Arunachal Pradesh : Parshuram Kund Mela Begins
• The famous Parshuram Kund Mela began in Arunachal Pradesh on 14 January 2020.
• Parshuram Kund is a Hindu pilgrimage centre situated on the Brahmaputra plateau in the lower reaches of the Lohit River in Lohit district of Arunachal Pradesh.
• Devotees from across the country visit the sacred place to take a holy dip in the Kund on the occasion of Makar Sankranti every year.

PwDs and super Senior Citizens can now vote too through Postal Ballot
• Person with disabilities(PwDs) and people over 80 years of age can now cast their vote in Delhi Assembly Election through postal ballot.
• For the first time, Delhi Metro, Northern Railway Employees and media persons covering polling can also use postal ballot facility to cast their votes.
• Till now, voting through postal ballot was available to armed forces and those assigned in poll duties. Briefing media in New Delhi today, Chief Electoral Officer Ranbir Singh said, employee of essential service can fill the form 12(D) and submit before 19th of this month to avail the postal ballot facility. He said, nodal officers have been deployed for this process for essential service employees.
• Mr Singh said, under postal ballot facility, these absentee voters, including those who are unable to vote due to some immobility can vote.
• He said, ramp, sign language, Braille and pick and drop facilities will be available for disabled persons at polling stations.
• Mr Singh said, commission is trying, with its objective of inclusive and accessible election, to make each and everyone to participate in the election process.
Government relaxes FASTag norms for 65 toll plazas

- The government today said, to facilitate smooth flow of traffic FASTag norms for 65 toll plazas with high cash transactions have been relaxed to allow them to convert up to 25 per cent of FASTag lane of Fee Plaza into hybrid lanes for 30 days.
- Transport ministry statement said, it has been done on the request of National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) so that the citizens are not put to any inconvenience.
- The government has rolled out FASTag-based electronic toll collection mechanism from December 15 last across all toll plazas of the NHAI and has mandated the use of FASTags across at least 75 per cent lanes of toll plazas and has restricted use of cash mode of payment to a maximum of 25 per cent lanes of toll plazas.
- These 65 plazas are located Pan-India including Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Punjab, Chandigarh and Andhra Pradesh. FASTags-based toll collection system has been rolled out across 527 national highways.

Amazon to invest $1 billion to digitise small and medium businesses in India

- Amazon.com Inc chief Jeff Bezos has announced USD 1 billion (over Rs 7,000 crore) investment in India over the next five years, to bring small and medium businesses online.
- The initiative will help to digitise micro and small businesses across India, and help them reach more customers than ever before.
- The company is also committed to exporting USD 10 billion worth of India-made goods by 2025.

National Highways Excellence Awards 2019

- The Union Minister for Road Transport & Highways and MSMEs Shri Nitin Gadkari presented the ‘National Highways Excellence Awards 2019’ to 12 outstanding performers in NH sector on 14 January 2020 in New Delhi.
• National Highway Excellence Awards were instituted in the year 2018 to recognize the well-performing companies in the field of construction, operations, maintenance, toll collection and road safety on National Highways.
• The award is given in seven categories namely:
  1. Excellence in Project Management,
  2. Excellence in Operation and Maintenance
  3. Excellence in Toll Management,
  4. Excellence in Highway Safety
  5. Innovation
  6. Outstanding Work in Challenging Conditions
  7. Green Highway

APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS

Dmitry Medvedev, Russian Prime Minister submits resignation
• Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev has resigned. The Tass news agency said that Medvedev submitted his resignation to President Vladimir Putin today.
• It said, President Putin thanked Mr. Medvedev for his contribution. The agency also reports that Mr. Putin will name Mr. Medvedev as deputy of the presidential Security Council.
• Russian President asked Medvedev's Cabinet to keep working until the new Cabinet is formed.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

145th Foundation Day of India Meteorological Department (IMD)
• The India Meteorological Department (IMD) is celebrating its 145th Foundation Day on 15 January. It was established in 1875. The day will be celebrated by Ministry of Earth Science under which IMD (Indian Meteorological Department) functions.
• History of India Meteorological Department: Indian Meteorological Department was established in 1875 with its headquarters at Calcutta. But later it was shifted to Shimla in 1905, to Pune in 1928 and then to Delhi in 1944.
• What is the India Meteorological Department? The India Meteorological Department (IMD) is work under the Ministry of Earth Sciences of the Government of India. It is the principal agency responsible for meteorological observations, weather forecasting and seismology. IMD is headquarter in Delhi and operates hundreds of observation stations across India and Antarctica. Its Regional offices are in Mumbai, Kolkata, Nagpur and Pune.
• Recent Achievements of India Meteorological Department: World Meteorological Organization recognized 5 observatories of India Meteorological Department as a long-term observing station for more than 100 years. These 5 Observatories are:
  1. Chennai (Nungambakkam)
  2. Mumbai (Colaba)
  3. Panjim
  4. Pune
  5. Thiruvananthapuram
• New Aeronautical Meteorological Stations commissioned under RCS-UDAN Scheme.
• Modelling & Forecasting System of India Meteorological Department
• IMD in collaboration with NCMRWF & IITM implemented Thunderstorm and Lightning Modelling and Warning System.
• Global Forecast System (GFS) model upgraded and run 4 times a day to generate 10 days forecast.

SUMMITS AND MOU’S

India and Bangladesh Signs MoU for Co-production of biopic on BangaBandhu
• India and Bangladesh signed some of the key agreements in the field of Information and Broadcasting on 14 January 2020 during the Information and Broadcasting Minister’s meet 2020 held in New Delhi.
• Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Shri Prakash Javadekar and his Bangladeshi counterpart Muhammad H Mahmud signed the agreement.

• Agreements include:

• MoU for the co-production of a film on “BangaBandhu” Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (first President of Bangladesh).
  o The film will be directed by Indian director/producer Shri Shyam Benegal.
  o It is proposed to be released in March 2021, as part of centenary celebrations of BangaBandhu.

• An airtime content exchange programme was signed between Prasar Bharati and Bangladesh Radio Betar.

• India committed to extend all possible cooperation to Bangladesh in setting up the BongoBandhu film city.

• Bangladesh will celebrate the ‘Mujib Year’ from March 17, 2020 to March 17, 2021 to mark the centenary year of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

**January 2020 Important Days**

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Name of important Days</th>
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<td>1 January</td>
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<td>8 January</td>
<td>African National Congress Foundation Day</td>
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<td>9 January</td>
<td>NRI (Non-Resident Indian) Day or Pravasi Bharatiya Divas</td>
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<td>11 January</td>
<td>Death anniversary of Lal Bahadur Shastri</td>
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<td>12 January</td>
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<td>15 January</td>
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<td>15 January</td>
<td>Indian Army Day</td>
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<td>Makar Sankranti</td>
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<td>23 January</td>
<td>Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Jayanti</td>
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<td>24 January</td>
<td>National Girl Child Day</td>
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<td>25 January</td>
<td>National Voters Day</td>
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</table>
25 January    National Tourism Day
26 January    Republic Day
26 January    International Customs Day
28 January    Birth Anniversary of Lala Lajpat Rai
30 January    Martyrs Day or Shaheed Diwas
30 January    World Leprosy Eradication Day
1 January – Global Family Day
It is celebrated as a day of peace and sharing. Its aim is to unite and spread message of peace by considering and promoting an idea that Earth is a one Global Family so as to make world a better place to live for everyone.

8 January - African National Congress Foundation Day
South African Native National Congress (SANNC) was founded in 8 January 1912 by John Langalibalele Dube in Bloemfontein. Behind this the primary motive was to give voting rights to black and mixed race Africans or to unite African people and spearhead the struggle for fundamental political, social and economic change.

9 January – NRI (Non-Resident Indian) Day or Pravasi Bharatiya Divas
NRI or Pravasi Bharatiya Divas observed every year on 9 January to mark the contribution of the overseas Indian community towards the development of India. This day also commemorates the return of Mahatma Gandhi from South Africa to Mumbai on 9 January, 1915.

10 January : World Hindi Day
The World Hindi Day is celebrated every year on 10 January since 2006 to create awareness for the promotion of Hindi in the world, to introduce Hindi as an international language among other things.Former Prime Minister of India Shri Manmohan Singh declared World Hindi Day to be observed on 10 January in the year 2006.Since then, the day is observed by Ministry of External Affairs and Indian Embassies abroad.

11 January – Death anniversary of Lal Bahadur Shastri
He was the second Prime Minsiter of Independent India. He popularised the slogan 'Jai Jawan Jai Kisan' He actively participated in the India’s freedom struggle. Due to cardiac arrest he died on 11 January, 1966.

12 January – National Youth Day
The birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda also called Swami Vivekananda Jayanti is celebrated every year on 12 January. He was born on 12 January, 1863. The government had decided to observe it as National Youth Day because the philosophy of Swamiji and the ideals for which he lived and worked could be a great source of inspiration for the Indian Youth. He had given speech at the Parliament of the World's religions in Chicago and glorified India's name.

15 January – Indian Army Day
Every year 15 January is observed as Indian Army Day because on this day in 1949 field Marshal Kodandera M Cariappa took over as the first Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army from General Sir Francis Butcher, the last British Commander-in-Chief.

15 January -- Makara Sankranti
Makara Sankranti or Maghi, is a festival day in the Hindu calendar, dedicated to the deity Surya. It is observed each year in January. It marks the first day of the sun's transit into Makara, marking the end of the month with the winter solstice and the start of longer days.
Observances: Kite flying.
Date: Wednesday, 15 January, 2020
Celebrations: Kite flying, bonfires, fairs, surya puja in river, feast, arts, dance, socialization
Featured in religions: Hinduism
Significance: Harvest festival
Also called: Magha, Môkôr Sôngkrânti, Mela, Maghi, Bhogi

23 January - Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Jayanti
Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose was born on 23 January, 1897 in Cuttack, Orissa. He was one of the most prominent Indian freedom fighter. His army was known as Indian National Army (INA) or Azad Hind Fauj. He also led an Indian national force from abroad against the Western powers during World War II.
24 January- National Girl Child Day
On 24 January every year National Girl Child Day is celebrated to highlight the inequalities faced by a majority of the girls in India, importance of education, nutrition, legal rights, medical care and safety of girl children etc.

25 January- National Voters Day
Every year on 25 January National Voter's Day or Rashtriya Matdata Diwas is celebrated to encourage young voters to take part in the political process. In 2011 first time this day was celebrated to mark Election Commission's Foundation Day.

25 January- National Tourism Day
Every year on 25 January National Tourism Day is celebrated in India to raise the awareness and educate people about the importance of tourism and the role it plays in the Indian economy.

26 January- Republic Day
On 26 November, 1949 Indian Constituent Assembly adopted the Constitution the supreme law of the land and replaced the Government of India Act 1935. It came into effect on 26 January 1950 with a democratic government system. This day marks with the largest parade took place at Rajpath, Delhi every year.

26 January – International Customs Day
International Customs Day (ICD) is celebrated every year on 26 January by Custom Organisation to recognise the role of custom officials and agencies in maintaining border security. It also focuses on the working conditions and challenges that custom officers face in their jobs.

28 January- Birth Anniversary of Lala Lajpat Rai
Lala Lajpat Rai was born on 28 January, 1865 in Punjab. He was a prominent nationalist leader who played an important role in India's struggle for freedom. He also earned the title of 'Punjab Kesari' or 'the Lion of the Punjab'. He initiated the foundation of Punjab National Bank. He died on 17 November, 1928, due to serious injuries. The University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences in Hisar, Haryana is named after Lala Lajpat Rai.

30 January – Martyrs Day or Shaheed Diwas
30 January is celebrated as Martyr's Day or Shaheed Diwas every year in the memory of Mahatma Gandhi and sacrifice of three revolutionaries of India. As, on 30 January, 1948, the 'Father of Nation' was assassinated. And on 23rd March 3 heroes namely Bhagat Singh, Shivaram Rajguru and Sukhdev Thapar of the nation were hanged to death by British.

30 January – World Leprosy Eradication Day
World Leprosy Day is observed on 30 January every year to focus on the target of zero cases of leprosy-related disabilities in children. As, we know that disabilities do not occur overnight but happen after a prolonged period of undiagnosed disease.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

The United States Treasury Department removes China from its Currency Manipulator list, which was imposed in August 2019.

NATIONAL NEWS

Japanese Coast Guard ship arrives in Chennai for joint exercise

- On January 13, 2019 the Japan Coast Guard Ship ‘Ichigo PLH08’ has arrived Chennai on a five-day goodwill visit and it will participate in the 19th edition of Annual Joint Exercise ‘Sahyog-Kaijin’ which will be begin on January 16, 2020 with the Indian Coast Guard off in Chennai.
- Admiral Takahiro Okushima, Commandant, Japan Coast Guard and Director General (DG) Krishnaswamy Natarajan, DG of Indian Coast Guard will witness the 19th edition of ‘Sahyog-Kaijin’ exercise.
- It is aimed at further strengthening bilateral ties and mutual understanding between the two Coast Guards and to enhance interoperability in communication and Search and Rescue procedures and sharing of best practices.
- Four Indian Coast Guard Ships, their aircraft and a vessel from National Institute of Ocean Technology will be participating along with Japan Coast Guard Ship.
Activities like Official calls, reciprocal visit Onboard ships, sporting, cultural interactions and professional interactions between personnel of both the Coast Guards will take part in the exercise.

Centre identifies 26 islands of Andaman and Nicobar and Lakshawadeep for holistic development by promoting tourism

- On January 13, 2020 the Union Minister of Home Affairs (MoHA) Shri Amit Shah chaired the 6th meeting of Island Development Agency (IDA) in New Delhi.
- During the meeting progress made towards “Holistic development of islands” were reviewed. It is also for the first time in India, under the IDA’s guidance an initiative of sustainable development has been undertaken with scientific assessments.
- A total of 26 islands i.e, 16 from Andaman and Nicobar Islands and 10 from Lakshadweep islands have been identified for promoting tourism.
- Digital connectivity by June 2020: In order to strengthen the infrastructure improving air, sea and digital connectivity are also being implemented. Port Blair (Andaman & Nicobar) and 7 islands of Andaman & Nicobar will be digitally connected through submarine optical fibre cable by June, 2020.
- Communication services: Information Technology (IT) based and other Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the islands would be set up through Lakshadweep and Andaman & Nicobar Islands Industrial Development Scheme (LANIDS), 2018 notified on 1st January, 2019.
- Airport development in Great Nicobar Island of Andaman & Nicobar and Minicoy Island of Lakshadweep have been proposed.

1st time India to host 19TH SCO heads meeting and Statue of Unity finds place in '8 Wonders of SCO'

- On January 13, 2020 the secretary general of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Vladimir Norov who is on a 4-day visit to India to attend the Raisina dialogue 2020 in new Delhi from January16-16,2020, has announced that India has been selected to host the SCO’s annual meeting of council of heads of government for the 1st time.
- Raisina dialogue host: The dialogue which addresses the issues faced by global community is hosted by Observer Research Foundation(ORF) in collaboration with Ministry of External Affairs(MEA).
• The Statue of Unity in Gujarat, India has been included in the SCO's “8 wonders of SCO” list.
• India's membership with SCO: India became a member of the SCO at the SCO summit held in Astana (now renamed as Nur-sultan), Kazakhstan in the year 2017 along with Pakistan. Before becoming a member of SCO, India was granted with the observer status from 2005.
• SCO members: The members of the SCO include China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, India, Pakistan. Thus there totally 8 member nations of SCO

The Pulses Conclave 2020 to be held at Lonavala, Maharashtra
• The 5th edition of the biennial global pulses conference, ‘The Pulses Conclave 2020’ (TPC 2020), will be held from February 12 to 14, 2020 at Lonavala, Pune, Maharashtra.
• The conclave is being organised by India Pulses and Grains Association (IPGA).
• IPGA is the apex body of India’s pulses and grains industry and trade based in Mumbai.
• The aim of the conclave is to discuss increasing domestic production and consumption and improving processing efficiencies, increasing consumption, exports, value addition, protein extraction, post-harvest crop management, etc.

11-17 January 2020 : National Road Safety Week
• In 2020, India is observing the 31st National Road Safety Week from 11 to 17 January 2020.
• The theme for National Road Safety Week 2020 is : ‘Sadak Suraksha – Jeevan Raksha’.
• The National Road Safety Week is observed throughout the country every year to highlight and emphasize the need for safe roads and provide an opportunity for all stakeholders to contribute to the cause by taking up activities to promote the concept.
• It is organised every year in January by the National Safety Council of India.

Neonatal and under-five mortality rate in India
• On January 12, 2020, the United Nations(UN) inter agency group for child mortality has produced a report titled “Levels and Trends in Child Mortality”.
• As per this report India is among 5 countries where in 2018, the mortality of girls under the age of 5 exceeds that of the boys.
• Half of all under-5 deaths in 2018 occurred in the following five countries: India, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo(DRC) and Ethiopia.
• Gender gaps: Considering overall states and Union Territories(UTs), Jharkhand, Bihar and Uttarakhand showed largest gender gaps in under-5 age mortality.

• India and Nigeria alone accounted for about 1/3rd of under 5 age deaths.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr.No</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>State with largest gender gap</td>
<td>Jharkhand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>State with highest newborn deaths</td>
<td>Uttar Pradesh.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>State with highest under 5 mortality rate</td>
<td>Madhya Pradesh.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>State with least under 5 mortality rate</td>
<td>Kerala.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11-member panel to discuss the royalty rate issues on minerals

• On January 13, 2020 the centre has decided to set up an 11-member panel that will look into the issues related to revision of royalty rates for minerals (other than coal, lignite, sand for stowing and minor minerals).

• The panel will be headed by additional secretary of the mines ministry Dr. K. Rajeswara Rao.

• Mines secretaries from states of Telangana, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha will be the members of the panel.

• Report submission: The members will have to submit the report within 1 month to the Mines ministry after examining the issues raised by stakeholders.

• Previously in February 2018, the mines ministry had set up a study group to revise royalty rates and dent rent for minerals. The group submitted its report in July 2019.

• About Ministry of Mines:
  Headquarters- New Delhi.
  Union minister- Prahlad Joshi. (Constituency- Dharwad, Karnataka).

Integrated Road Accident Database (IRAD) developed by IIT-Madras, Launched

• On January 13, 2020, Union Minister for Road Transport & Highways and MSMEs(Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises) Shri Nitin Gadkari & Defence Minister Shri Rajnath Singh have jointly launched an IT (Information Technology) tool “Integrated Road Accident Database
(IRAD)” developed by the Indian Institute of Technology–Madras (IIT-M) that will help in proper monitoring and accurate analysis of road accidents.

- It was launched during ‘Road Safety Stakeholders’ Meet held in New Delhi.
- Developed with the help of Rs.258 crore financial assistance given by the World Bank, the database will be implemented by the National Informatics Centre (NIC).
- Initially this system is being implemented in 6 states (Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh (MP), Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu (TN) and Uttar Pradesh (UP) with highest fatalities of road crashes

**BANKING AND ECONOMICS**

**Rs 14000 crore Approved by World Bank & ADB to enhance road safety in India**
- The World Bank and Asian Development Bank (ADB) have approved Rs 7 thousand crore each to reduce the number of ‘blind spots’ from Indian roads and addressed various aspects of road safety in India.
- This was announced by the Union Minister of Road Transport & Highways, Nitin Gadkari on 13 January 2020 at the Road Safety Stakeholders’ Meet in New Delhi, held to mark the 31st National Road Safety Week 2020.
- As a part of the event, the Defence Minister awarded Tamil Nadu as the best performing state in reducing road accidents.

**7.35% rise in Retail inflation in December 2019, highest in last 5 years : NSO**
- On January 13, 2020, According to the Consumer Price Inflation (CPI) / Retail inflation figures, released by the National Statistical Office (NSO) under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), Retail inflation rose to a 5-year high of 7.35% in December 2019.
- Earlier, in July 2014, the retail inflation had reached 7.39 %.
- Retail inflation was more affected in December due to high food prices.
- Retail inflation based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) stood at only 2.11 % in December 2018 & 5.54 % in November 2019.
• The retail inflation has crossed the upper limit set by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). The central government has asked the Reserve Bank to keep inflation in the range of 2-6%.

AWARDS, RECORDS AND RECOGNITION

Himachal holds Guiness World Record by preparing largest quantity of Khichdi on Makar Sankranti

• Himachal Pradesh has made the Guiness Book of World Records for preparing the largest-ever quantity of ‘bean and rice’ dish (khichdi) on 14 January 2020, on the occasion of Makar Sankranti, at Tattapani in Mandi district of the state.
• Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur accepted the certificate on behalf of the state’s Tourism and Civil Aviation department.
• A team of 25 chefs from Holiday Home hotel in Shimla, cooked 1995 kg of the dish in a vessel weighing 270 kg, with the dimensions of four feet depth and seven feet diameter, that was especially acquired from Jagadhari in Haryana.
• The chefs’ team took five hours, 4 AM to 9 AM, to prepare the stew.
• The khichdi container was too heavy to be carried that a crane was used to tilt out the khichdi from the enormous container for serving khichdi to devotees at Tattapani.
• Earlier, the record for making the largest amount of khichdi (918.8 kg) was held by celebrity chef Sanjeev Kapoor when he represented the Indian ministry of food processing industries at an event in New Delhi on November 4, 2017.

Republic Day parade of 2020: Captain Tania Shergill to become first woman parade adjutant

• On 13th January 2020, It was announced Captain Tania Shergill, an officer with Army’s Corps of Signals, will be the first woman parade adjutant for the Republic Day (26th January) parade of 2020.
• A parade adjutant is responsible for the parade.
• She is an electronics and communications graduate, her father, grandfather and great-grandfather have also served in the Army. She was commissioned in March 2017 from the Officer Training Academy, Chennai.
• In the 2019 Republic Day parade, Captain Bhavna Kasturi was the first women officer who led an all-men contingent.
• The Republic Day parade will witness Infantry Combat Vehicle BMP-2K of the 18 Mechanised Infantry, Dhanush Gun System and the Army Air Defence on the Rajpath.
• Contingents of the Corps of Signals, Sikh Light Infantry, Kumaon Regiment, the Grenadiers, the Parachute Regiment will also take part in the parade.

**British Indian yoga champion Ishwar Sharma wins Global Child Prodigy Award**

**Actor Aamir Khan in New Delhi conferred 2020 Swachhata Darpan plastic management awards**

• On January 12, 2020 the Drinking Water and Sanitation (DDWS) under Ministry of Jal Shakti, organised the ODF (Open Defecation Free) sustainability workshop in New Delhi. The workshop had a special session by Bollywood actor Aamir Khan (founder of Paani foundation) who distributed awards to the best performing districts on key swachhata parameters.
• Swachhata Darpan Awards:

 Actor Aamir Khan presented the Swachhata Darpan Awards for best performing districts which includes East Godavari (Andhra Pradesh), West Kameng (Arunachal Pradesh), Bemtara (Chhattisgarh), Diu (Daman and Diu), Panipat (Haryana), Vadodara (Gujarat), Kolhapur (Maharashtra), Moga (Punjab), East Sikkim (Sikkim) and Pedappali (Telangana).

• Award for plastic waste management:

 4 districts i.e, Dibrugarh (Assam), Sirmaur (Himachal Pradesh), Indore (Madhya Pradesh) and Puri (Odisha) were awarded for innovations and initiatives in plastic waste management.

**Sports**

**Football player Mbappé named as the most valuable player at €265 million: CIES Football Observatory**

**Appointments and Resignations**

**Appointment : Michael Debabrata Patra as Deputy Governor of RBI**

• Michael Debabrata Patra has been appointed as the 4th Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for a period of three-year.
• Patra replaces Viral Acharya, who quit the post in July 2019.
• RBI can have a maximum of four Deputy Governors.
• Currently N S Vishwanathan, B P Kanungo and Mahesh Kumar Jain are the other three Deputy Governors working at the central bank.

Lt General Girish Kumar reappointed as the Surveyor General of India for one year
A P Maheshwari appointed as the new DG of CRPF

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

ISRO : GSAT-30 Satellite ready to Launch from French Guiana on 17 January
• The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is set to launch a communication satellite named GSAT-30 on 17 January 2020 onboard the Ariane-5 launch vehicle (VA 251) from the Ariane Launch Complex at Kourou in French Guiana.
• The GSAT-30 is a 3,357 kg satellite with a mission life of 15 years.
• It will serve as a replacement to INSAT-4A spacecraft services to provide communication services from geostationary orbit in C and Ku bands with enhanced coverage.
• The satellite would be extensively used for supporting VSAT network, television uplinking and teleport services, digital satellite news gathering (DSNG), DTH television services, cellular backhaul connectivity, and many such applications

Indian scientists detect India's 1st case of infection in Maharashtra : H9N2 virus
• In December 2019, Scientists of the National Institute of Virology (NIV), Pune, Maharashtra have detected the 1st case of H9N2 virus ,a rare subtype of influenza virus A, in a 17-month-old boy in Maharashtra.
• The discovery has been published in the journal ‘Emerging Infectious Diseases’ of the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
• It is a rare variant of the virus, which causes human influenza as well as bird flu. These viruses, found exclusively in wild birds, could potentially play a major role in the worldwide emergence of influenza.
• According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the avian influenza virus is spreading rapidly in poultry firms, exposure to infected poultry or contaminated environments poses a risk to human groups as well.
H9N2 virus infections in humans are rare, although cases of the infection do not come to light due to unclear symptoms. In humans, the first case of H9N2 virus infection occurred in Hong Kong in 1998.

Special NATO class diesel for Indian Navy launched by IOC

On January 13, 2020, Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) has developed a special class diesel (HFHSD-IN 512) High Flash High Speed Diesel conforming to NATO grade for use in ships and vessels of Indian Army and results reduced carbon footprint.

Wolf Cukier, A 17-year-old intern at NASA, discovers new planet ‘TOI 1338b’ 1300 light years away.

OBITUARY


National Award Winner Manmohan Mohapatra passed away at 69

SUMMITS AND MOU’S

Indian Railways and RailTel signs MoU for Phase 2 execution of e-office

On January 13, 2020, Indian Railways signs Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with RailTel, a miniratna Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) under the Ministry of Railways for Phase 2 project of e-office execution.

Under this project, RailTel will register 39,000 users over 34 divisions on National Informatics Centre (NIC) e-office platform by June 30, 2020.

MoU was signed by Executive Director (ED/TD), Railway Board, Shri Umesh Balonda, and General Manager (GM)/Information Technology (IT) project/RailTel, Smt. Haritima Jaipuriar.

Under the Phase 1 execution of e-office, RailTel trained more than 50,000 users in 58 divisions of Indian Railways.

e-office is a paperless culture which helps to reduce the operational cost and carbon footprints.

Thus 58 units of Indian Railways became paperless under Phase 1 execution of e-office.

NIC e-office is a cloud enabled software based on Central Secretariat Manual of e-Office Procedure (CSMeOP). It contains four modules namely File Management System (eFile),
Knowledge Management System (KMS), Collaboration & Messaging Services (CAMS) and Personnel Information Management System (PIMS).

- Participants: Chairman, Railway Board, Shri Vinod Kumar Yadav, Member S&T, Railway Board, Shri Pradeep Kumar, CMD, RailTel, Shri Puneet Chawla and other senior officials of Railways and RailTel.

- **About Indian Railways:**
  - Founded- April 16, 1853
  - Headquarters- New Delhi
  - Minister of Railway- Piyush Goyal
  - Chairman of Railway Board- Vinod Kumar Yadav

**5th Raisina Dialogue Begins in New Delhi**

- The Dialogue has been jointly organized by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and the Observer Research Foundation.
- Raisina Dialogue is India’s flagship global Conference on geopolitics and geo-economics, and also one of the largest gathering of its kind.
- The inaugural session on 14 January will be attended by the Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi along with Seven former Heads of State/Government, to share their views on important challenges facing the world.
- The Raisina Dialogue 2020 will bring together 700 international participants from over a 100 countries.
- The conference will see deliberations over 80 sessions around 5 thematic pillars including
  - Nationalist impulses challenging global institutions and collective action,
  - Debate on the global trading architecture,
  - Role of technologies in determining political, economic and military power,
  - Global development agenda and
  - State-individual relationship in the age of digital communities and cyberspace.
SBI Signs MoU with South Central Zone of Indian Railways for Doorstep Banking

- The South Central Zone (SCR) of Indian Railways and State Bank of India (SBI) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding for ‘Doorstep Banking’ to enable direct pickup of cash earnings from all 585 Railway stations on SCR Zone.
- The direct pick up of cash from all the railway stations on SCR by SBI will save the tedious and complex activity of movement of cash earnings through ‘cash safes’ by trains.
- The door step banking will increase the pace of financial transactions and digitization of remittance of cash earnings of the Railways into accounts.

**January 2020 Important Days**

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It is celebrated as a day of peace and sharing. Its aim is to unite and spread message of peace by considering and promoting an idea that Earth is a one Global Family so as to make world a better place to live for everyone.

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South African Native National Congress (SANNC) was founded in 8 January 1912 by John Langalibalele Dube in Bloemfontein. Behind this the primary motive was to give voting rights to black and mixed race Africans or to unite African people and spearhead the struggle for fundamental political, social and economic change.

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NRI or Pravasi Bharatiya Divas observed every year on 9 January to mark the contribution of the overseas Indian community towards the development of India. This day also commemorates the return of Mahatma Gandhi from South Africa to Mumbai on 9 January, 1915.

10 January : World Hindi Day

The World Hindi Day is celebrated every year on 10 January since 2006 to create awareness for the promotion of Hindi in the world, to introduce Hindi as an international language among other things. Former Prime Minister of India Shri Manmohan Singh declared World Hindi Day to be observed on 10 January in the year 2006. Since then, the day is observed by Ministry of External Affairs and Indian Embassies abroad.

11 January – Death anniversary of Lal Bahadur Shastri

He was the second Prime Minsiter of Independent India. He popularised the slogan 'Jai Jawan Jai Kisan' He actively participated in the India's freedom struggle. Due to cardiac arrest he died on 11 January, 1966.

12 January – National Youth Day

The birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda also called Swami Vivekananda Jayanti is celebrated every year on 12 January. He was born on 12 January, 1863. The government had decided to observe it as National Youth Day because the philosophy of Swamiji and the ideals for which he
lived and worked could be a great source of inspiration for the Indian Youth. He had given speech at the Parliament of the World's religions in Chicago and glorified India's name.

14 January -- Armed Forces Veterans Day
In India, the Armed Forces Veterans Day is observed each year on 14 January since 2017 to acknowledge and honour the selfless devotion and sacrifice of our veterans in the service of the nation. The day is observed as a mark of respect and recognition of the services rendered by Field Marshal KM Cariappa OBE, the first Indian Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Armed Forces who retired on 14 January 1953. 2020 marks the 4th Armed Forces Veterans Day with celebrations held at Delhi at the National War Memorial.

15 January -- Indian Army Day
Every year 15 January is observed as Indian Army Day because on this day in 1949 Field Marshal Kodandera M Cariappa took over as the first Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army from General Sir Francis Butcher, the last British Commander-in-Chief.

15 January -- Makara Sankranti
Makara Sankranti or Maghi, is a festival day in the Hindu calendar, dedicated to the deity Surya. It is observed each year in January. It marks the first day of the sun's transit into Makara, marking the end of the month with the winter solstice and the start of longer days.

Observances: Kite flying.
Date: Wednesday, 15 January, 2020
Celebrations: Kite flying, bonfires, fairs, surya puja in river, feast, arts, dance, socialization
Featured in religions: Hinduism
Significance: Harvest festival
Also called: Magha, Môkôr Sôngkrânti, Mela, Maghi, Bhogi

23 January - Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Jayanti
Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose was born on 23 January, 1897 in Cuttack, Orissa. He was one of the most prominent Indian freedom fighter. His army was known as Indian National Army (INA) or Azad Hind Fauj. He also led an Indian national force from abroad against the Western powers during World War II.
24 January- National Girl Child Day
On 24 January every year National Girl Child Day is celebrated to highlight the inequalities faced by a majority of the girls in India, importance of education, nutrition, legal rights, medical care and safety of girl children etc.

25 January- National Voters Day
Every year on 25 January National Voter's Day or Rashtriya Matdata Diwas is celebrated to encourage young voters to take part in the political process. In 2011 first time this day was celebrated to mark Election Commission's Foundation Day.

25 January- National Tourism Day
Every year on 25 January National Tourism Day is celebrated in India to raise the awareness and educate people about the importance of tourism and the role it plays in the Indian economy.

26 January- Republic Day
On 26 November, 1949 Indian Constituent Assembly adopted the Constitution the supreme law of the land and replaced the Government of India Act 1935. It came into effect on 26 January 1950 with a democratic government system. This day marks with the largest parade took place at Rajpath, Delhi every year.

26 January – International Customs Day
International Customs Day (ICD) is celebrated every year on 26 January by Custom Organisation to recognise the role of custom officials and agencies in maintaining border security. It also focuses on the working conditions and challenges that custom officers face in their jobs.

28 January- Birth Anniversary of Lala Lajpat Rai
Lala Lajpat Rai was born on 28 January, 1865 in Punjab. He was a prominent nationalist leader who played an important role in India’s struggle for freedom. He also earned the title of ‘Punjab Kesari’ or ‘the Lion of the Punjab’. He initiated the foundation of Punjab National Bank. He died on 17 November, 1928, due to serious injuries. The University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences in Hisar, Haryana is named after Lala Lajpat Rai.

30 January – Martyrs Day or Shaheed Diwas
30 January is celebrated as Martyr's Day or Shaheed Diwas every year in the memory of **Mahatma Gandhi** and sacrifice of three revolutionaries of India. As, on 30 January, 1948, the 'Father of Nation' was assassinated. And on 23rd March 3 heroes namely Bhagat Singh, Shivaram Rajguru and Sukhdev Thapar of the nation were hanged to death by British.

**30 January – World Leprosy Eradication Day**

World Leprosy Day is observed on 30 January every year to focus on the target of zero cases of leprosy-related disabilities in children. As, we know that disabilities do not occur overnight but happen after a prolonged period of undiagnosed disease.

**INTERNATIONAL NEWS**

**Tehran to host dialogue forum on Hormuz peace initiative.**

- India participated in the Tehran Dialogue Forum, the 23rd Persian Gulf International Conference held in Tehran, Iran from January 06-07, 2020.
- During the forum, India supported the Hormuz Peace initiative 2020.
- The initiative was done so as to seek stability in one of the world’s busiest and strategically located shipping lanes i.e, Strait of Hormuz amid escalating US-Iran tensions.
- Oman, India, China and Afghanistan were the key participants.
- Hormuz Peace initiative 2020 in Tehran Dialogue Forum:
  - Plans under HOPE: The meeting reviewed the latest developments in the Persian Gulf region and also evaluated the regional cooperation plans under the ‘Hormuz Peace Endeavor’ (HOPE), proposed by Tehran at the 74th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) that was held in September 2019. It was presented by Iran President Hassan Rouhani at UNGA.
  - Strait of Hormuz: The Strait of Hormuz is one of the world's most strategically important choke points. It has Iran in the northern coat, UAE (United Arab Emirates) and Musandam, an enclave of Oman in the southern coast. It acts as an important gateway for significant amount of global oil supplies.
• Length: The strait is 90 nautical miles (167 km) long, with a width varying from about 52 nautical miles to 21 nautical miles.
• Oil & LNG supply to India: 2/3rd of oil and 50% of liquefied natural gas (LNG) imported to India comes through the strait between Iran and Oman.
• General statistics: Everyday 18 million barrels of oil pass through the Strait of Hormuz that accounts for 1/3rd of the global oil trade. 1/3rd of the world’s LNG trade also passes through the strait.
  o Waterway issues: In June 2019, 2 oil tankers were damaged by explosions. The United States (US) blamed Iran for the attack as a response to the US tightening sanctions in Iran. However, Iran denied it. Since the explosion Indian ships under the assistance of Indian Navy (IN) passes through the waterway.
  o Members present: Foreign Minister of Oman Yusuf bin Alawi and former President of Afghanistan Hamid Karzai and members from China and experts, directors of various foreign think tanks, and ambassadors participated in the forum.
• About Iran:
  Capital- Tehran.
  Currency- Iranian rial.
  President- Hassan Rouhani.
  Supreme leader- Ali Khamenei.

**World Future Energy Summit | Abu Dhabi | 13-16 Jan 2020**

• The four-day summit is expected to see nearly 33,500 visitors. It will conclude on January 16.
• As a part of the event, the Climate Innovations Exchange (CLIX) and the Future Sustainability Summit will also be conducted.
• The Future Sustainability Summit is being held under the theme “Rethinking Global Consumption, Production, and Investment.”
Bangladesh to hold world's second largest Muslim congregation 'Bishwa Ijtema' in January 2020

- First phase of “Bishwa Ijtema” has commenced in Dhaka, Bangladesh. It is the second largest congregation of Muslim community after Hajj.
- The second phase of the congregation will be held from January 17 to 19.
- Bishwa Ijtema is an annual event which is taking place on the outskirts of Dhaka since 1967.
- It is being organised in a field of 160 acres, on the bank of the Turag river at Tongi on the outskirts of Dhaka.
- The congregation draws devotees of Muslim community from about 150 countries, hence making it the second largest congregation of Muslim community after Hajj.
- Prime Minister of Bangladesh: Sheikh Hasina; Capital: Dhaka; Currency: Taka.

NATIONAL NEWS

Ordinance promulgated for amendment of MMDR Act and CMSP Act; paves way for growth in Coal and Mining sector

- The central govt has promulgated ordinance for amendment in the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act 1957 (MMDR act 1957) and The Coal Mines (special provisions) act, 2015 (CMSP act 2015) in order to ease new areas of growth in the coal & mining sector.
- The amendments in detail are as follows:
  - Enhance ease of doing business & Democratization of coal mining sector.
  - Unexplored and partially explored coal blocks mining through prospecting license-cum-mining Lease (PL- cum-ML) will be offered.
  - Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) promotion in the coal mining sector.
  - Attracting large investment in coal mining sector.
  - Allowing of successful bidder/allottee to utilise mined coal in any of the plant of its subsidiary or holding company Attracting large investment in coal mining sector as restrictions of end use has been dropped.
  - New Section in mines created: A new section 4B (after section 4A) has been inserted to enable the Central Govt. to prescribe conditions for ensuring sustained production by the holder of mining
leases, who have acquired clearances etc. The Central govt has the power to prescribe the conditions for the new lessees to commence production without prejudice to the time period of 2 years for starting the production prescribed in Section 4A.

- Flexibility in deciding the end use of Schedule II and III coal mines: The end use of Schedule II and III coal mines under the CMSP Act has been provided with flexibility through omission of sub-section (3) of Section 4 of CMSP Act.

**Sachin Bansal acquires DHFL General Insurance**

- Flipkart co-founder and former CEO Sachin Bansal has acquired DHFL General Insurance from Kapil Wadhawan-led Wadhawan Group Capital (WGC) for around Rs 100 crore.
- WGC is the parent company of debt-laden Dewan Housing Finance Limited (DHFL) and this deal is seen as a distress sale.
- With this acquisition, Bansal has entered into insurance business, and the investment is also seen as part of his strategy to enter into financial services industry.
- In the recent past, Bansal had done multiple investments in insurance business to increase his portfolio of firms in the sector.

**National Youth Festival 2020 : Begins in Lucknow**

- The 23rd edition of the National Youth Festival (NYF) 2020 was inaugurated at Indira Pratishthan, Lucknow on 12 January 2020. It will continue till 16 January 2020.
- The 5-day long festival has been jointly organised by Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports and State Government of Uttar Pradesh.
- Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Shri Yogi Adityanath and the Minister of State (I/C) for Youth Affairs & Sports, Shri Kiren Rijiju inaugurated the NYF 2020, on the occasion of birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda, the great Youth icon.
- The theme of the 23rd National Youth Festival 2020 is ‘FIT YOUTH FIT INDIA’
- NYF 2020 would have around 6000 participants from each State.
- The Government has been organizing National Youth Festival (NYF) since 1995 to provide a platform to bring the youth of the country together in an attempt to provide them opportunity to showcase their talents in various activities.
SEBI CMD Post Split: SEBI Extends Deadline By Two Years.

- January 13, 2020, Stock market regulator SEBI (Securities and Exchange Board of India) has extended the deadline for the separation of the posts of Chairman and MD (Managing Director) or chief executive officer (CEO) for 500 listed companies by 2 years.
- Now this rule has to be followed by April 2022.
- The first deadline issued by SEBI was April 2020. The move comes after the companies were asking for more time to keep expenses down due to the slowdown in the economy.
- Background: The rules to separate the post of Chairman-MD are part of the recommendations of the Uday Kotak (MD of Kotak Mahindra Bank) Committee appointed by SEBI on Corporate Governance. Having a post of chairman and MD or CEO is expected to cause a conflict of interest to the board of directors and management. In many companies including Reliance Industries, the chairman and MD are handled by the same person.

About SEBI:
Formation– April 12, 1988
Headquarters– Mumbai, Maharashtra
Chairman– Ajay Tyagi

RBI puts curbs on Sri Guru Raghavendra Sahakara Bank in Bengaluru from doing business

- On January 10, 2020 the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has curbed Sri Guru Raghavendra Sahakara Bank, a private bank in Bengaluru, Karnataka from doing business with immediate effect.
- This has been done after finding alleged irregularities in transactions.
- The bank’s savings and current account customers and depositors can however withdraw cash up to ₹35,000 only till further notice.
- Act: RBI’s Chief General Manager Yogesh Dayal issued the directive under Sections 35A and 56 of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949, from Mumbai, Maharashtra.
- Without the approval of RBI, the bank cannot write, grant or renew loans and advances, make investment, borrow funds or accept fresh deposits from January 10, 2020.
• The directive will remain in force for 6 months from January 10 and is subject to review,” added the official.
• About Sri Guru Raghavendra Sahakara Bank:
  Established- 1964
  Headquarters- Bangalore, Karnataka.
  Tagline- A cooperative bank with corporate vision.
  President- Dr. K Ramakrishna.
  Motto- Service to the Common Man.

SPORTS

ISSF rankings: India finishes 2019 as No. 1
• Based upon the International Shooting Sport Federation’s (ISSF) overall rankings of Nation for 2019, India finished the year as the top shooting nation in the world leaving behind China and USA.
• In terms of overall medals, India’s tally stood at 30 medals overall consisting 21 gold, six silver and three bronze as India topped all the Rifle-Pistol World Cups and Finals.
• China was second with 44 medals overall, including 11 gold, 15 silver and 18 bronze.
• The USA stood third with 15 medals including six gold six silver and three bronze.
• National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) President: Raninder Singh.

Novak Djokovic leads Serbia to victory over Spain in ATP Cup
• Serbia has won the inaugural 2020 ATP Cup tennis tournament, defeating Spain 2–1 in the final on 12 January 2020 in Sydney.
• Serbia’s Novak Djokovic was the key performer in the tournament.
• The World No. 2 Djokovic claimed a straight sets victory over the World No. 1 Rafael Nadal, 6-2, 7-6 (7-4) in singles.
• Further, in doubles also, Djokovic and Viktor Troicki claimed 6-3, 6-4 straight sets victory over Feliciano Lopez and Pablo Carreno Busta.
• ATP Cup was the opener for the 2020 ATP Tour, as well as the first ATP team tournament since the last edition of the World Team Cup in 2012.

APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS

Robert Abela wins election to be prime minister of Malta
• On January 12, 2020 Malta’s governing party has elected a new leader Robert Abela as 14th prime minister of Malta. He replaces Joseph Muscat, who resigned over the murder of a journalist.
• Robert Abela is the son of the Malta’s Former President George Abela.
Robert Abela, 42-years old lawyer won the Labour Party Leadership contest with 57.9% of the vote and beat his closest rival Chris Fearne 56-years old surgeon by more than 2,500 votes.
• Joseph Muscat announced his resignation last month over the scandal surrounding the murder of Daphne Caruana Galizia.
• Galizia was killed by a car bomb in 2017 as she investigated corruption in Malta.
• Caruana Galizia, known as the “one woman WikiLeaks”, exposed corruption at the highest levels of government and business circles in Malta.
• About Malta:
Capital- Valletta.
Currency- Euro.
President- George Vella.

Haitham bin Tariq sworn in as Oman's new sultan
• On January 11, 2020 Haitham bin Tariq Al Said (66) was appointed as the new ruler of the Oman after the death of Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al Said who ruled the country from 1970.
• Haritham bin Tariq Al Said who is the cousin of the deceased Sultan Qaboos, was the Cultural and Heritage Minister of Oman.
• In 2013 he was appointed by the Sultan Qaboos to chair the main committee responsible for Oman’s development.
• Haritham bin Tariq was an Oxford graduate who spent 16 years in various roles with the Foreign Ministry from 1986.
• He was also incharge for Oman’s Vision 2040 Program.
• About Oman:
  Capital- Muscat
  Currency- Omani rial

NATIONAL NEWS

Govt launches mission to develop steel sector in eastern India
• The Union Steel Minister Dharmendra Pradhan ‘Mission Purvodaya’ during an event in Kolkata on 11 January 2020 to strengthen steel sector in the Eastern region.
• Mission Purvodaya is aimed at accelerated development of eastern India through establishment of Integrated Steel Hub.
• The proposed Integrated Steel Hub, encompassing Odisha, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal and Northern Andhra Pradesh, would help towards socio-economic growth of Eastern India.
• The Minister informed that the eastern belt has the potential to add over 75 percent of the country’s incremental steel capacity envisioned by the National Steel Policy.
• Out of the 300 Million Tonne capacity by 2030-31, over 200 Million Tonne can come from this region alone.
• The Integrated Steel Hub would thus enable swift capacity addition, improve the overall competitiveness of steel producers both in terms of cost and quality, growth of steel industry along with employment opportunities across the entire value chain.

BANKING AND ECONOMICS

PM Modi launches projects worth 600 crore rupees on 150th year celebrations of Kolkata Port Trust
• The Kolkata Port has been renamed as Syama Prasad Mukherjee Port on 12 January 2020, on the occasion of 150 years of operation of Kolkata Port.
• This announcement was made by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during an event at the Netaji Indoor Stadium in Kolkata to celebrate 150th year of celebrations of the port.
• PM Modi also launched several Port led development projects worth Rs 600 crore as a part of the celebrations.

• Some of the projects launched include:
  o Upgraded Ship repair facility at Netaji Subhash Dry Dock
  o Upgraded railway infrastructure of Kolkata dock system of the Kolkata Port for smooth cargo movement and river front development scheme
  o Released a commemorative stamp on 150th years of the Kolkata Port Trust
  o Mechanization of Berth No. 3 at Haldia Dock
  o Inaugurated the Kaushal Vikas Kendra and Pritilata Chhatri Avas for 200 tribal girl students from Sundarbans.
  o Honored two oldest pensioners of the Port Smt. Nagina Bhagat (105 years) and Mr. Naresh Chandra Chakraborty (100 years)
  o Launched the Port Anthem
  o Handed over a cheque of Rs 501 crore to the chairman of LIC Mr. M.R. Kumar towards final installment to meet deficit of pension funds of the Kolkata Port Trust.

**India aiming at USD 250 billion maritime economy by 2024: Defence Secretary**

• India is aiming at a $250 billion maritime economy by 2024, which the Indian Coast Guard has the responsibility to safeguard.

• With a target of becoming a USD 5 trillion economy by 2024, we are looking at over USD 250 billion coming from the maritime zone.

• The maritime economy constitutes nearly five per cent of the world economy

**AWARDS AND RECOGNITION**

**Jasprit Bumrah to receive Polly Umrigar Award.**

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) Annual Awards for 2018-19 were presented on 12 January 2020 in Mumbai. Given below is the complete list of winners.

1. CK Nayudu Lifetime Achievement Award: Krishnamachari Srikkanth
2. BCCI Lifetime Achievement Award For Women: Anjum Chopra
3. BCCI Special Award: Dilip Joshi
4. Dilip Sardesai Award (Highest run getter in Tests): Cheteshwar Pujara
5. Dilip Sardesai Award (Highest wicket taker in Tests): Jasprit Bumrah
6. Highest run getter in women’s internationals: Smriti Mandhana
7. Highest wicket taker in women’s internationals: Jhulan Goswami
8. Polly Umrigar Award for Best International Cricketer (Men): Jasprit Bumrah
10. Best International debut (Men): Mayank Agarwal
12. Lala Amarnath Award for Best all-rounder in Ranji Trophy: Shivam Dube (Mumbai)
13. Lala Amarnath Award for Best all-rounder in Domestic Limited Overs competition: Nitish Rana (Delhi)
14. Madhavrao Scindia Award for highest run getter in Ranji Trophy: Milind Kumar (Sikkim)
15. Madhavrao Scindia Award for highest wicket taker in Ranji Trophy: Ashutosh Aman (Bihar)
16. MA Chidambaram Trophy for Highest Run Getter in CK Nayudu Trophy: Manan Hingrajia (Gujarat)
17. MA Chidambaram Trophy for Highest Wicket Taker in CK Nayudu Trophy: Sidak Singh (Pondicherry)
18. MA Chidambaram Trophy for Highest Run Getter in Cooch Behar Trophy: Vathsal Govind (Kerala)
19. MA Chidambaram Trophy for Highest Wicket Taker in Cooch Behar Trophy: Apurva Anand (Bihar)
22. Jagmohan Dalmiya Trophy for Best Senior Women’s Cricketer in Domestic competition: Deepti Sharma (Bengal)
23. Jagmohan Dalmiya Trophy for Best Junior Women’s Cricketer in Domestic competition: Shafali Verma (Haryana)
24. Best Umpire: Virender Sharma
25. Best Performance in Domestic Tournaments: Vidarbha

SPORTS

Badminton: Japan’s Kento Momota easily wins Malaysia Masters.

- World number one Kento Momota of Japan won the 2020 Malaysia Masters defeating Denmark’s Viktor Axelsen 24-22, 21-11 on 12 January 2020.
- The 2020 Malaysia Masters was the first tournament of the 2020 BWF World Tour.

6. Karolina Pliskova wins in Brisbane but ‘starts from zero’ heading into Australian Open.

- Czech Republic’s Karolina Pliskova defeated Madison Keys of United States 6-4, 4-6, 7-5 to win 2020 Brisbane International Tennis Tournament held at Brisbane, Queensland, Australia.
- This was Pliskova’s third Brisbane title in four years and her 16th on the WTA tour.
- In doubles category, Hsieh Su-wei and Barbora Strýcova defeated Ashleigh Barty and Kiki Bertens.
- Brisbane International is a WTA Premier tournament of the Women’s Tennis Association (WTA) Tour.

APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS

Tsai Ing-wen wins second term as Taiwan president.

- Taiwan’s President Tsai Ing-wen has secured a landslide victory in 2020 presidential elections with 57 percent of the vote in favour to win second term as the President of the Republic of China (Taiwan).
- 63-year old Tsai was the first female leader of the country, when she assumed charge for first term in May 2016.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
Naval variant of LCA Tejas successfully lands on carrier

- The naval version of the indigenously-built Tejas light combat aircraft (LCR) successfully undertook the maiden ski-jump take-off from the aircraft carrier INS Vikramaditya on 12 January 2020.
- Earlier on 11 January 2020, the aircraft made its first landing on the deck of INS Vikramaditya, which is currently deployed in the Arabian Sea.
- The successful landing and take off by the aircraft on INS Vikramaditya is a “great event” in the history of Indian fighter aircraft development programme.
- The achievement put India among a select group of nations having the capability to design such a jet which can operate from an aircraft carrier.
- The naval variant of Tejas has been developed by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) along with Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA), Aircraft Research and Design Centre of Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd, Centre for Military Airworthiness and Certification (CEMILAC) and CSIR among others.

OBITUARY

Veteran PTI journalist Babul Baruahhas died of prolonged illness.

- He was associated with the premier news agency for nearly 40 years.
- He was 80.

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Former Prime Minister of India Shri Manmohan Singh declared World Hindi Day to be observed on 10 January in the year 2006. Since then, the day is observed by Ministry of External Affairs and Indian Embassies abroad.

11 January – Death anniversary of Lal Bahadur Shastri
He was the second Prime Minister of Independent India. He popularised the slogan 'Jai Jawan Jai Kisan' He actively participated in the India's freedom struggle. Due to cardiac arrest he died on 11 January, 1966.

12 January – National Youth Day
The birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda also called Swami Vivekananda Jayanti is celebrated every year on 12 January. He was born on 12 January, 1863. The government had decided to observe it as National Youth Day because the philosophy of Swamiji and the ideals for which he lived and worked could be a great source of inspiration for the Indian Youth. He had given speech at the Parliament of the World's religions in Chicago and glorified India's name.

15 January – Indian Army Day
Every year 15 January is observed as Indian Army Day because on this day in 1949 field Marshal Kodandera M Cariappa took over as the first Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army from General Sir Francis Butcher, the last British Commander-in-Chief.

15 January -- Makara Sankranti
Makara Sankranti or Maghi, is a festival day in the Hindu calendar, dedicated to the deity Surya. It is observed each year in January. It marks the first day of the sun's transit into Makara, marking the end of the month with the winter solstice and the start of longer days.

Observances: Kite flying.
Date: Wednesday, 15 January, 2020
Celebrations: Kite flying, bonfires, fairs, surya puja in river, feast, arts, dance, socialization
Featured in religions: Hinduism
Significance: Harvest festival
Also called: Magha, Mökôr Sôngkrânti, Mela, Maghi, Bhogi

23 January - Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Jayanti
Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose was born on 23 January, 1897 in Cuttack, Orissa. He was one of the most prominent Indian freedom fighter. His army was known as Indian National Army (INA) or Azad Hind Fauj. He also led an Indian national force from abroad against the Western powers during World War II.

**24 January- National Girl Child Day**
On 24 January every year National Girl Child Day is celebrated to highlight the inequalities faced by a majority of the girls in India, importance of education, nutrition, legal rights, medical care and safety of girl children etc.

**25 January- National Voters Day**
Every year on 25 January National Voter’s Day or Rashtriya Matdata Diwas is celebrated to encourage young voters to take part in the political process. In 2011 first time this day was celebrated to mark Election Commission’s Foundation Day.

**25 January- National Tourism Day**
Every year on 25 January National Tourism Day is celebrated in India to raise the awareness and educate people about the importance of tourism and the role it plays in the Indian economy.

**26 January- Republic Day**
On 26 November, 1949 Indian Constituent Assembly adopted the Constitution the supreme law of the land and replaced the Government of India Act 1935. It came into effect on 26 January 1950 with a democratic government system. This day marks with the largest parade took place at Rajpath, Delhi every year.

**26 January – International Customs Day**
International Customs Day (ICD) is celebrated every year on 26 January by Custom Organisation to recognise the role of custom officials and agencies in maintaining border security. It also focuses on the working conditions and challenges that custom officers face in their jobs.

**28 January- Birth Anniversary of Lala Lajpat Rai**
Lala Lajpat Rai was born on 28 January, 1865 in Punjab. He was a prominent nationalist leader who played an important role in India’s struggle for freedom. He also earned the title of ‘Punjab Kesari’ or ‘the Lion of the Punjab’. He initiated the foundation of Punjab National Bank. He died on 17
November, 1928, due to serious injuries. The University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences in Hisar, Haryana is named after Lala Lajpat Rai.

30 January – Martyrs Day or Shaheed Diwas
30 January is celebrated as Martyr's Day or Shaheed Diwas every year in the memory of Mahatma Gandhi and sacrifice of three revolutionaries of India. As, on 30 January, 1948, the 'Father of Nation' was assassinated. And on 23rd March 3 heroes namely Bhagat Singh, Shivaram Rajguru and Sukhdev Thapar of the nation were hanged to death by British.

30 January – World Leprosy Eradication Day
World Leprosy Day is observed on 30 January every year to focus on the target of zero cases of leprosy-related disabilities in children. As, we know that disabilities do not occur overnight but happen after a prolonged period of undiagnosed disease.

**NATIONAL NEWS**

**India’s energy policy: Key findings of the IEA’s In-Depth Review 2020**

- On January 10, 2020 the International Energy Agency (IEA) in partnership with NITI (National Institution for Transforming India) Aayog has released the first in-depth review of India’s energy policies 2020.
- The IEA conducts review on energy policies of its member countries.
- This is the 1st time the review is done for India after it became an IEA-association country in March 2017.
- Renewable energy growth: India has strong growth in renewables in India accounting for almost 23% of the country’s total installed capacity.
- Doubling of energy demand: India’s energy demand is expected to be doubled by 2040 and also the electricity demand may triple.
- Share of variable renewables: The share of variable renewables in India is already above 15%.
- Reduction in energy demand: The improvements made in energy efficiency helped India to avoid 15% of additional energy demand, oil and gas imports, and air pollution as well as 300 million tonnes of CO2 (carbon dioxide) emissions between 2000 and 2018.
State Energy Efficiency Index 2019: Haryana, Karnataka and Kerala Tops

- The State Energy Efficiency Index 2019 was released on 10 January 2020 in New Delhi by RK Singh, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Power and New & Renewable Energy and Minister of State for Skill Development & Entrepreneurship.
- The Index has been developed by Alliance for an Energy Efficient Economy (AEEE) under the leadership and guidance of the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) to access the efforts and achievements of states and union territories towards energy efficiency implementation.
- The top performing states for State EE Index 2019, Haryana, Kerala and Karnataka

Basic Features of the Index
- The first such Index named the State Energy Efficiency Preparedness Index, was launched on 01 August 2018.
- The State EE Index 2019 draws on the previous index and has enhanced the indicator framework, with this year’s Index based on 97 indicators.
- 36 states and union territories have been assessed in State EE Index 2019.
- The State EE Index 2019 has categorized states in 4 groups namely ‘FrontRunner’, ‘Achiever’, ‘Contender’ and ‘Aspirant’ based on their efforts and achievements towards energy efficiency implementation.
- Also, for a rational comparison, the States and Union Territories were grouped into four groups based on the aggregated Total Primary Energy Supply (TPES) required to meet the state’s actual energy demand across sectors.

Key Findings of the Index
- None of the states were ranked as ‘front runner’ state which means that a lot more can be done at the state level to realise energy savings from energy efficiency.
- Haryana, Kerala and Karnataka topped the index and were the only three states to be ranked in the ‘Achiever’ category.
- Karnataka (Group 1), Haryana (Group 2), Himachal Pradesh (Group 3) and Puducherry (Group 4) led their groups.
• Rajasthan (Group 1), Jharkhand (Group 2), Jammu & Kashmir (Group 3) and Manipur (Group 4) performed the worst in their groups.

**Amit Shah inaugurates state-of-the-art portal (I4C) to tackle cyber crimes**
• The Union Home Minister Amit Shah inaugurated the state-of-the-art Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) in New Delhi on 11 January 2020.
• The minister also dedicated National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal to the nation.

**Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C)**
• Government had approved the scheme to set up I4C in October 2018 at an estimated cost of around Rs 416 crore to deal with all types of cyber-crimes in a comprehensive and coordinated manner.
• 15 States and UTs have given their consent to set up Regional Cyber Crime Coordination Centres.

**National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal**
• The National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal (www.cybercrime.gov.in) has been launched as a citizen-centric initiative by Home Ministry to enable citizens report cyber-crimes online.
• All the cyber-crime related complaints will be accessed by the concerned law enforcement agencies in the States and Union Territories for taking action as per law.
• This portal was launched on pilot basis on 30th August, 2019.
• So far, over 700 Police Districts and 3,900 Police Stations have been connected with this portal.

**First-of-its-kind ‘CYBER AASHVAST’ and VISWAS projects Inaugurated by HM Amit Shah in Gandhinagar**
• The Union Home Minister Amit Shah inaugurated various people centric projects at Mahatma Mandir in Gandhinagar on 11 January 2020.
• Some of the major projects inaugurated includes:
  o Video Integration and State Wide Advanced Security (VISWAS)
  o VISWAS is a first of its kind project in the country launched for major e-governance initiative.
• It aims at improving Law and Order Management, Proactive traffic management and control, Crime detection through video analytics and Post incident Investigation and video forensics.
  o Cyber Crime Prevention Unit-AASHVAST
• Cyber AASHVAST Project is a first of its kind unit launched by Gujarat Police to make cyber-space safe for common man through a dedicated helpline service for victims of cyber crimes to provide cyber-security solution.

**Paperless licensing process for petroleum road tankers launched by DPIIT**

• On January 10, 2020 Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce and Industry, has launched paperless licensing process through Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organization (PESO) for road tankers for transportation of petroleum under the Petroleum Rules, 2002.
• This is a significant move towards paperless and green India that provides ease of doing business for petroleum road tankers.
• Moving towards digitalisation the process will include filing the applications through online processing of the application at every stage will be intimated via e-mail (electronic mail) and SMS (Short Message Service) whether discrepancy or approval or grant of license.
• This initiative directly benefits more than one lakh petroleum road tanker owners who together hold more than half of total licenses issued under the Petroleum Rules, 2002.
• The authenticity of the license can be verified through public domain available on PESO’s website.
• About Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organization (PESO):
  It is headed by Chief Controller of Explosives.
  Founded- 9 September 1898.
  Headquarters- Nagpur.
  Joint Chief Controller of Explosives, HOD(HEAD OF DEPARTMENT)- M.K. Jhala.

Asia's largest Civil Aviation platform- 'Wings India 2020' to be held at Hyderabad from 12-15 March 2020
• Wings India 2020, an international exhibition and conference on civil aviation sector, will be held at Begumpet Airport in Hyderabad, Telangana from March 12-15, 2020.
• The theme of the event is “Flying for all”.
• The biennial event will be inaugurated by the Hon’ble Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi in presence of Minister for Civil Aviation and Minister of State for Civil Aviation.
• Ministry of Civil Aviation (MCA), Federation Of Indian Chambers Of Commerce And Industry (FICCI), Airports Authority of India (AAI) are the organizers of the event
• The event will provide a fillip to the aviation and restructured focused forums will be instrumental in attaining the objective of connecting the Buyers, Sellers, Investors and other stakeholders at a common forum.
• The maiden edition of “WINGS INDIA AWARDS” for Excellence in the Civil Aviation Sector will be announced during the event. The award will be conferred upon the Aviation-related Companies/Institutions/Organizations.
• About Ministry of Civil Aviation:
  Founded- October 21, 2016
  Ministry of Civil Aviation- Hardeep Singh Puri
  Ministry of State for Civil Aviation- Suresh Prabhu
  Director General of Directorate General of Civil Aviation- Arun Kumar
• About FICCI:
  Founded- 1927
  Headquarters- New Delhi
  President- Sandip Somany
• About AAI:
  Founded- April 1, 1995
  Headquarters- New Delhi
  Chairman- Arvind Singh
• About Telangana:
  Chief Minister- K. Chandrashekar Rao
Governor- Dr. Tamilisai Soundararajan
State Flower- Senna auriculata
State Tree- Jand
State Animal- Chital
State Bird- Indian roller

**NSO’s IIP data : Industrial production grows 1.8% in November 2019**
- On January 10, 2020, According to the Index of industrial production (IIP) data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO) of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), Growth in manufacturing sector has resulted in 128.4 in November 2019, which is 1.8 % higher as compared to the level 126.1 in the month of November 2018 .
- The result turning positive after 3 consecutive months (August to October 2019) of decline.
- Manufacturing sector: As per the data, the manufacturing sector (13 of the 23 industry groups in the manufacturing category ) grew by 2.7 % in November 2019, compared to a decline of 0.7 % in the same month in 2018.
- Electricity generation: While there was a 5.1 % increase in power generation in November 2018, it declined by 5 % in November 2019.
- Mining sector: Mining sector production was down 1.7 % as compared to a decline of 2.7 % in the reporting period.

**‘Jagananna Amma Vodi Scheme’ to financially help mothers educate their children : Andhra Pradesh**
- On 9th January 2020, the state government of Andhra Pradesh under Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy launched first-of-its-kind scheme for mothers in India named Jagananna Amma Vodi scheme.
- The ‘Amma Vodi’ scheme is AP government’s flagship programme to support mothers (or recognized guardian in the absence of mother), who is below poverty line household, irrespective of caste, creed, religion and region to enable her to educate her child/children from Class I to XII from the Academic year 2019-2020.
• The government has allocated Rs 6,455.80 crore budget in the fiscal year 2019-20 for the scheme.
• The minister released Rs 6,318 crore on January 9 for the scheme under which Rs 15,000 each was credited into the accounts of around 43 lakh mothers as an annual financial assistance for the benefit of 82 lakh children in the state this year.
• For further details visit: http://jaganannaammavodi.ap.gov.in

Click here to see the Beneficiaries of AMMAVODI SCHEME

**Yashaswini Scheme for Women entrepreneurship launched in Goa.**
• Union Minister for Women and Child Development and Textiles, Smriti Irani launched Yashaswini Scheme for Women entrepreneurship in Goa on 11 January 2020 at Dr Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Stadium at Taleigao near Panaji.
• Under Yashaswini scheme, women self-help groups will get interest free loans of upto Rs 5 lakh for business.
• To begin with, Adarsha Satari Mahila Mandal Guleli -Sattari, Umang Self-Help Group, Salcete, Phoenix Womens Wing Self-Help Group Valpoi -Sattari were given loans under newly launched Yashaswini scheme.

**INS Vikramaditya deployed amid China-Pak Navy drill**
• China and Pakistan are conducting their nine-day mega naval exercise ‘Sea Guardians’ in the North Arabian Sea from 06 January 2020 to increase inter-operability and strategic cooperation between their two navies.
• On the other hand, India Navy too deployed its aircraft carrier INS Vikramaditya in the Arabian Sea, to send a clear strategic signal to them about its operational readiness and combat capability in the maritime domain.
• Top officials of the Naval headquarters are personally keeping close watch on the ‘Sea Guardians’ from the aircraft carrier INS Vikramaditya deploying MiG29K fighters on board.

**BANKING AND ECONOMICS**

**HDFC completes acquisition of controlling majority stake (51.16%) in Apollo Munich.**
The mortgage lender Housing Development Finance Corporation (HDFC) has announced the completion of the acquisition of majority stake (51.16%) in Apollo Munich Health Insurance Company for Rs. 1,495.81 crore.

The acquisition was approved by the Competition Commission of India (CCI), the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), and the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRADI) by 01 January 2020.

Controlling Stake: HDFC has acquired 50.80% share of Apollo Hospital Group in Apollo Munich Health Insurance Company (Apollo Munich) for Rs 1485.14 crore.

- It has also acquired 0.36% shareholding held by few employees for Rs 10.67 crore.

Name of new Entity: Subsequently, the Apollo Munich has been renamed as HDFC ERGO Health Insurance and will operate as a subsidiary of HDFC.

MD and CEO: Anuj Tyagi, Executive Director and Chief Business Officer at HDFC ERGO Health Insurance has been appointed as the new MD and CEO of the new entity HDFC ERGO Health Insurance. However, the appointment is subject to approval of IRDAI.

Future plans: HDFC will merge HDFC ERGO General with ERGO Health and will soon apply to seek approval for the same to the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT).

- Post merger, the merged entity will be the second largest private insurer in accident and health segment in the country”.

**National Strategy for Financial Inclusion (NSFI)2019-2024 released by RBI.**


- The NSFI sets forth the vision and key objectives of the Financial Inclusion policies in India to expand the reach and sustain the efforts through a broad convergence of action involving all the stakeholders in the financial sector.

  - NSFI enlists 6 visions:
    - Universal Access to Financial Services
- Providing Basic Bouquet of Financial Services
- Access to Livelihood and Skill Development
- Financial Literacy and Education
- Customer Protection and Grievance Redressal
- Effective Co-ordination

- The document highlights the major issues that act as impediments to financial inclusion and comes up with a set of recommendations and action plans to support sustainable financial inclusion over the next 5 years.

**RBI now allows e-mandate on UPI.**

- Reserve Bank of India has allowed the Processing of e-mandate for recurring transactions for UPI transactions.
- The maximum permissible limit for a transaction under this arrangement shall be ₹ 2,000/-.  
- No charges shall be levied or recovered from the UPI User for availing the e-mandate facility on UPI for recurring transactions.

14. Govt raises authorised capital of Indian Overseas Bank to Rs 25,000 crore

- On January 10, 2020 the central govt in consultation with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has announced an increase in the authorized capital of Indian Overseas Bank (IOB) to Rs 25,000 crores from the previous authorized capital of Rs. 15,000 crores, thus making an increase by Rs. 10,000 crores.
  - Authorised capital: It is the maximum amount of share capital a company/bank/institution is authorised to issue its shareholders.
  - Paid-up capital: It is the amount of money a company has received from shareholders in exchange for shares of stock.

**About Indian Overseas Bank(IOB):**

Chief Executive Officer(CEO)- Shri Karnam Sekar.
Headquarters- Chennai, Tamil Nadu.
Founder- Chidambaram Chettyar.
Founded- 10 February 1937.
AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

**Merck announces Young Scientist Award winners in India**
- On January 9, 2020 Merck Young Scientist Awards 2019 in chemical science, instituted by Merck was announced in Bengaluru in Karnataka.
- Indian Scientist Dr Sakya Singha Sen and his team won the Merck Young Scientist Award 2019.
- The award is given to the given to researchers with less than ten years of experience with expertise in solving some of the toughest problems in chemical sciences.
- The winners will receive a cash award of Rs 2,00,000 and Travel Award of Rs 1,50,000 each

**SPORTS**

**7th National Ice Hockey Championship : Ladakh wins women trophy**
- Ladakh women team has won the 7th National Ice Hockey Championship women trophy. In the final match, Ladakh scoring 2 goals against Delhi and won the tournament.
- The tournament was organised by the Ice Hockey Association of India (IHAI) in association with the Ladakh winter sports club.
- 4 women teams representing Chandigarh, Delhi, Maharashtra, and Ladakh participated in the tournament.
- President of Ice Hockey Association of India: K. L. Kumar.

**Rani Rampal nominated for ‘World Games Athlete of the Year’**
- On January 10, 2020 Rani Rampal from Haryana, India the captain of the Indian women’s hockey team has been nominated for the “World Games Athlete of the Year” award, 2019 by the International Hockey Federation (FIH).
- Rani was instrumental in India qualifying for the first time in back-to-back olympic games.
World Games Athlete of the Year award is an initiative of IWGA (International World Games Association) that recognizes and honours an athlete or a team for their outstanding performance or for their social commitment or particularly, fair behavior.

- 2019 will be the 6th edition of the IWGA.
- Twenty-five athletes have been nominated for this award from their respective sports by their international federations.
- The winner will be decided by online voting which closes on January 30.
- Rani helped India qualify for the Tokyo Olympics 2020.

About International Hockey Federation:
Headquarters- Lausanne, Switzerland.
President- Narinder Batra.
CEO (Chief Executive Officer)- Thierry Weil.

APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS

Scientist Dr. Saha elected as IUPAC bureau member

- On January 10, 2020 Dr. Bipul Bihari Saha of Hyderabad, India has been elected as a bureau member of the IUPAC (International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry) for the period 2020-23.
- Saha is the only second Indian after “Bharat Ratna” Professor Chintamani Nagesa Ramachandra Rao (CNR Rao), to be elected (1979) for this position in a century.
- IUPAC is the largest global organization of Chemistry professionals and comprises of 12 Committees and 8 Divisions.
- The Bureau Member are elected considering his/her scientific contribution in the field of Chemistry, his leadership qualities etc.,
- Saha is a Chief Director of R&D (Research and Development) L.R Research Laboratories is a wholly owned subsidiary of NACL (Nagarjuna Agrichem Limited) Industries Limited, Hyderabad.
- Saha has been closely associated with the IUPAC as the Executive Committee Member of “IUPAC Committee on Chemistry and Industry” (First Indian to hold this position), National
Representative of India in “IUPAC Division of Chemistry and Environment” and member of “IUPAC Inter-Divisional Committee on Green Chemistry for Sustainable Development”.

- Saha was also a Principal Investigator and member of the steering Committee of Government of India sponsored “New Millennium Indian Technology Leadership Initiative Project”.
- Dr. Saha has been awarded Homi Bhabha Gold Medal by Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC).
- About IUPAC (International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry):
  IUPAC has the responsibility of naming all new elements and compounds, declare atomic weights and physical constants, update Periodic Table and carry out research Projects.
  Headquarters- Research Triangle Park, North Carolina, United States.
  Founded- 1919.
  Motto- Advancing Chemistry Worldwide.
  President- Professor Qi-Feng Zhou (China).

**National Book Trust appointed Lt Col Yuvraj Malik as director.**

- On January 11, 2020 Lt Col Yuvraj Malik was appointed as the director of National Book Trust (NBT) on deputation. Malik succeeds Sahitya Akademi-awardee writer Rita Chowdhury.
- Previously Malik has served with the Ministry of Defence (MoD), Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA), Raj Bhawan in Jammu & Kashmir (J&K), United Nations Missions in Africa and also in several operational assignments.
- About National Book Trust (NBT):
  Founded- 1 August 1957.
  Headquarters- New Delhi.
  Chairman- Govind Prasad Sharma.

**SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

**LCA Tejas' lands on Indian Navy's aircraft carrier INS Vikramaditya for the first time.**
• On January 11, 2020 the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas has made a successful landed on the India’s biggest warship INS Vikramaditya.
• The maiden landing was conducted by Commodore Jaideep Maolankar.
• For the first time an indigenous fighter aircraft has been landed on an aircraft carrier.
• India becomes sixth nation to master the art of an arrested landing and ski-jump take off on the deck of a carrier after Russia, the United States (US), France, the United Kingdom (UK) and China.
• LCA was developed by Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA) long with Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
• About LCA Tejas: Tejas is India’s Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) together with its variants, is the smallest and lightest Multi-Role Supersonic Fighter Aircraft of its class.
• This single engine, Compound-Delta-Wing, Tailless Aircraft is designed and developed by ADA with Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) as the principal partner along with DRDO, Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL), Directorate General Of Aeronautical Quality Assurance (DGAQA) to meet the needs of the Indian Air Force (IAF) and Indian Navy (IN).
• About DRDO:
  Founded- 1958
  Headquarters- New Delhi
  Chairman- Dr. G Satheesh Reddy
• About HAL:
  Chairman- R Madhavan
  Headquarters- Bengaluru
• About CSIR:
  Founded- September 26, 1942
  President- Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi
• About BEL:
  Headquarters- Bengaluru
Chairman- S.K.Sharma

OBITUARY

Qaboos bin Said, Oman’s Longest Serving Sultan, passes Away at 79.
• The Sultan of Oman, Qaboos bin Said, has passed away at the age of 79 due to health issues.
• He was the longest serving Arab leader who ruled the Gulf Arab state for 50 years since overtaking in 1970.
• Meanwhile, Oman’s culture minister, Haitham bin Tariq Al Said, has been named as the Arab country’s new ruling sultan.

Kannada Scholar M Chidananda Murthy passes away at 88.
Veteran broadcaster, academic-poet Obaid Siddiqui passes away at 63.
Canadian rock group drummer Neil Peart passed away at 67 years.

SUMMITS AND MOU’S

ASCEND 2020 : Global Investor Meet held in Kochi, Kerala
• A two day organised Global Investors Meet ASCEND 2020 was held in Kochi, Kerala at Lulu Bolgatty International Convention Centre, Grand Hyatt, from January 9-10.
• The meet was inaugurated by the Chief Minister of Kerala Shri Pinarayi Vijayan and was organised by states Department of Industries.
• Totally Rs 1 lakh crore worth investment proposals were received.
• The key highlights of the meet are as follows:
  o Proposed mega projects: Mega projects are those that has more than Rs 100 crore investment. A total of 18 mega projects were announced by the state govt. Some of them include setting up of Propylene Oxide plant, Electronic hardware park, Rs.131 crore defence park, Rs. 1,864-crore KINFRA (Kerala Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation)-initiated Petrochemical Park, Rs. 900-crore Super Absorbent Polymer Plant etc.
Pact by KIFML & ADIA: Kerala infrastructure Fund Management Ltd.(KIFML) and Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA) have signed 1 projected but have designated Rs 8110 crore for six projects.

Wage subsidy scheme: Apart from announcing mega projects, a wage subsidy scheme was also introduced. Wage subsidy will be provided for the first 5 years for new ventures getting registered on April 1, 2020. The benefit will only be available to those units that provides ESI (Employee State Insurance) and PF (Provident Fund) benefits to workers.

**January 2020 Important Days**

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<tr>
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DAYS
1 January – Global Family Day
It is celebrated as a day of peace and sharing. Its aim is to unite and spread message of peace by considering and promoting an idea that Earth is a one Global Family so as to make world a better place to live for everyone.

8 January - African National Congress Foundation Day
South African Native National Congress (SANNC) was founded in 8 January 1912 by John Langalibalele Dube in Bloemfontein. Behind this the primary motive was to give voting rights to black and mixed race Africans or to unite African people and spearhead the struggle for fundamental political, social and economic change.

9 January – NRI (Non-Resident Indian) Day or Pravasi Bharatiya Divas
NRI or Pravasi Bharatiya Divas observed every year on 9 January to mark the contribution of the overseas Indian community towards the development of India. This day also commemorates the return of Mahatma Gandhi from South Africa to Mumbai on 9 January, 1915.

10 January : World Hindi Day
The World Hindi Day is celebrated every year on 10 January since 2006 to create awareness for the promotion of Hindi in the world, to introduce Hindi as an international language among other things.Former Prime Minister of India Shri Manmohan Singh declared World Hindi Day to be observed on 10 January in the year 2006.Since then, the day is observed by Ministry of External Affairs and Indian Embassies abroad.

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Observances: Kite flying.

Date: Wednesday, 15 January, 2020

Celebrations: Kite flying, bonfires, fairs, surya puja in river, feast, arts, dance, socialization

Featured in religions: Hinduism

Significance: Harvest festival

Also called: Magha, Môkôr Sôngkrânti, Mela, Maghi, Bhogi

**23 January - Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Jayanti**

Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose was born on 23 January, 1897 in Cuttack, Orissa. He was one of the most prominent Indian freedom fighter. His army was known as Indian National Army (INA) or Azad Hind Fauj. He also led an Indian national force from abroad against the Western powers during World War II.

**24 January - National Girl Child Day**

On 24 January every year National Girl Child Day is celebrated to highlight the inequalities faced by a majority of the girls in India, importance of education, nutrition, legal rights, medical care and safety of girl children etc.

**25 January- National Voters Day**
Every year on 25 January National Voter's Day or Rashtriya Matdata Diwas is celebrated to encourage young voters to take part in the political process. In 2011 first time this day was celebrated to mark Election Commission's Foundation Day.

25 January- National Tourism Day
Every year on 25 January National Tourism Day is celebrated in India to raise the awareness and educate people about the importance of tourism and the role it plays in the Indian economy.

26 January- Republic Day
On 26 November, 1949 Indian Constituent Assembly adopted the Constitution the supreme law of the land and replaced the Government of India Act 1935. It came into effect on 26 January 1950 with a democratic government system. This day marks with the largest parade took place at Rajpath, Delhi every year.

26 January – International Customs Day
International Customs Day (ICD) is celebrated every year on 26 January by Custom Organisation to recognise the role of custom officials and agencies in maintaining border security. It also focuses on the working conditions and challenges that custom officers face in their jobs.

28 January- Birth Anniversary of Lala Lajpat Rai
Lala Lajpat Rai was born on 28 January, 1865 in Punjab. He was a prominent nationalist leader who played an important role in India's struggle for freedom. He also earned the title of 'Punjab Kesari' or 'the Lion of the Punjab'. He initiated the foundation of Punjab National Bank. He died on 17 November, 1928, due to serious injuries. The University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences in Hisar, Haryana is named after Lala Lajpat Rai.

30 January – Martyrs Day or Shaheed Diwas
30 January is celebrated as Martyr's Day or Shaheed Diwas every year in the memory of Mahatma Gandhi and sacrifice of three revolutionaries of India. As, on 30 January, 1948, the 'Father of Nation' was assassinated. And on 23rd March 3 heroes namely Bhagat Singh, Shivaram Rajguru and Sukhdev Thapar of the nation were hanged to death by British.

30 January – World Leprosy Eradication Day
World Leprosy Day is observed on 30 January every year to focus on the target of zero cases of leprosy-related disabilities in children. As, we know that disabilities do not occur overnight but happen after a prolonged period of undiagnosed disease.

**NATIONAL NEWS**

1. **India-2021 census to begin on 1st April.**
   - The Census India-2021 exercise is schedule to start on 1st April 2020 and conclude on 30th September 2020.
   - Also, for the first time, the Census India-2021 will be conducted through a mobile phone application, instead of the traditional pen and paper method as used earlier.

2. **Tamil Nadu: Famous chariot festival of Suchindram Thanumalayan Temple being held today.**
   - The annual chariot festival of the Suchindram Thanumalayan Temple in Tamil Nadu began on 09 January 2020.
   - The ten-day festival involving pulling of the chariot is held every year in the state in the Tamil month falling in December – January.
   - Suchindram Temple, also known as Sthanumalayan Temple is located in the Kanyakumari district of Tamil Nadu.
   - The main deity of the temple is Lord Shiva, Lord Vishnu and Lord Brahma in a single form called Sthanumalayan, where Sthanu means Trimurti – Brahma ,Vishnu and Shiva.

3. **Central Govt To Set Up 1023 Fast Track Special Courts For Speedy Disposal of POCSO and Rape Cases**
   - On January 09,2020 24 states and union territories (UTs) have joined together to set up a total of 1,023 ‘fast-track special courts’ (FTSCs) to dispose of over 1.60 lakh cases of rape of children below the age of 12 years and women pending in various courts across the country.
   - This has been done to bring out fast and time bound completion of trial of these cases for which Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2018 was enacted.
   - The FTSC will be set up as part of National Mission for Safety of Women (NMSW).
• Project cost: Total financial implication of the project is over Rs 767.25 crore.
• Operational courts: 216 POCSO courts have already been operationalized in 12 States under the scheme.
• Courts for POCSO cases: Out of the 1023 FTSCs, 289 courts were proposed in 2019 to be set up exclusively for POCSO Act related cases in Districts having more than 100 such cases.
• Cases to be heard in a year: Each FTSC is expected to dispose of 41-42 cases in each quarter and at least 165 cases in a year.

4. India's first “fully solar powered” railway section between Nandyal-Yerraguntla
• On January 9, 2020 the Nandyal-Yerraguntla section in Guntakal Division of Andhra Pradesh has been declared as the first solar section in South Central Railway.
• In 2016 August Indian Railways opened Nandyal-Yerraguntla section in Kadapa district of Andhra Pradesh.
• All the 8 stations in the Nandyal-Yerraguntla section has been provided with solar panels which are capable of meeting all the power needs in these railway stations.
• Anticipated savings in terms of revenue is around Rs 5 lakh per annum and it also helps in reducing carbon footprint to the tune of 49 metric tonnes per annum.
• By 2021-22, Indian Railways has planned to source about 1000 MegaWatt (MW) Solar Power and about 200 MW of wind power across Zonal Railways & Production Units.

5. Chenab Bridge: Indian Railways on track for world's highest railway-arch bridge in J&K
• On January 9, 2020 Government of India set a new deadline for the completion of the world's highest railway bridge- Chenab bridge. Kashmir will be connected to the rest of India by Indian railways by December 2021.
• Konkan railway is the implementing agency of this project.
• The Chenab bridge will be 35m taller than the Eiffel Tower in Paris, France.
• Once completed, it will surpass the record of the Beipan river Shuibai railway bridge (275 m) in China.
• The massive arch-shaped structure being constructed in hostile-terrain, have used over 5462 tonnes of steel will be 359 meters above the chenab river bed.
• It is designed to withstand the wind's speeds of up to 260km per hour.
• The 1.315-km-long 'engineering marvel' will connect Bakkal (Katra) and Kauri (Srinagar).
• The bridge forms a crucial link in the 111-km stretch between Katra and Banihal, which is part of the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla rail link project.
• The project was declared as a national project in 2002.
• About Chenab River:
  i. The Chenab river is formed by the confluence of the Chandra and Bhaga rivers at Tandi in the upper Himalayas in Lahaul and Spiti district of Himachal Pradesh, Republic of India.
  ii. In its upper reaches it is also known as Chandrabhaga.
  iii. It is the tributary of the Indus river.
  iv. The total length of Chenab river is about 960 km.
• Konkan Railway:
  Chairman and Managing Director- Shri. Sanjay Gupta.

6. Forest Committee approves scheme to 'trade' in forests.
• On January 09, 2020 the Forest Advisory Committee (FAC) which is an apex body that considers questions on the diversion of forest land for non-forest uses such as mining, industrial projects, townships etc and also issues granting of forest clearances has approved Green Credit Scheme that would allow forests to be traded as a commodity.
• Green Credit scheme:
  o Agencies identifying lands: The scheme allows agencies like private companies, village forest communities etc to identify lands for forest cultivation and ensures plantations are grown.
  o Compensatory forest land: After 3 years, these identified lands would be considered as compensatory forest land after meeting forest department’s criteria.
  o Industry approaching agencies: An industry that needs forest land could approach these agencies and pay them for such forested land. This would then be transferred to the forest department & also recorded as forest land.
Current system: In the current system the industry should find appropriate non forest land equal to that which would be razed for industrial purposes

**BANKING AND ECONOMICS**

7. **World Bank cuts India’s FY20 growth estimates to 5% from earlier 6%**.
   • The WB report has cuts India’s GDP growth for financial year 2020-21 to 5% from its previous estimate of 6 percent.
   • Also, for fiscal 2021-22, GDP projection has come down to 5.8 percent.
   • The Global economic growth in 2020-21 is expected to rise to 2.5%.

**AWARDS AND RECOGNITION**

8. **4 Indian airports receive international recognition for reducing carbon emissions**.
   • On January 10, 2020 the Airports Authority of India (AAI) has announced that 4 Indian airports have received international recognition for reducing the carbon emission level as per the standards set by Airports Council International (ACI) for the grading.
   • The 4 airports are as follows:
     o Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport (West Bengal)
     o Biju Patnaik International Airport (Odisha)
     o Lal Bahadur Shastri International Airport (Uttar Pradesh)
     o Trivandrum International Airport (Kerala)
   • The reduction in emissions was achieved by constituting Carbon Management Plan (CMP) and reducing carbon emissions at airports as per the Airport Carbon Accreditation (ACA) Program. ACI’s grading system is based on 4 categories. They are mapping, reduction, optimization and neutrality.

9. **Prof. MS Swaminathan & Dr. G Muniratnam chosen for Muppavarapu Venkaiah Naidu National Awards**.
Eminent Agricultural Scientist Dr M S Swaminathan and veteran social worker, Dr. Gutta Muniratnam have been chosen as the first recipients of 'Muppavarapu Venkaiah Naidu National Award for Excellence' and 'Muppavarapu National Award for Social Service’ respectively.

The announcement for the awards was made during the 10th Anniversary Celebrations of Muppavarapu Foundation and Sankranthi Sambaralu (festivities) organized in Hyderabad on 09 January 2020.

The Muppavarapu Venkaiah Naidu National Award for Excellence is instituted by the Muppavarapu Foundation.

Muppavarapu National Award for Social Service has been launched by the Swarna Bharat Trust.

Each award carries a cash prize of Rupees Five Lakh and citation.

Prof. M.S. Swaminathan has been awarded for his distinguished contributions to the field of agriculture.

Dr G Muniratnam, Founder Secretary of Tirupati-based Rashtriya Seva Samiti, was awarded for his extraordinary contribution in improving quality of people’s lives through social service.

SPORTS

10. TTFI to host ITTF EC Meeting in New Delhi.

The two-day Executive Committee meeting of the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) began in New Delhi on 10th January 2020.

This is the second time that India is hosting such a meeting.

Previously such meeting of the ITTF was held in New Delhi in 1987.

The EC meeting is being chaired by ITTF President Thomas Weikert to discuss the development of table tennis in India, among other issues.

The other members in the Executive Committee of the ITTF comprises deputy president Khalil Al-Mohannad, Secretary General Raul Calin, seven executive vice-presidents and CEO Steve Dainton.

International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) headquarter- Lausanne, Switzerland.

OBITUARY
11. **Former MP Gopinath Deo Dies At 76 In Odisha After Illness**
   • On January 10, 2020 Odisha's Gajapati dynasty head and the former MP Gopinath Gajapati Narayan Deo passed away due to prolonged illness in Bhubaneswar, Odisha.
   • He was 76. He was born on March 6, 1943 in Paralakhemundi town of Gajapati district in Odisha.
   • He was member of Indian National Congress (INC) representing the Berhampur parliamentary constituency.
   • He later joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in 1998 and moved to Biju Janata Dal (BJD) in 2009.

12. **Minati Mishra Passes Away at 91**
   • Eminent Odishi dancer and Padma Shri awardee Minati Mishra passed away in Switzerland. She was 91.
   • Born in Cuttack, Minati was a recipient of Odisha Sangeet Natak Akademi award for 1975, and the Padma award in 2012.

**DAYS**

**January 2020 Important Days**

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Makar Sankranti
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26 January    Republic Day
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28 January    Birth Anniversary of Lala Lajpat Rai
30 January    Martyrs Day or Shaheed Diwas
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1 January – Global Family Day
It is celebrated as a day of peace and sharing. Its aim is to unite and spread message of peace by considering and promoting an idea that Earth is a one Global Family so as to make world a better place to live for everyone.
8 January - African National Congress Foundation Day
South African Native National Congress (SANNC) was founded in 8 January 1912 by John Langalibalele Dube in Bloemfontein. Behind this the primary motive was to give voting rights to black and mixed race Africans or to unite African people and spearhead the struggle for fundamental political, social and economic change.
9 January – NRI (Non-Resident Indian) Day or Pravasi Bharatiya Divas
NRI or Pravasi Bharatiya Divas observed every year on 9 January to mark the contribution of the overseas Indian community towards the development of India. This day also commemorates the return of Mahatma Gandhi from South Africa to Mumbai on 9 January, 1915.
10 January : World Hindi Day
The World Hindi Day is celebrated every year on 10 January since 2006 to create awareness for the promotion of Hindi in the world, to introduce Hindi as an international language among other things.Former Prime Minister of India Shri Manmohan Singh declared World Hindi Day to be
observed on 10 January in the year 2006. Since then, the day is observed by Ministry of External Affairs and Indian Embassies abroad.

**11 January – Death anniversary of Lal Bahadur Shastri**

He was the second Prime Minister of Independent India. He popularised the slogan 'Jai Jawan Jai Kisan' He actively participated in the India's freedom struggle. Due to cardiac arrest he died on 11 January, 1966.

**12 January – National Youth Day**

The birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda also called Swami Vivekananda Jayanti is celebrated every year on 12 January. He was born on 12 January, 1863. The government had decided to observe it as National Youth Day because the philosophy of Swamiji and the ideals for which he lived and worked could be a great source of inspiration for the Indian Youth. He had given speech at the Parliament of the World's religions in Chicago and glorified India's name.

**15 January – Indian Army Day**

Every year 15 January is observed as Indian Army Day because on this day in 1949 field Marshal Kodandera M Cariappa took over as the first Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army from General Sir Francis Butcher, the last British Commander-in-Chief.

**15 January -- Makara Sankranti**

Makara Sankranti or Maghi, is a festival day in the Hindu calendar, dedicated to the deity Surya. It is observed each year in January. It marks the first day of the sun's transit into Makara, marking the end of the month with the winter solstice and the start of longer days.

Observances: Kite flying.

Date: Wednesday, 15 January, 2020

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INTERNATIONAL NEWS
3 of world’s 10 fastest-growing urban areas are in Kerala: Economist ranking
- On January 08,2020 latest ranking based on fastest growing urban regions/ fastest growing cities in the world was released by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU).
- As per the report 3 of the cities in Kerala were ranked in the top 10 places. Malappuram city of Kerala was ranked 1st in the list, while Kerala’s Kozhikode and Kollam cities were ranked in the 4th and 10th place respectively.
- List preparation: The list was compiled on the basis of the data provided by the United Nations Population Division (UNPD).
- Top rankers: Malappuram was followed by Can Tho region in Vietnam at 2nd spot and Suqian in China in the 3rd spot.
- Other indian cities: Thrissur city of Kerala was ranked at the 13th spot with a growth rate of 30.2%. Surat (Gujarat) was ranked at 27th spot and Tiruppur (Tamil Nadu) at the 30th spot.
Growth rate: Malappuram grew 44% from 2015 to 2020. In the past 5 years, Kozhikode had a growth rate of 34.5%, while Kollam had 31.1%.

About the Economist Intelligence Unit:
Fact- EIU, is a part of the popular Economist Magazine, provides forecasting and advisory services through research and analysis.
Founded- 1946.
Managing Director(MD)- Robin Bew.

World's most powerful passports in 2020: Indians don't need prior visa in 58 countries says Henley Passport Index released on 8th January 2020.

Report on India:
India ranks at 84th place which is tagged along with Mauritania and Tajikistan, which is a drop by 2 places as it ranked 82nd in 2019
India provides visa free access to 58 countries.
Visa free visits: Some of the countries where Indian passport holders can visit without a prior visa include Bhutan, Cambodia, Indonesia, Macao, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Kenya, Mauritius, Seychelles, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Iran and Qatar tc

General Report:
Mobility scores: The index measures the strength of all the passports around the world, based on mobility scores which denotes the number of destinations that could be accessed by the passport-holders of a specific country, without a pre-departure visa.
IATA covers 199 passports and 227 travel destinations.
Japan tops the list, provides visa-free access to 191 countries.
Top 10 countries: The countries in the top 10 list and no of destinations that could be visited without a prior visa is listed below in brackets:

- Singapore ranks 2nd (190);
- Germany and South Korea at 3rd (189);
- Finland & Italy at 4th (188);
- Denmark, Luxembourg and Spain at 5th (187);
- France and Sweden at 6th (186);
Austria, Ireland, the Netherlands, Portugal and Switzerland at 7th (185); Belgium, Greece, Norway, United Kingdom (UK) and the United States of America (USA) at 8th (184);

Australia, Canada, Czech Republic, Malta, New Zealand at 9th (183); Hungary, Lithuania, Slovakia ranked at 10th place (181).

Worst passport: Afghanistan’s passport is the world’s worst passport with mobility score 26 while India’s neighbouring country Pakistan’s is the fourth worst with mobility score 32. Afghanistan was followed by Iraq (mobility score-28) and Syria (mobility score- 29) having World’s worst passport.

NATIONAL NEWS

MILAN 2020: Visakhapatnam gears up to host International Naval event.

- The City of Destiny, Visakhapatnam, is set to host the International Naval event 'MILAN' in March 2020.
- MILAN 2020 is a multilateral naval exercise to enhance professional interaction between participating foreign navies and learn from each other’s strengths and best practices in the maritime domain.
- The theme of the exercise is ‘Synergy Across the Seas’.
- Of the 41 navies invited, confirmations from over 30 navies have been received towards their participation in MILAN 2020

MHA issues revised norms for mutual legal assistance treaties.

- On 8th January 2020, The Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has issued revised guidelines to expedite the delivery of mutual legal assistance and justice in criminal matters with other countries under the government’s policy of zero tolerance for crime at all.
- In this regard, India has signed Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT) with 42 countries in November 2019 for cooperation in criminal matters & the MHA is also designated ‘Central Authority of India’ for it.
- The guidelines, issued in December 2019, are steps to speed up the delivery of justice. The revised guidelines will provide investigative agencies with step-by-step guidelines on drafting and
moving request letters, mutual legal aid requests or Letters Rogatory (LR) and summon requests, notices and other judicial documents

- **Aim:** By incorporating various legal and technological developments in recent years, its goal is to make documentation more concise, focused and suited to international needs in this regard. Concerns raised by various courts have also been taken into consideration for fast and timely receipt of documents of people living abroad.

- India is also the signatory of various international conventions like the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), and the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC).

- **Mutual Legal Assistance:**
  It is a mechanism whereby countries cooperate with each another with the aim to provide and obtain formal assistance in prevention, investigation and prosecution of crime to ensure that the criminals do not escape for want of evidence available in various countries.

  Over eight crore farmer families benefitted under Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) Scheme, with more than Rs 48 thousand 937 crore released under the scheme till date.

**Crime in India increased by 1.3% in 2018: NCRB**

- On January 09, 2020 National Crime Record Bureau’s (NCRB) report on Crime in India for the year 2018 was released. The report finds that over 50 lakh crimes have been registered in 2018 which is 1.3% more than that of 2017.

- The report findings in detail are as follows:
  - The report stated that Uttar Pradesh (UP) accounted for the maximum number of economic offences in 2018 with 22,822 cases recorded. It was followed by Rajasthan (21,309 cases), Maharashtra (14,854 cases), Telangana (10,390 cases) and Bihar (9,209 cases) in the 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th rank respectively.
  - Crimes in 2018: Totally 50,74,634 cognizable crimes were committed in 2018. It included 31,32,954 Indian Penal Code (IPC) crimes and 19,41,680 Special and Local Laws (SLL) crimes.
  - IPC crimes: crimes under IPC have increased by 2.3% and stood at 61.7% in 2018.
• SLL crimes: Crimes under SLL have declined by 0.1% compared to 2017 and stood at 38.3% in 2018

About National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB):
Founded- 11 March 1986.
Headquarters- New Delhi.
Motto- Empowering Indian Police with Information Technology
Director- Ramphal Pawar, IPS (Indian Police Service).

BANKING AND ECONOMICS

Indian economy likely to grow to USD 7 tln by 2030 : Deutsche Bank
• Deutsche Bank has predicted India’s economy to grow to $7 trillion by 2030, which is two and half times more from about $3 trillion now, making India the world’s third largest economy.
• In its research report titled, Imagine 2030, it said that the nominal GDP growth is likely to average just over 10% through the next decade.
• Deutsche Bank Headquarter: Frankfurt, Germany.

SBI lowers GDP estimates for FY20 to 4.6% from 5%.
• The state-run largest lender, State Bank of India (SBI) has lowered its GDP growth forecast of India for FY20 to 4.6 percent from the previous estimate of 5 percent.
• According to the latest SBI Ecowrap report, the growth rate is predicted to remain below 6 percent for the two years in a row.

CCI report on 'Market Study on E-commerce in India' released.
The Competition Commission of India (CCI) released a report titled “Market Study on E-commerce in India: Key Findings and Observations” after it was initiated by CCI in April 2019 for better understanding a functioning of e-commerce in India. The study was also launched to identify impediments (obstructions) to competition.

Findings:
• Revenue sector: Revenue from the e-commerce sector is expected to increase from $39 billion in 2017 to $120 billion in 2020, growing at an annual rate of 51%, the highest in the world.
o Internet sector: The no.of internet users have increased from 445.96 million in 2017 to 665.31 million in 2019 and is also expected to increase to 829 million in 2021.

o Goods sector: E-commerce in the goods category in India has grown at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 57% in the last 7 years, and is expected to grow by 18.6% till 2022.

o Food sector: The food tech industry in India is estimated to grow at a CAGR (Compounded Annual Growth Rate) of more than 12% between 2016 and 2021.

83% of the respondent restaurants reported to have an online presence. Their online sales accounted for on an average nearly 29% of the respondent restaurants’ revenue.

Market Study on E-commerce in India:

o The study is a combination of secondary research, questionnaire survey, group discussions, one-on-one meetings etc covered in 3 categories of e-commerce in consumer goods, accommodation services and food services.

o Participation: 16 online platforms, 164 business entities and 7 payment system providers participated in the study. 11 industry associations, representing different stakeholder groups, also participated in the study.

o Key issues discussed in the study: Issues that directly or indirectly have a bearing on competition were discussed. These include issues of lack of platform neutrality, unfair platform -to-business contract terms, exclusive contracts between online marketplace platforms and sellers/service providers, platform price parity restrictions and deep discounts.

o Transparency measures for e-commerce platforms: The transparency measures include

  Search ranking- General description of the search ranking parameters should be drafted in plain and intelligible language with up to date prescriptions.

  Collection, use and sharing of data- A policy on the data should be set.

  User review and rating mechanism- This has to be done to ensure information symmetry, which is a prerequisite for fair competition.

  Revision in contract terms- The contract should be revised in a timely manner and revision should not be implemented before expiry of a notice period.

  Discount policy- A clear and transparent policy on discounts should be brought up.
About Competition Commission of India (CCI):
Founded- 14 October 2003.
Headquarters- New Delhi.
Chairperson- Ashok Kumar Gupta.
First executive- Dhanendra Kumar.

**Sunteck Realty jumps 6% on tie-up with SBI**
- On January 08, 2020 the State Bank of India (SBI) has announced a new scheme named Residential Builder Finance with Buyer Guarantee (RBBG).
- This new scheme’s purpose is to safeguard home buyers financially by issuing guarantee for completion of projects to customers availing SBI Home Loans.
- The ongoing home projects of SBI customers will be financed by the bank itself.
- Home price range: Housing segment with home price of up to Rs. 2.50 crores in 10 cities will be focused in the RBBG scheme initially.
- Residential builder finance with buyer guarantee:
  a. Builders loan availability: Under the scheme, all reputed builders fulfilling the bank criteria can avail loan ranging between Rs 50 crores and Rs 400 crores. The criteria also include star rating and CIBIL (Credit Information Bureau (India) Limited) score.
  b. RERA act: The buyer guarantee will be available for RERA (Real Estate Regulatory Act, 2016) registered projects and a project will be considered stuck after it crosses the RERA deadline.
  c. Amount refund: The lender would refund the entire principal amount in case the developer fails to deliver the project within the assured deadline. The refund scheme will be valid till the occupation certificate is procured by the builder.

**Zero-Budget Natural Farming: AP govt inks Rs 711 cr loan pact with German bank**
- On January 8, 2020 Andhra Pradesh government signs a loan pact for Rs.711 crore with Kfw, Germany Development bank for expanding the climate-resilient Zero-Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF) in the state for the next five years.
- Key Points:
a. To take up the insurance scheme Andhra Pradesh government will spend Rs 304 crore in addition to encourage 2.39 lakh farmers in 591 village panchayats.
b. ZBNF already covers about 1.28 lakh hectares in 3,011 villages of Andhra Pradesh and the financial assistance from German bank helps to cover about 2 lakh hectares in the addition.
c. The helpline number “1800 599 3366” was also launched for enquiries related to the insurance scheme.
d. The state government under takes ZBNF along with the Rastriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVV) and Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana’s (PKVY) of the Centre government and technical supported by Azim Premji Philanthropic Initiatives.

- About Zero-Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF):
  ZBNF is a method of Chemical-free agriculture practice which aims to bring down the cost of production to zero and doubles the farmer’s income. ZBNF was also highlighted in budget 2019 for doubling farmer’s income by 2022
- About Kfw:
  Founded- 1948
  Headquarters- Frankfurt, Germany
- About Andhra Pradesh:
  Chief Minister- Jagan Mohan Reddy
  Governor- Biswabhushan Harichandan
  Capital City- Amaravati
  State Tree- Neem tree
  State Flower- Water lilies
  State Animal- Blackbuck
  State Bird- Indian roller

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Indian-origin author's debut novel wins book award in UK

Jasbinder now lives near Bath, largest city in the county of Somerset, England, with her husband and her two sons.

The Costa Book Awards are a set of annual literary awards recognising English-language books by writers based in Britain and Ireland.

The award is presented across five categories namely First Novel, Novel, Biography, Poetry and Children’s Book.

APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS

State-owned Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO) has appointed M Nagaraj as CMD.

On January 8, 2020 State-owned Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO) has appointed M Nagaraj as company’s Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) for a period of 3 months.

M. Ravi kanth was the former Chairman and Managing Director of HUDCO.

Nagaraj is also Director (Corporate Planning) of the company.

The shares of Hudco were trading at Rs.37.40 a piece on BSE (Bombay Stock Exchange).

HUDCO provides loans for housing and urban infrastructure projects.

Static about HUDCO:
Headquarters- New Delhi.
Founded- 25 April 1970.

Former Allahabad HC chief justice Dilip B Bhosale quits as Lokpal member.

On January 9, 2020 Lokpal Member and the Former Chief Justice of the Allahabad High Court, Justice Dilip Babasaheb Bhosale has resigned from his post due to some personal reasons.

He was appointed by Lokpal Chairman Justice Pinaki Chandra Ghose on March 27, 2019.
• 63-years-old Bhosale was the acting Chief Justice of the High Court of Judicature at Hyderabad for the states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana from 2015-2016.
• He also served as a judge of the high courts of Bombay and Karnataka.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

New data relay satellites to keep Gaganyaan crew in touch with Earth
• The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has planned to launch its own satellite communication system called Indian Data Relay Satellite System (IDRSS) for tracking and communication of its space assets.
• The IDRSS will have a constellation of two geo satellites, which will be deployed in phases.
• The first satellites will be launched into low-Earth orbit by the end of 2020, ahead of the unmanned Gaganyaan test flight, while the second satellite will be launched in 2021, before the manned mission is embarked in 2022.
• IDRSS will help ISRO’s ground control room to uniformly monitor India’s spaceflights and communicate with them at any given point of time, and can be used in both low orbit missions and farther missions such as those to the moon, Mars and beyond.
• The first beneficiary of IDRSS would be the prospective crew members of the Gaganyaan mission of 2022 who can be fully and continuously in touch with mission control throughout their travel.

Railway stations to have smart cameras for facial recognition
• On January 8, 2020 Face recognition technology developed using Artificial Intelligence (IP) has been installed in Bengaluru, Manmad and Bhusawal stations as test cases.
• The objective of the Railway Protection Force (RPF) is to link the facial recognition system with existing databases and identify the criminals.
• Indian Railways is also in the process of installing Internet Protocol (IP) based Video Surveillance System (VSS) at railway stations.
• Key Points:
  o In the last budget Rs 250 crore was allocated to Indian Railways from Nirbhaya funds for installation of VSS in 983 railway stations.
RailTel, a miniratna PSU under Ministry of Railways are working for install Internet Protocol (IP)-based VSS and facial recognition system in the railway stations.

In the first phase of installation VSS is being installed at 200 stations and as on date work has been completed at 81 stations across India.

Under VSS, four types of full HD cameras namely Dome type, Bullet type, Pan Tilt zoom type and Ultra 4k-HD cameras will be installed. Each HD camera at the station consumes approximately 1TB of data and 4k camera consumes 4 TB data per month.

South Western Railway (SWR) has recently installed Video Surveillance system at 6 major stations namely Ballari, Belagavi, Vasco-Da Gama, Bengaluru, Bangarpet and Hassan. Thus SWR completes the work at the end of the year 2020 in 20 stations.

Western Railways has installed in 10 stations namely Bhavnagar Terminus, Udhna, Valsad, Veraval, Nagda, Navsari, Vapi, Viragam, Rajkot and Gandhidham,

- About Indian Railways:
  - Founded- April 16, 1853
  - Headquarters- New Delhi
  - Ministry of Railway- Piyush Goyal
  - Chairman of Railway Board- Vinod Kumar Yadav

17. China : Long March 3B launches TJSW -4

- China has successfully launched a new communication technology experiment satellite, Tongxin Jishu Shiyan Weixing -5 (TJSW-5) by its Long March-3B (also known as CZ [Chang Zheng]-3B) carrier rocket.
- The mission lifted off from Xichang Satellite Launch Center in Sichuan Province, a southwestern Chinese province.
- It was the 324th mission for the Long March series of carrier rockets.

Key Points:

i. The satellite ,entered into space, will be used in communication, radio, television and data transmission, as well as high throughput technology test.
ii. Earlier in December 2019, China launched its heaviest and most advanced communications satellite, Shijian-20 with its largest new carrier rocket Long March-5 (also known as CZ-5) from Wenchang Space Launch Center (WSLC) in south China’s Hainan Province.

- About TJSW (Tongxin Jishu Shiyan Weixing):
  It is a series of satellites are officially Communications Engineering Test Satellites, built by Shanghai Academy of Spaceflight Technology (SAST) and the China Academy of Launch Vehicle Technology (CALT), under the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation (CASC).

- About Long March-3B carrier:
  It has the capacity to launch 11,200 kg satellite to a low Earth orbit or a 5,100 kg cargo to a geosynchronous transfer orbit (GTO).

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

- On January 8, 2020 The manufacturing of the country’s first indigenous aircraft carrier Vikrant is likely to be commissioned by early 2021.
- Vikrant is currently under phase three of construction which involves setting to work of machinery and other equipment like power generation, propulsion and machinery.

  o Key Points:
  i. This carrier is being built at the Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL) Kochi, Kerala.
  ii. The third phase of construction will go till acceptance of harbour, sea trials and aviation trial will also take a year and it will be fully operated by 2022.
  iii. The first indigenous aircraft carrier Vikrant complemented with Mikoyan MiG-29k aircraft will be showcased as part of the Navy’s tableau during the ceremonial parade on Rajpath, New Delhi on the Republic day.

  o About Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL):
    Founded- 1972.
    Headquarters- Kochi, Kerala
    Chairman and Managing Director (MD)– Shri Madhu S Nair.

  o About Indian Navy:
    Chief of the Naval Staff- General Admiral Karambir Singh.
BOOKS AND AUTHORS

Amit Shah releases a book 'Karmayoddha Granth'

• Union Home Minister Amit Shah released a book titled 'Karmayoddha Granth' which depicts the life of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
• ‘Karmayoddha’ means a man with a beating heart for people, a statesman, a hard taskmaster, an able administrator and an ideal leader who leads by example.

SUMMITS AND MOU’S

The MoU on electoral cooperation between Election Commission of India and Electoral Commission of Mauritius renewed

• On January 08, 2020 the Election Commission of India(ECI) has renewed its Memorandum of Understanding(MoU) on cooperation in the field of electoral management with the electoral commission of Mauritius.
• The renewal was done at Port Louis of Mauritius and was signed by India’s Chief Election Commissioner(CEC) Sunil Arora and Mohammed Irfan Abdool Rahman, Electoral Commissioner of Mauritius.
• The MoU was previously in existence from April 2013-April 2018.

About Mauritius:
Capital- Port Louis.
Currency- Mauritian rupee.
Prime minister- Pravind Jugnauth.

SBI and Sunteck Realty Limited (SRL) signed MoU:
• On January 08, 2020, SBI and real estate development company Sunteck Realty Limited (SRL) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to boost the residential housing sector under the public sector lender’s RBBG scheme with tagine “Sapna Aapka – Bharosa SBI Ka” to the home buyers.

• Under this MoU three projects will be constructed in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region of Maharashtra.

• Home buyers can choose their dream homes from SBI approved projects in 10 cities enhancing trust and transparency.

• About State Bank of India (SBI):
  Formation- 1 July 1955.
  Chairperson- Rajnish Kumar.
  Headquarters- Mumbai.
  Tagline- The banker to every Indian; With you- all the way; A bank of the common man; Pure banking, nothing else.

January 2020 Important Days

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DAYS
25 January    National Voters Day  
25 January    National Tourism Day  
26 January    Republic Day  
26 January    International Customs Day  
28 January    Birth Anniversary of Lala Lajpat Rai  
30 January    Martyrs Day or Shaheed Diwas  
30 January    World Leprosy Eradication Day  
1 January – Global Family Day  

It is celebrated as a day of peace and sharing. Its aim is to unite and spread message of peace by considering and promoting an idea that Earth is a one Global Family so as to make world a better place to live for everyone.  

8 January - African National Congress Foundation Day  
South African Native National Congress (SANNC) was founded in 8 January 1912 by John Langalibalele Dube in Bloemfontein. Behind this the primary motive was to give voting rights to black and mixed race Africans or to unite African people and spearhead the struggle for fundamental political, social and economic change.  

9 January – NRI (Non-Resident Indian) Day or Pravasi Bharatiya Divas  
NRI or Pravasi Bharatiya Divas observed every year on 9 January to mark the contribution of the overseas Indian community towards the development of India. This day also commemorates the return of Mahatma Gandhi from South Africa to Mumbai on 9 January, 1915.  

11 January – Death anniversary of Lal Bahadur Shastri  
He was the second Prime Minsiter of Independent India. He popularised the slogan 'Jai Jawan Jai Kisan' He actively participated in the India's freedom struggle. Due to cardiac arrest he died on 11 January, 1966.  

12 January – National Youth Day  
The birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda also called Swami Vivekananda Jayanti is celebrated every year on 12 January. He was born on 12 January, 1863. The government had decided to observe it as National Youth Day because the philosophy of Swamiji and the ideals for which he
lived and worked could be a great source of inspiration for the Indian Youth. He had given speech at the Parliament of the World's religions in Chicago and glorified India's name.

15 January – Indian Army Day
Every year 15 January is observed as Indian Army Day because on this day in 1949 field Marshal Kodandera M Cariappa took over as the first Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army from General Sir Francis Butcher, the last British Commander-in-Chief.

15 January -- Makara Sankranti
Makara Sankranti or Maghi, is a festival day in the Hindu calendar, dedicated to the deity Surya. It is observed each year in January. It marks the first day of the sun's transit into Makara, marking the end of the month with the winter solstice and the start of longer days.
Observances: Kite flying.
Date: Wednesday, 15 January, 2020
Celebrations: Kite flying, bonfires, fairs, surya puja in river, feast, arts, dance, socialization
Featured in religions: Hinduism
Significance: Harvest festival
Also called: Magha, Môkôr Sôngkrânti, Mela, Maghi, Bhogi

23 January - Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Jayanti
Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose was born on 23 January, 1897 in Cuttack, Orissa. He was one of the most prominent Indian freedom fighter. His army was known as Indian National Army (INA) or Azad Hind Fauj. He also led an Indian national force from abroad against the Western powers during World War II.

24 January- National Girl Child Day
On 24 January every year National Girl Child Day is celebrated to highlight the inequalities faced by a majority of the girls in India, importance of education, nutrition, legal rights, medical care and safety of girl children etc.

25 January- National Voters Day
Every year on 25 January National Voter's Day or Rashtriya Matdata Diwas is celebrated to encourage young voters to take part in the political process. In 2011 first time this day was celebrated to mark Election Commission's Foundation Day.

25 January- National Tourism Day
Every year on 25 January National Tourism Day is celebrated in India to raise the awareness and educate people about the importance of tourism and the role it plays in the Indian economy.

26 January- Republic Day
On 26 November, 1949 Indian Constituent Assembly adopted the Constitution the supreme law of the land and replaced the Government of India Act 1935. It came into effect on 26 January 1950 with a democratic government system. This day marks with the largest parade took place at Rajpath, Delhi every year.

26 January – International Customs Day
International Customs Day (ICD) is celebrated every year on 26 January by Custom Organisation to recognise the role of custom officials and agencies in maintaining border security. It also focuses on the working conditions and challenges that custom officers face in their jobs.

28 January- Birth Anniversary of Lala Lajpat Rai
Lala Lajpat Rai was born on 28 January, 1865 in Punjab. He was a prominent nationalist leader who played an important role in India’s struggle for freedom. He also earned the title of 'Punjab Kesari' or 'the Lion of the Punjab'. He initiated the foundation of Punjab National Bank. He died on 17 November, 1928, due to serious injuries. The University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences in Hisar, Haryana is named after Lala Lajpat Rai.

30 January – Martyrs Day or Shaheed Diwas
30 January is celebrated as Martyr's Day or Shaheed Diwas every year in the memory of Mahatma Gandhi and sacrifice of three revolutionaries of India. As, on 30 January, 1948, the 'Father of Nation' was assassinated. And on 23rd March 3 heroes namely Bhagat Singh, Shivaram Rajguru and Sukhdev Thapar of the nation were hanged to death by British.

30 January – World Leprosy Eradication Day
World Leprosy Day is observed on 30 January every year to focus on the target of zero cases of leprosy-related disabilities in children. As, we know that disabilities

NATIONAL NEWS

Pune to host fifth edition of global Drosophila conference

- The Asia Pacific drosophila research conference (APDRC) is being conducted in India for the 1st time from January 6-10 in Pune, Maharashtra.
- Overall this is the 5th edition of the biennial conference and is known by the name APDRC5. It is organised by Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER).
- The conference aims to promote the interaction of Drosophila researchers in the Asia-Pacific region with the rest of the world.
- The previous 4 editions of the conference took place in Taipei (Taiwan), Seoul (South Korea), Beijing(China) and Osaka (Japan).
- About Maharashtra:
  Governor- Bhagat Singh Koshyari.
  Chief minister- Uddhav Thackeray.
  Capital- Mumbai.
  National Parks(NP)- Tadoba NP, Sanjay Gandhi NP, Chandoli NP, Gugamal NP.

Overview of Cabinet Approvals on 8th January, 2020

The Union Cabinet meeting chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi was held on 8th January 2020. Following decisions were taken during the meeting:

- Approval for the ratification of Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement between India and France.
- Approval for Agreement between India and Mongolia on Cooperation in the Exploration and Uses of Outer Space for Peaceful and Civilian Purposes.
- Approved Agreement on cooperation in polar science between India and Sweden.
• Approved Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and United Kingdom for Enabling Energy Self-Sufficiency for Indian Railways.
• Ex-post-facto approval on the Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) between Government of India and Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) on cooperation in the field of Health
• Approved Capital Grant as Viability Gap Funding to Indradhanush Gas Grid Limited for setting up the North East Natural Gas Pipeline Grid
• Approved ‘In Principle’ strategic disinvestment of equity shareholding of Minerals & Metals Trading Corporation Limited, National Mineral Development Corporation, MECON and Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd. in Neelachal Ispat Nigam Limited. a JV Company with two Government of Odisha State PSUs
• Confer the status of Institution of National Importance to the Institute of Teaching and Research in Ayurveda Jamnagar, Gujarat

Second National GST Conference held for streamlining GST

On January 07, 2020 the 2nd edition of the National GST Conference of the Commissioners of State Tax and Chief Commissioners of Central Tax was held in New Delhi under the chairmanship of Dr Ajay Bhushan Pandey, Revenue Secretary of the Ministry of Finance(MoF). The conference was held to streamline the GST (Goods and Service Tax) system and also to plug revenue leakages.

Measures taken in 2nd National GST Conference: After the conference, following measures were decided for necessary action.

• Committee constitution: A committee of the centre and state officers for examining and implementing quick measures to curb fraudulent refund claims was decided to be constituted. The committee will be implemented by the end of January 2020.
• Investigation: Major cases with fake Input Tax Credit(ITC), fraudulent refund cases will soon be compulsorily investigated.
• Linking foreign exchange remittances: Considering the increased amount of fraudulent IGST (Integrated GST) refund claims, the foreign exchange remittances will be linked with IGST refunds.
• CBDT, CBIC and GSTN Mou Signing: A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) would be signed among Central Board of Direct Taxes(CBDT), Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC)
and GST-Network (GSTN) to exchange data through Application Program Interface (API) among them.

- Data sharing: This data will be shared on a quarterly basis instead of yearly basis.
- Bank transaction exploration: Access to explore bank transactions including bank details by GST in consultation with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and NPCI (National Payments Corporation of India) will be made. Suggestions were also made to align GST system with the Financial Intelligence Units (FIU) to get bank account details.
- Fraud refund detected by CBIC & CBDT: Data will be shared for cases involving fraudulent refund detected by CBIC with CBDT and vice versa.
- Single bank account: Formation of a single bank account for foreign remittance receipt and refund disbursement was suggested.
- Business closure: In case of closure of businesses, a self-assessment declaration should be prescribed by suitable amendments in GSTR (GST- Return) forms.
- Unmatched ITC availed by taxpayers should be verified.
- About GST:

Fact- Goods and Services Tax (GST) is an indirect tax (or consumption tax) used in India on the supply of goods and services.

Launch- 1 July 2017.

**Gujarat : 31st International Kite Festival launched in Ahmedabad**

- Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani inaugurated the 31st edition of International Kite Festival at Sabarmati river front in Ahmedabad on January 07, 2020.
- The colourful kite festival will continue till 14th January 2020, the day which is observed as Makarsankranti (festival of Kites) in different parts of the state.
- The International Kite Festival will be held at nine other places across the state simultaneously including Statue of Unity- Kevadiya, Surat and Vadodara.
- More than 140 kite flying experts from 40 countries, about 800 kite fliers from Gujarat and 200 kite fliers from 12 other states are participating in this unique festival.
- Static About Festivals:
Lai Haraoba festival- Tripura.
Hornbill festival- Nagaland.
Lohri festival- Punjab.

**Gujarat : Vikram Sarabhai Children Innovation Center to be set up soon.**
- The state government of Gujarat has planned to set up Vikram Sarabhai Children Innovation Center (VSCIC) to identify, nurture and promote children’s innovation in the state.
- The announcement regarding this was made by the Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani, during the felicitation ceremony of Children’s Innovation Festival (CIF) held at Swarnim Sankul in Gandhinagar on 07 January 2020.
- CIF has been organized by Gujarat University Start-ups and Entrepreneurship Council (GUSEC), an incubation centre set up by Gujarat University in partnership with UNICEF to identify, nurture and support children’s innovations in the state.
- About Gujarat:
  - Chief Minister- Vijay Rupani
  - Governor- Acharya Devvrat
  - State Animal- Asiatic lion
  - State Bird- Greater flamingo
  - State Tree- Banyan
  - State Flower- Marigold
- About UNICEF:
  - Founded- December 11, 1946
  - Headquarters- New York, United States
  - Executive Director- Henrietta H. Fore

**Indian Navy launches awareness program about Coastal Security in Maharashtra**
- The Indian Navy has launched an expedition, Maha-Navy Connect 2020, on 05 January 2020 from the Naval Dockyard, Mumbai, as a part of its initiative to promote the maritime heritage of India and spread awareness about Coastal Security amongst the coastal communities in Maharashtra.
• The Vice Admiral Ajit Kumar, the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Western Naval Command flagged off the first-ever tri-dimensional expedition which consists of yachting, running and cycling teams of 50 naval personnel along three different axes.
• The expedition, concluding on January 11, extends from Arnala fort, Northernmost fort of Maharashtra to Sindhudurg fort, the southernmost fort of Maharashtra, covering more than 555 km.
• During the expedition, the teams will visit various schools and local establishments, undertake community interaction, Swachhta Abhiyan and awareness campaigns amongst the locals.

**Paris Book Fair 2020 : India invited as guest of honour**
• India will be attending the Paris Book Fair 2020 as the guest of honour country.
• The annual fair will be held in March 2020.
• This will be the third time that India would be the guest country at the fair after 2002 and 2007.
• To continue the cultural exchange, France is expected to be the guest of honour at the New Delhi World Book Fair 2022.

8. JK shines in provision of health services at National level
• On January 7,2020 Jammu and Kashmir (J&K),Union territory of India has registered the highest Inpatient Department, IPD care in the country.
• The state-wise fact sheets was released by National Health Systems Resource Centre (NHSRC),New Delhi.
• Overall, all women in J&K are availing Antennal Care Services (ANC).
• The report says that about 96% of IPD care in rural areas of J&K is provided by Public Health Services(PHS) which is highest against the country’s average of 85%.
• J&K had surpassed Kerala as the state with the highest life expectancy in India for all ages barring life expectancy at birth in the year 2016.
• About J &k:
  Lieutenant Governor- Shri Girish Chandra Murumu.
  National Park(NP)- Hemis NP, Dachigam NP, Kazinag NP, Kishtwar NP, Salim Ali NP.

**Intensified Mission Indradhanush 2.0: All you need to know**
• Intensified Mission Indradhanush (IMI) 2.0 at block level in 35 districts of Uttar Pradesh (UP).
• It aims to achieve 90% vaccination coverage among children under 2 years of age & pregnant women against 8 vaccine preventable diseases (diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, poliomyelitis, tuberculosis, measles, meningitis and Hepatitis B).

• Under IMI 2.0, the government will provide the immunization activity in 4 rounds over seven working days excluding the Regular immunization days, Sundays and holidays between December 2019 & March 2020.

• It will primarily focus on those people left out from earlier immunisation drives including dropouts, resistant families and under-served population, tribal areas and the urban areas.

• It is the 2nd phase of the nationwide immunisation drive to mark the 25 years of Pulse polio programme. The previous version (IMI 1.0) was launched by the centre in 2017. Prior to this, Mission Indradhanush launched in the year 2014, which sought to achieve 90% immunisation coverage in India by 2020.

• The 1st round of IMI 2.0 was completed in December 2019 and the next/ 3rd round of the mission will be launched in February 2020, where it will cover 425 blocks of 73 districts of Uttar Pradesh (UP) state and 4th round will be launched in March 2020.

BANKING AND ECONOMICS

NSO pegs India's GDP growth at 5% for FY20

• The first advanced estimates of the national income was released by National Statistical Office (NSO) on 07 January 2020.

• As per the report, the Indian economy is estimated to grow at 5 percent in 2019-20 as against 6.8 percent in the previous fiscal, mainly due to slow deceleration in manufacturing and construction sectors

Sri Lanka: Two Indian lenders, Axis Bank & ICICI Bank, to cease functioning.

• The Indian private sector lenders Axis Bank and ICICI Bank are all set to close their operations in Sri Lanka.

• The Central Bank of Sri Lanka has permitted the two banks to cease their operations in the island nation following the requests by their parent banks.
• The licenses issued to them will be cancelled once the winding-up operations are complete, after which the two banks will no longer be permitted to carry on banking operations, including accepting deposits from the public.

**Air India disinvestment: Group of Ministers approve EoI, share purchase agreement**

• The GoM also approved a Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) & also a debt restructuring plan for Air India.

• The central government had planned to sell its stake in Air India in 2018, but it could not succeed. In 2019, the Air India Specific Alternative Mechanism (AISAM) once again approved the sale of 100% government stake in Air India along with Air India Express and the carrier’s stake in joint venture AISATS (Air India -SATS (Singapore Airport Terminal Services Private Limited).

• Air India is incurring a loss of Rs 20 -26 crore every day. The airline’s debt has increased to about Rs 80,000 crore & its deficit was around Rs 8,556 crore in 2018-19.

• The debt burden on Air India has reached such an extent due to its debt management inability. So, the government is working on all methods for its disinvestment & approved to transfer the management control to private players.

• In July 2019, Union Government reconstituted the Group of Ministers (GoM) called the Air India Specific Alternative Mechanism (AISAM) on Air India disinvestment. It consists of 3 other ministers namely finance minister (FM) Nirmala Sitharaman, commerce, and railway minister Piyush Goyal and civil aviation minister Hardeep Singh Puri.

• The last meeting of the GoM was held in September 2019.

• About Air India:
  Founded– 15 October 1932 (as Tata Airlines)
  Headquarters– New Delhi
  Chairman & MD– Ashwani Lohani

**AWARDS AND RECOGNITION**

Prashant kishor and Kanhaiya kumar are among the'20 people to watch in 2020s’ list of Forbes; political commentator Hassan minhaj of US tops

**SPORTS**
**Former PM Zoran Milanovic wins Croatia presidential polls**

- On January 6, 2020, Zoran Milanovic, 53 years old won Croatia's presidential election. Zoran Milanovic is Croatia’s center-leftist former Prime Minister.
- He defeated center-right incumbent Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic (51 years old), who was the first female president of Croatia.
- The Presidential election was held on 22 December 2019.
- Milanovic belongs to the Social Democratic Party (SDP) won 52.7% vote while Grabar-kitarovic of the ruling Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) won 47.3%.
- About Croatia:
  - Capital- Zagreb.
  - Currency- Croatian Kuna.
  - Prime Minister- Andrej Plenkovic.

**Socialist leader Pedro Sanchez took the oath as PM of Spain**

- On January 8, 2020, Pedro Sanchez Perez-Castejon (47), a Spanish politician & Socialist leader took the oath as Spanish prime minister (PM) before Spanish King Felipe VI.
- He assumed his office after his proposal to form a leftist coalition government with support from smaller parties by narrowly won a parliamentary confidence vote. The Vote, by a simple majority of MPs (member of parliament), went 167 in the 350-seat assembly.
- The new Cabinet under Pedro Sanchez will have members of the anti-austerity United We Can party, including party leader Pablo Iglesias as deputy prime minister.
- About Spain:
  - Capital– Madrid
  - Currency– Euro

**A Sakthivel appointed as the new Chairman of AEPC**

- On January 6, 2020 Apparel Export Promotion Council of India (AEPC) has appointed A Sakthivel as the new chairman of the organisation from 2020 to 2021.
- He succeeded HKL Magu. He is also the first person in the history of AEPC, who is sworn-in for the fourth time as Chairman of the AEPC.
• About AEPC:
  Founded- 1978
  Headquarters- Gurgaon, Haryana.

**SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

**Dhadi folk singer Idu Sharif passes away**

• Noted sufi singer Idu Sharif, known for his Dhadi folk singing passed away due to paralysis.
• The Sangeet Natak Akademi award winner was from Patiala’s Laloda.
• Dhadi folk singing is a Punjabi folk music which includes singing ballads using Dhadd and Sarangi, the folk instruments of Punjab.

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1 January – Global Family Day
It is celebrated as a day of peace and sharing. Its aim is to unite and spread message of peace by considering and promoting an idea that Earth is a one Global Family so as to make world a better place to live for everyone.

8 January - African National Congress Foundation Day
South African Native National Congress (SANNC) was founded in 8 January 1912 by John Langalibalele Dube in Bloemfontein. Behind this the primary motive was to give voting rights to black and mixed race Africans or to unite African people and spearhead the struggle for fundamental political, social and economic change.

9 January – NRI (Non-Resident Indian) Day or Pravasi Bharatiya Divas
NRI or Pravasi Bharatiya Divas observed every year on 9 January to mark the contribution of the overseas Indian community towards the development of India. This day also commemorates the return of Mahatma Gandhi from South Africa to Mumbai on 9 January, 1915.

11 January – Death anniversary of Lal Bahadur Shastri
He was the second Prime Minster of Independent India. He popularised the slogan 'Jai Jawan Jai Kisan' He actively participated in the India's freedom struggle. Due to cardiac arrest he died on 11 January, 1966.

12 January – National Youth Day
The birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda also called Swami Vivekananda Jayanti is celebrated every year on 12 January. He was born on 12 January, 1863. The government had decided to observe it as National Youth Day because the philosophy of Swamiji and the ideals for which he lived and worked could be a great source of inspiration for the Indian Youth. He had given speech at the Parliament of the World's religions in Chicago and glorified India's name.

15 January – Indian Army Day
Every year 15 January is observed as Indian Army Day because on this day in 1949 field Marshal Kodandera M Cariappa took over as the first Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army from General Sir Francis Butcher, the last British Commander-in-Chief.

15 January -- Makara Sankranti
Makara Sankranti or Maghi, is a festival day in the Hindu calendar, dedicated to the deity Surya. It is observed each year in January. It marks the first day of the sun's transit into Makara, marking the end of the month with the winter solstice and the start of longer days.

Observances: Kite flying.
Date: Wednesday, 15 January, 2020
Celebrations: Kite flying, bonfires, fairs, surya puja in river, feast, arts, dance, socialization
Featured in religions: Hinduism
Significance: Harvest festival
Also called: Magha, Môkôr Sôngkrânti, Mela, Maghi, Bhogi

23 January - Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Jayanti
Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose was born on 23 January, 1897 in Cuttack, Orissa. He was one of the most prominent Indian freedom fighter. His army was known as Indian National Army (INA) or Azad Hind Fauj. He also led an Indian national force from abroad against the Western powers during World War II.

24 January- National Girl Child Day
On 24 January every year National Girl Child Day is celebrated to highlight the inequalities faced by a majority of the girls in India, importance of education, nutrition, legal rights, medical care and safety of girl children etc.
25 January- National Voters Day
Every year on 25 January National Voter's Day or Rashtriya Matdata Diwas is celebrated to encourage young voters to take part in the political process. In 2011 first time this day was celebrated to mark Election Commission's Foundation Day.

25 January- National Tourism Day
Every year on 25 January National Tourism Day is celebrated in India to raise the awareness and educate people about the importance of tourism and the role it plays in the Indian economy.

26 January- Republic Day
On 26 November, 1949 Indian Constituent Assembly adopted the Constitution the supreme law of the land and replaced the Government of India Act 1935. It came into effect on 26 January 1950 with a democratic government system. This day marks with the largest parade took place at Rajpath, Delhi every year.

26 January – International Customs Day
International Customs Day (ICD) is celebrated every year on 26 January by Custom Organisation to recognise the role of custom officials and agencies in maintaining border security. It also focuses on the working conditions and challenges that custom officers face in their jobs.

28 January- Birth Anniversary of Lala Lajpat Rai
Lala Lajpat Rai was born on 28 January, 1865 in Punjab. He was a prominent nationalist leader who played an important role in India’s struggle for freedom. He also earned the title of ‘Punjab Kesari’ or ‘the Lion of the Punjab’. He initiated the foundation of Punjab National Bank. He died on 17 November, 1928, due to serious injuries. The University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences in Hisar, Haryana is named after Lala Lajpat Rai.

30 January – Martyrs Day or Shaheed Diwas
30 January is celebrated as Martyr's Day or Shaheed Diwas every year in the memory of Mahatma Gandhi and sacrifice of three revolutionaries of India. As, on 30 January, 1948, the 'Father of Nation' was assassinated. And on 23rd March 3 heroes namely Bhagat Singh, Shivaram Rajguru and Sukhdev Thapar of the nation were hanged to death by British.

30 January – World Leprosy Eradication Day
World Leprosy Day is observed on 30 January every year to focus on the target of zero cases of leprosy-related disabilities in children. As, we know that disabilities do not occur overnight but happen after a prolonged period of undiagnosed disease.