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# MANTHAN

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**A General Awareness Weekly**

**23<sup>rd</sup> November to 29<sup>th</sup> November, 2020**

# PREFACE

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**Dear Students,**

The 'Current Affairs' section is an integral part of any examination. This edition of Manthan has been developed by our team to help you cover all the important events of the Week. This comprehensive bulletin will help you prepare the section in a vivid manner. We hope that our sincere efforts will serve you in a better way to fulfill aspirations.

**Happy Reading**

**Team CL**



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## National



### India hosted SCO Heads of Government meet

- India hosted the 19<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Council of Heads of Government in a virtual format, which was chaired by Vice President Venkaiah Naidu, the Ministry of External Affairs has said. Chinese Premier Li Keqiang attended the virtual meeting of the bloc which was also addressed by Vice-President Venkaiah Naidu.
- This is the first time that a Summit-level Meeting was held under India's Chairmanship since it gained full membership of the organisation in 2017.
- Officials explained that while the SCO Heads of Government Council consists of Prime Ministers, PM Modi had been deputing others for the event in previous years as well, with the External Affairs Minister attending the SCO HoG meets in 2017 and 2018, while Defence Minister Rajnath Singh filled in for the PM in 2019.
- Moreover, tensions between India and Pakistan, which have played out in previous meetings, may have played a part in Mr. Khan's decision to decline the invitation from India. During the SCO meeting of National Security Advisors, NSA Ajit Doval had walked out of the videoconference over his Pakistani counterpart's decision to use a Pakistani map claiming Indian territories Kashmir and Junagadh as part of its territory as his backdrop.
- Apart from the eight SCO Member States, the meeting was attended by four Observer States of the SCO: including the President of Afghanistan Ashraf Ghani, the First Vice President of Iran, the Prime Minister of Belarus, and the Deputy Prime Minister of Mongolia. Turkmenistan has been invited as a Special Guest by India and was represented by the Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers.
- In November 2020, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping participated in the SCO Council of Heads of State (SCO-CHS), the highest forum of SCO, meeting hosted by Russia in a virtual format.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) is a Eurasian political, economic, and security organisation, the creation of which was announced on 15 June 2001 in Shanghai, China by the leaders of China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan; the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Charter was signed in June 2002 and entered into force on 19 September 2003. India and Pakistan have become latest full members in SCO in 2017. The Secretariat of the SCO is the primary executive body of the organisation. It is headquartered in Beijing. The SCO's official languages are Russian and Chinese.

### Nagaland: KSCDL declared winner at ET Govt Global Smart Cities Forum 2020

- In Nagaland, Kohima Smart City Development Limited, KSCDL has been declared Winner at the ET Government Global Smart Cities Forum 2020 under the category Best Digital Initiative of the Year (Technology) for Kohima City Wifi Phase-I Project.
- IT infrastructure will enable Internet of Things and establish a platform for smart city with innovative smart solutions such as pan-city fire emergency solutions, smart offices, entertainment, smart street lighting, smart Kiosks, smart traffic management and others with the aim to turn Kohima into a more tourist-friendly place.

Nagaland is a landlocked state in north-eastern India. Nagaland's capital city is Kohima and its largest city is Dimapur. Neiphiu Rio is the current Chief Minister of Nagaland. Ravindra Narayana Ravi is currently serving as the Governor of Nagaland. Retired IPS 1976 batch. Greater Nagaland is consisting of all the Naga-inhabited areas of neighbouring Assam, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh and some portions Myanmar, which it considers to be the rightful homeland of the Nagas.

### Odisha Assembly passes 'Odisha Essential Services (Maintenance) Amendment Bill-2020'

- **Odisha Essential Services (Maintenance) Amendment Bill-2020** was passed by the state assembly. The bill seeks to amend the existing Act of 1988 to prohibit strikes by employees of essential services in the state.
- Expanding the ambit of essential services, the bill includes services like **fire service, excise, forest, prison reforms, electronics and Information and Communication departments.**
- According to the provisions of the amended bill, **persons resorting to or found instigating or funding illegal strikes may face imprisonment upto one year or a fine upto Rs. five thousand or both.**

The modern state of Odisha was established on 1 April 1936, as a province in British India. The ancient kingdom of Kalinga, which was invaded by the Mauryan emperor Ashoka in 261 BCE resulting in the Kalinga War, coincides with the borders of modern-day Odisha. Konark Sun Temple is a 13<sup>th</sup>-century CE sun temple at Konark about 35 kilometres northeast from Puri on the coastline of Odisha, India. The temple is attributed to king Narasimhadeva I of the Eastern Ganga Dynasty about 1250 CE. Ganeshi Lal is current Governor of Odisha. Naveen Patnaik is the current and 14<sup>th</sup> Chief Minister of Odisha.

### Second edition of SITMEX-20 held in Andaman Sea

- **Indian Navy Ships** including indigenously built ASW corvette Kamorta and missile corvette Karmuk are participated in the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of India, Singapore and Thailand Trilateral Maritime Exercise SITMEX-20 in Andaman Sea.
- **First edition of SITMEX**, hosted by Indian Navy, was conducted off Port Blair in September 2019. The SITMEX series of exercises are conducted to enhance mutual inter-operability and imbibing best practices between Indian Navy, Republic of Singapore Navy and Royal Thai Navy.
- **The 2020 edition of the exercise** is being hosted by Republic of Singapore Navy which is being represented by the 'Formidable' Class frigate 'Intrepid' and 'Endurance' Class Landing Ship Tank 'Endeavour'.
- **Royal Thai Navy** is being represented by the 'Chao Phraya' Class frigate 'Kraburi' in the exercise. The exercise, being conducted as a 'non-contact, at sea only' exercise in view of COVID-19 pandemic, highlights growing synergy, coordination and cooperation in the maritime domain between the three friendly navies and maritime neighbours. In September 2019, first edition of the SITMEX trilateral exercise was hosted by Indian Navy at the Port Blair

### Ravi Shankar Prasad launches international version of UMANG App

- **To mark the occasion of 3 years of UMANG and 2000 plus services milestone**, an online conference was organized under the chairmanship of Minister for Electronics and Information Technology, Ravi Shankar Prasad.
- On this occasion, Mr Prasad launched the UMANG's international version in coordination with Ministry of External Affairs for select countries that include USA, UK, Canada, Australia, UAE, Netherlands, Singapore, Australia and New Zealand.
- It will help **Indian international students, NRIs and Indian tourists abroad, to avail Government of India services, anytime.** It will also help in taking India to the world through 'Indian Culture' services available on UMANG and create interest amongst foreign tourists to visit India. It can be downloaded from Google play store.
- **The Union Minister also launched an e-Book** which presents major milestones of UMANG and major services available on UMANG App classified into various categories. Mr Prasad also unveiled the newly instituted UMANG Awards for Partner Departments of Centre and States based on the highest number of transactions across services.

**UMANG** or **Unified Mobile Application for New-age Governance**, is a **Government of India all-in-one single unified secure multi-channel multi-platform multi-lingual multi-service freeware mobile app** for accessing over **1,200 central and state government services** in multiple **Indian languages** over **Android, iOS, Windows** and services such as **AADHAR, DigiLocker, Bharat Bill Payment System, PAN, EPFO services, PMKVY services, AICTE, CBSE, tax and fee or utilities bills payments, education, job search, tax, business, health, agriculture, travel, birth certificates, e-District, passport and much more.** Conceived in 2016, this e-governance app was **developed by Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) and National e-Governance Division (NeGD)**, and went through several rounds of beta tests since November 2016 before its launch.

### **Agriculture Minister unveils ‘Sahakar Pragya’ to impart training to primary cooperative societies in rural areas**

- **Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar unveiled Sahakar Pragya. The 45 new training modules of Sahakar Pragya of the National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC) will impart training to primary cooperative societies in rural areas** of the country along with Lakshmanrao Inamdar National Cooperative Research and Development Academy.
- On this occasion, Mr. Tomar called upon the cooperative sector to play a role in **making the village-poor-farmers Atma Nirbhar.** He said, **India boasts a huge network of over 8.50 lakh cooperative societies with about 290 million members and around 94 per cent of the farmers are member of at least one cooperative society.**

**Narendra Singh Tomar** is the **Minister of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare and Minister of Rural Development** in the Second Modi ministry. He is a member of the **17<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha** from **Morena, Madhya Pradesh.**

### **PM Narendra Modi inaugurated RE-INVEST 2020**

- **Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated the 3<sup>rd</sup> Global Renewable Energy Investment Meeting and Expo (RE-Invest 2020) through video conferencing. The summit is organised by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy. The theme for RE-Invest 2020 is ‘Innovations for Sustainable Energy Transition’.**
- The Prime Minister expressed happiness that in the renewable energy sector, **within a short time the progress from megawatts to gigawatts in generation capacity and “One Sun, One World, One Grid” are becoming a reality,** all of which were discussed in the earlier editions. The Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, **UK and President COP-26, and the Minister of Energy, Utilities and Climate, Denmark attended and spoke in the inaugural session.**
- **Minister for New and Renewable Energy, RK Singh informed that the 3<sup>rd</sup> RE-Invest will build upon the success of the first two editions held in 2015 and 2018. It will provide an international forum for investment promotion in renewable energy. It will also send signals to the global renewable community about India’s commitment to the development and scaling up of renewable energy to meet its energy requirements in a sustainable manner.**

**Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE)** is a ministry of the Government of India that is **mainly responsible for research and development, intellectual property protection, and international cooperation, promotion, and coordination in renewable energy sources such as wind power, small hydro, biogas, and solar power.** The ministry is currently headed by **R. K. Singh, a Minister of State (Independent Charge).** He is a **Member of the Indian Parliament for Arrah, Bihar, since May 2014.**

### **India to build new dam, launch projects worth \$80 million in Afghanistan**

- **India unveiled new development initiatives for Afghanistan, including a dam to supply water to Kabul and 150 community projects worth \$80 million, even as it called for an immediate and comprehensive ceasefire in the war-torn country.**
- Against the backdrop of mounting global concern over increased attacks by the Taliban even as it engages the Afghan government in talks, **external affairs minister S Jaishankar** told a virtual international pledging conference that India is committed to a long-term role for the development of Afghanistan.



- **An agreement with Afghanistan to build Shahtoot Dam in the Kabul River basin to provide drinking water to two million residents of Kabul city.** This will be built on the 202-km Pul-e-Khumri electricity transmission line built in 2009 to provide power to the city.

**Afghanistan** is a landlocked country located within south-central Asia. **Kabul** is the capital of Afghanistan and its largest city. **Mohammad Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai** is the current President of Afghanistan, elected on 21 September 2014. Afghanistan is bordered by Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan to the north, Iran to the west, and Pakistan to the south and east. **Abdullah Abdullah** leads the High Council for National Reconciliation (HCNR), which is expected to lead the intra-Afghan peace talks with the Taliban. The **afghani** is the currency of Afghanistan, issued by the central bank Da Afghanistan Bank.

### Centre launches portal for transgender persons

- The ministry of social justice and empowerment launched a portal that will **allow transgender persons to apply online for certification of their self-perceived gender identity.** Launched by Union minister **Thawar Chand Gehlot**, the portal will allow transgender persons to upload an affidavit declaring their gender identity, which will then become the basis for their identity certificates to be issued by the district magistrate.
- One is expected to get an identity card within 30 days of the district authorities reviewing the application. **Following the passage of the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act 2019, the law allows for self-perceived identification by an applicant for an identity certificate.** The ministry will also open shelter homes for trans people in each state. **The first such home was inaugurated in Gujarat** and will offer shelter and skill training to those in need.

**The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019** is an act of the Parliament of India with the objective to provide for protection of rights of transgender people, their welfare, and other related matters. **The act** has been in effect since 10 January 2020. **National Legal Services Authority v. Union of India** is a landmark decision by the Supreme Court of India, which declared transgender people to be a 'third gender', affirmed that the **fundamental rights granted under the Constitution of India will be equally applicable to transgender people**, and gave them the right to self-identification of their gender as male, female or third-gender.

### Jagan Mohan Reddy launches interest-free loans scheme for Andhra street vendors

- The YSR Congress Party government in Andhra Pradesh launched yet another welfare scheme - **Jagananna Thodu (Brother Jagan's support)** - aimed at providing interest-free loans to small traders and street vendors in the state.
- Through this scheme, the banks would **provide loans to the tune of Rs 1,000 crore to nearly 10 lakh people** and the government would bear the **interest of Rs 60 crore to Rs 100 crore annually.** Assuming that the loan repayment period is 10 years, the government will be spending Rs 1,000 crore towards reimbursement of interest.

**Andhra Pradesh** is the first state in India to have Five Deputy Chief Ministers one each from Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe, backward, minority and Kapu communities. **YS Jagan Mohan Reddy** is the current Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh. Andhra Pradesh is the first state in India to have three capital cities; there are Visakhapatnam (Executive capital), Amaravati (Legislative capital) and Kurnool (Judiciary). Andhra Pradesh High Court imposed a stay on implementation of 3 capitals. Andhra Pradesh is the first state to be formed on a linguistic basis in India on 1 October 1953. **Biswabhusan Harichandan** is the current Governor of Andhra Pradesh.

### Prime Minister Narendra Modi chairs PRAGATI meeting

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired the PRAGATI meeting.** It marked **Prime Minister's thirty-third interaction through PRAGATI** - the ICT based multi-modal platform for Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation, involving Central and State governments. The projects taken up were of the **Ministry of Railways, MORTH, DPIIT and Power Ministry.** These projects, with a total cost of 1.41 lakh crore rupees, were related to ten states and union territories, including **Odisha, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Gujarat, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Dadra and Nagar Haveli.**

## India, Finland sign MoU in the field of Environment protection and biodiversity conservation

- **India and Finland signed a MoU for developing cooperation between two countries in the field of Environment protection and biodiversity conservation.**
- **The MoU is a platform to further advance Indian and Finnish partnership and support, exchange best practices in areas like prevention of air and water pollution, waste management, and promotion of circular economy. The MoU was signed virtually by Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar from the Indian side and his Finnish counterpart Krista Mikkonen.**

**Finland is a Nordic country located in Northern Europe. Finland shares land borders with Sweden to the west, Russia to the east, and Norway to the north and is defined by the Gulf of Bothnia to the west and the Gulf of Finland to the south that are part of the Baltic Sea. Sanna Mirella Marin has been Prime Minister of Finland since 10 December 2019. At 35, she is the world's fourth-youngest serving state leader, the youngest female state leader, and Finland's youngest-ever prime minister. Sauli Niinisto is the current President of Finland, in office since 2012. Helsinki is the capital, primate and most populous city of Finland. Euro is the official currency of it.**

## Union Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad unveils newly instituted UMANG Awards

- **On the occasion of completion of 3 years of UMANG App, Union Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad unveiled the newly instituted UMANG Awards for Partner Departments of Centre and States based on average transactions in the past six months across all services. Employees' Provident Fund Organisation has been conferred with Platinum Partner Award for registering more than 25 lakh transactions on UMANG App.**
- **As the majority of EPFO members are from the socio-economically disadvantaged sections, an accessible and affordable solution was needed to reach out to crores of EPFO subscribers. Considering the popularity and ease of usage of internet based devices like smartphones, tablets and desktop, EPFO aimed to harness the potential of UMANG app to enable easy and round-the-clock access to its services, especially to the subscribers residing in remotest of locations. This led to the launch of EPFO services on UMANG.**

## PM Modi inaugurates Global Renewable Energy Investment Meet and Expo 2020

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi said India's renewable power capacity is the 4<sup>th</sup> largest in the world and it is growing at the fastest speed among all major countries.**
- **The renewable energy capacity in India is currently 136 Giga Watts, which is about 36 percent of country's total capacity.**
- **Inaugurating the virtual 3<sup>rd</sup> Global Renewable Energy Investment Meeting and Expo, RE-Invest 2020, Mr Modi said, India is travelling on an unparalleled journey in the last 6 years.**

## Railway launches completely digitized online Human Resource Management System

- **Indian Railway has launched a completely digitized online Human Resource Management System (HRMS). HRMS is a high thrust project for Indian Railways to leverage improved productivity and employee satisfaction.**
- **It is a move to improve efficiency and productivity of the Railway system. Chairman and CEO of Railway Board launched HRMS modules of Employee Self Service, PF Advance and Retirement Settlement.**
- **The modules will benefit over 27 lakh families of both serving and retired Railway employees. Several other modules of HRMS are already operational in the Indian Railways.**

**Indian Railways (IR) is the fourth-largest railway network in the world by size. There are a total of 18 Railway zones. South Coast Railway Zone is the newest and 18<sup>th</sup> railway zone, headquartered at Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh. Piyush Vedprakash Goyal is currently serving as the Minister of Railways and Commerce in the Government of India. He was elected as the BJP candidate from Maharashtra for the Rajya Sabha on 3 June 2016. The practice of a separate Railway Budget was started by the British in 1924 under the recommendation of a 10-member Acworth Committee headed by British economist William Mitchell Acworth in 1920-21. On 21 September 2016, Government of India approved the merger of the Railway Budget with the Union budget of India, and thus came to end — a 92-year-old practice of separate rail and general budgets.**

## UNDP, Invest India launched 'SDGs Investor Map' for India

- The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Invest India, the national investment promotion agency under the Commerce & Industry Ministry, have launched the 'SDG (sustainable development goals) Investor Map' for India with 18 Investment Opportunities Areas (IOAs) in six critical sectors such as education and healthcare to help the country achieve its development goals.
- It laid out 18 Investment Opportunities Areas in six critical SDG enabling sectors, that can help the country push forward on the trajectory of Sustainable Development.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is the United Nations' global development network. Headquartered in New York City, UNDP advocates for change and connects countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build a better life. It provides expert advice, training and grants support to developing countries, with increasing emphasis on assistance to the least developed countries.

## Madhya Pradesh to set up Gau Cabinet for protection & promotion of cows in state

- In Madhya Pradesh, the state government has decided to set up a Gau Cabinet for the protection and promotion of cows in the state. The Chief Minister informed that we have been decided to constitute a gau cabinet for the protection and fostering of godhan, cow and its progeny in the state.
- Ministers of the animal husbandry, forest, panchayat and rural development, revenue, home and farmers' welfare departments will be included in this cabinet. India's first cow sanctuary, Kamdhenu Gau Abhyaranya in Agar Malwa was set up by the state government in September 2017. It was developed by the MP Gau Samvardhan Board by spending about Rs 32 crore. The sanctuary is spread across 472 hectares.

Madhya Pradesh (meaning Central Province) is a state in central India. Its capital is Bhopal. Nicknamed the "Heart of India" due to its geographical location in India. Madhya Pradesh is the second-largest state in the country by area after Rajasthan. This state was the largest in India by area until 2000, when its southeastern Chhattisgarh region was made as a separate state. MP has the largest reserves of diamond and copper in India. The current governor of Madhya Pradesh is Anandiben Patel. Shivraj Singh Chouhan is the current Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh.

## India records highest rate of bribery in Asia: survey

- India has the highest rate of bribery and use of personal links to access public services such as healthcare and education in Asia, according to a survey released by global civil society Transparency International.
- "India has the highest overall bribery rate (39%) and the highest rate of citizens using personal connections (46%), following India, Indonesia and China have the second and third highest rates of people using personal connections with 36% and 32% respectively." says the report titled "Global Corruption Barometer – Asia".
- It notes that in India, 50% of those involved in bribery are asked to bribe, while 32% of those who used personal connections say they will not receive the service otherwise.
- "Of the people surveyed in India, who came into contact with the police, 42% had paid bribes. The use of bribes was also rampant (41%) to obtain official documents such as identity papers. Use of personal connections was also largely made in dealings with the police (39%), procurement of identity documents (42%), and in relation to courts (38%)", it states.
- Across Asia, Transparency International surveyed 20,000 people in 17 countries- with six public services such as police, courts, public hospitals, procurement of identity documents, and utilities covered for the report. The survey was conducted between June-September last, recording their activities, perception, and experiences with corruption in the past 12 months.

Transparency International e.V. (TI) is a German non-governmental organization founded in 1993. Based in Berlin, its nonprofit purpose is to take action to combat global corruption with civil societal anti-corruption measures and to prevent criminal activities arising from corruption. Its most notable publications include the Global Corruption Barometer and the Corruption Perceptions Index.





### Face-to-face negotiations between UK, EU over trade deal restart in London

- **Face-to-face negotiations between the United Kingdom (UK) and the European Union (EU) over a trade deal have restarted in London** in a last-ditch attempt to find agreement with just **five weeks to go before their current relationship ends**.
- **EU negotiator Michel Barnier and the UK's chief negotiator David Frost are working to secure a deal before the UK's transition period with the EU ends on December 31.**
- **It is the first time they have met face-to-face since Barnier** went into self-isolation after a member of his team caught the novel coronavirus. Both sides are calling for the other to compromise on the three main issues of contention - fishing, state aid and how to resolve any future disputes.
- **The UK left the bloc on January 31 this year and a “no-deal” final exit would snarl borders, spook financial markets and disrupt delicate supply chains that stretch across Europe and beyond.** A no-deal scenario is widely expected to cause economic chaos, with customs checks required at the borders.

**Brexit (“British” and “exit”)** is the **withdrawal of the United Kingdom (UK) from the European Union (EU) and the European Atomic Energy Community (EAEC or Euratom) on 31 January 2020.** The UK is to date the **first and only country to formally leave the EU after 47 years of membership** and cautious integration within the bloc after it first joined its predecessor, the European Communities (EC), on 1 January 1973. It is also thought to be the **first country to voluntarily withdraw from an economic and monetary union of countries** (although the UK never adopted the Euro). **In July 2016, following a Brexit referendum in which a majority of those voting supported leaving the European Union.** In a referendum on 23 June 2016, **51.9% of the participating UK electorate voted to leave the EU.** On 29 March 2017, the United Kingdom (UK) invoked Article 50 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) which began the member state's withdrawal, commonly known as Brexit. After the three subsequent extensions of the Article 50 process, the deadlock was resolved after a subsequent general election was held in December 2019, resulting in the Conservatives who campaigned in support of a “revised” withdrawal agreement led by the current Prime Minister Boris Johnson winning an overall majority of 80 seats. Following the outcome, the UK Parliament finally ratified the withdrawal agreement, and the UK left the EU at 11 p.m. GMT on 31 January 2020.

### New Zealand declared a climate emergency

- **New Zealand has declared a “climate emergency” and promised to make its public sector carbon neutral by 2025.**
- **Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern told legislators that the climate emergency declaration was “an acknowledgement of the next generation – an acknowledgement of the burden that they will carry if we do not get this right and do not take action now”.**
- **New Zealand now joins 32 other countries that have declared a climate emergency. They include Japan, Canada, France and the United Kingdom.**
- **Ardern Labour Party won nearly 49 per cent of the votes in the general elections last month, which was the biggest victory for her party in about 50 years.** As Prime Minister, Ardern has been vocal about climate change and last November, the parliament passed the Zero-Carbon Act, **which commits New Zealand to zero carbon emissions by 2050 or sooner.**

New Zealand is an island country in the southwestern Pacific Ocean. Wellington is the capital city. Jacinda Ardern is the current Prime Minister. The New Zealand dollar is the official currency and legal tender of New Zealand, the Cook Islands, Niue, the Ross Dependency, Tokelau, and a British territory, the Pitcairn Islands.

### US CDC releases first blueprint for initial vaccine allocation

- America's top public health agency - the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has released its first blueprint of a four-pronged ethical basis which will determine how the coronavirus vaccine could be released to reach more than 261 million people who fall into the category of essential workers.
- A high-powered Advisory Committee on Immunisation Practices responsible for making vaccine recommendations while supply is limited laid out four principles that will guide allocation: Maximise benefits and minimise harms; Promote justice; Mitigate health inequities; Promote transparency.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is a national public health institute in the United States. It is a United States federal agency, under the Department of Health and Human Services, and is headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia.

### Priyanka Radhakrishnan becomes New Zealand's first-ever Indian-origin minister

- Priyanka Radhakrishnan became New Zealand's first-ever Indian-origin minister after Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern brought five new ministers into her executive.
- Her new role of Minister for Diversity, Inclusion and Ethnic Communities. In addition to this, she has become the Minister for the Community and Voluntary Sector and Associate Minister for Social Development and Employment.

### Christchurch Airport becomes world's first to achieve Level 4 Transformation of Airport Carbon Accreditation

- Christchurch Airport in New Zealand has taken a major step forward in its commitment to fight against climate change, becoming the first airport in the Asia-Pacific region and in the world to reach Level 4 Transformation of Airport Carbon Accreditation.
- This high achievement is evidence of the airport's continued efforts to align its carbon management strategy with the global climate goals. It also follows ACI's recent announcement of the introduction of two further levels of accreditation in its global Airport Carbon Accreditation programme (Level 4 Transformation and Level 4+ Transition) to mark the industry's ongoing commitment to 'Build Back Better'.
- Christchurch Airport, which was previously accredited at Level 2 Reduction of Airport Carbon Accreditation, has successfully upgraded to Level 4 Transformation, one of the highest levels of accreditation, by taking swift and concrete actions to transform its operations to achieve CO2 emissions reduction in alignment with the Paris Agreement (global warming limited to below 2°C and ideally 1.5°C).

### China's first domestically made nuclear reactor goes online

- China has powered up its first domestically developed nuclear reactor — the Hualong One — a significant step in Beijing's attempts to become less dependent on Western allies for energy security and critical technology.
- The reactor, which was connected to the national grid, can generate 10 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity each year and cut carbon emissions by 8.16 million tons.
- China has 47 nuclear plants with a total generation capacity of 48.75 million kilowatts — the world's third highest after the U.S. and France.

China is a country in East Asia and the world's most populous country, with a population of around 1.404 billion. Beijing is the capital of the People's Republic of China. Xi Jinping is serving as president of the People's Republic of China. National People's Congress is the national legislature of the People's Republic of China. With 2,980 members in 2018, it is the largest parliamentary body in the world. China's currency yuan joins the International Monetary Fund's basket of reserve currencies.

## India to set up Drug Detox Centre in the Maldives

- **The Drug Detoxification Centre in Hulhudhoo, Addu, the Maldives** is being set up with the help of India. Tailored to meet the requirements of the local community, **the project is funded through an MVR 8 million grant assistance from India.** And is going to be steered and executed by the Ministry of National Planning, Housing and Infrastructure of that country.
- **This is in line with India's 'Neighbourhood First' policy and the Maldives' 'India First' policy.** The two countries have been working together to fight the global pandemic of COVID-19.

**Maldives** is a South Asian country, located in the Indian Ocean, situated in the Arabian Sea. **Male** is the capital and most populated city, traditionally called the “King’s Island” for its central location. **Maldivian rufiyaa** is the currency of the Maldives. **Ibrahim Mohamed Solih** is the current President of the Maldives.

## Shanghai rises to become world's most connected city

- **Shanghai** has dethroned London to become the world's most connected city as the coronavirus shakes up international travel. **London** has seen a **67% fall in connectivity in air travel**, according to airline industry body IATA. **Shanghai** has risen up the ranks, and the world's four most connected cities are now all in China. The top four most connected cities in the world are now Shanghai, Beijing, Guangzhou, and Chengdu.

## China Hydropower Company plans first downstream dam on Brahmaputra

- Authorities have given the go-ahead for a Chinese hydropower company to construct the first downstream dam on the lower reaches of the Brahmaputra River, or Yarlung Zangbo as it is known in Tibet, marking a new phase in China's hydropower exploitation of the river with potential ramifications for India.
- A report in the Chinese media said the State-owned hydropower company POWERCHINA had last month signed “a strategic cooperation agreement” with the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) government to “implement hydropower exploitation in the downstream of the Yarlung Zangbo River” as part of the new Five-Year Plan (2021-2025).
- **China** in 2015 operationalised its first hydropower project at Zangmu in Tibet, while three other dams at Dagu, Jiexu and Jiacha are being developed, all on the upper and middle reaches of the river. The report said this will be the first time the downstream sections of the river will be tapped.

**Brahmaputra** called Yarlung Tsangpo in Tibet, Siang/Dihang River in Arunachal Pradesh and Luit, Dilao in Assam, is a trans-boundary river which flows through Tibet, India and Bangladesh. It is the ninth largest river in the world by discharge, and the 15<sup>th</sup> longest. With its origin in the Manasarovar Lake region, near the Mount Kailash, located on the northern side of the Himalayas in Burang County of Tibet as the Yarlung Tsangpo River. Major tributaries are Dihang, Lohit, Subansiri, Teesta, Meghna (Barack in Assam), Manas.

## Saudi Arabia Opens Its First UNESCO World Heritage Site 'Hegra' After 2,000 Years

- Nestled on a massive boulder in the desert, the 'masterpiece' resort Qasr al-Farid, or “The Lonely Castle,” in the UNESCO archaeological site in the north of AlUla in Saudi Arabia is now open to tourists.
- Built-in the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE, the tomb carved in the sandstone in Hegra also known as the Madain Saleh is among other iconic structures constructed by the Nabateans in a unique style which has been undisturbed for nearly 2,000 years. However, the Saudi Arabia government recently opened the site 'Hegra' for the general public which bears testimony to the Nabataean civilization from 2 and 3 centuries BC.

**Saudi Arabia** is a sovereign Arab state in Western Asia. Saudi Arabia is the largest country in the Middle East. **Riyadh** is the capital and most populous city of Saudi Arabia. **Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud** has been King of Saudi Arabia, Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia, and Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques since 23 January 2015. **Mohammad bin Salman** is the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, also serving as First Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Council for Economic and Development Affairs and Minister of Defense—the world's youngest office holder at the time. **Saudi riyal** is the currency of Saudi Arabia.





## RBI committee for conversion of large NBFCs into banks, entry of corporates

- In a series of proposals, an Internal Working Group (IWG) of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has recommended the guarded entry of corporates into the banking space, conversion of big NBFCs into banks and hike in promoters' stake to 26 per cent from 15 per cent.
- The group also proposed a hike in minimum capital for new banks from Rs 500 crore to Rs 1,000 crore. "The cap on promoters' stake in the long run — 15 years — may be raised from the current level of 15 per cent to 26 per cent of the paid-up voting equity share capital of the bank," the group proposed.
- This stipulation should be uniform for all types of promoters and would mean that promoters, who have already diluted their holdings to below 26 per cent, will be permitted to raise it to 26 per cent of the paid-up voting equity share capital of the bank.
- The committee, headed by PK Mohanty, has said "large corporates and industrial houses may be allowed as promoters of banks only after necessary amendments to the Banking Regulation Act, 1949" and strengthening of the supervisory mechanism for large conglomerates, including consolidated supervision. This is to prevent connected lending and exposures between the banks and other financial and non-financial group entities.

A Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC) is a company registered under the Companies Act, 2013 of India, engaged in the business of loans and advances, acquisition of shares, stock, bonds, hire-purchase insurance business or chit-fund business, but does not include any institution whose principal business is that of agriculture, industrial activity, purchase or sale of any goods (other than securities) or providing any services and sale/purchase/construction of immovable property. NBFC is a company registered under the Companies Act, 1956 before 2013 act. The working and operations of NBFCs are regulated by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) within the framework of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934 (Chapter III-B) and the directions issued by it. NBFC cannot accept demand deposits. NBFCs do not form part of the payment and settlement system and cannot issue cheques drawn on itself. Deposit insurance facility of Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation is not available to depositors of NBFCs.

## Reserve Bank of India reaches 1 million Twitter followers; first central bank globally to achieve

- In less than nine years, India's Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has become the first central bank in the world to achieve the 1-million-follower mark on the microblogging network Twitter. The central bank had joined the networking site back in January 2012, according to its profile

The Reserve Bank of India was founded on 1 April 1935 to respond to economic troubles after the First World War. RBI was conceptualised as per the guidelines, working style and outlook presented by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in his book titled "The Problem of the Rupee – Its origin and its solution" and presented to the Hilton Young Commission. The bank was set up based on the recommendations of the 1926 Royal Commission on Indian Currency and Finance, also known as the Hilton-Young Commission. In 1969, the Indira Gandhi-headed government nationalised 14 major commercial banks. Upon Indira Gandhi's return to power in 1980, a further six banks were nationalised. The first Governor of the RBI was British banker Osborn Smith and C.D. Deshmukh was the first Indian Governor of RBI. Shashikant Das is the current Governor of RBI.



## UP selects 58K banking Sakhis through tech-driven process, CM gives nod for training

- **Uttar Pradesh chief minister Adityanath** asked the rural development and panchayati raj departments to go ahead with the training of **58,000 women banking correspondent (BC) Sakhis** before they begin their job.
- The direction came as the Uttar Pradesh government **completed the first-of-its-kind technology driven process for selecting 58,000 women for as many posts of banking correspondent Sakhis**. A total of 58,000 gram panchayats in the state will have a BC Sakhi each. “Once the BC Sakhis begin working, it will help a lot of the villagers in their banking related needs. BC Sakhis will function from their village’s panchayat bhavan.”

**Uttar Pradesh** is the most populous state in India as well as the most populous country subdivision in the world. It was created on 1 April 1937 as the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh during British rule, and was renamed **Uttar Pradesh** in 1950, giving the acronym UP. The state is divided into 18 divisions and 75 districts with the capital being Lucknow. On 9 November 2000, a new state, **Uttarakhand**, was carved out from the state’s Himalayan hill region. The two major rivers of the state, the **Ganges and Yamuna**, join at **Allahabad** and flow further east as Ganges. The state contributes 80 seats to the lower house of the Indian Parliament, Lok Sabha and 31 seats to the upper house of the Indian Parliament, Rajya Sabha.

## India 4<sup>th</sup> major host of Greenfield FDI projects during 2004-2015: Report

- **India** was the fourth major host of **Greenfield foreign direct investment (FDI) projects** and eight major host of **cross-border M&A deals** between 2004 to 2015, according to a research paper released.
- The paper, titled '**Future of Regional Cooperation in Asia and Pacific**', pointed out that **India received 8,004 Greenfield FDI projects** and 4,918 counts of merger and acquisition (M&A) deals between 2004-2015.
- According to the paper, posted on the Asian Development Bank (ADB) website, **the US received the most Greenfield FDI projects between 2004 to 2015, followed by China and the UK.**

## US is second biggest FDI source for India during April-September 2020

- **The US** has emerged as the **second biggest source of foreign direct investment (FDI) into India**, replacing **Mauritius**, during the first half of the current financial year, according to data of the commerce and industry ministry. **The US was also India’s top trading partner in 2019-20.**
- The **DPIIT (Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade)** data showed that during April-September 2020, **India attracted FDI worth USD 7.12 billion from the US and USD 2 billion from Mauritius**, which slipped to fourth position.
- **Mauritius was the second biggest FDI source during the same period previous year.** The US was the fourth biggest investor during that period. **Singapore with USD 8.3 billion foreign inflows continued to be the top source of FDI for India in April-September 2020-21.**
- **Foreign inflows into India grew by 15 per cent to USD 30 billion** during the first half of the current fiscal. In August, the country had attracted USD 17.5 billion worth of foreign investments.

**Foreign direct investment (FDI)** is an investment in a business by an investor from another country for which the foreign investor has control over the company purchased. **Foreign institutional investors (FIIs)** are those institutional investors which invest in the assets belonging to a different country other than that where these organizations are based. **FDI is an investment that a parent company makes in a foreign country.** On the contrary, **FII is an investment made by an investor in the markets of a foreign nation.** The **FDI flows into the primary market**, while the **FII flows into secondary market.** While **FIIs are short-term investments**, the **FDI’s are long term investment.** **FII can enter the stock market easily and also withdraw from it easily.** But **FDI cannot enter and exit that easily.** The **Foreign Direct Investment is considered to be more stable than Foreign Institutional Investor.**

## India Post Payments Bank launches Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana

- **India Post Payments Bank (IPPB)** has joined hands with **PNB MetLife India Insurance Company Limited** to launch **Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana**. The unique scheme offers life cover on death of the insured member due to any reason.

**Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (Prime Minister Jeevan Jyoti Insurance Scheme)** is a government-backed Life insurance scheme in India. It was formally launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 9 May 2015 in Kolkata. Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana is available to people between 18 and 50 years of age with bank accounts. It has an annual premium of Rs.330. In case of death due to any cause, the payment to the nominee will be Rs.2 lakh. This scheme will be linked also to the bank accounts opened under the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana scheme.

### Lakshmi Vilas Bank to operate as customers of DBS Bank India

- **Lakshmi Vilas Bank (LVB)** is now amalgamated with **DBS Bank India Limited (DBIL)**, the wholly owned subsidiary of DBS Group Holdings Ltd. The scheme of amalgamation is under the special powers of the Government of India and Reserve Bank of India under Section 45 of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949, India, and came into effect on 27 November 2020.
- The moratorium imposed on LVB was lifted from 27 November 2020 and banking services were restored immediately with all branches, digital channels and ATMs functioning as usual. LVB customers can continue to access all banking services. All LVB employees will continue in service and are now employees of DBIL on the same terms & conditions of service as under LVB.

**Lakshmi Vilas Bank Limited** was an Indian private sector bank established in 1926 in Karur, Tamil Nadu. As of November 2020, the bank has 566 branches in 19 states and 1 union territory.

### Cabinet approves equity infusion of 6000 crore rupees into NIIF

- Union Cabinet has approved equity infusion by Government of 6000 crore rupees in NIIF Debt Platform sponsored by National Investment and Infrastructure Fund, comprising Aseem Infrastructure Finance Limited and NIIF Infrastructure Finance Limited.
- This was one of the twelve key measures made by the Finance Minister as part of Government's stimulus to the economy, under AatmaNirbhar Bharat 3.0. NIIF Infrastructure Debt Financing Platform is expected to contribute nearly one lakh crore rupees in debt to the infrastructure sector over the next five years. This will act as a catalyst in attracting more investments into the infrastructure sector as envisaged in the National Infrastructure Pipeline. It has outlined plans to invest more than Rs.102 lakh crore on infrastructure projects by 2024-25, with the Centre, States and the private sector to share the capital expenditure in a 39:39:22 formula.

**National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF)** is India's first infrastructure specific investment fund or a sovereign wealth fund that was set up by the Government of India in February 2015. The objective behind creating this fund was to maximize economic impact mainly through infrastructure investment in commercially viable projects, both Greenfield and Brownfield. On 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2020, the Union Cabinet has approved Rs. 6000 crore investment as a part of Atma Nirbar Bharat Abhiyan.

### Facebook cryptocurrency Libra to launch as early as January but scaled back

- Facebook's Libra cryptocurrency is readying to launch as early as January citing three unidentified people involved in the project. The Geneva-based Libra Association that will issue and govern Libra plans to launch a single digital coin backed by the dollar.
- The move would represent an even bigger scaling-back of the project's ambitions than that proposed in April in response to a regulatory and political backlash against the project. **Libra, unveiled by Facebook Inc last year, was relaunched in slimmed-down form after regulators and central banks across the world raised concerns it could upset financial stability and erode mainstream power over money.**

Facebook is an American online social media and social networking service company based in Menlo Park, California. Its website was launched on February 4, 2004, by Mark Zuckerberg along with Eduardo Saverin, Andrew McCollum, Dustin Moskovitz, and Chris Hughes. WhatsApp was founded in 2009 by Brian Acton and Jan Koum, both former employees of Yahoo!. WhatsApp Inc., based in Mountain View, California, which was acquired by Facebook in February 2014 for approximately US\$19.3 billion.



## Inventions/Discoveries

### 'Super Planet' discovered by scientists using radio telescope for the first time

- In a recent study, astronomers have **discovered a cold 'brown dwarf' also known as a 'super planet'-BDR J1750+3809** with the help of a radio telescope. Scientists have **nicknamed the faint super-planet as 'Elegast'** that has remained elusive to standard infrared survey methods. It was **first identified by using data from the Low-Frequency Array (LOFAR) radio telescope** in the Netherlands.
- **Generally, brown dwarfs are referred to as failed stars or super planets** because they are too small to be considered stars, yet too big to be considered planets. The substellar object is **usually discovered by infrared sky surveys**, however, **Elegast was the first substellar object to be detected** using a radio telescope, according to a statement from the University of Hawaii.
- **After discovering Elegast using the LOFAR radio telescope**, scientists later **confirmed their observations using the International Gemini Observatory in Hawaii and Chile and the NASA Infrared Telescope Facility**, which is operated by the University of Hawaii.

A super-Earth is an extrasolar planet with a mass higher than Earth's, but substantially below those of the Solar System's ice giants, Uranus and Neptune, which are 14.5 and 17 times Earth's, respectively. The term "super-Earth" refers only to the mass of the planet, and so does not imply anything about the surface conditions or habitability. The Solar System contains no known super-Earths, because Earth is the largest terrestrial planet in the Solar System.

### Delhi-born MIT grad's headset makes it to Time's 100 Best Inventions of 2020

- An AI-enabled 'mind-reading' headset designed by Arnav Kapur, an MIT graduate who grew up in Delhi, has been **named as Time's 100 Best Inventions of 2020**.
- A postdoctoral student at MIT, the 25-year-old Kapur has **made the list in the experimental category for AlterEgo**, an AI-enabled headset designed by him, **his brother Shreyas and fellow researchers at the MIT Media Lab**.
- The wearable device can be a boon for those with **communication problems such as those with cerebral palsy and ALS by letting them communicate with the computer without saying a word**, just by thinking of the instruction in their mind.
- "A major focus of this venture is to **assist communication for folks with speech problems together with circumstances like ALS (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis) and MS (several cases of sclerosis)**," reads the overview of the venture on MIT's web site.

### Two white snakes, first of their species in the world, found in Nepal

- **Two white-coloured kraits (of the genus Bungarus) discovered during rescue calls in Nepal's southeastern region of Province No. 2**, are the first such recorded cases in their species. **Kraits are known to be some of the most venomous snakes found in the Indian subcontinent**.



## IIT Guwahati develops free-space optical communication system

- A research team led by IIT Guwahati faculty, Dr. Bosanta Ranjan Boruah, Department of Physics, IIT Guwahati, and Dr. Santanu Konwar, presently an Assistant Professor at the Department of Physics, Abhayapuri College, Assam, has developed a novel free-space optical communication system for information transfer.
- In free-space communication, data in the form of voice, text or image is transmitted using light wirelessly rather than through optical fibres and it represents the next generation of communications technology. The results of this pathbreaking work has recently been published in communications Physics.

Free-space optical communication (FSO) is an optical communication technology that uses light propagating in free space to wirelessly transmit data for telecommunications or computer networking. "Free space" means air, outer space, vacuum, or something similar. This contrasts with using solids such as optical fiber cable. The technology is useful where the physical connections are impractical due to high costs or other considerations.

## Thane: Jupiter Hospital performs India's first intestine transplant

- Jupiter Hospital in Thane has successfully conducted India's first pediatric living donor small intestinal transplant on a Covid-19 patient whose intestine had been affected by the viral infection.
- The transplant was performed on nine-year-old Om after his intestines were found to be affected by thrombosis and gangrene. According to the hospital management, the boy was referred to Jupiter Hospital in Thane after removal of his intestine.
- An antibodies test and a bowel RT-PCR had showed Covid infection in the removed organ. This brought to light the fact that the boy and his father had tested positive for Covid-19 with mild symptoms a month ago.

## Sweden getting on board India's Venus mission with payload to explore planet

- Sweden is getting on board India's Venus orbiter mission 'Shukrayaan' with a scientific instrument to explore the planet. Swedish Institute of Space Physics (IRF) is engaged in the venture, its second collaborative project with the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).
- "IRF's satellite instrument Venusian Neutrals Analyzer [VNA] will study how the charged particles from the Sun interact with the atmosphere and exosphere of the planet". "The new Venus mission means that the collaboration between IRF and ISRO continues".
- The VNA would be the ninth generation of IRF's series of miniaturized ion and ENA (Energetic Neutral Atoms) instruments. The first generation was named SARA (Sub-keV Atom Reflecting Analyser) and was launched on board the Indian spacecraft Chandrayaan-1 that explored the Moon in 2008-2009.
- SARA consisted of two sensors. One was a detector for energetic neutral atoms and the other was an instrument to measure the flow of ions in the solar wind.
- The instrument studied how the plasma around the Moon interacts with the moon where the surface is not protected by an atmosphere or a magnetic field.

Venus is the second planet from the Sun. It is named after the Roman goddess of love and beauty. As the second-brightest natural object in the night sky after the Moon, Venus can cast shadows and can be, on rare occasion, visible to the naked eye in broad daylight. Venus lies within Earth's orbit, and so never appears to venture far from the Sun, either setting in the west just after dusk or rising in the east a bit before dawn. Venus orbits the Sun every 224.7 Earth days. With a rotation period of 243 Earth days, it takes longer to rotate about its axis than any other planet in the Solar System and does so in the opposite direction to all but Uranus (meaning the Sun rises in the west and sets in the east). Venus does not have any moons, a distinction it shares only with Mercury among planets in the Solar System.

## DRDO flags off first Varunastra, a heavy weight torpedo

- Bharat Dynamics announced that Dr G. Satheesh Reddy, Secretary, Department of Defence R&D and Chairman, DRDO flagged off the first Varunastra, the Heavy Weight Torpedo, being delivered to the Indian Navy, at a ceremony held at BDL, Visakhapatnam Unit on 21 November 2020.



- Foundation stone was also laid by Secretary, Department of Defence R&D and Chairman, **DRDO for setting up of state-of-the-art Central Stores at BDL, Visakhapatnam Unit.**
- **Varunastra or the Heavy Weight Torpedo** has been **designed and developed by NSTL, Visakhapatnam.** BDL, being the Production Agency, is manufacturing Varunastra at its Visakhapatnam Unit for the Indian Navy. This product is also being offered for export.

**Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** is an agency of the Republic of India, **charged with the military's research and development, headquartered in New Delhi, India.** It was **formed in 1958 by the merger of the Technical Development Establishment and the Directorate of Technical Development and Production** with the Defence Science Organisation. **Dr G. Satheesh Reddy** is the **current Chairman of DRDO.**

### **Maharashtra: Uran to get its first mangrove park by June 2021**

- **The Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT), the largest port container terminal in India, plans to build a 200-hectare (ha) mangrove park at Belpada in Navi Mumbai's Uran by June 2021.** The area, along with other eco-sensitive zones in Uran, has faced the problem of debris dumping that has threatened mangrove patches in the Raigad district.
- **The development of a mangrove park, the first in Uran, has been a longstanding demand by environmentalists.** It has also been suggested by the State Wetland and Mangrove Grievance Redressal Committee appointed by the Bombay high court in January 2019.

### **China launches robotic spacecraft to retrieve rocks from the moon**

- China launched a robotic spacecraft to bring back rocks from the moon in the first bid by any country to retrieve samples from the lunar surface since the 1970s, a mission that underscores Chinese ambitions in space.
- The Chang'e-5 mission, named after the ancient Chinese goddess of the moon, will seek to collect lunar material to help scientists understand more about the moon's origins and formation. The mission will test China's ability to remotely acquire samples from space, ahead of more complex missions.

### **Europe signs \$102 million deal to bring space trash home**

- **The European Space Agency says it is signing a 86 million-euro (USD 102 million) contract with a Swiss start-up company to bring a large piece of orbital trash back to Earth.**
- **The deal with ClearSpace SA will lead to the "first active debris removal mission" in 2025,** in which a custom-made spacecraft will capture and bring down part of a rocket once used to deliver a satellite into orbit.
- Experts have long warned that **hundreds of thousands of pieces of space debris circling the planet — including an astronaut's lost mirror — pose a threat to functioning satellites and even the International Space Station.** Several teams are working on ways to tackle the problem.
- **The object being removed from orbit is a so-called Vespa payload adapter** that was used to hold and then release a satellite in 2013. It weighs about 112 kilograms (247 pounds).

### **New species of gecko found in the Eastern Ghats**

- **A new species of lizard, the smallest known Indian gekkonid, has been discovered in the Eastern Ghats.** Studies show that the species belonged to the genus Cnemaspis.
- **In India, 45 diverse species of Cnemaspis have been found, of which 34 are from the Western Ghats.** The newly discovered dwarf gecko - Cnemaspis avasabinae is the twelfth species to be discovered outside the Western Ghats and also the first species reported from the Velikonda Range in Andhra Pradesh. This discovery suggests that the genus may be even more widely distributed than previously thought.
- **The new species was sighted in a dry evergreen forest among the rocks beneath a small stream** at a height of less than 200 metres above sea level and measured less than 2.9 cm (snout to vent length).

**Eastern Ghats are discontinuous range of mountain set along Eastern coast. Starting at West Bengal, Eastern Ghats pass through states like Odisha, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. These Ghats are ripped through by rivers like Godawari, Mahanadi, Krishna and Kaveri, the four major rivers of South India.**

## Union Government five-year action plan to save vultures, conservation centers in 5 states among host of ideas to protect vultures

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- **Union government five-year action plan to save vultures, conservation centers in 5 states** among host of ideas to protect vultures.
- **Nine species of vultures are recorded from India. Out of these, five belong to the genus Gyps:** the Oriental White-backed (OWBV) *Gyps bengalensis*, the Long-billed (LBV) *G. indicus*, the Slender-billed (SBV) *G. tenuirostris*, the Himalayan Vulture (HV) *Gyps himalayensis*, and the Eurasian Griffon (EG) *Gyps fulvus*. OWBV, LBV and SBV are residents, HV is largely wintering and EG is strictly wintering.
- **The other four genera are monotypic.** These include the Red-headed Vulture (RHV) *Sarcogyps calvus*, the Egyptian Vulture (EV) *Neophron percnopterus*, the Bearded Vulture (BV) *Gypaetus barbatus*, and the Cinereous vulture (CV) *Aegypius calvus*. RHV, EV and BV are residents while CV is strictly wintering. A sub-species of EV *Neophron percnopterus percnopterus* is largely wintering.
- **Vultures were very common in India till the 1980s.** During this period, the population of the three resident Gyps species of vultures (OWBV, LBV and SBV) in the country was estimated at 40 million individuals.
- **But their populations crashed** in the last couple of decades and the **most common vultures - Oriental white-backed, Longbilled, and Slender-billed - declined by more than 96 percent** in just a single decade (1993-2003).

## New species of burrowing frog named after Bengaluru

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- A group of researchers documenting “**Amphibians in the Deccan Plateau parts of Karnataka**” encountered a **new species of frog** and published the findings in a journal. **This new species — Sphaerotheca Bengaluru — is being named after the city to highlight the lacunae** in documentation of amphibians from non-forested areas and to restore frog habitats in Bengaluru.
- The researchers said in a press release that the **new species was described based “on the morphological differences and molecular approach with the known species of the borrowing frogs (across the distribution range, South Asia)”**.

## 'World's smallest atom-memory unit created'

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- **Researchers have created the smallest memory device yet**, an advance that may lead to **faster, smaller, and more energy-efficient electronic chips for consumer electronics and brain-inspired computing**.
  - **The scientists from the University of Texas at Austin in the US also found the physics** that unlocks dense memory storage capabilities for these tiny devices. **Though they used the compound molybdenum disulfide – also known as MoS2 – as the primary nanomaterial in their study**, the researchers believe the discovery could apply to hundreds of related atomically thin materials.
  - **The original device – dubbed “atomristor” by the researchers –** was at the time the thinnest memory storage device ever recorded, with a single atomic layer of thickness. However, shrinking the memory device is not just about making it thinner but also building it with a smaller cross-sectional area, they added.
  - **The new device falls under the category of memristors** – an area of memory research, centred around electrical components with the ability to modify resistance between its two terminals without a need for a third terminal in the middle. According to the researchers, these can be smaller than currently used memory devices and boast more storage capacity.
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# SPORTS



## Sports Personalities in News

### Diego Maradona, Argentine football's greatest icon, dies at 60

- Argentinian football legend and winner of the 1986 World Cup, Diego Maradona, has passed away at home in Tigre after suffering a heart attack. Widely regarded as one of the greatest players of all time, he was one of the two joint winners of the FIFA Player of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century award.
- A precocious talent, Maradona was given the nickname “El Pibe de Oro” (“The Golden Boy”), a name that stuck with him throughout his career. In his international career with Argentina, he earned 91 caps and scored 34 goals. Maradona played in four FIFA World Cups, including the 1986 World Cup in Mexico, where he captained Argentina and led them to victory over West Germany in the final, and won the Golden Ball as the tournament's best player. In the 1986 World Cup quarter final, he scored both goals in a 2–1 victory over England that entered football history for two different reasons. The first goal was an unpenalized handling foul known as the “Hand of God”, while the second goal followed a 60 m (66 yd) dribble past five England players, voted “Goal of the Century” by FIFA.com voters in 2002. He made his full international debut at age 16, against Hungary, on 27 February 1977.

### Daniil Medvedev beat Dominic Thiem to win ATP Tour Finals in London

- In Tennis, Daniil Medvedev beat Dominic Thiem to win ATP Tour Finals held in London, the biggest title of his career. Thiem was denied the title second year in a row.

### ICC nominates Kohli, Ashwin for Men's Player of the Decade Award

- The talismanic Virat Kohli and Ravichandran Ashwin were nominated for the coveted ICC Men's Player of the Decade Award with the Indian captain featuring in all five men's categories for his incredible run in the last 10 years. Besides the Indian duo, Joe Root (England), Kane Williamson (New Zealand), Steve Smith (Australia), AB de Villiers (South Africa), and Kumar Sangakkara (Sri Lanka) are the other contenders in this category. Kohli and Rohit also featured in the Men's T20I Player of the Decade category.
- Kohli has also been nominated in the Men's Test Player of the Decade and ICC Spirit of Cricket Award of the Decade categories. Besides Kohli, Dhoni also found a place in the ICC Spirit of Cricket Award of the Decade award category.

### New Zealand's Greg Barclay elected as new chairman of International Cricket Council

- New Zealand's Greg Barclay has been elected as the new independent chairman of the International Cricket Council (ICC). The head of the New Zealand Cricket team, NZC, Barclay beat Imran Khwaja in the second round of voting. Imran was interim chairman after Shashank Manohar stepped down from the post in July this year. Barclay is the second independent chairman of the world body, after Shashank Manohar of India.

International Cricket Council was founded as the Imperial Cricket Conference in 1909 by representatives from England, Australia and South Africa, renamed the International Cricket Conference in 1965.

## MISCELLANEOUS

### India's first moss garden comes up near Nainital

- **India's first moss garden** has been set up in Lingadhar village, Khurpatal area of Nainital district. The garden, which is built in an area of about half a hectare, houses different species of moss.
- Approved in July last year under the CAMPA scheme by the Research Advisory Committee of Uttarakhand Forest Department, the moss garden, the first in the country, was inaugurated by renowned water conservation activist Rajendra Singh.
- Mosses are small plants found all over the world. Their habitats range from the humid tropics to the polar regions, fallen logs to lakes, rivers and streams.

### 2-day All India Presiding Officers' Conference to be organized at Kevadia in Gujarat on Nov. 25

- A two-day All India Presiding Officers' Conference was organized at Kevadia in Gujarat on 25<sup>th</sup> of November. President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated the two day conference.
- Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla said that the theme of this year conference is **Harmonious Coordination of Legislative, Executive and Judiciary - Key to a Vibrant Democracy**. The two-day Conference is being organized by the Lok Sabha.
- The All India Presiding Officers Conference began in 1921 and this year is also being celebrated as the centenary year of the Presiding Officers Conference. To celebrate the centenary year, the two day Conference is being held in Kevadia in Gujarat.

### PM Modi releases book on life and ideals of Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi released a book on the life and ideals of Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji. The book has been penned by Kirpal Singh, who is based in Chandigarh.

### Health Minister Harsh Vardhan addresses Boston Center of Excellence for Health & Human Development

- Health Minister Harsh Vardhan addressed the Boston Center of Excellence for Health and Human Development through Video Conference. Saluting millions of front-line health workers who bravely carried on with their duty in spite of risk and adversity, including professionals other than doctors and nurses, Dr. Vardhan elaborated India's strategy to contain COVID-19.

### HP govt launches 'Him Suraksha Abhiyan' to sensitize people about Covid-19 pandemic

- In Himachal Pradesh, the state government launched 'Him Suraksha Abhiyan' to sensitize the people regarding Covid-19 pandemic and also to collect information regarding symptoms of diseases like TB, Leprosy, sugar and blood pressure by door to door campaign throughout the State.

### Nutrition portal to monitor services at anganwadis down for nearly three months

- A massive nutrition portal developed by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), which is used by the Centre as well as most States, and touted as the world's biggest nutrition system, to record and monitor delivery of services to children and mothers across nearly seven lakh anganwadis has been down for nearly three months, several State governments have confirmed. The snag comes as a setback at a time there is a call for the need to intensify efforts to identify mothers and children in need of nutritional interventions due to rising levels of hunger and poverty.

### Ladakh ranks 3<sup>rd</sup> among UTs in implementing PM SVANidhi Yojana

- Ladakh has ranked third among the Union Territories in implementing PM SVANidhi Yojana. Ladakh's performance was reviewed by the Prime Minister on Pragati of Housing and Urban Affairs schemes recently.
- The PM SVANidhi Scheme was launched on 1<sup>st</sup> June this year, under Atma-Nirbhar Bharat initiative to support the Street vendors due to adverse effect of COVID-19.



- The scheme aims to facilitate collateral free working capital loan up to Ten thousand rupees of one year tenure, subsidized repayments and rewards on digital transactions.

### **Tamil Nadu: Karthigai Deepam festival being celebrated**

- In Tamil Nadu, the famous Kartikai Deepam festival is being celebrated. In the famous Thiruvannamalai Sri Arunachaleswarar temple, the Bharani dweep was lit up. The Maha Dweep will be lit up after pujas at the summit of the mountain in a copper urn with ghee and wicks of cotton threads.
- In view of the prevailing pandemic, devotees from other places have been barred entry though the major events are being live streamed and telecast. The famous temple at Tiruvannamalai is in honour of the five elements. Besides, most houses in Tamil Nadu will be lit up with diya's or agal vilakku this evening in view of the Kartikai Deepam festival.

### **Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar launches Nafed's Honey FPO Programme**

- Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar launched five Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) for producing honey which will be set up with the help of NAFED in East Champaran (Bihar), Morena (Madhya Pradesh), Bharatpur (Rajasthan), Mathura (Uttar Pradesh) and Sunderbans (West Bengal).

### **PM Modi inaugurated six-lane widening project of Varanasi-Prayagraj section of NH-19**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Varanasi and dedicated to the nation the six-lane widening project of the Handia (Prayagraj) - Rajatalab (Varanasi) section of National Highway 19.
- During the tour, the Prime Minister attended Dev Deepawali, undertake a site visit of Kashi Vishwanath Temple Corridor Project and also visit the Sarnath Archaeological Site.
- The 73 Kilometers stretch of the newly widened and six laned NH-19, made with a total outlay of 2 thousand 4 hundred 47 crore rupees is expected to reduce the travel time between Prayagraj and Varanasi by one hour.
- Dev Deepawali, which has become a world famous festival of light and fervour in Varanasi, is celebrated on Kartik Poornima every year. The festival was started by the Prime Minister by lighting a diya on the Raj Ghat of Varanasi, which was followed by lighting of 11 lakh diyas on both sides of River Ganges.

### **Constitution Day celebrated**

- Constitution Day is being celebrated across the country to mark the adopting of the Indian Constitution by the Constituent Assembly. The day is also known as National Law Day and commemorates the adoption of the Constitution in India.
- On 26<sup>th</sup> November in 1949, the Constituent Assembly of the country formally adopted the Constitution of India which came into force on 26<sup>th</sup> January 1950.
- Constitution Day was first celebrated in 2015, when NDA Government decided to mark the day as a tribute to Dr B R Ambedkar who played an important role in its framing as the Chairman of the Drafting Committee.
- The constituent assembly took two years, eleven months and seventeen days to accomplish the stupendous task of drafting the historic document. The Constitution declares India a sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic republic, assuring its citizens justice, equality and liberty and endeavours to promote fraternity. It is also the longest written constitution of any sovereign country in the world.
- 26 January was chosen as the date for Republic day because it was on this day in 1929 when the Declaration of Indian Independence (Purna Swaraj) was proclaimed by the Indian National Congress as opposed to the Dominion status offered by the British Regime.

### **Obama's "A Promised Land" sells more than 1.7 million copies in its first week**

- Former President Obama's memoir, "A Promised Land," has sold more than 1.7 million copies in its first week — breaking records for publisher Penguin Random House.

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## PERSONS IN NEWS

### Uttarakhand's climate change activist Ridhima Pandey in BBC's list of 100 most influential women globally

- Thirteen-year-old Uttarakhand-based climate activist Ridhima Pandey has featured in the BBC's list of 100 inspiring and influential women from around the world for 2020.
- The list, according to the BBC website, highlights those who are leading change and making a difference during these turbulent times. "Ridhima Pandey is a climate activist who, at the age of nine, filed a petition against the Government of India in response to its inaction to mitigate climate change."

### Joe Biden appoints Indian-American Mala Adiga as soon-to-be First Lady's policy director

- US President-elect Joe Biden has appointed Indian-American Mala Adiga as the policy director of his wife Jill, choosing an experienced education policy hand as the incoming First Lady focuses on education and plans to continue teaching community college classes.
- Adiga was a senior adviser to Jill and senior policy adviser for Biden's 2020 campaign. She previously worked for the Biden Foundation as director for higher education and military families.

### US President-elect Joe Biden announces key figures for his cabinet

- US President-elect Joe Biden has announced key figures for his cabinet, picking longtime foreign policy advisor Antony Blinken to be his secretary of state and former US chief diplomat John Kerry as his special climate envoy.
- Mr Biden also nominated the Cuba-born lawyer Alejandro Mayorkas, to lead the Department of Homeland Security, which oversees immigration. He picked Avril Haines, the former deputy CIA director, as his director of national intelligence, the first woman to ever hold that position.
- Mr Biden also said that long-time diplomat Linda Thomas-Greenfield will be nominated to serve as his ambassador to the United Nations, with status as a cabinet member.
- Jake Sullivan, who was a security aide to Mr Biden when he was vice president, was appointed White House national security advisor. All are veterans of the former 2009-2017 Obama-Biden administration and deeply experienced in their fields.

### Janet Yellen as treasury secretary

- US President-elect Joe Biden has named ex-Federal Reserve chair Janet Yellen as his nominee for treasury secretary. If confirmed by the Senate, she would be the first woman ever to hold the post.
- Janet L. Yellen became an economist at a time when few women entered the profession and fewer still rose in a male-dominated environment. She is now poised to become the first female Treasury secretary and one of few people to ever have wielded economic power from the White House, the Federal Reserve and the president's cabinet.

### James Wolfensohn, former World Bank president, passes away

- James Wolfensohn, who served as the president of the World Bank for 10 years and was a guiding force for a couple of the most well-known cultural institutions in the US, has died.

### Indian-origin New Zealand MP takes the oath in Sanskrit

- Dr. Gaurav Sharma, who was elected as a Member of Parliament in New Zealand, took oath in New Zealand's indigenous Maori language and Sanskrit, a classical language from India.
- A doctor-turned-politician Dr. Sharma, hails from Hamirpur district in Himachal Pradesh. He had won the election from Hamilton West as the ruling Labour Party candidate. He had defeated Tim Macindoe of the National Party by over 4,386 votes.

## AWARDS

### "My Octopus Teacher" bags top tve global sustainability film award

- Documentary "My Octopus Teacher", which reinforces the importance of staying in touch with nature, has won the founder's prize at the ninth tve Global Sustainability Film Awards.
- The film, directed by Pippa Ehrlich and James Reed, vividly relates the bonding and the experiences that filmmaker and diver Craig Foster had in the one year he spent in swimming in the company of an octopus.
- This year, Difficult Dialogues, an international forum that discusses pressing issues of worldwide importance each year, partnered with tve Global Sustainability Film Awards for a five-day summit from November 16 that included dialogues, debates and movies and focused on sustainability.
- The tve GSFA Founder's Award for Sustainability on the Big Screen is a nominated category award and was instituted by Surina Narula in 2017.

### Wildlife preserve straddling Assam, Bhutan gets tiger conservation award

- A 1,500-sq. km. conservation area straddling the India-Bhutan border has received the TX2 Conservation Excellence Award for 2020. TX2 stands for "Tigers times two", signalling the goal to double the population of wild tigers by 2022.
- The recognition was for the Transboundary Manas Conservation Area or TraMCA comprising the 500 sq. km. Manas National Park in Assam and the 1,057-sq. km. Royal Manas National Park in Bhutan.
- India and Bhutan are among 13 countries working towards TX2, a goal that the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) had set through the Global Tiger Initiative, Global Tiger Forum and other critical platforms.
- The award recognises a site that has achieved excellence in two or more of five themes: Tiger and prey population monitoring and research (tiger translocation/prey augmentation); effective site management; enhanced law enforcement, protection and ranger welfare improvement; community-based conservation, benefits and human-wildlife conflict mitigation and habitat and prey management.
- According to a WWF statement, the award was given to TraMCA for efforts to increase the tiger population. The number of the striped cat in the Indian Manas increased from nine in 2010 to 25 in 2018 while that in the Bhutan Manas more than doubled from 12 in 2008 to 26 in 2018.

### Education Minister inaugurated Lilavati Awards, 2020

- Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal "Nishank" virtually launched Lilavati Award-2020: AICTE's Innovative education program to empower women. With women empowerment as the theme, the objective of the award is to create awareness about issues like sanitation, hygiene, health, nutrition, literacy, and employment among women.
- He said that the theme of the award -'women empowerment' has always been the top priority of the government. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Government has launched several welfare schemes for the overall development of girl child and women such as Sukanya Samridhi Yojana, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, and CBSE Udaan Scheme.
- The Minister added that with the Lilavati Award-2020, AICTE has once again championed the cause of women empowerment and paved a way towards equality in education and innovation.

### Education Minister RP Nishank receives Vatayan Lifetime Achievement Award

- Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank has been conferred with the Vatayan Lifetime Achievement Award for his contribution in the field of literature.
- Mr Pokhriyal received the award at Vatayan-UK felicitation ceremony organised through video conferencing by the British Institution Group in England.
- The Vatayan International Awards are presented by the Vatayan-UK organization in London to honor poets, writers, and artists for their works in the respective fields.

## 'Jallikattu' is India's official Oscar entry in the International Feature Film category

- Malayalam feature “Jallikattu”, directed by Lijo Jose Pellissery, has been selected as India's official entry for the International Feature Film category at the 93<sup>rd</sup> Academy Awards, the Film Federation of India (FFI) announced. Jallikattu is the third Malayalam film after Guru (1997) and Adaminte Makan Abu (2011) to be chosen as the country's official entry for the Oscars.
- Jallikattu will certainly face stiff competition at the Oscars, but do not be surprised if it becomes the first Indian film to get that honour after Lagaan in 2001. Before that, Mother India (1957) and Salaam Bombay! (1988) had made the grade.
- Based on writer S. Hareesh's acclaimed story Maoist, the film that explores the human psyche follows a buffalo that escapes the butcher's hold when he is about to slaughter it. The beast runs helter-skelter, leaving a trail of destruction in its wake.

Academy Awards, also known as the Oscars are a set of 24 awards for artistic and technical merit in the American film industry, given annually by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS), to recognize excellence in cinematic achievements as assessed by the Academy's voting membership. The awards were first presented in 1929 at the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel, USA.

## Delhi Crime is India's First Winner at International Emmys

- India has won its first International Emmy. Delhi Crime — the Netflix police procedural series created by Richie Mehta — was awarded Best Drama Series at the 2020 International Emmy Awards, which took place socially distanced and from the comfort of everyone's homes due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. Delhi Crime triumphed over UK's Criminal UK, Germany's Charité, and Argentina's The Bronze Garden.
- Netflix's India Original series “Delhi Crime”, helmed by Indian-Canadian director Richie Mehta, has bagged the best drama series honour at the 48<sup>th</sup> International Emmy Awards.
- Delhi Crime season 1 — released in March last year — is, in my opinion, the best Indian original series on Netflix, and it's only fitting that it would be the first Indian series to win an International Emmy.

An Emmy Award, or simply Emmy, is an American award that recognizes excellence in the television industry, and is the equivalent of an Academy Award (for film), the Tony Award (for theater), and the Grammy Award (for music). The first Emmy Awards ceremony took place on January 25, 1949, at the Hollywood Athletic Club, but solely to honor shows produced and aired locally in the Los Angeles area. Shirley Dinsdale has the distinction of receiving the very first Emmy Award for Most Outstanding Television Personality, during that first awards ceremony. The term “Emmy” is a French alteration of the television crew slang term “Immy”, the nickname for an “image orthicon”, a camera tube used in TV production.

## Douglas Stuart's 'Shuggie Bain' wins 2020 Booker Prize

- New York-based Scottish writer Douglas Stuart won the 2020 Booker Prize for his debut novel ‘Shuggie Bain’, a coming of age story set in Glasgow, beating Indian-origin author Avni Doshi.
- Dubai-based Indian-origin writer Avni Doshi, who was shortlisted among the final six authors for her debut novel Burnt Sugar, lost out on the top prize.

## UN award for Bhutan's Queen Mother

- In a first for the Himalayan Kingdom, and a rare honour in the sub-continent, Bhutan's Queen Mother Gyalyum Sangay Choden Wangchuck has been awarded the United Nations Population Award in the individual category for 2020 for her work on sexual health and ending gender violence.
  - The awardee in the organisational category is HelpAge India that works on elder care. Only two Indians have been awarded in the past four decades since the award was established in 1981: former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in 1983 and industrialist-philanthropist J.R.D.Tata in 1992.
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# IMPORTANT DAYS

## World Children's Day: 20 November

- **World Children's Day** was first established in 1954 as **Universal Children's Day** and is celebrated on **20 November** each year to promote international togetherness, awareness among children worldwide, and improving children's welfare.
- The theme of International children day 2020 is “Investing in our future means investing in our children”

## World Television Day: 21 November

- In recognition of the increasing impact television has on decision-making by bringing world attention to conflicts and threats to peace and security and its potential role in sharpening the focus on other major issues, including economic and social issues, the United Nations General Assembly **proclaimed 21 November as World Television Day.**

## International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People: 29 November

- In 1977, the General Assembly called for the **annual observance of 29 November as the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.** On that day, in 1947, the Assembly adopted the resolution on the partition of Palestine.

## World AIDS Day: 1 December

- **Every year, on 1 December, the world commemorates World AIDS Day.** People around the world unite to show support for people living with and affected by HIV and to remember those who lost their lives to AIDS. In 2020, the world's attention has been focused by the COVID-19 pandemic on health and how pandemics affect lives and livelihoods.
- COVID-19 is showing once again how health is interlinked with other critical issues, such as reducing inequality, human rights, gender equality, social protection and economic growth. With this in mind, this year the **theme of World AIDS Day** is “Global solidarity, shared responsibility”.

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# QUESTIONS

1. India's first moss garden has been developed at Khurpatal in \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Nainital district (b) Pithoragarh district (c) Chamba district (d) Shillong district
2. Who has been conferred with the Vatsyana Lifetime Achievement Award for his contribution in the field of literature recently?  
(a) Shri Ramnath Kovind (b) Shri Venkai Naidu  
(c) Shri Anurag Thakur (d) Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank
3. A two-day All India Presiding Officers' Conference was organized at \_\_\_\_\_ on 25<sup>th</sup> of this month.  
(a) Jodhpur in Rajasthan  
(b) Kevadia in Gujarat  
(c) Maharajganj in Uttar Pradesh  
(d) Gaya in Bihar
4. Indian Navy Ships including indigenously built ASW corvette Kamorta and missile corvette Karmuk are participating in the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of India, Singapore and \_\_\_\_\_ Trilateral Maritime Exercise SITMEX-20 in Andaman Sea.  
(a) Thailand (b) Trinidad and Tobago (c) Tajikistan (d) Tanzania
5. Recently, US President-elect Joe Biden has appointed Indian-American \_\_\_\_\_ as the policy director of his wife Jill, choosing an experienced education policy hand as the incoming First Lady focuses on education and plans to continue teaching community college classes.  
(a) Mala Adiga (b) Deepa Malik (c) Vidhushi Sinha (d) Mriganka Singh
6. New Zealand's first-ever Indian-origin minister after Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern brought five new ministers into her executive is  
(a) Chetana Jirach (b) Priyanka Radhakrishnan  
(c) Ramya Krishnan (d) Anamika Jayachandran
7. Recently, An AI-enabled 'mind-reading' headset designed by \_\_\_\_\_ an MIT graduate who grew up in Delhi, has been named as Time's 100 Best Inventions of 2020.  
(a) Amit Singhal (b) Arnab Kapur (c) Mrinal Sen (d) Anupam Mishra
8. Which of the following has become the first central bank in the world to achieve the 1-million-follower mark on the microblogging network Twitter?  
(a) U.S. Federal Reserve System (b) Bank of Japan  
(c) Reserve Bank of India (d) Swiss National Bank
9. Who has been awarded the United Nations Population Award in the individual category for 2020 for her work on sexual health and ending gender violence?  
(a) Aun San Suu Kyi (b) Maryam Nawaz  
(c) Gyalyum Sangay Choden Wangchuck (d) Maneka Gandhi
10. Who among the following addressed the Boston Center of Excellence for Health and Human Development through Video Conference?  
(a) Health Minister Harsh Vardhan (b) Prime Minister Narendra Modi  
(c) Rajendra Singh (d) Mahendra Singh
11. Which of the following Indian cities has been declared Winner at the ET Government Global Smart Cities Forum 2020 under the category Best Digital Initiative of the Year (Technology)?  
(a) Bhopal (b) Kohima (c) Agartala (d) Dispur

12. To mark the occasion of 3 years of UMANG and 2000 plus services milestone, an online conference was organized under the chairmanship of \_\_\_\_\_.  
 (a) Minister for Electronics and Information Technology, Ravi Shankar Prasad  
 (b) Minister of Home Affairs Amit Shah  
 (c) Prime Minister Narendra Modi  
 (d) Vice President Venkai Naidu
13. Recently, US President-elect Joe Biden has announced key figures for his cabinet, picking longtime foreign policy advisor \_\_\_\_\_ to be his secretary of state.  
 (a) Thomson Jui (b) Bill Knoght (c) Antony Blinken (d) Thiman Jiure
14. Which of the following countries topped public health agency - the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has released its first blueprint of a four-pronged ethical basis which will determine how the coronavirus vaccine could be released to reach more than 261 million people who fall into the category of essential workers?  
 (a) American (b) British (c) Russian (d) German
15. Recently, Odisha Essential Services (Maintenance) Amendment Bill-2020 was passed by the state assembly. According to the provisions of the amended bill, persons resorting to or found instigating or funding illegal strikes may face a fine upto \_\_\_\_\_.  
 (a) Rs. two thousand (b) Rs. five thousand (c) Rs. ten thousand (d) Rs. twenty thousand
16. In a recent study, astronomers have discovered a cold \_\_\_\_\_ also known as a 'super planet' -BDR J1750+3809 with the help of a radio telescope.  
 (a) brown dwarf (b) black dwarf (c) red dwarf (d) yellow dwarf
17. A research team led by which of the following IIT's has developed a novel free-space optical communication system for information transfer?  
 (a) IIT Guwahati (b) IIT Roorkee (c) IIT Delhi (d) IIT Bombay
18. In Tennis, who won ATP Tour Finals, the biggest title of his career?  
 (a) Daniil Medvedev (b) Roger Federer (c) Andy Murray (d) Dominic Thiem
19. World Television Day is celebrated every year on:  
 (a) 20<sup>th</sup> November (b) 21<sup>st</sup> November (c) 23<sup>rd</sup> November (d) 24<sup>th</sup> November
20. Name the Indian series which bagged the best drama series honour at the 48<sup>th</sup> International Emmy Awards.  
 (a) Mirzapur (b) Panchayat (c) Delhi Crime (d) A Suitable Boy
21. Name the thirteen-year-old Uttarakhand-based climate activist who has been featured in the BBC's list of 100 inspiring and influential women from around the world for 2020?  
 (a) Aditi Pant (b) Shivangi Rawat (c) Ridhima Pandey (d) Ayushi Parashar
22. Recently, A 1,500-sq. km. conservation area straddling the \_\_\_\_\_ border has received the TX2 Conservation Excellence Award for 2020.  
 (a) India-Nepal (b) India-Bangladesh  
 (c) India-Bhutan (d) India-Myanmar
23. Recently, Agriculture Minister unveiled \_\_\_\_\_ to impart training to primary cooperative societies in rural areas.  
 (a) 'Sahakar Pragya' (b) 'Sahakar Sewa'  
 (c) 'Sahakar Sahayata' (d) 'Sahakar Prabha'
24. Who has been nominated by Joe Biden to become the next Treasury secretary of USA?  
 (a) Pamila Jayapal (b) Janet Yellen  
 (c) Teresa Anthony (d) Nikkey Halley

25. Recently, In a series of proposals, an Internal Working Group (IWG) of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has recommended the guarded entry of corporates into the banking space. The committee is headed by:  
 (a) Amish Kumar Gupta (b) PK Mohanty (c) A. B. Nayan (d) Prabhakar Mukherjee
26. Recently, India unveiled new development initiatives for Afghanistan, including a dam to supply water to Kabul. The name of this dam is:  
 (a) Parijat Dam (b) Neem Dam (c) Shahtoot Dam (d) Gulmohar Dam
27. Name the Indian players who are nominated for the coveted ICC Men's Player of the Decade Award.  
 (a) Rohit Sharma and Ravindra Jadeja  
 (b) Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma  
 (c) Bhubaneshwar Kumar and Rohit Sharma  
 (d) Virat Kohli and Ravichandran Ashwin
28. Which of the following airports has become the first airport in the Asia-Pacific region and in the world to reach Level 4 Transformation of Airport Carbon Accreditation?  
 (a) Heathrow Airport (b) Sydney Airport (c) Christchurch Airport (d) Alaska Airport
29. In Himachal Pradesh, the state government launched \_\_\_\_\_ to sensitize the people regarding Covid-19 pandemic and also to collect information regarding symptoms of diseases like TB, Leprosy, sugar and blood pressure by door to door campaign.  
 (a) 'Him Suraksha Sewa' (b) 'Him Suraksha Abhiyan'  
 (c) 'Swasthya Himachal' (d) 'Himachal Swasth Rakho Abhiyan'
30. World Children's Day is celebrated every year on:  
 (a) 12<sup>th</sup> November (b) 15<sup>th</sup> November (c) 20<sup>th</sup> November (d) 25<sup>th</sup> November
31. Who has been elected as the new independent chairman of the International Cricket Council (ICC) recently?  
 (a) Ehsan Mani (b) Greg Barclay (c) Saurav Ganguly (d) Imran Khwaja
32. Name the Indian origin a Member of Parliament in New Zealand, who took oath in New Zealand's indigenous Maori language and Sanskrit, a classical language from India.  
 (a) Dr. Vimal Parekh (b) Dr. Gaurav Sharma (c) Dr. Prafull Natrajan (d) Dr. Mrinal Sengupta
33. Which of the following states launched welfare scheme - Jagananna Thodu (Brother Jagan's support) - aimed at providing interest-free loans to small traders and street vendors in the state?  
 (a) Telangana (b) Karnataka (c) Andhra Pradesh (d) Tamil Nadu
34. Which of the following Indian ministries has launched a portal that will allow transgender persons to apply online for certification of their self-perceived gender identity?  
 (a) Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions  
 (b) Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment  
 (c) Ministry of Finance  
 (d) Ministry of Home Affairs
35. According to the research paper, titled 'Future of Regional Cooperation in Asia and Pacific', India was the \_\_\_\_\_ major host of greenfield foreign direct investment (FDI) projects and eight major host of cross-border M&A deals between 2004 to 2015.  
 (a) Second (b) Third (c) Fourth (d) Sixth
36. Union Cabinet has approved equity infusion by Government of \_\_\_\_\_ rupees in NIIF Debt Platform sponsored by National Investment and Infrastructure Fund, comprising Aseem Infrastructure Finance Limited and NIIF Infrastructure Finance Limited.  
 (a) 3000 crore (b) 4000 crore (c) 5000 crore (d) 6000 crore



37. Which of the following countries is getting on board India's Venus orbiter mission 'Shukrayaan' with a scientific instrument to explore the planet?  
 (a) Norway (b) Sweden (c) Ireland (d) Finland
38. The football legend and winner of the 1986 World Cup, Diego Maradona, has passed away at home in Tigre after suffering a heart attack. He hails from \_\_\_\_\_.  
 (a) Argentina (b) Brazil (c) USA (d) Russia
39. Recently, Malayalam feature \_\_\_\_\_ has been selected as India's official entry for the International Feature Film category at the 93<sup>rd</sup> Academy Awards announced by the Film Federation of India (FFI).  
 (a) Vihangam (b) Rowdy (c) Jallikattu (d) Dhiruster
40. Recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi released a book on the life and ideals of \_\_\_\_\_.  
 (a) Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji (b) Sri Guru Ramdas Ji  
 (c) Sri Guru Arjandev Ji (d) Sri Guru Govind Singh Ji
41. Every year, Constitution Day is being celebrated across the country to mark the adopting of the Indian Constitution by the Constituent Assembly on:  
 (a) 18<sup>th</sup> January (b) 21<sup>st</sup> November (c) 24<sup>th</sup> October (d) 26<sup>th</sup> November
42. According to a survey released by global civil society Transparency International, which of the following countries has the highest rate of bribery and use of personal links to access public services such as healthcare and education in Asia?  
 (a) Pakistan (b) Bangladesh (c) India (d) Nepal
43. United Nations Development Programme, (UNDP) and Invest India have launched the \_\_\_\_\_ Investor Map for India.  
 (a) Reinvest India (b) Visitors Lock  
 (c) Sustainable Development Goals (d) NITI
44. Which among the following has joined hands with PNB MetLife India Insurance Company Limited to launch Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana?  
 (a) India Post Payments Bank (b) Jio Payments Bank  
 (c) Ujjivan Finance Payments Bank (d) Paytm Payments Bank
45. Recently, India and \_\_\_\_\_ signed an MoU for developing cooperation between two countries in the field of Environment protection and biodiversity conservation.  
 (a) Ireland (b) Finland (c) Sweden (d) Norway
46. Recently, DRDO flagged off the first \_\_\_\_\_ the heavy weight torpedo that was delivered to the Indian Navy.  
 (a) Varunastra (b) Vardhastra (c) Varuna (d) Vikramaditya
47. Which of the following countries had launched a robotic spacecraft recently to bring back rocks from the moon in the first bid by any country to retrieve samples from the lunar surface since the 1970s?  
 (a) Japan (b) India (c) China (d) South Korea
48. According to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India's renewable power capacity is the \_\_\_\_\_ largest in the world and it is growing at the fastest speed among all major countries.  
 (a) 2<sup>nd</sup> (b) 3<sup>rd</sup> (c) 4<sup>th</sup> (d) 7<sup>th</sup>
49. Recently, James Wolfensohn had died. He had earlier served as the President of:  
 (a) International Monetary Fund (b) World Bank  
 (c) AIIB (d) United Nations

50. Name union territory which ranked third among the Union Territories in implementing PM SVANidhi Yojana.  
(a) Jammu & Kashmir (b) Ladakh (c) Lakshadweep (d) Puducherry
51. Which of the following Indian states announced that it would constitute a Cabinet within the Cabinet, christened “Gau Cabinet”, to recommend measures for the conservation and promotion of cattle resources?  
(a) Uttar Pradesh (b) Haryana (c) Madhya Pradesh (d) Gujarat
52. Which of the following countries has declared a climate emergency recently?  
(a) USA (b) France (c) Australia (d) New Zealand
53. Recently, Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar launched five Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) for producing honey which will be set up with the help of NAFED. Which is not among the five FPO’s?  
(a) Mathura (Uttar Pradesh) (b) Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh)  
(c) Bharatpur (Rajasthan) (d) Sunderbans (West Bengal)
54. Which of the following Asian countries has powered up its first domestically developed nuclear reactor the Hualong One to become less dependent on Western allies for energy security and critical technology?  
(a) Japan (b) North Korea (c) China (d) South Korea
55. Recently, The Drug Detoxification Centre in \_\_\_\_\_ is being set up with the help of India.  
(a) Maldives (b) Mauritius (c) Seychelles (d) Sri Lanka
56. Recently, Face-to-face negotiations between the \_\_\_\_\_ and the European Union (EU) over a trade deal have restarted.  
(a) United Kingdom (b) Germany (c) France (d) Finland
57. Recently, Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal has launched the \_\_\_\_\_, an initiative of the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE).  
(a) Kalawati Award 2020 (b) Mridang Award 2020  
(c) Lilavati Award 2020 (d) Sulekha Award 2020
58. Which of the following countries foreign inflows continued to be the top source of FDI for India in April-September 2020-21?  
(a) Singapore (b) Maldives (c) USA (d) Japan
59. Recently, In India the new species of burrowing frog is named after the Indian city of \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Chennai (b) Bengaluru (c) Chennai (d) Lucknow
60. Recently, Former President \_\_\_\_\_ memoir, “A Promised Land,” has sold more than 1.7 million copies in its first week — breaking records for publisher Penguin Random House.  
(a) Barack Obama (b) George W Bush (c) Bill Clinton (d) Jimmy Carter
61. Which of the following countries hosted the 19<sup>th</sup> meeting of the SCO Council of Heads of Government in a virtual format?  
(a) Pakistan (b) Russia (c) China (d) India
62. The famous Kartikai Deepam festival is being celebrated in:  
(a) Maharashtra (b) Andhra Pradesh (c) Sri Lanka (d) Tamil Nadu
63. Dev Deepawali, which has become a world famous festival of light and fervour in \_\_\_\_\_ is celebrated on Kartik Poornima every year.  
(a) Bhubaneswar (b) Varanasi (c) Guwahati (d) Ayodhya

64. According to airline industry body IATA, which of the following cities has become world's most connected city as the coronavirus shakes up international travel?  
(a) Shanghai (b) Paris (c) Tokyo (d) London
65. Which of the following rivers flowing in India is also known as "Yarlung Zangbo" in Tibet?  
(a) Teesta (b) Brahmaputra (c) Lohit (d) Dihang
66. Libra cryptocurrency is readying to launch as early as January citing three unidentified people involved in the project. Libra cryptocurrency is associated with \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Facebook (b) Google (c) Amazon (d) SpaceX
67. Which of the following countries opened its First UNESCO World Heritage Site 'Hegra' After 2,000 Years?  
(a) Saudi Arabia (b) Kuwait (c) Oman (d) Jordan
68. Recently, A new species of \_\_\_\_\_ the smallest known Indian gekkonid, has been discovered in the Eastern Ghats.  
(a) Owl (b) Lizard (c) Frog (d) Deer
69. Name the Dubai-based Indian-origin writer who was shortlisted among the final six authors for her debut novel *Burnt Sugar* for Booker Prize 2020?  
(a) Malavika Saha (b) Amita Kulshrestha (c) Avni Doshi (d) Priya Narsingh
70. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People is observed every year on:  
(a) 21<sup>st</sup> November (b) 22<sup>nd</sup> November (c) 25<sup>th</sup> November (d) 29<sup>th</sup> November

## ANSWER KEY AND EXPLANATION

1. a India's first moss garden has been developed at Khurpatal in Nainital district.
2. d Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank has been conferred with the Vatayan Lifetime Achievement Award for his contribution in the field of literature.
3. b A two-day All India Presiding Officers' Conference was organized at Kevadia in Gujarat on 25<sup>th</sup> of this month.
4. a Indian Navy Ships including indigenously built ASW corvette Kamorta and missile corvette Karmuk are participating in the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of India, Singapore and Thailand Trilateral Maritime Exercise SITMEX-20 in Andaman Sea.
5. a US President-elect Joe Biden has appointed Indian-American Mala Adiga as the policy director of his wife Jill, choosing an experienced education policy hand as the incoming First Lady focuses on education and plans to continue teaching community college classes.
6. b Priyanka Radhakrishnan became New Zealand's first-ever Indian-origin minister after Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern brought five new ministers into her executive.
7. b An AI-enabled 'mind-reading' headset designed by Arnav Kapur, an MIT graduate who grew up in Delhi, has been named as Time's 100 Best Inventions of 2020.
8. c In less than nine years, India's Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has become the first central bank in the world to achieve the 1-million-follower mark on the microblogging network Twitter.
9. c In a first for the Himalayan Kingdom, and a rare honour in the sub-continent, Bhutan's Queen Mother Gyalyum Sangay Choden Wangchuck has been awarded the United Nations Population Award in the individual category for 2020 for her work on sexual health and ending gender violence.
10. a Health Minister Harsh Vardhan addressed the Boston Center of Excellence for Health and Human Development through Video Conference.
11. b In Nagaland, Kohima Smart City Development Limited, KSCDL has been declared Winner at the ET Government Global Smart Cities Forum 2020 under the category Best Digital Initiative of the Year (Technology) for Kohima City Wifi Phase-I Project.
12. a To mark the occasion of 3 years of UMANG and 2000 plus services milestone, an online conference was organized under the chairmanship of Minister for Electronics and Information Technology, Ravi Shankar Prasad.
13. c US President-elect Joe Biden has announced key figures for his cabinet, picking longtime foreign policy advisor Antony Blinken to be his secretary of state.
14. a American top public health agency - the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has released its first blueprint of a four-pronged ethical basis which will determine how the coronavirus vaccine could be released to reach more than 261 million people who fall into the category of essential workers
15. b According to the provisions of the amended bill, persons resorting to or found instigating or funding illegal strikes may face imprisonment upto one year or a fine upto Rs. five thousand or both.
16. a In a recent study, astronomers have discovered a cold 'brown dwarf' also known as a 'super planet'-BDR J1750+3809 with the help of a radio telescope.



- 17. a** A research team led by IIT Guwahati faculty, Dr. Bosanta Ranjan Boruah, Department of Physics, IIT Guwahati, and Dr. Santanu Konwar, presently an Assistant Professor at the Department of Physics, Abhayapuri College, Assam, has developed a novel free-space optical communication system for information transfer.
- 18. a** In Tennis, Daniil Medvedev beat Dominic Thiem to win ATP Tour Finals, the biggest title of his career.
- 19. b** In recognition of the increasing impact television has on decision-making by bringing world attention to conflicts and threats to peace and security and its potential role in sharpening the focus on other major issues, including economic and social issues, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 21 November as World Television Day.
- 20. c** Netflix's India Original series "Delhi Crime", helmed by Indian-Canadian director Richie Mehta, has bagged the best drama series honour at the 48<sup>th</sup> International Emmy Awards.
- 21. c** Thirteen-year-old Uttarakhand-based climate activist Ridhima Pandey has featured in the BBC's list of 100 inspiring and influential women from around the world for 2020
- 22. c** A 1,500-sq. km. conservation area straddling the India-Bhutan border has received the TX2 Conservation Excellence Award for 2020. TX2 stands for "Tigers times two", signalling the goal to double the population of wild tigers by 2022.
- 23. a** Agriculture Minister unveils 'Sahakar Pragya' to impart training to primary cooperative societies in rural areas
- 24. b** President-elect Joe Biden plans to nominate former Federal Reserve Chairwoman Janet Yellen, an economist at the forefront of policy-making for three decades, to become the next Treasury secretary, according to people familiar with the decision.
- 25. b** The committee was headed by PK Mohanty.
- 26. c** An agreement with Afghanistan to build Shahtoot Dam in the Kabul river basin to provide drinking water to two million residents of Kabul city.
- 27. d** The talismanic Virat Kohli and Ravichandran Ashwin were nominated for the coveted ICC Men's Player of the Decade Award with the Indian captain featuring in all five men's categories for his incredible run in the last 10 years.
- 28. c** Christchurch Airport in New Zealand has taken a major step forward in its commitment to fight against climate change, becoming the first airport in the Asia-Pacific region and in the world to reach Level 4 Transformation of Airport Carbon Accreditation.
- 29. b** In Himachal Pradesh, the state government launched 'Him Suraksha Abhiyan' to sensitize the people regarding Covid-19 pandemic and also to collect information regarding symptoms of diseases like TB, Leprosy, sugar and blood pressure by door to door campaign throughout the State.
- 30. c** World Children's Day was first established in 1954 as Universal Children's Day and is celebrated on 20 November each year to promote international togetherness, awareness among children worldwide, and improving children's welfare.
- 31. b** New Zealand's Greg Barclay has been elected as the new independent chairman of the International Cricket Council (ICC).
- 32. b** Dr. Gaurav Sharma, who was elected as a member of Parliament in New Zealand, took oath in New Zealand's indigenous Maori language and Sanskrit, a classical language from India.

- 33. c** The YSR Congress Party government in Andhra Pradesh launched yet another welfare scheme - Jagananna Thodu (Brother Jagan's support) - aimed at providing interest-free loans to small traders and street vendors in the state.
- 34. b** The ministry of social justice and empowerment launched a portal that will allow transgender persons to apply online for certification of their self-perceived gender identity.
- 35. c** India was the fourth major host of greenfield foreign direct investment (FDI) projects and eight major host of cross-border M&A deals between 2004 to 2015
- 36. d** Union Cabinet has approved equity infusion by Government of 6000 crore rupees in NIIF Debt Platform sponsored by National Investment and Infrastructure Fund, comprising Aseem Infrastructure Finance Limited and NIIF Infrastructure Finance Limited.
- 37. b** Sweden is getting on board India's Venus orbiter mission 'Shukrayaan' with a scientific instrument to explore the planet.
- 38. a** Argentinian football legend and winner of the 1986 World Cup, Diego Maradona, has passed away at home in Tigre after suffering a heart attack.
- 39. c** Malayalam feature "Jallikattu", directed by Lijo Jose Pellissery, has been selected as India's official entry for the International Feature Film category at the 93<sup>rd</sup> Academy Awards, the Film Federation of India (FFI) announced.
- 40. a** Prime Minister Narendra Modi released a book on the life and ideals of Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji.
- 41. d** On 26<sup>th</sup> November in 1949, the Constituent Assembly of the country formally adopted the Constitution of India which came into force on 26<sup>th</sup> January 1950.
- 42. c** India has the highest rate of bribery and use of personal links to access public services such as healthcare and education in Asia
- 43. c** United Nations Development Programme, UNDP and Invest India have launched the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Investor Map for India.
- 44. a** India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) has joined hands with PNB MetLife India Insurance Company Limited to launch Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana.
- 45. b** India and Finland signed an MoU for developing cooperation between two countries in the field of Environment protection and biodiversity conservation
- 46. a** DRDO flagged off the first Varunastra, the heavy weight torpedo that was delivered to the Indian Navy.
- 47. c** China launched a robotic spacecraft to bring back rocks from the moon in the first bid by any country to retrieve samples from the lunar surface since the 1970s, a mission that underscores Chinese ambitions in space.
- 48. c** Prime Minister Narendra Modi said India's renewable power capacity is the 4<sup>th</sup> largest in the world and it is growing at the fastest speed among all major countries.
- 49. b** James Wolfensohn, who served as the president of the World Bank for 10 years and was a guiding force for a couple of the most well-known cultural institutions in the US, has died.
- 50. b** Ladakh has ranked third among the Union Territories in implementing PM SVANidhi Yojana.

- 51. c** Madhya Pradesh chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan announced that he would be constituting a Cabinet within the Cabinet, christened “Gau Cabinet”, to recommend measures for the conservation and promotion of cattle resources.
- 52. d** New Zealand has declared a climate change emergency and committed to a carbon-neutral government by 2025, in what the Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern called “one of the greatest challenges of our time”.
- 53. b** Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar launched five Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) for producing honey which will be set up with the help of NAFED in East Champaran (Bihar), Morena (Madhya Pradesh), Bharatpur (Rajasthan), Mathura (Uttar Pradesh) and Sunderbans (West Bengal).
- 54. c** China has powered up its first domestically developed nuclear reactor — the Hualong One — a significant step in Beijing’s attempts to become less dependent on Western allies for energy security and critical technology.
- 55. a** The Drug Detoxification Centre in Hulhudhoo, Addu, the Maldives is being set up with the help of India. Tailored to meet the requirements of the local community, the project is funded through an MVR 8 million grant assistance from India. And is going to be steered and executed by the Ministry of National Planning, Housing and Infrastructure of that country.
- 56. a** Face-to-face negotiations between the United Kingdom (UK) and the European Union (EU) over a trade deal have restarted.
- 57. c** Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal has launched the Lilavati Award 2020, an initiative of the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE).
- 58. a** Mauritius was the second biggest FDI source during the same period previous year. The US was the fourth biggest investor during that period. Singapore with USD 8.3 billion foreign inflows continued to be the top source of FDI for India in April-September 2020-21.
- 59. b** A group of researchers documenting “Amphibians in the Deccan Plateau parts of Karnataka” encountered a new species of frog and published the findings in a journal. This new species — Sphaerotheca Bengaluru — is being named after the city to highlight the lacunae in documentation of amphibians from non-forested areas and to restore frog habitats in Bengaluru.
- 60. a** Former President Obama's memoir, “A Promised Land,” has sold more than 1.7 million copies in its first week — breaking records for publisher Penguin Random House.
- 61. d** India hosted the 19<sup>th</sup> meeting of the SCO Council of Heads of Government in a virtual format, which was chaired by Vice President Venkaiah Naidu, the Ministry of External Affairs has said.
- 62. d** In Tamil Nadu, the famous Kartikai Deepam festival is being celebrated.
- 63. b** Dev Deepawali, which has become a world famous festival of light and fervour in Varanasi, is celebrated on Kartik Purnima every year.
- 64. a** Shanghai has dethroned London to become the world's most connected city as the coronavirus shakes up international travel.
- 65. b** Authorities have given the go-ahead for a Chinese hydropower company to construct the first downstream dam on the lower reaches of the Brahmaputra river, or Yarlung Zangbo as it is known in Tibet, marking a new phase in China’s hydropower exploitation of the river with potential ramifications for India.
- 66. a** Facebook's Libra cryptocurrency is readying to launch as early as January citing three unidentified people involved in the project.

- 67. a** Saudi Arabia Opens Its First UNESCO World Heritage Site 'Hegra' After 2,000 Years
- 68. b** A new species of lizard, the smallest known Indian gekkonid, has been discovered in the Eastern Ghats. Studies show that the species belonged to the genus *Cnemaspis*.
- 69. c** Dubai-based Indian-origin writer Avni Doshi, who was shortlisted among the final six authors for her debut novel *Burnt Sugar*, lost out on the top prize.
- 70. d** In 1977, the General Assembly called for the annual observance of 29 November as the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.



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