



Monthly **GK** Mania



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India to switch to World's cleanest petrol and diesel.

India is all set to join the league of nations that use petrol and diesel containing just 10 parts per million (ppm) of sulphur. From April 1st, 2020, India shall leapfrog straight to BS-VI emission compliant fuels from BS-IV grades now. India's journey with Bharat Stages (BS) began in the year 2000, when the country adopted its emission standards from European emission and fuel regulations. Sanjiv Singh, chairman of Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) stated that new fuel will reduce the Nitrogen Oxide NOx in 25% in petrol cars and 70% in diesel cars with the implementation of BS-VI.

Pension Rules of Government Employees changed

The Department of Pension & Pensioners' Welfare under Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions has notified that all Central Government employees whose selection for appointment was finalized before January 1, 2004 but who joined service on or after 01.01.2004, for administrative reasons, can now opt to be covered under the Central Civil Services (Pension) Rules, 1972 instead of the NPS (National Pension System). The last date to exercise this option is May 31, 2020. The employees, under CCS (Pension) Rules, 1972, will be required to subscribe to the General Provident Fund (GPF).

Cabinet said yes

In February 2020, the cabinet gave nod to the constitution of the 22nd Law Commission of India for a period of three years. It will consist of a full time Chairperson as well as four full time members. The Commission will undertake research works and suggest reforms that are essential to enact new legislation. Besides this, the Assisted Reproductive Technology Bill has also been approved by the Union Cabinet. The bill seeks a set up of a national registry. It has provisions for identifying people that are involved in illegal embryo sale and trafficking, treating infertility as well as technology to remove an egg from a woman's body and fertilize it with a man's sperm to make an embryo. This will transform India into a surrogacy hub for foreign couples. The bill will encourage whistleblowers to highlight unethical practices that need to be brought under legislation.

The newly introduced apps

The Confederation of Real Estate Developers Association of India launched a ‘Credai Awaas’ app to connect home buyers with its member developers to purchase properties. The app will feature projects from 220 cities & will entertain participation from 20000 CREDAI developers across the country. Apart from this, Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan launched “Yodhav” (Warrior) mobile app at Kochi, Kerala, through which the public can inform police about drug abuse & its distribution and will help in the battle against drug menace.

The acquisitions in discussion

In February 2020, the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) gave nod to JSW Steel’s bid of Rs 19,700 crore for the purchase of the bankrupt Bhushan Power and Steel Ltd (BPSL). Currently BPSL’s former promoters are facing the lawsuits filed by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002. In this context, JSW Steel will be relieved from facing litigation for the work done by former promoters of Bhushan Power. Apart from this, the Competition Commission of India (CCI) approved acquisition of Westinghouse Air Brake Company (WABCO) Holdings by Automotive industry in Germany, ZF Friedrichshafen. Now ZF will purchase 100% shares of WABCO for USD 136.50 per share under the all-cash transaction method for a total equity value of USD 7 billion (approximately Rs. 49,700 crores).

The hustle-bustle of the educational world

All Indian Council of Technical Education (AICTE) banned all the government & private universities across India to offer both PGDM (Post Graduate Diploma in Management) and MBA (Master of Business Administration) courses simultaneously. The Human Resource Development Ministry has announced that PGDM courses can be run by standalone institutions, which are neither universities nor affiliated to any university, similar to the prestigious (IIMs) Indian Institute of Management. Whereas institutions affiliated to universities have the option of either converting all PGDM courses into corresponding MBA courses with respect to the university affiliation or vice-versa and run those under a separate standalone institute. Apart from this, two important institutions have been renamed. Latur Medical College of Maharashtra has been renamed as ‘Vilasrao Deshmukh Institute of Medical Sciences’ after former CM Vilasrao Deshmukh and Institute for Defense Studies and Analyses (IDSA) has been renamed as ‘Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defense Studies and Analyses’ to “honour the commitment and legacy” of late Manohar Parrikar.

Some key Appointments

Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) received its new chairman in the form of Supratim Bandyopadhyay, who was earlier a member of PFRDA. He will be on the post for a period of 5 years from the date of assumption or till attaining the age of 65 years. He has succeeded Pankaj Jain. It is worth knowing that PFRDA consists of a chairperson and 6 members, out of which 3 members are whole-time members, who are appointed by the central government. Apart from this, Ex-IAS officers Sanjay Kothari and Bimal Julka have become the next Chief Vigilance Officer (CVC) and Chief Information Commissioner (CIC) respectively. Sanjay Kothari has taken the place of K. V. Chowdary and Bimal Julka succeeded Sudhir Bhargava as CIC. And former Chief Managing Director (CMD) of Andhra Bank, Suresh Patel has been chosen as Vigilance Commissioner.

The latest from RBI board

The Central Board of Directors of the Reserve Bank of India at its 582nd meeting recommended aligning the financial year of RBI, currently July-June, with the government's fiscal year (April-March) from the year 2020-21. Now, the proposal is waiting for the government's approval. Besides this, RBI started a 3- year Long term Repo Rate Operations (LTRO) for Rs.25,000 crores. LTRO is about providing cheaper money to banks at the repo rate so that it can be used to boost credit growth. RBI has received bids of more than Rs. 1.944 lakh crore and has accepted bids of Rs. 25,035 crore. The RBI will conduct the second issue for Rs 25,000 crore on February 24 which will have one-year tenor. The current repo rate is 5.15% and LTROs will be conducted on CBS (E-KUBER) platform at a fixed rate in which bids below or above policy rate will be rejected.

North India's first bird ringing station

Bihar inked MoU for manifesting north India's first bird ringing station for observation, monitoring & research on migratory birds and with this, it has become the fourth state in the country after Tamil Nadu (Chennai), Rajasthan (Jaipur) and Orissa (Bhubaneswar) to do so. The MoU will be valid for 5 years in which the state government of Bihar will invest Rs. 5 crore. Bihar accommodates migratory birds in large numbers in Jamui, Begusarai, Darbhanga and Vaishali.

The 65th Amazon Filmfare Awards 2020

Indira Gandhi Athletic Stadium of Guwahati hosted the 65th edition of Amazon Filmfare Awards 2020. The winners of this prestigious award included Gully Boy (Best Film); Zoya Akhtar for Gully Boy (Best Director); Article 15 (Anubhav Sinha) and Sonchiriya (Abhishek Chaubey) (Best

Film (Critics)); Ranveer Singh for Gully Boy (Best Actor In A Leading Role (Male)); Ayushmann Khurrana for Article 15 (Best Actor (Critics)); Alia Bhatt for Gully Boy (Best Actor In A Leading Role (Female)); Bhumi Pednekar and Taapsee Pannu for Saand Ki Aankh (Best Actress (Critics)); Amruta Subhash for Gully Boy (Best Actor in a Supporting Role (Female)); Siddhant Chaturvedi for Gully Boy (Best Actor in a Supporting Role (Male)); Zoya Akhtar-Ankur Tewari for Gully Boy Mithoon, Amaal Mallik, Vishal Mishra, SachetParampara and Akhil Sachdeva for Kabir Singh (Best Music Album); Divine and Ankur Tewari for Apna Time Aayega (Gully Boy) (Best Lyrics); Arijit Singh for Kalank Nahi (Kalank) (Best Playback Singer (Male)); Shilpa Rao for Ghungroo (War) (Best Playback Singer (Female)); Aditya Dhar for Uri: The Surgical Strike (Best Debut Director) ; Abhimanyu Dassani for Mard Ko Dard Nahi Hota (Best Debut Actor); Ananya Pandey for Student Of The Year 2, Pati Patni Aur Woh (Best Debut Actress); Anubhav Sinha and Gaurav Solanki for Article 15 (Best Original Story); Reema Kagti and Zoya Akhtar for Gully Boy (Best Screenplay); Vijay Maurya for Gully Boy (Best Dialogue); Ramesh Sippy (Lifetime Achievement Award); Govinda (Excellence In Cinema); Sashwat Sachdev for Uri (RD Burman Award For Upcoming Music Talent) and Manish Malhotra (30 Years of Outstanding Contribution to Bollywood Fashion).

SC's verdict Women Officers in Defence

Supreme Court's Justice D Y Chandrachud gave nod to the Permanent Commissioning of Women Officers in Indian Army on 17th February 2020. It is worth recollecting here that in previous scenario the provision of the permanent service commission for women was not there, especially in combat units. And the inducted females were restricted to combat support units like law, education and logistics. Besides this, women were not appointed at the level of officers in the combat units. In 2010, the High Court of Delhi had instructed the GoI to provide permanent commissioning of women officers in the Indian Army. It should be noted that permanent commissioning is allowed to all women officers irrespective of the years of their services.

The First Integrated Tri-Service Command

The Chief of Defence Staff Bipin Rawat has announced the establishment of an integrated tri-service command for the first time by June 2020, which will be headed by an Air Marshal. Besides this, the CDS officer is also planning to create a joint peninsula command. Plans are being made to provide an air defence set up for every service that is in the pipeline. The Air Defence will integrate assets of the Navy, Air Force and Army.

The Plans of ISRO

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has presented its latest annual report for 2019-20. Currently, there are 18 communication satellites, 19 National Earth Observation satellites and 8 navigation satellites in service. Among these, 3 of these communication satellites are dedicated to military communication. In the ongoing fiscal 2019-20, ISRO had planned for 17 missions. Among these, six are yet to be completed and are expected to get completed by March 31, 2020. ISRO has planned 36 missions in the upcoming year. It includes the first Geo Imaging Satellite, GISAT-1 as well as a new series of high-resolution HRSATs as a threesome on a single PSLV launcher and 6 Earth Observation satellites viz. RISAT-2BR2, RISAT- 1A and 2A; Oceansat-3 and Resources at-3/3S. Among these, RISAT is Radar Imaging Satellites that provide all-weather surveillance using SAR (Synthetic Aperture Radars). The RISAT-2BR2 with its fleet of predecessors RISAT-2B and RISAT-2B1 will be placed 120 degrees apart.

Nitin Jairam Gadkari is in action

Minister for Road Transport & Highways of India and Shipping Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in the Government of India, Nitin Jairam Gadkari recently flagged off Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC)'s 'Apiary on wheels' for beekeeping in New Delhi. Besides being a unique concept for easy maintenance of BeeBox and migration of live colonies that have been designed by KVIC, it is also a holistic approach to meet the challenges faced by beekeepers & also help reduce the labour cost of maintenance of bee boxes and living bee colonies across India. Apart from this, Nitin Gadkari also green flagged the first inter-city electric bus service in Maharashtra between Mumbai and Pune. Manufactured by Mitra Mobility Solution, the electric bus has 43 seats that can cover a range of 300 kilometres on a single charge & will be operated twice between 2 cities. The government further plans to build e-(electric) highways.

Two Famous Institutes got named after Sushma Swaraj

The Ministry of External Affairs renamed two institutions after former Indian Diplomat late Sushma Swaraj on the 68th Birth Anniversary i.e. 14th February 2020. The cultural centre, Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra has been renamed as Sushma Swaraj Bhavan and the Foreign Service Institute where Diplomats are trained will be known as Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service. It is worth recalling here, Sushma was the first youngest cabinet minister in the Haryana Government, first woman Chief Minister of New Delhi as well as the first woman spokesperson for a national political party in India.

The 5-star hotel above the tracks!!!

In February 2020, the Chairman of the Indian Railway Board, Vinod Kumar Yadav, Indian Railways announced his plan of preparing 5-Star Hotel on the tracks in Gandhinagar railway station of Gujarat to cater world-class facilities to passengers. This pilot project of India will be handled by the famous hotel chain Leela Group, which will be completed by December 2020. A roof will be put on the pillars near the tracks and the proposed hotel will be built on top of it. It will have 300 rooms that will be insulated from the sound of passing trains. And an airport-style retail model will be set up to help generate revenue for the Indian Railways.

UP launched a toll-free helpline for Board Exam 2020

The Uttar Pradesh Government launched toll-free helpline numbers to solve the queries of students for the upcoming Board Examinations. The helpline numbers 1800-180-5310 and 1800-180-5312 will remain active from 8 am to 8 pm. Several academicians and experts of different subjects will be made available on call, to solve the doubts of students. The Deputy Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Dinesh Sharma, who holds the education portfolio launched these toll-free helpline numbers.

Arvind Kejriwal will continue to be the CM of Delhi

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) party leader Arvind Kejriwal is all set to take oath as the Chief Minister (CM) of New Delhi on February 16, 2020, at Ramlila Maidan, Delhi, with his cabinet members for the third time. He has been the CM during 2013, 2015 and 2020. The AAP secured 62 of the 70 seats in the 2020 Assembly election. The party has sent a letter to the Lieutenant Governor Anil Baijal staking claim to form the government. Arvind Kejriwal is a graduate in Mechanical Engineering from Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Kharagpur, West Bengal. He has served in the Indian Revenue Service (IRS) as a Joint Commissioner of Income Tax in New Delhi and had led anti-corruption agitation in 2011 along with Indian social activist, Anna Hazare.

The pairing of smart and poor cities

In order to transform the poorly performing cities into smart cities, the Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs has recently paired up 20 best performing smart cities with 20 poorly performing cities. The top 20 smart cities viz. Ahmedabad, Varanasi, Ranchi, Udaipur, Nagpur, Bhopal, Surat, Kanpur, Visakhapatnam, Vellore, Tiruppur, Vadodara, Nashik, Agra, Dehradun, Davanagere, Kota, Pune, Indore, and Amravati will work as “sister city” for the same. So far under the mission, around 100 selected smart cities have identified 5151 projects worth Rs 2,05,018 crore which will be executed soon.

Priti K Shroff's "Messages from Messengers"

A book titled "Messages from Messengers" penned by Priti K Shroff's was launched on 12th February 2020 in Mumbai, Maharashtra. The book is about Indian culture and tradition and is suitable for everyone in all stages of life, as a tool for self-guidance. The MD and CEO of the Bombay stock exchange, Ashish Chauhan was the chief guest of the launching function while panellists Kiren Shrivastav (Founder Fempowerment and Chairperson of Council for Fair Business Practices), Mickey Mehta (Global holistic health guru and Health wizard), Sohrab Ardeshir (Actor and spiritualist practising mediumship for 20 years), Sanober Pardiwalla (Stunt woman and medium), Parmita Shroff, yoga teacher and Kamlesh Shroff, Chairman of Association of National Exchanges Members of India graced the occasion with their presence.

February 13: National Women's day

India commemorates the birth anniversary of independence activist, Sarojini Naidu or 'Nightingale of India' in the form of National Women's day on 13th February. She was born on 13th February 1879 in Hyderabad British India (now in Telangana, India). In 1925, she became the President of the Indian National Congress, she was among the forefront leaders who led the Civil Disobedience Movement and the Quit India Movement. She had also served in the capacity of first Governor of United Provinces from 15th August 1947 to 2nd March 1949. The Anti-imperialistic, Universal Suffragist, Women rights activist had made way for several women's movements in India. It should be noted that International Women's Day is observed on 8th March annually.

CISF took in BARC Bhabha Kavach

Dr Ajit Kumar Mohanty, Director of Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) handed over 55 Bhabha Kavach bulletproof jackets developed by BARC to Rajesh Ranjan, Director General of Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) at a ceremony at BARC Camp, Trombay in Mumbai, Maharashtra. It is India's lightest level III plus bulletproof jacket with 6.8 kgs nominal weight based on native hot-pressed boron carbide and carbon nanotube technologies. The newly inducted bullet proof jacket can stop 7.62 x 39 mm hard steel core bullets fired from AK 47 rifles, 5.56 x 45mm Ball MKM bullets of Indian Small Arms System (INSAS) rifles and Self Load Rifles (SLR)/Bolt action rifles with a back face signature of less than 15 mm. It has passed all the requisite ballistic tests as per the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) and the new Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS).

The latest approvals of cabinet

The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given nod to several projects. It has sanctioned Rs. 2500 crore capital infusion for three Public Sector General Insurance Companies (PSGICs) viz. Oriental Insurance Company Limited (OICL), National Insurance Company Limited (NICL) and United India Insurance Company Limited (UIICL). It has agreed to changes in the “Vivad se Vishwas Bill” to reduce tax litigations related to direct taxes pending in several debt recovery tribunals (DRTs) involving over Rs 9.32 lakh crore. Next is the Pesticide Management Bill, 2020 meant to protect the interests of farmers against spurious pesticides. Major Ports Authority Bill, 2020 is another one that has been approved to resolve disputes between port issues as well as to ensure the export in the international market. Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement between India & Sri Lanka is another one that received a green flag for the avoidance of double taxation and the prevention of financial evasion in relation to taxes on income. Apart from this, CCEA chaired by Narendra Modi approved MoU between India and Iceland in the field of sustainable fisheries development.

The 20th edition of ‘Hunar Haat’ 2020

New Delhi inaugurated the 20th edition of ‘Hunar Haat’ 2020 on 13th February 2020 on “Kaushal Ko Kaam” theme. It is an initiative of the Ministry of Minority Affairs displaying handmade indigenous products of more than 250 master artisans, craftsmen and culinary experts, who are participating in this event which will continue till 13th February 2020. The Central Government has granted 100 “Hunar Hubs” in different parts of the country to train master artisans, craftsmen. This event was organized earlier at different places in India like Delhi, Mumbai, Prayagraj, Lucknow, Jaipur, Puducherry and Indore. The next ‘Hunar Haat’ will be held at Ranchi from 29th February to 8th March and in Chandigarh from 13th to 22nd March 2020.

NIFM now will be ‘Arun Jaitley National Institute of Financial Management’

The Government of India renamed the National Institute of Financial Management (NIFM), Faridabad, Haryana, as “Arun Jaitley National Institute of Financial Management”. Established in 1993, NIFM, Faridabad was registered as a society under the aegis of Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance, which train officers of various finance & accounts service recruited by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) through the civil service examination and also officers of the Indian Cost Accounts Service (ICoAS). Late Arun Jaitley, former Union Finance Minister

and Padma Vibhushan awardee played a key role during the period of 26th May 2014 to 30th May 2019. He looked into the introduction of GST which brought the country under one tax regime, the merger of railway budget with general budget, the introduction of the Insolvency & Bankruptcy code etc.

Kerala hosted “CLIMFISHCON-2020”

The Department of Fisheries, Kerala and Cochin University of Science and Technology (CUSAT) School of Industries Fisheries organized a four-day International Conference “CLIMISHCON” on ‘Climate Change-Effective Adaptation for a Secure Future’ theme in Kochi, Kerala. More than 300 delegates from 12 nations including researchers, administrators, scientists, academicians, policymakers, entrepreneurs, fishers, aqua farmers and students are discussing issues like changes in Hydrological cycle, Ocean ecosystem, Fisheries and Food security due to Global climate change in this ongoing conference.

New bulletproof jacket developed by BARC

The Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) developed a new bulletproof jacket called “Bhabha Kavach”. The jackets are to be used by the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF). It has been approved by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) and National Institute of Justice. The nominal weight of the jacket is 6.8 kgs which is the lightest as compared to the other jackets that weigh around 17 kgs. It is the lightest level-3 plus jacket. The technology used to produce the jacket is based on carbon nanotube and hot-pressed boron carbide. It has been introduced under the Make in India initiative and is capable of stopping hard steel core bullets that are fired from AK 47 and self-loading rifles and bolt action rifles.

The UP government approves 2020 Ground Water Act

The Uttar Pradesh Cabinet chaired by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath approved Ground Water Act-2020 on February 11, 2020. The act aims to improve groundwater levels. The rainwater harvesting system has been made mandatory in all private and government schools and colleges. In the urban areas, if a landlord installs a submersible pump to build a house larger than 300 sqm area, then it will be necessary to install the rainwater harvesting system. Furthermore, the farmers and domestic users need not pay fees to use the pumps. The act will also penalize those polluting ground water through boring pipes.

Conclusion of Defence Expo

In the recently concluded DefExpo 2020 in Lucknow, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh predicted that India will pretty soon become a prominent centre of global defence manufacturing in coming years. This DefExpo projected a new identity of Uttar Pradesh in the defence sector and the Defence corridor was largely encouraged for attracting new investments with the signing of 23 agreements. The state was found to have unlimited potential and is on the verge of becoming a hub of defence production in the country. The DefExpo witnessed participation of a large number of exhibitors, bubbling of new partnerships and attracted more than 12 lakh visitors. Besides all this, the first-ever India-Africa Defence Ministers conclave also took place on the sideline of this Expo in which a Lucknow Declaration was adopted.

P Parameswaran passed away

9th February 2020 witnessed the death of founder-director of Bharatiya Vichara Kendram, P Parameswaran at Ottapalam in Kerala. He was one of the senior-most Pracharaks of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and former leader of the erstwhile Bharatiya Jana Sangh who was honoured with Padma Vibhushan in 2018 and Padma Shri in 2004 for Literacy and Education. The deceased was a prolific writer researcher and an embodiment of Indian thought and philosophy, who made immense contributions to the society through Vivekananda Kendra and Bharateeya Vichara Kendra. He served as editor in magazines like Kesari, Manthan, Yuva Bharathi and Vivekananda Kendra Patrika. He penned around 21 books, out of them, 'Marx and Vivekananda: A comparative study' and 'From Marx to Maharshi and Bhagavad Gita – Vision of a New World Order' were popular ones.

KL Rahul and the flurry of records

Although India lost the tri-series to New Zealand yet the tournament fetched victory for KL Rahul, who scored 112 runs off 113 deliveries in an innings comprised of nine boundaries and two sixes, to help India post a total of 296 runs. With this feat, the 27-year-old came into limelight and created several records. Rahul is now the second-fastest batsman to score four hundred for the Indian team, after having achieved the tally in 31 innings in comparison to 24 for Shikhar Dhawan, who was leading the charts. Rahul further scored the first ODI hundred batting at the number five position or below since MS Dhoni's 134 against England at Cuttack in Jan 2017. KL is also now the second Indian player to score a hundred in New Zealand while batting at the number five position or below, while Suresh Raina is the first player to do so, following his unbeaten 110 against Zimbabwe in Auckland during the 2015 edition of the World Cup.

Global MOOC performance rankings

According to the latest Global Massive Open Online Course (MOOC), performance ranking of Business schools, HEC Paris, France emerged as the topper. It was followed by Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, United States (US) and IIM-Bengaluru, Karnataka (India) at the second and the third spots respectively. Around 16 business schools worldwide offer open online courses on 3 major MOOC platforms viz. Coursera, edX and Futurelearn. It is worth knowing that IIM, Bengaluru offers 43 open online courses on the edX platform as well as professional certificate courses & 2 MicroMasters programs. IIMB online courses are also available on an Indian platform, Study Webs of Active Learning for Young Aspiring Minds (SWAYAM) created by the Ministry of Human Resources Development.

The battle against coronavirus

Recently the government of Kerala declared an outbreak of novel coronavirus as a state disaster after three people were tested positive for the infection in the state. The government then established a task force under the chairmanship of Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare, Dr Harsh Vardhan, to monitor the recent novel Coronavirus outbreak with the representatives from the Ministries of Health, Home, Civil Aviation and Women and Child Development (WCD). Further India banned the export of all kinds of personal protection equipment like clothing and masks for protecting people from airborne particles including coveralls and N95 masks on the pretext of the probable growing demand for such products to combat the calamity in the country. In addition to this, the Asian Development Bank has given nod for \$2 million as funding to combat the outbreak of novel coronavirus. Under this funding, regional technical assistance will be extended in Cambodia, China, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam. ADB has also partnered with the World Health Organisation and other regional experts to respond to the 2019 novel coronavirus situation.

The demise of Punjabi writer Jaswant Singh

The 101-year-old eminent Punjabi Writer, Novelist and Sahitya Academy Awardee Jaswant Singh Kanwal died in Punjab, due to age-related illness. He authored around 80 books and novels that portray the rural life of Punjab and contributed to the promotion of Punjab Language, Art and Literature through his works. Jaswant was presented with the Sahitya Academy Fellowship Award for his Book “Pakhi” (Hand Fan) in 1996 and Sahitya Academy Award in 1998 for his Novel “Toshali Di Hanso” (Laughter of Toshali). Later in 2007, he was honoured with the Sahitya Shiromani Award of the Punjab Government.

The latest achievement of IIT-H

Researchers of the Indian Institute of Technology, Hyderabad (IIT-H), Telangana with support of SERB and AT&T's CSR have developed a new essential-oil-based system of delivering medicines to the body for the treatment of fungal infections like vaginal infections, diaper rash, athletes foot and nail fungus caused by the Candida family of fungi. In order to curb the burst release of the ingredients, they used microcapsules to encase aromatic oils. They used microcapsules made of organic waste like polylactic acid microcapsules which are used extensively in the medical field. The microcapsules are said to have active substances further incorporated into a secondary barrier made of nanofibrous bacterial cellulose.

NSO revised India's GDP growth rate for 2018-19 to 6.1% from 6.8%

Recently National Statistics Office (NSO) of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) revised India's Gross Domestic Product growth rate for the FY 2018-19 to 6.1 % as against the earlier forecast of 6.8 % on account of decreased mining, manufacturing and agriculture.

As per the revised statistics, the real GDP or GDP at constant prices (the base year 2011-12) stood at Rs 139.81 lakh crore and Rs 131.75 lakh crore in 2018-19 and 2017-18 respectively. The growth rate was 6.1 % in 2018-19 and 7 % in 2017-18 whereas the Real Gross Value Added (GVA) growth in 2018-19 was 6%, which is lower than in 2017-18 (6.6%). Lower growth in agriculture, forests and fisheries, mining and allied activities, manufacturing, electricity, gas, water supply and other utility services and other services were some of the reasons behind this.

Vinod Shukla won first Mathrubhumi book of the year 2020 award

Renowned Hindi poet-novelist and 1999 Sahitya Akademi honouree Vinod Kumar Shukla has won the first Mathrubhumi Book of the Year award 2020 for his translated book 'Blue Is Like Blue', which speaks about the common people and their daily struggles. He received this award from Kerala based Malayalam newspaper Mathrubhumi at the Mathrubhumi International Festival of Letters 2020 that concluded in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala. Vinod Shukla had earlier won the Atta Galatta Bangalore Literature Festival Book Prize 2019 for best fiction for this book. It should also be noted that Arvind Krishna Mehrotra and Sara Rai have translated the stories of 'Blue Is Like Blue's into English.

Combination of Yum Restaurants & Devyani Intl

The Competition Commission of India (CCI) gave approval for the proposal of the combination of Yum Restaurants (India) Private Limited (YRIPL) and Devyani International Limited (DIL).

The proposal is that DIL is about to purchase some Equity Shareholding and sell some Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) restaurants. YRIPL is a private limited company in India. It is a part of YUM Brands, a U.S.A based Fast Food Corporation. In India, YRIPL operates restaurants under KFC, Pizza Hut and Taco Bell.

India developed a new Vaccine for Swine Fever

Indian Council of Agricultural Research's Indian Veterinary Research Institute (IVRI) has recently developed a cell culture Classical Swine Fever (CSF) vaccine. The CSF is one of the deadliest diseases of pigs that is causing a loss of Rs 400 crores of meat production in India annually. Ideally, 50 doses of the vaccine can be produced from a single rabbit's spleen. The newly invented vaccine gives immunity for 2 years as compared to the previous vaccines that provided immunity for 3 to 6 months. It should be noted that the total requirement of the vaccine in India is 22 million doses per year but hardly 1.2 million doses are being produced currently.

Waheeda Rehman honoured with Kishore Kumar Samman 2018

Renowned yesteryear Bollywood actress Waheeda Rehman was honoured with the National Kishore Kumar Samman of the Madhya Pradesh(MP) government for the year 2018. She received a cash prize of Rs. 2 lakh and a citation at her residence in Mumbai, Maharashtra from Madhya Pradesh Culture minister of MP Vijaylaxmi Sadho on 4th February 2020. Waheeda Rehman is one of Hindi film industry's most successful leading ladies with a string of box office hits and several awards.

'Antahpragnya 2020': India's biggest rural technical festival

India's biggest 3-day rural technical festival 'Antahpragnya 2020' was inaugurated in Rajiv Gandhi University of Knowledge Technologies (RGUKT), Basar, Nirmal District, Telangana by M Prashanthi, District Collector of Nirmal, Telangana. The theme of this fest for the year 2020 was "Spot and encourage rural tech innovators". Around 300 prototypes, working models, exhibits technologies such as automatic switch for water, homemade electricity, smoke absorber, automatic street lighting system, smart dustbins, zero budget farming, automatic irrigation etc. were put on display. It is worth knowing that the team of Antahpragnya in collaboration with Society for Space Education, Research and Development (SSERD) organized an Astrospace camp which to create awareness about the exciting career in space.

Conversion of Human Brain Signals into Meaningful Language

Indian Institute of Technology-Madras (IIT-M) developed an Artificial Intelligence technology to convert Brain signals of Speech-Impaired Humans into simple Human Language English. The researchers found this technology useful in learning what Nature is trying to communicate with us as well as it seems to help in the prediction of Monsoons, Earthquakes, Tsunami and other Natural calamities by converting their signals into Human Language. Brain signals are electrical signals that are generally in waveforms which can be decoded into meaningful Information using scientific languages viz. Physical Laws or Mathematical Transforms (Fourier transform and Laplace Transform), which were discovered by Sir Isaac Newton and Jean-Baptiste Joseph Fourier.

The 16th Mumbai International Film Festival

The 16th edition of the oldest international event for non-feature films in South Asia, Mumbai International Film Festival was held at the Nehru Centre Auditorium, Worli, Mumbai, Maharashtra on 3rd February 2020. The names of winners under several categories include Naked Wall (IDPA Award for Best Student Film); Grandfather (Dadasaheb Phalke Chitranagari Award for Best Debut Film of a Director (Govt of Maharashtra)); The Wetland's Wail (Special Award for Best Short Film on Water conservation & Climate Change (up to 15 mins.) (For Indian filmmakers only)); MIXI (Best Animation Film); Bebaak: Dying wind in her hair (Best Short Fiction (up to 45 minutes)); Atasi (Best Documentary film (below 60 minutes)); Sindhustan (Best Documentary Film (above 60 minutes)); Pariah Dog (Best Sound Design); The Saleswoman & Fiancees (Best Editing Film (Jointly share)); Bebaak: Dying wind in her hair (Best Cinematography) and many more. Under International Competition Section, Portrait of Suzanne & The Fox of the Palmgrove (Best Animation Film); An Essay of Rain (Best Short Fiction Film (up to 45 mins.)); Babenco: Tell Me When I Die (Best Documentary Film of the Festival).

Shaktikanta Das: 'Central banker of the year 2020, Asia-Pacific'

A British English-language monthly financial affairs publication owned by The Financial Times Ltd, The Banker magazine, has chosen the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) governor Shaktikanta Das as the 'Central Banker of the Year 2020', Asia-Pacific for encouraging growth and balancing the economy. Besides him, the head of the National Bank of Serbia, Jorgovanka Tabakovi has been chosen for the title of Global Central Banker award 2020.

Andhra Pradesh is in news

Andhra Pradesh green signalled India's first of its kind 'fruit train' from Tadipatri Railway Station in Anantapur district & from Kadapa district of Andhra Pradesh. This is the first time an entire

train carrying a load of 980 metric tonnes of locally grown bananas has been sent to the Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNP) in Mumbai, Maharashtra which will be exported to Iran under the brand name 'Happy Bananas'. While farmers from the Putlur region in Anantapur and Pulivendula in Kadapa district of AP will be exporting 'Green Cavendish' bananas to international markets. Besides this, the government of Andhra Pradesh has also launched a doorstep pension delivery scheme "YSR Pension Kanuka". Under the scheme, several welfare pensions will be delivered to the pensioners. The old-age pensioners' age has also been reduced from 65 to 60 years. After this, the number of beneficiaries has gone up to 54.64 lakh in 2020. It should be noted that out of Rs. 15, 675.20 crores earmarked by the government for the programme, Rs.1320.14 crore has already been released.

IAF'S AN-32 aircraft is on the lips

Indian Air Force's (IAF) successfully operated AN-32 aircraft powered with 10% blend of Indian bio-jet fuel. The aircraft took-off from Kushok Bakula Rimpochee Airport, Leh. This was the first time both engines of the aircraft were powered by bio-jet native fuel. Bio-jet fuel is being produced from non-edible 'Tree Borne Oils' which are grown and procured from the tribal areas of Chhattisgarh. Council of Scientific and Industrial Research- Indian Institute of Petroleum (CSIR-IIP) in Dehradun, Uttarakhand developed this technology in 2013. Prior to this, operational flight to Leh, the flight was tested along with performance validation at Chandigarh Air Base.

BoM & SBI: 'Good' in digital transactions in Dec 2019

According to the recently released government data, Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) and State Bank of India(SBI) was the only Public Sector Banks(PSBs) that were rated as "good" in digital transactions in December 2019. BoM scored 77 and SBI scored 68. The scores of other banks like Yes Bank, Fino Payments Bank and HDFC Bank were 76, ICICI Bank (74) and IDFC (73). While Axis Bank and IDBI Bank scored 71 each. A total of 9 private banks and 2 payment banks obtained good ratings on digital transactions in December 2019.

Wipro CEO and MD Abidali Neemuchwala has quit

In January 2020 Abidali Neemuchwala, the Chief Executive Officer(CEO) and Managing Director (MD) of Information Technology service providing company, Wipro has quit from the post. During his tenure, Wipro's stock recorded a growth of 13%, while the stocks of Infosys and TCS grew 33% and 78% respectively. Recently Wipro lost its 3rd position to HCL Technologies. Apart from this, Canara Bank MD & CEO R.A. Sankara Narayanan retired on attaining the age of "superannuation".

The demise of Padma Shri awardee Dalip Kaur

Renowned Punjabi novelist, Dalip Kaur Tiwana passed away at the age of 84 due to old age ailments. She was best known for novels ‘Teeli da Nishaan’ and ‘Sooraj te Samandar’. She had served as former president of the Punjabi Sahit Akademi. She was honoured with Padma Shri in 2004 for literature and education. But in 2015, Dalip had returned her Padma Shri award to express solidarity with writers who were protesting against the suppression of freedom of expression and communalism. The list of other prominent awards which she received includes Sahitya Akademi Award in 1971 for novel Eho Hamara Jivan, Saraswati Samman in 2001 for novel Katha Kaho Urvashi etc.

M.Ajit Kumar: The new chairman of CBIC

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved the appointment of M.Ajit Kumar as chairman of the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC). Ajit is an Indian Revenue Service officer of 1984 batch. Ajit has been a member of the CBIC and now has taken the place of Pranab Kumar. This appointment has come as a part of the closure of Sabka Vishwas scheme (last date on January 15, 2020).

CCTNS platform welcomed two new additions

The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) launched two police-related Citizen centric services– “Searching the missing persons” & “Generating vehicle NOC (No Objection Certificate)” on Crime & Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS) platform. Arvind Kumar, Director, Intelligence Bureau launched the online services that can be accessed through ‘digitalpolicecitizenservices.gov.in’ portal or through a link in the existing ‘Digital Police Portal’. He also inaugurated the Cyber Tipline Monitoring facility in NCRB, New Delhi. The portal has all the details of missing persons including photos. And Generate Vehicle NOC is meant to inform the buyer about the status of the vehicle before its second-hand purchase (suspicious or clear from police records), details can be searched through national database based on vehicle’s details.

ED Janak Raj: New member of the MPC

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI), nominated ED Janak Raj as the third internal member of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) on January 29, 2020. Comprised of 6 members, MPC is responsible for fixing the benchmark interest rate in India. With this appointment, ED Janak Raj has joined the row of internal members like Dr Chetan Ghate, Dr Pami Dua, Dr Ravindra H. Dholakia, Bibhu Prasad Kanungo and Shaktikanta Das headed by RBI Governor.

Only If MDR is zero then.....

An umbrella organisation for operating retail payments and settlement systems, National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) approved part of the Indian Banks' Association (IBA) request to remove interchange fees on Unified Payments Interface (UPI) and RuPay card transactions as long as the merchant discount rate (MDR) remains zero. MDR is the cost paid by a merchant to a bank for accepting payment from their customers via digital means and it is expressed in percentage of the transaction amount. But other fees like payments service provider (PSP) fee and switching fees are still intact as the decision removing them would have obstructed RBI's revenues and PSPs like PhonePe & Google-Pay.

The demise of Tushar Kanjilal

Renowned social worker, environmentalist, educationist & writer Tushar Kanjilal passed away at the age of 85 in Kolkata, West Bengal. The Government of India honoured him with the 4th highest civilian honour of Padma Shri in the year 1986. He was born in Bangladesh and was inspired by Marxist ideologies. He worked for the preservation of the Mangrove forests in the Sunderbans and had also penned a book, "Who killed the Sunderbans?"

Addition in Ramsar sites

In January 2020, ten more wetlands from India viz. Nandur Madhameshwar (Maharashtra), Keshopur-Miani, Beas Conservation Reserve, Nangal (Punjab), Nawabganj, Parvati Agra, Saman, Samaspur, Sandi and SarsaiNawar (Uttar Pradesh) have been declared as Ramsar sites. Ramsar sites are the sites of national importance, which are inducted under the Ramsar Convention for improving their conservation, restoration and rejuvenation. Ramsar Convention on wetlands was formed by UNESCO on 2nd February 1971 and was signed in Ramsar city of Iran. The convention came into force in 1975.

India's first and biggest 'walk-through' aviary

Chief Minister of Maharashtra Uddhav Thackeray inaugurated the country's first and biggest 'walk-through' aviary (birdcage) in Veermata Jijabai Bhosale Udyan and Zoo also known as Byculla Zoo in Mumbai, Maharashtra. The 44 feet tall aviary is spread across 18,234 sq feet and consists of 100 species of Indian and exotic birds. The bears, hyenas, leopards, foxes, barasingha and antelope are also there in the zoo and Asiatic Lion, tigers will be included soon. He also inaugurated 'Miyawaki' (method of planting maximum trees in the minimum area) at Bhakti Park in Wadala, Maharashtra. It will be implemented in 64 locations in the state.



Women entrepreneurship can create 170 million jobs

According to the report titled ‘Women Entrepreneurship in India – Powering the economy with her’, by Bain & Company and Google, Indian women can generate between 150–170 million job opportunities by 2030. This is more than 25% of the new jobs required for the entire working population until then. The report identifies six dominant segments of female entrepreneurs and estimates India to have 13.5–15.7 million enterprises owned by women, representing about 20% of all enterprises. Women entrepreneurs provide direct employment to an estimated 22-27 million people today. The report projects an opportunity to accelerate both quantity and quality of entrepreneurship to create over 30 million women-owned enterprises out of which 12 million can create employment.

HDFC, MasterCard and SAP concur for T&E Tech

On February 18, 2020, HDFC (Housing Development Finance Corporation) teamed up with MasterCard and SAP Concur collaborated to manage travel and other corporate expenses. HDFC Bank will offer a corporate credit card for business travellers, providing a one-stop solution for payment and expense management during business trips. Interest-free credit period for the card is up to 50 days. SAP Concur offers credit for travel, expense, and invoice management solutions and the corporate credit card is supported by MasterCard. Mankiran Chowhan, the managing director (Indian subcontinent) of SAP Concur said that by automating and integrating travel, expense, and invoice management, they intend to help customers build an intelligent spend management platform.

20th February : World Day of Social Justice

In order to create awareness against social injustice regarding gender, age, race, ethnicity, religion, culture or disability, World Day of Social Justice is celebrated annually worldwide on 20th February. The theme for this year was “Closing the Inequalities Gap to Achieve Social Justice” that inspired upholding of the principles of social justice by promoting gender equality, or the rights of native people or migrants. Many Organizations, including the United Nations and the International Labour Office conducted programmes for the same.

Barry O'Farrell: Australia's new high commissioner to India

In February 2020, Australia has appointed former New South Wales (NSW) premier Barry O'Farrell as the next high commissioner to India. He will succeed in Harinder Sidhu. Barry has served in the New South Wales (NSW) Parliament from 1995-2015, as the 43rd premier of the province. He has made a significant contribution as the Deputy Chair of the Australia-India Council Board. It is worth knowing here that India is an important trading partner of Australia, with 2-way investments worth 30.7 billion dollars and around 700,000 people of Indian Origin are living in Australia.

Times emerging economies university rankings 2020

On 19th February 2020, Times Higher Education's (THE) Emerging Economies University Rankings 2020, was released in which a total of 533 universities from 47 countries were ranked. The list was dominated by China's three universities viz. Tsinghua University (83.8), Peking University (83.0) and Zhejiang University (65.5) that secured the first, second and third ranks respectively. 56 institutes of India also got a place in this list. Among featured Indian institutes, Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore (Karnataka) emerged on the 16th rank with a score of 48.4. It was followed by IIT Kharagpur (32nd rank, 42.9 score), IIT Bombay (34th rank, 42.4 score), IIT Delhi (38th rank, 41.9 score), IIT Roorkee (58th rank, 38.4 score), IIT Indore (61st rank, 38.2 score), IIT Madras and IIT Ropar (63rd rank, 37.7 score), Institute of Chemical Technology (73rd rank, 37.3 score), IIT Kanpur (77th rank, 37.1 score) and Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham (90th rank, 35.3 score). The list included institutions which were classified by the London Stock Exchange's FTSE (Financial Times Stock Exchange) Group as "advanced emerging", "secondary emerging" or "frontier".

UAE: First Arab Nation to operate a reactor at its Nuclear power plant

In February 2020, the United Arab Emirates' National Nuclear Regulator issued an Operating license for a reactor at its Barakah nuclear power plant and with this, it has become the first Arab country in the world to operate a nuclear power plant. Korea Electric Power Corporation had built this nuclear power plant at an expenditure of USD 20 billion on the Gulf coast of Abu Dhabi. It is fully operational and can generate 5600 megawatts of electricity to cater to 25% of the nation's need.

Laureus world sports awards 2020

The Laureus World Sports Academy (a unique group of sporting legends) voted for the winners of Laureus world sports awards 2020 in each shortlisted category. The winners of these awards that

were felicitated in Berlin, Germany included Formula One driver Lewis Carl Davidson Hamilton (United Kingdom) & Footballer Lionel Andrés Messi Cuccittini (Argentina) (Laureus World Sportsman of the Year); Simone Arianne Biles (American Gymnast) (Laureus World Sportswoman of the Year); South Africa Men's Rugby Team (Laureus World Team of the Year); Egan Arley Bernal Gómez (Colombian cyclist) (Laureus World Breakthrough of the Year); Sophia Florsch (German racing driver) (Laureus World Comeback of the Year); Oksana Masters (Ukrainian-American Paralympic rower and cross-country skier) (Laureus World Sportsperson of the Year with a Disability); Chloe Kim (American snowboarder) (Laureus World Action Sportsperson of the Year 8); Carried on the shoulders of a nation – Sachin Tendulkar (Laureus Best Sporting Moment); Dirk Nowitzki (German basketball player) (Laureus Lifetime Achievement Award); Spanish Basketball Federation (Laureus Academy Exceptional Achievement Award) and South Bronx United (Laureus Sport for Good Award).

The United Nations Biodiversity Summit

On February 17, 2020, Indian Prime Minister Modi inaugurated the 13th edition of Conference of Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS COP 13) on 'Migratory Species connect the planet and together we welcome them home' theme in Gandhi Nagar, Gujarat. This conference is focussing on the threats that the aquatic species are facing due to coastal developments like roads, restaurants and hotels. Turtle Nesting, as well as the effects of insects' decline on migratory species, are also the agendas of this conference. The insects play an important role in the functioning of ecosystems, especially for the insectivorous migratory species. As per predictions, around 40% of the world insect species will get extinct in the next few decades. India is hosting this Biodiversity Summit for the first time. The migratory mammals like Gobi bear, Persian Leopard and Urial are also the agendas of this conference. With this India has marked the beginning of "Super Year of Biodiversity". The year includes the UN summit in September 2020 and will end in the UN Biodiversity Conference at the end of 2020. In Super Year, the Sustainable Development Goals of Climate, Ocean, Gender, life below water and land will be implemented.

World Pangolin Day

Globe observed the 9th edition of World Pangolin Day on the third Saturday of February i.e. 15th February 2020. Pangolins are the only mammals wholly-covered in scales and under threat, they immediately curl into a tight ball and use their sharp-scaled tails to defend themselves. As they eat ants, termites and larvae, they are also known as "the scaly anteater." They have no teeth and pick up food with their sticky tongues, which can sometimes reach lengths greater than the animal's body. They are the most trafficked mammal in the world and their scales are used in traditional

Chinese medicine and folk remedies. In India, Madhya Pradesh forest department & Wildlife Conservation Trust (WCT) has radio-tagged an Indian Pangolin (*Manis Crassicaudata*) for the first time in order to learn its ecology and develop an effective conservation plan.

The subtraction in USTR's list of subsidy preference

United States Trade Representative (USTR) has removed India, Brazil, Indonesia, Hong Kong, South Africa and Argentina from getting special preferences under the methodology for countervailing duty investigations. This list of subsidy preference accommodates developing countries to exempt them from investigations into whether they harm American industry with unfairly subsidised exports. In case of India its Gross National Income (GNI) is below \$12,375 or ₹8.82 lakh but being a member of the G-20 and having a share of 0.5% or more of world trade, the United States considers it as a developed country. Apart from this, in order to make imposing of countervailing duties (CVDs) easier on goods imported from India and certain other countries, the U.S. government has changed an administrative rule for the same.

The FIH 2020 awards

The International Hockey Federation (FIH) announced awards for the year. The names of winners include Manpreet Singh Pawar (India, FIH Men's Player of the Year 2019); Eva de Goede (Netherlands, FIH Women's Player of the Year 2019); Vincent Vanasch (Belgium, FIH Men's Goalkeeper of the Year 2019); Rachael Lynch (Australia, FIH Women's Goalkeeper of the Year 2019); Colin Batch (Australia, FIH Men's Coach of the Year 2019) and Alyson Regina Annan (Australia, FIH Women's Coach of the Year 2019). It is worth noting here that Manpreet Singh Pawar, the captain of India men's national field hockey team, has become the first Indian to receive this honour. He played his first match in 2011 and has played over 260 matches & under his leadership, the Indian team won the FIH Olympic qualifier to secure a berth for the Tokyo Olympic Games 2020. He has also appeared in the 2012 London and 2016 Rio Olympics.

NASA's missions

National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) is ready with its new laser-toting robot or rock-vaporizing instrument 'SuperCam' for studying mineralogy and chemistry on Mars from up to about 20 feet (7 meters) away, which will help scientists in finding the signs of fossilized microbial life on the Red Planet. SuperCam is a part of seven instruments aboard the Mars 2020 rover. This mission is part of NASA's Mars Exploration Program which will be launched between 17th July and 5th August 2020 from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, Florida. It will land at Jezero Crater of Mars on 18th February 2021. The mission duration will be of one Mars year i.e.

687 Earth days. Apart from this, the US scientists of Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT), New York discovered the newborn massive planet closer to earth called “2MASS 1155-7919 b” which is just 330 light-years from Earth via Gaia space observatory. It has a mass just 10 times the size of Jupiter. It is only about 5 million years old, about one thousand times younger than our sun and at 600 times the distance the Earth orbits the Sun.

‘Top 500 Banking Brands 2020’

According to the latest ‘Top 500 Banking Brands 2020’ list, India’s IndusInd Bank has topped the list of ‘Highest increase in brand value’ among global banks. It’s brand value increased to 122% over the past 12 months. The bank registered total assets of Rs 3.1 lakh crore at the end of Q3 FY20. It was followed by Vietnam’s Vietcombank and US’s Chemical Bank with 99% and 88% increase respectively. While in the “Top 50 By Total Brand Value by Country” list, China emerged as the topper, followed by the United States (US), Canada, the United Kingdom (UK) and Japan at the second, third, fourth and fifth spots respectively. India occupied the 8th spot in this list with the brand value of 26,516 \$m in 2020 showing an increase of 13% in comparison to 23,409 \$m in 2019.

February 12: International Darwin Day

Globe celebrated the 211th birth anniversary of the father of evolutionary biology, Charles Darwin on 12th February 2020. Born on 12th February 1809 at Shrewsbury, Shropshire, England, he contributed to evolutionary and plant science. Published in 1859 by British publisher, John Murray, Darwin’s ‘Origin of Species’ was selected as the most influential academic book in history in 2015. Several events were conducted around the globe to commemorate the occasion, while a full month celebration is being observed at the birthplace of Darwin since 2003.

The deadly disease caused by new coronavirus has a name - Covid-2019

The World Health Organization(WHO) says the official name for the disease caused by the new coronavirus is Covid-19 — CoronaVirus Disease, 2019. The disease that has infected more than 40,000 people around the world now has a name. It comes after the death toll from the virus passed one thousand. According to the Coronavirus Study Group of the International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses, the microbe (virus) itself is now called Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2, or SARS-CoV-2. The disease caused by the 2003 coronavirus was named SARS, for severe acute respiratory syndrome. The other coronavirus that occasionally infects people causes an illness called MERS, for the Middle East respiratory syndrome.

The United States approves the sale of Integrated Air Defence Weapon System to India.

The United States of America allowed the sale of “Integrated Air Defence Weapon System” (IADWS) to India. The value of the system is estimated at 1.86 billion USD. India aims to buy the IADWS in order to modernize its armed forces to counter threats posed by air attacks. The US President shall visit India between February 23 and February 26, 2020. The IADWS includes Air Defence Weapon System, AMRAAM Missiles, NASAMS-II, the surface to air missiles, radars, etc. This has become an important move for India because China is undertaking massive military modernization. It is also increasing its presence in the Indian Ocean Region.

Iran launched a new ballistic missile ‘Raad-500’

Iran’s Revolutionary Guards launched a short-range ballistic missile, “Raad-500” on February 9, 2020, to honour the former head Quds Force, a unit of Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) Major General Qassem Soleimani, who was killed in a drone strike by the US in Baghdad airport in first week of January 2020. The new missile is well equipped with a power generation engine ‘Zoheir’ (which is made of alloy) to place the satellite into orbit as Zoheir is lighter in comparison to the steel engine built earlier, so it is much easier for the missile to travel faster. In comparison to previously made Fateh-110 missile, the Raad-500 missile is half the weight, however, its firepower is 500 km i.e. 200 km more than Fateh-110 missile, that was unveiled in the year 2002.

Oscars 2020

US Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences announced the world's most prestigious Film Awards, “Oscar Awards” for the year 2020. The 92nd award function was held at the Dolby Theater in the city of Los Angeles, USA, on 9th February 2020. The names of winners in different categories include Joaquin Phoenix (Joker) (Best Actor in a Leading Role); Renee Zellweger (Judy) (Best Actress in a Leading Role); Brad Pitt (Once Upon a Time In Hollywood) (Best Actor in a Supporting Role); Laura Dern (Marriage Story) (Best Actress in a Supporting Role); Parasite (Best Original Screenplay); Jojo Rabbit (Best Adapted Screenplay); Little Women (Best Costume Design); Bombshell (Best Makeup and Hairstyling); 1917 (Best Visual Effects); 1917 (Best Cinematography); Ford v Ferrari (Best Sound Editing); Toy Story – 4 (Best Animated Feature Film) and Learning to Skateboard in a Warzone (If You are a Girl) (Best Documentary Short Subject). The winners received the Oscar trophy made of black metal-plated Britannium on a black metal base. The statue is 13.5 inches (34 cm) long, 8.5 pounds (3.85 kg) having the shape of a warrior carrying a sword standing on a film reel.

Discovery of a monster galaxy XMM-2599

According to the latest publication of Astrophysical Journal, scientists at the University of California, United States have discovered a monster galaxy ‘XMM-2599’ that existed around 12 billion years ago. This galaxy lies about 12 billion light-years from Earth. It is worth recalling here that the Big Bang created the universe 13.82 billion years ago. It was found that even before the universe was 2 billion years old, XMM-2599 had already formed a mass of more than 300 billion suns that made it an ultramassive galaxy and then became inactive by the time the universe was only 1.8 billion years old. The researchers employed the W. M. Keck Observatory’s powerful Multi-Object Spectrograph for Infrared Exploration or MOSFIRE, which is installed on a telescope at the Keck Observatory in Hawaii for this information.

US President Donald declared “not guilty”

US President Donald Trump who had been questioned by the House of Representatives has now been declared “non-guilty” at the Senate trial. He was accused of charges that he had taken help from Ukraine to bolster his 2020 re-election. But two-thirds of the senators pronounced him not guilty. With this, he has become the third President in US history, who was called for questioning by the House of Representatives and acquitted by the Senate. Prior to him, the other two Presidents were Bill Clinton in 1999 and Andrew Johnson in 1868, who faced the same ordeal. It is worth knowing that the Constitution of the United States authorizes the House of Representatives to remove a US President over a simple majority vote.

NASA & ESA will capture the image of Sun’s poles

National Aeronautics & Space Administration (NASA) and European Space Agency (ESA) launch of a new spacecraft- “The Solar Orbiter Spacecraft” to take first pictures of Sun’s north and south poles at an expenditure of \$1.5 billion on 7th February 2020. The proposed spacecraft has been launched from Cape Canaveral, the United States via United Launch Alliance (ULA) Atlas V Rocket. This solar orbiter mission has 7 years lifetime and will reach 24 degrees above the sun’s equator increasing to 33 degrees with an additional 3 years extended mission operations. The spacecraft will pass within 26 million miles (42 million kilometres) of the sun which will be the nearest approach. Equipped with 4 in-situ instruments and six remote sensing imagers, Solar Orbiter will pass inside the orbit of Mercury. It will use the gravity of Venus and Earth, rotate itself out of the ecliptic plane to take pictures of the Sun’s poles. It will directly have an on-view of solar winds on solar poles and will record the 11-year cycle of sunspot waxes and wanes. This solar orbiter will be the second major mission to the inner solar system after Parker Solar Probe in 2018.

Fitch forecast India's 5.6 % GDP growth for FY 21

An American credit rating agency, Fitch Ratings Inc. has recently put out its 'India's economic growth outlook'. It has estimated India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth to 5.6 % for the financial year-FY21. For the current fiscal 2019-20 (FY 20), GDP is projected at 4.6 %. This estimation is less than what the central government had estimated in the Economic Survey 2020. Fitch has also predicted that in the fiscal year 2022, government debt will remain 70 % of total GDP. Reduction in income tax rates, emphasis on foreign investment, investment in infrastructure and some schemes will play a key role in the fluctuation of GDP.

UAE unveiled New Natural Gas Reserves

Shallow natural gas reserves of about 80 trillion cubic feet have been discovered between the Emirates of Abu Dhabi and Dubai. This has put the total reserves of natural gas of UAE to 273 trillion cubic feet conventional gas and 160 trillion cubic feet unconventional gas. Besides this, UAE has also announced the discovery of 7 billion barrels of oil that has raised the crude reserves of the country to 105 billion barrels making it the sixth-largest in the world.

Albin Kurti: The New Prime Minister of Kosovo

The former rebel leader Albin Kurti has become the new and fourth Prime Minister of the Republic of Kosovo by its parliament. Albin took the place of Ramush Haradinaj who had resigned from the post in July 2019 when he was called for an inquiry at the war crimes court in The Hague, Netherlands. Albin is the leader of the political party Vetevendosje (Self Determination), was popular as Kosovo's Che Guevara (Marxist leader) by reporters in the 1990s when he organised mass student protest against the repression of Serbia. He had served as the Vice-President of the University of Prishtina Student Union in Kosovo and had been the main organizer of non-violent demonstrations in 1997 and 1998.

World Cancer Day

The world observed 4th February as World Cancer Day to create awareness about cancer and to encourage its prevention, detection, and treatment. It is worth knowing here that Cancer is the second leading cause of death worldwide. As per recent warning of the World Health Organization (WHO) cancer cases are likely to rise by 81 percent in low and middle-income countries by 2040 on account of a lack of investment in prevention and care. WHO further commented that the vulnerable countries have focused their limited resources on combating infectious diseases and improving maternal and child health instead of fighting cancer.

Mo O'Brien: First deaf person row across the Atlantic Ocean

60-year-old pharmacy worker Mo O'Brien created a record of rowing an ocean by finishing a 3,000-mile journey across the Atlantic on last day of January 2020 and with this, she has become the first deaf person to traverse the mighty ocean by rowing. She along with her daughter Bird Watts, and their friend Claire Allinson, landed on the Caribbean island of Antigua 49 days after setting out from the Canary Island of La Gomera in December 2019. The Ocean Rowing Society, which is responsible for monitoring ocean rowing records acknowledged her feat.

India-Maldives agreements

India and Maldives have inked five agreements worth 2.49 million dollars for establishing the Addu Tourism zone in five islands of Addu atoll situated in the Maldives. The High Commissioner of India Sunjay Sudhir, Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdulla Shahid and Addu City Council were the signatories. Later a sixth agreement regarding a bottled water plant in Hoarafushi was added to the list. All these six projects are grant projects coming under India's High Impact Community Development Scheme (HICDP).

The Unseen can be seen now!

The world's largest solar telescope, Daniel K. Inouye Solar Telescope (DKIST), has captured the first highest-resolution image of the Sun's turbulent surface from Hawaiian island of Maui. The 13-foot mirror reflected the Sun's appearance as a boiling pot of popcorn. The plasma, which covers the sun, appears to boil in the images. The Solar Telescope will also map the magnetic fields within the Sun's corona, where solar eruptions occur that can affect life on Earth. This telescope will provide an insight into what drives space weather and ultimately help forecasters to make better predictions about solar storms.

Brexit eventually happened

On 31st January 2020 Britain formally gave up membership of the European Union and that brought an end of nearly four years of political upheavals. In 2016, Britons had voted to leave the bloc after 47 years of membership by a slim majority. Brexit followed two general elections, the ouster of two prime ministers and reshaped politics. The historic moment was well celebrated via a series of events including marches and candlelight vigils organized by both Brexiteers and pro-EU demonstrators. Prime Minister Boris Johnson considered this divorce from Brussels as a moment of real national renewal and change spelling another beginning instead of an end.

World Leprosy Day

30th January 2020 was observed as World Leprosy Day on “Leprosy isn’t what you think” theme. Observed on the last Sunday of January, it is meant to increase public awareness about this highly contagious infection caused by the bacterium *Mycobacterium leprae*, also known as Hansen’s disease. This day was instituted by the French humanitarian Raoul Follereau as a tribute to Mahatma Gandhi, who helped people infected with leprosy. Currently, the World Health Organization Goodwill Ambassador for Leprosy Elimination is Yohei Sasakawa.

The third Global Potato Conclave in Gujarat

Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi addressed the third edition of the Global Potato Conclave at Gandhinagar, Gujarat via video conference. Indian Potato Association (IPA), Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), New Delhi, and ICAR-Central Potato Research Institute, Shimla, Himachal Pradesh and International Potato Center (CIP), Lima, Peru together organized this event. The conclave covered 3 major events viz. Potato Conference, Agri Expo and Potato Field Day. It is worth noting that Gujarat leads in potato production in India and has been on number 1 position for the last 10 years. The event recorded the creation of a new record as an amount of Rs. 12,000 crore was transferred directly to the bank accounts of 6 crore farmers under the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) facility.



India : Winner of Cairns Cup chess tournament

Indian grandmaster Koneru Humpy has won the second edition of Cairns Cup Chess tournament held at St.Louis, US. She lifted the title after finishing 6 points off 9 rounds and received a cash prize of \$45,000. She was followed by reigning world champion Ju Wenjun, who finished with 5.5 points at 2nd spot, Russia's Alexandra Kosteniuk, who finished at the 3rd spot with 5 points, Ukrainian Mariya Muzychek at 4th spot and India's Harika Dronavalli at 5th spot with 4.5 points.

Official slogan of FIFA Under-17 Women's World Cup 2020

In February 2020, Official slogan of FIFA Under-17 Women's World Cup 2020, 'Kick Off the Dream' was announced. This tournament will begin on 2nd November 2020 and Ahmedabad (Gujarat), Bhubaneswar (Odisha), Guwahati (Assam), Kolkata (West Bengal) and Navi Mumbai (Maharashtra) will be the venues for the same. 16 teams will play across 32 matches to win the title and the final match will be held at Dr D Y Patil Stadium, Navi Mumbai, Maharashtra on 21st November 2020.

The 2020 Tokyo Olympics Motto: "United by Emotion" to

The Tokyo Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic games revealed the official motto, "United By Emotion" on February 17, 2020, that reflects the "universal values" and "unifying power of sport", for the upcoming 2020 Olympics, which will take place in Tokyo, Japan from July 24, 2020, to August 9, 2020. The motto underlines the power of sport to bring together people from diverse backgrounds to connect & celebrate in a way that reaches beyond their differences. It is worth knowing here that although the official Olympic motto is "Citius, Altius, Fortius" or "Faster, Higher, Stronger", yet each host city selects its own motto to accompany that edition of the Games.

India's Robin Singh became Director of UAE Cricket

Emirates Cricket Board appointed former India all-rounder Robin Singh as UAE's Director of Cricket on 12th February 2020. This has been done after the dismissal of head coach Douglas

Robert Brown. Robin Singh represented India for 1 test and 136 ODIs between 1989 & 2001 and scored 2236 runs in ODIs at an average of 25.95 and a best of 100. The player was also associated with the Mumbai Indians franchise of Indian Premier League, Caribbean Premier League's Barbados Tridents since 2013 & T10 franchises in the T10 league. It is worth knowing here that Robin was born in South America and has conducted coaching clinics in the UAE.

The 13th ESPNcricinfo Awards 2019

Sports news website, ESPNcricinfo announced the 13th edition of the Annual ESPNcricinfo Awards 2019 under 12 categories. The names of winners include Eoin Joseph Gerard Morgan (England, Captain of the year award); Ben Stokes (England, ODI batting performance of the year); Kusal Perera (Sri Lanka, Test batting performance of the year); Kemar Roach (West Indies, Test bowling performance of the year); Matt Henry (New Zealand, ODI bowling performance of the year); Gleen Maxwell (Australia, T20I batting performance of the year); Lasith Malinga (Sri Lanka, T20I bowling performance of the year); Jofra Archer (England, Debutant of the year); Meg Lanning (Australia Women's batting performance of the year); Ellyse Perry (Australia, Women's bowling performance of the year); George Munsey (Scotland, Associate batting performance of the year) and Bilal Khan (Oman, Associate bowling performance of the year)

Australia won ICC women's championship trophy 2020

Australia booked the International Cricket Council Women's Championship trophy 2020 for the second time on February 8, 2020. Meghann Moira Lanning (also known as Meg Lanning) had steered the winning team. Earlier, they did this feat in 2017 during the first edition between 2014–16. The ICC Women's Championship has given hosts New Zealand and four top teams a direct place in the World Cup 2021. And With this victory, Australia has secured a berth for the same. The remaining teams will lock horns in qualifiers through the Women's Cricket World Cup Qualifier 2020 scheduled to take place in Sri Lanka from July 3 – 19, 2020.

The 13th ICC Under 19 Cricket World Cup 2020

The 13th edition of international limited-overs cricket tournament 2020 ICC Under-19 Cricket World Cup saw a conclusion on 9th February 2020. Administered by the International Cricket Council (ICC), the tournament witnessed participation of 16 teams that played 48 matches. Bangladesh won the under-19 World Cup title for the first time. Bangladesh captain Akbar Ali was adjudged as the Man of the Match, while India's Yashasvi Jaiswal, who scored the highest 400 runs in the tournament, was adjudged as Player of the Tournament.

Novak Djokovic claimed his 8th Men's singles title

Serbia's Novak Djokovic won his record 8th Men's singles title in Australian Open at Rod Laver Arena in Melbourne. He defeated the first-time Australian Open finalist, Dominic Thiem of Austria, by 6-4, 4-6, 2-6, 6-3, 6-4. This was his 17th Grand Slam title. He has become the 3rd man to win at least 8 titles at a Grand Slam after Roger Federer (8 at Wimbledon) and Rafael Nadal (12 at French Open). It is worth knowing here that he has also become the 1st man in the Open Era of men's singles tennis to win a Grand Slam in 3 different decades. Prior to him, although Ken Rosewall had won Grand Slam titles in 3 different decades between the 1950s and the 1970s but all of them did not fall in the Open Era.

Deepa Malik became President of Paralympic Committee of India

India's only woman Paralympic medalist Deepa Malik got elected as President of the Paralympic Committee of India. Coming from Sonapat, Haryana, she won a silver in shot put F-53 event in the 2016 Rio Paralympic games. She was honoured with Padma Shri award, Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award and had also won silver in the IPC World Championships in 2011 in the shot put F 52-53 event. She also clinched silver in the discus (F 52-53) and javelin throw (F 53-54) events in 2108 Asian Games in Indonesia.

Madan Lal, R.P. Singh & Sulakshana entered the BCCI.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has announced the appointment of its 3-member Cricket Advisory Committee(CAC) comprised of Madan Lal, R.P. Singh & Sulakshana and their term of appointment is 1 year. Madan Lal represented India in 39 Tests and 67 One Day Internationals (ODI). He was also part of the Indian team during the 1983 World Cup where India won against West Indies. R.P Singh played for India in 14 Tests, 58 ODIs, 10 T20I (Twenty Twenty International) and was part of the Indian team which won the World T20 against Pakistan. Sulakshana had played two Tests, 46 ODIs and 31 T20Is for India in her 11-year long career.

Haryana felicitated Olympic participants

In February 2020, the Government of Haryana aired an announcement about providing Rs 15 lakhs to Olympic participants from Haryana and Rs 6 crore to the winners at the Olympic Games 2020. Besides this, the Government has also increased the prize money for players participating at Asian Games and Common Wealth Games. The Gold Medalists of Asian Games will be provided with Rs 3 crores whereas the winners of Common Wealth Games will be provided with Rs 1.5 crores. Apart from this, the government will provide pension to national award winners like Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Awardees, Dhyanchand and Arjuna Awardees.



Current Affairs

- In January 2020, the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) appointed former Executive Director A.D.M. Chavali of as its new panel member of the Advisory Board for Banking Frauds (ABBF).

(a) SBI (b) ICICI (c) IOB
(d) HDFC (e) IDBI
- Which of the following nations topped the 2019 Global Go To Think Tank Index Report?

(a) USA (b) Belgium (c) France
(d) UK (e) Netherlands
- Indian Navy, Mumbai (Maharashtra) has defeated South Central Railway (SCR), Secunderabad (Telangana) to win the 54th All India Bombay Gold Cup Tournament title in February 2020.

(a) Basketball (b) Hockey (c) Football
(d) Chess (e) Tennis
- Indian Navy, Mumbai (Maharashtra) has defeated South Central Railway (SCR), Secunderabad (Telangana) to win the 54th All India Bombay Gold Cup Tournament title in February 2020.

(a) Basketball (b) Hockey (c) Football
(d) Chess (e) Tennis
- The UK Government launched around Rs 37 crore Innovation challenge fund in India for future mobility in Maharashtra and artificial intelligence (AI) in

(a) Karnataka (b) Tamil Nadu (c) Kerala
(d) Telangana (e) Andhra Pradesh

6. Which of the following nations hosted the Barca Academy Cup – Asia Pacific 2020 ?
(a) India (b) Australia (c) Turkey
(d) China (e) Singapore
7. Mohammed Tawfiq Allawi became Prime Minister of
(a) Iran (b) Iraq (c) Afghanistan
(d) Turkey (e) Syria
8. Sachin Bansal, co-founder of has resigned from the post of independent director of Ujjivan Small Finance bank.
(a) Paytm (b) Flipkart (c) Nestle
(d) Mphasis (e) Kotak Mahindra
9. Which of the following state governments banned the online lottery scheme sales to check illegal sales in January 2020 last week?
(a) Madhya Pradesh (b) Arunachal Pradesh (c) Andhra Pradesh
(d) Uttar Pradesh (e) Punjab
10. Which of the following received the Banking, Financial Services & Insurance (BFSI) Digital Innovation Awards 2020 for Cloud Solutions ?
(a) LIC Housing Finance Limited
(b) ICICI Home Finance Company Limited
(c) IDBI Home finance Limited
(d) PNB Housing Finance Limited
(e) Bajaj Housing Finance Limited
11. Which of the following words has been named as Oxford Hindi Word of the Year for 2019?
(a) Sansad (b) Samvidhan (c) Adhiniyam
(d) Loksatta (e) Adhyaksh
12. What was the venue for the fourth East Asia Summit 2020?
(a) Kerala (b) Karnataka (c) Tamil Nadu
(d) Telangana (e) Andhra Pradesh

13. According to “Public Enterprises Survey 2018-19” emerged as the most profitable.
(a) BSNL (b) NTPC (c) MTNL
(d) ONGC (e) IOC
14. India won bronze in the Badminton Asia team championships 2020 held in
(a) Singapore (b) Malaysia (c) Thailand
(d) Sri Lanka (e) Philippines
15. The fourth National Conference regarding Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) took place in
(a) Rajasthan (b) Gujarat (c) Bihar
(d) Madhya Pradesh (e) Maharashtra
16. In February 2020 South Central Railways zone became India’s first to haveenergy-neutral stations.
(a) 10 (b) 11 (c) 12
(d) 13 (e) 14
17. In February 2020, Vinay Dube became CEO of
(a) IndiGo (b) Air India (c) SpiceJet
(d) GoAir (e) AirAsia India
18. In February 2020, the 8th edition of Ganga Kayak Festival was celebrated in
(a) Uttarakhand (b) Uttar Pradesh (c) Bihar
(d) Jharkhand (e) West Bengal
19. Dharampal Satyapal Limited won the Best In-House direct tax Team of the Year award in the..... edition of BRICS CCI Annual Direct Tax Summit & Awards 2020
(a) First (b) Second (c) Third
(d) Fourth (e) Fifth
20. The Government of India touched% of the full year target in December, 2019.
(a) 112.4 (b) 131.5 (c) 132.4
(d) 133.9 (e) 135.1



ANSWERS



- 1.(c)** In January 2020, the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) appointed former Executive Director A.D.M. Chavali of Indian Overseas Bank (IOB) as its new panel member of the Advisory Board for Banking Frauds (ABBF). The board aims to investigate allegations against officials in General Managers' ranking involved in fraud cases of worth above Rs.50 crores.
- 2.(a)** Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (CEIP) of USA topped the 2019 Global Go To Think Tank Index Report. It was followed by Belgium's Bruegel and French Institute of International Relations (IFRI) in the 2nd and 3rd place respectively. India's Observer Research Foundation (ORF) was ranked at 27th place.
- 3.(b)** Indian Navy, Mumbai (Maharashtra) has defeated South Central Railway (SCR), Secunderabad (Telangana) by 4-1 to win the 54th All India Bombay Gold Cup Hockey Tournament title for the 1st time in the final played at Mahindra Hockey Stadium, Churchgate, Mumbai, Maharashtra. Ajinkya Jadhav 's hat-trick made the Indian Navy win the title.
- 4.(b)** Indian Navy, Mumbai (Maharashtra) has defeated South Central Railway (SCR), Secunderabad (Telangana) by 4-1 to win the 54th All India Bombay Gold Cup Hockey Tournament title for the 1st time in the final played at Mahindra Hockey Stadium, Churchgate, Mumbai, Maharashtra. Ajinkya Jadhav 's hat-trick made the Indian Navy win the title.
- 5.(a)** The UK Government launched around Rs 37 crore Innovation challenge fund in India for future mobility in Maharashtra and artificial intelligence (AI) in Karnataka. This fund is meant for devising tech solutions to social, economic and environmental challenges in India.

- 6.(a)** India hosted the Barca Academy Cup – Asia Pacific 2020 from January 30 -February 2, 2020 in Gurgaon, Haryana for the second straight year. Total 48 teams from India, Australia, Turkey, China, Singapore, Japan and Spain played in 4 categories namely under 9 (U-9), U-11, U-13 and U-15 in this football tournament.
- 7.(b)** President Barhim Salih of Iraq appointed 65 years old Mohammed Tawfiq Allawi as the new Prime Minister after a long 2019 Iraq Protests named as Tishreen revolution (October revolution) or Iraqi Intifada. He has taken the place of former PM Nouri al-Maliki.
- 8.(b)** Sachin Bansal, co-founder of Flipkart has resigned from the post of independent director of Ujjivan Small Finance bank. He did so to look into his Chaitanya India Fin Credit Pvt. Ltd (CIFCPL) that has applied for a universal banking licence on January 10, 2020.
- 9.(e)** The government of Punjab has banned the sale of all types of online lottery schemes under section 5 of the Lotteries (Regulation) Act 1998. The act will not only check illegal lottery business but will also encourage Punjab’s tax and non tax revenue.
- 10.(e)** Bajaj Housing Finance Limited received the Banking, Financial Services & Insurance (BFSI) Digital Innovation Awards 2020 for Cloud Solutions during the Express BFSI Technology Conclave held in Pune, Maharashtra which is one of the largest meetings of IT-decision makers, senior executives and partners in India.
- 11.(b)** “Samvidhan” has been named as Oxford Hindi Word of the Year for 2019. It received widespread attention in August 2019 with the repealing of Article 370 and article 35(A) of the Indian Constitution.
- 12.(c)** The fourth East Asia Summit 2020 on maritime security cooperation 2020 held in Chennai, Tamil Nadu. It was jointly organised by the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India in collaboration with the governments of Australia and Indonesia
- 13.(d)** According to “Public Enterprises Survey 2018-19” Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) with 15.3 % registered profit emerged as the most profitable company. It was followed by Indian Oil Corporation(IOC) and National Thermal Power Corporation Limited (NTPC).

- 14.(e)** India got defeated by two-time defending champions Indonesia with 2-3 scores and won bronze in the Badminton Asia team championships 2020 held in Manila, Philippines. This is the 2nd time that India has won a bronze medal in this championship. In 2016, it won the first bronze at Hyderabad, Telangana.
- 15. (a)** Secretary in Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Sanjay Agarwal inaugurated the fourth National Conference regarding Review of Implementation of Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) in Udaipur, Rajasthan. PMFBY provides a comprehensive insurance cover to farmers against failure of the crop.
- 16.(d)** In February 2020 South Central Railways zone became India's first to have 13 energy-neutral stations. The number is highest amongst all the zones across the Indian Railways network. The total capacity of all the solar panels installed at the 13 energy neutral stations is 99 kWp at a cost of Rs 50 lakh.
- 17.(d)** In February 2020, Vinay Dube became CEO of GoAir. He has taken place of Cornelis Vrieswijk. Vinay Dube has served as CEO of Jet Airways before. He has also served as a senior vice president (Asia Pacific) at Delta Airlines.
- 18.(a)** In February 2020, the 8th edition of Ganga Kayak Festival was celebrated in Uttarakhand. It was organized by the Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board and the Adventure Sports Society. 45 men and 6 women athletes from Russia, Australia and Nepal participated in this event.
- 19.(b)** Dharampal Satyapal Limited won the Best In-House direct tax Team of the Year award in the second edition of BRICS CCI Annual Direct Tax Summit & Awards 2020. It was rewarded for resolving the issues related to direct tax and its implications.
- 20.(c)** The Government of India touched 132.4 % of the full year target in December, 2019. The gap between revenue and expenditure is known as fiscal deficit. It was 9,31,725 crores of rupees in December, 2019.