

Important Monthly Current Affairs – January 2020

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Important Days

Date	Day	Theme
January 1	Global Family Day	-
January 4	World Braille Day	-
January 9	Pravasi Bharatiya Divas or Non Resident Indian Day	-
January 10	World Hindi Day	-
January 12	National Youth Day	Channelizing Youth Power for Nation Building
January 15	Indian Army Day	-
January 18	15 th Raising Day of NDRF	-
January 19	National Immunization Day	-
January 24	National Girl Child Day	Aware girl child-able Madhya Pradesh (MP govt theme)
January 24 to 30	National Girl Child Week	-
January 24	International Day of Education	Learning for people, planet, prosperity and Peace
January 24	79 th Foundation Day of Income Tax Appellate Tribunal	-
January 25	National Voters' Day	Electoral Literacy for Stronger Democracy
January 25	National Tourism Day	-
January 26	International Customs Day	Customs fostering Sustainability for People, Prosperity and the Planet
January 27	International Holocaust Remembrance Day	75 years after Auschwitz - Holocaust Education and Remembrance for Global Justice
January 30	Martyrs Day	-

Important Banking News

RBI

RBI launches mobile app for visually challenged to identify denomination of currency notes

- Reserve Bank of India, RBI has launched a mobile app, **MANI**, Mobile Aided Note Identifier, to help visually challenged people to identify **denomination of currency notes**.
- The app, which is available both on Android and iOS operating systems, was launched by RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das in Mumbai.
- The visually challenged can identify the denomination of a note by using the application, which can also work offline once it is installed. The audio output will give the result in **Hindi and English**.

RBI buys three long-term securities worth Rs10,000 cr in 3rd special OMO

- Reserve Bank of India (RBI) bought **three long-term securities** worth **10,000 crore rupees** while selling the same amount of three short-term bonds.
- The RBI had announced to simultaneous purchase and sale of Government Securities (G-Secs) under Open Market Operations (OMOs) for 10,000 crore rupees each .
- RBI offered to purchase three securities including 10-year benchmark government bond, as against just one bond in the previous two auctions.

- It got bids worth **64,505 crore rupees** for the three bonds but choose to accept only bids of **10,000 crore rupees** under the OMO purchase auction.

RBI rolls out new Supervisory Action Framework to tighten norms for UCBs

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) rolled out its final Supervisory Action Framework (SAF) tightening norms for **Urban Co-operative Banks (UCBs)**. The revised SAF will be implemented with immediate effect.
- According to the norms, a UCB may be placed under SAF when its net **NPA's exceed six per cent** of its net advances and depending on the severity of stress.
- Actions such as the imposition of all-inclusive directions under **section 35A of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949** (as applicable to co-operative societies) and issue of show cause notice for cancellation of banking license may be considered by the RBI when continued normal functioning of the UCB.

RBI gives in-principle nod to Shivalik Mercantile to convert to SFB

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) granted in-principle approval to Uttar Pradesh-based **Shivalik Mercantile Co-operative Bank Ltd** to convert to a small finance bank (SFB), becoming the first urban cooperative bank (UCB) to make the transition.
- The UCB will get **18 months** to comply with the requirements under the scheme, which state that banks with a minimum net worth of **₹50 crore** and capital to risk (weighted) assets ratio of **9%** and above are eligible to apply for voluntary transition to SFB.
- These UCBs will also have to comply with the latest guidelines for on-tap licensing of SFBs in the private sector, under which SFBs will have to maintain a minimum net worth of **₹100 crore** from the date of commencement of business.
- The SFBs are also required to maintain minimum capital adequacy ratio of **15%** of its risk weighted assets (RWA) on a continuous basis and increase the minimum paid-up voting equity capital to **₹200 crore** within five years of the date of commencement of business.

RBI amends KYC norms, allows banks to use V-CIP

- The RBI has amended the KYC norms allowing banks and other lending institutions regulated by it to use **Video based Customer Identification Process (V-CIP)**, a move which will help them onboard customers remotely.
- The V-CIP, which will be consent-based, will make it easier for banks and other regulated entities to adhere to the **RBI's know Your Customer (KYC) norms** by leveraging the digital technology.
- The Reserve Bank decided to permit video based **Customer Identification Process (V-CIP)** to leveraging the digital channels for Customer Identification Process (CIP) by regulated entities (REs).
- The government had notified amendment to the **Prevention of Money-laundering (Maintenance of Records) Rules, 2005**. As per the circular, the reporting entity should capture a clear image of PAN card to be displayed by the customer during the process.

RBI asks issuers to provide facility to switch on, off cards to prevent frauds

- **Reserve Bank** has asked banks and other card-issuing companies to provide facility to customers to **switch on and off** their debit or credit cards, a move aimed at enhancing security for digital transactions.
- The RBI stated that at the time of issue or re-issue, all cards (physical and virtual) should be enabled for use only at contact based points of usage [ATMs and Point of Sale (PoS) devices within India.
- The channels should include mobile application, internet banking, automated teller machines, or interactive voice response.
- The RBI further stated that for existing cards, issuers may take a decision, based on their risk perception, whether to disable the card not present (domestic and international) transactions, card present (international) transactions and contactless transaction rights.

RBI imposes ₹1 crore penalty on HDFC Bank

- Reserve Bank of India has imposed a penalty of **₹1 crore** on **HDFC Bank** for **non-compliance** of master directions of **KYC directions**.
- RBI has imposed a monetary penalty of **₹1 crore** on the bank for failure to undertake on-going due diligence in the case of **39 current accounts** opened for bidding in Initial Public Offer.

Vodafone m-pesa's certificate of authorisation cancelled by RBI

- The Reserve Bank of India cancelled the **Certificate of Authorisation (CoA)** of **Vodafone m-pesa** after its voluntary surrender of authorisation.
- The central bank, however, stated that the customers or merchants having a valid claim on the company as a PSO can approach the company till **September 30, 2022**, for settlement of their claims within three years from the date of cancellation.
- The Reserve Bank of India, in exercise of the powers conferred on it under the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007, has cancelled the Certificate of Authorization of the below mentioned Payment System Operator (PSO) on account of voluntary surrender of authorization.

RBI buys Rs 10,000 crore of long-term securities in fourth special open market operation

- RBI bought **Rs 10,000 crore** worth of long-term securities and sold **Rs 2,950 crore** worth of short-term government bonds.
- RBI had stated it will simultaneously purchase and sell government securities under open market operations (OMO) of Rs 10,000 crore each.
- In the OMO purchase auction, the RBI received bids worth Rs 26,887 crore for two types of securities -- 7.32 per cent-2024 and 6.45 per cent-2029 -- but accepted only Rs 10,000 crore of bids.

UCBs report frauds worth ₹220 cr in last five fiscals: RBI

- Urban Co-operative Banks (UCBs) have reported nearly **1,000 cases of fraud** that amount to more **than ₹220 crore** in the last five fiscals, according to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
- The central bank stated a total of **181 fraud cases, involving ₹127.7 crore**, were noticed during 2018-19.
- A total of 99 and 27 such cases, involving ₹46.9 crore and ₹9.3 crore, were reported during 2017-18 and 2016-17, respectively.

Policy Rates

Policy Rates	Percentage
Repo Rate	5.15%
Reverse Repo Rate	4.90%
Marginal Standing Facility Rate	5.40%
Bank Rate	5.40%
Cash Reserve Ratio	4%
Statutory liquidity ratio	18.25%

SBI

SBI announces 'residential builder finance with buyer guarantee' scheme

- State Bank of India has announced a 'residential builder finance with buyer guarantee' (RBBG) scheme. It aims at giving a push to residential sales and improves homebuyers' confidence.
- The scheme will focus on affordable housing projects priced up to 2.50 crore rupees in 10 cities initially.
- The guarantee will be available for RERA registered projects and a project will be considered stuck after it crosses the RERA deadline.

Sale of Electoral Bonds at Authorised Branches of State Bank of India (SBI)

- As per provisions of the Scheme, **Electoral Bonds** may be purchased by a person who is a citizen of India or incorporated or established in India.
- Only the Political Parties registered under **Section 29A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 (43 of 1951)** and which secured not less than one per cent of the votes polled in the last General Election to the House of the People or the Legislative Assembly of the State, shall be eligible to receive the Electoral Bonds.
- The Electoral Bonds shall be encashed by an **eligible Political Party** only through a Bank account with the Authorized Bank.

- State Bank of India (SBI) has been authorised to issue and encash Electoral Bonds through its **29** Authorized Branches w.e.f. **13.01.2020 to 22.01.2020**.
- It may be noted that Electoral Bonds shall be valid for **fifteen calendar days** from the date of issue and no payment shall be made to any payee Political Party if the Electoral Bond is deposited after expiry of the validity period.

SBI launches promotional campaign with Metro Cash & Carry in Bengaluru

- State Bank of India (SBI), in a joint promotional campaign with **Metro Cash & Carry India**, has launched value-added services at its **Bengaluru Centre**.
- Under the arrangement, SBI will offer existing and new customers of Metro Cash & Carry, services such as opening SBI current accounts, issuing business debit cards, POS machines, digital products and other asset products.
- The campaign was launched simultaneously at three Metro Cash & Carry stores at Yeshwanthpur, Binneypet and Kanakapura and at SBI Mahalaxmi Layout, Chamrajpet and Doddakallasandra branches.
- SBI's existing and new SME customers will also be offered **pre-approved Metro Cash & Carry cards** along with a **welcome gift voucher**.

SBI's new one-use 'Virtual Cards' reduce risk of fraud in net banking

- **Reserve Bank of India** has brought out a new set of guidelines to enhance the security provided to debit and credit card customers, banks like **the State Bank of India (SBI)** have introduced new products and solutions that offer a more secure transacting experience for their customers.
- For instance, the SBI has recently rolled out a one-use '**Virtual Card**' for its net banking users, which allows them to make online payments without exposing their real debit and credit card details to the merchant.

World Bank

India and World Bank sign loan agreement of 210mn for Rural Transformation Project

- The **Government of India**, the **Government of Maharashtra** and the **World Bank** signed a loan agreement of **USD 210 million** to support small holder farmers participate in competitive agriculture value chains, facilitate agri-business investments, increase market access and productivity in focus commodities, and build resilience of crops to recurrent floods or droughts in the Indian state of Maharashtra.
- The project will be implemented in all **36 districts of Maharashtra**. At least 43 percent of farmers and farm-workers participating in project activities are expected to be women.

Other Banking News

Mudra loans: Banks sanction ₹40,000 crore in last two months

- Banks have stepped up disbursement of loans under **Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY)** in the last two months by disbursing more than **₹40,000 crore**.
- As on January 24, 2020, the disbursement of Mudra loans sanctioned stood at **₹1,97,816 crore**, while the disbursed loan amount was **₹1,91,970 crore**, according to government data.
- At the end of November 2019, disbursement was only at **₹1.51-lakh crore**, which means a little less than one-third of the total loans disbursed were done from December 2019 till date.
- PMMY is a scheme of the Centre, which was launched in **April 2015**, for providing loans up to **₹10 lakh** to the non-corporate, non-farm small/micro enterprises.
- These are collateral-free loans under three categories – Shishu (up to **₹50,000**), Kishore (between **₹50,000** and **₹5 lakh**) and Tarun (**₹10 lakh**). These loans are given by **commercial banks, RRBs, small finance banks (SFBs), MFIs and NBFCs**.

UK launches 4-mn pound Innovation Challenge Fund in India

- The **UK government** has launched **4 million pound (about Rs 37 crore)** fund in India to support collaborative research into emerging technologies.
- Innovation Challenge Fund will encourage industry and academia to collaborate and develop tech solutions for social, economic and environmental challenges in India.

- The initiative is focused on two major tech clusters: **artificial intelligence/ data in Karnataka** and **future mobility in Maharashtra**.

IRDAI gives big boost to affordable health cover with mandatory 'Arogya Sanjeevani' Policy

- The **Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDA)** has introduced a standard health cover policy that must be offered by all general and standalone health insurers.

The Arogya Sanjeevani policy is a first of its kind standard health insurance product

- As per the guidelines issued by the IRDAI, every general and standalone health insurer should offer a standard health product, the Arogya Sanjeevani Policy, with a **minimum sum insured of Rs 1 lakh, with a upper limit of Rs 5 lakh**.
- Policy Term - one year; Minimum entry age - 18 years ; Exit age – No.
- The policy covers 22 diseases and treatments with a varying waiting period of from 24 to 48 months. It will be offered on indemnity basis, and should not be combined with critical illness covers or benefit-based covers. The premium under this product will be the same across India, and no geographic location and pricing will be allowed.
- The insurers will now come up with product filing to the regulator and will have to offer it from **April 1, 2020**.

Equitas Small Finance Bank waives non-maintenance charges

- Equitas Small Finance Bank stated it has waived **non-maintenance charges** on all savings accounts besides offering lower transaction charges to customers.
- The bank offers up to **7.5 per cent** per annum on savings and **upto 8.25 per cent** per annum on fixed deposits and 0.60 per cent extra for senior citizens.
- They intend to further strengthen the liability franchise with a focus on growing the retail deposit and CASA deposit base to provide with a stable and low-cost source of funding.

CCEA approves strategic disinvestment of 49.78 per cent equity shareholding of MMTC

- The CCEA has given in-principle approval for the sale of equity held by four Central Public Sector Enterprises and two-state PSUs in **Neelachal Ispat Nigam Limited-NINL**.
- It has approved strategic disinvestment of **49.78 per cent** equity shareholding of Minerals and Metals Trading Corporation Limited and **10.10 per cent** of National Mineral Development Corporation.
- The CCEA gave approval for strategic disinvestment of **0.68 per cent** of **MECON** and Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited each. 12 per cent disinvestment in Industrial Promotion and Investment Corporation of Odisha Limited and 20.47 per cent in Odisha Mining Corporation in have also been approved.
- **NINL** is a Joint Venture company, in which these six companies are shareholders.

Paytm launches all-in-one QR for merchants

- Paytm announced the launch of its **all-in-one QR** for merchants across the country.
- The new smart device for payment processing '**soundbox**' is one of the QR merchandise that allows the merchants to hear confirmation of payment receipt.
- This QR will enable merchants to accept unlimited payments through **Paytm Wallet, Rupay Cards** and all UPI-based payment apps directly into their bank account at zero per cent fee.
- The platform offers a single reconciliation of all payments through its '**Paytm for Business**' app.
- Owned by **One97 Communications** Limited, the mobile wallet company currently enjoys 54 per cent market share of mobile payments for merchants.

In a first, HDFC Bank launches myApps to boost digital payments

- **HDFC Bank** launched **myApps** application to boost digital payments in India. myApps is a unique customised suite of banking products to benefit **urban local bodies**, housing societies, local clubs and gymkhanas and religious institutions.
- HDFC bank is helping organisations to entirely digitise their ecosystem through myApps. At present HDFC Bank is offering four types of applications — **mySociety, myClub, myPrayer** and **myCity**.

- **myApps** will allow institutions to customise their branding and content. There will be no monthly subscription charges. Members can pay monthly bill or fee and make an online booking for different facilities via myApps. There are also **no restrictions on the number of users**.

SEBI defers deadline by 2 years for top 500 firms to separate roles of chairman and MD

- SEBI has deferred by two years till **April 2022** its directive for companies to separate the roles of chairman and managing director in view of demand from the corporates and to keep compliance cost lower amid slowing economy.
- Under the Sebi norms, the top 500 listed entities by market capitalisation were mandated to comply with the requirement of separation of the roles of chairperson and managing director (MD) or chief executive officer (CEO) with effect from April 1, 2020.
- Now, the date of implementation of the regulatory provision has been deferred to April 1, 2022.

ICICI Bank Introduces Cardless Cash Withdrawal Facility Through ATMs, Per Day Limit at Rs 20K

- ICICI Bank launched **cardless cash withdrawal facility from its ATMs** with a per day transaction limit of **Rs 20,000**.
- This service enables customers to withdraw cash from over 15,000 ATMs of the bank by simply raising a request on **iMobile**, its mobile banking application."It is a simple and convenient way to withdraw cash without using a debit card.
- The bank's consolidated total assets stood at **Rs 12,88,190 crore** at September 30, 2019. It is present across 15 countries.

City Union Bank launches all-in-one app with multilingual chat-bot

- **City Union Bank (CUB)** has introduced its multilingual interactive voice-based **all-in-one mobile app**.
- The customers can converse with the chat-bot '**Ask Lakshmi**' of the app in Tamil, English, Hindi or Telugu. Customers can converse for their general banking needs including transactions such as balance enquiry, mini statement, fund transfer over voice/text instructions.

ICICI Lombard gets IRDAI nod to pilot five projects under Sandbox

- **ICICI Lombard** stated it has received **Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India's (IRDAI)** 's approval to pilot five innovative applications and programs in its health and motor portfolio under the **Sandbox Project**.
- IRDAI's Regulatory Sandbox Project has provided the insurance industry with the flexibility to explore new products and services that suit today's technology and data driven world.
- This is the highest number given to any company under the IRDAI-introduced project. ICICI Lombard is to pilot the five proposals from **February 1, 2020 to July 31, 2020**.

New India Co-op Bank to convert into SFB

- New India Co-operative Bank (NICB) has been decided to be converted into a Small Finance Bank (SFB) after being agreed by its shareholders under Voluntary Transition of Primary (Urban) Co-operative Banks (UCBs) into SFB.
- NICB will now approach the Reserve Bank of India(RBI) and Central Registrar of Societies for further action.
- Recently Uttar Pradesh-based Shivalik Mercantile Co-operative Bank taking the lead among urban co-operative banks to convert into a Small Finance Bank
- The bank is currently operating in Maharashtra and Gujarat and has network of Rs. 230 crores. A minimum of Rs.200 crore is needed to set up an SFB.

IRDAI slaps ₹1-cr fine each on Tata AIG and ICICI Lombard

- The IRDAI has imposed a penalty of **₹1 crore** each on **ICICI Lombard General Insurance** and **Tata AIG General Insurance company**.
- The fine was slapped on ICICI Lombard for selling group personal accident policies and individual personal protect policy beyond the permitted period.

Tata AIG to offer tailor-made insurance policies for drones

- **Tata AIG** has tied up with **Drone Federation of India** for **drone insurance**.

- The Drone Federation of India (DFI) is a not-for-profit industry-led body that strives to build a safe and scalable unmanned aviation industry in India. It had recently organised the Drone Festival of India on January 6 and 7 in New Delhi.
- The partnership will help create insurance solutions for the drone industry and help operationalise a very important part of the civil aviation requirements for RPAS as mandated by DGCA India.

Revision Points

Name of the Organization	Headquarters	Head of the Organization
Reserve Bank of India	Mumbai	Shaktikanta Das
World Bank	Washington D.C,	David Malpass
Paytm	Noida	Vijay Shekhar Sharma (Founder)
Equitas Small Finance Bank	Chennai	Arun Ramanathan
HDFC Bank	Mumbai	Aditya Puri
City Union Bank	Kumbakonam	N Kamakodi
Tata AIG	Mumbai	Saurabh Agarwal
IRDAI	Hyderabad	Subhash Chandra Khuntia
Axis Bank	Mumbai	Rakesh Makhija
Securities and Exchange Board of India	Mumbai	Ajay Tyagi
Pine Lab	Noida	Vicky Bindra
NPCI	Mumbai	DilipAsbe
State Bank of India	Mumbai	Rajnish Kumar
Paytm Payments Bank	Noida	Satish Kumar Gupta
Lakshmi Vilas Bank	Chennai	P Mukherjee
Bombay Stock Exchange	Mumbai	Ashish Chauhan
ICICI Bank	Mumbai	Sandeep Bakshi
Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs	New Delhi	John Joseph
National Stock Exchange	Mumbai	Vikram Limaye
National Statistics Office	New Delhi	Vijay Kumar (DG)
of Baroda	Vadodara	Hasmukh Adhia
Bank of India	Mumbai	Atanu Kumar Das
IDBI Federal Life Insurance	Mumbai	Vighnesh Shahane
Ujjivan Small Finance Bank	Bengaluru	Nitin Chugh

Important Financial & Economy Affairs

ORGANISATION	GDP RATE	
	2019 – 20 (FY20)	2020 – 21(FY21)
World Bank	5%	5.8%
IMF	4.8%	3.4%

India Ratings & Research	-	5.5%
FICCI	5%	5.5%

GST collection rises to Rs 1.03 lakh crore in December for second time in a row

- For a second time in a row, the GST revenue collection remained above the Rs 1 lakh crore marks with December mop-up at **Rs 1.03 lakh crore** indicating a pick-up in consumption.
- During December 2019, **Arunachal Pradesh** recorded more than two-fold jump in GST collection to **Rs 58 crore** from **Rs 26 crore** in the same month previous year. It was followed by **Nagaland** witnessing 88 per cent increase, **Manipur** 64 per cent and **Mizoram** 60 per cent.
- However, Union Territory **Lakshadweep** recorded 78 per cent decline in GST collection to Rs 1 crore and **Jharkhand** posted decline of 3 per cent at Rs 1,943 crore.

Economic survey likely to peg India's FY21 growth at 6-6.5%: Report

- India's economic survey is seen projecting growth of **6 to 6.5 per cent** in the next year starting April 1, boosted by a series of fiscal measures to revive demand.
- Growth slipped to 4.5 per cent in the July-September quarter, imperilling job prospects for millions of young people entering the workforce each year.
- The government has estimated gross domestic product expansion at 5 per cent for the financial year ending on March 31, which would be the slowest pace since the global financial crisis of 2008/09.

PPF, Sukanya Samriddhi Scheme remain attractive, interest rates kept unchanged

- Public Provident Fund (PPF) and other small savings scheme will continue to carry the same interest rate for the March quarter
- Kisan Vikas Patra (KVP) will give a yield of 7.6% and mature in 113 months
- The government kept interest rates of public provident fund (PPF) and other small savings schemes unchanged for the last quarter of the financial year 2019-20, starting from 1 January, 2020 to 31 March, 2020. Interest rates of small savings schemes are currently revised on a quarterly basis
- The interest rate on the PPF and the 5-year National Savings Certificate remains unchanged at 7.9% while the 5-year Monthly Income Scheme fetches 7.6%.
- Interest rate for the five-year Senior Citizens Savings Scheme has been retained at 8.6%. The interest on the senior citizens' scheme is paid quarterly. Interest on savings deposits has been retained at 4% annually.
- The interest rates on 1-year, 2-year and 3-year post office deposits have been kept unchanged at 6.9% while the 5-year deposit will fetch 7.7%.
- Similarly, the interest rate on the popular 5-year post office recurring deposit scheme has been kept steady at 7.2%.

BSE signs licensing agreement with ICE Futures Europe

- The **Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE)** has signed a licensing agreement with **Intercontinental Exchange (ICE) Futures Europe**, an operator of global exchanges and clearing houses.
- India is one of the largest consumers and importers of crude oil in the world, and Brent crude is highly correlated with the Indian crude oil market.
- It will also help Indian commodity markets by providing convenient and cost-effective onshore hedging products.

CBIC uses data analytics to identify 'risky' exporters'

- The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs has extensively used **data analytics** and matched data with income tax, GST and customs to identify risky exporters.
- All the star export houses have availed **IGST refunds**, which is now being questioned by the tax officers.
- The CBIC has referred the matter to Directorate General of Foreign Trade seeking a more robust accreditation process and taking further necessary actions as per law.
- The exercise by CGST field formations has revealed serious issues in compliance behaviour in some cases. In two cases, the premises were also found sealed and seized by the banks as the exporters had been declared as **Non Performing Assets**.

Piyush Goyal inaugurates NSE Knowledge Hub

- Union Minister for Commerce and Industries Piyush Goyal inaugurated the National Stock Exchange (NSE) **Knowledge Hub** in New Delhi.
- Artificial intelligence-powered learning ecosystem will assist the banking, financial services and insurance sector.
- The NSE Knowledge Hub will enhance skills and help academic institutions in preparing future-ready talent for the financial service industry.
- Artificial Intelligence and machine learning will contribute **one trillion dollars** by the year **2035**.

PM Kisan scheme: 50 per cent farmers to be covered this year

- The government is likely to miss this year target of reimbursement under the **PM Kisan scheme**, mainly on account of lack of updated data about farmers to be given by state governments.
- The scheme, which came into effect from **December 1, 2018**, provides **Rs 2,000** each in **three instalments** for every **four months** to the farmer families.
- It has identified about **14 crore farmers** to be benefitted under the scheme and had made budgetary provision of **Rs 75,000 crore** for this financial year.

India's per-capita income rises 6.8 per cent to 11,254 a month in FY20

- In 2018-19, the monthly per-capita income had stood at **Rs 10,534**.
- The country's per-capita monthly income is estimated to have risen by **6.8 per cent** to **Rs 11,254** during 2019-20, Government data on national income. In 2018-19, the monthly per-capita income had stood at Rs 10,534.
- "The per-capita net national income during 2019-20 is estimated to be **Rs 1,35,050** showing a rise of **6.8 per cent** as compared to Rs 1,26,406 during 2018-19 with the growth rate of 10.0 per cent," according to the annual national income and GDP 2019-20 data released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).
- Poor performance of manufacturing and construction sectors is estimated to pull down the country's economic growth to 11-year low of 5 per cent in 2019-20, according to first advance estimates of the national income released by the National Statistical Office.

India's GDP growth rate for 2019-20 estimated at 5%, says NSO

- The Indian economy is estimated to grow at **5 per cent** in **2019-20** as against **6.8 per cent** in the previous fiscal. According to the first advanced estimates of the national income released by National Statistical Office (NSO).
- The decline has been mainly on account of deceleration in manufacturing sector growth, which is expected to come down to 2 per cent in 2019-20 from **6.2 per cent** in the year-ago fiscal.

India needs 6.3% labour productivity growth to clock 8% GDP: India Ratings

- India Ratings and Research stated that the country will have to increase its labour productivity growth to **6.3 per cent** to attain **8 per cent economic growth**. The labour productivity growth in FY19 was **5.2 per cent**.
- And to attain nine per cent growth, labour productivity growth will have to be raised to **7.3 per cent**. This is **40.4 per cent** higher than the level attained in **FY19**.

Govt to propose easing foreign investment rules further

- India is considering further opening up its insurance and aviation sectors to foreign investors to help spur the economy.
- The Finance Ministry has suggested increasing the limit on foreign direct investment in insurance and pension companies to **74%** from the present **49%** and allowing foreign airlines to own Indian carriers.
- It also wants to allow **100% foreign investment in railway operations, education, and rental housing management companies**. FDI is currently prohibited in railway operations.
- The government wants to increase the amount of FDI to as much as **6% of gross domestic product**, compared with **less than 2% now**.

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

- Retail inflation rose to about five-and-half year high of **7.35 per cent** in December 2019, mainly due to rise in prices of vegetables as onions.

- As per the data released by National Statistical Office (NSO) the spike in inflation in the vegetable segment was **60.5** per cent during the month compared to December 2018.
- The overall retail inflation based on Consumer Price Index (CPI) was **2.11 per cent** in December 2018 and **5.54** per cent in November 2019.
- As per the data released by the NSO, the overall food inflation rose to 14.12 per cent in December as against (-) 2.65 per cent in the same month of 2018. The food inflation was 10.01 per cent in November 2019.
- The inflation in '**pulses and products**' was recorded at **15.44 per cent**, while in case of meat and fish it was nearly **10 per cent**.

Rs 70,000 crore loan amount has been disbursed till Jan 13 under MSMEs scheme: Govt

- The Finance Ministry has stated that a loan amount of nearly **seventy thousand crore rupees** has been disbursed under the scheme of providing loan to **Micro Small and Medium Enterprises - MSMEs within 59 minutes**.
- Out of the 2.73 lakh applications received, 2.19 lakh applications have been approved.
- For ease of access to credit for MSMEs, the government has introduced loan provision to MSMEs through a dedicated online portal- **www.psbloansin59 minutes.com**.
- The portal acts as a single interface portal which facilitates in principal approval of bank loans to Micro Small and Medium Enterprises up to **five crore rupees within 59 minutes**.

India among top 10 FDI recipients, attracts \$49 billion inflows in 2019: UN report

- **India** was among the top 10 recipients of Foreign Direct Investment in 2019, attracting **\$49 billion** in inflows, a 16 per cent increase from the previous year, driving the FDI growth in South Asia, according to a UN report.
- The Global Investment Trend Monitor report compiled by United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) states that the global foreign direct investment remained flat in 2019 at **\$1.39 trillion**, a one per cent decline from a revised **\$1.41 trillion** in 2018.
- **South Asia** recorded a 10 per cent increase in FDI to **\$60 billion** and “this growth was driven by India, with a 16 per cent increase in inflows to an estimated \$49 billion. The majority went into services industries, including information technology.

Global unemployment projected to rise by around 2.5 million in 2020: UN report

- Global unemployment is projected to increase by around **2.5 million in 2020** and almost half a billion people are working fewer paid hours than they would like or lack adequate access to paid work, according to **UN's International Labour Organization report**.
- The World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2020 (WESO) report, released , states that global unemployment has been roughly stable for the last nine years but slowing global economic growth means that, as the global labour force increases, not enough new jobs are being generated to absorb new entrants to the labour market.
- The International Labour Organization (ILO) forecasts that unemployment will rise by about **2.5 million this year**.

FPIs infuse Rs 1,624 crore in Indian markets in January

- Foreign portfolio investors have infused a net sum of **1,624 crore rupees** into the domestic capital markets in January so far.
- As per latest depositories data, Foreign portfolio investors put-in a net of 13,304 crore rupees, in equities and withdrew a net 11,680 crore rupees from the debt segment between January 1 and 24. This translates into a total net inflow of **1,624 crore rupees**.

Paytm Payments Bank to help identify rogue apps that could trigger fraud transactions

- **Paytm Payments Bank Ltd (PPBL)** stated it has added a new feature that analyses "**rogue**" apps on user devices that may trigger fraudulent transactions and advises users to uninstall such apps.
- It is also leveraging artificial intelligence to immediately identify and block suspicious activities, and is undertaking periodic awareness drives throughout the country to educate users about fraud calls and **SMSes**.
- The brand new feature analyses 'rogue' apps on user devices which might trigger fraudulent transactions and advises users to uninstall them,

TCS BaNCS powers operations of merged Tamil Nadu Grama Banks

- Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) has successfully integrated operations of Tamil Nadu's two rural banks — **Pandyan Grama Bank** and **Pallavan Grama Bank**, which were merged to form Tamil Nadu Grama Bank — onto **TCS BaNCS Core Banking Solution** within six months of the formation of the merged bank.
- The merged entity, sponsored by Indian Bank, is headquartered in **Salem**, has 650 branches and 800 business correspondent outlets, covering all districts of Tamil Nadu, except Chennai.

Important Business News

Flipkart partners with government's DAY-NULM to empower MSMEs

- **Flipkart** has announced a tie-up with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs under Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana — National Urban Livelihoods Mission (**DAY-NULM**) to train, support and provide market access to **artisans, self-help groups (SHGs) and those who deal with raw, organic food production**.
- The initiative is aimed to help small businesses explore wide markets through the Flipkart's platform.
- Under the memorandum of understanding between Flipkart and the ministry, the e-commerce firm will collaborate with state missions under the DAY-NULM to establish the Flipkart **Samarth program** in 22 states in the country.
- The market is pegged to grow to **200 billion in 2026** from 4.5 billion in 2018.

FSSAI launches 'Verified Milk Vendor Scheme' in Gujarat

- **FSSAI** to bring loose milk suppliers under the regulatory ambit
- The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has launched '**Verified Milk Vendors Scheme**' in **Gujarat** with an aim to cover milk producers and milk vendors under the regulation net.
- Under the new scheme, all the unorganised milk producers and vendors in Gujarat will be issued **identity cards** by taking their registration.

RIL approaches NHAI for offering waste plastic-to-road technology

- Mukesh Ambani-led **Reliance Industries** has approached **National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)** for offering its '**waste plastic-to-road**' technology that uses end-of-life plastic for road construction.
- The company has already piloted few projects and has constructed nearly **40 km road** by mixing 50 tonne of end-of-life plastic waste with bitumen at its Nagothane manufacturing site in **Raigad district**.
- Along with NHAI, RIL is also in talks with state governments and local bodies across the country for offering its technology 1 km of road uses 1 mt of waste plastic and can save nearly **Rs 1 lakh** as it can be utilised as a substitute to bitumen to the extent of 8-10 per cent.

OPPO signs pact with IIT Hyderabad for R&D

- **OPPO** has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Hyderabad** to promote research in the field of science and technology.

- The MoU will facilitate joint research and development for multiple projects over a period of **two years**.
- The MoU will help both OPPO and IIT Hyderabad to conduct research in core areas of software, hardware and internet services to ensure integrated user experience for the Indian audience.

Google announces \$1-million grant to promote news literacy among Indians

- **Google News Initiative (GNI)** has announced a **\$1 million** grant for **Internews**, a news literacy organisation.
- The funding support is part of Google's broader, **\$10-million commitment to media literacy**.
- Google's initiative will focus on delivering news literacy, especially in the **non-metro cities**.

PhonePe extends to insurance, MF, ATM

- **PhonePe** has announced its foray into the insurance, mutual fund and instant-cash segments to tap the fast-growing digital payments industry, which is expected to touch **\$10 trillion by 2027**.
- The Bengaluru-based fintech firm has announced two major tie-ups — with **Aditya Birla SunLife Mutual Fund** and **Bajaj Allianz General Insurance** — to offer its users benefits on mutual funds and travel.

Loanwalle.com offers loans in 15 minutes

- The New Delhi-based fintech start-up **Loanwalle.com**, which offers loans for a period of **7-30 days**, to cater to any medical or financial emergencies.
- The USP of the fintech firm, founded by **Sachin Mittal**, lies in providing instant loan facility to individuals stuck in a crisis situation, through speedy approval of loans. One can get a loan approved in just **15 minutes**, while generally the process including online and physical verification is completed in an hour.
- The process is less cumbersome and the amount of loan is very short, from **Rs 5,000 to Rs 1 lakh**. The interest rate is 1 per cent per day and the loan cannot be exceeded beyond 30 days

Airtel Joins Hands with Western Union to Accelerate Real-time Global Payments

- **Bharti Airtel** recently associated with the major money transfer brand Western Union to launch real-time payments into bank accounts in India and mobile wallets across **Africa**.
- In context with the collaboration, The Western Union's money transaction will be redirected to Airtel Payment Bank customers in India in a couple of months. This would happen into their bank accounts 24/7 through the mobile application.

Google partners with Airtel to offer G Suite to small, medium businesses

- Bharti Airtel and Google Cloud announced a partnership offer **G Suite** to small and medium sized **businesses (SMBs)** in India as part of its integrated information and communication technology portfolio.
- G Suite is a set of intelligent apps-Gmail, Docs, Drive, Calendar and more-designed with real-time collaboration and machine intelligence to bring people together and help them work smarter and safer.

Apollo Hospitals launches 'Health EMI card'

- Apollo Hospitals Group in collaboration with **Bajaj Finserv** has launched a "**Health EMI Card**" that offers a credit limit of up to **₹4 lakh** and covers nearly 600 procedures for patients.
- The cards would be accepted across all Apollo Hospitals in the country. It also features a personal accident insurance cover of **₹1 lakh**.
- It would enable users to convert their medical expenditure into no cost EMIs that can be repaid over a period of 12 months.

PhonePe launches digital ATM, users can withdraw cash from merchant shops

- Walmart-owned **PhonePe** has now launched its own Automated Teller Machine (ATM), a first of its kind service in India.

- The service launched on a pilot basis in **Delhi NCR** will enable people to get cash from merchant partners through transactions with their mobile devices.
- The service will enable neighbourhood stores to act as ATMs for PhonePe users.
- The PhonePe ATM allows customers to withdraw cash without any hassle through our trusted merchant partners. It also helps merchants avoid the hassle of storing cash and making multiple trips to the bank branch to deposit their extra cash.

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

- **Reliance** is all set to venture into the e-commerce segment with the launch of **Jio Mart**.
- The company will provide retail packaged consumer goods (PCG) and kitchen supplies to the customer in select locations across **Mumbai**.
- Jio Mart is currently live in Navi Mumbai, Thane and Kalyan. Powered by **kirana stores**.

8 states finalise action plan for agri export policy

- The government stated eight states have finalised action plan for agriculture export policy which aims to double such exports.
- The Agri Export Policy was announced last year with an objective of doubling the export and ensuring doubling of farmers' income.
- **Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Kerala, Nagaland, Tamil Nadu, Assam, Punjab and Karnataka** have finalised the State Action Plan and other states are at different stages of finalization of the action plan.
- The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) has been adopting a focused approach for ensuring greater involvement of the state governments for effective implementation of Agri Export Policy (AEP).
- A Farmer Connect Portal has also been set up by APEDA on its website for providing a platform for Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) and Farmer Producer Companies to interact with exporter.

Uber teams up with Hyundai on electric air taxi

- **Uber Technologies Inc** and **South Korean automaker Hyundai Motor** have teamed up to develop **electric air taxis**, joining the global race to make small self-flying cars to ease urban congestion.
- Germany's Daimler, China's Geely Automobile and Japan's Toyota have all unveiled investments in start-ups that aim to deploy **electric flying cars** capable of vertical takeoff and landing. But there are big technological and regulatory hurdles to the plans.
- **Hyundai** is the first carmaker to join **Uber's air taxi project**, which also counts Boeing subsidiary Aurora Flight Sciences among its partner firms.

PayPal unveils Adoption Assistance Programme

- **PayPal** has unveiled a new adoption assistance programme aimed at enhancing the **parental support benefits for employees**.
- The new policy will offer financial support of upto **Rs one lakh per** adoption for adoptive parents.
- This covers reimbursement of adoption expenses such as CARA registration, child placement, foster care and establishment of legal guardianship
- PayPal stated that it offers paid adoption leave of **16 weeks** for female employees and **paternity leave of two weeks**.

Abhibus ties up with IRCTC

- **AbhiBus.com** has tied up with **IRCTC** (Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation), allowing its customers **to buy or cancel tickets**.

- They can postpone their tickets as well on its platform. AbhiBus.com customer can also use the platform locator option and coach position to directly move to the respective platform and in the direction of the coach without wasting time checking for that information.

A uniform, standard health cover from April 1

- The IRDAI has made it mandatory for general and health insurers to come up with a **standard individual health insurance product**, which can cater to the basic health needs of a customer, with a maximum sum insured of **Rs 5 lakh** and minimum of **Rs 1 lakh**.
- The only standardised insurance product had been the motor insurance.
- The insurers are mandated to offer the product from **April 1, 2020**, onwards and need no pre-approval from IRDAI for this. The minimum entry age is fixed as **18 years** and maximum **65**.
- The policy has no exit age and has the provision of lifelong renewability. The dependents will be covered from the age of three months to 25 years, subject to the definition of 'family'. If the dependent is aged above 18 years and is financially independent, s/he would be ineligible for coverage in subsequent renewals.

Rs 4.7 trillion farm loans waived in 10 years

- Various states have written off **Rs 4.7 lakh crore** worth of farm loans in the last 10 years, though this is still below the total amount of bad loans from industries, stated a report by SBI Research.
- Even though the agriculture NPAs (non-performing assets) were only Rs 1.1 lakh crore or 12.4 per cent of the overall NPAs in FY19, if we accounted for Rs 3.14 lakh crore worth of farm loan waivers announced in the last decade, agri NPAs burden for the exchequer banks could be a staggering Rs 4.2 lakh crore, and if taken into account the latest Rs 45,000-51,000 crore write-offs announced by Maharashtra, this it could be at Rs 4.7 lakh crore, **which is 82 per cent of the industry-level NPAs,**" the SBI Research report claimed.
- In FY19, farm loan NPAs jumped to 12.4 per cent or at 1.1 lakh crore of the Rs 8,79,000 crore of total bad loans in the system, up from Rs 48,800 crore or 8.6 per cent of the total NPAs of Rs 5,66,620 crore in FY16.

BEL commissions real time train info system for Railways

- Bharat Electronics Ltd (BEL) has commissioned **Phase I of the Real Time Train Information System (RTIS) for the Railways**.
- RTIS provides real-time train information to the Railways thereby increasing its operational efficiency, in addition to enhancing passenger safety.
- The system has been commissioned through the **Centre for Railway Information System (CRIS)**, under the technical guidance of **Space Applications Centre (SAC), ISRO**.

Tamil Nadu plans single window system for building permits

- Tamil Nadu government will soon bring in a **single window clearance system**.
- The state government is creating a single window portal through which people can apply online for different building approvals.
- Tamil Nadu e-Governance Agency has been roped in to develop the portal. The agency will also be maintaining it.
- People can submit their application online for different services like obtaining planning permission, building permission application, completion certificate and occupancy certificate.

Government approves model pact with foreign countries for seafarers' competency certificate

- The government stated it has approved a model pact with **foreign countries for recognition of seafarers' competency certificates**.

- The proposed bilateral MoU will enable India and another country with which such a MoU may be entered, to mutually recognise maritime education and training, certificates of competency, endorsements, documentary evidence of training and medical fitness certificates, issued to the seafarers who are citizens of respective countries the Shipping Ministry stated in a statement.

Japan's NTT to invest Rs 11,000 crore in data centres in India

- Japanese tech major NTT stated a significant part of its **USD 7 billion** global commitment for data centres business would be spent in India over the next four years.
- The company also feels that there will be margin compression issues for the data centres business in India as capacity supply goes up along with an increase in competition, NTT's country chief executive for global data centres and cloud infrastructure, **Sharad Sanghi**.
- India is the fastest-growing region for NTT and a substantial amount of the **USD 7 billion** commitment will be invested.

Pine Labs launches Paper PoS for merchants

- **Pine Labs** has announced the launch of **Pine Labs Paper PoS** for its merchants.
- Pine Labs Paper PoS is an all-in-one solution for accepting multiple forms of **Unified Payments Interface (UPI)** and **Bharat QR payments** through a single merged static QR at the point of sale. Merchants can use Pine Labs Paper PoS to accept payments across different kinds of UPI and Bharat QR payments, including those from Amazon Pay, Google Pay, PayZapp, PhonePe, and YONO, among others.

Airtel's name removed from DGFT blacklist after dialogue with authorities

- **Bharti Airtel** stated its name has now been removed from the **denied entry list** for non-fulfilment of export obligation under an export promotion scheme.
- The company stated its has now been removed from the denied entry list, after it highlighted the relevant details and documents submitted to the **Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT)**.
- The DGFT, which is under the Commerce Ministry, had put the company under the list, commonly known as **blacklist**, for non-fulfilment of export obligation in respect of certain **Export Promotion Capital Goods (EPCG)** authorisation issued to it.

Nasscom, Japan join hands to match startups and tech firms with VCs

- **National Association of Software and Services Companies (Nasscom)** and the **Japan External Trade Organisation (JETRO)** have teamed up to bring more startups and technology firms in contact with **venture capitalists** and strategic partners from **Japan**.
- Nasscom has been looking to expand into more markets to reduce its overdependence on US and UK, which together make up more than 70 per cent of its exports, as of last financial year.
- A part of this initiative is the **Sino-Indian Digital Collaboration Opportunity Plaza (SIDCOP)**, a partnership between Nasscom and Chinese municipal governments, aimed at bringing Indian IT companies and Chinese enterprises closer on a digital platform.

Important State Wise National News

List of Festivals

Festival	Venue	Organized by/Inaugurated By
Lai Haraoba (Ritualistic Festival)	Tripura	Rebati Mohan Das
Zo Kutpui Festival	Mizoram	-

Buxa Bird Festival	Alipurdar, West Bengal	-
31 st International Kite Festival	Sabarmati River Front, Ahmedabad	Vijay Rupani
Lohri Festival	Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Jammu, Himachal Pradesh & Chandigarh	-
Prshuram Kund Mela	Arunachal Pradesh	-
Magh Bihu	Assam	-
Nagoba Jatara	Telangana	-
11-ay Dhanu Jatra	Bargarh, Odisha	-
Rath Yatra (Chariot Festival)	Odisha	-

Andhra Pradesh

CM Jagan Mohan Reddy to inaugurate YSR Aarogyasri scheme

- Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy inaugurated **YSR Aarogyasri** scheme at **Eluru** in West Godavari district.
- A total of **2,059** medical ailments have been covered under the scheme.
- With monthly cap of **Rs 5,000** Dr YSR Aarogyasri Health Care Trust will pay **Rs 225 per day** for the prescribed recovery period.
- Patients suffering from **leprosy** will also be given **Rs 3,000 a month as pension**.
- YSR Aarogyasri scheme is applicable to people having an annual income of up to **Rs 5 lakh**.

Andhra Pradesh CM Jagan Mohan Reddy set to launch Amma Vodi scheme

- **Andhra Pradesh** Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy will launch '**Jagananna Amma Vodi**' programme in Chittoor.
- Under Jagananna Amma Vodi scheme, financial assistance of **Rs 15,000** will be given to nearly 43 lakh mothers or guardians to send their children to school.
- The government in the fiscal year 2019-20 has allocated **Rs 6455.80 crore** budget for the scheme,.
- The scheme is applicable from the academic year 2019-20 in all the government, private aided, private unaided schools/junior colleges. It will also include residential schools and colleges in the state.

INTACH Efforts to Protect Buddhist Site

- The **Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH)**, heritage lovers and officials have almost stopped the stone-pelting ritual at **Bojjannakonda**, a famous Buddhist site at **Sankaram, near Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh**.
- The Indian National Trust for Arts and Cultural Heritage (**INTACH**) has already appealed to the authorities to ensure better **protection** of **Buddhist sites** by taking up the declaration of Bavikonda, Thotlakonda, Pavurallakonda and Bojjannakonda as heritage **sites** by UNESCO.

Visakhapatnam to be AP's new executive Capital

- **Visakhapatnam** will be the executive capital of Andhra Pradesh. The State Cabinet approved a high-powered panel report on decentralisation, making **Amaravati** only a legislative capital.
- The Secretariat and all heads of departments will also be shifted to Visakhapatnam. The State cabinet was to take a final call on the reports of the GN Rao panel and Boston Consulting Group, on the new capital.
- Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy had announced that the Government was in favour of administrative decentralisation, with **Visakhapatnam** and **Kurnool** serving as the executive and judicial capitals, respectively, while **Amaravati** could be used for assembly sessions.

Andhra Pradesh assembly unanimously passes resolution to abolish State Legislative Council

- The **Andhra Pradesh** Assembly has unanimously passed a resolution to abolish the State Legislative Council. Chief Minister **Jagan Mohan Reddy** moved the one-line resolution in the assembly to abolish the council.
- The Assembly passed the resolution on dissolution of the Council after a wide range of discussions. Later, the Speaker adjourned the House indefinitely.

AP: Sand delivery at doorstep from Jan 2

- The Andhra Pradesh Government is planning to introduce **door delivery of sand** in the New Year and as a pilot project it will first be taken up in **Krishna district** and then extended to other districts.
- The decision was taken at a review meeting chaired by Chief Minister Y.S Jaganmohan Reddy. It may be noted that sand scarcity hit the construction sector badly during the past few months.

Arunachal Pradesh

Arunachal assembly adopts new logo

- The **Arunachal Pradesh** Legislative Assembly adopted a **new logo**, reflecting the distinct identity and culture of the state.
- The new logo consists of the **national emblem and foxtail orchid (Rhynchostylis Retusa)**, the state flower.
- The symbol of national emblem signifies the federal system of the Indian Constitution while the foxtail orchid represents the state, its people and culture as a whole, while the blue colour denotes the autonomy of the assembly secretariat.

Arunachal to start red-listing of orchids

- Arunachal has become the first state in the country to initiate the International Union for Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) '**red listing**' at the state level after it inked a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the IUCN.
- The IUCN's Red List of Threatened Species is a critical indicator of the health of the world's biodiversity.
- The project will be spread **across 12 months**, during which workshops on red list assessment will be conducted by experts from the IUCN.

Arunachal CM dedicates Padi Yubbe stadium to people

- Chief Minister **Pema Khandu** dedicated the Padi Yubbe outdoor stadium to the people of Lower Subansiri district. It has a seating capacity of 4000.
- The chief minister also unveiled the memorial statue of **Padi Yubbe**.
- The Padi Yubbe Outdoor Stadium is the third after Pasighat and Daporijo to be completed and ready for use. Other big stadiums, in various stages of completion, are coming up at Chimpu near Itanagar, and Aalo (West Siang) and Tezu (Lohit).

Assam

Kaziranga records 96 species of wetland birds

- Kaziranga National Park and avian specialists conducted the second wetland bird count.
- The teams counted a total of 19,225 birds belonging to 96 species under 80 families.
- The first waterfowl census in 2018 had yielded 10,412 birds covering 80 families from 21 families.

Assam Rifles builds war memorial in Nagaland for 357 martyrs

- The **Assam Rifles** has constructed a combined war memorial in **Nagaland** for the 357 Army and Assam Rifles personnel killed while fighting insurgency in the north-eastern state.
- The memorial has been built at **Mokokchung**, which is also the cultural and intellectual centre of Nagaland.
- This memorial is the first of its kind in Nagaland, which also has the famous Second World War Cemetery at Kohima. Christened "**Veer Samriti**", the memorial is spread over 13,500 sq ft and was built by 44 Assam Rifles.

Bihar

First-of-its kind turtle rehab centre comes up in Bihar

- A first-of-its-kind rehabilitation centre for freshwater turtles will be inaugurated in **Bihar's Bhagalpur forest division** in January 2020. The rehab centre, spread over half a hectare, will be able to shelter 500 turtles at a time.
- The size of turtles found in eastern Bihar is good as well. A turtle weighing up to 15 kilograms can be found.
- On the other hand, hard-shell turtles, especially spotted ones, are being poached for the pet trade. Such turtles are in high demand in south east Asia, China and Japan.

Cultural exchange programme to be organised in Bihar under Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat

- A cultural exchange programme will be organised in February in **Gaya, Bihar** under **Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat** with youths of paired state, **Tripura, as well as Mizoram**.
- **Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat (EBSB)** programme is proving better platform of mingling of societies of different states.
- Different programmes organised under the aegis of Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat are spreading fragrance of unity of India.

Chhattisgarh

Chhattisgarh government launches 'Malaria-free Bastar' campaign

- **Bastar, the Red zone in south Chhattisgarh**, is facing a different battle. The region has the **Annual Parasite Incidence (API)** (malaria) of over 10—rated among the highest in the country.
- API-10 is equivalent to 10 confirmed cases per thousand population and Bastar is among the very few geographical locations endemic to malaria parasites—**Plasmodium vivax and P. falciparum**.
- The state has now meticulously embarked upon a plan to eliminate Malaria from Bastar on mission mode through door-to-door '**Mass Active Screening and Treatment**' process, which will continue till February 14 under the 'Malaria-Free Bastar' campaign.

Delhi

Pragati Maidan metro station renamed as Supreme Court metro station

- The Kejriwal government in Delhi announced the renaming of **Pragati Maidan** metro station as the **Supreme Court** metro station.
- The committee has also decided to rename **Mukarba Chowk** on Delhi's Outer Ring Road and its flyover after Kargil war martyr Captain Vikram Batra and MB Road as Acharya Sri Mahapragya Marg and the Lajpat Nagar flyover as Shri Jhulelal Setu among others.

Delhi polls launched 24x7 control room to monitor black money

- **The Income-Tax Department** has launched a **24x7 control room** to monitor black money and illegal inducements in poll-bound Delhi.
- A toll-free number- **1800117574** - where people can inform the department about any activity of use of money power, illegal distribution of cash among other such election-related crimes.

Delhi gets first smog tower to combat air pollution

- **Delhi's first smog tower** will start working at **Lajpat Nagar** central market.
- The **20-feet-tall tower** is fitted with exhaust fans to suck in polluted air and can remove up to 80% of the particulate matter (PM 2.5 and PM10).
- The tower will purify the air within a circumference area of up to 750 metres.
- The smog towers were to be installed on the lines of China, which has experimented with this technology.
- In February 2018, the Delhi government had installed an anti-pollution tower at ITO in central Delhi on pilot basis.
- The Delhi government will give 100% subsidy for the purchase of charging equipment up to ₹6,000 per charging point.

Delhi CM launches 'Guarantee card' ahead of Assembly Polls

- Aam Aadmi Party national convenor and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal launched party's **Guarantee Card** ahead of upcoming assembly elections in the national capital.
- AAP will ensure **24 hours drinking water supply** to every household and pollution-free Delhi. He further stated students will be given free bus services and affordable homes will be provided to the needy.

Delhi airport gets a new women-only cab service

- At the Indira Gandhi International Airport is an exclusive '**Women with wheels**,' taxi service that is unique as it is operated by women drivers, for women.
- The service, an initiative by '**Sakha cabs**' was launched from the international airport from January 10 in a bid to make women feel safer.
- The cabs are driven by women drivers and the services are also provided to only female commuters.

Karnataka

Bengaluru comes up with Centre for Excellence in Blockchain Technology

- Bengaluru has come up with a **Centre for Excellence in Blockchain Technology**. It helps in enhancing transparency and trust in e-Governance system by allowing all stakeholders benefit from shared learning, experiences and resources.
- Set up by the **National Informatics Centre**, the Centre for Excellence would help to bring a revolutionary change in the lives of the people by delivering e-governance services effectively through the data-centric model.
- The Centre for Excellence will provide **world-class blockchain** services to government by identifying and sharing suitable data for the use of government departments.

Visually impaired cricketers to get exclusive sports ground in Bengaluru

- Visually impaired cricketers are likely to get a dedicated sports training complex that will enable them to develop into professional players, **the Cricket Association for the Blind in India (CABI)**.
- CABI has approached the **Karnataka government** with a request to allot **25 acres of land** to set up a sports complex with a training ground, gymnasium and swimming pool, and has received a positive response, Mahantesh G K, President, CABI and head of Samarthanam Trust for the Disabled, told media persons in Bengaluru.

Mangaluru Smart City, IGBC ink pact

- **The Indian Green Building Council (IGBC) and Mangaluru Smart City Ltd (MSCL)** have signed a **memorandum of understanding (MoU)** for sustainable development in **Mangaluru**.
- The MoU envisages a joint assessment study to evaluate the green criteria of Mangaluru as per **IGBC Green Cities rating system**.
- It also aims at capacity building of professionals involved in the development of Mangaluru as a smart and green city.

Interceptor boat C-448 commissioned at New Mangalore

- The **Karnataka government** will provide 160 acres of land at Kenjar village in **Mangaluru taluk** to set up a **Coast Guard Training Academy**.
- The commissioning of **C-448 (a high-speed interceptor boat)** of Indian Coast Guard at New Mangalore.
- Karnataka Industrial Areas Development Board (KIADB) has allotted the land for setting up a Coast Guard Training Academy.
- This interceptor boat built by **L&T (Larsen & Toubro)** shipyard

Gujarat

10,000 cameras to be used in Gujarat Lion Census, 2020

- The Wildlife Institute of India (WII) is to conduct **Asiatic Lion Census in May 2020**. The Institute will use **10,000 cameras** to conduct the census.

- In 2015, the WII counted 523 lions in Gujarat. It is expected that the numbers have risen phenomenally and the population must have crossed **1,000**.
- The census is to adopt the technology of National Tiger Conservation Authority. The entire census area is to be divided in to 3-km grid.

Gujarat CM unveils world's 2nd tallest statue of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

- **Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani** unveiled the second tallest statue of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel in the world at **Ahmedabad**.
- **50 feet tall bronze statue** with the **weight of 70 thousand kilograms** has been unveiled. It was built at a cost of **Rs 3.25 crores**.
- It has become the second highest statue of **India's first home home minister** after the Statue of Unity of the legendary leader situated at Kevadiya in Narmada district of Central Gujarat.
- The 50 feet tall statue of Sardar Patel has also been designed by **Padma Bhusan Ram V. Sutar**.

KVIC opens first silk processing plant in Gujarat

- **Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC)** inaugurated the **first silk processing plant** at **Surendranagar** in **Gujarat**.
- This would help cut down the cost of production of silk yarn drastically and increase the sale and availability of raw material for Gujarati 'Patola' sarees locally.
- The plant has been set up by a khadi institution at a cost of Rs 75 lakh, in which KVIC has contributed Rs 60 lakh.
- **Patola**, the **trademark saree of Gujarat**, is considered to be very costly and worn only by royals or aristocrats.
- **Eight NE states to participate in Madhavpur Mela of Gujarat**
- The **eight States of the Northern Eastern Region** will participate in a big way during the **Madhavpur Mela** of **Gujarat** due to be held in the first week of April this year.
- The annual fair is held at **Madhavpur Ghed** in Porbandar district.
- This will mark the cultural integration of Gujarat with the North-East under the Ek Bharat, Shrestha Bharat.
- The Madhavpur Mela of Gujarat shares its connect to the **Mishmi Tribe of Arunachal Pradesh**.
- The festival celebrates the immortal journey which Rukmini undertook from Arunachal Pradesh to Gujarat with Lord **Krishna**. Bhismaknagar, located near Roing in the lower Dibang Valley district, also finds mention in Kalika Purana.

Gujarat to set up Vikram Sarabhai Children Innovation Center in state

- Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani has announced the setting up of the **Vikram Sarabhai Children Innovation Center (VSCIC)** to identify, nurture and promote children's innovation in the state.
- The felicitation ceremony of Children's Innovation Festival (CIF) held at Swarnim Sankul in **Gandhinagar**. A letter of intent was exchanged between **Gujarat University** and **UNICEF**.
- Children's Innovation Festival - CIF has been organized by Gujarat University Start-ups and Entrepreneurship Council (GUSEC) - an incubation centre set up by Gujarat University in partnership with UNICEF.

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

- External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar laid the foundation stone of the **Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Centre** for Empowerment and Livelihoods near **the Statue of Unity** at **Kevadia** in **Gujarat**.
- This will be a state-of-the-art skill Development centre in this tribal area. It will run several free of charge skill courses aligned to the **National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF)**.
- **GMR Varalakshmi Foundation** - GMRVF - has taken a joint initiative with Sardar Sarovar Narmada Nigam Limited to establish this Centre with an investment of over **Rs 15 crore**.

Haryana

Haryana Assembly passes motion to ratify 126th Constitutional Amendment

- **Haryana** Assembly unanimously passed a motion to ratify the **126th Constitutional Amendment** .

- The Amendment seeks to extend reservation for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Haryana for another 10 years in the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies. It was moved by Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kanwar Pal.

Khattar launches Atal Canteen in Karnal

- **Karnal** Haryana chief minister Manohar Lal Khattar inaugurated the state's first Atal Kisan-Mazdoor canteens at the Karnal grain market.
- At this canteen, farmers and labourers coming to the mandi will get a Veg-thali comprising four chapatis, rice, dal and seasonal vegetable, all for Rs 10.
- Karnal Haryana chief minister Manohar Lal Khattar unveiled a **14-foot statue** of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee at the **Atal Park**.
- Khattar also inaugurated and laid the foundation stones of developmental projects worth Rs 14.8 crore. He also flagged off a "Save Earth- Bicycle Rally" from Sector 12.

Himachal Pradesh

Himachal Pradesh Govt launches Himachal MyGov portal to strengthen public participation

- The Himachal Pradesh Government has launched Himachal **MyGov portal** in **Shimla** with a view to strengthen public participation in the governance process.
- Himachal Pradesh has become the **11th state** in the country to have this facility.
- MyGov is an innovative platform to build a partnership between citizens and government with the help of technology for growth and development of India.
- Chief Minister Thakur also launched **CM App** on the occasion. Through this App, people of the state would be able to write directly to the Chief Minister regarding their grievances.

Kerala

Kerala Travel Mart to support Green Cochin Mission

- **Kerala Travel Mart (KTM)** Society is set to implement the initiatives under **the nascent Green Cochin Mission** as its major policy programme to speed up the ongoing efforts to free Kerala's top tourist city of waste.
- The Green Cochin Mission is aiming, among others, to rejuvenate the city's canals and check encroachment so as to achieve its **zero pollution of soil** and water alongside greening Kochi.

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

- **Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan** launched the **Kerala Real Estate Regulatory Authority (K-RERA)**
- **Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act, 2016**, had directed the state governments to establish RERA for effective regulation of the real estate sector and also for speedy dispute redressal.
- As per the Act, buildings with more than eight apartments and real estate projects with **500 square metres** of land or more will have to be registered with RERA.

Kerala's Chief Minister launches website for NRK's investment

- Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has launched the website of **Overseas Keralites Investment and Holding Ltd**, set up by the State Government to attract investment from the **Non-Resident Keralites (NRK)**.
- The Chief Minister, who is also the Chairman of the company launched the website **www.okih.org** at **ASCEND 2020**, which began at Lulu Bolgatty International Convention Centre.
- The company was announced in the first Loka Kerala Sabha with the vision of '**Global thought for local growth**' to **ensure participation of Non-Resident Keralites** in State's development and provide them reasonable and assured returns. The company was formed in **August 2019**.

India's First Super Fab Lab That Can Produce 'Almost Any Machinery' Inaugurated In Kochi

- **India's first Super Fab Lab** was inaugurated in **Kochi, Kerala**.
- The lab is built in collaboration with **Massachusetts Institute of Technology(MIT)** and is spread across an area of **10,000 sq ft**.

- The Super Fab Lab will have state-of-the-art machines worth more than ₹7 crore, enabling researchers, innovators and developers to go beyond the scope of existing fab labs in the state.
- The Super Fab Lab inaugurated at the Integrated Startup Complex (ISC) of the **Kerala Startup Mission (KSUM)** is the only such facility outside of the US.

Kerala Becomes First State To Pass Anti-CAA Resolution

- **Kerala** became the first state to pass a resolution **against** the **Citizenship Amendment Act** amid widespread protests across the country.
- However, Kerala is now the first state to go down the legislature route to register its opposition.

Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh

J&K registers highest Inpatient Department care in country

- Jammu and Kashmir has registered the highest **Inpatient Department**, IPD care in the country.
- According to the state-wise fact sheets released by National Health Systems Resource Centre (NHSRC), **New Delhi**, overall all women in J&K are availing **Antenatal Care (ANC) services**.
- As per the report, the **96 percent IPD care** in rural areas of J&K is provided by Public Health Facilities which is highest against the country's average of 85 percent.

Jammu and Kashmir: Tourism Dept launches publicity campaign at SATTE 2020 to showcase diverse tourism attractions.

- Jammu and Kashmir Tourism Department has launched a massive publicity campaign at the **South Asian Trade and Travel Exchange Expo (SATTE), 2020**, to showcase diverse tourism attractions of the twin regions.
- The three-day expo, sponsored by J&K Tourism Department and supported by Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, has been organized in **New Delhi**.
- The **27th Edition of SATTE** has witnessed participation of over 1,000 delegates from over 50 countries and 28 Indian states.

Kashmir to be connected with rest of India through rail by December 2021

- **Kashmir** will be connected to rest of the country through Railway network by December next year as the government has set a fresh deadline for completion of the **world's highest Railway bridge**.
- The Rail line is expected to be **35 metres** taller than the Eiffel Tower. The massive **arch-shaped structure**, being constructed in hostile terrain, which will consume over **5,462 tonnes of steel** and will be **359 metres** above the river bed.
- Designed to withstand wind speeds of up to **260 kilometres** per hour, the **1.315 km-long** engineering marvel will connect Bakkal (Katra) and Kauri (Srinagar).
- The bridge forms a crucial link in the **111-kilometre** stretch between Katra and Banihal, which is part of the **Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link Project**.

J&K likely to have SMS-based taxi aggregator scheme soon

- In Jammu and Kashmir, the LG administration is mulling to bring Application and **SMS based Taxi Aggregator Scheme** to ensure quality of services, safety, vehicle profile, drivers' credentials, and regulation of fares and arrangement of services.
- In this regard, Lieutenant Governor, **Girish Chandra Murmu** has directed the officers to call the **Expression of Interest (EoI)** for implementing the scheme **within a period of one month**.

Srinagar declared Open Defecation Free

- **Mayor of Srinagar Junaid Azim Mattu** announced that Srinagar has joined the list of '**Open Defecation Free**' cities.

- Srinagar receives its **Swachhata Certificate** from **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs**, Central Government and joins the list of cities that are now **"OPEN DEFECATION FREE"**. Another achievement after Srinagar gets **45th Rank** in **Cleanest Cities** in the country.

Madhya Pradesh

Kamal Nath govt to offer Rs 5,000 as stipend to unemployed in Madhya Pradesh

- The Kamal Nath-led **Madhya Pradesh** government is launching a revised version of its **Yuva Swabhiman Yojana (YSY)** – a **scheme for the unemployed** – with an increased monthly stipend and annual number of working days.
- The scheme was launched on January 31, 2019, ensuring **100 days** of employment every year to economically weak urban youth at a stipend of **Rs 4,000 per month**.
- The Congress government in the state is increasing the amount of monthly stipend **to Rs 5,000** from Rs 4,000, while the days of employment will be increased **to 365 days from 100 days** earlier.
- They have decided to relaunch the scheme for **unemployed youths** after a year. The stipend has been hiked by **Rs 1,000 to Rs 5,000 per month**.

MP govt starts health insurance scheme for staff

- The **Madhya Pradesh** government has approved a health insurance scheme **Mukhyamantri Karmachari Swasthya Bima Yojana**.
- The scheme will be effective from April 1 and will make every government employee and their families eligible for medical treatment worth Rs 5 lakh annually
- The police will find the location of the person in distress after it receives the alert.

MP govt to set up Gandhi chairs, pillars in universities & colleges

- In Madhya Pradesh, the state government has decided to set up **Gandhi chairs** and **Gandhi pillars** dedicated to father of the nation in universities and colleges across the state.
- The ‘Gandhi Chair’ will be set up under the political science department of the universities. Under the aegis of Gandhi Chair, scholars who are doing research focusing Mahatma Gandhi will be given incentive of **Rs 60 thousand** per annum.

India's first e-waste clinic opens in Bhopal

- The country's first e-waste clinic is being opened in **Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh**. It will enable segregation, processing and disposal of waste from both household and commercial units.
- The e-waste clinic is jointly setting up by the **Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)** and **Bhopal Municipal Corporation (BMC)**. In the absence of a safe disposal mechanism, electronic waste at present is being disposed along with other waste.
- **Electronic waste** will be collected door-to-door or could be deposited directly at the e-waste clinic. The CPCB will provide technical support to the clinic.

Maharashtra

Shiv Sena-led Maharashtra govt launches its much-awaited 'Shiv Bhojan' scheme

- The Maharashtra government launched its much-awaited **'Shiv Bhojan' scheme**.
- Under the scheme, which has been launched on a pilot basis, thalis or lunch plates would be available to people at designated centres/ canteens during a stipulated time in all the districts.

Maharashtra CM inaugurates 18.5 km-long stretch of Nagpur Metro Aqua line

- In Maharashtra, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray inaugurated **18.5 kilometre-long stretch** of **Nagpur Metro Aqua line** of **Maha Metro Rail Network** in **Nagpur** through video conferencing.
- The Phase-I of Nagpur Metro is completed in record time. He appealed the citizens of Nagpur and state to take responsibility to maintain the cleanliness in Metro.
- The proposed **Broad-Gauge Metro network** will connect the satellite towns like **Wardha, Bhandara, Gondia, Chandrapur** near **Nagpur city**.

- **Nagpur Metro** is the Greenest Metro deriving 65 per cent of its power consumption from Solar Energy. Nagpur Metro network is now operational up to 24.5 kilometres.

Maharashtra Govt launches ‘Cyber Safe Women’ initiative

- Maharashtra Government has launched a ‘**Cyber Safe Women**’ initiative under which awareness camps will be held across all the districts of the state regarding cyber safety.
- In a statement, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray has stated the initiative will help in educating women about how the web is used by **anti-social elements** and child predators to commit various types of crimes.

Journalist Day Observed in Maharashtra on January 6

- Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray extended his greetings for the Journalists' Day which is being celebrated on **6th of January** every year in the state in the memory of late **thespian journalist Balshashtri Jambhekar**.
- The Chief Minister assured that the government will always take a positive role on various issues related to journalists.

Advantage Maharashtra expo 2020’ to be inaugurated

- Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray will inaugurate **Advantage Maharashtra expo 2020** in **Aurangabad**.
- The four-day mega industrial exhibition has been organised by the **Marathwada Association** of Small Scale Industries and Agriculture (MASSIA).
- Growth of Marathwada industries in technology and innovation and the products produced and exported from the region will be showcased in this exhibition.

Maha CM launches first girder of India’s longest sea-bridge

- Chief Minister **Uddhav Thackeray** launched the first girder for the country’s longest sea-bridge, the **Mumbai Trans Harbour Link (MTHL)**.
- The girder weighing 1,000 tonnes was set off by a **1,400-tonnes ‘launching girder’** and mark the erection of the first span in the civilian works of the MTHL.
- The MTHL, the second road link cutting through the Arabian Sea in the island city’s eastern coast, will connect the mainland with Sewri and Chirle respectively.
- It is expected to be completed by 2022 and Estimated to cost around Rs 14,260 crore, it is being financed by a loan from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).
- The MTHL will be connected to the new international airport coming up in Navi Mumbai, the Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust, the country’s first expressway, the Mumbai-Pune Expressway, Mumbai-Goa Highway and provide faster access to north Maharashtra and southern India.

Maharashtra government to make Marathi mandatory in all schools

- The Maharashtra government will enact a law during the next Assembly session, making it mandatory to teach **Marathi language** in all schools in the state irrespective of mediums of instruction.
- The next session of the Assembly will be held in February. The government will frame a law in next month's Assembly session, making it mandatory to teach Marathi language from Class 1 to Class 10 in all schools irrespective of media of all instructions.

Mumbai gets India’s first ‘walk-through’ aviary

- Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray inaugurated the country’s first and biggest ‘**walk-through**’ aviary at the Veermata Jijabai Bhosale Udyan and Zoo also known as **Byculla Zoo** in **Mumbai, Maharashtra**.
- The VJBUZ has India’s first air-conditioned enclosure for Humboldt Penguins, besides plans to add sections for the Asiatic Lion, tigers and another bird enclosure.
- Thackeray also laid the foundation stone for a **new flyover connecting Saat Rasta to Haji Ali** which will drastically cut down the travel time.

Maharashtra government makes it compulsory for school students to read the Preamble to Constitution

- The **Maharashtra government** ordered that school students across the state must recite the **Preamble to the Indian Constitution**, during their morning assemblies.
- Reading out the Preamble is part of the “**sovereignty of Constitution, welfare of all**” campaign.

Mumbai malls, shops, eateries can stay open 24X7 from January 27

- **Maharashtra** cabinet has approved a proposal to allow malls, multiplexes, shops and eateries to remain open round the clock.
- The decision came into force from **27th January** and will be implemented only in non-residential areas like Bandra Kurla Complex and Nariman Point.
- The cabinet has made the film "Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior" tax-free in the state. The film is based on Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's trusted lieutenant Tanaji Malusare.

Mumbai gets second all-women post office

- The city's second '**mahila dakghar**' - post offices operated by women staffers was inaugurated by operations member, Department of Posts, Arundhaty Ghosh at **Mahim Bazaar**.
- All the official positions at the post office, from postmaster in-charge to counter persons, will be managed by women. The post office located in **West zone of Mumbai**.

Nagaland

Entire Nagaland declared 'disturbed', AFSPA extended for six more months

- The Centre declared the whole of **Nagaland as a "disturbed" area** under the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958, for a further period of **six months**.
- The area comprising whole of Nagaland is in such a disturbed condition that the use of armed forces in aid of civil power is necessary.
- In exercise of the powers conferred by **Section 3 of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 (No. 28 of 1958)**.

Odisha

Odisha government launches e-certificate project

- The **Odisha government** has launched a unique "**people-friendly**" project to provide official documents such as income, residence and similar other certificates online without any fees.
- People can now apply for these certificates online under the e-certificate project for the Revenue and Disaster Management department as part of the 5T model of governance.
- The move aims at benefiting over **5 million applicants** annually, revolutionising peoples life.
- Patnaik also launched "Pauti", an App to facilitate online payment of land revenue and people need not visit government offices for the purpose.

Bhubaneswar civic body launches 'Go Green' campaign

- The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation launched a campaign to sensitize citizens on the protection of the environment and encourage exchange eco-friendly gifts this new year.
- The '**Go Green**' campaign was carried out in five different places in the city where municipal officials distributed saplings, books and cotton bags.
- The campaign was launched at Chandrasekharapur, Ganganagar, Saheed Nagar, State Museum and 'I Love Bhubaneswar' plaza on Janpath road. Similarly, officials in collaboration with **Axis Bank** launched '**Mu Safaiwala**' public van.

BMC declares ODF++ status for Bhubaneswar

- The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) on declared the Capital an **open defecation-free (ODF) ++ city**.
- BMC Administrator and Director of Municipal Administration Sangramjit Nayak stated the ODF++ status will be open for third party verification following the declaration.

- ODF++ status is accorded to a city where not a single person is found defecating and, or urinating in the open, all community and public toilets are functional and well maintained, faecal sludge and sewage are safely managed and treated with no discharge or dumping of untreated in drains, water bodies or open areas at any point of a day.

Population of ‘mugger’ crocodile species increases in Odisha

- The number of **muggers, an endangered crocodile species**, in **Ghodahada irrigation reservoir** and adjoining waterbodies in Odisha’s Ganjam district has increased.
- The number of the crocodile species in and around the reservoir was counted at 65 in the three-day-long census.
- While 44 muggers were found in the five square kilometres reservoir, 21 were counted in the nearby waterbodies.
- Ghodahada reservoir is considered as one of the potential habitats for the muggers in Odisha after Satakosia and Similipal.

44 underprivileged children to get their 1st flight experience

- In a first, 44 Divyang children from **Odisha** will experience the joy of flying aboard in a special Alliance Air flight from **Biju Patnaik International Airport** in **Bhubaneswar** .
- The initiative is a result of joint collaboration of **Ministry of Civil Aviation, Airport Authority of India** and **Alliance Air with Government of Odisha**.
- The Airport Authority of India has waived all the cost of flying and Odisha Government has extended full support to this initiative.

East Coast Railway commissions waste to energy plant in Bhubaneswar

- **The East Coast Railway** commissioned Indian Railways' **first waste-to-energy plant at Carriage Repair Workshop** in **Bhubaneswar, Odisha**.
- Railway Board Member (Rolling Stock) **Rajesh Agarwal** inaugurated the facility, first in Government sector.
- The plant will use polycrack technology to process the scrap and convert waste into energy to produce light diesel oil in 24 hours.
- Waste in the polycrack plant is processed and converted into energy within 24 hours. The fully automated system does not emit any hazardous pollutants.
- The plant would require Rs 10.4 lakh per annum for its maintenance. However, having a capacity to process 500 kg waste per batch, the plant will also provide an annual income of Rs 17.5 lakh by selling the diesel oil.
- This is the first Government plant and fourth in the country. The first plant was a small one with a capacity of 50 kg a day set up by Infosys at Bangalore in 2011.

National Handloom Expo 2020 kicks off at Bhubaneswar

- The **17th National Handloom Expo 2020** has kicked off at Exhibition Ground to provide an opportunity to weavers to sell handloom products of different places under one umbrella.
- The expo, organised by the Odisha State Handloom Weavers Co-op Society Limited (Boyanika), was inaugurated by Chief Minister **Naveen Patnaik**.

Punjab

Navigation facilities for visually impaired inaugurated at Chandigarh railway station

- Navigation facilities for visually impaired were inaugurated at **Chandigarh railway station** in **Punjab**.
- This facility has been introduced by the Indian Railway Stations Development Corporation through NGO '**Anuprayaas**'.
- Chandigarh is **fifth Railway station** in the country and **first in North India** to have this facility.

Rajasthan

Jaipur Literature Festival

- **Jaipur Literature Festival** was held with about 500 speakers of different fields are participating in the festival, which is currently in its 13th year. The five-day event will see more than 200 sessions and will be attended by 500 speakers from 20 countries.
- The broad themes of the festival this time include **climate, constitution, poetry**, and **artificial intelligence** Police has made special arrangements of security and traffic around the venue of the festival and walled city.

Archaea organism discovered in Sambhar lake

- Scientists at the NCMR-NCCS in Pune have reported a new archaeon (a kind of microorganism), which they discovered in **Sambhar Salt Lake** in **Rajasthan**.
- **Archaea** are a primitive group of microorganisms that thrive in extreme habitats such as hot springs, cold deserts and hypersaline lakes.
- They are known for producing antimicrobial molecules, and for anti-oxidant activity with applications in eco-friendly waste-water treatment.
- The new archaeon has been named *Natrialba swarupiae*.

Tamil Nadu

Tamil Nadu government to strengthen single-window clearance system for easy biz

- Tamil Nadu state government has planned to significantly strengthen its single-window clearance system and make it more comprehensive.
- Tamil Nadu government is currently working on making the state's single window portal more comprehensive by adding more services for applicants.
- **Tamil Nadu** had first set up a single-window facilitation mechanism under the state's Guidance Bureau at the state government level in 2017.

TN names two state-run varsities after Jayalalithaa

- **Tamil Nadu** Assembly passed two Bills to name a **fisheries university** and a **music varsity** after late Chief Minister and AIADMK supremo **J Jayalalithaa**.
- The Tamil Nadu Fisheries University and The Tamil Nadu Music and Fine Arts University have been rechristened "**The Tamil Nadu Dr J Jayalalithaa Fisheries University**," and "**The Tamil Nadu Dr J Jayalalithaa Music and Fine Arts University**."
- She served as Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu for **six times**.

Fresh investment proposals worth Rs 6608 cr approved in Tamil Nadu

- In Tamil Nadu, fresh investment proposals worth **6608 crore rupees** have been approved. They have been cleared by the higher-level committee on industrial guidance and single window system, led by the state chief minister **Edappadi K Palaniswamy**.
- The panel met at **Fort St. George** in **Chennai** and considered several new investment proposals and those who were pending for clearance submitted through the single window system.
- Many of the industries are coming up in districts like **Tuticorin, Trichy, Perambalur, Krishnagiri** and **Vellore**, besides the traditional industrial hubs of Chennai's adjoining districts of Kanchipuram and Tiruvallur.

Week-long National Tribal Youth Exchange Programme to begin in Puducherry

- A week-long **National Tribal Youth Exchange Programme** will begin in **Puducherry**. The programme is being jointly organized by the Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS) and **Puducherry Government**.
- Tamil Nadu and Puducherry Director of NYKS **M. N. Nataraj** informed that 200 youths from Naxal-affected areas of Chhattisgarh State will be participating in the 12th National Tribal Youth Exchange Programme being arranged with a view to ensure development and empowerment of the tribal youths.

TN CM Edappadi Palaniswami lays foundation for DLF DownTown in Chennai

- Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami laid foundation for the construction of **DLF DownTown**, a joint venture of the **Tamil Nadu Industrial Development Corporation (TIDCO)** and DLF, for housing information technology (IT) firms under one roof.
- The IT complex with all modern facilities would come up on 27.04 acres of land in **Taramani**, at an investment of Rs **5,000 crore**. The project is expected to provide direct employment for 70,000 people.

Telangana

Telangana govt declares 2020 as AI year, signs 8 MoU

- **Telangana** state government declared **2020** as the year of **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** and signed eight Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with various companies and educational institutes to pave way for upcoming technological advancement in the state.
- US-based tech major **NVIDIA** will partner with the state government to setup a **High-Performance AI Computing (HPAIC) Centre in Telangana**.
- **IIT-Kharagpur** has also signed MoU to set up a centre of excellence in AI and research and Development Park.

Rohit Sharma lays foundation stone for international cricket stadium and training centre in Hyderabad

- Star opening batsman Rohit Sharma laid down the foundation stone for an international cricket stadium and training centre at Heartfulness Institute on the outskirts of **Hyderabad**.
- **The cricket stadium has been named after Rohit Sharma** and this facility will provide the youngsters at the institute to perfect their cricketing skills.

Telangana's Peddapalli district gets fourth consecutive national award for sanitation

- **Peddapalli district** received another distinction at the national level, as it bagged the '**Swacchatha Darpan Award 2020**' by the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation.
- It is the **fourth national award** in a row received under the Swacch Bharat Mission (SBM) that the district had received.
- The district became the country's **first open drain free district** and saw a 65 per cent reduction of dengue cases.
- The district received 100 percent score on a wide range of sanitation parameters.

Face recognition app to be used in Telangana Municipal polls on pilot basis

- Telangana State Election Commission will be using facial recognition app to counter impersonation by voters. This will be done on a pilot basis in 10 selected polling stations in **Kompally Municipality of Medchal Malkajgiri district**.
- Artificial Intelligence-based technology is based on liveness testing, big data mining and deep learning. The face recognition is digitally verifiable and quick as it will be possible to identify a person through a photograph, even if there are certain changes in the profile over a period of time of even 20 years.

Hyderabad Metro Rail, redBus tie up for carpool services in city

- **Hyderabad Metro Rail Limited** launched a car and bike pooling service in collaboration with **redBus**.
- This facility would be provided through **rPool**, an in-app ride-sharing service from redBus.
- **Car pooling** and **bike pooling** is an ideal solution to reduce congestion by sharing vehicles. It allows office-goers to avail and offer rides in their personal cars, bikes while commuting between home and their workplace. This concept would help the creation of sustainable and eco-friendly solutions for the burgeoning traffic problems in the city.

World's largest meditation centre coming up in Hyderabad

- The **world's largest meditation centre** and the global headquarters of the **Heartfulness Institute** was inaugurated on **January 28**.
- To mark the 75th anniversary of the organisation, **Kanha Shanti Vanam** will be dedicated to the first guide of Heartfulness, fondly called **Lalaji** by the present global guide Daaji.

Tripura

34,000 Bru refugees to be settled in Tripura

- Union Home Minister Amit Shah presided over the signing of a quadripartite pact of **MHA** with the State governments of **Tripura, Mizoram** and leaders of Bru community to permanently settle around 34,000 internally displaced people in Tripura.
- **Reangs** or **Brus** are the second largest ethnic group in Mizoram.
- The Centre has sanctioned around ₹600 crore as a settlement package.

Uttarakhand

Uttarakhand to get first Snow Leopard conservation center of India

- **Uttarakhand** is set to open the country's **first snow leopard conservation center**.
- The center will be built at the entry point of **Gangotri National Park** above **2800 meters** sea level. It will be built under central government scheme '**SECURE Himalaya**'.
- It is a six-year project which was launched in year 2017 to ensure conservation of locally and globally significant biodiversity, land and forest resources in high Himalayan ecosystem spread over four states- **Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Uttarakhand and Sikkim**.
- The animal is considered to be one of the most enigmatic wild cat species due to its reclusive nature which has earned it a title of '**Ghost of the Mountains**'.
- The center has been designed by experts from the **Netherlands** with a budget of **Rs 5.30 crore**.

Uttarakhand becomes first state to implement agricultural land leasing policy

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

Uttar Pradesh

UPSRTC launches 'Damini' helpline for women

- **The Uttar Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation (UPSRTC)** has launched a dedicated women helpline, '**Damini**', which is a calling and a WhatsApp service for the safety of women.
- The unique number "81142-77777" has been subscribed for the helpline, which is an extension of the 'Nirbhaya Yojana' that aims to ensure safety of women.
- The service will be functional from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. every day and will be exclusively handled by women officers at the UPSRTC headquarters and regional offices.

UP to build Rs 234-crore zoo named after Ashfaqullah Khan

- The UP Cabinet approved a proposal to set aside **Rs 234 crore** for construction of a **zoological garden** named after **Shaheed Ashfaqullah Khan** in **Gorakhpur**. The zoo will come up across over 121 acres.
- At present, there are two zoological gardens in Uttar Pradesh, one in Lucknow and another in Kanpur. Shaheed Ashfaqullah Khan Zoological Garden was proposed in 2008-2009.
- With this zoo, **Gorakhpur** will be developed as a tourist spot and would be recognised internationally with this project.

UP Govt launches Mukhyamantri Krishak Durghatna Kalyan Yojana

- Uttar Pradesh Government has launched **Mukhyamantri Krishak Durghatna Kalyan Yojana** which will provide financial assistance to family of farmers who die or become handicapped while working in fields.
- Government has also decided to implement **Mukhyamantri Paryatan Samvardhan Yojana** to boost tourism in state.
- The scheme will be given financial assistance of **five lakh rupees**.
- The scheme will cover farmers and their family members in the age group of **18-70 years** and will be implemented from 14th September last year.
- Under Mukhyamantri Paryatan Samvardhan Yojana one tourist point will be developed with a fund of **50 lakh rupees** in each and every assembly segment of the state.

India's First War Memorial for Animals to Come up in Meerut

- **Meerut city in Uttar Pradesh** will be host to **India's first war memorial** for **service animals** including **dogs, horses and mules**.
- This place will dedicate itself to the contributions and heroics of animals who have helped the army in counter-insurgency operations in Kashmir and in the battlefield during the Kargil War.
- The memorial is to be similar to the National War Memorial in Delhi, will come up at the army's specialized breeding, rearing and training centre for animals in the Remount and Veterinary Corps (RVC) Centre and College, Meerut.

West Bengal

West Bengal Govt to provide insurance coverage of Rs 5 lakh to Ganga Sagar pilgrims

- The West Bengal Government will provide insurance coverage of **five lakh rupees** each to the **Ganga Sagar pilgrims**.
- Thousands of pilgrims assemble at **Sagar Island** to take a holy dip at the confluence of the Hooghly River and the Bay of Bengal on the occasion of **Makar Sankranti** and offer Pooja at the **Kapil Muni temple**.

PM Modi to re-dedicate three restored colonial structures to Kolkata

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who is scheduled to visit Kolkata, will "re-dedicate three recently restored iconic buildings" to the people of Kolkata.
- **Currency Building, Melcalfe Hall and Belvedere House** are the heritage buildings that have been restored and made vibrant with the intervention of the **Ministry of Culture**.
- The ministry is also working on developing other iconic buildings and cultural spaces in Mumbai, Delhi, Ahmedabad and Varanasi.

Mamata Banerjee's Bengal becomes 4th state to pass anti-CAA resolution

- West Bengal became the **fourth opposition-ruled state** to pass a resolution against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) in its assembly, after **Kerala, Punjab and Rajasthan**.
- The West Bengal state assembly had previously passed a similar resolution against NRC in September 2019.
- **Kerala** was the first state to pass a resolution demanding the withdrawal of the CAA law. The state passed the anti-CAA resolution in a special assembly session on December 31, 2019.

India's first underwater metro in Kolkata to be finally ready by March 2022

- **Kolkata Metro Rail Corp.** expects to complete its East-West project, which runs partly under the city's iconic Hooghly river, by **March 2022**.
- The authority is awaiting a final installment of 200 million rupees (\$2.8 million) over the next two years from the Indian Railway Board.
- A soft loan of **41.6 billion rupees** from Japan International Cooperation Agency helps fund **48.5%** of the project.
- The new line is expected to carry about 900,000 people daily, — roughly 20% of the city's population — and will take less than a minute to cross a **520-meter underwater tunnel**. 74% of the East-West metro project is owned by India's Railway & remaining 26% by the nation's Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs.

Revision Points

State	Capital	Chief Minister	Governor
Andhra Pradesh	Amaravati	Y. S. Jaganmohan Reddy	BiswaBhusanHarichandan
Arunachal Pradesh	Itanagar	Pema Khandu	Brigadier BD Mishra
Assam	Dispur	SarabanandaSonowal	Jagdish Mukhi
Bihar	Patna	Nitish Kumar	Phagu Chauhan
Chhattisgarh	Raipur	Bhupesh Baghel	AnusuiyaUikey
Goa	Panaji	Pramod Sawant	S.P Malik

Gujarat	Gandhi Nagar	Vijaybhai R. Rupani	Acharya Devvrat
Haryana	Chandigarh	Manohar Lal Khattar	Satyadev Narayan Arya
Himachal Pradesh	Shimla	Jai Ram Thakur	BandaruDattatraya
Jharkhand	Ranchi	Hemant Soren	Draupadi Murmu
Karnataka	Bengaluru	B S Yediyurappa	VajubhaiRudabhaiVala
Kerala	Thiruvananthapuram	Pinarayi Vijayan	Arif Mohammed Khan
Madhya Pradesh	Bhopal	Kamal Nath	Lalji Tandon
Maharashtra	Mumbai	Uddhav Thackrey	Bhagat Singh Koshyari
Manipur	Imphal	N Biren Singh	Padmanabha Balkrishna Acharya (Add. Charge)
Meghalaya	Shillong	Conrad Sangma	RN Ravi (Additional Charge)
Mizoram	Aizawl	Pu Zoramthanga	P S Sreedharan Pillai
Nagaland	Kohima	Neiphiu Rio	RN Ravi
Odisha	Bhubaneshwar	Naveen Patnaik	Ganeshi Lal
Punjab	Chandigarh	Amarinder Singh	V P Singh Badnore
Rajasthan	Jaipur	Ashok Gehlot	Kalraj Mishra
Sikkim	Gangtok	Prem Singh Tamang(PS Golay)	Ganga Prasad
Tamil Nadu	Chennai	Edappadi K. Palaniswami	Banwarilal Purohit
Telangana	Hyderabad	K. Chandrasekhar Rao	TamilisaiSoundararajan
Tripura	Agartala	Biplab Kumar Deb	Ramesh Bais
Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow	Yogi Adityanath	Anandiben Patel
Uttarakhand	Dehradun	Trivendra Singh Rawat	Baby Rani Maurya
West Bengal	Kolkata	Mamata Banerjee	Jagdeep Dhankhar

Important National News

Cabinet Approvals

The following agreements are approved in the cabinet.

- The Cabinet gave its approval for an Agreement between **India and Mongolia on Cooperation in the Exploration and Uses of Outer Space for Peaceful and Civilian Purposes**.
- The Cabinet gave its approval for signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department for International Development Government of the United Kingdom for Enabling **Energy Self-Sufficiency** for Indian Railways.
- The Cabinet was apprised of the Agreement on cooperation in polar science between Ministry of Earth Sciences, Government of India and Ministry of Education and Research, Sweden.
- The Cabinet gave its approval for the ratification of Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement between **India and France**.
- The Cabinet also gave its ex-post-facto approval on the Memorandum of Cooperation between Department of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India and Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation on cooperation in the field of Health signed in November last year.
- The Cabinet was apprised of information about the amendments moved to **the Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill, 2019** as passed by the Rajya Sabha.

- Amendments will ensure concurrence of the State Governments while formulating National Transport Policy and making schemes for national, multimodal and inter-state transportation of goods and passengers by the Central Government.
- Union Cabinet approved the Revised Cost Estimates for establishment of permanent campuses of new National Institutes of Technology, NITs, at a total cost of **4371.90 crore rupees** for the period till 2021-2022.
- Cabinet has also granted approval to addition of Term of Reference to the existing ToR of the Commission which include studying various Entries in the Central List of OBCs and recommending correction of any repetitions, ambiguities, inconsistencies and errors of spelling or tranion.
- The Cabinet gave approval to **Election Commission of India** to enter into MoU with the Independent High Authority for **Elections of Tunisia** and **the Papua New Guinea** Electoral Commission for elections for cooperation in the field of electoral management and administration.
- The Cabinet also gave its nod for the four agreements between **India** and **Brazil** in the field of oil and natural gas, Geology and Mineral Resources, mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters and cooperation in the field of early childhood care.
- The CCEA approved shutting down the operations of the plant and unit of **Hindustan Fluorocarbons Limited, HFL** and closure of the company. HFL is a Central Public Sector Enterprise under Department of Chemicals and Petrochemicals. HFL has only one plant located at **Rudraram**, District Sangareddy in **Telangana**.

Centre asks banks to collect annual life certificates of its Pensioners from their doorsteps for continued pension

- Centre has decided that pensioners' life certificates will be collected from their doorstep, saving them from hassles of visiting pension disbursing banks.
- **Department of Pension and Pensioners' Welfare** has taken this landmark step to make life easier for senior citizens to submit their Annual Life Certificate for **continued pension**.
- An amount not exceeding **60 rupees** will be charged for the service. Pensioners are required to give proof of them being alive to banks every year in order to ensure continued pension.

Nine Judge Constitution Bench of SC to frame issues about discrimination against women in various religions

- The Supreme Court stated, a **9-judge Constitution bench** will on **February 3** frame issues for deliberation in the matter relating to discrimination against women in various religions and at religious places including Kerala's Sabarimala Temple.
- A 3-judge bench, headed by **Chief Justice S A Bobde** stated, the **9-judge bench** will go through the issues framed by some arguing lawyers and would try to crystalize the common legal questions to be adjudicated upon by it. It will also fix the hearing schedule.

Govt aims to achieve objective of Housing for All by 2022 under PMAY-G

- Union Government aims to achieve objective of Housing for All by **2022** under **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Grameen**.
- A total of over **one crore 50 lakh rural** houses have been completed in the last five years.
- Ministry of Finance stated, the eligible beneficiaries will get **one crore 95 lakh** houses in the second phase of the scheme. Government has set a target of **60 lakh houses** for the current financial year.

Govt invites bids to sell 100 % stake in Air India

- Government has invited bids to sell its **100 per cent stake in Air India**. Issuing the preliminary bid document for the strategic disinvestment, government set the March 17, as the deadline for submitting expression of interest.
- As part of the strategic disinvestment, Air India would also sell **100 per cent stake** in low-cost airline Air India Express and 50 per cent shareholding in joint venture AISATS.

NHRC organise meeting of Statutory Full Commission

- The **National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)** is organising a meeting of a **Statutory Full Commission** in **New Delhi**.
- NHRC Chairperson **Justice HL Dattu** will chair the meeting. The meeting has been called for the discharge of functions towards promotion and protection of human rights as specified in the statutory clauses (b) to (j) of Section 12 of the Protection of Human Rights (PHR) Act.
- The Chairpersons for National Commissions for **Minorities, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Women** were already the deemed Members of the Commission.

Govt gives nod to amendments in National Commission for Homoeopathy Bill, 2019

- The Union Cabinet has approved the amendments in the **National Commission for Homoeopathy Bill, 2019** for amending the **Homoeopathy Central Council Act, 1973**. Presently, the Bill is pending in Rajya Sabha.
- The amendments will ensure necessary regulatory reforms in the field of Homoeopathy education. This will also enable transparency and accountability for protecting the interest of the general public.

Govt has released seven billion dollars to all states to tackle climate change: Javadekar

- Environment Minister **Prakash Javadekar** has stated that government has released **seven billion dollars** to all the states for intensive afforestation activities to tackle Climate Change.
- Addressing the **World Sustainable Development Summit 2020** in **New Delhi** in the last four years **India** is the only country in the world which have grown its tree cover by **13 thousand square kilometre**.
- The technology with innovation will be instrumental to tackle **climate change**. He also advocated for more joint research and joint collaboration in this regard.

Amit Shah to chair Central Zonal Council meeting in Chhattisgarh

- Home Minister Amit Shah will chair the 22nd meeting of the Central Zonal Council at **Raipur**, in **Chhattisgarh**.
- Central Zonal Council comprises of four states- **Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand** and **Chhattisgarh**.
- Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh is the Vice Chairman of the meeting. The Zonal Council is an effective platform for the resolution of inter-state disputes as well as irritants between Centre and member-States. Union Home Minister is the Chairman of each of these **five councils**.

PM Modi to attend NCC rally in New Delhi

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will attend the National Cadet Corps, NCC rally at the **Cariappa Parade ground in New Delhi**. At the event, Prime Minister will inspect the Guard of Honour and review the March Past by the various NCC contingents.
- Along with a cultural performance, NCC cadets will present before the Prime Minister their capabilities in fields such as adventure sports, music and performance arts.

Indian Railways to run 100% on electricity by 2024: Piyush Goyal

- Railways Minister Piyush Goyal on stated that the Indian Railways is expected to switch **entirely to electricity by 2024**, as it is already shunting diesel locomotives gradually out of service.
- India is also planning to make the entire railways network a "**net-zero emission network**" by 2030.

'Bharat Parv 2020' begins at Red Fort to celebrate spirit of India

- **Bharat Parv 2020**, a festival to celebrate the spirit of India has begun at **Red Fort ground** in **New Delhi**.
- The objective of Bharat Parv is to encourage people to visit different tourism places of the country and to inculcate the spirit of '**Dekho Apna Desh**'.
- The theme of 2020 Bharat Parv is '**Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat**' and '**Celebrating 150 Years of Mahatma Gandhi**'.

Corona Virus: Government launches 24X7 call centre

- Seven central teams will visit states and designated airports to review the end-to-end preparedness for management and control of Novel Coronavirus in India. These airports are **New Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai, Chennai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Kochi**.

- The team will consist of a public health expert, a clinician and a microbiologist. The decision was taken by the Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan at a review meeting held in **New Delhi**.
- A **24x7 National Centre for Disease Control Call Centre - 011 -23978046** has been made operational. The Call Centre will monitor the list of contacts furnished by the Ministry of External Affairs.

Union govt working on Delhi-Mumbai electric highway, says Nitin Gadkari

- Union Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari has stated that his ministry is working towards an **electric highway**.
- The highway from **Delhi to Mumbai** is under work and the target is to complete this highway before **January 26, 2024**.
- The minister stated that his ministry is now thinking to make e-highway and discussing with companies who have got the technology in Germany, the US, and Sweden.

Nation pays homage to Subhas Chandra Bose on his 123rd birth anniversary

- Nation pays homage to **Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose** on his **123rd birth anniversary** on 23rd january.
- In West Bengal, Governor Jaghdeep Dhankhar will pay floral tribute at the statue of Netaji in **Kolkata**. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee will pay homage at a function in Darjeeling.
- State Government is organizing **Subhash Utsav** in each Blocks of the state. People from all works of life are visiting the house of Netaji in South Kolkata since early morning to pay their homage to the great hero of the freedom movement
- Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu paid tributes to **Netaji** on his birth anniversary.

SAIL launches scheme for employee-led philanthropic activities

- Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas & Steel Dharmendra Pradhan launched a scheme by SAIL for Voluntary Philanthropist Activities (VPA) by its employees.
- The scheme called “SAIL Employee Rendering Voluntarism and Initiatives for Community Engagement (SERVICE)” will promote and facilitate philanthropist activities by the employees in a structured manner.
- The dedicated interactive “**SAIL SERVICE**” portal for implementation of this scheme shall act as a platform for enabling faster interaction and communication amongst the various stakeholders.

28 UIDAI-run Aadhaar Seva Kendras operational across the country

- The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) has opened 28 Aadhaar Seva Kendras (ASK) as part of its plan to open 114 stand-alone Aadhaar Enrolments & Update Centres across the country. These are in addition to about 38,000 Aadhaar enrolment centers run by Banks, Post Offices and State Governments.
- These ASKs which are open on all days of the week, have so far catered to over 3 Lakh residents of which a sizeable number are Divyang persons.
- These centres have a capacity to handle up to 1,000 enrolments and update requests per day and are operational from 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. They are closed only on public holidays.
- UIDAI plans to set up 114 Aadhaar Seva Kendras in 53 cities across the country.

PM to distribute Krishi Karman Awards and 3rd installment of Rs 2000 to 6 crore beneficiaries under PM KISAN

- The Prime Minister Narendra Modi will distribute Krishi Karman Awards and Commendation Awards to states.
- The event witnessed the release of the 3rd installment of PM Kisan (Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi) of Rs 2000 for the period December 2019-March 2020. This will benefit approximately 6 crore beneficiaries.
- He will also distribute Kisan Credit Cards (KCC) to select farmers of Karnataka.

Government launches web portal to block stolen, lost mobile phones

- The government has launched a web portal, ‘Central Equipment Identity Register (CEIR)’, to facilitate blocking and tracing of stolen, lost mobile phones in Delhi.
- The CEIR has been undertaken by the Department of Telecom (DoT) for addressing security, theft and other concerns including reprogramming of mobile handsets.

- The launch of the project in Delhi will facilitate – request for blocking of stolen or lost mobile phone by customers; blocking of such mobile phones across mobile networks; sharing of traceability data with the Police; and unblocking of recovered and found stolen or lost mobile phones.

EC launches Political Parties Registration Tracking Management System

- The Election Commission has launched a Political Parties Registration Tracking Management System to enable applicants to track the status of the applications.
- Under it, applicants, applying for the party registration from 1st of this month will be able to track the progress of applications and will get the status through SMS and e-mail.

National Green Corps scheme revived in J&K

- The National Green Corps scheme, which was closed for over a decade, has been revived for Jammu and Kashmir.
- Due to the persistent efforts of J&K Pollution Control Board, PCB, the Environment Education, Awareness and Training scheme of Union Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change for National Green Corps (Eco-Clubs) has been revived.
- J&K PCB put efforts for the revival of the scheme in the State Nodal Agency (SNA) meet organized by MoEFCC at Kevadia in Gujarat.
- Accordingly, the Environment and Forests Ministry has approved the release of Grant-in-Aid of 2.60 crore rupees to J&K PCB.

Indian Railways launches integrated helpline number 139 for passengers

- The Indian Railways has integrated its helpline numbers into a **single number -- 139** for quick grievance redressal and enquiries by passengers during their train journeys.
- The new helpline number **139** will take over all the existing helpline numbers. It will be easy for passengers to remember this number and connect with Railways for all their needs during train travel. The Helpline 139 will be available in **twelve languages**.

Home Minister Amit Shah inaugurates new campus of NFSC in Nagpur

- Union Home Minister Amit Shah dedicated the new campus of **National Fire Service College (NFSC)** under Ministry of Home affairs in **Nagpur**.
- Mr Shah stated, NFSC campus spread **across 42 acres** is fully equipped with the international standards. He informed that four-year Bachelor level course in Fire Engineering approved by the All India Council for Technical Education along with the short and long-term courses in Emergency Management, Medical Life Support Management and Disaster Management will be taught in this college.
- Union Home Minister Amit Shah dedicated the new campus of **National Fire Service College (NFSC)** under Ministry of Home affairs in **Nagpur**.
- Mr Shah stated, NFSC campus spread **across 42 acres** is fully equipped with the international standards.

Govt approves release of Grant-in-Aid of Rs 2.6 cr to J&K Pollution Control Board

- Environment and Forests Ministry has approved the release of Grant-in-Aid of **2.6 crore rupees** to **J&K Pollution Control Board**.
- The environment education, awareness and Training scheme of Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Govt. of India for National Green Corps (Eco-Clubs) which was closed for over a decade has been revived for J&K.

3-day capacity building programme for J-K officers begins in Jammu

- A three-day **capacity building programme** on general fund rules , e-procurement and government e-market place (GeM) for officers of Jammu and Kashmir was inaugurated by **Union Minister Jitendra Singh** .
- The programme is organized by DARPG, National Centre for Good Governance and National Institute of Financial Management in collaboration with the Department of Finance, J&K Government and J&K Institute of Management, Public Administration & Rural Development.
- They launched the **Monitoring Dashboard of Grievance Portal of Government of Jammu and Kashmir**.
- The Union Minister announced that a **national level Bamboo Workshop cum Exhibition** will be organised in **Jammu** next week.

- **Pension Adalat** would be held in Jammu, the first time away from the national capital.

Tiger deaths hit the 100-mark again, but number down from previous year

- For the third straight year, the number of tiger deaths in India have touched the 100-figure mark.
- According to data from the Ministry of Forest Environment and Climate Change (MoEFCC), there were 84 cases of tiger deaths in the country and 11 cases of seizures (in which a tiger is presumed dead on the basis of body parts seized by authorities).
- According to the **National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)**, the country's nodal body working on welfare and protection of tigers, at least 100 tiger deaths, including seizures, were recorded in 2018.
- In 2018, the number of tiger deaths recorded was 100 (93 mortalities and seven seizures). Madhya Pradesh topped the list with 27 tiger deaths and was followed by Maharashtra with 20 and Karnataka with 14 deaths.

Yoga Science meet organised at Indian Science Congress in Bengaluru

- A Yoga Science meet was organised as part of the ongoing **Indian Science Congress** in **Bengaluru**.
- The penultimate day of 107th Indian Science Congress in Bengaluru will focus on **farming and rural development**.
- Indian Council of Agricultural Research and University of Agricultural Sciences have identified 120 innovative farmers from across the country to participate in Farmers Science Congress.

Rajnath Singh inaugurates 3-day National Traders Convention in Delhi

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh stated government is committed to protect the interests of traders and to promote **ease of doing business**.
- while inaugurating the three-day **National Traders Convention at Ramlila Maidan in New Delhi**. The convention has been organised by Confederation of All India Traders and will deliberate upon various issues concerning traders.

Foreign tourist arrivals in India rose 3% in Jan-Nov 2019

- India is gaining popularity among overseas travellers as foreign tourist arrivals grew by 3.23 per cent to 96,69,633 during January-November 2019. As many as 93,66,478 overseas travellers had arrived in January-November 2018.
- India's rank in Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index of the World Economic Forum has moved to 34th rank in 2019 from 65th in 2013.

Union Home Minister Shri Amit Shah lays foundation stone of the Delhi Cycle Walk

- Union Minister for Home Affairs, Shri Amit Shah laid foundation stone of The **Delhi Cycle Walk** at **Tughlakabad, New Delhi**.
- It would reduce **air pollution** of New Delhi by at least 20% and added that green commuting will now be possible in New Delhi.
- This move will usher in an era where green transportation like cycles will become fashionable and would be widely used.
- 200 km CycleWalk will also give an impetus to Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's vision of 'Fit India'.

Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh launches website on grant of permission for aerial photography and remote sensing survey

- Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh launched Ministry of Defence (MoD) No Objection Certificate (NOC) web portal **www.modnoc.ncog.gov.in** for undertaking aerial survey with the final permission of Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA).
- The portal will be used by various vendors engaged by State Governments, Public Sector Undertakings and Autonomous bodies in seeking NOC from MoD.
- To facilitate the applicants of vendors, an e-book has also been uploaded on the above web portal AI & machine learning will contribute **Usd 1 trillion** to Indian economy by **2035**.

Centre releases Rs 5,908 cr to seven states as disaster relief

- The Centre has released **5,908 crore** rupees of Central assistance to **seven states** which were affected by floods, landslides, cloudburst during the previous year.
- The financial assistance has been given to **Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tripura and Uttar Pradesh** from the National Disaster Response Fund, NDRF.

- Out of **5,908** crore rupees, over 617 crore has been allocated to Assam, 285 crore rupees to Himachal Pradesh, 1,870 crore rupees to Karnataka, 1,750 crore rupees to Madhya Pradesh, 957 crore rupees to Maharashtra, 63 crore rupees to Tripura and 367 crore rupees to Uttar Pradesh.
- The Central Government has so far released **8,068 crore rupees** to **27 states** as Central share from **State Disaster Response Fund**.

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

- President Ram Nath Kovind laid foundation stone to **Lakshadweep's first Super Specialty Hospital at Kavaratti**.
- President assured special focus for the development of Lakshadweep and directed Lakshadweep Administrator to give special attention for the completion of Super Specialty Hospital.
- At the event in Kavaratti, President congratulated **Rahmath Begum**, the only woman who won Padmashri from Lakshadweep.

Special drive launched to remove speed breakers from National Highways

- A special drive has been initiated for removal of all sorts of speed breakers on National Highways. Road Transport and Highways Ministry stated, The step comes in a bid to ensure smooth and hassle-free traffic movement, especially at toll plazas.
- With the effective implementation of **FASTag** on toll plazas, the speed breakers and rumble strips constructed at toll plazas are being removed with immediate effect for smooth vehicular movement.
- Electronic Toll Collection through FASTag has been implemented from 15th December last year to provide commotion-free movement on highways.

Sahitya Akademi, Iran Embassy organize Indo-Iranian Writers' Meet in New Delhi

- In continuation of the cultural exchange programme between **India and Iran**, **Sahitya Akademi** in collaboration with **Embassy of Iran** organized an **Indo-Iranian Writers' Meet** in New Delhi.
- The objective of the meet is to further deepen cultural ties between the two nations and heighten literary awareness among the readers at both sides.
- The events also witnessed a panel discussion on **Indo-Iranian Cultural Bonds**.

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

- The Cabinet approved conferring the status of Institution of National Importance to a cluster of **Ayurvedic institutions at Gujarat Ayurved University campus in Jamnagar**.
- Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar stated, the elevation of the status of institution will provide it with the autonomy to upgrade the standard of Ayurveda education, frame various courses in Ayurveda as per national and international demand.

Govt approves over Rs 5000 cr project for natural gas supplies in Northeast

- The Government has approved the **Viability Gap Funding**, VGF of **5 thousand, 559 crore rupees** to Indra dhanush Gas Grid Limited to build Natural Gas Pipeline Grid covering 8 North Eastern states.
- This is second such funding by the government for gas pipeline project. The total cost of the grid is 9 thousand 256 crore rupees and sanctioned VGF amount will cover 60 per cent cost of the project.
- The **1,656-km** pipeline will connect **Guwahati** in **Assam** to major cities in the region such as **Itanagar, Dimapur, Kohima, Imphal, Aizawl and Agartala**.

Centre notifies new Wetland Conservation Rules

- Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has notified the **new Wetland Conservation Rules** which prohibit setting up or expansion of industries and disposal of construction and demolition waste within the wetlands.
- A wetland is a land area that is saturated with water, either permanently or seasonally, and it takes on the characteristics of a distinct ecosystem.
- The Ministry has stated that each state and Union Territory will have to set up an authority that will define strategies for conservation and wise use of wetlands within their jurisdiction.
- The Authority will prepare a list of all wetlands of the State or UT within **three months** from the date of publication of these rules.

IP based Video Surveillance System being installed by Indian Railways at railway stations to enhance security

- Railway Board has approved works for provision of **Video Surveillance System** covering **983 stations** under **Nirbhaya funds**.
- **RailTel** has been entrusted with the work of providing IP based VSS with video analytics and **facial recognition system**.
- Railway Board has approved works for provision of Video Surveillance System covering 983 stations over Indian Railways under Nirbhaya funds. This year a budget of **Rs. 250 crore** was allotted to Indian Railways from **Nirbhaya fund** for installation of video surveillance system.
- RailTel, a Miniratna PSU under Ministry of Railways, has been entrusted with the work of providing IP based VSS with video analytics and facial recognition system.

Census India-2021 to begin on 1st April; To be conducted through mobile app

- **Census India-2021** will begin on **1st of April** this year and will end on **30th of September**. Census India-2021 will be conducted through a mobile phone application, moving away from the traditional pen and paper.
- Enumerators of the census will seek the information of mobile number of the head of the family, information related to toilets, TV, Internet, vehicles owned, source of drinking water besides asking other questions during the house listing phase of the exercise.

Indian Railways to source about 1000 MW Solar Power by 2021-22

- All **08 stations** in the section provided with solar panels at one stretch; capable of meeting all the power needs of these railway stations.
- Indian Railways has planned to source about **1000 Mega Watt (MW) Solar Power** and about **200 MW of wind power** progressively by **2021-22** across Zonal Railways & Production Units.
- **South Central Railway** is one of the zones actively implementing several measures aimed at energy conservation by harnessing renewable energy.
- **The Nandyal – Yerraguntla section** in **Guntakal Division** has been declared as the first solar section in South Central Railway.
- All the 08 stations in the section – **Madduru, Banaganapalle, Koilakuntla, Sanjamala, Nossam, S.Uppalapadu, Jammalamadugu and Proddutur** – have been provided with solar panels capable of meeting all the power needs at these railway stations.

DPIIT launches paperless licensing process for petroleum road tankers

- The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade has launched paperless licensing process for road tankers for transportation of petroleum.
- It will provide simpler mechanism, ease of living and business to the petroleum road tanker owners.
- The process will include filing the applications online. It is an initiative to benefit more than one lakh petroleum road tanker owners.

Four Indian airports receive international recognition for reducing carbon emissions

- The Airports Authority of India (AAI) announced that four airports in the country have managed a transition from **level 1 to level 2** with a reduction in the carbon emissions by grading their systems as per the Airports Council International (ACI).
- The airports had adopted the grading system in 2018 and successfully implemented the carbon emission plan.
- Four AAI airports - **Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport, Kolkata; Biju Patnaik International Airport, Bhubaneswar; Lal Bahadur Shastri International Airport, Varanasi and Trivandrum International Airport** have met all the necessary requirements to upgrade to level 2: 'reduction', by constituting Carbon Management Plan and reducing the carbon emissions at airports as per the Airport Carbon Accreditation (ACA) Program.
- The grading system of ACI has four categories - mapping, reduction, optimization and neutrality.

Citizens can soon file grievances on CPGRAMS portal in Indian languages

- **Minister of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions Dr Jitendra Singh** has stated that efforts are on to help citizens lodge their grievances on the **Centralized Public Grievance Redress And Monitoring System (CPGRAMS)** portal in Indian languages.
- Many States have already replicated the CPGRAMS model and some States have provisions to lodge grievances in respective regional languages.
- The Minister stated a big leap has been taken in the newly carved out Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir with the launch of the “**Awaaz-e-aam**”- UT Grievance Redressal Cell and it will soon be linked with the CPGRAMS portal.

Home Minister Amit Shah dedicates National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal to nation

- Union Home Minister Amit Shah inaugurated the **Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C)** and also dedicated National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal to the nation . This state-of-the-art Centre is located in **New Delhi**.
- The scheme to set up I4C was approved in October 2018 at an estimated cost of around 416 crore rupees to deal with all types of cyber-crimes in a comprehensive and coordinated manner.
- On the other hand, National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal (**www.cybercrime.gov.in**) is a citizen-centric initiative that will enable citizens to report cyber-crimes online through the portal.
- All the cyber-crime related complaints will be accessed by the concerned law enforcement agencies in the States and Union Territories for taking action as per law.
- This portal was launched on pilot basis on **30th August, 2019**. It enables filing of all cyber-crimes with specific focus on crimes against women, children, particularly child pornography, child sex abuse material, online content pertaining to rapes.

Mangaluru Junction railway facility gets IMS certification

- **The Carriage and Wagon Depot at Mangaluru Junction railway station**, which is capable of examining freight train formations for rail worthiness, has obtained **Integrated Management System (IMS)** certification.
- Functions associated with the examination of freight trains and maintenance activities performed at the depot, platform yard, and sick line; and the stores and material management functions at the depot are certified under the IMS.
- The IMS certification covers ISO 9001-2015 for quality management, ISO 14001-2015 for environment management, and ISO 45001-2018 for occupational health and safety, and is valid up to **December 2022**.

PM Modi launches projects worth 600 crore rupees on 150th year celebrations of Kolkata Port Trust

- The Kolkata Port has been renamed as **Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Port**. The Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi announced this in Kolkata on the occasion of 150th years celebrations of the Kolkata Port Trust. Mr. Modi launched several Port led development projects worth **Rs 600 cr rupees** to mark the day.
- The projects include upgraded Ship repair facility at **Netaji Subhash Dry Dock**, upgraded railway infrastructure of Kolkata dock system of the Kolkata Port for smooth cargo movement and river front development scheme.

National Youth Festival 2020 begins at Lucknow in Uttar Pradesh

- On the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda, **23rd National Youth Festival 2020** started with a grand inauguration ceremony in **Lucknow** .
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi appealed youth of country to try only to purchase local products By 2020 which will help the countrymen.

Dharmendra Pradhan unveils Mission Purvodaya to develop eastern region into a integrated steel hub

- Union Steel Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has stated, the eastern belt has the potential to add over **75 percent** of the country's incremental steel capacity envisioned by the **National Steel Policy**.
- It is expected that out of the **300 Million Tonne** capacity by **2030-31**, over 200 Million Tonne can come from this region alone. while launching **Mission Purvodaya** in **Kolkata** .
- The programme is aimed at accelerated development of eastern India through establishment of integrated steel hub.

Raisina Dialogue to begin in New Delhi

- India's flagship global conference on **geopolitics and geo-economics Raisina Dialogue** will begin with Prime Minister Narendra Modi attending the inaugural session.
- The **fifth edition** of the prestigious Raisina Dialogue, jointly organised by **the Ministry of External Affairs** and the Observer Research Foundation, will bring together 700 international participants from over a 100 countries.

Smriti Irani launches Yashaswini Scheme for Women entrepreneurship in Goa

- Union Minister for Women and Child Development and Textiles, Smriti Irani launched **Yashaswini Scheme** for Women entrepreneurship in **Goa**.
- The event was held at **Dr Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Stadium at Taleigao near Panaji**.
- Under Yashaswini scheme, women self-help groups will be given interest free loans of upto **Rs Five lakh for business**.
- Adarsha Satari Mahila Mandal Guleli -Sattari, Umang Self-Help Group, Salcete, Phoenix Womens Wing Self-Help Group Valpoi -Sattari were given loans under newly launched Yashaswini scheme.

Centre to set up panel to examine issues on royalty rates for major minerals

- The Centre has decided to set up an **11-member panel** including mines secretaries from various states, to examine issues pertaining to the revision of rates of royalty for minerals.
- The members of the panel include mines secretaries from the states like **Telangana, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh** and **Odisha**.
- The Mines Ministry has decided to set up an official committee, for examining the issues raised by the stakeholders with regard to revision of rates of royalty and dead rent for minerals (other than coal, lignite, sand for stowing and minor minerals) .

CARA celebrates 5th Annual Day

- Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) has celebrated its 5th Annual Day in New Delhi.
- Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) is a statutory body of Ministry of Women & Child Development, Government of India.
- It functions as the nodal body for adoption of Indian children and is mandated to monitor and regulate in-country and inter-country adoptions.

PM Modi welcomes agreement to permanently settle Bru-Reang refugees in Tripura

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has welcomed the agreement to permanently settle the Bru-Reang refugees in Tripura saying it will greatly help them, the **Bru-Reang** refugees will benefit from numerous welfare schemes of the government.
- The Centre has sanctioned **600-crore rupee** package for the rehabilitation of the people from this community Bru refugees will get a 40 x 30 feet plot along with a fixed deposit of four lakh rupees, cash assistance of five thousand rupees per month for two years and free ration.

Mega campaign on fuel conservation 'Saksham' inaugurated in New Delhi

- Secretary, Petroleum and Natural Gas **MM Kuttu** has called for putting earnest efforts for petroleum conservation to bring down the huge import burden for energy requirements. Mr Kuttu inaugurated fuel conservation mega campaign - **Saksham** of Petroleum Conservation Research Association, PCRA in New delhi.
- The one-month long annual event Saksham aims at creating mass awareness among public about conventional fuel conservation. On the occasion, the Secretary also flagged-off the publicity vans of PCRA which will visit states spreading the message of fuel conservation.

President Kovind launches Pulse Polio Programme for 2020

- **President Ram Nath Kovind** launched the **Pulse Polio Programme** by administering Polio drops to children below five years at Rashtrapati Bhavan.
- Mr Kovind launched the programme on the eve of the National Immunization Day which will be observed.
- Under this programme, over 17 crore children of less than five years of age across the country will be administered polio drops.

3rd edition of North Zone Conference' of Media Units of I&B Ministry held in Jammu

- The **third edition of North Zone Conference' of Media Units** of Information and Broadcasting Ministry, is being held in **Jammu**.
- Joint Secretary Vikram Sahay asked the IIS officers to work in coordination and effectively promote programmes and policies of the Union Government.
- The Conference is being organised by Regional Outreach Bureau, Jammu and Kashmir region.

DV Sadananda Gowda launches APNA UREA – SonaUgle” brand of HURL

- Chemicals and Fertilizers Minister D.V. Sadananda Gowda launched the **APNA UREA - Sona Ugle** brand of Hindustan Urvarak and Rasayan Limited (HURL) at a function in **New Delhi**.
- HURL is Joint Venture Company promoted by the three Maha Ratna Companies - **Coal India Limited, NTPC Limited and Indian Oil Corporation Limited**.
- Mr Gowda stated, with the objective of making the country self-reliant in Urea, Prime Minister had directed for the revival of five major sick or shutdown fertilizer plants.
- Government had approved the revival of three sick Urea plants located at Gorakhpur, Sindri and Barauni, which have been undertaken by HURL.

Conference on Census 2021 held in New Delhi

- A Conference of the Chief Secretaries and Administrator State and Union Territories on **Census 2021** and updating of National Population Register, NPR was held in **New Delhi**.
- Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai laid emphasis on the need of conducting Census 2021 and the role of the States in doing the same.
- The data collected in the Census helps us in framing policies for the welfare of the people of the country. Mr Rai also inaugurated the Official Mascot for Census 2021.
- **Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India Dr Vivek Joshi** made a brief presentation on the Strategy for Census 2021.

PM Modi, Nepali PM KP Sharma Oli to inaugurate ICP Biratnagar

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Nepali counterpart K P Sharma Oli jointly inaugurated Integrated Check Post (**ICP) Biratnagar** .
- ICP Biratnagar has been built on 260 acres of land at a cost of around **140 crore rupees**.
- ICP Biratnagar is equipped with all modern facilities like warehousing facilities including refrigerated cargo, electronic weighing bridges, 100% power backup, fire safety, dedicated communication network and 24x7 monitoring through CCTV and public announcement systems. It is designed to handle around 500 trucks per day.

Centre for tougher law against sexual harassment at work

- Group of Ministers finalises recommendations, which will be put up for public comments.
- The Group of Ministers (GoM) headed by Home Minister **Amit Shah**, which was constituted to strengthen the legal framework to prevent sexual harassment at the workplace, has finalised its recommendations.
- The recommendations, which include addition of new provisions to the Indian Penal Code, will be put up for comments from the public.
- The GoM was reconstituted in July 2019 under Mr. Shah. The other members of the GoM are Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Human Resource and Development Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal and Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Irani.

PM Modi to chair 32nd interaction through PRAGATI platform

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will chair the 32nd interaction through **PRAGATI**- the ICT-based, multi-modal platform for Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation in **New Delhi** .
- In the last PRAGATI meeting, nine projects worth over 61 thousand crore rupees related to 16 states and the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir were taken up for discussion.
- Prime Minister had launched the multi-purpose and multi-modal governance platform PRAGATI on **25th March 2015**. PRAGATI is an integrating and interactive platform aimed at addressing the common man's grievances.

- PRAGATI also helps in simultaneously monitoring and reviewing important programmes and projects of the Centre as well as projects flagged by various State governments.

Procurement of defence equipment worth over Rs 5,000 cr approved to promote indigenization

- **Defence Acquisition Council, DAC** has approved procurement of equipment worth over **five thousand 100 crore** rupees from indigenous sources to promote **indigenization**.
- They include sophisticated Electronic Warfare Systems for the Army designed by Defence Research and Development Organization, **DRDO** and manufactured locally by the Indian industry.
- These systems will be used in deserts and plains and will provide comprehensive Electronic Support and Counter Measure capabilities to the field formations in both communication and other aspects of Electronic Warfare.

Govt sets up National Startup Advisory Council

- The government stated that it has set up a **National Startup Advisory Council** to advise the Centre on measures needed to build a strong ecosystem for nurturing innovation and start-ups in the country.
- The Council will suggest measures to foster a culture of innovation among students and others.
- It will also suggest measures to facilitate public organisations to assimilate innovation, promote creation, protection and commercialisation of intellectual property rights, make it easier to start, operate, grow and exit businesses by reducing regulatory compliances and costs.

Niti Aayog to develop National Data Platform

- **Niti Aayog** will develop a national data and analytics platform to make all government data accessible to stakeholders in a user-friendly manner.
- The platform will be powered by a user friendly search engine, backed by seamless navigation, with a worldclass user interface. Data will be provided in a machine-readable format with customisable analytics.

Jitendra Singh launches Bhuvan Panchayat V3 web Portal

- Union Minister of State for PMO Dr Jitendra Singh launched the **Bhuvan Panchayat V3 web Portal** that will enhance network **application of gram panchayats**. The Portal will function with the help of satellite technology developed by **ISRO**.
- The workshop on space-based information support for decentralized planning s will connect **gram panchayats** and help the flow of information.
- Space technology is an essential tool to realize Prime Minister Narendra Modi's dream of new India.

India, France discuss on ways & means on co-production of films: Javadekar

- Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar held an extensive meeting with a French delegation led by the Culture Minister of France Franck Riester.
- India and France discussed on ways and means on co-production of films and also collaborate in audio visual exchanges.
- He further stated that these schemes can assist entrepreneurs to establish market linkage across the country and also for exports to **ASEAN countries**.

V Prez, PM pay tribute to Lala Lajpat Rai on his birth anniversary

- Vice President and Prime Minister paid tribute to Punjab Kesari **Lala Lajpat Rai** on his birth anniversary. Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu said, Lala Lajpat Rai was a fierce nationalist and his remarkable and heroic role during the **Vandemataram movement** and **Simon go-back agitation** and his patriotism will continue to inspire every Indian.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi stated, his saga of sacrificing life for the independence of the nation will always inspire the countrymen.

SC allows introduction of African cheetah in India

- The Supreme Court allowed the Centre to introduce the **African cheetah** to a suitable habitat in India.

- The rare Indian cheetah is almost extinct in the country, the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) had filed an application seeking permission for the introduction of the **African cheetah from Namibia**.
- The apex court set up a three-member committee, comprising former **director Wildlife of India Ranjit Singh**, DG of Wildlife of India **Dhananjay Mohan**, and DIG, Wildlife, Ministry of Environment and Forests to guide the NTCA in taking a decision on the issue.
- The apex court will monitor the project and the committee will submit its report every **four months**.

2280 crore rupees projects financed under JKIDFC in this financial year in J&K

- In a major push to development in Jammu and Kashmir, around **1,256 projects** worth **2280 crore rupees** financed under **J&K Infrastructure Development Finance Corporation**, are being completed by end of March.
- All government departments have been asked to handover the completed infrastructure development projects under **JKIDFC**, before the commencement of the third week of March for their formal inauguration.

Revision Points

Portfolio	Union Minister	Constituency
Ministry of personnel, public grievances and pensions	Narendra Modi	Varanasi
Ministry of Defence	Rajnath Singh	Lucknow
Ministry of Home Affairs	Amit Shah	Gandhinagar
Ministry of Road Transport and Highways & Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium enterprises	Nitin Gadkari	Nagpur
Ministry of Chemical and Fertilizers	DV Sadananda Gowda	Bangalore North
Ministry of Finance & Ministry of Corporate Affairs	Nirmala Sitharaman	Rajya Sabha
Ministry of Consumer affairs, food and public distribution	Ram Vilas Paswan	NA
Ministry of agriculture and farmers welfare, Ministry of Rural Development & Ministry of Panchayati Raj	Narendra Singh Tomar	Morena
Ministry of Law and Justice, Ministry of communications & Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology	Ravi Shankar Prasad	Patna Sahib
Ministry of Food Processing Industries	Harsimrat Kaur Badal	Bathinda
Ministry of Social justice and empowerment	Thaawar Chand Gehlot	RS
Ministry of External Affairs	Dr Subrahmanyam Jaishankar	RS (Gujarat)
Ministry of Human Resource Development	Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank'	Haridwar
Ministry of Tribal Affairs	Arjun Munda	Khunti
Ministry of Women and child	Smriti Zubin Irani	Amethi

Development & Ministry of Textiles		
Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Ministry of Science and Technology & Ministry of Earth Sciences	Dr Harsh Vardhan	Chandni Chowk
Ministry of environment, forest and climate change & Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Ministry of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprise	Prakash Javadekar	Rajya Sabha
Ministry of Railways & Ministry of Commerce and Industry	Piyush Goyal	Rajya Sabha
Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas & Ministry of Steel	Dharmendra Pradhan	Rajya Sabha
Ministry of Minority Affairs	Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi	Rajya Sabha
Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs, Ministry of coal & Ministry of Mines	Pralhad Joshi	Dharwad
Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship	Dr Mahendra Nath Pandey	Chandauli
Ministry of Animal Husbandry, dairying and fisheries	Giriraj Singh	Begusarai

Important International News

Pacific Island nation Palau bans 'reef-toxic' sunscreen

- Palau's pioneering ban on "reef-toxic" sunscreens takes effect on **1st jan 2020**. The tiny Pacific island nation introduced strict environmental measures.
- Palau is renowned for its marine life and is regarded as one **of the world's best diving destinations**. But, the government is concerned this poses an environmental cost.
- President Tommy Remengesau stated there was scientific evidence that chemicals found in most sunscreens were toxic to corals.

At 67,385, India records highest number of babies born globally on New Year's Day: UNICEF

- Nearly **400,000** babies were born around the world on New Year's Day with **India** recording the highest number of these births worldwide at 67,385.
- An estimated 392,078 babies were born around the world on New Year's Day, according to UNICEF.
- An estimated 67,385 babies were born in India, the most globally. **China** comes in second with 46,299 births.

WHO declares International Emergency following outbreak of novel coronavirus from China

- World Health Organization has declared an **international emergency** over the **novel coronavirus** from **China**.
- WHO chief **Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus** stated that their greatest concern is the potential for the virus to spread to countries with weaker health systems. He declared the disease a public health emergency of international concern.

European Parliament to discuss India's anti-CAA resolution

- **The European Parliament** discussed the draft resolution on **Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA)** during a plenary session.
- The 154 members EP members drafted the five-page resolution fearing that the recently enacted legislation by India could trigger the "largest statelessness crisis in the world."

- The resolution describes the CAA as "**discriminatory**" and "**dangerously divisive**" but also a "**violation of India's international obligations** under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights".
- India adopted the CAA in December last year that grants citizenship rights to the persecuted minorities of neighbouring countries, including **Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh**.

European Parliament approves Brexit deal with Britain

- **European Parliament** has voted overwhelmingly to approve the Brexit deal with **London**, clearing the final hurdle for Britain's departure from the EU.
- **Britain** is the first country to leave the EU. UK's official departure will reduce the number of countries in the bloc to 27.

India successfully used digital technologies to reduce disparities among population groups: UN

- India successfully managed to use **digital platforms to reduce disparities** among population groups noting that the country's experience of complementing mobile technologies with the **Aadhaar identification system** to reduce inequality is likely to be replicated in other countries in future.
- The World Social Report 2020, published by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA).

WHO increases global risk degree of novel coronavirus from moderate to high

- The World Health Organization (WHO) has increased the global risk degree of the **novel corona virus strain 2019-nCoV from moderate to high**, citing an error in its previous report.
- According to the report, the total number of 2019-nCoV confirmed cases globally till reached 2,014, including 1,985 in China.
- Indian Embassy is considering all options which includes **evacuation of Indians in Wuhan**.

Switzerland mints world's smallest gold coin

- Switzerland state-owned Swissmint has minted **World's smallest gold coin** of 2.96 millimeter (0.12 inches). The coin will feature face of scientist **Albert Einstein** sticking out his tongue.
- It weighs 0.063 grams and has a nominal value of 1/4 Swiss francs (USD United States Dollar- 0.26).
- Swissmint has minted 999 coins which will be sold for 199 francs with a special magnifying glass to see Einstein's face.

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

- Former US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has been appointed the new chancellor of Queen's University in Belfast, Ireland.
- Clinton, who has been a regular visitor to Northern Ireland going back to the first visit of President Bill Clinton in 1995, becomes the university's first female chancellor.
- She will serve as chancellor for a five-year term. The position of chancellor has been vacant since the death in 2018 of Thomas J Moran.

Nepal's Prez launches 'Visit Nepal Year 2020' campaign to promote tourism

- President of Nepal Bidya Devi Bhandari launched much-awaited Visit Nepal Year 2020 campaign amidst a spectacular ceremony held at historic Dasaratha Rangashala in Kathmandu.
- The ambitious campaign is aimed to promote tourism in Nepal and attract 2 million tourists during the year 2020.

WHO designated 2020 as International Year of the Nurse and Midwife

- **The World Health Assembly** has designated **2020 the International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife** in honour of the **200th birth anniversary of Florence Nightingale**.
- Nurses and midwives play a vital role in providing health services.
- The world needs **9 million more nurses and midwives** if it is to achieve universal health coverage by **2030**.
- WHO partnered with **the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM), International Council of Nurses (ICN), Nursing Now and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)** in a year-long effort to celebrate the work of nurses and midwives.

India continues to be top sourcing market for Sri Lankan tourism

- India continued to be the top sourcing market for **Sri Lankan tourism** with Indian tourists constituting maximum **19 per cent** of total tourist arrivals to the island nation in 2019.

- The latest data released by Sri Lankan Tourism revealed that **3,55,002 Indian** tourists visited Sri Lanka last year against total arrival of around 1.91 million.
- **India, United Kingdom, China, Germany and Australia** were **Sri Lanka's** top five international tourist generating markets last year.

Bangladesh High Court orders ban on single use plastic

- The Bangladesh High Court ordered the government to impose a ban on **single use plastic** in coastal areas and hotels, motels and restaurants across the country within the next one year.
- Single-use plastic products include drinking straws, cotton buds, food packaging, food containers, bottles, plates, plastic cutlery and plastic bags.
- The court also ordered strict enforcement of the ban on **polythene** across the country.
- The court order came in response to a writ petition filed by **11 organizations working in the field** of environment and climate change.

Newly-elected Finland Prime Minister Sanna Marin proposes four-day working week

- Finland's newly elected Prime Minister has proposed a **four-day working week** arguing that such a measure will enable people to spend more time with their families.
- She also added that the standard working day should be reduced from **eight to six hours**.

Art Exhibition inaugurated to mark 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi in Bangladesh

- A ten-day-long art exhibition commemorating **150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi** was inaugurated in **Dhaka**. The art exhibition has been organised by the Indian High Commission in Bangladesh in association with the Bangladesh Shilpkala Academy.
- The exhibition was inaugurated with a floral tribute paid by MP from Noakhali H.M. Ibrahim and MP from Jamalpur Mirza Azam. The two Gandhi Ashrams in Bangladesh are located at Jamalpur and Noakhali.
- The exhibition is the culmination of art camp held in **Sreemangal in Sylhet Division** last month where 15 young artists worked on the exhibition under the guidance of the renowned artist Prof. Rokeya Sultana.

Indian Consulate in Dubai to issue passports under tatkal scheme on same day

- **Indian Consulate in Dubai** will issue passports under **the tatkal scheme** on the same day with certain conditions.
- The Consul General was addressing the Indian expats who had gathered in large number on the occasion.
- Passports under the **Tatkal scheme** in any case were being given **within 24 hours**. The announcement came as a boon especially for people who have to travel under emergency condition.

Second largest Muslim Congregation in the world Bishwa Ijtema begins in Bangladesh

- The first phase of the **world's second largest Muslim** congregation after **Haj** began on the outskirts of **Dhaka**. Thousands of devotees from Bangladesh and abroad are thronging the bank of **river Turag** at **Tongi** near **Dhaka** to participate in the congregation called **Bishwa Ijtema**.
- The Ijtema began with the 'aam bayan' and will end on January 12 with the final prayers 'Akheri Munajat'.
- The second phase of **Bishwa Ijtema** will take place between **January 17-19**.
- Bishwa Ijtema has been taking place on the Turag riverbank in Tongi near Dhaka since 1967. In 2011, the congregation was split into two phases to ensure better management.

Sri Lanka to buy 500 buses from India for USD 15 million

- Sri Lanka will purchase **500 buses from India** for **USD 15 million** by utilising the line of credit extended to it during President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's visit to **New Delhi**.
- The Cabinet of Ministers has given their consent for procurement of 400 new buses with 50-54 seating capacity and 100 new buses with 32-35 seating capacity utilising **USD 15.03 million** under the Indian loan grant scheme.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi in November announced a financial assistance of **USD 450 million** to Sri Lanka including USD 50 million to fight terrorism after he held "fruitful" talks with the island nation's newly elected **President Rajapaksa**.

Dhaka International Film Festival begins

- **The 18th Dhaka International Film Festival** was inaugurated by the Foreign Minister of Bangladesh Dr. A.K. Abdul Momen.
- The festival kicked off with the screening of the Spanish-Greek film *Window to the Sea*, directed by Miguel Angel Jimenez, at Bangladesh National Museum (BNM).
- The theme of the festival is '**Better Film, Better Audience and Better Society**'.

Chinese navy commissions first fourth generation destroyer

- **China** commissioned its **first fourth generation guided-missile destroyer**, which is expected to accompany aircraft carriers in new battle groups.
- The warship named **Nanchang** was commissioned by People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) in the port city of **Qingdao**.
- The commissioning of Nanchang marks the Navy's leap from the third generation to the fourth generation of destroyers.

UK-based Big Innovation Centre opens office in Hyderabad

- Big Innovation Centre (BIC), headquartered in the **United Kingdom**, which provides research and consulting services for the corporate, public institutes to address economic challenges and innovation capabilities, has opened its India office in **Hyderabad**.
- Big Innovation Centre has already launched its innovation hubs in **Saudi Arabia** and **UAE**.

India-Bangladesh I&B Ministers' Meet 2020 to be held in New Delhi

- **India - Bangladesh Information and Broadcasting Ministers' Meet 2020** will be held in **New Delhi**. Bangladesh Information Minister Muhammad H Mahmud arrived in New Delhi.
- Bangladesh official broadcaster Bangladesh Betar and All India Radio will inaugurate a content sharing programme. Both sides are also expected to hold talks on the bilaterally planned biopic of **Sheikh Mujibur Rahman**, the founding figure of Bangladesh.

World Bank predicts Sri Lanka's economic growth at 3.3 pct for 2020

- The World Bank has forecast Sri Lanka's economic growth at **3.3 per cent** for **2020** saying the growth is likely to remain below four per cent in next three years.
- The bank stated, in its latest report of World Bank's January 2020 Global Economic Prospects, that for 2021 and 2022, it maintains the same forecast of **3.7 per cent** of economic growth in **Sri Lanka**.
- Sri Lanka's new government headed by President Gotabaya Rajapaksa stated recently that one of its targets include achieving a **6.5 per cent economic growth** per annum from 2020 and a GDP growth of 6,500 U.S. dollars per capita.

Nepal to make yoga education compulsory for schoolchildren

- The Nepal government has decided to make yoga education compulsory for school children to promote healthy lifestyle among students.
- The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology has completed designing courses on yoga for **Grades IX, X, XI and XII**.
- Through integrated approach certain topics about yoga will be included as part of the compulsory subjects such as **English and Nepali**.
- However the students can make choice between **yoga, Ayurveda** and **natural medicine** as optional subject at the school level.
- The subject will be taught under three-year diploma programme under the Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training.

Ahead of Beijing 2022, China launches driverless bullet train

- Ahead of the **2022 Beijing Winter Olympics**, **China** has launched a new driverless train capable of travelling at **350kmph**.

- The high-speed bullet train, which connects **Beijing with Zhangjiakou** - two of the main host cities of the Winter Olympics - slashes the journey time from three hours to just 47 minutes.
- The line, which took four years to construct, is part of China's preparation for hosting its first Winter Olympics.
- The 2022 Games are scheduled to run between February 4 and 20.

Qatar scraps unpopular exit permits for domestic workers

- **Qatar** scrapped mandatory exit permits for migrant domestic staff and other groups, as part of efforts to boost rights for guest workers amid scrutiny of its record.
- Qatar has made a series of reforms to its employment regulations since being selected to host the **2022 World Cup**.
- It also dropped the exit visa requirements for other foreign workers -- including civil servants, oil and gas workers, and employees of government bodies including Qatar Airways.

Iranian Film 'Castle of Dreams' gets Best Film Award at Dhaka International Film Festival

- The Iranian film '**Castle of Dreams**' directed by **Reza Mirakarimi** won the Best Film Award in Asian Competition section of the **18th Dhaka International Film Festival (DIFF)**. The film also won the Best Director Award.

Asian Competition segment:

- Special Jury Award - **Prasanna Vithanage's** film '**Children of the Sun**' (Sri Lanka)
- Best Actress Award - Arezoo Ariapoor, Ferestha Afshar and Hasiba Ebrahimi for their acting in Afghanistan-Iran-France joint venture film '**Hava, Maryamk, Ayesha**'
- Best Actor Award - Lousie Abuel for his acting in the film '**Edward**'.
 - In Bangladesh Panorama Section, '**No Dorai**' directed by Taneem Rahman Angshu bagged the Best Film Award.
 - Indian film '**Finally Love**' directed by **Anjan Dutt** bagged Best Audience Award in Cinema of the World Category.
 - A total of 220 films from 74 countries were shown during the nine-day long festival which began on 11th of this month.
 - The theme of this year's festival was '**better film, better audience, better society.**'

Qatar signs \$470 mn solar deal

- Qatar signed a **\$470-million deal** to build its **first solar energy plant**, capable of meeting up to one-tenth of peak national power demand.
- The **Al-Kharsaah plant** is a 10-square-kilometre joint venture with French and Japanese partners due for completion in 2022 ahead of the football World Cup.
- Eight times the solar power pledged in the World Cup bid will be produced.

Novel corona virus grips China's Wuhan city

- China's Wuhan city is in grip of a new respiratory virus called **Novel corona virus** that has killed two people in China and sickened at least 45 persons including overseas cases with some new cases being detected in the city.
- The illness has been identified as a new strain of coronavirus, which is in the same family as the deadly severe acute **respiratory syndrome (SARS)** and the **Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS)**. Most people with the infection are believed to have contracted it through exposure to animals at a market that sells seafood and meat in Wuhan.
- It is not certain that the virus spreads from person to person. Symptoms of corona viruses can range from fever and coughing to pneumonia with severe effects.

Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina to launch e-passport distribution in Dhaka

- **Bangladesh** is set to begin the distribution of e-passports. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is expected to launch the e-passport distribution at an event scheduled to be held at the capital's **Bangabandhu International Conference Centre**.
- The delivery of e-passports will start in regional offices by the end of **2020**.
- The services will expand in phases, adding that machine-readable passports will remain valid as well.

- The Department of Immigration and Passports will issue **48-page** and **64-page** e-passports with the validity of five years and 10 years, respectively.

Brazil President Bolsonaro to be chief guest at 71st Republic Day

- President of Brazil **Jair Messias Bolsonaro** arrived in **New Delhi** on a four-day state visit to India. President Bolsonaro was the **chief guest at the 71st Republic Day Parade** at Raj Path in the national capital on January 26.
- He was accompanied by a delegation comprising of seven Ministers, Chairman of Brazil-India Friendship Group in the Brazilian Parliament, senior officials and a large business delegation.

UK Parliament ratifies Brexit divorce law

- British lawmakers finally approved the terms of their country's historic departure from the European Union.
- MPs in the lower House of Commons had already backed the EU Withdrawal Agreement Bill, which ratifies the divorce deal that Prime Minister Boris Johnson struck with Brussels last year.
- But the unelected upper House of Lords made some changes this week, including on the rights of EU citizens and child refugees after **Brexit**.
- The European Parliament has become the first country to leave the **28-member EU**.

Aurobindo Ashram School building constructed with India's assistance inaugurated in Nepal

- The Charge d' Affairs of Embassy of India in Nepal, Dr. Ajay Kumar ceremonially inaugurated new building of **Aurobindo Ashram School in Thankot, Kathmandu**.
- The new infrastructure is constructed with the Government of India's grant assistance of **28.25 million Nepali rupees**.
- The newly built infrastructure is expected to boost learning environment of the students. Government of India is happy to be associated with the project which compliments effort of **Government of Nepal** in augmenting infrastructure in the field of education.

WHO meeting underway to decide about declaring corona virus outbreak "An emergency"

- A meeting of the **World Health Organisation** is now in progress in **Geneva** to consider declaring outbreak of corona virus in China, an emergency.
- The meeting is important because the WHO thinks immediate and coordinated international action may be needed to contain the virus infection.
- In China, 9 people have died of corona virus infection and the infection has spread to several cities including **Wuhan, Beijing and Shanghai**.
- The virus causes illnesses ranging from common cold to **acute respiratory syndromes**. A total of 440 cases of pneumonia caused by the virus has been reported in China, Thailand, Japan and South Korea.
- India has already issued a travel warning. Several countries have also started screening travellers from **China to detect symptoms of syndromes**.

India opens its first Mahatma Gandhi convention centre in Niger

- External Affairs Minister **S. Jaishankar** and President of Niger **Mahamadou Issoufou** jointly inaugurated the first convention centre established in Africa by India to honour the memory of Mahatma Gandhi.
- MGICC is a landmark for India-Niger friendship, as also a symbol of India's firm commitment towards Africa.
- It is the first centre to be established in Africa by India to honour the memory of **Mahatma Gandhi** whose **150th Birth Anniversary** was observed last year.

Pakistan conducts training launch of nuclear-capable 'Ghaznavi' missile

- Pakistan conducted a successful training launch of nuclear-capable surface-to-surface ballistic missile '**Ghaznavi**', which can strike targets up to **290 kilometres**.
- The training launch was part of Field Training Exercise of Army Strategic Forces Command aimed at rehearsing operational readiness procedures during day and night
- The 'Ghaznavi' missile is capable of delivering multiple types of warheads upto a range of 290 kilometers.

Palestine takes over chairmanship of G77

- **Palestine** has taken over the chairmanship of **G77** from **Egypt**. Palestine will be formally elected chair at the annual G77 ministerial meeting, scheduled to take place in mid-September.

- The chairmanship of the G77 is based on the system of geographical rotation. **2019** was Asia's turn and the Asian group had unanimously endorsed **Palestine**. Egypt was representing the African Group of countries.

India and Brazil exchange 15 agreements widening areas of cooperation

- **India and Brazil** inked 15 agreements to boost cooperation in a wide range of areas like trade and investment, oil and gas, cyber security and information technology.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi stated an action plan has been finalised to further expand ties between the two strategic partners. Mr Bolsonaro's visit to India has opened a new chapter in bilateral ties between the two countries.

India, Bangladesh sign agreement to upgrade Ashuganj-Akhaura road into 4-lane highway

- India and Bangladesh signed an agreement to upgrade the **50.58-kilometre** long road between **Ashuganj river port** and the **Akhaura land port in Bangladesh** into a 4-lane highway.
- The deal to upgrade the 39 km long road between Ashuganj river port to Dharhar area was signed between the Roads and Highways Department (RHD) of Bangladesh and an Indian Company **Afcons Infrastructure Limited**.
- The RHD and an India-Bangladesh joint venture firm will take up the work of upgrading the remaining part of the road from **Dharhar to Akhaura**.

Nepal wants India to take back demonetised notes worth Rs 7 crore from its Central Bank

- Nepal's Central Bank is saddled with Rs 7 crore of demonetised Indian currency but India is not making "adjustments" to take back the notes, hoping the scrapped notes would be accepted by its neighbour.
- Of the Rs 15.41 lakh crore worth Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 notes in circulation on November 8, 99.3 per cent or notes worth Rs 15.31 lakh crore have returned to the banking system.

Revision Points

Country	Capital	Currency	Head
Saudi Arabia	Riyadh	Riyal	Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud
Bangladesh	Dhaka	Taka	Abdul Hamid
Sweden	Stockholm	Krona	Stefan Löfven
Brazil	Brasilia	Real	Jair Bolsonaro
Nepal	Kathmandu	Rupee	Bidhya Devi Bhandari
China	Beijing	Yuan	Xi Jinping
Afghanistan	Kabul	Afghani	Ashraf Ghani
Russia	Moscow	Ruble	Vladimir Putin
USA	Washington DC	Dollar	Donald Trump
Tunisia	Tunis	Dinar	Kais Saied
Iran	Tehran	Rial	Hassan Rouhani
Germany	Berlin	Euro	Frank-Walter Steinmeier
The Netherlands	The Hague	Euro	Mark Rutte
Sri Lanka	Colombo	Rupee	Gotabaya Rajapaksa
Italy	Rome	Lira	Sergio Mattarella
Ukraine	Kyiv	Hryvnia	Volodymyr Zelensky
Oman	Muscat	Rial	Qaboos bin Said Al Said
Japan	Tokyo	Yen	Shinzo Abe
Spain	Madrid	Euro	Pedro Sanchez
UK	London	Pound Sterling	Boris Johnson
Slovenia	Ljubljana	Euro	Borut Pahor

Palestine	Ramallah, East Jerusalem	New Shekel, Dinar	Mahmoud Abbas
Pakistan	Islamabad	Rupee	Arif Alvi
Niger	Niamey	CFA Franc	Brigi Rafini
Qatar	Doha	Riyal	Khalid Bin Khalifa bin Abdulaziz
Croatia	Zagreb	Kuna	Kolinda Grabar-Kitrovic
Taiwan	Taipei	Dollar	Tsai Ing-wen
Finland	Helsinki	Euro	Sauli Niinisto
Ireland	Dublin	Euro	Michael D.Higgins
Malta	Valletta	Euro	Joseph Muscat
Greece	Athens	Euro	Prokopis Pavlopoulos

Important Appointments **National Appointments**

Name of the Person	Designation
S Sundar	Interim MD and CEO, Lakshmi Vilas Bank
Umesh Sinha	Deputy Election Commissioner
Suresh Chandra Sharma	Chairman, National Medical Commission
Rajiv Rai Bhatnagar	Lt Governor of Jammu and Kashmir
M Nagaraj	Chairman & Managing Director, Hudco
Lt Col Yuvaraj Malik	Director of National Book Trust
Michael Patra	RBI Deputy Governor
A.P.Maheshwari	Director General of CRPF
Arjun Munda	President of Archery Association of India
Nripendra Misra	Chairman of the Executive Council of Nehru Memorial Museum & Library
SK Saini	Vice Chief of Army Staff
Sanjiv Chandha	CEO of Bank of Baroda
Atanu Kumar Das	MD & CEO of Bank of India
Lingam Venkata Prabhakar	Executive Director of Punjab National Bank
Challa Sreenivasulu Setty	MD of SBI
Punit Sood	Head of RBS India
Manoj Kohli	India Head, Soft Bank
Prem Chand Verma	India's Deputy Chef de Mission for Tokyo Olympics
A D M Chavali (Ex-ED of IOB)	CVC Board Member
Sunil Arora	Chairman of FEMBoSA
Debashish anda	Director, SBI Central Board (Nominated)
Anil Khanna	Ife President of Asian Tennis Federation
B Anand	Secretary of National Commission for Minorities

Sunil Mehta	Chief Executive of Indian Banks' Association
Harsh Vardhan	New Foreign Secretary
Ramesh Joshi (Ex SBI & Ex SEBI ED)	Non-executive chairman of Vakrangee
Alastair Cook & Ricky Skerritt	MCC's World Cricket Committee
Janak Raj (replaces MD. Patra)	Member of Monetary Policy Committee
M Balakrishnan	FO, IDBI Federal Life Insurance
Gita Sabharwal	Resident Coordinator in Thailand
Arvind Krishna	CEO of IBM
Lt CP Mohanty	Southern Army Command
Anuag Dahiya	Chief Commercial Officer of ICC
SS Deswal	CRPG DG (Additional Chief)
Vinod Kumar Yadav	Chairman of Railway Board
Rohan Shah	Governor on ERIA Board

International Appointments

Name of the Person	Designation
Pedro Sanchez	Prime Minister of Spain
Zoran Milanovic	President of Croatia
Samiya Naseem	Judge of Chicago
Tsai Ing-wen	Taiwan President
Dr Bul Behari Saha	Bureau Member of IUPAC
Haitham Bin Tariq bin Taimour	New Sultan of Oman
Robert Abela	Prime minister of Malta
Harish Salve	Queen's Counsel for courts of England & Wales
Elyes Fakhfakh	Prime Minister of Tunisia
Andrew Bailey	Governor of Bank of England
Ekaterini Sakellariopoulou	First woman President of Greece
Sheikh Khalis bin Khalifa	Prime Minister of Qatar
Joao Vale de Almeida	EUs top envoy to London
Taranjit Singh Sandhu	India's ambassador to US
Umara Cissoko Embalo	Elected President of Guinea-Bissau

Resignation

Name of the Person	Designation
PR Seshadri	MD & CEO, Karur Vysya Bank
Uttam Prakash Agarwal	Independent Director, YES Bank
Dmitry Medvedev	Russian Prime Minister
Oleksiy Honcharuk	Prime Minister of Ukraine
Sachin Bansal	Director of Ujjivan Small Finance Bank
Marjan Saree	Prime Minister of Slovenia

IAS officers Rajeev Singh Thakur, Shantanu appointed joint secretaries in military affairs dept

- **Senior bureaucrats Rajeev Singh Thakur and Shantanu** have been appointed as **joint secretaries** in the newly-created department of military affairs, as part of major bureaucratic reshuffle effected by the central government.
- Thakur will have a tenure till December 3, 2022. Shantanu has been appointed to the post till March 27, 2024.
- The government had last month created the department of military affairs, which is headed by **Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) Gen Bipin Rawat**.
- Odisha cadre IAS officer **Vishal Gagan** will be joint secretary, department of defence for a tenure of five years.
- **Ashutosh Agnihotri** has been appointed joint secretary in home ministry.
- Jammu and Kashmir cadre IAS officer Ashok Kumar Parmar will be advisor, inter state council secretariat under the home ministry.
- **Bharat H Khera** has been appointed joint secretary in Cabinet Secretariat.
- **Vimalendra Anand Patwardhan**, an officer of Indian Audit and Accounts Service, has been named as joint secretary and financial adviser in ministry of civil aviation, and IAS officer Nagaraju Maddirala will be joint secretary in the coal ministry.
- **S Suresh Kumar** and **Puneet Agarwal** have been appointed as joint secretaries in department of commerce and department of defence production respectively.
- **Vineet Mathur** will be JS, department of consumer affairs and Indian Forest Service (IFoS) officer **Sanjukta Mudgal** has been appointed as joint secretary in culture ministry.
- IAS officer **Tanmay Kumar** has been appointed joint secretary in the power ministry. Madhya Pradesh cadre IAS officer **Hari Ranjan Rao** will be joint secretary, department of telecommunications for five years.

Important Awards and Honours

Winner	Prize
Piyuus Jaiswal	Global Peace Excellence Humanitarian & Global Bihar Excellence Award
Prakash Javdekar	Antarrashtriya Yoga Diwas Media Samman
Sucheta Satish (can sing in 120 languages)	Global Child Prodigy Awards 2020
Sadio Mane	African Footballer of the Year Award
Jasbinder Blan	UK Costa Children's Award
Dr. Swaminathan & Dr Muniatnam	Muppavarau Venkaiah Naidu Award for Excellence
Jaspri Bumrah & Poonam Yadav	Polly Umrigar Award
Vasdev Mohi (Sindhi writer)	29 th Saraswati Samman (Chequebook)
Suman Kalyanpur	2017 National Lata Mangeshkar Award (Madhya Pradesh govt)
cVigil & Voter Helpline App	Award of Excellence

Kiran Mazumdar Shaw	Order of Australia honour
Hemant Soren	Champion of change Award
Priya Prakash	Cisco Youth Leadership Award
N Kumar	Harit Ratna Award
Hindu Tamil	Election Commission of India's Award
Sneha Pamneja (Tiffin: Authentic Recipes Celebrating India's Regional Cuisine; Author – Sonal Ved)	Oxford Bookstore Book Cover Prize
Andy Serkis	Bafta Film Awards
Bajaj Housing Finance Limited	BFSI Digital Innovation Award
Pavan Sukdev	Tyler Prize for Green Economy
Abhijit Vinayak Namerjee	D Litt by alma mater Calcutta University
Dr Partap Chauhan	Ayurveda Ratan Award
Krish Srikanth, Anjum Chopra	CK Nayudu Lifetime Achievement Awards by BCCI
Sanjay Gupta of Jagran	Lokmanya Tilak journalism Award

Assam tableau wins first prize at 71st Republic Day parade

- Defence Minister **Rajnath Singh** gave away **Best Tableaux awards for Republic Day Parade, 2020** in New Delhi.
- Assam's tableau has been chosen as the best tableau, followed by **Odisha** and **Uttar Pradesh** who were tied for the second position.
- The tableaux of **National Disaster Relief Force** and **Jal Shakti Mission** were chosen as the best among the Ministries and Departments.
- Central Public Works Department got the Special Prize for their tableau which based on the theme - Kashmir se Kanyakumari.

2020 Grammy Awards: The Full List Of Winners

- The **62nd edition of the Annual Grammy Awards** ceremony was held on January 26, 2020 in Los Angeles.
- The 2020 Grammy Awards has wrapped, with Billie Eilish sweeping the top four categories — song, record, album and new artist. Other top awards went to Lizzo, Lil Nas X, Tanya Tucker and more.
- Record of the Year – “Bad Guy” – Billie Eilish
- Album of the Year – *When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go?* – Billie Eilish
- Song of the Year – “Bad Guy” – Billie Eilish
- Best New Artist – Billie Eilish
- Best Pop Vocal Album – *When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go?* – Billie Eilish

- Click here for complete details <https://www.grammy.com/grammys/awards/62nd-annual-grammy-awards-2019>

Britain's Prince William unveils prize for climate innovation

- Prince William announced the most prestigious environment prize in history to encourage new solutions to tackling climate change.
- The **Earthshot Prize** will be awarded to five people every year over the next decade, and aims to provide at least 50 answers to some of the greatest problems facing the planet by 2030.
- The prize, **inspired by US president John F. Kennedy's ambitious "Moonshot"** lunar programme in the 1960s, promises "a significant financial award".

14 Indian scientists get Swarna Jayanti Fellowship

- **Fourteen Indian scientists** under 40 years of age, including three from the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru, were awarded the prestigious **Swarna Jayanti (SJ) Fellowships** for 2018-19.
- The fellows will get a monthly fellowship of Rs 25,000 and a annual research grant of Rs 5 lakh, for the next five years, in addition to their salary.
- Mathematician Apoorva Khare, physicist Anindya Das and computational data scientist Yogesh Simmhan are the new SJ Fellows from the IISc.
- The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay will have two new SJ fellows in chemist Gopalan Rajaraman and climate scientist Subimal Ghosh.
- Cryptography researcher Shweta Agrawal of IIT Madras and Arjun Bagchi, a theoretical physicist at IIT Kanpur are other two SJ fellows from IITs.
- Mahender Singh and Vishal Rai, the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER) Mohali and IISER Bhopal have one fellow each.
- Among other awardees are Smarajit Kamakar from the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research-Hyderabad, Sheetal Gandotra of Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology, Delhi, Jitender Giri of New Delhi-based National Institute of Plant Genome Research, Rakesh Singh Laishram from Rajiv Gandhi Centre for Biotechnology, Thiruvananthapuram and Kanishka Biswas from Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research, Bengaluru.

Singular 'they' voted word of the decade by US linguists

- US linguists have chosen **"they"** as their word of the decade, recognising the growing use of third-person plural pronouns as a singular form to refer to people who identify their gender as **neither entirely male nor entirely female**.
- The American Dialect Society also bestowed its word of the year honours on the increasingly common practice of introducing oneself in correspondence or socially by the set of pronouns one prefers to be called by – declaring in an email, for example, "pronouns: she/her".
- The singular use of **"they"** was previously designated as the **2015 word of the year**.

Golden Globe winners 2020

- **77th Golden Globe Awards** honouring the best films and television of calendar year 2019 was held at Beverly Hills, **California** in the USA.

Categories	Winners
Best Performance by an Actor in a Television Series -- Musical or Comedy	Ramy Youssef ("Ramy")
Best Performance by an Actress in a Television Series -- Musical or Comedy	Phoebe Waller-Bridge ("Fleabag")

Best Performance by an Actor in a Television Series -- Drama	Brian Cox ("Succession")
Best Performance by an Actress in a Television Series -- Drama	Olivia Colman ("The Crown")
Best Performance by an Actor in a Limited Series or Motion Picture Made for Television	Russell Crowe ("The Loudest Voice")
Best Performance by an Actress in a Limited Series or Motion Picture Made for Television	Michelle Williams ("Fosse/Verdon")
Best Television Limited Series or Motion Picture Made for Television	"Chernobyl"
Best Performance by an Actress in a Supporting Role in a Series, Limited Series or Motion Picture Made for Television	Patricia Arquette ("The Act")
Best Performance by an Actor in a Supporting Role in a Series, Limited Series or Motion Picture Made for Television	Stellan Skarsgård ("Chernobyl")
Best Television Series -- Drama	"Succession"
Best Television Series -- Musical or Comedy	"Fleabag"
Best Motion Picture -- Musical or Comedy	"Once Upon a Time in Hollywood"
Best Motion Picture -- Drama	"1917"
Best Motion Picture -- Foreign Language	"Parasite"
Best Screenplay -- Motion Picture	Quentin Tarantino ("Once Upon a Time in Hollywood")
Best Original Song -- Motion Picture	"(I'm Gonna) Love Me Again" ("Rocketman")
Best Original Score -- Motion Picture	Hildur Guðnadóttir ("Joker")
Best Actor in a Supporting Role in Any Motion Picture	Brad Pitt ("Once Upon a Time in Hollywood")
Best Actress in a Supporting Role in Any Motion Picture	Laura Dern ("Marriage Story")
Best Actor in a Motion Picture -- Musical or Comedy	Taron Egerton ("Rocketman")
Best Motion Picture -- Animated	"Missing Link"
Best Actor in a Motion Picture	Joaquin Phoenix ("Joker")
Best Actress in a Motion Picture -- Drama	Renée Zellweger ("Judy")

Best Actress in a Motion Picture -- Musical or Comedy	Awkwafina ("The Farewell")
Best Director -- Motion Picture	Sam Mendes ("1917")

Prashant Kishor and Kanhaiya Kumar feature in ‘list of 20 people to watch in 2020s’

- **Prashant Kishor**, poll strategist and JD(U) national vice-president and **Kanhaiya Kumar**, former JNU Students’ Union president from Bihar have found a place in the Forbes India’s prestigious list of ‘**20 people to watch in the 2020s**’.
- Apart from Prashant and Kanhaiya, other prominent Indians in the list are **Dushyant Chautala** (deputy CM of Haryana), **Mahua Moitra** (Lok Sabha member of TMC), the Godrej family (of Adi Godrej) and Garima Arora (chef and the first Indian woman to receive a Michelin star).

Indian scientists receive award for remarkable research

- Indian researchers have received **first Merck Young Scientist Award 2019** in Chemical Sciences recently at Bangalore instituted by Merck, a science and technology company operating worldwide.
- **Dr Sakya Singha Sen**, a senior scientist from National Chemical Laboratory (CSIR-NCL), Pune has been awarded for doing remarkable research in chemical science.
- The other recipient of the award are **Dr Debojyoti Chakraborty**, **Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology, Delhi** (IGIB); **Dr Dipyaman Ganguly**, **CSIR-Indian Institute of Chemical Biology, Kolkata** (CSIR-IICB); **Dr Siddhesh S Kamat**, **Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER), Pune**; **Dr Mahendran K .R**, **Rajiv Gandhi Centre for Biotechnology, Thiruvananthapuram** (RGCB) and; **Dr Basker Sundararaju**, **Indian Institute of Technology, (IIT) Kanpur**.

Odisha’s Puri District receives Swachhata Darpan Awards 2019

- Puri District receives **Swachhata Darpan Awards 2019**. The Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation (DDWS), Ministry of **Jal Shakti**, organised the ODF Sustainability workshop.
- The awardees include East Godavari (Andhra Pradesh), West Kameng (Arunachal Pradesh), Bemtara (Chhattisgarh), Diu (Daman and Diu), Panipat (Haryana), Vadodara (Gujarat), Kolhapur (Maharashtra), Moga (Punjab), East Sikkim (Sikkim) and Pedappali (Telangana). Four districts – Dibrugarh (Assam), Sirmaur (Himachal Pradesh), Indore (Madhya Pradesh) and Puri (Odisha) – were also awarded for innovations and initiatives for Plastic Waste Management.

Kerala announces sports awards, Muhammad Anas wins GV Raja award

- Kerala Sports Minister EP Jayarajan announced the sports awards instituted by Kerala State Sports Council with Indian sprinter **Muhammad Anas** winning **GV Raja award (Male) for athletics**.
- **In the female category, PC Thulasi** was adjudged the winner for GV Raja award which carries prize money of Rs 3 lakh and a citation.
- **TP Ouseph**, athletics coach will be conferred with Olympian Suresh Babu lifetime achievement award which carries a prize of Rs 2 lakh and a citation.
- The award for the best sports trainer was clinched by football coach **Satheevan Balan** of the Kerala State Sports council.

President of India Presents 14th Ramnath Goenka Excellence in Journalism Awards

- The President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, presented the **14th Ramnath Goenka Excellence** in Journalism Awards at a ceremony held in **New Delhi**.
- Ramnath Goenka Excellence in Journalism Awards honour those journalists from print, broadcast and digital media who have maintained the highest standards of their profession.

Sparsh Ganga initiative' wins Champions of Change Award

- Environmentalist and social activist **Arushi Nishank** was honoured with the **Champions of Change Award 2019** for her initiative towards cleaning and saving river Ganga, the **Sparsh Ganga initiative**. The second edition of the Champions of Change Award was held at **Vigyan Bhawan** (January 20).
- The program identifies the progress of **115 'aspirational' districts** whose development is being monitored by **NITI Aayog**.
- Other recipients of the award were actor **Shilpa Shetty** and her husband **Raj Kundra** for Swachh Bharat Abhiyan), actor **Suresh Oberoi** for Culture and Lok Sabha MP **Geeta Koda** for Aspirational Districts.
- Three persons – Telugu film producer Allu Arvind, Minister of State Finance & Corporate Affairs Anurag Thakur and Deepa Venkat of Swarna Bharat Trust (Andhra Pradesh) – won the award for Social Welfare.

National Bravery Awards: 49 children receive Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar 2020

- President Ram Nath Kovind conferred the **Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar 2020** to 49 children at the Rashtrapati Bhawan, **New Delhi**.
- The Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar are given under the revamped award scheme of the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India.
- Eleven-year-old **Aparna Chandrasekaran** was awarded the Pradhan Mantri Bal Shakti Puraskar 2020 for her achievement in the innovation category.
- She also represented India at **ASEAN INDIA PUSPITEK INNOVATION FESTIVAL** held in Indonesia where she was conferred the Young Innovator Award at Jakarta.
- The **Bal Shakti Puraskar** is given by the Government of India every year to recognize exceptional achievements of children in various fields i.e., innovation, scholastic achievements, social service, arts & culture, sports, and bravery.
- The awardees were chosen by the National Selection Committee under the Chairpersonship of Smriti Irani, Minister of Women and Child Development

22 children conferred with National Bravery Award

- **Twenty-two children**, including 10 girls and 12 boys have been selected for the **Indian Council for Child Welfare (ICCW) National Bravery Awards, 2019**. One award has been given posthumously.
- The coveted **Bharat Award** has been conferred on 15-year-old Master **Adithya K**, who is from Kerala. Adithya saved more than 40 lives when a bus they were travelling in bus caught fire in Nepal in May 2019.
- Another Kerala resident and award recipient was as brave but not as lucky. The only recipient to receive the award posthumously is **Muhamed Muhsin EC**, who has honoured with the **Abhimanyu award**.
- The two awardees from J&K **Sartaj Mohidin Mughal and Mudasir Ashraf** were found with great difficulty. The security forces knocked on their doors to inform them that both had won the bravery award.
- A 13-year-old **Alaika** saved her family after their car met with an accident.
- The **ICCW Markandeya Award** was conferred on 10-year-old **Rakhi from Uttarakhand**, who saved her 4-year-old brother from the claws of a leopard. She sustained severe injuries in the incident.
- The **ICCW Dhruva Award** has been given to **Purnima Giri (16) and Sabita Giri (15)** from Odisha who saved 12 persons from drowning a river when a boat sank into the water full with wild crocodiles.
- Ten-year-old **Srimati Badra** has been given the **ICCW Prahalada Award** for helping her friend who lost her right leg in a train accident. Due to her timely and courageous action, her friend's life could be saved.
- The other recipients are Kamal Krishna Das (Assam), Kanti Paikra and Bharneshwari Nirmalkar (both from Chhattisgarh), Aarti Kiran Shet and Venkatesh (both from Karnataka), Zen Sadavarte and Akash Machindra Khillare (both from Maharashtra), Lourembam Yaikhomba Mangang (Manipur), Everbloom K Nongrum (Meghalaya), Lalliansanga, Carolyn Malsawmtluangi and Vanlalhriatrenga (all from Mizoram).

Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar 2020 announced

- In order to recognise the excellent work done by individuals and institutions in India in the field of disaster management, Government of India has instituted an annual award known as **Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar**. The award is announced every year on **23rd January**, the **birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose**.

- For the year 2020, Disaster Mitigation & Management Centre, **Uttarakhand (in the institution category)** and **Kumar Munnan Singh (Individual category)** have been selected for the Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar for their commendable work in Disaster Management.
- **Kerala Tourism's disabled-friendly project earns UNWTO special mention**
- Kerala Tourism's Barrier-Free Tourism Project has won global recognition with the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) making a special mention of the south Indian state as an "Emerging Global Destination" in the Accessible Destination Awards 2019.
- Kerala Tourism Director P Bala Kiran received the conferment from UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili at the awards ceremony in Madrid.
- The work is also being implemented in Chavakkad Beach, Peechi and Thumboormoozhi in Kerala under the ongoing major development projects.

JK Police gets max 108 gallantry medals, CRPF 76

- The **Jammu and Kashmir Police** has been given the maximum number of gallantry honours with **108 medals**, followed by the **CRPF 76**, on the occasion of the **71st Republic Day**.
- The Union Territory police, thickly involved in counter-terrorism operations in the Kashmir Valley, has also bagged **three top President's Police Medal for Gallantry (PPMG)** while one has been accorded to the CRPF (posthumously).
- Jharkhand Police has been given **33 PMG**.

Padma Awards 2020: Arun Jaitley and Sushma Swaraj get second-highest civilian honour

- The government announced the names of this year's recipients of the **Padma awards**.
- Former Union ministers **Arun Jaitley, Sushma Swaraj** and **George Fernandes** – all of whom died in 2019 – were posthumously awarded the **Padma Vibhushan**, the nation's second highest civilian honour.
- The list had 141 awards – **seven Padma Vibhushan, 16 Padma Bhushan** and **118 Padma Shri**. **Thirty-four of the recipients were women**.
- Notable recipients of the Padma Vibhushan included boxer **MC Mary Kom** and classical singer **Chhannulal Mishra**. Mauritius Prime Minister **Anerood Gugnauth** has also been awarded the Padma Vibhushan.
- Some of the winners of the Padma Bhushan honour were Jammu and Kashmir politician Muzaffar Hussain Baig, industrialist Anand Mahindra and sportsperson PV Sindhu. Check the Padma Award Winners List

Important MOU's

OPPO, IIT-Hyderabad to take up joint R&D projects

- **OPPO** and **IIT-Hyderabad** have joined hands to take up joint R & D projects in advanced and emerging technologies.
- The areas identified are battery, camera and image processing, networks (5G), system performance and Artificial Intelligence among others.
- The partnership is aimed at developing solutions and bridging the gap between academic excellence and business requirements and to help create an industry-ready workforce, according to a statement from the IITH.

ISRO inks pact with NITK to set up Regional Academic Centre for Space

- **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** has set up a **Regional Academic Centre for Space (RAC-S)** at **National Institute of Technology Karnataka (NITK)** at Surathkal in **Mangaluru** taluk.
- The centre will help pursue advanced research in the areas of relevance to the future technological and programmatic needs of the Indian space programme.

- JPMC will also facilitate collaborative activities between the partner institutions of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Kerala and Lakshadweep.
- ISRO will provide necessary annual grant, as recommended by the JPMC, to the tune of ₹2 crore for conducting R&D projects, promotional activities and administrative expenses.

Chandigarh Group of Colleges Signs MOU with NASSCOM

- National Association of Software and Service Companies (**NASSCOM**) and Chandigarh Group of Colleges, Landran have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) which will facilitate the development and introduction of **Qualification Pack (QP) based training Programs for the engineering students**.
- The MoU was signed during a Faculty Development Program, organised in association with NASSCOM on Business Analytics, Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence.

Wipro, HAL in pact to make 3D-printed aircraft parts

- **Hindustan Aeronautics (HAL)** and **Wipro 3D** have partnered to develop 3D-printed components that could potentially be used on aircraft manufactured by state-run HAL.
- Wipro 3D is the first Indian company to locally develop an industry-grade metal-additive 3D-printing machine, jointly with the Indian Institution of Science.
- This initiative between HAL and Wipro 3D will create a unique synergy of capabilities that can accelerate the adoption of metal additive manufacturing in aerospace in India.

Indian Bank signs MoU with Women Entrepreneurs Welfare Association to provide credit

- Indian Bank has signed an MoU with the Women Entrepreneurs (WEWA) of Tamil Nadu(TN) to provide training and credit linkage to its women entrepreneurs to establish business.
- The Indian bank will provide loans to the WEWA members at **discounted rates**. Training will be given to the WEWA members in the **INDSETIs** (Indian Bank Self Employment Training Institutes).
- The WEWA currently aims to add **1,000** members by **2023**.

Indian Railways signs MoU with RailTel for Phase 2 of e Office execution

- **Indian Railways** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **RailTel, a miniratna PSU** under Ministry of Railways, for implementing Phase 2 of eOffice execution.
- Under the MoU, following the successful completion of Phase 1 execution of NIC e office for 50,000 users in 58 units, RailTel will now register 39,000 users over 34 Railway divisions on NIC e office platform by June 30, 2020.
- eOffice fosters paperless culture which will not only save operational cost but also reduces the carbon footprint.

Indian Navy signs MoU with GSI for sharing offshore data, products

- The **Indian Navy** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **Geological Survey of India (GSI)** for sharing seabed sediments data, products and expertise regarding naval application in meteorology and oceanography.
- The GSI's marine and coastal survey division, based at **Mangaluru**, has mapped most of India's 2.1 million square kilometre of "exclusive economic zone" and has a vast repository of offshore data.

Revision Points

Organizations	Purpose
Oppo & IIT Hyderabad	R & D Projects
ISRO & NITK	Setting up of Regional Academic Centre for Space
Chandigarh Group of Colleges & NASSCOM	Introduction of QP based training programmes for engg students
Wipro & HAL	3D printed aircraft parts
Indian Bank & WEWA	Providing training and credit linkage

Indian Railways & RailTel	E Office execution
Indian Navy & GSI	Sharing offshore data

Important Summit & Conference

14th Global Healthcare Summit in Vizag in 2021

- **Visakhapatnam** will host the prestigious three-day **14th Global Healthcare Summit** from January 3, 2021.
- Being organised by American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPI), the conference will see the participation of over 500 doctors from the US, Australia, Britain and other countries. The brochure of the summit was released by MP M.V.V. Satyanarayana.

India to Host 36th International Geological Congress in March 2020

- **India** will host the **36th International Geological Congress**, aimed at the development of Earth Sciences, in the National Capital Region (NCR) from March 2-8 2020.
- The “Olympics of Geosciences,” the event will witness debates and discussions on a wide range of issues affecting the world, such as sustainable development, climate change, water and mineral resources.
- The theme of the science programme at the 36th IGC is ‘**Geosciences: The Basic Science for a Sustainable Future.**’
- The IGC is a geoscientific event held under aegis of the **International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS)**.

HRD Minister to inaugurate 28th edition of World Book Fair

- **Union Minister for Human Resources Development Ramesh Pokhriyal** inaugurated the **28th** edition of annual New Delhi World Book Fair in **New Delhi**.
- The book fair organized by **National Book Trust** will be held till 12th of this month in the national capital.
- Theme of the fair was **Gandhi: The Writers' Writer**.

Women Science Congress begins in Bengaluru

- The **Women Science Congress** was inaugurated in Bengaluru.
- DRDO Aeronautical Systems Director General **Dr. Tessy Thomas** who is known as **Missile Woman of India** graced the occasion as the Chief Guest.
- The status of women in the country is changing as their growing presence is seen in many areas of expertise.

Kochi to host global meet on marine ecosystem

- Eminent marine scientists, oceanographers, fisheries researchers and marine biotechnologists from across the globe are expected to participate in the **third international symposium on marine ecosystems** – challenges and opportunities (**MECOS-3**) in Kochi
- Organised by the Marine Biological Association of India, MECOS-3 will serve as a platform for discussions on a range of topics.
- The four-day meet will be held at **the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute**, assumes significance in the backdrop of the recent spate of cyclonic storms and other climatic phenomena in the **Arabian Sea**.

Pune host fifth edition of global Drosophila conference

- **Pune** hosted the fifth edition of the **Asia Pacific Drosophila Research Conference (APDRC5)**, which is being organised in the country for the first time by the **Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER)**.
- It aims to promote the interaction of Drosophila researchers in the Asia-Pacific region.
- It would bring together scientists from all over the world who use the fruit fly, Drosophila, as a model organism to address basic and applied questions.

'Pariksha Pe Charcha 2020' held in New Delhi

- The **third edition** of Prime Minister's Interaction with school students, "**Pariksha Pe Charcha 2020**" held at **Talkatora Stadium in New Delhi**.
- The Human Resource Development Ministry in partnership with **MyGov** launched a 'short essay' competition for students of classes 9 to 12 for the third edition of Prime Minister's Interaction with school students.
- PPC2020 will have the 'Town Hall' format, which is unique in itself wherein the Prime Minister interacts with school students at the **Talkatora Stadium, New Delhi**.

23rd National Youth Festival-2020 organized from 12th to 16th January, 2020

- Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports and State Government of Uttar Pradesh are organized **23rd National Youth Festival (NYF) 2020** at Indira Pratishthan, **Lucknow**.
- The Government has been organizing National Youth Festival (NYF) since 1995. The objective of NYF is to provide a platform to bring the youth of the country together in an attempt to provide them opportunity to showcase their talents in various activities.
- The theme of the 23rd National Youth Festival 2020 is '**FIT YOUTH FIT INDIA**' in pursuance of the goal of Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi for New India to be a fit India.

5th edition of The Pulses Conclave to be held in Maharashtra

- **India Pulses and Grains Association (IPGA)**, the nodal body for India's pulses trade & industry announced that the **5th edition The Pulses Conclave**, their biennial global pulses conference will be held from 12th to 14th February, 2020 at Ambay Valley City in **Lonavala, Maharashtra**.
- IPGA expects close to 1500 trade stakeholders from India and key pulses exporting countries like the USA, Australia, Canada, Myanmar, Ethiopia, etc. to participate in the conclave.

Wings India 2020 To Be Held In Hyderabad From March 12-15

- **Wings India 2020** will be held at **Begumpet Airport in Hyderabad** from March 12 to 15.
- **MOCA and FICCI** is organising WINGS India 2020, providing a congenial forum catering to the rapidly changing dynamics of the sector, focusing on new business acquisition, investments, policy formation and regional connectivity.

Global investor meet ASCEND 2020 held in Kochi, Kerala

- A two day organised **Global Investors Meet – ASCEND 2020** was held in **Kochi, Kerala** at Lulu Bolgatty International Convention Centre, Grand Hyatt.
- The meet was inaugurated by the Chief Minister of Kerala Shri Pinarayi Vijayan and was organised by states Department of Industries.
- As per the scheme Wage subsidy will be provided for the first **5 years** for new ventures getting registered on **April 1, 2020**.
- The proposed mega projects further include a Propylene Oxide manufacturing plant of 2,00,000 MPA capacity in the vicinity of BPCL-Kochi Refinery, a PVC manufacturing facility of capacity 150,000 TPA and a ₹1,864-crore KINFRA-initiated Petrochemical Park of international standards at Ambalamugal in Ernakulam district.
- KINFRA (**Kerala Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation**) is also keen to set up a ₹400-crore logistics hub (in Palakkad) with warehousing facility, while thrust will also be given to set up a ₹300-crore cryogenic warehouse in Kochi's Puthuvypeen next to the existing LNG terminal.
- The ₹131-crore Defence Park at 60 acres in Ottapalam of Palakkad district will have central government assistance under the Modified Industrial Infrastructure Upgradation scheme.

World Future Energy Summit to begin in Abu Dhabi

- The World Future Energy Summit will begin in **Abu Dhabi**.
- The theme of summit is "**Rethinking Global Consumption, Production, and Investment.**"
- World Future Energy Summit is the Middle East's largest future energy and sustainability event.
- The event is starting to set an example for best practice, supporting the circular economy through recycling, and acting to remove **single-use plastics** from the event.

Renewable Energy Investors' Meet organized by Indian Railways

- Indian Railways and Railway Energy Management Company Ltd (REMCL), a joint venture of Ministry of Railways & RITES Ltd, organized a **Renewable Energy Investors' Meet in New Delhi** recently.
- The objective of the Investors' Meet was to disseminate information about the opportunities available under renewable energy in Indian Railways.
- The investors acknowledged the efforts of Indian Railways in leading the development of renewable energy in the country and expressed strong support to Indian Railways on the path of going green and achieving **the net zero carbon emissions target by 2030**.
- Indian Railways has recently invited bids for 47 MW rooftop solar projects and 249 MW of wind solar hybrid projects.

Exhibition on Indian Heritage in Digital Space

- Union MoS Culture and Tourism (Independent Charge) **Prahlad Singh Patel** inaugurated the exhibition on Indian Heritage in Digital Space and First International Heritage Symposium at National Museum, **New Delhi**.
- The exhibition was organized by Ministry of Culture and Tourism in collaboration with the **Indian Institute of Technology, New Delhi**.
- The visitors will be able to see the recreations of the socio-cultural life and traditions of **Hampi**, architectural and conjectural reconstructions of several important structures and experience demystification of many murals in the exhibition.
- This special exhibition showcase adaptation and infusion of technologies being developed under the **Indian Digital Heritage (IDH)** initiative of the Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India in the cultural heritage domain of the country.

Ladakh hosts first ever Food Processing Summit to attract investors

- Union Territory **Ladakh** is hosting the first ever Food Processing Summit to attract investors to the region.
- With the help of Ministry of Commerce and Industry and the Ministry of Food Processing Industries, the UT Administration of Ladakh is organizing the Summit.
- Ladakh region has vast scope for investment in food Processing Industries in horticulture products like Apricot, SeabuckThorn, Apple and agricultural produce like buckwheat and barley.

Om Birla inaugurates 7th Conference of CPA India Region in Lucknow

- **7th Conference of Commonwealth Parliamentary Association India Region** in the legislative assembly building in **Lucknow**.
- The main theme of the conference is '**ROLE OF LEGISLATORS**'.
- The delegates discussed the Capacity Building of Legislators for Scrutinizing Budgetary Proposals and Enhancing Focus of Legislators on Legislative Business.
- CPA India Region conferences are held once in two years and the 6th conference was held in 2018 in **Patna**.

Fifth Science Film festival holds in Goa

- The fifth edition of **Science Film Festival of India, SCI-FFI 2020**, was held in **Goa's** capital city **Panaji**.
- The festival aims at instilling the knowledge of science among the youth with the help of exhibitions, masterclasses, workshops, and other activities.
- The event is supported by Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute and National Institute of Science Communication and Information Resources (NISAR).
- Films that have been selected to be screened at the event are '**Mission Mangal**', '**Antariksham 9000 KMPH**', '**Everest**', '**Aamorie**', '**Terminator: Dark Fate**', '**Geostorm**' and, '**Virus**' among others.

The 6th National Standards Conclave

- The **6th National Standards Conclave** is being held in **Delhi**.
- Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal has said that the new BIS Act will relook at all standards for goods and services to balance the interest of consumers.

- He also stated that India would not allow the imports without the specific HSN (internationally recognised identification code for specific products) codes.

9th International Children's Film Festival begins in Kolkata

- The 9th International Children's Film Festival begins in **Kolkata** with the screening of Aizaz Khan directed Hamid.
- National Award winner Children actor, Talha Arsalan Rishi inaugurated the festival.
- Ten venues in the city have been selected for the festival. Besides the screening of films, an exhibition on the children's film festival was organised.

Piyush Goyal to lead Indian delegation to 50th World Economic Forum at Davos

- Union Minister for Commerce and Industry **Piyush Goyal** led the Indian delegation to the **50th World Economic Forum at Davos**.
- The theme of the World Economic Forum's meeting was '**Stakeholders for a Cohesive and Sustainable World**'.
- Goyal participated in the Forum along with Union Minister of State for Shipping and Chemical and Fertilizers **Mansukh Mandaviya** and Chief Ministers of the States of Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh apart from other senior officials.
- **Mr. Goyal** held bilateral meetings with Ministers of Australia, South Africa, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Switzerland, Korea and Singapore.

First edition of Krishi Manthan begins in Ahmedabad

- In Gujarat, the first edition of **Krishi Manthan**- the largest Food, Agri-business and Rural Development Summit of Asia organized by **Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad** began.
- The students along with working professionals from Food, Agriculture and allied sectors are getting benefited from the workshops during this summit.
- It is an exclusive platform for industry, and policymakers to share ideas, and knowledge to create solutions.

Heavy Industries & Public Enterprises Minister Inaugurates ELECRAMA 2020

- Union Minister of Heavy Industries & Public Enterprises, Environment, Forest and Climate Change and Information & Broadcasting, **Prakash Javadekar** inaugurated **ELECRAMA 2020**, at India Expo Mart in **Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh**.
- The event has been organised by Indian Electrical and Electronics Manufacturers Association (IEEMA), which is targeting businesses worth Rs 30,000 crore during the five-day event.
- The focus of 2020 ELECRAMA is on e-mobility, energy storage, start-ups, grid transformation, revenue security with special attention on small and medium enterprises (SMEs).
- **IEEMA** is a national representative organization of manufacturers of electrical, industrial electronics and allied equipment in India with presence in **Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, Bangalore**.

IILF to be held in Chennai from January 31 to February 3

- The **35th edition** of India **International Leather Fair (IILF)** was held from January 31 to February 3 in **Chennai**. The event organised by the Indian Finished Leather Manufacturers and Exporters Association will provide an insight about the latest trends and designs in the industry.
- From raw material to finished products like leather footwear, garments and fashion accessories was showcased at the event. Stakeholders like raw material suppliers, manufacturing equipment suppliers and tanneries will participate in the event and showcase their products.

IIM Kozhikode hosts International Conclave on 'Globalising Indian Thought'

- The **Indian Institute of Management Kozhikode (IIM Kozhikode)** hosted an International Conclave on '**Globalising Indian Thought**'.
- The three-day Academic conclave witnessed representations from renowned academicians, public figures and the presentation of more than 100 world-class research papers.
- IIM Kozhikode embraced Globalizing Indian Thought as its institutional mission a decade ago.

Dr Jitendra Singh inaugurates India's first global Mega Science Exhibition "Vigyan Samagam" in Delhi

- India's first **global Mega Science Exhibition "Vigyan Samagam"** at **National Science Centre, Delhi**.

- Three-tier teams should be set up for scientific research involving older and younger generations, so that continuity can be maintained in research work.
- This is fourth such exhibition after being organised at **Mumbai, Bengaluru and Kolkata**.

Ravi Shankar Prasad to inaugurate second edition of NIC Tech Conclave-2020

- Union Minister for Electronics and Information Technology **Ravi Shankar Prasad** will inaugurate the second edition of **NIC Tech Conclave-2020** in New Delhi.
- The two-day event was organized by the National Informatics Centre.
- This year's theme was **Technologies for Next-Gen Governance**.
- Experts from the IT industry in the areas of Cyber Security, Hyperscale Architecture, Design Thinking attended the conclave, which will help in delivering high-quality citizen-centric services.

13th Weld India expo from February 6

- India's potential to become a **\$5 trillion** economy will be highlighted at the **13th Weld India Exhibition** being organised in association with the **International Institute of Welding in Mumbai** (under the Union Ministry of Skill Development) from February 6 to 9.
- The event with the theme of **advanced welding technology and quality systems for developing economies** is expected to have participants from as many as 22 countries.

Shri Mansukh Mandaviya participates in the Round-table of UNAIDS

- The Union Minister of State for Shipping (I/C) and Chemical & Fertilizers **Shri Mansukh Mandaviya** participated in the High-level roundtable of **UNAIDS** (The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS) on the theme **Access for all: Leveraging Innovations, Investments and Partnerships for Health** at **World Economic Forum** at **Davos, Switzerland**.
- UNAIDS provides the strategic direction, advocacy, coordination and technical support needed to catalyse and connect leadership from governments, the private sector and communities to deliver life-saving HIV services.

ECI to Host the 1st Sukumar Sen Memorial Lecture

- **Election Commission of India** has decided to institute an Annual Lecture Series as a tribute to the first Chief Election Commissioner of India, **Shri Sukumar Sen. Sh Sen** (1898-1963) commendably conducted the first two General Elections to the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies, thereby putting India firmly on the map of democracy.
- During his service, he held several important posts, including as Chief Secretary of West Bengal (1947-1950). He served as the **first Chief Election Commissioner of India** from 21st March 1950 till his retirement 19th December, 1958.

Prime Minister to Address the 3rd Global Potato Conclave, Gandhinagar, Gujarat

- Prime Minister **Shri Narendra Modi** shall be addressing the **3rd Global Potato Conclave** at **Gandhinagar, Gujarat** through remote video conferencing.
- The Conclave will provide an opportunity to bring all stakeholders at one common platform.
- **Gujarat is one of the leading producers of Potato in the country**. In the last eleven years alone, while the area under potato in India, has increased by 19%, it has increased by about 170% in Gujarat (49.7 thousand ha in 2006-07 to 133 thousand ha in 2017-18).
- The Conclave is being organized by Indian Potato Association (IPA) in collaboration with Indian Council of Agricultural Research, New Delhi, and ICAR-Central Potato Research Institute, Shimla and International Potato Center (CIP), Lima, Peru.
- The **Potato Conference** will be held for 3 days during **28-30 January, 2020**. It will have 10 themes out of which 8 themes are based on basic and applied research. The remaining two themes will have special emphasis on potato trade, value chain management and policy issues.
- **Potato Field Day** will be organized on **January 31, 2020**.

France will be guest of honour at New Delhi World Book Fair 2022

- **France** will be the guest of honour at the **New Delhi World Book Fair** in January 2022, announced France Ambassador to India, **Emmanuel Lenain** as part of a reciprocal invitation as **New Delhi** is the guest of honour this year at **Livre Paris (Paris Book Fair)**.
- Lenain along with Leila Slimani, novelist and French President Emmanuel Macron's Envoy for Francophone Affairs, conferred 2020 Romain Rolland Book Prize at Jaipur BookMark in Jaipur, Rajasthan.

Revision Points

Conference/Summits	Venue
World Book Fair	New Delhi
3 rd Potato Conclave	Gandhinagar, Gujarat
13 th Weld India expo	Mumbai
2 nd edition of NIC Tech Conclave	New Delhi
India's first global Mega Science Exhibition	New Delhi
International Conclave on 'Globalising Indian Thought'	IIM Kozhikode
35 th India International Leather Fair	Chennai
ELECRAMA 2020	Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh
1 st edition of Krishi Manthan	Ahmedabad
50 th World Economic forum	Davos, Switzerland
9 th International Children's Film Festival	Kolkata
6 th National Standards Conclave	New Delhi
5 th Science Film Festival	Goa
7 th Conference of CPA India Region	Lucknow
1 st Food Processing Summit	Ladakh
Exhibition on Indian Heritage in Digital pace	New Delhi
Renewable Energy Investors' Meet	New Delhi
World Future Energy Summit	Abu Dhabi
Global Investor meet ASCEND 2020	Kochi
Wings India 2020	Hyderabad
5 th edition of the pulses Conclave	Maharashtra
23 rd National Youth Festival 2020	Lucknow
3 rd edition of 'Pariksha Pe Charcha 2020'	New Delhi
5 th edition of Global Drosophila Conference	Pune
14 th Global Healthcare Summit 2021	Visakhapatnam
36 th International Geological Congress 2020	India
28 th edition of World Book Fair	New Delhi
Women Science Congress	Bengaluru
MECOS-3	Kochi

Important Defence News

GRSE set to deliver anti-submarine warfare corvette INS Kavaratti to Navy soon

- Defence PSU Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (**GRSE**) is set to deliver anti-submarine warfare stealth corvette **INS Kavaratti** to the Navy soon.

- 'Kavaratti' is the last of the four Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) stealth corvettes built by the GRSE for the Indian Navy under Project P28. 'Kavaratti' will be the 104th ship to be constructed and delivered by the GRSE.
- Five warships have been delivered to Indian Navy by Defence PSU between March 2019 to December 2019

Operation Vanilla: India sends INS Airavat to provide aid to disaster-hit Madagascar

- **Indian Navy** launched **Operation Vanilla** in a bid to support the people of island **nation Madagascar** in the face of a natural disaster.
- Indian Navy stated, 'As the first respondent, **Indian Navy Ship Airavat**, which was en-route to Seychelles has been diverted to Madagascar for rendering assistance.'
- **INS Airavat** is an amphibious assault ship and its missions also include humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR).
- India's assistance to Madagascar is in consonance with Indian Navy's Foreign Cooperation initiatives in line with Prime Minister's vision of '**Security and Growth for all in the Region (SAGAR)**'

The 'Rao' power of 'Mission Shakti'

- A defence scientist – Y Sreenivasa Rao – led the DRDO contingent displaying the indigenous **Anti-Satellite Weapons (ASAT)** from 'Mission Shakti' at the **71st Republic Day parade**.
- India became only the **fourth nation** after the **US, Russia and China** to have the capability.
- The second tableau exhibiting the **Air Defence Tactical Radar** was led by a defence officer.

India Air Force Chief Formally Inducts Dornier Aircraft Into 41 Otters Squadron

- **Indian Air Force Chief RKS Bhadauria** has formally inducted the light utility aircraft Dornier into the **No. 41 "Otters" Squadron**.
- The IAF in 2015 had signed a contract to purchase 14 Dornier aircraft, which are flight inspection system planes, for Rs 1,090 crore from state-run Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL).
- The **Dornier-228** aircraft is a multi-purpose, fuel-efficient, rugged, lightweight twin-turboprop aircraft with a retractable tricycle landing gear.

General Bipin Rawat proposes creation of Air Defence Command by June 30

- Chief of the Defence Staff, **CDS General Bipin Rawat** has directed various branch heads to come up with recommendations for inter-service synergy and jointness in a time bound manner.
- After assuming charge as CDS, General Rawat held a meeting with important functionaries of Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff .
- He directed that a proposal to create **Air Defence Command** be prepared by **30th of June** this year. He also set out priorities for execution of synergy by 30th June and 31st December this year.

PM Modi inaugurates five high-tech DRDO labs

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated **5 new scientific laboratories**, which will employ only scientists **under the age of 35** to develop cutting-edge and futuristic technologies for military weaponry.
- 5 DRDO Young Scientist Laboratories (DYSLs) have come up in **Bengaluru, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata and Hyderabad**.
- Each lab is working on a key advanced technology of importance to the development of futuristic defence systems.
- Research in the area of rapidly evolving artificial intelligence will be carried out at Bengaluru.
- The all-important area of quantum technology will be based out of IIT Mumbai.
- The cognitive technologies based out of IIT Chennai.
- New and futuristic area of asymmetric technologies will be based out of campus of Jadhavpur University, Kolkata.
- The research in hot and critical area of smart materials and their applications will be based out of Hyderabad.
- A committee, chaired by the Principal Scientific Advisor to the government, **K Vijay Raghavan**, has selected the directors of these laboratories.

Upgraded Version of Fighter Jet Developed Jointly by China and Pakistan Makes Maiden Flight

- An upgraded version of a fighter jet being jointly developed by China and Pakistan has made its maiden flight in the Chinese city of **Chengdu**.

- The **JF-17 Thunder**, earlier named as **FC-1 Xiaolong**, was a single-engine multi-role light fighter jet jointly produced by the two countries for several years with engines supplied by Russia.
- The upgraded version features the technologies of **China's stealth fighter J-20**.
- **China** currently is the only country in the region to have stealth aircraft. The J-20 is China's fourth-generation medium and long-range fighter aircraft.

Lucknow to host Defence Expo 2020, inauguration by PM Modi on Feb 5

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath announced that '**Defence Expo-2020**' will be held in **Lucknow** in February 2020.
- Uttar Pradesh will become a destination for defence manufacturing and aerospace manufacturing.
- This is only the second time that the biennial event will be held outside Bengaluru. In 2018, Chennai hosted the biennial show for the first time ever.
- The theme of the Defence Expo India - 2020 will be '**India: The Emerging Defence Manufacturing Hub**' and focus will be on '**Digital Transformation of Defence**'.

Army to sign MoU for AK-203 assault rifles

- The Army is likely to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in a month for the procurement of over **7.5 lakh AK-203 assault rifles**, which are to be manufactured locally by an **India-Russia joint venture (JV)**.
- The rifles will be manufactured by the **Indo-Russian Rifles Private Limited (IRRPL) at Korwa in Uttar Pradesh**. The facility is being set up between the Ordnance Factories Board (OFB) from the Indian side, and Rosoboron Exports and Kalashnikov on the Russian side.
- The OFB owns 50.5% equity and Russian side holds the remaining 49.5%. The JV was formed following the Inter-governmental Agreement between India and Russia in February 2019.
- The Army recently began inducting the first batch of 10,000 SIG-716 assault rifles.

Royal Navy of Oman ships arrive in Goa for naval exercise "Naseem-Al-Bahr"

- Two ships of the Royal Navy of Oman (RNO) arrived in **Goa** to participate in the 12th edition of the Indo-Oman bilateral naval exercise **Naseem-Al-Bahr**.
- RNOV Al Rasikh and RNOV Khassab arrived at Mormugao Port.
- "Naseem-Al-Bahr" (or sea breeze) is a naval exercise between the Indian Navy and the RNO, being conducted since 1993.
- Indian Navy ships Beas and **Subhadra** are participating in it, with harbour phase in Goa followed by sea phase off the Goa coast.

Indian Navy Kicks Off First 'Maha-Navy Connect 2020' In Maharashtra

- The first tri-dimensional expedition '**Maha-Navy Connect 2020**' was launched by Indian Navy in Mumbai. It aims to promote the heritage of Indian Navy and to spread awareness about Coastal Security amongst the coastal communities in Maharashtra.
- The expedition covers more than 555 km, stretching from Arnala fort, which is the northernmost fort of Maharashtra to **Sindhudurg fort**, the southernmost fort of Maharashtra.

CISF to observe 2020 as "year of mobility" for troops' welfare, housing

- The CISF will observe **2020** as the '**year of mobility**' that will have a special focus on creation of more residential units and implementation of various welfare measures for the troops.
- The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) is mandated as the primary civil airports guarding force of the country apart from protecting some vital installations in the aerospace, nuclear, government and private domain. It is under the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Challakere to be ISRO's astronaut training hub

- India's world-class facility for training astronauts will come up not in the space headquarters in **Bengaluru**.
- It will be established in three years at **Challakere**, Bengaluru-Pune NH4 in **Chitradurga** district of **Karnataka**.

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has proposed a **₹ 2,700-crore** master plan to create top infrastructure that will house its young **Human Space Flight Centre (HSFC)**.
- The facility spread over **400-acre** ISRO land at Challakere will be a self-contained facility having infrastructure and activities related to space travellers.
- The first set of four astronaut candidates selected for the first Gaganyaan mission of **2022** will be trained in **Russia**.

SpaceX launches third batch of Starlink satellites part of plan to form global broadband

- SpaceX launched its **third batch of 60 mini-satellites into orbit**, part of its plans to build a giant constellation of thousands of spacecraft that will form a global broadband internet system.
- A live broadcast by SpaceX showed a **Falcon 9 rocket** taking off without incident from **Cape Canaveral, Florida at 9:19 pm (0219 GMT Tuesday)**.
- The satellites are set to release about one hour after takeoff, bringing the total number of satellites that are part of the US company's **Starlink** network to just under 180.

NASA's planet hunter finds Earth-sized world in 'Goldilocks zone'

- NASA stated that its planet hunter satellite **TESS** had discovered an Earth-sized world within the habitable range of its star, which could allow the presence of liquid water.
- The planet, named **"TOI 700 d"**, is relatively close to Earth -- only **100 light-years away**, NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory announced during the annual American Astronomical Society meeting in Honolulu, Hawaii.
- "TESS was designed and launched specifically to find Earth-sized planets orbiting nearby stars. The discovery were later confirmed by **the Spitzer Space Telescope**. TESS discovered three planets in orbit, named **TOI 700 b, c and d**.
- Only "d" is in the so-called habitable zone, not too far from and not too close to the star, where the temperature could allow the presence of liquid water.

India's first indigenous aircraft carrier Vikrant likely to be commissioned by early 2021

- The manufacturing of the country's **first indigenous aircraft carrier Vikrant** is currently under phase three which involves setting to work of machinery and other equipment and it is likely to be commissioned by early 2021.
- This carrier is being built at the **Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL) in Kochi**.
- Currently, phase three of the construction of Vikrant is under progress, which involves setting to work of machinery and equipment, like power generation and propulsion machinery. The carrier is likely to be commissioned by early **2021**.

Visakhapatnam gearing up to host MILAN 2020

- **Visakhapatnam** is gearing up to host another International Naval event '**MILAN**' in March 2020.
- The theme of the exercise for the year 2020 is '**Synergy Across the Seas**'.
- **MILAN 2020** is a multilateral naval exercise aimed to enhance professional interaction between friendly foreign navies and learn from each other's strengths and best practices in the maritime domain.

Indian Navy to continue with Op Sankalp in Gulf region

- **Indian Navy** continues to monitor the situation in the **Gulf region** and is maintaining a presence in the region to ensure the security of our sea-borne trade and the safety of Indian Flag Merchant Vessels transiting through the region.
- Since June 2019, an Indian warship is deployed in the Persian Gulf for an operation named **Op Sankalp**.

India deploys INS Vikramaditya in Arabian Sea amid China-Pak naval drill

- India has deployed its aircraft carrier **INS Vikramaditya** in the Arabian Sea at a time China and Pakistan are holding a nine-day mega naval exercise in the region.
- Pakistan and China launched a major drill in the North Arabian Sea with an aim to increase inter-operability and strategic cooperation between their two navies.
- The exercise '**Sea Guardians**' is taking place in the midst of heightened tension between India and Pakistan over the Kashmir issue.

Naval version of Tejas successfully takes off from aircraft carrier INS Vikramaditya in major feat

- The naval version of the indigenously-built **Tejas light combat aircraft** successfully took off from the "ski-jump" deck of the aircraft carrier **INS Vikramaditya** in a big leap in overall development of the jet.
- The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) is involved in development of the naval variant of Tejas along with Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA), Aircraft Research and Design Centre of Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd, Centre for Military Airworthiness and Certification (CEMILAC) and CSIR among others.

‘India aiming at \$250 bn maritime economy by 2024’

- **INDIA** is looking at a **USD 250 billion** maritime economy by **2024**, which the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) has the responsibility to safeguard.
- India's exclusive economic zone in the seas along its **7,500-kilometre** coastline comprises over 2 million square kilometres.
- With a target of becoming a **USD 5 trillion economy** by **2024**, looking at over USD 250 billion coming from the maritime zone.
- After commissioning coast guard ships '**ICGS Amrit Kaur**' and '**ICGS Annie Besant**' which will be deployed along the eastern coast.

India to acquire 200 fighter jets for Air Force: Defence secretary

- The government is in the process of acquiring around **200 aircraft** to cope with the depleting aerial inventories of the Indian Air Force, defence secretary Ajay Kumar stated.
- The contract for **HAL-manufactured 83 LCA Tejas Mark 1 A** advanced fighter jets is in the final stages.
- The Air Force has **Sukhoi 30 MKIs, Mirage 2000s, Mig 29s** and the ageing **Jaguars and Mig 21 Bisons** in its inventory of fighter jets at present.
- The last fleet of **seven swing-wing MiG-27 fighters**, which played an important role during the 1999 Kargil war, was decommissioned on December 27.

Two Coast Guard ships commissioned at Kolkata

- Two Indian Coast Guard Ships (ICGS) — **Annie Besant and Amrit Kaur** — were commissioned by Defence Secretary Ajay Kumar at **Kolkata**.
- ICGS Annie Besant was named in honour of Annie Besant. The ship will be based at Chennai under the operational and administrative control of the Commander, Coast Guard Region (East).
- ICGS Amrit Kaur ship will be based at **Haldia** under the operational and administrative control of the Commander, **Coast Guard Region** (North East).

Captain Tania Shergill to become first woman parade adjutant for Republic Day parade

- **Captain Tania Shergill** will be **the first woman parade** adjutant for the Republic Day parade.
- Commissioned in March 2017 from the Officer Training Academy, Chennai, Shergill is an electronics and communications graduate.
- In last year's Republic Day parade, Captain **Bhavna Kasturi** was the first woman officer to lead an all-men contingent.

Indian Navy with IOCL launches special fuel with reduced carbon footprints

- Indian Navy has succeeded in bringing down its **carbon footprint** by revising the fuel quality standards. The improvement is the result of a successful study which Navy conducted with **the Indian Oil Corporation Limited**.
- A revised technical specification was arrived at consisting of 22 test parameters including critical parameters **cetane number, flash point, sulphur content, sediment content, oxidation stability and Cold Filter Plugging Point (CFPP)**.
- The Indian Navy's present force level comprises about 140 ships and submarines and more than 200 aircraft safeguarding a large coastline of 7516 Kms with 1197 offshore islands and 2.01 million sq kms of Exclusive Economic Zone.

Japan Coast Guard Ship 'Echigo' arrives in Chennai

- The Japan Coast Guard Ship '**Echigo**' has arrived Chennai for a goodwill visit. It will be participating in the Annual Joint Exercise '**Sahyog-Kaijin**' with the Indian Coast Guard off **Chennai**.
- This is the **19th** such exercise being conducted between the two Coast Guards since 2000.
- It is aimed at further strengthening bilateral ties and mutual understanding between the two Coast Guards. It is set to enhance interoperability in communication and Search and Rescue procedures and sharing of best practices.

Indo-Japanese joint exercise 'Sahyog-Kaijin' begins off Chennai Coast

- Coast Guards of **India and Japan** took part in a joint exercise '**Sahyog-Kaijin**' off the **Chennai** coast as part of strengthening the bond of the two countries.
- Led by Commanding Officer Captain Kiyoshi Harada, the '**Ehigo PLH08**' and the four ships and a Dornier aircraft of Indian Coast Guard participated in the drill in the Bay of Bengal around 50 nautical miles off Chennai.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh flags off 51st K9 VAJRA-T gun from L&T complex in Gujarat

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh flagged off **51st K9 VAJRA-T Gun** from **Larsen & Toubro (L&T)** Armoured System Complex at **Hazira** in **Gujarat**.
- The government will make all efforts to remove any roadblock and work together to achieve the goal of indigenisation and self-reliance in defence sector.
- Various reforms introduced by the government under the 'Make in India' initiative to achieve **\$26 billion** defence industry by **2025** and provide employment to 2-3 million people.

Russia to deliver 5 S-400 air defence systems to India by 2025

- Russia will deliver **five S-400** air defence systems to India by **2025**, the missiles will serve well for the Indian security.
- India signed a **USD 5.43-billion** deal with Russia for the purchase of **five S-400** systems during the **19th India-Russia Annual Bilateral Summit in New Delhi** on October 5, 2018, for long-term security needs.
- Russia is possessing one of the world's best defense system and it would serve well for Indian security.

India successfully test-fires K-4 ballistic missile

- India has successfully test-fired a **3,500 kilometre range** nuclear capable missile that can be launched from a submarine. The test of the K-4 ballistic missile was conducted off the **Vizag coast** in **Andhra Pradesh**.
- India has moved one more step towards the induction of this ballistic missile on the **INS Arihant class of nuclear submarines**. The missile was developed by Defence Research and Development Organisation (**DRDO**)
- Only the US, Russia and China have submarine-launched ballistic missiles of 3,500-kilometre range.
- The submarine-launched ballistic missile is the most important part of the air, land and sea nuclear triad and is at the front of India's second-strike capability.

IAF inducts its first squadron of Sukhoi-30 MKI aircraft equipped with BrahMos missiles

- The Indian Air Force has inducted its first squadron of **Sukhoi-30 MKI** aircraft carrying the **BrahMos** missiles in the South at its **Thanjavur base** in **Tamil Nadu**.
- The Chief of Defence Staff General **Bipin Rawat** and the Chief of Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Rakesh Kumar Bhadauria inducted the squadron at an impressive ceremony.
- The newly reinstated 222-squadron, also known as the **Tigersharks**, would serve as a lethal weapons platform capable of carrying both aerial and maritime roles in the Indian Ocean Region.
- Air Chief Marshal **Rakesh Kumar Bhadauria**, the Sukhoi-30 MKI aircraft integrated with the supersonic cruise missiles.

SpaceX launches, destroys rocket in astronaut escape test

- **SpaceX** completed the last big test of its crew capsule before launching astronauts in as little as two months, mimicking an emergency escape shortly after liftoff.
- No one was aboard for the wild ride in the skies above **Cape Canaveral**, just two mannequins.
- A **Falcon 9 rocket** blasted off as normal, but just over a minute into its supersonic flight, the Dragon crew capsule catapulted off the top 12 miles (20 kilometers) above the Atlantic.

Avadi Ordnance Factory doubles the manufacturing capacity of Battle Tanks for Indian army

- The engine manufacturing capacity for the battle tanks in the **Indian Ordnance Board's Engines Factory** near Chennai has been more than doubled to **750 per annum**.
- It was earlier fixed at **350 engines per year**.
- The FMS is expected to more than double the engine production capacity of the plant to 750 per annum, from the earlier capacity of 350 engines per year, to meet the increasing demand of the Indian Army.
- The Engine Factory at **Avadi** is the only unit in the country dedicated to manufacturing fully indigenized engines for the Army's Main Battle Tanks.

DRDO to showcase indigenously-developed military systems, technologies at DefExpo 2020

- The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) will display various indigenously-developed military systems and technologies at the **11 edition of DefExpo 2020**, the biennial show that will be held in **Lucknow** from February 5-9.
- The DRDO will exhibit more than 500 products from all technology clusters in the five-day mega expo in line with the theme of the event **"Digital Transformation of Defence"**
- It will showcase over 23 products in the India Pavilion, which has been set up to showcase the combined strength of DRDO, public and private sector in defence manufacturing.

Important Science and Technology

ISRO acquiring land in TN for its 2,300-acre second launch centre

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has earmarked **2,300 acres of land** in **Thoothukudi district**, Tamil Nadu, to set up its second launch centre after the Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) in Sriharikota.
- The new launch centre will be initially meant for missions involving launching small satellites and small satellite launch vehicles (SSLVs).
- To carry forward the industry production of space systems, ISRO incorporated **New Space India Limited (NSIL)** under the Department of Space and efforts in realising PSLVs from industry have already been initiated.
- ISRO is looking at a total of five PSLV launchers is expected to be ready by **2022**.

NCRB Launches two online national level services related to Search of Missing Persons and to Generate Vehicle NOC

- **National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB)** launched Police related Citizen centric services on **CCTNS platform**.
- The services can be accessed through '**digitalpolicecitizenservices.gov.in**' portal or through a link in the existing '**Digital Police Portal**'. The two citizen services namely '**Missing Person Search**' and '**Generate Vehicle NOC**' will now be available online to Citizens.
- NCRB and Cyber Peace foundation together have designed **CCTNS Hackathon** and **Cyber Challenge 2020** with the aim to enhance skills and knowledge of law enforcement personnel at ground level.

10 more wetlands in India declared as Ramsar sites

- India has added **10 more wetlands** to sites protected by the **Ramsar Convention**, Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar announced.
- The 10 new ones are Nandur Madhameshwar, a first for Maharashtra; **Keshopur-Miani, Beas Conservation Reserve and Nangal in Punjab**; and **Nawabganj, Parvati Agra, Saman, Samaspur, Sandi and Sarsai Nawar in Uttar Pradesh**. The other Ramsar sites are in Rajasthan, Kerala, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Assam, West Bengal, Jammu and Kashmir, Andhra Pradesh, Manipur, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and Tripura.
- With this, a total of 37 sites in the country have been recognised under the international treaty. Wetlands declared as Ramsar sites are protected under strict guidelines.

New mission to take first peek at Sun's poles: NASA

- **NASA**, in collaboration with the **European Space Agency (ESA)**, is launching a new spacecraft next month to snap the first pictures of the **Sun's north and south poles**,
- The **Solar Orbiter spacecraft** will have its first opportunity to launch from **Cape Canaveral** in the U.S. on February 7, 2020.

- The spacecraft will use Venus's and the Earth's gravity to swing itself out of the ecliptic plane — the swath of space, roughly aligned with the Sun's equator, where all planets orbit.

IIT-H team develops essential oil delivery system to treat fungal diseases

- Researchers from the **Indian Institute of Technology, Hyderabad (IIT-H)**, have developed a **novel delivery system based on essential oils** in the treatment of diseases caused by **fungi**.
- Microorganisms such as bacteria and fungi have a remarkable capacity to evolve resistance to antimicrobial agents used to destroy them.
- The drug industry is facing a big challenge with many antibiotics becoming less effective.
- As a follow-up of the findings, the researchers are developing a prototype, anti-fungal hygiene products with funding from the **Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC)**.

Aunties, uncles, tube lights among 26 new Indian words in Oxford dictionary

- **Aunties, uncles and tube lights** have made it to the latest edition of the world's best selling dictionary, **Oxford** with 26 new Indian English words being added to a total of **384 existing ones**.
- The 384 words in the 10th edition of the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary come with an Indian English label, including 22 new additions in print and 26 in the online edition.
- Some of the new additions with an Indian-English label include **Aadhaar** (system of issuing a unique 12 digit identification to every individual in India), the Oxford Dictionaries Hindi Word of the Year for 2017, **Chawl** (a large building divided into separate apartments offering cheap and basic accommodation), **Shaadi** (wedding or marriage), **Dabba** (a container with a meal or snack) and **Hartal** (an occasion when all shops and businesses are closed in protest).

French agency CNES to aid ISRO's space station project

- The **French national space agency National Centre for Space Studies (CNES)**, which is collaborating with the Indian Space Research Organisation (**ISRO**) in the Gaganyaan project, will also partner with the latter in the development of **India's planned space station**.
- The French agency and its industry partners have gained vast experience from the **Automated Transfer Vehicle (ATV)** and its spin-offs such as rendezvous operations with the **International Space Station (ISS)**.

Isro signs pact with astrophysics institute to set up optical telescopes

- The Indian Space Research Organization signed a pact with Indian Institute of Astrophysics to establish an optical telescope under "**Project NETRA**".
- The organisation also tied up with **NIT-Karnataka** to set up a **regional academic centre for space** to promote research and development.
- Project NETRA was launched by **ISRO** in **September 2019**. Under the Project, ISRO plans to set up observational facilities that will help in making early warnings to satellites about debris and hazards in their orbit.
- The aim is to make the facilities powerful enough to track even the smallest particle of 10 cm diameter up to a range of **3,400 km**.
- Apart from ISRO, DRDO (Defence Research Development Organisation) operates NETRA (Network Traffic Analysis). It is a software network used to analyse internet traffic.

India to Launch GSAT-30 Communication Satellite

- **India** will launch a heavy communication satellite **GSAT-30** from **Kourou space centre in French Guiana** on board an **Ariane-5 rocket** of the European Space Agency (Arianespace).
- ISRO planning to have 25 launches this year, including Aditya-L1 satellite, which will be inserted in a halo orbit around the Lagrangian point (L1), about 1.5 million km from the earth.
- **Aditya** will also study the **Chromosphere** (ultra-violent) and the particle flux emanating from the sun and reaching **the L1 orbit**.
- During 2019, six launch vehicle and seven satellite missions were realised by us. The year also marked also marked the 50th launch of the **Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV)**.

DBT funds a biotech-kisan hub at Tamil Nadu Agricultural University

- The Department of Biotechnology in the Union Ministry of Science and Technology has provided funds to **Coimbatore-based Tamil Nadu Agricultural University** to set up a biotechnology-KISAN hub under its farmers-centric mission **Biotech-Krishi Innovation Science Application Network (Biotech-KISAN)** programme to link India's farmers with Indian and global best in science.
- The hub has a **low cost hydroponic demonstration unit**, silage making facility, moisture meter, a nutritional forage cafeteria and a power back up facility to ensure uninterrupted power supply to the demonstration unit.
- The hub has been established at a cost of **Rs. 11.14 lakhs** at the **Department of Forage Crops** in the Centre for Plant Breeding and Genetics at the University.

Gujarat Agro Industries launches imported water-soluble fertilizer

- **Gujarat Agro Industries Corporation (GAIC)** has launched imported **water-soluble fertilisers** in **Ahmedabad**.
- The state agency, which promotes agro-based industries in Gujarat, has already imported **300 tonnes of water-soluble fertilizers** from **China**.
- The new-generation fertilizers will be sold in the market under its brand - '**AGRO**'. It also plans to launch customised grades of stage-specific and crop-specific fertilizers.
- **Gujarat** has become a front-runner State in terms of area under drip irrigation system.
- The water-soluble fertilisers that were launched include, **AGRO MKP, AGRO NOP, AGRO MAP, AGRO NPK, AGRO CN, AGRO SOP**.

GSAT-30 Satellite To Be Launched Using Ariane-5 Launch Vehicle

- Communication satellite **GSAT-30** is set to be launched by **Ariane 5 rocket** from **French Guiana**.
- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and the European Space Agency Ariane space will start their space missions for the year **2020** with **GSAT-30**, which is an operational communication satellite for DTH, Television uplink and VSAT services.
- The **GSAT 30** produced by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will provide high-quality television, telecommunication, and broadcasting services, ensuring continuity of service for **INSAT 4A satellite**.

Isro's GSAT-30 satellite successfully launched aboard Ariane rocket

- India's "high power" communication satellite **GSAT-30**, aimed at providing high-quality television, telecommunications and broadcasting services, was successfully launched onboard **Ariane 5 rocket** from **French Guiana**.
- The **3,357-kg satellite**, which was deployed from the lower passenger position of **Ariane-5** launch vehicle (VA 251) into to geostationary transfer orbit (GTO), is configured on Isro's enhanced I-3K Bus structure to provide communication services from Geostationary orbit in C and Ku bands.
- **GSAT-30** is an operational communication satellite for DTH, television uplink and VSAT services.
- **EUTELSAT KONNECT** - which was produced by Thales Alenia Space for Eutelsat - was riding in the upper position of Ariane 5's payload arrangement, and was released first in the flight sequence at 27 minutes following liftoff.

CSIR-CCMB workshop on genome for providing personalised healthcare

- Indian and US researchers, who work to understand **the genetic basis of diseases** among various ethnic populations from different parts of the world, participated in a workshop organised by **CSIR-Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB), Hyderabad**.
- The workshop focussed on understanding genome information in a better way.
- Improved information on genome can help fine-tune genome-assisted healthcare, and could even lead to precise, personalized, more effective and economical approaches to healthcare.

France to train Indian flight surgeons for Gaganyaan mission

- **France** will train Indian flight surgeons to enable them to monitor the health of astronauts selected for the ambitious human space mission **Gaganyaan**.
- The two-week training is a critical aspect of the Gaganyaan project that is aimed at sending three Indians to space by **2022**.

- France has a well-established mechanism for space medicine. It also has the MEDES space clinic, a subsidiary of CNES, where space surgeons undergo training.
- The four shortlisted astronauts -- all test pilots from the Indian Air Force -- are currently in Russia for an 11-month training programme. India and France share robust ties in the area of space.

ISRO to send robot 'Vyomamitra' in unmanned Gaganyaan spacecraft

- The Indian Space Research Organisation will send 'Vyomamitra', a 'lady robot', in unmanned Gaganyaan spacecraft before orbiting astronauts on India's first manned mission to the space in December 2021.
- The robot was the centre of attraction at the inaugural session of the "Human Spaceflight and Exploration - Present Challenges and Future Trends" in Bengaluru
- Vyomamitra, a combination of two Sanskrit words Vyoma (Space) and Mitra (Friend), took everyone by surprise when she introduced herself to the audience gathered there.

POLNET 2.0 armed with robust sat data communication facility launched

- **Police communication services** in the country are expected to be bolstered as a revamped and upgraded **POLNET 2.0** was commissioned by Union Minister of State for Home **Nityanand Rai** at a national conference.
- The new platform is armed with a robust multi-media facility and is a captive satellite-based network that provides video, audio and data connectivity across the country, especially in times of disasters when regular communication either gets jammed or crashes.

Important Ranking and Indexes

Index	India's Rank	Top	Released By
Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index	34 th		World Economic Forum
Social Mobility Index	76 th	Denmark followed by Finland & Sweden	World Economic Forum
Carbon Disclosure Project 2019	5th	USA followed by Japan & UK	Global non-profit organization
Global Talent Index	72nd	Switzerland	INSEAD, Adecco & Google
Corruption Perception index	80th	Denmark & New Zealand	Transparency International

Uttar Pradesh's Chandauli district tops Niti's ranking in Dec

- **Chandauli district** in **Uttar Pradesh** has topped the list of **aspirational districts** ranked by the government think tank Niti Aayog in December.
- **Belangir (Odisha)** and **YSR (Andhra Pradesh)** have been placed at the second and third positions, respectively.
- **Sahibganj (Jharkhand)** has been ranked at the fourth spot and **Hailakandi (Assam)** at the **fifth** place.
- Aspirational districts programme, launched in January 2018, aims to transform districts that have shown relatively lesser progress in key social areas and have emerged as pockets of under-development.

Global unemployment to rise by around 2.5 million in 2020

- Global unemployment is estimated to increase by around 2.5 million in 2020, the United Nations' **International Labour Organisation** report has revealed.
- The **World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2020 (WESO)** report states that global unemployment has been stable for the last nine years but slowing global growth means not enough new jobs are being generated to absorb new entrants to the labour market.

- Currently, there are approximately 188 million unemployed people in the world in addition to the 165 million people who are underpaid.

Qantas Airways is the world's safest airline

- **Indonesia's PT Garuda** Indonesia is the most punctual airline.
- The world's safest and most punctual airlines are in the **Asia Pacific region**
- Qantas Airways Ltd was named safest airline in the world on a top-20 list published by AirlineRatings.com, followed by **Air New Zealand Ltd** and **Taiwan's Eva Airways Corp.**
- **Singapore Airlines Ltd** was ranked **sixth**, while Cathay Pacific Airways and Virgin Australia Holdings Ltd were ranked ninth and tenth respectively.
- In a separate survey by OAG Aviation Worldwide Ltd, **PT Garuda Indonesia** was crowned **2019's most punctual** carrier. **Panama's Copa Airlines SA** ranked **second** among airlines arriving or departing within 15 minutes of scheduled times. Japans Skymark Airlines Inc, Hawaiian Airlines Inc and Latam Airlines Group SA rounded out the top five.
- Among the major United States (US) carriers, **Delta Air Lines Inc** was the only one to make it into the top 20.

3 Kerala cities in Economist list of world's fastest growing urban regions; Malappuram tops

- Three Kerala cities—**Malappuram, Kozhikode and Kollam**—are among the top-10 fastest growing urban regions, in terms of population, in the world, according to the latest rankings by the **Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU)**.
- **Malappuram** ranked number 1, while **Kozhikode** has been ranked number 4; **Kollam** is in the tenth position. No other Indian city has figured in the top 10 list.
- One city from Vietnam (Can Tho), three from China (Suqian, Suzhou and Putian), one from Nigeria (Abuja), one from UAE (Sharjah), and one from Oman (Muscat) find their place in the list.
- The other Indian cities to figure in the list are **Surat (27)** and **Thiruppur (30)**. The list has been compiled on the basis of the data provided by the United Nation's Population Division.

Japan tops list of most powerful passports, India ranks 84th

- Japan has topped a global index for the world's most powerful passport in 2019, while **India** ranked at the **84th position**.
- According to the Henley Passport Index, which periodically measures the access each country's travel document affords, **Japan retained its top spot** as the **world's most travel-friendly passport** due to the document's access to 191 countries with a prior visa.
- Singapore is ranked at second position, allowing travel to 190 countries; South Korea and Germany shared 3rd position, with travel to 189 countries.
- India shares 84th position with Tajikistan and Mauritania, and is ranked lower than many African nations.
- The Henley Passport Index is based on data provided by the International Air Transport Authority (IATA) and covers 199 passports and 227 travel destinations.

Narendra Modi fifth biggest geo-political risk of 2020: Eurasia Group

- **India** under Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been listed as **the fifth biggest** geo-political risk of 2020, by the political risk consultancy – the Eurasia Group.
- In a list that is **topped by** elections in the **US** and followed by events and developments like the US-China technology tug of war on 5G as well as the trade war between Beijing and Washington.
- Eurasia's annual 'Top 10 Risks' of the year list is considered one of the foremost geopolitical indicators among global investors, multinational firms and various financial and business consultancies.

Haryana, Karnataka and Kerala top State Energy Efficiency Index 2019

- **Manipur, Jammu & Kashmir, Jharkhand and Rajasthan** perform worst in their groups
- **Haryana, Karnataka and Kerala** have topped the **State Energy Efficiency Index 2019**. This index tracks the progress of Energy Efficiency (EE) initiatives in 36 states and union territories based on 97 significant indicators.
- The State Energy Efficiency Index categorises states as 'Front Runner', 'Achiever', 'Contender' and 'Aspirant' based on their efforts and achievements towards energy efficiency implementation.

RBI ranked sixth among central banks in buying gold abroad

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) bought **7.5 tonnes of gold** last October.
- The RBI holds 625.2 tonnes of gold, forming 6.6 per cent of its forex reserves as per World Gold Council (WGC).
- RBI was a modest player in buying gold abroad compared to other major central banks, adding to its reserve in October after a gap of five months. However, it became the sixth largest buyer when it purchased 25.2 tonnes in first 10 months of 2019 to hedge government's sovereign gold bond issue.
- The central banks of China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Turkey, Poland bought more than India in 2019. In 2019, Uzbekistan and Venezuela sold 16.6 tonnes and 30.3 tonnes of gold.
- Institutional investors in exchange traded funds (ETF) were the second biggest buyers of gold in 2019. Retail demand for jewellery and investments continued to be high, but ETFs overtook them by buying 400 tonnes in 2019.

Mumbai among cheapest cities in the world for luxury goods, says Global Wealth and Lifestyle report

- Swiss wealth management group Julius Baer Group Ltd stated that its first Global Wealth and Lifestyle Report 2020.
- Out of 28 cities, **Mumbai** was ranked as the **cheapest city** for purchasing **luxury goods and services**, while **Hong Kong** was found to be the **most expensive**.
- Four out of the top five most expensive countries for luxury goods and services, in fact, were found to be Asian countries. **Hong Kong** topped the list, followed by **Shanghai, Tokyo, New York** and **Singapore**.

West Bengal emerges at the top in vegetable production

- **West Bengal** has overtaken **Uttar Pradesh** and emerged as the top State in vegetable production in 2018-19, the data presented at a recent horticultural meeting showed.
- According to the State-wise horticulture production data released at a conference organised by the Agriculture Ministry West Bengal produced 29.55 million tonnes (mt) of vegetables last year against 27.70 mt in the year before. Vegetable production in UP, which held the numerous position earlier, came down to 27.71 mt in 2018-19 from 28.32 mt the previous year.

Fruits production

- **Andhra Pradesh** continued to hold on to the pole position in fruits with 17.61 mt, followed by Maharashtra (10.82 mt) and UP (10.65 mt). While Andhra Pradesh marginally improved its position,
- **Maharashtra** overtook Assam, which occupied the second position in 2017-18. UP, too, moved several notches up from 2017-18 levels to reach the third rank.

Jharkhand's Jharia most polluted city, Delhi reduces air pollution marginally: Greenpeace report

- The coal-belching town of **Jharia in Jharkhand** continues to be the most polluted city in India, according to a Greenpeace India.
- **Jharkhand's Dhanbad**, known for its rich coal reserves and industries, is the second-most polluted city in India. Lunglei in Mizoram is the least polluted city in the country.
- **Delhi** is the 10th-most polluted city in India, according to the report.
- Six of the top-10 polluted cities are in Uttar Pradesh -- Noida, Ghaziabad, Bareilly, Allahabad, Moradabad and Firozabad.

Sri Lanka topped the World Breastfeeding Trends Initiative list

- **Sri Lanka** topped on breastfeeding rate according to a new survey conducted by the **World Breastfeeding Trends Initiative (WBTi)**. The survey was taken among 97 countries globally.
- **Sri Lanka's rank** is based on its performance on ten indicators of policies and programs.
- WBTi uses **color-code** to rank countries. Sri Lanka earned a **green color code**, which implies the best level of performance.
- Sri Lanka has been making an effort to support and provide supportive measures for breastfeeding **since 2005**.

Gujarat replaces West Bengal as top governing state in 2019, says study

- Gujarat replaced West Bengal as the **top governed state in the 2019** Skoch rankings.
- While there are 22 parameters that go into the overall ranking, health and cleanliness dominated the good governance initiatives across the country in 2019, says the report.
- **Delhi** was at the **19th place**, lower than 15th spot it occupied in the previous two years.
- Delhi is ranked fifth on the parameter of health, one of its main claims of governance

Hyderabad ranks 14th globally in housing price appreciation: Knight Frank

- **Hyderabad** has ranked **14th** among 150 cities in the **Knight Frank's Global Residential Cities Index Q3 2019**, with an appreciation of 9% in residential prices on a YoY basis in the third quarter of 2019 calendar year.
- **New Delhi** and **Bengaluru** stood at **70th** and **94th ranks**, respectively.
- **Budapest** leads the index, with the highest annual growth rate of 24%, followed by Xi'an and Wuhan in China at 15.9% and 14.9 per cent, respectively.

Bangladesh moves 8 positions up in EIU Democracy Index, Norway tops the list

- **Bangladesh** has improved its ranking by 8 points in the EIU Democracy Index released . The country has been ranked at **80th position** with an overall score of 5.88 on a scale of 10 this year compared to 88th position in 2018 Norway is at the top with an overall score of 9.71 while **North Korea** is at the bottom of the index.
- Overall, 2019 marked the worst year of global democracy score since 2006 when the rankings were first published.

China Ranked World's Second Largest Arms Producer Trailing behind US

- The opaque Chinese arms industry has made the Asian nation the **world's second largest producer** of munitions, a clear shift from a decade ago
- The report by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) suggests that China's weapons production, which has previously been shrouded in mystery owing to a lack of transparency, has grown as three of the world's top 10 arms companies are Chinese.
- **China** is the second largest arms producer in the world, **behind the US and ahead of Russia**.

Assam tops in budgetary practices, followed by Odisha, Andhra: Survey

- **Assam** has emerged as the top state in terms of best practices followed in **budget formulation**, followed by **Odisha** and **Andhra Pradesh**, says a survey by Transparency International.
- The survey was based on four parameters -- public disclosure, budgetary process, post budget fiscal management and efforts to make budget more transparent and citizen friendly.
- The states which figured lower in the ranking were **Goa, Maharashtra and Punjab**.

Important Books and Authors

Authors/ Released by	Books
Amit Shah	Karmayoddha Granth
Jggernaut Books	A New India: Selected Writings 2014-19
Samir Saran & Akhil Deo Launched by External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar	PAX SINICA: Implications for the Indian Dawn (A boo on China)
'Essays and Reminiscences' on Nani A alkhivala	Edited by the senior advocate Arvind Datar.
The Winning Sixer: Leadership Lessons To Master	Woorkeri Venkat Raman
Human Dignity – A purpose in perpetuity	Ashwini Kumar
The Gateway	Hariharan Balagopal

The Story of Yoga: From India to the Contemporary World	Alistair Shearer
Balwa (Hindi Novel)	Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi

PM Modi Launches Braille Version Of His Book 'Exam Warriors' On World Braille Day

- On **World Braille Day (Jan 4th)** Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that his famous book for children '**Exam Warriors**' will now be available in Braille.
- Exam Warriors is a book by PM Modi for the youth which talks about how children can ace exams through a fun and interactive style, with illustrations, activities and yoga exercises.

Nepali translation of Swami Vivekananda's 'Karma Yoga' among 4 books released in Nepal on Vishwa Hindi Diwas

- The Indian Embassy in Kathmandu released as many as four books, including the Nepali translation of Swami Vivekananda's '**Karma Yoga**'.
- The other three books include the Nepali translation of a book compiling five famous stories by Indian writer Premchand, as well as the Hindi translations of '**Ashwathama**' written by Nepalese poet **Madhav Prasad Ghimire** and '**Utkrishta Kahaniyan**' -- a collection of 25 modern Nepali stories written by young and upcoming Nepali story writers.
- In addition, a special issue of the research journal 'Sahityalok' of Central Hindi Department of Tribhuvan University was also released during an event at the embassy to mark the occasion.

Important Sports News

Cricket

BCCI likely to appoint Madan Lal, Gautam Gambhir as Cricket Advisory Committee members

- The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) is all set to appoint former cricketers **Gautam Gambhir** and **Madan Lal** as members of the Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC).
- Both Lal and Gambhir have been approached by the board for the role of the advisory committee which will pick selection committees for the next four-year cycle starting **2020**.
- **Madan Lal** is been approached by BCCI for CAC appointment but the final call to be taken by the board only. **Gautam Gambhir** is also approached by the BCCI and he is likely to accept the offer.

ICC U-19 World Cup Cricket begins in South Africa@BCCI

- The ICC Under-19 World Cup Cricket begins in **South Africa**. Indian team, under the captaincy of **Priyam Garg**, will look to defend the title when it begins its campaign against Sri Lanka at the **Oval, Bloemfontein**.
- India are placed in Group 'A' and will face New Zealand, Sri Lanka and Japan, who will be making their first-ever appearance in any World Cup.
- India is the most successful team in the tournament, having won four titles till date, including the last edition in 2018.

MS Dhoni dropped from BCCI's central contracts listPTI

- **Mahendra Singh Dhoni** was dropped from the **Board of Control for Cricket** in India's list of centrally-contracted players.
- The BCCI announced the central contracts for the period of **October 2019 to September 2020**.
- The 38-year-old player was in the 'A' category, which fetches a player **five crore rupees** as annual retainership, until last year.
- Skipper **Virat Kohli**, his white-ball deputy Rohit Sharma and top pacer Jasprit Bumrah were retained in the highest A bracket of seven crore rupees.
- Among others, batsman **K.L. Rahul** has been promoted from 'B' grade to 'A' category.

- Test opener Mayank Agarwal has been included in the Grade 'B' category, which also features Hardik Pandya and Yuzvendra Chahal along with two others.
- Pacer **Navdeep Saini** and T20 specialist Washington Sundar are new entrants in Grade 'C' alongside **Shreyas Iyer**, **Deepak Chahar** and Shardul Thakur.
- Veteran Cricketer **Mithali Raj** was demoted to Grade 'B' from 'A' while Radha Yadav and Taniya Bhatia were elevated to the middle bracket.
- T20 skipper Harmanpreet Kaur retained her 'A' category contract alongside Smriti Mandhana and Poonam Yadav.
- Players getting a central contract for the first time are 15-year-old opener **Shafali Verma** and **Harleen Deol**.

ICC ODI rankings: Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma consolidate top batting positions; Bumrah tops bowling chart

- India Captain Virat Kohli and his deputy **Rohit Sharma** consolidated their top two positions in the batting chart in the One-Day International Rankings issued by International Cricket Council in **Dubai**.
- Following their stellar performances against Australia which India won 2-1, **Kohli (No.1)** and **Rohit (No.2)** have strengthened their positions.
- Kohli (886 points) and Rohit (868 points) have gained two and three rating points, to occupy the top two positions in the batting rankings.
- Indian pace ace **Jasprit Bumrah** continued to lead among bowlers. Bumrah, who returned from injury in the Australia series, is at top of the bowling chart with 764 points.

Sachin Tendulkar, Courtney Walsh to coach Aussie bushfire relief match

- Cricket legends **Sachin Tendulkar** and **Courtney Walsh** will coach star-studded teams in a charity match to raise funds for victims of Australia's bushfires, organisers.
- The former Test captains are the latest players to come out of retirement for the appeal, joining Aussie greats Adam Gilchrist, Brett Lee, Michael Clarke and Shane Watson.
- India's Tendulkar and Windies fast bowler Walsh will coach teams skippered by Shane Warne and Ricky Ponting respectively. Steve Waugh and Australian coach Justin Langer will also have non-playing roles.

Australia to host 11th Indoor Cricket WC in October

- **Australia** is set to host a **third cricket World Cup** with the **World Indoor Cricket Federation** announcing Melbourne as the host city for the eleventh Indoor Cricket World Cup from October 10-17.
- The tournament will be held at two state-of-the-art, **elite indoor cricket** venues in Melbourne: **Casey Stadium** and **CitiPower Centre**.
- Cricketers from up to 10 countries from around the world will compete at the tournament in four divisions: 21 and under men, 21 and under women, open men and open women.
- Australia are already hosting Women's and Men's T20 World Cups this year.

Hagley Oval to host 2021 Women's Cricket World Cup final

- **Six New Zealand cities** will host the tournament's 31 **One Day International matches**, which runs from 6 February to 7 March. The cities are **Auckland, Wellington, Hamilton, Tauranga, Dunedin and Christchurch**.
- Hamilton and Tauranga will host the semifinals while Christchurch was awarded the final after consents were granted for the installation of lights at Hagley Oval last year.
- The ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2020 is scheduled to be held in Australia between 21 February and 8 March 2020.

Motera Cricket Stadium, world's largest, could host IPL 2020 final in Ahmedabad

- The final of the **Indian Premier League (IPL)** 2020 can be played at the **Sardar Patel Stadium (Motera) Stadium** in **Ahemadabad, Gujarat**.
- The Motera Stadium will become the largest cricket arena in the world when its construction is completed. The spectacular stadium will have a seating capacity of 1,10,000 spectators overtaking the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) in Australia which is the largest cricket stadium in the world at the moment.

S Dhoni picked captain of ESPN Cricinfo's ODI and T20 teams of past decade

- Former India skipper **Mahendra Singh Dhoni** was picked as **captain of ESPN Cricinfo's ODI** and Twenty20 teams of the decade, while **Virat Kohli** was named the **leader** in Tests.
- The criteria, set by the **23-member panel**, for selection was a minimum of 50 Tests or six active years in the traditional format while it was 75 ODIs and 100 T20s for the limited-overs teams.
- Kuldeep Yadav, and Yuzvendra Chahal, were the only other Indians to make the Test XI, which also featured England's Alastair Cook and New Zealand's Kane Williamson.
- Former skipper **Mithali Raj** and fast bowler **Jhulan Goswami** were named in the same women's team picked for both the ODIs and T20s. Australia's inspirational cricketer, **Meg Lanning** was named **the captain of the side**.

ICC plans to scrap five-day Tests from 2023@ICC

- International Cricket Council, plans to scrap **five-day Tests** from **2023**. The ICC could make four-day Tests mandatory from 2023 as part of the World Test Championship, primarily to free up the crowded calendar.
- Tests have been played over five days through most of their 140-year history. **England** has backed the plan.
- It could provide a sustainable solution to the complex scheduling needs and players' workloads.

Football

Hyderabad FC appoints Albert Roca as the new head coach

- The **bottom-placed ISL** outfit **Hyderabad FC** named **Albert Roca** as their new head coach for the **2020-21 season on a two-year deal**.
- According to an ISL media release, Roca, who had earlier coached Bengaluru FC to the AFC Cup finals, will advise the new coaching staff for the remainder of the season and will take full charge from the beginning of next season.

North East Dr T Ao Trophy: Mizoram defeats Sikkim

- Two times champion **Mizoram** defeated **Sikkim** by a solitary goal to emerge as the champion of the Northeast **Dr. T Ao Football Trophy 2020 at Indira Gandhi Stadium in Kohima**.
- The first half saw a goalless draw. Mizoram midfielder **David Lalrinmuana** scored the lone goal in the 74th minute to secure the title for the team.
- While the champion team received a cash prize of **10 lakh rupees**, the runners up got six 6 lakhs. **Rhitho Mero** received the golden boot for his 10 goals.
- Meanwhile, Nagaland defeated Arunachal Pradesh by 4-2 to claim the third position. Nagaland received two lakh rupees and Arunachal Pradesh one Lakh rupees with a certificate.

Other Sports News

Young Grand Master Praggnanandhaa stuns former world champ Topalov

- Young Indian Grand Master **R Praggnanandhaa** pulled off a huge upset, beating former world champion **Veselin Topalov** in the sixth round of the **18th Gibraltar Chess Festival** to record his fifth straight win.
- The 14-year old Chennai lad needed just 33 moves to put it across the **Bulgarian**. He had started with a loss against compatriot **P V Nandhidhaa** but since then he has been on a winning spree.
- A bunch of players including Indians — **B Adhiban**, K Sasikiran, Shardul Gagare, Karthikeyan Murali, last year's runner-up here, SL Narayanan — are in joint third place with 4.5 points.

5th IHA National Ice Hockey Championship-2020 begins in Leh

- The **5th Ice Hockey Association of India (IHA) National Ice Hockey Championship -2020** has begun in **Leh**. In the inaugural match in Under-20 Boys category between Chandigarh and Haryana, the contest ended in a draw with 4 goals each.

- The tournament will continue till **7th January in Karzoo Ice Hockey Rink in Leh**, where the Army, Chandigarh, Delhi, Haryana, Maharashtra and home team Ladakh are fighting for the championship in U-20 boys category.

Manav Thakkar becomes world no.1 in latest International Table Tennis Federation rankings

- **Manav Thakkar** became world no.1 in the latest **International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF)** rankings in the Under-21 men's singles category.
- Thakkar became the fourth Indian to achieve the feat after Harmeet Desai, G Sathiyam and Soumyajit Ghosh.
- **G. Sathiyam** has managed to retain his **30th spot** in the senior category. **Achanta Sharath Kamal** has climbed a spot to **33rd position**. Top woman paddler, Manika **Batra** was static at the **61st position**.

Indian Blind Sports Association organizes sports events from Jan 6

- **Indian Blind Sports Association (IBSA)** organized a week-long sportsevents for the blind in the premises of The BlindRelief Association, Delhi, **Lal Bahadur Shastri Marg**, near the **Oberoi Hotel, NewDelhi**.
- Over 400 participants, including 85 female blind sports persons from 7states, namely, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Tamilnadu and Telangana will be taking part in the following events.

Saurabh Chaudhary wins gold in men's 10 m air pistol at 63rd National Shooting C'ship

- **Saurabh Chaudhary** has won the **men's 10 metres air pistol gold** at the **63rd National Shooting Championship in Bhopal** . The 17-year-old from Uttar Pradesh shot a classy 246.4 to finish on top.
- Second-placed **Sarabjot Singh of Haryana** was well behind with a score of 243.9, while world number two **Abhishek Verma** settled for bronze in a high-quality final.

Khelo India Youth Games-2020 to advocate for elimination of single-use plastics

- The third edition of Khelo India Youth Games-2020, was held in **Guwahati** from 10th of January, will be advocating for the **elimination of single-use plastics** this time.
- The Games continued till 22nd of this month. The emphasis would be given to the responsible use of plastic material and proper collection and disposal of plastic waste.

Bhubaneswar to host 1st edition of Khelo India University Games from Feb 22 to March 1

- The first edition of Khelo India University Games is scheduled to be held at the **KIIT University in Bhubaneswar** from February 22nd to March 1st.
- The launching ceremony of the event was held at **Bhubaneswar**. Union Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju and Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik unveiled the logo and jersey of Khelo India University Games.
- Mr Patnaik stated that **Bhubaneswar** city has gained the repute of being the **Sports Capital of India**.

P Magesh Chandran lifts 95th Hastings International Chess title

- India's P Magesh Chandran lifted the title in the 95th edition of the prestigious Hastings International Chess Congress at Hastings in England.
- He remained unbeaten in all the nine rounds. The 36-year old Grand Master with a FIDE rating of 2479, finished in clear first place with 7.5 points from nine games. He beat fellow Indian GM **Deep Sengupta** in the eighth round.

ITTF executive committee meeting to be held in New Delhi

- **New Delhi** hosted the **two-day Executive Committee** meeting of the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF).
- It is the second time the country will be hosting such a meeting. The previous EC meeting of the ITTF was held in New Delhi way back in 1987 when Table Tennis Federation of India (TTFI) played host to the World Championships in Delhi.
- The EC meeting, to be chaired by ITTF President **Thomas Weikert**, discussed the development of table tennis in India, among other issues.
- TTFI has evinced interest in hosting the 2024 World Championships (team events), besides seeking to organise a Platinum Championships in 2021.

India finish 2019 as number one shooting nation in world

- India finished the year as the **top shooting nation in the world**, leaving behind Olympic heavyweights China and the USA.

- In terms of overall medals, the tally stood at **21 gold, six silver and three bronze** as India topped all the Rifle-Pistol World Cups and Finals in a unforgettable year.
- While **India** leads the standings with 30 medals overall, **China** is second with 11 gold, 15 silver and 18 bronze for a total of 44 podium finishes. The **USA** is placed third with 15 medals including six gold six silver and three bronze.

Ratchanok Intanon lifts Indonesia Masters 2020 title

- **Thailand's Ratchanok Intanon** lifted the **Indonesia Badminton Masters 2020** women's singles title after defeating **Carolina Marin** in the summit clash.
- Intanon defeated Marin 21-19, 11-21, 21-18 in one hour and twenty minutes long match. The clash went into three-games and both the shuttlers tried their 100 per cent to turn things in their favour.

Wrestling: India bags 7 medals in Rome Ranking Series

- In wrestling, India has returned with seven medals from the **Rome Ranking Series**.
- **Bajrang Punia** and **Ravi Kumar Dahiya** claimed gold medals in the tournament I.
- The 25-year-old Bajrang staged a comeback to secure a 4-3 win against USA's Jordan Michael Oliver in the summit showdown of the **65kg freestyle category**.
- The 23-year-old Ravi bagged the gold after defeating Kazakhstan's Nurbolat Abdualiyev 12-2 in his final **61 kg category** bout.
- Earlier, **Vinesh Phogat** won a gold and **Anshu Malik** a silver in the women's competition. In Greco-roman, Gurpreet Singh won a gold in 82 kg category. Sunil Kumar settled for a silver in 97kg category while Sajjan Bhanwal got a bronze in the 77 kg category.

Indian shooters Divyansh Singh Pawar, Apurvi Chandela Clinch Gold in Meyton CupF

- Indian shooters Divyansh Singh Pawar and Apurvi Chandela have clinched a gold medal each in Meyton Cup in Innsbruck, Austria.
- The Meyton Cup is a private tournament where shooters go on their own to participate to gain experience before international events.
- While Divyansh won the gold in the men's 10m air rifle event with an effort of 249.7, Auprvi bagged the yellow metal in the 10m air rifle women's category with a 251.4.
- Deepak Kumar and Anjum Moudgil also a bagged bronze medal each in men's and women's 10m air rifle events respectively. Deepak shot 228 en route the bronze, while Anjum's effort of 229 also fetched her a podium finish.

Celebrated wrestler Yogeshwar Dutt and Paralympian Deepa Malik inducted in AICS

- **Yogeshwar Dutt** and **Paralympian Deepa Malik** are among the new inductees in the government's All India Council of Sports (AICS).
- It is an advisory body to the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports which was formed in 2015 by the then Sports Minister Sarbananda Sonowal.
- Its term has also been extended by three years and it will continue to be led by veteran sports administrator **V K Malhotra** as President.
- Some other renowned new entrants in the Council are former shooter Anjali Bhagwat, footballer Renedy Singh, and mountaineer Bachendri Pal. Senior India off-spinner Harbhajan Singh has also been inducted in the council.

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

- In Cycling, India's **Esow Alben** has bagged a **gold** in the **men's Keirin individual event** of the Six Day Berlin Tournament. The 18-year-old finished on top of the podium, earning 20 classification points .
- Czech Republic's **Tomas Babek**, who won a silver in the 2017 World Championship, came in second while Maximilian Lev of Germany took home the bronze.

World Archery lifts suspension on India enabling Indian archers to represent country

- The World Archery conditionally lifted the suspension on India, less than a week after the embattled national federation held its elections.
- A statement from the World Archery stated the federation needs to comply with good governance and activity portions of the World Archery constitution and rules. Must report every three months.

- Union Minister **Arjun Munda** was elected as President of the Archery Association of India (AAI).

Khelo India Youth Games: Maharashtra crowned champion

- **Maharashtra maintained** its supremacy in **Khelo India Youth Games** by improving upon its last year's performance and finishing at the top of the table with a massive haul of 256 medals, comprising 78 gold, 77 silver and 101 bronze, as the 13-day sporting extravaganza came to a close.
- Maharashtra — which received the winner's trophy from Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal— was followed by **Haryana** (200, 68 gold) and **Delhi** (122, 39 gold).

Rank	State	Gold Medal	Silver Medal	Bronze Medal	Tally
1	Maharashtra	78	77	101	256
2	Haryana	68	60	72	200
3	Delhi	39	36	47	122
4	Karnataka	32	26	22	80
5	Uttar Pradesh	29	28	30	87

India's Federation Cup games moved from virus-hit China to Kazakhstan

- The **Indian Federation Cup** team heaved a sigh of relief after the **International Tennis Federation (ITF)** shifted the Federation Cup matches from the **Coronavirus-hit China to Kazakhstan**.
- **All India Tennis Association (AITA)** had written to the ITF, requesting the world governing body to consider either shifting the venue or postponing the tournament. The tournament was originally scheduled to be held in **Dongguan** from 4th of next month.

Adhiban, Narayanan register impressive wins in Gibraltar chess

- Grandmasters **B Adhiban** and **S L Narayanan** registered impressive wins in the **third round of the Masters' category of the ongoing Gibraltar chess festival**.
- Adhiban and Narayanan scored superb wins over Martin Petrov of Bulgaria and Tingjie Lei of China while young GM Raunak Sadhwani securing 1.5 points shared the point with higher-ranked David Navara.
- Apart from Adhiban and Narayanan, there are a few other Indians on 2.5 points, including **Vaibhav Suri** and **Karthikeyan Murali**. Young Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa beat International Master Padmini Rout to take his tally to 2.

Javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra qualifies for 2020 Tokyo Olympics

- Ace India **javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra** has qualified for the **Tokyo 2020 Olympics** with a throw of 87.86m at the Athletics Central North East meeting in South Africa.
- This was the Olympic medal hopeful's first competitive event after recovering from the injury.
- The Athletics Federation of India (AFI) also stated that they've confirmed with their South African counterparts that it was a 'recognised international meet', and hence the Olympic cut has been made.

National Shooting trials: Ayonika Paul and Vijayveer Sidhu emerge winners

- Olympian **Ayonika Paul** has won the women's **10m Air Rifle T1** event while **Vijayveer Sidhu** won the **men's 25m Pistol T2** event in the National Shooting trials at **Thiruvananthapuram**.
- Ayonika overcame a quality eight-woman field which had the likes of Tokyo 2020 quota holders Apurvi Chandela and Anjum Moudgil among competitors.

Revision Points

Organization	Headquarters	Key Person
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)	Paris, France	Audrey Azoulay
United Nations	New York, USA	António Guterres
Food Safety and Standards Authority	New Delhi	Rita Teatia

of India (FSSAI)		
NASSCOM	New Delhi	Rishad Premji
Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)	Bengaluru	K Sivan
National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)	Washington DC, USA	James Frederick “Jim” Bridenstine
World Economic Forum (WEF)	Cologny, Switzerland	Klaus Schwab
International Monetary Fund (IMF)	Washington DC	Kristalina Georgieva
International Cricket Council (ICC)	Dubai, UAE	Manu Sawhney
Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI)	New Delhi	DilipChenoy
International Hockey Federation (FIH)	Lausanne, Switzerland	Narinder Batra
United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)	New York, USA	Henrietta H. Fore

Important Peoples' in News

Rani Rampal becomes first ever hockey player to win World Games Athlete of the Year' award

- Indian women's team captain **Rani Rampal** became the **first-ever hockey player** to win the prestigious '**World Games Athlete of the Year'** award.
- Last year, India won the FIH Series Finals, and Rani was named **Player of the Tournament**.
- Rani, who was recently named among the **Padma Shri awardees**, dedicated the award to the entire hockey fraternity, her team and the country.

Telangana girl Malavath Poorna scales Mt. Vinson Massif, highest mountain in Antarctica

- Malavath Poorna**, who became a role model for the rural youth, after she conquered Mt Everest five years ago, has now set another record.
- Poorna has now conquered **Mt Vinson Massif**, the Antarctica continent's highest mountain peak (4,987 mts).

Irfan Pathan announces retirement from all forms of Cricket

- Indian all-rounder **Irfan Pathan** announced his retirement from all forms of Cricket. Irfan, who has been out of favour from the Indian team for few years now, made his Team India debut at the age of **19 in 2003**.
- He last played for India in October 2012. He played 29 Tests, 120 ODIs and 24 T20Is. He was part of the victorious Indian team at the 2007 World Twenty20 and was the man-of-the-match in the final against Pakistan.

Weightlifter Sarbjeet Kaur banned for four years for doping violation

- Weightlifter Sarbjeet Kaur** has been slapped with a **four-year ban** for doping by the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA).
- The sample of Sarbjeet, who won **the 71kg event** at the women's national weightlifting championships in February last year, was collected during 34th Women Senior National Weightlifting Championship held at Vishakhapatnam.
- The Anti-Doping Disciplinary Panel has found weightlifter Sarbjeet Kaur guilty of anti-doping rule violation. She has been imposed a penalty of ineligibility for a period of four years. Kaur was tested positive earlier following intake of the prohibited non-specified substance.

Virat Kohli retains top spot; Ajinkya Rahane, Cheteshwar Pujara slip in ICC Test rankings

- India skipper **Virat Kohli** retained his top spot among **batsmen** while **Cheteshwar Pujara** and **Ajinkya Rahane** slipped in the latest ICC Test rankings.
- In bowling, India's pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah, returning from an injury layoff, remained static at sixth position with 794 points, while spinner Ravichandran Ashwin (772 points) and seamer Mohammed Shami (771) were ninth and 10th respectively.

- Australia's Marnus Labuschagne grabbed a career-best third place.

Rani Rampal nominated for 'World Games Athlete of the Year'

- The Indian women's hockey team captain **Rani Rampal** has been nominated for the '**World Games Athlete of the Year**' by the sport's governing body FIH.
- FIH has recommended her name for the award for her outstanding performances and her ability to lead by example, Hockey India said in a statement.
- This will be the **6th edition of the WGA** initiative that recognises and honours an athlete or a team for their outstanding performance or for their social commitment or particularly fair behaviour.
- Last year, **Acrobatic Gymnastics couple Mariia Chernova and Georgii Pataraia (Russia)** won the title with 159,348 votes, just ahead of American Powerlifter Jennifer Thompson with 152,865 votes.

Noted theatre personality Sanjna Kapoor to be conferred French honour

- Noted theatre personality **Sanjna Kapoor**, the daughter of Bollywood actor Shashi Kapoor, will be conferred prestigious **French honour, Knight of the Order of Arts and Letters**, for her outstanding contribution to **theatre**.
- She was honored by French Minister of Culture Franck Riester, who was currently on an official visit to India.
- In 2012, she co-founded **Junoon**, an organisation dedicated to increasing the reach of theatre and the arts to wider audiences through innovative initiatives.

Important Mergers and Acquisition

HDFC gets requisite approval to hold a 51.2% stake in Apollo Munich Health Insurance Company

- **HDFC** has received approval from **Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (Irdai)** to acquire **51.2% stake in Apollo Munich Health Insurance** – a joint venture between Apollo Hospitals and German reinsurer Munich Re Group.
- In June 2019, HDFC had agreed to acquire the entire **50.8%** stake of Apollo Hospitals Group in a health insurance joint venture with German reinsurer Munich Re Group as part of its strategy to tap this potential growth market.

PayU to acquire PaySense for \$185 mn

- **PayU** has decided to acquire a controlling stake in digital credit platform **PaySense**, including its assets, in a deal valued at **\$185 million**.
- As part of the transaction, PayU's consumer lending businesses, LazyPay and PaySense, will merge their business operations to build a full-stack digital lending platform in India.
- Additionally, PayU will inject a total of up to **\$200 million** in the new enterprise in the form of equity capital; **\$65 million** of the total amount will be immediately invested, while the balance corpus will be infused in the next 24 months to grow the loan book.

Zomato acquires UberEats India for nearly Rs 2,500 crore in all-stock deal

- **Zomato** announced that it has acquired **Uber's Food Delivery Business** in India in an all-stock deal and Uber will have 9.99 per cent stake in the **Deepinder Goyal**-led food delivery platform.
- It is in the range of over **USD 350 million** or nearly **Rs 2,500 crore**. Uber Eats in India will discontinue operations and direct restaurants, delivery partners, and users of the **Uber Eats** apps to the Zomato platform.

Adani Capital acquires Essel Finance's MSME loan business

- **Adani Capital Pvt Ltd** has acquired **Essel Finance's MSME** loan business.
- It has a loan book of approximately **Rs 145 crore**. As of December 31, 2019 the overall lending book of NBFC and the housing finance business was Rs 1,100 crore, with the latter contributing Rs 150 crore.
- The gross NPAs as of December 31, 2019 stood at just **Rs 2.4 crore**, it added.
- Adani Capital is a **100 per cent** subsidiary of Adani Finserve Private Limited, the holding company of Adani Group's financial services business.

Home Credit joins hands with HDFC Ergo, Bajaj Allianz Life

- **Home Credit India** announced it has acquired a corporate agency license to provide health life insurance.

- While health insurance will provide coverage for medical expenses, life insurance will provide benefits and financial protection to Home Credit India customers.
- **Home Credit India** has tied up with **HDFC Ergo General Insurance Company for health insurance** and will provide cover in case of an illness or injury.
- For life insurance, Home Credit India will offer a savings plan of Bajaj Allianz Life Insurance Company which has life cover benefit along with tax-free guaranteed returns.

Australia pacer Peter Siddle announces retirement from international cricket

- **Australia** paceman **Peter Siddle** has announced his retirement from international cricket at the age of 35 after taking 221 wickets in a distinguished 67-Test career.
- Siddle broke the news to his teammates at the Melbourne Cricket Ground after being released from the squad for the third and final test against New Zealand in Sydney.

Important Web Portals and Mobile Apps

Plans afoot to launch e-comm platform for MSMEs: Gadkari

- Union Minister Nitin Gadkari stated the government plans to launch an e-commerce platform with an eye on garnering revenues of around **₹10-lakh crore** over **two-three years**.
- **The Bharatcraft portal**, which will be on the lines of **Alibaba and Amazon**, will provide a platform for MSMEs to market and sell their products and, in turn, boost the sector Gadkari stated at the 200th listing of an MSME company, 'Wonder Fibromats', on the NSE Emerge SME platform.

App for visually challenged to read currency

- **Retinuz** can rightly identify the denomination of the newly introduced currency notes for visually challenged at a single tap. It can be downloaded for free from Google Play Store.
- Retinuz comes alongside Reserve Bank's **MANI** (Mobile Aided Note Identifier). Retinuz works at night as well, as the app automatically switches on the torch on the mobile phone to scan the currency notes.
- The app scanner reads the colour pattern and width of the printed denomination for identification.

Website translator for SMEs launched

- Pune-based LanguageTech company, **LinguaSol**, has launched the **Website Translator 1.0**, a cost-efficient software solution for **Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)** to localise their websites and applications.
- The **Website Translator 1.0** addresses the need for a comprehensive translation partner for businesses through an intricately designed subscription-based language translation solution that is catered exclusively to SMEs.

Rojgaar Sangi- app to connect trained candidates with jobs

- Recently, the Chhattisgarh State Skill Development Authority (CSSDA) has launched a mobile phone app – **'Rojgaar Sangi'**.
- The mobile application aims to connect trained candidates with the jobs. It will also help start-up companies to hire an office staff. The app has been developed with the help of National Informatics Centre (NIC).
- The app is expected to benefit 7 lakh students who were trained under the courses offered by CSSDA.
- The National Informatics Centre (NIC) is an institute set up by the Indian government in 1976 to drive its technology and e-governance initiatives in the country. The institute is part of the Indian Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology's Department.

Revision Points

Applications/Web portals	Launched By
Bharatcraft Portal	Government
Rojgaar Sangi	Chhattisgarh State Skill Development Authority
Website Translator 1.0	LinguaSol
Mobile Aided Note Identifier	RBI

Important Obituaries

Name	Field
Ratna Ojha	Assamese Theatre Personality
DP Tripathi	DP Tripathi
Alajangi Viswanath Swamy	Social Activist, Former RS Member
Qassem Soleimani	Iranian Military Commander
PH Pandian	Former Tamil Nadu Assembly Speaker
Bhim Chandra Jana	Freedom Fighter
TN Chaturvedi	Former Karnataka Governor
Hans Tilkowski	German Goalkeeper
Prem Nath Hoon	Former Western Army Commander
R.P. Ulaganambi	Former Lok Sabha member
Minati Mishra	Odishi Danseuse
Sharif Idu	Folk Singer & Sarangi Maestro
Buck Henry	Screenwriter
Gopinath Gajapati Narayan Deo	Former MP
Sultan Qaoos Bin	King of Oman
Obaid Siddiqui	Broadcaster, Poet & Academian
Chidananda Murthy	Kannada Scholar
Babul Baruah	PTI Journalist
Thomas Antony	Kerala Cartoon Academy Secretary & Caricaturist
Saleha Sultan	The titular queen of Bhopal
Khagendra Thapa Magar	World's shortest man
Bapu Nadkarni	Former India all-rounder
Sunanda Patnaik	Indian Classical Singer
Ashwini Kumar Chopra	Senior Journalist
Shamsher Surjewala	Haryana Former Minister
Man Mohan Sood	Former Test Batsman
Terry Jones	Monty Python Star
Kobe Bryant	Former NBA star
Sahityacharya Dr Golok Chandra Goswami	Scholar, Linguist and Literature
Sher Singh Kukkal	Artist and Sculptor
K Amarnath Shetty	Former Minister
Rob Rensenbrink	Former Netherlands winger
Sunita Chandra	Former women's hockey team captain
Vinay Sinha	Film Producer
Jameela Malik	Actress
Abdul Gafoor	Former Bihar minister
Sashi Sarma	Assamese Literature
M Kamalam	Senior Congress Leader (Kerala)
Tushar Kanjilal	Social Worker and Educationist