
JANUARY CURRENT AFFAIRS - 2020

NATIONAL NEWS

1. Global Carbon Project has made some observations on India that India's emissions in 2019 was expected to be only 1.8% higher than in 2018.

- Growth in India's electricity generation has weakened from 6% per year to under 1% due to weak economy.
- Hydropower generation was high due to wet monsoon while coal generation declined.
- As per the observations, economic slowdown is the reason for a lower emission growth in India as well as in the rest of the world, and also in China, the world's largest emitter.

About Global Carbon Project (GCP):

- Established in: 2001
- Established by: International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme, the World Climate Programme, the International Human Dimensions Programme on Global Environmental Change and Diversitas
- Purpose: to reduce the greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.
- This partnership constituted the Earth Systems Science Partnership (ESSP) which subsequently evolved into Future Earth (handler of GCP).
- GCP is a research partner of the World Climate Research Programme.
- The project focuses on to reducing 3 major greenhouse gases- CO₂, methane, and nitrous oxide.

2. A workshop-cum-exhibition on 'Bamboo - A wonder grass: Opportunity for Sustainable Development in Jobs' will be organized in Jammu by the North Eastern Council (Cane and Bamboo Technology Centre of Assam) and J&K UT administration.

- Purpose: to replicate the successful model being adopted in the North East to market its products.

3. Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved to reduce central govt's shareholding in selected Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) where the govt shareholding is below 51%.

- However, the management control will differ on a case to case basis.

4. Andhra Pradesh CM Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has proposed to create 3 capital cities in Andhra Pradesh for effective decentralization of governance in the state.

- Reddy proposed to create Visakhapatnam as the executive, Amaravati as the legislative and Kurnool as the judicial capitals of the state.

Committees related to the news:

Extra Facts:

The 3 capital model has been taken from South Africa which has administrative capital in Pretoria, national legislature in Cape Town and judicial capital in Bloemfontein.

5. Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has also approved the amendments in the Toll Operate Transfer (TOT) Model proposed by National Highways Authority of India (NHAI).

- National Highway projects which are operational and have toll revenue generation history of 1 year after the Commercial Operations Date (COD) shall be monetized through the TOT Model.
- TOT model provides for a fixed 30-year concession period.



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- The fund, generated from monetization of highways, will be used by the govt for developing new highways.
6. Results of the Swachh Survekshan League 2020 (Quarter 1 and Quarter 2) has been released by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA).
- 5th edition of the Swachh Survekshan 2020 (the annual urban cleanliness survey conducted by MoHUA) was also launched.
 - SS League 2020 is being conducted in 3 quarters, i.e. April- June, July - September and October-December 2019 and has 2000 marks for each quarter.
 - Ranks have been assigned in two categories, namely, cities with population of 1 lakh and above (with two sub-categories, i.e. 1-10 lakh and 10 lakhs and above) and cities with population of less than 1 lakh (under the < 1 lakh population category, the rankings are given zone and population wise).
 - SS League holds 25% weightage in the Swachh Survekshan 2020.
 - Parameters: waste water management and faecal sludge management have been given special attention among 12 indicators.
7. President of India, Ram Nath Kovind (on October 31st, 2019) had revoked the President's Rules - imposed under Article 356 - on the consolidated state of J&K as the article is not applicable on UTs.
- Section 73 of J&K Reorganization Act, 2019 grants the powers to the President of India to take over the administration of J&K UT in case of failure of the UT administration.
 - In exercise of the powers granted under Section 73, President has taken control of J&K UT.
 - Under Section 74, President has authorized expenditure to be carried out of the Consolidated fund of UT of J&K.
8. Kerala has become the first state in India to pass a resolution for scrapping the Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019.
- Kerala's CM: Pinarayee Vijayan
 - While Uttar Pradesh has become the first state to start work under the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) 2019.
9. Central Government has established the new 'Department of Military affairs' (Sainya Karya Vibhag) within the Ministry of Defence (MoD).
- It will be headed by CDS Bipin Rawat.
 - It is the 5th department in the MoD (created by changing the Government of India (Allocation of Business), Rules 1961).
 - Dept of Defence will take capital acquisition decisions and not Dept of military affairs.
10. Central Government has formed a 7-member group of ministers, headed by Rajnath Singh, to review the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) and suggest measures to improve it.
- The committee has been formed to allay the apprehensions of farmers.
11. Indian Air Force has commissioned the Flight Inspection System - Dornier 228 (light utility aircraft) - in its 'Otters' squadron.
- In 2015, IAF has signed a deal with the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) for purchasing 14 Dornier aircraft.

12. The committee (2017), headed by Manish Sisodia, has renamed Pragati Maidan metro station in New Delhi as Supreme Court metro station.

- Following places in Delhi to be renamed as:

13. For the first time, American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPI) will organize the 14th Global Healthcare Summit in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.

About AAPI:

AAPI is a professional association for Indian American physicians. Headquarters - USA
President - Sudhakar Jonnalagadda (for 2020-21)

14. Uttar Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation (UPSRTC) has launched 'Damini' which is a calling and a WhatsApp helpline service to ensure the safety of the women passengers in UP.

- The help-line number is "81142-77777". It has been launched under the 'Nirbhaya Yojana'.

15. According to the data provided by Minister for Women and Child Development- Smriti Irani in the Parliament, states have used only 30% of the Poshan Abhiyan funds in 3 years since 2017.

- Mizoram, Lakshdweep and Bihar are the best performing states in utilizing the funds.
- Punjab, Karnataka and Kerala are the worst performing states in utilizing the Poshan Abhiyan funds.
- During 2019-20, funds were released to 19 States.
- Poshan Abhiyan (National Nutrition Mission) was launched in 2017 for 3-years and is implemented by the Ministry of Women and Child Development.

16. World's second tallest statue of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel (50 feet tall) has been built in Sardardham campus near Vaishnodevi circle in Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

- The statue has been developed by Ram V. Sutar (who is also the designer of 'Statue of Unity').

17. Lai Haroba - a ritualistic festival observed by Manipuri meitei communities - has been organized in Agartala, Tripura by the state govt.

18. Wildlife Institute of India will use around 10,000 cameras to conduct the Asiatic Lion Census in May 2020 in 7 districts in Gujarat.

- Asiatic lions (which is world's last independent population) are only found in Gir National Park and Wildlife Sanctuary in Gujarat.
- Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has launched the Asiatic Lion Conservation Project to conserve Asiatic Lion for 2018-2021.

19. Odisha has launched the first-of-its-kind "e-Gazette portal" to provide the Gazette notifications in online mode for all departments.

- It is developed by National Informatics Centre (NIC).

20. Cyber police of Maharashtra has launched the 'Cyber Safe Women' campaign on the birth anniversary of Savitribai Phule (social reformer).

- Purpose: to protect women and children from cybercrime.
- Savitribai Phule was born on January 3, 1831.

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21. Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan has launched the "K-RERA" - Kerala Real Estate Regulatory Authority - to bring transparency in real estate sector and boost customers' confidence.
 22. Telangana has signed 8 MoU with various companies and IIT-Kharagpur. IIT-Kharagpur will open a centre of excellence in AI and research and Development Park.
 - The state declared 2020 as year of Artificial Intelligence.
 - Telangana State Industrial Project Approval and Self-Certification System will provide permissions to new businesses.
 23. Delhi has installed the first ever 20-ft tall smog tower at Lajpat Nagar market to purify the air. It can remove up to 80% of the particulate matter (PM 2.5 and PM10).
 - A separate pilot project has been undertaken by the IIT-Bombay, IIT-Delhi and University of Minnesota to consider the efficiency of smog towers.
 24. Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) has established its first Silk Processing Plant in Surendra Nagar district of Gujarat.
 - Purpose: to increase the production of Gujarat Patola sarees.
 25. Ministry of External Affairs has set up the New, Emerging and Strategic Technologies (NEST) division to handle new and emerging technologies.
 - NEST helps to partner with 5G and artificial intelligence areas.
 26. 107th Indian Science Congress 2020 was held at the University of Agricultural Sciences in Bengaluru.
 - Theme: "Science and Technology: Rural Development".
 - For the first time, farmers science congress will be held.
 - During the farmer science congress, ARYA - Attracting and Retaining of Youth in Agriculture - initiative of Indian Council of Agricultural Research to attract youth towards agriculture and allied service sector.
 - DRDO Science Expo, Yoga Science Meet, Children's science congress, women science congress, science communicators meet, 2020 and Mega Science Exhibition - PRIDE OF INDIA ISC EXPO were also held here.
 - During ISC, PM Modi launched the Indian Science Technology and Engineering facilities Map (I-STEM) Portal to allow researchers to easily locate facilities needed for their research.
 - PM Modi also distributed the Krishi Karman to various farmers.
 27. First of its kind rehabilitation centre for freshwater turtles has been established in the Bhagalpur forest division of Bihar.
 28. ISRO has established its 4th Regional Academic Centre for Space at the National Institute of Technology, Karnataka.
 - Other centres are in Jaipur, Guwahati and Kurukshetra.
 - ISRO has also announced to establish its 2nd launch port in Thoothukudi district of Tamil Nadu to launch small satellite vehicles.



29. Amit Shah has been appointed as the head of the Group of Ministers to examine the proposed National Tariff Policy 2016.

Provisions of the National Tariff Policy 2016

- It proposes to penalize the discoms for power cuts (except cuts started due to calamity or technical faults).
- It proposes to transfer the subsidy directly to the customers' account.
- Cross subsidies on industries should not exceed 20%.
- Discoms should not exceed transmission, aggregate technical and commercial losses beyond 15% in consumer tariffs.

30. ISRO announced to develop a Human Space Flight Infrastructure Centre (to be operational in 3 years) at Challakere (also known as the 'Science City'), Karnataka for Rs 2700 crore.

- Purpose: to train humans for the Gaganyaan mission.
- Currently, Russia is providing the training to the 4 Indian air force officers for this mission at its Yuri Gagarin Cosmonaut Training Centre.

31. Andhra Pradesh has launched the "YSR Aarogyasri scheme" to provide free medical treatment to the poor people.

- Eligibility Criteria: Annual income below Rs 5 lakh and whose treatment cost is more than Rs 1,000.
- Diseases Covered: 2,059
- Insurance: eligible patients will get pension of Rs 3,000 - Rs 10,000 based on the disease.
- Post-surgery care: eligible patients will get a financial aid of Rs 225 per day up to a maximum of Rs 5000 per month.

32. Chandigarh railway station has become the first railway station in Northern India to launch the navigation facilities for visually impaired people.

- It is fifth railway station in India to launch this facility while Mysuru Railway Station was India's first station to do this.

33. Forest Survey of India (FSI) released a report which mentions that about 21.4% of forests in India are prone to fire.

- The report is based on a study carried out along forest fire points identified across the country from 2004 to 2017.
- Among the total forest areas, north eastern region and central India was more prone to fire. Mizoram was the most prone state with the highest number of fire alerts at 2,795.

34. ISRO has signed an MoU with Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA) to set up an Optical telescope under 'Project NETRA' - NETwork for space object TRacking and Analysis - for tracking space objects.

- India launched the early warning system Netra to secure its satellites and other assets in space at a cost of Rs 400 crore in 2019.

35. Madhya Pradesh has launched the Mukhya Mantri Karmchari Swasthya Bima Yojana for all 12.55 lakh employees of the state implemented w.e.f April 1, 2020.

- Rs 5 lakh will be given for general illness, 10 lakh for critical illness.



36. As per preliminary reports received from the States, the total area sown under Rabi crops stands at 571.84 lakh hectares (increased by 35.9 lakh hectare) as compared to 536.35 lakh hectare for corresponding period last year.

- The area sown so far and that sown during last year this time is as follows: (Area in lakh hectare)

37. Andhra Pradesh has launched a project to deliver sand at customers' door steps.

- Purpose: to resolve the issue of sand scarcity and sand mafia.
- Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) act, 1957 provides complete legislation to mines and minerals.

38. World Book Fair has been organized in New Delhi by the National Book Trust.

- Theme: 'Gandhi: The Writers' Writer'

39. 3rd international symposium - Marine Ecosystems-Challenges and Opportunities (MECOS) - will be held in Kochi, Kerala.

- Organizers: Marine Biological association of India.
- Purpose: To review concerns of marine ecosystem and will form new strategies for sustainable utilisation of marine wealth.
- It focuses on the SDG-14 - "Conserve and Sustainably use the oceans and its resources for sustainable development".

40. Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) released the first of its kind report on sugar intake of India.

- A joint survey was conducted by ICMR, National Institute of Nutrition - Hyderabad and International Life Science Institute of India for this report.
- Sugar intake in metro cities was 19.5 grams per day lower than the level recommended by ICMR of 30 gram per day.
- Mumbai had the highest amount of sugar intake at 26.3 g/day followed by Ahmedabad at 25.9 g/day.
- Women had high sugar intake of 20.2 g/day than men at 18.7 g/day.

41. Unnat Jyoti by Affordable LEDs for All (UJALA) and LED Street Lighting National Programme (SLNP) have completed 5 years.

- Implemented by Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL).
- EESL is a joint venture of PSU operating under Ministry of Power.
- The projects were launched in 2015.

42. Mizoram Govt is organising the Zo Kutpui festival across 10 states in India and also in Myanmar, USA and Bangladesh.

- Purpose: to integrate the Mizo population in India and worldwide.
- Mizo tribe is found in Manipur, Tripura and Mizoram and USA, Myanmar & Bangladesh.

43. 5th Asia Pacific Drosophila Research Conference - world's largest platform for meeting of researchers of Drosophila flies - has been organized by the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research held in Pune, Maharashtra.



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- It is the first time, the conference is held in India.
 - Drosophila is the small fruit fly.
44. India and Oman are conducting their bilateral naval exercise - "Naseem-Al-Bahr" - at Mormugao Port in Goa.
- RNOV Al Rasikh and RNOV Khassab of Oman and INS Beas and INS Subhadra from Indian are participating in this exercise.
45. By the end of 2020, ISRO will launch Indian Data Relay Satellite System (IDRSS), in low- earth orbits on a GSLV launcher, to set up a communication system between the space satellites of India.
- Advantages: The new system will help India to cover the entire Gaganyaan mission as well as other space missions.
 - First two satellites of IDRSS will be launched in 2020 and the second satellite will be launched in 2021.
46. Indian Meteorological Department has released its report on climate change and its impact. Key findings:
- 2019 was the 7th warmest year since 1901, but the heating was substantially lower than the highest warming observed in 2016 (0.7° C).
 - 1,562 people died due to extreme weather events in 2019.
 - Bihar witnessed the highest number of deaths (650) in 2019 due to climate change followed by Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh etc.
 - India's average temperature was 0.36 degree Celsius during 2019.
47. Indian Navy launched 1st tri-dimensional expedition 'Maha-Navy Connect 2020' in Mumbai to promote the heritage of Indian Navy.
- Purpose: to spread awareness about importance of Coastal Security among the coastal communities in Maharashtra.
48. Kolkata police has started the 3rd edition of 'Sukanya' project to provide self-defence training to school and college going girls in Kolkata.
- Sukanya is an initiative of Kolkata police to make girls self-dependent.
49. 4th Buxa Bird Festival 2020 has been organized in the Buxa National Park in West Bengal.
- The Buxa National Park has more than 300 rare species of birds.
50. Indian Army has started integrating its workshops (which test weapons and produce spares for the Army) with the Government Owned Contractor Operated (GOCO) Model.
- GOCO model in army workshops will reduce government expenditure on armed forces.
51. Uttar Pradesh has rolled out a Rs 3000 crore project for providing piped water to the households of 9 districts of Bundelkhand and Vindhya regions (facing the most severe water scarcity) in 2020.
- As per India's strategic plan for 2011-2022, 90% of the rural population in India has to be benefited with the pipe water supply.
 - Till date, about 10% rural population of UP is covered with pipe water supply schemes.

52. Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) is developing a digital repository named as the National Integrated Information Portal (NIIP) for all official statistics of the government in India.

- Data from the following websites is likely to be part of the portal.

53. India is helping Afghanistan to set up Aadhaar in the Islamic country.

- Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India and Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) organized a training program for Afghanistan Central Civil Registration Authority (ACCRA).

54. FSSAI has partnered with Amazon Alexa to launch Eat Rights quiz on the Alexa to promote good eating habits among youth.

55. Trade Promotion Council of India (TPCI) has suggested a five pronged strategy to the government to boost export of agricultural goods.

- According to TPCI, India has the potential to increase the agri-exports to \$100 billion in the coming years.
- Suggestions: TPCI proposed 100% pre-export certification, increasing customer base, branding, strengthening last mile connectivity for agri produce, and revamping Special Economic Zones policy for food exports.
- IndusFood 2020 - global food show - will be organized by TPCI to promote India as a global sourcing hub for the food sector in Greater Noida.

56. Union Cabinet has approved the following MoU or agreements signed by India with the following countries:

57. CCEA approved the Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) signed between the Department of Health and Family Welfare and Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation for cooperation in the field of health.

- The MoC was signed in November 2019.

58. 31st edition of the International Kite festival has been inaugurated at 9 places in Gujarat.

- Gujarat CM: Vijay Rupani.

59. Gujarat has announced to set up the Vikram Sarabhai Children Innovation Center (VSCIC) at Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Centre for Extension Research and Innovation in Gujarat University.

- Purpose: to identify, nurture and promote innovation of children up to 18 years.
- The VSCIC is a joint partnership between the Gujarat University and UNICEF.
- The university has also observed its first Children Innovation Festival.

60. Election Commissions of India and Mauritius have renewed their MoU for cooperation in the field of electoral management.

- Earlier, the MoU was valid from 2013-18.

61. As per the state-wise fact sheets released by the National Health Systems Resource Centre (NHSRC), Jammu and Kashmir has witnessed the highest number of IPD (Inpatient Department) care cases in India.



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- Overall, all women in J&K availed the Antennal Care Services (ANC).
 - Public Health Services (PHS) provides 96% of IPD care in rural areas of J&K which is highest against the country's average of 85%.
 - J&K has become the first state in highest life expectancy in India for all ages, surpassing Kerala in 2016.
62. 'MILAN' - International naval exercise - will be hosted by the Eastern Naval Command in Vishakapatnam, Andhra Pradesh in March 2020.
- Theme: 'Synergy Across the Seas'.
63. Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) has developed a cost-effective and efficient scientific method to cultivate Indian Pompano fish in ponds. Pompanos are marine fishes.
- Officially, Pompanos will be cultivated in ponds of Vishakhapatnam.
 - Indian pompano could be considered as an alternative to shrimp.
64. Madhavpur Mela of Gujarat will be organized by the Indian Council for Cultural Relation along with other departments at Madhavpur Ghed in Porbandar district, Gujarat.
- Purpose: The festival celebrates the immortal journey of Lord Krishna and Rukmini from Arunachal Pradesh to Gujarat.
 - 8 North-Eastern states - Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura - will participate in this festival.
65. In order to speed up the work under Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT), Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has issued revised guidelines.
- Till now, India had signed MLAT with 42 countries for cooperation in criminal matters and MHA is the 'Central Authority of India' for this treaty.
 - The guidelines details about the step-by-step guidelines for documentation and other processes.
66. Crime in India 2018 report has been released by National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB). Key Findings:
- Overall crimes - 50.74 lakh which is 1.3% more than 2017.
 - However, the crime rate per lakh population has declined to 383.5 in 2018 against 388.6 in 2017.
 - Economic Offences: In India, over 1.56 lakh cases were recorded in 2018.
 - Top State in economic offences: Uttar Pradesh with 22,822 cases (14.6% of total economic offences) followed by Rajasthan (previous year's topper).
 - On an average of 80 murders, 289 kidnappings and 91 rapes were reported every on a single day in 2018 in India.
 - West Bengal recorded the highest number of crimes committed by foreigners at 744.
 - Crime Against women in 2018 - Uttar Pradesh witnessed highest number of crime against women whereas Madhya Pradesh witnessed highest number of rapes (15 in a day). Among cities, Delhi is at the top in crime against women.
- Note: - As per NCRB, data of West Bengal, Arunachal, Meghalaya, Sikkim and Kolkata is provisional as of now.
67. India's first indigenous aircraft carrier - Vikrant will be commissioned by early 2021.
- It is being built by Cochin Shipyard Limited.



- Vikrant will be equipped with Mikoyan MiG-29k aircraft.
- Till date, India has only 1 aircraft carrier i.e., INS Vikramaditya (commissioned in 2013).

68. Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) has published the list of world's fastest-growing (urban) cities based on the data of United Nations Population Division (UNPD) and covered time period of 2015-20.

- 3 out of top 10 cities are in Kerala (Malappuram, Kozhikode and Kollam).
- Other Indian Cities - Thrissur (Kerala) is ranked at 13th spot, Surat (Gujarat) is ranked at 26th spot and Tiruppur (Tamil Nadu) is ranked at 30th spot.

Note: - In the first picture, growth rate of the cities is also mentioned.

69. Supreme Court has declared that Right of access to internet is a fundamental right under Article 19 and asked J&K UT to review the curbs on internet in a week.

- As per the bench, freedom of speech and expression and freedom to practice any business or trade over internet is constitutionally protected under Article 19 (1)(a),

70. 5th Pulses Conclave 2020 (a biennial conference) will be hosted by the India Pulses and Grain Association in Lonavala, Maharashtra in February.

India is the largest producer (around 25% of global production) of pulses in the world. India is also the largest consumer (27% of world pulses) of pulses.

India is also the largest importer of pulses (14% of pulses in the world).

71. Konkan Railways is constructing the world's highest railway bridge (at a height of 359 metres above the Chenab rivers' bed) in Kashmir to link the UT with rest of the India.

- The bridge (expected to be completed by 2021) is a part of Udampur- Srinagar- Baramulla rail link project.
- The bridge forms a crucial link in the 111-km stretch between Katra and Banihal. Extra Fact: Currently, China's Shuibai railway bridge (on Beipan river) at 275 m is the world's highest railway bridge.

72. In Feb 2019, Cabinet had approved Phase-II of Grid Connected Rooftop and Small Solar Power Plants Programme to increase the cumulative capacity of 40,000 MW from Rooftop Solar Projects by 2022.

- In 2015, this program was launched to install 4,200 MW rooftop solar power plants in India by year 2019-20.
- Implementation Agencies of this program - State Nodal Agencies, Solar Energy Corporation of India, Public Sector Undertakings and other Government Agencies (GAs).

73. Andhra Pradesh CM Jagan Mohan Reddy has launched the first of its kind Jagananna Amma Vodi Scheme (to be implemented from January 26, 2020).

- Under the scheme, Rs 15,000 will be given to low income families (especially mothers) to send their children to schools. (the scheme was announced in November 2019)

74. 4 airports have been chosen by the Airports Authority of India for international recognition for reducing the carbon emission levels as per the standards of Airports Council International (ACI).

- 4 airports - Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport (West Bengal), Biju Patnaik International Airport (Odisha), Lal Bahadur Shastri International Airport (Varanasi), Trivandrum International Airport (Kerala).



- Airport Carbon Accreditation (ACA) Program aims to reduce the carbon emission at airports through its Carbon Management Plan.

75. South Central Railway's "first solar section" has been unveiled at the Nandyal- Yerraguntla section in Guntakal Division of Andhra Pradesh.

- Targets: Indian Railways aims to source about 1000 MW Solar Power and about 200 MW of wind power across Zonal Railways and Production Units.
- Out of this, 500 MW solar plants will be installed on rooftop of Railway buildings.

76. NITI Aayog and International Energy Agency have released the first review of India's energy policies 2020.

- India had become an IEA-association country in 2017.

Findings of the report:

- 23% of the total installed capacity of India is in renewables.
- India has the largest unified power grid operating in a single frequency.
- India has reduced 15% of additional energy demand, oil and gas imports, and air pollution as well as 300 million tonnes of CO2 emissions between 2000 and 2018.
- India's energy demand is likely to double by 2040 and electricity demand may triple. o Share of variable renewables in India is above 15%.
- India will overtake China in terms of crude oil demand growth by mid-2020 which will rise 4.4 million barrels per day (in 2017) to 6 million barrels per day in 2024.
- India imports over 80% of its oil needs, of which 65% is from the Middle East through the Strait of Hormuz.
- Extra Facts: India will achieve 20% ethanol blending in petrol and 5% biodiesel in diesel by 2030 and will increase the use of Natural from 6.2% to 15% by 2030.
- Currently, India is the world's 3rd largest energy consumer after US and China.

77. Forest Advisory Committee (under Ministry of Environment) has approved Green Credit Scheme to facilitate trading of forests just like a commodity.

Features of the scheme:

- Private companies, village forest communities etc agencies will identify lands and grow plantations.
- These identified lands would be considered as compensatory forest land after 3 years.
- An industry that needs forest land can then pay for these patches of forest land, and this would then be transferred to the Forest Department.
- The scheme allows the forest department to outsource its responsibilities of reforestation to non-government agencies.

78. 2nd edition of the State Energy Efficiency Index 2019 for 36 states and UTs, based on 97 indicators, has been released to rank states/UTs on the progress of energy efficiency initiatives.

- Best Performers: Karnataka, Haryana and Puducherry in Achievers category. (no state is in Frontrunner category)
- Least Performers: Manipur, Jharkhand, Rajasthan and Jammu and Kashmir performed worst in Aspirants category.
- The states have been divided into 4 categories: Frontrunner, Achiever, Contender, Aspirant.

- Developers of this index: Bureau of Energy Efficiency in association with Alliance for an Energy Efficient Economy.

About the Index:

- State Energy Efficiency Preparedness Index was first launched in 2018.
- The states/UTs were assessed on 97 indicators based in 5 distinct sectors namely buildings, industry, municipalities, transport, agriculture and DISCOMs.
- In 2019 new indicators were included in this index which are Energy Conservation Building Code (ECBC) 2017, energy efficiency in MSME clusters, etc.

79. Arunachal Pradesh has adopted a new logo (featuring National Emblem and the flower foxtail of orchid) for the state to reflect the distinct identity and culture of the state.

80. An international exhibition and conference on civil aviation sector - Wings India 2020 - will be organized at Begumpet Airport in Hyderabad, Telangana in March 2020.

- Organizers: Ministry of Civil Aviation and FICCI.
- First edition of the Wings India Awards for Excellence in the Civil Aviation Sector will be announced during the event. Deloitte is the 'Knowledge Partner' for the Awards.

81. National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal and Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) have been inaugurated in New Delhi to curb cybercrime.

Note: - Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) is covered in detail in July Spotlight (national news >> news no. 217)

82. Global Investors Meet named as ASCEND 2020 has been organized in Kochi, Kerala.

- During the meet, Wage subsidy scheme was disclosed for new ventures (which provides social security benefits to employees) getting registered on April 1, 2020 for the first 5 years.
- A total of 18 mega projects were announced by Kerala govt. Besides, projects worth Rs 1 lakh crore were received during this meet.
- Kerala infrastructure Fund Management Ltd (KIFML) and Abu Dhabi investment Authority (ADIA) have signed one project and designated Rs 8110 crore for 6 projects.
- ADIA has proposed to invest Rs 66,900 crore for logistics park and other projects.

83. For the first time, Light Combat Aircraft Tejas has been landed on INS Vikramaditya through arrested landing.

- The landing was conducted by Commodore Jaideep Maolankar.
- Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA), in partnership with DRDO, has developed the Tejas.

84. Gujarat Agro Industries Corporation (GAIC) has announced to import water-soluble fertilizers from China in addition to the 300 tonnes that the agency has so far imported.

- "AGRO" is the brand name of these new fertilizers.

85. India will erect non-cut steel fence across Pakistan and Bangladesh borders in the sensitive areas.

- Government is also planning to implement LASER fences across these two borders and the progress work of the Comprehensive Integrated Border Management System (CIMBMS) has been accelerated.

86. Ministry of Steel, in association with Confederation of India Industries, will launch "Purvodaya" steel hub to accelerate the development of eastern states.

- Purpose: to create 2.5 million jobs in the region along with developing logistics and infrastructure.
- The hub will ensure the fulfilment of India's steel policy target of 300 MT by 2030-

87. "Cyber AASHVAST" - India's first Cyber Crime Prevention Unit - has been established in Gandhinagar, Gujarat to curb cybercrime.

- Also, the Video Integration and State Wide Advance Security project called VISWAS and Project NETRANG were also launched in Gujarat.
- Under the project NETRANG, command and control rooms in 33 districts will be established of Gujarat.
- AASHVAST also considers cyber bullying (online harassment of someone) as a crime.

88. India will host the 5th Raisina Dialogue in New Delhi between January 14-16, 2020 on the theme of "Navigating the Alpha Century".

- Organizers: Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and Observer Research Foundation (ORF)
- Raisina Dialogue is a multilateral conference in New Delhi since 2016 by MEA and ORF to discuss the geo-economic and geopolitical issues of Asia with an aim to integrate the region.

89. Ministry for Women and Child Development has launched the Yashaswini scheme for Women entrepreneurship to provide interest free loans of up to Rs 5 lakhs for 5 years to women self-help groups by Goa govt.

- Apart from this, Swasthya Sakhi project and breast cancer screening initiative were also launched in Goa.
- Under the Swasthya Sakhi project, a diagnostic kit will be given to the healthcare workers in Goa to conduct basic diagnostic tests at the houses of the citizens.
- The kit has been developed by Public Health Foundation of India.

90. Ministry of Coal has promulgated the Mineral Laws (Amendment) Ordinance 2020 to allow foreign direct investment in coal sector (govt had approved 100% FDI in coal mining in August 2019).

- Govt has set a minimum 4% revenue share from each mine as a bid parameter.

Extra Fact:

- A) India has the fourth largest coal resources in the world and has set a target of production 1 billion tonnes by 2023-24.
- B) Despite this, it has to import coal worth around Rs 1.7 lakh crore last year.

91. PM Narendra Modi renamed the Kolkata Port as Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Port (Bharatiya Jana Sangh founder) during the 150th year celebrations of the Kolkata Port Trust during his visit to Kolkata.

- Projects worth Rs 600 crores were also launched to develop the ports of Kolkata.
- Two oldest pensioners of the port Nagina Bhagat (aged 105 years) and Naresh Chandra Chakraborty (aged 100 years) were awarded by PM Modi.
- PM also inaugurated the Kaushal Vikas Kendra and Pritilata Chhatri Avas (student behaviour centre) for 200 tribal girl students from Sundarbans, West Bengal.
- Also, the commemorative stamps of the Kolkata port trust were launched.

92. Two Indian Coast Guard Ships - Annie Besant and Amrit Kaur - designed by Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers Ltd have been commissioned at Kolkata Port Trust.

- Both of them are second and third of the five Fast Patrol Vessels (FPVs).
- Annie Besant was a philanthropist, theosophist, author and supporter of Indian freedom struggle and Rajkumari Amrit Kaur was India's first Health Minister.

93. National institute of Information Technology (NIIT) has been chosen for the NEAT initiative as one of the EdTech companies for implementing the initiative in association with All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE).

- Also, Ministry of HRD, in partnership with NIIT, has announced to create five awards of Rs 50,000 for faculties and 10 awards of Rs 10,000 for students.

About NEAT - National Educational Alliance for Technology:

A) NEAT was launched in 2019 by Ministry of HRD to stimulate learning process by using Artificial Intelligence.

B) STEP Train - an online certification course - of the Hindu Group has been selected by the Ministry of HRD and AICTE as a part of the NEAT programme.

Note: - Details of NEAT is covered in September spotlight.

94. Statue of Unity has entered in the list of 8 wonders of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

- For the first time, India is hosting the SCO Heads of Govt meet.

95. Government has announced to acquire around 200 fighter jets out of which, 83 LCA Tejas Mark 1A will be procured from Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) and the rest of them will be procured based on Request for Proposals.

96. ISRO has announced to launch GSAT-30 satellite on Ariane-5 launch vehicle from Ariane Launch Complex from French Guiana (a French territory located in South America).

- GSAT-30 is a communication satellite which will replace INSAT-4A (launched in 2005).
- INSAT - Indian National Satellite System was launched for telecommunications, meteorology, broadcasting and search and rescue operations mainly for communication purposes.

97. 6th Island Development Agency (IDA) meeting, chaired by Home Minister Amit Shah, was held in New Delhi.

- Focus of the meeting: "Green Development in the Islands to reach new heights"
- Shah reviewed the "Holistic Development of Islands" programme taken up by the IDA to improve growth of the Islands.
- Currently, it is being implemented in 4 islands of Andaman and Nicobar Islands and 5 islands of Lakshadweep Islands.
- In Phase II, 12 more islands of Andaman and Nicobar Islands and 5 Islands of Lakshadweep islands will be developed for tourism.
- Under the Lakshadweep and Andaman and Nicobar Islands Industrial Development Scheme (LANIDS) 2018 (till 2020), IT based MSMEs will be set up in these two islands.

98. According to the 'Levels and Trends in Child Mortality' report released by the UN inter-agency group for child mortality, In India the mortality under-5 years of girls, exceeded that of boys in 2018.



Note: - orange coloured boxes detail about the findings of UN's report while yellow coloured boxes detail about the SRS survey of India 2017.

99. 19th annual joint exercise 'Sahyog-Kaijin' of coast guards of India and Japan will be held in Chennai.

- Japan Coast Guard Ship 'Echigo PLH08' has arrived Chennai to participate in it.

100. Indian Railways have signed an MoU with RailTel for executing the Phase 2 of e- office project (developed in association with National Informatics Centre).

- Under the Phase 2, RailTel will train 39,000 users over 34 divisions of railways to operate in a paperless e-office whereas 50,000 users over 58 divisions were trained in Phase 1.

101. Central govt has set up an 11-member panel, headed by K Rajeswara Rao (additional secretary of the Ministry of Mines), to consider the revision of royalty rates for minerals (other than coal, lignite, sand for stowing and minor minerals).

- The panel consists of mines secretaries from Telangana, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha.

102. IIT-Madras has developed the "Integrated Road Accident Database" (IRAD) to govt authorities in proper monitoring and accurate analysis of road accidents.

- World Bank has provided the financial support of Rs.258 crore for developing IRAD.
- National Informatics Centre (NIC) is implementing it in 6 states with highest road fatalities - Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh - on a trial basis.

103. Pratham NGO has released Annual Status of Education Report (ASER), 2019, covering 26 districts across 24 states between 4 to 8 years of age.

Key Findings:

- In government schools, the number of enrolled girls is higher than boys whereas the number of boys enrolled in private institutions is higher than girls.
- As per the report, 4 out of every 10 children in Class I are less than 5 years old whereas according to Right to Education Act, 2009, children in the 1st Class should be of 6 years.

104. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has released the National Draft Policy on rare diseases 2020 which proposes to create a one-time fund of Rs 15 lakhs under Ayushman Bharat to treat rare diseases.

- Under the policy, certain medical institutes will be certified as Centre of Excellence for rare diseases.
- Funding for certain diseases such as Hurler Syndrome, Gaucher's disease, Wolman disease can be increased from Rs 10 lakhs to Rs 1 crore per year through donations.

105. Jairam Ramesh panel, formed to Rajya Sabha to deal with pornography, has submitted its report to Rajya Sabha Chairman Venkaiah Naidu.

Suggestions of the report:

- A dedicated mechanism to deal with online sexual crimes on children and changes in the definition of 'child pornography' under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.



- Also, the panel is likely to have suggested that POSCO Act would consider the act of "advocating or counselling sexual activity" to a minor as an offence.
- An international cyber-crime reporting portal needs to be created to facilitate the reporting of sexual crimes against children from all over the world.

106. Shiv Sena led govt in Maharashtra has issued the order to stop funds for work going under Jalyukt Shivar scheme in Nashik, Dhule, Jalgaon, Nandurbar and Ahmednagar.

- Jalyukt Shivar scheme (water conservation) was launched to make Maharashtra a drought-free state by 2019.

107. Biplab Kumar Sarma (chairman of a 14-member panel) formed to recommend on Clause 6 of the Assam Accord 1985, will submit its suggestions to Home Minister Amit Shah within 10-15 days.

- Clause 6 of the Assam Accord 1985: It aims to protect, preserve and promote the cultural, social, linguistic identity and heritage of the Assamese people.

108. Kerala Government has filed a petition against Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) in Supreme Court under Article 131.

- Article 131 allows a state to move to SC in case of a dispute with central government.
- Further, Kerala has highlighted that CAA violates the Article 14 (right to equality), Article 21 (right to life), and Article 25 (freedom to practise religion).

109. First-ever International Heritage Symposium and Exhibition (IHSE) has been launched in New Delhi.

- Organizers: IIT-Delhi and sponsored by Department of Science and Technology and Karnataka State Council for Science and Technology.
- Books launched on the theme of 'Digital Heritage': "Digital Hampi: preserving Indian Cultural Heritage" and "Heritage Preservation: A Computational Approach".
- Exhibition: The title of the exhibition is "Indian Heritage In Digital Space".

110. Petroleum Conservation Research Association (PCRA) (under Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas) has launched fuel conservation campaign - Saksham 2020.

- Purpose: to spread awareness about the effective fuel conservation.
- 'Saksham' is an annual high intensity one-month long people-centric mega campaign of Petroleum Conservation Research Association.

111. India and Finland have signed an MoU for cooperation in procurement, production, research and development of defence related equipment during the Raisina Dialogue.

Note: details of Raisina dialogue is covered in Jan 8-15 doc.

112. 6th edition of the Women, Business and the Law 2020 has been released by World Bank which ranks a total of 190 countries based on the laws and regulations that restrict women's economic opportunities.

- Parameters: Total 8 indicators were used, that are, Mobility, Workplace, Pay, Marriage, Parenthood, Entrepreneurship, Assets, and Pension.
- Top Scorer: 8 countries scored a perfect 100, that are, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Latvia, Luxembourg, and Sweden.

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- India's Rank: 117th with a score of 74.4 (Benin and Gambia also have the same scores).
 - Bottom Rank: West Bank and Gaza with a score of 26.3.
 - Global average was 75.2 which is a slight increase from 73.9 in the previous index released in 2017.

113. IIM-Kozhikode organized the international conclave - "Globalizing Indian Thought" at its campus where a life size statue of Swami Vivekananda was unveiled by PM through video conference.

114. First Session of India-Norway Dialogue on Trade & Investment (DTI) was convened in New Delhi.

- The Terms of Reference for holding the DTI was signed by India and Norway in 2019.
- Cumulative FDI equity inflows to India from Norway was around \$257 million during April 2000 to September 2019.

115. Ladakh Food Processing Summit - "Building Partnerships for Inclusive Growth in Food Processing Sector" - was organised by the Ladakh govt and Ministry of Food Processing Industries and Invest India in Leh.

- Purpose: to maximize the potential of this sector by integrating local population into food processing and agriculture activities.

116. Mizoram and Tripura state governments have signed an agreement to allow the rehabilitation of 34,000 Bru-Reang tribal people in Tripura.

- Central government will provide a Rs 600 crore to Tripura for rehabilitation of Brus.
- In 1997, 30,000 Brus were forced to leave Mizoram. They sought shelter in Tripura.

117. GSAT-30 (India's latest communication satellite) has been launched successfully on Ariane 5 VA-251 launch vehicle from Kourou Launch Base, French Guiana.

- Along with GSAT-30, Eutelsat Konnect satellite of Eutelsat (European Organisation of Telecommunications by Satellite S.A.) was also launched.

118. 'Chapchar Kut' - a spring festival will be celebrated by the Mizoram which is celebrated after the jhum festival (forest clearing).

- Theme: "Promotion of Mizo's culture and moral code" ("Zonun ze mawi chawi san" in local language).

119. India and Bangladesh have signed an MoU for exchanging content between All India Radio and Bangladesh Radio Betar.

- National Film Development Corporation, India and Film Development Corporation, Bangladesh have also signed an MoU.

120. Arunachal Pradesh has become the first state in India which signed an MoU with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) to start 'red listing' of orchids in association with IUCN at the state level.

121. 23rd National Youth Festival 2020 was organized in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh.

- Organizers: Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports and UP Government.
- Theme: "Fit Youth, Fit India"

122. Indian Air Force is resurrecting the Sukhoi-30 MKIs squadron named as the 'The Tigersharks' (Indian Air Force's 222 Squadron) at Thanjavur in Tamil Nadu.

- It will be deployed in the Indian Ocean Region.

123. 51st K9 Vajra self-propelled Howitzer gun was made by Larsen & Toubro.

- In 2017, L&T had won the contract to supply 100 units of K9 Vajra-T gun systems to the Indian Army.

124. Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has launched India's first e-commerce housing platform named as 'HousingForAll.com' to bring transparency in the sector by allowing home buyers in identifying genuine properties and offer only certified projects.

- National Real Estate Development Council (NAREDCO) has developed this portal.
- 'Real Estate Sentiment Index Q4 2019' was also launched by Knight Frank-FICCI- NAREDCO which shows that the sentiment stood at 53 (which means pessimism).

125. Indian Army has conducted its biggest airborne exercise 'Winged Raider'.

- Over 500 soldiers of the Special Forces parachuted from C-130 Hercules and C-17 globemaster transport aircraft of the Indian Air Force.

126. Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers has launched "APNA UREA - SonaUgle" brand and logo of Hindustan Urvarak and Rasayan Ltd (HURL).

- HURL is a Joint venture company of Coal India Ltd, NTPC Ltd, Indian Oil Corporation Limited.
- In order to make India self-reliant in urea, the central govt will revive 5 major sick or shutdown fertilizer plants.

127. Indian Postal Department has released a commemorative stamp to honour Chuni Goswami (Indian footballer) on his 82nd birthday.

- He is only the third Indian footballer after Gostho Paul and late Dr Talimeren Ao on whose name a postal stamp has been released.

128. Two villages of Muzaffarnagar (in UP), Bahadurpur and Khedi Viran will be developed as first 'Model Sports Villages of India' (Adarsh Khel Gram) to promote sports culture in the country.

- This initiative is a part of the 'Adarsh Khel Gram' program of Institute of Management Technology - Ghaziabad (IMT) in association with NGO named as 'Sports: A Way of Life'.

129. 5th Science Film Festival of India was held in Panaji, Goa.

- Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute, National Institute of Science Communication and Information Resources and Goa govt organized the event.

130. Russia will deliver all S-400 air defence systems to India by 2025. S-400 is developed by Almaz-Antey company.

- In 2018, India and Russia signed a deal for procuring the S-400.
- India will receive the first batch of 5,000 Kalashnikov rifles in 2020 from Russia.
- Russia has also announced to conduct a trilateral meeting of foreign ministers of China, India and Russia in March 2020 in Russia.

131. Chhattisgarh has launched 'Rojgar Sangi' - an employment-oriented mobile app - developed by State Skill Development Authority.

- Purpose: to provide employment to the skilled youth.

132. NITI Aayog has signed an MoU with Ladakh UT to develop the infrastructure of Ladakh under its 'Development Support Services to States for Infrastructure Projects' (DSSS).

- DSSS was implemented to develop the infrastructure with state of the art technologies. Phase 1 of DSSS was completed in 2018.

133. The group of ministers on MeToo, headed by Amit Shah, has finalized its recommendations to be put in public.

- The group was formed in 2018 to suggest measures to prevent sexual harassment of women at workplaces. In 2019, it was reconstituted.

- Also, the group will change some provisions of Indian Penal Code to curb this menace.

The group considered the recommendations of the following committees before finalizing the suggestions:

A) Vishaka guidelines, issued by Supreme Court in 1997, on which the Sexual Harassment of Women and Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 is based.

B) Justice J.S. Verma Committee, which was formed after the Nirbhaya Gang Rape and murder in 2012, recommendations.

C) Verma Committee which has recommended to deploy an employment tribunal instead of the Internal Complaints Committee (ICC).

134. National Informatics Centre (NIC) will set up a block chain technology centre in Bengaluru to provide blockchain as a service to all the stakeholders.

135. India has renamed its National TB Control Programme to National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme.

- Indian scientists have developed a technology called TrueNat MTB to detect the TB accurately.
- India aims to eliminate TB by 2025 while WHO will eliminate the disease by 2030.
- WHO has praised TrueNat technology of India which detects TB accurately.
- TrueNat was developed by Goa-based Molbio Diagnostics and received support from Foundation for Innovative New Diagnostics (FIND based in Geneva) and Indian Council of Medical Research.

136. For the first time, Census 2021 will collect the data of houses headed by transgenders along with other information such as the food, toilet, tv and vehicles etc.

137. India has test fired K4 nuclear capable missile (range 3,500 km) successfully underwater. K-series missiles are developed by DRDO.

- The missile is meant for Arihant-class submarines.
- K-4 is an advanced version of K-15 (range 750 km). K-15 missiles are also known as Sagarika missiles.
- The K-series missiles are named after APJ Abdul Kalam.



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138. India and Sri Lanka have discussed to set up a maritime research coordination centre in the Sri Lanka to monitor the activities in the Indian Ocean Region.
139. Supreme Court has formed a committee, headed by Niranjan Bhat, to frame a law on mediation to give legal sanctity to disputes settled through mediation.
- The committee will recommend a code of conduct for the mediators (who are the legal experts).
 - CJI SA Bobde has suggested to introduced degree and diploma courses in mediation in national law universities.
 - Mediation and Project Conciliation Committee (MCPC), headed by Justice RF Nariman, will organise a National Conference on Mediation in Chandigarh in February.
140. Samsung has announced to set up the India's first smartphone display manufacturing unit on the outskirts of Delhi.
- Samsung has also launched the world's largest mobile factory in Noida in 2018.
141. According to the Odisha Forest Department, 146 endangered Irrawaddy dolphins have been sighted in Chilika Lake in Odisha - highest single lagoon population of dolphins in the world.
- In the last year's census, the Irrawaddy dolphin population in Chilika was 151.
142. Ministry of Jal Shakti has launched the rankings of the water departments of Central and state governments based on their efficiency targets.
- Top state: Gujarat at 1st position (from 7th in 2018)
 - Bottom state or worst performer: Delhi at 35th position (from 41st in 2018)
 - Most Improved: Tamil Nadu at 13th position (from 33rd) and Rajasthan was the best water management status.
 - Parameters: real-time data acquisition, analytical work, procurement, data digitization, trainings, updating MIS and analytical work.
 - Among the 7 Central departments reviewed, Survey of India was the best performer.
143. Lakshadweep's 1st Super Specialty Hospital will be established at its capital city Kavaratti.
- Lakshadweep's administrator: Dineshwar Sharma
144. Cabinet Committee on Investment and Growth (CCIG) has dictated the govt officials, ministries and departments to reduce expenditure on travel, food and conferences and other necessary activities by 20%.
- GDP for 2019-20 has been predicted at 5% (11 year low) by National Statistical Office.
 - Govt has also reduced its expenditure for Q4 of FY20 to 25% from 33% to maintain the deficit at 3.3%.
- Note: CCIG was constituted in June 2019 and the details of the committee has been covered in June spotlight.
145. First Krishi Manthan 2020 - the largest food, agri-business and rural development summit of Asia - was organized by the IIM-Ahmedabad in Ahmedabad, Gujarat.
146. India will provide \$50 million to Sri Lanka for the purchase of equipment for its security forces.



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- Recently, Russia has also announced to continue providing all necessary arms and ammunition to the Sri Lankan Army.
147. Agricultural and Processed Food Products Development Authority (APEDA) has established 135 more laboratories to the existing 51 agricultural product testing labs, taking the total number of labs to 186.
148. National Informatics Centre (NIC) has organized the 2nd edition of 'NIC TechConclave 2020' in New Delhi on the theme of "Technologies for NextGen Governance".
149. Two tribes of Manipur - Nagas and Kukis - have signed a declaration of peace to settle inter-community differences.
- The conflict between these tribes began in 1993 and claimed more than 230 lives and displaced 1 lakh people mostly Kukis.
 - Naga National Political Groups (NNPGs) and the Kuki National Organisation (KNO) have signed the declaration.
150. Bharat Electronics Ltd has commissioned real time information system to provide information to the Indian Railways about train.
- Purpose: It increases its operational efficiency and passenger safety.
151. Global Reporting Initiative has released a report to assess the countries on the basis of the carbon reduction by corporates.
- A total of 58 Indian companies were assessed in this report. Over 98% of the top Indian companies have now formed committees to address climate related issues.
 - In terms of companies disclosing their climate-related activities, USA has topped the list with 135 companies disclosing their action to counter climate change, followed by Japan (with 83 companies), UK (78), France (51) and India (38).
 - A total of 6,900 companies worldwide were assessed in this report.
152. Tenoch Holdings Limited (Cyprus), Maxim Naumchenko and Andrey Poluektov (both from Russia) have sued India, for cancelling the Letters of Intent for providing 2G telecom services, in the Bilateral International Treaty Organization (an international arbitration tribunal headquartered in Hague, Netherlands).
- Recently, the claims have been completely dismissed by the organization.
- About Bilateral International Treaty:
- A) It is an agreement which sets up rules for private investment by nationals and companies of one state in another state.
- B) The treaty is the successor of the 19th century friendship, commerce and navigation treaty.
- C) World's first BIT was signed between Pakistan and Germany in 1959.
- D) Bilateral investment treaties between two countries allows a private investor to initiate dispute arbitration proceedings against the government to protect its investments.
153. Ministry for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare has organized the 1st National consultative workshop on Strengthening Agri-Logistics in e-National Agriculture Market (e-Nam) in New Delhi.



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- According to the Minister of Agriculture, Narendra Singh Tomar, 585 markets across 16 states and 2 Union territories have been integrated on e-NAM.
 - 415 other mandis are expected to be soon integrated on this portal.
 - Already, trading of Rs 91000 crores has taken place on e-NAM and it is expected to reach 1 lakh crores in the near future.

Note: - e-NAM is covered in detail in ESI bundle >> Government Schemes >> Ministry of Agriculture and Farmer Welfare Part 1 document.

154. Indian Navy has signed an MoU with Geological Survey of India (GSI) for 'sharing of seabed sediments data, products and expertise for Naval Application in Meteorology and Oceanography'.
- Under the MoU, Indian Navy will get data from GSI which has collected the data by using the Samudra Manthan, Samudra Kaustubh, Samudra Shaudhikama and Samudra Ratnakar vessels.
 - Benefit: It will help Indian Navy in creating effective models of operation in the oceans.
155. PM Narendra Modi started the 'Pariksha Pe Charcha 2020' interaction programme with school students to relieve them of stress ahead of examination in 2018.
- Recently, the PM attended the 3rd edition of it in New Delhi.
156. Ministry of Defence has chosen state-owned Mazagaon Docks Limited and private sector giant Larsen and Toubro for the production of 6 Scorpene class submarines under P 75I project at a cost of 45,000 crore.
- These two Indian companies will now move on to the next step of joint bids with foreign technology collaborators for this project.
157. 12th National Tribal youth programme has been organized by the Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan and the govt of Puducherry in Puducherry.
- Purpose: to ensure development and empowerment of the tribal youths.
 - Puducherry governor - Kiren Bedi
 - Puducherry CM - Velu Narayanasamy (Puducherry, Delhi and J&K are the only three UTs in India which have a legislature of their own.)
158. Qualcomm has launched three new chipsets - Snapdragon 720G, 662 and 460 - which support Navigation with Indian Constellation (NavIC).
- NavIC is the indigenous GPS system of India, developed by ISRO in 2016.
 - These chipsets will make it easier for mobile manufacturers to make handsets which support NavIC.
159. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) of NITI Aayog held the Youth Co: Lab- National Innovation Challenge in New Delhi.
- Purpose: to foster technology, youth leadership and social entrepreneurship in India. Note: - details of the Youth Co: Lab has been covered in October Spotlight >> National News >> News no. 34
160. Uttarakhand CM Trivendra Singh Rawat has launched a lease agricultural land policy and thus became the first state in India to have such a policy.

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- As per its provisions, a farmer can lease out land for farming, agriculture, horticulture, herbs, off-season vegetables, dairy purpose and solar energy to an individual, firm or NGO for a period of 30 years.
 - In return, the farmer would be provided rent by the person taking the land on lease.
 - After permission from the district magistrate, a government land around the farm can be leased out by paying the fee, but only under special circumstances.

161. Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL), aka Kempegowda International Airport, has signed an agreement with KUNZ GmbH (German company) to acquire Disabled Aircraft Recovery Equipment (DARE) to enable faster resumption of operations of disabled aircrafts.

- BIAL has become the first airport in India to acquire such a facility.

162. UAE has been declared as a "reciprocating territory" under the Section 44A of Civil Procedure Code (CPC), 1908 by the Ministry of Law and Justice.

- Implication: It will help in enforcing the orders of UAE's superior courts in India and vice-versa.
- Reason: to reduce the time taken for executing court orders of both the countries.
- India has other reciprocating territory countries as well which include UK, Singapore, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Trinidad & Tobago, New Zealand etc.

Section 44A of Civil Procedure Code, 1908:

It provides the provisions for executing verdicts of foreign courts in India and vice versa.

163. Global Residential Cities Index Q3 2019 has been released by Knight Frank.

- Top Ranked City: Budapest (Hungary) with 24% increase in residential prices.
- Bottom Ranked City: Jerusalem (Israel) with -13.6% increase in residential prices.
- Total Cities: 150
- Top Indian Cities: Hyderabad at 14th with 9% increase in residential prices followed by New Delhi at 73rd and Bengaluru at 94th rank.

164. Telangana State Election Commission (TSEC) has become the first state to use facial recognition in the municipal elections of Telangana.

- Purpose: to stop fake votes.
- It will be implemented on a pilot basis in 10 polling stations in Komapally.

165. PM Modi has chaired the 32nd PRAGATI meeting to review the progress of the projects being implemented by the union government.

- Projects under PM Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana, PM Suraksha Bima Yojana and Crime and Criminal Tracking Network Systems (CCTNS) were discussed.
- In 2009, CCTNS was established to create an integrated system for effective policing through e-governance and developing a national database of criminals.

About Pragati:

- Full form - Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation
- Launched - 2015
- Purpose - to address grievances of common people and review the implementation of central and state govt projects.
- When conducted - on 4th Wednesday of every month

Note: - Both schemes mentioned above are covered in detail in the ESI >> Government Schemes >> Ministry of Finance document.

166. Union Cabinet has approved the Mutual Legal Assistance agreement in criminal matters expected to be signed between India and Brazil.

- Cabinet has also approved the agreement between India and Brazil for exploration in the oil and natural gas sector.

167. Parliament had cleared the Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu (Merger of Union Territories) Bill, 2019 to merge these two UTs into one.

- The bill will come into effect on 26 January 2020.
- The merged UT will be named as Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu.
- Union Cabinet has approved "Daman" as the new capital of this merged UT.
- After the merger, the total number of UTs in India will be 8.
- Union Cabinet has passed various regulations to make the GST and Value added taxes of both UTs congruent with the new rules.

168. Union Cabinet has approved the model MoU to allow unilateral recognition to the certificates issued by the Directorate General of Shipping to Indian seafarers by another country without seeking similar recognition by India of the certificates issued by that country.

- Benefit: The MoU will make Indian seafarers eligible to be get employment on ships under the flag of that country.
- The proposed model MoU between India and another country would allow recognition of the maritime education and training, certificates of competency etc. issued to the seafarers who are citizens of respective countries.

169. Indian Oil Corp and National Petroleum Authority of Ghana have signed an agreement for cooperation for increasing the usage of cooking gas in Ghana.

- With Indian assistance, Ghana aims to increase the usage of households cooking gas to 50% from the current 23% by 2030.

170. ISRO has formed a two-member panel to study the technologies needed for Gaganyaan mission.

- Apart from this, a half-humanoid named Vyom Mitra will go into space in the first test flight of Gaganyaan in 2020 and 2021.
- Vyom Mitra has been developed by the ISRO Inertial Systems Unit, Thiruvananthapuram.

171. Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas and Steel, Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, has launched a "SAIL Employee Rendering Voluntarism and Initiatives for Community Engagement (SAIL SERVICE)" scheme of Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL).

- Purpose: to promote and facilitate Voluntary Philanthropist (generous) Activities by the employees.
- "SAIL SERVICE" portal was also launched by the Ministry for implementing this scheme.

172. Greenpeace India has released its report for 2018 which ranks Jharia (Jharkhand) as the most polluted Indian city in 2018 followed by Dhanbad (Jharkhand) at the second position.

- Lunglei (Mizoram) is the least polluted city.



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- Out of the total 287 cities assessed, 231 were severely polluted.
 - Six of the top-10 polluted cities are in Uttar Pradesh: Noida, Ghaziabad, Bareilly, Allahabad, Moradabad and Firozabad.
 - Delhi has been ranked at 10th most polluted city (down from 8th position in 2017).
 - National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) - a 5-year action plan - to reduce the air pollution from the levels of 2017.
 - It was launched in 2019 with a target of reducing concentrations of PM-10 and PM-2.5 up to 30% by 2024 in 102 cities.
 - Jharia is known for its rich coal reserves.

173. Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has allowed the Election Commission of India to sign an MoU with Independent High Authority for Elections of Tunisia and Papua New Guinea Electoral Commission (PNGEC) for electoral management and administration.

174. Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved India and Brazil's MoUs.

- Ministry of Citizenship of Brazil and Ministry of Women & Child Development of India have signed the MoU for cooperation in the field of early childhood.
- Geological Survey of India and Geological Survey of Brazil have signed the MoU for cooperation in the field of geology and mineral resources.

175. Minister of External Affairs, S. Jaishankar, has inaugurated the first ever Mahatma Gandhi convention centre in Africa in the state of Niger to commemorate the 150th anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.

- S. Jaishankar is the first Indian-foreign Minister to visit Niger (West Africa) and Tunisia (North Africa).
- This is the first ever convention centre built by India in Africa.
- So far, India has provided Lines of Credit worth \$96.54 million to Niger for transport, electrification, solar energy and potable drinking water projects.

176. POLNET 2.0 - revamped communication system for police - has been inaugurated.

- POLNET 2.0 is a satellite-based network which provides video, audio and data connectivity across the country.

177. Uttar Pradesh has launched 'Mukhyamantri Krishak Durghatna Kalyan Yojana' for farmers of the state who die or become handicapped while working on the field.

- Under the scheme, an assistance of Rs 5 lakh will be given to the farmers' family. Farmers aged between 18 to 70 years are eligible for this scheme.
- The amount will be adjustable for those who are already taking the benefits of PM Jeevan Bima Yojana, PM Suraksha Bima Yojana or any other schemes.
- The state govt is also planning to launch the Mukhyamantri Paryatan Samvardhan Yojana to boost tourism in state.
- Under this scheme, each and every tourist spot in the state will be developed at a cost of Rs 50 lakh.

Note: Both the schemes are covered in ESI >> Govt scheme >> Ministry of Finance's document.

178. Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has declared that India has completely removed HydroChloroFluoroCarbon - 141 b (HCFC) - responsible for ozone depletion.

- The ministry has banned the import of HCFC 141 b under the Ozone Depleting substances (Regulation and Control) amendment rules, 2019 issued under Environment (Protection) act, 1986.
- The decision is in line with the Montreal Protocol.
- HCFC-141b contributes to 50% of ozone depleting chemicals being used in the foam sector in India.

In 1987, Montreal Protocol was adopted by UN to phase out Ozone Depleting Substances. It has been ratified by all 197 UN Member States.

179. NITI Aayog has announced to launch National Data and Analytics Platform (NDAP) in 2021 to make the government data accessible to all.

- A high powered steering committee, under the chairmanship of Rajiv Kumar (Niti Aayog vice-chairman), to provide direction, oversee progress, guide on data sources, and address various inter-ministerial issues on collating data.

180. Gujarat has been ranked first in the 'SKOCH State of Governance 2019' report for better performance in Health, Education, Power and e-Governance sectors.

- Gujarat was ranked 5th in 2018. In 2019 index, Gujarat has topped in 8 sectorial rankings.
- Total parameters - 22

181. India is helping Maldives to tackle the outbreak of Measles and Rubella by distributing 30,000 vaccines in Maldives.

- Maldives was declared measles-free in 2017 by WHO.
- Maldives is observing 2020 as the "Year of Public Health".
- In June 2019, India and Maldives had signed an MoU for cooperation in the field of health.
- India is also helping the Maldives in building a 100-bed Cancer Hospital in Hulhumale as part of its \$800 million Line of Credit.

182. Indian Railways has inaugurated the East Coast Railway's waste to energy plant, which uses Polycrack technology, in Bhubaneswar, Odisha.

- It is the fourth waste to energy plant of India and first plant commissioned by Indian Railways.

183. India will set up the first ever war memorial for army's service animals in Meerut, Uttar Pradesh.

- A labrador breed dog named as Mansi (who was awarded the highest honour of animals) will be on the top of the list of animals to be remembered.

184. 13th Zee Jaipur Literature Festival (largest literary show in the world) has begun in Jaipur, Rajasthan.

- 'The Vault of Vishnu' book of Ashwin Sanghi was launched here.
- Arvind Krishna Mehrotra (poet and literary critic) has been awarded 5th Mahakavi Sethia Award for poetry here. The award is given in memory of Rajasthani and Hindi poet Kanhaiyalal Sethia.

185. World Breastfeeding Trends Initiative 2020 has ranked a total of 97 countries based on 10 indicators for promoting breastfeeding.



- Top ranker - Sri Lanka (scored 91/100) got green code
- Bottom ranker - Libya (scored 19/100) got red code
- India's rank - 78th (scored 45/100) got yellow code
- The countries were given 4 colour codes (red, yellow, blue and green), in ascending order, based on their performance.

About World Breastfeeding Trends Initiative 2020:

- Launched: 2004
- Developed by: Breastfeeding Promotion Network of India in New Delhi
- Members till now: 120 countries
- Assessing countries: once in every 3-5 year

Global breastfeeding target:

- Currently, the rate of breastfeeding is 41% of 0-6 months infants worldwide.
- World Health Assembly (executive arm of WHO) has set a target achieving 50% breastfeeding by 2025.

186. Department of Biotechnology (under Ministry of Science and Technology) has organized the "Visualizing the Future: New Skylines" - an International Summit on Women in STEM - in New Delhi.

- Aim: to increase the women's participation in STEM - science, technology, engineering and math - segment.

187. Central Pollution Board Control (CPCB) and Bhopal Municipal Corporation (BMC) have jointly set up India's first e-waste clinic in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh.

188. Ministry of Rural Development and Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation have signed an MoU under the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) to strengthen institutions for rural poor.

- Purpose: to reduce poverty through rural women groups to promote self-employment as well as skilled wage employment opportunities with the help of Gates Foundation.

189. Government has formed a three high-level steering committees to dispose of immovable enemy properties vested in the Custodian of Enemy Property for India under the Enemy Property Act, 1968.

- First committee - It is a Group of Ministers, headed by Amit Shah, to monitor the disposal of more than 9,400 enemy properties in India.
- Second committee - It is an Inter-Ministerial Group, jointly headed by Ajay Bhalla (Union Home Secretary) and Tuhin Kanta Pandey (secretary of DIPAM).
- Third committee - It is a Core Group of Secretaries on Asset Monetisation (CGAM), headed by Rajiv Gauba (Cabinet Secretary).

What is Enemy Property?

- The property which is left by those who have taken Pakistani or Chinese citizenship.
- Highest number of Pakistani Enemy Property is in Uttar Pradesh.
- Highest number of Chinese Enemy Property is in Meghalaya.

190. India and Russia organized the first edition of the Ganga-Volga Dialogue (Track 1.5) in New Delhi on the theme of Connectivity.

- The platform acts as a good platform for discussing various issues for developing civilizations of both the countries.
- Volga is the river in Russia.

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191. Ministry of Women and Child Development, in association with University Grants Commission, has launched 10 chairs in universities in the name of 10 eminent women for 5 years.
- The initiative called "Establishment of Chairs in the Universities in the name of eminent women" aims to encourage women to carry out research activities.
 - Each chair will be given Rs 50 lakh per year.
192. National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR) has partnered with UNICEF and Hyderabad field office to set up 'Communication Resource Unit' (CRU).
- Aim: to provide Social and Behavioural Change Communications support to national programmes such as POSHAN Abhiyaan, National Health Mission and Swachh Bharath Mission etc.
 - Currently, CRU is operational in three states of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Karnataka.
 - NIRDPR is an autonomous organisation under the Ministry of Rural Development. It is headquartered in Hyderabad, Telangana.
193. Ministry for Road Transport and Highways has launched 'GATI' - an online web portal -to monitor the ongoing projects worth Rs 3 Lakh Crore.
- The portal has been developed on the lines of 'PRAGATI' portal and is accessible to NHAI's contractors etc.
 - Portal Developer: National Highways Authority of India Note: details of Pragati portal has been covered in Jan 23 doc.
194. Ministry of Agriculture and Farmer Welfare has released the State-wise horticulture production data (3rd Advance Estimates) for 2018-19.
195. India has signed an MoU with Tunisia for setting up an 'India- Tunisia centre for innovation in information and communication technologies' in Tunis, capital of Tunisia.
- Aim: to support business acceleration and enhance interactions between innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystems of both countries.
 - 4th India-Africa Summit 2020 will be held in India in September 2020 (3rd summit was in 2015).
196. India's first Super Fab Lab was established in Kerala by Massachusetts Institute of Technology (USA) and Kerala Startup Mission.
- It is the only laboratory that is established outside USA.
 - A Fab Lab is a laboratory that offers digital fabrication.
197. Central government has signed the "Bodo Accord" with the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) to facilitate all-round development of Bodo areas without compromising the territorial integrity of Assam.
- What is the Bodoland Territorial Area District?
- A) This accord has led to the reconstitution of Bodoland Territorial Area District (BTAD) under the 6th Schedule of the Constitution.
- B) BTAD will be renamed as Bodo Territorial Region.
- C) Bodo language will be notified as an associate official language in Assam.
- D) It is the 3rd accord signed by Central govt with the Bodo organization.
- E) 1st accord was signed in 1993 with the All Bodo Students Union.



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- F) 2nd accord was signed in 2003 with the Bodo Liberation Tigers.
198. France has been chosen as the guest of honour at New Delhi World Book Fair 2022.
- India is the guest of honour for 2020 Livre Paris (Paris Book Fair).
 - Romain Rolland Book Prize 2020 (given to the writers for translating French work into any Indian language including English) was conferred upon Dipa Chaudhuri and Puneet Gupta for translating Asterix series.
199. Government has started the celebrations of Bharat Parv 2020 programme to encourage people to encourage Indians to visit different tourism places of India from 26–31st January, 2020.
- Theme of the festival are: "Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat" and "Celebrating 150 years of Mahatma Gandhi".
200. National Tourism Conference was organized by the Odisha government and FICCI in Konark, Odisha.
- During the conference, Ministry of Tourism has announced to bear the travel expenses of tourists who travel 15 destinations of India in a year.
 - Ministry of Tourism has announced to include the Sun Temple at Konark in 'iconic sites' list.
 - Odisha and Gujarat state govt have signed a Memorandum of Intent for promoting the tourist sites of each other's state.
201. INS Kavaratti (the anti-submarine warfare stealth corvettes) has been developed by Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) as part of the project P28.
- 'INS Kamorta' in 2014, 'INS Kadmat' in 2015 and 'INS Kiltan' in 2017 were received by Indian Navy under project P28.
 - All these four corvettes have been named after the islands of Lakshadweep and Arabian Sea.
202. India and Brazil signed 15 agreements for cooperation in various fields such as oil and gas, mineral resources, traditional medicine, animal husbandry, bio-energy and trade & investment.
- Both countries signed a joint statement and an action plan to deepen cooperation in defence and security; trade and investment; agriculture and energy; civil aviation; energy; environment; and health and innovation.
 - India and Brazil have set a target of USD 15 billion in bilateral trade by 2022.
203. Ministry of Railways has set a target of completely electrifying Indian Railways by 2024 (earlier the target was 2023). India will be the first Railways to run 100% on electricity.
- Indian Railways has also planned to make the network zero-emission by 2030.
 - Government plans to create 500 GW of renewable energy by 2030.
204. Andhra Pradesh cabinet has approved to abolish the legislative council of the state to remove the hurdle in passing crucial bills.
- Reason: AP govt failed to pass the bills to create tri-capitals in the Legislative Council,
- A) As of November 2019, six out of 28 states in India have a legislative council after conversion of J&K into a UT (including Andhra Pradesh).
- o Six States are - Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh.
- B) Assam was the first state to abolish its state legislative council in 1947.

205. NITI Aayog has proposed to construct up to 10 large giga-factories at a cost of \$5 billion to produce lithium-ion batteries for e-vehicles. The factories would get subsidies.

- Each factory would produce 5 Gigawatt hours (GWh), taking the total capacity to 50 GWh over 10 years.
- Ministry of Finance has already agreed to the Aayog's proposal to start offering Rs 700 crore a year as subsidies to battery makers from 2022.
- The companies will become eligible for subsidy only when achieve 60% indigenisation of their full-scale production by 2025.

206. 3rd Global Potato Conclave 2020 will be jointly organized by Indian Potato Association, Indian Council of Agricultural Research, ICAR-Central Potato Research Institute, and International Potato Centre in Gandhinagar, Gujarat.

- The conclave will be conducted on 10 themes out of which 8 themes are based on basic and applied research and two themes will emphasize potato trade, value chain management and policy issues.

207. India's first underwater Metro, being developed under Hooghly river in West Bengal, will be completed by 2022 at cost of USD 2.8 million.

208. National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) - a US non-profit organization - has mentioned that over 25,000 cases of child pornography have been uploaded in 5 months in India.

- National Crime Records Bureau has made NCMEC's data public.
- According to Ministry of Home Affairs' data, Delhi has the highest amount of child sexual abuse material followed by Maharashtra, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.
- In 2019, Ministry of Home Affairs had signed an agreement with the NCMEC to obtain data on Child pornography being uploaded in India.
- The Ad-hoc committee on child pornography, headed by Jairam Ramesh, has submitted its 40 recommendations to prevent sexual abuse of children.

209. Indian Council of Agricultural Research will set up a Farmers' Innovation Fund to support innovation in farming sector.

- Also, an innovation centre would be established in New Delhi where the innovations would be scientifically validated and farmers would also be allowed to pursue research.

210. In June 2020, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs will release a report card on 100 selected smart cities, which will rank cities based on public performance index, ease of living and climate.

- Purpose: the rankings of cities would represent the work done under the Smart City Project (which will complete 5 years in June 2020).
- Parameters: ease of living, municipal performance index and climate.
- Apart from this, quality of life (with 35% of weightage), sustainability (20% weightage), economic viability (20% weightage) and citizen participation (30% weightage) will be assessed.

Smart City Mission:

- A) It was launched in 2015 by the Ministry of Urban Development to develop smart cities in India.
- B) Except West Bengal, every state has 1 city under the Smart City Mission.

211. Supreme Court has permitted to introduce African Cheetah in Palpur Kuno wildlife sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh on an experimental basis.

- Reason: Cheetahs are extinct in India since 1952. Reintroduction of Cheetahs in India will help in maintaining the ecosystem.
- In 2010, the central government set up an expert panel for reintroducing the cheetah in India.
- The panel had recommended to introduce cheetahs in Kuno Palpur, Velavadar National Park in Gujarat and Tal Chapar sanctuary in Rajasthan.

212. ISRO has launched Bhuvan Panchayat web portal's version 3.0 to help in the development of Gram Panchayats and to help the Ministry of Panchayati Raj in its village development processes.

- For the first time, a thematic data base (on a 1:10,00 scale) is available with integrated high resolution satellite data for planning.

A) Bhuvan (launched in 2009 by ISRO) is a satellite portal that allows the users to view 2D and 3D representation of the earth to help the govt in planning the development projects better.

B) Bhuvan Panchayat web portal was launched for visualisation, planning and monitoring of schemes at panchayat levels.

C) In 2011, the space-based information support was started to empower Panchayati raj institutions for development planning programmes.

213. National Institute for Smart Governance (NISG) has been tasked with preparing the National Strategy on Blockchain Policy.

- It recommended to create a national body to coordinate blockchain strategy across various state bodies.
- CEO of NISG - J. Rama Krishna Rao

214. First advance estimate of Rabi crops has been released by the National Collateral Management Services (a private company offering commodity based services).

- Rabi season which contributes to nearly 50% of the food grain production starts from November and lasts till April of the following year.
- In October 2019, India received 42% more rainfall than normal which provided the suitable conditions for sowing.

Note: The table has been prepared from economic times. The photo has been taken from Hindu business line newspaper. These two data were mentioned in these two sources.

215. 10 more wetlands in India have been recognized as "Ramsar" wetland sites. Now, the total number of Ramsar wetlands in India is 37.

- Ramsar Convention (1971): It is an international treaty for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands.

216. National Commission for homeopathy bill, 2019 has been approved by the Union Cabinet to bring reforms in Homeopathy education.

- Currently, Homeopathy Central Council act, 1973 regulates the Homeopathy education and practices in India.
- The act was modelled on Indian Medical Council Act, 1956.



- The act aimed to set up the Central Council of Homeopathy for regulation of the education and practice of homeopathy, for maintenance of a Central Register of Homeopathy.

217. Indian Navy has launched the Operation Vanilla in the Southern Indian Ocean to help the people of Madagascar who are affected by Cyclone Diane.

- INS Airavat has been deployed to provide the relief work.

About Madagascar:

- It is fourth largest island in the world. o Present in Indian Ocean. o Seychelles, Mauritius, Madagascar and Comoros are members of African Union and Indian Ocean Commission.

218. Union Cabinet has approved the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Bill, 2020 to amend the Medical Termination of Pregnancy act, 1971.

- The bill will be presented in upcoming parliamentary session.
- Purpose: The bill extends the legal period for abortion from 20 weeks to 24 weeks. It also includes special women (such as rape victims, differently-abled women etc).
- For the first time in 1966, Shah Commission recommended to legalize abortion.

219. India's onion production will increase by over 7% at 13 lakh hectares in 2019-20 crop year from 12.2 lakh hectares in 2018-19, according to the first advance estimates of horticulture production in 2019-20 (June-July) released by Ministry of Agriculture and Farmer Welfare.

- Overall horticulture production is estimated to be higher by around 1% in FY20 as compared with 2018-19.
- Overall fruits production will be lower by over 2.2% compared to 2018-19.
- The vegetable production will be higher mainly due to increased production of tomato, onion and potato (TOP).
- Potato production will increase from 50 MT in 2018-19 to nearly 52 MT in 2019-20.
- Tomato production is estimated to increase marginally from 19 MT in 2018-19 to 19.3 MT in current year.

220. Union Cabinet has approved the amendments to National Commission for Indian System of Medicine bill, 2019.

- It aims to bring reforms in the Indian System of Medicine Education.
- It aims to establish National Commission for Indian system of Medicine (NCIM) to regulate Indian System of Medicine and ensure adequate supply of skilled medical professionals in all parts of the country.
- NCIM Bill was first introduced in 2017 for conducting periodic assessments of medicinal institutions and set up a Register for Indian Systems of Medicine.

221. Cabinet has approved to use 30% of the funds of North East Council for the new projects in the North-eastern region.

222. The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) organized its annual event - 20th World Sustainable Summit 2020 - in New Delhi.

- Theme: 'Towards 2030: Making the Decade Count'
- Purpose: The summit provides a platform to focus on 2030 sustainable development goals.

223. 34th Surajkund International Crafts Fair - the largest crafts fair in the world - will be organized by Haryana Govt in Faridabad, Haryana.

- Partner country for the fair - Uzbekistan
- Theme state of the fair - Himachal Pradesh
- Organizers - Haryana govt in association with Ministries of Tourism, Textiles, Culture and External Affairs.
- Purpose - The fair will promote tourism in India and particularly in Himachal Pradesh.

224. NITI Aayog has released its monthly delta rankings of 115 aspirational districts, based on six parameters, for December 2019.

- Six Parameters - Health and nutrition, education, agriculture and water resources, financial inclusion, skill development and basic infrastructure.
- Aspirational districts programme was launched in 2018 to transform 115 districts identified from 28 states.

225. According to the UN Development Program, Telangana is the best performing state in India (with a score of 82) in terms of fulfilling SDG.

- The states have been ranked on the basis of SDG India Index 2019.

Note: NITI Aayog released the SDG India Index 2019 in December. It is mentioned in Dec spotlight in national news (page no. 39).

226. Assam Rifles has constructed the Nagaland's first war memorial for 357 Army personnel who lost their lives fighting against insurgency in the North Eastern State at Mokokchung, Nagaland.

- Nagaland already has the famous World War II Cemetery - "Veer Samriti" - in Kohima.

227. Central government has mandated all states to set up their own state-level price stabilisation funds (PSF) to counter price volatility of important agri-horticultural commodities such as onion, potato and pulses.

- Central govt will provide financial assistance for setting PSF which will be used for maintaining buffer stocks of price sensitive commodities.
- Centre had set up a PSF in 2014-15 to counter price volatility of agri-horticultural commodities.
- MSP will be funded by the state PSF.

228. According to the National Commission for Safai Karamcharis (NCSK), Tamil Nadu has witnessed the highest number of sewer deaths in India at 234 between 1993-2019.

- Total 926 deaths were witnessed from 1993 till December 31, 2019.
- Gujarat has the highest number of cases (48) where the compensation amount was not paid to the families of sewer deaths victims.
- Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013 provides for rehabilitation of these manual scavengers.

229. US-based Jones Lang Lasalle (JLL- a real estate company) has released the 7th City Momentum Index 2019 which ranks a total of 129 cities based on their dynamicity.

- Top Ranker (or the most dynamic city of the world): - Hyderabad



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- Other top Indian Cities: - Bengaluru (at 2nd position), Chennai (at 5th) and Delhi (at 6th) position, Kolkata (at 16th), Mumbai (at 20th).
 - India leads 2020 Index with seven Indian cities in the top 20.
 - Parameters: key growth drivers, including talent attraction, the expansion of innovation hubs and better urban planning to meet rapid technological and other changes.

230. 12th South Asia Conference has been organised by the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses on theme of "India's 'Neighbourhood First' Policy: Regional Perceptions" in New Delhi.

231. India and France have partnered for developing museums, cultural spaces and conducting research.

- Both countries will establish a joint working group for this purpose.

232. According to a survey named as TRANSPARENCY IN BUDGETARY PROCESS Report 2.0 by Transparency International India, Assam is the top state in terms of best practices followed in budget formulation, followed by Andhra Pradesh and Odisha respectively.

- 4 Parameters of the survey - public disclosure, budgetary process, post budget fiscal management and efforts to make budget more transparent and citizen friendly.
- Meghalaya, Manipur and Punjab were at the lowest ranks.
- According to the survey, state budgets in India have never received such importance as claimed by Union Budget which resulted in a lack of inclusiveness and transparency.

233. World's largest meditation centre and the global headquarters of the Heartfulness Institute have been opened in Hyderabad, Telangana to mark the 75th anniversary of the Heartfulness Institute.

- Kanha Shanti Vanam will be dedicated to the first guide of Heartfulness, fondly called Lalaji by the present global guide Daaji.

234. India's first and biggest 'walk-through' aviary has been established in Byculla Zoo (aka Veermata Jijabai Bhosale Udyan and Zoo) in Mumbai, Maharashtra.

- The aviary has 100 species of exotic birds as of now.
- 'Miyawaki' method (developed in Japan by botanist and plant ecologist Akira Miyawaki) was also inaugurated at Bhakti Park in Wadala, Maharashtra.
- The technique aims to grow the maximum trees in minimum area to increase biodiversity.

235. C-448 - 3rd high-speed interceptor boat - was constructed for Indian Coast Guard by Larsen & Toubro.

- The boat has been commissioned in Mangalore, Bangalore.

236. United Kingdom has launched an 'Innovation Challenge Fund' worth £4 million in India as part of the UK-India Tech Partnership (which was announced in 2018).

- The initiative is primarily concentrating on tech innovations like artificial intelligence in Karnataka and future mobility in Maharashtra.
- Aim: to encourage industry and academia to collaborate and develop high-tech solutions.

237. Flipkart has signed an MoU with Gujarat State Handloom and Handicrafts Development Corporation Ltd (GSHHDC) for promoting local handicrafts.



- The agreement is a part of "Samarth" initiative of Flipkart, launched in 2019, to help the handicraft artisans to set up their business on the Flipkart Marketplace.

238. India and Bangladesh will conduct their joint military exercise called "SAMPRITI-IX" at Umroi, Meghalaya.

239. Indian Railways will put RFID tag (Radio Frequency Identification) on its coaches to accurately trace the rolling stock of railways (carrying freight and passengers) by 2021.

- RFID tags are designed by Centre for Railway Information Systems.
- RFID is an Automatic Identification and Data Collection initiative.

240. Recently, the yellow rust disease has been identified in the wheat crop in Punjab and Haryana.

- Yellow rust disease of wheat (aka stripe rust of wheat) is caused by the fungus Puccinia.
- Effect: It becomes the powdery yellow stripes on leaves of wheat grain. These stripes stop the smooth photosynthesis.
- Major Wheat producing states - Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar and Gujarat.

241. A Supreme Court bench headed by Justices Arun Mishra and U U Lalit has announced that the state-run minority education institutions like Madarsas can be regulated by the state governments.

- These institutions cannot claim absolute rights as the Govt can also appoint teachers in these institutions to impart qualitative education.
- SC has upheld the constitutional validity of West Bengal Madrassas Service Commission Act, 2008, under which the selection and appointment of teachers in madrassas will be decided by a commission.

Article 30 - mentions that all minorities, whether based on religion or language, shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice.

Article 30 (1) - It ensures equal treatment between the majority and the minority institutions and that rules and regulations would apply equally to the majority institutions as well as to the minority institutions.

242. For the first time in India, Container Corporation of India Ltd. (CONCOR) flagged off a train filled with fruits for exports from Anantpur district in Andhra Pradesh to Mumbai's Jawaharlal Nehru Port.

- This is the first time in India that an entire train is being sent to the port for export. This is the first consignment to Iran.

243. Ministry of Road and Highways had constituted a Committee, chaired by Shri YS Malik, for transforming the Indian Academy of Highway Engineers (IAHE) into a world class premier institute on highway sector.

- The committee has submitted its recommendations to the ministry to improve the IAHE across India.
- Set up in 1983, IAHE is the premier institute for pooling of experience and sharing of knowledge on entire range of subjects involving management of highways.

244. 44th International Kolkata Book Fair 2020 was held in Kolkata, West Bengal.

- Theme Country: Russia

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- 30th January 2020 will be celebrated as the Focal Theme Russian Day.

245. First ever aircraft blended with 10% bio-fuel - AN-32 - of Indian Air Force has landed successfully in Leh airport.

246. For the first time, Indian Railways has launched a high capacity parcel van at Delhi Safdarjung Railway Station to boost the exports of the fruit.

- It is designed by Kapurthala Rail Coach Factory.

247. ISRO plans to launch 500 PSLV (Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle) for launching satellites at a cost of Rs 30-35 crores each.

- USD 1,600 million budget has been allocated to manufacture these satellite vehicles. Out of it \$870 million will be for PSLV and the remaining for GSLV.
- Also, ISRO is planning to launch 10 new communication satellites to replace the ageing satellites, having a lifespan of 12-15 years.
- The first such satellite was GSAT-30 to replace INSAT 4-A satellite.

248. The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) has released its report "Towards a Low Carbon Steel Sector: Overview of the Changing Market, Technology and Policy Context for Indian Steel".

- As per the report, if the demand for steel grows at the current pace, then the carbon emission from the steel sector would increase to 837 million tonnes (MT) against the current 242 MT by 2050.
- 242 MT is 35% of the total CO2 emission of the country.

REPUBLIC DAY TABLEAUX:

249. Captain Tania Shergill (from Army's Corps of Signals) has been appointed as the first woman parade adjutant for the 2020 Republic Day parade. (A parade adjutant is responsible for the parade)

- For the first time, during the Republic Day parade on 26th January, an all women biker contingent of the Central Reserve Police Force consisting of 65 women officers will showcase their daredevil stunts.

250. For the first time, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) will showcase a tableau on Startup India in this Republic Day Parade 2020 at Rajpath in New Delhi.

- Theme of the tableau - Startups: Reach for the Sky
- Purpose - to showcase the support given by government to promote startups.

About Startup India Action Plan Initiative:

- It was launched by DPIIT in 2016.
- Aim: To allow eligible companies get recognized as startups by DPIIT in order to access tax benefits, easier compliance, IPR fast tracking and other benefits.

251. Indian Navy will showcase its tableau at the Republic Day parade 2020 on the theme of "Indian Navy-Silent, Strong and Swift".

- Indian Navy week 2019 was also observed on the same theme.
- Indian Navy Day is observed on December 4 every year to commemorate the attack on Karachi harbour by Indian Navy during the Indo-Pak War of 1971.



252. Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro is the chief guest of India for Republic Day's parade on 26 January.

253. For the first time, artillery gun system Dhanush and a marching contingent of the Army Air Defence participated in the 71st Republic Day parade.

- For the first time, K9-Vajra, the anti-satellite (A-SAT) test conducted under Mission Shakti, and Air Defence Tactical Control Radar (ADTCR) of the DRDO will also be part of the parade.
- Lt Gen Kanwal Jeet Singh Dhillon received the Uttam Yudh Seva Medal (UYSM) for serving families in Kashmir after abrogation of Article 370.
- Dhillon had also launched 'Operation Maa' to help the children who joined terrorist groups in J&K.

254. The best tableaux award for the 71st Republic Day was given to Assam state by the Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.

Note: Jal Jeevan Mission is covered in ESI's bundle >> Monthly Current Affairs >> December 2019 document.

255. Central govt is planning to launch the PM-Yasasvi (PM Young Achievers Scholarship Award Scheme for Vibrant India) scholarship scheme for the students of class 9 to post-graduate level belonging to the minority sections.

256. Ministry of Labour is planning to launch the Santusht portal for grievance redressal of employees.

257. Ministry of Civil Aviation has mandated to conduct drone census in order to register all the drones in India and every drone will get a Unique Identification Number (UIN).

- Violators of this rule will face actions under the Aircraft act, 1934 and Indian Penal Code.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

1. Six Countries - Belgium, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden have recently joined INSTEX - Barter Mechanism.

- 'Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges' (INSTEX) is a payment mechanism being setup by the European Union.
- It was established by France, Germany and the United Kingdom.
- Purpose: to allow European countries to maintain trade with Iran (products or services in exchange of oil) in spite of US sanctions on Iran.

2. 35th Abu Dhabi International Petroleum Exhibition & Conference was held in Abu Dhabi, UAE (in November 2019).

- Theme of the conference was 'Oil and Gas 4.0'.
- India aims to invest \$100 billion in refining, pipeline and gas timeline by 2024.

3. Palau is the world's first country which banned sunscreen that affect coral reefs, sea life and other wildlife species.

- Hawaii has also banned the sun cream which will come into effect in 2021.



4. According to UNICEF's data, the decade beginning 2010 has witnessed more than 1,70,000 grave violations against children, which is equivalent to more than 45 violations every day for the last 10 years.

- In 2018, a total of 24,000 cases of violation against children were verified. Out of which more than 12,000 children were killed or maimed.
- During the first half of 2019, over 10,000 violations against children were identified by UNICEF - although actual numbers are likely to be much higher.

Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted in 1989 to ensure human rights of every person under the age of 18.

5. World Health Organization (WHO) has announced launched a pilot programme to prequalify human insulin to increase treatment for diabetes in low and middle income countries.

6. China's giant paddlefish (also known as the 'Panda of the Yangtze river' or 'Chinese swordfish') has become extinct.

- It was announced in a research paper published in Science of the Total Environment.

7. According to Bank for International Settlements (BIS) data, bonds issued by Chinese entities have increased to 12% in 2019 from 2% in 2007.

- USA's bonds were reduced by 4% to 36% while the EU's bonds shrank by 8% to 24%.
- However, US equities increased 44% in 2019 from 30% in 2007 while Chinese stocks have lost about 40% of their value since 2007.
- According to the data from the World Federation of Exchanges and calculations by Bloomberg News, Chinese companies possess about 12% of the total market capitalisation of all publicly traded companies, up from 9% in 2007.

8. World's first hotel themed on female empowerment named as Hotel Zena will open in Washington DC, USA.

- Pebblebrook Hotel Trust (Jon Bortz, president and CEO) is developing the hotel.

9. World's largest flower - Rafflesia tuan-mudae - has been discovered in Indonesia.

- A single petal of this flower is 3.6 foot (111 centimetres) in diameter.

10. Henley Passport Index 2020 has been released.

- Top Rank - Japan with a score of 191
- India's Rank - 84th, shared with Mauritius and Tajikistan with a score of 58 each.
- Bottom Rank - Afghanistan at 107th rank
- The Henley Passport Index 2020 is prepared based on the data from International Air Transport Association (IATA).

11. China and Pakistan are conducting their joint naval drill - "Sea Guardians" - in North Arabian Sea to increase the interoperability of the two navies.

- INS Vikramaditya of India has also been deployed in North Arabian Sea.

12. Iran organized the Tehran Dialogue Forum (23rd Persian Gulf International Conference) where India supported the Hormuz Peace Initiative in Tehran to stabilize the Strait of Hormuz amidst US-Iran tensions and to discuss the rising tension in Persian Gulf region.

- Strait of Hormuz is one of world's busiest shipping lanes.



-
- Trade partners of Iran namely China, Oman, India and Afghanistan attended the initiative.
 - Iran had proposed the coalition for "Hormuz Peace Endeavor" (HOPE) at the UN General Assembly in September 2019.

Note: Read about the US-Iran tensions and Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

13. According to the Global Firepower estimates, USA has the world's most powerful military.
 - India is at 4th position.
14. A new virus named Corona causing pneumonia has been discovered in China in the city of Wuhan and Hubei Province.
 - Globally, Corona Virus was first found in 1960s which causes flu and gastro intestinal problems.
 - World Health Organisation (WHO) has declared it as public health emergency.
 - The virus causes serious illnesses such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS- CoV), Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS-CoV), common cold.
 - India's first case of coronavirus has been detected in Kerala in a girl.
15. World Future Energy Summit will be held at Abu Dhabi, UAE.
 - Climate Innovation Exchange (CLIX) was launched during the 2018 Summit. Since then, it is being held on the side lines of the summit.
 - CLIX is a platform where countries exchange their ideas on common global problems comprising future of space, food, energy and mobility.
16. Australian Koalas population may be listed as "endangered" due to the Australian bushfire which destroyed 30% of their habitat across the country.
 - 2019 was the hottest year for Australia, with 1.52 °C national temperature above average, leading to the massive forest fires which killed 1.25 billion animals approx. and destroyed more than 10 million hectares of land.
17. USA and China have signed the phase 1 of their trade deal (which erupted in 2017) which includes:
 - Intellectual Property (IP) Protection and Enforcement, ending forced technology transfer, dramatic expansion of American agriculture, removing barriers to American financial services, ending currency manipulation, rebalancing the US-China trade relationship and effective dispute resolution.
18. Official Aviation Guide (OAG) has released the Punctuality League 2020 which is a ranking of the world's largest airlines and airports for on-time performance (OTP).
19. WHO has released a list of 13 urgent health challenges the world will face over next decade.
20. Bangladesh Government has announced to accommodate 1,00,000 Rohingya refugees in its Bhasan Char Island.
 - The Island remains submerged in water during monsoon and Bangladesh is making arrangements to make this island habitable.
21. International Maritime Organization has released the Sulphur 2020 rules, effective from 1st January 2020, to control maritime pollution.



- Marine sector will have to reduce sulphur emissions by over 80% by switching to lower sulphur fuels.
- Global sulphur cap of 0.5% will affect 3.5 million barrels per day demand for high sulphur fuel oil.
- Now, shipping sector is shifting towards snake fuel as a cleaner alternative to sulphur oil.

22. 25th edition of the biennial Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of the Commonwealth (CSPOC) 2020 was held in Ottawa, Canada.

- Lok Sabha speaker Om Birla represented India.
- Next edition of CSPOC will be held in Australia in 2022 and Uganda in 2024.
- Meanwhile, the additional CSPOC Standing Committee meetings will be held in Guernsey in 2021 and Trinidad and Tobago in 2023.

23. In 2018, International Maritime Organization of UN had announced to reduce the carbon emissions by 50% (from the levels in 2008) from shipping industry by 2050.

- According to the study conducted by University College London's Energy Institute, USD 1 trillion expenditure would be needed to achieve this target.
- Shipping sector accounts for 2.2% of total CO2 emissions of the world and 90% of world trade happen at sea.
- Decarbonization at sea needs at least USD 50 to 70 billion annual investments between 2030 to 2050.

24. Iran has threatened to pull out of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) if a dispute over its atomic programme goes before the UN Security Council.

- NPT was enforced in 1970 (signed in 1968) to restrict the spread of nuclear weapons and nuclear technologies.

25. Pakistan will host a ministerial meeting of Organisation for Islamic Cooperation (OIC) on Jammu and Kashmir in April 2020.

- In December, Malaysian PM Mahathir Mohammad had convened the "Kuala Lumpur" summit in Malaysia which aimed for reforms in the Muslim world.

26. International Labour Organization (ILO) has released its annual report titled as "World Employment and Social Outlook Trends 2020".

27. United States and the United Kingdom have ratified a treaty to protect the wrecks of RMS Titanic from damage by explorers and tourists in the North Atlantic Ocean.

- UK has signed the treaty in 2003 while USA has ratified the treaty in 2019.

28. Economist Intelligence Unit has released the Democracy Index 2019.

- India's is ranked at 51st position (down by 10 places) with a score of 6.90 against the 7.23 score in 2018.
- Reason for drop - an erosion of civil liberties in India.
- Total countries - 165 independent states and two territories.
- Top 5 countries - Norway (9.87 score), Iceland, Sweden, New Zealand and Finland respectively.
- Bottom 5 countries - Chad, Syria, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo and North Korea (at 167th position with 1.08 score) respectively.

- Comparison with BRICS peers - Brazil was ranked 52nd, Russia stood at 134th, China was ranked at 153rd position.

29. Guyana has been chosen as the Chair of G77 for the year 2020 (the year of 75th anniversary of UN).

- Guyana has taken over the chairmanship from Palestine.

About G77:

- It is the largest intergovernmental organization of developing countries in the UN.
- Founded-1964
- Headquarters - Geneva, Switzerland

30. EU (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill has been passed by European Union's (EU) parliament and it now awaits the assent of Queen Elizabeth II.

- The bill paves the way for the Britain's exit from European Union on 31 January with a deal.
- UK had proposed to leave EU in 2016.
- EU is a group of 28 members and after Brexit only 27 members will be a part of EU.

Exit from EU would cause economic loss to Britain.

31. Global Talent Competitiveness Index 2020 has been released by INSEAD.

- Title of the report: Global Talent in the Age of Artificial Intelligence
- Total countries - 132
- Top Country - Switzerland (81.26 score) followed by US and Singapore
- Bottom Country - Yemen (12.36 score)
- India's rank - 72 (40.42 score), up from 80th position in 2019 index
- Parameters - 6 metrics were used namely enable, attract, grow, retain, vocational skills and global knowledge skills.
- Comparison with BRICS peers - Brazil (80th), Russia (48th), China (42nd), South Africa (70th).

32. UN's World Tourism Organisation has released 'World Tourism Barometer' report.

Key Findings of the Report:

- In 2019, international tourist arrivals have increased by over 4% at 1.5 billion (54 million more arrivals than 2018).
- Region wise: middle east region led the highest growth in the number of arrivals (+8%), followed by Asia and Pacific region (+5%) and Europe & Africa both (4%).
- Based on current trends, economic prospects and the UNWTO Confidence Index, UNWTO forecasts a growth of 3% to 4% in international tourist arrivals worldwide in 2020.
- France witnessed the strongest increase in international tourism expenditure while USA led growth in absolute terms.

33. Transparency International has released the Corruption Perception Index 2019 (CPI) which ranks India at the 80th position (score of 41) among 180 countries and territories.

- Top ranker - Denmark and New Zealand (87 score)
- Bottom ranker - Somalia (9 score)
- India is sharing 80th rank with China, Benin, Ghana and Morocco.

About the index:

- It gives scores between 0-100 to countries.



- 0 means highly corrupt whereas 100 means very clean.
- In 2018 index, India's position was 78.

34. Nepal will host the 1st edition of the Sagarmatha Sambad in Kathmandu in April 2020 on the theme of 'Climate Change, Mountains and the Future of Humanity'.

- The Sagarmatha Sambad - a permanent biennial global dialogue - was launched in 2019 in Kathmandu (its headquarters) to discuss global, regional and national issues.
- It will be the biggest diplomatic initiative in Nepal's recent history.
- It is named after Mt. Everest (aka Sagarmatha).

35. China (Xiangmin Liu) is the President of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and co-chair for Asia Pacific Joint Group.

- FATF's Asia Pacific Group on Money Laundering (APG) has a permanent and a rotating Co-Chair. The permanent chair is held by Australia.
- The current Co-Chairs are Deputy Commissioner Leanne Close (Australia) and Mr. Abu Hena Mohd. Razee Hassan (Bangladesh).

36. Visit Nepal 2020 is the largest economic diplomacy initiative of Kathmandu, Nepal.

- As part of the initiative, India, Nepal and China will hold the first ever trilateral tourism expo in February.
- Visit Nepal 2020 has appointed Chinese actor Xu Qing as the goodwill ambassador.

37. Bangladesh has become the first country in South Asia and 119th country in the world to launch an e-passport.

- Malaysia is the world's first country to launch an e-passport in 1998.

38. World's Oldest Ever Mushroom Fossil has been discovered in the Democratic Republic of Congo by the Steeve Bonneville (professor at Universite Libre de Bruxelles in France).

- The fossils date back to 715-810 million years ago.
- The discovery was published in the 'Science Advances' journal.

Some Facts about Congo:

Currency - Congolese franc

Capital - Brazzaville

President - Felix Tshisekedi

Famous for - world's 2nd largest river Congo; deposits of copper, gold, diamonds, cobalt, uranium, coltan and oil.

39. Switzerland has produced the World's smallest gold coin of 2.96 millimeter which features Albert Einstein.

- The coin (weight - 0.063 grams) has a nominal value of 1/4 Swiss francs.

40. International Court of Justice (ICJ) has decreed Myanmar to protect Rohingyas from atrocities.

- Gambia has filed the lawsuit against Myanmar in ICJ for committing genocide on Rohingyas.
- Myanmar is accused of violating 1948 Genocide convention of UN for preventing the crime of genocide.

About ICJ:

Headquarters - The Hague, Netherlands President - Abdulqawi Ahmed Yusuf

41. World's tallest mural (286-foot-tall), made by Italian artist Giuseppe Percivati, has been unveiled in Karachi, Pakistan.

- It is called Rising Blue.

42. UK has launched the fast-track visa to allow talented scientists to come in UK.

- It coincides with the Global Talent Route Program, worth £300 million, of UK for research into advanced mathematics.

43. 13th International Children's Film Festival - only international film festival for children and young adults of the country - was organized by Children's Film Society of Bangladesh in Dhaka.

- Theme: 'Under The World'
- Slogan: "Future in Frames"

44. In order to commemorate Brexit, Britain has released a new 50 pence coin which has the inscription "Peace, Prosperity and Friendship with all nations".

45. According to the research of Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), China is the world's second-largest arms producer, preceded by United States at first position.

- As per SIPRI's research, Chinese companies would be on the 2nd position in terms of arm sales during 2015-17.
- Due to the lack of transparency in the Chinese system, the complete and accurate data could not be gathered.
- Therefore, Chinese companies were not ranked in the SIPRI Top 100 - an annual ranking of the world's 100 largest arms-producing and military services companies - published in 2017.
- In 2017, In the Top 20 companies, 11 were based in the USA, 6 in Western Europe and 3 in Russia.
- If the four Chinese arms companies investigated in the study were included in the Top 100, they would all rank among the top 20, with combined estimated arms sales totalling \$54.1 billion.
- According to the research, China North Industries Group Corporation (NORINCO) is the world's largest producer of land systems. This company would have found 8th position in the 2017 ranking.

46. USA has released its Middle East peace plan which suggests to create a state of Palestine with a capital in east Jerusalem.

- Further, the plan also recommends to recognize Israeli settlements in the West Bank in exchange for a four-year halt on new settlement activity.
- It will double the territory under the control of the Palestinians and also create a 1 million new Palestinian jobs.
- The plan envisages investment of \$50 billion in Palestine. Israel has welcomed the plan.

Note: Do read about the history of Palestine and Israel. Detail of West bank settlements has been covered in the November 20 document in the daily current affairs bundle.

47. USA had threatened Iran of targeting the cultural sites of Iran.

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- 1954 Hague Convention of UNESCO - also known as the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict is the first international treaty focusing exclusively on the protection of cultural heritage in the event of armed conflict.

48. "Solar Orbiter" - a spacecraft jointly developed by NASA and European Space Agency (ESA) - will be launched from Cape Canaveral (USA) to take first ever pictures of Sun's north and south poles.

- It will be launched on the United Launch Alliance Atlas V Rocket.
- The mission has a lifetime of 7 years.
- It is the 2nd major mission to the inner solar system after Parker Solar Probe (launched in 2018).
- Solar Orbiter is built by Airbus Defense and Space.

First spacecraft to study the Sun's poles was Ulysses, which was launched by NASA and ESA in 1990. But it could not get closer to sun. It was decommissioned in 2009.

49. According to data from the Missing Migrants Project (MMP), compiled by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Data Analysis Center, about 800 migrant people died on different migration routes in the Americas in 2019.

- This is the highest number of deaths recorded in the region in past six years.
- At least 2,959 people lost their lives while migrating in the Americas in the last five years, of which more than 60% lost their lives on the U.S.-Mexico border.

A) In 2014, IOM started to maintain the record of people dying during migration through its Missing Migrant Project.

B) According to IOM's Global Migrants Deaths, 2,421 people died in 2019. About IOM:

- IOM was founded in 1951 in Geneva, Switzerland.
- IOM has 173 members.
- IOM Director-General - Antonio Vitorino

50. According to the data released by UK's Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), China, USA and India are at the top 3 positions respectively in terms of number of students studying in London Universities from these countries.

- Indian student numbers in London grew by 34.7% in 2018-19 with 7,158 students.

51. NTPC Ltd has announced to become the project management consultant for the 300 MW solar power project in Togo (West African Country).

- Now, Togo has become the first nation in the International Solar Alliance (ISA) to get the services of NTPC.

52. The High-level roundtable of UNAIDS (The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS) was organized at World Economic Forum annual meeting in Davos, Switzerland.

- Theme of the roundtable - Access for all: Leveraging Innovations, Investments and Partnerships for Health.
- UNAIDS was started in 1996 and aims to end AIDS by 2030 as part of SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being).
- UNAIDS 2016-2021 strategy was adopted to end the AIDS epidemic.

53. World Economic Forum has launched the Reskilling Revolution to train 1 billion youth by 2030 to adapt the new technological challenges triggered by the 4th Industrial Revolution.

- Public Entities: Brazil, France, India, Pakistan, Russia, UAE and USA are the founding governments of this initiative.
- Private Entities: PwC, Salesforce, ManpowerGroup, Infosys, LinkedIn (data partner), Coursera Inc. and The Adecco Group are the business partners in this initiative.
- Benefit: through the public-private partnership, WEF's Reskilling Revolution will provide necessary skills to the 1 billion people.
- WEF also released a report - "Jobs of Tomorrow: Mapping Opportunity in the New Economy".

54. World Economic Forum and USA have joined the "Tree Trillion Campaign" of the UN to grow a trillion trees in the next decade and also launched a project - 1t.org - to support the campaign.

- In 2006, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) had launched the "Billion Tree Campaign". UNEP has handed over the campaign to Plant for the Planet (NGO)
- WEF has also released a report on the importance of passwords in cybercrime and the cost involved in keeping them safe.
- Cybercrime will cost \$2.9 million every minute in 2020, and some 80% of these attacks are password-related.
- Top 5 technologies for password protection: behavioural analytics, biometrics, QR codes, zero-knowledge proofs and security keys.
- Theme of the WEF's annual meet 2020 - 'Stakeholders for a Cohesive and Sustainable World.

55. 23rd Global CEO Survey (conducted annually by PwC) was launched during the World Economic Forum's annual meeting.

- India is the fourth choice of CEOs after the US, China and Germany for their companies' growth prospects in scenario of sluggish economic growth.
- Only 9% CEOs in a global survey favoured India.
- China's CEOs showed the highest level of confidence in the growth of their own companies at 45%.
- Indian CEOs showed second highest level of confidence at 40% while China was at the 1st position. USA, Canada and UK are at 3rd, 4th and 5th positions respectively.
- USA was lead market, CEOs look to for growth at 30% over the next 12 months.
- Japan has the least optimistic CEOs with only 11% confident of growing revenues in 2020.

56. World Economic Forum has released its 15th Global Risks Report 2020 which has identified top 5 global risks.

- The 5 major risks are of environmental, economic, geopolitical, societal and technological.
- As per the report, 78% respondents expect 'economic confrontation' (standoff) among might increase in 2020.
- For the first time, the top 5 risks in long term in terms of likelihood are all related to environment.

57. World Economic Forum (WEF), has released the first edition of the report "Nature Risk Rising:



Why the Crisis Engulfing Nature Matters for Business and the Economy", in partnership with PwC, under WEF's Nature Action Agenda.

- Purpose: the report assesses the impact of natural (climate) change on economy and businesses.

Facts mentioned in the report:

- A) According to the report, businesses are dependent on nature with an estimated exposure of \$44 trillion which is equal to half of the world's GDP.
- B) 25% of the plant and animal species, 75% of land and 66% of marine environment has been disturbed by human activities.
- C) Construction industry draws \$4 trillion, agriculture draws \$2.5 trillion and food & beverages draws \$1.4 trillion from nature.
- D) Industries which are highly dependent on nature generate 15% (\$13 trillion) of global GDP cumulatively, whereas moderately dependent industries generate 37% (\$31 trillion) of GDP.
- E) In terms of global exposure, larger economies have the highest absolute amounts of GDP in nature-dependent sectors: \$2.7 trillion in China, \$2.4 trillion in the European Union, and \$2.1 trillion in the United States.

58. 50th annual meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF) was held in Davos, Switzerland on the theme of "Stakeholders for a Cohesive and Sustainable World".

Decisions taken at the Summit:

- A) New Internet security principles were adopted to prevent cybercrime which is expected to cost \$6 trillion in 2021.
 - It will affect nearly 1 billion users.
- B) First ever public blockchain track and trace platform
 - It has been developed to help businesses fulfil the consumers' demands for environment-friendly products.
 - Provided by - WEF and first-movers Everledger, the International Trade Centre and Lenzing Group.
- C) Global Consortium for Digital Currency Governance - first ever platform for digital currency governance established
 - The consortium will have govt, businesses and other organizations.
- D) O.P Jindal Global University signed an MoU with the University of Zurich (Switzerland) for cooperation in the field of higher education and research.
- E) Madhya Pradesh govt received investment of Rs 4,125 crores in food and renewable energy sectors at WEF.
 - MP received FDI of Rs 125 crore from Saudi Arabia Agriculture and Livestock Investment Company (SALIC).
 - Two central wind projects of 325 MW capacity were approved by SoftBank Energy (Japan) and Actis (England) respectively.
- F) Karnataka govt has signed an informal agreement with WEF to launch "Centre for Internet of ethical things".
 - Aim: To keep a check on misuse of artificial intelligence and enhance ease of doing business.
- G) Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation (MDEC) has signed an agreement with WEF to expand the drones market.
- H) Tata steel Kalinganagar (in Odisha) was honoured for becoming the only Indian manufacturing plant to be included in the Global Lighthouse Network of WEF.



I) Deepika Padukone was awarded with 26th Crystal award 2020 for raising awareness on mental health.

J) 1st edition of Positive Impact Rating 2020 conducted by WEF launched.

- Purpose: to rank business schools on the basis of their contribution towards the solving societal challenges.
- Total number of schools in the ranking – 51
- Indian schools in the ranking - IIM-Bangalore in Level 4 and XLRI Xavier School of Management (Jharkhand) in Level 3 category.
- The schools were ranked in the five categories:

Level 1- Beginning

Level 2- Emerging

Level 3- Progressing

Level 4- Transforming

Level 5- Pioneering

- Total 21 schools were in the Level 3 and 9 schools were in Level 4 category.

K) WEF has appointed Kristalina Georgieva (chief of International Monetary Fund) and Patrice Motsepe (Chairman of African Rainbow Minerals) to its board of trustees.

59. World Economic Forum has released the "The Global Social Mobility Report 2020: Equality, Opportunity and a New Economic Imperative" report for the first time.

- Total countries: 82
- Top rank: Denmark (with 85.2 score)
- Bottom rank: Cote d'Ivoire (with 34.5 score)
- India's rank: 76th (with 42.7 score)
- Parameters: 5 key dimensions distributed over 10 pillars: Health, Education, (access, quality and equity, lifelong learning), Technology, Work (opportunities, wages, conditions), Protection and Institutions (social protection and inclusive institutions).
- Figure 6 Pillars of the Global Social Mobility Index
Suggestion of the report: If countries included in this report were to increase their social mobility index score by 10 points, this would result in an additional GDP growth of 4.41% by 2030 in addition to vast social cohesion benefits.

Extra Fact:

1) There was a Deloitte City Mobility Index which was released in 2019:

- Indian city to be ranked at the top in this index is Mumbai followed by Delhi and Bangalore.
- Overall, Amsterdam (Netherlands) had topped this index.
- The index measured cities on the basis of 3 parameters - Performance and resilience, Vision & leadership and Service and inclusion.

60. During the WEF's meeting, a survey conducted by the WEF in 30 countries (which represent 76% of world population) was presented.

- Purpose: the survey was conducted to assess the level of trust people have on climate science.
- It found out that India, followed by Bangladesh, has the most people who trust in the climate science and the most people who are aware about the climate conditions.
- The survey was presented in two parts - Toward More Sustainable World and Toward a more Cohesive World - which form the theme of 2020 annual meeting.



APPOINTMENTS

1. Vinod Kumar Yadav has got a 1 year extension as the chairman of Railway board.
2. S Sundar has been appointed as the interim MD and CEO of Lakshmi Vilas Bank.
 - He has also appointed as the additional director of the bank.
3. Suresh Chandra Sharma (AIIMS- Delhi professor) has been appointed as the first Chairman of National Medical Commission (NMC).
 - NMC has been established in accordance with the National Medical Commission Bill 2019.Note: - NMC Bill has been covered in detail in the July Spotlight (National News section >> news number 196)
4. Hillary Rodham Clinton has been appointed as the first female Chancellor of the Queen's University (located in Belfast, UK).
 - Clinton is the 11th Chancellor of the University.
5. Pranab K. Das has taken over as the Chairman of Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs.
6. Pedro Sanchez has been elected as the PM of Spain.
7. Grey Group (headquartered in New York) has appointed Anusha Shetty as its Chairperson and group CEO.
 - Sandipan Bhattacharyya (currently CEO) has been appointed as MD in addition to his current role.
8. IBM (tech company) has appointed Sandip Patel as new MD for IBM India and South Asia.
 - Brenda Harvey has been appointed as the CEO of IBM's Asia Pacific unit.
9. A Sakthivel has been appointed as the chairman of Apparel Export Promotion Council of India (AEPC) for 2020-21.
10. M Nagaraj has been appointed as the CMD of Housing and Urban Development Corporation for a period of 3 months.
11. Chandra Pal Singh Yadav (Rajya Sabha MP) has been reappointed as the Chairman as the Krishak Bharati Cooperative Limited (KRIBHCO).
12. Dr Bipul Bihari Saha has been elected as a bureau member of International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC) for 2020-23.
About IUPAC:
Founded in 1919, the agency of IUPAC names all new elements and compounds, declare atomic weights and physical constants, update Periodic Table and carry out research projects.
Headquarters- USA
President- Qi-Feng Zhou



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13. Tsai Ing-wen has been elected as the President of Taiwan for a second consecutive term.
 14. Mikhail Mishustin has been appointed as the Prime Minister of Russia.
 - President: Vladimir Putin
 15. Haitham bin Tariq Al Said has been appointed as the new ruler of Oman.
 - India observed one day of state mourning on the death of Omani king Qaboos bin Said al Said.
 16. A P Maheshwari has been appointed as the Director General of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF).
 - CRPF is the world's largest paramilitary forces with more than 3.25 lakh personnel.
 17. Lt General Girish Kumar has been reappointed as the Surveyor General of India for 1 year in the Survey of India.
About Survey of India:
Function: surveying and mapping the country Operated by: Ministry of Science and Technology
 18. Ahmed Mazhari has been appointed as the head of Microsoft's Asia business.
 19. Jaideep Nandi has been appointed as the CEO of Bajaj Consumer Care Ltd.
 20. Sunil A. D'Souza has been appointed as the MD and CEO of Tata Global Beverages.
 21. Vikas Agnihotri has been appointed as the first operating partner of SoftBank (Japanese investment major) in India.
 - SoftBank's India investment are led by Sumer Juneja.
 - Manoj Kohli has been appointed as the India's head of the SoftBank group (HQ- Japan).
 - Founder and CEO of Softbank - Masayoshi Son.
 22. Supreme Court bench, headed by SA Bobde, has appointed Justice A M Sapre as the chairman of its committee on road safety.
 - The panel's current head, Justice K S P Radhakrishnan, has expressed difficulty in continuing in that position.
 23. Queen Elizabeth II has appointed Harish Salve as the Queen's Counsel for courts of England and Wales.
 - Salve is presently the a Barrister with a legal firm- Blackstone Chambers.
 - Salve is famous for Kulbhushan Jadhav extradition case and Hyderabad Nizam case.
 24. Mohammad Ashraf Ghani has been re-elected as the President of Afghanistan.
 25. Arjun Munda (Minister of Tribal Affairs) has become the President of Archery Association of India (AAI) for 4 years.
 - Secretary General of AAI- Pramod Chandurkar.

26. Jagat Prakash Nadda has been elected as the 11th president of the Bharatiya Janata Party taking the position from Amit Shah.

27. Rajeev Singh Thakur and Shantanu have been appointed as the Joint Secretaries in the newly created Department of Military Affairs.

- Challa Sreenivasulu Setty was appointed as the MD of State Bank of India.
- Sanjiv Chadha has been appointed as the MD & CEO of Bank of Baroda.
- Lingam Venkata Prabhakar has been appointed as the MD & CEO of Canara Bank.
- Atanu Kumar Das has been appointed as the MD & CEO of the Bank of India.

28. Punit Sood has been appointed as the Head of RBS India by the Royal Bank of Scotland.

About RBS:

Headquarters: UK CEO: Alison Rose Chairman: Howard Davies

29. Nripendra Misra has been appointed as the Chairperson of the executive council of Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (NMML).

- PM Narendra Modi is the President of the NMML Society and Defence Minister Rajanath Singh is the Vice-President.

30. Sunil Mehta (former MD and CEO of PNB) has been appointed as CEO of the Indian Banks' Association (IBA) for 3 years.

- Currently, Rajnish Kumar (Chairman of SBI) is the Chairman of IBA for the year 2019– 20.
- IBA headquarters - Mumbai

31. Anil Khanna has been appointed as Life President of Asian Tennis Federation (ATF).

- Khanna has also been appointed as the Chairman of the ATF Finance Committee.

32. Katerina Sakellariopoulou has become the first Woman President of Greece.

- Current President of Greece - Prokopis Pavlopoulos

33. Joao Vale de Almeida has been appointed as the first ambassador of European Union to the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland after Brexit.

- European Union Headquarters - Brussels, Belgium

34. Sunil Arora (India's Chief Election Commissioner) has been appointed as the Chairman of the Forum of the Election Management Bodies of South Asia (FEMBoSA) for the year 2020 during the 10th annual meeting of FEMBoSA held in New Delhi.

- India has also renewed its MoU with Afghanistan for strengthening institutional capacity in the field of election management.

About FEMBoSA:

- FEMBoSA, established in 2012, is the election management body of SAARC countries.
- It has 8 members.

35. Sebastian Kurz (33 years old) has been appointed as the chancellor of Austria.

- He has become the youngest leader in the world.



36. Ramesh Joshi has been appointed as the Non-Executive Chairman of Vakrangee Ltd on the recommendations of Kotak committee and SEBI's revised Listing Obligations and Disclosure Regulations, 2015.

- The committee on Corporate Governance was formed in 2017 to separate MD and CEO posts in listed companies.

37. Alastair Cook (cricketer of England) and Ricky Skerritt (team manager of West Indies) have been appointed as members of MCC's (Marylebone Cricket Club) World Cricket Committee.

- MCC World Cricket Committee meeting will take place in Sri Lanka in March 2020.
- ICC World Test Championship and the MCC County Championship Match will also take place in Sri Lanka at Galle International Stadium in March 2020.
- MCC Headquarters - London

38. Harsh Vardhan Shringla has been appointed as the new Foreign Secretary in Ministry of External Affairs.

39. RBI has appointed Janak Raj as member of the Monetary Policy Committee.

- MPC (formed in 2016) has six members. Of the six members, three are nominated by govt, while the remaining three are from RBI (including the governor).
- MPC is headed by the RBI governor.
- Janak Raj has also been appointed as the Executive Director of RBI.

IMPORTANT DAYS

1. WHO has designated 2020 as International Year of Nurse and Midwife to commemorate the 200th birth anniversary of Florence Nightingale (founder of modern nursing).

- WHO has announced to release the first ever State of the World's Nursing report along with the State of the World's Midwifery 2020 report during the 73rd session of its World Health Assembly. [venue or date of the Assembly have not been disclosed yet.]
- WHO has collaborated with 3 year Nursing Now!' Campaign (2018-2020) to achieve Universal Health Coverage by improving the status of nursing.
- According to WHO data, 9 million more nurses and midwives are required globally to achieve universal health coverage by 2030.

2. World Braille Day is observed on January 4 by UN in remembrance of Louis Braille.

3. Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) has announced to observe 2020 as the "Year of Mobility" for the welfare of troops.

- Purpose: to construct residential units and implement welfare measures for the troops of CISF and their families.

4. Maharashtra Government observes January 6 as "Journalists' Day" of the state every year to commemorate journalist Late Balshastri Jambhekar.

- Jambhekar is also known as the 'The Father of Marathi Journalism'.
- He published the first Marathi newspaper 'Darpan' in 1832.



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5. World Hindi Day is observed on January 10.
 - For the first time, the World Hindi Conference was held in Nagpur to promote Hindi worldwide.
 - Indian embassy in Nepal has launched four books on this day.
 - A special issue of 'Sahityalok' (research journal) of Tribhuvan University of Nepal was also launched.

 6. National Youth Day is observed on the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda (2020 is 157th birth anniversary) on January 12 every year.
 - Theme of the day: "Channelizing Youth Power for Nation Building".
 - 23rd edition of the National Youth Festival 2020 will be held in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh by the govt. The festival is being organized since 1995.
 - Organizers of the festival: Ministry of youth Affairs and UP State Government.
 - Theme of the festival: Fit Youth Fit India

 7. 4th Armed Forces Veterans Day (also known as Armistice Day) is annually observed on January 14 since 2017 to honour the martyrs of Indian army.
 - Reason: on this day, the first Commander-in-chief of Indian Armed Forces - Field Marshal KM Cariappa got retired.

 8. Indian Meteorological Department observed its 145th Foundation Day on January 15, 2019. It was begun in 1875.

 9. Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (also called Non-Resident Indian day) is observed on January 9, 2020 to recognize NRIs who have contributed to the development of India.
 - Mahatma Gandhi came to India on January 9, 1915.

 10. India observed its 72nd Army Day on January 15 to honour the sacrifices of the soldiers for the country.

 11. "National Road Safety Week" is observed from 11 to 17 January 2020 across the country on the theme of "Bringing Change Through Youth".
 - Department of Rural Development organized a workshop on 'Road Safety' with State Governments aimed to reduce road accidents and boost road safety.

 12. National Immunization Day 2020 was observed on January 19 as a part of Pulse Polio Programme 2020. Polio was eradicated by India in 2014.

 13. Tripura has observed its statehood day on January 21.
 - On this day in 1972, three states - Manipur, Meghalaya and Tripura - became full- fledged states under North Eastern Region (Reorganisation) Act, 1971.

 14. 123rd birth anniversary of Subhash Chandra Bose is observed on January 23.
 - Central govt is constructing a temple named after Bose in Varanasi, with a Dalit woman as a chief priest.



- The temple will be coloured in red (symbol of revolution), black (symbol of strength) and white (symbol of peace) and the prayers will be offered to Bharat Mata at the temple to promote patriotism.

15. Ministry of Women and Child Development has been celebrating the National Girl Child Day on January 24 since 2008.

- International Day of Girl Child is observed on October 11.
- Madhya Pradesh celebrated the National Girl Child Day on 24 January on the theme of "Aware girl child: Able Madhya Pradesh" (Jagruk Balika-Samarth Madhya Pradesh) under the "Beti Bachao-Beti Padhao" scheme.
- MP govt will also celebrate the National Girl Child Week from 24 to 30 January.

16. National Voters Day is observed on January 25 since 2011 to mark Election Commission of India's (ECI) foundation day.

- ECI was established on 25 January 1950 under the Article 324 of the Constitution and the Representation of the People Act, 1951.
- Theme - 'Electoral Literacy for a Stronger Democracy.'

17. 2nd International Day of Education was observed on 24 January 2020 (started in 2018).

- Theme: 'Learning for people, planet, prosperity, and peace'.
- UNESCO and Centre for Research and Interdisciplinarity (CRI) in Paris have organized the celebrations for this day.

18. International Customs Day is observed on January 26 by World Customs Organization (WCO).

- Theme: "Customs fostering Sustainability for People, Prosperity and the Planet".
- On this day in 1952, the Customs Co-operation Council (aka World Customs Organization) was formed.

About World Customs Organization:

Headquarters: Brussels, Belgium Members: 183

Secretary General: Dr Kunio Mikuriya

19. International Holocaust Remembrance Day (or International Day to Commemorate Victims of Holocaust) is observed on January 27 by UN.

- 2020 is the 75th year of World War II end and liberation of Auschwitz (the largest Nazi concentration camp).
- Theme: "75 years after Auschwitz- Holocaust Education & Remembrance for Global Justice".

20. For the first time, World Neglected Tropical Diseases day will be observed on January 30, 2020 to create awareness about the tropical diseases.

- The day has been instituted by Crown Prince Court of Abu Dhabi, which also funded the launch.
- According to WHO, NTD affect more than 149 countries, located particularly in Asia, Africa and America.

21. World Leprosy Day is observed on the last Sunday of January every year. It was celebrated on January 26, 2020.

- Theme: "Leprosy isn't what you think"
- In India, it is observed on January 30 to commemorate the death of Mahatma Gandhi.



- Leprosy (also known as Hansen's disease) is a skin disease causing discoloration and lumps on the skin.

AWARDS

1. United Nations Medal has been conferred upon Indian peacekeepers for their dedication and sacrifice towards UN peacekeeping mission in South Sudan.
 - India has been the largest troop contributor to UN missions since its inception.
 - So far, India has participated in 49 Peacekeeping missions with a total contribution exceeding 2.45 lakh troops.
2. Malavath Purna (18 years) has become the first and youngest tribal woman in the world to climb 6 highest peaks of the 6 continents.
 - Mt Vinson Massif (highest mountain peak) in Antarctica at 4,892 meters was her latest summit.
 - She belongs to Pakala tribal hamlet in Telangana.
 - Purna aims to summit Mt. Denali in North America to complete her summit on 7 highest peaks of 7 continents.
3. Prince William Arthur Philip Louis has constituted a new prize - Earthshot Prize – to award the people working for solving the Earth's greatest environmental problems.
 - The award will be annually conferred upon 5 people for the next 10 years.
 - Purpose: to find at least 50 solutions to the world's greatest problems by 2030.
 - In 2020, the initiative will have a series of "Earthshot challenges" to find answers to climate issues.
4. For a 4th time in a row, Cristiano Ronaldo (Portuguese footballer) has received the Best Men's Player of the Year award at 11th Dubai Globe Soccer Awards 2019 held in Dubai, UAE.
 - Lucy Bronze (England footballer) has been awarded with the best women's player of the year.
 - The award was given in 15 categories.
5. India has honoured Sucheta Satish (aged 13) with the '100 Global Child Prodigy Award 2020' in the category of singing.
 - She is a Dubai based Indian girl who can sing in 120 languages.
6. For the first time, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting will confer "Antar-rashtriya Yoga Diwas Media Samman" to 30 media houses to recognize their role in spreading awareness about Yoga.
 - Categories of the awards: Best Media Coverage of Yoga in Television (8 awards), Best Media Coverage of yoga in Radio (11 awards), Best Media Coverage of Yoga in Newspapers (11 awards).
7. 77th Golden Globe Awards 2019, given to films and TV, was organized by Hollywood Foreign Press Association (HFPA) in USA.
 - In television, Fleabag, Succession, and Chernobyl won most awards.
8. '20 people to watch in 2020s' list of Forbes India has been released:



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9. 'Asha and the Spirit Bird' - debut novel of Jasbinder Bilan (UK resident) - has won the Costa Children's Award 2019 (UK children's book award).
 10. First edition of Muppavarapu Venkaiah Naidu National Award for Excellence has been given during the 10th anniversary of Muppavarapu Foundation.
 - Awardees - Dr. Gutta Muniratnam and Dr. MS Swaminathan (Agricultural Scientist) have won the National Award for Excellence in Social Service.
 - The award carries a prize money of Rs 5 lakhs and a citation.
 - Swaminathan is also known as "Father of Green Revolution" in India.
 11. Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has announced its annual awards in 25 categories for the 2018-19.

Note: - Only important categories have been taken here.
 12. Ishwar Sharma (aged 10) has won the Global Child Prodigy Award 2020 for his achievements in spiritual discipline yoga.
 - Global Prodigy Award is given by Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam Foundation.
 - Ananya Rajaraman (Bengaluru Girl) has won 100 Global Child Prodigy Award 2020 for her writing.
 13. Ministry of Jal Shakti has organised the Open Defecation Free (ODF) sustainability workshop in New Delhi where the Swachhata awards to the best performing districts were distributed.
 - Recently, Sindoda Panchayat of Indore was declared as the first plastic-free area in the Madhya Pradesh.
 14. Dr Sakya Singha Sen (Indian Scientist) and his team has won the Merck Young Scientist Awards 2019 for their innovations in chemistry.
 - Other Awardees - Debojyoti Chakraborty, Dipyaman Ganguly, Siddhesh S Kamat, Mahendran KR, Basker Sundararaju.
 - The award is given in chemical sciences to the researchers with less than 10 years of experience.
 15. Sachin Tendulkar has been included in the Laureas's list of the most inspiring sporting personality in the last twenty years.
 - Besides Tendulkar, Andrew Flintoff (England) is the only other cricketer in the list.
 16. Jasmin "Jaws" Moghbeli has become the first Iranian- American astronaut.
 - She earned her fierce nickname during her time as a decorated helicopter gunship pilot who flew more than 150 missions in Afghanistan.
 17. Vasdev Mohi (Sindhi writer) will be given Saraswati Samman for 2019 by the Krishna Kumar (KK) Birla Foundation for his short stories collection- 'Chequebook'.
 - KK Birla Foundation also gives Vyas Samman (for Hindi works) and Bihari Puraskar (for Hindi/Rajasthani works by Rajasthani writers).
 18. 17th Crossword Book Awards winners:



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19. Suman Kalyanpur (singer) will be conferred with the 2017 National Lata Mangeshkar Award by Madhya Pradesh govt.
- Kuldeep Singh (music composer) has been chosen for the 2018 National Lata Mangeshkar Award by the Madhya Pradesh govt.
 - MP govt has instituted this award to honour Lata Mangeshkar (who was born in MP).
20. Kerala State Sports Council has announced the GV Raja award (highest sports honour of Kerala):
21. Computer Society of India and Special Interest Group on e-Governance have presented the Award of Excellence for 2019 to two applications developed by the Election Commission of India - 'cVIGIL' and 'Voter Helpline App'.
- cVIGIL helps in reporting violations of Model Code of Conduct during elections while Voter Helpline App helps voters to get information.
22. The Order of Australia honour (highest civilian honour of Australia) has been conferred upon Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw (founder and chairperson of Biocon) for her contributions towards advancing Australia and India's relationship.
- She has also been appointed as an honorary member in the general division of the Order of Australia.
 - She is the 4th Indian citizen to be awarded Australia's highest civilian honour.
23. Priya Prakash (founder and CEO of HealthSetGo) has won the Global Citizen Prize: Cisco Youth Leadership Award 2019 for her school health program that provides healthcare support to children.
- Cisco Youth Leadership Award is given by Cisco company and Global Citizen organization.
24. Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren has won the "Champion of Change Award-2019" for his service in the Barhait and Dumka assembly constituencies in the state.
- Former president Pranab Mukherjee presented this award to him.
25. "14th Ramnath Goenka Excellence in Journalism Awards" 2019 (instituted to honour Ramnath Goenka - the founder of Indian Express) were given by the Express Group.
- The award was given to 23 winners in 11 categories for 2018.
 - It is one of the most prestigious awards in the field of journalism in India.
26. Ministry of Home Affairs has announced Disaster Mitigation and Management Centre (Uttarakhand) and former IPS officer K.M. Singh as the winners of the Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar for their contribution in the field of disaster management.
- The award is given on Subash Chandra Bose's birth anniversary.
27. 22 children (10 girls and 12 boys) have been selected from 12 states for the Indian Council of Child Welfare's (ICCW) National Bravery Awards 2019.
- ICCW has instituted five special awards this year - ICCW Markandeya Award, ICCW Dhruva Award, ICCW Abhimanyu Award, ICCW Prahalada Award and ICCW Shravan Award.
 - The awards were instituted by ICCW in 1957.

28. UN World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) has given a special recognition to Kerala as an "Emerging Global Destination" in the Accessible Destination Awards 2019.

- Reason: for implementing the Kerala Tourism's Barrier-Free Tourism Project in Thissur, Kerala. Kerala is the only state in India to win this honour.
- UNWTO Secretary-General (Zurab Pololikashvili) presented the award to Kerala Tourism Director P Bala Kiran in Madrid, Spain during the FITUR Trade Fair (second- biggest global gathering of tourism professionals).

29. Sneha Pamneja (graphic designer) has won the Oxford Bookstore Book Cover Prize 2020, for book designing, at the 13th Zee Jaipur Literature Festival.

- She has won this award for designing the cover of 'Tiffin: Authentic Recipes Celebrating India's Regional Cuisine' book (which is written by Sonal Ved).

30. N Ram (Journalist and Chairman of the Hindu Group) won the National Media Award of the Kerala Media Academy for his contribution to journalism.

31. Andrew Clement Serkis (English actor and film director) won the Outstanding British Contribution to Cinema Award 2020.

- The award is given by British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA).
- The award is given in honour of Michael Balcon (British film producer).

32. N Kumar (Vice-Chancellor of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University) has won the 'Harit Ratna Award 2019' given by the All India Agricultural Students Association.

- Reason: for providing entrepreneurship project worth Rs 30 crore in agri-business and motivating students to involve in the agriculture sector in the State.
- The award was given during the 5th National Youth Convention held at Indira Gandhi Krishi Vishwavidyalaya in Raipur.

33. Ministry of Home Affairs has announced the PADMA awards 2020. These awards are given in three categories - Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri.

- Padma Vibhushan was given to 7 people including Sushma Swaraj, Arun Jaitley among others.
- Mary Kom has become the first sportswoman (and second sports personality after Sachin Tendulkar) to win Padma Vibhushan.
- Padma Bhushan was given to 16 people.
- Padma Shri was given to 118 people.

34. Election Commission of India (ECI) has given the National Media Award for print to "The Hindu Tamil" (editor - K. Ashokan) as part of the ECI's national awards for voter awareness and education campaign in 2019.

- Reason: for encouraging people to give votes on the basis of merit of candidates' during Lok Sabha election 2019.
- Apart from this, Punjab, Andhra Pradesh and Odisha won the award for excellence to states.
- Election conducting officers, organizations and media were also given awards for spreading awareness about the fair electoral practises.



35. 62nd Annual Grammy Awards 2020 has been given by The Recording Academy to recognize achievements of the music industry.

Note: the awards were given in other categories as well. Only the important ones have been mentioned here. You can check out the full list of awardees here -

<https://www.grammy.com/grammys/awards/62nd-annual-grammy-awards-2019>

36. 'Samvidhaan' (means constitution) has been named as the Oxford Hindi Word of the Year for 2019 by the Oxford University Press.

37. Nobel Laureate Abhijit Banerjee has won the honorary Doctor of Letters Degree from the Calcutta University (his alma mater).

Note: Details of Nobel Prize 2019 have been provided in October Spotlight (in Awards section).

38. Sanjana Kapoor has won the French honour of 'Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres (Knight of the Order of Arts and Letters) for her contribution to theatre.

- She is the daughter of Shashi Kapoor (Bollywood Actor) and Jennifer Kendal.

39. Environmental economist Pavan Sukhdev (from India) and Conservation biologist Gretchen C. Daily (from USA) have been awarded with the 2020 Tyler Prize for Environmental Achievement.

- The award is often described as the 'Nobel Prize for the Environment' and is administered by University of Southern California.
- The award recognizes two individuals for pioneering conservation of natural capital.

40. Kashmiri journalist Yusuf Jameel has won the PEN Gauri Lankesh Award for 2019-20 for showing professional integrity and preserving the ideals of democracy.

41. Rani Rampal (Indian hockey women's team captain) has become the first-ever hockey player to win the World Games Athlete of the Year Award 2019 by International Hockey Federation (FIH).

42. Dr. Partap Chauhan has won the Ayurveda Ratan Award 2020 during the Ayurveda Day Celebration at the European Parliament in Brussels, Belgium.

- Reason: for his lifelong dedication towards the furtherance of Ayurveda worldwide.
- Ayurveda Day was first celebrated at the European Parliament on November 21, 2018.
- National Ayurveda Day is observed on the occasion of Dhanwantari Jayanti (Dhanteras) every year.

SPORTS

1. Sumit Sangwan (boxer) has been banned for 1-year by the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) for failing a dope test.

2. Sunita Lakra (India women's hockey player) has announced her retirement due to knee injury.

3. FIDE World Blitz competition 2019 was held in Moscow, Russia.

- Men's Winner: Magnus Carlsen (Norway)



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- Women's Winner: Kateryna Lagno (Russia)
 - India's best performer: Humpy Koneru (at 12th position)
4. MS Dhoni has been named as captain of ODI and T20I team of the decade of ESPNCricinfo.
 - Virat Kohli has been named as the leader in Tests team of the decade.
 - Mithali Raj (skipper) and Jhulan Goswami (fast bowler) have been included in the ODI and T20I teams of the decade while Meg Lanning (Australia) was named as the captain of the side.
 5. Manav Thakar has been ranked at the first position in U-21 Men's rankings released by the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF).
 - Thakar has won the U-21 men's singles title at the ITTF Challenge Plus Benemax- Virgo North American Open 2019 held in Markham, Canada.
 6. First edition of 2020 Khelo India University Games (KIUG) will be hosted by Odisha at Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology University (KIIT) in Bhubaneswar.
 - 'Jay and Bijay' mascots of the KIUG have been launched.
 - Sports Authority of India, Association of Indian Universities, Indian Olympic Association and National Sports Federation are jointly hosting the event.
 - One-state-one-sport plan was also announced where each state will adopt and nourish a particular sport of its choice and potential.
 - Khelo India youth games for schools will be organized in Guwahati, Assam.
 7. 3rd Khelo India Youth Games 2020 was organized in Guwahati, Assam by the Ministry for Youth Affairs and Sports and Assam government.
 - Mascots: Jaya (Black buck) and Vijay (Tiger)
 - Winner: Maharashtra with a total 256 medals
 - Runner Up: Haryana with 200 medals
 - Harsh Bhagwan (boxer) has won first medal (silver) for Daman and Diu at the games.
 8. Ministry of Sports has given its approval to host the Commonwealth Games in shooting and archery in 2022 in India.
 - These events will be held under the Commonwealth Games Friendship Program.
 - 2022 Birmingham CWG does not have these two sports.
 9. Rohit Sharma Cricket stadium is being developed in Hyderabad, Telangana.
 10. Magesh Chandran Panchanathan has won the 95th Hastings International Chess Congress held at Hastings in England.
 11. FIFA ranking for
 12. Novak Djokovic has won the men's singles at the ATP Cup 2020 held in Sydney, Australia.
 - Novak Djokovic and Viktor Troicki have won men's doubles.
 13. Kylian Mbappe (worth €265 million) has topped the list of most valuable football players in the



world released by the International Centre for Sports Studies (CIES - based in Switzerland) Football Observatory.

- Raheem Sterling (worth €223.7 million) is 2nd and Mohammed Salah (worth €175.1 million) is 3rd in the list.
- Lionel Messi is at the 8th position with €125.5 million.

14. Fouaad Mirza (equestrian) has become the first Indian in 20 years to qualify for the Olympics 2020 to be held in Tokyo, Japan. after 2 decades. (Equestrian means horse riding)

15. India is the top shooting country in the world with 21 gold, 6 silver, and 3 bronze in 2019 as per International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF).

- Also, India ranks at the top position in all the Rifle-pistol World Cups in 2019.
- China is at the second position with 11 gold, 15 silver and 18 bronze.
- USA is at the third position with 6 gold, 6 silver and 3 bronze.

About ISSF:

Headquarters- Munich, Germany President- Vladimir Lisin

16. Serena Williams (tennis) has won the singles title at WTA Classic Auckland Open 2020 held in Auckland, New Zealand.

- Women's Doubles: Asia Muhammad and Taylor Townsend

Women's Tennis Association (WTA):

Headquarters: United States President: Micky Lawler

17. Kento Momota has won the men's singles at the 2020 Malaysia Masters (badminton) held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

- Chen Yu Fei won women's singles.

18. ICC has announced its awards for Men for 2019:

19. Abhijeet Gupta has won the 18th Delhi International Open Grandmasters chess tournament.

20. Magnus Carlsen has set a world record of winning 111 unbeaten classical games.

21. 23rd Deloitte's Football Money League - the list of world's highest-earning soccer club has been released.

Extra Fact:

- Top 5 football leagues of Europe: English Premier League (EPL), La Liga (Spain), Fußball-Bundesliga (Germany), Serie A (Italy), and Ligue 1 (France).

22. Mohun Bagan football club will be merged with ATK Football Club and Bagan will be renamed as ATK-Mohun Bagan from 2020-21.

23. India has won 7 medals (including 4 gold, 2 silver and 1 bronze) in the UWW Rome Ranking Series in Italy.

- Gold winners: Bajrang Punia, Ravi Kumar Dahiya, Vinesh Phogat and Gurpreet Singh.

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24. Virat Kohli has become the only player in 2019 to score 2,455 runs in all formats - tests, ODIs and T20I - combined.
 25. Jacqueline Williams (Jamaica) has become the first woman third umpire in men's international cricket match.
 - She oversaw all 3 matches of the T20I series between West Indies and Ireland held in in Grenada, West Indies.
 26. ICC U-19 world cup 2020 will be held in South Africa.
 27. India has won ODI series of 3 matches against Australia held in Bengaluru.
 - Kuldeep Yadav has become the fastest Indian bowler to claim 100 wickets in ODI. In 2019, he became the first Indian cricketer to claim two hat-tricks in international cricket in 2019.
 - Virat Kohli has become the fastest captain to complete 5000 runs in ODIs in 82 innings.
 - Virat Kohli has also become the fastest captain to score 11,000 international runs in just 196 innings.
 28. M. Meena Kumari (54kg), Monika (48kg), Ritu Grewal (51kg) and Bhagyabati Kachan (75kg) won silver medals at the 9th Nation's Cup boxing tournament for women held at Sombor, Serbia.
 - Pavitra (60kg) and Pwilao Basumatary (64kg) won bronze medals.
 29. 27th WTA Hobart International 2020 (tennis tournament) was held in Hobart, Australia.
 - Singles winner: Elena A. Rybakina (Kazakhstan)
 - Doubles winner: Sania Mirza and Nadiia Kichenok (Ukrainian)
 30. Australia will host the 11th edition of the Indoor Cricket World Cup 2020 for men and women in Melbourne city in October.
 - World Indoor Cricket Federation regulates the Indoor Cricket World Cup.
 31. Meyton Cup International shooting championship was held in Innsbruck, Austria.
 32. Ministry of Sports has de-recognised the Rowing Federation of India for violating the Sports Code of 2011 in electing President and Secretary-General.
About Rowing Federation of India:
President - Rajlaxmi Singh Deo
Secretary-General - MV Sriram
 33. New Zealand will host the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup in 2021 in 6 cities.
 - Final match of the world cup will be played in Hagley Oval stadium in Christchurch.
 34. Fabiano Caruana (American-Italian chess Grandmaster) has won the Tata Steel Masters chess tournament held in The Netherlands.
 35. P. Magesh Chandran (Indian) has won the 95th edition of the Hastings International Chess Congress held in Hastings, England.



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36. Abhay Singh (India) has won British U-23 Squash Open Crown 2020 held in London, England.
37. Fares Dessouky (Egypt) has won the Pittsburgh Open (world squash tournament) held in Pittsburgh, USA.
38. 71st International Boxing Tournament "Strandja" 2020 was held in Sofia (capital of Bulgaria).
- Winner - Ukraine (Total medals - 10; Gold - 4)
 - India was ranked 9th with 3 medals (1 Silver won by Mohammed Hussamuddin and 2 Bronze won by Sonia Lather and Shiva Thapa).
- About International Boxing Association:
Headquarters - Lausanne, Switzerland
President - Gafur Rakhimov
39. India will host the Barca Academy Cup - Asia Pacific (football), consecutively for a 2nd time, in Gurgaon, Haryana.
- Seven countries - India, Australia, Turkey, China, Singapore, Japan and Spain - will participate in Cup which is organized by Barca Academy.
40. David Paravyan has won the 18th Gibraltar Chess Festival held in Gibraltar (British Overseas Territory).

MISCELLANEOUS

Note: Only remembering the name, country and profession of the disease would be sufficient for the exam.

1. American Dialect Society (ADS) has chosen 'they' as their Word of the Decade. In 2015, they was ADS's word of the year.
2. University of Oxford (England) has discovered the 2nd species on Earth which can see without eyes through a phenomenon called extraocular vision.
 - Name of that species is "red brittle star" (*Ophiocoma wendtii*). It lives in the coral reefs of the Caribbean Sea.
 - The study is published in journal Current Biology.
 - A sea urchin specie is the first specie to have this ability.
3. 'The Cuckoo's Nest', first English novel of A Sethumadhavan (Malayali novelist) has been published.
4. Amit Shah has released a book 'Karmayoddha Granth' on the life of PM Narendra Modi.
5. Laser Interferometer Gravitational-wave Observatory (LIGO) has detected gravitational waves due to collision of two neutron stars.
 - It is the 2nd time the gravitational waves are being detected. The first ever neutron star was detected in 2017.



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- India will also establish a LIGO in Maharashtra to locate gravitational waves and their new sources.
6. "New India: Selected Writings 2014-19" book is a compilation of selected writing of Late Arun Jaitley which is being compiled by Juggernaut Books publishing house (to be released in February 2020)
 7. 'PAX SINICA: Implications for the Indian Dawn' book has been authored by Samir Saran and Akhil Deo. It was released by External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar.
 - The book presents the details of China in 21st century.
 8. W.V. Raman (cricketer) has authored a book "The Winning Sixer".
 9. Liang Jun - China's first and oldest female tractor driver and a national icon - has passed away.
 10. Aashman Taneja (aged 5) from Telangana has made the Guinness Book of World Records for the most full contact knee strikes (more than 1,200 knee strikes) non-stop in 1-hour in Taekwondo.
 11. Scientists found out the world's oldest grains on earth (7 billion years old) inside the meteorite that crashed in a fireball in 1969 into the town of Murchison in Australia.
 - A team of scientists led by Philipp Heck published their research in 'Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences' (PNAS) journal.
 12. Britain's Prince Harry and his wife Meghan Markle have resigned as the working members of Britain's monarchy.
 13. 'Essays & Reminiscences: A Festschrift in Honour of Nani A Palkhivala' book has been released to mark the 100th birth anniversary of "Nani" Ardeshir Palkhivala (Jurist and Economist).
 - Arvind Datar has edited the book and Nani A Palkhivala Memorial Trust commissioned it.
 14. Rock band - Queen has become first British band to appear alongside Queen Elizabeth II on a commemorative coin which was released by Royal Mint.
 15. The Gateway - A Social Commentary on Safety of Senior Citizens book has been written by Hariharan Balagopal.
 16. "Human Dignity - A purpose in perpetuity" book has been written by Ashwani Kumar and published by LexisNexis (USA).
 17. Xenobots - world's first living and self-healing robots have been created by the University of Vermont and Tufts University by using the stem cells of frogs.
 - It is named after *Xenopus laevis* (African clawed frog) from which the stem cells was taken.
 - Benefits: Xenobots can be used to clean the radioactive waste, collect microplastics in the oceans, carry medicine inside human bodies, or even travel into our arteries to remove plaque.
 18. "The Story of Yoga: From India to the Contemporary World" book has been written by Alistair Shearer (Scottish cultural historian).
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19. To honour the contribution of Dr Kailash Chandra (Director of Zoological Survey of India - ZSI) towards Indian animal taxonomy, ZSI has named the new species of snake eel as *Ophichthus kailashchandrai*.
- It was found in the Bay of Bengal and is the eighth species of the *Ophichthus* genus found on the Indian coast.
20. Melhupra Vero has passed away. He was the first person from Nagaland to become a member of the Rajya Sabha.
21. Balwa (Hindi novel) has been written by Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi (Minister for Minority Affairs).
- Hindi novel 'Raj Leela' and 'Cyber Supari' are the other novels of Naqvi.
22. 10th edition of the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, consisting of 26 new Indian language words, has been launched.
- Over 1000 new words were included.
 - Total 384 Indian words such as Aadhaar, Chawl, hartal etc. are present in the dictionary.
- First published in Japan in 1942.
First published by Oxford University Press in 1948.
23. Kobe Bean Bryant (American basketball player) and his daughter passed away in a helicopter crash.
24. 'Relentless' autobiography of Yashwant Sinha (former finance minister) has been released.
25. Nagoba Jatara is a tribal festival observed in Adilabad district, Telangana.
26. Jallikattu is the bull-human fighting festival observed as a part of Pongal celebrations on Mattu Pongal day, particularly, in Tamil Nadu (and in other South Indian states).
27. "Aaj ke Shivaji: Narendra Modi" book has been written by BJP leader Jay Bhagwan Goyal.
28. "The Assassination of Mahatma Gandhi - Trial & Verdict 1948-49" book has been published by The Hindu.
29. Tushar Kanjilal (social worker, environmentalist, educationist and writer) has passed away.
- He has written 'Who killed the Sunderbans?' book.