



Monthly Current Affairs

December 2020

English

Important News: State

Uttar Pradesh Government to set up India's first mega Leather Park in Kanpur

- A mega leather park will come up in Ramaipur village of Kanpur with an investment of Rs 5,850 crores.
- Recently, the project has received approval from the Union Commerce Ministry. At least 50,000 people will get direct employment and indirect employment for 1.5 lakh people in the leather park to be built under the mega leather cluster project in Kanpur.

Karnataka unveils 'FRUITS' portal for farmers

- The Karnataka government has unveiled the FRUITS (Farmer Registration and Unified beneficiary Information System). It is an e-governance single portal to create a repository of farmland information and farm loan details.
- **Note:** Canara Bank has agreed to run FRUITS on a pilot basis.

Bengal's first Oil and Gas Reserve to Nation

- Minister for Petroleum & Natural Gas and Steel, Dharmendra Pradhan dedicated the eighth oil and gas producing basin to the nation in Ashok Nagar, around 47 km from the state capital Kolkata.
- The first proven reserve of oil and gas in the state was discovered in 2018.

The Ashok Nagar field, which falls under the Mahanadi-Bengal-Andaman (MBA) basin, has proved to be commercially viable.

Madhya Pradesh: India's 1st tiger reserve hot air balloon wildlife safari launched

- India's first hot air balloon wildlife safari in a tiger reserve was launched in the world famous Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve by Madhya Pradesh.
- The state was planning to introduce this service in Pench, Kanha and Panna tiger reserves as well.

The service is being operated by Jaipur-based Sky Waltz.

Bihar wins Digital India award 2020 for transferring money to beneficiaries' accounts during COVID-19

- More than 21 lakh stranded workers outside Bihar were provided financial assistance through the "Bihar Sahayata Mobile App".
- The Chief Minister Secretariat, the Disaster Management Department besides the National Informatics Centre (NIC) of the state have jointly been chosen as winners in the "pandemic category" Digital India Awards 2020.

Nehru Zoo becomes the first Indian zoo to receive ISO certification

- The Nehru Zoological Park, Hyderabad became the first zoo in the country to receive ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management Standards Certificate from Accreditation Service for Certifying Bodies (ASCB), United Kingdom.
- **About ISO:** International Organization for Standardization is an international standard-setting body composed of representatives from various national standards organizations. Founded on 23 February 1947, the organization promotes worldwide proprietary, industrial, and commercial standards. Its headquarters is in Geneva, Switzerland.

"HunarHaat" to be organised at Rampur and Lucknow (Uttar Pradesh)

- Union Minister for Minority Affairs Shri Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi announced that the next "HunarHaat" will be organised at Numaish Ground, Rampur (UP) from 18th to 27th December, 2020 and Shilp Gram, Lucknow(UP) from 23rd to 31st January 2021.



- **Note:** Shri Naqvi announced that in the coming days, “HunarHaat” will be organized at Jaipur, Chandigarh, Indore, Mumbai, Hyderabad, India Gate-New Delhi, Ranchi, Kota, Surat/Ahmedabad, Kochi and other places.

Lakshadweep declared first UT (Union Territory) to become 100% organic

- Lakshadweep has been declared as an organic agricultural area under the Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) of India.
- **Organic farming** is the technique of crop and livestock production which involves choosing not to use pesticides, fertilizers, genetically modified organisms, antibiotics and growth hormones to grow crops.
- **Participatory Guarantee System (PGS):** It is a process that certifies organic products. The certification is a documented logo or a statement issued by the authorities implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare.
- **Note:** Sikkim became India's first 100 percent organic state in 2016.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi lays foundation stone for three ambitious projects in Kutch, Gujarat

- Projects include the world's biggest renewable energy park, sea water desalination plant and milk processing dairy plant.
- The **Hybrid Renewable Energy Park** project is one of its kind and world class, green energy project situated near Vighakot village of Kutch district. It will produce 30 Giga watt solar and wind energy on a vast expanse of wasteland.
- The **sea water desalination plant** at Mandvi in Kutch, will convert sea water for potable purposes for nearly 8 lakh people of 300 villages.
- The 130 crore rupee **milk processing dairy plant** of Sarhad dairy will process 2 lakh liter of milk per day along with packaging facility.

Central Zoo Authority recognition to zoo in UP and Bihar

- CZA has given recognition to shaheed Ashfaq ullah khan prani udyan which is located in Gorakhpur and Rajgir Zoo Safari in Nalanda.
- It is the second largest zoo in UP after the Kanpur zoological park.

Gwalior and Orchha included in UNESCO's world heritage cities list

- The historical fort cities of 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:** Gwalior was established in the 9th century and ruled by Gurjar Pratihara Rajvansh, Tomar, Baghel Kachvaha and Scindias. Gwalior is known for its palaces and temples.
- Orchha is popular for its temples and palaces and was the capital of the Bundela kingdom in the 16th century.

Uttarakhand gets its first Eco-Bridge for small animals

- In an attempt to save reptiles and small animals from vehicular accidents while crossing the road, the Ramnagar Forest Division of Uttarakhand has constructed the state's first eco-bridge across Kaladhungi-Nainital highway.
- It is 90-feet-long and 5-feet-wide. No cement or iron was used in the construction of the bridge. It's made of eco-friendly items like bamboo, rope, and grass.
- **Note:** Eco-Bridges or Eco-Ducts are constructed to enhance the wildlife connectivity that is usually disrupted due to logging or highways.

Uttar Pradesh's Dandupur railway station to be renamed as 'Maa Barahi Devi Dham'



- The Dandupur railway station situated between Pratapgarh and Badshahpur on Lucknow-Varanasi rail section will now be named Maa Barahi Devi Dham

Assam government launches Orunodoi scheme

- Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal launched a massive beneficiary scheme covering almost 22 lakh families across the state from December 1.
- **Note:** Under the Orunodoi scheme, an amount of Rs 830 per month will be given to the qualified 22 lakh families to purchase fundamental items like medicines, pulses, sugar, etc. and the state government will spend Rs 2,400 crore annually.

Lucknow Municipal Corporation bonds list on the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE).

- With the listing of Municipal Corporation, Lucknow becomes the first city in Northern India and ninth overall.
- The Lucknow Municipal corporation bond will collect around Rs. 200 crore rupees which will be invested in developmental works of the city.
- **Note-** Municipal corporations are government bodies that typically form the third tier of the government in urban areas after the central and state government. They have their own expenditures and sources of revenue. Typically, municipal bodies provide services like water, sanitation, sewage and solid waste management. Some bigger municipal bodies also run schools.

India's first organ donor memorial inaugurated in Jaipur

- On the occasion of National Organ Donation Day 27 November, Rajasthan chief minister Ashok Gehlot inaugurated the country's first organ donor memorial in Jaipur, Rajasthan.
- The memorial has been built by the Mohan Foundation Jaipur Citizens Forum and the Jaipur Municipal Corporation.
- The organ donor memorial, built near SMS Hospital, is dedicated in honour of those who have given life to hundreds of others.
- The memorial is inspired by the famous Jantar Mantar of Jaipur and has been designed by Sameer Wheaton. It depicts life looking towards the cosmic heavens in gratitude, compassion and love.
- **Note:** "Organ donation is only 0.08 per cent in India while in Spain it is 35 per cent, in the US it is 21 per cent and in the UK it is 15 per cent.

'Ramayan Cruise Service' will be launched on the river Saryu in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh

- 'Ramayan Cruise Tour' on the Saryu River in Ayodhya will be launched soon. Shri Mansukh Mandaviya, Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways chaired a review meeting for the implementation of cruise service.
- **Note:** It will be the first-ever luxury Cruise service on the Saryu river (Ghagra/National Waterways-40) in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh.

The elevated road between AIIMS and Digha

- This 12.47 km road will connect northern Bihar with southern parts of the state.
- With this, a commuter coming from Muzaffarpur, Darbhanga, Chapra, Siwan via Hajipur and using JP Setu on Ganga river will directly reach the other side of Patna to go towards Arrah, Sasaram, Kaimur, Aurangabad, Gaya, Jahanabad, Nalanda and other districts and further on to Jharkhand.



Important News: India

“JSA(Jal Shakti Abhiyan) II: Catch the Rain” Awareness Generation Campaign launched

- National Water Mission(NWM), Ministry of Jal Shakti in collaboration with Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS), Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports launched the “JSA II: Catch the Rain” Awareness Generation Campaign.
- **Note:** As a preparatory phase of JSA-II, the Ministry has involved Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan for undertaking ‘Catch the Rain’ awareness campaign to cover 623 districts. The awareness generation phase of the campaign will run from mid-December 2020 to March 2021.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi flags off 100th Kisan Rail

- The train will run from Sangola in Maharashtra to Shalimar in West Bengal.
- The multi-commodity train service will carry vegetables such as cauliflower, capsicum, cabbage, drumsticks, chillies, onion, as well as fruits like grapes, oranges, pomegranate, banana and custard apple.
- **Note:** The Central Government has extended a subsidy of 50 per cent on transportation of fruits and vegetables.
- The first Kisan Rail was introduced from Devlali in Maharashtra to Danapur in Bihar on August 7, 2020, which was further extended upto Muzaffarpur.

World Bank Signs \$500 Million funding for 'Green' Highway Corridor Project in India

- India and the World Bank signed a \$500 million project to build safe and green national highway corridors in the states of Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh.
- The Green National Highways Corridors Project will support the ministry to construct 783 km of highways in various geographies by integrating safe and green technology designs such as local and marginal materials, industrial by-products, and other bio-engineering solutions.
- The project will help reduce GHG (greenhouse gas) emissions in the construction and maintenance of highways.

Cabinet approves the merger of 4 Film Media Units with NFDC

- The Cabinet approved the merger of Films Division, Directorate of Film Festivals, National Film Archives of India, and Children's Film Society, India with National Film Development Corporation (NFDC).
- The merger of Film Media Units under one corporation will lead to convergence of activities and resources and better coordination.
- **Note:** NFDC is a Central Public Sector Undertaking, incorporated in the year 1975 with the primary object of planning and promoting an organized, efficient and integrated development of the Indian Film Industry.

KVIC brings alive 1000-yrs old ‘Monpa’ Handmade Paper Industry in Tawang to revive the Heritage Art

- The 1000-year old heritage art – the Monpa Handmade Paper of Arunachal Pradesh – which was driven to extinction, has come to life once again, with the committed efforts of Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC).
- The fine-textured handmade paper, which is called Mon Shugu in the local dialect, is integral to the vibrant culture of the local tribes in Tawang.
- The Monpa handmade paper will be made from the bark of a local tree called Shugu Sheng, which has medicinal values too.



Prime Minister inaugurates New Bhaupur-New Khurja section of Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the 351-km New Bhaupur- New Khurja section in Uttar Pradesh of the Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor (EDFC).
- The Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor is 1875-km section that connects Punjab's Ludhiana to Dankuni in West Bengal.
- He also inaugurated the EDFC's **Operation Control Centre (OCC)** at Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh. The OCC, which will be the command centre for the entire route, to be one of the largest control centres in the world.
- **Note:** Apart from EDFC, the Western Dedicated Freight Corridor is also being developed. It will connect Mumbai to Uttar Pradesh's Dadri.

Union Government for the first time lays down Rights to the Electricity Consumers through "Electricity (Rights of Consumers) Rules, 2020"

- These rules shall empower the consumers of electricity and these Rules emanate from the conviction that the power systems exist to serve the consumers and the consumers have rights to get the reliable services and quality electricity.
- **Note:** The distribution licensee shall supply 24x7 power to all consumers. However, the commission may specify lower hours of supply for some categories of consumers like agriculture.

Government decides to constitute a High Level Committee to commemorate the 125th Birth Anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose

- The Committee will be headed by Shri Amit Shah, Union Home Minister and the members of the High Level Commemoration Committee will include experts, historians, authors, family members of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, as well as eminent persons associated with Azad Hind Fauj.
- The Committee will decide on the activities for a one year long commemoration starting 23rd January, 2021.
- **Note:** A museum has been set up on Netaji at Red Fort, New Delhi, which was inaugurated by the Prime Minister on 23.01.2019.

MPEDA launches India's first aquafarmers call centre

- The Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA), headquartered in Kochi, has launched a multilingual call centre for aquafarmers at Vijayawada in Andhra Pradesh, which will address their technical issues and impart knowledge about efficient farming methods round the clock.
- **Note:** The call centre primarily caters to aqua farmers of Andhra Pradesh, the state that contributes more than 60 percent of the country's marine products export.

Prime Minister, Narendra Modi delivers a keynote address at ASSOCHAM Foundation Week 2020

- It was a 5-day virtual event from 15th to 19th December 2020 with the central theme 'India's resilience: Aatmanirbhar roadmap towards a US\$5 trillion economy'.
- The Prime Minister also presented the 'ASSOCHAM Enterprise of the Century Award' to Shri Ratan Tata, who received the award on behalf of the TATA Group.
- **Note:** The Associated Chambers of Commerce of India (ASSOCHAM) was established in 1920 by promoter chambers representing all regions of India.

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi addresses International Bharathi Festival 2020



- This festival was organised by Vanavil Cultural Centre to celebrate the 138th birth anniversary of Tamil poet and writer, Mahakavi Subramanya Bharathi.
- Scholar Shri Seeni Viswanathan received the Bharathi Award 2020.

Note: Bharathi Award was instituted in 1994 by Vanavil Cultural Centre. Every year it is being conferred on eminent persons who have done laudable service in any field of social relevance and thus worked towards the fulfilment of Bharathi's dreams.

Norwegian Institute signs agreement with cGanga for development of sludge management framework in India

- 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:** The agreement was signed during the **5th India Water Impact 2020 summit**. The five-day summit is held to discuss and debate issues related to water conservation, water security and river rejuvenation.
- The event is co-organised by National Mission for Clean Ganga and Centre for Ganga River Basin Management and Studies.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi delivers keynote address at IIT-2020 Global Summit on 04 December

- IIT2020 focuses on the global economy, technology innovation, health infrastructure, habitat conservation, food innovation and universal education.
- **Note:** The conference is facilitated by PanIIT USA (PanIIT Inc.), an organization of IIT alumni in the United States, so as to carry out its mission of branding IITs and keeping IITians connected. Since 2003 this conference has been held every couple of years and is run by an all-volunteer team of IITians, celebrating successes in corporate leadership.

International Sand Art Festival

- The 9th edition of the International Sand Art Festival has begun at the Chandrabhaga Beach of Konark in Odisha's Puri district.
- Sudarsan Pattnaik, world-renowned sand artist and Padmashree Awardee, has been appointed as Chief Curator of the festival.
- This year, the main themes of the sculptures are 'Environment' and 'Covid-19'.
- **Note:** Every year, the festival is celebrated with great fervour in the **first week of December as part of the Konark Dance Festival** that is organised during the same time.

10th National Science Film Festival of India (NSFFI) 2020

- It has been jointly organized by VigyanPrasar, an autonomous agency under the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India and the Tripura State Council of Science and Technology from 24 to 27 November 2020.
- A total of 115 shortlisted films selected by the ten-member jury have been screened during the festival. These include films in Hindi, English, Urdu, Malayalam, Kashmiri, Bengali, Marathi, Punjabi and Tamil.
- **Note:** NSFFI is India's first of its kind of film festival where documentaries and short films on popular science, technology, health & environmental issues have been screened.

India Mobile Congress 2020

- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi addressed India Mobile Congress (IMC) 2020 on 08 December 2020. IMC 2020 was organised by the Department of Telecommunications, Government of India, and the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI). It is scheduled for 8th -10th December.



- The theme for IMC 2020 is "Inclusive Innovation - Smart, Secure, Sustainable".
- About IMC 2020: It aims to promote Digital Inclusivity, Sustainable development, entrepreneurship & innovation. It also aims to drive foreign and local investments, encourage R&D in the telecom and emerging technology sectors.
- IMC 2020 will see the participation from various Ministries, the telecom CEOs, global CEOs, and domain experts in 5G, Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things, Data Analytics, Cloud and Edge computing, Blockchain, Cyber-security, Smart Cities and Automation.

9 states successfully complete implementation of 'One Nation One Ration Card' system

- The Ministry of Finance has informed that as many as 9 states have completed the reforms in Public Distribution System (PDS) and have successfully implemented the 'One Nation One Ration Card System'.
- These 9 states are Goa, Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Telangana, Karnataka, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh, Tripura, and Gujarat.
- Note: This was aimed to ensure that the beneficiaries under the National Food Security Act (NFSA) and other welfare schemes, especially the migrant workers and their families, get ration from any Fair Price Shop (FPS) across the country.

India signs \$132.8-million loan agreement with ADB to strengthen Meghalaya's power supply

- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Centre signed a \$132.8-million loan agreement, aimed at strengthening and modernising the distribution network and improving the quality of power supplied to households, industries and businesses in Meghalaya.
- **Note:** This project supports Meghalaya's '24x7 Power for All' initiative and this project will help develop a distribution sector roadmap and a financial roadmap for the Meghalaya Power Distribution Corporation Limited (MePDCL).

British PM Boris Johnson will be the Chief Guest on Republic Day celebrations

- He is the second British PM after John Major who came to India as Chief Guest on Republic Day in 1993.
- Earlier, Boris Johnson invited PM Narendra Modi to participate in G-7 summit going to be held in 2021 in the United Kingdom.

Union Minister unveiled Sahakar Pragya

- Shri Narendra Singh Tomar, Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Rural Development, Panchayat Raj and Food Processing Industries, unveiled **Sahakar Pragya**.
- The 45 new training modules of Sahakar Pragya of the National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC) will impart training to primary cooperative societies in rural areas of the country.
- **Sahakar Pragya** embodies enhancing NCDC's training capacity by 18 fold through an elaborate network of 18 Regional Training Centres across the country by the dedicated, Laxmanrao Inamdar National Academy for Cooperative Research and Development (LINAC) set up and fully funded by NCDC.
- **Note:** India boasts a huge network of over 8.50 lakh cooperative societies with about 290 million members and around 94% of the farmers in India are members of at least one cooperative society.
- **About NCDC (National Cooperative Development Corporation):** NCDC has emerged as a financial powerhouse giving the client cooperatives a wide range of products and services.
- NCDC had earlier launched the **SahakarCooptube NCDC Channel** with the aim to involve youth in the cooperative movement, **Sahakar Mitra**-Scheme on Internship Programme, **Yuva**



Sahakar-Start-Up Scheme in Cooperatives, **Ayushman Sahakar**-For creation of healthcare infrastructure and services.

Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan launches world-class premium-grade Petrol (Octane 100) in the country

- Indian Oil has launched a world-class premium-grade Petrol (Octane 100) in the country. Branded as **XP100**, the premium grade petrol was launched across ten cities by Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, Minister of Petroleum & Natural Gas and Steel.
- Indian Oil plans to roll-out **XP100** premium grade petrol in 15 identified cities across the country in two phases. In the first phase, it has been made available at select ROs w.e.f December 1, 2020, in Delhi, Gurgaon, Noida, Agra, Jaipur, Chandigarh, Ludhiana, Mumbai, Pune and Ahmedabad. In the second phase, the availability of this 100 Octane petrol would be extended to Chennai, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Kochi, and Kolkata.
- Note:** Worldwide, 100 Octane petrol has a niche market for luxury vehicles that demand high performance, and is available only in six countries like Germany, USA, etc.
- India has already adopted the BS-VI category of fuel since April this year, and invested over Rs 30,000 crore in the technology.

Union Minister for Tribal Affairs Arjun Munda launches 'Aadi Mahotsav'

- The 10-day-long 'Aadi Mahotsav', Madhya Pradesh, a festival of tribes has been launched on December 1, 2020.
- Keeping in view of restrictions due to Covid-19, the TRIFED (Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India) has decided to organise its annual event Aadi Mahotsav-2020 in an online mode.
- Note: Aadi Mahotsav** is a unique celebration of the spirit of tribal crafts, culture, cuisine and commerce. It commenced in 2017.
- It was also announced that the next focus state from the 11th December would be Gujarat, following which the spotlight would shift to Bengal from the 21st December 2020.

The Government of India appointed Varsha Joshi as the new Chairperson of National Dairy Development Board (NDDB)

- She replaces Dilip Rath on completion of his tenure on November 30.
- Joshi is the Joint Secretary (CDD), Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying, Government of India.
- Note:** The National Dairy Development Board is an institution of national importance set up by an Act of Parliament of India. The main office is in Anand, Gujarat with regional offices throughout the country. It was founded on 16 July 1965.

IAS Utpal Kumar Singh appointed as General Secretary of Lok Sabha

- He is the 1986 batch IAS officer of Uttarakhand cadre and will replace Snehlata Srivastava.
- Note:** The post of Lok Sabha General Secretary is equivalent to the rank of Cabinet Minister.

1. Venkaiah Naidu, Vice President of India launches the first ever SCO online exhibition on shared Buddhist Heritage, during the 19th meeting of the SCO Council of Heads of Government

- This SCO online International exhibition, first ever of its kind, is developed and curated by National Museum, New Delhi, in active collaboration with SCO member countries.



- The exhibition deploys state of the art technologies like 3D scanning, WebGL platform, virtual space utilization, innovative curation and narration methodology etc.
- **Note:** The exhibition can be accessed at <https://nmvirtual.in/> for worldwide viewing.

Capital infusion into NIIF Infrastructure Debt Financing Platform

- The Union Cabinet has given its approval to the proposal for equity infusion by Government of Rs 6000 crores in **NIIF Debt Platform** sponsored by National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF), comprising of **Aseem Infrastructure Finance Limited (AIFL)** and **NIIF Infrastructure Finance Limited (NIIF-IFL)**.
- This was one of the twelve key measures made by the Union Minister for Finance, as part of Government of India's stimulus to the economy, under Aatma Nirbhar Bharat.
- Rs 6,000 crores will be invested as equity in the NIIF Debt Platform over two financial years, i.e., 2020-21 and 2021-22.F
- NIIF Infrastructure Debt Financing Platform is expected to contribute nearly Rs 1 lakh crores in debt to the infrastructure sector over the next 5 years.
- This will act as a catalyst in attracting more investments into the infrastructure sector as envisaged in the National Infrastructure Pipeline.
- As per the National Infrastructure Platform (NIP), investment in infrastructure sector is targeted at Rs.111 lakh crore over the next 5 years across various sub-sectors, creating substantial need for debt financing. This would require at least Rs 60 to 70 lakh crores in debt financing.
- **Note:** This current environment requires well-capitalized specialized infrastructure focused financial institutions, such as the ones being developed by National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF), which can focus on lending across the project life cycle with a strong capital base and expertise driven approach.

Brain Fingerprinting for interrogation

- The brain fingerprinting method is to be conducted on all the four accused in the Hathras Rape Case. A team of forensic experts are to work along with the CBI team to prepare probe short questions for the test.
- **Note: The Brain Fingerprinting or Brain Electrical Oscillation Signature** is a neuro psychological method used to interrogate an accused in the crime by studying his or her brain responses. The test is carried out through a process called Electroencephalogram that studies the electrical behaviour of the human brain.
- The consent of the accused is first taken in order to perform the test. The accused then has to wear a head cap with dozens of electrodes attached to it and is then showed with visuals or audio clips that are related to the case in order to check if there are triggering neurons in their brains generating brain waves.
- However, the test can only be used as an aid to question the accused in the Hathras case. The accused cannot be convicted based on the test. The conviction has to be done based on interrogation and other traditional legal practices of CBI.

Hornbill Festival

- Nagaland hosts the first virtual celebration of Hornbill Festival 2020 from 1 to 5 December.
- It showcases the rich cultural heritage and tradition of the Nagas in one platform at Naga Heritage Village Kisama under Kohima District.
- However, due to Coronavirus pandemic, the state is holding its 21st edition of Hornbill festival 2020 completely in virtual mode.
- **Note:** The Hornbill Festival is a celebration held every year from 1 to 10 December, in Nagaland, Northeast India. It is also called the 'Festival of Festivals'. The *Festival* is named



after the Indian Hornbill, the large and colourful forest bird which is displayed in folklore in most of the state's tribes.

- The start of the festival marks the Nagaland statehood day i.e. December 01.

Government launches Mission COVID Suraksha

- The Government of India has approved the third stimulus package of Rs. 900 Crore for the **Mission COVID Suraksha- The Indian COVID-19 Vaccine Development Mission.**
- For Research & Development of Indian COVID-19 vaccines, this grant will be provided to the Department of Biotechnology.
- Led by the Department of Biotechnology and implemented by a dedicated Mission Implementation Unit at Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council, the existing activities under National Bio Pharma Mission and Ind-CEPI Mission will provide complementary strengths to this Mission.
- **Note:** Phase-I of the COVID Suraksha Mission has been allotted Rs.900 Crore for a period of 12 months. A total of 10 vaccine candidates have been supported by the Department of Biotechnology so far at both academia and industry and as on date, 5 vaccine candidates are in human trials including the Russian Vaccine Sputnik-V with at least 3 more in advanced stages of preclinical to enter human trials shortly.

Inauguration of Honey FPOs (Farmer Producer Organizations)

- The Honey FPO Programme of National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Limited (NAFED) was inaugurated by Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Shri Narendra Singh Tomar.
- Under the making 10,000 FPOs of the Central government Scheme, 5 FPOs of honey were launched in five states. These are Sundarbans in West Bengal, East Champaran in Bihar, Mathura in Uttar Pradesh, Morena in Madhya Pradesh and Bharatpur in Rajasthan.
- NAFED, through its empanelled Cluster-Based Business Organisation (CBBO) Indian Society of Agribusiness Professionals (ISAP) has initiated the formation and promotion of FPOs of beekeepers and honey collectors.
- **Note:** **National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd** is an apex organization of marketing cooperatives for agricultural produce in India. It was established on the auspicious day of Gandhi Jayanti on 2nd October 1958.

Extension of Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme through ECLGS 2.0 for the 26 sectors

- **The Government has extended the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) through ECLGS 2.0 for the 26 sectors identified by the Kamath Committee and the healthcare sector.**
- Under ECLGS 2.0 entities with outstanding credit above Rs. 50 crore and not exceeding Rs. 500 crore as on 29.2.2020, which were less than or equal to 30 days past due as on 29.2.2020 are eligible.
- These entities/borrower accounts shall be eligible for additional funding up to 20 per cent (which could be fund based or non-fund based or both) of their total outstanding credit (fund based only) as a collateral-free Guaranteed Emergency Credit Line (**GECL**), which would be fully guaranteed by **National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company Limited (NCGTC)**. The loans provided under ECLGS 2.0 will have a 5-year tenor, with a 12-month moratorium on repayment of principal.
- In addition to ECLGS 2.0, where no annual turnover ceiling has been prescribed, **it has also been decided to extend ECLGS 1.0 to entities under ECLGS** which had a total credit outstanding (fund based only) of up to Rs.50 crore as on 29.02.2020 but were previously



ineligible owing to their annual turnover exceeding Rs.250 crore. All other existing criteria/ terms and conditions remain unchanged.

- The Scheme would be applicable to all loans sanctioned under ECLGS during the period from the date of issue of these guidelines by NCGTC to 31.03.2021 or till guarantees for a number of Rs 3,00,000 crore is sanctioned under the ECLGS (taking into account both ECLGS 1.0 and 2.0), whichever is earlier.
- **Note:** The RBI had formed a five-member committee under the chairmanship of former ICICI Bank Chief Executive **KV Kamath** to make recommendations on the financial parameters to be considered in the restructuring of loans impacted by the Covid 19 pandemic.

The amalgamation of Lakshmi Vilas Bank with DBS Bank India Limited

- The Union Cabinet has approved the Scheme of Amalgamation of Lakshmi Vilas Bank Limited (LVB) with DBS Bank India Limited (DBIL).
- On 17.11.2020, to protect depositors' interest and in the interest of financial and banking stability, on RBI's application under section 45 of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949, LVB had been under a moratorium for a period of 30 days.
- **Note:** DBIL is a banking company licenced by RBI and operating in India through the wholly-owned subsidiary model, a leading financial services group in Asia, with presence in 18 markets and headquartered in Singapore.

'PM Modi and his Government's special relationship with Sikhs' book released

- Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting Shri Prakash Javadekar released a booklet 'PM Modi and his Government's special relationship with Sikhs' along with Union Minister for Civil Aviation and Housing and Urban Affairs Shri Hardeep Singh Puri on the occasion of Gurupurab.
- The book published by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting was released in English, Hindi and Punjabi languages. The book is based on the messages of Guru Nanak Dev.
- **Note:** This year marks the 551st birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev, the first Sikh Guru, who laid the foundation of Sikhism.

RE-Invest 2020

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the 3rd Global Renewable Energy Investment Meeting and Expo (RE-Invest 2020) through video conferencing. The summit is organized by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy.
- The **theme for RE-Invest 2020** is 'Innovations for Sustainable Energy Transition'.
- India's renewable power capacity is the 4th largest in the world and is growing at the fastest speed among all major countries. The renewable energy capacity in India is currently 136 Giga Watts, which is about 36% of our total capacity.
- India's annual renewable energy capacity addition has been exceeding that of coal-based thermal power since 2017. In the last 6 years, India has increased installed renewable energy capacity by two and half times.
- **Note:** In September last year at the United Nations Climate Action Summit, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced increasing the renewable energy target to 450 GW by 2030 from 175 GW by 2022.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi chairs 33rd PRAGATI interaction

- It marked Prime Minister's 33rd interaction through PRAGATI - the ICT based multi-modal platform for **Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation**, involving Central and State governments.



- In the PRAGATI meeting, multiple projects, grievances, and programs were reviewed. The projects taken up were of the Ministry of Railways, Ministry of Road Transport & Highways, Department for Promotion of Industry & Internal Trade, and Power Ministry. These projects, with a total cost of Rs 1.41 lakh crore, were related to ten states and union territories, including Odisha, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Gujarat, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Dadra, and Nagar Haveli.
- During the meeting, grievances related to COVID-19 and to the PM Awas Yojana (Gramin) were taken up. PM SVANidhi, agriculture reforms, and development of districts as export hubs were reviewed.
- **Note:** In the previous 32 such meetings, a total of 275 projects worth Rs 12.5 lakh crore have been reviewed, along with 47 programs/schemes and grievances across 17 sectors have been taken up.

80th All India Presiding Officers' Conference

- President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated the 80th All India Presiding Officers' Conference on November 25, 2020 in Kevadia, Gujarat. The two-day conference has been organized by Lok Sabha to celebrate **Constitution Day on November 26**. Om Birla, Speaker of the Lok Sabha, was the Chairperson of the conference.
- The **theme of the conference** was Harmonious Coordination of Legislative, Executive, and Judiciary- Key to Vibrant Democracy.
- The valedictory session of the conference had been addressed by Prime Minister Modi on November 26.
- **About All India Presiding Officers Conference:** The year, 2020, is also being celebrated as the centenary year of the Presiding officer's Conference. The All India Presiding Officers Conference began in 1921 and through the years, the conference has proven to be a platform to share new experiences, thoughts, and ideas to strengthen the democratic process.

Inauguration of Mega Food Park in Punjab

- Union Minister for Food Processing Industries, Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Narendra Singh Tomar virtually inaugurated Mega Food Park (MFP) at Phagwara in Kapurthala district of Punjab.
- This Mega Food Park is built at a project cost of Rs 107.83 crores and spread over 55 acres of land.
- It is expected to benefit about 25000 farmers and likely to generate employment of about 5000 persons.
- **Note:** Government has started a scheme to create 10,000 new FPOs (Farmer Producer Organisations). Farmers are being given subsidy and the Government is focussing on the welfare of small farmers. A 10,000 crore fund has been created under Aatmanirbhar Bharat, for the development of the food processing sector which will benefit farmers and create employment opportunities. To date, 37 MFPs have been sanctioned and 20 have already started functioning.

Indian Railway launches digitized online Human Resource Management System (HRMS)

- Vinod Kumar Yadav, Chairman & CEO, Railway Board has launched the following modules of HRMS & User depot useful for railway employees and pensioners.
- Employee Self Service (ESS) module enables railway employees to interact with various modules of HRMS including communication regarding change of data.
- Provident Fund (PF) Advance module enables Railway employees to check their PF balance and apply for PF advance online.
- The settlement module digitizes the entire settlement process of retiring employees.



- **Note:** Prior to these modules, Indian Railways has already launched other modules of HRMS like Employee Master module, Electronic Service Record module, Annual Performance Appraisal Report (APAR) module, Electronic Pass module, Office Order Module.

Important News: World

Singapore's 'Hawker' Culture gets UNESCO recognition

- The Hawker Culture in Singapore, a popular Singaporean style of street dining and culinary practices in a multicultural urban environment has been recognized by UNESCO.
- The Hawker culture of Street food in Singapore has been listed on the UN's prestigious '**Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity**'.

India contributes USD 1 million to WADA for scientific research for Clean Sport globally

- India has pledged a sum of USD 1 million to the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) towards the global agency's scientific research budget to ensure an atmosphere of Clean Sport globally, which will allow WADA to develop innovative anti-doping testing and detection methods.
- India's contribution of USD 1 million is the highest among contributions made by other world governments, including China, Saudi Arabia and Egypt.
- **About WADA:** The World Anti-Doping Agency is a foundation initiated by the International Olympic Committee based in Canada to promote, coordinate and monitor the fight against drugs in sports. It was founded on 10 November 1999.

Indian Embassy in Beijing launched a movie series "cinemaSCOpe"

- Indian Embassy in Beijing launched a movie series "cinemaSCOpe" exclusively for the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in which more than two dozen Indian films dubbed in Russian language, will be screened on a monthly basis.
- The movie screening began with 'Three Idiots' and will continue till India's chairmanship of the SCO 'Council of Heads of State' meeting in 2023.

Forbes 2020 list of world's 100 most powerful women

- 1st rank- German Chancellor Angela Merkel
- 2nd rank- President, European Central Bank Christine Lagarde
- 3rd rank- US Vice President-elect Kamala Harris
- 41st rank- Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman
- 55th rank- HCL Enterprise CEO Roshni Nadar Malhotra
- 68th rank- Biocon Founder Kiran Mazumdar Shaw
- **Note:** Forbes is an American business magazine owned by Integrated Whale Media Investments and the Forbes family. Editor-in-chief is Steve Forbes.

Asia Pacific Vaccine Access Facility (APVAX)

- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has launched a 9 billion dollar vaccine initiative- the Asia Pacific Vaccine Access Facility (APVAX)- offering rapid and equitable support to its developing members as they procure and deliver effective and safe coronavirus disease (COVID-19) vaccines.
- **Note:** The financing of vaccines by ADB will also be in close coordination with other development partners including World Health Organisation, World Bank Group, GAVI, COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access Facility- COVAX and bilateral and multilateral partners.

UNESCO to launch international prize in the name of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman



- UNESCO has decided to launch an international prize in the field of 'creative economy' in the name of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Starting November 2021, the dollar 50 thousand award will be given away once in two years for global economic initiatives of the youth.
- **Sheikh Mujibur** was a Bangladeshi politician. He is called the "Father of the Nation". He served as the first President of Bangladesh and later as the Prime Minister of Bangladesh.
- **Note:** UNESCO has declared 2021 as 'International Year of Creative Economy for Sustainable Development'.
- Currently, there are 23 UNESCO International Awards in the name of international celebrities and organisations.

India and the US sign MoU on Intellectual Property cooperation

- Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce and Industry, India signed the MoU with US Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO), Department of Commerce of the US.
- The MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) will facilitate exchange and dissemination of best practices, experiences and knowledge on IP among the public, and between and among the industry, universities, research and development organizations.
- **Note:** Recently India signed MoU with Denmark on Intellectual Property cooperation.

UN removes cannabis from 'most dangerous drug' category

- At its ongoing 63rd session, the 53-member CND (The United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs) has chosen to affirm a World Health Organisation (WHO) recommendation from 2019 to remove cannabis from its 'most dangerous' category.
- **Note:** Currently in India, the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985, illegalises any mixture with or without any neutral material, of any of the two forms of cannabis-charas and ganja-or any drink prepared from it.

Mt Everest is now 86 cms taller

- China and Nepal jointly announced that the new height of Mt Everest, the world's highest peak, is 8,848.86 meters.
- The new height is 86 cms more than the previous measurement. According to the measurement done in 1954 by Survey of India, the height of Mount Everest is 8,848 metres.

India hosts SCO Council of Heads of Government (SCO CHG) meet

- Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu, Vice President of India chaired the 19th SCO Council of Heads of Government on 30 November.
- This is the first time that a Summit-level Meeting was held under India's Chairmanship, since India gained full-membership of the organization in 2017.
- India considers the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) as an important regional organization to promote cooperation in the areas of peace, security, trade, economy and culture. India is committed to deepening its cooperation with SCO by playing a proactive, positive and constructive role in the organization.
- **Note:** Next SCO Council of Heads of Government in 2021 will be chaired by Kazakhstan.
- **Facts about SCO:** Shanghai Cooperation Organisation or Shanghai Pact, is a Eurasian political, economic and security alliance.
 - **Formed:** 15 June 2001



- **Members:** China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India & Pakistan.
- **Headquarter:** Beijing, China

Dubai (United Arab Emirates) gets Arab Gulf's first coal power plant

- Dubai is starting up the \$3.4 billion Hassyan coal plant, with capacity being increased from an initial 600 megawatts to 2,400 by 2023. Japan's Jera Co. will supply coal under a long-term agreement with Acwa Power of Saudi Arabia, which is developing the plant.
- The International Energy Agency, which advises the world's richest economies on energy policy, said Hassyan will provide 20 per cent of Dubai's power when fully operational and "greatly reduce electricity costs for locals".

Economy

Cabinet approves 100% FDI in DTH services

- The Union Cabinet approved revised guidelines for Direct-to-Home (DTH) broadcasting services, allowing 100 per cent foreign direct investment (FDI) as well as increasing the licence period to 20 years.
- Under the revised guidelines the licenses will be issued for a period of 20 years, compared to 10 years at the moment, and will be renewed for a 10-year period.

'Positive Pay System' for cheque transactions

- On January 1, 2021, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will introduce the 'Positive Pay System' for cheque transactions above Rs 50,000 in a bid to enhance safety and eliminate frauds.
- Under this process, the issuer of the cheque submits electronically, through channels like SMS, mobile app, Internet banking and ATM, certain minimum details of that cheque (like date, name of the beneficiary, or payee and amount) to the drawee bank, details of which are cross-checked with the presented cheque by Cheque Truncation System (CTS).

India Post Payments Bank launches its digital payments' services 'DakPay'

- Department of Posts (DoP) and India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) unveiled a new digital payment app 'DakPay'. The App is launched as part of its ongoing efforts to provide Digital Financial inclusion at the last mile across India.
- **About India Post Payments Bank:** IPPB has been established under the Department of Posts, Ministry of Communication with 100% equity owned by Government of India. It was launched on September 1, 2018.
- Recently Meghdoot award 2020 has been conferred by the Department of Posts to postal employees for their achievements in 2019-20.

Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) launches E-agricultural spot market platform

- BSE has launched an electronic spot platform for agricultural commodities - "BSE E-Agricultural Markets Ltd. (BEAM)" - through its subsidiary BSE Investments.
- The platform facilitates spot agricultural commodities transactions across value chain consisting of producers, intermediaries, ancillary services and consumers.
- **Note: BSE Limited**, formerly known as the Bombay Stock Exchange Ltd., is an Indian stock exchange located at Dalal Street, Mumbai. Established in 1875, it is Asia's oldest stock exchange.

RBI to set up Automated Banknote Processing Centre in Jaipur



- With a view to effectively deal with increasing circulation of banknotes, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has decided to set up an Automated Banknote Processing Centre (ABPC) in Jaipur for receipt, storage and dispatch of currency notes.
- **Note:** The volume of banknotes in circulation has increased three-fold from March 2001 to March 2019, and is expected to rise further in the years to come.

Re-appointment of Uday Kotak as MD & CEO of Kotak Mahindra Bank

- The Reserve Bank of India approved re-appointment of Kotak Mahindra Bank's founder Uday Kotak as managing director and chief executive officer of the bank for a period of three years with effect from January 1, 2021.
- The central bank has also approved re-appointment of Prakash Apte as part-time chairman and Dipak Gupta as joint managing director.
- **About Kotak Mahindra Bank:** Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited is an Indian private sector bank headquartered in Mumbai. It was founded in 2003.

FM Nirmala Sitharaman releases the 'Smuggling in India Report 2019-20'

- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman inaugurated the 63rd Founding Day Celebrations of the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI).
- On the occasion, Mrs Sitharaman released the Smuggling in India Report 2019-20 which analyses organised smuggling trends on Gold and Foreign Currency, Narcotic Drugs, Security, Environment and Commercial Frauds.
- On the occasion, Bravery Awards were conferred upon Najimudheen T S of DRI Cochin Zonal Unit and Sumer Sen, an independent witness of a case booked by DRI, Jaipur.
- The DRI Utkrisht Seva Samman, 2020 was awarded to B. Sankaran, an officer of the Indian Revenue Service.

Ministry of Commerce and Industry and Ministry of AYUSH decides to set up an AYUSH Export Promotion Council (AEPC)

- This decision was taken recently in a joint review of AYUSH trade and Industry by Shri Piyush Goyal, Minister of Commerce and Industry and Shri Shripad Naik, Minister of AYUSH.
- **Note:** The entire AYUSH sector will work together to achieve price and quality competitiveness to boost AYUSH exports.
- AYUSH will figure appropriately in the "Brand India" activities being presently undertaken.

Awards and Honors

Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay NIF Book Prize 2020

- The jury of the Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay New India Foundation (NIF) Book Prize 2020 has for this year announced two joint winners—Amit Ahuja (Mobilising the Marginalised: Ethnic Parties without Ethnic Movements) and Jairam Ramesh (A Chequered Brilliance: The Many Lives of VK Krishna Menon).
- **Note:** Established in 2018, the Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay NIF Book Prize builds on the New India Foundation's mission of sponsoring high-quality research and writing on all aspects of independent India.

DRDO scientist Hemant Kumar Pandey conferred with 'Scientist of the Year Award'

- Hemant Kumar Pandey was conferred with 'Scientist of the Year Award' for his contribution in developing a herbal drug for leucoderma, an autoimmune disorder characterised by the loss of skin colour in parts of a body.



- Pandey, who heads the Herbal Medicine Division of DRDO's Defence Institute of Bio-energy Research (DIBER), was conferred with the prestigious award by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.

Virat Kohli wins the Sir Garfield Sobers Award for Male Cricketer of the Decade

- India captain Virat Kohli won the Sir Garfield Sobers Award for ICC Male Cricketer of the Decade. He also won the ICC Men's ODI Cricketer of the Decade Award.
- MS Dhoni won the ICC Spirit of Cricket Award of the Decade.
- Steve Smith from Australia won the ICC Men's Test player of the decade.
- Rashid Khan from Afghanistan won the ICC Men's T20I Cricketer of the Decade award.
- Ellyse Perry from Australia won the Rachael Heyhoe-Flint Award for ICC Female Cricketer of the Decade.

NTPC wins prestigious CII-ITC Sustainability Awards 2020

- Country's largest power producer, NTPC Ltd. has been conferred "Excellence" in the prestigious CII-ITC Sustainability Awards 2020 in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Domain.
- **Note:** 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.

Srinagar's Amar Singh College recognised with UNESCO award

- Srinagar based Amar Singh College has been recognized with the 'Award of Merit' in the 2020 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation.
- The college building is 80 years old and INTACH (Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage) chapter in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir had carried out the conservation work at the Amar Singh College.

AFSCB adjudged as the "Best Company Promoting Sports (Public Sector) 2020"

- **Air Force Sports Control Board (AFSCB)** has been annotated as the winner in the category of "Best Company Promoting Sports (Public Sector) 2020" at FICCI India Sports Awards 2020.
- **Note:** Earlier the AFSCB was also conferred with 'Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puruskar' on **28 Aug 2020** for 'Employment of Sports Persons and Sports Welfare measures'.

Dr. Narendra Dabholkar Memorial Award 2020 for Dravidar Kazhagam president K. Veeramani

- Veeramani has dedicated his entire life to propagate rationalism and served for the cause of social justice in society.

Note: The U.S.-based Maharashtra Foundation had instituted the award in the memory of the Maharashtra-based rationalist Dabholkar, a release issued by the Dravidar Kazhagam.

US President confers 'Legion of Merit' award to Prime Minister Narendra Modi

- The Legion of Merit, in the highest degree of the Chief Commander, is a prestigious award conferred by the President of the United States, typically upon Heads of State or Heads of Government of other countries.
- **Note:** At the ceremony, The Legion of Merit, was also awarded to the Prime Minister of Australia Scott Morrison, and former Prime Minister of Japan, Shinzo Abe.



Lewis Hamilton wins 2020 Sports Personality of the Year

- Formula 1 world champion Lewis Hamilton has won BBC Sports Personality of the Year 2020.
- **Note:** It is the second time Hamilton has been crowned Sports Personality of the Year, having first won the award in 2014.

Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Telecom Skill Excellence Awards

- Shri. Ravi Shankar Prasad, Minister of Communications and Electronics & IT presented the **Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Telecom Skill Excellence Awards** including cash awards of Rs 50,000 and Rs 30,000 respectively, to both awardees.
- **Shri. Sreenivas Karanam, Bangalore** was selected for the **FIRST prize** for his contribution in developing a cost-effective customized technical solution under the brand 'C mobile'.
- **Prof. Subrat Kar, New Delhi** was selected for the **SECOND prize** for his innovative solution on development & deployment of a large scale sensor network and devices to avoid train-animal collision.

Vidyut Mohan named among 'Young Champions of the Earth' winners by UN Environment Programme (UNEP)

- A 29-year-old Indian entrepreneur Mohan is among the seven winners of the prestigious "Young Champions of the Earth" 2020 prize.
- **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.

Ratan Tata to receive with 'Global Visionary of Sustainable Business and Peace' award

- Ratan Tata will be honoured with the award during the launch of the Federation of Indo-Israel Chamber of Commerce's international chapter in Dubai on December 21.
- **Note:** The 82-year-old industrialist and philanthropist is the recipient of India's highest civilian award - Padma Vibhushan.

Robert Lewandowski, Lucy Bronze win FIFA Football Player of the Year Awards 2020

- Bayern Munich striker Robert Lewandowski was named men's player of the year at FIFA's 'The Best' awards ceremony in Zurich. The 32-year-old Lewandowski came out ahead of the other two nominees, Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo.
- England defender Lucy Bronze took the women's award.
- It was the first occasion for both Lewandowski and Bronze to win the award.

SAIL gets Golden Peacock Environment Management Award

- Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) has been awarded with the prestigious Golden Peacock Environment Management Award for the year 2020 in the Steel Sector by the Institute of Directors.
- The company has been the winner of this award for successive two years and this bears testimony to the efforts made by it for sustainable and environmentally responsible steel making.
- **About SAIL:** It is one of the largest steel-making companies in India and one of the Maharatna's of the country's Central Public Sector Enterprises.

Raj Kamal Jha wins Rabindranath Tagore Literary Prize 2020

- Indian journalist-author Raj Kamal Jha has been honored with the Rabindranath Tagore Literary Prize 2020 for his novel '**The City and The Sea**'.
- Jha's book is based on the December 2012 Nirbhaya rape and murder case.



- **Note: Rabindranath Tagore Literary Prize** was founded in 2018 by a US-based publisher Bundalo. The prize serves as a platform for world peace, literature, art, education and human rights.

Bajrang Punia (Wrestler) and Elavenil Valarivan (Shooter) awarded “Sportsperson of the year” at FICCI India Sports Awards 2020

- The sports awards are an attempt by industry body, FICCI to acknowledge and recognise the contribution of sportspersons and various stakeholders who deliver excellent results throughout the year.
- **Note:** Madhya Pradesh received the Best State Promoting Sports Award and Cricket legend Anil Kumble received the Best Company Promoting Sports (Private Sector).

Social Entrepreneur of the year 2020 awarded to Ashraf Patel

- Ashraf Patel is one such person who has recently won the Social Entrepreneur of the Year award instituted by the Schwab Foundation and Jubilant Bhartia Foundation.
- **Note:** Ashraf Patel is the co-founder of Pravah and ComMutiny Youth Collective. In partnership with UNICEF ROSA, they developed an appreciative enquiry tool to assess the impact of COVID 19 on the lives of adolescents in 8 South Asian countries.

Joe Biden & Kamala Harris named Time magazine's Person of the Year 2020

- U.S. President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris were jointly named Time magazine's 2020 Person of the Year.
- **Note:** The Person of the Year is usually an individual, but multiple people have been named in the past. Time began its tradition for declaring person of the year in 1927.

Ramanujan Prize for Young Mathematicians 2020 awarded to Dr. Carolina Araujo

- Dr. Carolina Araujo is a mathematician from the Institute for Pure and Applied Mathematics (IMPA), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.
- Dr. Araujo, who is Vice President of the Committee for Women in Mathematics at the International Mathematical Union, is the first non-Indian to receive this prize for her outstanding work in algebraic geometry.
- **Note:** The prize awarded annually to a researcher from a developing country funded by the Department of Science and Technology of the Government of India in collaboration with ICTP (International Centre for Theoretical Physics) and the International Mathematical Union.

2020 United Nations Population Award

- This year's winners are HelpAge India, in the institutional category, and Gyalyum Sangay Choden Wangchuck, Queen Mother of Bhutan, in the individual category.
- **HelpAge India** has been working with and for disadvantaged elderly people in India for nearly four decades, enabling them to live active, dignified and healthier lives.
- **Gyalyum Sangay Choden Wangchuck** is a longtime champion of sexual and reproductive health and rights and said that there is need to end violence against women, girls and children in Bhutan. She founded a volunteer organization called “Respect, Educate, Nurture and Empower Women” (RENEW) in 2004.

Global Teacher Prize 2020

- Ranjitsinh Disale, a government school (Zilla Parishad Primary School) teacher from Solapur, Maharashtra, won the Global Teacher Prize 2020 with prize money of 1 million dollar.
- It is an annual prize founded by the Varkey Foundation in partnership with UNESCO in 2014 to recognise an exceptional teacher who has made an outstanding contribution to the profession.



- **Note:** Disale is best known for embedding QR codes in textbooks which was adopted by NCERT.

Police Station Award 2020

- Top 3 police stations:
 - 1st- Nongpok Sekmai in Manipur's Thoubal district
 - 2nd- AWPS-Suramangalam in Tamil Nadu's Salem district
 - 3rd - Kharsang in Arunachal Pradesh's Changlang district
- **Note:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2015 sought the laying down of parameters for grading police stations on the basis of their performances and citizens' feedback to rank the top 10 among them annually.

Gitanjali Rao, Time's first-ever 'Kid of the Year'

- Selected from more than 5,000 nominees as Time Magazine's first-ever 'Kid of the Year', 15-year-old Indian American, Gitanjali Rao was chosen for her "astonishing work" and using technology to tackle issues from contaminated drinking water to opioid addiction and cyber bullying.
- **Note:** Last year, Rao was featured in Forbes' '30 Under 30' list for her innovations. In 2017, she won the Discovery Education 3M Young Scientist Challenge and was awarded USD 25,000 for creating a device called Tethys.

United Nations declares Invest India the winner of the Investment Promotion Award 2020

- The United Nations (UNCTAD-United Nations Conference on Trade and Development) has declared Invest India as a winner of the 2020 United Nations Investment Promotion Award.
- **Note:** UNCTAD is a central agency that monitors performance of Investment Promotion Agencies (IPAs) and identifies global best practices. Germany, South Korea and Singapore have been some of the past winners of the award.
- **About Invest India**, the national investment promotion agency, is a non-profit venture under the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, the Ministry of Commerce & Industry. It was set up in 2009.

ICAR (Indian Council of Agricultural Research) wins the International King Bhumibol World Soil Day Award 2020

- This announcement was made on a virtual function by the FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization) on World Soil Day (5th December 2020).
- **Note:** ICAR is the organization responsible for the coordination, guidance and management of agricultural research and education in India as well as in the world.

Defense

Defence minister hands over 3 DRDO systems to chiefs of armed forces

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh handed over three systems developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation to chiefs of the three armed forces.
 - (i) Indian maritime situational awareness system (IMSAS) to Navy Chief Admiral Karambir Singh
 - (ii) The Astra Mk-1 missile system to Air Chief Marshal R K S Bhadauria
 - (iii) The Border Surveillance System (BOSS) to Army Chief General M M Naravane



Indian Army signs MoU with Bank of Baroda for new 'Baroda Military Salary Package'

- The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed by Lt Gen Ravin Khosla, DG (MP&PS) and Shri Vikramaditya Singh Khichi, Executive Director, Bank of Baroda.
- Services under this Salary Package will be offered to serving and retired personnel of Indian Army through the Bank's network of over 8,200 domestic branches and around 20,000 business correspondent touchpoints.

Successful maiden launch of MRSAM

- Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) achieved a major milestone with the maiden launch of **Medium Range Surface to Air Missile (MRSAM)**, Army Version from Integrated Test Range, Chandipur, off the Coast of Odisha.
- MRSAM Army weapon system comprises of Command post, Multi-Function Radar and Mobile Launcher system.
- **Note:** Army version of MRSAM was developed jointly by DRDO, India and IAI, Israel.

Indian & Vietnamese Navy conducts PASSEX- 2020 in South China Sea

- Indian and Vietnamese Navy conducted the two-day naval passage exercise PASSEX in the South China Sea as part of efforts to boost maritime cooperation between the two countries.
- **Note:** Indian Naval Ship Kiltan, carrying humanitarian assistance, reached Vietnam's Nha Rong Port in Ho Chi Minh City to deliver 15 tonnes of relief material for flood-affected people under **Mission Sagar-III**.
- This mission of INS Kiltan was part of India's Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) assistance to Friendly Foreign Countries during the ongoing pandemic.

Cabinet approves export of Akash Missile System and creates a Committee for faster approval of exports

- Akash is country's important missile with over 96 percent indigenisation.
- Akash is a Surface to Air Missile with a range of 25 Kms. The missile was inducted in 2014 in IAF and in 2015 in Indian Army.
- The export version of Akash will be different from System currently deployed with Indian Armed Forces.
- To provide faster approvals for export of such platforms, a Committee comprising of Raksha Mantri, External Affairs Minister and National Security Advisor has been created.

India successfully test fires two Prithvi-2 ballistic missiles

- The trials of the DRDO-developed nuclear-capable surface to surface Prithvi-2 missiles off the eastern coast of Odisha in Balasore were successful.
- The Prithvi-2 missile is capable of carrying 500-1000 kg of warheads and is powered by liquid propulsion twin engines.
- **Note:** Earlier on October 16, India had successfully conducted a night trial of Prithvi- 2 missile as a part of a user trial by the Army from a test range in Odisha.

India's first Maritime Theatre Command (MTC) to be launched in 2021

- The country's first MTC will have full operational control over the western and eastern naval fleets, maritime strike fighter jets and transport aircraft, two amphibious infantry brigades, and coastal patrol vessels.
- The MTC will be the first new "geographical" theatre command to be created as part of the biggest-ever military restructuring plan.
- **Note:** The MTC will look after the 7,516-km long coastline, the entire Indian Ocean Region and the 1,382 islands.

35th edition of IND-INDO CORPAT



- The 35th edition of India-Indonesia Coordinated Patrol (IND-INDO CORPAT) between the Indian Navy and the Indonesian Navy has been conducted from 17 to 18 December 2020.
- Indian Naval Ship (INS) *Kulish*, an indigenously built missile corvette along with P8I Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPA) undertook coordinated patrol with Indonesian Naval Ship KRI *Cut Nyak Dien*, a Kapitan Pattimura class corvette and a MPA of the Indonesian Navy.
- **Note:** The two navies have been carrying out CORPAT along their International Maritime Boundary Line since 2002, with the aim of ensuring safety and security of shipping and international trade in the region.

Launch of 2nd Project 17A Ship 'Himgiri'

- '*Himgiri*', the first of the three Project 17A ships being built at M/s Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers Limited (GRSE), Kolkata was launched.
- **P17A ships are the first gas turbine propulsion and largest combat platforms ever built at GRSE.**
- **Note:** Under the Project 17A program, a total of seven ships, four at Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL) and three ships at GRSE are being built with enhanced stealth features, advanced indigenous weapon and sensor fit along with several other improvements.

Passage Exercise (PASSEX) between Russian Federation Navy and Indian Navy in Eastern Indian Ocean Region from 4 to 5 December

- The exercise involved participation of Russian Federation Navy guided missile cruiser Varyag, large anti-submarine ship *Admiral Panteleyev* and medium ocean tanker *Pechenga*. Indian Navy has been represented by indigenously constructed guided missile frigate *Shivalik* and anti-submarine corvette *Kadmatt* along with integral helicopters.
- **Note:** The two navies have built a robust relationship through regular exercises such as INDRA Navy conducted biennially, with the last edition held in the Northern Indian Ocean Region from 4 to 5 September 2020.

Akash missiles test fired successfully

- The Indian Air Force has successfully test fired the Akash Missiles at Suryalanka test firing range in Andhra Pradesh during the Combat Guided Weapons Firing 2020 exercise.
- This exercise was aimed at practising different scenarios during conflicts to shoot down enemy planes.
- **Note:** Designed and developed by the DRDO, Akash is one of the most successful, indigenously-made missiles inducted into the Indian Army and Air Force.

Lieutenant General Rajeev Chaudhry assumes charge as Director General Border Roads (DGBR)

- Lt Gen Rajeev Chaudhry assumed the charge as 27th Director General of the Border Roads Organization on 01 December 2020.
- **Note:** He replaces Lieutenant General Harpal Singh who has been appointed as a new Engineer-in-Chief of Indian Army.

Successful test firing of BrahMos by Indian Navy

- BrahMos Supersonic Cruise Missile in Anti-Ship mode was successfully test-fired against a decommissioned Ship.
- BrahMos is the supersonic cruise missile jointly developed by DRDO and NPOM of Russia as a Brahmos Aerospace joint venture, which became Brahmos Aerospace Private Limited.



- The missile has established itself as a major force multiplier in modern-day complex battlefields with its impeccable anti-ship and land-attack capabilities with multi-role and multi-platform abilities and has been deployed in all the three wings of the Indian Armed Forces.
- **Note:** The first launch of Brahmos took place in 2001 and till date numerous launches have taken place from various ships, Mobile Autonomous Launchers and Su-30 MKI aircraft, making it a versatile weapon.

New Appointments

Arya Rajendran becomes India's youngest mayor from Thiruvananthapuram

- Arya Rajendran, a 21-year-old CPI (M) leader, was sworn-in as the youngest mayor of Thiruvananthapuram Corporation, the largest urban body in Kerala.
- She is a second-year BSc. Maths student of the All Saints College.

Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan nominated by the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation (GAVI) as a member on the GAVI Board.

- Dr. Vardhan will be representing the South East Area Regional Office (SEARO)/ Western Pacific Regional Office (WPRO) constituency on the GAVI Board.
- The seat is currently held by Myint Htwe of Myanmar.
- Dr. Vardhan will be representing India from January 1, 2021 till December 31, 2023.
- **Note:** The GAVI Board is responsible for strategic direction and policymaking, oversees the operations of the Vaccine Alliance and monitors programme implementation.

Vineet Agarwal takes over as new Assocham President

- 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).
- He replaces Niranjana Hiranandani, Co-Founder and MD, Hiranandani Group of Companies.

Shashi Shekhar Vempati, CEO Prasar Bharati elected Vice President of ABU

- Shri Shashi Shekhar Vempati has been elected to the office of the Vice President, ABU (Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union), one of the largest broadcasting associations in the world for three years.
- **Note: Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union**, formed in 1964, is a non-profit, professional association of broadcasting organisations. Its headquarters is in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Radhakrishnan Nair appointed as chief coach of Indian athletics

- Athletics Federation of India (AFI) appointed Radhakrishnan Nair as its full-time chief coach, filling the post left vacant after the resignation of Bahadur Singh in July.
- Note: Nair, who is also a certified Technical Official and World Athletics Level-5 coach, has been instrumental in enhancing the coaches education system in India.
- He is the first Indian to have an International Coaching Enrichment Programme Certificate of the International Olympic Committee.

Uday Shankar named FICCI president for 2020-21

- Shankar will succeed Sangita Reddy.
- He is the first-ever media and entertainment executive in India to lead a national industry chamber such as FICCI (The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry).



World Health Organisation (WHO) has appointed Indian-origin Anil Soni as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for the WHO Foundation

- WHO Director-General Adhanom Ghebreyesus described Soni as a proven innovator in global health who has spent two decades in service of communities affected by HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases.
- **Note: WHO Foundation**, an independent grant-making agency headquartered in Geneva, was launched in May 2020 to work alongside the WHO and the global health community.

Bata promotes India CEO Kataria as global head.

- Recently, Bata Shoe Organization named Sandeep Kataria as its first Indian CEO.
- He will replace Alexis Nasard.

Science and Technology

Niti Ayog launches made-in India cloud storage service, DigiBoxx

- DigiBoxx is India's first homegrown Digital Asset Management Platform where we can store and collaborate with your digital assets, like raw files, photographs, sensitive collateral, etc.
- This is a made-in India service that will store and encrypt data within the country. It is available on the web and Android as of now with iOS support arriving soon.
- Like Google Drive and Apple's iCloud service, DigiBoxx will enable individuals and enterprises to store, manage, collaborate, organise and share all their data online.

India's first-ever driverless train operations on Delhi Metro's Magenta Line

- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated India's first-ever driverless train operations on Delhi Metro's Magenta Line.
- He also inaugurated a fully operational National Common Mobility Card service on the Airport Express Line.
- **Note:** In 2014, only 5 cities had metro rail and today, metro rail is available in 18 cities. By the year 2025, metro rail will be available in more than 25 cities.

Mobile Application "Swachhata Abhiyan"

- Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment Shri Thaawarchand Gehlot launched a Mobile Application "Swachhata Abhiyan".
- This mobile application has been developed to identify and geotag the data of insanitary latrines and manual scavengers so that the insanitary latrines can be replaced with sanitary latrines and rehabilitate all the manual scavengers to provide dignity of life to them.
- **Note:** "Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013" mandates survey of insanitary latrines, their demolition and construction of sanitary latrines in their place.

IMD launches country's highest Meteorological Centre in Leh

- The India Meteorological Department (IMD) will now provide specialised weather forecasts for traffic movement on highways, agriculture, and defence personnel **from its Ladakh centre**. Located at 3,500 metres above sea level in Leh, it will be the highest Meteorological Centre (MC) in India.
- It will provide short range (3 days) medium range (12 days) and long range (one month) forecast for the two districts Leh and Kargil of the Union Territory.



- **Note:** After Itanagar in Arunachal Pradesh, the Leh centre is the second Meteorological Centre located in the Himalayas.

India's first Lithium refinery in Gujarat

- India's first Lithium refinery which will process Lithium ore to produce battery-grade material will be set up in Gujarat.
- Manikaran Power Limited, one of the country's largest power trading and renewable energy company will be investing over Rs 1,000 crore to set up this refinery.
- **Note:** Lithium is a rare element not usually found in India. The company will be importing Lithium ore from Australia and will be processing it here.

INCOIS launches web based Digital Ocean app

- INCOIS (Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services), an autonomous body under the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES), has launched a web-based application Digital Ocean to share information on marine data and forecast services.
- It is a first of its kind platform for ocean data management and contributes to the Digital India program.

India's first Centre of Excellence for Skill Development in Power Sector

- Skill India has established the first Centre of Excellence for Skill Development in the Power Sector in the campus of National Institute of Solar Energy, Gurugram, Haryana.
- The Centre of Excellence is an outcome of collaboration between the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Government of India, along with the Ministry of National Education and Youth, Government of France and Schneider Electric.
- The Centre of Excellence will focus on creating a pool of highly skilled trainers and assessors for further training to increase employability of candidates in the field of Electricity, Automation and Solar Energy Sectors.

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi inaugurates India International Science Festival (IISF) 2020

- 6th IISF 2020 is being organized jointly by Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), Department of Science and Technology (DST), Ministry of Earth Sciences, Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) in association with Vijnana Bharati (Vibha) from December 22 - 25, 2020.
- The theme is 'Science for Self-Reliant India and Global Welfare'.
- It aims to celebrate the achievements of India's scientific and technological advancements with students and innovators.

ISRO sets up dedicated control centre 'NETRA' for Space Situational Awareness (SSA)

- The Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) has set up a dedicated Control Centre 'NETRA' (NETwork for space object TRacking and Analysis) at ISTRAC campus at Peenya, Bengaluru to monitor, track and protect India's space assets.
- Directorate of Space Situational Awareness and Management (DSSAM) has been established at ISRO to enhance Space Situational Awareness.
- **Note:** Only America, Russia and Europe have similar established capabilities in place to track space objects and share collision warnings.

Defence minister Rajnath Singh inaugurates the advanced Hypersonic Wind Tunnel test facility in Hyderabad

- The state-of-the-art facility is a pressure vacuum driven enclosed free jet facility with nozzle exit of one-meter diameter.



- The project is an indigenous development and an outcome of synergistic partnership with Indian industries.
- **Note:** With this India has become the third country to have such a huge facility in size and capability after America and Russia.

ISRO successfully launches CMS-01 Communication Satellite on board PSLV-C50 Rocket

- CMS-01 is the 42nd communication satellite of the space agency and it is envisaged for providing services in Extended-C Band of the frequency spectrum covering India, Andaman and Nicobar, and Lakshadweep islands.
- **Note:** The satellite is going to function as a replacement for communication satellite GSAT-12 which was launched 11 years ago. CMS-01 will have a lifespan of over seven years, according to ISRO.

Cabinet approves setting up of public Wi-Fi networks

- The Cabinet approved setting up of public Wi-Fi networks under '**PM-WANI**' (**Prime Minister's Wi-Fi Access Network Interface**) to provide public Wi-Fi service through Public Data Offices without levy of any License Fee.
- "The scheme would enable small shopkeepers to provide Wi-Fi service. This will boost incomes as well as ensure youth gets seamless internet connectivity. It will also strengthen our Digital India mission.

Co-WIN mobile app announced for COVID-19 vaccine delivery

- The Union Health Ministry has announced a digital platform called 'Co-WIN' to monitor the entire vaccination process and enable people to register themselves for the vaccination.
- **Note:** This Co-WIN app will have 5 modules that will help vaccinators, administrators and people who will get these vaccine shots. These modules would include administrator module, registration module, vaccination module, beneficiary acknowledgement module and report module.

Quantum Communication between two DRDO Laboratories

- DRDO (Defence Research and Development Organization) developed Quantum Key Distribution (QKD) technology underwent trials in Hyderabad between two DRDO labs, DRDL (Defence Research and Development Laboratory) and RCI (The Research Centre Imarat), to show secure communication.
- **Note:** The technology is developed by CAIR, Bengaluru and DYSL-QT, Mumbai. Quantum Communication using the time-bin Quantum Key Distribution scheme was performed under realistic conditions.

DRDO's new laboratory named 'Defence Geo-Informatics Research Establishment'

- DRDO (Defence Research and Development Organisation) has created a new laboratory named Defence Geo-Informatics Research Establishment by merging two existing labs.
- **First** is the Manali-headquartered Snow and Avalanche Studies Establishment (SASE) and the **second** is the Delhi-based Defence Terrain Research Laboratory (DTRL).
- **Note:** The new lab will focus on research on terrain and avalanches along the border with China from Ladakh to Arunachal Pradesh.
- The SASE has been very actively engaged in the study of snow and avalanches in the operational areas. It has prepared an avalanche atlas of almost 3,000 on-road locations in different parts of the country where the armed forces are deployed. The DTRL had been working on different terrains where the armed forces are deployed.



NHSRCL adopts aerial LiDAR Survey technique to conduct the ground survey for Delhi-Varanasi High Speed Rail Corridor

- National High Speed Rail Corporation Limited (NHSRCL) will be adopting Light Detection and Ranging Survey (LiDAR) technique using Laser enabled equipment mounted on a Helicopter for conducting ground survey for the preparation of Detailed Project Report for the proposed Delhi-Varanasi HSR corridor.
- **Note:** The aerial LiDAR survey technique, for the first time for any railway project in India, was adopted for the Mumbai- Ahmedabad High Speed Rail Corridor primarily because of its high accuracy. The ground survey using aerial LiDAR for MAHSR alignment was done only in 12 weeks against the 10-12 months if had been done through traditional survey methods.

Health

Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi launches Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY SEHAT to extend coverage to all residents of Jammu & Kashmir

- Scheme will provide financial cover up to Rs 5 lakh per family on a floater basis; free and cashless treatment in any public and private empanelled hospital across the country.
- Right now about 6 lakh families of the state are getting the benefit of Ayushman Bharat Scheme. All 21 lakh families living in J & K will get the same benefit after the SEHAT scheme.
- **Note: AB-PMJAY** (Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana) is a flagship health scheme of the central government, which was launched in 2018, and provides a cover of up to Rs 500,000 per family every year for secondary and tertiary care hospitalisation.

The first and only indigenous Pneumonia vaccine launched by Serum Institute of India (SII)

- The product of the company is named the Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (PCV).
- This vaccine is used for active immunisation against invasive disease and pneumonia caused by Streptococcus pneumonia in infants and has been developed by SII in collaboration with other partners like the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.
- **Note:** Serum Institute of India is also the pharma company that is testing and producing the Oxford-AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine candidate in India.

Indian Railways launches Hospital Management Information System (HMIS) trial project

- The trail project has been launched over South Central Railway.
- **About HMIS:** The HMIS in Railways has been developed by Indian Railways in coordination with RailTel Corporation Limited.
- Its objective is to provide a single window of clearance of hospital administration activity such as clinical, diagnostics, pharmacy, examinations, industrial health etc.

National Centre for Divyang Empowerment (NCDE) inaugurated in Hyderabad

- Union Minister of State for Home G Kishan Reddy has inaugurated the National Centre for Divyang Empowerment at the CRPF Group Centre in Hakimpet near Hyderabad.
- This is the first of its kind establishment to re-skill and rehabilitates the Divyang Warriors of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) who suffered life threatening injuries in line of duty.

NITI Aayog releases a white paper " Vision 2035 - Public Health Surveillance in India"

- The white paper lays out India's vision 2035 for public health surveillance through the integration of the three-tiered public health system into Ayushman Bharat.



- Citizen-friendly public health surveillance system will ensure individual privacy, enabled with a client feedback mechanism. India aims to provide regional and global leadership in managing events that constitute a public health emergency of international concern.

India's first mRNA vaccine for Covid-19

- India's first indigenous mRNA vaccine has received approval from the Drug Controller General of India to initiate Phase I/II human clinical trial.
- The mRNA vaccine, HGCO19 has been developed by Gennova, a company based in Pune and supported with seed grant under the Ind-CEPI mission of Department of Biotechnology of Science and Technology Ministry.
- **Note:** The mRNA vaccines do not use the conventional model to produce immune response. Instead, mRNA vaccine carries the molecular instructions to make the protein in the body through a synthetic RNA of the virus.

India continues to make impressive gains in reduction of malaria burden: WHO

- According to the **World Malaria Report 2020** released by the World Health Organisation (WHO), India is the only high endemic country which has reported a decline of 17.6 percent in 2019 as compared to 2018. The Annual Parasitic Incidence reduced by 27.6 percent in 2018 compared to 2017.
- The percentage drop in the malaria cases was 71.8 percent and deaths were 73.9 percent between 2000 to 2019.
- **Note:** Malaria elimination efforts were initiated in the country in 2015 and were intensified after the launch of National Framework for Malaria Elimination in 2016 by the Health Ministry. The National Strategic Plan for Malaria Elimination was launched by the Health Ministry in July, 2017 which laid down strategies for the next five years.

Environment and Ecology

Ladakh's Tso Kar Wetland Complex now a Wetland of International Importance

- India has added Tso Kar Wetland Complex in Ladakh as its 42nd Ramsar site, which is a second one in the Union Territory (UT) of Ladakh.
- The Tso Kar Basin is a high-altitude wetland complex, consisting of two principal waterbodies, Startsapuk Tso, a freshwater lake of about 438 hectares to the south, and Tso Kar itself, a hypersaline lake of 1800 hectares to the north, situated in the Changthang region of Ladakh, India.
- **Note:** The Tso Kar Basin is an A1 Category Important Bird Area (IBA) as per Bird Life International and a key staging site in the Central Asian Flyway.

A Ramsar site is a wetland site designated to be of international importance under the Ramsar Convention. Ramsar convention is an inter-governmental environmental treaty established by UNESCO and came into force in 1975.

New population of blue whales discovered in western Indian Ocean

- Scientists have found evidence of a previously undiscovered population of blue whales living in the western Indian Ocean based on an analysis of sound recordings from the region.
- In a recently published study in the journal Endangered Species Research, the scientists analysed recordings from the Arabian Sea coast of Oman, and as far south as Madagascar, and found a blue whale song that had never been described.



- According to the researchers this population of blue whales was previously assumed to belong to the same that had been studied off Sri Lanka, ranging into the southcentral Indian Ocean.

Scientists discovered a new species of wild Sun Rose from the Eastern Ghats in India

- The name of the new species is *Portulaca lalji* which has been discovered from Prakasam district of Andhra Pradesh.
- It has unique features such as a tuberous root, no hair in its leaf axils, a reddish pink flower, prolate-shaped fruits, and copper brown seeds without lustre.
- It is named after Lal Ji Singh. He was a well-known botanist from the Botanical Survey of India.
- This species has been included in the “Data Deficient” category of the IUCN Endangered Species List.

The ‘Status of Leopard in India 2018’ report

- The ‘Status of Leopard in India 2018’ report was released by Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar.
- India now has 12,852 leopards. More than 60 percent increase in population has been recorded over the previous estimate which was conducted in 2014.
- **Note:** The States of Madhya Pradesh (3,421), Karnataka (1783) and Maharashtra (1690) have recorded the highest leopard estimates.

Researchers discovered a new frog species

- The researchers from multiple India Institutions and one from France, has found a new species of burrowing frog and named it *Sphaerotheca Bengaluru*, outside its natural habitat in a barren tract of land near Rajankunte, outskirts of Bengaluru.
- The new species was described based on the morphological differences and molecular approach with known species of the burrowing frogs.
- **Note:** The new species is a part of the team’s effort in documenting the ‘Amphibians in the Deccan Plateau parts of Karnataka’.

Cyclonic Storm ‘Burevi’

- According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), Cyclonic Storm Burevi is a currently active tropical cyclone which has made landfall in Sri Lanka and is threatening parts of southern India.
- **Note:** It is the fifth named cyclone in the 2020 North Indian Ocean cyclone season. The others are Cyclone Gati, Cyclone Nisarga, Cyclone Nivar and Cyclone Amphan.
- Cyclone Burevi is the third Cyclone to hit Tamil Nadu in two years after Cyclone Gaja in 2018 and Cyclone Nivar recently.

‘Blue tide’ spotted at Juhu beach

- **The blue tide phenomenon was observed in several stretches of Maharashtra coast- such as Juhu Beach.** According to Coastal Conservation Foundation director Shaunak Modi, the ‘blue tide’ was spotted at Juhu Koliwada.
- The ‘blue tide’ producing a fluorescent blue hue is a beautiful sight to behold. This phenomenon is called bioluminescence.



- **Note:** Bioluminescence has been observed across the coastline of many beaches in the world such as Indonesia, the USA, the Maldives, Vietnam, Australia and many other countries.
- This is a recurring phenomenon which is caused by bioluminescent plankton called Noctiluca scintillans, commonly known as sea sparkle. While smaller blooms may be harmless, slow-moving larger blooms may cause severe hypoxic conditions that result in fish die-offs in an area.
- **Bioluminescence** is the production and emission of light by a living organism. According to the National Ocean Service, bioluminescence in the ocean is not as rare as you might think. "In fact, most types of animals, from bacteria to sharks, include some bioluminescent members."

Banned catfish Thai Mangur

- A shocking incident came to light in Maharashtra, where almost thousands of tons of banned catfish, Thai Mangur are illegally being bred in over 125 artificial ponds in rural Thane.
- Thai Mangur has been banned by the National Green Tribunal in 2000 as they destroyed the local ecosystem and were considered harmful for human consumption too.
- **About Thai Mangur:** Ranging from Rs 100-150 per kg, Thai Mangur is easy and cheap to rear. The carnivorous species was introduced to India in the 1990s and it is originally from Africa and the Middle East.
- Artificial tanks are constructed in large farmlands by the local cultivators. It aggressively devours all organisms in any natural pond, thereby damaging the local ecosystem and biodiversity.
- The banned catfish species is a low-maintenance investment for cultivators as it can feed on anything and can even survive in hostile conditions, even staying alive outside water for a long time.

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change launched the "India Climate Change Knowledge Portal"

- Portal will be a "single point Information resource" which provides information on the different climate initiatives taken by various Line Ministries enabling users to access updated status on these initiatives.
- The portal captures sector-wise adaptation and mitigation actions that are being taken by the various line Ministries in one place including updated information on their implementation. The knowledge portal will help in disseminating knowledge among citizens about all the major steps the Government is taking at both national and international levels to address climate change issues.
- **The eight major components included in the knowledge portal are:**
 - India's Climate Profile, National Policy Framework, India's NDC goals, Adaptation Actions, Mitigation Actions, Bilateral and Multilateral Cooperation, International Climate Negotiations, Reports & Publications.
 - Web Portal link: <https://www.cckpindia.nic.in/>

India to launch Deep Ocean Mission in 3-4 Months

- Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) will soon launch an ambitious "Deep Ocean Mission" that envisages the exploration of minerals, energy, and marine diversity of the underwater world, a vast part of which still remains unexplored.
- The mission, which is expected to cost over ₹ 4,000 crores, will give a boost to efforts to explore India's vast Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf.



- The multi-disciplinary work will be piloted by the MoES and other government departments like the Defence Research and Development Organisation, Department of Biotechnology, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) will be stakeholders in this mission.
- **Note:** In September 2016, India signed a 15-year contract with the International Seabed Authority (ISA) for the exploration of Poly-Metallic Sulphides (PMS) in the Indian Ocean. The ISA is an institution set up under the Convention on Law of the Sea to which India is a Party.

Cyclone Nivar

- Very Severe Cyclonic Storm Nivar was a tropical cyclone that brought severe impacts to portions of Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh in late November of 2020. An area of low pressure was formed in the Bay of Bengal, off the coast of Tamil Nadu.
- The seventh depression and fourth named storm of the 2020 North Indian Ocean cyclone season, Nivar originated from a disturbance in the Intertropical Convergence Zone. The disturbance gradually organized and both the Joint Typhoon Warning Center (JTWC) and the India Meteorological Department (IMD) reported that a tropical depression has formed. Nivar made landfall near Tamil Nadu's Marakkanam and in Karaikal, Puducherry also.

Summits and Conferences

Prime Minister, Narendra Modi to attend G7 summit in 2021

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has accepted British Prime Minister Boris Johnson's invitation to attend the G7 Summit in 2021, which will be hosted by the United Kingdom.
- **Note:** British PM will be Chief Guest of India's 72nd Republic Day celebrations in New Delhi in January 2021.
- Johnson will be just the second British leader ever to attend India's Republic Day parade in New Delhi as a guest of honour, after John Major in 1993.

First Trilateral Working Group Meeting between India, Iran and Uzbekistan on joint use of Chabahar Port

- The Ministry of External Affairs said, this will open up economic opportunities for the traders and business community of the region.
- **Note:** All the countries welcomed India's proposal to hold a "Chabahar Day" on the margins of the International Maritime Summit to be hosted by New Delhi in January next year.
- **Chabahar Port** is a seaport in Chabahar located in southeastern Iran, on the Gulf of Oman.
- The port is being developed by India, Iran and Afghanistan to boost trade ties among the three countries.

PM Narendra Modi addresses Climate Ambition Summit 2020

- The summit was co-hosted by the United Nations, the United Kingdom and France in partnership with Chile and Italy to mark the fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Paris Agreement on December 12, 2020.
- The prime minister added that India has reduced its emission intensity by 21 percent over 2005 levels. Our solar capacity has grown from 2.63 GigaWatts in 2014 to 36 GigaWatts in 2020. Our renewable energy capacity is the fourth largest in the world.
- **Note:** The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) recently released the **Emissions Gap Report, 2020**.
- The report finds that, despite a brief dip in carbon dioxide emissions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the world is still heading for a temperature rise in excess of 3°C this century – far beyond the Paris Agreement goals of limiting global warming.



'Swadhinata Sarak' between Bangladesh and India to be opened on March 26, 2021

- Swadhinata Sarak remains functional on the Indian side while it will be connected through Mujibnagar, Meherpur district in Bangladesh.
- **Note:** During the summit meeting between the Prime Ministers of India and Bangladesh on December 17, Chilahati-Haldibrari rail link which was active till 1965 will be inaugurated.

2nd The Cancer Genome Atlas (TCGA) 2020 Conference

- Dr Harsh Vardhan, the Minister of Science and Technology and Vice President of Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), virtually inaugurated the 2nd TCGA 2020 conference on 04 December.
- The Conference brings together scientists and clinicians from across the globe to build Indian Cancer Genome Atlas (ICGA) which has been initiated by a consortium of key stakeholders in India led by CSIR, Government of India.
- **Note:** TCGA is a landmark cancer genomics program that molecularly characterized over 20,000 primary cancers and matched normal samples spanning 33 cancer types. This joint effort between the US- National Cancer Institute and the National Human Genome Research Institute began in 2006, bringing together researchers from diverse disciplines and multiple institutions.

Ranking and Index

UNESCO launches State of the Education Report for India 2020

- The State of the Education Report for India 2020: Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), was recently launched by UNESCO New Delhi.
- **Note:** India is at an exciting stage today, having made considerable progress towards its goal of creating a skilled workforce of 110 million people by 2022, as stated in the National Policy of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (NPSDE), released in 2015.
- It is presently training 10 million youth annually through the many schemes that are ongoing.

India ranks 111 in Human Freedom Index (HFI) 2020

- India was placed at the 111th spot out of 162 countries.
- New Zealand, Switzerland and Hong Kong bagged the first three spots.
- **Note:** The Human Freedom Index 2020, a worldwide ranking of civil, economic and personal freedom, published by American think tank Cato Institute and Fraser Institute in Canada.
- India ranked 94 on the index in 2019.

Urban Quality of Life Index 2020

- IIT-Bombay, recently released Urban Quality of Life Index, wherein the institution compared the life quality in various cities all over India on the basis of some common denominations.
- **Some important ranks are:** Mumbai provides the highest quality of life in the country, closely followed by Delhi, Chennai and Kolkata. Bihar's capital city Patna, on the other hand has been ranked at the lowest position.
- For the gender parity index, Chennai got the top rank and has shown the least gender discrimination and differences and Patna remains the worst performing city.

1. India got 131st place in Human Development Index (HDI) 2020

- India dropped two spots to 131 among 189 countries in the 2020 human development index, according to a report released by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).
- Norway topped the index, followed by Ireland and Switzerland.
- The life expectancy of Indians at birth in 2019 was 69.7 years.



- **Note:** India had ranked 129th in the index of 2019.
- Human Development Index is the measure of a nation's health, education, and standards of living.

Kotak Wealth Hurun India list: Wealthiest women in 2020

India's top 3 wealthiest women 2020:

1. Roshni Nadar Malhotra (HCL Technologies)
2. Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw (Biocon)
3. Leena Gandhi Tewari (USV)

Note: Kotak Wealth Management, a division of Kotak Mahindra Bank (Kotak) and Hurun India has announced its 2020 list of India's 100 richest women.

Reliance Industries tops Fortune India-500 list second year in a row

Top 3 companies on the 2020 Fortune India-500 list:

1. Reliance Industries
2. Indian Oil Corporation
3. Oil and Natural Gas Corporation

Note: Fortune India-500 list was published by Fortune India, which is part of the Kolkata-based RP Sanjiv Goenka Group.

Global Terrorism Index 2020

- 1st rank- Afghanistan
- 2nd rank- Iraq
- 3rd rank- Nigeria
- **8th rank- India**
- **Note:** The Global Terrorism Index (GTI) is a report published annually by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP).
- The GTI is based on data from the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) which is collected by the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) at the University of Maryland. It covers 163 countries.

India's Amul is now world's 8th largest milk processor

- Amul, a brand of dairy cooperative major Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation Ltd (GCMMF), is ranked 8th in the list of top 20 global dairy processors report 2020 released by the International Farm Comparison Network (IFCN).
- **Note:** US's 'Dairy Farmers of America' topped the global list of dairy processors.

Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI) 2021

- None achieved 1-3 rank
- 4th rank- Sweden
- 5th rank- UK
- **10th rank- India**
- While China is ranked 33rd, US 61st and Russia 52nd.



- **Note:** CCPI is prepared after assessing the performances of 57 countries and the European Union. These 57 countries and the European Union collectively are responsible for about 90 percent of the global GHG emissions.
- **The Climate Change Performance Index** is developed by not-for-profit organisations Germanwatch and NewClimate Institute (Germany) together with the Climate Action Network (CAN International).

Important Days

December 25, Good Governance Day

- This Day is observed in India annually on 25 December, the birth anniversary of former-Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. It was established in 2014.
- **Note:** On the occasion of the 96th birth anniversary of Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Mr. Modi released a book titled '**Atal Bihari Vajpayee in Parliament: A Commemorative Volume**', highlighting the life and works of the former Prime Minister.
- On the occasion, Hardeep Singh Puri, Housing and Urban Affairs Minister launched **E-Sampada**, a new web portal and mobile app.

World celebrates 1st International Day of Epidemic Preparedness on 27 December

- The first International Day of Epidemic Preparedness was celebrated by United Nations on **December 27, 2020**.
- The International Day of Epidemic Preparedness aims to promote international awareness and action on the prevention of, preparedness for and partnership against epidemics.

December 24, National Consumer Day

- On this day the **Consumer Protection Act, 1986** had received the assent of the president. The enactment of this Act is considered as a historic milestone in the consumer movement in the country.
- **Note:** On July 20th, 2020, the new **Consumer Protection Act, 2019** came into force in India, replacing the previous enactment of 1986.
- **World Consumer Rights Day** is celebrated on March 15 every year.

December 23, Kisan Diwas 2020

- Kisan Diwas or National Farmers' Day is observed on December 23, the birth anniversary of Chaudhary Charan Singh, the fifth prime minister of India.
- The government, in 2001, decided to mark Charan Singh's birth anniversary as Kisan Diwas.
- For his association with the farming community, his memorial in New Delhi was named the Kisan Ghat.

December 20, International Human Solidarity Day

- It is an international annual unity day of the United Nations and its member states introduced by the general assembly during the 2005 World Summit. It was established on December 22, 2005.
- It is a part of the World Solidarity Fund and United Nations Development Programme focused on achieving goals set for worldwide poverty eradication.
- **Note:** The General Assembly, on 20 December 2002, established the World Solidarity Fund, which was set up in February 2003 as a trust fund of the United Nations Development Programme.

December 14, National Energy conservation day

- Energy conservation day is celebrated on December 14 every year since 1991 to focus on making people aware of global warming and climate change and promotes efforts towards saving energy resources.



- **Note:** In India Energy Conservation Act was implemented by the Energy Efficiency Bureau (BEE) under the Ministry of Power in 2001. BEE is a constitutional body which works under the Government of India and helps in the development of policies and strategies to reduce the use of energy.

December 16, Vijay Diwas

- Vijay Diwas is commemorated every 16th December in India, to remember Indian military's victory over Pakistan in Indo-Pakistani War of 1971 for the liberation of Bangladesh from Pakistan.
- **Note:** Same day is commemorated in Bangladesh as Bijoy Dibos.

December 18, International Migrants Day

- The International Migrants Day 2020 theme is Reimagining Human Mobility.
- According to the United Nations, an estimated number of migrants globally reached 272 million in 2019.
- **Note:** On 18 December 1990, the General Assembly adopted a resolution on the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

December 7, Armed Forces Flag Day

- The Armed Forces Flag Day or the Flag Day is a day dedicated towards collection of funds from people of India for the welfare of the Indian Armed Forces personnel. It has been observed annually in India on December 7 since 1949.
- **Note:** Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said the Centre, states and union territories will celebrate the current month of December as "Gaurav Maah" (pride month) to honour the contributions of the armed forces and their veterans to the nation.

December 9, International Anti-Corruption Day 2020

- The theme of this year is 'United Against Corruption'.
- As per UN statistics, every year USD 1 trillion is being paid as bribes while USD 2.6 trillion are stolen due to corruption measures. As per the United Nations Development Programme, it is estimated that there are 10 times the funds lost due to corruption in the developing countries.
- **Note:** The United Nations General Assembly adopted the United Nations Convention against Corruption on October 31, 2003. The General Assembly also designated December 9 as World Anti-Corruption Day to raise awareness about corruption and of the role of the Convention in battling and preventing it. The Convention came into force in December 2005.

December 10, Human Rights Day

- The theme of Human Rights Day 2020 is 'Recover Better - Stand Up for Human Rights'.
- **Note:** Human Rights Day is observed every year on 10 December — the day the United Nations General Assembly adopted, in 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).

December 11, UNICEF Day 2020

- UNICEF works in 190 countries and territories aiming to save children's lives, to defend their rights, and to help them fulfill their potential, from early childhood through adolescence.



- **Note:** The United Nations General Assembly created UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) on December 11, 1946, as the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund.
- The organisation was originally named United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund. However, in 1953, it became a permanent agency of the UN, and the words 'International' and 'Emergency' were dropped from the official name but the acronym (UNICEF) continued.

December 4, Indian Navy Day

- Indian Navy Day is celebrated every year on December 4 to commemorate the attack on the Karachi harbour during the India-Pakistan war in 1971. On this day, the Indian Navy's attack on Karachi harbour contributed to the ultimate victory of the Indian Armed Forces over Pakistan.
- The theme of Navy Day 2020 is "Indian Navy Combat Ready, Credible & Cohesive".
- **Note:** Presently, Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS) is Admiral Karambir Singh.
- The Navy plans to celebrate 2021 as 'Swarnim Vijay Varsh' as part of commemorating the 50th anniversary of the victory in the 1971 war.

December 3, International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) 2020

- The theme is "Building back better: towards an inclusive, accessible and sustainable post-COVID-19 world by, for and with persons with disabilities".
- **Note:** WHO estimates that more than one billion people - about 15% of the world's population - experience some form of disability.
- The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol was adopted on 13 December 2006 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.
- International Day of Persons with Disabilities is an international observance promoted by the United Nations since 1992.

December 1, World AIDS Day

- World AIDS Day brings together people from around the world to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS.
- The theme for 2020 is "*Ending the HIV/AIDS Epidemic: Resilience and Impact*".
- World AIDS Day was first observed in 1988.
- **Note:** **AIDS:** Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome and **HIV:** Human immunodeficiency virus
- **National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO) in India:** The National AIDS Control Organisation, established in 1992 is a division of India's Ministry of Health and Family Welfare that provides leadership to HIV/AIDS control programme in India.

Books and Authors

Vice President Venkaiah Naidu releases the book 'Oh Mizoram'

- Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu released a book of English poems by Mizoram Governor P.S. Sreedharan Pillai, titled. Pillai's poems highlight Mizoram's pristine natural beauty.
- He has written 125 books in Malayalam and English on a variety of topics including politics, social and legal issues and poetry.

"In Pursuit of Justice: An Autobiography" by Late Justice Rajindar Sachar

- Sachar's Autobiography was launched posthumously by his family in association with The Indian Society of International Law and The Indian Law Institute.



- **Note:** Late Rajindar Sachar, most remembered for the Sachar Committee report of 2006 which documented the social and economic condition of Muslims in India.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla released book titled 'The Shaurya Unbound' on the 19th anniversary of the Parliament attack

- The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) has launched this book commemorating the valor of its brave soldiers, including Constable Kamlesh Kumari, who was martyred in the 2001 Parliament attack.

Neetu, DIG CRPF, and BM Dinakaran, DIG CRPF are the authors of this book.

Vice President Shri M Venkaiah Naidu releases a book named '40 years with Abdul Kalam-Untold Stories'

- Book is based on the life of the Former President of India Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam.
- Dr Sivathanu Pillai is the author of this book. He received Padma Shri and Padma Bhushan awards.

Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank presented the first copy of his book "Pioneer of Humanity: Maharshi Arvind" to President Ram Nath Kovind

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

Obituaries

Renowned Malayalam poet Sugathakumari passes away

- Sugathakumari, the Malayalam poet who had also been a committed environmentalist and women's rights activist.
- She was awarded India's fourth-highest civilian award, Padma Shri, in 2006.

Eminent dance scholar and critic Sunil Kothari passes away

- He was a member of the International Dance Council of UNESCO and a recipient of the Emeritus Fellowship of the Department of Culture, Government of India.
- He was awarded the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in 1995 and the Padma Shri in 2001.

Broadcaster Indira Joseph Venniyoor passes away

- Indira Joseph Venniyoor, Renowned broadcaster, All India Radio veteran, and the first English news announcer of Travancore Radio, passed away.
- In 1949, Travancore Radio started its first English news service.

Congress veteran Motilal Vora passes away at the age of 93

- Motilal Vora was an Indian politician belonging to the Indian National Congress.
- He served as Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh. He was also Governor of Uttar Pradesh.

Karnataka's renowned Sanskrit scholar and Kannada poet Bannanje Govindacharya passes away



- Conferred with the Padma Shri in 2009, Govindacharya was widely known for his translation of and commentaries on the complete texts of Sri Madhvacharya, a philosopher and theologian of the 13th century.
- Apart from translating several literary works from Sanskrit to Kannada, Bannanje Govindacharya penned nearly 150 books. His works are popular among Tuluvas and Kannadigas across the world.

Aerospace scientist Roddam Narasimha passes away

- Eminent aerospace scientist and Padma Vibhushan awardee Roddam Narasimha who served at the prestigious Indian Institute of Science (IISc) died at 87.

Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu releases commemorative postage stamp in honour of late Prime Minister, Indra Kumar Gujral

- **Note:** Indra Kumar Gujral was an Indian politician and freedom activist who served as the 12th Prime Minister of India from April 1997 to March 1998.

Dineshwar Sharma, Administrator of Lakshadweep passes away

- **Note:** Sharma, a former director of the Intelligence Bureau, was appointed as the Administrator of Lakshadweep in October 2019. Prior to this, he was an interlocutor for Jammu and Kashmir.

Noted Hindi poet and journalist Manglesh Dabral passes away at 72

- Dabral was awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award in 2000 for his poetry collection 'Ham Jo Dekhte Hain'.
- He worked with several newspapers, including Jansatta and Pratipaksha.

MDH owner 'Mahashay' Dharampal Gulati passes away

- Dharampal Gulati, the owner of the iconic spice brand MDH (Mahashian Di Hatti), passed away at 98.
- He received the Padma Bhushan award from President Ram Nath Kovind in 2019.

C. Kohli passes away

- Faqir Chand Kohli, (F.C. Kohli), known as the father of the Indian Software Industry, passed away. He was 96.
- Kohli was the founder-CEO of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS). He joined Tata Electric Co. in 1951 where he helped set up the load dispatching system to manage system operations. He became director of Tata Electric in 1970. As the first CEO of TCS, he pioneered India's IT revolution and helped the country build the \$190-billion IT industry.
- He was a recipient of Padma Bhushan from the Government of India.

Sports

The Sports Ministry approves inclusion of four indigenous sports in Khelo India Youth Games 2021

- The games include Gatka, Kalaripayattu, Thang-Ta and Mallakhamba.
- **Kalaripayattu** has its origin from Kerala and has practitioners all over the world.



- **Mallakhamba** has been well-known across India and Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra have been the hotspots of this sport.
- **Gatka** originates from Punjab and this traditional fighting style of the Nihang Sikh Warriors is used both as self-defense as well as a sport.
- **Thang-Ta** is Manipur's martial art.

Cologne Boxing World Cup 2020

- Indian boxers bagged nine medals including three gold, two silver and four bronze at the Cologne Boxing World Cup in Germany.
- Amit Panghal won gold in men's category while Manisha Moun and Simranjit Kaur won gold in Women's category.

Note: India finished 2nd in the overall medal list and Germany topped the list with 16 medals.

Formal recognition of Yogasana as a competitive sport

- The Ministry of AYUSH and Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports announced the formal recognition of Yogasana as a competitive sport.
- Yogasana is an integral and important component of Yoga, which is psycho-physical in nature and popular across the globe for its efficacy in fitness and general wellness.
- **Note:** The sports discipline of Yogasana is likely to have 51 medals in 4 events & 7 categories.

AIFF announces candidature to host AFC Asian Cup 2027

- The All India Football Federation (AIFF) has formally announced its candidature to host the AFC Asian Cup 2027 and deliver a brighter future together for football in India and across Asia.
- **Note:** In addition to the FIFA U-17 World Cup in 2017, India is also due to host the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup and the AFC Women's Asian Cup in 2022.

Yash Vardhan wins Gold in Air Rifle at 6th IOSC

- 17-year-old Junior Asian champion, Yash Vardhan of India won the 10m air rifle event at the 6th edition of the International Online Shooting Championship (IOSC).
- **Note:** The IOSC organised by former Indian shooter Shimon Sharif saw participation of shooters from around 20 different countries.

Doha to host 2030 Asian Games, Riyadh in 2034

- The Olympic Council of Asia announced that Doha, Qatar will host the 2030 Asian Games while Riyadh, Saudi Arabia will host the 2034 edition.
- **Note:** Qatar will also host the 2022 FIFA World Cup.
- China will host the 2022 Asian Games.

Government to start 1000 Khelo India small centres to encourage sports culture in country

- Addressing the 10th Global Sports Summit, TURF 2020, The Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports Kiren Rijiju, announced that the government will be starting 1000 Khelo India centres all over the country to help retired sportspersons get employment and to encourage the sports culture in the country.
- **Note:** FICCI in association with Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (MYAS), Government of India, organized International Conference on Business of Sports & Fitness 10th TURF 2020, the virtual edition on 8-9 December.



Breakdancing gets Olympic status to debut at Paris in 2024

- **Note:** Three sports (skateboarding, sport climbing and surfing) will make their Olympic debuts at the Tokyo Games which were postponed because of the coronavirus pandemic by one year to open on July 23, 2021.

F1 Abu Dhabi Grand Prix 2020

- **Max Verstappen (Red Bull)** won the F1 Abu Dhabi Grand Prix 2020.
- **Valtteri Bottas (Mercedes)** got second position and **Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes)** got third position.

Ankita Raina wins ITF doubles title in Dubai

- Indian tennis player Ankita Raina won her third doubles title, clinching the Al Habtoor challenge with Ekaterine Gorgodze.
- The unseeded Indo-Georgian pair won against Aliona Bolsova Zadoinov from Spain and Slovakian Kaja Juvan in the final event.

Kuldeep Handoo appointed as 'Fit India Movement' Ambassador

First Dronacharya Awardee from Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir in 2020, Wushu Coach of Team India, Kuldeep Handoo has been appointed as the Ambassador of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Fit India Movement'.

Sakhir Grand Prix 2020

- Jehan Daruvala creates history, becomes first Indian to win a Formula 2 race
- Yuki Tsunoda got second position and Daniel Ticktum got third position.

Parthiv Patel announces retirement from all forms of Cricket

- Wicketkeeper-batsman Patel, made his international debut in 2002 at the age of 17 in an away Test series against England
- He last wore Indian jersey in 2018 during a Test match against South Africa in Johannesburg.

Mondo Duplantis and Yulimar Rojas win '2020 World Athlete of the Year'

- Swedish pole vaulter Mondo Duplantis and Venezuelan triple jumper Yulimar Rojas are the 2020 Male and Female World Athletes of the Year.
- They are their countries' first recipients of the prestigious athletics award announced during the virtual World Athletics Awards.

Delhi Half Marathon 2020 (16th edition)

- **Men's winner:** Amedework Walelegn (Ethiopia)
- **Women's winner:** Yalemzerf Yehualaw (Ethiopia)
- India's Avinash Sable, who qualified for the Tokyo Olympics in 3000m steeplechase, emerged winner among Indian elite runners.
- **Note:** Airtel Delhi Half Marathon (ADHM) is an annual half marathon foot-race held in New Delhi, India. Established in 2005, it is both an elite runner and mass participation event.

Madhu Sharma was appointed as Joint Secretary of Amateur Baseball Federation of India.



- Treasurer of Baseball Association of Bihar Ms. Madhu Sharma appointed as Joint Secretary of Amateur Baseball Federation of India.

F1 Gulf Air Bahrain Grand Prix 2020

- British **Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes)** won the Formula 1 Gulf Air Bahrain Grand Prix 2020 held at Bahrain International Circuit.
- **Max Verstappen (Red Bull Racing)** got second position and **Alexander Albon** (Red Bull Racing) got third position.

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