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# MANTHAN

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**A General Awareness Weekly**

**21<sup>st</sup> December to 27<sup>th</sup> December, 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**



Career  
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## National



### India adds Tso Kar wetland complex to Ramsar Site

- In a significant development to conservation of biodiversity, **India has added Tso Kar wetland complex to the Ramsar Site. Tso Kar, the 42<sup>nd</sup> Wetland of International Importance, is at more than 4,500 metres above sea level in the Changthang region of Ladakh.**
- The complex includes two connected lakes, the freshwater Startsapuk Tso and the larger hypersaline Tso Kar, with presentation of a notable example of two such lakes existing in close proximity.
- The name Tso Kar refers to the white salt efflorescence on the margins of the lake caused by the evaporation of the saline waters. The local climate is arid, and glacial melt water is the primary water source for the lakes. The lakes and in particular the presence of fresh water attract biodiversity in a biologically sparse region.
- The site is habitat of numerous threatened species including the endangered saker falcon (*Falco cherrug*) and Asiatic wild dog or dhole (*Cuon alpinus laniger*), and the vulnerable snow leopard (*Panthera uncia*).
- The Site also acts as an important stopover ground for migratory birds along the Central Asian Flyway and is one of the most important breeding areas in India for the black-necked crane (*Grus nigricollis*).
- Tso Moriri or Lake Moriri or “Mountain Lake”, is a lake in the Changthang Plateau in Ladakh. It was notified in 2002 under the List of Ramsar Wetland sites under the Ramsar Convention.

The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat is an international treaty for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands. It is also known as the Convention on Wetlands. It is named after the city of Ramsar in Iran, where the convention was signed in 1971. Ramsar convention is an inter-governmental environmental treaty established by UNESCO and came into force in 1975. A Ramsar site is a wetland site designated to be of international importance under the Ramsar Convention.

### Goa Liberation Day 2020

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant extended greetings on the **Goa Liberation Day 2020. December 19 is observed as Goa Liberation Day to commemorate the role of India’s armed forces in liberating Goa from Portuguese rule.**
- The Portuguese ruled several Indian territories including Goa for over four centuries. But the Indian state was finally liberated Goa from the Portuguese occupation after a brief military operation in 1961.
- And since then December 19 is observed as the Goa Liberation Day every year. The day marks the Independence of Goa from centuries of Portuguese colonisation.
- Portugal had colonised several territories in India since 1510. However, by the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century, their rule was limited to few Indian territories including Goa, Daman and Diu, Dadra and Nagar Haveli.
- The movement to end Portuguese rule in Goa was started with low-level revolts. After India got its Independence in 1947, the territory of Goa was still under the control of Portugal. Despite several rounds of negotiations and diplomatic parleys, Portugal did not agree to free Goa and other Indian territories.

The Annexation of Goa was the process in which the Republic of India annexed the former Portuguese Indian territories of Goa, Daman and Diu, starting with the armed action carried out by the Indian Armed Forces in December 1961. In India, this action is referred to as the “Liberation of Goa”. In Portugal, it is referred to as the “Invasion of Goa”. The “armed action” was code named Operation Vijay (meaning “Victory”) by the Indian Armed Forces. It involved air, sea and land strikes for over 36 hours, and was a decisive victory for India, ending 451 years of rule by Portugal over its remaining exclaves in India. Following the end of Portuguese rule in 1961, Goa was placed under military administration headed by Kunhiraman Palat Candeth as Lieutenant Governor.

### India-Indonesia Coordinated Patrol (IND-INDO CORPAT) conducted

- The 35<sup>th</sup> edition of India-Indonesia Coordinated Patrol (IND-INDO CORPAT) between the Indian Navy and the Indonesian Navy is being conducted from 17 to 18 December 2020. Indian Naval Ship (INS) Kulish, an indigenously built missile corvette along with P8I Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPA) undertook coordinated patrol with Indonesian Naval Ship KRI Cut Nyak Dien, a Kapitan Pattimura (Parchim I) class corvette and a MPA of the Indonesian Navy.
- As part of Government of India’s vision of SAGAR (Security And Growth for All in the Region), the Indian Navy has been proactively engaging with countries in the Indian Ocean Region for Coordinated Patrols, cooperation in EEZ Surveillance, Passage exercises and Bilateral/ Multi-lateral exercises, towards enhancing regional maritime security. India and Indonesia have especially enjoyed a close and friendly relationship covering a wide spectrum of activities and interactions, which have strengthened over the years.
- To reinforce maritime links, the two navies have been carrying out CORPAT along their International Maritime Boundary Line since 2002, with the aim of ensuring safety and security of shipping and international trade in the region. CORPATs build up understanding and interoperability between navies and facilitate institution of measures to prevent and suppress Illegal Unreported Unregulated (IUU) fishing, drug trafficking, maritime terrorism, armed robbery and piracy.

Indonesia is a sovereign state in Southeast Asia, between the Indian and Pacific oceans. It is the world’s largest island country, with more than thirteen thousand islands. With over 261 million people, it is the world’s 4<sup>th</sup> most populous country as well as the most populous Muslim-majority country. Java is the world’s most populous island. Jakarta is the country’s capital. The rupiah (Rp) is the official currency of Indonesia. Joko Widodo also known as Jokowi is the seventh and current President of Indonesia.

### MHA bans NSCN (K) along with all its factions, wings and front organisations

- Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has declared National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Khaplang), NSCN(K) along with all its factions, wings and front organisations as an unlawful association under sections of Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967.
- The Central Government is of the opinion that the NSCN (K), is continuously engaging in unlawful and violent activities thereby undermining the authority of the Government of India and the Governments of Nagaland, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh. It said, NSCN (K) is spreading terror and panic among the people; aligning with other unlawful associations like the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) and Mettei organisations of Manipur; and indulging in kidnapping for ransom and extortion of money. It further said that the NSCN (K) has been obtaining assistance from anti-India forces in other countries to procure arms.

Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act is an Indian law aimed at effective prevention of unlawful activities associations in India. Its main objective was to make powers available for dealing with activities directed against the integrity and sovereignty of India. Passed in 1967, the law aims at effective prevention of unlawful activities associations in India. The Act assigns absolute power to the central government, by way of which if the Centre deems an activity as unlawful then it may, by way of an Official Gazette, declare it so. It has death penalty and life imprisonment as highest punishments. The 2004 amendment, added “terrorist act” to the list of offences to ban organisations for terrorist activities, under which 34 outfits were banned. Till 2004, “unlawful” activities referred to actions related to secession and cession of territory. In August 2019, Parliament cleared the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Bill, 2019 to designate individuals as terrorists on certain grounds provided in the Act.

## ISGF launched the first of its kind project in south Asia on peer to Peer (P2P) Trading of Rooftop Solar Power on Blockchain in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh

- **Uttar Pradesh launched India and South Asia's first blockchain-enabled Peer to Peer (P2P) Trading of Rooftop Solar Power.**
- Uttar Pradesh Power Corporation (UPPCL), Madhyanchal Vidyut Vitran Nigam Limited (MVVNL) and Uttar Pradesh New and Renewable Energy Development Agency (UPNEDA) **hosted the first of its kind pilot project involving energy generated from solar rooftop systems installed on buildings in Lucknow.**
- The project is being implemented by India Smart Grid Forum (ISGF) along with blockchain technology partner Power Ledger, Australia and Abajyon Consulting who supported the integration of blockchain platform with UPPCL's billing system.

A blockchain originally block chain, is a growing list of records, called blocks that are linked using cryptography. Each block contains a cryptographic hash of the previous block, a timestamp, and transaction data (generally represented as a Merkle tree). **The blockchain was invented by a person (or group of people) using the name Satoshi Nakamoto in 2008** to serve as the public transaction ledger of the cryptocurrency bitcoin.

## UN Women, Kerala government collaborate for India's first Gender Data Hub

- **The Kerala government and UN Women have collaborated to establish India's first Gender Data Hub. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed in this regard in the presence of Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan**
- **The Gender Hub builds on the goals established through the International Conference on Gender Equality held in November 2015, to collect, analyse and use more nuanced data and inform policy formulation in a manner that centre-stages women's rights.**
- **Three key areas of co-operation, as specified in the MoU, will be setting up the Gender Data Centre at The Gender Park, launching the second edition of the International Conference on Gender Equality, and increasing engagement on the global normative frameworks on gender equality and empowerment of women.**

**The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, also known as UN Women, is a United Nations entity working for the empowerment of women. UN Women became operational in January 2011. President of Chile Michelle Bachelet was the inaugural Executive Director, and Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka is the current Executive Director. It is headquartered in New York, USA.**

## PM Narendra Modi launched 'SEHAT', Health Insurance Scheme for UT of J&K

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) SEHAT scheme via video-conferencing to extend health insurance coverage to all residents of Jammu and Kashmir.**
- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched 'SEHAT' - Health Insurance Scheme for the entire Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir to cover the remaining One crore population which was not covered under Ayushman Bharat Scheme.**
- **Under Ayushman Bharat PM Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY), eligible beneficiaries were covered under Health Cover of Rs 5 Lakh. Under PMJAY scheme, 30 lakh people are being covered in J&K.**
- **With the launch of 'SEHAT' Scheme by the Prime Minister J&K will be among the first in the country to achieve Universal Health Coverage.**
- **Programmes will be organized across the UT and the distribution of Golden cards will be started on the same day. The scheme will provide free-of-cost insurance cover to all residents of the UT of Jammu and Kashmir, the PMO said, adding that it will extend financial cover of up to Rs.5 lakh per family on a floater basis to all residents of the UT.**



**Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY)** of the Government of India to provide free access to healthcare for 40% of people in the country. People using the program access their own primary care services from a family doctor. When anyone needs additional care, then AB PM-JAY provides free secondary health care for those needing specialist treatment and tertiary health care for those requiring hospitalization. It was launched in September 2018 by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. PM-JAY offers service to 50 crore (500 million) people and is the world's largest government sponsored healthcare program. The scheme has the benefit cover of Rs. 5 lakh per family per year.

### Government of India constituted a High Level Committee to commemorate 125<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose

- The Government of India has decided to constitute a High Level Committee to commemorate the 125<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.
- The Committee will decide on the activities for a one year long commemoration starting 23<sup>rd</sup> January, 2021. The High Level Committee will be headed by Home Minister Amit Shah.
- The Commemoration is being held as a tribute and as a mark of gratitude to the colossal contribution Netaji made to India's freedom struggle. The members of the Committee will include experts, historians, authors, family members of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, as well as eminent persons associated with Azad Hind Fauj-INA.
- The Committee will also lend guidance to the commemoration activities in Delhi, Kolkata and other places associated with Netaji and Azad Hind Fauj, both in India as well as overseas.

Subhas Chandra Bose was an Indian nationalist whose defiant patriotism made him a hero in India, but whose attempt during World War II to rid India of British rule with the help of Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan left a troubled legacy. The honorific Netaji ("Respected Leader") first applied in early 1942 to Bose in Germany by the Indian soldiers of the Indische Legion and by the German and Indian officials in the Special Bureau for India in Berlin, was later used throughout India. He rose to become Congress President in 1938. However, soon after being reelected in 1939, he was ousted from Congress leadership positions following differences with Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress high command. The Provisional Government of Free India (Arzi Hakumat-e-Azad Hind) or, more simply, Azad Hind founded on 21 October 1943, the government was inspired by the concepts of Subhas Chandra Bose who was also the leader of the government and Head of State. He died from third-degree burns received when his plane crashed in Taiwan on 18 August 1945.

### Shri Piyush Goyal launches India-Australia Economic Strategy Report

- Union Minister of Railways, Commerce and industry, Consumer Affairs, Food and Public distribution Shri Piyush Goyal said that there is tremendous scope for Australian investment into India as we ease our FDI norms & open up different sectors. The Minister also launched India-Australia Economic Strategy Report.
- The Minister said that in the backdrop of the pandemic, the focus of the industry, which had been to bring back economic activity, is yielding very good results. The economy is showing a V-shaped recovery. "India has utilised the opportunity thrown up by COVID 19 to further liberalise our economy & make it easier to do business in India. We are one of the most open economies today particularly with FDI in automatic route up to 100% in almost all sector expect."

Piyush Vedprakash Goyal is currently taking charge as Minister of Railways, Minister of Commerce and Industry and Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution.. He was elected as the BJP candidate from Maharashtra for the Rajya Sabha on 3 June 2016.

### Union Cabinet approves 100% FDI in DTH service

- The Union Cabinet approved 100% Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in direct-to-home (DTH) service, extension of the license period from 10 years to 20 and a reduced licence fee.
- Minister for Information and Broadcasting Prakash Javadekar said, "The Commerce Ministry had already spoken of 100% FDI in the DTH sector, but because of the guidelines issued by the Information and Broadcasting [I&B] Ministry, the FDI was limited to 49%."

**‘FDI’ or ‘Foreign Direct Investment’** means investment through capital instruments by a person resident outside India –in an unlisted Indian company or in ten per cent or more of the post-issue paid-up equity capital on a fully diluted basis of a listed Indian company. In India, foreign investment can be made mainly under two routes: **Automatic Route:** Under the Automatic Route, the non-resident investor or the Indian company does not require any approval from Government of India for the investment. **Reserve Bank of India is in charge of Automatic Route. Government Approval Route:** Under the Government Approval Route, prior to investment, approval from the Government of India is required. **A foreign direct investment (FDI) is an investment in the form of a controlling ownership in a business in one country by an entity based in another country.**

### Anji Khad, India’s first cable-stayed rail bridge

- The Railways is developing India’s first ever cable-stayed bridge, called Anji Khad. It is being built at a height of 331 metres above the riverbed, and will connect Katra and Resai in the Union Territory (UT) of Jammu and Kashmir.
- Anji Khad is a part of the complex Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla rail link project and is being developed by the Konkan Railway Corporation Limited (KRCL).
- “Engineering Marvel in the Making: The work on magnificent Anji Khad Bridge at night, India’s first cable stayed rail bridge, is going on in full swing. A part of Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link project, it will connect Katra & Reasi in Jammu and Kashmir.”

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.

### In a first, Uttarakhand government, IIRS to study urban flooding in Dehradun

- The Uttarakhand State Disaster Management Authority (USDMA) in collaboration with the Indian Institute of Remote Sensing (IIRS) is planning to undertake the first of its kind study of urban flood patterns in the state capital. It is the first time such a study is being undertaken in any city of Uttarakhand.
- “Under this study, maps with high-resolution of around 1 cm, of the flood-prone areas will be developed by using high tech drones. Based on these maps which also capture land undulations on a very high resolution, we will understand the drainage and passageways for rainwater and flooding patterns around Rispana (a tributary of the Song River that drains central Dehradun) and Bindal (which also flows through Dehradun and is fed by a number of springs at the base of Mussoorie ridge) rivers in Dehradun.”

Uttarakhand is often referred to as the Devbhumi, due to many Hindu temples and pilgrimage centres found throughout the state. On 9 November 2000, Uttarakhand became the 27<sup>th</sup> state of the Republic of India, being created from the Himalayan and adjoining northwestern districts of Uttar Pradesh. Trivendra Singh Rawat is the eighth and current Chief Minister of Uttarakhand. Baby Rani Maurya is serving as the seventh governor of Uttarakhand since 26 August 2018. The winter capital of Uttarakhand is Dehradun, the largest city of the state, which is a rail head. Gairsain, a town in Chamoli district is the summer capital of Uttarakhand. The High Court of the state is located in Nainital.

### Navies of India, Vietnam to hold PASSEX in South China Sea

- Indian Navy ship INS Kiltan, which arrived in Vietnam to deliver relief material under Mission Sagar-III, will hold a Passage Exercise (PASSEX) with the Vietnamese Navy in the South China Sea (SCS).
- Mission Sagar was launched as a part of India’s HADR assistance to friendly foreign countries during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The exercise has been conducted at a time when China has been expanding its military assertiveness in the South China Sea notwithstanding mounting global concerns and criticism.

**Vietnam is the easternmost country on the Indochina Peninsula in Southeast Asia. Hanoi is the capital of Vietnam. The dong has been the currency of Vietnam since May 3, 1978. Nguyen Phu Trọng is the current President of Vietnam. Nguyen Xuan Phuc is the current Prime Minister of Vietnam.**

**Vietnam, an important country of the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), has territorial disputes with China in the South China Sea region. India has oil exploration projects in the Vietnamese waters in the South China Sea. China claims sovereignty over all of the South China Sea, a huge source of hydrocarbons. However, several ASEAN member countries, including Vietnam, Philippines and Brunei, have made counterclaims. Chinese claims in the South China Sea are described in part by the nine-dash line.**

## **Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri launches E-Sampada web portal and mobile app on Good Governance Day**

- **Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh Puri launched E-Sampada, a new web portal and mobile app on Good Governance Day.**
- **The new application provides a single window for all the services including allotment for over one lakh government residential accommodations, office space allotment to government organisations in 45 office complexes in 28 cities and booking of 1,176 holiday home rooms. The portal provides online facility to users across India to lodge complaints, submit documents and appear for virtual hearing.**

**Hardeep Singh Puri is the current Civil Aviation Minister of India and Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs in India. He is a 1974 batch Indian Foreign Service officer who served as the Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations from 2009 to 2013. He formerly served as President of the United Nations Security Council and he represents Rajya Sabha from Uttar Pradesh.**

## **Assam cabinet approves Bill to make Bodo associate official language of state**

- **The Assam cabinet approved the Assam Official Language Amendment Bill for making Bodo (in Devanagari script) an associate official language of the state.**
- **The development comes 11 months after signing of the third Bodo peace accord between the Centre, Assam government, four Bodo rebel groups and two Bodo organizations, which included declaring Bodo as associate official language as one of the clauses.**
- **According to the Census 2011, there are around 14.16 lakh Bodo speakers in Assam (4.53% of the total population of the state).**
- **The cabinet also approved setting up of the Bodo Kachari autonomous welfare council-another clause of the Bodo accord signed in January this year. A proposal for amendments to the Autonomous Council Acts of Kamtapur, Motak and Moran was also approved wherein provisions were introduced for formation of interim governments.**

**Jagdish Mukhi is the current Governor of Assam and Assam is known for Assam tea and Assam silk. Dispur is the capital of the state of Assam. Guwahati is the largest city of Assam and Northeastern India. Sarbananda Sonowal is current the Chief Minister of Assam. In 1874, on the formation of Assam as the Chief Commissioner's Province, it was chosen as the headquarters of the new administration because of its convenient location between the Brahmaputra and Surma valleys and more so because the climate of Shillong was much cooler than tropical India. Shillong remained the capital of undivided Assam until the creation of the new state of Meghalaya on 21 January 1972, when Shillong became the capital of Meghalaya, and Assam moved its capital to Dispur in Guwahati.**

## **Madhya Pradesh cabinet approves Dharma Swatantrya (Religious Freedom) Bill 2020**

- **The Madhya Pradesh cabinet approved the Dharma Swatantrya (Religious Freedom) Bill 2020. Under the provisions of the bill, forced conversion of a woman will be punishable for a term up to 10 years and minimum fine of Rs 50,000.**



- Specific provisions are also made in the cases of religious conversion of minors, groups, or of those belonging to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Blood relatives, including parents of victims of such religious conversion, can file complaints under the proposed Act.
- Any marriage solemnized only for the purpose of converting a person will be considered null and void under the provisions of this proposed legislation. A provision is also being made that those willing to convert need to apply before the district administration two months in advance. The new Act will replace the Freedom of Religion Act 1968 in the state of Madhya Pradesh and its rules which were made in the year 1969.

**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.

### FASTag for all vehicles in country to be mandatory from January 2021

- Road Transport & Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari announced that FASTag is being made mandatory for all vehicles in the country from New Year. Mr Gadkari said, FASTag will be enforced from 1<sup>st</sup> of January, 2021.
- This has been done to help the commuters to make payments at the toll plaza without stopping the vehicle for cash payment. FASTags are now being widely used in India ever since the MoRTH made them mandatory for vehicles at toll plazas on the national highway.

### India to become 5<sup>th</sup> largest economy in 2025, 3<sup>rd</sup> largest by 2030

- India, which appears to have been pushed back to being the world’s sixth biggest economy in 2020, will again overtake the UK to become the fifth largest in 2025 and race to the third spot by 2030, a think tank said.
- India had overtaken the UK in 2019 to become the fifth largest economy in the world but has been relegated to 6<sup>th</sup> spot in 2020.
- “India has been knocked off course somewhat through the impact of the pandemic. As a result, after overtaking the UK in 2019, the UK overtakes India again in this year’s forecasts and stays ahead till 2024 before India takes over again,” the Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR) said in an annual report published. The UK appears to have overtaken India again during 2020 as a result of the weakness of the rupee, it said. The CEBR forecasts that the Indian economy will expand by 9 per cent in 2021 and by 7 per cent in 2022.

### Nashik leads wine capital race with Geographical Indication tag

- Nashik’s ambitions of claiming the wine capital of India status received an impetus after the Centre accorded it the coveted Geographical Indication tag. The city has been branded Nashik Valley Wine to give wine production a push.
- “The particular taste of any fruit or crop is attributable to the soil in the region. The soil and the geographical condition of Nashik are unique. That was the reason why we could produce a particular variety of grape that aided in wine production”.

A geographical indication (GI) is a sign used on products that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities or a reputation that are due to that origin. In order to function as a GI, a sign must identify a product as originating in a given place. In addition, the qualities, characteristics or reputation of the product should be essentially due to the place of origin. Geographical Indications protection is granted through the TRIPS Agreement of WTO. India, as a member of the WTO, enacted the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999 has come into force with effect from 15 September 2003. GIs have been defined under Article 22 (1) of the WTO Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement. Darjeeling tea became the first GI tagged product in India, in 2004–2005.



### Nepal: Parliament dissolved, Election will be held in two phases in April and May next year

- Triggering protests and the resignations of at least seven Cabinet-rank ministers, **Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli dissolved the country's House of Representatives, which is the lower house of Parliament, two years short of its five-year tenure** following months of bickering among factions within the ruling Nepal Communist Party (NCP).
- **Nepal President Bidhya Devi Bhandari dissolved parliament at the request of Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli's cabinet.** President's office said in a statement that the elections will be held on April 30 and May 10 next year, more than a year ahead of schedule.

Nepal is a **landlocked country in South Asia** located in the Himalaya. **Nepalese rupee is the official currency** of the **Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal.** **Constitution of Nepal 2015** is the **present governing Constitution** of Nepal. Nepal is **governed according to the Constitution** which came into effect on Sept 20, 2015, regarding the Interim Constitution of 2007. **The constitution of Nepal is divided into 35 parts, 308 Articles and 9 Schedules.** **Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli is currently serving as the Care Prime Minister of Nepal.** He was the **first elected prime minister under the newly adopted Constitution of Nepal.**

### Couscous joins UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage list

- **The United Nations added the Berber dish of couscous to its Intangible Cultural Heritage list** after four countries submitted the entry to UNESCO.
- **Despite major differences, Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia and Mauritania got together to highlight their shared love for the dish,** which joined Zambia's Budima dance, Spain's wine horses, Singapore's hawker culture and other new entrants on UNESCO's list of intangible heritage.

**United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)** is a specialized agency of the United Nations (UN) based in Paris. **Audrey Azoulay** appointed as the **Director-general of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO),** becoming the **second female leader of the organization.**

### Israel to hold snap polls next year as Parliament fail to meet deadline to pass Budget

- **Israel's parliament, the Knesset, was dissolved after the two main parties in its unity government failed to meet a deadline in a row over state budgets.**
- **Israel will now hold its fourth elections in two years** in March next year, just 12 months after the last round. Two previous elections were inconclusive, resulting in a rare government of national unity. **Israel's parliament was automatically dissolved as required by law after a deadline to pass the 2020 state budget expired.**

**Israel is a country in the Middle East, Jerusalem is one of the oldest cities in the world, and is considered holy to the three major Abrahamic religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.** Both Israel and the Palestinian Authority claim Jerusalem as their capital, however, **neither claim is widely recognized internationally.** Knesset is the **unicameral national legislature of Israel.** **Israeli new shekel is the currency of Israel.** **Benjamin Netanyahu is serving as the 9<sup>th</sup> and current Prime Minister of Israel since 2009.** **Reuven Rivlin is serving as the 10<sup>th</sup> and current President of Israel since 2014.**

## Indian submarine INS Sindhuvir officially inducted into Myanmar Navy

- **Myanmar officially inducted a submarine handed over by India in the month of October. INS Sindhuvir was commissioned as UMS Minye Theinkhathu and inducted on the 73<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the Myanmar Navy.**
- **This is the first time India has given a submarine to any country and shows growing defence cooperation between the 2 neighbouring countries. The Indian side has been training Myanmar Naval personnel. Last year, Indian and Myanmar naval undertook joint exercises IMNEX 2019 in Bay of Bengal.**
- **The kilo class submarine has a displacement of 3000 tonnes, a diving depth of 300 meters and top speed at 20 knots. UMS Minye Theinkhathu is named after an ancient warrior and can operate for 45 days. Myanmar has built a submarine base for it in a highly classified location. Kilo class submarines are operated by Indian, Chinese, Russian and Iranian Naval forces and were designed by the Rubin Central Maritime Design Bureau, St Petersburg.**

Aung San Suu Kyi is a Myanmar politician, diplomat, author, and Nobel Peace Prize laureate (1991). She is the leader of the National League for Democracy and the first and incumbent State Counsellor, a position akin to a prime minister. She is also the first woman to serve as Minister for Foreign Affairs. The incumbent president is Win Myint. Myanmar's capital city is Naypyidaw and kyat is the currency of Myanmar. Sittwe Port is a deep-water port constructed by India in 2016 at Sittwe, the capital of Rakhine State in Myanmar, on the Bay of Bengal. Situated at the mouth of the Kaladan River, the USD 120 Million port is being financed by India as a part of the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project, collaboration between India and Myanmar. Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project is a project that will connect the eastern Indian seaport of Kolkata with Sittwe seaport in Rakhine State, Myanmar by sea.

## Japan adopts green growth plan to go carbon free by 2050

- **Japan aims to eliminate gasoline-powered vehicles in about 15 years, the government said in a plan to achieve Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga's ambitious pledge to go carbon free by 2050 and generate nearly \$2 trillion growth in green business and investment.**
- **The "green growth strategy" urges utilities to bolster renewables and hydrogen while calling for auto industries to go carbon free by the mid-2030s.**

Naruhito is the Emperor of Japan. He acceded to the Chrysanthemum Throne on 1 May 2019, beginning the Reiwa era, following the abdication of his father, Emperor Akihito, on 30 April 2019. He is the 126<sup>th</sup> monarch according to Japan's traditional order of succession. Tokyo is the capital city of Japan and yen is the official currency of Japan and it is the third most traded currency in the foreign exchange market after the United States dollar and the euro.

## EU, UK unveil vast trade pact set to enter force on Jan 1

- **The European Union and the United Kingdom made public the vast agreement that is likely to govern future trade and cooperation between them from Jan. 1, setting the 27-nation bloc's relations with its former member country and neighbor on a new but far more distant footing.**
- **EU ambassadors and lawmakers on both sides of the English Channel will now pore over the "EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement," which contains over 1,240 pages of text. EU envoys are expected to meet to discuss the document, drawn up over nine intense months of talks. Businesses, so long left in the dark about what is in store for them, will also be trying to understand its implications.**

**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). The UK Parliament finally ratified the withdrawal agreement, and the UK left the EU at 11 p.m. GMT on 31 January 2020.**





## Ease of doing business: China's rank drops as World Bank corrects 'irregularities', India unaffected

- The World Bank has corrected two recent reports ranking countries on ease of doing business, based on an internal audit following officials' allegations of "undue pressure" by management to alter ratings, Bloomberg reported.
- The bank's changes to its ease of doing business reports for 2018 and 2020 has resulted in change of scores for four countries, including China, which also saw its ranking slip in one of the reports due to the correction.
- India's ranking, however, has remained unaffected. India has ascended 17 notches, ranking at 63<sup>rd</sup> position in the report published by The World Bank. The 'Make in India' campaign started by Prime Minister Narendra Modi focused on attracting foreign investment, boosted the private sector (especially manufacturing) and enhanced India's overall competitiveness.
- In a review of its report published on December 16, World Bank said that in the 2018 report released in October 2017, China should have been shown dropping seven places to 85<sup>th</sup> rather than remaining 78<sup>th</sup>, as in the 2017 report.
- "In Doing Business 2018, the published score including irregularities affecting the Starting a Business, Getting Credit, and Paying Taxes indicators was 65.3 with a global ranking of 78," the World Bank said in its release. "After correcting the irregularities described above, the Doing Business 2018 score is 64.5."
- Similarly, after corrections to the 2020 report, released in October 2019, Saudi Arabia is no longer the top improving economy, while Azerbaijan moved up to become one of the top 10 improvers. The country's 2020 ranking improved to 28, instead of its previous global ranking of 34.

Ease of Doing Business Report is published by the World Bank. The index has been created to evaluate the impact of the economic policies/reforms implemented by the government in the respective countries to promote and make it easier to do business. This report is published after evaluating the performance of countries under the following 11 parameters (for this year's ranking, the labour market parameter is not considered, hence this year's ranking is based on ten parameters).

## Indian entrepreneur named among 'Young Champions of the Earth' winners by UN environment agency

- A 29-year-old Indian entrepreneur, Vidyut Mohan is among the seven winners of the prestigious "Young Champions of the Earth" 2020 prize given by the UN environment agency to global change-makers using innovative ideas and ambitious action to help solve some of the world's most pressing environmental challenges.
- Vidyut Mohan, an engineer, is the co-founder of "Takachar", a social enterprise enabling farmers to prevent open burning of their waste farm residues and earn extra income by converting them into value-added chemicals like activated carbon on-site, UN Environment Programme (UNEP) said in a statement



- This year's Young Champions were selected by a global jury of experts following a competitive public nomination. **Each will receive USD 10,000 in seed funding and tailored training to help scale up their ideas. The Young Champions of the Earth prize is awarded every year to seven entrepreneurs under the age of 30 with bold ideas for sustainable environmental change.**

### Central Bank of India launches contactless debit card in association with NPCI

- **State-owned Central Bank of India has launched contactless 'RuPay Select' debit card in association with the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI).**
- **Users of Central Bank RuPay Select Debit Card can avail complementary membership and concessional access to golf courses, gyms, spas and restaurants, the bank said.**
- **Additionally, they would be entitled for discounted health check-ups with this National Common Mobility Debit Card (NCMC), which also has the unique feature of facilitating offline transactions in both transit as well as retail purchases.**

**Central Bank of India, a government-owned bank, is one of the oldest and largest commercial banks in India. It is based in Mumbai which is the financial capital of India and capital city of state of Maharashtra.**

**National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) is an umbrella organisation for operating retail payments and settlement systems in India. Founded in 2008, the NPCI is a not-for-profit organisation registered under section 8 of the Companies Act 2013, established by Reserve Bank of India & IBA. It is headquartered in Mumbai.**

### Ratan Tata to be honoured with 'Global Visionary of Sustainable Business and Peace' award

- **Veteran industrialist Ratan Tata was honoured by the Indo-Israel Chambers of Commerce for promoting innovation that supports sustainability and peace in the region, including with the Palestinians. The chairman emeritus of the Tata group was honoured with 'Global Visionary of Sustainable Business and Peace' award during the launch of the Federation of Indo-Israel Chamber of Commerce's international chapter in Dubai on December 21.**
- **The virtual ceremony was attended by senior officials from Israel, India and UAE. The 82-year-old industrialist and philanthropist Ratan Tata is the recipient of two of India's highest civilian awards - Padma Vibhushan and Padma Bhushan.**
- **The opening of the Federation of Indo-Israel Chamber of Commerce's international chapter in Dubai is the first such initiative aiming at tapping business opportunities together in other countries, and developing trilateral collaborations.**

### Centre and WB sign USD 500 million project to build Green National Highway Corridors

- **The Centre and the World Bank signed a USD 500 million project to build safe and green national highway corridors in Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh. The project will also enhance the capacity of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways in mainstreaming safety and green technologies.**
- **The Green National Highways Corridors Project will support the Road Transport and Highways Ministry to construct 783 kilometres of highways in various geographies by integrating safe and green technology designs such as local and marginal materials, industrial byproducts and other bioengineering solutions. The project will help reduce GHG emissions in the construction and maintenance of highways.**

**The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) said 11 industrial corridors consisting of 30 projects will come up across the country in four phases by 2024-2025. National Highway 5, which is part of the Golden Quadrilateral and Kolkata-Chennai route have been identified as crucial for the East Coast Economic Corridor (ECEC). The Dedicated Freight Corridor Corporation of India Limited (DFCCIL) is a Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) corporation run by the Government of India's Ministry of Railways to undertake planning, development, and mobilisation of financial resources and construction, maintenance and operation of the "Dedicated Freight Corridors" (DFC). The DFCCIL was registered as a company under the Companies Act 1956 in 2006.**

## ICICI Bank offers online platform for MNCs

- **ICICI Bank has introduced an online platform called ‘Infinite India’ for foreign companies looking to set up or expand business in India.**
- **This platform offers banking solutions as well as value-added services** such as incorporation of a business entity, corporate filings, licences and registrations, HR services, compliances and taxation.

**ICICI Bank Limited** is an **Indian multinational banking and financial services company headquartered in Mumbai, Maharashtra** with its registered office in Vadodara, Gujarat. **ICICI Bank** was established by the **Industrial Credit and Investment Corporation of India (ICICI)**, an Indian financial institution, as a wholly-owned subsidiary in 1994. **ICICI Bank** is one of the **Big Four banks of India** others banks are **SBI, Bank of Baroda and HDFC**. **Sandeep Bakhshi** is the current MD & CEO, **ICICI Bank** since October 2018.

## DigiBoxx: India’s first indigenous digital asset management platform launched

- **CEO of NITI Aayog Amitabh Kant** virtually launched India’s first digital asset management platform **DigiBoxx**. **DigiBoxx** has free 2 GB storage space and the file shared stays for 45 days, the company said in a statement.
- **Kant also signed up for an account, making him the first user of an Indian digital file storage, sharing and management SaaS product** that provides storage options for business as well as individual users.

The **National Institution for Transforming India**, also called **NITI Aayog**, was formed via a resolution of the **Union Cabinet on January 1, 2015**. It was established to replace the **Planning Commission** which followed a top-down model. **NITI Aayog** is the **premier policy ‘Think Tank’ of the Government of India**, providing both directional and policy inputs. The current chairman of **NITI Aayog** is **Shri Narendra Modi**, current vice chairman is **Dr. Rajiv Kumar** and the current chief executive officer is **Shri Amitabh Kant**.

## Sonalika becomes first player to launch electric tractor in India

- **International Tractors Ltd-owned Sonalika Tractors** has become the first manufacturer to commercially launch a field-ready electric tractor for the domestic market with an introductory price of Rs. 5.99 lakh (ex-showroom).
- **Calling its new product Tiger Electric**, **Sonalika’s electric tractor** is equipped with a **11 kW induction motor** and a **25.5 kWh lithium ion battery**, which can be fully charged in 10 hours using a regular home charging socket and in just 4 hours using a fast charging system. Positioned for agricultural applications usually made by an under-35 hp tractor, the company said **Tiger Electric** could run for 8 hours while running a 2-ton trolley on a single charge.

The **Sonalika Group** is an **Indian multinational company headquartered in Hoshiarpur (Punjab), India** and is active mainly in the automobile sector. The **Sonalika Group** is headed by **Lakshman Das Mittal**. **Sonalika** produces tractors with two brands **Sonalika & Solis**.

## Bangladesh moves 2 steps up on Human Development Index (HDI)

- **Bangladesh has improved its Human Development Index (HDI) ranking by 2 notches** in the recently released report by the UNDP. According to the **HDI 2020 for Bangladesh** released, **Bangladesh now stands at 133<sup>rd</sup> position out of 189 countries**.
- **In South Asia it remains on the 5<sup>th</sup> position out of 8 countries** included in the report. However, the country also improved its ranking by 9 places in the planetary pressure-adjusted Human Development Index.
- In the 2020 edition of the report, **UNDP has added two more elements in the calculation of the HDI**. It now takes into account **Carbon Dioxide emission of the country** and its material footprint in addition to the earlier included health, education and living standards based parameters.
- The inclusion of these new parameters has resulted in **50 countries dropping out of the very high human development group**, reflecting their dependence on fossil fuels and material footprint.

## Reserve Bank of India (RBI) decided to introduce the 'positive pay system'

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) decided to introduce the 'positive pay system' for cheque a couple of months ago. Under the new rule re-confirmation of key details may be needed for payments beyond Rs. 50,000. This new cheque payment rule will come into effect from 1 January 2021.
- The announcement by RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das in August MPC came in order to keep consumer safety in focus and to lower the cases of fraud and abuse with respect to cheque payment.
- Positive Pay is essentially an automated fraud detection tool. It matches specific information related to the cheque presented for clearing, such as the cheque number, cheque date, payee name, account number, amount, and other details against a list of cheques previously authorized and issued by the issuer.

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.

## Centralised investment clearance cell by April 15

- The Centralised 'Investment Clearance Cell', under the proposed single window system, aimed at facilitating businesses through a one-stop digital platform, is planned to be launched with relevant Ministries and Departments and select States by April 15, 2021.
- The Investment Clearance Cell, which is an integral part of the single window system being worked out by the Commerce and Industry Ministry, was announced by Finance Minister in this year's Union Budget.
- "The idea behind the Central Investment Clearance Cell is to ensure that an investor gets all information and clearances on one platform, instead of visiting multiple platforms".
- There are at least six States, including Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Telangana, Gujarat, Odisha and Goa, that are already part of the GIS enabled land bank under Industrial Information System (IIS) and it has been launched in a phased manner by the Department on August 27, 2020.

Government has integrated Industrial Information System (IIS) portal with the GIS System of six States in first phase to provide updates on land availability and plot level information to investors anywhere in the world on real time basis and help them make informed decisions. For the development of National Land Bank, Government intends to solicit the details of industrial land with plot level information, connectivity thereto, basic facilities, other facilities available and contact details of authorities/developer of the park.

## Gujarat: State to host India's first Lithium refinery

- India's first Lithium refinery which will process Lithium ore to produce battery-grade material will be set up in Gujarat.
- Manikaran Power Limited, one of the country's largest power trading and renewable energy company will be investing over Rs 1,000 crore to set up this refinery.

Reserves of lithium, a rare metal critical to build batteries for electric vehicles, have been discovered in Mandya, 100 km from Bengaluru - a find that should boost local manufacturing of EV batteries. Researchers at the Atomic Minerals Directorate, a unit of India's Atomic Energy Commission, have estimated lithium reserves of 14,100 tonnes in a small patch of land surveyed in the Southern Karnataka district, according to a paper to be published in the forthcoming issue of journal Current Science.

# SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY



## Inventions/Discoveries

**The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved a first-of-its-kind intentional genomic alteration (IGA)**

- The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved a first-of-its-kind intentional genomic alteration (IGA) in a line of domestic pigs referred to as GalSafe pigs.
- These pigs may be used for food and human therapeutics. This will be the first time that the regulator has approved an animal biotechnology product for both food and biomedical purposes.
- Intentional genomic alteration in animal's means making specific changes to the genome of the organism using modern molecular technologies that are popularly referred to as "genome editing" or "genetic engineering".
- Such changes in the DNA sequence of an animal may be carried out for research purposes, to produce healthier meat for human consumption and to study disease resistance in animals among other reasons.

The United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA or USFDA) is a federal agency of the Department of Health and Human Services. The FDA has its headquarters in unincorporated White Oak, Maryland. Stephen M. Hahn, MD is the current commissioner.

**The 'SolarWinds hack', a cyberattack discovered in the United States**

- The 'SolarWinds hack', a cyberattack recently discovered in the United States, has emerged as one of the biggest ever targeted against the US government, its agencies and several other private companies. In fact, it is likely a global cyberattack.
- It was first discovered by US cybersecurity company FireEye, and since then more developments continue to come to light each day. The sheer scale of the cyber-attack remains unknown, although the US Treasury, Department of Homeland Security, Department of Commerce, parts of the Pentagon are all believed to have been impacted.
- News of the cyberattack technically first broke on December 8, when FireEye put out a blog detecting an attack on its systems. The firm helps with security management of several big private companies and federal government agencies.

**Jupiter-Saturn great conjunction**

- The December 21, 2020 great conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn is highly conspicuous in the west after sunset each evening now. On December 21, the pair was only 0.1 degree apart.
- Astronomers use the word conjunction to describe meetings of planets and other objects on our sky's dome. They use the term great conjunction to describe meetings of Jupiter and Saturn, which are the two biggest worlds in our solar system. Though the two planets will appear spectacularly close together on the sky's dome now, Jupiter and Saturn are actually 456 million miles (734,000 km) apart. Saturn is nearly twice as far away as Jupiter.



- **Jupiter-Saturn conjunctions happen every 20 years**; the last one was in the year 2000. But these conjunctions aren't all created equal. **The 2020 great conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn was the closest since 1623 and the closest observable since 1226!** 2020's extra-close Jupiter-Saturn conjunction won't be matched again until the Jupiter-Saturn conjunction of March 15, 2080.

Saturn is the sixth planet from the Sun and the second-largest in the Solar System, after Jupiter. Saturn is named after the Roman god of wealth and agriculture; its astronomical symbol ( $\♄$ ) represents the god's sickle. At least 82 moons are known to orbit Saturn. Jupiter is the fifth planet from the Sun and the largest in the Solar System. It is named after the Roman god Jupiter. Jupiter has 79 known moons.

### Indian government mulls E20 ethanol mixed petrol to curb vehicle emissions

- **Ethanol blended petrol is an alternative fuel** which the transport ministry in India is currently exploring. The E20 blend of ethanol with petrol is expected to curb vehicular emission and also help reduce oil imports.
- The government of India has **proposed the adoption of E20 fuel for vehicular use**. E20 is a blend of 20% ethanol with gasoline (petrol) and can be used as an alternative to the fuels currently available.
- The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has published a draft notification as it opens up to comments from the **public for the adoption of E20 fuel**. The government is looking at the **adoption of mass emission standards for this fuel for transport application**.
- Additionally, it also wishes to facilitate the development of E20 compliant vehicles. The government believes that the **E20 blend will not only curb vehicle emissions but help reduce the country's oil import bill**.

The government of India has **set targets of 10 per cent bioethanol blending of petrol by 2022 and to raise it to 20 per cent by 2030 under the ethanol blending programme to curb carbon emissions** and reduce India's dependence on imported crude oil. 1G and 2G bioethanol plants are set to play a key role in making bio-ethanol available for **blending** but face challenges in attracting investments from the private sector.

### Delhi's Sunder Nursery Chosen for 2 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards For Conservation

- **Delhi's iconic Sunder Nursery**, a 90-acre garden which was transformed into a horticultural paradise after a decade-long conservation work, is among the winners in the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation this year.
- Also, Koothambalam at Guruvayoor Temple in Kerala's Thrissur has been chosen in the Award of Distinction category.
- The innovative revitalisation of the Lai Cho Wo Rural Cultural Landscape in Hong Kong SAR, China and the transformative management of the historic Sunder Nursery of New Delhi have received the newly introduced Special Recognition for Sustainable Development. The Sunder Nursery has also been recognised as the Award of Excellence in this year's UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation.

### DRDO conducts successful trial of Medium Range Surface to Air MR-SAM missile from Chandipur off Odisha coast

- **DRDO conducted the successful trial of the Medium Range Surface to Air MR-SAM missile from Chandipur off the Odisha coast**. This was the army version of the MR-SAM missile which has been designed jointly by India and Israel.
- 'Bansi'-a target missile was launched from the launch pad no.1 of the **Integrated Test Range at Chandipur**. MR-SAM was **test fired only to hit the target successfully**. The missile is designed to provide the armed forces with air defence capability against a variety of air-borne targets at medium ranges.

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**.

## Deadly brain-eating amoeba spreading fast in US, says report

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- **A deadly brain-consuming amoeba — Naegleria fowleri — is crawling its way northward from the southern states of the US.** According to a report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the geographic range of these cases has been advancing northward. Now, **more cases are being reported in midwestern states in the US.**
- **Naegleria fowleri is a free-living microscopic amoeba.** It can cause a rare and devastating infection of the brain called **primary amebic meningoencephalitis (PAM).** The amoeba is commonly found in warm freshwater and soil. Naegleria fowleri usually infects people when contaminated water enters the body through the nose, CDC explained.
- **Once the amoeba enters the nose, it travels to the brain, where it causes PAM, which is usually fatal.** Infection typically occurs when people go swimming or diving in warm freshwater places, like lakes and rivers. In very rare instances, Naegleria infections may also occur due to contaminated water from other sources.

## World's first wooden satellite to be launched by Japan in 2023

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- **Japanese logging company Sumitomo Forestry and Kyoto University are planting the seeds for a 2023 launch of the world's first satellite made out of wood.** The partners announced their intentions saying the aim was basic research and proof of concept.
- They have agreed to conduct research on **tree growth and the use of wood materials in space.** They hope to promote technology for using wood in extreme environments on Earth.

## Karnataka second in country in leopard numbers

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- **Karnataka — home to a high density of tigers — harbours the second highest number of leopards in the country after Madhya Pradesh,** according to a new report. The **‘Status of Leopard in India, 2018’** report released reinforces Karnataka's position as a pre-eminent wildlife State that has some of the highest number of tigers, elephants, and now leopards.
- The report released by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, noted that **Karnataka has 1,783 leopards and the results are in sync with similar studies on the spotted cat** conducted by wildlife biologists in the State.
- Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar released the Status of Leopard in India 2018 report. **Mr Javadekar announced that India now has 12,852 leopards. More than 60 per cent increase has been recorded in the leopard population over the previous estimate which was conducted in 2014.**

## Shift towards sustainable fisheries in Mediterranean, Black Sea region

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- **The number of stocks subject to overfishing has decreased for the first time in decades in the Mediterranean and Black Sea marine ecosystems,** though most fish stocks remain overexploited.
- **While 75 per cent of fish stocks remained subject to overfishing,** the percentage fell by **more than 10 per cent between 2014 and 2018,** according to a new report on the State of Mediterranean and Black Sea Fisheries (SoMFi 2020).
- **Fisheries form an essential part of the socio-economic fabric of the Mediterranean and Black Sea life,** with an economic contribution of an estimated **\$9.4 billion.** At least one in every 100 coastal residents in some areas there is a fisher.
- The **General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)** is responsible for overseeing the fishing fleet in the region.
- **GFCM works with the region's 25 coastal countries to monitor and manage vessels of all types and sizes —** from the wide variety of small-scale fishing boats that account for 83 per cent of the total fleet to the industrial trawlers, purse seiners, longliners and others that make up the rest.

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# SPORTS



## Sports Personalities in News

### Russia can't use its name and flag at the next 2 Olympics

- **Russia will not be able to use its name, flag and anthem at the next two Olympics or at any world championships for the next two years** after a ruling by the Court of Arbitration for Sport.
- **The Lausanne-based court halved the four-year ban proposed last year by the World Anti-Doping Agency** in a landmark case that accused Russia of state-ordered tampering of a testing laboratory database in Moscow. The ruling also blocked Russia from bidding to host major sporting events for two years.
- **Russian athletes and teams will still be allowed to compete at next year's Tokyo Olympics and the 2022 Winter Games in Beijing**, as well as world championships including the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, if they are not banned for or suspected of doping.

### The Best FIFA Football Awards 2020

- **Robert Lewandowski and Lucy Bronze were respectively named the men's and women's player of the year at the Best FIFA Football Awards 2020.**
- **Bayern Munich striker Lewandowski saw off competition from Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo to be crowned the best men's player.**
- **The forward has been in frightening form over the last year, scoring 55 goals and firing Bayern Munich to an impressive treble last season.** He was widely tipped to win the Ballon d'Or this year before it was scrapped amid the pandemic.
- **Lewandowski has continued his form and, since the start of the 2019/20 season, he has scored 73 goals in 64 club games – 22 more than any other men's player in Europe's top five leagues.**
- **Jurgen Klopp earned a surprise second consecutive Men's coach of the Year honour for his Premier League success with Liverpool while Sarina Wiegman won the Women's honour for her work with the Dutch national team.**

### Lewis Hamilton pips Jordan Henderson to win BBC's Sports Personality of the Year

- **Seven-time Formula One champion Lewis Hamilton capped another successful year by claiming the BBC's Sports Personality of the Year prize.**
- **The 35-year-old driver, who last month equaled Michael Schumacher's record of seven F1 titles, overcame Jordan Henderson and Hollie Doyle to win the British broadcaster's prestigious prize in a public vote.**

### Cristiano Ronaldo Wins Prestigious Golden Foot 2020 Award

- **Cristiano Ronaldo has won the prestigious Golden Foot 2020 award on in Monaco for his outstanding performance over the previous season.** He netted the ball on 44 occasions in 44 games and **helped Juventus top Group G in the ongoing UEFA Champions League.**

- Despite missing out on the coveted FIFA The Best Award to Bayern Munich icon Robert Lewandowski, Ronaldo picked up the Golden Foot 2020 award – something that is missing from arch-rival Lionel Messi's trophy cabinet.

### Rashford named first FIFA Foundation Award recipient

- **Marcus Rashford has become the inaugural recipient of FIFA Foundation Award.** Manchester United & England forward campaigned on child hunger. FIFA Foundation will donate USD \$100,000 to support his social and charity work.

### Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju virtually inaugurates 8 Khelo India State Centres of Excellence across India

- **Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju virtually inaugurated 8 Khelo India State Centres of Excellence across India** in the presence of State Sports Ministers. The 8 States include Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Kerala, Telangana, Nagaland, Karnataka and Odisha.
- **With a vision to make India one of the top 10 countries in 2028 Olympics, the Khelo India State Centres of Excellence** will ensure that **athletes proficient in a certain sport** can be given the world-class specialised training and these centers become the best facilities in the country to train athletes in the priority sport for which they have been earmarked.

### BCCI governing body approves 10 teams for 2022 IPL

- **The BCCI's governing body ratified the entry of two new franchises in the IPL to make it a 10-team affair** from 2022 during its Annual General Meeting (AGM).
- The Board, in principle, decided to back the **ICC's bid for inclusion of cricket, in the T20 format, in the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics** "after getting some clarifications from the International Olympic Committee". "Two new teams will be introduced in the 2022 IPL".

### India's largest hockey stadium planned in Rourkela, will host 2023 world cup games

- Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik announced that **India's biggest hockey stadium will come up at Rourkela and the 20,000-capacity facility will host matches of FIH men's World Cup in 2023.** Spread over 15 acres of land, the stadium will be constructed in the Biju Patnaik University of Technology campus.

### Chetan Sharma is chairman of selectors

- **Former India pace troika of Chetan Sharma, Abey Kuruvilla and Debasis Mohanty have been appointed as national selectors.** Chetan will replace Sunil Joshi as the chairman of the panel on the basis of having earned more Test caps (23 to 15).
- The appointment was announced after the **Cricket Advisory Committee of Madan Lal, Rudra Pratap Singh and Sulakshana Naik interviewed 11 candidates** shortlisted for the three vacant posts in the five-member selection committee. Joshi and Harvinder Singh, who is with India's squad in Australia, will continue as selectors.



## MISCELLANEOUS

### CBI gets new Crime Manual after 15 years

- Union Minister of State for Prime Minister's Office Jitendra Singh released the **Central Bureau of Investigation's revised Crime Manual**, which will be instrumental in guiding the agency on legal matters and tools for an efficient probe. The exercise of updating the manual in accordance with the **current requirements took almost 18 months, under CBI chief Rishi Kumar Shukla. It was last revised in 2005.**

### Govt to launch coal import monitoring system

- **The government plans to launch the coal import monitoring system from February, making it mandatory for importers to disclose future shipments. Importers of coking coal, steam coal and bituminous coal would have to gain a permit ahead of deliveries, the commerce and industry ministry said.**

### Prime Minister inaugurated India's first-ever driverless train on Delhi Metro's Magenta Line

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated India's first-ever driverless train operations on Delhi Metro's Magenta Line** through video conferencing.
- **The Prime Minister also inaugurated the fully operational National Common Mobility Card service on the Airport Express Line.** This will enable anyone carrying a RuPay Debit Card issued from any part of the country to travel on the Airport Express Line using that card. This facility will become available on the entire Delhi Metro network by 2022.

### Union Minister Arjun Munda inaugurates Tribes India showrooms in Kolkata and Gwalior

- **Tribal Affairs Minister Arjun Munda inaugurated Two Tribes India showrooms (Kolkata in person and Gwalior virtually)** in a grand opening ceremony in Kolkata. The Minister spoke extensively about the significance of preserving and promoting the art and culture of the tribal population who form roughly 8% of the population. Digital India Awards 2020: Haryana wins e-gov award for Antyodaya Saral project.

### Defence Secretary Dr Ajay Kumar launches DGNCC Digital Forum in New Delhi

- **The Defence Secretary Dr Ajay Kumar launched the DGNCC Digital Forum in New Delhi.** This Digital Forum hosted on the DGNCC website, will **provide a platform to National Cadet Corps cadets all over the country** to share their experiences of various NCC activities.
- Dr Kumar said that this forum will **help NCC cadets to share their opinions and suggestions on NCC training, Social Service and Community Development** and host of other issues related to National Security, National Integration and National Building.

### PM Modi pays floral tributes and release a book titled 'Atal Bihari Vajpayee' in Parliament

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid floral tributes and also **release a book titled Atal Bihari Vajpayee in Parliament : A Commemorative Volume on the birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.**
- The book also contains some rare photographs from Atal Bihari Vajpayee's public life. **December 25<sup>th</sup>, this year marks the 96<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Bharat Ratna Atal Bihari Vajpayee. This day is also celebrated as Good Governance Day.**

### CSIR-NISCAIR, MoES, Vijnana Bharati jointly organise inaugural session of International Science Literature Festival, Vigyanika

- **CSIR-National Institute of Science Communication and Information Resources (CSIR-NISCAIR), Ministry of Earth Sciences and Vijnana Bharati jointly organised the inaugural session of the International Science Literature Festival, Vigyanika.**
- The literature festival was **organised on the opening day of the India International Science Festival 2020 to mark the birth anniversary of renowned Indian mathematician, Srinivasa Ramanujan.**

## PERSONS IN NEWS

### Prachanda-led CPN removes PM Oli from party's chairman post

- The Central Committee meeting of **Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda'-led faction of the ruling Nepal Communist Party removed Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli from the post of chairman**, hours after the embattled premier announced a new 1,199-member committee to organise the party's general convention in an effort to strengthen his hold on it.
- The Central Committee meeting of the **Prachanda-led faction unanimously nominated senior leader Madhav Kumar Nepal as the party's second chairman. Mr. Prachanda is the first chairman of the party.**

### Ujwal Nirgudkar appointed as Member of Oscar Academy's Science & Technology Council

- **Ujwal Nirgudkar appointed as Member of Oscar Academy's Science & Technology Council** Ujwal Nirgudkar, Oscar Academy Member and Chairman of SMPTE-India Section who is promoting standards for Digital Cinema in India is now appointed by Oscar Academy to serve on the 2020-21 Science and Technology Council.
- **An Indian Resident is being invited as the Member for the first time in the history of 17 Years of the council.**

### Joe Biden names Indian American Bharat Ramamurti as National Economic Council member

- **US President-elect Joe Biden named Indian American Bharat Ramamurti as one of the three new members of the National Economic Council** that coordinates domestic and international economic policymaking process for the administration.
- Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris named three additional NEC members: **Joelle Gamble**, Special Assistant to the US President for Economic Policy; **David Kamin**, Deputy Director NEC along with **Ramamurti as Deputy Director of NEC for Financial Reform and Consumer Protection.**

## AWARDS

### US President presents 'Legion of Merit' award to PM Modi for his leadership in elevating US-India strategic partnership

- US President Donald Trump presented the prestigious Legion of Merit award to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his leadership in elevating strategic partnership of the two countries and emergence of India as a global power.
- India's Ambassador to the US, Taranjit Singh Sandhu, accepted the award on behalf of the prime minister from the US National Security Advisor Robert O'Brien at the White House. Mr Modi was presented with the highest degree Chief Commander of the Legion of Merit which is given only to the Head of State or Government
- Mr Modi was given the award in recognition of his steadfast leadership and vision that has accelerated India's emergence as a global power and elevated the strategic partnership between the United States and India to address global challenges.
- The US President also presented the Legion of Merit to Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison and the former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. The awards were received by their respective ambassadors in Washington DC.

### CtrlS bags world's first Golden Peacock Eco-Innovation Award for datacenters

- Hyperscale datacenter provider CtrlS, was awarded the prestigious Golden Peacock Award for Eco-Innovation. The company became the World's first datacenter to be awarded in the datacenter category.
- The jury selected CtrlS Datacenters, after having evaluated 234 companies on parameters such as innovation, environment, health and safety, energy conservation, and impact on climate Change.
- The winners in other than data center category include Tata Motors (ERC), ITC, JSW Cement, and ITC Life Sciences & Technology Centre. The past winners include Tata Steel, Mahindra & Mahindra, and Reliance Industries.

### Western Railway Wins First Prize In Energy Conservation Awards 2020

- Western Railway bagged three prestigious National Energy Conservation Awards (NECA) in 'Transport' and 'Building – Govt offices' categories for the year 2020, by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), Ministry of Power.
- It has been awarded the First Prize in the Transportation Category along with First and Third prize in Buildings Category for Divisional Railway Manager's offices at Bhavnagar and Rajkot respectively.

### Haryana government's e-governance project — Antyodaya Saral — won the Digital India Awards 2020 under the category — Excellence in Digital Governance — State/UT

- Haryana government's e-governance project Antyodaya Saral won the Digital India Awards 2020 under the category Excellence in Digital Governance State/UT. The award is conferred on December 30 by President Ram Nath Kovind.
- Antyodaya Saral is government to citizen focused public service delivery online platform that can be used to apply for over 549 schemes and services of the state government.
- Currently, services from 40 departments, boards and corporations are being provided with the help of Common Service Centre (CSC) and 117 Antyodaya Saral Kendras

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# IMPORTANT DAYS

## International Migrants Day 2020

- **Every year, December 18, is celebrated as International Migrants Day.** The day was appointed by the General Assembly of United Nations on December 4, 2000, taking into account the large and increasing number of migrants in the world.
- Each year, International Migrants Day observed around a specific theme. **The International Migrants Day 2020 theme is Reimagining Human Mobility.**

## National Consumer Rights Day

- **National Consumer Rights Day is observed on 24 December every year in India.** The day aims to highlight the importance of the consumer movement as well as the need to make them aware and informed of their rights and responsibilities.
- **The theme of the National Consumer Day is ‘The Sustainable Consumer’.** The theme is in view of the urgent need for action to approach the worldwide crisis, global temperature change and biodiversity loss. **The movement highlights the changes in lifestyle of consumers.**

## Good Governance Day 2020

- **Good governance is observed annually on December 25.** The day aims to let the citizens, the students, who are the future of the country know about the government’s responsibilities and duties that it needs to fulfill.
- The day is also **celebrated to commemorate the birth anniversary of India’s former Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee.** On December 23, 2014, Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya (posthumously) were announced as recipients of India’s highest civilian award, Bharat Ratna.

## International Day of Epidemic Preparedness, 27 December

- The United Nations General Assembly has proclaimed **December 27 the “International Day of Epidemic Preparedness.”**
- **A year into the global battle against the coronavirus,** the international body hopes the designation will help strengthen global measures against and preparedness for future health crises.

### References:

The Hindu

The Economics Times

Indian Express

Press Information Bureau of India

The Times of India

Business Standard

News on AIR

Hindustan Times



## QUESTIONS

1. Name the Indian entrepreneur who is among the seven winners of the prestigious “Young Champions of the Earth” 2020 prize given by the UN environment agency to global change-makers using innovative ideas and ambitious action to help solve some of the world’s most pressing environmental challenges.  
(a) Vidyut Mohan (b) Anand Mehta (c) Chandra Shaker (d) Kiran Kumar
2. The 35<sup>th</sup> edition of IND-INDO CORPAT naval exercise is conducted between which of the following two countries?  
(a) India-Italy (b) India-Iraq (c) India-Iran (d) India-Indonesia
3. Union Ministry of Home Affairs, MHA has declared National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Khaplang), NSCN(K) along with all its factions, wings and front organisations as an unlawful association under sections of Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) 1957 (b) 1967 (c) 1977 (d) 1987
4. President Bidhya Devi Bhandari dissolved parliament at the request of Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli’s cabinet. Bidhya Devi Bhandari is the current President of \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Bangladesh (b) Myanmar (c) Maldives (d) Nepal
5. Who was honoured the ‘Global Visionary of Sustainable Business and Peace’ award during the launch of the Federation of Indo-Israel Chamber of Commerce’s international chapter in Dubai on December 21, 2020?  
(a) Azim Hashim Premji (b) Mukesh Ambani (c) Ratan Tata (d) Gautam Shantilal Adani
6. Which of the following has approved a first-of-its-kind intentional genomic alteration (IGA) in a line of domestic pigs referred to as GalSafe pigs?  
(a) The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA)  
(b) World Health Organization  
(c) ICMR  
(d) ICRISAT
7. Which of the following countries will not be able to use its name, flag and anthem at the next two Olympics or at any world championships for the next two years after a ruling by the Court of Arbitration for Sport?  
(a) India (b) China (c) Russia (d) Spain
8. Who was named as the men’s player of the year at the Best FIFA Football Awards 2020?  
(a) Robert Lewandowski (b) Lionel Messi  
(c) Cristiano Ronaldo (d) Harry Edward Kane
9. Goa Liberation Day is observed every year on:  
(a) December 17 (b) December 18 (c) December 19 (d) December 20
10. International Migrants Day is observed every year on:  
(a) December 17 (b) December 18 (c) December 19 (d) December 20
11. Who has been recently appointed as Member of Oscar Academy’s Science & Technology Council?  
(a) Mahesh Jagtap (b) Ujwal Nirgudkar (c) Mukesh Gupta (d) Anniruddh Jagat
12. Which of the following states launched India and South Asia’s first blockchain-enabled Peer to Peer (P2P) Trading of Rooftop Solar Power?  
(a) Uttar Pradesh (b) Rajasthan (c) Madhya Pradesh (d) Karnataka

13. The \_\_\_\_\_ and UN Women have collaborated to establish India's first Gender Data Hub.  
(a) Karnataka government (b) Kerala government  
(c) Goa government (d) Tamil Nadu government
14. Recently, US President-elect Joe Biden named Indian American \_\_\_\_\_ as one of the three new members of the National Economic Council that coordinates domestic and international economic policymaking process for the administration.  
(a) Akshat Kulshrestha (b) Deepak Kumawat (c) Amit Sharma (d) Bharat Ramamurti
15. Recently, The Government has decided to constitute a High Level Committee to commemorate the 125<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. The High Level Committee will be headed by \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Prime Minister Narendra Modi (b) Defence Minister Rajnath Singh  
(c) Home Minister Amit Shah (d) Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar
16. Recently, Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar released the Status of Leopard in India 2018 report. More than \_\_\_\_\_ per cent increase has been recorded in the leopard population over the previous estimate which was conducted in 2014.  
(a) 20% (b) 35% (c) 45% (d) 60%
17. Robert Lewandowski was named as the \_\_\_\_\_ Best Men's Player for 2020.  
(a) ICC (b) IOC (c) FIFA (d) BCCI
18. Recently, The World Bank has corrected two recent reports ranking countries on ease of doing business, based on an internal audit following officials' allegations of "undue pressure" by management to alter ratings. India's position now stands as \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Two positions up (b) Two Positions down (c) Unaffected (d) Seven Positions down
19. The E20 blend of \_\_\_\_\_ with petrol is expected to curb vehicular emission and also help reduce oil imports.  
(a) Methanol (b) Ethanol (c) Lead (d) Chromium
20. Who won the BBC's Sports Personality of the Year prize 2020?  
(a) Michael Schumacher (b) Valtteri Bottas (c) Steven Smith (d) Lewis Hamilton
21. Which of the following railway zones has bagged three prestigious National Energy Conservation Awards (NECA) in 'Transport' and 'Building – Govt offices' categories for the year 2020, by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), Ministry of Power?  
(a) North Eastern Railway (b) Western Railway  
(c) Southern Railway (d) North East Frontier Railway
22. Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched 'SEHAT' - Health Insurance Scheme for the entire Union Territory of \_\_\_\_\_ to cover the remaining One crore population which was not covered under Ayushman Bharat Scheme.  
(a) Jammu and Kashmir (b) Ladakh (c) Lakshadweep (d) Puducherry
23. Which of the following countries presented the prestigious Legion of Merit award to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his leadership in elevating strategic partnership of the two countries and emergence of India as a global power?  
(a) Russia (b) USA (c) France (d) Canada
24. Who among the following inaugurated Two Tribes India showrooms (Kolkata in person and Gwalior virtually) in a grand opening ceremony in Kolkata?  
(a) Tribal Affairs Minister Arjun Munda (b) President Ramnath Kovind  
(c) Prime Minister Narendra Modi (d) Home Minister Amit Shah

25. Which of the following banks has recently has launched contactless 'RuPay Select' debit card in association with the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)?  
 (a) Punjab National Bank (b) Union Bank of India  
 (c) Central Bank of India (d) State Bank of India
26. Recently, The Centre and the World Bank signed a \_\_\_\_\_ project to build safe and green national highway corridors in Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh.  
 (a) USD 100 million (b) USD 200 million (c) USD 500 million (d) USD 1000 million
27. Name Delhi's iconic Nursery which is among the winners in the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation this year?  
 (a) Sunder Nursery (b) Lotus Nursery (c) Lite Nursery (d) Iconic Nursery
28. Name the footballer who has won the prestigious Golden Foot 2020 award.  
 (a) Lionel Messi (b) Kylian Mbappe (c) LucaModric (d) Cristiano Ronaldo
29. Who has recently become the inaugural recipient of FIFA Foundation Award?  
 (a) Marcus Rashford (b) Oliver Kahn (c) Saff Blatter (d) Mike Tune
30. International Day of Epidemic Preparedness is to be observed on:  
 (a) 23<sup>rd</sup> December (b) 25<sup>th</sup> December (c) 27<sup>th</sup> December (d) 31<sup>st</sup> December
31. Which of the following state governments e-governance project Antyodaya Saral won the Digital India Awards 2020 under the category Excellence in Digital Governance State/UT?  
 (a) Rajasthan (b) Haryana (c) Gujarat (d) Himachal Pradesh
32. Recently, The Union Cabinet approved \_\_\_\_\_ Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in direct-to-home (DTH) service, extension of the license period from 10 years to 20 and a reduced licence fee.  
 (a) 49% (b) 51% (c) 75% (d) 100%
33. Recently, The Railways is developing India's first ever cable-stayed bridge, called \_\_\_\_\_.  
 (a) Anji Khad (b) Chhatrapati Shivaji (c) Kanji Lad (d) Chenab on Lane
34. Who is present chief of Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)?  
 (a) Chetan Singh (b) Amrpitpal Nagar (c) Amish Dev Jaitley (d) Rishi Kumar Shukla
35. Recently, Israel's parliament \_\_\_\_\_ was dissolved after the two main parties in its unity government failed to meet a deadline in a row over state budgets?  
 (a) The Knesset (b) The Congress (c) The Diet (d) Legislative Council and Senate
36. Which of the following banks has introduced an online platform called 'Infinite India' for foreign companies looking to set up or expand business in India?  
 (a) Axis Bank (b) HDFC Bank (c) ICICI Bank (d) RBL Bank
37. Recently, CEO of NITI Aayog Amitabh Kant virtually launched India's first digital asset management platform \_\_\_\_\_.  
 (a) DigiMan (b) DigiBoxx (c) DigiMatch (d) DigiBon
38. CSIR-National Institute of Science Communication and Information Resources (CSIR-NISCAIR), Ministry of Earth Sciences and Vijnana Bharati jointly organised the inaugural session of the International Science Literature Festival, \_\_\_\_\_.  
 (a) Vigyanika (b) Vigyan (c) Sincere (d) Restin

39. Name the target missile which made the successful trial of the Medium Range Surface to Air MR-SAM missile from Chandipur off the Odisha coast.  
(a) Amrit (b) Dhruv (c) Bansi (d) Pinaka
40. Recently, Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju virtually inaugurated \_\_\_\_\_ Khelo India State Centres of Excellence across India in the presence of State Sports Ministers.  
(a) 4 (b) 6 (c) 8 (d) 12
41. Which of the following state's Disaster Management Authority (USDMA) in collaboration with the Indian Institute of Remote Sensing (IIRS) is planning to undertake the first of its kind study of urban flood patterns in the state capital?  
(a) Jharkhand (b) Uttarakhand (c) Uttar Pradesh (d) Himachal Pradesh
42. In a significant development to conservation of biodiversity, India has added Tso Kar wetland complex to the Ramsar Site. Tso Kar wetland complex is in:  
(a) Himachal Pradesh (b) Uttarakhand (c) Ladakh (d) Arunachal Pradesh
43. Which of the following companies has become the first manufacturer to commercially launch a field-ready electric tractor for the domestic market in India?  
(a) Swaraj (b) Mahindra (c) Sonalika (d) John Deere
44. According to Status of Leopard in India, 2018' report, which of the following states has the highest number of leopards in the country?  
(a) Madhya Pradesh (b) Karnataka (c) Tamil Nadu (d) Uttarakhand
45. The first country which officially inducted a submarine handed over by India is  
(a) Mauritius (b) Maldives (c) Myanmar (d) Sri Lanka
46. The Defence Secretary launched the DGNCC Digital Forum in New Delhi, which will provide a platform to \_\_\_\_\_ cadets all over the country.  
(a) National Cadet Corps (b) Girl Guide & Boy's Scout  
(c) CRPF (d) CISF
47. According to the Human Development Index (HDI) 2020 for Bangladesh released, Bangladesh now stands at \_\_\_\_\_ position out of 189 countries.  
(a) 107<sup>th</sup> (b) 118<sup>th</sup> (c) 133<sup>rd</sup> (d) 141<sup>st</sup>
48. According to a report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), A deadly brain-consuming amoeba — Naegleria fowleri — is crawling its way northward from the southern states of the \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Japan (b) China (c) USA (d) Canada
49. The BCCI's governing body ratified the entry of two new franchises in the IPL to make it a \_\_\_\_\_ team affair from 2022 during its Annual General Meeting (AGM).  
(a) 8 (b) 10 (c) 12 (d) 14
50. National Consumer Rights Day is observed on 24 December every year in India.  
(a) 20 December (b) 22 December (c) 24 December (d) 26 December
51. Which of the following states approved for making Bodo (in Devanagari script) an associate official language of the state?  
(a) Nagaland (b) Manipur (c) Assam (d) Bihar



52. Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh Puri launched \_\_\_\_\_ a new web portal and mobile app on Good Governance Day.  
(a) E-Shanti (b) E-Sampatti (c) E-Sampada (d) E-Sampoornan
53. Which of the following countries adopts green growth plan to go carbon free by 2050?  
(a) Indonesia (b) Japan (c) Malaysia (d) Russia
54. Indian Navy ship \_\_\_\_\_ which arrived in Vietnam to deliver relief material under Mission Sagar-III, will hold a Passage Exercise (PASSEX) with the Vietnamese Navy in the South China Sea (SCS).  
(a) INS Khaitan (b) INS Kirtan (c) INS Kiltan (d) INS Kiran
55. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has decided to introduce the \_\_\_\_\_ for cheque.  
(a) 'Positive payment system' (b) 'Positive payment syndicate'  
(c) 'Paypal pay system' (d) 'Positive pay analysis'
56. The Centralised \_\_\_\_\_ under the proposed single window system, aimed at facilitating businesses through a one-stop digital platform, is planned to be launched with relevant Ministries and selected States by April 15, 2021.  
(a) 'Investment Clearance Cell' (b) 'Investment Call Cell'  
(c) 'Investment Clearance Commitment' (d) 'Industrial Clearance Cell'
57. Which of the following countries has planted the seeds for a 2023 launch of the world's first satellite made out of wood?  
(a) China (b) Japan (c) Israel (d) India
58. Which of the following Indian cities has ambitions of claiming the wine capital of India status received an impetus after the Centre accorded it the coveted Geographical Indication tag?  
(a) Nashik (b) Jaipur (c) Dehradun (d) Patna
59. Who has been appointed as chairman of selectors by BCCI?  
(a) Abey Kuruvilla (b) Ajit Agarkar (c) Chetan Sharma (d) Debasis Mohanty
60. Good governance is observed annually on \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) December 21 (b) December 22 (c) December 25 (d) December 27
61. India's first Lithium refinery which will process Lithium ore to produce battery-grade material will be set up in \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Maharashtra (b) Gujarat (c) Madhya Pradesh (d) Karnataka
62. Which of the following states approved the Dharma Swatantrya (Religious Freedom) Bill 2020, under which forced conversion of a woman will be punishable for a term up to 10 years and minimum fine of Rs 50,000?  
(a) Uttar Pradesh (b) Madhya Pradesh (c) Chhattisgarh (d) Jharkhand
63. Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated India's first-ever driverless train operations on Delhi Metro's \_\_\_\_\_ through video conferencing.  
(a) Red Line (b) Magenta Line (c) Blue Line (d) Yellow Line
64. Road Transport & Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari announced that FASTag is being made mandatory for all vehicles in the country from \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020 (b) 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021 (c) 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021 (d) 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021
65. Name Hyperscale datacenter provider which was awarded the prestigious Golden Peacock Award for Eco-Innovation.  
(a) CtrlP (b) CtrlG (c) CtrlS (d) CtrlM

66. The \_\_\_\_\_ and the United Kingdom made public the vast agreement that is likely to govern future trade and cooperation between them from 1<sup>st</sup> of January, 2021.  
(a) Russia (b) European Union (c) Canada (d) Germany
67. According to Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR) report, India will overtake the UK to become the \_\_\_\_\_ largest in 2025.  
(a) Second (b) Third (c) Fifth (d) Ninth
68. According to a new report on the State of Mediterranean and Black Sea Fisheries (SoMFi 2020). The number of stocks subject to overfishing has decreased for the first time in decades in the \_\_\_\_\_ marine ecosystems, though most fish stocks remain overexploited.  
(a) Red and Black Sea (b) Mediterranean and Black Sea  
(c) Adriatic and Baltic Sea (d) Java and Mediterranean Sea
69. Good Governance Day is celebrated every year on 25<sup>th</sup> December to mark the birth anniversary of \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Indira Gandhi (b) Jawaharlal Nehru (c) Sardar Patel (d) Atal Bihari Vajpayee
70. India's biggest hockey stadium will come up at \_\_\_\_\_ and the 20,000-capacity facility will host matches of FIH men's World Cup in 2023.  
(a) Rourkela (b) Bhubaneswar (c) Bhopal (d) Bikaner



## ANSWER KEY AND EXPLANATION

1. a A 29-year-old Indian entrepreneur, Vidyut Mohan is among the seven winners of the prestigious “Young Champions of the Earth” 2020 prize given by the UN environment agency to global change-makers using innovative ideas and ambitious action to help solve some of the world’s most pressing environmental challenges.
2. d The 35<sup>th</sup> edition of India-Indonesia Coordinated Patrol (IND-INDO CORPAT) between the Indian Navy and the Indonesian Navy is being conducted from 17 to 18 December 2020. Indian Naval Ship (INS) Kulish, an indigenously built missile corvette along with P8I Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPA) undertook coordinated patrol with Indonesian Naval Ship KRI Cut Nyak Dien, a Kapitan Pattimura (Parchim I) class corvette and a MPA of the Indonesian Navy.
3. b Union Ministry of Home Affairs, MHA has declared National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Khaplang), NSCN(K) along with all its factions, wings and front organisations as an unlawful association under sections of Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967.
4. d Nepal President Bidhya Devi Bhandari dissolved parliament at the request of Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli’s cabinet.
5. c Veteran industrialist Ratan Tata was honoured by the Indo-Israel Chambers of Commerce for promoting innovation that supports sustainability and peace in the region, including with the Palestinians. The chairman emeritus of the Tata group was honoured with ‘Global Visionary of Sustainable Business and Peace’ award during the launch of the Federation of Indo-Israel Chamber of Commerce’s international chapter in Dubai on December 21.
6. a The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved a first-of-its-kind intentional genomic alteration (IGA) in a line of domestic pigs referred to as GalSafe pigs.
7. c Russia will not be able to use its name, flag and anthem at the next two Olympics or at any world championships for the next two years after a ruling by the Court of Arbitration for Sport.
8. a Robert Lewandowski and Lucy Bronze were respectively named the men’s and women’s player of the year at the Best FIFA Football Awards 2020. Bayern Munich striker Lewandowski saw off competition from Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo to be crowned the best men’s player.
9. c Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant extended greetings on the Goa Liberation Day 2020. December 19 is observed as Goa Liberation Day to commemorate the role of India’s armed forces in liberating Goa from Portuguese rule.
10. b Every year, December 18, is celebrated as International Migrants Day. The day was appointed by the General Assembly of United Nations on December 4, 2000, taking into account the large and increasing number of migrants in the world.
11. b Ujwal Nirgudkar appointed as Member of Oscar Academy’s Science & Technology Council Ujwal Nirgudkar, Oscar Academy Member and Chairman of SMPTE-India Section who is promoting standards for Digital Cinema in India is now appointed by Oscar Academy to serve on the 2020-21 Science and Technology Council.
12. a Uttar Pradesh launched India and South Asia’s first blockchain-enabled Peer to Peer (P2P) Trading of Rooftop Solar Power.
13. b The Kerala government and UN Women have collaborated to establish India’s first Gender Data Hub.
14. d US President-elect Joe Biden named Indian American Bharat Ramamurti as one of the three new members of the National Economic Council that coordinates domestic and international economic policymaking process for the administration.

- 15. c** The High Level Committee will be headed by Home Minister Amit Shah.
- 16. d** More than 60 per cent increase has been recorded in the leopard population over the previous estimate which was conducted in 2014.
- 17. c** Robert Lewandowski won his biggest personal prize showing that a forward not named Messi or Ronaldo can be voted the world's best soccer (FIFA) player.
- 18. c** Ease of doing business: China's rank drops as World Bank corrects 'irregularities', India unaffected.
- 19. b** The E20 blend of ethanol with petrol is expected to curb vehicular emission and also help reduce oil imports.
- 20. d** Seven-time Formula One champion Lewis Hamilton capped another successful year by claiming the BBC's Sports Personality of the Year prize.
- 21. b** Western Railway bagged three prestigious National Energy Conservation Awards (NECA) in 'Transport' and 'Building – Govt offices' categories for the year 2020, by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), Ministry of Power.
- 22. a** Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched 'SEHAT' - Health Insurance Scheme for the entire Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir to cover the remaining One crore population which was not covered under Ayushman Bharat Scheme.
- 23. b** US President Donald Trump presented the prestigious Legion of Merit award to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his leadership in elevating strategic partnership of the two countries and emergence of India as a global power.
- 24. a** Tribal Affairs Minister Arjun Munda inaugurated Two Tribes India showrooms (Kolkata in person and Gwalior virtually) in a grand opening ceremony in Kolkata.
- 25. c** State-owned Central Bank of India has launched contactless 'RuPay Select' debit card in association with the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI).
- 26. c** The Centre and the World Bank signed a USD 500 million project to build safe and green national highway corridors in Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh.
- 27. a** Delhi's iconic Sunder Nursery, a 90-acre garden which was transformed into a horticultural paradise after a decade-long conservation work, is among the winners in the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation this year.
- 28. d** Cristiano Ronaldo has won the prestigious Golden Foot 2020 award on in Monaco for his outstanding performance over the previous season.
- 29. a** Marcus Rashford has become the inaugural recipient of FIFA Foundation Award.
- 30. c** The United Nations General Assembly has proclaimed Dec. 27 the "International Day of Epidemic Preparedness."
- 31. b** Haryana government's e-governance project Antyodaya Saral won the Digital India Awards 2020 under the category Excellence in Digital Governance State/UT. The award is scheduled to be conferred on December 30 by President Ram Nath Kovind.
- 32. d** The Union Cabinet approved 100% Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in direct-to-home (DTH) service, extension of the license period from 10 years to 20 and a reduced licence fee.
- 33. a** The Railways is developing India's first ever cable-stayed bridge, called Anji Khad. It is being built at a height of 331 metres above the riverbed, and will connect Katra and Resai in the Union Territory (UT) of Jammu and Kashmir.



- 34. d** The exercise of updating the manual in accordance with the current requirements took almost 18 months, under CBI chief Rishi Kumar Shukla. It was last revised in 2005.
- 35. a** Israel's parliament, the Knesset, was dissolved after the two main parties in its unity government failed to meet a deadline in a row over state budgets.
- 36. c** ICICI Bank has introduced an online platform called 'Infinite India' for foreign companies looking to set up or expand business in India.
- 37. b** CEO of NITI Aayog Amitabh Kant virtually launched India's first digital asset management platform DigiBoxx.
- 38. a** CSIR-National Institute of Science Communication and Information Resources (CSIR-NISCAIR), Ministry of Earth Sciences and Vijnana Bharati jointly organised the inaugural session of the International Science Literature Festival, Vigyanika.
- 39. c** 'Bansi'-a target missile was launched from the launch pad no.1 of the Integrated Test Range at Chandipur.
- 40. c** Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju virtually inaugurated 8 Khelo India State Centres of Excellence across India in the presence of State Sports Ministers.
- 41. b** The Uttarakhand State Disaster Management Authority (USDMA) in collaboration with the Indian Institute of Remote Sensing (IIRS) is planning to undertake the first of its kind study of urban flood patterns in the state capital.
- 42. c** The Tso Kar or Tsho kar, known for its size and depth, is a fluctuating salt lake situated in the Rupshu Plateau and valley in the southern part of Ladakh in India.
- 43. c** International Tractors Ltd-owned Sonalika Tractors has become the first manufacturer to commercially launch a field-ready electric tractor for the domestic market with an introductory price of Rs. 5.99 lakh (ex-showroom).
- 44. a** Karnataka — home to a high density of tigers — harbours the second highest number of leopards in the country after Madhya Pradesh, according to a new report.
- 45. c** Myanmar officially inducted a submarine handed over by India in the month of October.
- 46. a** The Defence Secretary Dr Ajay Kumar launched the DGNCC Digital Forum in New Delhi. This Digital Forum hosted on the DGNCC website, will provide a platform to National Cadet Corps cadets all over the country to share their experiences of various NCC activities.
- 47. c** Bangladesh has improved its Human Development Index (HDI) ranking by 2 notches in the recently released report by the UNDP. According to the HDI 2020 for Bangladesh released, Bangladesh now stands at 133<sup>rd</sup> position out of 189 countries.
- 48. c** According to a report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the geographic range of these cases has been advancing northward. Now, more cases are being reported in midwestern states in the US.
- 49. b** The BCCI's governing body ratified the entry of two new franchises in the IPL to make it a 10-team affair from 2022 during its Annual General Meeting (AGM).
- 50. c** National Consumer Rights Day is observed on 24 December every year in India.
- 51. c** The Assam cabinet approved the Assam Official Language Amendment Bill for making Bodo (in Devanagari script) an associate official language of the state.
- 52. c** Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh Puri launched E-Sampada, a new web portal and mobile app on Good Governance Day.

- 53. b** Japan adopts green growth plan to go carbon free by 2050
- 54. c** Indian Navy ship INS Kiltan, which arrived in Vietnam to deliver relief material under Mission Sagar-III, will hold a Passage Exercise (PASSEX) with the Vietnamese Navy in the South China Sea (SCS).
- 55. c** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) decided to introduce the 'positive pay system' for cheque.
- 56. a** The Centralised 'Investment Clearance Cell', under the proposed single window system, aimed at facilitating businesses through a one-stop digital platform, is planned to be launched with relevant Ministries and Departments and select States by April 15, 2021.
- 57. b** Japanese logging company Sumitomo Forestry and Kyoto University are planting the seeds for a 2023 launch of the world's first satellite made out of wood.
- 58. a** The city has been branded Nashik Valley Wine to give wine production a push.
- 59. c** Former India pace troika of Chetan Sharma, Abey Kuruvilla and Debasis Mohanty have been appointed as national selectors. Chetan will replace Sunil Joshi as the chairman of the panel on the basis of having earned more Test caps.
- 60. c** Good governance is observed annually on December 25.
- 61. b** India's first Lithium refinery which will process Lithium ore to produce battery-grade material will be set up in Gujarat.
- 62. b** The Madhya Pradesh cabinet approved the Dharma Swatantrya (Religious Freedom) Bill 2020. Under the provisions of the bill, forced conversion of a woman will be punishable for a term up to 10 years and minimum fine of Rs 50,000.
- 63. b** Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate India's first-ever driverless train operations on Delhi Metro's Magenta Line through video conferencing.
- 64. b\*** Road Transport & Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari announced that FASTag is being made mandatory for all vehicles in the country from 1<sup>st</sup> of January, 2021.
- 65. c** Hyperscale datacenter provider CtrlS, was awarded the prestigious Golden Peacock Award for Eco-Innovation.
- 66. b** The European Union and the United Kingdom made public the vast agreement that is likely to govern future trade and cooperation between them from Jan. 1.
- 67. c** India will again overtake the UK to become the fifth largest in 2025.
- 68. b** The number of stocks subject to overfishing has decreased for the first time in decades in the Mediterranean and Black Sea marine ecosystems, though most fish stocks remain overexploited.
- 69. d** December 25<sup>th</sup>, this year marks the 96<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Bharat Ratna Atal Bihari Vajpayee. This day is also celebrated as Good Governance Day.
- 70. a** India's biggest hockey stadium will come up at Rourkela and the 20,000-capacity facility will host matches of FIH men's World Cup in 2023.