

WEEKLY G.K.

16 December – 22 December
2019

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National News

1. Lahore-Wagah shuttle train service resumed after 22 years.

- ✚ The shuttle train service between Lahore and Wagah railway station resumed its operation after a gap of 22 years. The service was inaugurated by Pakistan's Railways Minister Sheikh Rashid. The train service was operated till 1997. It was closed due to certain operational and security reasons.
- ✚ Pakistan aims to start or revive the connection of Lahore metropolitan city with its suburbs through rail routes. Lahore-Wagah is the first step taken by the Pakistan government. The shuttle train is expected to be followed by another train from Lahore to Raiwind within the next 15 days.
- ✚ The service will provide a hassle-free commute to hundreds of visitors who intend to witness the flag hoisting and lowering ceremony at Wagah or visiting Jallo Park.

Foot Notes:

About Pakistan

Currency: Pakistani rupee

Capital: Islamabad

Prime minister: Imran Khan

2. Nagaland Governor R N Ravi to take additional charge of Meghalaya.

- ✚ Nagaland Governor R N Ravi has been given additional charge of the State Meghalaya. The appointment was announced by the President of India.
- ✚ In addition to his own duties, the Governor of Nagaland will discharge the functions of the Governor of Meghalaya during the absence of Tathagata Roy, the Governor of Meghalaya.

Foot Notes:

About Nagaland

Capital: Kohima

Governor: RN Ravi

Chief Minister: Neiphiu Rio

About Meghalaya

Capital: Shillong

Governor: Tathagata Roy

Chief Minister: Conrad Sangma

3. WEF Gender Gap Index: India slips to 112th rank, in bottom 5 on health, economic fronts.

- ✚ World Economic Forum (WEF) has recently released Gender Gap Index-2019 that shows India has slipped to 112th position.
- ✚ India has moved downwards four places in terms of gender equality amid increasing disparity in terms of women's participation in the development of the country. The country is ranked in the bottom five on health and economic fronts.

Foot Notes:

WEF Gender Gap Index 2018: 108th

First WEF Gender Gap Index: 2006

1st is ranked 2019: Iceland

4. Haryana Police became the first to introduce 'Trakea' software in FSL

- ✚ Haryana police have introduced a unique barcoding software "Trakea" to enable foolproof security of the samples collected in Forensic reports.
- ✚ Haryana became the first state in the country to introduce this unique barcoding system.

- ✦ Manohar Lal Khattar, Chief Minister (CM) of Haryana inaugurated the TRAKEA barcoding system of Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) at Madhuban, Haryana.
- ✦ According to the police, Trakea ensures foolproof security of the samples collected from the scene of the crime, and the forensic analysis reports, and is different from traditional methods that the state police force has been following for decades.
- ✦ The software was developed by a software engineer Amit Mishra.

Foot Notes:**About Haryana**

Governor of Haryana: Satyadeo Narayan Arya.

Capital: Chandigarh

5. Amit Shah lays foundation stone of Bharat Vandana Park at New Delhi.

- ✦ Union Minister of Home Affairs Shri Amit Shah presided over the foundation stone laying ceremony of development of Bharat Vandana Park at New Delhi.
- ✦ The proposed park would be a major tourist attraction once constructed.
- ✦ That proposed over an area of 200 acres and at the cost of 550 crore rupees, the park's proximity to the Indira Gandhi International Airport and metro station would only add to its attractiveness as tourist destination.

6. MSME Minister Nitin Gadkari launches sale of 'Khadi Ruma'.

- ✦ MSME Minister Nitin Gadkari launched the sale of 'Khadi Ruma', made by militancy-affected families of Kashmir. Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) Chairman Vinai Kumar Saxena said that in 2016, the KVIC started a napkin stitching centre at Nagrota for the families of militancy-affected areas in the Valley.
- ✦ The minister said if people are provided job opportunities in their villages and home towns then there would not be any need for people to leave their homes.
- ✦ "The napkins will be stitched at centres in Jammu and Kashmir and sold on pan-India basis. In the exercise, 15 lakh kg cotton will be consumed, 25 lakh man days will be required in spinning, 12.5 lakh in weaving, 7.5 lakh in cutting, stitching and packing,". At the event, an agreement was also signed between KVIC and digital payments firm Paytm to sell 2 crore Khadi napkins.

7. Music festival 'Tansen Samaroh' begins in Gwalior.

- ✦ In Madhya Pradesh, popular classical music festival 'Tansen Samaroh' began with traditional style in Gwalior with the recitations of Harikatha and Milad. The 5-day festival is celebrated every year in the memory of one of the most eminent singers of Indian history, 'Mian Tansen'.
- ✦ Tansen Samaroh, the oldest and esteemed classical music festival in India is organised by Ustad Alauddin Khan Kala Evam Sangeet Academy, under the Madhya Pradesh culture department attracts thousands of musicians and aspiring singers from all over the country.
- ✦ It is the 95th year of the festival. Artistes from Greece, USA, Iran and Belgium will perform in different sessions of Tansen festival. Noted vocalist Pandit Vidyadhar Vyas will be presented the National Tansen Award for 2019 today on the first day of Tansen Festival.
- ✦ Instituted by the Madhya Pradesh government, Tansen award carries a cash prize of Rs 2 lakh and is given to outstanding exponents of Hindustani classical music.

Foot Notes:**About Madhya Pradesh**

Chief Minister: Kamal Nath

Governor: Lal Ji Tandon

8. Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot inaugurated the first Janta clinic at Valmiki Basti in Malviya Nagar.

- ✦ Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot inaugurated the first Janta clinic at Valmiki Basti in Malviya Nagar, Jaipur. The chief minister had announced Janta clinics during the state budget.

- ✦ Janta clinic will provide free primary health care to poor people living in city slums. In the first phase, 12 Janta clinics are to be opened where people will get free medicines as well as free medical examination in some cases. The move is to make healthcare facilities accessible to everyone in the state.
- ✦ If the Janta Clinics run successfully for a period of three months, the state government will tie-up with the private companies who have funds to spare under Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). The state government will also launch Nirogi Rajasthan to support the Janta clinic service.

Foot Notes:**About Rajasthan****Capital:** Jaipur**Governor:** Kalraj Mishra**9. Centre to set up the first-ever Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in Tripura.**

- ✦ Centre is to set up the first-ever Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in Tripura. The announcement was made by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry .
- ✦ The first SEZ for Tripura is being set up at Paschim Jalefa, Sabroom, South Tripura District. It is located 130 km away from Agartala.
- ✦ The Sector-Specific Economic Zone will be for Agro-Based Food Processing. The estimated cost for the project is around Rs. 1550 Crore.

Foot Notes:**About Tripura****Capital:** Agartala**Governor:** Ramesh Bais**10. GST council fixed 28 percent uniform tax rate for lottery.**

- ✦ The Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council fixed a uniform tax rate of 28% on both state and private lottery. The 38th GST Council was chaired by the Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in New Delhi. The new rate for the lottery will be effective from March 2020.
- ✦ The GST Council rationalized the tax rate on woven and non-woven bags to 18%. Exemptions have been given on long-term lease for industrial plots. It aims to facilitate the setting up of industrial parks.
- ✦ The panel reduced the levy of penalty for non-filing of GSTR-1 from July 2017.

BANKING ALL EXAMS Video Course**• 395 VIDEOS****₹4749/- ₹3749/-****11. Jalsathi: Odisha Govt. launches programme to ensure supply of safe drinking water.**

- ✦ Chief Minister of Odisha Naveen Patnaik launched the 'Jalsathi' programme which will ensure supply of safe drinking water to all households in the state.
- ✦ During the programme launch, he distributed water quality testing kits and POS (point of sale) machines to women volunteers being called as- 'Jalasathis'.
- ✦ A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed between Water Corporation of Odisha (WATCO) and women federations in Bhubaneswar (Odisha Capital) for implementation of 'Jalsathi' programme.

Foot Notes:**About Odisha****Capital:** Bhubaneswar**Governor:** Prof. Ganeshi Lal**12. Railways Ministry signs MoU with University of Birmingham for establishing Centre of Excellence.**

- ✚ National Rail Transport Institute (NRTI) signed an Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with University of Birmingham in Rail Bhawan, New Delhi to set up its first Centre of Excellence for Next Generation Transportation Systems. NRTI is a deemed to be university under Union Ministry of Railways.
- ✚ Indian Railways is a founding partner of this Centre of Excellence and would provide professional expertise, proprietary data, spare equipment and other available resources directly or through its Centralised Training Institutes (CTIs) and research organisations.
- ✚ The Centre would be involved in promoting development of Rail and Transportation sector in India.

13. Chennai Corporation launches India's first waste exchange platform.

- ✚ Chennai Corporation, Tamil Nadu launched India's first waste exchange platform namely "Madras Waste Exchange" to buy and sell municipal solid waste online.
- ✚ It will run on a pilot basis for the first three months. Based on the response from public and waste recyclers, more features will be added to the website.
- ✚ The Madras Waste Exchange, which is both a web portal and an application, has been conceptualised by the Smart City Mission, with support from the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.

Foot Notes:**Minister of State (Independent Charge) of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs:** Hardeep Singh Puri.**14. Afghanistan becomes the 1st nation to recognize Indian Pharmacopoeia.**

- ✚ The National Department of Regulation of Medicines and Health Products of the Ministry of Public Health of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan has formally recognized Indian Pharmacopoeia (IP), an official book of standards for drugs manufactured & marketed in India in terms of their identity, purity and strength.
- ✚ With this, Afghanistan has become the 1st nation to recognize IP, which is published by the Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission (IPC) on behalf of the Department of Commerce, and Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.
- ✚ The standards of the book has been made under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 and Rules 1945 thereunder.

Foot Notes:**About Afghanistan:****Capital:** Kabul**Currency:** Afghan afghani**President:** Ashraf Ghani**About IPC****Founded:** 1956**Headquarters:** Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh

International News & Foreign Affairs

1. UNESCO removes 'racist' Belgian carnival from heritage list.

- ✚ UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), has removed the 'Carnival of Aalst' of Belgium from its Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity List.
- ✚ The 2019 carnival featured a parade float that included racist and anti-Semitic representations which mocked the Orthodox Jews.
- ✚ The carnival was added to the Intangible Cultural Heritage list in 2010.

Foot Notes:

About UNESCO

Formation: 4 November 1946.

Headquarters: Paris, France.

Director-General: Audrey Azoulay.

2. British PM Boris Jhonson re-elected as Prime Minister of UK.

- ✚ British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has won the historic UK General Election as his Conservative Party crossed the magic number of 326 required for a majority in the Parliament. He is re-elected as a Prime Minister of UK.
- ✚ Johnson won the historic election as his Conservative Party crossed the 326-mark required for a majority in Parliament.
- ✚ The latest projections put the Johnson-led Conservatives at around 365, but the party can safely celebrate its victory as it comfortably crossed over the half-way finish line for the 650-member House of Commons.
- ✚ The Opposition Labour party is projected to get 203 seats, a disastrous performance for the party which resulted in leader Jeremy Corbyn announced that he would be stepping down.

Foot Notes:

About United Kingdom

Capital: London

Currency: Pound sterling

3. President Trump will be the third president in U.S. history to be impeached.

- ✚ The House of Representatives of the US has voted to impeach President Donald Trump. The voting of impeachment was on the grounds of abuse of power and obstruction of Congress.
- ✚ President Trump will be the third president in U.S. history to be impeached. The other two Presidents who were impeached were President Andrew Johnson in 1868 and President Bill Clinton in 1998.
- ✚ Impeach means charging someone, specifically a high government official, such as the U.S. president, a senator, or a federal judge, with a crime.

Foot Notes:

About US

Capital: Washington, D.C.

President: Donald Trump

Currency: United States dollar

4. Donald Trump officially launches US Space Force.

- ✚ United States President Donald Trump has signed the 2020 National Defense Authorization Act, authorising the establishment of Space Force, which would become the sixth branch of the armed forces.
- ✚ Space Force would become the youngest US military branch and the first new service since the establishment of the US Air Force back in 1947. The Space Force would be part of the Department of the Air Force.

Foot Notes:**About United States****Capital:** Washington, D.C.**President:** Donald Trump**5. Russia and Ukraine Sign Preliminary Gas Transit Deal.**

- ✦ Moscow and Kiev have signed a preliminary deal on the transit of Russian gas to Europe via Ukraine, after months of difficult talks but ahead of the looming New Year deadline.
- ✦ The current gas transit contract between the two ex-Soviet countries expires at the end of the year and ties between them shredded since Moscow annexed Crimea in 2014 and supported a separatist insurgency in eastern Ukraine.
- ✦ Russian and Ukrainian sides signed a memorandum of understanding cited as saying by Russian agencies while giving no details of the deal. Russia's Energy Minister Alexander Novak was a five-year deal that would be signed off before the end of the month.

Foot Notes:**About Russia****Capital:** Moscow**Currency:** Russian ruble**About Ukraine****Capital:** Kyiv**Currency:** Ukrainian hryvnia**President:** Volodymyr Zelensky

New Appointments and Person in News

1. Ankur Garg appointed as Chief Commercial Officer of AirAsia India.

- ✦ AirAsia India appointed Ankur Garg as its chief commercial officer (CCO). Before this appointment, Garg worked as the vice-president of revenue management at IndiGO. He quit the job recently. Ankur Garg will replace Mr. Sanjay Kumar, AirAsia India's Chief Operation Officer (COO).
- ✦ He will be in charge of areas such as marketing and sales, network and revenue management, and cargo. He will be reporting to Sunil Bhaskaran, MD, and CEO, AirAsia India.
- ✦ AirAsia India began its operations in June 2014. It currently has a fleet of 27 A320 aircraft and flies to 21 destinations in India. It is a joint venture between the Tata Sons, who holds 51% stake, and AirAsia Berhad, who holds a 49% stake, of the airline. It is the fourth largest low-cost carrier in India.

Foot Notes:**About AirAsia India****Founded on:** 28 March 2013**Parent company:** Tata Group**Headquarters:** Bangalore, India**Chairman:** S. Ramadorai**CEO:** Sunil Bhaskaran**2. Miss Jamaica crowned Miss World 2019.**

- ✦ Jamaica's Toni-Ann Singh has bagged the Miss World 2019 at an annual beauty pageant. It's the first time in history that black women hold the titles for Miss USA, Miss Teen USA, Miss America, Miss Universe and Miss World.
- ✦ The 23-year-old student was born in St Thomas, Jamaica, and plans to study medicine and become a doctor.

- ✦ The runners up included Ophély Mézino from France and Suman Rao from India.

3. Sanjiv Kapoor stepped down as the Chief Commercial Officer of Vistara.

- ✦ Vistara's Chief Commercial Officer (CCO) Sanjiv Kapoor has resigned from the post on 16 December 2019.
- ✦ He will be working with the airline till 31 December 2019. Kapoor had resigned due to personal reasons.
- ✦ Vinod Kannan, Vistara's Chief Strategy Officer will replace as the CCO.

Foot Notes:

About Vistara

Founded on: 2013

Headquarters: Gurgaon

Chairman: Bhaskar Bhat

CEO: Leslie Thng

4. Vice Chief Lt Gen Manoj Mukund Naravane set to become next Chief of the Indian Army.

- ✦ Lt Gen Manoj Mukund Naravane is set to become the next Chief of the Indian Army, Lt Gen Naravane is currently serving as Vice Chief of the Army.
- ✦ In his 37 years of service, Lt Gen Naravane has served in numerous command and staff appointments in peace, field and highly active counter-insurgency environments in Jammu and Kashmir and the Northeast.
- ✦ Army Chief Gen Bipin Rawat is due for retirement on December 31. Before taking charge as vice chief of the Army Staff in September, Lt Gen Naravane was heading the Eastern Command of the Army, which takes care of India's nearly 4,000-km border with China.

5. Sridhar Patra appointed new CMD of National Aluminium Company Limited (NALCO)

- ✦ The Appointments Committee of Cabinet (ACC) chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has appointed Sridhar Patra as the new Chairman-cum-Managing Director (CMD) of National Aluminium Company Limited (NALCO).
- ✦ He has been appointed as CMD of NALCO till the date of his superannuation, i.e. on 31 October 2024 until further orders, whichever is earlier. At present he is the Director (Finance) in NALCO.

Foot Notes:

About NALCO

It is one of the largest integrated Bauxite-Alumina-Aluminium-Power Complex in India.

Established in: 7 January, 1981

Registered office: Bhubaneswar, Odisha.

6. Sethuraman Panchanathan to be appointed as the National Science Foundation Director.

- ✦ The US President Donald Trump has chosen Indian-American computer scientist Sethuraman Panchanathan to lead the National Science Foundation (NSF).
- ✦ He will replace France Cordova when her 6-years-old term as the NSF Director ends in 2020. The position of NSF Director will be fixed by the Senate of the state.
- ✦ Sethuraman Panchanathan: Panchanathan is a 58-years-old. He is currently serving as the Executive Vice President and the Chief Research and Innovation Officer at the Arizona State.

7. IPS Officer Atul Karwal appointed Director of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel National Police Academy, Hyderabad.

- ✦ Atul Karwal, a 1988 batch IPS officer, has been appointed as the Director of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel National Police Academy in Hyderabad.
- ✦ The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the proposal of Ministry of Home Affairs for appointment of Karwal, presently working as ADG, CRPF as Director, SVP NPA by temporarily

downgrading the post to the level of Additional Director General for a period up to 05.12.2021 i.e. the date of combined deputation tenure of Karwal or until further orders whichever is earlier.

8. Justice Gulzar Ahmed sworn-in as 27th Pak Chief Justice.

- ✦ Justice Gulzar Ahmed appointed as the 27th Chief Justice of Pakistan. He takes over from Chief Justice Asif Saeed Khosa, whose tenure came to an end after serving the country's top judge from January this year. The new Chief Justice will remain in office till February 21, 2022.
- ✦ Pakistan's law ministry notified the appointment of Justice Ahmed as the country's new Chief Justice. Justice Ahmed was born on February 2, 1957, in Karachi and obtained education from Gulistan School in Karachi. He got BA degree from Government College and L LB degree from SM Law College.
- ✦ President Arif Alvi administered the oath to Justice Ahmed. Prime Minister Imran Khan, Senate Chairman Sadiq Sanjrani, National Assembly Speaker Asad Qaiser, Army Chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Cabinet members, serving and retired judges of the Supreme Court and lawyers, and others were present at the ceremony.

Foot Notes:

About Pakistan

Capital: Islamabad

Currency: Pakistani rupee

Prime minister: Imran Khan

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Banking

1. RBI recorded 11.4 lakh Online transaction in first 8 hours after NEFT was made 24/7 operational.

- ✦ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) operationalized National Electronic Funds Transfer (NEFT) System 24X7 from 12:00 am on 16 December 2019. After making the NEFT operational on a 24X7 basis, around 11.40 lakh transactions were settled in the first eight hours after widely-used NEFT.
- ✦ The aim is to ensure the availability of anytime electronic funds transfer. RBI has now joined an elite club of countries that have payment systems that enable round-the-clock funds transfer and settlement of any value.

Foot Notes:

About RBI

Headquarters: Mumbai

Governor: Shaktikanta Das

2. Complaints to banking ombudsman rise 20% to over 1.96L in FY'19: RBI.

- ✦ Complaints to banking ombudsman rose by nearly 20 per cent to over 1.96 lakh during 2018-19, with non-adherence to fair practices accounting for the highest number of cases, RBI data released showed.
- ✦ The complaints received at Offices of Banking Ombudsman (OBOs) rose by 32,311, taking the total to 1,95,901 complaints in 2018-19 over the previous year (1,63,590), recording a year-on-year increase of 19.75 per cent, the Reserve Bank said.

- ✦ Even as complaints, related to unfair practices topped the list, the percentage share came down to 19.17 per cent in 2018-19 from 22.10 per cent a year ago.

Foot Notes:**About RBI****Bank rate:** 5.40%**Headquarters:** Mumbai**Governor:** Shaktikanta Das**3. SBI inks \$277 million pact with Germany based KfW bank.**

- ✦ State Bank of India (SBI) has signed a loan agreement worth of \$277 million (about Rs 1,958 crore) with Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW) German development bank for establishing an energy-efficient housing programme in India.
- ✦ The programme shall be part of the Indo-German Development Co-operation, guided by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- ✦ Under the programme, both builders and homebuyers shall be financed for developing/purchasing energy-efficient residential projects that achieve at least 25 per cent energy savings in comparison to standard reference buildings. The arrangement of the loan and the grant facilities was facilitated by SBI's investment banking subsidiary SBI Capital Markets Ltd.

Foot Notes:**About SBI****SBI Chairperson:** Rajnish Kumar**Headquarters:** Mumbai**Founded:** 1 July 1955**4. HDFC Bank becomes third Indian company to cross \$100 bn M-cap.**

- ✦ HDFC Bank Ltd has crossed the \$100 billion market capitalization (M-Cap) in intraday trading, thus becoming only the third company in India to achieve this milestone. However, it closed below \$100 billion mark at \$99.5 billion. HDFC is one of India's largest private-sector lenders.
- ✦ HDFC Bank now ranks 110th in the list of world's most valued firms. However, it ranks 26th among most valued banks and financial companies around the world that have a market capitalization of more than \$100 billion.

Foot Notes:**About HDFC****Director of HDFC Bank:** Aditya Puri**Headquarters:** Mumbai, Maharashtra.**5. RBI to buy and sell Govt bonds worth Rs 10,000 crore.**

- ✦ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will simultaneously purchase and sell government securities worth Rs 10,000 crore under a special Open Market Operation (OMO).
- ✦ On a review of the current liquidity and market situation and an assessment of the evolving financial conditions, the Reserve Bank has decided to conduct simultaneous purchase and sale of government securities on December 23, 2019.
- ✦ The purchase will be for government securities worth Rs 10,000 crore for the instrument '6.45 per cent GS 2029'. The Reserve Bank reserves the right to decide on the quantum of purchase/sale of individual securities and to accept bids/offers for less than the aggregate amount.

Foot Notes:**About RBI****Headquarters:** Mumbai**Founder:** British Raj, 1 April 1935, Kolkata**Governor:** Shaktikanta Das

Science Tech & Defence

1. ITBP becomes first among CAPF to launch a matrimonial site for its staff.

- ✚ In a first of its kind move, the border guarding paramilitary force of Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) has started a dedicated matrimonial site for its staff.
- ✚ This is the first -ever dedicated and well-managed matrimony portal among Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF). A link for the unique portal was launched on 9 December on the official website of ITBP.
- ✚ The website will be managed by ITBP and only the staff will be able to access it.

2. DRDO successfully test-fired the Upgraded version of Pinaka rocket.

- ✚ An upgraded version of India's indigenously developed Pinaka guided rocket system was successfully test-fired from Odisha coast on 19 December 2019.
- ✚ The rocket aims to boost the Army's artillery power. It was fired from the Proof and Experimental Establishment firing test range at Chandipur.
- ✚ In March 2019, three successful trials of the Pinaka guided rocket system were conducted from the Pokhran test range in Rajasthan.

Foot Notes:

Chairman, DRDO: Dr G. Satheesh Reddy

3. India became the world's 3rd largest publisher of science and engineering articles.

- ✚ The US National Science Foundation (NSF) reported that India has become the world's third-largest publisher of science and engineering articles. It has published over 1.35 lakh scientific papers. China topped the report as the world's largest publisher.
- ✚ As per the data provided by NSF, the number of scientific papers published worldwide has increased from 1,755,850 in 2008 to 2,555,959 in 2018. It also said that science and engineering (S&E) journal articles and conference papers, grew about 4% annually over the last 10 years.
- ✚ China has accounted for 20.67% of all the global publications of articles. The number of global scientific publications increased from 2,49,049 in 2008 to 5,28,263 in 2018. It has a growth rate of 7.81% per annum.

4. The Chief of Naval Forces Admiral Karabir Singh is to visit Sri Lanka between December 19 and December 22, 2019.

- ✚ The Chief of Naval Forces Admiral Karabir Singh is to visit Sri Lanka between December 19 and December 22, 2019. The visit is aimed to strengthen bilateral maritime relations between the countries.
- ✚ The admiral will hold bilateral talks with the vice-admiral De Silva and other senior government officials. He will also attend the passing out parade of the 60th intake of midshipmen.
- ✚ The parade is to be held in Trincomalee port. India is helping Sri Lanka build the port in Trincomalee. Japan also has its role in building the port. This potentially increases India's outreach in the Indian Ocean. China already has its presence in the region with its 99-year leased Hambantota.

5. Apple, Amazon & Google partners for 'Connected Home over IP'.

- ✚ "Amazon.com Inc", "Apple Inc" and Alphabet Inc's "Google" have announced a partnership to lay the groundwork for better compatibility among their smart home products.
- ✚ Zigbee Alliance, whose members include IKEA and NXP Semiconductors among others, will also contribute to the project, titled 'Connected Home over IP'.
- ✚ The partnership aims to make it easier for device manufacturers to build products that are compatible with smart home and voice services such as Alexa, Siri and Google Assistant.

Foot Notes:

CEO of Apple: Tim Cook

CEO of Amazon: Jeff Bezos
CEO of Google: Sundar Pichai

6. Anti-hijacking exercise 'Apharan' conducted in Kochi port.

- ✦ The Indian Navy, in collaboration with Indian Coast Guard, Cochin Port Trust and all other concerned stakeholders, conducted a large-scale anti-hijacking exercise off the Port of Kochi.
- ✦ The Exercise code-named "Apharan" saw the participation of multiple agencies, including more than 12 ships and helicopters of the Indian Navy, Indian Coast Guard and Cochin Port Trust.
- ✦ Apharan was aimed at streamlining the response mechanism/preparedness to thwart any attempt by anti-national elements to hijack a merchant's vessel or attempt forced entry of a rogue/commandeered merchant vessel into the Kochi harbour.

Foot Notes:

Indian Coast Guard founded: 18 August 1978.

Headquarters: New Delhi.

Motto(s): Vayam Rakṣāmaḥ (We protect).

7. ETRSS: Ethiopia's first satellite launched from China.

- ✦ Ethiopia launched its first satellite, 'Ethiopian Remote Sensing Satellite' (ETRSS) from China. ETRSS is a remote-sensing microsatellite that was launched in order to help African country's research into climate change.
- ✦ It was sent into space together with 8 other satellites by a Long March-4B carrier rocket from Taiyuan Satellite Launch Center (TSLC) in Shanxi Province of north China.
- ✦ The satellite was designed by Chinese and Ethiopian engineers and Chinese government paid about \$6m of more than \$7m manufacturing costs.

Foot Notes:

About Ethiopia

Capital: Addis Ababa

Currency: Ethiopian birr

Prime Minister: Abiy Ahmed

About China

President: Xi Jinping

Capital: Beijing

Currency: Renminbi

8. Defence Ministry: 5th Edition of ARTECH to be held in New Delhi.

- ✦ Ministry of Defence is to hold ARTECH seminar in New Delhi on 23rd December, 2019. ARTECH is Army Technology Seminar that is being held since 2016. The fifth edition of ARTECH is to be organized by the Indian Army under Ministry of Defence on "Technologies for Non-contact Warfare".
- ✦ Speakers from diverse industries, subject matter experts, think tanks have been invited to address at the seminar. The seminar was launched as a part of "Make in India" campaign. It is a flagship event of the Indian Army that focuses on harvesting indigenous capabilities of Defence sector.

Important Days

1. Nation celebrated Vijay Diwas on 16 December.

- ✚ Vijay Diwas is celebrated on 16 December every year. The day aims to commemorate the victory of India over Pakistan in 1971. The day also a remembrance of the brave soldiers of India and Mukti Joddhas who sacrificed their lives for a noble cause.
- ✚ To mark the day, a wreath-laying ceremony was held at Vijay Smarak at Fort William the Head Quarters of Eastern Command in Kolkata, West Bengal. A 3-day event was organized in Kolkata from 14-16 December.
- ✚ Vijay Diwas is a day for Remembrance of the brave soldiers and Mukti Joddhas who sacrificed their lives for a noble cause and also a day for taking pledged to save our homeland from any possible attack of external enemies.

2. Minorities Rights Day observed on 18 December in India.

- ✚ Minorities Rights Day is observed on 18 December in India. The day aims to remind about the rights of minorities and to educate people about it. It focuses on the religious harmony, respect, and better understanding of all minorities' communities in India.
- ✚ The aim of the day is to advance and protect the privileges of the individuals to have a place with linguistic, religion, castes and color minority.
- ✚ The Minorities Rights Day is celebrated by the National Commission for Minorities (NCM). On 18 December 1992, the United Nations adopted the Statement on the individual's Rights belonging to religious or Linguistic National or Ethnic Minorities.

Foot Notes:

About United Nations

Secretary general: António Guterres

Headquarters: New York, United States

Founded: 24 October 1945

3. International Human Solidarity Day observed on 20 December.

- ✚ International Human Solidarity Day was observed on 20 December. The day celebrates unity in diversity. The day reminds the governments to respect their commitments to international agreements.
- ✚ It also encourages new initiatives for poverty eradication.
- ✚ The Day aims to raise public awareness of the importance of solidarity. It encourages debate on the ways to promote solidarity for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) including poverty eradication.

4. National Mathematics Day 2019 observed on December 22.

- ✚ National Mathematics Day is observed on 22 December every year to mark the birth anniversary of legendary Indian mathematician, Srinivasa Ramanujan and his contributions in the field of mathematics. The 125th birth anniversary of the great mathematician Srinivasa Iyengar Ramanujan declared as National Mathematics Day.
- ✚ The former Prime Minister of India, Dr. Manmohan Singh, paid tribute to Srinivasa Ramanujan at a function organized on the occasion of the 125th birth anniversary of the great mathematician Srinivasa Iyengar Ramanujan in Chennai.
- ✚ Thus, on 22 December 2012, National Mathematics Day was celebrated across the country for the first time.

Sports

1. Pakistan's Abid Ali becomes 1st batsman to score hundreds on both Test and ODI debuts.

- ✚ Abid Ali became the first man to score a century on their Test and one-day international debuts, as the first match in Pakistan since the deadly 2009 terror attacks ended in a draw.
- ✚ The 32-year-old Pakistan opener was unbeaten on 109 as the hosts ended on 252-2 in reply to Sri Lanka's first-innings total of 308-6.

2. Tahiti to host surfing events at the 2024 Paris Olympics.

- ✚ The Polynesian island of Tahiti will host the surfing events at the 2024 Paris Olympics. The events will take place at Teahupoo. It was chosen over beaches in southwest France and in Brittany.
- ✚ Tahiti is located in the southern part of the Pacific Ocean. It lies 15,000 kilometres from Paris. Paris became the second city to host the Olympics three times, after London, UK. It previously hosted the Olympics in 1900 and 1924.

Foot Notes:

About 2024 Paris Olympics (Games of the XXXIII Olympiad)

Host city: Paris, France

Dates: 26 July -11 August

3. Belgium crowned FIFA Team of the Year.

- ✚ Belgium has been crowned FIFA 'Team of the Year' for the second successive time after a record-breaking year for the global ladder.
- ✚ World champions France remains in the second place ahead of Brazil in third.
- ✚ Besides accumulating the biggest points haul, Qatar has also jumped a year-high 38 places, followed closely by fellow climbers Algeria (up 32 ranks) and Japan (up 22 places).

Foot Notes:

About FIFA

President of FIFA: Gianni Infantino

Founded: 21 May 1904.

Headquarters: Zürich, Switzerland.

4. ICC continues its partnership with UNICEF for Women's World T20.

- ✚ The International Cricket Council (ICC) has announced that it has extended its partnership with UNICEF through to the Women's T20 World Cup 2020 with the focus on empowering women and girls through cricket.
- ✚ The partnership and public donations continue to bring positive change to children through the programs in cricket playing nations focused on empowering women and girls in cricket. The money raised during the Women's World T20 will go to similar projects in cricket playing nations, including an innovative program to promote girls' participation in cricket in Sri Lanka and build peace in communities.
- ✚ The ICC and UNICEF partnership commenced in 2015, as part of the ICC's global community outreach program "Cricket 4 Good". During the Men's 50-over World Cup held in England and Wales earlier this summer, UNICEF raised \$180,000 as part of 'One Day 4 Children' and this money will go directly to fund a girls' cricket project in Afghanistan.

Foot Notes:

About ICC

CEO: Manu Sawhney

Chairman: Shashank Manohar.

Headquarters: Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Books and Authors

1. Amitabha Bagchi's Novel 'Half The Night Is Gone' Wins DSC Prize for South Asian Literature 2019.

- ✦ Author Amitabha Bagchi won the DSC Prize for South Asian Literature 2019 for his fiction novel, Half The Night Is Gone. The literary award, which also gives the winner prize money worth \$25,000 was instituted in 2010 and is one of the most prestigious international literary awards specifically focused on South Asian writing.
- ✦ Bagchi received the award during a ceremony at the IME Nepal Literature Festival in Pokhara, Nepal.
- ✦ Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nepal Pradeep Gyawali, along with the co-founder of the DSC Prize Surina Narula presented the winner's trophy to the author during the event which was attended by literary enthusiasts, writers and the media.

2. Viswanathan Anand launched his autobiography titled "Mind Master".

- ✦ India's first Grandmaster Viswanathan Anand released his autobiography titled Mind Master. It was co-written by Susan Ninan. The book offers an insight into Anand's greatest wins and worst losses. He has also shared his experience of facing the best minds in the world.
- ✦ Viswanathan Anand was born on 11 December 1969 in Chennai, Tamil Nadu. He became the country's first grandmaster in 1988.
- ✦ He is the first Asian to hold FIDE (Fédération Internationale des Échecs) World Chess Championship from 2000 to 2002. He won World Champion in 2007, 2010 and in 2012.

3. Braille Edition of Exam Warriors: Book written by PM Modi released.

- ✦ Centre released the Braille Edition of the book Exam Warriors. It was authored by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. The book was released by the Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment Shri Thaawarchand Gehlot.
- ✦ The Braille Edition was prepared in Hindi and English. It was prepared in the Braille Press of Rajasthan Netraheen Kalyan Sangh. All the pictures of the book have been well described for the benefit of blinds readers.
- ✦ It is expected to benefit millions of blind students of the country by providing motivation and mental strength.



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Awards

1. Gujarat-became the seventh state police force police to be honoured with the Presidents Colours award.

- ✦ Gujarat police was honoured with the President's Colours award on 15 December 2019. Gujarat became the seventh state police force in India to be bestowed with the honour of the President's Colours.

- ✚ It was presented by the Vice President, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu. He paid homage martyrs of Gujarat Police.
- ✚ President's Colours is also called NISHAAN. Now, the emblem will be worn by all the police officers of Gujarat on the left-hand sleeve of their uniform. The proposal for President's Colours was initiated by the office of the Director-General (DG) and Inspector General of Police (IGP), the head of the Gujarat Police.

2. Former Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf awarded death penalty.

- ✚ Former Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf has been awarded death penalty for his unlawful decision of imposing emergency in 2007. The judgement was delivered by a special court in Pakistan on December 17, 2019.
- ✚ The three-member special bench comprised Peshawar High Court Chief Justice Waqar Ahmad Seth and Justices Nazar Akbar and Shahid Karim. The bench handed death penalty to the former Pakistani Military General in a high treason case.
- ✚ The special court was hearing a case against Musharraf's decision to declare a state emergency in Pakistan on November 3, 2007.

Foot Notes:

About Pakistan

Prime minister: Imran Khan

Capital: Islamabad

Currency: Pakistani rupee

3. CBI officer B. P. Raju wins 'India Cyber Cop of the Year 2019' award given by NASSCOM-DSCI.

- ✚ CBI officer B P Raju has won the 'India Cyber Cop of the Year 2019' award by NASSCOM-DSCI for cracking a fraud case in an online entrance exam conducted by an engineering college in Rajasthan.
- ✚ The award was given to Raju by Secretary, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Ajay Prakash Sawhney, during the annual Information Security Summit held at Gurgaon.

Foot Notes:

About Central Bureau of Investigation

Headquarters: New Delhi

Crime branch executive: Rishi Kumar Shukla, IPS, Director General

Motto: Industry, Impartiality, Integrity

Founded: 1 April 1963

4. Ben Stokes awarded with Sports Personality of the Year 2019 award.

- ✚ England cricketer Ben Stokes has been voted BBC Sports Personality of the Year 2019.
- ✚ He has become the first cricketer since Andrew Flintoff in 2005 to win the prize.
- ✚ Ben Stokes was Man of the Match as England won the 2019 World Cup for the first time with a dramatic super over victory against New Zealand at Lord's.

5. Portugal to launch a Gandhi Citizenship Education Prize.

- ✚ Portugal to launch a Gandhi Citizenship Education Prize with an aim to promote Mahatma Gandhi's ideals. The announcement was made by the Portuguese Prime Minister, Antonio Costa.
- ✚ At the second meeting of the National Committee for Commemoration of the 150th Birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi at New Delhi. The meeting was presided over by President Ram Nath Kovind.

Obituaries

1. The French New Wave star Anna Karina dies aged 79.

- ✚ Danish-French actor Anna Karina, star of *Bande à Part* and *Pierrot le Fou* and collaborator with New Wave director Jean-Luc Godard, has died of cancer at the age of 79.
- ✚ Best known for her work with Jean-Luc Godard, she also appeared in films by Visconti, Fassbinder and others, as well as pursuing a singing career and writing four novels.

2. Shriram Lagoo: Greatest Marathi stage actors passes away at 92.

- ✚ Shriram Lagoo, veteran film and theatre actor passed away after suffering a cardiac arrest at his Pune residence. He was 92.
- ✚ Shriram Lagoo was considered as one of the greatest Marathi stage actors during the turn of the 20th century. The actor was also known to be very vocal and active about his progressive and rationalist beliefs.
- ✚ Lagoo along with a GP Pradhan had undertaken a fast in support of Anna Hazare's anti-corruption movement in 1999.

3. Bollywood actress Gita Siddharth Kak passes away.

- ✚ Actress Gita Siddharth Kak passed away. Her most well-known movies include *Garm Hava* (1973), *Parichay* (1972), *Gaman* (1978) among others.
- ✚ Her *Garm Hava* won the Best Feature Film at the 21st National Film Awards. The film was also critically acclaimed.

4. Writer and critic LS Sheshagiri Rao passes away.

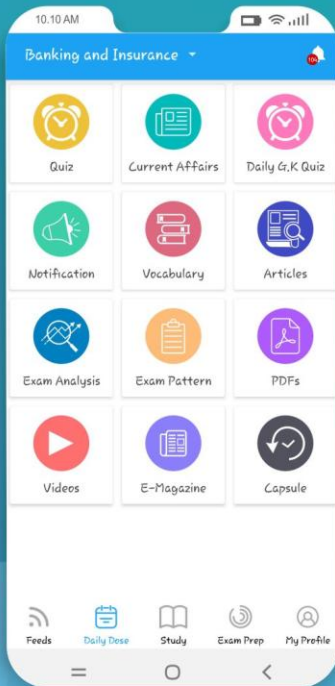
- ✚ Kannada writer and critic L.S. Sheshagiri Rao passed away. His first work was *Idu Jeevana*, an anthology of short stories was released in 1948.
- ✚ He is best known for his book "*Hosagannada Sahitya Charitre*".
- ✚ He was best known for his critical works and an English-Kannada dictionary that he compiled.
- ✚ Proficient in Kannada and English, many of his works were bridges between the two languages.

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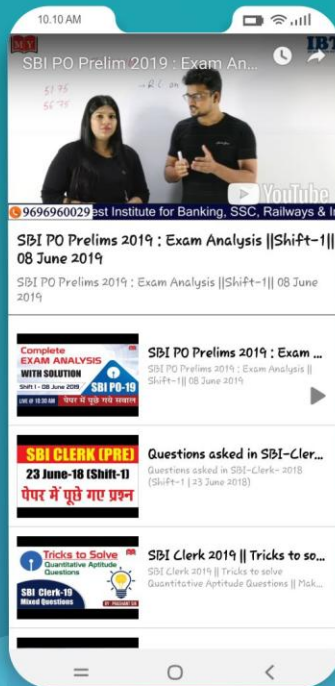
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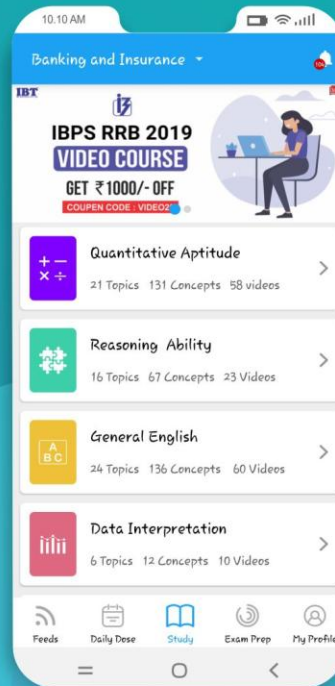
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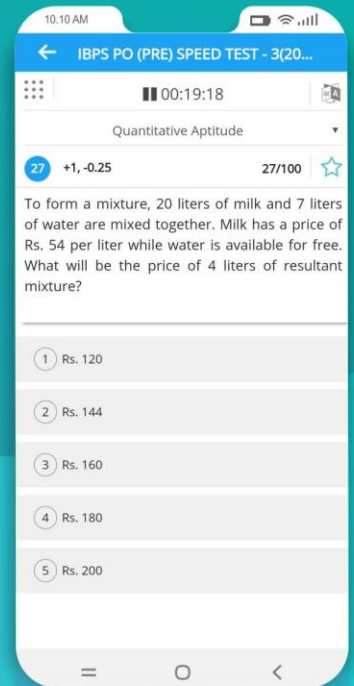
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