
MANTHAN

A General Awareness Weekly

30th November to 6th December, 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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National



Agriculture Infrastructure Fund: An important Link in Agricultural Reforms

- In its direction of agriculture reforms, the Central Government has launched one lakh crore rupees Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF).
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the financing facility of 1 lakh crore rupees under the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund through video conferencing. The Agriculture Infrastructure Fund is a medium - long term debt financing facility for investment in viable projects for post-harvest management infrastructure and community farming assets through interest subvention and credit guarantee. The duration of the scheme shall be from FY2020 to FY2029 (10 years).
- Under the scheme, Rs. 1 Lakh Crore will be provided by banks and financial institutions as loans with interest subvention of 3% per annum and credit guarantee coverage under CGTMSE scheme for loans up to Rs. 2 Crore for a maximum period of 7 years to the beneficiaries to increase the viability of these projects. Moratorium for loan repayment under this financing facility will be from 6 to 24 months.
- The beneficiaries will include farmers, PACS, Marketing Cooperative Societies, FPOs, SHGs, Joint Liability Groups (JLG), Multipurpose Cooperative Societies, Agri-entrepreneurs, Startups, and Central/State agency or Local Body sponsored Public-Private Partnership Projects.
- 11 of the 12 Public Sector Banks have already signed MOUs with the Department of Agriculture, Co-operation and Farmers Welfare. The Fund will catalyze the creation of post-harvest management infrastructure and community farming assets such as cold storage, collection centres and processing units.
- These assets will enable farmers to get greater value for their produce, as they will be able to store and sell at higher prices, reduce wastage, and increase processing and value addition. One lakh crore rupees will be sanctioned under the financing facility in partnership with multiple lending institutions. Prime Minister also released the sixth instalment of funds of 17 thousand crore rupees to 8.5 crore farmers under the PM-KISAN scheme. The event will be witnessed by lakhs of farmers, cooperatives, and citizens across the country.

The Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) scheme was launched in December 2018 to provide income support by way of a cash benefit to all landholding farmers (subject to certain exclusion criteria) to enable them to fulfill their agricultural requirements and support their families. Under the scheme, the financial benefit of Rs.6000/- per year is provided to eligible beneficiary farmers in three equal installments.

Bhubaneswar became the first Indian city to get an ISO 9001:2015 Certification

- The capital city of Odisha, Bhubaneswar became the first Indian city to get an ISO (International Organization for Standardization) 9001:2015 Certification for 'Faecal Sludge and Septage Management (FSSM) services'. Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) was the first civic body to implement FSSM regulations in the State.
- Jhenaidah is the first city in the world to get ISO 9001:2015 certifications. Bhubaneswar is the second city in the world and first in India to get ISO 9001:2015 certification.

- In February 2017, the **National Policy on Faecal Sludge and Septage Management (FSSM)** was launched by the **Ministry of Urban Development**. It is in line with Prime Minister Modi's Swachh Bharat Abhiyan and is a part of Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) Scheme.
- The aim of FSSM is to **facilitate the citywide implementation of safe and sustainable sanitation** in each and every household, street, town and city.

The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) is an international standard-setting body composed of representatives from various national standards organizations. Founded on 23 February 1947, the organization promotes worldwide proprietary, industrial, and commercial standards. It is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, and works in 165 countries. It was one of the first organizations granted general consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council. **ISO 9001:2015** is a company level certification based on the standard published by the International Organization for Standardization titled "Quality management systems-Requirements".

New farm Acts aim to transform agriculture sector in country & raise farmers' income

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi government has taken several measures with an aim to transform agriculture sector in the country and raise farmers' income.
- **Three Farm acts that are bone of contention: 1. The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020, 2. The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020, 3. Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020.**
- The acts aim to **do away with government interference in agricultural trade by creating trading areas free of middlemen and government taxes outside the structure of Agricultural Produce Market Committees (APMCs)**. It will allow farmers an option to sell their produce directly to these new zones, without going through the middlemen and paying levies such as mandi fees. It sought to remove stock holding limits as well as curbs on inter-State and intra-State trade, and create a framework for contract farming.
- The farmers have the power to sell their fruits or vegetables to anyone, and anywhere. The **Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020**, seeks to remove commodities like cereals, pulses, oilseeds, onion, and potato from the list of essential commodities and will do away with the imposition of stock holding limits.

The agriculture contribution in India's GDP in 2019 is 15.96 percent. According to latest report, **agriculture is primary source of livelihood for 58% population in India.** The Primary sector of the economy includes any industry involved in the extraction and production of raw materials, such as farming, logging, hunting, fishing, and mining. India is a global agricultural powerhouse. It is the world's largest producer of milk, pulses, and spices, and has the world's largest cattle herd (buffaloes), as well as the largest area under wheat, rice and cotton. It is the second largest producer of rice, wheat, cotton, sugarcane, farmed fish, sheep & goat meat, fruit, vegetables and tea.

Prakash Javadekar launches India Climate Change Knowledge Portal

- **Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change Prakash Javadekar launched the India Climate Change Knowledge Portal.** The portal will have all the major steps the Government is taking at both national and international levels to address the climate change issues.
- It will be a **single-point information resource that provides information on the different climate initiatives** taken by various Line Ministries enabling users to access d status on these initiatives. **With regard to climate actions after the Paris Agreement, India has practically achieved its pre-2020 climate action targets.**
- Mr Javadekar also demanded that other countries must commit to the advance commitments of Kyoto Protocol which has not been followed by the countries that must be done.

The landmark Paris deal, struck in 2015, aims to limit global warming to "well below" 2 °C above pre-industrial temperatures. The agreement came into force on November 4, 2016 and 189 countries have adopted it within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), dealing with greenhouse-gas-emissions mitigation, adaptation, and finance. **In November 2020, United States formally left the Paris Agreement.**

Nagaland hosts first virtual celebration of Hornbill Festival 2020

- Nagaland has hosted the first virtual celebration of Hornbill Festival 2020. Dubbed as the “Festival of Festivals”, the Hornbill Festival is celebrated every year showcasing the rich cultural heritage and tradition of the Nagas in one platform at Naga Heritage Village Kisama under Kohima District.
- However, due to Coronavirus pandemic, the state is holding its 21st edition of Hornbill festival 2020 completely on virtual mode. The content of the festival was sourced from Government archives.

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

Arjun Munda to launch 10-day-long Aadi Mahotsav

- Shri Arjun Munda, Union Minister for Tribal Affairs, launched the virtual edition of Aadi Mahotsav-Madhya Pradesh. The 10-day long festival, commencing on December 1, 2020, is being hosted on the Tribes India website (www.tribesindia.com).
- Keeping in view of restrictions due to Covid-19, the TRIFED has decided to organise its annual event Aadi Mahotsav-2020 in an online mode. India website www.tribesindia.com and the main focus of this year is on the tribal craft and culture of Madhya Pradesh.
- The Aadi Mahotsav is a unique celebration of the spirit of tribal culture, crafts, cuisine and commerce. It commenced in 2017. The festival is an attempt to familiarize the people with the rich and diverse craft and culture of the tribal communities across the country, in one place.

Cyclonic Storm ‘Burevi’ over southwest Bay of Bengal

- The Deep Depression over the southeast and adjoining southwest Bay of Bengal has intensified into a cyclonic storm. Seven days after Cyclone Nivar hit the Karaikal coast, another cyclone, Burevi, named by the Maldives, crossed Tamil Nadu's southernmost district of Kanyakumari first week of December.
- This is the third cyclone formed within the last 10 days in the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal, put together. Due to upwelling caused by Nivar, Cyclone Burevi has limited intensity.

Tropical Cyclone is any large system of winds that circulates about a center of low atmospheric pressure in a counter-clockwise direction north of the Equator and in a clockwise direction to the south.

Farm Legislations: Contract Agreement will guarantee the Farmers to get the fixed price

- The Narendra Modi government has taken several steps to transform the agriculture sector and to raise farmers' income. The government has also brought new farm acts in this direction.
- Contract farming is an alternate market model in which farmers and sponsors like wholesalers, processors, exporter enter into an agreement at the time of sowing. They work together to produce the required variety and quality in return of a risk-free income for the farmer.
- Such agreements provide multiple benefits to farmers including access to quality inputs, innovative cultivation practices, latest technology, market intelligence. It helps cultivate quality produce of variety consistent with market demand. It further improves farmers market access and opens high-value markets like export. The farmer will have full power in the contract to fix a sale price of his choice for the produce. They will receive payment within maximum 3 days.

In October 2019, Tamil Nadu has become the first State in the country to enact a law on contract farming with President Ram Nath Kovind giving assent to the Agricultural Produce and Livestock Contract Farming and Services (Promotion and Facilitation) Act. Contract farming usually involves the following basic elements - pre-agreed price, quality, quantity or acreage (minimum/maximum) and time (Manage 2003). Contracts can range from oral deals to formal, registered written contracts, the university said on its Website.

ADB, India sign 132.8 million loan to strengthen Meghalaya's power distribution Sector

- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Government of India signed a \$132.8 million loan to strengthen and modernize the distribution network and improve the quality of power supplied to households, industries, and businesses in India's northeastern state of Meghalaya.
- The project will construct 23 substations; renovate and modernize 45 substations, including the provision of control room equipment and protection systems; install and upgrade 2,214 kilometers of distribution lines and associated facilities covering three out of the six circles in the state.
- Installation of smart meters will benefit about 180,000 households. The loan is proposed to be supplemented by a \$2 million grant from ADB's Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction that will finance renewable energy mini-grids for improving power quality and supporting income generation activities, especially for women and other socially disadvantaged groups in three villages and three schools.
- The project will help develop a distribution sector road map and a financial road map for the Meghalaya Power Distribution Corporation Limited (MePDCL). These road maps will strengthen the capacity of MePDCL to operate and manage the distribution networks.

Asian Development Bank (ADB) is a regional development bank established on 19 December 1966, which is headquartered in the Ortigas Center located in the city of Mandaluyong, Metro Manila, Philippines. Masatsugu Asakawa, by career a Japanese civil servant, is the president of the Asian Development Bank. Asakawa, who took office on 17 January 2020, is the 10th president of ADB.

Odisha approves unified emergency helpline number 112

- Odisha Government approved the unified emergency helpline number 112 to provide all forms of police assistance to people in distress. Launching the service Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik said the consolidated helpline number would enable police to rush services to people in an efficient manner.
- The helpline number 112 subsumes the earlier segregated helpline numbers like 100,101,108 and other for emergency services like police, fire and ambulance. These multiple helplines have been clubbed together into the single toll free number under a centre-sponsored scheme that is already functional in several States.
- The 112 single Pan India helpline number had been launched by the centre in February last year to trigger emergency response to distress calls.

The '112' helpline is an integration of police (100), fire (101) and women (1090) helpline numbers and the project is being implemented under the central government's Nirbhaya Fund. The single number for emergency services is similar to '911' in the United States. The Emergency Response Support System (ERSS) envisages a single pan-India emergency number '112', which is an internationally recognised number, to target all types of emergencies. The Nirbhaya Fund was set up by the central government for projects specifically designed to improve the safety and security of the women.

Govt constitutes High-level Ministerial Committee for implementation of Paris Agreement

- Government of India has constituted a High-level Ministerial Committee for implementation of Paris Agreement. The Apex Committee for Implementation of Paris Agreement (AIPA) will be chaired by Environment Secretary.
- The purpose of AIPA is to generate a coordinated response on climate change matters that ensures India is on track towards meeting its obligations under the Paris Agreement.
- Another key function of AIPA would be to operate as a National Authority to regulate carbon markets in India under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, formulate guidelines for consideration of projects or activities under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, issue guidelines on carbon pricing, market mechanism, and other similar instruments that have a bearing on climate change and NDCs.
- The year 2021 would mark the beginning of implementation of the Paris Agreement and constitution of AIPA is central to strengthening the national systems and institutional arrangements for implementation and monitoring of climate actions.

Economy firmly on the path of a V-shaped recovery, says Finance Ministry

- **India's economy is firmly on the path of a V-shaped recovery after the collapse in the first quarter**, and further improvement is expected in the third quarter, **'notwithstanding some moderation'** in November's indicators attributing the recovery to the unlocking process along with **'astute' stimulus measures**.
- The prospects of a second wave of COVID-19 infections, however, remains the key downside risk to the economy, with **'Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi probably facing their second and third waves'** in November. **"This V-shaped recovery, evident at the half-way stage of 2020-21, reflects the resilience and robustness of the Indian economy.** The fundamentals of the economy remain strong as gradual scaling back of lockdowns, along with the astute support of Atmanirbhar Bharat Mission has placed the economy firmly on the path of recovery.

Economic recovery can take many forms, which is depicted using alphabetic notations. For example, a Z-shaped recovery, V-shaped recovery, U-shaped recovery, elongated U-shaped recovery, W-shaped recovery and L-shaped recovery. The fundamental difference between the different kinds of recovery is the time taken for economic activity to normalize. Z-shaped recovery is the most-optimistic scenario in which the economy quickly rises after an economic crash. V-shaped recovery is the next-best scenario after Z-shaped recovery in which the economy quickly recoups lost ground and gets back to the normal growth trend-line. U-shaped recovery is a scenario in which the economy, after falling, struggles around a low growth rate for some time, before rising gradually to usual levels. W-shaped recovery is a dangerous creature. In this, growth falls and rises, but falls again before recovering, thus forming a W-like chart. L-shaped recovery fails to regain the level of GDP even after years go by.

India's first transgender children's homes will be in Bengaluru

- **India's first homes for transgender children in need of care and protection** will soon be established in Bengaluru. The Ministry of Women and Child Development gave its nod for the project.
- **The minutes of the supplementary Project Approval Board (PAB) under child protection services** says that two government-run children's homes reserved for transgender children will be **established in Bengaluru Urban**. Children in need of care and protection include orphans, abandoned children, street children, child labourers and child victims of abuse.

PASSEX conducted by Indian Navy and Russian Navy

- **The Indian Navy (IN) is undertaking a Passage Exercise (PASSEX) with Russian Federation Navy (RuFN) in the Eastern Indian Ocean Region (IOR) from 4 to 5 December 2020.**
- **The exercise involves participation of RuFN guided missile cruiser Varyag, large anti-submarine ship Admiral Panteleyev and medium ocean tanker Pechenga. IN is being represented by indigenously constructed guided missile frigate Shivalik and anti-submarine corvette Kadmat along with integral helicopters.**
- **PASSEXs are conducted regularly by IN with units of friendly foreign navies, whilst visiting each other's ports or during a rendezvous at sea. This exercise, being conducted in the Eastern Indian Ocean Region, reflects the strong long-term strategic relationship between the two countries and particularly, defence cooperation in the maritime domain.**

Mizoram's first solar power plant commissioned

- **Mizoram's first solar power plant has been commissioned at Tlungvel.** The grid connected 2 megawatt solar photovoltaic (SPV) solar power plant was **opened by state Power minister R Lalzirliana.** The Solar Photovoltaic (SPV) Power Plant commissioned has a peak generation capacity of 2 MW.

Mizoram is a state in Northeast India, with Aizawl as its capital city. The name is derived from "Mizo", the name of the native inhabitants, and "Ram", which means land, and thus Mizoram means "land of the Mizos". Like several other northeastern states of India, Mizoram was previously part of Assam until 1972, when it was carved out as a Union Territory. It became the 23rd state of India, a step above Union Territory, on 20 February 1987, with Fifty-Third Amendment of Indian Constitution, 1986. Lal Thanhawla has been the Chief Minister of Mizoram since 11 December 2008. Kummanam Rajasekharan is the current Governor of Mizoram.

Bihar plans migratory bird festival to raise awareness about them

- In a novel initiative, Bihar is holding a bird festival to create awareness about the importance of migratory birds that arrive here in large numbers every year. The initiative assumes significance in the light of increasing cases of poaching and illegal hunting of migratory birds that provide benefits to the ecosystem, including pest control, pollination of plants and also serve as food sources for other wildlife, according to researchers.
- The first-of-its-kind bird festival is being organised at Bhagalpur, an eastern Bihar town located on the southern bank of the Ganges. The three-day festival likely to start from December 11 is being jointly organised by the Bhagalpur forest division, Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) and Mandar Nature Club.

Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IIT B) ranks as the number one university in India, according to QS World University Ranking 2021

- QS Top Universities website provides a comprehensive database of universities with detailed coverage about their features, facilities, courses, faculty, and other information. It also provides a university search tool that lets the users find and learn about different universities using very useful filters.
- India is a remarkable destination for higher education, with a long list of universities that offer students world class education. This article lists the top 10 Indian universities based on QS World University Ranking 2021.
- Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IIT B) ranks as the number one university in India, and stands at the 172nd position in the world ranking. The first of its kind to be set up with foreign assistance in India, this institution of national importance has 10,401 Indian students, including 99 international students, and around 974 faculty members. The institute is acknowledged globally as a leader in the field of engineering education and research. Indian Institute of Science Bangalore ranks second on the QS Top Universities list and is at the 185th position among the world's top universities.

Hunar Haat to be organised at Rampur from 18th to 27th December and Lucknow from 23rd to 31st January 2021

- Minority Affairs Minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi announced that the next “HunarHaat” will be organised at Numaish Ground, Rampur from 18th to 27th of this month and Shilp Gram, Lucknow from 23rd to 31st January next year. The theme will be “Vocal for Local”.
- Hunar Haat is an exhibition of handicrafts and traditional products made by artisans from the minority communities. These are organised by the Ministry of Minority Affairs under USTTAD (Upgrading the Skills & Training in Traditional Arts/Crafts for Development) scheme.

Task force set up for preparing a roadmap on imparting technical education in Mother Tongue

- Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal ‘Nishank’ has set up a task force for preparing a roadmap on imparting technical education in Mother Tongue.
- The task force set up under the chairmanship of Secretary, Higher Education will take into consideration the suggestions made by various stakeholders and will submit a report in a month. The decision was taken by the Minister at a high level meeting held on imparting technical education in Mother Tongue.
- The Minister said that no language will be imposed on any student but enabling provisions should be made so that bright students are not deprived of Technical Education due to lack of knowledge of English language.

The Ministry of Education (MoE), previously the Ministry of Human Resource Development (1985-2020), is responsible for the implementation and formulation of the National Policy on Education approved by Union cabinet of India and to ensure that it is implemented in letter and spirit. The Ministry is held currently by Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank. He represents the Haridwar Parliamentary constituency of Uttarakhand in the 17th Lok Sabha. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad is the First Minister of Education in the Indian. He is commonly remembered as Maulana Azad; the word Maulana is an honorific meaning ‘Our Master’ and he had adopted Azad (Free) as his pen name.



UAE: First Arab Country to generate electricity from coal

- The United Arab Emirates is set to become the first Arab Gulf country to generate electricity from coal. As governments increasingly turn to cleaner fuels and the price of renewable energy falls, it may also be the last.
- Dubai is starting up the \$3.4 billion Hassyan coal plant, with capacity being increased from an initial 600 mega watts to 2,400 by 2023. Japan's Jera Co. will supply coal under a long-term agreement with Acwa Power of Saudi Arabia, which is developing the plant.

Abu Dhab is the capital and the second most populous city of the United Arab Emirates (the most populous being Dubai), and also capital of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, the largest of the UAE's seven emirates. United Arab Emirates (UAE) is a federal sovereign absolute monarchy in Western Asia. Khalifa Al Nahyan is the current President of the United Arab Emirates. Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum is the Vice President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Ruler of the Emirate of Dubai. United Arab Emirates dirham is the currency of the United Arab Emirates. It is bordered by Saudi Arabia to the west and south and by Oman to the east and northeast. The land border with Qatar in the Khawr al Udayd area is a source of ongoing dispute.

Scotland first in the world to make sanitary products free

- Scotland made sanitary products free to all women, becoming the first nation in the world to take such a step against "period poverty."
- The measure makes tampons and sanitary pads available at designated public places such as community centres, youth clubs and pharmacies, at an estimated annual cost to taxpayers of 24 million pounds (\$32 million U.S.).
- The Period Products (Free Provision) Scotland Bill passed unanimously, and First Minister of Scotland Nicola Sturgeon called it "an important policy for women and girls."

Scotland is a country that is part of the United Kingdom. Edinburgh is the capital city of Scotland. Nicola Sturgeon is the current First Minister of Scotland.

Scottish homes to be first in world to use 100% green hydrogen

- Hundreds of homes in Scotland will soon become the first in the world to use 100% green hydrogen to heat their properties and cook their meals as part of a new trial that could help households across the country replace fossil fuel gas.
- Some 300 homes in Fife will be fitted with free hydrogen boilers, heaters and cooking appliances to be used for more than four years in the largest test of whether zero carbon hydrogen, made using renewable energy and water, could help meet Britain's climate goals.
- They will begin to receive green gas from the end of 2022, at no extra charge, and up to 1,000 homes could be included if the first phase of the trial is completed successfully.

Canada plans digital tax in 2022 on global tech giants such as Facebook, Google

- Canada plans to impose a tax on corporations providing digital services from 2022 that will stay in place until major nations come up with a coordinated approach on taxation.

- **The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development is working on a common approach to ensure digital behemoths**, such as Alphabet Inc's Google and Facebook Inc, pay their share of taxes as the coronavirus hammers budgets.

Canada is a country located in the northern part of North America. Canada is the world's second-largest country by total area. Elizabeth II is the Head of the Commonwealth and queen regnant of seven independent Commonwealth countries: the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Pakistan, and Ceylon. . Its capital is Ottawa, and its three largest metropolitan areas are Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver. Canadian dollar is the currency of Canada. Justin Pierre James Trudeau is serving as the 23rd and current Prime Minister of Canada since 2015.

Azerbaijan fully reclaims lands around Nagorno-Karabakh

- **Azerbaijan completed reclaiming territory ceded by Armenia under a Russia-brokered peace deal that ended six weeks of fierce fighting over Nagorno-Karabakh. Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev hailed the restoration of control over the areas as a "historic victory" and a demonstration of his nation's "unbending spirit."**
- **Turkey, which has strongly backed its ally Azerbaijan, has extended its clout in the region. Russian and Turkish military officials signed documents to set up a joint monitoring center to ensure the fulfillment of the peace deal.**
- **The peace agreement was celebrated as a victory in Azerbaijan, but sparked mass protests in Armenia, with thousands taking to the streets of the capital of Yerevan to demand the ouster of Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan. Several hundred protesters again rallied in Yerevan, repeating the demand.**
- **Nagorno-Karabakh lies within Azerbaijan but has been under the control of ethnic Armenian forces backed by Armenia since a separatist war there ended in 1994. That conflict left not only Nagorno-Karabakh itself but large chunks of surrounding lands in Armenian hands.**

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.

In world first, U.K. approves Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for emergency use

- **Britain approved Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine jumping ahead of the United States and Europe to become the West's first country to formally endorse a jab.**
- **Prime Minister Boris Johnson touted the medicine authority's approval as a global win and a ray of hope amid the gloom of the novel coronavirus which has killed nearly 1.5 million people globally, hammered the world economy and upended normal life.**

Boris Johnson invited as 2021 Republic Day chief guest

- **India has invited U.K. Prime Minister Boris Johnson as chief guest for the Republic Day celebrations in January 2021 and a decision on this is awaited from London.**
- **There has been top level visit since U.S. President Donald Trump's visit in February 2020 due to COVID-19. Also, with the number of COVID-19 cases in India crossing 9.5 million, there is still no clarity on the Republic Day celebrations in 2021. Then-Prime Minister John Major was the chief guest at the event in 1993, the last time India had invited a dignitary from the UK.**

UN, Ethiopia sign deal for humanitarian access to Tigray

- **The United Nations** says it and **Ethiopia's government** have signed a deal to allow **unimpeded humanitarian access to the embattled Tigray region**, at least the parts under federal government control.
- This will allow the **first aid to the region of 6 million people** that has been cut off during fighting that began a month ago between the federal and Tigray regional governments. Each regards the other as illegal in a power struggle that has been months in the making.

Ethiopia is a country in the **Horn of Africa** and its capital and largest city is **Addis Ababa**. The **birr** is the **unit of currency in Ethiopia**. **Abiy Ahmed Ali** is serving as the 15th and current Prime Minister of Ethiopia since **2 April 2018**.

Lebanon Reform, Recovery & Reconstruction Framework (3RF)

- **The Lebanon Reform, Recovery and Reconstruction Framework (3RF)** is part of a **comprehensive response to the massive explosion on the Port of Beirut**. It is a people-centered **recovery and reconstruction framework focusing on a period of 18 months** that will bridge the immediate humanitarian response and the medium-term recovery and reconstruction efforts to put Lebanon on a path of sustainable development.
- **The 3RF aims to help Lebanon achieve three central goals in response to the Beirut port explosion**. First, a people-centered recovery that returns sustainable livelihoods to the affected population; improves social justice for all, including women, the poor, and other vulnerable groups; and ensures participatory decision making.
- Second, the reconstruction of critical assets, services, and infrastructure that provides equal access for all to quality basic services and enables sustainable economic recovery. Third, the implementation of reform to support reconstruction and to help restore people's trust in governmental institutions by improving governance.

In UK, examining the world's first 'foul air death'

- **An important inquest is underway in London to determine whether air pollution caused or contributed to the death** in February 2013 of a nine-year-old child, **Ella Adoo Kissi-Debrah**, who lived with her mother near a busy road in London.
- **Ella's death could become possibly the first in the world to be legally certified as having been caused by "air pollution"**. For three years before she died, **Ella Adoo Kissi-Debrah** had **suffered seizures**, and had made 27 visits to hospital after having problems breathing.
- She lived less than 30 metres from the South Circular, a busy and congested arterial road in **Lewisham in southeast London**. If the campaign by the family is successful — **Ella's mother Rosamund**, an important voice in the clean air movement, has set up **The Ella Roberta Family Foundation to help improve the lives of children suffering from asthma** — Ella will become the **first person in the United Kingdom**, and possibly in the world, to have **air pollution recorded as the cause of death**.

PoK government signs agreements with Chinese firm to build 700 MW hydropower project

- The government in **Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir** has signed agreements with a **Chinese company** and a **local renewable energy firm** for the construction of **700 MW hydropower project** at an estimated cost of **\$1.35 billion** in the region as part of the **ambitious China-Pakistan Economic Corridor**.
- **China Gezhouba Group** and its local partner **Laraib Group Pakistan** are the shareholders of the '**Azad Pattan Hydropower Project**', which is located on **Jhelum River** in **Sadhanoti district of PoK**.

Azad Jammu and Kashmir ('Free Jammu and Kashmir') is a region administered by **Pakistan** as a nominally self-governing entity and constitutes the western portion of the larger **Kashmir region**, which has been the **subject of a dispute between India and Pakistan since 1947**. The territory has a parliamentary form of government modelled after the British Westminster system, with its capital located at **Muzaffarabad**. **Masood Khan** is a **Pakistani diplomat** who serves as the **27th President of Azad Kashmir**.



Indian Oil Corporation launches India's first 100 Octane petrol

- **Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) launched India's first 100 Octane petrol**, helping India join a select league of nations globally that have such superior quality fuel.
- **Launching the fuel**, Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas and Steel **Dharmendra Pradhan** said **XP100 premium petrol** will **initially be available at select outlet of IOC in 10 cities** -- Delhi, Gurgaon, Noida, Agra, Jaipur, Chandigarh, Ludhiana, Mumbai, Pune and Ahmedabad.
- **The fuel is manufactured at IOC's Mathura refinery in Uttar Pradesh** and supplied at select petrol pumps. Octane ratings are measures of fuel stability. **It is a measure of a fuel's ability to avoid knock.**
- **Knock occurs when fuel is prematurely ignited in the engine's cylinder**, which degrades efficiency and can be damaging to the engine. **The higher the octane number, the more resistant the petrol mixture is to knock.**
- **Worldwide, 100 Octane petrol has a niche market for luxury vehicles that demand high performance and is available only in six countries of USA, Germany, Greece, Indonesia, Malaysia and Israel.**
- **Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL)** had recently launched Octane 99 and now **IOC has come to the market with XP100**. Previously, the nation leapfrogged from BS-IV (Euro-IV) emission compliant fuel to BS-VI from April 1 this year.

An octane rating, or octane number, is a standard measure of the performance of an engine or aviation gasoline. The higher the octane number, the more compression the fuel can withstand before detonating. In broad terms, fuels with a higher octane rating are used in high-performance gasoline engines that require higher compression ratios. In contrast, fuels with lower octane numbers (but higher cetane numbers) are ideal for diesel engines, because diesel engines (also referred to as compression-ignition engines) do not compress the fuel, but rather compress only air and then inject fuel into the air which was heated by compression.

Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) is an Indian state owned oil and Gas Company with registered office at Mumbai and primarily headquartered in New Delhi. It is the largest commercial enterprise in the country.

Bengaluru to host India's first AI-enabled conversational digital persona

- **Accenture and the Museum of Art & Photography (MAP)**, a private art museum based in Bengaluru, will collaborate to create a digital experience to engage art enthusiasts.
- **MAP is the custodian of a growing collection of over 18,000 art works**, predominantly from the **subcontinent and dating from the 10th century to the present**. It will launch a digital version of the museum this month while its flagship physical space will come up in 2021.
- **Accenture Labs, through its Tech4Good initiative**, combined advanced technologies, such as **artificial intelligence (AI) with human-centered design**, and will **create India's first conversational digital persona to help visitors** have a more engaging experience. With this, visitors to the museum will be able to have a lifelike conversation with the persona in the display.

Lloyds Bank is first in the world to connect to Swift gpi Instant

- **Lloyds Bank in the UK has become the first bank to switch on Swift gpi Instant**, a new service from the Brussels-based interbank co-operative that **enables consumers and businesses to send tracked payments in seconds across borders**.
- **The gpi Instant service works by connecting Swift gpi**, the **high-speed cross-border rails with real-time domestic infrastructure**, in this case the UK's Faster Payments.
- **Remittance payments from anywhere in the world destined for the UK routed through Lloyds can now arrive in seconds**, with clarity on fees and predictability on when an end beneficiary's account will be credited.

Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT), legally S.W.I.F.T. SCRL, provides a network that enables financial institutions worldwide to send and receive information about financial transactions in a secure, standardized and reliable environment. In 2019, SWIFT announces the results of a global trial to integrate SWIFT gpi Instant, the co-operative's cross-border instant payments service, into Singapore's domestic instant payment service, Fast And Secure Transfers (FAST).

HCL's Roshni tops list of India's richest women

- **HCL Technologies chairperson Roshni Nadar Malhotra, with a net worth of Rs. 54,850 crore, tops the Kotak Wealth Hurun list of India's wealthiest women.**
- Trailing her is **Biocon's Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw with a net worth of Rs. 36,600 crore**. In the third spot is **Leena Gandhi Tewari of the Mumbai-headquartered pharmaceuticals firm USV, with a net worth of Rs. 21,340 crore.**
- **Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw is the wealthiest self-made woman on the list, which features eight dollar billionaires and 38 women with wealth of Rs 1,000 crore and above.** The listing is based on the net worth of women as on September 30, 2020 and focuses exclusively on women who play an active role in their family business, entrepreneurs and professionals.

Hyderabad International Airport Gets India's First IoT Enabled Smart Trolleys

- **GMR Hyderabad International Airport (GHIAL), also known as Rajiv Gandhi International Airport, has introduced an Internet of Things (IoT)-enabled smart baggage trolley system** for tracking and maintaining the availability of baggage trolleys in real-time across the airport. The airport is claimed to have **become India's first airport to deploy this technology**, which is in line with the **Digital India Programme of the Government of India.**
- **Under the Airport Baggage Trolley Project, the entire fleet of 3,000 baggage trolleys have been installed with the LoRa (Long Range) platform.** This technology will reduce passenger waiting times and ensure adequate availability of the trolleys in real-time. Furthermore, it is claimed to be compatible on desktop, mobile and laptop.

RBI asks HDFC to stop new digital business launches; avoid adding new Credit Card customers

- **The Reserve Bank of India has asked country's largest private bank, HDFC, to stop new digital business launches and avoid adding new Credit Card customers** after repeated reports by its customers facing multiple cases of technical glitches.
- **HDFC Bank said over the last two years, it has taken several measures to fortify its IT systems and will continue to work swiftly to close out the balance** and would continue to engage with the regulator in this regard.

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

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**.

Instagram launches 'Live Rooms' feature

- **Instagram rolled out the 'Live Rooms' feature that allows up to three additional users to go live in the same session.** Users can now accommodate three guests to expand their reach on the platform.
- **Creators can conduct talk shows or podcasts, host jam sessions or collaborate with other artists,** and engage in Q&As in the live session. **With the introduction of this feature, an Instagram live session will now be able to hold 4 people instead of 2 which was the previous limit.** Users will now not have to end their live session with the current user to add another participant.

Instagram is an American photo and video sharing social networking service owned by **Facebook**, created by **Kevin Systrom** and **Mike Krieger** and originally launched on iOS in October 2010. The Android version was released in April 2012, followed by a feature-limited desktop interface in November 2012, a Fire OS app in June 2014, and an app for Windows 10 in October 2016. **The app allows users to upload media that can be edited with filters and organized by hashtags and geographical tagging.**

Sandeep Kataria is Bata's global head; first Indian to hold top post

- International footwear company **Bata Brands** has elevated **Sandeep Kataria** to the post of **global CEO**. **Kataria is the first Indian to hold this prestigious role and will be taking over Alexis Nasard,** who has been leading the 126-year old company for almost five years now.

Shantanu Narayen, Ajay Banga named among Fortune Businessperson of the Year 2020

- **Adobe CEO Shantanu Narayen and Mastercard CEO Ajay Banga have been named by Fortune among the Businessperson of the Year 2020, a list topped by Tesla CEO Elon Musk.**
- **The Fortune 2020 Businessperson of the Year is Musk for a second time.** The publication said in a year dominated by crisis and uncertainty, other leaders also stood out and "achieved the remarkable".
- **On Narayen, ranked 8th on the list, Fortune** said under his leadership, the 38-year-old provider of design and publishing tools has continued to evolve into a massive subscription-based business.

Fortune is an American multinational business magazine headquartered in New York City. It is published by **Fortune Media Group Holdings**, owned by Thai businessman **Chatchaval Jiaravanon**. The publication was founded by **Henry Luce** in 1929.

Uday Shankar becomes first M&E executive to be elected as FICCI president

- **Uday Shankar, the outgoing chairman of Star & Disney India and president of The Walt Disney Company, Asia Pacific,** is the new president elect of **FICCI** for the year 2020-21.
- **He will succeed Sangita Reddy, current president of FICCI, and joint MD, Apollo Hospitals Group** during **FICCI's 93rd AGM.**

Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) is the largest and oldest apex business organisation in India. **FICCI** is established in 1927, on the advice of **Mahatma Gandhi** by **GD Birla** and **Purushottam Das Thakurdas**. It is headquartered in the national capital **New Delhi**.

FM Nirmala Sitharaman releases the 'Smuggling in India Report 2019-20'

- **Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman inaugurated the 63rd Founding Day Celebrations of the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI).** On the occasion, Mrs Sitharaman released the **Smuggling in India Report 2019-20** which analyses organised smuggling trends on Gold and Foreign Currency, Narcotic Drugs, Security, Environment and Commercial Frauds.

- On the occasion, Bravery Awards were conferred upon **Najimudheen T S of DRI Cochin Zonal Unit** and **Sumer Sen**, an independent witness of a case booked by DRI, Jaipur. **The DRI Utkrisht Seva Samman, 2020** was awarded to **B. Sankaran**, an officer of the 1961 batch of the Indian Revenue Service.

Nirmala Sitharaman is the current Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs of India. She is currently a member of the Rajya Sabha from Karnataka. Sitharaman formerly served as the Defence Minister of India, thereby becoming India's second female defence minister and also the second female finance minister after Indira Gandhi, and first full-time female Finance Minister. **Santosh Kumar Gangwar** is the Minister of State with independent charge in the Ministry of Labour and Employment in the Government of India.

India's economy rebounded sharply in the wake of the reopening from lockdowns, slowing the pace of its contraction to 8.6% in the second quarter

- India's economy rebounded sharply in the wake of the reopening from lockdowns, slowing the pace of its contraction to 8.6% in the second quarter, a 'nowcast' in the RBI's monthly bulletin showed.
- Still, the estimate implies that India is likely to have entered a technical recession in the first half of 2020-21 for the first time in its history with two successive quarters of GDP contraction, wrote an RBI official who authored an article in the bulletin.
- An Economic Activity Index, which tracks real-time data from 27 monthly indicators, showed the economy had rebounded sharply from May/June, with industry normalising faster than contact-intensive service sectors, pointing to a short-lived contraction.
- "The index nowcasts GDP growth at (-) 8.6% in Q2, implying that India is likely to have entered a technical recession in the first half," Pankaj Kumar of the RBI's Monetary Policy Department wrote in the article titled 'An Economic Activity Index for India'.

Deflation is generally the decline in the prices for goods and services that occur when the rate of inflation falls below 0%. Deflation will take place naturally, if and when the money supply of an economy is limited. Deflation in an economy indicates deteriorating conditions. Deflation is normally linked with significant unemployment and low productivity levels of good and services. **The term "Deflation" is often mistaken with "disinflation."** While deflation refers to a decrease in the prices of goods and services in an economy, disinflation is when inflation increases at a slower rate. Stagflation is the combination of high inflation, high unemployment and sluggish economic growth. Inflation is caused by multiple factors, they are 1. Money Supply 2. National Debt 3. Demand-Pull Effect 4. Cost-Push Effect.

India's Amul is now world's 8th largest milk processor

- Amul, a brand of dairy cooperative major Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation Ltd (GCMMF), is ranked 8th in the list of top 20 global dairy processors released by the International Farm Comparison Network (IFCN).
- The home-grown dairy giant has moved up one rank since last year's ranking. In 2018, it emerged as the 9th largest milk processor by IFCN, a global dairy research network.
- Amul was ranked at 18th position in 2012, however, in flat 8 years; it has moved 10 notches above to the current 8th position. New Zealand's Fonterra, Switzerland's Nestle Dairy, Canada's Saputo, US' Dairy Farmers of America, France' Groupe Lactalis, Netherlands' FrieslandCampina, and Denmark's Arla Foods have retained their rankings in 2020.

Amul is an Indian dairy cooperative society, based at Anand in the state of Gujarat. Formed in 1946, it is a cooperative brand managed by a cooperative body, the Gujarat Co-operative Milk Marketing Federation Ltd. (GCMMF), which today is jointly owned by 3.6 million milk producers in Gujarat. Amul spurred India's White Revolution, which made the country the world's largest producer of milk and milk products.



Inventions/Discoveries

BrahMos Supersonic Cruise Missile in Anti-Ship mode successfully test fired

- **BrahMos Supersonic Cruise Missile in Anti-Ship mode** was successfully test fired against a decommissioned Ship. The test firing was carried out by Indian Navy.
- The missile performed highly complex manoeuvres and hit Bull's eye of the target. Ministry of Defence in a statement said that **BrahMos is the supersonic cruise missile jointly developed by DRDO and NPOM of Russia** as a **Brahmos Aerospace joint venture**, which became Brahmos Aerospace Private Limited.
- The missile has established itself as a **major force multiplier in modern-day complex battlefields** with its **impeccable anti-ship and land-attack capabilities** with multi-role and multi-platform abilities.
- It has been deployed in all the three wings of the Indian Armed Forces. **The first launch of Brahmos took place in 2001** and till date numerous launches have taken place from various ships, Mobile Autonomous Launchers and Su-30 MKI aircraft, making it a versatile weapon.

The **BrahMos** missile is named after two rivers, the **Brahmaputra** and the **Moskva**. India is a member of the **MTCR**, India and Russia are now planning to jointly develop a new generation of Brahmos missiles with **600 km-plus range**.

Nasa finds 'Asteroid 2020 SO' which skimmed Earth this week was actually old rocket part

- **NASA has confirmed the 'asteroid' which swung by Earth on December 1** was actually a piece of an old rocket the space agency launched in the 1960s.
- **Asteroid 2020 SO flew by Earth at an extremely close distance**. The object came within just 13 percent of the distance between the Earth and the Moon, giving astronomers the perfect opportunity to witness the event. It had been **suspected Asteroid 2020 SO was not an asteroid**, and NASA observations have now confirmed that.
- **NASA collected data from the Infrared Telescope Facility (IRTF)** and orbit analysis from the Center for Near-Earth Object Studies (CNEOS) at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory to determine the orbit of 2020 SO.

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**.

HAL Delivers Biggest Ever Cryogenic Propellant Tank to ISRO

- The public sector aerospace manufacturing company, the **Hindustan Aeronautics Limited** delivered the **biggest cryogenic propellant tank C 32 LH 2** to the **Indian Space Research Organisation** in Bengaluru.
- The **biggest cryogenic propellant tank of aluminium alloy** is designed for **improving the payload capability of GSLV MK III heavy lift satellite launch vehicle** of ISRO.

Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) is an Indian state-owned aerospace and defence company headquartered in Bangalore, 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.

Govt. announces Rs 900 crore package for COVID-19 Vaccine Development Mission

- The Centre has announced the third stimulus package of Rs 900 crore for the Mission COVID Suraksha- The Indian COVID-19 Vaccine Development Mission. This grant will be provided to the Department of Biotechnology (DBT) for Research and Development of Indian COVID-19 vaccines with end-to-end focus from preclinical development through clinical development and manufacturing and regulatory facilitation for deployment.
- It would consolidate all available and funded resources towards an accelerated product development. The Ministry of Science and Technology said that this will help accelerate development of approximately 5 to 6 vaccine candidates.
- This will also ensure that these are brought closer to licensure and introduction in the market for consideration of regulatory authorities for introduction in public health systems, to combat further spread of COVID infection. Phase-I of the COVID Suraksha Mission has been allotted 900 Crore rupees for a period of 12 months.

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a contagious disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). The first case was identified in Wuhan, China, in December 2019. It has since spread worldwide, leading to an ongoing pandemic. WHO first learned of this new virus on 31 December 2019, following a report of a cluster of cases of 'viral pneumonia' in Wuhan, People's Republic of China. The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are, Fever, Dry cough and Fatigue. The standard diagnosis method is by real-time reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction (rRT-PCR) from a nasopharyngeal swab. In India, the first case was reported in Kerala.

In world's first, lab-grown meat to go on sale in Singapore

- Singapore has given U.S. start-up Eat Just the green light to sell its lab-grown chicken meat, in what the firm says is the world's first regulatory approval for so-called clean meat that does not come from slaughtered animals.
- Cultured meat, produced in bioreactors without the slaughter of an animal, has been approved for sale by a regulatory authority for the first time. The development has been hailed as a landmark moment across the meat industry.

Namibia to auction 170 elephants over drought, increased population

- Namibia has put 170 "high value" wild elephants up for sale due to drought and an increase in elephant numbers, the southern African country's environmental ministry.
- In October it put 70 female and 30 male buffalos from Waterberg Plateau Park in central Namibia up for sale in a bid to ease pressure on grazing land. The arid southern African nation also auctioned 1,000 animals from national parks, including 500 buffalos in 2019 as it faced the worst drought in a century.

Indo Gangetic plain global hotspot of atmospheric ammonia: IIT Kharagpur study

- The Indo- Gangetic Plain (IGP) is the global hot-spot of atmospheric ammonia (NH₃) due to intense agricultural activities and fertilizer production there, according to researchers at The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kharagpur.
- The study titled "Record high levels of atmospheric ammonia over India: Spatial and temporal analyses" has also been published in the international Elsevier journal "Science of the Total Environment".
- The study by the IIT team was conducted along with researchers from Indian Institute Of Tropical Meteorology, Pune and few European researchers. The team has also recommended wider adoption of precision farming along with seasonal restrictions on the use of fertilizers.

First-ever study has grim prognosis: native squirrel could vanish from NE after 2050

- **The Malayan Giant Squirrel**, one of the world's largest squirrel species that has a dark upper body, pale under parts, and a long, bushy tail, is **currently found in parts of West Bengal, Sikkim, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, and Nagaland.**
- A first-of-its-kind study by the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) under the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, has projected that numbers of the Malayan Giant Squirrel (*Ratufa bicolor*) could decline by 90 per cent in India by 2050, and if urgent steps are not taken, the species could be extinct in the country in subsequent decades. **Destruction of its habitat could restrict the squirrel to only southern Sikkim and North Bengal by 2050**, according to the ZSI.

Zoological Survey of India (ZSI), founded on 1 July 1916 by Government of India Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, as premier Indian organisation in zoological research and studies to promote the survey, exploration and research of the fauna in the country.

China completes its first-ever docking in lunar orbit

- A Chinese probe carrying samples from the lunar surface successfully docked with a spacecraft orbiting the moon, in another space first for the nation.
- The manoeuvre was part of the ambitious Chang'e-5 mission -- named after a mythical Chinese Moon goddess -- to bring back the first lunar samples in four decades. The cargo capsule carrying lunar rocks and soil lifted off from the surface and docked with the orbiter.
- The cargo capsule's departure from the lunar surface was also a first: the first liftoff of a Chinese craft from an extraterrestrial body. The capsule transferred the moon samples to the orbiter, which will separate and return to Earth.
- If the return journey is successful, China will become only the third country to have retrieved samples from the Moon, following the United States and the Soviet Union in the 1960s and 1970s. Scientists hope the samples from Chang'e-5 will help them learn more about the Moon's origins and volcanic activity on its surface.

Moon is a rounded astronomical body that orbits the Earth as its only natural satellite. It has a rocky silicate composition and is of planetary mass but has no significant atmosphere, hydrosphere or magnetic field. Its surface gravity is 0.1654 g, about one-sixth of Earth's. The Moon's average orbital distance from Earth is 384,402 km (238,856 mi) or 1.28 light-seconds. Its gravitational influence produces Earth's tides and slightly lengthens Earth's day. The first human-made object to reach the Moon was the Soviet Union's uncrewed Luna 2 spacecraft in September 1959, which was intentionally crashed onto the lunar surface. This was followed by the first successful soft landing on the Moon by Luna 9 in 1966. The only human lunar missions to date have been those of the United States' NASA Apollo program. Chandrayaan-1 was the first Indian lunar probe under Chandrayaan program. Chandrayaan-2 is the second lunar exploration mission developed by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), after Chandrayaan-1. Chandrayaan-3 is a planned third lunar exploration mission by the ISRO. Following Chandrayaan-2 where a snag in communication led to the failure of the lander's soft landing attempt, after a successful orbital insertion, another lunar mission for demonstrating soft landing was proposed.

SPORTS



Sports Personalities in News

Hamilton wins crash-hit Bahrain Grand Prix

- **Lewis Hamilton** won the Bahrain Formula One Grand Prix for Mercedes after French driver Romain Grosjean had a miraculous escape from a fiery first lap crash that ripped his car in two.
- The win, from pole position, was the 95th of seven times world champion Hamilton's career and came with the safety car leading the field to the chequered flag. Red Bull's Max Verstappen finished second.

Kohli becomes fastest cricketer to score 12000 ODI runs, beats Tendulkar's record

- India captain **Virat Kohli** became the fastest cricketer to score 12,000 ODI runs, breaking a record held by legendary compatriot Sachin Tendulkar.
- Kohli, who needed 23 runs for the landmark coming into the match, touched the figure in his 242nd innings. In comparison, it took Tendulkar 300 games to get there.
- The 32-year-old Indian captain was playing in his 251st ODI and averages close to 60 in the format with 43 hundreds and 59 half centuries. He made his debut in 2008.
- Tendulkar scored 18426 runs from 463 ODIs between 1989 and 2012 at an average of 44.83 with the help of 49 hundreds and 96 half centuries

FIFA extends 7-team Club World Cup to 2021; Japan to host

- FIFA extended the smaller Club World Cup format for one more year after a 24-team revamp scheduled for China in June 2021 was delayed because of the coronavirus pandemic.
- Japan was chosen to host a traditional, seven-team Club World Cup in December 2021. FIFA wanted a December 2020 edition in Qatar to be the last with seven teams six continental champions and the host nations domestic league winner. The format often attracts little interest and is routinely won by the European club.

The 2018 FIFA World Cup was an international football tournament contested by men's national teams and took place between 14 June and 15 July 2018 in Russia. It was the 21st FIFA World Cup, a worldwide football tournament held once every four years. In the final, France played Croatia on 15 July at the Luzhniki Stadium in Moscow. France won the match 4–2 to claim their second World Cup. Zabivaka was the official mascot for the event—an anthropomorphic wolf dressed in the colours of the Russian national team. The 2022 FIFA World Cup is scheduled to be the 22nd edition of the FIFA World Cup, the quadrennial international men's association football championship contested by the national teams of the member associations of FIFA. It is scheduled to take place in Qatar from 21 November to 18 December 2022.

MISCELLANEOUS

Police station at Manipur's Thoubal district chosen best in country

- **Nongpok Sekmai police station in Manipur's Thoubal district** has been selected as the best police station in the country, fresh rankings for 2020 announced by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).
- The other nine top police stations are AWPS-Suramangalam in Tamil Nadu's Salem city, Kharsang in Arunachal Pradesh's Changlang, Jhilmili (Bhaiya Thana) at Surajpur in Chhattisgarh, Sanguem in South Goa, Kalighat in Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Pakyong in Sikkim's East District, Kanth in Uttar Pradesh's Moradabad district, Khanvel in Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Jammikunta Town police station in Telangana's Karimnagar district.

First Child-friendly Police Station Launched in Maharashtra's Pune

- A first of its kind, 'child-friendly' police station has been inaugurated in Maharashtra's Pune. The police station has been set up in accordance with guidelines laid down by the National Commissioner for Protection of Child Rights.

Fertility index boards should be set up in every gram panchayat in Maharashtra

- Maharashtra Agriculture Minister Dadaji Bhuse has said that **Fertility index boards should be set up in every gram panchayat in the state informing the farmers in simple language** about the components of soil present in the village lands and the amount of fertilizer required for it. He directed that a workshop should be organized in every village on the occasion of World Soil Day on 5th December.

Assam launched 'Orunodoi' scheme

- **Assam government launched the 'Orunodoi' scheme.** Over 18 lakh families in the state will receive 830 rupees per month in their bank accounts under the scheme. **Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal** launched the scheme in presence of Finance minister Himanta Biswa Sarma in Guwahati.
- **Touted as the biggest ever scheme in post-Independence Assam,** this scheme would **strengthen the role of the women as the money will be deposited in the bank accounts of the women of the families.** The scheme will be rolled out in 29 districts at the moment, with 18.2 lakh beneficiaries. The scheme will be implemented in the four districts under BTC once the Council election process is over.

India's first wilderness park opened near Hyderabad

- **India's first wilderness park with focus on biodiversity conservation, rewilding** and a stated objective to be focused on **total inclusivity** was opened near Hyderabad.

Piyush Goyal inaugurates newly electrified Dhigawara-Bandikui section of NW Railway

- **Minister of Railways Piyush Goyal inaugurated the newly electrified Dhigawara-Bandikui section of North Western Railway.** He also flagged off the first train on this newly electrified route at the function organized at Dhigawara station.

Five-star village postal scheme launched in Uttarakhand

- **The Union Minister of State for Communication Sanjay Dhotre launched five star village postal scheme to ensure the universal coverage of flagship postal schemes in Dehradun for rural areas of Uttarakhand.**

Prime Minister Modi inaugurated construction work of Agra Metro Project

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the construction work of Agra Metro Project** through video conferencing. **The project comprises two corridors with a total length of 29.4 kilometers and connects major tourist attractions like Taj Mahal, Agra Fort and Sikandra with railway stations and bus stands.**
- **The project will be completed in 5 years with an estimated cost of over 8 thousand 379 crore rupees.** It will **benefit 26 lakh population of the city of Agra** and will also cater to more than 60 lakh tourists who visit Agra every year. It will provide an environment friendly Mass Rapid Transit System to the historical city of Agra.

‘PM Modi and his Government’s Special Relationship with Sikhs’ Book released on the occasion of Gurupurab

- **Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh Puri released a Book titled ‘Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Government’s Special Relationship with Sikhs’ on the occasion of Gurupurab.**
- The book was released in New Delhi in presence of Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar. **The book, published by Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, was released in English, Hindi and Punjabi languages.**

India’s first female, comic book superhero tackles COVID-19 in ‘Priya’s Mask’

- **India’s first female superhero, Priya, and her trusted flying tiger Sahas, find themselves amid a global, ongoing crisis: COVID-19.** Save the flying tiger, this is a familiar premise to us all, by now. Priya’s Mask is the newest edition of the Augmented Reality-enabled comic book series featuring the teenage, female superhero.
- **For the first time, it is accompanied by an animated short film.** Voiced by actors from India and the US (Mrunal Thakur as Priya, Vidya Balan and Rosanna Arquette as Sahas and Sairah Kabir as eight-year-old Meena), the film visually narrates a segment from the comic. Set against the city of Jodhpur, Priya befriends Meena to show her how indispensable frontline workers are and instills a sense of hope and courage in her.

Lahore again tops list of world’s most polluted cities

- **Pakistan’s cultural capital Lahore has once again topped the list of world’s most polluted cities.** “Lahore ranks the most polluted city in the world,” according to air pollution data **released by the US Air Quality Index**
- According to the index, Lahore reported a particulate matter (PM) rating of 423. Pakistan’s financial capital Karachi ranked at 7 on the AQI. **New Delhi came in second with a PM of 229, while Nepal’s capital Kathmandu ranked the third-worst city with a PM of 178.**

PERSONS IN NEWS

World's first graduate-level AI University appoints world-renowned academic Eric Xing as President

- **The Mohamed bin Zayed University of Artificial Intelligence (MBZUAI), the world's first graduate-level, research-based artificial intelligence (AI) university, has appointed renowned AI academic Professor Dr. Eric Xing as President.** Professor Dr. Xing will lead MBZUAI as the first intake of graduate students are set to commence studies in January 2021.

In a first for India, Kolkata Air Traffic Control gets a woman general manager

- **Shyamli Haldar becomes first woman air traffic heads at Kolkata Air Traffic Control (ATC).** She was among the **first batch of women air traffic controllers recruited three decades ago.** Haldar took over as the general manager of Kolkata ATC.

Joe Biden chooses an all-female senior White House press team

- **President-elect Joe Biden will have an all-female senior communications team at his White House,** reflecting his stated desire to build out a diverse White House team as well as what's expected to be a return to a more traditional press operation.
- **Biden campaign communications director Kate Bedingfield will serve as Mr. Biden's White House communications director.** Jen Psaki, a longtime Democratic spokesperson, will be his press secretary.

US President elect Joe Biden names Jenett Yellen as Treasury Secretary & Neera Tanden as Director of Office of Management & Budget

- **US President-elect Joe Biden has named ex-Federal Reserve chair Janet Yellen as his nominee for treasury secretary.** If confirmed by the Senate, she will be **the first woman ever to hold the post.** She is among several women chosen for top economic positions.
- **Indian American Neera Tanden has been named as director of the Office of Management and Budget. Mr Biden also named Wally Adeyemo,** a former Obama administration official and the first CEO of the former president's nonprofit foundation, as his nominee for deputy treasury secretary. He also unveiled his White House economic team, consisting of economists Cecilia Rouse, Jared Bernstein and Heather Boushey.

Joe Biden picks Vivek Murthy as Surgeon General

- **US President-elect Joe Biden has selected two former Obama administration officials for senior roles to help fight COVID-19, including the appointment of Jeff Zients as White House coronavirus coordinator.**
- **Biden adviser Vivek Murthy will return to his role as Surgeon General but with a broader portfolio as the pandemic rages through the country.**

Lt Gen Rajeev Chaudhry assumes the charge as Director General Border Roads

- **Lt Gen Rajeev Chaudhry assumed the charge as 27th Director General Border Roads (DGBR) on the 01 December 2020.**
- **Lt Gen Chaudhry was commissioned into the Corps of Engineers from Indian Military Academy, Dehradun in 1983 and has attended all prestigious courses of the Indian Army including staff Course at Defence Service Staff College, Wellington, Higher Command Course at Army War College, Mhow and the National Defence College, New Delhi. He is also an M-Tech from IISc Bangalore.**

AWARDS

Maharashtra zilla parishad educator first in India to win \$1-million teacher prize

- A primary school teacher from India was named the winner of the USD 1-million annual Global Teacher Prize 2020 in recognition of his efforts to promote girls' education and trigger a quick-response (QR) coded textbook revolution in India.
- **Ranjitsinh Disale from Paritewadi village in Maharashtra's Solapur district** emerged the winner from 10 finalists from across the world for the annual prize founded by London-based Varkey Foundation and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco) in 2014 to recognise an exceptional teacher who has made an outstanding contribution to the profession.
- The award is bestowed by The winners were announced by actor-writer Stephen Fry in an online ceremony from the Natural History Museum, London. Disale, a teacher at the zilla parishad school in Solapur's Paritewadi, was among the 12,000 educators from 140 countries, who had been nominated for the prize. The prize was set up to recognise one exceptional teacher making an outstanding contribution to the profession as well as to shine a spotlight on the important role teachers play in society.

Indian-American Gitanjali Rao named by TIME as first-ever 'Kid of the Year' for work in technology

- **Indian-American Gitanjali Rao, a "brilliant" young scientist and inventor**, has been named by TIME magazine as the first-ever Kid of the Year' for her "astonishing work using technology to tackle issues ranging from contaminated drinking water to opioid addiction and cyberbullying.
- "The world belongs to those who shape it. And however uncertain that world may feel at a given moment, the reassuring reality seems to be that each new generation produces more of what these kids have already achieved: positive impact, in all sizes.

Hina Khan wins big At the Dadasaheb Phalke Icon Awards 2020

- Actor Hina Khan has recently received Dadasaheb Phalke Icon Award 2020 for Iconic Diva 2020.
- Hina Khan was felicitated with the Style Icon of Television Industry (female) and Style Icon of Social Media (female). She recently posted pictures of herself posing with her trophies. She informed her fans about it on social media.

Parkash Singh Badal returns his Padma Vibhushan award in solidarity with farmers protesting against farm laws

- **Former Punjab Chief Minister and Shiromani Akali Dal patron Parkash Singh Badal** has returned his Padma Vibhushan award in solidarity with the farmers protesting against the three farm laws. Mr. Badal received Padma Vibhushan Award in 2015.
- In addition to Badal, another Punjab leader, Shiromani Akali Dal (Democratic) chief and Rajya Sabha MP Sukhdev Dhindsa, has returned his Padma Bhushan award and said it is useless if the farm laws are enacted. He was given the award in January 2019.

ICAR bags global award from FAO for creating awareness about soil health

- India's agri-research body Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has bagged the prestigious 'International King Bhumibol World Soil Day Award' from the United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) for raising awareness about importance of soil health among all stakeholders.
- The award was conferred to ICAR on the occasion of World Soil Day, celebrated on December 5, through a virtual function. India bagged the award for ICAR's awareness initiative undertaken in December 2019, involving participation of more than 13,000 people through a social media campaign.

IMPORTANT DAYS

Day of Remembrance for all Victims of Chemical Warfare, 30 November

- The Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention, at its 20th Session, **decided that a memorial Day of Remembrance for all Victims of Chemical Warfare would be observed on 30 November each year or, when appropriate**, on the first day of the regular session of the Conference.
- The day marks tribute to the victims of chemical warfare, as well as to reaffirm the commitment of the **Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)** to the elimination of the threat of chemical weapons, thereby promoting the goals of peace, security, and multilateralism.

International Day for the Abolition of Slavery: 2 December

- **The International Day for the Abolition of Slavery, 2 December, marks the date of the adoption**, by the General Assembly, of the United Nations Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others.
- The day is observed **annually around the globe to spread awareness about slavery and stop all kinds of slavery that exist in the present-day world**. Governments and organisations as well as common people take this opportunity of the day to express their views on slavery.

International Day of Banks 4 December

- On 19 December 2019, the **UN General Assembly adopted resolution, which designated 4 December as the International Day of Banks in recognition of the significant potential of multilateral development banks and other international development banks** in financing sustainable development and providing know-how; and also in recognition of the vital role of the banking systems in Member States in contributing to the improvement of the standard of living.

World Soil Day: 5 December

- **World Soil Day (WSD) is held annually on 5 December as a means to focus attention on the importance of healthy soil** and to advocate for the sustainable management of soil resources.
- An international day to celebrate Soil was **recommended by the International Union of Soil Sciences (IUSS) in 2002. Under the leadership of the Kingdom of Thailand** and within the framework of the Global Soil Partnership, FAO has supported the formal establishment of WSD as a global awareness raising platform.
- **The FAO Conference unanimously endorsed World Soil Day in June 2013** and requested its official adoption at the 68th UN General Assembly. In December 2013, the UN General Assembly responded by designating 5 December 2014 as the first official World Soil Day.
- **The theme for World Soil Day 2020 is “Keep soil alive, protect soil biodiversity”.**

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. Which of the following cities has become the first Indian city to get an ISO (International Organization for Standardization) 9001:2015 Certification for 'Faecal Sludge and Septage Management (FSSM) services'?
(a) Ranchi (b) Prayagraj (c) Shimla (d) Bhubaneswar
2. Which of the following is set to become the first Arab Gulf country to generate electricity from coal?
(a) Saudi Arabia (b) Kuwait
(c) United Arab Emirates (d) Jordan
3. Recently, The Mohamed bin Zayed University of Artificial Intelligence (MBZUAI), the world's first graduate-level, research-based artificial intelligence (AI) university, has appointed renowned AI academic _____ as President.
(a) Professor Dr. Eric Xing (b) Professor Dr. Chin Chan
(c) Professor Dr. Johnson Matthew (d) Professor Dr. Mohammad Salah
4. Which of the following airports became India's first airport to introduce 'Internet of Things' (IoT) enabled smart baggage trolleys which is in line with Government of India's flagship Digital India Programme?
(a) Indira Gandhi International Airport
(b) Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport
(c) Rajiv Gandhi International Airport
(d) Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose International Airport
5. The Centre has announced the third stimulus package of _____ crore for the Mission COVID Suraksha- The Indian COVID-19 Vaccine Development Mission.
(a) Rs 500 (b) Rs 700 (c) Rs 900 (d) Rs 1200
6. Recently, India's first wilderness park with focus on biodiversity conservation, rewilding and a stated objective to be focused on total inclusivity was opened near _____.
(a) Mysuru (b) Hyderabad (c) Bengaluru (d) Kochi
7. Who won the Bahrain Formula One Grand Prix?
(a) Recardo Powell (b) Lewis Hamilton (c) Max Verstappen (d) Romain Grosjean
8. Who launched the India Climate Change Knowledge Portal?
(a) Shri Narendra Modi (b) Shri Ramnath Kovind
(c) Shri Prakash Javadekar (d) Dr. Harshvardhan
9. Day of Remembrance for all Victims of Chemical Warfare is observed on:
(a) 21st November (b) 24th November (c) 27th November (d) 30th November
10. Name the Indian cricketer who became the fastest Indian batsman to score 1000 ODI runs.
(a) Shreyash Iyer (b) Mayank Aggarwal (c) Hardik Pandya (d) K L Rahul
11. Which of the following states hosted the first virtual celebration of Hornbill Festival 2020?
(a) Sikkim (b) Nagaland (c) Manipur (d) Mizoram
12. Recently, A first of its kind, 'child-friendly' police station has been inaugurated in _____.
(a) Maharashtra's Pune (b) Uttar Pradesh's Prayagraj
(c) Haryana's Rewari (d) Punjab's Kapurthala
13. Which of the following states launched the 'Orunodoi' scheme?
(a) Haryana (b) West Bengal (c) Assam (d) Odisha

14. Recently, the Central Government has launched _____ crore rupees Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF).
(a) one lakh (b) two lakh (c) five lakh (d) ten lakh
15. Which of the following countries made sanitary products free to all women, becoming the first nation in the world to take such a step against "period poverty"?
(a) Ireland (b) Iceland (c) Scotland (d) Mexico
16. The 10-day-long _____ a festival of tribes was launched by Union Minister for Tribal Affairs Arjun Munda in a virtual format.
(a) Āadi Mahotsav (b) Tri Mahotsav
(c) Vano Mahotsav (d) Adivashi Mahotsav
17. Recently, US President-elect Joe Biden has named ex-Federal Reserve chair _____ as his nominee for treasury secretary.
(a) Janet Yellen (b) Neera Tanden (c) Jared Bernstein (d) Wally Adeyemo
18. Hundreds of homes in _____ will soon become the first in the world to use 100% green hydrogen to heat their properties and cook their meals as part of a new trial that could help households across the country replace fossil fuel gas.
(a) Scotland (b) United Kingdom (c) France (d) Germany
19. According to air pollution data released by the US Air Quality Index, which of the following cities has topped the list of world's most polluted cities?
(a) Mumbai (b) Lahore (c) Munich (d) Beijing
20. Who among the following actors has received Dadasaheb Phalke Icon Award 2020 for Iconic Diva 2020?
(a) Divyanka Tripathi (b) Mona Singh
(c) Hina Khan (d) Kanikka Kapoor
21. Recently, The Union Minister of State for Communication Sanjay Dhotre launched five star village postal schemes to ensure the universal coverage of flagship postal schemes for rural areas of _____.
(a) Uttar Pradesh (b) Uttarakhand (c) Jharkhand (d) Chhattisgarh
22. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Government of India signed a \$132.8 million loan to strengthen and modernize the distribution network and improve the quality of power supplied to households, industries, and businesses in India's northeastern state of _____.
(a) Manipur (b) Meghalaya (c) Mizoram (d) Nagaland
23. Which of the following countries plans to impose a tax on corporations providing digital services from 2022 that will stay in place until major nations come up with a coordinated approach on taxation?
(a) Canada (b) Switzerland (c) Finland (d) Ireland
24. Which of the following countries completed reclaiming territory ceded by Armenia under a Russia-brokered peace deal that ended six weeks of fierce fighting over Nagorno-Karabakh?
(a) Azerbaijan (b) Tajikistan (c) Turkmenistan (d) Kazakhstan
25. Which of the following rolled out the 'Live Rooms' feature that allows up to three additional users to go live in the same session?
(a) Google (b) Instagram (c) Facebook (d) Whatsapp
26. Which of the following International footwear companies has recently elevated Sandeep Kataria to the post of global CEO?
(a) Nike (b) Adidas (c) Fila (d) Bata

27. Which of the following companies launched India's first 100 Octane petrol, helping India join a select league of nations globally that have such superior quality fuel?
 (a) Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (b) Gas Authority of India Limited
 (c) Indian Oil Corporation (d) Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited
28. Recently, a Book titled Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Government's Special Relationship with Sikhs was released on the occasion of Gurupurab. This book is not available in which of the following languages?
 (a) Hindi (b) English (c) Urdu (d) Punjabi
29. Recently, the public sector aerospace manufacturing company, the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited delivered the biggest cryogenic propellant tank C 32 LH 2 to the _____ in Bengaluru.
 (a) Indian Space Research Organisation (b) Bharat Electronics Limited
 (c) DRDO (d) Military Engineering Services
30. The International Day for the Abolition of Slavery is observed on:
 (a) 28th November (b) 30th November (c) 1st December (d) 2nd December
31. Recently, Government of India has constituted a High-level Ministerial Committee for implementation of Paris Agreement. The Apex Committee for Implementation of Paris Agreement (AIPA) will be chaired by:
 (a) Cabinet Secretary (b) Health Secretary
 (c) Environment Secretary (d) PMO
32. Recently, Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas and Steel Dharmendra Pradhan launched India's first indigenously developed _____ Octane premium petrol through video conferencing.
 (a) 50 (b) 100 (c) 200 (d) 500
33. Which of the following Indian cities hosted India's first AI-enabled conversational digital persona?
 (a) Chennai (b) Gautam Buddha Nagar
 (c) Hyderabad (d) Bengaluru
34. In world first, _____ approved Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for emergency use recently?
 (a) United Kingdom (b) Canada
 (c) United States of America (d) France
35. Recently, who has set up a task force for preparing a roadmap on imparting technical education in Mother Tongue?
 (a) Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank'
 (b) Prime Minister Narendra Modi
 (c) President Ramnath Kovind
 (d) Union Information & Broadcasting minister Ravi Shankar Prasad
36. The United Nations and _____ government have signed a deal to allow unimpeded humanitarian access to the embattled Tigray region, at least the parts under federal government control.
 (a) Ethiopia's (b) Eritrea's (c) Uganda's (d) Liberia's
37. Which of the following states approved the unified emergency helpline number 112 to provide all forms of police assistance to people in distress?
 (a) Jharkhand (b) Karnataka (c) Odisha (d) Uttarakhand
38. In world's first, lab-grown meat to go on sale in _____.
 (a) Singapore (b) Malaysia (c) Indonesia (d) Mauritius
39. Who among the following has become the fastest cricketer to score 12,000 ODI runs, breaking a record held by legendary compatriot Sachin Tendulkar?
 (a) Steven Smith (b) Virat Kohli (c) Shikhar Dhawan (d) Shoaib Malik

40. India's first female, comic book superhero tackles COVID-19 in _____.
 (a) 'Priyanka's Mask' (b) 'Pooja's Mask' (c) 'Priya's Mask' (d) 'Prerak's Mask'
41. According to fresh rankings for 2020 announced by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), which of the following has been selected as the best police station in the country?
 (a) Sanguem (b) Nongpok Sekmai
 (c) Jhilmili (Bhaiya Thana) (d) AWPS-Suramangalam
42. Name the Indian-American young scientist and inventor who has been named by TIME magazine as the first-ever Kid of the Year' for her "astonishing work using technology to tackle issues ranging from contaminated drinking water to opioid addiction and cyberbullying."
 (a) Gitanjali Rao (b) Anamika Ganguly (c) Anika Chowdhury (d) Deepa Mukherjee
43. Which of the following banks has become the first bank to switch on Swift gpi Instant, a new service from the Brussels-based interbank co-operative that enables consumers and businesses to send tracked payments in seconds across borders?
 (a) JPMorgan Chase & Co. (b) Lloyds Bank
 (c) Credit Agricole SA (d) Industrial and Commercial Bank Of China Ltd.
44. Who among the following topped the Kotak Wealth Hurun list of India's wealthiest women?
 (a) Savitri Jindal (b) Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw
 (c) Roshni Nadar Malhotra (d) Leena Gandhi Tewari
45. The Reserve Bank of India has asked country's private bank _____ to stop new digital business launches and avoid adding new Credit Card customers after repeated reports by its customers facing multiple cases of technical glitches.
 (a) HDFC (b) Axis (c) ICICI (d) Yes
46. Which of the following countries has put 170 "high value" wild elephants up for sale due to drought and an increase in elephant numbers?
 (a) Liberia (b) Nigeria (c) Sudan (d) The Gabon
47. According to researchers at The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kharagpur, the Indo- Gangetic Plain (IGP) is the global hot-spot of atmospheric _____ due to intense agricultural activities and fertilizer production.
 (a) Nitrogen (b) Ammonia (c) Methane (d) Argon
48. International Day of Banks is celebrated on:
 (a) 1st December (b) 2nd December (c) 4th December (d) 6th December
49. Who has become the first teacher from India to win the prestigious \$1-million Global Teacher Prize for innovation in teaching?
 (a) Shreyas Mulgaonkar (b) Mahesh Dipankar (c) Ranjitsinh Disale (d) Tusshar Deshpande
50. Who among the following has recently returned his Padma Vibhushan award in solidarity with the farmers protesting against the three farm laws?
 (a) Teejan Bai (b) Chhannulal Mishra (c) Mary Kom (d) Parkash Singh Badal
51. India's first homes for transgender children in need of care and protection will soon be established in _____.
 (a) Bengaluru (b) Hyderabad (c) Lucknow (d) Bhopal
52. The theme for Hunar Haat to be organized in Rampur in December 2020 is:
 (a) Awareness for Craft (b) Vocal for Local (c) Hunar to be Praised (d) Come On India

53. The Indian Navy (IN) is undertaking a Passage Exercise (PASSEX) with _____ in the Eastern Indian Ocean Region (IOR).
 (a) American Navy (b) Russian Federation Navy
 (c) German Navy (d) Japanese Navy
54. Who has been appointed as Surgeon General of USA but with a broader portfolio as the pandemic rages through the country?
 (a) Mahesh Prasad (b) Vivek Murthy (c) Thomas Buchanan (d) Rosefaet Andrews
55. Who has recently topped the list by Fortune for the Businessperson of the Year 2020?
 (a) Mark Juckerberg (b) Lary Page (c) Roshani Nadar (d) Elon Musk
56. Who is the new president elect of FICCI for the year 2020-21?
 (a) Amit Bhattacharya (b) Uday Shankar (c) Rahul Kumaria (d) Mukund Jain
57. Who has recently released the 'Smuggling in India Report 2019-20'?
 (a) Narendra Modi (b) Dr Harshvardhan (c) Nirmala Sitharaman (d) Amit Shah
58. Which of the following countries was chosen to host a traditional, seven-team Club World Cup in December 2021?
 (a) Japan (b) USA (c) Portugal (d) Chile
59. According to recent prospects by Finance Ministry of India, India's economy is firmly on the path of a _____ recovery.
 (a) D-shaped (b) V-shaped (c) U-shaped (d) Z-shaped
60. World Soil Day (WSD) is held annually on:
 (a) 1st April (b) 2nd April (c) 5th December (d) 7th December
61. Which of the following states first solar power plant has been commissioned at Tlungvel recently?
 (a) Nagaland (b) Manipur (c) Nagaland (d) Mizoram
62. 'Azad Pattan Hydropower Project', is located on _____ River in Sadhanoti district of PoK.
 (a) Indus (b) Jhelum (c) Chenab (d) Ravi
63. Which of the following countries is examining the world's first 'foul air death'?
 (a) France (b) United Kingdom (c) Germany (d) Ireland
64. Which of the following dairy brands is ranked 8th in the list of top 20 global dairy processors released by the International Farm Comparison Network (IFCN)?
 (a) Mother Dairy (b) Amul (c) Gyan (d) Patanjali
65. Which of the following institute ranks as the number one university in India, and stands at the 172nd position in the world ranking in the QS World University Ranking 2021?
 (a) Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur (b) Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur
 (c) Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (d) Indian Institute of Technology Delhi
66. The _____ Reform, Recovery and Reconstruction Framework (3RF) is part of a comprehensive response to the massive explosion on the Port of Beirut.
 (a) Syria (b) Libya (c) Lebanon (d) Sudan
67. A first-of-its-kind study by the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) under the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, has projected that numbers of the Malayan Giant Squirrel (Ratufa bicolor) could decline by _____ in India by 2050.
 (a) 50% (b) 60% (c) 80% (d) 90%

68. Asteroid 2020 SO flew by Earth at an extremely close distance. The object came within just _____ percent of the distance between the Earth and the Moon, giving astronomers the perfect opportunity to witness the event.
(a) 7 (b) 13 (c) 16 (d) 20
69. India's agri-research body _____ has bagged the prestigious 'International King Bhumibol World Soil Day Award' from the United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) for raising awareness about importance of soil health among all stakeholders.
(a) Indian Veterinary Research Institute
(b) Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education
(c) Indian Council of Agricultural Research
(d) India Agricultural Research Institute
70. Which of the following states is holding a bird festival for the first time as part of its initiative to save migratory birds that arrive in the state in large numbers every year?
(a) Uttar Pradesh (b) Bihar (c) Andhra Pradesh (d) Rajasthan



ANSWER KEY AND EXPLANATION

1. d The capital city of Odisha, Bhubaneswar became the first Indian city to get an ISO (International Organization for Standardization) 9001:2015 Certification for 'Faecal Sludge and Septage Management (FSSM) services'. Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) was the first civic body to implement FSSM regulations in the State.
2. c The United Arab Emirates is set to become the first Arab Gulf country to generate electricity from coal.
3. a The Mohamed bin Zayed University of Artificial Intelligence (MBZUAI), the world's first graduate-level, research-based artificial intelligence (AI) university, has appointed renowned AI academic Professor Dr. Eric Xing as President.
4. c GMR led Hyderabad's Rajiv Gandhi International Airport became India's first airport to introduce 'Internet of Things' (IoT) enabled smart baggage trolleys which is in line with Government of India's flagship Digital India Programme.
5. c The Centre has announced the third stimulus package of Rs 900 crore for the Mission COVID Suraksha- The Indian COVID-19 Vaccine Development Mission.
6. b India's first wilderness park with focus on biodiversity conservation, rewilding and a stated objective to be focused on total inclusivity was opened near Hyderabad.
7. b Lewis Hamilton won the Bahrain Formula One Grand Prix for Mercedes after French driver Romain Grosjean had a miraculous escape from a fiery first lap crash that ripped his car in two.
8. c Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change Prakash Javadekar launched the India Climate Change Knowledge Portal.
9. d The Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention, at its 20th Session, decided that a memorial Day of Remembrance for all Victims of Chemical Warfare would be observed on 30 November each year or, when appropriate, on the first day of the regular session of the Conference.
10. c Hardik Pandya did create history as he became the fastest Indian batsman to score 1000 ODI runs.
11. b Nagaland is hosting the first virtual celebration of Hornbill Festival 2020.
12. a A first of its kind, 'child-friendly' police station has been inaugurated in Maharashtra's Pune.
13. c Assam government launched the 'Orunodoi' scheme.
14. a The Central Government has launched one lakh crore rupees Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF).
15. c Scotland made sanitary products free to all women, becoming the first nation in the world to take such a step against "period poverty."
16. a Shri Arjun Munda, Union Minister for Tribal Affairs, launched the virtual edition of Aadi Mahotsav- Madhya Pradesh. The 10-day long festival, commencing on December 1, 2020, is being hosted on the Tribes India website (www.tribesindia.com).
17. a US President-elect Joe Biden has named ex-Federal Reserve chair Janet Yellen as his nominee for treasury secretary.

- 18. a** Hundreds of homes in Scotland will soon become the first in the world to use 100% green hydrogen to heat their properties and cook their meals as part of a new trial that could help households across the country replace fossil fuel gas.
- 19. b** Pakistan's cultural capital Lahore has once again topped the list of world's most polluted cities "Lahore ranks the most polluted city in the world," according to air pollution data released by the US Air Quality Index
- 20. c** Actor Hina Khan has recently received Dadasaheb Phalke Icon Award 2020 for Iconic Diva 2020.
- 21. b** The Union Minister of State for Communication Sanjay Dhotre launched five star village postal scheme to ensure the universal coverage of flagship postal schemes in Dehradun for rural areas of Uttarakhand.
- 22. b** The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Government of India signed a \$132.8 million loan to strengthen and modernize the distribution network and improve the quality of power supplied to households, industries, and businesses in India's northeastern state of Meghalaya.
- 23. a** Canada plans to impose a tax on corporations providing digital services from 2022 that will stay in place until major nations come up with a coordinated approach on taxation.
- 24. a** Azerbaijan completed reclaiming territory ceded by Armenia under a Russia-brokered peace deal that ended six weeks of fierce fighting over Nagorno-Karabakh.
- 25. b** Instagram rolled out the 'Live Rooms' feature that allows up to three additional users to go live in the same session.
- 26. d** International footwear company Bata Brands has elevated Sandeep Kataria to the post of global CEO
- 27. c** Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) launched the nation's first 100 Octane petrol, helping India join a select league of nations globally that have such superior quality fuel.
- 28. c** The book, published by Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, was released in English, Hindi and Punjabi languages.
- 29. a** The public sector aerospace manufacturing company, the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited delivered the biggest cryogenic propellant tank C 32 LH 2 to the Indian Space Research Organisation in Bengaluru.
- 30. d** The International Day for the Abolition of Slavery, 2 December, marks the date of the adoption, by the General Assembly, of the United Nations Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others.
- 31. c** The Apex Committee for Implementation of Paris Agreement (AIPA) will be chaired by Environment Secretary.
- 32. b** Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas and Steel Dharmendra Pradhan launched India's first indigenously developed 100 Octane premium petrol through video conferencing.
- 33. d** Bengaluru hosted India's first AI-enabled conversational digital persona.
- 34. a** In world first, U.K. approves Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for emergency use.
- 35. a** Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' has set up a task force for preparing a roadmap on imparting technical education in Mother Tongue.
- 36. a** The United Nations says it and Ethiopia's government have signed a deal to allow unimpeded humanitarian access to the embattled Tigray region, at least the parts under federal government control.

- 37. c** Odisha Government approved the unified emergency helpline number 112 to provide all forms of police assistance to people in distress.
- 38. a** Singapore has given U.S. start-up Eat Just the green light to sell its lab-grown chicken meat, in what the firm says is the world's first regulatory approval for so-called clean meat that does not come from slaughtered animals.
- 39. b** India captain Virat Kohli became the fastest cricketer to score 12,000 ODI runs, breaking a record held by legendary compatriot Sachin Tendulkar.
- 40. c** India's first female, comic book superhero tackles COVID-19 in 'Priya's Mask'.
- 41. b** Nongpok Sekmai police station in Manipur's Thoubal district has been selected as the best police station in the country, fresh rankings for 2020 announced by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).
- 42. a** Indian-American Gitanjali Rao, a "brilliant" young scientist and inventor, has been named by TIME magazine as the first-ever Kid of the Year for her "astonishing work using technology to tackle issues ranging from contaminated drinking water to opioid addiction and cyberbullying.
- 43. b** Lloyds Bank in the UK has become the first bank to switch on Swift gpi Instant, a new service from the Brussels-based interbank co-operative that enables consumers and businesses to send tracked payments in seconds across borders.
- 44. c** HCL Technologies chairperson Roshni Nadar Malhotra, with a net worth of Rs. 54,850 crore, tops the Kotak Wealth Hurun list of India's wealthiest women.
- 45. a** The Reserve Bank of India has asked country's largest private bank, HDFC, to stop new digital business launches and avoid adding new Credit Card customers after repeated reports by its customers facing multiple cases of technical glitches.
- 46. b** Namibia has put 170 "high value" wild elephants up for sale due to drought and an increase in elephant numbers, the southern African country's environmental ministry.
- 47. b** The Indo- Gangetic Plain (IGP) is the global hot-spot of atmospheric ammonia (NH₃) due to intense agricultural activities and fertilizer production.
- 48. c** On 19 December 2019, the UN General Assembly adopted resolution, which designated 4 December as the International Day of Banks in recognition of the significant potential of multilateral development banks.
- 49. c** Ranjitsinh Disale, has become the first teacher from India to win the prestigious \$1-million Global Teacher Prize for innovation in teaching.
- 50. d** Former Punjab Chief Minister and Shiromani Akali Dal patron Parkash Singh Badal has returned his Padma Vibhushan award in solidarity with the farmers protesting against the three farm laws. Mr. Badal received Padma Vibhushan Award in 2015.
- 51. a** India's first homes for transgender children in need of care and protection will soon be established in Bengaluru.
- 52. b** The theme will be "Vocal for Local".
- 53. b** The Indian Navy (IN) is undertaking a Passage Exercise (PASSEX) with Russian Federation Navy (RuFN) in the Eastern Indian Ocean Region (IOR).
- 54. b** Biden adviser Vivek Murthy will return to his role as Surgeon General but with a broader portfolio as the pandemic rages through the country.

- 55. d** Adobe CEO Shantanu Narayen and Mastercard CEO Ajay Banga have been named by Fortune among the Businessperson of the Year 2020, a list topped by Tesla CEO Elon Musk.
- 56. b** Uday Shankar, the outgoing chairman of Star & Disney India and president of The Walt Disney Company, Asia Pacific, is the new president elect of FICCI for the year 2020-21.
- 57. c** Mrs Sitharaman released the Smuggling in India Report 2019-20 which analyses organised smuggling trends on Gold and Foreign Currency, Narcotic Drugs, Security, Environment and Commercial Frauds.
- 58. a** Japan was chosen to host a traditional, seven-team Club World Cup in December 2021.
- 59. b** India's economy is firmly on the path of a V-shaped recovery.
- 60. c** World Soil Day (WSD) is held annually on 5 December as a means to focus attention on the importance of healthy soil and to advocate for the sustainable management of soil resources.
- 61. d** Mizoram's first solar power plant has been commissioned at Tlungvel.
- 62. b** China Gezhouba Group and its local partner Laraib Group Pakistan are the shareholders of the 'Azad Pattan Hydropower Project', which is located on Jhelum river in Sadhanoti district of PoK.
- 63. b** An important inquest is underway in London to determine whether air pollution caused or contributed to the death in February 2013 of a nine-year-old child, Ella Adoo Kissi-Debrah, who lived with her mother near a busy road in London.
- 64. b** Amul, a brand of dairy cooperative major Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation Ltd (GCMMF), is ranked 8th in the list of top 20 global dairy processors released by the International Farm Comparison Network (IFCN).
- 65. c** Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IIT B) ranks as the number one university in India, and stands at the 172nd position in the world ranking.
- 66. c** The Lebanon Reform, Recovery and Reconstruction Framework (3RF) is part of a comprehensive response to the massive explosion on the Port of Beirut.
- 67. d** A first-of-its-kind study by the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) under the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, has projected that numbers of the Malayan Giant Squirrel (Ratufa bicolor) could decline by 90 per cent in India by 2050.
- 68. b** Asteroid 2020 SO flew by Earth at an extremely close distance. The object came within just 13 percent of the distance between the Earth and the Moon, giving astronomers the perfect opportunity to witness the event.
- 69. c** India's agri-research body Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has bagged the prestigious 'International King Bhumibol World Soil Day Award' from the United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) for raising awareness about importance of soil health among all stakeholders.
- 70. b** Bihar is holding a bird festival for the first time as part of its initiative to save migratory birds that arrive in the state in large numbers every year.