



WEEKLY G.K.

30 December 2019 - 05 January 2020

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National News

1. SDGs Index 2019-20: Kerala tops the list while Bihar is worst performer.

- NITI Aayog has recently released the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Index for the year 2019-20. As per the SDG index, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Telangana have topped the index. On the other hand, UP, Sikkim and Odisha were among maximum improved states.
- Dr. Rajiv Kumar, Deputy Chairman, NITI Aayog released the second edition of India's Sustainable Development Goals Index. He also said that no state has got less than 50 out of a hundred marks. NITI Aayog also launched Dashboard 2019-20.
- Sustainable Development Goals Index and dashboard reflect the progress of the States and Union Territories.

Foot Notes:

About NITI Aayog

Formed: 1 January 2015

Headquarters: New Delhi

Chairperson: Narendra Modi

CEO: Amitabh Kant

About Kerala

Governor: Arif Mohammad

Khan Trending

Capital: Thiruvananthapuram

Chief Minister: Pinarayi

Vijayan

About Bihar

Governor: Phagu Chauhan

Chief Minister: Nitish Kumar

Capital: Patna

2. No extra charge on digital payments via UPI, RuPay from January 1, 2020.

- The central government has decided to remove the Merchant Discount Rate (MDR) to promote digital payments. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman recently said that all digital transactions using RuPay or UPI will not face additional charges from January 1, 2020.
- Earlier, the central government amended two acts, Payments and Settlement Systems Act and the Income Tax Act. Now, the Department of Revenue (DoR) will notify UPI and RuPay as the approved mode of payment for digital transactions without any Merchant Discount Rate (MDR).
- This step will promote home-grown digital payment gateways, RuPay and UPI. Other foreign payment gateway companies are VISA and MasterCard. It will also reduce the transaction cost of digital payments as well as it will enhance the use of digital payment in India. This recent move by Finance Minister can play a major role to boost the digital economy of India.

3. Reliance to venture in e-commerce with Jio Mart, initial roll-out in Mumbai.

- Mukesh Ambani's RIL has taken the first flight towards fulfilling its e-commerce plan and opened My Jio Mart to take on e-tailers such as Amazon and Flipkart. The soft launch of the e-commerce platform was done and it will cater to select locations, for now, such as Navi Mumbai, Thane, and Kalyan.
- Reliance Retail, which is one of the biggest retail chains in India along with Kishore Biyani's Future Group, is deploying new-age technologies on a pan-India basis to link producers, traders, small merchants, consumer brands and shoppers.

4. India Forest Report 2019: Green cover increased by 5,188 square km in two years.

- Union Minister Prakash Javadekar on December 30, 2019, released a report depicting forest cover in India. According to this report, the forest area in the country has increased by 5,188 square km in the last two years. It has also mentioned in the report that this green area covers about 25% of the total geographic area of the country.
- India State of Forest Report 2019 has been prepared by Forest Survey of India (FSI). It is a biannual report. The report is prepared after mapping of forests and trees through satellite. According to the report, the forest area has increased by 3976 kilometers and the area of trees by 1212 square kilometers in two years.

Foot Notes:

About Forest Survey of India

Headquarters: Dehradun in Uttarakhand

5. 'Dhanu Jatra' the 11-day long festival begins at Bargarh in Western Odisha.

- ✚ 'Dhanu Jatra' the famous 11-day long open air theater festival begins on 31 December, 2019 at Bargarh in western Odisha. Jatra drama is based on the story of Lord Krishna and his uncle Kansa.
- ✚ It is the world's longest open-air drama festival, which takes place in the Guinness book of records. To celebrate Indian's Independence and to symbolize the victory of good over evil this festival was celebrated from 1947-1948. Government of India gave the National Festival Status to Dhanu Jatra in November 2014.

Foot Notes:**About Odisha:****Chief Minister-** Naveen Patnaik**Governor-** Ganeshi Lal**Capital City-** Bhubaneswar**6. List of Nuclear Installations exchanged between India and Pakistan.**

- ✚ On January 1, 2020, India and Pakistan exchanged their nuclear installations under an agreement that prevents them from attacking each other's atomic facilities. The practice is being followed for 29 years for now.
- ✚ India and Pakistan exchanged the list of nuclear installations under the Agreement on Prohibition of attack against nuclear installations. The exchange was done based on diplomatic channels simultaneously in Islamabad and New Delhi. The first of the exchange took place on January 1, 1992.
- ✚ The agreement was signed between Pakistan President Benazir Bhutto and Indian PM Rajiv Gandhi on December 31, 1988.

7. India commences the world's largest ever vaccination program to control FMD.

- ✚ The union Government launched a new scheme National Animal Disease Control Programme for FMD and Brucellosis with a financial outlay of Rs. 13,343.00 crore for five years (2019-20 to 2023-24) by vaccinating 100% cattle, buffalo, sheep, goat, and pig population for FMD and 100% bovine female calves of 4-8 months of age for brucellosis to prevent loss of Rs. 50,000 crores. This programme combined with providing unique PashuAadhar to 535 million animals.
- ✚ Nationwide Artificial Insemination Programme district for 600 districts in the country was recently launched by the Government in September is one of the most extensive such programs with 100% central assistance for undertaking breed improvement. T600 districts so that India achieves 70% AI coverage. Under NAIP, more than 11 lakhs AI done on 31.12.2019.

8. PM Modi is to release the fourth installment of Pradhan Mantri Kisan Yojana in Tumakuru, Karnataka.

- ✚ PM Modi is to release the fourth installment of Pradhan Mantri Kisan Yojana in Tumakuru, Karnataka. The Prime Minister will also confer "Krishi Karmanya" award to three fishermen and 28 progressive farmers from various states.
- ✚ The scheme was first introduced in Telangana as "Rythu Bandhu" scheme. Under the scheme, a certain amount is given to eligible farmers. Eventually, the scheme was accoladed for its huge success all over the world including World Bank.
- ✚ Upon the success of Rythu Bandhu scheme, central government launched Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Yojana all over the country in 2018. Under the scheme, Rs 6,000 will be provided to farmers annually. The amount is directly credited to bank accounts of eligible farmers in four instalments.

Foot Notes:**About Karnataka****Chief Minister:** B. S. Yediyurappa**Capital:** Bengaluru**Governor of Karnataka:** Vajubhai Vala

9. Kerala: the first state to pass anti-CAA resolution.

- ✚ The Kerala Government passed a resolution to rollback the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) that was passed during this winter session of Parliament. According to the Kerala Government, the CAA act contradicts the basic principles of Constitution.
- ✚ According to the Government of Kerala, the act was against secularism and has triggered widespread protests in the country. The act also dented India's image among the International community.
- ✚ The Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019 was passed in December 2019. The act amended Citizenship act passed in 1955. It allows Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs, Jains, Christians and Parsi religious minorities to gain Indian citizenship. It also includes the minorities who have fled from countries such as Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh. The issue around the act is that it does not include Muslims.

Foot Notes:**About Kerala****Governor:** Arif Mohammad Khan**Capital:** Thiruvananthapuram**Chief Minister:** Pinarayi Vijayan

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**10. Results of Swachh Survekshan League, 2020 released, Indore tops the list.**

- ✚ The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs released Swachh Survekshan League in New Delhi. Around 4,372 cities participated in the league. It is a cleanliness survey that helps in competitive federalism.
- ✚ In the category of 10 lakh plus population, Indore secured first place. Indore has remained in first place for the last three years. Following Indore, Bhopal and Surat are in second and third places respectively. In the category of population between one lakh and 10 lakhs, Jamshedpur was in 1st spot following New Delhi and Khargone.
- ✚ The focus of the survey was on wastewater treatment, faecal sludge management. The survey also focused on implementation of ODF+, water plus and ODF++ protocols of the ministry of housing and urban affairs.

Foot Notes:**Union Housing and Urban Affairs Minister:** Hardeep Singh Puri**11. J&K abolishes toll tax from New Year, to incur annual loss of Rs 1,500 crore.**

- ✚ Jammu and Kashmir administration announced abolition of toll posts, including at Lakhanpur along Jammu-Pathankot highway, a move that will lead to a loss of Rs 1,500 crore to the exchequer annually.
- ✚ The decision of the abolishment of the toll tax from the New Year was welcomed by traders while industrialists termed the withdrawal of toll tax as a "Black Death Warrant for J&K Industrial Sector".
- ✚ The administration has decided to abolish toll tax at Lakhanpur and all other posts including at Railway Stations and Airports with effect from January 1, 2020.

Foot Notes:**Lt. Governor:** Girish Chandra Murmu

12. Pragati Maidan metro station renamed as Supreme Court metro station.

- ✚ The Pragati Maidan metro station will now be known as Supreme Court metro station, while Mukarba Chowk in Jahangirpuri will be known as Shaheed Captain Vikram Batra Chowk.
- ✚ The Delhi government's naming committee approved the name changes in its meeting. The demands for renaming Mukarba Chowk and Pragati Maidan were long pending. Mukarba Chowk is one of the most important junctions in the country.
- ✚ Naming the Chowk as well as the flyover after Shaheed Captain Vikram Batra who was martyred in the Kargil War in 1999 can inspire the people of Delhi and those who come to Delhi, adding that the decision is a deserving tribute to Batra whose parents had requested to honor the martyr.

13. GoM constituted to expedite revival plan of BSNL & MTNL.

- ✚ A Group of Ministers (GoM) has been constituted to expedite revival plan of BSNL & MTNL. The GoM will fast-track and oversee the implementation of the Rs 69,000 crore revival plan for state-owned telecom corporations BSNL and MTNL.
- ✚ The GoM includes Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, IT and Telecom Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad, Home Minister Amit Shah, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal and Oil Minister Dharmendra Pradhan.
- ✚ The government had approved a Rs 69,000 crore revival package for BSNL and MTNL which includes merger of the two loss-making firms, monetising their assets and giving VRS to employees. The GoM will expedite the smooth implementation of decisions taken on revival of BSNL and MTNL.

14. Kerala CM launches K-RERA to bring transparency in the real estate sector.

- ✚ Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan launched the Kerala Real Estate Regulatory Authority. The main aim to boost the confidence of customers and bring in more transparency in the real estate sector; the Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA) will be more transparency and credibility.
- ✚ Kerala Chief Minister's real-estate sector tremendous growth in the country in the last decade passed by the Parliament, the Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act, 2016, had directed the state governments to establish RERA for effective regulation of the real sector and for speedy dispute redressal.
- ✚ The buildings with more than eight apartments and real estate projects with 500 square meters of land or more will have to register with RERA.

Foot Notes:**About Kerala****Capital:** Thiruvananthapuram**Chief Minister:** Pinarayi Vijayan**15. Indian Railway announces one integrated Helpline number 139.**

- ✚ The Indian Railways made to overcome the inconvenience over multiple helpline numbers for grievances and inquiry during railway travel, Indian Railway integrated railway helplines into single number 139 for the passengers for quick grievance redressal and inquiry during their journey.
- ✚ The new helpline number 139 will take over all the existing helpline numbers (except 182), it will be easy for the passengers to remember this number and connect with Railways for all their needs during the travel.

Foot Notes:**Minister of Railways:** Piyush Goyal**16. DMRC awards first civil contract for Tughlakabad Aerocity corridor.**

- ✚ Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) awarded the first civil contract for the Tughlakabad-Aerocity corridor of its Phase 4 project. The first civil contract for the Tughlakabad the Aerocity corridor of Phase 4 awarded.

- ✦ This contract involves the construction of Metro viaduct from Sangam Vihar to Saket G including four elevated Metro stations - Sangam Vihar, Khanpur-Davoli, Ambedkar Nagar and Saket-G. The section will be a double-decker viaduct include as well as an elevated six-lane flyover from Sangam Vihar to Ambedkar Nagar.
- ✦ Union Cabinet approved three out of the six proposed corridors of Delhi Metro's Phase 4 project namely RK Ashram to Janakpuri West (25 stations), Tughlakabad to Aerocity (15 stations) and Maujpur to Mukundpur (six stations). The three priority corridors consist of both underground (22.359 kilometers) and elevated (39.320 kilometers) sections. The total length of these three corridors is 61.679 kilometers.

17. Nepal launches 'Visit Nepal Year 2020' campaign.

- ✦ President of Nepal launched the "Visit Nepal Year 2020" during the ceremony held at historic Dasaratha Rangashala in Kathmandu. Mythical creature Yeti has been selected as mascot of the campaign.
- ✦ The ambitious campaign is aimed to promote tourism in Nepal and to attract 2 million tourists in 2020. The Visit Nepal 2020 campaign was launched in all the seven provinces of Nepal.
- ✦ Nepal is one of the World's fascinating tourist destinations and the government has a goal of making tourism one of the key pillars of the Nepali economy.

Foot Notes:

About Nepal

Prime Minister of Nepal: K P Sharma Oli

Capital: Kathmandu.

President of Nepal: Bidhya Devi Bhandari

Currency of Nepal: Nepalese Rupee.

18. Assam state zoo first to breed endangered Hargila.

- ✦ The Assam State Zoo cum Botanical Garden and Aaranyak has jointly attained a landmark achievement by successfully hatching a pair of Greater Adjutant or Hargila chicks in an artificial platform within the zoo enclosure, in the first-ever experiment of its kind.
- ✦ This rarest of storks, the Hargila is currently on the brink of extinction due to habitat loss stemming from indiscriminate felling of big trees and dwindling wetlands. The Endangered Greater Adjutant stork is one of the rarest species of Storks out of twenty species of Storks in the world.
- ✦ In India, eight species of residential storks are found, out of which Greater Adjutant is one of them. Once abundantly distributed in Southeast Asia, this stork is now restricted to a few isolated pockets in Assam and Bihar in India and PrekToal in Cambodia.

Foot Notes:

About Assam

Governor: Jagdish Mukhi

Chief Minister: Sarbananda Sonowal

Capital: Dispur

19. Gujarat CM unveils world second tallest statue of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

- ✦ Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani unveils the second tallest statue of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel in the world at Ahmedabad.
- ✦ Around 50 feet tall bronze statue with a weight of 70 thousand kilograms unveiled at the Sardardham campus near the Vaishnodevi Circle in Ahmedabad. It is the second-highest statue of India's first home Minister after the Statue of Unity of the legendary leader situated at Kevadiya in the Narmada district of Central Gujarat. Statue of Sardar Patel is designed by Padma Bhusan Ram V. Sutar..

Foot Notes:

About Gujarat

Capital: Gandhinagar

Governor: Acharya Devvrat

Chief Minister: Vijay Rupani

20. First Silk Processing plant in Gujarat to boost “PATOLA SAREE” production.

- ✦ Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) inaugurated the first “Patola Saree” production unit in Gujarat. This will help to cut down the cost of silk yarn production and also will increase the sale of raw material for Patola sarees.
- ✦ The silk production plant has employed 90 local women of which 70 belong to Muslim community. The installation cost of the plant was Rs 75 lakh and the KVIC operating under Ministry of MSME has contributed Rs 60 lakhs.
- ✦ The plant has been built in a backward district of Gujarat (Surendranagar district). The aim of the plant is to make silk readily available to Patola saree manufacturers to boost its production.

Foot Notes:**About Gujarat****Capital:** Gandhinagar**Governor:** Acharya Devvrat**Chief Minister:** Vijay Rupani**21. Ritualistic festival ‘Lai Haraoba’ begins in Tripura.**

- ✦ In Tripura, Lai Haraoba, a ritualistic festival observed by Manipuri meitei communities since ancient times, began in Agartala. Lai Haraoba is celebrated through oral literature, music, dance and rituals.
- ✦ This festival is jointly organised by Department of Information and Cultural Affairs, Government of Tripura, Puthiba Lai Haraoba Committee and Puthiba Welfare & Cultural Society, Agartala.
- ✦ The five-day long festival was inaugurated by Speaker of state legislative Assembly, Rebati Mohan Das. The festival aims to uphold tradition and cultural values of Meitei community.

Foot Notes:**About Tripura****Capital:** Agartala**Governor:** Ramesh Bais**Chief Minister:** Biplab Kumar Deb**22. UPSRTC launches women’s special helpline Damini.**

- ✦ UP State Road Transport Corporation (UPSRTC) launched a dedicated women helpline, Damini, a calling and a WhatsApp service.
- ✦ A unique number, “81142-77777”, has been subscribed for the helpline which was launched by transport minister Ashok Kataria. Women officers from UPSRTC will monitor this service from 9 a.m to 6 p.m everyday. After 6 p.m complaints can be lodged using general helpline number 1800-180-2877.
- ✦ The helpline is an extension of “Nirbhaya Yojana” of the Centre.

Foot Notes:**UP State Road Transport Minister:** Ashok Kataria**About UP**

The United Provinces of Agra and Oudh during British rule, and was renamed Uttar Pradesh in 1950.

About Uttar Pradesh**Chief Minister:** Yogi Adityanath**Governor:** Anandiben Patel**Capital:** Lucknow

International News & Foreign Affairs

1. Koneru Humpy wins World Rapid Chess title in Russia.

- ✚ India's Koneru Humpy defeated China's Lei Tingjie in a battle to win the Women's World Rapid Chess Championship in Moscow.
- ✚ Indian lost the opening set before making a speedy recovery in the second round. The championship played under rapid time controls. FIDE holds the Women's Rapid chess championship.
- ✚ FIDE (Fédération Internationale des Échecs) is the supreme body by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in conducting chess tournaments at continental levels and global level. FIDE founded in Paris, France, on July 20, 1924. The motto of the organization is Gens una sumus meaning. We are one people.

Foot Notes:

About Russia

Capital: Moscow

Currency: Russian Ruble

President: Vladimir Putin

2. World's oldest rhino "Fausta" dies in Tanzania.

- ✚ Fausta, a female black rhino, who was believed to be the world's oldest rhino has died at the age of 57 in a Tanzanian conservation area. Fausta died of natural causes in captivity in Ngorongoro Crater, which lies in Ngorongoro Conservation Area of Tanzania.
- ✚ The records kept by Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority showed that Fausta lived (longer) than any rhino in world. She survived free-ranging in Ngorongoro, for more than 54 years before being kept in a sanctuary for last 3 years of its life in 2016. Her health deteriorated from 2016 after hyena attacks, thus she was taken into refuge.
- ✚ Fausta was first located in 1965 at the age of between 3 and 4 years' old by a scientist. However, Fausta survived 57 years without bearing calves.

Foot Notes:

About Tanzania

Capital: Dodoma

Currency: Tanzanian shilling

Prime minister: Kassim Majaliwa

3. UN declares Malala decade's 'the most famous teenager'.

- ✚ The UN has declared Pakistani education activist and Nobel laureate Malala Yousafzai as "the most famous teenager in the world" in its 'Decade in Review' report.
- ✚ In 2014, Malala became the youngest recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of her efforts for children's rights which started even before she was shot in the head two years ago by Taliban militants.
- ✚ She became a UN Messenger of Peace in 2017, with a special focus on girls.

Foot Notes:

About United Nation

Headquarters: New York, United States

Founded: 24 October 1945, San Francisco, California, United States

Secretary General: António Guterres

4. MEA sets up emerging technologies division, NEST.

- ✚ The external affairs ministry on Wednesday announced the setting up of new, emerging and strategic technologies (NEST) division. The development comes close on the heels of the government allowing all network equipment makers, including Huawei, to participate in 5G trials.

- ✚ NEST will act as the nodal division within the ministry for issues pertaining to new and emerging technologies. It will help in collaboration with foreign partners in the field of 5G and artificial intelligence.
- ✚ NEST will negotiate technology governance rules, standards and architecture, suited to India's conditions, in multilateral and plurilateral frameworks.

Foot Notes:**Minister of External Affairs:** S Jaishankar**Foreign Secretary:** Vijay Keshav Gokhale**5. Palau becomes 1st nation to ban 'reef toxic' sun cream.**

- ✚ The Pacific nation of Palau has become the first country to ban sun cream, which is harmful to corals and sea life. The ban prohibits sun cream containing any of the 10 ingredients, which include oxybenzone and octinoxate that absorbs ultraviolet light.
- ✚ A lagoon in Palau's Rock Island is a UNESCO World Heritage site. Palau is renowned for its marine life and is regarded as one of the world's best diving destinations.

Foot Notes:**About Palau****President of Palau:** Tommy Remengesau**Capital:** Ngerulmud**Currency:** US Dollar.**6. India to set strict restrictions on non-essential imports from China.**

- ✚ Ministry of Commerce and industry has announced that 371 items from China will get strict restriction from March 2020. The move aims at curbing imports of non-essential items such as plastic goods, toys, furniture, sports.
- ✚ The rules are to be framed by the Ministry in coordination with BIS (Bureau of Indian Standards). Though the rules focus on Chinese imports, it will also be applicable to Indian producers in order to make the regulations WTO-compliant.
- ✚ The imports from China that are categorized as non-essential amount to 4 trillion USD. Also, trade deficit with China is widening and it currently stands at 53.6 billion USD. The step will help in reducing India's dependence on China and will also help in curbing low quality imports from China. This is the main reason why India refused to join RCEP.

Foot Notes:**Union Minister of Commerce and Industry & Railways:** Piyush Goyal**About China****Capital:** Beijing**President:** Xi Jinping**Currency:** Chinese Yuan**7. Iran names Esmail Qaani new Quds chief of IRGC.**

- ✚ Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei named Esmail Qaani as the Deputy Head of the Revolutionary Guards foreign operations arm to replace Qasem Soleimani as its commander. Soleimani killed in a pre-dawn US strike in Baghdad.
- ✚ Qasem Suleimani regarded as the second most powerful figure in Iran after Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei was killed in an overnight attack by the US. Top Iraqi militia commander Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, an adviser to Soleimani killed in the attack.
- ✚ The Qaani was one of the most decorated commanders of the Guards during the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war. The orders for the force remain precisely as they were during the leadership of Soleimani. The members of the force to cooperate with General Qaani.

Foot Notes:**About Iran**

President: Hassan Rouhani
Capital: Tehran
Currency: Iranian rial
Supreme leader: Ali Khamenei

8. US army kills Iranian Commander Soleimani.

- ✦ US army killed Iran's most powerful military commander General Qasem Soleimani. He was killed at Baghdad airport.
- ✦ In a drone strike held by the US force at Baghdad airport, the Iranian Commander was killed along with other Iran supported militia heads.
- ✦ Under his leadership Iran had expanded its military presence in Syria and Iraq.

Foot Notes:

About United States


President: Donald Trump
Capital: Washington, D.C.

9. 2020 Designated as "Year of Nurse and Midwife" by WHO.

- ✦ In the honour of 200th birth anniversary of Florence Nightingale, WHO designated the year 2020 as the "Year of Nurse and Midwife".
- ✦ This year, WHO is to focus on nursing and midwifery in order to achieve Universal Health coverage. WHO will launch the reports prior to 73rd session of WHO which is to be held in Geneva between February 3 and 8, 2020.
- ✦ Every year, the International Nurses Day is celebrated on May 12. The day is celebrated by the International Council of Nurses.

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New Appointments and Person in News

1. H K Joshi Takes Charge As CMD Of Shipping Corporation of India.

- ✦ Shipping Corporation of India appointed as H.K. Joshi, Chairperson & Managing Director (CMD). The company holds the additional charge of the post of Director (Finance) of the company for three months with effect from 19 December 2019.
- ✦ Shipping Corporation of India Shipping Corporation of India is a Government of India Public Sector Enterprise with its headquarters in Mumbai.

Foot Notes:

About Shipping Corporation of India

Headquarters: Mumbai
Founded: 1950, Mumbai
Key people: Mrs. H.K Joshi (Chairman and Managing Director)

2. General Manoj Naravane appointed as a new Army Chief.

- ✦ General Manoj Mukund Naravane has been appointed as the new Indian Army Chief. He will be succeeding General Bipin Rawat who has been appointed as the first Chief of Defence Staff of India.
- ✦ General Naravane has the experience of working in an active anti-terrorism environment for over 37 years.

Foot Notes:**About General Manoj Mukund**

40th Vice Chief of Army Staff

Unit: Sikh Light Infantry

3. Babita Rayudu takes charge as SEBI Executive Director.

- ✦ G Babita Rayudu took charge as its executive director. Rayudu will handle the legal affairs department, enforcement department, and special enforcement cell.
- ✦ She was in the legal affairs department in the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI).
- ✦ According to its website, SEBI has eight other executive directors.

Foot Notes:**About SEBI**

The Securities and Exchange Board of India is the Regulator for the Securities market in India owned by the Government of India.

Founded: 12 April 1992

4. Air Marshal MSG Menon VSM assumes charge as Air Officer-in-Charge Administration of Indian Air Force.

- ✦ Air Marshal MSG Menon VSM takes over Air Officer-in-Charge Administration of Indian Air Force effect from 01 Jan 2020. Air Marshal MSG Menon VSM commissioned in the Administrative branch of IAF in Dec 1982.
- ✦ He has undergone Higher Air Command Course from the College of Air Warfare. He is an alumnus of Defence Services Staff College Wellington and the prestigious National Defence College.
- ✦ He was a member of the first UN Mission to Sudan. He served as the Commandant of the prestigious Air Force Administrative College, Coimbatore, and Principal Director Ops (Air Traffic Services).

5. Sai Deepak sets new Guinness World Records for most side lunges.

- ✦ B Sai Deepak set a Guinness World Records for most side lunges in 60 seconds. Deepak scripted the record by making 59 side lunges in 60 seconds, which is his fourth overall Guinness World Records.
- ✦ The previous record held by Pakistan national Irfan Mehsood. The 23-year-old dedicated his achievement to the martyrs. Currently, he holds four Guinness World Records for India.

Foot Notes:**About Guinness World Records**

Guinness World Records known from its inception in 1955 until 2000 as the Guinness Book of Records.

Published: 1955

Publisher: Jim Pattison Group

6. VK Yadav take charges as Railway Board Chairman for one more year.

- ✦ The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet approved the re-employment of V K Yadav as the Chairman of Railway Board for one year.
- ✦ Yadav took charge as Railway Board Chairman from Ashwani Lohani retired from the post in December 2018.
- ✦ Yadav earlier held the post of General Manager of South Central Railway (SCR). He is an electrical engineer and belongs to the 1980 batch of the Indian Railway Service of Electrical Engineers.

Foot Notes:

Minister of Railways: Piyush Goyal

7. Dr Kritika Shukla and IPS officer M Deepika, appointed as Special Officers for implementing the Andhra Pradesh Disha Act 2019.

- ✦ The state government-appointed Indian Administrative Service (IAS) official Dr. Kritika Shukla and Indian Police Service (IPS) official M Deepika, as Special Officers for implementing the Andhra Pradesh Disha Act 2019.
- ✦ The Act is intended for speedy trial and faster execution in cases of sexual offences against women in the state. The AP Disha Bill prescribes life imprisonment for other sexual offences against children and includes Section 354 F and 354 G in IPC.
- ✦ To ensure a speedy trial, the state will set up exclusive special courts in all the 13 districts to deal with cases of offences against women and children including rape, acid attacks, stalking, voyeurism, social media harassment of women, sexual harassment and all cases under POCSO Act. The state will also employ special Public Prosecutors and Special Police force dedicated to such crimes only.

Foot Notes:

Capital: Hyderabad • Amaravati

Governor: Biswabhusan Harichandan

Chief Minister: Y. S. Jaganmohan Reddy

8. Hillary Clinton appointed as new chancellor of Queen's University Belfast in Ireland.

- ✦ Former US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has been appointed the new chancellor of Queen's University in Belfast, Ireland.
- ✦ Clinton became the university's first female chancellor. She will serve as chancellor for a five-year term.
- ✦ The position of chancellor has been vacant since the death in 2018 of Thomas J Moran, Chairman, President, and Chief Executive of Mutual of America Life Insurance Company.

Banking

1. SBI to launch OTP-based cash withdrawal at all its ATMs from January 1, 2020, onwards.

- ✦ The State Bank of India (SBI) will switch to a one-time password (OTP) based cash withdrawal system at all its ATMs from January 1, 2020, onwards.
- ✦ With this latest move, the lender aims to ensure the protection of its customers from unauthorized transactions at ATMs. The new OTP-based ATM withdrawal will be applicable for transactions above Rs 10,000, between 8 pm to 8 am.
- ✦ Customers withdrawing cash from SBI ATMs will receive an OTP on their mobile number registered with the bank. However, the facility won't apply in case of transactions made by SBI cardholders at any other bank's ATM

Foot Notes:

About SBI

Chairperson: Rajnish Kumar

Headquarters: Mumbai

2. HDFC Life partners with Paytm to expand its distribution.

- ✦ HDFC Life Insurance has partnered with Paytm to expand its distribution. The partnership is aimed to enable customers of Paytm to purchase insurance products from HDFC Life. HDFC Life Insurance is constantly exploring opportunities to create and sustain new partnerships to strengthen its distribution network.

- ✦ With the partnership, HDFC Life Insurance aims to increase insurance penetration in India and to simplify the customer's experience right from the purchase to the claim process.

Foot Notes:**About HDFC Life Insurance:****Founded**– 2000**Headquarters**– Mumbai**MD & CEO**– Ms. Vibha Padalkar

It is a joint venture between Housing Development Finance Corporation Ltd (HDFC), one of India's leading housing finance institution and Standard Life Aberdeen PLC.

About Paytm:**Founded**– August 2010**Headquarters**– Noida, Uttar Pradesh(UP).**President**– Amit Nayyar**3. Mastercard signs agreement to acquire RiskRecon.**

- ✦ Mastercard has announced an agreement to acquire RiskRecon. RiskRecon is one of the leading providers of data analytics solutions and artificial intelligence focused on cyber-risk and security and offer solutions to mitigate cyber risks faced by the companies.
- ✦ The acquisition would enhance the cyber-security systems for MasterCard which offers payment processing services on a global scale.

Foot Notes:**About RiskRecon****CEO and Co-Founder:** Kelly White.**4. RBI launches mobile app 'MANI' for visually challenged to identify denomination of currency notes.**

- ✦ Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das launched a mobile app to help visually impaired people to identify the denomination of currency notes. The visually challenged people can identify the denomination of a currency note by using the mobile app. The application works offline once installed.
- ✦ The users can freely download the app, called 'MANI' (Mobile Aided Note Identifier), from Android Playstore or iOS App Store. The application can scan the currency notes using the camera of the mobile phone. It also gives audio output in Hindi and English.

Foot Notes:**About RBI****Founded:** 01 Apr 1935**Headquarters:** Mumbai, India**Governor:** Shaktikanta Das

Science Tech & Defence

1. Astronaut Christina Koch breaks record for longest female space flight.

- ✦ NASA astronaut Christina Koch on Saturday set a new record for the longest single spaceflight by a woman, eclipsing the record of 288 days set by former NASA astronaut Peggy Whitson in 2016-17.
- ✦ Koch still has six weeks to go before returning to Earth from the International Space Station (ISS), Space.com reported. When she arrives back on Earth in February 2020, the Expedition 61 Flight Engineer will have spent more than 300 days in space.

Foot Notes:**About NASA****Headquarters:** Washington, D.C, USA**Founder:** Dwight D Eisenhower**Founded:** 29 July 1958**2. Gen Bipin Rawat named as country's 1st Chief of Defence Staff.**

- ✚ Indian Army General Bipin Rawat has been named as the country's first Chief of Defence Staff (CDS). The Chief of Defence Staff will be a 4-star General, the principal military advisor to the defence minister, and will head the new Department of Military Affairs.
- ✚ The Chief of Defence Staff will ensure the jointness in training, logistics, and procurement of the three services. General Rawat is the first officer to hold the post of the Chief of Defence Staff
- ✚ The Defence Ministry had also amended the army, air force and navy rules by bringing in a new clause that allows the CDS to serve upto a maximum age of 65 years. The CDS will administer all tri-services organisations, but their command will be with the Chief of the service which has a predominant role in their functioning.

Foot Notes:**About Chief of the Defence Staff****Status:** Four-star general officer**Formation:** 24 December 2019**First holder:** General Bipin Rawat**3. New Delhi hosts the 49th Border Coordination Conference between BSF & BGB.**

- ✚ 49th Border Coordination Conference between border guarding forces of India and Bangladesh was held in New Delhi. The Indian delegation was headed by DG Border Security Force Vivek Kumar Johri and the Bangladesh delegation was headed by DG of Border Guards Bangladesh (BGB) Md Shafeenul Islam.
- ✚ The conference focused on co-operation in Border Guarding and Border Management between the two forces. During the conference, both forces agreed to make all possible efforts to curb the menace of cattle smuggling or any other criminal activity and to ensure tranquility on the borders.

Foot Notes:**About Border Security Force****Director General of BSF :** Vivek Kumar Johri.**About Bangladesh****Bangladesh Capital:** Dhaka**Currency:** Taka**PM:** Sheikh Hasina.**4. Railway renames Railway Protection Force as Indian Railway Protection Service.**

- ✚ On December 31, 2019, The Ministry of Railway (MoR) has accorded Organised Group 'A' status (OGAS) to Railway Protection Force (RPF) and also renamed RPF as Indian Railway Protection Service (IRPS).
- ✚ The notice of renaming was issued by the Joint Director of Railway Board Amitabh Joshi on December 30, 2019.
- ✚ The Indian Railways (IR) has also introduced a new Passenger Information System at Anakapalle Railway Station of Vijayawada Division of Andhra Pradesh (AP) in South Central Railway (SCR). The system has been introduced to provide better features and easy guidance to the passengers and also to enhance satisfactory user experience.

Foot Notes:**Railway Minister:** Piyush Goyal

5. Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicates Five DRDO Young Scientists Laboratories to the nation.

- ✦ Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicates Five DRDO Young Scientists Laboratories to the nation. The event shall be organized at the Aeronautical Development Establishment DRDO at Bengaluru. Prime Minister unveiled a plaque to mark the dedication and address the Scientists.
- ✦ DRDO will also showcase some of its innovative products to the Prime Minister at an Exhibition on occasion. Chief Minister B. S. Yediyurappa and DRDO Chairman Dr. G Satheesh Reddy will present on occasion.
- ✦ The defence research-related activities ensure that India remains abreast of global technological advancements in the field.

6. ISRO to set up the second launch port in Thoothukodi district.

- ✦ Indian Space Research Organisation establish a second launch port in Thoothukodi district in Tamilnadu exclusively to launch small satellite launch vehicles. ISRO Chairman K Sivan informed that this would come up in 2300 acres.
- ✦ The line of GPS navigation system developed by America, the Indian navigation system called Navic with the indigenous atomic clock, will be operational with mobile phone manufacturers coming forward to install the regional navigation device.
- ✦ India's first human-crewed mission to outer space Gaganyaan and four men selected from Indian Air Force will leave for Russia in the third week of January to get training. The Gaganyaan mission targeted to launch by 2022.

Foot Notes:

Chairman: K Sivan

7. Abhinav Kumar gets extension as BSF IG.

- ✦ The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet approved the proposal of Ministry of Home Affairs for extending the deputation tenure of IPS Abhinav Kumar, Inspector General, Border Security Force (BSF), up to June 27, 2021, in relaxation of IPS Tenure Policy.

Foot Notes:

About BSF

Formed: 1 December, 1965

Motto of BSF: Duty Unto Death

DG BSF: V K Johri

Important Days

1. 14 scientists awarded Swarna Jayanti Fellowships.

- ✦ The Union Ministry of Science and Technology have awarded Swarna Jayanti Fellowships to 14 scientists to pursue basic research in frontier areas of science and technology.
- ✦ The fellowship covers all the requirements for performing the research and includes a fellowship of 25 thousand rupees per month. A research grant of five lakh rupees for five years is also being provided in addition to their salary.
- ✦ Instituted to commemorate India's 50th year of independence, Swarna Jayanti Fellowships are awarded to young and brilliant scientists to pursue unfettered research with financial freedom and flexibility.

Foot Notes:

Union Ministry of Science and Technology: Dr. Harsh vardhan

2. World Braille Day observed on January 4th.

- ✦ World Braille Day observed on January 4th. The day is marked remembering the birth anniversary of Louis Braille, the inventor of Braille for people with visual disabilities.
- ✦ Louis Braille was born on 4th January 1809 in the town of Coupvray in northern France. The invention of the language of 6 dots is popularly known as Braille. The 17 years long tradition prepared in Braille Script with a special typewriter.
- ✦ This initiative aims to spread awareness among society about the plight and cause of people with visual disabilities.



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Sports

1. Sarbananda Sonowal launches torch relay of Khelo India Youth Games.

- ✦ Assam Chief Minister has launched the torch relay of the Khelo India Youth Games in Guwahati, Assam. The 3rd edition of the tournament will be held in January 2020.
- ✦ Athletes from all over the country will be coming to Guwahati for the Khelo India Youth Games. The officials of the competition are preparing a total of eight venues for the tournament to make the Games one of the largest sporting spectacles of the country.

Foot Notes:**About Assam****Capital:** Dispur**Chief Minister:** Sarbananda Sonowal.**Governor:** Jagdish Mukhi.**2. IOA ends boycott call for 2022 Commonwealth Games.**

- ✦ The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) has withdrawn its boycott call for the 2022 Commonwealth Games to be held in Birmingham.
- ✦ The decision was taken during its Annual General Meeting held in New Delhi.
- ✦ The cause of the boycott call was exclusion of shooting. IOA also announced that the country will bid to host either the 2026 or the 2030 edition.

Foot Notes:**About Commonwealth Games Federation****President of:** Dame Louise Martin.**Chief of Indian Olympic Association:** Narinder Batra.**3. 5th IHAI National Ice Hockey Championship-2020 begins in Leh.**

- ✦ The 5th Ice Hockey Association of India (IHAI) National Ice Hockey Championship -2020 has begun in Leh. The tournament is being organized at the Karzoo Ice Hockey Rink located in the largest city of the union territory of Ladakh.

- ✦ 6 Teams from hosts Ladakh, Indian army, Chandigarh, Maharashtra, Haryana, and Delhi are participating in the boy's U-20 category.
- ✦ In the girl's category, 4 teams from Ladakh, Chandigarh, Delhi, and Maharashtra are participating in the 5th edition of the tournament. Since April 1989, the Ice Hockey Association of India is a member of the International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF).

Foot Notes:**About Ice Hockey Association of India****President:** K. L. Kumar

Books and Authors

1. 28th World Book Fair to focus on Gandhi as writer, to be held in New Delhi.

- ✦ The New Delhi World Book Fair organized by the National Book Trust is being held for 42 years now. The trust is an apex body of Government of India functioning under Ministry of Human Resource Development.
- ✦ The World Book Fair is to be held between January 4, 2020 and January 12, 2020. The fair is organized jointly by National Book Trust and India Trade Promotion Organization. More than 800 exhibitors and 40 foreign exhibitors are to participate in the fair.
- ✦ The fair also acts as a gateway to the intellectual world of South Asia. The theme of the fair is Theme: Gandhi, the Writers' Writer.



1. Krish Srikkanth, Anjum Chopra to get CK Nayudu Lifetime Achievement Awards.

- ✦ Former India captain and member of the 1983 World Cup-winning team Krish Srikkanth will be the recipient of this year's prestigious CK Nayudu Lifetime Award given by the BCCI.
- ✦ Anjum Chopra is the co-recipient of the lifetime achievement award for the year 2019.
- ✦ The BCCI Annual Award function was held in Mumbai. Srikkanth and Anjum conferred with the Lifetime Achievement award for their contributions to Indian cricket.

Foot Notes:**About BCCI****CEO:** Rahul Johri**Headquarters:** Mumbai**Secretary:** Jay Shah**Presidents:** C.K. Khanna, Sourav Ganguly

2. Sanjay Gupta of 'Jagran' to be honoured with the Lokmanya Tilak journalism award.

- ✦ Sanjay Gupta, the editor-in-chief of 'Jagran' will be honored with "Lokmanya Tilak National Journalism Award" for his great contribution in the field of Journalism.
- ✦ The award was instituted by the Kesari-Maratha Trust and it will be conferred to Gupta on 4th January 2019 during the 139th foundation ceremony of 'kesari' newspaper started by Lokmanya Tilak.

Foot Notes:**About Lokmanya Tilak National Journalism Award:**

- This was started by Lokmanya Tilak to promote courageous and idealistic journalists.

- The award consists of Rs. 1 lakh cash prize and a memento.
- Earlier the award was conferred to well-known journalists such as Vir Sanghvi, N. Ram, H. K. Dua, Vinod Metha, and Siddharth Varadarajan.

Obituaries

1. Vishweshwara Tirtha Swami of Pejawar Mutt passes away.

- ✚ The pontiff of Pejawar Mutt, Vishweshwara Tirtha Swami passed away in Udupi. He was born at Ramakujna in Dakshina Kannada district on April 27, 1931.
- ✚ He was ordained as a monk at the age of eight in 1938, as the 33rd seer in the lineage or 'guru parampara' of the Pejawar Mutt.
- ✚ Vishweshwara Tirtha Swami made history by becoming the only seer among the seers of the Ashta Mutts (eight mutts) of Udupi, which propagate the Dwaita philosophy, to have performed five biennial Paryayas.

2. Nagaland Assembly Speaker Vikho-o Yhoshu passes away.

- ✚ The Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party (NDPP) leader and Nagaland Assembly Speaker Vikho-o Yhoshu passed away. Yhoshu was elected to the state Assembly thrice from Southern Angami-1 constituency in Kohima district.
- ✚ He had won the seat as a candidate of the Naga People's Front (NPF) in 2008 and 2013 and served as Advisor and Parliamentary Secretary of various departments. He was elected as Speaker of the state Assembly in 2018 assembly election.

Foot Notes:

About Nagaland

Chief Minister of Nagaland: Neiphiu Rio

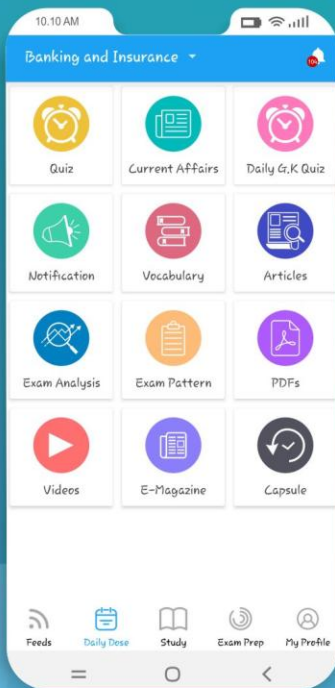
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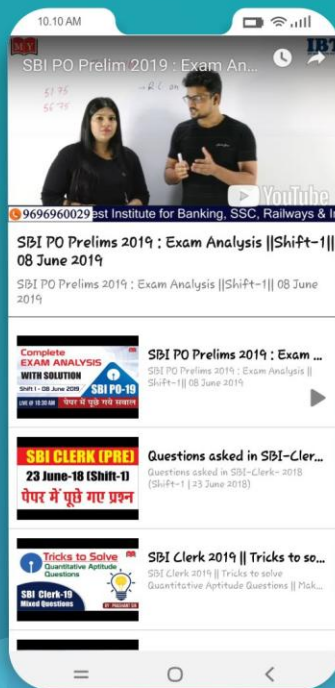
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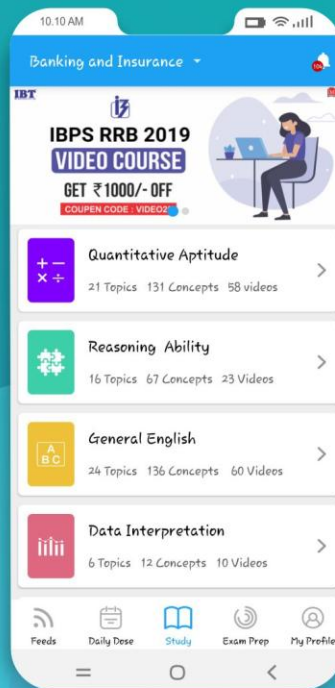
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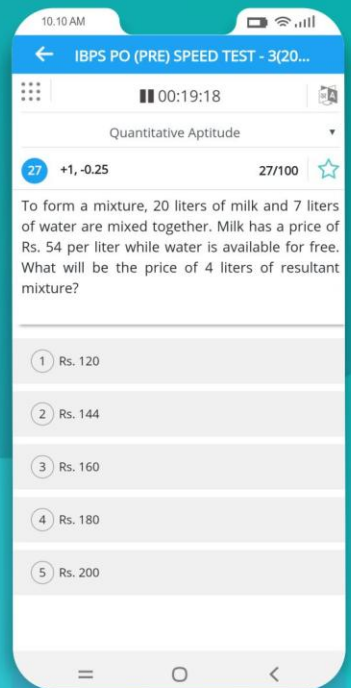
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