



# Monthly **GK** Mania



November - 2019

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### **National Organic Festival of Women Entrepreneurs**

Union Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI) and Union Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoWCD) cracked a deal to organise ‘National Organic Festival of Women Entrepreneurs’ annually via an academic institution, National Institute of Food Technology Entrepreneurship and Management (NIFTEM), Sonapat, Haryana. The proposed festival will encourage Indian women entrepreneurs, connect farmers with buyers, empower Indian women via financial inclusion as well as promote organic food production in India.

### **NDTV won International Press Institute India award**

India’s private news channel NDTV was presented International Press Institute India award for excellence in journalism by the India chapter of the Vienna-based International Press Institute for its ‘expose of the conspiracy to scuttle’ the Kathua rape and murder case probe. The jury of eminent editors headed by Soli Sorabjee, former Attorney General of India unanimously selected NDTV for the prestigious award. This annual award was instituted by IPI India in 2003 to acknowledge the best work done by an Indian media organization/ journalist in print, TV, radio and internet mediums.

### **H R Khan will preside Microfinance panel**

Former RBI deputy governor H R Khan has been appointed as the first chairman of steering committee panel on Code for Responsible Lending (CRL) in Micro-Credit. P Satish of Sa-Dhan, Sonia Krishnankutty of L&T Finance, Harsh Shrivastava of MFIN and Srinivas Bonam of IndusInd Bank etc. are other members of this panel. Launched in September 2019, CRL is a self-regulatory step for micro-credit industry making diverse entities such as banks, Non-Banking Financial Company – Micro Finance Institution (NBFC-MFI) and NBFCs, adhere to standards of customer protection. It was envisaged to get guided and supervised by a steering committee having representations from banks, Small Finance Banks (SFBs), NBFC-MFIs, NBFCs and industry associations under an eminent independent chair.

### **Malayalam poet Akkitham : The 55th Jnanpith Awardee**

Noted Malayalam poetry writer, Akkitham Achuthan Namboodri was chosen for the 55th Jnanpith Award. Under the chairmanship of noted Odia writer Pratibha Rai, other members of Jury viz. Shamim

Hanafi, Suranjan Das, Madhav Kaushik and Dr. Purushottam Bilimalale chose him for the prestigious award. Most of his poetry works have a unique prophetic character. He has written 55 books so far out of which 45 are poetry collections. Irupdam Nootandidae is his most popular poetry book. "Veeravadam", "Balidarshanam", "Nimisha Kshetram", "Amrita Khatika", "Akkhitam Kavitakhaka", "Epic of Twentieth Century" and "Antimkalam" are his other famous works. He received a cash prize worth Rs 11 lakh, a statue of Vagdevi, a citation and a memento.

### **Special Protection Group (Amendment) Bill**

Lok Sabha gave nod to the Special Protection Group (Amendment) Bill, 2019. It is about providing security to Prime Minister, and members of his immediate family residing with him at his official residence. Besides this, it also advocates provision of security to former prime ministers, and their immediate family members residing with them at the residence allotted to them for a period of five years. So far as per original Act, SPG cover was only for the security of the Prime Minister. Recently the security cover has been changed to Z Plus security with CRPF and Ambulance for Gandhi family after a proper professional threat assessment.

### **Merger of Union Territories Bill, 2019**

Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu (Merger of Union Territories) Bill, 2019 got approval of Lok Sabha. The bill aims at better delivery of services to citizens of both the Union Territories by improving efficiency and reduction in paperwork and administrative expenditure as well as establishing uniformity in policy and schemes. It is worth mentioning here that Dadra and Nagar Haveli with one district and Daman and Diu with two districts are located in the western region. The combined population of the two UTs is 5 lakh 80 thousand. The proposed merger will lead to ease of administrative functioning and with this, the number of total union territories of the country will become eight.

### **Bill on unauthorised colonies got green signal from Lok Sabha**

National Capital Territory of Delhi (Recognition of Property Rights of Residents in Unauthorised Colonies) Bill, 2019 succeeded in obtaining Lok Sabha's consent. The bill will fetch ownership rights to nearly 40 lakh people living in unauthorised colonies in Delhi. It will make way for registration of properties and will provide relief to the residents of 1731 unauthorised colonies in the city from registration charges and stamp duty. The bill is a boon for those who are possessing properties on the basis of Power of Attorney, Agreement to Sale and possession letter as it carries provisions for recognising the property rights in unauthorised colonies by securing the rights of ownership or transfer or mortgage in favour of such residents.

### **Uddhav Thackeray: The New CM of Maharashtra**

Shiv Sena Chief Uddhav Thackeray will take oath as the new Chief Minister of Maharashtra at 6:40 pm today. Uddhav Thackeray is son of Shiv Sena founder Balasaheb Thackeray. He has never contested an election previously and has never been a member of the state assembly. Therefore, he will have to seek election to the Maharashtra Assembly or the Legislative Council within six months of his taking oath. He is Editor-in-Chief of Saamana (Marathi newspaper) and President of Shiv Sena. In 2002, Uddhav had led the Shiv Sena to a massive victory in the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation elections. The Shiv Sena-NCP-Congress leaders submitted letters of support from 166 MLAs to the Governor. The last Shiv Sena member to hold the CM post was Narayan Rane in 1999, while Manohar Joshi was the first from Shiv Sena to become the Chief Minister of Maharashtra in 1995.

### **The National Institute of Design (Amendment) Bill**

In November 2019, the National Institute of Design (Amendment) Bill seeking to amend the National Institute of Design Act, 2014 that declares National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad as an institution of national importance got approval of both houses of the parliament and has proceeded to take autograph of President Ram Nath Kovind. The bill also requests to declare 4 National Institutes of Design (NID) located at Kurukshetra (Haryana), Amaravati (Andhra Pradesh), Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh) and Jorhat (Assam) as institutions of national importance. With this, the four institutes will have the standards at par with the institute in Ahmedabad and will impart quality education in the field of design and will be able to grant degrees/diplomas. Currently, these institutes are registered as Societies under the Societies Registration Act, 1860.

### **Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill, 2019**

In November 2019, Parliament has passed the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill 2019. The Bill defines a transgender as- ‘a person whose gender does not match the gender assigned at birth’ and provides recognition of identity of Transgender Persons and to confer upon them right to self-perceived gender identity. Once the bill turns into a law then every transgender person will have a right of residing with parents and immediate family members and be included in his household. It will cease all sorts of discrimination against a transgender person including unfair treatment/ denial of service in fields of employment, educational institutions, enjoyment of goods, healthcare services, other facilities, opportunities available to public, right to reside/ movement among others. In addition to this, a grievance redressal mechanism has also been established for addressing the issues related to transgender under which National Council for Transgender Persons (NCTP) will advise, monitor and evaluate measures for the protection of their rights.

### **Cartosat 3 launch: The latest success story of ISRO**

On November 27, 2019, ISRO launched a high-resolution (panchromatic resolution of 0.25m) earth observation satellite, Cartosat-3 satellite, which will be useful for weather mapping and army defence along with 13 commercial nanosatellites from the US into Sun Synchronous orbit aboard the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle(PSLV)-C47 launch vehicle from a launch pad at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh. This was the 21st flight of India's PSLV in 'XL' configuration and 74th launch vehicle mission overall from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre. The 1,625 kg Cartosat-3 satellite is a third-generation satellite equipped with agile and advanced features like adaptive optics, acousto optical devices and in-orbit focusing using MEMs. It will take place of the IRS series.

### **Cabinet approved Patent Prosecution Highway programme**

Union Cabinet presided by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved the proposal for adoption of Patent Prosecution Highway (PPH) programme by Indian Patent Office (IPO) under Controller General of Patents, Designs & TradeMarks, India (CGPDTM), Union Ministry of Commerce and Industries with patent offices of various other interest countries or regions. It will be launched between Indian Patent Office (IPO) and the Japan Patent Office (JPO) on a pilot basis for a period of three years only. The proposed programme is set of initiatives for offering accelerated patent prosecution procedures. It is meant to reduce time to dispose patent applications; lessen pendency of patent applications; improvise quality of search and examination of patent applications and provide an opportunity for Indian inventors including Start ups, MSMEs to get accelerated examination of their patent applications in Japan.

### **Cabinet passed Recycling of Ships bill, 2019**

The Union Cabinet gave nod to the proposal for enactment of Recycling of Ships bill, 2019 as well as approved the Hong Kong International Convention for safe and environmentally sound recycling of ships. The convention is meant to ascertain that the ships after reaching the end of their operational lives do not pose any threats to human and environment as the ships sent for scrapping may contain environmentally hazardous substances like hydrocarbons, asbestos, ozone depleting substances and others. The bill also advocates framing of international standards and laying down statutory mechanisms to enforce such standards for regulation of recycling of ships. It restricts and prohibits the use of hazardous materials from the ships brought for recycling. However, this is not applied to war ships and non-commercial ships. Further, the ship recycling facilities need to get authorized.

### **The Distribution of 13th Asia Pacific Screen Awards**

The 13th edition of Asia Pacific's highest accolade in film, Asia Pacific Screen Awards were presented in Brisbane, Australia. Films from around 70 countries that best reflected cultural origins and diversity

of Asia Pacific were acknowledged in this event. The names of winners include 'Parasite', directed by South Korea's Bong Joon-Ho (Best Feature Film category); Max Eigenmann in 'Verdict' (Best Performance by an Actress) and Manoj Bajpayee in 'Bhonsle' (Best Performance by an Actor). The First edition of the awards was conducted in 2007, since then UNESCO, FIAPF (International Federation of Film Producers Associations) and Brisbane City Council, Australia present these awards annually.

### **The Latest CRY Report**

The Child Rights and You (CRY) released a report "How Vulnerable are Children in India to crime?" on the analysis of National Crime Records Bureau for 2016-17. Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh topped the list of states for crimes against children. There were more than 19,000 cases in both the states. The highest increase in crimes was observed between the years 2016 and 2017 in Jharkhand. There has been a substantial increase in child labour of around 126%. In 2016 child labor was 204, which increased to 462 in 2017. Besides this, Child Marriage has also increased by 21.17%. The percentage reflects the cases registered under Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (PCMA), 2006. CRY suggests a robust increase in financial investments in child protection to curb the crime. Further, the report stressed on capacity building among officials working in child protection systems.

### **CBDT'S new Web Portal for exchange of information on Income Tax**

Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) inaugurated the Web Portal for Exchange of Information on Income Tax which will aggregate all relevant Automatic Exchange of Information (AEOI) related information under single roof. The portal will lead to convenient access by the public, financial institutions as well as departmental officers at large. It will act as a repository of policy and technical circulars, guidance, notifications issued by the CBDT. It will cater domestic financial institutions, foreign financial institutions and tax authorities' need of obtaining information regarding Indian laws, rules and procedures related to AEOI under Common Reporting Standard (CRS).

### **Secretagogin: Blood Sugar level Regulating Protein**

Researchers of Hyderabad based Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)-Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB) have identified a protein 'Secretagogin' that regulates blood sugar level. The protein plays a vital role in increasing insulin action in obesity-induced diabetes. The discovery will give insight about the processes regulating insulin synthesis, secretion, signalling and maturation in diabetes as per the latest issue of the journal iScience. It is a calcium-binding protein encoded by SCGN gene found in cytoplasm of human cells. SCGN is likely to become a diagnostic marker equipped with potential in diabetes management.

### **The Global Bio-India Summit**

India's first largest biotechnology conference, Global Bio-India Summit took place in New Delhi. The Department of BioTechnology under Ministry of Science and Technology along with BIRAC (Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council) and CII had organized it to give opportunity to the international forum for the exhibition of the bio technological advances in the country. The Minister of S&T, Earth Sciences and Health and Family Welfare used the occasion for the presentation of "Private Investment in Biotechnology" report at the summit. The report stressed on need of establishment of a single window system for approvals in the field of biotechnology and encouragement of industry-academia linkages in order to achieve the 5 trillion USD target by 2025. The sector has a potential of contributing 22% of 12 billion USD of Indian trade by 2025.

### **The prominence of Special Non-Resident Rupee accounts 'SNRR'**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has permitted persons residing outside India to open a non-interest bearing 'Special Non-resident Rupee' (SNRR) accounts for external commercial borrowing (ECB), trade credit and trade (export/ import) Invoicing, in domestic currency. This will popularise cross-border transactions in Indian rupee (INR). Besides this, the RBI, in consultation with government has decided to rationalise certain other provisions for SNRR Account like removing the restriction on tenure of SNRR account (which is currently 7 years). RBI also modified the regulations regarding re-export of unsold rough diamonds from special notified zone of Customs without export declaration form (EDF) formality. Only after getting satisfied with the bona-fides of the transaction, the Banks will allow such import.

### **J&K gained highest road length in country**

Under aegis of Union Ministry of Rural Development, centrally-sponsored scheme Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), Jammu and Kashmir achieved the highest road length in India during the current fiscal year. So far, this important accomplishment covers completion of around 11,400 kilometres of different road projects covering 1,838 habitations against the total sanctioned length of 19,700 kilometres against sanctioned 2,214 habitations. This yojana was implemented in J&K by Public Works (Roads and Buildings) Department of the Union Territory.

### **Floor Tests for Maharashtra CM**

The governor gave the Chief Minister of Maharashtra Devendra Fadnavis time till November 30, 2019 to prove his majority, while the Supreme Court ordered for a floor test to be conducted in the Maharashtra Assembly on November 27, 2019. Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari has been asked to appoint a temporary Speaker immediately. The upcoming trust vote is expected to be a thriller with

both the BJP and the rival Shiv Sena-Nationalist Congress Party (NCP)-Congress alliance claiming a majority. The order of governor ran contradictory to Supreme Court's orders that were passed in the last two decades. The Apex Court in its previous verdict pronounced that the floor tests should follow within 24 to 48 hours of swearing-in to avoid risks of horse trading and corruption. While Fadnavis took oath on 23rd November 2019. This concept of floor test was introduced under Article 164 of the constitution via SC's judgement in 1994 in SR Bommai case.

### **CIC Annual Report tabled in Lok Sabha**

The Central Information Commission tabled its annual report for the year 2018-19 in Lok Sabha that states that in the year 2018-19, around 13.70 lakh applications were received by the Central Public Authorities of the commission which are 11% more than the previous year 2017-18. Among the received applications, the commission has processed only 4.7% and has disposed off around 17,188 second appeals and complaint cases. It is worth knowing that the highest number of applications were rejected by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs i.e. 26.5%. It was followed by the Ministry of Home Affairs that rejected 16.41%.

### **Cabinet approved Industrial Relations Code, 2019**

The Union Cabinet gave nod to the introduction of Industrial Relations Code, 2019, which is the third code under labor reforms. In this new code around forty-four laws are being amalgamated into four codes viz. wage rates, social security, industrial relations and industrial security and labor welfare. The code is meant to simplify and rationalize the Trade Union Act, 1926, Industrial Disputes Act, 1947, Industrial Employment Act, 1946 and permits the companies to hire fixed-term contract workers. Besides this, the code proposes constitution of a two-member tribunal to speed up the disposal of cases.

### **The Poonch Link up Day**

Indian Army celebrated the Poonch Link-up Day on November 23, 2019 as a mark of tribute to the soldiers who sacrificed their lives in Operation Easy to defend Poonch that Pakistan was trying to invade in 1948. Line of Control surrounds the Poonch district on all three sides. In 1947-48 war, the district was divided between India and Pakistan. This war of 1947 was also called the First Kashmir War and it was the first of the four wars fought between India and Pakistan. It is worth knowing here that Pakistan after a few weeks of its independence had introduced the Lashkar tribals with the intention of capturing Kashmir. Then ruler of Kashmir of that time, Maharaja Hari Singh had requested India to help him and as a result India retaliated and won the war.

### **India for Humanity-Jaipur Foot Event**

Indian Embassy and Jaipur Foot USA together organized India for Humanity-Jaipur Foot event at United States Capitol building in commemoration of the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. The event was meant to ensure physical, socio-economic rehabilitation of differently-abled across the globe by helping them regain their mobility and dignity to become self-respecting and productive members of society. MEA collaborated with well known charitable organisation Bhagwan Mahaveer Viklang Sahayata Samiti (BMVSS), which is said to be the parent body of Jaipur Foot. BMVSS with support of government of India fitted total of 5152 limbs via 78 camps in 33 nations worldwide. Union Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) started this event in October 2018 to honour Mahatma Gandhi for his service to humanity.

### **India's first fixed income Exchange Traded Fund**

Union Government announced its plan of introducing the country's first fixed income Exchange Traded Fund (ETF) comprising debt securities of large central public sector enterprises (PSUs) by mid-December 2019. The proposed ETF with a size of a size of Rs 15,000 crore to Rs 20,000 crore will have only AAA-rated papers of the PSU companies. It will be launched to improve liquidity in the corporate bond market, smoothen borrowing plans of the participating state-owned companies and enhance investor base by providing new options to investors to own securities of government-owned PSUs along with facility of overnight liquidity.

### **National Intelligence Grid operations**

Lok Sabha announced that the ambitious National Intelligence Grid (NATGRID) project will kick start by December 31,2020. It is a counter terrorism programme linking databases of core security agencies of India via utilization of technologies like Big Data to study. It will lead to analysis of bulk amounts of data regarding credit card transactions, bank account details, tax details, visa, immigration records and air travel from various intelligence and enforcement agencies. This was proposed for the first time after the Mumbai terror attacks in 2008. In this four phased programme, the first two phases were approved in 2011, while the third and fourth phases required amendments of various laws that led to delay. Unlike NCTC and NIA, the NATGRID will simply act as an instrument of the security agencies.

### **National Institute of Sowa Rigpa**

Cabinet permitted set up of National Institute of Sowa Rigpa (Tibetan system of medicine) at Leh, Ladakh. It will serve as an autonomous National Institute under Union Ministry of AYUSH providing interdisciplinary education and research programmes in Sowa-Rigpa system of traditional medicine in co-ordination with premier national and international Institutes and will facilitate integration of

different systems of medicine. It is expected to fetch a valid and useful synergy between traditional wisdom of Sowa-Rigpa system of medicine and modern science, tools and technology. Yuthog Yonten Gonpo was the father of Sowa Rigpa, who had composed rGyud-bZhi (four tantra) the fundamental text book of this medicine based on indigenous medicine of Tibet enriched with Ayurveda, Chinese and Greek Medicine. Currently, the system is prevalent in Nepal, Bhutan, China, Mongolia, Russia and India (Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Darjeeling , Himachal Pradesh and Ladakh).

### **MLA stripped off Indian Citizenship**

It happened with MLA Chennamaneni Ramesh from Vemulawada in north Telangana. The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has cancelled his Indian Citizenship on the ground of misrepresentation of facts at the time of applying for citizenship in 2008. The son of freedom fighter parents, has been a citizen of Germany since 1993, and applied for Indian citizenship on March 31, 2008 and was granted the same on February 4, 2009. Since then, he has been politically active, starting his political career with the TDP in 2009, he moved to the TRS in 2010 because of Telangana agitation. He won all elections that he had contested. Congress leader from Karimnagar Adi Srinivas objected this grant of citizenship to Ramesh pointing that Ramesh had retained his German citizenship, and had travelled to Germany in the year preceding the date of his application for Indian citizenship, which was in violation of The Citizenship Act, 1955 that advocates that applicant should reside in India for one year immediately before making an application for Indian citizenship. However this clause in the Act was added after 2009.

### **The 2019 Indira Gandhi Peace Prize**

International jury chaired by former President Pranab Mukherjee chose noted naturalist and broadcaster Sir David Attenborough for the 2019 Indira Gandhi Peace Prize (Rs. 25 lakh) for revealing wonders of the natural world to people via BBC. He created commendable awareness about the preservation and protection of biodiversity of the planet for sustainable and harmonious life. He had also advocated for stopping what he has called: ‘a plague on earth’. Prior to this, he has also received accolades from Royal Geographical Society, the Michael Faraday Prize, UNESCO’s Kalinga Prize, the Descartes Prize and Fellowship of the Royal Society, as well as many Emmy and BAFTA awards.

### **Installation of ‘Third Umpire’**

Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) has installed the first of its kind, ‘Third Umpire’ high-end Reverse Transcription Polymerase Chain Reaction (RT-PCR) Machines in India for quick detection of dengue, tuberculosis (TB) and swine flu. With this, Kolkata has become the first City in India to do so. When medical reports and blood tests reveal contradictory results then these machines serve as a ‘third umpire’ to give accurate DNA report on blood tests in order to find the exact cause of illness.

### **Bharatiya Poshan Krishi Kosh**

Government kick started a repository of diverse crops, Bharatiya Poshan Krishi Kosh for better nutritional outcomes across 128 agro-climatic zones. It is meant to reduce malnutrition via a multi-sectoral results-based framework, including agriculture, among women and children across the nation. Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Zubin Irani emphasized on the need for convergence between agriculture and nutrition to solve the problem of malnutrition. She praised the government's commendable effort in addressing the challenges of availability of drinking water and sanitation via toilet construction and menstrual hygiene providing health security to women and children.

### **Book "Savarkar: Echoes from a Forgotten Past"**

The Vice President of India Venkaiah Naidu released a book titled "Savarkar: Echoes from a Forgotten Past, 1883-1924" at an event in New Delhi. Bengaluru based Historian and author Vikram Sampath has penned it and Viking Penguin publishers has published it. It is about the life of freedom fighter and philosopher Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, popularly known as Veer Savarkar. He was the first leader to term the 1857 rebellion as the first war of independence. This fact was mentioned in Savarkar's book 'The History of the War of Indian Independence', which was released in 1909.

### **The report of committee on Companies Act, 2013**

Company Law Committee that was formed by the Ministry of Finance and Corporate Affairs in September 2019 has submitted its report on Companies Act, 2013 to Finance Ministry. This committee was on purpose of decriminalizing the Companies Act, 2013 to provide Ease of Living for Corporate in the country. The committee in this report has recommended amendments to 46 penal provisions associated with the law. The amendments are either to eliminate criminality or to permit rectification through alternate methods or to award punishment in terms of fine. In other words, it has suggested lenient punishments for law abiding corporate. It has also stressed on wider consultations regarding permitting appeals in NCLT against the orders of Regional Directors; reviewing provisions on disqualification of directors; reviewing provisions that debar audit firms. Although India is an agricultural Economy, yet majority of the contribution towards its GDP is from the service sector.

### **Special Winter Grade Fuel for Ladakh**

Indian Oil Corporation introduced special winter grade diesel that will remain unfrozen even at -33 degree Celsius to provide continuous and year-round access to the snow-covered regions. Panipat Refinery produced and certified it as per BIS specification of BS-VI grade. This will lead to continuous road connectivity to the region and will drive government's plan of Rs 50,000 crore investment in the territory in areas of education, power, tourism and solar. Diesel Fuel is prone to waxing below its Cloud Point that refers to the temperature below which the fuel particles begin to cloud together and form solidified waxes.

### **Rejoice National Ayush Awards**

Ayush Minister Shripad Yesso Naik bestowed Rejoice National Ayush Awards to health sector entities for their vital contribution in providing health services via various programmes. The awards were started by promoter of mankind's health services, Rejoice Health Foundation that makes special efforts for care of specially abled-children through the application of AYUSH system. The Foundation is likely to get the government's support for the cause. The award function witnessed presence of Chairman, Parliamentary Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment, Rama Devi as well as 200 delegates, including doctors from AYUSH stream, dignitaries as well as representative of various universities and associations.

### **Know freshness of milk in just 13 minutes!**

IIT Guwahati reported development of a paper-based sensor to make assessment of freshness of milk by simple and instantaneous method in home kitchens. By using a simple filter paper that can detect the presence of metalloprotein Alkaline Phosphatase (ALP) can reveal the freshness and quality of milk. Raw milk entertains this compound in large quantities while pasteurization (heat treatment for partial sterilization) destroys it. Filter paper loaded with anti-ALP elements can capture the presence of ALP in the milk. The paper turns blue-green color if milk carries ALP compounds. Detecting ALP compounds can help in detection of inadequate pasteurization in milk. The method can be used to check the quality of milk at the point of milk collection itself in just 13 minutes. The accuracy of the method is 91% to 100% and so far researchers succeeded in detecting 0.87 units of ALP per milliliter of milk.

### **Rafale review petitions were turned down**

The Supreme Court dismissed all review petitions filed against its December 14, 2018 verdict in which it had denied to order an independent probe to look into the corruption allegations in the central government's Rafale deal saying that it was satisfied with the procurement process and the review petitions lacked merit. The petitioners of review petitions, Prashant Bhushan, Yashwant Sinha and Arun Shourie had filed the review petitions based on certain leaked documents by the media and argued that the government had concealed some material information from the court regarding its Rafale deal with France's Dassault Aviation.

### **ISRO is looking forward to Chandrayaan-3**

The Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) decided to start work on next moon mission 'Chandrayaan-3' by November 2020. ISRO has constituted various committees for Chandrayaan-3 that have conducted several high-level meetings since October 2019. ISRO is planning to employ Chandrayaan-2's orbiter which will remain functional for the upcoming seven years along with a new

lander and rover in Chandrayaan-3 mission. The committees have carefully planned the place of landing, correct navigation, sensors and engineering etc. for this third mission. ISRO is trying its best to set precise navigations so that spacecraft will take less time to land on the Moon. In the latest development, Chandrayaan-2's Orbiter has sent an image of the Moon having a 3D view of the crater that looks like a lava tube captured by the terrain mapping camera of Chandrayaan-2 from a distance of 100 km.

### **Sabarimala case now under the lens of 7 judge bench**

As restrictions on women in religious places is not limited to Sabarimala alone and is prevalent in other religions as well, so the Supreme Court of India has turned the review petitions of this case towards a larger seven judge bench. This bench will give verdict regarding Sabarimala case, entry of women in mosques and practice of female genital mutilation in the Dawoodi Bohra community. In September 2018, the court lifted the ban that prevented women and girls in the age group of 10 and 50 from entering the famous Ayyappa shrine in Kerala. It had condemned this centuries-old Hindu religious practice as illegal and unconstitutional.

### **Karnataka MLA Disqualification case**

The Apex Court of India upheld the disqualification of the MLAs by the speaker. Further the Court maintained the decision of the speaker that the MLAs cannot contest in further elections till the end of the tenure of the 15th Karnataka Assembly which includes the by polls to be held in December, 2019. Flashback reveals that in 2018, in the assembly elections of the 224 seats, BJP had won 104, INC won 80 and JD won 37. The Janata Dal-Indian National Congress coalition formed the government after 2018 elections. Then in July 2019, after BJP swept the parliamentary elections (coalition hardly won only 2 seats), 17 MLAs of the coalition submitted resignations to the speaker using the constitutional power under Article 190. Then these MLAs were disqualified by the speaker to contest elections based on anti-defection law. In July 2019 a petition was filed by MLAs challenging their disqualification by the then speaker of the Karnataka Assembly.

### **New inclusions in Bhavantar Bharpayee Yojna**

In Bhavantar Bharpayee Yojna review meeting that was chaired by Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar more crops were included under this scheme. Launched in January 2018, Bhavantar Bharpayee Yojna provides the vegetable growing farmers compensation for selling their crop at a price lower than that fixed by the government. The beneficiaries of the scheme registered on 'Meri Fasal Mera Byora (MFMB)' portal, if get a price lower than the price fixed by the government for their crop on its sale in the mandis, the difference is paid as incentive to the farmers directly into their bank

accounts. Initially it was for sale of potato, onion, tomato and cauliflower. Now carrots, peas, kinnow, guava, capsicum and brinjal have also been included in the list.

### **“IndAIR”: India’s First air pollution web repository**

National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI) of Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) launched India’s first interactive online repository called IndAIR or ‘Indian Air quality Studies Interactive Repository’ that documents air quality studies undertaken in the past 60 years. Equipped with 1,215 research papers, 170 reports and case studies, more than 100 cases and 2000 laws dating back to the year 1905, IndAIR will provide information regarding innovative research & analysis in the field of air pollution in India. NEERI has been created and funded by the Government of India.

### **Public Service Broadcasting Day**

12th November 2019 was celebrated as Public Service Broadcasting Day to commemorate the first and the last visit of Mahatma Gandhi, to the studio of All India Radio, Delhi in 1947. He used the medium to address the displaced people who had temporarily settled at Kurukshetra in Haryana after partition. Conceptualised by Suhas Borker, Convenor, Jan Prasar, this day was instituted in the year 2000. Prasar Bharati carries out the public service broadcasting, deepens democratic traditions and provides opportunities to diverse communities and cultures.

### **President’s rule Vs Shiv Sena**

On 13th November 2019 Shiv Sena of Maharashtra assembly filed a plea in the Apex Court challenging Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari's decision to deny their demand for 72 hours to submit letters of support and form the government claiming that the Shiv Sena had "in-principle support" from the NCP and the Congress. The governor rejects the allegation saying that he closed the door for the state assembly on the pretext of their failure in utilizing their allotted time window to submit list of majority MLAs. The governor had given BJP, the single largest party with 105 seats 48 hours to prove majority with a possible alliance followed by the Shiv Sena (56 seats, allotted time 24 hours), the NCP (54 seats, allotted time 24 hours), while Congress with the least number of seats i.e. 44 was out of this question. In the 288-member House, 145 seats are required for claiming majority. BJP failed to establish the requisite majority and Shiv Sena although left no stone unturned yet failed to form alliance. As no single party or coalition party came forward to form the government, the stalemate led to the implementation of President’s rule on 12th November 2019 for upcoming 6 months under Article 356(1). Further Shiv Sena is likely to challenge the imposition of

President's Rule. Prior to this, amid the political turmoil, the 18th CM of Maharashtra, Devendra Fadnavis also resigned on November 8, 2019 from his duty as his tenure that started on October 31, 2014 had come to an end. He served as a CM for 5 years and 1 week.

### **Sambhar Salt Water Lake became death bed of migratory birds**

In November 2019, thousands of migratory birds of 15 species including Pied Avocet, Northern Shoveller, Kentish Plover, Brahminy Duck and Tufted Duck were found dead near Sambhar lake in Rajasthan. According to the researchers of National Institute of Higher Security Animal Diseases, Bhopal, the birds have died at different times which implies that there could be poisoning or an avian disease. Every year more than a lakh of migratory birds visit the largest inland saltwater lake in India, Sambhar Lake in Jaipur, Rajasthan. However, the recent development activities in the region, especially extension of salt pan operations have reduced the number of migratory birds coming to the lake. The probe is still in process to learn the precise reason behind the massive death incidents.

### **National Education Day**

Like every year, the country celebrated National Education Day on 11th November to commemorate the birth anniversary of Maulana Abdul Azad, the first Education Minister of India. He was the founder of University Grants Commission (UGC), Lalit Kala Academy, Sangeet Natak Academy and Sahitya Academy. In 1912, he started a weekly Urdu newspaper called the "Al-Hilal". Establishments of the premier institutes of the country like IITs, IISc, etc. are also his credentials. He was an independence activist, one of the senior leaders of the Indian National Congress and proud recipient of Bharat Ratna. This day was celebrated for the first time in year 2008 to increase the literacy rate of the country.

### **Spider was given cricketer's name**

A junior researcher of Gujarat Ecological Education & Research (GEER) Foundation, Dhruv Prajapati, recently discovered two new species of spiders of Indo Marengo genus and Marengo genus of Asian jumping spiders. He has named the Marengo genus species spider as Marengo sachintendulkar after Indian cricketer Sachin Tendulkar and other as Indomarengo Chavarapatera after Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara who conducted campaigns for creating awareness about education in Kerala. Both of the species of spiders are flat-bodied and have been included in World Spider Catalogue also. The researcher had documented around 78 unique species of spiders found on the varsity's campus alone.

### **The upcoming 2G Ethanol Plant of Panipat**

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (EFoCC) has permitted the Indian Oil Corporation to establish a new 2G Ethanol plant at Panipat worth Rs 766 crore. The Ethanol that will

be produced in the plant will be exclusively used for transportation fuels and will double farmers income. It is worth knowing here that India began the use of Ethanol as a fuel (E5) in 2003 having combination of 5% Ethanol and 95% diesel. In 2006, India started E10 biofuel having 10% Ethanol and 90% Diesel. Indian Government has set a target of 22.5% production of Ethanol. In November 2019 firms like IOCL, HPCL and BPCL announced investment of 586 million USD to achieve this target. Future will witness establishment of around 7 ethanol producing units across the country. India is planning to launch E15 while globe is witnessing E100 stage. This is just the beginning and there is a long-long way to go for India.

### **Demise of the 10th CEC, TN Seshan**

Former Chief Election Commissioner TN Seshan died of heart attack on 10th November 2019. The 1955 batch retired IAS officer of Tamil Nadu cadre served as Chief Election Commissioner between 1990 and 1996. He served around 18 cabinet secretaries and had won Asia's Nobel Prize or Ramon Magsaysay Award for his services in 1986. Several electoral reforms viz. Introduction of Election Commission's constitutional powers that keep the politicians under check; Appointment of two additional Election Commissioners; Declaration of bribing voters, distributing alcohol during elections, approaching voters to appeal on caste or community basis, using official machinery for campaigning, using worship places for campaigning, using loudspeakers and high-volume music as offensive acts; Implementation of strict Code of Conduct including capping of election expenditure of the candidate and issuance of voter IDs are his credentials.

### **The Def Connect event**

Ministry of Defence (MoD) organized the "Def Connect" event on November 11, 2019 to display the achievements of iDEX-Innovations for Defence Excellence. On this occasion, iDEX portal and the DISC-Defense India Startup Challenge has been launched in which over 350 startups have participated. iDEX initiative is meant to bring together various stakeholders like MoD selected startups, nodal agencies of Indian Navy and Indian Air Force, Industrial Associations, DRDO, Defense PSUs, etc. and to create an ecosystem that will encourage technology development in the Defense sector. It is a precursor to the upcoming DefExpo 2020 that will take place in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh in 2020.

### **The most awaited Ayodhya Verdict**

On 9th November 2019, the Supreme Court of India solved 134 year old Ayodhya Ram Janma Bhoomi-Babri Masjid land dispute case. Amid tight security arrangements and imposition of Section

144 in UP, Delhi and other states, 5 judge bench of justice Ashok Bhushan, justice S A Bobde, justice D Y Chandrachud and justice S Abdul Nazeer headed by the Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi pronounced the verdict. The Apex Court ordered for the construction of Ram Temple in the disputed 5-acre land as well as directed the center to allot 5-acre land to the Sunni Waqf Board for the construction of a mosque in Ayodhya. In this case the Hindu side established their arguments that they possessed the outer courtyard while the Muslim side failed to prove the possession. Flashback says, it was in 1885 Mahanth Raghobar Das was the first man to file the first suit for construction of Ram Temple in Ayodhya. In 1949 Idols of Lord Ram were found inside Babri Masjid and in 1992 Babri Masjid was demolished by the right-wing activists. In 2010, the Allahabad High Court divided the disputed land among three litigants namely Nirmohi Akhara, Sunni Waqf Board and Ram Lalla.

### **Cheers for Deepak Chahar**

On 10th November 2019, India defeated Bangladesh in third T20 match by 30 runs and won the series with 2-1 at the VCA Stadium in Nagpur. India batted first and India scored 174 runs with the loss of 5 wickets in stipulated 20 overs. Chasing the target, Bangladesh was all out for 144 in 19.2 overs. This was a red letter day for Pacer Deepak Chahar who took 6 wickets for just 7 runs, including a hat-trick, from 3.2 overs and achieved the best ever figures in the history of T20 internationals. With this, the 27-year-old Chahar became the first Indian bowler to claim hat-trick in the shortest format of the game surpassing the previous record held by Sri Lanka's Ajantha Mendis who had taken 6 wickets giving just 8 runs against Zimbabwe in 2012.

### **The Catastrophe of Cyclone 'Bulbul'**

4 lakh 65 thousand people have got affected by the Cyclone 'Bulbul' in nine coastal districts of Odisha and West Bengal. The cyclone claimed ten lives and damaged more than 60 thousands houses as well as standing crop. The cyclone without any distinction of boundaries claimed 8 lives in Bangladesh as well according to the Disaster Management Ministry in Dhaka. The cyclone damaged thatched houses and disrupted electric power supply. The Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority informed that river transport services will be resumed pretty soon on all routes across Bangladesh.

### **NSIF awards**

Indian IT industry body's social arm, and Bangalore based software firm Mphasis announced the winners of the 11th edition of NASSCOM Social Innovation Forum (NSIF) award. Seven organisations viz. Meraki Foundation (Education category, upskilling low income parents towards holistic learning of their wards so as to act early to unleash a child's potential); Inali Foundation

(Accessibility for developing an ‘affordable’ myoelectric prosthetic arm) ; Pune-based startup, PadCare Labs Pvt. Ltd.( Healthcare for developing ‘Sanicare’, a smokeless sanitary napkin disposal system); MHS City Lab (developed ‘NEEV’ a digital tool for affordable low-income housing); Watsan Envirotech Pvt. Ltd. (Environment award) ; Himachal Pradesh-based tourism start-up, NotOnMap (creating livelihood for culturally hidden communities) and Bombay Bijlee (providing households platform to buy necessary home appliance on “ Pay As You Go” model). The NSIF is an ecosystem of more than 2,200 social innovations that has awarded over 90 social innovation projects, and has given more than Rs.1.5 crore in catalytic grants.

### **NMCG organized ‘Ganga Utsav’ in New Delhi**

On 4th November 2019 i.e. 11th anniversary of Ganga being declared as national river (4th November 2008), the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) in coordination with Union Jal Shakti Ministry organized the ‘Ganga Utsav’ in Major Dhyanchand stadium in New Delhi. Many students participated in the event and learned methods to save the river and got an opportunity to interact with Director-General of NMCG Rajiv Ranjan Mishra regarding conservation of river waters. ‘Ganga Utsav’ is meant to create awareness and gather public participation in efforts to clean River Ganga and its tributaries.

### **Global Climate Emergency**

As per latest publication of journal BioScience’s “World Scientists” report, 11,258 scientists in 153 countries signed the Global Climate Emergency. Among them 69 are from India. Based on the scientific analysis of over 40 years of publicly available data, the scientists presented a list of measures called “Vital Signs” that represent climate change trends viz. extreme weather events, ocean heat content, ocean acidity, etc. and methods to mitigate the threat. Replacing fossil fuels; Restoring and protecting ecosystems; Cutting pollutants like methane and soot; Eating less meat; Converting the economy to carbon-free and Stabilizing population growth were the key objectives of the report.

### **The Freedom on Net 2019 report**

International watchdog, the Freedom House released Freedom of Net report 2019 titled “The Crisis of Social Media” stating an overall decline in global internet freedom status between July 2018 and May 2019. Iceland topped this ranking with an overall score of 95. It emerged as the world’s best protector of internet freedom as it showed no civil or criminal cases registered against the users for online expression. On the other hand, with an overall score of 10, China was adjudged as the worst abuser of

internet freedom for the fourth consecutive year and was tagged “not free”. India acquired “partly free” status with an overall score of 55. Pakistan, with a score of 26, for the ninth consecutive year exhibited “not free” status. Malaysia and Armenia showed positive trends and Ethiopia recorded the highest improvement in terms of internet freedom, while USA had an overall score of 77.

### **The Largest Astrophysics Assembly**

On 6th November 2019, during the first day of the fifth edition of largest science festival in the world, ‘India International Science Festival (IISF) 2019’, Kolkata students created Guinness World Records for largest astrophysics lesson (45 minutes) and assembly of spectroscopes at Kolkata, West Bengal. More than 1,598 students participated in this session, which was dedicated to Meghnad Saha and Chandrasekhara Venkata Raman. The Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics that organized this event received a memento for the same. Spectroscopes are used by Astronomers to learn details about temperature, chemical composition, etc. of celestial objects which are located hundreds or millions of light years away from the Earth. A small personal model of advanced spectroscopes can be made by using a cardboard box with a very narrow window to channel light into spectroscope. Then by using a piece of a Compact Disc that light can be split by a process called diffraction.

### **BIMSTEC Ports Conclave**

The Ministry of shipping hosted the first ever two day BIMSTEC Ports’ Conclave at Visakhapatnam on 7th November 2019. The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multisectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) is an international organization that includes South East Asian and South Asian countries. The ongoing conclave is paving way for India’s maritime security measures and its interests in the Indo-Pacific region. Emergent roles of ports in the global supply chain; Safe and Secure ports; Port Services-Delivering Value; Port led Industrial Development and Tourism Development and Green Port Operations are the areas of focus of this conclave.

### **The climbing unemployment**

Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) released data on existing unemployment in India. It informed that India’s unemployment rate in October 2019 climbed to a 3 year high of 8.5% which is the highest recorded level since August 2016, and up from 7.2% in September 2019. In October 2019, urban unemployment rate stood at 8.9%, while rural unemployment reached 8.3%. Tripura & Haryana states suffered the highest unemployment levels of over 20% while Tamil Nadu recorded lowest unemployment with 1.1%. Seeing the apparent unemployment, Punjab launched ‘job helpline’ 76260-

76260 for the unemployed youth of the state under 'Ghar Ghar Rozgar' programme and became the first state in the country to do so. For this a 110-seat call center of Punjab Job Helpline has also been created for the data to be prepared.

### **Rising Himachal Global Investors' Meet 2019**

On 7th November 2019, the state government of Himachal Pradesh started a two day flagship business event called Rising Himachal Global Investors' Meet 2019. Diplomats, leaders from senior policy makers, corporate sector development agencies and investors from all over the world are participating in this event. Investment opportunities and policy & regulatory environment in agri-business and post-harvest technology; housing and urban development; manufacturing and pharmaceuticals ; civil aviation, hydro and renewable energy ; wellness, tourism and hospitality ; healthcare and AYUSH; IT-ITeS and electronics as well as education and skill development are areas of focus of this event.

### **Publication of 'Modern English Poetry'**

In November 2019, Sahitya Akademi published a new anthology called 'Modern English Poetry'. The anthology documents the contemporary poetry scene in India and the broader Indian diasporas. Edited by renowned poet, translator, and editor Sudeep Sen, it contains pieces by 70 young poets who are in their 40s or less. It is similar to previously published Harper Collins Book of English Poetry (2012) which was edited by Sen. Both these books documented the last 70 years of Indian English Poetry with the representation of 150 of the best present day poets. It is worth knowing that Indian poets began to write poetry in English in 1820 and year 2020 will mark the second centenary of Indian English poetry.

### **Aditya Mishra: The New Chairman of LPAI**

On 4th November 2019, 1989 batch IPS officer of Uttar Pradesh cadre Aditya Mishra has been appointed as the Chairman of Land Ports Authority of India (LPAI) for a period of five years. The Appointments Committee of Cabinet (ACC) chaired by PM Narendra Modi has approved this appointment on the recommendations of a search-cum-selection panel. Aditya Mishra is currently serving as ADG, CBCID, Uttar Pradesh Police. LPAI is a statutory body established by Land Ports Authority of India Act, 2010 on 1 March 2012 that develops, sanitises, upgrades, maintains and manages facilities for cross-border movement of passengers as well as goods at designated points along India's international borders.

## **Chennai-Kanyakumari industrial corridor**

On 4th November 2019, Asian Development Bank (ADB) sanctioned a \$451 million (Rs 3,200 crore) loan to strengthen power connectivity between the southern and northern parts of the Chennai–Kanyakumari Industrial Corridor (CKIC) in Tamil Nadu, that encompasses 32 districts of 23 state and 70 % of the state population. The project will get completed by the end of 2024. For this, the state government will provide \$202.5 million out of the total cost of the project \$653.5 million.

## **The Beginning of eCAPA 2019**

4th November 2019 witnessed inauguration of India's first-ever Arts Exposition for talents with intellectual challenges called 'eCAPA 2019 – Art from the Heart' in New Delhi. It is a unique nationwide platform cum social venture for artists struggling with Down Syndrome, Autism, Mental Retardation, Seizure Disorder and Dyslexia. This exposition will continue till 14 November 2019 at STIR Gallery, Chattarpur Farms in which the divyang artists will be presenting their varied skills in areas such as doodles, drawings, paintings, dance and music and will get an opportunity to meet mentors and eminent masters of different crafts.

## **The Red Atlas Action Plan Map**

On 4th November 2019, Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu inaugurated the 'Red Atlas Action Plan Map' atlas and the 'Coastal Flood Warning System App (CFLOWS-Chennai)' for flood mitigation in Chennai, Tamil Nadu. Prepared by the Union Ministry of Earth Sciences, both the atlas and the app are about flood mitigation, preparedness, operations and management aspects. The first of its kind ready reckoner map also presents a manual on corporation wards that are expected to be affected due to flooding, and the areas that may need evacuation in Chennai by taking into account all historical datasets. And the CFLOWS is an integrated system that involves coupling models of regional weather forecasts, storm surges and captures about 796 flood scenarios. Pretty soon such initiatives to tackle urban flooding are likely to be replicated in other Indian cities including Mumbai, Maharashtra.

## **India swam away from RCEP agreement**

In the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) summit that took place on 4th November 2019 in Bangkok, India has decided not to join the RCEP deal on pretext of failure of negotiations regarding New Delhi's outstanding issues and concerns. Finding the RCEP deal lacking in reflection of the complete basic spirit and the agreed guiding principles and saying that India stands for greater regional integration as well as for more free trade and adherence to a rule-based

international order, Prime Minister Modi took this decision in the interest of the nation. Later, the Secretary (East) in the Ministry of External Affairs, Vijay Thakur Singh also backed the PM's decision by saying that India's core issues would not be compromised and the RCEP agreement with China and ASEAN countries fails to reflect its original intent, and the outcome is not balanced.

### **The upcoming Aadi Mahotsav**

16th November 2019 will kick start National Tribal festival, Aadi Mahotsav in New Delhi . It will be a celebration of the spirit of tribal culture, craft, cuisine and commerce. Over one thousand tribal artisans from 27 states will participate in this event to feature exhibition-cum-sale of tribal handicrafts, art, paintings, fabric, jewellery and much more via two hundred stalls.

### **1st November : State Formation Day of seven states**

Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala, Chattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana and Madhya Pradesh celebrated their formation day on November 1, 2019. Kerala, Madhya Pradesh and Tamil Nadu were formed on November 1, 1956. Kerala is a combination of three independent provinces namely Malabar, Travancore and Cochin and it got its name from its first ruler Keralian Thamboran. MP is the second largest state of India in terms of area and is the sixth largest populous state. Tamil Nadu was formed on the basis of the Linguistic Reorganization of States in 1956. But Odisha was the first state to be formed on linguistic basis. A movement led by the Akali Dal in 1950s resulted in the formation of Punjabi-majority Punjab state, Union Territory of Chandigarh and Haryanvi-Hindi majority Haryana state. Haryana was carved out of Punjab in 1966 and it led the Green Revolution movement in terms of crop output. The state of Chattisgarh, which is currently the 10th largest state in India was carved out of Madhya Pradesh on November 1, 2000.

### **OCI will be eligible for NPS**

Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) permitted the Overseas Citizens of India (OCI) to enroll in the National Pension System (NPS) till age of 65 years at par with Non Resident Indians (NRIs) to promote and develop NPS and increase pension coverage in the country. NPS subscriber can contribute regularly in a pension account during his/her working life, withdraw a part of corpus in a lump sum and use remaining corpus to buy an annuity to ensure a regular income after retirement. In Union Budget 2019, the tax exemption limit under section 10(12A) of the IT Act, for lump sum withdrawal on exit/maturity from NPS was raised from 40% to 60%. The remaining 40% of corpus is already tax-exempt as it is mandatorily used for annuity buying.

### **Beginning of 'Aarambh'**

Indian government introduced the first ever foundation civil service course 'Aarambh' for civil servants at the Statue of Unity, Kevadia, Gujarat. Around 500 newly recruited bureaucrats will attend the six-day training. Home Minister Amit Shah and other top functionaries along with the World Bank president David Malpass graced the launch ceremony with their presence. In addition to this, "Nurture the Future" program was also launched under which the civil servants will be divided into teams to visit villages in Kevadia to provide career and professional guidance.

### **Conclusion of Vigilance Awareness Week**

Vigilance Awareness Week that started from 28th October, 2019 ended on 2nd November, 2019. The theme of this week was 'Integrity-a way of life' to fight against corruption. Under this, the officers and staff of offices were motivated and sensitized to remain vigilant and transparent in their work via campaign, activities like public interaction for redressal of grievances, debates among students, surprise inspections, poster competitions, essay writing, quiz, painting competitions. In addition to these, workshops for employees and other stakeholders on preventive vigilance measures were also conducted; human chains in villages and towns were organized; banners and posters were displayed in key locations at places with public interface (Railway station, petrol pumps, etc.) as well as awareness programs in Gram Sabhas and Gram Panchayats were also carried out.

### **Two operational commands for ITBP**

Recently government gave nod to establishment of two operational commands at Chandigarh and Guwahati for Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) that guards Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China. Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved a full cadre review for the ITBP for creation of more than 3,000 new posts. The new commands will be in existence by 2020 and will help in effective domination and control of LAC that is marred by harsh weather and high-altitude locations. This cadre review exercise of ITBP has been conducted after 18 years, as the last review was carried out in 2001.

### **Indian Railway launched one touch ATVM**

The Indian Railways introduced the "one touch Automatic Ticket Vending Machines (ATVM)" at 42 suburban stations in recent past. It aimed at saving time of the passengers. Under this system a passenger can obtain ticket in two steps which was earlier possible in 6 steps. This machine also provides platform tickets. Under Linux software, the machine operates on a smart card that when placed on a slot asks the user to select the route and destination and then machine confirms the details

and ticket is printed. The menu options are available in three languages and after issuance of the ticket, money is deducted from the card.

### **'Tamanna' for Class 9, 10 students**

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) have recently introduced an online aptitude test dubbed as 'Tamanna' (Try And Measure Aptitude And Natural Abilities) to assist students in making the right career choices. Tamanna will provide information about the weaknesses and strengths of students which will further help them in choosing apt subjects in Class 11 and 12. It should be noted that this test should be taken voluntarily by interested students and must not be used to impose any subject, courses of study and/or vocations etc. on students. According to CBSE circular, the registration process for the same will begin from 29 January 2020 on CBSE's official website – [cbse.nic.in](http://cbse.nic.in). Registered students will be able to take this test on any working day, by using school's log-in id.

### **The New Lieutenant Governors of the newly made UTs**

Radha Krishna Mathur and Girish Chandra Murmu have been appointed as the first Lieutenant Governors of the new Union Territories of Ladakh and J&K respectively. Chief Justice of Jammu and Kashmir High Court Gita Mittal administered their oaths. Retired 1977 batch IAS officer of Tripura cadre, Mathur had earlier served in capacities of Chief Information Commissioner(CIC) of India, Union Defence Secretary, Union Defence Production Secretary, Union Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) Secretary and Chief Secretary of Tripura. Girish Chandra Murmu is a 1985 batch IAS officer of Gujarat cadre and has served as principal secretary to Narendra Modi during his tenure as Chief Minister of Gujarat. Murmu has now presided over the last Governor of Jammu and Kashmir (position now abolished), Satya Pal Malik who has now moved to Goa for serving the remainder of his tenure as the governor.

### **The first ever Indian Brain Atlas**

According to the latest publication of a peer-reviewed journal, Neurology India, scientists of International Institute of Information Technology (IIIT-H), Hyderabad, have created the first-ever Indian Brain Atlas 'IBA 100' as a standard for neuroscience studies, diagnosis and treatment for Indian-specific population. Further, they are planning to prepare atlases for different age groups viz. 20-30, 30-40, 40-50 and 50-60, to study age related effects on brain anatomy. The earliest known brain atlas, 'Talairach and Tournoux atlas', was created manually by drawing post-mortem brain sections of a 60-year-old French woman. In 1993, Montreal Neurological Institute (MNI) and International

Consortium for Brain Mapping (ICBM) prepared the first digital human brain atlas. Recently, MNI and ICBM released other brain atlases using Caucasian (European origin) brains. Recent research suggests differences in MRI scans of Indian and Caucasian brains as Indian brains are smaller in comparison to the latter. Therefore Caucasian MRI scans if used as standard scans can lead to misdiagnosis for Indian population and it eventually led to the necessity of 'IBA 100'.

### **Institute of Himalayan Environment and Development**

On 1st November 2019, Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Prakash Javadekar gave nod to the proposal of New Regional Centre of the GB Pant Institute of Himalayan Environment and Development at Ladakh. The proposed institute will promote alternative and innovative livelihoods for climate change vulnerable cold-desert communities; strengthen and devise solutions and approaches for addressing water scarcity; facilitate conservation of important cold desert habitats and biodiversity and foster climate smart communities in the Himalayan landscape

### **Bamboo Tech Parks of J&K and Ladakh**

In November 2019, Ministry of Development of North Eastern Council (NEC) announced the establishment of new Bamboo Technology parks in Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh Union Territories. The nodal agency, Cane and Bamboo Technology Centre (CBTC) under the Ministry of NEC will implement this project. The project will replicate the North Eastern Region's existing model of bamboo cultivation, harvesting and utilization in Jammu, Leh and Srinagar regions. The model will be in agreement with the National Bamboo Mission.

### **Leeladhar Jagoori received Vyas Samman 2018**

Noted Hindi poet Leeladhar Jagoori received the 28th Vyas Samman for the year 2018 for his poetry collection 'Jitne Log Utne Prem', at a function held in New Delhi on 31st October 2019. Renowned author and scholar Govind Mishra presented this prestigious award to him. This poetry collection is his 12th anthology of poetry which presents a new world of experience, ever-changing sounds of experiments and progress. He was well applauded for his language and narrative. Vyas Samman was instituted in 1991 to acknowledge outstanding contributions to Hindi literature. It is sponsored by K K Birla Foundation and consists of a prize money of Rs. 4 lakh along with a citation and plaque.

### **The 14th National Health Profile**

On October 30, 2019, Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare, Dr. Harsh Vardhan released the 14th National Health Profile (NHP) 2019. Prepared by the Central Bureau of Health Intelligence (CBHI), the report speaks about the needs and issues of the population via the Socio-Economic

Indicators like Education, Employment, Housing, Amenities, sanitation and drinking water, Demographic indicator like Population and vital statistics as well as Health Status Indicators like Prevalence of communicable and non-communicable diseases. It reports that Life Expectancy in India has increased from 49.7 years in 1970-75 to 68.7 years in 2012-16. Delhi has the highest population Density i.e.11,320 people per square km and Arunachal Pradesh has the lowest population Density of 17 people per square km among other statistics.

### **NPCIL system had malware infection**

In October 2019, Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) isolated the malware which was reported by Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) on 4 September 2019 in state-run Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL) system at Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant (KKNPP), Tamil Nadu. Although malware was present yet it did not affect the plant system. According to the DAE specialists' investigation, the infected PC was used for administrative purposes. Kudankulam is one of the leading operational nuclear plants of India.

### **Nagaland introduced Ex-gratia Scheme for Students**

The state government of Nagaland introduced an ex-gratia scheme for students studying outside Nagaland, called 'Nagaland Government Ex-gratia Scheme for Students Studying outside Nagaland' (NGESSO) on October 31, 2019. In this scheme the state government will provide a financial assistance of Rs.5 lakhs as one-time payment to parents/families of students in case of unfortunate death of any student pursuing secular, technical, professional, diploma as well as theology courses outside the state. The scheme is meant for Naga students belonging to any recognized scheduled tribes (ST) and indigenous inhabitants of state. And the nominee can claim ex-gratia amount within a period of 2 months after the death of the students by presenting the required documents.



### **UNDP launched Accelerator Lab in New Delhi**

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in collaboration with NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) has introduced the India chapter of its new initiative, Accelerator Lab in New Delhi to address issues like air pollution, sustainable water management and client-resilient livelihoods. This Indian lab will be among 60 global ones that will find, test and try to scale up innovative solutions helpful in fighting both climate change as well as social inequity.

### **The Fragmented Bashir regime**

Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok led government of Sudan ordered absolute dissolution of the party of ousted President Omar al-Bashir and confiscation of all its properties in welfare of public via issuing a law titled "Dismantling of the regime of 30th June 1989". Bashir and his Islamist National Congress Party had reigned Sudan since June 30, 1989 before a nationwide protest movement that spelled his exile earlier this year. The step was taken in response to rally of thousands of Sudanese last month in various cities, urging the new authorities to dissolve the former ruling party.

### **International Conference on "Landslides Risk Reduction and Resilience"**

On 29th November 2019, Minister of State for Home Affairs, G Kishan Reddy performed the inaugural ceremony of 1st International Conference on "Landslides Risk Reduction and Resilience" in New Delhi for developing technology to address disasters like landslides and develop infrastructure to quickly respond to minimise the damage. The landslides often cause big havoc on communities, live stock, environment leading to great loss of lives. The conference focussed on finding long term solutions to natural disasters.

### **Global Exhibition on Services-2019**

Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry in association with Services Export Promotion Council (SEPC) and Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) inaugurated the 5th edition of the annual Global Exhibition on Services (GES) 2019 in Bengaluru, Karnataka to promote greater exchange of trade in

services between India and industry and governments from across the globe. India tried its best to tap the potential for services exports and increase FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) inflow. More than 400 exhibitors and over 3000 delegates including 400 overseas delegates from 74 countries participated in this event. Uttar Pradesh acted as the partnering state to promote the tourism sector.

### **America approved Hong Kong pro-democracy bill**

On 27th November 2019, US President Donald Trump signed Hong Kong pro-democracy bill. As per the bill, the President of America will consider annually the preferred business status given to Hong Kong and if the freedom in Hong Kong is found crushed, then the prestigious status from the US will be withdrawn. Along with this, the US also gave nod to another bill that bans the export of crowd control devices like tear gas, pepper spray, rubber bullets etc. to Hong Kong police supporting protesters in Hong Kong.

### **A new light on evolution of snakes**

According to the latest publication in the journal Science Advances, a 95-million-year-old skull fossil of an ancient snake with rear limbs, *Najash rionegrina* was discovered in Rio Negro Province of Argentina that adds a new insight into the evolution of snakes specifically in terms of skull for ingesting large preys. *Najash* was a terrestrial snake living in a desert. A long standing hypothesis is that the most primitive living snake, *Scolecophidia* (small, worm-like, small-mouthed burrowing) evolved from a blind, burrowing lizard ancestor and the rod-like bone located behind the eye of modern snakes called the jugal was thought to be the equivalent of the postorbital bone of their lizard ancestors. The idea followed that the jugal was lost through snake evolution. However, the fossil of *Najash* with sharp teeth, some of the mobile skull joints as well as with the bone below the orbit resembling shape, position and connections as the L-shaped jugal of more typical lizards, demonstrates that it is the postorbital bone that has been lost and not the jugal.

### **Malaysia laments over Sumatran Rhinos**

End of November spelled the end of the last surviving Sumatran Rhino 'Iman' in Borneo Rhino Sanctuary of Malaysia. Iman, which was the smallest of the five extinct rhino species in the world was captured in 2014 from Danum Valley in Malaysia and now it died of cancer. With this, Sumatran rhino have become extinct in Malaysia. However, Indonesia, still accommodates 80 Sumatran Rhinos. Black Rhinos, White Rhinos, Greater one-horned Rhinos and Javan Rhinos are the other extinct species of rhino.

### **ETVAX: Potential Diarrhea vaccine**

Researchers of University of Gothenburg of Sweden along with Scandinavian Biopharma, Stockholm came in news for developing potential Diarrhea vaccine, 'ETVAX' which seems to be safe and effective in an early-stage clinical trial of the disease. The publication in Science journal, The Lancet reveals that ETVAX has inactivated E. coli bacteria expressing high levels of protective antigens as well as ETEC-based B subunit protein LCTBA. The vaccine will reduce diarrhea deaths among children with age group half year (6 months) to 5 years of age.

### **NDv2: World's largest GPU-accelerated cloud-based supercomputer**

American technology company, NVIDIA unveiled the World's Largest GPU-accelerated cloud-based supercomputer named 'NDv2' on an open, flexible, enterprise-grade cloud computing platform, Microsoft Azure. NDv2 will handle Artificial intelligence (AI) and its High Performance Computing (HPC) application. It will permit customers for the first time to rent a whole AI supercomputer on demand from their desk, and match the competencies of large-scale. It is economic in comparison to traditional CPU based computing and employs 800 NVIDIA V100 Tensor Core Graphics Processing Units (GPUs) interconnected on a single Mellanox InfiniBand backend network for its operation.

### **Microsoft launched K-12 Education Transformation Framework**

Software giant Microsoft introduced its "K-12 Education Transformation Framework" to facilitate comprehensive digital transformation of schools across India. Based on four pillars viz. leadership and policy, modern teaching and learning, intelligent environments and technology blueprint, it is meant to provide education leaders, government decision makers, teachers and most importantly learners, tools to achieve ambitious change that many schools seek and thoughtfully integrate technology in powerful and productive ways. This framework model is currently functioning in more than 50 countries to help plan their learning strategies.

### **The Earth's Most Uninhabitable Place**

According to the latest publication of journal, 'Nature Ecology and Evolution', researchers discovered an aquatic environment on Earth with complete absence of any form of life. The hot, saline, hyperacid ponds of Dallol Geothermal Field in Ethiopia, East Africa, lack all forms of microbial life. These magnesium-rich brine lakes will lead to a better comprehension of limits of habitability. It is said to be a terrestrial analogue of early Mars that extends over a volcanic crater full of salt, constantly releasing toxic gases with water boiling in the middle of intense hydrothermal activity. It has one of the most torrid environments on the earth with daily temperatures in winter exceeding over 45 degrees Celsius or 113 Fahrenheit. The landscape has huge hyper saline and hyper acid pools, with pH zero (very acidic) to fourteen (very alkaline) even hitting the negative mark. Besides this, It is also one of the lowest land points, lying 125 m or 410 ft below mean sea level (MSL).

## **The upcoming 70th anniversary of diplomatic ties of India & China**

External Affairs Ministry of India announced year-long activities starting from 2020 for the demonstration of historic link between civilisations as well as growing bilateral relations of India & China. The duo will celebrate the 70th anniversary of the establishment of their diplomatic ties. The activities will be about exchange in fields like legislatures, businesses, academics, cultural and youth organisations, defence forces, martial arts, traditional sports, entrepreneurship, joint post-earthquake search and rescue exercise, tea promotion ; cooperative projects regarding ancient maritime links ; establishment of sister-state relations between Tamil Nadu and Fujian Province of China.

## **Tuvalu & Taiwan are holding hands**

The small South Pacific nation of Tuvalu came in news for refusing China's offer of building artificial islands that would help it deal with rising sea levels. Discerning this as an attempt of reducing Taiwan's influence in the region, Tuvalu Foreign Minister Simon Kofe chose Taiwan over China and reassured his country's support for Taiwan. China is said to have increased its efforts to expand its influence in the Pacific by luring island nations with the promise of financial aid and airplanes. China is posing a threat to the United States and its allies.

## **Discovery of new strain of HIV virus**

According to the latest publication of Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes(JAIDS), researchers from an American medical devices and health care company, Abbott Laboratories along with University of Missouri, Kansas City (America) have recently discovered a new subtype of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) named 'HIV-1 Group M, subtype L'. This was the first time in the past 19 years after new strains classifying guidelines were established in 2000, a new subtype of "Group M" virus has been discovered. The first two samples of the latest subtype of Group M viruses, responsible for the global pandemic were traced in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in the Sub-Saharan Africa in the 1980s and 1990s, and the third was found in 2001.

## **CT-TTX: The Counter Terrorism Table Top Exercise**

The National Investigation Agency of India hosted the first counter terrorism exercise, CT-TTX for India, Japan, US and Australia. It was aimed at validating and assessing the counter terrorism mechanisms and giving opportunities to explore areas of enhanced cooperation and sharing their best practices against emerging terrorism threats. It was meant to enhance the cooperation between the countries in terms of counter terrorism. Flashback says, this dialogue between the four countries was initiated in 2007 by the Japanese President Shinzo Abe and the first ministerial level negotiations of the grouping was conducted in September 2019.

### **5th India – Europe 29 Business Forum**

Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra in New Delhi hosted the 5th edition of India-Europe 29 Business Forum from 20 to 21 November 2019. Organized by industry body Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and Union Ministry of External Affairs, the event witnessed the presence of 400 delegates from 29 European countries who focused on Smart Cities, IT & ITES, Renewable Energy, Pharma and Artificial Intelligence (AI). The forum is said to be India's largest European Platform. Europe 29 region involves Austria, Serbia, Albania, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Moldova, Macedonia, Bulgaria, Malta, Norway, Denmark, Poland, Estonia, Hungary, Romania, Finland, Greece, Cyprus, Montenegro, Iceland, Sweden, Latvia, Czech Republic Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Switzerland and Turkey.

### **World Customs Organization RCP meeting of Asia Pacific**

Three day long World Customs Organization (WCO) Asia Pacific Regional Contact Points (RCP) meeting was held in Puducherry, India. International Organizations like UNCTAD, Global Alliance on Trade Facilitation (GATF) took part in this to present the best practices that are involved in customs procedures and discussed matters related to security, enforcement, facilitation and capacity building in the Asia Pacific Region that accounts to 37% of the world's GDP. India had hosted this event earlier also in Jaipur and Cochin. WCO is an inter-governmental Organization that sets up principles and standards especially for cross border procedures and customs.

### **The Beginning of Google Stadia**

Google's new cloud-based game streaming service, Google Stadia has been launched with 22 launch titles viz. Assassin's Creed Odyssey, Tomb Raider, Rise of the Tomb Raider, Shadow of the Tomb Raider, Mortal Kombat 11, Samurai Shodown, Final Fantasy XV, Attack on Titan: Final Battle 2, Red Dead Redemption 2, Football Manager 2020, NBA 2K20, Destiny 2: The Collection, Wolfenstein: Youngblood, Just Dance 2020, Kine, Grid 2019, Thumper, Rage 2, Trials Rising, Gylt, Metro Exodus and Farming Simulator 2019 in 14 countries worldwide. It can be accessed through Chrome browser and is presently available in its Pro tier with 4K resolution with HDR quality, 60 fps and 5.1 surround sound, priced at \$10.

### **World COPD Day**

On the third Wednesday of November i.e. 20th November 2019, World Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) Day on 'All Together to End COPD' theme was observed. The disease is often confused with Asthma. Severe breathlessness and predisposes to exacerbations are symptoms of

this disease caused by pollution and smoking. It is alarming to learn that 12% of the world's smokers are from India and the prevalence of the disease has increased by 29.2% between 1990 and 2016. The WHO (World Health Organization) and Global Initiative for Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease (GOLD) had instituted this day in 1997.

### **World Energy Outlook 2019**

International Energy Agency of Paris released a report on World Energy Outlook, which informs that currently the world uses 495 GW of installed solar power and the installed solar power in the world will increase by 3,142 GW by 2040. Presently, the energy demand in the world is growing at a rate of 2% per year. Oil demand is likely to slow down after 2025. In African states, the gas and renewable sources will power the future energy. However, the coal demand in these countries are touching sky. The report also speaks about three climate scenarios viz. the Current Policy Scenario, Stated Policy Scenario and Sustainable Development Scenario along with the allied energy demands.

### **Commemorative stamp on Al Quds**

Emirates Post, in association with Arab Postal Authorities, has issued a unified commemorative stamp entitled 'Al Quds - Capital of Palestine', featuring of the Al Aqsa Mosque, the flag of Palestine along with a white dove symbolising peace to support Al Quds' cause and protect its Arabian heritage. It serves as a reminder of the emotional and cultural significance of the city. The decision of this commemorative stamp was taken during a meeting in March 2018 in Muscat, Oman.

### **Closure of 25 factories in Bangladesh**

The High Court in Bangladesh has ordered shutters down for 25 factories and two private hospitals along the banks of river Buriganga in Dhaka. These factories and hospitals were functioning without environmental clearance. The High Court has ordered the Department of Environment to execute its order within 15 days. Buriganga is one of the most polluted rivers in the world, often referred as the largest sewer in the world with waste water from around 7,000 industrial units in the surrounding areas. Its connection with the sewage lines is under question.

### **Mysuru hosted International Conference on Yoga**

The 5th edition of the two-day International Conference on Yoga was organized by the Union Ministry of Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, Sowa Rigpa and Homoeopathy (AYUSH) at Mysuru, Karnataka on 'Yoga for Heart Care' theme. It was meant to focus on research in yoga with experts discussing and sharing their thoughts on the subject. Over 700 national and international

delegates participated in the conference that witnessed more than 10 technical sessions involving 50 resource persons and experts. Technical sessions were conducted on sub-themes like ‘Yoga for heart care; emerging trends and researches’, ‘Yoga for coronary artery disease’, ‘Role of Yoga in the management of Hypertension’ and ‘Role of Yoga in preventive cardiology’. Special need for promotion of yoga as a sport in India as well as abroad was felt at the event. The International Yoga Day 2020 event will be held in Mysuru.

### **Pakistan came in news for WHO approved Typhoid Vaccine**

Pakistan became the first nation to introduce WHO approved typhoid vaccine. The vaccine will be introduced in southern Sindh province via a four-week campaign to solve 10,000 cases of Typhoid that were documented since 2017. Flashback reveals that ailment claimed 70% lives in that year. United Nations Children's Fund (UNCF) is funding Typhoid Conjugate Vaccine (TCV), which was recommended by WHO in year 2018 for infants and children of more than 6 months of age in typhoid-endemic countries. TCV was found to have an edge over other earlier vaccines regarding long-lasting protection within fewer dosages. Geneva based Gavi Vaccine alliance, World Bank, WHO and Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation are supporting Pakistan in this mission. Typhoid is caused because of unsafe water and sanitation systems and inadequate drinking water.

### **European Investment Bank will stop Fossil Fuel Funding**

The European Investment Bank informed about its decision of stopping funds for oil and coal projects by the end of 2021. The bank has been funding these projects since 2013 and has so far funded 13.4 billion Euros for fossil fuel projects. The bank wishes to adhere to the new norms which state that the energy projects applying for funding must prove that they can produce 1 Kilowatt hour of energy emitting less than 250 grams of carbon dioxide. Although gas-based energy projects, that are common among the EU member states, have been kept away from this, yet the upcoming gas projects need to be in line with “new technologies” that include carbon capture, combining heat and power generation, mixing in renewable gases with fossil fuels, etc. With this, EU eyes to become the first carbon-neutral continent by 2050.

### **WTO Panel rejected India's claims on Steel issues with the US**

The World Trade Organization panel rejected several claims of India against US on steel duties. As per India's complaint the United States is breaching international trade rules in 14 areas and among them, Washington's imposition of tariffs on nearly 300% imports including steel, carbon-quality steel was prominent one. Later in the year 2014, the global body ruled that the duties imposed by the US

were a breach of global trade rules. It is worth knowing that India's steel exports to the US has declined by 49% in year 2018. The export of steel from India that was 372 million USD in year 2012 dropped to 221 million USD.

### **Rezwana Choudhury Bannya became ICCR Alumni awardee**

High Commissioner of India to Bangladesh Riva Ganguly Das bestowed the ICCR distinguished alumni award to noted Rabindra Sangeet exponent from Bangladesh Rezwana Choudhury Bannya in Dhaka during a musical function organised by the Indira Gandhi Cultural Centre (IGCC). The awardee is known for her distinctive style of singing and has set up a musical school 'Shurer Dhara' in Bangladesh to promote the Guru-Shishya tradition as practised in Shantiniketan. Prior to this, she has received 'Independence Award' which is the highest civilian award of Bangladesh.

### **Bangladesh topped business bribery risk index**

Trace Bribery Matrix released annual ranking of business bribery risk for 200 countries. Bangladesh topped the list at 178th spot among South Asian countries when evaluated under four parameters viz. business interaction with the government, anti-bribery deterrence, transparency and civil society oversight. The country was found to have a high degree of government interaction in business, a high expectation of bribes and a high regulatory burden which contributes in high bribery risk for business in this country. While Bhutan (52nd rank) has the lowest risk of bribery on the index in South Asia. Overall Somalia, South Sudan, North Korea, Yemen and Venezuela emerged with the highest risk of bribe demands and in contrast New Zealand, Norway, Denmark, Sweden and Finland received the lowest bribery risk.

### **IUCN's 7th Regional Conservation Forum**

Over 500 delegates from different countries, corporate sector and NGOs participated in the 7th edition of Regional Conservation Forum of International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) held at Islamabad, Pakistan. The forum learned about the rapid melting of Himalayan Glacier that is causing food and water shortages to 800 million people in South Asia and South-East Asia including China. 36% Glaciers in the regions of Himalayas and Hindukush (the third pole of the earth with a huge mass of ice) are on the verge of disappearance by 2100. The Himalayan and the Mekong basin are at greater risks. The foreseen disaster is likely to increase the risks of outburst floods adding to the expansion of unstable proglacial lakes.

### **The First Dhaka Global Dialogue**

Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the first edition of three day long Dhaka Global Dialogue on 11th November 2019. New Delhi based Observer Research Foundation (ORF) and Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIISS) were the organizers of this event. Over 150 delegates including policy makers, law makers, scholars, strategic experts, industry leaders and professionals of various fields from 50 nations discussed some key imperatives in the context to the Indo-pacific region. The event provided a platform for countries in this region for accomplishment of environmentally sustainable peace and prosperity specifically in the maritime domain.

### **The Second edition of Paris Peace Forum held in France**

An international event on global governance issues and multilateralism, Paris Peace Forum was carried out from 11 to 13 November 2019 at la Grande Halle de la Villette in Paris, France. It aimed at finding solutions to global challenges ranging from economic inequalities, climate change and terrorism to disinformation, migration and cyber security. The forum featured more than 100 projects from the worldwide, that have been implemented as specific solutions to governance challenges. External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar represented India and recommended coordinated action by nations, bilaterally or multilaterally and build 'national capacities' to prevent the forces of terrorism and extremism from building presence in the digital domain.

### **The Beginning of India International Trade Fair**

The 39th edition of India International Trade Fair began in New Delhi on "Ease of Doing Business" theme on November 14, 2019. Around 25,000 delegates from government agencies, non-government institutions and private sector enterprises from Vietnam, UK, Turkey, Tunisia, Thailand, Nepal, Myanmar, Iran, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Egypt, China, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Australia and Bahrain are participating in this fair. The fair is giving preferences to Bihar and Jharkhand this year and offering equal opportunities to large corporations, MSME, artisans and self-help groups to promote their products.

### **The International Lavi Fair**

Himachal Pradesh Governor Bandaru Dattatreya inaugurated four day long International Lavi Fair in Rampur district of Shimla, Himachal Pradesh on 11th November 2019. It is a 400 years old fair that commemorates the treaty which was signed between Raja Kehari Singh of Rampur Bushahr state and Tibet for promotion of trade between India and Tibet. Sale and purchase of Chamurthi horses (Tibet originated 'ship of the cold desert') along with woollens, dry fruits and other traditional crafts and products are the main attractions of this fair. In addition to this, the governor also inaugurated 'Kinnauri market' and an exhibition organised by several government departments.

### **The 9th BRICS Trade Ministers Meet**

On 13th November 2019, the 9th edition of BRICS Trade Ministers Meet was held in Brasilia, Brazil. Union Minister Commerce and Industry, Piyush Goyal represented India in this event. The meet stressed on development of digital infrastructure, digital skills and institutions in developing and less developed countries as well as advancing trade and investment cooperation between BRICS nations. It concentrated on challenges sprouting from growing protectionism and rising trade tensions manifested in unilateral measures. It underlined the growing trend of non-tariff barriers (NTBs) that refuse market access leading to economic uncertainty as well as raising the cost of doing trade for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) of developing countries.

### **International Treaty of Plant Genetic Resources**

In November 2019, the eighth edition of the International Treaty of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) was held in Rome, Italy. Around 146 nations along with international organizations like FAO, UN participated in the session. This treaty popularly known as the “Seed Treaty” is an international agreement to ensure food security by exchange of world’s plant genetic resources for food and agriculture for conservation and sustainable use of seed varieties. The purpose of this treaty is to provide a broad integrated global system for an easy access of genetic materials to scientists, farmers and plant breeders; helping farmers on crop selection that can adapt to unpredictable environmental changes and human needs. The treaty had a list of 64 crop species on catalogue and their facilitated access.

### **X Ray burst from outer space**

Neutron Star Interior Composition Explorer (NICER) telescope of NASA detected a sudden spike of X Rays caused by a massive thermo nuclear flash on the surface of a Pulsar. Pulsar is a neutron star that spins rapidly and becomes a host to many X-Ray emitting hotspot. As the object spins it produces regular pulses of high-energy radiation and when it runs out of fuel its compact core is left that later collapses under its own weight and explodes. In this process, Hydrogen gas forms a disk which when becomes denser, ionizes the gas. This leads to trapping of more and more energy inwards causing the explosion. The explosion leads to energy release in 20 seconds as that released by the sun in 10 days. The finding illustrates that like other astronomical bodies, the sun emits X Rays as well.

### **World Science Day**

Globe observed World Science Day for Peace and Development on 10th November 2019 on ‘Open science, leaving no one behind’ theme. On this occasion, Russian chemical company, PhosAgro, IUPAC/ UNESCO conferred grants upon young scientists to get them involved in green chemistry. This day was instituted by UNESCO in 2001 to strengthen public awareness about the role of science

for peaceful and sustainable societies, renew national and international commitment for use of science for the benefit of societies, encourage national as well as international solidarity for shared science between countries and highlight challenges faced by science and raising support for scientific endeavour.

### **Dengue can get transmitted sexually as well !!!**

World learned the first instance of vector transmitted disease becoming a sexually transmitted disease. Spanish health authorities confirmed transmission of a vector transmitted disease, dengue via sexual contact in case of a 41-year old man from Madrid. The homosexual victim received the disease from his male partner who had acquired it via a mosquito in dengue prevalent areas of Cuba. So far in general knowledge Dengue was thought to be transmitted by the bite of *Aedes Aegypti* mosquitoes carrying Dengue virus.

### **Wildlife biologist K. Ullas Karanth: George Schaller Lifetime Awardee**

In November 2019, Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), New York bestowed the George Schaller Lifetime Award in Wildlife Conservation Science to Wildlife biologist K. Ullas Karanth for his contribution to the field of conservation. With this, Ullas has become the first recipient of WCS's award. This award has been instituted in name of globally acclaimed, one of the greatest wildlife scientists and conservationists Dr. George Schaller, who saved wildlife and wild places. The recipient Ullas is currently the Director of Centre for Wildlife Studies, Bengaluru, Karnataka. And his research has been pioneering and groundbreaking regarding the ecology of tigers, predator-prey population ecology, sympatric predators and other large mammals, and mitigation of human-wildlife conflicts.

### **The 19th IORA ministerial meet in UAE**

Ministers from 22 nations participated in the 19th Indian Ocean Rim Association COM (Council of Ministers) meeting on 'Promoting a shared destiny and path to prosperity in Indian ocean' theme took place in Abu Dhabi, UAE on 7th November 2019. For the period of 2019-2021, UAE will hold the chairmanship assisted by Bangladesh. For 2017-19 Republic of South Africa presided over this meeting. The platform is on purpose of linking the world's most dynamic regions of south, west and south east Asia, Africa and Oceania through seas. Recently, India contributed 1 million USD to IORA Special Fund and became the largest contributor. In 2015, India had hosted the first Indian Ocean Dialogue.

### **International Conference on Soil and Water Resources Management**

In November 2019, International Conference on ‘Soil and Water Resources Management for Climate Smart Agriculture and Global Food and Livelihood Security’ was conducted at National Agricultural Science Centre (NASC) Complex in New Delhi. Soil Conservation Society of India (SCSI) in association with World Association of Soil and Water Conservation (WASWAC), China and International Soil Conservation Organization (ISCO), U.S.A. organized this event to address issues and challenges of soil and water conservation. Around 400 delegates from across the globe participated in this event. Besides this, three books viz. ‘Special Issue of Indian Farming by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research’, ‘7 Years of International Conference’ and ‘Abstract Book of the Conference’ were also released. Soil Conservation Society of India (SCSI) Awards – 2019 were also presented on this occasion.

### **The 10th Asian Conference of Emergency Medicine**

On 7th November 2019, the 10th Asian Conference of Emergency Medicine began in New Delhi. Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu inaugurated this biennial conference in India for the first time which is being organized by Asian Society for Emergency Medicine (ASEM) and Society for Emergency Medicine India (SEMI). The Conference will continue till 10th November 2019. More than 2000 emergency medicine experts from 32 nations are participating in the conference to address issues like investment in providing timely and high-quality Emergency Health Services (EHS) in India; inclusion of Emergency medicine and trauma care in curriculum of Undergraduate courses and train them to deal with various emergencies like accidents, heart attacks, natural calamities, and others; Developing programs and manuals to train citizens in emergency first aid procedures like Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) etc. It is about providing an affordable emergency care for all sections of the society, bridging gaps in healthcare and creating a positive impact on society.

### **Voyager 2 reached the interstellar space**

In November 2019, NASA’s Solar System Explorer, Voyager 2 came out of heliosphere, entered interstellar space and is now at 11 billion miles from the Earth. In the interstellar space, spacecraft detects plasma or solar wind flowing out from the sun and enveloping the planets in the solar system. Scientists have detected no density, pressure, temperature in this interstellar space. Voyager 2 will be the first spacecraft to study four planets like Jupiter, Neptune, Saturn and Uranus. Discovery of 14th moon of Jupiter, 5 moons of Neptune and identification of “Great Dark Spot” at Neptune are so far the credentials of this first human-made object that flew by Neptune.

### **Matildas cracked a landmark pay deal**

Australia women's football team, Matildas struck a historic deal with Football Federation Australia that became a landmark for gender equality in sports. Football Federation Australia under a new centralized contract system announced an amount of payment for Matildas stars such as Sam Kerr and Ellie Carpenter equivalent to the amount given to big Socceroos like Aaron Mooy and Mat Ryan. In addition to this, Matildas will also be offered business class flights to international fixtures and tournaments, like the men. Currently, The Matildas are ranked 8th in the world while Australia's men's team, the Socceroos hold the 44th rank.

### **Global Climate Emergency**

As per latest publication of journal BioScience's "World Scientists" report, 11,258 scientists in 153 countries signed the Global Climate Emergency. Among them 69 are from India. Based on the scientific analysis of over 40 years of publicly available data, the scientists presented a list of measures called "Vital Signs" that represent climate change trends viz. extreme weather events, ocean heat content, ocean acidity, etc. and methods to mitigate the threat. Replacing fossil fuels; Restoring and protecting ecosystems; Cutting pollutants like methane and soot; Eating less meat; Converting the economy to carbon-free and Stabilizing population growth were the key objectives of the report.

### **The Freedom on Net 2019 report**

International watchdog, the Freedom House released Freedom of Net report 2019 titled "The Crisis of Social Media" stating an overall decline in global internet freedom status between July 2018 and May 2019. Iceland topped this ranking with an overall score of 95. It emerged as the world's best protector of internet freedom as it showed no civil or criminal cases registered against the users for online expression. On the other hand, with an overall score of 10, China was adjudged as the worst abuser of internet freedom for the fourth consecutive year and was tagged "not free". India acquired "partly free" status with an overall score of 55. Pakistan, with a score of 26, for the ninth consecutive year exhibited "not free" status. Malaysia and Armenia showed positive trends and Ethiopia recorded the highest improvement in terms of internet freedom, while USA had an overall score of 77.

### **The Largest Astrophysics Assembly**

On 6th November 2019, during the first day of the fifth edition of largest science festival in the world, 'India International Science Festival (IISF) 2019', Kolkata students created Guinness World Records for largest astrophysics lesson (45 minutes) and assembly of spectroscopes at Kolkata, West Bengal. More than 1,598 students participated in this session, which was dedicated to Meghnad Saha and

Chandrasekhara Venkata Raman. The Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics that organized this event received a memento for the same. Spectroscopes are used by Astronomers to learn details about temperature, chemical composition, etc. of celestial objects which are located hundreds or millions of light years away from the Earth. A small personal model of advanced spectroscopes can be made by using a cardboard box with a very narrow window to channel light into spectroscope. Then by using a piece of a Compact Disc that light can be split by a process called diffraction.

### **Sara Dawnjanovic became 'Miss Asia Global 2019'**

On 4th November 2019 in the 5th Edition of 'Miss Asia Global Title 2019' Sara Dawnjanovic of Serbia got crowned by Miss Asia Global 2018, Assem Yessengeldiyeva at Gokulam Convention Centre in Kochi, Kerala. Among other celebrated beauties were Nguyen Thi Yen Trang from Vietnam, who won 'Miss Asia 2019' Title; Samiksha Singh from India won the sub-title of 'Miss Beautiful Face' Title; Leeseul Kim from Korea and Jeanyeer Ozbot from the Philippines were adjudged as the 'Miss Asia Global first' and 'Miss Asia Global second' runner ups. The Next 'Miss Asia Global Title 2020' will take place in Malaysia.

### **Appointment of seven new governors in Nepal**

Nepal's President Bidya Devi Bhandari has appointed new governors in all seven provinces of the country on 5th November 2019 on recommendation of the government as per Article 163 (2) of the Constitution. Somnath Adhikari 'Pyasi' (Province 1), Tilak Pariyar (Province 2), Bishnu Prasad Prasai (Province 3), Amik Sherchan (Gandaki Province), Dharmanath Yadav (Province 5), Govinda Kalauni (Karnali Province) and Sharmila Kumari Panta (Sudur Paschim Province) are the new appointees.

### **The 30th anniversary of the Berlin Wall fall**

Germany started a week of festivities marking three decades since the fall of the Berlin Wall on 4th November 2019. This wall was erected in 1961 to stop migration from the eastern, communist part of divided Germany to the more prosperous West. The border installations were around 163 kilometres. In this around 100 km was covered by an actual wall, with another 50 or more kilometres made up of heavy wire mesh. Mines were sown in the ground or strung along fencing. The first pieces of the wall were pulled down on 11th November 1989. This epochal event led to reunification and brought down the Iron Curtain dividing a communist East from a capitalist West. However, currently the country is again facing waves of cold war that existed three decades ago as the euphoric optimism for liberal democracy and freedom has begun to fade.

## **Maulana Fazlur Vs Imran**

Pakistan's firebrand cleric-cum-politician Maulana Fazlur Rehman is bent upon sacking prime minister Imran Khan from his post. The leader of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazl has threatened to lockdown the entire Pakistan after the deadline set by him for the resignation of prime minister Imran Khan ended on 3rd November 2019. He organized a grand protest rally in the capital Islamabad at the end of two-day deadline. Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party, Qaumi Watan Party, National Party and Awami National Party have supported Rehman caravan, dubbed as the 'Azadi' March in Islamabad for achievement of this objective. Prime Minister Khan has condemned this demand as protestors' efforts to get a deal for the release of PML-N and PPP top leaders who are in jails for corruption allegations.

## **Seven governors of Nepal got relieved**

On 3rd November 2019, President Bidya Devi Bhandari relieved seven Governors from the posts as per the constitutional provisions on the recommendation of cabinet. Govinda Bahadur Tumhang (Governor of Province 1), Ratneswor Kayastha (Province 2), Anuradha Koirala (Province 3), Baburam Kunwar (Province 4), Umakant Jha (Province 5), Durga Keshar Khanal (Province 6), Ratneshwor Malla (Province 7) were appointed in January 2018 under Sher Bahadur Deuba government after the first-ever provincial elections in the Himalayan nation following adoption of federalism after the promulgation of new constitution in September 2015.

## **WhatsApp has put Israeli company on fire**

In November 2019, WhatsApp, a chat app owned by Facebook confirmed involvement of Israeli company NSO's servers in carrying out hacking of more than 1400 high-profile WhatsApp users. WhatsApp decided to sue NSO on pretext of creating technology that can hack into the phones of WhatsApp users as well as providing requisite tools to sophisticated hackers or government officials to gain access to a WhatsApp user's phone simply by making a video call. Moreover, it was revealed that even if the users did not pick up the WhatsApp video call, the hackers succeeded in infecting the targeted phone to gain almost complete access to it. However, NSO denied the allegations and said that it did not condone misuse of its technology and worked only with governments and legitimate customers.

## **The Fifth Biennial Inter-Governmental Consultations**

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and German Chancellor Angela Merkel have co-chaired the fifth Biennial Inter-Governmental Consultations (IGC) in New Delhi on 1st November 2019. They

discussed bilateral issues regarding agriculture economic partnership, trade and investment, science, education, technology, people to people contact and cultural exchanges, cooperation in traditional sectors viz. transport, skill development and energy, as well as exploration of possibilities for cooperation in newer areas like green urban mobility and artificial intelligence (AI). Currently, Germany is India's largest trading partner in Europe and there are more than 1,700 German companies active in India and over 600 Indo-German joint ventures. In addition to this, Germany is the seventh largest foreign direct investor (FDI) in India that has invested in the insurance sector, transportation, automobiles, metallurgical industries, electrical equipment, chemicals, construction activity and trading.

### **Syrian Constitution is in making**

It was 31st October 2019 when 150 Syrian constitutional committee delegates met for the first time with Opposition delegates for the purpose of ending eight-and-a-half-year civil war and redrafting of Syrian constitution in premises of United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland. However, it is still unclear that an entirely new constitution will be formed or the pre written constitution of the year 2012 will be reformed. This historic move is the first step towards beginning for a political process that will lead to UN-supervised elections under UN resolution 2254. This move was proposed by Russia and is being overseen by UN special envoy for Syria, Geir Pedersen.

### **Introduction of RuPay card**

In October 2019, India inked an agreement with the Saudi Arabia to introduce the RuPay card in the country. This Memorandum of Understanding is a step that will benefit not only 2.6 million Indians in Gulf Kingdom but also pilgrims visiting Haj and Umrah. With this, Saudi Arabia has become the fourth nation to initiate India's digital payment system. Prior to this, India had already launched RuPay card in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, Bhutan and Singapore. RuPay card is a first-of-its-kind Indian domestic Debit and Credit Card payment network that RBI was launched in 2012 to fulfil its vision to have a domestic, open and multilateral system of payments and it is being accepted at ATMs, POS devices as well as e-commerce websites.



### **Rohit Sharma : The First Indian male cricketer to play 100 T20I**

On 7th November 2019, during the second match against Bangladesh at the Saurashtra Cricket Association Stadium, Stand-in skipper Rohit Sharma became the first Indian man and the second in world cricket to complete 100 T-20 Internationals. Currently, Shoaib Malik with 111 games from Pakistan is the only player to have played more than 100 T20 Internationals. Rohit is the top-scorer in this format with 2452 runs followed by regular skipper Virat Kohli at second spot in the list with an aggregate of 2450 runs. Rohit has so far scored the runs at a strike-rate of 136.67 with four centuries and 17 half-centuries.

### **Deepak Kumar secured India's 10th Olympic quota in shooting**

On 6th November 2019, Deepak Kumar secured India's 10th Tokyo Olympic quota. The Jakarta Asian Games silver medalist earned a bronze medal in the men's 10 metres air rifle, shot 227.8 in the eight-man final to finish third on the podium and added the 10th quota of India for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. He is the second Indian shooter to earn an Olympic quota in the men's 10 metres air rifle event after Divyansh Singh Panwar, who secured it in April.

### **IFFI 2019 winners**

The 50th edition of International Film Festival of India (IFFI) got concluded in Goa. And the name of the winners include the French-Swiss film 'Particles' directed by Blaise Harrison that won the Golden Peacock Award in Best Film category; Lijo Jose Pellissery for his Malayalam film 'Jallikattu' won 'Best Director Award'; Seu Jorge for Marighella (Best Actor (Male)); Usha Jadhav for Marathi crime film, Mai Ghatt: Crime No. 103/2005 (Best Actor (Female)); Pema Tseden for his Tibetan film 'Balloon' (IFFI 2019 Special Jury Award); Italian film 'Rwanda' (ICFT –UNESCO Gandhi Medal); Amin Sidi Boumediene for 'Abou Leila' & Marius Olteanu for 'Monsters'(Best Debut Feature Film of a Director); Abhishek Shah's Hellaro won a special mention for its "incredible music, colour and choreography"; Bahattar Hoorain directed by Sanjay P. Singh Chauhan won Special mention under ICFT-UNESCO Gandhi medal. Besides these, veteran actor Prem Chopra, legendary music composer Ilaiyaraaja, actor Aravind Swamy, Manipuri filmmaker Haobam Paban Kumar, Assamese filmmaker Manju Borah and Kathak dancer Birju Maharaj were also honored at the end of the event.

### **Syed Modi International Badminton updates**

Indian shuttlers Kidambi Srikanth & Sourabh Verma reached the quarterfinals of the men's singles contest at the ongoing Syed Modi International Badminton tournament in Lucknow and Srikanth will lock horns with seventh seed Son Wan Ho of Korea while Sourabh will clash with Thailand's Kunlavut Vitidsarn. On the other hand, young Lakshya Sen bowed out of the tournament. In women's singles, Shruti Mundada and Rituparna Das also reached the quarterfinals with straight game wins. Young women's pair of Simran Singhi and Ritika Thaker also succeeded in reaching the final eight. While, Kuhoo Garg and Anoushka Parikh also advanced to the next round.

### **Tennis veteran Rafael Nadal topped ATP ranking 2019**

Spanish professional tennis player, Rafael Nadal Parera (33) emerged as the topper in November 2019 ATP ranking. Exactly after one year he has again become the number one player in the world with 9585 points and has displaced Novak Djokovic who has slipped to number two (8945 points). Roger Federer of Switzerland with 6,190 points has followed them at the third spot. This is the 8th time Nadal has climbed the apex. It should be noted that Nadal is the second aging player to hold the number one position in the ATP rankings since 1973. Federer was number one in 2018 at the age of 36. In women's ranking, Australian tennis player Ashleigh Barty holds topped with 7851 points followed by Karolina Pliskova of Czech Republic in second place with 5940 points and Naomi Osaka of Japan grabbed the third rank with 5496 points.

### **Emblem for FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup**

On November 3, 2019, Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) and Local Organising Committee (LOC) disclosed the official emblem of FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup for the year 2020 at the launch event in gateway of India, Mumbai, Maharashtra. Emblem features bright blue waves rising from the base and reaching up along the form of the trophy towards a crown forming the shape of Paisley or Boteh motif commonly used in Kashmiri Pashmina shawl and carpets. The droplet of the design forming a ball made from a marigold flower indicates a symbol of growth and development. Bandhani textiles, an Indian tie-dye technique dating back thousands of years served as a source of inspiration for the color and style of this emblem. The stem of the marigold's symbol has been derived from traditional Warli paintings with Bandhani patterns.

# CURRENT AFFAIRS

1. In November 2019, FIFA banned three football officials of ..... for life term.  
(a) North America (b) South America (c) Africa  
(d) Asia (e) Europe
2. World Kindness Day was observed on ..... November.  
(a) 11<sup>th</sup> (b) 12<sup>th</sup> (c) 13<sup>th</sup>  
(d) 14<sup>th</sup> (e) 15<sup>th</sup>
3. In November 2019, government announced constitution of a Mihir Shah Committee regarding  
(a) Defence (b) Agriculture (c) Education  
(d) Water (e) Minority affairs
4. According to the Sample Registration System (SRS) Bulletin-2016, which of the following states showed the highest percentage decline in the Maternal Mortality Ratio ?  
(a) Kerala (b) Karnataka (c) Odisha  
(d) Maharashtra (e) Madhya Pradesh
5. All India Football Federation (AIFF) appointed Thomas Dennerby of .....as the Indian head coach of the Women's U-17 football team.  
(a) Argentina (b) France (c) Belgium  
(d) Sweden (e) Spain
6. Arupjyoti Saikia's latest book "The Unquiet River: A biography of the Brahmaputra" speaks about the history of which of the following North Eastern state?  
(a) Manipur (b) Assam (c) Mizoram  
(d) Arunachal Pradesh (e) Nagaland
7. October 20 was observed as .....  
(a) International Chefs Day (b) International Mountain Day  
(c) Safer Internet day (d) International Mother Language Day  
(e) World Wild Life Day

8. Recently discovered “Glossanodon macrocephalus” in water of Kerala is a species of .....
- (a) Crocodile (b) Frog (c) Fish  
(d) Tortoise (e) Crab
9. Nepali mountaineer Nirmal Purja created new speed record recently by climbing the world’s .....highest peaks in time period of 7 months.
- (a) 14 (b) 15 (c) 16  
(d) 17 (e) 18
10. Which of the following nations won the ninth Rugby World Cup title 2019 ?
- (a) Argentina (b) South Africa (c) England  
(d) Australia (e) France
11. India adopted .....model of human milk bank.
- (a) Peru (b) Brazil (c) Argentina  
(d) Bolivia (e) Venezuela
12. Whose novel among the following got place in BBC’s ‘100 novels that shaped our world’ list along with Arundhati Roy’s ‘The God of small things’ ?
- (a) R.K. Narayan (b) Salman Rushdie (c) Vikram Seth  
(d) S. Naipaul (e) All the above
13. Sumant Kathpalia has become the new MD & CEO of .....
- (a) Bank of India (b) Central Bank of India (c) IndusInd Bank  
(d) State Bank of India (e) Yes Bank
14. In November 2019, Government e-Marketplace (GeM) signed MoU with Indian bank and .....to provide a paperless, cashless, and transparent payment system on its portal.
- (a) Indian Overseas Bank (b) Uco Bank (c) Bank of Maharashtra  
(d) Canara Bank (e) None of the above
15. In November 2019, Health ministry launched SAANS campaign in .....to control pneumonia deaths in kids
- (a) Madhya Pradesh (b) Gujarat (c) Bihar  
(d) Rajasthan (e) Jharkhand

16. World Savings Day/ Thrift Day 2019 observed on.....  
(a) 31<sup>st</sup> October (b) 1<sup>st</sup> November (c) 2<sup>nd</sup> November  
(d) 3<sup>rd</sup> November (e) 4<sup>th</sup> November
17. The 50th World Economic Forum will be held in .....  
(a) Denmark (b) Sweden (c) Greenland  
(d) France (e) Switzerland
18. Which of the following Ministries is organizing Global Bio-India Summit 2019 in November 2019?  
(a) Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying  
(b) Ministry of Earth Sciences  
(c) Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change  
(d) Ministry of Science and Technology  
(e) None
19. In November 2019, the Archaeological Survey of India discovered a historic trade centre in .....  
(a) Telangana (b) Andhra Pradesh (c) Kerala  
(d) Karnataka (e) Tamil Nadu
20. In October 2019 Kais Saied became President of .....  
(a) Morocco (b) Tunisia (c) Algeria  
(d) Libya (e) Egypt

# • ANSWERS •

- 1.(b)** In November 2019, FIFA imposed lifetime ban on three football officials of **South America** viz. Former Peru Football Federation Manuel Burga and Argentinian officials Eduardo Deluca and Jose Luis Meiszner on account of 2015 corruption scandal in football. In addition to this they were also fined 1 million Swiss francs (912,000 euros) each.
- 2.(c)** World Kindness Day was observed on **13th** November 2019 to learn merits of kindness. The World Kindness Movement led to observation of World Kindness Day from 1998 onwards
- 3.(d)** In November 2019, government announced constitution of a Mihir Shah Committee regarding **water**. Former planning commission member and a water expert, Mihir Shah will head the 10 member committee for drafting a new National Water Policy (NWP). Prior to this NWP was framed in 2012 to manage the integrated water resources.
- 4.(b)** According to the Sample Registration System (SRS) Bulletin-2016, **Karnataka** showed the highest percentage decline in the Maternal Mortality Ratio. India recorded 26.9% overall reduction in maternal mortality since 2013.
- 5.(d)** All India Football Federation (AIFF) appointed Thomas Dennerby of **Sweden** as the Indian head coach of the Women's U-17 football team for women's football World Cup 2020 that will be hosted by India. The official emblem of the world cup was launched at the gateway of India in Mumbai, Maharashtra in November 2019.
- 6.(b)** Arupjyoti Saikia's latest book "The Unquiet River: A biography of the Brahmaputra" speaks about North East India's history. It is specifically centered on history of **Assam** and tells how the river played key role lives of Assamese and their settlements. The book is published by Oxford University Press
- 7.(a)** October 20 was observed as **International Chefs Day**. It was first time observed in 2004 by chef Dr. Bill Gallagher of Worldchefs, an organization of the World Association of Chef Societies. This year's theme of this observation was "How Healthy Food Works".

- 8.(c) Recently discovered “Glossanodon macrocephalus” in water of Kerala is a species of **fish** having whitish silvery body. The fish is usually found in muddy bottoms at depths 300-600mts.
- 9.(a) Nepali mountaineer Nirmal Purja created new speed record recently by climbing the world’s **14** highest peaks above 8,000 metres (26,250 feet) in time period of 7 months. He climbed Annapurna, Dhaulagiri, Kanchenjunga, Everest, Lhotse, Makalu, Nanga Parbat, Gasherbrum I, Gasherbrum II, K2, Broad Peak, Cho Oyu, Manaslu and Shishapangma.
- 10.(b) **South Africa** won the ninth Rugby World Cup title 2019 by defeating England by 32-12 scores in the final at International Stadium, Yokohama, Japan. This was the third Rugby World Cup title for South Africa. Earlier, it had won this title in 1995 and 2007. With this, South Africa has equaled New Zealand’s record of winning the World Cup three times.
- 11.(b) India adopted **Brazil** model of human milk bank to provide 70% infants access to breast milk (BM) by 2025 which will subsequently increase to 100%.
- 12.(e) Novels of **all** the four authors Salman Rushdie (The Moor’s Last Sigh’), RK Narayan (Swami and Friends), Vikram Seth (A Suitable Boy), S. Naipaul (‘A House for Mr Biswas) along with Arundhati Roy’s ‘The God of small things’ got place in the British Broadcasting Corporation’s list of ‘100 Novels That Shaped Our World’ in November 2019.
- 13.(c) Sumant Kathalia has become the new MD & CEO of private sector lender **IndusInd Bank** to look into consumer banking. He will replace Romesh Sobti, who will retire in March 2020. Prior to this he has headed consumer loans vertical at ABN Amro Bank and before joining IndusInd Bank in 2008.
- 14.(d) In November 2019, Government e-Marketplace (GeM) signed MoU with Indian bank and **Canara Bank** to provide a paperless, cashless, and transparent payment system on its portal. The agreement will provide both the banks an opportunity to offer stock of services like fund transfer through GeM Pool Accounts (GPA), advising of Performance Bank Guarantees (e-PBG), Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) and Payment Gateway to the GeM’s registered users.
- 15.(b) In November 2019, Health ministry launched ‘Social Awareness and Action to Neutralise Pneumonia Successfully’ (SAANS) campaign in Gandhinagar, **Gujarat** to control pneumonia deaths in kids. Children with pneumonia will be treated with pre-referral dose of antibiotic amoxicillin by Accredited Social Health Activist(ASHA) workers.

- 16.(a)** World Savings Day/ Thrift Day 2019 observed on **31st October** with "Savings give life a lift" theme. This day was instituted in year 1924 to promote the value of bank savings and re-establish the citizen's confidence in banks.
- 17.(e)** The 50th World Economic Forum will be held in in Davos-Klosters, **Switzerland**, from 21-24 January 2020 on 'Stakeholders for a Cohesive and Sustainable World' theme.
- 18. (d)** **Ministry of Science and Technology** is organizing Global Bio-India Summit 2019 between November 21 and /November 23, 2019 to attract investment in Biotech sector under Make in India initiative. Biotechnology and its contributions are important for India in achieving its 5 trillion USD target.
- 19.(b)** In November 2019, the Archaeological Survey of India discovered a historic trade centre at Gottiprolu, **Andhra Pradesh**. A massive brick enclosure on the bank of Swarnamukhi river was the outstanding discovery of the excavation.
- 20.(b)** In October 2019 Kais Saied became President of **Tunisia**. The Independent law professor Kais Saied won against his rival, Nabil Karoui. He won the election with 72.71% of votes