

Important Monthly Current Affairs – December 2019

S. No	Topics	Page No.
1.	Important Days	2
2.	Important Banking News	3
3.	Important Financial & Economy Affairs	12
4.	Important Business News	15
5.	Important State Wise National News	11
6.	Important National News	16
7.	Important International News	28
8.	Important Appointments	40
9.	Important Awards and Honors	44
10.	Important MoU	49
12.	Important Summit & Conference	52
13.	Important Defence News	56
14.	Important Science and Technology	58
15.	Important Ranking and Indexes	61
16.	Important Books And Authors	63
17.	Important Sports News	63
18.	Important Obituaries	69

Important Days

Date	Day	Theme
December 1	Human Rights Day	Communities make the difference
December 2	National Pollution Control Day	-
December 2	World Computer Literacy Day	-
December 2	International Day for the Abolition of Slavery	-
December 3	International Day of Persons with Disabilities	Promoting the Participation of Persons with Disabilities and their leadership: Taking Action on the 2030 Development Agenda.
December 4	Indian Navy Day	-
December 5	International Volunteer Day	Volunteer for an inclusive future
December 5	World Soil Day	-
November 30 to December 6	Pension week	-
December 7	Armed Forces Flag Day	-
December 7	International Civil Aviation Day	75 years of connecting the world
December 9	International Anti-Corruption Day	United Against Corruption
December 10	World Human Rights Day	Youth Standing Up for Human Rights
December 11	International Mountain Day	Mountains matter for Youth
December 11	UNICEF day	-
December 12	International Day of Neutrality	-
December 12	International Universal Health Coverage Day	Keep the Promise
December 14	National Energy Conservation Day	-
December 9 to 14	National Energy Conversion Week	-
December 15	International tea day	-
December 16	Vijay Diwas	-
December 18	International Migrants Day	-
December 18	Minorities Rights Day	-
December 20	International Human Solidarity Day	-
December 22	National Mathematics Day	-
December 23	Kisan Divas or Farmer's Day	-
December 24	National Consumers Right Day	Trusted Smart Products
December 25	Good Governance Day	-

Important Banking News

RBI

Reserve Bank keeps repo rate unchanged at 5.15 %

The Reserve Bank of India conducted its fifth bi-monthly Monetary Policy meeting headed by Shaktikanta Das with its 6 members. The rates are following:

Policy Rates	Percentage
Repo Rate	5.15%
Reverse Repo Rate	4.90%
Marginal Standing Facility Rate	5.40%
Bank Rate	5.40%
Cash Reserve Ratio	4%
Statutory liquidity ratio	18.50%

GDP growth for 2019-20 has been revised downwards from **6.1% to 5.0%**.

Former RBI deputy governor becomes chairman of micro-finance panel

Former deputy governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), H R Khan has been appointed as the first chairman of the steering committee of the Code for Responsible Lending (CRL) in micro-credits.

The CRL is a self-regulatory step for the micro-credit industry making diverse entities like banks, NBFC-MFIs and NBFCs adhere to standards of customer protection.

CRL was launched in September by MFIN and Sa-Dhan, an RBI-recognised association of MFIs, along with Finance Industry Development Council, an association of NBFCs.

RBI tightens norms for ARCs to acquire financial assets

The RBI tightened norms for asset reconstruction companies (ARCs), restricting them from buying financial assets from their sponsor firms and lenders on a bilateral basis. However, the regulator has allowed the ARCs to participate in auctions of such assets.

According to the new rules, ARCs cannot acquire financial assets from a bank or financial institution, which is the sponsor of the ARC, on a bilateral basis.

NEFT money transfer facility to be available from Dec16

Bank customers will be able to transfer funds round-the-clock through the National Electronic Funds Transfer (NEFT) system.

Anyone can able to send and receive money anytime. The NEFT payment system is available for customers from **8 am to 7 pm** on all working days, except the second and fourth Saturdays of the month.

This direction was issued by RBI under Section 10(2) read with **Section 18** of the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007 (Act 51 of 2007).

RBI has been decided to provide an additional collateralised intra-day liquidity facility, to be called Liquidity Support (LS) to facilitate smooth settlement of NEFT transactions with the Reserve Bank in a 24x7 environment.

RBI Guidelines for 'on tap' Licensing of Small Finance Banks in Private Sector

The Reserve Bank of India released "Guidelines for 'on tap' Licensing of Small Finance Banks in the Private Sector".

Major changes from the earlier Guidelines on Small Finance Banks are:

- The licensing window will be open on-tap
- minimum paid-up voting equity capital / net worth requirement shall be ₹ 200 crore;
- for Primary (Urban) Co-operative Banks (UCBs), desirous of voluntarily transiting into Small Finance Banks (SFBs)
- initial requirement of net worth shall be at ₹ 100 crore, which will have to be increased to ₹ 200 crore within five years from the date of commencement of business. Incidentally, the net-worth of all SFBs currently in operation is in excess of ₹ 200 crore;
- SFBs will be given scheduled bank status immediately upon commencement of operations;
- SFBs will have general permission to open banking outlets from the date of commencement of operations;
- Payments Banks can apply for conversion into SFB after five years of operations, if they are otherwise eligible as per these guidelines.

RBI plans local version of 'Operation Twist' to lower long-term yields

RBI will conduct a simultaneous sale and purchase of bonds, in a move seen by market participants as an attempt to bring longer-term yields lower.

It is the first time the RBI has conducted a special open market operation (OMO) of this kind, similar to the 'Operation Twist' carried out in the United States.

The RBI stated it will buy 100 billion rupees' (\$1.4 billion) worth of the current benchmark 10-year bond while selling four bonds maturing in 2020 for an equivalent amount.

RBI to buy, sell govt bonds worth Rs 10,000 crore

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will simultaneously purchase and sell government securities worth 10,000 crore rupees under a special Open Market Operation (OMO).

Such exercises are done by the central bank when the proceeds from the sale of short-term securities are used to buy long-term government securities or bonds in a bid to bring down interest rates on long-term securities.

NPAs dip, banks' profitability up in H1 of FY20: RBI

The banking sector has shown good signs with improvement in the gross nonperforming assets (GNPA).

The banking sector showed improvement with the GNPA ratio of scheduled commercial banks (SCBs) declining from 11.2% in March 2018 to 9.1% in March 2019 and a return to profitability in H1 of 2019- 20.

RBI caps lending on P2P platforms at Rs 50 lakh

Reserve Bank stated that on a peer-to-peer lending (P2P) platform the permissible exposure of a lender to all borrowers should not exceed Rs 50 lakh at any given point of time.

The lender investing more than Rs 10 lakh across P2P platforms will produce a certificate to P2P platforms from a practising Chartered Accountant certifying minimum net-worth of Rs 50 lakh.

The transfer of funds under P2P lending happens through an escrow account mechanism, which is operated by a bank promoted trustee.

RBI introduces new prepaid payment instrument

Reserve Bank has introduced a new type of prepaid payment instrument (PPI) which could be used only for purchase of goods and services up to a limit of Rs 10,000 per month.

The amount loaded in such PPIs during any month shall not exceed Rs 10,000 and the total amount loaded during the financial year shall not exceed Rs 1,20,000.

The directive is issued under Section 18 read with Section 10(2) of Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007.

NPCI offers recharge option for FASTag through BHIM UPI

National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) stated that customers can recharge NETC FASTags through BHIM UPI.

Any BHIM UPI-enabled mobile app would now give vehicle owners the opportunity to recharge their FASTags on the go and avoid queues at toll plazas.

The National Electronic Toll Collection (NETC) is a programme designed to meet the electronic tolling needs of the Indian market.

FASTag has been made mandatory on national highways throughout the country from December 15, 2019.

RBI directs large co-op banks to report exposures above Rs 5 cr

The Reserve Bank of India has directed large cooperative banks to report all exposures of **5 crore rupees** and more to the Central Repository of Information on Large Credits (CRILC).

The Reserve Bank has created a CRILC of commercial banks, all India financial institutions and certain non-banking financial companies with multiple objectives, which, among others, include strengthening offsite supervision and early recognition of financial distress.

The RBI had announced to bring UCBs with assets of Rs 500 crore and above under the CRILC reporting framework.

Country's financial system remains stable despite slowing economic growth: RBI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has released the 20th issue of the Financial Stability Report. It says that the global economy confronted several uncertainties that leads to significant deceleration in growth.

As regards the domestic economy, aggregate demand slackened in the second quarter of this year further extending the growth deceleration.

The report also says that the resilience of the banking sector has improved following recapitalization of Public Sector Banks by the Government.

RBI proposes to tighten lending norms for UCBs

The RBI proposed reduction in loan amount an urban co-operative bank can lend to a single entity and a group of borrowers to 10% and 25% respectively, with an aim to prevent PMC Bank like scams caused by large exposure to one group.

Currently, primary (urban) co-operative banks (UCBs) are permitted to have exposures up to 15% and 40% of their capital funds to a single borrower and a group of borrowers, respectively.

RBI buys ₹10,000 crore worth government securities via OMO

RBI bought ₹10,000 crore of long-term government securities and sold ₹8,501 crore of three short-term bonds.

The RBI had stated that it would buy and sell government securities under OMO for ₹10,000 crore each, simultaneously.

In the OMO purchase of 6.45% GS 2029, ie the 10-year benchmark security, the RBI received ₹25,698 crore worth of bids but accepted ₹10,000 crore worth.

SBI

SBI to introduce new way of ATM cash withdrawal from 1st January

SBI has introduced one-time password (OTP) based cash withdrawal system to help protect its customers from unauthorised transactions at ATMs.

The OTP-based cash withdrawal system shall be active across all SBI ATMs effective 1 January 2020 between 8 pm to 8 am.

The OTP-based cash withdrawal system to help protect from unauthorised transactions at ATMs. This new safeguard system will be applicable from 1st January 2020.

SBI's OTP-based cash withdrawal facility will be applicable for transactions above ₹10,000.

SBI cuts external benchmark-based rate by 25 basis points

State Bank of India (SBI) announced a reduction in its external benchmark-based rate by 25 basis points to 7.80 per cent from 8.05 per cent.

The new rates will be applicable from January 1, 2020. The new home buyers will get loans at an interest rate starting from 7.90 per cent per annum.

ADB

Asian Development Bank to advance Tamil Nadu USD 206 million for civic infrastructure

ADB has agreed to advance a loan of US \$206 million to develop water supply and sewerage infrastructure in Trichy and other cities in Tamil Nadu and strengthen the capacities of urban local bodies (ULBs) for improved service delivery in the state. The Centre signed an agreement with ADB in New Delhi.

This is the second project loan for the ADB-supported USD 500 million multi-tranche financing for the Tamil Nadu Urban Flagship Investment Programme, approved in September 2018. The first project under the programme, with USD 169 million financing, is currently under implementation.

ADB, India sign \$250 million loan to expand energy efficiency investments in India

The Asian Development Bank and the Government of India signed a \$250 million loan to Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL) to expand energy efficiency investments in India that will benefit agricultural, residential and institutional consumers.

In addition, \$46 million financing will be provided from the Clean Technology Fund (CTF), to be administered by ADB.

ADB previously approved a \$200 million loan to EESL in 2016 for Demand Side Energy Efficiency Sector Project that focused on efficient lighting and appliances.

ADB, India Sign \$ 490 Million Loan for PPP to Upgrade Madhya Pradesh Roads

The Asian Development Bank and the Government of India signed a \$490 million loan for public-private partnership (PPP) project to upgrade about 1,600 km of state highways and major district roads (MDRs) from single-lane to two-lane widths in the state of Madhya Pradesh.

An additional \$286 million investment will be mobilised through private sector participation under the PPP modality.

It will open a new partnership by introducing PPP through the hybrid-annuity model (HAM), thereby leveraging government financing and improving sustainability of capital investments.

World Bank

IFC to lead \$200 million debt financing in Mahindra Finance

World Bank Group's International Finance Corp. (IFC) was leading a \$200-million debt financing in Mahindra and Mahindra Financial Services Ltd as part of its plan to create a dedicated pool of financing for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in low-income states.

The \$100 million for women entrepreneurs will be supported through blended finance from the IFC- Goldman Sachs' Women Entrepreneurs Opportunity Facility.

IFC is investing \$75 million from its own account and mobilizing another \$125 million as parallel loans. Mahindra Finance has further committed \$225 million to this MSME pool.

AIIB

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

The Beijing-based Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) announced a total loan of USD 210 million for irrigation and solar energy projects in India.

The multilateral institution will lend USD 145 million to improve irrigation services and strengthen flood risk management in West Bengal, while USD 65 million has been earmarked for a 250-megawatt (MW) solar project in Rajasthan promoted by Hero Future Energies.

Other Banking News

BlackBuck partners IDFC Bank, YES Bank to offer free FASTags to truckers

Online trucking platform BlackBuck has partnered with IDFC Bank and Yes Bank to provide FASTags to truck owners free of cost.

Truck owners can order FASTags on BlackBuck's Boss App and it will be delivered at their doorstep free of cost until December 31, 2019. The initiative is expected to help over 3 million trucks in India become FASTag compliant.

HDFC ERGO launches my:health Woman Suraksha - A special health insurance for women

HDFC ERGO General Insurance Company announced the launch of 'my:health Woman Suraksha policy'.

It is specially designed to cover women against numerous illnesses and contingencies they may face during their lifetime, thereby providing financial aid in case of medical contingencies.

This policy is offered to women between 18-65 years of age and offers a sum insured ranging from Rs. 1 lakh to 1 crore.

Karnataka Vikas Grameena Bank signs bancassurance pact with Canara HSBC Oriental Bank of Commerce Life Insurance

Karnataka Vikas Grameena Bank and Canara HSBC Oriental Bank of Commerce Life Insurance Company Ltd. signed an MoU for bancassurance. The Bank will market products of Canara HSBC through its 636 branches.

Canara HSBC Oriental Bank of Commerce Life Insurance Company is jointly owned by Canara Bank (51%) and Oriental Bank of Commerce (23%) — and HSBC Insurance (Asia Pacific) Holdings Ltd. (26%).

DHFL becomes first financial services firm to be taken to NCLT

The RBI referred Dewan Housing Finance Corp. Ltd, which has a debt of ₹ 83,873 Crore, to the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) for insolvency proceedings.

The Reserve Bank has filed an application for initiation of corporate insolvency resolution process against DHFL under Section 227 read with clause (zk) of sub-section (2) of Section 239 of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), 2016 read with Rules 5 and 6 of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Rules, 2019.

R. Subramaniakumar, the RBI-appointed administrator for DHFL, will take over the lender's affairs.

78% depositors of PMC Bank can withdraw their entire account balance

As per the FM Nirmala Sitharaman, nearly 78 % depositors of the scam-hit Punjab and Maharashtra Co-operative (PMC) Bank have been allowed to withdraw their entire deposits even though the ceiling of Rs 50,000 on withdrawal continues.

Also account holders can withdraw up to Rs 1 lakh in case of medical emergency, marriage and other serious situations.

Exim Bank provides USD 500 mn credit to Bangladesh for defence procurement

Export Import Bank of India entered into an agreement with Bangladesh's Armed Forces Division for making available to the latter a Government of India-supported line of credit (LoC) of USD 500 million.

Under the agreement, goods and services including consultancy services of the value of at least 75% of the contract price shall be supplied by the seller from India.

The remaining 25% of goods and services may be procured by the seller for the purpose of the eligible contract from outside India, including Bangladesh.

Vakrangee partners with Union Bank of India for 20,000 banking BC points for Pan India Nextgen Vakrangee Kendras

Vakrangee Finserve Limited received approval from Union Bank of India for 20,000 Banking Business Correspondent (BC) point for Nextgen Vakrangee Kendra.

The Bank shall allot in a batch of 2,500 BC points whereby 70-80% of BC points would be in Tier 5 and 6 locations and which would include 5% of the outlets to be opened in aspirational districts and LWE (Left-wing extremism) areas.

The RBI guidelines stated that the Banks need to open at least 25% of their banking outlets in a year in the unbanked area. These have to be open for at least 4 hours per day for 5 days in a week manned either by business correspondents or by bank officials.

IRDAI forms group to study loss prevention

A ten-member working group has been constituted by the IRDAI to suggest segment-wise ways and means to improve loss prevention and loss minimisation in the general insurance industry.

The move is aimed at all stakeholders working together towards a common end on a common platform. IRDAI Member (Non-Life) **T. L. Alamelu** would chair the group.

Axis Bank, Indian Oil launch co-branded credit card for cashless payments

Axis Bank announced the launch of co-branded credit card in partnership with Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOCL).

This partnership is to expand their presence in the fast-developing credit card ecosystem in India, with an aim to offer attractive rewards and benefits for its customers.

Customers will be able to get benefits such as cashback up to Rs 250 on fuel purchases within first 30 days of card issuance, 20 times accelerated reward points on fuel spends at IOCL outlets as well as waiver of fuel surcharge.

Gem Partners with UCO Bank and Bank of Maharashtra for Payment Related Services

The Government e- Marketplace signed two MoUs with Bank of Maharashtra and UCO Bank to offer several services including transfer of funds through GeM Pool Accounts (GPA), advising of Performance Bank Guarantees and Earnest Money Deposit to the registered users on the portal.

GeM is also working with Banks, TReDs, and SIDBI to provide bill discounting and financing of working capital where the cost of capital is linked to the performance & rating of a seller on GeM.

SEBI inks pact with Kazakhstan-based AFSA for mutual, technical cooperation

SEBI (Securities and Exchange Board of India) has signed a bilateral memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Kazakhstan-based Astana Financial Services Authority (AFSA) for mutual co-operation and technical assistance.

The objective of pact is to strengthen cross border co-operation in area of securities regulation. Besides facilitating mutual assistance.

Pine Labs partners with Kotak Mahindra Bank to enable EMIs on Kotak debit cards

Pine Labs and Kotak Mahindra Bank (Kotak) announced a tie- up to enable EMI payments via Kotak Debit Cards.

The minimum purchase value to avail EMIs on Kotak Debit Cards facility is Rs. 8,000 and customers have the flexibility to repay the loan over a tenure of 3 months to 12 months.

Its aim is to provide affordable, flexible and easy EMI options on a range of products so that bank's customers can break their high-value purchases into affordable instalments at no extra cost.

Allahabad Bank gets fresh capital of Rs. 2,153 crore from government

Allahabad Bank stated it will get a fresh capital infusion of Rs 2,153 crore from the government in the current financial year.

In this list, Punjab National Bank was approved to get Rs 16,000 crore, Union Bank of India Rs 11,700 crore, Canara Bank Rs 6,500 crore and Indian Bank Rs 2,500 crore.

The capital infusion as intended will enhance the capital base of public sector banks so that they could accelerate lending in a bid to bolster growth.

Karnataka Bank launches TAB Banking

Karnataka Bank launched 'KBL Xpress SB Accounts', a digitised version for opening Savings Bank account through TAB Banking on the spot.

Using the TAB banking account opening process, the Bank can on-board the prospective customer and open the Savings Bank Account.

With the introduction of TAB banking for SB account opening, the customers can be on-boarded by the Bank within a short span of 10 minutes and instantaneously debit card will also be issued besides extending Mobile Banking and Internet Banking facilities.

RBI appoints J&K Bank as lead banking convenor for J&K, SBI for Ladakh

RBI appointed Jammu & Kashmir Bank as the lead banker for the newly carved out union territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

State Bank of India (SBI) will be the lead convenor bank for union territory of Ladakh.

It has been decided to assign the UTLBC (Union Territory Lead Bank Convenor) Convenorship of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir to Jammu & Kashmir Bank Ltd and the Union Territory of Ladakh to State Bank of India.

Ashok Leyland, Citicorp Finance ink MoU for commercial vehicles' financing

Ashok Leyland has partnered with Citicorp Finance India Ltd for financing commercial vehicles.

The company has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Citicorp Finance to enter into a strategic financing partnership for two years, to offer customised financial solutions to customers across India.

Swiggy launches own digital wallet, to credit refunds for now

Swiggy has launched its own wallet – Swiggy Money to credit amounts for the cancelled orders.

The Meituan-backed firm’s wallet is powered by ICICI Bank and is a fully Reserve Bank of India (RBI)-compliant Prepaid Payment Instrument.

Swiggy Money went live just a day after RBI introduced a semi-closed Prepaid Payment Instrument for small-ticket retail payments up to Rs 10,000. A full KYC allows the user to load up to Rs 1 lakh at any given time.

Pakistani-owned HBZ Bank sanctioned by South Africa's central bank

South Africa's central bank has sanctioned Durban-headquartered HBZ Bank, with roots in Pakistan, for violating the country's Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing Control Regulations.

The South African Reserve Bank (SARB) cautioned HBZ not to repeat the conduct which led to the non-compliance with "suspicious and unusual transaction" reporting requirements of the Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing Control Regulations.

Revision Points

Name of the Organization	Headquarters	Head of the Organization
Reserve Bank of India	Mumbai	Shaktikanta Das
Asian Development Bank	Manila, Philippines	Masatsugu Asakawa
International Finance Corp	Washington D.C, USA	Philippe Le Houérou
Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank	Beijing, China	Jin Liqun
IDFC Bank	Mumbai	V. Vaidyanathan
Yes Bank	Mumbai	Ravneet Gill
HDFC ERGO General Insurance Company	Mumbai	Deepak S Parekh
Export Import Bank of India	Mumbai	David Rasquinha
IRDAI	Hyderabad	Subhash Chandra Khuntia
Axis Bank	Mumbai	Rakesh Makhija
Bank of Maharashtra	Pune	A S Rajeev
UCO Bank	Kolkata	Atul Kumar Goel
Securities and Exchange Board of India	Mumbai	Ajay Tyagi
Kotak Mahindra Bank	Mumbai	Uday Kotak
Pine Lab	Noida	Vicky Bindra
NPCI	Mumbai	Dilip Asbe
State Bank of India	Mumbai	Rajnish Kumar
Allahabad Bank	Kolkata	SS Mallikarjuna Rao
Karnataka Bank	Mangaluru	Mahabaleshwara MS
Jammu & Kashmir Bank	Srinagar	RK Chhibber

ICICI Bank	Mumbai	Sandeep Bakshi
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Important Financial & Economy Affairs

ORGANISATION	GDP RATE	
	2019 – 20 (FY20)	2020 – 21(FY21)
CRISIL	5.1%	-
ADB	5.1%	
Moody's	4.9%	
Fitch	4.6%	5.6%
RBI	5%	

ADB scales down India's GDP growth forecast from 6.5% to 5.1% for FY20

Asian Development Bank has scaled down its projection for India's economic growth to 5.1% in 2019-20 from 6.5% projected earlier because of the crisis in the non-banking finance companies and impact on consumption due to rural distress and a dismal job scenario.

China is projected to grow at 6.1% in 2019-20 against ADB's forecast of 6.2% due to trade tensions and a slowdown in global activity coupled with weaker domestic demand.

Fitch cuts India's GDP growth forecast to 4.6% in FY20

Fitch Ratings cut India's GDP growth forecast for 2019-20 fiscal year to 4.6% on deterioration in business and consumer confidence.

Fitch estimated the economic growth to recover to 5.6% in 2020-21 and 6.5% in 2021-2022 with support from easing monetary and fiscal policy and structural measures.

India likely to surpass Germany to become the fourth-largest economy in 2026

India will overtake Germany to become fourth-largest economy in the world by the year 2026. According to a report 'World Economic League Table 2020' by the UK-based Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR), India is all set to overtake Japan to become the third-largest economy by 2034.

Canada's CPPIB to invest up to \$600 million in Indian infrastructure fund

Canada Pension Plan Investment Board (CPPIB) is investing up to \$600 million in India's National Investment and Infrastructure Fund, as it seeks to grow its infrastructure bets in Asia's third-largest economy.

The deal includes a commitment of \$150 million in NIIF's Master Fund and co-investment rights of up to \$450 million in future opportunities to invest alongside the Master Fund.

- The NIIF is majority-owned by institutional investors, but says is anchored by India's government, which is also an investor in its Master Fund.
- India needs investments worth about \$778 billion for highways, urban transport and renewable energy by 2022, according to the India Brand Equity Foundation.

CPPIB to invest \$225 million in Bain, Piramal-led India Resurgence Fund

Canada Pension Plan Investment Board will invest \$225 million in India Resurgence Fund (IndiaRF), a distressed asset buyout platform.

CPPIB, through its wholly owned subsidiary CPPIB Credit Investments Inc, will infuse money into the fund, which was set up by Piramal Enterprises and Bain Capital Credit.

The fund also has option to invest money through newly issued indiaRF had raised \$100 million from the International Finance Corporation (IFC) through its Distressed Asset Recovery Program.

Government bonds launches interest rate options on 10-year government bonds

NSE has launched interest rate options on 10-year government bonds to provide institutional investors ability to manage risk through a non-linear product.

Interest rate options are based on the underlying government 10-year bonds -- the 7.26 per cent 2029 bond and the 6.45 per cent 2029 bond. The unit of trading is set at Rs 2 lakh face value of government securities, corresponding to 2,000 units.

MOSPI constitutes Standing Committee on Economic Statistics headed by Pronab Sen

The statistics ministry has constituted a 28 member Standing Committee on Statistics (SCES) chaired by former Chief Statistician Pronab Sen to improve quality of data amid criticism of the government over political interference.

The first meeting of the SCES is scheduled on January 6, 2020. The agenda would be very broad based.

The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI) had decided not to release the Consumer Expenditure Survey results of 2017-18 citing data quality issues.

The MOSPI had also mentioned that an expert panel has recommended that 2017-18 would not be an appropriate fiscal to be used as a base year for new GDP series.

Government to sell 100 per cent stake in Air India

The government has decided to sell its entire 100% stake in Air India under the proposed disinvestment process.

The national carrier, which has a debt burden of more than ₹ 50,000 crore, has been making loss for long and as part of revival efforts, the government has decided on disinvestment.

AISAM has approved the 100% sale of Government of India stake in Air India for the re-initiated strategic disinvestment of Air India.

Edelweiss AMC launches India's 1st corporate bond 'Bharat Bond ETF'

Edelweiss Asset Management Company (AMC), a subsidiary of Edelweiss Capital Limited (ECL) has launched India's 1st Corporate Bond ETF (exchange trade fund) called the Bharat Bond ETF.

Edelweiss aims to raise an initial amount of Rs 3,000 crore through this bond from institutional players with a greenshoe option of Rs 2,000 crore in the 3-year maturity period (2023) and Rs 4,000 crore with a greenshoe

option of Rs 6,000 crore in the 10-year maturity bucket (2030). Small retail investors will have to invest at least Rs 1,000 in this fund.

They can invest up to 2 lakhs. At the same time, the minimum amount for anchor investors has been fixed at Rs 10 crore.

GST Council's decisions On Rate Changes

The 38th meeting of the GST Council has decided to keep the tax slabs untouched for the time being and has fixed a uniform tax rate of 28% on both state and private lotteries, effective from March 1, 2020.

The GST Council recommended the following relating to changes in GST rates, exemptions.

- The council rationalised tax rates on woven and non-woven bags to 18% and waived the GST payable for industrial and financial infrastructure plots by an entity with 20% or more ownership of the Central or state government. This change will be effective from January 1, 2020.
- The council has also relaxed penalty for non-filing of GSTR-1 from July 2017.
- The GST Council has decided to waive late fee for taxpayers who have not filed returns from July 2017 to November 2019, if all the returns are filed by January 10, 2020.
- In case the taxpayer does not file GSTR-1 by January 10, 2020, the e-way bill will be blocked for them
- The GST council has also extended the annual returns filing date for GSTR-9 and reconciliation form GSTR-9C for FY 2017-18 to January 31, 2020.

HDFC Bank crosses \$100 billion in market cap

HDFC Bank Ltd crossed the \$100 billion market capitalisation, becoming only the third firm in the country to achieve this milestone.

The lender has a market cap of \$140.74 billion, and Tata Consultancy Services that has a market cap of \$114.60 billion. HDFC Bank now ranks 110th in the world's most valued companies.

According to Bloomberg data, currently, there are 109 companies in the list which have market cap of over \$100 billion. Among the most valued banks and financial companies around the world, HDFC Bank ranks 26th.

Debt-ridden Air India receives Rs 500-crore guarantee from Centre

The debt-ridden Air India received a guarantee worth Rs 500 crore from the government to secure fresh funds for operational requirements.

The national carrier had sought Rs 2,400-crore guarantee from the government to raise fresh funds to mainly meet its operational requirements. The government is likely to invite preliminary bids for the stake sale in Air India.

FPIs flock to Indian capital market despite decline in GDP growth rate in 2019

Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) seem to have flocked to the Indian capital market in 2019 with a net inflow of over 1.3 lakh crore rupees, including 97,250 crore rupees in equities, the highest in last six years.

The debt market has seen a net inflow of nearly 27,000 crore rupees by FPIs, while a further amount of 9,000 crore rupees found its way to the hybrid instruments, shows the capital market data compiled by depositories.

GST Council sets up GRC at zonal, state level

The GST Council on announced setting up the Grievance Redressal Committees (GRC) at zonal and state levels to resolve issues related to the Goods and Services Tax (GST).

It will help in speedy redressal of grievances of taxpayers pertaining to tax related issues and the related procedure.

The secretary will also submit a quarterly progress report to the GST Council Secretariat and to the GST Policy Wing, CBIC. The committee will be constituted for a period of two years.

Important Business News

Trai revamps mobile number portability, advises 3 working days for requests

TRAI revamped **mobile number portability (MNP)** rules, making the entire process faster and simpler, and prescribed three working days timeline for port out requests within a service area.

The timeline of five working days has been prescribed for requests for port out from one circle to another.

The other major changes have been incorporated such as the validity of the **Unique Porting**

Code or UPC has been brought down to four days for all circles except Jammu & Kashmir, Assam and North East, where the validity of the said code remains unchanged to 30 days.

Dell Technologies Announces New Initiative with UNESCO MGIEP to Enable School Teachers with Technology

Dell Technologies announced a new partnership at TECH 2019 between its Dell in India operation and UNESCO MGIEP to enable schoolteachers to adopt technology in classrooms.

Through the partnership, 'Dell Aarambh' a PC for education program by Dell and UNESCO MGIEP's 'FramerSpace' platform, will collaborate to train identified teachers.

This partnership enables the global community in achieving the UN Sustainable Goal 4.7 towards education for building peaceful and sustainable societies and UNESCO MGIEP in its mission of building social and emotional learning, innovative digital pedagogies and empowering youth.

Tech Mahindra bags smart city project from Pune's Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation

Tech Mahindra has bagged a smart city project worth Rs 500 crore from Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation (PCMC) in Pune.

Through this project, Tech Mahindra will engage with more than 15 lakh citizens of PCMC in Pune district by enabling the technology-led transformation to convert it into a smart and sustainable city.

IBM's weather forecast system for accuracy of forecasts in India

IBM Plans to make a high-resolution weather forecast model that will also rely on user generated data to improve the accuracy of forecasts available in India.

IBM GARF, as the forecast system is called, can generate forecasts at a resolution of 3kms.

It is a higher resolution than the 12-km models used by the India Meteorological department to generate forecasts.

Wipro and Nasscom to upskill 10,000 engineering students in India

Wipro Ltd has partnered with the National Association of Software and Services Companies

(Nasscom) to train 10,000 students from over 20 engineering colleges in India as part of the ‘Future Skills’ platform.

The programme has now been extended to students directly through Future Skills, which is a Nasscom initiative to bridge the industry-academia skill gap and help students keep pace with emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), big data, cloud computing, cyber security, and internet of things (IoT).

Reliance Infrastructure wins Rs 1,250 cr arbitration award against DVC

Reliance Infrastructure has won an arbitration award of Rs 1,250 crore against Damodar Valley Corporation (DVC).

It will be used to pay lenders and reduce the debt of the company, the infrastructure firm in a filing to BSE. A three-member arbitration tribunal unanimously gave the award in favour of Reliance Infrastructure. Reliance Infrastructure has won a major arbitration award of Rs 1,250 crore against DVC, a government of India undertaking.

Amazon to open first farm collection centre in Pune

Amazon Retail India Pvt Ltd, will soon open its first farm collection center in Pune. Under its farm-to-fork initiative, Amazon will directly purchase vegetables from farmers, who would be paid within 24 hours.

NTPC may add 10GW of solar energy capacity

NTPC is planning to add 10GW of solar energy generation capacity by 2022, which entails an investment of around Rs 50,000 crore, to be funded mainly by green bonds.

It has formulated a long-term plan to become a 130 GW company by 2032 with 30 per cent non- fossil fuel or renewable energy capacity. Total installed power generation capacity of the group stands at 57,356 MW.

Important State Wise National News

List of Festivals

Festival	Venue	Organized by/Inaugurated By
Flamingo Festival	Pulicat lake in Nellore district of Andhra Pradesh	-
National Tribal Dance Festival 2019	Chhattisgarh	Rahul Gandhi
11th National Street Food Festival (Theme – Healthier Diets)	New Delhi	FSSAI & National Association of Street Vendors of India
Human Library Event	Mysuru	
Losar Festival	Ladakh	
Workshop-cum-exhibition on 'Bamboo - A wonder grass: Opportunity for Sustainable Development in Jobs'	Jammu	North Eastern Council with J&K UT administration
Namaste Orchha	Orchha, Madhya Pradesh	Madhya Pradesh govt
Tansen Samaroh (5-day	Gwalior, Madhya	

Music Festival)	Pradesh	
5th International Film Festival (Theme – Comedy)	Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh	Culture and Tourism Departments & Prayas Production. Inaugurated by Kamal Nath.
1 st edition of Mandu Festival	Mandu, Madhya Pradesh	Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board
three-day-long North East Food Show	Shillong, Meghalaya	Meghalaya Government in association with SIAL India and Inter Ads Exhibitions Private Limited.
16th Orange Festival	Tamenglong, Manipur	Minister N. Biren Singh.
30 th Konark Festival	Konark, Odisha	

Andhra Pradesh

Vijayawada railway station bags ISO-14001 certification

Vijayawada station has secured the prestigious Environmental Standard ISO 14001:2015 certification, making it an eco-smart station for efficient implementation of environment management system.

Vijayawada is one of the three stations selected under South Central Railway, in addition to Secunderabad and Kacheguda, for development into eco-smart stations in tune with the National Green Tribunal directive.

The ISO certificate would be valid till December 1, 2022, for implementing environmental management system using best and unique standards.

CM Jagan to launch YSR Arogya Asara scheme in Guntur

Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy is set to launch another program to provide relief to poor patients as part of the health scheme.

YSR Arogya Asara will be launched at Guntur General Hospital. After the surgery, the patients are offered a maximum of Rs.225 per day or a maximum of Rs 5,000 per month for the prescribed relaxation time. This is the first in India to offer this type of service to patients.

CM Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy launches YSR Law Nestham scheme

- CM Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy launched YSR Law Nestham scheme at Tadepalli and a stipend of **Rs 5,000** has been credited into the accounts of beneficiary junior lawyers.
- The eligibility of the candidate is, they should be under the age of 35 and must be a graduate in Law and, also junior lawyers who have stopped practising law are not eligible.
- Junior lawyers will be eligible for the scheme for the remaining three years after completing the first three years of practice.
- Also, senior lawyers with 15 years of practice experience and who are currently active in practice with certification from the Bar Association are also applicable for the scheme.

AP Cabinet clears Disha Act

- The Andhra Pradesh Cabinet has approved the draft Disha Act that provides for harsher punishments, including death sentence, to those guilty of heinous crimes against women.

- The government will set up special courts in districts to try the cases related to attacks, sexual offences on children and women.
- Sexual abuse and attacks on children would attract 354(F), with punishments ranging from **14 years** in jail to life term.

Concept of 3 capitals to be considered in Andhra Pradesh

- Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy indicated that the state could have three capitals like South Africa.
- Coastal city **Visakhapatnam** could be considered as the executive capital and **Kurnool** can be considered as the judicial capital.
- **Amaravati** can be retained as Legislative capital.

YSR Neetanna Nestham scheme launched in Krishna district's Pedana town

The YSR Neetanna Nestham scheme was launched in Krishna district's Pedana town by Andhra Pradesh Panchayati Raj Minister P Ramachandra Reddy.

Under the scheme, the govt could be given **Rs 24,000** annually to weavers.

Arunachal Pradesh

Arunachal to mark schools as 'hard' and 'soft'

Arunachal Pradesh will have schools marked 'hard', 'soft' and 'medium'

Under the new policy, all government schools will be divided into three categories — hard, medium and soft — based on topography, accessibility and degrees of difficulty in staying at the place of posting.

The next five years will be in schools with levels of medium difficulty, followed by posting in soft schools.

Assam

Assam Government Launches 'Abhinandan' scheme to benefit students

- 'Abhinandan', an education loan subsidy scheme, has launched to provide a one-time subsidy of **Rs. 50,000** in loan to 1546 students.
- The aim of the scheme is to provide a loan waiver to students of Assam who have availed education loans.
- The scheme will be available through all commercial banks like the **Federal Bank and HDFC and the regional rural banks like Assam Gramin Vikash Bank** within Assam.
- Through the Abhinandan Education Loan Scheme, the Assam govt aims to bolster its education infrastructure and urge more students to pursue higher education.

Bihar

Nitish Kumar Unveils Statue of Arun Jaitley in Patna on Late BJP Leader's Birth

Anniversary

- Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar unveiled a statue of former Union Minister Arun Jaitley in Patna.
- He had also said that Jaitley's birth anniversary will be celebrated as a State function every year.

New policy for population control to be ready soon in Bihar

- Bihar will have a new population-control policy soon. The new policy will be aimed at increasing the use of injectable contraceptives, creating more awareness among men and women on population control and the use of contraceptives, expanding existing medical festivals and, most likely, offering a package of incentives and disincentives.

- The total fertility rate (TFR) — roughly, the average number of children born per woman — has slightly reduced in Bihar in the last few years but it still is the highest in the country.

Delhi

Delhi Launches Housing Scheme for Residents of Unauthorised Colonies

- Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal launched the "Mukhyamantri Aawas Yojana" for the residents of Jhuggi-cJhopri (JJ) clusters would provide a pucca house to every citizen of Delhi.
- 65,000 families residing in slum areas were distributed ownership certificates and they would soon be provided pucca houses.

Delhi cabinet approves policy on electric vehicles to curb pollution

- Delhi govt approved a policy on electric vehicles (EVs) with a focus on two- wheelers, shared transport vehicles, and commercial vehicles to lead the change to electric mobility.
- By 2024, They want that **25%** of the vehicles to be electric vehicles. Electric two-wheelers are less than 0.2% (of annual sales) and three-wheelers are close to zero.
- In 2020, there will be 35,000 e-vehicles and 250 charging stations. In five years, hope that 5 Lakh electric vehicles will be registered.
- The Delhi government will give 100% subsidy for the purchase of charging equipment up to ₹6,000 per charging point.

Delhi restaurants will now have menus in Braille

- The Delhi State Commissioner of Person with Disabilities (PWD) has recently passed an order to almost 400 hotel and restaurants stating that they should print menus in Braille for the benefit of the visually impaired.
- All the members which are part of the Federation of Hotel and Restaurant Association of India (FHRAI) have been instructed to implement the order given by the court.
- As per the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 access to public services is mandatory,” The booklet should be uploaded in the website of **Ministry of Tourism**.

Karnataka

Human Library event in Mysuru

A human library, a concept which seeks to replace books with humans, was organised in Mysuru.

Human Library is a registered international non-profit organisation with its administrative headquarters in Copenhagen, Denmark.

In India the organisation is located in various places like Hyderabad(Telangana), Mumbai(Maharashtra), Delhi, Bengaluru(Karnataka), etc. Pavithra K is the founder of Human Library, Mysuru Chapter.

Kerala

Kerala launches two welfare schemes to support differently-abled persons

- **Kerala** unveiled two social welfare schemes - '**Vijayamritham**' and '**Sahachari**' to honour differently-abled people as well as NSS, NCC and Student Police Cadet (SPC) units working for their care and welfare.
- Under the 'Vijayamritham' scheme, for degree courses, the candidate should have scored at least 60% (for arts subjects) and 80% (for science subjects).

- While students who have passed degree courses with the above criteria will be given cash awards of Rs 8,000, those who have passed PG or professional courses will be given Rs 10,000.
- Sahachari scheme has been evolved to honour groups that assist people, with over 40% disability, in their studies and other tasks.

Kerala startup mission to organise second Scalathon for start-ups

- The Kerala Startup Mission (KSUM) is all set to conduct a similar Scalathon on January 7, 2020 for small and medium enterprises.
- The programme is for entrepreneurs with an annual business turnover between `5 crore and `350 crore.
- Scalathon will provide business owners with expert advice on improving industry ventures. The first edition of the Scalathon was held on December 17 and 18 at KSUM's Integrated Startup Complex in Kalamassery.

Gujarat

India's first maritime museum coming up at Lothal in Gujarat

- The government has decided to establish a National Maritime Heritage Museum at Lothal, a Harappan site on the Saurashtra coast in Gujarat.
- The museum will also be an independent research centre of underwater archaeology for reconstruction of maritime history, archaeology of boat building and materials traded.
- The museum is being set up with technical help from the **Portuguese Maritime Heritage Museum**. Lothal is the site of one of the oldest ports in India dating to the Bronze Age.

Haryana

Haryana CM inaugurates Integrated Command and Control Centre

- Haryana CM has inaugurated Gurgaon's ambitious Integrated Command and Control Centre (ICCC). It has been developed as the nerve centre to provide multifaceted online smart services to people.
- The ICCC has been designed to serve as the nodal point for all online data related to the Smart City applications, including CCTV-based public safety and adaptive traffic management system, smart parking system, water supply management system, pollution monitoring, property tax management system and asset management system.

Haryana govt distributed 101 Pashu Kisan Credit Cards in Bhiwani

- The First Pashu Kisan credit cards in India were distributed to 101 animal farmers in Bhiwani in Haryana.
- Haryana Government has set a target to issue 10 lakh Pashu Kisan Credit cards by March 2021.
- Under the Scheme, banks give Rs 40783 for a cow and Rs 60249 for a buffalo. The credit amount for goat and sheep each is Rs 4063. In the case of a pig, it is Rs 16337 per pig. For Hens, it is Rs 720 per layer and Rs 161 per broiler hen .

Haryana CM Khattar unveils five e-initiatives, including Lokayukta portal

- Haryana launched five new e-initiatives, including Lokayukta portal and addition of 42 new schemes and services on the Saral portal, at the State-level Good Governance programme.
- The year 2020 would be observed as “**Susashan Sankalp Varsh**” during which suggestions and reforms in the field of governance would be invited from people of the State.

- The **'Lokayukta Portal'** has been developed with several features like acceptance of complaint or grievances, marking of complaint or grievances, enquiry of complaints, disposal of complaints, finalisation of complaints, daily cause list, reopened disposed-of cases and monitoring reports.
- **'Web-Helris'** is a web-enabled integrated solution for deed registration and land records management. This portal provides the facility related to deed registration, mutation, jamabandi, khasra gridawari, issuing of copies of record and rights and integration with internal and external entities.
- The pilot project of Sirsi village in district Karnal has been completed for the rural and abadi deh areas and field verification of Sirsi work has been done, making it first village in the State to become **'Lal Dora free'**.
- The State government has developed 22 district websites using secure, scalable and **sugamya platform**.
- These schemes and services pertaining to the 38 departments, boards and corporations are being provided to the citizens through more than 6,000 Atal Seva Kendras and 115 Antyodaya Kendras throughout 22 districts of the State.

Himachal Pradesh

The Himachal Pradesh Cabinet approved signing of an MoU to sell water from the Yamuna

- Himachal Pradesh Cabinet has approved signing of an MoU to sell Yamuna water from the state's share at Tajewala corridor.
- The state government would earn Rs 21 crore per annum from the sale of water.

Rohtang tunnel named after Vajpayee

- The Central government announced to name the Rohtang tunnel, a road link between Kullu and landlocked Lahaul Valley in Himachal Pradesh, after Vajpayee.
- The tunnel, being constructed from Manali to Leh, would be renamed as the 'Atal Tunnel'.

Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh

J&K Lt Governor Girish Murmu inaugurates Rajouri bridge

- Lt Governor Girish Chandra Murmu dedicated the 72-metre-long Multi Cell Box Type Load Class 70 bridge to the Nation in Rajouri.
- The bridge spans over Draji nallah and connected Draji Area to Tehsil Kotranka area under District Rajouri.
- Draji bridge is an important bridge for military as well as for socio-economic development of the Rajouri district. This bridge will facilitate all weather and speedy movement of Army troops as well as locals.

Madhya Pradesh

MP police launch e-cop app for women's safety

- The Madhya Pradesh police have launched **'MP e-Cop'**, a mobile app to facilitate girls to get immediate back-up just by the push of a button.
- There is SOS (an international code signal for extreme distress) facility in the app, which would trigger the SMS to Dial 100 and phone numbers fed in the app by the girls/women.
- The police will find the location of the person in distress after it receives the alert.

First elephant colony in Madhya Pradesh

- Elephants have stayed back in Madhya Pradesh for the first time over seasons and even bred two new calves, choosing not to return to the withering forests of north Chhattisgarh.
- Elephants in herds, 38 of them, wandered into the forests of Bandhavgarh looking for food and water, like each year.

- The 'Tiger State' of Madhya Pradesh, which in the 2019 census recorded the greatest number of estimated tigers at 526, thus securing the title, presently has no know-how of dealing with elephants.

Maharashtra

Maharashtra has most employable talent, followed by TN, UP

- India Skills Report 2019-20 that was released showed an overall positive trend in comparison with the past 6 years for talent supply.
- The report states that about 46% of students were found to be employable or ready to take-up jobs as against 33% in 2014.
- The most employable candidates as per the courses were MBA Students with 54% as against 40% in the last two years.
- B. Pharma, Polytechnic, B.Com and BA courses, on the other hand, saw an improvement in employability which is increased by more than 15%.
- In 2019, the decline in employability is seen in B.Tech, Engineering. MCA graduates, Technical & Computer-related courses.
- **The Wheebox findings** also elaborated on the states with the highest employability – **Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, and Uttar Pradesh.**
- **Mumbai** followed by Hyderabad showed the highest employable cities. Bengaluru, New Delhi, Pune, Lucknow, and Chennai have maintained their presence in the top 10 list over the past 6 years.
- States that registered a dip in their ranking were West Bengal (2nd in last year) and Haryana which could not make it into the top 10 list.

Maharashtra cabinet approves farm loan waiver, meal scheme

- Maharashtra approved the farm loan waiver scheme and gave its nod to a subsidised meal scheme for the poor.
- The cabinet gave its approval to launching the 'Shiv Bhojan' programme, under which the poor will be served meal at the subsidised rate of Rs 10 at designated centres in all districts of the state.
- Under the pilot scheme, at least one 'Shiv Bhojan' canteen will be started at district headquarters. Each canteen will serve 500 thalis (plates).

Odisha

Odisha CM launches 'Madhu' app to help school students

- Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik launched 'Madhu' app, an e-learning mobile phone application for school students to understand their subjects in a better and efficient way.
- The app named after 'Utkal Gourab' Madhusudan Das is developed by Ganjam district administration for school students.
- Through the app, the students will have access to video explanation of the topics they are taught in their classroom.

Odisha's famed 'Kalia' scheme to be merged with Centre's PM-KISAN

- The Odisha government has decided to merge its flagship scheme to provide assistance to farmers with the Centre's Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-Kisan) yojana.
- According to the new guidelines, the farmers will get Rs 10,000 per annum as provided under the 'Kalia' scheme. Cultivators would not be able to avail the central's assistance of Rs 6,000 annually after the merger.

- According to the new guidelines, Poor farmers will get just **Rs 10,000** (□ 6000 from central government & □ 4000 from State government).

Prez Kovind lays foundation stone for Paika Rebellion memorial in Odisha

- In Odisha, President Ram Nath Kovind laid the foundation stone for a memorial to mark completion of 200 years of Paika Rebellion, a valiant uprising of Paikas in 1817 against the British Rule which is often termed as the First War of Independence. The proposed project will come up at the foothills of Barunei hills in Khurda district. The memorial is seen as an epitome of Odisha's valour and will serve as an inspiration for the youth.

Odisha govt includes Agriculture and Farmers Empowerment Dept in 'Mo Sarkar' scheme

- The Odisha government has brought Agriculture and Farmers Empowerment Department under its flagship initiative 'Mo Sarkar'.
- The Odisha State Higher Education department will also soon come under the purview of "Mo Sarkar" program of 5T initiative.
- The 5-T mantra is based on the philosophy that transparency, teamwork, technology and time leads to transformation.

Odisha to set up 45 new fast track courts

- To expedite the trial of cases relating to women and children, 45 new fast track courts will be set up in Odisha.
- 21 courts would be dedicated for cases of rape and sexual harassment of women. The remaining 24 fast track courts will specifically deal with Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) cases.

Odisha CM launches 'Jalsathi' programme

- Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik has launched the 'Jalsathi' programme to ensure supply of safe drinking water to all households in the state.
- He distributed water quality testing kits and POS (point of sale) machines to the women volunteers .
- For implementation of the 'Jalsathi' programme, the Water Corporation of Odisha (WATCO) and women federations in Bhubaneswar signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU).

Bhubaneswar-New Delhi Rajdhani Express featuring Odisha's heritage flagged off

- Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on flagged off Bhubaneswar-New Delhi Rajdhani Express showcasing Odisha's heritage and culture on the exteriors of the train.
- The coaches were draped with vinyl wrapping sheets having high-quality art related prints on the dance forms, archaeological monuments and flora and fauna of the state.
- Earlier, an agreement was signed between the East- Coast Railway (ECoR) and Navratna NALCO for decoration of the Rajdhani Express.

Punjab

Punjab to create land banks in rural areas to boost industrial development

- The Punjab Cabinet gave in-principle approval to amend the Punjab Village Common Land (Regulation) Rules, 1964, to create land banks in rural areas to boost industrial development.
- The new rule would pave the way for transfer of 'Shamlat' land for industrial projects to the industry department and state-owned Punjab Small Industries & Export Corporation (PSIEC)

- Shamlat land is one that does not come under habitation and cultivation and is considered as consolidated land holdings for common use.

WEF partners with Punjab government to design pilot on Electric Vehicles ecosystem

- Punjab Government has partnered with the World Economic Forum (WEF) to design a Public-Private pilot on shared, clean and electric mobility to combat the growing problem of environmental pollution in the state.
- The state is also formulating its own EV Policy to support the adoption of e-vehicles. The state has already banned new registrations of diesel and petrol 3 wheelers in 5 districts (Ludhiana, Jalandhar, Amritsar, Mohali and Fatehgarh Sahib).
- It is also encouraging the setting up of EV/Battery units in the new industrial park located over 380 acres in Dhanansu village of Ludhiana district.
- Punjab is also set to get India's first Auto Shredding Plant, with capacity to handle two lakh cars per annum in an 8- hour shift. The plant has been set up in technical collaboration with German technology.

Punjab government launches ESTAC programme for startups

- Punjab CM launched Enable Startup Track Acceleration (ESTAC) programme during Progressive Punjab Investors Summit-2019, with an aim to foster entrepreneurship and innovation in the state.
- ESTAC is a series of startup acceleration programmes created through a strategic partnership between the state government (Start-up Punjab Cell) and AIC, Indian School of Business, Mohali.
- The first of the series of ESTAC programme focuses on agri-tech start-ups, while the subsequent ones will relate to e- mobility, grain procurement, electric metering and other agricultural innovations.
- It will be a six-month programme commencing from March 1, 2020. Ten selected start-ups will be given the opportunity to participate in the ESTAC programme and secure pilot projects with the government of Punjab.

Rajasthan

Mission Indradhanush begins in Rajasthan

- The state-level programme of Mission Indradhanush began in Rajasthan. The campaign will be conducted in four stages in the state.
- It is the first phase of the intensive vaccination campaign. The second phase will start from January 6, the third from February 3 and the fourth from March 2. In each phase, vaccination will be done on seven working days.
- In the first phase of the campaign, 6071 vaccination sessions will be conducted and 10161 pregnant women and 42704 children will be immunised.

Rajasthan government sets up Rs 1,000 crore Farmers Welfare Fund

- Rajasthan government has constituted Rs 1,000 crore Farmers Welfare Fund to provide them a reasonable price for agricultural produce and boost their income.
- Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot launched the fund at 'Kisan Sammelan'. The objective of this policy is to encourage agro-processing and agricultural exports as well as increase farmers' income in the state.

Gehlot Government starts first Janta Clinic in Rajasthan to treat the needy

- Chief Minister Gehlot inaugurated the first Janta clinic at Valmiki Basti in the Malviya Nagar area to provide free primary health care to people living in slums.
- In its first phase, 12 Janta Clinics will be opened in Jaipur where people would get free medicines, and free medical examination in some cases. Janta Clinics will be opened in other areas.

Tamil Nadu

Chennai first city in India to get online portal to exchange reusable products

- Chennai residents can now buy and sell reusable and recycled products online as the Greater Chennai Corporation launched a new website that facilitates waste-trading.
- www.madraswasteexchange.com has a variety of products made from dry and wet waste. All the products is available in 210 Resource Recovery Points (RRPs) across the city.
- The city currently generates 5,220 metric tonnes of waste daily. Out of this, 2610 MT is wet-waste which is being recycled by the corporation in various composting methods.
- This website is part of the Smart City Mission and currently, the civic body only sells dry and wet waste.

Tamil Nadu tops in coverage under micro-irrigation

- Tamil Nadu has emerged as the topper in coverage of area under micro-irrigation (MI).
- Gujarat comes next to Tamil Nadu with a coverage of 77,858 hectares and Andhra Pradesh, 52,027 hectares.
- Maharashtra comes fourth with around 36,831 hectares and Uttar Pradesh with 25,680 hectares.
- The Central government sanctioned the installation of 17,500 solar agricultural pumpsets in the State. This has been done under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha evem Utthan Mahabhiyan (PM-Kusum) scheme.

Telangana

Secunderabad Railway Station Gets India's First 'Water From Air' System

- The Indian Railways announced that it has installed a first-of-its-kind 'atmospheric water generator' (AWG) system called 'Meghdoot,' which converts humid air into potable drinking water, at Secunderabad railway station in Telangana.
- The AWG device is developed by Telangana-based watertech company Maithri Aquatech
- The device was installed under SCR's green initiatives and water conservation measures programme Meghdoot AWG, which was designed and fabricated by Maithri Aquatech, under 'Make in India' initiative.
- The company has partnered with government research institutions like Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)-Indian Institute of Chemical Technology (IICT) to produce water of the standard quality of water (pH 6.5 to 9.2).

Hyderabad - New Delhi Telangana Express adorned with “Singareni Colours” starts its run from Hyderabad to New Delhi

- An initiative by South Central Railway, Hyderabad-New Delhi- Hyderabad Telangana Express, the iconic train that connects the State and the Nation’s Capital, has been wrapped with the colors of Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL), the Government owned Coal producing giant of India and also a premier freight customer of the Railways.

- The Secunderabad Division of SCR has tied up with M/s. SCCL and one rake of Hyderabad- New Delhi Telangana Express has been vinyl wrapped by SCCL.

Telangana govt raises retirement age of RTC staff

- Telangana government has decided to raise the retirement age of employees of the Road Transport Corporation, RTC to 60 from the current 58 years.
- The decision will be applicable to all cadres of employees of the state-owned RTC.

Uttarakhand

Country's first aqualab to be set up in Dehradun

- The Uttarakhand state forest minister Shri Harak Singh Rawat laid foundation stone of India's first Ganga centralised aqualab at Wildlife Institute of India (WII) Dehradun, Uttarakhand.
- The aqualabs will be set up under the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG). Various aquatic life forms found in the 2525-kilometer-long Ganga river would be preserved in the lab WII.
- Tributaries of river Ganga such as Gomti, Betwa, Kosi will be scientifically studied and their biological components will be preserved in the lab.

Uttarakhand all set for survey on snow leopards

- Uttarakhand is all geared up to conduct its maiden survey on snow leopards for which the Indo-Tibetan Border Police will be roped in for the nearly two-year exercise.
- The census will be conducted on the basis of camera trap pictures, pugmark, excreta and other evidence. Work will start after winters are over for the project 'Secure Himalaya'.
- In 2017, the Centre had launched the 'SECURE Himalaya', a six-year project, to ensure conservation of locally and globally significant biodiversity, land and forest resources in high Himalayan ecosystem spread over Himachal Pradesh, J&K, Uttarakhand and Sikkim.

After Kerala, Uttarakhand schools introduce 'water bell' to have students consume more Water

- In an effort to tackle dehydration in children of government schools, Uttarakhand education department will be introducing a 'Water Bell'.
- The bell will ring thrice a day to remind students of class 1-8 to drink water.

Uttar Pradesh

UP govt announces 25% subsidy & full stamp duty waiver for defence industry

- Uttar Pradesh government has decided to provide 25% subsidy and 100% stamp duty waiver for setting up defence industry in the state.
- State will also provided all facilities including power, road and fencing of land to the companies that will set up defence industries.
- State cabinet has given relief to the home buyers in Noida and Greater Noida region by giving exemption to the builders from penal interest. Builders will only get this exemption if they pass on this benefit to the home buyers.
- The benefit will apply to builders who are set to provide homes to buyers by June 2021. The state government expected one lakh new homes to be constructed by that time.

UP Cabinet gives nod to setting up 218 fast-track courts for rapes, crimes against children

- The Uttar Pradesh Cabinet cleared a proposal to set up 218 fast-track courts for hearing cases pertaining to crimes against children and rapes.

- The UP Cabinet has decided that for hearing of cases of rapes and crimes committed on children, 218 fast-track courts will be set up. Of these, 144 courts will hear cases of rape, while 74 courts will hear cases in which POCSO Act has been slapped.
- An estimated expenditure of Rs 63 lakh will be incurred on each of the new fast-track court.

India's first university for transgender community to come up in UP's Kushinagar dist

- The first university for the transgender community in India will be opened in Uttar Pradesh's Kushinagar district.
- It is being built by the Akhil Bhartiya Kinnar Siksha Seva Trust (All-India transgender education service trust).

West Bengal

West Bengal tops in a 100-day work programme for promoting livelihoods

- West Bengal has been selected for the 1st prize in 100-Day Work Programme for Promoting Livelihoods.
- The Rural Development Ministry has selected Bankura and Cooch Behar Districts of the state for 1st and 2nd positions among districts in the country in implementation of rural job scheme.
- Baburmahal Gram Panchayat of Kulpi in South 24 Parganas District has also bagged best performance award from the Centre.

Revision Points

State	Capital	Chief Minister	Governor
Andhra Pradesh	Amaravati	Y. S. Jaganmohan Reddy	Biswa Bhusan Harichandan
Arunachal Pradesh	Itanagar	Pema Khandu	Brigadier BD Mishra
Assam	Dispur	Sarabananda Sonowal	Jagdish Mukhi
Bihar	Patna	Nitish Kumar	Phagu Chauhan
Chhattisgarh	Raipur	Bhupesh Baghel	Anusuiya Uikey
Goa	Panaji	Pramod Sawant	S.P Malik
Gujarat	Gandhi Nagar	Vijaybhai R. Rupani	Acharya Devvrat
Haryana	Chandigarh	Manohar Lal Khattar	Satyadev Narayan Arya
Himachal Pradesh	Shimla	Jai Ram Thakur	Bandaru Dattatraya
Jharkhand	Ranchi	Hemant Soren	Draupadi Murmu
Karnataka	Bengaluru	B S Yediyurappa	Vajubhai Rudabhai Vala
Kerala	Thiruvananthapuram	Pinarayi Vijayan	Arif Mohammed Khan
Madhya Pradesh	Bhopal	Kamal Nath	Lalji Tandon
Maharashtra	Mumbai	Uddhav Thackrey	Bhagat Singh Koshyari
Manipur	Imphal	N Biren Singh	Najma Heptulla
Meghalaya	Shillong	Conrad Sangma	RN Ravi (Additional Charge)

Mizoram	Aizawl	Pu Zoramthanga	P S Sreedharan Pillai
Nagaland	Kohima	Neiphiu Rio	RN Ravi
Odisha	Bhubaneswar	Naveen Patnaik	Ganeshi Lal
Punjab	Chandigarh	Amarinder Singh	V P Singh Badnore
Rajasthan	Jaipur	Ashok Gehlot	Kalraj Mishra
Sikkim	Gangtok	Prem Singh Tamang(PS Golay)	Ganga Prasad
Tamil Nadu	Chennai	Edappadi K. Palaniswami	Banwarilal Purohit
Telangana	Hyderabad	K. Chandrasekhar Rao	Tamilisai Soundararajan
Tripura	Agartala	Biplab Kumar Deb	Ramesh Bais
Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow	Yogi Adityanath	Anandiben Patel
Uttarakhand	Dehradun	Trivendra Singh Rawat	Baby Rani Maurya
West Bengal	Kolkata	Mamata Banerjee	Jagdeep Dhankhar

Important National News

Cabinet Approvals

The following agreements are approved in the cabinet.

- The agreement on Security Cooperation between India and Saudi Arabia
- The MoU between India and Bangladesh on cooperation in Youth matters
- The agreement between India and Uzbekistan on Cooperation in the field of Combating Transnational Organized Crime and International Terrorism
- The Agreement between India and Sweden on Recognition of Seafarer Certificates
- The MoU between India and Saudi Arabia for cooperation in the field of Renewable Energy
- The MoU between India and Brazil on Bioenergy Cooperation
- The Memorandum of Understanding between the Republic of India and the Federative Republic of Brazil on Bioenergy Cooperation.
- The creation of Chief of Defence Staff post
- The official amendments to the Arms (Amendment) Bill, 2019

India becomes first country to make entire Haj process digital

- India has become the first country to make the entire process for pilgrims going on Haj completely digital.
- An online application, e-visa, Haj mobile app, 'e-MASIHA' health facility, "e-luggage pre-tagging" providing all information in India itself regarding accommodation and transportation in Mecca and Madina will be provided to 2 lakh Indian Muslims going for Haj in 2020.

IBC (Second Amendment) Bill, 2019 introduced in LOK SABHA

- The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Second Amendment) Bill, 2019 has been introduced in the Lok Sabha.

- The amendment is for streamlining corporate insolvency resolution process and to protect last-mile funding to promote investment in sectors that are financially distressed. Union Cabinet gave its approval to the amendment.

IIT Hyderabad CfHE Fellow launches India's first 'Vaccination Clinic' in Pune in collaboration with Gates Foundation

- Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad's Center for Healthcare Entrepreneurship (CfHE) Fellow Mr. Jignesh Patel has launched in Pune a Vaccination on Wheels Clinic, a first-of-its-kind service in India.
- It is done in collaboration with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, which provided a grant to Mr. Jignesh Patel under its Grand Challenges Explorations.
- Called 'VaccineOnWheels.com' as they have adopted VOW (Vaccination On Wheels) concept which will offer only vaccination services. **Mr. Jignesh Patel** founded Jivika Healthcare to provide this vaccination service.

Skill Development Ministry to set up 500 skill hubs and labs in govt schools

- Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Ministry has finalized a plan for setting up 500 skill hubs and labs in government schools. It has taken several initiatives to impart skill training to the youth of the country.
- The Ministry aims to Skill on a large scale with high Standards in order to achieve its vision of a Skilled India.

Govt proposes to invest 50 lakh crore rupees for modernisation of Railways

- Railway Minister Piyush Goyal has stated that Railways is looking at a 50 lakh crore rupees investment over the **next 12 years**.
- It is coming out of joint ventures so that it can modernize the railways, bring down the logistics cost and improve the share of freight in railway network and make the journey world-class.

PM Modi addresses ASSOCHAM Annual Conference

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the annual general meeting of Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India in New Delhi.
- The theme of the event was '**New India Aspiring for a USD 5 trillion economy**'. The event was organised on the completion of 100 years of ASSOCHAM.

Government launches independent directors' databank

- The government launched a databank of independent directors which will be a "comprehensive repository" of existing as well as those eligible to be independent directors.
- Set up under the Companies Act, 2013, independent directors are required to register themselves with the databank within three months from December 1, as per rules notified by the corporate affairs ministry.
- The Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA), under the ministry, would be maintaining the databank portal.

Intensified Mission Indradhanush (IMI) 2.0

- The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has launched Intensified Mission Indradhanush (IMI) 2.0 from December 2019 to March 2020.
- The IMI 2.0 portal was launched that has been designed to capture information on the block wise target of children and pregnant women to be vaccinated during the IMI drive and also the coverage data during the rounds of activity. The data will be entered at the district level.

Vice President launches 'Bharatiya Poshan Anthem'

- Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu launched the "Bharatiya Poshan Anthem" which aims at taking the message of making India malnutrition free to all corners of the country.
- The anthem has been penned by noted lyricist **Prasoon Joshi** and sung by **Shankar Mahadevan**.
- Poshan Abhiyan was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in March 2018 with an objective to make India malnutrition free by **2022**.

Election Commission to implement 'Political Parties Registration Tracking Management System'

- The Various technologies like apps, software and gadgets have been adopted by the Election Commission of India to conduct free and fair elections.
- The Election Commission of India has also reviewed the process of registration of the political parties. The new guidelines will be effective from 1st January 2020.

'YuWaah' youth skilling initiative to provide jobs to 300 million launched by Unicef, central govt

- National initiative - YuWaah - aimed at imparting skills among the youth and providing employment to more than 300 million young Indians was launched by Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Irani with an alliance of national and international partners, including **Unicef**.
- With the aim to transform the countries involved into hubs of education, skilling and employment for its more than 300 million young people aged 10-24 years.

Rural areas in all States, UTs become Open Defecation Free

- Rural areas in all the States and Union Territories have become Open Defecation Free in the country.
- Urban areas of all the States and Union Territories except **West Bengal** have been declared Open Defecation Free.
- Over 10 crore individual household latrines were constructed under the Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin).
- Over 60 lakh individual household latrines were constructed under the Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban).

Government approves 7 projects to strengthen FM coverage along Indo- Nepal border

- The government has approved seven projects for setting up FM transmitters in the premises of **Sashastra Seema Bal** (SSB) to strengthen FM coverage along the Indo-Nepal border.
- These 7 projects will set up in Bihar (Bathnaha village of Araria district, Narkatiaganj town in West Champaran district, and Sitamarhi district), Uttar Pradesh-UP (Gadaniya village in Lakhimpur Kheri district , Nanpara town in Bahraich district ,and Maharajganj district) , Uttarakhand (Champawat district).

President Ram Nath Kovind gave his assent to the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill

- According to the Act, members of Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi and Christian communities who have come from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan till December 31, 2014 and facing religious persecution there will not be treated as illegal immigrants but given Indian citizenship.
- The amendment is not applicable to the tribal areas of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram or Tripura as included in the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution and in the areas covered under the Inner Line Permit.
- The Inner Line Permit regime is applicable in Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Mizoram.

15th Finance Commission submits its report for FY21 to FM Sitharaman

- The Finance Commission submitted its report for the financial year 2020-21 to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. The panel is headed by **N K Singh**.
- The 15th Finance Commission was constituted by the President of India under Article 280 of the Constitution on November 27, 2017, to make recommendations for a period of five years from April 2020 to March 2025.

Govt disbursed Rs 36,000 crore to farmers under PM-Kisan Samman Nidhi

- Around 36 thousand crore rupees have been disbursed under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi.

- Around seven crores 60 lakh farmers have been benefited under the scheme. The government is striving to double the farmer's income **by 2022**.
- The Agriculture Export Policy, 2018 strives to increase India's Agriculture and allied exports which in turn would help in achieving the goal of doubling the farmer's income.

Over Rs 10 lakh cr loans sanctioned under MUDRA Yojana

- The government said more than Rs 10 lakh crore have been disbursed under the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana .
- The PMMY is a scheme launched by the prime minister on April 8, 2015, for providing loans up to **Rs 10 lakh** to non- corporate, non-farm small/micro enterprises.
- Under the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY), 20.84 crore loan accounts totalling an amount of Rs 10.24 lakh crore.

Over 65 lakh patients availed treatment worth Rs 9,549 crore under Ayushman Bharat scheme

- Over 65 lakh patients were provided treatment worth Rs Rs 9,549 crore under the Centre's flagship Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Yojana (AB-PMJAY).
- Out of the total 65,45,733 patients, treatment amounting to Rs 6,133 crore was provided to 35,34,695 through private hospitals.
- Under the AB-PMJAY, 1392 health benefits packages and their rates have been defined for providing secondary and tertiary healthcare to the beneficiaries at the empanelled hospitals.
- Under the health insurance scheme, the Centre and state's ratio of contribution towards premium is **60:40** in all the states except the northeast and the Himalayan region, where the ratio is 90:10.
- A total of Rs 1013.76 crore has been released under the AB-PMJAY for the financial year 2019-20, while for the previous year the amount stands at **Rs 1849.55 crore**.
- It is also to be noted that AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, Sowa Rigpa and Homoeopathy) treatment packages will not be covered in the scheme.
- The AB-PMJAY provides health cover of **Rs 5 lakh per family** per year.

Culture Minister Prahlaad Patel launches web portal showcasing heritage of India

- The Union Minister of State for Culture and Tourism, Prahlaad Singh Patel launched the Indian Culture web portal in New Delhi.
- The Indian Culture portal was envisioned by the Ministry of Culture and developed by a team from the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Bombay, while the data was curated by Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU).
- The Indian culture portal is the first Government authorized portal where knowledge and cultural resources of organizations of the Ministry of Culture are now available in the public domain on a single platform.
- The content on the portal is available in English and Hindi language in an interactive, user-friendly interface.

Ekamra Kshetra to replicate Jagannath temple project

- Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik announced a package for revival and preservation of the heritage value and grandeur of Lingaraj Temple and its surroundings on 66 acre of land.
- The package for Ekamra Kshetra in the first phase includes Outer Access Road Development, Lingaraj Entry Plaza, Bindu Sagar revival plan, parking space, Lingaraj Heritage Complex, development of amenities for Kedar Gouri-Mukteswar complex, Heritage e-auto project, relocation projects and heritage interpretation centre.

India Announces a “Green Window” to Catalyze Climate Finance

- The Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA) is considering an allocation of **\$20 million** in seed funding to set up its pioneering “Green Window”.
- The IREDA Green Window builds on the globally successful green bank model. Green banks across the world have supported projects worth \$50 billion in the last five years.
- The aim of the IREDA Green Window is to drive investment into underserved segments of the clean energy market. Under MNRE and IREDA’s leadership, the Green Window is based on extensive market research and stakeholder discussions involved in financing clean energy..
- IREDA is discussing allocating approximately \$20 million for the Green Window. With the seed capital, IREDA plans to leverage an additional \$80 million from both domestic and international sources to establish a facility of \$100 million.

Navarms 2019 - 4th International Seminar Cum Exhibition on Naval Weapon Systems

- The fourth edition of International Seminar cum Exhibition on Naval Weapon Systems ‘NAVARMS - 2019’ with the **theme ‘Make in India - Fight Category: Opportunities and Imperatives’** was inaugurated by Admiral Karambir Singh, Chief of the Naval Staff at Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, Development Enclave, New Delhi.
- The NAVARMS – 2019 Exhibition on defence technology was inaugurated by the CNS. The Exhibition comprised of exhibits from Ordnance Factory, DPSUs, private industries (both domestic and international) and Indian Navy showcasing cutting edge and niche defence technologies.

Ministry of HRD is implementing the Scheme of Vocationalisation of School Education to promote vocational education among children

- Ministry of Human Resource Development is implementing the Scheme of Vocationalisation of School Education under the umbrella of ‘Samagra Shiksha – an integrated scheme for school education’.
- Under the scheme a vocational subject is offered for Classes IX to XII along with the general education to provide necessary employability and vocational skills for variety of occupations.
- National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) have included the basic contents on Goods and Services Tax (GST) in their textbooks of Economics, Accountancy and Business Studies at different stages.
- The Scheme of Vocationalisation of School Education under the umbrella of ‘**Samagra Shiksha**’ is implemented in all the States and Union Territories.

Economic census launched in national capital

- The Seventh Economic Census was launched in the National Capital Territory of Delhi. The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation has tied up with Common Service Centre to carry out the economic census.
- For the first time the entire census is being conducted on a digital platform by the use of an application which will ensure high accuracy and data security.

National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management in Chennai

- The Ministry of environment, forest and climate change set up the National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management (NCSCM), Chennai to undertake studies and research in the area of Coastal Zone Management including coastal resources and environment.

The aims and Objectives of the Center are:

- Strive for being a World Class Knowledge Institution related to coastal zones, environment, resources and processes,
- To promote integrated and sustainable management of the coastal and marine areas in India for the benefit and wellbeing of the traditional coastal and island communities, and

- Advise the Union and State Governments and other associated stakeholder(s) on policy, and scientific matters related to Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM).

Women in Bihar to outlive males by 2035

- Women in Bihar are expected to outlive their male counterparts by the year 2035 according to a report by National Commission on Population, which falls under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- According to the report, the female life expectancy at birth for women will reach 74.5, as compared to 72.9 of males by 2035.
- The report titled ‘Population Projections For India and States 2011-2036’, has projected a major increase in the population of Bihar as well.
- Bihar will continue to be the youngest state till 2036, with an expected median age of around 28.1.

Ministry of Coal to Establish Sustainable Development Cell for Environmental Mitigation Measures

- The Ministry of Coal has decided to establish a ‘Sustainable Development Cell’ in order to promote environmentally sustainable coal mining in the country and address environmental concerns during the decommissioning or closure of mines.
- The Sustainable Development cell (SDC) will advise, mentor, plan and monitor the mitigation measures taken by the coal companies for maximising the utilisation of available resources in a sustainable way.

Uttarakhand to get a ‘Centre of Excellence for Skilling’ in Uttarkashi

- Uttarakhand will soon get a ‘Centre of Excellence for Skilling’ in Uttarkashi district to train youths of the hill state.
- The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship will send experts for discussing avenues for promotion of skill development and entrepreneurship.

Fifth EAC meeting of 15th Finance Commission held in New Delhi

- The fifth meeting of the Economic Advisory Council (EAC) of the Fifteenth Finance Commission was held in New Delhi.
- After the meeting, Chairman NK Singh stated that future revenue is the most critical issue for the Finance Commission.
- Advisory Council was informed about submission of the 2020-21 report and Commission’s next course of actions pertaining to preparation of the report for 2021-26 period.

Centre releases ₹35,298 cr GST compensation to states and UTs

- The Centre has released about ₹35,000 crore to states and Union Territories as pending compensation. Most of the states rued that the delay in payment has put pressure on their finances affecting many development works.

India donates solar-powered lamps to marginalised Palestinian children

- India has donated solar powered study lamps to Palestinian elementary school children from a marginalised Bedouin community to spread the principles of self-sufficiency and raise awareness towards the adverse effects of climate change.
- The solar powered study lamps supplied by Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay aims at making the student beneficiaries for the future propagators of renewable energy.

BEL & HAL organise roadshow urging active participation in Def Expo 2020

- Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) and Hindustan Aeronautical Limited (HAL) organised a roadshow in the run up to the 11th edition of DefExpo scheduled to be held in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh from February 5-8, 2020.
- The theme of DefExpo 2020 is 'Digital Transformation of Defence'. The event would provide a common platform for Defence industries, both public and private, MSMEs and startups.

Government promises broadband access in all villages by 2022; launches National Broadband Mission

- The government promised broadband access in all villages by 2022, as it launched the ambitious National Broadband Mission entailing stakeholder investment of Rs 7 lakh crore in the coming years.
- The mission will facilitate universal and equitable access to broadband services across the country, especially in rural and remote areas. It also involves laying of incremental 30 lakh route km of Optical Fiber Cable and increase in tower density from 0.42 to 1 tower per thousand of population by 2024.
- The mission also envisages increasing fiberisation of towers to 70% from 30% at present.

Yashwant Sinha-led group suggests restoration of statehood to Jammu and Kashmir

- The Concerned Citizens' Group (CCG) headed by Yashwant Sinha said the Union government should restore statehood to Jammu and Kashmir by reuniting the two union territories to bring back normalcy in the Valley.
- The CCG demanded the release of all Kashmiris who were taken into preventive detention under Public Safety Act (PSA) if they are not accused of any crime.

GeM launches National Outreach Programme - GeM Samvaad

- GeM Samvaad, was launched by Anup Wadhawan, Secretary, Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India and Chairman, GeM in New Delhi.
- Through GeM Samvaad the marketplace is looking forward to receiving feedback from users which shall be used for making improvements and advancements in the system.

Tripura gets its first Agro Based SEZ to come up in Sabroom

- The Ministry of Commerce and Industry has notified the setting up of the first ever Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in Tripura.
- The SEZ is being set-up across Feni River at Sabroom, South Tripura District, which is 130 km away from Agartala. It will be a Sector Specific Economic Zone for Agro-Based Food Processing.
- The estimated investment in the project will be around 1550 Crore. The developer of the SEZ will be Tripura Industrial Development Corporation (TIDC) Ltd.

136-km international rail link from Bihar to Kathmandu on track

- Indian Railways has announced that the survey work on the 136-km international railway from Raxaul on the Bihar border has been completed and is targeted for completion by 2030.
- The project would cost Rs 16,550 crore excluding the cost of acquisition of land by Nepal.
- The initial survey has been completed and the Ministry of External Affairs of India is to fund the project.
- A total of 32 road over bridges, 53 underpasses, 259 minor bridges and 41 major bridges will be designed to facilitate the route, which would pass through 39 tunnels.

Government approves Rs 436 crore outlay for skilling 4 lakh persons

- The government announced Rs 436 crore outlay for skilling 4 lakh professionals in futuristic areas such as artificial intelligence, blockchain, and cybersecurity over the next three years.

- The 'Future Skills PRIME' programme will be jointly rolled out by the information technology ministry and industry body Nasscom and will seek to position the initiative as India stack for digital talent.
- India is upping the ante in digital skilling at a time when it is poised to see over 90 million people joining the overall workforce by **2030**.

Govt plans host of measures to control population growth

- The government is set to adopt a host of measures to control population growth, including offering family planning support and investing in the behavioural change of people and making family planning a national priority
- NITI Aayog will consult subject specialists and officials to find ways of strengthening the country's population policy and family planning programmes.

Mission on urban renewal extended by 2 yrs to 2022

- The Centre has decided to extend the mission period of its flagship initiative Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) by two more years.
- Launched on June 25, 2015 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, AMRUT completes its mission period in March 2020.
- The project has a total outlay of Rs 77,640 crore (including central assistance of Rs 35,990).
- The ministry of housing and urban affairs has now decided to extend the mission by two more years till March 2022.

Dr. Harsh Vardhan dedicates the CGHS Wellness Centre, Vikaspuri, New Delhi to the CGHS beneficiaries

- CGHS services shall be now be extended to 100 cities". It was stated by Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister for Health & Family Welfare as he inaugurated the new CGHS Wellness Centre at Vikaspuri, New Delhi.
- At present the scheme is operational across 72 Cities through 329 Allopathic Wellness Centres and 86 AYUSH Centres. About 58% of CGHS beneficiaries avail of CGHS facilities at least once in a year.

Centre allots Rs 66,000 cr Kerala semi-high speed rail project

- The Centre had given in-principle approval to the ₹66,000 crore Thiruvananthapuram-Kasaragod semi-high speed rail (SHSR) corridor project.
- The order was issued by the Ministry of Railways and conveyed to Kerala Chief Secretary Tom Jose, Vijayan .
- It's joint venture of the Kerala government and the Ministry of Railways. SHSR, named Silver Line, is envisaged to cut travel time between Thiruvananthapuram and Kasaragod from 12 hours to 4 hours.

Parliament passes bill to merge UTs Daman and Diu, Dadra and Nagar Haveli

- The Parliament passed a bill which seeks to merge two Union Territories -- Daman and Diu, and Dadra and Nagar Haveli -- into one unit.
- The merged Union Territory will be named Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu.
- The country currently has nine Union Territories after the creation of the UTs of Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh. The number of UTs will come down to eight.

'Oxygen Parlour' at Nashik Railway Station to combat air pollution

- An 'Oxygen Parlour' has been opened at Nashik railway station to provide an experience of breathing clean air to the commuters.
- The initiative comes with the efforts of Airo Guard in collaboration with the Indian Railways.
- The concept of Oxygen Parlour is based on the recommendation of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

Central government to organize 100 'Hunar Haats' in next five years

- Government has decided to organize hundred Hunar Haat across the country in the next five years. These Haat aim to provide market exposure and employment opportunities to artisans, craftsmen and traditional culinary experts.
- Hunar Haat will be organized in New Delhi, Bengaluru, Chennai, Kolkata, Lucknow, Dehradun, Patna, Indore and other places.
- The Ministry has also sanctioned 100 Hunar Hubs in different parts of the country wherein training is being provided to master artisans, craftsmen and traditional culinary experts.

Indian Railways to modernize its Signalling system

- Indian Railways has decided to modernize its Signalling system on its entire network by implementing Modern Train Control system.
- Four works of the total 640-kilometre route at a cost of 1810 crore rupees have been sanctioned as pilot projects in Supplementary Works Programmes 2018-19 for extensive trials of Modern Train Control System.
- In connection with works of raising the speed up to 160 kmph to reduce travel time from existing 18 hours to 12 hours, Modern Train Control system shall be implemented on Delhi - Mumbai and Delhi - Howrah High- Density routes.

Urban India declared Open defecation free

- India Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban has achieved its target of creating Urban India Open Defecation Free.
- Urban areas of 35 states and Union Territories have become ODF. In all, 4,320 cities out of 4,372 have declared themselves ODF, of which 4,167 cities have been certified through third-party verification.

Govt notifies rules for fixation of microdots identifiers on vehicles

- The government has notified rules for fixation of microdots identifiers on motor vehicles and their parts.
- Microdots will enhance the security of vehicles. The invisible microdots will now come affixed on vehicles and their parts to prevent theft as well as to check fake spare parts.
- Microdot technology involves spraying the body and parts of the vehicle or any other machine with microscopic dots, which give a unique identification.

Dharmendra Pradhan unveils India's First CNG Bus which can run 1000 Kms in one fill

- Dharmendra Pradhan unveiled India's first long distance CNG bus fitted with composite CNG cylinders, which can travel around 1000 kms in a single fill. The project has been executed by Indraprastha Gas Limited (IGL).
- **Delhi** has witnessed revolution in shift towards cleaner, gas-based fuels. Over 500 CNG stations are operating in Delhi NCR and about 12 lakh piped natural gas connections have been provided.

Digital Radio to be launched in 2024: Prakash Javadekar

- Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar has stated that NDA government is bringing Digital Radio in 2024. The audio of digital radio will be more clear and its reach will be higher.

PM Modi to unveil statue of Atal Bihari Vajpayee in Lucknow

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has unveiled a 25-foot bronze statue of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee in Lucknow. Prime Minister also laid the foundation stone of Atal Bihari Medical University.

PM Modi to launch Atal Bhujal Yojana

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will launch Atal Bhujal Yojana in New Delhi. The Central Government scheme will promote Panchayat led ground water management and behavioural changes with primary focus on demand side management. The project outlay is ₹ 6,000 crore rupees.

- Atal Bhujal Yojana has two major components. One is Sustainable ground water management in the States including improving monitoring networks, capacity building and strengthening of Water User Associations. Second is incentivising the States for achievements in improved groundwater management practices.

Centre plans to convert 75 hospitals into medical colleges

- Harsh vardhan Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan has stated the Centre is planning to convert 75 hospitals in aspirational districts across the country into medical colleges in a phased manner.
- A target has been set to convert 49 hospitals, including six in Odisha, into medical colleges within the next five years.
- The Centre has planned to set up 1 lakh 50 thousand health and wellness centres across the country under the Ayushman Bharat scheme.

All villages to have free WiFi services by March 2020: Govt

- Ravi Shankar Prasad has stated that free WiFi services will be provided to all villages across the country through Bharat net till March next year.
- The target of the government is to convert at least 15 per cent of villages to the digital village in the next four years.

Govt approves updation of National Population Register (NPR); says no documentation or bio- metric needed

- Union Cabinet approves conduct of Census of India 2021 and updation of National Population Register. The next decennial Census is due in 2021 and would be conducted in two phases.
- The House listing and Housing Census will be carried out from April to September 2020 and Population Enumeration from 9th February to 28th February, 2021.
- Census exercise will be done by using App based technology to make it easier.

Aadhaar made mandatory for PMVVY pension scheme

- The government has made Aadhaar mandatory for subscribers of the Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana (PMVVY), a pension scheme for senior citizens.
- The scheme, which envisages an assured rate of return of 8% annually, is being implemented through Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC). The scheme was announced in Union Budgets of 2017-18 and 2018-19.
- The maximum limit under PMVVY was doubled to ₹15 lakh per senior citizen. The scheme is available for subscription till March 2020.

Dr. Harsh Vardhan inaugurates 2nd Edition of “Eat Right Mela”

- Dr. Harsh Vardhan inaugurated the second edition of the ‘Eat Right Mela’ at Jawahar Lal Nehru Stadium, New Delhi .
- Eat Right Mela of FSSAI is a commendable effort and outreach activity for citizens to nudge them towards eating right.
- The Union Minister launched ‘**The PURPLE Book**’ a handbook on diets for diseases. The book provides general guidelines for hospitals on suitable diets for common medical conditions.

MoH&UA to organise consultative workshop with States & UTs on "Shehri Samridhi

Utsav 2020"

- Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM) under Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs organized a meeting at New Delhi with all States and UTs to set out the framework for Shehri Samrddhi Utsav (SSU) 2020.
- The second edition of SSU 2020 will be organised from March 28 to April 12, 2020.

VP Venkaiah Naidu to inaugurate an LPG bottling plant of BPCL in Bolangir, Odisha

- Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu is scheduled to visit Balangir district of Odisha to inaugurate an LPG bottling plant of Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited in Balangir.
- The bottling plant has been established at an expenditure of 103 crore rupees and has capacity of manufacturing 42 lakh cylinders annually.
- The consumption is expected to increase to 105 lakh cylinders by the end of 2020.

HRD Minister launches five documents developed by UGC

- Human Resource Development Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank launched the five documents developed by University Grants Commission, UGC covering the 5 verticals of Quality Mandate in New Delhi .
- These five documents cover evaluation reforms, eco-friendly and sustainable university campuses, human values and professional ethics, faculty induction and academic research integrity.

Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh launches DefExpo 2020 mobile app

- Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh launched the mobile app of the forthcoming DefExpo 2020 . The app is available on Apple App Store and Android Play Store.
- The app has been developed by Department of Defence Production, Ministry of Defence (MoD) with the aim to engage with the visitors as well as exhibitors.

Finance Minister launches eBkay for online auction of assets attached by banks

- eBkay, a common e-auction platform was launched to enable online auction by banks of attached assets transparently and cleanly for improved realisation of value by the Finance Minister.
- The platform is equipped with property search features and navigational links to all PSB e-auction sites, provides single-window access to information on properties up for e-auction.

Central, state pollution control bodies to meet in Patna conference next month

- Union Minister for Environment Prakash Javadekar will inaugurate the two-day long 64th conference of central and state pollution control boards and pollution committees in Patna.
- The issues related to implementation, challenges and enforcement strategies for effective management of solid waste including plastic would be discussed.

Amit Shah unveils new insignia for CRPF's VIP security wing

- Amit Shah unveiled a new insignia for the CRPF's VIP security wing that protects 59 high-risk dignitaries, including members of the Gandhi family and a host of Union ministers.
- The logo — with a “Garuda”, sword and shield — will give a distinct identity to the unit, Shah said. The insignia will bear the motto of the force -- “Always, Aware, Alert”.

Indian Railways introduces New Passenger friendly Information System at Anakapalle Station in Vijayawada Division

- Indian Railways introduced a new Passenger Information System at Anakapalle Railway Station of Vijayawada Division in South Central Railway. The Passenger Information system comprises both “At a Glance Display Board” and “Coach Guidance Display Board”.
- The cost of the equipment is Rs 10 lakhs including supply, installation, commissioning and onsite warranty of 3 years.

PM Modi to inaugurate Science Congress in Bengaluru

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the 107th Indian Science Congress, organised by the University of Agricultural Sciences.

- The theme is ‘Science and Technology: Rural Development’. For the first time, ‘Farmers’ Science Congress’ is included.

CCTV in all railway stations and coaches by March 2022: Railway Board Chairman

- The Indian Railways has floated tenders for installing CCTV cameras at all the stations and in all the coaches by March 2022.
- The railways received Rs 500 crore under the Nirbhaya Fund for installing CCTV cameras on the railway premises across the country. The railways has also allotted Rs 2,000 crore for the installation of CCTV cameras.

Indian Railways to Launch Tejas Express on Ahmedabad-Mumbai Route

- Tejas is second Premium Train to be run by IRCTC. After the successful run of Lucknow-Delhi Tejas Express, the second premium Tejas train is ready to run between Ahmedabad and Mumbai.
- The inaugural run of this second Tejas Train will be flagged off from Ahmedabad on 17th January 2020. The commercial run of the train will start with effect from 19th January 2020 from Ahmedabad.

India set to cross 100GW renewable energy capacity mark in 2020

- India is all set to cross the 100GW renewable energy capacity mark in 2020 and can make rapid strides towards the ambitious 175GW clean energy target by 2022.
- India's installed renewable energy generation capacity touched around 86GW by November-end. This includes solar, wind, small hydro, biomass, waste to energy and others.
- Several new programs such as PM-KUSUM, solar rooftop phase-2, development of Ultra Mega Renewable Energy Power Parks (UMREPPs) etc have been introduced to promote renewable energy sector in India.

Revision Points

Portfolio	Union Minister	Constituency
Ministry of personnel, public grievances and pensions	Narendra Modi	Varanasi
Ministry of Defence	Rajnath Singh	Lucknow
Ministry of Home Affairs	Amit Shah	Gandhinagar
Ministry of Road Transport and Highways & Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium enterprises	Nitin Gadkari	Nagpur
Ministry of Chemical and Fertilizers	DV Sadananda Gowda	Bangalore North
Ministry of Finance & Ministry of Corporate Affairs	Nirmala Sitharaman	Rajya Sabha
Ministry of Consumer affairs, food and public distribution	Ram Vilas Paswan	NA
Ministry of agriculture and farmers welfare, Ministry of Rural Development & Ministry of Panchayati Raj	Narendra Singh Tomar	Morena
Ministry of Law and Justice, Ministry of communications & Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology	Ravi Shankar Prasad	Patna Sahib
Ministry of Food Processing Industries	Harsimrat Kaur Badal	Bathinda
Ministry of Social justice and empowerment	Thaawar Chand Gehlot	RS
Ministry of External Affairs	Dr Subrahmanyam	RS (Gujarat)

	Jaishankar	
Ministry of Human Resource Development	Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank'	Haridwar
Ministry of Tribal Affairs	Arjun Munda	Khunti
Ministry of Women and child Development & Ministry of Textiles	Smriti Zubin Irani	Amethi
Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Ministry of Science and Technology & Ministry of Earth Sciences	Dr Harsh Vardhan	Chandni Chowk
Ministry of environment, forest and climate change & Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Ministry of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprise	Prakash Javadekar	Rajya Sabha
Ministry of Railways & Ministry of Commerce and Industry	Piyush Goyal	Rajya Sabha
Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas & Ministry of Steel	Dharmendra Pradhan	Rajya Sabha
Ministry of Minority Affairs	Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi	Rajya Sabha
Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs, Ministry of coal & Ministry of Mines	Pralhad Joshi	Dharwad
Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship	Dr Mahendra Nath Pandey	Chandauli
Ministry of Animal Husbandry, dairying and fisheries	Giriraj Singh	Begusarai

Important International News

Eight West African nations rename common currency to Eco

- Eight West African countries have agreed to change the name of their common currency to Eco and severed their currency CFA Franc's links to former colonial ruler France.
- Benin, Burkina Faso, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo currently use the currency.
- All the countries are former French colonies apart from Guinea-Bissau. Eco will see the light of day in 2020.

Union ministers, CMs to join over 100 CEOs at World Economic Forum's 50th Annual Meeting in Davos

- Union ministers Piyush Goyal and Mansukh Mandaviya, & three chief ministers - Amarinder Singh, Kamal Nath and B S Yeddyurappa --, will join over 100 Indian CEOs in the Swiss ski resort town of Davos next month for the World Economic Forum's 50th annual meeting.
- The WEF has stated the 2020 meeting aims to give a concrete meaning to "stakeholder capitalism", assist governments and international institutions in tracking progress towards the Paris Agreement.

Ecuador declares emergency after fuel spill in Galapagos Islands

- Ecuador has declared emergency to contain the environmental impact of a fuel spill in the Galapagos Islands, after a barge carrying 600 gallons of diesel fuel sank. The Islands are located 1,000 kilometers east of mainland Ecuador.

China to suspend US Navy visits to Hong Kong

- China will suspend US Navy visits to Hong Kong and sanction a range of pro-democracy non-governmental organizations.
- This is in retaliation for US Congress passing legislation supporting human rights in the semi-autonomous territory.
- China has long accused foreign groups and governments of fomenting the six-month-old demonstrations in Hong Kong.

Saudi Arabia becomes 1st Arab country to take over G20 presidency

- Saudi Arabia became the first Arab nation to assume the G20 presidency after it took over from Japan.
- The Saudi G20 presidency is committed to continuing the work from Osaka and promoting multilateral consensus.

UNESCO removes 'anti-Semitic' Belgian carnival from heritage list

- Belgian carnival has been removed from UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage list after officials found the "recurrence of racist and anti-Semitic representations" to be incompatible with its principles.
- Aalst Carnival was recognized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), but has been widely condemned by Jewish organizations.

World's first liquid hydrogen carrier ship launches in Japan

- Japan's Kawasaki Heavy Industries debuted the world's first marine carrier 'Suiso Frontier' that transports liquefied hydrogen, using technology that will vastly expand cargo capacity of the green energy source
- The carrier will transport to Japan hydrogen produced in Australia from cheap coal, with trial shipments due to begin before March 2021.

Afghanistan first country to recognize Indian Pharmacopoeia

- The Indian Pharmacopoeia (IP) has been recognised formally by the National Department of Regulation of Medicines and Health Products of the Ministry of Public Health of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.
- With this, a new beginning has been made and Afghanistan has become the first country to recognize IP pursuant to the efforts of Department of Commerce and Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

Putin, Xi oversee launch of gas pipeline

- Russian President Vladimir Putin and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping have overseen the launch of a pipeline to take natural gas from Siberia to northeast China.
- The 3000-km-long Power of Siberia pipeline will transport gas from the Chayandinskoye and Kovytko fields in eastern Siberia, a project expected to last for three decades and to generate \$US400 billion (\$A591 billion) for Russian state coffers.

UKIBC launches Aerospace and Defence Industry Group

- The UK India Business Council (UKIBC) and The Defence and Security Organisation (DSO) announced the establishment of an Aerospace and Defence Industry Group. The group will be supported by the UK Defence Solutions Centre (UK DSC), ADS Group Ltd, The Department for International Trade (DIT), and Industry.
- The UK-India relationship in aerospace and defence is driven by distinct and powerful drivers on both sides.

Abu Dhabi selected as world's leading sports tourism destination

- Abu Dhabi has been selected as the world's leading sports tourism destination at the 26th edition of the World Travel Awards (WTA) being held in Muscat.
- It is the seventh time in a row that Abu Dhabi has been selected for this coveted award.

- Abu Dhabi selected as the West Asia's Leading Business Tourism Destination at the West Asia edition of WTA and Best City Break at the UK's Selling Travel Agents' Choice Awards.

U.S shuts down World Trade Organization appeals court

- The United States(US) decided to shut down the appeal court of WTO (World Trade Organisation) in response to WTO's decisions against the federal trade rules imposed by the US administration.
- WTO's appeal court acts as a trade dispute settlement body for its member countries.

Bougainville Votes to Become World's Newest Country

- The South Pacific region of Bougainville voted to become the world's newest nation by gaining independence from Papua New Guinea.
- Bougainville is an island in Papua New Guinea. The Bougainville referendum is a key part of a 2001 peace agreement that ended a civil war in which at least 15,000 people died in the cluster of islands to the east of Papua New Guinea mainland.

Ethiopia launches its first satellite

- Ethiopia launched its first satellite , a landmark achievement for the country's space program that caps a banner year for the African space industry.
- The launch of the Ethiopian Remote Sensing Satellite (ETRSS) took place at a space station in China.

India, Afghanistan, Iran meet to monitor implementation of Chabahar pact

- The second meeting between officials of India, Afghanistan and Iran took place to monitor implementation of the 2016 agreement regarding development and management of the Chabahar port in Iran.
- The Chabahar port -- being jointly developed by India, Iran and Afghanistan -- is considered a gateway to opportunities for trade by the three countries with central Asian nations. It is located on the Indian Ocean in the Sistan and Baluchistan province of Iran.

China Launches Second Aircraft Carrier, to be Deployed in South China Sea

- China launched its second aircraft carrier from a key base in the South China Sea, boosting its military ambition in the region.
- The ship named after Shandong Province in east China was launched from Sanya. The aircraft carrier is China first domestically built ship.
- China currently has one aircraft carrier Liaoning, a re-fit of the Soviet era ship which was commissioned in 2012.

Germany moves to ban gay 'conversion therapy'

- German government signed off on a new law banning "conversion therapies" designed to force heterosexuality on homosexuals.
- The legislation, set to be introduced next year, would see the practice made punishable with up to a year in prison and fines of up to 30,000 euros (\$33,000).

Google settles USD 327 million tax bill in Australia

- Google agreed to pay Australian tax authorities 482 million Australian dollars (USD 327 million) to settle a long-running dispute over the tech giant's multibillion-dollar business in the country.
- The Australian Tax Office (ATO) stated the payment covered taxes owed for 2008-2018 and brought to 1.25 billion Australian dollars.
- The ATO's operation would be extended until 2023 to ensure multinational digital players continue to pay taxes on sales revenue from Australian customers.

Brazil fines Facebook \$1.6 mn for improper sharing of user data

- Brazil's Ministry of Justice had found that data from 4,43,000 Facebook users was improperly made available to developers of an App called 'thisisyourdigitallife'

- It fined U.S. tech giant Facebook Inc 6.6 million reals (\$1.6 million) for improperly sharing user data.

The Netherlands drops 'Holland' as a Nickname

- The Netherlands has officially dropped “Holland” from all literature and marketing materials.
- Holland is a region of the Netherlands, but the two names are often used interchangeably to describe the northern European country.

Sri Lankan govt says Batticaloa airport to be developed as an international airport

- Sri Lankan government has stated that it would develop Batticaloa airport in eastern province as an international airport with Indian assistance.
- Batticaloa Airport was established in 1958 but due to the war situation, the Sri Lanka Air Force took over the airport in 1983 and operated as a base for the Sri Lanka Air Force.

China to issue revised local GDP figures under new mechanism from 2020

- China will revise its historical regional GDP data under a unified accounting mechanism in 2020. The Chinese economy grew at an annual pace of 6% in the July-September quarter,
- National Bureau of Statistics new mechanism will unify the standards and procedures for calculating national and local GDP numbers which had been calculated under different accounting methods.

ISA to deepen industry collaboration between India, US

- India and the US will deepen industry collaboration, enable the release of more advanced technology and information to India and help make it part of the global supply chain in the defence sector.
- During the 2nd edition of the 2+2 dialogue held last week, India and the US agreed to further expand their defence ties and concluded the crucial Industrial Security Annex (ISA).

UN gives green light to draft treaty to combat cybercrime

- The UN General Assembly approved a resolution that will start the process of drafting a new international treaty to combat cybercrime over objections from the European Union, the United States and other countries.
- The resolution establishes an expert committee representing all regions of the world "to elaborate a comprehensive international convention on countering the use of information and communications technologies for criminal purposes".

China to launch Beidou-3 satellites in 2020

- China will launch in 2020 the last two satellites of its Beidou-3 mapping system, an alternative to the US GPS, authorities have announced. China has launched 10 Beidou satellites into space during 2019.
- Ren added that by 2035 a new navigation system and schedule of Beidou more ubiquitous, integrated and intelligent will be established.

UN ups 2020 budget, includes funds for war crimes probes

- The United Nations General Assembly adopted a USD 3.07-billion operating budget which for the first time includes funding for the investigation of war crimes in Syria and Myanmar.
- The budget represents a slight increase from 2019's figure of USD 2.9 billion.

Italy Approves 3% Digital Tax On Large Tech Companies From 2020

- Italy has decided to implement a new tax on technology giants that will put a three per cent digital tax on companies like Google and Amazon.
- According to global figures, technology companies make over \$831 million in global revenue and approximately \$6 million from transactions and operation in Italy alone.

Revision Points

Country	Capital	Currency	Head
Saudi Arabia	Riyadh	Riyal	Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud
Bangladesh	Dhaka	Taka	Abdul Hamid

Uzbekistan	Tashkent	Som	Shavkat Mirziyoyev
Sweden	Stockholm	Krona	Stefan Löfven
Brazil	Brasilia	Real	Jair Bolsonaro
Nepal	Kathmandu	Rupee	Bidhya Devi Bhandari
China	Beijing	Yuan	Xi Jinping
Afghanistan	Kabul	Afghani	Ashraf Ghani
Russia	Moscow	Ruble	Vladimir Putin
USA	Washington DC	Dollar	Donald Trump
Ethiopia	Addis Ababa	Birr	Abiy Ahmed Ali
Iran	Tehran	Rial	Hassan Rouhani
Germany	Berlin	Euro	Frank-Walter Steinmeier
The Netherlands	The Hague	Euro	Mark Rutte
Sri Lanka	Colombo	Rupee	Gotabaya Rajapaksa
Italy	Rome	Lira	Sergio Mattarella
Indonesia	Jakarta	Rupiah	Joko Widodo
Oman	Muscat	Rial	Qaboos bin Said Al Said
Japan	Tokyo	Yen	Shinzo Abe
Spain	Madrid	Euro	Pedro Sanchez
UK	London	Pound Sterling	Boris Johnson
Cuba	Havana	Peso	Miguel Díaz-Canel
France	Paris	Euro	Emmanuel Macron

Important Appointments **National Appointments**

Name of the Person	Designation
Hari Mohan	Chairman of Ordnance Factory Board
Podali Shankar Rajeshwar	14th Commander-in-Chief of the Andaman & Nicobar Command
Girish Chandra Chaturvedi	NSE Chairman
Arnab Goswami	President of News Broadcasters Federation
V Viswanathan	Additional Director of Dhanlaxmi Bank.
Sunil Chhetri	Brand Ambassador of PUMA
Salman Khan	Pepsi's new brand ambassador
Suniel Shetty	Brand ambassador for NADA (National Anti-Doping Agency)
Vipin Sondhi	MD & CEO of Ashok Leyland
Sushil Modi	Head of GOM on IGST
Shrikant Madhav Vaidya	Chief of Indian Oil Corporation
Ravi Mittal	Information and Broadcasting Secretary
TV Somanathan	Secretary in the expenditure department
R.N Ravi	Governor of Meghalaya (additional charge)
Manoj Mukund Naravane	Indian Army Chief
Vinod Kannan	Chief Commercial Officer of Vistara
Sridhar Patra	NALCO CMD
Devesh Srivastava	CMD of General Insurance Corporation of India (GIC Re)
Mallika Srinivasan	Member, Chamber of Commerce's U.S.-India Business
Cyrus Mistry	Executive chairman of Tata Group.

Ankit Gupta	Chief Operating Officer of OYO
CV Ramulu	Telangana Lokayukta
Anish Shah	Mahindra Group,'s MD and CEO
Arpit Chug,	Chief financial Officer of RazorPay
Dr Monisha Ghosh	Chief Technology Officer at Federal Communications Commission
Sangita Reddy	President of FICCI
Harsh Kumar Bhanwala	NABARD Chief
Harsh Vardhan Shringla	New foreign Secretary
P R Ravi Mohan	Chairman of ESAF Small Finance Bank.
Niranjan Hiranandani	New Assocham President
Hemant Soren	Jharkhand CM
Deepak Verma	DDCA's new Ombudsman
Bipin Rawat	India's first Chief of Defence Staff
Ajit Pawar	Deputy CM of Maharashtra

International Appointments

Name of the Person	Designation
Sundar Pichai	CEO of Alphabet
Pritivirajsing Roopun	President of Mauritius
Upender Singh Rawat	Next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Costa Rica
Sanna Marin	Prime Minister of Finland
C. Sugandh Rajaram	Next High Commissioner of India to the Republic of Ghana
Boris Johnson	British Prime Minister
Abdelmadjid Tebboune	President of Algeria
Sethuraman Panchanathan	Head of National Science Foundation
Manuel Marrero Cruz	Prime Minister of Cuba
Ashraf Ghani	Afghan President

Resignation

Name of the Person	Designation
Adel Abdul Mahdi	Prime Minister of Iraq
Antti Rinne	Prime Minister of Finland
Sanjiv Kapoor	Chief Commercial Officer of Vistara
Anand Mahindra	Mahindra Group executive chairman
Dennis Muilenburg	CEO of Boeing

Important Awards and Honours

Winner	Prize
Tony Joseph	12 th Shakti Bhatt First Book Prize 2019
Former FM (Late) Arun Jaitley	Economic Times (ET) Lifetime Achievement award for Public Service 2019
Priyanka Chopra	UNICEF's Danny Kaye Humanitarian Award
Shilpa Shetty's Fitness App	Google Play Awards 2019
Zozibini Tunzi (South Africa)	Miss Universe 2019
Saurabh Chaudhary, Divyansh Singh Panwar and Elavenil Valarivan	Golden Target award from ISSF

Kairat Abdrakhmanov, Nicholas Emiliou, Nicholas Emiliou & Volodymyr Yelchenko	Diwali - Power of One Award
Viswanath Prasad Tiwari	Gangadhar National Award
Aminatou Haidar of Western Sahara; Guo Jianmei of China; Davi Kopenawa and the Hutukara Yanomami Association of Brazil; and Sweden's own Greta Thunberg	Right Livelihood Award
Padmeswar Gogoi	Siu-Ka-Pha Award
Greta Thunberg	Time's Person of the Year Award
Blue sky analytics	Space Oscar award
International Changemaker Olympiad by Rahul Adhikari	Wharton-QS Stars Reimagine Education Award,
Toni Ann Singh	Miss World 2019
Deepika Padukone	Crystal Award 2020
Ben Stokes	BBC Sports Personality of the Year
Gujarat Police	Honour of the President's Colours
Amitabha Bagchi	2019 DSC Prize
B P Raju	India Cyber Cop of the Year award
Aditya K. of Ramanattukara	Bharat Award for Bravery
Sharad Ponshe	Janakavi P Sawlaram Memorial Award
Anoop Mishra	Army Design Bureau (ADB) excellence award
Ilaiyaraja	Harivarasnam award for 2020
Marathi Literature Bhalchandra Nemade & Hindi writer Gynanranjan	Akashdeep Sanman awards
Amitabh Bachchan	Dadasaheb Phalke Award
Aayushi Dholakia	Miss Teen International 2019
Malala Yousafzai	Most famous teenager' of decade by UN

VP Naidu presents Uttar Pradesh with National Award for Excellence for rehabilitation of persons with disabilities

- Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment conferred Uttar Pradesh with the National Award of Excellence, which was given by Vice president M Venkaiah Naidu, for doing a commendable job in the field of rehabilitation of persons with disabilities (Divyangjan).
- Shabina Saifi (Lucknow), Vidisha (Ghaziabad), Seema Tiwari (Jhansi) and Priyanka Devi (Lucknow) received national awards in different categories.
- Uttar Pradesh also received the award for the best state in the implementation of Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan. The department's website also received the award as the best portal for being disabled- friendly while Varanasi has been awarded for offering the best rehabilitation services among the districts.

Archaeologist R. Nagaswamy honoured in Bangladesh

- Renowned archaeologist R. Nagaswamy was honoured at the Silver Jubilee International Conference of Art held in Dhaka by Bangladesh Culture Minister K.M. Khalid.
- He was honoured for the contribution of Nagaswamy to art, archaeology, history, and culture.

Mumbai Central gets first 'Eat Right Station' certification from FSSAI

- The Mumbai Central station of Railways was conferred with the 'Eat Right Station' certification with four stars rating by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), as a part of 'Eat Right India' movement launched last year.
- The Mumbai Central Railway Station is the country's first Eat Right Station.
- FSSAI, along with Western Railways (WR) and Indian Railways Catering Tourism Corporation (IRCTC), has trained food handlers, both in canteens and base kitchens.

President of India presents the National Florence Nightingale Awards

- Ram Nath Kovind presented the National Florence Nightingale Awards to nursing personnel in New Delhi.
- Nurses play a vital role in delivering quality and cost effective healthcare, addressing multiple health challenges and responding to health needs of individuals, families and communities..
- World Health Organisation has announced 2020 as **the Year of the Nurse and Mid-wife.**

NOTTO (National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organization) awards

- Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh were bestowed with awards for organ donation the event was organized by NOTTO (National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organization) of Union Health and Family Welfare Ministry (MoHFW) headed by Harsh Vardhan.
- Tamil Nadu (TN) was bestowed with Best State award in cadaveric organ donation for the fifth time,
- Gujarat won three awards for the Best SOTTO (State Organ Tissue Transplant Organization), Best hospital and Best coordinator in the organ donation field and Madhya Pradesh (MP) won the Best SOTTO award.
- Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital (RGGGH) in Chennai, Tamil Nadu won the Best Performing Hospital award.

Odisha's Jaga Mission Wins Bronze At World Habitat Awards

- Odisha Liveable Habitat Mission (OLHM) also known as Jaga Mission has won the bronze medal at the World Habitat Awards.
- Odisha had also bagged 'India Geospatial Excellence Award' along with Tata Trusts for technological innovation in empowering the urban poor through Jaga Mission.

Kamareddy district in Telangana secured the United Nations International Children's and Education Fund

- (Unicef)-2019 Award for effective implementation of Swachh Bharat Mission in water sanitation and hygiene sectors.
- The district stood in the forefront in the country in construction of individual sanitary lavatories, swachh darpan wall paintings, swachh survekshan, swachh sundar shouchalay and other activities.

Hubballi gets certificate of merit for healthcare project under Smart City

- Chitaguppi Hospital is short-listed for the recognition under Smart City-Empowering India Awards.
- A project under the Smart City Scheme pertaining to the development of Chitaguppi Hospital in Hubballi, Karnataka has been chosen for the award of certificate of merit under the Smart City-Empowering India Awards of the Union government.

CSMT gets 'Eat Right' station certificate

- Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (CSMT) railway station in Mumbai has been conferred with 'Eat Right Station' certification by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) for food safety and hygiene.
- The CSMT is the first station on the Central Railway to get this certification.
- 'Eat Right Station' initiative is a part of the 'Eat Right India' movement launched by FSSAI

Noted Urdu journalist Shireen Dalvi returns award in protest against Citizenship (Amendment) Bill

- Urdu journalist Shireen Dalvi returned an award she had received in 2011 to protest against the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill.
- Ms. Dalvi was awarded the 2011 Special Prize by the Maharashtra State Urdu Sahitya Akademi.
- She was the editor of the Mumbai edition of Urdu daily Avadhnama, which had come under attack after it published a controversial cartoon by French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo in 2015.

Sahitya Akademi announces annual Sahitya Akademi Awards in 23 languages

- Sahitya Akademi announced its annual Sahitya Akademi Awards in 23 languages.
- Seven books of poetry were awarded to Dr. Phukan Ch. Basumatary (Bodo), Dr. Nand Kishore Acharya (Hindi), Sri Nilba A. Khandekar (Konkani), Sri Kumar Manish Arvind (Maithili), Sri V. Madhusoodanan Nair (Malayalam), Smt. Anuradha Patil (Marathi) and Prof. Penna Madhusudan (Sanskrit).
- Four novels were awarded to Dr. Joysree Goswami Mahanta (Assamese), Sri L. Birmangol Singh (Beryl Thanga) (Manipuri), Sri Cho. Dharman (Tamil) and Sri Bandi Narayana Swamy (Telugu).
- Six books of short stories were awarded to Sri Abdul Ahad Hajini (Kashmiri), Sri Tarun Kanti Mishra (Odia), Sri Kirpal Kazak (Punjabi), Sri Ram sawroop Kisan (Rajasthani), Sri Kali Charan Hembram (Santali) and Sri Ishwar Moorjani (Sindhi).
- Dr. Shashi Tharoor (English), Dr. Vijaya (Kannada) and Prof. Shafey Kidwai (Urdu) have won for each of their works on creative non-fiction, autobiography and biography respectively. Three books of essays were awarded to Dr. Chinmoy Guha (Bengali), Sri Om Sharma Jandriari (Dogri) and Sri Ratilal Borisagar (Gujarati).

Vice President Venkaiah Naidu honours winners at 66th National Film Awards

Vice President Venkaiah Naidu honoured the winners of the 66th National Film Awards at a ceremony held in New Delhi's Vigyan Bhavan.

The winners are following:

Best Feature Film	Hellaro
Best Direction	Aditya Dhar, Uri The Surgical Strike
Best Actor (Male)	Ayushmann Khurrana (Andhadhun), Vicky Kaushal (Uri The Surgical Strike)
Best Actor (Female)	Keerthy Suresh (Mahanati)
Best Supporting Actor (Male)	Swanand Kirkire (Chumbak)
Best Supporting Actor (Female)	Surekha Sikri (Badhaai Ho)
Best Popular Film providing wholesome entertainment	Badhaai Ho
Best Hindi Film	Andhadhun
Best Original Screenplay	Chi La Sow, Rahul Ravindran
Best Adapted Screenplay	Andhadhun, Sriram Raghavan, Arijit Biswas, Yogesh Chandekar, Hemant Rao & Pooja Ladha Surti
Best Film on Social Issues	Padman
Best Music Direction	<u>Padmaavat</u> , Sanjay Leela Bhansali
Best Background Score	Uri The Surgical Strike, Shashwat Sachdev
Best Female Playback Singer	Bindu Malini (Maayavi Manave – Nathicharami)
Best Male Playback Singer	Arjit Singh (Binte Dil – Padmaavat)
Best Lyrics	“Maayavi Manave...” from Nathicharami
Special Mention Awards	Sruthi Hariharan, Chandrachoor Rai, Joju George and Savithri

Special Jury Award	Hellaro actresses Shraddha Dangar, Shachi Joshi, Denisha Ghumra, Neelam Paanchal, Tarjani Bhadla, Brinda Nayak, Tejal Panchasara, Kaushambi Bhatt, Ekta Bachwani, Kamini Panchal, Jagruti Thakore, Riddhi Yadav, Prapti Mehta and Kedara director Indradip Dasgupta
Best Cinematography	Olu, MJ Radhakrishnan
Best Dialogue	Tarikh
Best Action Direction	KGF, Vikram More & Anbu Ariv
Best Choreography	Padmaavat, Kruti Mahesh Madya & Jyoti Tomar for Ghoomar
Best Costume Design	Mahanati
Best Special Effects	Awe (Srushti Creative Studio) and KGF (Unifi Media)
Best Makeup artist	Awe, Ranjith
Best Editing	Nathicharami, Nagendra K Ujjani
Best Production Design	Kammara Sambhavam, Bangalan
Best Sound Design	Uri The Surgical Strike, Bishwadeep Dipak Chatterjee
Best Location Sound Recordist	Tendlya, Gaurav Verma
Best Re-recordist of the final mixed track	Rangasthalam, Raja Krishnan MR
Nargis Dutt Award for Best Film on National Integration	Ondalla Eradalla
Best Child Artist	PV Rohit, Sahib Singh, Talha Arshad Reshi and Shrinivas Pokale
Best Debut Film of a Director	Naal (Sudhakar Reddy Yakkanti)
Best Malayalam Film	Sudani from Nigeria
Best Marathi Film	Bhonga
Best Urdu Film	Hamid
Best Tamil Film	Baaram
Best Rajasthani Film	Turtle
Best Telugu Film	Mahanati
Best Assamese Film	Bulbul Can Sing
Best Punjabi Film	Harjeeta
Best Bengali Film	Ek Je Chhilo Raja
Best Garo Film	Maama
Best Kannada Film	Nathicharami
Best Konkani Film	Amori
Best Gujarati Film	Reva

Important MOU's

Walmart India Ties Up With HDFC Bank To Launch Co-Branded Credit Card

- Walmart has tied up with HDFC Bank to launch a co-branded credit card exclusively for members of its Best Price Modern Wholesale “B2B Cash and Carry” stores.
- The card was launched at Hyderabad store, as well as 26 other Best Price Modern Wholesale Store locations pan India.

MobiKwik, Aditya Birla Health Insurance to offer affordable Cancer Protect Cover

- Aditya Birla Health Insurance Co. Limited (ABHICL), has entered into a strategic alliance with MobiKwik, to offer simple sachet health insurance products.
- An innovative Cancer Protect Cover is the first product launched under this partnership between MobiKwik and ABHICL.
- The cancer-protect policy covers across all major stages of cancer with a 100 per cent payout and includes a larger age group of 18 to 60 years. With a one-year tenure, this can be bought for as little as Rs 125, for a sum insured of Rs 1.5 lakh.
- Users have other options for increased sum insured to choose from: Rs 4.5 lakh and Rs 7.5 lakh with annual premiums of Rs 375 and Rs 625 respectively.

J-K inks MoU with UNDP to strengthen immunization supply chain system

- The Jammu and Kashmir administration signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the UNDP India to strengthen immunization supply chain system in the union territory.
- It aims to implement Electronic Vaccine Intelligence Network (eVIN).
- Carried out by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Zestmoney Partners with Micredit, Launches Small Ticket Loans

- ZestMoney announced the company's foray into cash loans with Xiaomi.
- The new product called MiCredit allows customers to avail instant credit as low as INR 7,000 into their bank accounts almost instantly.
- MiCredit connects the loan seeker with a service provider, such as ZestMoney. On the app, the application process for loans can be completed within 5 minutes, and the repayment can be done over a period, ranging from 3 months to 3 years in easy EMIs.

MOU signed Between NSIC & ARAMCO Asia for development in Oil & Gas Sectors

- An MoU has been signed between NSIC and Aramco Asia for the development of MSME Ecosystem in India in Oil & Gas Sector. This MoU will pave a way for accredited Indian MSMEs to carve out a space as vendors in the Global space.
- NSIC is the flagship Mini Ratna PSU under Ministry of MSME in the business of facilitating MSMEs in India and Aramco is world's largest Oil & Gas Company from Govt. of Saudi Arabia having reported revenue of USD 355 Billion Dollar (2018) and estimated market value of 1.5 Trillion Dollars.

Mastercard ties up with Federal Bank for identity check security for digital transactions

- Mastercard has joined hands with Federal Bank to provide an additional layer of security for digital transactions.
- Mastercard Identity Check is a global authentication program that uses the latest authentication standards of EMV 3-D Secure to provide an additional layer of security for digital transactions and facilitate higher approval rates, improving the authentication experience for merchants, issuers and cardholders.

FSSAI inks MoU with Nasscom to prevent food wastage

- Food Safety and Standards Authority of India signed a MoU with Nasscom foundation to develop an app and set up a 24×7 helpline number to connect donors with surplus eatables with food distribution organisations.
- The platform will also facilitate registration of surplus food distribution organisations, and initially, the network of 81 such organizations across PAN India, known as the Indian Food Sharing Alliance (IFSA) will be a part of this platform.

ICAR and NABARD signs MoU to facilitate the action research and up-scaling of the various technologies and innovative farmer models

- Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) signed a MoU with the National Board of Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) to facilitate the action research and up-scaling of the various technologies and innovative farmer models that includes the successful climate resilient practices, models and integrated and hi- tech farming practices in a participatory model through adoptive research on watershed platform.

India, Indonesia decide to strengthen defence and security ties.

- India and Indonesia resolved to strengthen cooperation in areas of defence and security, connectivity and trade during talks between External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and his Indonesian counterpart Retno Marsudi.
- The two sides reviewed the entire gamut of ties at the 6th India-Indonesia Joint Commission Meeting (JCM).

Indian Embassy signs agreement for reconstruction of Nepal's 11 cultural heritage sites

- Indian Embassy signed an agreement with the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), India for the post-earthquake reconstruction of 11 Cultural Heritage sites in Nepal.
- The INTACH will provide Design and Project Management Consultancy services for the reconstruction of 11 Cultural Heritage sites in four districts (Kathmandu, Lalitpur, Bhaktapur and Solukhumbhu).
- It will also work with the Department of Archeology (DoA) of the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, Nepal to reconstruct and conserve Cultural Heritage sites as per the Government of Nepal's guidelines on the reconstruction of Cultural Heritage Sites.

CSIR and the National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS), France ink MoU for Promotion and Support of Scientific and Technological Research

- A MoU was signed between the Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR), India and the National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS), France to establish a framework for cooperation between the two towards promotion and support of scientific and technological research.
- CSIR and CNRS may explore strengthening their cooperation to foster joint innovation and transfer of technologies applicable to India or/and France and to other nations.
- This cooperation could include sharing good practices, promoting technology transfer and enhancing industry-academia cooperation.

UAE and Oman sign MoU to enhance trade & economic cooperation

- Etihad Credit Insurance (ECI) has signed a MoU with the Export Credit Guarantee Agency of Oman (Credit Oman) to enhance trade and economic cooperation between the two countries.
- The signing took place during the 10th AMAN UNION General Assembly, held in Muscat.
- AMAN UNION is a professional forum assembling Commercial & Non-commercial Risks Insurers & Reinsurers in Member Countries of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and of the Arab Investment & Export Credit Guarantee Corporation.

WE Hub Partners with Start-up India DPIIT To Launch WING Program for Women Entrepreneurs in Telangana

- WE Hub announced its partnership with Start-up India, DPIIT to promote women entrepreneurship to start-up, scale-up and accelerate with global market access,
- The two have joined hands to launch Start-up India's flagship program for women entrepreneurs called WING (Women Rise Together program) in Telangana.

- We Hub, will drive the program for women entrepreneurs in Telangana in collaboration with KSUM and provide them with access to incubation, investors and business support.

TN Govt, Dept of Fisheries, NABARD ink agreement under Aquaculture Development Fund (FIDF)

- The first tripartite Memorandum of Agreement was signed between the Department of Fisheries, NARBARD, and the Government of Tamil Nadu for the implementation of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development Fund (a total of Rs. 7,522.48)
- Tamil Nadu has signed the first Tripartite MoA for availing the initial concessional finance of Rs 420 crore from NARBARD for development of three fishing harbours in the State: Tharangampadi in Nagapattinam District, Thiruvottriyur Kuppam in Tiruvallur District, and Mudhunagar in Cuddalore District.

Grameena bank signs MoU on sustainable energy solutions

- Karnataka Vikas Grameena Bank (KVGB) and SELCO Solar Light Pvt. Ltd., a social enterprise that provides sustainable energy solutions to under-served households and businesses, have signed a memorandum of understanding on solar lighting and livelihood solutions.

Ramco enters into agreement with China Aircraft Services

- RAMCO Systems has signed an agreement with China Aircraft Services Limited (CASL) to manage its end-to-end line and base maintenance operations.
- Ramco will provide its integrated Aviation Suite with modules for maintenance and engineering, MRO (maintenance, repair and overhaul) contracts, supply chain, and finance.

Revision Points

Organizations	Purpose
Walmart & HDFC Bank	Launching of Co-Branded Credit Card
MobiKwik & Aditya Birla Health Insurance	Offer the Cancer Protect Cover
J & K and UNDP	Immunization supply chain system
Zestmoney & Micredit	Launching of Small Ticket loans
NSIC & ARAMCO	Development in Oil & Gas Sector
Master Card & Federal Bank	Security for digital transactions
FSSAI & NASSCOM	Prevent Food wastage
ICAR & NABARD	Upscaling of Technologies & farmer models
India & Indonesia	Defence & Security ties
Indian Embassy & INTACH	Reconstruction of Nepal's 11 cultural heritage sites
CSIR & CNRS	Support of Scientific and Technological Research
UAE & Oman	Trade & Economic Cooperation
WE Hub & Start-up India	Launching of WING Program
Karnataka Vikas Grameena Bank and SELCO Solar Light	Sustainable Energy Solutions
Tamil Nadu, Dept of Fisheries & NABARD	Implementation of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development Fund

Important Summit & Conference

UN Climate Change Conference held in Spain

- A two-week International Climate Conference held in Madrid, Spain.

- The main task of the conference is to be taking a few important steps, which are the UN climate change agenda, including dealing with several issues pertaining to the full operationalization of the Paris Climate Change Agreement.
- 8-year-old Licypriya Kangujam from Manipur speaks at the Climate Summit in Madrid, Spain. The young activist from Manipur who has already spoken in 21 countries on climate change, gave the world a glimpse of her resolve as she urged global leaders to "act now against climate change".

India, Japan hold first 'two-plus-two' dialogue

- India and Japan held their inaugural foreign and defence ministerial dialogue with an aim to give further momentum to their special strategic partnership, particularly in the maritime domain.
- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar led the Indian delegation while the Japanese side was headed by Foreign Minister Toshi-mitsu Motegi and Minister of Defence Taro Kono.

Regional Conference on Ek Bharat-Shresht Bharat focusing on Jal Shakti, Disaster Management concludes

- The deliberations of two-day Regional Conference on 'Ek Bharat Shreshta Bharat' focusing on 'Jal Shakti' and 'Disaster Management' concluded in Jammu with adoption of Sahyog-Sankalp resolution.
- This conference helps in sharing technical expertise between the two participating regions which will eventually help in developing the infrastructure.

2019 London Summit of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

- The 2019 London Summit of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was the 30th formal meeting of the heads of state and heads of government of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.
- It was held in The Grove, Watford, Hertfordshire, United Kingdom.
- The year 2019 marks the 70th anniversary of the summit. It was attended by NATO leaders and chaired by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg.

Jal Shakti Minister addresses the 4th India Water Impact Summit

- The Union Minister of Jal Shakti, Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat has addressed the 4th India Water Impact Summit 2019 with the theme "Valuing Water Transforming Ganga" held with the focus on integrated water resources management in urban and rural areas.
- Shekhawat also released the report on River Restoration and Conservation – A Concise Manual and Guide, and Documents on "cGanga Hubs".
- The summit was organized by Ministry of Jal Shakti, Government of India (GoI) and the Centre for Ganga River Basin Management and Studies (cGanga) led by IIT Kanpur.

7th OPEC and non-OPEC ministerial meeting in Vienna

- The 7th edition of the OPEC (Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries) and non-OPEC Ministerial Meeting was held in Vienna, Austria.
- The oil producing countries decided to cut oil production by 500,000 barrels per day with effect from January 1, 2020. This has been done to stem the pressure on prices from abundant reserves and weak global economic growth.

Goa to host 2nd edition of startup India Global Venture Capital Summit 2019

- The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), in partnership with Government of Goa organized the 2nd edition of the Startup India Global Venture Capital Summit for Fund Managers and Limited Partners of Top Global Venture Capital Firms.
- The theme for Startup India Global Venture Capital Summit 2019 is India Opportunity – Investing in tomorrow together.

Switzerland is partner country for BioAsia 2020

- Switzerland will serve as the country partner for the 17th edition of BioAsia.

- Switzerland has an outstanding reputation globally as an extremely specialised production location for innovative life science products.
- Telangana is a state committed to promoting innovation and entrepreneurship, and the focus of BioAsia has been centred around innovation over the years.

Symposium on Scope of Science of Ayurveda in Global Health

- The Ministry of External Affairs, in association with the Ministry of AYUSH, organized a Symposium on "Scope of Science of Ayurveda in Global Health", in New Delhi.
- The objective of the symposium was to create awareness on the potentials & efficacy of Ayurveda and other systems of AYUSH and to promote AYUSH at a global level.

Workshop on Bamboo cultivation to be held in Jammu

- In Jammu and Kashmir, a first of its kind workshop on Bamboo cultivation was held in Jammu.
- Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh inaugurated the exhibition. It focused on promotion of Bamboo cultivation in the potential Kandi areas of Jammu and its value addition as an economic activity and to generate entrepreneurship and employment opportunities.

External Affairs Ministry to host 6th Indian Ocean Dialogue, Delhi Dialogue XI

- External Affairs Ministry will host the 6th Indian Ocean Dialogue and Delhi Dialogue XI at the Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra in New Delhi.
- The theme for Indian Ocean Dialogue is "Indo-Pacific: Re-imagining the Indian Ocean through an Expanded Geography".
- The theme for 2019 Delhi Dialogue is "Advancing Partnership in Indo-Pacific", and is being organized with the assistance of the Research and Information System for Developing Countries.

Two plus 2 India-US dialogue held: Ministry of External Affairs

- The Second India-US 2 Plus 2 Ministerial Dialogue was held in Washington DC.
- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar led the Indian delegation.
- External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Raveesh Kumar met their US counterparts for a comprehensive review of cross-cutting foreign policy and defence and security issues in India-US relations.

India to Host 36th International Geological Congress in March 2020

- India is gearing up to host the 36th International Geological Congress (IGC) in the capital during the first week of March 2020.
- The theme of the forthcoming conference is 'Geosciences: The Basic Science for a Sustainable Development'.
- The IGCs are a prestigious global geo scientific events held once in four years and participated by around 5000-6000 geoscientists from all across the world.

3 days "International Seminar on Climate Smart Farming Systems" for BIMSTEC countries held in New Delhi

- 'International Seminar on Climate Smart Farming Systems' for BIMSTEC countries is being held in Delhi.
- It has been organized by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare.
- The objective of the seminar is to share experiences to enable the improvement of tropical smallholder farming systems for greater productivity and resilience to climate change.
- Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA) is an approach to help farmers respond effectively to climate change and ensure food security.

Steeling India 2019

- The Confederation of Indian Industry organized "Steeling India 2019" conference, a drive to increase metal intensity in key sectors.

- The conference developed a road map to increase steel intensity in key sectors. It also brought in strategies to mitigate supply chain issues in the steel sector.
- CII organized the conference with the objective of augmenting steel production. The conference will help India pave ways to achieve its target of 300 MT of production by 2030. The World Steel Association predicts steel demand in India to reach 103 MT (Million Tonnes) in 2019.

QCI Conclave in Uttarakhand

- Quality Council of India (QCI) along with PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PHDCCI) organized its 11th Regional Quality Conclave at, Rudrapur, district Udham Singh Nagar, Uttarakhand.
- The theme of the RudrapurRQC is “Advance Manufacturing with Quality, Innovation & Technology Interventions.”

Geneva hosts first Global Refugee Forum

- The first ever Global Refugee Forum was held in Geneva, Switzerland. It is being jointly hosted by United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) along with Government of Switzerland.
- Co-convened by Costa Rica, Ethiopia, Germany, Pakistan and Turkey, the Forum is aiming to generate new approaches and long-term commitments from a variety of actors to help refugees and the communities in which they live.

Second national conference on ‘Uniformed Women in Prison Administration’

- Union Minister of State for Home affairs inaugurated a National Conference on ‘Uniformed Women in Prisons Administration’ Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh.
- This type of national conference of uniformed women is being held for the first time in Madhya Pradesh outside Delhi. The first conference was held in Delhi in 2017.

Regional Conference on ‘Improving Public Services Delivery – Role of Governments’ inaugurated in Nagpur

- The inauguration function of two-day Regional Conference on ‘Improving Public Service Delivery – Role of Governments’ was held in Nagpur, Maharashtra
- The 2-day conference was organised by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) in collaboration with the Government of Maharashtra and the Maharashtra State Commission for Right to Public Services.

Army Tech Seminar 'ARTECH 2019' for 'Make in India' Defence industry begins in Delhi

- ARTECH Seminar was launched in 2016 as part of overall vision of ‘Make in India’ and is conducted every year.
- The ARTECH platform provides an opportunity to practitioners of military operations, policy makers in the Ministry of Defence, industry, and academia to put forth their contemporary Defence related capabilities.
- The 5th edition of ARTECH was organised by Indian Army on ‘Technologies for Non Contact Warfare’ which will be organised, at Manekshaw Centre, Delhi Cantonment.

Revision Points

Conference/Summits	Venue
5 th edition of ARTECH	New Delhi
Regional Conference on ‘Improving Public Service Delivery – Role of Governments’	Nagpur
National Conference on ‘Uniformed Women in Prisons Administration’	Bhopal
Global Refugee Forum	Geneva
11 th Regional Quality Conclave	Rudrapur, Uttarakhand

Steeling India 2019” conference	New Delhi
International Seminar on Climate Smart Farming Systems	New Delhi
36th International Geological Congress 2020	New Delhi
The Second India-US 2 Plus 2 Ministerial Dialogue	Washington DC
Workshop on Bamboo cultivation	Jammu
Symposium on ‘Scope of Science of Ayurveda in Global Health’	New Delhi
17th edition of BioAsia 2020	Hyderabad
2nd edition of the Startup India Global Venture Capital Summit	Goa
7th edition of the OPEC and non-OPEC Ministerial Meeting	Vienna
4th India Water Impact Summit 2019	New Delhi
2019 London Summit of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization	The Grove
UN Climate Conference	Madrid

Important Defence News

India successfully test-fires indigenously developed nuke-capable Prithvi-II missile

- India successfully test-fired its indigenously developed surface-to-surface nuclear-capable Prithvi-II missile off Odisha coast. It has a striking range of 350 km.
- The missile weighs about 4,600 kg, is capable of carrying 500 to one thousand kilograms of warheads and is thrust by liquid propulsion twin engines.
- It has been developed by the joint collaboration of Defence Research and Development Organization and Bharat Dynamics Limited under the Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme.

MoD to organise series of webinars in run up to DefExpo 2020

- Ministry of Defence (MoD) organizing a series of web seminars. The 11th edition of the biennial flagship event will be held in Lucknow to focus on path-breaking topics and will be streamed worldwide.
- The theme is India – The Emerging Defence Manufacturing Hub and Digital Transformation of Defence.
- The event focuses on bringing to the forefront of digital advances in the industry and provide a platform for drivers of such transformation to come together.

Kargil to Kohima Ultra Marathon- ‘Glory Run’

- Air Chief Marshal RKS Bhadauria felicitated a team of 25 Air Warriors at Air Force Station, New Delhi for a unique achievement – a running expedition from Kargil to Kohima- aptly named as K2K Ultra Marathon-Glory Run.

BrahMos Missile Successfully Test-fired from Odisha's Chandipur

- BrahMos was successfully test-fired from a base in Odisha's Chandipur.
- The land-attack version of the missile was test-fired from a mobile autonomous launcher at Launch Complex-3 of the Integrated Test Range (ITR).
- The BrahMos missile is a medium-range ramjet supersonic cruise missile capable of being launched from submarines, ships, fighter jets or land.

Indian peacekeepers in South Sudan receive prestigious UN medal

- India is among the largest troop contributing countries to UN peacekeeping operations.

- Currently, 2,342 Indian troops and 25 police personnel are deployed with the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS).
- About 850 Indian peacekeepers serving in South Sudan have been awarded the prestigious UN medal for their service and contribution to building peace in the strife-torn nation and supporting the local communities.

DRDO successfully flight-tests Pinaka Missile System off Odisha coast

- Pinaka Missile System was flight-tested from the Integrated Test Range, Chandipur off the Odisha coast.
- Pinaka is an Artillery Missile System capable of striking into enemy territory up to a range of 75 kilometres with high precision.
- The Pinaka MK-II Rocket is modified as a missile by integrating with the Navigation, Control and Guidance System. The Navigation system of the missile is also aided by the Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS).
- The missile system has been jointly developed by various DRDO Laboratories viz. Armament Research & Development Establishment (ARDE), Research Centre Imarat (RCI), Defence Research and Development Laboratory (DRDL), Proof & Experimental Establishment (PXE) and High Energy Materials Research Laboratory (HEMRL).

Indian Air Force planning 'swift trials' in ₹1.5 lakh crore 114 fighter jet deal

- In the over ₹1.5 lakh crore deal for manufacturing 114 multirole fighter aircraft, the Indian Air Force (IAF) is planning to compress the time taken for carrying out trials of all the participants to less than a year to ensure that the force gets its new combat aircraft at a faster rate.

Trump officially launches US Space Force

- United States President Donald Trump has signed the 2020 National Defense Authorization Act, authorising the establishment of Space Force which would become the sixth branch of the armed forces.
- Space Force would become the youngest US military branch, and the first new service since the establishment of the US Air Force back in 1947. The Space Force would be part of the Department of the Air Force.

India successfully test-fires Quick Reaction Surface to Air Missile system

- India successfully test-fired its Quick Reaction Surface to Air Missile (QRSAM) system, likely to be inducted into the armed forces by 2021, from a base off Odisha coast.
- The missile, developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), was flight-tested from the Integrated Test Range (ITR) at Chandipur.

49th border coordination conference between BSF, BGB in Delhi

- Border guarding forces of India and Bangladesh is holding Directors General level talks in Delhi.
- The talks are held twice every year - once in India and once in Bangladesh. The talks follow the methodology of border level coordination conferences.

Indian Navy plans to build 24 submarines, six of them nuclear powered

- Indian Navy has planned to build 24 submarines, including six nuclear attack Submarines.
- The Navy stated that there are presently 15 conventional submarines and two nuclear submarines in its fleet.
- The Indian Navy has two nuclear submarines INS Arihant and INS Chakra, with the latter being leased from Russia.

Defence India Startup Challenge gets under way

- The third edition of the Defence India Startup Challenge (DISC 3), which aims at facilitating the development of innovative technology for the defence and aerospace sectors, got under way.

- DISC 3, along with the Defence India Open Challenge, gives innovators the opportunity to explore the use of a product or technology in defence.
- The challenge is being conducted under the aegis of iDEX (Innovation for Defence Excellence), which offers innovators product development support and a grant of ₹1.5 crore to select start-ups.

Name of the Exercise	Countries	Venue
14th edition of Surya Kiran	India & Nepal	Rupendehi, Nepal
8 th edition of Hand in Hand	India & China	Umroi, Meghalaya
Iron Union 12	US & UAE	-
2 nd edition of INDRA	India & Russia	Puna, Gwalior, Babina & Goa
Apharan	Indian Navy	Kochi
Naval Exercise	China, Russia & Iran	Gulf of Oman

Important Science and Technology

IIT Researchers to offer an AI-based one-stop repository on Mahatma Gandhi

- Gandhipedia is being created with the help of Artificial Intelligence (AI), by Indian researchers.
- The venture is the collaborative effort of the IIT KGP (Kharagpur) has joined hands with National Council of Science Museums and IIT Gandhinagar.
- The first phase is expected to be completed by March next year followed by four more phases till March 2024.

'World's first' fully-electric commercial flight takes off

- An all-electric powered seaplane has taken flight in Vancouver, Canada, the operators describe as a "world first" for the aviation industry.
- The short test flight by Harbour Air and magniX involved a six-passenger aircraft fitted with an electric motor.
- It is manufactured by Harbour Air and Magnix and involves a six-passenger DHC-2 de Havilland Beaver with a 750-horsepower (560 kW) magni500 propulsion system, and was piloted by Greg McDougall, founder and Chief Executive of Harbour Air.

ISRO launches surveillance satellite RISAT-2BR1

- ISRO launched radar imaging earth observation satellite RISAT-2BR1 on board the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle-C48 rocket from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre at Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh.
- Nine other foreign commercial satellites were also launched on board the PLSV-C48.
- Six customer satellites belonged to the United States and one each from Israel, Italy and Japan.
- The 628-kg satellite is meant for applications by the military and also used in various fields like agriculture, forestry and disaster management support. The mission life of the RISAT-2BR1 is five years.

NASA scientists develop map showing presence of water ice on Mars

- NASA scientists have developed a map detailing the presence of water ice on Mars, with some believed to be as little as 2.5 centimetres below the Red Planet's surface.
- The researchers, including those from the American space agency's Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) in California said that water ice will be a key consideration for any potential landing site on Mars.

Warship builder GRSE hands over Landing Craft Utility amphibious ship to Indian Navy

- Warship builder Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) has delivered a Landing Craft Utility (LCU) to the Indian Navy.

- The LCU Mk-IV Class of ships are a further improved version of the Mk-III LCU Vessels fitted with close to 90% indigenous equipment, in line with the central Government's 'Make in India' initiative towards achieving self-reliance and indigenisation.

A star & planet get Indian names: 'Bibha' after woman scientist & 'Santamasa' in Sanskrit

- A white yellow star in Sextans constellation and its Jupiter like exo-planets, which were hitherto named HD 86081 and 86081b, will now have Indian names.
- The International Astronomical Union announced that the star will be called Bibhā, the planet will be called Santamasa.
- The star has been named in honour of a pioneering Indian woman scientist Dr Bibha Choudhury, who discovered the subatomic particle pi-meson. Bibha also means 'a bright beam of light' in Bengali.
- The planet has been named Santamasa to reflect the cloudy nature of its atmosphere. Santamasa is the Sanskrit term for 'clouded.'

Apple, Amazon, Google partner to make smart devices compatible with each other

- Apple Inc., Alphabet Inc.'s Google and Amazon.com Inc. -- three of the biggest smart-home and voice-assistant providers are joining forces to make internet-connected homes easier to set up and safer to use.
- Zigbee Alliance promotes standards for the Internet of Things, and its members including Samsung Electronics Co., Somfy SA and IKEA, on a new standard that will ensure their products work with one another.
- The alliance is aiming to have its new joint protocol ready by the end of 2020.

International Astronomical Union names new star 'Sharjah'

- The International Astronomical Union (IAU) announced the names of the newly discovered stars and planets, where the name "Sharjah" was chosen for a star with "Barjeel" being the name of one of its planets.

World's oldest fossil trees uncovered in New York

- Fossilized trees dating back 386 million years have been discovered at an abandoned quarry in New York.
- The finding could increase the understanding of the evolution of trees and how they remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.
- It was home to at least two types of trees: Cladoxylopsids and Archaeopteris.

Infosys launched 3 blockchain-powered distributed applications

- The launch of three blockchain-powered distributed applications for government services, insurance, and supply chain management domains.
- These comprehensive applications designed as ready-to-subscribe business networks ensure quick deployment, interoperability across disparate systems of value chain stakeholders and a wide variety of use cases involving other digital technologies like IoT, Analytics as well.

CBERS-4A: New China-Brazil earth resource satellite launched into space

- The China-Brazil Earth Resource Satellite-4A (CBERS-4A), developed by China and Brazil as part of a bilateral programme, was recently sent into space, thus further pushes forward the aerospace cooperation between two countries.
- It was launched on a Long March-4B carrier from Taiyuan Satellite Launch Center in Shanxi Province of China. The same rocket also put into orbits another 8 satellites, including a wide-range multispectral remote-sensing microsatellite donated to Ethiopia.

Army to sign deal for six Apache attack helicopters

- The deal for six AH-64E Apache attack helicopters for the Indian Army, estimated to cost around \$930 million. These are in addition to 22 Apaches being inducted by the Indian Air Force (IAF).

- The helicopters should start coming in by 2022. The Army will also soon start receiving the indigenously built Light Combat Helicopter (LCH) along with the IAF.
- Currently, the Army Aviation Corps operates only smaller Cheetah and ALH (Advance Light Helicopters) that weigh less than five tonnes.
- All bigger helicopters, including the Mi-35s and fixed wing aircraft are operated by the IAF.

President Kovind releases mobile app of Red Cross Society of India in Hyderabad

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

Scientists develop new ink formulation for security printing

- Researchers from Council of Scientific and Industrial Research- National Physical Laboratory (CSIR-NPL) have developed an ink that may help in combating the problem of counterfeiting of currency notes, fake printing of passports and pharmaceuticals.

Last solar eclipse of decade to be observed in parts of country

- The annular solar eclipse that happens when the Moon covers the sun's centre, leaving the sun's visible outer edges to form a 'ring of fire' or annulus - around the moon.
- The total duration of the eclipse will be 2 hours and 39 minutes. The ring of fire will be visible only from places like Kannur in Kerala along with the southern coast of the country and will not be seen from other places in India.

IIT Madras researchers find link between a tissue-remodelling enzyme and hypertension risk

- Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras have found an association between a tissue-remodelling enzyme called 'MMP7' and risk of hypertension, the premier science institute.
- Matrix metalloproteinases (MMPs) play a crucial role in hypertension-induced heart tissue remodelling

IIT-Hyderabad researchers unravel protein that repairs DNA

- Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad have unravelled the mechanism of action of a protein (alkB homolog 3, or ALKBH3) that repairs damaged DNA.
- In humans, one such repair mechanism involves activation of a special class of proteins called 'DNA repair proteins'.

Qure.ai develops software to provide fast and accurate diagnosis of Tuberculosis

- Qure.ai has developed software qXR using a database of 2.5 million X-rays, which provides fast and accurate diagnosis of Tuberculosis (TB).
- Qure.ai's qXR is designed to screen and prioritise abnormal chest X-rays and individuals suspected of TB.

China successfully launches largest carrier rocket

- China has launched the largest carrier rocket of the country, Long March-5, from Wenchang Space Launch Center in south China's Hainan Province carried by Shijian-20 satellite. The rocket, also known as CZ-5.

Russia inducts first Avangard hypersonic missiles into service

- Russia inducted first Avangard hypersonic missiles into service. The nuclear-capable missiles can travel more than 20 times the speed of sound.
- They have a "glide system" that affords great manoeuvrability and could make them impossible to defend against.

Mars 2020 rover to seek ancient life, prepare for human missions: NASA

- The Mars 2020 rover, which sets off for the Red Planet, will not only search for traces of ancient life, but pave the way for future human missions.
- The rover has been constructed in a large, sterile room at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, near Los Angeles. It is scheduled to leave Earth in July 2020.

100th Consecutively Successful Launch of Sounding Rocket RH-200 from TERLS

- ISRO has developed a series of sounding rockets called Rohini series, important among them being RH-200, RH-300 and RH-560, number in the name indicating the diameter of the rocket in mm.
- Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC), Thiruvananthapuram has been pioneering the sounding rocket launch for scientific studies.
- Large numbers of sounding rockets have been developed and launched from Thumba Equatorial Rocket Launching Station (TERLS).

Important Rankings and Indexes

Index	India's Rank	Top	Bottom	Released By
Human Development Index	129 th			United Nations Development Programme
Gender Gap Report	112 th	Iceland	Yemen	World Economic Forum

Andaman & Nicobar police station adjudged country's best

- Aberdeen police station in Andaman & Nicobar Islands has been adjudged as the country's best performing police station out of 15,579 police stations for the year 2019.
- Police stations in Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh have bagged the second and third spots, respectively, on the list.
- Police stations located in Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh (2 Stations), Arunachal Pradesh, Delhi, Rajasthan, Telangana and Rajasthan have also made it to the top 10 list for 2019.

Good Governance Index launched

- Minister of State for Public Grievances and Pensions Dr Jitendra Singh launched Good Governance Index in New Delhi.
- Tamil Nadu topped the Good Governance Index launched by the Centre. Maharashtra, Karnataka, Chhattisgarh and Andhra Pradesh followed among the 'Big States'
- Among the 'Big States', the poor performers are Odisha, Bihar, Goa, and Uttar Pradesh with Jharkhand coming last.
- The rankings were launched by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances **(DARPG) and the Centre for Good Governance.**

US replace Kuwait as India's 6th biggest oil supplier; Iraq remains on top

- The United States has surpassed Kuwait to become India's sixth largest oil supplier as it supplied 70% more crude to the world's third largest energy consumer during April-September.
- According to data, the US supplied 5.4 million tonnes of crude oil during the first six months of 2019-20.
- **Iraq** continues to be **India's top crude oil supplier.** India is 83% dependent on imports to meet its oil needs.
- Saudi Arabia, which is in the second spot, exported 20.7 million tonnes of crude oil in first six months.

- Nigeria grabbed the third spot vacated by Iran. It was followed by the UAE with 8.9 million tonnes of supplies and Venezuela with 8 million tonnes of sales.

Mukesh Ambani's RIL replaces Indian Oil at top of Fortune India 500 list

- Reliance Industries with revenue of ₹5.81 lakh crore in 2018-19 ended Indian Oil Corporation Limited's 10-year reign as India's largest company on Fortune India 500 list.
- ONGC was ranked third. It was followed by State Bank of India, Tata Motors and Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL).
- Rajesh Exports climbed one position to be ranked 7th on the 2019 list and so did Tata Steel, Coal India, Tata Consultancy Services and Larsen & Toubro that were ranked 8th, 9th, 10th and 11th, respectively.
- ICICI Bank rose two positions to be ranked 12th, followed by Hindalco Industries and HDFC Bank.

India in 7th position on World Anti-Doping Agency list for violations

- The World Anti-Doping Agency consisting of dope infractions recorded in 2017 across the world has revealed that India was fifth-highest when it came to total number of positive dope tests in Adverse Analytical Findings (AAF), while it was seventh-highest in the list of Anti-Doping Rule Violations (ADRV).
- French Anti-Doping Agency had the highest number with 164 AAF followed by USA with 136.

Virat Kohli, Akshay, Salman Khan top Forbes India's 2019 Celebrity 100 list

- Akshay Kumar and Salman Khan are among the top paid celebrities of India, Forbes India has announced.
- The magazine has published its list of Celebrity 100 for the year 2019 which has been topped by Indian cricket captain Virat Kohli with the earning of Rs 252.72 crore.
- Akshay is highest earning star from the country with Rs 293.25 crore, but is placed at the 2nd spot, followed by Salman with the earning of Rs 229.25 crore.
- Amitabh Bachchan and Indian cricketer MS Dhoni are listed at 4th and 5th spots, with earnings of Rs 239.25 crore and Rs 135.93 crore, respectively.

Bengaluru Has Maximum Number of Young Billionaires In India

- Bengaluru holds the distinction of being home to the most number of billionaires aged under 40. Hurun India Rich List 2019 has released a list of top 17 self-made entrepreneurs out of which a majority of 10 are from Bengaluru alone.
- While Mumbai registered the most number of billionaires across ages, Bengaluru, led by Zerodha's Nithin Kamath and Flipkart co-founder Sachin Bansal, became the millennial billionaire's hub.

The India State of Forest Report 2019

- Total tree and forest cover in the country increased by 5,188 square kilometer in the last two years.
- There is an increase of 42.6 million tonnes in the carbon stock of the country as compared to the last assessment of 2017.
- There is a decrease of forest cover to the extent of 765 sq km (0.45 per cent) in northeast India region. Except Assam and Tripura, all states in the region show decrease in forest cover.
- The loss in the North East is attributed primarily due to the traditional farming practice of Shifting Cultivation.
- The mangrove cover in the country has increased by 54 sq km (1.10 per cent) as compared to the previous assessment.
- **Karnataka** tops the country in growing the maximum amount of forest in the last two years followed by Andhra Pradesh (990 sq km) and Kerala (823 sq km).

Kerala tops SDG index; Bihar at last rank

- Kerala tops states in progress towards UN Sustainable Development Goals, while Bihar is at the bottom of Niti Aayog's SDG Index, released.
- Himachal Pradesh and Sikkim have joined all the southern states in the top tier of front runners who scored more than 65 points, out of a possible 100.
- Bihar, Jharkhand and Arunachal Pradesh are the worst performing states in this year's Index for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) .
- The SDGs are a set of 17 broad-based global goals adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015, and intended to be achieved by 2030.

Important Books and Authors

Authors/ Released by	Books
Abanindranath Tagore; Translated by Urbi Bhaduri	Nalak
Viswanathan Anand	Mind Master: Winning Lessons from a Champion's Life
Samanth subramanian	A Dominant Character: The Radical Science and Restless Politics of JBS Haldane
Boria Majumdar with Nalin Mehta	Dreams of a Billion: India and the Olympic Games
R P N Singh	Politics of Opportunism
Venkaiah Naidu	The Renaissance Man-The Many Facets of Arun Jaitley

Thaawarchand Gehlot releases Braille Edition of Book “Exam Warriors” written by Prime Minister
Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment Shri Thaawarchand Gehlot released the Braille Edition of the book "Exam Warriors" authored by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi .

- The Braille Edition in Hindi and English has been prepared in the Braille Press of Rajasthan Netraheen Kalyan Sangh.

Important Sports News

Cricket

Pakistan cricket board appoints Mushtaq Ahmed as spin bowling consultant

- The Pakistan cricket board has appointed former test leg spinner Mushtaq Ahmed as spin bowling consultant for a one year term.

Wasim Jaffer becomes first Indian to play 150 Ranji matches

- Wasim Jaffer became the first player in Indian cricket to feature in 150 Ranji matches.
- The 41-year-old from Maharashtra, who has been an important part of the title-winning Vidarbha team in the last two years.
- Jaffer is followed by Madhya Pradesh batsman Devendra Bundela (145 matches) and Amol Muzumdar (136 matches), who have played for Mumbai and Assam.

Virat Kohli retains top spot in ICC Test rankings

- Virat Kohli retained his top spot among batsmen in the latest ICC Test rankings With 928 points,
- Kohli is 17 points clear of Australia's Steve Smith who occupies the second spot.
- New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson ends the year at number three with 864 points. Cheteshwar Pujara retained his fourth place but Rahane slipped to seventh.
- Among the bowlers, Bumrah slipped to the sixth spot in the list headed by Australia's Pat Cummins.

- India's Ravindra Jadeja remained at number two, behind Jason Holder of the West Indies among Test all-rounders.
- In the ICC World Test Championship, India stand on top with 360 points, Australia with 216 points occupies 2nd spot. Pakistan is in third spot with 80 points.

Smriti Mandhana in ICC women's ODI and T20 teams of the year

- Smriti Mandhana was named in both the International Cricket Council's ODI and T20 teams of the year.
- Mandhana has Jhulan Goswami, Poonam Yadav and Shikha Pandey for company in the ODI team of the year and all-rounder Deepti Sharma in the T20 side.
- Australia's Alyssa Healy was chosen as the T20 cricketer of the year.

ICC opens anti-corruption investigations into Qatar T10 League

- The International Cricket Council is investigating the Qatar T10 league after intercepting "a number of known corruptors" in the event.
- The ICC's Anti-Corruption Unit was working with the organisers to monitor the league since its inception.
- The ICC sanctioned this event 12 months ago based on the sound information provided by the organisers.

England off-spinner Laura Marsh announces international retirement

- England off-spinner Laura Marsh has ended her international career in a 13-year span that included three World Cup wins, the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB).
- The 33-year-old made her debut as a pace bowler in 2006 before switching to spin and signs off with 217 international wickets, making her the most successful women's spinner in English cricket.

ICC T20I rankings: Radha retains 2nd position in bowlers' list as Deepti, Poonam slip

- Radha Yadav remained at the second spot and Deepti Sharma and Poonam Yadav slipped a place each to the fifth and sixth positions in the latest ICC Women's T20I players rankings.
- Jemimah Rodrigues continued to occupy the fourth spot, while Smriti Mandhana and Harmanpreet Kaur too remained static at the seventh and ninth positions.
- India continued to hold on to the fourth position in the ICC Women's T20 Team Ranking. Sophie Ecclestone and opener Amy Jones have attained career-high rankings.
- Australia's Megan Schutt continued to lead the bowlers ranking. Wicketkeeper-batter Jones has been rewarded with a jump of 30 places to a career-best 17th position.
- New Zealand's Suzie Bates continued to head the T20 batting list.

Kohli among five Wisden cricketers of the decade

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

MS Dhoni named captain of Cricket Australia ODI team of the decade, Virat Kohli Test

Skipper

- MS Dhoni has been named the captain of the ODI Team of the Decade compiled by Cricket Australia. 3 Indians are part of the 11-man team, which includes some of the best one-day players of the 2010s.
- Virat Kohli only Indian in CA's Test team of the decade
- MS Dhoni named captian of CA's ODI team of the decade
- Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli also part of CA's ODI team of the decade

Tennis

Ashleigh Barty named WTA Player of the Year

- The WTA has announced world No. 1 Ashleigh Barty as its Player of the Year.

- The 23-year-old won four titles from six finals in 2019, including the WTA Finals in Shenzhen and her maiden Grand Slam singles trophy at the French Open.
- Barty became the first Australian to be named WTA world No. 1 since Evonne Goolagong Cawley in 1976 and recorded the most matches won on tour this season, with 57.

Former World No. 1 Caroline Wozniacki to Retire After 2020 Australian Open

- Caroline Wozniacki former World No.1 tennis player announced her retirement from tennis after next month's Australian Open and WTA (Women's Tennis Association) event in Auckland.
- Since 2009, Wozniacki has consistently ranked in the top 10. She held the No. 1 spot from 2010 to 2012 and most recently occupied the top spot after winning the 2018 Australian Open. Wozniacki is ranked 37th in the world.

Football

FIFA rankings: India static at 108

- The Indian men's football team remained static at 108th spot in the year-ending FIFA rankings .
- India, however, lost 11 places throughout the year. With 1187 total points, India is placed at 19th spot among Asian countries headed by Japan 28th.

Sierra Leone pro football league gets first female coach

- Sierra Leone's top football clubs has picked a woman to coach its main squad, in a first for the West African country's professional league.
- The East End Tigers named police officer Victoria Conteh, who formerly coached the country's female football team, as its head coach.

Other Sports News

13th South Asian Games concludes in Kathmandu

- 13th South Asian Games have concluded in Kathmandu. India finished on top with 312 medals comprising 174 gold, 93 silver and 45 bronze followed by Nepal & Sri Lanka.
- In the women's section, Pinki Rani brought first gold in 51 kg category. She defeated Mala Ravi of Nepal in the final.
- In 57 kg, Sonia Lather won gold by defeating her Sri Lankan opponent. Manju Bamboriya also clinched gold in 64 kg. She beat Nepal's Punam Rawal.
- In men's Sparsh Kumar brought gold. He defeated Mohd. Asif Syed of Pakistan in 52 kg. Arinder Singh lost his bout to Nepal's Sanil Shahi in 60 kg.
- Krishan Vikas clinched gold in 69 kg beating Gul Zaib of Pakistan. In 91 kg Narendra brought sixth Gold for the country. He defeated Ashish Duwadi in the final.
- In Squash, India won gold in women's team event and silver in men's. Indian girls defeated Pakistan in the finals by 2-1, while men team lost to Pakistan by 1-2.
- In Basketball Indian men's and women's teams clinched gold each. Men team defeated Sri Lanka in the final by 101-62. In Women's final Indian girls crushed host Nepal by 127-46. In Judo mixed event India won gold.

Zeena Khitta wins women's national 10m Air Rifle

- Himachal's Zeena Khitta stunned West Bengal's Mehuli Ghosh and World No.3 Apurvi Chandela to emerge as the new national champion in the Women's 10 metres Air Rifle event at the ongoing 63rd National Shooting Championship Competitions Rifle and Pistol in Bhopal . Mehuli had to settle for the silver while Apurvi won the bronze.

Lewis Hamilton won the season ending Abu Dhabi Grand Prix 2019

- Lewis Hamilton won the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix, capping another stellar season with an 11th win and 84th overall.
- The six-time Formula One champion is now only seven wins behind seven-time F1 champion Michael Schumacher's all-time record of 91.

Senior Wrestling National Championships held in Jalandhar

- Vinesh Phogat and Sakshi Malik won in the finals to claim gold medals. Phogat beat 20-year-old Haryana's Anju 7-3 in the 55kg category, Olympic bronze medalist Malik defeated Radhika of Haryana 4-2 in the 62kg category.
- In the 68kg category, 35-year-old Haryana wrestler Anita Sheoran stunned Commonwealth Games bronze medallist Divya Kakran.
- Punjab's 35-year-old Gursharan Kaur, claimed the title in the 76kg category, with a 4-2 win over Pooja of Haryana.
- Asian Championships silver medallists Gurpreet Singh and Sunil Kumar clinched gold medals.
- In the 55 kg category, Arjun, representing Services, won against Ajay by technical superiority.

Indian junior women's team wins 3-nation hockey tournament

- The Indian junior women's team won the three-nation hockey tournament even though they lost to Australia 1-2 in the final game at Canberra.
- The Indian eves finished top on the point table, with seven points from four matches. They were ahead of the hosts, Australia on goal difference. New Zealand finished third, with only three points from their four matches.

National Schools Chess Championship

- Shashini Puvi from Karnataka has won the coveted gold medal in the National Schools Chess Championship in Aurangabad.
- Mumbai girl Myrah Sachdev has bagged the silver medal in the championship.
- Six-year-old Myrah is now tipped to officially represent India in the Asian and World Schools Chess Championships that are scheduled to be held in 2020.

Praggnanandhaa wins London Chess Classic

- India's R. Praggnanandhaa won the FIDE Open category of the London Chess Classic, which concluded with a tally of 7.5 points out of nine rounds.
- The tournament, organized by the World Chess Federation (FIDE), was held at Olympia London in London, United Kingdom.

Maisnam Meiraba Luwang wins Bangladesh Junior International Badminton Series

- Maisnam Meiraba Luwang has won the Men's singles Bangladesh Junior International Badminton Series 2019 in Dhaka. Top-seeded Meiraba, who hails from Manipur, beat Ken Yong Ong in the final lasting 38 minutes.
- In women's singles, Indian shuttler Treesa Jolly lost to Thailand's third seed Krittaporn Jiantanet in finals.

Manav Thakkar wins U-21 ITTF Challenge Series title in Canada

- Manav Thakkar became the first Indian since 2017 to win a U-21 men's singles title when he lifted the crown at the ITTF Challenge Plus Benemax-Virgo North American Open in Markham, Canada.
- It was India's first U-21 men's singles title since the ITTF Challenge Series became an entity in January 2017, as opposed to being an integral part of the ITTF World Tour.

FICCI India Sports Awards 2019: Rani Rampal Wins Female Sportsperson Of The Year

• Rani Rampal, Indian women's hockey team captain, won the Sportsperson of the Year Award 2019 (Female) at the FICCI India Sports Awards 2019. Saurabh Chaudhary won the Sportsperson of the Year Award 2019 (Male).

Final list of awards:

- Best Company Promoting Sports (Public Sector) -Central Coalfields Limited, Railway Sports Promotion Board
- Best Company Promoting Sports (Private Sector) -Centre for Sports Science
- Best NGO Promoting Sports -Subroto Mukherjee Sports Education Society
- Special Recognition NGO Promoting Sports -My Angels Academy
- Best Professional Services Company -The Sports School
- Best Sports Start-up -FanCode Powered by Dream11
- Best National Sports Federation -National Rifle Association of India
- Para-Athlete of the Year -Sandeep Chaudhary
- Special Recognition Para-Athlete of the Year -Manasi Joshi
- Breakthrough Sports Person of the Year -Amit Panghal
- Special Recognition Breakthrough Sports Person of the Year -Esow Alben
- Coach or Support Staff of the Year -Satyanarayana
- Lifetime Achievement Award (Administrator) -Govindaraj Kempareddy
- Lifetime Achievement Award (Athlete) -Pankaj Advani
- Best State Promoting Sports -Odisha
- Best Sports Journalist -Kamesh Srinivasan
- Special Recognition on the theme of Building New India Through Sports & Fitness -Chitharesh Natesam - India's First Mr Universe

FIH unveils new world ranking system for 2020

- The International Hockey Federation (FIH) unveiled a new world ranking system for 2020 in Lausanne, Switzerland.
- For a better reflection of current performances, the new ranking will be match-based instead of tournament-based calculation. The new world ranking system has been launched after 12 months of painstaking research, analysis and testing.

ICC extends partnership with UNICEF for 2020 Women's T20 World Cup

- The International Cricket Council (ICC) has announced it has extended its partnership with UNICEF through to the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2020 with the focus on empowering women and girls through cricket.
- The ICC and UNICEF partnership commenced in 2015, as part of the ICC's global community outreach programme 'Cricket 4 Good'.

Mirabai Chanu bags Gold in 6th Qatar International Cup in Doha

- Weightlifter Saikhom Mirabai Chanu won the women's 49kg category gold medal to open India's account at the 6th Qatar International Cup in Doha .
- Rakhi Halder clinched a bronze medal in the women's 64kg weight category. She superseded the senior national record in both snatch and total lift with her personal best effort of 218kg 95kg in the snatch with 123 kg .

Abhinav Lohan wins Bengaluru Open Golf Championship

- Abhinav Lohan lifted PGTI title at the Bengaluru Open golf championship.

- It was Lohan's first title on the TATA Steel PGTI and second win of the year as he had also emerged victorious at the PGTI Feeder Tour event in Lucknow.

Ahmedabad Gets Provisional Clearance to Host FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup India 2020 Games

- Ahmedabad has been cleared as a provisional venue for FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup India 2020 by the Local Organising Committee (LOC).
- FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup India 2020 will be held next year between November 2 and November 21.

Manu Bhaker, Anish Bhanwala clinch five gold medals at National C'ships

- Manu Bhaker and Anish Bhanwala clinched gold medals at the 63rd National Shooting Championships in Bhopal. Bhaker, representing Haryana, clinched four gold medals in the women's 10-meter air pistol.
- Devanshi Dhama bagged the silver in the senior women's 10-meter air pistol event while Yashaswini Singh Deshwal won the bronze medal in the same event.

Cristiano Ronaldo bags best men's player at Dubai Globe Soccer Awards

- Cristiano Ronaldo won the best men's player at the Dubai Globe Soccer Awards. Lucy Bronze was awarded the best women's player of the year, while Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp was named the best manager.

Weightlifter Seema banned for four years for doping

- Weightlifter Seema has been slapped with a four-year suspension for a doping violation.
- The National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) stated Seema's dope sample was collected this year during the 34th Women National Weightlifting Championship in Vishakhapatnam.

IOA withdraws boycott call for 2022 Commonwealth Games

- Indian Olympic Association (IOA) has withdrawn its threat to boycott the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham over Shooting's exclusion. It also announced that the country will bid to host either the 2026 or the 2030 edition.

Udayan Mane sets new PGTI record; bags TATA Steel Tour C'ship title

- Golf, Udayan Mane won the TATA Steel Tour Championship in Jamshedpur. It was Mane's eighth professional title and his second win on the PGTI. SSP Chawrasia had settled for second place.

Koneru Humpy becomes the 2019 Women's World Rapid Champion

- Indian grandmaster Koneru Humpy has become the 2019 Women's World Rapid Champion. She defeated China's Lei Tingjie in a dramatic final in Moscow, Russia.
- Tingjie finished with a silver, while Turkey's Ekaterina Atalik won bronze. Norway's Magnus Carlsen claimed the men's title.

New Zealand win MCC's Spirit of Cricket award

- The New Zealand cricket team has been bestowed with the Christopher Martin-Jenkins Spirit of Cricket award for its exemplary show of sportsmanship during the epic final of the ICC World Cup at Lord's in July.

Shadab Jakati quits all forms of cricket

- Goa spinner Shadab Jakati, who also played in the cash-rich Indian Premier League, retired from all forms of cricket.
- Jakati, who was part of teams like Chennai Super Kings, now defunct Gujarat Lions and Royal Challengers Bangalore to announce the retirement.

James Anderson becomes first fast bowler to play 150 Tests

- England's leading pacer James Anderson became the first fast bowler in the history of Test cricket to make 150 appearances.

- Anderson also became the ninth cricketer to reach the 150-Test milestone -- joining the likes of Sachin Tendulkar, Steve Waugh and Jacques Kallis.

Revision Points

Organization	Headquarters	Key Person
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)	Paris, France	Audrey Azoulay
United Nations	New York, USA	António Guterres
Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)	New Delhi	Rita Teotia
NASSCOM	New Delhi	Rishad Premji
Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)	Bengaluru	K Sivan
National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)	Washington DC, USA	James Frederick "Jim" Bridenstine
World Economic Forum (WEF)	Cologny, Switzerland	Klaus Schwab
International Monetary Fund (IMF)	Washington DC	Kristalina Georgieva
International Astronomical Union (IAU)	Paris, France	Ewine van Dishoeck
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	New York, USA	Achim Steiner
International Cricket Council (ICC)	Dubai, UAE	Manu Sawhney
Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA)	Zürich, Switzerland	Gianni Infantino
Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI)	New Delhi	Dilip Chenoy
International Hockey Federation (FIH)	Lausanne, Switzerland	Narinder Batra
United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)	New York, USA	Henrietta H. Fore

Important Obituaries

Name	Field
Tukaram Dighole	Former Minister of Maharashtra
Paramananda Sahu	Odisha theatre artist
Laxminarayan Nayak	Freedom Fighter
Bhawani Mukherji	Former India coach
Bhagabat Prasad Mohanty	Former Odisha Minister
Braj Bihari Kumar	Former Chairman of the Indian Council of Social Science Research
Gollapudi Maruthi Rao	Telugu Actor
Tara Sinha	India's first advertising lady
Gita Siddharth	Bollywood actress
ID Swami	Former Minister of State for Home Affairs
Peter Snell (New Zealand)	Three-time Olympic champion
Shriram Lagoo	Theatre and film actor
Gitanath Ganguly	Mohun Bagan president
Prof LS Sheshagiri Rao	Kannada writer, critic and lexicographer
Avtar Singh Makkar	Former president of Shiromani Gurdwara

	Parbandhak Committee
Thomas Chandy	Former Kerala Minister
Vidushi Savita Devi	Hindustani classical vocalist
Dr G Nanjundan	Translator and Sahitya Akademi award winner
Ramchandra Babu	Cinematographer
Ganga Prasad Vimal	Hindi Author
Vikas Sabnis	Cartoonist
B.V. Katti	President of All-India Veerashaiva Mahasabha
Vishwasha Theertha Swamiji	Pejavar Mutt chief
Shiv Sharma	Former DG of Doordarshan
Nazar Nandi	Social Worker

Important Peoples' in News

Ajit Doval to get honorary degree from HNBGU

- National Security Advisor Ajit Doval was awarded the honorary doctorate degree at the convocation ceremony of the Hemwati Nandan Bahuguna Garhwal University in Srinagar, Uttarakhand.
- Doval stated that being awarded the doctorate in his native land was a matter of great honour for him.

Sub-lieutenant Shivangi becomes first woman pilot for Indian Navy

- Sub-lieutenant Shivangi became the first woman pilot for the Indian Navy.
- She was born in the city of Muzaffarpur in Bihar. She was commissioned into the Indian Navy last year after her initial training. She will be flying the Dornier surveillance aircraft of the Indian Navy.

Lionel Messi claims record 6th Ballon d'Or, overtakes Cristiano Ronaldo

- Lionel Messi claimed a record sixth Ballon d'Or award, beating Liverpool's leading nominees and Cristiano Ronaldo to lift football's most prestigious individual trophy.
- The Argentine, who won the Liga title with Barcelona but only managed third place in the Copa America with his country, added to his 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2015 trophies.

Vernon Philander announces international retirement

- South Africa pacer Vernon Philander will retire from international cricket following the upcoming Test series against England.
- He represented South Africa in the longest format, and has played 60 Tests in comparison to 30 ODIs and seven T20 Internationals.

Joaquin Phoenix Named PETA Person of the Year

- Joker star Joaquin Phoenix has been named by the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals as its 2019 Person of the Year.
- He has recently appeared in an advertisement of PETA titled "We are all animals", which was displayed in the Times Square and Sunset billboards to promote the prohibition of travelling wild- animal circuses.
- Previous year winners of PETA 'Person of the Year' are Pope Francis, Oprah Winfrey, Anjelica Huston, Olivia Mun, Eva Mendes and Alicia Silverstone.

Roger Federer first living Swiss to have coin minted in his honour

- Tennis legend Roger Federer is to become the first living Swiss to have a coin minted in their honour, with a commemorative 20-franc (USD 20.06) silver piece bearing his image being issued in January.

- Roger Federer is a well-known tennis player of Switzerland who has won 103 tour level titles, 20 Grand slam crowns and 28 ATP (Association of Tennis Professionals) Masters 1000.
- He has also been named a street called the Roger- Federer-Allee in 2012 and the Swiss post has released a Roger Federer stamp in Basel in 2007.

Pakistan's Aleem Dar breaks Steve Buckor's world record for most Test as umpire

- Pakistan's 51-year old umpire Aleem dar has broken former Jamaican umpire Steve Bucknors record of most test matches as an umpire. The first test between Australia and new Zealand is Dar's 129th match as an on-field umpire.
- Dar had made his debut as umpire in 2003 during England's tour of Bangladesh. Bucknor umpired in 128 tests between 1989 and 2009.

Rohit Sharma named La Liga's first India brand ambassador

- Rohit Sharma was named the first-ever India brand ambassador of La Liga, the top Spanish football league.
- The current ICC World No. 2, Rohit is the only batsman in the history of the game to have scored three double hundreds in the 50-overs format including a world record 264.

Nirmala Sitharaman among world's 100 most powerful women: Forbes

- Forbes 2019 list of 'The World's 100 Most Powerful Women' has been topped by German Chancellor Angela Merkel followed by Christine Lagarde and Speaker of the US House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi.
- FM Nirmala Sitharaman (34th), HCL Corporation CEO and Executive Director Roshni Nadar Malhotra and Biocon Founder Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw have been named among the world's 100 most powerful women by Forbes.

84-year-old Canadian becomes oldest to complete Antarctic Ice Marathon

- An 84-year-old Canadian national named Roy Jorgen Svenningsen has become the oldest person ever to complete the Antarctic Ice Marathon.
- The winner of the race was William Hafferty of the US, who set an event record time of 3 hours, 34 minutes and 12 seconds.

Leander Paes to retire from Tennis in 2020

- Indian tennis ace Leander Paes has announced that 2020 will be his last year as a professional tennis player.
- Leander made his Olympic debut in 1992. He has made 7 appearances in a row at the Olympics. Paes has won eight doubles and ten mixed doubles Grand Slam titles.

Pat Cummins becomes most expensive overseas IPL player

- Pat Cummins (Australian cricketer) became the most expensive overseas buy as he was sold to Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) for a whopping 15.50 crore rupees.
- Glenn Maxwell was sold to Kings XI Punjab for 10.75 crore rupees while Aaron Finch was picked up by Royal Challengers Bangalore for 4.4 crore rupees in the Indian Premier League auction at Kolkata.

Eight-year-old becomes highest-paid YouTuber, earns 26 million dollars in year

Eight-year-old Ryan Kaji earned \$26 million in 2019 on his YouTube channel, making him the highest-paid creator on the platform, according to a list published by Forbes magazine.

Kaji, whose real name is Ryan Guan, was already the video platform's highest earner in 2018, with \$22 million, according to Forbes.

His channel "Ryan's World," launched in 2015 by Ryan's parents, is only three years old but already has 22.9 million subscribers.

Important Mergers and Acquisitions

ArcelorMittal, Nippon steel complete acquisition of Essar steel

- ArcelorMittal forms joint venture with Nippon Steel to operate Essar Steel;
- The decks for acquisition of Essar Steel for ₹42,000 crore by L.N. Mittal-led company was cleared by the Supreme Court.
- Aditya Mittal, President and CFO of ArcelorMittal, has been appointed Chairman of AM/NS India, and Dilip Oommen has been appointed as its CEO.
- The joint venture is called ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India Limited (AM/NS India), which will own and operate ESIL.

Patanjali Ayurved completes acquisition of bankrupt Ruchi Soya for ₹4,350 crore.

- Baba Ramdev's Patanjali Ayurved on made its first big acquisition when it paid ₹4,350 crore to take over soya food brand Nutrela-maker Ruchi Soya through an insolvency process.
- The acquisition will help Patanjali acquire edible oil plants as also soyabean oil brands such as Mahakosh and Ruchi Gold.

Three proposals get automatic nod under CCI green channel

- The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has received three Green Channel combinations for automatic approval under the competition law.
- 100 per cent acquisition of both IDBI Asset Management Ltd (IAML) and IDBI MF Trustee Company Ltd (IMTL) by Muthoot Finance Ltd (MFL).
- The acquisition of Adani Electricity Mumbai Ltd (AEML) and Adani Electricity Mumbai Services Ltd (AEMSL) by Qatar Holding LLC (QH).
- A green channel combination has also been filed in respect of Green Rock, NIIF and Indo-Infra acquisition and control of GVK Airport Holdings Ltd and its subsidiaries — Mumbai International Airport Ltd and Navi Mumbai International Airport Private Ltd.

Bharti Infratel, Indus Towers extend deadline for merger to February 24

- Bharti Infratel stated it has extended the deadline for a merger with mobile tower company Indus Towers by two more months to February 24.
- It also cautioned that "there can be no assurance that the merger can be completed within the extended time-frame".