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India-Brazil Business Forum

India and Brazil inked 15 agreements during India-Brazil Business Forum on January 27, 2020. Trade monitoring mechanism. The agreements covered bilateral cooperation in areas like trade, cyber, security, information technology, animal husbandry, sugarcane and many more. The countries have set a target to increase bilateral trade to 15 billion USD by 2022. Among these, Animal Husbandry is the newly identified area of cooperation. In context to sugarcane, Brazil had a complaint that India was extending support to local sugarcane growers but now the duo have agreed to address the issue bilaterally.

Andhra Pradesh dissolved its Legislative Council

The Legislative Council of Andhra Pradesh is said to have stalled two bills viz. AP Capital Region Development Authority Repeal Bill and Decentralization bill that were passed by the assembly as a result the Andhra Pradesh cabinet abolished the Legislative Council. Andhra Pradesh is among Bihar, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh and Telangana that has a bicameral legislature. The practice of having two Houses of Parliament in a state is called bicameral legislature. At the State level, the equivalent of the Lok Sabha is the Vidhan Sabha (Legislative Assembly), and that of the Rajya Sabha is the Vidhan Parishad (Legislative Council). But the Vidhan Parishad generally does not serve much purpose and poses a strain on States' finances. So Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly, using the power of Article 169 that provides Parliament the authority of creating or abolishing the second chamber i.e. Vidhan Parishad (Legislative Council) in a State via passing a resolution has abolished the Legislative Council.

The 2020 Grammy awards

27th January 2020 became a red letter day for Grammy awardees. The names of the winners Billie Eilish -Bad Guy (Record of the year award); Billie Eilish – When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go?(Album of the year); Billie Eilish (Best new artist); DJ Khaled featuring Nipsey Hussle & John Legend – Higher (Best rap/sung performance); Billie Eilish – Bad Guy (Song of the year); Tyler, The Creator – Igor (Best rap album); Dave Chappelle – Sticks & Stones (Best comedy album); Dan + Shay – Speechless (Best country duo / group performance); Lizzo – Truth Hurts (Pop solo performance of

the year); Lil Nas X featuring Billy Ray Cyrus – Old Town Road (Best pop duo/group performance); Billie Eilish – When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go? (Best pop vocal album); The Chemical Brothers – No Geography (Best dance/electronic album); Gary Clark Jr – This Land (Best rock performance); Gary Clark Jr – This Land (Best rock song Tool); Tool – 7empest (Best metal performance); Cage The Elephant – Social Cues (Best rock album); Vampire Weekend – Father of the Bride (Best alternative music album); Anderson .Paak featuring André 3000 – Come Home (Best R&B performance); Lizzo – Jerome (Best traditional R&B album); Lizzo – Cuz I Love You (Deluxe) (Best urban contemporary album); Anderson .Paak – Ventura (Best R&B album); Nipsey Hussle featuring Roddy Ricch & Hit-Boy – Racks In The Middle (Best rap performance); 21 Savage featuring J. Cole – A Lot (Best rap song); Willie Nelson – Ride Me Back Home (Best country solo performance); Tanya Tucker – Bring My Flowers Now (Best country song); Tanya Tucker – While I’m Livin’ (Best country album); Alejandro Sanz – #Eldisco (Best Latin pop album); Rosalía – El Mal Querer (Best Latin rock, urban or alternative album); Marc Anthony – Opus & Aymée Nuviola – A Journey Through Cuban Music (Best tropical Latin album); Finneas (Producer of the year, non-classical); Kirk Franklin – Long Live Love (Best gospel album); for KING & COUNTRY – Burn The Ships (Best contemporary Christian album) and Lady Gaga & Bradley Cooper – A Star Is Born won the award in the Best compilation soundtrack for visual media category.

India’s 71st Republic Day Celebration

With a grand military parade and exhibition of its history, cultural diversity and strategic weaponry at the Rajpath in the National Capital, India celebrated its 71st Republic day on 27th January 2020. President of Brazil Jair Messias Bolsonaro was the Chief Guest at the Parade this year. PM Narendra Modi paid homage to martyrs at the National War Memorial. The National Flag was unfurled followed by the National Anthem with a booming 21-gun salute. The parade commanded by Parade Commander, Lieutenant General Asit Mistry, General Officer Commanding, Headquarters Delhi Area, started from Vijay Chowk and proceeded towards the Red Fort grounds. For the first time, a contingent of women bikers of CRPF conducted spectacular daredevil stunts. Sixteen marching contingents from the Armed Forces, Paramilitary Forces, Delhi police and NCC along with 13 Military bands were the centre of attraction. Sixteen states and Union Territories and six Central Ministries participated in the Parade. Jammu and Kashmir participated in the parade for the first time as a Union Territory. Start-up India, Jal Jeevan Mission and financial inclusion were some of the themes of the tableau of Ministries and Departments. The Air Force tableau showcased models of the Rafale aircraft, Tejas aircraft, Light Combat Helicopter, Akash Missiles System and Astra Missiles. The fly-past by the newly inducted Chinook and Apache helicopters along with Sukhoi and advanced light helicopters as well as Anti-satellite weapon i.e. Mission Shakti, Army’s battle tank Bhishma were also put on display during the 90-minute long parade.

The shower of awards

Several awards were conferred on the Republic Day that included the prestigious Padma awards, Fire Service Medals, Jeevan Raksha Padak Series of Awards - 2019. Two Sri Lankan women, Deshabandu Dr Vajira Chitrasena for her contribution to dance and Late Prof. Indra Dassanayake, who was one of the pioneers to introduce and promote Hindi language in educational institutions of Sri Lanka received Padma Shri awards. Apart from this, 104 personnel were rewarded Fire Service Medals. Among these, President's Fire Service Medal for Gallantry have been presented to 13 personnel, Fire Service Medal for Gallantry have been conferred upon 29 personnel, President's Fire Service Medal for Distinguished Service to 12 personnel and Fire Service Medal for Meritorious Service to 50 personnel, forty-nine personnel have also been awarded Home Guard and Civil Defence Medals as well. Apart from this Jeevan Raksha Padak Series of Awards - 2019 were presented to 54 persons. This included Sarvottam Jeevan Raksha Padak to seven, Uttam Jeevan Raksha Padak to eight and Jeevan Raksha Padak to 39 persons. Five awards are posthumous.

The 6th Schedule Area status to Ladakh

Tribal Affairs Ministry proposed the 6th Schedule Area status to Union Territory of Ladakh. It implies that the Tribal Ministry will look after all requirements to enrich and preserve the legacy of Ladakh. The Sixth Schedule of the Constitution provides separate arrangements for the tribal areas of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, and Tripura under Article 244A. It seeks to safeguard the rights of the tribal population of these states through the formation of Autonomous District Councils (ADC). ADCs are bodies representing a district to which the Constitution has given varying degrees of autonomy within the state legislature. The governors of these states have been authorized to reorganise boundaries of the tribal areas. In other words, the privileged governor can choose to include or exclude any area, increase or decrease the boundaries and unite two or more autonomous districts into one. They can also alter or change the names of autonomous regions without separate legislation. Environmentalist Sonam Wangchuk had appealed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to preserve the culture and identity of Ladakh.

The government will recruit 1500 coaches

Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju broke out the news of the government's decision of recruiting 1500 coaches to fill up existing vacancies for supporting the country's athletes. The government will not wait for 8 years period and will promote the assistant coaches to senior-level after a few years on the basis of their service record so that there will be no drought of coaches. Along with the good Indian trainers and coaches, reputed foreign coaches will also be hired.

OICL & UIIC are about to merge

The National Insurance Company Limited (NICL) is all set to merge with Oriental Insurance Company Ltd (OICL) and United India Insurance Company Ltd (UIIC) to cut down costs and achieve economies of scale. The New India Assurance Company may also be involved in this merger as proposed by the late Finance Minister Arun Jaitley in the General Budget for the financial year 2018-19. But the merger did not materialize due to poor financial health. Further, it is worth recollecting here that in December 2019, the government has infused Rs 2,500 crore in three insurers through the supplementary demand for the first grant for 2019-20, to add Rs 2,500 crore.

Bharti Airtel is scripting news

Indian global telecommunications services company, Bharti Airtel Limited (also known as Airtel), did partnership with cloud computing services provider Google Cloud to offer services provided by Google's G Suite to small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) in India, which are already clients of Airtel's information and communications technology (ICT) services. The coveted G Suite consists of Gmail, Docs, Drive, Calendar and more – apps designed with real-time collaboration & machine intelligence to enhance productivity. Currently, Airtel has a subscriber base of 325 Million in India, serves to over 2500 large businesses and over 500,000 SMBs. Apart from this, the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has approved raising of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Bharti Airtel to 100 percent from 49 percent. As per RBI, foreign investors will be able to hold up to 74 percent stake in the company. The company has to clear statutory liabilities of up to nearly Rs 35,586 crore, of which Rs 21,682 crore is licence fee and another Rs 13,904.01 crore is spectrum dues excluding the dues of Telenor and Tata Teleservices before the approval.

CEC Sunil Arora: The New Chairman of FEMBoSA for 2020

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sunil Arora has become the Chairman of the Forum of the Election Management Bodies of South Asia (FEMBoSA) for the year 2020 at the 10th Annual Meeting of FEMBoSA held in New Delhi. He has taken place of KM Nurul Huda who is also CEC of Bangladesh. FEMBoSA was established in May 2012 at the 3rd Conference of Heads of Election Management Bodies of SAARC Countries held at New Delhi. The eight-member-FEMBoSA represents a very large part of the democratic world and is an active regional association of Election Management Bodies.

NITI Aayog's National Data and Analytics Platform

On January 23, 2020, National Institution for Transforming India (NITI) Aayog announced the launch of National Data and Analytics Platform (NDAP) in 2021 to democratize access of the government data. It will be a platform for different stakeholders to access the latest data from all the government

websites in an easy way. It will standardize formats in which data has to be presented under an inter-ministerial committee. The NITI Aayog has the governing council that is composed of CM of all states and union territories and is planning to implement Blockchain technology in E-governance via “India chain”.

National Girl Child Day

The nation observed January 24, 2020, as National Girl Child Day. The Ministry of Women and Child Development organized events to spread awareness about inequalities faced by girls in the country and promote the rights of the girl child. The day was used to highlight the importance of health, education and nutrition of girl child and bring into knowledge the various atrocities faced by girls in their lives like humiliation, discrimination and oppression. According to Child Rights and You (CRY), there are more than 10 million child brides in the world, who are forced into marriage before the legal age of 18. According to the 2011 Census of India, the sex ratio was 108.9, while the desired sex ratio for society should be between 103 and 107.

ISRO's “Vyom Mitra”

Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) introduced a half humanoid robot called the “Vyom Mitra” (a friend in Sky) at the “Human Space Flight and Exploration-Present Challenges and Future Trends” seminar that was held in Bengaluru. It is planning to send Vyom Mitra as an experimental mission to Gaganyaan. The robot can speak two languages namely Hindi and English and can mimic human activities such as recognizing other humans and responding to their queries. It can handle switch panel operations and provide air pressure change warnings.

January 23: Birth Anniversary of Netaji

The nation is celebrating Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose's 123rd birth anniversary on 23rd January 2020. Government of India inaugurated a Netaji temple at Varanasi in the name of the leader with a Dalit woman as a chief priest. The prayers were also performed to Bharat Mata at the temple. The temple is of red, white and black colours. Among them, the red colour symbolizes revolution, black represents strength, while white is for peace. The temple is meant to reinforce patriotism among the Citizens. Born on 23rd January 1897 in Cuttack, Odisha, Netaji had formed a separate army called the “Azad Hind Fauj” also called as Indian National Army or the INA. There were around 85,000 soldiers in INA. He had died on August 18, 1945, in a plane crash at the age of 48 years. He gave the slogan- ‘Jai Hind’ and inspired thousands of people to take part in the freedom struggle. He hoisted the Tricolour for the first time in Port Blair in 1943 and had declared Andaman and Nicobar Islands as the first Indian territory to get freed from British rule.

The National Startup Advisory Council

The Central Government announced the structure of the National Startup Advisory Council, chaired by the Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, Piyush Goyal to reduce the time spent on tax compliance to less than one hour a month and to encourage the availability of domestic and global capital. The council has the purpose of providing measures to build a strong ecosystem for new innovations and start-ups in the country. It is expected to increase economic growth and generate large scale employment opportunities in India. The council with non-official members nominated by the Union Government for two years, selected from different categories such as founders of successful startups, persons capable of representing the interests of accelerators and incubators, etc. along with Ex-officio members of Joint Secretary rank will suggest steps to develop a culture of innovation amongst citizens and students by reducing regulatory compliances and cost for startup companies. The Department of Promotion of Industries and Trade will be the convener of the council.

India inaugurated its first Mahatma Gandhi convention centre in Niger

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and Nigerien President Mahamadou Issoufou jointly inaugurated the first convention centre established in Africa by India in the memory of Mahatma Gandhi on 21st January 2020. This set up of the Mahatma Gandhi International Convention Centre (MGICC) is a landmark for India-Niger friendship and it is also a symbol of India's firm commitment towards Africa. The convention centre has been designed as a spacious, modern and eco-friendly facility, including a 2,000 capacity Plenary Hall, to witness high-level and wide-ranging participation from African Union member states and other high-level conventions. Besides this, India has also provided Lines of Credit to Niger for projects in transport, electrification, solar energy and potable drinking water in the recent past.

The upcoming 'One Nation, One Ration Card' scheme

Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Ram Vilas Paswan announced the implementation of 'One Nation, One Ration Card' scheme from June 1, 2020, across the country. This scheme has been preponed from its original date of June 30, 2020 to June 1, 2020, and under this scheme, the beneficiaries will be able to avail their entitled food grain under the National Food Security Act (NFSA) from any Fair Price Shop located across India. The beneficiaries of this scheme will be identified and verified via Aadhaar authentication at the Fair Price Shops on the electronic point of sale (e-POS) devices.

Challa Sreenivasulu Setty : The New MD of SBI

Government of India (GOI) has appointed Challa Sreenivasulu Setty as the Managing Director (MD) of the State Bank of India (SBI) for the upcoming three years. He is serving as the Deputy Managing

Director (DMD) of the SBI at present. Besides this, the government has also appointed Sanjiv Chadha, Atanu Kumar & Lingam as the head BOB, BOI & Canara bank respectively for the next three years. Sanjiv Chadha who had served as the Deputy Managing Director (DMD) at State Bank of India (SBI) will replace P.S. Jayakumar in Bank of Baroda (BOB). Atanu Kumar Das, who has been serving as the Executive Director (ED) of the Bank of India (BOI), has been promoted as the MD & CEO of the Bank. Lingam Venkata Prabhakar, who was the Executive Director of Punjab National Bank, will now replace R A Sankara Narayanan in Canara Bank.

Andhra Pradesh: The only state with three capitals

Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly approved a bill 'AP Decentralisation and Inclusive Development of All Regions Bill' proposing three capitals, Legislative, Executive and Judicial for the state amid the ongoing protests by thousands of farmers of the Amaravati region and by Telugu Desam Party. As per this bill, Amaravati will be the legislative capital, Visakhapatnam will be the executive capital and Kurnool will be the judicial capital of the state. Besides this, the Bill has a provision for dividing the State into various zones. It seeks to set up zonal planning and development boards. Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's cabinet also repealing the Capital Region Development Authority (CRDA) Act and establish the Amaravati Metropolitan Development Authority.

January 19: National Immunization Day

India observed National Immunization Day on 19th January 2020 with Pulse Polio Programme 2020 to protect children less than five years from Polio disease and to eliminate Poliomyelitis in India. This year nearly 17.4 crore children across the country were administered under the program. It is worth remembering here that the Pulse Polio Immunization Programme was launched in year 1995 and then the last cases of wild polio in India were seen in West Bengal and Gujarat in January 2011. The World Health Organization had declared India a polio-free nation on March 27, 2014.

General Satinder Kumar Saini: the new vice Chief of Army Staff

Southern Army Commander Lieutenant General Satinder Kumar Saini became the new Vice Chief of Army Staff (VCOAS), who will take charge on January 25, 2020. He succeeded Lieutenant General Manoj Mukund Naravane, who has been promoted as the Chief of Army Staff. In 1981, General Saini was commissioned into the Jat Regiment. He has also worked in the capacity of Deputy Chief Military Personnel Officer in Iraq-Kuwait United Nations (UN) Mission, attended the Global Peace Operations Initiative's peacekeeping exercise in Mongolia and counter-terrorism exercise in Australia.

The Beginning of the 9th International Children's Film Festival

The 9th International Children's Film Festival began in Kolkata on 19th January 2020. The National Award winner Child actor, Talha Arsalan Rishi inaugurated the festival. It began with the screening of Aizaz Khan directed the film, Hamid. Around 250 films from 45 countries will be screened in this week-long festival. The festival will carry on across ten venues in the city. The festival will also feature an exhibition on the children's film festival.

The CA Final Results 2019

Abhay Bajoria from Kolkata and Suryansh Agarwal from Noida shared the first rank, followed by Dhruv Kothari from Kolkata at the second rank and Darshan Shah from Ahmedabad at the third position in the country in the final chartered accountancy (CA) exam (new scheme) that was held in November 2019. Out of the 15,003 students who appeared for the test in both the groups, 15.12% cleared in the exam. In the old scheme exam, Gurram Naga Sri Krishna Praneeth, from Vijayawada, topped the final exam followed by Varada KP from Kerala and Dhawal Chopda from Mumbai, stood at the second and third spots respectively in the country.

The Food Processing Summit

Ladakh hosted the first-ever Food Processing Summit to attract investors to the region. The Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the Ministry of Food Processing Industries and the Union Territory Administration of Ladakh were the organizers of the event in which more than hundred entrepreneurs from Leh and Kargil participated in the Summit to encourage entrepreneurship in this region. Ladakh region has the potential for investment in food Processing Industries in horticulture products viz. Apricot, SeabuckThorn, Apple and agricultural produce like buckwheat and barley.

The 17th edition of Crossword Books Awards

The 17th edition of Crossword Book Awards was held in Mumbai. In which Krishna Trilok ('Notes of a Dream: The Authorized Biography of AR Rahman' in Biography category); Twinkle Khanna ('Pyjamas Are Forgiving', Popular Best Fiction Award); Sudha Murty ('The Upside-Down King: Unusual Tales About Rama and Krishna', Popular Children's book award); Shanta Gokhale ('One Foot on the Ground: A Life Told Through the Body', Jury Non-fiction award); Madhuri Vijay ('The Far Field', Jury Fiction award); Richa Jha and Sumanta Dey ('Macher Jhol: Fish Curry', Jury Children's book award) and Jayasree Kalathil and N Prabhakaran ('Diary of a Malayali Madman', Best book in the Indian Language) were the winners.

The 29th Saraswati Samman awardee: Vasdev Mohi

Eminent Sindhi writer Vasdev Mohi has been chosen for a prestigious literary award, Saraswati Samman for his short stories collection, 'Chequebook'. The collection is about the agonies and sufferings of marginalized sections of the society. He will receive a cash award of 15 lakh rupees, a citation and a plaque during the 29th edition of Saraswati Samman awards. Mohi has also penned 25 books of poetry, stories and translations. He had been a recipient of the Sahitya Akademi Award as well.

Kerala challenged CAA in Supreme Court

Recently Kerala invoked Article 131 to file a petition against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) in the Supreme Court and became the first state to do so. CAA seeks to provide Indian citizenship to six religious minority communities viz. Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi and Christian, who migrated to India before December 31, 2014, from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh to escape religious persecution (ill-treatment). The State of Kerala joined the citizens saying that illegal migrants from these selected countries and from the selected religions would get priority in the grant of Indian citizenship, which is against the principles of secularism, right to equality and dignity of life enshrined in the Basic Structure of the Constitution. Although India's goal of protecting persecuted (ill-treated) groups have been applauded, yet its accomplishment through a non-discriminatory "robust national asylum system" is desired. Further Critics are of opinion that the bill would be used, along with the National Register of Citizens, to render many Muslim citizens stateless, as they may be unable to meet stringent birth or identity proof requirements. Over this, the Indian government says that Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh have Islam as their state religion therefore Muslims are "unlikely to face religious persecution" there. But history presents certain Muslim groups, such as Hazaras and Ahmadis, that have historically faced persecution in these mentioned countries. It should be noted that Kerala Government's writ petition is not the same as the other challenges. It has filed its petition challenging the constitutional validity of the CAA act by invoking article 131 of the Indian constitution hence it is an original suit. Moreover, the petition invokes the mechanism for the states to challenge the centre.

Captain Tania Shergill will be the first woman parade adjutant

Captain Tania Shergill, an officer with Army's Corps of Signals, will be the first woman parade adjutant (person responsible for the parade) for the Republic Day (26th January) parade of 2020. She earned graduation in electronics and communications. She hails from a military background as her father, grandfather and great-grandfather had also served the Army. She was inducted in March 2017 from the Officer Training Academy, Chennai. The 2020 Republic Day parade will feature Infantry

Combat Vehicle BMP-2K of the 18 Mechanised Infantry, Dhanush Gun System and the Army Air Defence on the Rajpath. Contingents of the Corps of Signals, Sikh Light Infantry, Kumaon Regiment, the Grenadiers, the Parachute Regiment will be the proud participants of the parade. It is worth recalling here that in the 2019 Republic Day parade, Captain Bhavna Kasturi was the first woman officer who led an all-men contingent.

The 7.35% Retail inflation

According to the Consumer Price Inflation (CPI) / Retail inflation figures, released by the National Statistical Office (NSO) under the aegis of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), Retail inflation recorded a 5-year high of 7.35% in December 2019. This happened because of high food prices. Food inflation hiked to 14.12% from 10.01% in November 2019. In addition to vegetables, high prices of pulses, meat and fish also contributed to the highest level. Retail inflation is the increase in the price of goods sold at the retail market. In our country, the retail price is measured by the consumer price index (CPI), which is calculated by taking price changes for each item in the predetermined basket of goods and averaging them. The central government has instructed the Reserve Bank to keep inflation in the range of 2-6%. Prior to this, in July 2014, the retail inflation was seen crossing 7.39%.

India's under-5 mortality index

The United Nations(UN) inter-agency group for child mortality has prepared a report titled “Levels and Trends in Child Mortality”. According to the 2020 report in 2018 five countries viz. India, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo(DRC) and Ethiopia showed increased mortality of girls under the age of 5 in comparison to the boys. Speaking about India, Jharkhand, Bihar and Uttarakhand showcased largest gender gaps in under-5 age mortality. While Uttar Pradesh emerged as the state with the highest newborn deaths; Madhya Pradesh came up as state with highest under 5 mortality rate and Kerala was crowned as the state with the least under 5 mortality rate.

Lt General Girish Kumar continues to be the Surveyor General of India

In January 2020 the Appointment Committee of Cabinet (ACC) approved the re-appointment proposal of Lt General Girish Kumar as the Surveyor General of India in Survey of India for one more year w.e.f. January 1, 2020. The national survey and mapping organization of the country had appointed him on the post on September 30, 2017. The Surveyor General of India is somebody who heads the Department of Survey of India, which works under the Ministry of Science and Technology of Government of India. Currently, Col. Amardeep Singh is serving as Addl. Surveyor General.

Mission Purvodaya for integrated steel hub

Looking at the eastern belt's potential to add more than 75% of the country's incremental steel capacity, Union Steel Minister Dharmendra Pradhan inaugurated Mission Purvodaya in Kolkata. National Steel Policy expects more than 200 Million Tonne capacity from this region out of the targeted total of 300 Million Tonne capacity by 2030-31. This mission will accelerate the development of eastern India through the establishment of an integrated steel hub that will transform logistics and utility infrastructure as well as drive India's march towards a five trillion dollar economy set by the government. Apart from this, the minister has also underlined the government's efforts of empowering Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes' entrepreneurship via Special National Vendor Development Programme, 1 00 lakh crore rupees worth of National Infrastructure Pipeline, Stand-Up India initiative and many more.

National Highway Excellence Awards 2019

Transport and Highway Minister Nitin Gadkari presented the National Highway Excellence Awards 2019 in New Delhi. These awards were instituted in the year 2018 to acknowledge the well-performing companies in the field of construction, operations, maintenance, toll collection and road safety on National Highways. The annual awards in Excellence in Project Management, Excellence in Operation and Maintenance, Excellence in Toll Management, Excellence in Highway Safety, Innovation, Outstanding Work in Challenging Conditions and Green Highway categories will create a spirit of healthy competitiveness amongst all stakeholders involved in the development of highway infrastructure in the country and contribute to the bigger goal of expanding the road network in the country.

12th January: Birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda

The nation celebrated the 157th birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda by inaugurating a five day long National Youth Festival on 12th January 2020. Swami Vivekananda was one of the greatest spiritual leaders of India, who introduced the world to the Indian philosophies of Vedanta and Yoga. His famous speech at the World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893 made him popular in the western world. He was the chief disciple of the 19th-century mystic Ramakrishna Paramhansa, who founded the Ramakrishna Math and the Ramakrishna Mission. In the grand opening ceremony of the festival Prime Minister Narendra Modi appealed youth of country to try only to purchase local products By 2020 to help our countrymen and relate their dreams with the requirements of the country via creating new apps, finding solutions for different problems, starting new ventures, taking risks and generating employment for others. The Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports Kiren Rijiju announced at the occasion that the central government is giving top-level facilities to the young talent

eyeing to achieve a top ten position in the 2028 Olympic which will be organized in the USA. He also promoted EK BHARAT SHRESTHA BHARAT as a learning platform for everyone. This year the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports and the State Government of Uttar Pradesh are jointly organizing the national youth festival.

Uttar Pradesh rolled out the second phase of IMI 2.0

On January 7, 2020, the second phase of Intensified Mission Indradhanush (IMI) 2.0 started in 35 districts of Uttar Pradesh. The phase targets 90 % vaccination coverage among children under 2 years of age & pregnant women against 8 vaccine-preventable diseases viz. diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, poliomyelitis, tuberculosis, measles, meningitis, and Hepatitis B till March 2020. Prior to this, the first phase of the mission was launched in December 2019 that covered 272 districts spread over 27 states.

Forbes India's "20 people to watch in 2020" list

Forbes India released its popular "20 people to watch in 2020" list featuring 7 Indians viz. US-based Indian origin -Hasan Minhaj, who is a comedian & political commentator ranked number 1; ArcelorMittal Europe Group CFO and CEO, Aditya Mittal (2nd rank); Godrej family, Adi Godrej (6th rank); Deputy Chief Minister of Haryana, Dushyant Chautala (7th rank); Lok Sabha member, Trinamool Congress Mahua Moitra (9th rank); Politician, Communist Party of India (CPI) Kanhaiya Kumar (12th rank); Chef, the first Indian woman to receive a Michelin star Garima Arora (14th rank) and Political strategist, mentor-IPAC, and politician, Janta Dal, Prashant Kishor (16th rank).

A Sakthivel: the new Chairman of AEPC

Apparel Export Promotion Council of India (AEPC) has appointed A Sakthivel as the new chairman of the organization from 2020 to 2021 on January 6, 2020. He took place of HKL Magu. He is also the first person in the history of the Apparel Export Promotion Council of India who has become the chairman of the organization for the fourth time.

First Advance Estimates of National Income of 2019-20

The National Statistical Office (NSO) of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) has released the first advance estimates of the national income at both constant(2011-12) and current prices for FY(Financial Year) 2019-20. Besides this, the corresponding expenditure components of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was also estimated. The data says GDP in the year 2019-20 is likely to reach Rs 147.79 lakh crores against the Rs 140.78lakh crore estimate for 2018-19

released on May 31, 2019. The growth in real GDP for 2019-20 is estimated at 5% compared to 6.8% for 2018-19. The real Gross Value Added (GVA) at basic prices are estimated to rise to Rs 135.40 lakh crore for 2019-20 from Rs 129.07 lakh crore of 2018-19. GVA has been estimated to grow in real at 9% in 2019-20 as against 6.6% in 2018-19.

Gujarat inaugurated the 31st International Kite Festival

On January 7, 2020, Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani inaugurated the 31st International Kite festival at Sabarmati riverfront in Ahmedabad in the presence of Gujarat Governor Acharya Devvrat. Around 140 kite flying experts from 40 countries are participating in this event till 14th January Makar Sankranti (Uttarayan). The festival is being organized simultaneously, in 9 other places across the state viz. Kevadiya, Surat, and Vadodara. Apart from this, Gujarat is also planning to establish Vikram Sarabhai Children Innovation Center in Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam Centre for Extension Research and Innovation at Gujarat University to identify, nurture and promote innovation of children up to 18 years in the state.

RBI is in news

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) gave approval to Uttar Pradesh based Shivalik Mercantile Co-operative Bank Ltd to get converted into a small finance bank (SFB) and with this, Shivalik Mercantile became the first urban cooperative bank (UCB) to get converted into SFB. The RBI granted a license to Shivalik Mercantile bank for the beginning of the banking business under Section 22 (1) of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949. Besides this, RBI revised the supervisory action framework for Primary (Urban) Co-operative Banks to better manage the stressed UCBs. The revised rules include threshold limits for asset quality, profitability, and Capital to Risk-weighted Assets ratio (CRAR). Apart from this RBI permitted banks to offer round-the-clock forex market operations to reduce the rising influence of offshore trading in the currency markets. So far only selected banks in India offered Indian customers foreign exchange rates only in inter-bank market hours from 9 am – 5 pm.

A book on PM Modi: 'Karmayoddha Granth'

Union Home Minister Amit Shah released the book 'Karmayoddha Granth' on the life of Prime Minister Narendra Modi on January 7, 2020. The book speaks of Modi's accomplishment of removing the three curses of Indian Politics viz. politics of appeasement, casteism, and dynasty, after the year 2014. He has been called the epitome of selfless service to the nation as he laid the foundation of New India based on 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas', from Gujarat and brought the concept of good governance. The book praises him for taking strong decisions including removal of Article 370, 35A in Jammu and

Kashmir, bringing Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), criminalizing triple talaq, conducting surgical strikes and Balakot airstrikes which nobody dared in last 70 years.

First Scientific Experiment on Indian Pompano fish cultivation

The Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) announced that it has developed a viable scientific method to cultivate marine Indian Pompano fish in ponds. National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB) extended financial assistance for the same. The new scientific method recorded 95% of the survival of this fish with 3 tonnes per acre yield. In the current farming techniques in India, the Pompano is cultivated through Open sea Cage Farming and earthen pond freshwater farming and the recorded survival rates of open sea cage farming is 72%, while that of freshwater farming is 32%.

9th January 2020: The 16th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas

Ministry of External Affairs is celebrating Pravasi Bharatiya Divas today. The day rejoices the contribution of the overseas Indian community in the development of India. Instituted in 2003, it commemorates the return of Mahatma Gandhi from South Africa to India on 9 January 1915. External Affairs Minister Dr. S Jaishankar interacted with Indian Diaspora across the world through a digital video conference. It is meant to create a network of NRIs in all the countries across the globe and know the difficulties faced by the Indian labourers living abroad and seek the government's help in resolving their issues.

The demise of former Karnataka Governor

Padma Vibhushan awardee and former Karnataka Governor Triloki Nath Chaturvedi died at 90 in Noida, Uttar Pradesh. He was the Governor of Karnataka from 2002-2007 as well as Governor of Kerala in 2004. He was an Indian Administrative Service officer and had served the office of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India from 1984 to 1989. He received the prestigious Padma Vibhushan award in 1991. He had also penned books like Government Auditing, Auditing Receipts, Auditing Science and Technology.

ISRO is in action

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) seems to have started the new year with new vigour. It has inked an agreement with the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA) to set up optical telescopes under 'Project NETRA' i.e. Network for space object Tracking and Analysis for tracking space objects. ISRO had started Project Netra with an outlay of Rs 400 crore in September 2019 to help India detect threats to Indian Satellites from debris and other hazards. Besides this, it has established its fourth Regional Academic Centre for Space (RAC-S) at the National Institute of Technology Karnataka (NIT-K) at Surathkal in Mangalore taluk for advanced research in the areas of relevance to the future technological and programmatic needs of the Indian Space program and promotion of space

technology in southern regions like Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Pondicherry, and Lakshadweep. It is worth recalling here that ISRO has set its first RAC-S in Jaipur, second at Guwahati and third at Kurukshetra. In the latest development, ISRO has launched Indian Data Relay Satellite System (IDRSS) satellites for seamless uninterrupted space communication for astronauts. India is ready to embark upon its first-ever manned space mission with Gaganyaan in 2022, and IDRSS will be imperative to the mission.

Turtle rehab centre of Bihar

In the Bhagalpur forest division of Bihar, a first of its kind turtle rehab centre has been inaugurated for freshwater turtles. Spanned over half a hectare, the centre will shelter 500 turtles at a time. According to a recent report of the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) and Wildlife Institute of India (WII), the turtle species are under threat because of dams and barrages, pollution, illegal poaching, accidental drowning through fishing nets and threats to their nesting habitats, etc. Moreover, the Traffic India study reveals that nearly 11,000 turtles are being smuggled in India annually which makes 1,10,000 turtles in the past 10 years. The centre will treat sick, severely injured or smuggled turtles and will return them safely into their natural habitat after proper monitoring.

FDI inflows rose 15% to \$26 Bn in 1st half of FY2020

Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) released data which reveals that Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in India rose 15% to \$26 billion in the first half of the Fiscal year 2020 (FY2020) and Singapore emerged as the largest FDI source of India with \$8 billion investments. It was followed by Mauritius (\$6.36 billion), the Netherlands (\$2.32 billion), the United States (\$2.15 billion), and Japan (\$1.78 billion). The sectors that attracted maximum foreign inflows during April-September 2019-20 were Services (\$4.45 billion), Telecommunications (\$4.28 billion), Computer software and hardware (\$4 billion), Trading (\$2.14 billion) and Automobile (\$2.13 billion).

India will restrict non-essential imports from China

India revealed its plan of putting stricter quality standards on non-essential imports of 371 items from China. Out of them, around 111 are under the department of chemicals and petrochemicals, 68 are under department of heavy industries, 62 are under the ministry of electronics and information and technology (MeitY), 61 are under the industry department, 44 are under the steel ministry and 25 are under the telecom department. It is worth knowing that non-essential imports from China are estimated to amount to \$4 trillion per annum. India's trade deficit with China stands at \$53.6 billion that has been the key reason why India decided not to join the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) agreement.

Prof Suresh Chandra Sharma: the first Chairman of NMC

The head of ENT(ears, nose, throat) head-surgery department of All India Institute of Medical Sciences in New Delhi, Prof Suresh Chandra Sharma has been appointed as the first Chairman of the National Medical Commission (NMC). Besides him, Dr. Rakesh Kumar Vats, Secretary-General, Board Of Governors, Medical Council of India has been made Secretary of NMC. Both the Chairman and the Secretary of NMC will serve for a period of 3 years or till the age of 70 years. These appointments have been made under National Commission Bill 2019, which was introduced to replace the Indian Medical Council Act, 1956. It laid the provision of appointment of 33 members in the National Medical Commission by the Central Government including Chairman, President, and Directors. NMC has four autonomous boards viz. Under-graduate medical education board, Post-graduate medical education board, Medical assessment and rating board, and Ethics and Medical registration board. The bill spelled a common entrance test for both Post-graduate and Under-graduate in all medical institutions. It also advocated the National Exit Test for the medical students who obtain the license for the practice.

ISRO's second launch port in Tamil Nadu

Indian Space Research Organisation announced the establishment of its second launch port in Thoothukodi district of Tamil Nadu for launching small satellite vehicles in the 2300 acres area. Besides this, the Indian navigation system called Navic with the native atomic clock will be made operational with mobile phone manufacturers coming forward to install the regional navigation device. The government has approved Chandrayaan 3 mission to the moon, having a lander and a rover. India's first manned mission to outer space Ganganyaan has been scheduled in 2022 and the selection of Astronaut for the same is over. Four men have been selected from the Indian Air Force, who will be attending training in Russia.

Indian Science Congress began at Bengaluru

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the 107th Indian Science Congress at Bengaluru on 'Science and Technology: Rural Development' theme. Department of Science and Technology is hosting this seven-day event, which will witness around 28 plenary sessions on leading technologies viz. Climate-Smart Agriculture for food security, challenges in cancer drugs, nanomaterials for energy, solutions for oil and gas, environment and health care. In addition to this Farmers Science Congress, women science congress, as well as Children Science Congress, will also be held. The experts from the Indian Council of Agricultural Research and University of Agricultural Sciences will cover themes of innovation on integrated agriculture, doubling farmers' income, farmer empowerment,

conservation, biodiversity, etc. under Farmers Science Congress. Women Science Congress will applaud women's achievements and Children Science Congress will encourage children in the field of science.

Election Commission's PPRTMS

The Election Commission of India launched an online system Political Parties Registration Tracking Management System (PPRTMS). In order to contest in an election, a political party has to submit an application to the election commission within 30 days of its formation. The commission will check if the party satisfies the criteria governed by section 29A of Representation of the People Act, 1951 viz. If the party has secured at least 6% of votes in four or more states at an election to assembly or parliament and many more. Under this PPRTMS political parties will be able to track their applications.

2020: "Year of Nurse and Midwife"

The World Health Organization designated the year 2020 as the "Year of Nurse and Midwife" in honor of the 200th birth anniversary of Florence Nightingale, who was an English Social reformer born in 1820. She had organized camps for wounded soldiers and also served as a manager of nurses during the Crimean War. Every year International Nurse Day is celebrated on May 12th on the birth anniversary of "The Lady with the Lamp". WHO will eye on nursing and midwifery in order to achieve Universal Health Coverage this year. The organization is a partner of the State of the World's Midwifery Campaign and is also planning to release a first of its kind "World Nursing Report" in 2020 dedicated to midwifery.

Hillary Clinton: The new chancellor of Queen's University Belfast in Ireland

Former US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has been appointed as the new chancellor of Queen's University in Belfast, Ireland. She has been a regular visitor to Northern Ireland since the first visit of President Bill Clinton in 1995 and has now become the university's first female chancellor for a five-year term. The post has been vacant since the death of Thomas J Moran, chairman, president, and chief executive of Mutual of America Life Insurance Company in 2018.



The havoc of ‘Shopper’ malware

A new Trojan dubbed as ‘Shopper’ malware is multiplying its presence among smartphone users and it is screening unsolicited ads and ashing fake reviews. Targeting retail applications, the trojan first gains permission, interacts with the system interfaces and captures every data being featured on the screen. After obtaining information, it is using Google and Facebook data to register on popular shopping sites. It is boosting popular shopping app ratings and installations and spreading ads that annoy users. Prior to this was disastrous ‘Trojan-Dropper. AndroidOS.Shopper.a’ that affected 28.46% Russian smartphone users, 18.70% Brazilian users and 14.23% Indian users from October to November 2019.

The second-largest Muslim congregation: Bishwa Ijtema

The first phase of the world’s second-largest Muslim congregation ‘Bishwa Ijtema’ after Haj concluded on 12th January 2020 on the outskirts of Dhaka. Thousands of devotees from Bangladesh and abroad thronged at the bank of river Turag at Tongi near Dhaka. Well-known scholars delivered a religious sermon to the devotees. The Ijtema started with the ‘aam bayan’ and ended with the final prayers ‘Akheri Munajat’. The second phase of Bishwa Ijtema will be held between January 17th to 19th. The observation of Bishwa Ijtema has been taking place since 1967.

Dhaka International Film Festival

The 18th edition of Dhaka International Film Festival started on ‘Better Film, Better Audience and Better Society’ theme on 11th January with the screening of the Spanish-Greek film Window to the Sea, directed by Miguel Angel Jimenez, at the Bangladesh National Museum. The Foreign Minister of Bangladesh Dr A.K. Abdul Momen inaugurated this event which will continue till 19th January 2020. The event is witnessing featuring 220 films from 74 nations across various venues in Dhaka. The films like Amra Ekta Cinema Banabo, Mayaboti, Shuttle Train, Chandrabati Kotha, Tunes of Nostalgia, Maya - The Lost Mother, Nigrohokal and No Dorai have been selected in eight categories viz. Asian Competition Section, Retrospective, Bangladesh Panorama, the cinema of the world and Women Filmmakers etc. It is worth noting that four films by Polish director duo Joanna Kos-Krauzey and Krzysztof Krauze will be screened in the Retrospective section.

The beginning of the second innings for Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen

Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen secured a landslide victory in presidential elections after defeating her main rival, Han Kuo-yu of the China-friendly Kuomintang (KMT) party. 63-year old Tsai claimed victory for her second term with 57 per cent, more than eight million votes. Tsai hopes that Beijing authorities understand that democratic Taiwan, and its democratically elected government, will not concede to threats and intimidation. The Chinese Communist Party long claimed sovereignty over Taiwan and the right to take it by force if necessary. But the female leader has clarified, "We don't have a need to declare ourselves an independent state. We are an independent country already. We're a successful democracy, we have a pretty decent economy, we deserve respect from China."

Bush fire brought Australian Koalas at the brink of extinction

The firefighters are said to have brought Australia's largest "mega blaze" under control that caused devastation for three long months. It gave Australia's unique flora and fauna has a catastrophic hit, with an estimated 1.25 billion animals killed, and countless trees and shrubs burned away. Among them are herbivorous Australia's native Koalas (bear) population that came under the tag of 'endangered' as the fire destroyed 30% of their habitat. The Australian Government announced 50 million Australian Dollars emergency funds to save the affected wildlife. Australian Koalas are found in coastal areas of New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria, and South Australia. The Indian Ocean (lying in the northwest of Australia) Dipole was in its positive phase in 2019, which implies that the eastern Indian Ocean was cooler than the western Indian. This drew away the moisture from Australia raising temperatures in Australia. The westerlies blowing hot air into the continent increased the fire causing the mega bushfire. The Bureau of Meteorology has predicted 50 millimetres of rain in the devastated forest regions.

Bangladesh is all set for Hindi Honours' course

On the occasion of World Hindi Day in Dhaka on 12th January, the Indira Gandhi Cultural Centre (IGCC), High Commission of India celebrated the day by organizing Hindi Poem recitation, Elocution and Speech competitions. India's High Commissioner to Bangladesh Riva Ganguly Das announced that Dhaka University will have a Hindi chair to facilitate honours-level studies for students of Bangladesh. Besides this, the UN has also started a weekly Friday bulletin in Hindi as the language has gained prominence across the world due to its simplicity and richness of vocabulary.

NIIT will be a part of the NEAT program

The National Institute of Information Technology (NIIT), which is a multinational company has been selected as one of the EdTech companies for the National Educational Alliance for Technology

(NEAT) initiative for creating common one-stop access to technological solutions. Under this initiative, the solutions will be developed by the selected EdTech companies chosen through the PPP model. The NIIT will work with the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), which is implementing a NEAT program. Further, the Ministry of HRD along with NIIT will institute 5 awards of Rs 50,000 for faculties and 10 awards of Rs 10,000 for students. It is worth recalling here that NEAT was launched to customize the learning process using Artificial Intelligence.

The US inked the first phase of a trade deal with China

US President Trump and Chinese Vice Premier Liu He has inked the first phase of a trade deal with China after more than a year-long negotiation in Washington. The first phase of the trade deal covers Intellectual Property (IP) Protection and Enforcement, rebalancing the US-China trade relationship and effective dispute resolution. Trump has kept the massive tariff imposition on the import of Chinese goods intact. However, Trump might roll back the tariffs if the second phase of the trade deal is signed between the two countries. This trade deal is said to be a major political and diplomatic victory for Trump.

Climate Change & Displacement of 40 mn people

Looking at the rising of average temperatures in Bangladesh between 0.5 to 1.0-degree celsius, excessive rainfall in a short time span, the cyclone in the Bay of Bengal, rising sea level and entry of saline water from the sea into rivers, Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina predicted displacement of 40 million people in Bangladesh. Being one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world, Bangladesh is facing a variety of natural calamity which is drastically affecting the livelihood of fishermen and farmers. The climate change is adversely affecting the biodiversity leading to a negative impact on agriculture. The country is trying its best to reduce industrial pollution following the Effluent Treatment Plant (ETP) as part of the Zero Discharge Policy and launching a massive plantation drive.

The demise of Roger Vernon Scruton

Britain's conservative thinker and Philosopher Roger Vernon Scruton died of cancer at 75. He was a lecturer at the University of London's Birkbeck College, who penned more than 50 books on morality, politics, culture and aesthetics and made regular television appearances. He was also a proud recipient of Medal of Merit (First Class) of the Czech Republic in 1998. In 2019 he was presented Commander's Cross with Star of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Hungary, by Hungary's right-wing Prime Minister Viktor Orban. Besides these, he was also honoured with Grand Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland, 2019.

The resignation of the Russian government

The entire federal government of Russia tabled resignation after President Vladimir Putin's proposal of the requisite constitutional changes on 15th January 2020. The proposed proposals had in ingredients that could throw Russian power out of balance. Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev was also among the resignees, who resigned when Putin asked him to become deputy head of the National Security Council, which is being chaired by Putin. After this, President Putin proposed the head of Russia's tax service Mikhail Mishustin for the post of prime minister. Putin maintained his longtime ally in the Kremlin's leadership structure, appointing him to the newly created post of deputy head of the presidential Security Council. Putin, in his annual speech at the Parliament, proposed a referendum on amending Russia's constitution to increase the powers of parliament, while maintaining a robust presidential system. The unexpected announcement has come four years before Putin's fourth term of office is due to end.

WEF's 1st Global Social Mobility Index 2020

The World Economic Forum (WEF) released the first edition of a report titled "The Global Social Mobility Report 2020: Equality, Opportunity and a New Economic Imperative" for 82 nations. Denmark topped the list followed by Norway, Finland, Sweden, Iceland, Netherlands, Switzerland, Austria, Belgium and Luxembourg on the 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th in the list respectively. While India ranked at the 76th position in the list. It is among China, the United States(US), Japan and Germany which gained most from boosting social mobility scores. India needs to work on Social protection and fair wage section.

Winners of Dhaka International Film Festival

The 18th Dhaka International Film Festival (DIFF) got concluded on 19th January 2020 in which an Iranian film 'Castle of Dreams' directed by Reza Mirakarimi won the Best Film Award in Asian Competition section and its director Reza Mirakarimi won the Best Director Award; Sri Lankan director Prasanna Vithanage's film 'Children of the Sun' won Special Jury Award. Arezoo Ariapoor, Ferestha Afshar and Hasiba Ebrahimi won the Best Actress Award for their performance in the Afghanistan-Iran-France joint venture film 'Hava, Maryamk, Ayesha'; Lousie Abuel for his acting in the film 'Edward' won the Best Actor Award. 'No Dorai' directed by Taneem Rahman Angshu won the Best Film Award, while Indian film 'Finally Love' directed by Anjan Dutt won the Best Audience Award in Cinema of the World Category. The event witnessed 220 films from 74 countries within the nine-day long festival which began on the 11th of this month.

Armed Forces Day of Thailand

Thai King Maha Vajiralongkorn presided over the oath-taking ceremony of the Chief of Defence Forces General Pornpipat Benyasri, who pledged his life to honor and sustain the greatness of the king on Armed Forces Day on 18th January 2020. Around 7,000 soldiers and police paraded to mark Armed Forces Day to commemorate the victory of King Naresuan the Great in the battle against the Crown Prince of Burma in 1593. The occasion also rejoiced the King's coronation, which took place last year. The monarchy and the military are the two most powerful institutions in the country that have a strong grip over the country's democracy.

Resignation of Ukraine PM Oleksiy Honcharuk

Prime Minister of Ukraine Oleksiy Honcharuk handed over his resignation to President Volodymyr Zelenskiy on 17th January after less than six months in the role. Secret audio recordings appeared to show Honcharuk criticizing President Zelenskiy's knowledge of economics. According to Honcharuk, the recording had been doctored. However, the President has not accepted his resignation. It is worth knowing that the former lawyer and deputy head of the Prime Minister's office became Ukraine's youngest-ever head of government at the age of 35 when he took on the role in August of last year.

Russia began the production of S-400 air defence systems

Russian Deputy Chief of Mission Roman Babushkin while addressing a joint press conference with Russian Ambassador Nikolai Kudashev in New Delhi announced the delivery of five units of S-400 long-range surface-to-air missile systems for India by 2025. In addition to these, he promised delivery of the first batch of 5,000 Kalashnikov rifles this year which will be produced in India under a joint venture. Besides this, a contract will be finalised shortly for joint production of Kamov lightweight multi-role military helicopters for India. All these will significantly bolster India's air defence mechanism. It is worth recalling here that in October 2018, India inked a USD 5 billion deal to purchase the air defence missile systems.

Mikhail Mishustin: The New Prime Minister Of Russia

The Russian lawmakers gave nod to Russian President Vladimir Putin's proposed candidate Mikhail Vladimirovich Mishustin, the head of the Federal Tax Service, as the next prime minister of the country. He will take the place of Dmitri Anatolyevich Medvedev who resigned from his post. Although Russia's constitution bars a president from serving more than two consecutive terms, yet the new PM, Mikhail is likely to help Putin remain in power indefinitely even after his presidential term ends in 2024. During his tenure as Russia's tax service, Mikhail helped modernize Russia's inefficient

and corrupt tax system that fetched him the name “the taxman of the future” in a 2019 Financial Times profile. Apart from this, during the 16th annual address to parliament at Moscow’s Manezh exhibition hall, Russia, Putin emphasized the need to focus on domestic affairs, including measures to counter Russia’s declining population and taking GDP growth from the current 21% to 25% in 2024.

The inauguration of the 2nd Integrated Check Post at Jogbani-Biratnagar

The Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the PM of Nepal Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli jointly inaugurated the 2nd Integrated Check Post (ICP) at Jogbani – Biratnagar of India (in Bihar state) and Nepal respectively via video conference. Equipped with modern facilities, Jogbani – Biratnagar is a significant trade post between the two nations. Built at an estimated expenditure of Rs. 140 crores in a span of 260 acres, the Integrated Check Post has the potential of carrying 500 trucks on a daily basis. Prior to this, the first Integrated Check Post was built at the Raxaul-Birgunj border of India (in Bihar State) and Nepal respectively in 2018. Apart from this, it is worth recollecting here that in the 2015 Post-earthquake housing reconstruction projects (EHRP) in Nepal, India had committed to building 50,000 houses in Nepal’s Gorkha and Nuwakot districts. And out of the 50,000 houses, the construction of 45,000 houses have already been done.

Elyes Fakhfakh: The New Prime Minister of Tunisia

Finance Minister Elyes Fakhfakh has been designated as the next Prime Minister of Tunisia. Fakhfakh's proposal for forming the government will have to gain the approval of a divided parliament. He will have to form a cabinet within a month. After months of negotiations that followed elections in October 2019, parliament had dismissed a cabinet list proposed under the leadership of the Islamist-inspired Ennahdha party. It was seen that although Ennahdha won more seats than any other party in October's legislative election, but was still far short of a majority. This time if the 47-year-old Fakhfakh fails to form a government, the dissolution of the assembly will become inevitable. Presently, Tunisia is being administered by an outgoing government led by Prime Minister Youssef Chahed.

Queen Elizabeth II permitted Britain to leave the EU by January 31

Brexit deal succeeded in winning Queen Elizabeth II’s royal approval under the Royal Assent Act 1967. With this, Britain will become the first nation to leave the major bloc. It is looking forward to proceeding with a smooth exit from the European Union on 31st January. And the European Union (withdrawal agreement) bill 2020 has now officially become law after months of the blockade in the UK Parliament. The historic agreement has set the terms of the UK's departure from the 28-member EU bloc.

The Climax Of Calamity Of Coronavirus

Coronavirus is spreading like fire in China. Recently around 1,287 confirmed cases of pneumonia caused by a novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV), including 237 in critical conditions have been reported. The virus claimed 41 lives in China, 39 in central Hubei Province alone. Several Chinese provinces and municipalities of Beijing, Shanghai and Wuhan have launched the highest level of public health emergency response. Facing a lack of vaccine, China's top health body has resorted to the traditional Chinese medicines. The engulfing havoc has led to the cancellation of large-scale public events in Shanghai. Xi'an city has announced a ban on long-distance buses. China announced a national ban on wildlife trade as the virus has infected more than 2,000 people globally. According to the World Health Organisation the virus has so far taken Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand, Vietnam, Nepal, the United States, France and Australia in its grip.

Agni Sapkota: Speaker of the House of Representatives

Agni Sapkota has been chosen as the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the lower house of Parliament in Nepal during a meeting of the House of Representatives in Kathmandu on 26th January 2020. His name was proposed by Subhash Chandra Nembang of Nepal Communist Party and as he was the only candidate for the post, the House chose him unopposed. He took the oath of office and secrecy on 27th January 2020. He has taken place of Krishna Bahadur Mahara , who had resigned in October 2019 following allegations of attempted rape. Since then the post of Speaker was lying vacant.

Aldara : a weapon against dengue and zika viruses

According to a new study published in the journal Science Translational Medicine, a skin cream called 'imiquimod or Aldara', could help protect people against viral diseases such as Zika and dengue transmitted via mosquito bite. Researchers of the University of Leeds in the UK discovered the hidden potential of this clinically approved skin cream which is being used to treat genital warts and some forms of skin cancer. They discovered that mosquito-borne viruses that enter the skin through a bite are able to replicate quickly with little anti-viral response in the skin and then spread throughout the body. Keeping this in mind, within an hour of mosquito bite, they applied the cream and found that the cream encouraged a type of immune cell in the skin, called a macrophage, to suddenly spring into action to fight off the virus before it could spread around the body. As desired the skin cream could preemptively activate the immune system's inflammatory response before the virus poses a problem. The experiment dramatically reduced infection rates in their models(human skin samples and mice). In both cases, applying the skin cream worked out like a warning signal which caused rapid activation of the skin's immune response that fights any potential viral threats and hence prevented the virus from spreading around the body and causing disease.

Xenobots are the world's first living, self-healing robots

American scientists at the University of Vermont and Tufts University have created the world's first living and self-healing robots Xenobots from stem cells of frogs. It has been named after the African clawed frog, *Xenopus laevis* from which they have taken the stem cells. Xenobots are a new class of artefact that is a living and is programmable, which is less than a millimetre (0.04 inches) in width and is small enough to travel inside human bodies. They can walk and swim, live for weeks without food, and work together in groups. Xenobots have been made to clean up radioactive waste, collect microplastics in the oceans, carry medicine inside human bodies, or even travel into our arteries to scrape out plaque.

The US curbed the 'birth tourism'

The White House Press Secretary of USA announced new visa rules to restrict 'birth tourism' on January 23, 2020. This will put an end to the practice of travelling to the United States and giving birth on American soil for securing automatic and permanent American citizenship for their children. The nation will no longer issue temporary visitor visas to foreigners seeking to enter the nation for birth tourism to fortify public safety, national security and the integrity of the country's immigration system as well as save valuable hospital resources of the nation.

Guyana will chair G77

Guyana will preside over G77 summit for the year 2020. The G77 is the largest intergovernmental organization of developing nations in the United Nations meant to promote its members' collective economic interests and create an upgraded joint negotiating capacity in the United Nations. India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Argentina and Lebanon have joined the Groups from Latin and Central America, Asia, Africa and the Pacific to publicly approve Guyana's Chairmanship and pledged their support. It is worth noting here that the United Nations celebrates its 75th anniversary in 2020.

News from the World Economic Forum

The World Economic Forum that started on 21st January 2020 has joined the "Tree Trillion Campaign" of NGO, Plant for the Planet. This campaign was originally started by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in 2006 as "Billion Tree Campaign" but with the passage of time the goal of planting the number of trees increased. The forum has launched 1t.org platform to bring together the leading businesses, governments, civil societies and entrepreneurs from across the globe. Besides this, the forum has released a report on the role of passwords in cybercrimes and the cost involved in maintaining their secrecy. It costs 2.9 billion USD in the global economy. As 50% of IT Help Desk costs are spent on password resets so the necessity to shift the password-based system towards

Artificial Intelligence and the other fourth Industrial Revolution Technologies are being greatly felt. The report also suggests top 5 technologies for password protection like behavioural analytics, biometrics, QR codes, zero-knowledge proofs and security keys.

The Henley Passport Index 2020

Based on the data obtained from the International Air Transport Association (IATA), Henley & Partners released the passport Index 2020. Japan topped the index by providing visa-free access to 191 countries i.e. the mobility score. It was followed by Singapore (mobility score- 190); Germany and South Korea (189); Finland & Italy (188); Denmark, Luxembourg, and Spain (187); France and Sweden at 6th (186); Austria, Ireland, the Netherlands, Portugal, and Switzerland (185); Belgium, Greece, Norway, United Kingdom and the United States of America (184); Australia, Canada, Czech Republic, Malta, New Zealand (183); Hungary, Lithuania, Slovakia (181) complete the top ten list. India grabbed 84th place in the list providing visa-free access to 58 countries. While, Pakistan (32); Syria (29), Iraq (28) and Afghanistan with a mobility score of 26 emerged as the least powerful nations of the globe.

Prince Harry & Meghan are seeking financial independence

The Duke and Duchess of Sussex, Prince Harry and his wife Meghan have made public announcements about their stepping back as “senior” royals and working to become financially independent. The couple has planned to split their time between the UK and North America and will continue to fulfil their royal obligations and support towards Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth.

Zoran Milanovic: President of Croatia

Former Prime Minister Zoran Milanovic of Croatia won Presidential elections on January 6, 2020. Croatia's centre-leftist former Prime Minister defeated centre-right incumbent 51 years old Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic, who was the first female president of Croatia. Milanovic of Social Democratic Party(SDP) garnered 52.7% vote while Grabar-Kitarovic of the ruling Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) received 47.3% votes in the Presidential elections that were held on 22 December 2019.

Pedro Sanchez became Prime Minister of Spain

On January 8, 2020, Socialist leader Pedro Sanchez took the oath as Prime Minister of Spain in presence of Spanish King Felipe VI. The 47-year-old Pedro Sanchez Perez-Castejon before assuming the post had proposed to form a leftist coalition government with support from smaller parties by narrowly won a parliamentary confidence vote. He carried out tricky negotiations with far-left Podemos, Catalan, and Basque nationalists and won a confidence vote in parliament by 167 votes to

165. He will lead Spain's first coalition government. The new Cabinet will have members of the anti-austerity United We Can party, including party leader Pablo Iglesias as deputy prime minister. He has ambitious plans to raise the income tax level for the highest-paid Spaniards and will roll back labour market reforms.

Sucheta Satish: The Global Child Prodigy Awardee

In January 2020, Dubai-based 13-year-old Indian singer Sucheta Satish, who sings in 120 languages, has won the '100 Global Child Prodigy Award 2020' in the category of singing at an award ceremony in Ashok Hotel, Delhi. Puducherry Lieutenant (Lt) Governor Kiran Bedi conferred this prestigious award upon her in presence of chief guest Nobel Peace Prize (2014) winner Kailash Satyarthi. She had made her double world record in January 2018 in Dubai at the Indian Consulate Auditorium, as a 12-year-old when she has sung in 102 different languages over 6 hours and 15 minutes. Recently she released her album 'Ya Habibi' in Arabic. The award is being supported by Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam International Foundation and Oscar Award-winning music producer AR Rahman among others.

David Joel Stern of New York passed away

David Joel Stern, the brain behind the National Basketball Association (NBA) died of a brain haemorrhage at the age of 77 in New York. He was commissioner of the National Basketball Association for 30 long years (1984-2014). He joined the NBA as general counsel in 1978 and became executive vice president of the National Basketball Association in 1980. National Basketball Association's growth into a global sports powerhouse is his biggest credential.

The Golden Globe awards

In January 2020, the stars of the big and small screens received the most coveted 2020 Golden Globe Awards at the 77th edition of these Awards in Los Angeles, California. The winners for television include Ramy Youssef (Best Performance by an Actor in a Television Series -- Musical or Comedy category for "Ramy"), Phoebe Waller-Bridge (Best Performance by an Actress in a Television Series -- Musical or Comedy, "Fleabag"), Brian Cox (Best Performance by an Actor in a Television Series -- Drama, "Succession"), Olivia Colman (Best Performance by an Actress in a Television Series -- Drama, "The Crown"), Russell Crowe (Best Performance by an Actor in a Limited Series or Motion Picture Made for Television, "The Loudest Voice"), Michelle Williams (Best Performance by an Actress in a Limited Series or Motion Picture Made for Television, "Fosse/Verdon"), "Chernobyl" (Best Television Limited Series or Motion Picture Made for Television), Patricia Arquette (Best Performance by an Actress in a Supporting Role in a Series, Limited Series or Motion Picture

Made for Television, "The Act"), Stellan Skarsgård (Best Performance by an Actor in a Supporting Role in a Series, Limited Series or Motion Picture Made for Television, "Chernobyl"), "Succession"(Best Television Series -- Drama) and "Fleabag" (Best Television Series -- Musical or Comedy). In movies winners are "Once Upon a Time in Hollywood"(Best Motion Picture -- Musical or Comedy), "1917"(Best Motion Picture -- Drama), "Parasite" (Best Motion Picture -- Foreign Language), Quentin Tarantino (Best Screenplay -- Motion Picture, "Once Upon a Time in Hollywood"), "(I'm Gonna) Love Me Again" (Best Original Song -- Motion Picture, "Rocketman"), Hildur Guonadottir (Best Original Score -- Motion Picture, "Joker"), Brad Pitt (Best Actor in a Supporting Role in Any Motion Picture, "Once Upon a Time in Hollywood"), Laura Dern (Best Actress in a Supporting Role in Any Motion Picture, "Marriage Story"), Taron Egerton (Best Actor in a Motion Picture -- Musical or Comedy, "Rocketman"), "Missing Link"(Best Motion Picture -- Animated), Joaquin Phoenix (Best Actor in a Motion Picture -- Drama, "Joker"), Renée Zellweger (Best Actress in a Motion Picture -- Drama, "Judy"), Awkwafina (Best Actress in a Motion Picture -- Musical or Comedy, "The Farewell") and Sam Mendes (Best Director -- Motion Picture, "1917").

China lamented over Paddlefish

On January 03, 2020, scientists of the Yangtze River Fisheries Research Institute (YRFRI) after conducting a basin-wide survey between 2017 and 2018, declared *Psephurus gladius* or giant paddlefish or 'Panda of the Yangtze River' or 'Chinese swordfish' of China's Yangtze River as extinct. Out of the 332 species that were found in the survey there was not even a single live specimen of the paddlefish. The extinction was due to decades of overfishing. The extinct fish could grow from 10 feet to 22 feet (7 meters) in length. It was native of the Yangtze River, the longest river in Asia. The fish were last traced in the 2003 survey.

IndoOman bilateral Naval Exercise "Naseem Al-Bahr"

6th January 2020 welcomed Royal Navy of Oman ships Mormugao Port in Goa for 12th edition of biennial Indo-Oman Bilateral Naval exercise, Naseem-Al- Bahr (or Sea Breeze). Indian Navy Ships-INS Beas and INS Subhadra are participating in this naval exercise, which is being conducted regularly since 1993. Oman is strategically located at the gateway of Strait of Hormuz through which India imports one-fifth of its oil imports and the berth rights given by Oman to Indian vessels are important for the Indian Navy to carry out anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden. In 2018 India inked a pact with this country to access the Duqm port of Oman. Besides this, the two nations also conduct regular biennial exercises "Al Najah" between their armed forces and "Ex Eastern Bridge" between their Air Forces.

Red brittle star: World's second creature with extraocular vision

According to a recent study published in the journal Current Biology, scientists from the University of Oxford in England, United Kingdom, discovered the ability of extraocular vision in a starfish-like species called the red brittle star “*Ophiocoma Wendtii*” that lives in the coral reefs of the Caribbean Sea. With this ability to see without having eyes, the species has become the world's second creature after a sea urchin species that exhibits extraocular vision by virtue of the photoreceptor cells found on their bodies. The species was found to have light-sensing cells that cover its whole body, which gives it visual stimuli to recognize coarse structures such as rocks. Besides this, it shows a dramatic colour change. During day time it appears deep red in colour and at night its colour changes to beige. The red brittle star belongs to a group of marine invertebrates called echinoderms. It has a nervous system but no brain.

2019 was a deadly decade for children in conflict

The United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF) or the United Nations Children’s Fund recently reported more than 1,70,000 grave confirmed violations against children in conflict. This is the equivalent of more than 45 violations per day for the last decade. It included killing & maiming (injuring), sexual violence, abductions, denial of humanitarian access, child recruitment by armed forces and armed groups, attacks against schools or hospitals. During the first half of 2019 more than 10,000 violations against children were reported in which Harsh winter conditions in northern and eastern Syria, ebola outbreak in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), escalation of violence in Rakhine State in Myanmar killed a huge number of children. While in November 2019, UNICEF stated that 3 years of violence and instability in the North-West and South-West regions of Cameroon have placed more than 8.55 lakh children out of school and displaced 59,000 adolescents.

Mastercard acquired RiskRecon for its cybersecurity front

Leading global payments & technology company, Mastercard, acquired RiskRecon Inc, a leading third-party cyber risk solutions provider, to protect its cyber systems & infrastructure. The RiskRecon will promote Mastercard’s suite of cyber solutions designed to help financial institutions, merchants & governments secure their digital assets. Prior to this, Mastercard along with popular credit card companies like American Express, Visa & Discovery launched a one-click checkout feature for a faster and secure mode of the credit card payment by using the latest authentication standards of EMV (Europay, MasterCard, Visa) 3-D Secure. Apart from this, in India, the state government of Maharashtra launched the ‘Cyber Safe Women’ campaign in 34 districts and 90 places simultaneously

marking the birth anniversary of a social reformer, Savitribai Phule in Maharashtra. This initiative will reduce cyber crimes like stalking, picture morphing, online abuse and defamation, sextortion, pornography and child pornography, matrimonial and dating apps fraud against women and children.

Esmail Qaani became the new Commander of Iran

Brigadier-General Esmail Qaani has been appointed as the commander of Iran's Quds Force by the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. The most decorated commanders of the Revolutionary Guards of the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war has taken place of Qasem Soleimani, who got killed in a pre-dawn US strike in Baghdad on 3rd January 2020. Qasem Suleimani was regarded as the second most powerful figure in Iran after Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Along with him the top Iraqi militia commander Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, an adviser to Soleimani, was also killed in the attack. The US Defence Department said that it killed Soleimani because he “was actively developing plans to attack American diplomats and service members in Iraq and throughout the region”. And in addition to this, Soleimani had also approved the attacks on the US Embassy in Baghdad earlier this week.



Kimia is leaving Iran

Iran's Olympic medalist, Kimia Alizadeh announced that she is leaving the country. She made history at the Rio Olympics in 2016 by winning a bronze medal for her country in Taekwondo and with that, she became the only woman from Iran to have won an Olympic medal. Although she is one of the millions of oppressed women in Iran, Islamic republic had used her success as a propaganda tool, the government exploited her sporting success politically, officials humiliated her, yet she wishes to stay as the 'child of Iran', no matter in whichever part of the world she will stay. She has denied Europe's invitation. She has not revealed where she will go.

Jacqueline Williams: The First Woman Third Umpire In Men's T20i

A 43-year-old Jamaican woman, Jacqueline Williams became the first woman third umpire in men's international cricket match. She oversaw all 3 matches of the Twenty20 International (T20I) series in Grenada, West Indies between West Indies and Ireland. Prior to this, she stood as umpire in the 2015 ICC Women's World Twenty20 Qualifier tournament while in the year 2017, she was one of the four umpires in Women's Cricket World Cup Qualifier. In 2019, she stood in her first One Day International (ODI) match between the United States and Papua New Guinea in the United States Tri-Nation Series. Prior to her, in April 2019, Australia's Claire Polosak became the first female on-field umpire to stand in a men's ODI, in the ICC World Cricket League Division 2 match between Namibia and Oman in Windhoek, Namibia. And before them in May 2019, India's Gandikota Sarva Lakshmi became the first woman to get appointed onto the ICC International Panel of Match Referees and oversaw the third series of the Men's Cricket World Cup League 2 in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), becoming the first woman match referee in men's ODIs.

Cristiano Ronaldo won the best men's player title

Globe Soccer Award conferred the best men's player of the year title upon renowned Portuguese professional football player Cristiano Ronaldo in the international football function held in Dubai. Ronaldo won this title for the fourth consecutive time. He has won the award six times out of its nine years of existence. Besides him, England's Lucy Bronze was adjudged as the best women's player of the year. European Association of Player's Agents(EFAA) and the European Club Association (ECA) organized this 11th edition of the annual Globe Soccer Awards marking a new era for football in the Middle East, Dubai.

Conclusion of the 3rd Khelo India youth games 2020

The third edition of Khelo India youth games 2020 reached its end in January 2020 at Karmabir Nabin Chandra Bordoloi Indoor Stadium in Guwahati, Assam. Vijay the Tiger and Jaya the Blackbuck were the mascots of this tournament which witnessed participation of more than 10,000 students. Sprinter Hima Das acted as the torchbearer of the opening ceremony and Pugilist Harsh Bhagwan won Daman and Diu's first medal. Maharashtra won Khelo India Youth Games 2020 champions trophy with 256 medals (78 gold, 77 silver and 101 bronze). It was followed by Haryana with 200 medals (68 gold, 60 silver and 72 bronze) and Delhi with 122 medals (39 gold, 36 silver and 47 bronze) at the second and third places respectively. Tamil Nadu girls won the under-17 basketball title

UWW Rome Ranking Series 2020 & India

The United World Wrestling organized a four-day-long first edition of UWW (United World Wrestling) Matteo Pellicone Rome Ranking Series 2020 in the capital of Italy from 15th to 18th January 2020. It featured all the 3 disciplines – freestyle, Greco Roman and women's wrestling. The Indian wrestling team won 7 medals (4 gold, 2 silver, and a bronze). Bajrang Punia (65kg freestyle), Ravi Kumar Dahiya (61kg freestyle), Vinesh Phogat (53kg women's wrestling) and Gurpreet Singh (82kg -Greco-roman) were Gold medallists. Anshu Malik (57kg) and Sunil Kumar (97kg) were Silver medallists. Sajjan Bhanwal won the bronze medal in 77 kg Bronze.

The tale of Mumbai marathon

During the 7th edition of the Mumbai marathon, a 22-year-old Ethiopian Derrara Hurisa broke the event record for the full marathon in the elite category. He clocked a superb 2 hours, 8 minutes, 9 seconds, breaking the previous course record of 2:08:35 set by Gideon Kipketer in 2016. He was followed by Ayele Abshero and Birhanu Teshome who grabbed the second and third places in this category. While Ethiopia's Amane Beriso topped in the International Elite Full Marathon Women's category. Srinu Bugatha and Sudha Singh have booked the Indian Elite Full Marathon Men's and Women's category respectively. And Uttar Pradesh's Parul Choudhary has clinched the half marathon category, followed by Mumbai's Aarti Patil in the second and Nasik's Monica in the third spot.

Kuldeep Yadav: the fastest Indian spinner to take 100 wickets in ODIs

Kuldeep Yadav scripted history by becoming the fastest Indian spinner to take 100 wickets in ODI during the second match against Australia in Rajkot on 17th January 2020. The left-arm wrist-spinner achieved this milestone in his 58th match when he took Alex Carey's wicket for 18 in the 38th over of the Australian run chase. Kuldeep has now become the third-fastest Indian bowler to take 100 ODI wickets after his current teammates Mohammed Shami, who reached this milestone in 56 matches, and Jasprit Bumrah in 57 matches.

BCCI's central contract list for the year 2020

BCCI has released an annual central contract list for the period from October 2019- September 2020. Indian skipper Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma and Jasprit Bumrah are still in the highest A+ bracket contract that will bring each of these players Rs 7 crore each. Shikhar Dhawan, K L Rahul, Ravindra Jadeja, Ajinkya Rahane, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Cheteshwar Pujara, R Ashwin, Mohammed Shami, Ishant Sharma, Kuldeep Yadav and Rishabh Pant occupied A bracket contract. Hardik Pandya, Yuzvendra Chahal, Wriddhiman Saha, Umesh Yadav and Mayank Agarwal were inducted in the B bracket. And Kedar Jadhav, Deepak Chahar, Navdeep Saini, Manish Pandey, Hanuma Vihari, Shardul Thakur, Shreyas Iyer and Washington Sundar were taken in C bracket. It is worth knowing here that former Indian skipper MS Dhoni has been left out of the BCCI central contract list for the year 2020. Till last year he was in the A category of Rs 5 crore. Dinesh Karthik is also missing from the list, while several newbie's like Washington Sundar and Mayank Agarwal have been included in the list this year.

India ended the 2019 shooting championship campaign on a high note

According to the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF), India sealed the year 2019 as the top Shooting Nation in all the Rifle-pistol World Cups and Finals. It earned 21 gold, 6 silver, and 3 bronze. It was followed by China at the second position with 11 gold, 15 silver and 18 bronze and the United States at the third spot with 6 gold, 6 silver and 3 bronze.

The ongoing Khelo India Youth Games

As of 13th January 2020, Maharashtra and Haryana seemed to be fighting neck to neck in the medal tally at the ongoing Khelo India Youth Games at Guwahati. The defending champions, Maharashtra picked up five gold to manage a tally of total 76 medals with 17 gold to keep its topper image intact, while Haryana is also giving a good competition with 17 gold medals and a total of 47 medal win. Delhi and Gujarat are following them closely at the third and fourth spots respectively.

The Beginning of Khelo India Youth Games

The third edition of the Khelo India Youth Games started in Guwahati, Assam. Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal, Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports, Kiren Rijiju along with star athletes graced the inaugural ceremony at the Indira Gandhi Stadium which featured a state-of-the-art show created with the innovative use of lighting and technology. Around 6,800 athletes from teams of 37 states and union territories will compete in a total of 20 sports events till the 22nd of January 2020. This time the event is witnessing an addition of lawn bowls and cycling across eleven venues in Guwahati. The biggest contingents are from Maharashtra and Assam states in the games. Besides the Khelo India scholarships, the winners of the tournament will get, cash awards as well from the Assam Government.

Addition of shooting and archery in 2022 CWG

The Sports Ministry has given ‘in principle’ approval for holding the Commonwealth Games shooting and archery events in India. These events will take place under the aegis of the Commonwealth Games (CWG) Friendship Program in March 2022. Last year the Commonwealth Games had decided to exclude shooting events in 2022 CWG but the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) did not support this decision. India had won 66 medals including 26 gold medals in 2018 CWG in Gold Coast, Australia and also clinched 16 medals in the Shooting event.

The 63rd National Shooting championship

The National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) & MP State Shooting Academy organized the 63rd National Shooting championship competitions (NSCC) 2019 in Small Bore Rifle & Pistol events (including Para events) that concluded on 4th January 2020 in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh. The names of winners in women’s national 10m Air Rifle include Shooter Zeena Khitta (gold medal with 252.2 points), Mehuli Ghosh (silver medal with 250.5 points) and former World No. 1 and world record holder Apurvi Chandela (bronze medal with 227.6 points). In the women’s 10-meter air pistol event, Manu Bhaker of Haryana won 4 gold medals (individual and team events in senior and junior) and topped the junior category with 243 points and won the title with 241.5 points in the final of the senior category. She scored 588 points in the joint qualification of the two events. In the senior men’s 25-meter rapid fire pistol event, Anish Bhanwala from Haryana won the gold medal with 28 points in the senior class final. He topped the qualification with a 582 score. In men’s 10-meter air pistol event, Saurabh Chaudhary won gold and topped the table with 246.4 points. He is one of the medal contenders for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, who just scored less than 0.1 points from his former world record score; Sarabjot Singh finished second with a score of 243.9 and world number two Abhishek Verma managed a bronze medal. In 25-meter Standard Pistol for Men, Vijayveer won the individual gold medal. He topped the table with 580 points while Gurpreet Singh (578) and Udhayveer Sidhu (574) were behind in the queue. Vijayveer also topped the junior category, followed by Udhayveer and Harsh Gupta (572 points). In Junior Men’s Team, Vijayveer along with Udhayveer and Unish Holinder also won the team gold medal (1699 points) in the junior category. In the men’s 50m pistol event, the World Championship silver medalist Jitu Rai won team gold.



Current Affairs

1. Which of the following nations got elected to UNESCO's World Heritage Committee for the first time during the 22nd General Assembly of the State Parties ?
 (a) Oman (b) UAE (c) Saudi Arabia
 (d) Qatar (e) Kuwait
2. Which of the following nations topped the year-end FIFA/Coca-Cola World Ranking 2019 for men ?
 (a) USA (b) Mexico (c) Germany
 (d) Italy (e) Belgium
3. Westland publications will release book 'The Vault of Vishnu' penned by Ashwin Sanghi on Jan 23rd, 2020 in Jaipur Literature Festival. It has an account of some stories of as well.
 (a) South Korea (b) China (c) USA
 (d) Mongolia (e) Japan
4. In December 2019 Girish Chandra Chaturvedi became chairman of
 (a) BSE (b) NSE (c) CSE
 (d) ASE (e) None
5. Former CEO of, Sachin Bansal acquired DHFL General Insurance for Rs 100 crore.
 (a) Future Group (b) Flipkart (c) Titan
 (d) Shoppers Stop (e) Raymond Group
6. India landed LCA Tejas on
 (a) INS Vikramaditya (b) INS Arihant (c) INS Kiltan
 (d) INS Chakra (e) None
7. Dr. Bipul Saha of has been elected as IUPAC bureau member in January 2020.
 (a) Mumbai (b) Pune (c) Bengaluru
 (d) Hyderabad (e) Chennai

8. What was the venue of the fifth edition of Science Film festival 2020 ?
(a) Goa (b) Jammu & Kashmir (c) Uttar Pradesh
(d) Andaman and Nicobar Islands (e) Uttarakhand
9. India defeatedby 90 runs in U-19 World Cup in January 2020.
(a) Bangladesh (b) Sri Lanka (c) West Indies
(d) Zimbabwe (e) Australia
10. Malappuram of topped the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) survey 2015-20 of world's 10 fastest-growing cities
(a) Karnataka (b) Kerala (c) Tamil Nadu
(d) Andhra Pradesh (e) Telangana
11. South central zone of Indian railways has inked a pact with for doorstep banking in 585 stations.
(a) IDBI (b) SBI (c) ICICI
(d) BOB (e) PNB
12. In January 2020 the Central government raised India Overseas Bank's authorized capital to Rscrores.
(a) 20,000 (b) 22,000 (c) 23,000
(d) 24,000 (e) 25,000
13. Union Minister for Women and Child Development and Textiles, Smriti Zubin Irani launched Yashaswini scheme for Women entrepreneurship in
(a) Jammu & Kashmir (b) Goa (c) Uttarakhand
(d) Bihar (e) Gujarat
14. Robert Abela became the 14th Prime minister of.....
(a) Denmark (b) Luxembourg (c) Netherlands
(d) Norway (e) Malta
15. India's first case of infection of H9N2 virus, a rare subtype of influenza virus A was detected in
(a) Odisha (b) Maharashtra (c) Gujarat

(d) Rajasthan

(e) Bihar

16. Global Child Prodigy Award has been presented to- Indian yoga champion Ishwar Sharma in January 2020.
- (a) American (b) British (c) Australian
(d) Malaysian (e) Sweden
17. Which of the following states celebrated State's Journalists' Day on 6th January 2020?
- (a) Maharashtra (b) Mizoram (c) West Bengal
(d) Karnataka (e) Kerala
18. Which of the following financial services company became the first company to list commercial papers (CPS) on exchanges ?
- (a) Bajaj Finance Ltd (b) GIC Housing Finance Ltd
(c) IDFC First Bank Ltd (d) Indiabulls Housing Finance Ltd
(e) Aditya Birla Finance Ltd
19. PM Kisan Scheme registeredbeneficiaries in January 2020.
- (a) 5 crore (b) 6 crore (c) 7 crore
(d) 8 crore (e) 9 crore
20. An eleven day long festival 'Dhanu Jatra' began in
- (a) Rajasthan (b) Madhya Pradesh (c) Gujarat
(d) Odisha (e) Bihar



ANSWERS



- 1.(c) **Saudi Arabia** got elected to UNESCO's World Heritage Committee for the first time during the 22nd General Assembly of the State Parties after winning the membership in the UNESCO Executive Board for 2019-2023. Currently the UNESCO Executive board comprises of 58 member states.
- 2.(e) **Belgium** topped the year-end FIFA/Coca-Cola World Ranking 2019 for men. It was followed by France, Brazil, England and Uruguay to complete the top five list. India grabbed 108th spot in this ranking.
- 3.(b) Westland publications will release book 'The Vault of Vishnu' penned by Ashwin Sanghi on Jan 23rd, 2020 in Jaipur Literature Festival. It has account of some stories of **China** as well. The book will be the sixth series of 'Bharat Series'. Keepers of Kalachakra, The Rozabal Line, Chanakya's chant, The Krishna Key and The Sialkot Saga are some of his other titles. He has also co-authored '13 steps to Bloody Good Marks', '13 steps to Bloody Good Wealth' and '13 steps to Bloody Good Parenting'.
- 4.(b) In December 2019 public interest Director Girish Chandra Chaturvedi became chairman of India's leading stock exchange the National Stock Exchange(**NSE**). Chaturvedi has replaced Ashok Chawla. He also serves as a non-executive chairman of the Industrial Credit and Investment Corporation of India (ICICI).
- 5.(b) Former CEO of **Flipkart** Sachin Bansal acquired Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Limited General Insurance from Wadhan Group for Rs 100 crore. The deal has been done through Navi Technologies, formerly known as BAC Acquisitions Private Limited (BACQ) which Sachin Bansal had founded along with IIT-Delhi batchmate Ankit Agarwal after selling his stake in Flipkart.
- 6.(a) India landed LCA Tejas on **INS Vikramaditya** for the first time. It is India's biggest warship. The maiden landing was conducted by Commodore Jaideep Maolankar. This was the first occasion when an indigenous fighter aircraft was landed on an aircraft carrier.

- 7.(d) Dr. Bipul Saha of **Hyderabad** has been elected as International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC) bureau member in January 2020 for the period 2020-23. It is worth knowing that Saha is the only second Indian after “Bharat Ratna” Professor Chintamani Nagesa Ramachandra Rao (CNR Rao) to get elected (1979) for this position in the century.
- 8.(a) Inox Complex and Maquinez Palace in Panaji, **Goa** was the venue of the fifth edition of Science Film festival 2020. Films like ‘Mission Mangal’, ‘Antariksham 9000 KMPH’, ‘Everest’, ‘Aamorie’, ‘Terminator: Dark Fate’, ‘Geostorm’ and, ‘Virus’ were screened to instill knowledge of science among youth of the country. Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute(SRFTI) and National Institute of Science Communication and Information Resources (NISCAR) backed this event.
- 9.(b) India defeated **Sri Lanka** by 90 runs in an opening group league encounter of the ICC U-19 World Cup cricket at Bloemfontein in South Africa. Batting first, India scored a competitive 297 for 4, with the help of half-centuries from their premier batsmen opener Yashasvi Jaiswal and skipper Priyam Garg. Sri Lanka was all out for 207 runs in 45.2 overs.
- 10.(b) Malappuram of **Kerala** topped the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) survey 2015-20 of world’s 10 fastest-growing cities. It was followed by Can Tho region in Vietnam at 2nd spot and Suqian in China in the 3rd spot.
- 11.(b) South central zone of Indian railways has inked a pact with **SBI** for doorstep banking in 585 stations. This will lead to the development of equal remittance mechanism in all railway stations; real-time information will be available about the cash being deposited by various stations, which will facilitate accountability and it will also lead to avoidance of unwanted accumulation of cash at railway stations.
- 12.(e) In January 2020 the Central government raised India Overseas Bank’s authorized capital to Rs **25,000** crores from the previous authorized capital of Rs. 15,000 crores, thus making an increase by Rs. 10,000 crores. Authorised capital is the maximum amount of share capital a company/bank/institution is authorised to issue its shareholders.
- 13.(b) Union Minister for Women and Child Development and Textiles, Smriti Zubin Irani launched Yashaswini scheme for Women entrepreneurship at Dr Shyama Prasad Mukherjee stadium in Taleigao town near Panaji district of **Goa**. The scheme has provision of interest free loans up to Rs. 5 lakhs with a tenure of five years for women self-help groups.

- 14.(e)** Son of the Malta's Former President George Abela, Robert Abela of Labour Party became the 14th Prime Minister of European nation **Malta**. He has taken place of Joseph Muscat, who resigned over the murder of a journalist, Daphne Caruana Galizia.
- 15.(b)** India's first case of infection of H9N2 virus, a rare subtype of influenza virus A was detected in a 17-month-old boy in **Maharashtra**. It is a rare variant of the virus, which causes human influenza as well as bird flu. Globally, the first case of H9N2 virus infection occurred in humans in Hong Kong in 1998.
- 16.(b)** Global Child Prodigy Award has been presented to **British**-Indian yoga champion Ishwar Sharma in January 2020. The 10 years old schoolboy (UK resident) originally from Mysore, under 11-yoga champion from the UK, participated in more than 100 events across the UK and worldwide. He started an e-petition with the UK Government which has been signed by nearly 20,000 people to include yoga in the national school curriculum.
- 17.(a)** **Maharashtra** celebrated State's Journalists' Day on 6th January 2020 in the memory of late thespian journalist Balshastri Jambhekar. He was known as 'The Father of Marathi Journalism', who started the first newspaper in Marathi language named 'Darpan' in 1832. He was also the first Indian to have published research papers in the quarterly journal of the Asiatic Society and was the first person to print Dnyaneshwari in 1845.
- 18.(e)** **Aditya Birla Finance Ltd** became the first company to list commercial papers (CPS) on exchanges. Commercial papers are unsecured money market instrument issued in the form of a promissory note and transferable between Primary Dealers (PDs) and the All-India Financial Institutions (FIs).
- 19.(d)** PM Kisan Scheme registered **8 crore** beneficiaries in January 2020. The scheme was launched on 24th February 2019 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh.
- 20.(d)** An eleven day long festival 'Dhanu Jatra' began at Bargarh in Western **Odisha** in December 2019. Jatra's drama is based on the story of Lord Krishna and his uncle Kansa. It is the world's longest open-air drama named in the Guinness book of records.