

Monthly G.K Capsule

December- 2019

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National News

1. Taxation Laws Bill, 2019, will amend the Income Tax Act 1961 and the Finance (No 2) Act 2019.

- ✚ The Centre in the Lok Sabha on moved the Taxation Laws Amendment Bill 2019 for its passage, seeking changes in the Income Tax law aimed at lowering tax rate options to domestic companies to promote growth and investment and attract fresh investment in the manufacturing sector.
- ✚ The Bill seeking amendment to the Income-Tax Act, 1961 and to amend the Finance (No.2) Act, 2019 was moved in the House by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

2. India's first maritime museum coming up at Lothal in Gujarat

- ✚ Underwater or marine archaeology in India is all set to get a boost with the government deciding to establish a National Maritime Heritage Museum at Lothal, a Harappan site on the Saurashtra coast in Gujarat.
- ✚ The museum will also be an independent research centre of underwater archaeology for reconstruction of maritime history, archaeology of boat building and materials traded.
- ✚ Underwater archaeology is a specialized branch of archaeology that involves recovering submerged remains such as ports, shipwrecks and studying proxy records of maritime activity from archaeological excavations as well as archival and historical records.

3. Vice President launches 'Bharatiya Poshan Anthem'

- ✚ Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu launched the "Bharatiya Poshan Anthem" which aims at taking the message of making India malnutrition free to all corners of the country.
- ✚ The anthem has been penned by noted lyricist Prasoon Joshi and sung by Shankar Mahadevan.
- ✚ Poshan Abhiyan was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in March 2018 with an objective to make India malnutrition free by 2022.

4. Mumbai Central gets first 'Eat Right Station' certification from FSSAI

- ✚ The Mumbai Central station of Railways was conferred with the 'Eat Right Station' certification with four stars rating by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), as a part of 'Eat Right India' movement launched last year.
- ✚ According to a press note, the Mumbai Central Railway Station is the country's first "Eat Right Station."
- ✚ "Mumbai Central station has been judged on the basis of compliance of food safety and hygiene, availability of healthy diet, food handling at preparation, transshipment and retail/serving point, food waste management, promotion of local and seasonal food and creating awareness on food safety and healthy diet," as per a press note.

5. Global Climate Risk Index 2020: India fifth most affected country in 2018

- ✚ India was the fifth most climate-affected country in 2018, according to the Global Climate Risk Index 2020 released on December 4, 2019.
- ✚ India also recorded the highest number of fatalities due to climate change in 2018. The Global Climate Risk Index 2020 is published by International Environmental think tank Germanwatch.
- ✚ The Climate Risk Index 2020 published its results after assessing 181 countries and quantifying the impacts of climate change through economic fatalities.

6. Cabinet clears Citizenship Amendment Bill, Govt gears up for crucial Parliament test

- ✚ The Union Cabinet cleared the contentious Citizenship Amendment Bill for Parliament to take over. The Bill is now likely to be tabled in the Lok Sabha for clearance. The Parliament is likely to take up the Citizenship Amendment Bill next week.

- ✚ The Citizenship Bill seeks to grant citizenship to all non-Muslim refugees from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan if they faced religious persecution in these neighboring countries.
- ✚ Union minister Rajnath Singh asked BJP MPs to be present in large numbers in the Parliament when Home Minister Amit Shah tables the Citizenship Bill in Parliament.

7. 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.

8. 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.

9. Odisha Govt launches "MadhuApp" for school children

- ✚ Chief Minister of Odisha, Naveen Patnaik launched a smart learning phone application "MadhuApp" for school children. The app named after 'Utkal Gourab' Madhusudan Das, has been developed by the Ganjam district administration in accordance with the 5T initiative of the state government.
- ✚ Launching the App, Chief Minister interacted with students from Ganjam District through video conferencing and advised them to focus on their studies to make the state and country proud.

10. EC to implement Political Parties RTMS

- ✚ The Election Commission of India will implement the political parties Registration Tracking Management System (RTMS). It will be implemented through an online portal to facilitate tracking of the status of the application by applicants.
- ✚ The Commission said, the applicant who is applying for party registration from 1st January 2020 onwards will be able to track the progress of his or her application and will get status through SMS and email.
- ✚ Chief Election Commissioner : Sunil Arora

11. Avantee mega Food Park inaugurated in MP's Dewas

- ✚ In Madhya Pradesh, Union Minister for food processing Harsimrat Kaur Badal inaugurated Avantee mega Food Park in Dewas.
- ✚ This first food park of central India is spread over 51 acres and has been constructed at a cost of about 150 crore rupees.
- ✚ About 5 thousand local people will get employment from this Mega Food Park. Minister of State for Food Processing Industries Rameshwar Teli was also present on the inaugural ceremony.

12. Cabinet approves Personal Data Protection Bill 2019

- ✚ The Cabinet approved Data Protection bill to be tabled in Lok Sabha. The bill lays down legal framework to preserve sanctity in data sharing. The Draft of the bill was released by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology in 2018.

- ✚ The bill provides rules for collection, storage and handling of personal data. It regulates the processing of personal data of individuals incorporated in India and abroad.
- ✚ The bill makes it compulsory for the collecting authority to store the data within the territory of India. The bill divides data into three types namely critical, general and sensitive. The sensitive data are the data that are related to passwords, health, finances, religion, biometric and sexual orientation.

13. India Water Impact Summit-2019 to be held from 5th-7th December in New Delhi.

- ✚ Union Minister for Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation Shri Nitin Gadkari will inaugurate India Water Impact Summit 2018, being jointly organized by the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) and the Centre for Ganga River Basin Management and Studies (cGanga) from 5-7 December 2018 in New Delhi.
- ✚ The India Water Impact Summit is an annual event where stakeholders get together to discuss, debate and develop model solutions for some of the biggest water related problems in the country. The discussions this year will be on rejuvenation of the Ganga River Basin.

14. MHA sanctions Rs 100 cr to set up women help desks in police stations.

- ✚ A home ministry statement said the women help desks would focus on making police stations more women-friendly and approachable, as they would be the first and single point of contact for any woman walking into a police station.
- ✚ The ministry has sanctioned a sum Rs 100 crore from the Nirbhaya fund for setting up and strengthening of the women help desks in police stations, the statement said.
- ✚ The scheme would be implemented by the states and Union Territories, and lady police officers would be deployed at these help desks.
- ✚ The officials of women help desks would be trained to be sensitive towards women. These help desks would have enlisted panel of experts like lawyers, psychologists and NGOs to facilitate legal aid, counselling, shelter, rehabilitation and training among others.

15. Piyush Goyal inaugurates third edition of National Public Procurement Conclave

- ✚ Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal inaugurated the third edition of National Public Procurement Conclave in New Delhi today.
- ✚ The two-day conclave has been organized by Government e-Marketplace, GeM in association with Confederation of Indian Industry.
- ✚ In his inaugural address, Mr Goyal said, GeM epitomizes the speed, skill and scale which is essential in an e-marketplace platform. He further said that GeM rests on the three pillars of openness, fairness and inclusiveness and is a symbol of a truly transparent e-marketplace.
- ✚ The Minister hoped that during this conclave, a road map for the future of GeM will be put in place that will unify all government procurement, across all Ministries and Departments.

16. India's top 10 Police Stations for 2019 announced: Andaman tops the list

- ✚ The Ministry of Home Affairs (MOH) has released the list of best performing Police Stations across the country for the year 2019. Aberdeen police station from the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Balasinor police station from Gujarat and Ajk Burhanpur from Madhya Pradesh take the 1st, 2nd and 3rd places respectively.
- ✚ The grading system of the police stations comes after the directions of Prime Minister Narendra Modi while addressing the DsGP (State Police Chief) during the 2015 Conference held in Kutch, Gujarat.

17. SC ruled that no pension will be given for govt staff who resign

- ✚ SC's move is to make a distinction between voluntary retirement and resignation. This cause impacts the pensionary benefits under the Rules while deciding a case relating to the resignation of an employee.
- ✚ The Supreme Court (SC) ruled that an employee will become ineligible for a pension when he resigns because he forfeits his past service. It was passed under the Central Civil Services Pension Rules (CCS Pension Rules).

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18. Uttar Pradesh to set up 218 fast track courts

- ✚ The Yogi Adityanath government has approved the setting up of 218 fast track courts in Uttar Pradesh even as reports of rape and murder of women in the state is rising, especially in Unnao, Sambhal, Chitrakut and Muzaffarnagar, over the last month.
- ✚ Law minister Brajesh Pathak told agencies that there were 25,479 cases of rape and sexual crimes against women pending in UP courts and 42,379 cases related to sexual crimes committed against children, according to government data as on June 30, 2019.

19. 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.

20. Constitution Amendment (126th) bill, 2019 introduced in Lok Sabha

- ✚ The Constitution (126th amendment bill), 2019 was introduced in Lok Sabha on December 9, 2019. The bill seeks to extend the reservation provided to the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes by 10 years.
- ✚ The reservation provided to the Anglo-Indian community, SC, ST is to end by January 25, 2020. The bill is being introduced to continue the reservation of seats for another 10 years that is till January, 25, 2030. The reservation has been included in Article 334 and therefore the bill seeks to amend the article.
- ✚ Article 334 lays down that the provisions for reservation of seats and special representation of Anglo-Indian, SC and ST will cease after 40 years. The clause was included in 1949. After 40 years, it is being amended with an extension of 10 years.

21. Digital Exhibition on history of Constitution of India being held in New Delhi.

- ✚ The 'Digital Exhibition on History of Constitution of India', was inaugurated in New Delhi by Dr. Jitendra Singh, Minister of State (M/S) for Development of North Eastern Region (I/C), Prime Minister's Office, Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space. It will be organised for two days.
- ✚ It has been organised by Department of Personnel & Training (DoPT), Union Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, in collaboration with Parliament Museum and Archives of Lok Sabha Secretariat and Bureau of Outreach and Communication (BOC).
- ✚ It is an important day from historical point of view, as the first sitting of Constituent Assembly was held on this day in 1946. The current year 2019, marks 70th Year of adoption of Constitution.

22. Rajya Sabha passed the bill to extend the reservation for SC, ST by 10 more years.

- ✚ Rajya Sabha passed a Constitution amendment bill to extend reservation to SCs and STs in Lok Sabha and state assemblies by another 10 years. Now the bill will be sent to the states for ratification by 50% of the assemblies before it comes into force.
- ✚ Reservation for members of Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) was given for the past 70 years in Lok Sabha and state assemblies. The reservation is due to end on 25 January 2020.
- ✚ In Parliament, there are 84 members from the Scheduled Caste and 47 from the Scheduled Tribe communities. There are 614 SC members and 554 ST members in the state assemblies across India.

23. Lt Governor Girish Chandra Murmu inaugurated 72-metre all weather bridge in Rajouri in J&K.

- ✦ Lt Governor of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) Shri Girish Chandra Murmu inaugurated all-weather 72-metre-long multi cell box type load class 70 bridge in Rajouri in the Union Territory (UT) of J&K.
- ✦ The bridge which was built by the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) under project sampark, spans over Draj nallah and connected Draj Area to Tehsil Kotranka area of Rajouri district.
- ✦ This bridge will facilitate all weather and speedy movement of Army troops as well as locals thus it will also lead to socio-economic development of Rajouri district.

24. United States shuts down World Trade Organisation appeal court.

- ✦ The United States (US) decided to shut down the appeal court of WTO (World Trade Organisation) in response to WTO's decisions against the federal trade rules imposed by the US administration.
- ✦ WTO's appeal court acts as a trade dispute settlement body for its member countries.
- ✦ The appeal court which consisted of 7-member body was then cut down to a 3-member body in 2018. Recently, the terms of two of the last three judges on the WTO's appellate body ended on December 10, 2019.

25. 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.

26. Lok Sabha passed the 2019 International Financial Services Centres Authority Bill.

- ✦ The Lok Sabha passed the International Financial Services Centres Authority Bill, 2019. The bill proposes setting of an authority to develop and regulate the financial services market in the International Financial Services Centres (IFSCs) in India.
- ✦ The bill will be applicable to all the International Financial Services Centres in India, which were set up under the Special Economic Zones Act, 2005.

27. Andhra cabinet approves Disha Act providing for harsher punishments for crimes against women.

- ✦ The Andhra Pradesh Cabinet under Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy approved the enactment of the Andhra Pradesh Criminal Law (Amendment) Act also known as the Disha Act that provides for harsher punishments, including death sentence, to those guilty of heinous crimes against women.
- ✦ The offenders in such cases will be served with the punishment of 10 to 14 years and in case of severity in the committed crime, the punishment would be extended from 14 years to lifetime imprisonment. The cabinet has approved to extend the imprisonment for such crimes under POCSO Act.

28. Lok Sabha passes Central Sanskrit Universities Bill, 2019.

- ✦ Lok Sabha passed the Central Sanskrit University Bill 2019, which seeks to convert three deemed Sanskrit universities, presently functioning in the country, into central universities. The bill was piloted by Union Human Resource Development (HRD) Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank'.
- ✦ The Bill seeks to upgrade three deemed Sanskrit universities into Central universities, which are- Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan in Bhopal, Sri Lal Bahadur Shastri Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeeth in New Delhi and Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeeth in Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh.

29. 7th Economic Census: India's 1st digital census launched in New Delhi.

- ✚ 7th edition of the Economic Census was launched in New Delhi. To carry out the economic census, Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation (MoSPI) tied up with Common Service Centres Network (CSCN).
- ✚ CSC is an SPV (Special Purpose Vehicle) under Ministry of Electronics and IT(MeitY). It is for the first time the census is being conducted in digital platform named ICT (Information and Communication Technology).
- ✚ Delhi is the 26th state where the survey has been launched. The survey process is already on in 20 states and 5 UTs (Union Territories).

30. 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.

31. 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.

32. MSME Minister Nitin Gadkari launches sale of 'Khadi Rumal'.

- ✚ MSME Minister Nitin Gadkari launched the sale of 'Khadi Rumal', 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.

33. 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.

34. 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.

35. 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.

36. 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.

37. 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.

38. 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.

39. 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.

40. EChO Network launched to catalyze cross-disciplinary leadership in India.

- ✚ EChO Network, a national program to provide a template for cross-disciplinary leadership in India with the specific focus of increasing research, knowledge, and awareness of Indian ecology and the environment was launched yesterday in New Delhi by Prof. K VijayRaghavan, Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India.
- ✚ India recently took national-level efforts to promote ecological and environmental research on the subcontinent.
- ✚ The program will train postdoctoral leaders in research and outreach on these topics incorporating current public and private efforts into a national network. International distributed institute comprising individuals housed within the industry, government, private, and academic sectors, combining their expertise and resources collectively to tackle significant scale problems.

41. Chillai-Kalan: 40-day period of extreme cold begins in Kashmir.

- ✚ The traditional 40-day period of harshest winter in Kashmir known in the local parlance as 'Chillai-Kalan' began with the upper reaches of valley receiving snowfall. Chillai-Kalan period which is known for sub-zero temperatures, frozen lakes and river, will end on 31 January 2020.
- ✚ These 40 days are when the chances of snowfall are highest and the maximum temperature drops considerably.
- ✚ During Chillai-Kalan, the weather in Kashmir valley continues to remain dry and cold with minimum temperatures hovering below freezing point and the snow during this 40-day period freezes and lasts longer.

42. Assam Cabinet nod to make Assamese the state language.

- ✚ On December 23, 2019, the Assam Cabinet nodded to make Assamese language the state language of Assam. This will exclude BTAD (Bodoland Territorial Administrative Districts), Barak Valley and Hill districts of Assam.
- ✚ The cabinet has also suggested that Assamese will be made compulsory in all schools of Assam. The move comes in the wake of rising insecurities among Assamese population in the state. After the passing of Citizenship Amendment Bill, there has been an increased wave of insecurity in the Brahmaputra Valley.
- ✚ In order make the move successful, the Central Government will now have to amend Article 345. If amended, the article will remove fears of people fighting for their rights to culture and language in the region.

43. IAF Chief RKS Bhadauria will embark a four-day visit to Egypt starting on December 24, 2019.

- ✚ The Indian Air Force Chief RKS Bhadauria will embark a four-day visit to Egypt starting on December 24, 2019. The aim of the visit is to strengthen long-standing relations between India and Egypt.
- ✚ During his visit, the chief has scheduled to visit operational and training establishments of the Egyptian Air Force. Also, he will interact with senior officials of the Egyptian armed forces.
- ✚ India is the fourth largest trading partner of Egypt following US, Italy and Saudi Arabia. The trade between the countries has been tradition. India imported 1.29 billion USD worth goods (2017-18) and exported 2.39 billion USD worth goods.

44. Oxygen Parlour opened at Nashik Railway Station to combat Air Pollution.

- ✚ In a unique initiative to battle rising air pollution in cities, Indian Railways has opened an 'Oxygen Parlour' at Nashik railway station in Maharashtra. The initiative seeks to provide an experience of breathing clean air to the commuters. It has been set up by Indian Railways in collaboration with Airo Guard, a one of the leading consultancies in field of plant nurseries based in Nashik.
- ✚ The objective behind setting up Parlour is to expand this initiative to every railway station as well as every home.

- ✚ There are nearly 1500 plants in Oxygen Parlour, so, these plants can directly and effectively bring down the pollution in the air at the railway station and allow the people to breathe cleaner air. The concept of Oxygen Parlour is based on recommendation of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

45. Nityanand Rai inaugurates DNA Analysis Centre at CFSL Chandigarh.

- ✚ Minister of State for Home Affairs, Shri Nityanand Rai inaugurated a State-of-the-Art DNA Analysis Centre at CFSL, Chandigarh.
- ✚ This new Advanced Forensic DNA Analysis Lab set up under the Nirbhaya Fund scheme with an allocation of Rs.99.76 crores. The State-of-the-art facility for
- ✚ DFSS ensured that this Centre fully equipped with modern DNA Profiling tools and equipment. The Advanced Forensic DNA Analysis facility capacity of examining 2000 cases per year.

46. Cabinet approves creation of the post of Chief of Defence Staff in the rank of four star General

- ✚ The Cabinet approved creation of post of Chief of the Defence Staff, CDS which was announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his Independence Day address this year.
- ✚ The post of Chief of Defence Staff will be the rank of 4-Star General with salary equivalent to Service Chiefs and will head the Department of Military Affairs to be created under Ministry of Defence and will function as its Secretary.
- ✚ The Cabinet also gave ex-post facto approval for official amendments to the Arms (Amendment) Bill, 2019 moved and passed by the Lok Sabha.

47. CM of Delhi Arvind Kejriwal introduced a new policy to make Delhi the capital of Electric vehicles.

- ✚ CM of Delhi Arvind Kejriwal introduced a new policy to make Delhi the capital of Electric vehicles. Under the policy, the government has planned to provide subsidies to electric vehicles.
- ✚ The goal of the policy is to ensure that 25% of new vehicles registered are electric by 2024. Along with electric vehicles, the government has also planned to construct 250 charging stations. It also includes 20% of the parking enabled for electric vehicles.
- ✚ The policy has been drafted after feedback from UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme) experts, International Transport Council. The draft of the policy was already made public in November 2018.

48. PM Modi launches Atal Bhujal Yojana, names Rohtang tunnel after former Prime Minister.

- ✚ Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the Atal Bhujal Yojana, a scheme aimed at improving groundwater management, on the occasion of 95th birth anniversary of former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. He said this scheme will help in supplying water to every house hold by 2024.
- ✚ Under Atal Bhujal scheme, the government will promote Panchayat led ground water management and behavioural change with primary focus on demand side management.
- ✚ The central government scheme stresses on the need to use technology to prevent wastage of water in various spheres, including agriculture.
- ✚ The Cabinet also approved a decision to honour the contribution of ex-PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee by naming the strategic tunnel under Rohtang Pass after him.

49. Telangana's Kamareddy district awarded by UNICEF for effective implementation of Swachh Bharat Mission 2019.

- ✚ United Nations International Children's and Education Fund (UNICEF) has awarded Kamareddy district of Telangana for effective implementation of Swachh Bharat Mission in water sanitation and hygiene sectors for the year 2019.
- ✚ This award was given under the categories like construction of individual sanitary lavatories, swachh darpan wall paintings, swachh survekshan, swachh sundar shouchalay and other activities.
- ✚ Satyanarayana who was Collector of Kamareddy said that this award could be possible due to the concerted efforts of district rural development organisation, district panchayat office, mandal prajaparishads, panchayat secretaries, sarpanches and field assistants.

50. India's first Transgender University to come up in Uttar Pradesh.

- ✦ India's first university for the transgender community will be opened in the Fazilnagar block of the Kushinagar district in Uttar Pradesh. The transgender community members will be able to get an education. The university is being built by Akhil Bhartiya Kinnar Siksha Seva Trust (All-India transgender education service trust).
- ✦ The university will facilitate its members to study right from class 1 to Post Graduate (PG) and even do research and get a Ph.D. degree. The Members of the transgender community will get an education and will be able to give a new direction to the country.

51. Govt of India to launch 'Digital Radio' by 2024.

- ✦ Centre government is planning to revamp 'All India Radio' officially known as 'Akashvani' by introducing Digital Radio in India by 2024, when the country will be technologically equipped for it.
- ✦ The announcement in this regard was made by Union Information and Broadcasting (I&B) Minister Prakash Javadekar at the 2019 Akashvani Annual Awards in New Delhi.
- ✦ AIR was established in 1936 and is officially known as Akashvani since 1956. It is the national public radio broadcaster of India and is a division of Prasar Bharati, which is India's largest public broadcasting agency. AIR is sister service of Prasar Bharati's Doordarshan television Network.

52. Tamil Nadu tops 'Good Governance Index' launched by Govt of India.

- ✦ The Central Government has released the "Good Governance Index" on the occasion of Good Governance Day.
- ✦ The "Good Governance Index" was launched to assess the state of governance in Indian States and Union Territories.
- ✦ The prime objective of the GGI is to provide quantifiable data to compare the state of governance in all states and Union Territories, enable them to formulate and implement suitable strategies for improving governance and shift to result oriented approaches and administration. The Index was launched by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, and the Centre for Good Governance.

53. Telangana Govt Raises Retirement age of TSRTC Employees to 60 Years.

- ✦ Telangana government increased the retirement age from 58 to 60 for state-run transport corporation employees. Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao signed on the file pertaining to the increase in the retirement age for the employees of the Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TSRTC).
- ✦ The state cargo and parcel services will be used to shift books to institutions, medicines to ships, goods to various departments, liquor to wine shops and other goods across the state and country.
- ✦ TSRTC a profit-making corporation, implementation of the promises given to the workers and employees, strengthening the goods transportation network and other issues.

54. PM Modi unveiled Atal Bihari Vajpayee statue in Lucknow.

- ✦ Prime Minister Narendra Modi unveiled a statue of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee at Lok Bhawan in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh.
- ✦ He also laid the foundation stone for the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Medical University in the Uttar Pradesh capital.
- ✦ The state government has given 50 acres of land for the varsity.

55. All new Railway recruits to be inducted through UPSC civil services exams.

- ✦ The Railway Board has now decided that all new recruits in railways will be inducted through UPSC (Union Public Service Commission) Civil Services Exams under five specialities.
- ✦ The decision comes days after the Union Cabinet approved big-ticket reforms in the railways by merging its eight cadres and department services into one single entity- the Indian Railway Management Service (IRMS).
- ✦ This decision to merge services was to ensure that officers put railways first instead of their service which had become the case under the present system.

56. Turkey top court rules 'Wikipedia ban' breaches free speech.

- ✚ Turkey's Constitutional Court ruled that the government's ban on access to online encyclopedia Wikipedia violated freedom of expression.
- ✚ The ban imposed by Turkey's Information and Communication Technologies Authority (BTK) has remained in place since April 2017.
- ✚ Turkish officials said at the time the measure was needed as Wikipedia had failed to remove content deemed false from its pages that linked Turkey with terror groups.

57. India Japan held 5th round of maritime dialogue.

- ✚ India and Japan planned to deepen maritime cooperation and made consultations on disarmament, non-proliferation and export control.
- ✚ The 5th Round of India-Japan Maritime Affairs Dialogue held in Tokyo with the Indian delegation led by Indra Mani Pandey, Additional Secretary (Disarmament and International Security Affairs), Ministry of External Affairs, while Japanese delegation was led by Ambassador Yamanaka A Osamu, Deputy Assistant Minister, Deputy Director-General in Foreign Policy Bureau.

58. Finance Minister releases stamp to commemorate DRI's role.

- ✚ The finance minister of India released a postage stamp to commemorate distinguished service and glorious contribution of the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) in protecting the nation.
- ✚ DRI plays an immense role to counter smuggling and preserve cultural heritage and the environment of the country.
- ✚ It is essential for DRI to keep pace with technologies such as data analytics to fight against contraband items such as gold and narcotics. Contraband is good that is against the law to trade or to import or export.

59. India ranks 47th in house price appreciation during July, September.

- ✚ India ranks 47th in the world in terms of appreciation in housing prices as rates grew by only 0.6 percent during the July-September quarter over the year-ago period on slow demand, global property consultant Knight Frank.
- ✚ India stood at 11th position in the April-June quarter of 2019, with a 7.7 percent year-on-year rise in home prices.
- ✚ Hungary leads the index this quarter with 15.4 percent annual price growth, followed by Luxembourg at 11.4 percent and Croatia at 10.4 percent Slovakia is at number four with the home price rising by 9.7 percent, followed by Latvia (9 percent), Czech Republic (8.7 percent), China (8.5 percent), Jersey (8.5 percent), Mexico (8.4 percent) and Russia (8.1 percent).

60. Nepal bans Indian vehicles on Pokhara roads ahead of new year.

- ✚ Nepal banned vehicles with Indian number plates from running in the tourist hub of Pokhara ahead of the new year.
- ✚ Pokhara is one of the most visited tourist destinations in the country on Christmas and the new year. They decided to ban Indian vehicles in consultation with the district administration of Kaski to ease traffic congestion during celebrations.

61. "National Symposium of Poets 2020" organized by All India Radio.

- ✚ All India Radio organized the National Symposium of Poets 2020. Select poets of all 22 languages recognized in the constitution participated in the symposium.
- ✚ It is being held every year since 1956. The poets from all corners of the country gave their presentations and captivated the hearts of the people during the symposium.
- ✚ The symposium will be broadcasted on the eve of Republic Day and at all the centers of AIR.

62. Mandu Festival begins at Mandu, Madhya Pradesh.

- ✚ The first edition of Mandu Festival begins at Mandu, picturesque fort city of Madhya Pradesh. The event is organized by Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board. The festival will witness a celebration of the historic heritage blended with the modern vibrancy of the city culture.
- ✚ The Mandu festival will offer an eclectic mix of performing arts, workshops, art installations, nature trails, walks, food, architecture and music to the visitors during the festival. The festival is based on the idea of “Khojne Me Kho Jao”.
- ✚ The Mandu festival will redefine the essence of the city & bring about the joy of establishing a new tourism hub in the state.

63. Raksha Mantri launches DefExpo 2020 mobile app.

- ✚ Raksha Mantri has launched the “DefExpo 2020” mobile app of the forthcoming DefExpo 2020. The app has been developed by the Department of Defence Production, Ministry of Defence (MoD).
- ✚ It provides detailed information about the daily events, participating exhibitors, Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs), guest speakers of seminars/webinars, publications, and directions of the venues and city weather. The main features of the app constitutes inform, engage and feedback.

International News & Foreign Affairs

1. Saudi Arabia recently became the first Arab Nation to assume the G20 Presidency.

- ✚ Saudi Arabia became the first Arab nation to take over the G20 presidency as it seeks to bounce back onto the world stage following global uproar over its human rights record. The G20 presidency, which Saudi Arabia takes over from Japan, will see it host world leaders for a global summit in its capital next November 21-22.
- ✚ Saudi Arabia will host more than 100 events and conferences in the run-up to the summit, including ministerial meetings, the agency said.

2. Hornbill Festival begins in Nagaland

- ✚ The Hornbill Festival was inaugurated on December 01 in Kohima, the capital of Nagaland.
- ✚ Nagaland got a state status on 01 December 1963. Nagaland was the 16th state of India. The festival will conclude on 10 December.
- ✚ The festival is named after a bird named Indian Hornbill. Cultural presentations, sports competitions, and food stalls, etc. are organized during this festival.

3. Hollywood actor Joaquin Phoenix named 2019 PETA Person of the Year

- ✚ "Joker" star Joaquin Phoenix has been named 2019 Person of the Year by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA).
- ✚ According to The Hollywood Reporter, Phoenix is vegan since the age of three and has been a longtime supporter of the animal rights organisation.
- ✚ He recently appeared in PETA's "We Are All Animals" billboards in Times Square and on Sunset Billboard as he promoted legislation to ban travelling wild-animal circuses.

4. Finland's PM resigns after losing trust of coalition partner

- ✚ Finnish Prime Minister Antti Rinne resigned after a member of the ruling coalition said it had lost confidence in him following a series of disruptive strikes.
- ✚ The Center Party asked Rinne to step down after a more than two-week strike at Finland's state postal service, Posti, spread to the national airline, Finnair, and to other industries before being settled last week.

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. 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.

8. Malta PM Joseph Muscat to resign amid journalist murder probe protests

- ✚ Malta's Prime Minister Joseph Muscat, under fire over his handling of the murder of journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia, he would step down after his replacement is chosen in January.
- ✚ Muscat declined to make a link with Caruana Galizia's 2017 murder, saying in a televised address that he was resigning "as this is what needs to be done."

9. India 5th worst country in terms of invasive use of biometric data.

- ✚ According to a new report from Comparitech, a Britain-based tech research firm, India is fifth worst country after China, Malaysia, Pakistan and United States in terms of extensive and invasive use of biometric data.
- ✚ The study was conducted based on- 50 different countries were analysed to find out where biometrics are being taken, what they are being taken for, and how they are being stored.
- ✚ Each country was scored out of 25, with high scores indicating extensive and invasive use of biometrics/ surveillance. India scored 19 and was ranked relatively lower in the list of worst countries for biometric data collection.

10. Uttarakhand: Swedish royal couple inaugurate Sarai Sewage Treatment Plant.

- ✚ King Carl XVI Gustaf and Queen Silvia of Sweden inaugurated a 14 million litres per day (MLD) Sarai Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) here on Thursday. The Swedish royal couple jointly inaugurated the STP in the presence of Uttarakhand Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat, state Tourism Minister Satpal Maharaj and Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat.
- ✚ The STP has been constructed at a cost of Rs 41.40 crore under the Centre's Namami Gange programme. The Swedish King and Queen arrived in the state earlier in the day for a visit to Ram Jhula Bridge in Rishikesh and Bathing Ghat in Haridwar.

- ✚ The royal couple, who are on a five-day visit to India to strengthen bilateral ties, was received by the state Protocol Minister Dhan Singh Rawat at the Jolly Grant Airport in Dehradun.

11. NATO Summit 2019 held in Watford, United Kingdom.

- ✚ The United Kingdom(UK) hosted two days organized 2019 NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) Summit in London. The year 2019 marks the 70th anniversary of the summit. It was attended by NATO leaders and chaired by NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg.
- ✚ The purpose of the summit was to make the heads of state and heads of government of NATO member countries to evaluate and provide strategic direction for Alliance activities.

12. India's forex reserves cross \$450 billion for the first time.

- ✚ The country's foreign exchange reserves crossed the \$450-billion mark for the first time ever on the back of strong inflows which enabled the central bank to buy dollars from the market, thus checking any sharp appreciation of the rupee.
- ✚ "India's foreign exchange reserves were at \$451.7 billion on December 3, 2019 — an increase of \$38.8 billion over end-March 2019," RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said at the post monetary policy press conference. At \$451.7 billion, the country's import cover is now over 11 months.

13. Zozibini Tunzi was crowned as the 2019 Miss Universe

- ✚ South Africa's Zozibini Tunzi was crowned as the Miss Universe 2019. Zozibini and Miss Universe Puerto Rico Madison Anderson were the top two contestants for the 2019 Miss Universe title.
- ✚ Miss Universe Mexico Sofia Aragon won third place. Miss Universe 2018 Catriona Gray crowned Zozibini Tunzi, the winner of the title, at the event held in Atlanta on 8 December.
- ✚ Zozibini Tunzi, 26-year-old, is from South Africa. She fights against gender-based violence. She devoted her social media campaign to change the narrative around gender stereotypes. She is a proud advocate for natural beauty. She encourages women to love themselves the way they are.

14. Saudi Arabia ends gender segregation at restaurants

- ✚ Restaurants in Saudi Arabia are no longer required to have separate entrances for men and women, the kingdom's government announced.
- ✚ The move is part of a series of measures to loosen strict social rules as part of a drive to modernize the ultra-conservative, oil-rich kingdom.
- ✚ Before announcement by the ministry of municipalities and rural affairs, it was mandatory for restaurants and other dining establishments to have segregated entrances for women and families, and for men.

15. US replaces Kuwait as India's 6th biggest oil supplier.

- ✚ The United States has surpassed Kuwait to become India's sixth largest oil supplier as it supplied 70 per cent more crude to the world's third largest energy consumer during April-September.
- ✚ According to data furnished by the oil ministry to parliamentary committee, the US supplied 5.4 million tonnes of crude oil during the first six months of 2019-20. This compared to about 3.1 million tonnes of oil sourced from the US in the same period a year back.
- ✚ Iraq continues to be India's top crude oil supplier, meeting close to one-fourth of the country's oil needs. Iraq sold 26 million tonnes of crude oil to India during April to September.

16. India ranks 129 in UN's human development index

- ✚ India climbed one spot to 129 among 189 countries in the 2019 human development index, according to a report released by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on December 9.
- ✚ In 2018, India's human development index (HDI) value of 0.647 had put it at 130 rank.
- ✚ South Asia was the fastest growing region witnessing 46 per cent growth during 1990-2018, followed by East Asia and the Pacific at 43 per cent.

17. Malaysia records first polio case in 27 years

- ✚ Malaysia has reported the first case of Polio in 27 years, when a three-month-old Malaysian infant boy was diagnosed with polio.
- ✚ The last polio case in Asia-Pacific country occurred in 1992, and in 2000, after which the country was declared polio-free. In this recent case, the child was confirmed to be infected with vaccine-derived poliovirus Type 1 (VDPV1) on 6 December 2019.

18. WTA 2019 selects Abu Dhabi as World's Leading Sports Tourism Destination.

- ✚ Abu Dhabi, UAE has been selected as the World's Leading Sports Tourism Destination by the 26th Edition of the WTA 2019 held in Muscat, Oman. Abu Dhabi has been selected for the award for the 7th time in a row.
- ✚ Abu Dhabi has also been selected as the West Asia's Leading Business Tourism Destination at the West Asia edition of WTA and Best City Break at the UK's (United Kingdom) Selling Travel Agents' Choice Awards.
- ✚ It became the top destination of sports tourism after hosting the FIFA Club World Cup 2017 and 2018 the UAE Tour, the AFC Asian Cup 2019, the Special Olympics World Games 2019, the UFC 242 showdown and the Brazil vs South Korea international friendly match.

19. SIPRI's Arms Industry Database report: global arms sales up by 4.6%; India ranked 10th and US topped.

- ✚ SIPRI released a report on worldwide arms sales titled "The SIPRI Top 100 Arms Producing and Military Services Companies, 2018". As per the report, arms sales rose up by 4.6% in 2018. India ranked 10th in the overall country ranking while, United States (US) topped the list.
- ✚ 3 Indian defence companies (all state owned) were ranked in the top 100 list. They were
 1. Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)- rank 38
 2. Indian Ordnance Factories- rank 56 and
 3. Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL)- rank 62
- ✚ The arms manufacturing of the above mentioned 3 public sector Indian defence companies dropped by 6.9% from 2017. The main reason for the sales drop was due to Indian Ordnance Factory's significant 27% drop in arms sales.

20. The youngest ever Time's Person of the Year : Greta Thunberg, the teen climate activist

- ✚ Greta Thunberg, the Swedish teenager who became the voice of conscience for a generation facing the climate change emergency, was announced as TIME magazine's 2019 Person of the Year.
- ✚ The 16-year-old first hit the headlines for her solo strike against global warming outside Sweden's parliament last year.
- ✚ Speaker Nancy Pelosi, President Trump, the Ukraine whistle-blower and the Hong Kong protesters were all on the shortlist for this year's selection.

21. World's First fully electric commercial Seaplane takes test flight in Canada

- ✚ On 11th December 2019, the World's first fully electric commercial aircraft takes test flight in Vancouver, Canada.
- ✚ It is manufactured by Harbour Air and Magnix and involves a six-passenger DHC-2 de Havilland Beaver with a 750-horsepower (560 kW) magni500 propulsion system, and was piloted by Greg McDougall, founder and Chief Executive of Harbour Air.
- ✚ Civil aviation is one of the fastest growing sources of carbon emissions and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) has encouraged greater use of efficient Biofuel engines and lighter aircraft materials.

22. Cabinet approves Social Security Agreement between India and Brazil.

- ✚ The Union Cabinet chaired by PM Modi gave its approval for signing Agreement on Social Security between India and Brazil. The Social Security Agreement is being signed by India with several other countries in order to protect the interests of the professionals and skilled workers living abroad
- ✚ The agreement also allows export of social security benefits of the Indian workers after they relocate from Brazil.
- ✚ The agreement helps to avoid double social security contributions made by the workers. It also avails easy remittance of benefits offered by the governments of the respective countries. The agreement also allows the NRIs to aggregate the contribution periods. This will help to avoid loss of benefits.

23. Bougainville: World's newest nation after voted for independence from Papua New Guinea.

- ✚ The South Pacific region of Bougainville was voted to become the world's newest nation by gaining independence from Papua New Guinea. The chairman of Bougainville Referendum Commission Bertie Ahern declared that 98% of the voters backed independence.
- ✚ In the total of 1,76,928 people that voted, only 3,043 voted in favour of remaining with Papua New Guinea itself with more autonomy.
- ✚ Bougainville is an island in Papua New Guinea. The Bougainville referendum is a key part of a 2001 peace agreement that ended a civil war in which at least 15,000 people died in the cluster of islands to the east of Papua New Guinea mainland.

24. Poland out of EU's Climate Neutrality 2050 plan.

- ✚ Poland left 2050 Climate Neutrality Agreement of European Union as the Union demanded for more funds to support nuclear power and for economic transition.
- ✚ Poland, whose 80% of energy needs are relied on coal, opted out of Climate Neutrality 2050 plan. The country requested to extend the plan execution deadline to 2070 availing longer period to cut emissions according to the plan. However, net players like Netherlands refused to agree to the terms that led Poland to leave the plan.
- ✚ The Climate Neutrality Plan is a key commitment under 2015 Paris Agreement on Climate Change. It is a 100 billion Euro plan for net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. It is also called European Green Deal or Europe's man on the moon moment.

25. 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.

26. International Hockey Federation unveiled a new world ranking system for 2020 in Lausanne, Switzerland.

- ✚ The International Hockey Federation unveiled a new world ranking system for 2020 in Lausanne, Switzerland. The new method will come into effect from the 1st January 2020.
- ✚ The new ranking will be match-based instead of tournament-based calculation.
- ✚ The new model is expected to remove the subjectivity surrounding continental weighing by creating a system which is fair to all. The outgoing world ranking system was in existence since 2003. It was originally devised to allocate teams into pools at tournaments.

27. Maldives signs contract with joint venture of Indian companies for development of Addu.

- ✚ Maldives government has signed a contract with a joint venture of Indian companies. The contract aims to prepare project report and the development of Addu, which is the second biggest city in the island nation.

- ✚ The contract was signed L & T engineering limited and Lea associates south Asia for the Addu Road and Reclamation Project. The project includes land reclamation, construction of roads and storm water drainage system in Addu. This will upgrade existing infrastructure and mitigate the flood situation in Addu.
- ✚ Financing of the project will be done by EXIM bank of India through line of credit of USD 800 million.

28. World Design Organization to launch World Design Protopolis in Bengaluru.

- ✚ The World Design Organization is all set to launch its new global programme World Design Protopolis in Bengaluru, aimed at implementing holistic progress in mega cities across the world and making them sustainable.
- ✚ The announcement was made at the ongoing three-day Kochi Design Week (KDW), India's largest design conclave that kicked off at Bolgatty Island here on Thursday.
- ✚ The project aims to measure the progress of the city, attract investments and solve the problems so that the city becomes a better place for the citizens.
- ✚ Delivering the keynote address on Design Opportunities and Challenges Ahead, Srini R Srinivasan, CEO, Lumium, and President-elect, WDO, said, We have selected Bengaluru as the first ever city in the world to implement this project, which is exclusively for big cities.

29. India to host the 36th International Geological Congress (IGC) in 2020, in New Delhi.

- ✚ India is to host the 36th International Geological Congress (IGC) in New Delhi during the first week of March 2020. It is popularly described as the Olympics of Geosciences.
- ✚ The theme of the event is Geosciences: The Basic Science for a Sustainable Development. The IGCs are global geoscientific events held once in four years.
- ✚ The event aims to provide a platform for international cooperation in all major fields of geosciences including the provision of investment opportunities in mining, launching of collaborative programs, mineral exploration and environmental management and related enterprises.

30. India, Bangladesh, Nepal contributes global progress in infant birth registration: UNICEF report.

- ✚ According to the new report, 'Birth Registration for Every Child by 2030: Are we on track?' released by UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund), the number of childbirth registrations has increased significantly over the past decade & the great efforts of South Asian countries like India, Bangladesh and Nepal have contributed to the global progress in this field.
- ✚ The birth registration level in these regions has almost tripled from 23 % in the last two decades to 70%. The report analyzed the data from 174 countries.
- ✚ The report also stressed the governments to take action, in line with the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda which call for all people to be provided a legal identity, including birth registration.

31. 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.

32. Eight West African countries rename common currency to Eco.

- ✚ The eight West African nations have agreed to change the name of their common currency from 'CFA franc' to 'Eco', after they jointly severed the CFA franc's links to former colonial ruler France.

- ✚ The announcement was made during a visit by French President Emmanuel Macron to Ivory Coast, who hailed the decision as a historic reform. Even though the deal took six months in making, common currency Eco will see the light of day in 2020.
- ✚ The 8 West African countries namely- Ivory Coast, Mali, Burkina Faso, Benin, Niger, Senegal, Togo and Guinea-Bissau currently use CFA France as their currency. All these countries, except Guinea-Bissau, are former French colonies.

33. Archaeologist R. Nagaswamy honoured at the Silver Jubilee International Conference of Art in Dhaka.

- ✚ Archaeologist R. Nagaswamy was honoured at the Silver Jubilee International Conference of Art in Dhaka by Bangladesh culture minister K.M.Khalid for his contribution to art, archaeology, history and culture.
- ✚ Ramachandran Nagaswamy is an Indian historian, archaeologist and epigraphist. He served as the founder-director of Tamilnadu Archaeology Department. In 2018 he was awarded India's third highest civilian award Padma Bhushan.

34. India-Brazil MoU on Bio energy Cooperation gets Cabinet approval.

- ✚ Union Cabinet has given its approval for signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Republic of India and Federative Republic of Brazil on Bio energy Cooperation.
- ✚ In 2016, during the meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President of Brazil in India, the two sides agreed to cooperate on research and development (R&D) of renewable energies, and in field of 2nd-generation biofuels.
- ✚ Therefore, in this regard, an MoU was also signed between two sides to provide a framework to cooperate as well as to promote investment in biofuel, bioelectricity and biogas supply-chains including industrial conversion, feedstock, distribution and end use sectors.

35. Russia 'only country in world' with hypersonic weapons: Prez Putin.

- ✚ President Vladimir Putin that Russia is the only country in the world that has hypersonic weapons. Speaking at a meeting with top military brass, Putin said that for the first time in history Russia has an edge in designing a new class of weapons unlike in the past when it was catching up with the United States.
- ✚ He said that the first unit equipped with the Avangard hypersonic glide vehicle is set to go on duty this month, while that the air-launched Kinzhal hypersonic missiles already have entered service.
- ✚ Putin said that the missile flies 10 times faster than the speed of sound, has a range of more than 2,000 kilometers (1,250 miles) and can carry a nuclear or a conventional warhead.

36. Typhoon Phanfone pummelled the central Philippines.

- ✚ Typhoon Phanfone battered several central Philippine islands, making seven landfalls before heading out to the South China Sea. The typhoon brought chaos and a wet, miserable holiday season to millions in the mainly Catholic nation.
- ✚ Thousands were stranded at shuttered ports, while dozens of flights were cancelled.

37. UN gives green light to draft treaty to combat cybercrime.

- ✚ UN General Assembly approved it will start the process of drafting a new international treaty to combat cybercrime over objections from the European Union, the United States, and other countries.
- ✚ Russian-drafted resolution was approved by the 193-member world body by a vote of 79-60 with 33 abstentions. The resolution establishes an expert committee representing all regions of the world to elaborate a comprehensive international convention on countering the use of information and communications technologies for criminal purposes. It says the committee will meet in August 2020 to agree on an outline of its activities.

New Appointments and Person in News

1. 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.

2. 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.

3. Iraqi Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi resigns

- ✚ Iraqi Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi has submitted his resignation to Parliament amid ongoing anti-government protests across the country.
- ✚ The formal resignation came after an emergency cabinet session in which ministers approved the document and the resignation of key staffers, including Abdul Mahdi's chief of staff.

4. 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.

5. Pritivirajsing Roopun appointed as new President of Mauritius by the Parliament

- ✚ Lawmakers in Mauritius picked former arts and culture minister Pritivirajsing Roopun as president of the island nation, a largely ceremonial post.
- ✚ His predecessor Ameenah Gurib-Fakim resigned in March 2018 after being embroiled in a scandal over her use of a credit card to buy luxury personal items. She denied wrongdoing.
- ✚ In Mauritius, the prime minister is head of the government and holds most political power while the president is head of state but has no executive role and is considered the guardian of the constitution.

6. Hari Mohan took charge as the chairman of the Ordnance Factory Board (OFB).

- ✚ Senior officer Hari Mohan took charge as the chairman of the Ordnance Factory Board (OFB). He replaced Saurabh Kumar who was superannuated from the services.
- ✚ Hari Mohan is a 1982-batch Indian Ordnance Factories Service (IOFS) officer. He topped at University of Allahabad and University of Pune post-graduate degree in mechanical engineering.
- ✚ With his almost four decades of service, Mohan contributed significantly at various positions including Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) Haridwar, Ordnance Factory Chanda and Ordnance Factory

Dehu Road, Maharashtra, Vehicle Factory Jabalpur, Engine Factory Avadi, Heavy Vehicle Factory Avadi, Ammunition Factory Khadki, Ordnance Factory Bolangir, Odisha, OFB New Delhi Office and Ministry of Steel & Mines.

7. Sundar Pichai promoted as Alphabet Inc. CEO

- ✚ Sundar Pichai promoted as Alphabet Inc. CEO after Google co-founders Larry Page and Sergey Brin have announced that they are stepping down from the leadership role of the parent company Alphabet.
- ✚ Google CEO Indian-American Sundar Pichai will be assuming the role of Alphabet Inc CEO, making him one of the most powerful corporate leaders of the world.
- ✚ Alphabet and Google no longer need two CEOs and a President and Sundar Pichai will be the CEO of both Google and Alphabet.

8. Nirmala Sitharaman ranked 34th & Merkel topped the 16th Forbes powerful women list 2019.

- ✚ On december 13, 2019 the 16th annual ranking of 'The Forbes 2019 list of The World's 100 Most Powerful Women' list was released. Union Finance Minister of India Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman (60 years) ranked 34th in the list.
- ✚ The list was topped by German Chancellor Angela Dorothea Merkel. 65-year old Merkel topped the list for the 9th consecutive year. Merkel was followed by European Central Bank (ECB) President Christine Madeleine Odette Lagarde and Speaker of the US (United States) House of Representatives Nancy Patricia Pelosi in the second and third rank respectively.
- ✚ The ranking was based on 6 categories. They were, business, technology, finance, media & entertainment, politics & policy, and philanthropy.

9. Salman Khan appointed as brand ambassador of Pepsi

- ✚ On December 11, 2019 Food and beverage company PepsiCo has appointed Bollywood actor Salman Khan (born as Abdul Rashid Salim Salman Khan) as brand ambassador for its flagship Pepsi brand of carbonated beverage in India.
- ✚ The commercial will be launched in 2020 and will take up the "SWAG" themed campaign which was launched in the summer of 2019.
- ✚ Previously Salman Khan was the brand ambassador of PepsiCo's rival company Coca-Cola's popular Thums Up and also as the brand ambassador of Parle Agro-backed soft drink Appy Fizz. He also previously endorsed PepsiCo's Mountain Dew drink.

10. Kiren Rijiju announces Ripu Daman Bevli as Plogging Ambassador of India.

- ✚ Fit India Plogging Run, which was launched on October 2, 2019, concluded today in Delhi's Jawahar Lal Nehru Stadium, having covered 50 cities across the country.
- ✚ During the event, Minister of State(I/C) for Youth Affairs & Sports, Shri Kiren Rijiju felicitated Ripu Daman Bevli, popularly known as the Plogman of India and named him the Plogging Ambassador of India. The minister also launched the nation-wide Plogging Ambassador Mission under which, Indians who have been running and cleaning their cities, towns or districts, will be nominated as Plogging Ambassadors of their region.

11. 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.

12. K Vijay Kumar appointed senior security advisor in MHA

- ✦ K Vijay Kumar has been appointed as a senior security advisor in the Union Home Ministry headed by Amit Shah. The 1975 batch officer of Indian Police Service will “advise the ministry on security-related matters of Union Territory of J&K and Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected States.
- ✦ He will be in the position for a period of 1-year from the date of his taking charge. He has served as Director-General of CRPF, Director of National Police Academy in Hyderabad and his most talked-about stint was as the chief of the Tamil Nadu police special task force that killed forest brigand Veerappan in 2004.
- ✦ After his retirement from service and as DG, CRPF in 2012, Kumar was appointed as senior security advisor LWE in the Home Ministry then headed by Rajnath Singh.

13. National Stock Exchange appoints Girish Chandra Chaturvedi as its new Chairman

- ✦ Leading stock exchange NSE it has appointed Public Interest Director Girish Chandra Chaturvedi as its new chairman.
- ✦ The position was vacant since Ashok Chawla resigned as the chairman of the National Stock Exchange (NSE) in January.
- ✦ The board and the management of NSE has welcomed Chaturvedi, a retired IAS officer and former Secretary, Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, as the new chairman of the NSE.

14. At 34, Finland's Sanna Marin Set To Become World's Youngest Sitting Prime Minister

- ✦ Sanna Marin is set to become Finland's third female prime minister — and its youngest — leading a coalition of four other parties, all headed by women.
- ✦ At just 34, she will also stand out on the world stage by being the world's youngest sitting prime minister.
- ✦ Marin was nominated by her Social Democratic party after its leader, Antti Rinne, stepped down after losing the confidence among his coalition government over his handling of a postal strike.

15. V Viswanathan appointed as Additional Director of Dhanlaxmi Bank.

- ✦ The Board of Directors of Dhanlaxmi Bank, an old private sector bank headquartered in Thrissur City of Kerala, has appointed V Viswanathan as an Additional Director of the bank. He will hold the post upto the date of the next Annual General Meeting.
- ✦ Priorly, Viswanathan served as the Chief General Manager (Retail Banking) of State Bank of Hyderabad (SBH).
- ✦ Recently on October 30, 2019, T Latha had resigned as MD & CEO and Director of Dhanlaxmi Bank due to personal reasons. The Board has accepted her resignation with effect from October 31, 2019.



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16. 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.

17. Suniel Shetty signed as anti-doping brand ambassador of NADA

- ✚ Actor Suniel Shetty has been selected as the brand ambassador of National Anti-Doping Agency NADA. The country's anti-doping body is hoping that his celebrity status helps its efforts to clean up sports in the country from the menace.
- ✚ More than 150 athletes have failed dope tests this year though bodybuilders make up more than one-third of these offenders. This is not a welcome sign with less than eight months to go for the Tokyo Olympic Games.
- ✚ The suspension of National Anti-Doping Laboratory by the WADA earlier this year is another issue facing the country now that dope samples collected by the National Anti-Doping Agency from the athletes will have to be tested outside India.

18. Vikas Swarup appointed as the Secretary West in Ministry of External Affairs.

- ✚ Senior diplomat Vikas Swarup is appointed as the Secretary (West) in the Ministry of External Affairs. The Appointments Committee the Cabinet (ACC) of the Cabinet has approved the appointment.
- ✚ Swarup is a 1986 batch Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer. As the Secretary (West), he will be responsible for India's affairs with the UK and other European nations.
- ✚ In another appointment, career diplomat Sanjay Bhattacharyya has been appointed Secretary of Consular, Passport, Visa and Overseas Indian Affairs. Bhattacharyya is a 1987 batch IFS officer. He is currently India's Ambassador in Turkey.

19. Spain's football league LaLiga names cricketer Rohit Sharma as its brand ambassador in India.

- ✚ Spain's football league LaLiga names cricketer Rohit Sharma as its brand ambassador in India. The Indian cricketer is the first-ever non-footballer brand ambassador appointed by LaLiga globally and will be the face of the league in India.
- ✚ "India is a very important market for LaLiga from a global perspective; we came here in 2017 to get a better understanding of the pulse of the nation. Over the past two years, and after several ground-breaking initiatives, it is obvious that India has a huge appetite for football," said Jose Antonio Cachaza, Managing Director, LaLiga India.

20. TV Somanathan appointed as Expenditure Secretary in the Finance Ministry.

- ✚ The government appointed TV Somanathan as an expenditure secretary in the finance ministry. Somanathan will replace Girish Chandra Murmu, who was named the first lieutenant governor of the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir in October.
- ✚ TV Somanathan is a 1987 batch IAS officer from the Tamil Nadu cadre. Somanathan served as a commercial tax commissioner and principal secretary, Planning & Development, in the Tamil Nadu government.
- ✚ He was awarded the Gold Medal for the Best IAS trainee of his cohort. He holds a Ph.D. in Economics from Calcutta University and is a chartered accountant, chartered management accountant, and chartered secretary.

21. 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.

22. 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.

23. 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.

24. Manuel Marrero Cruz appointed as Cuba's first PM in more than 40 years.

- ✚ Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel has appointed Manuel Marrero Cruz as the country's first Prime Minister in more than four decades (40 years).
- ✚ Marrero Cruz who was named Prime Minister for a five-year term, has served as Cuban tourism minister for 16 years. He is an architect by trade and has helped boost Cuba's economy by making tourism one of the engines of growth.
- ✚ The post of Prime Minister was scrapped in 1976 by the then-revolutionary leader and Cuba's last Prime Minister Fidel Castro. In December 1976, Fidel Castro took the title of president of the State Council, which replaced the posts of President and Prime Minister.

25. Asia's richest man Mukesh Ambani adds \$18 billion to his fortune in 2019.

- ✚ According to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index, The Indian tycoon added almost \$17 billion to his wealth about \$61 billion in comparison, Alibaba Group founder Jack Ma's net worth grew \$11.3 billion, while Jeff Bezos lost \$13.2 billion.
- ✚ Mukesh Ambani's fortune fueled by a 40% jump in the shares of his Reliance Industries Ltd.

26. Shri Harsh Vardhan Shringla appointed as Foreign Secretary.

- ✚ Narendra Modi government approved the appointment of Indian ambassador to the United States Harsh Vardhan Shringla as the next foreign secretary. He replaced Vijay Gokhale. He is the 33rd foreign secretary of the country.
- ✚ Harsh Vardhan Shringla would take over next month after the completion of Vijay Gokhale's two-year term on January 28, 2020.
- ✚ A 1984-batch Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer and a fluent French speaker, Harsh Vardhan Shringla served as an ambassador to Bangkok from 2014 to 2016 and later as a High Commissioner to Dhaka for two years.
- ✚ Harsh Vardhan Shringla has also served at UNESCO in France, the UN in New York besides Vietnam, Israel, and South Africa.

27. Monisha Ghosh named 1st woman CTO at FCC in US.

- ✚ Indian-American Dr Monisha Ghosh has been appointed as the first woman Chief Technology Officer at the US government's powerful Federal Communications Commission (FCC).
- ✚ She will advise Indian-American Chairman of the FCC Ajit Pai and the agency on technology and engineering issues, and work closely with the Office of Engineering and Technology.
- ✚ Dr Ghosh will take charge on January 13. She replaces Dr Eric Burger.

28. Dr Sangita Reddy appointed as the President of FICCI for 2019-20 after succeeding Sandip Somany.

- ✚ Dr Sangita Reddy, Joint Managing Director of Apollo Hospitals Group was appointed as the President of Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) for the year 2019-20, during FICCI's 92nd Annual Convention in New Delhi. She succeeds Mr Sandip Somany, Vice Chairman and Managing Director, HSIL Limited.
- ✚ President of the Walt Disney Company APAC & Chairman of Star & Disney India, Mr Uday Shankar has been elevated as Senior Vice President of FICCI.
- ✚ Similarly, Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL), Mr Sanjiv Mehta was appointed as the Vice President of FICCI.

29. Ravi Mohan appointed as the new chairman of ESAF SFB.

- ✚ P R Ravi Mohan was appointed as the new chairman of ESAF Small Finance Bank (SFB). Ravi has replaced R Prabha, whose tenure as chairman has ended.
- ✚ Ravi previously worked as chief general manager Department of Banking Operations and Development (DBoD) of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). He also previously headed the Banking Supervision.
- ✚ ESAF Stands for Evangelical Social Action Forum.

30. Niranjana Hiranandani takes over as Assocham President.

- ✚ Niranjana Hiranandani took over as the new president of the Associated Chambers of Commerce & Industry of India (Assocham), the country's apex organization of industry and trade.
- ✚ He succeeds Balkrishna Goenka, the Welspun Group Chairman.
- ✚ Niranjana Hiranandani is the Co-Founder and Managing Director of the Hiranandani Group of Companies.

31. Hemant Soren to be sworn in as Jharkhand CM on 29th December.

- ✚ Hemant Soren is scheduled to take oath as the new Chief Minister of Jharkhand December 29, 2019 at the Morabadi Ground in Ranchi. Soren will be administered the oath of the office by Jharkhand Governor Droupadi Murmu.
- ✚ The Jharkhand Mukti Morcha will form the new government in the state in alliance with the Congress and the RJD. Their pre-poll alliance won a total of 47 seats in the 81-member Jharkhand assembly in the recently concluded Jharkhand elections 2019.
- ✚ The announcement of the oath-taking ceremony was made through an official communiqué by the Raj Bhawan on December 26, 2019. The state's Chief Secretary DK Tiwari had met Soren at his residence on the same day to invite him for the ceremony.

32. Ratan Tata, Azim Premji, Gautam Adani among India's top 10 most Googled business tycoons.

- ✚ Tata Sons chairman Ratan Tata emerged as India's most searched business tycoon on Google in 2019.
- ✚ Google released a Year in Search 2019 report shows what was trending on the world's largest search engine during the year in India.

Here is the top 10 list of trending searches for business personalities in India.

- 1) Ratan Tata
- 2) Azim Premji
- 3) Lakshmi Mittal
- 4) Cyrus S. Poonawalla
- 5) Anand Mahindra
- 6) Shiv Nadar
- 7) Gautam Adani
- 8) Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw
- 9) Uday Kotak
- 10) Radhakishan Damani

Banking

1. Masatsugu Asakawa elected ADB President

- ✚ The Asian Development Bank (ADB) board has unanimously elected Masatsugu Asakawa as its new President.
- ✚ He is currently a special advisor to Japan's Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, will assume office as ADB's 10th President on January 17, 2020. He will succeed Takehiko Nakao, who will leave office on January 16, 2020.
- ✚ He served as a Visiting Professor at the University of Tokyo from 2012 to 2015 and at Saitama University from 2006 to 2009.

2. Walmart launches credit card in partnership with HDFC Bank

- ✚ Walmart India, in partnership with HDFC Bank, launched a co-branded credit card exclusively for members of its Best Price Modern Wholesale "B2B Cash & Carry" stores, offering "free credit up to 50 days."
- ✚ The card is being supported by Diners Club International which has acceptance of its own membership card in 185 countries.

3. RBI releases guidelines for on-tap licensing of Small Finance Banks in the private sector.

- ✚ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) today has released "Guidelines for 'on tap' Licensing of Small Finance Banks in the Private Sector". Major changes from the earlier Guidelines on Small Finance Banks dated 27 November 2014, are

- (i) The licensing window will be open on-tap;
- (ii) minimum paid-up voting equity capital / net worth requirement shall be Rs 200 crore;
- (iii) for Primary (Urban) Co-operative Banks (UCBs), desirous of voluntarily transiting into Small Finance Banks (SFBs) initial requirement of net worth shall be at Rs 100 crore, which will have to be increased to Rs 200 crore within five years from the date of commencement of business. Incidentally, the net-worth of all SFBs currently in operation is in excess of Rs 200 crore;
- (iv) SFBs will be given scheduled bank status immediately upon commencement of operations;
- (v) SFBs will have general permission to open banking outlets from the date of commencement of operations;
- (vi) Payments Banks can apply for conversion into SFB after five years of operations, if they are otherwise eligible as per these guidelines.

4. BlackBuck partners with IDFC Bank, Yes Bank to offer free FASTags to truckers.

- ✚ Online trucking platform BlackBuck on Thursday said it has partnered with private lenders IDFC Bank and Yes Bank to provide FASTags to truck owners free of cost.
- ✚ Truck owners can order FASTags on BlackBuck's Boss App, a digital services platform exclusively for truck fleet owners, and it will be delivered at their doorstep free of cost until December 31, 2019, the company said in a statement.

5. NEFT transactions to be made 24x7 from December 16

- ✚ The Reserve Bank of India announced round-the-clock transactions will be allowed 24x7 facility under the National Electronic Funds Transfer (NEFT) system on all days including weekends and holidays from December 16.
- ✚ These transactions after the usual banking hours are set to be automated initiated using 'Straight Through Processing (STP)' modes by the banks. The existing discipline for crediting the beneficiary's account or returning the transaction within 2 hours of settlement to the originating bank will also continue.

- ✦ Member banks are also advised to initiate necessary action and ensure availability of all necessary infrastructural requirements at their end for providing seamless NEFT 24x7 facility to their customers.

6. Vakrangee joins hands with Union Bank of India (UBI) for 20,000 Banking BC Points

- ✦ Vakrangee Finserve Limited, a wholly owned subsidiary of Vakrangee Limited (VL) has partnered with Union Bank of India (UBI), one of the largest government-owned banks of India for 20,000 Banking Business Correspondent (BC) point for Nextgen Vakrangee Kendra.
- ✦ A batch of 2,500 BC points will be allotted by UBI in which 70-80% of BC points would be in Tier 5 and 6 locations and which would include 5% of the outlets to be opened in aspirational districts and LWE (Left wing extremism) areas.

7. Asian Development Bank reduced India's economic growth forecast for FY 2019-20 to 5.1%.

- ✦ Asian Development Bank reduced India's economic growth forecast for FY 2019-20 to 5.1%. It reduced upon analyzing the slowing job prospects, rural distress exacerbated by poor harvest and credit crunch.
- ✦ The bank has predicted the growth will pick up to 6.5% next year on supportive government policies. The bank has also reduced the estimate for the next fiscal, FY 2020-21 to 6.5% from 7.2%.
- ✦ In September 2019, ADB forecasted the GDP growth of 6.2% in 2019 and 6% in 2020.

8. Edelweiss AMC launches India's 1st corporate bond called 'Bharat Bond ETF'.

- ✦ Edelweiss Asset Management Company (AMC), a subsidiary of Edelweiss Capital Limited (ECL) has launched the India's 1st Corporate Bond ETF (exchange trade fund) called the Bharat Bond ETF. This bond will invest only in bonds rated AAA bonds of Public Sector companies.
- ✦ The funds that will come from the investment in this bond will be invested in companies included in the bond index.
- ✦ This ETF is an initiative of Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM), Government of India (GoI), and then it mandates Edelweiss AMC to design and manage the product.

9. 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.

10. 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.

11. 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.

12. 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.

13. 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.

14. Gross NPA ratio improves to 9.1% at Sept end from 11.2% y-o-y: RBI.

- ✚ As the bad loan recognition process nears completion, the health of the banking system has improved with the gross non-performing loan ratio remaining stable at 9.1 per cent as of September-end, the same level as in FY19, according to the RBI.
- ✚ However, the numbers indicate major improvement on a full-year basis, as in FY18 the ratio stood at a high of 11.2 per cent and slipped to 9.1 per cent in FY19, the RBI said in its annual report on trends and progress of banking in 2018-19.
- ✚ "The gross NPA (Non Performing Asset) ratio of all banks declined in FY19 (to 9.1 per cent from 11.2 per cent in FY18) after rising for seven consecutive years, as recognition of bad loans has neared completion," RBI said in the report.

15. Government to infuse Rs 8,655 crore in Allahabad Bank, IOB and UCO Bank.

- ✚ The Government of India approved the release of Rs 8,655 crore as fresh capital to three public sector banks. The bank includes Allahabad Bank, Indian Overseas Bank (IOB) and UCO Bank. The infusion did for preferential allotment of shares.
- ✚ The Fresh capital amounting to Rs 2,153 crore allocated to Allahabad Bank, Rs 2,142 crore to UCO Bank and Rs 4,630 crore to Indian Overseas Bank (IOB) for preferential allotment of shares.

16. Airtel Payments Bank enables 24x7 NEFT transfers.

- ✚ Airtel Payments Bank announced its customers will now be able to use the National Electronic Funds Transfer (NEFT) any time of the day in-line with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) guidelines.
- ✚ The facility will be available to customers on a 24x7 basis even on holidays. Customers can enable them to receive or send funds to any bank from anywhere, anytime.

Science Tech & Defence

1. 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.

2. Sub-lieutenant Shivangi becomes 1st woman of Indian Navy; to fly Dornier surveillance aircraft.

- ✚ Shivangi Swaroop has become the first woman pilot to fly Indian Navy fixed-wing Dornier surveillance planes. She has joined the Indian Navy as the first female pilot on December 2, 2019. She will be involved in Operation Duty in Kochi.
- ✚ Sub-lieutenant Shivangi is from Muzaffarpur in Bihar. She has done her studies from DAV Public School. After completing school education, Lieutenant Shivangi did B.Tech from Sikkim Manipal Institute of Technology.
- ✚ Bhawna Kanth became the first woman pilot of the Indian Air Force this year after qualifying all the required tests.

3. ISRO to launch second 'spy' satellite RISAT-2BR1 on December 11 to enhance India's surveillance capability

- ✚ Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is preparing to launch earth observation satellite RISAT-2BR1 that would enhance the country's surveillance capabilities, The Times of India has reported, citing sources in the space agency.
- ✚ According to the report, ISRO is looking to launch the satellite with the help of PSLV-C48 rocket from Sriharikota on December 11.
- ✚ This will be the second in the RISAT-series satellites. The first in the bunch was RISAT-2B (Radar Imaging Satellite-2B), which was put into orbit on May 22. Dubbed as a 'spy' satellite, RISAT-2B was launched to replace its predecessor RISAT-2, which was used by India to monitor activities in terror camps across the border in Pakistan to thwart infiltration bids by terrorists.

4. India test-fires surface-to-surface nuclear-capable Prithvi-II missile of 350-km range off Odisha coast

- ✚ India conducted a night trial of its indigenously developed, nuclear-capable surface-to-surface Prithvi-II missile off Odisha coast.
- ✚ The Strategic Forces Command conducted the night trial of short-range ballistic missile Prithvi-II from launch complex-3 of Integrated Test Range in Chandipur, said defence sources.
- ✚ The missile, which has a strike range of 350 km, was test-fired at 7.48 p.m. on Tuesday, the sources added. The last night time test of the Prithvi-II was on November 20 this year. Prithvi-II, which is capable of carrying 500 to 1,000 kg of warheads, is powered by liquid propulsion twin engines. It was inducted into the Indian defence forces in 2003.

5. Exercise Indra between India, Russia to be conducted from Dec 10-19

- ✚ Exercise Indra 2019, a joint, tri-services exercise between India and Russia will be conducted in India from December 10 to 19 simultaneously at Babina, near Jhansi in Uttar Pradesh, Pune, and Goa.
- ✚ The Indra series of exercise began in 2003 and the first joint tri-services exercise was conducted in 2017.
- ✚ Company-sized mechanized contingents, fighter and transport aircraft, as well as ships of respective Army, Air Force, and Navy, will participate in this exercise of ten days duration. The exercise will consist of a five-day training phase consisting of a comprehensive training curriculum.

6. Chief of the Air Staff participates in Pacific Air Chiefs' Symposium 2019

- ✚ Chief of the Air Staff of India is participating in the Pacific Air Chiefs' Symposium 2019 (PACS 2019) at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii.
- ✚ The theme for this year's symposium is 'A Collaborative Approach to Regional Security'. The conference will bring together Air Chiefs from across the Indo-Pacific region who will provide perspectives on common challenges faced and on shared mutual interests while focusing on relevant topics like 'Regional Security', 'Domain Awareness', 'Multi-Domain Awareness', 'Interoperability' and 'HADR'.
- ✚ The symposium will also entail discourse and discussions on the combined effort required to maintain peace and security within the region.

7. CSIR and BHEL join hands for commercialization of indigenous technologies.

- ✚ Soon Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) would start commercialization of various indigenous technologies developed by Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR). CSIR and BHEL have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to cooperate, collaborate and pursue industrial application oriented research programmes and its commercialization in large scale.
- ✚ The first joint project to be taken up under this collaboration shall be for commercialization by BHEL of various water purification / sewage disposal related technologies developed by CSIR.

8. Duchifat 3: Satellite built by Israeli school students to be launched by ISRO's PSLV C48

- ✚ Three youngsters Alon Abramovich, Meitav Assulin and Shmuel Aviv Levi, all 17 to 18 years old from Sha'ar HaNegev High school in Israel's southern region will be traveling to India to launch a satellite dubbed as- 'Duchifat 3', designed and built by them aboard PSLV C48 from Sriharikota launch site of ISRO (Indian Space Research Organisation) on 11 December 2019.
- ✚ Besides Duchifat 3, the PSLV C48 will carry place India's RISAT-2BR1 and 8 other foreign satellites as payload. India was chosen for the launch because of success enjoyed by country's space programme and also because of close relations between the two countries.

9. UAE, US joint military exercise 'Iron Union 12' commences.

- ✚ 'Iron Union 12', a joint military exercise between the ground forces of the UAE and the United States, commenced. 'Iron Union 12' will see the two sides take part in joint military cooperation to enhance combat and tactical capabilities.
- ✚ The joint military exercises of the UAE Armed Forces with fraternal and friendly countries takes place in a manner consistent with latest developments and reflects the UAE Armed Forces' determination to stand firmly against all threats and challenges facing the region.

10. Russian navy ships arrive in India for joint exercise INDRA 2019

- ✚ Three Russian navy ships have arrived in Goa to participate in the second edition of a tri-services exercise between the armed forces of India and Russia.
- ✚ The aim of exercise INDRA 2019 is to enhance interoperability and develop an understanding in order to effectively tackle common security challenges, they said.
- ✚ INDRA initially began as a bilateral naval exercise between the Indian and the Russian Federation navies in 2003. The exercise has now assumed a tri-service scope with corresponding maturity and gradual increase in complexity and level of participation.

11. In PSLV's 50th mission, ISRO successfully launches RISAT-2BR1

- ✚ India's space agency ISRO has successfully placed in orbit its latest RADAR imaging satellite and nine commercial satellites from other nations including the US and Israel in a PSLV launch.
- ✚ History was made at Sriharikota space launch centre with the successful 50th mission of the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle, the workhorse of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).
- ✚ The satellite will be used in applications such as agriculture, forestry and disaster management support.

12. 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.

13. International Seminar cum Exhibition on Naval Weapon Systems 'NAVARMS – 2019' held in Delhi.

- ✚ The fourth edition of International Seminar cum Exhibition on Naval Weapon Systems 'NAVARMS - 2019' with the theme 'Make in India - Fight Category: Opportunities and Imperatives' was inaugurated by Admiral Karambir Singh, Chief of the Naval Staff at Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, Development Enclave, New Delhi.
- ✚ The inaugural session of the seminar was attended by more than 300 delegates from three services, Min of Defence, DRDO, DGQA, DGAQA, OFs, DPSUs, Indian and international Industries and reps of foreign mission of friendly countries.
- ✚ The NAVARMS – 2019 Exhibition on defence technology was inaugurated by the CNS. The Exhibition comprised of exhibits from Ordnance Factory, DPSUs, private industries (both domestic and international) and Indian Navy showcasing cutting edge and niche defence technologies.

14. 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.

15. 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.

16. 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.

17. 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.

18. 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.

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

- ✚ Ethiopia launched its first satellite, 'Ethiopian Remote Sensing Satellite' (ETRSS) from China. ERSS 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.

20. India successfully test-fires Quick Reaction Surface to Air Missile (QRSAM) system.

- ✚ Quick Reaction Surface to Air Missile System (QRSAM) developed by DRDO has been successfully flight tested from Integrated Test Range in Odisha's Chandipur.
- ✚ The missile was flight tested with full configuration in deployment mode intercepting the target in mid-air and meeting mission objectives. The entire event was monitored by Ground Telemetry Systems, Range Radar Systems, Electro Optical Tracking System, etc.
- ✚ QRSAM weapon system, which operates on the move, comprises of fully automated Command and Control System, Active Array Battery Surveillance Radar, Active Array Battery Multifunction Radar and Launcher. Both radars are four walled having 360-degree coverage with search on move and track on move capability. The system is compact with minimum number of vehicles for a firing unit. Single stage solid propelled missile has mid course inertial navigation system with two-way data link and terminal active seeker developed by DRDO

21. NPL scientists develop ink to stop fake passports and currency notes.

- ✚ The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and National Physical Laboratory (NPL) developed an ink to combat the problem of fake printing of passports and counterfeiting of currency notes. The ink has a new security feature of protecting itself against duplicity.
- ✚ The ink was produced based on single excitable dual emissive luminescent pigment. It was developed based on the concept of fluorescence and phosphorescence phenomena. Currently, the currency notes display only one color with the emission of wavelength. However, in the ink developed by the scientists, features change in pigment color after the notes are printed.

22. WHO for 1st time approved Biosimilar of "Trastuzumab" for breast cancer treatment.

- ✚ The World Health Organization (WHO) announced that for the 1st time it had approved a "biosimilar" medicine of Trastuzumab named "Ontruzant" to make cheaper breast cancer treatment at an affordable rate to women globally.
- ✚ The medicine is derived from living sources rather than chemicals. The biosimilar medicine of the Trastuzumab drug was supplied by Samsung Bioepis co Ltd.

23. MiG 27: Indian Air Force bids farewell to 'Hero' of Kargil conflict.

- ✚ MiG-27 fighter jet is known as the Kargil war hero that decommissioned today with its last flight. It was an Indian Air Force's lethal fighter aircraft which became the main attacker during the 1999 Kargil war. The last fighter aircraft of the squadron took a flight from Jodhpur airbase.
- ✚ The squadron will be number plated on 31 March 2020, which means it will no more in the service. The MiG-27's squadron in Jodhpur is the last batch of aircraft. However, this squadron was known as one of the IAF's best team.
- ✚ The MiG-27 has a wonderful past in the history of the Indian Air Force. The MiG-class aircraft was purchased from Soviet Russia while it was first inducted into the Indian Air Force in 1981.

24. China, Russia and Iran to hold naval drills in the Gulf of Oman.

- ✚ China, Russia and Iran hold trilateral naval exercises in the Gulf of Oman. The move is done by three countries in the volatile Middle East.
- ✚ The trilateral exercise will be held in the Gulf of Oman from December 27 to 30. The Chinese Navy sent a guided-missile destroyer to participate in the drills adding that the exercise aims to deepen the exchanges and cooperation between the navies of the three countries and demonstrating the goodwill and ability of the three parties to jointly maintain world peace and maritime security.
- ✚ The Gulf of Oman borders Iran and Pakistan on the north, Oman on the south, the United Arab Emirates on the west and faces the Gujarat coast. Wu declined to directly respond to a question of whether the drills were any way connected to recent tensions in the region and US naval drills.

25. Russia deploys its first Avangard Hypersonic missile system.

- ✚ Russia's first missile unit equipped with Avangard Hypersonic glide vehicle. Russia's defence ministry said that new hypersonic weapon with the latest strategic missiles of the intercontinental-range has become operational.
- ✚ The nuclear-capable missiles can travel more than 20 times the speed of sound. The Avangard can carry a nuclear weapon of up to 2 megatons.
- ✚ Avangard is designed using new composite materials to withstand temperatures of up to 2,000 Celsius resulting from a flight through the atmosphere at hypersonic speeds.

Important days

1. International Day for the Abolition of Slavery: 2 December

- ✚ The United Nations observes International Day for the Abolition of Slavery on 2nd of December every year.
- ✚ The day focuses on eradicating contemporary forms of slavery, such as trafficking in persons, sexual exploitation, the worst forms of child labour, forced marriage, and the forced recruitment of children for use in armed conflict.
- ✚ According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) more than 40 million people worldwide are victims of modern slavery. Also, more than 150 million children are subject to child labour, accounting for almost one in ten children around the world.

2. International Day of Persons with Disabilities: 3 December

- ✚ International Day of Persons with Disabilities is being observed on the 3rd of December every year.
- ✚ This day is observed to promote the rights and well-being of persons with disabilities in all spheres of society and development and to increase awareness.
- ✚ The theme this year is – Promoting the Participation of Persons with Disabilities and their leadership: Taking Action on the 2030 Development Agenda.

3. Navy Day celebrated to mark Indian Navy's attack on Karachi harbour on December 4, 1971

- ✚ Indian Navy Day is celebrated on December 4 in commemoration of Operation Trident, the attack launched by the Indian Navy on Karachi harbour during 1971's Indo-Pakistan war.
- ✚ It was for the first time that an anti-ship missile was used in the operation.
- ✚ The operation was conducted on the night of December 4-5 and it inflicted heavy damage on Pakistani vessels. India did not suffer any loss during the operation.

4. International Volunteer Day: 5 December

- ✚ The International Volunteer Day (IVD) is observed across the world on 5 December every year.
- ✚ This year theme is "Volunteer for an inclusive future".
- ✚ This year's theme highlighting Sustainable Development Goal 10 (SDG 10) and the pursuit of equality including inclusion through volunteerism.

5. World Soil Day: 5 December

- ✚ World Soil Day is celebrated annually on the 5th of December at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). This year, by addressing the increasing challenges of soil management, the FAO campaign "Stop soil erosion, Save our future" aims to raise awareness of the importance of sustaining healthy ecosystems and human well-being.
- ✚ By encouraging people around the world to engage in proactively improving soil health, the campaign also aims to raise the profile of healthy soil.
- ✚ The International Union of Soil Sciences (IUSS), in 2002, adopted a resolution proposing the 5th of December as World Soil Day to celebrate the importance of soil as a critical component of the natural system and as a vital contributor to human well-being.

6. Armed Forces Flag Day: 7 December

- ✚ Armed Forces Flag Day is observed on 7th of December every year across the country to honour the martyrs and Armed Forces personnel, who safeguard the mother land. The day provides an opportunity to express gratitude to the nation towards forces guarding the borders and their families.
- ✚ The fund collected on this day is used for the welfare of the serving personnel and ex-servicemen. The day reminds that the welfare of the soldiers and their families is the responsibility of the entire nation.
- ✚ Chief of the Army Staff: General Bipin Rawat

7. SAARC Charter Day celebrated on December 8

- ✚ On 8th of December in 1985, the leader of the Seven South Asian Countries (means Maldives, India, Bhutan, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladeshi and Sri Lanka) had signed the contract (means charter) in order to set up the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).
- ✚ SAARC was joined by the Afghanistan as a Member in the month of April, 2007. Accordingly, 8th December is being celebrated as SAARC Charter Day.

8. International Civil Aviation Day is observed on 7 December

- ✚ International Civil Aviation Day is observed on 7 December 2019. It is celebrated every year. The day aims to celebrate the unique role of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) in helping States to cooperate and realize a truly global rapid transit network at the service of all mankind.
- ✚ The Day aims to create awareness about the importance of international civil aviation to the social and economic development of States.

9. International Anti-Corruption Day: 9 December

- ✚ The United Nations' (UN) International Anti-Corruption Day has been observed annually, on 9 December.
- ✚ The day aims to raise public awareness of corruption and what people can do to fight it. This year International Anti-Corruption Day theme is "United Against Corruption".

10. National Energy Conservation Week is being celebrated all over India from December 14 to December 20.

- ✚ National Energy Conservation Week is celebrated all over India from December 14 to December 20. Various Government enterprises and Public Sector Undertakings celebrate the week by organizing energy conservation message-oriented activities.
- ✚ The Energy Conservation Day is celebrated every year on December 14 since 1991. Energy Conservation Day is an initiative of Bureau of Energy Efficiency. The objective of the day is to demonstrate achievements of government in saving energy and conservation.
- ✚ On the day, National Energy Conservation awards are distributed to industries that play major role in conserving energy.

11. Human Rights Day: 10 December

- ✚ Human Rights Day is observed every year on 10 December. This Day came into existence on December 10, 1948, when the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the United Nations.
- ✚ This day is observed every year across the world, as it empowers us all. The day also acknowledges the advocates and defenders of human rights around the world.
- ✚ This year it will be the 71st anniversary of Universal Declaration of Human Rights. With the theme “Youth Standing Up for Human Rights”, the aim is to celebrate the potential of youth as constructive agents of change, amplify their voices and engage a broad range of global audiences in the promotion and protection of right

12. International Mountain Day observed on December 11; theme: ‘Mountains Matter for Youth’

- ✚ International Mountain Day is held every year on 11 December globally. This day was established by the UN General Assembly in 2003 to encourage sustainable development in mountains.
- ✚ The theme for 2019 IMD is “Mountains Matter for Youth”. International Mountain Day is a chance to highlight that for rural youth, living in the mountains can be hard.
- ✚ This year, youth will take the lead and demand that mountains and mountain people become central in the national and international development agendas; receive more attention, investments and tailored research.

13. UNICEF Day observed on December 11, 2019

- ✚ On December 11, 2019, UNICEF (United Nations Children’s Fund) day was celebrated. UNICEF was created by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on December 11, 1946 as the United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund to provide emergency food ,nutrition, education to children in the country that had been devastated due to World War II.
- ✚ In 1950, UNICEF’s mandate was extended and it widen its mission & became a permanent part of the United Nations System in 1953. UNICEF has since then reached out to millions of children whose lives are endangered by poverty, inequality, among others.
- ✚ Annual celebration of Universal Children’s Day (November 20) is part of the work carried out by UNICEF to promote international togetherness and awareness among children worldwide.

14. International Universal Health Coverage Day observed on 12 December.

- ✚ International Universal Health Coverage Day is observed on 12 December every year. The day is observed globally to highlight the importance of Universal Health Coverage (UHC) for strong and resilient health systems.
- ✚ The day reminds that every person, despite who they are or where they live, should be able to get the quality health care they need without facing financial hardship.
- ✚ The theme of the International Universal Health Coverage Day is to 'Keep the promise'.
- ✚ On 12 December 2012, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) passed the resolution on global health and accelerated the progress toward Universal Health Coverage (UHC).

15. 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.

16. 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.

17. 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.

18. 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.

19. National Farmers Day celebrated on 23rd December.

- India celebrates National Farmers Day on 23rd December to commemorate the birth anniversary of the 5th Prime Minister of India, Choudhary Charan Singh. He was a farmer's leader and he had introduced many policies to improve the lives of the Indian farmers. The day is being observed since 2001.
- Kisan Diwas is being celebrated in several parts of the country in order to promote importance of farmers in the society. It also aims at establishing the fact that overall social and economic development of the country depends on the farmers. The day is widely celebrated in states such as UP, Haryana, Punjab and MP.
- Choudhary Charan Singh served as the Prime Minister of India between 28 July 1979 and 14 January 1980. He is often referred to as the 'champion of India's peasants'.

20. National Consumer Day observed on 24 December.

- ✚ The objective is to highlight the importance of the consumer movement and the need to make every consumer more aware of his or her rights and responsibilities. The theme of this year is “alternate consumer grievance/dispute redressal”. On this day the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 was enacted.
- ✚ The Act aims to provide consumers with effective safeguards against different types of exploitation, such as defective goods, deficiency in services and unfair trade practices.
- ✚ Parliament gave its nod to the landmark Consumer Protection Bill, 2019 which aims to protect the rights of consumers by establishing authorities for timely and effective administration and settlement of consumers dispute, this year.
- ✚ The new Act has replaced the more than three decades old Consumer Protection Act, 1986. The CCPA would make interventions to prevent consumer detriment arising from unfair trade practices. The agency can also initiate class action, including enforcing recall, refund and return of products

21. India pays homage to Shaheed Udham Singh on his 120th birth anniversary.

- ✚ India pays homage to the great revolutionary, Shaheed Udham Singh on his 120th birth anniversary. He was born on this day in 1899 in the Sangrur district of Punjab.
- ✚ Udham Singh was present in the Jallianwala Bagh Amritsar on the fateful Baisakhi Day of 13 April 1919. He avenged the massacre by killing General O Dwyer in March 1940 and hanged by the British in London.
- ✚ Vaisakhi known as Baisakhi, Vaishakhi is a historical and religious festival in Hinduism and Sikhism. It is celebrated on 13 or 14 April every year.

Sports

1. GS Lakshmi has become the first woman match referee to oversee a Men ODI

- ✚ Former India cricketer GS Lakshmi has become the first woman match referee to oversee a men's One Day International (ODI). She officiated the opening match of the third series of the World Cup League 2 in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).
- ✚ Lakshmi will oversee the match between the UAE and the US at the Sharjah Cricket Stadium.
- ✚ This is the second significant achievement for Lakshmi in 2019. The first achievement of Lakshmi was her appointment as the first woman onto the ICC International Panel of Match Referees in May. Lakshmi, 51, was first officiated as a match referee in domestic women's cricket matches in 2008-09. She has now overseen 16 men's T20 Internationals, 3 women's ODI matches, and seven women's T20 Internationals.

2. Russia banned for four years including 2020 Olympics and 2022 World Cup

- ✚ Wada's executive committee made the unanimous decision to impose the ban on Russia in a meeting in Lausanne, Switzerland. It comes after Russia's Anti Doping Agency (Rusada) was declared non-compliant for manipulating laboratory data handed over to investigators in January 2019.
- ✚ Russia has been handed a four-year ban from all major sporting events by the World Anti-Doping Agency (Wada). It means the Russia flag and anthem will not be allowed at events such as the Tokyo 2020 Olympics and Paralympics and football's 2022 World Cup in Qatar.
- ✚ But athletes who can prove they are untainted by the doping scandal will be able to compete under a neutral flag. Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev said the ban was part of "chronic anti-Russian hysteria".

3. Wasim Jaffer, from Maharashtra becomes the first Indian Cricketer to play 150 Ranji Matches.

- ✚ Wasim Jaffer, (41) from Mumbai, Maharashtra and former Indian Cricketer becomes the first Indian to play 150 Ranji Matches.
- ✚ Jaffer is only 853 runs away from completing 20,000 runs in 150 matches, followed by Devendra Bundela, Madhya Pradesh and Amol Muzumdar, Maharashtra who have played in 145 and 136 matches respectively.
- ✚ Jaffer played his 150th Ranji Game for Vidarbha against Andhra Pradesh (AP) the match was held in Devineni Venkata Ramana Praneetha Ground, Northern side of ACA-KDCA (Andhra Cricket Association–Krishna District Cricket Association) Ground in AP.

4. FICCI India selects Hockey player Rani rampal & shooter Saurabh chaudhary as ‘Sportsperson of the year 2019’.

- ✚ Indian women’s hockey team captain Rani Rampal (25) and Asian Games gold medalist shooter Saurabh Chaudhary (17) were honored with the ‘Sports Person of the Year 2019’ award at the FICCI India Sports Awards-2019 held at FICCI Federation House in New Delhi.
- ✚ The awards were decided by a jury led by Mukul Mudgal, Retired Indian Judge, Delhi High Court (HC), and Chief Justice (CJ) of Punjab and Haryana High Court.
- ✚ Odisha’s Sports Minister Tusharkanti Behera and Sports Secretary Vishal Kumar Dev presented the awards to the winners at the ceremony, which was jointly organized by FIT India, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports & FICCI.

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. 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).

8. 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.

9. Pat Cummins becomes most expensive overseas IPL player.

- ✦ The Australian pacer Pat Cummins, with a base price of Rs.2 crore, became the most expensive overseas player in Indian Premier League (IPL) as he was sold to Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) for a whopping Rs.15.50 crore (\$2.2 million).
- ✦ Kolkata Knight Riders shelled out Rs.15.5 crore, nearly 43% of their purse, for the New South Welshman at the auction for IPL 2020, the 12th edition of Indian Premier League tournament.
- ✦ The 26-year-old is currently the number one ranked Test bowler in the world. He has previously played for Delhi Capitals or Delhi Daredevils (as they were known then) in 2017 edition and Kolkata Knight Riders in the 2014 edition.

10. MS Dhoni named captain of CA's ODI team of the decade.

- ✦ Former India skipper and wicket-keeper batsman MS Dhoni been named captain of Cricket Australia's (CA) ODI team of the decade and the line-up features three Indian players.
- ✦ Apart from Dhoni, Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma have made the cut in CA's team.
- ✦ CA's ODI team of the decade: Rohit Sharma, Hashim Amla, Virat Kohli, AB de Villiers, Shakib Al Hasan, Jos Buttler, MS Dhoni (c), Mitchell Starc, Trent Boult, Lasith Malinga, Rashid Khan.

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Books And Authors

1. 'The Vault of Vishnu', by author Ashwin Sanghi, to release in January 2020

- ✦ Bestselling author Ashwin Sanghi will come out with his next book, "The Vault of Vishnu", on January 23, 2020, announced publishing house Westland.
- ✦ The book, which will be the sixth installment of the author's famous mythological 'Bharat series', will be released at the upcoming Jaipur Literature festival (JLF).
- ✦ "'The Vault of Vishnu' is no different, just one difference that almost one half of the story is set in a land that I was not too familiar with -- China.

2. Abanindranath Tagore's Book 'Nalak', translated to English by Urbi Bhaduri.

- ✦ Abanindranath Tagore's Book 'Nalak' featuring the journey of life of Gautama Buddha, was translated to English by Urbi Bhaduri, and was published by Niyogi Books. The English translation of the book has no chapters and has been featured in pen and ink style including a theme inspired by Buddhist tankha paintings.
- ✦ Rabindranath Tagore's nephew, Abanindranath Tagore was born in Kolkata, West Bengal and was a famous artist of India well known for his painting and writing, he was also the principal innovator of the Bengal school of art.
- ✦ Some of his famous works in Bengali Children's literature were Rajkahini, Budo Angla, Nalak, and Khirer Putul.

3. Urdu author Manto's Shikari Auratein translated to English by Saba Mahmood Bashir.

- ✚ Urdu author, Saadat Hasan Manto's book Shikari Auratein was translated to English by Indian author Saba Mahmood Bashir as 'Women of Prey (Shikari Auratein): Stories' published by Speaking Tiger. The book was originally published in the year 1955. Manto was born in Punjab, India.
- ✚ The new book contains hilarious short stories and two sketches that bring together the different side of Manto, some of his other short stories include, Toba Tek Singh, Kaali Shalwar Boo and Khol Do.

4. 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.

5. 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.

6. 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 blind readers.
- ✚ It is expected to benefit millions of blind students of the country by providing motivation and mental strength.

7. S Gurumurthy releases book titled Politics of Opportunism in New Delhi.

- ✚ Political Analyst S Gurumurthy released a book titled Politics of Opportunism at a function in New Delhi. The book written by R P N Singh throws light on the subject related to the rise of regional parties and Centre -States relation.
- ✚ RNP Singh is a former officer of the Intelligence Bureau, Government of India. He has also earned the coveted Presidents Police Medal, Indian Police Medal, the Sukriti and Kautilya awards for his distinguished services.

Awards

1. New Zealand win Christopher Martin-Jenkins Spirit of Cricket award for 2019

- ✚ New Zealand cricket team was awarded the Christopher Martin-Jenkins Spirit of Cricket award for 2019. The Kane Williamson-led team's on and off-field display during the ICC Men's Cricket World

Cup final at Lord's has earned them the award. New Zealand gained praise for their humility after losing the premier tournament.

- ✚ The award, which was created in 2013, was the brainchild of the MCC and the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). It was created in memory of Martin-Jenkins, the former MCC president and BBC Test Match Special commentator, to honour his longstanding passion and desire to see the game played in the right spirit.
- ✚ Williamson was presented with the award during the drawn second Test between his team and England. Kumar Sangakkara, the president of the Marylebone Cricket Club, one of the creators of the award, said New Zealand are worthy winners of the award.

2. VP Naidu presents Uttar Pradesh with National Award for Excellence for rehabilitation of persons with disabilities

- ✚ Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment conferred Uttar Pradesh with the National Award of Excellence, which was given by Vice president M Venkaiah Naidu, for doing a commendable job in the field of rehabilitation of persons with disabilities (Divyangjan).
- ✚ The award was received by Uttar Pradesh Additional Chief Secretary (Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities) Mahesh Kumar Gupta on behalf of the state government. Besides, Shabina Saifi (Lucknow), Vidisha (Ghaziabad), Seema Tiwari (Jhansi) and Priyanka Devi (Lucknow) received national awards in different categories.

3. Priyanka Chopra honoured with UNICEF's Danny Kaye Humanitarian Award

- ✚ Priyanka Chopra has been awarded the Danny Kaye Humanitarian Award from UNICEF. Bollywood actress Priyanka Chopra is quite active not only in the entertainment and fashion world but also in social work. The award was announced in June 2019 and Priyanka was nominated for the award by the United Nations Children's Fund.
- ✚ Priyanka Chopra has been associated with UNICEF for the past 15 years as a Goodwill Ambassador. Now she has been awarded UNICEF's 'Danny Kaye Humanitarian Award' for her work. She was awarded this honor in the presence of many eminent personalities at the Snowflake Ball in New York.

4. Former Finance Minister Arun Jaitley conferred with ET Lifetime Achievement Award

- ✚ Former Finance Minister Arun Jaitley was conferred posthumously the Lifetime Achievement award for Public Service at the Economic Times Award 2019. Former Finance Minister Arun Jaitley was conferred posthumously the Lifetime Achievement award for Public Service at the Economic Times Award 2019.
- ✚ The second thing that Jaitley held high was ethics, she said here while receiving the ET award.

5. Odisha State government honoured with the 2019 World Habitat Award.

- ✚ Odisha State government was honoured with the 2019 World Habitat Award. The award recognized the State's ambitious project Jaga Mission. The award was conferred by the World Habitat, a UK based organization, in association with the United Nations (UN)-Habitat. The programme has set a global benchmark to empower the urban poor.
- ✚ The World Habitat Award was established in 1985. The award recognizes and promotes good habitat practices. The first awards were presented in 1986 in London by HRH the Prince of Wales and the Dr. Arcot Ramachandran, UN-HABITAT Executive Director.
- ✚ The awards were initiated as World Habitat's contribution to the United Nations International Year of Shelter for the Homeless in 1987.

6. Gurgaon-based startup wins 'Space Oscar' award.

- ✚ The Gurugram-based startup blue Sky Analytics has created an application called 'Zuri' that won the Copernicus Masters Award also called Space Oscars, under the Social Entrepreneurship category.
- ✚ The award was given by the Earth observation programme managed by the European Commission (EU) in partnership with the European Space Agency (ESA).

- ✚ The application uses satellite data to provide improved monitoring, supply chain and pricing analysis as well as the allocation of crop waste to be used as raw materials in other industries.

7. Deepika Padukone honoured with Crystal Award 2020 for Raising Mental Health Awareness.

- ✚ World Economic Forum's (WEF) 26th Annual Crystal Awards 2020 announced its winners to celebrate the enduring contributions of exceptional artists to the society. The winners will be honoured in the World Economic Forum at its 50th Annual Meeting 2020 to be held on 20th January in Davos-Klosters, Switzerland.

Winners of 26th Annual Crystal Award 2020 are as follows:

1. Deepika Padukone, India, for her leadership in raising mental health awareness
2. Theaster Gates, United States (US), for his leadership in creating sustainable communities
3. Jin Xing, China, for her leadership in shaping inclusive cultural norms
4. Lynette Wallworth, Australia, for her leadership in creating inclusive narratives

8. 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.

9. 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.

10. 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

11. 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.

12. 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.

13. Aditya became 1st child from Kerala to receive Bharat Award for bravery.

- ✚ Bharat award for bravery was announced. Aditya K. of Ramanattukara, Kozhikode, Kerala became the first child from the State to receive the highest honour award for bravery, the Bharat award. He was awarded for saving 20 people from a burning bus on the move.
- ✚ The awards will be presented by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi at the Republic Day event in New Delhi on January
- ✚ The national bravery award is given by the Indian Council for Child Welfare (ICCW) for the brave acts done by children neglecting their own safety. 1 Bharat Award, 5 special awards, and 15 general awards are announced annually by ICCW.

Foot Notes:

About Kerala

Chief Minister: Pinarayi Vijayan.

Governor: Arif Mohammad Khan.

Capital: Thiruvananthapuram.

14. Major Anoop Mishra awarded Army Design Bureau Excellence Award.

- ✚ Indian Army Chief Gen. Bipin Rawat felicitated Major Anoop Mishra with prestigious Army Design Bureau (ADB) Excellence Award for indigenously developing 'Sarvatra Kavach', a bulletproof jacket that can provide protection against various ammunition including that from sniper steel bullets.
- ✚ Maj. Anoop is presently posted as Instructor at College of Military Engineering, Pune and was among the four awardees felicitated by Gen. Rawat.
- ✚ The awards were conferred at Army Technology Seminar (ARTECH) held on 23 December 2019 at Manekshaw Centre, New Delhi. It was organized by Army Design Bureau (ADB), Indian Army jointly with Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and Society of Indian Defence Manufacturers (SIDM).

Obituaries

1. Shelley Morrison, 'Will and Grace' actor, dies aged 83.

- ✚ Shelley Morrison, best known for her role as maid Rosario Salazar in the US comedy Will and Grace, has died at the age of 83 from heart failure following a short illness.
- ✚ Born to Sephardic Jewish parents who emigrated to the US from Spain, Morrison appeared in 68 episodes of the pioneering LGBT comedy between 1999 and 2006.

2. Veteran journalist Bhaskar Menon passes away

- ✚ Bhaskar Menon, Veteran Journalist in the Press Trust of India (PTI) passes away.
- ✚ He was the Regional Manager in the south division of the PTI.

- ✚ He has also handled many crucial news like the assassination of former Prime Minister (PM) of India, Rajiv Gandhi in the year 1991.

3. Former England fast bowler Bob Willis (90 Tests, 325 wickets) dies at the age of 70

- ✚ Former England cricket captain and 1981 Ashes hero Bob Willis has died aged 70 after a short illness, his family said in a statement on Wednesday.
- ✚ The fast-bowler played in 90 Tests and 64 one-day internationals for England over more than a decade after his debut in 1971, retiring in 1984.
- ✚ Willis, who finished his test career with 325 wickets despite bowling with pain from 1975 after surgery on both knees, worked for the broadcaster as a cricket expert after his retirement.

4. Inventor of the bar code, George Laurer passed away at the age of 94.

- ✚ The inventor of Universal Product Code (UPC) or Barcode, George Joseph Laurer, passed away at the age of 94 due to old age ailments in Wendell, North Carolina in the US (United States).
- ✚ His barcode invention at IBM (International Business Machines) corporation, transformed the retail industries as well as other industries across the world.
- ✚ Born in September 23, 1925 in New York, US, Laurer worked as an electrical engineer with IBM in North Carolina's research triangle park in the early 1970s. It is where he founded the UPC or bar code.

5. Tara Sinha, the first woman to set up a national advertising agency in India passed away.

- ✚ **Tara Sinha**, the founder of ad agencies **Clarion and Tara Sinha Associates**, passed away Mumbai, Maharashtra. She was 88 years old. She was the **first woman to set up a national advertising agency** in India.
- ✚ Sinha completed the advertising diploma in the early 1950s from London. She joined DJ Keymer, Kolkata. In 1955, Sinha and others launched Clarion. She became its first director at 23.

6. Veteran Telugu actor, writer Gollapudi Maruti Rao dies at 80.

- ✚ Renowned Telugu actor and writer Gollapudi Maruti Rao, who enthralled people with his writings and acting for several decades, passed away.
- ✚ He was 80. Rao, who acted in around 250 films in about four decades, passed away in Chennai following a cardiac arrest, his family members, told reporters.

7. 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.

8. 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.

9. 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 Garam Hava won the Best Feature Film at the 21st National Film Awards. The film was also critically acclaimed.

10. 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.

11. Delhi's oldest voter Bachan Singh dies at 111.

- ✚ Bachan Singh, the oldest voter in Delhi who hogged headlines in May when he voted in the Lok Sabha election, passed away, his family said. He was 111.
- ✚ Singh died around 6.30 am. He had not been eating properly for the past three to four days, his grandson Sonu Singh said. Bachan Singh has never missed out on voting in an election since 1951, his youngest son, Jasbeer Singh, 63, said.
- ✚ Delhi Chief Electoral Officer Ranbir Singh had felicitated Bachan Singh and invited him to vote in the general election.

12. Renowned Hindi author Ganga Prasad Vimal dies at 80.

- ✚ Renowned Hindi author Ganga Prasad Vimal and his two family members were killed in a road accident in southern Sri Lanka.
- ✚ The 80-year-old author was travelling with his family in a van, which crashed into a container truck from behind on the Southern Expressway in the Kurundugahahathapma area.
- ✚ He wrote more than one dozen poetry collections, short story collections and novels. His last novel, Manushkhor, was published in 2013. He received several Hindi literary awards.

13. England's Football World Cup winner Martin Peters passes away.

- ✚ Former West Ham and Tottenham midfielder Martin Peters, who scored England's second goal in the 1966 World Cup final against West Germany, passed away.
- ✚ He joined West Ham in 1959 as a 15-year-old, made his debut in 1962 and was a key player in the side who won the 1965 Cup Winners Cup final at Wembley.

14. 'Colours of the Mountain' author Da Chen passes away.

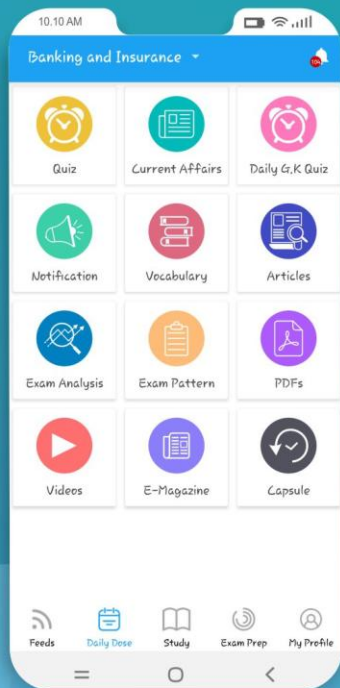
- ✚ China's brilliant storyteller, Da Chen, who created the critically acclaimed memoir “Colours of the Mountain” passed away recently.
- ✚ In “Colours of the Mountain” he recounted the abuses he and his family suffered during the latter years of the country's Cultural Revolution. The book was published in seven languages. His last book which was published recently was “Girl Under a Red Moon”.

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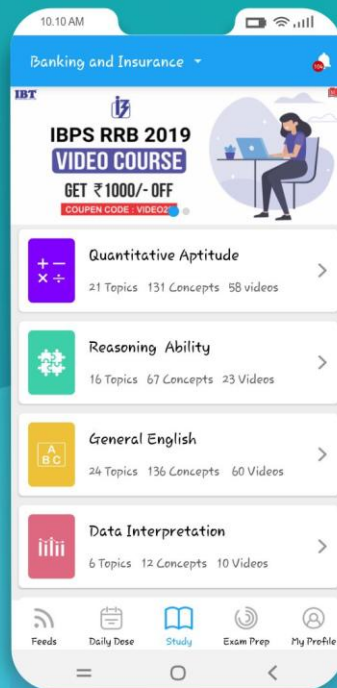
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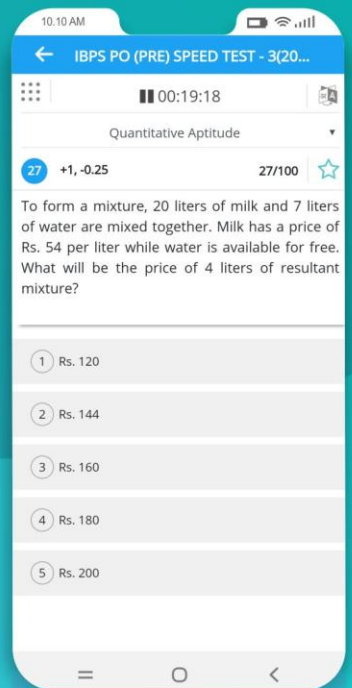
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