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People don’t need to be saved or rescued. People need knowledge of their own power and how to access it.
INTERNATIONAL

Masatsugu Asakawa elected 10th President of ADB
• The Board of Governors of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has unanimously elected Masatsugu Asakawa as its new President.
• The 61-year-old Mr. Asakawa will assume office as ADB’s 10th President on 17 January 2020.
• ADB headquarter – Metro Manila, Philippines.

Saudi Arabia assumes G20 presidency
• Saudi Arabia assumed the G20 presidency on December 01, 2019 and will hold the G20 leaders’ summit in Riyadh on November 21 and 22, 2020. The G20 summit in 2019 was hosted by Japan.
• The theme of the event will be “Realising Opportunities of the 21st Century for All”.
• Saudi Arabia will focus on three aims – empowering people, safeguarding the planet, and shaping new frontiers.

UN Climate Change Conference - December 2019
• The 2019 United Nations Climate Change Conference, also known as COP25 officially began in Madrid, Spain on 2 December 2019. It will continue till December 13.
• The conference was earlier planned to take place Chile, but due to social unrest in the country, the location changed to Spain. However Chile will remain the overall in charge of the event.
• The conference will include the following events:
  • 25th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC),
  • 15th meeting of the parties for the Kyoto Protocol (CMP15), and
  • 2nd meeting of the parties for the Paris Agreement (CMA2)
• The main objective of the conference is to bring the world together to deal with several issues pertaining to the full operationalization of the 2015 Paris Climate Change Agreement.
• Ms. Carolina Schmidt, Minister of the Environment in Chile, is the President of COP 25.

Indo-Nepal joint military Exercise SURYA KIRAN 2019 Commences in Rupendehi
• The annual joint military exercise ‘SURYA KIRAN – XIV’ between India and Nepal began at Salijhandi, Rupendehi district of Nepal on 03 December 2019.
• The exercise will continue till December 16, 2019.

Joaquin Phoenix Named PETA’s 2019 Person of the Year
• ‘Joker’ star Joaquin Phoenix has been named 2019 Person of the Year by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA).
• Phoenix is vegan since the age of three and has been a longtime supporter of the animal rights organisation.
• He recently appeared in PETA’s “We Are All Animals” billboards in Times Square and on Sunset Billboard as he promoted legislation to ban travelling wild-animal circuses.
• Past recipients of the award have been Oprah Winfrey, Anjelica Huston and Pope Francis.
Former England captain Bob Willis dies aged 70
• Former England captain Bob Willis has died at the age of 70 after battle with cancer.
• The former fast bowler played in 90 Tests and 64 ODIs for England after his 1971 debut and retired in 1984.
• Finishing his Test career with 325 wickets, Willis stands at fourth on the all-time list of England wicket-takers.

India Ranks 73 in UNCTAD B2C E-Commerce Index 2019; Netherlands Tops
• The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has released Business-to-Consumer (B2C) E-commerce Index 2019, that measures an economy’s preparedness to support online shopping.
• India has moved seven places up in the list to be ranked 73rd out of 152 countries.
• The list has been topped by the Netherlands for the second consecutive year.

India ranks 129th in 2019 human development index; Top- Norway
• India has been ranked at 129th spot in the 2019 Human Development Index released by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Last year India was ranked 130th.
• As per the 2019 Human Development Report (HDR), the 2019 Human Development Index has been topped by Norway. Switzerland is on second while Ireland is on the third.
• South Asia was the fastest-growing region witnessing 46 Percent growth during 1990-2018.

India Among Top 10 in 2019 Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI): Report
• The 2019 Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI) was presented at the ongoing COP25 climate summit in Madrid, Spain on December 10, 2019.
• India has for the first time emerged among the top 10 countries with higher climate performance.
• It has been ranked at 9th spot in the index for its Climate Policy performance among 57 countries and European Union.
• However, the first three places of the ranking remain unoccupied, since none of the countries is on a path compatible with the Paris climate targets, to implement strategies to limit global warming below 2 or even 1.5°C.
• Sweden (4th) and Denmark (5th) were the top rankers in the index.
• The ranking takes into consideration various criteria’s such as
• country’s energy use,
• its per capita emissions,
• its emission reduction targets for 2030,
• its national and international climate policy,
• renewable energy deployment and
• past trends of emissions.

Alberto Fernandez sworn in as president of Argentina
• Argentina’s Peronist leader Alberto Fernandez was sworn in as president, marking a shift to the left for Latin America’s third-largest economy, which is suffering rampant inflation, credit default fears and rising poverty.
• Fernandez takes over from conservative Mauricio Macri, who symbolically handed the incoming leader the presidential baton and sash.
India among top 10 countries with higher climate performance: Report
• India, for the first time, ranks among the top 10 in this year’s Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI) released at the COP25 climate summit in Spanish capital Madrid.
• The index is jointly presented by Germanwatch, NewClimate Institute and Climate Action Network.
• The current levels of per capita emissions and energy use in India ranked 9th in the high category showing that emissions are still comparatively low,

Kepler partners SpaceX for launch of own satellite constellation
• Canada-based small satellite startup Kepler Communications has teamed up with SpaceX to launch its own nanosatellite constellation for high-speed data transfers and low-power IoT connectivity.
• SpaceX will carry two separate batches of nanosatellites from Kepler aboard its Falcon 9 launch vehicles.
• Notably, SpaceX has requested approval to send 42,000 satellites for its own Starlink constellation.

Former PM of Algeria, Abdelmadjid Tebboune, Elected New President
• Algeria’s former Prime Minister Abdelmadjid Tebboune has been elected as the country’s new President.

FIH Unveils New World Ranking System to be Effective from January 2020
• The International Hockey Federation (FIH) has unveiled a new world ranking system to be followed from 2020.
• The new system will come into effect from 1 January 2020.
• It will be a match-based instead of tournament-based calculation to have better reflection of current performances.

Walmart to train 50,000 MSME entrepreneurs
• US retail major Walmart will train 50,000 entrepreneurs from the micro, small & medium enterprises (MSME) sector. The objective will be fulfilled by opening 25 institute hubs in India in next five years which would train the MSME entrepreneurs.
• The institutes will be opened under the ‘WalmartVriddhi Supplier Development Programe‘ across the nation.
• These institutes would be strategically located near the manufacturing clusters and will be the part of Walmart’s “long-term commitment to India”
• For the development of these institutes, Walmart has partnered with a local NGO Swasti which would also have academic support from the local universities.

BEE organized International workshop on Energy Efficient Cooling
• The Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), a statuary body under Union Ministry of Power, conducted an International Workshop on 12-13 December 2019 on ‘Energy Efficient Cooling’ at Scope Convention Centre in New Delhi. The two-day international workshop was organised as part of ‘Energy Conservation Week’ being celebrated from 9-14 December 2019.

Google Earth covers 98 percent of entire population
• Search engine giant Google has revealed that its powerful mapping service, Google Earth now covers more than 98 per cent of the world, and has captured 10 million miles of Street View imagery, a distance that could circle the globe more than 400 times.
• Google Earth, the software that lets you browse the globe with 3D representation, right from the comfort of your couch, offers 6 million square miles of high definition satellite images, covering more than 98 per cent of the entire population.

‘Nuad Thai massage included in UNESCO heritage list
The traditional “Nuad” Thai massage from Thailand has been recognized by UNESCO as part of its Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.
• This massage was originated in India but is practiced in Thailand for centuries. It was popularized when a specialty school was opened in the 1960s to train massage therapists from around the world.
• Nuad Thai Massage is one among over 20 elements that have been chosen for inclusion in the 2019 list.
• The UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage list includes 13 items from India till date.
• The most recent addition was made in 2017 when KumbhMela was added to the list.
• The first three entries in the list were made in 2008, when Vedic chanting, Ramlila and Sanskrit theatre Kutiyattam were added.

World’s First Liquid Hydrogen Carrier Ship ‘Suiso Frontier’ launched in Japan
• Japan’s Kawasaki Heavy Industries has launched the first of its kind, world’s first marine carrier that transports liquefied hydrogen, in a bid to establish green energy supply chain.
• The 116 meters long ship, named as Suiso Frontier, will carry up to 1,250 cubic meters of compressed, supercooled liquid hydrogen between the south coast of Australia and an unloading terminal under construction in Kobe, Japan.

Apple, Amazon & Google partner to make smart home devices more compatible
• Apple Inc., Alphabet Inc.’s Google and Amazon.com Inc. are all set to form an alliance to make smart-home devices more secure, reliable, and seamless to use.
• These three biggest providers of smart-home and voice-assistant technology are teaming up for the project, titled “Connected Home over IP”.
• They will work with the Zigbee Alliance (a foundation that promotes standards for the “internet of things), and its members including Samsung Electronics Co., Somfy SA and IKEA, on a new standard that will ensure their products work with one another.

Portuguese PM, Antonio Costa, on two-day visit to India
• Prime Minister of Portugal, Antonio Costa is on a two-day visit to India from December 19-20, 2019.
• This is Mr Costa’s first bilateral visit outside Europe after being re-elected as Prime Minister on 6 October, 2019.
• Portugal Capital: Lisbon; Currency: Euro

Donald Trump becomes third US president in history to be impeached
• Donald Trump has become the third US President in history to be impeached by the House of Representatives, bringing him a step closer to being removed from office.
• The House voted the President on two charges: one that he abused his power and other that he had obstructed Congress.

Manuel Marrero Cruz appointed as The First Prime Minister of Cuba Since 1976
• Manuel Marrero Cruz has been appointed as the Prime Minister of Cuba. The announcement was made by President of Cuba Miguel Diaz-Canel.
• The post of Prime Minister in Cuba was vacant since December 1976 with Fidel Castro as the last PM.
• Manuel Marrero Cruz has served as the tourism minister of Cuba for 16 years.
• President of Cuba: Miguel Diaz-Canel;
• Capital of Cuba: Havana.
• Currency of Cuba: Cuban peso.

Eco: A renamed common currency Eight West African nations
• Eight West African countries have agreed to change the name of their common currency to Eco and severed their earlier currency CFA Franc's links to former colonial ruler France.
• Benin, Burkina Faso, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo currently use the currency
• The CFA Franc was initially pegged to the French franc and has been linked to the euro for about two decades.
• All the countries are former French colonies with the exception of Guinea-Bissau.
• The CFA franc, created in 1945, was seen by many as a sign of French interference in its former African colonies even after the countries became independent.

US “space force” officially launched by Donald Trump
• Donald Trump has launched space force, the first new US military service in more than 70 years.
• Trump signed the 2020 National Defense Authorization Act that includes the space force. It is part of a $1.4tn (£1.1tn) government spending package – including the Pentagon's budget – that provides a steady stream of financing for Trump’s US-Mexico border fence and reverses unpopular and unworkable automatic spending cuts to defence and domestic programmes.
• It is not intended to put troops into orbit, but will protect US assets – such as the hundreds of satellites used for communication and surveillance.
• Space Force will build on the work of the existing US Space Command (SpaceCom), which was created in August to handle the US military’s space operations.

India constructs Girls’ Hostel for Nepal Armed Police Force
• On December 22, 2019, The Government of India (GoI) has granted Rs 2.2 crore (40.42 million Nepali Rupees) for construction of Girls’ Hostel for Nepal Armed Police Force (APF) School in Kirtipur, Kathmandu.
• The construction project was implemented by Nepal APF.
• The inaugural ceremony was attended by Dr Ajay Kumar, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of India, Ramsharan Paudel, Assistant Inspector General, Armed Police Force, Nepal, and others.
• About Nepal:
Nepal Prime Minister: K P Sharma Oli;
Capital: Kathmandu.
President of Nepal: Bidhya Devi Bhandari;
Currency of Nepal: Nepalese rupee.

**Govt approved projects worth Rs 7000 cr under Nirbhaya fund**
- On December 20, 2019, the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoW&CD) has announced the approval of projects worth Rs 7,000 crore including setting up of 1023 fast-track courts under Nirbhaya fund.
- These courts were decided to be set up in order to provide speedy trials of over 1.66 lakh pending cases of crime against women and children in India.

**About Nirbhaya Fund:**
- The Nirbhaya fund was set up in 2013 with Rs.1000 crores corpus by the Congress party-led govt. as a tribute to a 23-year-old Delhi gang-rape victim. Nirbhaya (fearless) was the pseudonym given to the victim to hide the original identity.
- To support initiatives by the government and NGOs (Non-Government Organizations) working towards protecting the dignity and ensuring the safety of women in India.
- The MoW&CD under Nirbhaya fund, has also funded women help desks across all police stations in the country. Anti-trafficking units to protect women and children have also been funded.

**WHO global report on trends in prevalence of tobacco smoking 2000-2025.**
- As per the report despite decline in tobacco usage, India is off-track to achieve a 30% reduction in tobacco use by 2025 when compared to its 2010 levels.
- 163 nations besides India are also not on track in this regard.
- The consumption in India is going down by 21.6% points. In male, the consumption will go down to 35.8% from 57.3% by 2025. The consumption in female for the same period will decline to 8% from 29.8%.
- Based on current progress by India, a reduction in the tobacco usage by 23% by 2025 is expected in the country.

**New Delhi hosts 49th Border Coordination Conference between BSF & BGB**
- 9th Border Coordination Conference between border guarding forces of India and Bangladesh was held in New Delhi.
- The Indian delegation was headed by DG Border Security Force Vivek Kumar Johri and the Bangladesh delegation was headed by DG of Border Guards Bangladesh (BGB) Md Shafeenul Islam.
- The conference focused on co-operation in Border Guarding and Border Management between the two forces.
- During the conference, both forces agreed to make all possible efforts to curb the menace of cattle smuggling or any other criminal activity and to ensure tranquility on the borders.
Director General of Border Security Force: Vivek Kumar Johri.
Bangladesh Capital: Dhaka; Currency: Taka; PM: Sheikh Hasina.
NATIONAL

Exercise Mitra Shakti – VII Between India and Sri Lanka Commences in Pune
• The seventh edition of Exercise MITRA SHAKTI- 2019 amongst the armies of India and Sri Lanka commenced at Aundh Military Station, Pune on 01 December.
• The exercise is aimed at enhancing interoperability and operational efficiency as well as build and promote positive relations between both the armies in the field of military cooperation and engagement for refining the interoperability and operational preparedness.

India becomes 1st country to make entire Haj process digital
• The Minister also informed that India has become the first country to make the entire Haj process completely digital for pilgrims going on Haj 2020.
• All the 2 lakh Indian Muslims going for Haj in 2020 will be provided with an online application, e-visa, Haj mobile app, 'e-MASIHA' health facility, and also the first ever “e-luggage pre-tagging” facility.
• They would also get information in India itself regarding accommodation and transportation in Mecca and Madina, like building and the room allotted to them.

Nationwide vaccination drive launched to prevent eight diseases under Mission Indradhanush 2.0
• Centre is launching nationwide vaccination drive to prevent eight diseases under Intensified Mission Indradhanush 2.0 across the country today.
• What is IMI 2.0: It is pan-India vaccination drive where children under the age of 2 years and pregnant women will be immunized against eight vaccine preventable diseases.
• Objective of IMI 2.0: Achieve targets of full immunization coverage in 272 districts in 27 States.
• Duration of the vaccination drive: December 2019 to March 2020.

Mandatory hallmarking for gold jewellery/artefacts from Jan 15, 2021
• The Consumer Affairs Minister Ram Vilas Paswan has announced that the Hallmarking of gold jewellery and artefacts in India will be made mandatory from January 15, 2021, to ensure purity of the precious metal.
• The government notification in this regard will be issued on 15 January 2020 and the decision will come into effect after a period of one year.
• It will be now compulsory for all the jewellers to register with the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) and sell only hallmarked gold jewellery and artefacts.
• They have been given a period of one year time for clearing their old or existing stock.

‘Ek Bharat Shreshta Bharat’ conference inaugurated in Jammu
• Union Minister of State (PP), Dr Jitendra Singh inaugurated a two day Conference on ‘Ek Bharat Shreshta Bharat’ in Jammu on November 30, 2019. The conference focusses on ‘Jal Shakti’ and ‘Disaster Management’.
• The conference was organised by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) in association with Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir and Governments of Tamil Nadu.

India-Japan Foreign and Defence Ministerial Dialogue (2+2) held in New Delhi
• The India-Japan Foreign and Defence Ministerial Dialogue (2+2) was held on 30th November 2019 in New Delhi. 2 participants participated from both the sides in the meet.
• The Indian side was represented by Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh and External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar while foreign Affairs Minister Mr. Toshimitsu Motegi and Minister of Defence Mr. Taro Kono represented Japan.
• The next 2+2 Ministerial Meeting will be held in Tokyo.

Armed Forces Flag Day-CSR Conclave 2019 Held in New Delhi
• The Armed Forces Flag Day (AFFD) Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Conclave 2019 was held in New Delhi on December 2, 2019.
• Defence Minister Shri Rajnath Singh addressed the conclave and urged the people of the country to contribute generously to the Armed Forces Flag Day (AFFD) Fund for the welfare of the Ex-Servicemen who have selflessly served the nation.

Labour Ministry to celebrate Pension Week from 30th Nov, 2019 to 6th Dec 2019
• Labour Ministry has decided to celebrate Pension Week from November 30, 210 to December 06, 2019.
• The aims of the Pension Week is to increase enrollments under:
  • Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maandhan (PM-SYM) – aim to enroll one crore beneficiaries by March 2020 and
  • National Pension Scheme for Traders and Self-Employed Persons (NPS-Traders) 50 lakhs beneficiaries for NPS-Traders by March 2020
• For this, Minister of State(I/C) for Labour and Employment Shri Santosh Gangwar inaugurated a function in New Delhi.

Nuclear Capable surface-to-surface Agni-III Missile Fails in Maiden Night Trial
• The maiden night trial of the nuclear capable Agni-III surface-to-surface ballistic missile was conducted from a mobile launcher at the Integrated Test Range at the APJ Abdul Kalam Island off Odisha coast on 30 November 2019.
• However, the test reportedly failed due to manufacturing defect.
• Agni III is designed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)

EU Commission begins new term under von der Leyen
• Ursula von der Leyen is the first woman to hold the EU’s top job as President of the European Commission, which has officially begun its new five-year term.
• Already, the 61-year-old former German defence minister, who succeeds Jean-Claude Juncker has a full intray.
• She has made the issue of climate change one of her top priorities – describing it as an existential crisis.

VP Venkaiah Naidu launches 'Bharatiya Poshan Anthem'
• On December 3, 2019, Indian Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu launched the “Bharatiya Poshan Anthem”.
• The anthem has been conceptualised by the Ministry of Women and Child Development.
• It has been written by noted lyricist Prasoon Joshi and sung by Shankar Mahadevan.
• The ‘Poshan Abhiyan or National Nutrition Mission’ was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in March 2018 to make India malnutrition free by 2022 by ensuring holistic development and adequate nutrition for pregnant women, mothers and children.

Govt launches 4th round of Regional Connectivity Scheme-UDAN
• Government has launched the 4th round of Regional Connectivity Scheme – UDAN (Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik) to further enhance the connectivity to remote and regional areas of the country.
• Civil Aviation Ministry said, the focus in this round will be North East Region, Hilly States, Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh and Islands.
• The scheme was launched in October, 2016, which seeks to provide connectivity to un-served and under-served regions through revival of existing air strips and airports.
• In the last three years government has successfully completed three rounds of bidding under the Scheme and awarded about 700 routes. The Ministry aims to operationalize one thousand routes and more than 100 airports in the next five years.

India ranks 5th in Global Climate Risk Index
• The Global Climate Risk Index 2020 released by environmental think tank Germanwatch ranked India the fifth most vulnerable nation to climate change.
• The report suggested that the 2018 monsoon led to India fall from the fourteenth position in 2017 to fifth in 2018.
• As per the study, the monsoon had forced over 220,000 people in Kerala to leave their homes.
Top ten most affected countries in 2018:
1. Japan
2. Philippines
3. Germany
4. Madagascar
5. India
6. Sri Lanka
7. Kenya
8. Rwanda
9. Canada
10. Fiji

Mobile app named Madhu App for e-learning launched in Odisha
• Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has launched Madhu App, an e-learning mobile phone app, for making classroom learning easier for students.
• Madhu App is named after noted freedom fighter and social reformer Madhusudan Das.
• Using the App, students will be able to download video lectures and exercises by qualified teachers in Odia language.

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

Avantee mega Food Park inaugurated in MP’s Dewas
• In Madhya Pradesh, Union Minister for food processing Harsimrat Kaur Badal inaugurated Avantee mega Food Park in Dewas.
• This first food park of central India is spread over 51 acres and has been constructed at a cost of about 150 crore rupees.
• About 5 thousand local people will get employment from this Mega Food Park.Minister of State for Food Processing Industries Rameshwar Teli was also present on the inaugural ceremony.

Mumbai Central Certified India’s first ‘Eat Right Station’ by FSSAI
• The Mumbai Central station of Railways was conferred with the ‘Eat Right Station’ certification with four stars rating by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), as a part of ‘Eat Right India’ movement launched last year.
• According to a press note, the Mumbai Central Railway Station is the country’s first “Eat Right Station.”
• FSSAI, along with Western Railways (WR) and Indian Railways Catering Tourism Corporation (IRCTC), has trained food handlers, both in canteens and base kitchens. They inspected catering establishments at the station and certified and rated the standard of food.
• As part of efforts to help passengers make a healthy and right food choice, the Indian Railways launched the ‘Eat Right Station’ as part of the ‘Eat Right India’ initiative of the FSSAI started in 2018.
• Eat Right India’ built on two broad pillars — Eat Healthy and Eat Safe — aimed to engage, excite and enable people enhance their health and wellbeing.

Priyanka Chopra tops IMDb 2019 list of Indian celebrities
• Actress Priyanka Chopra has been named as the top star of Indian cinema and television series in 2019, in a list released by the global film and TV website IMDb.
• Actress Disha Patani is on second spot, followed by Hrithik Roshan, Kiara Advani, Akshay Kumar, Salman, Alia Bhatt, Katrina Kaif, Rakul Preet Singh and Sobhita Dhulipala.
• IMDb determines the list using data from IMDbPro STARmeter rankings, which are based on the actual page views of the more than 200 million monthly IMDb visitors.

Assam govt sets up Anti-Depredation squads
• The Assam government has set up 15 Anti-Depredation Squads of the Forest department to deal with human-wildlife conflicts in the state.
• The anti-depredation squads will be stationed in 15 major human-wildlife conflict districts of the state to deal with the problem and ensure the safety of both humans and animals.
• The anti-depredation squads will be equipped with all logistics required for mitigating the conflict. The squads will have 12 bore pump action guns and rubber bullet ammunition.

President Kovind Presents National Florence Nightingale Awards 2019
• The President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, presented the National Florence Nightingale Awards to nursing personnel during a ceremony on December 5, 2019 in New Delhi as a part of the International Nurses Day.
• 36 nursing professionals were conferred the National Florence Nightingale Awards 2019 for their meritorious services.
• The award was instituted by the Government of India in 1973 and are named after Florence Nightingale, the founder of modern nursing.
• The World Health Organisation (WHO) has announced 2020 as the Year of the Nurse and Midwife.
• 2020 also mark the 200th birth anniversary of Florence Nightingale.

India’s Top 10 Police Stations for 2019 announced
• Government has released the list of best performing Police stations from across the country. The Top 10 Police Stations in the country are:-
1. Aberdeen- Andaman, Andaman & Nicobar Islands  
2. Balasinor- Mahisagar, Gujarat  
3. Ajk Burhanpur- Burhanpur, Madhya Pradesh  
4. AWPS Theni- Theni, Tamil Nadu  
5. Anini- Dibang Valley, Arunachal Pradesh  
6. Baba Haridas Nagar, Dwarka- South West, District Delhi  
7. Bakani- Jhalawar, Rajasthan  
8. Choppadandi (M)- Karimnagar, Telangana  
9. Bicholim- North Goa, Goa  
10. Bargawa- Sheopur, Madhya Pradesh  

• The objective was to rank the top 10 Police Stations out of 15,579 Police Stations in the country through data analysis, direct observation and public feedback. The ranking process commenced with shortlisting of the best performing Police Stations, in each State on the basis of addressing
1. Property offence  
2. Crime against women  
3. Crime against weaker sections.  
• Number of Police Stations selected initially from each State comprise of:
1. Three from each State with more than 750 Police Stations  
2. Two from all other States and Delhi  
3. One from each Union Territory

4th India Water Impact Summit 2019 held in Delhi
• The 4th India Water Impact Summit 2019 was held in New Delhi from December 5 to 7, 2019. Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat inaugurated the summit.
• It was organised by Ministry of Jal Shakti and the Centre for Ganga River Basin Management and Studies (cGanga) and was led by IIT-Kanpur.
• Theme of the event was: ‘Valuing Water – Transforming Ganga’.
• Objective of the summit: bringing together global financial investors and institutions to focus on water impact in smart cities.

India to launch spy satellite, 9 others on Dec 11
• India’s Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) rocket would launch the country’s latest spy satellite RISAT-2BR1 and nine foreign satellites on December 11, said the Indian space agency.
• According to the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), the rocket numbered as PSLV-C48 will lift off at 3.25 p.m. with RISAT-2BR1, a radar imaging earth observation satellite weighing about 628 kg.
• The rocket will blast off from the first launch pad at Sri harikota rocket port in Andhra Pradesh and place RISAT-2BR1 into an orbit of 576 km. The satellite will have a life of five years.
• Piggybacking on the Indian satellite would be nine foreign satellites from the USA (multi-mission Lemur-4 satellites, technology demonstration Tyvak-0129, earth imaging 1HOPSAT), Israel (remote sensing Duchifat-3), Italy (search and rescue Tyvak-0092) and Japan (QPS-SAR – a radar imaging earth observation satellite).
• These international customer satellites are being launched under a commercial arrangement with New Space India Limited (NSIL).

Odisha to set up 45 new fast track courts
• Aiming at expediting the trial of cases relating to women and children, the Odisha government said it will set up 45 new fast track courts.
• Of these, 21 courts would be dedicated for cases of rape and sexual harassment of women and the remaining 24 fast track courts will specifically deal with Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) cases, Law Minister Pratap Jena said.
• The fast track courts will function under Additional District Judges as per provisions of Orissa Civil Courts Act, 1984.

Switzerland is country partner of Bio Asia 2020
• Government of Telangana announced that Switzerland will serve as the country partner for the 17th edition of BioAsia.
• Consistently ranked number one, Switzerland Ais widely known for innovation in big pharma with the presence of eminent pharma and life-sciences companies like Novartis, Roche, Lonza and FerringPharma.
• With the theme "Today For Tomorrow," BioAsia 2020 is scheduled to be held from February 17 to 19.

The 107th edition of the Indian Science Congress (ISC) will be inaugurated by PM Modi on 3rd January.
• Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the five day 107th session of the Indian Science Congress on January 3, Karnataka Minister for IT-BT, Science and Technology Dr C Ashwath Narayan said.
• The 107th edition of Indian Science Congress (ISC) will be held at the University of Agricultural Sciences here from January 3 to 7, 2020.
• Themed “Science and Technology: Rural Development”, the event will bring together more than 15,000 delegates from the scientific fraternity and academia, Research& Development institutes, defence, government, PSUs and corporate houses.
• The ‘Pride of India Expo 2020’, organised concurrently with the ISC, will be a confluence of new ideas, innovations and products surrounding the entire canvas of scientific world will also be inaugurated simultaneously, the organisers said in a statement.

**Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2019 (CAB): All you need to know about.**

• The Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2019 (CAB) is a bill amending the Citizenship Act of 1955 to make illegal migrants who are Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan, who entered India on or before 31 December 2014, eligible for Indian citizenship.
• Under the Act, one of the requirements for citizenship by naturalization is that the applicant must have resided in India during the last 12 months, and for 11 of the previous 14 years.
• The Bill relaxes this 11-year requirement to five years for persons belonging to the same six religions and three countries.
• The bill exempts the tribal areas of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, and Tripura, included in the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution from its applicability.
• As per the citizenship bill, a foreigner may register as an OCI under the 1955 Act if they are of Indian origin.
• It entitles the OCI cardholders to benefits such as the right to travel to India, and to work and study in the country.
• The new bill amends the Act to allow cancellation of OCI registration if the person has violated any law notified by the Central government.

**Need:**
• In the 2019 election campaign, the BJP’s manifesto reiterated its commitment to bring in the Bill.
• The National Register of Citizens (NRC) was updated in Assam state in 2019, leaving out 1.9 million residents, a majority of whom were Hindus, without citizenship.
• This matter brought urgency to the bring in the Bill.

**Legislative History:**
• The Union Cabinet cleared the Bill on 4 December 2019. It was passed by the Lok Sabha on 10 December 2019 and, subsequently, in the Rajya Sabha on 11 December 2019.
• Now the Bill will go to the President for his assent. As many as 125 lawmakers voted in the favour of the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill and 99 against it.

**Political parties involved:**
• The CAB was supported by BJP, JD(U), SAD, AIADMK, BJD, TDP and YSR-Congress. The Shiv Sena did not participate in the voting.

**How much of Northeast does the Bill cover?**
• CAB won’t apply to areas under the sixth schedule of the Constitution – which deals with autonomous tribal-dominated regions in Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram.
• The bill will also not apply to states that have the inner-line permit regime (Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Mizoram).

**Why is Assam angry about it?**
• Among the states in the Northeast, the outrage against CAG has been the most intense in Assam.
• While a chunk of these states have been exempted from the legislation, CAB overs a large part of Assam.
• The protests stem from the fear that illegal Bengali Hindu migrants from Bangladesh, if regularised under CAB, will threaten cultural and linguistic identities of the state.

**Isn’t it the same like the NRC?**
• The National Register of Citizens or NRC that we saw in Assam targeted illegal immigrants.
• A person had to prove that either they, or their ancestors were in Assam on or before March 24, 1971.
• NRC, which may be extended to the rest of the country, is not based on religion unlike CAB.

Inauguration of Navarms 2019 4th International Seminar Cum Exhibition on Naval Weapon Systems held in New Delhi.
• The theme of the Exhibition is “Make in India – Fight Category: Opportunities and Imperatives”.
• NAVARMS is the only international seminar and exhibition on Naval Weapon Systems conducted in the country. It invites all the stakeholders in the life cycle management of Naval Weapons and provides a common platform to share their views and concerns.

Puma Signs Sunil Chhetri as Brand Ambassador for 3 Years
• The German multinational brand PUMA has roped in Indian national football team’s captain Sunil Chhetri as the brand ambassador under a three-year deal.
• The 35-year-old Bengaluru Football Club skipper now joins global players like Antoine Griezmann, Romelu Lukaku, Luis Suarez and Sergio Aguero among others to be Puma’s brand ambassador.

FSSAI and NASSCOM Foundation Partners to Develop Mobile App ‘Food Donation in India’ to Reduce Food Wastage
• In order to prevent food wastage, Food regulator, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) and Nasscom Foundation have signed an MoU on December 13, 2019 to develop a mobile application and set up a 24×7 helpline number.
• The mobile app named ‘Food Donation in India’ will connect donors with surplus edibles to food distribution organisations to donate food to the needy and hence reduce the wastage of food in the country through food donation.

Banking and Economy
Moody’s Reduces India’s GDP Rate for FY20 to 5.6 Percent
• Moody’s Investors Service has lowered its 2019 GDP growth forecast for India to 5.6 percent based on slow employment growth weighs on consumption.
• GDP For 2019-20 – 5.6%
• GDP For 2020-21 – 6.6%
• GDP For 2021-22 – 6.7%

7th Economic Census Completely Digital; Expected to End by March 2020
• The 7th Economic Census is being conducted across the country.
• West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat are the only states were the census is yet to start.
• The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) has tied up with CSC e-Governance Service for the 7th Economic Census.
• It is expected to be completed by March 2020.

37th National Symposium of Heads of Police Training Institutions Held in New Delhi
• The 37th National Symposium of Heads of Police Training Institutions was held in New Delhi on December 13-14, 2019.
• The event was organised by the Bureau of Police Research & Development (BPR&D).
FASTags mandatory for all vehicles comes into effect from December 15, 2019
• The facility of FASTags for all vehicles, private and commercial, has become mandatory with effect from December 15, 2019. Earlier the deadline was December 1.
• FASTags are prepaid rechargeable tags for vehicle toll collection that allow automatic payment deduction from the FASTag. They are normally affixed on the windscreen of the vehicle.
• The National Electronic Toll Collection System will enable the collection of user fee through FASTag, thus saving fuel and time, curb pollution and ensure seamless movement of traffic as the drivers will not have to stop their vehicles at toll plazas to pay tax.
• A FASTag uses radio frequency identification technology to enable direct toll payments from a moving vehicle. If anyone goes into an electronic toll collection lane without a FASTag, he or she has to pay double charges.

India expands Indo-Pacific Policy; includes Gulf and Africa
At the end of the joint Indian Ocean Dialogue held in New Delhi, External Affairs Minister officially announced that India is planning to expand its Indo-Pacific policy. So far, the Indo-Pacific covered Indian Ocean and the Arabian sea. With the expansion, the region will now include Gulf states and Africa.

India celebrates Vijay Diwas: 16 December
• In India, Vijay Diwas (Victory Day) is celebrated every year on December 16 to commemorate the service, valour, and sacrifices of the gallant men of the Indian Armed Forces victory over Pakistan in 1971 war.
• 2019 marks 48th Vijay Diwas and was celebrated at the National War Memorial.
• On 16 December 1971, the Indian Armed Forces won the 13-day long decisive war against the Pakistan Army and state for the liberation of Bangladesh from Pakistan.

Prime Minister chairs 1st meeting of National Ganga Council
• The first meeting of the National Ganga Council was held in Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh on December 14, 2019.
• The meeting was chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi to reinforce the importance of a ‘Ganga-centric’ approach in all departments of the concerned states as well as relevant Central Ministries.
• The Council is responsible for the management of pollution prevention and rejuvenation of River Ganga Basin, including Ganga and its tributaries.
• The Central Government had made commitment of Rs. 20,000 crores for the period 2015-20 to the five states through which Ganga passes, to ensure adequate as well as uninterrupted water flows in the river.

Ministry of Coal to set up Sustainable Development Cell to address environmental concerns
• The Ministry of Coal is set to establish a Sustainable Development Cell (SDC) to promote environmentally sustainable coal mining in the country and address environmental concerns during the decommissioning or closure of mines.
• The SDC will act as nodal point at Ministry of Coal level in this matter.

Edelweiss AMC launches India's 1st corporate bond ‘Bharat Bond ETF’
• Edelweiss Asset Management Company (AMC), a subsidiary of Edelweiss Capital Limited (ECL) has launched India’s 1st Corporate Bond ETF (exchange trade fund) called the Bharat Bond ETF.
• The ETF is a government initiative and Edelweiss AMC was given the mandate to design and manage the product.
• Edelweiss aims to raise an initial amount of Rs 3,000 crore through this bond from institutional players with a greenshoe option of Rs 2,000 crore in the 3-year maturity period (2023) and Rs 4,000 crore with a greenshoe option of Rs 6,000 crore in the 10-year maturity bucket (2030).
• Small retail investors will have to invest at least Rs 1,000 in this fund.
• After this, there is a facility for multiple investments. Here they can invest up to 2 lakhs.
• At the same time, the minimum amount for anchor investors has been fixed at Rs 10 crore.

Reliance Industries Overtakes Indian Oil As Highest Ranked Indian Company On Fortune 500 List
• Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Industries (RIL) ended Indian Oil Corporation Limited’s 10-year reign as India’s largest company on Fortune India 500 list.
• With revenue of 5.81 lakh crore in 2018-19, the Mukesh Ambani-led conglomerate also became the first privately-held company to become India’s largest corporation, Fortune India said.
• ONGC was ranked third, the same as in 2018.

TOP 10 COMPANIES (with revenue):
1. Reliance Industries: 580,553.00
2. Indian Oil Corporation: 535,793.18
3. Oil & Natural Gas Corporation: 436,057.04
5. Tata Motors: 303,227.41
6. Bharat Petroleum Corporation: 302,806.71
7. Rajesh Exports: 175,830.66
8. Tata Steel: 159,835.46
9. Coal India: 152,271.30
10. Tata Consultancy Services: 150,774.00

India’s Suman Rao crowned Miss World Asia 2019
• Jamaica-based and Indian origin, Toni Ann Singh was crowned Miss World 2019 on December 11, 2019.
• Vanessa Ponce of Mexico crowned her successor Toni-Ann Singh in the event.
• Earlier, on December 8, South Africa’s 26-year-old Zozibini Tunzi was crowned as Miss Universe 2019.
• India’s Suman Rao was crowned as 2nd runner-up and as Miss World Asia.
• Miss France Opélie Mezzino was the first runner-up. Before this event, Suman Rao was also crowned Miss India 2019

WEF Gender Gap Index: India slips to 112th rank, in bottom 5 on health, economic fronts
• The first WEF Gender Gap Index was published in 2006 when India was ranked at 98th position.
• WEF uses four metrics to give overall ranking that worsened India’s ranking from very next year.
• Now, India has slipped to 150th place on health and survival, 112th on educational attainment and 149th in economic participation.
• It was said in the report that there are very few economic opportunities for women in India. It is 34.5 per cent in India, 32.7 per cent in Pakistan, 27.3 per cent in Yemen and 22.7 in Iraq.
• The Report also highlights that India has a very low (13.8 percent) women representation on company boards.

Govt launches National Broadband Mission; to invest 7 trillion in 4 years
• The Government of India has launched the National Broadband Mission (NBM) to fast track growth of digital communications infrastructure, bridge the digital divide and provide affordable and universal access of broadband for all.
• The main objective of the NBM is to provide broadband access to all villages by 2022.
• The mission is part of the National Digital Communications Policy, 2018.

The mission envisages
• Rs 7 lakh crore investment in next 3 to 4 years.
• Taking optical fibre connectivity to 50 lakh kilometres from the current 22 lakh kilometres.
• Deploy 10 lakh mobile towers from the present 5.65 lakh sites in next 3-4 years
• 10% of the funds would come from the Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) and the balance will come from industry in the form of towers and other assets

GEM launches national outreach programme ‘GeMSamvaad’
• Government e-commerce portal GeM has launched a national outreach programme, GeMSamvaad, to bring on-board more local sellers.
• The outreach programme will take place with stakeholders across the country and with local sellers to facilitate on-boarding of local sellers on the marketplace.
• The programme was launched by Commerce Secretary AnupWadhawan in New Delhi.
• The programme will take place from 17th February next year and will cover all the States and Union Territories of the country.

GST Council fixes 28% uniform tax rate for lottery effective from March 2020
• The 38th meeting of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council, chaired by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman was held in New Delhi on December 18, 2019.
• Some of the important decisions taken during the meeting are as follows:
• Uniform GST tax rate of 28 percent on both state and private lottery. Currently, lotteries run by state-government attract 12% GST and those authorized by them and sold outside the state are taxed at 28%.
• GST rate on woven and non-woven bags rationalized to 18 percent, compared to 12% at present.
• The new rates will be effective from March 2020.

Odisha Govt. launches ‘Jalsathi’ programme
• Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has launched the ‘Jalsathi’ programme, involving women volunteers, to ensure supply of safe drinking water to all households in the state.
• Under the ‘Jalsathi’ programme, about 5,000 women, known as Jalsathi, will be engaged for supplying safe drinking water. They have been provided with water quality testing kits and POS (point of sale) machines.
• ‘Jalasathis’ will be responsible for water quality testing, facilitating new water connections, regularising connections, reassessment of demands, meter reading, bill generation, bill delivery, collection of water charges and facilitating complaints redressal.
50% concession for ‘Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat’ participants
Indian Railways has decided to grant 50% concession for the youth participating in the “Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat” programme. The concession will be given in basic fares of Second and Sleeper Class to youths with emoluments of not more than 5000 rupees per month for travelling from one State to another State to take part in the programme.

Braille Edition of Exam Warriors: Book written by PM Modi released
• Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment Shri Thaawarchand Gehlot released the Braille Edition of the book “Exam Warriors” authored by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi.
• The Braille Edition of the book has been published in Hindi and English.
• It has been prepared in the Braille Press of Rajasthan Netraheen Kalyan Sangh.

Andhra Pradesh tops in organising ‘Fit India school week’
• Andhra Pradesh has topped the charts among states in India in organising the Fit India week. 13,839 schools of Andhra Pradesh took part in the state.
• Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh are ranked at second and third place respectively.
• Prime Minister Narendra Modi had laid a foundation to the Fit India movement which was launched on August 29 this year.

Indian Coast Guard conducts ‘Swachchh Samundra NW-2019’
• The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) conducted a regional level pollution response exercise named ‘Swachchh Samundra NW-2019’. It was held at sea off Vadinar in Gulf of Kutch.
• The exercise was held from December 17 to December 18, 2019 with an aim to validate and reinforce the response mechanism for oil pollution incidents and enable the Indian Coast Guard to fine-tune the actions required in such eventualities.

Anand Mahindra to step down as Mahindra Group Executive Chairman from April 2020
• Mahindra Group has announced that Anand Mahindra will step down as Executive Chairman from April 1, 2020.
• Pawan Goenka will be re-designated as Managing Director and Chief Executive from April 1.
• This is in accordance with the Sebi guidelines. However, Anand Mahindra will continue to serve as Non-Executive Chairman of the company.

5th Edition of ARTECH to be held in New Delhi
• The 5th edition of ARTECH is being organised by Indian Army on ‘Technologies for Non-Contact Warfare’ which will be organised on 23 December 2019 at Manekshaw Centre, Delhi Cantonment.
• The seminar is the flagship event of the Indian Army which sets the agenda for focus areas of harvesting indigenous capabilities in the Defence sector.
• ARTECH Seminar was launched in 2016 as part of the overall vision of ‘Make in India’ of Hon’ble Prime Minister and is conducted every year as part of events leading to Army Day celebrations.
• ARTECH platform provides an opportunity to practitioners of military operations, policymakers in Ministry of Defence, industry and academia to put forth their contemporary Defence-related capabilities.
• Chief of the Army Staff: General Bipin Rawat.
• The motto of Indian Army: “Service Before Self”.
• Headquarters: New Delhi.
• Commander-in-Chief: President Ram Nath Kovind.

Uddhav announces Mahatma Jyotirao Phule loan waiver scheme of up to Rs 2 lakh for Maharashtra farmers
• The Maharashtra government has announced a loan waiver scheme named “Mahatma Jyotirao Phule loan waiver scheme” under which farmers in Maharashtra will get a loan waiver of upto Rs two lakh.
• The cut-off date for the scheme is September 30, 2019.

Wipro, NASSCOM jointly launch ‘Future Skills’ to boost engineering teaching
• Wipro has partnered with the National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM) to launch the ‘Future Skills’ platform to enhance the quality of engineering education.
• ‘Future Skills’ platform is a part of Wipro’s Corporate Social Responsibility programme, TalentNext and aims to target 10,000 students from over 20 engineering colleges in India.

YSR Neetanna Nestham scheme launched in Andhra Pradesh’s in Krishna district’s Pedana town for weavers
• Andhra Pradesh Panchayati Raj Minister P Ramachandra Reddy launched the YSR Neetanna Nestham scheme in Krishna district’s Pedana town under which weavers would be given Rs 24,000 annually.
• Around 75,000 weavers would be benefitted from the scheme.

Urban India, except Bengal, declared open defecation-free, says Ministry
• Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban has achieved its target of creating Urban India Open Defecation Free.
• Urban areas of 35 states and Union Territories have become ODF.
• In all, 4,320 cities out of 4,372 have declared themselves ODF, of which 4,167 cities have been certified through third-party verification.
• This has been achieved by the construction of nearly 65.81 lakh individual household toilets against Mission target of 59 lakhs and 5.89 lakh seats of public toilets against Mission target of 5.08 lakh seats.

Important:
• Minister of State (Independent Charge) of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs: Hardeep Singh Puri.

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

Important:
• CM of Telangana: K Chandrashekar Rao.
• Capital of Telangana: Hyderabad.
• Governor of Telangana: Tamilisai Soundararajan.

**CFSL gets advanced DNA analysis centre at Chandigarh**
- The Minister of State for Home Affairs, Nityanand Rai, inaugurated a state-of-the-art DNA Analysis Centre at Central Forensic Science Laboratory (CFSL), Chandigarh
- The new advanced forensic DNA Analysis Lab has been set up under the Nirbhaya Fund scheme, with an allocation of Rs 99.76 crores and has a capacity of examining 2000 cases per year.
- This Centre will provide State-of-the-art facility for sexual assault and homicide unit, paternity unit, human identification unit and mitochondrial DNA unit.

**Dharmendra Pradhan presents India’s first long distance CNG bus.**
- Oil minister Dharmendra Pradhan unveiled India’s first long distance Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) bus fitted with composite CNG cylinders, which can travel around 1,000 kilometre in a single fill.
- The project has been executed by Indraprastha Gas Limited (IGL) and has been achieved through design of Type IV Composite Cylinders in buses, replacing traditional very heavy Type-I Carbon Steel cylinders
- Mahindra & Mahindra along with Agility Fuel Solutions of USA have partnered with IGL for introducing the new concept of light weight Type IV composite cylinders in buses.
- IGL has procured five Mahindra’s Type IV buses. The Buses would be given to Uttarakhand Transport Corporation (UTC) on lease basis after the launch. These will ply on Inter-city routes from Delhi to Dehradun and will be the first CNG Buses in Uttarakhand.

**Telangana govt raises retirement age of RTC staff to 60 yrs**
- Telangana government has decided to raise the retirement age of employees of the Road Transport Corporation, RTC to 60 from the current 58 years.
- The decision will be applicable to all cadres of employees of the state-owned RTC.
- Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao also asked RTC management to launch cargo and parcel services to all destinations wherever an RTC bus could reach in the state.
- About Telangana:
  - Capital: Hyderabad
  - Governor: Tamilisai Soundararajan
  - Chief minister: K. Chandrashekar Rao

**Centre releases Good Governance Index ranking States and UTs in 10 sectors**
- Tamil Nadu topped the Good Governance Index launched by the Centre. Maharashtra, Karnataka, Chhattisgarh and Andhra Pradesh followed among the ‘Big States’.
- Among the ‘Big States’, the poor performers are Odisha, Bihar, Goa, and Uttar Pradesh with Jharkhand coming last.
- The States and UTs are divided into three groups — Big States, North-East and Hill States, and Union Territories.
- Among the North-East and Hill States, Himachal Pradesh was ranked first, followed by Uttarakhand, Tripura, Mizoram and Sikkim. The worst performers in this group are Jammu and Kashmir, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, with Arunachal Pradesh coming last.
- Puducherry is the best governed Union Territory followed by Chandigarh and Delhi. Lakshwadeep is the worst performing UT.
• The rankings were launched by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, and the Centre for Good Governance.
• In the agriculture and allied ranking, Madhya Pradesh, Mizoram and Daman and Diu are the best performing States in their groups. This rating took into account the growth rate of agriculture and allied sector, foodgrains production, horticulture produce, milk and meat production, and crop insurance.
• While assessing the performance of commerce and industries across States, Jharkhand, Uttarakhand and Delhi top the lists of their groups.

Mumbai: CSMT gets ‘Eat Right’ station certificate From FSSAI
• Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (CSMT) railway station in Mumbai has been conferred with ‘Eat Right Station’ certification with the five-star rating by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) for food safety and hygiene.
• An official release said that the CSMT is the first station on the Central Railway to get this certification.
• It stated that the CSMT has been judged on the basis of compliance of food safety and hygiene, availability of healthy diet, food handling at preparation, food waste management, promotion of local and seasonal food and creating awareness on food safety and healthy diet.
• ‘Eat Right Station’ initiative is a part of the ‘Eat Right India’ movement launched by FSSAI and an FMCG major which is aimed at promoting food safety and hygiene at the static catering units at railway stations.

Second edition of Eat Right Mela inaugurated by Health Minister in New Delhi
• Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan has said, the right kind of diet will help to reduce the disease burden in the country.
• Inaugurating the second edition of Eat Right Mela in New Delhi, the Minister said, healthy eating should become a people’s movement.
• He stressed upon the importance of having a people’s movement, encouraging people to have healthier diets which will help in reduction of the disease burden in the country.
• Dr. Harsh Vardhan stated that the Eat Right Mela is a commendable effort and outreach activity for citizens to nudge them towards eating right.
• He also highlighted that on one hand, India is suffering from under-nourishment and on the other side, there is obesity due to the result of junk food, wrong choices of food, overeating and lack of exercise.

First-ever university for transgenders to come up in UP
• The first university for the transgender community in India will be opened in Uttar Pradesh’s Kushinagar district.
• The university, which will come up in Fazilnagar block of Kushinagar district, is being built by the Akhil Bhartiya Kinnar Siksha Seva Trust (All-India transgender education service trust).
• In the university, the transgender community will be able to study right from class one to PG and even do research and get PhD degree.

FM releases stamp on DRI
• Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman released a postage stamp to commemorate distinguished service and glorious contribution of Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) in protecting the nation. After releasing the stamp, Sitharaman stressed on the critical need for training officers of DRI in using technology and data analytics to be able to inspire confidence of citizens and deter smugglers, the finance ministry said.
• She remarked that DRI continues to play an immense role in countering smuggling as well as in preserving the cultural heritage and environment of the country.
• The challenges faced by the organisation continue to grow with the adoption of innovative modes of smuggling, she said and called for increasing the concerted efforts of DRI, the statement said.

About DRI:
• DRI was formed on December 4, 1957 to function as an apex intelligence agency of the Central Board of Indirect Taxes & Customs to counter the menace of smuggling.
• DRI has established itself as the premier intelligence agency commanding the trust of international and national agencies with its intelligence inputs on myriad subjects inter alia ranging from fake Indian currency note, narcotics, gold, arms & ammunitions, wildlife, cultural heritage and commercial fraud, it added.

IAF bid farewell to MiG-27 ML Bahadur as India retires the strike aircraft
• The MiG-27 fighter jets of the Indian Air Force, which were part of the Kargil war with Pakistan 20 years ago.
• The fleet has been decommissioned after around 35 years of service and it received ‘water salute’ at a ceremony in Jodhpur.
• The MiG-27 had earned the tag of ‘Bahadur’ from IAF pilots.
• All other variants, such as MiG-23 BN and MiG-23 MF and the pure MiG-27 have already retired from IAF.

PM Modi launches Atal Bhujal Scheme for efficient groundwater
• Prime Minister Narendra Modi has launched Atal Bhujal Yojana (ATAL JAL) which aims to improve groundwater management.
• The scheme has been designed with the principal objective of strengthening the institutional framework for participatory groundwater management.
• It aims to bring behavioral changes at the community level for sustainable groundwater resource management in seven States. The 7 states includes Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.
• The scheme will promote panchayat led ground water management and behavioural change with primary focus on demand side management.
• The Government has outlaid Rs. 6000 crore for the scheme.

Mobile app of forthcoming DefExpo 2020 launched by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh
• Defence Minister Rajnath Singh launched the mobile app of the forthcoming DefExpo 2020 to be held in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh.
• The app provides detailed information about the day-to-day events, participating exhibitors, guest speakers of seminars, maps and directions of the venues.
• Mr Singh also reviewed the preparations of DefExpo. During the meeting, senior officials informed that a record number of over 880 exhibitors, including foreign companies, have registered so far. Dozens of MoUs are also expected to be inked during the Expo.
The 11th biennial edition of DefExpo India-2020 is scheduled to be held for the first time in Uttar Pradesh capital Lucknow. The theme of the expo is ‘India: The Emerging Defence Manufacturing Hub’.

Delhi: "National Symposium of Poets 2020" organized by All India Radio
- National Symposium of Poets – 2020 was organized by All India Radio.
- This poet symposium was attended by select poets of all 22 languages recognized in the constitution. It is being held continuously every year since 1956.
- Poets from all corners of the country gave their presentations and captivated the hearts of the people.
- Such National symposium is organized every year and broadcast on the eve of Republic Day and at all the centers of AIR at 10:00 PM.

MyGov reaches 1 crore registered users: PMO
- The Prime Minister’s Office has informed that the Central government’s citizen-centric online engagement platform, MyGov.in, has reached one crore registered users.
- MyGov was launched on 26 July 2014 to offer a platform for the voice and views of the people of India.

Chief of Defence Staff: Gen Bipin Rawat to be India’s first Chief of Defence Staff
General Bipin Rawat will be India’s first Chief of Defence Staff (CDS). He will serve as the principal military advisor to the defence minister as the head of the new Department of Military Affairs to ensure jointness and synergy between the three defence services of India.

Key Facts about CDS
- The CDS will administer all tri-services organisations, comprising personnel from the army, air force and navy, however, it will not have any operational role and military command to ensure impartial advice. The command will be held with the Chief of the service.
- The CDS will be appointed by the President of India.
- CDS will be responsible to head the following:
  - Department of Military Affairs
  - Chiefs of Staff Committee
  - National Security Council
  - Defence Acquisition Council
  - Defence Planning Committee
  - Nuclear Command Authority
- The defence ministry had recently amended the Army, Air Force and Navy rules by bringing in a new clause that allows the Chief of Defence Staff to serve up to a maximum age of 65 years.
- For the individual services, the maximum service age is limited to 62 years.

SDGs Index 2019-20: Kerala tops the list while Bihar is worst performer
- NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant launched the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) India Index 2019-20 on December 30, 2019.
- This is the second edition of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) India Index, which indicates where the country and its States and UTs currently are on SDG implementation.
- Key points of the Index
Kerala, Himachal Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Telangana are top states on the SDGs Index-2019-20

India has improved its composite score from 57 in 2018-19 to 60 in 2019-20 in the index

None of the States scored below 50 out of 100 score.

The United Nations SDG has 17 goals spread across 169 targets and 232 indicators

Pan-Aadhaar linking final deadline is December 31: Know how to link PAN card with Aadhaar card online?
The final deadline for linking the pan card with the aadhaar card is December 31. Those who haven’t yet linked their pan with aadhaar can check how to link the two cards online and through SMS here. Those who are unsure whether they have linked their pan with Aadhaar can also confirm the same by following a few simple steps.

**BANKING AND ECONOMICS**

Govt launches drive to enroll 1 cr beneficiaries under two pension schemes

The government has launched a drive to enroll one crore beneficiaries under the Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maandhan (PM-SYM) and the National Pension Scheme for Traders and Self Employed Persons (NPS-Traders) by March next year.

Labour and Employment Minister Santosh Kumar Gangwar launched the drive to mark the celebrations of Pension week. Stating that both the schemes are simple and hassle-free, an Aadhaar card number along with a savings bank account or Jan-Dhan account are needed for enrollments.

RBI adds Debt ETFs as eligible securities for repo transactions

The Reserve Bank of India has announced that the Units of Debt Exchange Traded Funds (Debt ETFs) shall henceforth be eligible securities for repo transactions.

The securities eligible for repo under these Directions shall include:

1. Government securities issued by the Central Government or a State Government.
2. Listed corporate bonds and debentures, subject to the condition that no participant shall borrow against the collateral of its own securities, or securities issued by a related entity.
3. Commercial Papers (CPs) and Certificate of Deposits (CDs).
4. Units of Debt ETFs
5. Any other security of a local authority as may be specified in this behalf by the Central Government.

CRISIL cuts India’s GDP growth for FY20 to 5.1%

Rating Agency CRISIL has reduced the GDP growth rate projection for India for 2019-20 (FY20) to 5.1% from its earlier prediction of 6.3%.

This comes after the official data (Government of India) shows the second-quarter growth at 4.5%.

India and ADB Sign USD 206 million loan to strengthen urban services in 5 Tamil Nadu cities

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Government of India has signed $206 million loan on December 2, 2019 to develop water supply and sewerage infrastructure in 5 cities of Tamil Nadu.

The loan amount will also be used to strengthen capacities of urban local bodies (ULBs) for improved service delivery.
Masatsugu Asakawa elected ADB President
• The Asian Development Bank (ADB) said its board has unanimously elected Masatsugu Asakawa as its new president.
• Asakawa, 61, currently special advisor to Japan’s Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, will assume office as ADB’s 10th President on January 17, 2020.
• He will succeed Takehiko Nakao, who will leave office on January 16, 2020.

RBI 5th Bi-monthly Monetary Policy Review, 2019-20: Repo Rate unchanged at 5.15%
• The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) released its fifth bi-monthly monetary policy statement for 2019-20 in which the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), led by Governor Shaktikanta Das, decided to keep the policy repo rate unchanged at 5.15%.
• In 2019, the RBI has cut repo rate by 135 basis points so far to a nine-year low of 5.15%.
• Analysts were expecting another 25 basis points cut.
• RBI has also lowered its GDP growth forecast to 5%
• Key Policy Rates & Reserve Ratios
  Repo Rate  5.15%
  Reverse Repo Rate  4.90%
  Marginal Standing Facility Rate  5.40%
  Bank Rate  5.40%
  CRR  4%
  SLR  18.5%

RBI to introduce new prepaid payment instrument
• The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will introduce a new type of prepaid payment instrument (PPI) which could be used only for purchase of goods and services up to a limit of Rs 10,000.
• Accordingly, the loading of such PPI will be only through a bank account and it could be used for making only digital payments such as bill payments and merchant payments, among others.
• “Such PPIs can be issued on the basis of essential minimum details sourced from the customer. Instructions in this regard will be issued by December 31, 2019,” the RBI said in a statement on developmental and regulatory policies.
• PPIs are financial instruments that facilitate the purchase of goods and services against the value stored on such instruments.

RBI raises peer-to-peer lending limit five-times to 50 lakh
• The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has raised its lending limit to peer-to-peer (P2P) platforms five-folds to 50 lakh from current 10 lakh.
• However, the exposure of a single borrower is capped at 50,000 across all NBFC-P2P platforms.
• The decision was made after “a review of the functioning of the lending platforms and lending limit was carried out by RBI.”
• In the P2P industry, individual borrowers are connected to lenders through digital platforms, and the platform just plays the role of a marketplace. More than 15 companies have registered with the RBI as non-banking finance company P2P lending platforms.
RBI allows ‘on tap’ Licensing of Small Finance Banks in the Private Sector
• The Reserve Bank of India has released the Guidelines for ‘on tap’ Licensing of Small Finance Banks in the Private Sector. On tap licensing means, that now one can apply to open a Small Finance Bank whenever he/she wishes to open. This is unlike the previous case where RBI has issued in-principle approval to ten applicants only, to open Small Finance Bank.

Here are some important points related to this:
• The licensing window will be open on-tap;
• minimum paid-up voting equity capital / net worth requirement shall be Rs. 200 crore.
• for Primary (Urban) Co-operative Banks (UCBs), desirous of voluntarily transiting into Small Finance Banks (SFBs) initial requirement of net worth shall be at ₹ 100 crore, which will have to be increased to ₹ 200 crore within five years from the date of commencement of business.
• SFBs will be given scheduled bank status immediately upon commencement of operations
• Payments Banks can apply for conversion into SFB after five years of operations.

Exim Bank provides USD 500 mn credit to Bangladesh for defence procurement
• India has provided USD 500 million (Rs 3,561 crore) line of credit to Bangladesh for defence-related procurement in the neighbouring country.
• Export Import Bank of India (Exim Bank) entered into an agreement on April 11 with Bangladesh’s Armed Forces Division for making available to the latter a Government of India-supported line of credit (LoC) of USD 500 million
• The LoC is for the purpose of financing defence-related procurement in Bangladesh
• “Out of the total credit by Exim Bank under the agreement, goods and services including consultancy services of the value of at least 75 per cent of the contract price shall be supplied by the seller from India,” it said.
• The remaining 25 per cent of goods and services may be procured by the seller for the purpose of the eligible contract from outside India, including Bangladesh.
• But, based on the nature of the procurement, the eligible goods and services up to the contract price to be supplied by seller from India may be further reduced from 75 per cent to 65 per cent and further reduction may be considered on a case-to-case basis.
• The agreement under the LoC is effective from November 7.
• The terminal utilisation period of the loan is 10 years from the date of signing of the agreement.

ADB Lowers India’s GDP forecast to 5.1% for FY2019; 6.5% for FY 2020
• The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has lowered India’s economic growth forecast for FY 2019 to 5.1 percent from earlier estimate of 6.5 percent in its latest Asian Development Outlook 2019 Update.
• GDP forecast for 2019-20: 5.1%
• GDP forecast for 2020-21: 6.5%

Maruti Suzuki ties up with Federal Bank for dealer and retail car financing
• Maruti Suzuki India Ltd (MSIL) has joined hands with Federal Bank to provide dealer finance and customised auto retail financing solutions to customers.
• In August, MSIL had inducted Federal Bank as an approved partner for dealer inventory funding. The latest tie-up for retail financing to customers will further offer comprehensive loan access facilities to Maruti Suzuki dealers as well as customers.

About Maruti Suzuki:
https://www.toprankers.com/subscription-plans
• Founded: 1981
• Founder: Sanjay Gandhi
• Headquarters: New Delhi, India
• Chairman: R. C. Bhargava
• Managing Director & CEO: Kenichi Ayukawa

About Federal Bank:
• Founder: K.P Hormi
• Headquarters: Kochi, Kerala, India
• MD & CEO: Shyam Srinivasan

Moody’s Further Lowers India’s FY20 growth forecast to 4.9%
• Moody’s Investors Service has lowered its GDP growth projection for India for the fiscal year 2019-20 to 4.9 percent from 5.8 percent.
• The major factors responsible for weakening economic growth are rural financial stress, low job creation and liquidity constraints.
• The US ratings multinational has also lowered the growth forecast for FY 2020-21 to 6.3 percent from an earlier prediction of 6.6 percent.

HDFC Bank crosses $100 billion market capitalisation
• HDFC Bank has become the 3rd Indian firm to cross $100 billion mark in market capitalisation. HDFC Bank has joined the league of Reliance Industries Ltd, which has a market cap of $140.74 billion, and Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) that has a market cap of $114.60 billion.
• Managing Director of HDFC Bank: Aditya Puri; Headquarters: Mumbai, Maharashtra.
• Reliance Industries Ltd (market cap of $140.74 billion), and Tata Consultancy Services (market cap of $114.60 billion) are the only top companies in the country in the list.
• Globally, HDFC Bank now ranks 110th as most valued companies in the world which have market cap of over $100 billion.

Fitch reduces India’s GDP growth forecast to 4.6% in FY20
• Fitch Ratings has cut its GDP growth forecast for India to 4.6% for the 2019-20 fiscal from its earlier prediction of 5.6%.
• Fitch has reaffirmed India’s rating at ‘BBB-‘ with a Stable Outlook.
• In FY2020-21 the growth rate is predicted at 5.6 per cent and 6.5 per cent in FY2021-22 as per Fitch.

RBI Announces special Open Market Operation (OMO) Purchase and Sale of Government of India Dated Securities
• The Reserve Bank has decided to conduct simultaneous purchase and sale of government securities under Open Market Operations (OMO) for Rs.10,000 crores each.
• This has been done after a review of the current liquidity and market situation and an assessment of the evolving financial conditions.
• The RBI will buy Rs.10,000 crore of 6.45% government bonds maturing in 2029 and simultaneously sell Rs.10,000 crore of short-term bonds maturing in 2020.

USD 210 million loan for irrigation & solar energy projects in India approved by AIIB

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• The Beijing-based Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) has announced loan worth USD 210 million for irrigation and solar energy projects in India.
• Of the $210 million, $145 million will be used to improve irrigation services and strengthen flood risk management in West Bengal, while $65 million has been earmarked for a 250-megawatt (MW) solar project in Rajasthan.
• India is the second-largest shareholder of the multilateral institution and the largest recipient of its loan and equity commitments.
• The total commitments to the country stand at $3 billion out of total commitment of $10 billion.

Allahabad Bank, UCO Bank, IOB get Rs 8,655 cr fund infusion by GOI.
• Three loss making PSU Banks — Allahabad Bank, Indian Overseas Bank and UCO Bank – have got Rs 8,655 crore fresh capital infusion from the government.
• The Finance Ministry has approved infusing fresh capital amounting to Rs 2,153 crore in the Allahabad Bank, Rs 2,142 crore in the UCO Bank and Rs 4,360 crore in the Indian Overseas Bank via preferential allotment of shares.
• UCO Bank posted a loss of Rs 892 crore in Q2, Allahabad Bank a loss of Rs 2,103 crore and Indian Overseas Bank posted Rs 2,254 crore loss in July-September quarter.
• All these banks, except the Allahabad Bank, are currently under the Reserve Bank of India’s prompt corrective action (PCA) framework and they need to have net NPA below six per cent to get out of PCA which is a key criterion.
• These banks filed separate regulatory filings on their capital infusion.

RBI launches new PPI for small digital transactions
• The Reserve Bank of India has introduced a new semi-closed prepaid payment instrument (PPI) which can be used for the transaction of goods and services up to a limit of Rs 10,000.
• The loading facility of the instrument will be linked only from a bank account.
• This direction has made under Section 18 read with Section 10(2) of Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007.
• PPIs are instruments that facilitate the purchase of goods and services, including financial services, remittance facilities, etc., against the value stored on such instruments.
• There are currently three kinds of PPIs allowed by RBI: closed system, semi-closed and open PPIs.
• The PPIs may be issued as cards, wallets, and any such form/instrument which can be used to access the PPI and to use the amount therein.

About RBI:
RBI 25th Governor: Shaktikant Das;
Headquarters: Mumbai;
Founded: 1 April 1935, Kolkata.

Union Human Resource Development Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal ‘Nishank’ launched five documents developed by UGC
• The Union Human Resource Development Minister launched the 5 documents developed by UGC covering the 5 verticals of Quality Mandate in New Delhi.
• These 5 documents cover evaluation reforms, eco-friendly and sustainable university campuses, human values & professional ethics, faculty induction and academic research integrity.
• These 5 documents help to improve the quality in Higher Educational Institutions, University Grants Commission has adopted the Higher Education Quality Improvement Programme Mandate.
• The quality mandate aims at evolving higher education system to equip country’s next-generation with vital skills, knowledge and ethics for leading a rewarding life.

The 5th Round of India-Japan Maritime Affairs Dialogue was held in Tokyo
• The 5th Round of India-Japan Maritime Affairs Dialogue was held in Tokyo, Japan.
• The two sides exchanged views on various topics of mutual interest in the maritime domain and identified the means for further strengthening their maritime cooperation.
• Both sides reiterated the importance of the Dialogue as an important mechanism between the two countries for consultations on issues of mutual interest in maritime affairs and agreed to hold the next round of the Dialogue on a mutually convenient date in India.
• The first round of India-Japan Maritime dialogue was held in New Delhi in 2013.
• About Japan:
  Japan Capital: Tokyo,
  Currency: Japanese yen,
  PM: Shinzo Abe

RBI directs large co-op banks to report exposures above Rs 5 cr
• The Reserve Bank has directed large cooperative banks to report all exposures of Rs 5 crore and more to the Central Repository of Information on Large Credits (CRILC), a move aimed at early recognition of financial distress.
• The Reserve Bank has created a CRILC of commercial banks, all India financial institutions and certain non-banking financial companies with multiple objectives, which, among others, include strengthening offsite supervision and early recognition of financial distress.
• Earlier in its bi-monthly monetary policy review this month, the RBI had announced that to bring UCBs with assets of Rs 500 crore and above under the CRILC reporting framework.

RBI directs large Co-operative Banks to Report all exposures of Rs 5 crore and Above
• The Reserve Bank of India has decided that all Primary (Urban) Co-operative Banks (UCBs) having total assets of Rs 500 crore and above as on 31 March, 2018 shall report their credit information, including classification of an account as Special Mention Account (SMA), on all borrowers having aggregate exposures of Rs 5 crore and above with them to Central Repository of Information on Large Credits (CRILC) maintained by the Reserve Bank.
• Aggregate exposure shall include all fund-based and non-fund based exposure, including investment exposure on the borrower.

No MDR charges will be applicable on transactions through RuPay, UPI platforms from 01 January 2020
• The Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has announced that no Merchant Discount Rate (MDR) will be applicable on transactions made through RuPay and UPI platforms with effect from 01 January 2020.
• Also, all companies with a turnover of Rs 50 crore and above will now be mandated to provide the facility of payment through RuPay Debit card and UPI QR code to their customers.
• Merchant Discount Rate (MDR)
The cost paid by a merchant to a bank for accepting payment from their customers via digital means. It is expressed in percentage of the transaction amount.

**UN General Assembly approves $3.07 billion budget for 2020**
- The UN General Assembly has adopted the regular operating budget of $3.07 billion ($3,073,830,500) for the United Nations for the year 2020 and for the first time includes funding for the investigation of war crimes in Syria and Myanmar.
- It is also for the first time since 1973 that the UN is adopting an annual operating budget instead of a two-year.

**Assam Launches Abhinandan education loan subsidy scheme**
- Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal launched the state government’s Abhinandan education loan subsidy scheme to bolster its education infrastructure and urge more students to pursue higher education.
- Under the scheme, one-time subsidy of Rs. 50,000 will be provided to students who have availed education loans of a minimum of Rs 1 lakh, provided that loan should have been sanctioned before March 31, 2019.

**Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman Launches auction Platform ‘eBkray’ for assets attached by banks**
- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman launched a common e-auction platform ‘eBkray’ (ेबक्रय), on December 28, 2019, to enable online auction of attached assets by banks transparently and cleanly for the improved realization of value.
- The e-platform eBkray provides a single-window access to information on all the properties up for e-auction, as well as a facility for the comparison of similar properties.
- It is equipped with property search features and navigational links to all PSB e-auction sites, along with photographs and videos of uploaded properties.

**HDFC Life partners with Paytm to expand its distribution**
- HDFC Life Insurance has partnered with Paytm to expand its distribution. The partnership is aimed to enable customers of Paytm to purchase insurance products from HDFC Life.
- HDFC Life Insurance is constantly exploring opportunities to create and sustain new partnerships to strengthen its distribution network.
- With the partnership, HDFC Life Insurance aims to increase insurance penetration in India and to simplify the customers experience right from the purchase to the claim process.

**AWARDS AND RECOGNITION**

**Author Tony Joseph wins 2019 Shakti Bhatt First Book Prize for ‘Early Indians’**
- English author Tony Joseph has been awarded the 12th ‘Shakti Bhatt First Book Prize’ for his 2018 book, “Early Indians: The Story of Our Ancestors and Where We Came From”.
- Instituted in 2008, by the Shakti Bhatt Foundation, the award seeks to celebrate “extraordinary new writing in all genres” from South Asian countries.

**Andreescu wins Canada’s athlete of the year award**
US Open champion Bianca Andreescu has become the first tennis player to win Canada’s athlete of the year award.
- The title is awarded each year to Canada’s top athlete, and Andreescu, 19, put together a strong case throughout her 2019 season, during which she won her first WTA title at the BNP Paribas Open — a Premier Mandatory tournament — and her second at the Rogers Cup in Toronto, a Premier 5 event that Andreescu grew up attending.
- The youngster later became the first from her country to win a Grand Slam singles title in the US Open.

Infosys wins 2019 UN Global Climate Action Award in ‘Carbon Neutral Now’ category
- The Indian IT services major Infosys Ltd has been awarded with the United Nations Global Climate Action Award in the ‘Climate Neutral Now’ category at the ongoing 2019 UN Climate Change Conference in Madrid, Spain.
- Infosys has been honored for its carbon neutral program, which delivers scalable, innovative and practical climate actions that address climate change and help drive progress on many other sustainable development goals.

Science & Technology

Greta Thunberg named Time Person of the Year for 2019
- Greta Thunberg, the Swedish schoolgirl who inspired a global movement to fight climate change, has been named Time magazine's Person of the Year for 2019.
- The 16-year-old is the youngest person to be chosen by the magazine in a tradition that started in 1927.
- Speaking at a UN climate change summit in Madrid before the announcement, she urged world leaders to stop using "creative PR" to avoid real action.
- The next decade would define the planet's future, she said.
- Last year, the teenager started an environmental strike by missing lessons most Fridays to protest outside the Swedish parliament building. It sparked a worldwide movement that became popular with the hashtag #FridaysForFuture.
- Since then, she has become a strong voice for action on climate change, inspiring millions of students to join protests around the world. Earlier this year, she was nominated as a candidate for the Nobel Peace Prize.
- At the UN Climate Conference in New York in September, she blasted politicians for relying on young people for answers to climate change. In a now-famous speech, she said: "You have stolen my dreams and my childhood with your empty words. We'll be watching you."

Indian cricketer Rohit Sharma becomes first non-footballer to be named La Liga brand ambassador
- One of international cricket’s premier batsmen, Rohit Sharma was named the first-ever India brand ambassador of top Spanish football club Real Madrid.
- He is the first non-footballer in the history of the La Liga league to have become a brand ambassador.
- Rohit comes on board following a series of major initiatives by La Liga in India since 2017.
- The current ICC World No. 2, is the only batsman in the history of the game to have scored three double hundreds in the 50-overs format including a world record 264.
Merkel tops Forbes’ list of World’s Most Powerful Women for 9th straight year
• German Chancellor Angela Merkel has topped Forbes’ list of The World’s 100 Most Powerful Women for the ninth straight year.
• European Central Bank President Christine Lagarde has been placed second on the list.
• Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, ranked at 34, is among the 23 newcomers in the Forbes’ 2019 list of World’s 100 Most Powerful Women.
• HCL Technologies Vice Chairperson Roshni Nadar Malhotra was ranked as 54th most powerful woman while Biocon Chairperson Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw was at 65.

World Habitat Award’ for Odisha’s JAGA Mission
• Odisha has won the ‘World Habitat Award’ for its ambitious initiative- Jaga Mission.
• It aims at transforming the slums into liveable habitat with all necessary civic infrastructure and services at par with the better off areas within the same urban local body and to continuously improve the standard of the infrastructure and services and access to livelihood opportunities.

World Habitat Award:
• This award is given by World Habitat, in partnership with United Nations Habitat, every year, in recognition of innovative, outstanding, and revolutionary ideas, projects, and programmes from across the world in the field of housing.

Salman Khan appointed as Pepsi’s new brand ambassador
• Food and beverage giant PepsiCo has roped in Bollywood actor Salman Khan as the new face of its flagship Pepsi brand of carbonated beverage in India.
• To note, the actor has been the face of rival Coca-Cola’s popular ThumsUp brand for years and was recently seen promoting Parle Agro-backed soft drink Appy Fizz.
• In 2020, we look forward to building the brand’s Har Ghoont Mein Swag proposition with Salman in 2020,” said a PepsiCo India spokesperson.

Deepika Padukone Wins WEF’s Crystal Award For Raising Mental Health Awareness
• Bollywood actress Deepika Padukone has been honoured with the World Economic Forum’s 26th Annual Crystal Award for raising mental health awareness.
• She is the only Indian actress to feature in Davos 2020 winners list which includes total four winners.

Jamaica’s ‘Tony-Ann Singh’ crowned as ‘Miss World 2019’
• The Miss World title for the year 2019 has been won by Toni-Ann Singh of Jamaica, at the annual beauty pageant in London, UK on December 14.
• The 23-year-old Toni-Ann Singhis a women’s studies and psychology student at US’ Florida State University.
• France’s OphelyMezino came second.
• SumanRao, who represented India in the annual beauty pageant, came in third.

Australia’s Ashleigh Barty Wins WTA Player of the Year 2019
• The WTA Awards are given by the Women’s Tennis Association to players for outstanding achievements during the season or their career.
• The winners of 2019 WTA Awards are given below:
• WTA Player of the Year 2019: Ashleigh Barty (Australia)
• WTA Doubles Team of the Year: TimeaBabos (Hungary) / Kristina Mladenovic (France)
• WTA Most Improved Player of the Year: Sofia Kenin (United States)
• WTA Newcomer of the Year: Bianca Andreescu (Canada)
• WTA Comeback Player of the Year: Belinda Bencic (Switzerland)
• WTA Jerry Diamond ACES Award: Kiki Bertens (Netherlands)

England cricketer Ben Stokes wins BBC Sports Personality of the Year 2019
• The 28-year-old, England cricketer Ben Stokes has been named BBC Sports Personality of the Year 2019.
• He became the first cricketer to win the prize after Andrew Flintoff, who won in 2005.
• The BBC Sports Personality of the Year 2019 was held on 15 December 2019 in Aberdeen, United Kingdom
• Other award winners at Sports Personality 2019

Virat Kohli tops Forbes India’s 2019 Celebrity list
• Indian Cricketer Virat Kohli has topped the Forbes India’s 2019 Celebrity list.
• The celebrity ranks are based on an aggregate of the estimated earnings and their calculated fame quotient, via print and social media reach.
• Actor Akshay Kumar is ranked second, followed by Salman Khan on third. Alia Bhatt is the top ranked female in the list and is ranked 8th.

Sahitya Akademi award 2019 released
The complete list of winners in a different language and genre categories is given in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Title and Genre</th>
<th>Name of the Author</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Assamese</td>
<td>Chanakya (Novel)</td>
<td>Joysree Goswami Mahanta</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Bengali</td>
<td>Ghumer Darja Thele (Essays)</td>
<td>Chinmoy Guha</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Bodo</td>
<td>Akhai Athumniphrai (Poetry)</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Dogri</td>
<td>Bandralta Darpan (Essays)</td>
<td>Om Sharma Jandriari</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>An Era of Darkness (Non-Fiction)</td>
<td>Shashi Tharoor</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Gujarati</td>
<td>Mojma Revu Re (Essays)</td>
<td>Ratilal Borisagar</td>
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<td>Chheelate Hue Apne Ko (Poetry)</td>
<td>Nand Kishore Acharya</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Kannada</td>
<td>Kudi Esar (Autobiography)</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Kashmiri</td>
<td>Akh Yaad Akh Qayamat</td>
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<td>Jingik Oriaon Kariat (Poetry)</td>
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<td>Malayalam</td>
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<td>Manipuri</td>
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<td>Marathi</td>
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<td>Anuradha Patil</td>
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<td>Odia</td>
<td>Bhaswati (Short Stories)</td>
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<td>Telugu</td>
<td>Septabhoomi (Novel)</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>Urdu</td>
<td>Sawaneh-E-Sir Syed: Ek Bazadeed (Biography)</td>
<td>Shafey Kidwai</td>
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</tbody>
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Nadal and Barty named 2019 ITF World Champions

https://www.toprankers.com/subscription-plans
• Ashleigh Barty and Rafael Nadal were named International Tennis Federation’s (ITF) World Champions in singles for 2019. This awards will be given at the 2020 ITF world champions 2nd June, in Paris.

**Indian Archaeologist honoured in Bangladesh**
• Noted archaeologist R. Nagaswamy was honoured at the Silver Jubilee International Conference of Art in Dhaka by Bangladesh. He is an Indian historian, archaeologist and epigraphist. He served as the founder-director of Tamilnadu Archaeology Department. In 2018 he was awarded India's third highest civilian award Padma Bhushan.

**National Bravery Award: Malayali boy bags top bravery award**
• Aditya K. of Kozhikode, Kerala has become the first child from the State to bag the Bharat Award for bravery.
• The Bharat Award has gone to Aditya for rescued 20 people from a bus carrying members of the Calicut University Pensioners' Forum and their families when it caught fire coming down a steep mountain road.
• Two more children from the State are also recipients of the awards. Muhammed Mohsin has been given the award posthumously for saving the lives of three children.
• Fatah gets the award for rescuing a woman and a girl from an approaching train. Both belong to Kozhikode.

**American Academy of Ophthalmology bestows Life Achievement honour to Indian Ophthalmologist Dr Santosh G Honavar**
• Dr Santosh G Honavar, India’s ophthalmologist is conferred with American Academy of Ophthalmology’s (AAO) highest award Life Achievement honour that is given to its members. He is the first Indian chosen for the honour.
• The award was formally presented to Dr Honavar recently at the Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Ophthalmology held in San Francisco.
• Dr Santosh G. Honavar, a Hyderabad-based Indian ophthalmologist was chosen for its highest award to recognize his contributions to the Academy, its scientific and educational programs, and to the advancement of ophthalmology.

**About American Academy of Ophthalmology:**
• American Academy of Ophthalmology is the world’s largest association of eye specialists. The mission of the American Academy of Ophthalmology is to protect sight and empower lives by serving as an advocate for patients and the public, leading ophthalmic education, and advancing the profession of ophthalmology.
• Founded in 1896 and headquartered in San Francisco, USA, American Academy of Ophthalmology has 32,000 professional members. 90 per cent of its members are practising ophthalmologists.

**Unicef award to Kamareddy dist. for Swachh Bharat implementation**
• Kamareddy district of Telangana has secured the United Nations International Children’s and Education Fund (Unicef)-2019 Award.
• The district has won the award for effective implementation of Swachh Bharat Mission in water sanitation and hygiene sectors.
• Kamareddy district was on top in the country among other districts in construction of individual sanitary lavatories, swachh darpan wall paintings, swachh survekshan, swachh sundar shouchalay and many other activities.

President confers Dada Saheb Phalke Award to Amitabh Bachchan: Top tweets
Amitabh Bachchan was honoured with India’s highest film award, Dada Saheb Phalke Award by President Ram Nath Kovind on December 29, 2019. The legendary actor had missed out on the 66th National Film Awards ceremony due to health issues. The actor was conferred the award amidst an audience that comprised his family and the National Film Awards 2018 winners and jury members.

SPORTS

Union Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju Launch 3rd Khelo India Youth Games in Guwahati
• The launching ceremony of the Composite Logo, Mascot, Jersey and Theme song of the third edition of Khelo India Youth Games 2020 took place at Karmabir Nabin Chandra Bordoloi Indoor Stadium, Sarusajai, Guwahati, Assam on November 30, 2019.
• The event was jointly inaugurated by Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal in the presence of Kiren Rijiju, Union Minister of State (I/C) for Youth Affairs and Sports.
• The 2020 Games will be held from 10 January 2020 to 22 January 2020.
• It will be conducted in partnership with the Indian Olympic Association (IOA), School Games Federation of India (SGFI), and Assam as the host State.
• The event will be held in 20 disciplines with the participation of 37 States and Union Territories.

Lewis Hamilton wins Abu Dhabi Grand Prix to Clinch 11th Title of the Season
• The Mercedes driver Lewis Hamilton has won the 2019 Formula 1 season finale Abu Dhabi Grand Prix, held on December 1, 2019, to end the season with 11th title.
• With this Lewis Hamilton successfully defended the World Drivers’ Championship title for the second year running and sixth world drivers’ title overall.
• Red Bull’s Max Verstappen finished runner-up while Ferrari driver Charles Leclerc came third.

13th South Asian Games Kicked Off in Nepal
• President of Nepal, Bidya Devi Bhandari declared the 2019 South Asian Games 2019 open. The inauguration ceremony was held at Dasharath Stadium in Kathmandu, Nepal.
• The XIII South Asian Games will be held from December 1 to 10 in Kathmandu, Pokhara and Janakpur cities of Nepal and will see the participation of around 2700 athletes from seven countries. (Nepal, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Maldives, Bhutan and Sri Lanka).
• Mascot of 2019 SAG: Krishnasar (the blackbuck antelope) is the official mascot.
• Tajinder Pal Singh Toor (shot putter) was the flag-bearer of India in the opening ceremony at South Asian Games.

Lionel Messi and Megan Rapinoe win 2019 Ballon d’Or awards
• Barcelona forward Lionel Messi won this year’s Ballon d’Or award.
• The 32-year-old Argentine overtook Cristiano Ronaldo and took his tally of Ballon d’Or wins to six, the most by any player.
• Messi and Ronaldo have now won 11 of the past 12 Ballon d’Ors.
• 2019 FIFA Women’s World Cup-winning US co-captain Megan Rapinoe won the women’s Ballon d’Or.

**Indian men’s volleyball team beat Pakistan to clinch Gold at 13th South Asian Games**
- The Indian men’s volleyball team defeated Pakistan by 3-1 in finals at the South Asian Games 2019 to win gold.
- The bronze medal ent to Sri Lanka.
- Meanwhile, in the women’s final, Indian team beat hosts Nepal 3-2 to clinch the gold. Here also Sri Lanka won bronze.
- South Asian Games 2019 is being held in Kathmandu, Nepal from December 1-10, 2019.

**New Zealand win MCC’s Spirit of Cricket award for 2019**
- New Zealand cricket team has been awarded the MCC’s Christopher Martin-Jenkins (CMJ) Spirit of Cricket Award 2019 for their “sporting conduct” in ICC Men’s World Cup 2019 final.
- The Kane Williamson-led team had lost to England after a tied Super Over by the virtue of having scored fewer boundaries. “Their actions deserve this recognition,” said MCC President Kumar Sangakkara.
- 2018’s joint winners were Dan Bowser and Chris Edwards of the England Learning Disability team, who were recognised for their outstanding sporting actions during the team’s tour of the Netherlands.
- The CMJ Spirit of Cricket award was created in 2013 by Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) and the BBC in memory of former MCC President and BBC Test Match Special commentator Christopher Martin-Jenkins (“CMJ”), who was passionate about promoting the spirit of the game.

**Cristiano Ronaldo named Serie A Player of the Year**
- Juventus forward Cristiano Ronaldo has been named the Serie A Player of the Year.
- For the first time at the Italian ceremony, there were also awards for female players, with Roma and Italy forward Manuela Giugliano winning the top prize.
- Ronaldo signed for Juventus from Real Madrid in July 2018 and helped Juventus win their eighth successive Serie A title.

**James Johnson appointed to run Australian football**
- James Johnson, former FIFA head of football, has been appointed as the new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Football Federation Australia (FFA). Johnson will commence in the role from January next year.
- Johnson arrives in the role with a wealth of experience under his belt having been the Senior Vice President of External Affairs with the City Football Group (CFG) most recently.
- He has previously held positions with FIFA — as head of professional football and senior manager member associations — and the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) as director of international relations and development.

**Former TT coach and Dronacharya awardee Bhawani Mukherji passes away**
- Former India Table tennis head coach Bhawani Mukherji died at his residence.
- Mukherji, 68, is survived by his wife and a son.
- He was the head coach at NIS Patiala and became the head coach of the national team for a brief period after the 2010 Commonwealth Games.
• He was bestowed with the Dronacharya Award in 2012, thus becoming the first coach to earn the recognition in table tennis.

**Indian Army lifts Sudan Polo Cup**

• The Indian Army team lifts Sudan Polo Cup, one the most prestigious polo tournament, beating British Army team. The match took place at the Jaipur Polo Grounds in Delhi between the both the polo teams.
• In a well contested match, the Indian team won the match by 5-3 following which Vice Chief of Indian Army Lieutenant General Manoj Mukund Naravane felicitated the teams.
• The Sudan Cup, is one of the most prestigious polo tournament, played between the British Army and the Indian Army alternately in India and UK. It was instituted in 1922.

**Armed Forces Flag Day: 7 December.**

Armed Forces Flag Day or the Flag Day of India is observed annually in India on December 7 since 1949 as an honour to the soldiers, sailors and airmen of India who fought on the borders to keep the country safe.

**Indian Junior Women’s Hockey team win 3-Nations Tournament in Australia**

• The Indian junior women’s team has won the 3-Nations Tournament held in Australia from 3-8 December 2019.
• India secured 7 points to be placed at top position in the points table.
• Hosts Australia stood second while New Zealand finished third.

**Russia banned from global sports for 4 years over doping, to miss Olympics**

• World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) has handed a four-year suspension to Russian Athletics Federation from all major sporting events, which includes the upcoming Tokyo Olympics and World Championships.
• Russia’s anti-doping agency can appeal the decision to the Court of Arbitration for Sport within 21 days.
• The ruling means Russian athletes will still be allowed to compete at the Tokyo Olympics as neutrals, but only if they can demonstrate that they were not part of what WADA believes was a state-sponsored system of doping.
• The Russian flag and national anthem have also been banned in global events.
• Earlier this year, WADA investigators and International Olympic Committee (IOC) had stated the Russian authorities tampered with a Moscow laboratory database to hide several potential doping cases.

**Flamengo striker Barbosa wins Brazil’s Golden Ball**

• Rio de Janeiro, Inter Milan loanee Gabriel Barbosa has won the Golden Ball for the best player in Brazil’s 2019 Serie A championship.
• He was one of seven Flamengo players named in the Serie A team of the year, joining goalkeeper Diego Alves, right-back Rafinha, midfielders Gerson, Willian Arao and Giorgian de Arrascaeta and forward Bruno Henrique.
• Others selected in Brazilian football’s ideal XI were Palmeiras defender Gustavo Gomes, Santos center-back Lucas Verissimo, Santos left-back Jorge and Palmeiras playmaker Dudu.
• Flamengo’s Portuguese head coach Jorge Jesus was named manager of the year and Corinthians forward Millene Fernandes was voted the outstanding women’s player.
• The best young footballer award went to 22-year-old Goias forward Michael Delgado.

**Abu Dhabi selected as world’s leading sports tourism destination**

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

• The award is the latest in several prestigious accolades gained by Abu Dhabi this year, including being selected as the West Asia’s Leading Business Tourism Destination at the West Asia edition of WTA and Best City Break at the UK’s Selling Travel Agents’ Choice Awards.

• Abu Dhabi shined as a premium destination once again for sports tourism in 2019 after hosting some of the world’s top sporting events, such as the FIFA Club World Cup 2017 and 2018, the first edition of the UAE Tour, the AFC Asian Cup 2019, the Special Olympics World Games 2019, the UFC 242 showdown and the Brazil vs South Korea international friendly match.

• The UAE capital also continues to play host to annual acclaimed sports events including the Formula 1 Etihad Abu Dhabi Grand Prix, the ADNOC Abu Dhabi Marathon, the Mubadala World Tennis Championship, the Abu Dhabi Golf Championship and the ITU World Triathlon Abu Dhabi.

• Abu Dhabi has been making strides within sports tourism by developing sports facilities and events across the capital. Earlier this year, Department of Culture and Tourism, Abu Dhabi had announced a five-year partnership with the UFC (Ultimate Fighting Championship) to host annual premier fixtures in the capital as part of Abu Dhabi Showdown Week.

• The emirate has also recently won the rights to host the FINA Short Course World Championship in 2020.

• World Travel Awards was established in 1993 to acknowledge, reward and celebrate excellence across all key sectors of the travel, tourism and hospitality industries.

**FICCI set to organize 9th Global Sports Summit “TURF 2019”**

• After the successful execution of the previous 8 editions, FICCI returns with the highly prestigious Global Sports Summit “TURF” which is slated to be held at the FICCI, Federation house in the national capital on December 11.

• This will be the 9th edition of the Global Summit which will witness esteemed sports personalities, administrators and members from the Indian sports fraternity be a part of the event.

• These awards are an attempt by FICCI to acknowledge the contribution and felicitate sports achievers and the various stakeholders who co-create the evolving sports ecosystem. The event is powered by FIT INDIA, Partner State: Odisha Government, Summit Partner: Star India, Brand Partners: Tata Edelweiss.

**13th South Asian Games concluded in Nepal**

• India concluded the South Asian Games with their highest medal tally in the history of the tournament.

• The contingent was able to win 312 medals, which includes 174 gold, 93 silver, and 45 bronze medals.

• India had claimed 309 medals in the 2016 edition of the South Asian Games and by winning 312 this time around, the contingent has broken their record.

• Nepal concluded the tournament at the second position in the medal tally with a total of 206 medals. Sri Lanka and Pakistan are on the third and fourth spots respectively.

Indian Grandmaster R. Praggnanandhaa wins London Chess Classic FIDE Open 2019
• India’s young grandmaster R. Praggnanandhaa has won the London Chess Classic FIDE Open 2019 Championship.
• The 14-year-old finished joint first with Anton Smirnov of Australia, with a score of 7.5/9.
• The third seed scored a rating performance of 2699.

Graeme Smith: Former captain named South Africa acting director of cricket
• South Africa have appointed former captain Graeme Smith as acting director of cricket for three months, taking in England’s four-match Test series starting later this month.
• Smith will take charge until the Indian Premier League starts in March, where he will take up a commentary position.
• The 38-year-old initially withdrew his application for the role last month.
• Smith’s appointment comes at a difficult time for Cricket South Africa, with chief executive Thabang Moroe currently suspended after allegations of misconduct.
• Smith made his South Africa debut in 2002 and succeeded Shaun Pollock as captain the following year, becoming the Proteas’ youngest ever skipper at the age of 22.
• He went on to play in 177 Test matches, 197 one-day internationals and 33 Twenty20 internationals before retiring in 2014.

Rohit Sharma Becomes 1st Indian To Hit 400 Sixes In International Cricket
• Opener Rohit Sharma has become the first Indian batsman to smash 400 sixes in international cricket.
• The 32-year-old achieved the feat by smashing his first six in the third T20I against West Indies in Mumbai.
• Overall, Rohit is the third cricketer to reach the milestone after Chris Gayle (534) and Shahid Afridi (476).

Rani and Saurabh honoured at FICCI India Sports Awards
• Indian women’s hockey team captain Rani and Asian Games gold medallist shooter Saurabh Chaudhary won the top honours at the FICCI India Sports Awards 2019.
• The awards are an attempt by FICCI to acknowledge and recognise the contribution of athletes and various stakeholders.
• Odisha’s sports minister Tusharkanti Behera and the state’s sports secretary Vishal Kumar Dev presented the awards to the winners.
• The FICCI India Sports Awards 2019 have been conferred by a jury headed by Mukul Mudgal, Retired Judge, Delhi High Court, and Chief Justice of Punjab and Haryana High Court.

Former Afghanistan captain Asghar Afghan has been reappointed as the skipper across all the three formats of the game.
• Asghar was replaced with Rahmat Shah, Gulbadin Naib and Rashid Khan as Test, ODI and T20I captains, respectively in April this year.
• However, following the team’s poor run in the World Cup, leg-spinner Rashid Khan was named the captain across formats.
• The 32-year-old Asghar has represented Afghanistan in 111 ODIs, 66 T20 Internationals and 4 Test matches.

Kento Momota & Chen Yufei Lifts 2019 BWF World Tour Finals

https://www.toprankers.com/subscription-plans
• The 2019 BWF World Tour Finals (HSBC BWF World Tour Finals 2019) was the final badminton tournament of the 2019 BWF World Tour. It was held from 11 to 15 December 2019 in Guangzhou, China.

**List of Winners**
1. Men’s Single – Kento Momota (Japan)
2. Women’s Single – Chen Yufei (China)
3. Men’s Double – Mohammad Ahsan and Hendra Setiawan (Indonesia)
4. Women’s Double – Chen Qingchen and Jia Yifan (China)
5. Mixed Double – Zheng Siwei and Huang Yaqiong (China)

**Australian all-rounder Ellyse Perry named ICC Women’s Cricketer of the Year**
• Australian all-rounder Ellyse Perry has been named ICC Women’s Cricketer of the Year for the second time in three years.
• Perry also won the ICC Women’s ODI Player of the Year award. Perry has scored 441 ODI runs and taken 21 wickets this year.
• Australia wicketkeeper Alyssa Healy won T20I Women’s Cricketer of the Year award the second straight year.

**S. Mandhana in ICC’s ODI and T20 team of the year**
• India opener Smriti Mandhana was named in both the International Cricket Council’s ODI and T20 teams of the year. She has Jhulan Goswami, Poonam Yadav and Shikha Pandey for the company in the ODI team of the year and all-rounder Deepthi Sharma in the T20 side.
• Mandhana has played 51 ODIs and 66 T20Is for India, besides a couple of Test matches. She has combined tally of 3476 runs in T20Is and ODIs.
• ICC CEO: Manu Sahney; Headquarters: Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

**Rafael Nadal, Ashleigh Barty named ITF World Champions for 2019**
• Ashleigh Barty (Australia) and Rafael Nadal (Spain) have been named as the ITF’s world champions for 2019 women’s and men’s respectively.
• They have been named the champions as they finished at the top in their respective category rankings.

**Liverpool won FIFA Club World Cup champions**
• Liverpool has won the FIFA Club World Cup for the first time. Roberto Firmino scored the decisive goal in the 9th minute of extra time.
• The finals was held in Khalifa International Stadium in Qatar’s capital city of Doha.
• Liverpool defeated Flamengo in the finals.

**ICC T20I rankings: Radha retains 2nd position in bowlers’ list.**
• The International Cricket Council (ICC) T20I (Twenty-twenty International) rankings for Women players were released.
• Spinner Radha Yadav remained in the second position in the Bowler rankings which is the highest of all category rankings by an Indian Women’s cricketer in the recently released T20I women’s rankings.
Meiraba Luwang clinches Bangladesh Junior Int'l Series title.
- India's shuttler Maisnam Meiraba Luwang has won the Men's singles Bangladesh Junior International Badminton Series 2019 in Dhaka.
  - Top-seeded Meiraba, who hails from Manipur, beat Ken Yong Ong 21, 14, 21-18 in the final lasting 38 minutes on Sunday.

Leander Paes to retire from Tennis in 2020.
- India veteran tennis player Leander Paes announced that the coming year, 2020, will be his last year on the court.
  - Paes has won eight doubles and ten mixed doubles Grand Slam titles. He received the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna award, India's highest sporting honor, in 1996-97; the Arjuna Award in 1990; the Padma Shri award in 2001; and India's third-highest civilian award, the Padma Bhushan prize in January 2014, for his outstanding contribution to tennis.
  - He won a bronze medal for India in singles in the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games. He competed in consecutive Olympics from 1992 to 2016, making him the first Indian and only tennis player to compete at seven Olympic Games.

Virat Kohli named in Wisden cricketers of the decade list
- Indian skipper Virat Kohli is one of the five players named in the Wisden Cricketers of the Decade.
- Kohli joins Australian batsman Steve Smith, and South Africans, Dale Steyn, and AB de Villiers.
- Australian all-rounder Ellyse Perry is the only female cricketer in the list.

James Anderson first specialist bowler in history to play 150 Test matches.
- England's 37-year-old fast bowler James Anderson has become the first specialist bowler in history to play 150 Test matches.
- Anderson achieved the feat after taking the field in the Boxing Day Test against South Africa in Centurion.

Weightlifter Seema banned for four years for doping
- Commonwealth Championship silver medallist weightlifter Seema has been banned for doping
  - She had been given a four-year suspension by NADA's Anti-Doping Disciplinary Panel
  - Seema won a silver medal in the 2017 Commonwealth Championships and finished sixth in the women's 75kg competition at the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games in 2018.
  - About NADA:
    - Formation: November 24, 2005
    - Headquarters: New Delhi, India
    - Chairman: Minister of Sports (India)

Former Chennai Super Kings Spinner Shadab Jakati Retires From All Forms of Cricket
- Goa spinner Shadab Jakati announced retirement from all forms of cricket after playing for 23 years.
  - Shadab Jakati had scalped 275 wickets from 92 first-class matches Jakati debuted in first-class cricket in 1998/99 and played his last first-class match against Punjab in October 2017.
  - He also played for Chennai Super Kings (CSK), Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) and Gujarat Lions in the Indian Premier League.
APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATION

Soma Roy Burman Takes charge as new Controller General of Accounts (CGA)
• A 1986-batch Indian Civil Accounts Service (ICAS) Officer, Smt Soma Roy Burman has been appointed as the new Controller General of Accounts (CGA), Ministry of Finance, Department of Expenditure with effect from December 1, 2019.
• Smt. Burman is the 24th CGA and 7th woman to hold the position.
• Prior to this, she served as Additional Controller General of Accounts in the office of CGA.

Shri Hari Mohan Appointed as Chairman of Ordnance Factory Board
• Shri Hari Mohan, a 1982-batch Indian Ordnance Factories' Service (I.O.F.S.) officer, has taken over the charge as Chairman of Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) on December 01, 2019.
• He succeeds Shri Saurabh Kumar who superannuated from the services.

Iraqi PM Adel Abdul Mahdi resigns amid anti-government protests
• Iraqi Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi has submitted his resignation to Parliament amid ongoing anti-government protests across the country. The formal resignation came after an emergency cabinet session in which ministers approved the document and the resignation of key staffers, including Abdul Mahdi’s chief of staff.
• Barham Salih is the current President of Iraq.
Baghdad is the capital of Iraq.
The Iraqi dinar is the currency of Iraq.

Govt appoints Soma Roy Burman as new Controller General of Accounts
• The government said it has appointed Soma Roy Burman, a 1986-batch Indian Civil Accounts Service Officer, as the new Controller General of Accounts (CGA). Burman is the 24th CGA and is the seventh woman to hold this position.
• During her 33-year long career, she has held cadre positions at different levels in ministries such as Home Affairs, Information & Broadcasting, Industry, Finance, Human Resource Development and Shipping, Road Transport & Highways.
• Prior to this, Burman served as the Additional Controller General of Accounts in the office of CGA, handling the critical areas of accounting rules, policy and reforms, financial reporting, data analytics, cash and budget management.

Sundar Pichai becomes Alphabet CEO as Google Co-founders step down
• Google Co-founders Larry Page and Sergey Brin have announced Google CEO Sundar Pichai is replacing Page as CEO of parent company Alphabet.
• Larry Page and Sergey Brin have decided to transition from their roles as CEO and President, respectively, of Alphabet.
• Page became CEO of Alphabet after Google restructured to form the parent company in 2015. He had previously been CEO of Google.

Pritivirajsing Roopun elected as new President of Mauritius by parliament

https://www.toprankers.com/subscription-plans
Pritivirajsing Roopun (also known as Pradeep Roopun) has been sworn in as the new and 7th President of the island nation Mauritius on December 2, 2019.

The 61-year-old succeeds Ameenah Gurib-Fakim, who resigned in March 2018.

Roopan was the former arts and culture minister of the country.

Rajendran Chinna Veerappan Re-appointed MD & CEO of CSB Bank

The board of directors of Kerala based CSB Bank (formerly known as Catholic Syrian Bank) has re-appointed Rajendran Chinna Veerappan as Managing Director and CEO of the Bank.

He will serve the second three years terms with effect from 9 December till 8 December 2022.

Veerappan has been on CSB board since November 2016 and his tenure was to end on 8 December.

Ex-Petroleum Secy Chaturvedi appointed NSE Chairman

Former bureaucrat Girish Chandra Chaturvedi has been appointed as the Chairman of the governing board of the NSE.

The development comes after NSE received regulator SEBI”s approval on Chaturvedi”s appointment. He held the post of Public Interest Director at the company.

“The Board and the Management of National Stock Exchange of India Limited (NSE) welcomes Girish Chandra Chaturvedi, a retired IAS Officer and former Secretary, Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, as the new Chairman of NSE,” the stock exchange major said in a statement.

Finland elects Sanna Marin, the youngest-ever Prime Minister

Finland’s Social Democrats elected a 34-year-old former transport minister to the post of the prime minister, making her the youngest head of government in the country’s history.

Sanna Marin narrowly won vote to replace outgoing leader Antti Rinne, who resigned after losing the confidence of the coalition partner Centre Party over his handling of a postal strike.

At 34, Marin also becomes one of the world’s youngest state leaders, ahead of Ukraine’s prime minister Oleksiy Honcharuk, who is currently 35.

Jairam Sridharan steps down as Axis Bank CFO

Jairam Sridharan, Group Executive and Chief Financial Officer and Key Managerial Personnel of Axis Bank, has stepped down from his post. He informed that he would like to pursue other career opportunities and as such has resigned from his services, Axis Bank said in a filing on Bombay Stock Exchange.

Sridharan will continue to serve as the Group Executive and Chief Financial Officer of the bank under his notice period of three months, Axis Bank further stated in its statement.

He joined Axis Bank in 2010 and was elevated to the group CFO’s position in 2015.

Arnab Goswami elected president of News Broadcasters Federation’s governing board

The News Broadcasters Federation has elected journalist Arnab Goswami as the president of its governing board.

The broadcaster’s body comprises of 78 news channels in 14 languages from 25 states.

The members unanimously elected Goswami, who is the managing director and editor-in-chief of Republic TV, to be president of the governing board.

The self-regulation mechanism of the body will be led by a chairperson, four eminent personalities and four editors.
National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) Ropes in Suniel Shetty as Brand Ambassador
• Bollywood actor Suniel Shetty was appointed as the brand ambassador of the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA).
• NADA along with the All India Football Federation (AIFF) recently conducted anti-doping awareness workshops for all footballers.
• The mass athlete awareness program against doping, which is a NADA educational programme, is set to be a regular fixture from 2019-20 onwards.

Paytm's founder Vijay Shekhar Sharma has resigned as the director of Paytm Financial Services.
• Vijay Shekhar Sharma has resigned as the Director of Paytm Financial Services, citing “other preoccupations” as the reason.
• Replacing him is Rohit Lohia, who is currently Vice President of Paytm’s lending business and came on board the financial services company in July 2019.
• Sharma will continue as Founder and CEO of Paytm and Paytm’s parent company, One97 and also as the Chairman of Paytm’s financial entity.

Ashok Leyland names former JCB India chief Vipin Sondhi as MD and CEO
• Chennai-based commercial vehicle manufacturer Ashok Leyland appointed Vipin Sondhi as its Managing Director and CEO for a period of five years.
• Sondhi was the MD and CEO of JCB India for about 14 years.
• Prior to Sondhi, the Hinduja Group company was being led by Vinod Dasari, who quit to join Royal Enfield as CEO in April.
About Ashok Leyland:
• Industry: Automotive Commercial
• Founded: 7 September 1948
• Headquarters: Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India
• Parent: Hinduja Group

Lt Gen Manoj Mukund Naravane appointed as next Army chief
• Lieutenant General Manoj Mukund Naravane, who is currently Vice Chief of Army Staff, has been named as next Indian Army Chief.
• An alumnus of National Defence Academy, the Lieutenant General was part of the Indian Peace Keeping Force in Sri Lanka.
• In his 39-year military career, he has commanded a Rashtriya Rifles battalion, raised an infantry brigade and headed the Army Training Command.
• Naravane will replace General Bipin Rawat, who became Army Chief on December 31, 2016.

COO Sanjiv Kapoor quits Vistara, succeeded by Vinod Kannan.
• Vistara’s Chief Commercial Officer (CCO) Sanjiv Kapoor has resigned from his position over ‘personal reasons’, the Tata Group airline said in a statement.
• The last working day for Kapoor, who joined Vistara in 2016, will be December 31, the statement added.
The airline’s Chief Strategy Officer, Vinod Kannan, will take over as the new CCO.

About Vistara:
- Founded: 2013
- Company slogan: Fly the new feeling
- Parent company: Tata Sons
- Headquarters: Gurgaon

IAS Ravi Mittal replaces Amit Khare as new I&B secretary
- IAS officer Ravi Mittal took charge as the new Secretary, Information and Broadcasting Ministry.
- Mr Mittal took charge from Amit Khare who has been appointed as Secretary, Department of Higher Education.
- Before this, Mr Mittal, a 1986 batch IAS officer of Bihar Cadre, was working as the Special Secretary in the Department of Financial Services, Ministry of Finance.

Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (India):
- Headquarters: New Delhi
- Minister of Information and Broadcasting: Prakash Javadekar

Cyrus Mistry restored as Executive Chairman of Tata Sons
- The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) has restored Cyrus Mistry as Executive Chairman of Tata Sons and ruled that his ouster in 2016 was illegal.
- Mistry had taken over as Tata Sons’ sixth chairman in 2012 after Ratan Tata announced his retirement.
- The Mistry family is the single largest shareholder in Tata Sons, with an 18.4% stake.

Sridhar Patra appointed NALCO CMD
- Sridhar Patra was appointed as the chairman-cum-managing director of NALCO, a Personnel Ministry order said.
- Patra is at present Director (Finance) in the National Aluminium Company Limited (NALCO).
- He has been appointed as the CMD of NALCO till the date of his superannuation, i.e. October 31, 2024, the order said.

Devesh Srivastava appointed GIC chief
- Devesh Srivastava took charge as the Chairman and Managing director of General Insurance Corporation of India on December 18.
- His name was recommended by Banks Board Bureau in August 2019.
- General Insurance Corporation India Headquarters: Mumbai, India.

Retired HC judge CV Ramulu named Telangana Lokayukta
Former High Court Judge Justice CV Ramulu has been appointed as the Lokayukta of Telangana.
- Former Law Secretary V Niranjan Rao has been appointed as Upa Lokayukta.
- CM of Telangana: K Chandrashekhara Rao.
- Capital of Telangana: Hyderabad.
- Governor of Telangana: Tamilisai Soundararajan.

IPS officer Atul Karwal appointed as Director of National Police Academy
The Union Government appointed a senior Gujarat Cadre IPS officer Atul Karwal, as Director of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel National Police Academy in Hyderabad. He is a 1988 batch IPS officer, is currently posted as Additional Director General of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF).

**Dr Sangita Reddy takes over as President FICCI**

- Dr Sangita Reddy, Joint Managing Director of Apollo Hospitals Group was appointed as the President of Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI).
- On 23rd December 2019, she is appointed for the year 2019-20, during FICCI’s 92nd Annual Convention in New Delhi.
- She succeeds Mr Sandip Somany, Vice Chairman and Managing Director, HSIL Limited.

President of the Walt Disney Company APAC & Chairman of Star & Disney India, Mr Uday Shankar has been elevated as Senior Vice President of FICCI.

Similarly, Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL), Mr Sanjiv Mehta was appointed as the Vice President of FICCI.

**About FICCI:**
- Established- 1927
- Headquarters- New Delhi

**Monisha Ghosh named as first woman CTO at FCC in US**

- Indian-American Dr. Monisha Ghosh has been appointed as the first woman Chief Technology Officer (CTO) at the US government’s powerful Federal Communications Commission (FCC).
- She will take charge on January 13, 2020. She replaces Dr Eric Burger.
- Dr Ghosh will advise Indian-American Chairman of the FCC Ajit Pai and the agency on technology and engineering issues. She will also work with the Office of Engineering and Technology.
- Ghosh received her PhD in Electrical Engineering from the University of Southern California in 1991 and B.tech from IIT Kharagpur in 1986.

About FCC:
- Founder- Franklin D. Roosevelt
- Founded- 19 June 1934
- Headquarters- Washington, D.C, US.

**Harsh Vardhan Shringla is now 33rd Foreign Secretary of India**

- Indian diplomat and the current Indian Ambassador to the United States, Harsh Vardhan Shringla has been appointed as the next Foreign Secretary of India.
- He will assume charge on 29 January 2020, replacing Vijay Gokhale, whose two-year term will end on January 28, 2020.
- Harsh Vardhan Shringla will be the 33rd foreign secretary of India.

**P R Ravi Mohan has been appointed as the new chairman of ESAF**

- P R Ravi Mohan has been appointed as the new chairman of ESAF Small Finance Bank.
- He succeeds R. Prabha.
- Earlier, he headed the Banking Supervision Department of Reserve Bank of India.
- ESAF Small Finance Bank was incorporated on May 5, 2016, with its registered office in Thrissur, Kerala.

**Niranjan Hiranandani appointed as new Assocham President**
• Hiranandani Group Co-founder and Managing Director, Niranjan Hiranandani has taken over as the new President of industry body Assocham.
• He succeeds Welspun Group Chairman Balkrishan Goenka.

Kumar Sanjay Krishna new chief secretary of Assam.
• The Assam government appointed senior IAS officer Kumar Sanjay Krishna as the new chief secretary.
• A state government order said that Krishna, a 1985 batch IAS officer at present the additional chief secretary Home, Political and Disaster Management will take over as the chief secretary after the incumbent Alok Kumar retires on December 31.
• The Assam government also transferred nine senior IAS officers.
• Jishnu Barua will be the Additional Chief Secretary Home and Political and Revenue and Disaster Management Departments in addition to his present duties of Secretariat Administration (Archives) Department, the order said.

Boeing CEO Dennis Muilenburg steps down
• Boeing CEO Dennis Muilenburg has stepped down as the company is facing tough period following two fatal crashes.
• He will be replaced by Chairman David Calhoun effective January 13, 2020.
• He became the CEO of the world’s largest aerospace company in July 2015.
• The company’s best selling commercial jet was grounded worldwide in March 2019 after two fatal crashes killed 346 people.

About Boeing:
Headquarters of Boeing: Chicago, United States.

Hemant Soren Takes Oath As 11th Chief Minister Of Jharkhand
• The Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) working president Hemant Soren took oath as the 11th Chief Minister of Jharkhand in Ranchi on December 29, 2019.
• This is the second time that Mr Soren is being sworn in as the chief minister. Before this, Soren served as the 5th Chief Minister of Jharkhand (13 July 2013 – 28 December 2014).
• He was administered the oath of office and secrecy by Governor Droupadi Murmu.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Ethiopia launched its first space satellite
• Ethiopia has launched its first satellite named Ethiopian Remote Sensing Satellite (ETRSS)-1 which took place at a space station in China.
• The Chinese Long March 4B rocket (CZ-4B) carried the ETRSS-1 from the Taiyuan Satellite Launch Center in China.

'Meghdoot': Secunderabad Railway Station Gets India’s First ‘Water From Air’ System
• The Indian Railways has announced that it has installed a first-of-its-kind ‘atmospheric water generator’ (AWG) system named ‘Meghdoot,’ which converts humid air into potable drinking water, at Secunderabad railway station in Telangana.
• The price of the potable drinking water ranges from INR 2 to INR 8. It costs less if the passengers carry their own bottles and containers.

• The minister of railways and commerce, Piyush Goyal informed about the installation of ‘Meghdoot’, which will produce water that complies with the World Health Organisation (WHO) standards.

Vaccine on wheels: IIT Hyderabad launches India’s first mobile vaccination clinic in Pune.
• A vaccine on wheels clinic, a first-of-its-kind service in India called ‘VaccineOnWheels.com’
• The clinic is the brainchild of Jignesh Patel, the Center for Healthcare Entrepreneurship (CfHe) IIT Hyderabad fellow, and has been set up together with the Gates Foundation.
• There are many features which makes it a unique vaccination service, including providing low-cost vaccination service to the low-income group of the population, creating awareness for government’s immunisation programme and selling only those vaccines which are not provided through the government agencies and compliance with cold chain maintenance as per WHO guidelines with state-of-the-art equipment.

WHO prequalifies first biosimilar medicine to increase worldwide access to life-saving breast cancer treatment
• On December 18, 2019 the World Health Organization (WHO) announced that for the 1st time it had approved a “biosimilar” medicine of Trastuzumab named “Ontruzant” to make cheaper breast cancer treatment at an affordable rate to women globally.
• The medicine is derived from living sources rather than chemicals.
• The biosimilar medicine of the Trastuzumab drug was supplied by Samsung Bioepis co Ltd.
• It will be used for the treatment of HER2 (Human epidermal growth factor receptor 2)-positive breast cancer and HER2 over expressing gastric cancer.

About World Health Organisation (WHO):

Founded- 7 April 1948.
Headquarters- Geneva, Switzerland.
Director General(DG)- Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.
Parent Organization- United Nations Economic and Social Council (UN-ECOSOC)

Earth Observation Satellite, CBERS-4A, Launched into Orbit, Co-developed by Brazil and China
• China and Brazil have jointly developed an Earth Observation (EO) satellite, China-Brazil Earth Resource Satellite (CBERS) 4A.
• The CBERS 4A satellite was launched into space on December 20 via a Long March 4B rocket from the northern Chinese province of Shanxi.
• This satellite was the sixth developed under the China-Brazil Earth Resources Satellite (CBERS) program that began in 1988.
• It will support the Brazilian government’s monitoring of the Amazon rainforest and changes in the country’s environment.

Quick Reaction Surface to Air Missile System (QRSAM) is successfully flight tested by DRDO from Chandipur in Odisha.
• On December 23, 2019, Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has flight-tested its Quick Reaction Surface to Air Missile (QRSAM) from Chandipur district of Odisha.
• This missile was tested with the full configuration in deployment mode intercepting the target in mid-air and meeting mission objectives.
• With this mission, developmental trials of the weapon system are completed and weapon system is expected to be ready for induction by 2021.
• This missile is developed by DRDO in association with Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) and Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL) for the Indian Army.
• Range of this missile is 30 kms.
• This missile is an all-weather, all-terrain surface-to-air missile.

About DRDO:
Chairman- Dr G Satheesh Reddy
Headquarters- New Delhi
Founded- 1958

China launches heaviest satellite to test key technologies
• China launched its heaviest and most advanced communications satellite on its largest new carrier rocket Long March 5.
• Shijian-20, a new technology test and verification satellite, successfully entered its orbit, state media reported.
• Launched from the Wenchang Space Launch Centre in south China’s Hainan Province, Shijian-20, weighing more than eight tonnes, is the country’s heaviest and most advanced communications satellite in geosynchronous orbit, according to its maker, the China Academy of Space Technology (CAST) under the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation (CASC).
• The Long March-5, China’s most powerful rocket and a critical ingredient in the nation’s ambitious space programme, can carry a maximum payload of 25 tonnes into low Earth orbit and 14 tonnes into geosynchronous orbit.

Russia Deploys First Hypersonic Avangard ICBM Missile
• Russia has deployed the first hypersonic missile Avangard. Russia’s Defense Minister Sergey Shoigu has informed President Vladimir Putin about the deployment of Avangard. This information was released in the official statement.
• According to the media reports, the direction of this missile can be changed even in the air. It caught the speed of Mach 27, which is equivalent to about 33,000 kilometers per hour, during the test. This is the first of its kind missile in the world. This missile can’t be caught by any radar.
• What is Hypersonic Missile? Hypersonic missiles are actually hypersonic glided missiles. It includes features of both cruise and ballistic missiles. It goes out of the Earth’s atmosphere into a parabolic path and enters the Earth’s atmosphere again. It flies low in the atmosphere and almost unable to intercept. At present, Russia, USA and China have the capacity of hypersonic missiles.

OBITUARY
‘Friends’ actor Ron Leibman passes away at 82
• Ron Leibman, who played the father of Jennifer Aniston’s character in ‘Friends’, passed away due to pneumonia at the age of 82.
• Apart from ‘Friends’, Ron is also known for his roles in films like ‘Slaughterhouse-Five’, ‘Where’s Poppa?’ and the 1979 film ‘Norma Rae’.

https://www.toprankers.com/subscription-plans
• The actor also won an Emmy award in 1979 for TV series ‘Kaz’.

Paul Volcker, former Fed Chairman who curbed inflation, dies at 92
• Paul Volcker, the former Federal Reserve Chairman who helped tame inflation in the 1980s and carried out Wall Street reforms amid the global financial crisis, died at the age of 92.
• Volcker died due to complications from prostate cancer, said his daughter, Janice Zima.
• He was also an adviser to ex-Presidents Richard Nixon and Barack Obama.

ICSSR Chairman BrajBihari Kumar Passes Away
• Dr BrajBihari Kumar, Chairman of the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), has passed away.
• BB Kumar was appointed as the chairman of the ICSSR in May 2017.

Veteran Telugu actor, writer Gollapudi Maruti Rao passes away
• Renowned Telugu actor and writer Gollapudi Maruti Rao, who enthralled people with his writings and acting for several decades, passed away. He was 80.
• Rao, who acted in around 250 films in about four decades, passed away in Chennai following a cardiac arrest.
• Rao, a multi-faceted personality, had been a journalist, playwright, writer, actor and television personality, all rolled into one.

Veteran Actress Gita Siddharth Passes Away
• The legendary Bollywood actress and a social worker Gita Siddharth has passed away.
• Gita made her debut in Gulzar’s 1972 film, Parichay.
• She was best known for her role in M.S. Sathyu’s 1973 classic ‘GarmHava’.
• Sholay, Trishul, Disco Dancer, are some of the major films done by Gita.

Anna Karina, an icon of French New Wave cinema, has died at the age of 79.
• Danish-French veteran actress-singer Anna Karina, who became a symbol of French New Wave film movement, passed away in Paris at the age of 79.
• Condoling Anna’s death, her agent Laurent Balandras tweeted, “A legend, an icon…died yesterday (Saturday) of cancer.”
• The actress-director, who also wrote four novels, passed away in company of American director and her fourth ex-husband Dennis Berry.

MohunBagan president GitanathGanguly passes away
• MohunBagan president and retired justice GitanathGanguly died following a cardiac arrest.
• Ganguly took over as the club president after the SwapanSadhan Bose-led panel swept the elections in November last year.

Veteran actor ShreeramLagoo passes away aged 92
• Veteran actor and theatre personality ShreeramLagoo passed away on Tuesday aged 92 in a private hospital in Pune.
• Lagoo had worked in over 100 Hindi and Marathi films, over 40 Hindi, Marathi and Gujarati plays and also directed over 20 plays in Marathi.
• He won the 1978 Filmfare Best Supporting Actor Award for the Hindi film Gharaonda.

Renowned Hindi author Ganga Prasad Vimal passes away.
• Renowned Hindi author Ganga Prasad Vimal and his two family members were killed in a road accident in southern Sri Lanka.
• Born in 1939 in Uttarkashi, a Himalayan town in Uttarakhand, Vimal held key responsibilities in Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi University and Kendriya Hindi Sansthan, Agra.
• He wrote more than one dozen poetry collections, short story collections and novels. His last novel, Manushkhor, was published in 2013. He received several Hindi literary awards.

World Cup winner Martin Peters MBE passes away, aged 76.
• England World Cup winner Martin Peters has died, aged 76, his former club West Ham United said.
• Peters was part of the 1966 World Cup-winning side and scored in the final against West Germany.
• Peters joined West Ham in 1959 as a 15-year-old, made his debut in 1962 and was a key player in the side who won the 1965 Cup Winners Cup final at Wembley.
• Peters won the UEFA Cup and two League Cups with Tottenham.

‘Friends’ theme songwriter Allee Willis passes away at 72
• Allee Willis, writer of ‘I’ll Be There For You’ which was used as the theme song in TV series ‘Friends’, died in Los Angeles from a cardiac arrest. She was 72.
• Willis entered the Songwriters Hall of Fame in 2018 for a catalog that also included hits such as Neutron Dance, What Have I Done To Deserve This?, Lead Me On and Boogie Wonderland and You’re The Best, which is the theme track of The Karate Kid.
• The songwriter was a two-time Grammy winner and was also nominated for a Tony and an Emmy.

Da Chen, ‘Colours of the Mountain’ author passes away
• China’s brilliant storyteller, Da Chen, who created the critically acclaimed memoir “Colours of the Mountain” passed away recently.
• In “Colours of the Mountain” he recounted the abuses he and his family suffered during the latter years of the country’s Cultural Revolution.
• The book was published in seven languages. His last book which was published recently was “Girl Under a Red Moon”

Vetern Political cartoonist Vikas Sabnis passes away at 69.
• Veteran Political cartoonist Vikas Sabnis passed away in Mumbai due to cardiac arrest. He was 69.
• He was unwell and undergoing treatment since last few days.
• He had completed 50 years of illustrious career in 2018. Inspired by Bal Thackeray and RK Laxman, he had started his career in 1968. Since then, for over 50 years, Sabnis has worked as a staff cartoonist at various newspapers, including the Times of India and the Mid-day.
• He made caricatures and political cartoons on various subjects and issues. These ranges from local to international levels.

Former DG of Doordarshan Shiv Sharma passes away at 85.
• Former Director-General of Doordarshan Shiv Sharma passed away in Gurugram in Haryana.
• He was 85. Mr. Sharma was associated with coverage of Asian games in 1982.
• He has also supervised coverage of various national and international events. Earlier, He has also served in All India Radio.

**Veteran Political Cartoonist Vikas Sabnis passes away**
• Veteran Political cartoonist Vikas Sabnis, who made caricatures and political cartoons on various subjects and issues, passed away. He was 69.

**SUMMITS AND MOU’s**

**ADB & India Signs USD 250 million loan to expand energy efficiency investments**
• The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Government of India has signed a $250 million loan to Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL) on 16 December 2019 to expand energy efficiency investments in India.
• In addition to the above, USD 46 million financing will be provided from the Clean Technology Fund (CTF), to be administered by ADB.
• ADB is committed to achieving a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Asia and the Pacific, while sustaining its efforts to eradicate extreme poverty.

**Reliance Industries Surpasses state-owned Indian Oil Corporation to top 2019 Fortune India 500 list**
• Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) has displaced state-owned Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) as India’s largest company in the Fortune India 500 list 2019.
• RIL is the first privately-held company to become the largest corporation in India and has ended IOC’s 10-year reign as India’s largest company. IOC is second on the list.
• RIL’s 2018-19 revenue stood at Rs 5.81 lakh crore, which was 41.5 percent more than previous year.
• IOC’s revenue stood at Rs 5.36 lakh crore, with a growth of 26.6 percent.

**Wipro partners with Nasscom to skill 10,000 students**
• Wipro has partnered with Nasscom to train students on emerging technologies. The programme will train on technologies such as artificial intelligence, data science, internet of things, cybersecurity.
• Wipro will train 10,000 students from engineering colleges in India as a part of Wipro’s corporate social responsibility programme “TalentNext”.
• TalentNext aims to improve the quality of engineering education by preparing faculty and academic leaders to train students.
• The programme will now be extended to students directly through Future Skills, a Nasscom platform.
• “Future Skills” bridges the industry-academia skill gap and help students learn new-age technologies.

**Bank of Baroda inks MoU with Gujarat govt to provide MSME loans**
In order to facilitate the flow of credit in the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) sector, Bank of Baroda (BoB), an Indian multinational, public sector Bank, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Gujarat government.

As per the agreement, the credit will be provided to the MSME for greenfield projects, startups, women entrepreneurs and entrepreneurs from backward areas under the Gujarat Single Window Clearance Act 2017 & Ordinance Number 1 of 2019 dated October 24, 2019.

About BoB:
Founded – 20 July 1908
Headquarters – Vadodara, Gujarat
MD & CEO – PS Jayakumar
Tagline – India’s International Bank

About Gujarat:
Capital – Gandhinagar.
Governor – Acharya Devvrat.
Chief Minister – Vijay Rupani.
Folk dances – Garba, Dandiya Ras, Tippani Juriun, Bhavai.
State Flower – Marigold

19th Joint Commission meeting of India-Iran, held in Iran.
External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar co-chaired the 19th Joint Commission meeting with Foreign Minister of Iran.
The Joint Commission meeting was held in Tehran, Iran.
The meeting reviewed the entire gamut of the cooperation and agreed to accelerate work on the strategic Chabahar project.
The Chabahar port is jointly being developed by India, Iran and Afghanistan.
It is located on the Indian Ocean in the Sistan and Baluchestan province of Iran.
About Iran:
Iran Capital: Tehran;
Currency: Rial;
President: Hassan Rouhani.

Fisheries dept, NABARD & TN govt sign first tripartite MoA for fisheries development fund
The first tripartite Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) was signed for the implementation of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development Fund (FIDF) to address the infrastructure requirement for fisheries sector.
A dedicated fund has been created namely the Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund (FIDF) with a total of Rs. 7522.48 crore.
Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying: Shri Giriraj Singh
FIDF provides concessional finance to the eligible entities, cooperatives, individuals and entrepreneurs for development of identified fisheries infrastructure.
The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NARBARD), National Cooperatives Development Corporation (NCDC) and all scheduled banks are Nodal Loaning entities (NLEs) to provide concessional finance under the (FIDF).

Sebi signs pact with Kazakhstan-based AFSA for mutual co-operation
• The MoU was signed by Chairman of Sebi Ajay Tyagi and the acting chief executive officer of AFSA Mukhtar Bubeyev.
• Markets regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has signed a pact with Kazakhstan’s Astana Financial Services Authority (AFSA) for mutual co-operation and technical assistance.
• The memorandum of understanding (MoU) will strengthen cross border co-operation in the area of securities regulation, facilitate mutual assistance, contribute towards efficient performance of the supervisory functions, and enable effective enforcement of laws and regulations governing the securities markets.

BSF Celebrated its Raising Day
• Prime Minister Narendra Modi extended greetings to Border Security Force (BSF) personnel on the organization’s 55th raising day (01st December 2019).
• The BSF was raised in 1965 with the specific purpose of manning Indian borders as the ‘First Line of Defence’ against infiltration, smuggling, and military assault.

World AIDS Day: December 1
• The World AIDS Day is observed across the globe on 1 December every year since 1988 to raise awareness of the AIDS pandemic caused by the spread of HIV infection
• The theme for the World AIDS Day 2019 is “Communities make the difference”.

10th Indian Organ Donation Day Held in New Delhi
• The Union Minister for Health & Family Welfare, Dr. Harsh Vardhan, presided over the 10th Indian Organ Donation Day in New Delhi on November 30, 2019.
• The event was organised by the National Organ & Tissue Transplant Organization (NOTTO).
• The Minister also informed that India performs the second largest number of transplants in the world, next only to USA as per data available on the Global Observatory on Donation and Transplantation.

National Pollution Control Day: December 2
The National Pollution Control Day is observed every year on December 2 in India to commemorate the life of people lost in the unfortunate incident of Bhopal Gas Tragedy that occurred in the year 1984 on the night of 2–3 December.

International Day of Persons with Disabilities: 3 December
• The International Day of Persons with Disabilities was proclaimed in 1992 by United Nations General Assembly and is observed annually on December 3.
• Aim: to promote the rights and well-being of persons with disabilities in all spheres of society and development, and to increase awareness of the situation of persons with disabilities in every aspect of political, social, economic and cultural life.
• 2019 Theme: Promoting the participation of persons with disabilities and their leadership: taking action on the 2030 Development Agenda.
World Soil Day: December 5
- The World Soil Day is celebrated every year on December 5 to raise awareness of the importance of soil quality for human well-being, food security and ecosystems
- The 2019 theme – ‘Stop Soil Erosion, Save our Future’!
- The day was first considered by the International Union of Soil Sciences in 2002.

International Civil Aviation Day: 7 December
- The International Civil Aviation Day is celebrated every year on December 7 to recognize the importance of aviation to the social and economic development of the world.
- The Day was established in 1994 TO celebrate the 50th anniversary of International Civil Aviation Organization.

International Anti-Corruption Day: December 9
- International Anti-Corruption Day is celebrated every year on 9 December to raise public awareness for anti-corruption.
- The day is observed annually on 9 December.
- The day is observed since the passage of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption on 31 October 2003.
- Theme 2019-‘United Against Corruption.’

National Energy Conservation Day: December 14, 2019
- The National Energy Conservation Day is observed annually on 14 December to raise awareness for energy efficiency and conservation as well as holistic development for overall effort towards climate change mitigation.

Important Days and Dates in December 2019

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20 December  International Human Solidarity Day  
22 December  National Mathematics Day  
23 December  Kisan Diwas  
24 December  National Consumer Rights Day  
25 December  Christmas Day  
25 December  Good Governance Day (India)  
31 December  New Year’s Eve  

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

Viswanathan Anand launches his autobiography ‘Mind Master’  
• Viswanathan Anand has launched his autobiography ‘Mind Master’. Anand’s autobiography is co-authored by sports journalist Susan Ninann.  
• It has been published by THG Publishing Private Limited. The book covers wonderful memories of Viswanathan Anand’s journey.

R.N Kao: Gentleman Spymaster by Nitin A. Gokhale  
• Book titled "R N Kao: Gentleman Spymaster" authored by former journalist Nitin Gokhale was released by Army chief-designate Lieutenant General Manoj Naravane.  
• Kao had served as the first chief of India’s external intelligence agency, the Research and Analysis Wing (R&W).

S Gurumurthy releases A book titled “Politics of Opportunism”  
• Noted Economist and Political Analyst S Gurumurthy released a book titled “Politics of Opportunism: Regional Parties, Coalitions, Centre-State Relations In India”.  
• The book is authored by R N P Singh.  
• The book throws light on the subject related to rise of regional parties and Centre-States relation.  
• RNP Singh is a former officer of the Intelligence Bureau, Government of India.  
• He has also earned the coveted Presidents Police Medal, Indian Police Medal, the Sukriti and Kautilya awards for his distinguished services.

Ranking

India slips 4 ranks to 112th on WEF’s gender gap report  
• World Economic Forum’s (WEF) Global Gender Gap Report 2020 has ranked India at 112th out of 153 countries.  
• India has moved down from its 108th position last year.  
• The report also stated that India has “abnormally low sex ratios at birth” with 91 girls for every 100 boys.
• Iceland (87.7%) remains the world’s most gender-equal country, India ranked lower than many of its international peers, and some of its neighbours like China (106th), Sri Lanka (102nd), Nepal (101st), Brazil (92nd), Indonesia (85th) and Bangladesh (50th).
• Yemen is ranked the worst (153rd), while Iraq is 152nd and Pakistan 151st.
• The first WEF Gender Gap Index was published in 2006 when India was ranked at 98th position.

**India Emerges as World’s 3rd Largest Producer Of Scientific Articles**

Based on the statistics compiled by the US-based National Science Foundation (NSF), India has emerged as the world’s third largest publisher of science and engineering articles.

• As per the report, in 2008, India published 48,998 science and engineering articles which increased to 1,35,788 articles in 2018. Now India accounts for 5.31 percent of the total world publications in science and engineering.

• China is on top of the list with the number of global scientific publications increased from 2,49,049 in 2008 to 5,28,263 in 2018 (growth rate of 7.81 percent per annum).
• United States stands second with the total global publications in science and engineering articles grew at a rate of 0.71 percent from 3,93,979 in 2008 to 4,22,808 in 2018.