award based on the submissions by the companies and reports of the independent assessment by CSR experts, Jury.

**Objectives**:

- Increasing competition in various categories of companies so as to infuse excellence in their CSR activities
- Encouraging companies to spend entire amount i.e. eligible CSR spend
- Recognising impact, usage of technology, innovation, gender and environment issues, scalability, replicability and sustainability of CSR activities.
- Channelising CSR initiatives of corporate so that benefits of these activities reach in remote areas of country and to marginalised sections of society

**Categories of Awards:**

Total number of awards of NCSRA is 20 in 3 categories are-
1. Corporate *Awards for Excellence in CSR:*
a) Recongnition to a company based on total eligible CSR Spend (4 awards)-

- above Rs.100 crores
- between Rs.10 crores and Rs.99.99 crores
- between Rs.1 crores and Rs.9.99 crores
- Spend below Rs.100 crores

b) Honourable Mention: In addition to four main awards, there may be four honourable mentions for companies that have undertaken appreciable CSR activities.
2. *Corporate Awards in CSR in Challenging Circumstances:*
a) Recognition to a company based on its CSR efforts in challenging circumstances, difficult terrains or disturbed areas, aspirational districts among others (up to five awards)- North; North East; East; West; South.
b) Honourable Mention: In addition to 5 main awards, there may be 5 honourable mentions for companies which have undertaken appreciable CSR activities.
3. *Recognition to a company to be given based on contribution to National Priority Schemes (NPS)*, so as to motivate corporates to spend in these areas. (Up to 11 Awards)
a) Honourable Mention: In addition to 11 main awards, there may be 11 Honorable Mentions of companies which have undertaken appreciable CSR activities.

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## India-Saudi Arabia to sign Agreement on Strategic Partnership Council

PM Modi is on a two-day visit to Saudi Arabia. He is visiting the country to attend the third Future Investment Initiative and to hold bilateral discussion with King Salman bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud. PM will sign minimum of 12 agreements during his visits in areas such as defence, civil aviation, infrastructure, non-renewable energy sector, etc.

Apart from this, PM Modi will sign a bilateral "Strategic Partnership Council" pact. India is the fourth country with which Saudi Arabia is signing the pact with. The three other countries are UK, France and China.

### Strategic Partnership Council

- The Council will include multiple sections from NITI Aayog, External Affairs Ministry and counterpart organizations from Saudi Arabia
- The council is to be led by Mr Modi and King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud.
- The Council will have two parallel tracks
    - Political, Security, Culture and society headed by both countries foreign ministers
    - Economy and Investment headed by India's Commerce and Industry minister and Saudi Arabia's energy minister.

### Significance

- The visit gains its importance as the visit comes three months after India ended the special status of Kashmir.
- The Council being formed will open era of cooperation across various sectors like security, Trade, investment, defence and cooperation.
- There are over 8 million Indian diaspora in the region.

## Nelloptodes gretae: Tiny beetle named after climate activist Greta Thunberg

Scientists at the British Natural History Museum in London, UK have officially named a tiny species of beetle that was discovered more than 50 years ago as 'Nelloptodes gretae', to honour the 16-year-old Swedish climate activist's 'outstanding contribution' in raising global awareness of climate change.

### About Nelloptodes gretae

It is an arthropod, which has no eyes or wings and rather has a small pit between where the eyes should have been. It is a tiny species of beetle, pale yellow and gold, with less than 1mm long. It belongs to *Ptiliidae* family, which is made up of some of the world's smallest beetles.

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The beetle was first found in 1965 by British naturalist Dr William C Block in Nairobi, Kenya. The samples taken in Kenya are stored in British Natural History Museum.

In general the biological name comprise of two words- one for genus and second for species i.e. while the species name 'gretae' derives from Greta, the genus Nelloptodes too is a new genus. Traditionally, it is the species name that scientists coin to honour a prominent personality, and sometimes even a friend/ relative.

## What is IndiGen Genome project?

The Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR) has conducted a Whole Genome Sequencing of around 1,008 Indians from different populations across country in order to generate data on genetic diseases and to know risk of genetic diseases in future generations. The project is called as IndiGen Genome project.

### Highlights of IndiGen Genome project

In April 2019, the IndiGen initiative was undertaken by CSIR. It was implemented by CSIR-Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology (IGIB), New Delhi and CSIR-Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB), Hyderabad.

The outcome of project will have applications in a number of areas such as predictive and preventive medicine with faster and efficient diagnosis of rare genetic diseases.

The whole-genome data will be important for building the knowhow, baseline data and indigenous capacity in emerging area of Precision Medicine.

**Benefits of Initiative**

The ability to decode genetic blueprint of humans through whole-genome sequencing will be a major driver for- biomedical science, epidemiology of genetic diseases to enable cost-effective genetic tests, enabling efficient diagnosis of heritable cancers, carrier screening applications for expectant couples and pharmacogenetic tests to prevent adverse drug reactions.

Moreover, the outcomes of IndiGen project will be utilized towards understanding genetic diversity on a population scale thus making available genetic variant frequencies for clinical applications and enabling genetic epidemiology of diseases.

The whole genome data and knowhow for analysis of large scale genomic data is expected to enable evidence and aid in development of technologies for clinical and biomedical applications in India.

It will also ensure that India with its unparalleled human diversity is adequately represented in terms of genomic data and develops indigenous capacity to generate, analyze, maintain, utilize and communicate large-scale genome data in a scalable manner.

## Justice Sharad Arvind Bobde appointed as 47th Chief Justice of India

Justice Sharad Arvind Bobde (aged 63) was appointed as 47th Chief Justice of India (CJI). His Warrant of Appointment was signed by President Ram Nath Kovind *under Article 124 of the Constitution of India*. He will take oath as the next head of the Indian judiciary on 18 November 2019, a day after incumbent Ranjan Gogoi demits office. His tenure will be of total 17 months and will be demitting office on 23 April 2021. Being senior most judge, his name was recommended by incumbent CJI Gogoi as per the established procedure.

### About Justice Sharad Arvind Bobde

He was born in Nagour Maharashtra on 24 April, 1955. He had studied in Nagour University. He comes from family of lawyers. His father Arvind Bobde was advocate-general of Maharashtra and his elder brother late Vinod Arvind Bobde a renowned senior advocate of Supreme Court.

He was enrolled as an advocate of the Bar Council of Maharashtra in 1978. He had practised law at Nagpur Bench of the Bombay High Court with appearances at Bombay before Principal Seat and before Supreme Court for over 21 years. He was designated as senior advocate in 1998.

He was elevated to Bombay High Court in March 2000, as Additional Judge. He was sworn in as Chief Justice of Madhya Pradesh High Court in October 2012. He was elevated as a judge of Supreme Court on April 2013.

## October 30, 2019

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## Vice President unveils 15-point reform on Parliament Functioning

On October 29, 2019, Vice President Venkaiah Naidu unveiled a 15-point reform charter for a new political normal to enable effective functioning of the Parliament and State Legislatures.

### The Charter

- The pre and post Legislative Impact should be assessed
- The functioning of Department related Standing Committees of Parliament should be ensured through longer tenures instead of reconstitution every year as at present. The recommendations to the committee should be based on academic backgrounds.
- The minimum number of sittings for both the Parliament and State Legislatures per year should be approximately prescribed
- The law makers should abide by the rules of the house. The political parties should take responsibility be enforcing a code of conduct
- Rules should be framed that take automatic effect against erring members in case of interruptions and disruptions
- The political parties should ensure at least 50% attendance of the members of legislatures everyday to address the issues of lack of quorum
- The secretariats of legislatures should publish regular reports on the attendance of members during the proceedings.
- The functioning of anti-defection law and whip system should be reviewed

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## Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat Parv

The Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat Parv is to be inaugurated by Union Human Resource Development Minister Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank. It is organized by Kendra Vidhyalaya Sangathan under Ministry of HRD.

### Highlights of the event

- The event is organized to showcase the spirit of "Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat". It promotes communication and artistic skills of students through various competitions
- The students will prepare their own projects and exhibits on customs, dress, agriculture, economy, climate and topography. This will act as a good platform for the children to understand the art and culture of the states.
- The event will also help the children overcome linguistic and geographical barriers and awaken a strong sense of national pride and widen their horizons with better cosmopolitan outlook.
- The regions will prepare exhibits based on theme Fit India, Swachh Bharat, Ban on Single use plastic, etc.

### Kendra Vidya Sangathan

- The Kendra Vidya Sangathan is a system of central government schools that operate under Ministry of Human Resource Development
- There are over 1209 KVS in India
- It is one of the world's largest chains of schools
- The system was begun in 1963.
- The schools are affiliated to the CBSE
- The objective is to educate the children of the Indian Defence Service personnel who are posted in remote locations. After the army begun its own Army Public schools the service was extended to the central government employees.

## Commemorative Coin released on Paramahansa Yogananda

The Union Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs Smt Nirmala Sitaraman released a commemorative coin on Paramahansa Yogananda to mark his 125$^{th}$ birth anniversary on October 29, 2019.

### Paramahansa Yogananda

Paramahansa Yogananda was an Indian monk, guru and yogi who introduced millions of teachings of meditation and Kriya Yoga through his organization Self-Realization Fellowship. He was the first major teacher to settle in USA. He published his book Autobiography of a Yogi in 1946. The book has been regularly reprinted in the name "The book that changed the lives of millions". In 2014, a documentary

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"Awake: The Life of Yogananda" was released and it won multiple awards all over the world.
In 1917, he founded the Yogoda Satsanga Society of India
Yogananda was born in Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh in 1893. In 1920, he went to the USA as an Indian delegate to an International Congress of Religious Liberals. The same year he founded Self-Realization Fellowship. The objective of the foundation was to disseminate his teachings, practices and philosophy of yoga worldwide. Yogananda returned to India in 1935
In 1977, India released a commemorative stamp to honor Yogananda. On March 7, 2017, PM Modi released another stamp to honor him on his 100th death anniversary.

## Himachal Pradesh: 2,000 Panchayats under Natural Farming

Around 2,209 panchayats were brought under natural farming under Prakritik Kheti Khushshal Kissan Yojana. The State is promoting Organic and Zero Budget Naturna Farming under the scheme.

### Features

- Under the scheme, a target of 50,000 farmers have been set for the year 2019.
- So far 20,579 farmers have been trained. Out of this, 15,391 are already practicing natural farming in their fields.
- The State Government plans to hold a minimum of 5 training sessions per month till March 2020.
- Technology block manager and Assistance Technology manger have been recruited under Agricultural Technology management Agency to fulfill the needs of the training.

### Prakritik Kheti Khushal Kisan Scheme

The scheme was launched by the Himachal Pradesh Government to promote natural farming and to increase farmer's income.
The main objective of the scheme is to reduce costs required for farmers, increase farmers income and to reduce use of chemicals and fertilizers in the farm.
The scheme provides 75% subsidy on drums that are required to make inputs of natural farming. It provides a financial assistance of Rs 50,000 to open natural resources store in villages.

## PRAKHAR: Delhi Police's anti-street crime vans

Delhi Police Commissioner Amulya Patnaik flagged off 15 'PRAKHAR' vans from the police headquarters at ITO, New Delhi. The vans are special vehicles to curb street crimes in the national capital. The new vans are in addition to already operational 15 'PRAKHAR' vans launched in September 2019, thus taking the total number of vans plying in New Delhi to 30.

### About 'PRAKHAR'

These patrol vans are tasked especially to curb street crimes as well as crimes against women in vulnerable areas in the national capital. They are specially designed and equipped with latest gadgets for quick transmission of information about any crime.
**Feature**: Besides the wireless set, each 'PRAKHAR' van is also equipped with Mobile Data Terminal (MDT) with inbuilt GPS. For immediate action, the MDT immediately transmits calls related to street crimes as soon as it is received in Command Room to concerned nearest PRAKHAR' van.
These vans conduct intensive patrolling and dedicated checking at vulnerable points in crime-prone areas of the districts. Thus with the latest induction, each district will now have 2 such vans to cover vulnerable stretches.
The deterrent presence of 'PRAKHAR' MPVs (Multi-purpose Vehicle) has substantially helped in curbing crime. During the one month of operation of these patrol vans in city, the number of calls related to snatching and robbery incidents have decreased in localities covered by them.

## India-Saudi Arabia sign MoUs during PM Modi visit

PM Modi visited Saudi Arabia to attend the Future Investment Initiative. During his visit, the two sides held bilateral talks during which they reviewed historical and close relations between the countries.

### Highlights

- The leaders of the two sides re-affirmed their deep commitment to strengthen "Riyadh Declaration".
- The leaders also expressed appreciation on the progress of bilateral relationship in economic, political, defence, security, manpower and people to people exchanges.
- The two sides reiterated their categorical rejection of all forms of interference in the internal affairs

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of the countries and the need for the international community to fulfill the responsibilities over the attacks on sovereignty of states.
- The leaders also emphasized the importance of preserving the unity of Yemen and achieving its security and stability on the basis of GCC initiative.

### List of MoUs signed

- Agreement on Strategic Partnership Council
- MoU on cooperation in the field of Renewable Energy, security cooperation
- Agreement in the field of illicit trafficking and smuggling of narcotic drugs, chemical precursors, psychotropic substances
- MoUs on military acquisition, research, development, industries and technology.
- MoUs in the field of civil aviation, small and medium enterprises, stock exchanges, petroleum and payment corporations.
- An agreement was also signed for the cooperation in the field of medical products regulations.

## Rafael Grossi elected new Director General of IAEA

Rafael Mariano Grossi of Argentina has been appointed as the new Director General of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), a United Nations' nuclear watchdog. The Argentine diplomat will succeed late Yukiya Amano as the new chief of IAEA.

### Key Highlights

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The 58-year-old Gossi will be appointed for a term of four years and will assume office no later than 1 January 2020. He will be the *sixth head of IAEA* since it was founded more than six decades ago in 1957.

He will preside over the **2020 Review Conference of the Parties** to the *Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons* at the UN headquarter in New York from April to May 2020.

### About International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

It is an international organization that promotes peaceful use of nuclear energy as well as inhibits the use of nuclear energy for any military purpose including nuclear weapons. It was established on 29 July 1957 with its headquarters in Vienna, Austria. It was created as an autonomous organisation through its own international treaty, the **IAEA Statute**. Even though IAEA is established independently of United Nations, it reports to both United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) and United Nations Security Council (UNSC). IAEA General Conference consists of representatives of all 171 Member States.

### About Rafael Grossi

He is a nuclear and diplomatic veteran from Buenos Aires in Argentina. He chaired expert panels on UN Register of Conventional Arms in 1997 and 2000. He was the chief political coordinator at Argentine Foreign Ministry from 2007-10, before being named an ambassador to Belgium, while doubling as Argentine envoy to United Nations office in Geneva. He served as a diplomat for a decade before holding several senior positions within UN. He has been Argentina's ambassador to Slovakia, Slovenia and Austria and permanent representative to international organisations in Vienna since 2013.

From 2002 to 2007, he headed the IAEA headquarters in Vienna (Austrian capital) and UN's Organisation for Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in The Hague, Netherlands. In 2010, IAEA had appointed Grossi as its assistant director-general for a stint of three years. He also headed Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), which is a multinational export control regime, the Convention on Nuclear Security and was deputy to the head of OPCW between 2014 and 2016.

## SEED Awards of United Nations: 4 Indian start-ups among 14 winners

The SEED awards are granted to organizations working towards achieving sustainable development goals (SDG). The 2019 SEED awards included SEED Low carbon, SEED South Africa Climate Adaptation, SEED Africa Awards and SEED Gender Equality Awards. 14 finalists from Asian and African countries were awarded for their works towards achieving SDGs.

The SEED was founded by UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme), UNDP (United Nations Development Program) and IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) at the World Summit on SDG, Johannesburg. It works in Asian and African countries

### India

Under the SEED Low Carbon category, the Aikya Organics located in Kanpur has won the award. The

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organization works to promote gender equality by training 1,200 women farmers. They try to achieve SDG by providing opportunities to follow natural farming techniques. The non-profit organization sells products like mustard oil, organic lentils, rice grains, etc.

Apart from Aikya three more start-ups from India received the award.

### Benefits of the award

The awardees will be provided financial literacy and support to scale-up. The SEED Catalyzer will help to refine their business models. They will also be provided national and international promotional opportunities.

## Finance Minister chairs meeting of NIIF's Governing Council

The governing council meeting of National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF) was chaired by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in North Block, New Delhi. Minister of State for Finance and Corporate Affairs Anurag Thakur was also present at the meet.

### About National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF)

NIIF is India's *first sovereign wealth fund* set up by government of India in 2015. It is a fund manager that invests in infrastructure and related sectors in India. It was created with the objective to maximise economic impact especially by infrastructure investment in commercially viable projects.

NIIF is operationalised by establishing three alternative investment funds (AIFs) under SEBI (Securities and Exchange Board of India) regulations.

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Government of India's contribution to AIFs under NIIF scheme is 49% of total commitment. The proposed corpus of NIIF is Rs.40,000 crore (about $6 billion).

NIIF has mandate to seek equity participation from strategic anchor partners like quasi-sovereign, overseas sovereign, bilateral/multilateral investors, as one of the key sources of funds.

## October 29: Odisha Disaster Preparedness Day

Odisha Disaster Preparedness Day and National Day for Disaster Reduction is observed every year on 29 October to commemorate destruction brought by Super Cyclone 1999 and to prepare ourselves for future disasters.

### Key Highlights

**Theme** of Odisha Disaster Preparedness Day for year 2019- *'Empowering Community for Disaster Resilience'*.

To mark the occasion of Odisha Disaster Preparedness Day 2019, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik inaugurated an awareness rally and photo & painting exhibition on Disaster Response equipment in Odisha. He also unveiled the Annual Newsletter of OSDMA *'The Response'* and felicitated volunters, agencies and institutions for their commendable works done in field of Disaster Management for year 2019.

The State level programme for observation of Odisha Disaster Preparedness Day 2019 and National Day for Disaster Reduction was organized by Odisha State Disaster Management Authority at Rabindra Mandap Bhubaneswar.

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## India to participate in 2020 Olympics

India is scheduled to participate in Olympics 2020 that is to be conducted in Tokyo between 24 July 2020 and 9 August 2020. Indian athlete made their official debut in 1900 Olympics that was held in Paris. However, they appeared continuously in every edition since 1920.

Javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra, shot putter Inderjeet Singh were to participate in the Olympics in 2020. However, Inderjeet's name was dropped after CAS (Court of Arbitration for Sport) handed a 4-year ban earlier in October, 2019.

### CAS

The Court of Arbitration for Sport is an international quasi-judicial body. Its headquarters is located in Lausanne, Switzerland. The court of the body is situated in New York, Sydney. The disputes related to Olympics can only be submitted to CAS. All the Olympics international federations and National Olympic committees including India's National anti-doping agency (NADA) have recognized the body.

### Tokyo Olympics 2020

The 2020 Olympics officially known as Games of the XXXII Olympiad, a multi-sport event is to be hosted by the Tokyo city for second time. This is the second of the three consecutive Olympics that is to be held in East Asia. The first was held in 2018 in Pyeongchang County South Korea. It was the Winter Olympics and

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the one being held in 2020 is Summer Olympics. The next is to be held in 2022, (the Winter Olympics), in Beijing, China.

## Three Indian-origin CEOs featured in HBR's top 10 best-performing CEOs

Three Indian-origin chief executive officers (CEOs) have been featured in *'The Best-Performing CEOs in World, 2019* list of world's top 10 best-performing chief executives. The list is compiled by the Harvard Business Review (HBR) and features 100 CEOs.

### Key Highlights of List

The list has been topped by American technology company NVIDIA's CEO Jensen Huang.

**Indian CEO's**: Among the world's top 10 best-performing chief executives on list, three spots have been occupied by Indian-origin CEOs. The 6th spot is held by Adobe CEO Shantanu Narayen, followed by MasterCard CEO Ajay Banga, ranked 7th and Microsoft chief Satya Nadella on 9th spot. The list also features India-born CEO of DBS Bank Piyush Gupta on 89th spot.

The list also includes, Apple CEO Tim Cook who is ranked 62nd, Nike CEO Mark Parker ranked 20, JP Morgan Chase chief Jamie Dimon ranked 23, Lockheed Martin CEO Marillyn Hewson ranked 37, Disney CEO Robert Iger ranked 55 and SoftBank head Masayoshi Son ranked 96.

The 2019 list has four female CEOs in top half of rankings (up from three in 2018). On average, executives on list became CEOs at age 45 and have been in office 15 years.

**Parameters**: HBR took into account 3 metrics for each tenure of CEO's- the total shareholder return which includes dividends reinvested adjusted by country and by industry and change in m-cap (market capitalisation) adjusted for share issues, share repurchases and dividends measured in inflation-adjusted USD.

Since 2015, the rankings in list have been based not only on financial performance but also on Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Scores ratings. To compile list of world's best-performing CEOs, the HBR began with companies that at the end of 2018 were in **S&P Global 1200**, which is an index that reflects 70% of world's stock market capitalisation and includes firms in North America, Latin America, Europe, Australia and Asia.

## PM Modi to attend Ekta Diwas parade

PM Modi is to pay tribute to the Iron Man of India, Sardar Vallabhai Patel on October 31, 2019. The event is to be conducted at the Statue of Unity, Kevadiya. PM will also participate at the Ekta Diwas Parade and interact with the Civil Service probationers attending the first foundation civil service course, Aarambh.

### Ekta Diwas

Since 2014, October 31 is being observed as the National Unity Day or Ekta Diwas. The aim of the observation is to encourage people from all walks of life to participate in the run for unity. Like every year "Run for Unity" campaign is being organized

### Run for Unity

In 2013, the event earned its place in the Guinness Book of World Records. It is a running event. The event entered the Guinness Book as 609,000 participants joined the event within 24 hours in multiple locations

### Significance

- It urges people to participate towards one goal "Ek Bharat Shreshth Bharat"
- It imparts the message to protect unity, integrity and security of the country.
- As Sir Patel integrated the nation, the day is being observed on his birth anniversary.

### Sardar Vallabhai Patel

As the first Home Minister of Inida, Sir Patel played key role in the integration of the princely states into Indian Federation. The plan of 16 May 1946 proposed partition of India based on religious lines with 565 princely states. They were given the freedom of joining India or Pakistan or choosing independence.

Patel, on 6 May 1947, began lobbying the princes, convinced them by explaining potential conflicts. He persuaded them and proposed favorable terms for the merger including privy purses for the rulers descendants. Privy Purses are payments made to the rulers after they agreed to merge with independent India.

Under his efforts, out of 565 states, only three states J&K, Hyderabad and Junagadh did not fall into his basket.

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## MIT researchers develop new technology to remove CO2 from air

Researchers from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), United States (US) have developed a new technology to capture carbon dioxide ($CO_2$) from a stream of air, virtually at any concentration level. This is a new advance that may pave the way for new strategies to reduce atmospheric greenhouse gas (GHG) levels. The study by researchers was published in the journal *Energy and Environmental Science*.

### About the New Technology

While in most of the prevalent methods, removing carbon dioxide ($CO_2$) from a stream of gas required higher concentrations like those found in flue emissions from fossil fuel-based power plants, but the new method could take out gas even when it was present in very low concentrations.

**Method**: Researchers described the device as a large, specialized battery with a stack of electrodes that absorbs $CO_2$ from air passing over its surface as it was being charged up, and then released gas as it was being discharged. A chemical reaction then takes place at surface of each of a stack of electrodes as battery charges.

The electrodes are coated with a compound called *polyanthraquinone* compounded with carbon nanotubes. The study noted that electrodes have a natural affinity for $CO_2$ and readily reacted with its molecules in airstream/feed gas. This new technology device operates at room temperature and normal air pressure.

The biggest advantage of this technology over most other carbon absorbing/carbon capture technologies is- *'binary nature of the adsorbent's affinity to carbon dioxide'*. Moreover, the new system is energy efficient compared to existing methods- consistently using about one gigajoule (GJ) of energy per ton of $CO_2$ captured.

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## October 31, 2019

## India to host second assembly of International Solar Alliance

The second assembly of International Solar Alliance (ISA) is to be hosted by India. The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy is hosting the event. It is to be held in New Delhi between October 30 and 31, 2019.The ISA brings together 81 nations. It offers concrete solutions to reduce the cost of solar installations in developing countries.

### Highlights

- Coordination and Consultation meetings on different aspects of the ISA programmes are conducted
- The Assembly will be co-chaired by French Deputy Minister Brune Porison along with Union Minister of State for New and Renewable energy Raj Kumar Singh
- Over 400 delegates are expected to attend the event from member states and observer states.

### ISA

- The ISA assembly is the highest decision making body. It gives directions on financial and administrative issues
- So far, 81 countries of 121 members have signed the Framework Agreement of the ISA. OF these, 58 have ratified the agreement.

### ISA First Assembly

- The first Assembly of ISA was attended by 78 countries. They recognized that ISA has major role in achieving SDG (Sustainable Development Goal).
- Since its inception, 1000 MW of solar power and 300,000 solar water pumps have been aggregated from the member countries.

### ISA operations

- ISA sent country missions to 8 countries-Togo, Uganda, Niger, Mali, Malawi, Guinea, Congo and Benin to understand the challenges and issues in the path of ISA programmes
- India has been providing full support to the alliance since its inception. GoI has allotted 5 acres of land to ISA. It has released a sum of Rs 160 crore for building infrastructure.

## October 31: World Cities Day

The World Cities Day (WCD) is being celebrated by the United Nations to promote the international community's interest in global urbanization. It also intends to address the challenges of urbanization and to contribute to sustainable urban development around the world. It was established in 2013.

The general theme of WCD is *Better City, Better Life*. However, every year a different sub-theme is selected. The sub theme is in such a way to either promote the success of urbanization or address specific

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challenges from urbanization.

**Theme: changing the world: Innovations and better life for future generations**

### Significance

The theme is selected to discuss how urbanization can be used to achieve sustainable development. It aims at implementing the New Urban Agenda.

### New Urban Agenda

The New Urban Agenda was adopted in Quito, Ecuador at the UN Conference on Housing and sustainable Urban Development in 2016. The conference is also known as Habitat Conference. The Agenda set global standards for the way the cities are to be built, managed and inhabited. Also, it aims at implementing SDG 11 which deals with making human cities and towns inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

The Habitat conferences happen once in every 20 years. The habitat I was organized in Vancouver in 1976, Habitat II in Istanbul in 1996 and Habitat III in Quito in 2016.

### Need

Over half of the world population now live in cities. The number is to double by 2050. It possesses great challenges related to environment, housing, infrastructure, climate change, basic services, infrastructure, food security, jobs, education, safety and natural resources.

## 5th International Conference on RoadTech held in New Delhi

The 5th International Conference on Road Tech (Sustainable Roads and Highways) was held in New Delhi. The Conference Agenda was-'*Smart Use of Available Resources for Green and Sustainable Roads*' The conference was addressed by Union Minister of State for Road Transport V.K. Singh.

### Key Highlights of Conference

In the last five years great amount of works have been done in field of infrastructure and in future much more will be done by government. Since infrastructure propels growth of economy, thus to achieve this growth country needs sustainable and environment friendly roads and highways.

Industry body must find the unique way to monetize road projects in an environment friendly manner. Also more focus must be given to infrastructure sector to fight economic slowdown.

## A Boost for DRDO's AIP system

The Air Independent Propulsion system enhances the submerged endurance of the submarines several times. As compared to other technologies fuel cell AIP has merits in performance. DRDO is now set to build fuel-cell based AIP system for Indian Naval Submarines.

### Air Independent Propulsion

AIP is a technology that allows the non-nuclear submarines to operate without access to atmospheric oxygen. Nuclear submarines constantly pump coolant generating some amount of noise. On the other hand, non-nuclear battery operated or AIP submarines are silent.

The fuel cell air independent propulsion converts chemical energy from fuel cell into electricity through chemical reaction of positively charged hydrogen ions with oxygen or other oxidizing agent.

### Role of AIP

A modern Diesel-Electric submarines remain submerged for 4 to 5 days. They have to come to periscope level to carryout an activity called "snorkeling". This is done to recharge their batteries. The AIP increases their underwater endurance and allows them to stay underwater for weeks together.

## Nagaland govt launches Ex-gratia Scheme for Students

The state government of Nagaland has launched an ex-gratia scheme for students studying outside Nagaland, called '*Nagaland Government Ex-gratia Scheme for Students Studying outside Nagaland*' (NGESSO). The scheme is the initiative of Nagaland Chief Minister *Neiphiu Rio*.

### Key Features of NGESSO Scheme

It is a scheme initiated and sponsored by Government of Nagaland under which state government will provide a financial assistance of Rs.5 lakhs as one-time payment to parents/families of students in case of unfortunate death of any student while studying outside state. The sum is to enable distressed families to bring mortal remains of deceased students.

**Beneficiary**: NGESSO scheme would benefit Naga students belonging to any recognized scheduled tribes (ST) and indigenous inhabitants of state. It is targeted for students who die outside state while pursuing secular, technical, professional, diploma as well as theology courses. The nominee can claim ex-gratia

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amount within a period of 2 (two) months after the death of the students by furnishing the required documents.

**Scheme Implementation**:

The scheme will be implemented by department of higher education with effect from year 2019-20. The advertisement for scheme will be issued from 1 November 2019. Last date for submission of NGESSO registration form is March 30, 2020 and uploading of NGESSO registration number in the department website will be done by August 2020.

The state government has earmarked a Corpus Fund of Rs.5 crore in a fixed deposit and the interest accruing from deposit will be utilized for payment of ex-gratia amounting to Rs.5 lakh to nominee of deceased students.

The payment will be made through *Direct Benefit Transfer* (DBT) by the state finance department to bank account of nominee within a period of one month.

## National Symposium on United to Eliminate Lymphatic Filariasis

On October 30, 2019, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare organized National Symposium on the following theme

**Theme: United to Eliminate Lymphatic Filariasis.**

### Highlights

- The event was inaugurated by the Health and Family Welfare minister Dr Harsh Vardhan.
- The minister also signed the "Call to Action to eliminate Lymphatic Filariasis by 2021"

### Significance

- The ministry is planning to draw attention towards Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTD). Over 1.5 billion people are affected globally due to NTDs.
- The most prevalent NTDs in India is Lymphatic Filariasis (Hathipaon) and Visceral Leishmaniases (Kala-Azar)

### India's measures

- GoI is to roll out the use of Triple Drug therapy in a phased manner from November 2019. It is to be implemented by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- India adopted the twin pillar strategy after WHO launched the Global Program to Eliminate Lymphatic Filariasis (GPELF)
    - Prevention through Mass Drug Administration using combination of 2 anti-filarial drugs namely DEC and Albendazole
    - Providing Morbidity management and Disability Prevention services
- GoI aunched the Accelerate Plan for Elimination of Lymphatic Filariasis (APELF) in 2018.

## Malware detected in NPCIL system, isolated

As per Department of Atomic Energy (DAE), a malware was identified in state-run Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL) system at Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant (KKNPP), Tamil Nadu. The matter was conveyed to the DAE by *Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In)* on 4 September 2019 and was immediately investigated by DAE specialists.

### Key Highlights

The identification of malware in NPCIL system was correct but the affected system was not connected to plant system. Thus NPCIL plant systems are not affected and networks are being continuously monitored.

The DAE specialists' investigation revealed that infected PC belonged to a user who was connected in internet connected network used for administrative purposes and it is isolated from critical internal network of NPCIL system. The networks are now being continuously monitored. Investigation also confirmed that plant systems are not affected.

### About Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant (KKNPP)

It is located 650km south of Chennai, in Tirunelveli district, Tamil Nadu. It is being developed by Nuclear Power Corporation of India (NPCIL). The NPCIL works under the DAE, which in turn comes under purview of prime minister's office (PMO).

Kudankulam is one of the leading operational nuclear plants of India. *Atomstroyexport*, is the supplier of equipment and fuels for the nuclear power project. It is a subsidiary of Russian State Nuclear Energy

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Corporation Rosatom.

Its unit-1 and unit-2 are already operational and connected to grid while Unit-3 and unit-4 are being constructed with help of Russia and preparatory work for construction of unit-5 and unit-6 is under process. At present India has 22 nuclear reactors in operation in 7 nuclear plants, having a total installed capacity of 6,780 MW and has another 21 reactors in various stages of construction and development.

## National Health Profile 2019 Released

The Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare released the 14th National Health Profile (NHP) 2019 on October 30, 2019. The NHP is prepared by the Central Bureau of Health Intelligence (CBHI). It was first published in 2005.

### Significance

- The Data is important in understanding the needs and issues of the population
- Also, it helps in understanding the goals, their strengths and weaknesses
- The NHP highlights major indicators as follows
    - The Socio-Economic Indicators-Education, Employment, Housing, Amenities, sanitation and drinking water
    - Demographic indicator-Population and vital statistics
    - Health Status Indicators-Prevalence of communicable and non-communicable diseases

### Highlights

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- Life Expectancy in India has increased from 49.7 years in 1970-75 to 68.7 years in 2012-16. Life Expectancy of females is 70.2 years and males is 67.4 years
- Out of 6.51 crore people who attended Non-communicable Diseases clinics, 4.75% were diagnosed with diabetes, 0.3% were diagnosed with cardiovascular disease, 6.19% were diagnosed with hyper tension and 0.26% were diagnosed with common cancers.
- Highest population Density was reported in Delhi with 11,320 people per square km and the lowest population Density was reported in Arunachal Pradesh with 17 people per square km.
- The Infant Mortality Rate has declined considerably. It was 33 per 1000 live births in 2016. It is now 37 in rural and 23 in urban
- The Total Fertility Rate was 1.8 in 2016 and has increased to 2.3 in rural and 2.5 in urban
- Dengue and Chikungunya are a great cause of concern to public health
- There has been consistent decrease in birth rate, death rate and natural growth rate in the country from 1991 to 2017. India in 2017 registered a birth rate of 20.2 per 1000 population, death rate of 63 and natural growth rate was 13.9 per 1000 population

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## OCI can now apply for National Pension System

The Overseas Citizens of India (OCI) will now be eligible to apply for National Pension System (NPS) at par with Non Resident Indians (NRIs). The permission to permit OCI to enroll in NPS was given by *Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA).* The decision is one of the endeavours of PFRDA towards promoting and developing NPS and increasing pension coverage in country.

### Key Highlights

As per a notification issued by Finance Ministry, now, any Indian citizen, resident or non-resident and OCIs are eligible to join NPS till age of 65 years.

**Condition**: An OCI may subscribe to NPS provided such person is eligible to invest as per provisions of **PFRDA Act** and accumulated saving will be repatriable, subject to **Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA)** guidelines.

Till 26th of October 2019, the total number of subscribers under National Pension System (NPS) and Atal Pension Yojana (APY) has crossed 3.18 crores and Asset under Management has grown to over Rs.3.79 lakh crore. Subscribers enrolled under NPS includes more than 66 lakh government employees and 19.2 lakhs subscribers in private sector with 6,812 entities registered as corporates.

### About National Pension System (NPS)

It was initially notified for Central government employees joining service on or after 1 January 2004. The NPS was subsequently adopted by almost all State Governments for its employees and was later extended to all citizens of India (*on a voluntary basis*) from May 2009, to corporates in December 2011 and to Non-

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Resident Indians (NRI) in October 2015.

A NPS subscriber can contribute regularly in a pension account during his/her working life, withdraw a part of corpus in a lumpsum and use remaining corpus to buy an annuity to secure a regular income after retirement.

In Union Budget 2019, the tax exemption limit under section 10(12A) of IT Act, for lump sum withdrawal on exit/maturity from NPS was increased from 40% to 60%. Moreover, the remaining 40% of corpus is already tax-exempt as it is mandatorily utilised for annuity purchase.

**NOTE**: ***PFRDA*** is a pension regulator of India. It administers and regulates National Pension System (NPS) and also administers Atal Pension Yojana (APY). It is a statutory authority established by PFRDA Act of Parliament, to promote, regulate and ensure orderly growth of NPS and pension schemes to which this Act applies.

## India, Saudi Arabia signs MoU to launch RuPay card in kingdom

During Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent visit to the kingdom of Saudi Arabia, India has signed an agreement with the Saudi Arabia to launch the RuPay card in the country. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was also signed between the two countries for the purpose. The step will benefit not only 2.6 million Indians in Gulf Kingdom but also pilgrims visiting Haj and Umrah.

The Rupay card lunch has made Suadi Arabia the third nation in West Asia to initiate India's digital payment system. India has already launched RuPay card in the *United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, Bhutan and Singapore*.

### About Rupay card

It is a first-of-its-kind Indian domestic Debit and Credit Card payment network. It is accepted at ATMs, POS devices as well as e-commerce websites. It was launched in 2012 to fulfil Reserve Bank of India's (RBIs) vision to have a domestic, open and multilateral system of payments.

RuPay is India's version of Master Card and Visa and is also a highly secure network that protects against cyberhacks. Currently, there are about 500 million RuPay cards in circulation in India.

To enhance its international acceptance, the RuPay has also tied-up with international players such as Discover, China Union Pay and Japan Credit Bureau. It recently also achieved a milestone of issuing 25 million RuPay cards.

### India-Saudi Arabia

Over the last few years, India's relations with the kingdom of Saudi Arabia have been on an upswing based on burgeoning energy ties besides cooperation in several other areas. PM Modi's first visit to Riyadh in 2016 had put bilateral ties on a new trajectory.

With more than 2.6 million Indians working in Saudi Arabia, the Indian is the largest expatriate community in country. Every year nearly 2 lakh Haj pilgrims and about 3million Umrah pilgrims from India visit Saudi Arabia. The recent acceptance of Rupay card will allow the Indian expatriate and pilgrims to transact at cheaper rates.

## Vyas Samman 2018 conferred on Leeladhar Jagoori

The 28th Vyas Samman for the year 2018 was conferred on noted Hindi poet and writer Leeladhar Jagoori for his poetry collection '*Jitne Log Utne Prem*', at a function held in New Delhi. Jagoori was conferred the prestigious award for his poetry collection by renowned author and scholar Govind Mishra.

Well known Hindi poet Leeladhar Jagoori's poems often celebrate love and hope. The poetry collection '*Jitne Log Utne Prem*' is Jagoori's 12th anthology of poetry. Jagoori's award citation reads- He presents a new world of experience, language, narrative and that his poems are ever-changing sounds of experiments and progress.

### About Vyas Samman

The prestigious award was started in 1991 and is conferred especially for contributions to Hindi literature. It is given by *K K Birla Foundation* for an outstanding literary work in Hindi authored by an Indian citizen published during last 10 years. It carries a prize money of Rs. 4 lakh along with a citation and plaque. The KK Birla Foundation also confers Saraswati Samman and Bihari Puraskar for literature in Indian languages.

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## India and Germany sign MoUs

The All India Institute of Ayurveda under Ministry of AYUSH and FiZ-Frankfurter Innovationzentrum Biotechnologie Gmbh signed MoU in the event "German/Indian knowledge exchange regarding current developments in the health care sector"

### Highlights

- The goal of the collaboration is to research in the field of Genomics
- According to the agreement, a team of scientists from both the countries will develop evidence-based guidelines supported with latest technologies like machine learning and Artificial Intelligence.
- It also aims at integrating Ayurvedic principles and practices into modern medicines.
- Also, the countries will exchange their knowledge and experiences

### Significance

- The experts believe that at deeper glance both the sciences can support each other
- The agreement forms the base line to complement traditional Ayurvedic Medicine with Biotechnology. It aids in creating evidences that will further help in contributing global health care
- Ayurveda being the time tested science focused upon wholeness of mind, soul and body, along with empirical medicine and precision medicine it can help ease the medicinal processes.

## Syrian Govt. and Opposition delegates meet to draft New Constitution

The Syrian government and Opposition delegates met for the first time in the United Nations office in Geneva, Switzerland to draft a new constitution and to chart a political settlement to end eight-and-a-half-year civil war. A total of 150 Syrian constitutional committee delegates representing the Syrian government, opposition and civil society met under UN auspices. The new constitution would act as a prelude to U.N. supervised elections for their war-torn country.

### Key Highlights

The **objective of meeting** was to agree on a new constitution for Syria, however it still reamins unclear that if this will mean redrafting existing constitution, written in 2012, or starting from beginning.

The meeting in Geneva is a key proposal from Russia and is being overseen by UN special envoy for Syria, *Geir Pedersen*. At present no deadline has been set for the end of talks, but all sides had promised to work expeditiously.

After about 9 years of civil war, the meeting of Syria's arch-enemies is an historic moment. Moreover, reforming Syrian Constitution is first step towards beginning for a political process that will lead to UN-supervised elections under *UN resolution 2254*.

## Indian Army participates in PLA organized Border Personnel Meeting

A Border Personnel Meeting (BPM) between Indian Army and People's Liberation Army (PLA) of China was conducted on 30 October 2019 on the Chinese side at Bum La, Tawang district, Arunachal Pradesh, India. The meeting was organized by PLA.

### Key Highlights of BPM

BPM was marked by unfurling of National Flags of both countries (India and China). It was followed by a formal address by delegation leaders as well as discussion on various issues to enhance existing mutual trust and bonhomie between two largest armies in the world.

The prevailing conducive environment during the proceedings of BPM 2019 evidently showed the desire to enhance cooperation and cordial relations between the two countries.

### About Border Personnel Meeting

The conducting of BPM every year on 30th October is in vogue since the **Border Peace and Tranquility agreement** was signed between India and China on 7 September 1993. In past 26 years, the BPM mechanism has evolved into a vital platform for resolving local issues and fostering mutual confidence amongst Border Guarding Troops of both nations.

## New Delhi Police Headquarters inaugurated

A new building of Police Headquarters (PHQ) was inaugurated by the Union Minister of Home Affairs Shri Amit shah. The officers and Jawans of Delhi Police Wing are getting a new building headquarters after 70 years. The building was opened on October 31, 2019 to commemorate Sardar Vallabhai Patel's birth Anniversary.

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### About the building

- The PHQ is unique in its implementation as the plans were under taken on a public private partnership mode
- It was built at a cost of 286 crores
- It has 18 floors that are designed to accommodate control rooms, conference rooms, communication centres, etc.

### Significance

- Police forces are important for stable law and order in the country.
- The contributions and sacrifices made by the Police officers are seldom highlighted. Also, a kind of negative protection demoralizes the police force. To change this image, GoI had developed National Police Memorial in New Delhi that chronicles the sacrifices of over 34,000 officers and jawans who laid their lives for the country.

### Delhi Police

- 25% of the Delhi Police Force is earmarked for VVIP security
- It comes under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Home Affairs and not under Government of Delhi.
- They are deployed close to PM residence, Rashtrapthi Bhavan, Residence of ministers, MPs, judges, etc.

## Multiple Choice Questions

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1. Who has become the first black woman to won the 2019 Man Booker Prize for Fiction?

[A] Eleanor Catton

[B] Margaret Atwood

[C] Anne Enright

[D] Bernardine Evaristo

**Answer:** Bernardine Evaristo

In London, Margaret Atwood and Bernardine Evaristo have jointly won the prestigious 2019 Man Booker Prize for Fiction for their novels – 'The Testament' and 'Girl, Woman, Other', respectively. The pair will split the literary award's £50,000 prize money equally. The Booker rules say the prize must not be divided, but the judges insisted they "couldn't separate" the two works. Atwood (79) is the oldest-ever Booker winner, while Evaristo is the first black woman to win since its creation in 1969.

2. Which airline has become the world's first airline to use Taxibot on A-320 aircraft?

[A] Alaska Airlines

[B] Air India

[C] Nikko

[D] Hawaiian Airlines

**Answer:** Air India

Air India has become the first airline in the world to use a Taxibot on a A-320 aircraft with passengers on board. Taxibot is a robot-used aircraft tractor for taxiing an aircraft from parking bay to runway and vice-versa. Air India CMD Ashwani Lohani flagged off flight AI665 and it was carried to runway using Taxibot at Terminal 3 of the Delhi Airport – to Mumbai. It is a pilot controlled semi-robotic towbar-less aircraft tractor used as alternate taxiing equipment.

3. Which Indian shuttler clinched the men's singles title at the 2019 Bahrain International Series Badminton?

[A] Lakshya Sen

[B] Priyanshu Rajawat

[C] Venkat Gaurav Prasad

[D] Kidambi Srikanth

**Answer:** Priyanshu Rajawat

Indian shuttler Priyanshu Rajawat has won the men's singles title at the 2019 Bahrain International Series Badminton at Isa Town. He beat top-seed Jason Anthony Ho-Shue from Canada in the finals 16-21, 21-7, 21-12 in the summit clash. Top-seeded Indian mixed double pair of Juhi Dewangan and Venkat Gaurav Prasad also finished at the top. In women's singles, Ira Sharma finished second best.

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4. On which date, the 2019 edition of International Day of Rural Women is observed?

[A] October 15

[B] October 19

[C] October 17

[D] October 16

**Answer:** October 15

The International Day of Rural Women is celebrated every year on 15th of October to recognize the critical role and contribution of rural women (including indigenous women) in increasing agricultural and rural development, improving food security and eradicating rural poverty". The 2019 theme is "Rural women and girls building climate resilience".

5. Alexei Leonov, who passed away recently, was the legendary cosmonaut of which country?

[A] South Korea

[B] Japan

[C] United States

[D] Russia

**Answer:** Russia

Alexei Leonov (85), the legendary Soviet Russian cosmonaut, has passed away in Moscow on October 11, 2019. On 18th March 1965, he created history by becoming the first human to conduct a spacewalk for 12 minutes and 9 seconds during the Voskhod 2 mission.

6. Who is the newly appointed President of the Indian Pharmaceutical Alliance (IPA)?

[A] Rajesh Jain

[B] Venu Srinivasan

[C] K Satish Reddy

[D] V A Rajkishore

**Answer:** K Satish Reddy

K Satish Reddy, Chairman of Dr Reddy's, has been appointed as President of the Indian Pharmaceutical Alliance (IPA) for 2019-2021. The IPA represents research-based National Pharmaceutical Companies.

7. Which Indian economist has won the 2019 Nobel Economics Prize for study on poverty?

[A] Abhijit Banerjee

[B] Arvind Subramanian

[C] Pranab Bardhan

[D] Srijit Mukherji

**Answer:** Abhijit Banerjee

Indian-American Abhijit Banerjee, his wife Esther Duflo and Michael Kremer have jointly won the 2019 Nobel Economics Prize for their experimental approach to alleviating global poverty. Mr Banerjee was educated at the University of Calcutta, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) and Harvard University, where he received his Ph.D in 1988. He is currently the Ford Foundation International Professor of Economics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Ms Duflo is the 2nd woman to be awarded a Nobel in economics after Elinor Ostrom (2009) and is also the youngest person-ever to receive the Economics Prize. The prize amount of 9 million Swedish krona will be shared equally between the three Laureates.

8. Who has been appointed as the new Union Law Secretary?

[A] Suresh Chandra

[B] Anoop Kumar Mendiratta

[C] Alok Shrivastava

[D] P S Joshi

**Answer:** Anoop Kumar Mendiratta

Anoop Kumar Mendiratta has been appointed as the new Law Secretary (Secretary, Legal Affairs) in the Union Law Ministry on contractual basis till March 30, 2023. He is at present the District and Sessions Judge (North East) of the Delhi's Karkardooma Courts. As per officials, it is the first time a sitting judge has been appointed as Law Secretary.

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9. Which Indian armed forced has recently organized Sangam Youth Festival (SYF)?

[A] Indian Coast Guard

[B] Indian Air Force

[C] Indian Army

[D] Indian Navy

**Answer:** Indian Army

The Sangam Youth Festival (SYF) has been organized by Indian Army at Bhadarwah in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) from 11th to 15th October 2019 in a bid to spread the message of peace, prosperity, communal harmony and national integration. Over 1,500 students from 32 colleges & university participated in the fest.

10. Who has been elected as new President of Tunisia?

[A] Kais Saied

[B] Nabil Karoui

[C] Youssef Chahed

[D] Mohamed Ennaceur

**Answer:** Kais Saied

Retired academic Kais Saied has been elected as new President of Tunisia after a landslide victory in the 2019 Tunisian presidential election.

11. Who has been appointed as Secretary of Department of School Education and Literacy?

[A] K M Chandrasekhar

[B] Amit Khare

[C] Rajiv Gauba

[D] N R Pillai

**Answer:** Amit Khare

I&B Secretary Amit Khare, an IAS officer of 1985 batch from Jharkhand cadre, has been given the additional charge of Secretary of Department of School Education and Literacy in Ministry of Human Resources Development (HRD). The Department of Higher Education is in charge of secondary and post-secondary education. It is empowered to grant deemed university status to educational institutions on the advice of the University Grants Commission (UGC) under Section 3 of the University Grants Commission (UGC) Act of 1956.

12. What is the India's rank at the 2019 Global Hunger Index (GHI)?

[A] 84th

[B] 112th

[C] 102nd

[D] 93rd

**Answer:** 102nd

India has been ranked 102nd out of 117 nations at the 2019 Global Hunger Index (GHI) that tracks hunger and malnutrition. The GHI is a peer-reviewed annual report, which is jointly published by Ireland's Concern Worldwide and Germany's Welthungerhilfe. It scores countries on a 100-point "severity scale", where zero is the best score (no hunger) and 100 is the worst. With a score of 30.3, India suffers from a level of hunger that is serious threat.

13. What is the theme of 2019 edition of World Food Day (WFD)?

[A] #FamilyFarming

[B] #ZeroHunger World

[C] #FeedingWorld

[D] #FoodPrices – from crisis to stability

**Answer:** #ZeroHunger World

The World Food Day (WFD) is observed every year on 16th of October to mark the foundation of Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations in 1945. It is also a day of action dedicated to tackling global hunger. The 2019 theme is "Our Actions Are Our Future, Healthy Diets for A #ZeroHunger World".

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14. Which organisation has introduced scheme of Food Safety Mitra (FSM)?

[A] FSSAI

[B] Red Cross Society

[C] Medical Council of India

[D] NCHRH

**Answer:** FSSAI

On the occasion of 2019 World Food Day (WFD), the Union Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan launched Food Safety Mitra (FSM) scheme, Eat Right Jacket and Eat Right Jhola. A FSM is an individual professional certified by Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) who assists in compliances related to FSS Act, Rules & Regulations with three avatars- Digital Mitra, Trainer Mitra and Hygiene Mitra depending upon their respective roles and responsibilities. The Eat Right Smart Jacket has been introduced to giving an identity to FSSAI staff to ensure transparent inspection. It's embedded with an RFID tag and QR code. It is linked to software to capture entry of inspection staff into premise for monitoring.

15. Which bank has launched new fixed deposit scheme 'FD Health'?

[A] SBI

[B] ICICI Bank

[C] HDFC

[D] Axis Bank

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**Answer:** ICICI Bank

The ICICI Bank has launched a new Fixed Deposit (FD) scheme – FD Health that provides the customer a complimentary critical illness cover of Rs 1 lakh from ICICI Lombard General Insurance Company on opening an FD of Rs 2 lakh to Rs 3 lakh for tenure of at least two years. For investors in FD Health, ICICI Bank will offer the insurance cover free of cost for the first year and thereafter, they can renew it.

16. Indo-Japan air drill exercise "Shinyuu Maitri" has started in which state?

[A] Rajasthan

[B] Jammu & Kashmir

[C] Karnataka

[D] West Bengal

**Answer:** West Bengal

In West Bengal, the joint military exercise 'Shinyuu Maitri' between Indian Air Force (IAF) and Japanese Air Self Defence Force (JASDF) has started at Air Force Station – Arjan Singh in Panagarh town from October 17 to 23. The focus of the exercise will be to undertake Joint Mobility and Tactical (JMT) interoperability among the two forces.

17. Which IIT has inked pact with ExxonMobil to boost biofuel research?

[A] IIT Madras

[B] IIT Indore

[C] IIT Bombay

[D] IIT Kanpur

**Answer:** IIT Madras

The IIT Madras has collaborated with ExxonMobil Research and Engineering Company (EMRE) for research on energy and biofuels. The 5-year joint-research agreement focuses on biofuels, data analytics, gas conversion and transport, and is intended towards finding low-emission solutions.

18. What is the theme of the 2019 edition of Global Handwashing Day (GHD)?

[A] Clean Hands for All

[B] Make handwashing a habit

[C] Our hands, our future

[D] Clean hands – a recipe for health

**Answer:** Clean Hands for All

The Global Handwashing Day (GHD) is observed every year on 15th of October to motivate and mobilize people around the world to improve their handwashing habits. It is a global campaign to raise awareness

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of handwashing with soap as a key factor in disease prevention. The 2019 theme is 'Clean Hands for All'.

19. Which state government has decided to organize India's first training and performance programme of world famous KHON Ramlila?

[A] Rajasthan

[B] Uttar Pradesh

[C] Tamil Nadu

[D] Chhattisgarh

**Answer:** Uttar Pradesh

The Culture Department of Uttar Pradesh government has decided to organise India's first training and performance programme of world famous KHON (□□□) Ramlila. The artists will get training from experts of Thailand as part of cultural exchange programme between two nations. Then, they will perform at Grand Deepotsav function which will be organised on 26th of October 2019 in Ayodhya. The KHON Ramlila of Thailand is included in the list of UNESCO's Intangible cultural heritage and it's a form of masked dance depicting the scenes of Ramlila. It has no dialogues and background voices narrate the whole story of Ramayana. KHON Ramlila's performance is also a visual delight famous for its beautiful attire and golden masks

20. Yashasvi Jaiswal, who became the youngest cricketer to score 200 in ODI, is from which city?

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[A] Mumbai

[B] Ranchi

[C] Kanpur

[D] Nagpur

**Answer:** Mumbai

On 16th of October, the 17-year-old Mumbai teenager Yashasvi Jaiswal created history as he became the youngest cricketer in the world to score a double century in 50-overs cricket including List A and ODIs. He scored 203 in 154 balls against Jharkhand in the ongoing Vijay Hazare Trophy at Alur, Karnataka. His, scintillating innings helped Mumbai set a mammoth target of 359 for Jharkhand in the Elite Group A match.

21. Which state has highest number of livestock, as per latest 20th Livestock Census -2019?

[A] Jharkhand

[B] Rajasthan

[C] Uttar Pradesh

[D] Madhya Pradesh

**Answer:** Uttar Pradesh

The Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying has recently released the 20th Livestock Census -2019. As per latest census, India's livestock population has increased to over 535 million showing an increase of 4.6% over Livestock Census-2012. Among the States, Uttar Pradesh has the highest number of livestock of 67.8 million, followed by Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal. The livestock census is conducted across the country periodically since 1919. The census usually covers all domesticated animals and headcounts of these animals are taken. The 20th Livestock Census was carried out in about 6.6 lakh villages and 89 thousand urban wards across the country.

22. Which state is celebrating the Shirui Lily Festival?

[A] Tripura

[B] Arunachal Pradesh

[C] Mizoram

[D] Manipur

**Answer:** Manipur

The 3rd edition of the Shirui Lily Festival 2019 has recently started at Shirui Vangayan Ground of Ukhrul in Manipur. The 4-day state festival was inaugurated by Union Tourism Minister Prahlad Singh Patel along with State Chief Minister N. Biren Singh. Folk dances and folk songs of different ethnic groups and performance by rock bands are the main attractions of the Festival which will showcase the rich cultural heritage of the State.

23. Ex-Eastern Bridge-V has started between India & which country?

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[A] Jordan
[B] Oman
[C] UAE
[D] Kuwait

**Answer:** Oman

The Indian Air Force (IAF) has started its bilateral joint exercise "Ex-Eastern Bridge-V " with Royal Air Force Oman (RAFO) at Air Force Base Masirah in Oman on October 17 & will continue till Oct 26. For the first time, MiG-29 fighter aircraft is participating in an International Exercise outside India.

24. The 129th death anniversary of the mystic bard Fakir Lalon Shah is observed in which country?
[A] Bangladesh
[B] Pakistan
[C] India
[D] Sri Lanka

**Answer:** Bangladesh

The 129th death anniversary of the mystic bard Fakir Lalon Shah is observed in Bangladesh on October 17, 2019. The devotees of Lalon from across the country and the world have congregated at the shrine to participate in the 3-day-long programme which is being organised by the Lalon academy and the culture ministry of Bangladesh. Lalon is believed to be born in 1774 though no written records exist. He died in 1890. His songs talk about humanism, love and equality going beyond the limitations imposed by religion, caste and creed. His contemporary Gurudev Rabindra Nath Tagore got some of his songs transcribed and published.

25. On which date, the 2019 edition of International Day for the Eradication of Poverty is observed?
[A] October 15
[B] October 18
[C] October 17
[D] October 16

**Answer:** October 17

The International Day for the Eradication of Poverty is celebrated every year on October 17 for eradication of poverty. The day also reflects the willingness of people living in poverty to use their expertise to contribute to the eradication of povertyThe 2019 theme is "Acting Together to Empower Children, their Families and Communities to End Poverty".

26. What is the India's rank at the 2019 Hurun Global Unicorn List?
[A] 1st
[B] 2nd
[C] 3rd
[D] 4th

**Answer:** 3rd

The Hurun Research Institute has released it's first-ever Hurun Global Unicorn List 2019. It is a ranking of the world's billion-dollar tech 'start-ups' founded in the 2000s and not yet listed on a public exchange. This is the first year of the list and follows from the 6th quarterly Hurun China Unicorn Index. China has topped the list with 206 unicorns, followed by US with 203. While India has been ranked 3rd in the list with 21 unicorns, led by payments solutions platform One97 Communications ($10 billion) and followed by cab aggregator Ola Cabs ($6 billion); online educator Byju's ($6 billion) and travel-stay finder OYO Rooms ($5 billion).

27. Nashri tunnel, which is in news recently, is situated in which state?
[A] Uttarakhand
[B] J&K
[C] Himachal Pradesh
[D] Sikkim

**Answer:** J&K

India's longest Chenani-Nashri road tunnel that links Kashmir with Jammu will be rechristened after

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Bhartiya Jansangh founder Dr Shyama Prasad Mukherjee. This is 9.2 km long tunnel on NH 44 that reduces the distance between Jammu and Srinagar by 31 km. The key features of the tunnel are – It is a single-tube bi-directional tunnel, with a 9.35-metre carriageway, and a vertical clearance of 5 metres.

28. The 2019 Indo-French Knowledge Summit was held in which city?

[A] Delhi

[B] Paris

[C] Lyon

[D] Pune

**Answer:** Lyon

The 2nd edition of Indo-French Knowledge Summit was held at University of Lyon in France on October 17-18. It is dedicated to higher education, research and innovation. The summit was organised by the Embassy of France in India in association with the Ministry of Science and Technology and the HRD Ministry.

29. The World Students' Day (WSD) is celebrated to mark the birth anniversary of which noted personality?

[A] Bal Gangadhar Tilak

[B] Mother Teresa

[C] APJ Abdul Kalam

[D] Lala Lajpat Rai

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**Answer:** APJ Abdul Kalam

The World Students' Day (WSD) is celebrated every year on October 15 to observe the birthday of India's former President and great scientist Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam. He was the 11th President of India, who served from 2002 to 2007, and was widely referred to as the people's President besides being credited for India's civilian space programme and military missile systems.

30. Which Arab country has announced establishment of 1st graduate-level, research-based AI university in world?

[A] Oman

[B] Jordon

[C] Israel

[D] UAE

**Answer:** UAE

UAE announced the establishment of the first graduate-level, research-based AI university – Mohamed bin Zayed University of Artificial Intelligence( MBZUAI) – in the world. The MBZUAI will enable graduate students, businesses and governments to advance the artificial intelligence field. The University is named after Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, who has long advocated for the UAE's development of human capital through knowledge and scientific thinking to take the nation into the future.

31. Which state has topped the NITI Aayog's first-ever India Innovation Index (III)?

[A] Maharashtra

[B] Telangana

[C] Karnataka

[D] Tamil Nadu

**Answer:** Karnataka

The first-ever India Innovation Index (III) has been launched by NITI Aayog in New Delhi in order to promote competitiveness among the states. Karnataka has topped the index, followed by Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Telangana, Haryana, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh. Jharkhand finished last in the list of 17 major states. Among the North-Eastern states, Sikkim and among Union Territories Delhi has occupied the top spot.

32. Which state has become the first Indian state to provide maternity benefits in the private educational sector?

[A] Karnataka

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[B] Kerala
[C] UP
[D] Tamil Nadu

**Answer:** Kerala

In a path-breaking development, the Central Government has recently approved the Kerala Government's decision to bring teachers and other staff of private educational institutions under the Maternity Benefit Act. When the amendment to the Act comes into force, Kerala would become the first state in India to provide maternity benefits in the private educational sector. The employees covered under the law can avail 26 weeks' maternity leave with salary. Moreover, an employer has to provide an amount of Rs 1,000 rupees as a medical allowance.

33. Tulagi Island, sometimes seen in news, is the territory of which country?
[A] Kiribati
[B] Solomon
[C] Tuvalu
[D] Nauru

**Answer:** Solomon

A Chinese company "Sam Enterprise Group" has signed a secretive deal with the government of the Solomon Islands to lease an entire Tulagi island for up to 75 years but the status of the lease remains unclear since it is a non-binding agreement. The deal was signed just a few days after the Solomon Islands abandoned Taiwan and began diplomatically recognizing Chinese aid and investment to flow. The purpose of the deal is to establish a Pacific military base on a strategic gateway to Australia. The island of Tulagi served as a South Pacific headquarters for Britain and then Japan. It is the site of a former Japanese naval base and was the scene of fierce fighting in World War II.

34. Which bank has recently launched contactless mobile phone payments facility?
[A] SBI
[B] ICICI Bank
[C] HDFC bank
[D] BoB

**Answer:** SBI

The SBI Card has launched the 'SBI Card Pay' that allows contactless payment using mobile phones at PoS terminals. Using SBI Card Pay, customers can make contactless payments at Near Field Communication (NFC) enabled point of sale terminals with just one tap of their mobiles, without using the physical credit card or entering any PIN. The SBI Card Pay is a payment feature based on Host Card Emulation (HCE) technology for faster, convenient and more secure card payments using mobile phones.

35. Debayan Saha, who has invented PM 2.5 device to curb air pollution, is graduate from which IIT?
[A] IIT Kharagpur
[B] IIT Bombay
[C] IIT Delhi
[D] IIT Indore

**Answer:** IIT Kharagpur

Debayan Saha, a mechanical engineering graduate from IIT Kharagpur, has invented a device called "PM 2.5" which he claimed when fitted near the silencer pipe in vehicles will curb air pollution. The technology developed by him uses a combination of electric energy and wave energy to influence the pollutants like PM 2.5 such that they act like magnet attracting other particulate pollutants from the ambient atmosphere to get attached to it. As they grow bigger in size they become heavy and fall off safely on the ground like soil.

36. What is the India's rank in the 2019 World Giving Index (WGI)?
[A] 112th
[B] 101st
[C] 82nd
[D] 97th

**Answer:** 82nd

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India has been ranked 82nd among the 128 countries in the 2019 World Giving Index (WGI), which is surveyed by the Charities Aid Foundation (CAF). The average figures for India over the past decade show that 34% people helped a stranger, 24% donated money and 19% volunteered or donated their time. The United States stood at the top followed Myanmar, New Zealand and Australia. The CAF is an international organization that promotes giving to transform lives and communities across the world.

37. Which state government has launched YSR Rythu Bharosa-PM Kisan Yojana?

[A] Himachal Pradesh

[B] Tamil Nadu

[C] Kerala

[D] Andhra Pradesh

**Answer:** Andhra Pradesh

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S Jaganmohan Reddy has launched YSR Rythu Bharosa – PM Kisan Samman Yojana in Nellore district. Under the crop investment support scheme, farmers will get financial assistance of Rs 13,500 per annum in three instalments, with the State Government contributing Rs 7,500 and the Centre Rs 6,000. Rythu Bharosa is one of the 9 major promises (Navaratnalu, or nine gems) made by the ruling YSR Congress Party in its manifesto.

38. Kanwar Sain Jolly, who passed away recently, was associated to which field?

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[A] Journalism

[B] Politics

[C] Arts

[D] Science

**Answer:** Journalism

Kanwar Sain Jolly (86), the Veteran journalist, has passed away in Gurugram. He served at various positions for 40 years at Press Trust of India (PTI), India's premier news agency. He was retired as Deputy General Manager of PTI news agency in 1993.

39. Who is the author of the book "Dark Fear, Eerie Cities: New Hindi Cinema in Neo-liberal India"?

[A] Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni

[B] Chetan Bhagat

[C] Sarunas Paunksnis

[D] Ashwin Sanghi

**Answer:** Sarunas Paunksnis

The book "Dark Fear, Eerie Cities: New Hindi Cinema in Neo-liberal India" has been authored by Sarunas Paunksnis. The book analyses the wide array of films made in the early 21st century to offer a philosophical and psychoanalytical critique of the transforming cinematic imaginary – from the pre-1990s feudal family ideal to the contemporary construction of the new middle class's subjectivities in the post-colonial context.

40. Which Indian armed force has launched OASIS (Officers Automated & Structured Information System) software?

[A] Indian Army

[B] Indian Air Force

[C] Indian Navy

[D] Indian Coast Guard

**Answer:** Indian Army

The Indian Army has launched its new software OASIS (Officers Automated & Structured Information System) that has started digitizing the records of the Army officers. The new software is hosted on Army's intranet and can be accessed by the Army officers to check their details. The OASIS will facilitate officers to view service records & raise observations. It also view & download monthly Statements of Accounts, Form-16 & DSOP Fund statements.

41. Who has been has been appointed as Director-General of the National Security Guard (NSG)?

[A] Anup Singh

[B] K L Dhillon

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[C] Venkatesh Prasad

[D] Pranjal Kumar

**Answer:** Anup Singh

Anup Singh, who is a 1985-batch IPS officer of Gujarat cadre, has been appointed as Director-General of the National Security Guard (NSG). His appointment will be from the date of joining the post and up to 30th of September, 2020. The NSG was raised in 15th October 1984 for combating terrorist activities with a view to protect states against internal disturbances.

42. India will host the 91st Interpol General Assembly in which year?

[A] 2020

[B] 2021

[C] 2022

[D] 2023

**Answer:** 2022

India will host the 91st Interpol General Assembly in the year 2022 after a proposal received the overwhelming support of member countries at the 2019 congregation at Santinago in Chile. The 91st Interpol General Assembly (IGA-2022) will be held as part of celebrations of the 75th anniversary of Indian Independence. Based in Lyon, France, Interpol (International Criminal Police Organisation) has 194 member states and 100 years of experience of international cooperation in policing. The organisation has 90-million records spread across 17 databases.

43. Kalidas Karmakar, who passed away recently, was the renowned painter of which country?

[A] Sri Lanka

[B] Bangladesh

[C] India

[D] Nepal

**Answer:** Bangladesh

Kalidas Karmakar (73), an internationally acclaimed painter of Bangladesh, has passed away in Dhaka on 18th October 2019. Kalidas was prolific in using new mediums and style for his art work while maintaining his signature style. He called his work alluvial art meaning the art of the delta land which gave expression to the precarious nature of the alluvial land and its people, their struggles and hopes. Karmakar also experimented with performance art which combined artist's body as an object of art along with his paintings.

44. Baliyatra is one of the biggest trade fairs of which state?

[A] Odisha

[B] Karnataka

[C] Tamil Nadu

[D] Jharkhand

**Answer:** Odisha

The Baliyatra is one of the biggest trade fairs of Odisha i.e. scheduled to begin on November 12. The 8-day trade fair will be jointly organized by the Cuttack District Administration, District Cultural Council, and the Cuttack Municipal Corporation (CMC).

45. Who led the Indian delegation at G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors in Washington?

[A] Narendra Modi

[B] Rajnath Singh

[C] Piyush Goyal

[D] Nirmala Sitharaman

**Answer:** Nirmala Sitharaman

In Washington DC, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman led the Indian delegation at G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors as well as the BRICS Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors meetings on the side-lines of the IMF/World Bank Annual Meetings. The focus of discussions in the G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors Meeting was on the current challenges to the global economy and possible responses to mitigate them.

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46. The Nuclear Energy Conclave 2019 was held in which city?
[A] Kochi
[B] Laddakh
[C] Bangaluru
[D] New Delhi
**Answer:** New Delhi

Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh has inaugurated the 11th Edition of Nuclear Energy Conclave 2019 in New Delhi. The theme of the Conclave: "Economics of Nuclear Power- Innovation towards Safer & Cost-Effective Technologies". It was organized by India Energy Forum (IEF).

47. Which sportsperson has written a book "Mind Master: Winning Lessons from a Champion's Life"?
[A] Abhinav Bindra
[B] Anju Bobby George
[C] Viswanathan Anand
[D] Jeev Milkha Singh
**Answer:** Viswanathan Anand

The book titled "Mind Master: Winning Lessons from a Champion's Life" has been authored by Indian Chess legend Viswanathan Anand. Through the book, Anand revisits his greatest games and worst losses, his unique experiences of playing against the best minds, and the methods he employs to prepare for wins, cope with disappointments and, simply, stay in the game. He looks back at a lifetime of games played, opponents tackled and circumstances overcome and draws from its depths significant tools that will help every reader to navigate life's challenges.

48. Who has been appointed the new chief of the European Central Bank (ECB)?
[A] Takehiko Nakao
[B] Antonio Guterres
[C] Kristalina Georgieva
[D] Christine Lagarde
**Answer:** Christine Lagarde

Former IMF chief Christine Lagarde has been appointed the new chief of the European Central Bank (ECB). She will succeed Mario Draghi (Italy) from November 1. Her confirmation for a non-renewable term of 8 years comes after EU leaders nominated her for the position on July 2.

49. DANX -19 has been conducted under the aegis of which command of the Indian Armed Forces?
[A] Andaman & Nicobar Command
[B] South-Western Command
[C] Army Training Command
[D] Southern Command
**Answer:** Andaman & Nicobar Command

The 2nd edition of Defence of Andaman and Nicobar Islands Exercise (DANX-19) has been conducted under the aegis of Andaman & Nicobar Command (ANC) from 14th to 18th Oct 2019. The 5-day exercise is a large scale joint services exercise of the Indian Army, Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard. The purpose of the exercise was to practice the defence of the island chain and recapturing islands

50. The 2019 Military World Games has started in which city of China?
[A] Hangzhou
[B] Beijing
[C] Wuhan
[D] Shanghai
**Answer:** Wuhan

The 7th edition of Military World Games (MWG-2019) is being held from October 18–27 in Wuhan, China with theme 'Military Glory and Peace'. It is for the first time that China is hosting the MWG, which is also known as Military Olympics. In it, more than 10,000 military officials from over 140 counties, including India are expected to participate with a record-high 329 events across 27 sports. The first MWG was inaugurated in Rome in 1955, and since then, it is held in every 4 years by the International Military

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Sports Council (or CISM).

51. Chewang Rinchen Setu, which is in news recently, is located in which city / region?

[A] Shillong

[B] Gangtok

[C] Ladakh

[D] Darjeeling

**Answer:** Ladakh

Rajnath Singh has recently inaugurated Col. Chewang Rinchen Setu which has been constructed at an altitude of 14,650 feet in the forward area of Ladakh region. This bridge has been built by the Border Roads Organisation (BRO). This Bridge is built on the strategically important road Durbuk Shyok Daulat Beg Oldie in sub sector north in eastern Ladakh. According to BRO, micro pile technology was used during the foundation of the bridge to overcome the technological challenges in the remote areas of Ladakh. It is named in honor of Colonel Chewang Rinchan who was one of the highly decorated officer in the Indian Army from Ladakh and he was awarded the Maha Vir Chakara twice.

52. Who has been sworn-in as the new President of Indonesia?

[A] Susilo Yudhoyono

[B] Jusuf Kalla

[C] Maruf Amin

[D] Joko Widodo

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**Answer:** Joko Widodo

In Jakarta, Indonesian President Joko Widodo has been sworn-in for a second and final 5-year term with a pledge to take bolder actions in the course of a string of fresh challenges around security, corruption and economic slowdown. Widodo clinched victory with 55.5% of the vote in the April presidential election.

53. Which state has decided to adopt NCERT course in Class 9th & 10th standard in all govt schools?

[A] Himachal Pradesh

[B] Madhya Pradesh

[C] Rajasthan

[D] Haryana

**Answer:** Madhya Pradesh

The Madhya Pradesh government has decided to implement NCERT course in Class ninth and tenth standard in all government schools of the state from the next academic session. The School Education Minister Dr Prabhuram Chaudhary has said that Parents-Teachers Association meetings will be held once in every 3 months in order to improve the standard of education in government schools. In it, parents and teachers will have an open discussion on students' education and their problems. He also pointed that Madhya Pradesh is the first state in the country, where the tradition of transfer of teachers as per their convenience has been started online.

54. KB Siddaiah, who passed away recently, was the veteran personality in which field?

[A] Poetry

[B] Journalism

[C] Politics

[D] Arts

**Answer:** Poetry

Sociopolitical philosopher-writer KB Siddaiah (65) has passed away in Bengaluru. He was one of the founder members of Dalitha Sangharsha Samithi (DSS) during the 80's and co-authored many songs to inspire the movement. He was a disciple of Jnapith awardee Dr U R Anantamurthy and critic Ki Ram Nagaraj.

55. Who has been appointed as the new chairman of Indian Banks' Association (IBA)?

[A] Rakesh Sharma

[B] Rajnish Kumar

[C] S S Mallikarjuna Rao

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[D] Madhav Kalyan

**Answer:** Rajnish Kumar

SBI chairman Rajnish Kumar has been appointed as the new chairman of Indian Banks' Association (IBA) for 2019-20. He succeeded Sunil Mehta, who was the MD & CEO of Punjab National Bank (PNB). The IBA represents banks' interests with the government and regulators.

56. Which team clinched the 2019 title of Pro Kabaddi League (PKL)?

[A] U Mumba

[B] Patna Pirates

[C] Bengal Warriors

[D] Dabang Delhi

**Answer:** Bengal Warriors

Bengal Warriors became the champions of Vivo Pro Kabaddi League (PKL) season 7. In the final, they defeated Dabang Delhi by 39-34 at the EKA Arena by TransStadia in Ahmedabad. This is Bengal's first PKL title.

57. N Chandrasekaran, who authored the book 'Bridgital Nation', is the chairman of which company?

[A] Infosys

[B] Tata Sons

[C] Wipro

[D] Birla

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**Answer:** Tata Sons

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has recently a book titled 'Bridgital Nation' in New Delhi. The book has been authored by Chairman of Tata Sons, N Chandrasekaran and Roopa Purushothaman. The book presents a powerful vision of the future where technology and human beings co-exist in a mutually beneficial ecosystem.

58. Which Indian cyclist won gold in the men's junior Keirin event at the 2019 Asian Track Cycling Championships

[A] James Singh

[B] Ronaldo Singh

[C] Rojit Singh

[D] Esow Alben

**Answer:** Ronaldo Singh

Indian cyclist Ronaldo Singh has won gold in the men's junior Keirin event at the 2019 Asian Track Cycling Championships at Incheon in South Korea. Apart from Ronaldo, James Singh clinched a bronze medal in the same event. India also secured 2 bronze medals in men's and women's Jr. sprint team.

59. The 18th Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) summit 2019 is being held in which city?

[A] Baku

[B] New Delhi

[C] Kuala Lumpur

[D] Bangkok

**Answer:** Baku

The 18th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) 2019 is being held at Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan from 25-26 October 2019. The NAM was established in 1961 in Belgrade, Yugoslavia through an initiative of the Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and the Yugoslav President Josip Broz Tito. It was founded during the collapse of the colonial system and the independence struggles of the peoples of Africa, Asia, Latin America and other regions of the world and at the height of the Cold War. The NAM is a forum of 120 developing world states that are not formally aligned with or against any major power bloc.

60. Indo-Maldives joint military exercise EKUVERIN – 2019 has concluded in which city?

[A] Kochi

[B] Visakhapatnam

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[C] Pune

[D] Bangaluru

**Answer:** Pune

Indo-Maldives joint military exercise 'Ex Ekuverin – 2019' has recently culminated at Foreign Training Node in Aundh military station, Pune. The 14 day exercise included joint training of the contingents in counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism operations in the semi-urban environment under the UN mandate, developing interoperability and cohesion between both the contingents.

61. The world's oldest known natural pearl has recently discovered in which Island?

[A] Ras Al Khaimah

[B] Umm Al Qaiwain

[C] Sharjah

[D] Abu Dhabi

**Answer:** Abu Dhabi

The oldest known natural pearl in the world has been discovered by Abu Dhabi archaeologists working at a Neolithic site on Marawah Island, just off the coast of Abu Dhabi. The pearl is dubbed as the 'Abu Dhabi Pearl'. It was found in layers that have been radiocarbon dated to 5,800-5,600 BCE, during the Neolithic period. The discovery is a proof that pearls and oysters were being used in the UAE nearly 8,000 years ago, and represents the earliest known evidence for pearling yet discovered anywhere in the world. Prior to the Abu Dhabi Pearl discovery, the earliest known pearl in the UAE came from a Neolithic site in Umm Al Qaiwain.

62. The researchers of which country have developed renewable energy storage device?

[A] United Kingdom

[B] United States

[C] France

[D] Germany

**Answer:** United Kingdom

The researchers from Queen Mary institute of London have developed a new dielectric capacitor- a device that stores energy like a battery, taking inspiration from a French pastry. The croissant is made by folding multiple layers of dough. They found that by pressing and folding a polymer film capacitor, they were able to store 30 times more energy than the best-performing commercially available dielectric capacitor. This is the highest energy density ever reported in a polymer film capacitor. The advance may pave the way for efficient, low-cost, and environmentally-friendly electric energy storage systems for wind and solar sources. With this technique, large amounts of renewable energy can be stored.

63. Which state has registered highest number of crimes against women, as per Crime in India Report 2017?

[A] Uttar Pradesh

[B] West Bengal

[C] Maharashtra

[D] Madhya Pradesh

**Answer:** Uttar Pradesh

The annual Crime in India Report 2017 has recently published by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). The statistics highlight the poor law and order situation in the country with 3.59 lakh cases of crime reported against women in 2017. Uttar Pradesh recorded the maximum number of crimes against women with 56,011 cases in 2017, followed by Maharashtra (31,979), West Bengal (30,992), Madhya Pradesh (29,778), Rajasthan (25,993) and Assam (23,082). The definition of 'crime against women' includes murder, rape, dowry death, suicide abetment, acid attack, cruelty against women and kidnapping. Assam recorded the highest crime rate of 143 in the country in 2017. Crime rate is offences registered per one lakh people. Odisha and Telangana recorded the second-highest crime rate of 94 each, followed by Haryana (88) and Rajasthan (73).

64. On which date, the 2019 edition of World Iodine Deficiency Day (WIDD) is observed?

[A] October 20

[B] October 23

[C] October 21

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[D] October 22

**Answer:** October 21

The World Iodine Deficiency Day (WIDD) is observed every year on 21st of October to raise awareness of iodine deficiency and its devastating effects on brain development. Iodine is an essential micronutrient required for normal thyroid function, growth, and development. Its deficiency is a major cause of preventable mental retardation. In its most severe forms, Iodine Deficiency Disorders (IDDs) can lead to cretinism, stillbirth and miscarriage; even mild deficiency can cause a significant loss of learning ability.

65. Which Indian sportsperson has won the Vogue's Sportsperson of the Year 2019?

[A] Dutee Chand

[B] P V Sindhu

[C] Mary Kom

[D] Mithali Raj

**Answer:** Dutee Chand

Indian sprinter Dutee Chand has won the Sportsperson of the Year 2019 in the 3rd edition of the Vogue Women Of The Year awards. Besides winning the prestigious honour, Dutee will also feature on the cover of Vogue India's November 2019 edition. Dutee broke the national record in the 100-metre event at the National Open Athletics Championships in Ranchi Ocrober 11. Besides her record-breaking feats on the track, she is also considered as India's first openly gay athlete.

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66. India's 1st plant to convert paddy straw into compressed biogas (CBG) will come up in which city?

[A] Udaipur

[B] Karnal

[C] Jabalpur

[D] Nagpur

**Answer:** Karnal

India's first plant to convert paddy straw into Compressed Bio Gas (CBG) will come up at Gharaunda village in Karnal, Haryana. The biogas generated at the Indra Indraprastha Gas Limited (IGL) 's plant will be used as CNG in vehicles and as piped cooking gas and help fight menace of stubble burning in fields. The plant is estimated to be completed by May 2020. It will have the capacity to convert stubble generated from 20,000 acres in a year into gas, which will then be sourced by IGL for its City Gas Distribution (CGD) network in Karnal. This unit has been set up by Ajay Bio-Energy Pvt Ltd under 'SATAT' (Sustainable Alternative Towards Affordable Transportation) scheme on CBG launched by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.

67. What is the theme of the 2019 edition of World Osteoporosis Day (WOD)?

[A] Strong Women Make Stronger Women

[B] Stop at One: Make your First Break your Last

[C] Love your bones and Protect your future

[D] Real Men Build Their Strength from Within

**Answer:** Love your bones and Protect your future

The International Osteoporosis Foundation observes the World Osteoporosis Day (WOD) every year on October 20th to raise global awareness on prevention, diagnosis and treatment of osteoporosis and metabolic bone disease. The 2019 theme is 'Love your bones and Protect your future'.

68. Which UN agency has launched campaign 'Feed Our Future' against hunger and malnutrition in India?

[A] UNESCO

[B] WFP

[C] FAO

[D] UNIDO

**Answer:** WFP

On the occasion of 2019 World Food Day (WFD), the United Nations World Food Programme (UNWFP) has launched its global cinema campaign 'Feed Our Future' in India with support from UFO Moviez to engage and motivate moviegoers to help in spreading awareness and working towards creating a world with Zero Hunger. The new campaign aims to build on last year's results which helped to double awareness of WFP among those who saw the ad and raised more than half a million dollars through

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online giving and through a 38% increase in downloads of the agency's #ShareTheMeal donation App.

69. Which state government has decided no Govt. jobs for people with more than 2 children from 2021?

[A] Rajasthan

[B] Punjab

[C] Jharkhand

[D] Assam

**Answer:** Assam

The 126-member Assam Assembly has adopted a 'Population and Women Empowerment Policy'& decided to make government jobs out of bounds for people with more than two children with effect from 1st January 2021 as per the small family norm.

70. Which state government has decided no Govt. jobs for people with more than 2 children from 2021?

[A] Rajasthan

[B] Punjab

[C] Jharkhand

[D] Assam

**Answer:** Assam

The 126-member Assam Assembly has adopted a 'Population and Women Empowerment Policy'& decided to make government jobs out of bounds for people with more than two children with effect from 1st January 2021 as per the small family norm.

71. Which union ministry has signed pact with defense ministry provide traditional medicine?

[A] Ministry of AYUSH

[B] Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change

[C] Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare

[D] Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

**Answer:** Ministry of AYUSH

The AYUSH ministry has signed a MoU with the Defence ministry to provide traditional medicine services at the armed forces' hospitals and dispensaries. Under the MoU, ayurveda units will be established at palliative care centres at the Army Research and Referral Hospital, Air Force Hospital, Hindon in Ghaziabad and five identified ex-service men Contributory Health Scheme (ECHS) polyclinics in Delhi –NCR.

72. The 2019 summit of the Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Program (GSLEP) was held in which city?

[A] Dehradun

[B] Shimla

[C] Darjeeling

[D] Delhi

**Answer:** Delhi

On the occasion of 2019 International Snow Leopard Day (ISLD), the Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar launched the first national protocol to enumerate the snow leopard population in India. It was launched at the inaugural session of the 4th steering committee meeting of the Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Program (GSLEP) in Delhi. Poaching is a major threat for the snow leopards. The Project Snow Leopard is an initiative of the Environment Ministry which aims to safeguard and conserve India's unique natural heritage of high altitude wildlife populations and their habitats by promoting conservation through participatory policies and actions. Snow leopards play a critical role in their ecosystem as top predators.

73. On which date, the 2019 edition of International Snow Leopard Day (ISLD) is observed?

[A] October 26

[B] October 23

[C] October 25

[D] October 24

**Answer:** October 23

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The International Snow Leopard Day (ISLD) is celebrated every year on 23rd of October to protect and conserve the snow leopards and preserve the beautiful wildlife of the Himalayas. It is believed to have 400 to 700 snow leopards spread across Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

74. The Data Security Council of India (DSCI) has launched which national repository of startups?

[A] TechBharat

[B] TechWalk

[C] TechSagar

[D] TechTea

**Answer:** TechSagar

The Data Security Council of India (DSCI) in partnership with National Cyber Security Coordinator's office has recently launched national repository 'TechSagar' to facilitate new opportunities for businesses and academia to collaborate, connect and innovate, in future. The TechSagar provides insights about capabilities of more than 4000 entities from industry, academia and research across 25 technology areas like Internet of Things (IoT), Artificial Intelligence / Machine Learning, blockchain, cloud and virtualization, robotics and Automation and more. The online portal also allows one to sort startups by filtering the technology they work on, their headquarters.

75. Bhashan Char Island, which is in news recently, is located in which country?

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[A] India

[B] Sri Lanka

[C] Bangladesh

[D] Pakistan

**Answer:** Bangladesh

The Bhashan Char is an uninhabited island around 30km east of Hatiya Island in the South East Bangladesh. The island was formed about two decades ago on the mouth of river Meghna. It is in news recently because thousands of Rohingya living in Bangladesh refugee camps have agreed to move to an island in the Bay of Bengal, despite fears the site is prone to flooding. It must be noted that the Government of Bangladesh has built the relocation camp at Bhashan Char with a capacity to accommodate about 1lakh people in 1440 buildings constructed there at an estimated cost of Tk 2,300 crore.

76. Who led Indian delegation at the 18th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)?

[A] Narendra Modi

[B] Raj Nath Kovind

[C] Venkaiah Naidu

[D] Rajnath Singh

**Answer:** Venkaiah Naidu

Vice President, M. Venkaiah Naidu is leading the Indian delegation at the 18th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) at Baku, Azerbaijan on 25th to 26th of October. The theme for the Summit is – "Upholding the Bandung Principles to ensure concerted and adequate response to the challenges of the contemporary world". The theme is significant as it relates to the forthcoming 65th anniversary of Bandung Principles in 2020 and the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the Movement in 2021.The Ten Principles of Bandung is a political statement that encapsulate the need to promote world peace and cooperation were formulated at the Asian-African Conference in 1955.

77. Which Indian sportsperson has been named ambassador for PM Modi's 'Bharat Ki Laxmi' initiative?

[A] Saina Nehwal

[B] Mary Kom

[C] PV Sindhu

[D] Mithali Raj

**Answer:** PV Sindhu

Actor Deepika Padukone and shuttler PV Sindhu has been named the ambassadors for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's new initiative called 'Bharat Ki Laxmi' movement. The aim of the initiative is to bring

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commendable work done by women across the nation to light ahead of the Diwali festival.

78. Who has been appointed new CEO of UIDAI?

[A] Prakash Sharma

[B] Pankaj Kumar

[C] Mayank Dutt

[D] Vijay Kumar

**Answer:** Pankaj Kumar

Pankaj Kumar, a 1987-batch IAS officer, has been appointed as the new CEO of the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI). The UIDAI is a statutory authority under the provisions of the Aadhaar Act of 2016 under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (Meity) with the mandate to issue UID or Aadhaar to all residents of India to eliminate duplicate and fake id entities.

79. Who is the head of the committee to resolve MeitY and NITI fight over Artificial Intelligence (AI)?

[A] K Vijay Raghavan

[B] S. K. Sinha

[C] Shobhana K. Pattanayak

[D] Tarun Shridhar

**Answer:** K Vijay Raghavan

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The Government of India (GoI) has formed a committee to resolve differences between the NITI Aayog and the Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY) over who will implement its ambitious Artificial Intelligence (AI) mission. The committee will be headed by principal scientific advisor K Vijay Raghavan and represented by the secretary in the department of science and technology, the CEO of NITI Aayog and secretary of MeitY.

80. Which Indian Armed Force has decided to conduct exercise codenamed 'Sindhu Sudarshan'?

[A] Indian Air Force

[B] Indian Navy

[C] Assam Rifles

[D] Indian Army

**Answer:** Indian Army

The Indian Army has decided to conduct exercise codenamed 'Sindhu Sudarshan' in the deserts of Rajasthan from Nov 29 to Dec 4. The purpose of the exercise is to evaluate the capability of the defence services to strike deep into enemy territory in an integrated air-land battle. Over 40,000 troops will participate in an all-arms battle array of Divisions and Brigades carrying out offensive operations in deserts.

81. Which union ministry has inaugurated the International Workshop on Environment Flows at Delhi?

[A] Ministry of AYUSH

[B] Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology

[C] Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change

[D] Ministry of Jal Shakti

**Answer:** Ministry of Jal Shakti

Union Minister for Jal Shakti, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat has recently inaugurated the International Workshop on Environment Flows at Delhi. He also formally released the first version of the Guidance Document on Environment flow assessment in India. The purpose of the workshop is to assist in the e-flows implementation in India by answering the following questions: What are the overall aims and targets for e-flows assessment in India? & What are the short- and long-term steps to implement e-flows according to the overall aims and targets.

82. India signed the Kartarpur Sahib Corridor Agreement with which country?

[A] Nepal

[B] Bangladesh

[C] Afghanistan

[D] Pakistan

**Answer:** Pakistan

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To celebrate the 550th birth anniversary of the founder of Sikhism Guru Nanak Dev, India and Pakistan have recently signed the landmark agreement to operationalise the historic Kartarpur Sahib Corridor at Zero Point, just about 4 km from the International Boundary. It will connect the Dera Baba Nanak shrine in India's Punjab with the Gurdwara at Kartarpur in Pakistan. The agreement will allow access to Gurdwara Darbar Sahib in Norowal district of Pakistan where the founder of Sikhism Guru Nanak Dev spent last 18 years of his life. The highlights of the Agreement are as follows: Indian pilgrims of all faiths and persons of Indian origin can use the corridor and the travel will be Visa Free.

83. What is the India's rank in the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business 2020 report?

[A] 75th

[B] 82nd

[C] 63rd

[D] 59th

**Answer:** 63rd

India has been ranked 63rd among 190 countries, as per latest Doing Business Report (DBR, 2020) of World Bank (WB). As per report, the World Bank (WB) has recognized India as one of the top 10 improvers for the third consecutive year. India's recovery rate under resolving insolvency has improved significantly from 26.5% to 71.6%. The time taken for resolving insolvency has also come down significantly from 4.3 years to 1.6 years. India has reduced the number of procedures in granting construction permits. Apart from this, India continues to maintain its first position among South Asian countries.

84. Who became the first Indian man to win gold at Wushu World Championships?

[A] Rajvir Singh

[B] Santosh Kumar

[C] Narender Grewal

[D] Praveen Kumar

**Answer:** Praveen Kumar

Praveen Kumar has become the first Indian man to win gold in the 48kg category at the 15th Wushu World Championships. In the final, he beat Russel Diaz of Philippines in the men's Sanda event in Shanghai. Wushu is a Chinese martial art which combines full-contact kickboxing, including close-range punches and kicks, with wrestling, takedowns, throws, sweeps and kicks catch.

85. Who has been appointed as new Chairman of Staff Selection Commission (SSC)?

[A] Braj Raj Sharma

[B] Pankaj Kumar

[C] Pooja Kadian

[D] Sandhyarani Devi

**Answer:** Braj Raj Sharma

Braj Raj Sharma, a 1984-batch IAS officer of J&K cadre, has been appointed as Chairman of Staff Selection Commission (SSC). He succeeded Pankaj Kumar, who recently became the new CEO of the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI).

86. Who is the author of the book "Ten Studies in Kashmir: History and Politics"?

[A] Jnan Chandra Ghosh

[B] Rajeshwar Acharya

[C] Kashi Nath Pandit

[D] Gita Mehta

**Answer:** Kashi Nath Pandit

The book titled "Ten Studies in Kashmir: History and Politics" has been authored by educationist and Padma Shri recipient Prof Kashi Nath Pandit. It sheds light on the events that happened from 1947 till the revocation of the special status of the J&K state (1947-2019 events). The author has described complexities in various aspects of contemporary Kashmir history. He has also described the issues like the genesis of the Kashmir crises, its roots, and ramifications, and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) and the Kashmir debate in the UN.

87. Which institute has topped the 2020 QS India University Rankings?

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[A] IIT Bombay
[B] IIT Madras
[C] IIT Kharagpur
[D] IIT Roorkee

**Answer:** IIT Bombay

IIT Bombay has topped the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) India University Rankings 2020. The QS has ranked the higher education institutions in India on the basis eight parameters of academic reputation (30%), employer reputation (20%), faculty-student ratio (20%), staff with PhD (10%), papers per faculty (10%), citation per paper (5%), international faculty (2.5%) and international students (2.5%). The Indian Institute of Science (IISc) Bangaluru has been ranked second followed by the IITs in Delhi, Madras, Kharagpur, Kanpur, Roorkee, and Guwahati.

88. On which date, the 2019 edition of World Development Information Day (WDID) is observed?
[A] October 25
[B] October 26
[C] October 24
[D] October 27

**Answer:** October 24

The World Development Information Day (WDID) is observed every year on 24th of October to draw the attention of the world public opinion to development problems and the necessity of strengthening international cooperation to solve them. It aims to disseminate information and mobilize public opinion, particularly among young people, in order to create awareness of the problems of development, promoting efforts in the sphere of international cooperation for development. This special day coincides with the United Nations Day (UND) which also falls on 24th October.

89. On which date, the 2019 edition of World Polio Day (WPD) is observed?
[A] October 24
[B] October 26
[C] October 28
[D] October 23

**Answer:** October 24

The World Polio Day (WPD) is observed every year on 24th October by the World Health Organization (WHO) and its allied agencies to commemorate the birth of Jonas Salk, who led the first team to develop a vaccine against poliomyelitis. The day provides an opportunity to celebrate progress towards a polio-free world and the tireless efforts of many towards the goal.

90. What is the India's rank at the 2019 Melbourne Mercer Global Pension Index (MMGPI)?
[A] 43rd
[B] 55th
[C] 17th
[D] 32nd

**Answer:** 32nd

India has been ranked 32nd among 39 nations at the 2019 Melbourne Mercer Global Pension Index (MMGPI). The index is based on how they fare on providing pension and retirement benefits to citizens across different income groups. India's index value increased largely due to the improvement in all three sub-indices of adequacy, sustainability and integrity. As per the index, the improvement was due to slight increase in scores across various dimensions, including net household savings, greater flexibility in managing retirement and part time work, steady progress in governance and reporting around private pension plans.

91. Which country will host the first edition of expanded 24-team FIFA World Cup for Clubs in 2021?
[A] Qatar
[B] India
[C] China
[D] Sri Lanka

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**Answer:** China

China will host the inaugural edition of the expanded 24-team FIFA World Cup for Clubs in 2021. The current Club World Cup features 7- teams including the holders of the UEFA Champions League. Qatar will host the competition in 2019 & 2020.

92. What is the theme of the 2019 edition of Vigilance Awareness Week (VAW)?

[A] Promote integrity and eradicate Corruption

[B] My Vision-Corruption Free India

[C] Eradicate Corruption-Build a New India

[D] Integrity- A way of life

**Answer:** Integrity- A way of life

The Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) is observing the Vigilance Awareness Week from 28th October to 2nd November 2019 with theme "Integrity- A way of life". This is observed every year during the week in which the birthday of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel (31st October) falls. This awareness week campaign affirms commitment to promotion of integrity and probity in public life through citizen participation.

93. Which international organization has inked agreement project to support smallholder farmers in Odisha?

[A] ADB

[B] IMF

[C] World Bank

[D] AIIB

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**Answer:** World Bank

The Government of India (GoI), Government of Odisha and the World Bank have recently signed a US$165 million loan agreement to support 125,000 smallholder farmers from 15 districts of the state. The project will strengthen the resilience of smallholder farmers against adverse climate by improving access to resilient seed varieties and production technologies, diversifying towards more climate-resilient crops, and improving access to better water management and irrigation services.

94. The 58th Raising Day of Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) is observed on which date?

[A] October 25

[B] October 24

[C] October 26

[D] October 27

**Answer:** October 24

The Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) is one of the 7 Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) of India. Under the CRPF Act, the ITBP was raised on 24th October 1962 in the wake of the Sino-Indian War of 1962. Recently, the 58th Raising Day of ITBP is recently observed on 24th October 2019 to commemorate the valor and achievements of the ITBP and to boost the morale of the force personnel.

95. The first-ever Global Bio-India 2019 summit is being held in which city?

[A] Chennai

[B] Gandhinagar

[C] Agartala

[D] New Delhi

**Answer:** New Delhi

The first-ever "Global Bio-India 2019" Summit is being held in India at New Delhi from 21st to 23rd November 2019. The event is expected to strengthen the indigenous research capabilities, bio-entrepreneurship, investments and last-mile-delivery of technology across rural India and tier-2, 3 cities. The summit is one of the largest biotechnology stakeholders conglomerate.

96. ABADHA scheme, which is in news recently, is associated to which state?

[A] Jharkhand

[B] Bihar

[C] Odisha

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[D] West Bengal

**Answer:** Odisha

The Odisha government has decided to spend Rs 3208 crore under the Augmentation of Basic Amenities and Development of Heritage and Architecture (ABADHA) scheme in 3 years to transform Puri into a World-class Heritage city.

97. Which state government has launched Mukhya Mantri Kanya Sumangala Yojana on Dhanteras?

[A] Punjab

[B] Uttar Pradesh

[C] Rajasthan

[D] Madhya Pradesh

**Answer:** Uttar Pradesh

On the occasion of Dhanteras, the Uttar Pradesh government has launched Mukhya Mantri Kanya Sumangala Yojana to empower the girl child. As per the scheme, an amount of Rs 15,000 will be provided to every family in which a girl child takes birth. The state government will direct transfer funds in the account of the registered girls in a phased manner when a girl child will complete various achievements, like vaccination, admission in class 1, 5 and 9, graduation.

98. K R Wadhwaney, who passed away recently, is associated to which field?

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[A] Sports

[B] Law

[C] Painting

[D] Music

**Answer:** Sports

K R Wadhwaney (90), the veteran sports journalist and author, has passed away in Delhi. Born in Karachi (now in Pakistan), migrated to Lucknow after the partition in 1947. He started his career in Lucknow before moving to New Delhi in the 1960s. He remained active as a sports journalist for almost 50 years. After working in top organisations, he later went on to become the Sports Editor of the Indian Express newspaper. He worked as a freelance writer for several Indian newspapers after his retirement.

99. The Thotlakonda Buddhist Monastery is located in which state?

[A] Andhra Pradesh

[B] Karnataka

[C] Kerala

[D] Tamil Nadu

**Answer:** Andhra Pradesh

The major part of the famous Mahastupa of the 2,000-year-old Buddhist heritage site of Thotlakonda has recently damaged due to heavy rains in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh. The dome of the Mahastupa is belonged to Heena Yana stream of Buddhism. The site is a prominent tourist spot with remnants of stupas, chaitya grihas and viharas atop Thotlakonda. It was the epi-centre for spreading Buddhism in other countries like Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Cambodia, etc.

100. Who won the 2019 Sakharov human rights prize of European Union (EU)?

[A] Oleg Sentsov

[B] Ilham Tohti

[C] Liu Xiaobo

[D] Nasrin Sotoudeh

**Answer:** Ilham Tohti

Ilham Tohti, an academic jailed for separatism in China, has been awarded the European Parliament's top human rights prize 'Sakharov' in recognition for drawing attention to ethnic tensions in Xinjiang. Tohti is from the Uighur minority & has been a fierce critic of China's treatment of the Uighur people. He was sentenced to life imprisonment in 2014 on separatism charges. The move will pointedly rebuked China's treatment of the Muslim ethnic minority and may draw a reprisal from Beijing.

101. Who won the Udyog Rattan Award-2019 of Institute of Economic Studies (IES)?

[A] Kishan Kumar

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[B] Pradeep Jain
[C] Thakur Anup Singh
[D] Kuldeep Yadav

**Answer:** Thakur Anup Singh

Thakur Anup Singh, CMD of Marg ERP, has won the prestigious Udyog Rattan Award-2019 for his exceptional work in transforming how MSMEs can accelerate their business by using technology. The award is conferred annually to Indian citizens for their outstanding contribution to the economic development of the country. It is conferred by the Institute of Economic Studies (IES) affiliated to Government of India (GoI).

102. Which Indian public sector bank has recently launched an healthcare insurance policy in collaboration with Universal Sompo General Insurance Company Ltd?

[A] Canara Bank
[B] Indian Overseas Bank
[C] Union Bank of India
[D] Bank of India

**Answer:** Indian Overseas Bank

Public sector Indian Overseas Bank unveiled a healthcare insurance policy through online platform in association with Universal Sompo General Insurance Company Ltd. The policy offered on real time basis to customers at the branches of Indian Overseas Bank through integration of technology of the two institutions. The co-branded healthcare policy designed by Universal Sompo General Insurance is offered with a sum insured from ₹50,000 to ₹15 lakh. The one of its kind family floater policy where the premium is charged as per the age of the proposer with no medical checkup up to the 50 years of age.

103. Manohar Lal Khattar, who has recently become CM of Haryana state for second time, represents which constituency of Haryana Legislative Assembly?

[A] Jind
[B] Karnal
[C] Rohtak
[D] Bhiwani

**Answer:** Karnal

Manohar Lal Khattar represents Karnal constituency in Haryana Legislative Assembly, and was sworn-in as Chief Minister of Haryana after BJP's win in the 2014 Haryana Legislative Assembly election. He was sworn in a second time as the Chief Minister on 27 October 2019 after making an alliance with Jannayak Janta Party post 2019 Haryana Legislative Assembly election.

104. Which cyclone recently became first Super Cyclonic storm in Arabian Sea in last 12 years?

[A] Cyclone Fani
[B] Cyclone Hikaa
[C] Cyclone Kyarr
[D] Cyclone Vayu

**Answer:** Cyclone Kyarr

Super Cyclonic Storm Kyarr, after a trail of destruction in Goa, moved away from the West Coast, with the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) forecasting reduction in the rainfall. It was an extremely powerful tropical cyclone that became the first Super Cyclonic Storm over the North Indian Ocean since Gonu in 2007.

105. In Mumbai, Indian Railways recently launched 42 Automatic Ticket Vending Machines for fast delivery of tickets of local trains. These ATVMs work on which operating system?

[A] Windows
[B] Linux
[C] Debian
[D] HeliOS

**Answer:** Linux

On October 24, 2019, the Indian Railways launched the "one touch ATVM" at 42 suburban stations. The

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purpose of the service is to render fast ticketing to millions of commuters, especially in the Mumbai Suburban Network. ATVM are Automatic Ticket Vending Machines. They work on Linux software.

106. Which Buddhist site of Bihar was recently in news for 50th anniversary of establishment of Vishwa Shanti Stupa (World Peace Pagoda)?

[A] Gaya

[B] Rajgir

[C] Nalanda

[D] Bodh Gaya

**Answer:** Rajgir

Addressing 50th anniversary of establishment of Vishwa Shanti Stupa (World Peace Pagoda) at Rajgir in Bihar; President Ram Nath Kovind said the timeless teachings of Lord Buddha and Gandhi are panacea for fundamental problems faced by individuals, a community, a country and the entire world.

107. Ex Shakti -2019 is a joint counter-terrorism drill between armies of India and __?

[A] USA

[B] UK

[C] France

[D] Israel

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**Answer:** France

Ex Shakti -2019 is a joint counter-terrorism drill between Indian and French armies to be conducted in Mahajan Field Firing Range (MFFR) Bikaner, Rajasthan from October 31 to November 13, 2019. The joint exercise will focus on counter-terrorism operations in the backdrop of semi-desert terrain under the United Nations mandate. This biennial exercise between the armies of the two countries had stated in 2011.

108. Recently Kalidhar Battalion was in news for a white-water rafting expedition called the "Rudrashila". The "Battle of Kalidhar" was a part of which war?

[A] Indo-Pak War, 1948

[B] Indo-Pak War, 1965

[C] Indo-China War, 1962

[D] Indo-Pak War, 1971

**Answer:** Indo-Pak War, 1965

"Battle of Kalidhar" was a part of Indo-Pak War of 1965.

109. On which date, World Day for Audiovisual Heritage is celebrated?

[A] 25 October

[B] 26 October

[C] 27 October

[D] 28 October

**Answer:** 27 October

The World Day for Audiovisual Heritage, observed on 27 October. The World Day provides an occasion to raise general awareness of the need to take urgent measures and to acknowledge the importance of audiovisual documents. This year the theme of the World Day for Audiovisual Heritage is "Engage the Past Through Sound and Images".

110. What is the theme of 2019 Vigilance Awareness Week?

[A] Students and Watchfulness

[B] Observing Prudence in Workplace

[C] Integrity- A way of life

[D] Vigilance for liberty and integrity of the country

**Answer:** Integrity- A way of life

Last week of October is observed as Vigilance Awareness Week under the aegis of Central Vigilance Commission (CVC). This year, the week falls from 28th October, 2019 to 2nd November, 2019. This year, the theme is Integrity-a way of life. The week is to be launched with an Integrity-pledge of the staff and

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officers of the ministry to fight against corruption.

111. Which actor has joined hands with UNICEF and Ministry of Women and Child Development to raise awareness and speak up against sexual abuse of children?

[A] Ayushmann Khurrana

[B] Hritik Roshan

[C] Rajkummar Rao

[D] Vicky Kaushal

**Answer:** Ayushmann Khurrana

In October 2019, Ayushmann Khurrana has joined hands with UNICEF and Ministry of Women and Child Development to raise awareness and speak up against sexual abuse of children.

112. Who is the recently appointed chairman of Airports Authority of India (October 2019)?

[A] Arvind Singh

[B] Sukhbir Singh Sandhu

[C] Sanjiv Saran

[D] Bhupendra Singh

**Answer:** Arvind Singh

IAS officer Arvind Singh has been appointed as the chairman of Airports Authority of India and Sukhbir Singh Sandhu will head the National Highways Authority of India.

113. Recently, Paralympics champion Marieke Vervoort ended her life through euthanasia at the age of 40 to end her sufferings due to degenerative muscle disease. She was from which country?

[A] Spain

[B] Belgium

[C] France

[D] Italy

**Answer:** Belgium

Belgian Paralympic champion Marieke Vervoort ended her life through euthanasia at the age of 40. She had announced her intentions after the Rio Games in 2016 to follow that path if her degenerative condition worsened her suffering. Vervoort suffered a degenerative muscle disease that caused constant pain, paralysis in her legs and left her barely able to sleep, and gradually her life became torture. Euthanasia is legal in Belgium.

114. Which professional football club has recently conferred life membership to Nobel laureate Abhijit Banerjee?

[A] Bengaluru FC

[B] Mohun Bagan

[C] United Sikkim

[D] Indian Arrows

**Answer:** Mohun Bagan

The Mohun Bagan Athletic Club conferred life membership to Nobel laureate Abhijit Banerjee. In 1911, Mohun Bagan became the first Indian club to win the Indian Football Association (IFA) Shield beating the East Yorkshire Regiment of the British Army in the final.

115. Dilip Parikh, who recently passed away, was a former chief minister of which state?

[A] Maharashtra

[B] Gujarat

[C] Uttar Pradesh

[D] Madhya Pradesh

**Answer:** Gujarat

Former Gujarat Chief Minister Dilip Parikh died following a prolonged illness, said his family members. He was 82. Mr Parikh served as the 13th Chief Minister of Gujarat between October 1997 and March 1998 .

116. TP Radhamani was an actress predominantly in which language films?

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[A] Kannada
[B] Tamil
[C] Telugu
[D] Malayalam

**Answer:** Malayalam

Veteran actress TP Radhamani who was predominantly active in Malayalam cinema passed away in Chennai. The 67-year old actor was under treatment for cancer.

117. K R Wadhwaney who recently passed away was a famous __?
[A] Poet
[B] Author
[C] Sports Journalist
[D] Political Leader

**Answer:** Sports Journalist

Veteran sports journalist and author K R Wadhwaney recently died in Delhi. He was born in Karachi (now in Pakistan), migrated to Lucknow after the partition in 1947. After working in top organisations, Wadhwaney later went on to become the Sports Editor of the Indian Express newspaper.

118. What is India's rank in Global Health Security Index, 2019?
[A] 54th
[B] 57th
[C] 68th
[D] 75th

**Answer:** 57th

The GHS Index is a joint project of the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security and the Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI), with research by The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU). Global Health Security Index is first comprehensive assessment and benchmarking of health security and related capabilities across 195 countries and it suggests that not a single country in the world is fully prepared to handle an epidemic or pandemic. The index has been topped by USA while India is on 57th position in the index.

119. Which organization awards Sakharov Prize for Human Rights?
[A] UN Human Rights Council
[B] Amnesty International
[C] Refugees International
[D] European Union (EU) Parliament

**Answer:** European Union (EU) Parliament

The European Union (EU) Parliament awarded the 'Sakharov Prize for Human Rights' to Uighur intellectual Ilham Tohti (49), who has been jailed and sentenced to life imprisonment in China for "separatism". The award was announced by European Parliament head David Sassoli, who also urged China to immediately release Ilham Tohti as well as called for the respect of minority rights in China. Sakharov Prize is awarded by the European Union (EU) Parliament annually for free speech. It was constituted in memory of Soviet physicist and dissident Andrei Sakharov.

120. Which two Indian cricketers are winners of the prestigious Wisden India Almanack Cricketer of the Year award this year (2019)?
[A] Bhuvneshwar Kumar & Mithali Raj
[B] Hardik Pandya & Jhulan Goswami
[C] Hardik Pandya & Smriti Mandhana
[D] Jasprit Bumrah & Smriti Mandhana

**Answer:** Jasprit Bumrah & Smriti Mandhana

Premier speedster Jasprit Bumrah and batswoman Smriti Mandhana are the two Indian names among the five winners of the prestigious Wisden India Almanack Cricketer of the Year award. The other winners from Asia are Pakistan's Fakhar Zaman, Sri Lanka's Dimuth Karunaratne and Afghanistan Rashid Khan. Mandhana is the third woman to be named 'Cricketer of the Year', after Mithali Raj and Deepti Sharma. Stalwarts Gundappa Viswanath and Lala Amarnath are inducted into the Wisden India

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Hall of Fame.

121. A school located in which city has won the Guinness World Record for becoming the 'world's largest school' in terms of strength of students?

[A] Mumbai

[B] Hyderabad

[C] Lucknow

[D] Dehradun

**Answer:** Lucknow

Lucknow-based City Montessori School (CMS) has won the Guinness World Record for becoming the 'world's largest school' in terms of strength of students.
City Montessori School (CMS) has won the global award for having largest number of students in 2019-20. At present, the CMS has 18 branches and approximately 56,000 students all over the city.

122. Which company has recently won DigiDhan Mission Fintech Award 2018-2019?

[A] PayTM

[B] BharatPe

[C] PhonePe

[D] MobiKwik

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**Answer:** BharatPe

BharatPe, India's largest merchant fintech company, has won the DigiDhan Mission Fintech Award 2018-2019 for 'Innovation in Digital Payments through Emerging Technology' at the MeitY Startup Summit 2019 held in Delhi. The award was presented by Chief Guest, Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad, Minister of Communication, Electronics & IT and Law & Justice.

123. Which Indian city has got the World Guinness Record for lighting 4 lakh diyas?

[A] Lucknow

[B] Ayodhya

[C] Bhopal

[D] Jaipur

**Answer:** Ayodhya

On October 26, 2019, in the city of Ayodhya 4 lakh earthen lamps were lit along the banks of Sarayu river. The event was organized by the Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi Adityanath. It was the third and largest Deepotsav in Ayodhya after he came to power. Last year around 3 lakh lamps were lit. The lamp lighting festival comes ahead of SC judgment on Ram Jan Bhoomi.

124. Which two companies have got Maharatna status in October 2019?

[A] Bhel and Power Grid Corporation

[B] HPCL and Power Grid Corporation

[C] Bhel and HPCL

[D] GAIL and BHEL

**Answer:** HPCL and Power Grid Corporation

Government of India has accorded 'Maharatna' status to public sector undertaking's (PSU's) Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) and Power Grid Corporation. Two separate orders to this effect were issued by Department of Public Enterprises, under Union Ministry of Heavy Industry and Public Enterprises.

125. Which Central Armed Police Forces of India recently celebrated its 58th raising day?

[A] Border Security Force (BSF)

[B] Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB)

[C] Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)

[D] Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP)

**Answer:** Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP)

The Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) is one of the seven Central Armed Police Forces of India, raised on 24 October 1962, under the CRPF Act, in the wake of the Sino-Indian War of 1962. It celebrated its 58th

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raising day on 24th October, 2019.

126. Recently, Central Government has given final approval to Tamil Nadu's proposal to establish six new medical colleges. Which of the following is not a location of these new medical colleges?

[A] Tiruppur

[B] Ramanathapuram

[C] Dindigul

[D] Sivagangai

**Answer:** Sivagangai

The Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has given its final approval to Tamil Nadu's proposal to establish six new medical colleges. The institutes will come up in Tiruppur, the Nilgiris, Ramanathapuram, Namakkal, Dindigul and Virudhunagar at a cost of ₹1,950 crore, and will be attached to existing hospitals in these districts. The new medical colleges would come up with 60% funding borne by the Centre and 40% by the State.

127. Sadako Ogata, the first female UN refugee chief passed away. She was from which country?

[A] Japan

[B] New Zealand

[C] United States

[D] France

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**Answer:** Japan

Sadako Ogata (92), a high-profile Japanese diplomat who served as the first female United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) from 1991 to 2000, has passed away on Oct. 22 in Tokyo.

128. Who has been appointed as new Indian Ambassador to Iraq?

[A] P S Chawala

[B] Piyush Agrawal

[C] Birender Singh Yadav

[D] Muktesh Kumar Pardeshi

**Answer:** Birender Singh Yadav

Birender Singh Yadav, a 1997-batch Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer, has been appointed as the new Ambassador of India to the Republic of Iraq. While, Muktesh Kumar Pardeshi has been appointed as India's new High Commissioner to Samoa.

129. Don Valentine, the founder of Sequoia Capital has passed away. He was from which country?

[A] United States

[B] China

[C] France

[D] Germany

**Answer:** United States

Don Valentine (87), an American venture capitalist who founded Sequoia Capital, has passed away in Woodside, Calif. Valentine spent nearly 40 years working in Silicon Valley, and Sequoia Capital is widely credited with cementing California's Bay Area as the tech powerhouse it is today.

130. V Nanammal, India's oldest yoga teacher has passed away. She was from which state?

[A] Odisha

[B] Tamil Nadu

[C] Kerala

[D] Karnataka

**Answer:** Tamil Nadu

V Nanammal (99), India's oldest exponent and teacher of yoga, has passed away near Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu. Born into an agricultural family, she was taught yoga by her father. She went on to master more than 50 postures or asanas, and trained more than a million students – hundreds of them now yoga instructors themselves around the world. She was known affectionately as "Yoga Grandma" & received the Padma Shri – one of India's highest civilian honours.

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131. Who has been appointed as the 47th Chief Justice of India (CJI)?

[A] Jasti Chelameswar

[B] Aniruddha Bose

[C] Sharad Arvind Bobde

[D] Madan Lokur

**Answer:** Sharad Arvind Bobde

Justice Sharad Arvind Bobde has been appointed as the 47th Chief Justice of India (CJI) & will take oath as CJI on November 18. He will have tenure of 17 months and would demit office on April 23, 2021.

132. Which Indian personality has been honored with Youth Icon Award from London's Imperial College?

[A] Narendra Modi

[B] Amitabh Bachchan

[C] Vidya Balan

[D] Priyanka Chopra

**Answer:** Vidya Balan

Bollywood actor Vidya Balan has been honored with Youth Icon Award from London's Imperial College. She is currently stationed in London shooting for her upcoming film "Shakuntala Devi – Human Computer".

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133. Which state is celebrating the Tawang Festival 2019?

[A] Tripura

[B] Nagaland

[C] Arunachal Pradesh

[D] Assam

**Answer:** Arunachal Pradesh

In Arunachal Pradesh, the 7th edition of the Tawang Festival 2019 has started with much fanfare and fervour in Tawang. It is a 3-day fest with varied traditional activities and events. The Tawang hill station is home for several tribes and the major tribal community is Monpas. The tTribes of this hill station welcome tourists with humble respect and welcome wishes in their culture. One can say, it is a wonderful festival to know about the rich varied traditions and cultures of state.

134. The term "Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR)" is associated to which field?

[A] Oil

[B] Telecom

[C] Insurance

[D] Banking

**Answer:** Telecom

The Supreme Court (SC) has recently upheld the definition of Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR) calculation as stipulated by the Department of Telecommunications (DoT). As per SC ruling, the telecom companies will now have to pay up approx Rs 92,642 crore to the government, more than half of which are owed by Airtel and Vodafone. The AGR is the spectrum usage charges and licensing fees that telecom operators are charged by the DoT. As per DoT, the charges are calculated based on all revenues earned by a telco – including non-telecom related sources such as deposit interests and asset sales. Though, Telco insist that AGR should comprise only the revenues generated from telecom services.

135. The 'Run for Unity' is organized in India to commemorate the birth anniversary of which freedom fighter?

[A] Ram Prasad Bismil

[B] Khudiram Bose

[C] Ashfaqulla Khan

[D] Vallabhbhai Patel

**Answer:** Vallabhbhai Patel

The event 'Run for unity' is being organised all over the country to commemorate the birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. Lakhs of people from more than 700districts will take part in the events to be organized on the occasion. Sardar Patel is credited for the integration of over 550 independent princely

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states into India from 1947–49 by Independence Act (1947). He is known as the "Bismarck of India". As the first Home Minister and Deputy Prime Minister of India, Sardar Patel organized relief efforts for refugees fleeing to Punjab and Delhi from Pakistan and worked to restore peace.

136. Where is the headquarters of International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)?

[A] Geneva

[B] Montreal

[C] Paris

[D] New York

**Answer:** Montreal

India has recently approached the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) after Pakistan denied Prime Minister Narendra Modi's special flight the use of its airspace. This is the 3rd time in recent weeks that Islamabad has refused to allow Indian leaders to use its airspace after turning down last month requests by President Ram Nath Kovind and Mr. Modi. According to official sources, such overflight clearances for VVIP special flights were granted routinely by "any normal country" as per prescribed ICAO guidelines. ICAO's headquarters is located in the Quartier International of Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

137. Which is the India's first ever common foundation course for probationer civil servants?

[A] Aarambh

[B] Protsahan

[C] Integrity

[D] Satyanisht

**Answer:** Aarambh

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The Union Government has launched India's first ever common foundation course – "Aarambh" – for probationer civil servants at the Statue of Unity, Kevadia, Gujarat. Around 500 newly recruited bureaucrats are undergoing a 6-day training. Beside this, the Indian Government has also launched the "Nurture the Future" programme. Under this program the civil servants will be divided into teams to visit villages in Kevadia, Gujarat. Each probationer will take a youth under his wing, provide career and professional guidance. The initiative will cover one lakh youth in next 5 years.

138. Which state government has signed pact with UNICEF to provide safe drinking water under 'Drink From Tap Mission'?

[A] Tripura

[B] Jharkhand

[C] Arunachal Pradesh

[D] Odisha

**Answer:** Odisha

The Odisha government has recently signed a Letter of Understanding (LoU) with United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to provide 24-hour safe drinking water to every household in the state under the project 'Drink From Tap Mission'. The project has been launched on a pilot basis for about 1.2 lakh people involving 22,000 families in pockets of Puri and Khurda district. It will be completed on March, 2020.

139. Which union ministry has approved issuance of two OGELs for export of certain parts and components?

[A] Ministry of Finance

[B] Ministry of Defence

[C] Ministry of Commerce and Industry

[D] Ministry of External Affairs

**Answer:** Ministry of Defence

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has approved issuance of two Open General Export Licences (OGELs) for export of certain parts and components and intra-company transfer of technology to select countries. This decision is expected to give a boost to defence exports and enhance Ease of doing Business (EDB). The transfer of technology to the countries is subject to the condition that the export is an intra-company transfer from an Indian subsidiary (applicant exporter) to its foreign parent company and or to subsidiaries of the foreign parent company. The OGEL is a one-time export licence to be granted to a

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company for a specific period which would initially be only two years.

140. Which state government has launched online platform SMARTPORT?

[A] Karnataka

[B] Telangana

[C] Andhra Pradesh

[D] Kerala

**Answer:** Andhra Pradesh

The Andhra Pradesh government has launched a new online platform – SMARTPORT – as part of implementing the Ease of Doing Business Reforms related to trade and export promotion in all ports in the state. The new initiative will be covered under the Public Service Delivery Guarantee Act and tracked through a single-desk portal to bring in transparency and accountability and establish a corruption-free environment in port-related services.

141. Which Indian airline has depicted 'Ik Onkar' on tail to mark 550th birth anniversary of Sri Guru Nanak Dev?

[A] SpiceJet

[B] IndiGo

[C] Air India

[D] Jet Airways

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**Answer:** Air India

In a unique gesture to mark 550th Prakash Purb of Sri Guru Nanak Dev ji, National carrier Air India has depicted Sikh religious symbol 'Ik Onkar' on one of its Boeing 787 Dreamliner aircraft . The aircraft will fly on October 31 from Amritsar to London. Ek Onkar, which means "God is One", is the religious symbol of the Sikh religion and is found on Gurdwaras (Sikh temples) around the world.

142. Which space agency has decided to send a new VIPER Lunar Rover to map water ice on the Moon?

[A] JAXA

[B] CNES

[C] ISRO

[D] NASA

**Answer:** NASA

To explore the moon's mysterious South Pole, NASA is sending a new VIPER (Volatiles Investigating Polar Exploration Rover) Lunar Rover to map water ice in the region. The VIPER will land in September 2022 in search of water on the lunar surface. The mobile robot will spend 100 days collecting data and sampling the water that is crucially needed for future astronauts. The rover is about the size of a golf cart, equipped with four scientific instruments to sample a range of soil environments.

143. Which tech giant has developed a new 54-qubit processor 'Sycamore'?

[A] Microsoft

[B] Facebook

[C] Google

[D] Twitter

**Answer:** Google

Google has officially claimed that its researchers achieved a breakthrough in the field of 'Quantum Supremacy'. The term was coined by American theoritical physicist ' John Preskill' to describe a point where quantum computers can perform any task that can't be performed by the classical computers. The tech giant have claimed that they have developed a new 54-qubit processor – 'Sycamore' – that is comprised of fast, high-fidelity quantum logic gates, in order toperform the benchmark testing

144. Which country has decided to hold world's second largest Muslim congregation 'Bishwa Ijtema'?

[A] India

[B] Iran

[C] Bangladesh

[D] Pakistan

**Answer:** Bangladesh

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Bangladesh will hold the first phase of Bishwa Ijtema from10th to 12th January 2020 in Dhaka. It is the second largest congregation of Muslim community after Hajj. The second phase of the Ijtema will be held from January 17 to 19. Bishwa Ijtema is an annual event which is held in a 160 acre field on the bank of the Turag river at Tongi on the outskirts of Dhaka since 1967. Bishwa Ijtema means world congregation and it draws in Muslims from about 150 countries. It is a gathering that focuses on prayer and meditation and is not open for political discussions.

145. Who is the head of the IRDAI committee to evaluate application under regulatory sandbox?

[A] Ramgopal Rao

[B] S Sadagopan

[C] Bhaskar Ramamurthi

[D] Pradeep Mathur

**Answer:** S Sadagopan

Insurance regulator IRDAI has set up a 8-member committee to evaluate applications filed under the Regulatory Sandbox (RS) approach to promote innovative ideas to foster growth in insurance sector. The committee will be headed by International Institute of Information Technology (Bangalore) Director S Sadagopan. The term 'Regulatory Sandbox (RS)' refers to live testing of new products or services in a controlled/test regulatory environment for which regulators may permit certain relaxations for the limited purpose of testing. As per the terms of reference, the committee will screen of applications received for the Regulatory Sandbox and evaluating the test design of the proposed hypothesis.

146. Which state government has decided to construct 'Safe Houses'for foreign ex-convicts in jail?

[A] Karnataka

[B] West Bengal

[C] Bihar

[D] Tamil Nadu

**Answer:** West Bengal

The West Bengal Government has decided to construct two Safe Houses for foreign prisoners, whose period of punishment have been completed and waiting for extradition . These houseswill come up at Bongaon and New Town in North 24 Paraganas District for stayingof foreign prisoners after completion of punishments in Indian jails. Accordingto National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), 284 Bangldeshi , 25 Nigerian , 5Pakistani , 3 Nepalese , 2 China and few Myanmar nationals are still inthe jails of West Bengal after completion of their punishment period and theirextradition are not being effected due to legal tangle.

147. Rafael Grossi, who became the new director-general of IAEA, is from which country?

[A] Brazil

[B] Japan

[C] Argentina

[D] South Africa

**Answer:** Argentina

Argentine diplomat Rafael Grossi has become the new director-general of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for a term of 4 years and will assume office in January 2020. He will succeed late Yukiya Amano. Gossi will preside over the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons at the UN headquarter in New York from April to May.

148. Which state has deployed anti-street crime vans "PRAKHAR"?

[A] Delhi

[B] Punjab

[C] UP

[D] Haryana

**Answer:** Delhi

The Delhi Police Commissioner Amulya Patnaik has recently doubled the anti-street crime vans 'PRAKHAR' to 30 to curb street crimes as well as crimes against women in the vulnerable areas. These are specially designed and equipped with latest gadgets for quick transmission of information about any crime.

149. Which state has become the India's first State to enact a law on contract farming?

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[A] Karnataka
[B] Tamil Nadu
[C] Kerala
[D] Sikkim

**Answer:** Tamil Nadu

Tamil Nadu has become the first State in India to enact a law on contract farming after President Ram Nath Kovind gave assent to the Agricultural Produce and Livestock Contract Farming and Services (Promotion and Facilitation) Act. The law will safeguard interests of farmers during times of bumper crop or when prices fluctuate.

150. The 'Ek Bharat Shreshth Bharat Parv -2019' is being organized under which union ministry?
[A] Ministry of Human Resource Development
[B] Ministry of Home Affairs
[C] Ministry of Tourism
[D] Ministry of Defense

**Answer:** Ministry of Human Resource Development

The 'Ek Bharat Shreshth Bharat Parv -2019' is being organized by Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS) under the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MoHRD) from October 31 to November 03, 2019. The aim of the event is to showcase the spirit of 'Ek Bharat Shreshth Bharat' and also to promote the communication and artistic skills of students through various competitions. The mega-event also provides a platform for teachers to express their talent in performing and visual arts. It is a broad platform for the students to display their creativity, originality, artistic skills, etc.

151. Nirmal Purja, who climbed 14 highest mountains in a record-breaking 6 months, is from which country?
[A] Nepal
[B] India
[C] Bhutan
[D] Bangladesh

**Answer:** Nepal

Nirmal Purja, a Nepali mountaineer and former British army soldier, has climbed all 14 of the world's 8,000-metre-high mountains in a record-breaking 189 days. He recently reached the top of his 14th mountain 'Shishapangma' in China. He was already the holder of numerous records – including the fastest "double-header" of two mountains higher than 8,000 metres – and was awarded the MBE, a civilian honour, by the Queen in 2018. The previous record was held by Kim Chang-ho of South Korea, who took 7 years, 11 months and 14 days.

152. Who is the author of the book "The Unquiet River: A biography of the Brahmaputra"?
[A] Romila Thapar
[B] Irfan Habib
[C] Arupjyoti Saikia
[D] Upinder Singh

**Answer:** Arupjyoti Saikia

The book " The Unquiet River: A biography of the Brahmaputra " has been authored by historian Arupjyoti Saikia that re-imagines the layered history of Assam with the river at the centre. The book claims to combine a range of disciplinary scholarship to unravel the geological forces as well as human endeavour which have shaped the river into what it is today.

153. On which date, the 2019 edition of World Stroke Day (WSD) is observed?
[A] October 28
[B] October 30
[C] October 31
[D] October 29

**Answer:** October 29

The World Stroke Day (WSD) is observed every year on 29th October to raise awareness and reduce the

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incidence of stroke across the world. A stroke is a disease that affects the arteries of the brain. Whenever an artery carrying oxygen and nutrients to the brain gets obstructed by a clot or ruptures – the specific part of the brain where this happens dies. There is also the possibility of a mini or temporary ischaemic stroke caused by a floating clot, temporarily blocking the blood supply. The effect of any type of stroke (also known as brain attack) is debilitating – restricted blood flow alters or stops the functions of that specific part of the brain, sometimes leading to paralysis.

154. The Prakritik Kheti Khushshal Kissan Yojana is associated to which state?

[A] Uttar Pradesh

[B] Himachal Pradesh

[C] Arunachal Pradesh

[D] Madhya Pradesh

**Answer:** Himachal Pradesh

The Prakritik Kheti Khushshal Kissan Yojana (PKKKY) was launched by the Himachal Pradesh government to promote organic / Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF) system. It is in news recently because out of the total 3,226 panchayats in the state, 2,209 have been brought under the ambit of the scheme. Under the scheme, farmers has been provided training, necessary equipments, bio-pesticides, bio-insecticides, etc. The Natural farming is a technique of farming that requires no ploughing or tilting or use of chemical fertilizers.

155. On which date, the 2019 edition of International Internet Day (IID) is observed?

[A] October 30

[B] October 29

[C] October 28

[D] October 31

**Answer:** October 29

The International Internet Day (IID) is observed every year on 29th October to mark the anniversary of the first usage of the Internet to send message electronically in 1969.The day also offeres the possibilities offered by new technologies to improve standards of living by giving people more understanding of technology and its functions.

156. Sakhalin Oil Field, sometimes seen in news, is situated in which country?

[A] China

[B] Indonesia

[C] Russia

[D] Vietnam

**Answer:** Russia

The Sakhalin oil field in Russia is a prolific oil producing field like Bombay High. Exxon Mobil, Rosneft, Japanese SODECO and ONGC Videsh are the partners in this field which will continue to produce oil and gas till 2055. It is in news because the Union Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas & Steel – Dharmendra Pradhan has recently visited the oil field. Mr. Pradhan Pradhan also visited the Rig "Krechet" which is the biggest and most powerful land rig in the world. It is a covered rig to allow people to work in extreme temperature (-40 degree Celsius in winter)- it drills up to 14 KM in horizontal drilling.

157. The researchers at which IIT have developed bio-bricks from agricultural waste products?

[A] IIT Indore

[B] IIT Bombay

[C] IIT Hyderabad

[D] IIT Delhi

**Answer:** IIT Hyderabad

The researchers at IIT Hyderabad and KIIT School of Architecture (Bhubaneshwar) have developed bio-bricks for construction from agricultural waste products. The team's bio-brick received a Special Recognition Trophy for sustainable housing at Rural Innovators Start-Up Conclave 2019 organised recently by National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), Hyderabad. These Bio-bricks can not only serve to manage agricultural waste but also provide scope for economically affordably environment-friendly sustainable construction building materials.

158. Who led Indian delegation at the 29th BASIC Ministerial Meeting on Climate in Beijing?

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[A] Narendra Modi
[B] Prakash Javadekar
[C] Ram Nath Kovind
[D] M Venkaiah Naidu

**Answer:** Prakash Javadekar

The 29th BASIC Ministerial Meeting on Climate Change was held in Beijing, China on 25th to 26th October 2019. The joint statement issued by Brazil, South Africa, India and China (BASIC) stated that global climate action should promote climate justice by recognizing the fundamental equality of all people in accessing economic growth and sustainable development. Here, the BASIC ministers also underlined the importance of a full, effective and sustained implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), its Kyoto Protocol and its Paris Agreement . From India, the meeting was attended by Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar.

159. Which state government has launched the Ex-gratia Scheme for students studying outside the state?
[A] Mizoram
[B] Nagaland
[C] Arunachal Pradesh
[D] Tripura

**Answer:** Nagaland

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The Nagaland Government has recently launched the Nagaland Ex-gratia Scheme for Students Studying outside Nagaland (NGESSO) belonging to any recognized Scheduled Tribes (STs) and indigenous inhabitants of the state. The scheme is targeted for students who die outside the state while pursuing secular, technical, professional, diploma and theology courses. The state government will provide a sum of Rs. 5 lakhs as one-time payment to the parents / families of the students in case of unfortunate death of any student while studying outside the state.

160. Who has been honoured with the 28th Vyas Samman for year 2018?
[A] Vishwanath Prasad Tiwari
[B] Leeladhar Jagoori
[C] Mannu Bhandari
[D] Parmanand Srivastava

**Answer:** Leeladhar Jagoori

In New Delhi , the well known Hindi writer Leeladhar Jagoori has been honoured with the prestigious 28th Vyas Samman for the year 2018 for his poetry collection- 'Jitne Log Utne Prem'. Since 1991, the Vyas Samman is given by K K Birla Foundation for an outstanding literary work in Hindi authored by an Indian citizen published during the last 10 years. It carries award money of 4 lakh rupees along with a citation and plaque.

161. As per which act, the Overseas Citizens of India (OCI) can now subscribe to National Pension System (NPS)?
[A] Banking Regulation Act
[B] RBI Act
[C] PFRDA Act
[D] NABARD Act

**Answer:** PFRDA Act

As per the provisions of the PFRDA Act, the Overseas Citizens of India (OCI) will now be eligible to apply for the National Pension System (NPS) at par with Non Resident Indians (NRIs). Now, any Indian citizen, resident or non-resident and OCIs are eligible to join NPS till the age of 65 years. The contributions made towards the NPS are eligible for an additional tax deduction under section 80CCD (1B) up to Rs 50,000 which is over and above the Rs 1,50,000 limit of deduction available under section 80CCD (1). The PFRDA runs two pension schemes viz. NPS (for government and organised sector employees) and Atal Pension Yojana (for the workers in the unorganised sector).

162. Which country is the focus country in the 3rd edition of Guwahati International Film Festival (GIFF)?
[A] Iran
[B] Vietnam

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[C] Malaysia

[D] Indonesia

**Answer:** Iran

The 3rd edition of the Guwahati International Film Festival (GIFF) is organised by Assam government-owned Jyoti Chitraban in association with the Dr. Bhupen Hazarika Regional Government Film and Television Institute. Iran is the focus country & renowned Polish filmmaker Krzysztof Zanussi is the Chief Guest in this week-long festival. 100 films from 65 countries will be screened during the Festival.

163. The researchers at which institute have created the first-ever 'Indian Brain Atlas (IBA)'?

[A] IIT Kanpur

[B] IIT Delhi

[C] IIIT Hyderabad

[D] IIT Bombay

**Answer:** IIIT Hyderabad

The researchers at the International Institute of Information Technology-Hyderabad (IIITH) have created the first ever Indian Brain Atlas (IBA). They stated that the average Indian brain is smaller in height, width, and volume as compared to the western and eastern population like the Chinese and Korean. The immediate implication of this finding can be seen in treatment outcomes of neurological problems or brain related ailments – like dementia, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease etc.

164. Dilip Parikh, who passed away recently, was the former Chief Minister of which state?

[A] Rajasthan

[B] Gujarat

[C] UP

[D] MP

**Answer:** Gujarat

Former Gujarat Chief Minister Dilip Parikh (82) has passed away in Ahmedabad on October 25. He started his political career as a BJP MLA. Industrialist by profession, he also served as President of the Gujarat Chamber of Commerce and Industry. He served as the 13th Chief Minister of Gujarat during 1997-98 when he was with Rashtriya Janata Party (RJP), floated by Shankersinh Vaghela. Parikh's government was supported by the Congress.

165. On which date, the 2019 edition of National Unity Day (NUD) is observed?

[A] October 31

[B] October 30

[C] October 28

[D] October 29

**Answer:** October 31

The 2019 edition of National Unity Day (NUD) is observed on 31st of October across India to commemorate 144th birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhai Patelwho had played important role in unifying the country. Since 2014, October 31st is observed as the Rashtriya Ekta Diwas (or NUD) and people from all walks of life participate in the 'Run For Unity'.

166. Sophie Wilmes, who is in news recently, has become the first female PM of which country?

[A] Italy

[B] Belgium

[C] Greece

[D] Portugal

**Answer:** Belgium

Sophie Wilmes, a centre-right liberal from French-speaking community, has taken office as the first female Prime Minister of Belgium in its 189-year history. She succeeded caretaker Prime Minister Charles Michel, who will take over as European Council president in December 2019.

167. What is the theme of 2019 edition of World Day for Audiovisual Heritage?

[A] Engage the Past Through Sound and Images

[B] Your Story is Moving

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[C] Discover, remember and share

[D] It's your story – don't lose it

**Answer:** Engage the Past Through Sound and Images

The World Day for Audiovisual Heritage is observed every year on 27th of October to raise general awareness of the need to preserve and safeguard important audiovisual material for future generations. The 2019 theme is "Engage the Past Through Sound and Images".

168. Prithvi Sekhar is associated to which sports?

[A] Badminton

[B] Tennis

[C] Cricket

[D] Boxing

**Answer:** Tennis

Unseeded Prithvi Sekhar from Chennai has clinched the men's singles title in the 2nd edition of World Deaf Tennis Championships (WDTC-2019). In the final, he defeated Jaroslav Smedek of the Czech Republic by 6-4, 6-3 points in Antalya, Turkey. He also won the men's doubles bronze medal with Prashanth Dasharath Harsambhavi in this event.

169. Which state government has decided to partner with MIT-based Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL)?

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[A] West Bengal

[B] Kerala

[C] Odisha

[D] Sikkim

**Answer:** Odisha

The Odisha government has decided to partner with Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) for targeted intervention in a set of social sectors including poorest of the poor through policy formulation and evaluations based on experimental research. The co-founders of J-PAL are Nobel laureates Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo. The Massachusettes Institute of Technology (MIT)-based J-PAL is known for its experimental research studies or randomized controlled trials. It has worked extensively in Africa as well India and its evaluations have helped improve outcomes of social sector initiatives.

170. What is the theme of 2019 edition of World Cities Day (WCD)?

[A] Designed to Live Together

[B] Inclusive Cities, Shared Development

[C] Changing the world

[D] Promoting a better urban future

**Answer:** Changing the world

The World Cities Day (WCD) is observed every year on 31 October to promote the international community's interest in global urbanization, push forward cooperation among countries in meeting opportunities and addressing challenges of urbanization, and contributing to sustainable urban development around the world. The 2019 theme "Changing the world: innovations and a better life for future generations" discusses how urbanization can be used to achieve sustainable development.

171. Which golfer has won the 2019 Zozo Championship in Japan?

[A] Anirban Lahiri

[B] Jyoti Randhawa

[C] Gaganjeet Bhullar

[D] Tiger Woods

**Answer:** Tiger Woods

Tiger Woods made history after he won the 2019 Zozo Championship in Japan for his 82nd US PGA Tour victory. according to the World Golf Hall of Fame, Woods equals legendary golfer Sam Snead 54-year-old record, who won 82 titles throughout his career.

172. Which state government has launched a new initiative "Meal in exchange for plastic waste"?

[A] Tamil Nadu

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[B] Odisha
[C] Jharkhand
[D] West Bengal

**Answer:** Odisha

In an effort to raise awareness about the perils of using plastic, the Kotpad Notified Area Council (NAC) in Koraput district of Odisha is providing free meals to the poor in exchange for a kilogram of plastic waste. The new initiative is being carried out under the State government's 'Aahar' scheme. The programme entails a meal for anyone who brings a kilogram of used polythene bags, plastic bottles and cups. Under the Aahar scheme, poor people in urban areas of the state are provided a meal comprising rice and 'dalma' (lentils with vegetable) at a cost of Rs 5.

173. John Witherspoon, who passed away recently, was the noted actor and comedian of which country?
[A] United States
[B] France
[C] Japan
[D] China

**Answer:** United States

John Witherspoon, the US actor and comedian, has passed way . He was best known for his role as rapper Ice Cube's father in the comedy trilogy Friday. He made his film debut in the 1980 'The Jazz Singer' and appeared in Hollywood Shuffle, Boomerang, Vampire in Brooklyn and The Ladies Man

174. Saint Kittis and Nevis, which recently signed ISA Framework Agreement, is an island country of which ocean?
[A] Pacific Ocean
[B] Indian Ocean
[C] Arctic Ocean
[D] Atlantic Ocean

**Answer:** Atlantic Ocean

India hosted the 2nd International Solar Alliance (ISA) assembly in New Delhi on 30th-31st October 2019. In it, two countries – Eritrea and Saint Kittis and Nevis – have signed the ISA's Framework Agreement and took the total number of signatories to 83. The ISA was jointly launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and then French President Francois Hollande at the UN Climate Change Conference in Paris in November 2015. It is a major global initiative for contributing to the implementation of the Paris Climate Agreement through rapid and massive deployment of solar energy. The Saint Kittis and Nevis is an island country in the West Indies, which is the region of the North Atlantic Ocean.

175. Girija Kir, who passed away recently, was the noted author of which language?
[A] Marathi
[B] Tamil
[C] Telugu
[D] Odia

**Answer:** Marathi

Girija Kir (86), the noted Marathi author, has passed away in Bandra, Maharashtra on 31st October 2019. Kir has written dozens of novels, stories, travelogues and children's books. She also worked as an assistant editor of 'Anuradha' magazine for 10 years from 1968 to 1978. Kir has won several awards for her writings, which largely originated from her on-field experiences in labour colonies, residences of patients suffering from leprosy and tribal areas. Her recent book 'Janmathep' was based on her study of inmates at Pune's Yerawada jail.

176. UNESCO has designated which Indian city as Creative City of Gastronomy?
[A] Mumbai
[B] Chennai
[C] Hyderabad
[D] Varanasi

**Answer:** Hyderabad

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On the occasion of World Cities Day (WCD-2019), UNESCO has announced that Mumbai and Hyderabad have been designated as Creative City of Films and Creative City of Gastronomy, respectively. By joining the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN), the cities pledge to share their best practices and develop partnerships involving public and private sectors as well as civil society to strengthen creation, production, distribution and dissemination of cultural activities, goods and services. Beside this, Chennai and Varanasi are designated as UNESCO cities of music while Jaipur is the City of Crafts and Folk Arts.

177. On which date, the 2019 edition of World Thrift Day (WTD) is observed in India?

[A] October 31

[B] October 30

[C] October 29

[D] October 28

**Answer:** October 31

The World Thrift Day (WTD) is celebrated every year on 31st October worldwide to promote savings and financial security of individual and nation as a whole. In India, due to death of late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on the same day in 1984 this day is being celebrated on 30th October. The day was established to inform people all around the world about the idea of saving their money in a bank rather than keeping it under their mattress or at home.

178. Who is leading the Indian delegation at the 35th ASEAN Summit?

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[A] Ram Nath Kovind

[B] Venkaiah Naidu

[C] Narendra Modi

[D] Rajnath Singh

**Answer:** Narendra Modi

The 35th Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Summit 2019 has started in Bangkok, Thailand on 1st of November with theme 'Advancing Partnership for sustainability'. During 5-days summit East Asia summit (EAS) and Regional Comprehensive Economic Summit (RCEP) will be also held. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will attend this summit on 3rd and 4th November. The ASEAN is a group of 10 member countries that encourages political,economic and social co-operation in the region. The summit would discuss comprehensive and sustainable ASEAN economic development and s on negotiations related to the RCEP including market opening. The RCEP is a proposed Free Trade Agreement ( FTA) between the 10 members state of ASEAN and its partner countries.

179. Which IIT has decided to set up space technology cell in collaboration with ISRO?

[A] IIT Delhi

[B] IIT Kanpur

[C] IIT Bombay

[D] IIT Madras

**Answer:** IIT Delhi

IIT Delhi has decided to set up a space technology cell in collaboration with the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO). The cell would work for carrying out focused research projects in the space technology domain with specific deliverables. It is also proposed that IIT Delhi as an institute becomes academic partner of ISRO in research areas such as or example AI Artificial Intelligence, Nano-technology, functional textiles and smart manufacturing or any area of joint interest.

180. India's first-ever Arts Exposition for talents with intellectual challenges "eCAPA 2019" has started in which city?

[A] Kanpur

[B] Kochi

[C] Dehradun

[D] New Delhi

**Answer:** New Delhi

India's first-ever Arts Exposition for Artists blessed with Down Syndrome, Autism, Mental Retardation, Seizure Disorder and Dyslexia has started in New Delhi on 3rd November 2019. The "eCAPA 2019 – Art from the Heart" is a unique nationwide platform-cum social venture for such artists to showcase their visual and performing arts. The aim of this exposition is to create an exclusive platform to showcase the

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visual and performing art talents of young adults with intellectual challenges. It will also provide Divyang artists with opportunities to find mentors in the visiting artists and eminent masters of different crafts. This exposition will continue till 14th November at STIR Gallery, Chattarpur Farms.

181. Which city is hosting the UN Climate Change Conference (COP 25) after Chile withdraws?

[A] New York

[B] Paris

[C] Madrid

[D] New Delhi

**Answer:** Madrid

The Spanish capital city of Madrid will host the UN Climate Change Conference (COP 25) from 2nd to 13th December 2019. The decision was taken after Chile withdrew as host for the event due to the ongoing street protests in the South American country. The annual Conference of the Parties (COP) summit is a key event which allows representatives from around 200 nations to monitor and discuss the current situation of the world's warming climate.

182. Which country will be the partner country at the International Film Festival of India (IFFI-2019)?

[A] Afghanistan

[B] China

[C] Japan

[D] Russia

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**Answer:** Russia

Russia will be the partner country at the Golden Jubilee of International Film Festival of India (IFFI-2019) in Goa. It will be held from November 20 to 28 with close to 250 films from various countries being screened. The fest will honour superstar Rajinikanth with a special 'Icon of Golden Jubilee' award presented in recognition of his outstanding contribution to Indian cinema. The Life Time Achievement (LTA) award for a Foreign Artiste will be conferred on French Actress Isabelle Hupert. During the 50th IFFI, 50 films of women directors will be showcased.

183. Which noted philanthropist has won the 2019 Sasthaaram Award?

[A] M Padmakuma

[B] K P Nandakumar

[C] V A Shrikumar Menon

[D] Unni Menon

**Answer:** K P Nandakumar

Dr K.P. Nandakumar, the noted Homoeopathic doctor and philanthropist, has won the 2019 Sasthaaram Award for his contributions to the art and socio-cultural realms. The award was instituted by the Thamarakkulam Sri Sabarimala Ayyappa Swami temple of Vadakkanthra in 2015 with the intention of honouring those who contributed to the art and socio-cultural fields in Palakkad. It consists of Rs 25,000, a citation and a plaque, and would be presented at a function to be held on December 22.

184. Which Indian sand artist has been selected for Italian Golden Sand Art Award 2019?

[A] Manisha Swarnkar

[B] Dhanraj Shelke

[C] Sudarsan Pattnaik

[D] Nitish Bharti

**Answer:** Sudarsan Pattnaik

Internationally acclaimed sand artist Sudarsan Pattnaik has been selected for the prestigious Italian Golden Sand Art Award 2019. He will be felicitated during the International Scorrana Sand Nativity in Italy, which is going to held from 13th to 18th Nov. He will also represent India in this fest.

185. Which IIT has launched the Rs 250 crore Global Alumni Endowment Fund?

[A] IIT Delhi

[B] IIT Kharagpur

[C] IIT Bombay

[D] IIT Kanpur

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**Answer:** IIT Delhi

President Ram Nath Kovind has recently launched the IIT Delhi global alumni endowment fund at Rashtrapati Bhavan that will have an initial commitment of more than Rs 250 crore. As per the scheme, the student will receive an aid of $10,000 from the alumni endowment fund. The aim of the endowment model is to achieve a target corpus of USD 1 billion over a period of 7 years. This first-of-its-kind fund in India will work towards the development of the University, nurturing innovation, and keeping alive the entrepreneurial spirit among the youth of India.

186. The Madhya Pradesh government has decided to set up Sikh museum and research centre in which city?

[A] Bhopal

[B] Jabalpur

[C] Indore

[D] Gwalior

**Answer:** Jabalpur

To mark the 550th 'Prakash Parv' of Guru Nanak Dev, the Madhya Pradesh government has decided to set up Sikh museum and research centre in Jabalpur at the cost of Rs 20 crore. Chief Minister Kamal Nath hasalso decided to develop six Sikh places associated with the founder of Sikhism in the state as religious tourist spots. These centres are: Tekri Sahib (Bhopal), Imli Sahib and Betma Sahib (Indore), Gurdwara (Omkareshwar), Gurunanak Ghat Gurudwara (Ujjain) and Gwari Ghat Gurudwara (Jabalpur).

187. The Indo-French exercise 'Shakti-2019' has started at which region?

[A] Udaipur

[B] Jodhpur

[C] Bikaner

[D] Jaipur

**Answer:** Bikaner

The 14-day long joint Indo-French exercise 'Shakti-2019' has started at the Mahajan field firing ranges in Bikaner, Rajasthan. The aim of the exercise is to enhance interoperability between the two armies and further strengthening the military relations between them. The exercise will facilitate both the armies to know each other better, share their operational experience and enhance awareness through information exchange.

188. The 2019 meeting of Council of Heads of Government (CHG) of SCO was held in which city?

[A] Tashkent

[B] Bishkek

[C] Ashgabat

[D] Baku

**Answer:** Tashkent

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has represented India at a meeting of Council of Heads of Government (CHG) of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in Tashkent on November 1-2. It was the 3rd CHG meeting of the SCO after India became the member of the grouping in 2017.The SCO is an influential regional security grouping which is seen as a counterweight to NATO. The aim of the SCO is to maintain peace, stability and security of the region. The SCO represents over 40% of humanity and nearly 20% of the global GDP.

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