
MANTHAN

A General Awareness Weekly

26th October to 1st November, 2020

PREFACE

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

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Career
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National



India assumes Chairmanship of Governing Body of ILO after 35 years

- After 35 years, India has assumed the Chairmanship of the Governing Body of International Labour Organization (ILO). It marks a new chapter in the 100 years of productive relationship between India and ILO.
- Labour and Employment Secretary, **Apurva Chandra**, has been elected as the Chairperson of the Governing Body of the ILO for the period October 2020- June 2021. The governing body is the executive body of the ILO. It meets thrice a year, in March, June and November. It takes decisions on ILO policy, decides the agenda of the International Labour Conference, adopts the draft programme and budget of the organisation for submission to the conference, and elects the Director-General. At present ILO has 187 members.
- It will also provide a platform to appraise participants of the transformational initiatives taken by India in removing the rigidities of labour market besides making its intention clear about universalization of social security to all workers. Mr Chandra belongs to the 1988 batch of the IAS, Maharashtra Cadre.

International Labour Organization (ILO) is a United Nations agency whose mandate is to advance social and economic justice through setting international labour standards. Founded in 1919 under the League of Nations, it is the first and oldest specialised agency of the UN. The ILO has 187 member states. Guy Ryder is the tenth and current Director-General of the ILO. ILO is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.

Uttar Pradesh secures first rank in disbursing loans under PM Swanidhi Scheme

- Uttar Pradesh government has secured the first rank in central government's one of the most ambitious schemes - the PM Atmanirbhar Nidhi Scheme (SVANidhi Scheme) by approving the highest number of loans under the scheme in the country.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will distribute loans to around 3 lakh beneficiaries and will interact with a few of them via video conferencing. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath will also be present on the occasion. State has ranked first in all the categories - Applications, Sanctions and Disbursements of the loans under the scheme.
- As many as 6,22,167 applications were received under the scheme in the state which is highest in the country, out of which sanctions were given to 3,46,150 applicants while the loans were disbursed to 2,26,728 beneficiaries. Seven cities of the state also find place in the list of top 10 cities of the country.

The PM Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi) was launched by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs on June 01, 2020 for providing affordable Working Capital loan to street vendors to resume their livelihoods that have been adversely affected due to Covid-19 lockdown. The duration of the scheme is until March 2022. Vendors can avail a working capital loan of up to Rs. 10,000, which is repayable in monthly instalments in the tenure of one year. On timely/ early repayment of the loan, an interest subsidy @ 7% per annum will be credited to the bank accounts of beneficiaries through Direct Benefit Transfer on quarterly basis. There will be no penalty on early repayment of loan. The scheme promotes digital transactions through cash back incentives up to an amount of Rs. 100 per month. The vendors can avail the facility of escalation of the credit limit on timely/ early repayment of loan.

Jammu and Kashmir High Court's Chief Justice, Gita Mittal inaugurated the first Family Court

- In a first in the history of Jammu and Kashmir, Chief Justice of Jammu and Kashmir High Court, Gita Mittal inaugurated a Family Court at District Court Complex Srinagar.
- Addressing the inaugural function, Chief Justice observed that the objective of establishing family court in J&K is to ensure speedy justice and inexpensive relief in family matters with least formalities.
- She highlighted background about the history of establishing of family courts across India and the enactment of Family Courts Act 1984 and its subsequent enactment in J&K after the promulgation of J&K Reorganization Act 2019.

The Jammu and Kashmir High Court is the high court for Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. It was established in 26 March 1928 by letters patent issued by the Maharaja of Jammu Kashmir. The seat of the court shifts between its summer capital Srinagar and winter capital Jammu of Jammu and Kashmir. The court has a sanctioned judge strength of 17 in which 13 are permanent judges and 4 are additional judges. Justice Gita Mittal was sworn in as the first woman Chief Justice of the Jammu and Kashmir High Court on 11 August 2018.

Uttar Pradesh emerged as top destination in 2019 attracting over 53 crore tourists

- Uttar Pradesh has emerged as the top destination for attracting the highest number of domestic tourists in 2019. The Indian Tourism Statistics (ITS), 2020, has announced that as many as 53.6 crore domestic tourists visited Uttar Pradesh in 2019 which was much higher as compared to 2018 when the state had got the second position after Tamil Nadu.
- Uttar Pradesh attracted the highest number of domestic tourists in the country in 2019 with a share of 23.1% travellers visiting the state. Uttar Pradesh also secured the third position in attracting foreign tourists with a record footfall of nearly 47 lakh foreigners visiting last year.
- The list, however, was topped by Tamil Nadu with nearly 68 lakh foreigners visiting last year. Surprisingly, Goa came last on the list with over 9 lakh foreign tourist visits in 2019.

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

Farooq Abdullah to lead Gupkar alliance

- Seven mainstream parties of Jammu and Kashmir gave formal shape to their recently cobbled alliance for the restoration of Article 370, electing National Conference's Farooq Abdullah as its chairman and PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti as vice chairperson.
- Veteran CPM leader M.Y. Tarigami was elected the convenor while Lok Sabha member from South Kashmir Hasnain Masoodi will be the coordinator of the conglomerate known as Peoples Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD).
- After a meeting held at Mehbooba's house, Abdullah, said the alliance is fighting for the restoration of special status to Jammu and Kashmir and is an "anti-BJP platform" and not an anti-national amalgam. As a mark of defiance to the constitutional changes made by the Centre with respect to Jammu and Kashmir last year, the alliance adopted the flag of the erstwhile state as its symbol.

Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019 re-constituted the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir into two union territories, Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, with effect from 31 October 2019. Girish Chandra Murmu is the first lieutenant governor of the Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir. Manoj Sinha is the second and current Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir. Ladakh is a region administered by India as a union territory; Radha Krishna Mathur is the first Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh.

Nitin Gadkari lays foundation stones of nine NH projects in Tripura

- Union Minister for Road Transport, Highways and MSMEs **Shri Nitin Gadkari** virtually laid the foundation stones of nine National Highway projects with a total length of nearly 262 kms worth over Rs 2752 crore in Tripura. The event was presided by the Chief Minister **Shri Biplab Kumar Deb**, in the presence of Union MoSs Dr Jitendra Singh and Gen (Retd) Dr V K Singh, Ministers from the State, Members of Parliaments, MLAs and senior officers from the Centre and the State.
- These highways will strengthen the tourism sector in the state by providing better connectivity, fast and safe movement of traffic to various tourists, historical and religious places. It will also generate large number of employment and provide self-employment opportunities to the unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled manpower of the region.

Tripura is the third-smallest state in the country; Agartala is the capital of Tripura as well as the second largest city in North-east India after Guwahati. Biplab Kumar Deb is the first the CM of the BJP government in Tripura. The BJP win ended the 25-year-old Left rule in the state. Ramesh Bais is serving as the 18th and current Governor of Tripura. Tripura is a landlocked state in North East India, where the seven contiguous states – Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura – are collectively known as the Seven Sister States.

Vigilance Awareness Week is observed across country

- The Central Vigilance Commission observes the Vigilance Awareness Week, 2020 from 27th October till 2nd of November. This year the theme is - Satark Bharat, Samridh Bharat (Vigilant India, Prosperous India).
- Vigilance Awareness Week is observed every year during the week in which the birthday of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel falls on 31st of October. The CBI is hosting a 3-day national conference on vigilance and anti-corruption.
- Central Bureau of Investigation has hosted a National Conference on Vigilance and Anti-Corruption (27th - 29th October, 2020) which was addressed by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on 27.10.2020 at 5 p.m. during the Vigilance Awareness Week which was webcast live and all organizations / departments of Central Government may watch the live webcast.

Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) is an apex Indian governmental body created in 1964 to address governmental corruption. In 2003, the Parliament enacted a law conferring statutory status on the CVC. It has the status of an autonomous body, free of control from any executive authority, charged with monitoring all vigilance activity under the Central Government of India, advising various authorities in central Government organizations in planning, executing, reviewing and reforming their vigilance work. It was set up by the Government of India Resolution on 11 February 1964, on the recommendations of the Committee on Prevention of Corruption, headed by Shri K. Santhanam Committee, to advise and guide Central Government agencies in the field of vigilance. Nittoor Srinivasa Rau, was selected as the first Chief Vigilance Commissioner of India. K V Chowdary is the first non-IAS and current head the Central Vigilance Commission.

Odisha launches web portal for inter-caste marriages, raises incentive to Rs 2.5 lakh

- To promote inter-caste marriages Odisha chief minister Naveen Patnaik launched a web portal that would help inter-caste couples get an incentive within 60 days of application.
- Launching the Sumangal portal, developed by ST & SC Development, Minorities & Backward Classes Welfare Department, CM Patnaik also announced hike in the incentive from Rs 1 lakh to Rs 2.5 lakh. Patnaik said such kind of marriages would lead to social harmony.
- To get the one-time incentive, the marriage should be between upper-caste Hindus and Hindu of scheduled castes. The marriage should be valid as per the law and duly registered under the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955.
- One of the spouses should belong to the scheduled castes as defined under Article 341 of the Constitution of India. The grant would be given only to people marrying for the first time. However in case, the bride is a widow or the bride-groom a widower, they would be eligible for the incentive. Incentive would also be given for the purchase of lands/essential articles for house-hold or for starting a business.

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

India hosted third India-US 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue

- India has hosted the Third India-US 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue on 27th of October in New Delhi. United States Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Secretary of Defence Mark T. Esper were visited India to participate in the dialogue. From the Indian side, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar led the delegation.
- The first 22 Ministerial Dialogue was held in New Delhi in September 2018 and followed by the second in Washington DC in 2019. The agenda for the third dialogue will cover all bilateral, regional and global issues of mutual interest.
- India and the US inked landmark defence pact, Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for Geo-Spatial Cooperation (BECA), to expand geospatial information sharing between armed forces of the two countries.
- The signing of the long-negotiated Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA) during the third edition of the 2+2 dialogue between the two strategic partners also signals further boosting of bilateral defence and military ties and it comes in the backdrop of India's tense border standoff with China in eastern Ladakh.
- Other Agreements signed by India are the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA), the Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA) while the General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA) was signed a long time ago. An extension to the GSOMIA, the Industrial Security Annex (ISA), was signed at the last 2+2 dialogue.

The 2+2 dialogue is the highest-level (Ministerial) institutional mechanism between India and the USA that brings together the perspectives of the two countries on foreign policy, defence and strategic issues. India also holds such dialogue with Japan as well. India also holds 2+2 dialogue with Australia at the foreign secretary and defence secretary level.

Feni Bridge connecting India and Bangladesh to be completed by December

- The 1.8 kilometre long Feni Bridge connecting Sabrum in India with Ramgarh in Bangladesh will be completed by December this year. According to the Ministry, Road Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari, Feni Bridge being built at the cost of Rs. 129 crore will ease the transportation of goods from Chattogram and Kolkata ports. An integrated check post is also proposed to be built near Sabrum.
- The RCC Bridge over Feni will improve connectivity to the international border with Bangladesh. Describing Tripura as the gateway of the 'Act East Policy' of the government, Union Minister of State for Development of North Eastern Region Dr. Jitendra Singh said that very soon a train to Bangladesh from Tripura will start.

Feni River is a river in southeastern Bangladesh and Tripura state of India. It is a trans-boundary river with an ongoing dispute about water rights. Muhuri River, also called Little Feni, joins it near its mouth.

Mobile Polling Units going door-to-door for first time for collection of ballot papers

- In Madhya Pradesh, the Mobile Polling Units are going door-to-door for the first time for collection of ballot papers. By-elections are being held for 28 State Legislative Assembly seats in the state.
- In view of the Corona pandemic, the Election Commission has provided the facility to the elderly people above the age of 80, Divyangjan and Corona-infected patients to vote from home through postal ballot. As per the information, overall 29 thousand such voters have agreed to cast votes under the Vote from Home facility. More than 15 thousand voters have cast their votes so far. The Election Commission has also facilitated Corona patients to cast votes from home.

Election Commission of India operates under the authority of Constitution per Article 324. The body administers elections to the Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, state Legislative Assemblies in India, and the offices of the President and Vice President in the country. Chief Election Commissioner of India is usually a member of the Indian Civil Service and mostly from the Indian Administrative Service. It is very difficult to remove the authority of the Chief Election Commissioner once appointed by the president, as two-thirds of the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha need to vote against him for disorderly conduct or improper actions. Sukumar Sen was the first Chief Election Commissioner of India, serving from 21 March 1950 to 19 December 1958.

‘Electricity Access in India and Benchmarking Distribution Utilities’ report launched

- NITI Aayog, Ministry of Power, Rockefeller Foundation and Smart Power India launched the ‘Electricity Access in India and Benchmarking Distribution Utilities’ report. According to the report, 92 per cent of customers reported the overall availability of electricity infrastructure within 50 metres of their premises.
- 87 per cent of the surveyed customers have access to grid-based electricity. The remaining 13 per cent either use non-grid sources or do not use any electricity at all. The hours of supply have improved significantly across the customer categories to nearly 17 hours per day.
- The report is based on a primary survey conducted across ten states, representing about 65 per cent of the total rural population of India and with a sample size of more than 25 thousand, including households, commercial enterprises and institutions.

The National Institution for Transforming India, also called NITI Aayog, was formed via a resolution of the Union Cabinet on January 1, 2015. 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.

Indian Army develops messaging application ‘Secure Application for Internet’

- Indian Army has developed a simple messaging application named the Secure Application for Internet (SAI). The application supports end to end secure voice, text and video calling services for Android platform over the internet.
- The model is similar to commercially available messaging applications like Whatsapp, Telegram, SAMVAD and GIMS and utilises end to end encryption messaging protocol. SAI scores over on security features with local in-house servers and coding which can be tweaked as per requirements. SAI will be utilised pan Army to facilitate secure messaging within the service.
- This initiative by the Indian Army can also be seen as a part of the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan.' SAI was first developed by Colonel Sai Shankar, the commanding officer of a signals unit in Rajasthan, and then upgraded to military-grade standards.

Malabar naval exercise to begin next week off A.P. coast

- The first phase of the Malabar Naval exercise including Australia along with Japan and the U.S., is scheduled to be held next week off the Visakhapatnam coast. This is the first time Australia will be joining the exercise after 2007 and it will bring all four countries of the Quadrilateral grouping together for military games.
- Over three years after Canberra’s request to join the exercise, last week India announced that Australian Navy would participate in Malabar 2020. “Phase 1 of the Exercise Malabar 2020 involving participation by Indian Navy, United States Navy, Japan Maritime Self Defence Force, and Royal Australian Navy is set to commence off Vishakhapatnam in Bay of Bengal from November 3 to 6”.
- With the decision to include Australia in the drills by India in 2020, it will be the first time all members of the regional grouping known as the Quad will be engaging militarily.

Exercise Malabar is a quadrilateral naval exercise involving the United States, Japan, Australia, and India as permanent partners. Originally begun in 1992 as a bilateral exercise between India and the United States, Japan became a permanent partner in 2015.

Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Goa best governed States: report

- Kerala was adjudged the best governed State in the large States category, while Uttar Pradesh ended at the bottom, in the Public Affairs Index-2020 released by the Public Affairs Centre.
- The city-based not-for-profit organisation, headed by former Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) chairman K. Kasturirangan, said in its annual report that the States were ranked on governance performance based on a composite index in the context of sustainable development. Four southern States — Kerala (1.388 PAI Index point), Tamil Nadu (0.912), Andhra Pradesh (0.531) and Karnataka (0.468) stood in the first four ranks in the large State category in terms of governance. Uttar Pradesh (-1.461), Odisha (-1.201) and Bihar (-1.158) were at the bottom of the ranking.
- In the small State category, Goa ranked first with 1.745 points, followed by Meghalaya (0.797) and Himachal Pradesh (0.725). The worst performers with negative points were Manipur (-0.363), Delhi (-0.289) and Uttarakhand (-0.277).
- Chandigarh emerged at the top in the category of Union Territories with 1.05 PAI points, followed by Puducherry (0.52) and Lakshadweep (0.003). Dadar and Nagar Haveli (-0.69), Andaman, Jammu and Kashmir (-0.50) and Nicobar (-0.30) were the worst performers.
- According to the PAC, the governance performance is analysed in the context of sustainable development defined by the three pillars of equity, growth and sustainability.

Formerly known as the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), the mission of the Brundtland Commission is to unite countries to pursue sustainable development together. The Chairperson of the Commission, Gro Harlem Brundtland, was appointed by then United Nations Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar in December 1983. At the time, the UN General Assembly realized that there was a heavy deterioration of the human environment and natural resources. In India, at the Central Government level, NITI Aayog has been assigned the role of overseeing the implementation of SDGs in the country.

India's first defence park ready for launch

- India's first defence park is ready for inauguration at Ottappalam in Palakkad district of Kerala. Located on the Kochi-Coimbatore industrial corridor, the 60-acre park with state-of-the-art infrastructure is intended exclusively for manufacturing of defence equipment for the armed forces, as also markets abroad.
- The Kerala Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation (KINFRA), the nodal agency for the project, has completed infrastructure development and civil works at the park.

Asan first Uttarakhand wetland to make it to Ramsar sites list

- Kabartal, a freshwater marsh of North Bihar is designated as Ramsar Site. With this the network of Indian Ramsar Sites becomes the largest in South Asia. Asan Conservation Reserve has become the first wetland from Uttarakhand to be included in the prestigious Ramsar sites list.
- Till February 2020, only 37 sites from India were in the Ramsar site list, which has now been extended to 39, the highest in South Asia. Located 40 kms from Dehradun, Asan attracts a big population of migratory birds in winters. The man-made wetland possibly attracts the biggest number of Brahminy Duck or Ruddy Shelduck in the entire India.

Ramsar Convention on Wetlands is an intergovernmental treaty adopted in 1971 in the Iranian city of Ramsar, on the southern shore of the Caspian Sea. It came into force for India on 1st February, 1982. Those wetlands which are of international importance are declared as Ramsar sites. The Montreux Record is a register of wetland sites on the List of Wetlands of International Importance where changes in ecological character have occurred, are occurring, or are likely to occur as a result of technological developments, pollution or other human interference. It is maintained as part of the Ramsar List. At present, two wetlands of India are in Montreux Record: Keoladeo National Park (Rajasthan) and Loktak Lake (Manipur). Chilika Lake (Odisha) was placed in the record but later removed from it.



Pakistan to remain in grey list of global terror financing watchdog- FATF till February 2021

- Pakistan will remain on the grey list of global terror financing watchdog, Financial Action Task Force (FATF) as it has not been able to fulfil six out of the 27 mandates to check terror funding. The decision was announced by the President of FATF Marcus Pleyer.
- The FATF strongly urged Pakistan to swiftly complete its full action plan by February 2021. It said, Pakistan needs to do more to check terror funding, adding that the 6 items which Pakistan is yet to address are serious deficiencies.
- The implementation plan to curb money laundering and terror financing was supposed to be put in place by the end of 2019. However, the deadline was extended in the wake of COVID pandemic.

The Financial Action Task Force (on Money Laundering) (FATF), also known by its French name, Groupe d'action financière (GAFI), is an intergovernmental organisation founded in 1989 on the initiative of the G7 to develop policies to combat money laundering. In 2001, its mandate was expanded to include terrorism financing. It currently has 39 members. These include two regional organizations - the European Commission and Gulf Cooperation Council. Since 2000, FATF has maintained the FATF blacklist (formally called the "Call for action") and the FATF greylist (formally called the "Other monitored jurisdictions"). It is based in Paris, France.

BRICS Parliamentary Forum held in virtual format

- The BRICS Parliamentary Forum was held in virtual format. It was chaired by Chairman of Russian Parliament, Vyacheslav Volodin. Speakers and members of five BRICS Parliaments - Brazil, Russian, India, China and South Africa were participated in the Forum.
- An Indian Parliamentary Delegation led by Lok Sabha Speaker, Om Birla and consisting of Member of Lok Sabha Kanimozhi Karunanidhi will attend the Forum.
- The theme of the Forum is BRICS partnership in the interest of global stability, general safety and innovative growth: Parliamentary dimension.

BRICS is the acronym for an association of five major emerging national economies: Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. Originally the first four were grouped as "BRIC" (China, Brazil, Russia and India), before the induction of South Africa in 2010. In 2009, the first BRIC Summit was held in Yekaterinburg, Russia.

India, Mexico to further work on strengthening 'Privileged Partnership'

- The 8th India-Mexico Joint Commission Meeting was held through Video-Conference. The Meeting was co-chaired by External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and his Mexican counterpart Marcelo Ebrard.
- The two sides agreed that given their respective economic strengths, growing regional and global profile, India and Mexico will further work on strengthening their 'Privileged Partnership'.

Mexico is a federal republic in the southern portion of North America. Mexico City or City of Mexico is the capital of Mexico. Mexican peso is the currency of Mexico. Enrique Peña Niet is serving as the current & 57th President of Mexico, since 2012. Andrés Manuel Lopez Obrador is the President-elect of Mexico until his inauguration as President on 1 December 2018.

Nuclear weapons ban treaty to enter into force

- **The United Nations announced that 50 countries have ratified a UN treaty to ban nuclear weapons triggering its entry into force in 90 days**, a move hailed by anti-nuclear activists but strongly opposed by the United States and the other major nuclear powers.
- As of 23rd October 2020, the treaty had 49 signatories, and **UN officials said the 50th ratification from Honduras had been received. The 50th ratification came on the 75th anniversary of the ratification of the UN Charter which officially established the United Nations and is celebrated as UN Day.**
- **This moment has been 75 years coming since the horrific attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the founding of the UN which made nuclear disarmament a cornerstone**, said **Beatrice Fihn, executive director of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize-winning coalition** whose work helped spearhead the nuclear ban treaty.

Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), or the Nuclear Weapon Ban Treaty, is the first legally binding international agreement to comprehensively prohibit nuclear weapons with the ultimate goal being their total elimination. It was adopted on 7 July 2017, opened for signature on 20 September 2017, and will enter into force on 22 January 2021. The nuclear-weapon states (NWS) are the five states—China, France, Russia, United Kingdom, and the United States—officially recognized as possessing nuclear weapons by the NPT. India, Israel, and Pakistan never joined the NPT and are known to possess nuclear weapons. India first tested a nuclear explosive device in 1974. That test spurred Pakistan to ramp up work on its secret nuclear weapons program.

India Post, US Postal Service sign agreement for electronic exchange of customs data

- **Department of Posts, India and United States Postal Service (USPS) have entered into an agreement for electronic exchange of customs data related to postal shipments exchanged between the two countries.**
- **The agreement will make it possible to transmit and receive electronic data of international postal items prior to their physical arrival at the destination and would enable customs clearance of postal items in advance in line with the evolving global postal framework.**
- **USA is the top export destination for India which is also reflected in exchange of goods through postal channel. In 2019, around 20 per cent of outbound EMS and 30 per cent of Letters and Small Packets transmitted by India Post were destined to USA whereas 60 per cent of the Parcels received by India Post were originated from USA.**

UN Secretary-General welcomes Armenia-Azerbaijan cease-fire agreement

- **UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres welcomed the joint statement by the United States, Armenia and Azerbaijan announcing that a previously reached humanitarian cease-fire agreement.**
- **Armenia and Azerbaijan have been at loggerheads over the mountainous region of Nagorno-Karabakh since 1988. Peace talks have been held since 1994 when a cease-fire was reached, but there have been sporadic minor clashes. A new round of armed conflict broke out along the contact line on September 27.**

Azerbaijan is a country in the Caucasus region of Eurasia. Baku is the capital and largest city of Azerbaijan, as well as the largest city on the Caspian Sea and of the Caucasus region. The city is renowned for its harsh winds, which is reflected in its nickname, the “City of Winds”. The manat is the currency of Azerbaijan. Ilham Aliyev is the fourth president of Azerbaijan, in office since 2003. Ali Hidayat oğlu Asadov is currently serving as the Prime Minister of Azerbaijan following his appointment to the post on 8 October 2019 by President Ilham Aliyev.

Armenia is a country in the South Caucasus region of Eurasia. The dram is the monetary unit of Armenia. Yerevan is the capital and largest city of Armenia as well as one of the world’s oldest continuously inhabited cities. Nikol Pashinyan is currently serving as Prime Minister of Armenia.

Japan to achieve zero carbon emissions by 2050

- **Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga** has said that the **country will achieve zero carbon emissions by 2050**. The Prime Minister intends to make a **sustainable economy a pillar of his growth strategy** and put **maximum effort into achieving a green society**.
- Mr. Suga emphasized the **need to shift away from fossil fuels to counter climate change as an opportunity rather than a burden**. As per Japan's current energy plan, **56 per cent of its energy requirements come from fossil fuels**.

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 126th monarch according to Japan's traditional order of succession. Yoshihide Suga is serving as Prime Minister of Japan and Leader of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) since September 2020. 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.

Abu Dhabi to issue FDI licences allowing 100% foreign ownership

- **Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates, will issue foreign direct investment (FDI) licences to allow foreign investors to own 100% of projects in the emirate in sectors including agriculture, industry and service.**
- **The move implements a foreign investment law approved in 2018 allowing foreign investors to own more than 49% and up to 100% of some UAE businesses, as the country seeks to boost private sector activity. WAM said 122 economic activities, which were approved by the UAE cabinet last year across 13 sectors, would allow 100% foreign ownership in Abu Dhabi.**

Central Asian Countries welcome one billion dollar Line of Credit by India for development in region

- **The Foreign Minister of Central Asian Countries welcomed the provision by India of one billion US dollar Line of Credit for priority developmental projects in fields such as energy, IT, healthcare, education and agriculture in the region.**
- **The second meeting of the India-Central Asia Dialogue was held in the digital video-conference format under the chairmanship of the External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar. Foreign Ministers of Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan as well as First Deputy Foreign Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic participated in the meeting.**

Central Asia is a region in Asia which stretches from the Caspian Sea in the west to China and Mongolia in the east and from Afghanistan and Iran in the south to Russia in the north. The region consists of the former Soviet republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. It is also colloquially referred to as "the stans" as the countries generally considered to be within the region all have names ending with the Persian suffix "-stan", meaning "land of".

China setting up world's highest-altitude cloud computing data centre in Tibet

- **China is building the world's highest-altitude cloud computing data centre in Tibet that will meet the data storage needs of the country and South Asian nations like Nepal, Bangladesh and Pakistan.**
- **The data centre is located in a high-tech zone of the Tibetan regional capital city of Lhasa located at an altitude of around 3,656 metres, making it the highest-altitude data centre in the world.**

Tibet is a region in East Asia covering much of the Tibetan Plateau. Tibet is the highest region on Earth, with an average elevation of 5,000 m (16,000 ft). The highest elevation in Tibet is Mount Everest, Earth's highest mountain, rising 8,848 m (29,029 ft) above sea level. The 14th Dalai Lama is the current Dalai Lama, the highest spiritual leader of Tibet and considered a living buddha.



IndusInd Bank is the first bank to go live on RBI's 'Account Aggregator Framework'

- **IndusInd Bank** announced that it has **gone live** as a **'Financial Information Provider' (FIP)** under the new **'Account Aggregator Framework'** of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), making it the first bank in the country to do so.
- With this, customers can now avail a host of benefits such as **viewing statements of their accounts, track deposits, plan investments (such as shares, mutual funds, Insurance, EPF, PPF), avail credit cards, etc.** on a single window, thereby empowering them to take informed decisions pertaining to their finances.
- The initiative is a path breaking step **taken by the RBI which will enable individuals as well as small and mid-sized businesses to avail services** that will help them fulfill their financial requirements in a seamless way.

IndusInd Bank Limited is an **Indian new generation bank in Pune, established in 1994**. The bank offers commercial, transactional and electronic banking products and services. **The bank began its operations on 17 April 1994 under the chairmanship of S.P. Hinduja** with the primary objective of serving the NRI community. **Sumant Kathpalia** is the current MD & CEO of the bank.

NBFCs ask RBI again to open TLTRO window to access funds

- **Nonbank finance companies (NBFCs)** have again called on the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** to give them access to the on-tap **TLTRO (targeted long term repo operations)** window, which provides long-term funds to banks at the policy rate. Despite the RBI introducing several tools to prop up bank funding to non-banks, the latter have been complaining of a persistent lack of liquidity, especially the smaller ones.
- The Finance Industry Development Council (FIDC), the NBFC lobby group, has **urged RBI governor Shaktikanta Das** to direct banks to lend to NBFCs under this scheme to ensure benefits reach a wider segment of borrowers.

Targeted Long-Term Repo Operations are **Long term repo operations (LTROs)** conducted by the **RBI** to ensure adequate liquidity at the longer period for specific sectors. Under LTROs, the **RBI will auction funds to banks for making investment in prescribed corporate and other instruments**. In the initial phase, the **RBI instructed banks to invest funds availed from TLTRO to invest in investment-grade corporate debt**. Purpose of the TLTRO is to ensure that there is enough liquidity in markets like corporate market and their yield are not going up in the context of the Covid set back. The TLTROs are exempted from regulatory requirement of the cash reserve ratio for the equivalent of incremental credit disbursed by banks as loans. **Interest rate under for banks will be floating rates linked to the policy repo rate.**

A **non-banking financial company (NBFC)** is a company registered under the **Companies Act, 1956**, NBFCs are doing functions akin to that of banks, however there are a few differences: **NBFC cannot accept demand deposits** (demand deposits are funds deposited at a depository institution that are payable on demand -- immediately or within a very short period -- like your current or savings accounts.) and it is **not a part of the payment and settlement system** and as such cannot issue cheques to its customers.

Aditya Puri hands over charge; Jagdishan takes over as HDFC Bank MD & CEO

- **Aditya Puri** stepped out of HDFC Bank's corporate headquarters after **handing over charge** to **Sashidhar Jagdishan** as the new chief executive and managing director of the largest private sector lender.
- Over 25 years ago, at a nondescript office across the road in Lower Parel's Kamala Mills compound, **Puri had started work as the bank's first head**, and built the lender which **now employs close to 1.20 lakh people**.

HDFC Bank Limited is an Indian banking and financial services company headquartered in Mumbai, Maharashtra. **HDFC Bank is India's largest private sector lender by assets**. In 1994 HDFC Bank was incorporated, with its registered office in Mumbai, India. **Sashidhar Jagdishan** is the MD of HDFC Bank.

India ranks 131 out of 138 countries in mobile internet speed, even lower than Iraq

- **Mobile internet speed in India** has **dropped further in September this year**, pushing the country even **below war-torn Iraq**. Even our neighbours, **Pakistan and Nepal** have **better mobile internet speeds**, according to the latest data from Ookla.
- As per the Ookla September speed test index, **South Korea has the best mobile internet speed of 121 Mbps** while **India is at 131st place with 12.07 Mbps average speed**. India has in fact lost two points since last month. Pakistan is at 116th place in terms mobile internet speeds with average speed of 17.13 Mbps while Nepal at 117th place with 17.12 Mbps speed. Sri Lanka has much better 19.95 Mbps mobile internet speed. Iraq, with 12.24 Mbps speed, is just ahead of India in the list.

U.K. to partner for developing GIFT City, funding infra pipeline

- The United Kingdom has entered into a strategic partnership to develop India's fledgling international financial services centre **GIFT City**, and agreed to set up a new Fund of Funds to be managed by the **State Bank of India group** in order to route U.K.'s future capital investments into India.
- **India and U.K. also signed off on a new infrastructure finance and policy partnership to help India execute its National Infrastructure Pipeline that envisages investments worth \$1.4 trillion**, at the tenth Economic and Financial Dialogue (EFD) between the two countries steered by U.K. Chancellor Rishi Sunak and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

7,000 projects have been **identified across various sectors** as part of the **National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP)** project which would be **executed at an investment of Rs 110 lakh crore**. To achieve the **GDP of \$5 trillion by 2024-25**, India needs to spend about **\$1.4 trillion or Rs 100 lakh crore** over these years on infrastructure, as per government estimates. It has **outlined plans to invest more than ₹102 lakh crore on infrastructure projects by 2024-25**, with the Centre, States and the private sector to share the capital expenditure in a **39:39:22 formula**.

India's largest power producer NTPC ties up with Japan Bank for Rs 3,500 crore loan

- **India's largest power producer NTPC Ltd** signed an agreement with **Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC)** for a loan of **Rs. 3,500 crore**.
- Under the foreign currency loan agreement, **JBIC will provide 60% of the loan amount and the balance will be covered by other commercial banks**, Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation, Bank of Yokohama, San-In Godo Bank, Jyoy Bank and Nanto Bank, that are under JBIC guarantee.
- The facility is **extended under JBIC's Global Action for Reconciling Economic growth and Environment preservation (GREEN) for projects** which ensure conservation of global environment.
- The loan proceeds shall be utilized by **India's largest power producer for funding its capex for Flue Gas Desulphurization (FGD) and renewable energy projects**.

NTPC Limited, formerly known as **National Thermal Power Corporation Limited**, is an Indian Public Sector Undertaking, engaged in the business of generation of electricity and allied activities. It is a company incorporated under the Companies Act 1956 and is promoted by the Government of India. **The headquarters of the company is situated at New Delhi**. It was **founded by Government of India in 1975**, which now holds 54.74% of its equity shares. **In May 2010, NTPC was conferred Maharatna status** by the Union Government of India.

SBI becomes first corporate partner of edX from India to offer Massive Open Online Courses

- **India's largest lender State Bank of India (SBI)** announced that it has **entered into a strategic partnership with trusted global non-profit education platform edX** in order to offer its **Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)**.
- The collaboration **aims at facilitating learners with expanding perspectives and access to knowledge beyond the classrooms**. These courses have been curated and designed by practicing bankers possessing rich experience and excellent academic credentials.

On April 1, 2017, the State Bank of India, which was India's largest bank, merged with five of its associate banks (State Bank of Bikaner & Jaipur, State Bank of Hyderabad, State Bank of Mysore, State Bank of Patiala and State Bank of Travancore), and with the Bharatiya Mahila Bank. Dinesh Kumar Khara is the current chairman of the State Bank of India (SBI). Imperial Bank of India was the oldest and the largest commercial bank of the Indian subcontinent, and was subsequently transformed into State Bank of India in 1955.

Hyderabad Airport becomes India's first airport to start e-boarding facilities for international flights

- **Hyderabad Airport becomes the first one in India to offer E-boarding services to flyers boarding international flights**. Indigo was the **first airline to start the international flight e-boarding service at Rajiv Gandhi International Airport (HYD)**.
- **Hyderabad airport has already been providing end-to-end paperless E-boarding for flyers boarding domestic flights**. The new procedure follows the **true spirit of "Aatmanirbhar Bharat"** and in line with the Centre's **Digital India campaign**.

NITI Aayog, QCI launch 'National Program and Project Management Policy Framework' for infrastructure sector

- **NITI Aayog and Quality Council of India (QCI) launched the 'National Program and Project Management Policy Framework' (NPMPPF)**, with the aim of **bringing radical reforms in the way infrastructure projects are executed in India**.
- **Union Minister for Road Transport & Highways and MSMEs Nitin Gadkari unveiled the Indian Infrastructure Body of Knowledge (InBoK)**, a book on the practice of program and project management in India, and launched the framework, along with Union Minister Piyush Goyal, NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant, and QCI Chairman Adil Zainulbhai.
- **In the future, InBoK is envisioned to have extensions, which will be specific to each domain or industry for infrastructure**, for example, a dedicated extension for roadways that captures issues and best practices specific to that sector.

Quality Council of India (QCI) was set up in 1997 by Government of India jointly with Indian Industry as an autonomous body under the administrative control of the DPIIT to establish and operate the National Accreditation Structure for conformity assessment bodies; providing accreditation in the field of education, health and quality promotion. It also promotes the adoption of quality standards relating to Quality Management Systems (ISO 14001 Series), Food Safety Management Systems (ISO 22000 Series) and Product Certification and Inspection Bodies through the accreditation services provided by National Accreditation Board for Certification Bodies (NABCB). Indian industry is represented in QCI by three premier industry associations namely ASSOCHAM; CII; and FICCI. QCI is assigned the task of monitoring and administering the National Quality Campaign a plan scheme of the department, and also to oversee function of the National Information and Enquiry Services.

China's first domestically-built aircraft carrier likely to be combat-ready by year-end

- **China's first domestically-built aircraft carrier Shandong** is expected to be combat-ready by this year-end. **The aircraft has completed regular testing and training missions at sea**.
- **Shandong is China's second aircraft carrier**. It is also the **country's first domestically built aircraft carrier**. Chinese aircraft carriers Liaoning and Shandong have recently completed routine training and sea trials.

Nabard to set up subsidiary to guarantee agri-loans

- Agri-lender Nabard has proposed to set up a subsidiary to provide a guarantee for loans under agriculture and rural development.
- To start with, a guarantee will be provided for loans under Animal Husbandry Infrastructure (CGAHI) scheme announced as part of Animal Husbandry Infrastructure and Development Fund (AHIDF), under PM's 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat programme', and for financing Farmer producer organisation (FPOs) as part of central sector scheme for FPOs.

NABARD came into existence on 12 July 1982 by transferring the agricultural credit functions of RBI and refinance functions of the then Agricultural Refinance and Development Corporation (ARDC). **NABARD is headquartered at Mumbai. The Bank has been entrusted with "matters concerning policy, planning and operations in the field of credit for agriculture and other economic activities in rural areas in India". Dr. G.R. Chintala is the Chairman of National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) with effect from 27 May 2020.**

Reserve Bank to evaluate impact of 'RBI Kehta Hai' campaign

- The document said the RBI's awareness campaign is one of its kind due to the kind of infrastructure and planning required for nationwide reach while ensuring the last mile connectivity.
- The Reserve Bank will evaluate the impact of multi-media public awareness campaign 'RBI Kehta Hai', which was launched in 14 languages to educate the public about safe banking and financial practices. 'RBI Kehta Hai' was the first even 360 degree campaign initiated by the central bank using all mass media, including media such as television, radio, newspapers, hoardings, web banners, gifs, social media and SMS.
- In order to evaluate the impact of the public awareness campaign, the RBI has invited Expression of Interest (EoI) from eligible companies and other entities which have successfully completed at least five similar projects. The document further said companies, NGOs, voluntary agencies or public trusts participating in the EoI should have a turnover of at least Rs 2 crore from "Impact Evaluation/Surveys Business" in each of the last three financial years -- 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20.

Biocon ranked among top five biotech employers globally

- Biocon Ltd, a Bengaluru-headquartered biopharmaceuticals company, has been ranked among the Top 5 Global Biotech Employers for 2020 in the U.S.-based Science magazine's annual 'Science Careers Top 20 Employers' list.
- The other top pharma employers in the list are Regeneron, Alnylam, Incyte and Syngenta. With this ranking, Biocon has moved up from No. 7 in 2018 and No. 6 in 2019 and to No.5 this year, ahead of global pharma companies like Novo Nordisk, Roche, Eli Lilly, Abbott, Novartis, Pfizer etc.

Biocon Limited is an Indian biopharmaceutical company based in Bangalore, India by Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, the founder. The Company manufactures generic active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) that are sold in over 120 countries across the globe, including the developed markets of the United States and Europe.

HAL, Tech Mahindra sign Rs 400 crore contract for 'Project Parivartan'

- Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd and Tech Mahindra signed a contract worth Rs 400 crore for implementation of Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) to support HAL's 'Project Parivartan'.
- 'Project Parivartan' is a comprehensive business transformation exercise initiated by HAL through technology enhancement and centralised ERP. The exercise would enable HAL to adopt some of the best practices followed in some of the similar industries globally.

Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) is an Indian state-owned aerospace and defence company headquartered in Bangalore (Bengaluru), India. It is governed under the management of the Indian Ministry of Defence. The government-owned corporation is primarily involved in the operations of the aerospace and is currently involved in the design, fabrication and assembly of aircraft, jet engines, helicopters and their spare parts.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY



Inventions/Discoveries

Nokia picked by NASA to build first cellular network on the moon

- **Nokia has been chosen by NASA to build the first ever cellular network on the moon.** The Finnish telecommunications firm said that the **partnership will create a path toward “sustainable human presence on the lunar surface,”** and will result in the first LTE/4G communications system in space.
- **Nokia’s Bell Labs unit is planning to build what it describes as an “ultra-compact, low-power, space-hardened, end-to-end LTE solution”** that will be available on the moon by late 2022.
- **The idea is to provide the kind of technology that makes it possible to remotely control lunar rovers, or allow real-time navigation** and streaming of high definition video.

Nokia is a Finnish multinational telecommunications, information technology, and consumer electronics company, founded in 1865. Nokia’s headquarters are in Espoo, in the greater Helsinki metropolitan area, Finland. Knut Fredrik Idestam is best known as a founder of Nokia.

Scientists identify new potential groundwater ‘arsenic hotspots’ in India

- **Scientists, including those from the National Institute of Hydrology (NIH), have found an increased probability of high arsenic levels in well waters** in parts of India where previously arsenic hazard was generally not considered to be a major concern.
- **Arsenic in drinking water obtained from wells is the cause of severe health outcomes,** including premature deaths from cancers and cardiovascular disease in many parts of the world and particularly in the Indian subcontinent.
- **Based on recent reported rates of household groundwater use for rural and urban areas, they estimate that about 18–30 million people in India are currently at risk of high exposure to arsenic through their drinking water supply.** The researchers, including Biswajit Chakravorty, a senior scientist at NIH in Bihar, have constructed a prediction model focused solely on India.

Arsenic is a chemical element with the symbol As and atomic number 33. Arsenic occurs in many minerals, usually in combination with sulfur and metals, but also as a pure elemental crystal. **Arsenic is a metalloid.** The primary use of arsenic is in alloys of lead (for example, in car batteries and ammunition). **Arsenic contamination of groundwater is a problem that affects millions of people across the world. In Bihar, Groundwater in 13 districts have been found to be contaminated with arsenic with quantities exceeding 0.05 mg/L.** All these districts are situated close to large rivers like Ganga and Gandak.

New species of Echinops found in Sahyadri Mountains

- **A Mumbai University M.Sc. (Botany) student is reported to have discovered a new species of Echinops Sahyadricus (English Common Name — Sahyadri Globe Thistle)** from the Rajgad Fort in the Sahyadri mountains in collaboration with researchers of Fabio Conti of the University of Camerino, Italy, and Harshal Bhosale of the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS).

- **Echinops** is a genus of about 130 species of flowering plants found in tropical and north Africa, the Mediterranean basin and West Asia, extending eastwards to China and Japan. **The highest number of taxa (76) is concentrated in the Iranian plateau.** Five species are found in India including two in Maharashtra.

NASA's SOFIA discovers traces of water on sunlit surface of Moon

- NASA's Stratospheric Observatory for Infrared Astronomy (SOFIA) has confirmed, for the first time, water on the sunlit surface of the Moon. This discovery indicates that water may be distributed across the lunar surface, and not limited to cold, shadowed places.
- SOFIA has detected water molecules (H₂O) in Clavius Crater, one of the largest craters visible from Earth, located in the Moon's southern hemisphere. Previous observations of the Moon's surface detected some form of hydrogen, but were unable to distinguish between water and its close chemical relative, hydroxyl (OH). **Data from this location reveal water in concentrations of 100 to 412 parts per million – roughly equivalent to a 12-ounce bottle of water – trapped in a cubic meter of soil spread across the lunar surface.** The results are published in the latest issue of Nature Astronomy.

National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) is an independent agency of the executive branch of the United States federal government responsible for the civilian space program, as well as aeronautics and aerospace research. President Dwight D. Eisenhower established NASA in 1958. James Frederick Bridenstine is an American politician and the current administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. He became the first member of Congress to lead NASA.

IIM-Bangalore's programme among top 100 in global list

- The postgraduate programme in enterprise management (PGPEM), offered by the Indian Institute of Management-Bangalore (IIM-B), has been ranked in the top 100 in the Financial Times (FT) EMBA 2020 ranking.
- Participating for the first time in this ranking, the programme has taken the second position in India. The PGPEM at IIM-B is a weekend MBA programme designed for working mid-level and senior executives with a minimum of four years of work experience after graduation.

Kerala first state in the country to fix floor price for vegetables

- Kerala had become the first state in the country to fix the floor price for vegetables. The floor price will be 20 per cent above the production cost of the vegetable. Even if the market price goes below the floor price, the produce will be procured at the floor price from the farmers.
- The produce will be graded and the floor price will be fixed based on the quality. Sixteen varieties of vegetables would be covered in the first phase and there is a provision to revise the floor price on a regular basis.

IIT Guwahati develops low-cost technology to produce psychoactive drugs from agricultural resources

- Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati researcher has developed a low-cost membrane technology to produce psychoactive drugs and anti-aging compounds from wide range of agricultural resources like camellia sinensis, citrus fruits and peels especially orange peels, berries, ginkgo biloba, parsley, pulses, tea, sea buckthorn and onions.
- The technology is patented and developed by Prof Mihir Kumar Purkait, Head, Centre for the Environment, and Professor, Department of Chemical Engineering, IIT Guwahati along with his M Tech student Mr V L Dhadge. The low-cost technology doesn't use any organic solvents.

Conservation centres in 5 states among host of ideas to protect vultures

- Uttar Pradesh, Tripura, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu will get a vulture conservation and breeding centre each, according to the Action Plan for Vulture Conservation 2020-2025. The plan has also suggested that new veterinary non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDS) be tested on vultures before their commercial release. NSAIDS often poisons cattle whose carcasses the birds prey on.

- **The action plan was approved by the National Board for Wildlife (NBWL) October 5, 2020**, its minutes showed. An earlier one was formulated in 2006 for three years. **The new plan has laid out strategies and actions to stem the decline in vulture population, especially of the three Gyps species: 1. Oriental white-backed vulture (Gyps bengalensis) 2. Slender-billed vulture (Gyps tenuirostris) 3. Long-billed vulture (Gyps indicus)**
- **This would be done through both ex-situ and in-situ conservation.**

Antarctica yields fossils of giant birds with 21-foot wingspans

- **Scientists at the University of California have identified the fossil of a giant bird that lived about 50 million years ago**, with wingspans of up to 21 feet that would dwarf largest bird, the wandering albatross.
- **The fossils recovered from Antarctica in the 1980s represent the oldest giant members of an extinct group of birds that patrolled the southern oceans.**
- **By comparison, largest bird, the wandering albatross has a wingspan of 11 and-a-half-foot. Called Pelagornithids, the birds filled a niche much like that of albatrosses and travelled widely over Earth's oceans for at least 60 million years.**
- **Though a much smaller pelagornithid fossil dates from 62 million years ago, one of the newly described fossils — a 50 million-year-old portion of a bird's foot — shows that the larger pelagornithids arose just after life rebounded from the mass extinction 65 million years ago, when the relatives of birds, the dinosaurs, went extinct.**

New coral species discovered on seabed marked for deep-sea mining

- **Three species of black coral have been discovered on the seabed of the northern Pacific Ocean, an area where several countries have contracts to explore for metals including cobalt and nickel as they race to find new supplies of the key battery elements.**
- **The corals were discovered on deep seamounts and ridges in the mineral-rich Prime Crust Zone, which stretches from the Mariana Trench to the Hawaiian Islands.**
- **The new black coral species are so named because of their black skeletons, but they can appear pink, white, or various other colours because of the living tissues growing over the skeleton. Previous studies have found a black coral species more than 4,250 years old.**

IIT-Jodhpur develops transistors with biodegradable gelatin as electrical insulator

- **In a breakthrough towards “green electronics”, researchers at Indian Institute of Technology (IIT)-Jodhpur, have developed transistors with biodegradable gelatin as an electrical insulator, which may be utilised as breath analyser.**
- **The changes in the property of transmitting electric force by exposure to moisture will enable the device to measure respiratory rate.**
- **IIT's Flexible Large Area Microelectronics (FLAME) research group, headed by Professor Shree Prakash Tiwari, has used the natural protein gelatin, with a unique amino acid profile, for the fabrication of high-performance organic field-effect transistors.**

IIT Roorkee researchers develop world's first specific bacterial biosensor for detection of environmental detergent pollutant

- **A five-member team of researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Roorkee have developed the world's first specific reliable bacterial biosensor to detect the presence of common environmental pollutant- Sodium Dodecyl Sulphate /Sodium Lauryl Sulfate (SDS).**
- **SDS is extensively used in soaps, toothpaste, creams, shampoos, laundry detergents in households, agricultural operations, laboratories, and industries. Its subsequent disposal in waterways causes harmful effects on aquatic organisms, environmental microcosms, and associated living organisms besides deteriorating the quality of drinking water. This objective of the study was to develop a novel biosensor for the detection of a detergent Sodium Dodecyl Sulphate /Sodium Lauryl Sulfate (SDS) in environmental samples.**

SPORTS



Sports Personalities in News

Abhinav Bindra launches sports medicine institute

- Olympic champion **Abhinav Bindra** has **taken another big step towards strengthening Indian sports** with the **opening of a sports medicine and research institute in Bhubaneswar**.
- The **Abhinav Bindra Sports Medicine and Research Institute (ABSMARI)** will **offer four-year Bachelor of Physiotherapy and two-year Masters of Physiotherapy courses**, with different specialisations. The objective of the venture, **which promises to combine theory with practical exposure**, with an affordable fee structure, is to develop professionals who can serve in sports academies, hospitals and other related fields.

Lewis Hamilton overtakes Michael Schumacher with record 92nd F1 win

- **Six-times world champion Lewis Hamilton** became the **most successful Formula One driver of all time in terms of race wins** with a dominant **92nd career victory** at the Portuguese Grand Prix.

Chris Gayle becomes first to hit 1,000 sixes in T20 cricket

- **Chris Gayle** became the **first batsman to get to 1,000 sixes in T20 cricket history** when he smashed the seventh of his eight sixes during his belligerent 99 against Kings XI Punjab in an Indian Premier League match. **Gayle achieved the land mark during an IPL 2020 game between Kings XI Punjab and Rajasthan Royals**.

Ritu Phogat wins third straight MMA title

- **Indian wrestler-turned-Mixed Martial Arts fighter Ritu Phogat** won her **third consecutive MMA championship title in Singapore**. Indian notched up a technical knockout win over Cambodia's Nou Srey Pov in the second round.

Former cricketer Shantha Rangaswamy to be conferred Lifetime Achievement Award

- Former India women's cricket team captain **Shantha Rangaswamy** will be **conferred the Lifetime Achievement award for 2019 by the Karnataka state government on November 2** for her contribution to Indian and Karnataka women's cricket.
- **Rangaswamy who was India's first Test captain was a woman of many other firsts**. She was the **first test centurion and also hit the country's first six** in international cricket. In her 15-year long international career, Rangaswamy played a total of 16 Tests – captaining the side in as many as 12 – and 19 ODIs. She was at the helm of India's first Test and ODI wins, and conceded just two defeats as skipper of the Test teams.

Anju Bobby George elected as AFI's first female vice-president

- India's only medallist in the World Athletics Championships and Olympian **Anju Bobby George** was **elected unopposed as the Athletics Federation of India's (AFI) first woman senior vice-president**. She will serve till 2024. Anju won the long-jump bronze at the 2003 World Athletics Championships in Paris before finishing fifth in the long jump at the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens with a personal-best jump of 6.83m.

MISCELLANEOUS

‘Pride Station’: North India’s first Metro station dedicated to transgenders in Noida

- In a first for Metro services in north India, the Noida Metro Rail Corporation (NMRC) officially renamed the Sector 50 station as “Pride Station” dedicating it to the transgender community.
- This initiative was inspired by the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019, passed by the Centre for the protection of the rights of the transgender people.
- As per Census 2011, there are 4.9 lakh transgenders in India, out of whom around 35,000 are staying in NCR. These numbers may have increased manifold in the present scenario”.

PM Modi inaugurates Sardar Patel Zoological Park & Arogya Van in Gujarat; Lays foundation stone for various projects at Kevadia

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated Sardar Patel Zoological Park and Geodesic Aviary Dome in the Statue of Unity complex near Kevadia in Narmada district of Gujarat. He dedicated to the nation 17 projects under integrated development of Kevadia and laid the foundation stone for 4 new projects.
- The projects include Navigation Channel, New Gora Bridge, Garudeshwar Weir, Government Quarters, Bus Bay Terminus, Ekta Nursery, Khalwani Eco Tourism, and Tribal Home Stay. He also flagged-off the Ekta Cruise Service to the Statue of Unity.
- The Sardar Patel Zoological Park has been completed in record time. This state-of-art Zoological Park is spread over 375 acre of land and built at seven different levels.

Railways launch ‘Meri Saheli’ initiative for security of women passengers

- Railways has launched Meri Saheli initiative for focused action on security of women passengers across all zones. The objective of this mission is to provide safety and security to lady passengers travelling by trains for their entire journey from starting station to destination station.
- Meri Saheli initiative was started as a pilot project in South Eastern Railway in September this year and after getting encouraging response from lady passengers.

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 18th 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.

Tribal Affairs Minister Arjun Munda launched two Centers of Excellence for Tribal Welfare

- Tribal Affairs Minister Arjun Munda has launched two Centers of Excellence for Tribal Welfare through video conference.
- The first initiative strengthening Panchayati Raj institutions was launched in five districts covering 30 Gram Panchayats and 150 villages of Jharkhand.
- The model is designed to create the youth volunteers among the tribal youths by giving them personality development training who will work for their community in spreading the awareness.

Assam Becomes First State to Add ‘Transgender’ as Gender Option in Exam Application

- Assam has become the first state in the country to add a ‘transgender’ option in the gender category of the civil service examination form. A total of 42 transgender persons have applied for the combined competitive (preliminary) examination (CCE), 2020, which is conducted by the Assam Public Service Commission (APSC).

V Prez Venkaiah Naidu launches virtual festival of 'Parampara Series 2020-National Festival of Music and Dance'

- Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu said that **music and dance can provide relief from the anxiety caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.**
- **Launching the virtual festival of 'Parampara Series 2020-National Festival of Music and Dance' organized by Natya Tarangini in partnership with the United Nations,** the Vice President said that music and dance make lives more fulfilling by rejuvenating and energising. He added that they bring harmony into lives and nourish inner spirit by dispelling gloom and despair.
- He appreciated **Natya Tarangini for organising the 'Parampara Series' continuously since past 23 years,** and adopting innovative efforts to make it happen for the 24th year.

Polish city names square after Harivansh Rai Bachchan

- **Megastar Big B, took to Twitter to share his happiness with 44.5 million Twitter followers over a city in Poland, Wroclaw, naming a square after his late father and celebrated poet, Harivansh Rai Bachchan.** The 78-year-old took to Twitter and posted a picture of a signboard of the square **embossed with Harivansh Rai Bachchan's name.**

In a first, Corbett Tiger Reserve to have women nature guides

- **Corbett Tiger Reserve (CTR) will have women nature guides for the first time in its history. Seven women have been selected by the Corbett administration after holding a guide recruitment test. These selected women will be registered as guides and given responsibilities after a training and orientation programme.**
- **488 candidates appeared in the guide recruitment test held in Ramnagar,** out of which 102 were women. A total of 67 candidates cleared the test, including seven women.
- **"This is the first-time women are getting a chance to become nature guides. Till now, males used to dominate this domain.** This concept is being implemented to generate livelihood for local women villagers who live in the periphery of the CTR".

PERSONS IN NEWS

Yashvardhan Kumar Sinha to be next Chief Information Commissioner

- Former diplomat and Central Information Commissioner **Yashvardhan Kumar Sinha** is tipped to be appointed as the country's next Chief Information Commissioner (CIC), two months after the position at the top transparency watchdog fell vacant.
- The decision was taken after meeting of the **high-powered selection panel** headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. However, Congress Leader in the Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, who is also a member of the panel, is learnt to have submitted a dissent note.

Edward Snowden granted permanent residency in Russia

- Former U.S. security contractor **Edward Snowden** has been granted permanent residency in Russia. Mr. Snowden, a former contractor with the U.S. National Security Agency, has been living in Russia since 2013 to escape prosecution in the U.S. after leaking classified documents detailing government surveillance programs.

Manipuri teenager becomes first Indian footballer to feature in The Guardian's next generation list

- Manipuri's 17-year-old defender **Bikash Yumnam** has become the first Indian footballer to make it to The Guardian's Next Generation List – a list of the best young footballers from across the globe.
- The list is published annually by the newspaper and it has been running since 2014 and has featured some of the most exciting football talents from across the world.

Amy Coney Barrett takes oath to join Supreme Court

- **Amy Coney Barrett** officially took the first of two oaths that will allow her to join the Supreme Court, shortly after being confirmed by a deeply divided Senate.
- Justice Clarence Thomas administered the Constitutional Oath to Barrett before a crowd of about 200. She will be able to participate in the court after taking the judicial oath administered by Chief Justice John Roberts in a private ceremony at the court.

New President elected for World Sailing

- **Quanhai Li** has been elected as World Sailing President, announced at World Sailing's Virtual General Assembly. Li unseats incumbent Kim Andersen (DEN) who was seeking his second and final 4-year term.
- Four Presidential candidates were up for election in the first round and no candidate received more than 50% of votes.

Indian airline appoints a female CEO for the first time

- For the first time ever, a woman has become the CEO of an Indian carrier, with the government appointing Harpreet A De Singh as the CEO of Air India's (AI) regional subsidiary Alliance Air.

AWARDS

India's Global Himalayan Expedition wins UN award for efforts to fight climate change amid Covid-19

- An Indian organisation that leverages tourism and technology to help remote communities access solar energy has won a prestigious UN award for its efforts to combat climate change amid the Covid-19 pandemic. The Global Himalayan Expedition (GHE) is among the winners of the 2020 UN Global Climate Action Award.
- GHE is one of the world's first organisations using tourism and technology to bring solar energy to remote communities. The recipients of the 2020 United Nations Global Climate Action Awards bring focus to the best examples of what people across the globe are doing "to combat climate change in a year that has cast darkness upon so many."
- According to a statement on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) website, GHE is the one of the world's first outfit using tourism and technology to bring solar energy to remote communities as recognised by the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) and the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO).
- In the Hindu Kush Region, there are more than 16 million people without access to basic energy mainly due to their geographic remoteness.
- GHE conducts "Impact Expeditions" to remote Himalayan villages and uses a portion of the expedition fee to fund the capital cost of the hardware, transportation, installation and training of village-scale solar micro-grids. The micro-grid infrastructure set up by GHE is owned and operated by the community.

Young Bangladeshi boy wins special prize in Global Art Competition conducted by ICCR

- A six year old Bangladeshi boy Anzar Mustaeen Ali won a special prize of USD 1000 for his artwork in the global art competition organised by the Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR).
- The ICCR had launched a global painting competition named 'United Against CORONA- Express through Art' which attracted 8000 artwork entries from around the world. After the first round of competition 210 artworks were shortlisted.
- The final jury evaluated and decided the winners from each category such as Indian and Foreign, Professional/Amateur/Children in four different sections: Contemporary Art; Folk and Tribal Art; Cartoons and Illustrations and Digital and New Age Art.

Aruba lodging first in world to win Global United Nations 2020 Climate Neutral Now Award

- The Caribbean's most eco-certified hotel is now setting the world standard as Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort in Aruba is the first-ever hotel in the world to win the prestigious Global United Nations 2020 Climate Action Award for Climate Neutral Now.

Global awards for Victor Banerjee

- Actor Victor Banerjee won two global awards in two days for his role as a priest, Father O'Hara, in the 2019 film, Josef - Born in Grace. The first was for Best Actor at the India International Film Festival of Boston on October 27; and the second, a day later, was best supporting actor, at the Ontario International Film Festival.
 - Josef - Born in Grace has made waves since its release in 2019. It was in the race for contention at the Oscars earlier this year. In September, it won Best Set Design at the Madrid International Film Festival; and it also won a second award at the Ontario International Film Festival this week, when Sudheer Palsane was declared Best Cinematographer.
 - Directed by Susant Misra, Josef - Born in Grace is an adaptation of a short story titled Joseph, written by well-known Odia author Umakanta Mahapatra.
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IMPORTANT DAYS

World Polio Day

- **World Polio Day (October 24) provides an opportunity to highlight global efforts toward a polio-free world** and honor the tireless contributions of those on the frontlines in the fight to eradicate polio from every corner of the globe.
- **2020 theme for World Polio Day is “A win against polio is a win for global health.”** As of August 2020, Afghanistan and Pakistan are the only two nations which remain with the continued transmission of wild poliovirus.

World Day for Audiovisual Heritage 27 October

- **The World Day for Audiovisual Heritage takes place every 27 October.** The World Day for Audiovisual Heritage (WDAH) provides an occasion to raise general awareness of the need to take urgent measures and to acknowledge the importance of audiovisual documents.
- **2020 Theme: Your Window to the World.**

World Cities Day- 31 October

- **The United Nations General Assembly has designated the 31st of October as World Cities Day.** The Day is expected to greatly promote the international community's interest in global urbanization, push forward cooperation among countries in meeting opportunities and addressing challenges of urbanization, and contributing to sustainable urban development around the world.
- **The impact of COVID-19 has re-shaped urban life around the world. Local communities have played a key role** in contributing to keeping people safe and maintaining some economic activities.
- **This year's theme is “Valuing Our Communities and Cities”.**

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. Recently, who has been elected as the Chairperson of the Governing Body of the ILO for the period October 2020-June 2021?
(a) Aditi Singh (b) Deepika Mahajan (c) Apurva Chandra (d) Nikita Chandel
2. Which of the following Indian states has secured the first rank in central government's one of the most ambitious schemes - the PM Atmanirbhar Nidhi Scheme (SVANidhi Scheme) by approving the highest number of loans under the scheme in the country?
(a) Uttar Pradesh (b) Madhya Pradesh (c) Gujarat (d) Haryana
3. Recently, Jammu and Kashmir High Court's Chief Justice, Gita Mittal inaugurated the first Family Court in the Union Territory at _____.
(a) Srinagar (b) Jammu (c) Ramban (d) Anantnag
4. The first transport project under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) was inaugurated in _____.
(a) Lahore (b) Karachi (c) Islamabad (d) Sialkot
5. According to Indian Tourism Statistics (ITS), 2020 which Indian state has emerged as the top destination for attracting the highest number of domestic tourists in 2019?
(a) Madhya Pradesh (b) Uttar Pradesh (c) Tamil Nadu (d) Himachal Pradesh
6. Which of the following countries will remain on the grey list of global terror financing watchdog, Financial Action Task Force (FATF) as it has not been able to fulfill six out of the 27 mandates to check terror funding?
(a) Bangladesh (b) Myanmar (c) Pakistan (d) Iraq
7. The former U.S. security contractor Edward Snowden has been granted permanent residency in _____.
(a) Germany (b) Russia (c) China (d) Cuba
8. Recently, The United Nations announced that 50 countries have ratified a UN treaty to ban nuclear weapons triggering its entry into force in 90 days. Which is the 50th country to ratify the UN treaty?
(a) Honduras (b) Panama (c) Mexico (d) Canada
9. Name the cellular company which has been chosen by NASA to build the first ever cellular network on the moon.
(a) Motorola (b) Samsung (c) Nokia (d) Huawei
10. Name the Formula One who had his career's 92nd victory at the Portuguese Grand Prix.
(a) Lewis Hamilton (b) Valtteri Bottas (c) Max Verstappen (d) Carlos Leclerc
11. Who will be the chairperson of the conglomerate known as People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) formed recently?
(a) Farooq Abdullah (b) M.Y. Tarigami (c) Mehbooba Mufti (d) Hasnain Masoodi
12. Recently, Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari laid the foundation stones of nine National Highway projects in _____.
(a) Tripura (b) Meghalaya (c) Nagaland (d) West Bengal
13. The Vigilance Awareness Week, 2020 is being observed from 27th October till 2nd of November. Vigilance Awareness Week is observed every year during the week in which the birthday of _____ falls on 31st of October.
(a) Madan Mohan Malviya
(b) Dr Rajendra Prasad
(c) Lal Bahadur Shastri
(d) Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

14. Tribal Affairs Minister Arjun Munda launched two Centers of Excellence for Tribal Welfare through video conference. The first initiative strengthening Panchayati Raj institutions will be launched in five districts covering 30 Gram Panchayats and 150 villages of _____.
 (a) Odisha (b) Jharkhand (c) Bihar (d) Uttar Pradesh
15. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres welcomed the joint statement by the United States, Armenia and Azerbaijan announcing cease-fire agreement. Armenia and Azerbaijan have been at loggerheads over the mountainous region of Nagorno-Karabakh since _____.
 (a) 1954 (b) 1962 (c) 1988 (d) 1996
16. Recently, Amy Coney Barrett officially took oath that will allow her to join the Supreme Court of _____.
 (a) Australia (b) New Zealand (c) USA (d) Great Britain
17. Recently, Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga announced that his country will achieve zero carbon emissions by _____.
 (a) 2025 (b) 2032 (c) 2038 (d) 2050
18. According to the latest data from Ookla, which of the following countries has the best mobile internet speed of 121 Mbps in the world in September 2020?
 (a) South Korea (b) Japan (c) USA (d) Singapore
19. Recently, The postgraduate programme in enterprise management (PGPEM), offered by which of the following IIM's has been ranked in the top 100 in the Financial Times (FT) EMBA 2020 ranking?
 (a) Indian Institute of Management-Bangalore (IIM-B)
 (b) Indian Institute of Management-Ahmadabad (IIM-A)
 (c) Indian Institute of Management-Lucknow (IIM-L)
 (d) Indian Institute of Management-Calcutta (IIM-C)
20. Recently, The NASA's Stratospheric Observatory for Infrared Astronomy (SOFIA) has confirmed, for the first time, water on the sunlit surface of the _____.
 (a) Mercury (b) Venus (c) Moon (d) Jupiter
21. In a first for Metro services in north India, the _____ officially renamed the Sector 50 station as "Pride Station" dedicating it to the transgender community.
 (a) Noida Metro Rail Corporation (NMRC)
 (b) Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC)
 (c) Gurugram Metro Rail Corporation (GMRC)
 (d) Meerut Metro Rail Corporation (MMRC)
22. Recently, which of the following Indian states launched a web portal 'Sumangal' to promote inter-caste marriages that would help inter-caste couples get an incentive within 60 days of application?
 (a) West Bengal (b) Odisha (c) Chhattisgarh (d) Karnataka
23. Recently, India and US held the 3rd bilateral two plus two Ministerial Dialogue in _____ and signed the landmark defence pact BECA.
 (a) New York (b) Washington D.C (c) New Delhi (d) Bengaluru
24. The BRICS Parliamentary Forum will be held in virtual format. It will be chaired by Chairman of _____.
 (a) Chinese Parliament (b) Brazilian Parliament (c) Russian Parliament (d) South African Parliament
25. Recently, In a breakthrough towards "green electronics", researchers at _____ have developed transistors with biodegradable gelatin as an electrical insulator, which may be utilised as breath analyser.
 (a) Indian Institute of Technology (IIT)-Kanpur
 (b) Indian Institute of Technology (IIT)-Guwahati

- (c) Indian Institute of Technology (IIT)-Mandi
(d) Indian Institute of Technology (IIT)-Jodhpur
26. The first state in India to fix the floor price for vegetables is
(a) Karnataka (b) Madhya Pradesh (c) Uttar Pradesh (d) Kerala
27. Recently, _____ researcher has developed a low-cost membrane technology to produce psychoactive drugs and anti-aging compounds from wide range of agricultural resources.
(a) Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad
(b) Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur
(c) Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati
(d) Indian Institute of Technology Madras
28. Recently, Aditya Puri stepped out of _____ corporate headquarters after handing over charge to Sashidhar Jagdishan as the new chief executive and managing director of the largest private sector lender.
(a) HDFC Bank (b) Yes Bank (c) ICICI Bank (d) Axis Bank
29. The World Day for Audiovisual Heritage (WDAH) on _____ provides an occasion to raise general awareness of the need to take urgent measures and to acknowledge the importance of audiovisual documents.
(a) 25th October (b) 27th October (c) 29th October (d) 30th October
30. Recently, A six year old boy from _____, Anzar Mustaeen Ali won a special prize of USD 1000 for his artwork in the global art competition organised by the Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR).
(a) Afghanistan (b) Nepal (c) Bangladesh (d) Maldives
31. Recently which of the following along with Ministry of Power, Rockefeller Foundation and Smart Power India launched the 'Electricity Access in India and Benchmarking Distribution Utilities' report?
(a) Ministry of Corporate Affairs (b) BHEL
(c) NITI Aayog (d) NTPC
32. In which of the following states, the Mobile Polling Units are going door-to-door for the first time for collection of ballot papers?
(a) Bihar (b) Uttar Pradesh (c) Rajasthan (d) Madhya Pradesh
33. India's largest power producer _____ entered into foreign currency loan agreement with Japanese government's financial institution for about Rs 3,582 crore.
(a) BHEL (b) NTPC (c) GAIL (d) Power grid Corporation Ltd
34. According to the Action Plan for Vulture Conservation 2020-2025, which of the following states will not get a vulture conservation and breeding centre?
(a) Uttar Pradesh (b) Tamil Nadu (c) Rajasthan (d) Maharashtra
35. Scientists have identified the fossil of a giant bird that lived about 50 million years ago, with wingspans of up to 21 feet that would dwarf largest bird, the wandering _____.
(a) Ostrich (b) Albatross (c) Siberian Crane (d) Eagle
36. United Arab Emirates will issue foreign direct investment (FDI) licences to allow foreign investors to own _____ of projects in the emirate in sectors including agriculture, industry and service.
(a) 49% (b) 51% (c) 70% (d) 100%
37. The Foreign Minister of Central Asian Countries welcomed the provision by India of _____ Line of Credit for priority developmental projects in fields such as energy, IT, healthcare, education and agriculture in the region.
(a) fifty million US dollar (b) one billion US dollar
(c) two billion US dollar (d) five billion US dollar

38. The 1.8 kilometre long Feni Bridge connecting Sabrum in India with Ramgarh in _____ will be completed by December 2020.
(a) Nepal (b) Myanmar (c) Bhutan (d) Bangladesh
39. The United Kingdom has entered into a strategic partnership to develop India's fledgling international financial services centre GIFT City, and agreed to set up a new Fund of Funds to be managed by the _____ group in order to route U.K.'s future capital investments into India.
(a) Punjab National Bank (b) State Bank of India
(c) Bank of Baroda (d) Canara Bank
40. Who among the following is the winner of the 2020 UN Global Climate Action Award?
(a) Bachpan Bachao Andolan (b) Thar Desert Protection Expedition
(c) Global Himalayan Expedition (d) Dibakar Bannerjee & Aditi Thapa
41. Which of the following states has become the first state in the country to add a 'transgender' option in the gender category of the civil service examination form?
(a) Arunachal Pradesh (b) Assam (c) Meghalaya (d) West Bengal
42. Recently, Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd and Tech Mahindra signed a contract worth Rs 400 crore for implementation of Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) to support HAL's _____.
(a) 'Project Parivartan' (b) 'Project Prarthna' (c) 'Project Prayatna' (d) 'Project Pardarshita'
43. Which of the following countries is building the world's highest-altitude cloud computing data centre that will meet the data storage needs of the country and South Asian nations like Nepal, Bangladesh and Pakistan?
(a) China (b) India (c) Japan (d) South Korea
44. Which of the following Indian banks announced that it has entered into a strategic partnership with trusted global non-profit education platform edX in order to offer its Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)?
(a) Bank of Baroda (b) Punjab National Bank (c) State Bank of India (d) Canara Bank
45. Which of the following airports becomes India's first airport to start e-boarding facilities for international flights?
(a) Delhi Airport (b) Hyderabad Airport (c) Jaipur Airport (d) Mumbai Airport
46. Recently, _____ and Quality Council of India (QCI) launched the 'National Program and Project Management Policy Framework' (NPPMF), with the aim of bringing radical reforms in the way infrastructure projects are executed in India.
(a) NITI Aayog (b) Ministry of Corporate Affairs
(c) Ministry of Finance Affairs (d) Both (a) and (c)
47. Name the actor who won the award for best supporting actor, at the Ontario International Film Festival.
(a) Naseeruddin Shah (b) Pankaj Kapoor (c) Victor Banerjee (d) Vimal Mishra
48. Recently, Olympic champion Abhinav Bindra opened a sports medicine and research institute in _____.
(a) Bhopal (b) Bhubaneswar (c) Meerut (d) Jaipur
49. Recently, Three species of black coral have been discovered on the seabed of the northern _____.
(a) Pacific Ocean (b) Atlantic Ocean (c) Indian Ocean (d) Arctic Ocean
50. Which is the first-ever hotel in the world to win the prestigious Global United Nations 2020 Climate Action Award for Climate Neutral Now?
(a) Palm Beach Resort in Havana
(b) Rose and Lotus Beach Resort in Japan
(c) Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort in Aruba
(d) Lavendor Resort in New Zealand

51. Recently, which of the following states was adjudged the best governed State in the large States category in the Public Affairs Index-2020 released by the Public Affairs Centre?
 (a) Kerala (b) Karnataka (c) Tamil Nadu (d) Maharashtra
52. Recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated Sardar Patel Zoological Park and Geodesic Aviary Dome in the Statue of Unity complex in _____.
 (a) Maharashtra (b) Gujarat (c) Karnataka (d) Kerala
53. Recently, Railways has launched _____ initiative for focused action on security of women passengers across all zones.
 (a) Meri Dost (b) Meri Mitra (c) Meri Saheli (d) Meri Saathi
54. Who has been recently appointed as India's next Chief Information Commissioner (CIC)?
 (a) Yashvardhan Kumar Sinha (b) Vipin Chandra Rathi
 (c) Anoop Kumar Mathur (d) Deepak Talreja
55. The first phase of the Malabar Naval exercise including Australia along with Japan and the U.S. is scheduled to be held off the _____ coast.
 (a) Paradip (b) Visakhapatnam (c) Panaji (d) Port Blair
56. Who has recently proposed to set up a subsidiary to provide a guarantee for loans under agriculture and rural development?
 (a) Reserve Bank of India (b) NABARD
 (c) SIDBI (d) Punjab National Bank
57. Which of the following companies has been ranked among the Top 5 Global Biotech Employers for 2020 in the U.S.-based Science magazine's annual 'Science Careers Top 20 Employers' list?
 (a) Lupin (b) Reliance (c) Glaxo Smithline (d) Biocon
58. Name the Indian wrestler-turned-Mixed Martial Arts fighter who won her third consecutive MMA championship title in Singapore.
 (a) Geeta Phogat (b) Babita Phogat (c) Vinesh Phogat (d) Ritu Phogat
59. Recently, who became the first batsman to get to 1,000 sixes in T20 cricket history?
 (a) Rohit Sharma (b) Chris Gayle (c) Kieron Pollard (d) AB de Villiers
60. Recently, The _____ has developed and launched a secure messaging application, Secure Application for the Internet or SAI.
 (a) Indian Army (b) Indian Navy (c) Indian Air force (d) All of the above
61. Recently, Kabartal, a freshwater marsh of _____ is designated as Ramsar Site. With this the network of Indian Ramsar Sites becomes the largest in South Asia.
 (a) South West Bengal (b) North Bihar (c) Eastern Uttar Pradesh (d) Bundelkhand, Uttar Pradesh
62. India's first defence park is inaugurated in _____.
 (a) Karnataka (b) Tamil Nadu (c) Maharashtra (d) Kerala
63. Recently, _____ has been elected as World Sailing President, announced at World Sailing's Virtual General Assembly.
 (a) Quanhai Li (b) Li Hunchai (c) Jetling Lin (d) Housie Li
64. Which of the following banks has gone live as a 'Financial Information Provider' (FIP) under the new 'Account Aggregator Framework' of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), making it the first bank in the country to do so?
 (a) IndusInd Bank (b) Axis Bank (c) IDFC First Bank (d) RBL Bank

65. The Reserve Bank will evaluate the impact of multi-media public awareness campaign 'RBI Kehta Hai', which was launched in _____ languages to educate the public about safe banking and financial practices.
(a) 7 (b) 9 (c) 12 (d) 14
66. A five-member team of researchers at the _____ have developed the world's first specific reliable bacterial biosensor to detect the presence of common environmental pollutant- Sodium Dodecyl Sulphate /Sodium Lauryl Sulfate (SDS).
(a) Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Roorkee
(b) Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay
(c) Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi
(d) Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras
67. Which of the following tiger reserves will have women nature guides for the first time in its history?
(a) Nagarjunsagar-Srisailem Tiger Reserve (b) Bor Tiger Reserve
(c) Corbett Tiger Reserve (d) Simlipal Tiger Reserve
68. Who will be conferred with the Lifetime Achievement award for 2019 by the Karnataka state government for her contribution to Indian and Karnataka women's cricket?
(a) Shantha Rangaswamy (b) Deepika Niar
(c) Diana Eduljee (d) Anjum Chopra
69. Who has been recently elected unopposed as the Athletics Federation of India's (AFI) first woman senior vice-president?
(a) Karnam Malleshwari (b) Geeta Phogat
(c) Anju Bobby George (d) Meera Nahata
70. Who has become the first Indian footballer to make it to The Guardian's Next Generation List – a list of the best young footballers from across the globe?
(a) Ngangom Bala Devi (b) Bikash Yumnam
(c) Dalima Chhibber (d) Oinam Bembem Devi

ANSWER KEY AND EXPLANATION

1. c Labour and Employment Secretary, Apurva Chandra, has been elected as the Chairperson of the Governing Body of the ILO for the period October 2020- June 2021.
2. a Uttar Pradesh government has secured the first rank in central government's one of the most ambitious schemes - the PM Atmanirbhar Nidhi Scheme (SVANidhi Scheme) by approving the highest number of loans under the scheme in the country.
3. a Jammu and Kashmir High Court's Chief Justice, Gita Mittal inaugurated the first Family Court in the Union Territory at Srinagar.
4. a The first transport project under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) was inaugurated in Lahore.
5. b Uttar Pradesh has emerged as the top destination for attracting the highest number of domestic tourists in 2019.
6. c Pakistan will remain on the grey list of global terror financing watchdog, Financial Action Task Force (FATF) as it has not been able to fulfil six out of the 27 mandates to check terror funding.
7. b Former U.S. security contractor Edward Snowden has been granted permanent residency in Russia.
8. a UN officials said the 50th ratification from Honduras had been received.
9. c Nokia has been chosen by NASA to build the first ever cellular network on the moon.
10. a Six-times world champion Lewis Hamilton became the most successful Formula One driver of all time in terms of race wins with a dominant 92nd career victory at the Portuguese Grand Prix.
11. a Seven mainstream parties of Jammu and Kashmir gave formal shape to their recently cobbled alliance for the restoration of Article 370, electing National Conference's Farooq Abdullah as its chairman and PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti as vice chairperson.
12. a Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari laid the foundation stones of nine National Highway projects in Tripura.
13. d Vigilance Awareness Week is observed every year during the week in which the birthday of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel falls on 31st of October.
14. b Tribal Affairs Minister Arjun Munda launched two Centers of Excellence for Tribal Welfare through video conference. The first initiative strengthening Panchayati Raj institutions will be launched in five districts covering 30 Gram Panchayats and 150 villages of Jharkhand.
15. c Armenia and Azerbaijan have been at loggerheads over the mountainous region of Nagorno-Karabakh since 1988.
16. c Amy Coney Barrett officially took the first of two oaths that will allow her to join the Supreme Court of USA, shortly after being confirmed by a deeply divided Senate.
17. d Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga has said that the country will achieve zero carbon emissions by 2050.
18. a As per the Ookla September speed test index, South Korea has the best mobile internet speed of 121 Mbps while India is at 131st place with 12.07 Mbps average speed.

- 19. a** The postgraduate programme in enterprise management (PGPEM), offered by the Indian Institute of Management-Bangalore (IIM-B), has been ranked in the top 100 in the Financial Times (FT) EMBA 2020 ranking
- 20. c** The NASA's Stratospheric Observatory for Infrared Astronomy (SOFIA) has confirmed, for the first time, water on the sunlit surface of the Moon.
- 21. a** In a first for Metro services in north India, the Noida Metro Rail Corporation (NMRC) officially renamed the Sector 50 station as "Pride Station" dedicating it to the transgender community.
- 22. b** To promote inter-caste marriages Odisha chief minister Naveen Patnaik launched a web portal that would help inter-caste couples get an incentive within 60 days of application.
- 23. c** India and US held the 3rd bilateral two plus two Ministerial Dialogue in New Delhi and signed the landmark defence pact BECA.
- 24. c** The BRICS Parliamentary Forum was held in virtual format. It was chaired by Chairman of Russian Parliament, Vyacheslav Volodin.
- 25. d** In a breakthrough towards "green electronics", researchers at Indian Institute of Technology (IIT)-Jodhpur, have developed transistors with biodegradable gelatin as an electrical insulator, which may be utilised as breath analyser.
- 26. d** Kerala had become the first state in the country to fix the floor price for vegetables.
- 27. c** Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati researcher has developed a low-cost membrane technology to produce psychoactive drugs and anti-aging compounds from wide range of agricultural resources
- 28. a** Aditya Puri stepped out of HDFC Bank's corporate headquarters after handing over charge to Sashidhar Jagdishan as the new chief executive and managing director of the largest private sector lender.
- 29. b** The World Day for Audiovisual Heritage (WDAH) on 27th October provides an occasion to raise general awareness of the need to take urgent measures and to acknowledge the importance of audiovisual documents.
- 30. c** A six year old Bangladeshi boy Anzar Mustaeen Ali won a special prize of USD 1000 for his artwork in the global art competition organised by the Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR).
- 31. c** NITI Aayog, Ministry of Power, Rockefeller Foundation and Smart Power India launched the 'Electricity Access in India and Benchmarking Distribution Utilities' report.
- 32. d** In Madhya Pradesh, the Mobile Polling Units are going door-to-door for the first time for collection of ballot papers. By-elections are being held for 28 State Legislative Assembly seats in the state.
- 33. b** India's largest power producer NTPC entered into foreign currency loan agreement with Japanese government's financial institution for about Rs 3,582 crore.
- 34. c** Uttar Pradesh, Tripura, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu will get a vulture conservation and breeding centre each, according to the Action Plan for Vulture Conservation 2020-2025.
- 35. b** Scientists have identified the fossil of a giant bird that lived about 50 million years ago, with wingspans of up to 21 feet that would dwarf largest bird, the wandering albatross.
- 36. d** Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates, will issue foreign direct investment (FDI) licences to allow foreign investors to own 100% of projects in the emirate in sectors including agriculture, industry and service.

- 37. b** The Foreign Minister of Central Asian Countries welcomed the provision by India of one billion US dollar Line of Credit for priority developmental projects in fields such as energy, IT, healthcare, education and agriculture in the region.
- 38. d** The 1.8 kilometre long Feni bridge connecting Sabrum in India with Ramgarh in Bangladesh will be completed by December this year.
- 39. b** The United Kingdom has entered into a strategic partnership to develop India's fledgling international financial services centre GIFT City, and agreed to set up a new Fund of Funds to be managed by the State Bank of India group in order to route U.K.'s future capital investments into India.
- 40. c** The Global Himalayan Expedition (GHE) is among the winners of the 2020 UN Global Climate Action Award.
- 41. b** Assam has become the first state in the country to add a 'transgender' option in the gender category of the civil service examination form.
- 42. a** Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd and Tech Mahindra signed a contract worth Rs 400 crore for implementation of Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) to support HAL's 'Project Parivartan'.
- 43. a** China is building the world's highest-altitude cloud computing data centre in Tibet that will meet the data storage needs of the country and South Asian nations like Nepal, Bangladesh and Pakistan.
- 44. c** The country's largest lender State Bank of India (SBI) announced that it has entered into a strategic partnership with trusted global non-profit education platform edX in order to offer its Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs).
- 45. b** Hyderabad Airport becomes the first one in India to offer E-boarding services to flyers boarding international flights.
- 46. a** NITI Aayog and Quality Council of India (QCI) launched the 'National Program and Project Management Policy Framework' (NPMPPF), with the aim of bringing radical reforms in the way infrastructure projects are executed in India.
- 47. c** Actor Victor Banerjee won two global awards in two days for his role as a priest, Father O'Hara, in the 2019 film, Josef - Born in Grace.
- 48. b** Olympic champion Abhinav Bindra has taken another big step towards strengthening Indian sports with the opening of a sports medicine and research institute in Bhubaneswar.
- 49. a** Three species of black coral have been discovered on the seabed of the northern Pacific Ocean, an area where several countries have contracts to explore for metals including cobalt and nickel as they race to find new supplies of the key battery elements.
- 50. c** The Caribbean's most eco-certified hotel is now setting the world standard as Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort in Aruba is the first-ever hotel in the world to win the prestigious Global United Nations 2020 Climate Action Award for Climate Neutral Now.
- 51. a** Kerala was adjudged the best governed State in the large States category, while Uttar Pradesh ended at the bottom, in the Public Affairs Index-2020 released by the Public Affairs Centre.
- 52. b** Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated Sardar Patel Zoological Park and Geodesic Aviary Dome in the Statue of Unity complex near Kevadia in Narmada district of Gujarat.
- 53. c** Railways has launched Meri Saheli initiative for focused action on security of women passengers across all zones.

- 54. a** Former diplomat and Central Information Commissioner Yashvardhan Kumar Sinha is tipped to be appointed as the country's next Chief Information Commissioner (CIC), two months after the position at the top transparency watchdog fell vacant.
- 55. b** The first phase of the Malabar Naval exercise including Australia along with Japan and the U.S., is scheduled to be held next week off the Visakhapatnam coast.
- 56. b** Agri-lender Nabard has proposed to set up a subsidiary to provide a guarantee for loans under agriculture and rural development.
- 57. d** Biocon Ltd, a Bengaluru-headquartered biopharmaceuticals company, has been ranked among the Top 5 Global Biotech Employers for 2020 in the U.S.-based Science magazine's annual 'Science Careers Top 20 Employers' list.
- 58. d** Indian wrestler-turned-Mixed Martial Arts fighter Ritu Phogat won her third consecutive MMA championship title in Singapore.
- 59. b** Chris Gayle became the first batsman to get to 1,000 sixes in T20 cricket history when he smashed the seventh of his eight sixes during his belligerent 99 against Kings XI Punjab in an Indian Premier League match.
- 60. a** The Indian Army has developed and launched a secure messaging application, Secure Application for the Internet or SAI.
- 61. b** Kabartal, a freshwater marsh of North Bihar is designated as Ramsar Site. With this the network of Indian Ramsar Sites becomes the largest in South Asia.
- 62. d** The country's first defence park is ready for inauguration at Ottappalam in Palakkad district of Kerala.
- 63. a** Quanghai Li has been elected as World Sailing President, announced at World Sailing's Virtual General Assembly.
- 64. a** IndusInd Bank announced that it has gone live as a 'Financial Information Provider' (FIP) under the new 'Account Aggregator Framework' of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), making it the first bank in the country to do so.
- 65. d** The Reserve Bank will evaluate the impact of multi-media public awareness campaign 'RBI Kehta Hai', which was launched in 14 languages to educate the public about safe banking and financial practices.
- 66. a** A five-member team of researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Roorkee have developed the world's first specific reliable bacterial biosensor to detect the presence of common environmental pollutant- Sodium Dodecyl Sulphate /Sodium Lauryl Sulfate (SDS).
- 67. c** Corbett Tiger Reserve (CTR) will have women nature guides for the first time in its history.
- 68. a** Former India women's cricket team captain Shantha Rangaswamy will be conferred the Lifetime Achievement award for 2019 by the Karnataka state government on November 2 for her contribution to Indian and Karnataka women's cricket.
- 69. c** India's only medallist in the World Athletics Championships and Olympian Anju Bobby George was elected unopposed as the Athletics Federation of India's (AFI) first woman senior vice-president.
- 70. b** Manipuri's 17-year-old defender Bikash Yumnam has become the first Indian footballer to make it to The Guardian's Next Generation List – a list of the best young footballers from across the globe.