

WEEKLY G.K.

09 December – 15 December
2019

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National News

1. Uttar Pradesh to set up 218 fast track courts

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

Foot Notes:

About Uttar Pradesh

Capital: Lucknow

Governor: Anandiben Patel

Chief Minister: Yogi Adityanath

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

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

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

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

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

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

Foot Notes:

About Border Roads Organisation

Founded: 7 May 1960

Founder: Jawaharlal Nehru.

Headquarters: New Delhi

Director General (DG): Lt. Gen. Harpal Singh.

Motto: Everything is achievable through hard work.

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

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

Foot Notes:**About United States****President:** Donald Trump**Capital:** Washington, D.C.**6. Lok Sabha passed the 2019 International Financial Services Centres Authority Bill.**

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

Foot Notes:**Finance Minister:** Nirmala Sitharaman**7. Andhra cabinet approves Disha Act providing for harsher punishments for crimes against women.**

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

Foot Notes:**About Andhra Pradesh****Governor:** Biswabhusan Harichandan**Chief Minister:** Y. S. Jaganmohan Reddy**8. Lok Sabha passes Central Sanskrit Universities Bill, 2019.**

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

Foot Notes:**Human Resource Development Minister:** Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal**9. Rajya Sabha passed the bill to extend the reservation for SC, ST by 10 more years.**

- ✚ Rajya Sabha passed a Constitution amendment bill to extend reservation to SCs and STs in Lok Sabha and state assemblies by another 10 years. Now the bill will be sent to the states for ratification by 50% of the assemblies before it comes into force.
- ✚ Reservation for members of Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) was given for the past 70 years in Lok Sabha and state assemblies. The reservation is due to end on 25 January 2020.

- In Parliament, there are 84 members from the Scheduled Caste and 47 from the Scheduled Tribe communities. There are 614 SC members and 554 ST members in the state assemblies across India.

10. 7th Economic Census: India's 1st digital census launched in New Delhi.

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

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International News & Foreign Affairs

1. Saudi Arabia ends gender segregation at restaurants

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

Foot Notes:

About Saudi Arabia

Capital: Riyadh

Currency: Saudi riyal

King: Salman of Saudi Arabia

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

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

3. Malaysia records first polio case in 27 years

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

Foot Notes:**About Malaysia****Capital:** Kuala Lumpur**Currency:** Malaysian ringgit**4. WTA 2019 selects Abu Dhabi as World's Leading Sports Tourism Destination.**

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

Foot Notes:**About World Travel Awards (WTA)****Country:** United Kingdom (UK)**Location:** Berkeley Square House, UK**First Awarded:** 1993**5. SIPRI's Arms Industry Database report: global arms sales up by 4.6%; India ranked 10th and US topped.**

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

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

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

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

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

Foot Notes:**About Canada****Capital:** Ottawa**Prime Minister (PM):** Justin Trudeau**Currency:** Canadian dollar**8. Cabinet approves Social Security Agreement between India and Brazil.**

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

Foot Notes:**About Brazil****Capital:** Brasília**President:** Jair Bolsonaro**Currency:** Brazilian Real**9. US replaces Kuwait as India's 6th biggest oil supplier.**

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

Foot Notes:**About United States****President:** Donald Trump**Capital:** Washington, D.C.**Currency:** United States Dollar**About United States****Capital:** Kuwait City**Currency:** Kuwaiti dinar**Prime Minister:** Sabah Al-Khalid Al-Sabah

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

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

Foot Notes:**About Papua New Guinea****Capital:** Port Moresby**Currency:** Papua New Guinean kina**Prime Minister:** James Marape**11. Poland out of EU's Climate Neutrality 2050 plan.**

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

Foot Notes:**About Poland****Capital:** Warsaw**President:** Andrzej Duda**Prime Minister:** Mateusz Morawiecki**12. International Hockey Federation unveiled a new world ranking system for 2020 in Lausanne, Switzerland.**

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

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

- ✦ Maldives government has signed a contract with a joint venture of Indian companies. The contract aims to prepare project report and the development of Addu, which is the second biggest city in the island nation.
- ✦ The contract was signed L & T engineering limited and Lea associates south Asia for the Addu Road and Reclamation Project. The project includes land reclamation, construction of roads and storm water drainage system in Addu. This will upgrade existing infrastructure and mitigate the flood situation in Addu.
- ✦ Financing of the project will be done by EXIM bank of India through line of credit of USD 800 million.

Foot Notes:**About Maldives****Capital:** Malé**President:** Ibrahim Mohamed Solih**Currency:** Maldivian rufiyaa**14. World Design Organization to launch World Design Protopolis in Bengaluru.**

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

Foot Notes:**World Design Organisation****Headquarters:** Montreal, Canada**President:** Srini Srinivasan**15. India to host the 36th International Geological Congress (IGC) in 2020, in New Delhi.**

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

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

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

Foot Notes:**About UNICEF****Formation:** 11 December 1946**Headquarters:** New York City, U.S.**Executive Director:** Henrietta H. Fore

It is responsible for providing humanitarian and developmental aid to children around the world.

New Appointments and Person in News

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

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

Foot Notes:

About Finland

President: Sauli Niinistö

Capital: Helsinki

Currency: Euro

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

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

Foot Notes:

About Dhanlaxmi Bank:

Founded: 1927

Chairman (Part-time): Mr. Sajeew Krishnan

Tagline: Tann. Mann. Dhan

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

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

Foot Notes:

About NADA

CEO: Navin Agarwal

Headquarters: Montreal, Canada

4. Salman Khan appointed as brand ambassador of Pepsi

- ✦ On December 11, 2019 Food and beverage company PepsiCo has appointed Bollywood actor Salman Khan (born as Abdul Rashid Salim Salman Khan) as brand ambassador for its flagship Pepsi brand of carbonated beverage in India.
- ✦ The commercial will be launched in 2020 and will take up the "SWAG" themed campaign which was launched in the summer of 2019.

- Previously Salman Khan was the brand ambassador of Pepsico's rival company Coca-Cola's popular Thums Up and also as the brand ambassador of Parle Agro-backed soft drink Appy Fizz. He also previously endorsed PepsiCo's Mountain Dew drink.

Foot Notes:**About Pepsico**

Founded: August 28, 1898.

Founder: Caleb Bradham.

Headquarters: New York, United States (US).

Chief Executive Officer (CEO): Ramon Laguarta.

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

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

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

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

Foot Notes:**About Spain**

Capital: Madrid

Prime Minister: Pedro Sánchez

Currency: Euro

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

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

Foot Notes:**About Forbes**

First issue: September 15, 1917.

Editor-in-chief: Steve Forbes.

Headquarters: New Jersey, U.S.

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

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

Banking

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

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

Foot Notes:**About Vakrangee****Formation:** 1990**MD & Group CEO:** Mr. Anil Khanna

It has planned target to reach 3,00,000 Nextgen Vakrangee Kendras by 2024.

About Union Bank of India (UBI)**Founded:** 11 November 1919**Headquarters:** Mumbai, Maharashtra**MD & CEO:** Shri Rajkiran Rai G.**Tagline:** Good People to Bank with.**2. Asian Development Bank reduced India's economic growth forecast for FY 2019-20 to 5.1%.**

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

Foot Notes:**About Asian Development Bank****Headquarters:** Mandaluyong, Philippines**President:** Masatsugu Asakawa**3. Edelweiss AMC launches India's 1st corporate bond called 'Bharat Bond ETF'.**

- ✚ Edelweiss Asset Management Company (AMC), a subsidiary of Edelweiss Capital Limited (ECL) has launched the India's 1st Corporate Bond ETF (exchange trade fund) called the Bharat Bond ETF. This bond will invest only in bonds rated AAA bonds of Public Sector companies.

- ✚ The funds that will come from the investment in this bond will be invested in companies included in the bond index.
- ✚ This ETF is an initiative of Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM), Government of India (GoI), and then it mandates Edelweiss AMC to design and manage the product.

Foot Notes:**About Edelweiss Capital Limited****Headquarters:** Mumbai**Founder:** Rashesh Shah**Founded:** 1995

Edelweiss AMC acts as the Investment Manager to Edelweiss Mutual Fund.



Science Tech & Defence

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

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

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

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

Foot Notes:**About UAE****Capital:** Abu Dhabi**Currency:** United Arab Emirates dirham**President:** Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan**About US****Attorney General:** William Barr**President:** Donald Trump

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

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

Foot Notes:**About Russia****President:** Vladimir Putin**Capital:** Moscow**Currency:** Russian Ruble**4. In PSLV's 50th mission, ISRO successfully launches RISAT-2BRI**

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

Foot Notes:**About ISRO****Headquarters:** Bengaluru**Founder:** Vikram Sarabhai**Founded:** 15 August 1969**Director:** Kailasavadivoo Sivan**5. International Seminar cum Exhibition on Naval Weapon Systems 'NAVARMS – 2019' held in Delhi.**

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

Important Days

1. International Anti-Corruption Day: 9 December

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

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

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

3. Human Rights Day: 10 December

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

Foot Notes:**About United Nations****Secretary General:** António Guterres**Headquarters:** New York, United States**Founded:** 24 October 1945, San Francisco, California, United States**4. International Mountain Day observed on December 11; theme: ‘Mountains Matter for Youth’**

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

5. UNICEF Day observed on December 11, 2019

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

Foot Notes:**About UNICEF****Headquarters:** New York, United States**Executive Director:** Henrietta H. Fore

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

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

Foot Notes:**About United Nations General Assembly****President:** Tijjani Muhammad-Bande**Headquarters:** New York, United States

Sports

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

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

Foot Notes:**About Russia****President:** Vladimir Putin**Capital:** Moscow**Currency:** Russian ruble**About World Anti-Doping Agency****Headquarters:** Montreal, Canada**President:** Sir Craig Reedie**2. Wasim Jaffer, form Maharashtra becomes the first Indian Cricketer to play 150 Ranji Matches.**

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

Foot Notes:**About Ranji Trophy****Named after:** Ranjitsinhji Vibhaji**Format:** First-class cricket (Domestic)

First edition: 1934 (Initiation took place between 1934-1935)

Current champion: Vidarbha, Maharashtra (2nd title)

3. FICCI India selects Hockey player Rani rampal & shooter Saurabh chaudhary as 'Sportsperson of the year 2019'.

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

Foot Notes:

About FICCI

Formation: 1927

Headquarters: New Delhi

President: Sandeep Somay



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Books and Authors

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

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

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

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

Awards

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

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

Foot Notes:

About Odisha

Capital: Bhubaneswar

Governor: Prof. Ganeshi Lal

Chief Minister: Naveen Patnaik

2. Gurugram-based startup wins 'Space Oscar' award.

- ✚ The Gurugram-based startup blue Sky Analytics has created an application called 'Zuri' that won the Copernicus Masters Award also called Space Oscars, under the Social Entrepreneurship category.
- ✚ The award was given by the Earth observation programme managed by the European Commission (EU) in partnership with the European Space Agency (ESA).
- ✚ The application uses satellite data to provide improved monitoring, supply chain and pricing analysis as well as the allocation of crop waste to be used as raw materials in other industries.

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

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

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

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

Foot Notes:

About World Economic Forum (WEF)

Founded: January 1971

Headquarters: Cologny, Switzerland

Chairman: Klaus Schwab

Obituaries

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

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

Foot Notes:

About United States (US)

Capital: Washington, D.C.

Currency: US dollar.

President: Donald Trump.

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

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

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

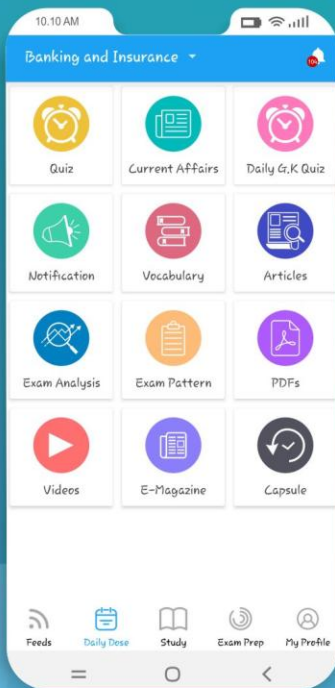
- ✚ Renowned Telugu actor and writer Gollapudi Maruti Rao, who enthralled people with his writings and acting for several decades, passed away.
- ✚ He was 80. Rao, who acted in around 250 films in about four decades, passed away in Chennai following a cardiac arrest, his family members, told reporters.

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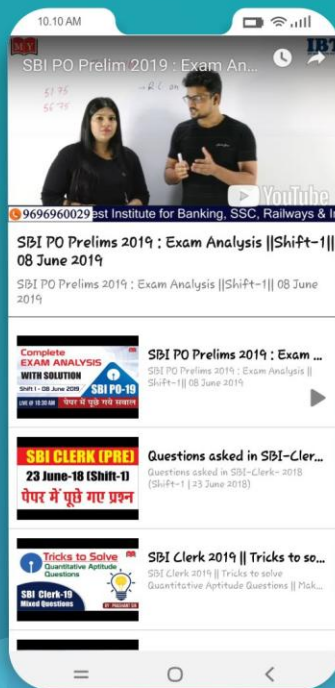
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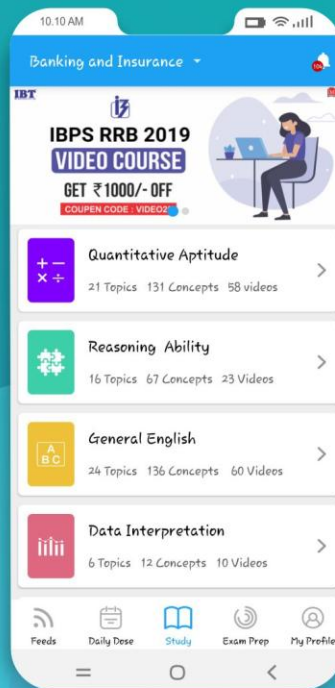
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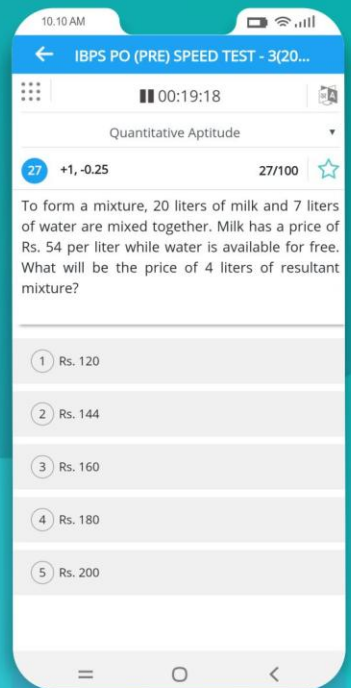
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