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Wishing You All The Very Best !!

DIRECTOR

(M.Shunmugam)
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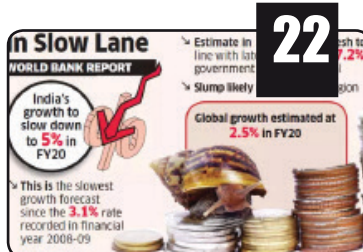


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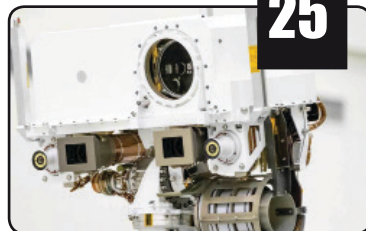
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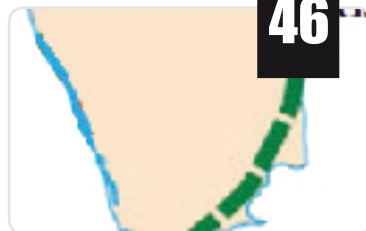
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History



1.1 Important Days

Date	Day	Theme / Remark
02-02-2020	World Wetlands Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The theme for 2020 WWD is 'Wetlands and Biodiversity.'
04-02-2020	World Cancer Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Theme – I'am and I will
06-02-2020	International Day of Zero Tolerance to Female Genital Mutilation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Theme: "Unleashing Youth Power: One decade of accelerating actions for zero female genital mutilation".
	Financial Literacy Week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will conduct the "Financial Literacy Week 2020" from February 10 to February 14, 2020. The theme of the Financial Literacy Week 2020 is "Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)". This year India's central bank is focusing on the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
10-02-2020	National Deworming Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To deworm children and adolescents to reduce the prevalence of parasitic worms in the intestine.
10-02-2020	World Pulses Day 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To recognize the importance of pulses (dry beans, lentils, dry peas, chickpeas, lupins) as global food.
11-02-2020	International Day of Women and Girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> International Day of Women and Girls in Science was observed
11-02-2020	World Unani Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The day marks the birthday of great Unani scholar and social reformer "Hakim Ajmal Khan".

12-02-2020	National Productivity Day	
13-02-2020	World Radio Day (WRD)	■ Theme "Radio and Diversity"
13-02-2020	National Women's day	

1.2 Defence, National Security and Terrorism

IIT Madras to showcase NextGen technologies at DefExpo 2020

- Indian Institute of Technology Madras will showcase next-generation technologies, during DefExpo 2020, the biennial defence exhibition at Lucknow.
- The DefExpo 2020 will be held from February 5 to 9, 2020, in Lucknow. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate India's five-day biennial mega defence exhibition.
- IIT Madras is the 'Knowledge Partner' of Tamil Nadu Defence Corridor and will form part of the TIDCO (Tamil Nadu Industrial Development Corporation) Pavilion in the Expo.

PM targets \$5 billion defence exports over the next five years

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi set a target of \$5 billion in defence exports in next five years for India as he invited private businesses to invest in the country, which he said would realize the twin objectives of handsome returns on investment and making Asia's third largest economy self-

reliant in defence manufacturing.

- In 2014, the export of defence equipment from India was about ₹2,000 crore. In the last two years, it has gone up to ₹17,000 crore. In the next five years, our target is export of \$5 billion, which is about ₹35,000 crore.

India to host East Asia Summit in Chennai

- The Ministry of External Affairs, in partnership with the govts of Australia and Indonesia, will organise the East Asia Summit Conference on Maritime Security Cooperation in Chennai.

Indian Navy to get delivery of Scorpene-class 'Karanj' submarine

- The stage is getting set for the Indian Navy to take the delivery of the third 'Scorpene' submarine 'Karanj' by the end of this year, and all the six will be delivered by 2022.
- Karanj was launched into water in January 2018 and is currently in advanced stages of sea trials. The first Scorpene, Kulvari, was commissioned in 2018 and it would go for a normal refit after six years in 2023, during which time the AIP would be installed. Second Scorpene Khandari was inducted in 2019.

Upgrade 155mm artillery gun handed over to Army

- The Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) handed over Sharang, the first 130mm M-46 artillery gun upgraded to 155mm to the Indian Army.
- The gun's range has now gone from 27km to over 36km with the upgrade. It also has more explosive capability and hence and more damage potential, the official stated. In all, OFB will upgrade 300 130mm guns to 155mm and the contract will be completed in four years.
- The Army inducted its first modern artillery guns system in November 2018. These include M-777 Ultra Light Howitzers (ULH) from the U.S. and K9 Vajra-T.

Green light for HAL copter

- The indigenous Light Utility Helicopter (LUH) being developed by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) crossed a milestone as it received the initial operational clearance (IOC) at the ongoing Defexpo.
- The choppers will replace the aging Cheetah and Chetak helicopters along with the Russian Ka-226T helicopters.
- This edition of Defexpo had witnessed signing of about 200 Memoranda of Understanding, technology transfer agreements and product.
- The LUH is a 3-ton class helicopter with glass cockpit for reconnaissance and surveillance roles.

Indian Army Major Anoop mishra develops world's 1st bulletproof helmet that can stop AK-47 firing

- In a vital development, a Major in the Indian Army, Anoop Mishra has developed the world's 1st bulletproof helmet which can stop an AK-47 bullet round from a distance of as less as 10 meters. The helmet is developed under the Indian Army's "Abhedya" project.

Army open to giving pension for women officer litigants

- The Army is open to giving pension to women officers who have finished the pensionable service limit, defence sources announced. The limit for officers is 20 years and for Junior Commissioned Officers and Other Ranks 15 years.

Indian Army & Private firm developed the World's Cheapest Gun Shot Locator "Parth"

- The Indian Army's College of Military Engineering (CME), Pune, Maharashtra, jointly with a private firm developed gunshot locators named as "Parth". The device is much cheaper than the imported ones. Major Anoop Mishra displayed the Parth gunshot locator at DefExpo 2020 held in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh (UP).

India-UK joint Military EX: Ajeya Warrior to be conducted in Salisbury plains, UK

- Fifth Edition of Joint Military Exercise between Indian Army and United Kingdom (UK) Arm AJEYA WARRIOR -2020 will be conducted at Salisbury Plains, United Kingdom(UK) from February (13 to 26) 2020.
- 120 Army Individuals each from Indian and United Kingdom Armies will participate in this Exercise and the Next Edition will be conducted in India, vice-versa.

DRDO developing a new ballistic missile Pranash with striking range of 200km

- The Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) is developing Pranash, a new 200Km strike range ballistic missile which will be the advanced version of Prahaar, with the strike range of 150Km. Pranash is a single stage solid propellant surface-to-surface missile.

About Prahaar:

- Prahaar is a short range Ballistic missile having a strike range of 150 Km and it can carry the nuclear warheads up to 200Kg. It is a solid propellant surface to surface missile which can travel at the speed of Mach 2.

Bhabha Kavach: New bullet proof jacket developed by BARC-to be used by CISF

- The Bhabha Atomic Research Centre developed a new bullet proof jacket called Bhabha Kavach. The jackets are to be used by the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF).

President's Colours Awards to INS Shivaji on its 75 years of Service

- President Ram Nath Kovind presented the President's Colours Awards to INS Shivaji. The Indian Naval Station Shivaji has completed 75 years of service. Last year, the award was given to Indian Naval Academy.

Anti-Hijack mock drill conducted at Visakhapatnam Airport

- The Anti-hijack exercise was conducted by created a mock situation using a naval Dornier aircraft by INS Dega, (a naval air station of the Indian navy) at Visakhapatnam Airport, Andhra Pradesh and the main objective of the exercise was to test the plans and procedures handled by various agencies during hijack threats.

1.3 World Organisations – Pacts and Summits

WHO report: Cancer Cases to increase by 81% in 2040

- While the world marked World Cancer Day on February 4, 2020, the World Health Organization released its report on Cancer.

Highlights

- According to the report, the cancer cases will increase by 81% by 2040. This is mainly due to lack of investment. The report says that it is essential to invest 25 billion USD in the next decade to save millions of lives.
- The treatment for cancer in developed countries has brought down the mortality rate due to cancer by 20%. However, in poorer countries the reduction was merely 5%. The report also says that 25% of cancer deaths were due to tobacco consumption.

Government allocates ₹ 100 crore to host G-20 Presidency in 2022

- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced that India will host the G-20 Presidency in 2022 and that ₹ 100 crore has been allocated for this purpose.
- The Group of 20 nations (G20) is an international grouping consisting of Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, the European Union, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, the UK and the US.

Rajasthan CM to dedicate UNESCO certificate for Jaipur

- Rajasthan world heritage site certificate, UNESCO, Walled City of Jaipur will dedicate the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation world heritage site certificate for Jaipur to the people at a function to organize at historical Albert Hall.
- UNESCO declared the Walled City of Jaipur world heritage site which is famous for its grid plan-based architecture and buildings constructed with the pink façade.

India slips to 40th rank on GIPC's 8th International Intellectual Property (IP) Index for 2020, US tops

- The U.S.(United States) Chamber of Commerce's Global Innovation Policy Center (GIPC) has released the 8th edition of International Intellectual Property (IP) Index for 2020 namely 'Art of the possible' which was authored by Meir Pugatch and David Torstensson.
- This report was conducted by Pugatch Consilium, a consultancy that provides evidence-based research, analysis, and intelligence on the fastest growing sectors of the economy. The 2020 index mapped the IP ecosystem in 53 global economies which included three new economies-Greece, Dominican Republic, and Kuwait, on the basis of 50 unique indicators.

1.4 Places in News

Scientists to digitally recreate Tamil Nadu port city

- The Chola Dynasty port city in Tamil Nadu that vanished from maritime history around 1,000 years ago will be digitally reconstructed by a consortium led by the Department of Science and Technology.
- There are exhaustive narrations in works of Sangam Tamil literature to infer that the city, located 30 km from the existing Poompuhar town in southern TN, was submerged due to “kadalkol” or rising sea levels.
- The reconstruction of Poompuhar is part of DST's Indian Digital Heritage project – an exhibition of its first project ‘Digital Hampi’ is currently on display at the National Museum.

Salem gets a new international standard cricket stadium

- A new cricket stadium of international standards was inaugurated in Salem by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister K Palaniswami.
- Former BCCI president N Srinivasan, former India captain Rahul Dravid and TNCA president Rupa Gurunath were present on the occasion.

1.5 Eminent Persons

Arignar Anna's 51st Memorial Day

- Anna founded the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) in 1949, after breaking away from the Dravida Kazagam (DK).
- The 51st commemoration of Arignar Anna was held in various parts of Tamil Nadu by political party members who paid tribute.

NASA astronaut Christina Koch returns to Earth after record-setting stay in space

- Christina Koch made the return trip from the International Space Station (ISS), along with ESA astronaut Luca Parmitano and Russian cosmonaut Alexander Skvortsov.



- Koch's trip was significant because it set a record, officially making her the U.S. astronaut with the second-longest stay in space with 328 consecutive days at the Station. She's second only to Scott Kelly, who spent 340 days in space, and she's officially the woman with the longest stay in space worldwide, passing fellow U.S. astronaut Peggy Whitson's record of 289 days.

Raju Bharatan passes away

- Veteran film historian and cricket journalist Raju Bharatan passed away following a prolonged illness. He was 86.
- Bharatan was associated with the Illustrated Weekly of India for more than four decades, working along with the likes of stalwarts like Khushwant Singh, M.V. Kamath, Pritish Nandy and Anil Dharker.



Books he authored

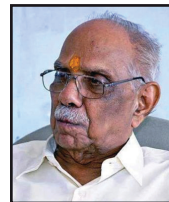
- The first of six books - Rivals in the Sun, revolved around the historic series. The other five titles he authored are Indian Cricket - The Vital Phase (1977), Lata Mangeshkar - A Biography (1995), A Journey Down Melody Lane (2009), Naushadnama: The Life and Music of Naushad (2013) and Asha Bhosle- A Musical Biography (2016).

APJ Abdul Kalam's life to be turned into film

- Former President of India and scientist APJ Abdul Kalam's life story is nothing short of inspiring. Telugu producer Anil Sunkara and Abhishek Agarwal will be making a film based on it.
- The first poster of the film was launched by the chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), which marks the second death anniversary of Abdul Kalam. The event took place in Rameshwaram, which is his birth place.

Veteran RSS pracharak P Parameswaran passes away

- Parameswaran, who had worked with leaders like Deendayal Upadhyaya, Atal Bihari Vajpayee and L K Advani during the Jana Sangh days, was honoured with Padma Vibhushan, the country's second-highest civilian award in 2018 and Padma Shri in 2004.



J.R.D. Tata gets a digital flying licence

- In was on February 10, 1929 that India got its first pilot in Jehangir R.D. Tata, who qualified with number 1 on his flying license, giving birth to Indian aviation.
- India has come a long way since then, with digitisation process of flying licences underway, being the latest among initiatives to be undertaken by Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA).
- In what might be a befitting tribute to the legend, the digitisation process, which kicked off in December 2019 is being undertaken by Tata Consultancy Services (TCS).



NIFM Faridabad to be renamed as Arun Jaitley Institute of Financial Management

- The government has decided to rename National Institute of Financial Management (NIFM), Faridabad as Arun Jaitley National Institute of Financial Management (AJNIFM).

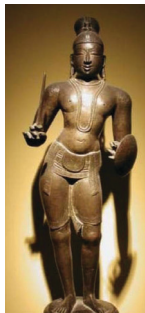
- NIFM, Faridabad, was set up in 1993 as a registered society under Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance, Government of India with the mandate to train officers of various Finance and Accounts Services recruited by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) through the Civil Services Examination as also officers of Indian Cost Accounts Service (ICoAS). The Union Finance Minister is the President of the NIFM Society.

Kaamya Karthikeyan: Mumbai Girl becomes the youngest to climb Mt Aconcagua

- Kaamya Karthikeyan became the youngest girl to climb the highest peak in South America, Mt Aconcagua.

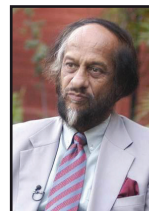
Azhvar idol traced to London museum

- The Idol Wing CID has traced a bronze idol of Thirumangai Azhvar, which went missing from a temple in Kumbakonam 60 years ago, to a museum in London.



Former TERI Chief R.K.Pachauri dead

- Rajinder K Pachauri, former Chairman of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, died. He was 79.
- Dr. Pachauri was the founder and chief executive of The Energy Resources Institute (TERI).



Government renames two Famous Institute after Sushma Swaraj

- The Ministry of External Affairs, announced that two Institutions, The Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra and The Foreign Service Institute have been named after former Indian Diplomat Sushma Swaraj for her Invaluable contribution in Public Service. The announcement is being made on her 68th Birth Anniversary falling on February 14, 2020.

Key points:

- Sushma was the 1st youngest cabinet minister in the Haryana Government and she also the 1st woman Chief Minister of New Delhi as well as the 1st woman spokesperson for a National political party in India.

1.6 Sports and Games

Bala Devi becomes first Indian woman footballer to bag contract with a foreign club

- A 29-year-old footballer Bala Devi from Manipur has become the first Indian footballer to associate with a foreign football club.
- She has been associated with the famous European club Rangers for 18 months. Bala Devi has also been the captain of the Indian women's football team.
- She is the highest international goal-scorer in South Asia. In 2015 and 2016 she was awarded AIFF Woman Player of the Year title.



Nethra Kumanan becomes first Indian woman sailor to win World Cup medal

- Chennai's Nethra Kumanan clinched a bronze medal in the Sailing World Cup to become the first woman from the country to achieve the feat. Participating in the Hempel World Series in Miami, United States of America, Nethra won bronze in round two of the tournament to create history.
- Erika Reineke of the USA and Vasilieia Karachaliou of Greece claimed the gold and silver respectively in the laser radial event.



Goa 2020 National Games unveils 'Rubigula' as official mascot

- 'Rubigula', Flame-Throated Bulbul, has been unveiled as the official mascot for the Goa 2020 National Games in Panaji, Goa. The Flame-Throated Bulbul is the state bird of Goa. Goa will be hosting the 36th edition of the National Games from 20th October to 4th November 2020.

Ayonika Paul won the women's 10m Air Rifle T1 event

- Olympian Ayonika Paul won the women's 10m Air Rifle T1 event. Vijayveer Sidhu won the men's 25m Pistol T2 event in the National Shooting trials at Thiruvananthapuram.
- She came to a quality eight-woman field, which had the likes of Tokyo 2020 quota holders Apurvi Chandela and Anjum Moudgil among competitors.



Rakhi Halder wins gold medal at the womens National Weightlifting Championship

- Rakhi Halder of West Bengal won Senior Weightlifting Championship. She bagged gold medal in the 64 kg category at the 35th National Weightlifting Championship held in Kolkata.

Indian boxers bag 14 medals, including six gold, at Golden Girl Championship in Sweden

- India's junior and youth boxers dominated the ring at the Golden

Girl Championship in Boras, Sweden, claiming 14 medals, including six gold, the overall championship trophy and the Best Boxer award.

- Haryana's Prachi Dhankar (50kg), fighting in the junior category, won the Best Boxer award. Besides Dhankar, Ethoibi Chanu Wangjam (54kg), Lashu Yadav (66kg) and Mahi Raghav (80kg) also won gold medals.
- The three silver medals in the junior category were won by Janhavi Churi (46kg) Rudy Lalhmingmuani (66kg) and Tanishka Patil (80kg) while Diya Negi brought home a bronze in the 60kg slot. A total of 75 teams participated in the championship.

Sindhu, Mary Kom among nominees

- Shutter P. V. Sindhu and boxer Mary Kom are among the five nominees for the inaugural BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year award to be presented.
- The other three are, Vinesh Phogat (wrestling), Dutee Chand (athletics) and Manasi Joshi (para-badminton).



Mirabai Chanu Breaks National Record, Lifts 203kg To Win Gold

- The 25-year-old Manipur girl lifted 87 kg in snatch in her second attempt and 115 kg in clean and jerk for a total of 203 kg. She competes in the women's 49 kg category.



- Mirabai's previous best of 201 kg had come at the World Championship in Thailand in September 2019, where she had finished fourth.

SAI, Hockey India launch high performance centres

- Sports Authority of India (SAI) and Hockey India announced the establishment of the High Performance Centres in seven places across the country to provide state-of-the-art facilities to junior and sub-Junior players.
- The move was aimed at grooming young talent in view of 2024 and 2028 Olympic Games.

Aurangabad therapist makes Ironman triathlon history

- Niket Dalal, a 38-year-old from Aurangabad, created history by becoming the first



- completely visually-challenged athlete to finish an Ironman triathlon.
- Associated with Adventures Beyond Barriers Foundation (ABBF), Mr. Dalal completed the gruelling Ironman 70.3 - consisting of a 1.9 km swim, a 90 km bicycle ride and a 21.1 km run - with assistance from his sighted companion, Arham Shaikh.

Vivek is FIH Rising Star of the year

- The Indian men's team midfielder Vivek Sagar Prasad was named as the 2019 Rising Star of the year by the International Hockey Federation (FIH).
- The 19-year-old Vivek won the accolade ahead of Argentina's Maico Casella and Blake Govers of Australia, who finished second and third.



National Winter Games to be held in Gulmarg

- The National Winter Games is to be held in Gulmarg from March 7, 2020. The games are to be held for five days in Gulmarg, the world-famous Ski destination. It is being held under Khelo India.

Sophie Devine becomes 1st cricketer to hit 5 successive 50-plus scores in T20 International

- New Zealand captain Sophie Devine has become the first international cricketer to score five consecutive 50-plus scores in T20I cricket, surpassed Mithali Raj, Brendon McCullum and Chris Gayle who all had four straight fifty-plus scores to their name in the shortest format of International Cricket.



Bangladesh stun defending champions India to clinch maiden U19 World Cup title

- Bangladesh U19 cricket team won their maiden U19 World Cup title after stunning defending champions India.
- This is Bangladesh's first major title at the world level in senior and junior cricket

54th All India Bombay Gold cup hockey championship 2020 in Mumbai

- Indian Navy, Mumbai (Maharashtra) has defeated South Central Railway (SCR), Secunderabad (Telangana) to win the 54th All India Bombay Gold Cup Hockey Tournament title for the 1st time with 4-1 scores in the final played at Mahindra Hockey Stadium, Churchgate, Mumbai, Maharashtra.

FIH award for Manpreet Singh

- National men's captain Manpreet Singh became the first Indian to win the International Hockey Federation's (FIH) Player of the Year award.

Smriti No.4 in rankings

- India star Smriti Mandhana rose three rungs to fourth but Jemimah Rodrigues dropped to seventh in the latest ICC women's T20 International rankings for batters.
- Harmanpreet Kaur has remained static at ninth in the same list.
- Among the bowlers, Poonam Yadav dropped six places to fall out of the top 10 and take the 12th position.

1.7 Books & Authors

Gandhiji's killing: 'The Hindu' releases book

- Veteran scientist Dr. M.S. Swaminathan released a special publication on the Mahatma Gandhi assassination trial titled The Assassination of Mahatma Gandhi – Trial & Verdict 1948-49 published by The Hindu, as part of the History Series.

"Calcutta Nights" translation of 'Raater Kolkata' done by Rajat Chaudhuri.

- Rajat Chaudhuri, translated the book "Calcutta nights" (originally 'Raater Kolkata') into English and was published by Niyogi Books.

Pop singer Lord J launches his Autobiography Book "Lord J: Lord of Anonymity"

- 1st and only Anonymous singer in the world. Lord J was born in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, Lord J is a Self-Taught singer and Lyric writer in an Anonymous way, and he is a world famous celebrity without revealing his identity to the world. The Name Lord J was given to him by an LA (Los-Angeles)-based fan.

Padma Shri awardee Manoj Das to receive Mystic Kalinga Literary Award

- Famous Odia and English writer Manoj Das, 85 years old, will receive Mystic Kalinga Literary award– Indian and Global languages, during the 4th edition of the 2 day Mystic Kalinga Festival (MSF).

- Mystic Literary award has been instituted to recognize and celebrate inspiring writers, poets and performers.
- Cash Prize: The Mystic Kalinga Literary Award will carry a cash prize of Rs 1 lakh, khadi shawl and a certificate.

'A Child of Destiny' an Autobiography by prof K. Ramakrishna Rao

- The Vice President of India and Chairman of Rajya Sabha Shri Muppavarapu Venkaiah Naidu released a Book titled 'A Child of Destiny' Autobiography penned by Professor Koneru Ramakrishna Rao at GITAM (Gandhi Institute of Technology and Management) University Vishakatapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, India.

Dharmendra Rai, Mind Map & Brain Literacy trainer launched his book "The Thin Mind Map"

- Dharmendra Rai, Mind Map & Brain Literacy trainer launched his book "The Thin Mind Map".

A book "Messages from Messengers" by Priti K Shroff launched

- "Messages from Messengers" book written by Priti K Shroff was launched in Mumbai, Maharashtra. The book deals with Indian culture and tradition and is suitable for everyone in all stages of life, as a tool for self-guidance.

Haryana CM released book titled "A Commentary and Digest on The Air Act 1981"

- Haryana Chief Minister (CM), Manohar Lal Khattar, released a book titled "A Commentary & Digest on The Air, Act 1981" at Chandigarh, Haryana. The book was written by Dr K K Khandelwal (Chairman, Haryana Real Estate Regulatory Authority, HRERA) and Apoorva Kumar Singh, (Principal Secretary, Town & Country Planning & Urban Estates Department) and was published by The Bright Law House.

from India, Maldives, and Bangladesh have to pay a certain amount for their stay in the country.

INS Jamuna deployed on Hydrographic Survey off coast Sri Lanka

- The Indian Naval Ship (INS) Jamuna has been deployed In the shores of Sri Lanka to carry out a joint Hydrographic survey. The survey is to be conducted for 2 months time period.

Financial closure of Arun-III hydropower project inked b/w India and Nepal

- The Arun-3 hydropower project, the largest Indian-backed project in Nepal, secured NPR (Nepaleses rupee) 100 Billion for the 900 MW (mega watt) hydropower project being built on the Arun River in Nepal's Sankhuwasabha District.
- India's Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam (SJVN) Arun-III Power Development Company, the developer of the Arun-III hydropower project has signed the financial closure of the project with 7 banks in Kathmandu, Nepal.

1.8 India and its Neighbours

Sri Lanka ranks first in Breast Feeding support Policies and Programs

- Sri Lanka has been ranked first in a new survey conducted by the World Breastfeeding Trends Initiative (WBTi) on Breast Feeding support Policies and Programs. Sri Lanka scored 91 points out of 100 and got the green color code and hence become the first country to achieve the "Green" nation status in supporting breastfeeding women.

Bhutan introduces 'Sustainable Development Fee' for regional tourists

- Bhutan has recently introduced a new system for regional tourists called 'Sustainable Development Fee'. The lower house of 'Tshogdu' or Bhutan's Parliament passed legislation that tourists

1.9 Awards & Honours

- Senior journalist Yusuf Jameel from Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) won the 2019-20 PEN Gauri Lankesh Award for Democratic Idealism for his outstanding contribution in journalism.

Documentary maker gets Shantaram Award

- Veteran documentary filmmaker S. Krishnaswamy was recently awarded the Dr.V. Shantaram Lifetime Achievement Award for his lifelong invaluable contribution to non-fiction filmmaking.

Veteran Hindi Writer Vinod Shukla Bags First Mathrubhumi Book of the Year 2020 Award

- Noted Hindi poet-novelist and Sahitya Akademi honouree Vinod Kumar Shukla has bagged the inaugural Mathrubhumi Book of the Year 2020 award for his translated book "Blue Is Like Blue", which deal with common people and their daily struggles.
- The stories in "Blue Is Like Blue" has been translated into English by Arvind Krishna Mehrotra and Sara Rai.

President confers International Gandhi Awards for Leprosy

- The International Gandhi Awards for Leprosy was presented by President Ram Nath Kovind to Dr. NS Dharmashaktu in the individual category and the Leprosy Mission Trust under the institutional category on. The award aims to recognize the work of individuals and institutions

in fighting leprosy and erasing prejudices attached to the disease.

Economic empowerment of women will boost growth

- Women are emerging as the drivers of the nation's economic growth and their economic empowerment is essential to boost national development, Telangana Governor.
- The women's cooperative from the Chennai branch was chosen for the overall Championship Award, women's cooperatives in the Adiramapattinam branch in Tamil Nadu, Hyderabad branch in Telangana, Bellary branch in Karnataka and Bhimavaram branch in Andhra Pradesh bagged regional awards.

South Korea's Parasite makes Oscar history with Best Picture

- Motion Picture Arts and Sciences look beyond the home turf, and English language, to write history. Mr. Bong's searing look at class divides Parasite became the first non-English feature film to win the Best Film Oscar at the 92nd Academy awards.
- Joaquin Phoenix won Best Actor for playing a failing clown who finds fame through violence in the dark comic-book tale Joker.
- Renee Zellweger was named Best Actress for her performance as an ageing Judy Garland in the musical biopic Judy.
- American Factory, a documentary produced by Barack and Michelle Obama for Netflix about a manufacturing plant in the U.S. Midwest reopened by a

Chinese billionaire, won the Oscar for best documentary.

India's Lalremsiami Bags "2019 Women's FIH Rising Star of The Year" Award

- Indian women's hockey team striker Lalremsiami has been adjudged the FIH Rising Star of the Year 2019. Lalremsiami, who made her international debut in 2018, was part of the team's success at the Hockey Series Finals Hiroshima 2019.
- She also played a key role in the team's performance at the Olympic Qualifiers in November last year where they edged out USA to earn their ticket to 2020 Tokyo Olympics. She was also part of the team that won the Olympic Test Event in Tokyo.

BioAsia 2020 announces Genome Valley Excellence Award

- American immunologist and oncologist Dr. Carl H June and Novartis CEO Dr. Vasant Narsimhan will be presented the Genome Valley Excellence Award of BioAsia 2020.
- The function will be organized by the Telangana government annual global biotechnology & life sciences forum on February (17 to 19, 2020).

NLCIL won WIPS "Best Enterprise Award"

- NLCIL has been presented with second 'Best Enterprise Award' in the Navratna category for the year 2019, instituted by the Forum of Women in Public Sector (WIPS) in recognition of its commendable

work done for the empowerment of women employees in the organization and for the welfare of women & children in the villages around Neyveli.

- The award, instituted by the Central APEX Forum of WIPS, functioning under the aegis of SCOPE is being presented annually to select PSUs in recognition of the commendable efforts made to harness the growth and development of women in PSUs.

1.10 Appointments – Who is who?

Jayachandran is acting chairperson of SHRC

- Retired district judge D.Jayachandran, one of the two members of State Human Rights Commission (SHRC) took over as the Commission's acting chairperson.
- The functioning of the Commission was being hampered by the delay in appointing a chairperson after Justice T.Meenakumari left the post.

Rishi Sunak appointed Britains' Finance Minister

- British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has appointed Rishi Sunak as his new Finance Minister.
- Mr. Sunak, 39, who previously served as Chief Secretary to the Treasury, the second in command to the Finance Minister, succeeds Pakistan-born Sajid Javid, who has resigned.

1.11 Cultural Panorama

Nagoba Jatra festival celebrated in Telangana

- Nagoba Jatra tribal festival was celebrated in the state of Telangana. The festival is prominently celebrated in Keslapur village, Indervelly Mandal, Adilabad district of Telangana. It is also the 2nd biggest tribal carnival and is celebrated by Mesaram clan of Gond tribes for nearly a month.

Key Points:

- The event concluded with a ceremony called 'bheting', which new brides entered into a family were incorporated into the clan.

Mumbai's Iconic 'Kala Ghoda Arts Festival' Begins from 1st Feb

- The 21st edition of the 9-day Kala Ghoda Arts Festival (KGAF) 2020, one of the biggest open street arts and cultural festival of India, has begun in Mumbai from 1st February 2020.
- The theme for 2020 KGAF is "PAST FORWARD."

World Peace Music Festival 2020

- The 10th edition of our World Peace Music Festival Sur Jahan will be held at Mohar Kunj, Kolkata on 31 Jan to 2 Feb, 2020.

1st Hornbill festival was celebrated in Tripura on Feb 8, 2020

- The Hornbill festival was celebrated in Tripura, Agartala. Chief Minister (CM) Biplab Kumar Dev inaugurated the 2 day hornbill festival at Baramura hill (in

western tripura).

- The festival was celebrated for the 1st time in Tripura.
- Aim: The aim of the festival is to raise awareness among people for bird conservation & to boost tourism.

1.12 Latest Historical events

A princess' Christmas gift, now a collector's item

- Antiquarian finds brass box Mary sent to sailors in 1914.
- The brass box sent by Princess Mary in 1914 with the words 'Imperium Britannicum' inscribed at the top along with a sword and a scabbard on either side.
- The box was sent out with a packet of tobacco and cigarettes, a portrait photograph of Princess Mary and Christmas cards from Princess Mary and King George and Queen Mary.

Stone inscription found near Madurai confirms co-rule by Pandiya brothers

- A stone inscription discovered in a village on the Madurai - Virudhunagar border confirms the theory that the Pandiya dynasty was once ruled simultaneously by two brothers, Jatavarman Kulasekara Pandiya and Maravarman Sundarapandiya Santhalingam.
- The Tamil script found on the stone says, "Sri Anna mennu nadai", similar to the verse found in a stone inscription at Ponamaravathi in Pudukottai district, dating to Maravarman Sundarapandiyan 1 (1216-1238).



2.1 Latest Court Verdicts

Supreme Court directs states to set up Gram Nyayalayas

- The Supreme Court of India directed the states to establish “Gram Nyayalayas” within four weeks’ time span. The apex court has directed the corresponding state high courts to expedite the process of consultation with the state governments.

Highlights

- The Gram Nyayalayas act, 2008 was passed to provide establishment of Gram Nyayalayas at the grass root level. The main objective of the judicial body is to provide inexpensive justice in rural areas.
- The current scenario of the states with respect to the Gram Nyayalayas were submitted by the SC Advocate Prashant Bhushan.

28 special courts to clear POCSO cases in Kerala

- Exclusive courts for clearing the pendency of cases booked under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act in two years will start functioning in Kerala before March.
- As many as 28 such courts will be made operational across the State before the

end of the fiscal. It is estimated that nearly 7,000 POCSO cases are pending.

- Thiruvananthapuram will have four courts, the maximum number among all districts. It has been decided to set up one court for every 165 pending cases. All courts will be headed by District and Sessions Judges. It is estimated that each court would require ₹75 lakh. While the Centre will meet 60% of the expenses, the State will have to chip in 40%.

Cases of sexual harassment at workplace: SC rejects plea

- The Supreme Court has refused to entertain an appeal seeking protection for complainants and witnesses in sexual harassment-at-workplace cases from victimisation or retaliation by accused persons or organisations involved.
- A Bench of Justices R. Banumathi and A.S. Bopanna disposed of the special leave petition filed by Sunita Thawani highlighting the issue that the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act of 2013 does not have any provision mandating protection for victims and witnesses in workplace sexual abuse cases.

Reservation in promotion is not a fundamental right, rules Supreme Court

- Under Article 16, the state can make reservations in matters of appointment and promotion in favor of the SCs and STs if they are not adequately represented in the services of the state.
- The Supreme Court has ruled that reservation in promotion is not a fundamental right and the states cannot be compelled to make laws in this regard for Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST).
- In an order passed, justice L Nageswara Rao said that Article 16 (4) and 16 (4-A) do not confer fundamental right to claim reservations in promotion.
- Article 16 (4) and 16 (4-A) are in the nature of enabling provisions, vesting a discretion on the State Government to consider providing reservations, if the circumstances so warrant.
- The judgement says that it is settled law that the state cannot be directed to give reservations for appointment in public posts. The order further adds that the state is not bound to make a reservation for SCs and STs in matters of promotions. However, if the state wishes to exercise its discretion and make such provision, it has to collect quantifiable data showing 'inadequacy of representation of that class in public services.
- The decision of the state government to provide reservations in promotion is challenged then the state concerned

will have to place before the court the quantifiable data that reservations became necessary on account of inadequacy of representation of SCs and STs without affecting general efficiency of administration as mandated by Article 335.

- Under Article 16, the state can make reservations in matters of appointment and promotion in favour of the SCs and STs if they are not adequately represented in the services of the state. However, it is for the states to decide whether reservations are required in the matter of appointment and promotions to public posts.

Supreme court upholds changes to SC/ST atrocities law

- The Supreme Court upheld a 2018 amendment which barred persons accused of committing atrocities against those belonging to the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes from getting anticipatory bail.
- The Bench, Justices Arun Mishra and Vineet Saran, held in their joint opinion that a High Court would also have an "inherent power" to grant anticipatory bail in cases in which prima facie an offence under the anti-atrocities law is not made out.

Strengthening the law

- The SC, in Dr. Subhash Kashinath Mahajan vs State of Maharashtra, held on March 20, 2018: No absolute bar against grant of anticipatory bail under the anti-atrocities

law if no prima facie case is made out or if judicial scrutiny reveals the complaint to be prima facie mala fide.

- Parliament introduces an amendment in 2018. Inserts Section 18A in the original scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act of 1989. Section 18A re-affirms the original legislative intention that Section 438 CrPC (pre-arrest bail) is not applicable to accused booked under the atrocities law.
- February 10, 2020 Judgement in Prathvi Raj Chouhan case: Justices Arun Mishra and Vineet Saran uphold Section 18A. However, the judges add that the High Courts will have an "inherent power" to grant anticipatory bail in cases in which prima facie an offence under the 1989 law is not made out.

2.2 Political parties and Political system in India

First Trial of Facial Tech in polls in Telangana

- A Pilot to test the use of facial recognition software in elections for the first time in India has met with roughly 65 to 86 per cent success rate. The Telangana government had tested the software during municipal elections held.

Dual citizenship not permitted under Constitution, says Centre

- The Central government made it clear in Parliament that dual citizenship "is not permitted" under the Constitution and the Citizenship Act, 1955.
- This assumes relevance in the context of the request made by Governor of Tamil Nadu, in his address to the Assembly, for the granting of dual citizenship to Sri Lankan refugees living in Tamil Nadu.
- The Tamil Nadu government also informed that under the 1964 Sirimavo-Shastri Agreement and the 1974 Sirimavo-Indira Gandhi Agreement, 6 lakh Indian Origin Tamils (IOT) along with natural increase would be given Indian citizenship, while Sri Lanka would absorb 3.75 lakh persons.

2.3 Govt – Welfare oriented Govt schemes, their utility

Under PMAY-G, Centre aims to achieve objective of housing for all by 2022

- The Central Government has aimed to achieve objective of Housing for all by 2022 (which coincides with 75 years of Indian independence) under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Grameen (PMAY-G) scheme.



Key Points:

- For the past 5 years, more than one crore 50 lakh rural houses have been sanctioned & completed by the government.
- Under the 2nd phase of the scheme, the eligible people will get one crore 95 lakh houses. Government has set a target of 60 lakh houses for the current financial year- FY 20.

100 airports to be developed by 2025 for UDAN Scheme

- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced 100 more airports will be developed by 2025 to support the UDAN Scheme, aimed at better regional connectivity.
- Ms. Sitharaman announced ₹1.7 lakh crore had been provided for transport infrastructure in 2020-21.

- 150 trains would run under the public private partnership (PPP) mode. Four stations would be redeveloped with the help of the private sector.

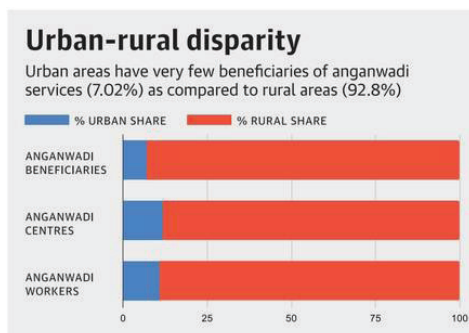
Madhya Pradesh bags first position for implementation of PMMVY

- Madhya Pradesh bags the first position for the implementation of Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana. Union Minister of Women and Child Development Smriti Irani will present this award to Madhya Pradesh at a function in New Delhi. Indore district bagged the first place for better performance of the scheme.

Pradhan Mantri Matritva Vandana Yojana

- Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana is a maternity benefit program run by the government of India. It was introduced in 2016. It is a conditional cash transfer scheme for pregnant and lactating women of 19 years.

7 in 100 anganwadi beneficiaries in cities



- For every 100 anganwadi beneficiaries in the country, only seven are in urban areas, according to the government's

response to a Right to Information (RTI).

- This is primarily because of a severe lack of anganwadis in cities, leading to poor coverage of the government's flagship programme in early childhood development.
- Anganwadis or day-care centres are set up under the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) by the Women and Child Development Ministry to provide a package of six services. The services include supplementary nutrition; pre-school non-formal education; immunisation, nutrition and health education; as well as referral services. The aim of the scheme is to reduce infant mortality and child malnutrition. Beneficiaries include children in the age group of six months to six years, and pregnant women and lactating mothers.
- As per Census 2011, 32% of India's 1.2 billion population live in cities.
- With these facts before it, the NITI Aayog has prepared a draft working paper to strengthen the ICDS programme in urban areas.

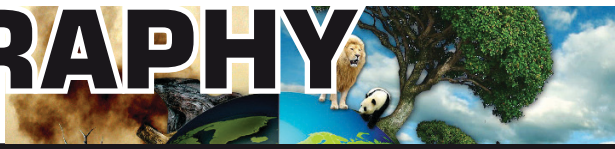
MSME implemented new scheme SFURTI to set up traditional industries clusters

- The Ministry of Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) implemented a new scheme named "Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries"(SFURTI). Under this scheme, financial support will be given to set up traditional industries clusters viz. Khadi, Coir & Village industries clusters.

SFRUTI objectives:

- Traditional industries to be set up in India in a period of 5 years and make the industries more profitable.
- Launch year: The scheme was first launched in 2005 to boost cluster development by MSME.
- Objective: The main objective of SFURTI is to make sustainable development, employment and strengthen governance systems for traditional rural industries. service.

3. GEOGRAPHY



3.1 Policy on Environment and Ecology

Matla Abhiyan: Coastal Security Exercise conducted by Indian Navy

- The Indian Navy recently launched a unique coastal security exercise in Kolkata. The exercise was conducted to create awareness about the coastal security to the local community.

Most cities in India turning into "urban heat islands": Study

- Team of researchers from IIT Kharagpur has found that most cities in the country are turning into "urban heat islands" in all seasons during day and night.
- Researchers from Centre for Oceans, Rivers, Atmosphere and Land Sciences (CORAL) of IIT-KGP and its Architecture and Regional Planning department showed that most big cities in the country with population more than one million have recorded rise in mercury level during daytime while showing an increasing trend in the night hours.



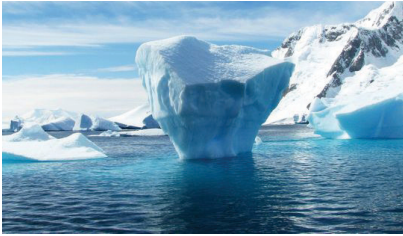
Disaster Management Exercise of BIMSTEC NDRF begins in Bhubaneswar

- The National Disaster Response Force of Government of India is to host the second BIMSTEC Disaster Management Exercise-2020 (BIMSTEC DMEx-2020). The exercise is to be held in Bhubaneswar, Odisha between February 11, 2020 and February 13, 2020.
- The main objective of the exercise is to test the existing emergency procedures, disaster problems, during flood, earthquake and storms.
- Theme: A Cultural Heritage Site that suffers severe damage in the Earthquake and Flooding or Storm.

Keeping count of the avian population

- For four days in February every year, birdwatchers from across the world participate in The Great Backyard Bird Count. This year, the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) will be held from February 14 to 17 in India, and will be coordinated by the Bird Count India collective.
- India has been participating in this global bird count since 2013 and this annual exercise helps study how birds are distributed across the country, how they are affected by changes in habitat and weather and if there have been changes in population and distribution.

Antarctica recorded the hottest temperature of 20.75 degrees Celsius



- The World Meteorological Organization announced that for the first time in record Antarctica has recorded its hottest temperature ever, 20.75 Degree Celsius. So far, the highest was 18.3 Degrees Celsius that was recorded in January 1982.

Scientists radio-tag Indian pangolin

- For the first time, scientists have radio-tagged the Indian pangolin, an endangered animal that is rarely sighted in forests. The Indian pangolin, which dons a thick scaly skin, is hunted for meat and used in traditional Chinese medicine.
- Radio-tagging involves attaching a transmitter to an animal to monitor its movement. Pangolins are among the most trafficked wildlife species in the world. The projected population declines range from 50% to 80% across the genus.
- Out of the eight species of pangolin, the Indian and the Chinese pangolins are found in India. Both these species are listed under Schedule I Part I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.





4. ECONOMICS

4.1 New Economic Policy & Govt. Sector

ICICI Bank launches first-of-its-kind 24×7 self-service delivery facility, 'iBox'

- ICICI (Industrial Credit and Investment Corporation of India) Bank, an Indian financial institution, has launched first-of-its-kind 24×7 self-service delivery tool for customers called "iBox" at one of its branches in Mumbai, Maharashtra. The bank has started it in over 50 branches in 17 cities.

Coronavirus declared as a global health emergency by WHO

- The World Health Organisation (WHO) has declared novel Coronavirus (nCoV) as a global health emergency. This announcement was made as the outbreak which was more prominent in China has now continued to spread to other countries too.

States' tax share to stay at 42%

- The Fifteenth Finance Commission, in its interim report tabled in Parliament has recommended maintaining States' share in the divisible pool of tax collections at virtually the same level of 42% set by its predecessor, for 2020-21.

- To factor in the changed status of the erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir, the rate at which funds may be shared with the States has been reset to 41%.

Nirmala Sitharaman quoted Thiruvalluvar and Avvaiyar in Budget 2020

- The Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman flexed her literary muscle in abundance - particularly when she quoted the legendary Tamil poets Thiruvalluvar and Avvaiyar. While she recited the Thirukkural to explain the '5 Jewels of a good country' to justify how India possesses it all, she quoted a line from the Aathichoodi while presenting her action plan for Indian farmers.
- "I fall back on the wise words of Thiruvalluvar. We've heard of several words of wisdom from the legendary poet. He has spoken about what a good country is and what makes up for the jewels of a good country.
- "There are five jewels for a good country. A good country must be free from epidemics, it must be wealthy, it should grow crops, people there must be happy and security and safety of the country must be a top priority,".

- Sitharaman quoted the line, “Bhoomi thiruthi un,” which literally translates to “Cultivate the land and feed.” In Tamil Nadu, there was a very wise old woman saint-poet who lived more than 3,000 years ago.

New Income Tax Slabs

Total Income (Rs.)	Simplified, optional tax rate
Up to Rs. 2.5 Lakh	Nil
Rs. 2,50,001 to 5,00,000	5%
Rs. 5,00,001 to 7,50,000	10%
Rs. 7,50,001 to 10,00,000	15%
Rs. 10,00,001 to 12,50,000	20%
Rs. 12,50,001 to 15,00,000	25%
Above Rs. 15,00,000	30%

Nirmala Sitharaman delivers longest Budget speech

- A Kashmiri verse, quotes from Tamil poets and references to Saraswati-Sindhu civilisation dotted Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's 160-minute long marathon Budget speech.
- The longest Union Budget speech ever, some of her remarks, including regarding 'Beti Bachao, Beti Pado' program, were met with protests from the Opposition benches.
- Her first Budget speech, in July 2019, went on for around 137 minutes.

Agriculture Highlights:

- Kisan Rail and Krishi Udan: The initiatives have been launched to facilitate smooth and fast transport of perishable goods to assist the farmers.

- Solar Pumps: The Government will also help 20 lakh farmers to set up standalone solar pumps.

Education Highlights:

- Funds: The Government has announced allocation of Rs. 99,000 crores for the education sector.
- New Universities: The government will be setting up National Police University and National Forensic University.
- IND-SAT test: The government has also proposed to set up IND-SAT test for foreign students wishing to pursue higher education in India.

Tourism Highlights:

- Five archaeological sites will be developed as iconic sites with on-site museums in 5 different states.
- The sites include – Rakhigarhi in Haryana, Hastinapur in UP, Shivasagar in Assam, Dholavira in Gujarat and Adichanallur in Tamil Nadu.

MSME & Corporate Sector

- The budget proposes a new scheme for MSMEs in the context of subordinate debt.
- The debt recast window of MSME is extended by one year to March 31, 2021.
- Certain categories of government securities will now be opened for Non-Resident Investors.
- The FPI Limit in Corporate bond has increased to 15%

Indian Railways

- Electrification of around 27000 km of railway lines achieved within 100 days of Modi Government formation in 2019.
- A large solar power capacity proposed

for the Indian Railways. It will be built along the rail track on the Railways owned lands.

- Bengaluru Suburban Rail Project proposed; budget allocates Rs 18,600 crore for this project.
- By 2024, the Government would monetize 12 lots of national highways.
- With the help of UDAN scheme, 100 airports will be built by 2024.
- The fleet of Aircraft will be increased to 1200 planes by 2024.
- Rs 1.7 lakh crore allocated for transport infrastructure.

Energy Sector

- Prepaid Smart Meters: States will have to replace existing energy meters with the prepaid smart meters.
- Budget allocates Rs 22,000 crore for the Power and Renewable Energy Sector.
- The national gas grid will be expanded from 16200 km to 27000 km.
- A new policy will be launched for the construction of data centre parks by the private sector.
- Bharat Net to link 1 lakh gram panchayats through Fibre to Home connections.
- Budget allocates Rs 6000 crore for the Bharat Net programme.
- It provides Rs.8,000 crore in the next 5 years for "National Mission on Quantum Technology and Applications".

Women Empowerment

- 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao': Enrollment of girls in schools is higher than the boys.
- Rs. 35,600 crores will be provided for nutrition-related programmes.
- Task Force will be constituted to look into the issue of girls of low age entering

motherhood.

- It allocates Rs. 85,000 crores for development of SCs and OBCs.
- It allocates Rs. 53,700 crores for STs development.
- It allocates Rs. 9,000 crores for Senior citizens and persons with disabilities.

Art & Culture

- The government will constitute "Indian Institute of Heritage and Conservation" as a deemed university.
- 5 archaeological sites to be developed as top-notch sites; these sites are: Rakhigarhi - Haryana, Hastinapur - Uttar Pradesh, Sivasagar - Assam, Dholavira - Gujarat, Adichanallur - Tamil Nadu.
- The government will build a Tribal Museum in Ranchi.
- The budget allocates Rs. 3150 crores for the Ministry of Culture.

Climate

- The Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure will be implemented from January 2021.
- It allocates Rs. 4,400 crores to promote clean air in cities with a population of over 1 million people.

Money earned in India by NRIs will be taxed

- Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman provisions introduced in the Budget would bring Indian workers' income in zero tax jurisdictions, like the UAE, into the Indian tax net.
- The Finance Bill has proposed three major changes to prevent tax abuse by citizens that don't pay taxes anywhere in the world reducing the number of days

that an Indian citizen can be granted non-resident status for tax purposes from 182 to 120; citizens who don't pay taxes anywhere will be deemed to be a resident; and the definition of 'not ordinarily resident' has been tightened.

- "The new provision is being interpreted to create an impression that those Indians who are bonafide workers in other countries, including in Middle East, and who are not liable to tax in these countries, will be taxed in India on the income that they have earned there.

Vivad se Vishwas' scheme offers to reduce tax litigations

- FM Nirmala Sitharaman announced a new scheme, "Vivad se Vishwas" (no dispute but trust) to resolve 4.83 lakh direct tax disputes pending in various tribunals.
- The scheme offers waivers off penalty and interest if the disputed amount is paid before March 31, 2020. The scheme aims to benefit those whose tax demands are locked in dispute in multiple forums.
- CBDT has already started building a database for the said announcement.

I-T dept launches e-calculator to compare due tax under new, old regime

- The Income-Tax Department has launched an e-calculator for individuals to estimate their tax liability if they opt for the new tax slabs, without claiming deductions and exemptions, for ITR filing as announced in the recent Budget.
- The calculator, with a comparative table to compare taxes in the old and the new tax regime, for resident individuals

(financial year 2020-21) has been hosted on the official e-filing website of the department.

Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train project: Govt allots ₹5,600 crore

- The Union government has allotted ₹5,600 crore for the Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train project for fiscal 2020-21. Prime Minister Narendra Modi wants to complete the 'dream project' by 2022, to mark the 75th year of Independence.

Ministry of Corporate Affairs to launch Spice plus form

- The Ministry of Corporate Affairs is set to launch the new company incorporation form "Spice+". This is a part of a comprehensive package to make life easier for someone starting a business. It will be launched on 15 February 2020.

Spice+ form:

- The form has at least five new formalities including Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO), Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) and professional tax registration, the opening of bank account and GST registration.

SBI Green Marathon Chennai

- SBI Green Marathon Chennai is part of the Eventjini Chennai Running Festival powered by Asics. On registration, stand a chance to win an exclusive running kit from Asics. There are in total 10 running kits to be won.
- SBI Green Marathon in Chennai is set to be the biggest single branded marathon property in India. It is about celebrating the passion for environmental

sustainability and better living for our future generations.

Govt plans to sell 5% stake in SAIL via offer for sale, may rake in ₹1,000 crore

- The government is planning to sell 5% stake in Steel Authority of India Ltd (SAIL) through an offer for sale, which could fetch about ₹1,000 crore to the exchequer. The Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) and steel ministry are planning roadshows in Singapore and Hong Kong for SAIL stake sale.

CRR exemption for retail MSME loans for 5 years

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has exempted banks from maintaining cash reserve ratio (CRR) for loans to retail and micro, small and medium enterprises for five years, if these loans are extended between January 31 and July 31, 2020.

Union Ministry of Finance has notified 'Printing of One Rupee Currency Notes Rules, 2020'

- The Union Ministry of Finance has notified 'Printing of One Rupee Currency Notes Rules, 2020' which will feature bilingual signature of Shri Atanu Chakraborty, Secretary, Ministry of Finance.
- Features of One Rupee Note as per 'Printing of One Rupee Currency Notes Rules, 2020'
- It shall be rectangular 9.7 x 6.3 cms, with its paper made of 100% (cotton) rag content.

- The note will be 110 microns thick, weighing 90 GSM (Grams per Square Meter).
- The pink green colour note will have a design of grains, which depicts the "agricultural dominance of the country".
- The design surrounding will be of the Sagar Samrat, which is an oil exploration rig.

Facts about Re 1 note

- The one-rupee note was introduced by the British on November 30, 1917 when currency notes in India were introduced in 1861.
- In 1949, Government of India brought out the new design Re 1 note. The King's portrait of the note was replaced by the Lion Capital at Sarnath.

4.1 Current Socio-Economic Problems

Unemployment rate in India was 6.1% in 2017-18 as per new PLFS

- As per the new Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) being conducted by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MosPI), the labour force participation is 36.9 % and the rate of unemployment for 2017-18 is 6.1%. The government is conducting a new PLFS with new parameters and bigger sample size, and its results cannot be compared with previous surveys. It's an attempt to provide authentic data.

5. SCIENCE



5.1 Latest Inventions on Science & Technology

In a first IAF'S AN-32 aircraft landed at Leh with indigenous bio-jet fuel

- Indian Air Force's (IAF) successfully operated AN-32 aircraft powered with 10% blend of Indian bio-jet fuel. This is the 1st time both engines of the aircraft were powered by bio-jet indigenous fuel where the aircraft took-off from Kushok Bakula Rimpochee Airport, Leh. Before undertaking operational flight to Leh, the flight was tested along with performance validation at Chandigarh Air Base.

NASA decommissioned its Spitzer Space Telescope after 16 years

- The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has decommissioned its Spitzer Space Telescope. The telescope which was used to study the universe by detecting cosmic infrared radiation for more than 16 years was first launched in 2003.

Key points:

- Spitzer was planned to be decommissioned in 2018 in anticipation of the launch of the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST), but as JWST launch mission was postponed spitzer was given 5th and final extension till 2020.

India's biggest rural technical festival Antahpragnya 2020

- M Prashanthi, District Collector of Nirmal, inaugurated National Level India's Biggest Rural Technical Festival titled 'Antahpragnya 2020' in the state of Telangana at Rajiv Gandhi University of Knowledge Technologies-Basar (RGUKT-Basar), the temple city, 180 km from Hyderabad, the state capital of Telangana.
- The three-day technical fest from January 31 to February 2 with the theme 'Spot and encourage rural tech innovators' will have over 200 events viz.

IHME Report: 14% of India's under-five aged deaths were due to pneumonia

- According to a recent report by the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME), 14% of under 5 years of age deaths in India occurred mainly due to pneumonia. This accounted for approximately 1,27,000 deaths annually where the figure was around 1,78,000 in 2013.

Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) report:

- The report has been released prior to the 1st-ever global forum on childhood pneumonia in Barcelona from January 29 to 31.
- 50% of the under-5 deaths caused by pneumonia were from the northern belt of India.
- Pneumonia mortality rate: The current pneumonia mortality rate is 5 per 1,000 live births. The target has been set to reduce the mortality rate to less than 3 by 2025.
- Death rate in general: 9 million children are estimated to die in a decade if proper action is not taken to combat pneumonia.

IIT-H finds molecule to cure rare ALS neurodegenerative disease

- Researchers from IIT-H, Telangana (Indian Institute of Technology-Hyderabad) had found a molecule called "AIM-4" that can help in the treatment of rare neurodegenerative disease called "Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis" (ALS) known as "Lou Gehrig's disease".

Key Points:

- About ALS: ALS is a neurodegenerative disorder that severely affects voluntary movement of muscles & leads to paralysis and death. ALS occurs due to changes in specific genes & caused by factors such as smoking, exposure to toxins, metals and pesticides.
- About AIM-4: AIM-4 prevents liquid-liquid phase separation of proteins & also deposition of protein on neurons.

Astronomers discover monster galaxy XMM-2599 from early universe

- The International team of astronomers led by scientists at the University of California, United States (US) have discovered a monster galaxy dubbed as XMM-2599.
- This galaxy existed around 12 billion years ago just 1.8 billion years after the formation of the universe. The details of this discovery has been published in the Astrophysical Journal.

Four Indian pilots begin astronaut training in Russia

- The four Indian pilots chosen as candidate-astronauts began their 12-month training at the Gagarin Research and Test Cosmonaut Training Centre (GCTC) in Moscow, Russian space business company Glavkosmos has announced.
- The full programme includes basic or generic astronaut training followed by activities specific to the first Indian human space mission, Gaganyaan.

Coronavirus poses 'very grave' threat to the world, says WHO

- The coronavirus outbreak in China may be over by April, but deaths surpassed 1,000 and the World Health Organization (WHO) warned of a global threat potentially worse than terrorism.

Renamed COVID-19

- With 99% of cases in China, this remains very much an emergency for that country, but one that holds a very grave threat for the rest of the world he said.

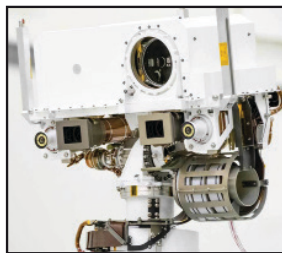
- “co” stands for “corona”, “vi” for “virus” and “d” for “disease”, while “19” was for the year, as the outbreak was first identified on December 31, 2019.

WHO to decide on emergency status of Ebola in DR Congo

- UN health agency experts to decide whether the Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo should still be considered a global health emergency, following a sharp decline in reported cases.
- The World Health Organization last July declared it a “public health emergency of international concern” a designation that gives the WHO greater powers to restrict travel and boost funding.
- The outbreak was first identified in August 2018 and has since killed more than 2,300 people in eastern DR Congo.

NASA's 'SuperCam' to study mineralogy of Mars during Mars 2020 rover mission

- NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) is all set to send a new laser-toting robot named 'SuperCam' to Mars for studying mineralogy and chemistry from up to about 20 feet (7 meters) away, to help scientists in finding the signs of fossilized microbial life on the Red Planet i.e. Mars.
- SuperCam, a rock-vaporizing instrument



is a part of seven instruments aboard the Mars 2020 rover.

About Mars 2020 rover mission:

- It is part of NASA's Mars Exploration Program which will be launched between July 17 - Aug. 5, 2020 from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, Florida.

5.2 Latest Discoveries in Health Science

World's First Transcatheter Mitral Valve Approved in Europe

- The Abbott Tendyne Transcatheter Mitral Valve Implantation (TMVI) system received the European CE mark. It is the first transcatheter mitral valve replacement (TMVR) technology in the world.

Aim:

- The main aim is to make critical need to eliminate mitral regurgitation when surgery or mitral repair is not an option in high-risk surgical patients.

Abbott:

- Abbott is developing a transcatheter

mitral valve to open-heart surgery. Building upon its success with the Mitra Clip device and many years of mitral valve experience and clinical evidence.

West Bengal growing arsenic-resistant rice

- Researchers have developed and commercialized a rice variety that is resistant to arsenic. Several studies have shown that arsenic from groundwater and the soil can enter the food chain through paddy.
- West Bengal is among the States with the highest concentration of arsenic in groundwater, with as many as 83 blocks across seven districts having higher arsenic levels than permissible limits.
- The new rice variety, Mukdoshri — also called IET 21845 —, was developed jointly by the Rice Research Station at Chinsurah coming under West Bengal's Agriculture Department and the National Botanical Research Institute, Lucknow, over several years.

5.2 Mass Media & Communication

Mobile app to deal with traffic violations

- Tenkasi district police to introduce new cell phone processor for first time in Tamil Nadu to take action against traffic violators.
- Tenkasi district traffic police has been created for the first time in the state of Tamil Nadu for Tenkasi district traffic police. The processor has a photo, 10 seconds video capture and GPRS feature. Violators can prove with video or video evidence of where, at what time, and at what time.

6. NATIONAL – DIARY OF EVENT



12th South Asia Conference held in New Delhi

- Defence Minister Shri Rajnath Singh addressed the 12th edition of the South Asia Conference at the Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis (IDSA) in New Delhi.
- The conference deals with issues related to economic cooperation for development, changing political context in India's neighborhood etc.
- The theme of the conference was India's "Neighborhood First" Policy: Regional Perceptions.

Honk More, Wait More

- Mumbai Traffic Police has quietly come up with a unique initiative to discipline the city's perpetual honkers, who love to blare the horns of their vehicles even when the traffic signal is red.
- Honking is not only a bad habit, but also an act of traffic indiscipline besides being a major health and pollution hazard. In Mumbai, 149 and 460 honkers were booked in 2018 and 2019 respectively for honking offences.

Hubballi-Dharwad BRTS inauguration

- The Hubballi-Dharwad Bus Rapid Corridor System (HD-BRTS) will be

formally inaugurated by Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu.

- The dedicated bus corridor, which is already ferrying close to 1 lakh commuters daily, was conceptualised and sanctioned in 2012.
- The World Bank has released 33% [₹324.32 crore] of the total project cost of ₹ 970.87 crore, the remaining was funded by the State government.
- At present 100 air-conditioned 'Chigari' buses are plying on the BRTS and the procurement of an additional 55 electric buses is under way.

Most missing women from Maharashtra, M.P.

- The highest number of women and children who go missing in the country are from Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh respectively, according to a study by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB).
- The two States recorded the highest number of cases of missing children and women among all other States in the years 2016, 2017 and 2018.
- The NCRB study was based on the annual Crime in India Report compiled by the agency for the years 2016, 2017 and 2018.

Odisha launches virtual police station

- Odisha government has recently launched a virtual police station to provide more ease to its citizens. People can lodge complaints about vehicle theft without visiting a Police Station.
- This virtual police station (e-police station) will operate under the State Crime Records Bureau in Bhubaneswar, the capital of Odisha.

ALL is world's third-largest busmaker

- Ashok Leyland Ltd., the flagship of the Hinduja Group, has been ranked as the number three globally in the medium and heavy commercial vehicle (M&HCV) busmaker segment for the calendar year 2019.
- The ranking is based on reports released by SIAM (Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers), OICA (Organisation Internationale des Constructeurs d'Automobiles) and IHS Markit, it added.

DST launches SATHI initiative to address need for building strong science & technology infrastructure

- DST (Department of Science and Technology) that works under the Ministry of Science and Technology, has launched a special scheme called "Sophisticated Analytical & Technical Help Institutes (SATHI)" with the aim to create shared, professionally managed and strong Science and Technology infrastructure in India.

Key Points:

- The SATHI scheme will enable academia, start-ups, manufacturing, industry and

R&D labs to offer high-end analytical testing. This will help to avoid duplication, reduce the dependency on foreign sources & also foster a strong culture of collaboration between institutions.

- In addition to SATHI, the government also provides Rs. 500 crores to 100 top-performing departments in universities and IITs, etc for their research facilities in the field of manufacturing, waste processing, clean energy and water, and Start-up India, etc.

AP Govt made history with 'Intivadhakey Pension' scheme by covering 94 % within few days

- The Andhra Pradesh (AP) state Government led by its Chief Minister(CM) Yeduguri Sandinti Jaganmohan Reddy, has created a record with its 'Intivadhakey Pension' (Pension to your Doorstep) Scheme by covering 94 % of about 60 lakh pensioners at their doorstep within a few days. The scheme was launched in 13 districts on February 1, 2020.
- AP is the 1st state in India to take up such an initiative of Door delivery of pension.

Karnataka launches Janasevaka scheme

- Janasevaka scheme will bring important government services closer to the citizens by enabling doorstep delivery of key documents including ration card, marriage registration certificate and health card. The scheme will employ volunteers as Jan Sevaks who will

deliver the services to the doorstep of the beneficiaries.

Udyanotsav inaugurated by the President at Rashtrapati Bhavan

- President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated Udyanotsav at Rashtrapati Bhavan. The Mughal Gardens will be opened to the public between February 5, 2020 and March 8, 2020.

Highlights

- The main highlights of the Udyanotsav of 2020 are Exotic flowers, tulips and bulbous flowers. Online booking to visit the gardens has been availed for the citizens in the website of Rashtrapati Bhavan.

Country's biggest horticultural fair begins



- The four-day mega event 'National Horticultural Fair 2020' at ICAR-Indian Institute of Horticultural Research kick-started in Bengaluru.
- As 'Making farming an enterprise' is the theme of this year's fair, special focus has been given to showcasing technologies, crop varieties and management practices that can turn farming into a sustainable as well as a profitable venture.

PM Modi announced 15-member trust named 'Sri Ram Janma Bhoomi Tirtha Kshetra trust' for Ayodhya temple

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced in Parliament about the formation of a trust to oversee the construction of a Ram Temple in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh. In this regard, 67.703 acres of land near the temple area has been allocated to the trust.

Key Points:

- This 15 member's trust will also include a Dalit representative who would be in-charge of the entire land.

8th Asia Pacific Gastroesophageal cancer congress

- The 8th Asia Pacific Gastroesophageal Cancer Congress got under way with 24 procedures being performed by experts from across the globe.
- The three day event is being hosted for the first time in India. EsoIndia Congress 2020 and the APGCC 2020 are being held jointly at the Sri Ramachandra Institute for Higher Education and Research.
- A total of 14 experts from other countries are participating in the event while one of them could not make it due to the quarantining of persons from China due to Coronavirus infection.

Uttarakhand's iconic Lakshman Jhula to be replaced by India's first Glass floor bridge

- Uttarakhand government has cleared the design of a glass floor suspension bridge, the first of its kind in the country, to be built across Ganga River in Rishikesh,

Uttarakhand as a replacement to iconic Lakshman Jhula which was closed in 2019 due to safety reasons. It has been in place for 94 years. The glass floor suspension bridge design is prepared by Public Works Department (PWD).

Jammu & Kashmir admin renames PHE & IFC department as 'Jal Shakti Dept'

- The Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) administration renamed Public Health Engineering and Irrigation and Flood Control Department (PHE & IFC) as the 'Jal Shakti Department'.
- The Administrative Council meeting was met under the Chairmanship of Girish Chandra Murmu, Lieutenant Governor of J&K, sanctioned the implementation of the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) to achieve 100% coverage of piped water supply by December 2021.

22nd edition of India International Seafood Show (IISS) 2020 commenced in Kochi, Kerala

- A 3-day long 22nd edition of India International Seafood Show (IISS), 2020 based on the theme "Blue Revolution-Beyond Production to Value Addition" has commenced at Hotel Grand Hyatt in Kochi, Kerala. The show is being organized jointly by the Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) under Ministry of Commerce and Industry & the Seafood Exporters Association of India (SEAI).

National Tribal Youth Exchange

Programme

- The 12th National Tribal Youth Exchange Programme was inaugurated in Puducherry under which tribal youths will be visiting many places to know about the language, customs, culture, arts, dressing patterns, food pattern and other aspects of Puducherry.

Yediyurappa inaugurates Bidar airport

- Karnataka Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa gave wings to the long-standing dream of the people of Bidar by dedicating the airport to the nation at a programme
- Arriving in a special 72-seater aircraft from Bengaluru along with Lok Sabha member for Bidar Bhagwant Khuba and other people's representatives.

For the first time in MP, drones are used for mapping villages

- The Madhya Pradesh (MP) government, for the first time, will use drones for mapping villages. This will replace the land survey work, done either manually or with the help of satellite images. In this regard, state revenue department inked an agreement with Survey of India, the country's national mapping agency under the Ministry of Science and Technology.
- 55 thousand villages of the state have been selected for mapping.

IIM Bengaluru ranks third in Global MOOC performance among Business schools

- Indian Institute of Management

Bengaluru (IIMB), Karnataka, secured third rank in Global MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) performance among Top Business schools in 2020. MOOC Labs published ranking for the business schools globally who are providing MOOC courses.

- IIMB online courses are also available on SWAYAM (Study Webs of Active Learning for Young Aspiring Minds) is an Indian platform created by the Ministry of Human Resources Development.

Hyderabad Metro Rail becomes Country's 2nd Largest Operational Metro Project

- Chief Minister of Telangana State Mr. K.Chandrashekhar Rao flagged off new Metro line from Jubilee Bus Station (JBS) to Mahatma Gandhi Bus Station (MGBS) connecting twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad, and the stretch covering of 11-kms (Kilometers) becomes India's 2nd largest Metro Rail Network of total operational distance of 69.2kms, only next to Delhi Metro Rail Network having an operational distance of 231kms.

Haryana Launches Rs.1500 crores Mukyamantri Parivar Samridhi Yojana

- Chief Minister Mr.Manohar Lal Khattar and Deputy Chief Minister Mr.Dushyant Chautala of Haryana jointly launched Mukyamantri Parivar Samridhi Yojana scheme on the mark of successful 100

days of the present state government. The scheme is about providing financial assistance of Rs.6000 to the families below the poverty line. The amount will be transferred through DBT (Direct Benefit Transfer) to Bank accounts.

Prime Minister attends celebrations on signing of Bodo Peace Accord at Kokrajhar in Assam



- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has attended the rally at Kokrajhar in Assam to celebrate the signing of the Tripartite Bodo Agreement, which was signed between the Centre, Assam Government and the banned Assam-based insurgent group National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) and is aimed at bringing political and economic benefits to the Bodo tribe, which is one of the largest tribes of Assam.

Make communities more sustainable

- Minister of Tamil Language, Culture and Archaeology K.Pandiarajan was inaugurating Rotary District Conference 2020 "Nakshatras".
- Actor Vivekh was awarded 'Pasumai Nayagan Virudhu' for planting 3.2lakh trees in schools and colleges so far.

Govt Proposes 50 Lakh Penalty, 5 Year Prison for Promoting, Endorsing

Fairness Creams

- India has a problem with colourism, where we are constantly tormented by fairness ads and products that promise to make us more 'attractive' (read whiter) with absolutely no medical or scientific backing. After years of obsessing over 'fair' skin, it looks like India is finally ready to forgo the stereotypes and take a step in the positive direction.
- In order to ban advertisements that promote such false claims, the government has proposed to amend the Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) Act, 1954. This amendment will ban all fairness and weight loss promoting ads.
- The draft of the Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) (Amendment) Bill, 2020 also proposes a fine of up to Rs 10 lakh and up to two years' imprisonment in the case of first offence. And in the case of a subsequent conviction, imprisonment may extend to five years and the fine, up to Rs 50 lakh.

Uttarakhand: UDAN heli services to connect Dehradun with Badrinath, Gangotri

- Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) operationalized the first-ever helicopter services from Dehradun's Sahastradhara helipad to Gauchar and Chinyalisaur under the Regional Connectivity Scheme – Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik (RCS-UDAN) of Government of India.
- MoCA awarded the Sahastradhara-Gauchar-Chinyalisaur route to Heritage Aviation under the UDAN 2 bidding

process. Heritage Aviation will operate helicopter services from Sahastradhara to Gauchar and Chinyalisaur twice daily.

National Conference on E-Governance held in Mumbai; National E-Governance Awards presented

- The 23rd National Conference on E-Governance was held in Mumbai to transform governance using digital technologies. The conference adopted Mumbai Declaration.

Highlights

- The Conference also assessed the national e-governance services being delivered by all the states and Union Territories. Delhi, Chandigarh and Daman and Diu emerged as the leaders in delivering e-governance services among Union Territories. Among the states, Haryana and Rajasthan emerged as leaders.

Best Performing Smart Cities paired up with least performing to work as SISTER CITIES

- The Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has paired up 20 best performing smart cities with least performing cities. They will work as "sister cities".

Highlights

- The best performing cities include Tiruppur, Nagpur, Bhopal, Ranchi, Kanpur, Surat, Indore, Vellore, Vishakhapatnam, Varanasi, Vellore, Nashik, Vadodara, Pune, Kota, Davangere, Dehradun, Udaipur, Amaravati and Agra.

- The programme to join a least performing city with the best performing city has been named 20-20 formula. The sister cities under the programme will sign MoUs. For instance, Ranchi has been paired with Pune, and Shimla with Dharmasala and so on.
- The pairing has been done based on culture and region.

First Disha Police Station inaugurated in Andhra Pradesh to work on violence against women

- Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy inaugurated the first Disha Police Station. The police stations are first of their kind in the state and will deal with crimes against women.

Disha Act

- The Andhra Pradesh Government passed the Disha Bill, 2019. The bill aims to complete investigation of cases related to crimes against women within 7 to 14 days. It also prescribes death penalty under Section 376 of IPC (Indian Penal Code).
- Also, the act punishes crimes against children with 10 to 14 years of imprisonment.

Shri Dharmendra Pradhan launched 'Saksham'

- 'Saksham', an annual one-month long, people-centric fuel conservation mega campaign of Petroleum Conservation Research Association (PCRA) under the aegis of Ministry of Petroleum and

Natural Gas launched on 16th January by Minister of Petroleum & Natural Gas and Steel Shri Dharmendra Pradhan in a function to be held in Delhi.

India-Central Asia Business Council launched in New Delhi

- The Ministry of External Affairs along with FICCI (Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry) recently launched the India-Central Asia Business Council.
- They were joined by 5 countries namely Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyz Republic. The Council will act as a common platform for the businesses of Central Asia and India.

India-Bangladesh rail link to be ready by 2021: Jitendra Singh

- The landmark railway line, connecting the northeastern region with Bangladesh, will be ready by the end of 2021, Union Minister Jitendra Singh said.
- Singh said when the construction of the railway line, between Agartala in Tripura and Akhaura in Bangladesh, will be completed, it will pave the way for running the first train from the northeast to Bangladesh on the eve of the 75th year of India's independence in 2022.

PM Modi's constituency Varanasi among 20 best performing 'smart cities'



- With some of the 100 selected Smart Cities lagging behind, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's parliamentary constituency Varanasi will guide Amritsar and Ahmedabad will help Chandigarh in implementing projects under the mission.
- Ahmedabad (1st rank), Nagpur, Tiruppur, Ranchi, Bhopal, Surat, Kanpur, Indore, Visakhapatnam, Vellore, Vadodara, Nashik, Agra, Varanasi, Davanagere, Kota, Pune, Udaipur, Dehradun and Amravati are the 20 best performing cities, according to internal rankings.

India to host 13th COP of UN's Conservation of Migratory Species; PM Modi to inaugurate

- The 13th Conference of Parties (COP) of the Convention on Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals is to be held in India between February 17, 2020 and February 22, 2020. The Conference is called the CMS-COP-13 in short. The Conference is to be hosted by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change on behalf of India.

Highlights

- India has been designated as the President of the Conference for the next three years. The representatives from 130 countries are to participate in the conference. The theme of the conference is as follows.
- Theme: Migratory species Connect the Planet and we welcome them.
- The mascot designated for the CMS COP-13 is Indian Bustard.

Haryana Government launched 'Reading Mission'

- Kanwar Pal, Haryana education minister, launched 'Reading Mission- Haryana' to inculcate reading habits among students.

Key Points:

- The mission has been launched based on the Central Government's "Reading Mission -2022" & aims to address the lost glory of reading books.
- About Reading Mission: Book review sessions will be organized by students once a month in educational institutions & 45 minute mass- reading programme will be held on 4th saturday of every month.

Gaurela-Pendra-Marwahi forms 28th District of Chattisgarh

- Bhupesh Baghel, Chief Minister (CM) of Chhattisgarh, inaugurated Gaurela-Pendra-Maewahi as the 28th district state of the state. The new district, carved out of Bilaspur, has 3 tehsils (talug) & 3 development blocks namely Gaurela, Pendra and Marwahi.

Key Points:

- The new district comprises 166 gram panchayats, 222 villages and two nagar panchayats with an area of 1,68,225 hectares.
- Bhupesh Baghel, CM also inaugurated offices of the collector and superintendent of police in the new district & approved Rs 18 crore for development works.
- State Assembly Speaker Charandas Mahant, Dharamlal Kaushik (Leader of Opposition), former CM Ajit Jogi were present on the occasion.

Lok Sabha passes bill to include more tribes in ST category in Karnataka

- Parliament passed a bill to include certain tribal communities in Karnataka in the Scheduled Tribe category.
- It seeks to include Parivara and Talawara tribal communities in the ST category to ensure they get reservation and other benefits provided by the government.
- Siddi tribes of Belagavi, Dharwad would also be included in the ST category apart from those living in Uttar Kannada districts.
- The amendments have been made in the list of STs in Karnataka.

Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat Campaign launched to build a cultural connect between different regions

- Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat Campaign organised by the Information and Broadcasting Ministry across the country. It will continue until the 28th of this month. Prime Minister Narendra

Modi had mooted the idea of a cultural connection between different regions during the Rashtriya Ekta Divas held in 2015.

20th 'Hunar Haat' 2020 to be held in New Delhi from Feb 13

- The 20th 'Hunar Haat', an initiative of the Minority Affairs Ministry, showcases handmade indigenous products of master artisans and craftsmen are made available to the people, will be held from February 13-23, 2020 based on the theme of "Kaushal Ko Kaam" at India Gate Lawns, Rajpath, New Delhi.

Kerala to hosts International conference on Climate change & Ocean health "CLIMFISHCON-2020"

- The "CLIMFISHCON" is a Four-day International Conference on changes in Hydrological cycle, Ocean ecosystem, Fisheries and Food security due to Global climate change. And the conference is going to be held at the Le Meridian Convention center in Kochi, Kerala from February 11 to February 14, 2020.

Key points:

- The conference is jointly organized by the Department of Fisheries, Kerala and the CUSAT (Cochin University of Science and Technology) School of Industries Fisheries, and 'Climate Change-Effective Adaptation for a Secure Future' is theme for the conference.

Mumbai to get India's largest air quality monitoring network

- The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) will develop an air quality monitoring network across 90 locations in Mumbai, Maharashtra. It will be the largest network in India.

MP CM Inaugurates National Water Conference at Bhopal

- The Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh Shri Kamal Nath has inaugurated the National water conference at Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh. The conference is being held to finalize the guidelines of "Right to Water Act" or "Water Rights Act" and also discussed the water crisis in the state and also making the state a water-rich state.

'India's position on Global Hunger Index alarming'

- Despite high food production, it is alarming that India ranks 102nd on the Global Hunger Index, announced Vice President Venkaiah Naidu, at the convocation of the Indian Agricultural Research Institute.
- Nutritional Security requires measures to improve protein and vitamin deficiencies.

'Ramayana-themed train on the cards, says Railways

- The Railways plans to run a new train, Ramayana Express, with Ramayana-themed interiors and religious songs playing on board to give the passengers a feeling of 'traveling in a temple.'
- The train is likely to be launched after March 10, said Railway Board Chairman V.K. Yadav, adding that the train schedule will be released in the coming week.
- The train will originate from different locations, north, south, east and west, so that people from across the country can avail its services.

7. INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS



UK leaves the European Union

- Britain left the European Union on Friday after 47 years of membership, taking a leap into the unknown in a historic blow to the bloc.
- Britons who cherished their membership in the bloc - and the freedom it bought to live anywhere across of 28 countries.
- Since the 2016 vote, the U.K. has held fractious negotiations with the EU that finally, late last year, secured a deal on divorce terms. But Britain is leaving the bloc arguably as divided as it was on referendum day.

Maldives readmitted and becomes 54th member of Common wealth family

- Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, President of the Maldives announced that Maldives has once again become a member of the Commonwealth family after the meeting between Abdullah Shahid, Foreign Minister of Maldives & Patricia Scotland, Secretary General of the Common wealth.
- The Maldives became the 54th family member of the Commonwealth family.
- Commonwealth meeting : Maldives will be part of the "Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM)" in Kigali, Rwanda (East Africa), between June 22 to 28,2020.

India signs 1st ever term contract with Russia for Importing Russian Crude Oil

- The union cabinet Minister for the Ministry of Petroleum and natural Gas Shri Dharmendra Pradhan signed the 1st ever term contract with Mr. Igor Sechin, Chief Executive Officer (C.E.O) and Chairman of Rosneft (Russia's largest oil producing Company). The term contract is between State-Owned Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) and Rosneft for Importing 2 Million Metric Tonnes of Urals grade crude oil to India for the year 2020.

Aadhar cards of dead residents of Srivilliputtur taluk to be collated

- For the first time in the country, Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) will collate the Aadhar details of the dead residents of Srivilliputtur Taluk of Virudhunagar district in order to prevent misuse of those Aadhar numbers.
- Srivilliputtur Tahsildar will be the nodal officer for the exercise and would be assisted by the District Adi Dravida Welfare Officer.

Haldia Petrochemicals set to invest ₹50,000 crore

- A memorandum of understanding (MoU)

signed with the Tamil Nadu government earlier, representatives from Haldia Petrochemicals called on Tamil Nadu Chief Minister to discuss investments to the tune of ₹50,000 crore in Cuddalore district.

- The outlay is estimated at ₹50,000 crore for converting the facility in Cuddalore into a petrochemical complex.

Cauvery delta to be declared a protected agriculture zone

- Tamil Nadu Chief Minister announced that the Cauvery delta region would be declared a Protected Special Agriculture Zone as a step towards ensuring food security of the State.
- To ensure that agriculture is not affected, the Cauvery delta regions in Thanjavur, Tiruvarur, Nagapattinam, Pudukottai, Cuddalore, Ariyalur, Karur and Tiruchirapalli will be converted into a Protected Special Agriculture Zone.

First-ever 'Jerusalem-Mumbai Festival' to be held soon

- The first-ever 'Jerusalem-Mumbai Festival' will be held on February 15, 2020 in Mumbai to showcase special links between Mumbai & Jerusalem.
- The festival will not only promote cultural ties between India and Israel, but it will also demonstrate the unique cultural traditions of both the cities. The festival will be organised by Jerusalem Municipality in collaboration with the Federation of India-Israel Chamber of Commerce and Consulate General of Israel in Mumbai.

President Trump to attend 'Howdy, Modi!'-like event in Ahmedabad

- US President Donald Trump, during his India visit, is scheduled to participate in a grand road show in Ahmedabad, tour the Sabarmati Ashram and inaugurate a newly-built cricket stadium with Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- Trump and Modi inaugurate the newly-constructed Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Stadium in Motera area and address a gathering, likely to be attended by over 1 lakh people.
- Citizens have dubbed the upcoming visit of the US President at the Sardar Patel Stadium as "Kem Chho, Trump!" (Hello Trump) event.
- The stadium at Motera has a seating capacity of 1.10 lakh.

43rd Governing council meet of IFAD 2020 held in Rome, Italy

- A 2-day long 43rd session of the annual Governing Council meeting of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) 2020 based on the theme "Investing in sustainable food systems to end hunger by 2030" was held at FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization) headquarters in Rome, Italy.

8. TAMILNADU AFFAIRS



State a top destination for tourists

- Tamil Nadu is one among the top three States in attracting domestic and foreign tourists, according to the Economic Survey 2019-20.
- The Survey, quoting the 2018 figures, mentioned Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra as the other two which were in the top league.
- The three States along with Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh accounted for nearly 65% of the total domestic tourists while they together with Delhi and Rajasthan recorded around 67% of the total foreign tourist visits

Tamil Nadu Conference held

- The 21st annual conference of the Indian Society of Neuroanaesthesiology and Critical Care was held in Chennai.
- Over 20 international faculty, delegates and 300 national delegates participated in the meet. Its aim was to share knowledge in practices in neuroanaesthesiology and neurocritical care.

South India's Biggest International Education Fair

- 17th edition of The Hindu Education Plus International Education Fair 2020 held in Chennai.

- Students and parents thronged the fair and had the opportunity to attend sessions on higher education opportunities in France and study options in the Netherlands, Australia, New Zealand and the U.S.

L&T MBDA Missile Systems sets up missile integration facility in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu

- Engineering & Construction Company L&T (Larsen & Toubro Limited) and European defence major MBDA Missile Systems have set up a missile integration facility in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu (TN).
- L&T MBDA Missile Systems (LTMMMSL) has set up the assembly, 'inert' integration (without explosives) and testing the Missile Subsystems & Weapon launch systems.

SRIOR announces novel measures to combat cancer

Awareness Umbrellas

- SRIOR will be providing Awareness Umbrellas to the interested NGOs and public. These umbrellas will have colored ribbons that are associated with its respective cancer types. (For instance, if

it is breast cancer, it will have the pink colored ribbon and a QR Code near it) Once scanned with a QR Code Scanner, it will provide details about the disease, symptoms, warning signs and all other forms of awareness. The website 'www.helpcancers.com' was launched at the event.

Ford's technology and innovation centre opens

- Tamil Nadu Chief Minister inaugurated the Ford Technology and Innovation Centre at the Electronics Corporation of Tamil Nadu (ELCOT) Special Economics Zone (SEZ) at Sholinganallur in Chennai.

Programme to promote women entrepreneurs

- The churn out more women entrepreneurs across the state, The Indus entrepreneurs (TiE) Chennai has introduced a new initiative called TiE women.
- This is an initiative that was launched by TiE Global and we have introduced in Chennai for educating, mentoring, networking opportunities, industry and investor connects for women entrepreneurs.

'130 out of 136 urban local bodies declared open defecation-free'

- The State government informed the Madras High Court that out of 15 municipal corporations and 121 municipalities in the State, six were yet to be declared open defecation-free places. Of the 136 urban local bodies, only 130 had so far been declared open defecation-free cities and towns.

- The submission was made in a counter affidavit filed before the First Division Bench of Chief Justice Amreshwar Pratap Sahi and Justice Subramonium Prasad, who were seized of a batch of cases aimed at effective implementation of the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act of 2013

MIOT International Programme

- To discuss various health issues related to women and to send across the message that their well-being should be prioritised, MIOT International organised a programme Women at the centre of our universe.
- About 100 delegates from across the world took part in the program.

Chennai Corporation launches framework for city's streets

- Under the project that envisages developing 426 sq km of roads in Chennai, there will be no road cutting for the next 30 years, announced by the Minister S. P. Velumani.
- The Greater Chennai Corporation should significantly add to its urban planning capacity and come out with a vision and area development plans.

Nilgiris Corporation makes natural Fertilisers

- The Nilgiris Corporation has produced natural vermin-compost fertilisers and successfully sold 17 tonnes.
- There is popular demand for natural fertilisers in the Nilgiris, a massive

exercise was undertaken by the Nilgiris sanitary department to produce vermi-compost at Ketti township near Coonoor.

- Ketti has 18 wards and 68 villages. Sanitary workers did door-to-door collection of segregated waste, separating degradable and non-degradable stuff. Personal collection was done in 15 wards while the other three wards put them in public garbage bins.

CM inaugurates Ceat tyre plant

- Tamil Nadu Chief Minister inaugurated Ceat's tyre plant in Sriperumbudur near Chennai. The plant is expected to generate 1,000 jobs, with a proposed investment of ₹4,000 crore.
- The Chennai plant would be the sixth in the country for Ceat, the flagship company of the RPG Group.

Ponneri Terminal Development Project on 21,966 acres

- Under the Chennai-Bangalore Business Route Program, the Ponneri Entrepreneurship Development Scheme will be implemented in Thiruvallur District with an area of 21,966 acres.
- The project has been approved by the state government agreement and the shareholders' agreement. As part of the East Coast Economic Highway Project, the Chennai-Kanyakumari industrial route project will be implemented with the assistance of the Asian Development Bank.
- The Tamil Nadu Industrial Development Institute will undertake the establishment

of Career Innovation Centers at Sriperumbudur and Hosur.

- The Business Facilitation Center is being developed at Kesari. The Tamil Nadu Industrial Development Corporation (TDC) will set up a 6 crore liter water treatment plant at a cost of Rs 634 crore per day to cater to the needs of entrepreneurs located in Tuticorin and its surrounding areas.
- East Coast Highway: As part of the East Coast Economic Highway Project, the Chennai-Kanyakumari industrial route project will be implemented with the assistance of the Asian Development Bank. It has stated that Rs 2,500 crore has been allocated for the industry in the financial year 2020-21.

Tamil Nadu Budget 2020

- Deputy Chief Minister and State Finance Minister presented the State Budget in the Assembly for the 10th time on February 14. Tamil Nadu's economic growth for 2019-20 is projected to be 7.27%, a fall from 8.17% in 2018-19 due to global and national economic headwinds.

Highlights of Tamil Nadu Budget 2020 – 21

- Food parks proposed to be established in Dharmapuri, Ariyalur, Perambalur, Karur, Nagapattinam, Ramanathapuram, Tenkasi districts at a cost of Rs 70 crore.
- The government has decided to form a 'not-for-profit' Special Purpose Vehicle to finance and manage the Amma Unavagam programme.

- Eco-restoration of the Buckingham Canal, its drains and all the drains of the Cooum and Adyar at a total cost of Rs.5,439.76 crore to be taken up
- Rs38,181.73 crore allocated for School Education Department, Rs5,052.84 crore for Higher Education.
- Stamp duty tax has been reduced to 0.25 per cent from the earlier 1 per cent.
- Fisheries department - To improve communication for fishermen more mechanised boats to be fitted with transponders.

Tamil Nadu Budget 2020 - 21

Sector	Allocated Amount
Higher Education	5,052.84 crore
Electricity Department	20,115.58 crore
For establishing 11 new medical colleges	1,200 crore
Health Sector	15,863 crore
Department of Tamil Development	74.08 crore
Archeology Department	31.93 crore
Department of Transport	2716.26 crore
Disaster management	1360 crore
Department of Prison	392 crore

Department of Energy	20,115.58 crore
Department of Highways	15,850 crore
For rural local bodies	5306.95 crore
For Crop Insurance	11,000 crore
Department of Agriculture	11,894 crore
For Amruth Project	1450 crore
Department of Municipal Administration and Water Supply	18,540
Nirbhaya Project	71 crore
For Food subsidy	6,500 crore