

# CURRENT AFFAIRS

## December 2019



Summary and Multiple Choice Questions

## Current Affairs – December 2019

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This is a guide to provide you a precise summary and a huge collection of Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs) covering national and international current affairs for the month of **December 2019**.

This guide will help you in preparing for Indian competitive examinations like Bank PO, Banking, Railway, IAS, PCS, UPSC, CAT, GATE, CDS, NDA, MCA, MBA, Engineering, IBPS, Clerical Grade and Officer Grade, etc.

## Audience

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Aspirants who are preparing for different competitive exams like Bank PO, Banking, Railway, IAS, PCS, UPSC, CAT, GATE, CDS, NDA, MCA, MBA, Engineering, IBPS, Clerical Grade, Officer Grade, etc.

Even though you are not preparing for any exams but are willing to have news encapsulated in a roll, which you can walk through within 30 minutes, then we have put all the major points for the whole month in a precise and interesting way.

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# Appointments

## 1. Soma Roy Burman took charge as new Controller General of Accounts

Soma Roy Burman took charge as the new Controller General of Accounts, CGA. She is the 24th CGA and the seventh woman to hold this coveted position. She took over from J P S Chawla.



Burman is a 1986-batch Indian Civil Accounts Service officer. Prior to assuming the charge of CGA, Burman served as Additional Controller General of Accounts in the office of the CGA. She handled the critical areas of accounting rules, policy and reforms, financial reporting, data analytics, cash and budget management.

## 2. Masatsugu Asakawa elected as ADB President

Masatsugu Asakawa has been unanimously elected President of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) by its Board of Governors. Asakawa, 61, currently Special Advisor to Japan's Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, will assume office as ADB's 10th President on 17 January 2020. He will succeed Takehiko Nakao.



Asakawa has held a range of senior positions at the Ministry of Finance of Japan, including Vice Minister of Finance for International Affairs and gained diverse professional experience in development policy, foreign exchange markets and international tax policy.

## 3. News Broadcasters Federation elected Arnab Goswami as governing board president

The News Broadcasters Federation elected journalist, managing director and editor-in-chief of Republic TV Arnab Goswami as the president of its governing board. The NBF president will be responsible to lead a group to form the self-regulatory body – News Broadcasters Federation Authority. The broadcaster's body comprises of 78 news channels in 14 languages from 25 states.



News Broadcasters Federation, formed in July 2019 with 50 news channels, was advised by Minister of Information and Broadcasting Prakash Javadekar to form a strong self-regulatory mechanism, while also recognising the importance of regional news channels.

#### 4. Girish Chandra Chaturvedi appointed as new chairman of NSE

National Stock Exchange of India Ltd appointed Girish Chandra Chaturvedi as its new chairman, replacing Ashok Chawla. He is a former Indian Administrative Services officer who retired in January 2013 as Secretary, Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.



At present, Chaturvedi is on the board of ICICI Bank and the member of the government appointed board of Infrastructure Leasing and Financial Services Ltd (IL&FS). He has served as chairman of Pension Fund Regulatory & Development Authority, Petronet LNG Ltd, Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves Ltd and Oil Industries Development Board.

#### 5. Ravi Mittal appointed I&B Secretary

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has appointed Ravi Mittal as the new Information and Broadcasting Secretary. Mr Mittal, who belongs to 1986 batch of Bihar Cadre of Indian Administrative Service, will replace Mr Amit Khare who has been appointed as the new secretary of the Department of Higher Education.



Mr Mittal is currently working as the Special Secretary in the Department of Financial Services in the Ministry of Finance.

#### 6. Lt Gen M.M. Naravane appointed as Chief of Army Staff

Government appointed Vice Chief of Army Staff Lt Gen Manoj Mukund Naravane, as the next Chief of the Army Staff after the retirement of General Bipin Rawat. Naravane has been part of the Indian Peace Keeping Force in Sri Lanka during 'Operation Pawan'. He had privilege of commanding the Republic Day Parade in 2017 in his capacity as the General Officer Commanding (GOC) Delhi Area.



The General Officer has commanded 2nd Battalion, Rashtriya Rifles (Sikh Light Infantry), 106 Infantry Brigade, Inspector General Assam Rifles (North) at Kohima, Nagaland and 2 Corps.

### **7. Devesh Srivastava appointed as GIC chief**

Devesh Srivastava took charge as the Chairman and Managing director of General Insurance Corporation of India. He has served in the Reinsurance Department and has handled the speciality lines of Aviation, Marine Hull and Cargo, Oil & Energy, Miscellaneous, Motor and Liability till he was selected to head the UK branch of the Corporation in 2013.



Devesh Srivastav has experience of working in the departments of Human Resource & Training, Re-Insurance Worldwide (RIWW), Health, Corporate Communications, CMDs Secretariat, Innovation Centre, Ministry & IRDAI matters prior to his elevation.

### **8. Sridhar Patra appointed as CMD of NALCO**

The Appointments Committee of Cabinet appointed Sridhar Patra as the new chairman - cum-managing director of NALCO (National Aluminium Company Limited). Prior to this appointment, he was Director (Finance) in the National Aluminium Company Limited (NALCO). ACC has appointed Sridhar Patra as the CMD of NALCO till the date of his superannuation, i.e. October 31, 2024.



Patra has experience of working as Director (Finance) with THDC India Ltd. He has worked in Odisha Mining Corporation Ltd, Indian Rare Earths Ltd and Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd.

### **9. Sangita Reddy appointed as the President of FICCI for 2019-20**

Sangita Reddy, Joint Managing Director, Apollo Hospitals Group, has taken over as FICCI President for 2019-20 from Sandip Somany, Vice Chairman and Managing Director, HSIL Limited. She was an Executive Member of NASSCOM and was on the Board for Development Institute, USA and GAVI.Org.



Sangita Reddy has been conferred with an Honorary Doctorate by Macquarie University Australia, in recognition of her efforts to bring transformative changes in healthcare, development of Health IT. She is an Honorary Consul of Brazil in Hyderabad, appointed by the Govt. of India.

### 10. Harsh Vardhan Shringla appointed as Foreign Secretary

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the appointment of Harsh Vardhan Shringla as the new foreign secretary with effect from 29.01.2020. An officer of the 1984 batch of the Indian Foreign Service (IFS), he is currently India's ambassador to the US and will take over from incumbent Vijay Gokhale.



During a diplomatic career spanning 35 years, Shringla has served as the high commissioner to Bangladesh and ambassador in Thailand. He has also headed the UN political and Saarc divisions in the external affairs ministry.

### 11. Indian-American Dr Monisha Ghosh named 1st woman CTO at FCC in US

Indian-American Dr Monisha Ghosh has been appointed as the first woman Chief Technology Officer at the US government's powerful Federal Communications Commission (FCC). She replaces Dr. Eric Burger.



The FCC regulates interstate and international communications by radio, television, wire, satellite and cable in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and US territories. The FCC as an independent US government agency overseen by Congress is the federal agency responsible for implementing and enforcing America's communications law and regulations.

### 12. Niranjn Hiranandani appointed as Assocham President

Assocham has appointed Dr. Niranjn Hiranandani, Founder & MD, Hiranandani Group as its Senior Vice President. He succeeds Welspun Group Chairman Balkrishan Goenka. Hiranandani is widely known as 'Builder Extraordinaire' and as the man responsible for changing the skyline of Mumbai with the delivery of landmark project 'Hiranandani Gardens,' Powai.



Some of his achievements include drafting the State Policy for Slum Rehabilitation in Mumbai and trustee for creation of Nathdwara Township as a heritage destination. Apart from being a Forbes' top listed Indian real estate developer, Dr Hiranandani is also a renowned philanthropist.



### 13. Bipin Rawat appointed India's first CDS

Bipin Rawat has been appointed as the first chief of defence staff (CDS). The cabinet committee on security (CCS) cleared the creation of the post of CDS, which was first proposed after the 1999 Kargil war.

The CDS will be a four-star general, head the department of military affairs and report to the defence minister on warfare and defence strategy for all three Armed Forces. The other countries that hold Chief of Defence Staff in the world includes Italy, France, China, Spain, UK, Canada and Japan.



# Awards

## 1. President of India presented the National Florence Nightingale Awards

The President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, presented the National Florence Nightingale Awards 2019 to Lini Puthussery, the nurse from Kerala who died due to Nipah virus that she contracted while treating a patient last year during the Nipah outbreak.



President Kovind presented the National Florence Nightingale Awards to the nursing community yesterday on International Nurses Day. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has announced 2020 as the year of the nurse and mid-wife.

## 2. ET Lifetime Public Service Award to Former FM (Late) Arun Jaitley

Former Finance Minister Arun Jaitley was conferred posthumously the Lifetime Achievement award for Public Service at the Economic Times Award 2019. The award was received by Arun Jaitley's spouse Sangeeta Jaitley. Late Arun Jaitley was the former Finance Minister of India.



Arun Jaitley worked as Minister of Corporate Affairs, Minister of Defence, Minister of Information and Broadcasting, Minister of Law and Justice as well as Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting.

## 3. Awards given for short film competition on environment

The Ministry of Environment gave away awards for a short film competition on environment. Additional Secretary in the Environment Ministry, Ravi Agrawal presented the awards to several school students and professionals for their documentaries and films.



Toon Club & Ecole Mondiale World School won 1st prize for Clean and Green title. Nishant Kumar Nishu, college student, won 2nd prize for 'One life' title. Kushagra Gaur won 'special mention' for 'Our world' title. The award distribution ceremony was the culmination of the four day festival where all the shortlisted films were showcased.

#### 4. “Shilpa Shetty App” won 2019 Google Play Awards

Bollywood actor Shilpa Shetty’s fitness and wellness app “Shilpa Shetty App” was awarded Google Play’s Best Apps of 2019 at 2019 Google Play Awards in the ‘Personal Growth’ category. This health and fitness app contains yoga routines to help you increase focus and maintain a healthy balance in life.



Shilpa Shetty App has 15+ programs which includes a 21-Day Weight Loss Program, Post-Pregnancy Weight Loss Program, Daily Yoga Routine, Office Yoga Routine and Flat Belly Program amongst others. The app also has yoga and meditation programmes to relax and rejuvenate the mind.

#### 5. Ethiopia's PM Abiy Ahmed received Nobel Peace Prize

Ethiopia's Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has received the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts to achieve international peace and co-operation. This year's Nobel Peace Prize was the 100th to be awarded. The Nobel Peace Prize consists of a diploma, a gold medal and a cheque for nine million Swedish kronor (850,000 euros).



Abiy Ahmed was awarded the Nobel peace prize for his efforts to resolve the long-running conflict with neighboring foe Eritrea.

#### 6. 4 eminent diplomats honoured with 2019 ‘Diwali – Power of One Award

Four prominent diplomats were honoured with ‘The Diwali – Power of One’ award 2019 in recognition of their work, especially at the United Nations, for a secure and peaceful world.



##### Diplomats who were honored were:

- Former foreign minister and Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan to the UN: Kairat Abdrakhmanov.
- Former Permanent Representative of Cyprus to the United Nations: Nicholas Emiliou.
- Former Chef de Cabinet to the President of the 72nd Session of the UN General Assembly and Permanent Representative of Slovakia to the UN: Frantisek Ruzicka.
- Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations: Volodymyr Yelchenko.

### 7. Gurgaon-based startup, Blue Sky Analytics, won ‘Space Oscar’

Gurgaon-based startup, Blue Sky Analytics, has won Copernicus Masters award, also dubbed as ‘Space Oscars’. The award was given for its application, Zuri. It is AI-enabled platform that uses satellite data for improved monitoring, supply chain and pricing analysis as well as allocation of crop waste for use in other industries as raw material.



The prize is also dubbed as ‘Space Oscars’. Seven groups got the prize in different categories. Zuri was selected under social entrepreneurship category.

### 8. President of India presented Visitor’s Awards 2019

President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind presented the 5th Visitor’s Awards at the conference of Vice-Chancellors of Central Universities, Directors of IISERs.

Category	Winner
Research in Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences	Prof. Sibnath Deb (Pondicherry)
Research in Physical Sciences	Prof. Sanjay Puri (Delhi)
Research in Biological Sciences	Prof. Asad Ullah Khan (U.P.) and Dr Partima (Delhi)
Technology Development	Dr. Shaon Ray Chaudhuri (Tripura)



### 9. CBI officer B. P. Raju wins India Cyber Cop of the Year 2019 award

CBI officer B P Raju won the 'India Cyber Cop of the Year 2019' award by NASSCOM-DSCI during the Annual Information Security Summit held at Gurgaon, Haryana. He won for cracking a fraud case in an online entrance exam conducted by an engineering college in Rajasthan.



While investigating the case, Raju had arrested nine accused persons and collected incriminating evidence from digital devices, which revealed the modus operandi adapted by the accused.

### 10. Amitabha Bagchi won 2019 DSC Prize for South Asian Literature

Amitabha Bagchi's novel Half The Night Is Gone won the \$25,000 DSC Prize for South Asian Literature 2019 among six shortlisted authors and novels. Bagchi's novel is a post-colonial saga that unfolds over three generations and explores human relationships. It has inventive use of language, and its memorable well defined characters make it an outstanding read. It weaves together three parallel stories, interrogating the relationships.



The DSC Prize has always encouraged diverse voices that bring alive the layered nuances of South Asian life.

### 11. Sahitya Akademi announced annual Sahitya Akademi Awards in 23 languages

Sahitya Akademi announced its annual Sahitya Akademi Awards in 23 languages for the year 2019. In Hindi, Nand Kishore has been awarded for his Poetry 'Chheelate Hue Apne Ko' and in English Dr Shashi Tharoor has been awarded for his Non-Fiction 'An Era of Darkness'.

भाषा	विजेता का नाम	विजेता का नाम
अंग्रेजी	डॉ. शशि थारूर	अन एरा ऑफ डार्कनेस
हिंदी	नंद किशोर	चिल्लते हुए अप्ने को
तमिल	चो धरमन	सूल
गुजराती	रतिल बोरिसगर	मोजामा रेवु रे
संस्कृत	पेन्ना मधुसूदन	प्राज्नाचक्षुषम
उर्दू	शाफेय किद्वी	सावनेह-ए-सिर सैद: एक बज्देद

In Tamil, Cho Dharman has been awarded for his Novel 'Sool' and in Gujarati, Ratilal Borisagar has awarded for his Essays 'Mojama Revu Re'. In Sanskrit, Penna Madhusudan will get the award for his Poetry 'Prajnachakshusham' and in Urdu, Shafey Kidwai will be awarded for his Biography 'Sawaneh-E-Sir Syed: Ek Bazdeed'.

### 12. Portugal announced Gandhi Citizenship Education Prize

Portuguese Prime Minister, Antonio Costa, has announced setting up of Gandhi Citizenship Education Prize, each year inspired by his different thoughts and quotes. The prize was announced to help perpetuate Mahatma Gandhi's ideals. The first edition of this prize will be dedicated to animal welfare.



Prime Minister Antonio Costa made the announcement while attending the second meeting of the National Committee for the Commemoration Mahatma Gandhi's 150th Birth Anniversary chaired by President Ram Nath Kovind. He is the only foreign Prime Minister to be a part of the committee.

### 13. Malayali boy Aditya bags top bravery award

Aditya K. of Kozhikode, Kerala won most prestigious of the National Bravery Awards, given away by the Indian Council for Child Welfare. With this, he became the first child from the State to bag the Bharat Award for bravery. Aditya showed bravery in rescuing 20 people from a bus carrying members of the Calicut University Pensioners' Forum and their families when it caught fire coming down a steep mountain road.



Other recipients' of this award were Muhammed Mohsin and Fatah, for saving the lives of three children and rescuing a woman and a girl from an approaching train respectively.

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

Major Anoop Mishra was awarded Army Design Bureau Excellence Award by the Army Chief for indigenously developing Sarvatra Kavach', a bulletproof jacket to develop his bulletproof jacket the day hit by a stray bullet during an operation. The jacket is developed at the College of Military Engineering in Pune.



Sarvatra Kavach can provide full-body protection against sniper rifle bullets even 10 meters. The sniper attacks the Line of Control and Kashmir valley for which the full-body protection will be provided to the soldiers.

### 15. Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu conferred 66th National Film Awards

The Vice President of India, Shri M Venkaiah Naidu conferred National Film Awards for the year 2018 in various categories at its 66th edition. The list of key winners is:

S. No	Category	Winner
1	Best Feature Film	HELLARO (Gujarati)
2	Best Popular Film Providing Wholesome Entertainment	Badhaai Ho (Hindi)
3	Best Film on Social Issues	Padman (Hindi)
4	Best Director Award	Aditya Dhar for Uri: The Surgical Strike (Hindi)
5	Best Actor Award	Ayushman Khurana and Vicky Kaushal for their performances in Andhadhun and Uri: The Surgical Strike respectively (Hindi)
6	Best Actress	Keerthy Suresh for her performance in Mahanati (Telugu)

### **16. Kamareddy won UNICEF-2019 Award for Swachh Bharat implementation**

Kamareddy district of Telangana won United Nations International Children's and Education Fund (UNICEF)-2019 Award for Swachh Bharat implementation in water sanitation and hygiene sectors for the year 2019. Kamareddy district worked hard in construction of individual sanitary lavatories, swachh darpan wall paintings, swachh survekshan, swachh sundar shouchalay and many other activities.



The award was result of combined efforts of district rural development organisation, district panchayat office, mandal praja parishads, panchayat secretaries, sarpanches and field assistants of Kamareddy district.

### **17. Indian Actress Priyanka Chopra won UNICEF's Danny Kaye Humanitarian Award**

Indian actress Priyanka Chopra was honored with UNICEF's Danny Kaye Humanitarian Award by the United Nations Children's Fund at the 15th annual UNICEF Snowflake Ball. She was honored for her work as UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador for Child Rights. Fashion designer Diane von Furstenberg handed over the award to the actor.



Priyanka Chopra is the global UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador for Child Rights and is known for raising her voice for children's education. Danny Kaye was UNICEF's first celebrity goodwill ambassador who made a commitment for helping the world's children.

### **18. AAO bestows Life Achievement honour to Dr Santosh G Honavar**

Dr. Santosh G Honavar was conferred with the American Academy of Ophthalmology's (AAO) highest award Life Achievement honor that is given to its members. He became the first Indian chosen for the honour. Dr Santosh G. Honavar is a Hyderabad-based Indian ophthalmologist chosen for its highest award to recognize his contributions to the Academy, its scientific and educational programs, and to the advancement of ophthalmology.



American Academy of Ophthalmology, founded in 1896 and headquartered in San Francisco is the world's largest association of eye specialists.

### **19. Amitabh Bachchan honoured with Dada Saheb Phalke award**

Veteran actor Amitabh Bachchan received the Dadasaheb Phalke award for his outstanding contribution to the film industry. President Ram Nath Kovind presented the award to the actor in New Delhi. Amitabh Bachchan has appeared in over 190 Indian films in a career spanning almost five decades.



The award, named after the father of Indian cinema, Dhundiraj Govind Phalke, was instituted in 1969. The award is conferred by the government for outstanding contribution to the growth and development of Indian Cinema. It consists of a Swarn Kamal and a cash prize of ten lakh rupees.



# Bills and Acts

## 1. Parliament passed the Special Protection Group (Amendment) Bill, 2019

The Parliament has passed the Special Protection Group (Amendment) Bill, 2019. The Bill reduces Special Protection Group cover to only Prime Minister, former Prime Minister and their immediate family members up to 5 years after ceasing post if they are residing at the residence allotted.



The bill amends Special Protection Group Act 1988 which was in application. The bill was earlier passed by Lok Sabha on November 27, 2019. It was passed in the Rajya Sabha on 3rd December 2019.

## 2. Cabinet approved Personal Data Protection Bill, 2019

The Union Cabinet has approved Personal Data Protection Bill, 2019. The Personal Data Protection Bill, 2019, has been referred to a 30-member Joint Committee, which will submit its report before the end of the Budget Session 2020. Meenakashi Lekhi from the BJP has been appointed chairperson of the Joint Committee.



Cabinet has also approved the withdrawal of Jammu And Kashmir Reservation (Second Amendment) Bill, 2019. It has also given its nod to The Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens (Amendment) Bill, 2019.

The bill seeks to amend the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizen Act, 2007.

## 3. Parliament passes Prohibition of Electronic Cigarettes Bill, 2019

Parliament has passed the Prohibition of Electronic Cigarettes Bill, 2019. The Prohibition of the Electronic Cigarettes Bill, 2019 bans production, import, export, transport, sale, distribution, storage and advertisements of e-cigarettes with stringent punishments for any violation. It replaces the ordinance promulgated on the 18th of September 2019.



e-cigarette is not a tobacco product but has the ability to bring serious health complications.

The intention of the bill is not to criminalize users but to prevent the availability of e-cigarettes and their use in India.

#### 4. Parliament passed Recycling of Ships Bill 2019

Parliament passed the Recycling of Ships Bill 2019. The bill will pave way for streamlining the already existing ship breaking industry and also help the country obtain eco-friendly steel. Since it is a labour-intensive industry, the bill aims at regulating the industry so that it complies with the Hong Kong convention.



The bill is aimed to provide for the regulation of recycling of ships by setting certain standards and laying down the statutory mechanism for enforcement of such standards. India accounts for 30% of the ship breaking industry in the world.

#### 5. Cabinet approved official amendments to the Arms (Amendment) Bill, 2019

The Union Cabinet has given ex-post facto approval for official amendments to the Arms (Amendment) Bill, 2019. The Bill shall deter the potential perpetrators from indulging in illegal arms and ammunition trade and its manufacturing, better address the present day security needs and effectively deal with the incidents and proliferation and trade of illicit arms and ammunition.



The approved amendments to the Arms Act include licence in electronic form, longer validity period of licenses and stricter regulatory mechanism to check illegal possession arms by proposing stricter punishment provisions.

#### 6. Cabinet approved Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Second Amendment) Bill, 2019

The Union Cabinet approved the proposal to make amendments in the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 (code), through the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Second Amendment) Bill, 2019. The amendments aim to remove certain difficulties being faced during insolvency resolution process to realise the objects of the code and to further ease doing of business.



The Amendment Bill seeks to amend sections 5(12), 5(15), 7, 11, 14, 16(1), 21(2), 23(1), 29A, 227, 239, 240 and insert new section 32A in the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 (Code).

## 7. Cabinet approved Aircraft (Amendment) Bill, 2019

The Union Cabinet has given its approval to introduce the Aircraft (Amendment) Bill, 2019 for carrying out the amendments to the Aircraft Act, 1934 (XXII of 1934). The Bill enhances the maximum limit of fine from the existing Rs. 10 lakhs to Rs. One Crore. It also enlarges the scope of the existing Act to include regulation of all areas of Air Navigation.



The amendments would fulfil the requirements of International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO). This will enable the regulatory bodies in the Civil Aviation sector to become more effective.

## 8. Parliament passed the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill 2019

Parliament passed the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill 2019. The bill amends the Citizenship Act, 1955 to make illegal migrants of six communities from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan eligible for Indian citizenship. The communities are Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians.



The Bill also proposes to relax the condition for acquisition of citizenship by naturalization for non-Muslim migrants from these countries. A significant feature of the Bill is that the relaxations for citizenship by naturalization will not be applicable to tribal areas of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram or Tripura.

## 9. Rajya Sabha passed bill to establish unified authority for IFSC

Rajya Sabha passed the International Financial Services Centers Authority Bill, 2019. The Bill aims at establishing a unified authority to develop and regulate the financial services market in the International Financial Services Centers in India.



Presently, multiple agencies are entrusted with regulating the specific market including the RBI, SEBI, IRDA and PFRDA. The unified authority will act as a single-window for regulating various financial activities in the IFSC. IFSC has become the major hub for the financial services.

### 10. Lok Sabha passed Central Sanskrit Universities Bill

The Lok Sabha has passed the Central Sanskrit Universities Bill, 2019. The Bill seeks to convert the three deemed-to-be universities: (i) Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan, New Delhi, (ii) Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeeth, New Delhi, and (iii) Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeeth, Tirupati into Central Universities.



The Bill will empower the institutions, which being deemed-to-be universities, do not have powers to grant affiliation to colleges and attract more students from within India and abroad.

### 11. Parliament passed bill to extend SC-ST quota in legislatures

Parliament has passed the Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty-Sixth Amendment) Bill 2019. The Bill seeks to extend the reservation for SCs and STs in Lok Sabha and State Assemblies by another ten years till January 25, 2030.



Reservation for members of Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs), given for the past 70 years in Lok Sabha and state assemblies, is due to end on January 25, 2020.

# Books & Authors

## 1. India becomes first Asian country to participate as 'Guest of Honour' in the International Book Fair in Mexico

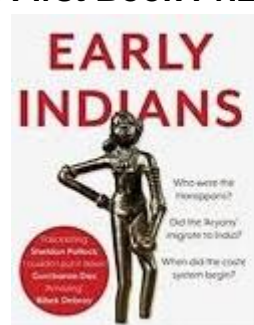
India was the 'Guest of Honour Country' at the International Book Fair at Guadalajara, Mexico and it is the first Asian country to have received this honour. This fair, which is called Feria Internacional del Libro de Guadalajara in Spanish, is the biggest book fair in the Spanish-speaking world. This was the 33rd edition of Guadalajara International Book Fair.

The National Book Trust (NBT), an autonomous body under the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), participated as the nodal agency of the GoI in this book fair.



## 2. Tony Joseph wins 2019 Shakti Bhatt First Book Prize

Author Tony Joseph was declared the winner of the Shakti Bhatt First Book Prize 2019 for his book "Early Indians: The Story of Our Ancestors and Where We Came From". English author Tony Joseph in his book, goes 65,000 years back into the past and concludes that none can claim ownership. We are all migrants. Joseph was unanimously chosen as the winner among four other debut writers from South Asian countries.



Shakti Bhatt First Book Prize, instituted in 2008, honors debut authors from the South Asian subcontinent.

## 3. Telangana Chief Minister released book on Kaleshwaram project

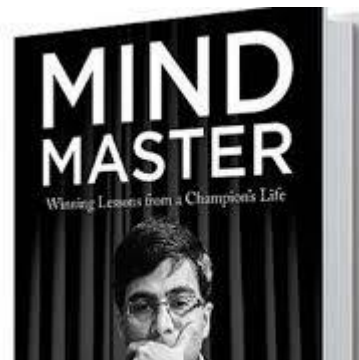
Telangana Chief Minister, Chandrasekhar Rao released a book in Telugu on 'Kaleshwaram Project-Telangana's chariot of Progress' authored by Officer on Special Duty, Irrigation to the Chief Minister, Sridhar Rao Deshpande. The book describes the way Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Scheme (KLIS) was completed in record time of three years and reached the stage to supply water to the farming community.



The book 'Kaleshwaram Project-Telangana's chariot of Progress' defines the statistics given by the Central Water Commission for completing project in such a short time.

#### 4. Viswanathan Anand launched his autobiography ‘Mind Master’

Viswanathan Anand has launched his autobiography ‘Mind Master’. Chess legend Viswanathan Anand has authored an inspirational book titled as “Mind Master: Winning Lessons from a Champion’s Life”. The book published by Hachette India, is based on Vishwanathan Anand’s experience to share lessons on how to navigate life.



He has penned about his greatest games and worst losses, his unique experiences of playing against the best minds, and the methods he employs to prepare for wins, cope with disappointments and, simply, stay in the game.

#### 5. Braille Edition of Book “Exam Warriors” released

Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment Mr Thaawarchand Gehlot released the Braille Edition of the book "Exam Warriors" authored by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The Braille Edition in Hindi and English has been prepared in the Braille Press of Rajasthan Netraheen Kalyan Sangh.



With this Braille edition, millions of visually-impaired students of country who face mental stress will be able to derive motivation and mental strength during examinations.

#### 6. Vice Prez released book ‘Turbulence and Triumph: The Modi Years’

The Vice President of India Venkaiah Naidu released a book titled 'Turbulence and Triumph: The Modi Years' in New Delhi. The book is penned by Rahul Agarwal and Bharathi S Pradhan and is published by Om Books International. It details about life journey of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi from his days as a young boy in Gujarat till becoming the Prime Minister of India.



The book guides people basic quality of democracy, peaceful, democratic methods and function according to the spirit of the Constitution.

### 7. Vice President Venkaiah Naidu released book on health and wellbeing

The Vice President, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu, released the book "Health and Wellbeing in Late Life: Perspectives and Narratives from India", in New Delhi. The book is penned by Dr. Prasun Chatterjee, a specialist in Geriatric Medicine and an Associate Professor at the Department of Geriatric Medicine, AIIMS.



The book describes how one should navigate the path of ageing, discusses preparedness for an aging individual, highlights the health issues and provides a detailed analysis of solutions. It is a timely and important book as Geriatric Medicine deals with healthcare issues in the elderly people.

Geriatric Medicine deals with healthcare

### 8. S Gurumurthy released book titled "Politics of Opportunism"

Noted Economist and Political Analyst S Gurumurthy today released a book titled "Politics of Opportunism". The book was written by R P N Singh which throws light on the subject related to rise of regional parties and Centre -States relation.



RNP Singh is a former officer of the Intelligence Bureau, Government of India. He has also earned the coveted Presidents Police Medal, Indian Police Medal, the Sukriti and Kautilya awards for his distinguished services.

### 9. Book to chronicle India's Olympic journey released

A book titled "Dreams of a Billion: India and the Olympic Games" author by BoriaMajumdar with Nalin Mehta released. It is published by HarperCollins India. The book describes about India's journey in the global sports arena of Olympics - the wins, the misses, the star sportspersons, their stories and a look at how the Indian Olympics world has changed in the last decade.



The book "Dreams of a Billion: India and the Olympic Games" gives an inside view of what goes on backstage in the Indian Olympics.

### 10. Venkaih Naidu released book on Arun Jaitley on his birth anniversary

Venkaiah Naidu released book on former Finance Minister Arun Jaitley on his birth anniversary titled as "The Renaissance Man-The Many Facets of Arun Jaitley". The book describes about life of Arun Jaitely, who never compromised on principles and was a staunch opponent of corruption.



Arun Jaitely served as the Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs of the Government of India from 2014 to 2019. He introduced Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code during his tenure which proved to be a revolutionary step.



# Committees

## 1. RS adopted motion to send Personal Data Protection Bill to Joint Committee of Parliament

Rajya Sabha has adopted a motion to send the Personal Data Protection Bill, 2019 to a Joint Committee of both Houses of Parliament. The ten-member committee will be headed by BJP MP Bhupendra Yadav.

The panel will have 20 members from Lok Sabha and 10 from Rajya Sabha. Currently, there are no laws on the use of personal data and preventing its misuse, although the Supreme Court upheld the right to privacy as a fundamental right back in 2017.



# Deaths

## 1. Veteran actor Shelley Morrison passed away

Hollywood actress Shelley Morrison passed away. Shelley Morrison was famously known for playing a memorable maid named as 'Rosario Salazar' on "Will and Grace" show from 1999 to 2006. "Will & Grace" show won Screen Actors Guild award for best ensemble in a comedy series.



In her 50 years of career, she played Sister Sixto, a nun on the sitcom The Flying Nun, a recurring role in the soap opera General Hospital in 1982 and in movies such as Divorce American Style and How to Save a Marriage and Ruin Your Life.

## 2. Veteran journalist Bhaskar Menon passed away

Baskar Menon, famous journalist in the Press Trust of India (PTI) passed away at the age of 87 years. He retired as Regional Manager (South) of PTI after handling several key news developments including the assassination of former PM Rajiv Gandhi. He was known for his rules of good writing, for his command over the English language and sharp editing skills and always insisted on speed and accuracy.



Bhaskar worked with the Indian Express, for Sun News in its English desk and for Chennai online after his tenure with PTI.

## 3. George Laurer, inventor of bar code passed away

George J. Laurer, whose invention of the Universal Product Code at IBM transformed retail and other industries around the world, passed away at the age of 94 years. Laurer was an electrical engineer with IBM in North Carolina's Research Triangle Park in the early 1970s when he spearheaded the development of the UPC, or bar code.



The now-ubiquitous marking, composed of unique black bars and a 12-digit number, allowed retailers to identify products and their prices as they are scanned, usually at checkout.

#### 4. Former US Federal Reserve chief Paul Volcker passed away

Former chairman of the Federal Reserve, Paul Volcker passed away. He was known for his battles against inflation in the late 1970s and early 1980s by raising interest rates. Later he inspired tough Wall Street reforms in the wake of the global financial crisis.

Volcker served as key financial adviser to President Barack Obama in 2009. His publication "Keeping at It: The Quest for Sound Money and Good Government," expressed concern about the direction of the federal government and the loss of respect for it.



#### 5. Former England cricket captain, Bob Willis, passed away

Former England captain and broadcaster, Bob Willis, passed away. He took 325 wickets in 90 Tests from 1971 to 1984. He was known for his best 8-43 to help England to a famous win over Australia at Headingley in the 1981 Ashes.

Bob served as a captain in 18 Tests and 29 one-day internationals before his retirement from all forms of cricket in 1984. He worked as summariser on BBC TV before joining Sky Sports as a commentator in 1991. He was honored with Wisden Cricketer of the Year in 1978.



#### 6. Veteran Telugu actor, writer Gollapudi Maruti Rao passed away

Telugu writer and actor Gollapudi Maruti Rao passed away at the age of 80 years. He worked in nearly 250 films over 56 years. Gollapudi branched into films as a screenwriter with late Akkineni Nageswara Rao-starrer Dr Chakravarthy (1964), which fetched him his first Nandi Award.

Gollapudi made his acting debut with Chiranjeevi-starrer Intlo Ramayya Veedilo Krishnaya (1982), directed by late Kodi Ramakrishna. Some of his memorable films as an actor include 'Intlo Ramayya, Veedhilo Krishnaya', 'Challenge', 'Samsaram oka Chadarangam', 'Aditya 369' and 'Leader'.



### 7. Veteran film actor Danny Aiello passed away

Veteran film actor Danny Aiello passed away. He was known for his roles in the movies Do The Right Thing, Moonstruck in 1987 and The Godfather Part II. He earned praises for playing the pizza parlour owner Sal in Spike Lee's 1989 Do the Right Thing.



Danny was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Supporting Actor for his role as Salvatore "Sal" Frangione in the Spike Lee film Do the Right Thing. He was honored with National Board of Review Award for movie Prêt-à-Porter and Emmy award for movie ABC Afterschool Special.

### 8. New Zealand three-times Olympic champion Peter Snell passed away

New Zealand's three-times Olympic middle-distance champion Peter Snell passed away. He was known for being the last male athlete to have completed the 800m and 1500m double at an Olympic Games, which he achieved in Tokyo in 1964. He was known as the New Zealand's greatest athlete of the century in 2000.



Peter was mile world record holder and also claimed 800m gold four years earlier in Rome. He won three Olympic gold medals, and is the only male since 1920 to have won the 800 and 1500 metres at the same Olympics in 1964.

### 9. Veteran actor Shriram Lagoo passed away

Famous Bollywood actor Shreeram Lagoo passed away. He was known for his roles not only in Marathi plays such as "Natsamrat" and "Himalayachi Saoli" but also in Hindi movies such as Pinjra, Gharonda, Lawaris and Ek Din Achanak. His efforts were recognized in growth of theatre movement in Maharashtra in the post-Independence era.



Shriram Lagoo acted in over 100 Hindi and Marathi films and in more than 40 Marathi, Hindi and Gujarati plays. He was associated with Maharashtra Anhashraddha Nirmoolan Samiti (ANS).

### 10. Former Union Minister ID Swami passed away

Former Union Minister ID Swami passed away. He served as Union Minister of State for Home Affairs in 1999 in former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's government and was two times Lok Sabha member from Karnal in Haryana. He was known for participating in freedom movement as student leader in 1946-47.



I.D. Swami was Scholarship holder from class 4th to 10th which was cancelled by the then British Government for having led a procession of students against the famous Red Fort trials of Shahnawaz, Dhillon and Sehgal of INA.

### 11. Veteran writer and critic LS Sheshagiri Rao passed away

Noted Kannada writer and critic LS Sheshagiri Rao passed away. He was famously known for his book "Hosagannada Sahitya Charitre". His first work was Idu Jeevana, an anthology of short stories was released in 1948. Some of his popular works include Hosagannada Sahitya Charitre, Pashchatya Sahitya Vihara, Greek Rangabhoomi Mattu Nataka and English Sahitya Charitre, which got him the Kendra Sahitya Akademi Award.



Rao won many honors, including Kendra Sahitya Akademi Award, Rajyotsava award, Masti Award and Karnataka Sahitya Academy award. He served as president of 74th Kannada Sahitya Sammelana held in Udupi in 2007.

### 12. Former Kerala Minister Thomas Chandy passed away

Nationalist Congress Party's Kerala State President and former Minister Thomas Chandy passed away at the age of 72 years. The businessman-turned politician represented Kuttanad Assembly constituency in Alappuzha district. Chandy was elected from Kuttanad thrice with his maiden win coming in 2006.



Chandy, who started his political career as a Congress worker, became active in social activism with his works for the Daveedputhra Charitable Trust. He became part of the NCP after the merger of the now-defunct DIC with Sharad Pawar's party.

### 13. Veteran Hindustani classical vocalist Vidushi Savita Devi passed away

Renowned Hindustani classical vocalist Vidushi Savita Devi has passed away. She was famously known for her thumris. She wrote the biography of her mother Siddeshwari Devi, called as 'Maa...Siddheshwari'. She was recipient of the Padmashri award.



Vidushi Savita was appreciated for her various semi classical vocal forms such as thumri, dadra, chaiti, kajri and tappa of the Banaras Gharana (Purabang). She headed the music department at Daulat Ram College under Delhi University for many years.

### 14. England World Cup winner Martin Peters passed away

Former West Ham and Tottenham midfielder Martin Peters passed away. He scored England's second goal in the 1966 World Cup final against West Germany. Peters won the UEFA Cup and two League Cups with Tottenham.



Martin scored 100 goals in 364 appearances for West Ham before moving across London to join Tottenham Hotspur in 1970. He was honored with MBE for services to football in 1978 and European Cup-Winners' Cup in 1964-65. Peters published his autobiography, 'The Ghost of 66' in 2006.

### 15. Veteran Hindi author Ganga Prasad Vimal passed away

Renowned Hindi author Ganga Prasad Vimal passed away. He penned down more than a dozen poetry collections, short story collections and novels. Some of his best poetries were Bodhi Vriksh, Alikhit-Adikhat, Pachaas Kavityayen etc. He was awarded Doctor of Philosophy and University Fellowship of Punjab University.



He received many honors such as Poetry People Prize (1978); Diploma from Art University, Rome (1979); Gold Medal, National Museum of Literature, Sofia (1979); International Open Scottish Poetry Prize (1988), Indian Language Award (Bhartiya Bhasha Parishad) (1992) and Mahatma Gandhi samman, U.P. (2016).

### 16. Veteran Political cartoonist Vikas Sabnis passed away

Veteran Political cartoonist Vikas Sabnis passed away. He had completed 50 years of illustrious career in 2018. Sabnis has worked as a staff cartoonist at various newspapers, including the Times of India and the Mid-day. He made caricatures and political cartoons on various subjects and issues.

Sabnis made poignant comments on the socio-political developments through his cartoons. He idolised cartoonists R K Laxman and Shiv Sena chief Bal Thackeray.



### 17. American songwriter Allee Willis passed away

American songwriter Allee Willis passed away. Allee Willis, wrote the famous song 'I Will Be There For You' for the famous TV sitcom Friends. She composed some of the hits such as Neutron Dance, What Have I Done To Deserve This?, Lead Me On and Boogie Wonderland and You're The Best, which is the theme track of The Karate Kid.

Willis was included in the Songwriters Hall of Fame in 2018. She won Grammy award twice and was nominated for a Tony and an Emmy.



### 18. 'Colours of the Mountain' author Da Chen passed away

China's brilliant storyteller Da Chen passed away. Chinese author Da Chen's some of the best works include Brothers, China's Son, Sounds of the River, Sword, and critically acclaimed memoir Colors of the Mountain. In 1999, Da Chen's best-selling "Colors of the Mountain, book detailed about the abuses he and his family suffered during the latter years of the China's Cultural Revolution.

Da Chen's book Brothers was awarded best book of 2006 by The Washington Post, San Francisco Chronicle, Miami Herald and Publishers Weekly.



## 1. India successfully test-fired indigenously developed nuke-capable Prithvi-II missile

India successfully test-fired its indigenously developed surface-to-surface nuclear-capable Prithvi-II missile off Odisha coast. The user trial of the 350 km range missile was conducted from a mobile launcher from launch complex-3 of the Integrated Test Range at Chandipur. The missile is capable of carrying 500 to 1000 kg of warheads and is thrust by liquid propulsion twin engines.



Developed under the joint collaboration of Defence Research and Development Organization and Bharat Dynamics Limited, the missile was first test-fired on 27 January 1996.

## 2. Indo-Lanka joint military exercise, Mitra Shakti, concluded

The seventh edition of the joint training exercise between the Indian Army and the Sri Lankan Army, Exercise Mitra Shakti concluded on 14 December at Aundh Military Station, Pune. The two week long exercise focused on enhancing interoperability for developing the capability to undertake joint operations in counter terrorism operations under United Nations mandate.



A contingent comprising 120 personnel each from the Sri Lankan and Indian Army participated in the exercise. The themes chosen for the joint training exercise were both, live and contemporary affecting both the nations alike.

## 3. Indian Air Force bid adieu to MiG 27

Indian Air Force bid adieu to MiG 27 by organizing a decommissioning ceremony at the Jodhpur air base. The Mig 27 is a soviet origin aircraft that was built under licence by HAL. All of its variants have been phased out in the recent past, only the Mig 27 Upgrade was the last serving fighter jet. The fighter aircraft was the backbone of ground-attack fleet of the Air Force for over 34 years.



MiG-27 contributed in wars and peace-keeping operations since Operation Parakram but emerged as the real hero in the 1999 Kargil war.



#### 4. Two BrahMos missiles launched from land and air platforms

Defence Research & Development Organisation, Indian Air Force and BrahMos jointly successfully conducted two BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles tests, one each from land and air platforms. The first missile launch was from a land based mobile launcher, where most of the components were indigenous.



The second launch of the missile was carried out from SU-30MKI platform against a sea target. The test revalidated the ship attack capability of the advanced air-launched cruise missile. The BrahMos Air Launched Cruise Missile (ALCM) promises to bolster the air combat capability of IAF from stand-off ranges.

#### 5. Exercise Surya Kiran-XIV held in Nepal

The 14th edition of bilateral annual military exercise SURYA KIRAN-XIV between Indian and Nepal Army was held Salijhandi, Rupendehi district of Nepal. Both the Armies will also share their valuable experiences in countering such situations and also refine drills and procedures for joint operations.



The aim of this exercise was to conduct a battalion level combined training between Indian Army and Nepal Army with a scope to enhance interoperability at military level in jungle warfare, counter terrorist operations in mountainous terrain, humanitarian assistance, disaster relief operations, medical and environmental conservation including aviation aspects.

#### 6. DRDO successfully flight-tests Pinaka Missile System

Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully flight-tested Pinaka Missile System from the Integrated Test Range, Chandipur off the Odisha coast. The Pinaka is an Artillery Missile System capable of striking into enemy territory up to a range of 75 kilometres with high precision.



The Pinaka MK-II Rocket is modified as a missile by integrating with the Navigation, Control and Guidance System to improve the end accuracy and enhance the range.

## 7. INDO-Russia Joint Tri-Services Exercise Indra- 2019

The second edition of the bilateral tri-service exercise between India and Russia, designated INDRA - 2019, kicked off at Babina town of Uttar Pradesh. It was simultaneously conducted in Goa, and Pune.



The exercise included joint training in counter terrorism and counter insurgency operations under the United Nations mandate. Important lectures, demonstrations and drills related to counter terrorism operations were rehearsed and executed jointly. The INDRA exercises are being regularly held since 2003.

## 8. 8th edition of India-China joint training exercise Hand-in-Hand 2019

The 8th Edition of India China joint training exercise 'Hand-in-Hand-2019' was held at Umroi, Meghalaya. The training consisted of two strategic exercises. The first exercise was focused on the anti-terrorism mechanism and the second on humanitarian and disaster relief (HADR) operations.



The joint military exercise "Hand-in-Hand" is an annual military exercise held under a United Nations mandate. It was started in the year 2007 in Kunming (China) but remained shelved for five years until it was resumed in 2013.

## 9. Upgraded version of Pinaka guided rocket system, QR-SAM successfully test-fired

India successfully test-fired two missiles - upgraded version of Pinaka guided rocket system and the all-weather tracked-chassis Quick Reaction Surface-to-Air Missile (QR-SAM).



The indigenously developed Pinaka system has a maximum range of 75 km for Mark-II variant and can fire a salvo of 12 rockets in less than 45 seconds. QR-SAM system can also engage multiple targets within a range of around 25 to 30 km with two vehicle configurations for area air defence.

## 1. Government makes hallmark for Gold jewellery and artefacts mandatory from 2021

Hallmarking of gold jewellery and artefacts will be made mandatory across the country from January 15, 2021, to ensure the purity of the precious metal. A notification in this regard will be issued on January 15, 2020. The BIS is already running a hallmarking scheme for gold jewellery since April 2000 and around 40% of gold jewellery is being hallmarking currently.

The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) has formulated standards for hallmarking gold jewellery in three grades: 14 carats, 18 carats and 22 carats.



## 2. India's forex reserves crossed \$450 billion mark for first time

India's foreign exchange reserves crossed the \$450 billion mark for the first time ever on the back of strong inflows which enabled the central bank to buy dollars from the market, thus checking any sharp appreciation of the rupee. India's foreign exchange reserves stood at \$451.7 billion in December beginning, an increase of \$38.8 billion over end-March 2019.

Foreign exchange reserves are the foreign currencies held by a country's central bank. Countries use their foreign exchange reserves to keep the value of their currencies at a fixed rate.



## 3. ADB lowered India's GDP growth forecast to 5.1% in FY20

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) scaled down India's GDP growth forecast from 6.5% to 5.1% for FY20 and its FY20 forecast to 6.5%, down from 7.2%. It was mainly due to credit crunch in the economy resulting from the IL&FS crisis in August 2018 and impact on consumption due to rural distress and a dismal job scenario.

ADB's supplement to the Asian Development Outlook 2019 has projected China's GDP at 6.1% in 2019-20 against ADB's earlier forecast of 6.2%, keeping China as fastest growing large economy.



#### 4. Amazon launched Audible Suno app in India

Audible, Amazon's audiobook company has launched a new app exclusively for India, called Audible Suno. The app offers free access to original audio series across many genres from India. It will not require sign-ups and will be without advertisements for now.



US-based Audible was founded in 1995 by Donald Katz and was acquired by Amazon in 2008 in cash and short-term investments. The platform offers spoken audio content, basically a plethora of audio versions of books and newspapers and radio programmes.

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

"Amazon.com Inc", "Apple Inc" and Alphabet Inc's "Google" announced a partnership to lay the groundwork for better compatibility among their smart home products. The goal of the Connected Home over IP project is to simplify development for manufacturers and increase compatibility for consumers.



The project aims to make it easier for device manufacturers to build devices that are compatible with smart home and voice services such as Amazon's Alexa, Apple's Siri, Google's Assistant, and others. Smart home devices will be secure, reliable, and seamless to use.

#### 6. Infosys launched blockchain powered distributed applications

Infosys announced the launch of three comprehensive blockchain-powered distributed applications for government services, insurance, and supply chain management domains. These comprehensive applications designed as ready-to-subscribe business networks ensure quick deployment, interoperability across disparate systems of value chain stakeholders and a wide variety of use cases involving other digital technologies like IoT, Analytics as well.



Infosys' Blockchain Distributed Applications are equipped with predictive ROI analytics for business investments that can be tailored to meet numerous industry-specific needs.

## 7. Fresh Vegetables from Varanasi to Dubai

Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) has sent the first trial shipment of vegetables by sea route from Varanasi to Dubai. APEDA is in the process of setting up Agri export hubs in the 5 districts of the Varanasi region, viz. Ghazipur, Jaunpur, Chandauli, Mirzapur and SantRavidas Nagar.



APEDA organized an Export Promotion Programme and Buyer Seller Meet (BSM) for fresh vegetables this year in Varanasi which was attended by 100 farmers of the region and exporters from Mumbai, Kolkata, Hyderabad and Uttar Pradesh. The BSM provided a platform to link the FPOs and progressive farmers to prominent exporters.

## 8. S&P reaffirms India's rating at 'BBB' with stable outlook

Rating Agency S&P has reaffirmed the Sovereign Credit Rating of India at BBB with outlook as stable. S&P said India's economy continues to achieve impressive long term growth rates despite a recent deceleration. It believed that the economic slowdown is cyclical rather than structural.



In the report, S&P has maintained a stable outlook for India on the basis of their expectation that over the next two years the growth will remain strong. According to the report, India will maintain its sound net external position and fiscal deficit will remain elevated but broadly in line with their forecast.

## 9. Wipro partnered with Nasscom to train 10,000 students on emerging technologies

Wipro Limited partnered with the National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM) to launch the Future Skills platform for 10,000 students from over 20 engineering colleges in India. This is a part of Wipro's Corporate Social Responsibility programme, TalentNext which aims to enhance the quality of engineering education by preparing faculty and academic leaders to train students.



This initiative will create a talent pool of students, certified by Wipro and NASSCOM. The platform enables learning the skills required in emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence, Big Data, Cloud Computing, Cybersecurity and Internet of Things (IoT) – to make them future-ready.

### 10. Foreign Portfolio Investors open fund Net inflow crossed 1 trillion in 2019

The debt market has seen a net inflow of nearly Rs 27,000 crore by FPIs, while a further amount of Rs 9,000 crore found its way to the hybrid instruments.

Ignoring negative sentiments around falling GDP growth rate and some policy roadblocks, foreign portfolio investors seem to have flocked to the Indian capital market in a big way in 2019 with a net inflow of over Rs 1.3 lakh crore, including Rs 97,250 crore in equities, the highest in last six years.



### 11. Centre released Rs 35,298 crore GST compensation

The central government released Rs 35,298 crore to states to make up for the loss of revenue due to rollout of the Goods and Services Tax (GST). The compensation amount was fixed at 14% on top of revenue in the base year of 2016-17.

When GST was rolled out on July 1, 2017, states were through legislation promised to be compensated for the loss of revenue as not just their taxes such as VAT were being subsumed in the new levy but also their right to levy taxes was being snatched.





#### 4. Government of India mapped Tiger Corridors in the country

Centre mapped tiger corridors inside and outside protected areas across the country and developed a conservation plan for tigers. National Tiger Conservation Authority and Wildlife Institute of India have jointly mapped 32 major corridors and details the tiger conservation plan under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.



The strategy to streamline infrastructure projects with mandatory inclusion of safe passages have been published in a document titled as 'Connecting Tiger Populations for Long-term Conservation'. The strategy includes providing material, logistical and financial support to tiger reserves.

#### 5. Indian Coast Guard conducted 'Swachhh Samundra NW-2019'

The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) conducted a two-day regional level pollution response exercise named 'Swachhh Samundra NW-2019' at sea off Vadar in Gulf of Kutch. The exercise was done with an aim to validate and reinforce the response mechanism for oil pollution incidents and enable the Indian Coast Guard to fine-tune the actions required in such eventualities.



The exercise evolutions included reporting procedures, testing of communication links, threat assessment and deployment of pollution response equipment for containment and recovery of spilled oil.

#### 6. 'Oxygen Parlour' at Nashik Railway Station to combat air pollution

In a unique initiative to battle rising air pollution in cities, Indian Railways has opened an 'Oxygen Parlour' at Nashik railway station to provide an experience of breathing clean air to the commuters. Airo Guard in collaboration with the Indian Railways has come up with this initiative, on recommendation of National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).



Around 1500 plants of the Oxygen parlour at the railway station will bring down the pollution in the air at the railway station and allow the people to breathe cleaner air.



## 1. IEPFA signed MOU with Bank of Baroda for Investor Awareness

Bank of Baroda (BoB) and Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority (IEPFA) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to spread customer awareness and investor education.

BOB and IEPFA have decided to work towards creation of content (IEC material) and strategic use of all the available marketing channels and brand assets with the BoB viz. placement of IEPFA posters at all BoB branches, placement of digital banners of IEPFA in ATM, BoB Kiosks, Access Points, etc.



## 2. Reserve Bank keeps repo rate unchanged at 5.15 %

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in its fifth bi-monthly Monetary Policy has kept the policy repo rate unchanged at 5.15%. It has also maintained the reverse repo rate at 4.90% and the marginal standing facility rate and Bank Rate at 5.40%.

The six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) headed by Governor Shaktikanta Das revised the real GDP growth for 2019-20 downwards from 6.1% in the October policy to 5.0%. The decisions are in consonance with the objective of achieving the medium-term target for consumer price index inflation of 4% while supporting growth.



## 3. RBI mulling to amend regulatory guidelines for UCBs

The Reserve Bank of India is mulling to amend regulatory guidelines for primary Urban Co-operative Banks - UCBs. The guidelines would primarily relate to exposure norms for single and group/interconnected borrowers, promotion of financial inclusion and priority sector lending.

These measures are expected to strengthen the resilience and sustainability of UCBs and protect the interest of depositors. RBI has also decided to bring UCBs with assets of 500 crore rupees and above under the Central Repository of Information on Large Credits - CRILC reporting framework. RBI will announce a comprehensive cyber-security framework for the UCBs.



#### 4. RBI Financial Stability Report released

RBI released December 2019 Financial Stability Report. The FSR reflects the collective assessment on risks to financial stability.

##### Highlights

- Gross NPA ratio may increase from 9.3% in September 2019 to 9.9% by September 2020.
- Scheduled commercial banks' (SCBs) credit growth remained subdued at 8.7% in September 2019.
- Private Sector Banks (PVBs) registered credit growth of 16.5%.
- SCBs' capital adequacy ratio improved.
- SCBs' gross non-performing assets (GNPA) ratio remained unchanged at 9.3 per cent between March and September 2019.



#### 5. Customer Outreach Initiative: PSBs disburse Rs 4.91L Cr loans in Oct, Nov

Public Sector Banks have disbursed Rs 4,91,000 crore rupees of loans during the month of October and November 2019 under customer outreach initiative. The Customer Outreach Initiative by PSBs was launched in September to improve credit delivery and support the needs of the economy, with particular focus on MSMEs and Agriculture sector borrowers.



These banks disbursed 2.52 lakh crore rupees in October and 2.39 lakh crore rupees in November under this outreach initiative. Around 73,000 crore rupees were disbursed to MSMEs and over 78,000 crore rupees to the agriculture sector.

#### 6. Walmart launched credit card in partnership with HDFC Bank

Walmart India partnered with HDFC Bank Ltd. to launch a co-branded credit card exclusively for members of its Best Price Modern Wholesale "B2B Cash & Carry" stores. Registered members of Walmart India's 'Best Price' can apply for co-branded credit card on Best Price stores.



The co-branded card will offer 'Best Price' members rewards and cashback on all purchases, with savings of up to 6% on annual spends. The card comes in two variants. Best Price Save Smart offers annual savings of up to Rs 14,250 and Best Price Save Max card offers annual savings of up to Rs 40,247.

## 7. World Bank arm IFC invested \$200 million in Mahindra Finance

International Finance Corporation (IFC), a unit of the World Bank Group, has anchored an investment round of \$200 million in Mahindra & Mahindra Financial Services Limited (MMFSL) for supporting India's NBFC sector in expanding financial services for MSMEs. IFC is investing \$75 million from its own account and mobilizing another \$125 million as parallel loans.



The investment is done with an aim to create a dedicated pool of financing for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in low-income states. Mahindra Finance has earmarked at least \$100 million for women-owned micro, small and medium enterprises.

## 8. BlackBuck partnered with IDFC Bank, Yes Bank to offer free FASTags to truckers

BlackBuck, an online trucking platform, has entered into partnership with private lenders IDFC Bank and Yes Bank and will offer FASTags to truck owners free of cost. The truck owners can order FASTags on BlackBuck's Boss App, which is a digital service platform available especially for truck fleet owners, and get it delivered at their doorstep free of cost until December 31, 2019. FASTags will decrease tolling times and revolutionise the logistics sector in India.



The National Electronic Toll Collection (NETC) programme, is the flagship initiative of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.

## 9. RBI released "Guidelines for 'on tap' licensing of SFB"

RBI released "Guidelines for 'on tap' licensing of Small Finance Banks (SFB) in the Private Sector" as follows:

- The licensing window will be open on-tap. Minimum paid-up voting equity capital / net worth requirement shall be ₹ 200 crore.
- SFBs will be given scheduled bank status immediately upon commencement of operations.
- SFBs will have general permission to open banking outlets.
- Payments Banks can apply for conversion into SFB after five years of operations.



### 10. Government amended IEPFA Rules, 2016, to simplify refund of claims

The Investor Education & Protection Fund (Accounting, Audit, Transfer and Refund) Rules 2016 have been amended vide GSR No.571 (E) dated 14.8.2019 to simplify the process of refund of claims filed with The Investor Education & Protection Fund Authority (the Authority).



**Investor Education and  
Protection Fund**

The amended rules inter-alia provide for digitisation with transparent and faceless processing of claims by the Authority. Compliances by companies have also been made time bound and system driven with rule based enforcement.

time bound and system driven with rule based enforcement.

### 11. NSE launched interest rate options on 10-yr govt bonds

National Stock Exchange launched interest rate options on ten-year Government bonds. The exchange recorded a turnover of 5,926 contracts on the first day of its launch. Interest rate options are based on the underlying ten-year government bonds, which are 7.26% 2029 bond and 6.45% 2029 bond.



The unit of trading is Rs 2 lakh face value of GOI securities, corresponding to 2,000 units. The options contracts available are European call & put options with minimum 8 in-the-money, 8 out-of-the-money and 1 near-the-money strike prices and a strike interval of Rs 0.25.

### 12. Edelweiss AMC launched India's 1st corporate bond 'Bharat Bond ETF'

Edelweiss announced the public issue of India's first Corporate Bond ETF called the Bharat Bond ETF. The Bharat Bond ETF will help to deepen the corporate bond markets and enhance retail participation.



The ETF will invest only in AAA rated bonds of Public Sector companies. Through the ETF, Edelweiss Mutual Fund proposes to raise an initial amount of 3000 crores. Bharat Bond ETF will be a low cost product for retail investors. BHARAT Bond ETF provides the best features of Mutual Funds, ETFs and Bonds.

Mutual Funds, ETFs and Bonds.

### 13. SBI inked \$277 million pact with Germany based KfW bank

India and Germany inked pact of Rs 1,958 crore to develop energy-efficient housing programme. A loan agreement was signed between State Bank of India (SBI) and German development bank KfW for USD 277 million to establish an energy-efficient housing programme in India.



As per MoU, both builders and homebuyers shall be financed for developing/purchasing energy-efficient residential projects that achieve at least 25% energy savings in comparison to standard reference buildings. This programme, which will contribute to India's policy framework towards energy conservation, is a part of the Indo-German Development Co-operation, guided by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

### 14. HDFC Bank crossed \$100 billion market capitalisation

HDFC Bank became the 3rd Indian firm to cross \$100 billion mark in market capitalisation. The other two are Reliance Industries Ltd, which has a market cap of \$140.74 billion, and Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) that has a market cap of \$114.60 billion.



HDFC Bank is ranked at 26th position among the world's most valued banks and financial companies which have a market cap of over \$100 billion. HDFC bank has reported 20% profit growth, stable asset quality and healthy advances growth.

### 15. Bank of Baroda partnered with Gujarat government to provide MSME loans

Bank of Baroda signed a MoU with the Government of Gujarat to facilitate flow of credit to the MSME sector for Greenfield Projects, Start-Ups, Women Entrepreneurs and Entrepreneurs from backward areas of Gujarat under Gujarat Single Window Clearance Act 2017 & Ordinance Number 1 of 2019 dated 24th October 2019.



"The objective of the Gujarat Single Window Clearance Act 2017 and Ordinance dated 24 October 2019 is to provide an entrepreneur-friendly environment in the State of Gujarat. This MoU would speed up the process of credit off-take as well as industrial development.

### 16. SEBI signed pact with Kazakhstan's AFSA for mutual co-operation

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) and the Astana Financial Services Authority (AFSA) entered into a bilateral Memorandum of Understanding for mutual co-operation and technical assistance.



The objective of the bilateral MoU was to strengthen cross border co-operation in the area of securities regulation. This will facilitate mutual assistance, contribute towards efficient performance of the supervisory functions, and enable effective enforcement of laws and regulations governing the securities markets.

### 17. Finance Minister launched eBKray for online auction of assets attached by banks

Finance Minister launched eBKray, a common e-auction platform to enable online auction by banks of attached assets transparently and cleanly for improved realisation of value.



The platform is equipped with property search features and navigational links to all PSB e-auction sites, provides single-window access to information on properties up for e-auction as well as facility for comparison of similar properties, and also contains photographs and videos of uploaded properties. A total of 35,000 properties had been uploaded on the platform by PSBs.

### 18. RBI directed large co-op banks to report exposures above Rs 5 cr

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) directed large cooperative banks to report all exposures of 5 crore rupees and more to the Central Repository of Information on Large Credits (CRILC). The move is aimed at early detection of financial distress. Aggregate exposure will include all fund-based and non-fund based exposure (like partial credit enhancement) including investment exposure on the borrower.



The Reserve Bank has created a CRILC of commercial banks, all India financial institutions and certain non-banking financial companies with multiple objectives, which, among others, include strengthening offsite supervision and early recognition of financial distress.

### 19. Government approved infuse Rs 8,655 crore into Allahabad Bank, IOB & UCO Bank

In order to strengthen banks, in addition to the recent infusion of Rs. 60,314 crore, additional infusion of Rs. 8,855 crore has been approved by Government of India for four banks, which would be released shortly. Rs 4360 crore to Indian Overseas Bank, Rs 2153 crore to Allahabad Bank, Rs 2142 crore to UCO Bank and Rs 200 crore to Andhra Bank have been approved. The infusion will be done for preferential allotment of shares.



The government had infused ₹60,314 crore in public-sector banks of the total of ₹70,000 crore that was announced for these banks in budget.

### 20. RBI caps lending on P2P platforms at Rs 50 lakh

Reserve Bank of India capped the permissible exposure limit at Rs 50 lakh of a lender on a Peer-to-Peer lending (P2P) platform for all borrowers to protect the consumer's interest. The lender investing more than Rs 10 lakh across P2P platforms has to produce a certificate from a Chartered Accountant.



Further, it is also proposed to do away with the current requirement of escrow accounts to be operated by bank promoted trustee for transfer of funds having to be necessarily opened with the concerned bank to provide more flexibility in operations.

### 21. AIIB to give \$210 million loan for irrigation & solar energy projects

The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank's (AIIB) Board of Directors has approved a USD145-million loan to India to improve irrigation service delivery and strengthen flood risk management in West Bengal and USD65-million 250-megawatt (MW) solar power project in Jodhpur.



West Bengal project, co-financed with the World Bank, is expected to strengthen the management of the Damodar Valley Command Area irrigation scheme to improve service delivery and efficiency. Jodhpur project will add 250 MW of solar capacity and result in clean energy generation of 616 MWh in 2022.

# Important Days

## 1. International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD)

The United Nations' (UN) International Day of Persons with Disabilities is observed annually on December 3rd to focus on issues that affect people with disabilities worldwide.

The theme for this 2019 IDPD is 'Promoting the participation of persons with disabilities and their leadership: taking action on the 2030 Development Agenda'. The theme focuses on the empowerment of persons with disabilities for inclusive, equitable and sustainable development as envisaged in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.



International  
Day of  
Persons with  
Disabilities

3 DECEMBER

## 2. World AIDS Day observed

The United Nations' (UN) World AIDS Day is observed annually on December 1st to honor AIDS victims. It also focuses on issues surrounding HIV and AIDS. The day is observed often with education on AIDS prevention and control.

The theme of this year's World AIDS Day is "Communities make the difference". The theme focusses on the essential role that communities have played and continue to play in the AIDS response at the international, national and local levels.



## 3. International Volunteer Day observed

The United Nations (UN) annually observes the International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development on December 5. The theme for 2019 was 'Volunteer for an inclusive future'. The day is viewed as a unique chance for volunteers and organizations to celebrate their efforts, to share their values and to promote their work among their communities.

United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme contributes to peace and development by advocating for the recognition of volunteers and working with partners to integrate volunteerism into development programming.





#### 4. World Soil Day observed

World Soil Day (WSD) is held annually on 5 December as a means to focus attention on the importance of healthy soil and advocating for the sustainable management of soil resources. An international day to celebrate Soil was recommended by the International Union of Soil Sciences (IUSS) in 2002.



The theme for 2019 was "Stop soil erosion, Save our future". World Soil Day 2019 (#WorldSoilDay) and its campaign based on the theme is envisaged to raise awareness on the importance of sustaining healthy ecosystems.

#### 5. International Day for the Abolition of Slavery

International Day for the Abolition of Slavery is celebrated on 2 December to raise awareness of the atrocities of modern slavery. The day highlights the importance of eradicating contemporary forms of slavery including trafficking in persons, sexual exploitation, child labour, forced marriage, etc.



The day marks the date of the adoption, by the General Assembly, of the United Nations Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others.

#### 6. International Day of Neutrality observed on 12 December

Every year on December 12th, the International Day of Neutrality promotes the importance of peaceful, friendly, and mutually beneficial relations between countries. Neutrality is defined as the legal status arising from the abstention of a state from all participation in a war between other states.



International Day of Neutrality

12 December

UN General Assembly declared 12 December as International Day of Neutrality, and called for marking the day by holding events aimed at enhancing public awareness of the value of neutrality in international relations.

### 7. International Mountain Day observed on 11 December

December 11, "International Mountain Day", was designated by the United Nations General Assembly in 2003. The General Assembly "encouraged the international community to organize events at all levels on that day to highlight the importance of sustainable mountain development."

'Mountains matter for Youth' was the theme of this 2019 International Mountain Day. Theme highlights that youth will take the lead and demand that mountains and mountain peoples become central in the national and international development agendas.



### 8. International Civil Aviation Day observed on 7 December

On 7 December of every year, International Civil Aviation Day (ICAD) is celebrated globally by United Nations General Assembly. The United Nations General Assembly began celebrating International Civil Aviation Day globally since 7 December 1996.

The theme of 2019 Civil Aviation Day was "75 Years of Connecting the World". The purpose of International Civil Aviation Day is to help generate and reinforce worldwide awareness of the importance of international civil aviation to the social and economic development of States.



### 9. International Anti-Corruption Day observed on 9 December

International Anti-Corruption Day has been observed annually, on 9 December, since the passage of the United Nations Convention against Corruption on 31 October 2003 to raise public awareness for anti-corruption. 2019 campaign, Zero Corruption - 100% Development, reinforced the idea that development can thrive only when societies tackle the root causes of corruption.



The campaign aims to bring together people from all walks of life in the fight against corruption, serving as a global call for action and raising awareness about the UN Convention against Corruption.

## 10. International Universal Health Coverage Day observed on 12 December

On 12 December of every year, the Universal Health Coverage Day is celebrated globally. The day is promoted by the World Health Organization. The aim of Universal Health Coverage Day is - everyone, everywhere should have access to quality, affordable health care - as an essential priority for international development.



On 12 December 2017, the United Nations has proclaimed "12 December" as the International Universal Health Coverage Day (UHC Day) by its resolution 72/138. The theme of 2019 was "Keep the promise."

## 11. Human Rights Day observed on 10 December

On 10 December of year, Human Rights Day is celebrated globally by the United Nations. 10th of December is the day that United Nations General Assembly adopted in the year 1948 as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. 10th December, 2019 was marked as the 71th anniversary of Universal Declaration of Human Rights.



The theme of 2019 Human Rights Day was 'Youth Standing Up for Human Rights'. It aims 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 rights.

## 12. Armed Forces Flag Day observed on 7 December

Armed Forces Flag Day is being observed annually on 7 December throughout the country to honor the martyrs and the men in uniform who valiantly fought on our borders to safeguard the country's honor. December 7 marks the annual Armed Forces Flag day in India since 1949.



The day is also dedicated towards collection of funds from people for welfare of Indian Armed forces personnel and to commemorate the soldiers, airmen and sailors of the armed forces for their yeomen services.

### 13. International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime observed on 9 December

In September 2015, the United Nations General Assembly established 9 December as the International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of this Crime. 2019 marked the 70th anniversary of the Convention.



The purpose of the day is to raise awareness of the Genocide Convention and its role in combating and preventing the crime of genocide, as defined in the Convention, and to commemorate and honour its victims. The day pays tribute to the victims of the horrendous crime of genocide.

### 14. International Migrants Day observed on 18 December

On 18 December of every year, International Migrants Day is celebrated by United Nations General Assembly. On 18 December 1990, the General Assembly had first adopted a resolution on the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.



The theme of 2019 was Migration and SDGs: ASEAN and Beyond: A Pathway to 2030 Agenda: Episode II'. It is celebrated through the dissemination of information on human rights and fundamental political freedoms of migrants.

### 15. International Human Solidarity Day observed on 20 December

On 20 December of every year, International Human Solidarity Day is celebrated by United Nations General Assembly. The objective of this celebration is to remind people on the importance of solidarity in working towards eradicating poverty. The major objectives are to eradicate poverty and promote human and social development in developing countries, specifically among the poorest segments of their populations.



It is a day to remind governments to respect their commitments to international agreements, a day to raise public awareness of the importance of solidarity and a day of action to encourage new initiatives for poverty eradication.

### 16. National Farmers Day observed on 23 December

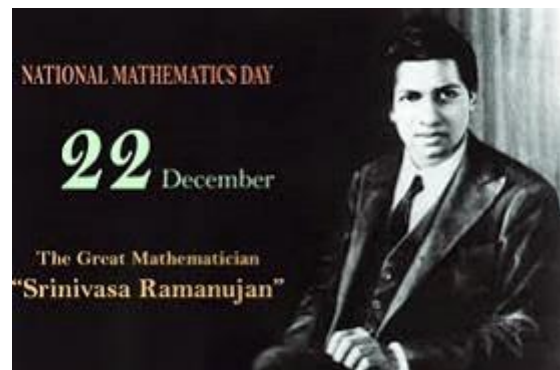
Kisan Diwas or National Farmers' Day was observed across India on December 23, in the honor of Chaudhary Charan Singh, the 5th Prime Minister of India who was born on this day. Chaudhary Charan Singh not only introduced a slew of policies to improve the lives and conditions of farmers in the country but also played a leading role in the agricultural sector of the country by introducing bills for farmers' reforms.



Kisan Diwas is being celebrated every year to promote awareness among people about the importance of the farmers and overall economic development of the country.

### 17. National Mathematics Day observed on 22 December

The National Mathematics Day is observed annually on the 22nd December on the birth anniversary of the great Indian Autodidact Mathematician Srinivasa Ramanujan. He was considered as the master of the number theory, infinite series, mathematical analysis and equations without any formal training in pure mathematics. He had formulated more than 3900 mathematical results and equations.



The main objective behind the celebration of National Mathematics Day is to make people aware of the development of mathematics and its importance in the growth of humanity.

### 18. 24 December observed as National Consumer Day

National Consumer Day observed on Dec 24. The objective is to highlight the importance of the consumer movement and the need to make every consumer more aware of their rights and responsibilities. The theme of 2019 was "Timely Disposal of Consumer Complaints".



On this day the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 was enacted. The Act aims to provide consumers with effective safeguards against different types of exploitation, such as defective goods, deficiency in services and unfair trade practices.

### **19. Good Governance Day observed on 25 December**

Good Governance Day is annually celebrated on birth anniversary of former Indian Prime Minister, Bharat Ratna recipient, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, who was born on 25th December. Good Governance Day was established in 2014 to honor Prime Minister Vajpayee by fostering awareness among the Indian people of accountability in government. Good Governance Day has been declared to be a working day for the government.



Atal Bihari Vajpayee was the 10th Prime Minister of India, first for 13 days in 1996 and then from 1998 to 2004. He was elected to the Lok Sabha seven times.

# International

## 1. Global Migration Film Festival organised in Dhaka

The Global Migration Film Festival (GMFF) was organised in Dhaka. The day-long festival screened 15 films on the theme of migration and its various aspects. The festival was organised by the International Organisation of Migrants (IOM) and Dhaka University Film Society with the support of the European Union.



The GMFF started in 2016 and this year it is being organised across many cities in the world between 28th November to 18th December. IOM is the UN migration agency established in 1951. It works to ensure orderly and humane management of the migration issue.

## 2. NATO leaders gather in London to mark the 70th anniversary of the Alliance

Allied Heads of State and Government gathered in London on 3 December 2019 to commemorate the 70th anniversary of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The twenty-nine member alliance is the world's biggest military alliance. NATO's Secretary General is Jens Stoltenberg.



NATO was founded in 1949 for the collective defence of its members, linking the security of the United States with its European allies against the Soviet Union. It witnessed the end of communism, defeating the Soviet Bloc without firing a shot.

## 3. Namibia's President secured second term

Namibia's President Hage Geingob has won the country's Presidential elections securing a second term despite a recession and a corruption scandal that has fuelled popular discontent. However, the longtime ruling party South West Africa People's Organisation's (SWAPO) has lost its powerful two-thirds majority in its most challenging election since independence nearly 30 years ago.



President Geingob, received 56% of the votes while opposition challenger Panduleni Itula had 29%. The results showed a sharp decrease in support for Geingob, down from 87% in the previous election in 2014.

#### 4. Pritivirajsing Roopun elected as new President of Mauritius

The National Assembly of Republic of Mauritius unanimously elected Prithvirajsing Roopun, as new President of the island nation. He was a Member of Parliament between May 2010 and November 2019. During this tenure, he has served as Minister of Arts & Culture and Minister of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment.



In Mauritius, Prime Minister is head of government and holds most political power while the President is head of state but has no executive role and is considered guardian of the constitution.

#### 5. NATO Summit 2019 organized in Watford, United Kingdom

The 2019 London Summit of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was the 30th formal meeting of the heads of state and heads of government of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. It was held in The Grove, Watford, Hertfordshire, United Kingdom. The NATO leaders' meeting marked the 70th anniversary of the Alliance. It was chaired by NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg.



NATO leaders took a number of important decisions to increase the readiness of Allied forces, declared space as the fifth operational domain and committed to ensuring the security of telecommunications infrastructure.

#### 6. “International Seminar on Climate Smart Farming Systems” for BIMSTEC countries held in New Delhi

The three day 'International Seminar on Climate Smart Farming Systems' for BIMSTEC countries was held in New Delhi. It was organized by the Department of Agricultural Research & Education, Ministry of Agriculture & Farmer's Welfare and Indian Council of Agricultural Research.



The objective of this International Seminar was to have experience sharing to enable improvement of tropical smallholder farming systems for greater productivity and resilience to climate change through ecological approaches.



### 7. US, Mexico, Canada sign USMCA trade deal

The representatives from the United States, Mexico and Canada inked a revamped version of their regional trade pact after months of negotiations. The United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) will now go to the countries' legislatures for final approval.



The USMCA is "NAFTA 2.0." The agreement updates the North American Free Trade Agreement, the 1994 pact that governs more than \$1.2 trillion worth of trade among the three nations, for the 21st century. There are a lot more rules in the USMCA on intellectual property and data, as well as labor and environmental protections.

### 8. UAE, US joint military exercise 'Iron Union 12' concluded

The joint military exercise between the ground forces of the UAE and the United States, dubbed "Iron Union 12", concluded successfully. The two sides took part in joint military cooperation to enhance combat and tactical capabilities.



The "Iron Union 12" exercise lies within the framework of the joint exercises of the UAE Armed Forces with fraternal and friendly countries to enhance their combat skills in a manner consistent with the latest developments, and that reflects their readiness.

### 9. Finland elects Sanna Marin, the youngest-ever Prime Minister

Sanna Marin became the world's youngest prime minister after she was elected as the Prime Minister of Finland at the age of 34 years. She replaced outgoing leader Antti Rinne.



Rinne stepped down after several weeks of political crisis over a plan to cut wages for 700 postal workers. Elected to Parliament in 2015, Ms. Marin was re-elected in May 2019 and has served as the Minister of Transport and Communications.

### 10. Worldwide arms sales rise by nearly 5% in 2018

According to a new report by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), worldwide arms sales rose by nearly 5% in 2018. US manufacturers alone accounted for 59% of the market, up 7.2% on the previous year.



Russia was second in the rankings for arms production, with 8.6% of the market, United Kingdom on 8.4% and France on 5.5%. The world's largest arms maker remains the US firm Lockheed Martin, as it has been since 2009. Its sales alone account for 11% of the world market.

### 11. 8th edition of Embassy's annual film festival held in Riyadh

The Indian Embassy in Riyadh hosted "Ambassador's Choice: Screening of Films," an annual diplomatic film festival where movies from a number of countries are screened every evening. The 8th edition of the festival was inaugurated on Dec. 5 at the embassy's auditorium.



The two-week festival began with the screening of three Saudi short films titled "The Swan Song" by Hana Alomair, "A Colorful Life" by Abdurahman Sandokji and "Jaleed" by Abdurahman Sandokji. The festival concluded with the screening of "Queen".

### 12. World's 1st fully electric commercial aircraft takes inaugural test flight in Canada

The world's first fully-electric commercial aircraft took its inaugural test flight, in Vancouver, Canada. Australian engineering firm magniX designed the plane's motor and worked in partnership with Harbour Air. The technology would mean significant cost savings for airlines and zero emissions.



The e-plane – a 62-year-old, six-passenger DHC-2 de Havilland Beaver seaplane retrofitted with a 750hp electric motor – was piloted by Greg McDougall, founder and chief executive of Harbour Air.

### 13. Dell Technologies partnered with UNESCO to boost quality of education

UNESCO MGIEP (Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace) partnered with Dell Technologies to enable school teachers to use technology while teaching in classrooms by using ICT tools, developed by Dell Aarambh and FramerSpace platform.



The training provided on FramerSpace, a digital platform will help teachers in providing quality education, as outlined under Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SGD 4) by the member-states of the United Nations. Dell Aarambh has already provided ICT training to more than 85,000 teachers across 4,530 schools of India.

### 14. Exim Bank provided USD 500 mn credit to Bangladesh for defence procurement

Exim Bank has entered into an agreement with the Armed Forces Division, Bangladesh for making available supported Line of Credit (LoC) of USD 500 million for the purpose of financing defence related procurement, in the Republic of Bangladesh.



Under the arrangement, financing of export of eligible goods and services from India would be allowed subject to their being eligible for export under the Foreign Trade Policy of the Government of India and whose purchase may be agreed to be financed by the Exim Bank under this agreement.

### 15. Israeli student's made satellite "Duchifat-3" to be launched from Sriharikota

The "Duchifat-3", Israeli student's made satellite will be launched from ISRO's Sriharikota launch site. Duchifat 3, designed to serve children from across the country to "observe the Earth", is the third in the series of Israeli student-made satellites. Herzliya Science Center and Sha'arHanegev High School students have jointly designed the satellite.



Israeli students created a satellite image processing mechanism, which includes selecting the relevant images, compressing them and sending them to Earth so as to build appropriate communication systems and build software for managing satellite.

### 16. US and China reach trade agreement

The US and China have announced the phase one trade agreement. This brought a big breakthrough after over 18-month-long bruising trade war between the world's two largest economies threatening to roil the global economy.



The phase one of the deal requires structural reforms and other changes to China's economic and trade regime in the areas of intellectual property, technology transfer, agriculture, financial services, and currency and foreign exchange.

### 17. US House of Representatives approved two articles of impeachment against President Trump

The US House of Representatives approved two articles of impeachment against President Donald Trump. The final charges against Mr. Trump are - abuse of power and obstruction of Congress. This makes him only the third President in the US history to be impeached.



The President is accused of betraying the public trust by withholding 391 million dollars in military aid to pressure Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to announce an investigation of former Vice President and one of his top political rivals, Joe Biden.

### 18. Boris Johnson won parliamentary majority in UK election

Boris Johnson returned to power as Prime Minister of United Kingdom with a big majority win. The Conservatives won 365 of the 650 seats in the House of Commons. The Opposition Labour party secured 202 seats.



The snap election had been called by Johnson in a bid to win a majority for his Conservative Party and break the Commons deadlock over Brexit. Mr Johnson became prime minister in July without a general election, after the Conservative Party elected him as leader to replace Theresa May.

### 19. Maldives signed contract with joint venture of Indian companies

Maldives government signed a contract with a joint venture of Indian companies for preparation of project report and development of Addu, second biggest city in the island nation. The contract was signed by L & T engineering limited and Lea associates south asia for the Addu Road and Reclamation Project.



The scope of the project includes land reclamation, construction of roads and storm water drainage system in Addu. It will be financed through 800 million US dollars line of credit extended by EXIM bank of India for strengthening of Indo-Maldives development cooperation.

### 20. Sri Lanka formally released 'Vistas of Prosperity and Splendor'

Sri Lankan government released its new National policy Framework meant to guide the government ministries and departments in implementing their policies. The framework titled 'Vistas of Prosperity and Splendor' is aimed at achieving fourfold outcome of being a prosperous nation.



Among the main objectives are maintaining a 6.5% or higher GDP growth rate under the macroeconomic programme, achieving a per capita income exceeding 6,500 US dollar during 2020 to 2025. The policy further elaborates to keep the unemployment rate below 4% and the inflation rate below 5%.

### 21. UN Medal awarded to Indian peacekeepers to support the people of South Sudan

About 850 Indian peacekeepers serving in South Sudan were awarded the prestigious UN medal for their dedication and sacrifice. Indian peacekeepers have been recognized for their strong contribution to building peace in conflict-affected South Sudan as well as for going above and beyond their duties to support local communities.



India is among the largest troop contributing countries to UN peacekeeping operations. Currently, 2,342 Indian troops and 25 police personnel are deployed with the UNMISS.

## 22. Former PM Abdelmadjid Tebboune elected as the President of Algeria

Former Prime Minister Abdelmadjid Tebboune was elected as the President of Algeria, succeeding Abdelkader Bensalah. He served as the PM from May 2017 to August 2017, under the governance of President Abdelaziz Bouteflika. He has served as Minister of Housing (2001-2002) and Minister of Communication and Culture (1999-2000).



Abdelmadjid Tebboune was recently honored with the National Order of Merit from the acting President Abdelkader Bensalah.

## 23. India and US signed defence tech transfer pact during 2+2 dialogue

India and the US signed an agreement to facilitate the transfer of defence technology. During the 2+2 dialogue, a new annual exercise called Tiger Triumph was launched, which will enhance tri-service coordination and involve exchange of knowledge and expertise. New agreements on space exploration and defense industrial collaboration were signed during the meeting.



The Industrial Security Annex (ISA) agreement was signed during the second round of 2+2 dialogue between the two countries. India and the US signed three agreements under the Defense Technology and Trade Initiative.

## 24. World's New Nation Bougainville gained independence from Papua New Guinea

The autonomous region of Bougainville voted to become independent from Papua New Guinea, paving the way for the group of islands to become the world's newest nation. Almost 98% of people (176,928 people) voted for independence and less than 2% (3,043 people) voted to remain as part of Papua New Guinea but with "greater autonomy".



Buka town on Buka island is the capital of the region, and houses the government headquarters. The estimated population of the territory is 300000. John Momis has served as the President of the Autonomous Region of Bougainville of Papua New Guinea since 2010.

## 25. First ever Global Refugee Forum held in Geneva

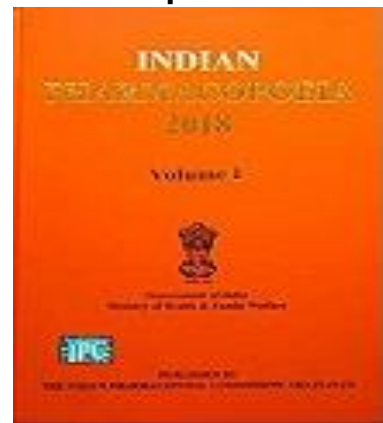
The first ever Global Refugee Forum was held in Geneva, Switzerland. The event was co-hosted by United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) along with Government of Switzerland. Global Refugee Forum was an opportunity for countries to take stock of situation and to strengthen the international response.



The Global Refugee Forum is a unique occasion for States and others to come together and announce bold, new measures they will take to ease pressure on host countries, boost refugee self-reliance, and search for solutions. It enables host countries to tap into additional development cooperation.

## 26. Afghanistan first country to recognize Indian Pharmacopoeia

Afghanistan became the first country to recognize Indian Pharmacopoeia (IP) after it was formally recognised by the its National Department of Regulation of Medicines and Health Products of the Ministry of Public Health. It will also be used based on the requirement as reputable pharmacopoeia in the laboratory of medicines and health products quality.



IP is an officially recognized book of standards as per the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 and Rules 1945 thereunder. The IP specifies the standards of drugs manufactured and marketed in India in terms of their identity, purity and strength.

## 27. US, India announce establishment of annual Parliamentary exchange

The US and India have announced the establishment of an annual Parliamentary Exchange to discuss issues of strategic importance to the bilateral relationship. The Parliamentary Exchange was announced as a part of the final joint statement of the India-US 22 Ministerial Dialogue.



The exchange is expected to begin in 2020. The Parliamentary Exchange will feature members of the India Caucus in the US and Indian parliamentarians travelling to each other's countries every other year to discuss issues of strategic importance to the bilateral relationship.

### 28. Sheikh Hasina elected Awami League President

The 21st National council of the ruling Awami League of Bangladesh has elected Sheikh Hasina for the next three years as Party President for the ninth consecutive term. She has been leading the Awami League since 1981. It also elected Obaidul Quader as general secretary for second term.



The number of women in the central committee is expected to be increased from the current level of 15 as the Bangladesh Constitution requires that women representation in all political parties must be at least 33% by 2020.

### 29. US President Trump officially launched US military 'Space Force'

President Trump has signed the 2020 National Defense Authorization Act and with it directed the establishment of the U.S. Space Force (USSF) as the sixth branch of the armed forces. The Space Force is part of the Department of the Air Force.



The launch of the Space Force will be funded by an initial \$40m for its first year. The Space Force is not intended to put troops into orbit, but will protect US assets - such as the hundreds of satellites used for communication and surveillance.

### 30. Trump became third US president in history to be impeached

The US House of Representatives approved two articles of impeachment against President Donald Trump. The final charges against Mr. Trump are - abuse of power and obstruction of Congress. This makes him only the third President in the US history to be impeached.



The President is accused of betraying the public trust by withholding 391 million dollars in military aid to pressure Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to announce an investigation of former Vice President and one of his top political rivals, Joe Biden.



### 31. India-Iran 19th Joint Commission meeting held in Iran

The 19th Session of the India-Iran Joint Commission was held in Tehran. It was co-chaired by External Affairs Minister of India Dr. S. Jaishankar and the Foreign Minister of Iran Dr. Mohammad Javad Zarif. Various issues such as connectivity, trade and commerce, cultural and people-to-people contacts were discussed. They also exchanged views on regional and global issues of mutual interest.



Both sides reiterated support for strengthening bilateral trade and commerce. It was agreed to take humanitarian approach in dealing with issues related to fishermen and sea-farers. It was agreed to commemorate the 70th Anniversary of the bilateral Treaty of Friendship in 2020.

### 32. UAE and Oman sign MoU to enhance trade & economic cooperation

The UAE federal export credit company, Etihad Credit Insurance (ECI) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Export Credit Guarantee Agency of Oman (Credit Oman) to enhance trade and economic cooperation between the two countries.



The signing took place during the 10th AMAN UNION General Assembly, held in Muscat. AMAN UNION is a professional forum assembling Commercial & Non-commercial Risks Insurers & Reinsurers in Member Countries of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and of the Arab Investment & Export Credit Guarantee Corporation.

### 33. Eight West African nations rename common currency to Eco

Eight West African countries have agreed to change the name of their common currency to Eco and severed their earlier currency CFA Franc's links to former colonial ruler France. Eco usage will come in to force in 2020. It will be pegged to the Euro.



The CFA Franc was initially pegged to the French franc and has been linked to the euro for about two decades. Benin, Burkina Faso, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo currently use the currency.

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

President Miguel Díaz-Canel has appointed Manuel Marrero Cruz as Cuba's first Prime Minister in more than 40 years. It was reinstated under the rules of a new constitution for the communist-run island passed earlier in 2019.



Marrero, who has served as tourism minister for 16 years, helped boost Cuba's economy by making tourism one of the engines of growth. The post of prime minister was scrapped in 1976 by the then-revolutionary leader Fidel Castro.

### 35. UNGA approved resolution on initiating drafting of new treaty to combat cyber-crime

The UN General Assembly approved a resolution for drafting a new treaty to combat cyber-crime. The Assembly also approved a resolution strongly condemning human rights abuses against Myanmar's Rohingya Muslims and other minorities. It calls on Myanmar government to take urgent measures to combat incitement of hatred against minorities in Rakhine, Kachin and Shan states.



The Russian-drafted resolution to combat cyber-crime establishes an expert committee representing all world regions. It will elaborate a comprehensive international convention on countering the use of information and communications technologies for criminal purposes.

### 36. Russia inducted first Avangard hypersonic missiles into service

Russia inducted first Avangard hypersonic missiles into service. The first missile regiment equipped with latest strategic missiles with the Avangard hypersonic glide vehicle entered service at 10 am Moscow time.



Avangard hypersonic missiles have a "glide system" that affords great maneuverability and could make them impossible to defend against. The Avangard system could penetrate current and future missile defence systems. The Avangard is invulnerable to intercept by any existing and prospective missile defence means of the potential adversary.

### 37. China successfully launched largest carrier rocket

China successfully launched the largest carrier rocket Long March-5, from Wenchang Space Launch Center in south China's Hainan Province. The rocket, also known as CZ-5, blasted off with more than 1,000 tonnes of thrust.



It was the country's third attempt to launch the rocket. The first attempt was made in 2016. However, during the first attempt, the rocket failed to reach the speed required for the early phase of the flight. Long March-5 carried Shijian-20 satellite which entered into its designated orbit and the mission was declared as successful.

### 38. United Nations adopted 3.07 billion USD budget

The General Assembly has adopted a budget of 3.07 billion dollars for the United Nations in 2020. The budget for the first time includes funding for the investigation of war crimes in Syria and Myanmar.



#### Budget highlights:

- Budget increased by \$8 million w.r.t initial announcement.
- The increase is due to additional missions assigned to the UN Secretariat, inflation and exchange rate adjustments, according to diplomats.
- It marks the first time since 1973 that the UN is adopting an annual budget instead of a two-year one.
- It is focused for entry into the Decade of Action for SDG implementation.

### 39. UAE extended 300 million US dollars of development aid to Jordan

The Abu Dhabi Fund for Development (ADFD) announced to provide 300 million US dollars as development aid to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. Thousands of refugees have been pouring into Jordan to escape Syria's civil war. The move comes following the directives of President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, with the support of His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi.



Syria shares the northern border with Jordan. According to an UN estimate the Hashemite kingdom hosts about 630,000 Syrian refugees while Jordan claims that the number is over 1.4 million.

# Miscellaneous

1. In pursuance of judgment of Honorable Supreme Court, the Government has decided to set up a bench of National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) at Chennai.
2. MSMEs contribute 29.7% of GDP and 49.66% of Indian Exports.
3. Over 93 lakh houses have been sanctioned and over 55 lakh are at various stages of construction under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban). Over 28 lakh houses have been completed and delivered to the allottees.
4. Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu launched the Bharatiya POSHAN Anthem in New Delhi.
5. Saudi Arabia has taken over the G20 Presidency from Japan. It is the first Arab nation to assume the G20 presidency. It will host world leaders for a global summit in its capital on 21-22 November in 2020.
6. Donyi Polo Cultural & Charitable Trust and Indigenous Faith & Cultural Society of Arunachal Pradesh celebrated 'Indigenous Faith Day' at Pasighat with religious fervour.
7. The President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind graced and addressed a National Convention on 'Empowerment of Women for Social Transformation' at the headquarters of Brahma Kumaris in Mount Abu, Rajasthan.
8. Archaeological Survey of India has identified 138 numbers of monuments as Must See Monuments and information thereof is made available on "Must See" portal of Archaeological Survey of India.
9. Rajya Sabha passed the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order (Second Amendment) Bill, 2019.
10. The West Bengal government organized a two-day Business Conclave at Digha in East Midnapore District to attract more industrial investments in the State.
11. The 18th round of Foreign Office Consultations between India and Myanmar was held in New Delhi.
12. Xiaomi launched service "Mi Credit" in India for Android phones.
13. Switzerland will be the country partner at the 17th edition of BioAsia2020 scheduled to be held from February 17-19, 2020 with the theme "Today For Tomorrow" in Hyderabad, Telangana.
14. Indian match referee GS Lakshmi is set to become the first woman match referee to officiate a men's ODI match.
15. Shri C. Sugandh Rajaram (IFS:2001), presently Consul General, Consulate General of India, Munich has been appointed as the next High Commissioner of India to the Republic of Ghana.
16. Veteran opener Wasim Jaffer became the first player in Indian cricket to feature in 150 Ranji matches.
17. Chairman of the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), B B Kumar, passed away.
18. The Federation of Indian Association (FIA) has invited Super 30 founder Anand Kumar to a function on the eve of India's Republic Day celebrations in New York.
19. Malaysia has reported the first case of Polio in 27 years, when a three-month-old Malaysian infant boy was diagnosed with polio.
20. President of India conferred 36 awardees with the National Florence Nightingale Awards 2019.
21. The National Energy Conservation Day is observed on 14th December.

22. The 11th edition of the Delhi Dialogue was held at Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra in New Delhi. The theme for this year's Delhi Dialogue is Advancing Partnership in Indo-Pacific.
23. UNESCO has removed the 'Carnival of Aalst' of Belgium from its Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity List.
24. The 11th Regional Quality Conclave (RQC) is being organized on 20 December 2019 at Rudrapur, district Udham Singh Nagar, Uttarakhand.
25. Poland left 2050 Climate Neutrality Agreement of European Union as the Union demanded for more funds to support nuclear power and for economic transition.
26. In a first, GST Council fixes 28% uniform tax rate for lottery.
27. India is set to host the 36th International Geological Congress (IGC) in New Delhi
28. World Design Organization (WDO) will be launching its new global programme 'World Design Protopolis' in Bengaluru, Karnataka.
29. The Union Government appointed a senior Gujarat Cadre IPS officer Atul Karwal, as Director of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel National Police Academy in Hyderabad.
30. Government of India launched EChO Network, a national program to provide a template for cross-disciplinary leadership in India.
31. US President Donald Trump has picked Indian-American computer scientist Sethuraman Panchanathan to lead the prestigious National Science Foundation (NSF) in USA.
32. Centre Government launched the National Broadband Mission (NBM) to provide broadband access to all villages by 2022.
33. Google searches for "Operation Twist" surged in India after the central bank announced its version of the U.S. Federal Reserve's unconventional monetary policy.
34. Chief Minister of Odisha Naveen Patnaik launched the 'Jalsathi' programme which will ensure supply of safe drinking water to all households in the state.
35. National Rail Transport Institute (NRTI) signed an Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with University of Birmingham in Rail Bhawan, New Delhi to set up its first Centre of Excellence for Next Generation Transportation Systems.
36. India's first ever fresh vegetable export to Dubai by Sea Route.
37. The Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), a statutory body under Union Ministry of Power, conducted an International Workshop on 12-13 December 2019 on 'Energy Efficient Cooling' at Scope Convention Centre in New Delhi.
38. The Seventh Economic Census is being conducted nationwide through Common Service Centres (CSC) and is expected to be completed by March 2020.
39. The Indian Council on Medical Research has issued guidelines on Gene Therapy. The aim of the guideline is to enable the stakeholders comply with the R&D of Gene Therapeutic Products being produced and tested inside the country.
40. The Government of India for the first-time invoked Drug Price Control Order, 2013 in order to increase the prices of 21 medicines to ensure their availability.
41. Indian squash player Harinder Pal Singh Sandhu clinched the men's title while Hana Ramadan of Egypt won the women's crown in the third leg of the HCL-SRFI (Squash Rackets Federation of India) India Tour Squash Tournament in Mumbai.
42. Noted archaeologist R. Nagaswamy was honoured at the Silver Jubilee International Conference of Art in Dhaka by Bangladesh.
43. Minister of State (MoS) for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai, inaugurated a State-of-the-Art DNA Analysis Centre at Central Forensic Science Laboratory (CFSL), Chandigarh.
44. The 'Nagpur Resolution- A holistic approach for empowering citizens' was adopted during the Valedictory session of the two-day Regional Conference on 'Improving Public Service Delivery – Role of Governments', in Nagpur, Maharashtra .

45. 34,74,000 approx. numbers of passengers were flown under RCS-UDAN Scheme till date.
46. NITI Aayog will launch the second edition of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) India Index, which documents the progress made by India's States and Union Territories towards implementing the 2030 SDG targets.
47. France's armed forces carried out a drone strike for the first time, during operations in Mali.
48. Private sector lender Federal Bank has tied up with online real estate platform Magicbricks for listing and e-auctioning of immovable properties repossessed by it in recovery proceedings.
49. Reserve Bank of India has introduced a new semi-closed prepaid payment instrument (PPI) which can be used for the transaction of goods and services up to a limit of Rs 10,000.
50. Afghan President won second term with 50.6% of preliminary vote count.

## 1. India, Sweden sign MoU for India-Sweden Healthcare Innovation Centre

India and Sweden signed a Memorandum of Understanding for India-Sweden Healthcare Innovation Centre in New Delhi. The objective of the innovation Centre is to develop an ecosystem of open innovation to which start-ups and the healthcare delivery stakeholders can use to collaborate and address current and future challenges in the healthcare sector.



The MOU focuses on creating new partnerships within the public, private and academic sectors. The Centre will run for an initial period of three years.

## 2. Centre released Rs. 414.90 crore and Rs. 552.00 crore to the cyclone “BULBUL” affected states of West Bengal and Odisha respectively under SDRF

The Union Government has released Rs 414.90 crore and Rs 552 crore to the cyclone 'Bulbul' affected states of West Bengal and Odisha respectively under State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF). Additional financial assistance is extended from the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) as per the laid down procedure.



The funds are made available to States in their SDRF in advance for meeting relief expenditure for natural disasters, including cyclone. The Central Government had constituted Inter-Ministerial Central Teams (IMCT) for both the states after the cyclone BULBUL.

## 3. Ministry of Railways signed an MoU with Department for International Development (DFID), UK

The Ministry of Railways signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Department for International Development (DFID), United Kingdom for collaboration on energy and sustainability. The MoU will broadly cover:



Energy planning for Indian Railways in line with Governments' policies and regulations as applicable from time to time including 100% greener sources of electricity supply Promoting energy sustainability initiatives like adopting energy efficiency practices and enabling Fuel efficiency

#### 4. Piyush Goyal inaugurated third edition of National Public Procurement Conclave

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal inaugurated the third edition of National Public Procurement Conclave in New Delhi. The two-day conclave was organized by Government e-Marketplace, GeM in association with Confederation of Indian Industry.



Sixty-two stalls ranging from IT, electronic items, road safety equipment, security, furniture items, sports goods, health care, telecom, GIS solutions, home appliances and freight services were put up for the participants and visitors to see. GeM awards were also given away during the inaugural session.

#### 5. Home Ministry sanctions Rs 100 crore for Women Help Desks in Police Stations

Ministry of Home Affairs has sanctioned a sum Rs. 100 crores from Nirbhaya Fund for setting up/strengthening of Women Help Desks in Police Stations. This scheme would be implemented by the States and Union Territories.



गृह मंत्रालय  
MINISTRY OF  
HOME AFFAIRS

Women Help Desks would focus on making the Police Stations more women friendly and approachable, as they would be the first and single point of contact for any woman walking into a police station. Essentially, lady police officers would be deployed at these help desks.

#### 6. India's first HAM project in sewerage sector, the 14 MLD STP at Sarai, Haridwar completed before time

The 14 MLD Sewage Treatment Plant at Sarai in Haridwar is the first STP to be completed under the Hybrid Annuity (HAM) Based Public Private Partnership Model. It involved a cost of Rs. 41.40 crores, and the Plant has been completed before its scheduled timeline.



This Plant is based on advanced aerobic biological process, Sequential Batch Reactor (SBR) process, capable of removing the nutrients during treatment and is a 100% eco-friendly project.



### 7. CSIR signed MoU with BHEL to push 'Make in India' initiative

CSIR and BHEL have signed an MoU to cooperate, collaborate and pursue industrial application oriented research programmes and its commercialization in large scale. Thus, indigenously developed technologies by CSIR shall be commercialised & implemented jointly by BHEL & CSIR in the country, to make the Government of India initiative "Make in India" successful.



The first joint project to be taken up under this collaboration shall be for commercialization by BHEL of various water purification/sewage disposal related technologies developed by CSIR. The MoU will remain in force for five years duration.

### 8. CSIR signed MoU with KVIC on promotion of honey production

The Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR) has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) for promotion of honey production. The MoU will help formalize the working relationship between the two organizations in areas such as honey testing, promotion of Honey Mission alongside the CSIR Aroma Mission and the proposed CSIR Floriculture Mission.



The MoU will also explore enlisting of CSIR licensees in the KVIC network, display of CSIR technology products at important KVIC outlets such that CSIR products can reach to wider audience.

### 9. India becomes first country to make entire Haj process digital

India has become the first country to make the entire process for pilgrims going on Haj completely digital. An online application, e-visa, Haj mobile app, 'e-MASIHA' health facility, "e-luggage pre-tagging" providing all information in India itself regarding accommodation and transportation in Mecca and Madina will be provided to 2 lakh Indian Muslims going for Haj in 2020.



This year, a 100-line information centre has been established at the Haj House, Mumbai for providing information regarding the entire Haj process. E-MASIHA (E-Medical Assistance System for Indian Pilgrims Abroad) has been developed to deal with any emergency in Mecca and Madina.

## 10. Government launched 4th round of Regional Connectivity Scheme- UDAN

Government has launched the 4th round of Regional Connectivity Scheme - UDAN (Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik) to further enhance the connectivity to remote and regional areas of the country. The focus in this round will be North East Region, Hilly States, Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh and Islands.



The scheme was launched in October, 2016. In the last three years government has successfully completed three rounds of bidding under the Scheme and awarded about 700 routes. The Ministry aims to operationalize one thousand routes and more than 100 airports in the next five years.

## 11. TRAI revamped mobile number portability rules

Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has revamped mobile number portability (MNP) rules, making the entire process faster and simpler. TRAI has prescribed three working days timeline for port out requests within a service area. Similarly, timeline of five working days has been prescribed for requests for port out from one circle to another. The new rules will come into effect from December 16.



Validity of the Unique Porting Code (UPC) has also been brought down to four days instead of a fortnight earlier.

## 12. Nationwide vaccination drive launched to prevent eight diseases under Mission Indradhanush 2.0

Centre has launched nationwide vaccination drive to prevent eight diseases under Intensified Mission Indradhanush 2.0 across the country. The government's flagship scheme is aimed at immunizing children under the age of 2 years and pregnant women against eight vaccine preventable diseases. The IMI covers vaccines for diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, poliomyelitis, tuberculosis, measles, meningitis and Hepatitis B.



Vaccines for Japanese encephalitis and hemophilus influenza are also being provided in selected areas. The IMI 2.0 aims to achieve targets of full immunization coverage in 272 districts spread over 27 States. The IMI 2.0 will be carried out between December 2019 and March 2020.

### 13. Fit India School Rating System launched as part of Fit India Campaign

Union Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' and Kiren Rijiju jointly launched the Fit India School Rating System. Fit India program is an innovative initiative launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to increase the awareness among masses and to encourage people to adopt healthy lifestyle.



Fit India school rating system as per certain parameters will enhance the image of the schools. Three Kendriya Vidyalayas of Delhi were awarded with Fit India Flag.

### 14. Mumbai Central received first 'Eat Right Station' certification from FSSAI

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) conferred the Mumbai Central station in Mumbai with the 'Eat Right Station' certificate with four stars rating as a part of their 'Eat Right India' movement. The focus of the movement is on improving the health and well-being of people by ensuring that they eat healthy. Mumbai Central Railway Station became India's first "Eat Right Station."



Mumbai Central station was judged on the basis of compliance of food safety and hygiene, availability of healthy diet, food waste management etc.

### 15. CPPIB to invest \$600mn via National Investment and Infrastructure Fund

National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF) of India and Canada Pension Plan Investment Board (CPPIB) announced an agreement for CPPIB to invest up to US\$600 million through the NIIF Master Fund. The agreement includes a commitment of US\$150 million in the NIIF Master Fund and co-investment rights of up to US\$450 million in future opportunities to invest alongside the NIIF Master Fund.



The NIIF Master Fund invests equity capital in core infrastructure sectors in India, with a focus on transportation, energy and urban infrastructure. CPPIB will also become a shareholder in NIIF's investment management company.

### 16. IIT researchers to create 'Gandhipedia'

Two IITs and the National Council of Science Museums (NCSM) have joined hands to develop 'Gandhipedia', an online repository of books, letters and speeches written by Mahatma Gandhi, to commemorate his 150th birth anniversary. Under this project, 40 books written by Mahatma Gandhi will be digitised with the help of Artificial Intelligence till March, 2024.



A total of 100 works of Mahatma Gandhi, including his letters and speeches, would be uploaded in the portal for people to have access to read.

### 17. 'Borderman' yearly magazine released by Nityanand Rai

The Minister of State for Home Affairs, Nityanand Rai released the yearly magazine "Borderman" at the 55th Raising Day of BSF (Border Security Force). The 55th raising day of BSF (Border Security Force) was celebrated on the 1st of December 2019.



The magazine pays homage to the BSF personnel who made supreme sacrifices for the security of the nation. Minister inspected an impressive parade by BSF jawans and took salute of the march past. He later presented Police Medals for Gallantry and Meritorious Services to the BSF personnel.

### 18. Massive campaign launched by Ministry of Defence against single use plastic

Ministry of Defence launched massive plogging programme against single use plastic at more than 400 locations. The aim of this massive exercise is to raise awareness amongst the community, collect plastic waste and make the surroundings clean. The slogan for this event is 'Plastic Se Raksha – Swachhata Hi Suraksha'. Community awareness programmes such as nukkad nataks, debates, quizzes, painting competitions among students etc. will be organized.



Army will clean up waste at 17 locations, Indian Navy will clean up waste at 30 locations and Indian Air Force will clean up waste at 150 locations across the country.

### 19. India-Australia hold third Secretary-level 2+2 Dialogue

The third India-Australia Secretary-level 2+2 Dialogue was held in New Delhi. The Indian delegation was led by Defence Secretary Dr. Ajay Kumar and Foreign Secretary Shri Vijay Gokhale, while the Australian side was led by Defence Secretary Mr. Greg Moriarty and Foreign Secretary Ms Frances Adamson.



Both the sides discussed issues related to bilateral defence engagements, areas to enhance cooperation in the field of defence industry and defence technology as well as the prevailing regional security concerns.

### 20. Cabinet approved Agreement on Social Security between India and Brazil

The Union Cabinet has given its approval for signing the Agreement on Social Security between the Republic of India and the Federative Republic of Brazil. At present, about 1,000 Brazilians are living in India, while about 4,700 Indians are living in Brazil. All posted/detached workers and self-employed persons will benefit from this proposal without any discrimination.



India has been entering into bilateral Social Security Agreements (SSAs) with other countries in order to protect the interests of Indian professionals/skilled workers working abroad for short durations and enhance the competitiveness of Indian companies.

### 21. Cabinet approved MoU between CDSCO and Saudi Food and Drug Authority

The Union Cabinet approved ex-post facto the Memorandum of Understanding between Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO) and Saudi Food and Drug Authority in the field of Medical Products Regulation.



The MoU would facilitate better understanding of the regulatory aspects between the two sides and help in increasing India's export of medical products to Saudi Arabia. It will also enable better coordination in international fora. CDSCO is the national regulatory body for Indian pharmaceuticals as well as medical devices.

## 22. Cabinet approved revision in funding pattern of Phase IV of Delhi Metro

The Union Cabinet approved revision in the funding pattern of Delhi Metro Phase-IV enabling the Centre and the Delhi government to share cost of land in 50-50 ratio. The approval is applicable to three priority corridors of Phase-IV – Aerocity to Tughlakabad, R K Ashram to Janakpuri (West), and Mukundpur to Maujpur.



Delhi will be the first city where the Centre will be bearing land cost with the state government in any Metro project. At present, the Centre and the Delhi government share cost of Metro projects in 50-50 ratio.

## 23. Cabinet approved the proposal for increase in authorised capital and equity support to IIFCL

The Union Cabinet has approved the proposal for providing additional equity support to IIFCL to the tune of Rs. 5,300 crore in financial year 2019-20 and Rs. 10,000 crore in financial year 2020-21. This will be done through regular Budgetary support and/or through issuance of recapitalization bonds.



The Cabinet has also approved for increasing the authorized capital of IIFCL from Rs. 6,000 crore to Rs. 25,000 crore. IIFCL is a wholly-owned Government of India (GoI) company. It is the principal entity which provides long term finance to viable infrastructure projects across sectors.

## 24. Cabinet authorised NHAI to set up Infrastructure Investment Trust and monetize National Highway projects

The Union Cabinet has given its approval to authorize National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) to set up Infrastructure Investment Trust(s) (InvIT) as per InvIT Guidelines issued by SEBI. This will enable NHAI to monetize completed National Highways that have a toll collection track record of at least one year and NHAI reserves the right to levy toll on the identified highway.



NHAI's InvIT will be a Trust established by NHAI under the Indian Trust Act, 1882 and Securities and Exchange Board of India (Infrastructure Investment Trusts) Regulations, 2014. The InvIT Trust will be formed with an objective of investment primarily in infrastructure projects (as defined by Ministry of Finance).

## 25. India Design Council launched two Initiatives to promote Design Education and Standards

The India Design Council (IDC) launched the Chartered Designs of India (CDI) and the Design Education Quality Mark (DEQM) in New Delhi. These two initiatives of IDC and National Institute of design, Ahmedabad will help to address the 5 challenges of scale, quality of design, quality of education for design, raising the priority for design in industry and design for public purpose.



India Design Council is an autonomous body of the Government of India. It is a national strategic body for multi-disciplinary design and is involved in promotion of design to make India a design enabled country.

## 26. ICAR signed MoU with NABARD

The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the National Bank of Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD). The MoU is for taking up site-specific transfer of technologies under sustainable agriculture, integrated farming system, crop intensification, agro-forestry, plantation and horticulture, animal sciences, agri-engineering, etc., including post-harvest technologies.



Further, the ICAR through its large network will support the training and capacity building of channel partners and NABARD Officers. The initiative will strengthen the competence of channel partners under the promotional and developmental programmes of NABARD technology transfer under the climate resilient agriculture, contingency and adaptation planning.

## 27. 37th National Symposium of Heads of Police Training Institutions organized

The 37th National Symposium of Heads of Police Training Institutions was organized by Bureau of Police Research & Development (BPR&D) in New Delhi. The theme of the two day Symposium was 'Optimal Utilization of Resources-Through Sharing and Networking'.



A Directory of Indian Police Training Institutions (DIPTI) was released that has information on the resources of around 300 Police training institutions all over the country. The two day symposium was attended by the Heads of Police Training Institutions of States/UTs/Central Armed Police Forces/Central Police Organisations, academia and domain experts.

## 28. India to Host 36th International Geological Congress in March 2020

India will host the 36th International Geological Congress (IGC) in New Delhi during the first week of March 2020. The theme of the forthcoming conference is 'Geosciences: The Basic Science for a Sustainable Development'.



Popularly described as the Olympics of Geosciences, the IGCs are prestigious global geo-scientific events held once in four years and participated by around 5000-6000 geoscientists from all across the world. India is the only Asian country to host the event twice.

## 29. Prime Minister chaired first meeting of National Ganga Council

PM Narendra Modi chaired the first meeting of National Ganga Council at Chandra Shekhar Azad University of Agriculture and Technology, Kanpur. The meeting was aimed at reviewing the progress of the Namami Gange project.



'Namami Gange Programme' is an Integrated Conservation Mission, approved in June 2014 with budget outlay of Rs. 20,000 crore to accomplish the twin objectives of effective pollution control and conservation and rejuvenation of River Ganga.

## 30. 6th India-Indonesia Joint Commission Meeting (JCM)

The 6th India-Indonesia Joint Commission Meeting (JCM) was held in New Delhi. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and his Indonesian counterpart Retno Marsudi participated in the meeting. India and Indonesia resolved to strengthen cooperation in areas of defence and security, connectivity and trade.



The two sides reviewed the entire gamut of ties. Both sides reiterated their commitment to strengthen ties in the areas including people-to-people exchanges. As key partners in the Indo-Pacific, both sides called for greater synergy in the region, guided by the shared vision on maritime cooperation.



### 31. Fifth meeting of the Fifteenth Finance Commission held in Delhi

The fifth meeting of the Economic Advisory Council of the Fifteenth Finance Commission (XVFC) was held in New Delhi. Advisory Council was informed about submission of the 2020-21 report and now the Commission is on its next task of preparing the report for 2021-26 period.



#### Major issues discussed in the meeting were:

- Possible macro assumptions for the Commission's award period relating to real growth, inflation, etc.
- Way to improve tax collection for additional resource mobilization.
- Issues related to stabilization of GST.
- Issues related to compliance and adherence to Fiscal responsibility legislations.

### 32. GEM launched National Outreach Programme - GEM Samvaad

A national outreach Programme, GeM Samvaad, was launched in New Delhi. GeM Samvaad will take place with stakeholders across the country and with local sellers in order to facilitate on-boarding of local sellers on the marketplace while catering to specific requirements and procurement needs of buyers.



Government e Marketplace (GeM) is the national public procurement portal offering end to end solutions for all procurement needs of Central and State Government Departments, PSUs, autonomous institutions and local bodies.

### 33. Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad launched National Broadband Mission

Minister for Communications, Ravi Shankar Prasad launched National Broadband Mission to fulfill all aspirations of the people and enable fast track growth of digital communication infrastructure. The Logo of the NBM, a Booklet was also launched.



#### Objectives of NBM:

- Broadband access to all villages by 2022.
- Develop a Broadband Readiness Index.
- Laying of 30 lakhs route km of Optical Fiber Cable.
- Improve quality of services for mobile and internet.

- To fast track growth of digital communications infrastructure and increase tower density.

### **34. ADB and India signed \$250 million loan to expand energy efficiency investments in India**

The Asian Development Bank and the Government of India signed a \$250 million loan to Energy Efficiency Services Limited to expand energy efficiency investments in India that will benefit agricultural, residential and institutional consumers. In addition, \$46 million financing have been provided from the Clean Technology Fund.



Earlier, ADB approved a \$200 million loan to EESL for Demand Side Energy Efficiency Sector Project that focused on efficient lighting and appliances. The project will contribute to the mission of Government of India to promote energy efficiency and meet Government's commitments to reduce energy intensity of the economy.

### **35. CSIR and the National Centre for Scientific Research, France inked MoU**

A MoU was signed between the Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR), India and the National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS), France to establish a framework for cooperation between the two towards promotion and support of scientific and technological research. MoU will boost cooperation in many critical areas such as health, water, energy and climate change among others and contribute towards addressing the global challenges.



CSIR and CNRS have explored strengthening their cooperation to foster joint innovation and transfer of technologies applicable to India or/and France and to other nations.

### **36. Union Rural Development Ministry selected UT of J&K for National award**

Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir has been selected for national award by Union Rural Development Ministry for best performance in the implementation of Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY).



Union Rural Development Ministry has sanctioned 147 Road and Bridge projects under PMGSY-II covering a length of 783.88 kilometres at an estimated cost of 878.53 crore rupees for Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh. The entire road length has been sanctioned for upgradation of existing road infrastructure with 10-year maintenance.

### 37. WDO is set to launch World Design Protopolis in Bengaluru

World Design Organization (WDO) is set to launch its new global programme 'World Design Protopolis' in Bengaluru, Karnataka. It is aimed at implementing holistic progress in megacities across the world, measure the progress of the city over a period of five years, attract investments and solve problems so that the city becomes a better place for citizens.



The mega event 'World Design Protopolis' will be witnessed by design professionals from India and abroad, heads of various companies, architects, interior designers, etc.

### 38. Government approved Rs 436 cr outlay for skilling 4 lakh persons

The Government announced 436 crore rupees outlay for skilling four lakh professionals in artificial intelligence, blockchain and cybersecurity areas over the next three years. The 'Future Skills PRIME' programme will seek to position the initiative as India stack for digital talent. The programme will increase employability and will add digital value to the talent pool.



In the last phase, around 200000 IT employees were trained under skilling program, and the upcoming initiative will expand the scope to others who are keen to upskill themselves in areas like AI, Cyber security, blockchain.

### 39. IIT-H launched Vaccination on Wheels in collaboration with Gates Foundation

IIT Hyderabad fellow launched 'Vaccination On Wheels' in collaboration with Gates Foundation. Fellow Jignesh Patel launched a 'Vaccination on Wheels Clinic' in Pune. The foundation has provided funds to Mr. Jignesh Patel under its Grand Challenges Explorations. Jignesh Patel founded Jivika Healthcare to provide this vaccination service.



The clinic is aimed at visiting schools, colleges and corporates to conduct vaccination camps at their doorsteps, so as to provide low-cost vaccination service to the low-income groups in society. With this, government will cover the last mile in delivering vaccines to people of all strata of the society.

### 40. Ministry of Railways signed MoU with University of Birmingham

The National Rail Transport Institute, a deemed to be university under the Ministry of Railways, signed an MoU with the University of Birmingham to set up its first Centre of Excellence for Next Generation Transportation Systems.



This Centre will be involved in promoting development of the Rail and Transportation sector in India which include offering post-graduate, doctoral and post-doctoral programmes, customized training programmes for in-service professionals. The University of Birmingham is home to the Birmingham Centre for Railway Research and Education (BCRRE). BCRRE is the largest university-based centre for railway research and education in Europe.

### 41. Government launched EChO Network to catalyze cross-disciplinary leadership in India

The Union Government has launched EChO Network, a national program to provide a template for cross-disciplinary leadership in India. The specific focus of the program is to increase research, knowledge, and awareness of Indian ecology and the environment.



The initiative has drawn in partners from Government, industry and academia. The founding partners include Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Centre for Cellular and Molecular Platforms (C-CAMP), Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL), India Climate Collaborative (ICC), RoundGlass and Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and Environment (ATREE).

#### 42. First tripartite Memorandum of Agreement signed for implementation of FIDF

The first tripartite Memorandum of Agreement was signed between the department of Fisheries Government of India, NABARD and the Government of Tamil Nadu for the implementation of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development Fund (FIDF). A dedicated fund has been created namely the Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund with a total of Rs. 7522.48 crore to address the infrastructure requirement for fisheries sector.



The Government of Tamil Nadu has signed the first Tripartite MoA for availing the initial concessional finance of Rs 420 crore from NABARD for development of three fishing harbours in the State namely, (i) Tharangampadi in Nagapattinam District, (ii) Thiruvottriyur Kuppam in Tiruvallur District and (iii) Mudhunagar in Cuddalore District.

#### 43. Cabinet approved transformational Organisational Restructuring of Indian Railways

The Union Cabinet has approved a transformational organisational restructuring of the Indian Railways. This historic reform will go a long way in achieving Government's vision of making Indian Railways the growth engine of India's vikas yatra.



The reforms include:

- Unification of the existing eight Group A services of the Railways into a Central Service called Indian Railway Management Service (/RMS)
- Re-organisation of Railway Board on functional lines headed by CRB with four Members and some Independent Members
- The existing service of Indian Railway Medical Service (IRMS) to be consequently renamed as Indian Railway Health Service (IRHS)

#### 44. Cabinet approved transfer of administrative control of BCPL

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved the transfer of administrative control of Brahmaputra Cracker and Polymer Limited (BCPL), the Central Public Sector Undertaking implementing the Assam Gas Cracker Project (AGCP) from Department of Chemicals & Petrochemicals to Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas.



**Brahmaputra Cracker  
and Polymer Limited**

The CCEA has also approved the Feedstock subsidy to BCPL for 15 years of plant operation to maintain minimum Internal Rate of Return (IRR) of 10% (post tax). To bring the IRR

to 10%, BCPL has estimated feedstock subsidy of approximately Rs.4600 crore for the project for 15 years of plant operation.

#### 45. Cabinet approved creation of the post of Chief of Defence Staff

The Union Cabinet has approved to create the post of Chief of Defence Staff in the rank of a four-star General. The Chief of Defence Staff will also head the Department of Military Affairs (DMA), to be created within the Ministry of Defence and function as its Secretary.

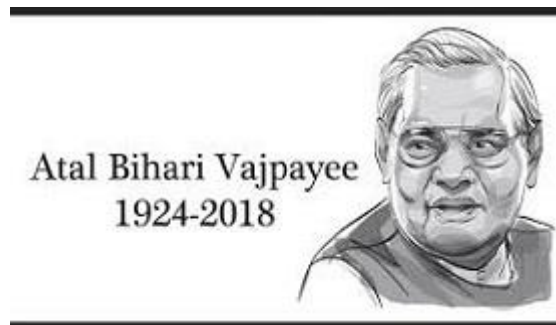


The following areas will be dealt by the Department of Military Affairs headed by CDS:

- The Armed Forces of the Union, namely, the Army, the Navy and the Air Force.
- Integrated Headquarters of the Ministry of Defence comprising Army Headquarters, Naval Headquarters, Air Headquarters and Defence Staff Headquarters.
- The Territorial Army.
- Works relating to the Army, the Navy and the Air Force.

#### 46. Cabinet approved Strategic Tunnel under Rohtang Pass to be renamed after former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee

The Union Cabinet has decided to honour the contribution of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee by naming the Strategic Tunnel under Rohtang Pass after him. The historic decision to construct a strategic tunnel below the Rohtang Pass was taken on June 03, 2000 when late Atal Bihari Vajpayee was the Prime Minister.



The 8.8-kilometre long tunnel is the world's longest tunnel above an altitude of 3,000 metres. It will reduce the distance between Manali and Leh by 46 kilometres and save crores of rupees in transport costs. It is a 10.5-metre wide single tube bi-lane tunnel.

#### 47. Cabinet approved ex-post facto agreement on Security Cooperation between India and Saudi Arabia

The Union Cabinet has given ex-post facto approval on an Agreement on Security Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.



The Agreement aims to improve the effectiveness of both countries in the prevention and suppression of crimes including crime relating to terrorism and its financing and organized crime and to establish a framework for enhancing cooperation between the officials of intelligence and

law-enforcement agencies of the two countries, in line with national and international obligations.

#### **48. Cabinet approved ex-post facto the agreement between India and Uzbekistan**

The Union Cabinet has given ex-post facto approval on an Agreement between India and Uzbekistan on Cooperation in the field of Combating Transnational Organized Crime and International Terrorism.



The agreement aims to improve the effectiveness of both countries in prevention and suppression of crimes including crime relating to terrorism and its financing, organized crime and to establish a framework for enhancing cooperation between the officials of intelligence and law-enforcement agencies of the two countries, in line with domestic laws and international obligations.

#### **49. Cabinet approved MoU between India and Bangladesh on cooperation in Youth matters**

The Union Cabinet was apprised of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between India and Bangladesh on cooperation in Youth matters. The MoU was signed on 5th October, 2019 at New Delhi.



Exchange programmes in the field of Youth Affairs between India and Bangladesh will help in promoting exchange of ideas, values and culture amongst Youth and in consolidating friendly relations. It will help in developing international perspective among the Youth and expanding their knowledge and expertise in the areas of youth affairs.

#### **50. Cabinet grants ex-post facto approval to Agreement between India and Sweden on Recognition of Seafarer Certificates**

The Union Cabinet has given its ex-post facto approval for the Agreement between India and Sweden on Recognition of Seafarer Certificates, pursuant to Regulation I/10 of the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watch-Keeping for seafarers, 1978.



The Agreement will pave the way for recognition of maritime education and training, certificates of competency, endorsements, training and documentary evidence and medical fitness certificates for seafarers issued by the Government of both the countries.

### 51. Cabinet approved Promulgation of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Ordinance, 2019

The Union Cabinet approved a proposal to promulgate an Ordinance and to amend the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016. Under the Amendments, the liability of a corporate debtor for an offence committed prior to the commencement of the corporate insolvency resolution process shall cease, and the corporate debtor shall not be prosecuted for such an offence from the date the resolution plan has been approved by the Adjudicating Authority, if the resolution plan results in the change in the management or control of the corporate debtor to a person who was not:



- A promoter or in the management or control of the corporate debtor or a related party of such a person; or
- A person with regard to whom the relevant investigating authority has, on the basis of material in its possession, reason to believe that he had abetted or conspired for the commission of the offence, and has submitted or filed a report or a complaint to the relevant statutory authority or Court.

### 52. Cabinet approved MoU between India and Saudi Arabia for cooperation in the field of Renewable Energy

The Union Cabinet was apprised of a Memorandum of Understanding between India and Saudi Arabia for cooperation in the field of Renewable Energy in the following areas:-



- Upgrading the level of technologies and their applications
- Contributing to the field of renewable energy to raise its efficiency
- Developing the Renewable energy projects in Solar, Wind, Biogas, Geothermal and other fields of renewable energy
- Development and localization of value chain in the field of renewable energy
- Developing and boosting uses of solar energy small applications for buildings, homes and others



### 53. Cabinet approved ratification of the Tenth Additional Protocol to the Constitution of the Universal Postal Union (UPU)

The Union Cabinet gave its approval to the ratification of the Tenth Additional Protocol to the Constitution of the Universal Postal Union (UPU) adopted by 2nd Extraordinary Congress of the Union held at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 3rd to 7th September, 2018.



The approval enables the Postal Administration of India to have the Instrument of Ratification signed by the Hon'ble President of India and have the same deposited with the Director General of the International Bureau of the Universal Postal Union through diplomatic channels along with approval of other Acts of the Union.

### 54. Cabinet granted Ex-post facto approval to amend the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulations

The Union Cabinet gave its ex-post facto approval to the Adaptation of Laws (Amendment) Order, 2019 issued by the President of India under clause (2) of article 372 of the Constitution to amend the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulations (BEFR), 1873.



The notification will extend BEFR to the State of Manipur to give its indigenous people protection from the provisions of Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019 and make necessary changes in the said Regulation.

### 55. Cabinet approved signing of protocol to amend the Air Services Agreement between India and Switzerland

The Union Cabinet has approved the signing of the Protocol to amend the Agreement between the Swiss Federal Council and the Government of India related to air services and to exchange Diplomatic Notes with Switzerland for bringing the amendments in the Air Services Agreement into force as per Article 17 thereof.



The amendments in the Air Services Agreement will bring it in tune with the developments in the civil aviation sector. It will provide enabling environment for enhanced and seamless connectivity while providing commercial opportunities to the carriers of both the sides.

### 56. Cabinet approved Atal Bhujal Yojana

The Union Cabinet has given its approval for the implementation of the Atal Bhujal Yojana (ATAL JAL), a Central Sector Scheme with a total outlay of Rs.6000 crore to be implemented over a period of 5 years (2020-21 to 2024-25). Out of the total outlay of Rs. 6000 crore, 50% shall be in the form of World Bank loan.



The scheme aims to improve ground water management through community participation in identified priority areas in seven States, viz. Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. ATAL JAL will promote panchayat led ground water management.

### 57. Cabinet approved funds to the tune of Rs. 627.40 crore to Swadesh Darshan Scheme

The Union Cabinet has given its approval to release funds to the tune of Rs. 627.40 crore for the 10 projects sanctioned during 2018-19 and additional Rs. 1854.67 crore for sanctioning of new projects during 2019-20 in Swadesh Darshan Scheme.



Under Swadesh Darshan Scheme, Ministry of Tourism is developing critical tourism infrastructure in the country in a sustainable and inclusive manner to make India, a world class tourist destination.

### 58. President Kovind released mobile app of Red Cross Society of India

President Ram Nath Kovind released the mobile app of the Red Cross Society of India in Hyderabad. The app is developed by the Telangana Centre for Good Governance in less than three months. The mobile app is accessible in all languages. The access to blood bank and Red Cross membership will become easy with the launching of the mobile app.



The app also connects blood donors and provides up-to-date information as it is connected in real-time to the Central Government's blood bank management database named 'e-Rakt Kosh'.

### 59. Good Governance Index launched

Minister of State for Public Grievances and Pensions Dr Jitendra Singh launched Good Governance Index in New Delhi on the occasion of Good Governance Day. The Good Governance Day is observed on the birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.



Good Governance Index has been scientifically designed on various parameters of governance, keeping in mind the citizen-centricity. Index will also seek to determine the status of governance and provide reference threshold for future also.

### 60. Dharmendra Pradhan unveiled India's first long distance CNG bus

In a major step towards making India a gas-based economy and making CNG as the eco-friendly option for long distance transport, Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, Minister of Petroleum, unveiled India's first long distance CNG bus fitted with composite CNG cylinders, which can travel around 1000 kms in a single fill.



CNG buses will improve overall ease of living of people by mitigating the problem of air pollution, ensuring a cleaner environment and reducing waiting time at CNG stations. CNG buses fitted with light weight composite cylinders has the capacity to revolutionize the fight against air pollution across the nation.

### 61. Cabinet approved conduct of Census of India 2021 and updation of National Population Register

The Union Cabinet has approved the proposal for conducting Census of India 2021 at a cost of Rs. 8,754.23 crore and updation of National Population Register (NPR) at a cost of Rs. 3,941.35 crore. Census of India will cover the entire population in the country while NPR will also cover all the population except in the state of Assam.



The National Population Register (NPR) was prepared in 2010 under the provisions of the Citizenship Act, 1955 and Citizenship Rules, 2003, which was subsequently updated in 2015 by seeding it with Aadhaar.

## 62. Dr. Harsh Vardhan inaugurated 2nd Edition of “Eat Right Mela”

Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister of Health inaugurated second edition of the 'Eat Right Mela'. Eat Right Mela of FSSAI is a commendable effort and outreach activity for citizens to nudge them towards eating right. 'Eat Right Melas' will be part of public gatherings like local melas, community programs etc., so that the citizens would learn about health and nutrition benefits of different types of food.



The Union Minister launched 'The PURPLE Book', a handbook on diets for diseases. The book provides general guidelines for hospitals on suitable diets for common medical conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, cancer, etc.

## 63. Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh launched DefExpo 2020 mobile app

Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh launched the mobile app of the forthcoming DefExpo 2020. The app has been developed by Department of Defence Production, Ministry of Defence (MoD) with the aim to engage with the visitors as well as exhibitors.



The main features of the app are 'inform, engage and feedback'. It provides detailed information about the day-to-day events; participating exhibitors; Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs), guest speakers of seminars/webinars; publications i.e., electronic brochures and e-books; maps and directions of the venues and city weather.

## 64. Foundation laid for India's first Transit-Oriented Development Project

Union Home Minister Amit Shah laid the foundation stone for India's first transit-oriented development (TOD) project in New Delhi. The project includes Delhi's tallest tower in East Delhi, a massive open green landscape area, besides a 48-storey signature tower which will come up in the first phase of the TOD project.



CP Kukreja Architect's organic growth designed hub will bring together metro stations, residences and workplaces by 2023. The infrastructure project will consist of mixed-land use in ratio of 70:20:10 for residential area, commercial use and civic amenities.

### 65. 7th Economic Census Flagged off in Delhi

The Seventh Economic Census was launched in Delhi. The Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation (MoSPI) has tied up with Common Service Centre (CSC), an SPV under Ministry of Electronics and IT, to carry out the 7th National Economic Census.



Census is being conducted on a digital platform by the use of an application which will ensure high accuracy and data security. National Economic Survey, which is conducted every five years, is very crucial for framing of policies and planning for the government and other organisations.

# Persons in News

## 1. Indian Navy Gets its First Woman Pilot

Sub Lieutenant (SLt) Shivangi created history as the first woman pilot of the Indian Navy, on successful graduation from the 7th Dornier Conversion Course (DOCC) as Dornier pilots.

SLt Shivangi was inducted into the Indian Navy under the Short Service Commission (SSC)-Pilotentry scheme, and was part of the 27th Naval orientation course (NOC) at the Indian Naval Academy, Ezhimala. She will continue her training at INAS 550, the Dornier squadron at INS Garuda, to become a fully operational pilot on Maritime Reconnaissance (MR) aircraft.



## 2. 'Joker' fame Joaquin Phoenix named 2019 'Person of the Year' by PETA

'Joker' fame Joaquin Rafael Phoenix, American actor from California, was named 2019 Person of the Year by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA). PETA honored Joaquin Phoenix for helping create films, billboards and videos that wake people up; for loudly protesting against cruelty and quietly comforting animals during their last moments on Earth. He served as a living example of the end of speciesism.



People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) is the largest animal rights organization in the world.

## 3. Roger Federer's face to go on Swiss coin

Tennis legend Roger Federer will become the first living person in Switzerland to have a coin minted in his honour. The Federal Mint, Swissmint, has created a 20-franc silver coin bearing Federer's image. It's the first time in its history that Swissmint created a commemorative coin to honour a living legend. Prior to this, Federer was pictured on a special edition stamp released in 2007 by Swiss Post in Basel.



The picture on coin shows Roger playing a single-handed backhand on the "head" side bearing a legal face value of 20 Swiss francs.

#### 4. South Africa's Zozibini Tunzi crowned Miss Universe 2019

South Africa's Zozibini Tunzi was crowned Miss Universe 2019. The 26-year-old is a gender violence activist. Puerto Rico's Madison Anderson was elected first finalist, and Miss Mexico Sofía Aragón second.



She is the third woman from South Africa to win the title, and the first black woman since Leila Lopes was crowned Miss Universe 2011. A total of 90 countries participated in this year's contest, which was hosted by Steve Harvey.

#### 5. PUMA signed Sunil Chhetri as brand ambassador

German sportswear giant Puma signed Sunil Chhetri, captain of the Indian national football team and Bengaluru FC, as its new brand ambassador. Chhetri, who is the most-capped player and six times winner of AIFF Player of the Year, signed a three-year deal with Puma.



Sunil Chhetri, all-time top goal scorer for the Indian team was honored with Arjuna award in 2011 and Padma Shri in 2019. Puma SE, branded as Puma, is a German multinational company that designs and manufactures athletic and casual footwear, apparel and accessories.

#### 6. PepsiCo appointed Salman Khan as Pepsi's new brand ambassador

PepsiCo appointed actor Salman Khan as the new brand ambassador of its flagship Pepsi brand of carbonated beverage in India. PepsiCo India launched 360-degree campaign. Its summer 2020 campaign will be based on Salman Khan's upcoming movie "Dabangg-3".



Prior to this, actor endorsed PepsiCo's Mountain Dew drink. Pepsi brand will launch brand's 'HarGhoont Mein Swag' proposition with Salman in 2020. Previously, actor has been the face of rival Coca-Cola's popular ThumsUp brand for years.

### 7. Ripu Daman Bevli as “Plogging Ambassador of India” on 50th Fit India Plogging Run

Union State Minister Kiren Rijju felicitated Ripu Daman Bevli, popularly known as the Plogman of India and named him the Plogging Ambassador of India, at the event of 50th Fit India Plogging Run.



Plog Run is a unique way of picking up garbage while jogging and was added to the Fit India Movement as a unique way of combining cleanliness and fitness. Bevli and his team have cleaned up 50 cities and covered over 1000km in about 2 months, collecting 2.7 tonnes of garbage.

### 8. Greta Thunberg named Time Person of the Year for 2019

Greta Thunberg, the Swedish schoolgirl who inspired a global movement to fight climate change, has been named Time magazine's Person of the Year for 2019. At 16 years of age, she is the youngest person to have ever received the accolade.



Thunberg was lauded by Time for starting an environmental campaign in August 2018 which became a global movement, initially skipping school and camping out in front of the Swedish parliament to demand action.

### 9. Toni-Ann Singh crowned Miss World 2019

Jamaica's Toni-Ann Singh won the Miss World 2019 title, with India's Suman Rao becoming second runners-up. Ophely Mezino of France became first runner up of the title. Toni-Ann has worked as president of the Caribbean students' association.



Toni became fourth woman from Jamaica to win the Miss World title. After a long decade, Jamaica has won the Miss World 2019 title. Earlier to this, Jamaica's Lisa Hanna won the Miss World title in 1993.



# Places in News

## 1. Abu Dhabi selected as world's leading sports tourism destination

Abu Dhabi has been selected as the world's leading Sports tourism Destination at the 26th edition of the World Travel Awards (WTA) being held in Muscat. This is the seventh time in a row that Abu Dhabi has been selected for this coveted award.



Abu Dhabi hosted some of the world's top sporting events, such as the FIFA Club World Cup 2017 and 2018, the first edition of 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.

## 2. Navarms 2019 4th International Seminar Cum Exhibition on Naval Weapon Systems held

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 held in Delhi. The seminar laid emphasis on the ways and means for boosting indigenisation of Naval Weapon Systems.



NAVARMS-19: International Naval weapon systems exhibition

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.

## 3. Human Library event to be held in Mysuru

Human Library, a concept which seeks to replace books with humans, was held in the City of Palaces, Mysuru, Karnataka. The first event of Human Library aimed to break past long-standing prejudices and stereotypes by creating a safe framework for conversation by using a library analogy of lending people rather than books.



Human Library was initially launched in the year 2000 and currently exists in more than 85 countries, known as The Human Library Organization. In India, Human Library is spread across various metropolitan cities including Hyderabad, Mumbai, Delhi, Bengaluru.

#### 4. Dehradun hosted Conference of Presiding Officers of Legislative Bodies

79th Conference of Presiding Officers of Legislative Bodies was held in Dehradun, Uttarakhand. The presiding officers of all state legislatures participated in the conference and discussed the agenda 'Tenth Schedule to the Constitution and the role of the Speaker'. Tenth schedule of the Constitution deals with disqualification of members of parliament or members of state legislatures on the basis of change of party.



The aim of the conference was to run democracy properly under parliamentary rules and that zero hour is an important aspect in functioning of parliament.

#### 5. South India's earliest Sanskrit Inscription found in AP

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has discovered the earliest Sanskrit inscription in South India which is also an earliest epigraphic evidence for the Saptamatrika cult. Saptamatrikas are a group of seven female deities worshipped in Hinduism. Epigraphy is the study of ancient inscriptions that clarify their meanings according to dates and cultural contexts, and drawing conclusions about the writing and the writers.



Earliest Sanskrit inscription in South India found in A.P.

Earliest Sanskrit inscription in South India found at Chebrolu in Andhra Pradesh. The found inscription records the construction of a Prasada (temple) and proved that the found inscription is in Sanskrit and in Brahmi characters.

#### 6. 'Oxygen Parlour' at Nashik Railway Station to combat air pollution

In a unique initiative to battle rising air pollution in cities, Indian Railways has opened an 'Oxygen Parlour' at Nashik railway station to provide an experience of breathing clean air to the commuters. Airo Guard in collaboration with the Indian Railways has come up with this initiative, on recommendation of National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).



Around 1500 plants of the Oxygen parlour at the railway station will bring down the pollution in the air at the railway station and allow the people to breathe cleaner air.

# Regional

## 1. India and ADB sign \$206 million loan to strengthen urban services in 5 Tamil Nadu cities

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Government of India signed a \$206 million loan to develop water supply and sewerage infrastructure in 5 cities of Tamil Nadu and strengthen capacities of urban local bodies (ULBs) for improved service delivery.

This is the second project loan for the ADB-supported \$500 million multi-tranche financing for Tamil Nadu Urban Flagship Investment Programme, approved in September 2018. It will overall develop climate-resilient water supply, sewerage, and drainage infrastructure in 10 cities of Tamil Nadu.



ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

## 2. Avantee mega Food Park inaugurated in MP's Dewas

Union Minister for food processing Harsimrat Kaur Badal inaugurated Avantee mega Food Park in Dewas, Madhya Pradesh. This first food park of central India is spread over 51 acres and has been constructed at a cost of about 150 crore rupees. About 5 thousand local people will get employment from this Mega Food Park. Processing of soyabean, gram, wheat and other grains and vegetables will be done in the park. Warehouses will also be opened in Indore, Ujjain, Dhar and Agar in the next phases.



## 3. Hornbill festival celebrated in Kohima

The Hornbill Festival is celebrated every year in the first week of December. It is also called as the "Festival of Festivals". The festival is organized by the Government of Nagaland to encourage inter-tribal interaction and to promote cultural heritage of Nagaland. The first festival was held in 2000.



The festival is named after the Indian hornbill, the large and colourful forest bird which is displayed in the folklore of most of the state's tribes. It is held at Naga Heritage Village, Kisama. It provides a colourful mixture of dances, performances, crafts, parades, games, sports, food fairs and religious ceremonies.

#### 4. MP government proposed 5% quota for sportspersons in jobs

The Madhya Pradesh government would introduce a bill in the Legislative Assembly to earmark 5% reservation to sportspersons in State jobs. It has also launched an insurance scheme for the sportspersons and is also planning to establish a career development centre for sportspersons and a world-class sports university.



Sportspersons who excel at national competitions would get encouragement prize of Rs 1 lakh instead of Rs 5,000. While organisations that host state-level sports meets would get Rs 2 lakh instead of Rs 50,000, those holding national-level competitions will get Rs 10 lakh instead of Rs 2 lakh given earlier.

#### 5. UP government announced 25% subsidy & full stamp duty waiver for defence industry

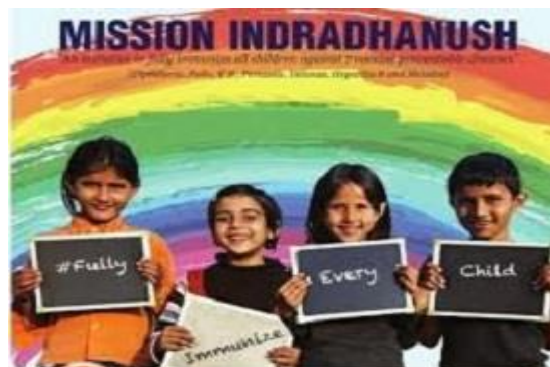
Uttar Pradesh government has decided to provide 25% subsidy and 100% stamp duty waiver for setting up defence industry in the state. State will also provide all facilities including power, road and fencing of land to the companies that will set up defence industries.



The state cabinet has also given relief to the home buyers in Noida and Greater Noida region by giving exemption to the builders from penal interest and other dues for the period their project is stalled due to litigation.

#### 6. Mission Indradhanush 2.0 to be conducted in four phases in Chhattisgarh

Intensified Mission Indradhanush-2.0 was launched in Chhattisgarh. This immunization drive will be conducted in four phases across the state. The programme will be completed by March 2020.



The Mission Indradhanush is being carried out in seven districts of the Chhattisgarh including five districts of tribal Bastar division: Narayanpur, Kondagaon, Sukma, Dantewada and Bastar to vaccinate hard-to-reach and tribal populations. During the next four months, a target has been set to vaccinate 90% children under the age of 2 years.

### 7. Odisha launched 'Madhu' app to help school students

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik launched 'Madhu' app, an e-learning mobile phone application for school students in learning their lessons through videos and tutorials. Madhu app developed by Ganjam district administration is named after 'UtkalGourab' Madhusudan Das.



Students can study through video lectures and exercises in Odia language by leading subject experts and educationists.

Mathematics and Science tutorials for students of classes V to VIII is launched in first phase.

### 8. Gujarat to have India's first maritime museum

The Government of India has planned to establish a National Maritime Heritage Museum at Lothal in Gujarat. Lothal is the site of one of the oldest ports in India dating to the Bronze Age. The museum will act as an independent research center for archaeology of boat building, reconstruction of maritime history and materials. The museum is being set up with technical help from the Portuguese Maritime Heritage Museum.



The central government has appointed the first Director General for the museum which will be attached to the Maritime Board of the Gujarat government.

### 9. Odisha to set up 45 new fast track courts

The Odisha government plans to set up 45 new fast track courts. Of these, 21 courts would be dedicated for cases of rape and sexual harassment of women. The remaining 24 fast track courts will specifically deal with Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) cases.



These special courts will be part of total 1023 fast track courts proposed by the central government for speedy trial and disposal of rape and other sexual assault cases. Odisha has seen low conviction rate in rape cases.

### 10. UP government to set up 218 fast-track courts for crimes against women and children

The Uttar Pradesh cabinet approved a proposal to set up 218 fast track courts (FTCs) for speedy disposal of rape and child sexual abuse cases. 144 courts will hear rape cases and 74 will hear cases of crime against children.



The state cabinet also cleared the proposal to create 218 posts of additional session judges and staff of the courts. The state government will spend Rs 75 lakh on the operation of each fast track court. Additionally, Rs 63 lakh will be spent per annum on the salary of the staff.

### 11. UP Police to deploy women police personnel in Police Response Vehicle of dial 112 emergency services

The Uttar Pradesh Police have decided to deploy women police personnel in Police Response Vehicle of Dial 112 Emergency Services and women can also take the help of the service to reach their homes safely.



Police Response Vehicles will drop women travelling alone late at night to their destination to ensure their safety. The PRV will also escort women driving scooters, if need arises. The women police personnel will be deployed on 10% of the regular Police Response Vehicles. This service will be available from 10 P.M. to 6 A.M.

### 12. West Bengal topped in a 100-day work programme for promoting livelihoods

West Bengal has been selected for the 1st prize in 100-Day Work Programme for Promoting Livelihoods. The Rural Development Ministry has selected Bankura and Cooch Behar Districts of the state for 1st and 2nd positions among districts in the country in implementation of rural job scheme.



Baburmahal Gram Panchayat of Kulpi in South 24 Parganas District has also bagged best performance award from the Centre. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005 (MGNREGA) guarantees 100 days of employment in a financial year to any rural household whose adult members are willing to do unskilled manual work.

### 13. Andhra Pradesh government decided to bring new laws to protect women & children

The Andhra Pradesh Government has decided to bring new laws to protect women and children. The state Cabinet has approved to enact the new law, Andhra Pradesh Disha Act, Andhra Pradesh Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2019 and Andhra Pradesh Special Court for Specified Offences against Women and Children Act-2019.



Draft DISHA ACT provides for harsh punishments, including death sentence, to those guilty of heinous crimes against women. The Act would cover sexual offences against women and children, acid attacks and harassment of women. It also provides for completion of the judgement process in 21 working days.

### 14. National Tribal Dance Festival held in Raipur

A three-day National Tribal Dance Festival was held in Chhattisgarh's capital Raipur from December 27 to 29. International folk artists from 23 states and six other countries took part in the festival and portrayed their respective tribal folk culture.



The festival is used to mark the dances of Adivasi and tribal people in India and their indigenous tribal dance culture.

### 15. Puducherry government unveiled start-up policy

The Puducherry government has unveiled a start-up policy. It aims to create a corpus fund of ₹10 crore to support the setting up of start-up incubators and to develop co-working spaces. The department plans to provide a grant of ₹3 lakh to projects recommended by incubators established by the government/private sector/academic institutions as a start-up grant.



A monthly allowance of ₹10,000 will be given to individuals up to a maximum of five years. The Puducherry Start-up Cell will be the nodal agency for implementing the policy.

### 16. Virtual Police Station at Andhra University

The first Virtual Police Station (VPS) in the state of Andhra Pradesh has been established at Andhra University. Students will be able to report violence or any other crime online. After a complaint is filed, the police station concerned will take up the issue and initiate probe.



The facility will initially be open only to the students. The AU facility is being looked at as a pilot project, and this will later be replicated at other educational institutions.

### 17. Congress released 'Vision Document 2020-25' in Madhya Pradesh

In Madhya Pradesh, former Prime Minister DrManmohan Singh released 'Vision Document 2020-25' to mark the completion of one year of the Congress government in the state.



The document aimed to make the state a prosperous one. Industrial growth, agriculture and allied sectors, education, public health and nutrition, inclusive growth, culture, heritage and tourism, youth welfare and sports, irrigation, energy and environment, urban development, rural development and good governance are focus areas.

### 18. Five-day music festival 'TansenSamaroh' held in Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh

In Madhya Pradesh, popular classical music festival 'TansenSamaroh' began with traditional style inGwalior with the recitations of Harikatha and Milad. The five-day festival is celebrated every year in the memory of one of the most eminent singers of Indian history, 'MianTansen'.



TansenSamaroh, the oldest and esteemed classical music festival in India was organised by Ustad Alauddin Khan Kala Evam Sangeet Academy, under the Madhya Pradesh culture department. Artistes from Greece, USA, Iran and Belgium performed in different sessions of Tansen festival.

Noted vocalist Pandit Vidyadhar Vyas was presented the National Tansen Award for 2019.



### 19. 7-Day International Film Festival held in Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh

In Madhya Pradesh, Chief Minister Kamal Nath inaugurated the 7-Day International Film Festival in Shilpkala village of Khajuraho. Films from the country and abroad including Bundelkhandi were screened at the festival. The eminent personalities like KailashKher, Smt. Poonam Dhillon, Smt. PadminiKolhapure and Smt. AlkaYagnik attended the festival.



The International Khajuraho Film Festival is being organized by the Prayas Sanstha in collaboration with the State Government. Events like film making workshop, mobile film making workshop, plays, programmes for promoting local art and culture, herbal forest fair, animal fair etc. were organized during the Film Festival.

### 20. Three-day state-level orange festival held in Manipur

Three-day State-level Orange Festival was held in Manipur. Chief Minister N. Biren Singh inaugurated the festival at district headquarters Tamenglong. Tamenglong district is largest producer of orange fruit in Manipur. The state government under the sponsorship of North Eastern Council organise the festival annually to promote the fruit and encourage its growers.



Orange growers' competition was held and prizes were distributed to top position holders. Cultural shows, traditional games, orange queen competition, seminar for growers were held in the festival.

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

In order to ensure foolproof security of the samples collected from the scene of crime, and the forensic analysis reports, Haryana introduced a unique barcoding software "Trakea" to enable foolproof security of the samples collected in Forensic reports. Haryana became India's first police force to have introduced this unique barcoding for forensic reports.



**Haryana Police**

A prisoner (software engineer) of Bhondsia jail designed the software. Trakea is aimed at tracking casewise forensic reports electronically through barcodes. It includes two-stage barcoding to maintain the secrecy of the samples.

## 22. Gujarat police became 7th state police to get 'President's Colours'

Gujarat became the seventh state to receive the prestigious President's Colours for its services and courage. President's Colours is also called as 'Nishaan', an emblem which all police officers of Gujarat would wear on the left-hand sleeve of their uniform. It is the highest honour given to the Armed Forces, Para Military Forces and State Police Forces by the President.

Past recipient states of this award include Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Jammu and Kashmir, Tripura and Assam.



## 23. Chennai Corporation launched India's first waste exchange platform

Chennai Corporation, Tamil Nadu launched India's first waste exchange platform namely "Madras Waste Exchange". Madras Waste Exchange ([www.madraswasteexchange.com](http://www.madraswasteexchange.com)) will be used to buy and sell of waste and recycled products online, on a pilot basis for the first three months.



Madras Waste Exchange ([www.madraswasteexchange.com](http://www.madraswasteexchange.com)) is India's

first waste exchange programme. Vendors and buyers of waste will connect and perform transactions involving municipal solid waste. Web portal has been built to support Madras Smart City Mission and achieving target of generating zero waste.

## 24. ADB, India signed \$490 Million loan for PPP to upgrade Madhya Pradesh roads

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Government of India signed a \$490 million loan for public-private partnership (PPP) project to upgrade about 1,600 km of state highways and major district roads (MDRs) in Madhya Pradesh. An additional \$286 million investment will be mobilised through private sector participation under the PPP modality.



The project will upgrade 750 km of state highways and 850 km of MDRs to two-lane and all-weather standards with road safety features. Since 2002, ADB has provided the state government with five loans to develop its road network, improving about 7,300 km of roads.

## 25. QCI Conclave in Uttarakhand

Quality Council of India (QCI) along with PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PHDCCI) organized its 11th Regional Quality Conclave (RQC) at Rudrapur, district Udham Singh Nagar, Uttarakhand. The theme of the RudrapurRQC was "Advance Manufacturing with Quality, Innovation & Technology Interventions."



The objective of the Conclave is to create awareness about significance of quality culture in businesses, deliberate on how organizations could continuously improve and innovate and share the technological advancement like Industry 4.0 and predictive maintenance.

## 26. Tripura gets its first SEZ

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry has notified the setting up of the first ever Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in Tripura at PaschimJalefa, Sabroom, South Tripura District. It will be a Sector Specific Economic Zone for Agro-Based Food Processing.



The estimated investment in the project will be around Rs 1550 Crore. The developer of the SEZ will be Tripura Industrial Development Corporation (TIDC) Ltd. The SEZ is estimated to generate 12,000 skilled jobs. Rubber based industries, textile and Apparel Industries, bamboo and Agri-food Processing Industries will be set-up in the SEZ.

## 27. Uddhav Thackeray announced loan waiver up to Rs 2 lakh for farmers

Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray announced waiver of farm loans up to 2 lakh rupees sanctioned till 30 September 2019. The Chief Minister announced the Mahatma PhuleShetkariKarjaMuktiYojana (Mahatma Phule Farmer Loan Waiver Scheme).



Mr. Thackeray also announced starting of Shiv Bhojan scheme which offers meal worth 10 Rupees on experimental basis in 50 centers across the state. He also announced Special package worth 253 crores rupees for suicide prone districts of Yavatmal.

### 28. Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik launched 'Jalsathi' programme

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has launched the 'Jalsathi' programme to ensure supply of safe drinking water to all households in the state. Patnaik also distributed water quality testing kits and POS (point of sale) machines to the women volunteers - 'Jalasathis'.



Under the 'Jalsathi' programme, about 5,000 women will be engaged for supplying safe drinking water. The programme will be implemented in as many as eight wards of Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation under the 5T initiative of the Housing and Urban Development.

### 29. Meghalaya Assembly passed resolution to bring state under ILP

The Meghalaya Assembly passed a resolution to urge the Centre to implement the inner-line permit(ILP) in the state under the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulations, 1873, to safeguard the interests of the citizens of the state. All members of the House supported through a voice vote.



Section 2 of the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation 1873 provides for power to prescribe by notification "The Inner Line" prohibiting all citizens of India or any class of such citizens or any persons residing in or passing through such states from going beyond such a line without a pass.

### 30. Rajasthan government started its first Janta Clinic

In order to provide free primary health care to people living in slums, Rajasthan Chief Minister inaugurated its first "Janta clinic" in Jaipur. It will provide free primary health care to people living in slums. Under first phase, 12 Janta Clinics will be opened in Jaipur where people would get free medicines and free medical examination in some cases.



The state government will rope in doctors on contractual basis and NGOs for paperless registration of patients as doctors will prescribe medicines on computer applications.

### 31. Andhra Pradesh launched 'Netanna Nestham' welfare scheme for weavers

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy launched YSR Netanna Nestham welfare scheme for weavers at Dharmavaram in Anantapur district. The scheme will benefit nearly 85,000 families who depend on handloom weaving for livelihood.



Under this scheme, an annual incentive of Rs 24,000 will be provided to handloom weavers in the state. Over five years, each weaver family will be given Rs 1.2 lakh in total. The Netanna Nestham scheme was also launched in Krishna district's Pedana town.

### 32. Delhi cabinet approves new policy on pollution

Chief Minister of Delhi, Arvind Kejriwal introduced a new policy to make Delhi the capital of Electric vehicles. With an aim to reduce air pollution in the city, government is targeting 35,000 electric vehicles (2/3/4 wheelers and buses), 1,000 EVs, and 250 public charging or swapping stations in Delhi.



#### Policy features:

- To provide subsidies to electric vehicles.
- Rs 36 crore approved for carrying out mass awareness campaigns.
- The policy will be valid for three years from the date of the notification.
- 100% subsidy for the purchase of charging equipment up to ₹6,000

### 33. Hemant Soren took oath as Jharkhand CM

Jharkhand Mukthi Morcha chief Hemant Soren took oath as the 11th Chief Minister of Jharkhand. It was the second time that Mr Soren was sworn in as the chief minister. Soren succeeds BJP leader Raghubar Das and was administered the oath of secrecy by Governor Droupadi Murmu.



In the election results, the JMM won 30 seats while its alliance partners, Congress and RJD, grabbed 16 and one, each. The BJP with 25 seats is in the opposition.

### 34. National Tribal Dance Festival celebrated in Raipur

National Tribal Dance Festival celebrated in Raipur, Chhattisgarh. More than 1300 participants from 25 states & UTs of the country and six countries participated in three-day dance fest. Various folk dance teams presented their respective folk art cultures. Around 29 tribal troupes presented more than 43 styles of four different dance forms.



The National Tribal Dance Festival is an annual festival celebrated by the aborigines and tribal of India. It is organized by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India in collaboration with IGRMS, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh.

### 35. CSMT received 'Eat Right' station certificate

Iconic Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (CSMT) railway station in Mumbai was conferred with 'Eat Right Station' certification with the five-star rating by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) for food safety and hygiene. CSMT became first station on the Central Railway to get this certification.



CSMT was judged on the basis of compliance of food safety and hygiene, availability of healthy diet, food handling at preparation, food waste management, promotion of local and seasonal food and creating awareness on food safety and healthy diet.

### 36. Mandu Festival celebrated at Mandu, Madhya Pradesh

Madhya Pradesh, the 5-day Mandu festival, was celebrated in Mandu, a world-famous picturesque tourist destination located in Dhar district of the state. The event was organized by Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board. 5 day long 'Mandu Utsav' involved adventure activities and cultural performances. Adventure activities like ATV bike, Paragliding, rifle shooting, parasailing etc were arranged at event.



The festival was based on the idea of "Khojne Me Kho Jao". The Mandu festival offered workshops, art installations, nature trails, walks, food, architecture and music to the visitors during the festival.

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

India's first university for transgender community will be opened in Uttar Pradesh's Kushinagar district. The university will offer transgender community members to study from class one to Post Graduate degree and even do research and get PhD degree.



The University will be built by the Akhil Bhartiya Kinnar Siksha Seva Trust (All-India Transgender Education Service Trust). It is the first of its kind in the country where transgender community members will get education.

# Reports

## 1. India ranked 129th in Human Development Index 2019

India inched up one spot to rank 129th out of 189 countries on the 2019 Human Development Index (HDI) released by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The report found that despite progress where 27.1 crore people were lifted out of poverty from 2005-06 to 2015-16, group-based inequalities persist in India, especially affecting women and girls. Norway topped the index followed by Switzerland, Ireland and Germany in top five list.



2019 Human Development Report (HDR) was titled as "Beyond income, beyond averages, beyond today, inequalities in human development in the 21st Century".

## 2. Maharashtra topped India Skills Report 2019

India Skills Report 2019 showing status of employability of citizens and availability of employment in cities, was released jointly by the Confederation of Indian Industry, All India Council for Technical Education, United Nations Development Programme and Association of Indian University.



### Key findings

- Maharashtra topped the list of states with the highest employable talent, followed by Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh.
- Mumbai, Hyderabad and Pune stood out as the most employable cities.
- About 46.21% students were found employable or ready to take up jobs in 2019.
- Most employable candidates as per the courses were MBA Students.

## 3. Global Climate Risk Index 2020 released

Global Climate Risk Index 2020, published by environmental think tank Germanwatch was released.

Japan, being most vulnerable country to climate change topped the index. Japan was followed by Philippines, Germany, Madagascar and India in the top 5 list. Due to severe impact of southwest monsoon in Kerala in 2018, India was ranked fifth most vulnerable country globally to climate change.





The Global Climate Risk Index 2020 analyses to what extent countries and regions have been affected by impacts of weather-related loss events.

#### **4. India ranked 5th worst country in terms of invasive use of biometric data**

Comparitech, a Britain-based tech research firm's report on extensive and invasive use of biometric data unveiled that India is the fifth worst country for people's privacy and biometric data collection. China topped the index followed by Malaysia, Pakistan and United States in terms of extensive and invasive use of biometric data.



Ireland, Portugal, Cyprus, the UK and Romania emerged as the five best countries for biometric data collection. Researchers analysed 50 different countries where biometrics are being taken.

#### **5. Nirmala Sitharaman ranked 34th in Forbes' 100 Powerful Women of 2019**

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has been ranked 34th in the world's 100 most powerful women by Forbes. The Forbes 2019 list of 'The World's 100 Most Powerful Women' has been topped by German Chancellor Angela Merkel. President of the European Central Bank Christine Lagarde is second while Speaker of the US House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi is third.



Nadar Malhotra, CEO of HCL Corporation, is ranked 54th on the list and Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw of Biocon is 65th.

#### **6. India ranked 63rd in World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Report 2020**

India ranked 63rd among 190 countries in World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Report 2020 improving by 14 ranks from its rank of 77 in 2019. New Zealand topped the list followed by Singapore, Hong Kong, Denmark, Korea and U.S.A. in top five. In Doing Business 2020, the 10 top improvers are Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Togo, Bahrain, Tajikistan, Pakistan, Kuwait, China, India, and Nigeria.



All of the 20 top ranking economies have online business incorporation processes, have electronic tax filing platforms, and allow online procedures related to property transfer. Doing Business 2020 acknowledged 22 reforms in the 20 top-ranking economies.

### 7. India slipped to 112th place on WEF's Global Gender Gap Report

India ranked 112th in terms of gender gap among 153 countries surveyed in the World Economic Forum's (WEF's) Global Gender Gap Report 2020. The report unveiled that India is the only country where the economic gender gap is larger than the political gender gap.



Iceland topped the report and remained the world's most gender-neutral country followed by Norway (2nd), Finland (3rd) and Sweden (4th). Yemen was ranked the worst (153rd) in the report. Other economies in the top 10 included Nicaragua, New Zealand, Ireland and Spain.

### 8. India is world's third largest producer of scientific articles: US Report

According to latest report by US National Science Foundation (NSF), India emerged as the world's third largest publisher of science and engineering articles. China topped the list with 20.67% of all global publications in scientific articles followed by U.S at 2nd position.



India published 1,35,788 science and engineering articles and 1.35 lakh scientific papers in 2018. Countries who made it to top ten were Germany (1,04,396), Japan (98,793), UK (97,681), Russia (81,579), Italy (71,240), South Korea (66,376) and France (66,352).

### 9. Bangladesh topped WEF Gender Gap Report in South Asia

Bangladesh is the only country in South Asia to feature in the top 50 of the Global Gender Gap Report 2020 released by the World Economic Forum (WEF). Bangladesh retained its position at the 50th rank in the index that measures gender gap in political, economic and social spheres in a country.

REDUCING GENDER GAP	
COUNTRY	POSITION
BANGLADESH	72
INDIA	87
SRI LANKA	100
NEPAL	110
MALDIVES	115
BHUTAN	121
PAKISTAN	143

Iceland is the most gender-equal country in the world for the 11th time in a row. It is followed by Norway, Finland and Sweden. India has slipped to 112th position.

### 10. Tamil Nadu topped ‘Good Governance Index’

Tamil Nadu state topped the Good Governance Index released by the Government of India. Other states such as Maharashtra (2nd), Karnataka (3rd), Chhattisgarh (4th) and Andhra Pradesh (5th) were in the top five of index. Himachal Pradesh topped in the North-East and Hill States category of Index. Puducherry emerged as the best-governed union territory. Lakshwadeep was found to be the worst-performing.



Good Governance Index has been scientifically designed on various parameters of governance, keeping in mind the citizen-centricity. Index will also seek to determine the status of governance.

# Resignations & Retirements

## 1. PM Adel Abdul Mahdi of Iraq resigned

Iraqi Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi has submitted his resignation to Parliament amid ongoing anti-government protests across the country. The formal resignation came after an emergency cabinet session in which ministers approved the document.



More than 400 people have been killed in Iraq since early October with thousands of people taking to the streets in Baghdad and southern part of the country over corruption, poor services, lack of jobs and calling for an end to the post-2003 political system.

## 2. England Cricketer Laura Marsh announced retirement

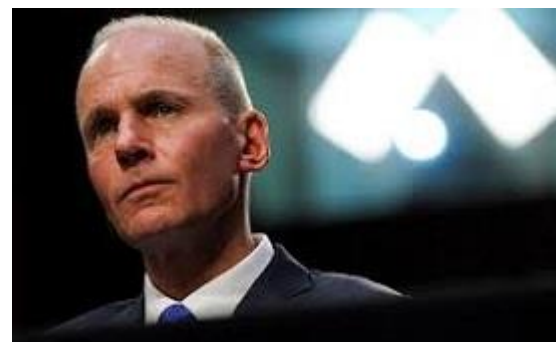
England spinner Laura Alexandra Marsh announced her retirement from cricket. She played 103 ODIs, 67 T20Is and 9 Tests and took 217 wickets across all formats, in her 13-year career. She is known to be best spinner in the history of English women's cricket and third-highest wicket-taker in ODI.



Laura is one of those few, who have won three World Cups. Laura was awarded a full central contract by the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) for 2019.

## 3. Boeing CEO Dennis Muilenburg stepped down

Boeing's chief executive officer and board member Dennis Muilenburg resigned from his position, following the months-long fallout from the two fatal 737 Max crashes that killed 346 people. He will be replaced by Chairman David Calhoun effective January 13, 2020. Dennis became the CEO of the world's largest aerospace company in July 2015.



The Boeing Company is an American multinational corporation that designs, manufactures, and sells airplanes, rotorcraft, rockets, satellites, telecommunications equipment, and missiles worldwide. The company also provides leasing and product support services.

#### 4. South African cricketer Vernon Philander announced retirement

South African all-rounder Vernon Philander announced international retirement from all forms of cricket. South Africa's fast bowler Vernon Philander played 97 matches across all three formats and scored 261 wickets with 1784 runs in his international career. His international career lasted for more than 12 years. He was known for spell of 5 for 15 on his Test debut against Australia that had the visitors bowled out for 47 in their second innings at Newlands.



Vernon was honored with 2012 SA Cricketer of the Year for record-breaking 51 wickets in his first seven Test matches.

#### 5. Leander Paes announced retirement from Tennis

Indian tennis ace Leander Paes has announced that 2020 will be his last year as a professional tennis player. Leander, who made his Olympic debut in 1992, will look for one final flourish at Tokyo Olympics 2020. Leander has made 7 appearances in a row at the Olympics making him the only tennis player ever to do so. Leander Paes has won eight doubles and ten mixed doubles Grand Slam titles.



Leander was honored with Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna award (1996-97), Arjuna Award (1990), Padma Shri award (2001) and Padma Bhushan (2014).

# Science & Technology

## 1. ISRO sets up dedicated Cells in IITs

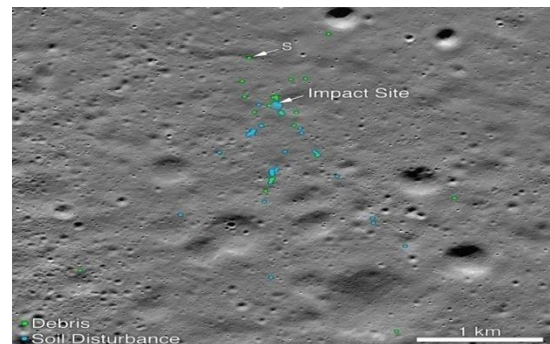
ISRO has set up 5 Space Technology Cells (STCs) at premier institutions like Indian Institute of Technologies (IITs) - Bombay, Kanpur, Kharagpur & Madras; Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru and Joint Research Programme with Savitribai Phule Pune University (SPPU, Pune) to carry out research activities in the areas of space technology and applications.



ISRO desires development of high end technology in collaboration with IITs in the areas of Space Science, Space Technology and Space Applications. ISRO would fund the identified projects.

## 2. NASA finds India's crashed Vikram lander

A NASA satellite orbiting the Moon has found India's Vikram lander which crashed on the lunar surface in September. NASA released an image taken by its Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter, LRO that showed the site of the spacecraft's impact and associated debris field.



NASA released a mosaic image of the site on 26th of September and invited the public to search it for signs of the lander. A person named Shanmuga Subramanian contacted the LRO project with positive identification of debris.

## 3. VP Naidu launched new Rotavirus vaccine: ROTAVAC-5D

Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu launched the new Rotavirus vaccine - ROTAVAC-5D® designed and developed by Bharat Biotech in New Delhi. ROTAVAC is an example of innovation that was realized through a partnership between scientists from India and the USA. It was done with an aim of protecting the health of each and every children and ending morbidity and mortality in children caused due to diarrhoea by 2022.



The first generation, Rotavirus vaccine, ROTAVAC developed by Indian Department of Biotechnology has put India on the global map for setting new standards in pharmaceutical R&D.

#### 4. CSIR developed

CSIR-Central Institute of Medicinal & Aromatic Plants and CSIR-National Botanical Research Institute developed scientifically validated herbal product NBRMAP-DB as anti-diabetic formulation. Further, the formulation showed therapeutic efficacy for treating newly diagnosed type 2 diabetes.

#### Anti-Diabetes Medicine



CCRAS (Central of Research in Ayurveda Sciences) had developed the AYUSH82 formulation for diabetes through scientific process of drug development and commercialized through National Research Development Corporation (NRDC) for wider public utility. CCRAS has been engaged in extending research oriented Ayurveda based on integrative health care services for the management of Madhumeha which is Diabetes Mellitus.

#### 5. PSLV successfully launched RISAT-2BR1 and nine commercial satellites in its fiftieth flight

India's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle, in its fiftieth flight (PSLV-C48), successfully launched RISAT-2BR1 along with nine commercial satellites from Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) SHAR, Sriharikota.



RISAT-2BR1 is a radar imaging earth observation satellite weighing about 628 kg. The satellite will provide services in the field of Agriculture, Forestry and Disaster Management. The mission life of RISAT-2BR1 is 5 years. The nine customer satellites of Israel, Italy, Japan and USA were launched under a commercial arrangement with New Space India Limited (NSIL).

#### 6. ISRO begins preparations for setting up third rocket launchpad

Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) has begun preparatory works for setting up a third rocket launchpad in the small coastal hamlet of Kulasekharapattinam in the Thuthukudi district of Tamil Nadu.

At present, the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) has two launch pads at Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh. The demand for additional launch pads has arisen as a result of the increase in the number of satellite launches from India, both for domestic and international customers.



### 7. International Astronomical Union names new star ‘Sharjah’

The International Astronomical Union (IAU) announced the names of the newly discovered stars and planets. The newly discovered star HIP 79431 was named as "Sharjah" and the planet affiliated with this star was named "Barjeel.



A barajeel is a wind tower used to direct the flow of the wind so that air can be recirculated as a form of air conditioning.

The star was named so to honor the efforts and contributions of the Emirate of Sharjah to the global scientific community.

### 8. New China-Brazil earth resource satellite launched into space

The China-Brazil Earth Resource Satellite-4A (CBERS-4A), a new satellite jointly developed by China and Brazil as part of a bilateral programme, was recently launched into space on a Long March-4B rocket in the northern Chinese province of Shanxi. CBERS-4A is meant to support the Brazilian government’s monitoring of the Amazon rainforest and changes in the country’s environment.



CBERS-4A is the sixth satellite of the China-Brazil Earth Resources Satellite Programme. CBERS-4A can help in land resources survey, environmental inspection, climate change research, disaster prevention and agricultural forecast.

### 9. International Astronomical Union named a star after Indian Woman Scientist

International Astronomical Union announced to name a yellow white star in Sextans constellation as Bibha. It is named after Indian Woman Scientist DrBibha Choudhury, who discovered subatomic particle, pi-meson, Bhibha also means “a bright beam of light” in Bengali. Jupiter like exo-planets in Sextans constellation were named Santamasa to reflect the cloudy nature of its atmosphere. Santamasa is the Sanskrit term for “clouded.



The star and exo planets were named through a global contest called ‘Name Exo Worlds’. Around 7,80,000 people participated worldwide to propose and select names for each exoplanet and its host star.



### 10. Scientists found world's oldest Fossil forest

Scientists discovered the remnants of world's oldest fossil forest- an extensive network of trees around 386 million years old in a sandstone quarry in United States (US). The forest, found in the town of Cairo, would have spanned from New York to Pennsylvania and beyond.



The 385-million-year-old rocks contain the fossilized woody roots of dozens of ancient trees. The trees that grew a few tens of millions of years after the Cairo forest have had an indirect impact on the modern climate.

### 11. WHO launched first biosimilar medicine to treat Breast Cancer

World Health Organization launched its first biosimilar medicine named as trastuzumab to treat breast cancer. Breast cancer is the most common form of cancer in women. WHO has launched the medicine so that this expensive, life-saving treatment can become more affordable to women worldwide.



Trastuzumab, a monoclonal antibody was included in the WHO Essential Medicines List in 2015 as an essential treatment for about 20% of breast cancers. Trastuzumab has high efficacy in curing early stage breast cancer and in some cases more advanced forms of the disease.

### 12. Ethiopia launched its first satellite

Ethiopia launched its first satellite, a landmark achievement for the country's space program that caps a banner year for the African space industry. The launch of the Ethiopian Remote Sensing Satellite (ETRSS) took place at a space station in China.



This was the eighth launch of an African satellite this year, topping the previous record of seven in 2017. The launch makes Ethiopia the eleventh African country to put a satellite into space. Egypt was the first in 1998.

## 1. Virat Kohli regains no.1 spot in ICC Test rankings

India captain Virat Kohli regained the top spot in the latest International Cricket Council's (ICC's) Test rankings. Kohli, with 928 points, is now five points clear at the top against Australia's Steve Smith. Kane Williamson of New Zealand is third in the list followed by India's Cheteshwar Pujara. David Warner is 5th in the list.



West Indies captain Jason Holder has consolidated his position at the top of the all-rounders' list. Among the bowlers, Jasprit Bumrah is the highest-placed Indian at the fifth position. Pat Cummins of Australia topped the bowler's list followed by South Africa's Kagiso Rabada.

## 2. David Warner hits triple century against Pakistan

Australian opener David Warner hit a triple century during the second Test against Pakistan in Adelaide. Warner scored an unbeaten 335. With this, he joined an elite group of 10 players to reach the milestone.



Warner passed Sir Donald Bradman and Mark Taylor's mark of 334. Former opening batsman Matthew Hayden has the highest Test score by an Australian with his 380 not out against Zimbabwe in 2003. West Indies great Brian Lara is the current world record holder with his unbeaten 400 against England in 2004.

## 3. Senior Wrestling National Championships

Star wrestlers Vinesh Phogat and Sakshi Malik registered convincing wins in the finals to claim gold medals at the Senior Wrestling National Championships in Jalandhar. While Phogat beat 20-year-old Haryana's Anju 7-3 in the 55 kg category, Olympic bronze medalist Malik defeated Radhika of Haryana 4-2 in the 62 kg category.



In the 68 kg category, 35-year-old Haryana wrestler Anita Sheoran stunned Commonwealth Games bronze medalist Divya Kakran. Punjab's 35-year-old Gursharan Kaur claimed the title in the 76kg category, with a 4-2 win over Pooja of Haryana.

#### 4. Sourabh Verma lost to Wang Tzu Wei in men's singles final of Syed Modi International

Chinese Taipei's Wang Tzu Wei won the men's singles final of the Syed Modi International tournament held in Lucknow. Wei defeated Sourabh Verma of India in straight sets by 21-15, 21-17.



Carolina Marin won the women's final after she won over Thai challenger Phittayaporn Chaiwan. Russia's Rodion Alimov and Alina Davletova won the mixed doubles final against Marcus Ellis and Lauren Smith of England. Jung Kyung Eun and Baek Ha Na of Korea won the women's doubles final while He Jiting and Tan Qiang of China won the men's doubles.

#### 5. New Zealand won MCC's Spirit of Cricket award

New Zealand's outstanding display, both on and off the field, in the epic ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2019 final at Lord's has earned them Christopher Martin-Jenkins Spirit of Cricket award for 2019. New Zealand players were awarded for their level of sporting conduct that was fitting for such a fantastic final.



Christopher Martin-Jenkins Spirit of Cricket award was created in 2013, in memory of Martin-Jenkins, the former MCC president and BBC Test Match Special commentator, to honour his longstanding passion to see the game played in the right spirit.

#### 6. Lionel Messi won Ballon d'Or for 6th time.

Lionel Messi won a record-breaking sixth Ballon d'Or. In 54 appearances of 2019, Messi managed an astonishing 46 goals and 17 assists while for Barca alone he hit 41 goals and 15 assists in 44 matches, which included seven doubles and three hat-tricks.



Messi's first season as club captain brought a third consecutive La Liga title. He also claimed his sixth Pichichi Trophy as the division's top scorer, with 36 goals in 34 matches.

## 7. Lewis Hamilton won Abu Dhabi Grand Prix

Six times world champion Lewis Hamilton bagged the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix 2019. It was his 84th career victory, fifth in Abu Dhabi and 11th of the season. Red Bull's Dutch driver Max Verstappen stood 2nd in the race. Charles Leclerc stood third and Valtteri Bottas stood at 4th position.



The Abu Dhabi Grand Prix is a Formula One motor race. 2019 Abu Dhabi Grand Prix race took place over 55 laps of the 5.554-kilometre Yas Marina Circuit on Yas Island.

## 8. FICCI India Sports Award 2019

Indian women's hockey team captain Rani Rampal and ace pistol shooter Saurabh Chaudhary won the Sports Person of the Year awards at the FICCI India Sports Awards 2019. The other key winners are:

- Best National Sports Federation: National Rifle Association of India
- Best Company Promoting Sports (Public Sector): Railway Sports Promotion Board
- Best Para-athlete: Sandeep Chaudhary (javelin).
- Breakthrough Sports Person: Amit Panghal (boxing)
- Lifetime Achievement (Administrator): Govindaraj Kempareddy
- Lifetime Achievement: Pankaj Advani (cue sport)
- Best State promoting sports: Odisha
- Best Sports Journalist: Kamesh Srinivasan



## 9. WADA bans Russia from international sporting events for four years

The World Anti-Doping Agency, WADA, banned Russia for four years, from participation in global sporting events, including the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics. WADA accused Moscow of falsifying data from an anti-doping laboratory.



The Russian flag and national anthem have also been banned in global events. The independent McLaren report released in 2016 revealed the significant extent of state-sponsored doping in Russia, notably between 2011 and 2015.

### 10. Indian junior women's team won 3-nation hockey tournament

The Indian junior women's team won the three-nation hockey tournament. The Indian team finished top on the point table, with seven points from four matches. They were ahead of Australia on goal difference. New Zealand finished third.

The tournament was held from 3rd December 2019 to 8th December 2019 between Australia, India and New Zealand. It was held in Canberra, Australia.



### 11. Anthony Joshua reclaimed world heavyweight crown

Britain's Anthony Joshua reclaimed his world heavyweight crown from Andy Ruiz. Joshua had suffered a stunning knockout defeat to Ruiz in New York in June 2019. He produced a masterclass performance to regain his IBF, WBA and WBO titles in emphatic fashion at Ad Diriyah in Saudi Arabia.

The fight was billed as the Clash on the Dunes. Joshua had previously held the WBA (Super), IBF, WBO, and IBO titles between 2016 and June 2019. Joshua is ranked as the world's best active heavyweight by BoxRec.



### 12. India's R. Praggnanandhaa won London Chess Classic

R. Praggnanandhaa from India won London Chess Classic FIDE Open 2019 champion with a score of 7.5/9 and a rating performance of 2699. Anton Smirnov also scored 7.5/9 followed by Aravindh Chithambaram at third place.

Recently, R. Praggnanandhaa became the World Youth Champion under-18 when he crossed the live rating of 2600 by winning the super strong Xtracon Open in Denmark. Praggnanandhaa will feature upcoming event at the Sunway Open in Sitges, Spain.



### 13. Suniel Shetty signed as anti-doping brand ambassador NADA

Actor Suniel Shetty was selected as the brand ambassador of National Anti-Doping Agency NADA. Since the World Anti Doping Agency had suspended India's National Anti Doping Lab on the account of non-compliances with the International Standard for Laboratories (ISL), Indian athletes' fear of doping tests to be carried out outside India.



More than 150 athletes failed dope tests in 2019, out of which bodybuilders make up more than one-third of these offenders. Suniel Shetty's celebrity status will help keep sports clean and deter the players from the menace.

### 14. 2019 South Asian Games concluded in Nepal

13th South Asian Games 2019 concluded in Nepal. India finished on top with 312 medals comprising 174 gold, 93 silver and 45 bronze. Host Nepal remained second and Sri Lanka got third place.



#### Summary of Event:

- Over 2700 athletes participated at the event.
- In women's boxing, India's Pinki Rani brought first gold in 51 kg category.
- India won gold in women's team and silver in men's team of squash.
- In 91 kg boxing, Narendra brought sixth Gold for the country.
- In Basketball Indian men's and women's teams clinched gold each.
- India won gold in Judo mixed event.

### 15. BWF World Tour Finals 2019

The BWF World Tour Finals 2019 was held in Guangzhou, China. World number one badminton player Kento Momota lifted his 11th title of the year as he defeated Anthony Sinisuka Ginting in the final of the BWF World Tour Finals 2019.



#### Other Winners:

- Women's Singles: Chen Yu Fei
- Men's Doubles: Mohammad Ahsan/Hendra Setiawan
- Women's Doubles: Chen Qing Chen / Jia Yi Fan
- Mixed Doubles: Zheng Si Wei / Huang YaQiong

### 16. FIH unveiled new world ranking system for 2020

The International Hockey Federation (FIH) unveiled a new world ranking system for 2020 in Lausanne, Switzerland. It will come into effect from January 2020. For a better reflection of current performances, the new ranking will be match-based instead of tournament-based calculation.



The outgoing world ranking system was in existence since 2003. It was originally devised to allocate teams into pools at tournaments. The old model allowed nations to earn ranking points two to three times per year.

### 17. Rohit Sharma becomes La Liga's first Indian brand ambassador

Rohit Sharma became the first non-footballer in history to be named the brand ambassador of the La Liga. The Campeonato Nacional de Liga de Primera Division commonly known as La Liga (La Liga Santander for sponsorship reasons with Santander), is the men's top professional football division of the Spanish football league system.



The English Premier League is the most followed competition in India, while Bundesliga and Serie A are also making efforts to capture the attention of Indian audiences.

### 18. Ben Stokes honored with Sports Personality of the Year 2019 award

England cricketer Ben Stokes was named as BBC Sports Personality of the Year 2019. England cricket team was awarded the Team of the Year 2019. Jos Buttler's run-out of Martin Guptill won Greatest Sporting Moment of the Year.



Ben became fifth cricketer to win the award. Past cricketer recipients' of this award include Flintoff, David Steele, Jim Laker and Sir Ian Botham. Formula One driver Lewis Hamilton and athlete Dina Asher-Smith were voted second and third respectively in BBC Sports Personality of the Year 2019 voting.

### 19. Belgium crowned FIFA Team of the Year

Belgium was crowned FIFA 'Team of the Year' for the second successive time. Red Devils team was on top spot. World champions France remained in the second place ahead of Brazil in third, England at fourth position and Uruguay moved up to fifth on the back of a two-spot rise. China dropped one place to 76th.



Qatar was ranking's Mover of the Year. Qatar jumped a year-high 38 places, followed closely by fellow climbers Algeria (up 32 ranks) and Japan (up 22 places).

### 20. Mirabai Chanu won Gold in 6th Qatar International Cup in Doha

Former world champion weightlifter, Saikho Mirabai Chanu, won the women's 49kg category gold medal at the 6th Qatar International Cup in Doha. Chanu bagged gold with an effort of 194kg in the Olympic qualifying event. The 24-year-old Manipuri lifted 83kg in snatch and 111kg in clean and jerk.



Indian weightlifter, Jeremy Lalrinnunga, from won the silver medal in men's 67 kg weight category. Rakhi Halder clinched bronze medal in women's 64kg category.

### 21. Abhinav Lohan won Bengaluru Open Golf Championship

Abhinav Lohan won the PGTI title. It was Lohan's first title on the TATA Steel PGTI and second win of the year as he had also emerged victorious at the PGTI Feeder Tour event in Lucknow. Chandigarh's Karandeep Kochhar finished runner-up. M Dharma and Rahil Gangjee took third and fourth places.



Lohan thus became the fourth Indian golfer to register his maiden title on the TATA Steel PGTI this season following the likes of Kshitij Naveed Kaul, Priyanshu Singh and Veer Ahlawat.

### 22. India stays at 108th rank in latest FIFA Ranking

The Indian men's football team remained static at 108th spot in the year-ending FIFA rankings. India, however, lost 11 places throughout the year. With 1187 total points, India is placed at 19th spot among Asian countries headed by Japan 28th.



2018 World Cup runners-up Belgium ended on top for the second successive year. World



champions France remained in second place ahead of Brazil. England was fourth while Uruguay moved up to fifth spot.

### 23. Sweden beats India to win U-17 tri-nation tournament final

Sweden won the U-17 Women's Football Tournament as they beat hosts India 4-0 in the final played at the Mumbai Football Arena. The Tri-nation tournament was organised by AIFF as preparation for the upcoming 2020 FIFA U17 Women's World Cup hosted by India. The third nation to participate was Thailand.



The award-winners at the end of the tournament are as follows:

- Most Valuable Player: Evelina Duljan (Sweden)
- Most Promising Player: Shilky Devi (India)
- Highest Scorer: Monika Bah (Sweden)
- Best Goalkeeper: Elin Svahn (Sweden)

### 24. Zeena Khitta won Women's National 10m Air Rifle

Zeena Khitta of Himachal Pradesh won the gold in the women's 10m Air Rifle event at the 63rd National Shooting Championship. Mehuli Ghosh won the silver medal while Apurvi Chandela won the bronze medal.



Reigning Commonwealth Games champion Shreyasi Singh won the women's Trap Gold. Rajeshwari from Punjab claimed the team gold in Women's Trap along with teammates Inaya Vijay Singh and Prabsukhman Kaur. Varda Sharma of Delhi won the Junior Women's Trap competition to win gold. Among the teams, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and West Bengal won two gold medals each.

### 25. Nadal and Barty named 2019 ITF World Champions

The International Tennis Federation (ITF) announced Australia's Ashleigh Barty and Rafael Nadal of Spain as International Tennis Federation's (ITF) World Champions in singles for 2019. This awards will be given at the 2020 ITF world champions 2nd June, in Paris.

**Other recipients were as follows:**

Category	Winner
Women Doubles	Timea Babos and Kristina Mladenovic
Men Doubles	Juan Sebastian Cabal and Robert Farah
Women's Wheelchair	Diede de Groot (Netherland)

Men's Wheelchair	Gustavo Fernandez (Argentina)
Quad	Dylan Alcott (Australia)

## 26. Manu Bhaker, Anish Bhanwala clinch five gold medals at National Championships

Commonwealth Games champions Manu Bhaker and Anish Bhanwala clinched gold medals at the 63rd National Shooting Championships in Bhopal. Bhaker, representing Haryana, clinched four gold medals (individual and team events in senior and junior) in the women's 10-meter air pistol.

Anish won individual gold medal in the senior men's 25 meter rapid fire pistol event.



Devanshi Dhama bagged the silver in the senior women's 10-meter air pistol event while Yashaswini Singh Deshwal won the bronze medal in the same event. Manu Bhaker and Yashaswini have already secured quotas for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

## 27. Indian weightlifter Rakhi created two new national records

Indian weightlifter Rakhi Halder created two new national records on her way to a bronze medal in the women's 64kg weight category at the Qatar International Cup. The Commonwealth Championship gold medalist obliterated the senior national record in both snatch and total lift with her personal best effort of 218kg (95kg in snatch + 123 kg in clean and jerk).



At the Commonwealth Championship in June, Halder had clinched the gold with a combined effort of 214kg (94kg+120kg).

## 28. Maisnam Meiraba Luwang won Bangladesh Junior International Badminton Series

India's shuttler Maisnam Meiraba Luwang has won the Men's singles Bangladesh Junior International Badminton Series 2019 in Dhaka. He beat Ken Yong Ong 21, 14, 21-18 in the final.

Meiraba had also clinched the boys' singles U-19 title at the Woncheon Yonex Korea Junior Open International Challenge in November 2019. In women's singles, Indian shuttler Treasa Jolly lost to Thailand's third seed



Krittaporn Jiantanet 21-12, 16-21, 21-16 in finals.

### 29. Kohli finished as top ranked batsman in ICC Test rankings 2019

Indian skipper Virat Kohli finished as the top ranked batsman in the latest ICC Test rankings issued for 2019. With 928 points, Kohli was 17 points ahead of Australia's Steve Smith who occupied the second spot followed by New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson at number three with 864 points. Cheteshwar Pujara retained his fourth place but Rahane slipped to seventh.



Jasprit Bumrah retained his sixth spot in the list headed by Australia's Pat Cummins. In the ICC World Test Championship, India topped with 360 points followed by Australia at 2nd place and Pakistan at 3rd place.

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

India's World Cup-winning former captain MS Dhoni was named the captain of Cricket Australia's (CA) ODI team of the decade, compiled by Cricket Australia. 3 Indians formed part of the 11-man Cricket Australia's team. MS Dhoni handles the wicket keeping duties in CA's ODI team. India captain Virat Kohli and opener Rohit Sharma form part of team.



Journalist Martin Smith compiles the ODI team of the year for Cricket Australia. Virat Kohli is the only Indian cricketer to have found a spot in Cricket Australia's Test team of the decade.

### 31. Virat Kohli named in Wisden cricketers of the decade list

Indian skipper Virat Kohli has been named in the Cricketers of the decade list alongside four others by the Wisden Cricketers' Almanac. Apart from Kohli, South African duo of Dale Steyn and AB de Villiers, Australia's Steve Smith and women's all-rounder Ellyse Perry also found a place in the list of five cricketers of the decade.



Kohli, who has scored 5,775 more international runs than anyone else in the last 10 years, has been the best batsman over the last decade. He is also third in the list of leading run-scorers of all time behind Ponting and Tendulkar.