

Current Affairs- December



Monthly Digest

December -2020

Banking & Financial Awareness

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1. Asian Development Bank (ADB) has released a new book titled, 'Future of Regional Cooperation in Asia and the Pacific'. **Note:** The book reviews the progress with regional cooperation and integration in Asia and the Pacific. It explores ways for economies in the region to work combinedly to recover and rebuild from the COVID-19 pandemic, so as to achieve a more flexible, sustainable, and inclusive future. The book consists of papers that are contributed by renowned scholars and staff of ADB.

2. To strengthen the power distribution sector in Meghalaya, the Government of India recently signed 133 million USD loan Agreement with the Asian Development Bank.

Note: Also, the loan is to be supplemented with a 2 million USD grant from the Asian Development Bank Japan fund for poverty reduction. This fund was basically allocated to finance renewable energy projects and support income generation activities for disadvantaged groups and women.

3. State Bank of India in association with Japan's JCB International Co Ltd (JCB), has launched a debit card on National Payments Corporation of India's (NPCI) RuPay network.

Note: The 'SBI RuPay JCB platinum contactless debit card' comes with a dual-interface feature, which will enable customers to perform both contact and contactless transactions in the domestic market and seamless contact transactions overseas. With this card, consumers would be able to transact on ATMs and PoS terminals across the globe under JCB network.

4. According to data of the Commerce and Industry Ministry, USA is the second largest source of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in India.

Note: During April-September 2020, India attracted FDI worth \$7.12 billion from the U.S. and \$2 billion from Mauritius, which slipped to fourth position, the DPIIT (Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade) data showed. Singapore with \$8.30 billion foreign inflows continued to be the top source of FDI for India in April-September 2020-21. The country has received \$2.1 billion inflows from Cayman Islands.

5. With **Asian Development Bank**, the government of India has inked loan pact of USD 50 million to

boost digital platforms for public finance reforms in West Bengal.

Note: The integration of the state's financial and information systems through the programme's whole-of-government approach will help improve delivery of public services and generate fiscal savings that could help the state augment growth-enhancing development financing. Through the support to interoperable e-Government platforms, the programme will ensure streamlining of social protection benefits such as pension and provident fund, facilitate gender-disaggregated data, tax payments and revenue collection.

6. The Reserve Bank of India has issued an order to **HDFC Bank** to temporarily halt all launches of the Digital Business generating activities planned under its program Digital 2.0.

Note: The order dated December 2 comes after HDFC Bank's internet banking and payment system were disrupted by yet another outage on November 21. HDFC Bank has drawn criticism for various such incidents over the past two years. RBI has directed HDFC Bank's top examine the lapses and fix accountability. HDFC Bank is one India's largest private sector bank and has a market capitalization of Rs 7.7 lakh crore.

7. To improve the quality and reliability of electricity supply in Uttar Pradesh the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a USD 430 million multi-tranche financing facility (MFF).

Note: The Uttar Pradesh Power Distribution Network Rehabilitation Project will improve efficiency and sustainability of power supply in the state. The project will finance the conversion of 65,000 km rural low-voltage distribution lines from bare conductors to aerial bundle conductors to benefit an estimated 70 million people in 46,000 rural villages.

8. Punjab National Bank has launched a tech-based loan management solution called 'LenS-The Lending Solution', to speed up and maintain accuracy in online loan processing and sanctioning of credit proposals.

Note: To standardise the system, process and appraisal formats for loan processing, speed up the process of credit sanctions, and auto-generate loan documents, among others are the main purpose behind the launch of it. For all kinds of loans such as

MSME, agriculture, retail and other credit, the system is expected to be implemented in a phased manner

9. Yes Bank has unveiled a premium banking program that offers personalized solutions focused on the particular needs of key consumer segments – from small business owners to salaried professionals and senior citizens.

Note: Yes Bank will celebrate the launch of this enhanced program during 'Truly Yours' Week, from December 1 – 7, 2020 throughout the bank's network of branches across India, with several customercentric programs and partnered activations through dealer, OEM and bancassurance partners.

10. Indian Bank has entered into an agreement with Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) to use its asset restructuring module for MSME borrowers.

Note: MSMEs have been finding it difficult to maintain books of accounts, preparation of financial statements and submission of financial projections for producing the same to banks / FIs for availing credit finance / restructuring their loans based on their estimates and revision in working capital cycle. MSMEs have to approach third parties for this purpose which involves time and cost.

11. Axis Bank has launched Rupifi Business Credit Card' for MSMEs in partnership with Rupifi and Visa.

Note: This Contactless Co-Branded credit card, powered by Visa is applicable only to the MSMEs businesses that transact on the aggregator platforms partnered with Rupifi PAN (Permanent Account Number) India for their business purchases. The card offers credit solutions to such MSMEs. It is only for domestic transactions.

12. Recently, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has decided to extend liquidity adjustment facility (LAF) to **Regional Rural Banks** to make liquidity management more efficient.

Note: Accordingly, the apex bank has decided to extend the Liquidity Adjustment Facility (LAF) and Marginal Standing Facility (MSF) to RRBs. It has also decided to permit the RRBs to participate in the Call/Notice money market, both as borrowers and lenders. RRBs are currently not permitted to access the liquidity windows of the Reserve Bank as well as the call/notice money market.

13. The Reserve Bank of India has proposed to increase the limit for contactless card transactions to Rs 5000 from Rs 2,000 per transaction from January 1, 2021.

Note: Similarly, the limit for processing e-mandates and standing instructions on cards and Prepaid Payment Instruments (PPIs) for recurring transactions has been increased to Rs 5,000. This

announcement was part of the RBI's bi-monetary policy announcement held on December 4, 2020.

14. Paytm has partnered with **Suryoday Small Finance Bank** to empower MSMEs with instant digital loans.

Note: The company is offering instant microloans to businesses that are unable to access financial services from traditional banking players. The company through this partnership is aiming at disbursing loans to over 1 lakh small businesses in the next 12 to 18 months.

15. The Karnataka regional office of NABARD signed MoU with State Bank of India to extend concessional refinance facility to the beneficiaries of watershed development and tribal development projects.

Note: The MoU aims to benefit 45000 beneficiaries from 260 Farmers Producers Organisations in 28 districts. In addition 8500 beneficiaries from Self Help groups and Joint Liability Groups will be covered. The MoU signed will enable SBI to act as an implementing agency for digitilising the Self Help Groups and uploading data on E-Shakti portal across the state.

16. Financial solutions provider Razorpay partnered with global digital payments platform, PayPal to facilitate international payments for small businesses and freelancers.

Note: The company's partner businesses can now integrate with PayPal and accept payments from international customers from across 200 markets in a convenient, fast and secure manner.

17. Fintech company Finin has launched itself as a 'neobank', in partnership with **SBM Bank**.

Note: It will provide features such as detailed break-up of user spending and send prompts if they exceed pre-set limits and automatic sweeps of money into liquid funds. The bank will target white-collar workers and freelancers and has waiting list of 15,000 people before launch. It aims to open 50,000 accounts in six months.

18. **HDFC Life** in association with Ketto India has initiated #PromisewalaDabba, a nationwide crowdfunding campaign.

Note: #PromiseWalaDabba has been initiated by the insurance company for supporting the community, with an aim to help the Dabbawalas of Mumbai stand on their feet once again with a month's supply of ration, delivered to their homes. Ketto, India's foremost crowdfunding platform has also partnered with HDFC Life as part of the campaign in order to serve as a platform to raise money for this cause.

19. In partnership with Yes bank and NPCI the PayNearby announced to launch PayNearby Shopping Card, enabling its retail partners to derive

maximum benefits of digital commerce in the mass market category.

Note: The new service will allow PayNearby retailers to avail a range of digital services in a secure, risk-free mode. The retailers can avail of services such as e-learning, e-commerce, online gaming, monthly recharges and utility payments, online music, and videos. The launch of the PayNearby shopping card is powered by RuPay and is targeted for enabling a mass-market adoption. This will likely allow for cash digitization options at the grass-root levels.

20. Karnataka Vikas Grameen Bank (KVGB) has launched 'Kirishi OD' scheme designed for farmers.

Note: The farmers are provided with an OD facility based on the value of the land. The limit is capped to a maximum of ₹1.5 lakh per acre to irrigated lands and ₹1 lakh per acre to dry land. The facility can be used for working capital requirements such as maintenance of machinery and equipment, repair and replacement of machinery, agricultural allied activities and even for the repayment of private loans availed for personal use.

21. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a USD 190 million loan for modernization and upgradation of power distribution system in **Bengaluru**.

Note: The funding for the Bengaluru Smart Energy Efficient Power Distribution Project by ADB includes a USD 100 million sovereign loan and a USD 90 million without sovereign guarantee loan to Bangalore Electricity Supply Company Limited (BESCOM). This features an innovative financing arrangement, the first of its kind for ADB, combining public and private sector loans to a state government-owned enterprise.

22. ICICI Bank has entered into the 'FinTech' space and launch an app that offers payments and banking services to customers of any bank.

Note: The mobile application offers a combination of facilities of a payment app -- such as enabling customers to pay to any UPI ID or merchants, paying bills and do online recharge among others -- with instant banking services such as savings account, investments, loans, credit cards, gift cards, travel cards and much more. Besides, the users of 'iMobile Pay' could also transfer money to any bank account, payment app and digital wallet.

23. The National Institute for Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (ni-msme) and the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) have partnered with Mastercard to launch Digital Saksham, a capacity building initiative to drive awareness around digitization for MSMEs in the country.

Note: Digital Saksham is an expansive program designed to strengthen the competitiveness of

MSMEs through building their digital know-how and acceptance. Digital Saksham will be rolled out across 25 cities in seven states of India.

24. Ujjivan Small Finance Bank has introduced 'Money Mitra', a new channel, to make banking services accessible to its customers in their neighbourhood.

Note: Money Mitra facilitates entrepreneurs of local businesses like kirana / medical stores or Insurance agencies to offer retail banking solutions to Ujjivan SFB customers exclusively. Currently, Ujjivan SFB has established over 100 Money Mitra outlets across the country.

25. Bank of Baroda has launched 'Atmanirbhar Women Scheme' to help women to be self-reliant.

Note: This launch is part of the bank's Baroda Gold Loan. The launch was also made simultaneously in 18 branches coming under 18 zones in India. Under this scheme Women can get loans at 0.50% concession, under this scheme.

26. World Bank has approved a \$2.5 million Technical Assistance to support advanced biofuel development in India.

Note: This grant is funded from the Asia Clean Energy Fund, financed by the Government of Japan under the Clean Energy Financing Partnership Facility, and the Republic of Korea's e-Asia and Knowledge Partnership Fund. With this commitment, ADB supports the National Policy on Biofuels of Government of India, which was established in 2018.

27. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has canceled the licence of Karad Janata Sahakari Bank of **Maharashtra**.

Note: This means that the bank is prohibited from taking any deposit or making any repayment. However, the process of paying the depositors of the bank will be set in motion.

28. ICICI Bank won the mandate to be the designated bank for all financial institution for all monetary transactions under National Health Mission in West Bengal.

Note: This is on the lines of WB government decision of implementing a single bank account system for NHM. Under this, all financial transactions will be conducted through online software, integrated with bank accounts.

29. The Asian Development Bank has projected 8 per cent of contraction in the Indian GDP in the fiscal year 2020-21, in its Asian Development Outlook.

Note: Earlier it was estimated by the bank that India would contract by - 9%. This is the GDP forecast of India by the bank. The growth projection has been kept at 8%. These announcements are

part of the Asian Development Outlook. According to the Asian Development of Outlook, the developing Asia is to contract by 0.4 % in 2020 and grow by 6.8% in 2021.

30. BSNL has launched world's first satellite based Narrow Band Internet of Things network in India in partnership with the Skylo.

Note: This is to bring a breakthrough in satellite based narrowband internet of things technology. It will also help in achieving the targets of Digital India mission helping farmers, fishermen, meaning, construction and Logistic Enterprises in India.

31. RBL Bank has entered into a bancassurance partnership with ICICI Prudential Life Insurance Ltd to offer a range of life insurance products.

Note: This partnership will allow more than 8.7 million customers of RBL Bank to access and purchase ICICI Prudential Life's customer-centric protection and long-term savings products. It provides financial security to the customers and their families through life insurance cover.

32. SBI General Insurance Company Limited has entered into a strategic partnership with Mahindra Insurance Brokers Ltd. (MIBL) to increase the insurance penetration in tier 2 & 3 cities of India.

Note: MIBL has collaborated with SBI General Insurance under its 'Sajhedaari program'. This association enables the company to offer health insurance cover to people in tier-II and III cities and also generate employment.

33. DBS Bank has partnered with Haqdarshak Empowerment Solutions Private Limited to help Indian MSMEs (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises) to recover from COVID-19 pandemic.

Note: This aid will happen through the newly launched Haqdarshak MSME platform. The platform helps India's enterprises to access MSME-focused government welfare schemes, covering registrations, documentation and applications for financing across India. DBS Bank India is a wholly owned subsidiary of DBS Bank Ltd, Singapore

34. Bharti AXA Life Insurance life insurance company has launched 'GotYouCovered' campaign, a special initiative to appreciate frontline healthcare workers who are striving to protect people from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Note: Bharti AXA Life Insurance has joined hands with Primero Skills & Training, a skill development organisation imparting free skills and training programmes to youth under the Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative, to support its healthcare workers by masking them against life and health risks during the ongoing Covid pandemic. The company will promote #GotYouCovered initiative and encourage

people to acknowledge the efforts of frontline healthcare workers.

35. In partnership with Mastercard the Yes Bank has launched 'Yes Private Prime Credit Card' for the Affluent and Ultra High-Net-Worth-Individuals of India.

Note: The card is available on the Mastercard World Elite platform. The card is a strictly by-invitation-only lifestyle Credit Card. Yes Private Prime credit card is in line with YES Bank's strategy to deliver premium and exclusive services to its valued customers.

36. The license of **Karad Janata Sahakari Bank** was cancelled by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) as it does not have adequate capital and earning prospects on December 2020.

Note: The Commissioner for Cooperation and Registrar of Cooperative Societies, Maharashtra has also been requested to issue an order for winding up the bank and appoint a liquidator for the bank. The RBI said it cancelled the licence of the bank as it "does not have adequate capital and earning prospects".

37. Federal Bank tied-up with OrbitRemit Limited to facilitate low-cost money transfer to India by NRIs and small business in New Zealand.

Note: "OrbitRemit Limited a leading full-service provider based out of New Zealand has its presence in other countries like Australia UK and currently provides remittance services to around 39 countries worldwide".

38. The Asian Development Bank has launched **APVAX** facility to offer financial support to procure COVID vaccine for member countries.

Note: Asian Development Bank (ADB) has launched Asia Pacific Vaccine Access Facility (APVAX) to offer rapid and equitable financial support to procure vaccines for ADB's developing member countries. Total cost for allocation of APVAX: \$ 9 Billion

39. Bombay Stock Exchange has launched e-agricultural spot market platform 'BEAM'.

Note: This will act as a national level, institutionalised, electronic, transparent commodity spot trading platform with vision to create a single market. BSE is Asia's oldest stock exchange and world's 10th largest stock exchange

40. India Post Payments Bank has unveiled a new digital payment app DakPay

Note: The App is launched as part of its ongoing efforts to provide Digital Financial inclusion at the last mile across India. Along with digital payment the DakPay will also work as suite of digital financial and assisted banking services provided by India Post and IPPB.

41. Edelweiss General Insurance has launched a first of its kind, Open Application Programming Interface (API) Gateway to enable full digital collaboration with its business partners.

Note: It is a first of its kind, to facilitate complete digital collaboration with its business partners. With this gateway, EGI's authorised partners can integrate their systems with the company's robust technology platform. It will help further reinforce EGI's linkages with both customers and partners.

42. Canara Bank has launched 'FX 4 U', a new technology(tech) product to enable internet banking users to handle forex transactions seamlessly.

Note: The new product will enable internet banking users to handle forex transactions seamlessly. Currently, the outward remittance module is being activated, the remaining modules will be activated shortly. This facility enables all the eligible individual customers to undertake remittance facilities as per the Foreign Exchange Management Act(FEMA), 1999.

43. The Reserve Bank of India has announced to set up an Automated Banknote Processing Centre (ABPC) in **Jaipur**.

Note: ABPC will automate the handling of banknotes for receipt, storage, retrieval, processing and destruction. It will also handle storage of fresh banknotes received from printing presses, processing of banknotes received from currency chests (CCs) and bank branches and destruction of soiled banknotes in an automated manner.

44. The Rating agency CRISIL has projected **7.7%** per cent of contraction in India's GDP in ongoing financial year 2020-21.

Note: CRISIL in its September release, estimated India's GDP to be around 9% forecast in September 2020. CRISIL expects the growth to bounce back to 10% for the fiscal 2021-22 (FY22).

45. In association with **Yes Bank** the Ewire Softtech (under Kerala Startup Mission) has launched a prepaid card in association enabling the next-generation payment platform provider chart an all-India presence.

Note: The co-branded digital banking mobile application will help the public and corporate houses with loans, insurance and CASA account through its channel partners. This can be done via its dedicated RuPay prepaid cards platform. The card will be offered through YES Bank's branches across 28 States and 8 UTs.

46. In partnership with **Citi Bank** the **National Centre for the Performing Arts** has been offering scholarships to the young promising students who seek advanced training in the field of Hindustani music.

Note: The CITI-NCPA Scholarship for Young Musicians 2021-22 will be offered for training in khayal and dhrupad under vocals and for tabla or pakhawaj in percussion. Applicants aged 18 to 35 years need to send in their application by January 15, 2021. Auditions will be held in February either online or at NCPA, depending on BMC norms at that time.

47. Yes Bank has partnered with Visa as a payment processor to enhance salaried account holders' payment experience.

Note: This launch enables customers to avail VISA-branded YES bank debit cards along with Mastercard and RuPay branded debit cards. This upgradation is aligned with the vision of the bank to offer its customers a best payment experience in the world. It also is the step towards the cashless transformation in India.

48. The Financial Intelligence Unit has imposed Rs 96 lakh penalty on **PayPal** for alleged contravention of the anti-money laundering law and accused of "concealing" suspect financial transactions and abetting "disintegration" of India's financial system.

Note: The company has also been charged with "defeating and frustrating" the tenets of public interest and the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), which aims to keep the country's financial system safe from economic crimes, terrorist financing and black money transactions.

49. In partnership with fintech company **Mastercard** the Yes Bank has launched 'Yes Private Prime Credit Card' for the Affluent and Ultra High-Net-Worth-Individuals of India.

Note: Yes Private Prime credit card is in line with YES Bank's strategy to deliver premium and exclusive services to its valued customers. It offers unlimited access to the International & Domestic Airport Lounges for Primary and Add-on card holders and guests. Upon purchasing the card, a gift voucher of Rs 9,000 will be given by Oberoi Hotels & Resorts. It is an annual feature and will also be available on card renewal.

50. Export-Import Bank of India has extended a Line of Credit of \$448 million to the **Uzbekistan**.

Note: This LOC is for financing various projects in the Roads & Transport, Water and Technology & Communication sectors in Uzbekistan. With the signing of this LOC Agreement, Exim Bank has now in place 266 Lines of Credit, covering 62 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, CIS and the Oceania, with credit commitments of around \$26.59 billion, available for financing exports from India.

51. SEBI has set up a specialised department to tackle cases of diversion of funds, bank loans and resources by company promoters.

Note: The new department will be known as the Corporation Finance Investigation Department (CFID). The new department will even check if resources like company land, guest houses or vehicles are misused by promoters.

52. Fintech company **Aceware** has launched Ace Money Micro ATM service in Kochi.

Note: Initially, the service will be available in Kochi city, and the company has already recruited delivery executives for rolling out the service. The company is planning to expand the service to all the municipalities in the State by January 2021.

53. The State Bank of India research report has projected **7.4 percent** of contraction in India's GDP in FY 2020-21.

Note: The report also believes that it would take seven quarters from the fourth quarter of FY21 for GDP to reach the pre-pandemic level in nominal terms. The revised GDP estimates are based on SBI 'Nowcasting Model' with 41 high frequency indicators associated with industry activity, service activity, and global economy.

54. SBI General Insurance has partnered with IntrCity RailYatri, a multi-modal intercity mobility platform, to offer domestic travel insurance.

Note: The insurance would be offered to bus travelers opting to commute through IntrCity RailYatri, it would be a complimentary travel cover worth Rs 5 lakh which will come along with the travel ticket. Under the travel insurance, SBI General Insurance would provide a wide variety of coverage including accidental death, permanent total disability, and medical evacuation.

55. Indian government has signed a pact worth 400-million Dollar **World Bank** to aid the poor and vulnerable reeling under the coronavirus crisis.

Note: This is the second operation in a programmatic series of two as the first operation of Dollar 750 million was approved in May 2020. The \$400 million credit has been extended by World Bank's concessionary lending arm International Development Association (IDA).

56. The Government of India and **New Development Bank** have signed a loan agreement for lending \$1,000 million to support the rural infrastructure in the country and the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee scheme.

Note: The programme proposes creation of durable rural infrastructure assets relating to NRM and generation of employment opportunities for rural poor, especially migrant workers who have returned

from urban areas and have lost their livelihoods due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

57. Indian government has signed a \$300 million loan from **Asian Development Bank** to upgrade rural power distribution networks in Uttar Pradesh.

Note: This is the first tranche of the loan for the Uttar Pradesh Power Distribution Network Rehabilitation Project. Overall, the \$430 million multi-tranche financing facility (MFF) has been approved for the project constituting two tranches.

58. Bank of Baroda has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Indian Navy and Indian Coast Guard under which the bank would offer customised services along with a host of facilities to account holders.

Note: The bank has also renewed its existing MoU with the Indian Army to offer specially customised banking services through 'Baroda Military Salary Package'. Services under 'Baroda Military Salary Package' will be offered to serving and retired personnel of Indian Armed Forces through the Bank's network of over 8,200 domestic branches and around 20,000 business correspondent touch points.

59. Central Bank of India has launched a unique variant of a contactless debit card under the name '**RuPay Select**', in association with the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI).

Note: This innovative offering by the bank in the form of RuPay Debit Select Card, will focus on customers' lifestyle, fitness, rejuvenation, nutrition and personal care. Users of Central Bank RuPay Select Debit Card can avail complementary membership and concessional access to golf courses, gyms, spas and restaurants.

60. Online payments solutions provider **PayU** has collaborated with Google Pay to introduce tokenized payments flow for merchants in India.

Note: Following this collaboration, Google Pay users will now get an option to pay a PayU merchant with their debit cards, credit cards, or Google Pay UPI. With the digital token linked to the phone and card information tokenised, Google Pay users can make repeat payments seamlessly and securely.

61. SBI General Insurance has partnered with IntrCity RailYatri, a multi-modal intercity mobility platform, to offer domestic travel insurance

Note: The insurance would be offered to bus travelers opting to commute through IntrCity RailYatri, it would be a complimentary travel cover worth Rs 5 lakh which will come along with the travel ticket. Under the travel insurance, SBI General Insurance would provide a wide variety of coverage including accidental death, permanent total disability, and medical evacuation.

62. The **National Council of Applied Economic Research** (NCAER) has projected **7.3%** of contraction in the India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth.

Note: In its mid-year review of the Indian economy, the NCAER said that the long-term effects of the pandemic will last for years.

63. As per the revised guidelines of Union Cabinet for Direct to Home (DTH) broadcasting services **100%** of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) will be allowed in DTH.

Note: It also approved the extension of the license period from 10 years to 20 and a reduced licence fee. The licence fee had been reduced in keeping with the rates in the telecom sector. Currently, India has 18 crore television sets, out of which 6 crore operate on DTH.

64. The 1st Financial Institution (FI) to take the 1st of its kind Farmer Registration and Unified Beneficiary Information System (FRUITS) Portal, e-Governance, Government of Karnataka -- **Canara Bank.**

Note: Canara Bank becomes the 1st Financial Institution (FI) to take the project on a pilot basis. It is the first of its kind technology adoption from the Karnataka govt to combine all 70 lakh farmers in the state with land and other details under a single platform. The launch was done at the NABARD office, Karnataka at an event organized by NABARD.

65. State Bank of India secured the top spot in UPI Transaction among the UPI Remitter Banks with 607.92 million transactions.

Note: The State Bank of India (SBI) secured the top spot in UPI Transaction among the UPI Remitter Banks with 607.92 million transactions. The banks have initiated close to half or 1.1 billion of the total UPI transactions processed in November. HDFC is the third largest UPI-player amongst banks in terms of remittances, clocking close to 179.4 million transactions.

66. The GoI has signed a USD 500 million project with **World Bank** to build safe and green national highway corridors in Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh.

Note: The Centre and the World Bank signed a USD 500 million project to build safe and green national highway corridors in Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh. The project will also enhance the capacity of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways in mainstreaming safety and green technologies.

67. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has cancelled the banking licence of **Subhadra Local Area Bank Ltd.**

Note: The central bank observed that the Local Area Bank (LAB) had breached the minimum net worth requirement for two quarters in the financial year 2019-20. The bank was incorporated on July 10, 2003 and received a banking licence from RBI to work as a Local Area Bank in the districts of Kolhapur, Satara, Sangli, Belagavi & Pune.

68. Financial organization **HDFC Bank** topped in BFSI Movers and Shakers 2020 report.

Note: The BFSI Movers and Shakers 2020 Report by Wizikey, a PR- SAAS start-up, highlighted the top 100 banks in India and emerging BFSI models such as Wallets and UPI, Neobanks, NBFCs, Small Finance Bank, Payments Banks, among others, that have found acceptance and their respective sectoral leaders this year. According to the report, HDFC, ICICI, and SBI were the top three banks of 2020.

69. Asian Development Bank has announced to provide Rs 2,100 crore loan to the Tripura government for the development of urban areas and tourism in the state.

Note: Under the loan arrangement, initially ADB would provide Rs 40 crore for engagement of project design and management consultants for urban and tourism sectors. Once the projects are prepared, ADB would provide Rs 1,600 crore for development works in urban areas and Rs 500 crore in tourism sector over the next three years.

70. National water mission has collaborated **Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan** for 'Jal Shakti Abhiyan-II: Catch the Rain' an awareness generation campaign for rain water harvesting.

Note: Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan will undertake the campaign covering 623 districts across the nation from December 2020 to March 2021. NWM has launched a campaign 'Catch the rain' with tag line "catch the rain, where it falls, when it falls" in order to nudge all stake-holders to create Rain Water Harvesting Structures (RWHS) to store rain water as rains falling in the four/five months of monsoon are the only source of water for most parts of the country.

71. The Asian Development Bank has signed a USD 40 million loan agreement with **Northern Arc Capital Limited** to support the livelihoods of microfinance borrowers and MSMEs in India.

Note: The loan is disbursed to NACL as part of ADB's ongoing COVID-19 response. NACL will on-lend the loan proceeds and provide guarantees to financial institutions and individual borrowers. NACL will also on-lend to affordable housing finance companies.

72. Asian Development Bank offer loan to construct Lower Kopili Hydroelectric Power (LKHEP) plant in Central Assam, India.

Note: The LKHEP plant is expected to double the hydropower generation capacity of the Assam Power Generation Corporation (APGCL). The plant will produce a total capacity of 120MW of electricity to harness water from the Kopili River, to address power requirements during peak demand periods.

73. Indian government has signed a pact worth 400 million dollar with **World Bank** to aid the poor and vulnerable reeling under the coronavirus crisis.

Note: This is the second operation in a programmatic series of two as the first operation of Dollar 750 million was approved in May 2020. The \$400 million credit has been extended by World Bank's concessionary lending arm International Development Association (IDA).

74. The Government of India and **New Development Bank** have signed a loan agreement for lending \$1,000 million to support the rural infrastructure in the country and the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee scheme.

Note: The Government of India and the New Development Bank (NDB) signed a loan agreement for lending \$1,000 million for 'supporting India's economic recovery from COVID-19' by supporting expenditures on rural infrastructure related to natural resource management (NRM) and rural employment generation under Government of India's Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS).

75. HDFC Ltd. has signed an MoU with the Indian Green Building Council (IGBC) to promote green buildings in the country.

Note: HDFC intends to work with IGBC to create awareness and promote financing of green buildings in the country. Under the MOU, HDFC and IGBC will promote green housing by jointly organising training and awareness programmes to facilitate capacity building across the country.

76. Central Bank of India has decided to exit housing finance business.

Note: State-owned Central Bank of India will exit housing finance joint venture by selling its entire stake of over 64 per cent to Centrum Housing Finance for Rs 160 crore. The bank has entered into a binding agreement to divest its entire equity stake of 64.40 per cent in Cent Bank Home Finance Ltd (CBHFL), to Centrum Housing Finance.

77. SBI Life has acquired 8.99 per cent stake in Paisalo Digital.

Note: The transaction was for cash consideration of about ₹186.20 crore. It has purchased 38 lakh equity shares of the company at ₹489.99 apiece, it further said, adding that the purchase was done in the normal course of business.

78. Punjab National Bank has introduced an 'e-Credit Card', a digital replica of a physical Credit Card.

Note: It will allow PNB customers to use PNB e-credit card at any e-commerce platform or merchant website, without the need of carrying the physical card. Customers can view PNB e-Credit Cards details by clicking on e-Credit Card facility in PNB Genie Mobile app. Existing PNB customers will need to update their PNB Genie with the latest app available on Google play store and Apple's app store to use the new feature.

79. According to the annual report of Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR) India will become the third largest economy by **2030**.

Note: India had overtaken the UK in 2019 to become the fifth largest economy in the world but has been relegated to 6th spot in 2020. The UK-based think tank forecast that China will in 2028 overtake the US to become the world's biggest economy, five years earlier than previously estimated due to the contrasting recoveries of the two countries from the COVID-19 pandemic. Japan would remain the world's third-biggest economy, in dollar terms, until the early 2030s when it would be overtaken by India, pushing Germany down from fourth to fifth.

80. Bank of Baroda has launched its Digital Lending Platform (DLP), which will allow prospective retail loan seekers to get loans digitally through a paperless process.

Note: The Platform provides 'in-principle approval' for home, car and personal loans in 30 minutes without human intervention. The bank will also offer 'Online Loan against Fixed Deposits' via DLP. Prospective loan seekers can avail the DLP facility through multiple channels — website, mobile banking, internet banking and social media as well.

81. ICICI Bank has announced a partnership with Google which will allow users to issue FASTag using Google Pay.

Note: Google Pay users will now be able to conveniently order, track, and recharge ICICI Bank FASTags. The announcement makes ICICI Bank the first bank to join hands with Google Pay for the issuance of FASTag. This will also add competition for Paytm, which currently issues FASTags from the app as well and is quite a popular choice for many customers.

82. AU Small Finance Bank aims to deliver paperless life insurance solutions to its more than 18 lakh customers through digital platform with ICICI Prudential Life Insurance.

Note: Over 700 banking touch points of AU Bank across 13 states and 2 union territories will receive

the entire suite of customer-centric protection and long-term savings products of ICICI Prudential Life

Obituaries

1.

1. Renowned personality S Ramakrishnan passed away recently, he was former director of **Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC)**.

Note: Mr. Ramakrishnan joined the VSSC, a lead centre of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), in August 1972 after graduating from the College of Engineering, Guindy, and acquiring his MTech in Aeronautics from IIT, Madras. He joined as a member of the SLV-3 project team responsible for the development of India's first satellite launch vehicle under the leadership of A.P. J. Abdul Kalam.

2. Renowned personality Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali passed away recently, he was former prime minister of **Pakistan**.

Note: Jamali, the country's first and only elected prime minister from Balochistan, had served during the military regime of Gen Pervez Musharraf. However, Gen Musharraf sought his resignation in 2004 and he was replaced by Shaukat Aziz. He won the 2013 general elections as an independent, but later joined the PML-N and used to sit on the treasury benches in the previous assembly.

3. Renowned personality Manu Mukherjee passed away recently, he was a veteran **Actor**.

Note: The actor is best remembered for his roles in Satyajit Ray's Joy Baba Felunath and Ganashatru. He had also been part of children's fantasy film Patalghar'.

4. Former chief of Intelligence Bureau chief Dineshwar Sharma passed away recently, he was Administrator of Union territory of **Lakshwadweep**.

Note: Mr. Sharma, a 1979-batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer, hailed from Bihar. He served as IB Director from 2014 to 2016. He headed the bureau when the government announced demonetisation on November 8, 2016. In 2017, he was appointed as the union government's representative for peace talks with various groups in North Eastern states on May 30, 2017.

5. Renowned personality Valery Giscard d'Estaing passed away recently he was former President of **France**.

Note: Giscard was elected president in 1974 at the age of 48 to become France's youngest postwar leader. He was also an ardent Anglophile, and took office a year after Britain joined the European Economic Community.

6. Renowned personality Dharampal Gulati, passed away recently he was owner of **MDH**.

for retirement and critical illness.

Note: Popularly called 'King of Spices,' was awarded the Padma Bhushan, the country's third-highest civilian award, in 2019. MDH exports spices to countries across the world such as Switzerland, Japan, the US, and Canada. It is one of the biggest brands of spices, and manufactures almost 50 different types of spices.

7. Senegal's Legendary footballer Papa Bouba Diop passed away recently.

Note: He was of the age of 42. His goal helped Senegal secure historic 1-0 win over the then-world champions France in the opening match of the 2002 FIFA World Cup, and Senegal's first-ever match at the FIFA World Cup. Diop has won 63 caps for Senegal.

8. Renowned personality Madhukar Gangadhar passed away recently he was a veteran **Hindi writer**.

Note: Mr. Gangadhar was born in Bihar's Purnia district on 7th January 1932. His last rites will be performed at his native place today. Mr. Gangadhar studied in Purnia Inter College and Patna University and had worked at Patna Akashwani and later also served as the director, AIR Allahabad. He also worked in the capacity of Deputy Director General (DDG), AIR at New Delhi.

9. Often known as the father of fibre optics, Narinder Singh Kapany passed away recently was a citizen of **USA**.

Note: Kapany was the first to transmit images through fibre optics back in 1954 and laid the foundation for high-speed internet technology. He not only founded fibre optics but also used his own invention for the business. He founded the Optics Technology Incorporation and Kaptron Incorporation in 1960 and 1973 respectively.

10. Renowned personality Vidyavachaspati Bannanje Govindacharya passed away recently, he was a scholar of **Sanskrit and Kannada**.

Note: He had done extensive research on Madhwa philosophy, besides authoring over 100 books and 4,000 pages in Sanskrit on the subject. He had written commentaries on Vedas, Upanishad, Mahabharata, Ramayana, Bhagavata and Puranas. He was awarded Padma Shri in 2009. He had written screenplay for films 'Bhagavad Gita', 'Adi Shankaracharya' and 'Madhvacharya'.

11. Renowned personality John le Carre passed away recently, he was a veteran **Novelist**.

Note: The author, whose real name was David John Moore Cornwell, wrote 25 novels and one memoir in a career spanning 60 years, selling some 60 million books worldwide. By exploring treachery at the heart of British intelligence in spy novels, le Carre challenged Western assumptions about the Cold War by defining for millions the moral ambiguities of the battle between the Soviet Union and the West.

12. Renowned personality Manglesh Dabral passed away recently, he was a veteran poet of **Hindi**.

Note: As a critic of government policies, he returned his Sahitya Akademi award in 2015 in protest against the growing climate of intolerance in the country. He worked as the Editor of Jansatta's Sunday Magazine, Ravivari. Through his writings in the four-page literary magazine, Jansatta, he mentored a generation of Hindi writers.

13. Renowned **Malayalam** personality UA Khader passed away.

Note: He published more than 70 novels, short stories and travelogues that are considered among the finest works in Malayalam. Khader was known for a progressive and secular outlook to his life and his literature. His most acclaimed work of fiction, Thrikkottoor Peruma (Thrikkottoor Lore), won him the Kerala Sahitya Akademi Award in 1984

14. Renowned personality Manglesh Dabral passed away recently, he was a veteran poet of **Hindi** language.

Note: As a critic of government policies, he returned his Sahitya Akademi award in 2015 in protest against the growing climate of intolerance in the country. He worked as the Editor of Jansatta's Sunday Magazine, Ravivari. Through his writings in the four-page literary magazine, Jansatta, he mentored a generation of Hindi writers.

15. Renowned personality Padma Vibhushan recipient, Roddam Narasimha, passed away recently, he was a veteran **Aerospace Scientist**.

Note: Prof Narasimha made a mark in the field of aerospace and as a fluid dynamicist. He taught Aerospace Engineering at the IISc from 1962 to 1999. He also served as the director of the National Aerospace Laboratories from 1984 to 1993. Considering his contribution, the Central government bestowed on him Padma Vibhushan, the second-highest civilian award of India, in 2013. Dr Kalam and Prof Narasimha had together authored a book – Developments in Fluid Mechanics and Space Technology.

16. Renowned **Football** D Ethiraj passed away recently.

Note: Ethiraj was a part of the Indian football team that finished on top of the podium at the 1962 Asian Games. The Indian team led by the legendary Chuni

Goswami defeated South Korea 2-1 in the Games final to clinch the gold medal. He was a part of the national team during the '50s and '60s, which are widely regarded as the golden era of Indian football.

17. Renowned sportsperson Shripati Khanchnale passed away recently, he was associated with **Wrestling**.

Note: He was a recipient of the Shiv Chhatrapati award, which is given by the Maharashtra government.

18. Renowned personality Eric Freeman passed away recently, he was a veteran **Cricketer**.

Note: Freeman became Australia's 244th men's Test cricketer when he made his debut against India at the Gabba in 1968, removing both openers in the tourist's first innings with his right-arm fast-mediums. Freeman received the Medal of the Order of Australia in 2002 for his services to sport.

19. Renowned **Politician** Motilal Vora passed away recently.

Note: He passed away recently after a prolonged illness. A former chief minister of Madhya Pradesh, Motilal Vora was also a Rajya Sabha member from Chhattisgarh till April this year. He was also the AICC general secretary (administration) before the recent party reshuffle by Congress president Sonia Gandhi.

20. Renowned environmental activist personality Sugathakumari passed away recently, she was also a poet of **Malayalam** language.

Note: Sugathakumari was an influential voice in the field of Malayalam literature with her works garnering all the major accolades on offer in the country. She was a recipient of the Kerala Sahitya Akademi award, Kendra Sahitya Akademi award, Odakkuzhal award, Ezhuthachan award among others.

21. Shamsur Rahman Faruqi passed away recently, he was an accomplished **Urdu Poet**.

Note: Faruqi's book 'Kai Chaand The Sar-e-Asmaan', written in 2006, has been hailed as a masterpiece of Urdu fiction. An English version of this book 'Mirror of Beauty' was published in 2013. He has also translated his stories into English which are included in a book titled 'The Sun That Rose from the Earth' in 2014. He has also been credited with spearheading the revival of the Dastangoi – an urdu oral storytelling art form.

22. Famous **Cricketer** John Edrich passed away recently.

Note: Former England opening batsman John Edrich passed away at the age of 83. John Edrich had a prolific career for England and scored more than 5,000 runs during a 77-match Test career, including 12 centuries. The batsman was also the captain of

Surrey and hit 103 hundreds and more than 39,000 runs in first-class cricket

23. Renowned **cricketer** Robin Jackman passed away recently.

Note: Jackman played in four Tests and 15 one-day internationals for his country, while he took 1,402 wickets in a 399-game first-class career between 1966 and 1982. Following his retirement he became a successful commentator in South Africa.

24. Renowned personality Ishwar Bidri passed away recently, he was a veteran **cinematographer**.

Note: He was best known for his work in popular 1990s films like Andaz Apna Apna and Border. Ishwar Bidri is best known for his longstanding collaboration with filmmaker JP Dutta for whom he shot action dramas like Yateem, Hathyar, Batwara in the late 1980s and the 1998 war epic Border.

25. Renowned personality Sunil Kothari passed away recently, he was an eminent **dance scholar**.

Note: A Sangeet Natak Akademi fellow, Kothari blazed a new trail in documenting Indian classical

dance forms. Kothari received numerous titles and awards for his contribution to Indian dance forms including the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award (1995); the Gaurav Puraskar conferred by the Gujarat Sangeet Natak Akademi (2000); the Padma Shri bestowed by the Government of India (2001); and the Life Time Achievement Award of the Dance Critics Association, New York, USA (2011). He was also an elected Fellow of **Sangeet Natak Akademi** for his contribution to Indian dance as a scholar.

26. Ustad Iqbal Ahmed Khan passed away following a cardiac arrest, was an exponent of Music -- **Delhi Gharana**.

Note: Ustad Iqbal Ahmed Khan was best known for his versatile renditions in various genres of Indian classical music, including 'thumri', 'dadra', as well as bhajans' and ghazals. Iqbal Ahmed Khan had several accolades to his credit, including the Priyadarshini Award (2001), and the Rajiv Rattan Sadbhavna Samman (2003).

Important Days

1.

1. Ending the HIV/AIDS Epidemic: Resilience and Impact is the theme of the World Aids Day 2020.

Note: The day is being celebrated since 1988. It is celebrated to create awareness against the spread of HIV infection. It is one of the 11 official Global Public Health campaigns of World Health Organisation.

2. The World Computer Literacy Day is observed every year on **2nd December**.

Note: The day promotes technological skills, especially in children and women. The World Computer Literacy Day controls the advanced gap that exists in the world today. The day was originally founded by the Indian computer company NIIT to mark its 20th anniversary in 2001.

3. The National Pollution Control Day is observed every year on **2nd December**.

Note: The year 2020 marks the 36th anniversary of the Bhopal Gas Tragedy. Through this day, awareness is created about the rising pollution of air, water, and soil, as well as shifts the attention of people with regards to the pollution control acts.

4. International Day for the Abolition of Slavery is observed annually on **2nd December**.

Note: The theme of the for 2020 is 'Not all Disabilities are Visible'. The day is celebrated to promote the rights and well-being of persons with disabilities in all spheres of society and development, and to increase awareness of the

situation of persons with disabilities in every aspect of political, social, economic and cultural life.

5. "Indian Navy Combat Ready, Credible and Cohesive" is the theme of the Indian Navy Day 2020, celebrated every year on December 4.

Note: Every year the Indian Navy Day is celebrated on December 4. Every year the Indian Navy Day is celebrated to commemorate Operation Trident. The operation was launched by the Indian Navy during the India-Pakistan war of 1971 to attack Karachi Harbour.

6. International Volunteer Day is observed every year on **5th December**.

Note: The theme for International Volunteers Day 2020 is 'Together We Can Through Volunteering'. Amid the Covid-19 pandemic on the world level, the volunteers have worked at the forefront of medical, community and societal responses.

7. The International Civil Aviation Day is celebrated every year on **7th December**.

Note: The purpose of International Civil Aviation Day is to help generate and reinforce worldwide awareness of the importance of international civil aviation to the social and economic development of States, and of the unique role of ICAO in helping States to cooperate and realize a truly global rapid transit network at the service of all mankind. The Council has decided that from now until 2023, the theme will be: "Advancing Innovation for Global Aviation Development".

8. In India, the Armed Forces Flag Day is observed annually on **7th December**.

Note: The three branches of the Armed Forces of India, namely, the Indian Army, the Indian Air Force and the Indian Navy are remembered on this day. The 'Armed forces Flag Day Fund' (AFFDF) has been constituted by the Government of India for the welfare and rehabilitation of the Ex-Servicemen (ESM) community.

9. The International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of this Crime is observed annually on **9th December**.

Note: The 9th of December is the anniversary of the adoption of the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (the "Genocide Convention"). This year marks the 71st anniversary of the Convention.

10. 'RECOVER with INTEGRITY' is the theme of the International Anti-Corruption Day 2020 being observed every year 9th December.

Note: The day is observed since the passage of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption on 31 October 2003. The theme of International Anti-Corruption Day 2020: 'RECOVER with INTEGRITY.' The theme focuses on recovery through corruption mitigation and emphasizes that inclusive COVID-19 recovery can only be achieved with integrity.

11. 27th December has been approved by the United Nations General Assembly to be observed as the International Day of epidemic preparedness.

Note: The day is to be marked to facilitate exchange of information, transmission of scientific knowledge and best practices locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. This will help to prevent and respond to the epidemics. The resolution Adopted expressed grave concern stating impacts created by epidemics and infectious diseases. The covid-19 was exemplified during the consensus. The day mainly aims to prevent COVID-19 like situations and to equip the world to fight such scenarios.

12. "Recover Better-Stand Up for Human Rights" is the theme of the International Human Rights Day.

Note: The day was chosen to honour the United Nations General Assembly adoption of Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The United Nations Prize in the field of Human Rights is awarded on the Human Rights Day. This year, the Human Rights Day was celebrated under the theme "Recover Better-Stand Up for Human Rights".

13. Every year, UNICEF Day is observed on **11th December** by the United Nations.

Note: UNICEF stands for United Nations International Children Emergency Fund. It was started in order to provide assistance, supplies and improve health, education, nutrition of children after World War II. The organisation was originally named UNICEF, that is, United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund.

14. 'Mountain Biodiversity' s the theme of the International Mountain Day 2020 celebrating every year on December 11 by United Nations.

Note: It is important to conserve mountains as they are home to 15% of world population. They also host more than half of world biodiversity hotspots. Also, conserving mountains is a key part of Goal 15 of the Sustainable Development Goals.

15. 12th December the International Day of Neutrality celebrated across the world.

Note: It was officially declared by a UN General Assembly resolution adopted in February 2017 and first observed on December 12, 2017.

16. The Universal Health Coverage Day is observed every year on **12th December**.

Note: The theme of 2020 is "Health for all: protect everyone. To end this crisis and build a safer and healthier future, we must invest in health systems that protect us all now".

17. The Energy Conservation Day is celebrated every year on **14th December**.

Note: Every year on 14 December, the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), under the Ministry of Power, celebrates Energy Conservation Day in a bid to raise awareness on the importance of energy conservation for the present as well as future generations. The day is organised annually to showcase India's achievements in energy efficiency and conservation, while working towards climate change mitigation.

18. International Tea Day is celebrated every year on **15th December**.

Note: International Tea Day focuses on promoting better trade practices and working conditions as well as ethical and sustainable production of tea. The day also aims towards raising awareness on the importance of tea in fighting poverty and hunger.

19. India celebrates Vijay Diwas every year on **16th December**.

Note: On the occasion, PM Narendra Modi paid tribute at National War Memorial by lighting the 'Swarnim Vijay Mashal'. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh unveils the logo for 'Swarnim Vijay Varsh' to mark Vijay Diwas.

20. International Migrants Day is observed annually on **18th December**.

Note: The day also commemorates the assembly adopting the International Convention on the

Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families in 1990. As per the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), the theme for International Migrants Day 2020 is "Reimagining Human Mobility".

21. In India, Minorities Rights Day is observed every year on **18th December**.

Note: On 18 December 1992, the United Nations adopted the Statement on the individual's Rights belonging to religious or Linguistic National or Ethnic Minorities. The Ministry was established on 29 January 2006. It was carved out of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. The Union Government established the National Commission for Minorities (NCM) under the National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992.

22. International Human Solidarity Day is observed globally every year on **20th December**.

Note: The is commemorated to celebrate unity in diversity and raise awareness about the importance of solidarity. According to the United Nations Millennium Declaration, solidarity is among the fundamental values that are essential to international relations.

23. In India the National Mathematics Day is observed every year on **22nd December**.

Note: The main objective behind celebrating the day is to raise awareness among people about the importance of mathematics for the development of humanity. National Mathematics Day was first observed in 2012 when former Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh declared this day as National Mathematics Day on February 26, 2012.

24. National Farmers' Day is observed every year on **23rd December**.

Note: Kisan Diwas or National Farmers' Day is observed on December 23, the birth anniversary of Chaudhary Charan Singh, the fifth prime minister of India. This day is of vital significance as it lays the

New Appointments

1.

1. Professor Sangita Srivastava becomes the first women vice chancellor of Allahabad University (AU).

Note: She is the first woman chosen for this post at AU. Prof Srivastava is a former head of Allahabad University's home science department. After her new appointment, she was relieved of her present charge as vice chancellor of Prof Rajendra Singh University on the orders of the chancellor and governor Anandiben Patel.

2. Utpal Kumar Singh has been appointed as the as Secretary-General of the Lok Sabha and Lok Sabha Secretariat.

idea of empowering the farmers of the society with the latest learnings of the agricultural sector.

25. The theme of National Consumer Rights Day being celebrated every year on 24th December -- **The Sustainable Consumer**.

Note: On December 24, 1986, Consumer Protection Act 1986 received the approval of the President of India and hence, came into force. Consumer Protection Act 1986 aims to provide few rights to the consumers in order to save them from the damages caused to them due to different unfair trade practices.

26. National Good governance day is observed annually on **25th December**.

Note: The day is also celebrated to commemorate the birth anniversary of India's former Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee. The day aims to let the citizens, the students, who are the future of the country know about the government's responsibilities and duties that it needs to fulfill.

27. Ministry of skills development joins hands with **Microsoft and NASSCOM** to provide digital learning content for students at industrial training institutes (ITIs).

Note: Nearly 1,20,000 students in around 3000 ITIs across India can be benefited by this digitized e-learning module via the Bharat skills portal. Microsoft has also facilitated access to the free content available on the Microsoft Learn platform for more than 24 lakh students in the ITI ecosystem, by linking the Global Skilling Initiative (GSI) through the Bharatskills platform.

28. The first ever International Day of Epidemic Preparedness, observed on **27th December 2020**.

Note: The International Day of Epidemic Preparedness aims to promote international awareness and action on the prevention of, preparedness for and partnership against epidemics.

Note: His appointment will come into effect from December 1, 2020. He will succeed incumbent Snehlata Shrivastava. Mr Singh is a 1986 batch IAS officer of Uttrakhand Cadre and has been appointed as Secretary-General of the Lok Sabha in the rank and status of Cabinet Secretary.

3. Varsha Joshi has been appointed as the Chairperson of National Dairy Development Board (NDDB).

Note: The Government of India has appointed IAS officer Varsha Joshi as the new Chairperson of National Dairy Development Board (NDDB). She is presently served as Joint Secretary (CDD),

Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying, Government of India.

4. Kumud Srinivasan has been named as the Treasury Secretary by the U.S. President-elect Joe Biden.

Note: If confirmed, she will be the first woman to lead the Treasury Department in its 231-year history. The 74-year-old previously broke barriers as the first female Fed chief.

5. AR Rahman has been appointed as the ambassador for the British Academy of Film and Television Arts' (BAFTA) 'Breakthrough Initiative'.

Note: The initiative, supported by Netflix, aims to identify, celebrate, and support up to five talents working in film, games, or TV in India. As part of BAFTA Breakthrough India, a jury of British and Indian industry experts will select five talents from across India to take part in the year-long mentoring and guidance programme.

6. Kuldeep Handoo has been appointed Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Fit India' Ambassador.

Note: Mr Handoo, who is Wushu Coach of Team India is serving as Inspector in Jammu and Kashmir Police Department. Fit India Movement is a nationwide movement in India to encourage people to remain healthy and fit by including physical activities and sports in their daily lives.

7. Uday Shankar has been named as the president-elect of industry chamber FICCI for 2020-21.

Note: Shankar will be succeeding Sangita Reddy, president of Ficci and joint managing director, Apollo Hospitals Group, during Ficci's 93rd annual general meeting. Presently Shankar is the president of The Walt Disney Company for Asia Pacific and the chairman of Star and Disney India.

8. SM Vaidya has been appointed as the first Vice President of the World LPG Association (WLPGA).

Note: Shri SM Vaidya is appointed as the first Vice President of the World LPG Association (WLPGA), The World LPG Association (WLPGA) is the authoritative voice of the global LPG industry representing the full LPG value chain. Shri SM Vaidya currently is the Chairman of Indian Oil Corporation.

9. Dr Vivek Murthy has been appointed as the Surgeon General of US President-elect Joe Biden.

Note: 43-year-old Murthy will be leading the Covid-19 response team. He served as Surgeon General during the Obama administration too. Dr Murthy was previously confirmed by the Senate to serve in the same capacity, holding the post as 'America's Doctor' between 2014 and 2017.

10. Anil Soni has been appointed as the first Chief Executive Officer of the newly launched The WHO Foundation, which works alongside the World Health Organization to address most pressing health challenges across the world.

Note: Soni will assume his role as The WHO Foundation's inaugural Chief Executive Officer on January 1 next year. In his new role, Mr Soni will accelerate the Foundation's "work to invest in innovative, evidence-based initiatives that support WHO in delivering on its mission to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all,

11. Justice Rajesh Bindal has been appointed as the Chief Justice of the Common High Court for the Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Union Territory of Ladakh.

Note: He will take charge on December 9, 2020. He succeeds Justice Gita Mittal, the 1st female Chief Justice of this court. President of India appointed him, in exercise of the power conferred by Article 223 of the Constitution of India Prior to his appointment as chief justice of the common HC for the UT of J&K and UT of Ladakh, he served as the senior-most Judge of this court.

12. Sabrina Filzmoser and Flavio Canto have been appointed as International Judo Federation (IJF) climate ambassadors by IJF President Marius Vizer.

Note: The pair are now expected to talk about global warming and use judo as a positive influence in delivering this message.

13. Zena Wooldridge has been appointed as President of the World Squash Federation.

Note: She will become the 10th WSF President to serve since the Federation's inception in 1967. She is the second female President after New Zealand's **Susie Simcock**.

14. Annika Sorenstam has been elected as the president of the International Golf Federation (IGF).

Note: IGF President, **Peter Dawson**, is stepping down after 10 years of leadership and service. Sorenstam, a 72-time winner on the LPGA Tour and former No. 1 from Sweden.

15. Uday Kotak has been reappointed as the Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Kotak Mahindra Bank (KMB) for a period of 3 years.

Note: RBI also granted approval for reappointing Prakash Apte as Part -time Chairman and Dipak Gupta as joint MD for 3 years period with effect from January 1, 2021. The board and the shareholders of the bank had approved these reappointments, subject to RBI's approval at their respective meetings.

16. Indian American astronauts **Raja Chari** has been selected as the Commander of the SpaceX Crew-3 mission to the International Space Station (ISS) by NASA and the European Space Agency.

Note: The Indian American will command the mission, while Tom Marshburn will serve as pilot and Matthias Maurer as a mission specialist. Earlier this year in January, Chari became one of the 11 astronauts to join NASA's ranks.

17. Shekhar Vempati has been elected as the Vice President of Asia Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU).

Note: It is one of the largest broadcasting associations in the world. The Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union was formed in 1964 as a professional association of broadcasting organisations with over 286 members in 57 countries and regions, reaching the potential population of about three billion people. Vempati is an alumnus of IIT Bombay and worked in Infosys for more than a decade as Product Strategist.

18. Siddharth Chatterjee has been appointed as the United Nations Resident Coordinator in China by the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

Note: Resident Coordinators are the UN Secretary-General's representatives for development at the country level. They lead UN teams supporting countries to recover better from the COVID-19 pandemic through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

19. Vineet Agarwal has been appointed as the new President of the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM).

Note: Managing Director of logistics major Transport Corporation of India Limited Vineet Agarwal has taken over as the new President of The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (Assocham), the industry body said. He

replaces Niranjan Hiranandani, Co-Founder and Managing Director, Hiranandani Group of Companies. Sumant Sinha, Chairman and Managing Director of ReNew Power, is the new Senior Vice-President of Assocham.

20. Florin Citu has been appointed as Romania's new prime minister.

Note: Some 260 lawmakers in Romania's 465-seat, two-chamber assembly on Wednesday voted for the new government, while 186 voted against. Former investment banker and finance minister Florin Citu become the new prime minister at a time when Romania is struggling against the ongoing coronavirus pandemic and its economic fallout.

21. Arya Rajendran has become the Country's Youngest Mayor from Kerala's Capital Thiruvananthapuram.

Note: The party district committee has decided to field S Arya Rajendran as the mayor candidate on behalf of the LDF and Suresh Kumar as the District panchayat president of Thiruvananthapuram. In the recent civic polls, the LDF has won 51 wards in the 100-member prestigious corporation of the Kerala capital. Rajendran is a state committee member of the Students Federation of India (SFI) and also the state president of Balasangam, the children's wing of the Left party.

22. Dr. Harsh Vardhan has been nominated as the board member of the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation (GAVI).

Note: Dr Vardhan will represent the South East Area Regional Office (SEARO)/ Western Pacific Regional Office (WPRO) constituency on the GAVI Board. Dr Vardhan will assume the charge with effect from January 1, 2021, and serve till December 31, 2023.

Important News – India

1.

1. M Venkaiah Naidu chaired the 19th Meeting of the SCO Council of Heads of Governments held recently.

Note: The Summit ended with the adoption of the Joint Communique. During the meet he launched the first ever SCO Online Exhibition on Shared Buddhist Heritage. It was launched during the 19th Meeting of the SCO Council of Heads of Government.

2. India's ranked at **8th** in the Global Terrorism Index (GTI) 2020.

Note: India recorded 277 Deaths, 439 Injuries & 558 Incidents due to Terrorism in 2019. Regionally, South Asia was the most impacted region by

terrorism in 2019, recording more deaths than any other region. Also, globally the deaths caused due to terrorism fell by 15 per cent to 13,286 in 2019 over 2018.

3. Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change will chair the high-level inter-ministerial Apex committee for Implementation of Paris Agreement (AIPA) constituted by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.

Note: The purpose of AIPA is to generate a coordinated response on climate change matters that ensures India is on track towards meeting its obligations under the Paris Agreement including its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC). Senior

officials from fourteen ministries will serve as members to AIPA who will oversee the progress in implementation of India's NDC and receive periodic information updates to monitor, review and revisit climate goals to fulfil the requirements of the Paris Agreement.

4. According to The International Farm Comparison Network (IFCN) Dairy Processors Report 2020 the position of AMUL as the Milk Processor globally is **8th**.

Note: The rankings are based on the parameters of Milk Intake per annum. Amul has reported an intake of 10.3 Billion Kg of Milk annually, it is more than double growth from the 4.54 Billion Kg of Milk Intake reported by Amul in 2013.

5. Reliance Industries Ltd has topped the Fortune 500 list of Indian companies list of 2020.

Note: Indian Oil Corporation Ltd. (IOC), the nation's biggest oil firm, bagged the second spot, followed by Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) at the third. The country's largest lender State Bank of India was in the fourth position, while India's second-biggest fuel retailer Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd. (BPCL) took the fifth spot.

6. 7th edition of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Conclave 2020 was held in **Hyderabad**.

Note: It was organized by UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund), National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRD & PR) in collaboration with 3 state governments – Telangana, Andhra Pradesh & Karnataka. Governor of Andhra Pradesh, Biswabhusan Harichandan participated as the Chief Guest of the Conclave.

7. India's first indigenously developed 100 Octane premium petrol developed by **Indian Oil Corporation Limited**.

Note: Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas and Steel Dharmendra Pradhan launched India's first indigenously developed 100 Octane premium petrol through video conferencing. The high octane premium grade petrol being marketed under the brand XP-100 will be made available in 10 cities across the country including the national capital in the first phase.

8. Vice-President Venkaiah Naidu virtually released a commemorative postage stamp in honour of late Prime Minister **IK Gujral**.

Note: I K Gujral was the 12th Prime Minister of India, he served as the Prime Minister from April 1997-March 1998. During his tenure as India's External Affairs Minister, I K Gujral laid a set of five principles – 'Gujral Doctrine' to guide the conduct of foreign relations with India's immediate neighbours.

9. Boris Johnson (PM UK) will be the chief guest for the Republic Day celebrations in January 2021.

Note: India has invited U.K. Prime Minister Boris Johnson as chief guest for the Republic Day celebrations in January 2021 and a decision on this is awaited from London. If Johnson accepts the invite, he would become the first British prime minister to grace the parade at Rajpath in nearly three decades. The last British prime minister at the Republic Day parade was John Major in 1993.

10. Arjun Munda e-launches "Virtual Aadi Mahotsav in **Madhya Pradesh**.

Note: Videos showcasing different aspects of their culture – music, dance etc, will also be shared. In essence, it will still be a celebration of the tribes and their diverse, varied lifestyle but on a different platform.

11. Gwalior and Orchha in Madhya Pradesh have been included in the list of UNESCO's world heritage cities under its urban landscape city programme.

Note: The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), an agency of the United Nations, aims at promoting world peace and security through international cooperation in education, the sciences, and culture. After getting included in the heritage city list, the face of Gwalior and Orchha will totally change and UNESCO along with the state tourism department will make a master plan for the beautification of the two places.

12. Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated metro rail project in **Agra** recently through video conferencing.

Note: The project consists of two corridor connecting the major tourist attractions with railway stations and bus stand. This metro project, worth over Rs 8,000 crore, will strengthen the mission related to the establishment of smart facilities in Agra.

13. "Inclusive Innovation-Smart, Secure, Sustainable" is the theme of the India Mobile Congress 2020 organized by the Department of Telecommunications and Cellular Operators Association of India.

Note: The Department of Telecommunications and Cellular Operators Association of India are organizing the Indian Mobile Congress. It was organized under the theme "Inclusive Innovation-Smart, Secure, Sustainable". The Congress is to be held between December 8, 2020 and December 10, 2020.

14. India ranked at 10th position in the 'Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI) 2021'.

Note: The overall score of India is 63.98. It is for the second time in a row that India emerged among the top 10 countries with higher climate performance from among 58 economies. India was at 9th spot last year in the index. Like CCPI 2020,

the first three places in 2021 ranking also remains unoccupied, since none of the countries is on the path compatible with the Paris climate targets, to implement strategies to limit global warming below 2 or even 1.5°C.

15. The Union Minister of state for tourism and culture Shri Prahlad Singh Patel inaugurated the Association of Buddhist Tour Operators International Convention in **New Delhi**.

Note: The convention is to be held in partnership with Ministry of Tourism. During the inauguration ceremony the Minister made the following announcements

- The Swadesh Darshan scheme and PRASAD Yojana was launched to develop the tourism industry in the country.
- Under the Swadesh Darshan scheme, more than 350 crores of Rupees have been sanctioned for the development of Buddhist sites
- More than 900 crores of Rupees have been sanctioned under the PRASAD scheme

16. The Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways Shri Nitin Gadkari inaugurated the Koliwar Bridge built over Sone river in Bihar.

Note: The bridge was constructed at an expense of 256 crores of rupees. The existing two-Lane Bridge over the river for both road and rail traffic is 138 years old. The Bridge has been replaced which includes three lanes of carriageway. The bridge will up subsequently reduce the traffic on NH-30 and on NH -922. It is all major link between Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

17. The fifth India Water Impact Summit was organized by **National Mission for Clean Ganga & Centre for Ganga River Basin Management and Studies**.

Note: The Summit is being organised by the National Mission for Clean Ganga and the Centre for Ganga River Basin Management and Studies. The Summit will disseminate and discuss the need for modalities of embracing Ganga. Also, it will act as a common platform for the investors and stakeholders in the water sector. The Summit will promote International cooperation between India and several other foreign countries for river management.

18. The Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi laid foundation stone of new Parliament building in New Delhi. The project is expected to be completed by **2022**.

Note: The construction cannot begin for now with the Supreme Court hearing petitions challenging the project on environmental grounds. Last week, the Supreme Court had berated the government, accusing it of "pushing forward aggressively" with the project even before its decision on the petitions.

"You can lay the foundation stone, you can carry on paperwork but no construction or demolition, no cutting down any trees,

19. The second TCGA-Cancer Genome Atlas 2020 conference was held in **New Delhi**.

Note: The conference brought together scientists and clinicians from all over the world to jointly establish the Indian Cancer Genome Atlas (ICGA). Indian Cancer Genome Atlas (ICGA) aims to create an indigenous, open-source and comprehensive database to collect molecular profiles of all prevalent cancers in the Indian population.

20. The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Austria on Technology Cooperation in the Road Infrastructure Sector.

Note: It was signed by the Additional Secretary, MoRTH Shri K.C. Gupta and the Ambassador of Austria Brigitte Oppinger-Walchshofer in New Delhi. The MoU will cover Road Transportation, Road/Highways infrastructure development, management and administration, Road safety and Intelligent Transport Systems between both countries.

21. Mumbai ranked first in the Urban Quality of Life (UQoL) Index 2020 released by the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IIT-B).

Note: In accordance to this, Mumbai (Maharashtra) tops the index followed by Delhi, Kolkata (West Bengal) and Chennai (Tamil Nadu) by providing Highest Quality of Life while Bihar's capital city Patna provides poorest quality of life to its people. Notably, this is for the first time the index has considered the factor of gender parity under which Chennai is named as the most women-friendly city while Patna stood last.

22. India ranked at **9th** position in global spam calls in the 4th Edition of Global Insights Report for 2020 released by Truecaller.

Note: This was a drop for India in the rankings, which indicates spam calls actually fell this year in the country. Truecaller's report also revealed another interesting fact during the three months of lockdown: In India calls to emergency services spiked by 148% at the beginning of the lockdown.

23. SJVN Limited has signed an MoU with Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited for green energy projects.

Note: As per the MoU, IREDA will provide services to SJVN for development of Green Energy Projects, and help SJVN in devising an action plan to create and acquire Renewable Energy Projects for the next 5 years. As part of the MoU, IREDA will undertake Techno-Financial due diligence (identifying suitable

technology for particular project sites) for the projects of SJVN.

24. The Asia Pacific Vaccine Access Facility (APVAX), a \$9 billion initiative has been launched by **Asian Development Bank.**

Note: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has launched a USD 9 billion vaccine initiative that will offer support to its developing member economies to procure and deliver COVID-19 vaccines. The Asia Pacific Vaccine Access Facility (APVAX) provides a comprehensive framework and resource envelope for supporting developing Asia's vaccine access, using two complementary components.

25. National Centre for Divyang Empowerment has been inaugurated in **Hyderabad.**

Note: This is first of its kind establishment to re-skill and rehabilitate the Divyang Warriors of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) who suffered life threatening injuries in line of duty.

26. NITI Aayog releases white paper titled 'Vision 2035 - Public Health Surveillance in India'.

Note: It lays out India's vision for public health surveillance through the integration of 3-tiered public health system into Ayushman Bharat, along with the need for expanded referral networks and enhanced laboratory capacity.

27. Norwegian Institute of Bioeconomy Research (NIBIO) has signed an agreement with cGanga, a think-tank of the National Mission for Clean Ganga, for development of sludge management framework in India.

Note: This was announced during the 5th India Water Impact Summit 2020. The event is co-organised by National Mission for Clean Ganga and Centre for Ganga River Basin Management and Studies.

28. To commemorates the 125th birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose in 2022, the Union Culture Ministry was planning to set up a museum in **Kolkata.**

Note: A museum on Bose was "proposed to be set up in Kolkata as a part of commemorations and that the current museum at Red Fort, New Delhi is also proposed to be expanded. The GoI is also planning to reprint some of the books written by Netaji. The Netaji museum in New Delhi is also to be expanded.

29. India's rank in the recently released United Nations' Human Development Index 2020 -- **131st.**

Note: For the first time, the United Nations Development Programme introduced a new metric to reflect the impact caused by each country's per-capita carbon emissions and its material footprint, which measures the amount of fossil fuels, metals and other resources used to make the goods and services it consumes. Norway, which tops the HDI,

falls 15 places if this metric is used, leaving Ireland at the top of the table.

30. A dedicated control centre for Space Situational Awareness (SSA) activities in the country has been set up in **Bengaluru.**

Note: ISRO SSA Control Centre, 'NETRA', is set up within the ISTRAC campus at Peenya. The control centre is envisaged to function as a hub of all SSA activities within India.

31. Indian city **Mumbai** ranked first in the Urban Quality of Life (UQoL) Index 2020 released by the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IIT-B).

Note: In accordance to this, Mumbai (Maharashtra) tops the index followed by Delhi, Kolkata (West Bengal) and Chennai (Tamil Nadu) by providing Highest Quality of Life while Bihar's capital city Patna provides poorest quality of life to its people. Notably, this is for the first time the index has considered the factor of gender parity under which Chennai is named as the most women-friendly city while Patna stood last.

32. India's first Zoological Park to acquire ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management Standards Certification -- **Nehru Zoological Park, Hyderabad.**

Note: HYM International Certifications Pvt Ltd, accredited by the ASCB, recently reviewed the ISO 9001: 2015 certification. The basis of assessment was sanitisation, food processing, animal breeding, medicare, animal care, hygiene maintenance and establishment. Notably, the number of tigers and Indian Gaur were also increased at the Nehru Zoological Park.

33. Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA) & Automotive Skills Development Council (ASDC) announced partnership with **Google** company to reduce the digital skill gap in India's auto dealership sector.

Note: The main focus of the partnership is to empower Indian dealerships through adoption of digital tools and platforms to engage with customers in post-COVID era. Training will be provided under the topics of Digital Marketing, Hyper Local Marketing & Full Funnel Strategy. This is Google India's first-of-its-kind initiative to help the dealer fraternity and support them in this necessary transition.

34. The networking and communication company Ericsson released a report "The Ericsson Mobility Report 2020" which estimated India's 5G connection to surpass 350 million by **2026.**

Note: The report also notified India's first 5G connection to be rolled out by 2021. More than 15% of the world's population (1 billion people) will live in areas under 5G coverage. 60% of the global

population (3.5 billion) will use 5G connections with 5G subscriptions by 2026

35. According to the **2020 Global Status Report** for Buildings and Construction released by Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction, the Building & Construction sector accounted for **38%** of CO₂ emissions.

Note: This is the 5th Edition of the Annual Report. GlobalABC was launched at COP21 (2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference) and is hosted by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

36. India's rank in the 'Human Freedom Index 2020: A Global Measurement of Personal, Civil, and Economic Freedom' -- **111th**.

Note: It is the sixth Annual Report released by Cato Institute of United States & Fraser Institute in Canada. New Zealand topped the index followed by Switzerland. India was ranked 110th in terms of personal freedom and 105 on economic freedom. The index put China at 129th, Bangladesh at 139th and Pakistan at 140th rank.

37. India's rank in the corrected 'Doing Business' 2020 report -- **63rd**.

Note: The World Bank has come out with a corrected Doing Business ranking following review of data irregularities. The WB has lowered China's ranking by 7 notches. The WB also corrected the rankings of Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Azerbaijan. The ranking of Azerbaijan has been improved to 28 from 34.

38. Amit Shah will head the committee constituted by the central government to celebrate Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose's 125th birth anniversary.

Note: The committee will include experts, historians, authors, and family members of Netaji, as well as eminent personalities associated with his Azad Hind Fauj and Indian National Army. The committee will lend guidance to the commemorative activities in Delhi, Kolkata and other places associated with Netaji and the Azad Hind Fauj in India as well as overseas.

39. Chennai Mathematical Institute (CMI) has decided to establish the "Dr F C Kohli Centre of Excellence for Advanced Research in Mathematical and Computing Sciences.

Note: With a committed donation of Rs 10 crore towards the establishment of the centre, the institute will raise funds from corporates, community groups, colleagues and wellwishers to further augment the corpus. FC Kohli, known as the architect of the Indian IT industry, passed away on November 26 at the age of 96.

40. As per the 'Status of Leopard in India 2018' report, released by Union environment minister

Prakash Javadekar, the population of leopard in India has increased by **60 per cent**.

Note: More than 60 per cent increase in population has been recorded over the previous estimate which was conducted in 2014. The States of MP (3,421), Karnataka (1783) and Maharashtra (1690) have recorded the highest leopard estimates.

41. The Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) has launched a multilingual call centre for aquafarmers in **Andhra Pradesh** state.

Note: The call centre primarily caters to aqua farmers of Andhra Pradesh, the state that contributes more than 60 per cent of the country's marine products export basket. The call centre can also handle calls in English and Hindi.

42. Homegrown data storage and management platform DigiBoxx has been launched by **NITI Aayog**.

Note: India now has its own cloud storage platform, DigiBoxx. A potential alternative to Google Drive, Dropbox, and Microsoft OneDrive, the indigenous cloud service is seen as a step that furthers the initiative of 'Atmanirbhar Bharat.' The homegrown data storage and management platform has been launched by NITI Aayog and it will provide affordable services to both regular users as well as businesses. Without revealing any technical details, the company said that all the data will be encrypted and stored in servers in India. The cloud storage platform is available on Android and iOS and can be accessed on computers through the web. The most interesting feature of the service DigiBoxx is that it allows users to share files even when they don't have a DigiBoxx account.

43. International Gita Mahotsav 2020 was held in **Kurukshetra** city of India inaugurated by Himachal Pradesh chief minister (CM) Jai Ram Thakur.

Note: The international festival was held from 17th to 25th December, 2020. In view of the pandemic, the celebrations are subdued this time. While earlier, the extravaganza used to continue throughout the month, this time the celebrations were last for only a week.

44. Indian Navy with Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for sharing ocean services data, expertise in operational oceanography.

Note: This MoU is focused on sharing of ocean services, data, and expertise in the field of operational oceanography and the same will benefit both Indian Navy and INCOIS in furthering meaningful interactions and professional exchanges in future.

45. India will host a Global Media and Film Summit in **2021**.

Note: The year 2022 will mark 75 years of independence and 75 years of Cannes Film Festival, and the occasion will be celebrated in a different scale with a special pavilion at the International Film Festival.

46. India indigenously developed high horsepower locomotives and has become the country in the world to do so -- **6th**.

Note: The Indian Railways has operationalised its first 12,000 hp electric locomotive manufactured locally by French rolling stock manufacturer Alstom. The locomotive made its maiden commercial run between Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Station to Shivpu. Indian Railways' completes five years of awarding the contract to Alstom for manufacturing the high-speed electric locomotives.

47. Name the mobile application that was launched by the Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment Thawarchand Gehlot to identify and

geotag insanitary latrines and manual scavengers -- "**Swachhata Abhiyan**".

Note: This app would help in rehabilitating all manual scavengers and replace insanitary latrines with sanitary ones. In the absence of any authentic data base regarding the location of insanitary latrines, it has been decided to seek the help of NGOs, Social Organisations and general public for collection and compilation of the data.

48. Hardeep Singh Puri has launched E-Sampada, a new web portal and mobile app on Good Governance Day.

Note: The new application provides a single window for all the services including allotment for over one lakh government residential accommodations, office space allotment to government organisations in 45 office complexes in 28 cities and booking of 1,176 holiday home rooms. The portal provides online facility to users across India to lodge complaints, submit documents and appear for virtual hearing.

Important News – State

1.

1. West Bengal state government has started 'Duare Sarkar' (government at doorsteps) programme to speed up and take the delivery of public services to the doorstep of the people.

Note: Benefits of at least 11 state government-run schemes will be made available to eligible people at camps to be set up for 'Duare Sarkar' (government at doorsteps) programme.

2. Punjab state government has signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with International Digital Health & Artificial Intelligence Research Collaborative (I-DAIR) to develop and deploy digital technologies in the health sector.

Note: Punjab is the 1st govt partner of I-DAIR to develop models of people-centric digital infrastructures for health Anirudh Tewari, the state's Additional Chief Secretary (Governance Reforms) signed the MoU on behalf of Punjab Government.

3. The Suryadhar lake has been inaugurated in **Uttarakhand**.

Note: Suryadhar lake has been built at a cost of Rs 50.25 crore. It is 550 metres long, 28 metres wide and 10 metres deep with a capacity of 77,000 cubic metres. The lake will address the drinking water and irrigational needs of nearly 20 villages around it and is also set to become a major tourist and water sports destination in coming times.

4. The cyclone 'Burevi' hits Tamil Nadu recently.

Note: This is the third cyclone formed within the last 10 days in the Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea

put together. As the new cyclone Burevi comes just days after Cyclone Nivar, its impact is set to be more subdued.

5. Country's first memorial for organ donors has been inaugurated in **Rajasthan**.

Note: This exclusive memorial has been established jointly by Mohan Foundation Jaipur Citizen Forum (MFJCF) and the Jaipur Municipal Corporation, near the city's SMS Hospital, in honour of those who have given life to others in need. The names of 38 organ donors who have saved the lives of over 100 people in Rajasthan, Delhi and Mumbai, are etched on the memorial.

6. Raimona National Park is proposed to become sixth National Park in **Assam**.

Note: The area of proposed Raimona National Park lies within the Ripu Reserve Forest that has a history of one of the best scientifically-managed forests in the country during the late 19th century. The area comprises the highest biodiverse floristic composition of the state wherein as many as 11 different forest types and sub-types could be classified.

7. Swasthya Sathi scheme is a health insurance scheme of West Bengal has now been expanded to cover the state's entire population.

Note: It provides basic health cover for secondary and tertiary care up to 5 lakh INR per annum per family. Both state-run and private hospitals are part of the scheme. The card under the scheme is issued

to the female guardians of the families. Every citizen and every family in the state are to be included in the scheme irrespective of their age group.

8. Nongpok Sekmai police station of Manipur was ranked as the best performing police station in the country in the recently released the annual ranking of police Stations in India.

Note: The annual ranking is being done since 2015. Nongpok Sekmai police station in Thoubal district of Manipur was ranked as the best performing police station in the country. The All Women Police Station of Suramangalam in Salem city of Tamilnadu was ranked second in the list

9. Odisha state government has organised the 9th edition of International Sand Art festival.

Note: The sand art festival displays spectacular sand arts sculpted by skillful artists from India and around the world. World recognised sand artists from Mexico, Spain, Singapore, France, Norway, Germany, Netherland and USA have participated over the years

10. Bihar state is planning its first ever migratory bird festival this year.

Note: It is to be jointly organised by Bhagalpur forest division, Bombay Natural History Society and the local Mandar Nature Club. The region houses a large number of migratory birds between November and March every year. The festival is intended to check cases of poaching in the region.

11. Biggest-ever Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) scheme 'Orunodoi' has been launched in **Assam**.

Note: The scheme has been rolled out with 17 lakh families as beneficiaries at present. The government said that it will transfer Rs 830 per month to the account of one of the female members of the family under the 'Orunodoi' scheme. The number of beneficiaries will increase to about 22 lakh once the BTC districts are also included.

12. Madhya Pradesh aimed to completely eliminate AIDS by 2030.

Note: The highest number 12 thousand 773 patients reported in Indore. Bhopal is at number two with more than 7 thousand patients. Jabalpur has around 6 thousand patients while Gwalior has more than 3 thousand HIV patients. The highest 68 percent HIV infected people belong to the age group of 25 to 49 years.

13. Odisha state topped in the Urban Governance Index released by the Praja Foundation recently.

Note: According to the Urban Governance Index Odisha was followed by Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh. Delhi rank 13th in the list. The states were marked between 0 and 100 based on the themes empowered City administration, elected

representatives and legislative structure and empowered citizens and physical empowerment. Maharashtra scored 55%, Odisha scored 56%. The Other top performers were Chhattisgarh with a score of 49.6 8%, Kerala with a score of 48.7 7% and Madhya Pradesh with the score of 45.9 4%.

14. Kanhalgaon will be the 50th wildlife sanctuary of **Maharashtra**.

Note: With the addition of the state's 50th wildlife sanctuary and 10 new conservation reserves (CR), Maharashtra has expanded its protected area network from 62 to 73 zones with over 10,000 sq km of the state now secured.

15. Lakshadweep has achieved the status of 100% organic region after Sikkim.

Note: The UT is second after Sikkim to achieve the status of 100% organic region. It is first in the Union Territories of India to achieve the status. The entire 32 sq km area of the UT has been certified as organic under the Union Government's Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (organic farming improvement programme).

16. West Bengal state government has announced the construction of a deep sea port in Tajpur.

Note: Tajpur Deep Sea Port will be built at a cost of Rs 15,000 crore and will generate employment for 25,000 people. It will be the state's first deep seaport. The concentration of iron and steel industries around Kharagpur will get a boost by having a port at their doorstep for exports.

17. Mizoram has launched "Livelihood Generation for Returned Migrant Workers project" to assist migrant workers who lost their job in the pandemic.

Note: The project will be funded by North East Council. Provide skill based training and entrepreneurship to over 2,600 workers through 7 components.

18. Uttar Pradesh state government has recently launched a scheme to take the unique culture of its ethnic Tharu tribe across the world.

Note: The state government is working to connect Tharu villages in the districts of Balrampur, Bahraich, Lakhimpur and Pilibhit bordering Nepal, with the home stay scheme of the UP Forest Department. The idea is to offer tourists an experience of living in the natural Tharu habitat, in traditional huts made of grass collected mainly from the forests.

19. World's leading mobility platform, Ola has signed an MoU with **Tamil Nadu** state government for setting up the world's largest scooter manufacturing plant.

Note: Initially, it will have an annual manufacturing capacity of 2 million units. It will make India a manufacturing hub for two-wheeler electric vehicles.

It will also reduce dependence of India on import of electric vehicles, boosting manufacturing, employment.

20. India's rank in global spam calls in the 4th Edition of Global Insights Report for 2020 released by Truecaller -- **9th**.

Note: The fourth edition of the report points out that the Covid-19 pandemic affected "communications behaviour and spam patterns around the world". As per the report, Brazil is the most affected country in the world by spam calls, followed by the US and Hungary.

21. The Telangana government has partnered with tech major **IBM** to skill 30,000 students in emerging technologies.

Note: IBM will work with Telangana Academy for Skill and Knowledge (TASK) to offer Open P-TECH, a free digital education platform focused on emerging technologies and professional development skill. A total of 30,000 students of engineering, degree and polytechnic courses would benefit from the initiative over a period of one year.

22. India's eighth hydrocarbon producing basin has been open by country's largest largest oil and gas producer ONGC in **West Bengal**.

Note: ONGC has discovered and put to production seven out of the eight hydrocarbon producing basins of India, covering 83 per cent of established oil and gas reserves. ONGC is India's largest oil and gas producer contributing 72 per cent of the country's hydrocarbon production.

23. The Ministry of AYUSH has approved 200 AYUSH Health and Wellness Centres in **Uttarakhand** state under centrally sponsored scheme of National AYUSH Mission.

Note: In this regard, Arvind Lal Vandana Lal (ALVL) Foundation, New Delhi is providing support to the department of AYUSH, Uttarakhand, in operationalization of AYUSH HWCs in Almora district of Uttarakhand. The Central Government will provide necessary technical support. The ALVL Foundation will support in Population Enumeration, creation of Health Cards in the catchment population of the HWCs and help in training and capacity building of HWC team.

24. Andhra Pradesh government has launched 'Free Crop Insurance' scheme for farmers.

Note: AP Government credited ₹1,252 crores into the bank accounts of 9.48 lakh farmers in insurance claims for the agricultural season 2019. The previous government spent an average Rs 393 crore per annum for three years towards payment of insurance premium. The compensation for the crop losses during 2020 will be paid in April next.

25. Gujarat state gets a new online fire safety approval system, the 'Fire Safety COP' and becomes the first state to do so.

Note: The system, which will be implemented from January 26 next year, comes after recent incidents of fire in COVID-19 facilities in which several patients died, including in Rajkot on November 27.

26. Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of the world's largest renewable energy park in **Gujarat**.

Note: This 30,000 megawatt capacity hybrid renewable energy park will be built along the Indo-Pak border at Khavda using both wind and solar energy. Spread over 72,600 hectares of waste land, the first of its kind energy project is expected to play a major role in fulfilling India's vision of generating 450 gw (4,50,000 mw) of power by 2030.

27. Uttar Pradesh state government has launched 'Kisan Kalyan Mission' to double the income of farmers.

Note: The program named as Kisan Kalyan Mission will cover all assembly constituencies of the state. Under the Kisan Kalyan mission various programs will be organised across the state.

28. Uttar Pradesh government has launched a special campaign 'Varasat' (natural succession) to curb property & land-related disputes in rural areas.

Note: This is a first of its kind campaign in the state which aims to put an end the land-related issues in the rural areas and eradicate the exploitation of the villagers over succession rights by land mafias, who generally target disputed properties. The two-month-long special drive will continue till 15th February 2020.

29. Gujarat state government has signed a pact with Cerestra Managers Pvt Ltd to set up a Special Education Region.

Note: The Gujarat government signed a pact with Cerestra Managers Pvt Ltd to set up the Gujarat-Special Education Region (G-SER) at the Dholera Special Investment Region. The G-SER will be developed as an education hub spread over 1,000 acres that can be expanded up to 5,000 acres to develop university district, school district and innovation district

30. Kerala state government has collaborated with UN-Women to establish India's first Gender Data Hub.

Note: The Gender Hub builds on the goals established through the International Conference on Gender Equality held in November 2015, to collect, analyse and use more nuanced data and inform policy formulation in a manner that centre-stages women's rights.

31. Punjab government has launched 'PR Insight' mobile app and web portal.

Note: The 'PR Insight' mobile app and web portal will look after and improve the delivery of citizen-centric services in order to observe responsive and transparent administration in the State. It will work coordinately in response to the feedback from the people on government policies and schemes. The app and web portal will help to align the proper execution of existing schemes so that each person can avail the benefits. It is developed by the Information & Public Relations Department.

32. Uttar Pradesh has become the first state to launch blockchain-enabled solar power trading in India and South Asia.

Note: Uttar Pradesh has become the first state to launch blockchain-enabled solar power trading in India and South Asia in a project led by India Smart Grid Forum (ISGF) with Australian technology company Power Ledger. Uttar Pradesh Power Corporation Limited (UPPCL) and the subsidiary Madhyanchal Vidyut Vitran Nigam Limited (MVVNL) will host a pilot project involving peer-to-peer (P2P) trading of energy generated from solar rooftop systems installed on buildings in Lucknow. India Smart Grid Forum along with two other organisations will execute the project. The P2P trading platform's first 12 participants would comprise nine customers with rooftop solar systems (prosumers) and three customers without rooftop solar systems (net buyers).

33. Uttar Pradesh state will become the first state in the country to establish a leather park.

Note: A mega leather park will come up in Ramaipur village of Kanpur with an investment of Rs 5,850 crores. With the mega leather cluster at Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh will become the first state in the country to establish a leather park. The park which is part of the mega leather cluster project is likely to create 50,000 jobs. The mega leather cluster project will attract an investment of about Rs 13,000 crores. The leather park will be equipped with an effluent treatment plant to keep a check on pollution.

34. Haryana state government's Department of Information Technology, Electronics and

Communication has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with India Accelerator to build startup ecosystem.

Note: The Government is in the process of building a robust Startup Ecosystem for encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship in the state. The Department of Information Technology, Electronics and Communications, Government (DITECH) Haryana has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with India Accelerator.

35. Rajasthan government has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with IIT Madras to create a data-driven system approach to road safety.

Note: The objective of this collaboration is to enhance road safety measures, increase capacity and capability across the board in the Government to both increase the survivability of road accident victims and reduce occurrence rate in the State.

36. Telangana state government has signed an MoU with SAP India to digitize and empower MSMEs in the state by equipping them with digital skilling and technologies.

Note: The program will work towards promoting entrepreneurship for the MSMEs sector, by providing them with access to the global marketplace, digital skilling for the workforce and access to affordable enterprise technology.

37. Odisha state government has launched a 'Career Portal' for secondary and higher secondary students in collaboration with UNICEF.

Note: The portal will provide easy access to information on different careers and will give students an opportunity to interact with teachers. Students will also be able to access career guidance services through a mobile friendly app created specifically for the portal.

38. India's first Lithium refinery is soon going to be set up in **Gujarat**.

Note: The company will import Lithium ore from Australia and will be processing in Gujarat. Manikaran Power Limited, one of the country's largest power trading and renewable energy company will invest around Rs 1,000 crore to set up this refinery. The refinery will process Lithium ore to produce battery-grade material.

Important News – World

1.

1. Kazakhstan will chair the incoming 20th Meeting of the SCO Council of Heads of Government in 2021.

Note: The Summit ended with the adoption of the Joint Communique. During the meet he launched

the first ever SCO Online Exhibition on Shared Buddhist Heritage. It was launched during the 19th Meeting of the SCO Council of Heads of Government.

2. According to air pollution data released by the US Air Quality Index 2020 **Lahore** has topped the list of world's most polluted cities.

Note: According to the index, Lahore reported a particulate matter (PM) rating of 423. Pakistan's financial capital Karachi ranked at 7 on the AQI. New Delhi came in second with a PM of 229, while Nepal's capital Kathmandu ranked the third-worst city with a PM of 178.

3. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has published a flagship report titled "The State of Food and Agriculture (SOFA) 2020 – Overcoming Water Challenges in Agriculture".

Note: The report states that around 1.2 billion people across the globe are under high levels of water stress, which means that one out of every 6 people in the world are facing a severe water stress or scarcity in agriculture with more than 15% of the rural population at risk. The State of Food and Agriculture 2020 report addresses two prime water challenges that affect agriculture and food production, Water Shortages and Scarcity.

4. According to the world Malaria report, 2020 prepared by the World Health Organisation, India is the largest contributor of Malaria cases in the south-east Asia region.

Note: As per the report, India recorded the largest reduction in malaria cases in South East Asia. The case count has reduced from 20 million in 2000 to around 5.6 million in 2019. However, India is the largest contributor of Malaria cases in the south-east Asia region. Around 88% of Malaria cases in the region are from India.

5. Singapore becomes the first country to allow the sale of cultured meat.

Note: The meat is created from animal cells without slaughtering chickens. Eat Just Inc., a maker of meat and egg substitutes, has been approved to sell its laboratory-created chicken in Singapore

6. Bangladesh has signed its first Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) with **Bhutan**.

Note: Under the PTA, 100 Bangladeshi products will get duty free access to Bhutan, while 34 items from Bhutan will get duty free access into Bangladesh. Further items can be added in the list later on the basis of discussion between the two countries.

7. Singapore will host the Special Annual Meeting 2021 of WEF in 2021.

Note: For the first time the WEF Special Annual meeting is taking place in Asia and the second time that meeting is being held outside Davos, Switzerland. The first meeting outside Davos, Switzerland was held in 2002 in New York.

8. UNICEF has decided to introduce a prestigious award "Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman"

International Prize in the Field of Creative Economy".

Note: The name of the award is "UNESCO-Bangladesh "Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman" International Prize in the Field of Creative Economy." The award will be given every two years and the prize money will be US \$50,000. It will be given for the first time in November next year at the 41st General meeting of UNESCO.

9. India decided to establish a task force on energy with **Qatar**.

Note: This was announced after a telecall between Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas and Steel, Dharmendra Pradhan, and Saad Sherida Al-Kaabi, Qatar's Minister of State for Energy Affairs and President and CEO Qatar Petroleum. Qatar is a reliable supplier of Liquefied Natural Gas and Liquefied Petroleum Gas.

10. The joint air force exercise "Shaheen (Eagle)-IX" was conducted between **Pakistan and China**.

Note: Shaheen-IX is the ninth in the series of Joint Air Exercises which is conducted each year in both countries on alternate basis. The first such drill was held in Pakistan in March 2011. China and Pakistan share close military ties. China helps Pakistan to jointly produce JF-17 fighter jets and other armaments.

11. According to 11th Edition of Emissions Gap Report 2020 (Annual report) released by United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Global Carbon Dioxide Emissions are set to fall by **7 per cent** in 2020 owing to Pandemic.

Note: The report states that emissions of the richest 1% of the Global Population (Countries like United States of America (USA), European Union (EU), Australia and New Zealand) account for more than twice of the share of poorest 50% of countries. Global GreenHouse Gas (GHG) emissions continued to rise in 2019. 52.4 GtCO₂e (Gigatonnes of equivalent carbon dioxide) without land-use change (LUC) and 59.1 GtCO₂e including LUC.

12. United Nations Education Scientific & Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has released the 2nd edition of "State of the Education Report for India 2020: Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)".

Note: Over 400 representatives were participated that includes from the government, civil society, academia, partners and youth. The second edition of the State of Education Report focuses on technical and vocational education and training (TVET).

13. Oman becomes the first Arabian country to establish Friendship Association with India.

Note: Oman's Foreign Minister Sayyid Badr bin Hamad bin Hamood Al Busaidi held detailed dialogue with his Indian counterpart S Jaishankar on giving further momentum to strategic ties. The aim of the association to provide a platform that promotes friendship, understanding and matters of mutual interest between Oman and India business and social communities in the Sultanate.

14. Chile finds top position in Bloomberg New Energy Finance's (BNEF) 2020 Climatescope survey ranking.

Note: India has dropped to the second position in Bloomberg New Energy Finance's (BNEF) 2020 Climatescope survey ranking from first last year, as a result of a decline in clean energy investment, which fell 12 per cent in 2018-19 to \$8.5 billion and has plummeted 32 per cent since 2017.

15. Virtually co-hosted Climate Ambition Summit 2020 -- **UN and France.**

Note: Climate Ambition Summit marked 5 years of the adoption of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. It is a major step to the next UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26), which will be hosted by UK in 2021.

16. 'Swadhinata Sarak' is to be opened in 2021 between India and **Bangladesh.**

Note: It will be inaugurated by March 2021. It will remain functional on the Indian side while it will be connected through Mujibnagar, Meherpur district in Bangladesh.

17. India is planning to work with **United Kingdom** on the academic and research collaborations and also set up a joint task force which would work towards mutual recognition of academic qualifications.

Note: Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom, Dominic Raab hailed India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 as visionary and expressed the resolve of strengthening India-UK collaboration on deepening engagement in the field of education and research. Raab held a bilateral talk with India Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal "Nishank" during which he said that the proposed reforms of NEP 2020 will open up opportunities for students, economy and for deeper engagement and collaboration between the two countries.

18. International organization **UNESCO** has released the 2nd edition of "State of the Education Report for India 2020: Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)".

Note: India's often cited demographic dividend, the aspirations of its youth and the skill requirements of the growing economy – all hinge on a well-functioning TVET system for achieving an inclusive and equitable growth that will propel the country to

the next phase of socio-economic development. The Report aims to support the Government of India which has already announced skills development as a key national priority under the Skill India Mission.

19. Oman becomes the first Arabian country to establish Friendship Association with India.

Note: Oman's Foreign Minister Sayyid Badr bin Hamad bin Hamood Al Busaidi held detailed dialogue with his Indian counterpart S Jaishankar on giving further momentum to strategic ties. The aim of the association to provide a platform that promotes friendship, understanding and matters of mutual interest between Oman and India business and social communities in the Sultanate.

20. Russia has been banned from using its name, flag and anthem at the next two Olympics or at any world championships for the next two years.

Note: The Court of Arbitration for Sport's ruling also blocked Russia from bidding to host major sporting events for two years. Russian athletes and teams will still be allowed to compete at next year's Tokyo Olympics and the 2022 Winter Games in Beijing, as well as world championships including the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, if they are not implicated in doping or covering up positive tests.

21. Pakistan has approved the chemical castration of rapist in its new Anti-Rape legislation.

Note: New laws approved by President Arif Alvi will see rape cases expedited through the courts and create the country's first national sex offender register. Pakistan is a deeply conservative and patriarchal nation where victims of sexual abuse often are too afraid to speak out, or where criminal complaints are frequently not investigated seriously.

22. Singapore's tradition of communal dining at hawker centres has been recognised by UNESCO for its cultural significance.

Note: The UN cultural agency added the city-state's "hawker culture" to its Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Singapore's hawker centres were set up to house former street vendors, or "hawkers" in an effort to clean up the island in the 1970s

23. The second Bangladesh-India Cotton Fest 2020 was held in **Dhaka.**

Note: Bangladesh Cotton Association (BCA) jointly organized the festival, in cooperation with Bangladesh Textile Mills Association (BTMA), Indian Cotton Association Ltd. (ICAL), India-Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (IBCCI).

24. Russia successfully test-launched its heavy lift Angara A5 space rocket for the second time.

Note: First test-launched in 2014, it is being developed to replace the Proton M as Russia's heavy lift rocket, capable of carrying payloads bigger than

20 tonnes into orbit. A launch pad for the new rocket is due to open in 2021.

25. The 20th edition of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) Council of Ministers (COM) Meeting was held under the Chairmanship of **United Arab Emirates (UAE).**

Note: The theme of the meeting was "Promoting a Shared Destiny and Path to Prosperity in the Indian Ocean". The Indian delegation was led by V. Muraleedharan, MoS, Ministry of External Affairs. Sri Lanka has assumed the charge of Vice-Chair of IORA for the period 2021-23.

26. India signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Israel** for cooperation in the fields of Health and Medicine, sharing expertise in building climate resilient infrastructure & support to 'Green Healthcare'.

Note: The MoU was signed by Israel's Minister of Foreign Affairs Gabi Ashkenazi & Sanjeev Kumar Singla, India's ambassador to Israel. On November 4, 2020, the Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi had approved the signing of MoU between India & Israel.

Honor & Awards

1.

1. Ranjitsingh Disale has won the Global Teacher Prize 2020 in recognition of his efforts to promote girls' education.

Note: He is a primary school teacher from Solapur of Maharashtra. The Global teacher prize is awarded by the Varkey Foundation. The 31-year-old Ranjitsingh Disale generously declared that he will split half of the prize money of USD 1 million with his top ten fellow finalists.

2. Gitanjali has been named by TIME magazine as the first-ever 'Kid of the Year' 2020 for her works using 'technology to tackle issues ranging from contaminated drinking water to opioid addiction and cyberbullying'.

Note: The 15-year-old from Colorado, US was selected from 5,000 nominees and was interviewed by Academy award-winning Hollywood actor Angelina Jolie for TIME. At the age of 11, Rao won the Discovery Education 3M Scientist Challenge and was listed by Forbes in "30 Under 30" list for her innovations. Her latest discovery is an app called, Kindly, that detects cyberbullying at an early stage, based on artificial-intelligence technology.

3. Invest India has won the United Nations Investment Promotion Award 2020.

Note: The award ceremony took place at UNCTAD Headquarters in Geneva yesterday. The Award recognizes and celebrates the outstanding

27. UNICEF organization has launched 'COVID-19 Vaccine Market Dashboard'.

Note: The dashboard, in this 1st release offers a routinely updated overview of the global research and development pipeline, the projected production capacity, the bilateral and multilateral supply agreements, that were announced publicly and the reported price points. The dashboard will be expanded to see the progress towards the goal of the COVAX Facility to achieve 2 billion vaccine doses by the end of 2021.

28. China has successfully launched a new remote sensing satellite 'Yaogan-33' into space.

Note: The satellite, Yaogan-33, was launched aboard a Long March-4C rocket and entered the planned orbit successfully. It was the 357th flight mission of the Long March carrier rocket series, the report said. The mission also sent a micro and nano technology experiment satellite into orbit. The two satellites will be used for scientific experiments, land resources survey, crop yield estimation and disaster prevention and reduction.

achievements of the World's best-practice investment promotion agencies. The evaluation was based on UNCTAD's assessment of work undertaken by 180 national Investment Promotion Agencies across the world.

4. Raj Kamal Jha has won the 3rd Rabindranath Tagore Literary Prize 2020 for his novel, "The City and The Sea".

Note: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the winner of the \$5,000 prize was announced online in Copenhagen, Denmark. Jha's book, which is based on the December 2012 Nirbhaya rape and murder case, was chosen from ten shortlisted books including Amitav Ghosh's Gun Island, Nirmala Govindarajan's Taboo and Ranjit Hoskote's Jonahwhale.

5. Mondo Duplantis is associated with **Sweden** who has been named the male World Athletes of the Year at the World Athletics Awards 2020.

Note: Duplantis broke the world record in the pole vault twice, topping 6.17m and 6.18m on back-to-back weekends in February just a few weeks before the global coronavirus pandemic ground the sporting world to a halt. When competition finally resumed, Duplantis capped his season and produced the highest outdoor vault of all time (6.15m) and finished the year undefeated in 16 competitions.

6. Yulimar Rojas of **Venezuela** has been named the female World Athletes of the Year at the World Athletics Awards 2020.

Note: Rojas broke the South American indoor triple jump record in her first competition of the year, reaching 15.03m in Metz, France. In her next competition, at the World Athletics Indoor Tour meeting in Madrid, she leaped 15.43m in the final round of the competition to break the world indoor record by seven centimetres.

7. Angela Merkel grabbed the No. 1 slot in the Forbes' ranking of 100 most powerful women in the world.

Note: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, US Vice President-elect Kamala Harris, Biocon Founder Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw and HCL Enterprise CEO Roshni Nadar Malhotra have been named among the world's 100 most powerful women by Forbes. Sitharaman is ranked 41st on the list, Nadar Malhotra comes in at the 55th spot, Mazumdar-Shaw — described as "India's richest self-made woman" — is ranked 68th and chairwoman of Landmark Group Renuka Jagtiani is ranked 98th.

8. Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has been ranked at **41st** in the Forbes' ranking of 100 most powerful women in the world.

Note: Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is among the Forbes' ranking of 100 most powerful women in the world. German Chancellor Angela Merkel grabbed the No. 1 slot for the 10th consecutive year, with European Central Bank head Christine Lagarde coming in second for the second year in a row. US Vice President-elect Kamala Harris made the list for the first time—debuting in the No. 3 spot.

9. Dr. Carolina Araujo belongs to **Brazil** who has been conferred with '2020 Ramanujan Prize for Young Mathematicians' for her significant work in algebraic geometry.

Note: She is the first non-Indian women mathematician to receive this prize. She is from Institute for Pure and Applied Mathematics, Brazil. Ramdorai Sujatha from India was the first women to receive this award in 2006. It is given every year to young mathematicians who conducts outstanding research in developing nation.

10. Ashraf Patel has won the Social Entrepreneur of the Year (SEOY) Award – India 2020 instituted by the Schwab Foundation and Jubilant Bhartia Foundation.

Note: It is the 11th edition of the annual award, instituted by the Schwab Foundation and Jubilant Bhartia Foundation in 2010. The award was presented by Union Minister of Women & Child Development & Textiles, Smriti Zubin Irani.

11. Joe Biden and Kamala Harris have been named the Time magazine's "Person of the Year-2020".

Note: U.S. President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris were jointly named Time magazine's 2020 "Person of the Year" chosen from a list of finalists that included President Donald Trump. The US president was named as Person of the Year in 2016 by Time.

12. Sonu Sood become the number one South Asian celebrity on the Eastern Eye's 50 Asian celebrities in the World list published by UK based Eastern Eye newspaper.

Note: The 47-year-old talented Bollywood star has been honoured for his inspiring philanthropic work throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, especially helping migrant workers reach their hometowns. Canadian YouTuber, social media star, comedian and TV personality Lilly Singh came in second and Half-Indian British pop superstar, Charli XCX, was third in the list.

13. Bajrang Punia has been named as the FICCI 2020 Male Sportsman of the Year.

Note: He has won silver in 2018 World Wrestling Championships and bronze in 2019 World Wrestling Championships and 2013 World Wrestling Championships. The award is an attempt by FICCI to acknowledge and recognise the contribution of sportspersons and various stakeholders who deliver excellent results throughout the year.

14. Elavenil Valarivan has been conferred with the 2020 Female Sportsman of the Year by FICCI.

Note: At the 10m air rifle Asian Air Gun Championships in Taoyuan, Taipei, she clinched her first individual gold medal in the senior category with a score of 250.5. She also won two junior World Cup gold and a silver at juniors' 2018 World Championships.

15. Ashraf Patel has been conferred with the Social Entrepreneur of the Year Award – India 2020.

Note: She is the founder member and Board member of Pravah and ComMutiny – The Youth Collective (CYC). Social Entrepreneur of the Year Award – India 2020 is the 11th edition of the annual award, instituted by the Schwab Foundation and Jubilant Bhartia Foundation in 2010.

16. Steel Authority of India Limited has been awarded the prestigious Golden Peacock Environment Management Award for the year 2020 in the Steel Sector.

Note: The company has been the winner of this award for successive 2yrs. This award is one of the most coveted awards in the category. Considering various environmental issues leading to global warming and climate change, this encourages

corporates to enhance their environmental performance.

17. Ratan Tata has been honoured with 'Global Visionary of Sustainable Business and Peace'.

Note: He will be honoured by the Indo-Israel Chambers of Commerce for promoting innovation that supports sustainability and peace in the region, including with the Palestinians. He will be awarded during the launch of the Federation of Indo-Israel Chamber of Commerce's international chapter in Dubai.

18. India conducted 35th edition of Coordinated Patrol (CORPAT) with **Indonesia**.

Note: As part of Government of India's vision of SAGAR (Security And Growth for All in the Region), the Indian Navy has been proactively engaging with countries in the Indian Ocean Region. The CORPAT being conducted since 2002 to ensure the safety and security of shipping and international trade in the region.

19. Robert Lewandowski has won the FIFA men's player of the year 2020.

Note: The 32-year-old Lewandowski, the top scorer in Europe and winner of the Champions League with Bayern, came out ahead of the other two nominees, Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo

20. Lucy Bronze has been named as FIFA Women's player of the year 2020.

Note: It is the first occasion for both Lewandowski and Bronze to win the award, with the Pole only the second player after Luka Modric in 2018

21. Kylie Jenner has been crowned the highest-paid celebrity of 2020 by Forbes.

Note: The top-earning stars in the world earned a combined of \$6.1 billion in 2020 with Kylie Jenner and Kanye West at the top of the list. In addition to Tyler Perry, Howard Stern, and Dwayne Johnson, A-listers like Roger Federer, Cristiano Ronaldo, Lionel Messi, Neymar and LeBron James helped round out the top 10.

22. Indian entrepreneur **Vidyut Mohan** has been among the seven winners of the prestigious "Young Champions of the Earth" 2020 prize given by UNEP.

Note: Vidyut Mohan, an engineer, is the co-founder of "Takachar", a social enterprise enabling farmers to prevent open burning of their waste farm residues and earn extra income by converting them into value-added chemicals like activated carbon on-site.

23. Lewis Hamilton has won the BBC Sports Personality of the Year 2020.

Note: The 35-year-old driver, who last month equalled Michael Schumacher's record of seven F1

titles, overcame Jordan Henderson and Hollie Doyle to win the British broadcaster's prestigious prize in a public vote. England midfielder Henderson led Liverpool to its first Premier League title in 30 years.

24. Amar Singh College Srinagar has bagged a prestigious award of merit in the 2020 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Asia-Pacific awards for cultural heritage conservation.

Note: The Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) chapter in the union territory has been administering the conservation work at the 80-year-old building. Seven conservation projects have been awarded by an international panel of jury members, which reviewed 48 nominees from nine countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

25. Indian boy **Siddhant Gumber** (12-years) in the UAE has entered into the Guinness Book of World Records by identifying the most aeroplane tails in a minute.

Note: Siddhant Gumber, an Abu Dhabi-based homeschooled boy who identified 39 aeroplane tails in 60 seconds, is also the youngest Indian to identify top 100 tallest buildings. His name also features in the India Book' for being the youngest to identify the top 100 tallest buildings of the world with their respective heights and locations.

26. NTPC Ltd. has been conferred "Excellence" in the prestigious CII-ITC Sustainability Awards 2020 in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Domain at the 15th CII-ITC Sustainability Awards 2020.

Note: NTPC has been honoured in the Corporate Excellence Category, Commendation for Significant Achievement. This is the highest award conferred by CII-ITC in CSR domain. NTPC is the only PSU to receive the award in the Corporate Excellence category. NTPC wins the prestigious CII-ITC Sustainability Awards in Corporate Excellence category second time in a row i.e. in the year 2019 and 2020.

27. V.K. Yadav has been conferred with the prestigious "Eminent Engineer Award for the Year 2020'.

Note: Every year Institution of Engineering and Technology, Delhi Local Network celebrates Engineers' Day on the 15th September to commemorate the birth anniversary of Bharat Ratna Sir M Visvesvaraya. On this occasion, besides technical activities the Institution also presents Eminent Engineer's Award to distinguished Engineering personalities for their outstanding services in the field of Engineering and technology.

1.

1. Lewis Hamilton has won the Bahrain Formula One Grand Prix 2020.

Note: The win, from pole position, was the 95th of seven-time world champion Hamilton's career and came with the safety car leading the field to the checkered flag. Red Bull's Max Verstappen finished second with Thai teammate Alexander Albon completing the podium in the floodlit race at Sakhir after inheriting third place from Racing Point's Sergio Perez who suffered a blown engine three laps from the end.

2. Virat Kohli become the fastest batsman to reach 22,000 international runs.

Note: Kohli achieved this feat during the second ODI between Australia and India at the SCG. The ODI legend scored a superb 89-run knock for India in their pursuit of 390. Notably, Kohli has become the eighth batsman overall and the third Indian to surpass 22,000 international runs

3. Sergio Perez won the formula One Sakhir Grand Pix in Bahrain.

Note: Sergio Perez became the first Mexican victor in F1 since Pedro Rodriguez in 1970, ending a series of races dominated by Mercedes for whom Valtteri Bottas finished eighth and George Russell ninth. The 30-year-old Mexican recovered from a first-lap crash that dropped him to the back of the field in his 190th race.

4. Sri Lanka will host the Asia Cup in June 2021.

Note: As per the original schedule, the tournament was supposed to be hosted by Pakistan in 2020, however, it got postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Now the event has been moved forward to June 2021, with Sri Lanka Cricket taking the hosting rights from PCB. As compensation, PCB has got the hosting rights for the 2022 edition

5. Jehan Daruvala is associated with **Formula Race** who has created history becoming first Indian to win the game recently.

Note: This was the final race of the F2 season. The Formula 2 Championship is a second-tier single-seater racing championship. The 22-year-old Jehan Daruvala is currently a member of the Red Bull Junior Team and competes for Carlin Motorsport.

6. Paul Sein Twa belongs to **Myanmar** who has won the 'Goldman Environmental Prize 2020' for Asia.

Note: Sein Twa received the prestigious prize along with five other grassroots environmental activists from the Bahamas, Ghana, Ecuador, Mexico and France. Dubbed the "Green Nobel Prize," this award is given annually to environmental heroes from each of the world's six inhabited continents.

7. Anthony Joshua has won the world heavyweight titles 2020.

Note: Anthony Joshua has retained his world heavyweight titles with a ninth-round knockout of Kubrat Pulev, potentially setting up an all-British fight against Tyson Fury to be undisputed champion of boxing's marquee division. Joshua had already knocked down Pulev three times when he unleashed a right hook that sent the 39-year-old Bulgarian to the canvas once again.

8. Max Verstappen has won the year-ending Formula One the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix 2020.

Note: Champions Mercedes completed the podium places in a processional race with Valtteri Bottas second and seven times world champion Lewis Hamilton third. The 23-year-old Verstappen had clinched a brilliant pole position and made a good start while Bottas comfortably held off Hamilton.

9. Bajrang Punia has won the FICCI sportsperson of the year award 2020 in male category.

Note: Wrestler Bajrang Punia and Shooter Elavenil Valarivan received the highest honour "Sportsperson of the Year of Men & Female" Award respectively. Bajrang Punia, represents India in Freestyle Wrestling in 65 kg category.

10. Elavenil Valarivan associated with **Shooting** who has won the FICCI sportsperson of the year award 2020 in female category.

Note: Wrestler Bajrang Punia and Shooter Elavenil Valarivan received the highest honour "Sportsperson of the Year of Men & Female" Award respectively. Elavenil Valarivan Represents India in the sport of Shooting, She won gold medal in 2018 ISSF Junior World Cup, She won Silver medal at World University Games in 2019. She won Gold medal at World Cup Suhl in 2019 & she will represent India in Tokyo Olympics 2021.

11. Pakistan will host the Asia Cup Cricket Tournament in 2022.

Note: In July 2020, Asia Cup's Governing body, Asia Cricket Council (ACC) announced that the 2020 Edition of Asia Cup was cancelled due to Pandemic. The 2020 Edition was originally set to be hosted by Pakistan, as it was cancelled Pakistan were awarded to host the 2022 Edition as Compensation. Asia Cup is a men's One Day International (ODI) & Twenty20 International Cricket Tournament.

12. Breaking will make its debut at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris and became a Medal Event.

Note: Breaking will make its Olympic debut at the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris, while 3 other sports will make their Olympic debut at the 2020

Tokyo Summer Olympics to be held in July, 2021 (delayed due to COVID-19). The additional sports were proposed by the Paris 2024 Organising Committee.

13. Max Verstappen is the winner of Formula 1 season-ending Abu Dhabi Grand Prix 2020.

Note: He is the racer of Red Bull and is from Netherlands. Valtteri Bottas (Mercedes-Finland) bagged 2nd place, followed by Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes-Great Britain) at Abu Dhabi Grand Prix 2020.

14. Ankita Raina has won the ITF doubles title in Dubai along with Ekaterine Gorgodze.

Note: Indian tennis player Ankita Raina won her third doubles title of pandemic-hit 2020 season, clinching the Al Habtoor challenge with Ekaterine Gorgodze. She along with Ekaterine Gorgodze won 6-4 3-6 10-6 against Aliona Bolsova Zadoinov from Spain and Slovakian Kaja Juvan in the final of the USD 100,000 hard court event.

15. Odisha state will host the FIH Men's Hockey World Cup 2023.

Note: The 2023 tournament will be held at Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar and Biju Patnaik Hockey Stadium in Rourkela. FIH Men's Hockey World Cup 2018 was also hosted by Odisha. FIH 2023 tournament will be 15th edition of the Men's FIH Hockey World Cup.

16. Pakistan will host the Asia Cup Cricket Tournament in 2022.

Note: In July 2020, Asia Cup's Governing body, Asia Cricket Council (ACC) announced that the 2020 Edition of Asia Cup was cancelled due to Pandemic. The 2020 Edition was originally set to be hosted by Pakistan, as it was cancelled Pakistan were awarded to host the 2022 Edition as Compensation. Asia Cup is a men's One Day International (ODI) & Twenty20 International Cricket Tournament.

17. The Sports Ministry has formally recognized **Yogasana** event as a competitive sport.

Note: Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju and Minister of AYUSH (Ayurveda Yoga and Naturopathy Unani Sidda Homoeopathy) Shripad Yesso Naik formally promoted yogasana as a competitive sport during an event here. The move was made to encourage yoga, spread awareness about its benefits and to help improve physical and mental wellbeing of the people.

18. Zimbabwe will host the qualifiers of the 2023 ODI ICC World Cup.

Note: India, the hosts of the rescheduled 2023 ODI World Cup, along with seven other top Super League teams will qualify directly for the tournament to be held in October-November. The bottom five teams from the Super League will

compete in the 2023 World Cup qualifier, joining the best three teams from League 2.

19. Indian boxing champion **Amit Panghal** has won the gold medal in Cologne World Cup 2020 among men.

Note: Veteran Satish Kumar (+91kg) had to settle for a silver after an injury forced him to withdraw from the finals. India finished the competition at the second spot overall after claiming three gold, two silver and four bronze medals.

20. Simranjeet Kaur is associated **Boxing** sports has won a gold medal recently in an international event.

Note: Indian women boxers Simranjeet Kaur (60kg) won a gold medals with contrasting final wins in the Cologne World Cup in Germany. Simranjeet defeated German Maya Klien Hans 4-1 to finish on top. India finished the competition at the second spot overall after claiming three gold, two silver and four bronze medals.

21. The Sports Ministry has approved the inclusion of four indigenous games to be a part of the Khelo India Youth Games 2021, these are **Gatka, Kalaripayattu, Thang-Ta & Mallakhamba.**

Note: Mallakhamba has been well-known across India and Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra have been the hotspots of this sport. Gatka originates from the state of Punjab and this traditional fighting style of the Nihang Sikh Warriors is used both as self-defense as well as a sport. Thang-Ta, a Manipur martial art has passed into oblivion in recent decades, but the sport will get national recognition again with the help of the Khelo India Youth Games 2021. Kuttu varisai means empty hand combat in Tamil and was first documented in Sangam literature, also called kai silambam means hand

22. Qatar will host the 2030 Asian Games as per the announcement made by the Olympic Council of Asia.

Note: An executive board meeting of the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) unanimously approved the proposal to name the runner-up in the two-horse race for the 2030 games as 2034 hosts. The decision means Qatar will play host to the multi-sport event eight years after it organises the 2022 football World Cup finals.

23. The Indian Hockey men team ranked at **4th** position in the latest rankings released by the International Hockey Federation (FIH) at the end of 2020.

Note: Belgium Men's Team will finish 2020 at the top position, while Netherlands women's team finished 1st. In January, 2020, FIH released a new method for calculation of World Ranking. The new method is based on a match-based rankings model,

moving away from Tournament-based rankings followed by FIH.

24. Indonesia has got the hosting right for the FIFA Under-20 Men's World Cup in 2023.

Note: The Bureau of the FIFA Council has decided to cancel the 2021 editions of the men's U-20 World Cup and U-17 World Cup and gave the hosting rights to Indonesia and Peru respectively for the 2023 editions.

25. Australia and New Zealand will host the FIFA Women's World Cup 2023.

Note: Australia and New Zealand will host the FIFA Women's World Cup 2023. The play-off tournament will be used as a test event in Australia and New Zealand for the FIFA Women's World Cup.

26. Russian doubles badminton player **Nikita Khakimov** has received a five-year ban after being

found guilty of offences relating to "betting, wagering and irregular match results.

Note: The BWF opened an investigation against Khakimov after obtaining a statement from a whistleblower, who claimed the shuttler had approached him to manipulate match results at the European Teams Championships held in February 2018. Khakimov, 32, was part of the Russian men's team that won the bronze medal at the 2020 European Team Championships.

27. Virat Kohli has won the Sir Garfield Sobers Award for ICC Male Cricketer of the Decade.

Note: The winners of the prestigious ICC Awards of the Decade including the Rachel Heyhoe-Flint for Best Female Player and Sir Garfield Sobers for Best Male Player, were announced. Virat Kohli wins the Sir Garfield Sobers Award for ICC Male Cricketer of the Decade

Books and Authors

1.

1. Hardeep Singh Puri has released the book titled Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Government's Special Relationship with Sikhs on the occasion of 550th Gurupurab.

Note: The book was released in New Delhi in presence of Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar. The book, published by Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, was released in English, Hindi and Punjabi languages.

2. Amrit Raj has authored the book titled "Indian Icon: A Cult Called Royal Enfield".

Note: This book maps the trail-blazing story of the brand, the company and most of all, the individuals who have made Royal Enfield what it is now — a premium homegrown consumer brand for the global markets.

3. A. Sivathanu Pillai has authored the book titled "40 Years with Abdul Kalam- Untold Stories", a book on the life of the former President of India Dr APJ Abdul Kalam.

Note: The Vice President of India, M Venkaiah Naidu has released the book titled "40 Years with Abdul Kalam- Untold Stories", a book on the life of the former President of India Dr APJ Abdul Kalam. The book is published by Pentagon Press LLP and the foreword was written by Pranab Mukherjee, former president of India.

4. Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank has authored the book titled "Pioneer of Humanity: Maharishi Arvind".

Note: The book is in Hindi with the title 'Manavta ke Praneta Maharishi Arvind'. Shri Arvind was a person fully devoted to Indian culture, Indian values, Indian nationalism and Indian philosophy.

5. The book titled 'Romancing Targets' has been authored by **Nidhi Vadhera**.

Note: In this book, Author Nidhi Vadhera shares with you a systematic approach to understand the sales process which will empower you to embrace sales targets and achieve results without getting burnt in the process.

6. The book titled "Dharma: Decoding the Epics for a Meaningful Life" has been authored by **Amish Tripathi**.

Note: The book provides philosophical lessons extracted from the ancient Hindu Epics. The book is published by Westland Publications Pvt Ltd and set to release in December 2020. The book is presented in a form of conversation between the characters in modern day India, which offers various practical philosophical lessons from epics like "Maharabarat" and Amis's books "the Shiva Trilogy" and "Ram Chandra Series".

7. Om Birla released the book titled "The Shaurya Unbound-Tales of Valour of the CRPF" on the 19th anniversary of the attack on Indian Parliament.

Note: On the 19th Anniversary of the attack on Indian Parliament the Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla has released the book titled "The Shaurya Unbound-Tales of Valour of the Central Reserve Police Force". It is a collection of 13 most exemplary acts of valour of CRPF brave hearts who were awarded with Chakras.

8. Maharashtra government has unveiled a Braille version of the Indian Constitution.

Note: A valuable work of making available the Indian Constitution in Braille script for the visually impaired has been done. The Braille version of the

Constitution has been prepared on behalf of Thane-based NGO Astitva Foundation.

9. Prem Prakash has authored the book titled "Reporting India" released by the External Affairs Minister S Jai Shankar.

Note: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has released a book titled "Reporting India" My Seventy-Year Journey as a Journalist'. The book is pretty much history of India from a foreign policy perspective for half-a-century and the domestic aspects of his journalistic work are no less interesting.

10. P S Sreedharan Pillai has authored the book titled 'Oh Mizoram' which was released by the vice president M Venkaiah Naidu.

Note: The book has been authored by Mizoram governor P S Sreedharan Pillai. It is his 125th book. OH, Mizoram' is his first poetry collection in English. It was published by the Indus Scrolls Press.

11. Jairam Ramesh has authored the book titled "The Light of Asia: The Poem that Defined the Buddha.

Note: The book will showcase the story of the poem "The Lights of Asia" which shaped the people's view of Buddha and his teachings. The book will be published by Viking imprint of Penguin India.

12. Shakti Sinha has authored the book titled "Vajpayee: The Years that changed India".

Note: The new book on former PM was released on his 96th birth anniversary. **Shakti Sinha** has worked with Vajpayee as the secretary to the leader of the Opposition (1996-97) and as his private secretary (1998-99).

13. Madhav Bhandari has authored the book titled 'Ayodhya'.

Note: Former Maharashtra Chief Minister and Leader of Opposition in the Legislative Assembly Devendra Fadnavis released the book 'Ayodhya' written by BJP's State Vice President Madhav Bhandari in Mumbai. Fadnavis said that the fight to build a Ram temple is a fight to awaken the Hindu community and the book will be used as a reference book.

14. Kailash Satyarthi has authored the book titled 'Covid-19: Sabhyata ka Sankat aur Samadhan'.

Note: The Hindi book, published by Prabhat Prakashan, discusses how the pandemic has influenced the education system, business, politics, public safety, foreign policy, law, medicine, economy and development of countries.

15. "In Pursuit of Justice: An Autobiography" is an autobiography of **Rajindar Sachar**.

Note: The family of Late Justice Rajindar Sachar in association with The Indian Society of International Law and The Indian Law Institute is organizing the book launch "In Pursuit Of Justice: An Autobiography" written by Late Justice Rajindar Sachar. The book has been posthumously published.

16. Manav Kaul has authored the book (Novel) titled "Antima".

Note: Manav Kaul on December 28 presented his first novel "Antima" to Ruskin Bond here and the iconic author said he hopes the book earns the actor "lots of royalties and readers". The "Ghoul" actor took to Instagram to share a short video in which Bond congratulated him on the release of the Hindi book.

Science and Defence

1.

1. The Indian Navy test-fired the anti-ship version of **BrahMos** missile in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands territory.

Note: This comes amid the border tensions with China in eastern Ladakh. This successful test is a part of series of trials being carried out by the three services. BrahMos Aerospace is a joint venture of India and Russia aimed at producing lethal weapon that can be launched from submarines, ships, aircraft and land.

2. On Indian Navy Day India held a two-day Passage Exercise in the Eastern Indian Ocean with **Russia**.

Note: The exercise involves participation of RuFN guided missile cruiser Varyag, large anti-submarine

ship Admiral Panteleyev and medium ocean tanker Pechenga. The exercise is aimed at enhancing interoperability, improving understanding and imbibing best practices between both the friendly navies.

3. The researchers at **IIT Guwahati** have developed novel materials that can harvest water from humid air.

Note: This method involves spraying a sponge-like porous polymeric material on a normal printer paper. As per the researchers, this method can also be used in underwater hulls of ships and submarines to prevent bio-fouling; and to prevent icing on aircraft windows.

4. Indian Coast Guard Interceptor Boat got commissioned at Hazira in Gujarat, is built indigenously by **Larson & Toubro**.

Note: This Interceptor boat is built indigenously by M/s L&T Jetty, Hazira. It is capable of a high speed of 45 knots having capability to operate in shallow waters. Vessel is fitted with latest state-of-the-art navigation and communication equipment.

5. The Indian Space Research Organization successfully launched the CMS-01 through PSLV-C50. CMS-01 is India's which number communications satellite -- **42nd**.

Note: The 44-metre-high four-staged engine, PSLV-C50, is the 22nd flight of PSLV in 'XL' configuration (with six strap-on motors hugging the first stage). It will be the 52nd mission for India's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV). The PSLV in normal configuration is a four-stage expandable rocket powered by solid and liquid fuels alternatively, with six booster motors strapped on to the first stage to give higher thrust during the initial flight moments.

6. Advanced Hypersonic Wind Tunnel (HWT) test facility inaugurated in **Hyderabad** by the Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.

Note: The state-of-the-art HWT Test facility is pressure vacuum driven enclosed free jet facility having nozzle exit diameter of 1 meter and will simulate Mach No 5 to 12 (Mach represents the multiplication factor to the speed of sound). After USA and Russia, India is the third country to have such a large facility in terms of size and operating capability. It is an indigenous development and an outcome of synergistic partnership with Indian industries.

7. Rajnath Singh has handed over three systems indigenously developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation to chiefs of the three-armed forces.

Note: The systems are Indian Maritime Situational Awareness System (IMSAS), ASTRA Mk-I Missile and Border Surveillance System (BOSS). All three systems--IMSAS, Astra Mk-1 and BOSS-- have been designed and developed DRDO only. Astra Mk-1 is the first indigenously developed beyond visual range (BVR) missile.

8. Indian Coast Guard (ICG) ship 'Sujeet' was commissioned at **Goa**.

Note: It is the second in the series of five Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV) built by Goa Shipyard Limited. This vessel has been made in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of 'Make in

India'. The indigenously built ship will be commissioned by Secretary of Defence Production Raj Kumar.

9. The Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) will set up its Regional Academic Center for Space (RAC-S) in **IIT-BHU**.

Note: In this regard a memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed between IIT-BHU and ISRO to pave the way for advanced research in the future technology of the Indian space program. IIT-BHU will act as a catalyst for capacity building, awareness creation and R & D activities of ISRO. The activities of RAC-S shall be directed to maximize the utilization of research potential, infrastructure, expertise available at ISRO and IIT-BHU.

10. India successfully test-fired a medium range surface-to-air missile (MRSAM) from Odisha coast, the missile has been jointly developed by DRDO and aerospace manufacturer **Israel Aerospace Industries**.

Note: The missile was fired from a ground mobile launcher at launch pad number-1 of the Integrated Test Range (ITR) near here at 3.55 pm, and it hit the target with accuracy. An unmanned air vehicle (UAV), 'Banshee', was first flown into the air, which was hit by the MRSAM.

11. Defence manufacturing group **L & T Defence** has received 'green channel status' from Defence Ministry.

Note: It has received the status from the Directorate General Quality Assurance (DGQA) under the Ministry of Defence for its major naval weapon delivery systems. L&T became the first private sector defence company to be granted this (green channel) status for delivery of major naval systems.

12. The 51st Director General (DG) Level Border Coordination Meet between Border Security Force (BSF) and Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) took place in **Guwahati, Assam**.

Note: India was represented by DG Rakesh Asthana and Bangladesh was represented by Major General Md Shafeenul Islam. The dignitaries discussed border-related issues and assured to develop coordination between the border guarding forces of both nations. They held discussions about development and infrastructure work to implement a coordinated border management plan and confidence building measures.

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