

VETRI IAS STUDY CIRCLE

TNPSC

CURRENT AFFAIRS

JANUARY - 2020



An ISO 9001 : 2015 Institution | Providing Excellence Since 2011

Head Office

Old No.52, New No.1, 9th Street, F Block, 1st Avenue Main Road,
(Near Istha siddhi Vinayakar Temple), Anna Nagar East - 600102.

Phone: 044-2626 5326 | 98844 72636 | 98844 21666 | 98844 32666

Branches

SALEM

No.189/1, Meyanoor Road, Near ARRS Multiplex, (Near Salem New bus Stand), Opp. Venkateshwara Complex, Salem - 636004.

0427-2330307 | 95001 22022

KOVAI

No.347, D.S.Complex (3rd floor), Nehru Street, Near Gandhipuram Central Bus Stand, Ramnagar, Kovai - 9

75021 65390

Educareerr Location

Vivekanandha Educational Institutions for Women,

Elayampalayam, Tiruchengode - TK Namakkal District - 637 205.

04288 - 234670 | 91 94437 34670

Patrician College of Arts and Science,

3, Canal Bank Rd, Gandhi Nagar, Opposite to Kotturpuram Railway Station, Adyar, Chennai - 600020.

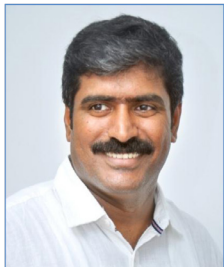
044 - 24401362 | 044 - 24426913

Sree Saraswathi Thyagaraja College

Palani Road, Thippampatti, Pollachi - 642 107

73737 66550 | 94432 66008 | 90951 66009

www.vetriias.com



My Dear Aspirants,

Greetings to all of you! “What we think we become” Gautama Buddha. We all have dreams. To make dreams come into reality it takes a lot of determination, dedication, self discipline and continuous effort.

We at **VETRII IAS** Study Circle are committed to provide the right guidance, quality coaching and help every aspirants to achieve his or her life's cherished goal of becoming a civil servant.

The class room coaching at **VETRII IAS** Study Circle is meticulously planned to equip the aspirants with all the relevant facts and fundamentals of the subjects. Further the **VETRII IAS** Study Circle Study materials aim to support the candidate by providing the most relevant study material in a comprehensive manner.

Wishing You All The Very Best !!

DIRECTOR

(M.Shunmugam)
Vetrii IAS Study Circle.

Published by

VETRII IAS STUDY CIRCLE

F Block New No. 1, 9th Street, 1st Avenue main Road, Chinthamani, Anna Nagar (E), Chennai – 102.

Phone: 044 – 26265326 / 9600124042 / 9840097666

www.vetriias.com

E-Mail: vetriias@gmail.com / vetriias2011@gmail.com / vetriias2018@gmail.com

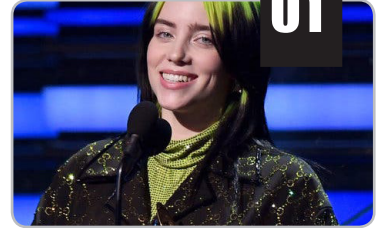
Feedback: vetriiasmaterials@gmail.com

© All rights reserved with the publisher. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without the written permission of the publisher, will be responsible for the loss and may be punished for compensation under copyright act.

INDEX

01 - 21 HISTORY

- Important Days ▪ Defence National Security and Terrorism ▪ World Organisations – Pacts and Summits
- Eminent Persons ▪ Sports and Games ▪ Books & Authors
- Awards & Honours ▪ Cultural Panorama ▪ India & its Neighbours ▪ Appointments – Who is who?



01

22 - 25 POLITICAL SCIENCE

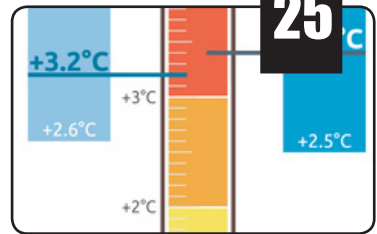
- India's Foreign Policy ▪ Latest Court Verdicts ▪ Govt – Welfare oriented Govt schemes, their utility



22

25 - 27 GEOGRAPHY

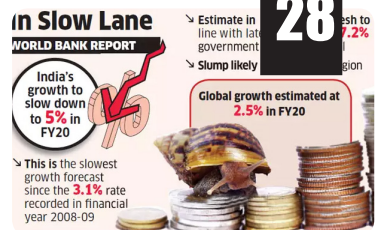
- Policy on Environment and Ecology ▪ Natural Disasters – Safeguard Measures



25

28 - 29 ECONOMICS

- New Economic Policy & Govt. Sector ▪ Current Socio - Economic Problems



28

30 - 35

SCIENCE

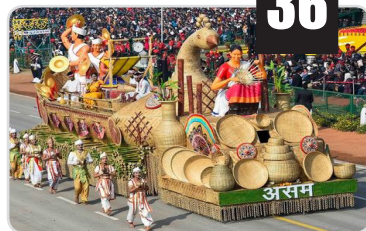
- Latest Inventions in Science & Technology
- Latest Discoveries on Health Science
- Mass Media & Communication



30

36

NATIONAL – DIARY OF EVENTS



36

50

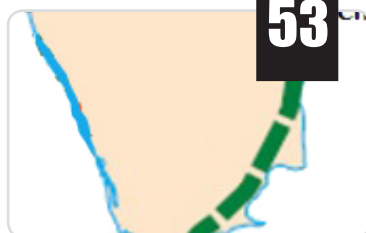
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS



50

53

TAMIL NADU AFFAIRS



53

History



1.1 Important Days

Date	Day	Theme / Remark
14-01-2020	Fourth Armed Forces Veterans' Day	Armed Forces Veteran's Day is observed every year on 14th January as a mark of respect and recognition of the services rendered by Field Marshal Kodandera Madappa Cariappa OBE (Order of the British Empire), the first Indian Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Armed Forces who retired on 14 Jan 1953. Observing since 2017, the year 2020 marked day's fourth edition.
15-01-2020	Indian Army Day	
15-01-2020	145th Foundation Day of India Meteorological Department (IMD)	
1 to 17 January	National Road Safety Week 2020	The theme for National Road Safety Week 2020 is : 'Sadak Suraksha – Jeevan Raksha'.
19-01-2020	National Immunization day	
25-01-2020	10th National Voters' Day	Theme for NVD 2020 is 'Electoral Literacy for Stronger Democracy' Honble President of India Sh. Ram Nath Kovind will be the Chief Guest at the 10 th National Voters' Day being organized by Election Commission of India on 25 th January 2020 at Manekshaw Centre, Delhi Cantt.
24-01-2020	International day of education 2020	The theme for the year 2020 is 'Learning for people, planet, prosperity, and peace'.

26 to 31 January	Bharat Parv 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Bharat Parv, 2020, the programme to celebrate the Spirit of India, started at Red Fort in New Delhi and will be continued till 31st January, 2020. ■ Theme: "Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat" & "Celebrating 150 years of Mahatma Gandhi".
26-01-2020	International Customs Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The theme of International Customs Day 2020, "Customs fostering Sustainability for People, Prosperity and the Planet".
27-01-2020	International Holocaust Remembrance Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Theme: "75 years after Auschwitz-Holocaust Education & Remembrance for Global Justice".
30-01-2020	World Leprosy Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Theme: "Leprosy isn't what you think

1.2 Defence, National Security and Terrorism

Japan coast guard Ship 'Echigo PLH08' arrives Chennai to take part in the 19th edition of 'Sahyog-Kaijin' exercise

- The Japan Coast Guard (JCG) Ship 'Echigo 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 begin on January 16, 2020 with the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) off in Chennai, Tamil Nadu.
- 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.
- First edition of 'Sahyog-Kaijin' exercise between two coast guards took place in 2000.
- 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.

Apache and Chinook helicopters to participate in Republic Day parade-2020

- The newly inducted Apache attack and Chinook heavy lift helicopters will be participating in the fly past of the Republic Day for the first time.
- The Indian Air Force (IAF) tableau for the Republic Day 2020 will showcase scaled down models of five systems, which will include the Rafale fighter aircraft.

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

- Russia said it has started production of S-400 long-range surface-to-air missile systems for India, and all five units will be delivered by 2025.
- The Indian Armed forces will receive the first batch of 5,000 Kalashnikov rifles this year as well. These will be produced in India under a joint venture.
- Asserting that the S-400 air defence missile systems are among best in the world, the diplomat said they will significantly bolster India's air defence mechanism.
- In October 2018, India signed a USD 5 billion deal to buy the air defence missile systems.

Winged Raider: Indian Army's largest airborne exercise-500 troops participate

- The Indian Army recently conducted the largest air borne exercise called the Winged Raider. Around 500 troops participated in the exercise.
- Around 500 troops participated in the exercise. The exercise was conducted in the north-eastern theatre.
- The exercise was conducted to demonstrate the operational readiness of the paratroopers and air warriors. The C-130 Hercules, Dhruv Helicopters and C-17 globe master transport aircraft participated in the exercise.

Thanjavur gets a Sukhoi squadron

- The Indian Air Force (IAF) inducted a squadron of Sukhoi-30 MKI fighter jets armed with BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles, at its Thanjavur Air Force Station.
- Five to six SU-30MKI fighter planes with the capability to carry BrahMos missiles would be positioned at the Air Force Station and the full capacity of 18 planes would be reached.
- This is also the first Sukhoi squadron of the IAF with BrahMos missiles.

Start Up India-first time in Republic Parade; Indian Navy

- The Department of Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) operating under Ministry of Commerce and Industry is to showcase tableau on Start Up India at the Republic Day Parade to be held at Rajpath, New Delhi. The tableau is to be held under the theme: Reach for the sky.
- This is the first time Start Up India is participating at the Parade.

Indian Navy

- The Indian Navy is to showcase its tableau at the Republic Day parade under the theme Theme: Indian Navy-Silent, Strong and Swift.

India showcases it's A-SAT missile prowess

- Among the Army's marching contingents, marching for the first time on the Republic Day was a contingent from the Corps of Army Air Defence.

- The Army's Signal Corps contingent was led by Capt. Tanya Shergill, a fourth generation officer.
- The Army showcased its recent induction, the 155-mm Dhanush towed howitzer and K9-Vajra self-propelled artillery gun. Both, however, were part of the parade in the past.

RSS Army School to begin session in April

- Rajju Bhैया Sainik Vidya Mandir (RBSVM), the first of-its-kind RSS school, is set to begin its first session in April.
- In July, ET had reported that RSS was setting up its first Army school in Bulandshahr district of Uttar Pradesh which would be named after former RSS chief Rajendra Singh, alias Rajju Bhैया.

Navy launches Op Vanila to help Madagascar

- The Navy launched 'Operation Vanilla' in support of the national disaster in flood-hit Madagascar and diverted a large amphibious ship to provide assistance.
- INS Airavat, which was mission deployed has been diverted for the same, the Indian Navy said in a statement.

ICG commissioned high-speed interceptor boat C-448 in Mangaluru

- The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) has commissioned a high speed interceptor boat C-448 in Mangaluru, Karnataka. The boat will be operational under the

administrative control of Commander of the Coast Guard Region (West) Inspector General AP Badola.

planned & executed by Inspector General Assam Rifles (North), will be inaugurated soon.

Assam Rifles builds war memorial in Nagaland for 357 martyrs

- Assam Rifles (military unit) has constructed a war memorial "Veer Samriti" in Nagaland, Kohima for 357 Army & Assam Rifles, died while fighting against insurgency against north-eastern state.

About "Veer Samriti" war memorial:

- The memorial has been built at Mokokchung, Nagaland (one of the cultural & intellectual center), which was

SAMPRITI-IX: India-Bangladesh Joint Military Exercise to be held in Meghalaya

- A Joint Military Exercise between India and Bangladesh is to be held at Umroi, Meghalaya between 3rd February, 2020 and 16th February, 2020. The exercise is called "SAMPRITI"

1.3 World Organisations – Pacts and Summits

The Global Risks Report 2020

- The Global Risks Report 2020 presents the major risks the world will be facing in the coming year. It stresses the need for a multi stakeholder approach to addressing the world's greatest challenges, and comes ahead of the World Economic Forum's 50th Annual Meeting in Davos-Klosters.

Switzerland tops the Global Talent Competitiveness Index 2020, India ranks 72nd

- The Global Talent Competitiveness Index 2020 (GTCI) report was launched by INSEAD, a partner and sponsor of the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Tent in Davos, Switzerland. India has moved up eight places to the 72nd position from 80th position in GTCI 2019. In list of 132 countries Switzerland tops the list.
- According to the report the United States (USA) is at the 2nd position followed Singapore.

- Top10 list includes Sweden at 4th, Denmark at 5th, the Netherlands at 6th, Finland at 7th, Luxembourg at 8th, Norway at 9th and Australia at the 10th position.
- China was ranked at the 42nd place, Russia at 48th position, South Africa at 70th position and Brazil at 80th position.

Nepal pitches for informal SAARC summit

- Nepal will host an informal summit of the leaders of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) on the sidelines of the coming Sagarmatha Sambaad.
- To revive the forum, which has been unable to meet formally during the last four years because of the negative India-Pakistan relations. The SAARC summit could not be held in Islamabad in 2016 after India faced terror strikes blamed on elements in Pakistan.
- Kathmandu had invited all SAARC heads of government for Sagarmatha Sambaad, the first edition of a multi-stakeholder dialogue, to be held from April 2 to 4 and argued that an alternative to the formal summit model could be explored.

1.4 Places in News

Statue of Unity finds place in 8 Wonders of SCO

- The 182-meter tall Statue of Unity in Gujarat has been included in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization's '8 Wonders of SCO' list, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar announced.
- The 'Statue of Unity', the world's tallest statue, is a monumental tribute to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, independent India's first home minister as well as deputy prime minister.
- The statue was inaugurated in October 2018 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the occasion of Patel's 143rd birth anniversary.

1.5 Eminent Persons

Tania Shergill-trailblazer woman officer who led all-men contingents during Army Day parade

- Captain Tania Shergil created history on this Army Day by becoming the first-ever woman to 'Parade Adjutant' to lead an all-men contingent.
- The historic move came after she commanded the contingent with her head held high at the Cariappa Parade Ground in Delhi Cantonment on January 15.



Women Power at Republic Day parade: Tania Shergil and CRPF bikers

- The Republic Day parade held at Rajpath every year is one of the largest parades of the world. The parade marches from Rashtrapati Bhawan along Rajpath until India Gate. This year the parade has certain events to express the woman power in the defence sector.

Women Power

- Tania Shergil In 2020 republic day parade, Tania Shergil becomes the first woman officer to lead all men contingent. The Contingent was commissioned in March 2017 from Officer Training Academy, Chennai.

Subhash Chandra Bose Birth Anniversary 2020

- India is celebrating the 123rd birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose on January 23, 2020. Subhash Chandra Bose is known for the establishment of the Azad Hind Fauj or Indian National Army (INA).
- Nation pays a tribute to Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose on his birthday. Several cultural programs held across the country in his respect. It is believed that Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose died in a plane accident in 1945.

January 28: Lala Lajpat Rai Birth Anniversary Celebrated

- The India celebrated the legend Lala Lajpat Rai's 155th birth anniversary. He is one of the most celebrated freedom fighters in the country. His patriotism

earned him titles such as "Punjab Kesari" and "Lion of Punjab".

Bhakta Ramadasu Statue to be unveiled

- An 11-foot imposing bronze statue of Bhakta Ramadasu, the renowned saint composer of the 17th century, is all set to be unveiled at his birthplace, Nelakondapalli, on the occasion of his 387th birth anniversary on January 29.

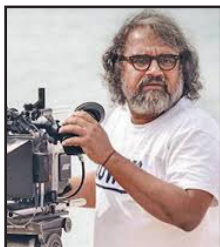
Abhijit Banerjee conferred D Litt by alma mater Calcutta University

- Nobel Prize winner in economics Abhijit Vinayak Banerjee conferred with the honorary D Litt (Doctor of Literature) by his alma mater Calcutta University in Kolkata, West Bengal.
- Abhijit was awarded Nobel Prize in 2019 for "Experimental approach to alleviating global poverty".



A first-person take on Gandhi's assassination

- Film-maker Bharatbala, who has embarked on a 1,000 short film challenge that involves untold stories about India, has released an eight-and-a-half minute film, The Assassination of Mahatma Gandhi, on the occasion of his 72nd death anniversary.



1.6 Sports and Games

16th edition of ICC awards 2019 announced ; Rohit Sharma named ODI cricket of the year

- The International Cricket Council (ICC) has announced the list of ICC award winners for the year 2019 to recognise and honor the best international cricket players of the previous 12 months.
- Indian opener Rohit Gurunath Sharma became ODI (One Day International) Cricketer of the Year for the first time. At the same time, Virat Kohli bagged Spirit of Cricket award.

Jacqueline Williams of Jamaica becomes the 1st woman third Umpire in men's T20I

- Jacqueline Williams of Jamaica becomes the first woman third umpire in men's international cricket match. The 43-year-old Jamaican woman oversaw all 3 matches of the Twenty20 International (T20I) series in Grenada, West Indies between West Indies and Ireland.



India wins 7 medals in 1st UWW Rome ranking series 2020 held in Rome, Italy

- The Indian wrestling team has clinched 7 medals (4 gold, 2 silver and a bronze)

in the 1st edition of UWW (United World Wrestling) Rome Ranking Series 2020 held from January 15 - 18, 2020 in the Italian Capital, Rome.

- The 4-day tournament, organized by UWW, has featured all the 3 disciplines - freestyle, Greco Roman and women's wrestling.
- **List of Indian winner:**

Winner	Category	Medal
Bajrang Punia	65kg freestyle	Gold
Ravi Kumar Dahiya	61kg freestyle	Gold
Vinesh Phogat	53kg	Gold
Gurpreet Singh	82kg -Greco-roman	Gold
Anshu Malik	57kg	Silver
Sunil Kumar	97kg	Silver
Sajan Bhanwal	77 kg	Bronze

A blend of chess and tourism

- As the first international chess tournament to be held on a houseboat, the mascot of Kerala Tourism, the six-day tourney will be held in a 'Spice Route luxury houseboat,' which will cruise along the backwaters, blending chess and tourism and promoting Kerala globally.

World Archery lifts suspension on AAI

- World Archery removed suspension imposed on Archery Association of India (AAI). Indian archers has now been allowed to compete in World Archery

Events from 23 January 2020 onwards. The decision to remove suspension was taken by World Archer's executive Board postal vote.

Key Points:

- AAI will be required to send a progress report every 3 months to World Archery as the federation instructed to update the constitution athlete membership.
- The Archery Association of India had been suspended since August 5, 2019. Due to this reason, Indian athletes were only allowed to compete under a neutral flag at events, which directly affected their qualification chances for the Olympics.
- India currently has 3 men and 1 women's quota place at Tokyo 2020 olympics.

Award for Rani Rampal

- The Indian women's team captain Rani Rampal became the first-ever hockey player to win the prestigious World Games Athlete of the Year Award.
- "Indian hockey superstar Rani is The World Games Athlete of the Year 2019

1.7 Books & Authors

- Former Union minister Ashwini Kumar's was launched book Human Dignity – A purpose in perpetuity in New Delhi.

Gandhi wanted to spend 15 Aug, 1947 in Pak: Book by MJ Akbar

- Mahatma Gandhi wanted to spend August 15, 1947, the first day of freedom, in breakaway Pakistan rather than in India, says a new book 'Gandhi's Hinduism: The Struggle new book 'Gandhi's Hinduism: The Struggle Against Jinnah's Islam' Against Jinnah's Islam' by former Union minister M J Akbar.
- According to the author, Gandhi's immediate concern after independence was the fate of partition's principal victims, the minorities: Hindus in Pakistan and Muslims in India.
- Whether in South Africa or India, for over half of a century till the end of his public career in 1948.

Former Indian Cricketer WV Raman's book 'The Winning Sixer'

- Woorkeri Venkat Raman (WV Raman), former Indian cricket team opener has authored a book 'The Winning Sixer: Leadership Lessons To Master', which was released formally by Anil Radhakrishna Kumble during an event in Bengaluru, Karnataka. WV Raman is the current head coach of the national women's cricket team. The book was published by Rupa Publications, India.

Book 'Essays and Reminiscences: A Festschrift in Honour of Nani A Palkhivala' released on noted jurist and economist Nani A Palkhivala

- The book 'Essays & Reminiscences: A Festschrift in Honour of Nani A Palkhivala' was released to mark the birth centenary anniversary of Indian Jurist and Economist Nanaboy "Nani" Ardeshir Palkhivala. The book is published by LexisNexis publications.

Key Points:

- The book was commissioned by the Nani A Palkhivala Memorial Trust and edited by the senior advocate Arvind Datar

Book titled The Story of Yoga: From India to the Contemporary World by Alistair released

- Book titled "first definitive history" of Yoga, "The Story of Yoga: From India to the Contemporary World" has been written by Scottish cultural historian Alistair Shearer, will be released by the end of January, 2020 and published by Penguin Random House. The book discusses about the practice of yoga since ancient time in India till now.

Book on Kiran Bedi launched

- Mr. Purohit, who launched the book Where Kindness Spoke, published which is devoted Ms. Bedi's work in the Union Territory, said he had been her fan since 1982, when as a deputy commissioner of police she had famously ordered the removal of the Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's car.

Minority Affairs minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi's new novel 'Balwa' to be released

- The Union Minister for Minority Affairs Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi will soon release his Hindi novel Balwa, a fiction story based on the happenings in India in the 1990s. It will be published by Diamond Pocket Books.

Key Points:

- The book revolve the concepts of society misleading by religious, political and administrative machinery.
- Also, Naqvi has written a Hindi novel 'Raj Lila', which based on the story of tribal woman's struggles & Cyber Supari will also be released soon.

'Relentless' Autobiography by Former finance minister Yashwant Sinha released by Pranab Mukherjee

- Former president of India, Shri Pranab Mukherjee released the autobiography of former Finance Minister Shri Yashwant Sinha titled "Relentless" at the India International Centre in New Delhi. The book describes Sinha's journey from a normal life to a high political powered life. The book is published by Bloomsbury Publishing India Pvt Ltd.

1.9 Latest Terminology

26 new Indian English words added to the Oxford Dictionary

- The Oxford Dictionary includes a range of colloquial terms, slangs, acronyms, and phrases as official new words for people to use. About two years ago

endearing Indian words like 'Abba' and 'Anna' were added to the dictionary. The list of inclusions for 2018 also had words like 'gulab jamun', 'dadagiri', 'achcha', 'bapu' and 'surya namaskar'. As many as 70 Indian words were added that year.

- But about a month back, the dictionary assumed a more serious tone and chose 'climate emergency' as the Word of the Year 2019. Other shortlisted words included 'Climate crisis', 'climate action', 'climate denial', 'eco-anxiety' and 'extinction'. The latest edition of the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary features 26 new Indian English words, including 'Aadhaar', 'chawl', 'dabba', 'hartal' and 'shaadi'. The 10th edition of the dictionary has 384 Indian English words and incorporates over 1,000 new words such as chatbot, fake news and microplastic.

'Samvidhaan' named as Oxford Hindi Word of the Year for 2019

- The Oxford University Press(OUP) has named 'Samvidhaan'(constitution) as the Oxford Hindi Word of the Year (HWOTY) for 2019. This name received widespread attention in August 2019 with the abrogation of Article 370 and article 35(A) of the Indian Constitution on August 05, 2019. The articles removed special status granted to Jammu and Kashmir.

1.9 Awards & Honours

TN cuts road accidents, gets Centre award

- The award titled 'Best Performance in Road Safety' was given to TN by the centre.
- Defence Minister, Mr Rajnath Singh, gave this award to TN Transport Minister Mr M.R. Vijayabaskar.
- As per official data, in the year 2018, TN witnessed a 32% drop in the deaths due to road accidents when compared to the previous year. In the years 2016 and 2017, the state of TN grabbed many eyeballs as it topped India's statewide accident chart.

Chithirai Thirunaal awards for 2019 and Tiruvalluvar award for 2020

- Former union minister Gingee N Ramachandran, senior journalist Maalan and poet Krishangini are among those chosen for awards instituted by Tamil Nadu government for 2019.
- The awards will be presented by Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami at a function in Chennai.
- The awards carry ₹ 1 lakh, a citation and a shawl. For the organisation which receives Thamizh Thaaai award, ₹ 5 lakh, a citation and a shawl will be given.
- The personalities who have been chosen for Chithirai Thirunaal awards for 2019 are: ThamizhThaaai award (Chicago Tamil Sangam), Kabilar award (Poet Vettrialagan), UVeSa award (V Mahadevan), Kambar award (Saraswathi Ramanathan), SollinSelvar award (Poet Kavidasan), Umaru Pulavar

award (Liagat Ali Khan), GU Pope award (Maria Joseph Xavier), ElangoAdigal award (Poet G Thirugnanasambandam), Amma Literary award (Umayal Muthu), Singaravelar award (SK Subramanian), MaraimalaiAdigal award (P Muthukumaraswamy) and AyothiDasaPandithar award (Poet V Prabhakaran).

- Senior journalist Maalan alias V Narayanan, poet Krishangini alias Brinda Nagarajan, MarabinMainthanMuthaiah, S Mohammed Yusuf, KJ Masthan Ali, Siva Murugesan, N Kadikachalam, Murugudurai and A Mathivanan have been chosen for the best translator award for 2019.

Thiruvalluvar awards for 2020

- While N Nithyananda Bharathi has been chosen for Thiruvalluvar award for 2020, the following have been selected for Thiruvalluvar Thirunaal awards for 2019: Gingee N Ramachandran (ThanthaiPeriyar award), Ambedkar award (K Arjunan), Perarignar Anna award (G Samarasam), Kamarajar award (MS Mathivanan), MahakaviBharathiyar award (P Sivaraji), Bharathidasan award (TThenisai Chellappa), Thiru Vi Ka award (S Sundararajan) and KAP Viswanatham award (Manimekalai Kannan).

Puri, Odisha recieves Swachhata Darpan Awards 2019

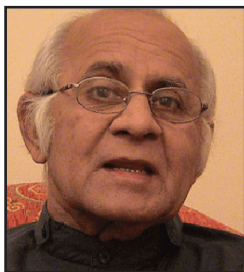
- Puri, Odisha has been awarded for its initiatives for plastic waste management with the Swachhata Darpan Awards 2019. The award ceremony was held during

the Open Defecation Free Sustainability Workshop held in New Delhi.

- The workshop was organised by the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation (DDWS) and Ministry of Jal Shakti.
- The Puri District of Odisha has been awarded for successfully managing the plastic wastes in the district with its effective policies by engaging the people of the town through awareness programmes, hence keeping the town's environment pollution free.

Sindhi writer Vasdev Mohi to be conferred with 29th Saraswati Samman

- Sindhi (Indo Aryan language) Writer Vasdev Mohi has been selected for the Saraswati Samman 2019, a literary recognition given annually by the K K (Krishna Kumar) Birla Foundation. The literary award is given for his short stories collection- 'Chequebook'.
- The short story talks about the sufferings of the marginalized sections in the society. The work was selected by a committee headed by former secretary general of the Lok Sabha, Subash C Kashyap



Telangana-Genco and SAP bags CSI award

- The Telangana State Power Generation Corporation (TS-Genco) and SAP (India) have jointly bagged the Computer Society of India (CSI) special interest group

e-governance award of excellence-2019 for their project - Leveraging TS-Genco Business Process using SAP File Life-cycle Management and Analytics.

Deepika Padukone receives Crystal Award at Davos

- Padukone was given the award for her leadership in raising mental health awareness.
- Deepika Padukone receives Crystal Award at Davos, talks about depression.

'cVIGIL' and 'Voter Helpline app' won e-Governance Award of Excellence 2019 in Bhubaneswar, Odisha

- Award of Excellence for the year 2019 was given by Computer Society of India (CSI) and Special Interest Group on e-Governance (CSI SIG e-Gov) at Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology in Bhubaneswar, Odisha.
- The two innovative Information and Communication Technology (ICT) applications developed by Election Commission of India (ECI), 'cVIGIL' and 'Voter Helpline App' has won the e-Governance award.

President confers Bal Shakti Puraskar on 49

- Ishaan Sharma, who saved a Russian tourist from two robbers, Omkar Singh, who holds the world record for the youngest theoretical author, and Gauri Mishra,



youngest pianist in India, were among those who were given the Bal Shakti Puraskar 2020 by President Ram Nath Kovind at the Rashtrapati Bhavan.

- Forty-nine children in the age group of five to 18 won the award in the fields of innovation, social service, scholastic, sports, art and culture and bravery. The award carries a medal, a cash prize of ₹1 lakh, a certificate and a citation.

Sparsh Ganga initiative' wins Champions of Change Award

- Environmentalist and social activist Arushi Nishank was honoured with the Champions of Change Award 2019 for her initiative towards cleaning and saving river Ganga, the Sparsh Ganga initiative. The second edition of the Champions of Change Award was held at Vigyan Bhawan (January 20).
- The award is given under the transformation of Aspirational District Program announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in January last year.
- The program identifies the progress of 115 'aspirational' districts whose development is being monitored by NITI Aayog.
- Other recipients of the award were actor Shilpa Shetty and her husband Raj Kundra for Swachh Bharat Abhiyan), actor Suresh Oberoi for Culture and Lok Sabha MP Geeta Koda for Aspirational.

Former President Pranab Mukherjee Confers 'Champions of Change 2019' Award

- Jharkhand CM (Chief Minister) Hemant Soren was conferred with 'Champions of

Change Award-2019' for social welfare (Aspirational Districts) by Former President Pranab Mukherjee at a function in New Delhi.

- Award Contribution: The award is contributed to Hemant for his work in the Barhait and Dumka assembly constituencies in the state.

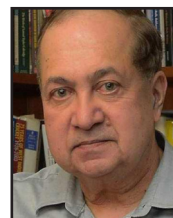
TNAU V-C gets Harit Ratna Award

- N. Kumar, Vice-Chancellor of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, has been conferred 'Harit Ratna Award 2019' by the All India Agricultural Students Association for dissemination of ₹30-crore entrepreneurship project in agri-business and for motivating students to the agriculture sector in the State.
- The award was conferred at the 5th National Youth Convention at Indira Gandhi Krishi Vishwavidyalaya in Raipur.



Kerala Media Academy award for N.Ram

- N. Ram, chairman of The Hindu Group Publishing Private Limited, has been selected as the outstanding mediaperson in a national award instituted award carrying a cash prize of ₹1 lakh, citation and sculpture was announced as part of the academy's 40th anniversary celebration.



Former IPS Officer bags disaster mitigation award

- The Disaster Mitigation and Management Centre in Uttarakhand and former IPS officer K.M. Singh have been selected for the Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar for their contribution in the field of disaster management.
- While the Disaster Mitigation and Management Centre in Uttarakhand, an organisation working in the field of natural calamity relief, has been selected in the institution category and will be given a certificate and a cash prize of ₹51 lakh.
- The award is announced every year on January 23, the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose. As many as 330 nominations were received this year and the final decision was taken by the Prime Minister.

Padma honours for Mary Kom, Sindhu

- Boxing ace Mary Kom has been bestowed with Padma Vibhushan while badminton icon P.V. Sindhu has been honoured with Padma Bhushan ahead of the 71st Republic Day.
- The list, released by the Government also includes six Padma Shri Award winners with veteran hockey star M.P.Ganesh



being recognised for his services to the game. Arun Jaitley and, Sushma Suvaraj were also awarded with Padma Vibushan Posthumously.

Padma awardees from Tamil Nadu, Puducherry

- Social worker Krishnammal Jagannathan, industrialist Venu Srinivasan and littérateur Manoj Das have been chosen for the Padma Bhushan awards from Tamil Nadu and Puducherry.



- Carnatic vocalists C.Lalitha and C.Saroja, artist Manohar Devadoss, social worker S. Ramakrishnan, nagaswaram vidwans Kalee Shabi Mahaboob and Sheik Mahaboob Subani and IIT-Madras professor Pradeep Thalappil from Tamil Nadu, and artist V.K. Munusamy from Puducherry are the recipients of the Padma Shri awards.
- Krishnammal Jagannathan, 94, heads the Land for Tillers' Freedom (LAFTI), an NGO working for the upliftment of women belonging to the Scheduled Castes and their families, particularly in the Thanjavur region.
- Ms. Jagannathan had worked extensively in areas like Kilvenmani following the massacre in 1968, when 44 people belonging to the SC community were

burnt by henchmen from an intermediate caste.

Gallantry medal for downed pilots

- Squadron Leaders Siddharth Vashisht and Ninad Mandavgane, pilots of an Indian Air Force Mi-17 helicopter accidentally shot down in Budgam were posthumously selected for the Vayu Sena Medal (Gallantry) on the eve of Republic Day by President Ram Nath Kovind.
- The President approved nine Shaurya Chakras, of which four were posthumous. Six Shaurya Chakras were to Army personnel, while three were to security forces personnel under the Home Ministry.
- These include nine Shaurya Chakras, 28 Param Vishisht Seva Medals (PVSM), four Uttam Yudh Seva Medals (UYSM), 53 Ati Vishisht Seva Medals (AVSM), 10 Yudh Seva Medals (YSM), 123 Vishisht Seva Medals (VSM), 111 Sena Medals (Gallantry), five Nao Sena Medals (Gallantry), four Vayu Sena Medals (Gallantry), 40 Sena Medals (devotion to duty), eight Nao Sena Medals (devotion to duty) and 14 Vayu Sena Medals (devotion to duty).

Arvind Krishna awarded Mahakavi Kanhaiyalal Sethia Award

- Renowned poet and literary critic Arvind Krishna Mehrotra was awarded 5th edition of the Mahakavi Sethia Award for poetry during JLF 2020. The award is given in memory of Rajasthani and Hindi poet Kanhaiyalal Sethia and carries a cash prize of Rs. 1 Lakh.

Tamil Nadu governor Banwarilal Purohit hosts 'at home' reception

- The Police Department received the first prize, Department of Agriculture and Horticulture received second prize followed by Department of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj.
- Governor Banwarilal Purohit hosted the Republic Day reception 'at home' in the Raj Bhavan.

Good Samaritans awarded Anna Medal for Gallantry

- Five men, whose daring act saved a woman from being abducted in Tiruvalluvar district last December, were among those who were awarded the Anna Medal for Gallantry, 2020, on the occasion of Republic Day in Chennai.
- The award includes a cheque for ₹1 lakh, a medal worth ₹5,000 and a certificate.

Sena Medal

- Captain A. Ranjith Kumar, a native of Tamil Nadu who has been selected for the Army's Sena Medal (Gallantry) this year for his key role in an operation in the Kashmir Valley.

Election Commission of India (ECI) award for The Hindu Tamil

- Election Commission of India (ECI) awarded National Media Award for print to "The Hindu Tamil" as part of the poll panel's national awards for voter awareness and education campaign in 2019 on the occasion of the 10th National Voters Day held at New Delhi.

Michelle Obama is now a Grammy winner

- Obama was nominated in the Best Spoken Word Album category for the audio recording of her bestselling memoir, "Becoming," and she beat out the competition, which included director John Waters and Beastie Boys' icons Adam "Ad-Rock" Horovitz and Michael "Mike D" Diamond.



Billie Eilish sweeps Grammys with 5 awards

- The 62nd annual Grammy Awards anointed a new star in Billie Eilish.
- Ms. Eilish, an 18-year-old auteur with a moody and idiosyncratic aesthetic, won five awards, including the four most prestigious and competitive prizes – album, record and song of the year, and best new artist. She was the first artist to sweep the top awards since Christopher Cross in 1981.



Cancer Institute alumnus feted for Padma award

- V.Shanta, chairman, Cancer Institute, has congratulated Ravi Kannan, an alumnus of Cancer Institute, who has been awarded the Padma Shri.

Assam and Jal Shakti Mission wins the best tableaux awards for the Republic Day Parade 2020



- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh distributed the awards for best tableaux which was conducted on January 26, 2020 in Republic Day event.
- There were a total of 22 tableaux including 16 from various states and union territories and remaining 6 from various ministries and departments.

Best Tableaux Awards (States and Union territories):

- Assam's tableaux displayed with the theme 'Land of Unique Craftsmanship and Culture', had showcased the Xattriya tradition in the form of Bhortal Nritya was chosen as the best tableaux.
- The second position was tied between Odisha which depicted Lord Lingaraja's Rukuna Rath Yatra, and Uttar Pradesh which showcased the culture of Sarva Dharma Samabhav.

Best Tableaux Awards (Ministry)

- National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) won best tableaux for Ministry for showcasing the cutting-edge technology and instruments used by the force to carry out daring rescue operations in flood-hit and disaster hit areas.

Best Tableaux Awards (Departments)

- Jal Shakti Mission won best tableaux among departments for government's new initiative, 'Jal Jeevan Mission', which aims at providing functional tap connection to every rural household by 2024.
- Central Public Works Department won the second place for the theme "Kashmir se Kanyakumari".

Sanjna Kapoor gets French honour 'Knight of the Order of Arts and Letters'

- Sanjna Kapoor (52), an Indian theatre personality and former British film actress of Indian and British descent, was awarded the French honor prestigious French honour of 'Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres (Knight of the Order of Arts and Letters) for her outstanding contribution to the field of theater.

1.10 India and its neighbours**President Kovind lays foundation stone of Lakshadweep's 1st super specialty hospital at Kavaratti**

- The President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, who was on a first ever 2-day State Visit to the Union Territory of Lakshadweep, has laid the foundation stone for Lakshadweep's 1st Super Specialty Hospital at Kavaratti.

South Asia's 1st and 119th e-passport in the world

- Prime Minister (PM) of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina Wazed have launched e-passport in Dhaka, Bangladesh as Mujib Century year gift to the country. Bangladesh is the first country in South Asia and 119th country in the world to have e-passport facility. Malaysia is the first country in the world to launch this facility in 1998.

13th edition of International Children's Film Festival inaugurated at Dhaka, Bangladesh

- The 13th edition of International Children's Film Festival was inaugurated in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The theme of International Children's Film Festival 2020 is 'Under The World'. The week long festival will be concluded on January 31, 2020.

Key Points:

- It is organized by the Children's Film Society, Bangladesh. It is the biggest film festival of Southeast Asian country and only international festival celebrated since 2008.

Nepal is the 1st South Asian Nation to offer to mediate between India and Pakistan

- Nepal became the first South Asian nation, which has offered to "mediate" between India and Pakistan over Kashmir and cross-border terrorism as the 2020 SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) Summit to be held in Islamabad, has been Postponed since 2016.

1.11 Appointments – Who is who?

Newly appointed deputy governor to look after RBI's monetary policy division

- Newly appointed RBI Deputy Governor Michael Debabrata Patra will look after the key monetary policy department along with seven other units, the central bank said after reshuffling portfolios of deputy governors.
- Besides the governor, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has four deputy governors looking after different departments.



Mikhail Mishustin becomes the next prime minister of Russia

- The Russian lawmakers have approved Russian President Vladimir Putin's proposed candidate Mikhail Vladimirovich Mishustin, the head of the Federal Tax Service, as the next prime minister of the country. He replaced Dmitri Anatolyevich Medvedev who resigned from his post.



Lt.Gen.S.K.Saini to be Vice-Chief of Army Staff

- Lt.Gen.S.K.saini, currently the Southern Army Commander, will be the next Vice-chief of Army Staff. He will assume charge on January 25, defence sources said here.



Nripendra Misra to head Nehru Memorial Museum

- As part of a full revamp of the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library's executive council, Nripendra Misra, former Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, has been appointed as the new chairperson. This comes at a time when the institution is finalising plans to set up a Museum of Prime Ministers.



Anil Khanna nominated as Life President of Asian Tennis Federation (ATF)

- Senior Sports Administrator Anil Khanna was unanimously appointed as Life President of Asian Tennis Federation (ATF) during the meeting of its Board of Directors in Melbourne, Australia. He is also named as the Chairman of the ATF Finance Committee.



Gita Sabharwal of India appointed UN Resident Coordinator in Thailand

- Gita Sabharwal of India was appointed as the UN(United Nations) Resident Coordinator (RC) of Thailand by United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.



About UN Resident Coordinator:

- The UN Resident Coordinator is the highest ranking representative of the UN development system at country level and representatives of UN Secretary-General.
- 2030 Agenda: UN Resident Coordinator has the responsibility to guide UN country teams and coordinate the support from other countries for smooth implementation of 2030 Agenda.

1.12 Cultural Panorama

Mizoram sets to celebrate 'Chapchar Kut' festival on March 6, 2020



- Government of Mizoram along with the organizing committee under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Zoramthanga has decided to celebrate

the 'Chapchar Kut', the biggest and most important festival of the Mizos, on March 6, 2020. The two- days festival is celebrated under the theme "Promotion of Mizos' culture and moral code".

Tripura Renames Baramura Hills as 'Hatai Kutul' on 'Kokborok Day'

- The Tripura government has renamed Baramura Hills in Kokborok language on 'Kokborok Day', thereby fulfilling the long-standing demand of Kokborok speaking people that prominent places of the state be renamed in the local language.
- The state government, through an emergency cabinet decision, has renamed the Baramura Hills as "Hatai Kutul" to mark "Kokborok Day" held every year on January 19.

Discovery of 18th – century 'plot stones' near Uthiramerur in Kanchipuram district

- Near the Uthiramerur, two 18th -century 'plot stones' have been discovered.
- Edamichi Village is located on the road from Salavakkam village to Uthiramerur Circle. These are thought to be 18th century plot stones.
- It has been customary for his wife to set herself on fire with a heroic death in battle to protect her ethnic group or her hometown.
- The name of the conspiracy at that time was the "conspiracy". To commemorate the couple who embraced the heroic death, it was the practice of the day to carve their images in stone and worship them. These stones are called 'plot stones'.

Magh Bihu festival celebrated in Assam

- Magh Bihu, an auspicious harvest festival is being celebrated in Assam. Magh Bihu falls in the local month of 'Magh' during mid-January. It is also called 'Bhogali Bihu' or 'Maghor Bihu' as it is celebrated with community feasts after the annual harvest takes place.



- The night before 'Magh Bihu' is called 'Uruka' meaning the night of feasts.
- The villagers make bamboo huts called 'Bhelghor' or community kitchen where they begin with the preparations for the festival.

13th Jaipur Literature Festival began in Jaipur, Rajasthan

- The 13th edition of the Zee Jaipur Literature Festival (JLF) began at Diggi Palace Hotel in Jaipur, Rajasthan on January 23, 2020 and will be conducted till January 27, 2020. The 5-day long festival was inaugurated by Chief Minister of Rajasthan Shri Ashok Gehlot.



Toda festival Modhweth celebrated

- The Todas' most important festival of the year, known as Modhweth, was celebrated at the MuthanaduMund, near Thalaikundah, in the Nilgiris.
- The Moonpo temple is unique in that it is one of the last of the Toda temples with a similar design left in the Nilgiris.

Vasant Panchmi 2020

- Vasant Panchami is celebrated in Bihar.
- According to scholars, this year, the coincidence of Sarvartha Siddhi has been made on Vasant Panchami, after 175 years.



2.1 Latest Court Verdicts

SC affirms 3% quota for disabled in PSUs

- A three-judge Bench of the Supreme Court has granted relief to persons with disabilities across the country by allowing reservation in promotion in all groups for those employed in public sector jobs.
- The Bench led by Justice Rohinton F. Nariman confirmed that 3% reservation should be given to disabled persons both in direct recruitment and in promotions.
- Included under The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995, were eligible for reservation in promotion.

African Cheetahs to prowl Indian forests

- The Supreme Court lifted its seven-year stay on a proposal to introduce African cheetahs from Namibia into the Indian habitat on an experimental basis.
- The plan was to revive the Indian cheetah population.
- In May 2012, the top court had stalled the plan to initiate the foreign cheetahs into the Palpur Kuno sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh fearing they may come into conflict with a parallel and a much-delayed project to reintroduce lions into the same sanctuary.
- A Bench led by Chief Justice Sharad A. Bobde was nudged by the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) to take the plunge and go ahead with its plans to bring the African cat to India.

2.2 Govt – Welfare oriented Govt schemes, their utility

Govt to provide ₹ 15 lakh under Rashtriya Arogya Nidhi scheme

- The govt has released the National draft policy on Rare Disease in which financial support of Rs.15 lakh will be provided under the Rashtriya Arogya Nidhi scheme for one-time treatment of rare diseases.
- Beneficiaries: The scheme benefit is limited to people below Poverty Line (BPL) and also 40% of the population eligible as per Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) norms for treatment in government tertiary hospitals only.

National Policy for Treatment of Rare Diseases (NPTRD):

- Previously the health ministry formulated the National Policy for Treatment of Rare Diseases (NPTRD) in July, 2017. When this policy was introduced, there prevailed lack of clarity regarding the cost effectiveness, share of expenditure between centre and states etc. Hence the policy was decided to be reframed & the ministry constituted an expert committee in November 2018 to review it.

New Policy to Revive Power Discoms

- The new scheme would include elements of the current UDAY scheme and would provide assistance for reduction of discoms' losses.

- The scheme for revival of stressed power discoms was launched in November 2015. The Ujwal Discom Assurance Yojana's (UDAY) prime objectives were financial turnaround and operational improvement of the discoms along with the reduction of cost of generation of power development of renewable energy efficiency and conservation.
- The scheme may come up as a revised version of UDAY -- UDAY 2.0 -- which would provide another lease of life to ailing power discoms by extending financial support in the form of loans and grants

Cabinet nod for raising gestation period for abortion to 24 weeks

- The Union Cabinet approved the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Bill, 2020, to amend the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971.
- The proposed amendment seeks to enhance the upper gestation limit from 20 to 24 weeks for special categories of women that will be defined in the amendments to the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Rules and will include 'vulnerable women including survivors of rape, victims of incest and other vulnerable women (like differently-abled women, minors).
- The Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Bill, 2020 is for expanding access of women to safe and legal abortion services on therapeutic, eugenic, humanitarian or social grounds.

2.3 Latest Inventions on Science & Technology

Rare variety of H9N2 virus has been reported in a 17-month-old boy of Maharashtra

- India's first case of Avian influenza or Bird flu caused by a rare variety of H9N2 virus has been reported in a 17-month-old boy of Maharashtra.
- The infection is caused by a rare variety of H9N2 virus, which is a subtype of the influenza A virus that leads to human influenza as well as bird flu.
- The viruses are found in wild birds and are endemic in poultry in some countries.
- The report was revealed in the December 2019 issue of the Emerging Infectious Diseases journal of the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), by scientists of the National Institute of Virology (NIV), Pune.

7-billion-year-old stardust is the oldest material ever found on Earth

- Scientists recently identified the oldest material on Earth: stardust that's 7 billion years old, tucked away in a massive, rocky meteorite that struck our planet half a century ago.
- This ancient interstellar dust, made of pre-solar grains (dust grains that predate our sun), was belched into the universe by dying stars during the final stages of their lives.



- Some of that dust eventually hitched a ride to Earth on an asteroid that produced the Murchison meteorite, a massive, 220-lb. (100 kilograms) rock that fell on Sept. 28, 1969, near Murchison, Victoria, in Australia.
- New analysis of dozens of presolar grains from the Murchison meteorite revealed a range of ages, from about 4 million years older than our sun - which formed 4.6 billion years ago - up to 3 billion years older than our sun, researchers reported in a new study.

GSAT-30 gives India a Communication boost

- The nation's latest communication satellite, GSAT-30, was launched into space from the Guiana Space Centre in Kourou at 2.35 a.m. IST.
- The 3,357-kg satellite will replace INSAT-4A, which was launched in 2005 and marks the first mission of the year for Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).
- The high-power satellite is equipped with 12 normal C band and 12 Ku band transponders,
- ISRO opted for a foreign launch as the GSAT-30 is much heavier than the 2,000-kg lifting capacity of its geostationary launch vehicle GSLV-MkII.
- While the newer and more powerful GSLV-MkIII can lift up to 4,000kg, the space agency plans to save the two or three upcoming MkIIIs for its first human space flight Gaganyaan of 2022 and two preceding crew-less trials.
- The first Indian crew-less test flight is planned for later the year.

3. GEOGRAPHY



3.1 Policy on Environment and Ecology

GoI launches 'Seismic Hazard Microzonation' to minimize earthquake disasters

- The Ministry of Earth Science has launched Seismic Hazard Microzonation project in major cities of India. The project aims to reduce hazards of seismic activities by putting in adequate measures

What is Seismic Microzonation?

- It is the process of dividing earth quake prone areas based on certain factors. The factors include geological and geophysical characteristics of site s. They are ground shaking, landslide, liquefaction susceptibility, rock fall hazard and flooding caused due to earth quakes. Based on the division, mitigation measures are prepared. Hence, it is a preventive method to minimise the losses.
- The factors in the microzonation method are estimated based on response from soil layers.

Waterbird census from January 24

- The 10th edition of Tamirabharani water bird count in select water bodies in Tirunelveli, Tenkasi and Thoothukudi districts will be conducted between January 24 and 26 this year.
- As usual, thousands of migratory birds have arrived at irrigation tanks in the

Tamirabharani basin and thousands of local birds started breeding in their regular nests.

Haboob

- A huge dust storm rolled through Dubbo and Parkes in New South Wales on Sunday afternoon
- The cloud was described as a 'haboob' dust cloud, which often form after a thunderstorm
- The Bureau of Meteorology also recorded wind gusts of 107km/h at 7.41pm local time in Dubbo.

Corona virus outbreak

- With China reporting an outbreak of a novel corona virus, the Directorate of Public Health and Preventive Medicine has instructed doctors to look out for symptoms of influenza-like illnesses, regardless of patient travel history to the affected country.
- Tamil Nadu already has in place a screening mechanism for influenza-like illnesses, and doctors have been told to stay alert, look out for symptoms of respiratory infections, fever and cough and ask for the travel history of patients.
- Corona viruses are species of virus belonging to the subfamily Coronavirinae in the family Coronaviridae, in the order Nidovirales.

- Corona viruses are enveloped viruses with a positive-sense single-stranded RNA genome and with a nucleocapsid of helical symmetry.

New snake eel species discovered in Odisha

- A new snake eel species residing in the Bay of Bengal has been discovered and documented this month (January) by the Estuarine Biology Regional Centre (EBRC) of the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) at Gopalpur-on-sea in Odisha.
- This new marine species has been named *Ophichthus kailashchandrai* to honour the vast contributions of Dr. Kailash Chandra, Director of ZSI, to Indian animal taxonomy.
- *Ophichthus kailashchandrai* is the eighth species of the *Ophichthus* genus found on the Indian coast. It is the fifth new species discovered by the Gopalpur ZSI in the last two years.

New species

- In 2019, two new species of marine eel, *Gymnothorax amanensis* and *Gymnothorax smithi* were been discovered by this ZSI centre.

WEF to conserve 1 trillion trees by 2030 to combat climate change through 1t.org

- The World Economic Forum (WEF) and its partners have launched 1t.org which is a multi stakeholder effort to support efforts to grow, restore and conserve 1 trillion trees around the world in order to restore the biodiversity and help combat climate change.

1t.org's aims and efforts to be taken:

- Project aim: 1t.org project aims to unite all the countries' govts, non-govt. organisations, businesses & individuals in to restore nature in a mass scale.
- Carbon locking: Locking up the carbon in the world's forests, grasslands, and wetlands can provide 1/3rd of emission reductions needed to meet the Paris Agreement targets by 2030.

A bid to restore coral reefs in Gulf of Kutch using biorocks

- The Zoological Survey of India (ZSI), with help from Gujarat's forest department, is attempting for the first time a process to restore coral reefs using biorock or mineral accretion technology.
- A biorock structure was installed one nautical mile off the Mithapur coast in the Gulf of Kachchh on January 19.
- Biorock is the name given to the substance formed by electro accumulation of minerals dissolved in seawater on steel structures that are lowered onto the sea bed and are connected to a power source, in this case solar panels that float on the surface.

10 more wetlands in India declared as Ramsar sites

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



4. ECONOMICS

4.1 New Economic Policy & Govt. Sector

World Gold Council report: RBI ranks 6th in buying gold abroad

- The World Gold Council (WGC) recently released its report, "World Gold Outlook 2020". The report says that gold has performed the best since 2010 in 2019.
- In 2019, the gold trade in USD has increased by 18.4% as compared to 2010.

Highlights: India

- According to the WGC, RBI (Reserve Bank of India) currently holds 625.2 tonnes of gold. This is 6.6% of the country's foreign exchange. With this, India ranks sixth in the world among other central banks.

WEF's 1st Global Social Mobility Index 2020: India ranks 76th & Denmark tops the list

- The World Economic Forum (WEF) released 1st edition of a report titled "The Global Social Mobility Report 2020: Equality, Opportunity and a New Economic Imperative". The global social mobility index (GSMI) of 82 countries

were launched in this report. As per the Index, India ranked in the 76th position with a score of 42.7 while Denmark topped the list.

Rank	Country
76	India
1	Denmark
2	Norway
3	Finland
4	Sweden
5	Iceland

IMF lower India's growth forecast to 4.8%

- The International Monetary Fund (IMF) lowered India's economic growth estimate for the current fiscal to 4.8% and listed the country's much lower than-expected GDP numbers as the single biggest drag on its global growth forecast for two years.
- In October, the IMF had pegged India's economic growth at 6.1% for 2019.
- Compared to the October World Economic Outlook (WEO) forecast, the estimate for

2019 and the projection for 2020 represent 0.1 percentage point reduction for each year while that for 2021 is 0.2 percentage point lower.

For the 1st time, RBI Releases Minutes of board meeting

- For the 1st time, India central bank, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has released the minutes of the 579th meeting of Central Board of Directors (BoD) held in Chandigarh on October 11, 2019 as part of the central bank's transparency initiative.

Background:

- In the recent times, RBI central board meetings have been controversial, especially considering that then governor Urjit Patel had resigned for the reason of alleged difference of opinions on policy matters with the central government.

5. SCIENCE



5.1 Latest Inventions on Science & Technology

India's 1st Sukhoi-30 squadron to be stationed in Thanjavur, TN: IAF chief RKS Bhadauria

- As per the Chief of the Indian Air Force (IAF), Air Chief Marshal Rakesh Kumar Singh (RKS) Bhadauria, the induction ceremony of a Sukhoi-30 MKIs (Su-30 MKI) squadron in the southern skies will take place in the presence of Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh at Thanjavur in Tamil Nadu (TN) on January 20, 2020.
- The range of this will be in the Indian Ocean region (IOR) up to Suez Canal.

TB diagnostic test developed in India has high accuracy, says WHO

- The World Health Organization (WHO) had mentioned that the India - made Truenat MTB, a molecular diagnostic test for pulmonary and extrapulmonary TB and rifampicin-resistant TB, has high accuracy.
- Truenat MTB has "high diagnostic accuracy as initial test to diagnose TB and to sequentially detect rifampicin resistance".
- It will be used as an initial test thus replacing sputum smear microscopy.
- Truenat is developed by the Goa-based Molbio Diagnostics. The company was

provided with technical assistance and resources by the Foundation for Innovative New Diagnostics (FIND) to help commercialise Truenat. ICMR had assessed and validated the diagnostic tool.

"APNA UREA-Sona Ugle" brand of HURL launched-To increase Urea Production

- The APNA UREA-Sona Ugle brand of HURL (Hindustan Urvarak & Rasayan Limited) was launched by the Union Minister of Chemicals and Fertilizers Shri D V Sadananda Gowda.

Recent developments in Urea Production

- In order to make India self-sufficient in Urea, the Union Government approved revival of three Urea plants located in Sindri, Gorakhpur and Barauni. The other two major fertilizer plants at Talcher and Ramagundam are also to be reopened.

What is HURL?

- HURL is a joint venture of Indian Maharatna companies namely IOCL (Indian Oil Corporation Limited), NTPC (National Thermal Power Corporation) and Coal India Limited. The objective of HURL is to make India self-reliant in Urea.

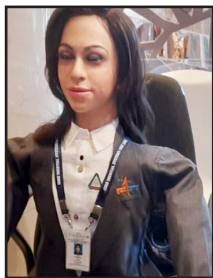
Submarine-launched ballistic missile tested

- India successfully test-fired the 3,500-km range submarine-launched ballistic missile, K-4, official sources confirmed. The test was carried out by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) from a submerged pontoon off the Visakhapatnam coast around noon.
- INS Arihant, the first and only operational SSBN, is armed with K-15 Sagarika missiles with a range of 750 km.



Vyom Mitra, first Indian 'woman' to ride to space

- "Young woman" named Vyom Mitra will ride to space in the first test flight of the human space mission, Gaganyaan.
- The ISRO unveiled its first 'woman' astronaut to an international gathering here on Wednesday.
- Two trial flights without crew will take place with a humanoid — the first around December 2020 and the second around July 2021. Vyom Mitra is the result of a year-long toil of the ISRO Inertial Systems Unit, Thiruvananthapuram.
- The ISRO will send the human-resembling model in a space capsule around the



end of 2020 or early 2021 to study how she and later real astronauts respond to living outside earth in controlled zero-gravity conditions.

Xenobots: World's first living, self-healing robots

- Scientists of University of Vermont and Tufts University have created the world's first living and self-healing robots Xenobots, using stem cells from frogs. It is named after the African clawed frog, *Xenopus laevis* from which they take their stem cells.

Key Points:

- The machines used are less than a millimeter (0.04 inches) wide which are small enough to travel inside human bodies. They can walk and swim, survive for weeks without food, and work together in groups.
- Xenobots could be used to clean up radioactive waste, collect micro plastics in the oceans, carry medicine inside human bodies, or even travel into our arteries to scrape out plaque.

Wuhan coronavirus may have been transmitted to people from snakes

- A new coronavirus originating in Wuhan, China, that has claimed 17 lives may have been transmitted to people from snakes, according to a genetic analysis. The snakes may have caught the virus from bats in the food market in which both animals were sold.
- The source of the infection is suspected to be a food market in Wuhan that was visited by several of those first infected

with the virus. The market is known to sell live wild and farmed animals, including marmots, birds, rabbits, bats and snakes.

First 'industry-made' PSLV in 2022

- The first Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) fully built by the industry will be rolled out in 2022.
- The PSLV will be manufactured by the industry as a whole product, The ISRO has announced plans to outsource the PSLV to the industry so that it can focus on other research areas and important missions.
- The first developmental flight of the Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV) is expected in April. This mission will be carried out from Sriharikota.
- The process of acquiring 2,300 acres at Kulasekharapattanam in southern Tamil Nadu for establishing a launch facility for the SSLV is in progress.

Pakistan successfully launched ballistic missile "Ghaznavi"

- The successful training launch of nuclear-capable surface-to-surface ballistic missile (SSBM) 'Ghaznavi' was held in Islamabad, Pakistan. The Ghaznavi missile strike targets upto a range of 290 km (kilometers).
- In November 2019, Pakistan had carried out a successful training launch of ballistic missile Shaheen-I which was also an SSBM.

'Ultrasonic gripper' robots move things without touching them



- Scientists have designed a robotic gripper that uses sound waves to move small and fragile objects, without touching them.
- The prototype robot developed by the researchers from ETH Zurich in Switzerland comprises of two semi-spheres, and resembles a pair of headphones.
- The spheres are connected to a circuit board carrying microchips. A small sphere hovers between the two semi-spheres, held up by ultrasound waves.
- "This phenomenon is known as acoustic levitation.

Reliance launches new road project to counter pushback against plastics

- Reliance Industries, India's largest petchem player, is launching a project to use plastics in road construction, amid growing concerns over pollution in the country of 1.3 billion whose major cities are often plagued with smog and litter.
- India, which uses about 14 million tonnes of plastic annually, lacks an organized system for management of plastic waste, leading to widespread littering.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi is urging India to end consumption of single-use plastics by 2022.

New mission launched by NASA & ESA to take first pics of Sun's poles

- NASA (National Aeronautics & Space Administration) and ESA (European Space Agency) jointly will launch a new spacecraft- "The Solar Orbiter Spacecraft" to take first pictures of Sun's north and south poles. The spacecraft will be launched from Cape Canaveral, United States on Feb 7, 2020 on a United Launch Alliance (ULA) Atlas V Rocket.

Mission

- The solar orbiter mission has 7 year lifetime and reach 24 degrees above the sun's equator increasing to 33 degrees with additional 3 years extended mission operations. The spacecraft will pass within 26 million miles (42 million kilometers) of the sun which is the nearest approach.

ISRO Technology Park

- Aim to provide thrust to space science across the country, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has announced a list of new projects including an incubation centre in Trichy, Tamil Nadu and a space research facility in Kanyakumari.
- It features sophisticated telescopes, from India's first launched satellite, to rocket to existing satellites.
- Currently, Kolkata has such a sophisticated facility.
- Steps have been taken to make this center of Kanyakumari an important regional center.

5.2 Mass Media & Communication

High School Portal 'Aspire' to be launched

- The Minister for School Education Dr. Prabhuram Chowdhary will launch portal 'Aspire'. The Portal has been prepared with the help of UNICEF for the students of class 9th to 12th of the govt schools.
- The 'Aspire' is in fact a future opportunity portal. Information pertaining to college fee, subjects, admission procedure etc. of all the colleges of national and state level can be obtained from this portal.

Amit Shah to launch POLNET 2.0

- Police communication services in the country are set for a major revamp with Union Home Minister Amit Shah expected to launch an upgraded POLNET 2.0, armed with a robust multi-media facility.
- The Directorate of Coordination Police Wireless (DCPW) that operates the POLNET or the police network services in the country has created a new and enhanced communication platform for police and security forces to better communicate during law and order problems and disasters including linkup from remote border and coastal areas.
- The DCPW was set up in 1946 and it was placed under the Ministry of Home Affairs in 1950 with the primary mandate of coordination between state and central police and security agencies for radio communication and frequency allocation.

CM Bhupesh baghel launches employment-oriented mobile app 'Rojgar Sangi' in Raipur

- The Chief Minister (CM) of Chhattisgarh, Bhupesh Baghel has launched a employment-oriented mobile app, 'RojgarSangi' developed by state-run Chhattisgarh State Skill Development Authority (CSSDA) at the ceremony of youth fest 2020 held at Science College premises in Raipur, Chhattisgarh.

Nitin Gadkari's 5-yr roadmap

- Union Minister Nitin Jairam Gadkari in his second innings has lined up big plans - from infusing Rs 15 lakh crore in highways to propelling GDP growth by globalising khadi and MSME products. After taking charge of Road Transport and Highways and Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) ministries, Gadkari told PTI that the mission is to further propel the country's economic growth through concerted efforts, be it in highways or MSME.
- The focus will be rural areas, and forming clusters of potters, people dependent on leather industries and giving them assistance with new technology aimed at promoting export of these products.

In a 1st, City Union Bank launches multilingual voice based 'All-In-One' app

- For the 1st time India, the City Union Bank (CUB) Limited, one of the leading Indian banks in India, has launched multilingual voice enabled mobile banking application.

- Now the CUB customers can converse with the chat-bot 'Ask Lakshmi' of the app in Tamil, English, Hindi / Telugu language for their general banking queries including transactions like Balance enquiry, mini statement, fund transfer over voice/text instructions.

App aims to academically empower visually impaired students

- The Swalekhan (self-writing) app is a tech offering conceptualised by the city-based Niwant Andh Mukta Vikasalaya, an NGO that works for the betterment of the visually impaired individuals, and developed by Josh Software, a Pune-based IT services company specialising in providing global tech solutions, in conjunction with Tekvision, a leading accessibility service provider whose workforce comprises a significant number of visually impaired technocrats.

Dr Jitendra Singh launched ISRO's Bhuvan Panchayat V 3.0 Web portal

- Dr. Jitendra Singh, Ministry of Atomic Energy and Space launched the Bhuvan Panchayat Version V 3.0 web portal in Antariksh Bhavan Bengaluru, Karnataka to support Gram Panchayat Development planning in the country.
- The Minister released the technical documents related to SISDP (Space Based Information Support for Decentralised Planning Update) - Update Project.

About Bhuvan Panchayat V 3.0 web portal:

- The web portal has been developed by National Remote Sensing Center (NRSC), Hyderabad, Telangana.

5.3 Latest Discoveries in Health Science

First case confirmed in India

- The first case of Coronavirus has also been confirmed in India. A student returned to Kerala from Wuhan found infected with the Coronavirus. According to the statement released by the health ministry on January 30, 2020, the first positive case of Novel Coronavirus has been confirmed in Kerala.

What is Coronavirus?

- Novel Coronavirus (COV) belongs to a family of viruses whose infection can cause problems ranging from cough to breathlessness. This virus has never been seen before. The virus infection started in December 2019 in Wuhan, China. According to WHO, fever, cough, shortness of breath is its common symptoms. There is no vaccine has been made to stop the virus so far.

6. NATIONAL – DIARY OF EVENT



Indian Heritage in Digital Space exhibition in New Delhi

- Union Minister of State for Culture and Tourism (IC) Shri Prahalad Singh Patel launched the first International Heritage Symposium and Exhibition (IHSE). The exhibition will be held until February 15, 2020 on “Indian Heritage in Digital Space “ and first international heritage symposium will be held for two days in the National Museum in New Delhi.
- The project aims to create digital installations using 3D laser scan data, AR, holographic projections and 3D fabrication, to provide interactive and immersive experiences showcasing the glory of Hampi and five Indian monuments namely KashiVishwanath Temple, Varanasi; TajMahal, Agra; Sun Temple, Konark; Ramachandra Temple, Hampi ; and RaniKiVav, Patan.
- Installation of ‘ViRaasat’ which consists of a scaled down 3D printed replica using laser-scanning, 3D modelling and rendering, 3D printing, computer vision and spatial AR provides a mixed reality experience to visitors in selected monument.

Arunachal pradesh becomes the 1st state in India to initiate IUCN’s red-listing of orchids

- Arunachal Pradesh (AR) has become the 1st State in India to initiate the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)’s ‘red listing’ of orchids at the state level after it has inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in Itanagar, AR.
- IUCN’s Red List of Threatened Species is an important indicator of the health of the world’s biodiversity. This list is serving as a powerful tool to inform and catalyze action for biodiversity conservation and policy change. The IUCN has estimated that these are complications for protecting natural resources.

23rd National Youth Festival 2020 held in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh

- The 23rd edition of the National Youth Festival (NYF) 2020 was held at Indira Pratishthan, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh from January 12-16, 2020. It was jointly organised by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (MYAS) and State Government of Uttar Pradesh.
- The theme of the 2020 NYF was “Fit

Youth, Fit India” Inauguration: It was inaugurated by Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh Shri Yogi Adityanath and Minister of State (MoS- independent charge) for Youth Affairs & Sports, Shri Kiren Rijiju on 12th January that marked the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda, Indian-Hindu monk.

“Globalizing Indian Thought”, an International Conclave held at Kozhikode

- The International Conclave on “Globalizing Indian Thought” was held in IIM, Kozhikode
- The conclave aimed at revealing India’s thoughts in becoming one of top three economies of the world.
- India is stepping towards the goal of becoming a 5 trillion Dollar economy by 2025. This will make India one of the top three economies in the world after US and China

GoI launches Saksham, a mega campaign on fuel conservation

- The Petroleum Conservation Research Association (PCRA) operating under Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas will launch fuel conservation campaign.
- The campaign will create awareness among public about fuel conservation. PCRA has been conducting Saksham campaigns in different parts of the country.
- In collaboration with NCERT, PCRA has prepared a comic book on the theme, “Fuel Conservation”.

Historic Bru-Reang Refugee agreement signed-34,000 displaced to settle in Tripura.

- Government of India, Bru-Reang representatives, Government of Tripura and Mizoram signed an agreement in New Delhi to end the refugee crisis of Bru-Reang community.
- Under the agreement, around 34,000 Bru Refugees are to settle in Tripura. The Centre will offer their rehabilitation helps with an allocated budget of 6000 crores.
- The land is to be provided by the Tripura Government. The Centre will provide aid of Rs 1.5 lakhs to build their houses.
- Due to ethnic tension in 1997, around 5,000 families of 30,000 Bru-Reang tribes were forced out of Mizoram to seek shelter in Tripura.
- In 2010, GoI began its efforts to permanently rehabilitate them as they constantly demanded to settle in Tripura.
- In 2018, GoI signed an agreement with the State Governments of Tripura and Mizoram in order to help the families and increase the aid substantially.

Indian Railway’s first Waste to Energy Plant uses “Poly Crack” Technology

- The East Coast Railways commissioned the first waste-to-energy plant of Railways sector of India. It is the fourth such plant in the country. The plant has been set up at a cost of Rs 1.79 crores with Polycrack technology.

Poly Crack Technology

- In Polycrack Technology, waste is processed and reformed in 24 hours. The

only drawback is that it requires larger area.

- The major benefit of the method is that it does not require pre-segregation.

India's first Super Fab Lab inaugurated in Kerala

- India's first Super Fab Lab was inaugurated in Kerala. The laboratory is to function in collaboration with Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), USA. It is the only laboratory that is being installed outside US.

Vigyan Ashram

- Vigyan Ashram was the first Fab Lab to be opened in India. It was established in 2002. Also, it was the first fab lab to be opened outside USA (MIT).

Fab Fi Fab

- Fi is the wireless network that is currently being operated in Afghanistan, US and Kenya. It provides high speed internet from a central provider.

Shiv Sena-led Maharashtra govt launched 'Shiv Bhojan' scheme

- The Shiv Sena party led Maharashtra Government (govt) launched 'Shiv Bhojan' scheme, with the aim of providing meal to the poor for Rs.10 on the occasion of the 71st Republic Day. The district guardian Minister Aslam Shaikh inaugurated the "Shiv Bhojan Thali" canteen at the civic-run Nair Hospital, Mumbai, Maharashtra.

Goal of the scheme:

- To provide affordable & quality food to all, irrespective of caste, creed, religion and financial status.

Key Points:

- The State Govt. is expected to incur an expense of Rs.6.4 crore for the pilot 'Shiv Bhojan' thali project that will run for 3 months & will expand the number of such canteen based on feedback.

GoI new Target: Indian Railways to run 100% on electricity by 2024

- The Union Minister Piyush Goyal announced that Indian Railways will run 100% on electricity by 2024. In such case, Indian Railways will be the first Railways to run 100% on electricity.
- Also, the Indian Railways has planned to make the network zero-emission network by 2030.

GoI signs "Historic Accord", Bodo Agreement

- The Government of India signed the historic agreement with the nine factions of the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB). According to the agreement, the Bodoland Territorial Area District will hold special rights for the locals. However, the outsiders will have to obtain "permit" to work in the territory.

Bodo Accord- Bodoland Territorial Area District

- The accord signed is the third agreement signed in 27 years. The first was signed with All Bodo Students Union in 1993 and the second was signed with the Bodo Liberation Tigers in 2003. The third agreement led to the formation of

Bodoland Territorial Council under the sixth Schedule of the Constitution. The BTC now administers 4 districts in Assam namely Chirang, Kokrajhar, Baska and Udalguri. These areas are called the Bodoland Territorial Area Districts.

India's first underwater Metro: To begin in March 2022 in Kolkata

- The first underwater Metro is being constructed in Hooghly river. The project is awaiting clearance of 2.8 million USD from the Indian Railways.

Highlights

- The Hooghly Metro is one of the oldest Metro in the country. It was started in 1984. The new under water tunnel will carry 20% of city's population and will cross the river in less than a minute. Currently it takes 20 minutes in the ferry to cross the river and an hour to cross the Howrah bridge.

Government of India has decided to sell 100 per cent stake of Air India

- Civil Aviation Minister of India and Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs in India Hardeep Singh Puri has expressed the Indian Government's decision to sell its 100 per cent stake of Air India (AI). It includes its 100 per cent stake in low-cost airline Air India Express and 50 per cent shareholding in joint venture AISATS Airport Services Private Limited.

West Bengal becomes fourth state to scrap CAA resolution

- West Bengal became the fourth state to pass a resolution against the contentious

Citizenship Amendment Act(CAA), prior to three states have scrapped controversial CAA law which are Kerala, Rajasthan and Punjab.

Indian Red Cross Society celebrates centenary year

- To commemorate the centenary year of IRCS, the Governor released a special postal cover in the presence of M. Sampath, chief post-master general, Tamil Nadu circle, while Indian Oil Corporation Ltd donated two ambulances to be used in Tambaram and Thiruparankundram in Madurai.

World's largest meditation centre opened in Hyderabad, Telangana

- The World's largest meditation centre was inaugurated at Kanha Shanti Vanam in Hyderabad, Telangana to mark the 75th anniversary of the formation of Shri Ram Chandra Mission (SRCM) and Heartfulness Institute. It can accommodate 1 lakh practitioners at a time.

Key Points:

- The meditation center is built in 30 acres with a central hall and eight peripheral halls.
- To celebrate the 75th anniversary, special sessions will be addressed by President Ram Nath Kovind on February 2, 2020 and social activist Anna Hazare on February 8, 2020.

Government to release the report of 100 Smart Cities in June 2020

- The Government of India (GoI) is to release the report card of 100 selected smart cities in June, 2020 as the Smart Cities Mission completes its five year. This report will be released in three categories, namely ease of living index, municipal performance index and climatic index.

Key Points:

- Prime Minister has launched the Smart Cities Mission with the mission to develop 100 Smart Cities across the country.
- Ease of Living index: Under this index 35 percent weightage will be given “to quality of life”, 20 percent to “sustainability”, 20 percent to “economic viability” and 30 percent to “citizen participation”.
- Municipal Performance index: Under this index 30 percent weightage will be given for “services”, 20 percent for “finance”, 15 percent for “technology”, 15 percent for “planning”, 20 percent for “governance”.
- Climatic index: Under this index cities will be ranked for promoting environment related issues.

Country's 1st and biggest 'walk-through' aviary inaugurated

- Chief Minister of Maharashtra Uddhav Thackeray inaugurated the country's first and biggest 'walk-through' aviary in Veermata Jijabai Bhosale Udyan and Zoo also known as Byculla Zoo in Mumbai, Maharashtra.
- The aviary is spread over in 18,234 sq ft, is 44 feet tall and consists of 100 species of Indian and exotic birds.

Andhra Pradesh Assembly passes resolution to abolish Legislative Council

- The Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly unanimously passed a resolution on January 27, 2020 to abolish the state legislative council. The state cabinet had approved the resolution earlier in the day. The proposal will now be sent to the centre for further action.
- The one-line resolution to abolish the state council was passed in the assembly by Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu. The resolution was passed with 133 members voting in favour of it. This was announced by assembly speaker Tammineni Seetharam.

States have abolished the legislative council

- After Assam, West Bengal had abolished its legislative council in 1969 and Punjab abolished it in 1970. The state legislative council of Andhra Pradesh was also abolished previously in 1985 and was revived again in 2006.

Article

- Notwithstanding anything in article 168, Parliament may by law provide for the abolition of the Legislative Council of a State having such a Council or for the creation of such a Council in a State having no such Council, if the Legislative Assembly of the State passes a resolution to that effect by a majority of the total membership of the Assembly and by a majority of not less than two-thirds of the members of the Assembly present and voting.

6 more routes identified for high-speed corridors

- India's bullet train project between Mumbai and Ahmedabad, the country's first high-speed corridor, will be completed by December 2023.
- Trains can run at a maximum speed of over 300 km/hr on a high-speed corridor, while on a semi-high speed corridor, the maximum speed can go beyond 160km/hr.
- In a briefing ahead of the Union Budget, Yadav said the six corridors include the Delhi-Noida-Agra-Lucknow-Varanasi (865 km) and the Delhi-Jaipur-Udaipur-Ahmedabad (886km) sections.
- Other corridors are: Mumbai-Nashik-Nagpur (753 km), Mumbai-Pune-Hyderabad (711 km), Chennai-Bangalore-Mysore (435 km) and the Delhi-Chandigarh-Ludhiana-Jalandhar-Amritsar (459 km) sections.
- India's bullet train project between Mumbai and Ahmedabad, the country's first high-speed corridor, will be completed by December 2023.

NITI Aayog's Aspirational district ranking : Chandauli of UP tops in December 2019

- NITI Aayog (National Institution for Transforming India), a policy think tank of the Government of India (GoI), released the ranking of Aspirational Districts of the country for the month of December 2019.
- The ranking is based on the progress made in 5 development areas in 112 aspirational districts across India in December 2019.

The rankings focus on progress in Health and nutrition, education, agriculture and water resources, financial inclusion & skill development and Basic infrastructure.

Top 3 states in Aspirational Districts ranking:

State	District	Score (December-2019)
Uttar Pradesh	Chandauli	57.6
Odisha	Balangir	53.9
Andhra Pradesh	Y.S.R.	65.2

Delhi airport gets a new women-only cab service

- 'Women with Wheels' cab service was started at Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA), New Delhi. The service was initiated by 'Sakha cabs' for the safety of women.

World Sustainable Development Summit organized by TERI first time in New Delhi

- The World Sustainable Summit is an annual event organized by The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI). It is being organized since 2001.

Highlights

- The event is to be held between January 29, 2020 and January 31, 2020. This year, the event is being held at New Delhi. The theme of the event is Theme: 'Towards 2030: Making the Decade Count'.

Bengaluru Has World's Worst Traffic, 4 Indian Cities In Top 10

- India has topped the TomTom Traffic Index 2019 with 4 of its cities amongst the 10 most congested cities globally.
- Bengaluru (71%), Mumbai (65%), Pune (59%) and New Delhi (56%) ranks 1st, 4th, 5th and 8th respectively.
- The other global cities featured amongst the top 10 include Manila from the Philippines, Bogota from Colombia, Moscow from Russia; Lima from Peru, Istanbul from Turkey, and Jakarta from Indonesia.
- New Delhi takes the 8th spot this year with 56% congestion level (extra travel time stuck in traffic). On an average, Delhiites driving during peak hours spend an extra 190 hours, i.e., 7 days, 22 hours in traffic each year.
- The city's heaviest congestion (81%) was recorded on October 23, 2019, while its lowest congestion (6%) was recorded on March 21, 2019.
- The TomTom Traffic Index 2019 indicates that the congestion level in Delhi has reduced by 2% compared to TomTom Traffic Index 2018.

A.P. flags off country's first 'fruit train'

- A 'fruit train', said to be the first of its kind in the country, was flagged off from Tadipatri Railway Station in Anantapur district carrying a load of 980 metric tonnes of locally grown bananas to the Jawaharlal Nehru Port in Mumbai, from where the consignment will be exported to Iran.

- This is the first time in India that an entire train is being sent to the gateway port (JNPT) for export.
- The bananas are being exported under the brand name 'Happy Bananas'. Farmers from Putlur region in Anantapur and Pulivendula in Kadapa district are exporting 'Green Cavendish' bananas to many international markets.

Video contest for farmer's stories opens

- Tractors and Farm Equipment Ltd. (TAFE) has launched "100 Farmers. 100 Stories" – a nationwide "Photo and Video Story Contest", dedicated to farmers as part of its "Be a #FarmDost" initiative.
- The contest is open till February 29 and allows participants to register and post their entries directly on the FarmDost website: farmdost.com.

World of Leather Comes to Chennai with Goddies & Opportunities

- As leather and leather goods producer, India has a strong presence on the global arena. It accounts for 13% of world production of leather.
- In footwear sector, India is second largest producer after China, with annual production in 2018 of 2.58 billion pairs. On consumption side also, India is the second largest with a use up of 2.60 billion pairs.
- In leather garment sector, India is second largest exporter, next only to Italy, with a global market share of about 17% accounting for 8.23% share of country's total export in 2018-19. India is fifth

largest exporter in leather goods & accessories sector.

- The export of footwear, leather and leather products from India reached a value of US\$ 5.69 billion during 2018-19.

Rajnath Singh flags off 51st K-9 Vajra at L&T gun making facility.

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh flagged off the 51st K-9 Vajra-T gun at the Larsen and Toubro Armored Systems Complex at Hazira, Surat.
- The L&T officials showed the minister the different manoeuvres of the K-9 Vajra-T, a tracked self-propelled howitzer.
- The gun weighs 50 tonnes and can fire 47kg bombs at 43-kilometre distant targets. L&T had in 2017 won the Rs 4,500-crore contract from the Ministry of Defence to supply 100 units of K9 Vajra-T 155 mm/52 calibre tracked self-propelled gun systems to the Indian Army under the Centre's 'Make in India' initiative.

National Information Centre sets up Centre of Block Chain Technology in Bengaluru

- The National Informatics Centre (NIC) will set up block chain technology centre in Bengaluru.
- The centre aims to provide Block Chain as service to all the stake holders who are interested in shared experiences, learning and resources.
- National Informatics Centre has always been the premier technology advisor and also a pioneer in introducing technologies such as National Knowledge Network, NICNET, etc.

Merger Plan of RSTV and LSTV in final stages

- The merger of Rajya Sabha Television (RSTV) and Lok Sabha Television (LSTV) is in the final stages, with a six member committee expected to submit a report by to Upper House Chairman Venkaiah Naidu and Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla. The final decision will be taken by them.
- There has been an overwhelming demand that the live transmission of the proceedings of the two Houses should not be disrupted.
- The committee consists of Prasar Bharati Chairman Surya Prakash, Additional Secretary to the RS Secretariat A. Rao, the Lok Sabha Secretariat's Ganpati Bhatt, Financial Adviser to RSTV Shikha Darbari, and CEOs of RSTV and LSTV Manoj Kumar Pandey and Aashish Joshi respectively.
- LSTV was launched in 2006 by Speaker Somnath Chatterjee.

ELECRAMA-Indian Electrical Industry Showcase inaugurated

- The ELECRAMA 2020 was held in Noida. The event showcases innovations and achievements of Indian Electrical Industry.

Significance

- The "ELECRAMA" platform is organized by Indian Electrical and Electronics Manufacturers' Association (IEEMA). It is supported by other ministries such as ministry of renewable energy, power, MSME (Micro Small and Medium Enterprises).

Industrial Meet of 'Wings India'-Asia's largest Civil Aviation Event held at Bengaluru

- The Industrial meet of the Asia's largest Civil Aviation was held in Bengaluru. The Civil Aviation event is to be held at Begumpet airport, Hyderabad in March 2020. The theme of the event will be Theme: Flying for All.

Targets set for aviation sector

- India aims to become the third largest aviation market globally by 2024
- The number of Indian carriers is to be increased to 1,100 by 2027
- The freight traffic at the airports of India is to cross 11.4 MT by 2032.

Sanskrit to replace Urdu on railway signboards in Uttarakhand

- Names of railway stations written in Urdu on platform signboards in Uttarakhand will now be written in Sanskrit.
- As per rules of the Railway Manual appropriate change should have been made on these signboards in 2010 after Sanskrit was made the second official language of the state.
- Sanskrit was made the second official language of Uttarakhand in 2010 during the chief ministership of Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank, who is now Union HRD Minister.

New Parliament complex may seat 1,350 members

- A new Lok Sabha central hall big enough to house 900 Members of Parliament (MPs), and flexible enough to house up to

1,350 MPs for a joint Parliament session will be the center piece of the Central Vista redevelopment plan that has a deadline of 2024.

- The shape of the present circular building designed by architects Edwin Lutyens and Herbert Baker in 1912-13, was based on the Chausath Yogini temple, one of the oldest heritage sites in India.
- According to presentations made by the Ahmedabad-based HCP Design, the new triangular Parliament building will come up next to the existing complex, the Indira Gandhi National Centre of Arts will be relocated with some of the new government buildings coming up where it is located, and the National Archives will be remodelled.

Bahadurpur and Kheri Viran to become India's first model sports villages

- Two villages namely Bahadurpur and Kheri Veran of Uttar Pradesh (UP) has set to become India's first 'Model Sports villages' as part of the Institute of Management Technology (IMT) Ghaziabad, UP under the 'Adarsh Khel Gram' program, IMT in association with NGO(Non Governmental Organization)' Sports: A Way of Life'.
- AIM: To evolve sports culture and increase sports literacy in the country.

Key Points:

- Under this program all the verandahs, courtyards will be developed as primary sports ground management and IMT will provide Olympic related sports equipment.

- One hour everyday from 4-5:00 pm will be the designated time to play sports.
- The main objective is to teach the Olympic games in these villages and various Arjuna Awardees would meet these kids to motivate them to participate in the games.

Govt to collect data including families headed by transgenders for census 2021

- According to the Ministry of Home affairs (MHA), the central government, for the 1st time, will collect data on households headed by a transgender and members living in the family for census 2021. Previously, the choice of the head of the household was gender – male or female.

Key Points:

- The census officer, while making a list of houses to be held from April 1 – September 30, 2020 will ask for specific information based on 31 questions from each household during the census 2021.
- Now three options will be given under the head “sex of the head of the household”- male, female and transgender.
- In addition, the government gather data on ‘ownership status of the census house’ – whether it is owned / rented.
- The census reference date will be March 1, 2021 but due to snowfall it will be October 1, 2020 in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

New initiative in Census 2021:

- The census 2021 will be done through a mobile phone application, deviating from the traditional pen and paper.

- Usage of census monitoring & management portal as a single source for all officers involved in Census activities to provide multi language support.

Background:

- The census has been conducted in India since 1872 without outbreak. It is conducted every 10 years. 2021 is not only the 16th census but also 8th after independence. The Census Act, 1948 and the Census Rules, 1990 provide the legal framework in conducting the Census.

UGC to Set Up National Academic Credit Bank

- The University Grants Commission (UGC) will soon set up the National Academic Credit Bank (NAC-Bank) with an aim to help students plan their learning objectives and graduate with a degree before the stipulated period. The system of academic credit bank is already prevalent in many foreign countries.
- The National Academic Credit Bank will enable non-science students (arts and commerce stream) to take up courses in the science stream after completing a bridge course/ programme.
- Through this initiative, students can plan their academic/ learning objectives and pursue courses as per their wishes and requirement. UGC has also released a concept note on NAC-Bank on www.ugc.ac.in. The commission has also invited the views and suggestions from all Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) including teachers, students, education personnel, on the NAC-Bank latest by December 20, 2019.

Gujarat leads in water efficiency survey under National hydrology project

- According to the rankings of 'Central and state governmental water departments based on their efficiency targets for 2019' released by Ministry of Jal Shakti, Gujarat ranked the best for parameters on efficiency targets, while National Capital Territory of Delhi remains in the worst-performing state category.
- Departments wise ranking: The Survey of India (SoI) received top spot among the 7 central government departments reviewed.
- It was followed by National Institute of Hydrology (NIH) and the Central Water Commission. Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) pushed to the last in the year 2019 ranking.
- State wise ranking: However, Delhi improved its position by 6 places to get 35th rank in 2019 as against bottom 41 in 2018. Tamil Nadu (TN) ranked best among the states that significantly improved its ranking. It stood at 13th spot in 2019 as compared to 33 in 2018.
- Rajasthan has been ranked 3rd in the country this time, while in the April-May 2018 rankings, Rajasthan was ranked 16th. In the rankings released in December-2019

1st of Krishi Manthan 2020 begins in Ahmedabad, Gujarat

- The 1st edition of the Krishi Manthan 2020 which is a Food, Agri-business and Rural Development Summit of Asia was held in Ahmedabad, Gujarat from January 16-17,

2020. The event was organised by Food and Agribusiness Committee of Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad (IIMA).

Govt sets up National Startup Advisory Council

- The government stated that it has set up a National Startup Advisory Council to advise the Centre on measures needed to build a strong ecosystem for nurturing innovation and start-ups in the country.
- The Council will suggest measures to foster a culture of innovation among students and others.

UP Govt launches Mukhyamantri Krishak Durghatna Kalyan Yojana

- Uttar Pradesh Government has launched Mukhyamantri Krishak Durghatna Kalyan Yojana which will provide financial assistance to family of farmers who die or become handicapped while working in fields. Government has also decided to implement Mukhyamantri Paryatan Samvardhan Yojana to boost tourism in state.
- Under the 'Mukhyamantri Krishak Durghatna Kalyan Yojana, if a farmer or any member of his family dies while working in a field then they will be given financial assistance of five lakh rupees. For the first time, the scheme will also include the Bataidars, who work in the field of other persons and share the crop after it is harvested.
- The scheme will cover farmers and their family members in the age group of 18-70 years and will be implemented from 14th September 2019.

India drops 10 ranks in Democracy Index

- The latest edition of the Democracy Index spells gloom for India. The world's biggest democracy slipped 10 places in the 2019 global ranking to 51st place.
- The survey published attributes the primary cause of "the democratic regression" to "an erosion of civil liberties in the country".
- India's overall score fell from 7.23 to 6.9, on a scale of 0-10, within a year (2018-2019) – the country's lowest since 2006.
- A year of democratic setbacks and popular protest, was done by The Economist Intelligence Unit – the research and analysis division of The Economist Group.

Index	Value in 2019	Change from 2018
Democracy	6.90	-0.33
Electoral pluralism	8.67	-0.5
Government	6.79	0
Political participation	6.67	-0.55
Political culture	5.63	0
Civil liberties	6.76	-0.59

Uttarakhand is the 1st state in the country to implement agricultural leasing policy

- Uttarakhand has become the first state in India which has made a policy to lease agricultural land. After the approval of Rashtrapati Bhavan, the state government has issued the order.

Carbon Disclosure Project: India ranks 5th

- The Carbon Disclosure Project, an annual report on carbon reduction activities of different countries and their firms was released by a non-profit organization Global Reporting Initiative. According to the report, the countries were ranked based on their corporate responsibilities of carbon reduction. In order to assess the role played by them, their science-based targets were weighed.

India's first e-waste clinic opens in Bhopal

- The first e-waste clinic of the country has been recently opened in Bhopal. This clinic will segregate and process e-waste from household and commercial units.
- The clinic will process all types of e-Waste materials like computers, mobile, chargers, etc. The clinic will run a campaign 'junk to jugaad' for those e-waste materials which will not be possible to process.
- The e-waste clinic has been prepared in a junk low floor bus. Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) and Bhopal Municipal Corporation (BMC) are providing technical support to this clinic.

Jharkhand's Jharia is the most polluted Indian city & Lunglei, Mizoram least polluted: Greenpeace India report 2018

- The Greenpeace India report for 2018 was released based on the National Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Programme

(NAMP). Jharia in Jharkhand which is known for Coal-belching is the most polluted Indian city with 322 µg/m³ (micrograms per cubic meter) of PM10 (Particulate matter) pollutants in 2018, according to the report analysis of 287 cities across the country. Out of 287 cities 231 cities were severely polluted.

- Dhanbad in Jharkhand which is known for its rich coal reserves and industries, is the second-most polluted Indian City with 264 µg/m³ of PM10 pollutants.
- By taking marginal improvement in reducing air pollution, Delhi had jumped to the 10th position in the analysis. It was at the 8th position in the last report.
- Lunglei in Mizoram is the least polluted followed by Meghalaya's Dowki.

Gujarat secures top spot the SKOCH State of Governance 2019 ranking

- According to the 'SKOCH State of Governance 2019' report, Gujarat gained the top spot on the back of better performance in Health, Education, Power and e-Governance segments. Gujarat, which was ranked 5th in 2018 replaces 2018 leader West Bengal.
- The projects undertaken by the states, have performed the best in terms of rankings across 22 different parameters have been listed as STARS.

Top 3 Star states include:

Rank	State Name	Project
1	Gujarat	104 projects
2	Maharashtra	50 projects
3	West Bengal	20 projects

India participates at United Nations AIDS Programme at World Economic Forum

- India participated at the United Nations AIDS (UNAIDS) programme at the World Economic Forum (WEF). The theme of the programme was Theme: Access for all: Leveraging Innovations, Investments and Partnerships for Health.

UNAIDS Programme

- The main objective of the programme is to coordinate global action on the AIDS disease and alleviate its impact. It was established in 1994.

MP Government makes reading of Preamble compulsory in Schools

- MP Government has also decided to make reading of Preamble of Constitution compulsory in Schools.

Maharashtra to launch Sovereignty of Constitution Programme

- Prior to Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra Government had also announced that it will make reading of preamble to constitution compulsory in all primary and secondary schools, starting from January 26.
- The initiative is being launched as part of the Sovereignty of Constitution Programme which is being launched in public interest.

'Vigyan Samagam', India's 1st global Mega Science Exhibition

- The Union Minister of State Independent Charge (I/C) Ministry of Development Of North Eastern Region, Minister of State (Mos) Prime Minister's Office

(PMO), Personnel, Public Grievances and Pension, Minister of State for Department of Atomic Energy and Space, Dr. Jitendra Singh inaugurated India's first global Mega Science Exhibition "Vigyan Samagam" at National Science Centre, New Delhi. The exhibition will be held from January 21, 2020 to March 20, 2020.

- The exhibition was Organised by Department of Science and Technology (DST) and the National Council of Science Museums (NCSM) under the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE).

India's 1st War Memorial for Animals to be set up in Meerut, UP

- The govt has announced to set up country's 1st war memorial for service animals such as dogs, horses, mules in Meerut, Uttar Pradesh (UP). This war memorial will come at army's specialised breeding, rearing training centre for animals in the Remount and Veterinary Corps (RVC) Centre and College in Meerut.

Srinagar declared Open Defecation Free

- Mayor of Srinagar Junai Azim Mattu announced that the Srinagar has joined the list of 'Open Defecation Free (ODF)' cities.
- Swachata certificate: Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir received its Swachata certificate from Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), Central Government and joins the list of cities that are now 'OPEN DEFECATION FREE'.

- Achievement of Srinagar: Srinagar receives 45th Rank in Cleanest cities in the country.

Top cities to help poor performers

- Finding some of the 100 cities selected for the Smart Cities Mission lagging behind in implementation of projects, the Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry has decided to pair up 20 of the best performers with 20 of the worst in order to improve their performance.
- The aim was that the top performing cities would inspire and help those lagging behind to improve their work.
- Among the top cities in the latest internal rankings are Nagpur, Tiruppur, Ranchi, Bhopal, Surat, Kanpur, Indore, Visakhapatnam, Vellore, Vadodara, Nashik, Agra, Varanasi, Davanagere, Kota, Pune and Udaipur.

7. INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS



1ST Session of India-Norway Dialogue on Trade & Investment

- The first Session of India-Norway Dialogue on Trade & Investment (DTI) was convened in New Delhi.
- The session was based on the Terms of Reference (ToR) signed between India and Norway in New Delhi, during the visit of Prime Minister of Norway.
- This was the first meeting after the signing of DTI.
- The first Session was preceded by an industry interaction on 15th January, 2020 with the representatives from Indian industry, where discussions were held on various areas of mutual interest like blue economy, shipping & maritime, ICT, renewable energy, fisheries and MSME.

10th World Future Energy Summit 2020 held in Abu Dhabi, UAE; CLIX sustainability summit held

- Recently the 10th edition of World Future Energy Summit (WFES) 2020 hosted by Masdar renewable energy company, was held at Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (UAE) from January 13-16, 2020. The theme for the year 2020 was "Rethinking Global Consumption, Production, and Investment".

3rd Climate Innovations Exchange:

- Alongside the World Future Energy Summit, 3rd edition of the Climate Innovations Exchange, 'CLIX' for short and the Future Sustainability Summit was also held in Abu Dhabi. The event showcased innovative ideas related to energy, food, agriculture and sustainability in space.

The Berlin Conference on Libya

- The Conclusions of the Berlin Conference on Libya that have just been released provide such a wide remit to please all participating parties allowing for broad and different interpretations and providing no real new solutions or mechanisms to break the impasse that has dogged the Libyan crisis since the 2015 Skhirat Libyan Political Agreement.
- The conclusions build upon the Paris, Palermo and Abu Dhabi processes and conclusions as well as the 2015 Skhirat Libyan Political Agreement and all relevant UN and UN Security Council resolutions. This includes UNSMIL's Gassan Salame current "Three-Point-Plan" for Libya.

UAE has been declared 'reciprocating territory' by India under section 44A of CPC, 1908

- The Central Government has declared the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to be a "reciprocating territory" under Section 44A of Civil Procedure Code (CPC), 1908. The order was issued by the Ministry of Law and Justice.

Key Points:

- By this the order passed by the superior Courts of UAE can now be enforced in India as if they had been passed by the local courts in India. Section 44A provides the law on the subject of execution of decrees of Courts in India by foreign Courts and vice versa.
- The other countries "reciprocating territories" are: United Kingdom, Singapore, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Trinidad & Tobago, New Zealand, the Cook Islands (including Niue) and the Trust Territories of Western Samoa, Hong Kong, Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Aden are the some of the countries which have reciprocating territories.

60th Tiruvalluvar statue in Cambodia on behalf of the World Tamil Association

- The 60th Tiruvalluvar Statue will be installed in Cambodia on April 2020 on behalf of the VGP World Tamil Association. To establish the Thiruvalluvar statue in the Cultural Office premises in Cambodia from 1st to 6th of April. A group of about 50 Tamil writers, headed by Dr. VG Santhosam, will be attending the ceremony.

India slips two places on global corruption perception index

- India's ranking in the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI-2019) has slipped from 78 to 80 compared to the previous year, said Transparency International questioning the "unfair and opaque political financing" in the country. Its score of 41 out of 100 remains the same.

Country	Score in 2019	Rank in 2019	Change in rank from '18
Denmark	87	1	0
New Zealand	87	1	1
U.K.	77	12	-1
U.S.	69	23	-1
India	41	80	-2
China	41	80	7
Brazil	35	106	-1
Pakistan	32	120	-3
Russia	28	137	1
Bangladesh	26	146	3
Somalia	9	180	0

- The report has revealed that a majority of countries are showing little to no improvement in tackling corruption.
- The 2019 CPI draws on 13 surveys and expert assessments to measure public sector corruption in 180 countries and territories, giving each a score from zero (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean).

India Opens 1st Mahatma Gandhi Convention Centre in Niger

- India's Minister of External Affairs (MEA) Shri Subrahmanyam Jaishankar and Nigerian President Mahamadou Issoufau inaugurated the first convention centre in Africa namely "Mahatma Gandhi convention centre" (MGICC) established at the state of Niger in Western Africa by India to honour the memory of 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. This is the 1st centre established in Africa by India under grant assistance.

Ganga-Volga Dialogue held with Russia to enhance Connectivity

- The Ganga-Volga Dialogue was held between India and Russia in New Delhi. The dialogue focused in providing interface between the civilizations of the countries.

Highlights

- The dialogue prioritized people-to-people contact. According to Russia, the dialogue acted as a good platform for its policy of "Greater Eurasia".
- Theme: Connectivity

India, France to partner on museums

- India and France will work together in the field of museums, cultural spaces and research, and a joint working group will be established for this purpose, the Ministry of Culture.

China is the world's 2nd -biggest weapons producer

- As per the report by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) has suggested that China is the world's second largest producer of munitions behind the United States and ahead of Russia. The data which covered the period from 2015 to 2017.

TN CM unveils Direct CTO scheme for green category industries

- Tamil Nadu government announced a new initiative, 'Direct CTO', to enable companies operating under 'green category industries' receive faster clearances from government to commence operations.
- The move would largely benefit micro, small and medium enterprises planning to set up operations in the state, to mark 125 years of trade body Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).
- The pollution index of any industrial sector is a number from 0 to 100 and the increasing value of PI refers to the degree of pollution load from the industries.
- 'Red' category industries are those which have a pollution index score of 60 and above, 'orange' category is with 41 to 59, 'green' category industrial sectors are of 21 to 40 and 'white' category industries are from 0 to 20.

8. TAMILNADU AFFAIRS



Amma Youth Sports Scheme launched

- The scheme will be implemented in all 12,524 gram panchayats and 528 panchayat unions.
- The Amma Youth Sports Scheme announced by Chief Minister Edappadi K.Palaniswami in the Assembly in July, last year has made strides in Jolarpet, Sholingur, Arni and Cheyyar.
- The scheme was launched by Minister for Commercial Taxes and Registration, K.C. Veeramani and Labour Welfare Minister Nilofer Kafeel in Mandalawadi village of the Jolarpet block.
- List of Sports under Amma Youth Sport Program are Kabaddi, Football, Volleyball, Cricket.

Tamil Nadu government to set up mega food parks across state

- The Tamil Nadu government would soon set up mega food parks that would lead to creation of jobs in rural areas of the state, Deputy Chief Minister O Panneerselvam.
- In addition to the proposed Mega food parks, an 'Ultra Mega Food Park' would also be set up on a 450-acre land at Pelakuppam village in Villupuram district.
- The mega food parks would evolve as hubs for food processing in fruits and

vegetables, fisheries, dairy, poultry and meat by encouraging private investment and are expected to generate substantial employment in rural areas.

- The Mega Food Parks would be established in Theni, Virudhunagar, Tuticorin, Erode, Cuddalore, Salem, Dindigul, Tirunelveli, Tiruvannamalai and Krishnagiri districts.

Govt to try intra-state portability of ration cards on pilot basis

- According to the GO, ration cardholders can purchase food grain from any ration shops in the state. Initially, the scheme would be tested in Tirunelveli and Thoothukudi districts on a pilot basis and once it is successful the scheme would be extended to the entire state.
- To facilitate smooth flow of intra-state portability in the state, 20 percentage of additional allotment has to be made in addition to the excess entitlement
- The Central government is ambitiously pursuing 'One Nation One Ration Card' despite the Opposition parties criticising them. Even the state government has accepted to implement the scheme and it is likely to come into force in June.

Mega Mohiniyattamevent in Thrissur

- 'Ekatmakam', a mega Mohiniyattam event, will be held at Thekkinkadu Maidan in Thrissur. The event, in which 6,000 dancers will take part, is organized with an aim to enter the Guinness World Records.

Eco-farms across Tamil Nadu set to be new tourist hotspots

- An eco-park at Courtallam, a giant orchard at Karumandurai near Salem, a farm in Thandikudi in Kodaikanal, a farm at Devala in the Nilgiris and one in Kallar near Mettupalayam, developed by the horticulture department.

DLF to invest Rs 5,000 crore to develop 6.8 million sq ft IT park in Chennai

- Singapore's sovereign fund GIC, is planning to invest Rs 5,000 crore to develop a 6.8 million sq ft information technology park in Chennai, making the south India city its second largest market after Gurugram.
- The project, DLF Downtown Taramani spread over 27 acre is a joint venture with Tamilnadu Industrial Development Corporation (TIDCO).