

Monthly G.K Capsule

January - 2020

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National News

1. Captain Tania Shergill to be the first woman parade adjutant for the Republic Day parade.

- ✚ Captain Tania Shergill has been selected to be the first woman parade adjutant for the Republic Day parade. The parade adjutant is responsible for the parade. In the 2019 Republic Day parade, Captain Bhavna Kasturi was the first woman officer to lead an all-men contingent.
- ✚ Captain Tania Shergill is an officer with the Army's Corps of Signals. She was commissioned in March 2017 from the Officer Training Academy, Chennai.
- ✚ She is an electronics and communications graduate. Her father, grandfather and great-grandfather have also served in the Indian Army.

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

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

3. Hyderabad Scientist Dr.Saha elected as IUPAC bureau member.

- ✚ Dr.Bipul Bihari Saha of Hyderabad, India has been elected as a bureau member of the IUPAC(International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry) for the period 2020-23.Saha is the only second Indian after "Bharat Ratna" Professor Chintamani Nagesa Ramachandra Rao (CNR Rao),to be elected(1979) for this position in a century.
- ✚ IUPAC is the largest global organization of Chemistry professionals and comprises of 12 Committees and 8 Divisions.The Bureau Member are elected considering his/her scientific contribution in the field of Chemistry,his leadership qualities etc.,
- ✚ Saha is a Chief Director of R&D (Research and Development) L.R Research Laboratories is a wholly-owned subsidiary of NACL(Nagarjuna Agrichem Limited) Industries Limited, Hyderabad.Saha has been closely associated with the IUPAC as the Executive Committee Member of "IUPAC Committee on Chemistry and Industry"(First Indian to hold this position),National Representative of India in "IUPAC Division of Chemistry and Environment" and member of "IUPAC Inter-Divisional Committee on Green Chemistry for Sustainable Development".

4. 50th World Economic Forum to be held in Switzerland; Union Minister Piyush Goyal to lead Indian delegation.

- ✚ The four day 50th World Economic Forum at Davos in Switzerland will begin on 21 January. 53 heads of state or government from 117 countries are participating in the event.
- ✚ The theme of this year's WEF is 'Stakeholders for a Cohesive and Sustainable World'. Union Minister for Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal will lead the Indian delegation.
- ✚ Among other highlights of the forum is Indian actress Deepika Padukone, who will be given a WEF crystal award for her work on mental health while the US rapper William Adams will be talking about ending gun violence.

5. 50th Annual Meeting of World Economic Forum begins in Davos.

- ✚ The 50th Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum, a congregation of rich and powerful from across the world, opens in Davos, Switzerland.

- ✚ Commerce and Industry Minister will lead the Indian delegation to the WEF. Besides, over 100 CEOs, political leaders including Union Ministers and Chief Ministers will take part in the 50th edition of the annual event.
- ✚ The welcome message was followed by the annual crystal awards and this year's recipients included celebrity film star Deepika Padukone.

6. First digital exhibition on Indian Heritage inaugurated in New Delhi.

- ✚ State of Culture and Tourism minister launched a month long exhibition on Indian Heritage in New Delhi. The exhibition was launched in digital space and will stay online till February 15, 2020.
- ✚ This exhibition is first of its kind in the country. The visitors of the exhibition will find architectural and conjectural reconstructions, recreations of socio-cultural traditions and life of Hampi and also many more murals.
- ✚ Through this, the exhibition will take heritage to wider population. It has overcome the barrier that heritage was restricted only to research. When the reach of significance of heritage increases, accountability of citizens increases. This will help to protect age old structures and monuments in a better way.

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

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

8. J&K abolishes toll tax from New Year, to incur annual loss of Rs 1,500 crore.

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

9. India finish 2019 as number one shooting nation in world.

- ✚ According to International Shooting Sport Federation's (ISSF), With its sparkling show through 2019, India finished the year as the top shooting nation in the world, leaving behind Olympic heavyweights China and the USA.
- ✚ In terms of overall medals, the tally stood at 21 gold, six silver and three bronze as India topped all the Rifle-Pistol World Cups and Finals in an unforgettable year.
- ✚ While India leads the standings with 30 medals overall, China is second with 11 gold, 15 silver and 18 bronze for a total of 44 podium finishes. The USA is placed third with 15 medals including six gold six silver and three bronze

10. Budget to be presented on Feb 1; Economic Survey on Jan 31.

- ✚ Union Budget will be presented on 1st of next month and the Economic Survey on 31st January. The Budget Session of Parliament will begin on the 31st of this month.
- ✚ The first Union budget of independent India was presented by R. K. Shanmukham Chetty on 26 November 1947.
- ✚ Until 2016, the budget of the Indian Railways was presented separately to Parliament and dealt with separately.

11. Uttarakhand becomes first state to implement agricultural land leasing policy.

- ✚ Uttarakhand has become the first state in the country where the government has made a policy to lease agricultural land. In lieu of giving land on a 30-year lease, the concerned farmer will get the rent for the land.
- ✚ In the hilly areas of the state, the obstacles of leasing land for farming, agriculture, horticulture, herbs, off-season vegetables, milk production, tea plantation, fruit hybridization and solar energy has been removed with this step.
- ✚ After getting approval from the Raj Bhavan, the state government has issued its notification. Now any institution, company, firm or NGO can take farm land on lease in villages, leasing a maximum of 30 acres of land on lease for 30 years.

12. Hyderabad becomes most dynamic city in the world, tops JLL City Momentum Index 2020.

- ✚ Hyderabad secured the first place in the list of the world's most dynamic cities. Jones Lang Lasalle (JLL) has recently released the city momentum index that comprised of 129 cities across the world. JLL evaluated 129 cities and selected Hyderabad as the world's most dynamic city.
- ✚ Top-20 dynamic cities in the world: Hyderabad, Bangalore, Ho Chi Minh City, Nairobi, Chennai, Delhi, Ha Noi, Manila, Silicon Valley, Schengen, Chongqing, Pune, Wuhan, Dubai, Hangzhou, Calcutta, Shanghai, Riyadh, Austin, Mumbai.
- ✚ There are seven Indian cities are present in the top-20 cities. Bangalore ranked second in this index while Chennai secured fifth and Delhi got the sixth position.

13. Jharia most polluted place in India in 2018, Greenpeace report.

- ✚ Jharia, known worldwide for its underground coal fires, continued to be the most polluted city in the country in 2018, according to Airpocalypse-IV, an annual report released by Greenpeace India.
- ✚ The report, based on analysis of particulate matter data across 287 cities, said Delhi was 10th most polluted city in 2018, an improvement by two ranks as compared to 2017.
- ✚ Lunglei in Mizoram was the least polluted city in India, followed by Meghalaya's Dowki, according to the report. Six of the top-10 polluted cities are in Uttar Pradesh: Noida, Ghaziabad, Bareilly, Allahabad, Moradabad and Firozabad.

14. Government of Maharashtra makes the reading of Preamble mandatory in Maharashtra schools.

- ✚ Maharashtra Government has made the reading of the Preamble of the Constitution mandatory for the Maharashtra schools.
- ✚ The reading will be done after prayer in all primary and secondary schools in Maharashtra.

15. India ranked 51st in the 2019 Democracy Index.

- ✚ India ranked 51st in the Democracy Index 2019. It has dropped 10 places in the Democracy Index's global ranking. The survey described the erosion of civil liberties in India as the primary cause of democratic regression.
- ✚ The index referred to the changes in Jammu & Kashmir and the controversial implementation of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Assam as the democratic regression.
- ✚ The index is based on the functioning of government, electoral process and pluralism, civil liberties, political participation, and political culture.

16. Cabinet gives approval to EC to enter into MoU with Election Commissions of Tunisia and Papua New Guinea.

- ✚ The Cabinet gave approval to the Election Commission of India to enter into MoU with the Independent High Authority for Elections of Tunisia and the Papua New Guinea Election Commission.
- ✚ The MoU has been signed for elections for cooperation in the field of electoral management and administration.

- ✚ The Cabinet also gave its nod for the four agreements between India and Brazil in the field of oil and natural gas, Geology and Mineral Resources, mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters and cooperation in the field of early childhood care.

17. Ghana will replicate the Ujjwala model of LPG connection under the guidance of India.

- ✚ Indian Oil has signed a MoU with the National Petroleum Authority (NPA) of Ghana for providing its assistance and technical expertise in the implementation of Ghana's National LPG Promotion Policy.
- ✚ LPG coverage in Ghana is 23%. Citizens of Ghana spend hours together at petrol stations to refill their cylinders. Ghana is to fix the issues around LPG with India's support. Ghana inspired by India's bottling plants of LPG is to implement its replica aiming to cover 50% of population in the initial stage.
- ✚ India has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Ghana to provide assistance in Ghana's National LPG Promotion Policy. The MoU will strengthen cooperation between the countries and will increase the support offered to National Petroleum Authority of Ghana by India.

18. Uttar Pradesh government implements 'Mukhyamantri Krishak Durghatna Kalyan Yojana' for the farmers in the state.

- ✚ Uttar Pradesh government has implemented 'Mukhyamantri Krishak Durghatna Kalyan Yojana' for the farmers in the state. The assistance of Rs 5 lakh will be provided to the farmers' family in case of farmer's death or disabled due to the accident. The age limit of the scheme is between 18 to 70 years.
- ✚ This scheme is fully funded by the government of UP.
- ✚ Within 45 days, the beneficiaries will receive the amount under this scheme. UP government will launch a web portal for this scheme for its easy access.
- ✚ The amount will be adjusted for the person who are already receiving benefits from Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Bima Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana or any other schemes which are provided by the government.

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

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

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

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

21. NSO estimated India's GDP growth rate as 5 percent for the current fiscal.

- ✚ National Statistical Office (NSO) has estimated India's GDP growth rate for 2019-20 estimated at 5% on 7 January 2020. It has seen dipping to an 11-year low of 5% in the current fiscal. This is mainly due to poor showing by the manufacturing and construction sectors. The previous low economic growth was recorded at 3.1% in 2008-09.
- ✚ As per the first advance estimates of the national income released by NSO, the estimated growth of the Indian economy of 5% in 2019-20 as against 6.8% in the previous fiscal.

- ✚ The report also states that the output of the manufacturing sector is expected to decelerate to 2% in 2019-20 from 6.2% in the previous fiscal. The reduction was also witnessed in sectors like construction and electricity, agriculture, gas and water supply.

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

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

23. First edition of Krishi Manthan begins in Ahmedabad.

- ✚ In Gujarat, the first edition of Krishi Manthan- the largest Food, Agri-business and Rural Development Summit of Asia organized by Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad began.
- ✚ More than 1,500 delegates including students and academicians are participating in the two-day event organized by the Food and Agribusiness Committee of IIMA.
- ✚ The students along with working professionals from Food, Agriculture and allied sectors are getting benefited from the workshops during this summit.

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

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

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

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

26. Assam state zoo first to breed endangered Hargila.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

30. List of Nuclear Installations exchanged between India and Pakistan.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

35. Indian Railway announces one integrated Helpline number 139.

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

36. DMRC awards first civil contract for Tughlakabad Aerocity corridor.

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

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

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

38. Ritualistic festival 'Lai Haraoba' begins in Tripura.

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

39. UPSRTC launches women's special helpline Damini.

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

40. MP govt starts Mukhyamantri Karmachari Swasthya Bima Yojana.

- ✚ The Madhya Pradesh government has given its 12.55 lakh employees a new year bonanza by approving a health insurance scheme, 'Mukhyamantri Karmachari Swasthya Bima Yojana'.
- ✚ The scheme will be effective from April 1 and will make government employees and their families eligible for medical treatment worth Rs 5 lakh annually. For some critical diseases, the eligibility will be enhanced to Rs 10 lakh.
- ✚ All permanent and contractual employees, teachers, retired employees, home guards and others getting salary from contingency fund will reap the benefits of this scheme.

41. Uttar Pradesh first state to kickstart implementation of CAA.

- ✚ Uttar Pradesh is all set to become the first state in the country to start the exercise of shortlisting migrants from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan, eligible for citizenship under the new Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA).
- ✚ The exercise will also identify those who are living illegally in the state.
- ✚ All 75 district magistrates have been asked to track down migrants from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan who have settled here for decades, without citizenship.

42. NITI Aayog: List of high export potential medical devices created.

- ✚ The Government Think Tank Niti Aayog draws up list of medical devices that have high export potential. It has come up with 10 devices to provide priority subsidies. It includes surgical blades, orthopaedic implants, catheters, syringes and needles, X-ray machines, blood bags, MRI machines and CT scan.
- ✚ The devices included in the list are to be prioritized in order to boost their domestic manufacturing. Also, in order to boost their exports, GoI will create a framework to accelerate their standardization and certification.
- ✚ In December 2018, NITI Aayog announced that all medical devices will be brought under one regulatory regime. This will aid in boosting the exports as well as it will fasten the certification process

43. World's highest railway bridge to be built by 2021 December.

- ✚ The government has set a fresh deadline for the completion of the world's highest railway bridge that connects Kashmir to the rest of India by December 2021. It is the most challenging project in the post-independent history of the Indian Railways.
- ✚ The Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla rail link project is important in order to provide an alternative and reliable transportation system to Jammu and Kashmir.
- ✚ It will connect Kashmir Valley to the Indian Railways network. This project will provide seamless and hassle-free connectivity in Jammu and Kashmir.

44. Institutions at Gujarat Ayurved University to get status of Institution of National Importance.

- ✚ The Cabinet approved conferring the status of Institution of National Importance to a cluster of Ayurvedic institutions at Gujarat Ayurved University campus in Jamnagar.
- ✚ The elevation of the status of institution will provide it with the autonomy to upgrade the standard of Ayurveda education, frame various courses in Ayurveda as per national and international demand. It will help the institute to develop tertiary care in Ayurveda and to secure interdisciplinary collaborations to give a contemporary thrust to Ayurveda.
- ✚ The status of National Importance will boost the role and importance of Ayurveda in Public Health.

45. Government of India's UJALA & Street Lighting National Programme complete five successful years.

- ✚ UJALA and Street Lighting National Programme (SLNP) of the central government completed five successful years of illuminating the country. Over 36.13 crore LED bulbs have been distributed across the country through the UJALA initiative.
- ✚ This has resulted in an estimated energy savings of 46.92 billion kilowatt-hour per year. Unnat Jyoti by Affordable LEDs for All (UJALA) project brought the market transformation in the energy efficiency sector.
- ✚ More than 1.03 crore smart LED streetlights have been installed till date under the Street Lighting National Programme.

46. 'Advantage Maharashtra expo 2020' inaugurated in Aurangabad.

- ✚ Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray inaugurated the Advantage Maharashtra expo 2020 in Aurangabad.
- ✚ The four-day mega industrial exhibition has been organised by the Marathwada Association of Small Scale Industries and Agriculture (MASSIA).
- ✚ Growth of Marathwada industries in technology and innovation and the products produced and exported from the region will be showcased in this exhibition. Over 450 exhibitors from within the state as well as outside the state are participating in this exhibition.

47. President Kovind lays foundation stone to Lakshadweep's first Super Specialty Hospital at Kavaratti.

- ✚ President Ram Nath Kovind laid foundation stone to Lakshadweep's first Super Specialty Hospital at Kavaratti. President who is on two days visit to the union territory assured special focus for the development of Lakshadweep and directed Lakshadweep Administrator to give special attention for the completion of Super Specialty Hospital.
- ✚ Lakshadweep Administrator Dineshwar Sharma received the President at Agatti Airport. President received guard of honour from a joint group of 160 different forces.

48. 4th 'Buxa Bird Festival' started in West Bengal.

- ✚ The 4th edition of 'Buxa Bird Festival' has started in Buxa National Park in West Bengal's, district Alipurduar.
- ✚ More than 50 birdwatchers from pan India and abroad have registered in the festival.
- ✚ Over 300 rare species including the Sultan Tit, Greater Spotted Eagle and Great Hornbill visit the national park during this festival.

49. Indian High Commission organizes “Art Exhibition” in Bangladesh.

- ✚ The Indian High Commission has organized the “Art Exhibition” in Dhaka, Bangladesh.
- ✚ The “Art Exhibition” has been organized to commemorate the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.
- ✚ The art exhibition constituted unique photographs of Mahatma Gandhi from his initial days in South Africa to numerous movements he participated in India.

50. India Declared 5th Biggest Geopolitical Risk Of 2020.

- ✚ India under Narendra Modi is the fifth biggest geopolitical risk of 2020, said Eurasia Group, world’s leading political risk consultancy.
- ✚ Eurasia’s annual ‘Top 10 Risks’ of the year list is considered one of the foremost geopolitical indicators among global investors, multinational firms and various financial and business consultancies.
- ✚ The list that is topped by-elections in the US and followed by events and developments like the US-China technology tug of war on 5G as well as the trade war between Beijing and Washington.

51. "Pariksha Pe Charcha 2020", will be held at Talkatora Stadium on 20th Jan.

- ✚ Over 2000 students, parents and teachers will be participating from all over India in this event. The Human Resource Development Ministry in partnership with MyGov last month launched a ‘short essay’ competition for students of classes 9 to 12 for the third edition of Prime Minister’s Interaction with school students.
- ✚ The themes given this time for PPC 2020 are 'Gratitude is Great', 'Your future depends on your aspirations', 'Examining Exams', 'Our duties, you take' and 'Balance is Beneficial'.
- ✚ The first edition of Pariksha Pe Charcha was held on 16th February, 2018 and second on 29th of January last year.

52. Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy launched Amma Vodi Scheme in Chittoor.

- ✚ Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy launched Amma Vodi Scheme in Chittoor. It is one of the nine flagship programmes of the Andhra Government. The programmes are called Navratanalu. The scheme is first of its kind in the country.
- ✚ The scheme aims at benefitting school students studying in classes I to XII. It includes both public and private schools. Under the scheme, these students belonging to Below Poverty Line will get Rs 15,000 per annum.
- ✚ However, the guardian or mother of the child should ensure 75% attendance of the child.

53. Supreme Court: Access to Internet-a fundamental right.

- ✚ Supreme Court of India said that Right of access to internet is a fundamental right. The Court had asked the administration of Jammu and Kashmir to review the curbs on internet in a week.
- ✚ Lately the Indian Government had been using internet shut down as a tool to control protest in the country against the Citizenship Amendment Bill. It was predominant in the north eastern states.
- ✚ The bench pronounced that freedom of speech and expression and freedom to practice any business or trade over internet is constitutionally protected under Article 19 (1).

54. Railways: First Solar Power and other plans to Link J&K with rest of India.

- ✚ Indian Railways announced that it will source 1000 MW of solar power and 200 MW of wind power to zonal railways by 2021-22. Also, Kashmir is to be linked with the rest of India through railway network by December 2021.
- ✚ In order to implement the solar and wind power in Indian Railways, GoI has planned to install 500 MW of solar plants on the roof top of Railway buildings to meet non-traction loads.
- ✚ It has also planned to install another 500 MW of land-based solar plants whose energy will be used to meet both non-traction and traction load requirements.

55. Haryana, Karnataka and Kerala top State Energy Efficiency Index 2019.

- ✚ The Union Government has released the “State Energy Efficiency Index 2019”. The index was released during the ‘Review, Planning and Monitoring (RPM)’ meeting held in New Delhi.
- ✚ The index is developed by Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) along with Alliance for an Energy Efficient Economy (AEEE). The SEE Index 2019 traces the expansion and achievements of Energy Efficiency (EE) drives running in 36 states and union territories.
- ✚ The SEE Index 2019 constitutes quantitative, qualitative and outcome-based 97 indicators to check energy efficiency initiatives, programs and outcomes in five distinct areas: transport, industry, agriculture, buildings, municipalities, and DISCOMs. State Energy Efficiency Index 2019 has divided States/UTs into 4 groups on the basis of Total Primary Energy Supply (TPES) desired to meet the State’s/UT’s actual energy demand through electricity, coal, oil, gas, etc. across all the sectors. The 4 groups are: ‘Front Runner’, ‘Achiever’, ‘Contender’ and ‘Aspirant’.

56. Kolkata Port renamed as Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Port.

- ✚ The Kolkata Port has been renamed as Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Port. The Prime Minister Mr Narendra Modi announced this in Kolkata on the occasion of 150th-year celebrations of the Kolkata Port Trust.
- ✚ Mr Modi launched several Port led development projects worth Rs 600 cr rupees to mark the day.
- ✚ On the occasion the Prime Minister released a commemorative stamp on 150th years of the Kolkata Port Trust..

57. Centre promulgated Ordinance to amend coal mining laws.

- ✚ The Central government announced the promulgation of the ordinance for amendment in the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) (MMDR) Act, 1957 and the Coal Mines (Special Provisions) Act, 2015.
- ✚ Union Cabinet approved the promulgation of Mineral Laws (Amendment) Ordinance 2020. The ordinance aims to ease the auction of coal mines, allow Foreign direct investment (FDI) and enhance ease of doing business.
- ✚ The amendments Coal Mines (Special Provisions) Act, 2015 will offer unexplored and partially explored coal blocks for mining through prospecting license-cum-mining lease (PL-cum-ML).It will enable any India-registered company to invest in the coal mining sector and develop coal blocks. The companies must have prior experience of mining in India to bid for the blocks. It will allow FDI in the coal mining sector by removing the restrictions and eligibility criteria for participation.

58. Dhaka International Film Festival begins in Bangladesh.

- ✚ The 18th edition of the Dhaka International Film Festival (DIFF) began on 11 January 2020. The festival will be held from 11-19 January. The program was inaugurated by the Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr. AK Abdul Momen. The theme for the DIFF festival is Better Film, Better Audience, and Better Society.
- ✚ DIFF aims to create a better understanding of the films of the world in an atmosphere that appreciates film culture. The festival focuses to move towards excellence in the motion picture art and industry in Bangladesh.
- ✚ Rainbow Film Society is being organized the Dhaka International Film Festival since 1992.

59. Drone registration compulsory by January 31 to avoid legal action.

- ✚ The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has asked all the people possessing and flying drones to register their gadgets by January 31, 2020.
- ✚ Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) said in a public notice that if they violate the rules then appropriate action will be taken against them under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the Aircraft Act.
- ✚ The ministry said in a notice that it has come to the notice of the government that there are some drones and drone operators who do not comply with the Civil Aviation Requirements (CAR) standards. Drone registration started on January 14, 2020.

60. Yogi Adityanath govt implements police commissionerate system in Lucknow, Noida.

- ✚ The Uttar Pradesh government switched to the commissionerate system of policing for Lucknow and Noida, giving magisterial powers to the top cops in both cities.
- ✚ Lucknow and Noida will now have an additional director general level officer as police commissioner.
- ✚ The state government announced the names of the state's first police commissioners senior IPS officers Sujit Pandey for Lucknow and Alok Singh for Noida. The commissioners in both the districts will have magisterial powers.

61. Income Tax Department launched 24x7 control room.

- ✚ Income-Tax Department launched 24x7 control room to monitor black money and illegal inducements in poll-bound Delhi. This facility will also host a toll-free number (1800117574).
- ✚ People can inform the department about any activity of use of money power, illegal distribution of cash etc.
- ✚ Foot Notes:
- ✚ Chairman of the Central Board of Direct Taxes: Pramod Chandra

62. Japan Coast Guard Ship 'Echigo' arrived in Chennai.

- ✚ The Japan Coast Guard Ship 'Echigo' has arrived in Chennai on a five-day goodwill visit. It will be participating in the Annual Joint Exercise 'Sahyog-Kaijin' with the Indian Coast Guard off Chennai.
- ✚ This is the 19th such exercise being conducted between the two Coast Guards since 2000.
- ✚ Four Indian Coast Guard ships, their aircraft and a vessel from the Chennai-based National Institute of Ocean Technology - NIOT are participating in the exercise along with the Japanese vessel.

63. Retail inflation jumps to about 5-yr high of 7.35 pct in Dec 2019.

- ✚ Retail inflation rose to about five-and-half year high of 7.35 per cent in December 2019, surpassing the RBI's comfort level, mainly due to rise in prices of vegetables as onions. As per the data released by National Statistical Office (NSO), the spike in inflation in the vegetable segment was 60.5 percent during the month compared to December 2018.
- ✚ The overall retail inflation based on Consumer Price Index (CPI) was 2.11 per cent in December 2018 and 5.54 per cent in November 2019. The previous high in retail inflation was witnessed at 7.39 per cent in July 2014, the year the Narendra Modi-led Government assumed office for the first term.
- ✚ The Central Government has mandated the Reserve Bank of India to keep inflation in the range of four per cent with a margin of two per cent on the either side.

64. India, Bangladesh ink MoU for co-production of biopic on Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

- ✚ India and Bangladesh signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the co-production of a biopic on Bangladesh's founding father Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.
- ✚ The biopic will be directed by acclaimed filmmaker Shyam Benegal and will be released in March 2021 as part of centenary celebrations of Banga Bandhu. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is often called the father of Bengali nation.
- ✚ He served as the first President of Bangladesh and later as the Prime Minister of Bangladesh from 17 April 1971 until his assassination on 15 August 1975.

65. Fox 'jallikattu' organisers in Tamil Nadu warned of punishment.

- ✚ Forest Department officials in Salem, Tamil Nadu are gearing up to prevent an unusual jallikattu, one that uses foxes (Bengal Fox) instead of bulls.
- ✚ The "Wanga" breed of foxes is tied using ropes and chased across the streets by the villagers on 'Kaanum Pongal'. The villagers observe this practice as they believe the Wanga foxes bring good fortunes and copious rains.
- ✚ Another forest official said the "wanga" foxes are a rare breed and found in dense forest areas in the district.

66. Inscriptions confirm presence of two medieval monasteries at Moghalmari, West Bengal.

- ✚ Recently, a study of inscriptions on clay tablets excavated from Moghalmari have confirmed the presence of two monasteries.
- ✚ Moghalmari is a Buddhist monastic site of the early medieval period in West Bengal's Paschim Medinipur district.
- ✚ The inscriptions are in Sanskrit and the script is a transitional phase between later north Indian Brahmi and early Siddhamatrika.

67. Shri Dharmendra Pradhan to launch 'Saksham', conservation on mega campaign of PCRA on 16th January, 2020.

- ✚ 'Saksham', an annual one-month long, people-centric fuel conservation mega campaign of Petroleum Conservation Research Association (PCRA) under the aegis of Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas is going to be launched on 16th January by Minister of Petroleum & Natural Gas and Steel Shri Dharmendra Pradhan in a function to be held in Delhi.
- ✚ PCRA and Oil & Gas companies shall carry out various interactive programs during this month-long campaign. Activities like 'Saksham' Cycle Day, Cyclothons, Workshops for drivers of commercial vehicles, Seminars for housewives/cooks on adopting simple fuel saving measure, Nationwide campaign through Radio, TV, Digital Cinemas, Outdoor etc. are planned with an aim to reach the nook and corner of the country with the message of fuel conservation, Greener Environment and better Health.

68. Department of Industries and Commerce organized food processing summit in Ladakh.

- ✚ Department of Industries and Commerce, functioning under Ministry of Food Processing Industries organized food processing summit in Ladakh. The other stakeholders of the summit include Invest India and National Investment Promotion and Facilitation agency.
- ✚ The Summit was attended by food producers of Ladakh. It included producers of milk, barley, meat, organic vegetables, apples and apricots. The Ladakh Action Plan for Food Processing to promote food processing was presented at the summit.
- ✚ The summit focused on chain mapping of food processing and recommended strategies to integrate local population towards agriculture and food processing. It also focused primarily on Leh and Kargil regions.

69. Reliance Jio emerges as largest telecom with 36.9 cr users; Vodafone loses 36 mn customers.

- ✚ Reliance Jio has become the largest telecom player with 36.9 crore mobile subscribers 2019, according to the data published by telecom regulator Trai. Vodafone Idea reported a total mobile subscriber base of 33.62 crore and Bharti Airtel at 32.73 crore customers for November 2019.
- ✚ Mobile subscriber base, which dominates overall telecom connections, declined by 2.43 per cent to 115.43 crore in November from 118.34 crore in October with Vodafone Idea losing the highest number of subscribers.

70. 7th Conference of Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, India Region starts.

- ✚ The 7th Conference of Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) India Region started at the legislative assembly building in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh.
- ✚ Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla inaugurated the Conference in the presence of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.
- ✚ Around 100 Delegates of 15 state assemblies and representatives of some foreign countries have reached Lucknow to take part in the 7th Conference of CPA India Region. The main theme of the conference is 'ROLE OF LEGISLATORS'.

71. Historic Bru-Reang Refugee agreement signed; 34,000 displaced to settle in Tripura.

- ✚ Government of India, Bru-Reang representatives, Government of Tripura and Mizoram signed an agreement in New Delhi to end the refugee crisis of Bru-Reang community. Home Minister Amit Shah presided over the event.
- ✚ Under the agreement, around 34,000 Bru Refugees are to settle in Tripura. The Centre will offer their rehabilitation helps with an allocated budget of Rs 600 crores. With this, the refugees are now eligible to enjoy social welfare schemes of state and central governments.
- ✚ According to the agreement, the displaced families are to be provided with land of 40 by 30 square feet. The land is to be provided by the Tripura Government. The Centre will provide aid of Rs 1.5 lakhs to build their houses. The Centre will also provide fixed deposit of Rs 4 lakhs and Rs 5,000 cash aid per month and free ration for 2 years.

73. State of Art Tejas express train between Mumbai-Ahmedabad flagged off.

- ✚ The state of art- new Tejas Express train between Ahmedabad and Mumbai Central has been flagged off by Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani at Ahmedabad Railway Station. The train will have stoppages at Nadiad, Vadodara, Bharuch, Surat, Vapi and Borivali en-route to Mumbai Central.
- ✚ The first train under the private sector has world-class comfort and facilities for passengers. The train operated by IRCTC will run between Ahmedabad and Mumbai on a six days a week- basis except.
- ✚ The second Tejas Express by IRCTC is being called a 'private' train since its operational control is entirely under IRCTC, instead of Indian Railways.

74. 9th International Children's Film Festival begins in Kolkata.

- ✚ The 9th International Children's Film Festival begins in Kolkata with the screening of Aizaz Khan directed Hamid. About 250 films from 45 countries will be screened in the week-long festival.
- ✚ The National Award winner Children actor, Talha Arsalan Rishi will inaugurate the festival.
- ✚ Besides the screening of films, an exhibition on the children's film festival will also be organised.

75. Kiren Rijiju and Pramod Sawant flag off 'Fit India Cyclothon' in Panaji.

- ✚ The Fit India Mission under the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports organized the inaugural event of 'Fit India Cyclothon' event in Panaji.
- ✚ The Cyclothon was flagged off by Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports Kiren Rijiju and Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant from the Campal Parade Ground in the city.
- ✚ The Cyclothon event witnessed participation by over 500 cycling enthusiasts who came together to cycle through a five-kilometre stretch within the Panaji city.

76. 3rd Edition of North Zone Conference of MIB's of Media Units held in Jammu.

- ✚ The 3rd edition of North Zone Conference' of Media Units of Information and Broadcasting Ministry, held in Jammu. The Conference is being organised by the Regional Outreach Bureau, Jammu and Kashmir region.

77. Delhi CM launches 'Guarantee card' of upcoming assembly elections in the national capital.

- ✚ Aam Aadmi Party national convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal launched party's Guarantee Card ahead of upcoming assembly elections in the national capital.
- ✚ This card lists 10 promises that AAP will deliver on if it is elected to rule Delhi again.
- ✚ The card, '10 guarantees of Kejriwal', also promised to continue the scheme for free electricity up to 200 units, free health facilities and to plant two crore saplings in the national capital over the next five years.

78. For the 1st time, Govt to collect data including families headed by transgenders for census 2021.

- ✚ According to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), the central government, for the 1st time, will collect data on households headed by a transgender and members living in the family for census 2021. Previously, the choice of the head of the household was gender – male or female.
- ✚ The census 2021 will be done through a mobile phone application, deviating from the traditional pen and paper.
- ✚ The census has been conducted in India since 1872 without outbreak. It is conducted every 10 years. 2021 is not only the 16th census but also 8th after independence. The Census Act, 1948 and the Census Rules, 1990 provide the legal framework in conducting the Census.

79. Haryana Assembly ratifies 126th Constitutional Amendment Bill.

- ✚ The Haryana Assembly ratified the 126th Constitutional Amendment Bill, passed by the Parliament in December last year.
- ✚ Earlier, Uttarakhand, Maharashtra and Bihar Assemblies had ratified the Bill, which was introduced in the Lok Sabha by Union Minister of Law and Justice Ravi Shankar Prasad on December 9, 2019. The Bill amends provisions related to reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs).
- ✚ The Constitution provides for reservation of seats for SCs and STs and representation of the Anglo-Indian community by nomination in Lok Sabha and Legislative Assemblies of states. This has been provided for a period of 70 years since the enactment of the Constitution and will expire on January 25, 2020. The Bill seeks to extend the reservation for SCs and STs by another 10 years till January 25, 2030.

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80. Airtel joins hands with Google cloud to bring G Suite to Indian SMBs.

- ✚ Bharti Airtel Limited (also known as Airtel), an Indian global telecommunications services company, has entered into the partnership with cloud computing services provider Google Cloud, under which Airtel will offer services provided by Google's G Suite to small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) in India, which are already clients of Airtel's information and communications technology (ICT) services.
- ✚ The G Suite consists of Gmail, Docs, Drive, Calendar and more – apps designed with real-time collaboration & machine intelligence to enhance productivity.
- ✚ Airtel has a subscriber base of 325 Million in India, serves to over 2500 large businesses and over 500,000 SMBs. Microsoft also partnered with Reliance Jio to target small and medium businesses in India.

81. Nepal invites PM Modi for Sagarmatha dialogue.

- ✚ Nepal has invited Prime Minister Narendra Modi to attend the first Sagarmatha Sambaad forum to be held here in April. The first edition of the Sagarmatha Sambaad' is scheduled to be held from April 2 to 4 on the theme "Climate Change, Mountains and the Future of Humanity".
- ✚ SAARC countries, including Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan have been invited.
- ✚ The Sambaad (dialogue) is named after the world's tallest mountain Sagarmatha (Mt. Everest) which is also a symbol of friendship.

82. This year, Republic Day ceremony was started from War Memorial, not India Gate.

- ✚ Changing a decades-old tradition, the 71st Republic Day ceremony was not began from India Gate, where the Prime Minister commemorates soldiers who had died in combat for India. Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid a wreath at the National War Memorial, which was opened on February 25, 2019.
- ✚ Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Bipin Rawat, Army chief General M M Naravane, Navy chief Admiral Karambir Singh and Air Force chief Air Marshal R K S Bhadauria stood behind Modi when he paid homage to the dead soldiers.
- ✚ On March 27 last year, India became only the fourth country to successfully fire an Anti-Satellite (A-SAT) missile under a project named Mission Shakti . Demonstrating this power, the A-SAT missile featured in the parade on this Republic Day.

83. India took over the chairmanship of FEMBoSA from Bangladesh.

- ✚ Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sunil Arora assumed Chairmanship of the Forum of the Election Management Bodies of South Asia (FEMBoSA) on 24 January for the year 2020. India took over the Chair of FEMBoSA from KM Nurul Huda, CEC of Bangladesh.
- ✚ Mr.Huda handed over the Logo of FEMBoSA to Mr. Arora at the 10th Annual Meeting of FEMBoSA held in New Delhi
- ✚ FEMBoSA was established at the 3rd Conference of Heads of Election Management Bodies of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Countries held at New Delhi in May 2012. FEMBoSA is a regional association Election Management Bodies (EMBs) of SAARC Countries. The forum has eight members. FEMBoSA is an active regional association of EMBs.

84. Country's first Super Fab Lab inaugurated in Kerala

- ✚ The country's first Super Fab Lab was launched at the Integrated Startup Complex of the Kerala Startup Mission (KSUM).
- ✚ The lab will give a major push to the hardware industry in the country and the only such facility outside the U.S.
- ✚ The Super Fab Lab will function in collaboration with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

85. 'Innovation Festival' begins at Science Centre in Itanagar

- ✚ In Arunachal Pradesh, the two-day 'Innovation Festival' kicked off at the Science Centre. The festival is being organized by the Arunachal Pradesh State Council for Science & Technology in collaboration with the National Innovation Foundation.
- ✚ More than 50 innovations are put on display by students from various educational institutions, grassroots innovators, artisans and entrepreneurs from Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and other states.
- ✚ The Innovation Festival, a first of its kind in the state, aimed to foster the culture of innovation among all people of the state, especially in all the educational institutions.

86. Tribal Affairs Ministry proposes 6th Schedule Area status to Ladakh

- ✚ Union Tribal Affairs Ministry has proposed 6th Schedule Area status to Union Territory of Ladakh.
- ✚ Tribal Affairs Minister Arjun Munda said that his ministry has sent the proposal to the Union Home Ministry to declare the 6th Schedule status to Ladakh. Environmentalist Sonam Wangchuk had last month appealed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to preserve the culture and identity of Ladakh.
- ✚ The Sixth Schedule of the Constitution deals with the administration of the tribal areas in the four northeastern states of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram.

87. Government announces sale of 100% stake in debt-laden Air India

- ✚ The government issued the preliminary information memorandum for 100 per cent stake sale in national carrier Air India.

- ✚ As part of the strategic disinvestment, Air India would also sell 100 per cent stake in low cost airline Air India Express and 50 per cent shareholding in joint venture AISATS. Management control of the airline would also be transferred to the successful bidder.
- ✚ The government has set March 17 as the deadline for submitting the Expression of Interest (EoI).

88. PM Modi to inaugurate Biggest DefExpo 2020 in Lucknow.

- ✚ The Defence Expo 2020 in Uttar Pradesh's Lucknow city is going to be by far the biggest expo. The number of international companies confirming their presence at the expo has also gone up as compared to previous expos.
- ✚ The number of companies registered for participating in the 11th edition of the biennial mega defence exhibition, DefExpo 2020, to be held at Uttar Pradesh capital Lucknow between February 5-9, 2020; has reached 1,000.
- ✚ In the DefExpo 2018, held in Chennai, 702 companies had participated. Thus, it has become by far the biggest ever DefExpo to be held in India.

89. Assam tableau won first prize at 71st Republic Day parade.

- ✚ Defence Minister Rajnath Singh gave away Best Tableau awards for Republic Day Parade 2020. The event took place in New Delhi.
- ✚ Assam's tableau, which portrayed the unique craftsmanship and culture of the state chosen as the best tableau, followed by Odisha and Uttar Pradesh tied for the second position. The Assam tableau showcased various dance forms of the country, especially the Bhortal dance of Assam.
- ✚ Odisha's tableau depicted Lord Lingaraja's Rukuna Rath Yatra, whereas the tableau of Uttar Pradesh showcased the state's cultural and religious heritage. The tableau of National Disaster Relief Force and Jal Shakti Mission were chosen as the best among the Ministries and Departments. The Central Public Works Department got the Special Prize for their tableau, which based on the theme - Kashmir se Kanyakumari.

90. West Bengal becomes fourth state to pass resolution against CAA in house.

- ✚ Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee urged the Party of India (Marxist) or CPI (M) and Congress to put aside with Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government at the Centre. West Bengal became the fourth state to pass an assembly resolution against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA).
- ✚ The National Population Register (NPR) and the proposed pan-India National Register of Citizens (NRC) and the CAA are related. The amended citizenship law anti-people amid slogans like Didi-Modi are two sides of the same coin by members of the Opposition Congress and the CPI (M).
- ✚ The Kerala and Congress-ruled Punjab passed similar resolutions on December 31 and January 17. The CAA was given last month to fast-track the citizenship process for non-Muslims who have entered India from Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Bangladesh before 2015, and triggered protests across the country.

91. India's first underwater metro project to start soon in Kolkata.

- ✚ India's first underwater metro train, passing through Kolkata's iconic Hooghly river, will begin service in 2022 March.
- ✚ The East-West Metro project, connecting the twin cities Kolkata and Howrah is being constructed by Kolkata Metro Rail Corporation (KMRC), which launched India's first metro project in 1984 with a North-South service.
- ✚ The 16.6 km route with six stations on the way is having its terminal stations at Salt Lake Sector V and the Howrah Maidan. It is expected that 9,00,000 people will be travelling by this new line daily.
- ✚ The project cost is funded by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), which provided a soft loan of Rs 41.6 billion. KMRC will repay the JICA loan over a period of 30 years after an initial six-year moratorium.

92. Oxford University Press (OUP) named 'Samvidhaan' (Constitution) the Oxford Hindi Word of 2019.

- ✚ OUP said that it received widespread attention in the year which was witness to the spirit of the Indian Constitution being embraced across segments of the society.
- ✚ The Oxford Hindi Word of the Year is a word or expression that has attracted a great deal of attention and reflects the ethos, mood, or preoccupations of the past year.
- ✚ In November 2019, Oxford Dictionaries has named "climate emergency" as its 2019 Word of the Year.

93. Maharashtra CM Uddhav Thackeray inaugurates Nagpur Metro's Aqua line.

- ✚ The Chief Minister of Maharashtra Uddhav Thackeray inaugurated 18.5 kilometre-long stretch of Nagpur Metro Aqua line of Maha Metro Rail Network.

94. World's biggest meditation centre in Hyderabad.

- ✚ To mark the 75th anniversary of the formation of Shri Ram Chandra Mission and Heartfulness Institute, unveiled the meditation centre slated to be the world's largest.
- ✚ The centre that can accommodate one lakh meditation practitioners at a time. Built on 30 acres, the meditation centre with a central hall and eight peripheral halls to accommodate 1,00,000 people will offer meditation training free.
- ✚ It is dedicated to the first guide of Heartfulness Lalaji Maharaj affectionately known as Daaji, the present guide of Heartfulness, in the presence of several dignitaries.

95. S Jaishankar lays foundation stone of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Centre at Kevadia in Gujarat.

- ✚ External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar laid the foundation stone of the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Centre for Empowerment and Livelihoods near the Statue of Unity at Kevadia in Gujarat. This will be a state-of-the-art skill Development centre in this tribal area.
- ✚ This Residential Centre will have all modern infrastructure including accommodation for about 100 youth at a time. It will run several free of charge skill courses aligned to the National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF).
- ✚ To begin with, the majority of the courses will focus to meet the demand of tourism and hospitality requirements at Kevadia. This centre will prove to be a boon for empowering the local youth and women by their skill development and by providing them employment opportunities.

96. Google announces \$1 million grant to promote news literacy in India.

- ✚ Technology giant Google announced a USD 1 million grant to promote news literacy among Indians. The money will be given to Internews, a global non-profit, which will select a team of 250 journalists, fact checkers, academics and NGO workers for the project.
- ✚ The announcement, part of a USD 10 million commitment worldwide to media literacy, comes at a time when news publishers, especially on the digital front, have been found to have indulged in spreading misinformation.
- ✚ A curriculum will be developed by a team of global and local experts, who will roll out the project in seven Indian languages.

97. Cabinet approves Medical Termination of Pregnancy Amendment Bill to raise upper limit for termination of pregnancy to 24 weeks.

- ✚ Union Cabinet has approved the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Bill, 2020. The bill will amend the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971.
- ✚ The limit of termination of pregnancy has been increased from 20 weeks to 24 weeks. For Medical termination of pregnancy, permission will be needed, from two doctors and one of them must be a government doctor.
- ✚ The proposed amendments are a step towards the safety and well-being of the women and many women will be benefitted by this.

98. Nepal creates Guinness World Record for highest altitude fashion show event.

- ✚ Nepal has created a new Guinness World Record for organizing highest altitude Fashion Show on the earth.
- ✚ The Mount Everest Fashion Runway was held at 5340 meters (17515 feet) elevation at Kala Patthar, near Everest base camp. 18 supermodels from 10 different countries walked the ramp to create history.

99. India to increase carbon emissions by 600 million tonnes due to increase in steel demand.

- ✚ The 20th edition of the World Sustainable Development Summit 2020, a TERI flagship event, states that the CO2 emissions from India's steel sector could increase up to 837 million tonnes (MT) by 2050.
- ✚ India's steel demand will be more than quadruple from around 111 million tonnes to 489 million tonnes.
- ✚ The carbon dioxide emissions from the sector projected to go from 242 MT to 837 MT. Low Carbon Steel prepared by the Energy Transitions Commission (ETC) India. It is a research platform based in TERI in New Delhi.

International News & Foreign Affairs

1. US army kills Iranian Commander Soleimani.

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

2. Iran names Esmail Qaani new Quds chief of IRGC.

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

3. Israel unveils revolutionary laser-based air defense system.

- ✚ Israeli Ministry of Defense announced that it has successfully developed a laser-based air defense system. The system is meant to intercept aerial threats ranging from as mortar fire, drones, medium range Grad rockets, anti-tank missiles as well as long-range missiles, currently at the disposal of Iran-backed terror groups in Syria and Lebanon.
- ✚ The system is set to be tested in six months' time at an undisclosed location in northern Israel. If the interception test is successful, the laser-based system will be dispatched for field use along Israel's border with the Gaza Strip.
- ✚ The technological development will enable the long-range targeting and stabilization of laser beams, allowing them to intercept targets at great distances.

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

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

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

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

6. France to train Indian flight surgeons for the Gaganyaan mission.

- ✚ France will train Indian flight surgeons to enable them to monitor the health of astronauts selected for the ambitious human space mission Gaganyaan. The two-week training is a critical aspect of the Gaganyaan project that is aimed at sending three Indians to space by 2022.
- ✚ The flight surgeons, who will be Indian Air Force doctors specialising in aviation medicines and responsible for the health of astronauts before, during and after flight, will be shortlisted soon.
- ✚ The four shortlisted astronauts, all test pilots from the Indian Air Force, are currently in Russia for an 11-month training programme.

7. Global Talent Competitive Index 2020: India improves eight ranks to 72, Switzerland tops the list.

- ✚ Global Talent Competitive Index (GTCI) 2020 has been released at the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF) on January 22, 2020. INSEAD Business School released the GTCI report with the help of Google and Adecco Group.
- ✚ This year India climbed eight ranks and secured the 72nd rank in the index. Switzerland is in the first place while the USA and Singapore grabbed the second and third positions respectively. This index shows the ability of countries to make the world progress, retain and attract talent. They are ranked based on their abilities.

8. Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen secures second term in landslide victory.

- ✚ Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen secured a landslide victory in presidential elections with voters resoundingly handing its first female leader a second term.
- ✚ Her main rival, Han Kuo-yu of the China-friendly Kuomintang (KMT) party, has conceded defeat.
- ✚ As per official results, Tsai was ahead with 57 per cent. In her victory speech, President Tsai Ing-wen expressed hope that Beijing authorities understand that democratic Taiwan, and its democratically elected government, will not concede to threats and intimidation.

9. Australian Koalas become endangered in bush fires.

- ✚ The Australian Koalas population suffered an extraordinary hit in the bush fires of Australia. It took 3 months for the firemen to control the fires.
- ✚ Australia recorded 2019 as its hottest year on record. Around 1.25 billion animals are believed to be dead in bush fires. It has also destroyed more than 10 million hectares of land.

- ✚ The Australian Koalas are to be put under “endangered” from “vulnerable” as 30% of their habitat were destroyed by the fires. The Australian Government has announced 50 million Australian Dollars emergency fund to save the wildlife affected due to the fires.

10. Henley Passport Index launched: Japan has the world's strongest passport.

- ✚ Recently, Henley Passport Index was launched. The index was launched based on the data collected from International Air Transport Association (IATA). Around 199 different passports and 227 different travel destinations were considered to launch the index.
- ✚ The Index is based on the number of destinations their holders can access without visa. Japan was followed by Singapore, Germany, South Korea at second, third and fourth places respectively. US and UK have been falling places for two year are now in eighth position.
- ✚ India ranked closer to the bottom at rank 84.

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

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

12. MEA sets up emerging technologies division, NEST.

- ✚ The external affairs ministry on Wednesday announced the setting up of new, emerging and strategic technologies (NEST) division. The development comes close on the heels of the government allowing all network equipment makers, including Huawei, to participate in 5G trials.
- ✚ NEST will act as the nodal division within the ministry for issues pertaining to new and emerging technologies. It will help in collaboration with foreign partners in the field of 5G and artificial intelligence.
- ✚ NEST will negotiate technology governance rules, standards and architecture, suited to India's conditions, in multilateral and plurilateral frameworks.

13. Palau becomes 1st nation to ban 'reef toxic' sun cream.

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

14. India to set strict restrictions on non-essential imports from China.

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

15. 2020 Designated as “Year of Nurse and Midwife” by WHO.

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

16. Iran takes final step by abandoning JCPOA restrictions.

- ✚ In Iran, the Cabinet announced the country's decision to take the final step to reduce commitments to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), popularly referred to as the 2015 nuclear deal.
- ✚ Iran will observe no restrictions in operational areas including enrichment capacities, enrichment percentage, and the volume of enriched material as well as research. However, Iran will continue cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency as before.
- ✚ Under the 2015 accord, Iran had agreed to limit its sensitive nuclear activities and allow in international inspectors in return for the lifting of crippling economic sanctions.

17. MECOS-3, 2020: Global Marine Ecosystem Meet in Kochi.

- ✚ Kochi will host the third international symposium on marine ecosystems challenges and opportunities (MECOS-3) from January 7 to 10. Organised by the Marine Biological Association of India, MECOS-3 will serve as a platform for discussions on a range of topics, including the impact of the climate crisis on marine ecosystems and an unusual warming of the Arabian Sea.
- ✚ The meet will also focus on the UN's sustainable development goal-14 (life under water), development of small-scale fisheries, recent developments in aquaculture, eco-labelling and green fishing technologies.
- ✚ The symposium is aimed at reviewing the concerns involved in marine ecosystem and formulating strategies for the better and sustainable utilisation of marine wealth.

18. UAE Cabinet approves issuance of 5-Year multi-entry tourist visa.

- ✚ The UAE Cabinet has approved the issuance of a five-year multi-entry tourist visa for all nationalities visiting the country. The decision was made during the Cabinet's first meeting of 2020.
- ✚ The move comes in a bid to support the UAE's tourism economy, and affirm the country's position as a global tourist destination.
- ✚ The country receives 21 million tourists annually and their aim is to establish the country as a major global tourist destination.

19. Neutral pronoun ‘they’ voted Word of the Decade.

- ✚ Neutral pronoun ‘they’ has been voted word of the decade by US language experts. “They” is used in English by a growing number of non-binary individuals, people who do not identify as either male or female.
- ✚ They prefer the plural neutral pronoun to bypass using the pronouns “he” or “she”. The selection of “they” is an indication that how a personal expression of gender identity has become an increasing part of our shared discourse.
- ✚ The recognition comes after US dictionary Merriam-Webster in December named “they” as word of the year. The American Dialect Society had previously named “they” word of the year in 2015.
- ✚ Other contenders in the decade category included #BlackLivesMatter, #MeToo, climate, emoji, meme, the opioid crisis and woke.

20. India-Germany sign MoU on Zero Budget Natural Farming.

- ✚ Andhra Pradesh Government signed Memorandum of Understanding with a German firm to implement Zero Budget Natural Farming in the state.

- ✚ The state Government will take a loan of Rs 1015 crores to spend towards climate resilient Zero Budget Natural Farming. The project aims to cover 2.39 lakh farmers in 600 villages. The project was included in the Budget presentation of 2019. Along with ZBNF implementation, the Government will also implement Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana.
- ✚ It is a chemical-free agricultural farming practice. The Government of India is promoting ZBNF through Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana and Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana since 2015-16.

21. India's first indigenous aircraft carrier Vikrant to be commissioned by 2021.

- ✚ The manufacturing of the country's first indigenous aircraft carrier Vikrant is currently under phase three.
- ✚ It is likely to be commissioned by early 2021. This carrier is being built at the Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL) in Kochi.
- ✚ Navy Chief Admiral Karambir Singh on December 3 had said that Vikrant will be fully operational by 2022 and it will have a fleet of MiG-29K aircraft.

22. World Future Energy Summit began on 13 January in Abu Dhabi.

- ✚ The World Future Energy Summit begins in Abu Dhabi. 33,500 participants from 170 countries and 800 specialist exhibitors are expected to attend the four-day annual event.
- ✚ The theme for this year's summit is "Rethinking Global Consumption, Production, and Investment."
- ✚ The World Future Energy Summit is the Middle East's largest future energy and sustainability event.

23. Japan's Kento Momota wins Malaysia Masters.

- ✚ World number one Kento Momota won the Malaysia Masters after easily defeating Denmark's Viktor Axelsen 24-22, 21-11.
- ✚ The victory in Malaysia lends credence to Momota's drive to win the gold in July's Tokyo Olympics.
- ✚ The reigning world champion told reporters that he eyes more success in 2020.
- ✚ Momota, currently the best player on the planet, won a record 11 titles last year.

24. United States remove 'currency manipulator' label imposed on China in 2019.

- ✚ The United States removed the currency manipulator label it imposed on China, in a sign of easing tensions between the economic powers after nearly two years of conflict.
- ✚ Just two days before President Donald Trump is set to sign a "phase one" trade agreement with China, the US Treasury said in its semi-annual report to Congress that the Yuan has strengthened and Beijing is no longer considered a currency manipulator.

25. Raisina Dialogue: India-Finland sign MoU; Russia reiterates for India's UNSC membership.

- ✚ The Raisina Dialogue was held at New Delhi for four days recently. Leaders from several countries participated in the dialogue.
- ✚ It included foreign ministers from 13 countries including Iran, Australia and Russia. During the Raisina Dialogue, India and Finland signed a defence agreement.
- ✚ Also, Russia announced that it supports India for the latter's permanent membership at the UNSC (United Nations Security Council).

26. Russia's government resigns as Putin moves to change the constitution.

- ✚ The principal ministers of the Russian government, from Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev on down, resigned in a move designed to ease a constitutional overhaul recently proposed by President Vladimir Putin.
- ✚ The president accepted Medvedev's resignation and said he would appoint his longtime loyalist to the Russian Security Council.
- ✚ Putin also nominated Mikhail Mishustin, head of the Federal Tax Service, to replace Medvedev as prime minister, according to Russia's state-run Tass news agency. The rest of the ministerial Cabinet is expected to remain until their replacements are determined.

27. “Globalizing Indian Thought”, an International Conclave held at Kozhikode.

- ✚ On January 17, 2020, the International Conclave on “Globalizing Indian Thought” was held in IIM, Kozhikode. PM Modi addressed the conclave. The conclave aimed at revealing India’s thoughts in becoming one of top three economies of the world.
- ✚ India is stepping towards the goal of becoming a 5 trillion Dollar economy by 2025. This will make India one of the top three economies in the world after US and China. It is essential for India to reveal its path while it is achieving such goals. The Conclave is an initiative to achieve this.

The Conclave focuses on India’s thought on development. The thoughts are as follows

1. Satyam-Truth
2. Nithyam-Sustainability
3. Purnam-Wholeness.

28. First Session of India-Norway Dialogue held in New Delhi.

- ✚ First session of India-Norway trade and investment dialogue was held in New Delhi. It was the first meeting of the countries after they signed an agreement in 2019.
- ✚ India and Norway signed Dialogue of Trade and Investment when Norway Prime Minister visited India in 2018. Based on the agreement, the countries held their first meeting to discuss industrial trade.
- ✚ The discussions included on various areas such as renewable energy, ICT, fisheries, MSME, maritime, shipping. The countries exchanged their views on investment opportunities.

29. Brazil’s new US\$100 million Antarctic base, built by China.

- ✚ Brazil has inaugurated a new US\$100 million Antarctic base, built by Chinese company CEIEC to replace a research station destroyed by fire almost seven years ago.
- ✚ The new 48,375 sq ft facility was bigger and safer, with 17 laboratories, a heliport, and other advances.
- ✚ Scientists will use the base to study microbiology, glaciers, and climate, among other areas.

30. China and Myanmar signed 33 agreements to accelerate BRI.

- ✚ China and Myanmar signed 33 deals on 18 January 2020. The agreements aimed to speed up key infrastructure projects to provide China a stepping stone to the Indian Ocean.
- ✚ The agreement was signed after a meeting between President Xi Jinping and State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi. Suu Kyi was on a two-day visit to China. He held talks with Xi on the final day of his two-day visit.
- ✚ The agreements covered areas such as politics, investment, trade, and people-to-people communications for China's flagship Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

31. Social Mobility Index: India ranks low at 76th place; Denmark tops.

- ✚ India has been ranked very low at 76th place out of 82 countries on a new Social Mobility Index compiled by the World Economic Forum. Denmark has topped the charts.
- ✚ The report, released ahead of the 50th Annual Meeting of the WEF, also lists India among the five countries that stand to gain the most from a better social mobility score.
- ✚ The top five are all Scandinavian, while the five economies with the most to gain from boosting social mobility are China, the United States, India, Japan and Germany.

32. Iranian Film ‘Castle of Dreams’ gets Best Film Award at Dhaka International Film Festival.

- ✚ The Iranian film ‘Castle of Dreams’ directed by Reza Mirakarimi won the Best Film Award in Asian Competition section of the 18th Dhaka International Film Festival (DIFF).
- ✚ The film also won the Best Director Award. Information Minister of Bangladesh Hasan Mahmud gave away the award carrying prize money of Tk 1 lakh, a citation in the closing ceremony held in Dhaka.
- ✚ Indian film ‘Finally Love’ directed by Anjan Dutt bagged Best Audience Award in Cinema of the World Category. The theme of this year’s festival was ‘better film, better audience, better society’.

33. Claims against India under Bilateral International Treaty dismissed.

- ✚ The Bilateral International Treaty organization, an international arbitration tribunal recently dismissed all the claims against India.
- ✚ The claims against India was brought the organization by private firms in Cyprus and Russia. The claims were under Agreement between Government of Russian Federation and Cyprus for promotion and protection of investments. The claims have now been dismissed completely.
- ✚ BIT is an agreement that was established for FDI(Foreign direct investment). It allows countries to set up rules for investments between each other. The treaty is the successor of the 19th century friendship, commerce and navigation treaty. The first BIT was signed between Pakistan and Germany.

34. Lebanon announces formation of new Government headed by Prime minister “Hassan Diab”.

- ✚ Lebanon, which has been rocked by anti-government protests for the last several months, finally has a new government. The presidency announced the formation of the new government after Hezbollah and its allies clinched a deal on a cabinet that must tackle the country's worst economic crisis in decades.
- ✚ The new government headed by Prime Minister Hassan Diab, a 60-year old professor at the American University of Beirut, will consist of 20 ministers-technocrats.
- ✚ The country has been hit by protests since October last year against the ruling political class.

35. Scholars from India and Russia participate in the first Ganga-Volga Dialogue of Civilizations held in New Delhi.

- ✚ Eminent scholars from India and Russia participated in the first Ganga-Volga Dialogue of Civilizations earlier wherein they deliberated upon the existing and emerging spheres of bilateral cooperation between the two countries, the Ministry of External Affairs.
- ✚ As many as 15 scholars from Russia and India spoke at the dialogue upon the four broad themes in the context of India-Russia bilateral cooperation, namely, education, culture and civilization; entrepreneurship and innovation; trade routes including inland navigation; India, Russia and Greater Eurasia.

36. European Commission’s President “Ursula von der Leyen” and European council’s President “Charles Michel”, signed the Withdrawal Agreement ahead of BREXIT day.

- ✚ The heads of the European Commission and Council, Ursula von der Leyen and Charles Michel, signed the Withdrawal Agreement of the UK.
- ✚ The move comes ahead of the UK's exit from the EU on 31 January 2020. Brexit ended 47 years of run in the European Union partner.
- ✚ Queen Elizabeth II gave her assent to the Brexit on 23 January. It was also signed by UK Prime Minister “Boris Johnson” on 25 January.

37. Switzerland mints smallest gold coin featuring image of Einstein

- ✚ The smallest gold coin in the world featuring legendary scientist Albert Einstein has been recently minted by Switzerland.
- ✚ The gold coin of about 0.12 inches of diameter has been made by state-owned Swissmint and features the scientist sticking out his tongue. The size of the coin weighing 1/500th of an ounce is so small that it comes along with a magnifying glass for observing Einstein's cheeky image.
- ✚ The price of each gold coin has been pegged at USD 205 and only 999 of these have been made by producers. Famed physicist Einstein was granted Swiss citizenship in the year 1901 and he was also a recipient of the 1921 Nobel Prize for physics.

38. U.K introduces new fast-track visa to attract scientists

- ✚ British Prime Minister Boris Johnson introduced a new fast-track visa to attract more of the world's best scientists to the U.K. in hopes of creating a global science "superpower." Johnson paired the announcement of the Global Talent route program with a pledge of 300 million pounds (\$392 million) for research into advanced mathematics.

- ✚ The money will help fund researchers and doctoral students whose work in math underpins myriad developments such as safer air travel, smartphone technology and artificial intelligence. The new visa route will have no cap on the number of people able to come to the U.K. under the program.
- ✚ Britain is facing its biggest immigration shake-up in decades after it leaves the EU.

39. Slovenian Prime Minister Marjan Sarec resigns.

- ✚ Slovenian Prime Minister Marjan Sarec announced a step down and called for fresh elections, following weeks of rising tensions within his minority five-party coalition government.
- ✚ Mr Sarec's resignation came almost at the same time as Finance Minister Andrej Bertoncelj announced that he too would quit in a row over health care funding.
- ✚ Mr Sarec, is Slovenia's youngest-ever Prime Minister. He was previously best known as a comedian and political satirist before he launched himself as an anti-establishment politician.

40. SC allows centre to introduce African cheetah to suitable habitat in India.

- ✚ The Supreme Court allowed the Centre to introduce the African cheetah to suitable habitat in India. The apex Court's decision followed a petition filed by National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) seeking permission for the introduction of the African cheetah as rare Indian cheetah is almost extinct in the country.
- ✚ The government's plan is to import the Cheetah from African countries like Namibia and reintroduce them in India.
- ✚ In 2013, the top court had declined the plea seeking relocation of African Cheetah at Kuno National Park.

41. ORF of India ranks 27th on "Global Go to Think Tank" Index report.

- ✚ India's Observer Research Foundation (ORF) has jumped more than 90 places to 27th position among 176 global think tanks.
- ✚ The 2019 Global Go To Think Tank Index Report, by the Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program (TTCSP) of the Lauder Institute at the University of Pennsylvania, ranked ORF among top 30 think tanks globally. ORF moved up from the 118th position in the 2018 ranking and got featured at the ninth position on the "Think Tank to Watch in 2019" list.
- ✚ Moreover, ORF curated Raisina Dialogue has been ranked 7th best conference in the report, moving up from 12th position. The list was topped by Carnegie Endowment for International Peace of US, followed by Belgium's Bruegel and French Institute of International Relations (IFRI).

42. WHO declared global emergency due to coronavirus as death number reached to 213.

- ✚ The World Health Organization declared a global emergency over the new coronavirus, as China reported the death toll had climbed to 213 with nearly 10,000 infections.
- ✚ The UN health agency based in Geneva had initially downplayed the threat posed by the disease, but revised its risk assessment after crisis talks.
- ✚ Many countries have already urged their citizens not to visit China, while some have banned entry for travellers from the central Chinese city of Wuhan, where the virus first surfaced.

43. India will continue to lead global sustainable energy agenda.

- ✚ Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has said India will continue to lead the global sustainable energy agenda. The principal note address at the TERI's World Sustainable Development Summit 2020 on 'Energy Future Road Map' in New Delhi. The trajectory to end energy poverty in India, as compared to the rest of the world, is based on the particular national circumstances.
- ✚ The right mix of enablers is being put in place to ensure that the energy transition is secure, affordable, reliable, and sustainable. India is the third-largest energy consumer after the US and China. The union government has set out a road map for reducing India's crude oil imports by 10 percent by 2022.
- ✚ The Government is working towards transformation to a gas-based economy, tapping into indigenously produced biofuels, apart from adopting renewable energy and energy efficiency measures, to achieve the much-needed carbon reductions.

New Appointments and Person in News

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

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

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

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

3. Babita Rayudu takes charge as SEBI Executive Director.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

9. Rajiv Rai Bhatnagar appointed as advisor to the Lt Governor of JK.

- ✚ IPS officer Rajiv Rai Bhatnagar has been appointed as an advisor to the Lt Governor of Jammu and Kashmir. He recently retired as the Director-General (DG) of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF).
- ✚ The position in the paramilitary force remained vacant for nearly two months after the retirement of K Durga Prasad on 28 February 2019.
- ✚ The role of the Advisor includes assisting the Lieutenant Governor of the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir in the effective discharge of his functions. The appointment will be effective from the date from which he assumes charge. G C Murmu is the LG of Jammu Kashmir UT since its creation on 31 October 2019.

10. Arun Kumar Sahu concurrently accredited as India's Next Envoy to Dominica.

- ✚ Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has concurrently accredited Arun Kumar Sahu as the next ambassador of India to the mountainous Caribbean island of Dominica, with residence in Port of Spain. He succeeded Madhu Sethi.
- ✚ Sahu is a 1996 batch IFS (Indian Foreign Service) officer, who serves presently as the High Commissioner of India to the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

11. Hudco appoints M Nagaraj as Chairman, Managing Director.

- ✚ State-owned Housing and Urban Development Corporation (Hudco) said that M Nagaraj has been appointed the company's Chairman and Managing Director.
- ✚ Nagaraj is also Director (Corporate Planning) of the company. He has experience of around 28 years in a multitude of sectors such as housing, infrastructure finance, skill development and microfinance in the social sector, and international trading.
- ✚ Hudco provides loans for housing and urban infrastructure projects.

12. Sakthivel takes over as Apparel Export Promotion Council of India Chairman.

- ✚ Apparel Export Promotion Council of India (AEPC) said it has appointed A Sakthivel as the new chairman of the organisation.
- ✚ Sakthivel said the industry had been struggling to survive and the exports growth were stagnant.
- ✚ Sakthivel along with some exporters had founded Tirupur Exporters Association in 1990.

13. Lt Col Yuvraj Malik appointed as director of National Book Trust.

- ✦ Lt Col Yuvraj Malik was appointed as the director of National Book Trust (NBT) on deputation. Malik succeeds Sahitya Akademi-awardee writer Rita Chowdhury.
- ✦ Previously Malik has served with the Ministry of Defence (MoD), Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA), Raj Bhawan in Jammu & Kashmir(J&K), United Nations Missions in Africa and also in several operational assignments.

14. Michael Patra appointed as RBI Deputy Governor.

- ✦ The government has appointed Michael Patra as the Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). The appointment was approved by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC). He will hold the office for a period of three years.
- ✦ Patra is a member of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC). He will replace Viral Acharya, who left the post in July 2019. He will be the fourth Deputy Governor of the central bank. He will be in charge of monetary policy and will remain on the MPC. Patra is currently the executive director (ED) of the Monetary Policy Department.

15. Lt General Girish Kumar reappointed as the Surveyor General of India for one year.

- ✦ Lt General Girish Kumar was reappointed as the Surveyor General of India for one year. He has been appointed on contract basis for one year.
- ✦ Kumar was in September 2017 appointed as the Surveyor General of India under the Survey of India, the national survey and mapping organisation of the country.

**16. Former Flipkart CEO Sachin Bansal acquires DHFL General Insurance.**

- ✦ Former co-founder and CEO of e-commerce giant Flipkart recently acquired DHFL General Insurance from the Kapil Wadhawan-led Wadhawan Group of companies for 100 crore. The deal is seen as a distress sale for Kapil Wadhawan-led financial services group, which used to run the debt-laden DHFL.
- ✦ With this acquisition, Bansal has entered into the insurance business. The investment is also seen as part of his strategy to enter into the financial services industry.

17. Janak Raj to be the third internal member of the Monetary Policy Committee.

- ✦ Janak Raj is expected to be appointed as the third internal member of the central bank in the monetary policy committee (MPC). He is currently serving as Reserve Bank of India's principal adviser in the monetary policy department.
- ✦ He will replace Michael Patra, the executive director of the monetary policy department, who was elevated as Deputy Governor. The MPC consists of 6 members, out of which three are RBI's internal members and three are external experts
- ✦ As per the law, by default, the Governor and the Deputy Governor of RBI who are in-charge of monetary policy are the two RBI internal members of MPC. The third member could be any RBI officer. Therefore, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das and Deputy Governor Michael Patra are the two RBI internal members of MPC.

18. Bipul Behari Saha has been elected by IUPAC as its bureau member.

- ✚ Bipul Behari Saha has been elected as the bureau member of International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC) for the tenure of 2020-23.
- ✚ He has become the 2nd Indian after CNR Rao to hold the position.

19. Harish Salve appointed Queen's Counsel for courts of England & Wales.

- ✚ Senior Advocate Harish Salve has been appointed the Queen's Counsel for the courts of England and Wales. This was announced by the United Kingdom's Ministry of Justice Department.
- ✚ The title of Queen's Counsel is usually awarded to lawyers possessing demonstrated skill and expertise in the conduct of advocacy.
- ✚ Advocate Salve served as a Solicitor General for India until 2002. He is known for representing India before the International Court of Justice in the Kulbhushan Jadhav extradition case.

20. Centre appoints Nripendra Misra as chairman of NMML executive council.

- ✚ Former principal secretary to the Prime Minister, Nripendra Misra, has been appointed chairperson of the executive council of the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (NMML).
- ✚ According to a government order, the Executive Council of the NMML has been reconstituted and it will be now chaired by Mr Misra.
- ✚ Mr Misra is a 1967-batch retired IAS officer. The Nehru Memorial Museum & Library is a museum and library in New Delhi, which aims to preserve and reconstruct the history of the Indian independence movement.

21. Ashish Garg elected President of the Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI).

- ✚ The Company Secretaries Institute has a new President in Ashish Garg for the year 2020. Nagendra D Rao, a fellow member of ICSI, has been elected Vice-President of the Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI).
- ✚ Garg is a Post Graduate in Economics (M A), Commerce (M Com) and a graduate in law (LLB). He was elected to the central council of ICSI for the term 2015-18 and re-elected for the term 2019-22.

22. Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw becomes 4th Indian to receive highest Australian civilian honour.

- ✚ Australia has conferred its highest civilian honour, the Order of Australia honour to Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, founder and chairperson of biopharmaceutical company Biocon and appointed as an honorary member in the general division of the Order of Australia by Australia's High Commissioner to India Ms. Harinder Sidhu at a ceremony in Leela Palace, Bengaluru, Karnataka. She is the fourth Indian citizen to be awarded Australia's highest civilian honour.
- ✚ The award is given to foreign nationals who have extraordinarily contributed to Australia or for humanity.
- ✚ The Australian civilian honours from India are star batsman Sachin Tendulkar in 2012, Former Attorney General of India Soli Jehangir Sorabjee in 2006 and Mother Teresa (Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu) of Kolkata in 1982.

23. Prince Harry, Meghan Markle sign formal deal to exit from royal family.

- ✚ Prince Harry and his wife Meghan Markle, the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, have signed up to a formal exit deal from the royal family.
- ✚ It will see them forsake their His and Her Royal Highness (HRH) titles and will no longer receive UK taxpayers' funding for their duties. The deal, which comes into effect by spring in a few weeks' time, means the couple will no longer be representing the Queen in an official capacity.
- ✚ Queen Elizabeth II said the agreement followed months of discussions and was a constructive and supportive way forward for her grandson and his family.

24. Challa Sreenivasulu Setty appointed as the MD of SBI.

- ✚ The government-appointed Challa Sreenivasulu Setty as the Managing Director (MD) of the State Bank of India (SBI) on 20 January 2020. He is appointed for a period of three years.
- ✚ The proposal of the Department of the Financial Services for the appointment of Setty was approved by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC).
- ✚ His appointment will be with effect from the date of his taking over the charge of the post or until further orders.

25. Sunil Mehta takes over as Chief Executive of Indian Banks' Association.

- ✚ Sunil Mehta took over as Chief Executive Officer of the Indian Banks Association. He succeeds V G Kannan, who stepped down on December 31, 2019.
- ✚ Sunil Mehta was heading Punjab National Bank, PNB as an MD & CEO. While serving PNB, Mehta was also appointed as a chairman of IBA in 2018-19.
- ✚ The term of the CEO of IBA is for three years while the chairman term is for only one year. IBA is the representative body of the India's banking sector and works for the development of the banking industry.

26. ATF unanimously nominates Anil Khanna as life President.

- ✚ Senior Sports Administrator Anil Khanna, who recently decided not to contest the President's post of the Asian Tennis Federation (ATF), was nominated Life President of the continental body.
- ✚ Mr Khanna had served as ATF President from 2005 to 2019 and also ITF Vice President from 2015-19.
- ✚ The ATF held the meeting of its Board of Directors in Melbourne and unanimously nominated Mr Khanna as Life President.
- ✚ He was also appointed Chairman of the ATF Finance Committee.

27. Qatar names Sheikh Khalid bin Khalifa bin Abdelaziz Al Thani new PM.

- ✚ Qatar appointed Sheikh Khalid bin Khalifa bin Abdelaziz Al Thani as the new Prime Minister. He will replace Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al Thani.
- ✚ The earlier Prime Minister has submitted his resignation. The state-run Qatar News Agency reported that no reason for the change has been specified.

28. Taranjit Singh Sandhu appointed India's ambassador to US.

- ✚ Senior diplomat Taranjit Singh Sandhu has been appointed as India's Ambassador to the US. Sandhu, a 1988-batch Indian Foreign Service officer, is currently posted as High Commissioner of India in Sri Lanka.
- ✚ He replaces Harsh Vardhan Shringla as India's envoy in Washington.
- ✚ Shringla has been named as India's next foreign secretary.

29. Harsh Vardhan Shringla takes charge as new Foreign Secretary.

- ✚ Harsh Vardhan Shringla took charge as new foreign secretary succeeding Vijay Gokhale. Mr Shringla is a 1984-batch officer of the Indian Foreign Service.
- ✚ In the course of a diplomatic career spanning 35 years, Shringla has held a variety of positions in New Delhi and abroad, and is considered an expert on India's neighbourhood.
- ✚ He has also headed the United Nations Political and SAARC divisions in the ministry.

30. Shashi Kapoor's daughter Sanjana Kapoor got French honour for theatre artiste.

- ✚ Well-known theatre person Sanjana Kapoor received the prestigious French honour of 'Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres (Knight of the Order of Arts and Letters) for her outstanding contribution to the field of theatre.

- ✚ French Minister of Culture Franck Riester conferred the insignia of the distinction on Kapoor in a special investiture ceremony.
- ✚ L'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres is a French government distinction instituted in 1957 by the Ministry of Culture, and is conferred, regardless of nationality, on persons who have distinguished themselves by their creativity in the fields of art or literature, or for their contribution to promoting art and literature in France and throughout the world.

31. ICC appointed Anurag Dahiya as chief commercial officer.

- ✚ The International Cricket Council (ICC) appointed seasoned media professional Anurag Dahiya as its Chief Commercial Officer.
- ✚ Dahiya brings more than two decades of commercial experience from the media industry, most recently as head of content and media sales at Singtel, Asia's leading telecommunications group.
- ✚ Prior to that, he spent 14 years with Fox International Channels (previously ESPN STAR Sports) as senior vice president, strategy and business development.
- ✚ His responsibilities there included cricket rights and content acquisition working on high profile, high value acquisition of sports rights.

Banking

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

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

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

- ✚ HDFC Life Insurance has partnered with Paytm to expand its distribution. The partnership is aimed to enable customers of Paytm to purchase insurance products from HDFC Life. HDFC Life Insurance is constantly exploring opportunities to create and sustain new partnerships to strengthen its distribution network.
- ✚ With the partnership, HDFC Life Insurance aims to increase insurance penetration in India and to simplify the customer's experience right from the purchase to the claim process.

3. Mastercard signs agreement to acquire RiskRecon.

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

4. RBI launches mobile app 'MANI' for visually challenged to identify denomination of currency notes.

- ✚ Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das launched a mobile app to help visually impaired people to identify the denomination of currency notes. The visually challenged people can identify the denomination of a currency note by using the mobile app. The application works offline once installed.

- ✚ The users can freely download the app, called 'MANI' (Mobile Aided Note Identifier), from Android Playstore or iOS App Store. The application can scan the currency notes using the camera of the mobile phone. It also gives audio output in Hindi and English.

5. India's Forex reserves touch all time high of 457.468 billion.

- ✚ India's foreign exchange reserves swelled by 2.520 billion USD to touch a record high of 457.468 billion USD in the week that ended on 27th December 2019.
- ✚ An RBI press release has informed that foreign currency assets, a major part of the overall reserves rose by 2.203 billion USD to 424.936 billion USD.
- ✚ India's special drawing rights with the International Monetary Fund, however dipped by 2 million USD to 1.441 billion USD, while the country's reserve position increased by 58 million USD to 3.7 billion USD.

6. Piyush Goyal inaugurates National Stock Exchange knowledge hub.

- ✚ Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal inaugurated National Stock Exchange (NSE) Knowledge Hub, an Artificial Intelligence (AI)-powered learning ecosystem that will assist the banking, financial services, and insurance (BFSI) sector.
- ✚ He hoped that the knowledge hub created by NSE in the national capital will fill in these gaps and help the financial sector to move into the future.
- ✚ AI and machine learning will contribute USD 1 trillion by 2035 and it was a good beginning by NSE to tap the potential of AI and use it as a tool to create a workforce in the BFSI sector in India.

7. Two Indian banks 'Axis Bank and ICICI Bank' to cease operations in Sri Lanka.

- ✚ The Central Bank of Sri Lanka has permitted Indian private sector lenders Axis Bank and ICICI Bank to close their operations in Sri Lanka.
- ✚ The licenses issued to them will be cancelled once the winding-up operations are complete.
- ✚ The two banks are no longer permitted to carry on banking operations, including accepting deposits from the public.

8. RBI allows select banks in India to offer forex rates 24X7 to Indian Clients.

- ✚ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has permitted the select banks in India can offer forex rates to Indian clients round the clock, which is 24X7. Now the select banks can work beyond the inter-bank market hours, which now run from 9 am to 5 pm.
- ✚ The move will allow the Indians to hedge their foreign exchange risks at any time of the day. It will make the offshore currency markets in Dubai and Singapore less attractive for Indian investors.
- ✚ RBI has also decided to accept the recommendation of the task force on the offshore rupee market. Hence it permits the authorized dealers Category-I banks to offer foreign exchange prices to users at all times either by a domestic sales team or through their overseas branches.

9. IBBI notifies — Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India Regulations, 2020

- ✚ The amendment clarifies that a person, who is not eligible under the Code to submit a resolution plan for insolvency resolution of the corporate debtor, shall not be a party in any manner to a compromise or arrangement of the corporate debtor under section 230 of the Companies Act, 2013.
- ✚ It also clarifies that a secured creditor cannot sell or transfer an asset, which is subject to the security interest, to any person, who is not eligible under the Code to submit a resolution plan for insolvency resolution of the corporate debtor.
- ✚ The amendment provides that a secured creditor, who proceeds to realise its security interest, shall contribute its share of the insolvency resolution process cost, liquidation process cost and workmen's dues, within 90 days of the liquidation commencement date.

10. Shivalik Mercantile became 1st urban cooperative bank to convert to SFB.

- ✚ RBI gave approval to Uttar Pradesh based Shivalik Mercantile Co-operative Bank Ltd to convert to a small finance bank (SFB).
- ✚ With this, Shivalik Mercantile became the 1st urban cooperative bank (UCB) to be converted into an SFB since the release of reformed RBI guidelines which came out 2 years ago. The RBI will grant a licence to Shivalik Mercantile bank for the commencement of banking business under Section 22 (1) of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 as an SFB.
- ✚ RBI granted transition of a UCB into an SFB under the scheme on the voluntary transition of urban co-operative bank into a small finance bank issued on September 27, 2018.

11. SBI announces 'residential builder finance with buyer guarantee' scheme.

- ✚ Country's largest public sector bank, State Bank of India has announced a 'residential builder finance with buyer guarantee' (RBBG) scheme.
- ✚ It aims at giving a push to residential sales and improving home buyers' confidence. Under this scheme, the SBI will issue a guarantee for completion of select residential projects to customers who have availed home loans from it.
- ✚ The scheme will focus on affordable housing projects priced up to 2.50 crore rupees in 10 cities initially.

12. SBI lowers GDP estimates to 4.6% in FY20 from 5%.

- ✚ The SBI lowered the economic growth forecast to 4.6% from the earlier 5%.
- ✚ The latest SBI Ecowrap report even predicted growth rate to remain below 6 percent for the two years in a row.
- ✚ The SBI Research Desk stated that factors like government expenditure are the key factors in determining the overall growth outlook for FY20.

13. RBI extends recurring payments feature to UPI.

- ✚ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will now allow consumers to give an e-mandate for recurring payments made through Unified Payments Interface (UPI).
- ✚ This functionality will allow UPI users to bypass additional factor authentication (AFA) every time a payment is made to a regular merchant by giving a onetime instruction to the UPI service provider.
- ✚ This facility was earlier available for card and wallet based payments. The limit on such recurring transactions has been set at Rs 2000.

14. RBI directs issuers to provide a facility to switch on, off cards.

- ✚ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has directed banks and other card-issuing companies to provide a facility to customers to switch on and off their debit or credit cards.
- ✚ The move by RBI aims to enhance the security of digital transactions. It assumes significance amid rising instances of cyber fraud. RBI observed the volume and value of transactions made through cards have increased manifold.
- ✚ It stated that all cards at the time of issue or re-issue, physical and virtual, should be enabled for use only at contact-based points of usage, ATMs, and Point-of-Sale (PoS) devices, within India.

15. BoB and Kotak Mahindra Bank exit Equifax Credit Information Services.

- ✚ State-owned Bank of Baroda (BoB) and Kotak Mahindra Bank has exited from credit information bureau Equifax Credit Information Services for a consideration of Rs 91.03 crore.
- ✚ In a regulatory filing, BoB sold 1,35,00,000 shares of a face value of Rs 10 for Rs 67.43 per unit.
- ✚ Kotak Mahindra Bank also existed from Equifax Credit Information Services.
- ✚ This is part of capital-raising exercise by exiting non-core business.

16. Exim Bank to raise up to \$3 billion from overseas borrowings in FY21.

- ✚ The Export-Import Bank of India (Exim Bank) is looking to raise up to \$3 billion (about Rs 21,000 crore) from overseas borrowing in next financial year (2020-21).
- ✚ The bank has raised \$1.7 billion (about Rs 11,900 crore) of overseas borrowing through bond issues and foreign loans in the current financial year.
- ✚ It has also raised \$350 million in foreign loans so far in FY20. In terms of geographic distribution, 44 per cent bonds were distributed in Asia, 36 per cent in the US and 20 per cent from EMEA (Europe, Middle East and Africa) region.

17. World Bank & GoI signs MoU for loan of Assam Inland Water Transport Project.

- ✚ World Bank & GoI signs MoU for loan of \$88 million of Assam Inland Water Transport Project. The loan agreement seeks to modernize the Assam's passenger ferry sector by improving the infrastructure and its services.
- ✚ The government ferries are operated by the Assam Shipping Company (ASC) while the terminals and terminal services are provided by the Assam Ports Company (APC) in the state of Assam.
- ✚ The \$88 million agreement will provide technically better designed terminals and energy-efficient vessels to make the ferry services more efficient, modern and safe mode of river transport system.

18. IMF reduces India's economic growth forecast to 4.8 percent.

- ✚ The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has reduced India's economic growth forecast to 4.8% for the current fiscal year. The decline is due to the crisis in the non-banking financial sector (NBFC) and weak rural demand. It has also cut the world's growth estimate.
- ✚ The IMF projection, 1.3% points lower than its earlier estimates, is less than the 5% projected by the official advance estimates. The IMF projected India's economy to grow by 5.8% next year. It is 1.2% points less than its earlier forecast.
- ✚ The IMF estimated world economic growth at 1.9% for 2019, 0.1% point lower than its earlier forecast.

19. Vodafone m-pesa's Certificate of Authorization cancelled by RBI.

- ✚ The Certificate of Authorization (CoA) of Vodafone m-pesa has been cancelled by Reserve Bank of India.
- ✚ Vodafone Idea closed the m-pesa after getting merged with the Aditya Birla Idea Payments Bank Limited in 2019.

20. India's foreign exchange reserves touch a life-time high of USD 462.16 billion.

- ✚ The country's foreign exchange reserves rose USD 943 million to touch a life-time high of USD 462.16 billion according to the latest data from the RBI.
- ✚ In the previous week, the reserves had increased by USD 58 million to USD 461.21 billion.
- ✚ Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.

21. NABARD pegs credit potential at Rs 90,000 crore for Odisha.

- ✚ The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development projected a credit potential of Rs 90,395.69 crore for Odisha under priority sector for 2020-21 fiscal. The projection was made in the State Focus Paper released by Finance Minister Niranjan Pujari at the annual State Credit Seminar organised by NABARD for 2018-19 here.
- ✚ Inaugurating the seminar, Pujari emphasized the need for increasing agriculture term loan finance in other allied sector activities such as animal husbandry, poultry and fisheries leading to asset formation and diversification of farmers' income.
- ✚ Pujari advised regional banking heads to increase their outreach in un-banked areas of the State to help in effective implementation of various developmental programmes while increasing the scope of digital banking and financial inclusion across the State. The Finance Minister also highlighted the need for a coordinated support from all the stakeholders to make Odisha a leading State in Indian economy.

22. BSE signs licensing agreement with ICE for the rupee-denominated Brent futures contract.

- ✚ The Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) has signed a licensing agreement with Intercontinental Exchange (ICE) Futures Europe, an operator of global exchanges and clearing houses. India is one of the largest consumers and importers of crude oil in the world, and Brent crude is highly co-related with the Indian crude oil market.
- ✚ This agreement will serve the needs and interests to the Indian energy commodities space and market participants to access Rupee-dominated Brent benchmark prices.
- ✚ It will also help Indian commodity markets by providing convenient and cost-effective onshore hedging products and enable the price discovery of Brent crude prices in the Indian time zone.

23. BoM and SBI banks have PSB rated good in digital transactions in December.

- ✚ Bank of Maharashtra and State Bank of India are the only two state-run banks that showed 'good' performance in terms of digital transactions in December with a score of 77 and 68 respectively, government data showed.
- ✚ The calculated rating for an individual bank is given by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) on various parameters such as percentage of digital transactions, merchant deployment achieved, system resilience, and average percentage of technical decline for UPI or AePS transactions.
- ✚ The union government gave a target of 4,000 crore digital transactions for the current fiscal. Banks performance on various parameters, including digital sales, is to be tracked on every month.

Science Tech & Defence

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

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

2. Gen Bipin Rawat named as country's 1st Chief of Defence Staff.

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

3. New Delhi hosts the 49th Border Coordination Conference between BSF & BGB.

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

4. Railway renames Railway Protection Force as Indian Railway Protection Service.

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

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

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

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

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

7. Abhinav Kumar gets extension as BSF IG.

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

8. India Russia to sign MoUs on AK-203 assault rifles.

- ✚ The Army is likely to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the procurement of over 7.5 lakh AK-203 assault rifles with Russia. About 1 lakh rifles will come directly from Russia and the remaining will be manufactured by the JV in India.
- ✚ The rifles will be manufactured by the Indo-Russian Rifles Private Limited (IRRPL) at Korwa in Uttar Pradesh.
- ✚ The Army has been looking to replace the indigenous INSAS (Indian National Small Arms System) rifles in use with a modern rifle.

9. Oman ships arrive to participate in Indo-Oman bilateral Naval Exercise "Naseem Al-Bahr".

- ✚ Oman ships arrived in Goa to participate in "Naseem-Al-Bahr", the Indo-Oman bilateral naval exercise. RNOV are Royal Navy of Oman Vessels. RNOV al Rasikh and RNOV Khassab arrived at Goa. Along with these ships, Indian Naval Ships Shubhadra and Beas will also participate in the exercise. The Indo-Oman Naval Exercises are being conducted since 1993.

- ✚ The countries conduct regular biennial exercises between all three services namely army, navy and air force. "Al Najah" is the army exercise conducted between the countries. "Ex Eastern Bridge" is the Air Force exercise that is held between the countries. In West-Asia, Oman is one of India's oldest defence partners and an ally in anti-piracy campaigns. India has supplied rifles to Oman. In addition, India is considering setting up a defence production unit in Oman.

10. 2020 to be observed as Year of Mobility by CISF.

- ✚ The CISF observes 2020 as the "Year of Mobility" for the welfare of the troops. It will focus on construction of residential units and implementation of welfare measures.
- ✚ In the year of 2020, the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) will aim at creating infrastructure for their families. It will also aim at focusing on sports and physical fitness leveraging modern gadgetry. It is essential to equip the forces with modern instruments as the force plays major role in the security system of the country.
- ✚ They guard civil airports, nuclear power stations, mines, thermal power stations in private domain as well.

11. Indian Army begins its work on the GOCO (Government Owned Contractor Operated) Model.

- ✚ Indian Army began its work on the GOCO (Government Owned Contractor Operated) Model. The model is extended to base workshops and ordnance depots. The workshops play vital role as they ensure the Indian Army is operationally prepared all the time.
- ✚ The workshops are assigned the role of overhauling (testing and repairing) of weapons. They also manufacture spares. The workshops have an annual turnover of Rs 10,000 crores.
- ✚ Though, the GOCO model in army workshops helps reducing government expenditure on armed forces and increase combat capability of the army, there are certain issues associated with the model.

12. Indian Navy start 1st 'Maha-Navy Connect 2020'.

- ✚ Indian Navy starts 1st Maha-Navy Connect 2020 Tri-Dimensional Expedition started from Mumbai, Maharashtra.
- ✚ The aim of the expedition is to promote the maritime heritage of India and spread awareness about Coastal Security amongst the coastal communities in Maharashtra.
- ✚ The tri-dimensional expedition consisting of yachting, running and cycling teams of 50 naval personnel. This expedition will cover more than 555kms from Maharashtra's northernmost fort Arnala to its southernmost Sindhudurg fort.

13. DRDO's Naval variant of Light Combat Aircraft makes its first successful landing.

- ✚ The naval version of indigenous Light Combat Aircraft, LCA, made its first successful landing on the aircraft carrier INS Vikramaditya.
- ✚ This aircraft is developed by the Defence Research and Development Organization, DRDO. Congratulating the DRDO and Navy for this achievement, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said that he is extremely happy to learn about the maiden landing of naval variant of LCA on INS Vikramaditya.
- ✚ With the successful landing of Light Combat Aircraft, LCA on aircraft carrier INS Vikramaditya, India has entered into the club of selected nations having the capability to design a fighter jet which can land on an aircraft carrier. LCA is the smallest and lightest Multi-Role Supersonic Fighter Aircraft of its class.

14. Indian Space Research Organization will launch GSAT-30 satellite on the launch vehicle Ariane-5.

- ✚ On January 17, 2020, the Indian Space Research Organization will launch GSAT-30 satellite on the launch vehicle Ariane-5. It is to be launched in Ariane Launch Complex at Kourou. Kourou is a French territory that is located along the north eastern coast of South America.
- ✚ The GSAT-30 is a communication satellite. It is to replace INSAT-4A. The mission life of GSAT-30 is 15 years. ISRO has designed GSAT-30 in such a way to increase the number of transponders. A transponder is a device that transmits and responds to signals.

- ✚ The satellite will help in supporting VSAT network, teleport services, DTH televisions services, cellular backhaul connectivity and digital news gathering services

15. Indian Navy gets Fuel HFHSDIN 512, a special NATO class diesel.

- ✚ M/s Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) launched the new fuel High Flash High-Speed Diesel (HFHSD) – IN 512, with revised technical specifications. India will be able to ensure interoperability amongst foreign navies during fleet exercises.
- ✚ It will provide fuel of quality better than that mandated to all foreign navies under bilateral/ multi-national logistics support pacts including Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA).
- ✚ This fuel will be the key enabler in the Indian Navy's 'Mission Based Deployment' on a global scale.

16. CSIR partners with DRDO to develop the Saras engine.

- ✚ The Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) has partnered with the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) to develop the Saras engine.
- ✚ CSIR will take up the project jointly designing and developing an aero-engine which is a highly complex task.
- ✚ All major systems of the Saras engine, except the power plants, are indigenous. The prototype version of the Saras is being developed by the CSIR's National Aeronautical Laboratory (NAL).

17. Winged Raider: Indian Army's largest airborne exercise, 500 troops participate.

- ✚ The Indian Army recently conducted the largest air borne exercise called the Winged Raider. Around 500 troops participated in the exercise. The exercise was conducted in the north-eastern theatre.
- ✚ The exercise was conducted to demonstrate the operational readiness of the paratroopers and air warriors. The C-130 Hercules, Dhruv Helicopters and C-17 globe master transport aircraft participated in the exercise.
- ✚ The exercise was telecasted live. It focused on encountering China in the border region. The exercise also included capacity building programmes and habitats. It also focused on moving certain advanced weapon system to the eastern side.

18. Delhi Police gets power to detain for 3 months under National Security Act.

- ✚ Delhi's Lieutenant Governor Anil Baijal granted Delhi Police Commissioner the power to detain under the National Security Act, 1980 for next three months. The Delhi Police will get emergency detention power with effect from January 19, 2020 till April 18, 2020.
- ✚ The National Security Act, NSA allows for the preventive detention of an individual or individuals who are seen as threat to the national security or harm law and order. The person detained under the act is not charged by the Police.
- ✚ Delhi Police detention authority comes amid rising protests in Delhi against the controversial Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) as well as the National Register of Citizens (NRC).

19. Russia to deliver S-400 air defence systems to India by 2025.

- ✚ Russia said it has started production of S-400 long-range surface-to-air missile systems for India, and all five units will be delivered by 2025. In October 2018, India signed a USD 5 billion deal to buy the air defence missile systems.
- ✚ Russian Deputy Chief of Mission Roman Babushkin also said that a contract will be finalised shortly for joint production of Kamov lightweight multi-role military helicopters for India.
- ✚ The Indian Armed forces will receive the first batch of 5,000 Kalashnikov rifles this year as well. These will be produced in India under a joint venture.

20. DRDO successfully test fired K-4 ballistic missile from an underwater platform.

- ✚ India has successfully test-fired nuclear-capable K-4 ballistic missile off the coast in Andhra Pradesh on 19 January 2020. The missile was launched from a 3500 kilometer strike range nuclear-capable

submarine, underwater platform. The missile was developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

- ✚ K-4 ballistic missile will be equipped on indigenous INS Arihant class nuclear-powered submarines of the Indian Navy. The missile has a range of around 1,500 km.
- ✚ K-4 missile is one of the two underwater missiles that were being developed by DRDO. DRDO's other underwater missile is the over 700 kilometre strike range BO-5 missile.

21. Indian Air Force inducts BrahMos-armed Sukhoi-30MKI fighter squadron at Tamil Nadu's Thanjavur.

- ✚ The Sukhoi-30MKI fighter aircraft was inducted at Thanjavur airbase equipped with 'special weapon' BrahMos supersonic cruise missile that will manage the requirements in the Indian Ocean.
- ✚ The integration of the air-launched version of the BrahMos missile with the SU-30MKI fighter has been done fully indigenously by BrahMos Aerospace, HAL and the Air Force. The Su-30 MKI is a state-of-the-art all-weather multi-role fighter aircraft capable of undertaking varied air defence, ground attack and maritime missions.

22. Start Up India-first time in Republic Parade; Indian Navy to showcase its tableau.

- ✚ The Department of Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) operating under Ministry of Commerce and Industry is to showcase tableau on Start Up India at the Republic Day Parade to be held at Rajpath, New Delhi. The tableau is to be held under the theme Reach for the sky.
- ✚ It is with the same theme the Indian Navy week was celebrated. It will showcase the fire power of Navy in all three dimensions namely sub-surface, surface and air.
- ✚ The Kalvari class submarine, Harpoon missiles, MiG 29K fighter jets are to be part of the Tableau.

23. Indian Army to induct indigenously upgraded Artillery gun 'Sharang' by March 31, 2020.

- ✚ Indian Army (IA) has announced to induct 1st batch of 18 indigenously upgraded 'Sharang' artillery guns by March 31, 2020. The announcement was made by the Programme Coordinator of Sharang Brigadier Jayant Kar.
- ✚ Sharang: The artillery gun's barrel upgraded from 130mm to 155mm has a strike range of 39 kilometres and has gone integrated firing range from 0-45 degrees in its trial at the Long Proof Range of Ordnance Factory Khamaria, 16 kilometers from Jabalpur district headquarters in Madhya Pradesh. Previously the strike range was 27 kilometers.
- ✚ The contract to upgrade the Sharang artillery gun was undertaken by Gun Carriage Factory (GCF) in Jabalpur with the help of state-owned ordnance factories, and teams from the Army and DRDO (Defence Research and Development Organisation)

24. Pakistan tests nuclear-capable surface-to-surface ballistic missile 'Ghaznavi' of 290-km range

- ✚ Pakistan conducted a successful training launch of nuclear-capable surface-to-surface ballistic missile 'Ghaznavi', which can strike targets up to 290 kilometers.
- ✚ "The training launch was part of Field Training Exercise of Army Strategic Forces Command aimed at rehearsing operational readiness procedures during day and night," the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the media wing of the army.
- ✚ The launch was witnessed by Lt Gen Nadeem Zaki Manj, Director General Strategic Plans Division, Commander Army Strategic Forces Command, senior officers from Strategic Plans Division, Army Strategic Forces Command, Scientists and Engineers of the strategic organisations, according to the state-run Radio Pakistan.

25. GRSE set to deliver ASW corvette INS Kavaratti to Navy soon.

- ✚ Defence PSU Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) is set to deliver anti-submarine warfare stealth corvette INS Kavaratti to the Navy.
- ✚ 'Kavaratti' is the last of the four Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) stealth corvettes built by the GRSE for the Indian Navy under Project P28.

- ✚ Three of the four corvettes, INS Kamorta, INS Kadmatt and INS Kiltan were commissioned in 2014, 2016 and 2017 respectively. The new technology will mean that the warship, which has 90 per cent indigenous components, will also require lower maintenance.

26. Coast Guard Ship 'Annie Besant' reaches base harbour at Chennai.

- ✚ The recently inducted Indian Coast Guard Ship Annie Besant has reached its base harbour at Chennai. It was received with pomp and splendour by the staff and their family members of the Coast Guard Chennai office.
- ✚ The ship Annie Besant is the third Fast Patrol Vessel of the 'Priyadarshini' class. The ship has been indigenously designed and built and was commissioned at Khidderpore Dock, Kolkata.
- ✚ The ship ICGS Annie Besant is fitted with modern navigational and communication equipment and sensors. It is capable of undertaking multi-faceted maritime operations such as Surveillance, Search and Rescue and Interdiction.

27. Indian Navy launches operation 'Vanilla' to provide disaster relief at Madagascar.

- ✚ Indian Navy has launched operation Vanilla to provide humanitarian assistance and disaster relief at Madagascar.
- ✚ Operation Vanilla has been launched to provide assistance to the affected population of Madagascar post devastation caused by Cyclone Diane.
- ✚ The Indian Navy Ship is geared to set up medical camp and provide food, water and other necessary relief material

28. Indian Coast Guard commissions C-448 third interceptor boat.

- ✚ The third Indian Coast Guard Interceptor Boat of Coast Guard Headquarters (Karnataka), C 448, was officially commissioned at New Mangalore Port.
- ✚ The interceptor boat has been built by Larsen and Toubro Shipyard Limited in Surat. The interceptor boat will help the Coast Guard check illicit activities, including infiltration, smuggling and illicit fishing.
- ✚ Also, the Karnataka government has also decided to provide 160 acres of land at Kenjar village in Mangalore taluk to set up a Coast Guard Training Academy.

Important days

1. 14 scientists awarded Swarna Jayanti Fellowships.

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

2. World Braille Day observed on January 4th.

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

3. GoI to confer first “Antarrashtriya Yoga Diwas Media Samman”.

- ✚ On January 7, 2020, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting will confer “Antarrashtriya Yoga Diwas Media Samman” to 30 media houses. The award is being presented for the first time.
- ✚ The aim of the award is to acknowledge positive role of media in disseminating outreach of Yoga.
- ✚ The awards are to be provided in the categories of Best Media Coverage of Yoga in Television (8 awards), Best Media Coverage of yoga in Radio (11 awards), Best Media Coverage of Yoga in Newspapers (11 awards).

4. Pravasi Bhartiya Divas: 09 January

- ✚ Pravasi Bharatiya Divas is celebrated every year to mark the contribution of the overseas Indian community in the development of India. It also commemorates the return of Mahatma Gandhi from South Africa to India on 9 January 1915.
- ✚ Established in 2003 the celebratory event is organised by the Ministry of External Affairs every year on this day.
- ✚ On the occasion of Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar interacted with Indian Diaspora across the globe through a digital video conference.

5. India celebrated 155th Anniversary of Lala Lajpat Rai on 28 January.

- ✚ The year 2020 marks the 155th birth anniversary of Lala Lajpat Rai, one of the greatest freedom fighters of India. Lala Lajpat Rai was born on January 28, 1865 in a Jain Punjabi family in Dhudikae village of Punjab's Moga district. Rai was also known as Punjab Kesari. He played a pivotal role in the Indian freedom struggle.
- ✚ He was part of the famous radical trio Lal Bal Pal, who advocated the Swadeshi movement in India, involving the boycott of all imported goods and the use of Indian made goods. To report the political situation of India, in 1928, the British government set up the Commission, headed by Sir John Simon.
- ✚ When the Commission visited Lahore on October 30, 1928, Lajpat Rai led a non-violent march in protest against it.

6. Martyr's Day is celebrated on 30 January.

- ✚ Five days are declared as Martyrs Day in India to honour those who laid down their lives for the nation. The first fall accordingly on January 30, the day when Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated by Nathuram Godse in 1948.
- ✚ Mahatma Gandhi played a significant role in India's struggle for Independence.
- ✚ He brought forth the awe-inspiring method of non-violent protests, Satyagraha and spread the word of peace and harmony even in dissent.



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7. World Hindi Day observed on 10 January.

- ✚ World Hindi Day is observed every year on 10th January 2020. The day ensures to promote the Hindi language around the world. World Hindi Day is different from National Hindi Day.
- ✚ The day aims to create a suitable environment to promote Hindi worldwide and to present Hindi as the prevalent language of the world.
- ✚ On this day, Indian Foreign Ministries located abroad organize various programs. People of Indian origin living abroad organize various programs and celebrate the day. Unique programs for Hindi on various subjects are organized in all government offices.

8. Nation celebrated the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda as National Youth Day on 12th January.

- ✚ The nation is celebrating the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda as National Youth Day on 12 January. One of the greatest spiritual leaders of India, Swami Vivekananda introduced the world to the Indian philosophies of Vedanta and Yoga.
- ✚ He became popular in the western world after his famous speech at the World's Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in 1893.
- ✚ Vivekananda was the chief disciple of the 19th-century mystic Ramakrishna Paramhansa. He was the founder of the Ramakrishna Math and the Ramakrishna Mission.

9. Armed Forces Veterans Day celebrated on January 14.

- ✚ Every year, Armed Forces Veterans Day is celebrated on January 14. The day is being celebrated since 2017. The day was initially called Armistice Day.
- ✚ The Day began its journey as Armistice Day in order to reflect upon heroism of those who died in country's service. Armistice Day is celebrated on November 11 all over the world.
- ✚ The first Armistice Day was celebrated on November 11, 1919 marking the anniversary of the end of World War I and celebrating the brave soldiers who were part of World War I. However, in India the day was first marked through a resolution passed by the Congress in 1926.

10. Army Day is observed on 15 January.

- ✚ Army Day is observed on 15 January every year. India celebrated 72nd Army Day on 15 January 2020. The special event was organized on this day in the national capital, Delhi. Army Command headquarters in the national capital, as well as in other parts of the country, celebrated the occasion by organizing military parades and other shows of strength.
- ✚ The Indian army was officially established on 1 April 1895. But, only in 1949, after independence, the Army got its first chief. On 15 January, command of the Indian Army was handed over from General Sir Francis Butcher to Lieutenant General KM Cariappa. The transfer of power from the British to India signifies an important moment in Indian history.

11. Mizoram to celebrate Chapchar kut on March 6.

- ✚ Mizoram will celebrate Chapchar Kut, the biggest and most important festival of the Mizos, on March 6. The meeting of Chapchar Kut organizing committee held under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Zoramthanga decided that the festival will be a two-day event.
- ✚ While March 5 will be celebrated as pre-festival, which would be graced by Art and Culture Minister R Lalzirlana as "Kut Pa" or the "father of the festival", the grand celebration will take place on March 6, where that place would be taken by Zoramthanga.
- ✚ "Promotion of Mizos' culture and moral code" has been chosen as the theme for this year Chapchar Kut.

12. Subhash Chandra Bose Jayanti is celebrated on 23 January.

- ✚ Subhash Chandra Bose Jayanti is celebrated on 23 January 2020. The day marks the 124th birth anniversary of Bose. Subhash Chandra Bose's birth anniversary commemorates his contribution to India's struggle for independence.
- ✚ Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose was born in Cuttack, Odisha on 23 January 1897. He ranked second in the matriculation examination and fourth in the Indian Civil Services (ICS) examination.
- ✚ He quit his ICS job and came back to India from England in 1921. He joined India's freedom struggle movement. He was a member of the Indian National Congress (INC). He introduced the famous slogan 'Jai Hind'. He revamped the Indian National Army (INA).

13. National girl child day was celebrated on 24th January to spread awareness about inequalities faced by girl child.

- ✚ India celebrates National Girl Child Day on January 24 annually. It was initiated by Ministry of Women and Child Development in 2008.
- ✚ The aim of the day is to spread awareness about inequalities faced by girls in the country. It also promotes awareness about rights of girl child.
- ✚ Also, it increases importance of health, education and nutrition of girl child. The National Girl Child Day also spreads various atrocities faced by girls in their lives.

14. National Voters' Day was celebrated on 25th January.

- ✚ The Government of India observes 25 January every year as "National Voters' Day".
- ✚ It started on January 25, 2011 to mark the Election Commission's foundation day. The theme for National Voters Day this year is "Electoral Literacy for Stronger Democracy".
- ✚ The purpose of this day is to make people aware of their voting rights and to attract more people, mostly the newly eligible younger generation, to vote and contribute to the electoral political process.

Sports

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

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

2. IOA ends boycott call for 2022 Commonwealth Games.

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

3. 5th IHAI National Ice Hockey Championship-2020 begins in Leh.

- ✚ The 5th Ice Hockey Association of India (IHAI) National Ice Hockey Championship -2020 has begun in Leh. The tournament is being organized at the Karzoo Ice Hockey Rink located in the largest city of the union territory of Ladakh.
- ✚ 6 Teams from hosts Ladakh, Indian army, Chandigarh, Maharashtra, Haryana, and Delhi are participating in the boy's U-20 category.
- ✚ In the girl's category, 4 teams from Ladakh, Chandigarh, Delhi, and Maharashtra are participating in the 5th edition of the tournament. Since April 1989, the Ice Hockey Association of India is a member of the International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF).

4. Indian Grandmaster P. Magesh Chandran wins Hastings International Chess Congress tournament in England.

- ✚ India's P Magesh Chandran remained unbeaten in nine rounds to win the title in the 95th edition of the prestigious Hastings International Chess Congress in Hastings, England.
- ✚ He beat fellow Indian GM Deep Sengupta in the eighth round.
- ✚ France's Romain Edouard, who was the only player to end the tournament a half point behind Chandran, took the second spot. Four players shared third to sixth places with 6.5 points.

5. Leh-Ladakh's boys & girls teams win 5th IHAI National Ice Hockey Championship 2020.

- ✦ In Leh-Ladakh, the home teams won the 5th Ice Hockey Association of India (IHAI) National Ice Hockey Championship -2020 in both Boys and Girls categories.
- ✦ Ladakh Scouts Regiment Centre (LSRC) won the bronze medal, in the Under-20 Boys category. Maharashtra girls stood 3rd in the championship.
- ✦ Ice Hockey National teams will be shortlisted from the Championship and teams will be selected after a coaching and conditioning camp. The Under-20 boys will be playing in the Asia Challenge Cup between 10th and 15th of next month in Thailand.

6. Women weightlifter Sarbjeet Kaur banned for 4 years by NADA.

- ✦ Indian women weightlifter Sarbjeet Kaur has been banned for 4 years from the sport by the National Anti Doping Agency (NADA).
- ✦ This ban was imposed on her for involving in doping violation. The sample of Sarbjeet was collected during 34th Women Senior National Weightlifting Championship held at Vishakhapatnam.
- ✦ The Agency found her guilty of anti-doping rule violation.

7. Rani Rampal to lead Indian Women's Hockey squad for New Zealand tour.

- ✦ Striker Rani Rampal will lead the 20-member Indian Women's Hockey team for the upcoming New Zealand tour.
- ✦ Hockey India also said that Savita will be the vice-captain of the team for the forthcoming tournament, which will begin from 25 January 2020 in Auckland, New Zealand.
- ✦ India will take on New Zealand on January 27 and 29 followed by a match against Great Britain on February 4.

8. ICC U-19 World Cup Cricket begins in South Africa.

- ✦ Indian team, under the captaincy of Priyam Garg, will look to defend the title when it begins its campaign against Sri Lanka at the Oval, Bloemfontein.
- ✦ India are placed in Group 'A' and will face New Zealand, Sri Lanka and Japan, who will be making their first-ever appearance in any World Cup.
- ✦ India is the most successful team in the tournament, having won four titles till date, including the last edition in 2018.

9. Two-day SQAY competition kicks off in Madhya Pradesh.

- ✦ The two-day SQAY competition is being organized at Sports Authority of India (SAI) in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh.
- ✦ The under-21 category tournament is organized under the 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat' campaign.
- ✦ SQAY is a martial art form of Central Asia, in which the players show the skills of fencing. Experts say that the martial art form originated in Kashmir.
- ✦ In this competition, teams from eight states across the country including Uttarakhand, Karnataka, Goa, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Bihar and Tripura will participate.

10. Ratchanok Intanon lifts Indonesia Masters 2020 title.

- ✦ Thailand's Ratchanok Intanon lifted the Indonesia Badminton Masters 2020 women's singles title after defeating Carolina Marin in the summit clash.
- ✦ Intanon defeated Marin 21-19, 11-21, 21-18 in one hour and twenty minutes long match. The clash went into three-games and both the shuttlers tried their 100 per cent to turn things in their favour.
- ✦ Despite losing the first game, the Spanish shuttler made a comeback in the second game and claimed the game by 21-11. Intanon won the match by claiming the third game by 21-18.

11. Sania Mirza wins women's doubles title of WTA International trophy at Hobart.

- ✚ In Tennis, Sania Mirza and her Ukrainian partner Nadiia Kichenok have won the women's doubles title of the WTA International trophy at Hobart in Australia.
- ✚ In the final, they beat Shuai Peng and Shuai Zhang of China 6-4, 6-4.
- ✚ It is Sania's 42nd WTA doubles title and first since Brisbane International trophy in 2007 with American partner Bethanie Mattek-Sands.

12. Maharashtra retains “Khelo India Youth Games” champions trophy.

- ✚ Maharashtra retained first place in the Khelo India Youth Games champions trophy with a rich collection of 256 medals, including 78 gold.
- ✚ Haryana came second with 200 medals (68 gold, 60 silver, 72 bronze), followed by Delhi at third with 122 medals (39 gold, 36 silver, 47 bronze).
- ✚ After 13 days of intense competition, Maharashtra won its second Khelo India Youth Games (KIYG) trophy in a row.

13. India's Esow Alben bags gold in men's Keirin individual event of Six Day Berlin Tournament.

- ✚ In Cycling, India's Esow Alben has bagged a gold in the men's Keirin individual event of the Six Day Berlin Tournament.
- ✚ Czech Republic's Tomas Babek, who won a silver in the 2017 World Championship, came in second while Maximilian Lev of Germany took home the bronze.
- ✚ Keirin event is a six-day track cycling race. Each cyclist competes on every day of the competition.

14. Indian Javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra qualifies for Tokyo Olympics.

- ✚ Star Indian javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra has qualified for the Tokyo Olympics with a throw of 87.86 metres at the Athletics Central North East meeting in South Africa.
- ✚ The 22-year-old Asian Games and Commonwealth Games gold medallist breached the Olympic qualification mark of 85 metres in his fourth attempt at Potchefstroom.
- ✚ Neeraj had missed the IAAF World Championships, the Diamond League and the Asian Championships due to an elbow injury.
- ✚ His last major international competition was the 2018 Jakarta Asian Games where he won gold with a national record of 88.06 metres.

15. Ayonika Paul and Vijayveer Sidhu emerged as winners in National Shooting trials.

- ✚ Olympian Ayonika Paul has won the women's 10m Air Rifle T1 event while Vijayveer Sidhu won the men's 25m Pistol T2 event in the National Shooting trials at Thiruvananthapuram.
- ✚ Ayonika overcame a quality eight-woman field which had the likes of Tokyo 2020 quota holders Apurvi Chandela and Anjum Moudgil among competitors.
- ✚ Ayonika registered a score of 252.0 enroute to victory. Apurvi came third with a score of 229.8 but it was Himachal's Zeena Khitta, who had the best day in women's Air Rifle event, coming in second place with a score of 251.1. Chandigarh's Vijayveer won the junior men's 25m Pistol with an aggregate score of 585.

Books and Authors

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

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

2. Amit Shah releases a book titled 'Karmayoddha Granth', on the life of PM Modi.

- ✚ The Union Minister for Home Affairs Amit Shah released a book titled Karmayoddha Granth in New Delhi. In his book, Amit Shah has shared the life of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi.
- ✚ The book talks about the three parts of PM Modi's life: The first part talks of Modi dedicating his life to an ideology. The second about him entering politics on the ideals of the Sangathan. The third about him Upholding the tenets of Parliamentary Democracy and the Constitution of India to construct an ideal State

3. Jasbinder Bilan wins UK children's book award.

- ✚ India-born author Jasbinder Bilan has bagged a coveted UK children's book award for her debut novel.
- ✚ Her novel, 'Asha and the Spirit Bird', aimed at readers aged nine years and above, beat competition from three other shortlisted books to be named the winner of the 2019 Costa Children's Award this week.
- ✚ Bilan will receive 5,000 pounds as the winner of the award. The award is open to authors resident in the UK and Ireland and presented annually across five categories of First Novel, Novel, Biography, Poetry and Children's Book.

4. Book titled The Story of Yoga: From India to the Contemporary World by Alistair Shearer released.

- ✚ Book titled "first definitive history" of Yoga, "The Story of Yoga: From India to the Contemporary World" has been written by Scottish cultural historian Alistair Shearer, will be released by the end of January, 2020 and published by Penguin Random House. The book discusses about the practice of yoga since ancient time in India till now.
- ✚ It has been endorsed by the likes of Philip Goldberg, author of "American Veda and the life of Yogananda", John Zubrzycki, author of Empire of Enchantment: The Story of Indian Magic" and author-politician Shashi Tharoor.

Awards

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

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

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

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

3. Saurabh Chaudhary wins gold at the 63rd National Shooting Championship.

- ✚ The 17-year-old ace shooter from Uttar Pradesh Saurabh Chaudhary has won the men's 10 metres air pistol gold at the 63rd National Shooting Championship in Bhopal on 4 January 2020. Chaudhary shot a 246.4 to finish on top.
- ✚ Sarabjot Singh of Haryana secured second and scored 243.9 and Abhishek Verma won bronze in a high-quality final.

4. Sucheta Satish won the 2020 Global Child Prodigy Awards.

- ✚ Dubai-based Indian girl Sucheta Satish, who can sing in 120 languages, won the Global Child Prodigy Awards 2020. The 13-year-old known is as the Dubai Indian High School's nightingale.
- ✚ Along with Sucheta Satish, 100 other Global Child prodigies across the world were honoured at the award ceremony in different categories.
- ✚ The award recognized her twin world records for singing in most languages during one concert and the longest live singing concert by a child. She had set as a 12-year-old two years ago in Dubai at the Indian Consulate Auditorium. During the concert, she sang in 102 languages over 6.15 hours.

5. Nitin Gadkari confer National Highways Excellence Awards.

- ✚ The National Highways Excellence Awards will be conferred by the Union Minister for Road Transport & Highways and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) Shri Nitin Gadkari in New Delhi on 14 January 2020.
- ✚ The award by the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways acknowledges the exceptional work that is done in various aspects of highway management.
- ✚ The award instituted in 2018. The award aims to create a spirit of healthy competitiveness amongst all stakeholders involved in the development of highway infrastructure in the country. It encourages to contribute to the larger goal of expanding the road network in the country.

6. Jasprit Bumrah wins Polly Umrigar Award.

- ✚ Jasprit Bumrah bagged the Polly Umrigar Award, the highest award of Indian Cricket. He received this award for the best international cricketer (2018-19) at the BCCI Annual Awards event. Bumrah made his Test debut against South Africa in 2019.
- ✚ Poonam Yadav was given the Best International Cricketer (Female) Award at the same function. It is the top award from the BCCI in the women's category.
- ✚ Jasprit Bumrah was also given the Dilip Sardesai Award. The Polly Umrigar Trophy is given to the best male international cricketer by BCCI.

7. Priya Prakash CEO of HealthSetGo won the 2019 Global Citizen Prize: Cisco Youth Leadership Award.

- ✚ Priya Prakash won the Global Citizen Prize: Cisco Youth Leadership Award for 2019. She is the founder and CEO of India-based HealthSetGo.
- ✚ The award recognizes her school health program that aimed to provided 360-degree healthcare support to children.
- ✚ The award honours individuals aged between 18 to 30 who are bringing about a positive change in the world by solving some of its biggest global challenges.

8. President Kovind confers Rashtriya Bal Puraskar awards to children.

- ✚ President Ram Nath Kovind presented the Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar, 2020 at Rashtrapati Bhavan.
- ✚ The Bal Puraskar is given by the government every year to recognize exceptional achievements of children in various fields. These fields are innovation, scholastic achievements, social service, arts and culture, sports and bravery.
- ✚ The 22 children who were selected for National Bravery Awards also received the awards from the President.

9. DMMC, won the 2020 Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar award.

- ✚ Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar 2020 was announced on the occasion of Subhash Chandra Bose birth anniversary. Disaster Mitigation & Management Centre (DMMC), Uttarakhand under the institution category won the award. DMMC received a certificate and a cash prize of Rs.51 lakhs. The cash prize will be used by the winning institution for Disaster Management related activities only.
- ✚ Disaster Mitigation & Management Centre (DMMC), Uttarakhand under the institution category won the award. DMMC received a certificate and a cash prize of Rs.51 lakhs.
- ✚ The cash prize will be used by the winning institution for Disaster Management related activities only.

10. Dipa Chaudhury & Puneet Gupta awarded Romain Rolland Prize for Translation for their Hindi translation of French cartoon series "Asterix".

- ✚ The Hindi translation of French cartoon series "Asterix" was declared the winner of the 3rd Romain Rolland Prize for Translation at the ongoing Jaipur Literature Festival (JLF).
- ✚ "Dipa Chaudhury and Puneet Gupta of Om Books, who have translated the first three volumes of the 1953 comics series are awarded this year's Romain Rolland prize for translation.

11. Government announces 141 Padma Awards for this year on occasion of 71st Republic Day

- ✚ The government has announced 141 Padma Awards for this year on the occasion of 71st Republic Day. The list comprises 7 Padma Vibhushan, 16 Padma Bhushan and 118 Padma Shri awards.
- ✚ Former Union Ministers George Fernandes, Sushma Swaraj and Arun Jaitley will be awarded Padma Vibhushan posthumously. Pejavara math seer late Vishveshateertha Swamiji will be awarded Padma Vibhushan posthumously.
- ✚ Former Prime Minister of Mauritius Anerood Jugnauth, Hindustani classical vocalist Chhannulal Mishra and Boxer MC Mary Kom will also get Padma Vibhushan. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has congratulated all those who have been selected for Padma Awards.

12. Tamil Nadu Agricultural University Vice chancellor "Dr. N Kumar" gets 'Harit Ratna' Award.

- ✚ Dr. N Kumar, Vice-Chancellor of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, has been conferred 'Harit Ratna Award 2019' by the All India Agricultural Students Association.
- ✚ He has been awarded for dissemination of 30-crore entrepreneurship project in agri-business and for motivating students to the agriculture sector in the State.
- ✚ The award was conferred at the 5th National Youth Convention at Indira Gandhi Krishi Vishwavidyalaya in Raipur recently.

13. India's hockey Captain Rani Rampal wins 'World Games Athlete of the Year' award.

- ✚ Indian women's team captain Rani Rampal became the first-ever hockey player to win the prestigious 'World Games Athlete of the Year' award.
- ✚ The World Games announced the winner on after 20 days of polling by sports fans world-wide.
- ✚ Rani, who has been a member of the national team since she was 15-years-old, currently has more than 240 caps for India.
- ✚ Under Rani's leadership, the Indian women's team qualified for just the third Olympic Games in its history.

Obituaries

1. Vishweshwara Tirtha Swami of Pejawar Mutt passes away.

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

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

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

3. Former Karnataka Governor T N Chaturvedi passes away.

- ✚ Former Governor of Karnataka T N Chaturvedi passed away. T N Chaturvedi served as Comptroller and Auditor General of India from 1984 to 1989.
- ✚ He was awarded the Padma Vibhushan in 1991. He was the Governor of Karnataka from the year 2002 to 2007.

4. Famous artist Akbar Padamsee passed away.

- ✚ One of India's best-known artists, Akbar Padamsee passed away in Coimbatore. He was 91 years old.
- ✚ Akbar Padamsee was born in Mumbai in 1928. He earned a Diploma in Painting from Sir JJ School of Art. He was one of the pioneers of modern Indian art along with S.H. Raza, F.N. Souza, and M.F. Husain.
- ✚ He was also part of the Progressive Artists' Group. He was renowned for his famous artworks like metascapes, Syzygy, Portrait of Husain, Jeune femme aux Cheveux noirs, la tête inclinée, Metascape - III. He won many honours, including a gold medal from the Lalit Kala Akademi, and the Padma Bhushan in 2010.

5. Lt Gen PN Hoon, who secured Siachen for India in 1984, dies at 90.

- ✚ Lt Gen Prem Nath Hoon, who served the army for four decades before hanging up his boots as chief of the Western Command in 1987, died in Panchkula. He was 90.
- ✚ His son Ronny Hoon said the General died after suffering a brain haemorrhage at 6:30 pm. The last rites will be performed at the electric crematorium in Sector 25 at 3:30 pm on Tuesday.
- ✚ Commissioned into the Sikh regiment two years after the Partition, Lt Gen Hoon led the Operation Meghdoot — as the commander of Srinagar-based 15 Corps — to capture the Siachen glacier in 1984.

6. Ruler of Oman Sultan Qaboos bin Said passes away.

- ✚ The longest serving ruler of Oman Sultan Qaboos bin Said passed away. He was a charismatic and visionary leader who transformed Oman into a modern and prosperous nation. He was ruling Oman since 1970.
- ✚ The Sultan is the prime decision-maker in Oman and holds the portfolio of Prime Minister, supreme commander of the armed forces, minister of foreign affairs, minister of finance and minister of defence.
- ✚ The former culture minister Haitham bin Tariq Al Said was sworn in as the country's new ruler.

7. Noted Kerala Cartoonist Thomas Antony passes away at 62.

- ✚ Kerala Cartoonist and Secretary of Kerala Cartoon Academy Thomas Antony passed away at Kottackal town in Malappuram district, Kerala after suffering from heart attack. He was 62. He was born in Kottayam District Kerala India.
- ✚ He worked as a cartoonist in Deepika daily and served as the executive artist with Malayalam daily 'Metro Vaartha'.
- ✚ In 2007 he won United Nations Political Cartoon Award and the World Press Cartoon Award, instituted by an organization based in Lisbon, Portugal, in 2018.

8. China's first and oldest female tractor driver Liang Jun, whose image features on Renminbi currency notes, dies at 91.

- ✚ China's first and oldest female tractor driver Liang Jun, whose image features on Renminbi currency notes, has died. Liang was 90.
- ✚ She died of illness in Harbin, the capital of northeastern province Heilongjiang. Liang was the first female tractor driver of New China. Her image was featured on the one-Yuan note of the third set of the Chinese currency Renminbi.

9. Former cricketer Bapu Nadkarni Passes Away.

- ✚ Former India all-rounder cricketer Bapu Nadkarni, who built an extraordinary career with his parsimonious left-arm spin, has died at the age of 86.
- ✚ Nadkarni enjoyed a 13-year international career, during which he played 41 Tests and snared 88 wickets.
- ✚ The legendary cricketer will be best remembered for bowling 21 consecutive maiden overs against England in a Test match in Chennai.
- ✚ He also served as a member of the National Selection Committee and also as the Joint Honorary Secretary of the Mumbai Cricket Association (MCA).

10. Veteran Odia Hindustani vocalist Sunanda Patnaik passes away at 85.

- ✚ Eminent Indian classical singer and daughter of noted Odia poet Baikunthanath Patnaik, Sunanda Patnaik passed away.
- ✚ Singer of Gwalior gharana of classical music, Sunanda was referred to as 'Guruma' in the classical music circle. Her popular devotional Odia song 'Jeevana Patra Mo Bhariccha Kete Mote' that was penned by her father, still holds a special place in the hearts of Odias.
- ✚ For her contribution to Hindustani classical music, Sunanda was honoured with the Odisha Sangeet Natak Akademi award in 1970 and 1971 and the Central Sangeet Natak Akademi Award for the year 2012.

11. Congress leader Shamsher Singh Surjewala passes away.

- ✚ Veteran Congress leader Shamsher Singh Surjewala has passed away following prolonged illness.
- ✚ Surjewala, father of party leader Randeep Surjewala, breathed his last at the AIIMS hospital in Delhi. Shamsher Surjewala remained a five-time MLA and one-time Rajya Sabha MP.
- ✚ He was also the former president of the Haryana Congress and a former minister. He was the president of the Haryana Krishak Samaj and fought for farmers rights.

12. NBA legend Kobe Bryant killed in helicopter crash

- ✚ Kobe Bryant, one of the NBA's all-time greatest players whose international stardom transcended basketball, was killed at age 41 in a helicopter crash near Los Angeles.
- ✚ His daughter Gianna, 13, were among the nine killed when the aircraft came down in Calabasas.
- ✚ Bryant rocketed to fame as an 18-year-old rookie and played 20 years for the Los Angeles Lakers, winning five NBA championships.
- ✚ The cause of the crash was unknown, and an investigation by the Federal Aviation Administration and the National Transportation Safety Board could take months.

13. Noted artist and sculptor Sher Singh Kukkal passes away

- ✚ Noted artist and sculptor Sher Singh Kukkal passed away. He was awarded Senior Fellowship in Visual Art Photography by Union Ministry Of Culture during 2008-09.

14. Sahityacharya Dr Golok Chandra Goswami passes away.

- ✚ Eminent scholar, linguist and litterateur Sahityacharya Dr Golok Chandra Goswami passed away.
- ✚ Dr Goswami attended a number of national and international seminars on linguistics, representing Assam and India. He was the founder president of Assam Bhasha Bigyan Samiti.
- ✚ Goswami pursued his master's degree in Assamese language in Gauhati University, Assam. In 1985 he retired from Gauhati University as head of the Assamese department. In 2018, he was awarded with Hemchandra Barua Bhasha Sahitya Sadhana award by Satin-Pratidin group.

15. Former Kerala Minister and veteran Congress leader M Kamalam passes away at 92.


- ✚ Former Kerala state Minister and veteran Congress leader M Kamalam passed away at her residence in Kozhikode. Kamalam was active in politics for seven decades.
- ✚ She was Co-operation Minister between 1982-1985 during Chief Minister K Karunakaran's tenure.
- ✚ She represented the Kalpetta Assembly constituency twice, having won in 1980 and in 1982.
- ✚ During her long political career, she served as Vice President and general secretary of the Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) and member of the All India Congress Committee (AICC). She had also served as Chairperson of the Kerala Women's Commission.

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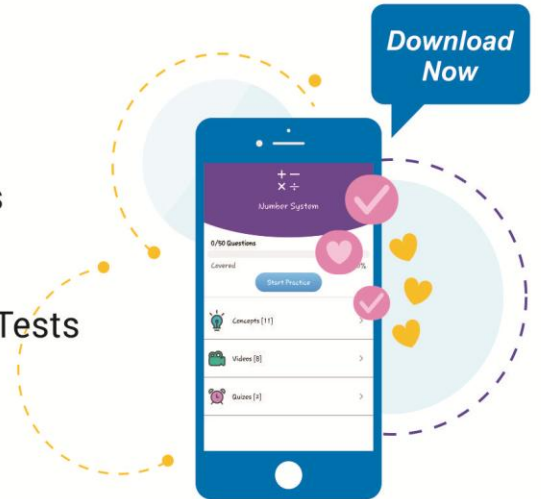
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